

Fall 2022

WE ARE STILL “NUMBER ONE”!

Hello All and WELCOME TO AUTUMN in Rutland!

Often times I’m asked what it is like to be an elected official at the town level. What are our duties, roles and responsibilities? I have been an elected official for almost 5 years - first as a supervisor and now a chairperson. I maintain that the learning curve mirrors my college days. Elected officials attend ongoing local/district/state level meetings, workshops, conferences, events, and an annual convention that encompasses 3 days of classes lead by many leading governmental experts. Although anyone can get elected to be a town official, to truly serve and lead in a manner that is consistent with an ever changing set of statutes and administrative rules, I believe a town official must engage in a pattern of continuous learning. The duties and responsibilities between supervisor and chairperson roles are driven by statute. For example, the chairperson supervises the administration of the law concerning the town to see that the law is “faithfully executed”. (Wisconsin Town Officers’ Handbook, page 3-11.)

I am particularly interested in our state’s economic investment in agriculture and recently learned a great deal at 2 farm events. First, I will touch on the annual Agricultural Community Engagement (ACE) meeting where town officials joined in discussions with neighbors, town leaders, and local elected officials and shared ideas and solutions for issues that affect us all – water, conservation, transportation, local ordinances and more. Several hands-on demonstrations were observed to show comparisons of storm water run-off with and without the use of needed conservation practices. A significant amount of time was also spent discussing the pros and cons of allowing ATV/UTVs on town roads and how the recent Act 164 now allows towns to regulate these particular speed limits. You may recall that ATV/UTV road usage was a discussion item on a recent Rutland board agenda. It was productive to have many Rutland residents in attendance sharing their opinions and experiences regarding this increasing state wide issue.

Elected officials often collaborate with neighboring municipalities regarding shared interests, mutual needs and services. Our town recently purchased heavy equipment with 4 other municipalities that will be shared among these municipalities. For years, Rutland has often practiced and benefited from “shared services/equipment” with our surrounding towns. Town officials often meet to discuss our individual community needs and how we can work together for the benefit of our residents. Ultimately, these management practices save you, the taxpayer, money.

Our neighboring municipality, the Town of Oregon, recently highlighted our Wisconsin “Number One” position in our nation’s cheese production at a local farm event held at the chairperson’s (Wayne Ace) homestead. Oregon High School FFA students lead tours and demonstrations at various hands-on learning stations where hundreds of 4th graders enjoyed interacting with farm animals and learning about the importance of agriculture in our area. Samples of the most favored cheese (mozzarella) were shared. All learned about the important role agriculture plays in our area and how that impacts global economics.

Speaking of appreciation for agriculture, in Rutland we are fortunate to have an excellent 4H Group: namely, “Rutland 4-H”. You have likely enjoyed this group’s cheerful presence and offering of food

products (widely known for lefsa) at our Rutland Polls! Rutland 4-H will be at our polls in November. Stop by their table for all kinds of homemade treats. Proceeds from this bake sale are used for member fees. This 4-H group also volunteers to beautify and maintain our town hall flower box. Thank you "Rutland 4-H" group!

Hopefully, I have inspired you to enjoy some Wisconsin cheese. Check out the free digital magazine: Grate.Pair.Share. or the website: wisconsincheese.com. to learn about the 600 varieties of cheese made in Wisconsin. We are lucky to also have a wonderful cheese shop right here in Rutland! You won't be disappointed when you stop in "Best of Wisconsin Shop" and meet their very friendly and knowledgeable staff.

I will share another upcoming "cheese opportunity". On Saturday, October 15th the Oregon Firefly Coffeehouse & Artisan Cheese will be holding a cheese tasting event from 6:00-8:00pm. All supplied from local producers, dozens of artisan cheeses will be available for sampling. Check with this local business for details: fireflycoffeehouse.com.

Lastly, as you are out viewing our colorful changing landscape, check out our Rutland Historical Building (former church) on highway 14/Rome Corners. It is stunning with its fresh, new paint! Thank you to Chris and Kathy Ziembra for your many continued efforts. Volunteer opportunities to improve the building remain available and any donations (service or monetary) are greatly appreciated by all. Contact Chris or Kathy for information. (608-469-8806)

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I enjoy being of service to you.

Sincerely,

Deana M. Zentner, Rutland Chairperson

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