

COMPASS POINTS

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER: VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1 FALL 2011

NEW MAPPING PRODUCTS

The Kenosha County Department of Planning and Development is pleased to announce it has recently accepted delivery of several new mapping products. These include Aerial Photography for 2010, LiDAR data and 1-foot contour elevations.

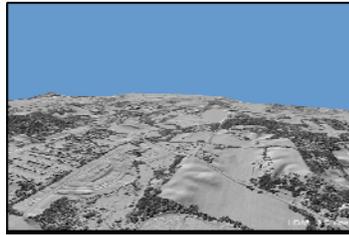
Taken in the spring of 2010, the new aerial photography is the latest addition to Kenosha County's photo inventory that includes air photos from 1963, 1967 and every five years since 1970. The 2010 color aerial photography surpasses all earlier photos in quality by featuring a 3-inch pixel resolution thereby giving objects greater detail and allowing nearly four times more resolution than the 2005 photos. County mapping staff has already put the new photos to good use by updating existing datasets like the structures layer and developing new layers such as pavement edges.

Also in Spring 2010, Kenosha County arranged to fly and capture LiDAR data for all 282 square miles of the county. LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is an airplane-based optical remote sensing technology. It takes measurements with the light of a laser which allows for a complete and very accurate picture of the ground surface. The data it captures also provides multiple details about our landscape including severe slopes, vegetation coverage, and building heights. Most exciting of all, LiDAR will enable County staff to begin working with three dimensional modeling.

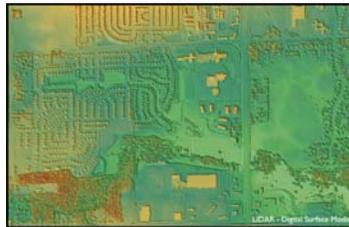
A new countywide elevation model derived from the LiDAR data has enabled Kenosha County to create highly precise 1-foot contour elevation lines. These 1-foot contours provide more precise measurements for floodplain determinations allowing for more accurate site planning and in some cases, minimizing the need for site specific surveys.

The Kenosha County LiDAR, topographic and aerial photography mapping is the basis for economic development, watershed studies and serves as one of the foundational elements for the County's geographical information system program. These datasets are a key element in the growth and development of the County which provides developers with the most up-to-date information needed for land development.

The 2010 aerial photos, the 1-foot contour lines as well as other new datasets will soon be available for viewing on the Kenosha County Interactive Mapping website at: http://www.kenoshacounty.org/plandev/mapping/interactive_map.html



LiDAR - 3-D View



LiDAR - Digital Surface Model



2005 and 2010 Air Photos

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR 2011

OCTOBER

6	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm
12	Planning, Development & Extension Education Committee Public Hearing Room, 6:30 pm
20	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm
22	Real Farms, Real Food - Farm Fresh Atlas Fundraiser
27	Pike River Planning Meeting — Mount Pleasant Village Hall (see page 4)

NOVEMBER

3	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm
5	5th Annual Rural Landowners Conference (see pg.2)
12	Planning, Development & Extension Education Committee Public Hearing Room, 6:30 pm
17	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm

DECEMBER

1	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm
14	Planning, Development & Extension Education Committee Public Hearing Room, 6:30 pm
15	Zoning Board of Adjustments Hearing Room A, 6 pm

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are at the Kenosha County Center (19600 75th Street, Bristol)

UNDERSTANDING VARIANCES

In order to explain what a variance is, one first must understand the premise of a zoning ordinance. A zoning ordinance is a land use planning device used by local governments to promote the general welfare of its residents, the quality of the environment, and the conservation of its resources.

Under chapter 59 of the Wisconsin state statutes, Kenosha County created and adopted Chapter 12 of the Kenosha County Municipal Code, better known as the Kenosha County General Zoning and Shoreland/Floodplain Zoning Ordinance. In general, the Kenosha County General Zoning and Shoreland/Floodplain Zoning Ordinance sets rules on what uses can be established on a property, and where the activities and structures associated with that use can be located in relation to property lines and existing environmental assets such as waterways, wetlands and floodplains.

Recognizing the fact that zoning ordinances cannot be written to address every circumstance, zoning ordinances are required to specify procedures for property owners to seek relief from strict adherence to the zoning code. This "relief" is called a variance, defined as an authorization granted by the Kenosha County Zoning Board of Adjustments to construct or alter a building or structure in a manner that deviates from the dimensional standards of the Kenosha County General Zoning & Shoreland/Floodplain Zoning Ordinance. The Kenosha County Zoning Board of

Adjustments is a quasi-judicial committee comprised of 5 members appointed by the county executive.

The variance process is necessary since a landowner is entitled to use his/her property in a way that is reasonable. Without a variance process, certain properties could be rendered useless under the requirements of the zoning code, resulting in a regulatory taking from the owner.

State law requires that a hardship must be present in order for a variance to be granted. A hardship is defined as a case where the applicant has demonstrated that he or she will have no reasonable use of the property, in the absence of a variance. Requests for variances are either approved, approved with conditions, or denied by the Kenosha County Zoning Board of Adjustments after the application has received a recommendation from the local township. The variance process takes about 4-6 weeks to complete and requires public notification, allowing for input from neighboring properties and other agencies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kenosha County Planning & Development (variance section):
http://kenoshacounty.org/plandev/zone_permit/variances.html

Kenosha County Zoning Board of Adjustments:
http://kenoshacounty.org/plandev/comm_zoningb.html

5TH ANNUAL RURAL LANDOWNERS CONFERENCE

The Southeast Wisconsin Rural Landowner Conference offers educational opportunities for rural landowners and small farmers as well as individuals who are considering a farm enterprise. The conference will be held on Saturday, November 5, at the Kenosha County Center (19600 75th Street, Bristol), and will run from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Tim Baye, Business Development Educator with University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension, will begin the day with a discussion of by "Biomass: Turning Green into Green \$." Biomass is defined as organic material from plants or animals. After the keynote speaker, participants will be able to choose from a variety of educational topics from three tracts:

- The **entrepreneurship** tract will feature topics such as growing grapes and starting a vineyard,; growing hops; brewing beer and wine; and running a winery business.
- The **small farm** tract will offer information on raising chickens; raising ducks and geese; raising beef ; and raising pigs.
- The **conservation** tract will include workshops on invasive species identification; creating natural landscapes; vermicomposting (composting with worms); and a panel discussion on the various government programs in which a landowner might be eligible to participate.

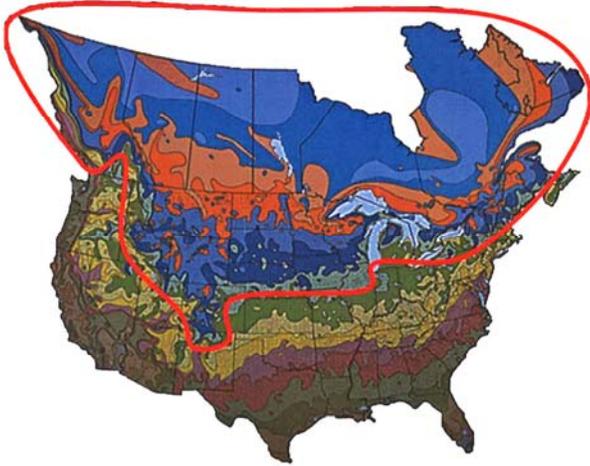
A trade show and farmers' market will be held in conjunction with the conference.

For more information, including how to register, please visit: <http://kenosha.uwex.edu/agriculture>, or contact Rose Skora, Agriculture Educator, Kenosha and Racine Counties UW-Extension, at 262-857-1945 or rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu.



SEPTIC SYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN THE WINTER MONTHS

Septic systems seldom freeze in the winter, but when this does happen it becomes a difficult task to thaw out a system. The best approach is to do some prevention before the winter weather hits.



Potential areas of freezing septic systems (circled in red)

Maintain Snow Cover

Snow in itself is a great insulator and will prevent the frost depth in the soil from reaching its maximum potential. However, what do you do when you have little or no snow cover during the winter months?

If you have a slab foundation or a walkout basement where the building serves your residence in shallow to the ground surface, a severe winter with little or no snow can freeze the building sewer or even a septic tank. The removal of snow from an area that includes your building sewer (such as sidewalks, patios, driveways and parking areas) will allow the frost depth to increase and possibly cause waste piping to freeze. If at all possible, do not remove the snow cover. If that is not possible, make sure your building sewer was properly insulated when it was installed. Straw or mulch can also provide a barrier to deep soil freezing when there is no snow.

Do Not Stockpile Snow over Your Septic System

In winter when we are getting snow, the issue of where to pile it is equally important for your septic system. Many rural residents use snowplows on their trucks, ATV's and garden tractors to push snow off their driveways and into their yards. If these areas include your septic system, you will want to avoid stockpiling snow over these areas. The areas that have tank risers and lids, observation pipes, cleanouts and vent pipes can easily be damaged by the pushing of snow and definitely by a snow plow.

If you must stockpile the snow near your system, it would be recommended to mark these components with lath or

reflective markers prior to snowfall and stay away from those areas. Make sure that all vent pipes remain uncovered from snow as well as all manhole risers and lids.

As you approach the spring, make sure surface water does not pond over any component of your septic system. That observation pipe you broke off while plowing now becomes a direct conduit to your absorption trench and will flood your system with water from the ground surface.

Solutions to Freezing Problems

There are devices available for purchase that will heat the effluent and air space in your septic tank thus preventing freezing in the tank and at its inlet and outlet. Also, as mentioned earlier in this article, building sewer, conveyance piping, tanks and even absorption cells can all be insulated with one-inch extruded poly styrene insulation to stop frost penetration. Obviously, the best time to do this is during the installation of the system. However, in situations where a freezing problem has developed, digging up the area that freezes in the summer months and insulating will give you years of peace of mind in the winter months. Even making sure there is good sod cover over all components of your system will provide better frost protection than bare soil.



Septic Heater



Septic Tank Heating Device

COUNTY SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING AUTHORITY HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS FOR COUNTY RESIDENTS



The Kenosha County Housing Authority is an agency of County government that was organized in 1981 for the purpose of providing affordable housing rehabilitation loans for low- and moderate-income homeowners and landlords who agree to rent to low- and moderate-income tenants.

Over the past 30 years, the Housing Authority has secured a total of \$2.4 million in Community Development Block Grant funds from the State of Wisconsin that have been used to capitalize the County's housing revolving loan fund. To date, the Housing Authority has provided a total of 645 loans to eligible homeowners and landlords. All funds that are repaid to the Housing Authority are placed in a revolving loan fund that is used to finance future home improvement loans.

To qualify for a home improvement loan, homeowners must be low- and moderate-income (LMI), and landlords must agree to rent to LMI tenants and keep rents below established limits for five years from the date of the loan. For example, to qualify as LMI, a family of two must have a gross annual income of no more than \$45,550 and a family of four no more than \$56,900.

Home improvement loans are available for projects anywhere in Kenosha County, except in the City of Kenosha. Additional eligibility guidelines require that the homeowner live in the house to be improved, have sufficient equity to secure a Housing Authority loan, and be current on all property tax payments.

Eligible housing rehabilitation activities include improvements such as insulation, furnaces, septic systems, wells, electrical and plumbing improvements, roofs, foundation repairs, windows, painting, and siding among others.

Kenosha County also offers loans to help low- and moderate-income renters fund 50 percent of the down-payment and closing costs of purchasing a home in Kenosha County.

Those interested in applying for a loan are encouraged to call the Kenosha County Housing Authority at the Kenosha County Center at (262) 857-1843.



UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE

PIKE RIVER PLANNING MEETING: OCTOBER 27, 2011, 3:30 - 5:30 PM

Help plan for a healthy Pike River Watershed! Citizens, public officials, landowners, fishermen, farmers, scientists, students, paddlers, local river groups, land conservationists and others interested in restoring the Pike River are invited to the second meeting of the Pike River Watershed Planning Group. The meeting will take place at Mount Pleasant Village Hall (8811 Campus Dr., Mount Pleasant), and will feature a brief introduction on the Pike River planning effort, followed by a presentation by Mount Pleasant staff on their 10-year effort to reduce flooding and restore the natural flow of the Pike River in the Village. A tour of the river will follow. For more information on this meeting and future meetings, please visit <http://www.rootpikewin.org>.

MASTER GARDENER TRAINING: JANUARY - MAY, 2012

The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer training program of the University of Wisconsin Extension for anyone who wants to expand their knowledge and understanding of horticulture and share that information with others in the community. In Kenosha County, Master Gardener Volunteers answer gardening questions, present educational programs, design and maintain demonstration and therapeutic gardens, and help youth learn about and appreciate the natural world. The course will take place on Monday evenings January 16 through May 7, 2012. More information and the application to become a Master Gardener Volunteer are available online at <http://kenosha.uwex.edu>.



Kenosha County Department of Planning and Development
19600 75th Street, PO Box 520, Bristol, Wisconsin, 53104-0520
Phone: (262) 857-1895 | Fax: (262) 857-1920
<http://kenoshacounty.org/plandev>

The mission of the Kenosha County Department of Planning and Development is to encourage the use of land, water resources and structures in a planned and orderly manner through technology, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and its base mapping and various ordinances, which promotes sound planning and land use management, environmental awareness and public participation to protect the overall public health, safety, morals, prosperity, aesthetics, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the citizens of Kenosha County as well as providing professional planning assistance to other departments within Kenosha County government.