



Historical Monument Dedicated in Ryan Business Park

The Ryan Business Park sits on the southeast corner of Ryan Road and 13th St. This 114-acre site is home to Oak Creek's Amazon Fulfillment Center, the first development in the park. However, just to the north of the massive structure is something most would not expect – a historical marker dedicated to memorializing the history of the land the business park sits upon.

It took nearly 15 years for the developer, Capstone Quadrangle, to assemble the land for the business park. Two of the largest parcels were acquired from families that had owned and farmed the land for more than 100 years, long before Oak Creek was incorporated as a city. Despite having a vision for the future of the land, Michael Faber, principal of Capstone Quadrangle, wanted to be sure that the story of its past was also preserved in a meaningful way.

"As you might imagine, selling something that has been in a family for multiple generations is a very emotional thing, and we had to be respectful of that. As we worked with these families, we learned some of the stories we wanted to memorialize on this permanent record," noted Faber during a ceremony on June 10, dedicating the historical marker.

The marker sits on a park-like, half-acre site, offering visitors a place to pause and learn about the past, while taking in the quiet, wildflower-dotted space. Large blocks of limestone surround the marker, not only affording visitors a place to sit, but aiding in telling the story of the land. Where the Bartel Court bridge now stands, the Wisconsin Union Railroad originally crossed the Oak Creek when it was built in 1872. The railroad tracks were moved in 1906, but the bridge abutments remained. In 2019, when the new bridge was constructed for the roadway, the limestone was excavated and salvaged to be used anew.

The historical monument also pays tribute to the Ryan, Tischendorf and Bartel families and their role in Oak Creek. Ryan Road is said to be named after brothers Patrick and Richard Ryan, Irish immigrants who settled on adjoining properties at the intersection of what is now Ryan Road and Chicago Road. What is thought to be one of the first paved roads in Wisconsin, Ryan Road is now a well-traveled state highway and namesake for the Ryan Business Park.

The Tischendorf and Bartel families, who owned the western and eastern halves of the business park, respectively, purchased the land in the 1920s. Like many in Oak Creek during that time, both families grew crops and raised livestock on the land, serving them well for generations.

As Oak Creek grows and changes with the times, it is essential to recognize our City's past and the families that helped it become what it is today. The historical monument in the Ryan Business Park will serve as an important reminder of where we began as we move into the future.



Photos courtesy of Capstone Quadrangle