



The information below is from an article that appeared in The Rock River Times newspaper, February 2009----“A special thank-you to Mr. Frank Schier, Editor of The Rock River Times newspaper, for providing his thought provoking questions on what Winnebago County is doing to Go Green and for sharing the results listed below with the Community”..... Scott Christiansen, Chairman, Winnebago County Board---Please read on....

Winnebago County has established a “Green Team” Committee!
Here’s how Winnebago County is going “Greener” everyday!

Going Greener--in natural areas!

Winnebago County has several replanting programs that are currently in place:

- * Winnebago County Forest Preserve plants one tree for every tree they remove (2008-they planted approx. 1200 new trees, along with prairie plants & grasses)
- * In 2009, Winnebago County Forest Preserve will be reforesting Blackhawk Springs Forest Preserve.
- * Winnebago County Highway Department places trees in the right of ways and medians, i.e. Perryville Road, Route 173, Harlem Road. Yes, the county planted medians of trees, prairie grasses & flowers instead of cement.
- * Winnebago County promotes prairie plantings along county roads.
- * The county planted a prairie in the space between River Bluff and the County 9-1-1 Center.
- * Both Winnebago County Highway Department and Forest Preserve mulches the natural vegetation and reuses it in their projects.
- * Many of the Winnebago County buildings do have flower boxes around the buildings; in addition, we have contributed to the Rockford Park District Foundation’s roadside and bridge baskets.
- * Winnebago County has recently torn down the Juvenile Building at Elm & Church Streets. The result will be a small “pocket” garden in that space; and eventually, we would like to secure a weekly farmer’s market in the garden.
- * Winnebago County Forest Preserve shares and has adopted policy from the Four River Environmental Coalition.

Going Greener--in the County’s 2030 Land Use Management Plan!

- * Created a 60 member Community Focus Group, comprised of seven sub-committees, which did the research and compiling of all information pertinent to their sub-committee Plan topic—two and a half years of public open houses (7 total)—received input from the public including townships, villages, and cities. The Focus Group created the foundation of the plan including the goals and objectives. Information was then given to the 2030 Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee further compiled the information set forth and created and forwarded a Plan in which they think best represents the Public at Large to the County Board (Zoning Committee).
- * Waterway Buffer Zones currently on the Plan are delineated primarily in accordance with the NRI Map and the Boone/Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan which primarily lines up with the 100 year flood plain.

- * The future Zoning Ordinance will further address the buffer zones along the waterway corridors.
- * Once the plan has been approved, subscribers/public can go to the WinGIS system and the approved map will be one of many layers available in the WinGIS system in which the user can turn on and turn off certain layers of information.

Going Greener--in energy usage!

- * Winnebago County turns off lights in offices not in use; unplugs many of the electronics as well; and takes advantage of lower power settings on computers.
- * We will be encouraging our employees to be more energy conscientious and to think “green” through information in payroll stuffers; a special “green tips” button on the Winnebago County Website; and articles in the employee newsletter “The County Chatter”
- * For physical fitness and to save electricity, many employees already use the stairs instead of the elevators in our County facilities.
- * We support and have participated in the Winnebago County Green Business Awards.
- * A number of the county vehicles are capable, at this time, of using alternative fuel.
- * Diesel fuel used at Winnebago County Highway is 5% bio-diesel.
- * Winnebago County is currently looking at the placement of solar panels on county facilities; and we are using solar panels on warning signs on county highways.
- * Winnebago County has partnered with the local “No Idle Zone” Group promoting the lower fuel consumption program, and we are working on more ways to cut down on idling vehicles to save fuel.
- * On all new road projects, if warranted, bike paths are incorporated into the project. In addition, Winnebago County helped build Charles Street Bike Path, assisted with the Perryville Road Bike Path, and is involved in the planning of the Pecatonica Bike Path.
- * The National Association of Counties (NACo) features a themed “County Government Week” each year. This year’s event will take place May 3–9, 2009 and the Theme: “Greening Our Future.” Winnebago County will participate this year with a showcase of County services at CherryVale Mall with an emphasis on “Going green” in Winnebago County.

Going Greener-- in recycling, reuse and purchasing!

- * Look for the date to be announced for our Annual Tire Recycling Program
- * The county is a major sponsor/participant in the annual “Great American Clean-up” in Winnebago County.
- * Changed from using oil-based paint on roadways to using water-based paints.
- * The county recycles vehicle oil.
- * The county participates in the recycling of wood pallets, metals, and paper products.
- * Court & Case Management and purchase of laptops for the County Board members will facilitate the County towards going “paperless”

Going Greener--Ideas In process!

- * Creating bike lanes for County Roads.
- * Buying bike racks for county buildings.
- * Having a special section for organic food and a “Green Policies Showcase” at the yearly county fair.
- * Eventually, where possible, we will be looking at alternative energy options for our county fleet vehicles.
- * Signing the national “Cool Counties” Agreement.

Submit your ideas!

Please send all information on “Going Green” to Administrative Assistant, Alanna Conard, at aconard@wincoil.us ; information may be used on our Winnebago County Website; in payroll stuffers; and County employee newsletter “The County Chatter”