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ATV Club President Addresses Village Board

Mike Krause, President of the N.E.W. Riders ATV Club, addressing the Board said, "The ATV's have gained a lot of popularity in the area. I have a UW-Madison Economic Impact Study, conducted in June-October 2003. When the DNR started to register the ATV's in 1986, they had 25,600. As of last year, they had 192,000 registered. You can see how this sport is gaining. ATVs are all over the place. What the State is recognizing is that they have to do something about potential problems. They want to control it by registering them and putting them on trails. There are more ATVs than snowmobiles. The registration money that was taken in last year was \$295,285,000. That is about equivalent to what was taken in to build the Packer Stadium. There is a lot of money in this business. The average ATV rider spends \$523.33 on a family weekend.

Continuing he said, "What we are trying to do is to build an ATV trail in this area. Eventually, we will be connecting it to the State Trail System. We've got a trail system approved which runs through the Coleman area. We are working with the Town of Pound to get another portion of the trail system approved. Now, I'd like to work with the Village to get a trail system through here and continue leapfrogging along. We would like to come along the railroad tracks in your community, and improve some of that area. The residents are worried about speed and noise. The ATVs in this area will only be allowed to go 10 mph because it is a community. The decibel level will be set at 96 – which is about as loud as a lawn mower. Out in the open air, 96 decibels is not real loud. What we are trying to accomplish is to get a trail out to Montana Lake, which eventually will continue farther to the west. We have had other people inquire as to how we could get to their neighborhood. Once we have a trail system in place, I think it is going to spider out a little more. We are working on a long-range plan. For now, we just want to get a little 15 mile loop going. We have to designate roads from point to point. We don't want to come into town and just run all over. That is not our intent. The system itself will be governed. An ATV has to be on a specific route. They are not allowed to run in any road right-of-way, like a snowmobile would be. ATVs cannot run in the ditch lines at all."

Bruce Braun added, "I don't mind if the ATVs are riding the trails, so long as this does not become a free for all."

Krause said, "There was nothing that governed the snowmobile system when it first started out. In the ATV system, we have what is called the Ambassador Program. It is a training course. They get out on the trails and govern themselves. Once we have the trail system in place, we welcome other groups of Ambassadors to come through and help monitor it. We want to keep it a good sport. Most of the people who are riding these machines are 40 years old and older. There are not a lot of kids. They are not out there to destroy – they are out there to enjoy. Insurance is a big issue. There is a Recreation Hold Harmless Law. The Village or the individual landowners are not held liable for someone running a machine into a ditch. The ATV rider is held responsible even if there is an obstacle in the way. Ponds do not have to be fenced."

President Schutte also commented, "I think that there is more of a problem with snowmobiles riding across yards and getting off of the trails." The Board approved an ordinance which allows ATVs to ride on designated roads in the Village as per yearly resolution.