

Eau Claire Community Forum by Forum Manager Ken Fulgione August 22, 2011

Eau Claire City Manager Mike Huggins heard about the idea last year and has been promoting it ever since, and **Ken Fulgione** volunteered to lead the effort to make it happen. The idea... an online public forum where neighbors talk to neighbors and can share information and opinions about community issues and events... a modern day version of leaning over the backyard fence or attending a community event and talking to a neighbor.

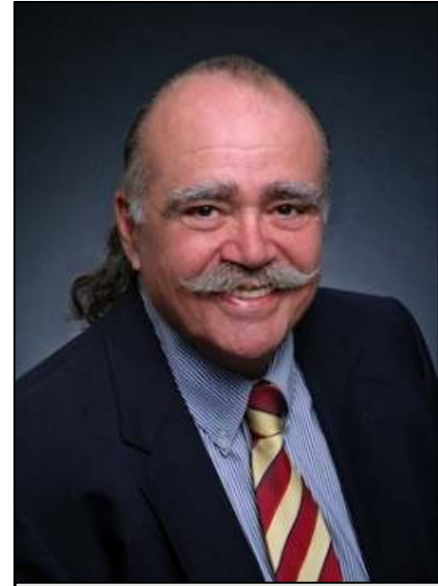
E-Democracy.org is a Minnesota based nonprofit nonpartisan organization that began in 1994 with a stated mission to "harness the power of online tools to support participation in public life, strengthen communities, and build democracy." It currently hosts 30 forums in 15 communities located in three countries. The **Eau Claire Community Forum** will operate as one of these forums. According to Fulgione, people can use the forum to talk about just about anything. It could be about parks, wildlife sightings, budgets, or the merits of raising chickens within the city.

In order for the site to go "live", it was first necessary to have 100 people signed up on the forum. This benchmark has just been reached and the Eau Claire Forum is scheduled to go live September 1.

Fulgione has been working hard to get the word out, and drum up more public interest. He mentioned that Volume One had recently published a nice article, and was hopeful the Leader-Telegram might add to the hype. It didn't take long for his wish to come true, as the Sunday, August 28 Leader-Telegram includes a front page article and an editorial on the Eau Claire Community Forum.

In addition to being an advocate for the Forum, Fulgione is also serving as its first Forum Manager or moderator. The Forum rules require, among other things, that participants use their real names, remain civil, limit their activity to two posts per day, and refrain from name calling and other offensive behavior. Fulgione's responsibility as the moderator is to enforce these rules, and he has the technical capabilities and other tools to do so.

In conclusion, Fulgione urged everyone to visit the Eau Claire Community Forum at <http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/eaucnaire> and, better yet, to sign up and become a member.



Ken Fulgione, moderator of Eau Claire's forum on E-Democracy.org (Fulgione's photo compliments of Coldwell Banker Brenizer, Realtors)