

REMINDERS AND OTHER NEWS

BUCKLE UP!

Effective January 1, 2012, ALL passengers in a motor vehicle, in both the front and back seats, must wear a seat belt. The Downers Grove Police Department will be enforcing this new Illinois law.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Most Village Offices will be closed on December 23 and 26, 2011, and on January 2, 2012.

CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION

Free collection of live Christmas trees will be offered by Republic Services from January 3-13, 2012. Trees must be free of tinsel, ornaments, and hooks and should not be placed in bags.

GARBAGE NOTES

Monday, December 26, 2011, and Monday, January 2, 2012, are garbage holidays. Collections will be delayed by one day during these weeks.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

The Village and Creative Recycling offer electronics recycling on the **first Saturday of the month from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** The drop-off location is at Village Hall, 801 Burlington Avenue, in the employee parking lot at the rear of the building off of Curtiss Street. Because the site is staffed by community volunteers, gates will be opened at 9:00 a.m. and closed promptly at noon.

MAKE A DATE ON THE VILLAGE CALENDAR

The Village is accepting event information from DuPage County non-profit organizations to be posted on the Events Calendar on the Village website.

Questions and event information may be forwarded to events@downers.us.

NEW BUSINESSES

DLD DANCE STUDIO

www.dlddancecenter.com
912 Curtiss St.
630-67-DANCE

SPICE MERCHANTS

www.spicemerchants.biz
5225 Main Street
630-829-2000

IS YOUR BUSINESS THE NEW KID IN TOWN?

If so, Hometown Times wants to hear from you. For more details, contact Printing and Publications at (630) 434-5556. New businesses are published as a service, not as an endorsement by the Village.



www.downers.us

801 Burlington Avenue
Downers Grove, IL 60515

Mayor Martin T. Tully
Commissioners

Marilyn Schnell, William Waldack,
Sean Patrick Durkin, Geoff Neustadt,
Robert T. Barnett, Becky Rheintgen

Council Meetings 1st, 2nd & 3rd Tues. -7:00 pm
Fire, Medical or Police Emergency 9-1-1
Village Hall 1.630.434.5500
Communications Department 1.630.434.5550
Community Response Center 1.630.434-CALL (2255)
TDD 1.630.434.5511

Village Hall Hours

Tues. 8:00 am to 7:00 pm

Mon. and Wed. through Fri. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Mayor
Martin T. Tully

Happy Holidays Downers Grove!

It was with great pride that for the first time as Mayor, I had the opportunity to join Santa Claus in pushing the button at the Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony on November 25 to officially launch the season of glad tidings for all. It was a splendid, well-attended evening, featuring a beautiful tree adorned with over 1,000 ornaments handmade by Downers Grove's very own elves (i.e., children), holiday favorites performed by the District 99 marching band, and heart-warming carols sung by the DG Choral Society and local scout troops.



Just prior to that on Thanksgiving Day, a record crowd of 5,100 participants turned out in support of the 8th Annual Bonfield Express 5K run/walk, myself included. Participation in this charitable event has grown rapidly over the years, becoming a cherished Downers Grove tradition and resulting in the distribution of over \$150,000 in scholarships to local high school students.

Of course, these events were only the beginning, as many more festive activities, concerts, events, and gatherings continue through the balance of the year. Among other things, while you are supporting your local businesses by shopping in town, please be sure to experience the "Painting with Lights Spectacular" that brings the Main Street Train Station to life. The lights dance to holiday songs every hour, on the hour, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. through January 1, 2012.

Without question, events like these typify how perseverance, good will, and community spirit are alive and well in Downers Grove. We are truly blessed to live in a terrific community that has much to offer its residents and to be thankful for. That is uplifting news at a time when the economic challenges of the day sometimes overshadow the positive stories and exciting opportunities around us. The Village Council and staff continue moving in a positive direction through a shared commitment to financial stewardship, transparency, innovation, and efficient and effective delivery of essential municipal services.

2012 Municipal Budget Reflects Sustained Financial Health

For example, after many months of careful planning, hard work, and public discussions, the Village Council adopted the fiscal year 2012 Municipal Budget on November 8, 2011. As a result, the Village is well-positioned for continued financial health in 2012 and beyond. Here are just a few of the highlights from this "good news" budget story:

- A balanced General Fund with revenues and expenses equal at \$41.35 million.
- \$393,104 reduction in public safety pension expenses.
- \$60,000 reduction in post-employment benefit expenses.
- \$393,104 reduction in the Village portion of the total property tax levy.
- Continued reduction in staffing through attrition.
- Funding for continued investment in critical Village infrastructure.
- Implementation of the recommendations for the operation of the water system.
- Funding for the 2012 High Priority Action Items.

New Comprehensive Plan Charts the Bright Future of Our Community

On October 4, 2011, the Village Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan, a key planning document that provides guidance on a wide range of issues including economic development, infrastructure, recreation, environmental impacts, and public safety, in addition to land use policies and maps. It illustrates an inclusive vision for the physical character of the Village for the next 15 to 20 years. The new Comprehensive Plan was much needed and a long time in coming, given that the Village's prior plan was last updated in 1965! As they say, sometimes good things come to those who wait.

Railroad Safety



The Downers Grove Police Department has received a grant from the Illinois Commerce Commission and Federal Railroad Administration to enhance the educational and enforcement efforts centering on railroad safety. The grant funding will be used to purchase materials and reimburse the police department for manpower hours used during special enforcement details that will include both vehicles and pedestrians.

Follow these safety tips from Operation Lifesaver:

Vehicles

- Approach any crossing with care.
- **Do not stop on the tracks – EVER.** The law in Illinois clearly states "No person shall drive onto any railroad grade crossing unless there is sufficient space on the other side of the rail grade crossing to accommodate the vehicle without obstructing the passage of a train..." The fine for this offense is \$250.00.
- Do not begin to cross any railroad track unless there is enough space on the other side of the track for your vehicle.
- All motorists must **REMAIN STOPPED** at the crossing until the lights have stopped flashing and the gates are **completely** in the upright position. The fine for the first offense of disobeying the red flashing lights at a railroad crossing is \$250.00.

Pedestrians

- Cross tracks **ONLY** at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals.
- Do not begin to cross the tracks if the signals activate. The fine for this offense is \$250.00.
- Never walk down a train track; it's illegal and it's dangerous. By the time a locomotive engineer can see a trespasser or a vehicle on the tracks, it is too late. The train cannot stop quickly enough to avoid a collision.

Stay safe and follow the rules at all times, and especially anytime you are near the railroad tracks. Look, Listen, and Live.

Crossing Guards Need Your Help

School crossing guards have a very important and challenging responsibility: keep children safe while walking to and from school each day. The guards ask motorists to assist them in their duties by following Illinois traffic laws when driving near school crossings.

- The Illinois Vehicle Code (IVC) requires motorists to comply with "lawful order or direction of any school crossing guard..." Failure to do so can result in a mandatory fine of \$150.00.
- The IVC also addresses pedestrians at intersections equipped with traffic control signals. Motorists are required to "yield the right of way to pedestrians lawfully within an adjacent crosswalk." A violation for this offense is a minimum fine of \$120.00.
- Motorists must yield the right of way to school children crossing the roadway at crosswalks in school zones on school days. Fines for this offense are \$150.00 for the first offense and \$300.00 for any subsequent offenses.

Please be a safe driver and good role model. The Downers Grove Police Department's goal is to have an accident-free, school year.

COP Named "Unit of the Year"



The Downers Grove Police Department Community Oriented Policing (COP) Team was awarded the 2011 Illinois

Crime Prevention Association Unit of the Year. Investigations Sergeant Rick Giancarlo (center), Officer Drew Barczak (left), and Officer Rob McMahon (right) were recognized for their work building strong community partnerships and improving the quality of life for our residents.

The Downers Grove COP Unit plays a critical role in educating our citizens about crime prevention. Services include:

- Senior Citizen investigations and crime prevention programs.
- Domestic violence liaison to Family Shelter Services.
- Bike patrol: During summer months, these officers patrol the business district, parks, and the Prentiss Creek complex to interact with the residents and supplement the patrol division.
- Tobacco enforcement: Monitoring businesses that sell tobacco products to ensure they are not selling to minors.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Holiday Fire Safety

The winter holidays are often a time of celebration, but also a time of an increased number of residential fires. Enjoy the holidays safely by remembering the following tips:

- Keep all auxiliary heating units at least three feet from any combustibles.
- Never leave candles burning and unattended in a room. Place candles in hurricanes or other sturdy holders to keep them from tipping over. Better yet, consider using flameless candles.
- Do not overload outlets or extension cords. If possible, use power strips with surge protectors for lights and decorations.
- Keep all combustibles such as paper towels, napkins, paper plates, and dish towels away from the stovetop and adjacent counters.
- Fireplaces should be cleaned annually if used on a regular basis. Do not burn any foreign objects in fireplaces. A fireplace screen should always be in use.
- Turkey deep fryers are for outdoor use only. Never leave the fryer unattended, even for a few minutes.
- Make sure you have a **working** smoke alarm on every floor and in every bedroom.
- Check the water level daily on live trees. All live trees and boughs should be disposed of immediately after the holiday, before they dry out.

New Ladder Truck Put to the Test



The Downers Grove Fire Department took delivery of the community's new 100-foot ladder truck on September 30, 2011. After months of meetings and research to determine if it was best to refurbish the old ladder truck or purchase an entirely new unit, the Village Council approved the purchase.

The vehicle is housed in the center of town at Fire Station #2, 5420 Main Street, and is equipped to handle victim search, rescue, and ventilation. The ladder height allows firefighters to access rooftops and other difficult to reach structures. It didn't take long for the ladder truck to be put into action.

On November 4, 2011, fire crews responded to 2300 Warrenville for a person who was injured while working on the roof. Workers were removing debris from the roof with a crane to prepare for the installation of a new HVAC unit. The chain on the crane that was securing the debris while being lifted broke, causing the load to be dropped on the worker who was still positioned on the roof.

Due to the patient's injuries, it was imperative that he be removed from the roof in an immobilized position. The safest and most practical way of accomplishing this under these circumstances was to place the patient into a rescue lifter and use the specialized attachment on the ladder truck to secure the basket to the platform of the aerial tower. Using this procedure allowed the patient to be delivered to the ground without further injury in an expedient manner that presented less risk to all involved.

The value of this new piece of equipment was clearly illustrated in this instance.

Wreaths with red bulbs will be displayed at each of the Village's fire stations through January 1, 2012. If a holiday related fire occurs during this time, one of the red lights will be changed to white.

The process to develop the Plan began in February 2010 with the formation of the Comprehensive Plan Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of a number of dedicated volunteer residents and other representatives from various facets of the community who gave much of their time and experience to this very important undertaking. Going forward, this document will be utilized to assist with decision-making across a wide range of areas including budgeting, land use, transportation, environmental resources, and community redevelopment and revitalization.

Community Engagement Continues to be a Hallmark of Good Local Government

Projects like these can only be effectively accomplished with the aid of robust community input and dialog. Indeed, public meetings and open lines of communication are a crucial component to the success of municipal government. Here are some recent processes that exemplify and underscore the Village's commitment to public engagement and participative government:

- Comprehensive Plan - February 2010 through October 2011: 21 public meetings
- 2011 Long Range Financial Planning - May through August: 5 public meetings
- 2012 Budget Process - October through December: 10 public meetings
- 2011 Village Council Meetings (including Coffee with Council): 41 public meetings

Dreaming of a White Christmas and a Greener Community

In a previous Village newsletter article, I mentioned the launch of an innovative pilot program to accept used motor oil and transmission fluid which will be used to heat the fleet services garage during the winter months. Used cooking oil is also being accepted to be filtered and used in the Village's diesel engines as part of the Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) program. AFVs save money in the form of lower fuel and maintenance costs. Our CNG (compressed natural gas) vehicles achieve 35 MPG at a cost of under \$1.00 a gallon. The latest "green machine" to join the Village fleet is a five ton CNG Freightliner truck. This AFV requires an oil change every 15,000 miles compared to the standard 3,000 to 5,000 mile cycle for typical diesel trucks. Its quieter, clean burning engine emits zero odors and will be the first of its kind to plow snow in the Midwest this winter season.



Thank you for taking the time to read this message and by all means, please read on as this edition of the Hometown Times is packed with important information. The State of the Village message and Annual Report are due to be delivered early in 2012. As always, additional details regarding the items mentioned herein are available at www.downers.us.

On behalf of the Downers Grove Village Council and staff, we wish you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Happy Kwanzaa, and may you all have a happy, healthy, and joyous New Year. See you again in 2012!

Max T. Tully

Village Welcomes New Residents

Earlier this year, the Village Council approved the annexation of approximately 400 parcels of property. Effective on January 1, 2012, these properties will become part of the Village of Downers Grove.

The areas being annexed exist primarily in small pockets, which create gaps in service delivery. As an example, road maintenance, emergency response, and other services are handled by different entities, and areas of coverage often overlap between agencies. Annexing these properties ensures that services are provided in an efficient manner and paid for equitably by those who benefit from them.

Newly annexed residents are encouraged to visit the Village website at www.downers.us for answers to frequently asked questions and to learn more about Village services. Under **Trending Topics**, select **Annexation**.

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

New Water Rates In 2012

As of January 1, 2012 water rates will be increasing. The new rates, which will be reflected on water bills distributed in March, are as follows:

Year	Rate per Water Unit (1 unit = approx. 750 gallons)		Bi-Monthly Fixed Charge Meter Size 5/8" (most common residential size)
	Resident	Unincorporated	
2011 (current)	\$3.30	\$3.80	\$8.25
2012	\$4.13	\$4.76	\$9.31

Factors Affecting Water Rates

The DuPage Water Commission (DWC) purchases Lake Michigan water from the City of Chicago and in turn, distributes and sells it to member communities, including Downers Grove.

The majority of the rate increase is due to the fact that the City of Chicago will be raising their water rates on January 1, 2012. The price increase that Downers Grove customers will pay includes a pass-through of the City's increase, as well as an increase for DWC existing debt service payments and planned capital improvements. Part of the increase will also reflect the continued implementation of recommendations from Downers Grove's 2010 Water Rate Study.

Continued Implementation of Water Rate Study

In 2010, the Village Council approved the Water Rate Study Report, which recommended changes to the water rate structure. Put simply, the expenses needed to properly maintain the water system were exceeding the water revenues being collected. The study cited three main reasons causing the need for change:

- **People are using less water.** Water consumption has declined by about 1% annually over the past five years and is projected to continue along this trend in the future.
- **The cost of water is increasing.** The price of water that the Village buys from the DuPage Water Commission will significantly increase and is expected to continue at a rate of 10% per year.
- **The water system infrastructure is aging.** Large portions of the system have reached their useful life. This includes water main pipes that deliver water to homes and businesses, as well as water towers. A significant investment is needed to avoid disruptions in water service due to failed equipment.

Providing clean, safe, and reliable drinking water is a fundamental Village service. Despite the unforeseen and substantial increases in water rates by the City of Chicago, it is important to continue implementation of the 2010 Water Rate Study recommendations to ensure the on-going viability of Downers Grove's water system.

Additional information regarding the 2010 Water Rate Study Report and Recommendations are available at www.downers.us.

Christmas Light Recycling



Don't know what to do with the strands of Christmas lights that are tangled, broken, or have lost their glow? Here's a bright idea; recycle them!

For the second year, the Village of Downers Grove is accepting used Christmas lights during business hours, Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Public Works Facility, 5101 Walnut Avenue. Collection continues through the post-holiday season until February 10, 2012.

All light colors and strand lengths will be accepted. Items include mini-lights (Italian lights), C7 lights, C9 lights, rope lights, LED lights, and extension cords.

TROUBLE PARKING?



TRY THE CONVENIENCE OF PARKING AT THE FAIRVIEW TRAIN STATION.

- **JUST .7 MILES FROM MAIN STREET**
- **PARKING IS STEPS FROM THE STATION**
- **THREE WAYS TO PAY**
 - QUARTERS
 - CASHKEY (Available at Village Hall)
 - PAY BY PHONE (\$.50 fee applies)
- **CONVENIENT MORNING SCHEDULE TO DOWNTOWN**
 - 6:38 a.m. train arrives at 7:12 a.m.
 - 6:51 a.m. train arrives at 7:35 a.m.
 - 7:28 a.m. train arrives at 8:05 a.m.
 - 7:48 a.m. train arrives at 8:23 a.m.
 - 8:07 a.m. train arrives at 8:45 a.m.
- **AVAILABLE PARKING FOR MID-DAY TRAINS (FREE AFTER NOON IN PERMIT SPACES)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL 630-434-5500 OR VISIT WWW.DOWNERS.US

Visit www.metrotransit.com for train schedules.

(Stormwater Utility Discussions Continue, continued from cover)

What is stormwater? Stormwater is the water from rain or melting snow that "runs off" across the land instead of seeping into the ground. This run-off usually flows into the nearest waterway or is channeled into storm sewers or ditches, which eventually discharge into three local water bodies:

- Lacey Creek, which is north of Ogden Avenue;
- St. Joseph Creek, which flows through the central portion of the Village; and
- Prentiss Creek, which is south of 63rd Street.

All three creeks drain westward and empty into the east branch of the DuPage River.

Why does stormwater have to be managed? Without proper stormwater management, rain events may result in flooding on roads and properties throughout the Village, leading to property damage and dangerous road conditions. Stormwater run-off must be channeled through a system of pipes, ditches, catch basins, and storm drains before being safely discharged into local streams and rivers. Even if a specific property has never flooded, the stormwater that flows from the property still contributes to the overall flow and must be managed so that it does not cause flooding downstream on property or roads.

Why should I care about stormwater? Any property is likely to generate run-off in a severe rain storm, even if the ground is able to absorb water in a normal rain event. Everyone in the community benefits from adequate, properly functioning drainage and flood control systems, which decrease the likelihood of flooding, erosion, and the amount of pollutants discharged in surface and stormwater run-off.

How is stormwater regulated? The Village stormwater system is regulated by local, county, state, and federal entities. The Village is required to manage the stormwater system at a level that ensures compliance with the federal Clean Water Act and in accordance with DuPage County stormwater regulations.

What is a utility and what are the benefits? A utility is a way of managing delivery of a service and the assets that are used. In a utility, revenues are generated by charging users of the system a fee and the money generated is used to pay for the cost of owning and operating the system. In a stormwater utility, the service being provided is the collection and delivery of stormwater run-off into the creek system. The assets are the creeks, pipes, ditches, and structures that are used to deliver stormwater to the creeks.

Many communities in the United States have opted for a stormwater utility to fund their stormwater programs. Since every property generates run-off and benefits from the infrastructure in place, the utility model represents the most equitable method to collect revenue from those who place a demand on the stormwater management system. Communities in Illinois that have adopted stormwater utilities include Aurora, Highland Park, and Rolling Meadows.

For additional information about stormwater and the proposed utility, visit www.downers.us. Under "Trending Topics," click on "Stormwater."



North branch of St. Joseph Creek

Help Us Share the Warmth

The Village of Downers Grove is hosting a coat drive through January 8, 2012. Clean, gently used coats and winter accessories may be dropped off at Village Hall, 801 Burlington Avenue or the Downers Grove Police Station, 825 Burlington Avenue.

Coats will be distributed to the community through Sharing Connections.