

Missing Street Signs: Dangerous And Costly

By Anne Hewitt
Beacon staff

What may seem to be harmless fun can turn out to be a serious mistake. Such is the case with tampering with or removing highway signs, including those that mark the names of streets.

Signs do get damaged, sometimes by car collisions. Quick replacement is necessary for both safety and con-

venience, but expediency is not always possible. Andover's Road Agent, John Thompson, oversees sign replacement. "More common names, like Main Street, are kept in stock at the Prison [the state agency that makes the signs], but less common names can take up to four months to get."

When signs are replaced, they must be bigger than the signs we're used to. The bigger signs are required to meet new guidelines of the Enhanced 911 emergency system.

New street signs cost \$54, the bracket is \$15, and the post \$10. Add to that the labor required for installation. Those costs come out of the Road Agent's budget. Twenty-three signs were replaced in 2004, and so far this year Road Agent Thompson estimates that 10 to 15 have been replaced.

Anyone caught damaging or removing signs or in possession of what is considered stolen property can face stiff penalties. Depending on the cost of the signs, a conviction could mean fines

up to \$2,000 and possible jail time.

"We take each incident individually," said Andover Police Chief Glenn Laramie, "and those responsible will be held accountable." Andover Police Department has not received many complaints, and the police were not involved in a recent episode where a number of street signs were returned to the Town Hall.

"We'll accept any signs back with no questions asked," said Town Administrator Mark Stetson.

For those who have a real longing for street signs, just about any sign can be purchased. On the Web, use Google to search on "street signs" and shop away!



The "Ricky G's" property has been sold to Doug Gay and Joanna Sumner of Andover. The wooden structures were reduced to rubble (above), then the Andover Fire Department used the pile for a live burn exercise. Doug and Joanna are looking at the possibility of professional office or retail space on the property. Photo: Charlie Darling



Currently, Andover's streets are marked by two different size signs. Smaller signs, like the Main St sign, will be replaced over time by larger ones like the Franklin Hwy sign.

Photo: Anne Hewitt

New Town Web Site And Web Log

After several years of down time, the new Town of Andover Web site is expected to be up and running by the time this issue of the *Beacon* is delivered. Its Internet address is www.AndoverNH.us.

The site aims to answer as many town-related questions as possible and includes everything from Town ordinances and regulations, to current memberships and meeting times of Town boards and committees, to descriptions of the town's non-profit organizations. Mapping is comprehensive, with tax, wetlands, flood plain, zoning, and other maps.

The site covers recreation options, particularly for Andover's young folks, and the Andover Historical Society's share of the site is considerably larger now, with more to come. The site includes both scenic and historic photo galleries.

This Web site is a work in progress. Items planned for the near future include a list of local businesses and businesses in nearby communities owned by Andover residents. A business which wishes to be included should e-mail its name, type of

business, street address, owner or manager's name, phone number, e-mail address, and Web site URL (if any).

Some genealogy (at first limited to vital statistics) will be added, and considerable additions to the Master Plan Update Committee's section. It is intended to turn over access to each board's, committee's, and non-profit's section to that organization so that those entities can be responsible for their own changes and additions.

The site was created through the efforts of Proctor Academy alumnus and recent Lewis & Clark College graduate Nate Laffan of Canaan and is provided to the town through the generosity of Proctor Academy, which maintains the site on its servers. Errors and omissions should be e-mailed to AndoverNH@tds.net.

The Andover Web site complements another new digital addition, a "Web log" (usually called a "blog") titled Andover E-Town Hall, where residents can express their opinions and discuss town issues on-line. The blog can be found at AndoverNHUS.BlogSpot.com.

The staff and volunteers of *The Andover Beacon* want to congratulate Charlie Darling on the success of our first year. We're looking forward to many more years of growth with the *Beacon*.



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