

# **CHAPTER 5**

## ***Utilities and Community Facilities***

### **Introduction**

The community services that a town provides are often limited by its population. Because of the rural nature of the Town of Erin Prairie, the services offered to residents are limited and often provided by neighboring communities. The Community Facilities and Utilities chapter will identify the provider of facilities and utilities to residents and identify future needs.

### **Water Supply**

The water supply for residential and commercial needs in the Town of Erin Prairie is supplied by private wells. With recent increases in the use of large center-point irrigation wells, the ground-water level in Erin Prairie needs to be monitored carefully. If agricultural uses begin to mine the ground water and lower its level, then restrictions will be necessary to preserve this important resource for all residents of the town.

### **Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS)**

Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) serve all wastewater treatment needs in the Town of Erin Prairie. POWTS are commonly referred to as septic systems or holding tanks. Failing systems can have a negative impact on both ground- and surface-water quality.

### **Stormwater Management**

The Town of Erin Prairie does not have a stormwater system. Ditches, swales, and culverts generally handle stormwater.

The addition of impervious surfaces, pre- and post-construction practices, and the use of fertilizers and pesticides can have an impact on the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff and its impact on the Town's water resources. This will be discussed in more detail in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter.

### **Solid Waste Disposal/ Recycling**

Residents in the Town of Erin Prairie contract individually for garbage collection. Residents may take their recyclables and mixed paper to the Town of Richmond Recycling Center. Each year the Recycling Center holds a tire and appliance roundup.

In the past, illegal garbage dumping by local and neighboring residents has been a problem. This has occurred mostly in the western part of the Town. It was not uncommon to find appliances, tires, computers and construction waste dumped on private lands. The Town has and should continue to organize cleanups where residents can bring these items to a drop off point at the Town Hall for disposal.

## **Cemeteries**

There is one cemetery in the Town of Erin Prairie. This is located at St. Patrick's Catholic Church along C.T.H. G (see *Map 5-1*). The cemetery is approximately four acres in size. Additional needs are provided by cemeteries in the surrounding communities.

## **Health Care Facilities**

There are no health-care facilities located in the Town of Erin Prairie. The nearest health-care facilities are Baldwin Area Medical Center in the Village of Baldwin and Westfields Hospital in New Richmond. It is likely that these facilities and others throughout St. Croix County and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area will continue to provide health care for residents.

## **Child Care Facilities**

There are no licensed child care facilities in the Town of Erin Prairie. Child care needs will likely be met by local residents offering child care in their homes or in facilities located in communities where residents work.

## **Fire Protection**

Fire protection in the Town of Erin prairie is provided by two entities. The New Richmond Fire Department covers over 100 square miles including a majority of Erin Prairie (see *Map 5.2*). United Fire & Rescue, which serves the Villages of Baldwin, Hammond and Woodville, provides protection in the southeast corner of Erin Prairie. There are no satellite fire stations planned in the Town.

## **Emergency Medical Services**

Emergency medical services (EMS) are also provided by two entities. The New Richmond Area Ambulance and Rescue Service provides EMS service to most of the Town of Erin Prairie (see *Map 5.2*). Baldwin Area EMS serves the southeast corner of Erin Prairie. There are no satellite EMS stations planned in the Town.

## **Police Protection**

The Town of Erin Prairie does not have a Town Constable. Police protection is provided by the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department. Emergency calls for police, fire, and EMS services are directed through St. Croix County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center.

# TOWN FACILITIES

Town of Erin Prairie  
St. Croix County, Wisconsin



- Town Boundary
- Road Right-of-Way
- Parcels
- Rivers, Streams, and Creeks
- Lakes and Flowages

- Town Facilities**
- Town Hall
- Cemetery

- Federal & State Lands**
- Wisconsin DNR
- U.S.A. Fish & Wildlife



0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: 2005 St. Croix County Plat Book

# EMERGENCY SERVICE BOUNDARIES

Town of Erin Prairie  
St. Croix County, Wisconsin



Emergency Service Boundaries



- Town Boundary
- Road Right-of-Way
- Parcels
- Rivers, Streams, and Creeks
- Lakes and Flowages



Source: St. Croix County 2006

## **Schools**

There are no schools located in the Town of Erin Prairie. Students residing in the town attend schools in three different districts (*see Map 5.3*), the School District of New Richmond, the St. Croix Central School District, and the Baldwin-Woodville Area School District.

The School District of New Richmond constructed a new elementary school, a new high school, remodeled the existing high school into a middle school, and upgraded of the West Elementary building.

The St. Croix Central School District has expanded and remodeled the Roberts Elementary School and Hammond Middle School.

The Baldwin-Woodville Area School District Board of Education formed a planning committee in 2007 to conduct long range planning.

## **Town Hall**

The Erin Prairie Town Hall was built in the early 1900's and was originally a school house. The Town has completed recent improvements to the siding, windows, and roof. There are no plans for a new Town Hall.

## **Libraries**

The nearest library for Erin Prairie residents is the New Richmond C.A. Friday Memorial Library in New Richmond.

## **Parks and Trails**

There are approximately 470 acres of federally owned land that surrounds portions of the Willow River in the northwest corner of the Town of Erin Prairie. There is also approximately 180 acres of land owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) adjacent to Casey Lake. There are other smaller parcels of DNR land also in the northwest corner of the Town (*see Map 5.1*). These federal and state lands are undeveloped.

There is renewed interest in public walking trails and potential for a walking trail along the Willow River corridor. Developing walking trails is usually cost prohibitive or rural communities. With the establishment of this comprehensive plan, WDNR-Stewardship funds will be available for development on such land. The Town can also explore the collaborative development of walking trails on the federal and state lands within Erin Prairie.

# SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Town of Erin Prairie  
St. Croix County, Wisconsin



- School Districts
- Baldwin-Woodville
  - New Richmond
  - St. Croix Central

- Town Boundary
- Road Right-of-Way
- Parcels
- Rivers, Streams, and Creeks
- Lakes and Flowages

0.5      0      0.5      1 Miles

Source: 2005 St. Croix County Plat Book



## **Telecommunication Facilities/ Transmission Lines**

There are no telecommunication facilities or transmission lines in the Town of Erin Prairie. High-speed internet access is available over existing telephone lines, and technological developments may make access via the electrical grid, or wi-fi facilities cost-effective in the future. High-speed Internet access has the potential to support important economic activity in the Town, and these developments should be monitored closely.

## **Utility Gas**

Utility gas is available to some residents in the Town of Erin Prairie from Xcel Energy. Map 5-4 shows the location of the gas line. Utility gas is being used for residential and farm applications.

## **Alternative Energy Sources**

With the cost of energy rising, interest in alternative forms of efficient energy generation is rising. For example, using windmills to supplement electricity is becoming more common. St. Croix County regulates windmills under its zoning code. A windmill is referred to as a transmission facility. No transmission facilities are allowed in major subdivisions created for residential purposes. Only one transmission facility is allowed per parcel and cannot be over 200 feet high. If a transmission facility is unused for more than 12 months, it must be removed.

There are many other forms of alternative energy or methods to reduce energy use to are becoming more common. Geothermal heating and cooling systems takes advantage of the constant temperatures of the ground to reduce the energy needed to heat and cool a structure.

Photovoltaic cells convert solar energy (sunlight and ultra violet radiation) directly into electricity.

Solar hot water heaters circulate a heat-transfer fluid through the collectors and a heat exchanger to heat the water that then flows into the home.

The Town can regulate these more stringently though local ordinances if considerations of adjacent landowners, viewsheds, and potential impacts on wildlife are not being met.





## **Community Facilities & Utilities Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs, and Actions**

**Goal 1:** Maintain existing facilities and utilities to adequately serve Erin Prairie residents.

### **Objectives**

1. Provide basic facility and utility needs for Town residents and for ag-related commercial ventures, while preserving our quality of life and natural resources.

### **Programs, Policies, and Actions:**

1. Work with surrounding communities and agencies to provide quality police, fire, and emergency medical services to the Town's residents
2. Coordinate the future development of any hiking or biking trails on federal or state lands with St. Croix County and surrounding communities if feasible.
3. Encourage the use and development of facilities in neighboring communities.
4. Support telecommunications facilities that would better enable residents to establish home based businesses if the towers do not detract from the rural aesthetics of the Town.
5. Support the development of wireless technology (Wi-Fi) or other technologies for high-speed internet access throughout St. Croix County.
6. Support utility expansion into Erin Prairie.
7. Support the expansion of communications infrastructure such as fiber optics and cable into Erin Prairie.
8. Support the use of wind, solar, and geothermal technologies as renewable sources of energy
9. Support alternative fuel technologies, but regulate those that degrade ambient air quality and scenic vistas. Establish effective siting ordinances to assure that environmental and public concerns are addressed.