



Cranberrytoday

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2008 FALL EDITION



Rt. 228 Improvements? The Jury Is Still Out

The fate of a major series of improvements along Rt. 228 in

Cranberry is still unknown. But a final proposal presenting a scaled-back series of recommendations to PennDOT is currently under review by the state agency. And a decision could come at any time.

That proposal represents the recommendations of both the Township and Simon Property Group – the giant mall operator and developer which has worked over the past six years to create a major mixed-use commercial center at the northeastern corner of I-79 and Rt. 228.

Of the \$65 million available for the improvements, funds associated with the Simon project represent approximately \$41 million, with PennDOT – which had previously committed to fund improvements along the highway – putting up the remaining \$24 million. An additional \$2 million could be dedicated to the project out of Township Impact Fees, but no final action on that allocation has been taken.

“We sent PennDOT the final package – our last try,” according to Cranberry’s Chief Strategic Planning Officer John Trant, Jr. “We said ‘this is it. It’s better to do something, than to allow the Simon contributions to walk.’ It’s

a proposal for how the available money can be used to advance the movement of traffic along 228.”

Problem is that the original project, which included a series of ramps, flyovers, lane additions and intersection improvements, came to more than \$85 million. So the revised proposal, which ‘value engineered’ the project to reduce its initial cost to fit the available funds, eliminates the additional thru lanes on 228 and stops the project at Castle Creek Drive in Seven Fields instead of going on to Myoma Road in Adams Township.

“The Township and Simon have both signed off on this proposal; we’re just waiting on PennDOT,” Trant said. “It doesn’t require them to go beyond the commitment of funds they’ve already made. They just have to decide if they’re comfortable with the levels of service it would provide. There’s no hard deadline, but we know that Simon really only has until the end of the year. And there’s the possibility that we could start losing some of the funding that’s already been allocated to this project. But inflation is eroding the value of that allocation.”

Without PennDOT approval, the Township’s expectation is that Simon will abandon their project and that all the funds it brought to the table will leave along with it. ~



New Study Outlines Green Path For Cranberry

Sesame Street’s Kermit the Frog may have put it best: It isn’t easy being green.

But a new and detailed 200-page assessment of Cranberry’s green practices, prepared by Sustainable Pittsburgh in close cooperation with Township staff, may make it a little

Continued on page 2.

INSIDE *this edition*

Planning	2
Supervisor’s Commentary	5
Tech Company Profile	6
School District	7
In Briefs	8
Library	9
Public Safety	10
Calendar	12
Parks & Recreation	14
Fire Company	17
Public Works.....	19
Cranberry’s Voting Districts	24

New study outlines green path for Cranberry *Continued from front cover*

easier. The study outlines an ambitious series of steps that local officials plan on taking to bolster the community's current arsenal of conservation measures.

The report, which was prepared by an independent ten-member team representing a variety of technical specialties, was commissioned following the formal adoption of five broad sustainability principles by Cranberry's Board of Supervisors in April. The study project's charge was to provide specific recommendations, including expected costs and benefits, that could either save money, make money, or increase efficiencies, while enabling the Township to become a better environmental steward.

The team was specifically directed to focus on actions that the Township could take now and continue into the future which would "create a culture of innovation, conserve resources, achieve cost savings, maximize human creativity, and infuse sustainability in municipal policies, programs, and management," according to the report's introduction.

"Our primary goal in deciding to undertake this initiative was to continue improving the quality of life for Cranberry's residents," Board of Supervisors Chairman Dick

Hadley pointed out. "But along the way, we should be able to reduce the cost of providing services, build property values, and enhance our natural environment."

In preparing their assessment, the study team was given broad access to a variety of municipal facilities, personnel, and data. Their objective was to thoroughly review both the ways in which Cranberry is already putting sustainable policies into practice and to find opportunities for it to go even further.

Study recommendations were organized by topic areas – energy, recycling, purchasing, stormwater, hiring, etc. – and then grouped into three tiers, each corresponding to the length of time and level of Township resource commitment which would be required to produce significant results. The study findings, and the Township's initial responses to them, were presented to Cranberry's Citizen Advisory Panel – a group of 70 residents who have been working with Township staff on revising the community's long-range plan – on August 12.

Recommendations concerning vehicles, however, were not part of the report. And it wasn't because they're unimportant. Instead, it is because no definitive method has emerged to account for the combined lifetime expense-energy use-carbon footprint costs associated with different types of vehicles.

"Companies like UPS and FedEx who rely solely on transportation for their business are trying different mechanisms to quantify the costs," according to Cranberry Public Works Director Jason Dailey. "But there's really not a tried and true approach to it right now, so vehicles were totally excluded from our study."

Steps to implement many of the report's other recommendations are already underway, according to the Township's Chief Strategic Planning Officer, John Trant, Jr.

More information about the initiative is available on the "Greening" page of Cranberry's planning website www.cranberryplan.org. ~

Immediate Steps.

The Sustainability Assessment identified a number of things the Township could do right away to cut expenses, improve efficiency, and reduce its carbon footprint. Some of them were common sense steps that could apply to local residents and businesses as well. Among them:

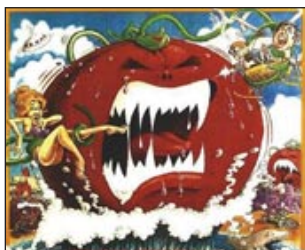
- *Unplug coffee makers when they're not in use*
- *Reduce the number of dorm-style refrigerators*
- *Turn off computers when they're not in use*
- *Eliminate incandescent lighting wherever possible*
- *Install more occupancy-sensing lighting controllers*
- *Install low-flow aerators and shower heads*
- *Reduce unnecessary weight carried in trucks and vehicles*
- *Install programmable thermostats*

Our primary goal was to continue improving the quality of life for Cranberry's residents. But along the way, we should be able to reduce costs, build property values, and enhance our natural environment.



Plan a Party!

The American Planning Association has designated October as National Community Planning Month. Each year, the APA, its members and affiliates sponsor events to raise the visibility of planning in communities across the U.S. This year's theme, Green Communities, celebrates the role of planning in helping to ensure environmentally-friendly and sustainable communities.



Oh My Gosh! Here Comes The **BIG BERRY**

How big will Cranberry be when it grows up?

About 50,000. At least that's the estimated population of a built-out and sustainable Township based on the particular mix of assumptions that went into one of the three analytical models, known as Scenario B, which planners used to identify Cranberry's preferred land use and administrative policies over the next 25 years.

That would make Cranberry second most populous municipality in southwestern Pennsylvania after Pittsburgh, whose current population is 313,000.

Determining the Township's preferred growth scenario was not simply a blue-sky exercise in creating an ideal future. "It was really projecting trends over a 25-year period to ask what infrastructure and operational support is needed to make sure we can maintain the high quality of services that residents enjoy today," according to Cranberry's Chief Strategic Planning Officer John Trant, Jr.

"The good thing, as indicated by our survey and all the public input we've collected, is that in terms of core services – parks, programs, police, etc. – residents are very happy. So we have a good starting point," he said. "Our goal was to determine how we could maintain the level of service we enjoy today 5, 10, 15, or 25 years from now. It was extremely complicated, but it would have been a lot

harder if we were looking at 2008 and saying, well, we have a deficiency here in this area and how do we make sure that we're meeting that need?

"So we projected everything out and analyzed the support and financial infrastructure that would be needed from an operational standpoint. What we found was that the lines were crossing somewhere around Scenario B," Trant said. "Scenario A, which was essentially a growth projection based on the policies we have in place right now, told us we would need a certain amount of infrastructure and sewer capacity for a population of 38,000. But Scenario B doesn't need much more additional capital investment to support the additional density and mixed use development that occurs under that Scenario, but that

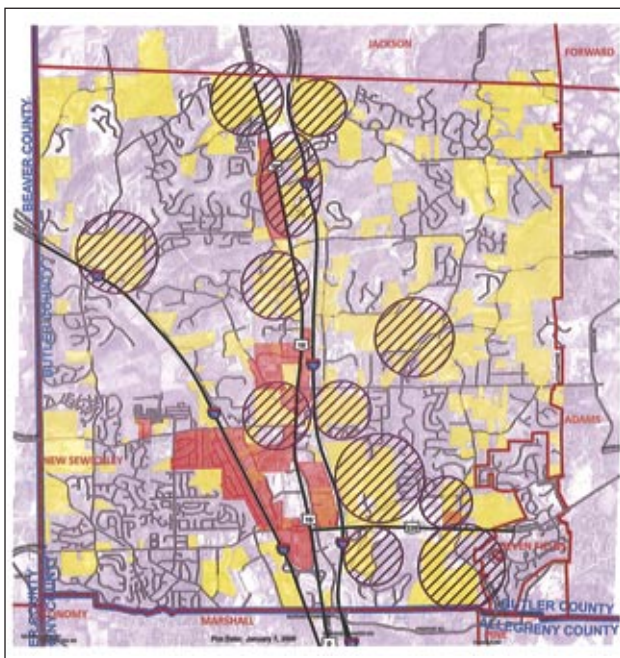
type of development gives us an increased tax base.

"Scenario C, which includes more intensive and higher density development, would require doubling the size of the sewage treatment plant to handle its population of 64,000. That would be a huge capital investment. And the return on that investment, in terms of tax revenues compared to the infrastructure costs, would be less than under Scenario B.

"So the Steering Committee said, well, it looks like we need to go with Scenario B; it's the most fiscally responsible direction with greater return on our capital investment because we don't need a lot of additional infrastructure. We can get higher tax revenues and a bigger tax base. So what we're doing now is just tweaking Scenario B to shift some things around to be responsive to the input from the public and from the Citizens Advisory Panel."

A series of computer models were used to project the consequences of different 'what if' assumptions over the period covered in the plan. They include traffic models, a sewer model, and a fresh water model to generate expected daily use levels for each of those systems. Those figures, in turn, indicate how much staffing and infrastructure would be needed to support those use levels. For police protection, call volumes served as an indicator of current service levels. That was used to validate the ratio of police officers to population required to maintain the current level of public safety. ~

Preferred Growth Scenario B



Our goal was to determine how we could maintain the level of service we enjoy today 5, 10, 15, or 25 years from now.

What's Up With Freedom Road?

Where is Freedom Road going to go? The people who live along the increasingly busy east-west corridor really, really want to know. And all through the Township's comprehensive planning process which began last year, long-time residents of Freedom Road have made a point of pressing Township officials to find a satisfactory resolution to their concerns – concerns which mainly grow out of the area's transition from a quiet rural area prior to 1980, into something quite different. But exactly what?

No one is really sure. Now, however, there's a mechanism in place to plan for whatever the Freedom Road corridor will ultimately become. At the September 4 meeting of Cranberry's Board of Supervisors, a process was adopted to plan for future land use and transportation improvements.

The six-step process approved by the Board calls for the formation of three resident committees – each focused on one of three distinct study areas traversed by the roadway – then a meeting of stakeholders regarding the entire corridor; a review of the committees' findings and by the Township's Planning Advisory Commission; and finally a recommendation by the Commission to the Board of Supervisors.

Plans for major improvements to Freedom Road – which is known as Freedom-Crider Road in Beaver County – have been under active discussion since the mid-1980s. Much of that discussion was prompted by

businesses along the Ohio River in Beaver County which had difficulty accessing the Turnpike and I-79. That led PennDOT to propose a project known as Crows Run – a new, limited-access highway linking Beaver Valley to both Interstate roads.

Three different alignments were proposed for the roadway, all of which were opposed by the affected communities, including Cranberry. As a result, in 2001, PennDOT abandoned the idea and instead proposed a series of smaller improvements to roads in the area which were already being used for traffic from Beaver County, including Freedom Road.

Cranberry supported that proposal and actively partnered with PennDOT on several phases of improvements including securing rights of way, signaling intersections, adding turning lanes, improving drainage, paving shoulders, and assisting in plans for a five-lane Turnpike crossover. But in the summer of 2007 – even though preliminary design for the Turnpike bridge had already been completed – the General Assembly enacted Act 44 which required PennDOT to put repair projects ahead of new capacity ones like the Freedom Road expansion.

Although it is unclear when or whether state policy will change yet again to finance the needed



Areas of concern. A resident-driven master planning process for Freedom Road will focus on three undeveloped and lightly developed areas along the busy east-west corridor.

improvements to Freedom Road, what is certain is that continued growth in the Township will increase traffic along all of its major corridors. It is also clear that any issues affecting safety along that roadway will be magnified by its growing volume of travelers.

But the essential character of Freedom Road, and its relationship to other corridors in Cranberry, will be determined through the planning mechanism which is now in place. The outcome, which is expected to require several months to develop, will tell Township officials how best to work with PennDOT in addressing the concerns of residents who live along Freedom Road, as well as those of the larger community.

“Pennsylvania's economy is like the rest of country's; it goes through cycles,” Township Manager Jerry Andree pointed out. “Right now it's down, but we expect that things will eventually improve. If and when that happens, and there's money available from the state to work on projects like Freedom Road, we want to have a plan in place that says exactly how we want that money to be used in Cranberry.” ~

If and when there's money available from the state to work on projects like Freedom Road, we want to have a plan in place that says exactly how we want that money to be used in Cranberry.

Cranberry: Building On Strengths, Overcoming Weaknesses

by Bruce Mazzoni, Supervisor, Cranberry Township



I actually wear several hats in Cranberry. One of them is president of a nonprofit organization, Cranberry Township

Community Chest, or CTCC.

Another is serving on the Steering Committee of the Township's 25-year comprehensive planning process.

And both of those positions provide a good fit for my primary role as an elected member of the Township's Board of Supervisors.

That's because our Board has come to realize – and a study completed earlier this year confirmed – that despite Cranberry's many real strengths, we also have several serious weaknesses: first, a decline in our volunteer-based nonprofit organizations, and second, political decisions in Washington and Harrisburg that have worked against our interest.

In the case of our nonprofits, the voluntary civic sector of Cranberry has grown much more slowly – and in some instances actually shrank – despite a growing population and a thriving commercial sector. And in the case of our government relations, the concern is that growing communities like ours require state and federal investment to succeed, but we're not getting the help we need. So unless we address those two weaknesses, we will never realize our potential as a community.

The contrast between having a weak nonprofit sector and strong

public and business segments in our community is important to understand because it impacts our service delivery, cost of government, and quality of life. So it's essential for the leaders of our business community to appreciate that and understand their own role in assuring Cranberry's viability going forward. It is also important that they appreciate their potential for political influence at the state and federal level.

To make sure that happens, we invited all 750 businesses in Cranberry to a private update on the Township's Comprehensive Plan. More than 150 companies, including 800 business owners, managers and executives accepted our invitation. And here's what they heard: Cranberry has a high family median income of \$90,500, but it's not just a bedroom community; 25 percent of our residents actually work here. Compared to just about any other community in the region, we have a young population with a median age of just 34.5. We also have an excellent quality of life with a low crime rate, over 11,000 registrants for our Parks & Recreation activities, and more than 200,000 visitors to our library each year. In addition, Cranberry is professionally managed, which is unusual for a municipality in western Pennsylvania. All of those are positives.

But they also heard about our weaknesses. Nearly half the jobs in Cranberry pay less than \$30,000. Public transit is very limited, and there are frequent traffic issues. Housing has become less affordable, especially new construction. We

lack diversity. And for a community of our size and economic stature, the Township, its school district and its business community could accomplish a lot more by working together, instead of separately, to help our state and federal elected leaders focus on issues that matter to us. That is particularly important when it comes to improving our key traffic arteries, almost all of which are state-maintained roads including Routes 19 and 228, as well as Freedom, Franklin, and Rochester Roads.

Finally, we told them, that in an effort to shore up our nonprofit and civic sector, Cranberry's Board of Supervisors agreed to reorganize the Cranberry Township Community Chest, CTCC, with a specific set of goals in mind: to encourage businesses to become active in our non-profit/civic organizations; to encourage residents to become members of these organizations; to provide seed funding for new projects and services that benefit our community; and to help create new volunteer opportunities.

Altogether, we gave that presentation more than 100 times, and everyone was impressed with both our Comprehensive Planning process, our plan to build on Cranberry's strengths, and our determination to overcome its weaknesses. So this fall, I plan to give that same presentation again – this time to anyone else who's interested. If you'd like to attend one, please feel free to email me at brucemazzoni@zoominternet.net or call me at my home: 724-538-4555.

~

The Township, its school district and its business community could accomplish a lot more by working together.

You can reach Bruce Mazzoni at: brucemazzoni@zoominternet.net

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTARY

How MHF Logistical Solutions Got From Point A To Point B

From the time it was started in Zelienople in 1994 until about five months ago at its headquarters in Cranberry Woods, MHF Logistical Solutions was almost totally focused on one thing: packaging and transporting nuclear and hazardous waste.

During that time, using more than 1,700 of its own rail cars and shipping containers, the company collected over 14 million tons of radioactive debris, toxic soil, contaminated demolition rubble and other dicey materials. Then, through a series of contracts with railroads across the country, it transported them to disposal sites throughout the U.S.

Nuclear and hazardous waste transport is still MHF's core business, but the company was looking to replicate its success by diversifying. So earlier this year, the MHF initiated a series of changes that promise to extend its base of clients, broaden its service offerings, and increase its capabilities for moving freight throughout the United States and, eventually, around the world.

For starters, they expanded their two existing divisions by adding two new ones, each with its own distinctive business mission – hazardous and nuclear waste transport, specialty packaging materials, truck-to-rail freight conversion, and a traditional truck and rail freight brokerage – the last two of which were formed just this past March. Then in May, the company brought in a new head of operations, Lane Turner.

Already, MHF's diversification strategy is seeing results. "In just those five months we have grown significantly," Turner observed. "We have opened five locations that handle traditional truckload and partial truckload

brokerage as well as intermodal shipments. This is where the growth is going to be in the future. The nuclear and hazardous waste markets are only so big, whereas the U.S. markets for over-the-road, partial truckload, and intermodal shipments are almost limitless."

They're also wide open, with the ten biggest freight companies representing only about 10 percent of the \$600 billion domestic market. And the soaring price of fuel is creating new opportunities as well as new pain. "One current initiative is the conversion of traditional truckload freight into boxcar freight. Depending on the cargo, MHF is averaging about 3 to 4 truckloads per boxcar. So our customers realize significant savings by consolidating three or four truckloads into one boxcar shipment. When you consider fuel surcharges on top of truck shipment rates, it is not uncommon for customers to save 30 percent or more," he said, noting that the strategy was already paying off in the shipment of cotton bales.

"When this initiative began in March, MHF employed 57 people," Turner said. "Today, we employ 75. Even against the current economy, we're continuing to grow and expand. In addition to our current employees, we expect to have at least fifteen more by the end of the year as business continues to grow."

One result of its diversification is that the company's staff is now dispersed among more locations

than it was even five months ago, so its office space needs are changing. Consequently, when its lease is up

late next year, the company will move again. But it will be to another site in Cranberry.

"The reason we moved here originally was that Cranberry is one of the fastest-growing and most livable locations in the U.S.," Turner said. "The various amenities in the Cranberry area and its proximity to I-79 and the Turnpike help us attract

good talent. We have proposals out on three different properties in Cranberry right now. Either way, MHF is not leaving because I live here too, and this is where I want to be." ~

The U.S. markets for over-the-road, partial truckload, and intermodal shipments are almost limitless. They're also wide open, with the ten biggest freight companies representing only about 10 percent of the market.



Move it. MHF Logistical Solution's Executive Vice President Lane Turner oversees the operation of brokers working in the company's newest division, Magellan Transport Logistics. Its mission: contract with carriers to move client's freight to their destination utilizing the most cost-efficient, on-time carriers.

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

'Wow, How Exciting!'

By Linda Andreassi, Communications Director, Seneca Valley School District

I was recently extolling the virtues of the Seneca Valley School District curriculum when a prospective parent from the Midwest stopped me short.

"Did you just say you have a robotics elective in the senior high school?" this mom of a high schooler asked.

"We do," I replied, adding, "Seneca Valley offers a number of unique electives as well as rewarding and challenging courses in our secondary schools."

She became quiet over the next several minutes as I continued, sharing statistical data, testing results and population figures. This was like any routine, preliminary call I take from parents moving into our district community. She was full of questions and anxious about how such a move will impact her child's educational path.

This is certainly normal. Most parents with school-aged children understand that they are not just buying a home; they are buying a school district. As someone who has attended two Western Pennsylvania public schools and now works for a third, I understand. It's important to look beyond the building facades to learn more about a district's mission and goals for its students.

She wanted to know more about our electives. Happy to oblige, I thumbed through our program of studies guide and brushed over a few electives, including independent art study, speedwriting for note taking (a valuable class this journalist could have used in college let alone high school), acting through improv, interior design, child development (which is the driving force of our preschool program), and aviation (no need to worry, parents, no one actually flies an airplane in this class) to name a few.

"Wow, how exciting," the relieved parent interjected.

To read more about Seneca Valley's secondary courses and electives, you can read through the program of studies found on the district Web site at www.svsd.net. Just click on "curriculum."

I sometimes feel I could spend hours on the phone with our new parents. I could go on about the many students who are also succeeding in advanced placement, college in high school, and honors courses as offered in our intermediate and senior high schools. In fact, we had a record number of students taking the 2008 Annual College AP Exams (I'm the PR person - I just had to share that).

It's also important to note that many of our students on the vocational track are building their post-high school resumes by finding their niche in the many valuable programs available to them through the Butler County Vocational Technical School. There are 15 different courses that offer credit for everything from Air Conditioning/Heating/Electrical Repair to Protective Services.

And while I believe the statistics are important (Seneca is rapidly climbing the "Pittsburgh Business Times" rankings with a jump from 38 to 18 in just two years), I think it's often easy to, at times, overlook the opportunities that come with progress, growth and size. We are fortunate to be able to provide meaningful electives that support the core curriculum found in our classrooms.

Not many schools can tout that they have a television production course that is supported by a student-driven, state-of-the-art television studio located right in the senior high school.

This mom was right, it is exciting. The opportunities for success are found in so many of the choices available to Seneca Valley students today.



In Briefs

Yuk. Residents from 683 households in and around Cranberry were able to safely ditch 30 tons of paints, stains, varnishes, automotive fluids, pesticides, pool chemicals and other potentially harmful products at a household hazardous waste collection held at the Auto Auction on August 16. If you missed it, check our website for other collection events.



Invisible fencing.

Underground animal confinement systems, like Invisible Fence, are not regulated by the Township nor are

they prohibited by most homeowner association covenants. But if you are building one in your yard, Cranberry's Public Works Department asks that you be sure to keep it at least a foot away from the edge of the road or the back of the curb.



Making connections.

The first stage of a connector

road linking Ehrman Road to Garvin Road in the Township's northeastern quadrant is now underway. Median planter islands, inlaid crosswalks, and landscaping will be added to Ehrman Road between Celtic Ash Court and Gate Dancer Drive. Work is expected to be completed by late fall.



Kudos! Congratulations to Cranberry police officers Bill Och and Bill Ahlgren on their promotion from Patrolman to

Corporal. Competition for the two high-ranking slots, which involved both tests and interviews, was spirited. "I am very, very impressed with the quality of our patrolmen," Township Manager Jerry Andree reported.



Tenors welcome. The 30-member Cranberry Civic Chorale, which gives 13-15 performances a year, is seeking new members, regardless of vocal register or previous musical experience. Under the direction of Carolyn Steele, the choir practices weekly, performs patriotic songs and show tunes February thru July, and offers holiday music during the fall and winter seasons. "Tenors are always welcome," according to founder John Milius, "but so is everyone else." Call 724-776-9511 to join.



Prepare for winter.

With the onset of colder weather, Cranberry's Public Works Department offers these reminders: don't bury your fire hydrant in snow, don't enclose your water meter in an unheated area of your home, and don't park on the street when snow plows need to operate.

Burning ashes.

Normally you can't burn yard waste in Cranberry. But the Township is making an exception for the purpose of burning ash tree wood that has become infested with Emerald Ash Borer beetles. Infested wood may not be transported from its original site and should be burned as soon as possible.



If you have Ash trees which have become infested, contact the Township Codes Department to identify the property, date and time at which the burn will take place.

Police add officers. A badge pinning ceremony was held on September 4



for the Township's three newest police officers. They are, left to right: patrolmen Edward Horan, Justin Hewitt, and Michael Weleski. Congratulations!



Clubhouse Pavilion.

The Cranberry Highlands Golf Course Clubhouse has a new addition: a permanent open-air pavilion adjacent to its back patio which is perfect for warm weather personal celebrations or business events. Contact Director Jon Shuster at 724-776-7372 for details.

New look.

Cranberry's latest police vehicles are sporting a new set of markings, shown here. The spikey blue semicircle, which formerly enclosed the Township logo on the car's front door, has been replaced by a discrete black band which turns gold under strobe lighting; the logo is now on the car's rear corner post. But the police officers' high level of service and professionalism remain the same.





Limited openings. Limited space is still available in Cranberry's pre-K program for 4 and 5 year old children who will be entering Kindergarten the next year, as well

as in its Pre-School for 3 year olds. Once the classes fill up, Parks & Recreation will be happy to put others on a waiting list. But don't get discouraged. "There are always family changes, people move and may have to drop out of the program," according to department director Mike Diehl. "So I encourage people to check this out; we may be a fit for them."



Everything's coming up roses. Thanks to the Penn State Master Gardeners of Butler County

for greening the Trial Garden at Cranberry's Municipal Center. They include, left to right: Sandy Glasser, Rose Romboski, Sandi Gutowski, Peg Campbell and Gina Bianchi. ~



Cranberry's Head Librarian To Retire

Carol Troese, the only head librarian the Cranberry Public Library has ever known, has announced plans to retire at the end of November – around the same time her daughter in Maine is due with her first grandchild.

Under Troese's leadership the library, which began in 1973 with 200 books in a 120 square foot room, has grown to hold more than 92,000 items in a well-equipped 15,300 square foot space serving 26,000 registered patrons. Its circulation last year was over 350,000 items.

"I run into people all the time who remember that they first met Carol Troese when she was driving around in a bookmobile," according to Library Board President Michelle Switala. "When we started it was teeny-tiny. Then when the Township building was built, we got library space. And later we got to expand and create the Children's Center."

Today's Cranberry Library occupies a much better and more sophisticated space than many other municipal libraries in the region. But the demand for its services – which now encompass a variety of electronic

media as well as print publications – has continued to grow. "We should have about double the size we do now based on the population of Cranberry Township," Switala said. "There's a formula for square footage and size of the collection based on the number of residents and other factors. But there's nowhere to move right now."

Over the years, most of the library's special programs, including its recent Lincoln display, had been handled by the outgoing director. "The Lincoln exhibit was very successful; we've had crowds of 60 to 100 people come to the events," Switala said. "But it would be nice to have larger spaces so we could continue to do the kind of programming which we know will draw a crowd

"The library is due for a new strategic plan," Switala continued. "Cranberry is changing quite a bit. We've become more diverse. We're starting to see more and more people in the library where English is not the first language for the adults but it is for their children. So there's a lot of interpreting back and forth." And every year sees more use of the library's computer technologies.

"Carol is very interested in the whole transition process," Switala said. "She dearly loves the Cranberry library and she has run a successful program there for a long, long time. She wants to make sure we're hiring a quality person, and she certainly knows things about the collections that we wouldn't know to ask about or listen for. So we're grateful for her help."

Cranberry's new library director will be required by state law to hold a master of library science degree. Applicants were asked to complete an application form, to answer three essay questions, and submit their resume. The board's search committee is also looking for someone with three to five years of practical library work experience. "We are hoping to have someone in place by January 1," Switala said.

The Cranberry library's budget for 2008 was \$554,000, much of which comes from the Township out of a 1 mil property tax. State support also forms part of the library's budget, but that has been a tenuous allocation each year, according to Switala. And funding from Butler County – \$237,000, which is shared among all eleven libraries in its federated system – hasn't changed in more than a decade. ~

Cracking Cranberry's Chop Shop

The scheme was simple but ingenious: Steal a high-value car or truck, change its ornamental trim, buy a junker of the same brand, swap their vehicle identity numbers, then scrap the old one. And voila! You have a beautiful new car with a clean title that you can drive, sell, or give away to relatives without anyone being the wiser. It seemed like the perfect crime, and for more than 15 years, it worked for an auto theft ring operating out of Cranberry Township.

But that all began to change on November 17, 2006. That was the date Cranberry police Lt. Kevin Meyer got a call from the Jackson Township police department alerting him that there may be a stolen truck on the property of a radiator shop on Rochester Road.

Until that time Meyer, a police veteran of 12 years, had only limited involvement with auto theft. By the time it concluded, in September of this year, it had mushroomed into one of the biggest cases of its type in Western Pennsylvania, and Meyer, working closely with the Western Regional Auto Theft Task Force – a coalition of state police, county detectives, and local law enforcement agencies – had become its lead investigator.

“One of the most significant moments came when we were interviewing the shop’s owner for the very first time,” Meyer recalled. “He told us that the vehicle he drove that day to meet with us was actually

stolen; it was one of his company trucks. Then once he made that admission, he admitted that all of his vehicles were stolen. So we thought, wow, this thing is a lot bigger than we realized. That’s when we recovered six stolen vehicles from his property and one donor vehicle. It was one of the case’s *ah-ha!* moments.”

But it turned out to be just the tip of the iceberg. “Altogether, we had 26 vehicles that we knew were stolen; two that were never recovered,” Meyer said. “We had one vehicle recovered in Sioux City, Iowa and one vehicle was recovered in Colorado – a member of the shop owner’s family. And keep in mind that for every stolen vehicle, you have another donor vehicle. So you’re in the neighborhood of 50 vehicles involved in this case.”

There were other charges filed too, including thefts of money and materials, fraud, forgery and more. But over a six-month investigation, with four visiting Task Force investigators working essentially full-time on the case, the evidence amassed became so overwhelming that, in the end, all 15 of those charged in the case decided – one by one – they would be better off to plead guilty, turn state’s evidence, and throw themselves on the mercy of the court



Keeping track. Cranberry Police Lt. Kevin Meyer developed this massive spreadsheet to keep on top of the thousands of pieces of evidence, testimony, and contacts involved in cracking a sprawling chop shop case that included more than two dozen stolen vehicles.

than go to trial. The ring’s mastermind is now serving a 4 to 14 year sentence in the State Penitentiary.

Auto theft remains a serious problem in Pennsylvania; last year 25,807 vehicles were reported stolen in the state. But that actually represents a significant improvement; in 1994 it was 52,306. And collaboration between different law enforcement agencies has played a critical role.

“I wouldn’t say that this case has changed the way we do business, but I can say that it’s been a good thing,” Meyer reflected. “A lot of times law enforcement agencies keep to themselves and don’t share outside the department. Having a resource such as the Western Regional Auto Theft Task Force has been an opportunity to show what can be done when you combine resources and work together.” ~



The evidence became so overwhelming that, in the end, all 15 of those charged decided they would be better off to plead guilty and throw themselves on the mercy of the court.

Nobody Likes Ike

Around 8:30 on Sunday evening, September 14, just as most residents had started settling in to watch the Steelers beat Cleveland, a windstorm with gusts of over 70 miles an hour – the remnants of hurricane Ike – blew into Cranberry. Within minutes, falling trees had blocked roads, torn down power lines, toppled canopies, and scattered debris everywhere. Calls poured into Butler 911, and by 9:00, Cranberry was fully mobilized.

At 8:45, Cranberry Public Safety Director Jeff Schueler activated the Township's Emergency Management procedure. Key administrative staff and department heads were summoned. Off-duty police and Public Works personnel were assembled. Every Fire Company volunteer was paged. And Customer Service pulled together its own team of phone responders.

Normally, an evening storm with heavy debris on the roads quickly translates to highway mishaps as drivers swerve to dodge fallen branches. But on a Steeler night, when most people are home watching TV, traffic is light. As a result, there were no

On a Steelers night, when most people are home watching TV, traffic is light. As a result, there were no accidents reported in Cranberry that evening.

traffic accidents reported in Cranberry that evening and two Public Works crews, using heavy-duty front loaders, were able to reach the reported roadblocks and clear away fallen trees by 3:00 AM.

In a briefing the following morning, Schueler reflected on the long night that he and his colleagues had spent responding to storm-related issues. "I can't give you the total number of calls," he said, "we're still trying to work that out. Our best guess is 60-plus fire calls for trees and wires." Actually, it turned out, there had been 68.

Like thousands of others throughout the region, many homes and business in Cranberry lost power. Some were still out the next day. "There are outages around Commonwealth Drive and Pennwood in RIDC Park, around the Kensinger Drive area,

over toward Peters Road, and there are 70 houses out on Garvin Road," Schueler reported at mid-morning.

In responding to major storms, there is a standard division of labor. Reports of downed trees go to Public Works.

Downed wires and structure fires are directed to the Fire Company.

Traffic accidents, 911 incident reports and automated alarms are directed to the Police. And for accidents involving injury, the EMS ambulance service is summoned.

Utility companies – particularly electric companies – also become intimately involved by shutting off power to downed lines and restoring power to customers who lost it. But just the day before, PennPower had sent many of its field crews to help in devastated areas of the Gulf states, where Ike had wreaked havoc. As a result, crews from a sister company in New Jersey were dispatched to help in western Pennsylvania.

But individual residents can and should be in a position to help themselves – at least for a few days – in the wake of sudden emergencies, Schueler advises. "I saw this morning that a lot of my neighbors were out helping each other. That's something you can do: help your neighbors, check on the elderly in your neighborhood, if you know anybody that's sick, call or stop in."

The Police Department also has a booklet, available on request, called "Emergency Preparedness Guide: What to do When Disaster Threatens." It offers a series of recommendations about what to plan for, what to get, and what to do in case of a serious emergency. Stop by the department's Municipal Center office to pick up your own free copy. ~



***Early autumn.** Leaves, branches, and everything else on this Katherine Court maple fell to the ground in the fury of the Hurricane Ike windstorm that hit Cranberry the evening of September 14. Despite its damage, the Township's quick response, along with a little help from the Steelers, prevented any injuries.*

WED 1	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm Chapter Book Club Grades 1-3, Library, 7:30 pm <i>Treating Stress Resistant Hypertension</i> † presentation by AGH, Library, 6:30 pm	THURS 2	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm	FRI 3	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm	SAT 4	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Scrapbooking for Books* Library, 9 am - 4 pm Farmers' Market Mashuda Dr. entrance to Community Park, 10 am - 1 pm Doggie Palooza Rotary Dog Park, Community Park 10 am - 2 pm	SUN 5	MON 6	Book Discussion <i>Three Cups of Tea</i> , Library, 7 pm		
MON 6	Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm	TUES 7	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm	WED 8	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm Chapter Book Club Grades 1-3, Library, 7:30 pm Parks and Recreation Advisory Brd Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm	THURS 9	YOM KIPPUR Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm	FRI 10	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm	SAT 11	Cranberry 6th Annual Tennis Tournament †† Community Park, 9 am
SAT 11	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Farmers' Market Mashuda Dr. entrance to Community Park, 10 am - 1 pm	SUN 12	Cranberry 6th Annual Tennis Tournament Finals †† Community Park, 9 am	MON 13	COLUMBUS DAY Twp Offices Open	TUES 14	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm	WED 15	Book Discussion <i>The Code of the Woosters</i> , Library, 10 am <i>Osteoporosis, How to Keep Your Bones Healthy</i> UPMC Wellness Series, Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 12:30 pm Chapter Book Club Grades 1-3, Library, 7:30 pm			
WED 15	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm	THURS 16	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm Backyard Composting Class †† Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm	FRI 17	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm	SAT 18	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Farmers' Market Mashuda Dr. entrance to Community Park, 10 am – 1 pm	SUN 19	MON 20	Zoning Hearing Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm	TUES 21	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm
WED 22	Pumpkins in the Park †† Community Park, Jaycees Shelter, 1 pm Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm Chapter Book Club Grades 1-3, Library, 7:30 pm	THURS 23	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm	FRI 24	Farmers' Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm	SAT 25	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Farmers' Market Mashuda Dr. entrance to Community Park, 10 am - 1 pm Spookapalooza †† Municipal Ctr/Teen Ctr, 12 - 2 pm	SUN 26	MON 27	Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30 pm		
MON 27	<i>Understanding Advanced Directives/Living Wills</i> † presentation by AGH, Library, 6:30 pm	TUES 28	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm	WED 29	Book Discussion and Meet the Author <i>Resurrecting Allegheny City</i> by Lisa Miles, Library, 6:30 pm Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm	THURS 30	Cranberry Plan Update Open House 4 - 6 pm Status Update/Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm <i>Promoting Positive Behavior</i> * presentation by Bellevue Pediatrics, Library, 7 pm	FRI 31	Halloween Trick or Treat in Cranberry Twp 6 - 8 pm			

SAT 1Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Cranberry Women’s Club Farkleberry Craft Show Municipal Ctr, 10 am - 3 pm		SUN 2Daylight Savings Time Ends set clocks back one hour after 2 am		MON 3Book Discussion <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> , Library, 7 pm		TUES 4ELECTION DAY Polls open 7 am - 8 pm 4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm		WED 5Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm		THURS 6Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm				
THURS 64 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm		FRI 7	SAT 8Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am		SUN 9	MON 10Zoning Hearing Brd Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm		TUES 11VETERAN’S DAY Twp Offices Open/Library Closed Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm		WED 12Living with Diabetes UPMC Wellness Series, Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 12:30 pm Parks and Recreation Advisory Brd Mtg Municipal Ctr, 7 pm				
THURS 13Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am				FRI 14	SAT 15Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am		SUN 16	MON 17	TUES 18Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm		WED 19Book Discussion <i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> , Library, 10 am		THURS 20	FRI 21Cranberry Twp Light Up Night Santa arrives via fire truck, Municipal Ctr, 6 pm
SAT 22	SUN 23	MON 24Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30 pm			TUES 25Tough Toddlers* presented by Bellevue Pediatrics, Library, 7 pm			WED 26	THURS 27THANKSGIVING DAY Twp Offices and Library Closed		FRI 28Waste Collection 1 day delay Twp Offices Closed/Library Open		SAT 29	SUN 30

MON 1	TUES 2	WED 3	THURS 4	Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm			FRI 5	Friday Night Flicks: <i>The Polar Express</i> †† Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 - 9 pm			SAT 6	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Milk and Cookies with Santa †† Municipal Ctr, Senior/Teen Ctr, 10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm			SUN 7	Cranberry Women's Club Christmas House Tour †† Advanced sales only, Library, 4 – 8 pm				
MON 8	Zoning Hearing Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 9	Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm			WED 10	Parks and Recreation Advisory Brd Mtg Municipal Ctr, 7 pm			THURS 11	Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 6:30 pm			FRI 12	SAT 13	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Milk and Cookies with Santa †† Municipal Ctr, Senior/Teen Ctr, 10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm		
SUN 14	MON 15	TUES 16	WED 17	THURS 18	FRI 19	SAT 20	Computer Class* Schedule available, Library, 9 am Milk and Cookies with Santa †† Municipal Ctr, Senior/Teen Ctr, 10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm			SUN 21	MON 22	HANUKKAH Begins		TUES 23	WED 24	CHRISTMAS EVE Twp Offices Open/ Library Closed		THURS 25	CHRISTMAS DAY Twp Offices and Library Closed	
FRI 26				Waste Collection 1 day delay			SAT 27	SUN 28	MON 29	Planning Advisory Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30 pm			TUES 30	WED 31	NEW YEAR'S EVE Twp Offices Open/ Library Closed					

Ballet Theater Park Performance Sweeps Audience Off Its Feet

The Pittsburgh Ballet Dance Theatre was really on its toes the evening of August 22. An appreciative audience of approximately 800 gathered at the Rotary Amphitheatre in Community Park for a first-time-ever performance of the troupe in Cranberry. And the weather couldn't have been nicer.

"The entire group put a lot of work into this performance," Cranberry Parks and Recreation Director Mike Diehl acknowledged. "They had to build a sprung stage because you can't dance on the concrete stage floor we have in the amphitheater. They used a three-layer system of plywood, cushioned with rubber spacers. They also had to build a dressing room large enough for 30 dancers to put on makeup, change outfits, and just change into their clothes. They had several bars in the back to stretch out and get prepared for the performance. Altogether

it took about seven hours of construction and rehearsal time on site before the performance on that day. It was a lot of work for one performance."

The performance itself, which began with duets, and then built to quartets, octets, and a final ensemble piece with 18 dancers, featured works arranged by Twyla Tharp, who is regarded as the nation's premier choreographer, as well as a dance set to music by composer Alexander Glazounov which was staged by the dance company's own Artistic Director, Terrence Orr.

The Ballet Theatre's Cranberry appearance was part of the organization's strategic initiative to reach audiences outside of Pittsburgh's Cultural District and build the subscription base for its main season schedule at the Benedum Center.



Its Cranberry performance was sponsored by the Township and the Butler County Convention and Tourism Bureau with major funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"The Company really enjoyed it," he said. "I think they were pleasantly surprised by the attendance and the attentiveness and the appreciation of the audience. Whether you're a dancer or any other kind of performer, you live for the applause and the instant gratification in a live performance. And they were getting it here." ~

The paws that refreshes...

Rotary Dog Park Opens To Howls Of Elation

It was a perfect summer day as hundreds of excited but well-behaved dogs and their owners gathered in Community Park for the official



opening of Rotary Dog Park on August 20. Following a brief ceremony and ribbon cutting, owners eagerly led their pets into the park's large and small dog areas to legally run off-leash in a public park for the first time in Cranberry Township.

Plans for the much-anticipated park began in January of 2006 in response

to persistent requests from pet owners whose dogs are prohibited by ordinance from the Township's parks. A series of fund-raising events, craft sales and dinners, held at sites throughout the Township by supporters of the park concept, helped to bring the project to life.

Construction of the new facility, which is situated on a four-acre site



adjacent to Community Park was given a major boost by the Cranberry Rotary Club which pledged \$45,000 toward the dog park's development and maintenance.

"Some of the creative features have been a big hit," according to Parks and Recreation Director Mike Diehl.

Continued on page 15.



Miracle League Registering Players, Volunteers

The angels must be smiling on Cranberry's Miracle League baseball field project. On July 9, Pirates Charities – the philanthropic arm of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club – teamed up with Pirate second baseman Freddy Sanchez to announce a grant of \$200,000 toward construction of the new facility in Graham Park – \$50,000 of which was personally donated by Sanchez and his wife. It was, according to Dick Hadley, Chairman of Cranberry's Board of Supervisors and one of the speakers at the ceremony, “not only a great day for Cranberry Township, it's a great day for all of western Pennsylvania.”



The Pirates' bequest, together with gifts, grants, volunteer help

and encouragement from hundreds of other supporters, has allowed the new ballfield to advance so quickly that on September 1, online registration for both players and volunteers for the 2009 season opened to anyone interested in the

project – now officially known as the Pirates Charities Miracle League Field – and its very special mission.

Miracle League – a national organization focused on building ballfields designed to accommodate children with disabilities – was formed ten years ago in Rockdale County, Georgia. Cranberry resident Mike Sherry, who learned about the organization while working in Alabama, has become a leading proponent for the Graham Park Miracle Field and was instrumental in securing support from other local benefactors.

Miracle League of Southwestern PA, the association Sherry formed to promote the Cranberry ballfield, is also a division of the Cranberry Township Athletic Association, CTAA. CTAA will

administer the League's baseball/softball program on a day-to-day basis once construction of the field is completed next spring. Cranberry Township provided land for the field while its construction costs are being paid out of donations raised by the Miracle League organization.

Every child deserves a chance to play baseball. No child will be turned away for any reason.

Today, there are 200 similar Miracle League organizations operating across the country, with 100 completed fields, and 100 more under construction. The League's motto, “Every child deserves a chance to play baseball,” has become a reality for more than 80,000 children and young adults with disabilities who have used the League's fields, which feature a synthetic surface that makes it possible for children in wheelchairs and walkers to play the game safely.

A registration fee of \$35 is charged to players, but a scholarship fund is available for anyone who does not have the ability to pay the fee. No child will be turned away for any reason, according to Sherry. Volunteers, including coaches, umpires, buddies, fund-raisers and team

parents can register the same way as players by going to the www.miracleleagueofsouthwesternpa.org, clicking on the registration link in the lower right corner of the home page, and following the steps in the click-through process. ~

Rotary Dog Park opens to howls of elation *Continued from page 14*

“That includes the watering holes that were built into the site. They're about five feet square; they can be filled up with 6 or 8 inches of water. Dogs lie in it, walk in it, drink from it. Then it can be quickly drained and refilled. That's been a big success.”

The Rotary Dog Park is situated on a strip of land bounded on one side by a creek and on the other by the Township's Public Works storage yard and Public Safety training area.

A multipurpose athletic practice field is situated nearby.

The dog park is partitioned into three sections – two for large dogs and one for small dogs. The two large dog areas will be rotated into service for active play, permitting their grass to recover from expected wear and tear. Parking is available immediately adjacent to the new facility, enabling dog owners to bring their pets in and out of the park without having to walk them through

Community Park areas where pets are not allowed. A double-gate system allows dogs to enter the fenced-in compound without letting others out.

Although the dog park is not supervised, rules regarding clean-up and pet behavior are posted. But the dogs rarely read those signs. “The little dogs aren't always in the small dog area,” Diehl observed. “Little dogs don't know they're little and they want to run with the big dogs.” ~

The Greening Of Graham Park

Warm, dry weather through the second half of summer allowed construction on the Dick's Sporting Goods Sportsplex at Graham Park to move ahead quickly. And much of the Park's remaining work, including its fencing and most of its building construction, can continue even during the winter months. Right now, though, the most critical and time-sensitive step is making sure the grass grows in thick enough to withstand active play when the Park officially opens next year.

"The key is getting the grass to grow on the baseball fields and then do the general seeding everywhere else that we're not either paving or playing on so they'll all be green when spring comes," Cranberry Parks and Recreation Director Mike Diehl observed. Irrigation systems, fed by wells on Township property, have been able to keep grass growing on the playing fields despite the lack of rain. But it took a series of aerial photos to identify exactly where the sprinklers were missing and where adjustments in their spray patterns needed to be made.

"It's a pretty intricate formula that goes into calculating how much water goes on those fields, how long you put the sprinklers on for, the coverage, and the volume of water prescribed for those types of seeds to germinate. So we're going through all those calculations on these fields," Public Works Manager Walt Beighey pointed out. "We're trying to build sod by letting the grass grow to get some stabilization into the ground; just because it's green doesn't mean there are roots underground. If you step on new grass you kill it. But it's all starting to come together."

"The football fields are definitely greening up and coming around to game-shape," Diehl confirmed. "The lights are hung and in place and we're making arrangements now for the bleacher seating and scoreboards to be installed."

We're trying to do everything in our power to make sure that come May, we can open the gates and that everyone will enjoy the Park.

Work on the concession-restroom buildings is also moving along briskly, as is progress on the park's internal road network. "Pavement should be completed soon for our connecting road off of Bellevue Park that will tie into Dover at Rochester," he said.

Other progress to date includes pouring the concrete sidewalks connecting the park's sports campuses along the roadway; the stone base for an asphalt bicycle and walking trail has now been laid; conduits to carry power, water and communication lines have been installed; a pre-formed bridge spanning Brush Creek is now open to construction traffic; field lights are going up; and framing for the park's maintenance building has also been erected.

"We've had some very preliminary talks about a grand opening and for opening this park up with a bang," Diehl said. "We're looking at May because we want to be sure the weather works with us and that this tender grass gets a chance to really reach down and develop a sturdy root base before we turn people loose on it. We're trying to do everything in our power to make it a success so that come May, we can open the gates and that everyone will enjoy the Park." ~





Holy Cow! It's Fire Safety Week!

According to tradition, on Sunday evening, October 8, 1871, in a small shed along an alley in Chicago where

the city's Fire Academy now stands, a cow belonging to Patrick and Catherine O'Leary kicked over a lantern igniting one of the greatest conflagrations in American history. The Great Chicago Fire, as it came to be known, burned until the following Tuesday, killing hundreds and destroying almost four square miles of the city.

As it later turned out, a newspaper reporter who covered the story for the *Chicago Republican* admitted that he had actually invented the cow story because he thought it would make more colorful reading. But whatever its true origins, the fire's devastating spread drove home a series of important fire safety concepts that have guided public officials ever since.

Today, all across America, the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire is marked by the observance of Fire Safety Week – a period of intensive public education about fire prevention. And in Cranberry, a key part of that education is offered in the Fire Company's Fire Safety

House – actually a 30-foot trailer whose interiors have been scaled to the dimensions of a child and which replicates a two-story house, complete with all the potential fire hazards associated with a normal home.

"We've had at least a thousand kids a year go through since we got it in 1993," Fire Company President Chris DeCree claims. It's a popular asset. "During Fire Safety weeks we try to keep it around here in the Township. But people have borrowed it from as far away as Slippery Rock. We just did the regatta up at Moraine State Park. Middlesex has borrowed it. We lend it out to our Mutual Aid companies. And a couple of block parties in the community have called to ask about it. But the biggest users are the two schools – Haine and Rowan. We put every third-grader in those schools through and now we've got programs for first and second graders, too."

One of the program elements is 'Don't Fear a Firefighter in Gear,' designed to keep children from being afraid of the firefighters themselves. "We teach the kids not to hide under the bed, not to hide in closets and we teach them to run to the firefighter. We teach them not to go back in the house for pets or toys.

We teach them basic fire safety, meeting places, calling 911, and that they have to know their name, address and phone number.

We stress that to the parents, too," he said.

But the Fire Safety House is only part of the Company's Fire Prevention education. Altogether, the Cranberry Fire Company participated in 63 events during 2007, drawing more than 4,000 people. Among them is a program directed toward showing adults how to operate a fire extinguisher. "We take it to businesses and show employees how to use it," DeCree said. "We're going to take it around to the senior citizen centers and show them how to use it, too."

"We have customized programs for business. We do station tours for kids and adults. We have vehicle displays that we take out to the communities along with handouts about fire safety. We have slide shows. We show businesses about evacuation programs. Scouts call us every year because they get merit badges for fire safety. And we have the Sparky robot." Sparky, a radio-controlled talking Dalmatian in a tiny fire truck, is always a big attraction.

But he has seen better days. "We had to get a new one because we couldn't get it repaired anymore," DeCree acknowledged. "A kid hugged the last one too tight and his head popped off. And that was devastating to the little kid; it took a long time to calm him down because he thought he had killed the dog. That's why we decided we couldn't repair it because it would just happen again. But we did get a grant and we're in the process of purchasing a new Sparky right now." ~



Safety first. A group of special needs children from Butler toured the Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company's Fire Safety House this summer, learning basic fire prevention and personal safety techniques. More than 1,000 children a year are taken through the miniature two-story house, which is built into a 30-foot trailer.

Profile of a firefighter:

Good As New: Restoring Cranberry's First Fire Truck

Cranberry's Volunteer Fire Company, which celebrated the arrival of a shiny new

rescue vehicle last month, can boast some of the region's best and most up-to-date fire apparatus. But in 1958, when members of the startup Cranberry Volunteer Fire Company bought their first engine, it was already nearly 30 years old.

That truck is still around – looking better than ever. And Jim Cole, a Life Member of the Fire Company who comes from a long pedigree of firefighters, has emerged as its caretaker. Here is his story.

The 1929 Pirsch was originally bought by the Munhall Fire Company No.4. It was later sold to Kilbuck which, for reasons that no one now remembers, never bothered putting it into service.

It had been built as a pumper – a truck designed to pressurize the water drawn from wells, cisterns, streams and ponds in order to feed its fire hose. And Cranberry, whose drinking water at the time came mostly from on-lot sources, was able to use it until 1967, when the truck's engine blew up.

Once that happened, the Pirsch was left to sit outside the fire station. A few years later, however, a firefighter who restored Packard cars as a hobby, felt that the truck deserved a more dignified fate, and proposed buying it from the Township for \$1 with the idea of restoring and then selling it back to the fire company. But shortly after the deal was done, the man suffered a stroke which left him partially paralyzed, making work on the Pirsch impossible.

As a result, the fire truck sat in a state of neglect for another ten

years. That's when Cole and a group of fellow volunteers, along with the blessing of the fire company, decided

to rebuild it themselves with each member bringing a different set of technical skills to the project. So they towed it back to the fire house and worked on it there for the better part of a year. Eventually, after working throughout the winter of 1980-'81 and lavishing 1,800 man-hours of tender loving care on it, the antique fire engine emerged repaired, repainted, and refurbished to its original capability of pumping 600 gallons of water a minute.

However by the early-'80s, the restored Pirsch had become a true collectors item, and was never returned to service as an active fire engine. But it quickly became Cranberry's premier parade vehicle. And Cole is always happy to be at its wheel. In fact, as someone who has held every position in the fire company except its presidency, Cole is also qualified to drive all of the company's front-line trucks, although most of the calls he has gone on in recent years have been prompted by vehicle accidents or

automatic alarm systems rather than structure fires.

Cole and a group of fellow volunteers decided to rebuild it themselves.

But that's just fine with Cole who, along with his fellow fire fighters was deeply shaken when they responded to a house fire in 1981 but were unable

to save its three occupants. "That was the first-time Cranberry had suffered a death in a fire," he recalled. "It was really painful for most of the firefighters. So we had a small group of people come in who deal with traumatic situations like that and they walked us through trying to accept the deaths. They were here for about two months."

A one-time farmer, Cole is now maintenance superintendent for Trinity Cathedral in downtown Pittsburgh. His son Mike, who joined the Fire Company at age 16, has now himself become a Life Member of the fire company.

Like his father, Mike, who works as a computer programmer, has gone through the Company's extensive training. But after 18 years, the younger Cole prefers to remain in the background, helping out where he can. And although he is no longer in a position to respond to most calls, he participates in the business side of the company, joining them for their weekly meetings – as well as for any parade in which the Pirsch his father rebuilt is playing a part. ~



On parade. Jim Cole, who along with a team of other CTVFC volunteers restored the Fire Company's first fire engine to mint condition, takes the wheel of the antique Pirsch pumper during Cranberry's 2006 Night Out parade.

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



New Fire Truck Arrives in a Blaze of Glory

After telegraphing its entrance with blaring horns and flashing lights, the newest vehicle in the

Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company fleet was gently nudged into its new home at the Haine School Road Fire Station on September 9 by more than 40 Company members who had assembled to greet the arrival of their custom-built rescue vehicle. The new \$600,000 truck, financed by a long-established one mil fire tax on local real estate and built by KME Fire Apparatus according to specifications set by a seven-member committee of the Fire Company, replaced one that had gone into service 17 years earlier.

Following a ceremonial title transfer and brief remarks from Board of Supervisors Chairman Dick Hadley, Township officials and firefighters, along with their families and guests, witnessed several fire service

traditions dating back to the 19th century which have been likened to the christening of a newly commissioned ship. After passing the vehicle's title, one of the fire company's members took a tool from a compartment on the old truck and placed it in the new one. Then every fire company member was invited to help push the truck into its station bay by hand.

As the first, and frequently the only fire company vehicle dispatched to highway crashes and building fires, a rescue truck can deliver as many as ten firefighters to the scene along with an extensive assortment of equipment including tools to cut apart wrecked cars and extract their injured passengers. The workhorse

rescue apparatus also includes a generator to produce electricity, a compressor to run hydraulic tools, and a system used to refill the air cylinders firefighters carry when fighting interior blazes.

Unlike some of the more specialized fire apparatus in service, a rescue vehicle is essentially a rolling warehouse, outfitted with compartments for every sort of tool that emergency workers are likely to need. But as the technology of firefighting has evolved since the 1991 vehicle was put into service, so has the range of equipment firefighters need to carry. As a result, the new truck is equipped with more and different compartment spaces than the one it replaces.

Although the retiring rescue truck had less than 40,000 miles on its odometer, it accumulated many thousands of hours of use at the scene of incidents while its engine was kept running to operate generators, pumps, lights, and hydraulic tools. Also unlike other Fire Company vehicles, the rescue truck responds to essentially every 911 call – more than 600 last year alone. ~



Road Cleanup Program Honored

Adopt-a-Roadway – Cranberry's local road cleanup program patterned after the state's

Adopt-a-Highway anti-litter program, has received PA Cleanways' Western District Excellence Award for 2008. The program is responsible for clearing debris from 30 miles of the Township's connector road network at least twice a year.

Altogether, 26 groups – businesses, families, clubs and associations – have committed to cleaning their section of roadway. Sections range

from half a mile to nearly two miles in length. Some groups do it more frequently than others. But their work is limited to a three month window in the spring and fall. As a result, a great deal of administrative work goes into coordinating the program between the volunteers and Cranberry's Public Works Department. Although there is currently a waiting list of groups who want to participate in the program, many have a specific road in mind which may not be available at that point.

Volunteers taking part in the program are issued safety vests,

traffic warning signs, pickup tongs, garbage bags, and other necessities by the Township's Public Works Department. A list of safety precautions is also reviewed with each participating entity. Signs acknowledging the adoptive organization are posted along their roadway.

Roads become available for adoption whenever new ones are added or when participating organizations leave the program. More information is available by calling Adopt-A-Roadway coordinator Barby Cheetham at 724-776-4806 x1500 between 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday. ~

Cranberry Woods Drive Offers A Roundabout Way Of Getting To Work

You may think they're just going in circles. But for the operators of several thousand cars and trucks expected to use the new East entrance to Cranberry Woods Drive on the opposite side of Rt. 228 from Cranberry Commons each weekday, access to work and to the assortment of eateries along restaurant row, it's already starting to happen.

Their route to the Westinghouse site and other nearby destinations is taking them through a new traffic circle – the first in Cranberry Township. And if it proves to work as well as the computerized traffic models say it will, its design could become a template for other intersections in different areas of the Township as well.

The new roundabout – which is on private roads and jointly financed by Mine Safety Appliance and Creative Real Estate Development Corporation, or CREDCO – has no traffic signals to guide motorists through the four-way intersection. Instead, signs direct everyone entering the 70-foot circle to yield to other vehicles already in the circle before they turn right – the only permitted traffic direction. Pedestrians in the brick crosswalks just outside the circle also have right of way.

Traffic circles – which are strange to most western Pennsylvania motorists – have their own rules, and it remains to be seen how well they fit with the region's traditional driving

culture, where people tend to take turns proceeding through non-signalized intersections. Dick Jones, the site development consultant for MSA and CREDCO who was retained to oversee the project, has been keeping an eye on its emerging use patterns.

"The way it's set up, all the spokes that come in have Yield signs. The traffic that's in the inner circle has the right of way," Jones said. "The Yield signs are in place now – not that people pay much attention to them – but the folks in the inner circle don't realize they have the right of way, so they stop and take turns. But as time goes on and people know that if they're approaching they have to yield and the other folks don't have to, I think there will be a learning curve."

Although it appears to be a simple and elegant solution to moving traffic through the intersection, creating the roundabout was a significant engineering challenge because of its close proximity to Rt. 228, less than 100 yards to its north.

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Circling their wagons. Vans, sedans and station wagons navigate Cranberry's newest innovation in traffic management – a roundabout at the junction of Cranberry Woods Drive and the restaurant row access road that parallels Rt. 228. The privately-built traffic circle will become a major point of access to current and future office and retail destinations on the south side of Rt. 228.

ran a bunch of different intersection designs. So I came up with this idea that we'd use a roundabout and see what works."

"It's a unique project for Cranberry; there are no roundabouts anywhere in the area let alone in Cranberry Township," Township's Chief Strategic Planning Officer John Trant, Jr. pointed out. "It will take several weeks until everything is in place. There will be a nicely landscaped center island surrounded by brick paving. There are brick crosswalks and decorative light fixtures to safely allow pedestrians to move through the area.

"This is an excellent example of a successful public/private partnership. It's a private road, owned by the private partners, but there's public access to it," Trant said. "The Township's role was not financial. Cranberry laid out the local road system with its Official Map adoption last year – including the connection out to Franklin Road. We knew we were essentially creating that intersection but hadn't determined its final design. So through a lot of design and a lot of engineering analysis, all the parties agreed on a roundabout, and that's what we're implementing." ~

Empowering Cranberry

Signal Power Backups Help Prevent Traffic Backups

Twice this past summer, just two days apart, widespread power outages hit Cranberry's busy southern tier, knocking out electrical service to homes, businesses, and highways for hours. The first – which began a little before noon on a Friday – was triggered by a squirrel which had tiptoed its way across two high voltage lines in Penn Power's Rochester Road substation. The other, beginning around 11:30 the next Sunday morning, was attributed to lightning damage.

Although most private homes can get along reasonably well for the first few hours of an outage, highway traffic can become snarled in less than a minute. So for Cranberry, with its steady stream of traffic along Routes 19, 228, and assorted feeder roads, the loss of traffic signal power can create gridlock, rising to emergency levels in a heartbeat. But it is an emergency that Cranberry's police and Public Works departments have been through many times and their joint response is well-rehearsed.

"It's incident management," Public Safety Director Jeff Schueler points out, "and that's normal for police." As soon as a power failure hits, the Police Department's shift supervisor quickly assesses the situation and dispatches as many officers as are available. "It becomes a mobilization. We assess the situation by the importance of coverage and we mainly hit the arterial roads," Schueler said. "Intersections like Rochester and Thompson Park are low priority; we're not going to cover them until we have the main roads covered.

"Other calls are put on hold unless they're emergencies that require an officer to leave, such as a serious car accident," he said. "It's a judgment thing; we adapt as the situation

arises. If someone calls in with a house fire, we're not going to stay here and direct traffic; we're going to leave."

Meanwhile, at the Public Works operations center near Community Park, a half dozen gas-powered generators – all fueled up, strapped onto a trailer, and ready to roll – are quickly hitched to trucks which deliver and plug them into control boxes at designated intersections along Rt. 19. Once they're fired up – typically less than 15 minutes from the initial report of an outage – those intersections can resume normal operation, or at least somewhat normal operation, since their communications with other traffic signals remain unavailable until power is restored.

But for a growing number of intersections, even that brief lag time is becoming a thing of the past. Three major intersections along Rt. 19 – 228/Freedom Road, Rochester Road, and Rowan Road – have now been outfitted with Uninterruptable Power Supplies, or UPS units – essentially backup batteries that can keep the signal lamps and timers operating for extended periods.

If someone calls in with a house fire, we're not going to stay here and direct traffic; we're going to leave.

"Having a UPS at the main intersections during power failures helps to maintain control. It's seamless; there's no interruption, and the equipment picks up very quickly," Cranberry's traffic signal guru Marty McKinney explained. "The length of time that a UPS can support an intersection depends on how many bulbs are in the signals and how many different signals there are. A minimum time would be six to eight hours."

One of the main reasons its UPS units can maintain power for so long is that that Township has been replacing older incandescent traffic signals with LEDs – bright, long-lasting lamps that require just a fraction of the power needed by the older 135-watt bulbs. "We see the use of UPSs expanding to other intersections in the Township," McKinney said. "One of the criteria would be prioritizing by the volume of traffic they control. The other would be roadway safety as it relates to directing traffic; some intersections are harder to direct traffic and require more people than others because of their geometry."

Cranberry currently maintains 33 traffic signals at intersections

throughout the Township. ~

Keep moving. Cranberry Township Police officer Michael Kramer directs traffic at the entrance to Cranberry Commons during a mid-day power failure in June which darkened most of the traffic signals along Rt. 19. At the critical intersection of 19 and 228, however, a backup power supply maintained traffic flow until power was restored five hours later.





Salt Of The Earth Reaches Exalted New Heights

Timing is everything. Consider Cranberry's Public Works Department. This past August, in preparation

for the coming winter season, Public Works ordered up 2,000 tons of road salt. It paid \$42.89 a ton. The very next day, salt prices went up – way up.

“Our price was less than half of what they’re charging now: \$104. And that doesn’t even count delivery,” Public Works Director Jason Dailey observed. “It’s supply and demand. There was a run on salt last year compared to the year before. And the suppliers just don’t have stockpiles now to meet the demand.” But it gets even worse. When the Butler County Council of Governments opened its salt bids on September 8, the lowest bid was for \$133 a ton.

And it’s not just that other communities will need to pay more.

In many cases, they’re out of luck altogether. Take, for example, the

It’s not just that other communities will need to pay more; in many cases, they’re out of luck altogether.

Lawrence County and Westmoreland County Councils of Government – cooperative organizations that buy salt for their member municipalities. When they went out soliciting bids from the Big Three salt companies – North American, Cargill, and Morton – nobody answered. Of course, there are lots of alibis: without rain, the rivers are running low so it’s harder to bring the barges through; the price of fuel is up and it takes fuel to mine salt; they ran through all their stock last year and don’t have any more sitting on the ground; and blah, blah, blah.

“The insight of the Supervisors several years ago to build a storage building that holds 6,500 tons is really paying off because our average use is 4,600 tons salt per season,” Daily said. “By having that big building, we were able to store

enough for a normal winter at much lower cost. Next year it might catch up. But who knows where prices are going to go? Most likely everybody’s going to have to pay more.”

The beet goes on

However if Cranberry’s road salt appears to have a reddish look this

year, don’t be alarmed. “We’re mixing the salt with beet juice,” Daily said. He means real beets, like the ones you grow in a garden. “We tried it with a small batch. We got a tote of beet juice and mixed 270 gallons into 45 tons of salt and started coating it.”

“It’s supposed to result in slower melt and longer residual value, so it stays around longer. It takes more water or snow to get rid of the beet juice, so when it’s coated, it holds the salt longer,” he explained. “It also has stick value. Salt normally bounces, so when a car comes up and hits it, it has a tendency to bounce off the road. But the beet juice is like a molasses coating, so now it sticks when it hits; it doesn’t have a bounce. So we’re going to use it selectively and monitor how it works.

But it’s expensive, Daily warns. “It’s probably 200 times the cost of the salt. It’s definitely more expensive than magnesium chloride we also use. We have it on our trucks now in liquid form, but it’s not refined down to the point where it would go through the nozzles. It’s the leftover from commercial beet production.”

~

Court Ruling Scuttles Road Resurfacing Test

Cranberry’s plan to test the innovative new resurfacing technology known as Full Depth Reclamation this past summer hit a pothole. “The Prevailing Wage law pushed us out of being able to try it,” Public Works Director Jason Daily reported.

The issue – an interpretation of state law that requires municipalities to pay significantly higher wages for projects defined as ‘construction’ than for those identified as ‘maintenance’ – dramatically changed the

economics of using the new method.

The so-called Prevailing Wage law is not new to Pennsylvania. But resurfacing roads, which had traditionally been considered a maintenance activity, has now been ruled by a state court as a form of construction, particularly if it uses the full-depth method.

That forced the price of the project out of sight. “We bid the road project right before the court ruling, then

we bid it again after the ruling happened, and then an interpretation came down on the ruling which forced us to rebid it a third time,” Dailey explained. “So our road projects this year ended up costing us \$125,000 to \$150,000 more than the first time we bid it, just as a result of the court’s ruling. We took a substantial hit. It ended up costing 15 to 20% more than the original job. So that kept us from proceeding with that test.” ~

Not the same old grind

Kitchen Waste Disposals Gunk Up Treatment Plant

Holding down FOG levels – the wastewater treatment industry’s shorthand for fats, oil, and grease – has been a priority for Cranberry’s sewage treatment operations for more than a decade, particularly when it involves commercial kitchens. But restaurants are not the only source of FOG; private homes also play an important role, especially with the growing use of in-sink kitchen garbage disposal units. As a result, the concentration of organic material coming into the Township’s sanitary sewers today is higher than it ought to be, a situation which concerns the Township as well as the state Department of Environmental Protection.

“Wastewater treatment plants are designed to treat a certain amount of organic material,” Cranberry Pretreatment Administrator Mark Wolinsky explained.

“If more is coming down the line than it was designed for, you may need to increase its treatment capacity – which can be a very expensive undertaking. So from a wastewater point of view, garbage disposals are not so great because they add to what needs to be treated at the plant.”

Several years ago, Cranberry passed a Pretreatment Ordinance which required restaurants and other commercial kitchens in the Township to install grease traps or similar devices. Its goal was to remove the fats, oils and grease from their wastewater before it drained into the treatment plant. As a result, the organic load coming from commercial sources is starting to

come down. But private residences are exempt from the rules and their contribution to that load is steadily growing.

Properly used, garbage disposals are a great convenience. But not all uses are proper. “Certain things shouldn’t be put through a home garbage disposal,” Wolinsky cautions. “Garbage disposals work pretty well these days, so people use them for more things and send more down to the plant. But from a wastewater treatment point of view, it’s not something we like to see.”

For one thing, food from a waste disposal unit can clog your home’s drain lines and easily overburden an older plumbing system. That can be a costly and messy proposition for you individually. But the problem is even bigger, because garbage disposals essentially double the volume of non-liquid material that goes down the drain, moving food waste disposal from land to water. Each person in the U.S. throws out about 300 pounds of food per year, and that’s a lot of organic waste.

Of course, any way you dispose of waste creates its own set of issues. Hauling organic waste to landfills requires garbage trucks with all their exhaust emissions. And landfills themselves produce a lot of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. However, sending food waste through a kitchen garbage disposal not only increases water usage, it also raises treatment plant costs because after the wastewater gets treated, the plant is left with more sludge, which is costly to dispose of.



Compost food scraps.
The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of food waste is to compost it, turning excess waste into a great garden asset. Cranberry offers classes in backyard

composting. Check our website, www.cranberrytownship.org for details.

But there are guidelines that can make the use of kitchen waste disposals more environmentally friendly.

- **Grind food waste only.** And avoid greasy or fatty foods, which tend to clog sewer systems as well as home plumbing. Wipe the grease out with a paper towel or put it into a sealed container and then pitch them in the garbage.
- **Run it with cold water.** Cold water uses less energy than heated water. Then run more water for a short time after the grinding is done to flush out small scraps.
- **Clear your disposal regularly if it’s connected to a dishwasher.** If your disposal is connected to your dishwasher, be sure to clear out any waste inside. Otherwise your dishwasher won’t drain properly.
- **Your disposal is not a chipper.** If you give it long enough, a powerful kitchen disposal can grind up a turkey carcass, but it’s not a good idea. Throw it in the trash.
- **Compost food scraps.** The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of food waste is to compost it, turning excess waste into a great garden asset. Cranberry offers classes in backyard composting. Check our website for details. ~

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Cranberry's Voting Districts Have Been Redrawn

Not only will you have to decide who to vote for in next month's election, you'll also have to figure out where to vote. Cranberry's steady population growth prompted the Butler County Bureau of Elections to create three new precincts in the Township this year, providing Cranberry with nine polling places altogether. Cranberry had previously been divided into six voting districts.

New polling places this year include the Baptist Bible, Dutilh Methodist, and LDS Churches, as well as the Cranberry Highlands Golf Course Clubhouse. Details are available on the Township website. "It was a major redistricting," according to Bureau Director Regis Young. "We try to keep the district populations as even as possible."

Several long-established districts in the Township – East One, East Two, and West One – will stay largely

unchanged, according to Young. But the remaining districts will see major realignments as well as new poll locations.

Once the final polling place sites are set, every registered voter will be sent a postcard from the County with the new name of their precinct as well as the location of where they should go to vote. In the meantime, though, you can find the County's street-by-street precinct directory posted on the Township's Web site, www.cranberrytownship.org.



Next year, as part of the municipal elections, the district lines for Seneca Valley School District's board of directors will also move to correspond with the redrawn precinct lines. ~

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



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