



Tom Schmitt, Councilmember Ward 4



Rob Guetzloff, Councilmember Ward 3



Robin Arvanitis, Councilmember Ward 1



Kevin Connelly, Councilmember Ward 2



Caleb Johnson, Councilmember Ward 5



Mike Troxell, Clerk-Treasurer



Randy Wyllie  
Judge, Schererville Town Court



#STAYHOME

## We're all in this together

These are challenging times for all of us. As the COVID-19 emergency continues, we ask residents to remain calm and follow the directions they receive from their local, state and national officials. In order for us to beat this virus we all need to do our part.

Although Town Hall is closed for face-to-face business, the town offices "are operating and continue to provide necessary services to all our residents," said Robert Volkmann, Town Manager. "Our staff members are performing their duties and practicing social distancing as required by both the National and State directives."

Volkman encourages Schererville residents to contact the Town via phone and email for any service needs, questions and requests.

"Please follow the Schererville web page [www.schererville.org](http://www.schererville.org) for general information plus information on COVID - 19. You will find this information as well as the Executive orders from Governor Eric J. Holcomb on the web site," he said.

"You can reach us by phone during business hours. To call the Administration department for the Town Manager or the Town Council call (219) 322-2211, then prompt 3 for assistance."

Volkman said departments have split staffing to provide critical services and protect employees.

"Our Public Works Department, for example, has split the staff with each crew working three days at a time," he said. "The Clerk-Treasurer's office has half the staff working from home. The Planning and Building Department has staff working from home."



# Why do you need to be counted in the 2020 Census in Schererville

There's still time to respond to the 2020 Census. In mid-March households throughout Schererville received official Census Bureau mail about how to respond. Your participation means so much to Schererville over the next 10 years.

And it's easier than ever to respond. You can use the paper form, with a phone call or on the Internet. It takes about 10 minutes to complete the form.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau is suspending 2020 Census field operations for two additional weeks until April 15. That means that no one will be visiting homes or other facilities.

"The Census Bureau is taking this step to help protect the health and safety of the American public, Census Bureau employees and everyone who will go through the hiring process for temporary census taker positions," a press release noted.

"The 2020 Census is open for self-response online at [2020Census.gov](https://2020census.gov), over the phone by calling the number provided in your invitation, and by paper through the mail," that release noted.

## Why is it important to be counted in Schererville?

In 2010, Schererville's Census count compliance was 82%, and the Town's official population was 29,243. Each year, more than \$675 billion in federal funds is distributed based on the census count. In the fiscal year 2016, the federal government provided more than \$17.9 billion in funding for Indiana based on that 2010 census data.

That funding equals approximately \$2,710 per person each year.

If that additional 18% of our residents had been counted, Schererville's population should have been somewhere around 34,450 people. The difference of 5,207 individuals not counted in the 2010 Census means the Town missed \$14,111,000 in federal funding per year. That equals \$141,000,000 over the course of 10 years.

Those federal dollars support education, health care, roads, public works projects, firefighting services and other vital programs.

Many state agencies also distribute funds to areas based on local population counts. That money includes funding for local road and street improvements, the distribution of gaming tax revenue, the rural development fund and distribution of money from the Indiana library and historical boards to eligible public library districts.

## Town Council President Tom Schmitt works as part of the town's taskforce

"When this COVID-19 pandemic started, as Town Council President we needed to put our emergency plan in place to meet the needs of our community," said Tom Schmitt, who is from Ward 4.

Schmitt worked with the Town administrative staff, the department heads, fellow council members, and Clerk-Treasurer to put together a taskforce that provides vital communication between all the departments. The Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief were assigned to be contacts to all federal, state and county organizations for information and orders needed for our first responders. At 2 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, a teleconference meeting is held with Town Council President Schmitt, who is stationed at the Schererville Town Hall.

"Every department head calls in and reports what changes have been necessary, and any personnel or operational issues that they are experiencing, and most important, how to keep employees and residents safe," Schmitt said.

Those departments include the Town Council, Town Administration, the IT Department, Police Department including Southcom dispatch, Fire Department and Ambulance Service, Public Works, Clerk-Treasurer's Office, Parks & Recreation Department, Water and Sewage Plant, Planning and Building Department, Town Court and Animal Control, he said.

"We implemented scheduling changes that allow the least amount of employees to be

together in the one location," Schmitt said. "Protecting our employees with the goal of maintaining critical services to Schererville citizens is our top priority."

The IT Department "has done a terrific job with constantly updating our Town website to give our residents valuable information and the work provided so many employees can work remotely from home," he noted. "Our biggest concern is that people listen to the directives issued for social distancing that have now been extended through the end of April. We also want to be certain that first responders are getting the equipment they need."

Live broadcasts of the Town Council meetings held each month on the second Wednesday can be viewed by the public on YouTube. "We want our Town's people to be able to contact us by phone, email or fax," Schmitt noted. "Check the Town website for more information on participating in these public meetings."

"We Council Members stay in touch on a daily basis. We work well together," he said. Those council members include Rob Guetzloff, Council Vice-President from Ward 3; Robin Arvanitis, Councilwoman from Ward 1; Kevin Connelly, Councilman from Ward 2; and Caleb Johnson, Councilman from Ward 5.

"Tom Schmitt has done a great job," said Town Manager Robert Volkmann. "He came in to help right from the start, coordinating communication with our staff and elected officials."



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# Here's how services are being provided

## The Planning & Building Department

Although not open to the public, the Schererville Planning & Building Department is still processing permits and doing inspections. Permits can be applied for on line through the Town's web site.

The staff will contact applicants via email or phone for processing. If you have permitting or general building department questions you can email us at [PandB@schererville.org](mailto:PandB@schererville.org) or call at (219) 322-2211, then prompt 4 for assistance. The department's fax number is (219) 865-5504.

Forms and applications can be found at our website <https://www.schererville.org/towngovernment/planning-and-building/forms-and-applications/>

## The Clerk-Treasurer Utility Billing

All water utility bills can be paid online or over the phone.

Full information on options below can be found here at [www.schererville.org/town-government/clerk-treasurer/utility-billing/](https://www.schererville.org/town-government/clerk-treasurer/utility-billing/). These options include the following (Convenience fees may apply):

1. Automatic Withdrawal: Set up utility payments to automatically be withdrawn from your bank account
2. Online Payment: Pay using Invoice Cloud Online Bill Payment. Invoice Cloud FAQ can be found at [https://www.schererville.org/assets/1/6/Online\\_Utility\\_Bill\\_Payment\\_FAQ1.pdf](https://www.schererville.org/assets/1/6/Online_Utility_Bill_Payment_FAQ1.pdf)
3. Pay over the phone by calling (844) 321-9513, available 24/7. Be sure to have your account number handy.
4. Mail your payments or drop them off in the drop boxes located in the front and back of the building.

## About Branch & Leaf Collection Information

- Branch collection typically begins the first week of April and continues through the year until snow falls.
- Each week, the route alternates from north to south with U.S. 30 being the dividing line.
- Friday of each week, we concentrate on the streets that require flaggers. These are the main streets where traffic counts and speed limits require extra personnel to assure the safety of the work crews. Residents who live on a flagger street should call the office when they have placed a pile of branches or leaves along the roadway for pick-up. This helps assure that you do not get missed in a given week. Flagger streets are as follows: Main Street, Burr Street, Kennedy Avenue (from Junction to Main), Junction Avenue (from Kennedy to Joliet), Joliet Street (east of Austin Avenue), Cline Avenue, St. John Road, U.S. 30, U.S. 41, 77th Avenue and Austin Avenue (south of U.S. 30).

## Other Branch & Leaf Pick-up Policies

- **To be assured you get picked-up**, have your branches and/or leaves in front of your residence by 7 a.m. on Monday morning of your designated week. The Public Works Department will go through each neighborhood only once during a given week. We do not have the resources to go back through an area because leaves

and/or branches were not ready on the day we came.

- **Branches and leaves are to be placed in the parkway** (grassy area) between the sidewalk and street within 5 feet of the street. Our machines must be able to reach the items or we will not pick them up. If you do not have a parkway, place them behind the sidewalk or along side of the roadway.
- **Please do not place leaves and branches in the street.** This causes flooding in the streets when they wash down and plug up storm water inlets.
- **Leaves and branches must be placed in separate piles** or they will not be picked up. Two different types of machines are used. Branches plug up the leaf vacuums and leaf piles plug up and dull the branch chipper blades.
- **Residences that have frontage on two roads (houses that face a low volume subdivision street and back up to a main thoroughfare such as 77th Avenue) are strongly encouraged to place leaves and branches on the low volume subdivision street.** It is much safer for our crews to work on these streets than to tie up traffic on the main roads and will help keep pick-ups on schedule.
- **Avoid placing leaves and branches in ditches and drainage swales.** Again, this contributes to flooding issues should they wash downstream.
- **Do not place leaves in containers or bags during regular pick-up schedule.** Leaves must be loose for our machines to handle them.
- **Leaf and branch piles will be picked-up only from residences that pay for trash services with the Town.** Piles placed in front of vacant lots or businesses will not be collected.

## Animal Control

The Animal Control Division of the Police Department is currently providing full services while maintaining social distancing procedures, said Chief Pete Sormaz.

Two full-time employees and one part-time employee work at the shelter that houses stray animals. If residents want to report a stray animal, they should call 911, the Southcom dispatch center, and an Animal Control Officer will be dispatched.

"When you call the dispatch center, please be patient with the response time," Sormaz said.

## Trash & Recycling changes from Republic Services

Republic Services has notified the Town of Schererville that because of the COVID – 19 Emergency Directives and for the protection of Republic employees and the public **that drivers are not to get out of their trucks to hand-load material.**

Residents should place all material for refuse pick up in their provided tote or another refuse container that can be picked up by the auto loader on the truck. **Do not place loose material or bags by the curb they will not be picked up.**

*Continued on back*



# News from the Schererville Parks Department

At this time, the Schererville Community Center is closed to the public until further notice due to the social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC, said Josh Barnes, Recreation Coordinator.

The Schererville Park office is closed to the public but can still be reached by phone or through email. Business hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"Please note that all programs, classes, trips, events, shelter rentals and Community Center rentals have been cancelled up until May 10," Barnes said. "Shelters and Community Center rentals can still be made online for reservation dates after June 1."

For the month of May, the following events and trips have been cancelled: the Cinco De Mayo Party in the Park (May 1); the Four Winds Bus Trip (May 7) and the Chicago Botanic Garden Trip (May 21).

"The department is planning virtual classes online. Go to our website at [www.schererville.org](http://www.schererville.org) or our Facebook page for more info on this and the status of other future programs and events," Barnes noted.

In accordance with Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-08, all playgrounds maintained by the Schererville Parks Department will be closed until further notice. In an effort to protect public safety, the skate park, basketball courts, and restrooms are also closed until further notice.

When visiting our parks and trails, the Schererville Park Department endorses following CDC guidance on the recommended size of social gatherings including outdoor picnicking, pick-up sports and other group hangouts, and maintaining proper physical distance at all times, and encourages all users to follow social distancing to prevent the spread of Covid-19.



## *How services are being provided, Continued from inside right*

Recycling material should be placed in the recycling tote for normal recycling pickup. Please note: **do not place trash** in your recycling tote as it contaminates the recycling materials and results in the whole truck load of recycled material being dumped in the land fill.

There will be **no large item pickups** until the COVID – 19 restrictions are lifted. Residents are asked to store any large items in their garages or home until this service resumes. If

you have any questions please contact Republic Services (219) 662-8600 or Schererville Public Works at (219) 322-6688.

We would like to thank all residents for their understanding and patience during these difficult times and hope you and your families are keeping safe and following the restrictions we all must abide by. Take care and call us if you have questions or concerns.