

St. John Township continued to provide assistance during COVID-19 shut-down

Although the St. John Township Community Center at 1515 Lincoln Highway in Schererville has been closed to the public since Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb issued his Executive Order 20-18 responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the township staff has "continued to provide assistance," said Cathy Lareau, St. John Township Trustee.

"We have been accepting applications for needed services online and have continued to provide food pantry items with curb-side pickup," Lareau said.

Several churches reached out to the St. John Township office to collect food at their churches, she said. "They brought food to disabled residents and senior citizens. They've also done grocery shopping for area residents."

Lareau said she was also contacted by North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan to let St. John Township seniors and disabled residents know they could have food supplied by the Northwest Indiana Food Bank delivered two times a month.

Another act of kindness occurred when Christopher L. Powers sought Lareau's permission to clean the gravestone of a Revolutionary War veteran at Pleasant View Cemetery which is owned by St. John Township.

A member of the David D. Porter Camp #116 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War based in Valparaiso and a social studies teacher at Hammond's Morton High School, Powers contacted Lareau via email.

"I stopped by Pleasant View Cemetery recently and placed a flag on the Revolutionary War veteran's grave. I do this with most Civil War soldiers," he wrote in that email. "One thing I have major experience with cleaning gravestones. The one at Pleasant View is in need of cleaning and I was just wondering if I would have your permission to clean it for Memorial Day. It will be done with water from a spray bottle only and a soft bristle brush."



On May 20, Powers cleaned the side-by-side gravestones of Stephen Wilcox and his wife, Rachel Campbell Wilcox.

"It was an honor to honor this Revolutionary War veteran!" Powers wrote to Lareau.

"The timing of that was perfect," she said as Memorial Day approached.

Before the COVID-19 shutdowns, remodeling of various areas at the St. John Township Community Center were begun with completion dates slated well into 2021. Those remodeling projects,

including ones to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities) requirements, are now being finished as State-mandated phasing allows because the center is closed to the public, Lareau said.

"Because of COVID-19, we have to be concerned and considerate that we have a safe environment for everyone," she noted.

The Township Office originally featured an open concept. With the remodeling that office will now provide privacy for clients, Lareau said.

Another project that's being completed is remodeling of the hall where meetings and festive occasions such as wedding receptions are held.

"The doors that open into the hall will now be ADA compliant," Lareau said. "The Towns of Schererville, Dyer and St. John partnered to make those doors ADA compliant. We will also be able to get our bathrooms ADA compliant before we reopen."

Under the governor's "Back on Track" schedule, the St. John Township office should reopen on Monday, June 15, she said, adding social distancing will continue to be practiced.

"I am so proud of our staff that we have been able to provide vital services to our clients during these extraordinary times," Lareau said.

Burr Street construction helps drainage, adds multi-use path

Burr Street will undergo reconstruction and widening of the road from U.S. 30 to 500 feet north of 78th Avenue. The design engineering firm is Robinson Engineering out of Merrillville.

"Phase I will consist of water main replacement and tie ins, paving, storm sewer replacement, adding curbs and the installation of an eight-foot wide multi-use path on the east side of Burr Street," said Jim Gorman, Director of Operations for the Town of Schererville.

Griffith-based Gatlin Plumbing & Heating was the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for the entire project. The water main replacement was bid as a separate item which came in at \$420,420.00, which is funded solely by the town.

To fund the road improvements on Burr Street, the town applied for and received a Community Crossing

Matching Grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation. "This is a 50/50 grant which means INDOT provides funding for half of the cost, and we fund the other half," Gorman said. "With the project cost coming in at \$1,190,190, the town will only pay \$595,095."

"Design and construction of Phase II is anticipated to begin sometime in 2021 if we are successful in receiving another INDOT grant," he added.

"Phase II will mirror Phase I in construction and continue all the way north to the Erie Lackawanna Trail," Gorman said.

The CCMG grant is also partially funding a \$100,000 paving project on Austin Avenue from Joliet Street to U.S. 30, for which the Town of Schererville will pay \$50,000, and an \$18,000 paving project on Fawn Valley Drive, which will cost Schererville \$9,000, he noted.



Emergency Hire Process adds new officers to Police Department



Five officers will soon join the ranks of the Schererville Police Department as part of the department's Emergency Hire Process, said Police Chief Peter Sormaz.

"We are hiring officers who are already academy-certified," he said, explaining that these officers have already been through training at the Police Academy.

"This is a huge cost saving for the town," Sormaz noted. When new recruits are hired, they are sent for 15 weeks of training at the Police Academy, then 14 weeks of field training. The recruits' salaries and cost of the academy and field training are paid for through the department's budget, he said.

The Emergency Hire Process was initiated because "we had a lot of unexpected police officer retirements as well as other retirements where those officers are moving on to

other careers," Chief Sormaz said about the vacancies that are being filled.

"The purpose of this is to put boots on the ground right away," he said.

Fifty applications were received, making Schererville one of the top two towns in Northwest Indiana to attract new police officers who are academy-certified, the Chief said. After reviewing the applications, the Schererville Board of Safety voted at its May 21 meeting to extend conditional offers to the five officers.

Those officers include the following:
 Riley Arvanitis Ricardo Ascencio
 Mark Djordjevich Ryan Eger
 Thomas Ruzga

"We will put them through a two-week in-house training period," Chief Sormaz said. "We work 12-hour shifts 15 days a month. They will then be placed in an abbreviated field training program before the officers are released to work on their own."

THE SCHERERVILLE CROSSROADS

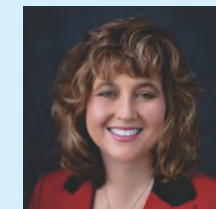
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Tom Schmitt, Councilmember Ward 4



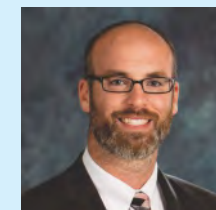
Rob Guetzloff, Councilmember Ward 3



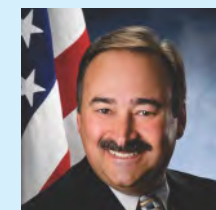
Robin Arvanitis, Councilmember Ward 1



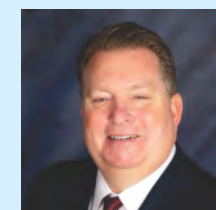
Kevin Connelly, Councilmember Ward 2



Caleb Johnson, Councilmember Ward 5

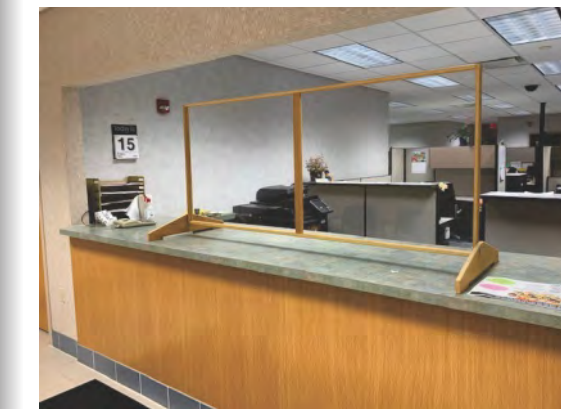


Mike Troxell, Clerk-Treasurer



Randy Wyllie
 Judge, Schererville Town Court

Town services continued throughout Schererville in face of pandemic



A new chapter in Schererville's history began March 18 when Town Officials followed Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb's Executive Order 20-18 to close all municipal buildings to the public because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Although we closed to the public, we kept the Town going," said Jim Gorman, Director of Operations. "Our goal is to continue providing all essential services to our residents and businesses."

To provide those services, various actions were implemented, Gorman said.

"We had to educate people how to submit applications for things like building permits online," he explained, "as well as paying their water bills in the same manner."

Other actions included changing the schedules for departments including the Clerk-Treasurer's office, the Planning and Building Department and Public Works, Gorman said.

For example, the Clerk-Treasurer's office split their staff in half between home and work. Of the three full-time employees of the Planning and Building Department, one worked from home.

"In Public Works, half of the employees worked 14-hour shifts on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and then were off four days. The other half of the

employees worked those 14-hour shifts on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and were off four days," Gorman said. "We sanitized all the trucks after each shift."

The Police and Fire Departments also practiced social distancing, Gorman said.

All scheduled meetings were held virtually on social media platforms, he added.

"Town Hall was busier because we had to change everything to electronic response. It did work well," Gorman said. "Everybody was impressed with it at the same time providing services."

On May 11, Schererville Town Hall reopened to the public with specific restrictions, according to Gorman.

The Town Hall office doors are locked and anyone seeking access to the building must wear a mask and practice social distancing. Signs about these restrictions are posted on all doors, he said, adding all staff members working with the public are wearing masks.

"If we see a person wearing a mask, we buzz in one customer at a time for the Clerk-Treasurer's office and the Planning and Building Department," Gorman said.

"At every station, we've installed temporary Plexiglas sneeze guards. We've also constructed temporary sneeze guards at the building counter," he noted.

A limited number of people, currently at 25, can now attend meetings held at Town Hall including those of the Town Council, the BZA and the Planning Commission. However, each person attending must wear a mask and practice social distancing, Gorman said.

"We are very proud of all our employees who kept our services going during this difficult time, as well as our residents and business owners who've adapted to the changes we needed to make," Gorman said.

NEW GARBAGE RATE GOES INTO EFFECT WITH JUNE BILLING

Schererville residents will see a \$6 per month increase for garbage/recycling pickup on their June bills.

increased along with dramatic increases in recycling costs which is all reflected in the new monthly rate.

The Town's four-year contract with Republic Services expired at the end of March, said Clerk-Treasurer Mike Troxell. Under that contract, residents have paid \$15.50 per month for garbage and recycling services since 2012, he said. Operational and labor costs have

A new four-year contract with Republic Services includes a 39% rate increase which is passed on to Schererville residents increasing to \$21.50 per month for those services, Troxell said.

There's still time to be counted in the 2020 Census

If you haven't participated in the 2020 Census, there's still time to be counted.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the original deadline has been extended, and your participation means so much to Schererville over the next 10 years. 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, including funding for local road and street improvements and distribution of money from the Indiana Library and Historical Boards to eligible public library districts.

You can respond several different ways – using the paper form you received in the mail, by phone (in English at 844-330-2020) or on the Internet at <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-online.html>.

Remember – whether you're 100 years old or one day old, you matter!



WE ARE STILL HERE TO SERVE YOU DURING THE CLOSURE!

The buildings may be closed, but the library is still open

The Lake County Public Library is still providing library services during the buildings' closure due to COVID-19.

You'll find a huge selection of books, audio books, movies, TV shows, music, comics and magazines in our online collections, available 24-7 to all Schererville residents with a library card, said Chris Rettig, Manager of the Dyer-Schererville Branch. If you miss learning new things at the library, your library card also gives you free access to online tools like Creativebug, Mango Languages and National Geographic. Find it all at www.lcpln.org/stream.

Have a reference question, or a question about using the library? You can use the

callback service (219) 769-3541, press 4 to leave a message, and a librarian will call you back within one business day with an answer. Or you can use the Ask a Librarian form for the same service through email at www.lcpln.org/ask.

And don't forget about the actual books!

Curbside service at the Dyer-Schererville branch, 1001 W. Lincoln Highway in Schererville, has begun, and librarians are busily pulling your holds off the shelf for contact-free pick up outside the branch. To learn more about using curbside service, visit www.lcpln.org/curbside or call (219) 769-3541 and press 4 to leave a message.



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Schererville parks & recreation

Many Park Department's summer events cancelled due to COVID-19

Popular summer events in the Town of Schererville are being cancelled to protect the safety of the community, vendors and town staff.

"On behalf of the Town of Schererville and Schererville Parks, it is with heavy hearts that we announce the 2020 Schererville Fest and Parade are officially cancelled," said Josh Barnes, Recreation Coordinator. The festival was originally slated for Wednesday, June 10 through Sunday, June 14, while the parade was set to step off on Saturday, June 13.

In addition, the Schererville Fireworks celebration, originally set for Friday, July 3, will be rescheduled, Barnes said. "We are looking at rescheduling for Friday, Sept. 4," he added.

"This decision was determined based on numerous factors, including the 'Back on Track' plan released by Gov. Eric Holcomb that prohibits fairs, festivals and parades in Stages 3 and 4," Barnes said.

"While this was a very difficult decision to make, we are absolutely certain that this is the choice that had to be

made in the interest of public safety," he said. "We are grateful for all those who join us each year for our annual Schererville Fest and can't wait until next year."

Other summer events that have been cancelled include the following:

- Dino Day Party in the Park, cancelled for June 26
- Gremlins Party in the Park, cancelled for July 10

Hocus Pocus Party set to be first major event of the summer

"Our first major event of the summer season will be the *Hocus Pocus Movie in the Park* on Friday, July 24," Barnes said.

Redar Memorial Park at 217 Gregory St. will again be the site of this popular event that will include a showing of the classic 1993 movie starring Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy as the trio of diabolical witches.

"We will have food vendors and crafters at this event that will also require social distancing," Barnes said.

Vendors make generous donations to Town during pandemic

During this COVID-19 pandemic, area vendors have provided more than \$2,000 in donations of materials to the Town of Schererville.

"These generous in-kind donations include personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer," said Town Manager Robert Volkmann.

Those vendors include the following:

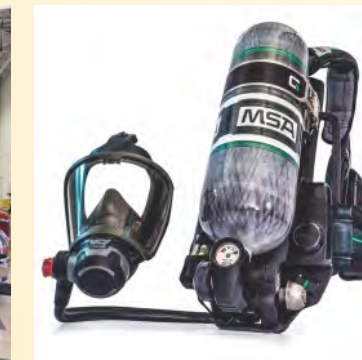
- Schererville BMW – Hand sanitizer and wipes
- Home Depot – Respirators, filter and masks
- Toast & Jam Restaurant – Gloves and masks
- Walmart – Cleaning supplies
- Tobacco Island – Personal-size hand sanitizer



Kirk Cordill (front) of Schererville BMW drops off donations of hand sanitizer and wipes for the Town of Schererville.



Schererville Fire Department rolls out new equipment



New equipment put into service this year helps members of the Schererville Fire Department respond to emergencies.

"At the beginning of the year, we took delivery of a brand new Horton Ambulance that was put right into service," said Fire Chief Robert Patterson.

This new ambulance rotates between Station 1 at 1650 Cline Avenue and Station 2 at 280 Plum Creek Drive, the Chief said.

Thanks to a regional grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Schererville Fire Department also received new air packs in March that have been put into all vehicles, Patterson said. These self-contained breathing apparatus provide airway protection from toxic gases and harmful particulates that result from a fire.

"This regional grant for just over \$1 million was shared with Crown Point, Lakes of the Four Seasons and Hobart," he said.

In mid-May, the department also took delivery of a new 2020 E-One Typhoon Engine, Chief Patterson said.

"This engine has a Hale Pump that pumps out 2,000 gallons of water per minute," he noted, adding that when this new engine is put into service it will be housed at Station 1, which is also the Fire Department headquarters.

"We did notice that April was a little slower," Chief Patterson said reporting on the volume of emergency calls the department received this spring.

"I am really proud of all our men and women of the Schererville Fire Department for standing tall," he said.

Residents get discount on summer sewer rates

Schererville residents will notice a discount on their summer water bills. That's because the Town of Schererville provides a discount on their sewer rates, which is part of the water bill. The Summer Sewer Rates are in effect from May 1 through Sept. 1, said Mike Troxell, Clerk-Treasurer.

"We do this for the benefit of our residents," Troxell said, explaining that when residents fill pools, hot tubs or water their grass, the water doesn't go into the sewer system.

An average household uses 2,000 gallons of water per person per month, he said. If two people live in a household, they should use approximately 4,000 gallons of water per month.

"During the Summer Sewer Rates, if they use 10,000 gallons of water, they are only

charged for 4,000 gallons of sewage, but still pay for the 10,000 gallons of water they used," Troxell said.

During the use periods of May, June, July and August, the sewer rate will be based on the average water consumption from the winter months of January, February and March, he said.

"However, any residents using less water in the summer than what their average is will be billed for the lesser amount," Troxell noted.

"If you plan to fill your pool or hot tub after Sept. 1, please read your water meter before you begin water usage and after you are done," he said. "Call the readings into the Clerk-Treasurer's office at (219) 322-2211, ext. 5."

