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CIVIL SOLUTIONS

Engineering news that affects your business now

2nd Quarter-2009



Dear Tony,

We hope you'll enjoy and value this edition of *Civil Solutions*, a quarterly e-newsletter designed to help keep you in touch with engineering issues that affect your business. If you have suggestions on subjects you'd like to know more about, contact us, and we'd be glad to cover it here.

-John Davel, President

New Shoreland Zoning Rules

What Land Developers Need to Know

In a process that started nearly eleven years ago, the Natural Resource board recently approved changes to NR 115, which regulates how counties administer shoreland zoning. The new rules are expected to be adopted by the legislature by the end of the year.

The shoreland area is defined as land within 1000 feet of a lake or within 300 feet of a navigable stream. Counties have the ability to extend these limits, as these are the minimum standard.

When the county reviews a land division, it establishes minimum lot sizes and widths, maximum building heights, setbacks and viewing corridors.

The parts of NR 115 that will most greatly impact land developers include

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the impervious surface area requirements and mitigation.

The code requires

- No mitigation for development that has less than 15 percent impervious area of the lot.
- Required mitigation for developments that have more than 15% impervious area of the lot.
- Impervious area of more than 30% is not permitted, (which I believe would affect most commercial development in shoreland areas, requiring more land for a given development).

The requirements of mitigation are left, in general, for the counties to decide. The mitigation must be proportional to the impact. Mitigation would include infiltrating runoff, treating or controlling runoff, or restoring or maintain a natural vegetative buffer between the shoreline and the development.

These rules changes seem to be moving forward because of changes to what was previously proposed regarding non conforming structures. Previously an alteration, repair, or addition to an existing nonconforming structure could not exceed 50% of its equalized value. Under the new rules, unlimited repair and maintenance are allowed on a nonconforming principle structure within the building envelope. An existing principle structure can also be expanded if the use of the structure has not been discontinued for 12 months, the existing structure is at least 35 feet from the stream and no portion of the addition will be closer the ordinary high water mark. A plan to expand an existing structure must include a mitigation plan.

Stimulus Impact Falling Short?

An Updated View

While some local communities have received funding via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the Stimulus Bill,) many have not. At this point, the law has not had the anticipated effect on our state's infrastructure that we civil engineers had hoped. According to a recent report by *Smart Growth America*: "The 50 states' stimulus spending on transportation received mixed reviews. The majority of the \$26.6 billion in stimulus spending went towards infrastructure repairs, but only five states allocated most of their stimulus funds to expand roads and highways. However, very little of the stimulus funds in any of the states went towards public transportation."

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds are distributed through the state to local counties. Here's what our area received:

- Outagamie County: \$49.8 million
- Winnebago County: \$43.9 million

- Calumet County: \$12.9 million
- Waupaca County: \$15.3 million

In Wisconsin, the largest percentage of stimulus money--almost 48 percent, is allocated to school districts, which are receiving more than \$197.1 million, according to the *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel* and the *Wisconsin Office of Recovery and Reinvestment*. Statewide, just over \$73.5 million is going to road projects including I-43 and US 41 projects in the Oshkosh and Green Bay areas.

Provisions to the bill that were aimed at helping the housing industry including the \$8,000 first time home buyer tax credit seemed to have had some effect, especially on lower priced homes.

Regardless of federal funding, which may not reach or affect many of us, I still believe strongly in the concept of "shovel ready." It may not be a good time to invest heavily in a new development, but economic conditions will eventually change. The developer that has plans approved and permits in hand, will be in a much better position to quickly take advantage of the improving market conditions, than one who only begins planning at that point. Fees are low, agencies and approval boards are underutilized, and the rules regarding development are only going to get more restrictive.

[Click here to link to additional information on state stimulus spending,](#)

Winning the Technology War

Consider these startling facts:

- China is the #1 English-speaking country in the world
- The top 25 percentile of IQ in India is more than the entire population of the US-that means India has more honor students than we have students.
- There are 31 billion searches per month on Google. In 2006, it was 2.7 billion (Where were these questions directed before Google?)
- The top 10 jobs today did not exist in 2004.
- A week's worth of the New York Times contains more information than a person was likely to come across in their entire lifetime in the 18th century.
- The world will generate 4 exabytes of information this year, more information than was generated in the last 5000 years.
- The amount of technical information doubles every year.

Viewing the stats made me wonder how

engineering as a profession and in the US in particular, competes in an ever changing world. According to a Duke University study, the US still retains a lead over churning out engineers vis-a-vis India and China.

According to Duke, "The United States actually graduates more engineers than India, and the Chinese numbers are misleading. On a **per capita basis**, the United States still has a strong lead as it graduates over 750 engineers per million, India graduates only 200 engineers per million and China graduates 500 per million."

Facts taken from Sony corporation's Executive conference. You can watch the video in its entirety at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL9Wu2kWwSY>.

Important Phone Changes

Direct Phone Lines at Davel

We have taken another step into the 21st century by updating our phone system to better serve our clients. The new system offers many new features that we can now use to provide better service to our clients. Every staff member has a direct phone number for more efficient access.

Surveying

Eric Stobb 560-6561

James Sehloff 560-6562

Robert Brownson 560-6566

Engineering

John Davel 560-6563

Tim Wittmann 560-6568

Katie DeMarco 560-6564

Shane Nelson 560-6567

Administration

Michelle Sommerfeld 560-6565

An auto attendant and voice mail make sure we don't miss an important call. Additional features allow transferring, simultaneous ringing and automatic forwarding of calls to extend our availability to our clients. High density digital equipment help to make our voices loud and clear. We have already heard many compliments from our clients on the improved service.

I hope you enjoyed this latest edition of *Civil Solutions*. If you'd like more information about our firm or our services, please call us at (920) 991-1866 or visit:

www.davelengineering.com

With best wishes for your continued business success,

John Davel
Davel Engineering



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