

Municipal Corner – Thank a Municipal Employee

We often hear about the stereotypical public sector employee that is lazy and just riding out their time until retirement. While I have certainly run into such employees over the years, I want also to let you know there are a lot of hard working municipal employees in Stowe. Not to exclude any of them, but to single out a few as examples:

Steve Bonneau, Highway Superintendent, is in his 60's and nearing retirement. This winter in a snowstorm when you're asleep, Steve may be out plowing. If it isn't snowing, but is predicted to do so, you may just find Steve staying overnight at the Highway Garage so that he can keep an eye on the weather. Steve by the way is on a salary and doesn't get paid overtime. No one asks him to take the extraordinary steps, he just does so.

Bruce Godin, Parks Superintendent, has worked for the Town of Stowe for over thirty years. His hands are as big as bear claws from years of hard work and he expects the same work of his employees. If you want to teach your kids how to work hard, then send them to work for the Stowe Parks Department to work for the summer. If I need something done right, I often find myself turning to Bruce.

Harry Shepard, Public Works Director, inherited a load of capital projects, administrative responsibilities, ever increasing community expectations and mandates from other levels of government. He brought the Arena project under budget and ensured the Town was restored after Hurricane Irene. If that wasn't enough, heavy rains again caused significant damage to the Recreation Path this year. The job of taking care of Stowe's infrastructure never ends.

Alan Shatney is the Highway Mechanic who is retiring this year after 17 years of turning wrenches to keep the town's vehicles on the road plowing and responding to emergencies. If you see him, wish him well before he drives off on his Harley to a well deserved retirement.

These employees are representative of our municipal workforce. We often take for granted that our roads will be plowed, public spaces and infrastructure maintained, our toilets will flush and water will run, and someone will respond to an emergency. However, there are real people behind all those things we take for granted every day, so next time you see a municipal employee please be sure to say thank you.