

North Ridgeville Community Connection

Quarterly Newsletter of the City of North Ridgeville ~ October 2012

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Visit us at www.nridgeville.org

Mayor's Message...

City to Join R.I.T.A.

As a result of several factors coming together at the same time, the City has decided now is the time to join the Regional Income Tax Association (RITA) to undertake collection of our City income taxes.

Two significant events led the administration to consider partnering with RITA. First, is the consideration that in the not too far future our Income Tax Administrator, Laverne Porowski, may retire. Laverne has long served the City residents faithfully and superbly, but that's a story for another time. But it would require the City to try and find a qualified replacement, no easy task.



Mayor St. Daniel Hillenkamp

Secondly, there has been a lot of discussion and several meetings in Columbus regarding the collection of Municipal Income Taxes. Changes have been proposed for everything from having the State collect the taxes, to the City only being able to tax those who work within the City. Other considerations include standardizing rates, credits, definitions, forms and procedures. At this point a bill has not been introduced to the General Assembly but changes of some nature, yet to be determined, are definitely on the horizon.

We believe RITA will be able to provide continued service to our residents including being able to use tax software to file City forms and still having a representative on site to assist. In addition, we will avoid having to purchase costly software to update our systems and save on personnel costs.

More information will be forthcoming as we transition to a new way to collect taxes that we think will provide more and better service in the future. We believe this is another way that the City can continue to provide good service to our residents with fewer revenues.

New Water Contract

Did you know that each day the City of North Ridgeville uses approximately 3,000,000 gallons of water? That's a lot of water!

We currently purchase the bulk of our water from Avon Lake. In April of 2011 it cost us \$1.09 per 1,000 gallons of water, so you can see it adds up quickly. Subsequent price increases have caused the rate to increase to \$1.22 for the remainder of 2011 and then to increase to \$1.41 in July of 2012. Further annual rate increases are planned by Avon Lake over the next several years.

So, we were extremely glad when we were able to ink a new contract with Elyria allowing us to buy up to 2,000,000 gallons per day from them at a rate of \$1.21 for the next 10 years! In addition, Elyria will fund about \$25,000 in expenses to retrofit one of the valves to enable us to purchase this water from them. This contract will assure that our residents have reasonable water rates for the next decade. Thanks to Elyria for working with us to provide a clean and dependable water source.



Special Leaf Collection, October 29-November 27

Leaves may be placed at the curb in **plastic bags** beginning the week of October 29 and will continue through November 27 on the regular trash pick-up day. After November, leaves in plastic bags can only be left out as extra garbage the first full week of each month. From April through October each year, yard waste must be placed in brown yard waste bags for weekly collection. Please call the Utilities Department at 353-0841 with any questions.



Welcome to the New Service Department Superintendent

Al Swindig, Jr. was recently named Service Department Superintendent after Bill Gluvna's retirement at the end of August. Mr. Swindig is no stranger to the City's Service Department. He started his career 28 years ago as a laborer/meter reader, followed by machine operator and most recently, as the Service Department foreman. Here's what Mr. Swindig had to say, "I am humbled by the administration's decision to appoint me to the position of Service Department Superintendent. I am very blessed to have 34 of the hardest working employees, all striving for the same common goal - providing our citizens with the services and snow-free roads they have become accustomed to."

Please join the City in congratulating Al Swindig, Jr. on his new position.

Project Updates from the Engineering Department

Chestnut Ridge Road repaving project is underway. The job was initially advertised as two phases, which received no bids. When combined into one phase and the timeline modified for rebid, the project was ultimately awarded to Karvo Paving Company. The project includes repaving the driving surface with asphalt, a slight widening of the driving lanes to eleven feet wide, some sidewalk improvements and the addition of a four foot shoulder. One way traffic will be maintained during construction with anticipated completion by mid-November.

Cornell Avenue Waterline Project is anticipated to begin in late October or early November. Phase 1 of the multi-phase project runs from Center Ridge Road north to Cross Street. The new waterline will be installed on the west side of the road and will replace 2,300 feet of existing 6" with an 8" line. This will greatly improve the water quality and overall service to the residents of Cornell Avenue. Water service will be maintained during construction. Future phase(s) will be announced when funding becomes available.

Railroad Quiet Zone Safety Improvements. The work of installing the additional gates, circuitry upgrades, median barriers and vehicle detection system at the railroad crossings will be complete after Norfolk Southern Corporation's planned reconstruction of the Chestnut Ridge Road crossing the week of October 8. They were informed that new and better materials are available for this crossing. After this work is complete, and the paperwork required by the maintenance agreement between Norfolk Southern Corporation and the City of North Ridgeville is finalized, the city can send a Notice of Establishment of the Quiet Zone to the Federal Rail Administration, Ohio Rail Development Commission, and Norfolk Southern. There will be an inspection and 21-day test period as required by the federal government. Norfolk Southern will establish the date that the quiet zone becomes effective.

Fire Safety Tips from the Fire Department

Winter time is the time to fire up the fireplaces, turn on the furnace, and get that space heater out of storage. This can increase the risk of residential fire, so follow the safety tips below when heating your home during the holidays.

Fireplaces

- Inspect your chimney regularly for cracks and obstructions.
- Don't let creosote buildup in your chimney, as it could set off a roof fire.
- Don't "over build" your fire using too much paper. You could ignite the soot in your chimney.
- Never burn charcoal in your fireplace. It gives off deadly carbon monoxide.
- Keep your damper open if there are hot ashes in your fireplace. Closing the damper could enable hot ashes to heat up and cause a damaging fire.
- Let ashes cool in a sealed metal container.

Furnaces

- Before you turn on your furnace, have it inspected by a qualified professional.
- Make sure to check the condition of the automatic controls and emergency shutoffs.
- Keep all trash and combustibles away from the furnace.
- Check your chimney for cracks or loose bricks.
- Seal all unused flue openings with solid masonry.

Space Heaters

- Make sure your space heater has a working safety light, alarm, automatic shut-off switch and a cut-off device to prevent overheating.
- Keep all objects, people and pets at least three feet away from the heater.
- Never use a space heater in your bathroom. Water and electric appliances don't mix.

Utility Bill - Fuel Recovery Fee

Several months ago, residents began seeing a charge on their monthly utility bill for a Fuel Recovery Fee, which is associated with their trash and recycling collection charge. Since then, the Utilities Department has received more than a few phone calls with questions regarding this fee so we would like to explain this in more detail.

The refuse contract that was initiated in 2009 has carried annual fee increases each year of the contract as well as a fuel recovery fee component. The city has done its best to hold off on any increases to residents as long as the solid waste fund balance was able to sustain itself. Unbeknownst to the residents, the city had been absorbing the annual increases and the fuel recovery fees each month, without raising the monthly rate to residents.

When the City began writing bid specifications for the last solid waste/recycling/yard waste collection in late 2008, every company that showed the slightest interest asked if a "Fuel Recovery" component would be included. Since these waste companies are bidding on three to five year contracts, they have to be able to have some adjustments in that area due to the volatile petroleum market, especially diesel fuel. If the Fuel Recovery fee had not been in our bid specs to allow the companies bidding a little breathing room should the price of diesel fuel skyrocket as it has, then the original bids (not allowing for fuel recovery) would have most likely been over inflated in order to protect the company's interest should fuel prices rise extremely high. The Fuel Recovery fee isn't something new that Allied Waste instituted by themselves. Virtually every company in the waste hauling industry operates this way and if they're not given the opportunity to do so, the rates are that much higher from the very beginning of the contract to safeguard against such high fuel price spikes.

As of the April 2012 billing, the first fuel recovery fee to appear on the monthly utility bill, was \$.77 per residential account. Since then, it has fluctuated several times from \$1.05, to \$.98, to \$.84, to the current rate of \$.70. The quarterly fuel surcharge is calculated based on the EIA/DOE (Energy Information Administration/ Department of Energy) retail price for diesel fuel for the Midwest Region on the first Monday of each calendar quarter. The base line for the fuel adjustment portion of your bill is \$2.50. For that reason, the fee is listed separately on the monthly bill because it is readjusted, per the contract, each quarter (or sooner if the cost is lower) and may increase or decrease accordingly. The City wanted to insure that residents are aware of the cost associated with this charge. Should diesel fuel drop below \$2.50 per gallon, there would be NO fuel recovery fee on your bill. The charge for fuel recovery that is on the monthly Allied Waste invoice for refuse collection that the city receives is shared and divided equally amongst the residential households for the monthly refuse collection. The current number of residential households is 11,329.

If you have any questions regarding this or concerns with your utility billing, please call the Utilities Department at 353-0841.

NOPEC Seven-Year Price Stability Program

As a NOPEC member community, NOPEC electric customers are currently guaranteed 6% off the utility's "Price to Compare" for the generation portion for residential customers and 4% off for small business/commercial customers. In addition, NOPEC funds separately an additional 1% discount which appears on NOPEC customers' bills as a separate line called the "NOPEC Customer Credit." The funding of this NOPEC Customer Credit is determined by the NOPEC Board of Directors each year. This program is known as "Guaranteed Percent Off Savings Program."

NOPEC has introduced a new, fixed-rate electric offer for our residents, "Seven-Year Price Stability Program." Through NOPEC's contract with FirstEnergy Solutions, customers can lock in the rate of 6.75 cents per kilowatt hour through August 2019. NOPEC and FirstEnergy Solutions will not charge you anything to enroll and you'll continue to receive the same reliable electric service from your local electric utility. There are three ways to enroll: 1) Call 1-877-204-0426; 2) Go online to fes.com/nopec7year; or, 3) Fill in and mail back the enrollment form mailed to you last month. **Deadline is October 31, 2012.**

If you don't know which offer is right for you, please call FirstEnergy Solutions at 1-866-236-9628 and a customer service representative will gladly explain your options and find a program that is right for you.



Pictured left: During a recent City Council meeting, Safety Service Director Jeffry Armbruster presents a proclamation to Kevin Beckett, Beckett Corporation, in celebration of their 75th anniversary.

Pictured right: Cub Scout Pack 100 led City Council members in the Pledge of Allegiance at a recent City Council meeting.





Community Calendar



- October 23 CVS FLU CLINIC at the Senior Center from 9 AM-1 PM; first come, first served basis. For pneumonia shots, please register in advance by calling 353-0835.
- October 26 TOTS TRICK-OR-TREAT at 1 PM in the safety of City Hall. Children, ages 2-5, dress in costume and gather treats, donated by city employees, from participating departments. Police and Fire Departments will have a K-9 unit and fire truck available at the end of the walk. Pre-registration is required by October 21 by visiting the Parks & Recreation website at: www.northridgeville.recdesk.com/recdeskportal or call 353-0860.
- October 26 SPAGHETTI DINNER at the Senior Center from 5-7 PM. Cost: \$6 adults, \$5 seniors and \$4 children 10 and under. Take-out available.
- October 31 TRICK-OR-TREAT will be observed from 6 PM-7:30 PM - Citywide.
- October 31 QUARTERLY CITY INCOME TAX (estimated) due for the third quarter 2012.
- November 1-December 14 HOLIDAY FOOD AND TOY DRIVE to benefit Community Care. Non-perishable food items and new toys in original packaging may be dropped off at City Hall, Parks & Recreation and Senior Center.
- November 4 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ends. As a reminder, turn your clocks back one hour.
- November 6 ELECTION DAY - Exercise your right to vote! Polls open at 6:30 AM and close at 7:30 PM.
- November 12 CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED in observance of Veteran's Day.
- November 19 "NEW BEGINNING" BEREAVEMENT support group meeting at the Senior Center from 11:45 AM-1 PM.
- November 20 AARP "SALUTE TO VETERANS" Safety Driving classroom course at the Senior Center from 10 AM-2 PM. Free to all military personnel, veterans and dependants (with military ID including spouses, widows/widowers and children). To register, please call 353-0835.
- November 22, 23 CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.
- December 1 HOLIDAY ON THE RIDGE is the city's kick off to the holiday season. The self guided tour takes you to multiple craft shows, business open houses and special events (*sponsored by North Ridgeville Chamber of Commerce*).
TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY at South Central Park at 5 PM. This is an annual tradition where local scouts decorate the tree, High School Choir will lead the spectators in festive songs of the season, and Mayor Gillock will light the tree.
- December 10 "NEW BEGINNING" BEREAVEMENT support group meeting at the Senior Center from 11:45 AM-1 PM.
- December 24, 25 CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED in observance of the Christmas holiday.
- December 28 THE SINGING ANGELS will be at St. Julie Billiart Church, 5500 Lear Nagle Road, for a FREE concert. Doors open at 6:30 PM and concert begins at 7 PM; sponsored by Center Ridge Health Campus on behalf of the Senior Center.
- January 1 CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED in observance of New Year's Day.
- January 14 "NEW BEGINNING" BEREAVEMENT support group meeting at the Senior Center from 11:45 AM-1 PM.
- January 17 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS by Mayor David Gillock at the North Ridgeville Education Center. The event is sponsored by the North Ridgeville Chamber of Commerce. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 327-3737.
- January 21 CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

For up-to-date class and program information, please visit the Parks & Recreation website at: www.northridgeville.recdesk.com/recdeskportal or call 353-0860. Watch for the winter issue of the Rec Gazette in your December utility bill.

SENIOR CENTER NOTES

Reservations are required for the following events.

To make reservations or to obtain a complete listing of activities, please call 353-0828.

SOCIAL, LUNCH & BINGO meets every Wednesday at the Senior Center from 10 AM-2 PM.

MEN'S BREAKFAST, Thursdays October 4, 18, November 1, December 6, 20, January 3, 17 at the Senior Center from 9-10 AM.

WOMEN'S BRUNCH, Thursdays October 25, November 15, December 27, January 24 at the Senior Center from 10:30-11:30 AM.

HEARING TESTING, Thursday, November 15 at the Senior Center from 1-2 PM.

HEALTH SCREENINGS, Wednesday, November 21 at the Senior Center, first come, first served basis. Free blood pressure checks from 9-11:30 AM; Glucose and cholesterol screening (for accurate reading, fast two hours prior to screening), complimentary service provided by St. John West Shore from 10-11:30 AM; Glaucoma screening, complimentary service provided by Dr. Carol Novak from 10-11:30 AM.

HOLIDAY PARTY, Thursday, December 13, at the Senior Center at noon.

SUPER THURSDAY LUNCH, Thursday, January 10 at the Senior Center at noon.