

2013 – Year in Review

Town of Ridgeway officials formally celebrated the Town's bicentennial on Saturday, June 29th. Town Supervisor Brian Napoli hosted the gala event which was attended by seventy people. Legislator David Callard introduced U.S. Rep. Chris Collins, and State Senator George Maziarz. They presented proclamations and citations acknowledging the Town's rich history. State Assemblyman Steve Hawley sent congratulations and official commendation. Lynne Johnson, Legislator for the Towns of Ridgeway, Yates, and a district in Shelby presented a chronicle of Ridgeway's two hundred year history which she then presented to Supervisor Napoli. She referenced many notable events, including the 2012 election of the first female Board member. The Bicentennial event was held in conjunction with an Open House to showcase the newly renovated Town of Ridgeway building. The work was completed by Horizon Builders, Ridgeway contractors.

Weatherwise, there were no memorably dramatic events to report. January was seasonably cold though Jan. 30 boasted a record high of 66 degrees, quickly followed by a precipitous drop of 40 degrees as arctic winds blew in a lake-effect storm. Another storm on February 8 yielded a foot of snow. Winter did not loose its icy grip until April. Twenty three of the thirty days of March were at or below normal temperatures for the month. However, farmers welcomed the long chill. They were rewarded by a glorious warm spell in early May when all of the blossoms flourished, presaging a bountiful fruit crop. The balmy weather did not last: we were treated to hail on Mother's Day, followed by a frost! June was the 6th wettest in meteorological history, but Summer and Fall were pleasant, October in particular. Winter set in early, we had a "white" Thanksgiving and for the traditionalists, a "white" Christmas.

The Ridgeway tax levy remained unchanged, town officials reported that they maintained spending at the \$2.3 million budget level. The Town of Ridgeway started working to establish Water District 13 following a public hearing in October. The proposed district would add a stretch of Bates Road running from Oak Orchard Creek to the north and Portage Road to the south and East Scott Road from Bates Road to Culvert Rd. into the town's water network. Thirty one residential properties would be included; the project could begin in 2014 if funding was approved.

A persistent flooding problem in Knowlesville was solved, much to the relief of affected residents.

Officials from the Town of Ridgeway met regularly with representatives from the Village of Medina and the Town of Shelby to discuss sharing services. In August, the Village Dissolution Plan Committee announced that a referendum to dissolve the Village of Medina would be postponed. In December, the Town of Ridgeway and Town of Shelby Supervisors presented a statement outlining the many issues and complexities involved with regard the proposed Village dissolution with particular regard to the various departments - Police and Fire Departments, Ambulance Service, Water/Sewer service, etc.

Voters went to the polls in November and re-elected the following unopposed candidates: David Stalker and Jeffrey Toussaint for the Town of Ridgeway Board, Barbara Klatt as Town Clerk, and Lawrence Sanderson as Town Justice. David Stalker was elected to fill the seat vacated by Paul Canham, who retired. Mr. Canham had dedicated his time and energy to the Town, especially to the development of new water districts.

The Highway Superintendent race was more dramatic: incumbent Mark Goheen faced a challenge from Raymond Wendling. Goheen secured the support of the Republican Party over Wendling in the Primary. Wendling challenged Goheen in November as a candidate for the Conservative Party and the independent Ridgeway Peoples Party. The results of the election were nail-bitingly close: Wendling (570), Goheen (562) But when 40 absentees were tabulated later in the month, Goheen ended up the victor, 591-581. He received 29 of the absentees to 11 for Wendling.

Karen Knowlton, who worked as a clerk for the water billing department and code enforcer retired from her position in December and moved to Arizona.

Some businesses expanded, some moved, some renovated.

In March Hartway Motors demolished a building on North Main, formerly Loblaw's store, to increase inventory space, part of the renovations planned to bring the dealership in line with Chevrolet's national image. The historic showroom building will maintain the same footprint but a new front entrance sign and portico will be added.

Also in March, CRFS moved from Albion to newly renovated office space at the Olde Pickle Factory with the promise of 200 new jobs. But in October, the company which handles foreclosure loss mitigation for banks and mortgage services, announced a plan to return to Albion, moving 250 jobs to the former JP Morgan space, which had been purchased by Talis Equity, a Medina based investment company, owned by Roger Hungerford.

In June, Worthington Industries caused dismay when it announced that the company would consolidate its Bernz-O-Matic manufacturing operations in 2014, a move that would eliminate 174 jobs at its Medina facility. The Columbus, Ohio-based steel processor and pressurized cylinder company intends to move manufacturing from Orleans County into an existing Chilton, Wis., facility within the year. Worthington reported that some of the Medina employees would have the opportunity to transfer to the Wisconsin facility.

TreeHouse Foods, a Chicago based food manufacturer, announced in August that they had paid \$180 million to add Associated Brands production facilities in Orleans County,

Ontario and British Columbia. The Medina facility which is located at Park Ave. employs 300; it will be TreeHouse's lone operation in New York.

In September, Howard and Clara Lake opened another business at their Salt Works Road location, creating two new jobs. Lake's Wines and Spirits sell a variety of spirits and features local wines. This venture joins C&HPC, their computer repair store, and the Park Grill, a seasonal concession stand.

In September, Baxter International laid off more than 90 employees, a temporary measure that will be reversed when the company receives FDA regulatory approval for the Sigma Spectrum, a medical infusion pump. Baxter employs 370 at the Park Ave. facility.

The United Methodist Church held its last service at the historic brick building at 222 West Center St. on October 27. The congregation opted to leave the 1876 church, citing masonry and structural problems as well as utility costs. Following the last service, members walked a mile west to their new location, the former Apple Grove Inn, which they have repurposed at an estimated cost of \$875,000.

Meanwhile, The Orleans Renaissance Group, owners of the former Bent's Opera House, continued their creative and energetic efforts to raise funds to restore the building. In October they received \$100,000 emergency loan from the Preservation League of New York State to be used immediately to address the main structural support timber on the building's southeast corner.

Town Clerk Barbara Klatt reported 40 marriages, 12 deaths and 4 births. Assessor Tricia Laszewski reported that the highest selling property for the year sold at \$205,000.

Sadly, the Journal-Register, announced a cutback in its publication schedule to three days a week. A new, free, online, county-wide news source, The Hub, operated by the Lake Country Pennysaver was launched in May and proved to be very successful. As the wise man sagely noted "Change is the only constant".

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cooper