

Cranberry today

WINTER 2017

Budget 2017: Building Assets, Holding Down Taxes

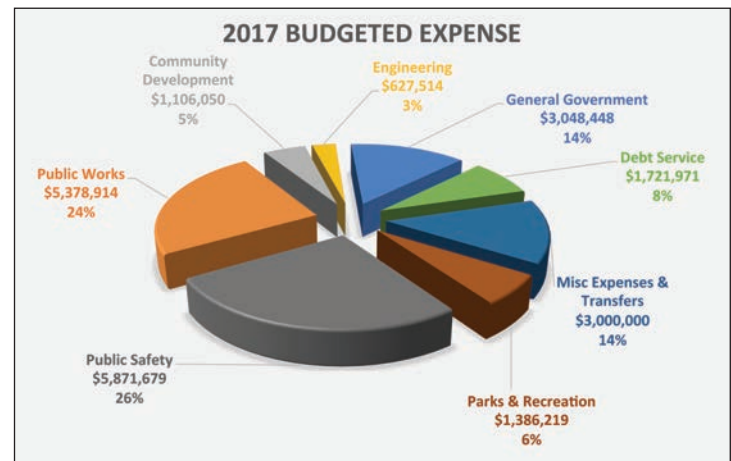
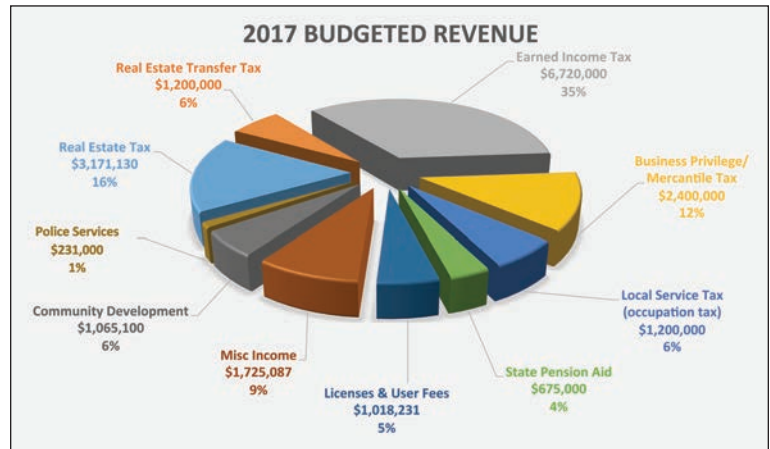
At a time when local governments across the country are struggling to repair crumbling roadways, replace damaged waterlines, fight rising crime and find ways to finance their pension obligations, Cranberry offers a happy exception.

The Township's 2017 budget provides for significant road improvements, new park infrastructure, a larger police force, and the retention of all current programs and services without any tax increases. Its growth in revenues, projected at three percent for the year, fully offset the estimated expense increases for 2017.

Revenues received from earned income tax, business privilege tax and local services tax grew as anticipated in 2016 and are expected to continue growing in 2017. Matching grants from several public agencies are helping to finance various traffic system improvements. And bonds financed entirely out of sewer and water customer fees are rebuilding Cranberry's wastewater treatment plant – the Township's single biggest expense item for 2017.

Two years ago, Pennsylvania's Auditor General released a report about the state of public employee pension funds in the Commonwealth, based on what were then the most recent statistics. The news was not good. It showed that in the prior two years the unfunded liability of municipal funds had grown by approximately \$1 billion, to \$7.7 billion. Of the 1,223 municipal governments that administered pension plans at the time of the report, nearly half were categorized as distressed – massively underfunded.

"Nationally, there are lots of municipal pension issues, which we don't have," Cranberry Finance Director Vanessa Gleason pointed out. "Pensions aren't earning enough money, they've got too many retirees, and their pension obligations are huge. We don't have that issue. Our pensions are sound financially; they're not distressed. We are 90% funded, which is very good." ~



A Publication of

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The Race For Faster Internet

There may be good news on the horizon for local fans of streaming television, video gamers and mobile device enthusiasts. Then again, nobody is really sure. It all has to do with the ways that advances in communication technology play out over the next few years and who provides them.

Starting about 20 years ago, the lines separating phone service from cable TV service began getting blurry. The main reason was the advent of consumer Internet service. Both phone and cable companies started getting into Internet delivery, and then continued from there into one another's core businesses. So cable companies now offer phone service and phone companies deliver TV programs – both in addition to Internet.

Cell phone service, however, remained largely aloof from the utility giants' battle – focusing its resources solely on mobile devices. But that may be changing, according to Cranberry's Director of Technology and Communications Adam Osterrieder. "Nothing is set in stone," Osterrieder admits. "Nobody knows whether recent advances in cellular network technology will actually succeed in the marketplace."

But there is basis for speculation. It has to do with the next generation of cellular connection referred to as 5G – a technology capable of wirelessly delivering Internet speeds and bandwidth now available only on robust cable and fiber-based networks. Preliminary tests of 5G service are about to get underway in three New Jersey communities.

More competition?

"You might see increased competition, which is better for the consumer," he explained. "If Verizon and AT&T were some day to put their 5G connection into residential areas here in Cranberry,

you might see additional competition. We get a lot of phone calls and emails saying: why do we only have one Internet provider? Why do we only have one cable provider? But the Township doesn't decide that. We're not preventing any cable or phone company from coming here, but you don't usually see them build over top of an existing company. It's not good business. Every utility is like that."

But the economics of 5G are intriguing. Most home developments built in the last 30 to 40 years have their utilities delivered through buried service lines. So, in addition to stringing wires over poles to deliver their signals to the entrance of a neighborhood, a phone or cable company needs to do considerable digging underground to actually get into individual homes. That's both costly and time consuming. But if the service is delivered wirelessly to residents, that huge expense can be eliminated.

Verizon, for example, the nation's largest cell service provider and a key developer of 5G, has stopped pulling fiber into homes for its FIOS service. Could they know something the rest of us don't?

Network investment

"Right now, we're not aware of another cable provider coming to Cranberry," Osterrieder said. "But 5G could be a possible competitor in another 5 to 7 years. So if I were an Internet Service Provider, I would invest more into my network infrastructure because I'd



Competition is coming – it's not going to be a secret.

know that competition is coming – it's not going to be a secret. I'd also know that the market is shifting to streaming video content and multi-media. People are cutting the cord; they're watching Netflix and other streaming on Apple TV, Google, Roku, and Amazon devices. So it's even more important to have a solid network to provide video and music and Internet connectivity."

No matter who delivers the service, the move toward Internet-based devices – and the corresponding thirst for greater bandwidth – seems inexorable. The Internet of Things, where cars and appliances talk to one another, is affecting more and more of America's home and work life.

"You've probably seen the Buick commercial where a guy is at the beach with his wife. She asks if he locked the car doors, and he does it from his phone," he recalled. "But then she asks if he closed their apartment windows, and he visualizes all the pigeons flying in. That's where things are headed. Everything needs a connection nowadays. Sometimes it's convenient, sometimes it's a pain. Everyone can decide that for themselves." ~

Township Website Goes Mobile

Cranberry Township's website, which has emerged as a central fixture in the community's arsenal of communication tools over its 15-year history, has just undergone a major update. Part of the update was cosmetic – to improve the appearance and leave a more favorable first impression. Another part was to make navigating the site easier and more intuitive. But the most important reason grows from a change in the way people use it.

Back when the website was initially launched, the only way people could access it was on their desktop or laptop computers. Those devices still represent a significant share of users. Today, however, with over 1,000 daily visitors hitting the site, more and more people are accessing it on their mobile devices – particularly smartphones. But

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the previous website, when viewed on a phone or tablet, was neither attractive nor easy to navigate. This time, it is designed for optimal viewing on any digital platform. It is also much more

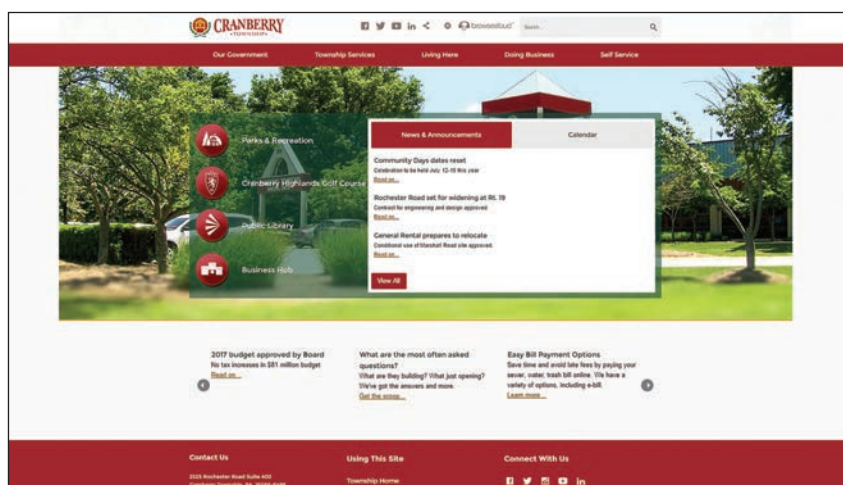
closely integrated with social media feeds from sites including Twitter and Facebook.

"We gave visitors clear paths to useful information while keeping our content fresh and updated on a daily basis," according to Communications Manager Tina Fedko. "Our search bar is very convenient and well-placed for visitors who need extra assistance in finding what they are looking for." A reorganization of the site's archival information, which now includes thousands of pages, limits the amount of scrolling required for users to find what they are looking for.

"Our homepage gets the bulk of our site traffic," Fedko noted. "So it was crucial for the homepage to direct that traffic to our different departments effectively and efficiently. Visitors can easily navigate to Cranberry Highlands Golf Course, the Library, the Business Hub, and Parks & Recreation."



Then and now. The home page of the updated Cranberry Township website, below, sports a cleaner, more phone-friendly look.



A safety-related improvement provides for a scrolling alert bar at the top of every page – not just the home page. It's used to inform users of emergencies in a timely manner. ~

Library Seeking Donors

Cranberry's public library is free to patrons, and supported by a dedicated local property tax. Years ago, it used to receive funds from the state as well. But that source has dried up and, like other public libraries, Cranberry's is looking to its residents for additional funding. The library's 2016-17 annual support drive is now underway, and tax-deductible gifts of any size are welcome. To make an online donation, or for more information about other giving opportunities including gifts honoring personal celebrations or memorials, the library's equipment wish list, or ways to create a Cranberry Legacy Endowment fund, go to www.cranberrylibrary.org. ~



Library Children's Department Goes App Happy

If there's anyone who still thinks public libraries are essentially book archives, they really need to take another look. Today's highly interactive, information-rich environment has not only prompted changes in library collections and technologies, it's influencing their missions as well. Just check out Cranberry's public library.

Last year, in response to those fast-changing surroundings, the library's Board of Directors revisited the organization's strategic plan. Along the way, they formulated a new slogan: Inform, Inspire and Enrich. As a mission statement, the new tag line pointedly avoids any reference to books, stacks, microfilm, periodicals, catalogues or other traditional library holdings. Instead of dwelling on the library's collections, it looks to the organization's more enduring goals. One of the most important is fostering early literacy among its youngest patrons.

Computers and literacy

Serving children has always been an important part of the library's mission. More than ten years ago, a library expansion created a bigger, better, brighter space for its Children's Department. Part of that expansion involved building a handful of child-size workstations, each outfitted with its own PC. For years, the Township's IT department did a yeoman's job of keeping the computers, with their old-fashion CRT picture tube monitors, in working condition. But when the library tried to update their programs, it hit a wall.

Working specimens of computers that old are rare. Nobody makes programs for computers of that era anymore. So in order to update its programs, the library realized that its computers themselves would have to be retired. Last fall, they were – replaced by iPads and touch-

screen PCs enclosed in brightly colored protective cases and loaded with child-oriented game and program apps. The new acquisitions were made possible by a \$20,337 state grant funded by the federal Library Services and Technology Act.

Starting in January, a dozen more iPads acquired through the same grant and outfitted with popular children's stories and early literacy apps, will be integrated into the Library's weekly Storytime programs. The half-hour sessions will be offered Thursday evenings, and whole families are invited to join with their young children and read along.

Annemarie Lamperski is the children's librarian responsible for the preschool Storytime programs – programs which have historically centered around cultivating young children's listening habits and encouraging them to follow the story along in printed books. Although she has led traditional Storytime sessions for years, Lamperski is excited about the opportunity that integrating iPads into her programs will bring, although she still admits to uncertainty about which approach to using the electronic tablets will prove most effective.

High tech Storytime

"We will still have a traditional Storytime," she assures a visitor. "We continue to have print material where we are teaching print awareness – left to right reading, page turning – all of the things you do when you actually hold a book. With the iPads, we will still have that part of it – plus we're adding the technology twist." It is a twist that could conceivably open new horizons of sight, sound, and interaction never before available, and it is one that many publishers of children's fare are eager to take advantage of. Best of all, it is



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built around a technology that young children take to quickly and easily.

"Little kids who can barely get onto the chair will hoist themselves up and start touching the screen. It's just amazing to see," Lamperski said, pointing to a row of young children eagerly seated at the children's library workstations. "We see it every day out there.

"I try very hard to incorporate pre-literacy skills into our programs," she pointed out. "I think that will also come through with iPads because of the huge assortment of apps and activities and other things out there that really hit those pre-literacy skills." However, some judicial pre-screening will also be required.

"We really look at each app," she said. "It takes a while to make sure they're appropriate, that they live up to their summaries, and that they're right for our uses. But there's something about them that's really engaging for the kids." ~

New Book Illuminates Cranberry's History

The life of a teacher couldn't have been easy back in the day. In the introduction to her new book *Images of America: Cranberry Township*, author and Cranberry native Kate Guerriero Benz quotes a century old set of rules cited in Helen Goehring Dewald's earlier work *Cranberry Township: A History of our Community*. "Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed," the passage read. Male teachers didn't get off much easier. "Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls or gets shaved in a barbershop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty," it said.

However to Ms. Benz, whose parents and grandparents had spent much of their lives in a far more pastoral Cranberry Township, the rules seemed less oppressive than endearing. "When I read about some of those guidelines I thought: that was a job you were to take seriously; that was to be your life – to educate and to teach. I read it as saying that nothing should distract from that."

It is a view she comes by honestly. Veronica Rice Guerriero, Ms. Benz's mother, had been a founding member of the Cranberry Historical Society and her grandfather, Dr. Samuel M. Rice, had for years maintained his Crider's

Corners physician's office at what is now the site of an interchange ramp linking I-79 with Route 228. To Benz, who currently lives in Pittsburgh's North Side, it was an idyllic childhood, and one whose memories of a slower, simpler, happier life she is determined to preserve.

Family photos

Her seven-chapter book, part of Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series, makes extensive use of family photos taken over a century starting around 1880. Those pictures – as well as the identifications and quirky anecdotes in her captions that give them a

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delightfully human dimension – came from the Cranberry Historical Society, Helen Dewald, the Meeder family, and the Township's own archives.

The genesis of her book, which was issued this past August, grew from a conversation she had over lunch several years ago with Heinz History Center President Andy Masich. "I was pontificating about Cranberry before it was Cranberry," she recalled. "He patiently listened to me and then said 'why don't you write about it? You should contact Images of America and see if anybody's written a book on Cranberry yet.'"

To her surprise, although the publisher had already issued more than 7,000 highly localized books about American

communities, Cranberry Township was not among them. "When I got in contact with Arcadia's regional person, she told me Cranberry had been on her hot list for years, but she could never get anybody to write it," she said. For Benz, herself a former *Tribune-Review* lifestyle reporter, now a freelance writer and Trib columnist, it seemed almost serendipitous.

"They gave me a deadline of six months," Benz said. "Initially, I was thinking that's plenty of time. But about a month into it I thought: that's not nearly enough time – at least not for the approach I wanted to take which was assigning little anecdotal stories to each of these photos.

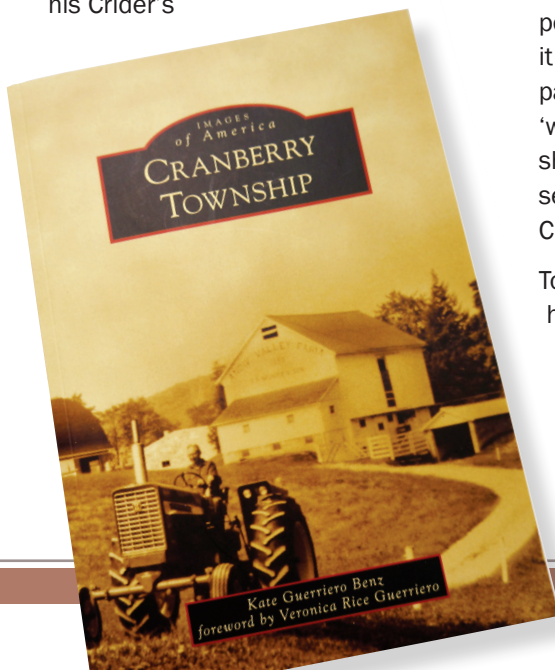
Personal anecdotes

"It's neat when you find those little personalized tidbits because to me that brings history even closer; you start to realize we're not all so different. We think we are, but we're not. Time marches on, but a lot of those fundamentals stay the same.

"I'm certainly not trying to push an agenda," Benz explains. "But I look at things like the Meeder farm and think: Wow! There's so much more than just brick and mortar. Maybe it's the writer in me. I see stories, and there's so much we can learn from them.

"I desperately want to preserve that history as much as possible," she said. "I know it's disappearing everywhere because of the world we live in today. So anything I can do to help preserve those stories and keep them alive – that is the greatest satisfaction I can have as a writer. I've always said that this book was a love letter to the township I grew up in – a township that doesn't exist anymore." ~

Making history. A recently published book by Cranberry native Kate Guerriero Benz documents the Township's history through family photos spanning more than a century. The book is available for \$21.99 at bookstores, less online.



The Fast Fire Danger Lurking In Newer Homes

There is certainly nostalgia for the grace of old-fashion homes, but there's no going back to the old ways of building them. And in newer communities like Cranberry, that has consequences.

Even when they're inspired by or patterned after traditional American home styles, the houses built today are fundamentally different. For one thing, they're generally bigger and with more open floor plans than in the past. For another, they're quicker and cheaper to build, requiring less labor on the job site. But the modern construction materials responsible for those benefits also carry tradeoffs: if they catch fire, they'll burn hotter, faster, and with more toxic fumes than traditional building and furnishing materials. Fewer interior barriers combined with more fuel enables fire to spread faster. That carries important implications both for residents and firefighters.

Engineered materials

"The materials have changed because of the lack of wood," longtime Cranberry firefighter and fire company administrative assistant Mark Nanna explained. "The wood isn't there anymore. People can't afford it. So to build these houses, they had to come up

: They take small trees,
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with something new. What they've come out with is what they call engineered wood. They've learned to take small trees, chew them up, and make wood of any length and thickness they want. It's just as strong as natural wood, if not

stronger. The only problem is if you put fire on it, it falls apart."

In place of solid wood beams for floor trusses and roof rafters, structural parts are now fabricated using smaller pieces of wood arranged into open matrixes. They're assembled at factories far from the construction site and lowered onto the frame of the new home with cranes. Support beams are now produced from wood scraps and sawdust glued together and formed into the shape of I-beams and used to provide the required bracing. Likewise, upholstered furniture, bedding and carpeting are produced using synthetic materials which are more durable, but also faster burning and far more toxic, than natural fibers.

Even modern doors and windows are prone to faster failure in the event of fire. According to UL lab tests, vinyl-clad wood frame double-glazed windows failed after just 4 minutes and 19 seconds versus 9 minutes 37 seconds for the type of wood-frame, single glazed storm windows used between 1950 and 1970. Nevertheless, they can still provide a temporary barrier to the spread of fire and should be shut to compartmentalize the blaze and deprive it of new oxygen.

Get out NOW

What do those changes mean for homeowners and their families? For one thing, it means you have significantly less time to get out of a burning building. But first, you need to realize that there's a fire to escape from. That's why firefighters stress the importance of having working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of the home. A well-maintained unit can detect smoke and the carbon monoxide fumes of a fire before most people would



**Tomorrow's
wood today.**

Homes today are built using engineered wood products – open air lattices of wood as floor trusses and particle board composites for structural beams. The products are strong, straight, inexpensive and easy to install. They also carry a much greater risk of fire failure.

notice it. That alarm can buy you a few more precious minutes to get everyone safely out of the house.

And there's other encouraging news. While sprinklers are not normally found in single-family homes, current building codes require new condominiums and buildings with four or more levels to install them, and sprinklers dramatically reduce the risk of fire fatalities. Cigarette smoking, which was a frequent source of home fires in the past, has greatly decreased. And home electrical systems have advanced significantly over the past few decades, providing a safety advantage that the residents of older homes don't always enjoy.

"If you can pull a door shut on your way out or turn something off, do it," Nanna advises. "If you don't have time, just get out and let us handle it. We'll determine, once we get there, how we're going to handle it, because every fire is different. But the biggest thing is just to get out. We can build new houses every day; we can't replace people. You can't replace a life." ~



Cranberry Fire Company Rescues Its Volunteers

By Bruce Hezlep, Cranberry Township Supervisor

Is Cranberry's fire company attempting to swim against a powerful tide?

I suspect so, but they're struggling to fight back, and now they have a plan. Here's the problem:

Several recent studies of fire companies in communities our size examined the composition of their membership. What they found is that fire companies which are all or mostly-volunteer are a distinct minority – somewhere between five and twenty percent of the total. That includes Cranberry. Of course, our fire company has great respect and affection for career firefighters everywhere, just as they do for all full-time first responders. But remaining an all-volunteer organization is a real priority for our fire company, and it's something they're doing their best to continue.

Why a volunteer company?

There are several reasons. One is financial. A full-time fire company staffed by career personnel is very expensive. When you add up all the costs associated with each paid firefighter, you're deep into six figures per person every year. And for a community our size, you'll need at least a dozen – probably more. Right now, there are 55 active firefighters in our fire company, and they're all volunteers. Even though they're rarely available at the same time, when there's an evening alarm, the fire company is usually able to turn out more than 20 firefighters.

But the most important reason concerns our sense of community – of belonging and sharing support. Volunteerism is a fundamental American value; removing it cuts deep into the fabric of community life. Communities with fire services whose members truly reflect their

values have a more engaged population. Volunteers foster a culture where residents take greater responsibility for their own lives and welfare. Those communities are happier places to live, work and play. That's what we want for Cranberry.

At the same time, however, there is nothing easy about staffing, organizing or running a volunteer fire company. I know; I was President of Cranberry's Volunteer Fire Company for five years and I'm still an active member.

For one thing, a community like Cranberry sees a lot of turnover. People in the early and middle stages of their careers – people in their prime years for firefighting – frequently have to relocate for work. So, in addition to competing time demands, we lose a lot of volunteers that way.

Another is that firefighter training requirements keep going up. Back when Cranberry's fire company started in 1959, training was somewhere between minimal and non-existent – most of what you needed to know you learned at the fire scene. But today, even the most basic level of state-required training involves over 200 hours of class time – a major burden for anyone holding down a regular job.

Then there's mission creep, where firefighters are called on to deal with a constantly growing assortment of incidents – car crashes, hazardous spills, confined space rescues, gas leaks, and a whole lot more. In fact, of the 31.6 million calls to the nation's fire departments in 2013, only 1.2 million involved fire, and just 500,000 of those were actual structure fires.

The breaking point

In Cranberry, we already average more than two fire calls a day; days in which we answer three or four calls



Volunteerism is a fundamental American value; removing it cuts deep into the fabric of community life.

are actually quite common. But there's a limit to how frequently volunteers can respond – particularly if they have to leave work for several hours to do so. We don't really know what that limit might be before the volunteer fire service model breaks, but our fire company is doing everything they can to avoid reaching it.

This past spring, the fire company completed a strategic plan. It calls for recalibrating the arrangements between the Township and fire company including the benchmarking of response standards, reviewing membership requirements, and reorganizing internally. Together with enhanced recruitment, they are implementing those recommendations right now. It may not resolve every issue, but as they move forward, we will continue to have a great fire company protecting a great community and serving as a model for others all around the country.

Interested? New volunteers are always welcome. To learn more, write me at bruce.hezlep@cranberrytownship.org.

~



Third Generation Firefighter Amy Behun Is Opening Doors For Women

Back in the dark days of 2006-

'08, when America's auto industry was struggling to keep afloat, General Motors slashed its product lines – eliminating Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Saturn and Hummer – and sold off its financial arm, the General Motors Acceptance Corporation, in a desperate effort to cut expenses and raise new cash.

The freshly severed GMAC eventually re-emerged, this time as the online-only Ally Bank. And Cranberry interior firefighter Amy Behun – herself a former GMAC employee – remained with the newly independent financial unit, continuing her rise through its ranks.

Shortly after her 1998 graduation from Allegheny College in Meadville, Amy had joined GMAC's Cranberry office, settling in Zelienople. Successive company promotions carried her to assignments in Connecticut, California, Philadelphia and Texas.

While still a student at Allegheny, Amy followed in the footsteps of her father and grandfather, who were themselves veteran volunteer firefighters. There, she trained and worked as an EMT and ambulance dispatcher while completing her basic firefighting training with the Vernon Central Hose Company, just outside of Meadville. She later received her Firefighter One certification with the Glastonbury Fire Department in Connecticut.

In every location her career carried her, Amy continued using her emergency medicine and firefighting skills, finally returning to the area in 2008. That's when she rejoined the Zelienople volunteer company, eventually becoming its president.

While president, she came to know Bruce Hezlep, her counterpart in Cranberry, who invited her to consider joining the Township's own Volunteer Fire Company when she left Zelienople's department in 2012. After some consideration, she accepted, passing the Firefighter Two exam in her new role as a Cranberry firefighter where today she is the only woman on the fire brigade – the first-response unit that answers to 9-1-1 emergency calls.

Raising her hand

"Growing up, I was never afraid to get dirty or play in the mud, and I've always been one to raise my hand for something," she recalled. That included

Growing up, I was never afraid to get dirty or play in the mud, and I've always been one to raise my hand for something.

serving on the athletic board of her daughters' school and pitching in on work for Habitat for Humanity. But today, with a demanding career, three children, and her service with the Fire Company, Amy realized she needed to dial back. "I can't do everything," she admitted. "I've had to pick and choose where I spend my time."

Fortunately for Cranberry, her time is more often available during daylight hours, when it is typically most difficult for fire companies to summon volunteers. But with her responsibilities at auto dealerships ranging from Butler



to West Virginia, even her daylight hours tend to be scarce. Still, she remains committed to firefighting and, as part of the fire company's membership committee, it is a cause she is eager to share.

"Obviously, we welcome any women who want to join," she said. "It's not predominantly a field where women are attracted to volunteer, but we do have several women involved. We have the Ladies Auxiliary and other women who are company members that help with meals at meetings and at some of our events and fundraisers.

"There are multiple opportunities to belong," she explained. "There's a misconception that if you join you have to be a firefighter, and that's not the case. If you choose to be a firefighter, great, we'll take you. But it's a physically demanding position that some people may not be comfortable with. So we also have Company-only memberships where you can sit on committees, volunteer for events, and support the fire department

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

Third Generation Firefighter Amy Behun Is Opening Doors For Women *Continued from page 8*

in ways other than being an active firefighter.

"Sometimes women get discouraged because it is a male-dominant

environment," she acknowledged. "But I would encourage anybody who thinks they want to try it to try it – particularly if they're in a situation that allows them to

be available during daylight hours. You can do as much or as little as you want. Don't be afraid because it's mainly men; they're all nice people." ~

There's a Place for You.



**Neighbors.
Heroes.
Volunteers.**

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

is looking for men and women willing to answer the call.

Volunteer Firefighters (18 & up) * Fire Police
Non-Firefighters (Administrative) * Fire Safety Educators
Junior Firefighters (14-17) * Ladies Auxiliary

JOIN NOW!

There's a place here for you
 in emergency response and rescue or administration.
 Learn how you can be part of our life-changing organization.

CTVFC21.org | Membership@CTVFC21.org

Police Flex Muscle

What are the physical fitness requirements to hold a police officer's job in America? There aren't any. But the job itself carries significant physical demands. That paradox – which is complicated by laws concerning various sorts of discrimination – has been a source of difficulty for law enforcement agencies all around the country, particularly where collective bargaining determines the conditions of employment. However, an innovative program in Cranberry is starting to address that enigma through a voluntary incentive program called Elite Police FIT. The program, which was officially launched in December, provides age and gender-specific assessments for every officer and develops training programs to help that individual achieve their appropriate goals. A Thomson Park gym operated by former NFL tight end Darnell Dinkins will be providing much of that training. With co-sponsorship from E.T.H.I.C. Training and nutritional supplement company Performance Inspired, the program will attempt to reduce injuries, improve health, and create a more tactically-ready police force. ~



Public Safety Director Schueler Reflects On A Life In Law Enforcement

Is America sinking into a cesspool of crime and violence? Are its streets teeming with terrorists, drug addicts, alien thugs and vandals? Are its police-community relations irreparably broken?

Anyone following the rhetoric of America's recent presidential campaign might suspect so. But Cranberry's recently retired Director of Public Safety, Jeff Schueler, sees things differently – at least as they apply to Cranberry Township. Shortly before his November 11 retirement, Schueler sat down with *CranberryToday* to reflect on his 37 years of service to the Township and the challenges Cranberry faces going forward.

"It's all about communications and relationships and relationship-building," he observed. In the case of police departments, it's a need that applies broadly. But it begins with sister units of law enforcement. Perhaps the department's most valuable relationship involves the Butler County 9-1-1 Center, and it's one Schueler is particularly pleased about. "We have an excellent working relationship with them," he noted. "That's very important. I'm in weekly contact with the county 9-1-1 Center and its director, who is also in charge of Emergency Management."

Teamwork

"We try to work with all the services," Schueler said. "We started a Traffic Incident Management team because of issues we've had with traffic crashes. Plus, we're dealing with the Turnpike and I-79. So we brought state police, PennDOT, Turnpike Commission, local law enforcement, local EMS, and local fire departments into our TIM team. We were the first in Western Pennsylvania, and the TIM team is still thriving. So that's a real accomplishment."

Communicating with residents is also a priority. Although it's no longer the old-fashion sort of community policing where patrol officers got to know local residents and business owners personally, it has also become more effective with the advent of email, social media, electronic signs, cell phones and other mobile digital devices. Even so, within the family of emergency service workers, significant technology problems remain – particularly with incompatible radio frequencies.

"We can talk to Allegheny but not Beaver County," he said. "We can't talk to the state police; they're allowed on our frequency but local police aren't allowed on theirs. We're eventually going to lose the frequencies we're on now and get assigned new ones, but we don't know what the interoperability will be. And within the Township, we'll still need to stay in communication with Public Works and other Township departments. So that's going to be a challenge in the future."

Evolution

Still, Schueler has witnessed important improvements in public safety during his time as a Township police officer and Public Safety Director. "Two of the

*: The biggest changes
: I've seen are how
: we handle domestic
: violence and DUIs.*

biggest changes I've seen are how we handle domestic violence and DUIs," he said. "When I first started on the job, there was very seldom much of a penalty for DUI. But as MADD spotlighted the problem of DUIs causing deaths and severe injuries, society



decided we're not going to put up with that. And with domestic violence, it used to be that the battered party would have to press charges. But most of the time, they wouldn't. So again we, as a society, decided not to stand for it and we started evidence-based prosecution where an officer could press charges if he had enough evidence. So now we can move forward with prosecution even without the victim pressing charges. That was a big, big change."

At the same time, other problems have expanded over the years – particularly shoplifting fueled by drug addiction, which has itself grown to epidemic proportions. He worries that the surge of heavy truck traffic through the Township could someday result in a serious spill of hazardous materials. He is concerned that fire companies, including Cranberry's, are experiencing mission creep that will be very difficult to sustain as a volunteer organization. And he knows how difficult it will be to maintain a focus on emergency preparedness in a community as safe as Cranberry.

But the successes of his tenure, including completion of the Township's safety training campus, the rise of Cranberry EMS to regional leadership, and the formation of the region's first interagency Traffic Incident Management team, are signature accomplishments – and they're all ones he finds deeply gratifying. ~

New Mission For EMS: Saving Our First Responders

This past July, while still working his shift, a member of Cranberry's EMS took his own life. His death sent shock waves through the Township's ambulance service, but it wasn't an isolated event.

"Over the last 18 months there have been seven emergency responder suicides just in Western Pennsylvania," EMS director Jeff Kelly pointed out. "Five of them were people that I had either worked with or knew on a very intimate basis.

If you have a suicide within your organization, you are exponentially more likely to have a second suicide.

"One of the biggest things I've learned is that if you have a suicide within your organization, you are exponentially more likely to have a second suicide," he said. "So one of the things I'm really trying to make sure of is that we prevent another episode like the one we've had."

It's a serious risk. According to the Code Green Campaign, a national nonprofit organization focused on protecting the mental health of first responders, the incidence of suicidal behavior is 13 times greater among emergency workers than in the general population.

Part of it stems from the fact that military veterans who are already experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder constitute a significant part of the civilian emergency workforce.

But it is the cumulative stress of responding to a series of bad events, combined with long hours as well as the multiple part-time jobs many first responders hold that contribute to the exceptionally high rate of depression and PTSD in the community of emergency workers. In fact, according to Code Green, between 20 and 30 percent of first responders working today have fully-diagnosable PTSD.

Self-destructive behavior resulting from depression, anxiety, or PTSD is not something that tends to cure itself. So Kelly reached out to Code Green for its help in keeping Cranberry's emergency workforce, both volunteers and career employees, from getting caught in the downward spiral that can result from the dreary nature of their work. It is a task frequently complicated by the culture of pride, self-reliance, and reluctance to seek help which is especially prominent among emergency workers.

Code Green alert

During one long weekend in November Fiona Thomas, Code Green's co-founder and one of its two certified instructors, visited Cranberry from her base in Austin to lead seven separate hour-

long sessions for local first responders. Altogether, 120 firefighters and EMS employees from throughout Western Pennsylvania attended one of her sessions. They focused on recognizing the signs of mental health disorder, strategies to increase personal resilience, resources available for those in need, and how to initiate difficult and highly personal conversations that deal with disturbing incidents.

Among her recommendations:

1. Remember that responding to emergencies is your job, not your identity, no matter what badge you happen to be wearing at the time.
2. If troubling incidents stay on your mind, write them down – journaling tends to be very cathartic.
3. Talk it out with your co-workers. Vent about it. It's easier to deal with issues that are out in the open than ones kept inside.
4. If nightmares continue to bother you after three weeks, look into finding a counselor. New treatments are available which are more effective than traditional talk therapy and can help you compartmentalize troubling memories.

"Some pretty horrific incidents in the area have driven first responders towards Code Green," Kelly noted.

"There was a fatal house fire earlier this year in which an entire family was killed in Bellevue, and I know some of the Bellevue fire folks. So it doesn't just have to be a suicide scenario; it's an opportunity for folks in emergency services to share their stories, to understand that we're all dealing with different scenarios and different levels of frustration, depression, PTSD, compassion fatigue, or whatever. I'm hoping those folks will see it as a great opportunity to share stories, listen to other people, and erase the stigma that says 'we can't talk about it; we can't go to our bosses, we can't go to our superiors.' That has to stop. It's ridiculous." ~



JAN

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

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

SUN 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY		MON 2 Township Offices and Library Closed		TUES 3 ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm Board of Supervisors Reorganization Mtg Council Chambers, 6:30pm		WED 4		THURS 5 + Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tail Waggin' Tutors Library, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm		
FRI 6	SAT 7	SUN 8	MON 9 Live (Christmas) Tree Collections thru Jan. 20 + Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am + Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Council Chambers, 6pm + First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm					TUES 10 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tween Art Club Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		
WED 11 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am + Genius Hour (Teens) Library, 4pm			THURS 12 ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm + iTots Storytime Library, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm						FRI 13	SAT 14 > ECS&R Hazardous Waste Collection By appt. Call 866-815-0016
SUN 15	MON 16 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY Library Closed ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			TUES 17 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tween Lego Club Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm				WED 18 ^ Parks & Rec. Winter Program Registration Opens + Books and Bagels Book Club Library, 10am + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am + Fandom Club Library, 5pm		
THURS 19 + Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Budding Builders Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm				FRI 20	SAT 21 + CADN Movie (\$5), Valentin Library, Noon		SUN 22	MON 23 + Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am + Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		
TUES 24 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			WED 25 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am + Genius Hour (Teens) Library, 4pm		THURS 26 + 4th Thursday Book Club Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + iTots Storytime Library, 6:30pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Council Chambers, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm			FRI 27 National Puzzle Day Exchange Library, 10am- 4pm		
SAT 28 + Princess Tea Party Library, 11am Lesson & Dance (\$10), Cha Cha Gym, 7pm		SUN 29		MON 30 + Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Council Chambers, 6pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			TUES 31 + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEB

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

* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806

Cranberry Highlands 724-776-7372

+ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100

< Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480

^ Parks and Recreation 724-779-4FUN

> ECS&R 866-815-0016

WED 1 + **ABC Storytime**
Library, 10am & 11am
+ **Grades 1-3 Book Club**
Library, 7pm

THURS 2 + **Adult Discussion Group** Library, 10am
^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **Tail Waggin' Tutors** Library, 6:30pm
Board of Supervisors Mtg
Council Chambers, 6:30pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (30+) 8pm

FRI 3
SAT 4 + **Intro to Computers Class** Library, 9am
Sheriff's Office Gun Licensing
Council Chambers, 9am-2pm

SUN 5
MON 6 **Planning Advisory Commission Mtg**
Council Chambers, 6pm
+ **First Editions Book Club** Library, 7pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

TUES 7 ^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

WED 8 + **Genius Hour** (Teens)
Library, 4pm
+ **Grades 1-3 Book Club**
Library, 7pm

THURS 9 ^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **Homeschool Crafternoon**
Library, 1pm
+ **iTots Storytime** Library, 6:30pm
* **Manager's Coffee, GIS System**
Council Chambers, 7pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (30+) 8pm

FRI 10
SAT 11 + **Word I Class**
Library, 9am
^ **Special Needs Cupid Dance**
7pm

SUN 12
MON 13 + **Teen Advisory Board**
Library, 4pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

TUES 14 ^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
^ **Sweetheart Bingo**
Senior Ctr, 1pm
+ **Tween Art Club**
Library, 4pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

WED 15 + **Books and Bagels Book Club** Library, 10am
+ **Fandom Club** Library, 5pm
+ **Grades 1-3 Book Club**
Library, 7pm

THURS 16 + **Adult Discussion Group**
Library, 10am
^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **Budding Builders** Library, 4pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (30+) 8pm

FRI 17

SAT 18 + **Word II Class** Library, 9am
< **CPR and First Aid Training**
Municipal Ctr, 9am
> **ECS&R Hazardous Waste Collection**
By appt. Call 866-815-0016

SUN 19
MON 20 **PRESIDENT'S DAY**
Library Closed
^ **Preschool Open House**
Municipal Ctr, 10am-1pm and 5-7pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

TUES 21 ^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **Tween Lego Club**
Library, 4pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

WED 22 + **Genius Hour** (Teens)
Library, 4pm
+ **Grades 1-3 Book Club**
Library, 7pm

THURS 23 + **4th Thursday Book Club**
Library, 10am
^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **iTots Storytime** Library, 6:30pm
Board of Supervisors Mtg
Council Chambers, 6:30pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (30+) 8pm

FRI 24
SAT 25 + **Internet I Class** Library, 9am
^ **Special Needs Winter Family Fun Day (Free)** 12pm
+ **CADN Movie (\$5), Lesson & Dance (\$10), Rumba** Gym, 7pm

SUN 26
MON 27 + **Infant Storytime** Library, 10:30am
+ **Teen Advisory Board** Library, 4pm
Planning Advisory Commission Mtg
Council Chambers, 6pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

TUES 28 + **ABC Storytime** Library, 10am & 11am
^ **Pickleball** (18+) 12pm
+ **Meet Author: Jim Brewer, History of Pittsburgh Jazz** Library, 6pm
^ **Open Gym Basketball** (18+) 8pm

MAR

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

* Cranberry Customer Service 724-776-4806

+ Cranberry Library 724-776-9100

^ Parks and Recreation 724-779-4FUN

+ Cranberry Senior Center 724-772-6086

< Cranberry EMS 724-776-4480

> ECS&R 866-815-0016

WED 1+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am		THURS 2+ Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tail Waggin' Tutors Library, 6:30pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Council Chambers, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm		FRI 3		SAT 4+ Internet II Class Library, 9am Digital Detox Day Library, 1-3pm		SUN 5	
MON 6+ Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Council Chambers, 6pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		TUES 7+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm - Mystery Dinner Theater Senior Ctr, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		WED 8+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am		THURS 9^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Homeschool Crafternoon Library, 1pm + iTots Storytime Library, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm			
FRI 10	SAT 11+ Computer Security Class Library, 9am	SUN 12Daylight Savings Time Begins	MON 13+ Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am + Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm + First Editions Book Club Library, 7pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			TUES 14+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tween Art Club Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			
WED 15+ Books and Bagels Book Club Library, 10am + ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am + Genius Hour (Teens) Library, 4pm		THURS 16+ Adult Discussion Group Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Budding Builders Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm		FRI 17	SAT 18+ Powerpoint Class Library, 9am + Superhero Party Library, 11am > ECS&R Hazardous Waste Collection By appt. Call 866-815-0016				
SUN 19	MON 20+ Infant Storytime Library, 10:30am ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		TUES 21+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + Tween Lego Club Library, 4pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			WED 22+ ABC Storytime Library, 10am & 11am + Fandom Club Library, 5pm			
THURS 23+ 4th Thursday Book Club Library, 10am ^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm + iTots Storytime Library, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm		FRI 24	SAT 25+ Excel I Class Library, 9am + CADN Movie (\$5), Library, Noon Lesson & Dance (\$10), Waltz Gym, 7pm		SUN 26	MON 27+ Teen Advisory Board Library, 4pm Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Council Chambers, 6pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm			
TUES 28^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (18+) 8pm		WED 29+ Genius Hour (Teens) Library, 4pm		THURS 30^ Pickleball (18+) 12pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Council Chambers, 6:30pm ^ Open Gym Basketball (30+) 8pm		FRI 31Waterpark Membership Discount Period Ends			

Diversity Group To Host Disparate Events

The Cranberry Area Diversity Network takes a broad view of its mission, according to the organization's co-founders, Charles Hawkins and Gary Winterhalter. Its programs not only focus on national, cultural and ethnic diversity, they also extend to topics involving mental illness – emotional health issues that transcend traditional social distinctions, frequently resulting in individuals being excluded from normal interactions. This winter and spring, three very different programs will be offered under the Network's inclusive umbrella.



- From noon to 3:30 on Saturday, **January 21**, there will be a showing of the **award-winning 2002 Argentine film *Valentin***, which revolves around a precocious 8-year old boy. Shown in Spanish with English subtitles at the Cranberry Library's Franklin Station room, the screening will be followed by a sampling of Argentine foods and discussion of the film led by Sharon and Dolores Beck. Other movies in the Movies, Mumble and Munch series will be held February 25 and March 25.
- Suicide awareness and prevention will be the topic of the **Network's**

Spotlight on Mental Health, Wednesday evening, **February 15**, in the Rose E. Schneider Family YMCA. Sponsors include the Butler County Suicide Awareness Task Force, the Seneca Valley School District, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The program, which will focus on understanding suicide, who it affects, and what can be done to prevent it, will be led by Jackie Eppler, who also serves as the director of Care and Counseling at Grace Community Church. The program will specifically address suicide among elderly and teens, as well as its impact on the workplace. A follow-up session will

be held on Saturday, May 20, in the Township Municipal Center.

- The Diversity Network's **third annual CranFest**, an event which celebrates the rich assortment of cultures and ethnicities in the Cranberry area with entertainment, food and crafts, will be held in the Municipal Center from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM on Saturday, **April 8**. Chaired by Sonia Jaiswal, the event will include participants and vendors from cultural organizations and specialty restaurants as well as individuals, families and groups of residents eager to showcase their affiliations.

For questions or more information, contact the Network at: diversity@cranberrytownship.org ~



How Cranberry Got On The Map

A Coffee and Conversation with

Township Manager Jerry Andree will focus on Cranberry's Geographic Information System – a database containing all sorts of information about the community along with the ability to graphically map it – will be held starting at 7:00 on Thursday evening, February 9 in Council Chambers. Professionals from the Township's Information Technology department will be on hand to explain, demonstrate and discuss the ways in which that information is captured and used. No reservation is needed to attend, but your RSVP to 724-776-4806, ext. 1089 would be appreciated for planning purposes. ~

Community Days Dates Reset

Cranberry Township Community Days has been held the second weekend of July for a number of years now. But a quirk in the 2017 calendar would have put Community Days and Independence Day into the same week. So, to reduce the possibility of residents overdosing on celebration activities, Cranberry's Board of Supervisors announced that the 2017 event would be held the following week, Wednesday July 12 through Saturday, July 15. ~



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Feeling Fat? Boo Hoo. So Does Everyone Else.

Have the holidays taken a toll on your waistline? For way too many people, the answer is a big fat YES! And Cranberry's Parks & Recreation Department is listening.

"The biggest concern for everybody is the extra holiday pounds they put on," Department Director Pete Geis acknowledged. "Health is always a concern in Cranberry Township. We pride ourselves on being a healthy community, so we are always looking, particularly at this time of year, to provide fitness programs that will attract people. So we're offering a plethora of programs for people of all different capabilities."

Fitness fads

The specific mix of those Township programs, however, keeps on changing as fitness fads continue to come and go. "It's cyclical; a program goes in and becomes the hot thing for a year or two, and then all of a sudden, it dies down and something else picks up," Geis explained. "The next thing you know, everyone's requesting it again and we bring it back. We understand that it changes all the time. If people do the same thing too often, the repetition will get them bored and out of being healthy and out of their fitness routine. Our program coordinators are constantly changing it up so people stay involved."

Nancy Triscuit, the department's group fitness coordinator, is constantly adjusting her class schedule – offering new programs and tapping into whatever vogue may be hot at the moment. "She keeps her eye on what's happening as the year goes on," Geis said. "And when you have a fitness program where all of a sudden, participation is diminishing, she'll add another class, or replace it, or incorporate some of our other classes into it so people don't lose what they

were doing. And we've also been getting rave reviews on our new fitness room; people are loving it."

We've also been getting rave reviews on our new fitness room; people are loving it.

This year, in addition to core aerobics classes included in its month-to-month Fitness Group Membership program, the department has several new offerings. Some include weight training. Some are low impact. Some are staff-led, others are led by independent fitness entrepreneurs. All are described in the Parks & Recreation program guide, coming out soon.

Join the club

"One of the new things we're excited about is a fitness program called Clubbin," Geis noted. "It's an exercise program that's like going to a dance club. The instructor is a former All-American football player – a receiver – not one of the big linemen. And he is always looking to make his class fun and unique.

"Back when we were in our 20s, we'd go to clubs downtown or wherever and dance the night away without realizing how much exercise we were getting," he reflected. "Well here, we have that same experience, but it's in a class. When people leave they look like they just ran a marathon, but they all have smiles on their face – laughing and talking about what they did in the program. Men and women alike are having a blast in this class."

Unlike most commercial fitness facilities, Cranberry's aerobic exercise classes make sparing use of equipment. "There are bands, there are balls, there are steps and minor weights that will be used for certain classes," Geis admitted. "Depending upon the class, we may use dumbbells or kettlebells to keep people engaged and interested." But most of the exercises focus on keeping the body in motion – kicking, bending and lunging rather than on turning stationary equipment.

"Our instructors are phenomenal here," he said. "They all have their certifications. It's a great fitness staff. That's what really keeps our fitness program exploding here." ~



People Love Cranberry's Parks All Year Long

Outdoor parks are normally considered fair weather community assets. But once you combine milder winters with an active and growing population, get ready for a new normal.

While it's true that clearing snow from park roads has never been a Township priority and that park playing fields are in no condition for active use during the winter season, Cranberry's Public Works department is making a concerted effort to keep the four miles of paved walking trails in its parks passable all year long. At least one heated bathroom will remain available in each of the Township's three main parks throughout the winter season. And their playgrounds and fitness stations will remain open all year.

"We're doing everything we can to accommodate people through the winter," according to Parks & Recreation Director Pete Geis. "With a community as young and vibrant as ours, they don't stop in November, December and January. They keep going; they just enjoy the parks in a different manner."

With a community as young and vibrant as ours, they don't stop in November, December and January. They keep going.

That was confirmed by a recent study examining the impact of Cranberry's parks. Last year the parks saw an astonishing 1.5 million visits. While a major share of it came from repeated visits by Township residents, a significant portion represented guests visiting Cranberry from other locations

throughout Western Pennsylvania and increasingly, from out of state. That generated an economic impact in excess of \$5 million, mostly spent on local stores, restaurants and hotels. It is a pattern which seems almost certain to grow and continue benefiting the local economy.

Strategic investments

To accommodate the steadily increasing use of its Parks, Township officials have been making strategic investments in the municipal park network – partnering with Cranberry Township Community Chest, CTCC, in adding playgrounds, fitness stations, and a fishing lake, as well as enlarging the pool, extending the trail system, increasing the parking, and adding amenities like the Seneca Village sculpture tableau.

This year, a major expansion of Graham Park's amenities is underway. Partnering with CTCC, the Township is undertaking Phase II of the park, at its previously undeveloped southern end. Ground was broken for the project on October, and a complex of venues for court games, called the CTCC SportCourts at Graham Park, is expected to be completed and ready for use this fall.

Township Public Works personnel and selected contractors will prepare the basic infrastructure for Phase II including grading, utility lines, parking, stormwater management, bathrooms, storage and vehicle access. Adopting the game courts as its 2017 Project of the Year, CTCC has launched a community fundraising campaign targeting individual and life sports enthusiasts. Its goal is to build a series of venues on the site for various court



games including tennis, pickle ball, shuffleboard, horseshoes, bocce and basketball.

Planning ahead

But Graham Park is not alone in drawing the Township's attention. A master plan for North Boundary Park and the property acquired several years ago contiguous to the park and Goehring Road, will be developed this year. And a few more upgrades at Community Waterpark, which reopened last year after a major series of improvements, are also in the planning crosshairs.

"We are looking, over the next year or so, to make enhancements to the concession stand," Geis noted. "That's our primary challenge at the Waterpark right now. It was originally built to serve a population of somewhere around 15,000 people; we're over 30,000 now. When it was built 20 years ago, it was probably doing \$5,000 or less of business. Last year it generated close to \$175,000. And the facility just wasn't built to service that kind of need."

"Everything we do is based on public input. We're constantly listening to what the community wants. The primary challenge at the Waterpark this past year was the main entrance and the wait time at the concession stand. So who knows? Maybe in another five years we'll be hiring a chef." ~



Township Zoning Ordinance Enables Medical Marijuana

Put away those Screaming Yellow Zonkers and the rest of your stoner munchies. Cannabis is serious medicine.

At least that's the thrust of Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Act, SB-3, which was passed and signed into law last spring. Its enactment followed a lengthy campaign to make it available to patients in the Commonwealth suffering certain serious health conditions for which the plant's extracts can provide some relief. Initially, the only types of medical marijuana allowed under the act will be pills, oils, gels, creams, ointments, tinctures, liquid, and non-whole plant forms to vaporize. Smoking it is prohibited. Marijuana is still a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law.

SB-3 imposes a number of conditions on patients getting hold of marijuana in an effort to keep it out of the hands of healthy people who might want it for recreational use. For example, you'll need a doctor's written recommendation to buy it. But before the doctor can recommend medical marijuana to patients, they'll have to take a four-hour course developed by the state's Department of Health.

Once the doctor has taken the course and registered with the Department, he or she can write recommendations

for patients who have certain qualifying medical conditions. With the doctor's written recommendation in hand, the patient must then register with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and pay \$50 to receive a state identification certificate. That certificate allows the patient to access to 150 state-licensed dispensaries expected to open in the Commonwealth under terms of the Act. According to state law, those dispensaries must be at least 1,000 feet away from any school or day care center.

Joint resolution

Whether a community's officials want medical marijuana in their town or not, the Act bars local municipalities from sabotaging the law by enacting their own ordinances designed to keep medical marijuana production, processing or distribution out of their jurisdictions. Accordingly, this past fall, Cranberry updated its zoning regulations to permit state-licensed medical marijuana dispensaries anywhere that normal pharmacies are allowed and to classify growing medical marijuana as an ordinary agricultural activity. SB-3 allows for 25 cannabis grower-processor permits to be issued statewide.

Pennsylvania is the 24th state to legalize marijuana for medical uses.



Entrepreneurs across the state are moving quickly to get into the business.

According to various sources, even before Pennsylvania's new law took effect, the legal U.S. marijuana crop last year brought in around \$7 billion. That's a lot of money. As a result, entrepreneurs across the state are moving quickly to get into the business, which observers believe will happen within another year or two. However, no applications for companies to either grow, process or distribute medical marijuana have been presented to Cranberry for approval at this time. ~



Make Mountains Out Of Molehills

Township construction projects frequently generate truckloads of material that has to be disposed of. Problem is, there aren't many places in town to put it. Those which have been identified are typically sites that can take just one or two truckloads. But Public Works is looking for properties with the potential for months or even years of use – places where significant changes in the property's topography are both practical and welcome. For the larger receiving sites which have been selected and used, once a project has concluded, Township personnel will level off the mounds of fill, add topsoil, and seed it to prevent erosion. However, Public Works cautions property owners to understand that a fill project is not a landscaping project; the owner will still be responsible for their property's finished grade. Anyone who knows of a potential fill site in the Township is asked to contact Public Works Director Jason Dailey at 724-776-4806. ~

Regional Contractors Association Partners With Township On Training

The Contractors Association of Western Pennsylvania was formed more than 80 years ago when heavy construction in the region – as well as in much of the rest of America – was reminiscent of the Wild West. Labor relations were terrible. Safety was poor. Business practices were predatory. And public perceptions of the industry were very low. America was in the depths of the great depression, and building industry leaders understood that despite the inherently competitive nature of construction contracting, they needed to do better.

The resulting trade association included union-affiliated contractors in the heavy industrial, highway, railroad and utility construction business sector throughout western Pennsylvania. From 1968 until March of 2015, the Association maintained its headquarters on Banksville Road. That was the month they relocated to a Cranberry Woods suite, in the building which formerly housed Verizon's regional call center.

Their new space is an attractive and practical office facility that includes a conference room, a 40-person training classroom, and plenty of parking. But for most of the training and many of the demonstrations involving heavy construction, off-site locations offer a better fit. That's where Cranberry Township's Public Works Department came in.

Host with the most

"Even though we're not in the business, we do a lot of the same things that a construction company might do," explained Public Works Director Jason Dailey, whose Township facilities include a 70,000 square foot operations center, as well as a wide assortment of related support resources. "We certainly have the ability to move our trucks around

to accommodate their needs while taking advantage of their organization for the safety training and education they do."

A recent example involved a workshop on the growing use of silica in concrete – an issue for Cranberry as well as for the commercial construction industry. Another involved trailer safety. "They'll rent two or three bays of our facility here and bring in motor vehicle enforcement officers, state police, and maybe two or three vendors of cargo straps to show you proper tie-down techniques for different pieces of equipment," Dailey said.

"We're not a member of the association. We're just a good host who also gets the benefit of their program," he said. "There's usually a small fee for participants, but since we host their events, our employees are treated as complementary guests for the training."

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Barter

Swapping free training of Township employees in exchange for the use of Cranberry's facilities, is actually nothing new. Other Lunch 'n Learn vendors have been hosted there as well, including PA One Call, which used to hold a huge exposition directed toward underground utility workers at the Public Works complex every year. And Public



We're not in the business, but we do a lot of the same that a construction company might do.

Safety does something very similar for first responders at its nearby training campus.

"Mohawk Lifts came here and did some safety demonstrations using the vehicle lifts we have," Dailey noted. "And we've had other material vendors come in to do the same kind of thing where they'll put on a program and we'll invite our neighbors or some other local colleagues to come along. But we don't have to organize it; that's a huge benefit for our folks. So it's great to have the Association as a business here in our community, and even better to have it as an educational partner for us."

However, Public Works isn't the only Township beneficiary of the Contractors Association's new home in Cranberry. So are Parks & Recreation and the Cranberry Library. For the last two years, the Association has co-hosted a free, Township-sponsored Touch-A-Truck event featuring vehicles loaned by its members. The organization's goal: to illustrate the impact of the heavy highway construction industry on residents' everyday lives. More than 500 children and their parents have attended each event. ~

Hello, Newman. Township, Contractor Prep For Meter Installation.



For Cranberry residents, the home water meter exchanges which will affect every household in the Township by mid-

2018 are expected to be a non-event: you schedule the installation, let the contractor in for about half an hour, he takes your old meter out, a new digital one is installed, a data transmitter – known as an MXU – is snapped over the old touch pad on the outside wall of your home, and you're back in business. You're without water for maybe 20 minutes.

In November, Cranberry's Board of Supervisors awarded Newman Plumbing of Zelienople a \$779,000 contract to schedule and perform the home installations over an 18-month period starting in February. But behind the scenes, there's a lot of preparation going on, and the success of that largely unseen work will determine the effectiveness of the meter exchange program.

Why the meter swap?

Over time every device wears out. In the case of water meters, that wear causes them to lose accuracy. One result is that it becomes more difficult for the Township to efficiently manage its complex network of pipelines, storage tanks, pumps, valves and sensors as well as its purchases from the West View Water Authority. Another is that if meters are running slow – showing less use than they should – the Township's bills become inaccurate. New, more accurate water meters can help although, over time, they too will need to

be replaced; the new meters come with a 20-year battery life.

The other major reason behind the exchange is to eliminate estimated readings. Until now, meters were read on alternate months by a Township technician. The bills for months in between were calculated rather than measured. The new meters, coupled with the MXU devices, transmit water use data multiple times a day, and report use in smaller units than the older meters. That data is captured, entered into the customer's account, and used as the basis for billing. It will

*That data will be
securely available
online so that
homeowners can track
their own household's
consumption.*

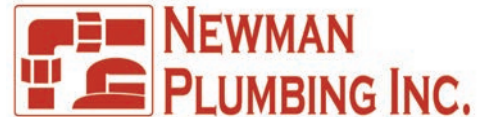
also be securely available online in real time so that homeowners can track their own household's consumption and even use it to detect possible leaks.

But before that can happen, a considerable amount of advance preparation needs to take place. "There's a lot of backend work being done to make sure all the customer data comes over and ties together,"

Public Works Director
Jason Dailey
explained."



*The new meters come with a 20-year
battery life.*



Reconciling readings

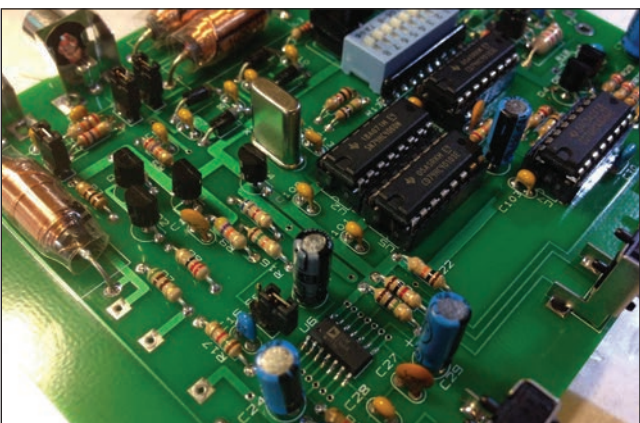
If someone's old water meter is running slow, any bills generated by the replacement meter will show increased use. If it reflects a big difference, it's something the Township will be watching out for.

"We may see an initial jump in the water bill," Dailey said. "It will most likely be a slight one, and we'll be monitoring that for you. We have procedures in place right now where we look at every bill that goes out. We have alerts set up in our system that tell us that if this home's use goes up over 10 percent, we will look at their account after the meter is changed out."

Plans call for Newman Plumbing to replace meters on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis starting in February. Homeowners will be notified by letter of the dates when the installers will be working their neighborhood and given a phone number to call for arranging an appointment. A household member 18 or older must be present to let the contractor in and to sign a receipt confirming that the exchange has taken place.

Every water service customer is required to participate in the exchange. For up to date information on the program, go to: www.cranberrytownship.org/meterswap.

Public Works Adapts Traffic Technology To Novel Township Uses



Carnegie-Mellon has earned its reputation as a hotbed of technical innovation. Cranberry Township has an equally well-deserved reputation as a progressive community. So it's no surprise that the two institutions would find a lot in common. At least that's the view of Public Works Director Jason Dailey who recently attended a high-level consortium of traffic experts in Oakland hosted by the university's Traffic 21 institute at CMU's Heinz College.

What initially intrigued Dailey was an innovative system used to detect and predict the future movement of pedestrian and bicycle traffic – a job which had previously been nudged aside in favor of automated vehicle counting technology. However, the two tasks eventually converge.

“When somebody hits that pedestrian crossing button, it impacts traffic,” he said. “Everybody has to stop and then allow that movement to take place. Is there a more efficient way to move it? Is there a better way to make it more efficient for the motoring public as well as for pedestrians and bicyclists?”

The answer isn't clear, and it becomes even more complicated when it's integrated into the type of adaptive traffic signal system that Cranberry is currently installing along every major corridor in the Township. Nobody has

tried to do that before, nor, to the best of anyone's knowledge, has the detection system's ability to predict pedestrians' future movement ever been used to optimize traffic signals.

Outside the box

But traffic signals are only the most obvious application of the technology; it also carries important implications for advertising, merchandising, engineering, planning, grant writing and many other uses, both commercial and non-commercial. Helping developers see ways in which their inventions can help municipalities address issues they never previously considered has been a personal mission for Dailey.

Helping developers see ways their inventions can help municipalities has been a personal mission for Dailey.

Extending those applications has also been a top priority for Traffic Operations Manager Marty McKinney. “When we first started working with CMU's autonomous car, they brought us these very powerful, military grade Ethernet radios that can talk to cars along the corridor,” McKinney said. “When we started looking at those radios, we thought to ourselves: we may have some other uses for these.

“So, for example, when work was being done at Rochester and Graham School Road, we installed a temporary traffic signal. And we used those radios to get that signal onto our network and make sure we could monitor that intersection. The vendor didn't even realize it had that capability.”

“We're also using them to transmit our water meter data back and forth to the water towers,” Dailey added. “We even called the manufacturer who said ‘no one has ever done this before, but I don't see why you couldn't. Give it a shot.’ So we started to find all these other applications for technology we saw at this consortium.”

Flow monitoring

“Whenever I'd talk to the people there, I not only brought up traffic and pedestrian and trail connectivity, I also brought in sewer and water concerns,” he continued, “like the fact that we have sub-basins out in our watersheds, or that we're looking at real-time flow monitoring and how to communicate that back.

“They had a 3-D modeler down there that our police department might be interested in for investigating crashes. The developer uses off-the-shelf android cameras that can reconstruct in 360-degrees and you can print out a model of a crash in very high resolution.

“Most roadway maintenance applications out there are very expensive,” he said. “But here's a guy using a \$99 camera to do what a contract for tens of thousands of dollars with some other companies out there might do. For a community that doesn't have a road program or an infrastructure inventory, his model is very affordable.

“A lot of it is really in its infancy now,” Dailey reflected. “That's true for almost everything they talked about, like interactive message boards picking up waves of congestion from miles away by interacting with the social aspect of traffic management. It's all very interesting.” ~

We're Not A Perfect 10, But We're Getting Close.

Assessing the health of roadway pavement and assigning a priority to its maintenance is growing more sophisticated. This year, Cranberry's Public Works Department used several new scanning technologies to come up with a score for each segment of roadway in the Township reflecting its pavement condition. According to Township Streets Manager Bob Howland, the scoring system ranges from 1 (terrible) to 10 (flawless). The Township's combined average score: 6.97. Cranberry's policy is to keep every Township-owned road at a 5 or higher. Lower-scoring roads have been given priority for the 2017 maintenance season including crack sealing and thin coating in addition to conventional milling and repaving. ~



Taking Root

A half dozen volunteers from the Cranberry LDS church, in tandem with half a dozen Township employees and a resident of Greenfields Estate, spent a spectacular Friday morning in November planting an assortment of trees along the northern stretch Brush Creek trail near Powell Road. As they mature, the trees – which were selected by Township Grounds Maintenance Manager Rebecca Auchter – will provide additional shade along that segment of the popular 1.7 mile footpath. ~

Who's Responsible For Clearing Snow From Cranberry's Sidewalks?

It's you, if that sidewalk touches your property. Growing Cranberry's network of sidewalks is a joint undertaking of the Township and private developers. But maintaining those sidewalks, including removing snow and ice within 48 hours of a snow event, falls to the property owner. It doesn't matter whether you built the sidewalk or not, in fact most people didn't. But removing snow and ice from them is the legal responsibility of the person whose property is adjacent to that sidewalk. If you're away when the storm hits, try to make advance arrangements with a neighbor or hire someone to clear it for you. When you shovel snow or use a snow blower, move it to the building's side of the walkway. Don't shovel or blow it onto the road; that's illegal and it creates a hazard for motorists. You are welcome to use salt or other anti-icing material in clearing the sidewalk, but it's not a requirement. And 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. ~



Many Thanks

By Linda Andreassi, Seneca Valley School District Communications Director



January is School Director Recognition Month – a month to celebrate our nine School Board Directors and remember how important their work is for our District.

Teachers are not the only ones who set the example in our schools. Board Directors are very much a part of the fabric of this District and set a positive tone as they work collaboratively with our staff and communities to maintain the high standards set for Seneca Valley. Through their dedication and hard work, School Directors continue to lead Seneca Valley on a journey filled with achievements both in and outside of our classrooms.

Tireless leaders, board members can often be found at numerous events each month, including board meetings, committee meetings and District activities. They routinely communicate one-on-one with constituents and take the time to represent Seneca Valley at local and statewide functions. Working as volunteers for no pay, all of them will tell you that they do so because they have a desire to give back. If you see a board member this month, be sure to tell them **thank you**.

Pennsylvania School Board Facts:

- According to the Pennsylvania School Board's Association
- 4,500 school directors serve Pennsylvania's 500 public school districts; all boards have nine members.
- School director elections are held every two years, on a 5-4 rotation to ensure continuity.
- All board members are elected to four-year terms.
- School directors are elected locally; however, the state constitution delegates to them the responsibility to administer the school system as agents of the General Assembly.
- Pennsylvania school directors continue to keep adequate school funding at the top of the list of the most important educational concerns facing public schools.

2017 Seneca Valley School Board of Directors

James Nickel, President

- Serving second term, expiration 2019
- Represents Cranberry Township West I and West II, Region 2

Eric O. DiTullio, Vice President

- Serving second term, expiration 2017
- Represents Lancaster and Forward Townships, Region 8

Susan Harrison

- Serving first term, expiration 2019
- Represents Cranberry Township West III, Region 3

Timothy Hester

- Serving first term, expiration 2017
- Represents Cranberry Township East III and West V, Region 5

Jeanette Lahm

- Serving second term, expiration 2017
- Represents Cranberry Township East I and II, Region I

Rev. Reid Moon

- Serving second term, expiration 2019
- Represents Zelienople Borough, Region 6

Frederick Peterson Jr.

- Serving first term, expiration 2017
- Represents Cranberry Township West IV and West VI, Region 4

James Welsh

- Serving second term, expiration 2017
- Represents Callery and Harmony Boroughs, and Jackson Township, Region 9

Kathy Whittle

- Serving second term, expiration 2019
- Represents Evans City and Seven Fields Boroughs, Region 7

Learn more about the Seneca Valley School Board, including meeting dates, agenda information and District policies @ www.svsd.net/SchoolBoard

L-R, front row: Ms. Susan Harrison, Ms. Jeanette Lahm, Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools, and Board Vice President Eric DiTullio. **L-R, back row:** Board President Jim Nickel, Rev. Reid Moon, Mr. Fred Peterson, Jr., Mr. Tim Hester, Ms. Kathy Whittle and Mr. Jim Welsh.





724-776-4806

www.cranberrytownship.org

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

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Mike Manipole, *Vice Chairman*

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Jerry Andree, TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Peter Longini *Editor*

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IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP AFTER THE HOLIDAYS!

Live Christmas Tree Curbside Collection

January 9 - 20 on regular collection days only

- Please cut trees taller than 6 ft. into 4 ft. sections
- Remove ornaments and lights
- No artificial trees

Purchase Extra Collection Tags

During business hours at the Municipal Center in
Customer Service and Parks & Recreation
or Cranberry Highlands Golf Course

- 65¢ 32 gallon bags
- \$4 Large items (*Call in advance*)
- \$10 Appliances (*Call in advance*)
- \$15 Volume pick up (*Call in advance*)

Cardboard Recycling

A commercial-strength compactor is available for use in the rear parking lot of the Municipal Center.

WINTER REMINDERS:

Please keep roadways
clear of parked vehicles
for emergency access,
snow removal and
trash collection.



**collection
connection™**

A CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP PROGRAM

CranberryTownship.org/Collection
724-COLLECT (724-265-5328)

Keep sidewalks
safe this winter-
clear snow & ice
within 48 hours of
a snow event.

Missed The Boat?

If your 2016 Butler County/Cranberry Township and 2016/2017 Seneca Valley School District real estate taxes were not paid in full by December 31, they've been turned over to Butler County's famously unsmiling Tax Claim Bureau at 724-284-5326. On the other hand, your 2017 Butler County/Cranberry Township real estate tax notices, which will be mailed to you on March 1, can be paid at the discount rate through April 30. If your home is your primary residence and you haven't already filled out the County's Homestead application form, complete it send it back. It will save you money on your 2017-2018 school property taxes. If there have been any changes in your mortgage company or you are no longer using an escrow account to pay your property taxes, contact tax collector P.J. Lynd at 724-776-1103 to make payment arrangements. ~