



Hometown TIMES

“Downers Grove Preserves the Balance Between Tradition and Progress”

STATE OF THE VILLAGE 2009 Year End Report

The following is the State of the Village 2009 Year End Report presented by Mayor Sandack at the January 19, 2010 Council Meeting.

The year 2009 was full of tremendous financial challenges and hurdles which caused the Village to make several operational changes. A shortfall in General Fund revenues was quickly identified and staff was very responsive and began implementing changes as early as March. The expense reductions needed totaled \$2.4 million and included a hiring freeze, voluntary separations, salary freezes, furlough days and other operating efficiencies.

Through innovation, the Village found ways to improve efficiency and save money. Two great examples of cost reductions, which also support environmental sustainability, occurred in the area of Fleet Operations. In 2009, the Village's fleet of vehicles was reduced by 15, which saved \$200,000. A computerized fleet analysis software program was implemented to better track vehicle usage and scheduled maintenance and saved \$50,000 in maintenance, supplies and equipment. Staff reductions in this area saved another \$72,000. In total, fleet expenses have been reduced by 20%

The Village also saved money in fuel consumption through several initiatives including:

- Instituting an anti-idling policy
- Switching to nitrogen tire inflation
- Eliminating older vehicles
- Increased reliance on alternative fuels

In fact, there are now a total of 97 alternative fuel vehicles within the Village Fleet, something we can all be proud of. Together, these initiatives resulted in a \$150,000 savings, marking the lowest fuel consumption costs since 2005.

Increased emphasis on reducing energy consumption surfaced in other Village operations as well. For example, new energy efficient lighting was used to re-lamp the parking deck. The cost of the project was approximately \$45,000, thanks to a rebate from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The new fixtures have a ten-year life span and the lighting will pay for itself in three years, resulting in a 40% reduction in lighting expenses.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE STATE OF THE VILLAGE

(Continued from cover)



Mayor Sandack
January 19, 2010

Perhaps my favorite example of the Village responding to a specific need in a highly innovative and cost-effective manner is a new street light project in the Prentiss Creek Subdivision. The Village was approached by the residents to provide street lighting in this unlit area. The Village researched several options and discussed the features and benefits of each with neighborhood members. The result of this cooperative effort is a solar and wind powered street lighting system that is the first of its kind in any residential neighborhood in the United States. The \$282,000 project was partially funded through a Community Development Block Grant which covers 45% of the cost. Overall, in 2009 the Village obtained over \$400,000 in energy-related project grants to accomplish the innovative concepts.



Hybrid Street Light

The Village remained committed to infrastructure investment in 2009. Twenty-two major projects were completed throughout our community over the past year. In total, \$15 million was spent to improve our roads, insure pedestrian safety, and fortify our stormwater management systems. The most visible of these projects were Prairie Avenue and Rogers Street, and we're nearing completion on improvements at Washington and McCollum Parks, in partnership with the Downers Grove Park District. The Village also completed \$3.2 million in needed road maintenance in 2009.



Prairie Avenue



A short time ago, stormwater was a conspicuous infrastructure need and the Village has maintained its commitment to making improvements in this vital area. In 2007, a three-year plan was implemented calling for \$25 million in stormwater improvements. Last year, \$7.5 million was spent on the implementation of the high priority projects identified in the Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan.

Throughout the summer months, the community, Village Council and staff participated in the development of a Long Range Financial Plan. This was a data-driven look at the financial trends and issues facing the Village. Ultimately, the process revealed something pretty profound—a structural gap with respect to expenses outstripping revenues. It is important to note that this structural gap existed prior to the recession, which basically compounded some problems that have now

been addressed.

The Village now has a Long-Range Financial Plan to guide financial decisions and budget preparations for the next 3-5 years. This was a top priority in our Strategic Plan. The Long Range Financial Plan has specific strategies for expense reductions, revenue enhancements and the strategic use of reserves when needed.

Community outreach and public input were at the forefront of Village activity in 2009. The Total Community Development process (TCD3) sought input from community members on issues important to Downers Grove. This process included residential and business workshops, as well as on-line surveys and mapping tools for people to share their opinions. The common themes discussed throughout the process included economic development, infrastructure, education, public finances, and environmental sustainability.

In August, the Village published its Sustainability Best Practices Report. (see page 4) Going forward, the Village will be working on a variety of environmental issues, some of which include installing idling units on diesel vehicles, analyzing and improving recycling at Village facilities and throughout the community, reducing street light electricity usage, bidding solar panels for our water pumping stations and researching the benefits of gray water collection and rain barrel usage. We will rely on talented volunteer members of the Environmental Concerns Commission to advise on these projects in the coming year.

Another important activity that will take place this year will be the Comprehensive Plan update. A group has been appointed to develop recommendations largely dealing with land use and the layout of our community and will address concepts such as housing, transportation, open space and historic preservation. The vast amount of research obtained from TCD3 will be incorporated in this endeavor.

The Village implemented several new communications tools in 2009. The Community-Wide Notification System is able to reach all registered residences and businesses with emergency messages and announcements regarding important issues. The system can also target specific areas or neighborhoods. Although the primary form of notification is by phone, individuals can also register their e-mails and/or cell phones. Importantly, no Village funds were utilized on this project.

The Village also launched a new format for the e-newsletter which allows subscribers to receive news targeted to specific construction projects. This is in addition to the general e-news already in place. In keeping with the theme of technology, the Village established a presence on Twitter in May.

Though the Village faced many financial challenges, 2009 was a good year for economic development, thanks in part to cooperative efforts between the Village, Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation, the Downers Grove Area Chamber of Commerce, the County of DuPage and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

DeVry's decision to move to Downers Grove is the most conspicuous win for our Village. DeVry is a global leader of educational services and one of the largest publicly held educational organizations in the world. In the first quarter 2010, DeVry will move from Oakbrook Terrace to the Highland Landmark V and bring with it approximately 700 new jobs.

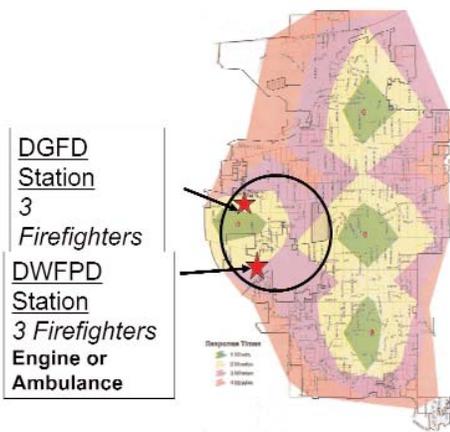
The Dover Corporation is moving from Park Avenue in Manhattan, New York to Downers Grove. Dover is the maker of a large variety of products ranging from garbage trucks to building equipment. The company currently has dozens of employees in this area, but will be adding about 90 new employees to our community soon—another economic win for our State, County and this municipality.

The Zeigler Automotive Group is putting a new facility at 2311 Ogden Avenue. The dealership will bring 75 new jobs and something that is especially rewarding during these times - sales tax revenue. The choice to locate these businesses in Downers Grove is a reminder that our community continues to be a sought after destination to do business.

The final thing the Village Council and staff accomplished in 2009 was to prepare and pass a balanced budget. The last month of 2009 was difficult because we had to make some significantly challenging decisions which have set the Village on a path toward financial sustainability for 2010.

A theme that will continue in 2010 is financial stewardship. Throughout the year we are going to be mindful of the prudent use of tax dollars. This means doing more with less and using innovative approaches to increase the efficiency by which we provide necessary services to the community.

In 2010 we'll improve customer service by developing a customer satisfaction measurement tool to improve performance. We will seek input from our customers regarding their interactions with the Village and increase the number of e-news construction updates related to specific projects. New ways to increase public input at Village Council meetings have already been implemented.



An innovative concept that is now being pursued regards a partnership between the Village and the Darien/Woodridge Fire Protection District. These organizations are working together to enhance fire and EMS services while reducing costs. Near Belmont and Maple there are two stations in close proximity which provide services to the same geographical area. The concept - which is just that, a concept - would allow for joint operations from one of the two stations, while maintaining response times and the excellence both communities have regarding fire protection services. This is a novel opportunity to consolidate operations and provide necessary services at reduced cost.

Our commitment to infrastructure improvement will not waver as we plan to complete 29 projects totaling approximately \$29.5 million. The Village recently doubled the amount available for the neighborhood stormwater cost-sharing program to \$100,000. This will allow for the completion of smaller, localized neighborhood drainage projects. Grants are projected to fund over \$2 million of our 2010 capital program.

The coming year will likely be every bit as challenging—maybe more challenging—than 2009, but our Village is well-positioned to face those realities and handle whatever comes our way for the betterment of our community. In 2010 we'll endeavor to do the best we can for you, our customers, in the delivery of necessary Village services. We'll be doing this with an eye towards partnership, looking and listening to you for any ideas you have in helping us do what we do as best as we can.

Godspeed,

Census Arrives in March

The United States Constitution mandates a population count every ten years of everyone residing in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, plus Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. The 2010 Census consists of a few simple questions and will be mailed in March 2010. This short form asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, and whether you own or rent your home. It takes only about 10 minutes for the average household to complete.

It is to everyone's advantage to cooperate with census workers and return your survey. The census population totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. It also determines the amount of state and federal funding communities receive over the course of the decade. 2010 Census data will directly affect how more than \$4 trillion is allocated to local, state and tribal governments over the next 10 years.

For more information,
visit www.census.gov.



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

United States[®]
Census
2010

Environmental Sustainability Goals for 2010



The Village's Strategic Plan established *Being "Green" Mindful* in Village Operations as a high priority within the five-year plan and goals for 2008 – 2013. In response, the Village published the **Sustainability Best Practices Annual Report** in August 2009. The report assesses the Village's current green practices and develops a plan for achieving greater environmental sustainability in future years. Operational categories reviewed in the report include:

- Transportation
- Energy
- Waste Diversion
- Urban Forest
- Land Use and Development
- Water
- Community Outreach

Village staff has reviewed the list of short-term goals outlined in the report and selected several environmental sustainability items to be addressed in 2010 including the following:

- Formalize the Municipal Vehicle Anti-Idling Policy.
- Analyze and improve recycling procedures throughout Village facilities in addition to Village Hall.
- Address streetlight electricity usage.
- Bid for solar panels for Village water pumping stations.
- Install idling units on Village vehicles.
- Develop a water conservation plan for the Village.
- Research feasibility and cost/benefit assessment of rainwater collection and rain barrel usage, along with gray water usage at Village facilities.
- Replace T-12 lighting fixtures at Village Hall with T-8.
- Enhance community outreach programs related to environmental sustainability.

Staff will be providing regular progress reports to the Village Council as these projects are addressed throughout the year. Visit www.downers.us and type the keyword **Sustainability Report** in the search box to view the report.

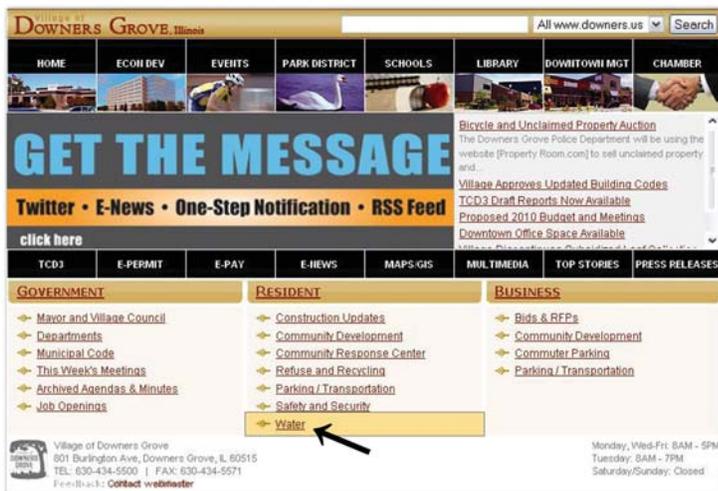
Save time Save paper Save money Register today for E-WATER BILL!

Village of Downers Grove water customers will soon be able to receive their water bill via email. It's easy, secure and takes just a few minutes to register.

1. Visit the Village website at www.downers.us
2. Click on Water, then select Water Billing.
3. Scroll to the E-Water Bill Authorization form and follow the directions to submit your request.

Effective with the February 2010 billing cycle, customers registered for E-Water Bill will no longer receive a paper copy of their bill in the mail.

Participation in the E-Water Bill program is voluntary. Those who do not register will continue to receive a paper copy of their water bill through the mail.



Direct Debit

Pay your water bill on time, every time.

Water customers who register for Direct Debit may have funds automatically withdrawn from either their checking or savings account.

- Registered users will receive a water bill/statement every two months showing water usage, due date, and the amount to be debited from their checking/savings account. E-Water Bill customers will receive their bill via email.
- Payment will be deducted from the account on the billing due date.

For an enrollment form and more information:

1. Visit the Village website at www.downers.us
2. Click on Water, then select Water Billing.
3. Scroll down to the Direct Debit form and follow the directions to submit your request.



NEW FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW

Changes to the State's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) governing the disclosure of government records to the public went into effect on January 1, 2010. The Village has enacted several changes to comply with the new law, including:

- The timeframe for response to requests for public records has changed from seven to five business days.
- The Village Clerk has been designated to serve as the Freedom of Information Officer and to establish fees for Village records.
- There will be no charge for standard copies of records; color copies will be charged at the actual cost of \$.10 per page. Fees for plats, maps, photographs, CD's, DVD's, etc. will be the actual cost of reproduction.

Information regarding requests to inspect and/or obtain copies of public records is available on the Village website, www.downers.us. Contact the Village Clerk's office at (630)434-5535 with questions or comments.

New Traffic Laws for 2010

As of January 1, 2010 a new Illinois texting law is in effect. Per the State statute, "A person may not operate a motor vehicle on a roadway while using an electronic communication device to compose, send, or read an electronic message."

For the purpose of this new law, "electronic message" includes, but is not limited to electronic mail, a text message, an instant message or a command or request to access an Internet site.

Driving a vehicle demands a driver's full attention. Distractions, such as texting while driving, can be deadly because taking your mind and eyes off the road, even for a few seconds, prevents you from seeing a hazard in enough time to avoid a crash. Using electronic devices while driving can have tragic consequences. According to the National Safety Council, cell phone use is a factor in 6% of traffic crashes on our nation's highways. This equates to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, and 2,600 fatalities.

The State of Illinois has also enacted legislation that prohibits all cell phone usage for drivers under the age of 19 unless there is an emergency and they are calling for police or emergency medical care.

Please drive safely and use good judgment while driving. Follow the law in Illinois and remember, "Don't Drive In-TEXT-icated."

Railroad Safety



The Village of Downers Grove has three sets of railroad tracks that run right through the center of our community. The railroad provides many benefits, including allowing commuters to "park & ride" into the city for work and for relaxation. However, the railroad tracks can be dangerous for motorists and pedestrians when they do not exercise caution. Follow these recommendations from Operation Lifesaver:

- Approach any crossing with care.
- Stop at least 15 feet from nearest rail, but not more than 50 feet, if you see a train.
- If it won't fit, don't commit. Trains extend beyond the width of the rails at least 3 feet on each side. If your vehicle has a trailer, remember the additional length.
- Cross tracks with care. If your vehicle has a manual transmission, use a gear that will not require shifting until you reach the opposite side.
- Keep going once you start, even if lights start to flash or gates come down.

What to do if your vehicle stalls or hangs up on the tracks:

- Get out immediately - evacuate your vehicle. (Trains traveling at 60 mph may take a mile or more to stop.)
- Move away at once. Walk in the direction of the oncoming train, and away from the tracks at a 45-degree angle. (If your vehicle is hit, debris will spread out from the tracks in the same direction the train is moving.)
- Call 9-1-1 immediately.

Pedestrian Rail Safety Tips

- Trains can move in either direction at any time. Trains are sometimes pushed by locomotives instead of being pulled. This is especially true in commuter and light rail passenger service.
- Modern trains are quieter than ever, with no telltale "clackety-clack." Also, an approaching train will always be closer and moving faster than you think.
- Cross tracks ONLY at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals.
- 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.

In Case of a Fire



Exactly two weeks apart, on Saturday December 19, 2009 and on Saturday, January 2, 2010, two Downers Grove families experienced serious and devastating residential fires. Both fires left the homes uninhabitable. The community has demonstrated a heartfelt and generous outpouring of support through concerned telephone calls, donations, and other offers to help these families as they attempt to rebuild their lives.

The Downers Grove Fire Department reminds all residents that if a fire should

happen in your home, always remember to take these steps before trying to fight any fire:

- 1) It is best not to try to fight the fire yourself, unless it is very small.
- 2) Get out of the house immediately and stay out!. Do not go back inside the structure for anything! No contents are worth the lives of you and your family.
- 3) Call 9-1-1. If possible, make this call from a land line rather than a cell phone. If calling from a cell phone, also ask a neighbor to call from their land line. Do not call the Downers Grove Fire Department's non-emergency phone number for a suspected fire. These calls will be forwarded to 9-1-1 anyway and can delay the response time.
- 4) Have a meeting place outside where all family members meet and account for the safety of all who were home.

Safety reminders:

- 1) Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every floor of the residence. New recommendations are to have a smoke alarm in every bedroom.
- 2) Keep fire extinguishers maintained and in a readily available location.
- 3) Never leave candles unattended. Nationally, candles are still a major cause of fires. Flameless candles are recommended and available at reasonable prices. (above)
- 4) Perform a "sweep" of your home before going to bed at night and before leaving the house. Are all candles extinguished? Are all burners on the stove turned off? Has anything been left cooking on the stove?
- 5) If you have any disability that would compromise your ability to escape from fire, be sure you have an escape plan, clear aisles, and other aids next to the bed.

The Downers Grove Fire Department will provide a home safety check of your home at no cost. Call Public Information Officer Marsha Giesler at (630) 434-5986 to set up an appointment.

Free Paper-Shredding Event

The Downers Grove Police Department, in partnership with Brinks Document Destruction, will be hosting a Paper-Shredding Event on Saturday, April 17, 2010 from 8:00 a.m. until noon at the Police Department, 825 Burlington Ave. This free service is being offered to Downers Grove residents in an effort to prevent identity theft. Participants must show proof of Downers Grove residency.

Each person will be allowed three brown paper bags or three banker's boxes filled with personal paperwork. A bonded and insured representative of Brinks Document Destruction will use a crosscut shredder to render documents beyond reconstruction. Shredded materials will be taken to a recycling facility.

Identity theft is a serious crime. Thieves often look through unsuspecting victims' trash in search of discarded documents containing your name, address or phone number, as well other personal information such as Social Security Number, bank account or credit card numbers. People whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years trying to clear their names and restore their credit record.

One of the most important things you can do is to shred any personal documents you wish to discard. Please mark your calendar and take advantage of this free service.

Don't Get Rid of Your Land Line!

Many families use only cell phones today, however, it is recommended that all homes keep at least one land line. Did you know that when you place a 9-1-1 call from a cell phone, it does not go directly to the Downers Grove emergency dispatch center?

Most 9-1-1 calls from cell phones are sent to a County dispatch center, which then relays the call to the jurisdiction from which the call is made. This can add some time to an already serious situation. For best results, place 9-1-1 calls from land lines.

REMINDERS AND OTHER NEWS

GARBAGE STICKER PRICE INCREASE

Per the Village's contract with ARC Disposal, sticker prices are scheduled to increase on April 1, 2010. The new price will be \$3.08.

YARD WASTE COLLECTION

ARC Disposal will resume yard waste collection on April 1, 2010. Yard waste includes leaves, grass clippings, twigs, small branches and other garden refuse. As a reminder, yard waste must be placed in one of the following:

- 33-gallon biodegradable paper bag
- 33 gallon unlined can
- ARC yard waste cart.

Bags or cans may not weigh more than 50 pounds. Carts or cans used for yard waste must be clearly marked as such. Contact Village Hall for free YARD WASTE ONLY decals.

- Brush and tree branches may not exceed 4 feet in length and 5 inches in diameter and must be bundled together with jute twine or uncoated string. Bundles may not exceed 2 feet in diameter, 4 feet in length, and 50 pounds in weight.
- A sticker must be attached to each bag, can or bundle.

PLANNING A SPRING HOME PROJECT?

A call to Community Development Department should be the first step any time a property owner is considering making interior or exterior improvements. Depending on the type of work to be done and scope of the project, one or more building permits may be required. Call (630) 434-5515 for further information.

New Businesses

FLEUR COUTURE
4956 MAIN STREET
630-968-3700

BELLO TEA
5111 MAIN STREET
630-445-1200

THE LAW OFFICES OF KEVIN M. LYONS
921 CURTISS STREET
630-852-2529
KEVINL@KLLAWFIRM.COM

SCUSA MI PIZZA AND CATERING
4948 MAIN STREET
630-493-1234

TOSCANA'S GRILL AND PUB
994 WARREN AVENUE
630-968-1715

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 Ron Sandack
Commissioners
Marilyn Schnell, William Waldack,
Sean Patrick Durkin, Geoff Neustadt,
Bruce E. Beckman, Robert Barnett

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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