

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Waukesha, Wisconsin

2013 County Executive Budget



LAPHAM PEAK

In 1870, on top of Lapham Peak, then known as Government Hill, the United States Army Signal Corps established one of its original National Weather Service signal stations. Weather data was received here from Pikes Peak, Colorado, and relayed to the United States Weather Bureau headquarters in Chicago. Lapham Peak, the highest point in Waukesha County, is named for Increase Allen Lapham (1811-1875), Wisconsin's premier 19th-century naturalist, archeologist and scholar. From this peak, Lapham recorded many weather observations for his pioneering work in meteorology, which included publishing isothermal maps of Wisconsin and working with the Smithsonian Institution as a weather observer for the Great Lakes region. Concerned with potential storm disasters to Great Lakes shipping and Wisconsin farming, Lapham proposed a state weather forecasting service in 1850. Although not adopted by the state, Lapham rewrote the proposal for a national weather service, which was approved by Congress on February 9, 1870. On November 8th, working as the assistant to the Chief Signal Corps Officer, Lapham recorded the first published national weather forecast, calling for "high winds and falling temperatures for Chicago, Detroit and the Eastern cities."

Erected 1995

DANIEL P. VRAKAS
WAUKESHA COUNTY EXECUTIVE