

The Wahkon Wire

Brought to you by the Wahkon WAVE committee

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WAVE brings you the news

Introducing the Wahkon Wire

Kelly LaBrosse
Wahkon WAVE Committee

The *Wahkon Wire* is a new periodical newsletter, brought to you by the Wahkon WAVE committee, for the purpose of sharing community news and current events.

Why are we doing a newsletter? At a community involvement meeting held on May 3 WAVE asked residents who attended to voice their opinions on what projects are needed in the area. After compiling a list of these items, everyone in attendance was given "two cents" and asked to mark their top two choices. The newsletter received 6 votes, putting it towards the top of the list. At a WAVE meeting on June 9 it was decided to tackle this project (as well as a Wahkon Welcome packet, recycling/compost site, and city water study).

The newsletter will be written, edited and compiled by volunteers and postage paid for by WAVE. It will be mailed to City of Wahkon residents periodically with the sewer bills and will also be available to read on the Wahkon website – cityofwahkon.com. We would like to thank the City Council for allowing us to send these out with the sewer bills.

We hope you enjoy reading the *Wahkon Wire* and find it both interesting and informative.

Please don't forget to look for your sewer bill enclosed with this mailing!

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'Wahkon Welcomes' new residents

Information packets now available

Pete Olson
Wahkon WAVE Committee

Folks who are new to the Wahkon community, or those of you who know recent arrivals, will be pleased to see that "Wahkon Welcomes You" with a packet stuffed full of information guaranteed to help anyone settle-in a bit more comfortably.

The colorful folders, available at City Hall during regular business hours, 9 AM to 1 PM, Monday through Friday, open with a welcome letter from the mayor and a map for finding your way around. City government pages afford a look at office titles and those who are appointed or elected to serve the city and its residents. Meeting times and schedules are detailed along with a summary of regularly-scheduled city government events. One sheet is devoted to the featured activities in town, including the ever-popular Wahkon Days celebration in August.

Did you know that the city has ordinances setting rules for cutting chunks of ice for the cooler during our frigid winter months at Mille Lacs? Well, the 1912 ruling is still on the books.

More current ordinances include seasonal parking restrictions to allow snowplows plenty of space to maneuver when blizzards brew.

Not only has the newcomer just moved in, but may have an eye to remodeling, expanding or revamping the place. Lots of ordinance material refers to the building codes and requirements for city-issued permits to commence work.

The list goes on, but it's safe to know that if the new resident has questions about anything from stabling an animal to hooking up to the city sewer, the welcome packet is a great place to start. Most details are answered at city hall where the complete ordinance book is available. The object of the welcome packet is to point you in the right direction.

Wahkon is host to two churches, Catholic and Presbyterian, and a church directory contains information on all area churches including those with services in Isle, Onamia, Malmö, and other Mille Lacs area communities.

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Fishing pier sparkles in Wahkon Bay

A community project

Wahkon WAVE Committee

A focal point of the Wahkon City Park is the recently completed pier and boardwalk, donated to the community by the WAVE Committee during the August 10 City Council session. Folks from far and near have enjoyed the views from the pier since Wahkon Days, 2008, while volunteers wrapped-up work on the handicap-accessible boardwalk, city park sign and landscaping just in time for the annual city celebration this year.



City Clerk Karrie Roeschlein recently told members of the council, "The Wahkon Area Vision Effusion (WAVE) and dedicated volunteers have worked tirelessly to implement the community's desire to have a fishing pier in the City Park."

To raise funds for the project, committee members sold memorial and commemorative plaques and held fund raisers, while the Wahkon Civic Association donated \$6,730.39 towards landscaping the project. Following the pier donation to the city, proceeds from plaque orders will be forwarded to the City of Wahkon.

Roeschlein observed that Thiele Welding, Art Carr, Country Lumber, and Dogfish Bay Design reduced their prices for welding, sign repainting, construction and landscaping supplies.

A \$14,840 pier project cost breakdown includes: \$10,761 for the pier; \$2,389 for boardwalk materials; \$1,390 for plantings; and \$300 to refurbish the park sign.

"Volunteers were invaluable in constructing the pier, the boardwalk and landscaping," Roeschlein told the council.

Working on various stages of the pier project were: Ronda Bjornson-Main, Art Carr, Christine Childs, Randy Christensen, Dawn Christensen, Jonathon Darrington, Don Ellis, Chip Frederickson, Del Freichels, Elaine Freichels, Steve Hoosline, Mary Jevne, Mel Laisy, Dale Matte, Doc Moss, Emil Moss, Pete Olson, Katy Radunz,

Mike Radunz, Steve Rud, Bob Stone, Barb Stone, Pat Steele, Gary Steele, Dale Thiele, John Thoen, Heather Tideman, Nancy Walicki and Dick Wettersten. "If anyone's name is missing, please know it wasn't intentional," Roeschlein added.

WAVE Chairman Bob Stone noted that the fishing pier was selected for a project as a result of the community involvement meeting the WAVE committee hosted in 2006.

The Healthy Communities Partnership Grant Program orchestrated by the Initiative Foundation was the guiding force for the WAVE committee with training and funding to jump start the visioning teams' objectives. An initial community meeting was a structured information gathering forum which was directed by a trained moderator recommended by the Initiative Foundation. Members of the community and surrounding area all had a chance to lend their thoughts and wishes for the future vision of the community.

"WAVE committee members reviewed the projects and Randy Christensen suggested the fishing pier was a project that would be a visible accomplishment and an asset for all members of the community to utilize," Stone said. As coordinator, Christensen worked the design, ordered materials and directed the volunteer workers in constructing the decking, railings, walkway and ramps to the pier.

Through this effort, the pier was completed and in place at the city park prior to Wahkon Days in August, 2008. Boardwalk sections, a repainted sign and shrubberies were in place in July, 2009.

"The fishing pier is a place for area residents to take some time out of their schedules and to enjoy the pleasures of what Mille Lacs Lake has to offer. It is a place where parents and grandparents can take their children and grandchildren and spend some quality time together; a chance for family and friends to bond," said Stone.

"The volunteer members of the community were always ready to help with their time and labor in working on this project," he added. "It was total community involvement. The WAVE committee is grateful to all who volunteered their time and effort in making this project a reality."

Writers Wanted...

Do you have a flair for writing and an ear for news? The *Wahkon Wire* seeks story ideas and volunteer writers to submit articles for our new periodical newsletter. If interested, email Pete Olson at pbo47edit@yahoo.com for details.

Running an efficient wastewater system

Wahkon WAVE Committee

Whenever residents wash the dishes or flush their toilets, whatever happens to the wastewater is pretty much taken for granted. How the effluent makes its way to the sewer ponds far south of Wahkon is up to the city.

That's where Maintenance Superintendent Chris Weinreich comes in to ensure that we have an efficiently run wastewater facility and the pumping system is up to the task. A 13-year veteran of the City of Wahkon, Weinreich prepared himself with training through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Since he received his wastewater treatment operations license, and served a one-year apprenticeship, Weinreich has participated in continuing education every three years to maintain certification.

Recently, the city floated a nearly \$1.5 million bond to enlarge the system to four ponds. Many around town read the news that the city had to reach compliance with state regulations for sewer capacity. Sewer bills to individual residents and businesses reflect the costs associated with bringing the system up-to-date with current pollution control standards.

It's all in a day's work for the maintenance supervisor, to keep the pumps running and the ponds monitored. Weinreich regularly fills out reports to MPCA regarding operations and treatment.

His chores include maintaining the pond facility with weed control, mowing and ensuring the pond rip rap is secure, transferring water and monitoring levels. In addition to the everyday duties, he must see that the treatment conditions are monitored, water is tested, and water quality is sampled. These samples are constantly recorded, as are precipitation levels. Wastewater is treated for phosphorus levels to ensure environmental quality.

The infrastructure of a smoothly running wastewater system includes lift stations which are located at key junctions along the sewer lines. Weinreich is charged with duties including daily monitoring of electronic lift station units and maintaining lift station floats and pumps. Regular work calls for cleaning lift components and structures and repairing manholes.

The heavy rains that visited Wahkon this summer are events that call for extra electronic and on-site inspections and attention by the operator. A computerized electronic monitoring system keeps Weinreich apprised of problems in the system.

He is also called upon to flush mainline problem areas and to organize restoration projects to help minimize infiltration and inflow of extra water.

Weinreich recently observed that the sewer pond project completed in 2007 will see Wahkon and its residents through the foreseeable future. "It's all working well and the city strives to keep the system as efficient and cost-effective as possible," he concluded.

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The *Mille Lacs Messenger* newspaper publishes a *Resource Directory* and a seasonal *Fun Guide* which are both invaluable information resources included in the welcome packet. New residents are going to find a get-acquainted three-month subscription coupon to the *Messenger* included.

As Wahkon celebrated its centennial in 2007, the welcome packet is the place to find a comprehensive historical view of the city in *The Wahkon Enterprise*, a newspaper compiled and written by local volunteers. Full of old-time photos and reminiscences, the *Enterprise* has been a popular item for history buffs, whether young or old.

So, don't forget to start your Wahkon residential adventure, weekends or year-round, with a reading of the "Wahkon Welcomes You" packet, sponsored by the Wahkon WAVE committee.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CHRISTMAS IN WAHKON

Place: Downtown Wahkon, Sacred Heart Church

Date: Nov 7-8

Craft Fair and various sales and specials at local businesses

RECYCLING

Place: Mille Lacs County Highway Maintenance Shops

Date/Time: The 1st and 3rd Saturdays in Onamia and the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in Isle From 9am -1pm

SENIOR DINING

Place: Wahkon Community Hall - 151 2nd Street E

Date/Time: every Monday and Thursday - Lunch is served around 11:45 p.m

Enjoy a healthy meal at an economic price with the local seniors (60 years or older). Afterwards they have fun playing bingo until approximately 1:30 p.m. Meals can also be delivered to those unable to attend.

City clerk refreshes skills

Wahkon WAVE Committee

Wahkon City Clerk Karrie Roeschlein recently attended her first Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute (MMCI) where she learned that running cities, large and small, requires a vast knowledge of government functions and interpersonal skills.

Among the topics covered in the institute sessions were: effective interpersonal communications and work styles; human resource issues and approaches for clerks; getting along with your elected officials; how to work as a team; effective listening; and handling difficult people. A sidelight of the sessions was a field trip to Mill City Museum and the City of Minneapolis.

Nuts and bolts of running a city were covered by classes including: emergency management; data practices; revenue sources; fund accounting and budget preparation; fundamentals of MN government; municipal issues and approaches. Clerks also listened to authorities on: minute-taking, meetings and Parliamentary Procedure; open meeting law; what councils can or cannot do; capital planning and budgeting. A class also covered the intricacies of working with volunteer fire departments and relief associations.

This is a three-year program of one, week-long session per summer, through St. Cloud State University wherein clerks and finance officers learn many topics to become certified. "I had the most years of service as a clerk in the year one program. It was a great networking opportunity and very informational," Roeschlein said. "I loved the topic regarding interpersonal communications and work styles. There are three main categories: altruistic nurturing; assertive directive and logical thinking. People tend to gravitate towards one category or a combination of the two.

"Altruistic nurturing involves someone who cares what everyone thinks and feels. They believe in harmony and can sometimes get bogged down in making decisions that may adversely affect others. Assertive directives are very goal and action oriented. They believe inaction is inexcusable.

"Logical thinkers love to analyze data and come up with the best answer. They tend not to give their opinions until all factors are known and have been investigated. All three categories and/or combinations make our world go round. Organizations working with people need to recognize this fact and focus on their strengths when trying to accomplish tasks," she said.

"We also learned how often we automatically judge people that are different from us and how that adversely affects them and us. It is imperative we try to understand people and when necessary use behavior descriptions in lieu of judgments. One of the mottoes

near my desk is 'listen to understand, not to agree or disagree, nor to judge,'" Roeschlein said.

She noted that the Fundamentals of MN Government sessions were valuable. Clerks learned of various political cultures, changes in MN and opportunities to connect with citizens. She learned that people are becoming increasingly disengaged from their communities because of social and economic pressures. With businesses going global, there are fewer reasons for key families to sponsor Minnesota from generation to generation. "Some don't care about their roots," she said.

"In the past people sat on their front porch to socialize and do chores such as shucking peas. Everyone knew each other and their kids. Topics of discussion were numerous and everyone had their input," said Roeschlein.

"Today people are sitting on their back patio isolated from their neighbors and their community at large. We need to bring people out to the front porch again. WAVE and Wahkon Civic Association is doing this through community forums, picnics and Wahkon Days," she said.

Classes also dealt with diminished citizen participation in politics. For various reasons the jobs usually shouldered by volunteers have been increasingly absorbed by the political machines and political consultants.

"Minnesota has seen a tremendous growth in special interest groups and lobbyists," said Roeschlein. "As David Broder observed at the Citizens League 2002 Annual Meeting,...'these interest groups pursuing legitimately their own agenda have become far more powerful as blocking agents than the political parties and political leaders have in building support for their change.' The citizen often asks, 'Is my effort worthwhile? Will I make a difference?'"

She concluded that the Clerks Institute suggested that there are ways folks can become involved. "What can we do? Reaffirm the citizen's role. Revitalize the citizen's education and practice. Recognize the fundamental role of families and create ways for their participation. Revitalize K-12 curriculum to include civic education. Promoting citizenship was one of the reasons public schools were created in the first place. Recapture the citizen's creativity," she said.

Sponsors of the Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute included the Minnesota Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association, League of Minnesota Cities, and The Center for Continuing Studies at St. Cloud State University. Ever-mindful of keeping our budget at a minimum, Roeschlein joined this week-long institute in the Twin Cities at little cost to taxpayers, as a \$350 grant, and lodging at her parents' home defrayed all but \$60 of the total.