

Village Board acts after officials report drivers cutting across Hwy. 33

Village of Saukville police report that the introduction of roundabouts on Highway 33 have caused few traffic problems, with one notable exception.

Confused or impatient motorists heading north from Piggly Wiggly and Walmart have occasionally made sharp left turns at the Plaza Drive crossing of Highway 33 instead of following the counter-clockwise direction of the roundabout, which is designed to channel all traffic to veer right.

When officials wanted to post a one-way sign at the intersection, they learned there was no ordinance on the books covering the crossing. That made it impossible for police to issue citations.

Village Attorney Gerald Antoine was asked to recommend wording for the ordinance change that would correct the problem with errant traffic.

Antoine recommended making the change adjacent to the section of the code dealing with one-way traffic.

The attorney said while researching the issue, he discovered the village ordinance also failed to include Ulao Street among its one-way streets, recommending that change along with the roundabout wording.

He said the presumption by Department of Transportation officials is that installing roundabouts will naturally force traffic to head in one direction.

“The state apparently underestimated the impatience of drivers,” Antoine said.

The Village Board unanimously approved the wording changes last week.

Even without the no-turn signs, Police Lt. Jeff Goetz said local motorists have adjusted well to the roundabouts that were opened to traffic this summer.

“We have had five crashes since they were installed. None of them were due to a driver going the wrong way, and none of them resulted in injuries,” Goetz said.

“When the roundabouts were first opened but still under construction, we did have several confused drivers going the wrong way, however none resulted in a crash.”

One of the selling points of roundabouts touted by DOT officials is that when accidents do occur, injuries tend to be minimized because traffic is moving slower and in the same direction.

Goetz said there have actually been fewer accidents at Plaza Drive since the roundabouts were installed, although some of that reduction may be attributed to drivers avoiding the area during

Law makes ignoring roundabout flow illegal

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construction.

“So far, they seem to be moving traffic fairly well,” he said.