

# Wisconsin Towns Association

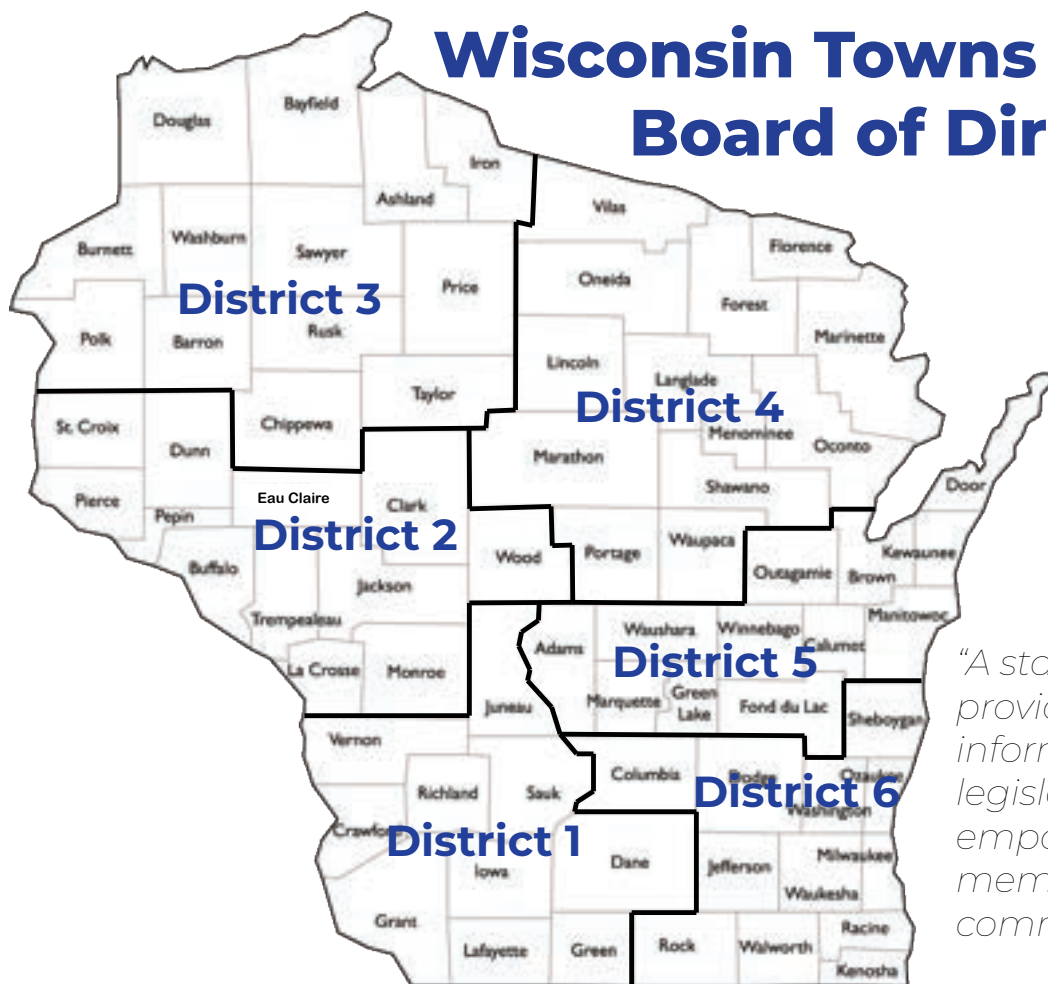
April 2025



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Shawano, WI 54166

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# Wisconsin Towns Association Board of Directors



*"A statewide association providing education, legal information and grassroots legislative advocacy to empower and inspire our members to lead in their communities."*



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**Volume 446**

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April 2025

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*Empowering Town Officials*

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



By  
**Mike Koles**

## **Expanding Clerk Education**

I am excited to announce the beginning of a new partnership with the UW-Madison Division of Extension to expand town clerk education. Melissa Kono, Burnside Town Clerk (Trempealeau County) and Professor at the Extension Local Government Education Program started in a joint WTA-UW position as Municipal Clerk Specialist on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The role of town clerk has greatly expanded over the last decade, and the responsibilities of the position continue to increase. For example, MOE (maintenance of effort) reporting was added less than a year ago. Oddly, we still get fairly frequent reports from new town clerks who agreed to take the position because they were told they only needed to attend some meetings and take some minutes. To be a successful town clerk absolutely requires so much more. And, oh by the way, successful elections, obtaining funds from the state and federal government that the town is entitled to, not being penalized for failing to file a plethora of reports, etc. is contingent upon the clerk succeeding.

The clerk position is administrative in nature and typically insulated from politics. At the same time the role began to significantly expand, it was also thrust into the political spotlight due to elections. Depending on the town, the clerk was also buried in conflict. Increasing responsibilities, politics, conflict, and the inevitable creep of demographics all played a role in what has been a significant amount of

mid-term resignations and upcoming April retirements.

Over the last decade, WTA committed to periodically engage in robust efforts to strategically plan for the future. Plan implementation, for example, led to overhaul of the Urban Towns Committee into the Town Advocacy Council, a move that has produced hundreds of millions of dollars of new funding for towns. Another strategy we deployed was to obtain non-profit status, which, in the end, saves members money because the association no longer must pay taxes. In 2019, we began offering health insurance to employees for the very first time. It's hard to imagine we were able to obtain the high quality staff we did prior to this. We were lucky.

Given the critical nature of the clerk position combined with the turnover dilemma, the WTA Board of Directors identified a strategic need to increase clerk education opportunities. We weren't comfortable just keeping our fingers crossed and hoping to be lucky. The new partnership will help fulfill that need. Please see Melissa's inaugural "Clerk's Corner" magazine article for more information.

In the coming months, we will provide more detail on what to expect from this investment. Please note that the position will focus primarily on proactive education. Our legal hotline should still be used for inquiries that require a more immediate response.





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# Clerk's Corner



By: Melissa Kono, UW Ext./WTA Clerk Specialist

Hello everyone, allow me to introduce myself. I am Melissa Kono and I have the pleasure of serving you as the first Municipal Clerk Specialist for the Local Government Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension and the Wisconsin Towns Association. These two institutions recently started this new partnership to empower clerks through information and education. I am so excited for this new role because it means I get to work with my favorite people—town clerks.



I have been the Town Clerk with the Town of Burnside in Trempealeau County since 2013. I am also a Professor with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. I credit my clerk background as the reason I was hired in Extension. Several members on the hiring committee were town board members, and they understood the value of having someone with first-hand local government knowledge providing outreach education. My involvement with town, city, village, and county government has helped inform Extension work ever since, and much of my teaching is focused on local government education. One of my major programs is offering election worker training—I trained over 600 election workers last October. I always say that it is my hands-on experience as a town clerk that provides me with the ability to teach election administration training, and because I love to teach that I'm willing to stand in front of a group and talk about it!

## The Need for Clerk Education and Support

When I was first appointed clerk, I was fortunate to have a former clerk that had everything in order and was always available to answer any of my questions. But even with that support, I often felt frustrated when I would receive an email that a report was due—and I didn't know what it meant or what information I needed to complete the report. Last year, I had the opportunity to meet many clerks at the Fall Financial Workshops. I heard over and over from clerks how stressful the job is, and I understand. It is my hope that I can provide clerks, especially new ones, with resources to make the job less frustrating and more rewarding. To that end, I will be developing a variety of educational opportunities for new and seasoned clerks alike. From timely Lunch and Learn webinars, to a Clerk College for Town Clerks, to clerk-focused classes at the Spring and Fall Workshops, I am hoping to empower clerks with the information we need to do our jobs efficiently, effectively, and so you can help fulfill the desire of the WTA to have town officials unlock the potential of democracy.

### Upcoming Clerk Education Offerings

April might well be the busiest month for clerks. Between an election, the Annual Meeting, working on the Form CT Financial Report, not to mention several other reports, and preparing for Board of Review, it feels like many of the major clerk deadlines fall within this month. While I hope to develop more resources to help with many of these tasks in the future, I am currently offering several webinars on preparing the Form CT Municipal Financial Report. The last one is April 30<sup>th</sup> from 12:00-2:00 p.m. but a recorded version is available if you don't want to wait. You also have the option to register for the April 30<sup>th</sup> live webinar and watch a recorded version in the meantime to help you get started on your form. Register at the Local Government Education website to attend or to watch the recording: <https://localgovernment.extension.wisc.edu/distance-education/#ct>

### Additional Trainings

I will be developing other educational opportunities designed with clerks in mind, including Lunch-and-Learn monthly webinars and creating new classes for the upcoming the Spring and Fall Workshops. The Lunch and Learn webinars will focus on topics relevant to each month, such as Maintenance of Effort Reporting in June, budget development resources in the fall, election information during election season, etc. We are gathering topics for future trainings, if you have ideas for trainings you would like to see, I would love to hear them. We are collecting responses with this form: [https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1AoZAKbzEonG9fg](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1AoZAKbzEonG9fg).

In the coming months I will be offering **New Clerk Bootcamp** aimed at supporting clerks new to the role, as there will be many new clerks after the April Election. If your town is expecting a new clerk, or you've had a new clerk recently, please consider having them attend the New Clerk Bootcamps held in locations throughout the state in June. These sessions will help new clerks understand the role of the clerk and all the deadlines and duties assigned to clerks. New Clerk Bootcamp will be offered in-person at regional locations and will allow new clerks to connect with available resources, network, and ask questions. The dates and locations will be sent after the April 1st election once new clerks are on board.

### Clerk College

Another exciting new educational opportunity coming up is **Clerk College for Town Clerks**. This is a year-long program focused on leadership and skills development for town clerks. Clerk College will be a series of units on topics relevant to the clerk role such as human resource management, town financials, elections, reports, and conflict management. Clerk College will not only empower clerks with the information needed to effectively do our jobs as clerks, it will also provide an opportunity for networking and support. Look for the full details and schedule of Clerk College coming soon.

I hope to meet many of you at the upcoming Spring Workshops and that you will take a minute to introduce yourself. I am very excited about this opportunity and am looking forward to meeting clerks (and other town officials of course) at events throughout Wisconsin this year. I wish you all luck as we tackle all the demands of April!



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# Wisconsin Towns Association Spring Road School 2025

Chula Vista Resort and Conference Center

Wisconsin Dells, WI

Monday April 21 – Wednesday April 23, 2025

**WHO:** Local Government Elected Officials, Road Workers, Road Superintendents, Public Works Directors, Engineers, Contractors, anyone involved in constructing and maintaining town roads and village streets.

**WHAT:** An extraordinary amount of local official turnover in recent years combined with a lot of new road worker and transportation based employees has prompted numerous requests for WTA to provide an educational program that takes a deep dive into road related topics. Thus, we are introducing the 2nd annual Town Road School. Attendees will learn about specific products and techniques from the private sector. The plethora of new transportation programs, including Transportation Funding and Legislative Priorities, Transportation Plans, Paser Ratings, LRIP Updates, will be reviewed. Road workers will obtain flagger certification. A rich opportunity to network with fellow officials and service providers will be provided. Top all of that off with some fun, food, and support of the WTA scholarship program.

**REGISTRATION:** See form in magazine or register online at [www.wisctowns.com](http://www.wisctowns.com). Registration deadline is April 1, 2025.

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS:** A room block is available at the Chula Vista. The hotel room reservation deadline is April 1, 2025. To make a room reservation, please contact the reservation department at (833) 459-5638. The booking ID number is K64861. The room block is reserved under the Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA). Room rates are \$98.00 single; \$129 double; or \$229 for a 2-bedroom condo per night. To receive your tax exemption, please email [billing@chulavistaresort.com](mailto:billing@chulavistaresort.com) and provide a copy of your tax exempt certificate and your confirmation number no later than several weeks prior to arrival.



**AUCTION:** WTA provides a minimum of seven \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors annually. Have some fun and help support the program by participating or donating. The auction will begin at 5:00pm on Tuesday, April 22. Towns are encouraged to consider donating an item or a package of items of approximately \$50 in value that highlights your region of the state. Towns donating items will be recognized when your item is auctioned. For questions about the auction, please contact Gary Kennedy at 920-323-6500 or [hwygaryk@gmail.com](mailto:hwygaryk@gmail.com).

# Wisconsin Towns Association Spring Road School 2025

Chula Vista Resort and Conference Center - Wisconsin Dells, WI  
Monday April 21 – Wednesday April 23, 2025

## Agenda

### MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2025

5:00 – 6:00pm **REGISTRATION** (you must be registered to attend – thank you)

6:00 – 10:00pm **NETWORKING ROUNDTABLE**

*Location: Follow Signs*

This is a can't miss evening of networking opportunities with fellow local officials, road workers, and private sector transportation service providers. Join us in one of four hospitality rooms sponsored by Cedar, Sherwin Industries, Scott Construction & Contech complete with free heavy hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025

6:30 – 8:00am **BREAKFAST BUFFET**

*Location: Conference Rooms A through I*

Freshly cut fruit, muffins and breakfast breads, orange & apple juices, freshly brewed regular and decaffeinated coffee and hot teas. Eggs, smoked bacon, sausage patties and breakfast potatoes.

8:00am **VENDOR EXHIBITS & REGISTRATION OPEN**

9:00 – 9:15am **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

*Location: Grand Ballroom*

Mike Koles, Wisconsin Towns Association, Executive Director

9:15 – 9:45am **TRANSPORTATION FUNDING STATUS AND TOWN TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES (PDH'S 0.5)**

*Location: Grand Ballroom*

After over a decade of dismal transportation funding due to the elimination of gas tax indexing, transportation fund raids, excess borrowing, and lagging transportation specific revenue enhancements, infrastructure investment has witnessed significant attention in recent years. Several small revenue increases and heavy reliance on general purpose revenue (GPR) has resulted in more funding. Unfortunately, funding gaps are still extensive and the sustainability of relying on GPR is being questioned. Come learn about the challenges and the plan to overcome them.

Joe Ruth, Wisconsin Towns Association, Governmental Affairs Director

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025 (continued)**

### **9:45 – 10:30am CREATING YOUR FIVE-YEAR TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION PLAN (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Today's high inflation environment combined with increasing road wear and tear due to heavy vehicles requires that towns pay an increasing amount of attention to getting the biggest bang for your transportation buck. Learn how to use existing data, trends, and technologies to create a five-year infrastructure plan that maximizes your financial investment.

Dennis Mack, P.E. and Russ Kiviniemi, P.E.-Cedar Corporation

### **10:30 – 11:15am NETWORKING INTERSECTION**

**Location:** *Conference Rooms A through I*

Take a break and visit the Town Transportation Service Providers in the Vendor Exhibit Area.

### **11:15am – 12:00pm *OPTION A* ENGINEERING OR NO ENGINEERING - THAT IS THE QUESTION (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Town transportation program funding and circumstances have significantly and abruptly changed; however, the rules/standards for road improvements have remained the same for decades. What are the elements of a "good road?" When is engineering required? When is it a good idea even when not required? When can you get away without it?

Dave Pantzlaff and Craig Schuh, P.E. – AYRES Associates

### **11:15am – 12:00pm *OPTION B* TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Upper Grand Ballroom*

This session will feature Subsurface, Inc. Joe Baratka will highlight the innovation on "no dig" culvert rehabilitation. Please join Joe in this modern and unique technology for trenchless solutions.

Joe Baratka, Subsurface, Inc.

### **12:00 – 1:30pm LUNCH AND VENDOR VISITS**

**Location:** *Conference Rooms A through I*

Visit with vendors after enjoying sauteed chicken breast, lightly dusted with Italian herbs and topped with Parmesan and marinara. Served over fettuccine.

### **1:30 – 2:15pm *OPTION A* LRIP AND TRANS 206 (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

LRIP has become one of the important town transportation funding sources, and the amount of funding available has substantially expanded in recent years. Maximizing your opportunity requires that towns take advantage of the right program for the right road application at the right time. This session will help you discern what is right and what is being done to improve the program given its significance to town transportation funding.

Mike Koles, Wisconsin Towns Association, Executive Director

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025 (continued)**

1:30 – 2:15pm **OPTION B CHIP SEAL SOLUTIONS ON TOWN ROADS (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Upper Grand Ballroom*

Should we crack fill? Should we single chip? Double chip? Let the road go to heck and start over in a few years? This session will consider several different maintenance techniques and if and when they should be used in order to create your town's best infrastructure system.

Chase Brockman, Scott Construction and Josh Lorenzen, Thunder Road

2:30 – 3:15pm **OPTION A UTILITY ACCOMODATION POLICY (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Most work in the right-of-way requires written permission from the town, which can take the form of a permit. Towns have the ability to enforce reasonable regulations in the use of the right-of-way and in order to obtain a permit. Come learn about utility accommodation policy and the recent sample policy tailored to towns that is available from the WTA.

Larry Konapacki, Stafford Rosenbaum Law Firm

2:30 – 3:15pm **OPTION B INVASIVE AND NOXIOUS WEEDS: WHY YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED AND WHAT YOU CAN DO (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Brush control costs a lot of time, energy, and money. Learn about effective methods for general brush control, including the most common and regulated invasive species in Wisconsin and what to use to control them.

Lee Shambeau, 4Control and Rick Schulte, Nutrien

3:30 – 5:00pm **TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDERS RECEPTION**

**Location:** *Conference Rooms A through I*

Welcome and introduction to local government transportation service providers complete with hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.

5:00 – 6:00pm **WTA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDERS AUCTION**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Have a ball and support the WTA Scholarship Fund through your engagement in this live auction. Participation can of course be through bidding, but we also encourage local governments to donate items for the auction.

Dave Bell Auctions, LLC, and Cedar Corporation

**ADJOURN - DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

6:00 – 10:00pm **NETWORKING ROUNDABOUT**

**Location:** *Follow Signs*

This is a can't miss evening of networking opportunities with fellow local officials, road workers, and private sector transportation service providers. Join us in one of four hospitality rooms sponsored by **Cedar, Sherwin Industries, Contech and Scott Construction** complete with free heavy hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



**6:30 – 7:45am BREAKFAST BUFFET**

**Location:** *Conference Rooms A through I*

Freshly cut fruit, muffins and breakfast breads, orange & apple juices, freshly brewed regular and decaffeinated coffee and hot teas. Eggs, smoked bacon, sausage patties and breakfast potatoes.

**7:45 – 8:30am *OPTION A* PASER & WHY YOU CAN'T IGNORE THIS (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Rating your roads accurately and in a timely manner has always been a requirement; however, with town official turnover there has been a decreasing emphasis on this. Unfortunately, that comes at a time when the data is increasingly being considered as part of transportation legislative advocacy, grant funding, and the development of capital improvement plans. Come learn how to effectively use PASER to advance your town's infrastructure and all town's funding chances.

Ben Jordan, P.E., WI LTAP, Staff Engineer

**7:45 – 8:30am *OPTION B* WORKER SAFETY: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PDH's 0.75)**

**Location:** *Upper Dells Ballroom*

The hidden real dangers surrounding our trucks, trailers, and equipment. The way we use, secure, and transport our cargo or materials.

Patrick Kelly, Firsthand Safety

**8:30 – 9:00am NETWORKING INTERSECTION**

**Location:** *Conference Rooms A through I*

Take a break and visit the Town Transportation Service Providers in the Vendor Exhibit Area.

**9:00 – 10:00am **6-20ft SMALL BRIDGE INVENTORY & INSPECTION PROGRAM UPDATE (PDH's 0.5)****

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

The inventory phase of the new small bridge program is complete and the inspection process has started. What has been found so far and what are the next steps? When the inspections are completed, what will this all mean for how we advocate, what we need to advocate for, and why?

Josh Dietsche and Dave Bohnsack, WisDOT & Debby Jackson, TDA Executive Director

**10:00 – 10:45am **GETTING YOUR GRANT REIMBURSEMENTS: TIPS, TRICKS, & TRAPS (PDH's 0.75)****

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

You have been awarded a TRI, TRID, TRIS, or ARIP. Learn what must be done to obtain your reimbursement. What is required, when is it required, how do you go about submitting the information? Also, hear about the "Lessons Learned" and the Mistakes made from last year or requests for reimbursement.

Mark Servi, Paladin Program Management Group LLC

**10:45 – 11:00am **BREAK** (Please remember to check out of your hotel room.)**

**11:00am – 1:00pm **WISDOT CERTIFIED FLAGGER TRAINING (PDH'S 2.0)****

**Location:** *Grand Ballroom*

Obtain your original flagger certification and your two-year required flagger refresher certification.

Gary Kennedy, DOT Certified Flagging Instructor & DJ Fedderly P.E.;P.L.S. Paladin Program Management Group LLC

# Wisconsin Towns Association Spring Road School 2025

Chula Vista Resort and Conference Center - Wisconsin Dells, WI  
Monday April 21 - Wednesday April 23, 2025

## Registration

**Register before April 1 - \$199.00 Town Official**  
**Register before April 1 - \$125.00 Spouse/Guest**

**OR**

**Register after April 1 - \$299.00 Town Official**  
**Register after April 1 - \$225 Spouse/Guest**

**Registration includes all meals, workshops and events.**  
**Please select which you will attend below.**

Name:	Office/Position:
Town:	County:
Spouse/Guest Name:	
Address:	
Email:	Phone:
Amount Enclosed: \$	

<i>*Must be completed to register.</i>	Yes	No
Tuesday Breakfast		
Tuesday Lunch		
Transportation Service Provider Reception		
Wednesday Breakfast		

**Mail completed form and payment to WTA, W7686 Co. Rd. MMM, Shawano, WI 54166**

**or**



**Register online at [www.wisctowns.com](http://www.wisctowns.com).**

*Cancellation Policy:*

*Cancellations received 10 days or more in advance of the start of the meeting will receive a full refund less a \$15.00 administrative fee. Cancellations received less than 10 days in advance of the start of the meeting will be charged a \$15.00 administrative fee plus the cost of food. Refund requests submitted 30 or more days after the event will not be processed.*

# LIVE AUCTION

## Tuesday, April 22

### 5:15pm



## Upper Grand Ballroom - Chula Vista Resort

*Join us for refreshments and a Live Auction to support the WTA Scholarship Program!*

*The Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) will be holding a fundraiser at their Spring Road School for their scholarship program. The WTA will be holding a live auction and would like to collect auction items from businesses across each section of the state.*

***100% of the money raised will go towards the scholarships.***

***We are asking Towns and businesses to donate an item of approximately \$50 value and we will recognize each business during the time their item is being auctioned. NOTE: Local items raise the most money! Try to think of personalized items from your region, if possible!***

### Sponsored By:



*Thanks again for your support!*  
*Any questions or concerns regarding the auction or our scholarship program, please contact me at the following information.*

Gary L. Kennedy, WTA Representative  
1355 N 16th Street  
Manitowoc, WI 54220  
920-323-6500 or [hwygaryk@gmail.com](mailto:hwygaryk@gmail.com)





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# LEGAL OPINIONS



By **Atty. Joe Ruth**  
**Government Affairs**  
**Director**

## Capitol Day 2025 Presented by the Town Advocacy Council

Every legislative session, in the spring of odd numbered years, WTA's Town Advocacy Council (TAC) hosts a Capitol Day in Madison. This year's event will be held on **Wednesday, April 30th, at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison** – across the street from the Wisconsin State Capitol building. Capitol Day is your opportunity to personally meet with legislators and their staff in Madison to help them understand the needs and challenges of town government. Your personal voice is **critical** for the success of WTA's legislative efforts. **Capitol Day is free to attend but space is limited!**

Capitol Day will begin with a briefing and prep session at 8:45 a.m. Attendees will discuss key issues with WTA's advocacy team to help plan for your meetings with legislators and their staff. We will then walk across the street to the Capitol and begin your small group legislative visits at 10:30 a.m. Each visit will last approximately 30 minutes followed by lunch, a debriefing, and legislative guest speakers back at the hotel. There is no cost for Capitol Day, which includes a free continental breakfast and lunch.

**8:00 a.m.** Registration & Breakfast  
**8:45 a.m.** Legislative Visit Preparation  
**10:15 a.m.** Leave for Legislative Visits  
**10:30 a.m.** Legislative Visits  
**12:00 p.m.** Lunch  
**1:00 p.m.** Debriefing & Legislative Guest Speakers  
**2:00 p.m.** Adjourn

Your attendance at Capitol Day is as important as ever. A partial veto to General Transportation Aids (GTA) two years ago shifted funding away from towns and villages to larger cities – leaving small communities without necessary resources to plow roads, salt icy highways, patch potholes, and generally provide transportation safety. **We need your voice to restore GTA funding and ensure that towns are not left behind.** Strong attendance at Capitol Day will extend the reach of our message far beyond what our advocacy team can accomplish on its own.

Parking is available at the hotel on a first come first served basis for \$2/hour. A free shuttle from the park and ride located at 5601 Eastpark Blvd, Madison, will also be provided for those looking to avoid Madison traffic (sponsored by Scott Construction). Please check the box on the registration form if you plan on riding the shuttle bus.

Don't miss your chance to communicate directly with your legislators and their staff at Capitol Day on April 30th! See the agenda and registration information on the following page. Space is limited. **Please Register by April 15, 2025, so our staff can set up appointments with your legislators.** Finally, please take a few minutes to pass along this message to your fellow town officials and help make Capitol Day 2025 the biggest one yet!



**Wisconsin Towns Association &  
Town Advocacy Council  
Capitol Day, Wednesday, April 30, 2025  
Madison Concourse Hotel  
1 W Dayton St, Madison, WI 53703**



8:00 a.m. Registration & Breakfast Sponsored by **Scott Construction**

8:45 a.m. Legislative Visit Preparation

10:15 a.m. Leave for Legislative Visits

10:30 a.m. Legislative Visits

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Debriefing of Legislative Visits  
Legislative Guest Speakers

2:00 p.m. Adjourn



Your engagement with legislators is **critical** to the success of WTA's legislative priorities. Thanks to the investment in TAC by nearly 60% of all towns, Capitol Day 2025 is **free to attend**, including breakfast and lunch for all participants. Parking is available at the hotel on a first come first served basis for \$2/hour. A free shuttle from the park and ride located at 5601 Eastpark Blvd, Madison, will also be provided for those looking to avoid Madison traffic (sponsored by Scott Construction). Please check the box below if you plan on riding the shuttle bus.

Send registration to Wisconsin Towns Association, W7686 County Road MMM, Shawano, WI 54166 or email to [sandy.wanta@wisctowns.com](mailto:sandy.wanta@wisctowns.com). **Please register by April 15, 2025, so our staff can set up appointments with legislators as soon as possible.**

**Registration Form for 2025 Capitol Day, Wednesday, April 30, 2025**

Town

County

Your Name

Office/Position

Phone

Email

Home Address (to set up legislator visits)

☐ Yes! I plan on riding the shuttle bus

Note: The shuttle bus will begin boarding at 7:30 a.m. The bus will depart the park and ride at 7:50 a.m.



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## Meeting Minutes FAQs

### **Q. Who is responsible for taking minutes at town board meetings, meetings of the town electors, and other meetings of governmental bodies?**

A. The town clerk is required to serve as clerk of the town board and keep a “full record of the town board’s proceedings.” Wis. Stat. § 60.33. The town clerk also serves as the clerk for town elector meetings and drafts minutes for those meetings. If the clerk is absent, the deputy clerk fills in to complete these tasks. If the clerk and deputy clerk are absent, the chair appoints someone to serve as the clerk for that meeting. For other governmental bodies, the clerk or secretary of the body is responsible for the minutes.

### **Q. What information must be included in meeting minutes?**

A. Minutes are an official record of the proceedings of the governmental body, so they must identify the *substance* of what occurred at a meeting, including who made and seconded each motion, the subject and exact wording of each motion, and the results of each vote. Wis. Stats. §§ 19.88(3) and 985.01(6). If a roll call vote was required or requested, the minutes must indicate how each individual board member voted. *Robert’s Rules of Order* further recommends that the minutes contain the following: 1) the kind of meeting held; 2) the name of the body; 3) the date, time, and location of the meeting; 4) the names of the presiding officer and the clerk/secretary; 5) the members present; 6) whether minutes were approved or corrected; 7) points of order and appeals; and 8) the time the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes should reflect an accurate account of what actions were taken and what topics were addressed by the governmental body at a meeting. Minutes are **not** meant to be a transcript of what each member of the body said about each topic on the agenda, and they should **not** include personal opinions or irrelevant commentary. The exact level of detail to include depends on the meeting agenda. If a governmental body is reviewing evidence or documentation in support of an application or petition, etc., the minutes should include significant details regarding the standards, law, and supporting facts and evidence the body relied on to reach its decision. If a board meeting agenda allows for public comment, listing the name and specific comments of every participant is typically unnecessary, but the general topics on which the public spoke should be summarized in the minutes. In contrast, if a speaker is specifically listed on the meeting agenda, the minutes should include their name and a synopsis of their report.

### **Q. Are minutes required to be taken in a closed session?**

A. Yes. If a governmental body votes to convene in a closed session, minutes must still be taken. If the clerk is present, the clerk should take the minutes; if not, another board member should take the minutes.



The minutes must reflect that the body properly voted to go into closed session under Wis. Stat. § 19.85, as well as the topic for discussion. The minutes should indicate when the closed session started and ended and who was present, as well as any motions made or votes taken. Although minutes must be recorded, it is often not necessary or advisable to record exact details of the discussions held in closed sessions, as the information in the minutes from the closed session may require confidentiality and the record custodian would need to justify non-disclosure of that information in response to a public record request for a copy of the minutes as long as the need for confidentiality remains. See Wis. Stat. § 19.35(1)(a).

**Q. Do minutes have to be drafted within a certain time after a meeting?**

A. Minutes of town *elector* meetings must be on file in the clerk's office within 5 days after the meeting. Wis. Stat. § 60.15. However, no statutes govern when the minutes of a governmental body should be drafted. Therefore, the board and clerk should work out a mutually agreed upon timeline for drafting minutes to ensure accuracy and give the body enough time to review the draft prior to the next meeting.

**Q. How are meeting minutes approved and amended?**

A. Meeting minutes are approved via a majority vote of the body at any subsequent meeting of the same body. Town board meeting minutes are typically approved at the next monthly board meeting, whereas town elector meeting minutes won't be approved until the next elector meeting. If a member of the body believes that a correction should be made to the minutes as drafted by the clerk, the member can make a motion to amend the minutes, which also must be approved via a majority vote of the board.

**Q. When are meeting minutes considered to be a public record, and how long must they be kept in the town's files?**

A. Minutes are considered a public record from the time the clerk circulates a proposed draft of the minutes to other members of the governing body. If a member of the public makes a request for draft minutes that have not yet been approved but have been circulated and made public, the best practice is to add a watermark/header indicating that the "minutes are in draft form subject to final approval of the board." **Meeting minutes must be kept permanently as public records.** If the clerk makes an audio/video recording of a meeting to help draft the minutes, that recording is also considered a public record that must be retained for at least 90 days after the minutes are approved. Wis. Stat. § 19.21(7).

**Q. What posting or publication requirements apply to meeting minutes?**

A. Minutes of town board meetings are not required to be published or posted. Village board meeting minutes must be published in a qualified newspaper as a Class 1 notice if the newspaper is published in the village. If a qualified newspaper is not published in the village, the village board may choose another newspaper medium that publishes in the village or may opt to post the minutes in several public places in the village. Wis. Stat. § 61.32. Actions taken at a town *elector* meeting are subject to Wis. Stat. § 60.80(1)(a), which requires that any resolution, motion, or action adopted by the town electors must be published or posted within 30 days after the meeting. If the resolution, motion, or action is not recorded in a separate document to satisfy this notice requirement, the town elector meeting minutes should be posted or published, pursuant to § 60.80, to make the electors' resolution, motion, or action effective.

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# 2024 Scholarship Winner

**Sponsored By:**



*"What strategies can be implemented by town officials in collaboration with citizens to maintain civility in local government?"*

**Written By: Kayla Kressin, Ellsworth High School**

The Wisconsin Towns Association, Rural Mutual Insurance Company, and Scott Construction, Inc. award \$7000 in scholarships to high school seniors graduating from either a public or private high school that enroll in a Wisconsin public or private college or university. The winners are determined by independent judging of an essay contest.

Civility, a cornerstone of a thriving community, hinges on the principles of respect, consideration, and courtesy. In the realm of local government, the responsibility to cultivate a civil and respectful environment lies jointly with town officials and citizens. Town officials can pave the way for civility by leading by example, ensuring effective communication with citizens, and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.

Starting with the imperativeness of leading by example, town officials wield considerable influence in shaping the community's tone. They must establish a standard of behavior that expresses civility and respect across all interactions. They must practice this behavior through words and actions not only in official meetings but also in day-to-day engagements with citizens. Presenting themselves in a dignified and approachable manner in public is paramount. An abrasive or unapproachable demeanor reflects poorly and risks alienating citizens from local governance. As representatives of the community, officials' conduct echoes, impacting the overall civility of the town.



Drawing from personal experiences I recall instances where the behavior of local officials directly influenced my perception of community engagement. Attending a government day event at the courthouse in sixth grade, I witnessed officials exhibit openness, friendliness, and a genuine interest in our ideas and questions leaving a lasting positive impression. Conversely, encounters with officials who appeared distant or dismissive left me feeling disconnected from the decision-making process. These experiences underscore the profound impact officials' behavior can have on citizens' perception of civic engagement.

Furthermore, town officials must actively engage citizens in decision-making processes to foster a sense of ownership and accountability. When citizens believe their voices matter, they are more inclined to participate in a

civil and respectful manner. Organizing town hall meetings, public forums, and focus groups provides platforms for citizens to express their concerns and suggestions. Feeling heard and valued nurtures a collaborative spirit among citizens, contributing to a more civil and cooperative community.

In my interactions with community officials, contributing ideas and opinions on local initiatives instilled a sense of pride and responsibility. Witnessing officials genuinely considering and incorporating citizen input showcased the potential for collaboration between authorities and the community. This firsthand experience emphasized the importance of citizen involvement in decision-making processes for fostering civility.

Establishing open communication channels stands as another crucial strategy for town officials. Regular communication with citizens through platforms like social media, newsletters, and community events not only keeps residents informed about the town's progress but also provides avenues for them to voice their opinions and concerns. Open and transparent communication is instrumental in averting misunderstandings and conflicts, contributing to a more harmonious community.

Reflecting on personal encounters with effective communication channels, such as our town's Facebook page, the local newspaper, and instances where local authorities proactively shared updates on projects or sought input through surveys strengthened my sense of connection to the community. These experiences underscored the role of transparent communication in building trust and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

In conclusion, the cultivation of civility in local government demands a collective effort from both town officials and citizens. Leading by example, involving citizens in decision-making, and establishing open communication channels form the pillars of a civil and respectful community. Through my own experiences, I have witnessed the transformative impact of these strategies, emphasizing the pivotal role they play in shaping a harmonious and engaged local community.

## **2025 WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION**

**Sunday, October 12 – Tuesday, October 14, 2025**

**Kalahari Resort & Convention Center**

**Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin**

**LODGING:** The Kalahari Resort and Convention Center will not start taking room reservations until noon on January 15, 2025. **You may not make more than 3 room reservations under your name.** Please **DO NOT** call our office concerning rooms.

**KALAHARI RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER, 1305 Kalahari Dr., WI Dells.**

**PHONE: 877-254-5466      BOOKING WEBSITE: <https://book.passkey.com/e/50924325>**

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**Room Rate Includes 1 Waterpark Pass per Registered Guest**





# 2025 SPRING NEW & CONTINUING OFFICIALS WORKSHOPS

Newly elected/appointed and continuing officials are invited to learn about the structure and responsibilities of local government, finance basics, road management, plan commissions, open meetings, public records, ethics, and more!

**Join us in person May 13 – 22 or via webinar June 2 – 5. See the following pages for a detailed schedule and program description.**

**Register on the WTA website, [www.wisctowns.com](http://www.wisctowns.com), or by mail.**



# 2025 Spring New & Continuing Officials Workshops

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

### **Powers and Duties of Town Officials**

#### ***Wisconsin Towns Association Staff***

Learn about the fundamentals of town government, town board structure, and the unique powers of town electors. We'll discuss the statutory responsibilities of the town board, chair, clerk, and treasurer, as well as discretionary duties that a board may exercise. This session is a must for those new to town government!

### **Public Records Law**

#### ***Local Government Education Staff***

This session reviews Wisconsin's public records law, including how to create a public records policy, when a record is considered public, how to comply with record requests, and how to manage public records in compliance with Wisconsin's municipal record retention requirements.

### **Local Government Finance Basics**

#### ***Local Government Education Staff***

Preparing the annual budget is one of local government officials' most important duties. This session teaches basic municipal budget adoption and administration requirements, including budget amendment procedures.

### **Fundamentals of Town Road Operations**

#### ***Wisconsin's Local Technical Assistance Program Staff***

This presentation will review town officials' road-related responsibilities, road standards and terminology, and fundamental infrastructure management and roadway safety considerations for town roads.

### **Open Meetings Law 101**

#### ***Wisconsin Towns Association Staff***

This session offers an overview of Wisconsin's open meetings law and outlines how the law affects the work of all local government officials. We will review definitions, quorums, notice requirements, and more.

### **Open Meetings Law 201**

#### ***Wisconsin Towns Association Staff***

This presentation will build on the basics from the 101 session and provide a deeper dive into the open meetings law, addressing closed session protocol, electronic meetings, meeting accessibility, and more.

### **Town Role in Planning and Zoning**

#### ***Becky Roberts, Center for Land Use Education***

In this session, we'll explore options for county and town zoning administration and the specific role of the plan commission, zoning board, and town board in making land use decisions. Feel free to bring advanced questions related to planning, zoning, subdivisions, or land use decision-making.

### **What's Your Sign?**

#### ***Wisconsin's Local Technical Assistance Program Staff***

This session presents standards for traffic signs and pavement markings and discusses sign management, work zone traffic control, and updates from the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

### **Ethics for Public Officials**

#### ***Local Government Education Staff***

This session provides an intro to Wisconsin's ethics and conflicts of interest laws for local government officials. Learn how to spot and avoid conflicts between personal interests and public responsibilities, make fair decisions, improve standards of public service, and strengthen the community's trust in public officials and employees.

### **Managing Board/Clerk Relationships**

#### ***Local Government Education Staff***

Get to know the responsibilities of the town or village clerk and navigate how boards and clerks can best support one another in their roles. Learn tips for managing conflict and building effective working relationships.

### **Solar Development Regulation**

#### ***Local Government Education Staff***

Large and small-scale solar energy arrays continue to be planned and constructed across Wisconsin and can generate local land use, health, and safety concerns. This presentation focuses on the current state of solar development regulation and features a model solar ordinance developed by UW-Madison Extension for potential use by towns and other local units of government.

## **IN-PERSON WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

<b>New Officials</b>		<b>Continuing Officials</b>	
8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration	8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Powers and Duties of Town Officials	8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Open Meetings Law 201
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Break	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Planning and Zoning
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Public Records Law	10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Break
11:30 - 12:15 p.m.	Local Government Finance Basics	10:45 - 12:00 p.m.	Road Management
12:15 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	12:00 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Fundamentals of Town Road Operations	12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Ethics for Public Officials
2:15 - 2:30 p.m.	Break	1:45 - 2:30 p.m.	Board/Clerk Relationships
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Open Meetings Law 101	2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Break
		2:45 - 3:30 p.m.	Solar Regulation

## **LIVE WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

<b>Monday, 6/2</b>	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Powers and Duties of Town Officials
	3:15 - 4:15 p.m.	Open Meetings Law 101
<b>Tuesday, 6/3</b>	8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Public Records Law
	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Town Role in Planning and Zoning
	10:45 - Noon	Fundamentals of Town Road Operations
<b>Wednesday, 6/4</b>	1:00 - 1:45 p.m.	Local Government Finance Basics
	2:00 - 2:45 p.m.	Board/Clerk Relationships
	3:00 - 4:15 p.m.	Road Management
<b>Thursday, 6/5</b>	8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Open Meetings Law 201
	9:45 - 10:45 a.m.	Ethics for Public Officials
	11:00 - 11:45 a.m.	Solar Development Regulation

## 2025 SPRING WORKSHOPS REGISTRATION FORM

All registrants (attending in-person or virtual only) will be invited to join the webinar presentations, and all registrants will receive on-demand access to recorded videos of each presentation. **Limited printed materials will be provided; copies of PPT slides will only be provided online.** Registered attendees will receive an email (at the email address you provide below) with information about how to join the webinars, as well as how to access the recordings and materials. **AN EMAIL IS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION.** If you plan to attend the virtual presentations via telephone, the phone number from which you will be calling is also required.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (**REQUIRED for teleconference access**) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email (**REQUIRED**) \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to attend the following workshop (please check one):

- ☐ Tuesday, May 13: Barneveld, WI – Deer Valley Lodge
- ☐ Wednesday, May 14: Fond du Lac, WI – Prairie Theater and Event Center
- ☐ Thursday, May 15: Green Bay, WI – Rock Garden
- ☐ Friday, May 16: Stevens Point, WI – Holiday Inn
- ☐ Tuesday, May 20: Minocqua, WI – Pointe Hotel
- ☐ Wednesday, May 21: Cable, WI – Lakewoods Resort
- ☐ Thursday, May 22: Eau Claire, WI – Florian Gardens
- ☐ Virtual Programming Only (Live Webinars June 2 - 5 + On-Demand Access to Recorded Presentations)

FEE: \$70 – Early registration (**payment must be received at least 10 days in advance of the workshop date**)  
\$85 – Late registrations and walk-in registrations

Cancellations received 10 days or more in advance of the workshop date will receive a full refund less a \$15.00 administrative fee. Cancellations received less than 10 days in advance will be charged a \$15.00 administrative fee plus the cost of the meal. Refund requests submitted 30 or more days after the event will not be processed.

If you are or have recently felt ill or have been in contact with someone that is ill, please stay home! Contact the WTA office to either cancel your registration as explained above or change your registration to “Virtual Programming Only.”

This form should be copied for multiple registrations. Make checks payable to the Wisconsin Towns Association and mail along with registration forms to:

Wisconsin Towns Association; W7686 County Road MMM; Shawano, WI 54166.

**IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING ONLY, please return registration forms and checks to the WTA office by Friday, May 23, 2025!** Registrations received after that date may not receive materials and connection information prior to the live webinar/teleconference sessions.

Registration and payment may also be submitted online on the WTA website, [www.wisctowns.com](http://www.wisctowns.com). Total charges will include a \$2.65 credit card processing convenience fee for payments made via credit card.

Questions? Please email [wtowns@wisctowns.com](mailto:wtowns@wisctowns.com) or call (715) 526-3157.



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## **American Rescue Plan Act Reporting FAQs**

**Q. After the election, we will have a new clerk who is going to be responsible for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) reporting. How can the new clerk gain access to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's (Treasury's) web portal?**

A. Each Treasury portal account has three roles that must be assigned. They include the account administrator, the point of contact for reporting, and the authorized representative for reporting. Please note that one town official can hold all three roles. The account administrator is responsible for making changes to those holding the “point of contact for reporting” and “authorized representative for reporting” roles. If a previous town clerk held all three roles, then the town would not have an “account administrator” to make those changes.

If your town does not have an active “account administrator”, your town must email [SLFRF@Treasury.gov](mailto:SLFRF@Treasury.gov). The email should include a request to be the town's account administrator. To speed up the process, the new clerk should register with Login.gov.

**Q. How do we access the Treasury's web portal?**

A. This will depend on how your town's reporting official set up their portal access. The official either used Login.gov or ID.me for gaining portal access. See the respective instruction guide below for more information:

- Login.gov
  - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Login.gov-User-Guide.pdf>
- ID.me
  - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/TreasuryPortalRegInstructions.pdf>

**Q. Our town spent all of its ARPA funds. We also previously reported that we have spent all of our funds. Do we still have to file Project and Expenditure Reports?**

A. Yes, even if the town has reported that it has spent all of its ARPA funds, the town must continue to complete Project and Expenditure reports. These reports must be filed in 2025, 2026, and 2027. The Treasury has also indicated that there will be an award closeout process, but they have not made that information available yet. Failure to file these reports may lead to a finding of noncompliance which could lead to the town having to repay its ARPA funds.

**Q. When will the 2025 Project and Expenditure Report become available? When is it due?**

A. The 2025 Project and Expenditure Report should be available April 1, 2025. It is due April 30, 2025.

**Q. Are there any webinars that we can watch on ARPA reporting?**

A. Yes, the Treasury keeps all of their past webinars on their YouTube account. Here are some useful recordings:

- SLFRF Explainer: Obligating and Expending All Funds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8BDHz0KCoU&t=52s>
- SLFRF Explainer: Obligating Revenue Replacement - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9AIPZBVP34&t=18s>
- SLFRF Explainer: Troubleshooting When Unable to Lock Projects - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Euu0NAjElwk>

**Q. Does the Treasury have a webpage with reporting information?**

A. Yes, it can be accessed here: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds/reporting-and-compliance>.

**Q. What do we need to include in the 2025 Project and Expenditure Report?**

A. The report will include all ARPA activity from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025. The Treasury will also require towns to report all funds that were obligated but unspent by December 31, 2024. Please note that the Treasury could ask for other information.

**Q. Our town is unsure whether it met the December 31, 2024 obligation deadline. How does a town obligate its ARPA funds?**

A. See question 17.1 of <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-FAQ.pdf>.

**Q. Our town had unobligated funds at the end of 2024. What do we do with them?**

A. The Treasury will provide “Financial Instructions to Return Unobligated Funds” to local governments that did not fully obligate their funds by December 31, 2024. These instructions will:

- Inform the recipient how much it owes. This will be based on the local government’s most recently submitted report.
- Provide a date by which the ARPA funds must be repaid.
- Require that the town use Pay.gov to process the repayments.

If the town does not repay the amount it owes by the due date, the Treasury will establish a debt and follow their standard debt collection policy and procedures in coordination with the Bureau of the Fiscal Service. There will be interest and penalties once the debt has been established.

**Q. Our town had obligated, unspent ARPA funds at the end of 2024. How long does the town have to spend its ARPA funds?**

A. ARPA projects must be completed by December 31, 2026. After this date, any unspent ARPA funds must be returned to the Treasury.

**Q. Our town is having issues submitting its 2025 Project and Expenditure Report. What should we do?**

A. The town should call the Treasury at (844) 529-9527. After navigating a phone tree, you should be able to speak to a live representative. They should be able to assist your town with resolving reporting issues. If your town has reporting issues, we would encourage you to document all correspondence with the Treasury.

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866-385-6316

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# Spotlight on

## Helping communities stay safe and informed in the face of PFAS

For the last four years, the Town of Campbell on French Island has been under an interim drinking water health advisory due to PFAS contamination. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, have been detected at elevated levels in municipal wells, private drinking water, and groundwater.

Contamination events like the one on French Island are confusing, scary, and even political. That's why targeted education, outreach, and communication are needed to ensure members of the public have the information they need, especially in times of uncertainty. And the Town of Campbell is not alone. Other areas, including Madison, Peshtigo, and Stella, have advisories related to PFAS concerns as well.

To help address these concerns, UW–Madison Division of Extension uses research findings to provide community support and information about emerging contaminants. Some of these efforts involve community workshops, language-accessible materials, online and paper fact sheets, and cutting-edge research.

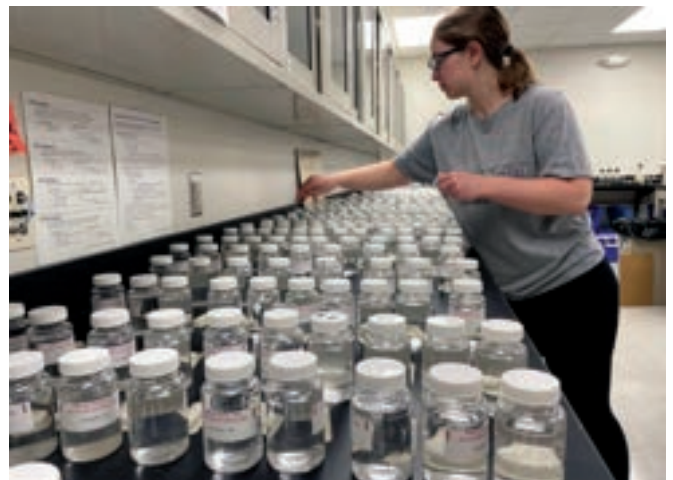
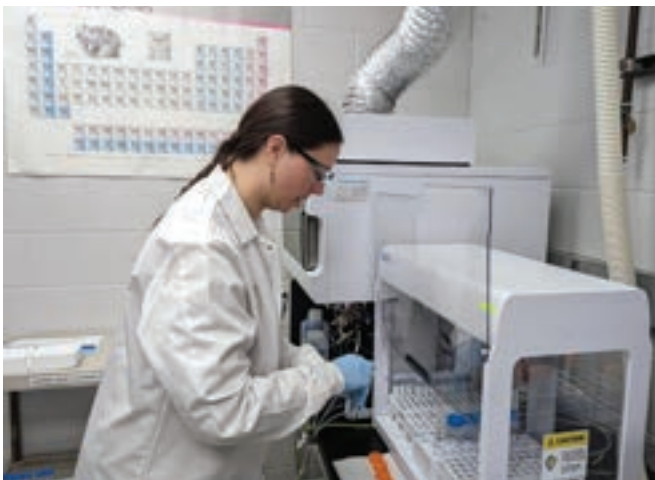
### Helping communities understand PFAS and other contaminants

In her role as the Extension Emerging Contaminants Outreach Specialist, Anya Jeninga works with partners to increase access to information. She helps communities stay informed on emerging contaminants and understand what can be done about them. She is an associate investigator on a project working to expand PFAS testing in Wisconsin and to build a toolkit for county health departments to use when they have elevated PFAS levels in their jurisdiction.

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*"When it comes to PFAS, a lot of folks are just learning about the chemicals, their sources, and their impacts," notes Jeninga. "And to make matters more confusing—most folks don't know if their water is a significant PFAS source," Jeninga said.*

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Water quality testing taking place at the Water & Environmental Analysis Laboratory based at the Center for Watershed Science and Education

Kevin Masarik is an Extension Groundwater Specialist and Director of the Center for Watershed Science and Education at UW-Stevens Point. The center houses the state-certified Water & Environmental Analysis Laboratory, which analyzes private well water samples sent in by Wisconsin residents. The center recruits staff to help members of the public interpret the results of their well water testing, information which contributes to the Wisconsin Well Water Viewer, a free, interactive map that depicts well water quality in all Wisconsin counties.

“Currently, we don’t offer PFAS testing, but we are hoping to integrate PFAS testing into our Extension programming efforts in the near future. In addition, we are investigating other potential screening tools and funding opportunities to allow us to offer PFAS testing at a more affordable price point than what is currently available,” notes Masarik. “Right now there are only a handful of labs that test for PFAS in the state and private well water quality testing for PFAS can cost between \$300 and \$400, making it cost prohibitive for many.”

## What are PFAS?

PFAS originate from many sources, including firefighting foams, consumer products, food wrappers, nonstick cookware, and water and greaseproof clothing. PFAS are also commonly used in different industrial processes, like chrome-plating metals.

PFAS can enter our drinking water, private wells, and groundwater aquifers through runoff from biosolids containing PFAS, leaching from landfills and septic systems, and from industrial waste discharge. Additionally, animals and plants exposed to high levels of PFAS may accumulate the chemicals and pass them when they are consumed. PFAS have also been shown to enter our air through industrial processes or the breakdown of some carpets.

While the health impacts of PFAS are not fully understood, research has shown that exposure to high levels of the chemicals can impact the thyroid, reproductive health, cholesterol, vaccine efficacy, and infant birth weights, and can increase the risks for some cancers.

## Local Government Education Webinar on PFAS

Wednesday, April 16th from 12-1pm CT

Tune into this informative webinar providing timely, expert guidance to help local government officials keep current on PFAS and ways to address these emerging contaminants.

» [go.wisc.edu/pfaswebinar](https://go.wisc.edu/pfaswebinar)

### This webinar will:

- review the sources and impacts of PFAS contamination
- review potential state funding available to help investigate and address PFAS-impacted groundwater
- look at a specific example where the Town of Campbell and La Crosse County partnered to mitigate the groundwater contamination in the Town while also preventing future contamination at the La Crosse County Solid Waste facility.



**Register  
for April 16  
Webinar**







**Karl Green presenting on Strategic Planning at a Wisconsin Towns Association Spring Workshop**

Complicating matters further is the fact that PFAS are difficult to monitor because testing requires professionals and expensive equipment. Many water sources across the state have not yet been tested for the chemicals, and when PFAS testing is available, interpreting the results can be complicated.

### **Making sense of PFAS data**

In her work, Jeninga has found a lot of confusion around PFAS and test results. To help address this confusion, Jeninga developed a fact sheet designed to help private well owners understand their test results.

This is something Karl Green, a geologist and Program Manager for Extension's Local Government Education Program, knows all too well. "Water testing can be confusing for landowners and municipalities alike. Common water tests, especially those done during transitions in home ownership, only sample for more common contaminants, usually nitrate, nitrite, and bacteria. However, these samples do not test for substances like PFAS or volatile organic compounds. Residents must understand which test they are using, and what it is designed to detect," notes Green.

Moreover, understanding the results of a water test is an entirely different problem. "It's all chemistry, and that stuff is not easy to interpret. Depending

on the lab and how they report, it can be very confusing," says Green.

Green is hosting a webinar on April 16 on PFAS sources, impacts, and potential funding opportunities for local government officials. Jeninga is one of the speakers, along with representatives from the Town of Campbell.

Even as scientists work to uncover the mysteries of PFAS and Extension expands its educational efforts, residents can use the wide array of Extension's water quality resources to stay safe and informed.

"I've seen a lot of responses to environmental contamination, and I've seen the confusion that happens whenever there's a new site, between the residents and state agencies and the local partners they work with to respond. I'm excited to help work on that, and help make that whole process smoother," says Jeninga.

Across Extension, our collaborators are enthusiastic to work together to create more public materials, including specific outreach on PFAS contaminants.

If you're curious about testing your water or learning more, visit the Center for Watershed Science and Education or a local health department near you.

# 2024 Scholarship Winner

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*"What strategies can be implemented by town officials in collaboration with citizens to maintain civility in local government?"*

**Written By: Ayla Schmidt, Saint Croix Falls High School**

The Wisconsin Towns Association, Rural Mutual Insurance Company, and Scott Construction, Inc. award \$7000 in scholarships to high school seniors graduating from either a public or private high school that enroll in a Wisconsin public or private college or university. The winners are determined by independent judging of an essay contest.

Maintaining civility in a local government can be a challenge. The presence of differing opinions and conflicting interests among citizens and officials can lead to heated debates and disagreements, making it harder to maintain a civil atmosphere. To prevent this, we can encourage open communication, promote transparency and accountability, and assist in education and awareness. Using these strategies would create an environment where respectful and constructive communication is upheld among town officials and citizens. Disagreement can be handled in a respectful manner, decisions can be made collectively, and the overall functioning of local government can be improved.

Open communication is vital for a local government. This can be done through town hall meetings, surveys, and public forums. It is important for officials to listen to citizens' concerns and ideas, and for citizens to engage respectfully in the decision-making process. According to diligent.com, "Building that trust will in turn help inspire citizens to become more engaged and more involved in their communities." Open communication creates a platform for sharing ideas, concerns, and perspectives. Sharing this



information allows for a better understanding of different viewpoints from the citizens and government. For example, I have observed school board meetings where community members can speak during open forums and communicate their opinions on proposed board actions. Instead of resorting to heated arguments, open communication allows for a civil discussion. Town officials can hold public meetings where citizens can express their concerns and ask questions. In return, the officials can take their thoughts into consideration when making a decision.

An essential aspect of civility in local government is to promote transparency and accountability. If a local government has transparency, it means that information and decision-making processes are open and accessible to citizens. This helps build trust and ensures that everyone is aware of how and why certain decisions were made. Citizens will understand that the local governments serve the community's best interest. In today's world, local governments place many of their documents online and that aids in

transparency. Transparency reduces misunderstandings and potential conflicts. Accountability goes hand in hand with transparency. Accountability means that officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions. When there is a system in place to hold officials accountable, it creates a sense of fairness and ensures that the best interests of the community are upheld.

Lastly, assisting education and awareness raises awareness and empowers individuals with knowledge and understanding. By providing resources and programs, local governments can educate citizens on topics such as civic participation, democratic processes, and respectful communication. This education helps citizens navigate the complexities of local government and encourages them to actively contribute to their community. Consequently, raising awareness about government initiatives, policies, and decision-making processes is crucial. When citizens are well-informed about ongoing projects and public meetings, it allows individuals to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas respectfully and constructively. Again, websites and online forums assist in communicating research and potential government action. A local community must determine the best avenue for communicating with its citizens. Overall, assisting education and awareness fosters a culture of civility. It equips citizens with the knowledge and understanding they need to participate, engage, and collaborate with their local government, leading to better decision-making, stronger community bonds, and a more civil society.

Together open communication, promoting transparency and accountability, and assisting education and awareness help create a local government that values civility, respects diverse perspectives, and works collaboratively with its citizens for the betterment of the community. When these pieces are in place, local government is more productive and successful, and serving the interests of the people is the purpose of government.



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# CLASSIFIEDS

## PROPOSALS FOR TOWN ASSESSOR

The Town of Necedah, Juneau County, requesting proposals for Town Assessor starting 2026 tax year. The Town's population for 2024 is 2,515, with total assessed amounts from 2024, Real Estate value including manufacturing \$310,078,100 for 3,293 parcels, (1,942 improvements). Proposals will include maintaining the assessment roll and individual property classifications within 10% of equalized value, Open Book and Board of Review. Last revalue in 2022, so a revaluation is needed in a 3-year proposal. The proposal will include data in electronic form, our data is Market Drive, if conversion needed it is not our cost. Please send your proposal marked **Assessor Proposal** to Town of Necedah, PO Box 349, Necedah, WI 54646, or email: [Necedah@mediacombb.net](mailto:Necedah@mediacombb.net), with State certification, proof insurance, references and resume, by **Friday May 9, 2025**. Town Board reserves right to reject any and all proposals.

## TOWN OF NORWAY CLERK

The Town of Norway, Racine County, Wisconsin (Pop. 7013) is seeking a highly motivated and experienced Clerk to fill the position of Town Clerk. The position is responsible for ensuring the efficient operation of the Town Clerk office. Duties include, but are not limited to elections, liquor licensing, records maintenance, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, payroll, bookkeeping, and website maintenance. Experience in local government, bachelor's degree desirable, experience may substitute education, certified municipal clerk or treasurer. Salary is dependent on qualifications. The salary range is \$75,000.00 to \$80,000.00. This is a full-time management position requiring some evening meetings. A full position description can be obtained at the Norway Town Hall or on the Norway Town Website [www.townofnorwaywi.gov](http://www.townofnorwaywi.gov). Submit a resume to Thomas Kramer Town Administrator, 6419 Heg Park Road, Wind Lake, WI 53185. Closing date open until filled.

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*-Kevin K, Chairperson, Town of Bradley*

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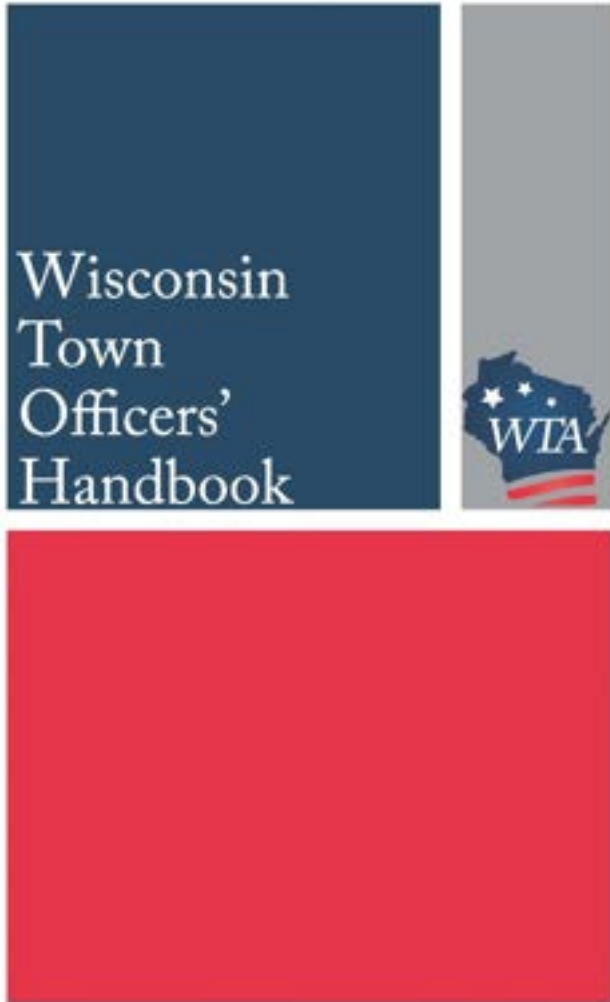
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Fourth Edition, 2023

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