



from the director

WCA: 75 YEARS AND GOING STRONG

-Mark D. O'Connell, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association

This year feels like a more exciting new year than usual. We bid farewell to the oughts (if that is what we are calling them), and usher in a new decade. At WCA, we have another reason to celebrate – 2010 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Wisconsin Counties Association.


As I reflect on 1935, the year WCA was founded, at first it seems like a long time ago. After all, so many historical events and technological advancements have occurred since that time. However, take another look and you will see that the political and economic climate of 1935 resembles what we see today. The country suffered an extended depression making economic and social reform dominate the national discussion. A focus was placed on ensuring that government, at every level, was operating at its best to serve a struggling citizenry. Sound familiar?

It is easy to see the need for associations like WCA during that time, to facilitate “best practices” communication to and among county officials, and to serve as an advocate for counties at the state and national level. Today, in the midst of budget cuts and economic crises, WCA is still here, working hard to protect the interests of counties.

Throughout 2010, we will be commemorating WCA’s 75th anniversary at different events in a variety of ways. In the spirit of celebration, we have redesigned *Wisconsin Counties* with a fresh, contemporary look. Additionally, each issue this anniversary year will include an article reprinted from the *Wisconsin Counties* archives. You can see an article from the very first edition printed in 1938 on page 30.

In concert with the magazine redesign, the magazine will undergo an editorial review. This will occur in February in conjunction with the 2010 Legislative Exchange, where we will convene a focus group made up of county government officials in order to gather feedback about the composition of the magazine. One new addition for 2010 is a monthly column from the managing editor, Jennifer L. Bock.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions for ways to celebrate the association’s 75th birthday, particularly at our legislative exchange in February and our annual conference in September.

Thank you for your support over the last 75 years. We are proud to have served you, in good times and bad, and we look forward to serving you for at least 75 more. 



the editor's desk

WISCONSIN COUNTIES' NEW LOOK

—Jennifer L. Bock, Managing Editor, Wisconsin Counties Association

As no doubt you have noticed, *Wisconsin Counties* has undergone a graphic redesign. Industry standard for magazines tells us that every 10 years a magazine should go through at least an updated look, if not an entire redesign. *Wisconsin Counties* last got a “new look” the year I started at the association in 1997 – just over 12 years ago.

The 75th birthday of the Wisconsin Counties Association is the perfect occasion to unveil a new design! After a year of research and careful consideration, you hold in your hands the latest and, I would say, greatest of our “looks” to date!

The redesigned masthead or banner of *Wisconsin Counties*, which appears on the cover, uses the typeface Gill Sans as its base. After careful thought, I decided to put more emphasis on the word “counties” in our masthead in order to identify more readily with the readership, as well as the association’s primary makeup.

Gill Sans is a humanist sans-serif typeface designed by Eric Gill, an established sculptor, graphic artist and type designer, in 1926. The typeface continues to thrive to this day, often utilized to bring an artistic or cultural sensibility to an organization’s business or corporate style.

The body of the magazine underwent a redesign as well and there are many subtle changes in the text layout, including more grouped white space to relieve the eye, greater space between lines of text for ease of readability and a brand new text font – Archer.

A relatively young font, Archer was crafted by one of the most renowned font houses in America, Hoefler & Frere-Jones. It combines the ordinariness of an antique font with the modern practicality of a geometric font. The description the company gives of the font is a terrific description of what we were looking for: *Sweet but not saccharine, earnest but not grave, Archer is designed to hit just the right notes of forthrightness, credibility and charm.*

While I am sure this is more than you ever wanted to know about the minute decisions that take place during a magazine redesign, the rich tradition and history of a magazine that

has been in existence since the late 1930s demands close and careful consideration before contemplating any change. I hope these descriptions to have shed some light on the process, as well as the thoughtful care that was taken during this redesign.

As Mark D. O’Connell indicated in his column, *From the Director*, the magazine will also undergo an editorial redesign. Starting with a focus group at the 2010 Legislative Exchange, these changes will occur over a series of months guided by the membership’s input. To that end, do not hesitate to voice your opinion to any WCA staff member or give me a call in the office at 608.663.7188, or e-mail me at bock@wicounties.org. I look forward to your feedback! 