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State retains expert to study Wisconsin's deer herd management practices

By: Wisconsin Department of Administration news release (10/3/11)

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The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has retained Dr. James C. Kroll, the world's foremost expert in modern deer herd management, to provide the state with an independent, objective and scientifically based review of Wisconsin's deer management practices.

Dr. Kroll will immediately commence a scientific study of Wisconsin's whitetail deer management practices, including management practices related to Chronic Wasting Disease. He is expected to complete his report by June 2012.

Dr. Kroll is a nationally-renowned expert in deer management techniques. He currently holds the Harry M. Rockwell Chair in Forest Wildlife at Stephan F. Austin State University where he also serves as director at the Institute for White-tailed Deer Management and Research.

"Wisconsin is well known for its proud deer hunting tradition," Dr. Kroll said. "I have over 30 years of experience in deer herd management. That, combined with the expertise of staff at the Wisconsin DNR, will provide a solid foundation for a scientifically-based review of Wisconsin's deer management practices. In the end, this work will help Wisconsin's deer hunting tradition thrive for generations to come."

Last week, Gov. Scott Walker issued [Executive Order #44](#) to create a Whitetail Deer Trustee who will review and evaluate Wisconsin's deer herd management practices. Under this executive order, DOA was directed to retain an independent expert with recognized scientific credentials and demonstrated experience to review the state's deer management practices.

Editor's note: DNR has created a ["Recent News"](#) link on the "Deer Hunting in Wisconsin" webpage to help redirect questions to DOA and Kroll that it receives from the public on the Deer Trustee.

On October 4, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress issued a [news release](#) welcoming Kroll.



New counter service hours scheduled to become effective in early January

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Following up on the commitment of Secretary Cathy Stepp to improve face-to-face customer service, the department is putting in place a new service delivery model that will provide over 9,000 more hours of over-the-counter service for the public, a 40% increase when compared with hours of service in 2010.

The new service delivery model is based upon providing counter service at DNR's service centers five days per week with consistent hours statewide. Staff urged Sec. Stepp to make improvements in our current delivery service model during tours the Secretary's Office took around the state earlier this year. Input also came from conversations with customer service staff and input from customers.

This new plan includes hiring a few new customer service staff, and a reduction/elimination of travel in the new service plan frees up funds to hire additional LTEs to assist.

The Secretary's Office has given final approval for full implementation of the plan, scheduled to occur in early January.

Full service and satellite service centers

As part of this new plan, the concept of "satellite service centers" was born. Customer and Employee Services Division administrator **Julie Sauer** described the new concept of "satellite service centers."

"We wanted to better communicate to our customers which centers will be open partial days and which will be open full days. We came up with the concept of calling those open partial days 'satellite service centers.'"

"Full service centers" will offer counter services from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., including during the lunch hour, five days per week. These service centers are located in:

- Fitchburg
- Eau Claire
- Spooner
- Rhinelander
- Green Bay
- Milwaukee

"Satellite service centers" will offer counter services five days per week from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Following are the locations of the "limited hours satellite centers:"

- Antigo
- Ashland
- Baldwin
- Black River Falls
- Cumberland
- Dodgeville
- GEF 2/central office
- Hayward
- La Crosse
- Ladysmith
- Oshkosh
- Park Falls
- Peshtigo
- Plymouth
- Sturgeon Bay
- Sturtevant
- Superior
- Waukesha
- Wausau
- Wisconsin Rapids
- Woodruff

A “**limited days service center**” in Janesville will continue to provide counter services two days per week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. The department is exploring opportunities to partner with other state agencies, such as the departments of Tourism and Transportation, to offer services at shared sites such as welcome centers and rest areas located in high traffic areas of the state. Janesville is the first area where we are exploring that alternative, explained Sauer.

When this new plan is implemented, Poynette and Wautoma no longer will provide counter services.

Schedules will provide additional service opportunities

These schedules also will allow the department to be flexible in extending hours at those “satellite service centers” that experience increased customer service demands because they’re located in high-volume tourism areas or during a recreational season, e.g. hunting, fishing, snowmobiling.

“While this plan is not perfect for providing over-the-counter service, with our limited resources we believe that it’s a great improvement over the current plan. We’ll continue to collect feedback from our customers and evaluate our service delivery models,” said Sauer.



Door County state parks and trails reopened after destructive storms

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DNR-managed properties continue to be hit hard by storms



Maple trees in full fall foliage fell across the Peninsula State Park golf course.

WDNR Photo

Several Wisconsin State Parks and trails in Door County had been closed from September 30 until October 6, after high winds toppled numerous trees and some power lines resulting in closed roads, power outages and potentially unsafe conditions for visitors.

Although no one was injured by the impacts of the high winds, buildings and vehicles sustained damage from falling trees and debris.

State recreational properties closed and now reopened for business were:

- [Peninsula](#), including the golf course.
- [Potawatomi](#)
- [Rock Island](#)
- [Newport](#)
- [Whitefish Dunes State Park/a> and the Ahnapee State Trail](#)



This tree alongside a walkway through the golf course split into two sections as high winds ravaged the park.

WDNR Photo

Crews cleaned up downed trees at all of the properties. Although there were wide spread power outages, power now has been restored at all locations. Water, restrooms, sewer services and buildings have been inspected or repaired and are fully functioning. Camper check-ins at Peninsula, Potawatomi and Newport State Parks resumed early in the morning of October 6.

Park staffs sent voice mail and e-mail notifications to affected reservation holders to notify them that the campgrounds would be open for the upcoming October 8-9 weekend.

“We had all available local crews at work clearing roads, with additional help arriving at all times,” said Dan Schuller, director of the [Wisconsin State Parks and Trails](#).

“We concentrated on damage assessment and clearing roads to campgrounds and other high-use areas. Campers in the parks were asked to leave due to likely hazards. The goal was to reopen all properties as soon as they could be declared safe for visitors,” Schuller said.



A large tree caused damage to this shower building at Potawatomi State Park.
WDNR Photo

Following is just some of the local news coverage of the storm and its impact on Door County parks and trails. Click on the headlines to view each story.

- [“Door Co. state parks to reopen Thursday”](#)
- [“Storm damage Sept. 29-30, 2011”](#)[Damage Sept. 29-30, 2011”](#)
- [“DNR: ‘Sigh of Relief’ as Door County State Parks Reopen Thursday: Update”](#)

Kimberly Currie, chief of the Property Services Section in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, complimented those involved in reopening the parks and trails: “There has been excellent cooperation statewide from parks, forestry, fisheries, wildlife, law enforcement, facilities and land, CAES, public affairs and other regional employees.”



A crew at Potawatomi Park sawed trees into smaller pieces for removal.
WDNR Photo

Sec. **Cathy Stepp** also complimented employees on their speedy response and excellent integrated efforts, which led to reopening the parks for the upcoming weekend, typically one of the busiest of the season.



Join a healthy hunting discussion with Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine

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The October issue of [Wisconsin Natural Resources](#) magazine invites readers to volunteer and to be vocal about what's important to them.



The cover of the October magazine offers an image to the issue's cover story.

WDNR Photo

The cover story, "When gaggles meet giggles" takes a look at a goose banding operation at Horicon Marsh that is highly dependant on volunteer determination. Data collected from bands of harvested geese help state and federal agencies set hunting seasons and daily harvest limits.

A feature, "Let's talk hunting," invites readers to engage in a dialogue about one of Wisconsin's greatest traditions. Hunters and non-hunters alike need to put aside their differences to ensure that the public has the opportunity to not only hunt and fish, but to hike and watch wildlife. Find out if the term "eco redneck" fits you. A companion feature, "Locavore, meet hunter," shows how hunter recruitment is taking a new turn to connect young adults with the source of their food.

"A gift that spawns Great Lakes fisheries" follows the legacy of Bayfield pioneer R.D. Pike. A founding father of the City of Bayfield, Pike gave his family homestead containing rare coastal wetlands along the shoreline of Lake Superior and his private fish hatchery on Pikes Creek to the State of Wisconsin.

"Wildness incarnate" documents the sandhill crane conservation success story. Photos show the cranes engaged in a courtship ritual, painting their feathers to camouflage themselves and gathering in staging areas by the several thousand. Link to a video of cranes dancing and hear a podcast of

their calls.

“Paying attention to composition” is key advice for taking excellent photos in the field. Hunting for outdoor photo hints challenges photographers to fill the frame and get out and practice.

Finally, “Creature Comforts” confronts a formidable flea problem and “Traveler” offers advice for finding autumn festival fare from apples and cranberries to giant pumpkins.

Remember to consider the magazine as a thoughtful, inexpensive gift that can share what you value about the outdoors with family, friends and professional colleagues. Six colorful issues are delivered to readers’ doors all year for less than \$1.50 a copy. Year-round the magazine shares ways and place to enjoy the Wisconsin outdoors for only \$8.97.

Subscribe toll-free at 1(800)678-9472, online at [Wisconsin Natural Resources](#) or by mail. Subscription blanks and single issues are also available from our circulation office at P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. For more information contact **Natasha Kassulke, editorial, at (608) 261-8446 or **Karen Ecklund**, circulation editor, at (608) 267-7410.**



Hunter safety classes not packed with conceal/carry permit seekers

By: Tim Lawhern, Division of Enforcement and Science

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In recent weeks, the media have been actively following the use of hunter education courses to meet concealed/carry requirements under the new law. There have been reports that many of these courses are filling fast with adults interested in filling concealed/carry training requirements. That doesn't appear to be the case.

Shortly after the conceal/carry law was passed, there were a few Internet hunter education courses that saw a spike in attendance because of enrollment of permit applicants.

Legislation approving concealed carry specifically noted that hunter education would fulfill training requirements. Reports that hunter education courses are crowded with those interested in concealed/carry permits, are inaccurate.

Reports that I've received from volunteer instructors indicate that they're either not seeing any or just a couple of people seeking hunter education training to qualify for the educational component of the concealed/carry law.

DNR's hunter education volunteers are passionate about teaching people how to be safe, knowledgeable and responsible hunters. Those volunteers expressed unhappiness over the possibility that applicants for conceal/carry permits would take their courses, displacing those needing the course in order to hunt.

An increase in the numbers of students in hunter education is a good thing. That means we have the opportunity to introduce more people to the wonderful sport of hunting, and how to do it correctly and safely.

It would even be a good thing if folks who weren't initially planning to use their training to hunt became hunters after graduating from hunter education courses.

Another good sign of the popularity of these classes is an increase in the number of young people enrolling. That doesn't surprise me. While I was the administrator of

DNR's hunter education program, I asked the Department of Public Instruction for the numbers of students available between the ages of 11 and 12. About eighteen months ago, the department saw a slump in the number of students of those ages available to take hunter education training.

DNR now is seeing a significant upswing in our population of those age 11 to 12, which is wonderful news. Wisconsin always has been a state that prides itself on being good stewards of the land. So, it's a good thing that we're seeing more kids taking up activities that are outdoors, be they hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, playing soccer, etc.

Footnote: *Tim Lawhern is the administrator of the Division of Enforcement and Science.*



Air and Waste Management's Sue Hoops loses her battle with cancer

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Sue Hoops, 55, of Belleville, died unexpectedly but peacefully on Thursday, September 29 at UW Hospital in Madison. She worked for the DNR for more than 23 years, most recently as the chief information technology officer for the Division of Air and Waste.

"She fought her cancer with poise, strength and grace, which reflects the person she was," said **Sue Bangert**, deputy division administrator. "Her illness just got the better of her, sooner than any of us had wanted."



Sue Hoops left behind many colleagues and friends at DNR.
Photo courtesy of Mary Jo Kopecky

"While we are sad in the loss of our colleague and friend, we also are blessed in having known and worked with such a wonderful person, who shared her intelligence, kindness, care and life with us here at the DNR," added Bangert.

Sue began her career at DNR in November 1987 as a wastewater permits coordinator

in Rhinelander. Prior to that, she had served in the Peace Corps as a sanitation engineer in Sana'a Y.A.R. (Yemen).

In January 1989, Sue received a promotion to an environmental engineer position in the Industrial Wastewater Section, in Madison, and in July 1990, promoted again to environmental engineer supervisor/unit leader in the Municipal Wastewater Section. There, she coordinated the municipal wastewater permitting for the state, paying a great deal of attention to the diversity of her work unit and the department.

While serving in the wastewater position, Sue provided leadership as the project manager responsible for streamlining the WPDES permit system, said Bangert. She promoted innovation, good customer service and consistency within the system, moving it to an electronic venue.

In more recent years, Sue's skills and talents in process re-engineering were used in the Air Permit Improvement Initiative and in bettering the information technology systems within the Air and Waste Division. As one of her former colleagues stated, Sue brought a "special set of qualities to representing the Department of Natural resources in those (external outreach) relationships."

Bangert added that Sue always put forth the extra effort and commitment, whether it was getting the important work of the department done, helping others creatively approach their work, mentoring staff, being a good friend or taking care of her pet pigs, cats and dogs.

Sue is survived by her husband Steve Timm of Belleville, her father, two brothers, nieces and nephews. At Sue's request, a private family service will be held. You can read the obituary posted on the [Beal Funeral Homes](#) website.

Sue's husband has suggested two organizations for any memorials in her name:

- Farm Sanctuary, P.O. Box 150, Watkins Glen, NY 14891
- Mountain Gate Zen Center, Mitra Bishop, Sensei, HC 65 Box 78, Ojo Sarco, NM 87521-9604.

For those who would like to send condolences to Sue's husband Steve Timm, his address is W4079 Pine Valley Road, Belleville, WI 53508-9608.

Bangert is organizing a gathering of current and former DNR friends for later in October, at which time they'll share their memories of Sue.

"The blessings in this (and there are always blessings) are that Sue no longer is suffering the pain she had experienced these past couple of weeks; that she was able to share so much with us in her life; that she is at peace; and that she had all of you--her wonderful, loving group of friends--who kept sending encouragement, humor, chocolate and fun," said Bangert.



Warden supervisor Peery receives top trainer honors

By: Joanne Haas, Division of Science and Enforcement

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Conservation warden supervisor **Jeremy Peery**, Eau Claire, received Wisconsin's "Trainer of the Year Award" during the annual conference of the [Law Enforcement Training Officers' Association](#) (LETOA) in mid-September.



Conservation warden Jeremy Peery accepted the "Trainer of the Year Award" from Monica Barman, president of the Law Enforcement Training Officers Association of Wisconsin.

WDNR Photo

In the nomination for the award, conservation warden **Ryan Volenberg**, Mishicot, praised Peery's efforts as a certified tactical instructor, water safety instructor and field training officer, as well as his work with youth in the community through the Learn to Hunt and Hunt of a Lifetime programs and local school programs.

In addition, Peery was lauded for his teaching and motivation skills, innovation and dedication.

The purpose of LEOTA of Wisconsin is to promote professionalism in law enforcement through training. LEOTA is the oldest training organization of its kind in the United States.

Footnote: *Public affairs manager Joanne Haas works with the Division of Enforcement and Science.*



Links of interest---don't miss them

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- **Title:** DNR Customer Service and Licensing "On-hold messages"

Description: DNR's call center phone system allows the department to share timely information with callers in the event they're placed in queue waiting for a customer service representative to answer their questions. In 2010, call center staff handled more than 370,000 contacts. The Bureau of Customer Services and Licensing saw the opportunity to reach a large group of people and developed a schedule of messages that will change each month. Callers can receive information that may well relate directly to the reason for their calls. Secretary **Cathy Stepp** records messages, tips, etc. as yet another way she can reach customers.

Link: [DNR Customer Service and Licensing "On-hold messages"](#) (Adjust your volume as needed)

- **Title:** "Wisconsin State Assembly Natural Resources Committee Asian Carp and Quagga Mussels"

Description: This presentation by DNR's invasive aquatic species coordinator **Bob Wakeman**, Waukesha, provides information on the history of Asian carp in the

United States, including the devastation they cause.

Link: ["Wisconsin State Assembly Natural Resources Committee Asian Carp and Quagga Mussels"](#)

- **Titles:** "Employee Enhancement Newsletter" and "Supervisor/HR Supplement Newsletter"

Description: In addition to DNR's long-time Employee Assistance Program director **Jeff Carroll** (608/266-2133), [Deer Oaks Employee Assistance](#) (use password "sowi") is available to department employees and their immediate families. A new monthly feature in the "Digest" will be links to Deer Oaks' newsletters. September's employee newsletter highlights Deer Oaks' teen hotline and offers tips on how to avoid hitting your debt ceiling. In the supervisor newsletter, there's a discussion of several different types of intelligences that good leaders should possess, as well as answers to supervisors' challenging, frequently-asked management questions. To speak to someone at Deer Oaks, call 1-(866)327-2400.

Links: ["Employee Enhancement Newsletter"](#)
["Supervisor/HR Supplement Newsletter"](#)

- **Title:** "Med drop: A safe communities collaboration"

Description: As sure as the leaves turn colors at this time of the year, citizens in Fitchburg, Madison and Sun Prairie have a chance again this fall to drop off unused prescription and over-the-counter medicines. This service, scheduled for October 22, reduces the risk of medicines falling into the wrong hands or ending up in public waterways.

Link: ["Med drop: A safe communities collaboration"](#)

- **Title:** "Lake Michigan Mass Marking Machine"

Description: See young "king" Chinook salmon take a wild ride through a machine that can mark 90,000 of them a day to help the department know, when a salmon is caught, whether it originated in a hatchery or as naturally reproduced in the wild.

Link: ["Lake Michigan Mass Marking Machine"](#)

- **Title:** "Senate Select Committee on Mining Jobs"

Description: In an excerpt from a letter to members of the recently-created Select Committee on Mining Jobs," Wisconsin Senator Neal Kedzie wrote: "As you know, this special committee has been created specifically to review proposed legislation which seeks to establish a new state permitting program for metallic (ferrous) mining. As members of this committee, we have a monumental task before us, one which could greatly impact Wisconsin's economy and environment for generations to come."

Link: ["Senate Select Committee on Mining Jobs"](#)

- **Title:** "Walker Announces Chippewa Flowage Forest Legacy Easement"

Description: Subtitled the "First Major Stewardship Purchase of His Administration," this October 3 news release explains how this act will protect 10,000 acres in northwestern Wisconsin for outdoor recreation and forest industry jobs.

Link: ["Walker Announces Chippewa Flowage Forest Legacy Easement"](#)



Bill introduced would add funds for local recycling efforts

By: Paul Heinen, Secretary's Office

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Senator Chris Larson introduced **Senate Bill 209**, this week. The bill adds \$13 million to the Recycling Fund that the DNR uses to pay local governments for local recycling programs. The bill is now in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

The Back to Work Special Session will run at the same time as the regular fall legislative session, October 18 through November 3. There are two proposals (not yet bills) that affect DNR: one streamlines the wetland permitting process; while the other makes a number of changes to various DNR programs, which will allow them to operate more efficiently.

The Assembly Natural Resources Committee heard **Assembly Bills 231** and **234** on September 28. No action was taken, however.

For a complete "roundup" of legislation that impacts DNR programs, take a look at the updated ["Bill Tracker."](#)

Footnote: *Paul Heinen is a policy initiative advisor in the Secretary's Office.*



Chief warden Stark cited for national work, state multi-cultural efforts

By: Joanne Haas, Office of Communication

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Chief conservation warden **Randy Stark** says the special recognition award he recently received from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is not so much an individual honor, but more an opportunity to accept the recognition on behalf of many.

Stark, who became DNR's chief warden in 2002, received the award at the national association's meeting in September.

"I was humbled and honored to accept the award on behalf of all the extremely dedicated, committed and competent people of the DNR who, along with our partner organizations, I have had the privilege to work with on these projects," Stark said.

"We are so fortunate to have the talented people we have working in conservation."

Specifically, Stark's award noted his work as an instructor at the [National Conservation Leadership Institute](#) and his leadership in crafting the "Harmony in the Woods" program after several hunter slayings in northern Wisconsin.

Stark has served on the faculty of the West Virginia-based institute, an intensive annual leadership development program within the natural resources community, dedicated to building the conservation leaders of the next generations.

"People who attend the national institute report that it is a life-changing experience," Stark said, adding that he is thankful the current DNR administration supports the institute and its mission.

"Given the age structure of people in leadership positions in conservation across the country, it's critical we work now to develop a stream of leadership that can adapt organizations to the new realities the future holds," he said.

The "Harmony in the Woods" initiative grew from a desire to ease racial tensions in northern Wisconsin after the 2004 murders of six white hunters by a Hmong hunter and the 2007 killing of a Hmong hunter by a white hunter.

"The 'Harmony in the Woods' initiative was a wonderful example of teamwork, both

inside and outside DNR," Stark said. "As the cultural demographics of society change, creating a diverse and inclusive conservation community will be critical to future success. That's why the 'Harmony in the Woods' initiative is so important."

"I'm so proud of both the internal DNR team and our external partners work on this project; they really deserve all the credit."

Stark added that the cause of conservation fuels extraordinary work.

"We recognize nothing less than that the future vitality of our country rests in our natural resources," he said. "This work is really about leaving our natural resources intact for future generations; it's about what we leave behind to as-yet-born generations of Americans."



Worth a thousand words: images of us at work

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West Central Region kicks off fundraiser by celebrating "Isthmus's" ranking of DNR

Apparently there hasn't been much to celebrate lately, or maybe there was some kind of collective "cake jones" going on, but the news that Madison DNR was voted "most helpful government office" by readers of "Isthmus" sparked a mini celebration at the Eau Claire headquarters, where the coffee fund was raided and a cake quickly produced.

DNR's **Karen Voss** took this photo of regional director **Scott Humrickhouse** displaying true "fan of the DNR" spirit. Other DNR folks in the photo (left to right) are **Ginger Hooper**, **Duane Popple** (back turned), **Mike Wenholz**, **Bob Hujik**, **Cameron Bump**, **Karen Blodgett**, **Dan Baumann** and **Angela Parkhurst**.



WDNR Photo

The event also marked the kick-off for plans to conduct a charitable soup and chili potluck in October. Staff will donate cash and non-food items of the essential variety, such as toilet paper, toothbrushes, toothpaste and pet food not supplied by the area food pantry.

Footnote: *Ed Culhane, public affairs manager for the West Central Region, submitted this story with photo.*

DNR responded to Adell early-morning fire

A recent early-morning 4-alarm fire at the Adell Co-op in Sheboygan County consumed a warehouse holding seeds, insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers. As firefighters arrived, two large explosions from propane tanks occurred. The local incident commander made the decision to evacuate a one-mile radius.



DNR onsite recognized local firefighters for taking the time to consider runoff. A railroad track parallels the property line, and fire department staff used a culvert underneath the train tracks to create an earthen dam in a ditch to prevent water from flowing into a nearby wetland and stream.

WDNR Photo



Adjacent to the fertilizer/chemical warehouse is an above-ground storage tank farm. The firefighters were able to save the tank farm.

WDNR Photo



Flu shot clinic returns to GEF 2 on October 27

By: Marty Karow, Bureau of Human Resources

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DNR once again will sponsor a seasonal flu shot clinic to be held in GEF 2 on Thursday, October 27. Home Health United will be on hand to administer the vaccinations.

State employees interested in receiving a seasonal flu shot can sign up for the clinic, which will run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in room G09 on the ground floor.

November through January is the most common period for the spread of the flu. According to State Department of Health and Family Services, employees can help minimize their chances of catching the flu by being vaccinated.

As with any medication or health care, you should first talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns. This year the flu shot will cover both the seasonal flu and H1N1. As before, the shots will be mercury free, but keep in mind that the mercury-free shots do contain a small amount of latex, so anyone allergic to latex should get the flu shot that is not mercury free. Home Health United also will be offering the intranasal vaccine.

For further information, email me ([Marty Karow](#)), call me at (608)246-7998 or see the "[Have You Had Your Flu Shot Yet](#)" flyer.

Footnote: *Marty Karow is a risk management specialist in the Safety and Risk Management Section.*



Submit "It's Your Choice" health insurance changes online

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Enrollment period runs from October 3 to 28

This fall employees once again can electronically submit "It's Your Choice" enrollment changes via the "[myETF Benefits Online Health Insurance Enrollment System](#)." DNR's Bureau of Human Resources also will accept paper applications.

"It's Your Choice" provides an opportunity for eligible active employees, annuitants and former employees who have continued their coverage to:

- enroll in the health plan of their choice for coverage to begin January 1, 2012;
- change health plans;
- enroll or drop coverage for adult children or domestic partners and their children from family coverage;
- change from single or family coverage

All permanent employees and Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) LTEs will receive links to "[It's Your Choice](#)" booklets:

During the enrollment period, permanent employees and WRS LTEs may:

- enroll in health coverage;
- enroll or drop coverage for domestic partners and their domestic partners' eligible dependents;
- enroll or drop coverage for eligible adult children (married or unmarried) up to the end of the month in which they turn age 26;
- change from one plan to another; and,
- change from single to family coverage or from family to single coverage.

Even if you're satisfied with your current health plan, you should carefully review the "It's Your Choice 2012" booklet to learn whether there are major changes in your coverage. Even employees wanting to continue in their current health plan should do the following:

- Verify that their current plan is available in their area for 2012.
- Verify that selected physicians, clinics and/or hospitals still are available under their plans for 2012.

Review changes in benefits by reading the "[Important Changes](#)" for 2012, as well as the individual plan description found in the booklet.

Some important plan and program changes include:

- Coinsurance of 10% has been added to all non-preventive medical services with an annual out-of-pocket maximum of \$500 per individual or \$1,000 per family.
- The plan now allows enrollment for your married child until the end of the month in which they **turn 26, rather than age 27.**
- Health insurance coverage will end at the end of the month in which an employee terminates employment.
- The health plan "WEA Trust East" has expanded into eight additional counties.
- The health plan "WEA Trust Northwest" will be available in 18 counties.
- GHC of Eau Claire no longer has providers in seven counties.
- Changes to the Dean Health plan dental benefit.
- Changes to Unity UW Health plan dental benefit.

With the new year will come new premiums

The 2012 monthly premiums for permanent employees and LTEs with two concurrent positions will be as listed below. LTEs with one position or two consecutive positions will continue to pay one-half the total premium.

- **Tier 1 Single Rate** is \$81 and the Family Rate is \$201 per month
- **Tier 2 Single Rate** is \$118 and the Family Rate is \$297 per month
- **Tier 3 Single Rate** is \$219 and the Family Rate is \$548 per month

If you wish to make health insurance changes during the "It's Your Choice" enrollment period:

- Use the dedicated and secure ["On-line network for members."](#)
- If you prefer, however, you may submit a paper ["Group Health Insurance Enrollment/Change Form"](#) to your regional payroll and benefits specialist or Betty McWilliams by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, October 28, 2011.

No action is necessary if you don't want to change plans or change coverage.

If you'd prefer to have a paper copy of the 2012 "Decision Guide" or "Reference Guide" booklet, email [Betty McWilliams](#) or call her at (608)266-0850. Regional staffs should contact their regional payroll and benefits specialists. HR also will send library copies of the booklets to many DNR offices for employee reference.



Enroll in VSP Vision Care by October 28

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This fall, VSP "Vision Care" insurance continues to provide coverage to state employees. If you're currently enrolled in VSP, you'll automatically have coverage for 2012. VSP is sending materials about ["Vision Care"](#) to employees' home addresses.

During the open enrollment you may elect to:

- **enroll in VSP vision insurance for 2012 or**
- **cancel coverage for 2012.**

Your coverage will become effective on January 1, 2012. Once enrolled, you must remain enrolled the entire calendar year.

You may enroll online, by telephone at 1(800)400-4569, by fax, or by mail

directly with VSP. Don't send the application to your payroll representative. To cancel coverage for 2012, you must submit a written request (an email is fine) to your regional [payroll and benefits specialist](#) or to [Betty McWilliams](#) in the Bureau of Human Resources (608)266-0850.



2012 Employee Reimbursement Account drug coverage changes

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Annual enrollment period October 3 to October 28, 2011

If you want to continue participating in the Employee Reimbursement Account (ERA) next year, you must re-enroll for the Plan Year 2012. Again this fall, you'll find information about [ERA](#) online.

Enrollment in ERA becomes effective January 1, 2012. LTEs aren't eligible to enroll in this program.

The "myFBMC Card" reimbursement option will continue in 2012. Employees may use this payment card to pay for eligible medical expenses. The cards are good for two years and have an expiration date on them. Remember, most over-the-counter drugs no longer are eligible for coverage.

During the ERA open enrollment period October 3 through October 28, you may elect to:

- enroll to have between \$100 and \$7,500 deducted on a pre-tax basis for eligible medical expenses;
- enroll to have a maximum of \$5,000 per family deducted on a pre-tax basis for eligible child care expenses.

You can enroll online or by telephone by 9 p.m. on October 28. Here's how:

- Go to ["Welcome to my FBMC.com"](#) to enroll online. After you've completed the enrollment process, print your confirmation for future reference.
- Or, you can call 1(800)847-8253 to enroll by telephone. Be sure to stay on the line until you've received your confirmation number.



EPIC insurance offering vision option for 2012

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Also replacing excess medical coverage with hospital and surgery benefit

EPIC will hold a "Special Enrollment" during the open enrollment period from October 3 through October 28, 2011, with coverage effective date of January 1, 2012. All permanent employees and LTEs enrolled in the Wisconsin Retirement System are eligible to enroll in EPIC.

EPIC Benefits+ provides employees with additional dental, hospital and surgery indemnity benefits, accidental death & dismemberment, and a vision discount. Employees may add a Vision Benefit Extension.

The benefits are changing this year to eliminate the excess medical coverage and replace it with a hospital and surgery benefit. A benefit of \$100 per day will be paid, beginning on the third day and continuing through the 365th

day of a hospital confinement. This benefit will not cover confinement in a skilled nursing facility. A benefit of \$100 per outpatient surgery will be paid when performed in a hospital outpatient department of freestanding ambulatory surgical center. Multiple procedures occurring during a single surgical session qualify for a single \$100 benefit. This benefit won't cover surgery performed in a physician's office.

Premiums for Benefits+ without Vision

- Single: \$18.99
- Two persons: \$37.98
- Family: \$56.97

Premiums for Benefits+ with Vision

- Single: \$22.99
- Two persons: \$45.05
- Family: \$67.36

Employees not currently enrolled in EPIC, may elect to enroll in Benefits+ through EPIC's "Special Enrollment" provisions. All eligible employees may elect to enroll in Benefits+ with or without the Vision Extension.

Check out the following brochure and enrollment form for EPIC:

- ["Wisconsin State Employees Enrollment Form"](#)
- ["Benefits+ Designed Exclusively for State of Wisconsin Employees"](#)

Employees who choose to enroll through the "Special Enrollment" opportunity will have special dental maximum levels and additional waiting period for the orthodontic benefit. Members currently insured with EPIC won't have a waiting period or limited dental maximum, but may elect to add the Vision Extension.

Once enrolled in EPIC Benefits+, employees must stay enrolled the entire calendar year. If you're currently enrolled and don't want coverage for 2012, you must notify your [regional payroll and benefit specialist](#) or [Betty McWilliams](#), HR/8, (608)266-0850, by December 1.

Review the "Special Enrollment" brochure for more details. Hard copies are available from your regional payroll and benefits specialist or Betty McWilliams.



Enroll in Dental Wisconsin October 3 through October 28, 2011

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Dental Wisconsin is a dental plan offered by the EPIC Life Insurance Company. This plan isn't connected with the EPIC Benefits+ plan, however. It's a separate dental plan that provides two dental options for an employee to choose from. Employees may enroll in both Dental Wisconsin and Benefits+, just as they may enroll in other multiple optional dental plans.

Under Dental Wisconsin, the two options are named "PPO" and "Select." PPO stands for "Preferred Provider Plan" and offers a higher benefit if you receive services from an in-network dentist and fewer benefits if you receive service from an out-of-network dentist. The PPO plan has a higher monthly premium than the Select plan, but includes coverage for cleanings and exams. The Select plan allows you to see any dentist, has a lower monthly

premium than the PPO plan, but doesn't include coverage for cleanings or exams.

This new optional dental plan will be available to employees during this fall's open enrollment, October 3 through October 28. The Dental Wisconsin Handout will provide a high level description of the PPO and Select plan options.

See the attached brochures for details:

- [“Dental Wisconsin, a Comprehensive Dental Program from EPIC”](#)
- [“Dental Wisconsin Enrollment Form”](#)

Once enrolled in Dental Wisconsin, you must stay enrolled for the entire calendar year. If you're currently enrolled and don't want the coverage in 2012, you must notify your regional payroll and benefits specialist or [Betty McWilliams](#), (608)266-0850 by December 1.

To enroll or cancel your current coverage, complete this [application](#) and return it to your regional payroll and benefits specialist or Betty McWilliams, HR/8 DNR, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, by 4:30 p.m. on October 29, 2011. Hard copies of this information also are available from your payroll and benefits specialist or McWilliams.



2011 Anthem DentalBlue available online

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This fall, “Anthem DentalBlue” insurance enrollment information is being distributed to employees electronically. Simply click on [“Anthem’s DentalBlue and Other Dental Coverage”](#) to view the dental insurance information.

During the open enrollment period employees may elect to:

- enroll in single, two-person or family dental coverage;
- change from single, two-person or family coverage to another level of coverage;
- change from one of the three offered Anthem plans to another Anthem plan; or
- enroll domestic partners or eligible adult children to age 26.

Changes will become effective on January 1, 2012. No action is necessary if you don't wish to change plans or levels of coverage.

Once enrolled, you must stay enrolled in the dental plan for the entire calendar year. If you're currently enrolled in “Anthem DentalBlue” and don't want the coverage in 2012, you must notify your regional payroll and benefit specialist or Betty McWilliams, HR/8 by December 1.

The [plan summary](#) contains important and useful information about the three offered Anthem plans.

Some monthly 2012 rates have increased. See [“2012 DentalBlue Payroll Deduction Plans”](#) for these changes.

There's a 90-day waiting period for new enrollees before basic services (e.g. fillings) or major services (e.g. crowns, bridges, dentures) are covered under the “Preferred PPO” or the “Supplemental Plan.” There's no waiting period for “Dentacare HMO.”

If you wish to enroll or make changes:

- To enroll, complete the “Anthem DentalBlue” [“Group DentalBlue Application.”](#)
- To cancel, again complete the “Anthem DentalBlue” [“Group DentalBlue Application,”](#) checking the cancellation box.

Return the completed application to your [regional payroll and benefits specialist](#) or to Betty McWilliams, HR/8 DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 no later than 4:30 pm on October 28, 2011.

To receive paper copies of “Anthem DentalBlue” information or applications, contact your regional payroll and benefits representative. In the central office, email [Betty McWilliams](#) or call her at (608)266-0850.



Around the state...DNR employees shine

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Departmentwide success stories

The Bureau of Parks and Recreation received the following kudos for employees stationed at various locations around the state.

- Peninsula State Park ranger **Kristin Becker** received the following note after her response to a customer’s bicycle accident: “Dear Officer Kristin Becker (LTE), thank you for your assistance following my bike accident on August 26. Thankfully, I am recovering uneventfully. I am grateful for your service and dedication.”

- At Wyalusing State Park, ranger **Lisa Pitzer** received a thank-you card from Chris and Jessica: “Thank you so much for the help you gave and the kindness you showed us. May God bless you for your service to others!”

The two women misjudged their vehicle fuel supply and ran out of fuel in the park. Lisa picked them up, loaned them a gas can and gave them a ride to the local gas station where they got fuel. She gave them a ride back to their vehicle and transferred the fuel from the can to the car. Chris and Jessica were on their way after a rather short delay, and were very appreciative of this outstanding customer service.

The bureau received other notes about outstanding customer service.

- **Yellowstone Lake State Park:** “Well-kept and clean. Friendly rangers and staff. Excellent facilities and hiking trails. Can’t wait to go back again.”
- **Governor Dodge State Park:** “The park is truly a gem. The rangers were particularly helpful and kind to two lost hikers. I can’t say enough about our experience. Our reservations have been made for next year.”
- **Brunet Island State Park:** “Brunet Island is a gorgeous park with a knowledgeable and helpful staff. While visiting, we had some trouble with our camper and the staff helped with what they could and then directed us to businesses in Cornell.”
- **Harrington Beach State Park:** “This park is very nice, well maintained, clean and beautiful. Park ranger was excellent and helpful. He went out of his way to make my park experience great. Best \$25 I ever spent to use this beautiful park. Please thank the park ranger and staff.”

Northeast Region success stories

- **Jennifer Borski**, Remediation and Rehabilitation hydrogeologist: “Thanks for the quick response on the General Liability Clarification letter you wrote for us. It was a pleasure speaking with you. I am originally from northwestern Illinois, very near the Wisconsin border, and my mother is a Kenosha native. I’ve always been impressed by the friendly and helpful nature of most Midwesterners. Thank you again for being so willing to help. Have a nice weekend. *Dave Maglietta P.G.EBI Consulting, York PA.*

- **Christine Lilek**, Remediation and Rehabilitation hydrogeologist: “Thanks for sending us these two groundwater focused emails (“USGS Fact Sheet Estimates of Recharge in WI” and “2010 - 2011 Annual Wisconsin Groundwater Report”), Chris! And, thanks again for all of your help getting the Wisconsin Section - American Institute of Professional Geologists September 17th meeting, lunch, and ice age trail construction effort pulled together. *Steve Sletten, PG, CPG, MS, MBA, Business Development Manager-Water and Environment*

- **Heidi Springbor**: “I wanted to thank you for your professionalism and personal courtesy in answering questions I had on the eradication program for invasive species. I really felt comfortable when speaking with you. I had the sense that you would have taken up as much of your time that was needed to help me better understand the much needed program. Your experience and knowledge in such work was well exhibited during the course of our conversation. Thanks again for your dedication in your work. *Joe Berken*

- “I would like to recognize and thank NER wildlife biologist **John Huff**, wildlife technician **Aaron McCullough** and conservation warden **Mike Stahl** for their assistance (at) the Oconto's Promise Marsh Group's booth at the Oconto Fly In on September 17, 2011. The Oconto's Promise Marsh Group is a team comprised of the UW Extension Office in Oconto County, Oconto Middle School staff and students, DNR, Oconto citizens, Oconto Park and Rec Department, and the NEW Audubon Society. The mission of this group is to engage the young people of Oconto in their community, and to promote and enhance the Oconto Marsh which is located along the Oconto city limits. John and Aaron helped to identify wildlife and waterfowl species that frequent the marsh, provided us with a pop up tent for our booth (which turned out to be essential on a windy day), and have been available every time assistance has been requested where the Oconto Marsh is concerned. Warden Stahl came to our booth during the fly in to be available for any type of questions visitors might have about regulations and the marsh. The Oconto Marsh group is very appreciative of John, Aaron and Mike's efforts and we look forward to continuing a great working relationship with them. *Thank you, Marsha*”

Northern Region success stories

- From Northern Region director **John Gozdzialski** to the Secretary’s Office about the Governor’s event in Siren: “The Governor's visit and tour was nothing short of fantastic. Everyone was very appreciative of the efforts and progress. As I mentioned during the DNR-DOT portion of the briefing, the Governor can be very proud of his NW Wisconsin team. Wisconsin's team spirit rings loud and clear. They have placed many points on the scoreboard (similar to Packers and Badgers). I also highlighted that the private-public collaboration is top shelf.

"The four legislators in attendance (Harsdorf, Jauch, Rivard and Milroy) spoke highly of the cooperative efforts and passed along accolades for DNR as well as National Guard. The local government officials, industry and utility reps were also pleased with the progress.

"We did receive some feedback which was focused on 1) developing financial incentives i.e., low interest loans for timber storage and fuel tax incentives, and 2) DOT road weight exceptions and road repair \$. Both of these are, by the way, in play as we speak.

"The chatter post meeting was that it was a "love fest." Frankly, I've been to many meetings where the DNR is lucky to leave with its back end intact. It's a wonderful accomplishment when the ALL parties are truly appreciative! **Hats-off to our staff.** They are the running backs that have carried the ball down the field and scored the points! We have a great DNR team. Enjoy the first weekend of fall! *John Gozdzialski*"

"Wow! Nothing to add to John's comments except a heartfelt thank you to the men and women of WDNR who continue to give their all to our state. Very proud of you all. Sec. **Cathy Stepp**"



Josh Leal proudly showed off the bear he took during a Learn to Hunt in Minocqua. WDNR Photo

- "My son and I were involved in the hunt this past weekend in Drummond, Wis. I would like to let you know what a wonderful program this is. **Jill Schartner** (conservation warden) ran a very good program in her area. From the hunter safety weekend to the hunt weekend she was totally involved. From all the guides/mentors to the taxidermist with cooler space in warm weather and even a get together for all hunters for a brat fry. The whole area knew what was going on and everybody wished us good luck. My son has been involved in the Learn to Hunt deer program in Minocqua and said the bear hunt was AWESOME! Thanks for the program. **Larry and Josh Leal**"

Southeast Region success stories

- "Let me add my thanks and gratitude to **Tim Lizotte and his staff** for this

effort(See ["Around the state"](#) in the September 22, 2011 "Digest.") We had talked about coordinating the removal of the sand bags with water program staff.

Fortunately, this effort simplified the time and expense of the project. I am always impressed with the can do approach that Tim and his staff demonstrate for even "out of the box" projects. Thanks again. **Jim D'Antuono**, *Fox Basin team leader*"

- Congratulations and a thank you to all **Southeast Region staff** that helped facilitate the Natural Resource Board tour and meeting *from acting regional director John Hammen*: "The Natural Resources Board expressed appreciation to the US Coast Guard, WE Energies Power Plant, the staff at Richard Bong State Recreational Area, and all staff who made the tour informative and successful.

"Secretary Cathy Stepp and Natural Resource Board chair Dave Clausen recognized former Regional director **Gloria McCutcheon** on her retirement from the department at the Wednesday board meeting. They praised her accomplishments here in the 'mighty' Southeast Region and presented her with her Governor's plaque, Retirement Resolution and retirement pin. Gloria thanked the Southeast Region staff for their dedication, commitment, and outstanding work. The board members and all present at the meeting honored her with a standing ovation."

- Regional enforcement leader **Kevin Mickelberg** sends congratulations to conservation warden **Nick Blankenheim** for being featured in a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel from: "Nick is charge of the new DNR boat in the Milwaukee harbor and the September 25 article is an interview with Nick on his love of the outdoors and what is involved in being a conservation warden. Don Walker writes this monthly feature on careers in a dynamic economy."

- **Tim Lizotte** (area wildlife supervisor) and **Travis Schroeder** (water regulation and zoning specialist) received this "thank you" note *from a learn to hunt doves mentor*: "Thank you all, I had a fantastic time and it means everything to me that Damien and his brother Draven got to meet you guys. Damien is a senior this year and his goal is to go onto college (UW Stevens Point) and get into wildlife management.

"A little background: I met the Williams family a few years back in boy scouts and a week later his father who was an avid outdoorsman passed away. Let's just say I instantly became Damien's outdoor mentor. We spent many weekends at scout camps doing everything from learning to tie knots, to night time navigation, and one thing I could never do was take a step without Damien asking me about animals and nature. Even when building a fire he was always right there at my side asking if he could help. A few years ago I planned a youth duck hunt outing and let's just say with 75 degree sunny day we just took a boat ride on Mississippi back waters and stopped for lunch. Well we turned it into a squirrel hunt while other adults in camp went bow hunting and with kids chasing borders of woods in turned out well. Later that night we were able to help track a bow hunter's downed deer. Thanks to Damien's keen eye we had grey squirrel and the bow hunter contribution we also had tenderloin for breakfast the next morning.

"We haven't seen much of each other since my son dropped out of scouting, but once a year Damien has known he is welcomed to deer hunt with me and a few of my co-hunters. In fact just few weeks ago he contacted me and asked if we could plan another gun deer season. Also if I had room in my hunter safety class for his younger but larger brother Draven. Then we heard about Dove hunt, wow talk about luck and timing.

"Another great memory we can talk about for years to come. No birds in the pot, but that is something that is an added bonus when it happens, maybe next time.

"So you bet I just wanted you all to know how much I appreciate the opportunity to join up with you all on a wet dreary day that made a lasting memory.

"Contact me anytime and I look forward to creating memories in young minds with you all in the near future. *Martin Kendl*

In addition to Tim Lizotte, wildlife biologist **Brian Glenzinski** and wardens **Doug Zeihen** and **Gervis Myles** were instructors and mentors. Travis Schroder also was a mentor.

- **Tom Isaac**, wildlife biologist, received this kudo following a presentation on coyote and other canines management at the Bayside Village Hall: "I can't thank you enough for the presentation you gave last night. I was happy to see we had quite a few concerned citizens in attendance. I think collectively, we cleared up a few misconceptions that needed to be addressed, and overall the meeting was a huge success.

"Your dedication to your profession and the communities you serve does not go unnoticed. If there ever is a time you would need my assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will stay in touch. Thanks again. *Scott McConnell*"

West Central success stories

- "A question came up recently about the number of years we have been marking Trumpeter Swans in central Wisconsin. Essentially, we have been marking wild Trumpeters here since 1998. On 25-26 August, we captured 27 cygnets at state, private, and federal sites--part of an overall goal to mark 100 cygnets this year: information needed for our population model (developed by Science Services) to determine and track age of first breeding.

"As the Trumpeter Swan round-ups approach their end next year, I want to emphasize one fact that has been made abundantly clear over the years: our program (including nest monitoring early and round-ups later) in central Wisconsin would not have been possible without the support of Sandhill WLA personnel.

"Similar comments can be made about the efforts of WM (wildlife management) staff in other parts of the state, but I want to focus here on central WI staff. Specifically, **Wayne Hall** (wildlife biologist) and **Rick Greene** (wildlife technician) (and **Daryl Hardy** before he retired) have helped keep track of nesting pairs, made contacts with landowners, and worked with the roundup crews and pilots overhead--while slogging through marshes--to make the Trumpeter Swan Program successful in central Wisconsin. Their commitment has time and again gone above and beyond the call of duty, and I can't say enough about their dedication and perseverance. To say that they are a credit to the agency is an understatement, but they are indeed that and much more. Personally, it's been an honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to work with them. *Regards, Sumner Matteson, avian ecologist in the Bureau of Endangered Resources*"

- Retired regional warden **Dave Zimmerman** received this note about a recent hunter safety course: "Just wanted to send a note to thank you and all of the instructors for the outstanding Hunter Safety Course!! All of the instructors were terrific and the demonstrations were great! The Field Day was wonderfully hands-on and was very well organized along with all of the classes. A thank-you to the

gentleman at the fire range and to the **conservation warden** as well. The value of the course is priceless and all of the time and talent of all of you are very much appreciated!! Zach and I loved Dennis - he was very entertaining.

"As a parent, I found it good to be able to sit in on everything. I took Hunter Safety growing up but taking the course again was a good refresher and I learned many things that I don't remember learning before.

"When I called to sign Zach up for the class I was very surprised at the cost of \$10 and so was everybody that I mentioned it to. It may be the best \$10 I've ever spent. Thank-you again to all of you for your time and talent!!! *Debora Hudson*

Editor's note: **Nick Schaff**, West Central Region environmental analysis and review specialist with the DNR Office of Energy, and retired warden **Mark Brann** were instructors for this course.



Commuters learning options during National Rideshare Week

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October 3-10 highlighted variety of ways to commute, year-round

Commuting to work and home by means other than driving alone reduces pollution and saves commuters \$2,000 annually, according to The Rideshare Etc. program. Rideshare provides a free service that helps commuters by identifying all of the alternative commuting options based on each individual's circumstances, including ride-share pools, Metro Transit (Dane County), state vanpools, pedestrian/bike, and Park N Ride lot options.

To learn more about Rideshare in south central Wisconsin, call (608)266-RIDE or go to the [Rideshare Etc.](#) website. The website also contains information on who to contact if you live and work elsewhere in the state, even in an adjoining county across state borders. You can log onto and create a password-protected account by filling in home and work addresses, and your work hours; then run a carpool, vanpool, bus or bike route search of options based on your specific circumstances.

The database will return a list of available partners or services near the commuter for setting up rides to work and home. Home addresses are always suppressed in the database. There's no charge or obligation. Employees who participate in Rideshare can save more than \$200 per month.

You might ask, "What do I do if I've commuted to work and need to leave because of an emergency?" Rideshare provides a guaranteed ride home service. A Madison-area commuter can receive up to six taxi vouchers per year with a maximum value of \$75 per voucher from Union Taxi (608/242-2000). Select the commuting option best for you, then call 266-RIDE or email rideshare@cityofmadison.com to receive vouchers by mail.



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