

# West Pottsgrove Informer

## BIG PROJECTS IN A LITTLE TOWN

FALL 2009

We are a little township with some very big projects. The talk of the town lately is the new shopping center, Upland Square. After years of planning, the shopping center is now open and tenants and shoppers are beginning to fill the empty stores. This project benefits our township and our school district, not to mention consumers and job seekers. Kudos to our township manager, code officer, and the planning commission for their diligence and hard work in bringing this project to successful completion.

Everyone's asking where the restaurants are ... restaurants have been recruited, but most have declined expansion during this downturn in economy. The developers continue to seek out interested eateries.

If we're not talking about the shopping center, we're talking about trash. Naturally, most people aren't aware of all that goes into the decision-making process in our township. Managing a township is a lot like managing your own household, but there are many more rules, procedures, and guidelines that must be followed.

We are happy to answer questions and explain the process, and here are some of the questions that have been asked:

**"Why do we have to bid for trash removal?"**  
The First Class Township Code requires that most contracts with a total dollar value of \$10,000 or greater must be advertised and a formal contract must be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

**"If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Why change contractors?** The township must award the job to the lowest bidder. Where the lowest

bidder has been bypassed without any investigation, the courts have upheld surcharges against municipal officers, and the lowest bidder can take legal action against the township.

**"Why didn't you reject all the bids and start over?"** A municipality can reject all bids when the right to do so is reserved in the advertisement or specifications. However, there should be a good reason for this action. Again, legal action will most likely result if all the bids are rejected without just cause.

**"Why are we limited to two bags of grass clippings each week?"** That limit has not changed in our township. It is interesting to note that about half the states have banned any grass clippings going into landfills, because in the collection system, grass clippings are a costly nuisance. Yet when recycled at home, grass clippings are a resource of valuable plant nutrients and organic matter for your soil. The best way to manage grass clippings is to leave them on the lawn. Grass clippings left to decompose (in place) will improve your turf. The best thing to do with grass clippings is to recycle them! But for those who choose to bag them, two per week is the limit.

In the midst of managing these two projects, our township has purchased property for open space, repaired sewer lines, decreased our water flows into the sewer system, and made street and sink hole repairs. Some future projects include a rental ordinance, High Street revitalization efforts, and development of the "Flagg" property. Stay tuned ... the little township with big ideas may take a breather but won't be sitting idle for long.

Diana Gulotta  
President, Board of Commissioners

### Special points of interest:

- Oct. 7 Board Meeting
- Oct. 8 Town Watch
- Oct. 11 Fall Festival 12-5 P.M.
- Oct. 31 Trick or Treat 6-9 P.M.
- Nov. 3 Election Day
- Nov. 4 Board Meeting
- Nov. 11 Veterans Day
- Nov. 12 Town Watch
- Nov. 19 Planning Commission
- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving
- Dec. 2 Board Meeting
- Dec. 10 Town Watch
- Dec. 16 Board Meeting-Continuation
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Dec. 31 New Years Eve
- Jan. 1 New Years Day
- Jan. 4 Board Meeting-Reorganization

All meetings 7 P.M. unless noted

## Fall Festival: NEW JOINS DIFFERENT



Each year the Commissioners, sponsor a Halloween Parade and Community Day. This year there will be something different as we combine both events into a fall festival. This year's fall festival will take place on October 11 from 12-5 P.M. at the Township Building. As with Community Day there will be food, drinks, games and entertainment for all. The kids are invited to come in costume as we will parade around the Township grounds. There will be goodie bags for all marchers. The West End Fire Company will be serving breakfast that morning which will add to the events of the day. As always the great Pottsgrove Community Band will provide a variety of music for all. Bring the family for a fun filled day.

## **From West Pottsgrove Town Watch Don't be a Victim of "Senior Fraud"**

Many legitimate companies and charities solicit consumers by phone and consider it an effective way to raise money or increase company business. Unfortunately, others are simply "up to no good". Seniors can prevent telemarketing fraud by being educated consumers.

Senior citizens continue to be a rapidly increasing segment of the population, and that makes them a prime target for con artists and thieves. Americans who are 65 or older represent about 13 percent of our country's population, and their population will only continue to grow as the Baby Boomer generation begins to enter that age range.

Studies have shown that senior citizens are more at risk to be targeted by telemarketing scams than other age groups, and fraudulent telemarketers direct anywhere from 56 to 80 percent of their calls at older Americans. These con artists believe that senior citizens are vulnerable and more susceptible to their tricks. To help prevent from becoming a victim of "Senior Fraud" please keep these tips in mind:

Offers too good to be true usually are. Ask to receive the "unbelievable deal" or the "amazing prize offer" in writing so you can read it carefully before making a commitment.

Never give out your personal information over the phone or Internet unless you have initiated the contact. Legitimate business callers will never ask you for this information over the phone.

If a caller asks you to pay for an offer in advance or asks for your credit card number or Social Security number, tell the person you don't give out personal information over the telephone.

Remember that legitimate telemarketers won't be turned off if you use these techniques. They will appreciate dealing with an educated consumer. It's not rude – it's shrewd!

Please consider joining "West Pottsgrove Town Watch" to learn more about keeping you and your neighborhood safe from becoming victims of crime.

West Pottsgrove Town Watch meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 7:00 PM, at the Township building at 980 Grosstown Rd.

Bring a friend or neighbor.

### **Greetings from The West Pottsgrove Township Police Department**

It's that time of the year, the sidewalks and streets are filled with children traveling to and from school. With that, I would like to remind everyone to drive carefully and to be alert for children crossing the streets and school bus's picking up and dropping off children. Our Police Department will be doing patrols to keep our children safe while they travel to and from school. The school zone speed limit will be strictly enforced so be sure to slow down. The speed limit is 15 mph when the school lights are flashing. If everyone obeys the traffic laws and drives carefully, we can all help in making the school year a safe one.

Sincerely,

Earl E. Swavely Jr.  
Chief Of Police



## Public Works Update

### Retirement

Long time Township Employee Road Master Jerry Warsheski retired on July 31. We wish to thank Jerry for all the years of loyal service to West Pottsgrove Township and wish him well in his retirement.

### New Road Master

David Weidner of West Pottsgrove Township has been appointed as the new Road Master for the Township. David has been employed by the Township for three years and fills the position created with the retirement of Jerry Warsheski

### New Employee

The Township has hired Chris Galloway as a laborer with the road crew to replace David Weidner due to his promotion to Road Master.

Rounding out the Public Works Department is long time employee Paul Kulp of West Pottsgrove Township. Paul has worked for the Township for 19 years and is a valuable member of our staff.

## Solicitor's Corner

### The Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act

Those in the home improvement construction industry must comply with the recently enacted Act, which went into effect July 1, 2009. The Act defines a home improvement contractor as anyone involved with the following in connection with the land or a portion of land adjacent to a private residence, or a building or a portion of the building used as a private residence, provided the contract is more than \$500:

- repair, replacement, remodeling, demolition, removal, renovation, installation, alteration, conversion, modernization, improvement, rehabilitation or sandblasting.
- construction, replacement, installation or improvement of driveways, swimming pools, pool houses, porches, garages, roofs, siding, insulation, solar energy systems, security systems, flooring, insulation, solar energy systems, security systems, flooring, patios, fences, gazebos, sheds, cabanas, certain landscaping, painting, doors and windows and waterproofing.

Registration by a home improvement contractor is mandatory and they must file an application with the Bureau of Consumer Protection to obtain a registration number.

The Act dictates mandatory requirements for home improvement contracts, after July 1, 2009, which must meet certain criteria:

- be in writing,
- disclose the material aspects of the work and job (such as start and complete dates, the total contract price, identity of any subcontractors used, confirmation of insurance coverage and importantly, notice that the homeowner can rescind the contractor within 3 days of signing)

A contractor's failure to comply may render the home improvement contract unenforceable. In addition, the homeowner may also be entitled to recover attorney's fees and treble damages in cases where fraud can be established under the Unfair Trade and Consumer Protection Law.

You can check the registration of your contractor by going online at [www.attorneygeneral.gov/hicsearch](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov/hicsearch)

## Storm Water Management MS4

As mandated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) the Township is required to control storm water pollution. All outfalls for storm water are tested on a regular basis to prevent any type of pollutant from entering the storm water system. By allowing things such as motor oil, grease, chemicals, grass clippings and detergents to enter the system causes pollution of the water systems where our water drains to. Any contamination of the river that collects our rain water runoff is a violation of the Clean Streams Act and is regulated by DEP and can result in action against the Township and or the violator. Please be mindful of this and please do not put anything into a storm drain that doesn't belong there. You will notice that the inlets are marked with a symbol of a fish showing that the water going into these drains flows to the river.

DEP has notified all municipalities that these regulations must be enforced or penalties will be imposed against the Township. It is very important not to blow your grass into the street, allow your auto to leak oil, drain your swimming pool or allow any types of chemicals to enter the storm sewer system. Please help West Pottsgrove by not allowing pollution to enter the storm drainage system. If you see any of these problems contact the Township Office.

**Exelon Nuclear's Limerick Generating Station has been an important aspect of the local community for many years. Limerick generates enough power each year for 2 million homes, and does so cleanly, safely and reliably.**

**Limerick generates electricity without emitting greenhouse gas emissions. Safety is on every employee's mind each and every day. In 2008, Limerick Generating Station Unit 1 and Unit 2 had a combined capacity factor of 94.3 percent, meaning that Limerick was providing energy to the regional electric grid 94.3 percent of the time, which makes Limerick more reliable than many other sources of electricity.**

**The majority of Limerick's 850 employees live in Montgomery, Bucks and Berks counties. Limerick employees are involved in the local communities by raising money at the station for local organizations, volunteering in the community and raising their families here. In 2008, Exelon Nuclear and Limerick employees donated \$300,000 to local organizations that work to improve the lives of those in our communities.**

## Helpful Hints for a Snow Event:

You may think it's too early to think about snow but here are some friendly reminders for when that first storm comes:

- All vehicles must be removed from the snow emergency routes
- Try to park vehicles in driveways or parking lots so plows can remove snow curb to curb
- Wait until the streets to clear before clearing the end of your driveway or walk
- Please don't throw snow into the street. It is illegal and poses a risk situation for everyone.
- If you have a fire hydrant near your house try to keep it open to allow access for the fire department.
- Under extreme conditions, please stay home. Cars that get stuck and block the road create hazardous conditions for everyone.
- Watch for snow removal equipment. Use caution around all snow removal equipment; keep back farther than you normally would. Watch for sudden stops or turns; be as visible as possible in case a truck needs to back up. Please use your headlights at all times.
- When going out during a storm be prepared and please be safe.

### Recycling

Residents are reminded of participation in the Township's curbside recycling program. Commingled items may be placed at curbside, along with newspaper. Commingled items are plastics, metals and glass. The collection is made every other week. If a recycling bin is needed, stop by the Township office between 8a.m. -4p.m. to receive one. If you can't make it during these hours call the office and one will be left outside for you. Residents and businesses are encouraged to recycle. Remember that JP Mascaro also picks up yard waste.

All businesses are encouraged to recycle. Although the Township only provides residential recycling pick up it is very important to have your waste hauler include you in the recycling program.

**Code Enforcement Update:**

Each year at this time I provide an update on the regulations for swimming pools. Before looking to purchase a pool for next year contact me with any questions. All pools must meet regulations established by the State and are part of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code, International Property Maintenance Code and the International Residential Code. As you can see to conform to three codes you will need some help.

Regulations require a proper barrier around the pool, locking steps, proper electrical connections and the proper method of backwashing. Please keep in mind that we don't write the regulations but we must enforce these regulations. Before you purchase come see the Code Officer for the proper information for installation.

If you live in a rental property it is the landlord's responsibility to provide smoke detectors in specific areas of your dwelling unit or building in accordance with the Fire Code. If you don't have smoke detectors or want to make sure they are in the right place contact the Code Officer for assistance.

One other item I would like to address is the use of electric space heaters. These heaters are not considered a source of permanent heating and should only be used as a supplement to the main system. Please keep in mind to turn off heaters when leaving the house and only use them when you are in the area where the heater is. Don't leave the heater unattended at any time.

**Fire Marshal Message:**

In last winters newsletter I addressed the use of outdoor fire pits, patio fire pits and chimeneas. In discussion with the Township Manager it was observed that these types of fire burning appliances are generally used for recreation and would meet the guidelines for proper use and not fall under open burning. Even with the recreational use of these types of appliances there is still the possibility of the smoke from one of these appliances causing a concern for a neighbor.

If smoke from a fire pit or other similar device would cause an adverse condition for a neighbor or cause excessive smoke you will be asked to discontinue the use of said appliance until the smoking condition is corrected. Any questions regarding the use of this type of equipment should be directed to the Fire Marshal at 610-323-7717.

The original ban on barrel burning and open burning of leaves, tree limbs and other yard waste as well as trash and garbage is still in effect and will be strictly enforced. Any questions should be directed to the Fire Marshal.

With the opening of Upland Square Shopping Center we ask that all drivers pay attention to the fire lanes in front of the stores. You will notice yellow lines signifying

NO PARKING/FIRELANE. Please refrain from parking in this area at all times as this zone is for emergency personnel. Any delay in getting an ambulance or fire equipment in place because someone is parked in these lanes could be the difference between a successful response or a tragic ending. Please help all emergency response teams by keeping the Fire Lanes open at all times.

To the residents of West Pottsgrove Township:

As most of you know the Stowe Lions Club has been serving West Pottsgrove Township and its residents for many years, as of September 2009 the Stowe Lions Club has merged with the Pottstown Lions Club to form the Pottstown/Stowe Lions Club. For several years the two clubs have been meeting together and working together on projects and fundraisers. As of late the Pottstown clubs membership had dwindled down to a handful of members and they decided that it would be best for the two clubs to merge and become one strong club. The membership and Officers of the Stowe club agreed and filled the paperwork to finalize the merger. This merger has served to strengthen the club and will enable us to remain a viable community service organization in both West Pottsgrove and Pottstown. We will continue to provide services to assist the less fortunate and sponsor community projects. If you are the kind of person who enjoys giving and would like to make a lot of new friends, Lionism may be for you. We happily extend an open invitation to you to attend one of our Lions Club meetings, the meetings are held at the Pottstown Elks Club on the second and fourth Tuesday's of each month at 7pm. If you do decide to join us for a meeting please contact us ahead of time so that we can arrange to have a meal set aside for you. You can get info at [www.stowelions.org](http://www.stowelions.org) and contact us at [info@stowelions.org](mailto:info@stowelions.org).

Sincerely,

Mark M. Green

## West End Fire Company - West Pottsgrove's 100% Volunteer Fire Department

On several emergency calls residents have asked me questions. Do you get paid to do this? Do you train a lot? How do I become a fireman? The firefighters and fire police of the West End Fire Company are all volunteers. As a volunteer we are not financially compensated for the fuel we use to respond to calls or for our time we spend training or responding to emergencies. We respond to emergencies 24/7/365. When we are eating dinner, sleeping or in the middle of a family function we drop what were doing to respond to our community's emergency. Although we are "only volunteers" there are standards in place to provide you with highly trained professional volunteer firefighters. Entry level volunteer firefighters are required to participate in a minimum of 4 modules of training for a total of 166 hours plus 8 hours of mandatory federal hazardous materials training. Each volunteer firefighter then trains an average of 12 hours a month at the station and 10 hours annually for hazardous materials and CPR. Some volunteers enroll in federal, state and county level training programs for emergency medical, rescue, hazardous materials, driver operator, and emergency management or to enhance their skills. If you would like to become a volunteer stop by the station on a Thursday night and speak to the Fire Chief. Volunteers are always needed for all areas in the fire company from firefighting and traffic control to helping with fundraising.

Submitted by,  
Mark A. Hritz  
Deputy Fire Chief



Once a child touches a hot stove, as the cliché goes—he learns his lesson, stay away from a hot stove. This cliché does not take into account the pain and suffering from burns and burns should not be part of the learning process.

That's why West End Fire Company is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for Fire Prevention Week 2009 (October 4-10) to urge West Pottsgrove residents to "**Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned.**" This year's campaign focuses on ways to keep homes fire safe and prevent painful burns. Additionally, fire safety educators will be teaching local residents how to plan and practice escape from a home in case a fire occurs.

The statistics are staggering. Each year roughly 3,000 people dies as a result of home fires and burns, and more than 200,000 individuals are seen in the nation's emergency rooms for burn injuries. "The most common types of burn injuries result from fire or flame burns, scalds and contact burns," said Mark A. Hritz Deputy Fire Chief. "Burns are painful and can result in serious scarring and even death. When we take extra caution in our homes to ensure that the curling iron is out of children's reach or pot handles are turned away from the edge of the stove, such injuries are entirely preventable. Keeping our homes safe from fire and preventing devastating burn injuries is a healthy change we can make happen."

By following simple safety rules, you can "**Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned.**"

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from tables and counter edges so they cannot be pulled or knocked over.
- Have a 3-foot "kid-free" zone around the stove.
- Never hold a child in your arms while preparing hot food or drinking a hot beverage.
- Be careful when using things that get hot such as curling irons, oven, irons, lamps, heaters.
- Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent a child from sticking an object in the outlet.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a lit candle, portable heater, lit fireplace or stove, or where a hot appliance might be in use.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Set your hot water temperature no higher than 120 degrees.
- Install anti-scald valves on shower heads and faucets.

## TOWNSHIP REMINDERS

- Trash pick up is only once a week on Wednesday.
- Recycling is every other week.
- Please remove trash cans from sidewalk after pick up.
- Grass may not be blown or thrown into the street.
- Basketball nets are not permitted to be in the street.
- All exterior property areas must be maintained.
- Grass & weeds should be removed from curbs and sidewalks.
- Grass may not exceed six inches in height.
- Snow should not be thrown into the street.
- Building permits are required for most construction jobs.
- Board of Commissioners meets the first Wednesday of the month.
- Please don't rake leaves into the street.
- Please don't put any chemicals into the storm drains.
- Office hours are 8 A.M. - 4 P.M. daily
- Township Office welcomes all visitors to the office
- Please don't place trash for collection before 5 P.M. the evening before pickup

# FIRE HOUSE EVENTS

Looking for a place to eat or get take-out Friday & Saturday Nights? Support our Local 100% Volunteer Fire Department Friday Nights starting at 5pm. They are offering Smoked BBQ, Legendary Ribs, Steaks, Seafood, Wings and \$5 sandwiches served with fries & home-made coleslaw. Family Friendly Dinning that benefits our 100% volunteer fire department.

*View our menu online at [www.engine57bbq.com](http://www.engine57bbq.com)*

## **Fire House Breakfast Buffet**

**2nd Sunday of the Month at 8:00am**

**Mark your Calendars: October 11th, November 8th, December 13th**

## **Raymond The Amish Comic Comedy Show and Legendary BBQ Buffet Dinner**

**October 17th 2009 6pm**

**Advance Tickets Only, See our website for details.**

***WWW.WESTEND57.ORG***

West Pottsgrove Township  
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## Township Manager's Report:

My first five years as Township Manager have flown by. We as a Township have accomplished many things through the help of the residents and Board of Commissioners. During my first year we laid out a plan for improvement of the Sanitary Sewer System. As of this year we have replaced or lined the mains on Ash, Howard, and Vine and Pulaski Streets; in addition to completing a manhole restoration project, replacing the Force Main on Grosstown road and installing a new generator at the Doehler Pump Station. The Township also was required to pay their fair share of improvements at the Pottstown Sewer Plant to the amount of \$689,000. While making all these improvements we were still able to hold the line on sewer rates.

While working to keep our rates stable, the Borough authority has been raising theirs and has passed on an increase of 30% for 2009. We have been able to weather this increase with other sewer revenue but I don't see that holding true for 2010. We will have to take a long hard look at an increase for next year.

Our last upcoming project for 2009 is the replacement and lining of the sewer main on Elm Street. This job will have already started when you read this update. We have also set phase II of the Lemon Street project in motion by applying for grant funding to replace the main from Rice to Monroe. When doing the sewer work we also due curb replacement and install a new road surface,

Funding for the majority of these projects comes from Community Development Block Grants that we apply for every April. We have received \$541,977 to complete these projects with another \$200,000 pending for Phase II of Lemon Street.

In closing I would like to thank all the Residents and the Board of Commissioners for their support and for allowing me the privilege to represent our great Community for the past five years.