



Town of Munster, 1005 Ridge Road

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

Edited by: D.Z.

**JANUARY 2026**

## Town President's Message

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### Year-End Community Newsletter – 2025

Dear Munster Residents,

As 2025 comes to a close, I want to personally thank you for your continued trust and engagement. This year, our Council remained focused on a clear commitment: **putting Munster residents first**. Every action we took reflected that priority, and I'm proud to share some of the major accomplishments we achieved together.

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### 2025 Accomplishments

- **Hired a Permanent Town Manager**

Providing consistent, professional leadership to guide long-term planning and daily operations.

- **Entered a New Agreement with the School Town of Munster for IT Services**

This partnership modernized outdated IT infrastructure and strengthened technology systems across both organizations.

- **Issued a \$20 Million Water Revenue Bond**

This investment launches essential upgrades to our water utility infrastructure, ensuring dependable service for current and future residents.

- **Hired a Town Social Worker**

Expanding our ability to support individuals and families facing mental-health or crisis-related challenges within our community.

- **Awarded the Construction Contract for the Bridges Over Ditches Project**

After many years of planning, construction will begin on new pedestrian bridges over the Cady Marsh and Schoon Ditches, improving connectivity and walkability throughout town.

- **Completed Key Landfill Improvements**

Repairs to well fields and a new leachate disposal system will enhance safety, compliance, and long-term functionality.

- **Installed a New Methane-to-Electricity Generator**

This upgrade converts landfill methane into usable energy, reducing emissions and improving efficiency.

- **Continued Paving and Watermain Improvements**

Several streets received new pavement and upgraded watermain this year. (A full list of completed streets will be provided by Bob.)

## Looking Ahead to 2026

With the foundation we've built in 2025, we are entering the new year with strong momentum. In 2026, the Council will continue to prioritize transparency, responsible investment, and resident-focused decision-making. We remain committed to ensuring Munster stays a safe, vibrant, and forward-moving community.

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## Warm Holiday Wishes

On behalf of the entire Town Council, I wish you and your family a joyful holiday season and a healthy, happy New Year. Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your Town Council President.

Warm regards,

*George Shinkan*

Munster Town Council President

## Clerk-Treasurer's Message

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Happy New Year, Munster!

The beginning of a new year allows us to reflect on the past while also planning for the year ahead. Councilor Shinkan focused his article on the Town's accomplishments in 2025. I wanted to share a few additional items from 2025 that have come up in conversations with residents, along with a bit about 2026.

### Town of Munster app (we don't have one anymore)

Twice recently, the Town of Munster app was mentioned. The app was once used to allow residents to report issues such as potholes or streetlights that were out. The Town did have such an app; however, only a small number of residents used it, and we struggled to respond to submissions in a timely manner. The decision was made to discontinue the app several years ago. The app was replaced with a reporting link on the Town website, which was also used very infrequently and has since been discontinued. Currently, if you have an issue to report, please contact 219-836-6900. This number connects to the Town's phone tree and will route you to the appropriate department.

### December events you can look forward to seeing again in 2026

This past December, we kicked off the winter season with the Munster Civic Foundation lighting Town Hall and sharing hot chocolate prior to the December 1 Council meeting. The following weekend, the Parks Department hosted an Arts and Crafts Show; Santa visited the Kaske House, hosted by the Munster Historical Society; the Munster Education Foundation's annual holiday house and neighborhood light competition kicked off; Community Choice Council holiday trees were decorated at Town Hall; and the Munster Chamber's Shop Small event brought thousands of dollars to local merchants. These events contribute to the success of Munster and reflect the Town pride we share. Please plan to look for them again in 2026, and we invite your participation.

### 2026

The South Shore Train is coming in 2026, with trains expected to begin running in March of 2026. Final preparations are underway, including test runs and landscaping.

The Town will host NICTD for Coffee with the Councilors (and the Clerk-Treasurer) on Wednesday, January 21, at 6:00 pm in the Main Meeting Room at Munster Town Hall. NICTD will provide a presentation, and residents will have the opportunity to ask questions about upcoming train services. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

The Clerk-Treasurer's Office evaluated office traffic over the past three months. Due to few office visits or phone calls after 4:00 pm, and in an effort to improve office efficiency, the Clerk-Treasurer's Office will close at 4:00 pm each day. The office will continue to open at 7:30 am each morning and we offer multiple options for residents to pay utility bills or conduct other business. Town Hall will remain open during its current hours. After-hours water emergencies should be reported to 219-802-9693, and street emergencies can be reported at 219-802-6531.

This past year was a good one for me, as I had the opportunity to travel and my family grew with the addition of an incredible daughter-in-law. I can only hope that 2026 will be just as wonderful, both personally and professionally. I enjoy hearing from residents, whether you are sharing concerns or applauding the many successes throughout Town. Please feel welcome to reach out at [wmis@munster.in.gov](mailto:wmis@munster.in.gov) or 219-836-6945.

I wish you a very blessed 2026.

*Wendy Mis*  
*Clerk-Treasurer, Town of Munster*

## Parks & Recreation

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The **Winter Spring Recreation Guide** is NOW OUT! We have a lot of fun things planned for this season and hope you'll join us at one of our many upcoming programs or events.

Get ready for the summer w/ **winter swim lessons**! Offering Parent/Tot, Preschool, Youth, Private and Semi-Private – we have something for everyone! Classes run Sundays, 1/11-2/15 (No class: 2/1). Questions as to what level to place your child? Feel free to email Abby at [akresal@munster.org](mailto:akresal@munster.org).

**Day off School Camp** is calling your name! Spend Martin Luther King Day with us doing fun activities with friends. Camp takes place Monday, January 19 from 9AM-4PM at the Lions Club Social Center. Lunch will be provided.

Whether you want to think “summer” yet or not – we have already started planning for it and that’s where we need you!

**Apply for Seasonal Jobs w/ the Parks** – sports, summer camp, Munster Pool, park maintenance and more. See all positions, rates, ages to apply, contact info and submission deadlines in the Winter/Spring Recreation Guide (page 13).

**Daddy Daughter Date Night** is sure to sell out to buy your tickets NOW! Last year we sold out before the early-bird deadline, so be sure to claim your spot sooner than later. The event will take place on Saturday, 2/7 at Wilbur Wright Middle School.

**Chat GPT courses** are coming back this winter/spring! These were a hit in the fall, so don’t miss out on How to use it, How to make it into a Side Hustle or finding ways to cut back costs.

- 1/11 Parent/Tot, Preschool, Youth, Private and Semi-Private Lessons
- 1/15 Kids Watercolor at South Shore Arts
- 1/15 Wado-Ki Karate
- 1/16 Daddy Daughter Date Night Early-Bird Deadline
- 1/17 Hawks and Owls of NWI
- 1/19 Day off School Camp
- 1/19 Step into the Spotlight at South Shore Arts
- 1/22 Tiny Punters
- 1/23 Paper Clay Jewelry at South Shore Arts
- 1/23 Daddy Daughter Date Night Final Deadline (unless filled early)
- 1/23 How to use Chat GPT: Artificial Intelligence (ZOOM)
- 1/23 Chat GPT Side Hustle: Making an Income Working from Home (ZOOM)
- 1/23 Personal Finance for Hard Working People (ZOOM)
- 1/24 Using Chat GPT AI – Find ways to cut back costs (ZOOM)
- 1/26 Jumpstart Hoops
- 1/28 Rookie Rundown
- 1/29 Kids Drawing at South Shore Arts

**Any questions related to any park events, contact Parks Department at 219-836-7275**

## Police & Fire

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### **MUNSTER CRIME WATCH MEETING FEATURING ACTIVE SHOOTER AWARENESS & PREVENTION PRESENTATION**

The Munster Police Department invites all residents and business representatives to the first Munster Crime Watch Meeting of the year on Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 6:30pm at the Munster Town Hall (1005 Ridge Road) which will feature crime statistics from the past year compared to previous years and an important safety presentation on Active Shooter Awareness and Prevention. This presentation will provide meeting participants with important safety tips to consider while shopping, dining, or working and how to respond in the event that there is an active shooter situation. Several door prizes will also be awarded at the conclusion of the meeting, which should only last around an hour. For more information, please contact Sergeant James Ghrist at 219-836-6639 or [jghrist@munster.org](mailto:jghrist@munster.org).

### **MUNSTER'S 2025 NATIONAL NIGHT OUT EVENT RANKS #1 IN THE UNITED STATES!**

In late November, the Munster Police Department was notified that this past year's National Night Out Celebration which was held in Munster on August 5<sup>th</sup> was ranked by the National Association of Town Watch as the #1 National Night Out event in the United States for our population category of 15,000-50,000 people (there are only six population categories). The National Night Out is held in approximately 16,000 communities throughout the United States each year, with millions of people participating, to promote positive police and community partnerships through a variety of both fun and educational activities for all ages. For ranking #1, Munster will be receiving the National Night Out Cup (a trophy) to display in town.

This achievement would not have been possible without the great support of many businesses, school groups, community organizations, faith-based groups, town employees, and residents who either volunteered their time, set up booths, provided donations, or actively participated in the event that evening to help make this past year's National Night Out the best one yet. Thank you and congratulations to our community.

The Munster Police Department and Choice Community Council look forward to beginning plans on our 2026 National Night Out (scheduled for August 4th) this spring. If you would like to help out with planning the National Night Out and other events through the Choice Community Council, please contact Sergeant James Ghrist at 219-836-6639 or [jghrist@munster.org](mailto:jghrist@munster.org).

## Public Works

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Martin Luther King Day on Monday, January 19, 2026, is REGULAR Garbage Collection there will NOT be a delay in pick up.

### **HOLIDAY Trash & Recycling Collection**

Homewood Disposal Service will not collect garbage and recycling on Thursday, December 25, 2025 or Thursday, January 1, 2026. Garbage will be delayed 1 day after each holiday.

### **CHRISTMAS TREES**

Christmas trees will be picked up by the Public Works Department starting until Friday, December 26, 2025 through January 30, 2026, **weather permitting**. Please make sure all decorations are off the tree.

### **ELECTRONIC RECYCLING**

Electronic Recycling is available at the Public Works Facility located at 508 Fisher Street during operating hours M-F from 7 am to 3 pm. The Storage container for the electronics is inside our gate and marked with signage.

**Any questions, contact Public Works Department at 219-836-6970 or 6971**

## Meeting Schedule

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Town Council/Redevelopment Mtg.	January 5, 2026 6:30 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Site Plan Review Mtg.	January 15, 2026 1:30 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg.	January 13, 2026 6:00 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Plan Commission Mtg.	January 13, 2026 7:00 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Town Council/Redevelopment Mtg.	January 19, 2026 6:30 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Board of Safety Mtg.	January 20, 2026 7:00 am	Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Park Board Mtg.	January 20, 2026 5:00 pm	Main Meeting Room (MTH)

## Elected Officials

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### Town Council Elected Officials:

- George Shinkan, President, Elected Official, Ward 1, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Joseph Hofferth, Vice President, Elected Official, Ward 2, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Chuck Gardiner, Elected Official, Ward 3, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- David B. Nellans, Elected Official, Ward 4, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Jonathan Petersen, Elected Official, Ward 5, Term 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027



George Shinkan  
Joseph Hofferth  
Chuck Gardiner  
David Nellans  
Jonathan Petersen  
Wendy Mis



Ward #1  
Ward #2  
Ward #3  
Ward #4  
Ward #5  
Clerk-Treasurer



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