



City Voice

January 2014

City of Caro
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MAKING A LIST, CHECKING IT TWICE.... BY: DICK POULIOT, MAYOR



Well; we all have been blessed with those lists, this time of year some more than others. Even your local government has lists. Lists of reminders, lists of procedures, list of topics and lists of actions are just a few that the council and city staff are constantly referencing to guide us in this cities' business. In an effort to bring you up to date on our "list of

ongoing projects", the council made the decision to wait and see how the implementation of the SAW grant affects other communities. As you may recall, it is a wastewater grant to identify areas that rainwater enters sewer pipes. We have been doing our own inspections and making improvements with the cities' internal funds. Council and administrative staff felt it would be beneficial to apply for the grant. However; in the process of applying for it, we found that one of the conditions of the grant was to raise our sewer rates as directed by Lansing. That condition or criteria was one of several concerns council had with the grant. Council decided not to pursue the grant any further at this time and to continue with our own upgrades. That would give us time to see how other communities fair in this program.

Next on the list, is the Downtown Infrastructure Grant (DIG). This grant is designed to help us improve our downtown streets, sidewalks and drains, as well as updating lighting. At this point, we were not successful in obtaining funding for these items. Council feels that it is a good program and if possible we will apply again. One of the projects that the city funded was the repaving of most of Monroe Street. The total cost of this project was approximately \$33,000.00. We will continue with this program because the city has established its own set of specifications for this type of work. The Columbia Street project has kicked off with a series of meetings and construction is scheduled to begin May 5th. We are extremely excited about this project.

The council and staff are in the process of reviewing leases and agreements with the Caro Exchange Club and the Tuscola County Conservation Club for the use of city property at the corner of M-24 and Gun Club Road (opposite of our Chippewa Park). We are looking at a stewardship agreement with the Exchange Club to maintain the current use and develop plans for higher community evolvement. The Conservation Club is in discussions for a long term "improvement project" to improve facilities and grounds. We will be looking at the proposals and future plans for that usage.

Another area of opportunity for upgrades is firefighting equipment. The City of Caro Fire Department and staff are working on a countywide grant from FEMA to obtain critically needed equipment, emergency vehicles, training and other resources to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. We will keep you in the loop on this process and its developments.

In the sake of not getting too long, the last thing on this list of updates and topics is the township's petition to annex their cemetery into the City. The State Boundary Commission held its public input hearing just a few weeks ago, and I felt that the City's facts and arguments in that regard were clear and concise as to why we are in opposition to the annexation. The majority of attendees spoke to oppose the township's petition of annexation. So, from here we move to the period of additional input and rebuttals, then on to the adjudicative hearing to consider the legalities of the petition on the basis of SBC criteria and State laws. I will keep you posted and updated in future newsletters.

I know to some this list and the checking it twice was, most likely incredibly boring, but this is your cities business, and your tax dollars at work. Thank you for your time, support, and interest in these areas. I'm trusting your personal lists were much more enjoyable and engaging thru the Holidays, and that it was a Great Holiday season for you and your families and friends. See you in the spring when we talk again!

THE MANAGER'S CORNER BY JARED OLSON



Winter seems to have come early this year with the cold snap that has been the month of December. It will be welcome for the holiday season but the countdown to spring is not too far off. With the transition to winter, several projects are getting off the ground throughout the Caro community.

One of the most important projects to happen throughout the community will be the master plan review process that the Caro planning commission has recently begun. The master plan is a tool that can be utilized throughout the entire community to help formulate and accomplish long term goals. The master plan review process is one that as tentatively scheduled will not be completed until the fall of 2014.

As the completion date suggests, this is no quick process where data is simply updated and the plan stamped for final approval. The goal for the completed plan aims to serve as a guide for all future public and private decision-making regarding the future policy development, economic development and the physical development within the community. In order to formulate these goals and objectives, community input will be sought in order to gather as broad of input spectrum as possible. The kick-off meeting for the project was held in November and the process will pick up in January with further discussion and activities planned.

However, the master plan update is not the only project slated for the upcoming 2014. The reconstruction of Columbia Street will commence in early May with the tentative completion date scheduled for late June. In order to complete this project, we were able to leverage \$375,000.00 of federal road funding which will make over fifty percent of the total project cost.

The reconstruction of Columbia Street marks the fourth major street project within the last four years.

During ordinary economic times this would be quite the feat for a community of our size but coupled with the recession and drop of property values; it speaks volumes to the long term fiscal position of the city. We have been able to bring in approximately \$1.3 million dollars of outside funding in order to help accomplish these infrastructure goals in the last five years. The city will continue to look for ways to stretch our local dollars in order to create the strongest community possible.

Over the next year, we will continue to issue updates on these two major projects along with anything else that is undertaken at City Hall. We will be doing newsletter updates and other community outreach sessions during the master plan process and will have numerous updates about the Columbia Street project as it grows nearer. With that said I maintain an open door policy here at City Hall and welcome you to call me or stop in with any issues or questions that you may have.

A WORD FROM THE CLERK BY KAREN J SNIDER, CMC



Now that the holidays are wrapping up and the New Year is beginning, it is time to see what new and exciting challenges face us in 2014.

Staff would like to remind everyone that winter taxes are due Feb 28. The City will continue to collect both the summer and the winter taxes until 5 p.m. on that date. The City staff will turn over the 2013 delinquent tax collection to the County on March 1. Administrative staff not only collects taxes for the City of Caro millage levied, but also for the other entities such as Tuscola County for their operating and special millages, State Education, Tuscola County Medical Care Facility, Caro District Library, Caro Transit Authority, Caro Community Schools and Tuscola Intermediate School District. The monies collected for the other entities are reconciled and sent to them.

I am sure by now most of you have read about Governor Snyder's recently signed into law Public Act 161 of 2013. This Act amends MCL 211.7b regarding Veterans Exemptions. It affects real property used and owned as a homestead by a disabled veteran who was discharged from the armed forces of the United States under honorable conditions that may be exempt from

the collection of taxes under the act. To obtain the exemption, an affidavit must be presented to the local Board of Review in December. The county treasurer will cancel the collection of taxes for the summer and winter taxes of that year (i.e December Board of Review in 2013 affects the summer and winter taxes for 2013). The local taxing unit shall bear the loss of its portion of the taxes upon which the exemption has been granted. There are many unanswered questions as to how the law applies. Hopefully by next December, some clarification will be made. If you have questions or concerns regarding this new law, please call the Veterans Administration.

The assessments on your property for 2014 will be mailed around the end of February. The March Board of Review will be held March 17 and 18, 2014. This is a time when assessment appeals will be heard by the City of Caro Board of Review.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT BY CURTIS WELLS, SUPT

The staff at your Caro area Wastewater Treatment Plant hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and Christmas and wish all of you a prosperous New Year!

At the time I wrote this article we still had not received our operations permit from the MDEQ, luckily the old one is still in effect until they do. We did however get introduced to our new Environmental Quality Analyst Kip Cronk by our semi-retired Environmental Quality Analyst Gene Suoppi. Gene it has been a honor and a privilege to have worked with you for the past 9 years and we are hoping the best for you in your future endeavors.

And as a reminder, the RV dump will be closed when the roads are icy and snow covered until next spring. Thank you all for remembering....disposable does not mean flushable.



PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS BY CHARLIE SUNDBLAD DPW SUPERINTENDENT

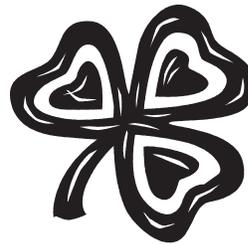


Winter is upon us and that means that we should remember to drive carefully. Remember that there is no parking on any city street from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. during the months of December through March.

Also, there is an ordinance against shoveling or blowing your snow into the street. Remember to protect yourself when it gets cold outside, and to have fun skiing, sledding, or riding snowmobiles.

When the city crew is plowing please remember to give them consideration because they cannot always see you. Leaf pickup has ended for the year. We will have a week in the spring that we will pick up leaves.

ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT BY JERRY THORP



Winter has hit us with a vengeance. Temperatures are below normal for this time of year.

Your Ordinance Officer works to enforce a different section of the rules due to the circumstances that comes with cold weather. Lawns are NOT a concern at this time of year, however; snow

removal and clean sidewalks are my priority when making my inspection tours.

The City Manager sent out letters to all downtown property owners reminding them that snow and ice from the sidewalks in front and adjacent to their buildings fall under Ordinance #397. It is essential to keep sidewalks free from ice and snow. We want people to be able to shop and walk downtown Caro easily and without the risk of injury. This also includes vacant buildings. If this Ordinance is not adhered to, the City will have the sidewalk cleared and bill the property owner for the cost of the work. The intent is to keep the downtown sidewalks clear for people to work, shop and enjoy.

Happy New Year and have a safe Holiday season.

CARO FIRE DEPARTMENT BY CHIEF RANDY HECKROTH



Winter officially arrived on December 20th, and we are seeing the effects of the cold weather. Roads are becoming slippery, and driving can be a challenge. No doubt giving yourself extra time is a good way to stay out of the ditch. In the

event that does happen and you find yourself stuck or stranded, it is advisable to have some basic items in your vehicle. Number one have a freshly charged cell phone before leaving. A couple of blankets and some flares can keep you warm and safe from other oncoming traffic which may have a hard time seeing you. And always let someone know of your driving plans, where you are going and what time you are expected to arrive.

The cold air also is the time when we are turning on our heat sources (gas furnaces, wood stoves and even corn burners). All have their dangers if not maintained properly. They need to be inspected prior to first turning on by a professional person, to ensure the units are properly cleaned, and ready for service.

Do not forget to check batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. These also need to be kept cleaned and in a proper location to be effective as possible.

With just these few reminders, you can sleep better at night knowing you have taken precautions to avoid an unsafe situation.

SWEARING IN NEW FIREFIGHTER



City Clerk Karen Snider, City Manager Jared Olson, Michael Spaulding and Fire Chief Randall Heckroth

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT POET BIOREFINING

**BY: DAVID GLOER,
GENERAL MANAGER**



As General Manager of POET Biorefining – Caro, I'm honored to have this opportunity to share with residents of Caro an update from our facility.

Originally designed to produce 40 million gallons of ethanol annually, our Caro facility is now producing 58 million gallons, as well as producing corn oil and animal feed. There is no waste at our facility. In fact, we were honored with the Michigan Agri-Business Association's Green Agri-Business Designation in 2011, 2012, & 2013 for our efforts in total water recovery, recycling, waste heat recovery systems, among other environmentally-friendly efforts.

I also wanted to share with you an industry update. A recent decision by the Obama Administration proposes to lower the amount of ethanol oil refiners must blend into the fuel supply in 2014. Lowering the 2014 requirements will hurt America's consumers, cut American jobs, increase the potential for harm to the environment, and discourage future biofuel investment. The Renewable Fuel Standard is an important law that enhances our path towards energy independence and it must be defended.

In addition, the ethanol industry also gives a tremendous boost to local economies. Here in Caro, area restaurants, hotels and suppliers all benefit significantly from this facility. Our team members are very active in this community and we do our best to be good neighbors to each one of you. We believe it is part of our mission to give back to the community that has given us so much.

Thank you again for the opportunity to update you and I hope to see you sometime soon.

David Gloer

CARO POLICE DEPARTMENT BY CHIEF NEWCOMB



The Caro Police Department wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. As we head into the winter months, we would like to remind everyone that with poor driving conditions, you should allow extra time for travel.

Cellular telephone use is at an all time high. New laws have been enacted that make it a civil infraction for a new driver with a level I or II operators license to use a cell phone while driving. Texting is illegal for anyone while driving, however this continues to cause serious and fatal crashes.

A good share of our current head on crashes and rear end crashes are a direct result of texting while driving. Please use good judgment and use hands free features on your phone or wait until you can stop and text in safety.

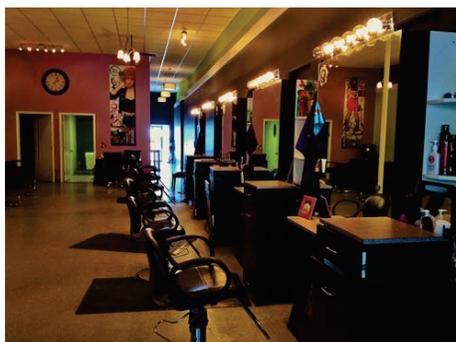
While on patrol, we frequently see poor driving and then realize that the driver is talking on a cell phone. The Michigan's texting law is a "primary" law which means that an officer can pull you over for the offense without having to witness some other violation.



Winter is a beautiful season but with it comes the danger of slipping and falling. Please remember to keep your sidewalks and walks to your mailbox clear of ice and snow. The mail delivery people must be able to get to your mailbox to deliver your mail.



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT INNOVATIONS LLC



Jamie Wilson is the owner and a stylist at Innovations and is pleased to have a team of the most talented in the industry. Her manager Brenda Lounsbury, started out as a part time receptionist and worked her way up to manager.

A large array of services are offered including hair services, nail services, make-up, waxing, massage therapy and facials. Jamie has introduced TIGI lines, including TIGI Color. The business is located at 166 North State Street and is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. They can be reached by calling 989-672-5500

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Council	Jan 6 & 20	7:30 p.m.
	Feb 3 & 17	7:30 p.m.
	Mar 3 & 17	7:30 p.m.
Planning	Jan 14	7:00 p.m.
	Feb 11	7:00 p.m.
	Mar 11	7:00 p.m.
DDA	Jan 8	Noon
	Feb 12	Noon
	Mar 12	Noon
Historical	Jan 22	6:30 p.m.
	Feb 26	6:30 p.m.
	Mar 26	6:30 p.m.
Parks & Rec	Jan 16	7:00 p.m.
	Feb 20	7:00 p.m.
	Mar 20	7:00 p.m.