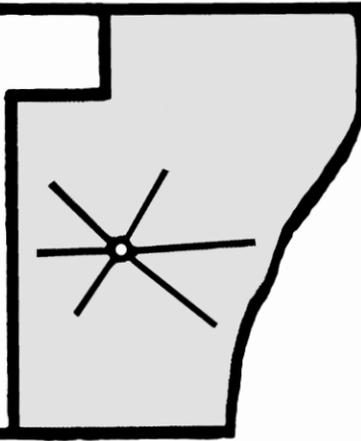


the Valders Journal

Vol. 80 No. 10 Thursday, October 24, 2019
Subscription \$30 Per Year Single Copy \$1



Overall air quality improves

Wisconsin environmental officials say the state's air quality is improving. According to the Department of Natural Resources' 2019 Air Quality Trends Report, concentrations of most pollutants are continuing to decrease. Overall fine particle concentrations have dropped 35% since 2002. Emissions of ozone-forming pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides, have decreased 50% and sulfur dioxide emissions have dropped 68% since the early 2000s. About 94% of Wisconsin's population lives in areas that now meet all federal air quality standards. However, sections of six counties along Lake Michigan, including Manitowoc, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, and Door, aren't meeting federal ozone standards.

Drivers find muddy path this autumn

Farmers battle wet fields, fight to keep roads clear

By Todd S. Bergmann

Blame the weather, not the farmers.

Roads across the area are covered in more mud than usual during the fall harvest due to persistent rain. Farmers and custom operators are asking for cooperation and patience and doing what they can to minimize any danger and inconvenience.

Because the area has had twice as much rain as normal, mud on roads has reached frustrating levels, said Brandon Vogel, an owner of Right Way Applications in rural Valders, which is assisting farmers in manure application on their fields.

"You cannot do anything about it," he said. "It is the nature of the beast."

Dan Meyer, a rural Kiel farmer, said that with record rains this fall, water has no place to go.

"There will be mud on the roads this fall until the rain stops," he said. "That is just how it's going to be. The farmers will do the best to remove it. We ask drivers to be cautious."

Heavy mud on the roads is a matter of concern for town road superintendents, farmers, motorists and law enforcement. At least one injury accident near Valders this fall has been related to mud on the roads, when a skid steer operator was struck by a car while cleaning mud off County Road C.

Like Meyer, Maj. Jason Orth of the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Department has seen more mud on roads this fall.

"With the increase of rain this year, there is no doubt that farm equipment has been transferring above normal amounts of mud onto the roadway," he said.

This year, he said farmers are calling the sheriff's department to report when they will harvest and what roads they will use and to leave contact phone numbers, Orth said.

"That way, we can notify them to clean it up, before we check it," he said. "That helps."

Most farmers recognize that they are expected to keep roads in safe driving condition and not let mud on the roads get out of hand, Orth said.

Vogel said Right Way Applications tries to remove the mud as fast as possible with skid steers and other equipment and transfers the manure away from roads.

"We are only taking tractors out on the field minimal times," he said. "We try not to put any manure on the road."

Custom operator Mike Kaufmann said his employees work to minimize the mud.

"We put signs up warning people of mud on the road," he said. "Then, we also have equipment out there to scrape the road to keep it clean."

Kaufmann said his operation is using dump carts to place corn into semi trucks, parked either on roads or driveways on the farm.

See Mud p. 12



Keeping a Steady '70s Beat

The percussion section (above) performs a portion of the Valders High School marching band's halftime show, which featured the music of the 1970s. Mason Wenzel (left) performs a dance during the show as part of the color guard. The band closed out its 2019 field marching season last Friday and held a concert on Monday. See p. 10 for concert photos. —Journal Photos

Sounding the alarm on water quality

Noted environmental voice sees sharp deficiencies in protecting state's waterways

By Todd S. Bergmann

Wisconsin waters are getting worse, after decades of improvement.

George Meyer, executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and former secretary of the state Department of Natural Resources, talked about that disturbing trend in water quality at the annual meeting of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association at Meat's Opera Haus in St. Nazianz on Friday night.

"With the current policies that are in place in this state and the current programs, we will never, ever reach water quality standards in our lakes and streams in this state," he said. "It is technically and physically impossible."

While state and federal programs reduced pollution from industry and sewer treatment plans, Meyer said runoff from farms and streets continues to contaminate ground and surface waters.

"We have put hundreds of millions of dol-

lars into the program," he said. "We are going backwards on many of our waters."

Bullhead Lake near Collins is suffering from a glut of phosphorous, added Tom Ward, president of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association.

"The fish are not what they used to be," he said.

That lake will have to undergo an expensive alum treatment, Ward said.

The state needs an effective program to reduce phosphorous and nutrients in waters, Meyer said.

"It is time to stop saying, 'We're going to get there' if we are not going to get there," he said.

Wisconsin will have to require farmers to develop and follow a nutrient management plan and provide funding to cover costs, Meyer said.

"I get it," he said. "Farmers don't like regulation."

When he was growing up on a farm just west of New Holstein, Meyer said, his father demonstrated conservation by example.

"Dad and all the neighbors were really good farm operators," he said. "They really respected the land and were stewards. They did not use words like 'the environment.' We did not know what that was."

"They took care of the land. They were careful on how they used chemicals."

While he was attending St. Norbert College in De Pere in the 1960s, students often went into the Fox River, Meyer said.

"If you went in that river... you either had an ear infection or a rash," he said. "It was contaminated. There were 10 paper mills upstream."

The river contained carp but no game fish, Meyer said.

At the same time, he said paper mills discharged so much sulfur and mercury in the See Water p. 20

Water

Continued from p. 1

Wisconsin River that no one could eat fish from it.

In the past 50 years, Meyer said the quality of the Fox River has improved.

"Now, it is a world-class walleye fishery," he said.

After St. Norbert, Meyer attended law school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and worked part time as a law clerk for the DNR.

During this time, Congress passed the Clean Water Act, which required states to implement a permit process to make waters fishable and swimmable by 1983, Meyer said.

"They needed lawyers to do the work," he said.

After graduation from law school, Meyer got a job as a DNR lawyer.

Before the Clean Water Act, many municipalities merely had primary treatment to catch the big stuff before sewage went in the water, Meyer said.

The act added secondary treatment to keep bacteria out of the water in the 1970s and tertiary treatment to keep phosphorous out of the water in the 1980s, he said.

The state spent \$3 billion to help municipalities clean wastewater they discharged into streams and lakes, Meyer said.

With the federal act, he said paper mills could no longer threaten to leave Wisconsin because they would have to meet the same pollution standards in other states.

After industry and municipalities reduced contamination, Meyer said it still flows off farmlands and streets, beyond state control.

"We knew it would not be as easy," he said. "There is no way of actually forcing it to happen."

A \$200 fine for killing fish did little good, Meyer said.

Farm runoff not only kills fish in streams, but also contaminates well water, he said.

People across the state



Water Warning

George Meyer, executive director of Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and former secretary of the state Department of Natural Resources, speaks to the Manitowoc County Lakes Association on Friday in St. Nazianz. He highlighted growing problems with lake water quality. —Journal Photo

complain at meetings about bad water in their wells, Meyer noted.

"It is tough to drill a new well and have the second well contaminated after a short time," he said. "They cannot sell their homes. It is pretty hard to sell a house with a bad well."

New wells and current programs will not end the problem, Meyer said, adding that the state needs a stricter requirement to reduce phosphorus and nitrate runoff from farms.

State law requires farmers do certain things, such as store manure away from streams, and promised 70% state funding, while the Legislature appropriated only a small portion, Meyer said.

"We still end up with phosphorous and nitrogen coming off the land," he said. "In most bodies of water, we are going backward in terms of runoff."

The only requirement for farmers to do anything to reduce runoff, normally through nutrient management plans, applies to a minority of farmers in federal programs, Meyer said.

"Farmers can develop a nutrient management plan on

how much nutrients they can put on the land, how they are applied, when they are applied, so they do not run off into lakes and streams," he said.

Only 37% of Wisconsin farmers have a nutrient management plan and of those not all are following them, Meyer

Eaton

Continued from p. 3

during snowplowing on Schomisch Road and discussed a request by Jordan Saunders to convert a building on his family's property into a wedding barn, referring him to county officials and the town building inspector.

• Heard a report from Road Superintendent Craig Zipperer about his work in the past month, including truck repairs, road and culvert work, installation of address signs, brush cutting and mud removal on roads.

said.

"We've got to get serious about this," he stressed.

To eliminate the economic burden on farmers, Meyer proposed 100% government funding of nutrient management costs.

The cost of reducing farm runoff is much less than this nation spent cleaning up sewer discharge years ago, he said.

"You ask a logical question," Meyer said. "Where is that money going to come from?"

People and politicians in Wisconsin do not want to raise taxes.

"It is just a matter of political will and setting priorities," he said. "We're doing this for our grandkids."

Meyer's solution is to dedicate the \$98 million of annual state sales tax revenue on firearms, ammunition, fishing supplies, boats and binoculars to solving the problem.

"I have friends who hike and bike in the outdoors," he said. "They are very willing to pay money for conservation."

Don't get spooked by bad deals at Halloween

Shopping for Halloween should be fun, not terrifying. With so many costume and decoration ideas, it's difficult to choose what to buy, and where to buy it from.

According to the National Retail Federation, Halloween spending for 2019 is expected to reach \$8.8 billion, with consumers planning to spend an average of \$86.27 each.

The survey also noted that, among Halloween celebrants, 69% plan to pass out candy, 49% will decorate their home or yard, 47% will wear costumes, 29% will take their children trick-or-treating, and 17% will dress their pets in costumes.

The Better Business Bureau recommends the following tips to avoid getting spooked this Halloween:

• Some people don't like the idea of spending a lot of money on a costume that will only be worn once, which is why they look into renting.

Check the condition of the costume first, as it may not be in great shape.

• Always check the return policy on retail items, and keep receipts. And remember, buying items with the intent of simply returning them after Halloween is considered fraud.

• When shopping at seasonal stores that may close the day after Halloween or refuse returns after, make sure the item is exactly what you want before purchasing.

• Before purchasing tickets for a special event or haunted house, check bbb.org to make sure there are no complaints about the company hosting the event.



Over the years, numerous surveys have shown apple pie to be the favorite dessert in the United States. It has also been a favorite in England for hundreds of years.



1922 US Hwy. 10, Reedsville, WI 54230

Quality, Affordable, Friendly

- ◆ Companion Animal Preventive Health Care
Dentals • Surgery • Diagnostics
- ◆ Professional Services...Companion, Equine and Dairy

Phone: 920-754-4307

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 7:30 am-6 pm; Sat., 7:30 am-2 pm.

Cool falls nights are on their way...

make sure your Furnace doesn't give you the cold shoulder!



10% DISCOUNT on any parts needed

TUNE-UP SPECIAL

Residential Gas Units Only Offer Ends 11/15/19

For \$82.99 + tax you will receive 20 individual checks including the following:

- Clean and Tune-Up of your furnace
- Check Gas Line for Leaks
- Adjustments to the Thermostat
- Remove and Clean Burners
- Electronic Combustion Analysis (assuring your furnace is providing your home comfort as safe and efficiently as possible)

*Other than the 10% Parts Discount stated, no other discounts may be applied to this special offer.



NOT ALL FURNACE TUNE-UPS ARE ALIKE!

turn to the experts



684-5559 • schausinc.com

100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!



I HAVE A CONCERN AND THE FREEDOM TO PETITION MY GOVERNMENT.

Understanding the First Amendment is key to protecting our free society.

Freedom to Petition the government for redress of grievances means you can actively participate in government by asking for changes or adjustments that affect you or in which you feel strongly.

Learn more at ThinkFirstAmendment.org

Freedom of Speech • Freedom of Religion • Freedom of the Press • Freedom to Peaceably Assemble • Freedom to Petition the Government



KNOW YOUR 5 FREEDOMS

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association and Valdars Journal.