



Cranberrytoday

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2006 WINTER EDITION

Pace of Municipal Center Parklet Development to Accelerate This Spring

The front lawn of Cranberry's Rochester Road Municipal Center, which is slowly being transformed into a small but scenic public park, will see several key steps in the realization of its master plan put into place this spring. That's when a shaded walking trail, as well as a gazebo for small performing arts groups, will be added to the two gardens and restored one-room school house building already there.

Five years ago Cathy Soergel, a student of landscape architecture at Yale University, was asked to prepare a series of sketches for the Township outlining possibilities for a Municipal Center Parklet. Her drawings visualized, in addition to the features already in place, a

walking trail, landscaping designed to buffer against traffic noise, and a bandstand for small-ensemble summertime concerts. Soergel's colorful illustrations have served as an informal basis for the park's development ever since.

Last year, in an important step toward fulfillment of that vision, Cranberry's Sunrise Rotary Club donated a gazebo which will be erected on the lawn this spring. At the same time, Cranberry's Public Works department will build the trail, installing appropriate drainage, surface materials, and textiles for soil stabilization, as well as planting shade trees at 12-foot intervals along the footpath.

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Down the trail. This engineering schematic shows the alignment of a 1/5-mile walking trail as well as the placement of shade trees and a new gazebo, which will be installed this spring at the northeast corner of Cranberry Township's Municipal Center property on Rochester Road.

A bark in the park **Dog Playground Planned for Community Park**

Long-suffering dog owners in Cranberry may finally be able to take their pets for a spirited off-leash run in a special area of Cranberry Park if all goes according to plan.

A new dog park facility, which would provide year-round access to dogs accompanied by their owners, is planned for a 4-6 acre site on the former Lindner farm, immediately north of Community Park, which Cranberry acquired last fall. The new dog park will be a joint project of Cranberry Township and the Cranberry Township Rotary, which has pledged up to \$10,000 toward the park's construction.

Although important details of design and policy remain to be finalized, the dog park would be fenced off and

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Dog playground planned for community park

(Continued from front cover.)

divided into four areas, according to Parks and Recreation Director Mike Diehl. Two of the four areas would be for large and small dogs, respectively. The remaining two would be rotated into service as active play areas while allowing the two previously active areas to recover from expected wear and tear.

Parking, which will be provided immediately adjacent to the new facility, would allow dog owners to bring their pets in and out of Community Park without having to walk them through already-established child play areas. Once at the dog park, a double-gate system would allow one dog at a time to enter the compound without letting the rest out.

Other amenities would include water fountains for dogs and dog owners, benches where owners could sit, and eventually, some kind of shade structure as well. Although the dog park would not be supervised, rules regarding clean-up and allowable pet behavior would be posted.

Diehl is currently coordinating with local dog advocacy groups both to formulate the policies which would apply to park users, to create related programs dealing with pet care, and to establish areas of responsibility

for various constituent groups. A public meeting for anyone interested in these initiatives will be held at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers at the Municipal Center on Wednesday, January 25.

Dog parks are currently active in many parts of the country, according to Diehl. "What goes on at these locations is that as pets become more social with one another, their owners enjoy socializing with their fellow owners. It's become the new meeting place, and it will be available year-round," he said. ~



Nice doggie. Big dogs and small dogs will be able to frolic in separate areas of a new dog park being planned as part of Cranberry's Community Park expansion.

Pace of Municipal Center parklet development to accelerate this spring

(Continued from front cover.)

In addition to providing a fresh-air venue for walking, the trail will serve another purpose as well: improving access to the vegetable garden which was created for active senior citizens, particularly those who no longer have their own homes and gardens, according to Parks & Recreation Director Mike Diehl. A local garden club has also expressed an interest in planting and maintaining flower beds adjacent to the parklet's other facilities.

"It's going to improve the visual impact of the Municipal Center," Diehl said. "It will be a nice little reprieve from the standard urban/suburban environment. It is a spot we visualize being picture perfect for prom photos, wedding pictures, and so on. This is where people will come for their memories, whether it has any connection to them or not." ~



Recycling Notes

Phone book recycling behind Municipal Center. The North Pittsburgh Telephone Company has placed a container in the parking lot behind the Cranberry Township Municipal Center for your use in recycling telephone directories. It will remain there through February 10. Collection Connection™ customers can recycle phone books by using their regular Blue-top recycling carts at home.



Cranberry Wins Association Award for Transit Study

Cranberry Township's support for a 10-month study which investigated the service potential for public transit in Southern Butler County was honored with a "Moving Mobility into the Community" award from the Association for Commuter Transportation, ACT, on December 19.

The study, which was sponsored by the influential Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and conducted by Baker Engineering, examined the need for commuter transit between Butler, Cranberry and Pittsburgh, as well as to and from other key destinations in the region. It also studied the need for circulator service within the area surrounding Cranberry Township including Zelienople, Evans City, Adams and Jackson townships.

ACT is an association of transportation professionals, engineers, employers, universities, and transit advocates who are working to improve transportation in the United States and beyond. Its Mid-Atlantic chapter, which presented the award to Cranberry Supervisor John Milius on behalf of the Township, serves the organization's members in Pennsylvania, Delaware and

New Jersey. PennDOT Secretary Allen Biehler, who had previously worked on staff for the Port Authority of Allegheny County, was the featured speaker.



The Cranberry Area transit study recommended implementing a two-year pilot program, using a commercial contractor, to help validate the need for public transportation in the area. If it proves successful, a permanent service, using dedicated buses, stations, and a permanent workforce, could be implemented. A \$3.5 million earmark grant to build a transfer station for the service, should it become a reality, was adopted by Congress in 2005. ~



Reserve Your 2006 Golf Outing Now

Cranberry Highlands Golf Course is accepting golf outing reservations for parties ranging from 24 to 175 players throughout the 2006 season. Outing packages can be configured around any organization's needs, tastes, and convenience, according to Golf Operations Manager Jon Shuster.

In addition to a full round of golf with cart, outing packages typically include full buffet and beverage service. Clinics, logo golf balls, and other amenities are also available. To find out more and to place reservations for your organization, call 724-776-7372 or go to the Web site: www.cranberryhighlands.com. ~

Chamber Announces Scholarship Essay Contest

The Cranberry Area Chamber of Commerce is holding its 2006 Student Essay Contest for members of the senior class at Seneca Valley, Mars, and North Allegheny High Schools. Three \$1,000 scholarships, funded by proceeds from the Chamber's five-kilometer race in Thorn Hill Park last summer, will be awarded to the top entries.

This year's essay topic: "What experiences have led you to choose your educational field and career goals?" Scholarship applications may be picked up at the schools' guidance offices, the Chamber Office, or the Cranberry Library. Essays must be received by the Chamber no later than **4:00 PM on Friday, March 17, 2006**.

For more information, call the Chamber Office at 724-776-4949. ~

In Cranberry Woods, Verizon Wireless Can Hear You Now

Michael Walbrecher has a commanding view of Cranberry and the highway network that serves it from his corner office atop the Verizon Wireless call center building in Cranberry Woods. But the view he is concentrating on when a visitor stops by is actually much smaller: it is the tiny high-resolution TV screen that appears when he flips open the cell phone he carries in his pocket.

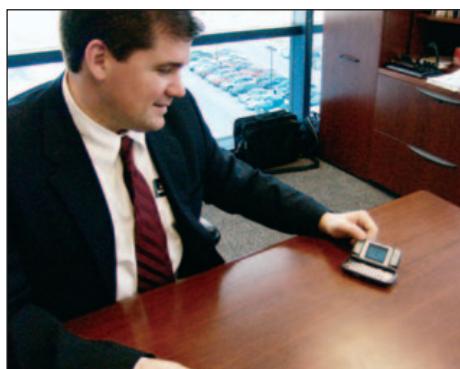
Neither that phone, nor the *Today* show segments it displays through the company's V-Cast service, are actually produced by Verizon Wireless, which acquires best-of-breed technology products and content from sources all over the world. But they demonstrate the advanced network capability that Verizon Wireless is currently introducing to its customers in Pennsylvania – a territory that the New Jersey-based company, itself a joint venture of Verizon Communications and Vodafone, administers as part of its Midwest business unit, one of four that blanket the country.

In his 12 years with the company, Walbrecher – a native of Baltimore and since 2005 a resident of Cranberry – has seen staggering technical advances as well as a massive expansion in cellular use. And in his current capacity as Director of the call center, he is responsible for overseeing the nearly 900 employees who work in shifts at the Cranberry Woods facility, from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM, every day of the year, troubleshooting customers' technical issues, resolving billing questions, selling specialty services, and providing human contact for many of the company's 50 million customers.

During the past five years, Verizon Wireless' Cranberry Woods Customer Service facility – one of the largest in its Midwest business unit – has felt that explosive growth head on. Prior to taking out a ten-year lease on its Cranberry Woods building, the call center had shared space with a sister unit in Thorn Hill Industrial Park. But following a flurry of mergers and acquisitions in 2001, including GTE, Bell Atlantic, NYNEX, and others – the need for more people and more space became acute. Only 18 months ago, Verizon Wireless employed 40,000 nationwide, Walbrecher noted. Today there are 52,000.

“The work ethic and the quality of employee is very solid in this area,”

he said, citing the low turnover and high productivity of its Cranberry staff. “I know; I’ve traveled a lot and I can say that for sure. That was one of the reasons we decided to expand our customer service organization in what was then the Warrendale



Single cell organism. Michael Walbrecher, Verizon Wireless' Cranberry Woods Call Center Director, demonstrates the power of one cellular device to send and receive information of every sort. Nearly 900 of the company's employees work in shifts at the fast-growing site, which services its large national accounts as well as millions of individual customers.

facility. When they went looking for a new place, they didn't want to impact their employees, so they found a space that's five minutes away, right here in Cranberry Township, and they decided to make this one of our larger compounds. And it didn't take long for it to fill it up with all the new customers coming on.” Today, between the company's two local facilities, Verizon Wireless employs approximately 1,300, making it the Cranberry-area's single largest employer. But that may be only the beginning.

While practically everyone is familiar with the basic connections cell phones make possible, that service is just the start, according to Walbrecher. “I can see CNN on here. I can play music. I can check my email. I can play cartoons for my kids. We've got devices you can open your garage door with. You can operate your TV. It's becoming a single device for managing your life. Wireless services use navigation systems, and that has lots of applications. It's in cars. It's used to change signs over the road, like Amber alerts. It's on the ankle bracelets worn by convicts. So it's in everything – more than we sometimes realize. The growth is unbelievable.” ~



Snow Day? Two-Hour Delay?

by Linda Andreassi, Communications Director, Seneca Valley School District

Kevin Prady is an early riser.

On those snowy winter mornings when most people are sleeping in their warm and cozy beds, Mr. Prady is very much awake.

It's 4:15 a.m., and as transportation director of the Seneca Valley School District, he knows that the decision he makes over the course of the next hour will affect the school and work days of nearly 6,000 families in an area that covers 100 square miles.

What may be a snow event in Zelienople could be nothing but sun in Cranberry Township.

Certainly a tough call.

But through the help of national weather reports, local media forecasts and direct communication with the district administration, bus contractors and local municipalities, Mr. Prady receives a great deal of input.

"We are also in contact with neighboring districts, but our final decision is usually based on reports of how clear and passable secondary roads and housing developments are in the district," he said.

Primary roads are typically taken care of first. Often times, a two-hour delay is needed to give the district's nine municipalities time to clear secondary or side roads and housing plans. In order to get a first-hand account of what things are like, Mr. Prady travels one of three winter routes before meeting his bus contractors, who have also been on the roads throughout the morning.

"We cover each township in the district," he said.

It's approximately 5 a.m., and the group is convening to share their professional opinions before one final call is made to the Superintendent. But there's more they need to consider.

While Mr. Prady and others are on the roads, Ron Lamneck, director of buildings, grounds and security, is reviewing all seven building entryways, parking lots and sidewalks. Some snow events are such that time may be needed to clean, salt or improve these areas and that can factor in to a two-hour delay.

"Creating a safe parking and walking environment for all students and staff is paramount," Mr. Lamneck said.

Seneca Valley School District

Over the course of the day, more than 120 school vehicles are utilized to transport students to and from district buildings and outside schools as well. Seneca Valley is responsible for transporting students to more than 45 private, parochial and special needs schools. In total, district buses travel 11,970 miles each day and can go north as far as Slippery Rock and as far south as the north side of Oakland.

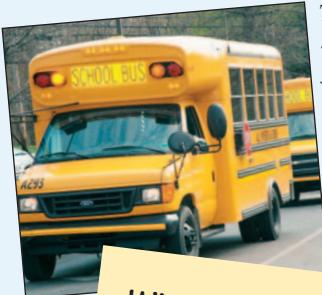
If the decision is a two-hour delay, like it was on December 9, Mr. Prady makes sure his drivers are told one thing:

"Safety is first, schedules are second," said Mr. Prady, a nationally certified director of pupil transportation.

Inside the bus, students should use inside voices and remain seated at all times. "If a student is behaving correctly, riding a bus is the easy part of the school day," he said.

While school buses remain the safest mode of ground transportation, approaching a bus stop can be hazardous when the roads are snow covered or icy.

"We ask that all students, parents and drivers use the utmost caution when near a school bus or bus stop," Mr. Prady said.



These buses, whose winter schedules hinge on Kevin Prady's foul weather call, are among more than 120 operated by three private contractors who provide transportation services for students from Seneca Valley, including more than 45 private and parochial schools in the district.

Where to turn for school schedule information when the weather becomes cold and blustery:

TV Stations:

KDKA-TV 2
WTAE-TV 4
WPXI-TV 11
SVTV - Armstrong
Cable Channel 50

Radio Stations:
KDKA 1020 AM
WISR 680 AM
WBUT 1050 AM
All Hitz 97.7 FM

School Locations:

District Web site: www.svsd.net
District Phone Line (recording):
724.452.6040

JANUARY

SUN 1	MON 2	SVSD No School	TUES 3	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm 3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required	WED 4	Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm	THURS 5	3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required				
FRI 6	SAT 7	SUN 8	MON 9	Book Discussion Call for title Library, 7 pm	TUES 10	3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required	WED 11	Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm				
SAT 14	CTAA Registration Municipal Center, 10 am – 4 pm SVSA Registration Seven Fields Community Center, 10 am – 3 pm	SUN 15	MON 16	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY Township office open SVSD No School	TUES 17	3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required	WED 18	Books & Bagels Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 10 am Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm CTAA Registration Municipal Center, 7 pm – 9 pm				
THURS 19	3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required	FRI 20	SAT 21	CTAA Registration Municipal Center, 1 pm – 5 pm	SUN 22	MON 23	TUES 24	3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm, Registration required Presentation, <i>The Overweight Child: How to Help</i> , by Bellevue Pediatrics Library, 7 pm				
THURS 26	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm 3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm, Registration required	FRI 27	SAT 28	SVSD SAT Test Day	SUN 29	MON 30	Registration for previously enrolled Cranberry Township preschool students Municipal Center, check website for times Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm					
WED 1	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm	Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm			THURS 2	GROUNDHOG DAY 3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required						
MON 6	Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 7 pm Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Essay Competition Opens Call 724-776-4949	TUES 7			WED 8	Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm						
FRI 10	SAT 11	SVSD ACT Test Day	SUN 12	MON 13	Registration for new Cranberry Township preschool students Municipal Center, check website for times			TUES 14	VALENTINE'S DAY	WED 15	Books & Bagels, Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 10 am Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm	
THURS 16	FRI 17	SVSD No School	SAT 18	SUN 19	MON 20	PRESIDENT'S DAY Township office open SVSD No School	TUES 21	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm			WED 22	Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm 2-year old's Storytime Library, 7 pm
THURS 23	2-year old's Storytime Library, 11 am	FRI 24	SAT 25	SUN 26	MON 27	Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 28	Presentation, <i>Mothers & Daughters Growing Together</i> , by Bellevue Pediatrics Library, 7 pm Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm		

FEBRUARY

WED 1	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm	Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm			THURS 2	GROUNDHOG DAY 3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm Registration required			FRI 3	SAT 4	SUN 5	
MON 6	Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 7 pm Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Essay Competition Opens Call 724-776-4949	TUES 7			WED 8	Family Pajama Storytime Library, 7 pm Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm			THURS 9	SVSD Prom Fashion Show Senior High School, 7 pm – 9 pm 3-5 year old's Storytime Library, 11 am and 1 pm, Registration required		
FRI 10	SAT 11	SVSD ACT Test Day	SUN 12	MON 13	Registration for new Cranberry Township preschool students Municipal Center, check website for times			TUES 14	VALENTINE'S DAY	WED 15	Books & Bagels, Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 10 am Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm	
THURS 16	FRI 17	SVSD No School	SAT 18	SUN 19	MON 20	PRESIDENT'S DAY Township office open SVSD No School	TUES 21	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm			WED 22	Kid's Chapter Book Club Grades 1st – 3rd. Library, 7:30 pm 2-year old's Storytime Library, 7 pm
THURS 23	2-year old's Storytime Library, 11 am	FRI 24	SAT 25	SUN 26	MON 27	Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 28	Presentation, <i>Mothers & Daughters Growing Together</i> , by Bellevue Pediatrics Library, 7 pm Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm		

MARCH

WED 1	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm 2-year old's Storytime Library, 7 pm	THURS 2	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm 2-year old's Storytime Library, 11 am			FRI 3	SAT 4	SUN 5	MON 6	Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 7 pm						
TUES 7	Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm	WED 8	2-year old's Storytime Library, 7 pm		THURS 9	2-year old's Storytime Library, 11 am		FRI 10	SVSD No School	SAT 11	SUN 12	MON 13	SVSD No School	TUES 14	Infant Family Time with Children under 2 years, Library, 11 am and 1 pm	
WED 15	Books & Bagels, Book Discussion Call for title, Library, 10 am 2-year old's Storytime Library, 7 pm	THURS 16	2-year old's Storytime Library, 11 am		FRI 17	ST. PATRICK'S DAY Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Essay Contest deadline		SAT 18	SUN 19	MON 20	Spring Storytime Registration Library		TUES 21	WED 22	THURS 23	
FRI 24	SAT 25	SUN 26	MON 27	Planning Commission Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 28	Board of Supervisors Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm			Presentation, <i>Tackling Puberty: A Class for Dads and Sons</i> , by Bellevue Pediatrics Library, 7 pm			WED 29	THURS 30	FRI 31

Township Introduces High-Performance Budgeting

Cranberry's budget is becoming so transparent you can actually see what's behind it.

Reading municipal budgets is never easy. And making sense of them is even harder. But Cranberry's 2006 annual budget is taking a step in the direction of improved transparency and project management. Here's how:

The annual budgets of most municipalities use a process called 'line-item budgeting.' It typically includes budget items identified with names like 'vehicles,' or 'electricity,' or 'pipe.' And along with each entry is a certain sum of money projected to be spent on it during the budget period.

But what do those items signify in terms of what the municipality actually accomplishes for its money? How are the vehicles, electricity, and pipe actually used to provide necessary customer services, keep municipal equipment running, or improve government-owned facilities – the things people really need and appreciate? For most communities, the answer is that the budget offers very little guidance.

Pilot Program

However, that's starting to change. This year, one important part of Cranberry's nearly \$34 million budget – its \$7.5 million sewer and water operation – is using an approach called Program Performance Budgeting. It is a pilot program for the Township, and if it works as well as expected, it will eventually be extended to every area of the municipal budget.

Instead of having an entry for electricity or vehicles or pipe which is then allocated by formula to various departments, Program Performance budgeting works from the bottom up. So, for example, Cranberry's sewer and water work program for 2006 is broken down

into specific activities, and every activity is then associated with individual tasks such as training, repair inspections, and information technology. Each task, in turn, requires specific expenses. Among them: wages, materials, fuel, utilities, and equipment purchases.

It is only when those detailed expenses have been identified that they are aggregated into higher levels of the budget for approval by the Board of Supervisors. But improved financial management is only one aspect of the new procedure.

Measure It

"The real significance will be in the task performance measures for each activity," Township finance director Vanessa Gleason noted. "We're going to measure what we do. For example, under the category identified as 'Water Fund - system support/vehicle maintenance,' our performance measures include the number of hours lost due to equipment failure and the cost for repairs, as well as for contract services.

"So we break the tasks down into their most basic form and then measure them," she continues. "There's a familiar saying: 'if you don't measure it, it doesn't get done.' Well, that's what we're working on here," she said.

The Township's computer-based work order system will be used to capture a lot of that performance-related information, according to Ms. Gleason. For example, how much time has someone spent on a job? How many calls were received about a particular clogged sewer line? How many about a broken water line? "Some of the measurements are financial, but most of them are not," she noted.

"In a line item budget, if something goes over budget, you don't know what that really means," she said. "It won't be easy to document what actually happened. But now, we'll be able to see through it right away." ~

Performance Budgeting at Work.

Cranberry's 2006 budget makes use of Program Performance Budgeting for the first time. Full details will be posted in the Finance section of the Township's Web site: www.cranberrytownship.org



Holding the Line.

The Township's \$34 million budget for 2006 includes no increases in either property or income taxes. However, a \$20 increase in the annual Municipal Services Tax will go into effect during the year and water rates will rise to help offset increased prices from West View Water, Cranberry's sole supplier.

Pay Your Local Taxes, But Don't Overpay Them

Earned Income Tax

Some Cranberry residents are paying a lot more in local income tax than they should. But they're paying it to the wrong municipality. Local income tax in Pennsylvania is based on where you live, not where you work.

Particularly if you work in Pittsburgh, where the earned income tax rate is nearly three percent, you need to make sure your payroll office knows where you live. Because in Cranberry, the rate is just one percent, split evenly between the Township and Seneca Valley School District. Check your pay stub to make sure your employer is directing any local tax withholdings to Cranberry Township.

If your employer is sending it to Pittsburgh – and the default community for many companies is the one in which they are situated – contact your payroll officer and request the form you'll need to change it. Then call Cranberry's income tax collector, Berkheimer Associates at 724-453-5060, for guidance about how to recover your

misdirected tax money and see that Cranberry gets the right amount.

If your employer doesn't withhold your local income tax, or if you are self-employed, you'll need to pay it yourself on a quarterly basis. But even if you're not currently earning income – as in the case of full-time homemakers, retirees, and those who are disabled – you'll still need to file an income tax form; it's just that you only have to do so once, and you won't owe anything.

Everyone 18 or older is responsible for making a tax filing of record. Those whose work is intermittent still need to file a report yearly, but only have to pay taxes during those quarters in which they actually worked.

Berkheimer can help you become registered as a potential Cranberry Township taxpayer and make sure you know which types of income, such as interest and dividends, are exempt from the tax altogether. But tax laws can and do change; legislation now before the Pennsylvania General Assembly could yet again change both the rates and rules affecting tax payment.

Municipal Services Tax

An increase in the annual Occupational Privilege Tax, which is now called the Municipal Services Tax, was approved by Pennsylvania's General Assembly last year. Although state law allows municipalities to levy up to \$52 on each employee working there, the tax rate in Cranberry will increase by just \$20 – from \$10 to \$30 – for anyone working in the Township and making more than \$1,000 a year. If you work in Pittsburgh, you will pay \$52. Other communities charge different rates.

Property Tax

Real estate tax bills for the Seneca Valley School District won't be mailed to homeowners or their mortgage holders until August 1, but Butler County/Cranberry Township real estate tax bills will be mailed March 1. Tax rates, which are based on County assessments of property values calculated in 1969 dollars, include 120.39 mills for the school district, 27.5 mills for the county, and 14.2 mills for the Township. Each mill equals \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value. ~

Does Cranberry Use Its Low Tax Rates to Steal Business From the Rest of the Region? Not So, Says One Local Official

A widely shared belief among officials in Southwestern Pennsylvania holds that Cranberry and Butler County use their low tax rates to lure companies away from Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, where taxes are generally higher. The result, they believe, is that companies abandon their former home communities to avoid paying taxes.

But, according to Cranberry's Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro, that just isn't so. "Cranberry is not interested in

stealing companies from Pittsburgh or anywhere else in the region," he said. "We are very interested in seeing Pittsburgh succeed. If Pittsburgh's were to fail, it would really hurt us."

Companies that relocate to Cranberry do so based on good highway access, land availability, a nearby network of suppliers, strong local markets, and the ability to retain the same experienced workers they had before their move, he said.

"Even though our tax rates may be lower, we make a point of collecting those taxes," Santoro said. "A lot of other communities give long-term tax abatements to businesses that move in. So even though their posted tax rates are higher than ours, the companies don't actually have to pay them. Here they do. So this whole idea of our enticing companies with lower taxes really misses the mark." ~

On Edge: Properties at the Limits of Their Zoning Districts Challenge Township Planners

People and businesses in Cranberry are rubbing up against one another in more ways than ever lately, and it's not always comfortable. But with development accelerating throughout the Township, it's likely to continue, according to one Township official.

There was a time, Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro wistfully recalls, when open space was so abundant that projects being developed in Cranberry typically weren't all that close together.

“As Cranberry matures, we’re going to experience more and more of these challenges because the easy sites are already done.

Almost everything being built now fits between something else that's already there," he said. "A lot of projects before weren't right next to something. Well now, that farm is next to a residential development, or the residential development is next to vacant commercial land. So we're going to see more and more of these types of difficult zoning issues."

A recent example involved a property zoned C-1, for convenience commercial development, along Freedom Road, adjacent to the Blue Ridge plan of homes. Allowable development in C-1 zones includes gas stations. But the home owners who would become neighbors to a proposed new gas station on Freedom Road didn't care for the idea and lodged a series of protests with Cranberry's Board of Supervisors.

That posed a dilemma for the Township in dealing with the project's developers. "Cranberry has done an excellent job over the years saying 'here are the rules; if you follow the rules, you're going to get your development approved,'" Santoro said. "They might need to meet a higher standard – more landscaping, more architectural features, or what have you, as they had to in this instance. But if they meet those things, they'll get their approval, as the law requires, and ultimately get their projects built.

"Those rules are spelled out in the zoning ordinance and the subdivision land development ordinance," he continued. "But if the Board is pressured to say 'we don't care what the rules say; even though you've

met our standards we're still not going to approve you,' the Township as a whole loses. And that's what actually happens in other communities; their boards and councils say 'no' despite their own rules. Then they have to spend thousands and thousands of dollars to fight the battle in court, lose badly, and end up getting the project anyway."

But there's an opportunity to revisit the underlying rules. "For transition zones – those areas directly adjacent to residential properties – the zoning we were left with from the '70s completely ignored that issue," Santoro acknowledged. "They didn't do anything with it because they didn't have to. But now that we're developing these areas, we need to focus on those rules."

"One of the things we'll do in the comprehensive planning process that's currently underway is to look at those transition areas. Otherwise we're going to have a hundred more of these sorts of challenges," he said. "But even if we soften the transitions, some people aren't going to like it. There's always going to be a point in a transition when you draw a line that says 'I'm this and you're that.' So we're always going to see some conflict." ~



Growing pains. The more intensive the development, the harder it gets to separate different land use areas. Cranberry's Grandshire neighborhood, for example, overlooks nearby Cranberry Commons. Allowable development in areas that buffer adjacent districts are defined by zoning and subdivision ordinances, which are currently under review in the Township's Comprehensive Planning process.

Odor Treatment Unit Proposed for Brush Creek

Plans are now underway to investigate installing a new \$750,000 odor treatment unit in the Township's Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant. The device, which would work in tandem with the facility's ATAD (Autothermal Thermophilic Aerobic Digestion units in which bacteria decompose organic matter into biosolids) sludge handling, and dewatering equipment, could substantially reduce the offensive odors which the plant now emits, according to Public Works Director Duane McKee.

At the same time, McKee cautions, effective odor control at any wastewater treatment plant is difficult to achieve. Although Cranberry has made significant progress with its Brush Creek facility, there are still many days when offensive odors reach into the nearby neighborhoods of Greenbrier and Hunters Creek, as well as onto Turnpike traffic.

Part of the problem, according to Lorin Meeder, Environmental Projects Coordinator, is that the organic chemistry involved is

exceedingly complex and layered; each time one odor is neutralized, it reveals previously unnoticed fragrances which had been masked behind it. Another is that the vagaries of wind and weather have a powerful effect on the dispersion of odors. Beyond that, each individual's perceptions of odor varies; some people become desensitized after a time, while others become hypersensitive to those same fragrances.

Cranberry's sewer and water personnel have worked to control the plant's odor emissions for years. But the odor treatment unit proposal, which grew out of a five-month study of Cranberry's sewer system that began last May, would be part of a comprehensive plan to protect public health and safety, to assure adequate wastewater treatment capacity for the Township's projected growth, and to extend the useful life of the plant itself. The study also examined ways to reduce downtime resulting from unforeseen repairs and unscheduled maintenance requirements.

The preliminary plan, which provides for developing engineering specifications, securing state permits, and seeking contractors' bids, as well as actual construction, will be considered by the Board of Supervisors early this year.

Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, the regulatory body which has general oversight of the state's water treatment facilities, is actively involved in helping Cranberry advance its plans. ~



Seeking better treatment. Residents of Hunters Creek and Greenfield Estates, two housing plans which adjoin the Brush Creek sewage treatment plant, have become outspoken advocates for stronger odor control measures at the nearby facility. Installation of a new odor treatment system is currently under review.

Intersection Improvement at a Crossroads

The stage is now set for a major improvement to the intersection at Route 19 and Rochester Road scheduled to begin this spring. Last fall, Township Public Works personnel and workmen from the local utilities moved back the power, cable, gas, and water lines serving the area in preparation for roadwork to begin in April.

The \$3.6 million project, a partnership of Cranberry Township, PennDOT, Continental Real Estate, and Gigliotti Properties, will significantly expand the capacity of the intersection, which has experienced increased traffic from new develop-

ment along the growing east-west corridor. The improvement project will widen both Rochester Road and Route 19 in the area approaching their intersection.

New turning lanes will be added to both roads including a second left turn lane on Route 19 northbound, a longer right turn lane on its southbound side, a new westbound receiving lane on Rochester Road as well as a new left turn only lane eastbound and a right turn only lane facing the same direction. Nearby Unionville Road, which has no traffic signal and which now allows traffic to enter and exit in both

directions, will be limited to right-in/right-out only once the project has concluded this fall. ~



Ready, get set, grow. The busy intersection of Rochester Road and Route 19 will see a major improvement in its traffic-handling capacity when a joint public-private lane expansion project begins this spring. Relocation of nearby utility lines was completed this past fall.

Voice Access to Library Catalog Now Available for Disabled Patrons

Speak up!

Visually and physically disabled library patrons can now simply raise their voices to get results. The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

(LBPH) at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh has introduced Vo-PAC (Voice-Activated Public Access Catalog), a new automated book ordering system allowing registered patrons to browse over 60,000 titles and place requests for items using just their telephone and a password. Vo-PAC is available in addition to LBPH's established online public access catalog, (OPAC), through which computer users can search the collection and place requests.

Vo-PAC and OPAC users can order materials with complete privacy, around the clock, seven days a week. Searches can be conducted by author, title, subject, narrator, or series.

The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped serves patrons with visual and physical disabilities in 36 western Pennsylvania counties, including those using the Butler County Library System, to which the Cranberry Public Library belongs. There is no charge for this service. Materials are sent to and from readers by mail, free of charge to the patron.

To find out more about LBPH services or details on Vo-PAC or OPAC, call 1-800-242-0586 or email lbph@carnegielibrary.org. ~

Annual Giving Program Extends Drive

2005 may be over, but it's not too late to give to Cranberry Public Library's 2005-'06 Annual Giving Program, according to Library Director Carol Troese. Today, more than 16,000 people walk through the Library's doors every month.

Even more access it online. You can help secure the library's future in a number of ways. Among them: by becoming an annual donor. Or by giving a direct gift to the library

endowment. Or by establishing a trust or endowment honoring a loved one. Or by contributing appreciable assets, such as stocks. You can also name the library as a beneficiary in a will or in a life insurance policy.

All donations are tax-deductible. Contact Carol Troese at 724-776-9100 ext. 1125 about the ways you can help. ~

Make New Friends

A new auxiliary support organization, Friends of Cranberry Public Library, is now being formed. A core group has already begun to establish its tax-exempt 501(c)3 status, to schedule meetings and to plan

future fundraisers. You can join, too. Call Pat DiFiore, 724-776-9100 ext. 1126 for details. ~

**CRANBERRY
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



On a sunny Saturday in June, nearly 200 volunteers joined forces to build Cranberry Township's free AE RIDE Skatepark. The facility has been in constant use ever since.



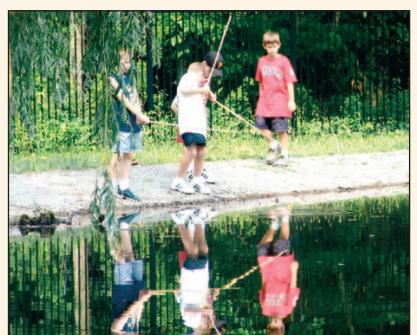
A long line of emergency and show vehicles paraded along Haine School Road for Night Out in August celebrating the 25th anniversary of Ruff McGruff, the trench-coated crime dog.



Work on Cranberry's long range comprehensive plan began last year with a series of community meetings designed to identify key issues facing the Township.



During 2005, spending on new construction in Cranberry Township exceeded every previous record by a wide margin.



Hundreds of children enrolled in week-long summer sessions of Camp Cranberry which included outings to the lake at Family Resources Center.

Cranberry 2005 A Year of Kodak Moments



The new location for Cranberry's Local Government Day in the Township's Municipal Center provided more room for guests as well as for exhibits.



Santa and his entourage made an early visit to the Municipal Center where he met hundreds of local children and spread holiday cheer.



Community Day in Cranberry drew thousands of families to the Rt. 19 Community Park for a spectacular Fourth of July celebration.



Township ordinances dating back to the 1970s were revised, updated, and codified by Cranberry's staff and enacted by the Board of Supervisors in December.



Bargain hunters and resellers came from all over the region to bid on old and surplus municipal equipment at a Township auction in July.



Dozens of local restaurateurs offered samples of their signature dishes at the Chamber of Commerce's annual Taste of Cranberry in the Municipal Center.

Construction in 2005 Shatters Previous Record



Between January 1 and December 15, 2005, more than \$105 million had been spent on new construction in the Township.

New property development in Cranberry is really nothing new. But last year was by far the Township's biggest year ever for new construction.

Until 2005, the biggest year for new development had been 1997, which saw \$82.5 million in new construction. The second biggest, in 2002, had seen \$79.5 million in new housing, public facilities, and commercial development within the Township. But the pace in 2005 blew those old records away.

Between January 1 and December 15, 2005, more than \$105 million had been spent on new construction in the Township. And unlike earlier record years, which were typically the result of one or two

major commercial projects, the volume in 2005 was the combined result of many small to medium size projects throughout the community, Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro told the Board of Supervisors.

That number is likely to grow even faster in 2006, Santoro noted. Particularly with final approval in hand for development of Park Place, an 800-unit neighborhood patterned after the traditional pre-World War II style, as well as the possible start of a major new lifestyle shopping mall proposed by Simon Properties – each of which would easily exceed \$100 million – this year's volume could dwarf even the 2005 record, he said. ~

For the most up-to-date information, visit us online at www.cranberrytownship.com



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