



1005 Ridge Rd., Munster, IN 46321

NEWS YOU CAN USE

JANUARY 2011

Edited by Charlene Stout 836-6999

NEW YEAR'S DAY, SATURDAY, JANUARY 1

Due to the New Year holiday falling on the weekend, there will be normal refuse and recycling pick up.

Christmas Trees will be picked up by the Public Works Department on your regularly scheduled pick up day. Collection of trees will begin January 4, 2011, and ending January 21 (weather permitting). Please make sure all decorations are removed from your tree.

SNOW POLICY

The town is applying liquid chemicals (brine) to the roadways prior to a snow event to prevent the formation of ice. The brine is applied to the main, secondary, and hill streets prior to the snow event.

The town's policy is to start plowing when there is an inch of snow on the roadways. Main, secondary, and hill streets are plowed first, then residential and cul-de-sacs.

The town will only salt main and secondary streets at intersections, railroad tracks, school zones, curves, bridges, and around the hospitals. Once the snow has stopped, crews will salt the main and secondary streets all the way through following with the residential streets. The town will only salt residential streets at stop signs once the snow event has stopped. The town will no longer salt mid-block of the residential streets.

FUND ACCOUNTING? WHAT'S THAT?

Governmental units are required to keep financial records with the fund accounting method. Each fund has a set of account numbers set aside for specific purposes outlined in state law or local ordinance. Every fund is restricted and can only be used for expenses/revenues defined by the law or ordinance that created it. Munster currently has 48 funds.

Some funds can be used for capital projects, like paving roads, installing park equipment, or upgrading computer equipment. Other funds can be used for operating expenses, like payroll, NIPSCO charges, or road salt. By law, funds that can be used for capital expenses cannot be used to pay operating costs. Money or budget dollars cannot be transferred from one fund to another. This is why governments can buy squad cars or buildings but are limited in paying employees to use them.

Confusing? Frustrating? It sure is. Why do governments use this method of accounting? Governments have to show how or where

the money was spent, not how much profit was earned. Therefore, the dollars must be segregated based on use.

Next month, we'll explain the difference between controlled (property tax) and non-controlled funds.

Have a government financial question you would like answered? Send an email to pabbott@munster.org and we'll answer it in a future issue of News You Can Use.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

We all rely on law enforcement to protect our streets and enforce our laws, but what does this valuable service cost? The following is a breakdown of the cost for a 1st Class Patrol Officer in 2010.

Wages & Clothing Allowance	\$ 50,574
Taxes	\$ 733
Pension	\$ 11,868
Insurance (medical, dental, life, and long-term disability)	\$ 15,082
Training	\$ 438
Total payroll expense	\$ 78,696

21 Current 1st Class Officers \$1,652,616

- These costs reflect the average wage of the current 1st Class Patrolmen. Officers of different ranks make different wages.
- These costs do not include specialized equipment, or vehicles. The cost of a squad car will be shown in next month's newsletter.
- Police officers must be paid from the General Fund which gets its revenues from property taxes and certain user fees.

NEXT PHASE OF PENNSY BIKE PATH

The town is planning the next phase of the Pennsy Path from Calumet Avenue west, which will be linked to the existing path at the state line in Lansing. A \$900,000 state grant was awarded to the town to install the path down the abandoned Penn Central Railroad, from Main Street to Calumet Avenue. This path was constructed in 2010. The town is planning to install the path from Calumet Avenue to the state line during 2011.

There are challenges involved in continuing west, including heavy traffic on Calumet Avenue and a busy active rail corridor, both of which must be crossed. Calumet must be crossed at an intersection with a pedestrian signal, after dismounting. The

Canadian National Railroad will not permit a new crossing of their rail right-of-way strictly for pedestrians and cyclists. It is permissible to use the current sidewalk on the east side of Calumet Avenue to cross the tracks. There is a crosswalk at the East 45th Street intersection to cross 45th and another to cross Calumet Avenue to get to the west side. Once on the east side of Calumet, the path can be diverted down the west side of Calumet to the NIPSCO easement south of Fisher Street. From there the existing path crosses in front of the fire station and public works facility. The Pennsy rail right-of-way lies just west of the public works yard south of the homes on Timrick Drive.

The Calumet to NIPSCO right-of-way route is not very direct, and places cyclists close to Calumet traffic. The town is considering a route which would get pedestrians and cyclists back on the rail right-of-way much quicker. The town owns the buildings on the west side of Calumet south of the Pepsi plant. We are looking for a route through this property which borders the Pennsy right-of-way in the rear. From that point on the path would return to the abandon rail right-of-way behind Pepsi, Lake Business Center and then west to Lansing. The final decision on the route will be made this winter. For more information call James Mandon, PE, town engineer, at 836-6995.

STORM WATER TIP OF THE MONTH

Do not dump anything down a storm drain. Just a few ounces of waste oil or other chemicals can contaminate hundreds of gallons of water. There are convenient ways to get rid of leaves, waste oil, paint, lawn chemicals, and other pollution sources. Call the Public Works Department at 836-6970 for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR "COPS FOR KIDS" PROGRAM SPONSORS

During the first two Saturdays in December, officers from the Munster Police Department took approximately 50 underprivileged children shopping with funds that were donated by local residents, businesses, and community organizations. Thanks to the generosity of others, these children were able to have a brighter holiday season, and we appreciate the support of our sponsors very much.

In addition to the huge number of residents who provided donations, financial donations were provided by the following businesses and community service organizations: The Munster Junior Women's Club, Watson Management Group, Munster/Highland Tri-Kappa, Wal-Mart, Munster Stor-All, Pfister Irrigation, and Schoops Hamburgers. Thank you to everyone for your continued support of the Munster Police Department's community policing programs and for your generosity this past holiday season. Your donations really made a difference!

MUNSTER CRIME WATCH MEETING

The Munster Police Department will be holding their first quarterly Crime Watch meeting of the year for ALL residents and business representatives on Thursday, January 27, at 7:00 p.m. in the main meeting room of the Munster Town Hall. Information about recent crime activity will be provided along with a chance for those in attendance to ask questions or raise concerns to Chief

Steve Scheckel and other police officials. Crime prevention tips will also be presented to the public, and materials such as brochure, window stickers, and other helpful items will be made available. For more information contact Officer James Ghrist at 836-6639 or jghrist@munster.org. We look forward to seeing you there!

CHOICE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Munster's CHOICE Community Council will be holding their first meeting of the year on Thursday, January 27, at 6:00 p.m. at the Munster Town Hall, Conference Room A. This meeting is an open forum for any Munster resident who wishes to participate in the planning of programs aimed at drug, gang, and violence prevention in Munster. During this first meeting we will be discussing program plans for 2011. For more information contact Officer James Ghrist at 836-6639 or jghrist@munster.org.

MUNSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT SEEKING VOLUNTEER BLOCK CAPTAINS

The Munster Police Department is currently seeking residents who would like to serve as volunteer Block Captains in their respective neighborhoods. Serving as a Block Captain does not take up much of your time. The work mainly consists of forwarding the Munster Neighborhood Crime Watch Weekly Report to your neighbors by e-mail each week in an effort to keep them informed about recent crime activity. If you are interested in setting up a Crime Watch group in your area, contact Officer James Ghrist at 836-6639 or jghrist@munster.org.

HOME HEATING SYSTEMS CARBON MONOXIDE

It's the time of year when cold, outside temperatures cause us to turn up our heating systems. They make our homes warm and cozy, but they also are a leading cause of fires. Have all heating equipment, including chimneys, serviced every year by reputable professionals.

Nearly half of all home heating fires occur in the winter months. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from any heat source. Use portable heaters only if they carry the UL label and only if they have sturdy cords. Never use an extension cord. Never leave portable heaters unattended.

Be sure to follow manufacturer's recommendations when using gas and wood-fueled heating units, including portable units. Home heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. Often called the "silent killer", carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your residence. Be careful, keep your family warm and safe.

WINTER STORM FACTS

Primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, telephone service, and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day. Keep ahead of the storm by listening to NOAA weather radio, commercial radio, and television for the latest winter storm watch, warnings and advisories. **What to listen for:**

Winter Weather Advisory - Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life-threatening. **The greatest hazard is often to motorists.**

Winter Storm Watch - Severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, are possible within the next couple of days. **Prepare NOW!**

Winter Storm Warning - Severe winter conditions have begun or are about to begin in your area. **Stay indoors!**

Blizzard Warning - Snow and strong winds will combine to produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill. **Seek refuge immediately!**

Be prepared!!! Have available: Flashlight and extra batteries, battery powered NOAA weather radio and portable radio (these may be your only link to the outside), water and extra food which does not require cooking, medicine and baby items, first-aid supplies, emergency heating source - such as a fireplace, or wood stove, and fire extinguisher and smoke detector.

Carry a WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT in your car: Blankets/sleeping bags, flashlight with extra batteries, first-aid kit with knife, non-perishable food, extra clothing to keep dry, bag of sand or cat litter, shovel, windshield scraper and brush, tow rope tool kit, booster cables. Also, keep your gas tank near full to prevent ice in the fuel and fuel lines, try not to travel alone, and let someone know your timetable and route.

WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

- ◆ Carry a first aid kit, map, ice scraper, snow brush, matches, candles, flashlight & extra batteries, tow & battery jumper cables, shovel, bag of sand, blanket, winter gloves, emergency "HELP" sign, and flares
- ◆ Add gas line anti-freeze to every second tank of gas
- ◆ Keep your gas tank over half full
- ◆ Keep windshield wipers in good shape or install winter wipers
- ◆ Keep windshield washer fluid full
- ◆ Check engine oil & have winter weight installed
- ◆ Keep battery terminals clean, tight & free of corrosion
- ◆ Check tire pressure (once a month) & conditions, including the spare tire
- ◆ Have tires balanced
- ◆ Have a mechanic check the charging system & belts
- ◆ Check coolant, transmission & brake fluids
- ◆ Check all of the lights
- ◆ Check exhaust system for leaks
- ◆ Start slowly & brake in slow steady strokes

- ◆ Stay a safe distance behind snowplows & other vehicles
- ◆ Be aware that bridges & overpasses may freeze first
- ◆ Watch for "Black Ice" - It may appear to be a wet road but will be glazed ice
- ◆ Turn on your headlights to be seen
- ◆ Drive below the posted speed limit in bad weather
- ◆ Don't use the cruise control
- ◆ Don't be overconfident in 4 x 4 vehicles; they don't stop faster than other vehicles
- ◆ Don't pass snowplows unless absolutely necessary
- ◆ Watch rear view mirrors for vehicles that might rear end you
- ◆ Treat a non-working traffic light as a four-way STOP
- ◆ Reduce speed when approaching intersections & bridges
- ◆ Don't pump anti-lock brakes. Push firmly & steer to a stop
- ◆ When braking a vehicle without anti-lock brakes, press the pedal firmly & slowly to avoid locking up the wheels. Pump & steer until you reach a complete stop

DISPLAYING HOUSE NUMBERS

In order for emergency vehicles to respond quickly to calls, please display house numbers in a position easily observed and readable from the public right-of-way. According to Munster Code, Sec. 26:1203, all number should be at least three inches high and be a contrasting color from the background.

MUNSTER PARKS AND RECREATION (836-PARK)

Munster Parks and Recreation can help you celebrate 2011 by getting in shape, becoming more socially active, improving your mind, and simply enjoying a healthier lifestyle. Please check out our 2011 Winter/Spring Recreation Guide for new classes, programs and activities for you and your entire family!

Adult Open Volleyball and **Open Basketball** will be available to all area residents beginning Sat., Jan. 22. Both sports will take place at Elliott. **Jump Start Tennis for Adults** takes place at Matchpoint Tennis Club on Monday nights beginning Jan. 10.

Don't miss out on **Youth Sport Registration Days** on Sat., Jan. 15 and 22, at Elliott Elementary School Cafeteria. Sign up early for Munster Parks Soccer and/or our other programs/events.

Bumper and Youth Bowling for ages 4-13 will begin on Jan. 26. Come bowl with your friends and Munster National Honor Society Volunteers. **Quick Start Tennis** for ages 5-6, 6-7 and 8-9 will take place at Matchpoint Tennis Club and begin on Sat., Jan. 15. **Wado-Ki Karate** classes for all ages begin on Thurs., Jan. 6 at Community Park Social Center.

Daddy Daughter Date Night is just around the corner. Dads, bring your little sweethearts and enjoy an evening of dinner, dancing and fun on Sat., Feb. 5. Early Bird deadline: Jan. 21. Moms, be sure and look in our brochure for your own special night with your sons!

We offer a wide variety of wellness/fitness classes. Some of these classes include: **Aqua Workout, Belly Dance Tone, Cardio Dance, Restorative Yoga, Tai Chi Chih and Zumba.** Registration deadline for Fitness Pointe classes is Wed., Jan. 5.

We are looking for **summer part-time employees** (camp counselors, pool staff, golf staff, maintenance, etc.). Come to the **Job Fair** on Mon., Jan. 17 at Centennial Park. Please bring your resume, dress appropriately, and be prepared to interview.

Are you an adult with management experience and pool operation knowledge? If so, contact Barb at the parks office 836-7275. We are looking for Summer Enrichment teachers for June/July 2011.

Business Owners and Artists and Crafters: We are holding our **11th Annual Winter Arts & Crafts Fair** and our **7th Annual Business/Consumer Fair** on Sat., Feb. 19 at Munster High School. If you are interested in being a vendor, call (219)836-7275 and ask for Barb. If you cannot make the fair, you can still market your business by advertising in our **Ad Book.** Contact Donna for your marketing needs.

Our **4th Annual Winter Bridal Fair** will be held on Wed., Feb. 16 at Centennial Park Ballroom. All interested vendors please call (219)836-7275 and ask for Barb. There are only 60 vendor booths, so don't delay! We also have sponsorship possibilities.

Our **Continuing Education** courses will begin in March. This season we are offering **EKG Technician Certification**

(\$999). **Medical Billing and Coding** (\$1,799) and **Pharmacy Technician** (\$999). Call Barb for more details.

Whether you are traveling to Chicago for the day, to Mackinac Island for a getaway or Australia for a 2-week vacation, let Munster Parks and Recreation be your travel host! You can choose your own destination or take one of our planned 2011 trips below:

ONE-DAY TRIPS

- **Four Winds Casino** - Jan. 25
- **FREE Travel Show** - Feb. 8, 1-2:00 pm, or 5-6:00 pm
- **Eagles of the Illinois River** - Feb. 17
- **Strike it Rich!** (Field's Museum GOLD! Exhibit) - Feb. 25
- **Flower and Garden Show** - Mar. 8

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

- **Mobile Mardi Gras, New Orleans** - Feb. 22 - Mar. 1
- **"Where Eagles Soar"** - Mar. 18 - 20
- **British Landscapes** - April 7 - 16
- **Smoky Mountains, Churchill Downs** - April 27 - May 1
- **Magnificent Cities of Central/Eastern Europe** - May 8 - 21
- **America's Music Cities** - May 29 - June 6

Are you interested in volunteering for Munster Parks and Recreation? Please call our office 836-7275 for volunteer opportunities. In our 2011 Winter/Spring Recreation Guide, a **"V"** is placed by the programs and activities where we need volunteers.

TOWN COUNCIL, BOARD, AND COMMISSION MEETINGS FOR JANUARY 2011

Event	Date	Time	Location
Town Council Meeting & Redevelopment Mtg.	Mon., Jan. 10	7:00 pm	Main Meeting Room
Board of Zoning Appeals	Tues., Jan. 11	7:00 pm	Main Meeting Room
Plan Commission	Tues., Jan. 11	7:30 pm	Main Meeting Room
Board of Safety	Thurs., Jan. 20	7:30 am	Conference Room "C"
Park Board Regular Meeting	Tues., Jan. 18	7:00 pm	Main Meeting Room
Town Council Meeting & Redevelopment Mtg.	Mon., Jan. 24	7:00 pm	Main Meeting Room

Notes:

- The above schedule is subject to change. Please telephone Town Hall at 836-6900 to confirm meetings. A schedule of these meetings and others is maintained on the Community Calendar at the Town of Munster website: <http://www.munster.org>.
- To keep up with what's going on in Town, tune in to AT&T U-Verse, Channel 99 (where available). Currently, this channel is showing a bulletin board of events and public information announcements for various activities within Munster. Soon, the channel will have television shows too!

TOWN COUNCIL & CLERK-TREASURER TELEPHONE AND E-MAIL LIST

JOHN EDINGTON - 836-2637, jedington43@comcast.net **MICHAEL MELLON** - 836-1766, mmellon@ambfinancial.com
DR. ANDY KOULTOURIDES - 922-4403, drkoul@sbcglobal.net **ROB MANGUS** - 972-9359, r_mangus@sbcglobal.net
DAVE NELLANS - 923-3490, dnellans@munster.org **DAVE SHAFER** - 836-6940, dshafer@ci.munster.in.us

*****TOWN'S SMALL SHOPS OR OFFICES FOR LEASE (Calumet and 45th Street), 1,220 to 4,020 sq. ft.
 CALL Russ Snyder 922-3440, Rob Klein 924-9305, Stan Wolucka 836-8040*****