

We're Off the Transmission Line Hook for Now, But They're Still Fishing

by Michael McDermott

Seems No Transmission Line For Us Now, But Yet, Threatening Letters

Many landowners in the Town of Vermont received letters recently telling them that they are within the proposed routes for American Transmission Company's (ATC) Cardinal Hickory Creek transmission line. At about the same time ATC decided that the Town of Vermont is now the alternate route, and the preferred route is now to the south. The line now would go along Hwy 18/151 and traverse Dodgeville, Barneveld, Blue Mounds, and Mt. Horeb. Along that way the line and its 150-foot towers would cut through or be visible from towns, villages, state parks, cultural facilities, and designated natural areas. All the problems of the line remain. We will still pay the excessive cost, it is not needed, and there are better ways to make the generation and delivery of our electricity reliable and cleaner without damage to the Driftless Area.

Town property owners, who received letters, were frustrated because ATC did not inform them that they were on the



(Continued, page 2)

2018 Second Quarter Town of Vermont Broadband Update

by John Hallick

All timelines below are tentative and subject to change, except for the grant deadline for project completion by August 2019. At this time, according to TDS the project is on schedule.

Programming and testing for the Dynamic Spectrum Access (DSA), which is wireless technology enabling rural broadband Internet service providers to access lower-frequency RF spectrum, reducing the cost of network deployment and operation. The DSAs listed below are completed. The process of migrating customers off the old equipment and onto new equipment installed in the seven DSAs was scheduled to begin the week of March 12, 2018. This work is expected to be completed by the end of April 2018. Once complete, customers served by these DSAs should notice improvements. I have requested some specific location addresses and should be able to provide them to you after the migration work is completed. This will complete Phase 1 of the project for these DSAs.

- DSA 04 -- 9625 Union Valley Road
- DSA 05 -- 4423 CR JJ
- DSA 06 -- 4924 CR F
- DSA 07 -- 4201 CR F
- DSA 18 -- 4593 State Rt. 78
- DSA 21 -- 4603 CR F
- DSA 22 -- 4315 CR F

(Continued, page 2)

VERMONT'S VOICE

(Cardinal Hickory Creek, continued from front page)

alternate route. Some of our neighbors went ahead and scheduled meetings with developer of public relations representatives including Jon Callaway (jcallaway@atcllc.com) from ATC and Angela Jordan (ajordan@itctransco.com) from International Transmission Company (ITC). The meetings were exercises in frustration, anger, and refusals to supply requested information. Several of our citizens sent follow-up letters of their own to the developers demanding needed information.

On March 2, 2018 well over one hundred people from throughout southern Wisconsin attended a forum called Stop Cardinal Hickory Creek/Harnessing Our Energy Future in Dodgeville. Energy experts and folks, who opposed lines from our area and around the country, spoke about how similar lines have been defeated by aroused citizens and how there are better approaches to generation and transmission. The evening session was especially useful for hearing details of movements to stop such lines. Neighbors and Vermont residents attended and reported being energized and inspired. The event was sponsored by the Inter-Municipal Energy Planning Committee, of which the Town of Vermont board has representatives, and SOUL (Save Our Unique Landscape), as well as many other local organizations.

What next?

ATC has moved up their application to the Public Service Commission (PSC) to late March or April. They can still change the routes and there is no guarantee that we are safe from this development. The Vermont Citizens Powerline Action Committee will remain vigilant and actively oppose the line no matter where it ends up, and certainly oppose it for the Town of Vermont. We will further develop our own Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to protect the town. We will continue to oppose the line because it is a bad, expensive, and destructive approach to our electrical needs. We will soon call for a meeting of local residents to talk more about the meetings between property owners and the developers and how to keep up our opposition.

Stay tuned and see more here: <http://www.vermont-citizens-powerline-action-committee.org/>.

(Broadband update, continued from front page)

Work to build the remaining five DSAs listed below has not yet started. Work is expected to start to place these five new DSAs this spring following the winter thaw, when the construction season resumes. The new DSAs will be put in service later this year. Customer migration to the new equipment in these DSAs is currently expected to occur sometime in the fourth quarter of 2018 to complete Phase I of the project for these DSAs.

- DSA 19 -- Moyer Road
- DSA 13 -- Saint James
- DSA 16 -- Blue Mounds Trail
- DSA 21 -- Moe Road
- DSA 60 -- Forshaug Road



As previously reported, Phase 2 of the project must be completed before TDS can provide Alternative Connect America Cost Model (A-CAM) required speeds of either **25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload** or **10 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload**. Phase 2 of the project is not expected to be completed until 2019 for all DSAs.

VERMONT'S VOICE

What Federal Tax Reform Means For Your Property Taxes

by Jenna Schmidt, Town of Vermont Treasurer

As some of you know, this was my first year collecting property taxes. As part of this process, I was very fortunate to be able to meet so many Vermont residents. A subject that kept popping up in many of my conversations was the federal tax reform bill, officially named the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which was passed in December. So what does tax reform mean for you and your property taxes? Currently, if you itemize deductions on your tax return, you are generally able to deduct all the property taxes, as well as all of the state income or sales taxes, that you paid during the year. With tax reform, you will still be able to deduct state and local taxes. The annual deduction, however, is limited to \$10,000 for all state and local taxes, which include property taxes, sales taxes, and income taxes.



I'll give you the bad news first. For some taxpayers, this means that your itemized deduction amount for state and local taxes will be significantly less than previous years. Is there any good news? Maybe. There are other elements of the tax reform package that will hopefully offset this lost tax benefit. For example, the standard deduction amounts have increased meaning more people will choose not to itemize, because the standard deduction gives them more tax relief. It is important to remember the tax reform provisions will be effective for your 2018 tax return that is filed in early 2019. These changes do not impact the 2017 tax returns that you have already filed or, if you're like me, will file in early April! *Disclaimer: Thankfully I am not a tax professional. Please consult with one if you have questions.*

And there's more good news! The town board recognizes that this change could lead to frustrations with property taxes because you may not be receiving the same federal tax benefit that you have always enjoyed for paying property taxes. The majority of your property tax bill is determined by other entities, including the county, school districts, fire and EMS districts, and MATC. The Town of Vermont must levy the appropriate amount of taxes to meet the budgetary needs of these entities. There is also a portion of your tax bill that is for the town's expenses. We will be working diligently to find ways to reduce town expenses to hopefully relieve some of the (potential) tax burden and frustrations.

Every little bit helps!

VERMONT'S VOICE

Countywide Zoning Changes – What's the Impact?

by Karen Carlock

While on occasion, zoning rules may feel like a hassle, planning and zoning is so critical to maintaining the character of our rural community. As part of Dane County, the Town of Vermont uses the Dane County Zoning Ordinances, as well as town-specific zoning ordinances. Over the past couple of years, Dane County has been working with a team of folks from throughout Dane County (including Town of Vermont Plan Commission Vice-Chair and zoning maven, Jim Elleson) to revise that County Zoning Ordinance, which had not been fully revised for several decades.

The goal of the revision was to completely re-examine the zoning categories as well as the associated requirements, restrictions, and conditional uses. The revised ordinance is now fully drafted and review has begun with the municipalities in Dane County. As part of this process, the Town of Vermont Plan Commission also needs to verify that the new zoning category assigned to each parcel in the Town is correct.

The Town board has approximately one year before it needs to adopt the revised Dane County Zoning Ordinance, and we recognize that the year will fly by as we work to thoroughly review each of the parcels in our community. We will work with property owners to understand what, if any, impacts this change has on them.

Please join us at the Vermont Town Hall on April 17, 2018 from 6:30pm – 7:00pm for the opportunity to review the new zoning categories currently assigned to the parcels in the Town of Vermont. This precedes the Annual Town Meeting which will begin at 7:00pm, where a part of the agenda will be dedicated to beginning the discussion of the Dane County zoning ordinance revisions.

Clerk's Corner - Things That Make Local Government Go

by Chris Christian

It has been a busy start to 2018 in the Town of Vermont. February 20th was the first election of the year. If you haven't already, mark your calendars for the Spring Election on April 3rd, the Partisan Primary on August 14th, and the Fall General Election on November 6th. If you need to register to vote in the Town of Vermont, you can go to myvote.wi.gov or contact Chris Christian, Town Clerk, at 608-767-2457.

The Town of Vermont is looking for residents, who are interested in participating on the Plan Commission. This commission reports to the Town Board, and plays a valuable role in our local government with development of land use planning recommendations and review of land use petitions. If you would like to get involved in local government, this is a great way to start. There is no required skill set – just a willingness to dig in.

If you are a Vermont resident living in the Mt. Horeb Fire District, we would love to hear from you, if have an interest in serving the residents in your district as our representative to the Mt. Horeb Fire/EMS Board. Public safety is a critically important service, and the costs of public safety make up a substantial portion of the Town of Vermont yearly budget. With the current Mount Horeb Fire District building project underway, resident involvement is incredibly valuable. Both the Plan Commission and the Fire/EMS board positions receive a modest per diem and are eligible for mileage compensation.

And mark your calendars! The Vermont Annual Town Meeting will be April 17th beginning at 7:00 p.m. There will be light refreshments, and we would love to see you there. It is such a great time to come together as a community and make sure that we are all in communication regarding concerns, questions, town planning and budgeting.

VERMONT'S VOICE

Appointed Clerk and Treasurer: Question on the Ballot at the November General Election

by Karen Carlock

Like many Towns, Villages, and Cities, the Town of Vermont is considering a move from having an elected clerk and treasurer to having the two separate positions become positions that are appointed by the Town Board.

Wisconsin Towns Association reports that many towns are considering this change for three primary reasons:

1. The responsibilities of the positions are becoming more complicated and require personnel who have the unique skill set to complete the tasks.
2. The Town is unable to find electors who are interested in running and serving in the positions.
3. The town board prefers to set the job description, the qualifications, the term, the compensation, and have these positions become more accountable to them.

The Town of Vermont is considering this change for reasons 1 and 2 above. Recent years have shown it is difficult to find individuals to run for the positions, and the duties of the positions have grown increasingly complicated. The Town of Vermont board is not proposing that the positions be combined – we see significant value in continuing to have two separate positions, that of clerk and that of treasurer.

The Town Board would like to discuss this topic at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting on April 17th beginning at 7:00 p.m. If there is support for a potential change, the question of whether the Town of Vermont residents would like the positions to become appointed ones would be decided via a referendum vote at the November 6, 2018 general election. There are several key considerations that should be noted (adapted from Attorney Jann Charette's "Changing from an Elected Official to an Appointed One" *Wisconsin Towns Association*, Feb 2018, pp. 15-16).

1. An appointed clerk or treasurer does not need to be an elector or resident of the Town of Vermont. An elected clerk or treasurer does have to be an elector of the town.
2. When the positions are appointed, the Town Board may meet in closed session to interview, discuss employment, promotion, compensation, or performance. When the positions are elected, the Town Board may not discuss the above in closed session.
3. Compensation is established by the electors when the positions are elected and the job description is limited to only that which is specified in state statute; whereas the Town Board determines the compensation and the job description for the appointed positions.
4. When they are appointed positions, the board may appoint a person for a term of up to three years, and may choose to appoint the person as part-time or full-time. Elected officials hold two-year terms that start in April of odd-numbered years.

We wish to involve residents in discussion of this topic before the question would be brought to a vote at the general election. Please feel free to provide your feedback on whether or not you would support this change.

VERMONT'S VOICE

How to reach us:

Publisher: Lisa Orman, 608-767-4930, home; lisa@kidstuffpr.com
Managing Editor: Dean Bossenbroek 608-669-1728,
dean.bossenbroek@gmail.com



Lisa and Dean

Mission Statement: It is the mission of Vermont's Voice to provide information about our town and articles of interest to the residents of our town in order to promote a sense of community, encourage participation in and understanding of town government, and improve communication among residents. Vermont's

Voice is a volunteer, citizen-run publication that encourages and depends on citizen participation in providing information, articles, or suggestions for articles, photos, criticism, and help with mailings. The cost of printing and postage is included in the town budget. Vermont's Voice is not the official voice or viewpoint of the town government.

Keep up to date on town ordinances, meetings and other business at <http://www.townofvermont.com>.

Town Officials

Chair, Karen Carlock, 773-682-8599

Supervisor #1 Scott Moe 608-767-4738

Supervisor #2 John Hallick

Supervisor #3 Todd Culliton
608-767-4145

Supervisor #4 Doug Meier 608-767-8860

Town Clerk Chris Christian 608-767-2457

Or email:
clerk@townofvermont.com

Town Treasurer Jenna Schmidt

Town Patrolman Jack Schulenberg
608-437-5490

Building Inspector Johnson
Inspections 608-444-0372

Plan Commission Members

Chair Doug Meier 608-767-8860

Vice Chair Jim Elleson 608-767-3553

Secretary Diane Anderson

Scott Moe 608-767-4738

Dean Bossenbroek 608-669-1728

Todd Culliton 608-767-4145

Alex McKenzie 608-217-8611

Open Seat

Designed and edited by

KidStuff
PUBLIC RELATIONS