

Based on CAFO

# Marietta Town Board hears four tax appeals

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

Six citizens attended the Board of Review meeting of the Marietta Town Board on Monday, Nov. 14, to appeal their tax assessments. The four citizens who requested 13-percent reductions in their assessments made the case that because the Livestock Facility Siting Permit for the planned Roth Feeder Pigs II hog CAFO has been approved by Crawford County, their property values have decreased.

Bob Madwig of Holloway Appraisal Service, joined supervisors Teddy Beinborn, Reggie Lomas and Sheila Zinkle, and town clerk Clifford Monroe at the meeting. The four citizens making appeals were Bill Holt, Jude Hartwick, Ken Cornish and Eric Pauer. Kathleen Tigerman and Carl Schlecht were also in attendance.

Holloway Appraisal Service provides assessor services for the towns of Eastman, Marietta, Seneca and Ferryville in Crawford County.

In all four cases brought before them, the assessor recommended no changes at this time, and the board voted unanimously against making changes in the citizen's assessments.

"The Town of Marietta is currently undergoing a re-valuation process based on the township being out of compliance according to the State Department of Revenue (DOR)," Madwig told the group. "The state has stepped in because it has been 12 years

since properties in the township were revalued (normal is every five-to-six years), and the increases of 35-40 percent are mandatory."

Madwig said that he understands the residents frustration about the Roth Feeder Pigs II hog CAFO that has been permitted but not yet built, and would be happy to work with the citizens after the CAFO is up and running.

"I can't act now because Roth hasn't even broken ground for the facility," Madwig said. "I'm not allowed to speculate in advance of the facility beginning operations - right now, property values have nothing to do with the CAFO."

Madwig said that he would be happy to work with the property owners after the CAFO goes in.

"Do we have to wait for our wells to be contaminated or for the noise from the operation to get too loud or for the smell to get too bad before we can appeal our property tax assessment?" Bill Holt asked.

"You will have to work with the DNR to establish any impacts on your property and its value from the CAFO operation once it is up and running," Madwig replied. "If the DNR agrees that there have been impacts, then I'll work with you - I've done the research in other areas, and I've seen the impacts valued at between a two and 80 percent reduction in property values."

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Lisa bags a fine buck

This year I got my own crossbow. It was also my first year hunting by myself. I'm not a fan of heights, so I hunted from ground blinds or elevated box blinds. I've had some great hours spent in the woods and had some exciting hunts. None better than today though! After lots of action this handsome fellow came walking in close enough for a shot! I'm thankful for an exciting and successful morning! Thanks to Jay for all the help, coaching, and encouragement. And for putting up with my obsession the last couple weeks!

At UW-Richland

# County seeks full-time staff for recruiting

By MATT JOHNSON

The education committee of the Richland County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution Monday asking to have the University of Wisconsin system return a full-time recruiter to the UW-Richland campus.

UW-Richland is an associate campus of UW-Platteville where recruiting efforts are located for the UW-Platteville, UW-Richland and UW-Baraboo campuses. UW-Richland, which up until about eight years ago ran a steady student population of 400 or above has dwindled to 65 students this year.

Richland County owns the land the UW-Richland campus is on and it maintains the buildings. Local officials are concerned although tuition is approximately \$2,000 per year lower at UW-Richland than other major system universities, without centrally located recruiting aid, UW-Richland is in dire straits.

"Having a full-time recruiter on the UW-Richland campus is a No. 1 priority for us," said county supervisor Shaun Murphy-Lopez, who introduced the resolution. "Campus is just dying."

The resolution will go before the full county board at its next meeting in December. The resolution passed with a 5-0 vote.

"There was widespread agreement for returning a re-

See RICHLAND Page 8 Col 4

# Crawford County Land Conservation Committee meets

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The Crawford County Land Conservation Committee met on Wednesday, Nov. 9 at the Crawford County Administration Building. New citizen representative Kate Krachey, Bridgeport, joined the meeting. Krachey replaces retiring committee member Kim Moret.

In the Land Use portion of the meeting, Gigi Collins reported on the effort to straighten out land records in parts of Clayton Township through development of an assessor's plat. This would be a process similar to the one in Seneca Township last year.

"We are still trying to identify the parcels in the township that would be involved," Collins reported. "There is still one delinquent tax property that I'm having some issues with."

Collins said that the steps in the process would be to get permission from the committee to proceed with development, then communication with the landowners involved, and finally a Crawford County Board resolution. She said that surveyor Richard Marks is working to contact the prior surveyor to obtain the prior survey.

Jon Mayer, Sanitation & Zoning Technician, reported that he is working to better understand how to enforce shoreline zoning in the county.

Crawford County Conservationist Dave Troester told the committee that the department will be sending letters to owners of property in the county in the floodplain to let them know what the restrictions of floodplain zoning are for them, and said they may do a mailing to owners of property in the shoreline zoning areas as well.

Mayer reported that he'd recently resolved a shoreline zoning issue, and that the process had brought to light the need for proactive communication with owners of properties affected by floodplain or shoreline zoning.

"The owner of the property affected by shoreline zoning had applied for a permit for

See LCC Page 8 Col 3

# Lower Wisconsin River

## Riverway Board hears about map and trail

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

About 20 citizens and DNR staff attended the meeting of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (LWSRB) at the Avoca Village Hall on Thursday, Nov. 10.

The meeting took place on what many jokingly referred to as "the last day of summer," with a morning high temperatures of 70 degrees, and the overnight low projected at 25 degrees. A cold front produced copious quantities of rainfall, which was heavy at times.

In his LWSRB Executive Director's Report, Mark Cupp told the board about a meeting he had recently held at the Riverway Board's office in Muscoda. At that meeting in late October, a large number of citizens had shown up to share information, ideas and feedback regarding a Cultural and Heritage Map of the Lower Wisconsin River. The map is the senior project of UW-Madison geography student Christina Dennis, and her advisor, Professor Bill Gartner.

"People came to the meeting, and brought ideas and items of local history," Cupp reported. "This stimulated many conversations about the Riverway's history and pre-history."

Cupp said the feedback will be incorporated before the final version of the map is released. He said Dr. Gartner also plans to meet with Bill Quackenbush of the Ho-Chunk Nation to review the map and obtain his input. The final version of the map will be available digitally through the LWSRB and Friends of the Lower Wisconsin River (FLOW) websites, and a limited print version will also be made available if funding can be secured for printing.

### Water trail project

Cupp also reported about a meeting he'd recently attended in Wausau. There, he met with a group of citizens that is working on a 'Great Pinery Heritage Trail' project for the

Upper Wisconsin River. The vision is for use of the riparian corridor in the upper reaches of the Wisconsin River for a canoe/kayak trail, with improved boat landings that are ADA compliant.

"This effort is being led by a passionate individual, inspired by his time spent hiking in Europe," Cupp said. "The idea has been well-received up there, and is a long-term project."

Cupp said he had encouraged the group to focus on the economic development aspect of the project in order to enlist the support and funding the group will need for the project. He said he'd suggested they reach out to FLOW about the river safety and education aspects of the project, and also to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Management Board, for their model of integrated management with the Ho-Chunk nation. He also encouraged them

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BOB MADWIG of Holloway Appraisal Service is the assessor for the Town of Marietta. Madwig was present Monday night at the Town Board of Review meeting, and heard petitions from four town residents requesting a 13-percent reduction in their property taxes due to county approval of a Livestock Facility Siting Permit for the Roth Feeder Pigs II hog CAFO in the township.

On November 28

# Author to share Food & Memories

Beloved Wisconsin author and historian Jerry Apps and his daughter, author and educator Susan Apps-Bodilly, will explore the ways food shapes families and carries on legacies in an all-new television special, Jerry Apps Food & Memories, premiering 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 28 on PBS Wisconsin. The program will also be available for on-demand streaming at pbswisconsin.org and in the free PBS Video App on all streaming platforms, digital devices and Smart TVs.

Born and raised on a dairy farm in Waushara County during the Great Depression, Apps has extensively written and spoken about his child-

hood and agricultural history. Both as a longtime professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in partnership with the Wisconsin Historical Society, his writing continues to document a unique era of local history.

In Jerry Apps Food & Memories, Apps and Apps-Bodilly share family stories through food his mother, Eleanor, painstakingly prepared for the family. A companion to the Apps' Wisconsin Historical Society Press book "Old Farm Country Cookbook: Recipes, Menus, and Memories," the television special lovingly depicts both the challenges and nostalgia of farm life during the 1930s and '40s, and how those traditions live on.

Apps says, "For me food will always be associated with times of good eating, storytelling, laughter and good-hearted fun." For decades, his mother

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Veterans honored in Soldiers Grove

American Legion Post #220 conducted a Veteran's Day Ceremony at the Soldiers Grove Veterans Memorial on Friday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. On-hand to fire the salute to area veterans were, from left, Ken McCormick, Jay Boesch, Orvis Severson, John Young and George Read. The ceremony was led by post commander Brian McCoy, with Frank McCoy as chaplain, and Stan Turben as bugler.



# Four Town of Marietta residents seek property tax relief based on CAFO

## TAXES from Page 1

Supervisor Reggie Lomas weighed in on the topic prior to the board's vote on Holt's appeal.

"We can't change your assessment before the CAFO happens," Lomas said.

Beinborn agreed with Lomas, and was quick to say, "I'm not trying to be mean to anyone."

Marietta Township resident Jude Hartwick, who owns property on Kickapoo Valley Road, just downhill from where the CAFO will be built, disagreed with the board's decision about the timing of consideration of a property tax reduction.

"I disagree with you about the timing, that you can't act prior to the CAFO beginning operations," Hartwick said. "Market value of property is a strange thing that fluctuates based on perception, whereas assessed values do not."

Hartwick said that when the county had permitted the CAFO, that had already made a difference in how the value of his property is perceived.

"Even though no construction has taken place, my valuation has already gone down," Hartwick contended. "What I have on paper is not what I'll be able to get if I try to sell my property."

Hartwick said that Madwig, as an assessment professional, is forced to wait for operations to commence at the CAFO, but he pointed out that the town board was not.

"Based on the Wisconsin State Journal (WSJ) article about the DOR's decision to reduce the property tax assessment of a property in close proximity to a dairy CAFO in Kewaunee County, I'm asking for a 13-percent reduction in my property taxes," Hartwick said.

Lomas countered Hartwick's contention that the board should act now and not wait for operations to commence at the CAFO.

"What if it doesn't get built — what happens then if we act now?" Lomas asked. "If we wait until we have concrete proof that your property value has been impacted, we'll have more ability to do something."

Clerk Clifford Monroe made the point that legally, the board is obligated to act on the advice of their assessor. He pointed out, however, that the board's decision can be appealed to the DOR.

"You can't just assess ahead on a permit approval," Madwig explained. "The way that people argue successfully for a reassessment is based on sale data for neighboring properties."

## Other comments

At the beginning of the process, Monroe explained to petitioners present that each case would be heard and decided individually. He made clear that no one person could speak on behalf of all petitioners present.

Bill Holt was the first citizen to have his hearing.

"I received my assessment from Holloway, and I'm surprised at how high it is," Holt said. "I think this assessment is very unfair because of the approval of the permit for the CAFO."

After discussion, the board voted unanimously to deny Holt's request for a reduction in his property tax assessment.

Ken Cornish was up next, and spoke to the same issues.

"From what I've heard with Bill's request, I don't know if it is even worth talking with the board," Cornish said. "Based on the article in WSJ about DOR's finding about the Kewaunee County property in close proximity to the CAFO, I believe my property taxes should be reduced 8-13 percent. As the wind blows, my property is about 1,200 feet from the CAFO site."

Supervisor Sheila Zinkle responded to Cornish.

"Believe me, I understand your concerns," Zinkle said. "On my property near Wauzeka, I'm already experiencing the impacts of Roth's CAFO down on Highway 60."

After discussion, the board voted unanimously to deny Cornish's request for a reduction in his property tax assessment.

Jude Hartwick's petition has been reported on above. After discussion, the board voted unanimously to deny Hartwick's request for a re-

duction in his property tax assessment.

Last to make a petition, Eric Pauer addressed the board.

"I'm hearing you say that to reduce our assessment now, before the CAFO is built and begins operations, would be speculative," Pauer said. "Can we get an adjustment once the CAFO begins operations?"

Madwig responded that the Town Board of Review meets annually, usually in late spring or early summer. He said that it had been delayed this year because it's a "reevaluation year."

"There is an opportunity for your property to be reassessed every year," Madwig said. "I can come and help you investigate, and work with DNR and DOR, but we have to wait until the CAFO is operational."

After discussion, the board voted unanimously to deny Pauer's request for a reduction in his property tax assessment.

Although they did not petition the board for a reassessment, Kat Tigerman and Carl Schlecht were there to listen, and spoke briefly to the board.

"This CAFO affects us — we have so much that we want to do to improve our home, but we're not sure if we should move forward because we may have to sell if things get too bad after the CAFO begins operations," Tigerman said. "I appreciate your sensitivity to our plight."

## Madwig speaks

Reached after the meeting, Bob Madwig of Holloway Appraisal Service had this to say:

"I have helped property owners in the past navigate the DOR when appeals to Board of Review cases happen," Madwig said. "The process can sometimes be confusing and time consuming, and in my opinion I'm not only contracted by the township, but also work directly for the residents. If I can make their lives easier trying to accomplish their goals, then I'm happy to do so."

He said that the Marietta Township situation is the first CAFO situation he's had to deal with, and he takes it very seriously.

"Mr. Hartwick sent me a study, and I reviewed other information pertaining to other CAFOs around the state," Madwig said. "From what I saw, rulings were made after the CAFOs were operational and the effects were easier to measure. I committed to the Marietta residents to work with them, along with the DOR and DNR on an annual basis, and make any adjustments that seem fair, appropriate and equitable."

Madwig said he works with the DOR often, and says they are a great resource for him when challenging situations arise.

"CAFOs seem to be increasing every year, and the effects on property are real," Madwig said. "The timing of the adjustments and the formula for which the adjustments are calculated will take some work, but we'll get there. I appreciate the manner in which the residents of Marietta brought this issue to my attention, and again I'm committed to working with them moving forward to see this situation resolved."

## DOR decision

In DOR '2017 Appeal #2017-81-01, Findings of Fact section D-6," Wisconsin Department of Revenue awarded a 13-percent property tax reduction to Scott and Deborah Kliment for their 14-acre property in rural Algoma, Wisconsin. Their property is located just across the road from the Ebert Enterprises dairy CAFO.

After investigation about the impacts of large dairy CAFOs on property values in Kewaunee County, DOR determined that impacts are not seen from operations smaller than 4,000 animal units. A full-grown dairy cow is considered to be 1.4 animal units.

When the Kliments purchased their property in 1995, the farm across the street was not yet a CAFO.

"It was beautiful," Deborah Kliment said. "It was all beautiful, single-family dwellings, all farmettes. We had an Amish family nearby. We should have taken the hint when the Amish moved out."

Deborah Kliment said that she was amazed at how quickly the negative impacts of the dairy's scaling up to a CAFO began to affect them. She cited the noise, traffic and smell. Mercifully, at the time of DOR's decision in 2017, the Kliments' well water was not impacted.

The Kliments first response was to try and sell their property. But after contacting two real estate agents, they found that the price they could expect from sale of their property was considerably lower than its appraised value. The agents told them to expect that it could take as much as two years to sell their property.

Their next tack was to ask the Pierce Town Board of Review for a reduction in their

tax assessment. The town's assessor declined to take the CAFO into account, and the town board decided against action based on their uncertainty about what authority they had to act in the situation.

On Sept. 7, 2017, the Kliments sat before a panel of two Department of Revenue staffers in Green Bay; they and the town assessor made their case. In November of 2017, the department issued its ruling in favor of the Kliments, who saw about a \$30,000 drop in their assessment from the ruling.

The department was not moved by complaints of smell and noise, nor by price-assessment comparisons of the neighboring six properties, the sales of which were

too old to be useful. They also were not impressed by the assessor's attempt to show a comparable sales grid, because the assessor used sales of properties that the department found were not reasonably comparable.

So the department did its own study of residential sales in the county in the prior three years. It excluded residences in the county's two cities and two villages, and it excluded waterfront properties.

It then graphed those properties by distance from a CAFO.

In the end, the department looked at 184 sales of properties measured against CAFOs of more than 4,000 animal units. This comparison showed a larger difference within one-third of a mile of

the large CAFO, a small but still significant difference just outside that third of a mile, and no significant difference a mile or more from the farm.

The department concluded that the value of property located more than a mile from a CAFO or within any distance from a CAFO smaller than 4,000 units is not impacted. The value of property located between a quarter mile and a mile of a large CAFO is reduced by eight percent. The value of a property within a quarter mile of a large CAFO is reduced by 13 percent.

The ruling does not provide an automatic tax reduction to anyone living within a mile of a large CAFO, the department was quick to point out.

"DOR considers this study to be appropriately extensive for application across Kewaunee County only," the department's facts sheet says. "While trends may be useful to consider in nearby, similar counties, it is not appropriate to apply beyond the immediate area. Kewaunee County is somewhat unique in that there are a significant number of (large CAFOs) from which to gather data."

Kewaunee County Board chairman Robert Weidner said the Kliments' 13 percent tax reduction won't have a big impact on the county budget, but that could change if other homeowners follow their lead.

"If this would carry over to other challenges to assessments, so that numerous residents are appealing their taxes and the valuation of their property, it could get to be substantial," Weidner said.

*Note: some of this text in this article regarding the DOR decision was adapted from an article by Paul Srubas, published by Wisconsin Farmer.*



MARIETTA TOWNSHIP residents, from left, Jude Hartwick, Ken Cornish and Eric Pauer attended the Marietta Township Board of Review meeting to appeal their property tax assessment. The three expressed that the Roth Feeder Pigs II hog CAFO need not be operational for their property values to be negatively affected.

# Septic non-compliance citations expected to go out soon

## LCC from Page 1

a cabin and septic, and on the first visit, everything looked good," Mayer explained. "On the second visit, I saw that the owner had clear cut an area and the required 35-foot vegetated buffer was gone, which could cause erosion issues."

Mayer said that the owner had been working with the department, and the issue was mainly a disconnect in their communication with WDNR.

"We got a blue grass and fescue planting going in the area," Mayer said. "In the spring, we'll get some saplings planted as well."

Mayer reported that inspections and installations of septic systems had experienced their typical seasonal slow down. He said he'd recently attended a conference where he had learned that certain revisions to the county's septic system ordinance are needed. Troester said that the committee should take up needed revisions in the cell tower ordinance as well.

## Septic late fees

Troester reported that letters notifying owners of septic systems that had not submitted proof of inspection were sent to 150 people on September 20. Of those, 84 had responded and there are 66 people remaining due to be issued a citation in the next week or two.

"To date, we have collected 12-15 late fees," Troester reported. "I am working with Mark Peterson and Jim Hackett from the Sheriff's Department on the process for issuing the citations."

## Soil and Water Concerns

In the Soil and Water Concerns portion of the committee meeting, Troester reported that the Clean Sweep event held in Seneca had once again been a great success.

"We filled two trailers, and the bill may be just a little higher than the preceding year," Troester said. "A couple of townships came the day before as requested with dump trucks, and one township came the day of the event."

Troester reported that DATCP had provided final approval for Farmland Preservation Zoning in Freeman Township. He said that his department had begun to receive calls and hoped to conduct a handful of inspections before the snow flies.

He said that WDNR's deer donation program had

been approved by the state. He said that the only locker accepting deer donations in the county will be Eastman Locker.

## Well water testing

Troester reported that citizen response to the November well water sampling in the county had been lower than in previous rounds. He speculated that this was because this time, the county had asked well owners to pay part of the cost, with the county paying \$35 and the well owner paying \$25.

"We have only distributed about 25 bottles, and still have bottles available," Troester said. "I'm a little disappointed in the response this time."

## Technician report

Conservation Specialist

Travis Bunting reported that he is waiting for the brush and leaves to die back before doing survey work. He said that he is still waiting on approval of the permit by NRCS for work on the Blackhawk-Kickapoo PL-566 flood control dam on Johnstown Road.

"Once we have the permit, then we will be able to let the bids," Bunting explained. "Hopefully, we'll get the permit before it snows and can get prospective contractors out there to look at it."

## Public input

Crawford Stewardship Project's new community engagement coordinator Joe Childs introduced himself to the committee. He pointed out that the DNR has called for public input into the pro-

cess of developing its master plan for the Western Coulee Region. He said there would be a public input meeting held on December 17, from 5-7:30 p.m., at the UW-Richland campus.

Gillian Pomplun reported to the committee that WDNR has re-started the process to develop groundwater standards for PFAS in the state. Pomplun asked if the department and public health had discussed the situation with the former Bell Center and Bridgeport landfills that received 3M industrial waste. Troester replied that he had talked with Crawford County Public Health Officer Sonya Lenzendorf about the situation, but that neither of them was aware of grants that could pay for the cost of testing of wells and fish tissue.

# Murphy-Lopez makes open records request

## RICHLAND from Page 1

cruiter to work directly out of the UW-Richland campus full-time." Murphy-Lopez said. "People want the state to be our partner in this... We're a working-family community and back in 1967 the citizens of Richland County built the campus to give their kids a better future. We've got to see we're getting something out of this investment."

Murphy-Lopez made an open records request of UW-Platteville this past summer to gather financial information. As enrollment has dropped, the UW-System's budget for UW-Richland has fallen from nearly \$3.5 million in 2015 to approximately \$500,000 in 2022, according to Murphy-Lopez.

The resolution says that if UW-Richland's budget had kept pace with inflation, its annual budget for 2022 would have been \$4 million.

Murphy-Lopez said recent comments from UW-Platteville interim chancellor Tammy Evetovich that appeared in the Richland Observer appeared non-committal to returning recruiting to UW-Richland as opposed to an office in Platteville.

"If anyone is going to save the campus it is going to be us," Murphy-Lopez said. "We've got to prioritize an on-campus recruiter. When you think about this we are looking at UW-Richland like a customer of the UW System and we're dealing with UW-Platteville and not getting the results we need. So, we're proverbially asking

for a manager — the Board of Regents and the office of the governor — to understand what we believe we need."

Murphy-Lopez said there were two UW-Platteville officials at the education committee meeting including Assistant Provost Michael Compton, but they did not comment on the resolution.

The resolution seeks circulation of the county's efforts to get a full-time recruiter among all state legislators in

the UW-Richland area, UW System President Jay Rothman, Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Counties Association — in addition to regents and UW-Platteville personnel.

The resolution will need to be passed by the county board to continue onto the parties listed therein.

*Matt Johnson can be reached online at johnsonmedialabs@gmail.com*

**No-till farming is a cornerstone soil health conservation practice, which also promotes water quality while saving farmers time and money. It is also a key climate smart practice, that helps store more carbon in the soil One of the first soil health principles is 'do not disturb'. No-Till November is a fun way to remind farmers about the important relationship between tillage and soil health. Improving soil health increases soil biological activity, which provides erosion control, nutrient benefits, and can simulate tillage.**

Source: USDA-NRCS

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