



Waunakee Rotary Club

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Since January of 2006, Dr. Tom Schlenker has worn three hats as the director of the Madison Department of Public Health, along with the Dane County Department of Public Health and as the two entities that will merge into one in January 2008.

Tom is looking forward to January, when his responsibilities will be pared to one department only, he told the Waunakee Rotary Club at its Nov. 15 meeting.

County and city officials have discussed merging the Madison and Dane County health departments for the last 20 to 30 years, Tom said. Not only will the merged departments run more efficiently in the long run, but one department can provide better service to the public in some cases.

For instance, in the past, the WIC (Women Infants Children) program had one office that would host clinics for families on two different days, depending on whether they were city or county residents. If City of Madison families visited the office on a day designated for county residents, they would be turned away.

The merged public health department also is better able to handle infectious disease control, Tom said. For instance, in the past, if an virus outbreak were to stem from a wedding in Fitchburg attended by residents throughout Dane County, the city and county departments would have to negotiate the investigation and and response, Tom said.

"We've got more resources to deal with," he added. "When we identify a serious problem, we've got more mobility now."

Some serious issues now include the resurgence of tuberculosis, some of which are multi-drug resistant, Tom said.

Now the department can send one of the most talented nurses for specialized training to work closely with doctors at hospitals treating tuberculosis patients, Tom said.

The department recently completed an Environmental Report Card for the county. While the county has wonderful environmental resources, they are experiencing stress from rapid growth, Tom said.

Air quality has remained steady over the last 10 years, but still, the American Lung Association recently gave Dane County a D grade.

"Every year, there's a couple of days where air quality is at an unsafe level," Tom said.

Nine different major manufacturers and industries have significantly reduced their output of pollutants. And citizens can do their part by walking and riding their bicycles more, rather than driving, Tom said.

Drinking water is another concern as the county grows. The county is spending \$80,000 on a manure digester to help the problem of farm runoff, and the public health department has worked hard on the City of Madison's manganese problems.

In the future, the public health department plans to assist other utilities and to help test the other 20,000 private wells in the county.

The merger between the health departments has been difficult, Tom said, mainly because approvals for it must come from both the City of Madison and Dane County.

"There's never been a rule book on how do you merge two agencies," he added.

Other items:

- There is no meeting Nov. 22, Thanksgiving. Last week's newsletter listed some people as greeters for that day. Don't show up then, but do come the next week, Nov. 29!

- Help is still needed to install the displays at Village Park. See the Web site or call Phil, Bill or Tom to find out when.

- The board of directors meeting will meet one week later in December, Dec. 13. Club Assembly will be the

OFFICERS

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PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • KIM LENGFELD, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

TOM REIS • LORI DERAUF • BILL ERICKSON

Calendar of Events:

Thanksgiving breakfast, Nov. 22.

Rotary in Lights, Nov. 26-Jan. 1

first Thursday in December.

- The Christmas party has been set for the last Friday in January, Jan. 25. Bob Klinger will play, so there will be dancing after dinner.

Guests: Raissa, the club's exchange student.

Visiting Rotarians: None.

Birthdays: Nov. 30, Susan Vergeront.

Anniversaries: Dec. 1, Bob and Nancy Hoskins.

Prayers: Nov. 29, Msgr. Kramer; Dec. 6, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: Nov. 22, no meeting, Thanksgiving; Nov. 29, Ian Weller on travels in Jordan; Dec. 6, Club Assembly.

Greeters: Nov. 29, Amy Gile Enge, Jeremiah Gollon; Dec. 6, Rich Harris, Bob Hoskins; Dec. 13, Jim Jukes, Kevin Kearney; Dec. 20, Dave Kennedy, Neil King.

See you next week!

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.