Big changes down the road

State, Federal Funds to Create Major Improvements to 228 Corridor

A series of major improvements to Rt. 228, which will help realize the Township's vision of greatly improved public road access to that quadrant of Cranberry along its 228 corridor, took a significant step forward when Congress enacted the six-year, $286 billion federal transportation act in late July. Among the 6,371 projects for which funds were specially earmarked in the act was $4.5 million to help build a flyover bridge allowing eastbound traffic on 228 to directly access Cranberry's northeastern road network without pausing for traffic lights or left turns.

Over the past ten years, a number of commercial developers have proposed building on the land north of Rt. 228 and just east of I-79, but they ultimately withdrew because they weren't able to meet the Township's requirement that any transportation infrastructure would need to serve the entire area and not just their own private development. More recently, Indianapolis-based Simon Properties has taken the lead and is pulling together a plan, in cooperation with the Township and PennDOT, that is consistent with Cranberry's transportation master plan. Simon is proposing to build a 900,000 square foot open-air mall in that area.

At the same time, PennDOT is moving forward with a long-range, $68 million series of improvements along the 228 corridor which would widen the highway to six lanes at various points, improve its intersections with other roads including new ramps with I-79, and ultimately carry those improvements all the way through to Rt. 8. But to make sure the two sets of priorities didn't end up tripping over one another in the heart of Cranberry, the Township insisted that the projects be designed and constructed together, even though they would be separately funded, according to Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro. Part of that will involve a study of possible long-term improvements to the key intersection of Rts. 19 and 228.

"We've insisted on a Rt. 19 corridor study because the improvements they're making at 228/19 are short-term improvements; they're not the long-term improvements which are necessary," Santoro said. "The study will evaluate all the

alternatives to determine the best solution for Rt. 19 from the 528 interchange in Jackson all the way south to the Warrendale interchange in Marshall – which includes the 228 intersection." ~

INSIDE *this edition*

Down on the Farm in Cranberry Township

For most of its 200 year history, Cranberry Township was a sparsely settled rural community, marked by fields and pastures, punctuated with barns and farm houses. But since the mid-'70s, most of Cranberry's farms have been sold to developers and turned into office parks, shopping centers, and residential neighborhoods. In time, the few farms that remain may well succumb to the same fate.

But not necessarily. Dairy farmer Denton Powell, for example, is hoping to save his 80-acre farm on Goehring Road for posterity.

He's been approached by developers, but his answer is always the same: "I'm not interested."

To help make sure his farm will remain a pastoral place even after he's gone, Powell approached the Township's Board of Supervisors in August about making his land part of an Agricultural Security Area that mainly includes land in nearby Adams Township.

According to Ron Fodor, manager of the Butler County Conservation District, agricultural security areas are created by local municipalities, together with the individual landowners, to promote permanent, viable farm operations. The way it works is that if a farm is accepted into the program, the county will buy the farmer's development rights, so that the owner reaps at least some of the financial benefits of development while, at the same time, securing permanent protection from

Nationwide, every minute, two acres of farmland are consumed for new development.

Making hay. *Farmer John Kraynik cuts alfalfa on a field of the Meeder family farm across from the Township's Municipal Center on Rochester Road. Alfalfa, which is rich in nitrogen, is rotated with corn to maintain soil conditioning. The harvested alfalfa is then sold for feed to dairy farms. The farm, which has been operating continuously since the late 1860s, may eventually become the site for a new commercial town center development.*

having the land consumed by new construction.

Although Cranberry Township doesn't have its own agricultural security area, farms can be included in security areas in adjacent municipalities and can be afforded the same type of protection, according to Dan Santoro, Assistant Township Manager.

Nationwide, every minute, two acres of farmland are consumed for new development, according to the American Farmland Trust. Between 1992 and 1997, Pennsylvania alone lost 134,000 acres of prime farmland to development.

Joining an agricultural security area is just the first step in meeting the eligibility requirements to participate in Butler's farmland preservation program – a complicated process that can take years before it comes to fruition – if ever. "The application date for Butler County's farmland preserva-

tion program is January 31, 2006, but it is very competitive and depends on county and state funding, which is extremely limited," Fodor explained, noting that of the 20 applications received by the county last year, only two were approved. "There are still a lot of good farmers, but there are also a lot of other things that play into land development. I don't know what the future holds," he said.

"Denton Powell has a land ethic," Santoro noted, acknowledging that the farmer could sell his land to developers for roughly $20,000 an acre and retire. "Or he can pursue the path of joining an agricultural security area, where he could get a couple hundred-thousand for his development rights under the County's farmland preservation program. He's tied to the land, and he wants to preserve it, which is admirable." ~

Park Place Proposal Poses Planning Puzzles

Here comes the neighborhood.

A move to the final engineering phase for Park Place, a major residential development north of Rochester Road patterned after traditional American neighborhoods of the pre-World War II era, has received a thumbs up from the Township's Board of Supervisors.

At 800 units on 195 acres, Park Place will be Cranberry's largest-ever plan of homes. It will also be the most unusual.

Departing from the established patterns of suburban development characterized by detached homes on cul-de-sacs with large lots, front driveways, deep setbacks, and rear decks, the developers of Park Place sought to create a pedestrian-oriented community featuring a mix of regionally-authentic stand-alone, common-wall, and multi-family apartment structures, on a grid of connected streets, with detached garages, as well as many essential services provided from a network of alleys behind the properties.

According to Rob Robinson, a UDA architect and consultant to the Park Place developers, home designs in the plan will be taken from a pattern book based on houses built during the late 19th and early 20th century in such nearby communities as Zelienople, Harmony, and Sewickley. The plan will also include a number of parklets and open spaces as well as screened parking areas, all linked by a continuous network of sidewalks.

But the novel features of Park Place also presented Cranberry's planning staff with unique challenges, as well as the need to revise the Township's zoning and subdivision codes.

For example, residents and visitors in Park Place will be able park on the streets – something not permitted anywhere else in Cranberry. As a result, a number of services which are normally provided from the street such as garbage pickup and utility access, must be provided from the alley network behind those homes. Mail delivery, which is provided by carriers walking from house to house in traditional urban neighborhoods, is not available in Cranberry, which the Post Office has designated a rural postal area served by carriers from trucks. So mail delivery will be from the alley as well.

As a result, planners had to figure out what geometry of alleys would be needed to accommodate the different types of vehicles which will have to use them.

Snow plowing will also have to change. With on-street parking and narrower traffic lanes, the Township's current practice of pushing snow off the streets simply won't work in Park Place.

And then there's the plan's mixed use concept.

In certain areas of the plan, residents will be able to convert the first floors of their townhouses to offices or certain other commercial uses.

"From both a building code and zoning administration standpoint, that was a challenge because there are regulations now for different types of structures and uses in different areas. When you mix them in the same area, building code requirements for things like fire separation, signage, dumpster location, on-street parking, and so on, gets you into this whole extra set of issues," explained Township Assistant Manager Daniel Santoro.

But they were not insurmountable. "These issues have been largely worked through now," he said. "We've established two sets of mini-zoning regulations for Park Place that applies to them because of these unique situations. And what can a conversion convert to anyway? A Laundromat? A café? Is a pub okay? We had to think through those uses." ~

Scale models of the residential development, Park Place, to be built north of Rochester Road in Cranberry Township.

Deep in Cranberry Woods, Danieli Engineers Design, Build, and Maintain North America's Sprawling Steel Industry

For decades, as every American knows, Western Pennsylvania was the nation's undisputed steel capital. But it lost that distinction years ago, as the gigantic ore-eating, coke-fueled blast furnaces, once emblematic of the region's primary steel industry, fell into decline while a new generation of mini-mills – fed by scrap steel and powered by electric smelters – emerged in localities all around the country.

But during the course of its reign as Steel City, the Pittsburgh area accumulated the nation's greatest concentration of steel industry engineers – people whose practical know-how in designing, building, maintaining, and operating steel plants had allowed the local industry here to flourish for so long. And to a surprising extent, even after the industry itself had shriveled away, that engineering talent remained rooted in the region.

It was precisely that concentration of engineering savvy, and the hands-on work ethic that went along with it, that caught the attention of the Danieli Corporation – a giant Italian-based producer of the heavy equipment used in steel production, finishing, and forging plants throughout the world.

So when the local steel industry went into decline, Danieli made its move, buying the then-bankrupt Youngstown-based Wean Industries as well as Pittsburgh-based United Technologies – two well-respected firms whose expertise in flat-rolled steel technology added a new dimension to Danieli's already-established strength as a supplier of equipment for castings and such long steel products as beams, bars, and rails.

Along the way, it consolidated the company's other North American operations including their engineering functions from Charlotte, North Carolina and Sault St. Marie, Canada, into Danieli's new U.S. headquarters in Cranberry Woods, which initially included more than 200 veteran steelmaking engineers. But its mission has evolved since the company's move to Cranberry in 1999.

"We don't do as much engineering as we had in the past here," John Brandon, Danieli corporate vice president and head of the company's U.S. operations noted. "Now, with the Internet and electronic transfer being so easy, we can engineer things at our headquarters in Italy, and post them on a Web page. Today the Cranberry office is primarily for sales and support of our U.S. customers: spare parts and field service, proposals, small engineering, project management, and purchasing."

Why Cranberry? "We drew a line on a map and said okay; we don't want our Pittsburgh employees having to drive too far; we don't want our Youngstown employees driving too far. So let's look somewhere between the two," Brandon recalled. "Some of the other criteria we had were for restaurants, hotels, and easy access for customers coming in from a major highway. We searched 12 or 14 different office locations and this was best suited to us."

"I don't believe you could find a nicer office park than Cranberry Woods," he said. "This is almost like a college campus with the lakes and the landscaping and the incredible view. For an engineering company, this is a beautiful setting, as compared to being in a high-rise in the middle of a large city and looking out and seeing the neighbor's high-rise. When we look out here, we see deer and rabbits and turkey walking around. It's incredible." **~**

Detailed drawings for hundreds of steelmaking plants going back as far as the 1930s, are kept at Danieli's U.S. headquarters in Cranberry. Corporate vice president John Brandon, who heads the office, explains that the company, whose local roots go back to 1900, supports its North American customer's facilities throughout their lifetime.

Although widely known for its retail businesses, Cranberry is also becoming an important high technology center. Each issue of Cranberry Today *features the profile of a different local technology company and offers a glimpse into the Township's emerging knowledge-based economy.*

Cyber Nanny Maintains Strict Order Among Library Internet Users

The next time you sit down at one of the 18 public Internet computers in Cranberry Library, your time on the machine will be tracked. And if you are prone to being a cyberhog – someone who likes to tie up a Library computer for hours while others wait their turn – your program or Internet connection will be terminated after 60 minutes, following several on-screen warnings.
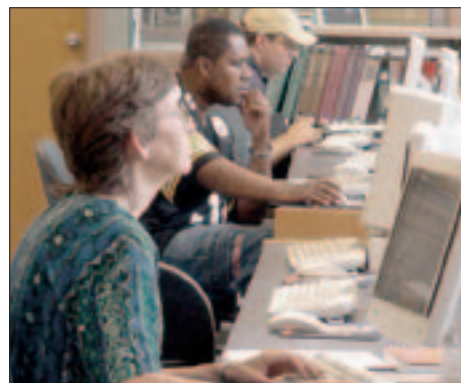
CybraryN, the brand name for the tracking software, was installed this past August in an attempt by the Library staff to allow more patrons to use the popular Internet access service as well as productivity software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. It also tracks prepaid accounts that patrons create for printing, at 10¢ a black and white page, 25¢ for color.

However, before gaining access to any of the programs, users must first log in using their library card bar code or a guest number, which will be available from the circulation desk. Once they are on the Library's network, a small window will remain open in the corner of the screen counting down the minutes remaining in their session.

The new software does not monitor the sites that patrons visit, Library Director Carol Troese makes clear. In fact, the library deletes its computers' search histories every 24 hours. Instead, the software frees the on-duty reference librarian to answer patrons' reference questions rather than having to keep an eye on their computer use.

Although the software is most helpful during the school year, particularly when student reports and research assignments are due, CybraryN does offer some flexibility. For example, if there are other computers available at the end of your first hour, you can get a 30-minute extension. And if there are still openings when the extension is up, you can get another half-hour before having to log out. Beyond that point, if more computer stations are free, you can repeat the cycle one more time, but on a different PC.

There is, however, another option: If you own a laptop computer that's already equipped to receive signals from a wireless network, you can bring it into the Library and use it there, through the Library's wireless Internet connection, for as long as you please. **~**

Learn MS Office Programs, Free

Cranberry Library is offering free Saturday classes in two popular Microsoft Office programs: Excel and Access. Advance registration is required. If interested, call 724-776-9100 ext.1147.

Beginning and Intermediate Excel: This class will cover the basics of setting up a spreadsheet, for both mathematical and nonmathematical purposes, using formulas, formatting and printing.
Saturday, October 29, 9 AM
Saturday, November 5, 9 AM

Microsoft Access: In this class you will learn the fundamentals of relations, fields, and design and how to set up a relational database. *Saturday, November 12, 9 AM*

Library Account Management Now Available Online

With just a current library card and PIN number, Cranberry Library patrons can now manage their library accounts from home, any time, any day. For example, you can check to see if you have any books out from the Library and when they're due. If they are not yet overdue, and no one is waiting for them, you can renew them immediately online.

You can also search the holdings of the Cranberry Public Library, and all the other libraries in the Butler County Library System, by title, author, or subject.

And if you want the library – actually any library in the Butler County system – to hold a book you've identified so that you can pick it up, you can do that online as well, and the library will contact you when the item becomes available.

Or, if you just want to have the library send you an e-mail reminder of overdue items, simply give your e-mail address to the desk librarian. To get a PIN number that allows you to manage other aspects of your account, you should register for the service in person the next time you visit the Library. **~**

Community Park Acquires More Room to Grow

A purchase agreement to buy a 28-acre parcel of open land immediately north of the Rt. 19 Community Park will allow Cranberry Township to expand the footprint of its original park by more than 50 percent. The Township agreed to buy the new property, which had formerly been part of the George Lindner farm, for $500,000. Upon closing, the Township will pay the Lindner family $100,000 and then another $100,000 a year – interest free – for each of the next four years.

Several years ago, the family had expressed an interest in selling their land to the Township. But the proposed sale came at a time when Cranberry was actively involved in the purchase of farmland in another part of the Township from the Graham family, on land that is now the site for the future Graham Park. As a result, both the cost and timing of the proposed sale kept Cranberry from acting on the Lindner property

acquisition at that time. Even so, its location was perfect.

"It made sense to us, we always liked the idea," Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro said. "We had a right of first refusal – not a formal written agreement, but a handshake: that if he ever decided to sell it, we'd be interested in talking to him about buying it."

Eventually, Lindner came back to the Township, this time with an offer that was hard to pass up. "That came just when we learned we would not be getting a state grant to help buy Graham Park," Santoro recalled. "That was very disappointing. But we thought it might be an opportunity for us to get a grant for the Lindner farm, which would have made it more affordable. So we applied, and we got some positive feedback."

"The goal of acquiring this property is to provide for future expansion at Community Park in ways that best serve the community," according to

John Skorupan, Chairman of Cranberry's Board of Supervisors. The property also provides a natural buffer for a new public safety training facility, which will be built next to the park. "Having a local training facility will be key to maintaining a strong volunteer fire force," Skorupan said. "Acquiring this property is another step by the Board to prepare for the future. Failure to act in this case would have resulted in a lost opportunity." ~

Master class. Volunteers trained in plant science and certified by Penn State as Master Gardeners created this garden just outside the Municipal Center this summer. Master Gardener Dick Cherry, who has championed an effort to re-establish the wild cranberry in its namesake Township, explains how the low-growing perennial, planted during Cranberry's bicentennial last year, has grown. Master Gardener Rosemary Rombonsky tells a young visitor from Philadelphia about other aspects of the organization's demonstration garden project.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a Master Gardener can call the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in Butler, 724-287-4761.

The Alpo Classic
This Year, Cranberry WaterPark Served All Species

After its biggest season ever – with spectacular weather and more than 81,000 visitors – Cranberry WaterPark ended up going to the dogs. And soon, it will go to the fishes.

On Saturday, September 10 the WaterPark hosted a Puppy Plunge, where 122 local dogs dragged their owners to the pool for a leisurely swim. In addition to casual water play, the day featured special competitive events including a Dog Paddle race, a Doggie Diving Competition, and a tennis ball Retrieving Match as well as a Canine Swimsuit Competition. A children's fishing derby, for which the pool has been stocked with live trout, is scheduled for Sunday, October 2.

Chlorine treatment, which is used to disinfect the pool, ended after Labor Day, the final day of the swim season. Five days later, at the time of the Puppy Plunge, chlorine levels had dropped to a fraction of their normal amounts. And by the time of the Fishing Derby, the remaining chorine will have completely evaporated, according to Parks & Recreation Director Mike Diehl.

But some degree of separation by species will remain. Before the pool reopens next summer, all the remaining water will have been drained to allow for painting, repairs, and general maintenance, Diehl noted. As a result, the children of yuppies will not have to share the pool's water with either puppies or guppies.

Biped mammals, too
After nine seasons, human attendance patterns at Cranberry WaterPark have also evolved and stabilized, according to Diehl. When the pool was new, people often lined up to rush in just as the facility opened, mostly to snag a comfortable poolside lounge chair. Over time, however, after people realized they could still find good positions around the pool, traffic leveled out with guests entering and leaving the WaterPark throughout the day.

2005 also saw several other pool operations being fine-tuned, particularly those involving food service. For example, an outdoor gas grill was added to the concession area, giving guests an additional assortment of menu choices. And a satellite ice cream-only station was opened, which significantly reduced the wait for service at the main concession counter.

Next year, Diehl expects to continue the Puppy Plunge and Fishing Derby, which he anticipates becoming annual affairs. "Dog and fish events have been done successfully in many other public pools, where you can enjoy spending time with your pet in a unique setting. People ask me why we're doing this," he said, "I just respond: why not?" ~

This Land is Your Land
Free fill from Cranberry Township

If you are looking for one or more truckloads of fill to level your yard, add a parking pad, or take on pretty much any landscaping project other than building the foundation for a new structure, Cranberry Township's Public Works department may be able to help you, free of charge.

Here's why: During the warm weather months, when the Township tackles various road repair and construction projects, it often ends up with a surplus of excavated material. Frequently, that excess material – which typically consists of earth, stone, gravel, and concrete chunks – is used by the Public Works department itself for other Township projects whenever fill is needed.

But not always. Sometimes there is no local site that can make immediate use of the material. And that means the Township has to truck it to other communities, and occasionally even pay to dispose of it.

However, if you are contemplating a project on your property where fill may be required, contact the Public Works department at 724-776-4806, extension 1500. They'll send someone over to determine whether your project is a good fit for receiving the fill. If it is, the Township will deliver the material and rough grade it at no cost to the property owner. ~
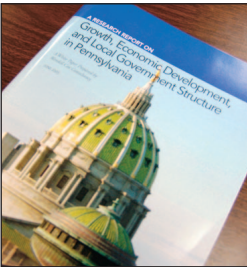
OCTOBER

| SAT 1 | SUN 2 Children's Fishing Derby Cranberry WaterPark, Noon – 3 pm | MON 3 Book Discussion Call for title Library, 7 pm | TUES 4 3–5 year old's Story Time Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required | WED 5 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm | THURS 6 3–5 year old's Story Time Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required | FRI 7 SVSD No School Farmer's Market Behind Municipal Center, 3:30 pm – 6 pm |

SAT 8 **Farmer's Market** Community Park, 10 am – 2 pm | SUN 9 | MON 10 **COLUMBUS DAY** Offices open | TUES 11 **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required | **Backyard Composting Class,** Butler County Master Gardeners, Municipal Ctr, Library Conference Room, 7 pm – 9 pm, call 724-776-4806 to register — **Last day to register for November election** | WED 12 | THURS 13 **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required

FRI 14 **Farmer's Market** Behind Municipal Center, 3:30 pm – 6 pm | SAT 15 **Farmer's Market** Community Park, 10 am – 2 pm | SUN 16 | MON 17 **Cranberry Highlands** reduced fall golf rates begin | TUES 18 **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required | WED 19 **Books & Bagels Book Discussion**, Call for title Library, 10 am | THURS 20 **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required

FRI 21 **Farmer's Market** Behind Municipal Ctr, 3:30 pm – 6 pm **Night Mayor** Ages 7 and up Dan Baker Shelter, 8 pm – 10 pm | SAT 22 **Farmer's Market** Community Park, 10 am – 2 pm | SUN 23 | MON 24 | TUES 25 **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm Registration required | WED 26 | THURS 27 **Board of Supervisors Meeting** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm, Registration required

FRI 28 **Farmer's Market** Behind Municipal Center, 3:30 pm – 6 pm | SAT 29 **Farmer's Market** Community Park, 10 am – 2 pm **Spookapalooza** Senior Teen Center, Noon – 2 pm **Beginning Excel Class** Library, 9 am | **Presentation,** *Spiritual Approach to Health and Healing,* by Giulia Plum Library, Meeting Room, 2 pm | SUN 30 **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS** Set clocks back one hour | MON 31 **Halloween** Trick or Treat 6 pm – 8 pm

NOVEMBER

TUES 1 **Last day to apply for absentee ballot** **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm, Registration required | WED 2 **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm **Planning Commission Meeting Workshop** Municipal Center, Room 203, 5:30 pm **Library Program** Allegheny General Hospital, 7 pm, call 724-776-9100 to register | THURS 3 **Board of Supervisors Meeting** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm, Registration required

FRI 4 | SAT 5 **Intermediate Excel Class** Library, 9 am | SUN 6 | MON 7 **Book Discussion** Call for title Library, 7 pm | TUES 8 **ELECTION DAY** **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm, Registration required | WED 9 **Library Program** "But We Used To Be So Close: Strengthening the Mother/Daughter Bond", North Hills Youth Ministry, 7 pm Call 724-776-9100 to register

THURS 10 **SVSD No School K – 6** **3–5 year old's Story Time** Library, 11 am or 1 pm, Registration required | FRI 11 **VETERAN'S DAY** **SVSD No School** Offices open | SAT 12 **Microsoft Access Class** Library, 9 am | SUN 13 | MON 14 *We Mean Business In Butler County* **Business Showcase 2005** Regional Learning Alliance, 1 pm – 7 pm Call 724-776-4949 for more information | TUES 15

WED 16 **Books & Bagels Book Discussion**, Call for title, Library, 10 am **Estate Planning Seminar**, Nick Bucci, CLU, ChFC, Library, 7 pm, call 724-776-9100 to register | THURS 17 | FRI 18 **Light Up Night** Municipal Center, 6 pm – 9 pm Santa arrives at 6:30 pm | SAT 19 | SUN 20 | MON 21 | TUES 22 **Board of Supervisors Meeting** Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm **Library Program** Bellevue Pediatrics, 7 pm, call 724-776-9100 to register

WED 23 | THURS 24 **THANKSGIVING DAY** Offices closed | FRI 25 **SVSD No School** | SAT 26 | SUN 27 | MON 28 **SVSD No School** **Planning Commission Meeting Workshop** Municipal Center, Room 203, 5:30 pm | TUES 29 | WED 30

DECEMBER

THURS 1 **Board of Supervisors Meeting** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm | FRI 2 | SAT 3 | SUN 4 | MON 5 **Planning Commission Meeting General** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm **Book Discussion**, Call for title, Library, 7 pm | TUES 6 | WED 7

THURS 8 | FRI 9 | SAT 10 **Brunch with Santa** Cranberry Highlands Golf Course Banquet Room, 11 am – 12:30 pm | SUN 11 | MON 12 | TUES 13 | WED 14 | THURS 15 **Board of Supervisors Meeting** Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 7 pm | FRI 16 | SAT 17 | SUN 18

MON 19 | TUES 20 | WED 21 **Books & Bagels, Book Discussion** Call for title, Library, 10 am | THURS 22 **SVSD Winter break begins** | FRI 23 | SAT 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE** | SUN 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY** | MON 26 | TUES 27

WED 28 **Planning Commission Meeting Workshop** Municipal Center, Room 203, 5:30 pm | THURS 29 | FRI 30 | SAT 31

It's Never Too Late to Pay Your Taxes, But It Will Cost You

The discount period for 2005/2006 Seneca Valley School District real estate taxes has passed. However they can be paid at face value from October 1 until November 30. The 2005 Butler County/Cranberry Township real estate taxes, which could have been paid at face value until June 30, are now payable at the penalty amount through December 31.

The office of tax collector P.J. Lynd will continue to be open daily, including Monday evenings. Normal hours of operation are Monday 9 AM to 7 PM, Tuesday through Thursday 9 AM to 4:30 PM, and Fridays 9 AM to 3 PM. Appointments are always available. The office is located in the Municipal Center on Rochester Road in the front hallway with the other elected officials and the Chamber of Commerce.

Stop in or mail payments to P.J. Lynd, Tax Collector, 2525 Rochester Road, Suite 402, Cranberry Township, PA 16066. If you have refinanced, made any changes in your mortgage company, or are no longer using an escrow account to pay your property taxes, please contact the tax collector's office at *lyndpj@cranberrytownship.org*, by phone at 724-776-1103 or by fax at 724-776-3011. **∼**

Can Pennsylvania Consolidate Itself Into Prosperity? No Way, According to One Public Policy Analyst.

Does Pennsylvania have too many local governments for its own good? And would its economy become more competitive if the state required them to consolidate into fewer but larger units? A recent report by the Brookings Institution, commissioned by the nonprofit 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, seems to support that concept. But PSATS, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, takes another view, according to Cranberry Township Supervisor Dick Hadley, who serves on the governing boards of both statewide organizations.

To help articulate the organization's case that township governments are actually examples of what is right, rather than what is wrong with Pennsylvania, PSATS commissioned an analysis of the Brookings report's key findings by public policy consultant Wendell Cox. Over lunch in Cranberry, Cox summarized his differences with three of the Brookings Institution's central claims.

First, according to Cox, the report asserts that economic development in Pennsylvania is weak and that its growth is too low to sustain acceptable levels of public service. Wrong, said Cox. In fact, economic growth in the Commonwealth, while uneven, is just about midway in the range of states it was compared with. Although increasing that growth would be good for Pennsylvania's residents, he acknowledged, the report's representation of the state as an economic failure is simply not supported by the facts.

Second, the report claims that one of the major forces driving down growth is the state's sprawling pattern of land development. More growth concentrated into higher density communities would be better for the economy, it asserts. But that isn't consistent with the facts either, according to Cox. The sprawling growth of suburban communities can create significant issues, he observed, but the rate of land consumption in Pennsylvania is no different than in most other metropolitan areas – including ones like Atlanta, which are often held

up as models of strong economic growth. And where they have been put into place, policies that force new housing into designated development zones has had the perverse effect of squeezing lower income families out of the community altogether.

Finally, the report excoriates Pennsylvania for having too many municipalities. Too many townships, boroughs, cities and counties creates wasteful duplication, the report claims. Consolidating adjacent communities and encouraging counties to absorb their central cities, as Philadelphia has done, is the way to achieve higher efficiency and lower cost of government, according to the report. But once again, the data fail to support that claim according to Cox.

Small local governments in fact spend less per capita than larger consolidated ones, he said. And measured against that criterion, the data actually show that the least costly local governments are among the smallest, Cox noted. Of course if local governments – including

Autumn Leaves Are Falling. Now What?

Fall will be a little different this year in Cranberry Township. Leaves will still change color. Daylight hours will continue growing shorter. And temperatures will keep on moderating. But at the curbside, it's going to be a brand new story.

For one thing, no leaf drop-off sites will be provided anywhere in the Township. Also unlike last year, this year's curbside waste collection will include leaf pickup right from the start of the fall season and continue through December 2. Leaves and other yard waste in Green-top carts will be picked up weekly and composted as part of Cranberry's Collection Connection™ program.

If additional capacity is needed, the collector will also pick up any number of **paper** bags with leaves, free of charge. Paper yard waste bags are available from any local hardware or home center store. Packets of five paper yard bags can also be purchased from the Township's Municipal Center Customer Service desk for $2.

However, **plastic bags** of leaves **will not** be collected for composting – even if they are the so-called biodegradable types of plastic. Instead, the collectors have been instructed to treat all plastic bags as ordinary trash, no matter what they contain, and even then, only if they carry a 65¢ waste tag. But carting leaves to the landfill is not a preferred practice; in fact, the state has banned yard waste from landfill sites in order to preserve space and extend their useful lives..

To make sure your yard cart gets completely emptied during pickup, be sure not to pack it too tight; otherwise the leaves inside may not fall out when the cart is tipped. The collector also reminds residents not to set the bags too close together or up against their carts; poor placement could interfere with the truck's automatic pickup arm.

Special curbside Christmas tree collections will be held beginning January 2 and continuing through January 13 on your normal collection day. Cut taller trees to six-foot lengths, remove all decorations, and avoid using plastic bags – even if you've used one to remove the tree from your house. ~

Don't get burned

Leaf burning, once a common practice in Pennsylvania, has been banned in most communities, including Cranberry Township. In addition to posing a fire danger, the smoke emissions from leaf burning create an environmental and health hazard. Violators are subject to citations and fines.

In Cranberry, Local Roads Are Not Parking Lots

Why does Cranberry Township ban on-street parking?

1. To inconvenience you

2. To annoy your guests

3. Because most cars are ugly

4. They interfere with snow plows, garbage trucks, fire engines, and postal delivery
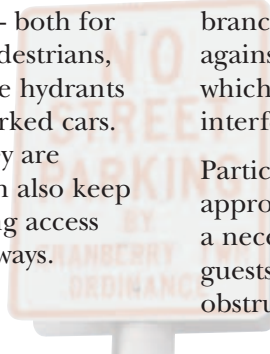
ANSWER? number 4

quick QUIZ

Street parking is common in many cities, but it is banned throughout Cranberry Township. There are a variety of reasons for that ban. Service vans and large emergency vehicles need room to maneuver. Garbage trucks cannot collect trash when the waste carts are blocked in by parked cars.
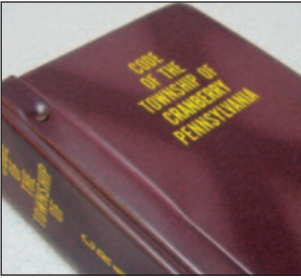
Parked cars reduce vision – both for other motorists and for pedestrians, creating safety hazards. Fire hydrants can become blocked by parked cars. And, depending where they are positioned, parked cars can also keep other residents from getting access to or from their own driveways.

So to help encourage off-street parking, Cranberry police will issue citations for street parking – particularly during the winter months.

But parked cars are only one of the ways local streets and services can become blocked. Others include portable basketball hoops with nets or bases that extend over the roadway; tree branches hanging over roads that brush against taller vehicles, and garbage carts which are placed at the roadway and interfere with snow plowing.

Particularly as the winter months approach and snow removal becomes a necessity, remind your family and guests to keep the street clear of obstructions. ~

Breaking the Code
Cranberry Overhauls and Updates Its Collection of Laws

According to the Cranberry Township code, its Chief of Police must report the activities of his department directly to the Board of Supervisors in addition to carrying out a number of other designated tasks. Problem is, Cranberry hasn't had a Chief of Police for nearly ten years. The code also prescribes Cranberry's relationship with Pennsylvania's Department of Community Affairs. Unfortunately, that department doesn't exist anymore. And junk dealers, for whom the code provides annual licenses as a matter of right, are in fact unable to operate at all outside the tight restrictions of the Township's zoning ordinance.

The Code of the Township of Cranberry – a bound volume that compiles and categorizes all the ordinances enacted by the Township Board of Supervisors since the beginning of time – has started to show its age. Many of its provisions are simply out of step with Cranberry's current practices and organization. And finding appropriate guidance in the Code for dealing with situations ranging from pets to peddling and sewers to subdivisions, is simply too difficult and time-consuming. But all that's about to change.

To help bring its Code into the 21st century, Cranberry began working last year with a specialized company, KeyState Publishers, to update the Code, offering recommendations to make it consistent with current state and federal legislation, having it conform to more recent court actions, and having it reflect the Board's own ordinances and actions since the Code was last compiled in 1974.

"We expect too have it in front of the Board for consideration and approval in October or November," according to Assistant Town Manager Dan Santoro. "We hope to get it online so that we'll have an electronic version of all our ordinances, instead of just the zoning ordinance that we have posted today. Of course, there will be a hearing on it before adoption and copies will be available for public inspection." But you may want to allow a significant chunk of time for that review, he cautioned. "It's about 500 pages long." **~**

Building ties. *A new 350-yard north-south link between Smith Drive and Wisconsin Drive – two short east-west streets off Rt. 19 – is now open to traffic. The connector, which will greatly improve the safety of traffic turning into and out of Smith Drive from Rt. 19, was built this summer. Major improvements at the intersection of Rt. 19 with Wisconsin Drive – which is known as Rochester Road on the opposite side of the intersection – will allow drivers accessing that fast-developing commercial area to use traffic-sensitive signals, including a hand-actuated pedestrian signal, for crossing the Rt. 19 thoroughfare.*

Radio daze
Emergency Services Struggle to Upgrade Their Communications

The Verizon technician who wanders around in its company commercials asking "Can you hear me now?" brings a touch of humor to the quirks of cell phone use. But it's only funny when the communication breakdown isn't important. In real emergencies, radio communications are critical for police and fire department operations – and dead air is more than just a nuisance.

Yet for years, the very high frequency (VHF) radio system used by police, fire, and emergency medical services dispatched by Butler County 911 has suffered serious gaps including dead air spaces, transmission difficulties from buildings, limited effectiveness of handheld sets, and incompatible radio frequencies.

As a result, an effort has been underway for several years to replace the old system with a new ultra high frequency (UHF) one, which officials expect will overcome many of those shortcomings. The UHF system, which is estimated to cost about $5 million when fully in place, first went live in December. Today, all municipal police and fire departments in Butler County are updating their systems, and many have already done so.
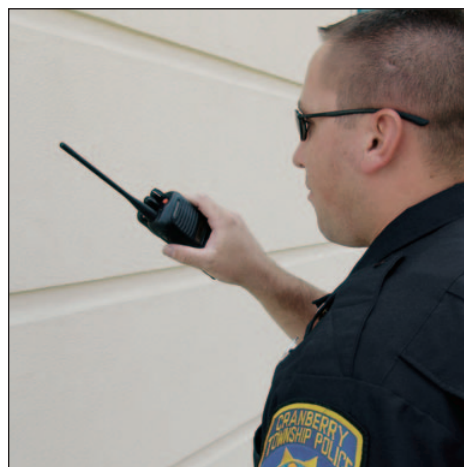
Cranberry's Volunteer Fire Company made the switch last year but, according to Steve Mannell,

Cranberry Township's public safety director, they still have to use the old VHF system to talk with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority, which is not switching.

But making the transition has also opened opportunities for other improvements, according to Mannell. "We want a system where all the Township Public Works and Sewer and Water employees can talk to each other day-to-day, that we can also use for command and control communications in an emergency," he said. A recommendation to switch those Township services to UHF will require Board of Supervisors approval. The Township has already set aside $82,000 to switch its radio system, but the full costs won't be known until the bids are received, according to Mannell.

Township Public Works Employees currently use both VHF and UHF radio systems, but it is cumbersome and inefficient. "Our effort is designed to ensure that everyone can continue to communicate without maintaining both types of radios," Mannell said. Cranberry Township's Police Department has been testing different makes of radio since June in an effort to select one that meets both its own needs and complies with the requirements set out by Butler 911.

Despite the headaches that inevitably accompany conversion, Mannell sees the effort paying off. "In the past, communicating on VHF during major storm events was problematic. UHF is much more reliable and provides better coverage, especially in how it penetrates buildings," he said. "Using UHF as the primary system for all public safety agencies as well as the Township's public works and administrative functions is going to give us the interoperability we need. We are trying to make sure we never have a public safety failure that can be blamed on inadequate radio communications. We're looking forward to the switch." **~**

Ten-four. *A new generation of two-way radios is being put through their paces by the Cranberry police department. Several makers of the handheld UHF units are competing for the Township's business.*

Can Pennsylvania Consolidate Itself Into Prosperity?
No Way, According to One Public Policy Analyst. *Continued from page 10.*

municipalities, public authorities, school districts and others – chose to merge or share resources as a strategy for saving money or improving services, that would be fine, according to Cox. It's just

that forcing consolidation on units of government which are reluctant to do so – particularly when they are already working quite well – is bad policy as well as bad economics, he said.

PSATS is attempting to call attention to the results of its analysis through a variety of news media, according to Hadley. **~**

Is the bus coming?
Area Transit Study Recommends a Test Run

If public transit ever comes about in southern Butler County, it will have a $3.5 million down payment already in the bank. That was the message delivered by Senator Rick Santorum and Representative Melissa Hart when they presented a check – part of the massive federal transportation act passed at the end of July – to Butler County Commission Chairman Scott Lowe at the Cranberry Municipal Center on September 9.

A 10-month study of the potential for public transit service in the Cranberry area, which concluded this past August, recommended a two-year pilot program. That test program, using a commercial contractor, would help validate the need for public transportation in the area including Zelienople, Evans City, Jackson, Adams, and Harmony, as well as Cranberry Township. If it proves successful, a permanent service, using dedicated buses, stations, and a permanent workforce, would be implemented. The ear-marked funds would be used to build a central transfer station.

The proposed demonstration program would offer commuter service between southern Butler County and the cities of Butler and Pittsburgh as well as local circulator service around Cranberry Township.

Big bucks. *Senator Rick Santorum, left, and U.S. Representative Melissa Hart, second from right, presented a $3.5 million check for future transit improvements in southern Butler County to Township Supervisors John Milius and Dick Hadley, Butler Township-City Joint Municipal Transit Agency Executive Director John Paul, Butler County Commission Chairman Scott Lowe, and Township Supervisor Chuck Caputy at a ceremony in the Cranberry Township Municipal Center on September 9.*

It would also provide opportunities for transit riders to travel from Zelienople, Harmony, Evans City, Mars and Warrendale to a transit center located in Cranberry, where they could transfer to either the commuter or local service.

To help move the proposal along, the 11-county Southwest Pennsylvania Commission will be working closely with Butler Township-City Joint Transit Authority executive John Paul (no relation to the late Pontiff), to secure commitments of financial support from the affected municipalities. If they succeed, the Authority will be responsible for running the system. But there are speed bumps along the way.

"There's no funding for startup services like this now," Assistant Township Manager Dan Santoro pointed out. "There's money for capital costs, like the $3.5 million earmark that the County just got, and for operating costs, but there is no legislation for operating funds like this as a startup. So not only do we have to build a system that has regional support, we've also got to find the federal-state piece which is typically automatic for other transit agencies. There's a lot of heavy lifting still to be done in order to get this service on line and operating." **~**

Local Elections November 8

Elections for Cranberry Township and Butler County offices will be held on Tuesday, November 8. Polling booths will be open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Among the local offices up for election in 2005 are two of the five positions on Cranberry's Board of

Supervisors, each for six-year terms; a District Magistrate, also for a six-year term; and a Township tax collector for a four-year term. Various Butler County offices, including sheriff, coroner, controller, clerk of courts and jury commissioner, will also appear on this year's primary ballot.

Seneca Valley School District regions

1, 4, and 5, in Cranberry will each have a school board member appear their ballot; board members serve four-year terms. Region 1 includes everyone east of I-79. Regions 4 and 5 are west of I-79 and south of Rochester Road. See the map on our Web site for exact district lines and polling places. The last day to register to vote in November is October 11. **~**

Virtual Sewer System Peers Into the Future

Interceptor 1 – the name used to designate the Township's largest sanitary sewer line – runs north along Brush Creek, parallel to the Turnpike, finally ending at Cranberry's municipal wastewater treatment plant at Powell Road. Along its route from Thorn Hill Industrial Park in Marshall, through Fernwood, and skirting the edge of what will eventually become Graham Park, other sewer lines serving different parts of the Township, connect and feed water into it.

Over the course of its four-mile run, as more and more wastewater drains into Interceptor 1, the pipe's diameter expands from 15 inches at its southernmost point, to more than 30 inches by the time it reaches the plant. On a normal day, it will deliver around 4 million gallons to the plant for treatment. On a rainy day, it can bring several times that amount.
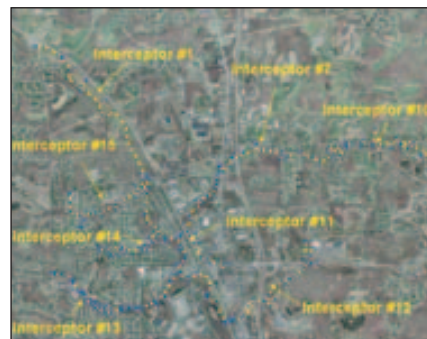
But as Cranberry grows, and demands on the system increase, how long will its current capacity be adequate? What would be the best strategy for increasing the volume it can handle? And when should those changes be made?

To help answer those questions, Cranberry's Board of Supervisors is considering a proposal to build a detailed computer model of the system using SewerCAD software. If approved and built, that model would more clearly define the capacity of the existing sewer system, assess the ability of the sewer lines to handle new customers, evaluate the effectiveness of possible sewer system improvements, and provide guidance in the Township's ongoing effort to reduce the volume of unwanted rain and groundwater entering the system. It can also help planners evaluate the impacts of different land use scenarios as the Township continues to develop.

The computer model, which is based on pipe sizes, materials, measured flow rates, and soil hydrology, and surface features, is from the same family of models as the Township's water system model, which is closely linked to its geographic information system databases. The proposed model is part of a comprehensive study of Cranberry's sewer collection and wastewater treatment system which began in May. ~

State Cuts Cranberry's Sewer Tap-in Fees

The one-time fees charged to connect new homes to the Cranberry's sewer service have been slashed as the result of a change in state regulations. The new rate, which is about one-third lower than the previous one, will reduce the system's income by $300,000 to $700,000 a year, depending on the volume of new construction, according to Township Manager Jerry Andree. Two years ago, more than $500,000 a year in state funds for the Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant were also eliminated, resulting in a combined shortfall of approximately $1 million a year in operating funds.

The sewer within. *There are various ways to repair a leaky sewer line. Most of them require a lot of digging. But a trial project in Fernway this summer demonstrated a different approach. Slipping a flexible, seamless, resin-based sewer line inside the old one, threading the new line from one manhole to another and from one side of the street to the next, workers were able to complete the entire project in a single day.*

The Art of Snow Plowing
It's really cool

This winter, when snow begins building up on local roads, you may be startled to see a Township truck outfitted with a bizarre-looking plow, scraping its way along your neighborhood streets. Don't worry. The plows, which range from eight to eleven feet across, are among seven snow-clearing blades used by Cranberry's Public Works department which were decorated by art students from Seneca Valley as a class project this past year.

The plows' decorative themes, which range from seasonal to patriotic to school spirit, were jointly selected by the Seneca Valley art department and the Township Public Works. Art teacher Mary Jane Hadley of Rowan Elementary School had 170 of her fourth graders paint three of the plows over a five week period; Noele Reynolds of Haine Middle School had her own art students paint four more. Work began this past April, and the finished plows – with a protective polyurethane coating added by Public Works employees – were put on display at Community Day, July 4.

Having students paint the equipment, and become more familiar with Cranberry's snow and ice control operations along the way, was the brainchild of Public Works director Duane McKee, who had heard about a similar program in Greeley, Colorado while attending a professional conference. "We thought that giving Cranberry kids an up-close look at our snow clearing equipment and letting them leave their mark on it, would draw more attention to the equipment when it is actually in service," McKee said.

Getting the word out about the Township's snow removal practices as well as the responsibilities that Cranberry residents have for keeping those roads clear of obstacles, is essential to the success of the program, according to McKee. Altogether, the Township outfits 14 trucks with plows for the duration of the winter season; all but two of them also carry anti-ice and anti-skid dispensers. **~**

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

CRANBERRY
·TOWNSHIP·

2525 Rochester Road, Suite 400
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

724-776-4806
www.cranberrytownship.org

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