

# Cranberrytoday

WINTER 2015

## 2015 Budget: Big Bucks, But No Tax Increases From 2014

When you add it all together, Cranberry's budget for 2015 is projected to exceed \$48 million – significantly above the 2014 figure – but it does so without imposing either new or increased tax levies. Continuing growth in the Township's residential and business sectors are expected to generate a corresponding increase in revenues.

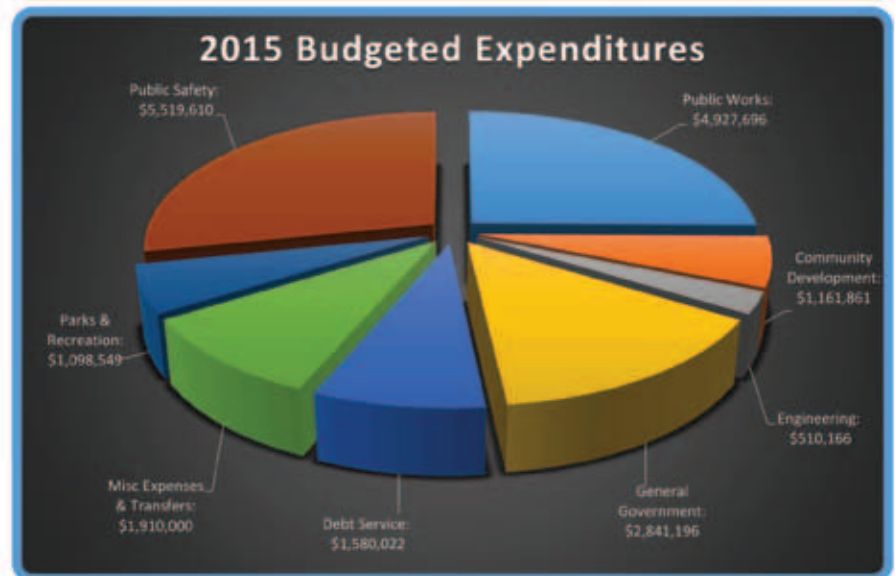
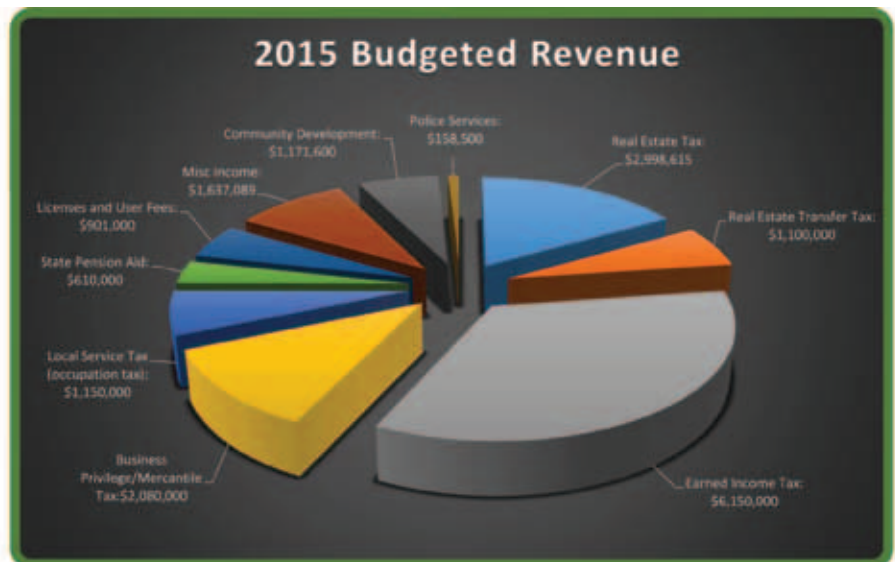
The budget document, which covers 21 separate funds, was adopted by the Township's Board of Supervisors on

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- *salt increased 25 percent over*
- *last year.*

December 11. It absorbs significant increases in employee health care costs, which have gone up substantially, and provides added funds for the purchase of road salt, which increased 25 percent over last year. It also includes money for additional traffic management expenses as well as for costs associated with the recruitment and onboarding of new police officers to fill two full-time vacancies.

The single largest of those funds is Cranberry's \$19.5 million General Fund,

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A Publication of

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## 2015 Budget *Continued from front cover*

which covers the Township's core operating expenses – police, planning, codes, engineering, public works, administration, customer service, parks and recreation. It is projected to increase by 2.3 percent over the previous year. The General Fund's largest streams of revenue come from individual income and real estate taxes. Other budgeted funds, most of which are financed by user fees such as water bills, trash service, greens fees, waterpark admissions and developer fees, total \$28.5 million.

For 2015 and beyond, one of the Township's most significant

expenses will be an upgrade to its Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant – an improvement mandated by the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Planning for that expansion, which began years ago, led to an adjustment of sewer customer rates in early 2014 to pay the advance design and permitting costs associated with a plant upgrade. Additional rate adjustments are likely to be needed based on factors such as actual construction costs, final permit requirements, and cost sharing arrangements with Marshall Township

– a major customer of Cranberry's sanitary service.

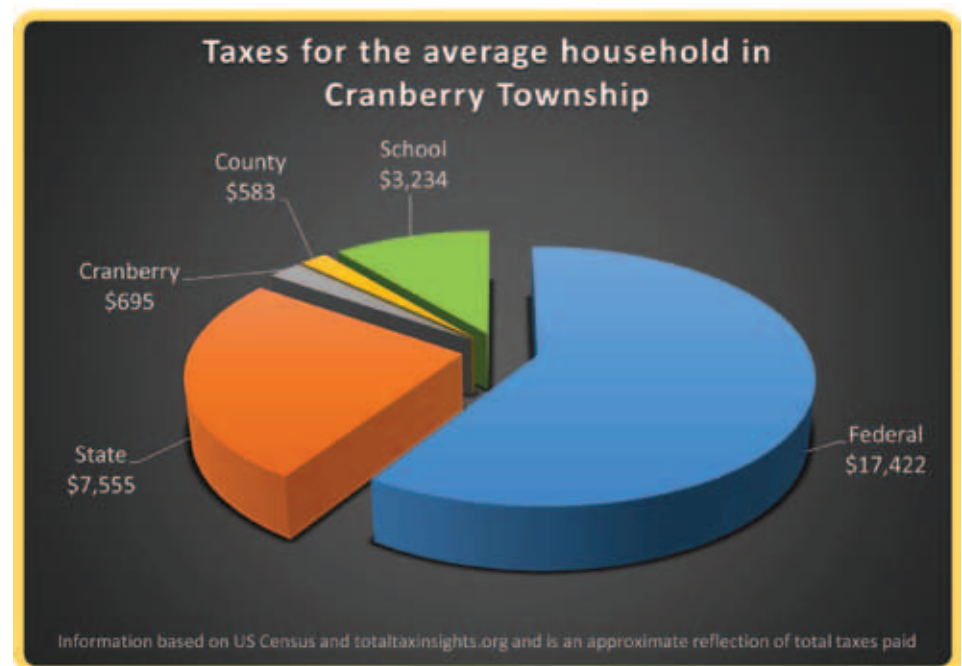
"All the proposed expenditures are focused on maintaining the Township's infrastructure and providing for high quality-of-life services to the residents, consistent with the Board's public policy," Township Manager Jerry Andree noted in his annual budget message. "The overall goal of that public policy is to sustain a healthy community for today as well as into the future." The full 2015 budget is online at [www.CranberryTownship.org/budget](http://www.CranberryTownship.org/budget). ~

## Taxed Up The Wazoo? Here's Where It Goes

People everywhere complain about taxes, and their complaints are often well-justified. But America has lots of taxing bodies with overlapping jurisdictions. Cranberry Township is one of them, but for most residents, it is among the smallest in its share of taxes collected while providing the largest share of services.

This chart shows the relative share of taxes paid to different public entities by an average household in Cranberry Township with a family income of \$96,000 and a house with a \$250,000 market value. It was published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and it includes several other reasonable assumptions about an average household's composition.

What it shows is that of all the taxes paid by the average household in Cranberry, just two percent, or

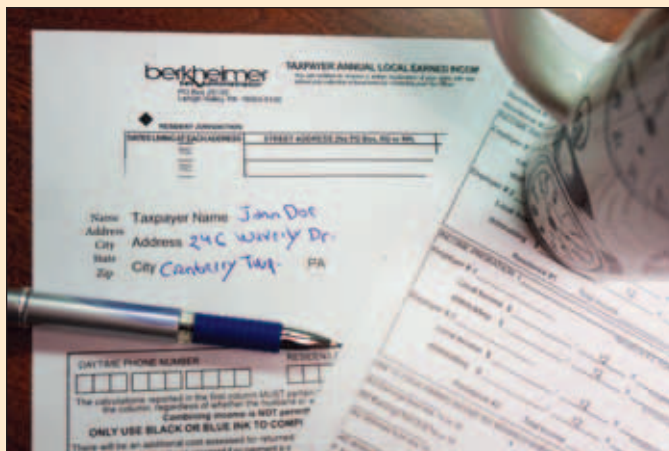


\$695, go to the municipality. Yet the services people receive for that money – including road maintenance, recreational facilities, emergency

services, land use management, stormwater management and more – are among the most valuable offered by any unit of government. ~



**Speaking Of Wazoos...** If you didn't get around to paying your 2014-2015 Seneca Valley School District real estate tax by December 31, your account has been turned over to the Butler County Tax Claim Bureau. Call them at 724-284-5326 to see if you can work something out. But there's still hope: County and Township real estate tax notices won't go out until March 1. You can pay them at a discount through the end of April, and save even more if that home is your primary residence.



## Now, About Your Local Income Tax Return

Most Cranberry residents who are employed have their local income tax withheld, just as they do with their state and federal income taxes. But, as in the case of their state and federal tax payments, taxpayers are required to file a final return to reconcile their local tax payments. Local Earned Income Tax Returns must be filed by anyone subject to the tax on or before April 15, whether or not any tax is due. However, if a payment is due, and it is not made on time, an interest rate of 1 percent per month is tacked onto the overdue amount. If you

have applied for an extension of your federal or state tax filing, you may also apply that extension to your local return. Anyone who is either self-employed or works out of state or who works for an employer that did not withhold the correct tax from their paycheck, may be eligible to pay their taxes quarterly. To file online, visit [www.berk-e.com](http://www.berk-e.com). ~

## What Did Cranberry Really Do Last Year?

- Public Safety responded to more than 14,000 calls for service
- Fire Company volunteers provided 20,000 hours of service
- Community Development issued 447 building permits
- Code Administration conducted 8,089 building inspections
- Customer Service managed 7,694 service requests
- Cranberry Highlands hosted 28,491 rounds of golf
- Road crews maintained 117 miles of local streets
- Winter maintenance personnel spread 8,700 tons of road salt
- Environmental Services supervised 13,617 tons of garbage collection
- Engineering managed \$139 million in new land development projects
- Parks & Recreation registered over 15,000 participants in programs
- Waterpark staff admitted 50,000 guests
- Information technology filtered 2.6 million incoming emails
- Communications welcomed 300,000-plus website visitors
- Finance Department managed \$43 million in cash flow

### Not only that...

- Cranberry Highlands built a new Starter Hut
- Public Works reconstructed Glen Rape Road
- Early Education program space was completely rebuilt
- Parks & Recreation has a new Dek Hockey rink
- CTCC installed four park fitness stations
- Library meeting and tutoring rooms were added
- Township added bike racks to municipal buildings
- Traffic Operations revised signal timing plans

**CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP**  
**built for you.**



## Let's Have Another Cup Of Coffee

Township Manager Jerry Andree will host two more Coffee and Conversation sessions with interested residents this winter. At 1:00 PM on Tuesday, January 20 and 7:00 PM on Tuesday, February 17, participants will meet in the Public Works department's Traffic Operations Center to hear Planner Kathleen McCaig talk about Cranberry's efforts to improve its road connections and build its pedestrian infrastructure to create a more walkable community. No reservations are required, but for planning purposes, your call to 724-776-4806 x1103 would be appreciated. ~





## The Lone Ranger Doesn't Live Here Anymore

by Mike Manipole, Supervisor, Cranberry Township

There was a time, which many of us still recall, when Western

Pennsylvania was a quiltwork of small communities, each with its own sense of history, identity, and pride. Most of them had their own schools, as well as their own fire companies, business communities and governing bodies. They took care of what needed to get done, driven by the sort of self-reliance that had defined the region and its people for generations. Although it wasn't always elegant, it was usually good enough.

One of the reasons we remember it so well is because the remnants of that culture are still all around us. Collaboration between neighboring communities today remains a struggle; nobody likes to give up their sense of autonomy. Beyond that, historic resentments between communities are hard to overcome. And working with really big entities, like the Commonwealth, can be difficult because they tend to overlook the genuinely important distinctions that do exist between communities.

But there's a problem: our expectations have grown tremendously over the last few decades. The meandering country roads of the past just don't cut it today. The tiny schools and their limited offerings of years past aren't up to the

standards we now insist upon. The simple playgrounds of my youth fall way short of current expectations. And so on.

As a result, the facilities and services people demand today are difficult or impossible to achieve with yesterday's limited resources. No one – not even a prosperous community – can afford to do everything by themselves at the high level their residents expect; it's just too expensive. So sharing resources, forming partnerships, and collaborating in other ways have become an increasingly important aspect of local government. And I'm proud to say that Cranberry has led the way.

### Friends, neighbors, partners

We have very good working relationships with PennDOT, which is critical because most of Cranberry's arterial roads are state roads. We have a great working relationship with the local athletic associations, which has resulted in our having much better quality athletic fields than we could justify doing on our own. We work closely with the Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau, which shares the Township goal of attracting guests to visit our community. We have good relationships with different local developers who build the office parks, shopping centers, and residential neighborhoods that make up Cranberry's built environment. And we have excellent relations with our school district, which is one of the most important factors people look at when they choose a new home.

All of these relationships, as well as others, have resulted in projects that benefit both the Township and its partners, as well as local residents. In fact, it's fair to say that partnership is Cranberry's signature way of doing



business. But it takes work, it involves risk, and it flies in the face of local tradition. It also creates the possibility of inadvertently alienating a partner by overstepping the boundaries that define their core interests. Even good relationships can get unintentionally bruised.

The key to keeping that from happening, and to minimize the damage if it does, is to cultivate open lines of communication. If a person or unit of government is secretive about their intentions, our instinct is to become suspicious. But if we can feel confident enough to pick up the phone and speak candidly to the other party – even if it's about an uncomfortable topic – we are more likely to defuse any misunderstandings. So our Board members and Township staff make a point of attending meetings and conferences and informal gatherings of our counterparts so we can work on developing cooperative relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

Even so, I can still understand the appeal of the Lone Ranger – the self-reliant idol who doesn't need anyone's help for anything. At some level, I think everyone would like to be that character. But the Lone Ranger has moseyed off into the sunset, and what's left for us is to pick up his unfinished work and carry on together. ~

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• prosperous community – can  
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You can reach **Mike Manipole** by email at [mike.manipole@cranberrytownship.org](mailto:mike.manipole@cranberrytownship.org) or at **Twitter: @mikemanipole**

## On The Road With Upper St. Cranberry

Western Pennsylvania communities have always taken pride in their self-reliance. But in a break with tradition, Cranberry and Upper St. Clair – both progressive, upscale suburbs – tried an experiment last fall.

It began at a luncheon meeting of the regional American Public Works Association this past October. Cranberry's Public Works Director Jason Dailey, who is currently the chapter's president, approached the chapter's vice president, Upper St. Clair Public Works director George Kostelich, Jr., with an idea: since both communities needed to refresh and update their field crews about winter road maintenance, instead of bringing in paid training consultants as each had done in the past, why not spend a day swapping positions and serving as the other one's consultant? No money would need to change hands.

It seemed like a promising idea, with no obvious down side except, perhaps, the understandable fear of being seen as a substitute teacher and failing to engage the attention of a rowdy audience. So the two men got together and prepared an 85-slide PowerPoint presentation. The plan was for each to give the same presentation to the other one's road crews, together with anecdotes

about experiences in their own home communities, particularly where the two departments took different approaches.

### Almost twins

Upper St. Clair, in the South Hills, has about 20,000 residents in 10 square miles along with 110 miles of road under its care. Cranberry has around 30,000 residents in 23 square miles with 117 miles of local roads. So it seemed like a pretty good match and, no matter whose roads you're talking about, there's a lot about clearing snow that's almost identical.

But there are also some important differences. Take, for instance, the pretreatment of roads when a storm is approaching. Or the use of beet extract as a salt additive. Or the operators' official uniforms. Or rendering out-of-vehicle assistance. Or on-street parking regulations. Or the use of cell phones instead of radios. Or staffing in shifts for major snow events. Or the responsibility for sidewalk maintenance.

Each community had arrived at its own practices through years of experience, local custom, and the administration of different ordinances. At the same time, though, both townships remained open to learning about alternative approaches to commonly held problems. Beyond

that, since road maintenance technology has continued to evolve, hearing first-hand experiences from one's own peers could have considerable value. But it would also require a measure of diplomacy. So, where practices differed, they

agreed that neither would claim superiority. Instead, they would simply present an alternative approach which might otherwise have been overlooked.

### No worries

As it turned out, all those worries quickly evaporated. In fact, it may even have been a bit liberating. Complaints which workers previously kept private out of deference to their own managers were freely expressed, including irritation over being tasked with implementing confusing and seemingly contradictory municipal ordinances and policies. So were anecdotes of success.

While neither director expected their own crew's practices to be transformed simply as the result of a 90-minute exchange, it ended up including enough intriguing tips, tales and trials to justify an exploratory follow-up meeting – one which led to changes which could eventually benefit both townships – and maybe others as well. But it also raised a new possibility:

*The potential for swapping senior managers in training could also be profitably applied to a wide range of other municipal functions.*



**Here's how we do it...** Back in October, Upper St. Clair Township Public Works Director George Kostelich, Jr. traded places for a day with Jason Dailey, his Cranberry counterpart, to train each other's road crews in winter road maintenance procedures.

The potential for swapping senior managers in training may not be limited to winter road maintenance. The same idea could also be profitably applied to a wide range of other municipal functions. Training exchanges among communities that share similar circumstances could become an important tactic in today's information-sharing climate. And having a well-trained workforce is a powerful asset for communities of every size, even if it's free, and even if it runs against a culture of near-total self-reliance. ~

## The Perfect Solution To A Perfect Storm

Cranberry's streets and fleet manager Bob Howland is excited about a newly acquired tool – one designed to preempt the formation of ice on local roads. The Township's new anti-icing equipment lays down thin bands of salt in the form of a brine solution, buying extra time for crews to get out on their routes. But using it effectively requires the perfect set of weather and road conditions.

For starters, you have to have really good weather forecasting. "You need to look out 2 to 3 days ahead of the storm, have dry roads, and no rain in the forecast. You spray liquid salt brine, get the roads good and wet, and then give it a chance to dry," Howland explained. "The conditions have to be right. The forecast would have to show a snowstorm coming in, and no rain in between." Rain would only dilute and then wash away the salt layer.

The anti-icing technique, which has been in use for years in other parts of the northeast, requires crews to put down 40 to 50 gallons per lane mile of the liquid solution – 23.3 percent of which is dissolved salt – then allowing the water to evaporate, leaving a thin layer of salt on the road. A few days later, when the snow arrives, it activates the salt, keeping snow from bonding to the road.

"It gives us time to react, to get our manpower in, to get the trucks out on the route," he said.

### Cranberry's brine factory

Several years ago, Cranberry invested in brine-making equipment, which is housed in a building across from the Public Works department's salt shed. The solution, with carefully controlled salt levels, costs about eight cents a gallon to produce. Since Cranberry's brine plant began operation, the solution has been used to pre-wet salt as it exits the spinner on the back of the

Township's trucks, turning it into a sticky slurry with the consistency of oatmeal and keeping ice from forming down to temperatures as low as six below zero. That use – sometimes with the addition of liquid magnesium chloride – will continue.

But for Cranberry, the direct application of brine to the roads before a storm is new. This winter, the truck-mounted 700-gallon tank and brine applicator bar are being tested on some of the Township's more difficult roads including portions of Unionville, Bear

*"I'm excited about bringing in this technology and trying it on some of the drastic hills and curves in the Township."*

Run, Bayberry, and Powell roads. "I'm excited about bringing in this technology and trying it on some of the drastic hills

and curves in the Township," Howland said, "just to show how it improves motorists' safety."

Over time, as the technology demonstrates its effectiveness, Howland is hoping to add more units to the Township's fleet. "Once we've proven that it works, the best way to approach it would be to treat the roads that are furthest away from the Public Works building – the ones we would typically get to last when plowing and salting. That would be where we'd start, and then we'd work our way back into the central hub, which is the Public Works facility."

"So all the anti-icing, the pre-wetting, and using more of the 8-cents per gallon salt brine, is better than burning through rock salt that cost nearly \$80 a ton this year," Howland observed. "We're striving to save money any way we can. But our primary goal is to be efficient in preventing snow and ice from bonding to the road so that everyone can remain safe." ~



**Telltale stripes.** Salt brine is sprayed and then dried onto the road surface before a snow storm to prevent icing.



# The What, Why And How Of Winter Sidewalk Upkeep

*Sidewalks are an important means of getting around in Cranberry Township – more now than ever. Keeping them clear of snow, ice and debris after a winter storm is essential to making them safe and available all year long, just like our roads. So how does that work in Cranberry?*

**Whose job is it to clear snow from sidewalks?** Removing snow and ice from sidewalks is the legal responsibility of the owner whose property touches that sidewalk.

**Doesn't the Township clear sidewalks?** Only the ones on Township property. Cranberry's Public Works crews clear local roads, but sidewalks are the responsibility of their respective private owners.

**What if I didn't build the sidewalk?** If it crosses in front of your property, it's your responsibility to clear it.

**Can I delegate that responsibility to someone else?** Some business property owners require their tenants to shovel the sidewalks, and some homeowner associations hire a service to do it for their neighborhoods. That's fine. But the ultimate legal responsibility remains with the owner.

**How much time do I have to clear it?** Until recently, you had 24 hours from the end of a snowstorm, but Cranberry's Board of Supervisors recently extended that to 48 hours.

**What if I'm away when the storm hits?** Try to make advance arrangements with a neighbor or ask a nearby enterprising young person to clear it for you.

**Do I have to clear the whole sidewalk?** You are responsible only for the segment of sidewalk that abuts your property, but you need to clear its full width.

**Is there a penalty if I don't clear my sidewalk?** Cranberry's Municipal Code provides a legal process which can result in fines for neglecting to clear sidewalks. But its purpose is to encourage people to keep their sidewalks clear, not to collect fines.

**How is it enforced?** Enforcement of the Code can come about as the result of a complaint called in or from Township code enforcement officers who happen across a neglected stretch of sidewalk.

**What if a homeowner is willing, but unable to clear their sidewalk?** They should arrange with neighbors or contract with commercial services to take care of their sidewalk.

**What if my driveway or sidewalk got buried by a Township snowplow?** That sometimes results from road maintenance operations, particularly during major storms, and we apologize for that, but the sidewalk still needs to be cleared.

**What if someone falls and gets hurt on my sidewalk?** Courts and insurance companies typically work those issues



out case-by-case, but in many instances, it's the property owner's liability.

**Where can I move the snow from sidewalks?** Move the snow onto the building side of the walkway; don't shovel or blow it onto the road, which is illegal and creates a hazard for motorists.

**Do I need to put down salt?** No, but you are responsible for clearing the ice from your sidewalk and you are free to use salt or other anti-icing material in doing so.

**What about fire hydrants?** It's not a requirement, but it's a great idea to clear snow from around your hydrant; you don't want firefighters to spend the first 10 minutes of an emergency call shoveling snow.

**Can I do anything to make it fun?** Sure; turn it into a party. Have your homeowners association organize a wintertime sidewalk block party with hot cider, cookies and good companionship. Misery loves company. ~



## Still More Rt. 228 Upgrades In The Pipeline

Shortly before November's gubernatorial election, outgoing PennDOT Secretary Barry J. Schoch announced two grants, totaling \$1 million, to support the design and engineering for several long-planned improvements to Rt. 228 in Cranberry. The grants will be used to support the design and initial construction of a new eastbound lane between the I-79 northbound off ramp and Franklin Road. That

lane, in turn, will form the first step in building an underpass below 228 to carry traffic from I-79, as well as from Cranberry Woods, directly into developments on the north side of Rt. 228, where the new Lemieux UPMC-Penguins training center in Cranberry Springs is located. The grants will bring both projects into shovel-ready form, pending the commitment of additional funds for construction. The improvements are being supported by a partnership between the Township, PennDOT, and Cranberry Springs. Cranberry hopes to see construction begin by the spring of 2016.

## Township Takes A Fresh Look At Foul Water

America's Environmental Protection Agency has worried about stormwater for quite a while now. First it was about quantity; now it's about quality.

Here's their concern: unless stormwater volume is managed properly, it can lead to flooding and property damage. That's the quantity part of it. But even when the flooding risks are well managed, if that stormwater picks up pollutants on its way into local streams, it contaminates the water supply, kills off fish, and endangers human health. That's the quality part of the issue. So the agency's efforts today are largely focused on telling local governments to address those quality issues, using their own funds.

Unlike wastewater, which runs through sanitary lines and into Cranberry's sewage treatment plant before being discharged into local streams,

• *Stormwater doesn't get treated. But that doesn't mean it's clean.*

stormwater doesn't get treated. But that doesn't mean it's clean. Before entering Brush Creek, open runoff can get contaminated with oil and grease from roadways, pesticides from lawns, sediment from construction sites, and carelessly discarded trash including cigarette butts, paper wrappers and plastic bottles. All of it flows directly into our waterways.



### Bad nutrition

The most troublesome of those pollutants, perhaps surprisingly, are the fertilizers that farmers and homeowners use in growing lawns and crops. After they get picked up by rainfall, they end up in places like Chesapeake Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, where they fertilize the growth of algae, choking off the air supply for fish and other aquatic life, effectively killing that body of water. In 2011, a massive algae bloom erupted on the western rim of Lake Erie, turning Toledo's water supply toxic.

So, as EPA sees it, the solution is at the source – the hometowns where pollution begins. Cranberry is no exception. “We have a number of stormwater issues, like old pipes, and we don't have a dedicated replacement program,” Assistant Township Manager Duane McKee explained. “We have a very strong maintenance program with our roads. Our sewer lines and water lines have strong, well-funded processes to maintain them. But stormwater was always just considered to be part of the road system.

“Although our stormwater system and road systems work together in many cases, we need to look at them separately and fund them separately,” he said. “Some of the stormwater work we're going to have to do will involve major capital improvements.”

### Capital ideas

They include replacing old stormwater pipes, restoring streams disturbed by construction, improving the drainage



ways between stormwater outfalls and streams, minimizing erosion, restoring lowlands, and grading property so water can percolate through the soil and into the aquifer below.

“We never looked at storm drains the same way we did with sewer and water pipes or roads when it came to maintenance,” McKee said. “In most communities, including Cranberry, it was more of a spot repair. When we saw an issue, we fixed it. But we didn't set aside funds to fix the entire system.

“Remember the sinkhole along McKnight last summer? That's a prime example. The community said they knew it was there, but they didn't see the urgency. Then they had the collapse. That's changing here; we're going to have more urgency in repairing these issues so they don't become catastrophic.

“Years ago, before there were any controls, people would pipe a stream when they did development. When they ran the Turnpike through here in '49 there weren't any environmentalists around. They would be moving Brush Creek, and piping this, and damming that, and building a road. That's the way we used to do things. Now we're paying penance.” ~



## What If You Posted A Stop Sign And Nobody Stopped?

No one likes to see people speeding through their neighborhood. It is a dangerous, illegal and anti-social practice. So worried residents frequently call the Township, demanding something be done about it – something like dropping the speed limit or putting up stop signs or issuing citations.

Cranberry takes those complaints seriously, and it has a process in place to address them. But controlling traffic speed is a complex issue involving engineering, communication, and psychology as well as the law.

### Undergoing analysis

In Pennsylvania, for example, no community has the authority to post regulatory signs solely at the discretion of its residents or local officials. Any such signs would be illegal and unenforceable. Instead, speed limits

out, we do accident analysis, we do sight distance analysis,” Township Engineering Director Jason Kratsas explained. “Those are federal requirements, called warrants, and they’re

right out of the Federal Highway Administration’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. We’ll go in, get a good understanding of what’s actually going on at the intersection, and then make recommendations.

“A lot of times people want to use stop signs as a speed control device, but you can’t do that,” he said. “Stop sign warrants are based on traffic volumes and accidents – not speeds. When you start putting up stop signs everywhere to try to deter speed, it creates more problems than it solves. People actually speed up between stop signs.”

### Islands of calm

Instead, Township engineers, working in tandem with the neighborhood’s Homeowners Association, consider traffic-calming scenarios. In the case of Cranberry Heights, Ehrman Farms, and Blue Ridge Estates, where speeding was confirmed to be a real issue, it led to planter islands being inserted into the roadway with the association agreeing to maintain their landscaping. In addition to enhancing the street’s appearance, the islands narrow the roadway, leading motorists



to slow down. Electronic speed signs and trailers can also help raise driver awareness.

“When an individual resident calls in saying they want to see something changed in their plan, our

first response is: Can you take that to your homeowners association? If there is a change that the HOA would like to see implemented, we can work with the whole neighborhood on a solution.”

Yet even with well-engineered traffic calming features, there are still instances where a speeding ticket would be justified, and Township police are ready to help. But in Pennsylvania – unlike any other state – local police are prohibited from using radar to enforce speed limits. Instead, they have to follow the speeder for at least three-tenths of a mile, or use a stopwatch to measure the time it takes the driver to travel between marked lines – both cumbersome methods to use on local streets.

But the biggest problem is a people problem. While most residents willingly obey speed limits, there are people who just don’t play by the rules,” Kratsas said. “If you sign a road to slow down speeders, you’re making everybody stop to fix a problem that involves just a few people – people who would probably ignore the signs anyway. What ends up happening is that most people just stop respecting the stop sign.” ~



Speed limits must be established following a step-by-step process.

must be established following a step-by-step process that begins with a study to determine the actual conditions of the roadway or intersection in question.

And it can be backfire. If 85 percent or more of the traffic using that road travels at least 10 miles an hour above the posted speed, then the posted speed is wrong – not the drivers. That’s what happened a few years ago on Franklin Road when the state did a study for Seven Fields, which had hoped to tamp down speeding. Instead, the study concluded that the posted speed limit actually needed to be raised – just the opposite of what borough officials had been hoping for.

Same for stop signs. “We go through a process where we put traffic counters

## Shrinking And Stretching Local Roads To Fit Service Vehicles

There are hundreds of cul-de-sac roads in Cranberry Township neighborhoods. Their dimensions were set according to ordinances in effect at the time their plans were approved. One of the key considerations used in setting those street widths was to allow easy access for service vehicles – garbage trucks, school buses, fire engines, snow plows and so on. But things change.

*Ten years ago, Seneca Valley's school buses carried 66 passengers. Today, they seat 84 and have significantly longer wheelbases.*

Ten years ago, when the Marshall Heights plan of homes was approved, Seneca Valley's school buses carried 66 passengers. Today, they seat 84 and have significantly longer wheelbases. As a result, turning them around requires a bigger swath of pavement – one that exceeds the dimensions of many cul-de-sacs which were previously served by the school district.

What that meant for students living on Maureen Drive – a long residential road ending in a tight turnaround loop – was that their street was no longer serviceable by Seneca Valley's school buses. Some students would have to walk nearly a mile to get to the nearest stop. That wasn't what residents wanted. So the Marshall Heights neighborhood homeowners association approached the Township for help.

### The partnership

In response, Township officials proposed a partnership to extend the turning radius of their roadway loop enough to accommodate the longer school buses. The three-way agreement would require the homeowners association to buy any needed construction materials, Township Public Works crews would

install them, and Seneca Valley would commit to providing bus transportation for residents who live on the cul-de-sac. All three parties accepted, and their agreement was implemented this past fall, restoring bus service to the street.

At the same time, though, other streets in the Township are shrinking. To discourage speeders, thoroughfares in Ehrman Farms, Cranberry Heights and Blue Ridge Estates have been narrowed by the use of planter islands. Bellevue, a mostly townhome residential development adjacent to Graham Park, was designed with narrower roadways than traditional housing plans. Although its streets follow a grid pattern, eliminating cul-de-sac endings, Bellevue's cartways – the portion of pavement dedicated to motor vehicle traffic – have gone from 32 feet in width to just 24. That carries practical consequences.

### Denser, tighter, shorter

"Big, wide streets cost a fortune to maintain over the life of that road," Township Manager Jerry Andree pointed out. "And they encourage speeding. But when you put a 32-foot paved roadway through your neighborhood and allow

parking on one side, you slow traffic down."



However, doing so also presents challenges to navigating oversize vehicles through those streets. In fact, that was one of the major considerations behind the Fire Company's recent design of a new aerial truck, due for delivery this spring, which is both shorter and with a tighter turning radius than the Township's current ladder truck.

"We're always tweaking our standards, dimensions, and sizes of roads," Andree said. "What we're seeing now is tighter, more dense development. We're becoming more city-like. So we're gradually evolving to see how we can best support that sort of development.

"Right now we have about 270 cul-de-sacs; but we just can't go in and modernize them without a partnership. So that's why the HOA in Marshall Heights partnered with us." ~





## On Finding Yourself In Cranberry Township

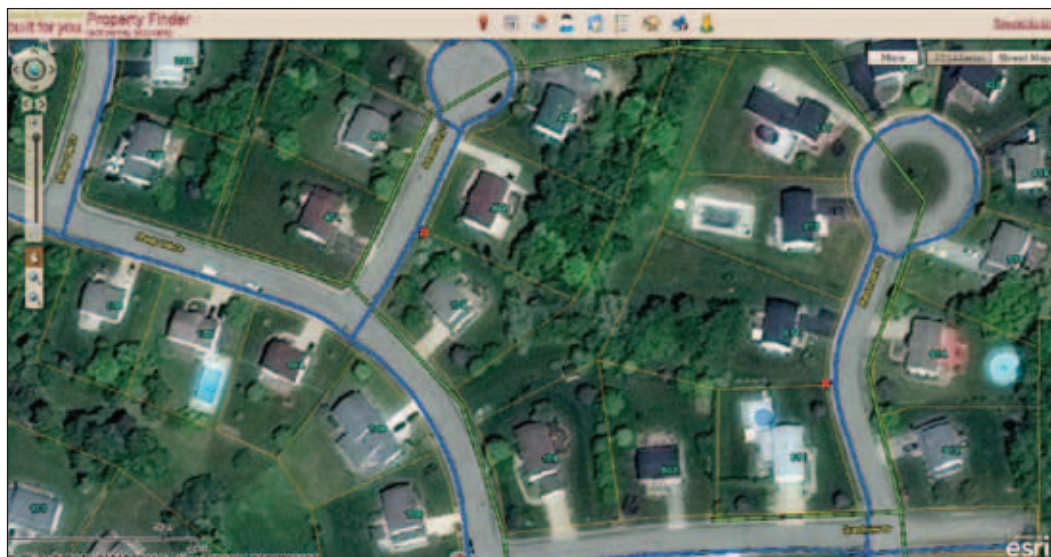
Aerial surveillance by drones has come under attack from privacy advocates. But high-altitude photography from manned aircraft has proved to be an attractive alternative – and almost as revealing. Consider the case of Cranberry's Property Finder – an online information system, used extensively by Township staff, that covers every parcel of land in Cranberry Township.

Want to know who has a backyard pool? Want to see who has public water or sewer service? Want to find out who owns that wooded hillside? How big someone's lot is? Or how a particular piece of property is zoned? No problem. Just go to the Cranberry website, and click on the Property Finder link at the bottom of the home page.

What you'll find is a constantly updated world of information, mapped against the backdrop of a high-altitude aerial image showing all of Cranberry, taken in May of 2014. However, since the Township's map covers more than 15,000 acres, you are able to zoom in and see details from just a portion of Cranberry, with images showing each tree, driveway, building and property line in an area as small as 15 acres. Google Street View images and topographic contour lines at two-foot intervals are also available for viewing.

### Information overload

In fact, Property Finder, which is built on a GIS platform created by ESRI Software and maintained by Cranberry's own IT department, is packed with so much data it can be downright intimidating unless you use the menu in its upper right corner to select just the types of information you're looking for. And when you click on any individual parcel of land – each of which is defined by on-screen property lines – a little window pops up that displays the sorts of information about that property which are most requested by residents.



You don't even have to look through the whole display you've selected to find what you're looking for. A set of widgets at the top of your screen will help guide you through searches according to either the property's mailing address, owner, neighborhood, street name, or tax ID number.

You can also personalize the map. A set of tools allows you to draw shapes onto the screen, make measurements, add text, and then print the maps out for future reference. And it's something you can do from most mobile devices, as well as from your PC or Mac computer, although moving through the display is most easily accomplished using its on-screen navigation tools instead of touch screen finger movements.

### Close approximations

There is, however, a caveat to the use of Property Finder. It's that the property lines it shows are approximate; they generally fall within a foot and a half of the actual lines, but they do not take the place of a professional surveyor. For property transactions, tax administration and other legal purposes, an on-site survey will still be required.

One reason for that is because the resolution of Property Finder's aerial image, although the highest allowed

*For privacy and security purposes, it is not permitted to be clear enough to read license plates, inspect roof tiles, or identify sunbathers.*

by federal rules, is not razor sharp. For privacy and security purposes, it is not permitted to be clear enough to read license plates, inspect roof tiles, or identify sunbathers. Even so, it distinctly shows such seldom-seen features as the zig-zag lines reflecting the modifications in Cranberry's boundaries with Seven Fields, Adams and Jackson Townships, as well as the surprisingly large number of farms which still operate in Cranberry.

A limited amount of online property information is also available at the county level. But since Cranberry also maintains files of data including water and sewer line locations, zoning districts, and other highly localized information, its maps provide a much more comprehensive look at the Township's features. Cranberry is one of the only communities of its size in the region able to offer that level of detail online. ~



## CMU Startup Is Bringing Alien Objects To Life

Even if they're not Star Trek fans, most people have heard by now that there really are such things as 3D printers – futuristic devices which, by laying down successive layers of material, can render digital designs into full-dimensional objects. The printers have been used to make machine parts, prosthetics, artwork, firearms and more. But relatively few people have had the opportunity to actually see or touch, much less use one. For Cranberry area residents, that's about to change.

An East Liberty-based startup company, PieceMaker, has created a 3D printer that ordinary people can use to build and personalize small items, while you watch, in the Cranberry Toys'R'Us store. It is one of only two stores in the country outfitted with the device that its makers call "The Original Factory in a Store." The other one is near the Toys'R'Us corporate headquarters in New Jersey.

Here's how it works: Instead of using ink or toner to render an image onto a flat surface like paper, 3D

3D printers use heated plastic, metal or ceramic material to build whatever the design instructions call for.

printers use heated plastic, metal or ceramic material to build whatever the design instructions call for. But unlike conventional factories which mass produce whatever they make, 3D printers can efficiently produce one item at a time, where each one is a unique creation, and to do so far more quickly than traditional methods would allow.

In the case of PieceMaker, the material used is brightly colored ABS plastic – the same material used in Lego bricks and many other children's toys.

### To infinity... and beyond!

Several years ago, two Carnegie-Mellon students who had become fascinated with the idea of 3D printers decided to build one that was both simple to use and capable of reaching large numbers of people with its amazing capabilities. That's when they had an epiphany: instead of building 3D printers and selling them as the company's product, they would retain ownership of the devices and use the printers to produce 3D items for retail store customers, essentially turning their business into a custom manufacturing company.

In its current form, a customer goes to a touch-screen kiosk, selects something they would like the printer to make from a menu of pre-existing templates, chooses a color, and personalizes the piece in various ways. Their instructions are then transmitted to one of two nearby 3D printers, where the customer can watch their creation taking shape. Depending on its complexity, each piece takes between 5 to 25 minutes to print, and then it's ready to take home.

"We make the system, and we do a lot on the back end to make designing the pieces very easy," company co-founder Alejandro Sklar explained. "We allow people to personalize pieces, even if they've never done any computer design before. We install the system so it's very

easy for the store employees to use. And then we share the revenue with them."

"The store employees actually run the system and customers design their own pieces. That's the fun part of it. They get to be a designer. Here, we're making our own toys, our own jewelry. People are having a great time with it."

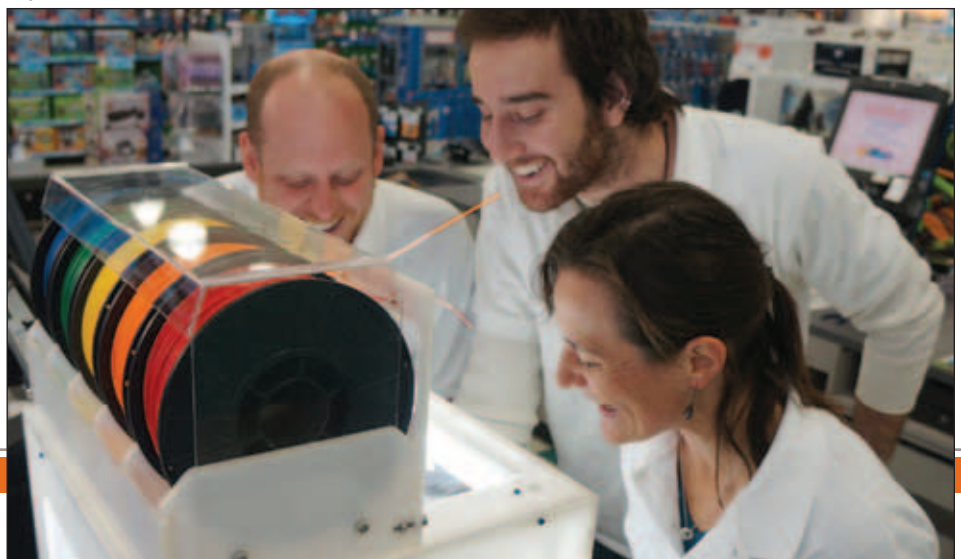
### Live long and prosper

As the PieceMaker system evolves, the team plans to incorporate new technologies, new materials, and new personalization tools, allowing them to expand into other industries and to improve the customer's creative capabilities. For the time being, however, its business plans are a closely guarded secret.

But why Cranberry? "Part of it is that they have a great store manager here and it would be a really great environment," Marketing Director Pam Israel pointed out. "They thought the customers in this area would be a good fit for the offering – that it would be a really nice combination, both in terms of the people in the store and in the community. And we've been thrilled. It's been very positive."

More about the company is available on its website, [www.piecemaker.com](http://www.piecemaker.com), as well as on social media. ~

**It's alive! It's alive!** Members of the startup company PieceMaker watch as their 3D printer brings a customized plastic toy design to life for a customer in the Cranberry Toys 'R' Us store.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# JAN

Registration may be required for some programs. For more information, call:

◀ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100

★ Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806

† Parks and Recreation 724-776-4806 ext. 1129

☎ Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480

✓ ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

‡ Butler Housing Authority 1-800-433-6327

THURS 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Municipal Ctr and Library Closed No Waste Collection		FRI 2 Parks Shelter Reservations Open Waste Collection delayed by 1 day		SAT 3	SUN 4	MON 5 Christmas Tree Pick Up Thru 1/16 on regular collection days Infant Storytime < Library, 10:30am Teen Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4pm Planning Advisory Commission Regular Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6pm First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm			
TUES 6 Preschool Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Tween Art Club Library, 4pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Organizational Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm			WED 7 Toddler Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30-4:30pm			THURS 8 Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm Teen Art Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm		FRI 9	
SAT 10	SUN 11	MON 12 Infant Storytime < Library, 10:30am Tween Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4:30pm		TUES 13 Preschool Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm		WED 14 Toddler Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30-4:30pm Mother-Daughter Book Club Library, 6:30pm Young at Heart Adult Book Club Library, 7pm			
THURS 15 Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm		FRI 16 Teen Movie Night Library, 7pm		SAT 17	SUN 18	MON 19 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY Library Closed Zoning Hearing Board (if needed) Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7:30pm			
TUES 20 Preschool Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Coffee with Twp Manager Traffic Operations Ctr at Public Works Facility, 1pm Tween LEGO Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm				WED 21 Toddler Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30-4:30pm Books & Bagels Club Library, 10am			THURS 22 Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm		
FRI 23	SAT 24 Mother-Daughter Tea Party Library, 11am-1pm Let's Dance, Cha Cha Cha Gymnasium, 7pm		SUN 25	MON 26 Infant Storytime < Library, 10:30am Planning Advisory Commission Work Session Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30pm 20s & 30s Book Club Library, 7pm			TUES 27 Preschool Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm		
WED 28 Toddler Storytime < Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30-4:30pm			THURS 29 4th Thursday Book Club Library, 10am Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm				FRI 30	SAT 31	

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# FEB

Registration may be required for some programs. For more information, call:

◀ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100

★ Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806

† Parks and Recreation 724-776-4806 ext. 1129

☼ Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480

✓ ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

‡ Butler Housing Authority 1-800-433-6327

<div>SUN1</div>	<div>MON2</div> <div>GROUNDHOG DAY</div> <div>Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am</div> <div>Teen Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4pm</div> <div>Planning Advisory Commission Regular Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6pm</div> <div>First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm</div>		<div>TUES3</div> <div>Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am &amp; 11am</div> <div>Tween Art Club Library, 4pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm</div>		<div>WED4</div> <div>Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am &amp; 11am</div> <div>Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm</div> <div>1st–3rd Grade Book Club Library, 7pm</div>
<div>THURS5</div> <div>Discussion Group Library, 10am</div> <div>Teen Art Club Library, 4pm</div> <div>Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>FRI6</div>	<div>SAT7</div>	<div>SUN8</div>	<div>MON9</div> <div>Tween Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4:30pm</div>	<div>TUES10</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm</div>
<div>WED11</div> <div>Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm</div> <div>1st–3rd Grade Book Club Library, 7pm</div> <div>Young at Heart Adult Book Club Library, 7pm</div>	<div>THURS12</div> <div>Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>FRI13</div> <div>Sweetheart BINGO Municipal Ctr, Sr./Teen Ctr, 1pm</div>	<div>SAT14</div> <div>VALENTINE’S DAY</div> <div>Sheriff’s Office: Gun Licensing Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 9am–2pm</div> <div>Valentine’s Day Movie &amp; Game Night † Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm</div>		
<div>SUN15</div>	<div>MON16</div> <div>PRESIDENT’S DAY Library Closed</div> <div>Early Learning Center Open House Municipal Ctr, 10am–1pm &amp; 5–7pm</div> <div>Zoning Hearing Board (if needed) Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7:30pm</div>	<div>TUES17</div> <div>Tween LEGO Club Library, 4pm</div> <div>Coffee with Twp Manager Traffic Operations Ctr at Public Works Facility, 7pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>WED18</div> <div>Books &amp; Bagels Club Library, 10am</div> <div>Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm</div> <div>1st–3rd Grade Book Club Library, 7pm</div>		
<div>THURS19</div> <div>Budding Builders LEGO Club Library, 4pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>FRI20</div> <div>Tween Movie Night Library, 7pm</div>	<div>SAT21</div> <div>Special Needs Winter Family Fun Day † Municipal Ctr, 12–4pm</div> <div>Cranberry EMS Learn CPR ☆ Municipal Ctr, 9am–12pm, Learn First Aid ☆ Municipal Ctr, 12–3pm</div> <div>Let’s Dance, Fox Trot Gymnasium, 7pm</div>			
<div>SUN22</div>	<div>MON23</div> <div>Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am</div> <div>Planning Advisory Commission Work Session Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30pm</div> <div>20s &amp; 30s Book Club Library, 7pm</div>	<div>TUES24</div> <div>Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am &amp; 11am</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>WED25</div> <div>Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am &amp; 11am</div> <div>Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm</div> <div>1st–3rd Grade Book Club Library, 7pm</div>		
<div>THURS26</div> <div>4th Thursday Book Club Library, 10am</div> <div>Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm</div> <div>Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm</div>	<div>FRI27</div>	<div>SAT28</div> <div>Superhero Program Library, 11am–1pm</div>			



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# MAR

Registration may be required for some programs. For more information, call:

◀ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100

\* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806

† Parks and Recreation 724-776-4806 ext. 1129

☎ Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480

✓ ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

‡ Butler Housing Authority 1-800-433-6327

SUN 1	MON 2 Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am Teen Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4pm Planning Advisory Commission Regular Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6pm		TUES 3 Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Tween Art Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm		WED 4 Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm	
THURS 5 Discussion Group Library, 10am Teen Art Club Library, 4pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm			FRI 6	SAT 7	SUN 8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	MON 9 Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm
TUES 10 Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Untold Stories of Civil War Library, 6pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm			WED 11 Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm Young at Heart Adult Book Club Library, 7pm		THURS 12 Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm	FRI 13
SAT 14	SUN 15	MON 16 Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am Teen Advisory Board Mtg ◀ Library, 4pm Zoning Hearing Board Mtg (if needed) Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7:30pm		TUES 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Tween LEGO Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm		WED 18 Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Books & Bagels Book Club Library, 10am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm
THURS 19 Budding Builders LEGO Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm		FRI 20	SAT 21 Let's Dance, Merengue/Hustle Gymnasium, 7pm		SUN 22	MON 23 Infant Storytime ◀ Library, 10:30am Tween Advisory Board Mtg Library, 4:30pm
TUES 24 Preschool Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm		WED 25 Toddler Storytime ◀ Library, 10am & 11am Free Housing Counseling ‡ Library by Appt, 2:30–4:30pm			THURS 26 4th Thursday Book Club Library, 10am Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8–10pm	
FRI 27 Teen Movie Night Library, 7pm	SAT 28	SUN 29 PALM SUNDAY Hippity Hop Egg Hunt † Municipal Ctr, 10:30am–2pm		MON 30 Yard Waste Collections Resume Planning Advisory Commission Work Session Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30pm 20s & 30s Book Club Library, 7pm		TUES 31 Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8–10pm

# The Fine Art Of Organization

What does an art teacher do in retirement? At least in the case of Kathy Bischak, Mary Jane Hadley, Mary Mason, and current Haine Middle School art teacher Noele Reynolds, it's painting, sculpture, ceramics and jewelry making.

Last spring, along with fellow artists Colin Richards, Irene Ackerman, Elise McVeigh, and Duane Cacali, together with support from CTCC, the teachers formed an organization – the Cranberry Artists Network, or CAN – to support and encourage local artists. By fall, their numbers had grown to more than 25 and their first juried show, held in October at Keystone Summit Corporate Park – the former campus of FORE Systems and Marconi – drew more than 90 works from 45 different artists in the four-county area surrounding Cranberry Township.

"We were going to screen members to make sure we've got people who are seriously interested in art," Ms. Bischak pointed out. "But we accepted anybody who wanted to be a member for this first show, and we were delighted with the quality of the work. We sold ten pieces out of that show. For a fine arts show in this area, that was really good. I know people who exhibit in Pittsburgh in juried shows all the time and don't get sales like that. So we were very satisfied with the quality of the people who entered the show."

## All together now

Although some art is created collaboratively, most artists work individually, scrambling for support and attention. But the isolation can be difficult. "Most visual artists work on their own," Bischak acknowledged. "This is more about all of us coming together to promote what we do together as a group. Instead of trying to have one-person shows all over the place, it gives you a group that you're affiliated

with. We're trying to find people around Cranberry who are making art and who don't have anywhere nearby to go; until

: "Until now we had  
: to go to Butler or  
: Pittsburgh to find an  
: arts organization that  
: was of quality."

now we had to go to Butler or Pittsburgh to find an arts organization that was of quality."

However CAN wasn't the first time artists attempted to affiliate in Cranberry. In 2013, some of the group's members had tried to form a Cranberry chapter of the Butler City-based Associated Artists of Butler County. But the connection never came to fruition. "It just didn't work out," she acknowledged. "There was just too much distance between Cranberry and Butler for us to coordinate because people who wanted to meet in Cranberry didn't want to go to Butler, and Butler people didn't want to come down to Cranberry."

## Coming attractions

The organization's goal of supporting and promoting the visual arts in Cranberry will continue in 2015 with four shows planned, including the year's first exhibit, scheduled to open at 7:00 on the evening of

February 4 in the Township's Municipal Center. Its final night, on February 25, will conclude with a demonstration by internationally-recognized pastel artist Christine Swan. Other guest artists will be featured in future meetings as well.

For the moment, at least, CAN's focus will remain on the visual arts, as distinct from the performing arts. But the scope of its art interest is broad, including glasswork, digital art, animated drawing, jewelry, photography, and sculpture as well as oil and water color paintings. During Community Days last summer, CAN members demonstrated plein air painting, with canvases mounted on easels in Community Park as the artists prepared and then gave away their works.

Like most artists, however, CAN members work primarily out of their own homes. But that can have limitations. "We would all love to create a studio," Bischak said wistfully. "The problem is that property in Cranberry Township is at a premium. We've all talked about finding a place – an abandoned spot – that we could use to paint and do our

art in. But I think that's something down the road, way in the future, maybe beyond my time." ~



**A sign of the Times.** Judges awarded local artist Nanette Hought, right, First Place in the initial exhibit of the Cranberry Artists Network held this past October for her pastel "Times Square".



SAVE  
THE DATE

# SENECA-SOCIAL

AN EVENING WITH THE SENECA VALLEY FOUNDATION



APRIL 16-2015

JERGEL'S RHYTHM GRILLE  
WARRENDALE, PA

6:30  
PM

Food • Door Prizes • Live Music • Silent Auction

## CALL FOR DONATIONS AND SPONSORS

If you would like to make a donation or become a sponsor, please contact Linda Andreassi, Communications Director, at [andreassill@svsd.net](mailto:andreassill@svsd.net) or by calling (724) 452-6040, ext. 1612.

The **SENECA VALLEY FOUNDATION** is a private, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to encouraging excellence and innovation in the Seneca Valley Schools. The Foundation seeks donations and patrons to facilitate the development of new capital projects, programs and scholarships. Its board members consist of stakeholders from local business leaders, community leaders and school leaders.

As a non-profit organization, the Foundation is also utilized as a vehicle by which memorial and other charitable donations may be made to the Seneca Valley School District. In addition, the Seneca Valley Foundation provides several scholarships to underprivileged children in the Seneca Valley School District.



Follow the Foundation on Twitter:  
[www.twitter/SVSDFoundation](http://www.twitter/SVSDFoundation)



124 Seneca School Rd.  
Harmony, Pa. 16037  
[www.svsd.net](http://www.svsd.net)



# A Unicorn's Business: Attracting Girls To STEM

In October, as part of a monthly after-school enrichment program, a group of 30 girls from Seneca Valley Middle School were given paint trays, sand and clay to build miniature models of a watershed. With encouragement from Cranberry wastewater pretreatment administrator Rhonda Zellhart and SV science teacher Julie Smith, the girls fashioned imaginative landscapes, observing the ways that water sprayed onto them like rain, either becomes absorbed into the soil or flows into streams and bodies of water along its perimeter.

To increase the models' realism, some of the girls placed tiny toy animals, including several unicorns they had created, alongside the banks of their water basins. "Okay," Ms. Zellhart prodded them, "Those animals have to go and make poo. How is that waste going to affect the streams?" The girls' responses showed an amazing level of engagement, excitement and resourcefulness.

Other watershed scenarios were also enacted, including the impact of leaking antifreeze, of diesel spills, and different pollution incidents that Zellhart and her Public Works colleagues have actually been called upon to deal with in the Township.

## Another agenda

But while raising student awareness of watershed issues and identifying ways to protect vulnerable water assets were clearly important goals of the exercise, another, even more significant objective, was also at play: creating a school environment where adolescent girls could feel comfortable working on science-related projects, free of social pressures.

**Go with the flow.** Girls from the Seneca Valley STEM FEMS after-school science program built miniature models of watersheds to study the ways water flows over its topography.

Although women fill close to half of all jobs in the United States, they hold

*Women hold fewer than a quarter of the STEM jobs – jobs in science, technology, engineering and math – many of which pay quite well.*

fewer than a quarter of the STEM jobs – jobs in science, technology, engineering and math – many of which pay quite well. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, women in STEM jobs earn 33 percent more than women in non-STEM work. But the gender-based stereotypes of those occupations have proved stubbornly resistant. They are still widely considered to be jobs for men.

Getting girls interested in STEM careers is an issue of national concern. But for Ms. Zellhart, herself a former college biology major, it's also a personal one. "I've been in the wastewater business for 15-plus years now," she reflected. "Initially, when I would go to meetings for various organizations in water and wastewater, I'd be one of the only women there. Now that's starting to change. I'm seeing more women, younger women, young professionals.

"For example, one of the groups we belong to is the Western Pennsylvania Water Pollution Control Association. That organization has been active for 60-plus years, but this is the first year

we've ever had a woman president."

## In search of STEM FEMS

Finding ways of exposing girls to science and technology fields that engage their imaginations is an effort the Township is continuing to support in tandem with Seneca Valley schools' STEM program. Its after-school program, appropriately called STEM FEMS, has welcomed other women on the Cranberry Township staff in addition to Ms. Zellhart. Engineer Kelly Maurer, communication specialist Cindy Marzock, and laboratory technician Larissa Hoover have all participated in sharing their work and experiences with girls at the club. And, along with teacher Julie Smith, they are constantly looking for hands-on activities that can help the girls tie underlying scientific concepts together.

But they are also on the lookout for other adult women in the community who can meet with the STEM FEMS, mentor them, or serve as judges for their science fairs and projects based on STEM disciplines. Interested professionals are invited contact the program about their interests at [rhonda.zellhart@cranberrytownship.org](mailto:rhonda.zellhart@cranberrytownship.org). "Even the White House is saying we need more women in the STEM fields," Zellhart pointed out.

But beyond mere numbers, there may be another advantage to expanding the field of women in those disciplines – one rooted in the way that women tend to look at solving problems. "We are wired slightly differently than gentlemen are," she said with a knowing smile. ~



# When Worse Comes To Worst; Responding To A Live School Shooter

It has been over 15 years since two heavily armed students at Columbine High School in Colorado went on a murderous rampage leaving a dozen classmates and one teacher dead, as well as 23 other students seriously wounded. It also set a macabre model for school massacres – one which has been followed by dozens of imitators in schools across the nation. The Columbine attack left school administrators everywhere with the daunting task of securing their buildings against the wrath of either suicidal student assaults or of strangers bent on wreaking havoc within their walls.

There is no history or credible threat of an active shooter attack in any of Seneca Valley's nine schools. But what all such attacks have had in common is that they were never expected. So preparing for that possibility, and training in ways of responding should one occur, are never far from the minds of law enforcement professionals or school administrators. That's why, this past Columbus Day, October 13, teachers and senior administrators, together with law enforcement and emergency agencies from the surrounding area, converged on Haine Middle School in Cranberry for training in how to respond should the need ever arise.

## Emergency planning

In 2012, Sean McCarty, Seneca Valley's Assistant Superintendent, completed his doctoral studies with a dissertation on school safety. For much of the following two years, he worked with Cranberry police and others in law enforcement to arrange for a realistic drill on ways of responding to a school shooter. "You



: "You hope this will  
: never happen in any of  
: our schools, however  
: we need to do our due  
: diligence to prepare  
: for this event."

hope this will never happen in any of our schools," he reflected. "However we need to do our due diligence to prepare for this event."

Penn State's Fayette County campus is home to the Center for Community and Public Safety – a faculty of former law enforcement professionals who train local police departments in all aspects of their trade. For more than a decade, training in response to mass shooting events has been a mainstay of the program. So, for the Haine School drill, Cranberry secured instructors from Penn State to stage a variety of attack scenarios, coach area police officers in proven response tactics, and then critically evaluate their performance.

But while the drill's primary objective was to train law enforcement personnel, members of the district's teaching staff were also involved, particularly those who were members of their home school's crisis teams. "All the teachers and members of our staff who acted out the scenarios were either part of our crisis teams or volunteers from those

buildings," McCarty said. "The intent was to experience hearing the gun shots, see how police would enter the building, and see how victims could be sent out. But the idea for our staff was to take that

experience back to our school buildings, look at the footage, and talk about what you should do if one of these scenarios occur. What's your responsibility if you have children that are under your care? What should you do next?"

## Police response

On the law enforcement side, Cranberry police Lt. Kevin Meyer and Sgt. Chuck Mascellino served as the drill's local points of contact. "We got as many as our law enforcement neighbors involved as we could," Meyer pointed out. "We had folks from Jackson, Adams, New Sewickley, Northern Regional, Evans City, Lancaster, Butler County Community College, and the Sheriff's office. We had Cranberry EMS and fire company here as well as officers from the Butler County Prison. We were able



to establish four separate teams and we mixed them up as we went through the different scenarios."

"It's extremely important to have those working relationships," he said. "What's also important is that you bring these agencies into our community and that they're able to see our school. So now they're familiar with Haine School and its layout in the event, God forbid, we would have to respond to something like this. There's a whole host of different positives that come out of these types of training."

A video of the drill is available online at [www.CranberryTownship.org/ActiveShooterDrill](http://www.CranberryTownship.org/ActiveShooterDrill). ~

## Cranberry's Police Look Deeply Into Cell Phones

There was a time, not all that long ago, when people were inclined to use their computer for just about everything important in their lives. For law enforcement professionals, that usually meant a suspect's PC would yield a bonanza of documents, pictures, correspondence, transactions and contacts which could be tremendously important in solving a crime.

So to help, Cranberry's police department acquired a Forensic Tool Kit, a product of Access Data Corp., to scrutinize and retrieve high-value computer data. But the use of personal computers, and the days of seizing laptops for evidence, are steadily giving way to searching the contents of smartphones and the caches of information they typically hold.

Part of the reason behind that transition is that unlike a computer, a cell phone is almost always with its owner and almost always turned on. Another is that the capabilities of a typical smart phone, as well as its storage capacity, are significantly greater than most personal computers were as recently as ten years ago. They also provide a wealth of location-specific information – some of which resides in the phone, some of which can be secured by subpoena from the cell phone carrier. Most important, perhaps, is that virtually everyone – particularly including lawbreakers – carries one, which they check, refresh and make use of dozens of times a day.

### A forensic feast

As a result, when someone is arrested, Cranberry police quickly secure a warrant allowing them to search the suspect's cell phone. To help, the office of Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger bought a special device made by Cellebrite last spring, which was created to help police retrieve, organize, search and store information from mobile devices for forensic investigation. In addition to

being capable of recovering information from essentially any make of cell phone, it can circumvent the passwords which are normally required to gain access to the devices. It also enables data to be extracted, decoded and analyzed – even if the user has already deleted it from the phone.

The Cellebrite unit was purchased for the use of all police departments in Butler County. But because of Cranberry's size and technical sophistication, as well as its initiative in requesting the device, the Township's Police Department was selected to be its home.

"That was the agreement we had," Cranberry police Lt. Kevin Meyer confirmed. "We have a valuable tool here that's available to us at any time, and we will use it for other agencies. We even get Allegheny County departments come up; we all share our resources.

*When someone is arrested, Cranberry police quickly secure a warrant allowing them to search the suspect's cell phone.*

"We operate on the assumption that we're going to get a warrant to search every one of them," he said. "Either the owner consents to a search, or we get

a warrant. We're not going to do it just on a whim – only if there's an exigent circumstance where we urgently need to get that information."

### Technology support

Today, the county's Cellebrite is in heavy use. But at least for now, the computer-oriented Forensic Tool Kit is only in intermittent use. "We have this expensive tool, but we don't use it daily," Meyer admitted. "While our guys are technically savvy, they're not that practiced. So we came up with the idea to take Cranberry's Desktop Administrator Jeff Gooch, who is our liaison with the Township's IT department and who deals with all our digital issues, and train him in how to operate the Forensic Tool Kit. But he's also on call to help investigators with our new mobile phone device."

"Cellebrite's software takes a copy of the phone, pulls whatever information it can, and saves it onto some sort of portable media where it's stored as evidence," Gooch explained. "It creates a report – a sort of snapshot in time – of what was on that device at the time it was recovered. It captures the state of the device, extracts that information, and then references, searches, and formats it in whatever way the person who's reviewing that evidence needs in order to see what transpired using that device – pictures, text messages, phone calls, things like that.

"It creates a log and the logs never lie."

~

### Spilling its guts.

Township IT department Desktop Administrator Jeff Gooch, whose own college studies involved computer forensics, operates the Cellebrite cell phone information retrieval device to recover evidence for local law enforcement agencies.





## CTCC Attempts To Solve: The Case Of The Vanishing Firemen

All across America, the roster of volunteer firefighters has experienced a long and depressing decline. Pennsylvania today has just one-sixth as many volunteers as it had in 1970. But maintaining a full-time paid fire department – the main alternative to having a volunteer company – is way beyond the means of most Commonwealth communities.

*Cranberry Township Community Chest, as its 2015 Project of the Year, is attempting to change the paradigm of volunteer fire service in Butler County.*

So Cranberry Township Community Chest, as its 2015 Project of the Year, is attempting to change the paradigm of volunteer fire service in Butler County and reverse that historic drop in numbers. It has made considerable progress since the campaign formally began this past summer.

### Threefold strategy

CTCC's Firefighter Initiative is approaching the falloff in three complementary ways. One is by working with local media to focus on volunteer firefighters in Butler County and thank these otherwise unsung heroes by way of twice-weekly profiles showcasing volunteer fire companies in the *Butler Eagle*.

Another is through the purchase of two mobile fire safety trailers – one that the County's 31 fire companies would use in training their residents and workers in the fundamentals of

fire safety. That trailer would be housed at Butler County Community College's main campus and scheduled by BC3 staff in response to requests from fire companies throughout the County. The other, identical to the first, would remain in Cranberry Township and be scheduled by its own fire company as needed.

The third part is to endow approximately 20 scholarships to attend Butler County Community College and offer them to students who agree to take the required fire safety training and serve in the volunteer fire companies of their home or workplace communities during the time they're enrolled at the school.

Taken together, the initiative is projected to require half a million dollars. As of late November, \$330,000 had been received with additional fundraising efforts still underway. The hope is that these combined initiatives will begin turning around Butler County's long slide in volunteer firefighters and become a model for other communities as well.

### The long struggle

But it's an uphill battle. That's because there are a number of compelling reasons behind the falloff in numbers. Some of them apply to every community, others to only a few. But together, they conspire to make volunteer fire service more difficult and time-consuming than most prospective volunteers can shoulder.

For example, America's rural population is aging, making it more difficult to find young people who are available to serve their home communities. Family work patterns have shifted, making volunteer time less available. The hours that firefighters are required to spend



in training has exploded from 12 in the 1970s to 188 today – and that's just for training in the essentials.

The types of incidents for which fire companies are called upon has expanded considerably too. And, of course, firefighting remains dangerous work; in 2013 alone, 97 firefighters were killed in the line of duty, including 14 in one horrific incident at a fertilizer plant explosion in Texas. But perhaps the most difficult challenge – although pointedly not in Cranberry – is that the majority of volunteer time is spent raising money to fund the fire company's operations. Bingos, auctions, raffles and carnivals typically take more time than training and emergency calls combined.

Various communities have tried different approaches to improving the situation. Some, like Cranberry, add fire taxes to real estate assessments, others charge homeowners or insurance companies for response calls. Some have merged to cut costs. Some offer stipends to volunteers for time spent in training, while others actually pay volunteers based on call responses, training, or time on duty. And in a few states, firefighters are granted pensions, life insurance and other benefits. But at the end of the day, for most communities, a fresh approach will be required to help them recruit and retain volunteers.

If you would like to support CTCC's countywide initiative, look in any Sunday issue of the *Cranberry Eagle*, where you'll find details about how you can be part of the solution. ~

### Consider The Alternative

*97% of the fire fighters in Butler County are volunteers.*

*The exception is the City of Butler, whose paid fire service costs every resident \$125 a year. For a family of four, that's more than a Cranberry family would pay for all municipal services including fire, police, roads, parks, library, and more. In addition to keeping residents safe, that's how much Cranberry's volunteer firefighters save the Township.*



John Thrower, Jr.,  
CEO Thrower Concrete

## I was amazed at their response.

*"Around 1:05 a.m. on January 20, I got a call from the Cranberry Fire Company that there was a fire at my cement plant. An electric heater had caught the office on fire, and it spread through the rest of the building. Someone had seen it from the highway and called 911.*

*"They had it pretty well out by the time I got there. However, the control room building had been completely destroyed. We were out of business there for most of the year. Fortunately, we had two other plants, but it took us a lot longer to make deliveries.*

*"Now we're back on line, but I'm still amazed at the amount of equipment and manpower the Cranberry Township Fire Company had on the scene for the middle of a cold winter night. I'm really happy to be back in business here in Cranberry."*

Every year, the men and women of the Cranberry Township's Volunteer Fire Company answer over 600 calls, from reassuring residents to taking decisive action. They do it all without hesitation, without complaint, and without pay. And they do it with the thanks of a grateful community.

If you'd like to be part of something truly special, the members of Cranberry's Fire Company invite you to join them.



The Cranberry Township  
Volunteer Fire Company

1629 Haine School Road and 20727 Route 19

Cranberry Township, PA 16066

724-776-1196

[www.ctvc21.com](http://www.ctvc21.com)

## This Class Can Save Your Life

Cranberry EMS will be offering six bi-monthly training sessions in CPR and First Aid during 2015. The tuition – \$40 per discipline – is unchanged from last year. Anyone who successfully completes a class will receive a two-year certification as well as a pocket CPR Mask. All classes will be held in Council Chambers. CPR instruction will run from 9:00 AM until noon; First Aid will be taught from 12:15 until 3:00 PM. Classes will be held the third Saturday on alternate months: February 21, April 18, June 20, August 15, October 17, and December 19. To register, or for more information, call 724-776-4480 ext. 1911, or go to the EMS website at [www.cranberrytownshipems.org](http://www.cranberrytownshipems.org). You can also register to have your child's car seat checked any Tuesday or Thursday between 10:00 AM and 4:30 PM by calling that same number.





## Common Sense Winter Safety Information

- Slow down; on slippery roads, even 25 can be too fast
- Don't pass snow plows and stay back to avoid salt spray
- Provide off-street parking for your guests
- Pull basketball hoops back from the street
- Clear snow from around fire hydrants
- Don't burn Christmas trees; put them out at the curb
- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned if necessary
- Shovel your sidewalks for pedestrians, first responders
- Sign up for Township alerts concerning winter storms ~



## For Whom The School Bell Tolls

To mark American Education Week in November, Seneca Valley invited community leaders from throughout the district to spend a day visiting any one of its nine schools and witnessing its classes in action. In addition, the leaders were invited to spend

November 20 shadowing a principal or teacher in their choice of district schools in order to share "What Works at SV." Cranberry staff members and Supervisors answered their call. Supervisors Dick Hadley and Bruce Mazzoni spent the day observing in several district schools as did Township Manager Jerry Andree, Pretreatment Administrator Rhonda Zellhart, and Parks & Recreation Program Manager Dave Hutner. ~



## Purdue Comes To Cranberry's Traffic Test Kitchen

Where does a prestigious university go when it needs really good information about traffic? Cranberry Township. It's not only that Cranberry has lots of traffic to study, it's that it also has some of the most advanced traffic monitoring and tracking technology of any community in the country. As a result, the data collected to operate Cranberry's traffic signals is prized by anyone who is serious about developing even more advanced traffic management systems. Several years ago, it was Carnegie-Mellon. This year it's the Joint Transportation Research Program out of Purdue University's civil engineering office, which is developing a system to improve intersection management around a currently unused module of the Centrax signal software that Cranberry now has installed. ~

## Power To The People

The all-electric Tesla S is expensive, starting around \$70,000. But there are some offsetting savings. Unlike most vehicles, which require you to fill them up with gasoline every few hundred miles, Tesla includes the electricity used to power the advanced luxury car as part of its purchase price. A network of 132 company-owned Supercharging Stations, open 24/7, have been built along well-traveled highways from coast to coast in North America, including one six-bay station in Cranberry Township, by the Residence Inn on Freedom Road. The high-voltage direct current Superchargers can provide the sedan with half a charge in as little as 20 minutes, enough to power the car for 170 miles. ~



## Think Summer

Cranberry's Waterpark will open for business Saturday, May 23 and remain open daily – weather permitting – until Sunday, August 30, with no increase in membership pricing from last year. Private sun deck and party room reservations are now available. Early Bird rates for Cranberry residents using their discounts for memberships purchased in January or February, range from \$65 for an individual 62 or older to \$250 for a family of five or more. Rates for non-residents are \$85 and \$310, respectively. Membership application forms are posted on the Township's website at [www.CranberryTownship.org/Waterpark](http://www.CranberryTownship.org/Waterpark). ~







724-776-4806

[www.cranberrytownship.org](http://www.cranberrytownship.org)

2525 Rochester Rd, Ste. 400, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

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# Keep on Recyclin'

Cranberry residents have one of Pennsylvania's best records for recycling. The Township earns state grants for good performance which help to finance the Collection Connection program. Keep up the good work.

**Recycle. It's clean. It's green. It's easy.**



paper



boxes



cans



jars



bottles



724-776-4806 • [www.cranberrytownship.org/collection](http://www.cranberrytownship.org/collection)



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**built for you.**



## Email? Text?

Free up-to-the-minute alerts concerning travel advisories, weather cancellations, public safety issues and other essential information affecting Cranberry residents can be sent to your inbox, as they occur, when you sign up for Cranberry Connect. Go to [www.cranberrytownship.org/connect](http://www.cranberrytownship.org/connect) to subscribe. If you are already a user of Twitter or Facebook, find us on their Cranberry pages and click "follow" or "like" to receive Township announcements.