

Update: The Old Junior High

Turning Our Largest Blighted Property Into a Productive Asset

We'd like to provide the latest update regarding the Old Junior High Project.

A thorough assessment of the structure has been completed. This assessment helped us identify any contaminated materials and a plan has been created to determine how to safely remove them.

The Village is currently in the process of accepting bids for the demolition of the building, marking the next big step of this exciting new chapter. Demolition is set to kick off in November and will continue through the winter months.

Any contractor bidding on the project is required to provide information about environmental protection, dust control, and noise control. We're committed to keeping our community clean, safe, and peaceful throughout the process.

Once the demolition is complete, we'll start developing a Request for Proposals to revitalize the site. The Community Development Authority has its sights set on creating multifamily housing in this space, providing much-needed housing to the area and adding to the vibrancy of our community.



FAQs

Here's What You've Been Asking



What is the latest on the biogas digester project?

The Village held two separate Public Hearings regarding this project. One with the Plan Commission on July 20 and one with the Board on August 14.

The Village Board is still in negotiations with Bigadan regarding the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Once the negotiations are complete the Village Board will schedule a Special Board Meeting to discuss the project and potentially vote to approve or deny the Special Use Permit. We have also asked the DNR to be present for this meeting to answer any Board questions.

It's worth noting that approval of a Special Use Permit will not automatically greenlight the project. This is just one step in a lengthy process of studies, plans, and other approvals.

Please watch our website and Facebook page for any upcoming meetings.

COMMUNITY CHAMPION

This quarter, we're excited to shine the light on Sharon Schulze! Individuals like Sharon exemplify the true essence of community service and volunteerism. Let's take a closer look at her impactful contributions.

As the board chair of Assistance & Resource Center, Inc. (ARC), Sharon has been a pivotal force in this volunteer-driven nonprofit since 2013. ARC's mission is clear: to provide short-term financial assistance to residents facing basic living expenses. In 2022, they distributed an impressive \$188,000 to households in need, alleviating financial burdens and bringing hope to many.

Sharon also serves as a board member for the Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the library financially and through volunteer work. Her dedication was instrumental in a highly successful community letter-writing campaign which raised over \$49,000 for the library's renovation.

Further demonstrating her commitment to our community, Sharon is a member of the Ellsworth Public Library Building Committee. Together with Roxy Birkel, she secured a substantial \$288,000 in grant funding to initiate the library building fund. Now, their focus is on enhancing the library's exterior in 2024.

Beyond her involvement in these organizations, Sharon and her husband, Joel, have been active members of the English Lutheran Church since their arrival in Ellsworth in 1979, actively participating in the church's ministry.

Sharon's dedication to these causes is a testament to the power of individuals to make a positive impact within our community. She serves as an inspiration for all of us, reminding us of the importance of selflessness, compassion, and community engagement.

Thank you, Sharon!



VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH

Newsletter

FALL 2023

HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

CONTACT INFO

130 N Chestnut Street

Village Hall
(715) 273-4742

Police Department
(715) 273-3275

Ellsworth Public Library
(715) 273-3209

DROP BOX

A 24-hour drop box is available on the front of the Village Hall.

PAYMENTS

The Village accepts cash, check, and/or online payments. Paperless billing and auto-payments now available!

We're the Greener Grass

Message from Becky Beissel, President, Village of Ellsworth

I spent the day volunteering for Habitat for Humanity's Rock the Block: Elevate Ellsworth on Saturday. The first half of my day was spent with a smaller group consisting mostly of seasoned Habitat volunteers from outside the community. As we broke for lunch, we had an opportunity to get to know each other better.



Robert shared how, when he and his family relocated to the area from Ohio, after spending a fair amount of time exploring the more rural "suburbs" they decided they wanted to live in Ellsworth. They loved how it was situated close to the Twin Cities but was still a quaint, small, rural community (however, due to his company's commuting distance policy they ended up in Roberts).

Pierre, from Lake Elmo, who moved here from Malta last year, shared how much he loves the area. They hope to move to somewhere "like Ellsworth" in the coming years.

Kent, from Hudson, shared how Ellsworth is usually the first choice when setting out for a drive.

They love the small-town energy/vibe here.

Ellsworth was also a host site for a regional roundtable discussion for the WEDC's Wisconsin Main Street last week. In attendance were two community leaders from Hammond. At one point in the meeting they shared how they wish they "had it

going on" like we did here in Ellsworth; the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, cheese curds, a growing downtown district, etc.

It's easy to think that the proverbial grass is always greener in other communities. I know I fall into this from time to time; if we only had this, that, or another thing, then we would appreciate our community more. So let this be a reminder to love our community the way it is now (there are a lot of people out there who already do!). And because we love it, let's take good care of it; make improvements, be kind to one another, volunteer, patronize local businesses, and show appreciation to those who are doing their part to make this a better community.

Now Video Streaming our Village Meetings

Attend our meetings from the comfort of your own home



We are thrilled to announce a significant leap forward in transparency and accessibility for our village governance. You can now watch Village Board and Committee meetings via live video streaming from the comfort of your own home!

This new initiative opens up opportunities for you to stay informed about the decisions, discussions, and developments that impact our community directly. You can now witness the decision-making process in real time and gain a deeper understanding of how our village operates.

To access these live streams, simply visit our Village of Ellsworth website

(www.villageofellsworth.org) and navigate to the 'Events' section near the bottom of the homepage, click on the meeting you are interested in, and then click on the Zoom link near the top of the posted agenda.

We believe that informed and engaged citizens are the backbone of a thriving community, and this step is a testament to our dedication to your involvement.

Rock the Block: Elevate Ellsworth

Bridging Gaps and Building a Stronger Community

The Ellsworth Community came together to tackle its first-ever Rock the Block: Elevate Ellsworth this last weekend, September 30-October 1.

Rock the Block is a community-driven initiative that involves collaboration between Habitat for Humanity, local volunteers, residents, and community organizations. It aims to bring neighbors together to improve the quality of life in their community.

The program focuses on making critical repairs and improvements to homes in a target neighborhood or community. These repairs may include fixing structural issues, addressing safety concerns, installing energy-efficient upgrades, and enhancing curb appeal.

The ultimate goal of the program is to create lasting improvements in a community's quality of life. By addressing both the physical and social aspects of a neighborhood, Rock the Block aims to strengthen communities and build a sense of pride among residents.

St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity,

the Ellsworth Community School District, the Village of Ellsworth, and the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce joined forces to bring the first annual Rock the Block to Ellsworth.

After an application process, eight homes were selected in Ellsworth to tackle items such as siding repair, power washing, weeding, house painting,



landscaping, door replacement, window repair, and more.

This program relies heavily on volunteer engagement. Over the three days, there were over 80 volunteers who pitched in. We were very fortunate to have several of Habitat for Humanity's "regular volunteers" from Andersen Win-

dows, Krauss Anderson, and 3M show up to help!

The weekend started off on a damp note with the unexpected rain on Friday morning. The volunteers did what they could and leftover projects were finished up on Saturday. Anything that was not finished after the weekend will be tackled in the coming weeks by Habitat for Humanity volunteers.

The hope is to turn this into an annual event. But in the meantime, watch for volunteer opportunities on the Habitat for Humanity homes going in near the Ellsworth Middle School, on Panther Drive. They plan to break ground on the first home next month.

Thank you to these generous organizations for sponsoring and/or partnering in this event: Andersen Windows & Doors, Kraus Anderson, CCF Bank, WESTconsin Credit Union, Ellsworth Co-operative Creamery, Nilssen's Foods, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, St. Croix Valley Magazine, and St. Croix Valley Food Bank.

Grant, Piety, Strickland, and Woodworth

Street Project 2024 Utility and Road Reconstruction Project

We're happy to announce a major utility and road reconstruction project coming in 2024!

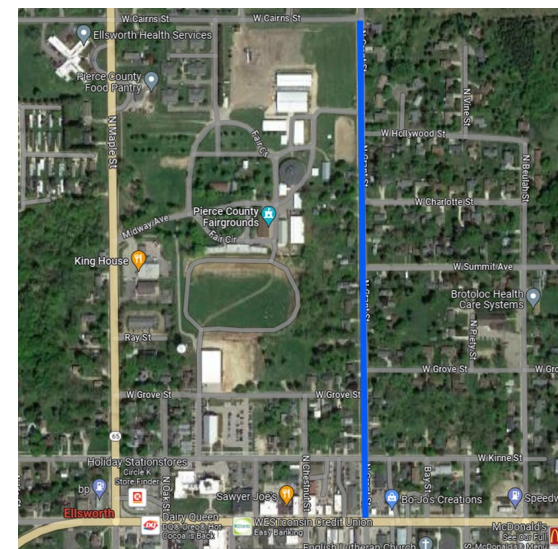
The scope of work includes improvements for Grant Street, Piety Street, Woodworth Street, and Strickland Avenue. The utilities in these areas have outlived their useful life and several deficiencies have been found. The oldest water main in this project dates back to 1915 (with other sections dating to the 1930s) and all are undersized. Additionally, the streets and storm sewers in the project area are deteriorating. Some of the sewer lines are clay pipes with numerous cracks and sags. The much-needed upgrades will improve the delivery of utility services to the properties in the area and also strengthen and improve the utility systems for the whole community. The full scope of the project also includes street replacement, service replacement, site restoration, storm sewer replacement, and other items necessary to complete the project.

The Street and Sidewalk Committee has had multiple meetings to discuss the street layout, sidewalks/multi-use trails, parking, and trees. They have authorized much of the general design, but additional details and final approval are still upcoming.

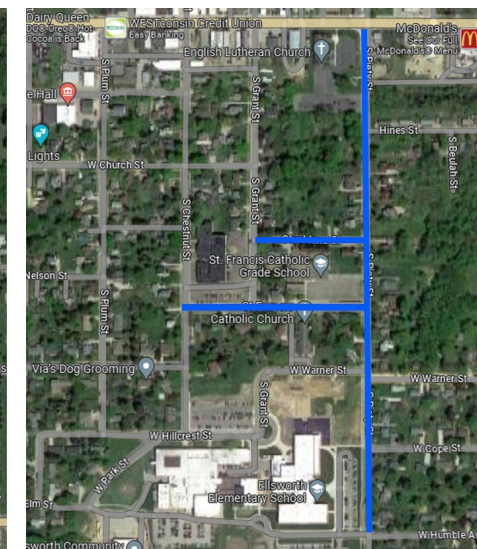
The entire project will be funded with a 20-year water bond and a 20-year sewer bond, through the DNR, which will impact rates. The DNR Clean Water Fund Program and Safe Drinking Water Loan Program provide subsidized loans for municipalities and potential principal loan forgiveness. The recently approved federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has provided additional funding for these state programs. With the considerable need for utility and street upgrades and the additional funds available, the Village believes it is the right time to take on this project. The applications for the loans and loan forgiveness have been submitted and the Village is hopeful that loan forgiveness will be awarded.

We're excited for this project to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of utility services and to aesthetically improve community connectivity with upgraded streets, sidewalks, and trails.

As this project moves forward, we will keep you in the loop about construction details and timelines. We're committed to minimizing disruptions for our residents and everyone traveling on these streets.



Project area north of Main Street—Grant Street from Main Street to Cairns Street.



Project area south of Main Street—Piety St. to Humble Ave., Strickland and Woodworth St.

Welcome, Cyndi Kern!

There is a new staff member at Village Hall! Cyndi Kern started with the Village in May as our Deputy Treasurer. This position was recently created as part of a reorganization of staff and duties within Village Hall. Her position has a broad range of duties including accounting, payroll, processing payments, invoicing, reconciliations, and other tasks.

Cyndi previously worked as the Pierce County Deputy Clerk where her work included elections, applications and licensing, and records.

Her personality and experience are a great addition to Village Hall and the community. She has been working hard to get acclimated to the position and is excited to be in a new role where she will have more public involvement.

Reminder: Water Survey

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a survey was launched in late September to identify water service lines containing lead.

The aim is to work hand-in-hand with local, state, and federal partners to eliminate 100% of lead service lines, with a primary focus on communities that have been significantly affected by lead contamination.

By completing the survey sent to your homes and businesses, you'll be contributing to the crucial Lead and Copper Service Line Material Inventory project.

Or complete the survey online:

www.villageofellsworth.org/news/water-survey

