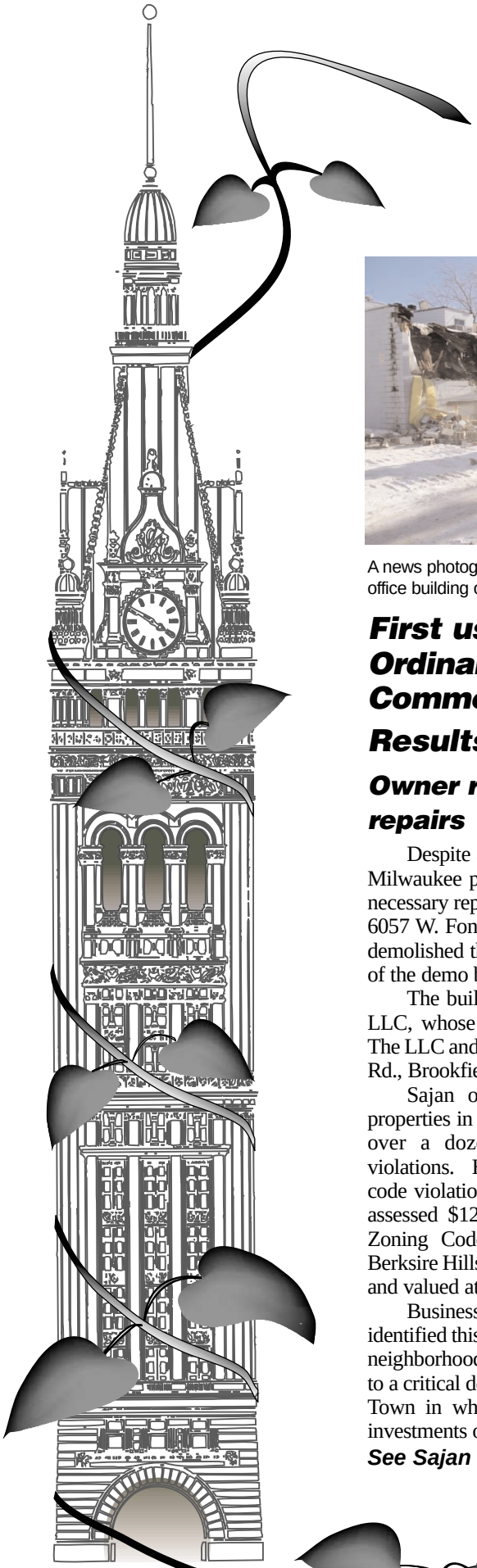

Neighborhood Grapevine

News from the City of Milwaukee's Department of Neighborhood Services

A news photographer video tapes the demolition of the office building owned by Makbal Sajan

First use of Shaming Ordinance on Commercial Building Results in Demolition

Owner refused to make repairs

Despite a $1 million home in Brookfield, a Milwaukee property owner refused to make the necessary repairs to a two-story office building at 6057 W. Fond Du Lac Ave. As a result, the City demolished the building and will collect the cost of the demo by filing a lien on the property.

The building is owned by MK Investments LLC, whose registered agent is Makbul Sajan. The LLC and Sajan's address is 18925 Cavendish Rd., Brookfield, WI 53045 (414) 687-0016.

Sajan owns or controls some 15 other properties in the City of Milwaukee, which have over a dozen open orders with 125 code violations. He has been convicted of previous code violations 13 times within the last 3 years, assessed $1200 in past fines for Building and Zoning Code fines. His Brookfield home in Berksire Hills subdivision is assessed at $904,500 and valued at over $1 million.

Business groups and neighbors in the area identified this building as one of the worst in their neighborhood. The property is also located next to a critical development corridor known as Mid-Town in which the City has made significant investments over recent years.

See Sajan Demo on page 4

State Supreme Court upholds use of DNS Reinspection fee

The Wisconsin Supreme court refused to hear the case challenging the use of Milwaukee's reinspection fee against owners who fail to make timely repairs. The action reaffirms the lower Appeals court ruling that said the ordinance is constitutional and that the City has a right to use it. Opponents to the fee claimed it was unfair and illegal, but the courts disagreed. The courts found that property owners can avoid the fee by simply making timely repairs.

The case known as Rusk vs. the City of Milwaukee was first filed in Circuit Court on September 30, 2002 and found in the favor of the City. The decision went to the Court of Appeals and was decided again in the City's favor on December 19, 2006. The plaintiffs then sought relief from the State Supreme court and were denied on April 17, 2007. The law suit was funded in part by members of the Apartment Association of South Eastern Wisconsin (AASEW).

The decision is hailed as a major victory for Milwaukee's aging housing stock. The escalating reinspection fee is primarily a motivational tool to get non-compliant property owners to make the necessary repairs to their property.

If an order is complied with in the time allowed, no fees are assessed. The order lists the date due for the repairs, which is typically 30-60-90 days. If after the first deadline the repairs are not completed, the property is assessed a $50 fee and it is reinspected every 30 days. The second reinspection costs $75, the 3rd $150 and $300 for each subsequent reinspection period. The final inspection is free. Ironically some people don't react until the $300 fee hits.

Assistant City attorney Rudy Konrad defended the City's case and saw it through to the State Supreme Court.

Other communities are already following

See Supreme Court on page 3

Pictures from the field: What's Wrong with this picture?

You are driving down the road in Milwaukee and you glance to the right and notice a colorful assortment of tricycles and baby strollers. On the walls you see colorful towels. What's wrong with this picture? If you said the bikes are not sorted by color, you are wrong! Other visible clues are in the picture, so look around and tell us what is wrong.

Answer: The key to this question is on the ground and in the air. First of all, this is an open market. Open markets may be permitted under the zoning code provided the use is located entirely on private property and the appropriate permit is obtained. In some areas, a special use permit may be required. These bikes are lined up on a City sidewalk. While parking your bike on the sidewalk is not a crime, taking up sidewalk space to sell bikes is a crime. Use of the public right-of-way for sales requires a direct sellers permit as regulated by chapter 95 of MCO. Merchants engaging in direct sales on public property, need to be aware of rules and regulations limiting their use. The police are responsible for this enforcement.

Retail sales is a permitted use in an area zoned Commercial. . A plan of operation is only required for a special use or variance. A sign that does not reflect the actual use of the property may be considered an abandoned sign after 90 days as regulated by section 244-3-2 MCO. All permanent signs currently require a permit.

Another common problem is to block windows more than 25% with temporary signs/posters advertising sales such as cigarettes or liquor in excess of 30 days; or more than 50% with a combination of permanent and temporary signage. Many stores create crime opportunities when these signs block the public's view to activities inside the store. For answers to questions about Zoning matters call 286-2557.

Need Help Finding a DNS form?

All of DNS forms, brochures and documents are available on the Public Information Section of the DNS web site at:

www.milwaukee.gov/dns

James G. Miicke booking photo from Milwaukee Police Department

Landlord jailed for non-payment of building code fines

James G. Miicke of 9418 W Schlinger Ave, West Allis, WI 53124 (414) 321-7738 or 414-302-5650 was arrested by Muskego police on July 6th on warrants issued by Milwaukee Municipal Court for non-payment of fines issued for building and zoning code violations.

Miicke, who owns or controls about 50 properties in the City of Milwaukee, has been fined a total of $404,281 since 1992 from being prosecuted in 90 court cases. Miicke now ranks as one of the most fined landlords in Milwaukee, surpassing the previous record holder Timothy J. Brophy, who had been fined $307,170 in 107 Building and Zoning court cases since 1992.

Miicke also has a registered address of S63 W12486 Emerson Dr., Muskego, Wi 53150 with the Department of Neighborhood Services..

Fixing "CAR" Problems

by Ron Roberts, Supervisor Zoning, Commercial & Condemnation

In the past few years the City of Milwaukee has been plagued with operators who conduct illegal auto sales from private property. These operators would purchase the vehicles at an auction or as a private sale. (They would not title the vehicle, but you may have seen those vehicles for sale on city streets and on an abandoned private property.) The operator may have 2 or more vehicles posted for sale in a high-visibility area on lots not licensed for motor vehicle sales. That is both a licensing and zoning violation. Ticketing the vehicles creates no sense of urgency since the vehicle or plate is not licensed to the seller. Involving parking enforcement resulted in a parking ticket with tow capability after three days. Owners, the city, police and an aldermen receiving these complaints were frustrated.

Now a simple solution has been discovered. Although parking enforcement cannot tow for 72 hours, if the property is posted and upon authorization by the property owner, a private tow company can tow the vehicles immediately.

Such was the case at Family Dollar, 2601 W. Hampton. After several weeks of ticketing cars and discovering that it wasn't working, DNS asked Family Dollar to sign a blanket waiver permitting the city to tow cars for sale off their lot at will. Once ticketed, we contact a tow company and have the vehicles towed immediately. The police will be present to ensure no harassment.

This simple solution promises to put an end to the illegal auto sales activity this summer.

Supreme Court from page 1

Milwaukee's lead and are adopting simular ordinances.

Fred Curzan of the Milwaukee City-wide Housing Coalition said, "The fee helps neighborhoods by persuading owners to do repairs in a timely manner. Landlords that delay those repairs contribute to the destabilization of the neighborhood through lower property values, high turnover and low home ownership."

"I hope that the AASEW will now devote its time and funds towards improving our housing stock instead of trying to strip DNS of one of our best methods of dealing with code violators." said Commissioner Martin G. Collins. "Code compliance improves the value of our neighborhoods and that benefits landlords and homeowners alike. An incentive that results in the costs of obtaining code compliance to fall more on code violators than on property owners who maintain their buildings is more fair to all." added Collins.

Sprinkler Permits now on NSS

from Carolyn Wood, IT Section

The fire suppression systems inspected by the plumbing and sprinkler sections are now part of NSS! There are several types of fire suppression systems, including regular sprinklers, dry standpipes, wet standpipes, hydrants, water curtains, chemical systems, and spray booths. Water branch lines that DNS inspects for the Water Department, both inside and outside the City, are included. All of these systems, except dry standpipes, must be inspected every year. Dry standpipes must be inspected every three years.

A lot of the sprinkler information used to be maintained on paper cards and duplicate master cards were updated using a typewriter. Billing was done via dBase III. The information from the paper cards will be entered into NSS over time, and we hope it will all be entered this year. Once it is all entered, subsequent inspection data entry and billing will be faster. Automating these greater than 6,500 records and integrating them into NSS allows for better managing and tracking of these records and related inspections.

With the anti-graffiti artists watching in the background, the students from Bruce Guadalupe Community school witness Mayor Tom Barrett sign a funding approval to purchase 10 high-tech trip wire cameras to catch graffiti taggers. The cameras are small enough to conceal anywhere around a graffiti prone area. They can automatically alert police to graffiti activity and transmit images of the tagger so that police can make quick and accurate arrests. The art work from the students is on display now at the offices of DNS at 4001 S. 6th St. The signing was part of the 2007 Anti-graffiti campaign kick-off.

Coming to a hose near you!

from Hal Jenkins, Cross Connection Section

The above pictures show what may become the most popular plumbing project many folks may be doing this summer. A new inspection program will be visiting commercial businesses to look for backflow and cross connection problems. A cross connection is a direct arrangement of a piping line which allows the potable water supply to be connected to one which contains a contaminant. An example is the common garden hose attached to a sill cock with the end of the hose lying in a cesspool. Other examples are a garden hose attached to a service sink with the end of the hose submerged in a tub full of detergent, supply lines connected to bottom-fed tanks, supply lines to boilers. Locally, the ordinary garden hose is the most common offender as it can be easily connected to the potable water supply and used for a variety of potentially dangerous applications.

What does this inspection detail? A survey is required by the State of Wisconsin to look for the possible interconnection of water related sources. This is a City required inspection. The inspector will have to follow the water lines to where ever they run. Hence they may need access to the entire building.

The purpose of a sill cock is to permit easy attachment of a hose for outside watering purposes. However, garden hoses can be extremely hazardous because they are left submerged in swimming pools, lay in elevated locations (above the sill cock) watering shrubs, chemical sprayers are attached to hoses for weed-killing, etc.

What protection is required for sill cocks? A hose bibb vacuum breaker should be installed on every sill cock to isolate garden hose applications thus protecting the water supply from contamination by back flow.

What is Backflow? Backflow occurs when the flow of water, in any pipeline or plumbing system, reveres and flows in the opposite direction than intended. The normal direction of water flow is from the utility water main to the homes or businesses. The backflow of water from home plumbing systems into the communities drinking water sometimes results from a pressure source like a well pump. Signs of contaminated water range from water that is off-color and undesirably odorous to water that contains health threatening and even life threatening toxins. Inspectors ultimately will be searching for these backflow and cross connections in every commercial building in Milwaukee beginning this year.

What are the Odds?

Guess how many inquiries were made to the DNS Neighborhood Services System (NSS) database on the Fourth of July? Think patriotic here! If you guessed 1776 you were right! Sometimes the numbers just click!

Sajan Demo from page 1

The local alderman, Joe Davis, Sr. said, "The unfortunate thing about it is this property owner lives in Brookfield and has close to a $1 million property, but he chooses not to invest in a property in the City of Milwaukee." The Fond Du Lac Ave. property has extensive water damage and mold growth due to the lack of a working heating system. The owner has proposed only minimal repairs such as painting, which DNS has ruled as being substantially lacking in compliance.

Using a special ordinance, Section 218-9, the City is declaring the building a nuisance and condemning it. This allows the City to post the sign and use public pressure to get the owner to repair the building.

Above: Makbul Sajan's home in Brookfield, complete with private pond.
Below: Mold covers the walls as an example of the condition of the office building before DNS declared it a nuisance and tore it down.

Progress being made on other shaming signs

from Chris Kraco, Condemnation Section

DNS has used the shaming sign with varied success in the past. In its first use on a residential property in November of 2002, the City had compliance with in 24 hours. The first Commercial use resulted in a demolition. In January of 2007 the City used the shaming ordinance on a mixed use building with some interesting results. The night before a new conference was to be held announcing the sign placed at 2600 N. Booth St., someone tore off the half of the sign listing the name, address and phone number of the owner, Timothy J. Brophy, Jr. Things took another strange turn.

Unknown person(s) replaced a torn shaming sign with a photo of the owner and stenciled phone numbers. The sign was repaired two-weeks later.

While the City was preparing to make a new sign, someone put up a police booking photo of the owner, and a cell number and covered it with plexiglass liquid nails and screws to deter its removal. Police never found who posted the "unofficial" sign. The owners asked to have the "unofficial" sign removed. A few weeks later the City re-posted its "official" sign and the matter regarding this property is continuing in court.

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Meanwhile another shaming sign was posted on an apartment complex at 4265 N. 27th St. and is owned by Roger L. and Ilona G. Stank, who live at 5511 N. 53rd St. The Stanks have failed to correct code violations dating back to September of 2004. If the Stanks fail to submit an acceptable restoration plan, the City plans to tear the building down and hand the bill to the owners.

This was the second time a residential property had been the focus of a City shaming sign. It's hoped the added attention will motivate the owners to make necessary repairs. So far the results are encouraging.

The Stanks own four additional properties that are also subject to orders from DNS. The addresses are 6050 W. Appleton Ave., 5511 N. 53rd St., 5500 N. 54th St., 8110 W. Bradley Rd..

First District Alderman Ashanti Hamilton said, "The City can no longer allow absentee landlords to destroy the infrastructure of our neighborhoods. Your City officials and I will continue to be diligent on building issues."

The Stanks are not strangers to building code violations. To date they have received $9519 in fines for code violations. They currently owe the City $3067 on that balance. They also have two cases pending in municipal court after being convicted 12 times in the last 3 years on building and zoning code violations.

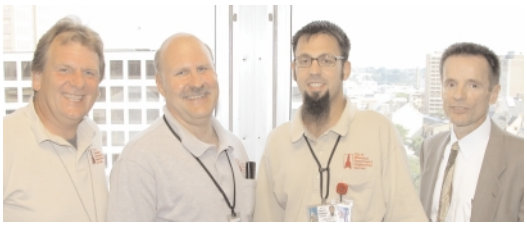
DNS found that including numerous code violations, the building is severely overloaded with storage to the point it poses a potential fire hazard to the neighborhood and firefighters who may have to respond.

Some of the apartments are now being emptied and progress is being made that will hopefully restore the building to a safe condition.

Welcome Aboard to New Hires

by Karen Haack and the New Hires

Many new faces have been added to the Department since the last newsletter. Plumbing & Cross Connect saw the addition of **Christopher Krowski**, **Abraham Jones**, **Christopher Cottreau**, **David Tabaka** and **Jeffrey Wroblewski**. Jeff says he is an outdoorsman with interests including fishing, hunting and four-wheeling. He is also very involved with family activities and he and his wife Diane are kept busy watching sporting events involving their two teenage daughters and five-year old son. Chris Krowski worked as a plumber for 10 years, has a degree from UW-Madison and enjoys golfing and hunting in his free time. **David Tabaka** joined the city as a plumbing inspector in August, 2006. Since beginning his apprenticeship in 1994, he has worked for some of the area's most reputable companies. After fourteen years in the field, he welcomes the opportunity to be a part of DNS. New plumbing inspector **Abraham Jones** enjoys watching and playing sports, especially taking his son to the Brewer's games on the weekends. **Andrew Witczak** joined the plumbing section as a cross connection inspector. He's newly married and looking forward to a honeymoon in Europe! In his free time he like bicycling and golf. Three new clerical staff were also added to these sections. **Michael Marass** is the OAIII for the Cross Connect section. Previously worked at the library, MPS, and Waukesha Memorial hospital. He is seeking a graduate degree at the Organization of Information at UW-Milwaukee. In his spare time he has a passion for reading and learning new things. **Bertha Redd** says she is proud to be working for the City of Milwaukee as an OAII in Plumbing. She was a school secretary for 14 years and enjoys candlemaking in her spare time. Currently she is a full-time student working towards a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Information Technology. **Mary Stevenson** also works for Plumbing and was formerly employed by MPS as a secretary I from August 1994 – June, 2007.



L to R: New Plumbing staff- Jeff Wroblewski, Jim Winterhalter, David Tabaka, and Mike Marass

Paula Forest has been providing clerical support to the Electrical section since April, 2007. Before that she worked for MPS for 17 years 11 months. She has one daughter and two grandsons. She enjoys singing and directing her church choir and making flower arrangements and dancing. She is a self proclaimed shoe-aholic and says, " The shoe industry is getting rich off of me."

Construction added a new inspector named **Keith Spruce** who says he is excited to join DNS. He has been practicing architecture since 1971 and most recently operated his own architectural firm in Two Rivers for the past 20 years. **Kathleen Gerlica** has joined Residential Code Enforcement. She is married to John, who is also a city employee. They have a 2-year old daughter named Allie. And she enjoys gardening, music, movies and writing. Kathleen previously worked for DPW. Also welcome Residential Code Enforcement Inspectors **Mario Hernandez** and **Eric Yanke**. Eric is married and has a boy-9 and girl-10. In his off time he is an assistant soccer coach. The following Code Enforcement Interns were also hired: **Jumaane Cheatham**, **Matthew Rzepkowski**, **Jason Golec** and **Anthony Schwegel**. Jumaane and Mario have been promoted to Inspector I. Jumaane says he's a thirty-something resident of Milwaukee with experience in the residential and commercial construction. He is married with four kids in age from k-3 to high school. Mario worked for 11 years at Community Advocates before joining DNS. He enjoys fishing and camping.

Lake Tower staff (l to R) Michael Mannan, Jason Golec, Matt Rzepkowski, Tammy Neeb, Jumaane Cheatham.

(L to R) New Nuisance Control Staff: Ken Kenitz, Tammy Neeb, Julia VanTreek, LaTanya Linsey

On his off days, Anthony enjoys spending time in the outdoors. Either up north hunting or fishing along with playing softball and golf. He is also a volunteer firemen/EMT for the city of Muskego. **Jason Golac** is a former carpenter and am very excited about the opportunities the city has to offer. He is recently married and enjoys golfing in his spare time. **Ken Veriga** is a UW-Milwaukee intern and recently graduated with a Masters of Urban Planning.

It's that time of the year where we need a little extra assistance with nuisance issues. Please welcome **Kenneth Kenitz** and **Latanya Lindsey**, summer temps who are helping out in Nuisance. Hope you enjoy working for DNS. Congratulations to **John Fusek** and **Tammy Neeb** former temps who are now full-time Nuisance Control Inspectors. Tammy earned a B.A. in Fine Arts from UWM. Her background includes teaching for the Milwaukee Zoological Society, managing a dog daycare business, and she did dog mushing in Alaska for a summer. She works with youth and collegiate groups through a leadership development training organization. She plays in several volleyball leagues and in tournaments and also loves to camp, hike, and backpack, and hang out with her Boston Terrier named Elvis. Finally let's welcome **Michael Mannan** to the Department. He worked for the Health Department as a Lead Risk Assessor for 4 years and started with DNS on May 21st, 2007 as an Environmental Hygienist. He is planning on getting married this November. His interests include soccer, camping, snorkeling and biking.

New Lake tower staff (l to R) John Kolberg, Jacquelyn Medina, John Fusek, and Nancy Gielow.

Nancy Gielow transferred to DNS in January, 2007 and is currently a Customer Service Rep at Lake Tower. Here is what Nancy has to say about herself. "Early in my career with the city, I worked at Lake Tower for the Health Department Nursing Bureau. After taking a few years off to raise my children, I returned to the Health Department - Consumer Environmental Division and worked downtown for 18 years. I most recently transferred to DNS at Lake Tower as a Customer Service Representative. I feel like I've come full

See New Hires on Page 9

Meet the DNS managers in Administration

The following is the first in a series of articles about the staff of DNS. Our first group is the managers of the Administration Section.

The Department of Neighborhood Services is comprised of several different divisions. They consist of Administration, Commercial Code Enforcement, Information Technology, Nuisance and Environmental Health, Residential Code Enforcement and the Trades. Because we have two office locations, sometimes it is hard to know what each section is responsible for and who manages those sections especially if they are located in a different office building. The intent of this article is to give a brief synopsis of what each section's responsibilities are and to provide a profile of the management staff that supervises these sections.

BROADWAY OFFICE

Commissioner's Office

The Commissioner's Office is responsible for the overall operation of the department and to ensure all codes are complied with. To list in detail his responsibilities could take up half a page. There is an ordinance in the Charter that describes his responsibilities. It can be found at http://cc-codenew.milwaukee.gov/code/charter/ch8.pdf

Marty Collins

Commissioner

His main responsibilities include overseeing the actions of all DNS employees, seeking new "tools" for staff to use to do their jobs and to represent DNS before the council and the press. This is a cabinet position where he is appointed to the position by the Mayor. He has held this position for 6 years and has been with DNS/BI for 25 years. His history with the department is as follows. He began as a Code Enforcement Administrator and then a Construction Administrator. For most of his career, though, he has held the position of Deputy Commissioner under the past Commissioner, Lee Jensen. Prior to his employment with DNS/BI, he worked as an attorney for New York City Planning Commission and as an attorney and manager for the Housing Preservation and Development Division for the City of New York. He holds several certifications including the Commercial Building Code, UDC (Construction, HVAC). He also holds various certifications from the American Association of Code Enforcement. Currently he represents DNS/City as Chairman of the ICC Property Maintenance and Zoning Code Inspector Certification committee and represents Milwaukee for the American Association of Code Enforcement. His hobbies/interests include bike riding, scuba diving, books on tape, cooking and laughter

Tom Mishefske

Neighborhood Services Operations Manager (aka Deputy)

The Operations Manager's main responsibility is to assist the Commissioner in the performance of his duties and in his absence, perform all acts required by law to be done by the Commissioner.

Some of the downtown DNS managers. (l to r) Jeff Crouse, Carolyn Wood, Jim Styers, Chris Kraco, Tom Wessel, Marty Collins, and Ron Roberts

Tom is new in this position. Tom has worked for DNS/BI for over 14 years and was recently promoted as Tracy Williams replacement. Tom was formerly the NIP Program manager, a position he held since returning to DNS from the Health Department. At MHD, Tom was the HOME Environmental Health Supervisor in the Lead Program. He was originally hired by Building Inspection as a construction inspector assigned to the NIP program.

Tom holds several certifications including Commercial Building Code, UDC Construction, HVAC, Electrical, and Plumbing. He is also a licensed Risk Assessor. Tom is a HUD Certified HOME Program Specialist and holds a Certificate in Public Administration. Currently he represents DNS on the City of Milwaukee Lead Elimination Strategic Planning Committee.

Tom was recently married in March 2006. He has four teenage children and enjoys traveling (when time allows).

Administration

The Administration section oversees the business and administration operations of the department. It processes certain permits, invoices, permit fees, and various inspection and occupancy certificates. Functions within the administration area are Property Recording, Rent Withholding, and Public Information, Web Site and Training Coordination.

Jeff Crouse

Business Operations Manger

His main responsibilities include the preparation of the DNS annual budget, supervisory oversight of the Administration Division, monitoring departmental expenditures and revenues for budgetary purposes, and perform the duties of a department personnel officer. He has held this position for the past 6 years and has been with DNS/BI for 24 years. While working for DNS/BI, he has been the Administrative Assistant for the CDBG Program, Supervisor of Low Income Weatherization Program, supervisor of the Commercial Code Enforcement Division, and Code Enforcement Inspection Supervisor of the Residential Code Enforcement Division. He has worked for the city for 28 years. Prior to working for DNS, he worked for the Department of Employee Relations. Jeff holds several state certifications including Commercial Building, (Construction, HVAC) and State

of Wisconsin Fire Inspector I certification. He currently represents DNS at the Judiciary & Legislation committee and the Finance & Personnel committee. His outside interests include target shooting, reloading metallic cartridges, bullet casting, hunting (deer, small game, waterfowl, upland birds, and varmints), reading, and bird watching.

Lynne Steffen
Office Supervisor II
Her current responsibilities include supervision of the Administration office staff, co-manages Property Recording program, compiling tax roll special charges, data integrity of NSS-Admin file, and telephone coordinator. Lynne has worked for DNS/BI for 23 years in her current position. Her outside interests include volunteer work at her children's school; she is a big sports fan and enjoys traveling.

Jim Styers
Administrative Specialist
He is responsible for the maintaining the Property Recording program, which includes obtaining and maintaining the ownership of the required properties in the City. He has been in this position for 13 years and has worked for DNS/BI for 26 years. Prior to this position, he started as an intern and then became to Tool Loan Manager. Before working for the City, he was an Iron worker for 11 years. He holds a Certificate in Public Administration. He enjoys musky fishing.

Todd Weiler
Public Information and Training Coordinator
Todd creates and maintains all print and electronic forms of public communication used by the department. He updates 200+ web pages for DNS's web site. He updates PDF documents distributed to the public and responds to all media inquires. As training coordinator he facilitates the training and education for the certified inspectors and processes all tuition benefit applications for DNS. He has worked for DNS/BI for 21 years in this position. Prior to working for DNS, he was a freelance film producer, then a TV news reporter/photographer/assignment editor for 2 years in Wausau, then 1 year in Green Bay as news assignment editor and then two years in Milwaukee as TV news producer/assignment editor. Todd holds several state certifications including Commercial Building Code, and UDC-Construction, UDC-HVAC. His outside interests include astronomy, photography, woodworking, private pilot and sailing.

Karin A. Long
Landlord Training Program Coordinator
Karin is responsible to coordinate, market and present the nationally recognized Landlord Training Program "Keeping Illegal and Destructive Activity Out of Rental Property". She also assists and advises Community Based Organizations, Common Council members, Police dept. the Mayor's office on issues related to accepted property management practices to address problem properties. Karin joined BI/DNS in 1988 and was hired to head up the landlord training program in 1993. Prior to working for the BI/DNS, she worked for the Commission of Community Relations training police recruits in communication skills, cultural awareness, sexual assault, domestic violence, the gay and lesbian and homosexual community and elder abuse. She also worked as a consultant with DCD organizing Fondy Market, the farmers market located at 21st and North Ave and worked as an organizer for ESHAC (East Side Housing Action Committee). When not at work, her hobbies/interests include wine making, golfing, fishing, riding her ATV, boating, hiking, swimming, bird watching, gardening, good gossip, hunting, walking her dogs, spending time with Susan Sloniker, and playing her red cedar flute.

Making Hearts "Throb" at Lake Tower

What better time to schedule a CPR class than on Valentines Day. After the installation of new AED equipment at the Lake Tower office, a number of staff volunteered to learn how to use the Automatic Electronic Defibulators. The devices require trained staff to use so the class covered CPR and how to use the AED. In an emergency the machine is a piece of remarkable technology. After set up, it can monitor, diagnose and instruct the operator on what needs to be done.

Featured in the photo (l to R) are Dave Markwardt, Marcie Otto, Melissa O'Neil, and Jennifer Weiser. As more AED equipment is installed at City buildings, more classes will be offered to help train staff on its use.

Speaking of hearts, here is another sample of big hearts at Lake Tower. When Mayor Barrett put out the call for assistance to aid the homeless in Milwaukee during the February cold snap, Department of Neighborhood Services employees, of the Anderson Municipal Building (Lake Tower) sprang into action. Members of the Nuisance Control and Environmental Health Division and the Residential Code Enforcement Division organized a baked goods and soup sale which was overwhelmingly supported by employees and visitors of the department.

Proceeds of the bake sale were used to purchase thirteen blankets. Special thanks to Laurie Petrie, Kathy Kendzierski, San Juanita Velez, John Thompson, Jeanne Hagner and Karen Brauch for arranging the bake sale and shopping for the items which were donated. Also, thanks to all who donated baked goods and soup.

Additionally, Marcie Otto was able to arrange for the donation of over 100 new coats, and 30 hand-knitted hat and mitten sets through the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1318 Ladies Auxiliary in Madison, WI. Thank you very much!

New Code expands Sprinkler Systems and Elevator width

by Todd Weiler, Public Information and Training Coordinator

(The following items are notes from a training session conducted by Richard P. Paur, P.E., Building Construction Inspection Division Manager)

There may be a rush of people wanting to convert their duplex into three-family style apartments given some of the pending changes coming form the 2006 International Building Code. Why are we talking about the 2006 code when it's already 2007? For that you need to know how building codes become law.

The International Building Code (IBC) is revised on a 3 year cycle. It is not unusual for states and communities to be a year or two behind in adopting a national standard. Once the IBC codes are voted on and approved by member agencies, local governments must review and adopt the parts they accept. Locally we call these differences "Wisconsinisms".

Wisconsin once enjoyed a high status as it had its own enrolled code. In other words, it took the material from the International Building Code and then broke it down into chapters that matched the Commercial Building Code of Wisconsin. When the 2003 IBC was created Wisconsin issued supplement pages to the enrolled code. Invariably the page numbering hassles began to become difficult to navigate depending on the version of the code you are using. The State decided no more enrolled codes. From now on, the inspector will use the IBC and the "Wisconsinisms" will be in the back. It's a bit tricky, but better than the work required to create another enrolled code.

If there is a silver lining here consider this as a compliment to Wisconsin's progressive code writing. The new 2006 IBC has incorporated many of the old "Wisconsinisms" so the amount of changes Wisconsin will have to make to the 2006 IBC will be less.

What's new in the 2006 IBC? When members were asked to submit comments and changes for the 2006 IBC 260 replies were received. 240 of those replies dealt with sprinklers. Clearly the move to get more sprinklers installed is the wave of the future. One of the biggest changes will be apartments with as few as 3 units will now have to sprinkle. The old trigger was 20 units. This will impact Milwaukee significantly as many more duplexes exist here in high priced rental markets.

While the first reaction may be to think this is too expensive, it might be a good deal for Milwaukee. Thanks to the City's municipal water supply, builders here will not have to spend the estimated $25,000 for a water reservoir and pump. While that price may sound high, in terms of the overall building price the cost will be between $1.87-$1.44 per sq. ft. depending on the number of units. When looking at the entire cost/benefit package it shapes up as a win/win.

An increase of one percent in construction cost equates to a 1/10 of one percent increase to the interest rate of a 30-year loan. Owners can expect about a 5-40% drop in insurance premiums. By providing a sprinkler system the commercial code typically will allow as increase of one story or 20 feet in height and an area increase of 200% for multi-story buildings, and an area increase of 300% for single story buildings. Savings in construction can be had since providing a sprinkler system will typically allow for a 1-hour reduction in fire resistive rating of the buildings, structural frame, bearing walls, non-bearing walls, floor construction, and roof construction. Even with the $300-$500 annual sprinkler testing cost the payback is estimated to occur in 10 to 15 years.

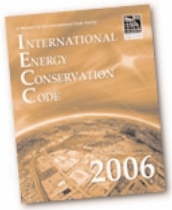
Another tricky area of the code is what to do about existing buildings when there is a change of use in the occupancy. In Wisconsin, Chapter 70 of the Historic building codes languished without and update for years. Many older buildings in the city meantime were being radically altered from warehouses to condos. One such example was the condominium conversion of the grain exchange building which through application of the Chapter Comm 70 Historic Building Code was allowed to be occupied without installing a full sprinkler system, and without upgrading the elevators to provide fire department controls with automatic recall. Issues such as this cause great concern among our certified inspectors. Fortunately the proposed adoption of the 2006 International Existing Building Code (IEBC), Chapter Comm70 (the historic code) will no longer be in effect and the IEBC will become Chapter Comm 66. Under application of the IEBC the grain exchange building would have required a sprinkler system and the elevator upgrades.

Another new code Chapter Comm 60, Erosion Control, Sediment Control and Storm Water Management came into effect April 1, 2007. This is an area that needed attention since the Environmental Protection Agency set the rules the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources was to follow to stop soil erosion. One of the largest soil disruption agencies, Wisconsin Department of Transportation had created "best practices" that identified specific erosion control products on the market and their correct use on state project. Now the three state agencies involved in aspects related to erosion control, transportation, natural resources and commerce, have worked closely to establish more uniform requirements for addressing erosion control. Through this effort, revisions to the erosion control requirements within the Uniform Dwelling Code were made along with those in Chapter Comm 60 for commercial building sites.

The 2006 codes, if adopted in October 2007, will be the International Building Code (IBC) as Chapter Comm 62 with Wisconsin modifications, the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) as Chapter Comm 63 with Wisconsin modifications, the International Mechanical Code (IMC) as Chapter Comm 64 with Wisconsin modifications , International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC) as Chapter Comm 65 with Wisconsin modifications, the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) as Chapter Comm 66 with Wisconsin modifications, the ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities as a reference, and the 2006 NFPA 1. Though not formally part of the adopting process the International Fire Code (IFC) is used as a reference document when designing under the IBC,

While the ups and downs of the approval process continue in Madison, the new code will mean bigger elevators. The old standard of 76" is bumped to 84" to accommodate the ambulance size stretchers. The weight capacity will go from 2,500 lbs. to 4,000 lbs.

as well. Bigger elevator shafts mean less space inside the building. This will impact buildings 4 floors or more.



There will be a new residential energy performance section. There is also a prescriptive envelope requirements for low rise residential buildings that will allow an unlimited number of openings in a wall. That should solve some complex energy calculations. Furthermore, the code is now allowing more natural ventilation. Instead of going with a total mechanical ventilation system, buildings will now be allowed to "open the windows" on a nice day and use less energy to ventilate. There are provisions for more energy recovery so that large 5000 CFM units can be throttled down for use. In perhaps recognition of global warming, the seasonal recreational building limits for occupied use are increased from May 1st to October 15th.

Sprinkler systems are really the most active area of changes. The 3 unit sprinkler limit is already in use in 24 states. That's mostly because those states have already adopted the 2006 IBC. Interestingly 14 states have no local residential sprinkler code.

Wisconsin builders will likely resort to building more row houses after the 2006 IBC is adopted. That was they can separate each apartment with a 2-hour fire rated wall and build one right next to the other without sprinklering.

But fire continues to claim victims. 80% of all U.S. fire deaths occur in residential occupancies. That's 3030 people a year. Studies showed that nationally 34% of the people died in apartment fire even when the working smoke detector sounded. 12% died in 1-2 family homes with a working detector.

In Wisconsin, the numbers were better, but still deadly. From 2001-2005, 242 people died. 33 died in apartments with 3-20 units. 11 died in apartments with 21 or more units. 187 people died in 1-2 family homes. In Wisconsin in 2005, that amounted to a $126 million property loss. Nationally property lost to fire is estimated a $6.8 billion. Clearly the sprinkler is being viewed as a rational response.

Some communities are also viewing fire departments as an antiquated response for dealing with fires. The push for more active fire systems that put the fire out, are winning over the passive systems that simply hold the fire back as it burns. In all respects, a sprinkler system is like having a fire fighter standing by with a charged hose waiting for the fire to trigger a release of the water. As the sprinkler associations are so quick to quote, there never has been a direct fire fatality in a sprinklered building were the fire wasn't proceeded by an explosion first. Cities like Scottsdale, AZ have a 100% residential sprinkler code. We're likely to see this list of cities grow.

What is a Megger? A Tool that can save a life!

from Rob Radmer, Supervisor Electrical Section

Electrical wiring is an area of concern when it comes to house fires. As most urban legends go, people tend to blame older wiring in older homes with causing house fires. The truth of the matter is, old wires tend to be relatively safe. The problem is, when people start adding loads to the underrated and under insulated wires. Who would have though in 1920 that every bedroom in a two story duplex would want a 20 amp air conditioner?

When electrical equipment is installed, it is frozen in time. Meaning that when the item is first installed and approved, it meets the code in affect at the time. As new products are developed, new codes are adopted and what was once considered a "best practice" is now changed and inadequate.

One tough item to inspect is electrical wiring. Most of the wires are hidden in walls and conduit never again to see daylight. Only when it exits at a box or a lamp socket do we get an idea of the wire's condition.

One tool used to field evaluate wiring is a megger. When DNS electrical inspector Jim Powers worked with DCD bid packages he worked to train all his apprentices for residential retro work and code compliance jobs. They also got to see first hand the results of time and use on devices and wiring. The reason he would megger wires is that he had the West Milwaukee street light and signal account and all his employees had to know how to run the test for servicing that account. He also felt it best if they took out every device and fixture to inspect the wires while he ran the test.

The most common problem was light fixtures with high wattage bulbs cooking the insulation off the wires. They would also replace every device with new and higher quality devices. He was able to show them how long term constant use, primarily too cheap residential grade receptacles, made for real hazards. He recognized that a listed item installed to code is frozen in time and that both systems are not representative of how people really use electricity.

As a contractor he always overwired and upgraded to match his concerned acquired knowledge. Sometimes he lost bids on projects that offered minimal specifications. These best prices were not the best value and the difference was normally less than 5%. It's a small price to pay for greater safety and many clients agreed.

Using a megger (about a $400 tool) can measure insulation value along a circuit. If the insulation is failing or weak, one can decide a corrective action. Meantime, when making decisions about lighting fixtures and saving money, consider quality over price and the long term benefits that come with peace of mind.

New Hires from page 5

circle and I am happy to be so close to home again." In case you didn't know, **Bill Karr** retired and **Frank Ferrarro** is the new "Bill" when it comes to problems with City owned property.

Tracy Williams, formerly the Operations manager for DNS accepted a position as head of Code Enforcement for Tucson, AZ. **Thomas Mishefske** has been promoted to replace her. In the meantime we will be looking to fill Tom's old position as Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) manager.

Downtown New hires (l to R top row) Andy Witzak, Michael Guttmann, Abraham Jones, (next row left) Keith Spruce, Ken Veriga, Kathy Gerlica, (front row left) Pamela Forest, Bertha Redd, Mary Stevenson, Chris Krowski.

New DNS Wellness Committee created

from Todd Weiler, Public Information and Training Coordinator

A new committee is being created within each City department. The committee is a team of co-workers whose mission will be to create a wellness activity and plan for the department.

The purpose of the committee was outlined in a two page memo highlighting the rising costs of health care and ancillary issues. Apparently 80% of the health care costs are attributable to only 20% of the employee population. Furthermore 50-70% of U.S. health care spending is on preventable chronic disease. The basic purpose of the worksite wellness program is to improve the health and productivity of the workers and reduce the overall health related risks and costs.

The first goals due in July were to create a committee and obtain training on promotion of wellness activities. In August develop the wellness activity idea. In September the department leader will attend a City-wide wellness team meeting to share ideas about their wellness promotion activity.

The team member volunteers are: Todd Weiler – Administration (Team Leader), Barb Bogdanski-Administration, Carolyn Wood- IT Section, Angela Ferrill- Commercial/Zoning, Foster Finco-Plumbing (Trades), Jennifer Klouda- Residential, Erica Lewandowski-Environmental, David Markwardt - Nuisance, San Juanita Velez- Residential, Greg Zyszkiewicz – Special Enforcement

More team members may be added as needed. Team training was conducted on July 18, 2007. The DNS Wellness Team (DWT) meet again at Lake Tower to review a draft of a starter survey that is to be used to measure wellness in DNS. Results of the survey will be used to define the wellness activity plan.

Action related to wellness is continuing at the bargaining table with the cities unions. We are not alone. The City is a part of a wellness challenge to be designated when 20% of its work force (private and public sector) are deemed to be involved in a wellness activity as approved by the Wellness Councils of America. Over 30 other Milwaukee businesses are involved in this initiative.

The DWT is to develop no-cost or low-cost activities. Once the bargaining units formalize the Wellness Program a formal budget may be adopted. Already the committee is sorting through a myriad of options such as walking teams, informational guest speakers, newsletters, exercise equipment rooms, Health Risk Assessment surveys, and means to create a data-based outcome. If you have an interest or a concern about wellness, please contact one of the above members.

Commissioner's Corner

How are we Doing?

by DNS Commissioner
Martin G. Collins

A long time ago, I worked for the City of New York. The then mayor, Ed Koch, would periodically appear at subway entrances and ask people "How am I doing?" It is difficult to gauge!

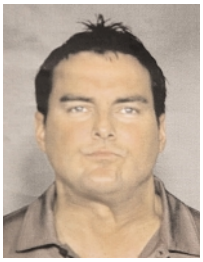
Each year we at DNS receive and respond to over 30,000 citizen complaints and issue over 70,000 notices of violation. How are we doing at this process? Alas, there is no "Customer Service Speedometer" that we can watch to tell us how we are doing in delivering code compliance services to Milwaukee.

We do know that what President Lincoln once said is still true today; You cannot please all of the people all of the time. In many cases, we are pitted between two feuding neighbors. Making both of those into satisfied customers is a rare outcome.

I look at a number of indicators as to how the community judges our services. We get feedback from the Mayor at AIM meetings. We are doing well enough that the frequency of these has been reduced from every other month to quarterly. I meet annually with every Alderman who wants to do so. I call them "Report Card " meetings. I present maps showing where the addresses affected by their ASR's are and where our orders are issued. City wide, only 11% of the complaints we respond to go though their offices. I also ask for a letter grade for our service for the prior year. While there is no uniform grading scale, we do well. This year it averages almost an A (94.5). Several have told me that we are the most responsive department in the city. Letting their offices know how we followed up on their requests pays off! The public also lets the Aldermen know how we are doing. If there was a serious problem, we would not be getting an A- from the Aldermen. Additionally, in the past 10 months we have attended 53 meetings in the community resulting in a lot of feedback.

This certainly does not mean we do not have room to improve! We give a lot of bad news to property owners. Not everyone is good at doing this and it can aggravate how the message is received. Periodically I hear from new business owners that the occupancy inspectors were hostile, when they probably did not mean to come across that way. On rare occasions I hear that an owner is allegedly told something totally inappropriate like, "If you don't like it move away." The best way to think about your interactions with the public is to walk in their shoes. How would you like to be treated? Even bad news can be delivered in a sympathetic manner. It is an important skill.

We have a lot to be proud of at DNS. That is due to what each of us does everyday in the way we do our jobs. Please join me in our ongoing effort to continue to do even better..



Timothy J. Brophy's arrest photo.

Judge Approves $300,000 settlement against Timothy J. Brophy

A class-action lawsuit against Milwaukee landlord Timothy J. Brophy was approved in late July. Milwaukee County Circuit Judge David Hansher, who approved the settlement, extended the deadline for filing any claims against Brophy until Sept. 14. After court and lawyer expenses are deducted, each of the 71 former tenants who joined the class-action are estimated to receive about $2,700 each. The lawsuit stems from a tenant who found out the property she rented was placarded and unfit for human habitation. According to the suit, Brophy failed to return the security deposit.

Those interested in joining the suit should contact attorney Douglas P. Dehler, 111 E. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1750, Milwaukee, WI 53202. (414) 226-9900. Brophy currently owes the City nearly $116,000 in unpaid Building and Zoning code violation fines. He also has been previously arrested for non-payment of those fines.