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1. ***TODAY*** Wisconsin Academy of Sciences: Envisioning Responses to Climate Change Forum Tuesday, Feb. 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m.



The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters is hosting an 'Academy Talk' to discuss Wisconsin's future in the context of climate change. Experts will explore how scenario-building, storytelling and the arts can help us envision responses to climate change.

2. **Fitchburg Green Thursday Event: Community and Urban Gardening, Thursday, Feb. 5, 6:30-8 p.m., Fitchburg Public Library – Room A/B**

Join us on Feb. 5th to learn about community and urban gardening and the way that sustainable agriculture programs can strengthen communities, help us reconnect with our food, improve our health, and provide a rewarding, lifelong hobby. Presenters from Fitchburg Fields, Troy Community Garden/Community GroundWorks and others will share information on strategies and workshops that support community and school gardens, creating more resilient cities while trying to overcome our nation's extreme weather and economic challenges.



3. **Fitchburg Roads Are On a Low-Salt Diet**

With winter weather comes the job of keeping the roads clear of snow and ice for city residents, first responders and others traveling in Fitchburg. There are a number of factors that determine when, how, and how much the roads are treated for each snowfall. Plowing is the most effective measure to improve safety, and salt is used secondarily to clear the roads. Past experience and changes in best practices have led to the current methods the city uses.



Fitchburg has taken multiple steps to improve the effectiveness of its winter maintenance techniques that maintain or improve safety, while reducing costs and environmental impacts. Minimizing salt use saves money and also reduces the negative impacts on the environment.

Before a storm even hits, Fitchburg staff monitors the pavement temperature, air temperature, predicted snowfall amount, predicted wind speeds, and timing of the event. Understanding the weather helps us make the best decisions for road clearing procedures. When conditions are favorable, the city will pre-treat

roads with a brine (salt water) solution before the snow falls. This solution, which is 80% salt water and 20% beet juice, keeps ice from bonding to the road, making the mechanical plowing of the roads more

effective. The City also pre-wets dry salt with brine before application. This pre-wetting accelerates the effectiveness of the salt, reduces the amount of salt scatter off of roads, and can reduce the amount of rock salt used by 20 percent.

When the pavement temperature drops below 15° F, salt loses nearly all of its effectiveness in keeping roads clear of ice. When pavement temperatures are below 15° F, sand is used to provide traction. Sand, like salt, also has a large environmental impact to streams, lakes and air quality. Sand also creates a large maintenance burden for cleaning the storm sewer system. During cold weather periods, sand is used sparingly to improve traction at steep slopes, intersections and curves.

Trucks equipped with electronic application rate controls have been the biggest factor in decreasing Fitchburg's salt use. This new feature controls the volume of salt applied to the road based on the traveling speed of the truck, making the application more accurate and efficient. Based on conditions, various plow blades are also used to increase the amount of snow removed during plowing.

The combination of all these methods improves the condition of the roads, but the most important thing an individual can do is slow down when driving. Speed limits are intended for ideal conditions and winter time does not provide ideal driving conditions.



Fitchburg previously used a 50/50 blend of salt and sand, which was thought to be the best combination of both traction and deicing at the time. In reality, this resulted in more salt and sand being used than was needed. Starting in the 2008-09 season, the City began using tables created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to determine appropriate application rates and conditions for salt or sand use. This resulted in a dramatic reduction in salt and sand use, with the road still being maintained for safe driving. In 2010, the city began pretreating roads with a brine or brine/beet juice mixture to prevent ice from bonding to the road surface. This made the mechanical plowing much easier, and also resulted in less salt and sand use. In 2011, a formal Snow and Ice Control policy was adopted by the Board of Public Works (www.fitchburgwi.gov/225/Snow-Removal) that set priorities for which streets should be treated first and how much snow fall is acceptable before cleaning operations need to take place. It also set policies on salt use based on the most effective recommendations.

4. Dane County and UW-Extension Debuts Spring 'Garden Basics and Beyond' Short Course

Dane County Extension will offer a short course on gardening from 6:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday nights from March 3 through April 14, 2015 at the Dane County UW-Extension office on Madison's east side. Speakers include UWEX county staff, Master Gardener volunteers, local experts and UW specialists. The class fee of \$130 includes a set of handout materials. A limited number of scholarships will be available, courtesy of the Madison Area Master Gardeners Association (MAMGA) in memory of Shelley Ryan of *The Wisconsin Gardener* WPT program. For more course details or to register, visit <http://dane.uwex.edu/horticulture/gardenbasics/>.



Gardening short course topics include:

- March 3 – Soils and composting
- March 10 – Plant Propagation
- March 17 – Tree Planting, Pruning and Selection
- March 24 – Native Plants for Gardens and Pollinators
- March 31 – Vegetables
- April 7 – Annuals and Perennials
- April 14 – Weeds and Wildlife

Also, mark your calendars for the Wisconsin Public Television Gardening Expo coming to the Alliant Energy Center from Feb. 13-15. For more information, visit: www.wigardenexpo.com.

5. Keep Pet Waste in the Trash and Pledge to Protect Fitchburg's Creeks

It's important to pick up after your pet all year long, but especially during winter and spring. If you don't pick up pet waste right away, it can soon be encased in snow and ice, ready to be carried away with melt water during the spring thaw. Grassy areas that would normally allow water to soak in are frozen during winter and early spring, so they're more like a parking lot, greatly increasing the surface area from which runoff flows. As a result, the bacteria and nutrients found in pet waste are much more likely to make their way to the nearest storm drain. And, contrary to common belief, rain and melting snow that goes into storm drains do not go to the wastewater treatment plant. Rather, this runoff goes to the nearest Fitchburg creek.



Fitchburg is the headwaters of the following creeks which drain to downstream lakes and rivers: Nine Springs Creek, Swan Creek, Murphy's Creek, Badfish Creek, Story Creek/Allen Creek, and Badger Mill Creek. Be sure to continue to scoop the poop and either flush it down your toilet, or bag it and place it in your green refuse cart.

Fitchburg's Creek Supporter Pledge Program (www.fitchburgwi.gov/stormwater) offers residents a reduction in their stormwater utility bill of \$4 to \$8 per year for pledging to do at least 34/57 actions, like scooping the poop, which is much better than paying the \$114 citation for leaving pet waste behind.

For more ideas on how you can help improve water quality near you, visit www.fitchburgwi.gov/stormwater or www.myfairlakes.com.

6. Curbside Options for Excess Recyclables



Fitchburg's recycling hauler, Pellitteri Waste Systems, will pick up excess recyclables curbside that do not fit into the blue recycling carts at no additional charge for all single to four-unit residential homes. Homeowners may place excess recyclables in:

- A clearly labeled reusable container or
- A clear plastic bag

Excess cardboard that does not fit inside your blue recycling cart should be broken down and loosely stacked next to the cart (or placed in a clear plastic bag or reusable container). If you do place a reusable container on the curb next to your blue recycling cart, clearly label it so drivers know that you would like it returned. More information is available at www.fitchburgwi.gov/solidwaste.

Please contact [Erika Kluetmeier](mailto:erika.kluetmeier@fitchburgwi.gov), Sustainability Specialist, at erika.kluetmeier@fitchburgwi.gov or 270-4274 if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions on future Green E-News topics.