



JOHNSON CREEK
Crossroads With A Future

The Creek

News from the Crossroads

April 2020

SERVING JOHNSON CREEK

By Kyle L. Ellefson



*Village Administrator
Kyle L. Ellefson*

For those of you that have not heard, I will soon be leaving Johnson Creek to pursue a different opportunity. So, I write this article to reflect on all that has been accomplished in the past several years, to celebrate our accomplishments, and most of all to say thank you to the Village President and Village Board, the residents, and business owners that make Johnson Creek a wonderful place.

Since 2016, Johnson Creek has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, with several new businesses and dozens of new homes being built in the Village. On the development front, we have issued more than 50 new permits in the past few years, and welcomed nearly 90 new residents; bringing the Village to an all-time high population of 3,021 residents. JWR just finished their new facility, following additional improvements in 2017. The View at Johnson Creek has nearly finished their beautiful new facility in one of the most prominent locations in the Village, and they should soon be welcoming residents to their new home. In the past several years we have also been blessed to see the Kearns Motor Car dealership completed, QDOBA and Starbucks opened in a new retail center, the Crossroads Church relocated to the old high school campus, and Hoof Health built a brand-new manufacturing facility. This business and organizational growth will help fund the termination of our Tax Increment Districts within just a few years and provide additional jobs for current and future residents. Between new homes and businesses, we have seen an average of 2.05% increase in new construction in the Village, adding more than 20 million in new property tax base.

We have also seen multiple projects and improvements occur in the Village during the past several years. At Centennial Park paved parking was completed and drain tile was added to both baseball fields to improve drainage and increase playability. In Veterans Park the basketball court was resurfaced and re-striped, and in Pioneer Park the Public Works Department just recently replaced the old worn out bridge that spans the gap connecting the two ponds. Aztalan Street was resurfaced with new asphalt, and there were several improvements to the intersection of Hwy Y and River Drive, Hwy Y and Resort Drive, and Paradise Lane. We completely upgraded our wastewater treatment facility to new technology, and we corrected a major bottleneck in the wastewater system; adding a larger interceptor near Aztalan, Milwaukee, and Union Streets. We continued to add or replace equipment as well; replacing a 20-year old ambulance last year and a police squad car this year, in addition to adding a water/ice rapid deployment craft in 2018.

In addition to addressing projects and equipment, we continued to improve the Village through solid planning efforts, and targeted program improvements. First, we completed a lengthy Comprehensive Planning with multiple community focus groups, several public input sessions, and an exhaustive review process. The result has been a comprehensive plan with clear, achievable goals that the Village Board references as they pursue opportunities and prioritize resources. Similarly, the Village completed a multi-year process of strategic planning to identify projects and equipment that needed to be replaced or completed. The result has been a clear plan for capital expenditures that lays out what projects or equipment we

are going to address, when we are going to address them, and most importantly, how we are going to pay for it. Not to mention, we found a way to afford the equipment and projects without increasing the tax rate, which is something the Village Board should be incredibly proud of, and residents should be thankful for.

When the Village saw the challenge of replacing our longtime Street Superintendent, they turned that into a rare opportunity to consolidate both the Public Works Department and Utility Departments under one common management structure, allowing the Village to add one full time position. This allowed the Village to increase front-line staff and consolidate leadership and with very little additional cost. The Village Board and Tourism & Promotion Commission have also made significant improvements in our Room Tax program over several years. The Village Board established a Tourism and Promotion Department targeted on increasing tourism in the Village and improving the opportunities for



*Village Board of Trustees
Pictured left to right
John L. Swisher, President (top)
Bev Deppe, Rooney Freimund,
David Rousayne (second row)
Mike Saindon, Tim Semo, Joseph
Yaeger IV (third row)*



visitors to stay at the Comfort Suites hotel. Village President Swisher nominated Katie Newcomb to be the first Tourism Director to lead the Tourism and Promotion Department, and she has served in that capacity since 2018; developing the visitjohnsoncreekwi.org website, establishing a branding campaign and multiple digital marketing campaigns, as well as direct outreach programs, Buzzed into Madison episodes, and spearheading the Discover Wisconsin episode that will be unveiled the weekend of April 23rd. Katie has not only implemented all of these marketing efforts, but she has refined and improved the existing tourism grant process to maximize the return on investment. We have emerged as a leader among municipalities in this area, and others are learning from our success!

There is one common influence among these achievement and accomplishments that you might not have noticed. That, of course is the talented members of the Village Board! From Village President John Swisher, to each of the six village trustees, I have been honored to work with this dedicated and thoughtful group, and I am proud to have played a

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CORONAVIRUS UPDATES: The Village produces the newsletter weeks in advance of delivery. As the Coronavirus situation is changing rapidly, for the latest information, please visit our Village website: www.johnsoncreek-wi.us, the CDC website: www.cdc.gov, and the WHO website: www.who.int.

SERVING JOHNSON CREEK (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

role in the impressive results they have seen over the past several years. Make no mistake, none of this would have been possible without the leadership and support of the village president and trustees. I would encourage everyone reading this article to take a look at the breakout graphic showing the current Village Board members, and take a moment in person, by email, or by telephone to say, "Thank You!" They have spent countless hours over the last several years improving policies, establishing realistic priorities, balancing future projects and equipment needs with available resources, and keeping your Village tax rate lower than any other city or Village in Jefferson County. In closing, I want to again thank the village president and village board for their leadership and commitment to making Johnson Creek an amazing community. Strong fiscal management practices, an emphasis on continuous improvement, and a focus on providing quality service will continue to make Johnson Creek not only the crossroads with a future, but also one of the premier communities in the region.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD ON KYLE:

"I would like to begin by saying Thank You to Kyle for the past three and a half years that you served as our Village Administrator. You can certainly be proud of everything that you accomplished here. It was not only a pleasure to work with you but also to develop a friendship. As you begin your new journey in Columbus, I wish both you and your family all the best." **Village Board President John L. Swisher**

"I had the pleasure of serving with Kyle as a Trustee, and then again appointing him as our administrator. I always appreciate the way Kyle approaches problem solving and how he truly demonstrates his desire to put the needs of the Village first. With Kyle working by our sides we have seen some incredible growth in the village, and he leaves us well prepared for the future." **Village Trustee Tim Semo**

"I have worked with Kyle for less than a year but have found him to be very accessible and easy to work with. He is very knowledgeable about all aspects of administration. His forward thinking has kept the village on a good path towards fiscally responsible growth. He will be missed!" **Village Trustee Bev Deppe**

"Besides being a guru when it came to budgeting, what made Kyle a great Administrator was his ability to be a strong divergent thinker. Whenever an issue would be presented he would always have multiple solutions that he would present to paint a full picture for the board. He would then give his recommendation with various reasons why. This made life as a board member a lot easier because most of our questions were played out in one of his solutions. He also would not shy away from presenting the "unpopular" or tough solutions. Kyle will be greatly missed but I'm happy to see him grow in his career field. Columbus is very lucky to have him." **Village Trustee Joseph Yaeger**

"It has been a great pleasure working with Mr. Kyle Ellefson these past nine months. Mr. Ellefson's knowledge, input, and perspective has been a tremendous asset for the entire Village and he has personally helped me adapt to the Board quickly and efficiently. Kyle, Tina, and Family will be missed and I wish them well on their new adventure." **Village Trustee Rooney C. Freimund**

NEXT STEPS ON HIRING IN THE VILLAGE

The Village is moving quickly to fill key positions as quickly as possible. The Village Administrator recruitment is on track for approval, and we expect to see advertisements very soon. We are planning to secure interim leadership as needed to ensure we maintain momentum on all of our projects and initiatives.

After the Village Board authorized funds, the Police & Fire Commission is also moving forward with two important recruitments as they seek candidates for the Fire/EMS Chief, and a new fulltime Paramedic/Firefighter. The Board and Commission have been working together to ensure we have the right combination of staff and coverage to provide the best emergency services possible.

Stay tuned for updates on these recruitments in future issues!

THANK YOU KYLE ELLEFSON: ADMINISTRATOR AND RESIDENT

Kyle Ellefson has served as Administrator for Johnson Creek since 2016. During that time the Village has grown in both population and industry; working in tandem with the board, setting the tone for continued smart growth.



But Ellefson is also a Johnson Creek resident. He, his wife, Tina, and their children, Christian (13), Carter (11), and Lauren (4), have been active members of the community. Some of you may not know that Kyle started the Johnson Creek Lion's Club in 2017.

What you may also not be aware of is just how much of a family man Kyle is. "Family is everything to me," said Ellefson. "Tina and I are very much a team and all decisions we make for our family, we make together," Ellefson shared.

Kyle and Tina are high school sweethearts having met at Sheboygan Falls High School and graduating in 1997. "Our first date was because of a car," Kyle chuckled. "We both were fans of our school's wrestling team and had mutual friends. One day I asked her if she would like a ride to a wrestling meet. We started chatting and riding more to meets together, and soon began dating," Ellefson recounted.

The high school sweethearts married in 1999 and began a plan to support each other while obtaining their bachelors and masters degrees. Tina went first for education while Kyle worked and also dabbled in local politics; including being elected to the Pardeeville Village Board when he was 21 years old. "I was always interested in local government and at that time didn't realize my hobby would turn into my career," said Ellefson.

Ellefson's career before Johnson Creek prepared him for a role in management, problem solving, and service. Beginning in 1999, Ellefson had a variety of positions with the State of Wisconsin; including stints as a meat inspector, meat investigator, and meat supervisor, but also as an investigation program manager.

In his investigation program role, he was now out of the front lines and in a management position. This afforded the opportunity to hone his writing, problem-solving, and people skills. "I found I not only enjoyed knowing rules and regulations, but I was also good at helping people work within guidelines," Ellefson said. "For me, one of my favorite things is to take a different approach with problem solving to make the best solutions while enforcing deals to make industry better," said Ellefson.

"Kyle's ability for problem solving is certainly one of his many strengths. A few examples that come to mind is our current fire contract. Kyle took the time to thoroughly understand the needs and obstacles that each municipality was facing and developed a contract that was a win-win for all. Another example was his ability to take our strategic planning vision and bring it to reality."

- **Village President John L. Swisher**

As many who know Kyle are aware, he is a go-getter. So it should come as no surprise that while the couple was undergoing a family balancing act with Tina establishing her career as a teacher and prin-

THANK YOU KYLE ELLEFSON, ADMINISTRATOR AND RESIDENT (CONT FROM PAGE 2)

cial, Kyle working for the State, and both juggling parental duties, Kyle went back to get his bachelor's degree at the University of Concordia in 2012, and later his masters in public administration at UW-Oshkosh in 2015. "I really attribute our family's success to Tina," said Ellefson. "Without her support during that time, and really throughout our marriage, I'm not sure I'd be where I am," Kyle acknowledged. "Our relationship is based on mutual respect and cooperation. No one job for either of us is more important than the other," remarked Ellefson. "We both make sacrifices and for our family that works." And that commitment to family was instilled with Ellefson at a very young age through his own family. Both his parents were profession-

als, and one of his uncles was a fire chief in Saint Lawrence, Wisconsin. "I admired my Uncle Gary (Karnitz) and his work with the fire department that I knew I wanted to help serve my community in that same way," said Ellefson.

When Ellefson was 18 years old, he became a firefighter in his hometown of Johnsonville, Wisconsin, and later in Pardeeville where he also became a licensed EMS provider and EMS instructor. His call to service, his hobby, eventually lead him to Kewaunee, Wisconsin, where he became city administrator in 2015. He later brought his talents to Johnson Creek where he now leaves us as village administrator after three and a half years of dedicated service.

When asked what were some of his favorite memories and projects from his time in Johnson Creek, Ellefson says it's all about togetherness.

"Times and events where the community comes together, in grass roots efforts like the Annual Tree Lighting event and Fireman's Festival are the moments that I treasure the most in Johnson Creek," said Ellefson.

Moving forward, Ellefson takes a position in nearby Columbus to further his career and balance time with his family's needs. On what he thinks the future holds for Johnson Creek, Ellefson didn't hesitate. "Johnson Creek has an incredible future. It has everything to offer businesses and residents. With steady progress, we've made our mark as a leader in the county for the long term. The village board is the friendliest to businesses in the county and with the benefit of a great community our progress will outlive any one person and will fuel continued growth."

Corrections: In last month's Resident Spotlight piece, we incorrectly stated a few facts for Sally Albertz. Her father's name is Walter Becker. She also worked for the Gobbler Supper Club and Motel, and has served as treasurer of her church for more than 20 years. We apologize for the confusion.

THOUGHTS ON KYLE FROM THE STAFF:

"Kyle always had logical, level-headed advice for me. I could always count on him to explain things clearly and problem solve with me. He will be missed!" **Library Director Abby Armour**

"Kyle has always been the consummate professional. Fair, honest, and always willing to find the best solutions for the Village and employees. I wish him all the best," **Tourism Director Katie Newcomb**

"I could always count on Kyle to walk into my office by 10:00am and ask me what was for lunch! I will greatly miss him and his sense of humor and professional guidance. I wish him and his family the best with their next endeavor." **Clerk/Treasurer Sam Bell**

"Kyle didn't function as a title, but as genuine leader. He challenged us to do our best, showed grace when we fell short, encouraged us with his guidance in solving problems, and always did it all with a great sense of humor. I've been so blessed to work with him, and wish him and his family the best." **Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Kelly Brinkman**

"Best wishes, Kyle, for continued success in your new position." **Fire/EMS Chief Jeff Roemer**

"Other bosses give orders, you gave us direction. Other bosses give targets, you gave us a vision. Other bosses lead by authority, you have always led us by respect. I just wanted to say that it has been a great honor and pleasure to have you as my boss. One final question; who's going to make the coffee every morning now?!" **Administrative Assistant Laura Canales**

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Shaping the Future of YOUR Johnson Creek



The Village of Johnson Creek has dedicated and giving residents who have a love for our community and the desire to make it the wonderful place to live, work, and play that it is. Our residents' generosity and commitment to our community are what makes Johnson Creek so unique. The investments of time, talent, and treasure of so many help ensure the continued success and growth of our community. We want to thank and remind such individuals of how important they are to the Village.

Patti Swanson

- "4 Our Kids" community action group steering committee member
- Volunteer for "One Team One Dream" gala, golf outing & running concessions
- Volunteer softball coach (Johnson Creek Yellowjackets) & volleyball coach (Johnson Creek Recreation)
- Friends of Our School member and board member

Merisa Nicholuson

- "4 Our Kids" community action group steering committee member
- Volunteer for "One Team One Dream"
- Volleyball coach (Johnson Creek Recreation & girls YMCA leagues)
- Volunteer softball (Johnson Creek Yellowjackets) & T-Ball coach
- Friends of Our School member and board member
- Member of the Joint Village and School Rec Committee

TOURISM UPDATES



Due to the Coronavirus health crisis, many events in the Village have been cancelled or postponed. If you are an event planner with a changed event, please contact Tourism Director Katie Newcomb to update information on our website via: katienn@johnsoncreekwi.org.

For information on best travel practices during the crisis, please visit the Travelers' Health page on the CDC website: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

Discover WI Premier Party: ON HOLD

Due to Coronavirus, the Discover Wisconsin Premier Party scheduled for April 24th is currently on hold. We will make the final call closer to the event date.

YOUR LIBRARY UPDATES & NEWS



Johnson Creek
Friends of the Library

BOOK SALE

Come shop the annual book sale

Friday, April 24th: 9am - 6pm
Saturday, April 25th: 9am - 1pm

at the Johnson Creek Library
125 Lincoln St

Taco sale is Friday from 10am until
supplies run out. Come early to get
your tacos!

Animal Meet & Greet

Monday, April 6 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

for ages 2 and up

Meet and pet a variety
of live animals!



JOHNSON CREEK ELEMENTARY &
JOHNSON CREEK PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENT

OPEN MIC NIGHT

NOCHE DE MICRÓFONO ABIERTO

FOR ALL AGES
PARA TODAS LAS EDADES

April 23, 2020
23 de abril de 2020

5:30-7:00 PM

Johnson Creek Community Center
Centro Comunitario de Johnson Creek

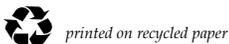


Please note: the Animal Meet & Greet which was scheduled for April 6th has been cancelled. Open Mic Night and the annual Friends of the Library book sale are currently pending as of the newsletter print date. Watch the library website at www.johnsoncreeklibrary.org or follow them on Facebook @JohnsonCreekPublicLibrary for updates on these events and library hours.



Village of Johnson Creek

www.johnsoncreek-wi.us



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Holiday Closings



Village Hall: Friday, April 10, 2020

Library: Friday, April 10, 2020 &
Saturday, April 11, 2020

DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO VOTE?

The polling location for all Village of Johnson Creek residents is the **Community Center** located at **417 Union Street**. There is a large parking lot located off of Ashland Street (see map on right) for easy access to the building.

