

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

From  
**KATHLEEN M.  
FALK**



**DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Fall is here and I'm finalizing the 2006 county budget to submit to the County Board by October 1. I am grateful for the valuable priorities that citizens shared with me through phone calls, meetings, e-mails and public hearings. I genuinely appreciate you taking the time to communicate your interest in the matters that concern all of us. My budget will prioritize public safety and human services. I anticipate that the County Board will finish with the budget around Thanksgiving.

Land use continues to be the number one challenge people tell me they want county leadership on. How do we accommodate more than 60,000 new citizens a decade in a way that doesn't compromise many of the features that we love about Dane County? We've taken big steps by bringing diverse interests together, such as realtors, developers and environmentalists, but the biggest step is still ahead. Now that I've completed six months of listening/working sessions across the county on my Attain Dane initiative, I will produce a map of where citizens tell me they want our county to grow and what we want to preserve.

But kids are why I am in public office. With tremendous partnerships, we've built a number of truly innovative programs to help kids succeed. The Allied Drive Early Childhood Initiative

(ECI) is one example, and the Madison Community Foundation is a key partner. The ECI focuses on home visitation and self-sufficiency through employment. The goal is that working parents will become a "natural" part of the home environments of children on Allied Drive. The ECI was selected as one of only thirteen programs in Wisconsin to receive funding from the Wisconsin Partnership for a Healthy Future. The ECI was also selected as one of only six programs in Wisconsin to be a model of how services can be coordinated most effectively.

One continuing initiative is the Huber/AODA Facility Study. It directly relates to my commitments in the areas of the well being of children and public safety. Alcohol and other drug abuse represent a tremendous drain on our community and communities across the country. Some of the costs can be measured in dollars, but the human costs are greater. We must get smarter about how we deal with crime in our community.

As we move into the last quarter of 2005, I am encouraged by the work that we have done together, and we need to do more. With your help we will continue to work smarter and better to reinvent government, use your tax dollars even more efficiently, protect our great natural assets, make sure children have better opportunities by helping their parents to get jobs, and lead on drug and alcohol treatment programs.

Thank you again for all you do to make this an even better community. Have a wonderful autumn.

*County Executive Falk can be reached at 266-4114 or falk@co.dane.wi.us*

From  
**PAUL  
RUSK**



**DISTRICT 12 SUPERVISOR**

#### Removing County Board Chair

As I write this column I'm preparing for the special meetings this week that have finally been scheduled to deal with my motion to remove the county board chair. Malfeasance in office is a serious matter, and although the chair has not yet been convicted, I believe strongly that he should not remain in his leadership position on the board based on his numerous actions pertaining to the email smear pending in the courts. Clearly identity theft is a serious matter and public officials should not threaten law enforcement budgets when a friend of yours is being investigated. It takes a two-thirds vote to remove the chair. By the time you read this column a decision may have been made, but it is hard to predict as the circumstances keep changing. In my view the entire county benefits by a full public hearing of all the facts as this will hopefully prevent such actions in the future. We need to insist upon high standards for those who serve in public office.

#### 2006 Budget

We have been working closely with the county executive to help craft a budget within the state mandated cap of a 4.2% increase in spending. This is no small feat as our basic costs keep climbing while state and federal dollars decrease. There is grave concern about the future of our economy in light of the tragic hurricanes in the south and the

growing federal budget deficit. Next year the local situation may be significantly worse so being prudent now is especially important. I'm not one to insist upon much additional spending, but I'm hopeful the budget will contain an additional white-collar crime paralytic for the district attorney to prosecute unscrupulous employers who do not pay employees, a growing problem in Dane County. The state is no longer intervening, and we have had tragic cases where hardworking citizens simply have nowhere to turn and end up being evicted through no fault of their own. This position will also help address the growing problem of elder financial abuse. I'm also hoping we can assure a 1% raise for about 1300 of our lowest paid human service workers who take care of our most vulnerable citizens with special needs. The budget should be final by Thanksgiving in time for December property tax bills.

#### Stoughton Tornado.

I am shocked that the federal government turned down Wisconsin's application for emergency federal assistance following several serious summer storms, including the Stoughton tornado that hit about 6 p.m. on my birthday. The Dane County Board promptly waived fees for new building permits to assist the families who lost their homes, but federal assistance is clearly needed to help rebuild this area. The state is appealing this unfortunate decision. I was a Congressional assistant in 1984 when the devastating Barneveld tornado killed nine people. The federal dollars for Barneveld and Black Earth were especially helpful to both communities.

*Supv. Rusk can be reached at 249-9667 or rusk@co.dane.wi.us*

From  
**DOROTHY  
WHEELER**



**DISTRICT 18 SUPERVISOR**

#### Blocking an Asphalt Plant

It takes 75% of the county board to block a CUP (Conditional Use Permit) approved by the ZLR (Zoning and Land Regulation) Committee. This committee has five members, three of which constitute a majority. When those three supervisors voted to approve the construction of an asphalt plant in the township of Springfield in an existing quarry, the chance of getting the 27 board members to be of like mind and overturn that decision was almost nil. After the hearing on September 15, when the board weighed arguments from both sides, it was still unclear whether we could overturn this decision. Then the supervisors themselves rose to speak and I heard over and over again from these supervisors that there was one overriding argument that had swayed most of them - the intergovernmental agreement between the City of Middleton and the Township of Springfield. These two bodies had not only agreed on growth plans for major areas contiguous with their boundaries, but had also voted unanimously to stop the asphalt plant from being located in the quarry. In my view, the county must respect and uphold these intergovernmental agreements if we want to move forward with comprehensive plans for the future of this county so I was very pleased with these results.

#### Lake View Hill and Woods

More good news!! At that same meeting on September 15, Supervisor Paul

Rusk and I introduced the resolutions to transfer the jurisdiction of Lake View Hill and Lake View Woods to the Dane County Parks Commission under Wis. Stats. 27.05(3). The Dane County Parks Department staff are already partnering with the Friends of Lake View Woods to restore and manage the woods and they oversee the contract to mow and care for the Hill so there will not be many changes except that we can rest assured that these properties will be protected by a powerful entity whose mission is to preserve the land for parks and open space. All of the buildings will remain under the jurisdiction of Dane County. The resolutions are making their way through various committees and will be taken up by the full board in October.

#### Budget Time

The board held public hearings on three separate evenings in the process of preparing this budget and some changes were made to accommodate the needs expressed by the citizens. County officials can raise the levy rate 4.2% under the imposed restrictions from the Governor's tax freeze. Without that imposed limit, we would have held to the County Executive's formula for raising taxes using the population increase and inflation rate - 4.7%. In the last week of September, the executive budget will be ready to be submitted to the board for its approval with possible amendments. Even with the constraints, the County Executive and her staff have prepared an excellent budget keeping all the human services with some modifications as requested in the public hearings. They will also propose \$5,000,000 in the capital budget to purchase land, which is fast appreciating in value.

*Supv. Wheeler can be reached at 244-4711 or djwheele@juno.com*

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STEVE

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