

Wahkon Wire

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Welcome, new WAVE Chairman

Greetings to all my new fellow neighbors of Wahkon.

My name is Anthony (Tony) Button and I recently volunteered to chair the WAVE Committee for the next year. With my wife of 37 years, Carleen, we have two sons and two grandchildren. I am retired from the U. S.



Army after 27 years serving in combat and construction engineers units, Maintenance units and Forward Support Battalions.

Among my civilian occupations of 11 years are: Project manager; Fleet & Maintenance operations manager; Plant Maintenance manager; and co owner of a full service MMS text advertising company.

After reading through Bob Stone's notes I am honored to serve the community in this position. Since attending the last two meetings, I was a surprised that the committee has accomplished so much with so little.

As some of you may know through neighbors or the newspaper, the town has had the three town parkland areas surveyed and marked. Here is an opportunity for all our weekend neighbors to get involved in this community to be heard and to get involved.

The WAVE committee would like any and all input on how the areas should be used. Suggestions may include little or no maintenance, or maybe working on the spaces in two or three phases due to money constraints.

Let's Do it once and Do it right the first time.

Here are some proposals: 1. creating walkways through and connecting to Main Street; 2. building a bridge or; 3. arch over the brook; 4. constructing a town dock; 5.(Civic, Council) moving Ellen Ruth or; 6. redesigning the roof over the Ellen Ruth to have covered picnic area, 7. placing signage with a more "Northland" appeal, and, last but not least, 8. Veterans Park re-landscaping and re-designing the wall, trees and beach.

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IDEAS? Write them down and drop them off at city hall or email them to wavechair@scicable.com

Wahkon Clean Up slated for June 4

It's time, once again, to consider Wahkon Clean Up Day as a golden opportunity to spruce up the yard, clear out the shed or just make the community look tidy.

The event is Saturday, June 4, 8:00 A.M. to Noon, and workers will be on hand to help unload your cast-offs at City Hall. Volunteers and city maintenance chief Chris Weinreich will also be traveling around town with a trailer to pick up items for folks without means to get their stuff hauled away

The Wahkon City Council initiated the effort to ensure a clean and healthy community.

Property owners within city limits may bring items to the City Hall parking lot located at 151 2nd Street E, all morning. City Clerk Karrie Roeschlein reminds residents to be prepared to show proof you own property or reside within the city limits of Wahkon, i.e. tax statement with property number beginning with 25 (example #25-040-0320); driver's license; Wahkon wastewater utility bill; etc. Please note that having a Wahkon mailing address doesn't necessarily mean you live within city limits. This service is provided solely to Wahkon City taxpayers. If you are unsure, please call Wahkon City Hall for clarification.

The city asks folks keep the amount of items reasonable as the City of Wahkon may, at its discretion, deny disposal. This service is free of charge, but donations would be greatly appreciated to help defray some of the cost. Cost of last year's clean-up was \$2,548, with \$295 in donations.

Roeschlein noted, "If you are unable to bring items to us due to lack of transportation or help, please contact City Hall to be placed on a list for pickup that day. Thank you to last year's volunteers who graciously collected numerous items."

If you could help and/or volunteer your truck and trailer please call Karrie at City Hall #320-495-3441.

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS: household appliances, small amounts of demolition material; i.e., wood, metal, shingles, windows, and sheet rock, dry paint cans, computers and peripherals, tires, television sets, mattresses, box springs, couches and chairs, other miscellaneous household items

NON-ACCEPTABLE ITEMS: all gas refrigerators, wet paint or varnish cans, grass, leaves or brush, railroad ties, old ballasts, fluorescent bulbs, cement, and hazardous materials.

Notifications will appear in the Mille Lacs Messenger, May 25 and June 1, and in at City Hall and the Post Office.

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Also suggested for projects are: 1. Main Street revitalization, with county input; 2. luring travelers of the Soo Recreation Trail to local businesses; and 3. constructing a band shell.

The Veterans park is passed by year-round and very few people even know where it is or what war veterans were honored with the park.

I am looking for assistance or personal introduction to area fraternal organizations (I am a legionnaire and KOC), whose charters may support community, youth, Americanism, veterans and veterans memorials. I hope that area organizations may be willing to help in the revitalization of our town. As of this date we have already had \$1000. dollars donated to a bridge or arch over the brook.

Please email me at: wavechair@scicable.com

Sincerely yours,
Tony Button - WAVE Chairman

Flood plain map detailed

A multi-year project to re-examine flood zones within Mille Lacs County and develop detailed, digital flood hazard maps has been completed. New flood maps -- also known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) -- have been developed for the City, which was previously not mapped, to reflect current flood risks.

What does it mean if your property is shown in the Special Flood Hazard Area?

If you have a mortgage from a federally-regulated lender and the building(s) on your parcel are within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), then by federal law, your lender must require you to carry flood insurance when these flood maps become effective. Flood insurance is available through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a federally underwritten program provided by nearly 100 insurance companies and written through licensed insurance agents. Contact your insurance agent to learn about lower-cost "grandfathering" options offered by the NFIP for properties being mapped into higher-risk areas for the first time.

When do the maps become effective?

Once the appeals and protests are reviewed and once any needed map changes are incorporated, FEMA will issue a Letter of Final Determination. Six months later, an ordinance approving the new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map will be adopted. The maps will then become effective, as will any new flood insurance requirements.

For more information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program's website, www.floodsmart.gov or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources floodplain management website, www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/floodplain/index.html

Your input is valuable:

2010 Census Dispute

Dear Citizens:

As you may have already read or heard through the grapevine, the 2010 census data has been released. Below is our letter questioning the accuracy of their count.

The City of Wahkon, Minnesota, has grave concerns on the accuracy of our 2010 Census data.

Population in 1990 was 197, 2000 was 314 and 2010 is 206, which is the same as the number of housing units. According to the State Demographic Center our 4/1/2009 population was estimated at 343 and household estimate was 164. How can these figures be so different? How can the housing units match the population?

In 2010 Wahkon was designated as an "update/enumerate" from previous years as "mailout/mailback." The reason given was that in the 2000 Census only 48% of households voluntarily returned their forms. Our neighbor, the City of Isle, was also designated "update/enumerate" at the same time. However the reason for such designation doesn't coincide, as Isle's return rate was a few percentages below the national average of 67%. Further debating our designation we were informed "most of the Minnesota reservations are update/enumerate along with areas of high seasonal type housing." Wahkon has vehemently disagreed that we are part of a reservation and have forwarded letters conveying this over the years to several different agencies. Craig Best, Assistant Regional Census Manager stated their maps show boundaries for statistical data collection and tabulation only.

Several citizens contacted City Hall asking when their census form could be expected. When informed someone would be going door to door they decided to wait. However when no one came, some citizens called back and were directed to the library in Isle to fill out a form. Were those forms included? To further raise concerns, the Mayor of Wahkon, Sandy Reichel has yet to be counted at her residence where she operates Walleye Dundee's Resort & Café located at 550 North Main. She and the others residing on the property are full time residents and not snowbirds. She informed a census employee twice that she had not been counted. That census worker did not work in our area but informed her superiors both times, but to no avail. No notice was ever posted on their door indicating someone tried to contact them so the five people residing there were never counted.

Wahkon donated our community hall for use by the census bureau to test possible employee candidates and participated in the venue of a Complete Count Committee ensuring citizens were aware of the importance of providing accurate information. The certificate of appreciation we received recognizes us as a valued partner. "Your efforts to help achieve a complete and accurate census count have made a lasting impact on the nation." As your partner, we are extremely disappointed that we cannot rely upon the data provided and formally request answers to why our Mayor and her household were never counted?

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The Census Bureau will accept challenges under the Count Question Resolution (CQR) program to correct errors. The State Demographer's Office encourages us to utilize this program and will assist in the preparation of the challenge. The Census Bureau however, will not change their redistricting data, even if the challenge is accepted. Why do they have the program then?

With this in mind, Council will decide if the time and energy is warrantable as the end result will remain the same. Personally my household was reduced by 50% due to our children becoming adults. Other families in Wahkon saw reductions as well. However, we believe several residences were never counted along with Mayor Reichel's. Please contact City Hall, #320-495-3441 if you were not counted so I may compile a list for documentation purposes. If your residence was one of the few that went to the Isle Library to fill out a questionnaire, that information would also be helpful. The Census Bureau claims those forms would have been counted, but keeping track on our end may be helpful information.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Karrie Roeschlein, Clerk

Adopting a Highway

Last year Wahkon's WAVE committee accepted a stretch of road to keep free of litter in the MN Adopt A Highway program. Located between mile markers 194-196 of Hwy 47, east of Fiddlestix Golf Course heading toward Mora, the roadway received the kind ministrations of a volunteer group in both June and October, 2010.

Last year's volunteers were Randy and Dawn Christensen, Lori Stalker, Sandy Reichel, Deanna Nordstrom, Barb Stone, Kelly LaBrosse and Karrie Roeschlein.

WAVE is currently looking for a few good volunteers for the 2011 effort. Volunteers should be able to walk the ditches and be fully aware of their surroundings at all times. Wear jeans, long sleeves, boots or stable footwear, gloves, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent. Volunteers should be current on their tetanus booster. Safety vests are provided. Everyone will meet at City Hall.

All volunteers must watch a short MnDOT video each and every time. Wave members felt the Adopt a Highway program would be a wonderful conduit towards community pride. "Minnesota should be proud of their commitment to keep our highways clean and beautiful," said Karrie Roeschlein. This year's dates have yet to be scheduled, but please contact Karrie at city hall 320-495-3441 if you would be interested.

Council backs Vets Park projects

Recently the Wahkon City Council threw its weight behind a project, spearheaded by WAVE and its new Chairman Tony Button, to revitalize the Veterans Park area for all to enjoy. Many folks may not be aware that the area, which occupies a tree-lined shorefront across from Walleye Dundee's, is a public park dedicated to the memory of American veterans of all branches of service.

Over the years the park, which boasts a small World War I memorial and children's play area, has seen little use. In its resolution, passed April 11, the Council decided to recognize the need to renovate the area and set aside a fund for donations to bring Veterans Park back into the limelight it deserves.

The City of Wahkon will now accept donations for the Veterans Park Renovation and keep them separate in the "Veterans Park Fund" within the General Fund to be used exclusively toward improving the existing Veterans Park.

In accepting the Council's resolution WAVE Chairman Tony Button said the committee's and his vision of the Veterans Park all depends on the funds that can be raised.

"Right now the only Vets honored are from WWI. So we have a lot to look into and research or just one six-sided monolith listing all services, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines, honoring them past, present, and future.

"The first item is to check out all the trees on the park property to see how healthy they all are. We don't want to re-do the park and have the trees come crashing down.

"The wall is really kind of an eyesore, more of a detraction than an invitation to use," Button added.

The WAVE Committee has also discussed a path or walkway that ties the Vets Park with a bridge or stone arch over the brook to the pier (and town dock someday). Members are soliciting ideas for landscaping the area fronting the roadway, with bushes and flowers that need little or no maintenance.

Button also suggested the vision for the park could include State Park type signage along the path to tie everything together.

City Clerk and WAVE member Karrie Roeschlein noted that Button has been energetic in spearheading the Vets Park project and other committee endeavors. She said, "I feel very fortunate to have Tony Button on board as WAVE's Chair. As a new full time resident he has jumped right in with exuberance and planning skills. The WAVE committee is excited to see where the planning process will take us relative to park improvements and possibly Main Street beautification. We will be investigating becoming a 501(c)3 charitable organization in order to fully utilize organizations for expertise, donations and grants. This will be a very large project and may take years to fully implement, but now is the time to express our hopes and dreams for Wahkon. Bob Stone would be proud to know the committee is following their vision statement: 'The Wahkon area will continue evolving into a vibrant place to live, work, play, shop and visit for residents and visitors of all ages. A place to be called home.'