

Cranberrytoday

FALL 2015

Township's Water Meters Slated For An Upgrade

Chances are your home water meter – and maybe your workplace one as well – are in line to be replaced. Why?

As things stand now, a Township Public Works employee trudges onto your property every other month, pushes aside your shrubbery, sidesteps any snarling dogs, and places his reading device onto the touchpad on an outside wall of your home. That gives him a reading from your indoor water meter, which is hard wired to the touchpad. Your water consumption data is then transferred to the Township's accounting system which, in turn, generates a monthly bill – alternating between actual and estimated readings.

There are more than ten thousand of those touchpads in Cranberry, so

older technology and it's probably not reading correctly anyway. That not only makes your bill inaccurate, it also interferes with the Township's water system management.

Going digital

So, starting early next year, your old meter will get replaced with a new electronic one, and your outdoor touchpad will be augmented with a snap-on unit that will allow it to be read remotely. Instead of today's meters, which show use to the nearest 100 gallons, the new digital ones will register down to a single gallon. It will eliminate estimated water bills. Instead of having a worker come on site to take readings once every other month, it will take hourly readings and send them to the Township's Finance Department. It will also send the data to a secure website where you can track your own water use in near-real time.

That can help you to better manage your own water consumption. For example, you can set it to give automatic alerts by voice, text or email when your measured



use exceeds a preset amount.

The transition to remotely read meters is already underway nationwide.

In Western Pennsylvania, it currently includes Monaca, Adams,

New Kensington, West View Water and Hampton-Shaler. Cranberry saw the trend emerging some years ago, and carefully monitored the experience of other communities undertaking that transition to find out what worked and what didn't. Then, starting in 2010, the Township began pilot testing meters from different manufacturers to see which ones were most accurate and trouble-free to install.

Standard setting

Like most grocery items, those meters and touch pad transponders come with expiration dates, which are clearly identified. But unlike most grocery items, they won't expire for another 20 years. That's because each device has a long-life battery built into it – one which

Continued on page 3.

If the meter in your home was installed before 2009, it uses an older technology and it's probably not reading correctly anyway.

reading them all takes a lot of time and labor – more than 120 hours a month. And if the meter in your home was installed before 2009, it uses an

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Historical Society To Open Museum In Municipal Center

Back in late 19th century, ambitious plans were underway for two separate steam railroads to cross through Cranberry Township – one from Pittsburgh to New Castle, another from Sharpsburg to Lawrence County, crossing each other in the northwest corner of Cranberry Township. Had they actually been built, the history of Cranberry might well have been very different.

Today, many generations later, no one is left with even a second-hand recollection of the Township's early

A handful of artifacts tell the tale of a pioneering community, bristling with oil derricks, strip mines, sawmills, gristmills and blacksmith shops, as well as family farms.

industrial period. However a handful of artifacts, maps and other documents tucked away in attics still remain to tell the tale of a pioneering community,

bristling with oil derricks, strip mines, sawmills, gristmills and blacksmith shops, as well as family farms.

This fall, to better showcase that fleeting era, the Cranberry Township Historical Society will open a permanent exhibit, designed to capture and display lost remnants of the community's early days of growth and settlement. It will be housed in the Township's Municipal Center, in a space formerly used as a conference room for tenants.

School's out

Roy Wagner, the Historical Society's president, has been quietly advancing the concept of a local history museum for several years. "I initially wanted to put the museum inside the old Johnston School," he recalled, but the fragile brick building – which was finally demolished in 2013 – had serious issues. "The lot would only hold about five cars. The chimney was falling off. The foundation had problems. The floor inside was sinking. And when the Township consulted with the company that moved the wooden Sample schoolhouse, there was no guarantee

that Johnston School could be moved without breaking apart."

But the Township's 220 square foot Municipal Center conference room seemed ideal. The building is in excellent repair, its mechanical systems work well, security is not an issue, and parking is abundant. So earlier this year, the Township and Historical Society entered an agreement where the room could be used free of charge for museum space, with the Society taking responsibility for all of its furnishings.

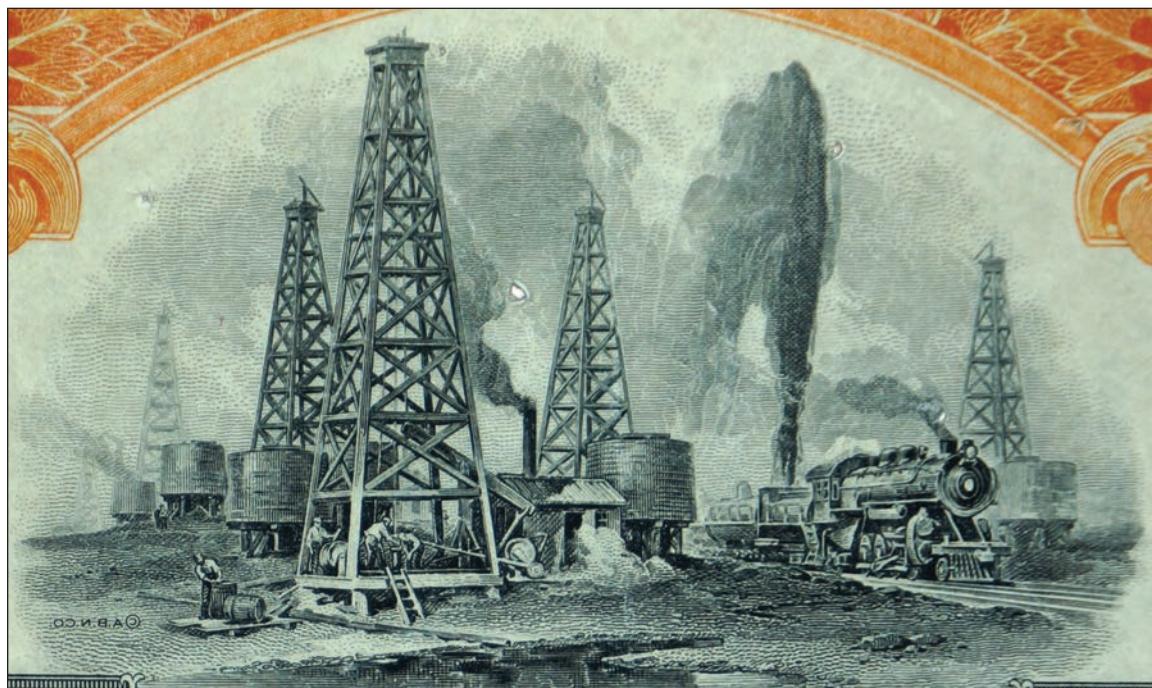
Historic installations

"We'll have permanent displays and space where we can rotate other items through," Wagner explained. "We plan on having a docent there anytime it's open. For the permanent display, we envision a 4 by 4 relief map of the Township based on a 1908 topographic map. It's the best quality topo we have and the oldest one I know of. Then we would add in the Indian trails that pass through the Township, mark the proposed routes of the two railroads and the Mars-Rochester trolley, add LED lights marking key points of interest,

possibly including oil well locations," although, as he admits, there were literally hundreds of wells – so many they could potentially overwhelm the map.

Continued on page 3.

The Cranberry that almost was. Artifacts of America's industrial age were everywhere in Cranberry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However plans for two steam railroad lines crossing the Township were never built.



Historical Society To Open Museum In Municipal Center

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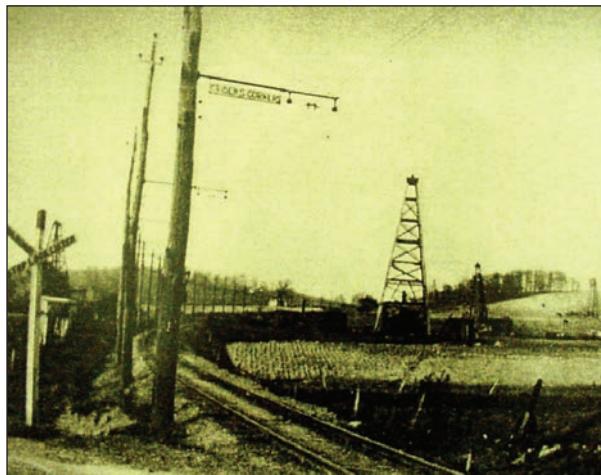
"On two of the walls, we're going to have an L-shaped HO model railroad featuring the Harmony Line," he said. "We're going to include some of the old structures such as the Meeder Store, Ogle Post Office and all six trolley stops along it from pictures we have and from structures still in place. I already have one volunteer who does scratch building, and I learned CAD so I could design some of these buildings and the Harmony Line trolley cars themselves from pictures and then 3D print them."

Other elements of the exhibit will include historic photos, wall-mounted pull-down maps, a display of Indian hunting artifacts currently housed in the Society-managed Sample One-Room Schoolhouse, a replica of the Freedom Road fudge stand repurposed as a

souvenir kiosk, interactive slide shows, touch pads and videos, as well as such household period items as a butter churn and scrub board. More items are expected to be added as the museum evolves.

The Cranberry Township History Center – the museum's official name – was financed in part with a grant from CTCC. It is an affiliate of both the Heinz History Center and the Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau. Its official

opening date and hours of operation have not yet been announced. ~



The Cranberry that actually was. Criders Corners, at the corner of today's Dutilh and Mars Road, was a stop along the Harmony Line electric trolley in the early 20th century as it passed through rural Cranberry Township which included more than 100 gas and oil wells.

Township's Water Meters Slated For An Upgrade

Continued from front cover

keeps their digital displays and transmitters operating without the need for external power. But eventually, those batteries run down and, starting around 2036, the units will once again need to be replaced.

In the meantime, Cranberry's meter changeover is expected to take two or three years. Following a green light from its Board of Supervisors in July, the first phase – which involved acquiring the

software and building remote antenna towers – was begun. The remaining phases of the project, slated to start in early 2016 and continue into 2018, involve hiring a contractor to do the actual on-site exchanges, which take an average of 30-45 minutes, disrupting water service for only about 20 minutes.

The contractor's call center will contact every water customer ahead of time to schedule their installation, which

requires access to the interior of the home. An adult must be present when the work is done, both to let the workers in and to sign off once it's complete.

The meter swap program's \$3 million cost is expected to be recovered within five years through savings from remote reading as well as from more accurate billing. ~



Honest, It Just Slipped My Mind

Oops! Your 2015 Butler County/Cranberry Township real estate tax is overdue and now it has a penalty attached. Pay it now, because if it's still unpaid by the end of the year, it goes before the famously unsmiling Butler County Tax Claim Bureau for more aggressive collection. On the other hand, your 2015/2016 Seneca Valley School District real estate tax can still be paid at face value until November 30. If you recently changed mortgage companies and are no longer using an escrow account to pay your property taxes, contact tax collector P. J. Lynd either at his Municipal Center office, by email at pj.lynd@cranberrytownship.org, or by phone at 724-776-1103. ~

Accelerating Cranberry's Bike-Pedestrian Connections

This past summer, when Cranberry's Community Development Director Ron Henshaw issued a call for volunteers to form a committee that could help his department identify bicycle and pedestrian projects to build next year, he was hoping that a handful of local stalwarts would eventually put up their hands. He was wrong.

"We immediately got our twelve Advisory Committee members," he reported soon afterward. "And then we had to turn down 30 or 40 more; we still get people every day asking to be on it."

For Henshaw, who oversees the Township's planning efforts, it was a gratifying development. Before the mid-'90s, most of Cranberry's components – its neighborhoods, office parks, shopping centers, municipal buildings, playgrounds, schools and churches – were developed in isolation. The idea that they might benefit from being connected to one another by sidewalks, particularly in what was then a mostly rural Cranberry Township, must have seemed odd. In fact Cranberry's first comprehensive plan, in 1977, never even mentioned sidewalks or trails as priorities. Walking, after all, was what you did in parks; driving was how you got from Point A to Point B.

By the '90s, however, attitudes had changed. Developments were being built closer together. New residents were arriving from other communities where sidewalks were customary. Fitness came into vogue. So the interest in building a connected network of sidewalks, trails,

bikeways and pathways in Cranberry continued to grow. And Township planners struggled to figure out how to retrofit a community that was never designed for pedestrians. But Henshaw

- *Township planners struggled to figure out how to retrofit a community that was never designed for pedestrians.*

expects the advent of his Community Connections Advisory Committee to accelerate that process.

Planning in a vacuum

"If we had kept on going the way we were going, we would have been planning in a vacuum," he observed. "Just doing what our staff thinks is the wrong way to go. It's all about the residents. At the same time, though, most residents don't know the challenges we face. There are complications in every direction, and it's going to be a learning process for them. But with the Advisory Committee coming on line, I think we're up for the challenge. It's going to put a different spin on prioritizing how we build pedestrian ways and the bike component."

"What else can we do to build connections and connect this community?" he asked, rhetorically.

"How can we build a trail system that actually gets us through the Township? It might not go all the way through in every direction, and it's got some challenges, like crossing Rt. 19. But if you stop working every time a challenge popped up, nothing would get done. Nothing. So we've got to fight through them, figure them out, and keep that thought process going until it really starts to make sense."

Making sense

"Actually, it's already starting to make sense," he said, citing sidewalk improvements and connections completed this summer along Powell Road, Commonwealth Drive and Brush Creek. "Even with these three projects and some other little things that Public Works and Engineering did recently, people get it. They're on board with it. It's got energy."

"At the same time, however, I feel as though our bike connections are trailing behind. We've got to find some real solutions for them. We have to. Our Board of Supervisors knows that bike-able communities are successful communities. And right now, we're lagging."

"We need to figure this stuff out – all of it: sidewalks, trails, and bikeways. But it always starts with a wild idea. Maybe we can't actually do it, but that wild idea leads us to something else we can do – some other component we hadn't even thought of." ~



Hit The Trail

Walk and ride with Township Manager Jerry Andree along Cranberry's growing network of footpaths, trails and sidewalks. Beginning at 10:00 AM on Saturday, November 7, participants will meet in Graham Park to board a bus which will take them to different sites in Cranberry where pedestrian pathways are now in place. Some of them, including the trail between Graham Park and the Hunters Creek plan of homes, will be traversed by foot. Trail mix and juice will be provided during the free outing, but your RSVP is requested at 724-776-4806 x1103. ~





Discrediting Government: Is Fox News Actually Right?

by **Bruce Mazzoni**, *Chairman, Cranberry Township Board of Supervisors*

It's happening all over America. Local governments are getting shut out of the nation's credit markets. Cities like Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis, as well as entire states and suburbs in Virginia, Maryland, and other parts of the country, have been assigned junk bond status – forced to pay exorbitant interest rates to raise funds for essential public projects. And Washington just keeps printing money to cover its monstrous federal deficits. So is Fox News' view of government right after all?

The reasons that bond ratings for so many municipal governments have gone down the drain are, at their core, political: a history of nepotism, poor management, deferred maintenance, unsustainable pension contracts, and the absence of realistic planning. A lot

Moody's Investor Service – whose assessments of borrowers' creditworthiness effectively sets the rates for municipal borrowing – recently evaluated us in connection with our plan to float bonds for financing the Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant upgrade. The way it works is that the higher your rating, the lower your interest rate. Before the latest evaluation, we had been graded a very high Aa2. But our latest rating came out an even higher Aa1.

What does that mean? Well, to start with, it means we're paying a lot less in debt service. Only 9 out of 2,562 municipalities in Pennsylvania share our Aa1 rating. By contrast, both the Commonwealth and the federal government saw their ratings downgraded over the last two years. So, at least in investors' eyes, Cranberry Township is in great financial shape and operating responsibly.

Unlike other units of government, we have not kicked the can by ignoring future problems. Our infrastructure is in good shape, our non-uniformed employees have had a 401(k)-type pension plan for years, and we believe in planning and investing for the future. Not only have those factors improved our credit rating, even more important, they resulted in 10,000 new jobs, 400 new businesses and thousands of additional residents, just over the last decade. That has generated an economic impact of over \$6 billion to our region, which is huge.

Part of that success is due to the fact that none of Cranberry's five Supervisors depend on their elected posts to feed their families. We even gave up health care insurance eight years ago. We do what we do for community service and to make a

difference that benefits our residents – not for the token stipend that comes with the office. We are exactly the sort of "citizen legislators" our founding fathers intended.

Another reason is that we hire professional staff to run Township affairs day-to-day. Because of our reputation as a progressive community, whenever a position opens, we get dozens, if not hundreds, of great applications. Cranberry is known as a leader in local government. Part of the reason is that we take politics out of our decisions and instead, base what we do on deciding what's right for our residents. That's essentially why Moody's upgraded us.

Beyond that, we're careful with taxpayer money. Cable subscriptions, cell phones, and even HOA bills typically cost \$100 or more a month. But for 24/7 police and fire service, snow plowing in the winter, paving in the summer, a great library, 600 acres of beautiful park space, and a municipal center teeming with activities, the cost to a typical family in Cranberry is just \$67 per month, based on an average home value of \$275,000 and a family income of \$75,000. An average retiree pays just \$37 a month. Beyond that, homeowners' property values keep growing because people are eager to move here.

So let's give credit where credit is due. There is such a thing as good government. And it's right here in Cranberry Township. But you probably knew that since you decided to live here. ~



A lot has to do with career politicians – whose livelihoods, healthcare and pensions depend on keeping a largely dysfunctional system going while keeping themselves in office.

of that has to do with career politicians – people whose livelihoods, healthcare and pensions depend on keeping a largely dysfunctional system going while keeping themselves in office term after term. They're everywhere.

However, there are still some noteworthy exceptions. Cranberry, I'm pleased to say, is one of them. This past summer,

Financing the Brush Creek plant expansion

The Name Is Bond. Municipal Bond.

Cranberry Township, like most local governments, is accustomed to financing major public projects – parks, building expansions, fire trucks, and so forth – by issuing a few million dollars in tax-free municipal bonds to institutional investors like pension funds, insurance companies and endowments.

They work a lot like mortgages, and it's a fairly straightforward process: a professional service like PNC Capital Markets is retained to offer investors the opportunity to buy a stream of income, usually for 10 to 20 years. Proceeds from that bond sale go toward financing the project, while local taxpayers repay the buyers, with interest, over time. The interest rate they pay is strongly influenced by investors' perceptions of the Township's creditworthiness.

This past August, armed with an attractive new credit upgrade from Moody's Investor Service and a marketplace featuring historically low borrowing rates, Cranberry once again approached the bond market. Only this time it was for a much bigger project – \$41.5 million to expand the Township's Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant and satisfy a mandate from Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection. But in big-time financing, things work differently.

"This is absolutely the biggest capital project Cranberry has ever undertaken – by far," Finance Director Vanessa Gleason reflected.

Part of the challenge comes from a legal requirement that obliges the

municipality to spend all proceeds from the bond sale within three years. But the construction timetable for Cranberry's plant upgrade – which doesn't even start until next year – would take longer than that. As a result, the bond issue could only raise a portion of the funds, although a big enough portion to cover most of the cost.

Bottled in bond

"We talked about borrowing \$32 million in 2015, then borrowing the other \$9 million in 2016 to get to \$41 million, which is what we need," Gleason said. "Then we looked at either 20-year, 25-year or 30-year bonds." What the Township's Board of Supervisors decided was that even though its payments would be somewhat higher, Cranberry could repay the bonds in 20 rather than 30 years, saving millions over the long term, just as accelerating payments save homeowners on mortgage debt.

Servicing that debt required increasing customer's sewer rates by 82¢ per 1,000 gallons from \$7.16 per 1,000 gallons to \$7.98, effective October 20. But approximately ten percent of that increase can be attributed to a unique complexity of bond trading – secondary premium markets which resulted in raising \$35.3 million rather than the \$32 million originally visualized. It also saw investors securing bonds of different lengths and at interest rates ranging from as little as 1.5 to as much as



Shaken, not stirred. Cranberry retained PNC Capital Markets as its stalwart guide through the jungle of America's institutional investor market.

5 percent, although refinancing the higher interest bonds at a later time will still be possible.

An added complexity came from legacy indebtedness of the former Municipal Sewer & Water Authority, which the Township absorbed in 2001. "We have an issue with old debt from the Authority," Gleason explained. We still have ten more years to pay on that debt. We're trying to position ourselves so the old debt gets paid off, and this new bond issue itself is close to being paid off, before the next phase of the plant expansion has to happen."

Cranberry's newly issued bonds are legally classified as General Obligation bonds, backed by the full faith and credit of the Township – taxes, user fees, everything. "However, absolutely no tax dollars go toward this – absolutely none," Gleason emphasized. ~



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- go toward this – absolutely none.

Sustainable Government: A Different Shade Of Green

Even before Cranberry's Board of Supervisors approved the Township's 2009 comprehensive plan, it declared sustainability to be a pillar of the community's planning effort.

To many people, that meant the Township would strive to be a good environmental steward through conservation, recycling, avoiding pollution, and encouraging the use of renewable resources. That actually happened, and this past August, Sustainable Pittsburgh, together with the Pennsylvania Municipal League, awarded Cranberry its Platinum Level certificate, their highest award, for achievements in sustainability – one of only two communities to receive that distinction.

But for most units of government, there is another, more immediate meaning to the concept of sustainability: maintaining its ability to pay long-term obligations. That can be a huge challenge, and it's one that public entities struggle with all the time. Some succeed, others scrape by, and a growing number just don't make it at all – drowning in debt they can't service.

Cranberry is one of the communities that has managed to keep its fiscal balance, although the challenge never goes away. Earlier this year, as if to validate that



success, Moody's Investor Services raised the rating they assigned to the Township's creditworthiness from an already high Aa2 to an even higher Aa1. Among more than 2,500 municipalities, authorities and school systems in Pennsylvania, only nine share that distinction.

However, Cranberry's achievement is more than a stroke of good fortune. It is the result of applying a disciplined set of sustainability principles to the Township's financial operations. Among them:

- **Avoid legacy costs.** Many units of government, at one time or another, agreed to pay lifetime benefits to their retirees – something the private sector rejected 30 years ago. Cranberry has minimal legacy costs and only those mandated by the state.
- **Separate duties.** Elected officials in many municipalities do double duty as members of the government's staff. That complicates the board's oversight of municipal operations and creates potential conflicts of interest. Cranberry's Board is completely separate from its staff functions.
- **Professionalize decisions.** The priority for public works projects in many communities is set by elected officials based on personal or political connections. In Cranberry, decisions like road maintenance are made by its professional staff using objective criteria.
 - **Avoid business subsidies.** The practice of using tax relief or
- making infrastructure improvements at public expense to attract new businesses is widespread in Western Pennsylvania. Cranberry avoids that wherever possible, charging builders Impact Fees instead.
- **Shun nepotism.** Professional employment in Cranberry is based on what you can do, not on who you know. Job openings draw huge numbers of applicants.
- **Inform the Board.** Cranberry's Board of Supervisors receives detailed monthly reports and briefings on the community's finances. Changing trends become apparent early on.
- **Communicate internally.** Department heads meet together regularly to share ideas and information, avoiding the isolated silos that can impede teamwork.
- **Be transparent.** Cranberry regularly posts and publishes detailed information to residents about its finances and operations, holding frequent public meetings to answer questions.
- **Monitor tax exemptions.** About 10% of Cranberry's real estate is currently tax exempt. In Pittsburgh, it's closer to 40%, unfairly burdening non-exempt property owners.
- **Diversify.** Communities that grow around a single large employer or industry are vulnerable to its eventual downturn. Cranberry works to avoid that exposure by cultivating a diverse economic base.
- **Match revenue to expense.** If servicing debt adds to its expenses, Cranberry will also raise its user fees, utility rates, taxes or other revenue streams to offset it. ~

Uncertainty Drives Brush Creek Plant Upgrade Design

When Cranberry's engineers and consultants began looking at what an upgrade to the Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant might involve, they were faced with two big unknowns. The first was how big Cranberry's population and workforce would be several generations from now. The other was what DEP, Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, whose job includes issuing water regulations and approving permits for treatment plants, would decide the Brush Creek facility had to do in the future.

The answers to both could only be educated guesses. But the plant's design and cost would have everything to do with how closely those answers turned out to fit with reality. A bad guess could be disastrously expensive. So a number of options were developed and presented to the Township's Board of Supervisors. What the Board determined, after careful review, was that the upgrade could be split into several phases.

As far as its capacity was concerned, the Township already had forecasts of population growth and, by extension, of how big a plant would be needed to serve that growth. So Phase I of the project could focus on expanding the plant's treatment capacity from 4.5 to 8.7 million gallons a day, a volume that would comfortably serve the 50,000 residents expected by 2030 – the projected peak population for a fully built-out Cranberry Township.

At the core of that uncertainty is how much phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen the agency will allow.

Beyond that, DEP ruled out the Township's current practice of blending rainwater and wastewater during heavy

storm events, instead requiring rainwater to be treated as sewage.

But as to what DEP would require down the road, there was less certainty. At the core of that uncertainty is how much phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen the agency will allow in treated water discharged by the plant into Brush Creek.

Up the creek

Why those specific materials? Because they serve as nutrients for algae, creating problems like fish kills, murky water, and depletion of desirable plants and animals. Chesapeake Bay, which is in the watershed of eastern and central Pennsylvania, has been struggling with those problems for years. And conventional wastewater treatment typically doesn't remove enough of those nutrients to protect receiving waters.

However Western Pennsylvania has a different watershed, ultimately draining into the Gulf of Mexico. So DEP needs to decide how much of a nutrient reduction should apply here. Speculation is that there will be some, but nobody knows for sure. As a result, Phase II of Cranberry's treatment plant upgrade will wait until that determination is made and then focus on meeting those requirements. In the meantime, the plant's design will be compatible with technology known to remove those elements.

Engineer Tim Schutzman is Cranberry's point man for the project, whose initial phase won't be completed for another three years. "We thought it was beneficial to the Township to do it in multiple phases instead of trying to do it all at one time," Schutzman explained.



Down the drain. Construction bids for upgrading the Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant, estimated at \$41.5 million, will be sought starting in November, with the expectation of awarding contracts in February.

"The limits may change in the future and we're expecting that to happen. We want to account for what's coming. But we don't necessarily need to build that today. We want to keep our eyes wide open to see what's in the future."

What can clearly be seen today, however, is the need for a high level of choreography involving the four contractors who will be working the project, which sits on a very small plant site, and to do so without disrupting the facility's operations, which have to continue without interruption the entire time.

"We're planning ahead so we won't get caught in a panic 20 years from now," Schutzman said. "That's why we chose the membrane technology. The design accounts for what the future holds. If we had selected a more conventional process, like the one we have today, it would have taken up our whole footprint. Then, when those other limits came on board, we wouldn't have had the space to expand and meet those limits. We wanted to make sure we didn't go overboard with cost and to find the best fit for our plant so that we can account for future requirements and still be able to operate today." ~

Literature al fresco

Library Opens Outdoor Plaza

A tastefully landscaped and furnished 600 square foot fresh-air patio, adjacent to Cranberry's Public Library in the Township's Municipal Center, is now open to visitors. The new outdoor reading garden, named in honor of library donors Bruce and Connie Mazzoni and partially financed with a \$230,000 matching grant from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, was designed by RSSC Architecture to be a multi-purpose facility, available for both informal reading as well as formal events, April through October.

"We've noticed a trend in libraries wanting to be gathering spots for people," Library Director Leslie Pallotta pointed out. "They always have been, but lately it's come more to the forefront. So how do we make the library a place people want to be?"

"I started to notice gardens popping up in libraries," she said. "At first, I didn't think it was possible here. But when we were writing the Keystone grant to renovate our meeting room spaces, someone suggested the area just outside as a garden. So the architects and engineers came out, took a look around, and said 'yeah, we can do that.' Then, when we checked the grant guidelines, we saw nothing saying we couldn't apply for funds to do a garden space. So we did, and here we are!"

Different spaces, different places

No two outdoor library spaces are quite the same, however, and their gardens assume different roles at each library. "Our children's librarian and I were in New York last year for a training workshop, where they had a garden primarily for children," Pallotta recalled. "Their concept was to have a sandbox and an area where the kids could actually grow plants like tomatoes. In fact, they had a 'Pizza Garden' where

the kids grew tomatoes and basil. Then, at the end of the summer, they collected what they grew to make sauce, used it to make pizzas, and had a big pizza party!"

Other libraries do it differently. "Mt. Lebanon has

a courtyard right in the middle of their library," she noted. "It's internal; you can only access it from the inside. So it's more of a reading garden. It's similar to ours, where you would go to sit and read. But we're also hoping to use it as programming space; that's why we designed it the way we did.

"We've talked about having outdoor concerts, possibly partnering with Parks & Recreation to bring in local musicians. We've talked about having open mic

• "We've talked about having outdoor concerts, open mic nights and wine tastings. Somebody even suggested doing brandy and cigars as a library fundraiser.

nights. We've talked about doing wine tastings. Somebody even suggested doing brandy and cigars out there as a library fundraiser. It would obviously have to be an after-hours event if we did something like that," she said.

Quiet reading and noisy events

In the meantime, the library's children's department has used the reading



Secret garden. Library patrons in search of tranquil space have found the new Bruce and Connie Mazzoni Reading Garden at the Cranberry Public Library to be an idyllic place to pursue their literary interests – as well as to hop online using the library's free wi-fi.

garden in connection with some of its own programs. They included a dance party, complete with a conga line. And Cranberry's volunteer fire company did a safety program in the garden for children over the summer.

"So it's starting to get use, primarily with the children's department, but we're hoping to expand and grow that use," she reflected. "We haven't figured out all the things we'll be able to do with it. But people don't know it's here yet. So we're hoping to get the word out that you can come to the library and not have to sit in the stacks – and you're welcome to bring along your reading materials or laptops. Our wi-fi access extends out to the garden. So come out and use it."

As a rule, the reading garden's exterior gate will remain locked; its only access is through the library itself, primarily as a safeguard against library materials walking away without first being checked out. "We had the gate open when the Friends of the Library did their Hot Dog Friday sales this summer," Pallotta pointed out. But that's the exception, at least for now.

The Mazzoni Reading Garden is open during normal library hours, whenever weather permits. ~



Reptile Dysfunction

In late July, a 3½ foot long alligator was taken into custody by Township police at the Chatham Commons apartment complex on Powell Road. Police were already there on an unrelated matter.

When officers initially apprehended the wayward creature, attempting to lock it into a dog cage, the reptile resisted arrest, thrashing and snapping at police. In response, police summoned an exotic animal company from Beaver County to the scene. As soon as the handler arrived, the alligator became calm, crawling serenely onto the man's arm. No charges were filed. Police have reported complaints concerning other wild animals as well, including black bears and coyotes in the Township, particularly during warm weather months. They advise residents not to leave food, cooking oil, or trash outdoors between curbside pickups, particularly in autumn when bears are most actively feeding prior to hibernation. ~



Very Touching

The powerful attraction of little kids to big trucks was on full display one sunny August afternoon when Cranberry Public Library held its second annual Touch-a-Truck event in Community Park. Hundreds of young children, with parents in tow, got up close and personal with a variety of specialty vehicles owned by the Township as well as by private operators. Highway tractors, tow trucks, police cars, fire engines, construction vehicles and ambulances shared the parking lot with an assortment of food trucks, whose proceeds from their sales were shared with the library. ~

The End Is Near! Or Not.

But in either case, it's a good idea to be prepared for the ravages of winter, according to Township police. As a rule of thumb, keep enough food, medicine and other supplies on hand to remain in your home for three days. Check the batteries of your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; replace them as needed. Prepare your car for a possible winter mishap by carrying a blanket, jumper cables, cat litter for traction, and a bit of food and water for yourself. In the event of a snow storm, clear your sidewalks and access to nearby fire hydrants, but don't shovel the snow back onto the roadway. And be a good neighbor by checking on elderly or sick residents who live nearby. ~



DIY Speed Signs

Speed limits, and the posted signs that announce them, are required to be established by legal ordinance, and only then by following a detailed procedure established by the state. But electronic signs that use radar to flash a vehicle's speed need no official action. And they work. Feedback showing drivers that they are exceeding posted speed limits has a measurable and calming effect on driving speeds. As a result, several neighborhood homeowner associations in Cranberry have purchased the displays and mounted them next to their neighborhood speed limit signs. Cranberry itself also owns several units which the Township installs temporarily when speeding complaints or road engineering issues warrant closer study. An older trailer-mounted unit is being retired from service. ~



The Shovel Is Mightier Than The Sword

Cranberry Township is in the water and sewer utility business, but it doesn't supply natural gas to its residents. This past August, however, Cranberry's Sewer & Water field crew was honored by PA One Call and Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania for exercising care in its digging operations and servicing the Township's underground water lines without accidentally hitting any gas lines – a dangerous and all-too-frequent occurrence in the region. To recognize its appreciation of the Township's practice of having PA One Call summon gas company field workers to come out and mark nearby gas lines in advance of any water line excavation, the damage prevention coordinator for Columbia Gas presented Cranberry with its coveted Blue Shovel Award. ~



Hockey Gets Assist

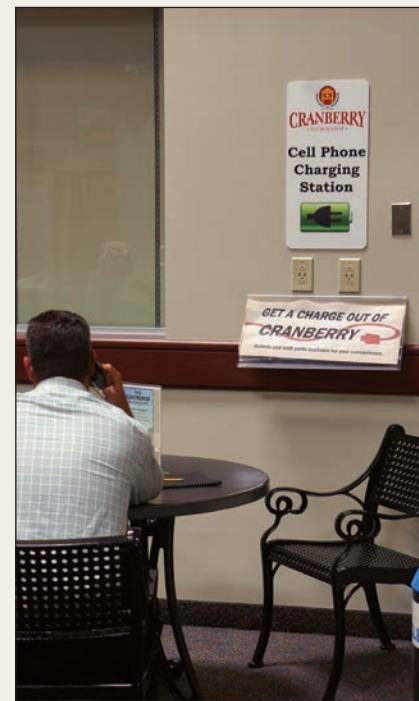
Dek hockey in Cranberry is picking up momentum with the opening of the new Lemieux Sports Complex, with its two ice rinks, and the signing of Uncle Maddio's Pizza as sponsor for the entire fall season of the Highmark-Pens dek hockey rink in Graham Park. Cranberry Parks & Recreation Director Pete Geis reports work on a transition program with the Pittsburgh Penguins to build the Township's fledgling dek hockey program into a pathway to ice hockey at the Lemieux facility for interested players. The Uncle Maddio's sponsorship applies to every age group and will be reflected on a banner and on

the backs of jerseys worn by players. It is a pattern of business support for local teams that Geis hopes to see expand and to include other companies, other seasons, and other sports in the Township. ~



Ever Use A Fire Extinguisher?

Lots of people have fire extinguishers in their homes, and just about everybody has one at their workplace. But very few have actually operated one, so most people aren't exactly sure how it's done. Waiting for an emergency to learn their operation is a bad idea. So Cranberry's Fire Company held several hands-on sessions this summer, using the P.A.S.S. method – Pull/Aim/Spray/Sweep – with a combination extinguisher and live flame simulator. Watch the website for future session times. ~



Power Up

Malls, airports, hotels and other high-traffic gathering places have already done it for a while. But now you can charge your cell phone, tablet or laptop, as well as connect with free Armstrong wi-fi, right in the heart of Cranberry's Municipal Center. A multiple plug and port shelf has been installed in a wall near the main entrance to the library; a table and chairs are stationed next to it so people can make themselves comfortable and productive as their device is charging. Cranberry's free charging station is available for use any time the building is open. ~

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

OCT

ART SHOW

Cranberry Artists Network
"Lets Be Thankful"
Art Show
Oct. 7 – Nov. 2
Municipal Ctr
Opening Reception
Wed., Oct. 7, 6-8pm

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

* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806 # Cranberry Highlands 727-776-7372
+ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100 < Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480
^ Parks and Recreation 724-779-4FUN > ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

MON 5	Infant Storytime + Library, 10:30am First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm	TUES 6	Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am Movie Fun Night + Library, 6pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Council Chambers, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 2	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr, 3:30-6:30pm	SAT 3	HHW Collection > ESCR, All Day Farmers' Market Rt. 19 Fire Station, 10am-1pm Child Seat Check < EMS Station, 10am-2pm	SUN 4
FRI 9	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr, 3:30-6:30pm Tween Movie Night Library, 7pm	SAT 10	Sheriffs Office: Gun Licensing Municipal Ctr, 9am-2pm Farmers' Market Rt. 19 Fire Station, 10am-1pm CTVFC Ladies Aux Spaghetti Dinner Rt. 19 Fire Station, 3-7pm	SUN 11	MON 12 Library Closed	MON 13	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm 1-3 Grade Book Club Library, 7pm	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm Family Playtime Library, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm
WED 14	ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm 1-3 Grade Book Club Library, 7pm Young (At Heart) Adult Book Club Library, 7pm	THURS 15	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Budding Builders (Legos grade 1-3), Library, 4pm Tail Waggin' Tutors + Library, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 16	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr, 3:30-6:30pm Great Pumpkin Festival ^ Municipal Ctr, 6pm			
SAT 17	Learn CPR < 8:30am Learn First Aid < 12pm Reg. Req. – CTwp EMS, Council Chambers, 8:30am Farmers' Market Rt. 19 Fire Station, 10am-1pm Special Needs Halloween Dance ^ Municipal Ctr, 7pm	SUN 18	MON 19	TUES 20	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Tween Lego Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 21	Books & Bagels Group Library, 10am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm 1-3 Grade Book Club Library, 7pm	
THURS 22	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm 4th Thursday Book Group Library, 10am Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 23	Used Book Sale Library, 10am Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr, 3:30-6:30pm	SAT 24	HHW Collection > ESCR, All Day Used Book Sale Library, 10am Farmers' Market Rt. 19 Fire Station, 10am-1pm Let's Dance the Rumba Gym, 7pm	SUN 25	MON 26	
TUES 27	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Psychic Sisters + Library, 6pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 28	Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm 1-3 Grade Book Club Library, 7pm	THURS 29	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm Open GymBasketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 30	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr, 3:30-6:30pm	
SAT 31	Farmers' Market Rt. 19 Fire Station, 10am-1pm Trick or Treat in CTwp 6-8pm							

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOV

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

* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806 # Cranberry Highlands 727-776-7372
+ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100 < Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480
^ Parks and Recreation 724-779-4FUN > ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

SUN 1	Daylight Savings Time Ends	MON 2	First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm	TUES 3	Municipal Election Polls open 7am-8pm Tween Art Club Library, 4pm Cranberry Artists Network Open Studio Municipal Ctr, 6pm	WED 4	Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm College Prep for Parent Library, 6pm		
THURS 5	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am Family Fun Night + Library, 6:30pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 6	SAT 7	Farkleberry Craft Show Municipal Ctr, 9:30am-3pm Manager's Coffee Trail Ride, Making Connections, 10am	SUN 8	MON 9	Infant Storytime + Library, 10:30am Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm		
TUES 10	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Teen Art Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 11	VETERAN'S DAY Library Closed Early Learning Ctr Open House Municipal Ctr, 10am-1pm & 5-7pm Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 12	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm Family Playtime Library, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 13	Teen Movie Night Library, 7pm		
SAT 14	Save a Life Sat. CPR < Municipal Ctr, 10am-2pm	SUN 15	MON 16	MON 17	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Tween Lego Club Library, 4pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm				
WED 18	Books & Bagels Group Library, 10am ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 19	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Budding Builders (Legos grade 1-3), Library, 4pm Tail Waggin' Tutors + Library, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 20	Cranberry Gallery of Trees Municipal Ctr, thru Dec. 31 Santa's First Stop Municipal Ctr, 6pm Stuff The Ambulance Toy Drive Municipal Ctr, 6pm				
SAT 21	HHW Collection > ESCR, All Day Let's Dance Night Club 2 Step, Gym, 7pm	SUN 22	MON 23	MON 24	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm				
WED 25	ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 26	THANKSGIVING DAY Township Offices and Library Closed Trash Collection delayed by 1 day (Thurs. and Fri.)	FRI 27	Township Offices and Library Closed	SAT 28	SUN 29	MON 30	Infant Storytime + Library, 10:30am

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DEC

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

* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806 # Cranberry Highlands 727-776-7372
+ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100 < Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480
^ Parks and Recreation 724-779-4FUN > ECS&R 1-866-815-0016

TUES 1	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Tween Art Club Library, 4pm Cranberry Artists Network Open Studio Municipal Ctr, 6pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 2	ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 3	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm Family Fun Night + Library, 6:30pm	
FRI 4	SAT 5 Milk & Cookies With Santa ^ Municipal Ctr, 11:30am; 12:45pm; 2pm	SUN 6 Milk & Cookies With Santa ^ Municipal Ctr, 11am; 12:30pm		MON 7	Infant Storytime + Library, 10:30am Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm Planning Advisory Commission Council Chambers, 6pm First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm	
TUES 8	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Teen Art Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 9 ABC Come Read With Me + Library, 10am or 11am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm Young (At Heart) Adult Book Club Library, 7pm	THURS 10	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Seniors For Safe Driving Municipal Ctr, 9am-1pm Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm Family Playtime Library, 6:30pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm		
FRI 11	Exceptional Holiday Dance Municipal Ctr, 7pm Tween Movie Night Library, 7pm New York City Express Bus Trip ^ Municipal Ctr, Depart 11pm	SAT 12 Brunch With Santa ^ Cranberry Highlands, 10am; 12:30pm	SUN 13	MON 14 Teen Magazine Library, 4pm	TUES 15 Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Tween Lego Club Library, 4pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	
WED 16	Books & Bagels Group Library, 10am Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 17 Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Budding Builders (Legos grade 1-3), Library, 4pm Tail Waggin' Tutors + Library, 6:30pm Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8-10pm	FRI 18	SAT 19 Learn CPR < 8:30am Learn First Aid < 12pm Reg. Req. - CTwp EMS, Council Chambers, 8:30am HHW Collection > ESCR, All Day Let's Dance Waltz Gym, 7pm	SUN 20	
MON 21	Teen Magazine Library, 4pm	TUES 22 Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 23 Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 24 CHRISTMAS EVE Library Closed Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm	FRI 25 CHRISTMAS DAY Township Offices and Library Closed Trash Collection delayed by 1 day	
SAT 26	SUN 27	MON 28	TUES 29	Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8-10pm	WED 30 Free Housing Counseling * Library by appt, 2:30- 4:30pm	THURS 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE Township Offices Open; Library Closed Open Gym Pickleball 9am-12pm Last Day to Pay Current School/Local Taxes Info, 724-776-1103

Leaping Above The Rest

Seneca Valley students can now earn an associate's degree in dance

By Katie Huttinger, Seneca Valley Media Support Specialist

The Seneca Valley School District name has always been synonymous with great fine arts, performing arts, and musical arts programs. Students from Seneca Valley have brought home hundreds, perhaps thousands, of awards throughout the years in all of these areas.

An already well-established program within the District, SVAOC has a multitude of opportunities under its umbrella to allow for students to customize schedules for a perfect fit. Most notably, students can be found taking cyber courses (full-time or part-time) through the SVOAC, allowing those interested in pursuing the arts the time necessary to further hone their skills in variety of areas, including dance.

Now, the Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC) Dance Program is raising the "barre."

In addition to having Kwang-suk Choi, a well-respected international dancer, as the director of the program, the SVAOC Dance Program is offering passionate dance students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree during their high school career.

This innovative program, approved at the school board meeting on Aug. 17, allows SVAOC students, in partnership with the Community College of Beaver County (CCBC), to complete an associate's degree while at the same time earning credits toward their Seneca Valley high school graduation.

"This unique partnership with CCBC will offer our elite dancers who train rigorously to take college credits now toward a dance degree," said Dr. Tracy Vitale, superintendent of schools, "We are very excited about this new opportunity."

SVAOC has been developing a partnership with CCBC for more than a year. Together, they reviewed and adjusted curriculum to provide the number of dance courses and core courses that students will need to complete in order to obtain their degree. All coursework will be listed on the student's high school transcript and credits will transfer for students who want to continue their education at a college-level institute.

With administrative approval, students (as early as freshman year) can apply for their degree through CCBC and submit their registration to the guidance office.

"A lot of our dancers want to move to the next level in dance (i.e. college-level or professionally), and this gives them the additional training and an extra leg up on the competition," said Dr. Matthew McKinley, assistant superintendent for grades 7-12, "In addition, students are saving time by leaving high school with a degree and ultimately saving money."

Courses like advanced ballet technique, dance composition, jazz and tap are offered and taught by high level educators, including Mr. Choi.

"We know and understand the importance of offering dual enrollment for our college bound students," said Dr. Vitale, "Anything that we can do to help our students to prepare and take college classes now, can only help prepare them for their college years later."

We are proud to meet the needs of Seneca Valley families using 21st Century environments that provide an academically rigorous learning experience in a progressive environment.

For more information on SVAOC Associate's Degree in Dance, visit www.svsd.net/SVAOC. For questions regarding the SVAOC or its dance program, please contact Ms. Denise Manganello, Seneca Valley Academy of Choice Principal, at 724-452-6040, ext. 1015 or at manganello@svsd.net.



Special Attention To Special Events

Cranberry Parks & Recreation Director Pete Geis joined the Township staff a little more than two years ago. His memory of the first 5 kilometer race he watched in his new role remains vivid.

"The very first 5k I attended included a lady who passed out at the end of the race. I had just started, I'm wearing a Cranberry Township staff shirt, and everybody turns around and looks at me and says: 'where's the ambulance?' Well, there wasn't one. Then they turned to me, saying 'you mean you allow 5ks in your park and you don't require them to have any sort of medical attention here?' So I said: you know what? That's the last time this will happen. And there hasn't been another 5k here without medical attention."

Cranberry emerged some time ago as a great place to hold charitable fund-raising events, including 5K races, concerts and fairs. And the Township was happy to accommodate them. Most of those fundraisers were staffed by volunteers, many of whom were new to event planning. But sometimes that inexperience led to misunderstandings, conflicts and expenses which could have been avoided had a special events policy been in place. Now there is one.

What do you need?

"We've been following it for about a year and a half now," Geis noted. "People have to define all their needs to the Township. It makes them articulate

People have to define all their needs to the Township. We send them a special event request form to complete.

those needs. For example, a lot of people wouldn't consider traffic cones as a need. But for a 5K, you usually need 100-200 cones. Cones have to



get there. Cones have to be spread out. Then they have to be collected and returned. Normally, the group does that. And usually a couple are lost. So we initiated fees for everything.

"We send them a special event request form to complete and send in. It usually requires them to include some justification for why they're doing it," he said. "That starts our face-to-face conversation, and then it goes through the different departments that are going to be impacted by the event – police, public works and, of course, parks and rec. That's how we know everybody is involved in the coordination."

"We typically work with people who are volunteers, and those volunteers transition over the years. So a lot of times their budget didn't get through, or they didn't prepare for the expenses. And they're not exorbitant fees, either. In fact, it's not a fee at all; it's reimbursement of expenses to the Township. If they need personnel to clear streets, they've got to pay for personnel to clear streets. If they need cones, they need to pay the expense of what it takes us to get the cones there and get the cones back. Same with stage setup, electricity, Township staff and medical staff."

Reimbursing costs

"I talk to kids all the time who want to run concerts in our park. They think they

can just go out, put up a band, have sound, and everything else is taken care of. But it has to be coordinated with other events in the park. Security has to be considered. Traffic patterns have to be considered.

"It's not that we don't support them, it's that we believe our residents deserve a choice of where their money goes and

We believe our residents deserve a choice of where their money goes.

that they shouldn't be required to pay for, say, an autism race when they'd prefer to support the troops. So if these organizations end up encumbering the Township to pay for and manage their event, then the taxpayers end up paying for all that.

"Residents keep approaching our elected officials to ask why they should be paying for these different functions that are going on. It's a fair question. But I think people are starting to come around to see that part of their organization's budget should be for the cost of doing business – what it actually costs to manage an event."

"I foresee that other communities will follow suit on how we manage it." ~

Waterpark Splash: Contractors Jump In

Astute guests at Cranberry's Community Waterpark in August could see it coming. Colored spray paint on the lawn marked the locations of underground pipes. Stacks of building material started being strategically staged nearby. Specialized construction equipment had begun being put into position. And informational boards previewing the upcoming season were prominently posted around the pool's deck and lockers.

All of it was waiting for the whistle to blow marking the end of the 2015 season and the immediate start of the most significant reconstruction of the Waterpark since it first opened in 1997. Although the pool had been open for public use the same number of weeks as it had for each prior season, this year, for the first time, it closed a week before the big Labor Day weekend which, because of a calendar fluke, came late this year.

"We have a very tight schedule," Parks & Recreation Director Pete Geis explained. "This is a pool renovation where you're fitting eight months of work into six-months of manageable working times. The earlier you start – you have September, October, as much of November as you can get before the

weather really turns bad – the better. Because then you've got to wait until the weather dries out before you complete the project.

"If we had waited until after Labor Day, our process for closing the pool down – which can take a week or week and a half – would start too late. Now everything has come together, so it works out perfectly. We were able to shut the pool operations down, get everything cleaned, get it winterized, and hand the facility over to the contractors so they could get to work."

Delay is not an option

Timing for the pool reconstruction is extremely sensitive. "We're already scheduling events for Memorial Day weekend," Geis pointed out. "So this pool doesn't have an option of opening late next year. For us to train our staff on time, this pool has to be ready to go May 9. So we have a very abbreviated window." That requires following a very aggressive construction schedule.

"Most people in the business know that there were three major pool construction projects in the region this past year; all three opened late, including our own Butler County pool; it opened 2, 3 weeks late," he said. "They

actually had to train their lifeguards in our pool because they couldn't get theirs open on time. So it's a very, very abbreviated window and even a week can mean the world."

Cranberry's \$1.7 million project involves a number of components.

Relining is part of it, a climbing wall and dump bucket, as well as a waterslide timing light, will be added. And three separate filter systems will be installed.

Relining is one part of it; an entire new quartz plaster surface will be placed throughout the pool. Several fun features, including a climbing wall and dump bucket, as well as a waterslide timing light, will be added. And three separate filter systems – one each for the newly enlarged and separated zero-depth entry pool, the spray pad area, and the main pool area – will be installed.

"Before the new filters were put in, if there happened to be an accident, if any kind of body fluid got into the water, we'd have to shut the entire pool and chemically treat it," Geis explained. "So now, when an accident happens in any one of them, we can leave the other two open for use by our guests."

Plans anticipate building the infrastructure needed for the baby pool's expansion's and separation wall before snow hits and the ground freezes. The new plaster surfacing will have to wait until warm weather returns, which may not be until May. Mechanical portions of the project are expected to be complete by November.

Discounted memberships to the renovated 2016 Waterpark are available through December. ~



Police Radio Drama: Stay Tuned

Local police departments are in a quandary over pending changes in their radio assignments. While the outcome is still unclear – the result of a massive radio spectrum sale which is still underway – public safety officials are concerned they will have to shell out Big Bucks to re-equip their personnel and remain in contact with sister departments and partner agencies.

“We’re losing the radio frequencies we’re on now,” Cranberry Public Safety Director Jeff Schueler explained. “It’s a range of frequencies that the federal government is selling to the commercial

Switching frequencies means having to buy a whole new radio system. It’s going to be expensive. We’re talking as much as \$14 million for everything.

industry. So we’re probably going to be switching frequencies, which means having to buy a whole new radio system. It’s going to be expensive. We’re talking as much as \$14 million for everything in the County, depending on the system and radios purchased. So the County’s doing a radio study because its 911 consoles will be reaching the end of their useful life in a few years and Motorola will no longer support that equipment after 2017. So we’ll have to migrate to a new radio system.”

Static

Initially, when the spectrum sale was proposed, plans called for proceeds from the multi-billion dollar sale to finance the transition. But public safety officials remain skeptical. “Nobody I’ve talked to is confident that we’ll get that money like the federal government said we would,” Schueler said. “It’s probably

just another unfunded mandate. They sell it off and then the local municipalities become responsible for putting a new radio system in place.”

But not everyone can wait until the dust settles on their new frequency reassignments. Some of the County’s radios and consoles have already reached end of their useful life, which is typically around ten years. “So they have to upgrade their system,” Schueler noted. “The question is whether to stay on the same radio frequencies or migrate to new ones.”

Police and public service radio frequencies today are in the 400 MHz range and use analog signals. The new frequencies will likely be in the 700 MHz range, using digital transmission, although some nearby counties have opted to use the 800 MHz frequency band. For some purposes, that can even be an advantage; the higher frequencies do a better job of penetrating buildings, although their range is a bit shorter than with the older band, requiring more antennas. But frequencies are only part of the story.

Radio silence

“We’re probably going to get into encrypted radios for police departments,” he said. “So you couldn’t pick them up with a scanner. Your \$99 pre-programmed Radio Shack scanner won’t work. If you’re not in the police department, you’re not going to hear anything. You will get EMS and Fire, but you won’t get the police. So the families of police officers, and others with an interest, like reporters and tow truck operators, would most likely be cut off from radio contact. I don’t know how they would get around it because they wouldn’t be able to buy the encryption.”

For Cranberry, the greatest impact is that its current system was built so that police could communicate directly



with the Township’s Public Works department. “We have interoperable communication in the Township,” Schueler pointed out. “But we’re going to lose that capability if we go to 700 MHz because the other Township departments will still be on the 400 GHz system, while we’ll be on 700.

“You can get a dual-band radio which does it automatically, but they’re very expensive. Or you get stuck like us where you actually have two radios in each vehicle because we have to deal with the Turnpike and Beaver County which are still on the lower frequency.”

But there are some compensations. “Actually, for the PD, it’s a good thing,” he reflected. “There are a lot of things on the police side that most people shouldn’t know about anyhow – criminal histories, driving records – things that shouldn’t be out there. And we’ve also found perpetrators with scanners in the past. So if they hear there’s a bank robbery in the north, where all the police are going, they think it may be a good time for them to rob one in the south. You hear a lot of stuff like that.” ~

Cranberry PD Hosts German Rookie Cop

On October 1, Gordon Barth began his job as an entry-level patrolman at a police station in Berlin – part of the German city-state's 16,000 member police force. But for several weeks following his graduation this past summer from Berlin's Police College, he was given the opportunity to do a brief internship with a law enforcement agency of his choice anywhere in Europe or the United States. He chose Cranberry Township, where an uncle resides.

"I received an email from Gordon back in March asking if we had an internship program," Cranberry Police Chief Kevin Meyer recalled. "I explained that we didn't have a formal internship program, but I could offer him a ride-along. So he took us up on it and made plans to come over and visit with us."

"He was here for about a week and a half," Meyer explained. "Our plan was to introduce him to our Police, Fire and EMS folks, introduce him to our court system, get him up to Butler, give him an introduction to how things operate in the courthouse, and then a jail tour so he could see how the American prison system works on a local level."

A land of contrasts

Barth's initial ride-alongs became an eye-opening experience. Take staffing,

for example. "We always have two officers to a car," Barth pointed out, contrasting it to Cranberry's practice of single-officer patrols. "If you're patrolling and it's an emergency call, some things can be done by just one police officer, but it has to be something that's not dangerous, like sending an officer to investigate a break-in and collect fingerprints and take photographs. But usually you have to have at least two persons."

Another difference had to do with municipal ordinances which German police, who are attached to one of the country's 16 states, are not required to enforce. "You don't have to know every rule of every community," he said. "It's not a law you have to enforce. All of Germany has the same laws."

Search warrants work differently as well, and so do personal police tools. "We don't use the taser," he said after seeing they were standard issue here. "The only police officers in Berlin that use the taser are in the SWAT unit we call SEK, which stands for special duty command. The rest of us carry a baton, pepper spray and a handgun. We also have an MP5 in our cars, behind the back seat. It's a small rifle, in case we have a hostage taking or bank robbery. But we don't use it for normal patrols, just for special cases."

Perhaps surprisingly, the biggest difference was in the sophistication of electronics aboard the police vehicles – which, in Berlin, tend toward Opals and VWs, not Mercedes. "His department doesn't have in-car computers or in-car cameras," Meyer noted. "And he was just blown away with our new e-ticketing system. So he was intrigued by our vehicles and technology."

Something in common

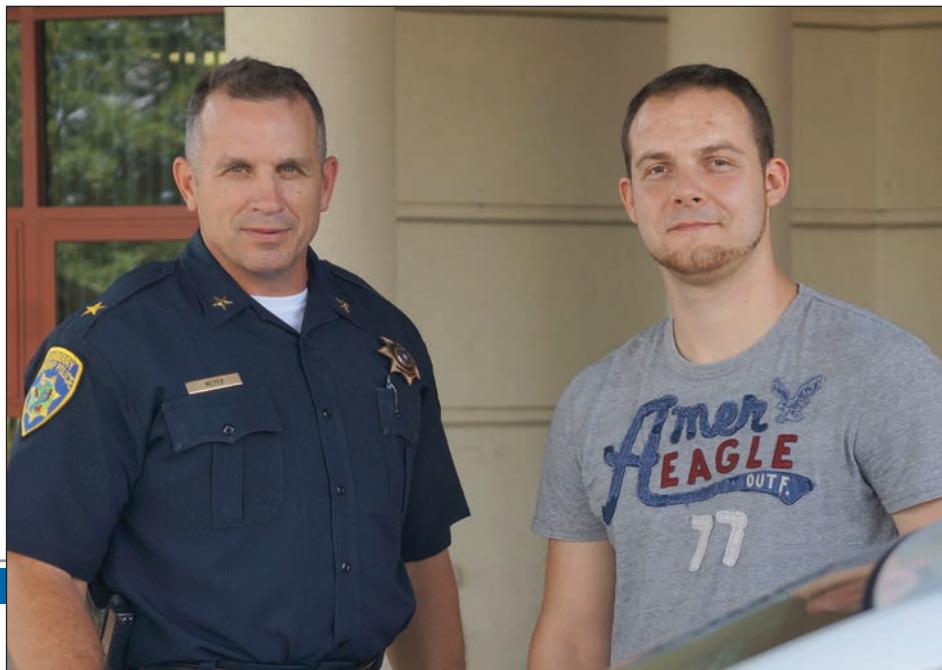
Even though their tools are somewhat different, the problems faced by Berlin's police bear a striking similarity to those of their American counterparts: organized crime and drug use –

Problems faced by Berlin's police bear a striking similarity to those of their American counterparts: organized crime and drug use.

problems which are frequently related and almost always require a major investment of police resources.

A common language helped, too. Prior to Barth's arrival, potential problems related to language difference had been a concern for Cranberry's PD. But with his easy fluency in English, it quickly became a non-issue. "We were happy to have him here in Cranberry Township," Meyer said. "It was a great thing. We learned as much from him as he did from us. It was a win-win and a lot of fun." ~

Was ist los? Gordon Barth, right, a newly-minted police officer from Berlin, spent some time this summer getting familiar with local practices from Cranberry Police Chief Kevin Meyer and the Township's police force.



EMS Takes Off The Training Wheels

Visitors to Cranberry's 2015 Community Days celebration in Community Park weren't surprised to see EMS technicians there. After all, Cranberry's EMS has been comforting presence at major events in the Township for years. What did surprise some, however, was that one of the service's emergency medical technicians was weaving through the crowd on a mountain bike, clearly marked as a Cranberry EMS vehicle.

The bicycle, carrying a satchel of life support equipment in a black pannier and operated by a uniformed and fully credentialed EMT, is one of two that the agency acquired this summer. It is part of an effort to expand its community presence, improve its mobility in crowds, and extend the geographic footprint of its services.

But it is also a strategy designed to broaden its offerings and provide lower cost coverage of events. That's important because Cranberry Emergency Medical Service, unlike the Township's police department, is not tax-supported. And, unlike Cranberry's volunteer fire company, the EMS is primarily staffed by full-time paid professionals. So it provides its services for a fee. In the case of patients being transported to hospitals, most of that fee is paid by the patient's insurance company. But when an ambulance and crew are dedicated to standing by during a public event in case someone gets sick or hurt, the agency needs to charge a fee.

We operate a business; we can't give the service away. We just have to reach common ground on the fee schedule.

"Problem is the fee schedule to put an ambulance and a couple of folks down there is higher than most organizations

are willing to pay," Cranberry EMS Executive Director Jeff Kelly acknowledged. "That fee schedule ranges anywhere from \$400 to \$1,000. So we started thinking: if we put this bike team together, could we offer it up as a resource in place of an ambulance? It's much more cost effective for us to send one or two folks on bikes than it is two people in an ambulance."

Not that the agency is out to profit from others' misfortunes. In fact much of what it does at public gatherings it does for free. But when a free ambulance crew standing by gets paged by 9-1-1, they need to respond. "I don't like saying that we put a price on people's lives," Kelly pointed out. "But we operate a business; we can't give the service away. We want to be at your events. We just have to reach common ground on what the fee schedule should look like."

Keeping their balance

Details of that fee schedule for bike-based EMS patrols are still under development. But Cranberry's EMS bicycle service – the only EMS in Butler County that currently offers it – also creates new opportunities for revenue from outside the Township. For example, Pittsburgh paramedics always need extra bicycle EMS help with events like the Marathon. And Philadelphia posted a notice that it was looking for 60 additional bike-based EMS crews to cover the Pope's September visit. Unlike Cranberry, both cities require EMS teams to be on site for major events. That can help balance the agency's budget.



Rolling out. To introduce its bicycle-based emergency service, Cranberry EMS sent Paramedic Russ Ridenbaugh to patrol crowds during Community Days in Community Park on one of the agency's two specially-outfitted mountain bikes.

However, being effective as a bicycle-based EMS technician also requires physical stamina. To qualify for Cranberry's bicycle crew, interested EMTs and Paramedics had to pass an agility test that included biking for three miles, running 400 yards, and then carrying the bike for another 100 yards – all in less than 15 minutes. Of the six who took the test, four passed. To build on that proficiency, Kelly is looking for partner EMS agencies to share in funding a visit by an instructor from the International Police Mountain Bike Association next spring to help raise the bar even higher.

Right now, both of Cranberry's EMS bikes are staffed and outfitted identically. In time, though, Kelly visualizes one of them as having advanced life support, operated by a Paramedic, with the other carrying basic life support components, operated by an EMT. "They have essentially the same things that an ambulance would have, other than a heart monitor," Kelly noted. "But it's not going to replace an ambulance or replace people showing up at your door in an emergency. It's strictly reserved for special events and mass gatherings." ~

Here Comes Son Of Fire Safety House

About 20 years ago, Marshall Township's Volunteer Fire Company borrowed what was, at the time, Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company's nearly new mobile Fire Safety House to run an instructional program for third-graders in North Allegheny School District. Weeks later, a house fire erupted in Marshall with two children inside. When firefighters arrived, they found a girl with her little brother huddled by the home's curbside mailbox.

It was precisely the response that children going through the fire safety program were taught, and the girl had been among those participating in a 45-minute session aboard the trailer. "As far as I'm concerned, the trailer had paid for itself," longtime Cranberry firefighter and Safety Committee head Chris DeCree observed, reflecting back on the incident. Marshall apparently thought so too, presenting Cranberry's firefighters with a commemorative plaque which still hangs in DeCree's office.

Fire safety training today is every bit as important as it was back when the trailer was initially built. But advances in technology as well as the shifting focus of safety instruction over the years led Fire Company officers to conclude that in order to keep pace, a new, redesigned fire safety trailer would be required. However, by last year, the original trailer's \$32,000 price had doubled and the fire company simply didn't have the budget to replace it.



Enter CTCC

When Cranberry Township Community Chest learned about the need, its Board saw an opportunity to add acquiring a new safety trailer to its already impressive series of high-value community Projects of the Year. But then they enhanced it, ultimately ending their 2015 Volunteer Firefighter Initiative in July with two identical trailers as well as a scholarship endowment at BC3 to support student firefighters countywide. One of those trailers is based in Cranberry, and it provides a platform for safety training that extends beyond young children and even beyond fire.

"This is a safety trailer – not just a fire safety trailer," DeCree pointed out. "We can also do storm training. We have a video recording of a newscast interrupted by a storm to go along with shaking window blinds and lightning strobes on board the trailer. Then its emergency lights kick on."

"With the new trailer, we have stadium seating for children instead of having them sit on stairs. Instead of 8 or 10 children at a time, now we can do 15 to 20," he said. "We have heated doors. If they feel that the door is warm, they know there's fire on the other side and not to open it. We have smoke – actually fog from a generator – which can be directed to individual rooms. There's a simulated flame on a gas range. There's a simulated trash fire, a pull-down alarm, smoke detectors and a touch-tone phone for calling 911. Now

two people can do the whole program; it used to take five of us."

Now two people can do the whole program; it used to take five of us.

Not by fire alone

Other safety items are also onboard. They include, for example, bicycle helmets, knee pads, elbow pads, swimming vests and auto seatbelts. Instructors from the Fire Safety Committee show adults as well as children how to put out grease fires, use extinguishers, manipulate escape ladders, and use a kitchen range safely. The trailer's use for adult instruction is something that the previous trailer, constructed as a two-level home with very low ceilings, was not well suited for, although nearly 800 adults, as well as 1,000 children a year, managed to pass through it.

The new safety trailer, and its clone which is moored at Butler's BC3 campus, are designed for even greater volume. In just its first two months, the Cranberry trailer alone accommodated 400 guests. Over the course of a year, Cranberry's Fire Company conducts around 100 events, some with and others without the trailer. Although the organization does its best to honor invitations from schools, businesses and homeowner associations to offer safety instruction, towing the 5-ton, 35-foot trailer requires special equipment and

Continued on page 23

This old house. In August, Cranberry Volunteer Fire Company donated its 1993 fire safety house to a mutual aid partner, the Marshall Township Volunteer Fire Company. Marshall plans to refurbish it and continue offering safety instruction to young children. The other new trailer is at the Butler BC3 campus.



Firefighter Profile: Cranberry Remains Home Base For The High-Flying Hayden Brothers

It doesn't take long, after talking with brothers Sean and Daniel Hayden, to realize they are precisely the sorts of people you'd like to have at the controls of a plane you are flying in. And if you're lucky, someday you will. They are also the sorts of people you'd like to see show up if your house is on fire.

Smart, serious, hardworking, and with Eagle Scout-certified good character, the brothers, who are both active members of the Cranberry Volunteer Fire Company, have been steadfastly following in the career footsteps of their father, a United Airlines pilot operating out of Washington, DC, as well as following one another.

Sean, the oldest brother at 27, has been affiliated with the fire company ever since, at the tender age of 14, he was invited by current Company president Ed Hestin to attend a meeting. Daniel, now 19 and the youngest of the family's three sons, would enjoy hanging out with his older brother, along with the other volunteers at Park station, eventually reaching the age when he too became eligible to join as a junior member.

Very high school

After graduating Seneca Valley in 2006 with his private pilot's license already in hand, Sean enrolled at Kent State University whose five Aeronautics programs include approximately 600 students, 120 of whom are flight tech majors, training to be pilots. The school operates its own airport and fleet of 30 planes, offering students the sorts of hands-on experience, as well as recorded flight time, that no classroom or simulator could ever provide.

Following graduation, Sean continued up the aviators' career ladder, starting as First Officer with a regional carrier serving various U.S. destinations. This past January, by then with

more than 3,000 flight hours under his belt and a record of exemplary conduct, he was hired by United Airlines to train for flights on its Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft. Then in May, he began flying the big planes to Rome, Madrid, Dublin, Hawaii, and key stops in between.

- *This past January he was hired by United Airlines to train for flights on its Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft.*

Daniel, who continues to shadow his big brother, is now a sophomore in Kent State's flight technology program, having already earned his instrument rating certificate, which allows flight under low-visibility conditions. Even before attending Kent, Daniel had been part of a flying club at Zelienople's Airport where he certified as a private pilot. Like his older brother, he, too, is well on his way toward the life of a professional airline pilot. But with a requirement of 1,000 hours of flight time before regional carriers will even consider interviewing a new pilot, he understands there is still a long way to go.

The long commute

Maintaining their Fire Company memberships has also been a priority



Down to earth. Brothers Daniel and Sean Hayden have remained committed members of the Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company despite aviation careers that involve extensive travel.

for both brothers, never mind that their work frequently takes them far away. Although his flights are based out of Newark, Sean still considers Cranberry as his home, staying with his family between trips. And Daniel, whose university is 80 miles away, typically drives home once or twice a month just to attend the Fire Company's Tuesday evening training and work sessions.

Of course, dealing with onboard fires is fundamental to every pilot's training. But despite his Cranberry experience, Sean leaves any airport firefighting to that airport's own staff. "Our process starts and stops with identifying the problem, reading the correct checklist, and then evacuating the aircraft," Sean pointed out. "After that, we just let the professional fire personnel handle the situation."

But there are important areas of overlap as well. "Our training here in the fire company indirectly helps us as pilots," he observed. "A lot of the thought processes and things like leadership and crew resource management are concepts that apply to both firefighting and aviation."

"Leadership and followership are important in both services because you're a team. Working together and adhering to standard operating procedures are essential for successful outcomes." ~

Cranberry welcomes new Fire Company volunteers throughout the year. To learn more, call 724-776-1196.



They made us feel safe.

"When we got back from vacation, our garage was swarming with bees. We had a beekeeper come over, but they kept coming back in because the house wasn't sealed properly. So we bought some cans of expansion foam to fill the cracks. Our flashlight batteries were dead, so we lit a candle to help see what we were doing.

"We held the candle away from the foam, but not far enough. All of a sudden, a whole section of the overhang on the house caught fire. Then we discovered our fire extinguisher was empty. So my husband called 911 and got a garden hose to put out the flames we could see.

"The Fire Company got here very quickly. And they went over the whole house to check for hot spots. They were concerned that the fire had travelled inside the walls where we couldn't see it.

"We felt really bad, but the Fire Company was great; they made us feel safe about going back into our home."

Every year, the men and women of the Cranberry Township Volunteer fire Company answer over 600 calls, from reassuring residents that their homes are safe to taking decisive action in life-threatening conditions. 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 part of something truly special, the members of Cranberry's Fire Company invite you to join them.



The Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company



Dorilyn Holmes,
Cranberry Township
Homeowner, resident

1629 Haine School Road and 20727 Route 19

Cranberry Township, PA 16066

724-776-1196

www.ctvfc21.com

Here comes Son of Fire Safety House *Continued from page 22*

training – something that only two of the Safety Committee's eight members can provide, and even then, only when they're not at work on their day jobs.

Nevertheless, Cranberry's Fire Company welcomes invitations to provide instruction. To request a class – which is offered without charge – call 724-776-1196 or go to the Fire Company's website at www.ctvfc21.org.

This new house. CTCC financed the purchase of two new and highly capable mobile safety trailers as its 2015 Project of the Year. This one is permanently housed in Cranberry; the other is at the Butler BC3 campus.





CRANBERRY

TOWNSHIP

724-776-4806

www.cranberrytownship.org

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FINAL WEEK OF 2015 YARD WASTE COLLECTION: DECEMBER 14 - 18



ACCEPTED:

- Leaves
- Grass clippings
- Branches and tree limbs under 4" diameter
- Brush up to 4 ft. in length
- Plants, flowers, and roots
- Shrubbery and prunings
- Sawdust

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Loose soil or sod
- Kitchen food waste
- Garden or orchard food waste
- Excrement, pet droppings, or kitty litter
- Plastics or synthetics
- Tree stumps or limbs over 4" thick
- Non-compostable bags or boxes
- Lumber or construction material

Place items curbside in
**GREEN TOP CART
or BIODEGRADABLE
YARD WASTE BAG**

Bags available for sale in
Customer Service - 5 for \$2
or home improvement/hardware stores.



 **Collection
connection**
A CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP PROGRAM

More waste collection info:
CranberryTownship.org/Collection



Guests Get Comfy In Cranberry

Cranberry Township has just climbed up into the ranks of top American visitor destinations. In August, the online travel site Expedia ranked Cranberry Township as #8 among its top 101 Most Comfortable Cities for Travelers. The recognition, which appears at www.CranberryTownship.org/ExpediaList, is based on survey results from more than 600,000 guests who responded to Expedia's request for reviews of the community's accommodations. The company's website, which draws millions of visitors annually, is credited with raising awareness among tourists about America's most comfortable places to visit. ~

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