



Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Division of Transportation System Development

# Utility Coordination Newsletter

## Projects Progress with New Notary Options



WisDOT keeps highway projects moving forward through the use of new notary options during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Remote Options:

#### WisDOT Regions

Starting May 1st the State of Wisconsin will allow the use of electronic notary (see article below). WisDOT is in the process of assigning regional

### Articles Included

- Statewide Utility Conference
- Tree Trimming Guidelines
- MyDTSD Updated
- Updated Utility Coordination Webpage
- Local Program Agency
- Norman's Corner
- Bruns Retires
- Bielefeldt New Job
- Utility Conflict Doc. Report

staff to utilize e-notary services. Please contact Central Office for guidance at [DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

- TUMS
- Work Zone Training

### **Non-Remote Options:**

#### **UPS Stores**

Documents can be notarized at UPS stores. Using their website, locations that provide this service can be identified and appointments can be set up. It is also recommended to verify that a selected location has additional staff available to meet signature witnessing requirements.

<https://www.theupsstore.com/store-services/notary-services>

#### **Banks and Credit Unions**

Local banks and credit unions will set up appointments for clients to complete notarization of documents. Each institution will have a process for completing this following social distancing guidelines (use of the drive-through window, use of conference table and having each party individually sign, or use of e-notary software, etc.)

#### **Mobile Notary Services**

There are mobile notary services available in Wisconsin. Below are links to related service providers.

[http://www.123notary.com/wisconsin\\_notary/](http://www.123notary.com/wisconsin_notary/)

<https://www.superiornotaryservices.com/find-a-notary-near-you/wisconsin-mobile-notary/>

<https://www.thumbtack.com/wi/milwaukee/mobile-notary/>

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### **Department of Financial Institutions (DFI)-Notarization Changes**

#### **Wisconsin Act 125 becomes effective May 1<sup>st</sup>**

Language in the statute as of May 1<sup>st</sup> will allow remote live audio and video connection for remote notarization. Act 125 specifically says: "Therefore, until further notice to be given once this crisis abates, for documents requiring notarization, the Department will construe the statutory terms 'appear[] before' and 'presence' to include appearances by remote live audio and video connection."

DFI Press Release Emergency Guidance on Remote Notarization

[https://www.wdfi.org/newsroom/press/2020/20200318\\_NewsRelease\\_COVID-19EmergencyGuidanceOnRemote%20Notarization\\_vFINAL.pdf](https://www.wdfi.org/newsroom/press/2020/20200318_NewsRelease_COVID-19EmergencyGuidanceOnRemote%20Notarization_vFINAL.pdf)

DFI Emergency Guidance on Remote Notarization

[http://wdfi.org/Apostilles\\_Notary\\_Public\\_and\\_Trademarks/pdf/Emergency%20Guidance%20-%20Remote%20Notarization.pdf](http://wdfi.org/Apostilles_Notary_Public_and_Trademarks/pdf/Emergency%20Guidance%20-%20Remote%20Notarization.pdf)

DFI Apostilles, Notary Public and Trademark

[http://www.wdfi.org/Apostilles\\_Notary\\_Public\\_and\\_Trademarks/default.htm](http://www.wdfi.org/Apostilles_Notary_Public_and_Trademarks/default.htm)

## Statewide Utility Conference Tentatively Scheduled for Sept 30-Oct 1, 2020



The Statewide Utility Conference is tentatively scheduled for Sept 30-Oct 1, 2020 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

The conference will have a mixture of large group presentations and a variety of break-out sessions. Presentations will be geared for staff of

WisDOT utility units, utility companies, municipalities and other utility industries. Names of volunteer speakers and topic suggestions can be forwarded to Abby Williamson at [DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

UN #08-02

## Tree Trimming Standards Shared

Utility line clearing is a tough subject because most times it doesn't involve what's best for a tree.

As a member of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), Mark Polega, WisDOT landscape architect and certified arborist, gives this advice, "My stance is if a tree cannot be pruned properly, it probably should just be removed and forget the 'at least we saved the tree' attitude, because improper pruning leads to many problems down the road that are not good for the tree or anyone involved."



Pruning around utilities requires specialized training and knowledge. ISA has a program to train individuals to become Certified Arborist Utility Specialists. Ultimately, appropriate plant selection and proper plant placement along utilities provides the best long-term solution to this issue says Polega.

<http://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/pruningyourtrees>

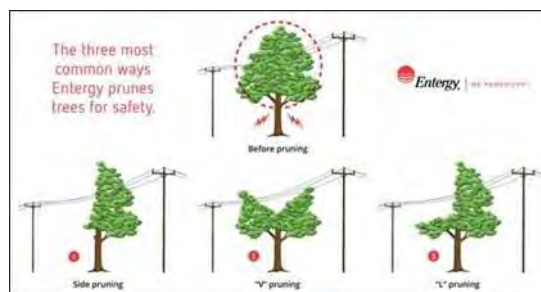
Guidance on tree trimming and chemical spraying is found in the Utility Accommodation Policy at [HMM 09-15-45](#) , section 2.1

The addition of native grasses, wildflowers and some shrub species in utility corridors can be a good solution because they do not interfere with utility function and provide habitat for pollinators, etc. "This has become a practice to help soften the effects of tree removal and line clearing and I think it is a good compromise providing many benefits to help offset the sometimes drastic effects of tree removal," says Polega.

This is a link to an article regarding this concept:

<https://www.saveourmonarchs.org/corridors-for-pollinators.html>

UN #08-03



#### How are trees trimmed?

Unfortunately, people often find this necessary pruning to be aesthetically unacceptable. Due to the inherent danger of electric lines, pruning within easement areas should only be carried out by professionals trained in line clearance pruning; never by homeowners. New Braunfels Utilities tree trimming professionals follow **best management practices for utility pruning of trees**. These practices were developed from the residential and commercial tree care industry, utilities, the municipal and federal sectors, the landscape and nursery industries, and other interested organizations, and are documented in the [American National Standards Institute](#) publication ANSI A300, part 1. New Braunfels Utilities trims-eight feet from the overhead primary system.

New Braunfels Utilities tree trimming standards include natural lateral or directional trimming methods that promote growth of the tree away from the electrical facilities. These trimming methods ideally allow a tree to retain as much of its natural form as possible while requiring less trimming in the future.

## WisDOT Staff: Updated MyDTSD

The MyDTSD Utility Coordination Sharepoint webpage was updated for WisDOT staff. As Connie Bruns was finishing up some of her last projects prior to retirement, she worked to update information available on this webpage.

Changes included:

#### MyDTSD – Utility Coordination Sharepoint webpage (intranet)

- Updated introduction
- Reduced information related to manuals, additional resources
- Moved some job aids and or other materials that are used by WisDOT and consultant staff to the [Wisconsin.gov](http://Wisconsin.gov) website
- Updated links for utility coordination meeting agendas and minutes
- Updated the Related Content area (right hand side of the page) to include links to the LPA tools, utility coordination tools and utility forms on the internet

Additionally, a new job aid giving guidance on how to submit a utility agreement for approval was added. This job aid is to be used by region utility coordinators when recommending approval of a utility agreement to the Bureau of Technical Services Utility Unit. It includes a list of required documents, the order in which they are placed in the packet and which documents are required as a part of the agreement submittal.

This is a link to the updated page: [WisDOT Staff MyDTSD Utility Coordination](#)

Report any issues or concerns to [DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

UN #08-04

## Resources Added Utility Coordination Webpage

Resources were added to the WisDOT's webpage for Utility Coordination.

A new link was added called **Utility Coordination Tools** and it was designed for WisDOT and consultant staff who perform utility coordination. The contents were developed to act as resources to help people remember all the required steps and ultimately improve utility coordination.



This is where the information is located: [Utility Coordination Tools](#)

The **Plat Review Checklist** was published in February 2020 under Utility Coordination Tools webpage in the section titled "Land Rights Interpretation for WisDOT." This checklist was created to be a resource for utility coordinators (WisDOT and consultant staff) to refer to during the review of the right of way plats.

Follow this link: [Plat Review Checklist](#)

The **Let Review Standards (LRS) Job Aid** was created and posted on the Utility Coordination webpage in early January 2020. The purpose is to document what is reviewed during the let review process by the Bureau of Technical Services (BTS) Utility Unit. It also standardizes the let review process, so individuals submitting utility related documents for Plans Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) are receiving the same review comments from Centra I Office. It's also a historical document to track how unique situations were handled in the past. It is advised that any WisDOT or local program agency individual preparing the utilities article of the special provisions, the DT1080 – Utilities Status Report (USR) and the General Notes page of the plan refer to this document during that process.

This is where the job aid can be found: [Let Review Standards Job Aid](#)

Not all situations are included. Questions can be submitted to [DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

UN #08-05

## Local Program Agencies

Contacts from Local Program Agencies can find guidance from WisDOT on its website on the Utility Coordination page by following this link: [Local Program Agency Tools](#)



Two new forms were added. These forms are like the DT1077 and DT1078 forms that are used on Trans 220 projects, but they have been modified and can be used for connecting highway and local program projects.

- Project Plan Transmittal
- Proposed Highway Improvement Notice

UN #08-06

## Norman's Corner

These are challenging times for us, but I have been impressed by the exchange of information and the ability of people to work together to solve problems. These are the true marks of leadership. It's easy to fix problems when all the tools are in your toolbox and/or handed to you, but it's not so easy when you need to improvise and come up with new tools.



Special thank you to We Energies for allowing us to work together and share information on electronic notary certification during this COVID-19 situation as we get some of our WisDOT staff e-notary certified. If any of our utility industry partners would like some information on getting e-notary certified, please feel free to contact us.

Statewide Utility Conference – We're excited about this conference. We want it to be informative for all of us working in the area of utility coordination, including utility industry professionals, WisDOT and folks directing Local Public Agency road projects. We are looking for presenters and topics you would like to have covered at the conference. Please forward your ideas and information to the email box listed below.

Our state will soon be back on a "new normal" course – I look forward to seeing everyone in person again and continuing on with the good work we do to keep Wisconsin moving forward.

If you have a question or comment, please send it to:

[DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

Thanks,

**Norman Pawelczyk**

Technical Services Chief  
Division of Transportation Systems Development  
Bureau of Technical Services  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

**Office:** 608-266-2362

**Cell:** 608-516-6355

UN #08-07

## Bruns Retires After 22 Years of Service



WisDOT would like to thank Connie Bruns for her 22 years of service. In early April Bruns finished up her responsibilities as a statewide utility project coordinator, a position she held since November of 2015. Bruns began at WisDOT as a program assistant in 1998 in the SW Region and moved to utility coordinator, real estate specialist and into her current position. Prior to working at WisDOT, Bruns was a civilian employee at Fort McCoy for 17 years in the logistics area supporting military training efforts and the civilian workforce.

“What I am looking forward to the most in retirement is time,” said Bruns. She is looking forward to being able to have more time to walk her dog Piper, be at the cabin with her husband and visit with family and friends. Additionally, Bruns hopes to pursue volunteer work-a lifelong goal. Bruns was asked recently if she had mixed feelings about retiring, “Without hesitation I said nope, not one. I love what I do but I am ready to be done working.”

UN #08-08





## Bielefeldt Named New Statewide Utility Project Coordinator

WisDOT would like to congratulate Heath Bielefeldt on his new position as statewide utility project coordinator. For more than 20 years Bielefeldt has worked at WisDOT, 14 years in project development and six in utility coordination. Prior to WisDOT, Bielefeldt worked as a land survey technician for three years.

When asked what he is most looking forward to in his new role, Bielefeldt says, "I was very fortunate to work on Connie Bruns' lean government team and was exposed to all the challenges and interesting problems that Central Office gets to be involved with. Also, I saw how well the team at Central Office works together."

In his free time Bielefeldt likes racing 10Ks and half marathons. His spring goal for a half marathon is to complete it in 1:45 (virtual). When he's not running, Bielefeldt is in search of the best donuts and pastries. His kids help in this quest (see photos below). Racing seems to be Bielefeldt's theme. On the weekends he and his wife Stacie have sudoku "races" to finish.

Regarding work from home challenges, Bielefeldt says, "While most of our family has adjusted well, the cat has not. Recently he flipped his dry food in protest of canned food rationing and perhaps due to his naps being cut to only 12 per day."





Bielefeldt along with son, Henrik age 10, and daughter Annaka age 12, search for the tastiest donuts and pastries (Above Left to Right).



Bielefeldt family cat flips his dry cat food in protest of canned food rationing.



## Utility Conflict Documentation Report

WisDOT developed a new document to track utility issues that affect the highway contractor and the construction of highway improvement projects. The title of this document is the Utility Conflict Documentation Report.

This report will be created by the WisDOT construction project engineer and will document utility issues that prevent the highway work from being completed. The report asks the following:

- Did the utility issue affect the controlling item of work?
- Why did the utility issue occur?
- How was the utility issue resolved?
- How did the utility issue impact the highway contractor operations?
- How much time did WisDOT and the contractor spend on the utility issue until it was resolved?



In the 2020 construction season, this report will be required to document utility issues on 41 different construction project ID's. A separate report is required for every utility issue that occurs on these projects. In addition, this report will be required as supplemental information for every construction project Contract Modification that utilizes a "UC" code. This will include

Contract Modifications on the state trunk highway system, connecting highways and the local program.

For the 2021 construction season and beyond, it is anticipated that this report will be utilized on the majority of projects. Due to this, the report is currently in the process of being incorporated as a screen in AASHTOWare. This will provide WisDOT an easier way to create reports and analyze the data.

Questions regarding this can be sent to [DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov)

UN #08-10



Using the Utility Conflict Documentation Report will keep track of utility issues that prevent the highway work from being completed.



## TUMS Framework Updated

In the next phase of the TUMS Project, the application framework used to build TUMS and DOCR will be updated. The update is happening in two stages. The TUMS portion will be rolled out to users this week and the DOCR portion will be completed in June.

What does this mean? Following are some explanations to clarify.

1. Application – A software application created to resolve a specific business need. TUMS and DOCR were developed to address specific utility coordination needs.
2. Java – A programming language used by application developers to build software applications. TUMS and DOCR were developed using Java as the main programming language.
3. Framework – The building blocks or structure something is built upon. In this case, an application framework is a set of common software routines that provide foundation structure for developing an application.

Currently, TUMS and DOCR are built on an application framework called

Struts. These applications are upgrading to a new framework known as Spring. Struts and Spring are further defined here:

4. Struts and Spring – Both are development frameworks for creating Web-based applications in Java.

**Struts** is an older application development framework that functioned well before but now needs to be replaced. It is considered “outdated” in the technology marketplace and has almost no support options.

**Spring** is a common application development framework for enterprise Java applications and is considered “current and supported” in the technology marketplace.

This update is required by the Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS) for all Department applications built on a Struts framework.

Once completed, TUMS and DOCR can take advantage of contemporary programming methods and functions. Practical examples of this are improved menu systems and navigation (similar to the WisDOT Internet site).

The advantages of this upgrade will be hidden “under the hood” and most will not be obvious to system users. However, the upgrade will allow TUMS and DOCR to adapt and grow - alongside changing technologies and utility coordination needs.

UN #08-11

## Utility Coordination Training Available



### Work Zone Training

Work zone traffic control training is available through WisDOT’s LearnCenter. To set up an account and register for training, follow the instructions at this link:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/contractors/cntrctr-trng/default.aspx>

UN #08-12



To subscribe, submit questions, suggestions, comments or potential newsletter articles, please send an email to [DOTDTSDCUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov](mailto:DOTDTSDCUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov) . BTS/U will review each submission prior to publication.



This bulletin has been developed to provide updates, clarifications, job aids and news pertaining to WisDOT utility coordination and related WisDOT programs, policy and services. Information published in this bulletin will be of interest to those who work closely with utility coordination.