

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

From
**BRIAN
BENFORD**



DISTRICT 12 ALDERPERSON

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Okay folks, this is my last column. When you read this, I will no longer be an alderperson. As always, I want to thank the Northside Planning Council for this opportunity. I also want to thank Debbie Fields, who works in the Common Council office, for her tremendous talents and support in editing and submitting all of my wacky, socialist-leaning, pinko rants.

While we are on the subject of thanks, I want to thank all of you who believed in me over the last five years. Many of you will recall my early struggles in office. The first year of my service, I cared for my dying mother, hoping to ease her passing. I had to learn to balance family, work, and my service to the community. The second year offered profound political lessons as this community debated raising the minimum wage, the smoking ban and the creation of the Department of Civil Rights. Just as I was getting settled,

there was this strange phenomenon called an election. I was extremely honored to be re-elected.

If you have ever read my column, you would know that I have always been exceedingly candid about my limitations. I will be the first to admit that I was not the perfect alder - far from it. What I can say in complete honesty is that I did my best. I always understood my primary role was to make government accessible to all, especially those who were under-represented. I ran for office to provide the perspective or voice of a low-income father and community activist. Our Common Council has never reflected the community when it comes to women or people of color. I am deeply humbled to be one of a few alders of color to have served this city. For this, I thank you.

Ald. Benford can be reached at 332-3098 or district12@cityofmadison.com

See pages 5 & 33 for election results and to learn about your new District 12 Alderperson.

From
**DAVE
CIESLEWICZ**



MAYOR OF MADISON

More Madisonians getting online for better service

City of Madison online services for residents and businesses continued to grow in popularity in 2006, according to the latest statistics. The City processed over 86,000 transactions totaling \$14.3 million during 2006 for everything from property taxes to bicycle licenses to Olbrich Gardens memberships.

Meanwhile, the popular "Report-a-Problem" website, launched in 2005, received over 4,900 contacts in 2006 for issues ranging from dead animal collection to pothole repair to brush collection.

Online services are an important way that city government can be more responsive and more accessible to residents and businesses. These innovations help the city to be more efficient, and provide high-quality services to a growing community.

We have received national recogni-

tion for our accomplishments, having just been ranked the #1 "Digital City" of our size for the second consecutive year.

Madison's online bill paying system was inaugurated in 2001 for payment of parking tickets. It has since expanded rapidly, and now allows for online payment in 22 different categories. Over 300,000 online transactions totaling \$50.5 million have been made since 2001. It can be visited online at www.madisonpay.com.

The "Report-a-Problem" website allows residents and businesses to conveniently alert city government to a wide range of issues. The information is routed from the Report-a-Problem website directly to the proper city staff for resolution. Nearly 6,200 reports have been filed through this website since its introduction. It can be visited online at www.cityofmadison.com/reportaproblem/.

In addition to these sites, citizens can also track a wide variety of city government business through the Online City Hall, available online at <http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/mattersearch/home.aspx>.

Mayor Cieslewicz can be reached at 266-4611 or Fax: 608-267-8671 or mayor@cityofmadison.com

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From
**PAUL
VAN ROOY**



DISTRICT 18 ALDERPERSON

It is with mixed emotions that I sit down to write my last article as 18th District alder.

As I look back over the last six years that I have been on the City Council, it has been an interesting and rewarding experience.

Although during my career with the State of Wisconsin, I spent most of my time working with local governments across Wisconsin, it is very different to be a decision maker.

When you have to weigh the items coming before you and decide whether you support or oppose them there are many things you have to take into consideration.

First of all, how will it impact the residents of the 18th district, and how would they want you to vote on the particular issue. Will there be a fiscal impact on the taxpayer, and if so, is the cost worth the expected benefit?

Sometimes those decisions are easy and other times they are quite difficult. I hope that at least in most cases I made the right decisions.

Some of the most rewarding things are being able to help a constituent, whether it is just getting them in touch with the right City staff person to answer their questions, or being able to improve a dangerous traffic situation that someone brings to your attention.

I thank all of you for the opportunity that you gave me to serve the 18th district as your alder. It has truly been a rewarding and gratifying experience.

Ald. Van Rooy can be reached at 663-9500 or district18@cityofmadison.com

See pages 5 & 33 for election results and to learn about your new District 18 Alderperson.