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HILES NEWS

Even though the cold temperatures are continuing, I can tell that the days are getting longer. That makes the cold a bit more bearable, although I'm hoping the -20's go away for the rest of the winter. Don't forget to add the Fisheree to your calendar; it will be February 3rd. Ice shacks and tents are out on the lake, the fish are biting, and there is fun to be had! Also, please think about joining the fire department in any way that you can. With upcoming classes, it's a perfect opportunity for anyone.

With the new year, the Planning Committee is getting going once again, and I thought I'd do a year in review. New signs were welcomed, from the Welcome to Hiles sign to the new electronic sign outside of the Hiles Town Hall. The Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway was also completed and a dedication was done this past August; (the signs for that are still in the works as the different towns involved are working with the DOT on the signage). Now that may not seem like a lot, but it is because of the amount of time, effort, and cooperation that it took from many groups to bring these ideas to life. And where is the funding coming from? Not the tax rolls! The majority of this money, along with grants, is coming from room tax. Now you might not be aware of how much is actually collected through the year from room tax, because you may just think of the Little Pine Motel and Strand's resort off the top of your head. You may think that with only those two places, it can't amount to that much. But in reality, in the Town of Hiles alone, 14 places collect room tax. Some of those are the motel and resorts that are in Hiles, but that also includes people that rent out their homes and cabins for vacationers. Of the room tax that is collected, 30 % gets returned to the Town of Hiles, due to the 2015 Wisconsin Act 55. Per that change to the state statutes, that money must be spent on tourism promotion and development. For the third quarter of 2017 alone, the town will get back almost \$3000 collected in room taxes. Hiles actually had the 2nd highest room taxes collected, second to the town of Crandon. So with the knowledge of that money coming in, and an ongoing grant from the Forest County Economic Development group, the town authorized the purchase of the new electronic sign. That sign can be used to not only advertise events that are going on in the Town of Hiles, but also events and activities throughout Forest County. School events are even listed, so it really is a great asset to the community. And as tourism will only increase due to the new byway, the changes will have a lasting effect on our town.

One task that hasn't been completed yet but is on its way is the dredging of Pine Lake. The town, along with the Hiles Planning Commission, last year updated the Town of Hiles longterm Comprehensive Plan, to allow the possibility of dredging Pine Lake. I will update this and other activities in the works next week.

Have a great week all! Stay warm, and be careful on the ice that's underneath this new snow.

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