

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Cooperation Nets Residents Savings on Utilities

by Tom Gray, Village President and Del McCord, Village Manager

When you twist on a faucet or flip a light switch, you probably don't think about where the water comes from or how the energy gets to your house, and it might never occur to you that several forms of local governments work together to bring you those services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. But that's what happens in Chatham.

Let's first talk about electricity. The village is a purchasing member of the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (the IMEA). The agency is a joint action agency composed of municipalities throughout the state, banded together to provide electricity to its citizens at a price that is lower than private utility companies. The agency, located in Springfield, is a partner in two separate power stations; one in Trimble County, Kentucky, near Louisville, and one in southern Illinois, called Prairie State. The agency also has various cost-based contracts with Ameren. The IMEA has done an outstanding job in providing electricity to its municipal members at competitive prices.

With that said, the cost of providing electricity has increased drastically over the past couple years. We are watching with great interest some proposed legislation on the federal level that would increase our cost greatly. The village has kept our electric rate competitive with suppliers in our area. However, we must keep our system economically viable. To that end, a professional rate study was

conducted, and the village board is evaluating it. The board will carefully study the conclusions submitted to the village and take the necessary action to secure the best possible rates for our citizens, while at the same time keeping our system viable for the future.

As for water, we currently purchase our water from the City of Springfield, with two connection points. Our main connection is near Interstate 55, with our secondary connection on Route 4 near Mansion Road. The village's contract for this water supply expires on December 31, 2013. As most are aware, for more than a dozen years we have been exploring another water supply option. Specifically, we are moving towards using the Sangamon Valley Aquifer just east of Rochester.

Recently, the Villages of Chatham and New Berlin formed the South Sangamon Water Commission. The commission contains a member from each village and one member appointed by the county board. The commission will be the entity that owns the water wells, the plant and transmission main. Most importantly, it will set the price for the water for sale to its customers. The villages will decide whether to purchase water from the commission or from their current supplier. The Village Board will continue to examine many factors to determine how best to proceed to secure the future water needs for our community.

If you have questions please about your utilities please call the village

office at 483-2451.

What's an Intergovernmental Agreement?

Often government entities pool their resources to build facilities and provide services for their communities. These cost-sharing plans take the form of intergovernmental agreements, and these cooperative ventures are becoming more important as government entities in Illinois continue to struggle with finances.

However, working on projects is not the only way local governments can work together. For example, units of local government might purchase major equipment together; say, a dump truck that can be used by both a village and a township.

Here in Chatham, we strive to stretch your tax dollar by partnering with other local governments. Over the past year, the village has worked with the school district to install a bus lane at Chatham Elementary.

When opportunities exist, the village is committed to working together with your township, school, library and fire protection district. We all pay a portion of our tax dollars to each of these government bodies. It's sound wisdom for your officials to work cooperatively to save money, and we will continue to do just that.

FROM THE CHIEF

Q & A With Chatham's New Police Chief John Holm

In July, veteran Chatham police officer John Holm was promoted to Chief, succeeding Roy Barnett, who held the position for 22 years. Vern Foli, who has been with the department for 11 years, has been promoted the newly created position of Deputy Chief.

To introduce Chief Holm to those who may not know him, here is a question and answer session with the village's new Chief.

Q. You grew up in Chatham and have been an officer for 17 years. What made you want to become a Chatham police officer in the first place?

Growing up, I always wanted to be a police officer. It was always a childhood dream of mine. I watched any police show that my parents would allow. As I got into my teens I thought of other careers, but being a police officer was still always in the back of my mind. In the early nineties, I was employed in the banking industry and got the opportunity to test for the Chatham Police Department. It worked out that I placed high on the eligibility list and was hired by the Chatham Police Department in January of 1992. Since then, it has been a whirlwind. The community has grown, doubling in size and so has our police department.

Q. Why did you want to become the chief?

When the position of Chief of Police became vacant, I was not sure how they were going to replace Chief Barnett. He had been here for twenty years and was a great person to work for. Chief Barnett took a small police department and, over time, helped the department grow, improve and develop into what it is today. When I found out that the village administration was looking to hire from within, I thought this opportunity was too great to let slip by. From within a very capable group that applied for the position, I was honored to be the administration's choice.

Q. What are short-term goals for yourself and the department?

My short-term goals are to learn my new position quickly and address any pressing issues within the police department. One of my main short-term goals for the police department is to get us back to full staff. Other short-term goals are to handle the day-to-day problems efficiently as they come in.

Q. What are your long-term goals for yourself and the department?

My personal long-term goal is to help this department to continue to grow and change to fit the needs of our community. There are some programs that I would like to look into, such as a K-9 unit, drug prevention programs, neighborhood information, senior programs, etc. A lot of this depends on manpower and resources, of course.

Q. What are the biggest challenges for you and the department?

Our biggest challenge is that, as we implement new programs, we also have to make sure that we have maximum coverage for timely responses to calls for service. We don't want to spread ourselves too thin and minimize our ability to provide excellent service to the community.

Q. What are some things that residents can do to make the village safer?

Please, lock your car doors, shut your garage doors at night and call us if you see anything out of the ordinary. Call us right then, not the

next day. Also, be aware of your surroundings and who is around you. Crime can happen anywhere, so don't be a victim. The one thing that we can take away from a criminal is his or her opportunity. We can't control criminals' knowledge or abilities, but we can control their opportunities.

Village Board

Tom Gray, Village President
Phone: 217-483-4219
mpogge@msn.com

Jeanne Boyle, Trustee
Phone: 217-483-2250
boyle.jeanne@uis.edu

Chuck Herr, Trustee
Phone: 217-483-4553
chuker1h@insightbb.com

Tom Kavanagh, Trustee
Phone: 217-483-8295
tom@tjnicoud.com

Matthew Mau, Trustee
Phone: 217-502-4660
repub2@juno.com

Jill Reynolds, Trustee
Phone: 217-483-4815

Joe Schatteman, Trustee
Phone: 217-483-5939
jscatman@springnet1.com

Pat Schad, Village Clerk
Phone: 217-483-4441
pfschad@comcast.net

MEETINGS

Planning Commission
Third Thursday of the month
7:00 p.m.
Village Hall - 117 East Mulberry

Village Board
Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month
6:30 p.m.
Village Hall - 117 East Mulberry

Answering the Census Helps Chatham

Be Counted in the Spring of 2010

The census is a count of everyone living in the United States every 10 years, as required by the U.S. Constitution. Every household in the country will receive a census questionnaire in the spring of 2010.

Why is census data important?

To ensure an accurate and fair count of all populations at all geographic levels in the nation, the Census Bureau needs you or someone in your household to respond to the census questionnaire. But census data is important at the local level for the following reasons.

Census data is used to map or re-map congressional districts.

The federal government uses census data to help determine funding for community services, such as health programs and road repairs. The federal government distributes \$400 billion in such funding each year.

The state distributes gas and income tax funds based on census data. This money goes directly into road construction projects here in Chatham.

Businesses make marketing and relocation decisions based on census information.

About the census questionnaire.

You will receive a census form in the mail on or near April 1, 2010. All that is required is that you fill out the questionnaire and mail it back.

Typical response time for the census is less than 10 minutes.

Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census. The information you give is strictly confidential. All information reported to the public and to local governments is aggregate information.

If you do not receive a census packet, the census department will set up stations in local offices (perhaps at the library or the community center) for you to visit and respond on the spot.

Further information about the census is available at www.census2010.gov.

Surveillance Cameras at South Park

To discourage vandalism and other crimes, cameras have been installed at the new concession building and other areas of South Park.

“Our goal is to have no crimes in our parks, but if it does happen we want to apprehend and prosecute anyone who commits a crime. A park should be a place that families can have fun and enjoy themselves. We

want to help ensure that this will be the case,” said Chatham Police Chief John Holm.

According to Chief Holm, over the last several years, village parks have sustained vandalism damages costing thousands of dollars, which made the use of a surveillance system worth a try. But sometimes such decisions are not only about dollars and cents, he

Free Leaf Pick Up Program to Run Through November

Residents who want to participate in the free leaf pick up program may get paper yard waste bags from the village office now through the end of November.

Twice a year, the village provides the bags and picks up residents' leaves and twigs.

The next free yard waste pick up period will begin October 26 and will go through the first week of December, finishing by December 4.

Residents should have their bags out to the curb early Monday morning for pick up some time during the week.

The last day for residents to get free bags from the village is November 27, and the last day to have bags to the curb is November 30.

The free pick up is for leaves and twigs only – not grass clippings.

Throughout the year, residents may purchase yard waste bags at grocery and hardware stores. When the village's free pick up program is not in effect, yard waste will be collected by residents' trash haulers, provided that each yard waste bag has the proper sticker attached. Stickers may be purchased at most hardware stores.

notes. “Sometimes it is about helping people make the right choices in life. If the knowledge of a camera recording a person's actions prevents them from doing something wrong, then that is a good thing.”

Chief Holm says the village is researching the possibility of installing cameras at other park locations to help prevent future damage.