

Wood River Township Report - Mike Babcock, Wood River Township Supervisor

Wow! I am still in amazement that 2018 is already here. A lot has happened in the Wood River Township since my last update in the *Business Edge* newsletter. We ended 2017 on a good note by hosting our first annual Toys for Tots toy drive. The Riverbend area should be so thankful for such a program that delivers, through a new toy at Christmas, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, and patriotic citizens. Our township appreciated the opportunity to help and I thoroughly enjoyed personally delivering an overflowing box of toys and being able to express my gratitude to the volunteers who run Toys for Tots in our county. Thank you Wood River Township for your generous donation of toys and cash!!

Longtime Wood River Township administrative assistant, Missy Barnard, retired after 25 years of exemplary service in November of 2016. We wish her the best as she enjoys spending more time traveling and enjoying her family that she holds very dear. It has been such a pleasure working with Missy and I will definitely miss her being at the township full-time.

Congratulations to two of our Wood River Township officials as they were elected to serve on the board of directors for the Township Officials of Illinois. Sandy Shaw, Assessor for Wood River Township, and Sherry Tite, Clerk for Wood River Township, were both unanimously elected to serve on the board during the association's 110th Annual Educational Conference held in Springfield, Illinois, Nov. 12-14, 2017.

At our December 2017 meeting, the Wood River Township Board voted to freeze the township's tax levy for the eighth year in a row. Illinois now ranks second in the nation for the highest amount of property taxes paid by its residents and escalating property taxes are a huge concern to the residents of the Wood River Township. I'm proud that over the past eight years we have taken the necessary steps to run an efficient and productive branch of local government without having to ask our overburdened taxpayers for more. Even with a tax levy freeze, our township has been able to improve township services, make health insurance affordable to our employees and their children, revamp our parks, and create northern Madison Country's first bike trail.

The "rails to trails" program in Madison County has been extremely productive. More than seven years ago we first explored turning a one mile section of abandoned railroad right of way near Kutter Park into a bike trail. The persistence and hard work has finally born fruit and we expect the project to go out for bids by mid-February. If all goes well, we hope to break ground during the fall of this year.

Kutter Park's disc golf course and "Movie in the Park" events continue to be successful. A big thank you goes to ConocoPhillips, The Bank of Edwardsville, and First National Bank for sponsoring our events. Our family friendly "Movies in the Park" program will see some changes in scheduling during 2018. Residents have asked that we adjust movie nights to include some of the fall months and eliminate some of the summer show times to avoid the summer heat.

It has been such a pleasure serving as Wood River Township Supervisor these past 8 years. I look forward to another great year of putting our taxpayers first. We welcome feedback for our township. Please contact the supervisor's office at 618-259-2366 or come in for a visit Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 49 South 9th Street, East Alton. Our Wood River Township Board meetings are the last Tuesday of each month (unless otherwise posted) and are held at the Wood River Township Hall—33 South 9th Street, East Alton at 6 p.m.

January 2018