

## **Temple Good Roads Day**

Good Roads Day (GRD) is a Temple community tradition. This whole-town event occurred every spring, with a few brief gaps of several years, since it was first established in 1914. The tradition began as “Good Roads Day” and was focused originally on community road repair. The event continued in the same fashion until sometime in the 1950s.

Later, when it was brought back in the 1960s to 1970s, it was held as Town Improvement Day and included several new tasks such as the painting of the common rails and the cleaning of the village center. From the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, it was known as Town Spring Cleanup Day or Community Cleanup Day. Off and on between the formal town-sponsored periods, some people celebrated it as Temple Earth Day.

Although the event has been called by several names, the original name was brought back for the turn-of-the-century 2000/2001 revival of this old-time community tradition. In addition, more jobs were added to the Good Roads Day event during the first decade of the new century. The community cleanup effort evolved into the complete raking of the green areas in the village center (the area inside the post and rail fence on the common, the village cemetery, and all around the town buildings); removal of poison ivy, briars, and fallen branches along the wooded edges of the green areas; complete roadside litter pickup of all roads in town; weeding and pruning of all the community garden areas; raking, cleaning, and seasonal preparation of the ball field, playground, and tennis/basketball courts; maintenance of town trails; cleanup of the bird sanctuary and the historic schoolhouse area; and miscellaneous one-time work projects as needed.

During this period, volunteers would also gather each year before and after Good Roads Day to help with special projects that required work over an extended period of time. These community projects varied considerably from routine cleaning and maintenance, to new construction, to major repair work, to beautification efforts and landscape renovation.

Later, in the following decade, an increase in other activities and events happening at the same time contributed to a reduction in Good Roads Day participation. As a result, the work load was reduced to match the available work force.

The current GRD effort focuses on litter pickup along most of the town roadsides, raking/pruning in the village center along the front/sides of town buildings, weeding most of the town gardens, raking/preparing the ball field, and removing leaves from the playground.

Some follow-up work and several group roadside litter pickups are scheduled during the late spring, summer, and early fall. In addition, many of our Temple community members pick up litter along the roadsides at regular intervals throughout the year.

Since the 2000/2001 revival, Good Roads Day has happened in April or May. The work day typically begins in the early morning and ends in the early to mid-afternoon. Coffee, baked goods, tools, and supplies are available to the workers beginning around 8:30 am. Forty to fifty (up to 100 in the past) participants of all ages work at the various project sites on the actual day of the scheduled event. Some continue their work after lunch; others go home after the meal.

Most of the GRD workers gather for the noontime meal in Friendship Hall. From 2003 until 2010, Temple Elementary School provided the community feast; but for all other years, before and after, the meal has been prepared and served as a community potluck.

TEEC and RET provide the recycling service and handle the lunch trash as well as the bags of litter collected by Good Roads Day participants. The sorting of the litter is completed after the community meal.

Since 2001, families, individuals, and a few community organizations have shared the cost of food and supplies for this special town gathering. The day has something for everyone and is made possible by the caring and the commitment of the people of Temple. It is a wonderful way to share the joy of springtime and to work with others to keep our community safe and beautiful.

For more information, call Linda Bollinger at 878-1078, or check the March/April issue of the Temple Newsletter.