

Fire Department Message

Chief Brent Cole

As we approach the holiday season, the last thing anyone would want is to have this joyous time interrupted by fire. Take a few extra minutes to help put your mind at ease.

THANKSGIVING: Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven. Keep kitchen clutter and loose clothing away from the stove's heat. Turn pot handles in, away from a child's reach. Use pot holders to prevent burns. Never throw water on a grease fire. Instead, cover the burning pan with a lid. Keep all appliances in good working order. Never overload electrical outlets. Unplug appliances when not in use. Never leave cooking food unattended. Keep Thanksgiving decorations away from sources of direct heat.

CHRISTMAS: Make sure your Christmas tree is fresh. Shedding needles is a sign of a dry tree. Keep your tree fresh by placing it in a stand that holds water. Make sure artificial trees are flame-retardant. Never smoke around the tree or flammable decorations. Place trees away from direct sources of heat. Never place a tree so it blocks an exit. Only buy electric lights that are approved by a national testing lab. Never decorate metal trees with electric lights. Always unplug lights before going to bed. Never run electrical cords through doorways and under rugs. Keep candles in sturdy holders and never place them near combustibles, such as curtains. Avoid handling stockings near open flame. Never burn paper in a fireplace. This is a major cause of chimney fires. Keep hydrants clear of snow and visible from the street.

NEW YEARS: At a party, check to be sure the exits are clear. Never let friends drink excessively. Alcohol affects judgment and coordination. Check under furniture and cushions for smoldering cigarettes.

The 30th Annual Christmas Parade is tentatively scheduled for December 6 starting at 6PM. Santa, door prizes, cider, donuts will be offered. The top three parade participants will receive plaques.

I hope everyone has a safe and joyous holiday season. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 635-2300.

CITY OF SWARTZ CREEK

<http://www.cityofswartzcreek.org> Phone: (810) 635-4464 Fax: (810) 635-2887

Newsletter



Autumn

2014

A Message from the Mayor

-Mayor David Krueger

With snow looming over Halloween, it looks like winter is bearing down upon us early once again. The National Weather Service is forecasting a long, hard winter this year similar to last year's. With all the snow we had last year and no warming spells to melt it, things got pretty dangerous for our students and others who had to walk to school, the store, etc., because many sidewalks remained buried in snow all winter. City ordinance requires sidewalks to be cleared for walkers within 48 hours of a snow fall. If your sidewalk is not kept clear this year, the city will send a contractor to shovel it for you and send you the bill along with a fine. We don't want to do that, so **PLEASE KEEP YOUR SIDEWALK CLEAR!**

If you need help shoveling the walk and/or driveway, please call Assistant Principal Jan Kauzlarich at the High School, (810) 591-1802, and arrange to hire a local student to help you or to do the work for you. This will help you and our kids, and will be a lot cheaper than the city's contractor. Thanks for helping to keep our children and our citizens safe this winter.

After Hours Emergencies:

Including water main breaks or sewer backups, should be reported to 911.

(City voice messages are not checked on the weekends or after 5pm on weekdays.)

Talk of the Town: Local Streets.....

Adam Zettel, City Manager

Beginning this summer, our community began having public discussions about our local streets. (Think of local streets as the side streets in residential neighborhoods, including most streets in the city but notably EXCLUDING Miller, Morrish, Elms, Seymour, and Bristol Road). It is no surprise that everyone could agree that the condition of our local street network is deplorable.

Furthermore, most everyone could agree that the funding is not yet in place for the proper amount of replacement, rehabilitation, and maintenance required to save our cars and property values. However, there was not a consensus on what degree to fund streets as well as how to seek out such revenues.

So what actions did we take? The city held off on immediate repairs to select streets that would have been paid for by a special assessment on affected properties. Instead, the council directed the engineer to create a 15-20 year plan to address the entire local street network with a mix of fixes. The mix of fixes approach is a departure from the traditional 'worst first' approach to street replacement. Under this model, a city-wide levy would be collected annually and, in addition to select street replacement, a range of maintenance work would be completed on newer streets as well. Think of this as replacing roof shingles BEFORE the leak destroys the rest of your house.

Now what? The engineer has provided our community with a range of options. These range from the "do nothing and watch our community crumble" option all the way to the "that is way to expensive, are you insane?" option. I suspect that somewhere in the middle is an option that will greatly improve the condition of our streets, city-wide, without breaking the bank. With that said, please join us at the next public information/input sessions on November 10th where these options will be laid out in plain English (the good, the bad, and the ugly). The guidance from these sessions will likely result in a specific ballot question that will be placed before the community.



City of Swartz Creek
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Police Department News

Chief Rick Clolinger

The last year has been a busy one for the Creek police department. The new assessment revenues have permitted the hiring of two full time officers and restored much of the funding that has been creating deficits during recent years. The city is now looking at a potential merger of the police department with Mundy Township following my retirement, and that has raised equal amounts of praise and criticism from the community. Opportunities and pitfalls abound, but here is a summary of what brought us to this point and where we go from here.

Why should we study this? The city is looking at this option as a way to increase the level of service provided and to ensure the financial stability of the department given the ever diminishing state revenues that used to help support such services. Even with the new police revenues, there is no reason to be complacent when opportunities for better service are available. There is reason to believe that the same amount of resources could increase the police presence in our community. For example, the current department has six full time officers, one of whom is the chief. It might be more prudent to have six full time officers patrolling the streets and pool resources for administration, support staff, buildings, vehicles, training with another community.

What is happening now? I have retired as a full time employee and am contracted to provide part-time chief services for the city and part time administrative services for Mundy Township on a temporary basis. The purpose of this shared service arrangement is to enable both communities to study the merger on an interim basis until a final decision is made. For now, our department is functioning like it normally does. I oversee the administrative duties, and our officers patrol our community using our local ordinances, and procedures.

What are the next steps? The status quo will remain until the merger study is completed in 8-12 months. At that time, presentations will be made to the general public and governing bodies concerning potential merger options. If the community likes what it sees, a new authority could be created, similar to the Swartz Creek Area Fire Department, that would provide police services to our community and Mundy. If the community does not like the options when considering costs, service level, image, or any other reason then the city will terminate the agreement, hire a new chief, and move on with business as usual.

I encourage our community to consider this process with an open mind. It may be reasonable to conclude that a merger is not in our best interest, but only after all the facts have been looked at. We may be surprised at the benefits of doing so. For the time being, the city's department still belongs to the city. For a sit down discussion on the matter, I invite you to contact me at 810.635.4401.

UTILITY RATE INCREASE

New, increased rates will be reflected in the January 2015 water/sewer bill due to increases in wholesale costs to the city.

- Sewer rates generally reflect treatment and transportation costs as billed to the city by the county, and these change very seldom (the last increase was in 2007).
- Unfortunately, water costs are increasing at unprecedented rates due to issues with the water provider, Detroit. Rates are expected to stabilize, PERHAPS even decrease, when the new Huron intake (Karegnondi Water Authority) goes online in 2016.

**Leak detection kits can find ways to reduce water usage. Contact city hall to receive one.*

Dog Licenses

The City of Swartz Creek will sell one year dog licenses from December 1, 2014 through February 28, 2015.

**Cost: \$10.00 / 1 year / spayed or neutered
\$30.00 / 1 year / male or female**

On a monthly basis, the Genesee County Treasurer's office sends out pre-printed applications 30 days before the month of the rabies vaccine expiration date. *(Pre-printed applications are NOT required to purchase a license. Licenses can be purchased with proof of current rabies vaccination and proof if the pet has been spayed or neutered.)*

Owners will have the month before, the month of and the month after the vaccination to purchase a license. After that time the license would be delinquent and may be purchased only through Animal Control (810-732-1660). All licenses may be purchased from Genesee County through the mail or in person. Some participating veterinarians sell three year licenses, as does Genesee County. Replacement licenses are issued through the Genesee County Treasurer's Office (810)257-3054



Reminders

- The Swartz Creek City Office is closed from 12pm to 1pm daily. Regular office hours are from **8am to 12pm and 1pm to 4:30pm Monday through Friday.** (Police dept. services remain at city hall pending staff hiring at the police department.)
- **DO NOT** rake or blow leaves or yard waste into the street. The City DOES NOT pick up yard waste from the street.
- Please advise the city office if you will be out of town for an extended period of time. This allows us to mail your bills to the correct location and keep an eye out for problems at your residence.
- **Visit our website at www.cityofswartzcreek.org for updates. Like us on Facebook as well!**
- Winter tax bills will be mailed December 1, 2014 and are due without penalty by February 14, 2015.
- There is no parking on any City street from 2am-6am. Please be mindful to only park on city streets where it is not prohibited. Keeping vehicles off the street lowers the risk of theft and permits winter maintenance. Violations will be issued to vehicles parking illegally.



Sidewalks Ordinance Change!

Winter is upon us! Residents and other property owners should have a winter maintenance plan in place for sidewalks.

Sidewalks must be cleared of ice and snow within 48 hours after a snow event. Failure to do so will result in a \$50 fine plus the costs to have the city clear the sidewalk. This will be enforced. Please be mindful of students, mail carriers, and other pedestrians. Plan to clear your sidewalk this winter.



Yard Waste & Wood Chipping Guidelines

- Yard waste bags will be collected by Republic through the end of November. And wood chipping is expected to wrap up by the 2nd week of November
- Separate leaf and waste into bags for pickup by Republic and brush into piles for the city wood chipper
- All limbs must be 4 inches or less in diameter
- Brush ends **MUST** be stacked with cut ends facing the curb/road edge
- No lumber, tree removal, contracted jobs, or lot clearing jobs will be accommodated
- Do not include vines, ivy, strings, wires, stumps, or other obstructions