



Town of Florence, Wisconsin

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Did You Know. . . Florence Facts **Town Roads (shared 04-09-26)**

Did you know that there are two different highway departments that deal with road work in the Town of Florence? Our town is unique in the sense that it is served by two separate Highway Departments, each with its own responsibilities. The Florence County Highway Department is tasked with maintaining major roads such as the US Highway 2, County Highway N, County Highway NN and State Highway 70. On the other hand, the Town of Florence Highway Department is responsible for all public roads in the town.

Did you know that when you look at roads in the Town of Florence there are public roads and private roads? To differentiate between the two, simply look at the road name sign. Public roads are marked with green and white signs, while private roads have blue and white signs.

Did you know that there are approximately 120 miles of public Town Roads located in the Town of Florence? Approximately 64 miles are paved while the remaining are all gravel. In addition, there are a few roads that we share with neighboring Townships including Commonwealth and Fern. The Town also has an agreement signed with the Federal Forest Service to help with maintenance of their roads that are in the Town of Florence.

Did you know that the Town of Florence receives General Transportation Aids (GTA) from the State of Wisconsin? With the GTA program is a way for the local governments, like the Town of Florence, to receive aid payments from the State of Wisconsin to help defray part of the costs for the Town in regards to road maintenance and construction. Like many different programs, General Transportation Aids are governed by Wisconsin Statute, specifically 86.30. GTA funding comes from State Transportation Fund revenues, which are primarily comprised of motor fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees.

Did you know that the GTA that the Town receives is based on the number of miles of roads that the Town has? The amount per mile is also set by statute, Wis. State Statute 86.30(2)(a)3. GTA increased for 2026 to \$2,930, which is an increase from \$2,734 that the Town received for calendar years 2023 to 2025. Basically, road construction and maintenance expenses are what GTA can be used for. These expenses are reported to the State annually as part of the Town's Municipal Financial Report. GTA only covers a portion of the highway expenses each year there is also tax levy money collected and spent on roads.

Did you know that the highway right-of-way extends beyond the edge of the road? The Wisconsin Department of Transportation defines the highway right-of-way as the area needed for traffic lanes, shoulders, ditches (and in some cases) an errant vehicle recovery. The actual right-of-way is dependent on the method of how the Town acquired the road. Town roads can be acquired by deed or written easement, highway order or plat. Most rural 2-lane highways in the Town of Florence have a right-of-way of 66 feet as an easement, which is measured from the centerline of the road in either direction 33 feet on each side.

Did you know that the Town of Florence Highway Department has done some major road reconstruction projects? In 2024, ½ mile of East Shore Road was widened and reshaped with new ditches and back slopes constructed. Other recent reconstruction projects have included North Lake Rd, North Shore Rd, Town Road II, Town Road JJ, and Town Road

N just to name a few. The North Lake Rd project was the largest project due to the length of the road and work that was done. It took 20+ years to complete from one end to the other working on it in smaller sections, which helped financially to keep it in the budget. The Town did not have to borrow money to fund any of those projects.

Did you know that in addition to road construction the Town of Florence Highway crew works on maintenance of all Town roads each year? Brush cutting, dust control, grass cutting, grading and patching are a few of the non-winter jobs performed by the Town Highway Department. Gravel roads are graded and more gravel added when needed to keep the base of the road in good shape. Seal coating, cold mix and hot mix blacktop are done on an as needed basis to keep those paved roads in good shape.

Did you know that the Town Board and Highway Foreman have a plan for the roads, but ultimately mother nature can change what happens in the spring of the year? Each year Spring Weight Restrictions get placed on all Town of Florence roads to help preserve the roads. It is the Town's responsibility to preserve the investment they have in the roads by protecting them. The spring thaw weakens pavements, trucks and vehicles carrying heavy loads can damage them more easily during this season. While the Town cannot control the weather, they can put restrictions on roads to limit the potential amount of damage that could be caused. For example, this is why during weight restrictions, not all roads are permitted to be traveled by garbage and recycling trucks. Once the frost and moisture leave the road bed, spring weight restrictions are lifted. The timing of spring weight restrictions is dependent on the weather. While not common, they have come on as early as February 1 and have lasted well into May.

The Town of Florence is proud to have open, transparent government. It means that people can clearly see what the Town is doing, why it is doing it, and how decisions are made. Open and transparent means that information is not hidden, decisions are made at meetings open to the public, and questions and answers can be shared from the Board with the community. The ultimate goal is that people can see and understand the decisions that are made, how to ask questions, and share information.

One way the Town of Florence is looking to accomplish this is by sharing informational facts about the Town and the Town's government. Through sharing facts, the Town is looking to help increase awareness and understanding of local Government.