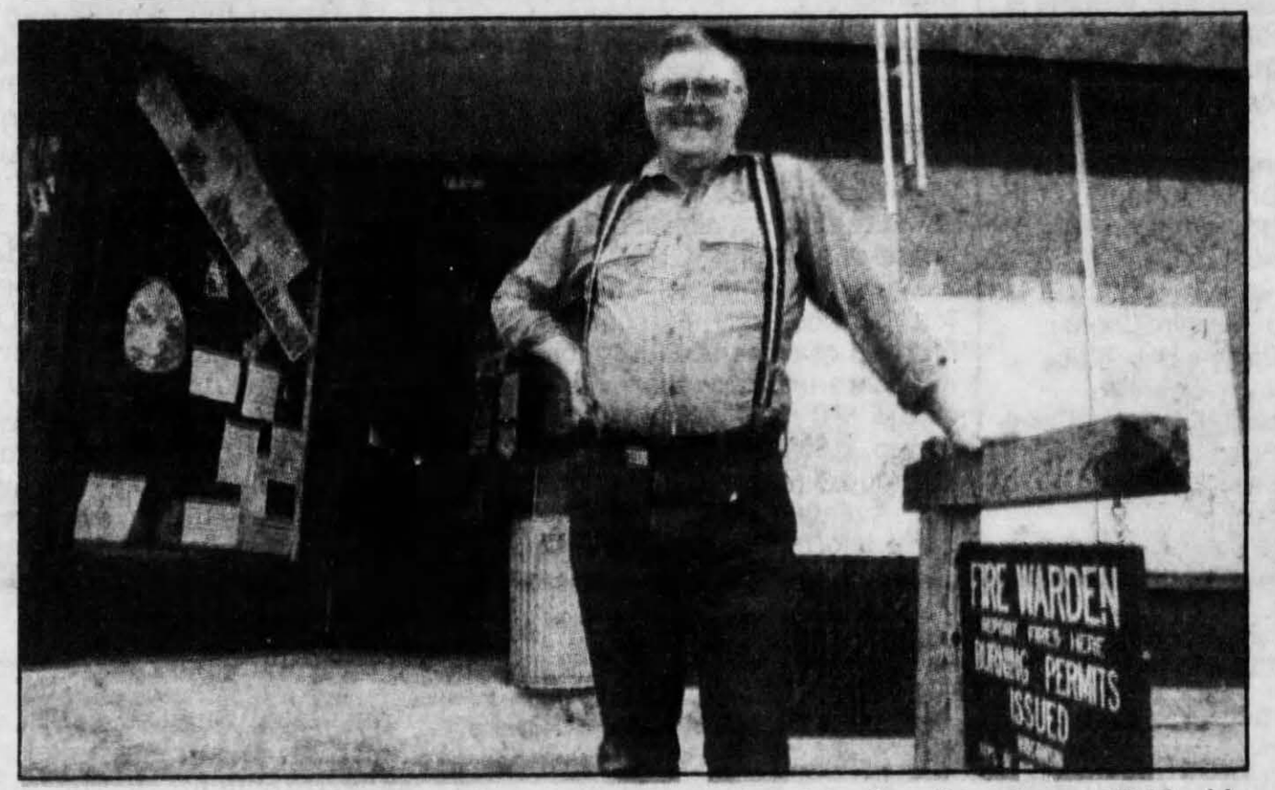
Our weekly community profile



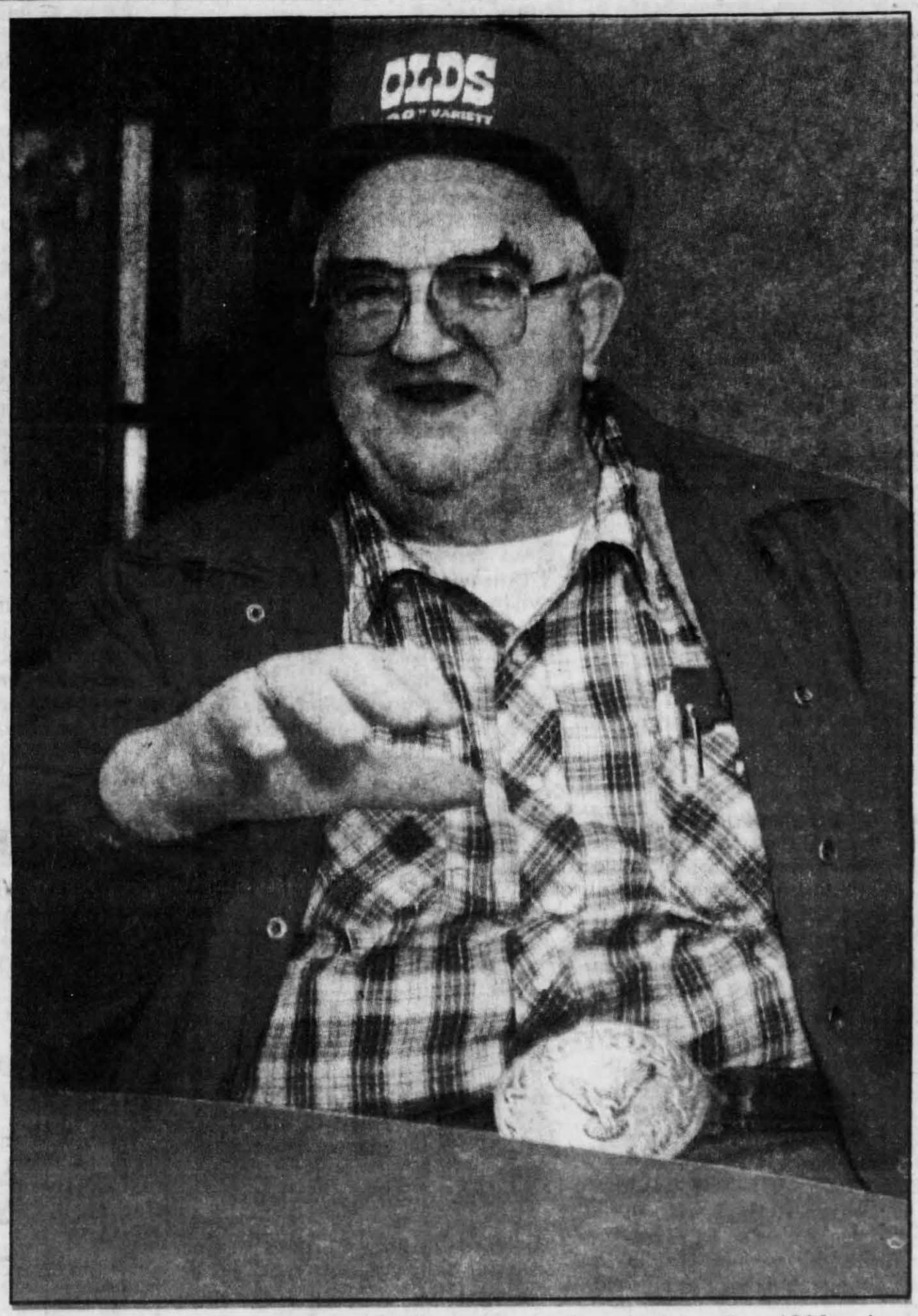
In general: Walter Bramschreiber of Little Suamico stands outside the general store that has been run by his family since 1913. He said his is the only general store left in the area.

The file on town of Little Suamico

- **Population:** 3,404 (estimated by town Clerk Sandra Pagel)
- **1980 population:** 1,969 (U.S. Census Bureau)
- **Education:** Students attend either Pulaski or Oconto Falls public schools.
- **Government:** The town hall and fire department are in Sobieski.
- **Police protection:** One constable and the Oconto County Sheriff's Department.

Press-Gazette photos
by Sandee Gerbers

Record keeper: Sandra Pagel, town of Little Suamico clerk, talks while looking over one of the town record books.



Town talk: Bob Rost, town of Little Suamico chairman, discusses the town's history and growth. The town, founded in the 1890s, has almost tripled its population over the last 11 years.

Town of Little Suamico luring residents

Short commute to Green Bay, rural lifestyle are primary attractions

By Gary Dodge
Press-Gazette

TOWN OF LITTLE SUAMICO — Metropolitan Green Bay's suburbs soon may cross the Brown-Oconto county line.

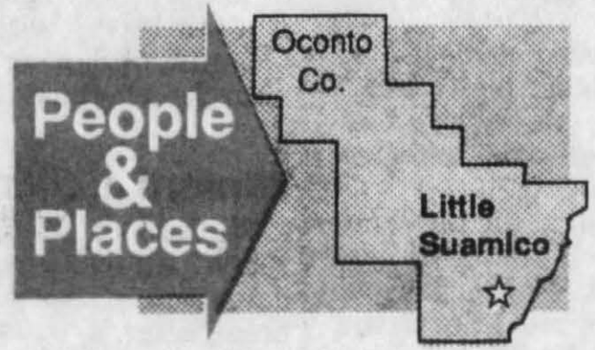
When Bob Rost, 63, became town chairman 11 years ago, 1,268 people lived in the 5-mile-by-6-mile town in Oconto County. Today, the population has reached 3,404. Rost said most residents commute to Green Bay jobs.

Recent annual sales of building permits have totaled about 30, said town Clerk Sandra Pagel, 42.

Population centers in the town are Little Suamico, Sobieski and Sobieski Corners. The town, founded in the 1890s, was named after an American Indian chief, Rost said.

"There was a little chief and a big chief. Little Suamico lived here and Big Suamico was there. Suamico just dropped off the 'Big' part," Rost said. "That's what I was told."

Its country charm may be a major reason why people are moving into the area. The town runs along Green Bay. The Little Suamico River also flows through it.



Pagel, explaining the attraction for families, said: "I think it's pretty friendly. I think people enjoy that. It's a close-knit community. Everybody knows everybody."

Families also move to the town because larger pieces of property can be bought. It's also a short commute to Green Bay, Pagel and Rost said.

Many families also find it easier to rear children in a rural area, residents say.

Students attend either the Pulaski School District or Oconto Falls School District.

"The big thing the people come out for are cheap taxes," Rost said.

But families moving to the community will not find lower property taxes.

"We're in a growing town and the state demands how much money we have to have here on account of our growth and the way our lots are selling," he said.

In fact, one man complained to Rost about the property taxes.

Rost said he told the man it costs money to provide the same services he received in Green Bay.

Rather than depend upon tourism, the community has several businesses that help the local economy.

Included are several taverns, a lumber company, a bank, restaurants and motels.

One store in the hamlet of Little Suamico maintains its ties to the past.

Walter Bramschreiber, 59, said he can remember when his general store carried everything from farm feed to hardware supplies.

The store once served a thriving commercial fishing industry but today that has gone by the wayside, he said.

Many sport fishermen, however, still enjoy catching perch in the bay, Bramschreiber said.

But with changing market conditions, his store carries mainly food supplies.

He still has customers that shop for all their supplies there, but the main portion of his business is from people who need just a few things, he said.

Bramschreiber has been in the grocery store business since 1953.

As a grocer, Bramschreiber said he knows the area and its people.

Retired farmers, many of whom have been lifelong residents, make up much of the community, he said.

The influx of families means he will need to learn the new names.

His hardwood-floor store along Grosse Road is the only general store left in the area, Bramschreiber said. Another store closed Jan. 1, he said.

Bramschreiber's parents, Walter and Susan, bought the store in 1913. His parents died two years ago.

■ **Next week:** Bonduel in Shawano County