

ANNUAL REPORT



DODGE COUNTY
**LAND RESOURCES AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT**



2024



Dodge County Land Resources and Parks Department

Annual Report - 2024

May 15, 2025

Honorable Dodge County Board of Supervisors

Dear Members:

The Dodge County Land Resources and Parks (LRP) Department respectfully submits its 2024 Annual Report.

The LRP Department, operating under the direction of the Land Resources and Parks Committee, extends special thanks to the members of this committee for their interest in, support of, and commitment to the Department's missions and activities.

Land Resources and Parks Committee:

Daniel Siegmann, Chair
Dale Macheel, Vice Chair
Mary Bobholz, Secretary
Larry Bischoff, Kevin Burnett

We welcomed a new staff member, Bryce Johnson, to the LRP Team in 2024. Bryce was hired as Land Use/Sanitation Specialist, replacing Morgan (Wisth) Muche who transferred to the Community Development Marketing and Communications Mgr position following the departure of Becky Glewen early. The Department also lost Joe Giebel, Code Manager, to retirement after almost 37 years with the Department. Terry Ochs, Sr Land Use/Sanitation Specialist was promoted to take over Joe's position at yearend.

The LRP Department is functionally divided into four major divisions. This report is organized in order of the divisions listed below.

A few highlights from the year are listed below:

Code Administration – The overall number of applications processed by the Code staff in 2024 decreased about 2.5% over 2023 with the land use and driveway permit applications accounting for the majority of the decrease. The total value of construction permitted also saw a decrease from \$53 million in 2023 to \$38 million in 2024. However, the number of new home permit applications in 2024 increased by about 13% and Land Division activity saw an increase of almost 25%. GeoPermits online permitting system began the implementation phase to improve public access and ease of filing for permits and to further automate the permitting process. The building number application was the first application process to be implemented in 2024.

Land Information/GIS – Staff completed the challenging 2-year process of shifting Personal Property Tax assessments to the Real Estate Tax rolls, per updated State legislation. The 3-year [Dodge County Land Information Plan 2025-2027](#) was completed and adopted by the Land Info Council, identifying 18 planned or potential projects – making them eligible for WLIP grant funds.

Community Development – Workforce Development continued to be a key focus for division staff with development of the Dodge County Exploration Internship program (set to begin in 2025), facilitation of hands-on learning projects with schools for the County parks, promotion of the Inspire Program, Manufacturing Business Alliance and other efforts to strengthen our workforce pipeline. A 2nd Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant was received to implement new tourism branding in coordination with 12 community and facility partners and complete the tourism website in 2025.

Parks & Trails – Camping activity continues to be strong in the County Parks, although a slight decrease in overall campsite rentals and revenues was experienced in 2024 mostly due to the need to close many of the sites at Astico Park for much of the season because of flooding and wet conditions. The big parks projects in 2024 included the campsites upgrade at Harnischfeger Park, preparation for restroom / shelter construction at Astico Park and planning for vault toilet installations along the Wild Goose Trail and at the north side of Harnischfeger Park. Developing construction specifications, bidding and contracting the various components of these projects were a focus prior to yearend to meet ARPA funding requirements. Construction of these projects will be completed in 2025. Additionally, the Gold Star Memorial Trail Phase 2 segment from Horicon to the Wild Goose Trail began the lengthy design & engineering process which should be completed in late 2025. Trail construction is planned for 2026.

This report details these and other LRP activities and accomplishments in 2024. **Make sure to follow the [links](#) in the online version of this report to access corresponding webpages, videos and other media that help enhance this report.**

Please feel free to stop by the Department or give us a call should you ever have questions, comments, recommendations, need more information or would like a behind the scenes tour of the Department (or the parks) and to meet the dedicated LRP staff!

Respectfully,



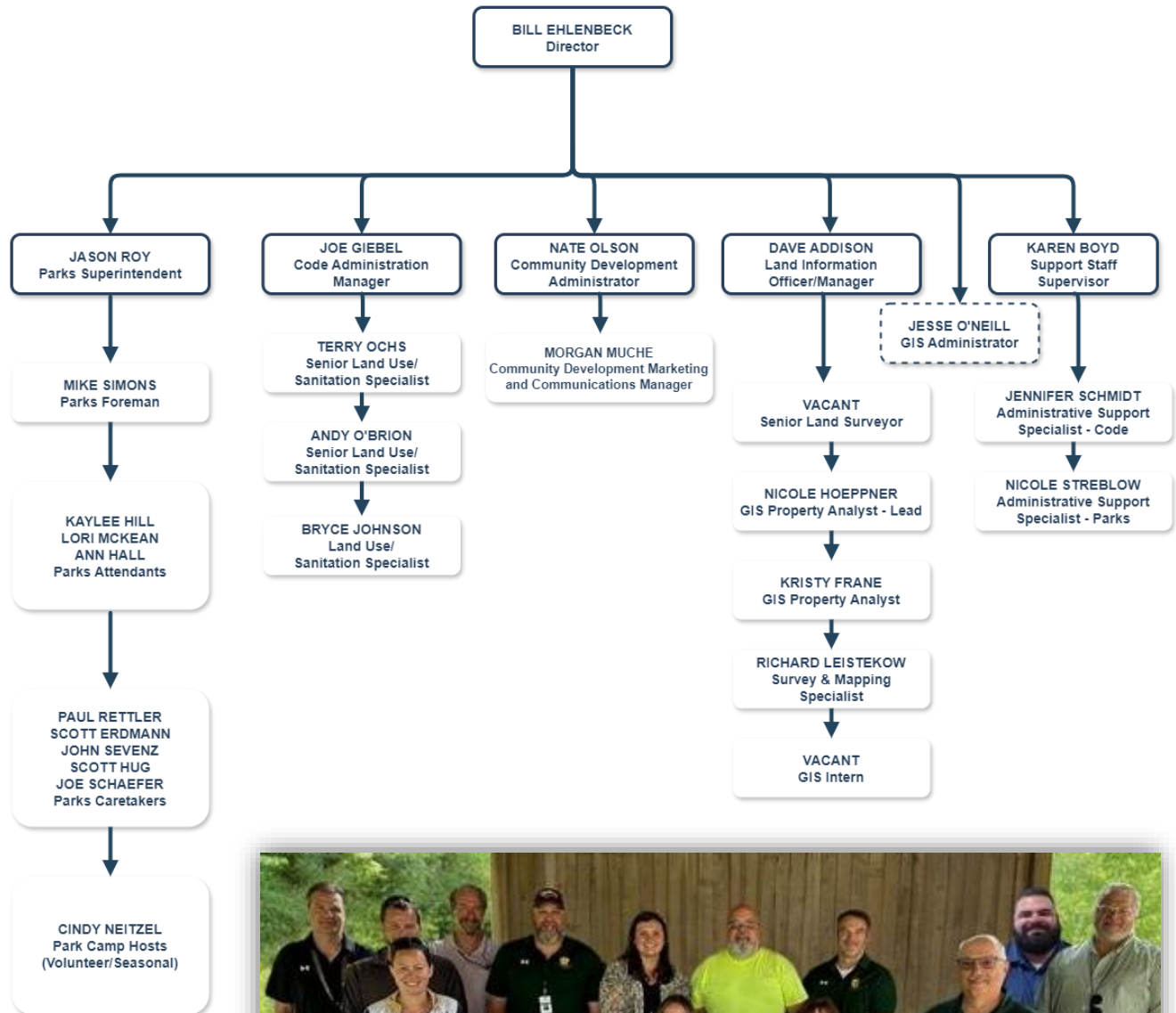
William J. Ehlenbeck
Director

Dodge County Land Resources and Parks Department Annual Report-2024

Land Resources and Parks Committee

Daniel Siegmann, Mary Bobholz, Larry Bischoff, Kevin Burnett, Dale Macheel

Land Resources and Parks Department



Code Administration Division

[Code Administration](#) manages the County Land Use Code which includes zoning district regulations and standards, the Environmental Protection, Highway Setback, Planned Unit Development and Land Spreading of Petroleum Contaminated Soil regulations. This unit also enforces the County Airport Zoning Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, Shoreland Protection Ordinance, Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance and the Sanitary Ordinance regulations and standards. The Board of Adjustment administration and clerical assistance is also a responsibility of this unit.

ZONING

The zoning provisions of the County Land Use Code promote health, safety, morals, prosperity, aesthetics and general welfare of the citizens of Dodge County by dividing the County into districts and regulating the use of structures, land and water within each district. Districts reflect the objectives of adopted plans of the County and its municipalities. Zoning provisions are based on ss. 59.69 which calls for county zoning to be in effect in towns which approve it. Thirteen of the twenty-four Towns in the County have adopted County Zoning (County Land Use Code); Ashippun, Calamus, Elba, Emmet, Fox Lake, Hustisford, Lebanon, Leroy, Lomira, Oak Grove, Rubicon, Shields and Trenton have approved the County Land Use Code. The Town of Emmet adopted the County Land Use Code in July, 2024.

Permits and Reviews		
	2023	2024
Land Use Permit	418	362
Sanitary Permit	125	151
Rezoning	21	11
Conditional Use Permit	21	24
Minor Land Division	69	86
Certified Survey Maps	64	80
Driveway Permit	96	45
Town Rezoning	9	12
Sanitary Compliance Reviews	4	8
Soil Evaluation Reviews	127	160
Violations	30	25
Plats	2	1
Variances	22	18
Total	1008	983

towns having town zoning ordinances, primarily in regards to rezoning requests which require County Board approval to be in effect. The Town of Westford has not adopted any zoning ordinance.

The County Shoreland-Wetland Ordinance, required by ss. 59.692, requires counties to regulate development within 1,000 feet of lakes, ponds and flowages and 300 feet of rivers and streams. The County Floodplain Ordinance authorized under ss. 87.30 is also in effect countywide. Adoption and enforcement of the County Floodplain Ordinance is required in order for FEMA flood insurance and certain federal assistance to be available in Dodge County.



The Land Use Code requires that a permit be obtained before changing the use of any structure, land or water, or locating or structurally altering any structure or sign. A land use permit is required for permitted uses or structures. A conditional use permit may be granted by the Land Resources and Parks Committee after a public hearing for conditionally allowed uses specified in each zoning district, to which conditions may be attached.

Code Administration Division

The Code Administration staff experienced a decrease of 2.5% in overall review activity in 2024 from permit applications and other code approval requests. Of the 362 Land Use Permit applications received, 44 were for new homes compared with 39 new home requests in 2023. The value of construction permitted by Land Use Permits under the County Land Use Code was \$38,531,713 in 2024 compared to \$52,603,005 in 2023. Staff also conducted site inspections, developed staff reports, drafted resolutions, and made recommendations to the Land Resources and Parks Committee concerning rezoning and conditional use permits. The staff also prepared minutes, decisions, hearing notices and agendas for each meeting. Town rezoning and/or text amendments were reviewed in 2024 for the Towns of Chester, Hubbard, Lowell and Theresa.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Activities such as dredging, filling, excavating and construction of buildings within the floodplain are generally allowed, but may be restricted according to which flood zone the property is located in. The adoption and enforcement of the updated Ordinance provisions allow the County to continue to participate in the FEMA Flood Insurance Program.

AIRPORT ZONING ORDINANCE

The Airport Zoning Ordinance was approved by the County Board in 2011. This ordinance regulates the height of structures near the Dodge County Airport. The ordinance also imposes additional “overlay zoning” regulations, which are in addition to those “underlying zoning” regulations that will maintain a compatible relationship between airport operations and existing and future land uses within the three mile jurisdictional boundary. Permits are required for all construction within three miles of the airport.

HIGHWAY SETBACK OVERLAY DISTRICT

Dodge County adopted a Highway Setback Ordinance in 1952. The Overlay District establishes setback distances and requires permits for construction within 200 feet of a public road. Sixteen of the County's 23 towns have approved these district regulations.

SHORELAND PROTECTION ORDINANCE

The Shoreland Protection Ordinance applies to all land in unincorporated areas that are located within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond or flowage, within 300 feet of a navigable river or stream, within a wetland and within the floodplain of a river or stream. The ordinance establishes minimum standards governing lot size, lot coverage, structure height, impervious surface area and water setback regulations for all development within a shoreland area. The ordinance also contains mitigation standards which allow the owner to make certain improvements to a parcel located within

2024 Submitted Land Use and Conditional Use Permits			
Town	Land Use Permits	Conditional Use Permits	New Homes
ASHIPPUN	35	1	4
BEAVER DAM	16	0	0
BURNETT	2	0	0
CALAMUS	28	1	1
CHESTER	2	0	1
CLYMAN	6	0	0
ELBA	18	4	2
EMMET	14	0	3
FOX LAKE	40	0	7
HERMAN	1	0	1
HUBBARD	19	0	1
HUSTISFORD	29	0	3
LEBANON	23	3	0
LEROY	9	1	2
LOMIRA	16	3	3
LOWELL	0	0	0
OAK GROVE	29	5	2
Juneau (C)	3	0	0
Horicon (C)	0	0	0
PORTLAND	0	0	0
RUBICON	17	0	5
SHIELDS	10	3	0
THERESA	1	0	0
TRENTON	15	3	3
WESTFORD	28	0	5
2024 TOTALS	361	24	44
2023 TOTALS	418	21	39

Code Administration Division

the shoreland area that may be nonconforming to the setback, impervious surface area or the height standards in the code without a variance, in exchange for agreeing to certain mitigation requirements listed in the ordinance.

SUBDIVISION OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Land Use Code contains subdivision design and improvement regulations which apply to the division of land in unincorporated areas of Dodge County. County approval is required for most land divisions.

Certified Survey Maps

A property division of four parcels or less requires the submission of a Letter of Intent. The town board and affected County agencies may comment regarding compliance with regulations and plans. The subdivider may then proceed with soil tests and a certified survey. In 2024, 86 Letters of Intent were processed and 80 certified survey maps were approved, compared with 69 Letters of Intent and 64 certified survey maps in 2023.

Plat Review

Proposed subdivisions of five or more parcels in unincorporated areas require the submission and Committee approval of a preliminary and final plats. Plats in cities and villages are reviewed by the Department, but the County Land Use Code regulations do not apply. One preliminary plat and one final plat were reviewed in 2024.

SANITARY ORDINANCE

The Sanitary Ordinance protects the public health by regulating the location, construction, installation, alteration, design and use of private sewage disposal systems. Permits are required for the installation of holding tanks, septic tanks and absorption areas and systems. Sanitary regulations apply in all areas of Dodge County, including cities and villages. Administration of this Ordinance consists of site investigations, review of applications, permit issuing, installation inspections and compliance investigations. The County Sanitary Ordinance was amended in 2024 to make minor changes to processes under the ordinance.



Sanitary Permits

During 2024, 151 sanitary permits were processed compared to 125 in 2023. There were 160 soil test reviews completed in 2024 in comparison to 127 in 2023. State sanitary code mandates that every POWTS (septic system) in the County is serviced and inspected once every three (3) years. As part of the mandate, the County is required to maintain a database of these systems and is required to send out notices to those property owners with POWTS located within the County needing the three-year maintenance inspection. There were 3,565 maintenance notices sent out in 2024 as compared to 5,691 notices in 2023. In 2024, 89% of property owners complied. Since the adoption of the citation process, the Department was authorized to issue citations. The initial notices that were issued in 2024 were 2018-147; 2019-31; 2020-68; 2021-75; 2022-93 and 2023-229. Total violations were 643 and at the end of 2024 there were 431 outstanding violations.

Code Administration Division

NON-METALLIC MINING RECLAMATION PROGRAM

Chapter 295 of Wisconsin Statutes mandated that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources create regulations to ensure non-metallic mines are properly reclaimed. In 2001, Dodge County was mandated to administer NR 135. Each mine is required to have a reclamation plan that outlines the process to fully reclaim mine sites, as well as maintain financial assurance to guarantee the mine site will be reclaimed. Mines are located within 15 of the 23 towns in Dodge County. In 2024, there were 16 mine operators and 25 mine sites in the County with approximately 874.6 acres being actively mined and 31.2 acres currently inactive. The mines range in size from 1.3-acres to 148.4-acres. No mines are currently under reclamation or have been reclaimed in 2024.

In addition to working with mine operators, the staff works with financial institutions to maintain financial assurance for each site. Various methods are used to maintain financial assurance, letters of credit and bonds being the most popular. Currently there is approximately \$3,850,145.09 in financial assurances (as of 12/31/2024). This program is funded with annual fees that are charged to mine operators.



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The Dodge County Board of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial body charged with the responsibility of deciding appeals and applications filed with it under the terms of the Zoning Codes. The Board of Adjustment acts somewhat like a court, therefore, it is vitally important that the Board follows accepted procedures and fairly evaluates the relevant facts in each case that comes before them. In order to allow for meaningful certiorari review by a circuit court, the board is required to explain the “grounds” it relied upon to make its decisions – or the reasons the application does or does not fit the legal criteria for granting a variance. The Board must, therefore, carefully document whether the requirements for granting a variance are present or not in each request. Each decision of the Board must be made on the basis of facts available and be in accordance with guidelines found in the County Codes and Ordinances, the Wisconsin State Statutes and Court decisions interpreting the Statutes. Every person who appeals to the Board of Adjustment and who is aggrieved by the Board’s decision may appeal such decision to circuit court. Cases have become more complex over the years and many decisions are being challenged in the courts. The Department staff assists the Board of Adjustment by conducting site inspections, developing staff reports and making recommendations to the Board of Adjustment concerning variance requests and appeals. The staff also prepared minutes, hearing notices and agendas for each meeting. Legal advice from the Corporation Counsel is also required at times to arrive at judicious and legal decisions. The activities of the Board of Adjustment during the calendar year 2024 as well as comparison figures for 2019 through 2024 were as follows:

Code Administration Division

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT ACTIVITY:

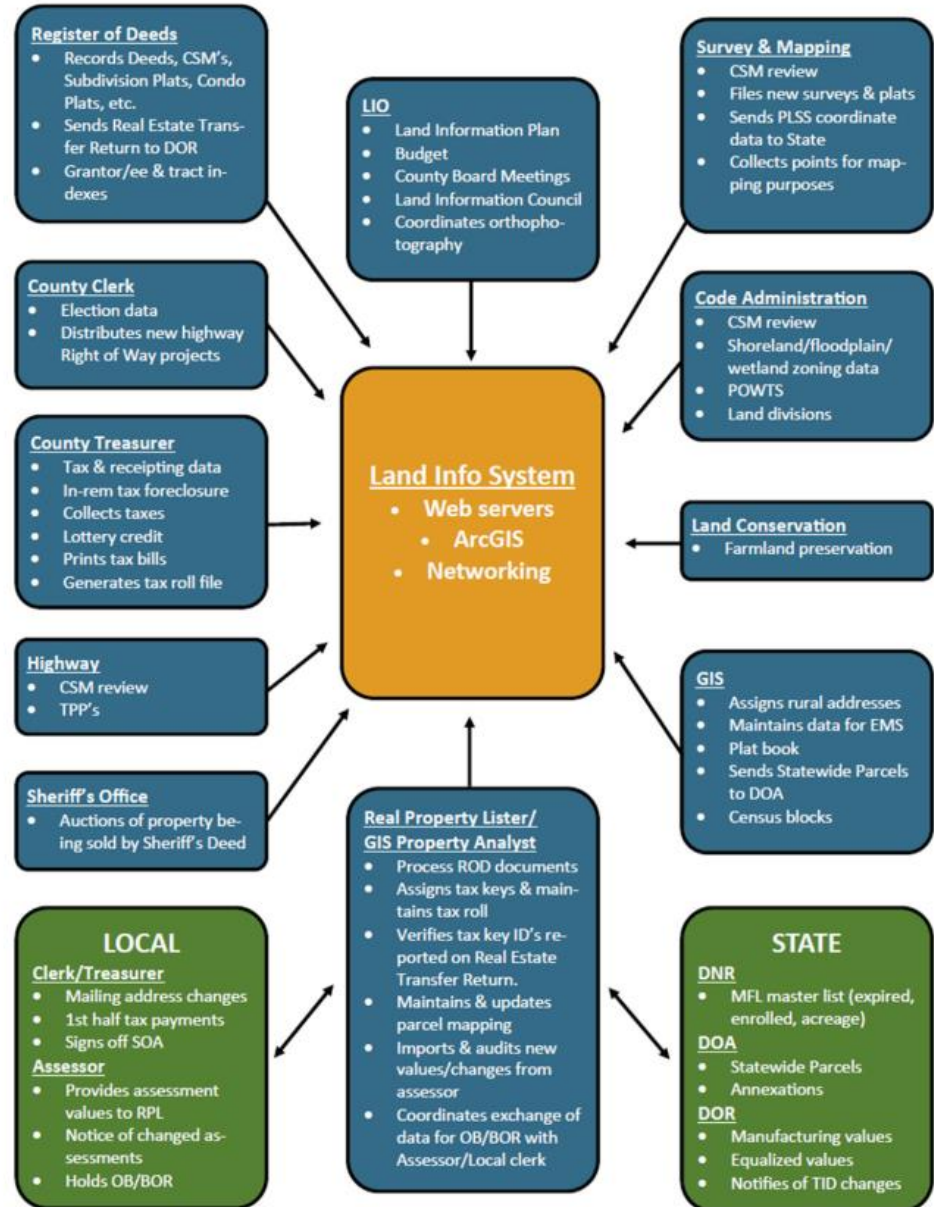
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Meetings Held	14	13	10	17	18	11
Total Public Hearings Held	13	20	9	19	10	13
Variance Requests						
Zoning Ordinance	5	11	7	13	17	8
Shoreland Ordinance	6	5	2	3	3	3
Floodplain Ordinance	0	0	0		0	1
Highway Setback Overlay	3	5	1	2	3	1
Airport Ordinance	0	0	0		0	0
Sanitary Ordinance	0	0	0	1	1	1
Subdivision	0	1	0		1	0
Totals	14	22	10	19	25	14
Board Decisions on Variance Requests						
Granted as proposed	0	2	1	3	3	0
Granted with conditions	10	13	7	12	19	11
Partially Granted / Partially Denied	0	1	0	1	1	0
Denied	4	4	1	3	2	2
Decision Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	2	1	0	0	0
Appeals of a decision of the Land Resources and Parks Committee and / or the Land Use Administrator	2	0	0	0	0	0
						0
Board Decisions on Appeals						0
Upheld	2	0	0	0	0	0
Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partially Upheld / Partially Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appeal of a decision of the Board of Adjustment	1	0	0	1	0	0
Upheld	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	1	0	0	1	0	0

Land Information Division

The [Land Information Office](#) is responsible for the County's Land Information Program including tax parcel mapping, survey services, and real estate description functions. The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data administration and management, mapping services and maintenance of addressing system are also identified under this division, although many functions and services are provided independent of this division and support all areas of the Land Resources and Parks Department and other County departments. Additionally, Spillman GIS Support is provided to the Sheriff's Office.

This division administers all Land Information System/Geographic Information Systems (LIS/GIS) data and software management and mapping for the Department. Other functions include maintenance and administration of online GIS mapping tool and Land Information Search Tool (LIST), and property assessment functions supporting the Dodge County Land Information Management System (LIMS).

The division is a great resource available to all County departments (including Land Resources and Parks, Land and Water Conservation, Treasurer, Register of Deeds (ROD), Highway, Emergency Management, County Clerk, Corporation Counsel, and Dodge County Sheriff's Office and Communications Center), local, regional, state and federal units of government, the private sector and the general public.



Land Information Division

The Land Information Division is under the jurisdiction of the Land Resources and Parks Committee with significant input from the Dodge County Land Information Council. The Land Information Council is comprised of nine members: Chris Planasch, Register of Deeds; Kris Keith, County Treasurer; David Addison, Land Information Office representative; Sheriff designee Jeremy Grossman; three members of the Dodge County Board of Supervisors – Jeff Breselow, Daniel Siegmann and Randall Vande Zande; Realtors Association representative, Dianne Bell; registered professional land surveyor within Dodge County, Brad Tisdale. The Land Information Council encourages the Highway Commissioner, Emergency Management Director, Land Conservationist, Land Resources and Parks Director, and any other county or municipal staff or general public with an interest in land records and land records modernization to attend their meetings.

Revenue Sources

The main outside revenue source for the Land Information Office (LIO) (Division 8230) comes from Real Estate Recording Fees collected in the Register of Deeds Office as part of the **Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP)** administered by the Department of Administration (DOA). Document recording fees are retained at the county level and a portion are returned to the DOA and made available to the county thru grants. The program is governed by state statutes 16.967 and 59.72, as well as Administrative Rule Chapter Adm. 47. In 2024, Dodge County retained \$89,616 from recording fees. Dodge County was also awarded \$22,760 in WLIP Grants. The total received from WLIP from 1990 through 2024 is \$4,257,839 with \$3,453,160 from retained fees and \$804,679 from grants.

Summary of WLIP Revenues from Retained Fees and Grants (October 1, 1990 - December 2024)

Year	# of Recorded Docs	LIO - Public Access Retained Fees	LIO Grant Funds Received	Key Projects or Activities
1990	2,731	\$10,922	\$300	
2000	17,266	\$69,065	\$19,138	Orthophotos for 50 sections / SIG-metadata software
2010	17,182	\$115,698	\$300	Retained fee increase - Act 314 June 25, 2010
2020	17,297	\$138,376	\$69,048	Drone and Orthophotos
2021	18,430	\$147,440	\$26,000	Survey equipment & ROD scanning
2022	13,125	\$105,000	\$61,000	Culvert inventory and mobile data collectors
2023	10,525	\$84,200	\$96,000	Orthophotos and Land Cons EVAAL
2024	11,202	\$89,616	\$22,760	Parcel Fabric Pro Migration and GeoPermits System
TOTALS	605,568	\$3,453,160	\$804,679	
\$4,257,839 TOTAL Retained Fees and Grants through WI Land Info Program				

These funds support operations of the Land Information Office, annual maintenance of GIS, CAD and GPS software, new equipment purchases, LTE's to assist with projects, contracting of professional services, and support of various land records-related projects. Funding for Division 8230 is non-lapsing and by statute must be used to support land records modernization activities. Funds not used in a budget year accrue in the Designated Fund Balance for future large cost projects such as orthophotography and LiDAR (elevation data), survey and computer equipment, application development and/or system upgrades. The Fund Balance at end of 2024 was \$305,376. Revenues for Division 8230 are dependent upon the strength of the economy with no funding from the tax levy.

Division 8231 supports the functions of the Real Estate and Survey Office units of the Land Information Division.

There are no significant revenues received in this unit due to a strict interpretation of Wisconsin's Open Records Law. Data is freely shared and exchanged with other units of government and the private and public sectors. Numerous walk-ins, email, online and telephone requests are filled daily.

Land Information Division

The availability of geospatial data online through the [LIST](#) and [GIS Web Mapping](#) tool provide 24-7 access for a wide spectrum of users and has helped reduce the work load of staff. Downloadable datasets were added in 2020 and available via the internet, further reducing staff workloads by reducing individual requests.

The Division continues to provide information and services to a wide range of users. Efficiencies have increased, duplication of effort has been reduced or eliminated, and additional land related information is made available to more people and organizations on a timely basis resulting in better decision-making.

Highlights and Projects – Summarized Below by Functional Area

Much of the work is collaborative between the various areas and staff members in the division.

LAND INFORMATION

Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP) - In order to participate in the WLIP, counties must meet certain requirements. Any grants received and fees retained for Land Information through the WLIP must be spent consistent with the County Land Information Plan. Requirements include: updating the County's Land Information Plan every three years (in 2024 completed the 2025-2027 Plan); meeting of the Land Information Council at least once per year to review expenditures, policies and priorities; Grant Report on expenditures each year; submit detailed grant applications each year; complete WLIP annual survey; subscribe to DOA's land information listserv; coordinate the sharing of parcel data with DOA in a searchable format.

Parcel Fabric Migration – The Land Information Division provided existing parcel data to Panda Consulting for migration into the ESRI ArcGIS Parcel Fabric to enable more efficient mapping procedures. This project was funded using a combination of retained fees and a 2024 WLIP Base Budget Grant.

Permitting Application for Land Use and Sanitary Permits – The department selected the GeoPermits solution from Schneider Geospatial for management of permit applications to allow tracking permits in real time, interactively edit maps and integrate current data. The workflow manager can be used to configure different types of processes and permit applications. Funding for this project was assisted through a WLIP Strategic Initiative Grant.

SURVEY

Survey Review – Staff reviewed Certified Survey Maps as part of Survey Review policy. All other surveys submitted for filing (Plats of Survey, Subdivisions, Condos and CSM's that are not part of review authority) were reviewed as well. All surveys are hyperlinked into Access Database and filed in section folders. Surveys are also drawn and links to their images provided through the [Survey Finder Tool](#). Updated section corner information is made available on the County website as well as through the State Cartographer's Office (SCO) Control Finder and PLSS Finder internet applications.

PLSS Maintenance - Performed on-going Public Land Survey System (PLSS) section corner maintenance through contracted services with MSA Professional Services and performed site visits to check monuments. Checked with Highway Department and Townships regarding their annual notification of planned roadwork that would damage or destroy PLSS monumentation. Updated 53 Monument records from road projects and other miscellaneous situations.

Land Information Division

Fieldwork for remapping project - Finished fieldwork and mapping for the Village of Kekoskee (original village) and Village of Neosho. Preliminary work was begun on the City of Waupun. Fieldwork is being done as part of our high accuracy remapping project. Data acquired entered into CAD and imported into the Parcel Fabric to assist with the tax mapping.

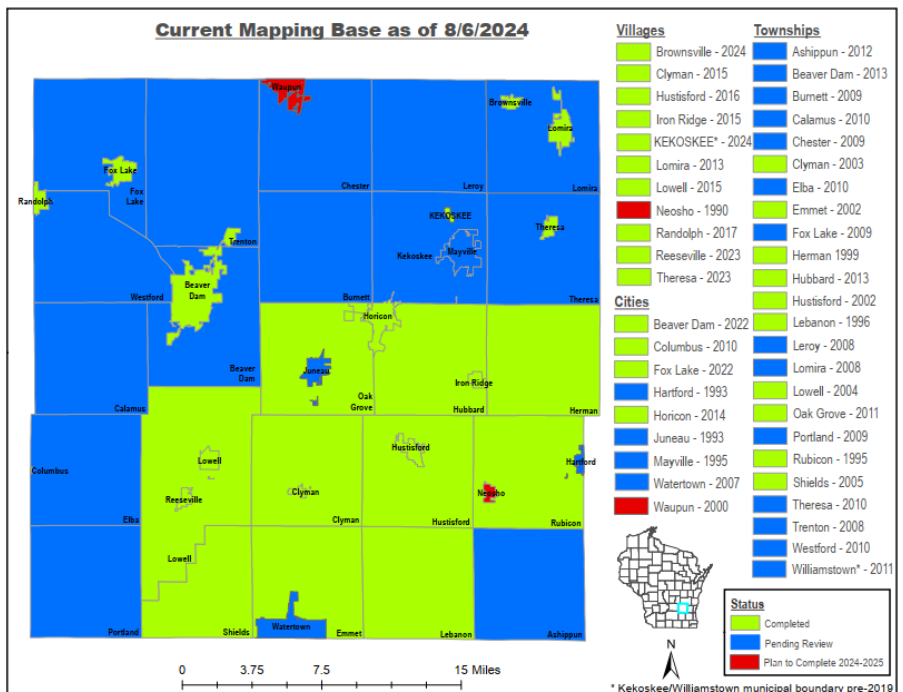
Technical support and research - Provided technical support for survey-related questions and assist private surveyors and the public with any questions, corner research, data requests and locating section corners. Performed survey-related fieldwork for County departments and committees upon request.

Assisted Parks Division – Located utilities for projects at Derge, Harnischfeger and Astico Parks.

TAX MAPPING

Parcel Mapping Updates - Updates were made under the Parcel Fabric system. Updated mapping is necessary to show new lots created through the platting process (Subdivisions, Condos and Certified Survey Maps). Mapping updates are also done for existing lots and parcels that may have been changed when deeds are recorded using new legal descriptions (typically from a Plat of Survey). Miscellaneous updates are also made as staff discovers errors or discrepancies in the existing mapping.

Remapping – In 2024 the CAD mapping for the Villages of Theresa, Reeseville and Brownsville were added to the Parcel Fabric in 2024. Remapping for the Village of Neosho was also completed and added to the Parcel Fabric. Other select smaller areas where staff identified the need were also completed in 2024. It is anticipated the City of Waupun will be completed in 2025 completing this phase of the remapping project. Remapping of the County is an ongoing project to improve boundary accuracy and will continue in the future, concentrating on unincorporated areas and pockets of development.



Land Information Division

DRONE PROGRAM

Licensing – There are currently five staff members who have received the UAS Pilot license. Licensed staff are generally available to assist when a flight is necessary. The GIS Property Analyst has been designated as the main point of contact.

Projects – Projects – Several flights were flown in 2024 to assist in other areas of the department, such as Code Administration, Parks, and Community Development. The drone was used to photograph parks around the county for Community Development division and document the electrical instillation at Derge Park for Parks division. It was also used to collect LiDAR data of non-metallic mining quarries to create orthophotographs to assist Code Administration. It also assisted in photographing a property to be sold by the county. Other projects include the Dodge County Housing Authority Juneau Project, Beaver Dam Industrial Park, & the fish cleaning station at Derge for Community Development & Parks.



REAL ESTATE

The assessment cycle runs January 1st through the time tax bills are run in December and is a vital function of the office. Processed assessment roll data for Managed Forest Lands, State Assessed Manufacturing and local assessors in a timely fashion to meet assessors' deadlines. Worked with local clerks to ensure that reports balanced with assessor data. Ran reports and files for the Department of Revenue (DOR) to assist with the determination of equalized values. Communication and contact with local and state officials ensures the data is accurate prior to running tax bills.

DODGE COUNTY 2024 REAL ESTATE VALUATION SUMMARY GRAND TOTAL							REPORT #: SRVALSUM1ST RUN DATE: 01/09/2025 RUN TIME: 01:03:07 PM PAGE: 89	
	CODE	-----PARCEL TOTAL	COUNT LAND	----- IMPROVE	LAND VALUE	IMPROVE VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL ACRES
REAL ESTATE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX:								
RESIDENTIAL	G1	29717	29709	27926	1,203,836,400	5,243,826,300	6,447,662,700	29,849.902
COMMERCIAL	G2	2793	2741	2372	193,017,700	1,198,164,100	1,391,181,800	7,608.239
MANUFACTURING	G3	192	189	173	29,370,100	389,774,300	419,144,400	2,471.224
AGRICULTURAL	G4	13735	13735	0	106,616,400	0	106,616,400	347,603.136
UNDEVELOPED LAND	G5	10991	10896	0	67,569,800	0	67,569,800	76,990.683
AGRICULTURAL FOREST	G5M	3058	3058	0	26,701,200	0	26,701,200	20,531.707
PRODUCTIVE FOREST LANDS	G6	502	502	0	11,689,500	0	11,689,500	4,649.655
OTHER	G7	2462	2462	2434	79,398,000	418,743,700	498,141,700	4,989.700
TOTAL		63450	63292	32905	1,718,199,100	7,250,508,400	8,968,707,500	494,694.246
WOODLAND:								
PRIVATE FOREST CROP PRE 72	@ ± 0.10 W1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
PRIVATE FOREST CROP POST 71	@ ± 3.60 W2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
PRIVATE FOREST CROP SPECIAL	@ ± 0.20 W3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
COUNTY FOREST CROP	@ ± 0.00 W4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
MFL OPEN POST 2004	@ ± 1.90 W5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
MFL CLOSED POST 2004	@ ± 9.49 W6	64	64	0	3,497,800	0	3,497,800	1,364.204
MFL OPEN PRE 2005	@ ± 0.72 W7	2	2	0	63,800	0	63,800	30.000
MFL CLOSED PRE 2005	@ ± 1.68 W8	43	43	0	2,046,600	0	2,046,600	778.932
MFL CLOSED PRE 2005 MINING	@ ± 7.37 W9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
TOTAL		109	109	0	5,608,200	0	5,608,200	2,173.136
EXEMPT:								
FEDERAL	X1	153	0	0	0	0	0	21,716.677
STATE	X2	576	0	0	0	0	0	26,950.419
COUNTY	X3	125	0	0	0	0	0	1,819.398
OTHER	X4	1887	0	0	0	0	0	11,063.441
TOTAL		2741	0	0	0	0	0	61,549.935
** FINAL TOTAL **		66300	63401	32905				558,417.317
ACTUAL PARCEL COUNT		47931						

Land Information Division

The office kept current on processing documents. Documents are downloaded from the Register of Deeds on a daily basis and processed in the LandNav program after comparing names and legal descriptions with the assessment records.

The office assists local assessors and the DOR by verifying Parcel ID numbers on the DOR Electronic Real Estate Transfer Return site. The office works with the Drainage District engineer in developing drainage district maps which helps identify these properties. The office assists the public with general property questions at the counter, on the phone and through email and consults County Code Administration on possible land division violations.

The office closely monitored the former Personal Property accounts that needed to be added to the Real Estate roll to ensure that all were accounted for. This change was necessary due to Wisconsin Act 12 which eliminated the Personal Property tax.

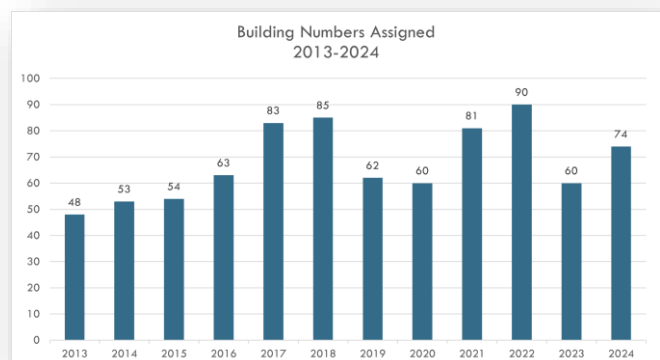
GENERAL STATISTICS FOR 2024

- 47,932 real estate parcels were maintained
- 3,595 real estate recordings from the Register of Deeds Office were processed (32% of all documents recorded in 2024) affecting 5,327 tax parcels (approximately 11% of the total parcels)
- 2,835 parcels had ownership updates
- 597 tax parcels are showing an error on a recorded document and 32 tax parcels are “on hold” (not yet updated ownership information due to significant errors)
- Staff processed 14 Sheriff’s Deeds for 14 tax parcels which accounts for approximately 0.4% of all documents processed and 0.0003% of all tax parcels in 2024
- There were two new TID districts in 2024 (effective for 2025)
- There were 6 annexations in 2024 (changes effective for 2025)

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

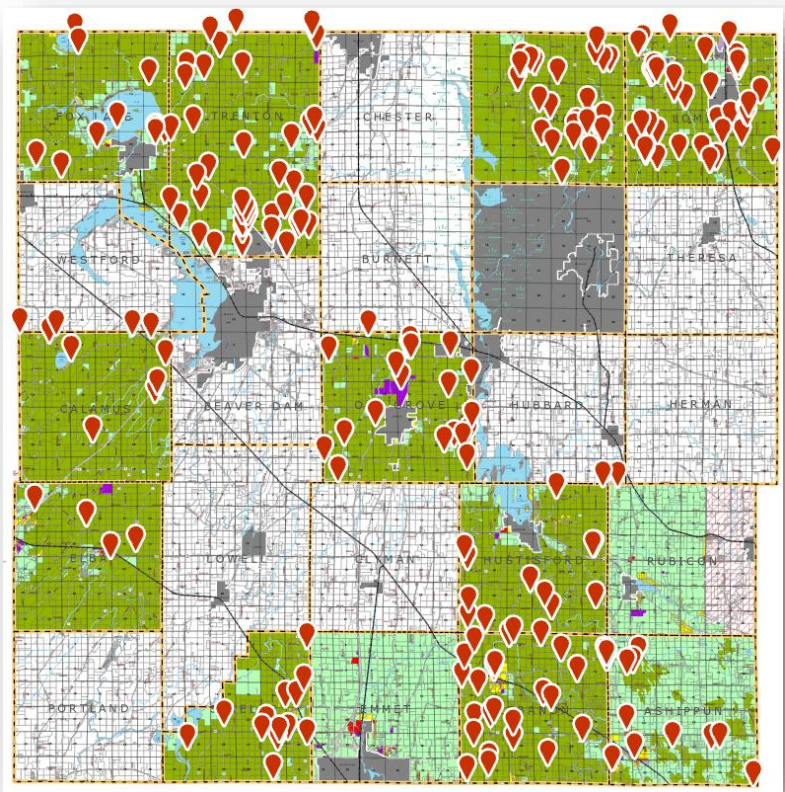
- Modernization and improvement of the “Systems” part of Geographic Information Systems was the major theme of 2024. Upgrades were implemented to the parcel database, county zoning database, and the GIS SQL data server which facilitates all internal and external GIS data consumption. As always, we continue to provide ad-hoc and project level mapping for many County departments, public agencies, and private citizens & businesses.

- **Addressing/GeoPermits** – New address permit applications increased 23% from 2023, with 74 new addresses assigned. The building number/address application became the first Land Resources & Parks permit to successfully go live on the new GeoPermits online permitting system. GeoPermits allows customers to apply and pay for a building number permit completely online. The system is tightly integrated with our Beacon web mapping application, utilizing the mapping functions to draw site plans and also linking completed GeoPermits applications on the Beacon parcel info page. Fifty-four (54) of the 74 address applications in 2024 were processed through GeoPermits, and we continue to encourage the public to utilize the new system.



Land Information Division

- **Transition to ArcGIS Pro** –We successfully upgraded our parcel mapping environment to the new ArcGIS Pro platform in 2024, ahead of the scheduled retirement of the older ArcGIS Desktop platform in 2026. We contracted with Panda Consulting to transition the parcel database to a new schema and also provide training for the editing tools and workflows on the new platform. Once the parcel data itself was moved to the new system, all of the nightly/weekly GIS update scripts and models had to be re-written to support the new database schema. The graphic below is a visualization of an export model for pulling one layer out of the parcel database and updating the SQL database that all of our GIS users and web apps use. There are dozens of layers that are regularly updated and all of them have unique export models that needed to be rebuilt.
- **NextGen 911**– The Sheriff’s Office 911 Comm Center is scheduled to go live on the statewide NextGen 911 system in 2025. GIS data will play a critical role in this transition. Significant time was spent in 2024 improving various GIS databases to meet state NG911 requirements. Most required geometry and attribute updates are now complete, and work in 2025 will focus on synchronizing our very accurate GIS data with the outdated tabular address data currently in use by telecoms so the new 911 system and the old 911 system will be able to “speak to each other”.
- **County Zoning**– The GIS zoning database was rebuilt to modernize records and incorporate the Town of Emmet which adopted County Zoning in July. As part of this database upgrade process, a point feature class was created showing zoning activity since June 2009 when Ordinance 854 was adopted. This provides an easy way to visualize rezoning activity, and the points are linked directly to scanned documents for easy access to historical information on each rezoning.
- **Comprehensive Planning**– County GIS data provides the backbone for the maps being created in the county comprehensive plan update. Data sharing and preliminary map production started in 2024, with the project scheduled to wrap up by the end of 2025. Separate from the county plan, the GIS division also provided support for several individual towns as they updated their own comprehensive plans. Our involvement ranged from providing data and metadata support to actually producing the required maps (for a fee) in several cases.





DODGE COUNTY
WISCONSIN

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
LAND RESOURCES & PARKS DEPT.

Nate Olson
Community Development Administrator

Morgan Muche
Community Development Marketing &
Communications Manager

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VISION

Initiate and support wide ranging community and economic development activities that provide positive opportunities for public and private entities throughout Dodge County, thereby promoting Dodge County to be successful and sustainable in the future.

The Community Development Division plays a key role in driving economic growth and enhancing the quality of life in Dodge County. Our services support business development, workforce retention and expansion, community assistance, tourism, and activities related to county development.

Community development in Dodge County is multifaceted, reflecting the differing needs of our rural and urban areas. With nearly 90,000 residents spread across 43 cities, towns, and villages, covering almost 900 square miles, the task of providing leadership and services to both urban and rural communities is extensive. Despite the diverse needs, these communities are interconnected and reliant on each other for mutual success. Building strong partnerships between public and private sectors is essential to ensure the county's continued growth and sustainability.

Dodge County faces a range of challenges, including workforce attraction and retention, stagnant population growth, an aging demographic, housing and childcare shortages, and transportation barriers. Additional issues include the digital divide between rural and urban areas and ensuring communities are prepared to attract future businesses and residents. While these challenges are significant, they also present opportunities for innovation and growth. The Community Development Division is committed to partnering on initiatives that address these issues and foster positive change, helping businesses and residents choose Dodge County as their home.

The following pages highlight the key initiatives and progress made in 2024 by the Community Development Division.

2024 NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Hired Morgan Muche as Community Development Marketing and Communications Manager to expand the county's website, social media presence, and digital marketing efforts for stronger community engagement and strengthens online visibility
- Developed and secured approval for \$2 million Dodge County Community Development Fund Grant Program, an innovative and unique initiative in the State of Wisconsin designed exclusively to support communities within Dodge County.
- Successfully partnered with 9 communities and 3 marsh entities through the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM Grant) to develop a new County tourism brand, while also securing funding for year two of the grant to support new website development.
- Dodge County Exploration Internship was developed for summer of 2025 to offer high school students the opportunity to learn first-hand about county government and the different career paths
- Facilitated hands-on learning projects with two school districts and MBA Members, successfully completing a fish cleaning station and collaborating on selfie stands for county parks.
- Dodge County joined the Inspire Program through CESA 6, providing students with career-based learning activities, furthering efforts with the MBA and Youth Apprenticeships.
- Collaborated with K-12 schools and local employers to implement the GPS Ed program, enhancing career pathways and educational opportunities.

WORKFORCE

Maintaining a strong workforce pipeline is essential for supporting both current and prospective employers in Dodge County. To ensure long-term economic growth, Dodge County actively collaborates with public and private partners to raise awareness of local career opportunities and address the evolving needs of employers. Below are some of the recent workforce initiatives aimed at strengthening our local workforce pipeline.

Manufacturing Business Alliance (MBA)

MBA is a partnership of local manufacturers working together to strengthen the talent pipeline. The goal is to increase awareness of local manufacturing opportunities and improve collaboration among businesses. For more information check out the MBA website: www.dodgeregionmba.org

2024 Activities:

- Administered facility tours for over 250 high school students
- Coordinated various employer engagements with high school tech classes
- Co-hosted two MBA meetings at MPTC and EK Machine
- Coordinate development of John Deere employer videos to use and market to students

Manufacturing Business Alliance (MBA) School Projects

School-based projects provide students with hands-on experience in practical skills, allowing them to engage in real-world applications within the classroom. These initiatives foster learning, encourage collaboration, and promote a sense of accomplishment while supporting community engagement.

2024 Activities:

- Coordinate Beaver Dam High School with Drexel Building Supply, Masonry by Gruss, Quest Electric, White Plumbing, Schraufnagel Construction, Apache Stainless, Metalcraft of Mayville, Lycon Inc & Ace Hardware to design and build new fish cleaning station at Derge Park.
- Coordinate Dodgeland High School with Apache Stainless, & Breur Metal Craftsmen Inc. to design and build selfie stands for Wild Goose State Trail, Astico Park, Ledge Park, and Nitschke Mounds
- Arrange rehab of MBA sponsored "Project Grill" with Dodgeland High School



WORKFORCE - continued

CESA 6 – Youth Apprentices (YA) & Inspire Programming

A career exploration platform connecting students with local businesses allowing students to gain exposure to various career paths.

2024 Activities:

- Staff assisted 3 times with mock interviews at Lomira and Dodge Land High Schools
- Staff presented at in-service event at Dodge Land High School to expand knowledge of county careers to teachers
- Staff assisted with Dodge County Sheriff's Open House hosting over 60 students and Highway Department Open House hosting 23 students.
- Connected CESA 6 with local employers to help increase business involvement and expand sector participation.

Youth Apprenticeship (YA)

A state-sponsored program that offers high school students the opportunity to gain work experience and skills in various career fields through paid apprenticeships. It helps students explore careers while earning academic credit and preparing for future employment. Hear what EK Machines has to say about Youth Apprenticeships: [YA Testimonial](#)

2024 Activities:

- Promote Youth Apprentice programming
 - Over 200 students in Dodge County participate in YA

GPS – Education Partners (GPS-ED)

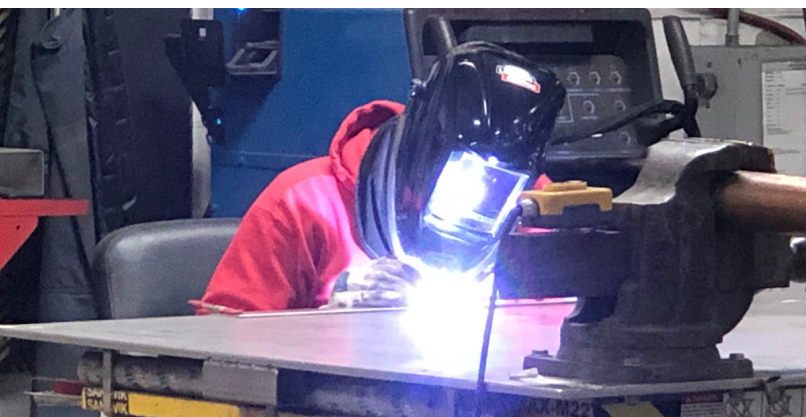
GPS – Education Partners connects high school students with local businesses to provide hands-on apprenticeship opportunities in skilled trades and manufacturing. The program helps students gain real-world experience while completing their high school education.

2024 Activities:

- Promote GPS-ED while distinguishing the difference between Inspire and YA's.

Other Initiatives:

- Coordinate 2-day 7th Grade Career Exploration Event at Beaver Dam Middle School with Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce
- Create binders for Beaver Dam Elementary students that illustrate local employers
- Collaborate with Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) on new and changing needs in the region
 - Promote MPTC contract training with employers



BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Showcasing Dodge County as a place to do business is an important part of the Community Development Division. Utilizing available resources to feature Dodge County as a great location in WI, available workforce, and a quality of life area are features that used to market Dodge County. Since Dodge County does not own any buildings or sites available for new developments, staff works with local communities to market their available building and sites. Additionally, staff works with community leaders to respond to Requests for Information (RFI) for new potential developments. Some of the activities in 2024 include:

- Building and Sites Inventory: Click [Here](#) to View
 - 19 sites available
 - 9 buildings available
- Received and distributed 15 Request for Information (RFI) to community leaders
- Continuously work with Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP) and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) on new development interest and options to help tell our story about why Dodge County is a good place to do business.
- Worked with City of Horicon to make Marshland Crossing Industrial Park Gold Shovel Certified
 - Connected MPTC with Horicon for build-out of new Horicon Regional Center that opened September 2024.
- Continuously Provide Assistance in various forms and as resources allow to communities



Marshland Crossing Industrial Park ft. MPTC - Horicon Regional Center

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE)

Assisting the existing businesses in Dodge County to help them grow and thrive in Dodge County is vital for our future. Businesses have varying needs that staff assists with, such as facility expansions, business to business connections, business growth (exporting), community relations, and workforce. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with existing businesses is extremely important and critical for BRE activities. Some of the BRE activities in 2024 include:

When surveyed about the strengths of doing business in Dodge County, here's what we heard:

“

- Lower cost of doing business
- Strong schools and local businesses
- Easy to work with local communities
- Proximity to assets
- Room to accommodate additional development

”

Over 100+ Business Contacts in 2024, talks have led to:

- Workforce and Quality of Life Initiatives
- Potential Facility Expansions
- Business to Business Connections
- Review – On-site Healthcare / Childcare / Housing
- Business Market Growth
 - Supply Chain / Exporting
- Community Relations
 - Regulatory Activities

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

There are 43 local units of government in Dodge County; 23 Towns, 11 Villages, and 9 Cities. Each community has its own unique set of issues and opportunities to work on. Dodge County serves as a partner to communities to assist with those needs and supports where able to. Some of the activities staff assists communities with is:

- County/Town Zoning, Land Division, Park Plans, Comprehensive Plans, Farmland Preservation Program, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (planning/ plat review/ zoning).
- Collaborating with public/private entities to expand childcare accessibility:
 - Connected YMCA to local employers to create new childcare options
 - Led employer sponsored childcare discussions and exploration.
 - Conducted childcare facility survey to explore challenges within Dodge County
- Addressing housing needs
 - Connecting housing developers and communities
- Hosted 2 Chamber of Commerce Leadership Meetings
- Create training opportunities for local officials
 - Center of Land Use Education hosted 2 workshops for Town Zoning /Planning Officials
- Developed Dodge County Community Development Fund Grant Program for local entities utilizing sales tax dollars to help bridge the financial gaps in projects promoting economic growth and improve quality of life.



DODGE COUNTY ACTIVITIES

There are a wide variety of county activities the Community Development Division is involved in. These can range from traditional Land Resources and Parks (LRP) Department activities to higher level county administration activities. Below is a summary of Dodge County activities typically worked on:

- Land Resources and Parks Department
 - Land Use Code/ Comprehensive Plan/ Farmland Preservation (\$700,000+ tax credits)/ Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)/ Elected Official Training
- CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Programs
 - 50+ Loans = \$1,875,295 loaned to homeowners
- Gold Star Memorial Trail Development
 - Connecting Horicon to Wild Goose State Trail
- Dodge County Housing Authority Projects
 - 30 Housing Units in Juneau
 - 10 Housing Units and Childcare Facility in Lowell
- Updating Dodge County Comprehensive Plan
 - Developed Work Group with 12 Public & Private Entity Stakeholders throughout Dodge County



Comprehensive Plan Work Group Meeting

TOURISM

A wide range of tourism activities are organized through the Community Development Division. Dodge County offers diverse outdoor recreational opportunities, including the Dodge County Park and Trail System, the Federal and State Horicon Marsh Areas, the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center, state wildlife areas, and numerous lakes and waterways. These extensive outdoor options are within an hour's drive of a large portion of the state's population, making it a prime location for regional tourism. As a result, a significant focus is placed on promoting Dodge County's outdoor recreation to the Fox Valley, Madison, and Milwaukee areas.

Both digital and print materials were used to market these outdoor opportunities. Additionally, the annual Dodge County Visitor Guide remains a key marketing tool for attracting new residents and workforce. The following highlights some of the key activities from 2024:

Dodge County Visitor Guide

- 25,000 Paper Guides – Distributed across greater Dodge County region
- 1 Digital Campaign showcasing canoe/kayaking opportunities in Dodge County:
 - 45,462 Impressions / 80 Clicks

Created Promotional Video Highlighting Snowmobiling in Dodge County

- Shared across social media platforms and the Dodge County website to attract visitors during the winter season
 - View Video Here: [Dodge County Snowmobile Video](#)

Collaborated with the Department of Tourism to create a DIY Economic Impact Report

- The economic activity generated by Dodge County Parks and the Horicon Marsh Visitor and Education Center was estimated to have an economic significance of \$8.4 million
 - View the Report Here: [2024 DIY Economic Impact Report](#)

Joint Effort Marketing Grant

- Partnered with 12 communities and 3 Horicon Marsh entities to establish new brand tourism brand and logo for Dodge County Tourism
 - Slogan: Dodge County – A New Direction
- Awarded Year 2 JEM Grant for \$39,550 to Dodge County with goal of building out new tourism website for Dodge County
- Collaborate with communities gathering content for webpage
- Collected and edited content of Dodge County Parks utilizing camera and drone for website collection



LOOKING AHEAD

The Dodge County Community Development Division remained proactive and engaged throughout 2024, setting the stage for continued progress in the coming year. As we move forward, the division is committed to building on past successes, addressing ongoing challenges, and embracing new opportunities that support economic growth and community development. Through collaboration and strategic initiatives, we strive to enhance Dodge County's appeal for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

In the year ahead, the division will focus on several important efforts:

- **New Tourism Website Launch** – A refreshed online platform will provide visitors with an improved experience, showcasing attractions, events, and outdoor recreation opportunities in Dodge County.
- **Community Development Fund Grant Program** – Now open for applications, this program will support local projects that drive economic and community growth.
- **Dodge County Enhanced Internship Program** – Expanding opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in various county departments this summer.
- **Gold Star Memorial Trail Expansion (Horicon to Wild Goose Trail)** – Advancing efforts to connect communities through outdoor recreation and active transportation.
- **Comprehensive Plan Update** – Continuing the long-term planning process to guide the county's growth and development.
- **Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships** – Collaborating with stakeholders to address issues impacting businesses, municipalities, and residents across Dodge County.
- **Expanding Inspire/MBA activities** to further enhance career-based learning opportunities and strengthen connections between students and local employers.

Our division provides essential services that support both public and private stakeholders across the region. Like pieces of a puzzle, each function we perform is vital on its own, but together, they create a stronger, more connected Dodge County. By fostering partnerships and driving innovation, we look ahead with optimism, ready to shape a thriving future for our communities.

Please feel free to get in touch with us. Our contact information is provided for your convenience:

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Parks and Trails Division

**ASTICO * DERGE * LEDGE * HARNISCHFEGER * NITSCHKE MOUNDS * WILD GOOSE STATE TRAIL *
GLACIAL RIVER TRAIL * GOLD STAR MEMORIAL TRAIL * SNOWMOBILE/ATV TRAILS**

MISSION

To meet the health and recreation needs and demands of the citizens of Dodge County and its visitors and to further the County's environmental and land use goals through efficient and cost-effective operation and maintenance of a safe and accessible county-wide system of primarily resource-oriented parks, trails and open space areas.

SCOPE

The [Parks and Trails Division](#) is responsible for planning, development, operation and maintenance of eight current parks and trails facilities, administration of the County Snowmobile and ATV/UTV Trail Programs, and promotion of regional open space recreational opportunities in Dodge County. The table on the next page identifies the amenities and features of the County Parks and Trails System.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION of the park system is carried out primarily by the Parks Superintendent and Parks Foreman and nine (9) seasonal staff assisted by Volunteer Camp Hosts (when available). Department Director provides project management and oversight on select projects and activities. The Administrative Support Specialist manages the reservation system and serves as the primary point of public contact and public relations in the office, providing a key link between staff and customers. Many projects, activities and some routine maintenance require the use of Burke Correctional Center inmates, scout troops, volunteers, contracted labor and County Highway crews to supplement park staff.

The parks remain open year-round for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding and other day use recreation. Minimal winter maintenance is currently undertaken. However, multi-use winter trails are groomed to increase trail access and use year-round. Plowing services are contracted at Astico, Harnischfeger, Ledge and Nitschke Mounds Parks to keep a minimum of roads open to parking areas in order to allow access and use of the park for day-use activities. Winter camping is not permitted in the parks. Parking lots along the Wild Goose State Trail are able to be maintained with assistance from the Highway Department as time and resources permit.



Seasonal Staff and Assignments:	Attendants	Caretakers	Volunteer Hosts
Astico	Kaylee Hill	Paul Rettler	Eric Henninger
Derge	Vacant	Scott Erdmann	Chuck Gottschalk
Ledge	Lori McKean	Scott Hug	Cindy Neitzel
Harnischfeger	Ann Hall	John Sevenz	David Baumgartner & Bonnie Ayers
Nitschke Mounds, Glacial River Trail, Gold Star Memorial Trail, and Wild Goose State Trail	N/A	Joe Schaefer	N/A

Parks and Trails Division

The **Volunteer Camp Host** program continues to be a vital component in the parks operation. The camp hosts assist park visitors with information, campsite registrations, firewood sales, watercraft rentals and monitoring of the park when staff are not available. The camp hosts receive a campsite and firewood as compensation during their stay. The volunteer camp host at Derge Park has provided attendant like services, so we did not need to fill the vacant attendant position for 2024.

Amenity / Feature	Harnischfeger	Astico	Ledge	Nitschke Mounds	Derge	Wild Goose State Trail	Glacial River Trail	Gold Star Memorial Trail
Acres	132	100	83	54	13	20 miles	3.5 miles	2.1 miles
Key Feature	Rock River	Crawfish River	Niagara Escarpment	Effigy Mounds	Beaver Dam Lake	Horicon Marsh Community Connectivity	Connects Wild Goose Trail to Watertown	Connects Mayville to Horicon Marsh
Campsites - Electric	8	45	23	NA	24	NA	NA	NA
Campsites – Non electric	1	15	18	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Flush Toilets	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Showers	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Vault /Portable Toilets	2 Portable	4	3	1 Portable	1	1 Portable (Hwy 60)	NA	NA
Dump Station	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Canoeing/Kayaking	Rentals/Access	Rentals/Access	NA	NA	Access/ADA	NA	NA	NA
Motor Boat Access	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Fishing Access	Pier/Shore	Pier/Shore	NA	NA	Pier/Shore	NA	NA	NA
Biking	On Roads/ Main Trail	On Roads	On Roads	NA	On Roads	20 miles	3.5 miles (6.5 miles on road)	2.1
Hiking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	20 miles	3.5 miles	Yes
Horseback Riding	1.2 miles	NA	NA	NA	NA	14 miles	NA	NA
Enclosed Shelter	Clubhouse	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Open Air Picnic Shelter	2	1	2	1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Picnic Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Horseshoe Pits	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Volleyball Courts	1	1	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Playground	2	2	2	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
Disc Golf	9 holes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Miniature Golf	9 holes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Boardwalk	800 ft (to river) 100 ft (woods)	50 ft (pier)	130 ft (overlook)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
X-C Ski/ Snowshoe Access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ATV Trail (Winter)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20 miles	NA	NA
Snowmobile Trail	379.9 miles of County trails, mostly located over private property through easements							

Parks and Trails Division

Park Entrance Vehicle Counts

Entrance data has been collected in the parks since 2013 through the use of pneumatic and infrared counters. Pneumatic traffic counters need to be removed for the winter, so actual year-round traffic count data has not been possible previously. The pneumatic counters were becoming more unreliable as they aged and were replaced with the infrared counters, providing more accurate year-round data.

The monthly counts by park for 2024 are identified in the table below. Some equipment issues were experienced at Nitschke Mounds Park from August through December. Therefore, the average daily traffic (ADT) counts shown were significantly lower than expected.

VEHICLE COUNTS IDENTIFIED ON INFRARED TRAFX COUNTERS AT PARK ENTRANCES																	
Year	Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Actual ADT	ADTx365 (Yearly)	Total Visitors	
2022	Astico	794	734	1,556		3,276	7,747	10,472	1,218	0	4,178	1,374	1,045	48	17,491	34,982	
	Derge Park	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	2,376	3,087	1,494	1,571	1,536	187	84	8,897	17,794	
	Harn North Barn	411	322	428		550	1,628	905	799	1,438	2,560	750	515	480	15	5,393	10,786
	Harnischfeger Park	582	634	908		2,368	3,830	3,555	4,475	2,906	4,610	2,685	952	761	39	14,133	28,266
	Ledge Park	895	740	470		4,830	7,039	6,321	6,845	5,737	5,561	9,420	2,088	633	75	27,310	54,619
	NM Park	580	523	NA		1,310	5,273	1,323	1,012	1,146	1,123	1,124	619	378	23	8,567	17,134
2023	Astico	1,247	1,423	2,269		4,310	8,211	8,767	10,259	7,443	7,199	4,542	1,800	1,222	80	29,346	58,692
	Derge Park	121	97	191		857	3,228	3,729	4,363	3,556	3,015	1,362	577	394	29	10,745	21,490
	Harn North Barn	384	501	661		804	1,121	669	728	1,229	NA	NA	744	588	10	3,715	7,429
	Harnischfeger Park	617	718	1,011		2,092	2,578	2,988	4,150	3,367	2,540	NA	533	583	36	13,236	26,471
	Ledge Park	992	1,275	1,990		5,003	6,828	6,538	7,158	6,180	5,925	6,838	2,073	964	71	25,882	51,764
	NM Park	477	489	499		939	6,686	3,519	2,476	4,663	1,019	938	732	448	31	11,443	22,885
2024	Astico	802	2,099	2,741		4,015	7,815	7,100	7,686	6,965	6,408	5,557	1,168	1,698	74	27,027	54,054
	Derge Park	61	438	643		1,191	2,927	4,289	4,554	4,648	3,677	2,888	507	306	36	13,065	26,129
	Harn North Barn	347	645	776		814	1,161	910	823	846	12,353	1,296	547	704	29	10,611	21,222
	Harnischfeger Park	501	1,011	1,724		2,547	2,498	3,558	3,210	2,523	4,548	2,422	914	845	36	13,151	26,301
	Ledge Park	573	1,679	2,437		4,240	6,876	6,078	6,569	6,487	5,996	7,573	1,654	889	70	25,526	51,051
	NM Park	421	565	859		1,002	1,439	1,289	990	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	15	5,651	11,303
NA=counts not available due to counter not installed or counter not functioning properly (or assumed malfunction due to inexplicable counts)																	
ADT = Average Daily Traffic																	
ADT x 365 = Total Traffic Counts for the year based on the ADT for days that counts were available																	
Total visitors estimated is based on the average number of visitors per vehicle being 2																	

Total Park Visitation (est.)			
	2022	2023	2024
Astico	34,982	58,692	54,054
Derge	17,794	21,490	26,129
Harn North Barn	10,786	7,429	21,222
Harnischfeger	28,266	26,471	26,301
Ledge	54,619	51,764	51,051
NM	17,134	22,885	NA
Total Visitation	163,580	188,731	178,757

ADT (Average Daily Traffic)			
	2022	2023	2024
Astico	48	80	74
Derge	24	29	36
Harn North Barn	15	10	29
Harnischfeger	39	36	36
Ledge	75	71	70
NM	23	31	NA

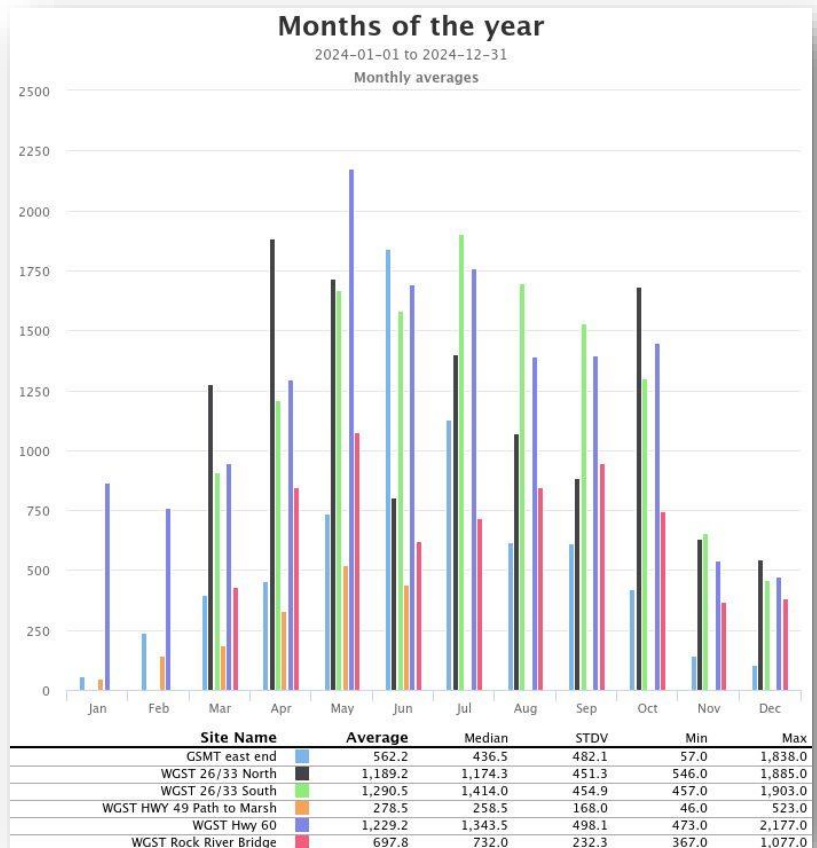
Parks and Trails Division

Trail Counts

Recognizing that trail counts are important for planning, maintenance, trail advocacy and helping to obtain grants and funding, we have made efforts over the years to identify and develop good trail user count data. The old-style counters in use prior to 2019, were not overly reliable and thus we had limited success with our trail counts analysis. In March of 2019, a new counter was placed on the Gold Star Memorial Trail toward the east end of the trail just after construction of the first phase of the trail was completed. A new counter was also placed on the Wild Goose State Trail near the south end of the trail just north of State Road 60. Despite an occasional inexplicable count anomaly, these counters have provided mostly reliable trail counts since installation and are building important baseline data. Additional counters are placed at various locations for short periods to obtain additional counts that can be evaluated

based on the data from the permanent counters. For 2024, the area south of Hwy 33 on the Wild Goose Trail saw the highest average monthly use with the Hwy 60 area receiving just slightly less activity.

A [trail count App](#) is available for viewing current trail and park counts. The link for the App can be accessed from the [County Parks webpage](#).



2024 Trail visitor counts / usage 2024 based on various counters data.

	Month	GSMT east end	WGST 26/33 North	WGST Hwy 60	TOTALS
Total Counts from infrared counter	January	57		864	921
	February	250		789	1039
	March	398	1278	949	2624
	April	453	1885	1295	3633
	May	735	1715	2177	4627
	June	1838	801	1693	4332
	July	1130	1399	1761	4290
	August	617	1071	1392	3080
	September	611	885	1394	2890
	October	420	1681	1449	3550
	November	142	631	542	1315
	December	104	546	473	1123
Total Trail Counts		6,755	11,892	14,778	33,424

Parks and Trails Division

Campsite Rentals

A variety of campsite types are available throughout the Dodge County Parks system. Standard electric and non-electric sites with camping pads, picnic tables and fire rings are most common and available at Astico, Derge, Ledge and Harnischfeger Parks. Group sites are also available at Astico, Harnischfeger and Ledge Parks. Group sites primarily serve scout campouts but are also popular for large family gatherings and organization outings.

The campsites available for rentals are:

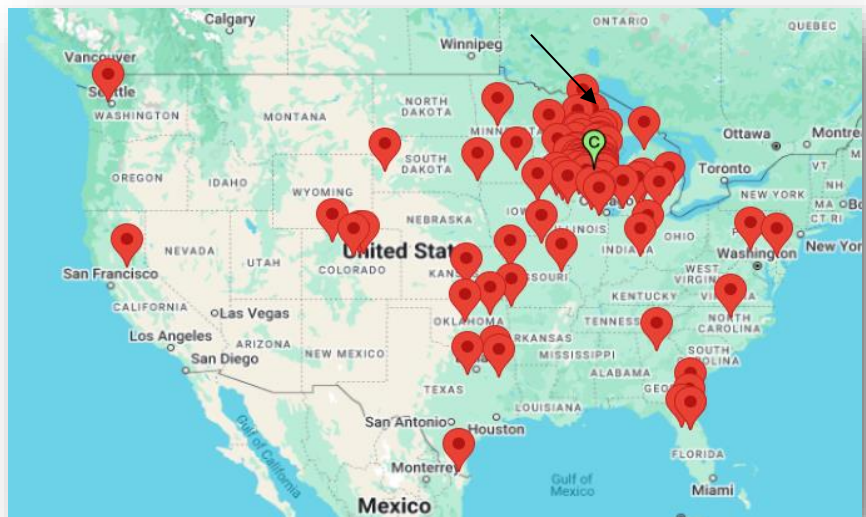
- Astico – 45 electric, 14 non-electric, 1 group
- Ledge – 23 electric, 16 non-electric, 2 group
- Derge – 24 electric, 0 group
- Harnischfeger – 8 electric, 1 group

Campsite Rentals: 2020-2024 (Total Nights)					
Park	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Astico	2,768	3,899	4,019	3,853	3,469
Derge	1,101	3,477	1,177	1,845	1,897
Ledge	2,337	1,884	3,120	3,285	3,480
Harnischfeger	601	824	949	1,047	991
TOTALS	6,807	10,084	9,265	10,030	9,837

In 2024, camping fees were \$28 for electric sites and \$20 for non-electric sites. High campsite occupancy continued at all parks again in 2024. Overall camping revenues decreased by 5% for 2024, mostly attributed to the many site closures at Astico Park due to flooding. Harnischfeger Park saw the largest increase in camping revenues for 2024 at 10%.

Typically, about 65% - 70% of the overnight campsite rentals in the parks are by visitors from outside of the Dodge County area. Camper visitors come from around the country and in 2024, roughly 14% travelled over 100 miles to stay in one of our County Parks. Residents, generally within a 15-25 minute drive of a park, are the primary users of the day use facilities such as the trails, fishing areas, playgrounds and picnic areas.

Where Did 2024 Harnischfeger Park Campers Come From?



Camping Revenue History by Park

Park	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	%Change
Astico	\$66,405	\$94,796	\$95,802	\$97,442	\$90,705	-7%
Derge	\$28,886	\$39,192	\$32,142	\$49,924	\$49,217	-1%
Ledge	\$60,130	\$83,730	\$79,154	\$83,257	\$86,954	4%
Harnischfeger	\$15,804	\$22,332	\$24,758	\$24,227	\$26,586	10%
TOTALS	\$171,225	\$240,050	\$231,856	\$254,851	\$245,969	-5%

Parks and Trails Division

Online Reservation System

An online reservation system was implemented mid-year 2018 to better meet the needs of our park customers by providing 24/7, real time - online camping and shelter reservations. In 2024, 32% of reservations were made on the weekends and 46% were made outside of regular office hours compared to 29% on weekends and 45% outside of office hours in 2023.

Park	Online Reservations Campsites and Shelters - 2024
Astico	1,276 – 90%
Derge	632 – 89%
Ledge	1,382 – 92%
Harnischfeger	321– 77%

The sixth full year of operation under the online system was in 2024. In 2024, a total of 3,611 reservations were made online compared with 3,584 in 2023. A \$5 fee is charged per reservation in addition to the campsite fee. This fee is segregated into a future Parks Development account to cover credit card use fees with the balance of revenue remaining for future park development.

Firewood

Firewood continues to be a major task for the park staff, both in keeping up with sales and supplies. The firewood ban first instituted in 2008 was lifted for the 2020 camping season. Firewood revenue has continued a slight decrease each year since the ban was lifted. Firewood fees remained at \$5 per bundle (approximately 8 pieces) in 2024 and were sold by park staff, volunteer camp hosts and on a self-service basis.

Approximately 25,307 pieces of firewood were cut, split and sold in the parks in 2024 resulting in over \$15,817 net firewood revenues (after sales tax

Firewood Revenue History								
Park	2020	2021				2022	2023	2024
Astico	\$5,426	\$6,747				\$6,436	\$6,225	\$5,462
Derge	\$1,488	\$1,503				\$1,512	\$1,564	\$1,896
Ledge	\$6,380	\$8,138				\$7,545	\$7,791	\$7,210
Harnischfeger	\$ 924	\$1,540				\$1,416	\$1,123	\$1,249
TOTAL	\$14,218	\$17,928	\$16,909	\$16,704	\$15,817			

removal), a \$887 decrease from 2023. All the firewood sold was generated from the parks utilizing dead and downed wood from throughout the park system as well as removal of undesirable and hazard trees.

Burke Correctional Center inmates assisted park staff with firewood cutting, splitting, stacking and brushing in 2024.

Continual efforts have been taken by parks staff to inventory and remove hazardous trees in the parks and on the trails. Replanting of various tree species is also a priority for park staff to offset the tree removal.

Shelter and Clubhouse Rentals

The shelters and clubhouse rentals available in the County Parks provide a valuable service to Dodge County residents and visitors. The buildings are used for scout activities, organization outings, company picnics and family parties, such as reunions, graduations, weddings, birthdays and more. Additionally, the clubhouse serves as the hub of activities for the annual FallFest public fundraising event at Harnischfeger Park held by Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. The Clubhouse and shelters are also available at no charge to all Dodge County departments that wish to host an off-site department meeting or training session.

The buildings available for rentals are:

- Astico Park – 1 Open Shelter
- Ledge Park – 2 Open Shelters
- Harnischfeger Park – 2 Open Shelters and the Clubhouse
- Nitschke Mounds Park - contains a large shelter that functions primarily for park programming and educational functions and is not available for public rentals.

Net Shelter Revenue History by Park					
Park	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Astico	\$449	\$1,268	\$ 312	\$431	\$370
Derge	\$ 47	\$246	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Ledge	\$188	\$654	\$1,232	\$1,564	\$879
Harnischfeger	\$531	\$2,715	\$3,554	\$3,496	\$3,205
TOTALS	\$1,215	\$4,883	\$5,098	\$5,491	\$4,454
Harnischfeger Clubhouse	\$1,353	\$3,245	\$5,189	\$4,474	\$2,872

Parks and Trails Division

Watercraft Rentals

Watercraft rentals, which include canoes and kayaks, are available at Astico and Harnischfeger Parks. Watercraft activity levels remain high, however more people continue to bring their own canoes/kayaks rather than rent from the parks. Due to flooding and variably high water and fast flows at both parks the watercrafts had minimal availability for public rental in 2024. Thus, minimal watercraft rental revenue was received at both parks.

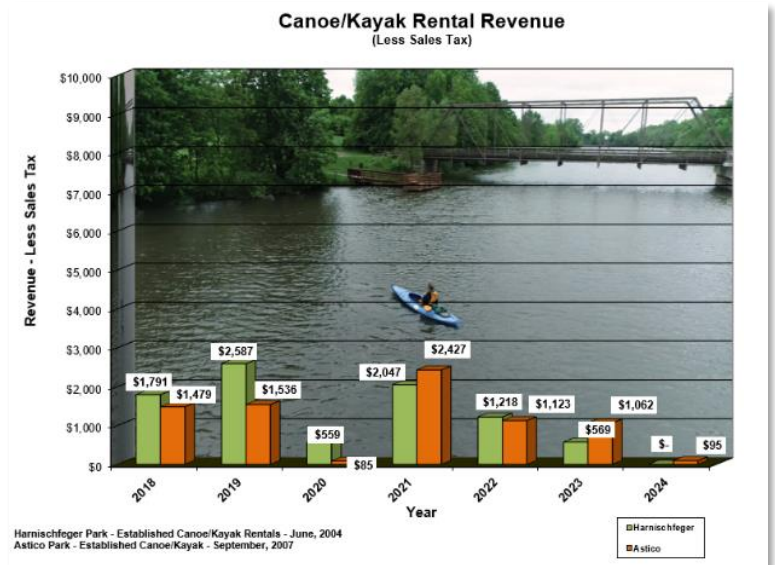
Watercraft inventory for rentals were:

Harnischfeger Park

- 8 Canoes
- 8 Kayaks (Two – two-person units)

Astico Park

- 4 Canoes
- 4 Kayaks (One – two-person unit)



2024 DODGE COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS PROJECTS

Astico Park

One third of the campsites in the park were closed for the majority of the season due to extreme flooding. A concrete pad was installed on the east side of the park for the selfie stand project that will be completed in spring, 2025. This project is supported by donations from local businesses and Dodgeland High School. Planning and preparations began for the installation of a new restroom/shower building, sanitary mound system and open air pavilion. The restroom/shower building, electrical/well upgrades and the sanitary mound system design were approved for ARPA funding.



Derge Park

The electrical upgrades to the campsites were completed. Each campsite now has an electrical pedestal with 20/30/50 amp service. The Fish Cleaning Station was also completed. This project was supported by donations from local businesses, contractors and Beaver Dam and Dodgeland High School. During the 2024 camping season several campsites were closed periodically due to flooding.



Harnischfeger Park

The campsite pads were widened, lengthened and leveled in early spring, 2024. One campsite was removed due to continuous flooding. This work was completed by the Dodge County Highway Department. In November, 2024 work began on the electrical and water upgrades for the campsites. Each campsite will have an electrical pedestal with 20/30/50 amp service. Each campsite will also have a water hook-up. The electrical upgrades will be completed in early spring, 2025. The electrical and water upgrades were supported by ARPA funds. A new commercial water heater was installed in the restroom/shower building, replacing the outdated and undersized unit. Repairs to the boardwalk continued in 2024.



Parks and Trails Division

Ledge Park

The old fenced in woodlot near the Park Office was removed and replaced with a new woodlot near the restroom/shower building. This will increase efficiency and security. Multiple hazardous trees and ash trees were removed. Park staff and volunteers spent many hours brushing and resurfacing the hiking trails with woodchips. Several support posts were replaced on the scenic overlook to accommodate the installation of a selfie stand in spring, 2025.



Nitschke Mounds

Red Wolf Trail planning continued; to include quotes for the proposed boardwalk across the pond and in several low areas. The addition of solar power to the pavilion for educational presentations was delayed to 2025. A Wisconsin Archaeology in Public Education Grant was received for educational signage updates for the pavilion, thanks to staff coordination with Ryan Howell, Effigy Mounds Initiative and Kurt Sampson, Dodge County Historical Society. The Wisconsin Historical Society, Board of Curators also presented a Historic Restoration Award to Nitschke Mounds Park for Effigy Mound Initiative in 2024. Volunteers spent many hours continuing the endless battle of invasive species removal as well as clearing trees and brush from the mounds in the north end of the park.



Wild Goose State Trail (WGST)

Bridge inspections and repairs continued to be a focus in 2024. Park staff and Dodge County Highway Department personnel completed repairs and reconstruction of several bridges. Concentrated efforts were again focused in 2024 on clearing and maintenance of the horse trail. A concrete pad for a future selfie stand was installed at the south end of the WGST near the State Road 60 parking lot. Tree cleanup continues to be a major investment of time and equipment for park staff after almost every storm or strong wind events. Planning and bidding for 2 vault toilets along the trail was also completed in 2024 for 2025 installation.



Gold Star Memorial Trail

The Phase 2 project from Horicon to the Wild Goose Trail was awarded \$260,000 in State Stewardship funds in 2024 to go along with the \$1.1 million Federal grant awarded in 2022. Design and Engineering work on the segment began in 2024 to include environmental, historic/cultural and endangered species evaluations beyond the trail design/engineering. Design and Engineering should be finalized by fall of 2025 along with acquisition of some temporary and permanent easements that will be needed. Construction is expected by spring of 2026. Many fundraising activities continued to take place in 2024 led by the Friends of Dodge County Parks. A contract to undertake preliminary layout design and provide necessary information to seek grant opportunities to develop this phase was awarded in 2024 with work to begin in 2025. Additionally, preliminary discussions began in 2024 regarding the ability to bring the national Gold Star Families Memorial Monument to Dodge County along the Gold Star Trail.

Glacial River Trail

The Dodge County Highway Department assisted with spring trail preparations with the use of a mechanical sweeper. Park staff performed routine seasonal mowing and maintenance on the trail.

Parks and Trails Division

[County Snowmobile Trail System](#)
[County ATV/UTV Trail \(Winter Only\)](#)

379.9 miles
20 miles

Snowmobile and ATV/UTV program grants are received from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and distributed as needed to operate, maintain, rehabilitate, and develop the trail systems. Dodge County receives \$300 per mile for the snowmobile trails and \$200 per mile for the ATV/UTV trail. Funding for the programs comes from snowmobile and ATV/UTV registration fees, trail pass fees and gas tax.

2023-2024 Season

- Received \$113,970 snowmobile trail grant for maintenance and grooming of snowmobile trail system (\$2,934.47 for program administration).
- Received \$4,000 ATV/UTV trail grant for maintenance of ATV/UTV trail on the Wild Goose State Trail (\$462.56 for program administration).
- Maintained trail reports on hotline, email, Facebook, website, and Travel Wisconsin snow conditions report website to keep local media, law enforcement, the public and others informed of trail status changes.
- The Dodge County snowmobile trail system has five zones. During the 2023-2024 season two zones were open 11 days, two zones were open 10 days and one zone was open 9 days. During the previous 2022-2023 season one zone and a portion of another zone were open for a day and a half. The Wild Goose State Trail was open for 14 total days for winter ATV/UTV use during the 2023-2024 season compared with 22 days during the 2022-2023 season.
- Dodge County received State recognition as a "Snowmobile Friendly County" for 2024-2028 by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC).



Parks and Trails Division

THE FRIENDS OF DODGE COUNTY PARKS

The Friends of Dodge County Parks is a 501c3 non-profit organization working closely with the Parks and Trails division to encourage and assist Dodge County in providing and upgrading park and recreation facilities to meet the needs and demands of County residents and visitors into the future. The Friends group also provides recommendations for new or updated park and recreational facilities or initiatives. The most visible aspect of the Friends group is in fundraising to provide a source of funds to the County to supplement public funds for park projects. The typical sources of funds for the group comes from the annual FallFest event at Harnischfeger Park as well as memberships and general donations. The Friends group has several designated funds for specific parks (and projects) allowing donors to contribute to parks or projects that especially appeal to them.

FallFest 2024 raised nearly \$10,000 for Harnischfeger Park improvements and had an attendance of about 1,000 people.



A permanent **Endowment Fund** with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin was created in 2010 to provide perpetual funding support for the Friends group mission. The goal is to increase the Endowment Fund value to a level that provides significant annual funding. The Endowment Fund value increased by \$6,365 during 2024 to a yearend value of \$49,667.

Additionally, the Gold Star Memorial Trail fund with the Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation experienced a few larger contributions in 2024 for a yearend value of \$5299.

The group maintains a Facebook page (since 2012) to provide and promote park project and event updates, to solicit feedback, to promote parks and trails use and to encourage donations and volunteerism.

The Officers and Board of Directors of the organization promote and oversee membership, fundraising and organizational operations which includes directing the project funding where requested and needed. Currently Harnischfeger Park, the Gold Star Memorial Trail and Nitschke Mounds Park have active fundraising committees. One of the Board members conducts a field trip tour of Nitschke Mounds Park through the Natural Resources Foundation. Several Nitschke Mounds Park Committee members are helping to lead invasive management efforts along with other committed regular volunteers.

Park staff assist the Friends group in an advisory role and provide some administrative assistance, as well as making funding requests and recommendations for park projects. Input on projects and park needs are also sought from the Board during their meetings in which park staff attend.

FRIENDS OF DODGE COUNTY PARKS, INC. YEAR END FINANCIALS		
FUND ACCOUNTS	2023	2024
Administrative Fund	-1,851	-327
Astico Fund	9,105	8,999
Derge Fund	6,579	8,106
Ledge Fund	-26	12
Wild Goose Trail Fund	4,046	3,602
Nitschke Mounds Fund	7,823	9,132
Harnischfeger Fund	46,718	56,453
Gold Star Mem. Trail Fund	36,987	61,651
Pelican Path Fund	10,684	14,289
Future Park Fund	245	245
Endowment Fund – Temp	25	1,225
Undesignated General Fund	8,706	8,981
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	129,041	172,368
Total Revenues	42,354	57,411
Total Expenses	16,565	13,760
Transfer to Endowment	500	325
NET REVENUE	25,289	43,326
Endowment Fund (Dec 31 Balance)	43,302	49,667
Beaver Dam Area Comm Foundation Fund (Dec 31 Balance)	965	5,299