

WisLine Programs for January through March, 2006: WisLine links speakers and participants across Wisconsin. WisLine allows the program and listeners' questions to be heard simultaneously at all locations. Topics and registration brochures/ information for all of the Local Government Center's WisLine series are available at your local County Extension Office or questions may be addressed to lqc@uwex.edu, or call (608) 262-9960.

December 1 to 5 p.m. on 1st Tuesday in January: Period of filing nomination papers for Spring Election candidates.

January 31st
The last day for holding town and village caucuses.

February 21:
Spring Primary Elections

April 4:
Spring Elections

January 12, 2006 (Thursday), 1:00-2:50 p.m.: DRIVING THE ROAD PERMITTING PROCESS -- A variety of permits are often required for local road projects. This session will review which permits are typically needed for a local road project and discuss how to go about getting them. *Steve Pudloski, Transportation Information Center. Roger Laning, Highway Commissioner, Sheboygan County*

January 19, 2006 (Thursday), 10:30 – 11:50 a.m. – MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS/CLERK'S DUTIES (#1735-5) – A review of duties such as issuing absentee ballots, absentee voting in nursing homes, handling write-in candidates, election results, municipal boards of canvassers and issuing certificates of election.

February 1, 2006 -- Principle of Parliamentary Authority. The relationships among statutes, court decisions, organizational rules, and Robert's Rules of Order

February 8, 2006 -- Principle of a Meeting. Issues about notice, quorum and attendance

February 9, 2006 (Thursday), 10:30 – 11:50 a.m. – TRAINING FOR ELECTION DAY OFFICIALS/WRAPPING UP AN ELECTION (#1735-6) – It's 8:00 p.m. and the polls are closed. Now what? Instructions on counting, tallying, recording write-ins, securing ballots, completing forms, routing election day materials and local canvass boards.

February 14, 2006 (Tuesday), 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. – THE GREAT GASB 34: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS (#1736-4) – The Governmental Accounting Standards Board recommendation #34 advises local governments, among other recommendations, to incorporate management notes into their financial reports and to develop a depreciation schedule for their infrastructure. Most local governments that issue bonds or receive federal grants have begun meeting GASB 34 standards. Learn about the challenges and possible solutions in implementing these standards, especially in developing a depreciation schedule for infrastructure. *Staff Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP.*

March 7, 2006 (Tuesday), 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. – RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (#1736-5) – Find out about the industries and economies of rural areas that include agriculture, forestry, and tourism and recreation. Learn the basics of economic development and of new tools available to rural areas to support their economy. *Staff from the Center for Community Economic Development and staff from the Governor's Working Lands Task Force.*

March 9, 2006 (Thursday), 10:30 – 11:50 a.m. – RECOUNT HOW-TO'S (#1735-7) – Learn what to do for a recount. Get pointers to make your job easier, gathered from those who have actually lived through one. For those who anticipate a close race for an office up for election, or for those who just wish to be prepared.

March 21, 2006 (Tuesday) 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. – HOW TO RUN THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING (#1736-6) – Learn about the statutory requirements and parliamentary procedures required to run a successful annual town meeting. *Rick Stadelman, WTA*

**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
PERMIT #49
ELLSWORTH WI 54011-0069**

- **How to Run for Local Elected Office in Wisconsin**
- **Merger of City-Village Service-Best Practices**
- **Pierce County Scene**
- **The Two-Year Levy Limit- Explained in Detail**



January-March 2006 Pierce County, WI

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN RUNNING FOR OFFICE-

Elected officials in Wisconsin cite a number of reasons for running for local office. Many run inspired by the general desire to contribute to their communities, while others are motivated by dissatisfaction with the incumbent and the belief that they could do a better job. Some are recruited by friends and neighbors. Still others are driven to seek office by a single burning issue. No matter what the reason for running for political office, potential candidates must carefully appraise both themselves and the political climate they would enter. Following is a list of areas for assessment and research:

Personal strengths and weaknesses.

Why run for this particular office? What is the attitude of your family toward your candidacy? Are you strong enough to take public and/or personal criticism? Are you prepared to work on a variety of topics?

Political strengths and weaknesses. What is your relationship to your community – length of residence, association with community leaders, friends from a cross section of the community? With what issues or problems are you identified? Can you speak audibly, concisely, and authoritatively? Can you attract an appropriate number of workers and contributors? Are you able to deal with today's

opponents in a way that will allow them to be allies tomorrow? What is your political experience?

The electorate. What voting patterns emerge from past elections? What is the majority party? What percentage of voters turns out to vote? What percentages of citizens are registered to vote? What is the demographic composition of the district?

The opposition. How many opponents are there likely to be? Is the incumbent an opponent? What are the personal and political strengths and weaknesses of each potential opponent? What are their campaign tactics?

Legal requirements. What are the applicable election laws, including filing and qualifying requirements, finance laws, legal deadlines, and dates?

Political tradition. What campaign activities are expected by the electorate? What amount of money has been spent by both winning and losing candidates for this office in previous elections?

Opinion influences. What local issues have provoked local debate or citizen reaction lately? What issues surround this particular office? What other races or issues will be on the ballot? Who really makes decisions in the community? What are the influential organizations? What are the prevailing community media outlets?

The office. Is this the correct office for the candidate? What intrinsic rewards does the office offer? Does this office hold the potential to influence the kinds of changes that the candidate wants to see? What kind of time commitment will be necessary if the candidate is elected?

Time. How many days are there until election day? How much time will the candidate have for the campaign? How much time can core supporters give?

Money. What is the fund raising tradition in the community? How much “early money” can be raised? How much money can the candidates, their families, their closest friends, and their key supporters contribute to the campaign? What organizations make political contributions and which are likely to contribute to this candidate?

Ethics. Ethics laws in Wisconsin place limitations on elected officials’ ability to sell goods and services to the municipality for which they hold office. Does the candidate have a financial conflict of interest? Is the candidate willing to give up revenue that a family-owned business might otherwise earn from selling to the municipality? If this appraisal period leads to the decision to run for office, the information gathered will provide the basis for a campaign plan.
Excerpts from the Campaign Handbook, published by the National Women’s Education Fund, Washington, DC 20035.

Campaigning for Local Office-Mapping the Campaign

1. Invite potential committee members to discuss priority issues and campaign organization during the months before circulating nomination papers. Include a variety of factions who would support you.
2. Get a copy of the election statutes from your clerk or download

3. Get a candidate packet from the State Elections Board by calling 608-266-8005 or on the internet at <http://elections.state.wi.us/>
4. If necessary, circulate nomination papers. Get as many people involved in circulating papers as possible. Save copies of those filed with the clerk’s office in order to be able to contact those who have indicated support. File more than the minimum number of names in case questions arise about the qualification of signers. Nomination papers can get people talking about your candidacy. There is, however, a limit to the number of signatures that can be submitted. This limitation is designed to prevent one candidate from “cornering the market.”
5. If necessary, attend the appropriate caucus with your supporters and get nominated.
6. Learn the “culture of campaigning” in your area. Do local candidates actively campaign in traditional ways such as door to door, yard signs, attend local events, etc.? Or is campaigning “shunned”? You may choose to run a “quiet” campaign through paid newspaper ads, coffee/socials by invitation in private homes.
7. Issue an announcement of your candidacy to the papers, preferably with a picture. A 5x7 glossy and a short resume about you will be effective.
8. Develop consistent visuals such as a logo, slogan, colors, that residents can associate with you quickly and repeatedly. Create tasteful and original campaign literature. All political advertising used in campaigns must carry clearly visible information identifying its source. The phrase “authorized and paid for by” should be followed by the candidate’s name and address or the campaign committee and the treasurer’s name. Keep in mind that

Chapters 5-12 of the Wisconsin State Statutes on the Web at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/statutes.html>

- it is illegal to place any campaign materials on windshields.
9. Divide campaign jobs into a variety of projects. Have on hand assignments of varying degrees of difficulty and time requirements for volunteers to choose from (e.g. neighborhood canvassing, writing campaign literature, circulating nomination papers, giving coffees, thanking contributors, checking on people who might need babysitting or rides to polls, checking on registration). Any work done for a candidate is a commitment to that candidate.
 10. Arrange for coffees and public appearances (don’t forget the local radio talk show) – as many as possible.
 11. Knock on doors. Door-to-door campaigning is the only way you will meet some of the voters. So, plan on as much of this as you can handle. Prior to going door-to-door, obtain from the county clerk’s office a list of voters in your jurisdiction who voted in the most recent election like the one you are participating in (e.g. spring election; fall of a presidential election year; fall of an off-year election). Give priority to speaking with people most likely to vote.
 12. Keep your workers’ morale from sagging. Accentuate the positive and express your gratitude.
 13. Attention campaign workers! Keep your candidate’s morale at a high level.
 14. Raise some money. Fund raising is essential. Whether you merely pass the hat or throw an elaborate function, infuse that budget early and solicit funds.
 15. Make the campaign your own and maintain your ground. Say what you think. Be yourself. Be willing to say you are not informed, if you are not, and say you will become informed. Watch out for declaring a final opinion on everything.
 16. Check your speaking habits. Find whatever way works best for you to relax. Focus on the interviewer and the questions, if there is one, but

- don’t avoid eye contact with an audience. The audience will remember your general outlook and poise perhaps more than specific statements you make in your responses.
17. Be creative in the way you thank your workers, contributors and campaign managers. At a minimum send thank you notes. Remember, there is always a next time, win or lose.
 18. Expect the unexpected.
- Source: League of Women Voters of Wisconsin and the State Election Board*

Merging Municipal Services-

By-Dan Elsass, City of Chippewa Falls Administrator, UWEX Local Government Center and League of Wisconsin Municipalities

The Local Government Center (LGC) of UW-Extension has developed a set of case studies chronicling the successes and challenges of cities and villages that voluntarily have combined one or more major municipal services with one or more neighboring units of local government. These studies include agreements covering a wide range of basic municipal services, from wastewater treatment to municipal libraries and from fire protection to parks and recreation facilities. In reviewing the merger stories, the LGC found a number of common elements or themes running through them that may assist other municipalities in following successful paths towards consolidation. In fact, none of the mergers were influenced by discussions regarding either state aids reductions or the Consolidation Incentive Payments. In fact, they were designed by community leaders primarily interested in other factors such as cost efficiency, higher quality of service to the citizens, or the need for more rapid response to the community, rather than by additional state aid monies. Also, strong local leadership was vital to win public acceptance in the majority of

the mergers. Often the main elected officer of one or more of the communities (e.g. the village president or mayor of the city) had to expend considerable political capital to convince local citizens or a neighboring community that the merger would result in long-term benefits. In several cases, chief appointed officials (city or village administrators, fire chiefs, etc.) were main catalysts behind the consolidation efforts. If you are interested in learning more about the lessons learned and best practices regarding the merger of municipal services, please contact a UW- County Extension Office or visit: www.uwex.edu/lgc/intergov/pdf/bestpractices.pdf

Local Government Levy Limit-

*By Kate Lawton
Local Government Specialist
UWEX Local Government Center*

Counties, cities, villages, and towns are all subject to a two year levy limit for their 2005 and 2006 levies. The levy limit allows a percentage increase in the property tax levy equal to the percentage change in a county or municipality’s equalized value due to net new construction or 2%, whichever is greater. In addition, the following conditions apply:

- (1) The levy limit excludes tax increments from TIF districts, school levy for first class cities, county levy for children with disabilities boards and general obligation debt. Debt that was part of the property tax levy in 2004 is considered part of the base that is used to calculate the allowable percentage increase. Also, an upward adjustment to the limit is provided for any increase in total debt service related to debt approved prior to July 1, 2005. Debt approved after July 1, 2005 is not considered part of the base for the levy limit calculation and does not require a referendum.
- (2) The limit would be adjusted for transfers of service and annexations. Note that other county special tax levies are not excluded from the 2% levy limit

and are considered part of the base (e.g., for libraries, public health, sanitation, bridge projects). The levy limit can be changed by general referendum in either the spring or fall elections preceding the 2006 levy, and municipalities and counties may call for a special referendum preceding the 2005 levy. The referendum can specify increases beyond the levy limit for more than one year. In addition, if the referendum approves, say a 10% increase for one year, the amount “above” what would have been allowed had the levy limit been in place is excluded from the base in calculating the allowable percentage increase for the following year. Towns fewer than 2,000 in population may approve a resolution at the annual town meeting to exceed the allowable levy increase rather than go through the referendum process, provided the question is on the agenda for the town meeting. Penalties for exceeding the levy rate limit are a comparable reduction in State Shared Revenues. The Department of Revenue is the state agency responsible for monitoring compliance with the levy limits. For counties, both the levy rate limit law and the new levy limit law apply. What a mouthful! You may wonder how these two laws apply to counties in different situations. It is simple - the more restrictive condition rules. For example, if a county is at its levy rate limit with no increase in equalized value, it cannot increase the county levy by the 2% under the new levy limit law. If a county is not at its levy rate limit and has 5% growth in equalized value due to net new construction, the county could increase its levy by 5%, provided it does not exceed the levy rate limit.

*The **Local Elected Officials Newsletter** is a quarterly educational publication produced by UWEX Western District CNRED program. We welcome any suggestions/input that you may have.*

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