

Rockaway Township Report



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Inside This Issue

Mayor's 2014 Address	1
Home Heating Message	1
Wood Stove & Fireplace Safety	2
Community Service News	2
Images from the Holidays	2
What's Happening	3
News from the Tax Collector	3
Mayor's Special Recognition	3
Staying Warm This Winter	4
Library Musings	4

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Mayor's Corner: 2014 Address



It is my privilege as the Mayor of Rockaway Township to provide you with this update about the activities going on within our community. As you know, communication and being proactive are very important parts of my Administration. To accomplish this goal, Township staff is now publishing a quarterly newsletter with up to date information allowing residents to be informed about events within the Township. The current newsletter, along with previous editions, is available on the Township's website at www.rockawaytownship.org.

Our communication planning has improved, particularly during emergencies, through the use of the Nixle and Everbridge systems. I encourage everyone to sign up for these emergency notifications by visiting the Township's website. Residents and businesses can get information on how to receive these emergency alerts. In addition to these emergency notifications and the newsletter, the Township now hosts its own

Facebook page as another way to keep the public informed and involved.

The Township aggressively pursues grant opportunities to offset the cost of large capital projects. The Township has been very successful in securing grants from the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Local Aid program. This year, the Township received \$205,000 for the resurfacing of a portion of Daniel Street. The Township also received an additional \$43,000 award for the Pavement Replacement Project caused by a 10" water main break on Mount Hope Road just south of the Interstate 80 overpass. These grant applications are the kind of proactive approach my Administration delivers for the benefit of all Township taxpayers.

It is important to me that Township services are made accessible to all residents, especially those that are unable to come to the Municipal Building during traditional business hours. The Township has automated service requests that can be entered directly on the Township's website. Residents can report issues,

make suggestions, and complete a customer satisfaction survey. Our staff will respond and keep you informed about the status of your request. This is just another one of the many ways my Administration is committed to being proactive and making Township services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There are challenges we will face this New Year, including the police services agreement at the Townsquare Mall, labor agreements with the Township's blue and white collar workers, and legal fees associated with on-going litigation, especially Pondview and Morris Commons. It is essential the Township deal with these issues directly as the resolution of these matters will have a real effect on public safety and property taxes in the years to come. As you know, my approach to these challenges will be putting the Township taxpayer first, and my commitment to excellent financial and operational management.

I thank all residents for their continued support and help. I wish everyone a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Mayor Michael G. Dachisen

Home Heating Message from Construction

Residents who are planning to use a pellet stove or wood burning stove to heat their home this winter are asked to please contact the Construction Department regarding any permit requirements that may be applicable. We wish to keep everyone safe.

Please note that all home improvement contractors must be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs. Residents are

encouraged to visit the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs website to verify a contractor's registration status.

The Construction Department is here to assist you in following all applicable State and municipal regulations. Should you require any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at 973-983-2809, or email the Construction Department at: construction@rockawaytownship.org.

Office of the Fire Marshall: Wood Stove & Fireplace Safety



Several chimney fires occur every year in Rockaway Township. We also have several house fires where the cause of the fire is the improper maintenance or management of a fireplace or wood stove. A few years ago, use of an unsafe woodstove and a massive combustible load caused the complete destruction-by-fire of a rural two story township home. For *Wood Stove* safety, check for cracks and holes, inspecting legs, hinges and doors

for good seals. Use only seasoned firewood for fuel - never utilize green wood, construction debris, artificial logs or trash. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned pellets.

Fireplaces regularly build up creosote in their chimneys. Wood stoves and fireplace chimneys and pipes need to be cleaned out regularly. Have your chimney cleaned at least once a year or as needed. Inspect and check for obstruction to

prevent chimney and roof fires as well as the production of oxygen-depleting carbon monoxide, a product of incomplete combustion.

Working smoke detectors/CO alarms are a must-have in the house, with at least one in your bedroom area. Should a smoke detector go off, leave your house, go to your meeting place and call 911 for help. Enjoy your wood stove or fireplace by properly maintaining it.

Remember to like Rockaway Township on Facebook! You will find regular announcements, news, photos and more !

News from Community Services

The Department of Community Services wishes to advise residents that sports registrations have begun for the following programs: Girls Softball, Babe Ruth and Sr. Babe Ruth, Ice Hockey, Soccer, Little League and Lacrosse. Registration information for these programs may be found on the Rockaway Township website under the 'News' tab.

If you have not subscribed to receive Community Services updates, please do so at www.egovlink.com/rockaway/subscriptions/subscribe.asp. You may select Community Services – and a number of other departments – and this will allow you to receive information on events, activities, etc. that are posted to the Township website directly via email. Please also like Rockaway Township on Facebook to find updated information on town happenings.

Residents are advised that Frog Falls registration will begin on the following dates:

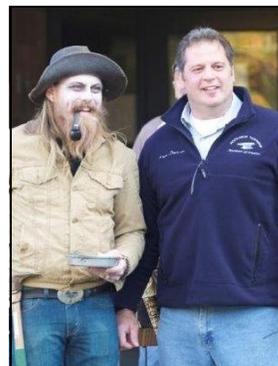
- March 3 – Rockaway Township residents
- March 17 – Open registration for partner towns
- April 21 – Sponsored memberships (unlimited)

A family may have a Caregiver membership for up to two (2) caregivers for a total cost \$220.00 plus the Picatinny decal fee of \$15.00, which is paid separately from the family membership.

The Department of Community Services is pleased to announce that it will be accepting program registration online through Community Pass, and we will now be accepting payment by credit card or e-checks for all Community Pass online registrations. You can pre-register your family on Community Pass at:

<https://register.communitypass.net/Rockaway>

Christmas Cheer and Halloween Humor



Left to right: Santa takes gift requests at the Township's annual Christmas Tree Trimming Celebration on December 6; John Dunado, Patti McGowan and Historical Society President Steve Dochniak get in the holiday spirit; Mayor Dachisen presents best costume award to Rockaway's Zombie Miner at the annual Trunk or Treat and Costume Contest; Rockaway's annual Halloween celebration brings out the cutest dinosaurs.

What's Happening

FEBRUARY

- 12th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 19th Catching Fire: Create your own ring on fire & necklace
Teens grade 6 - 12
Rockaway Township Public Library
7:00pm - 8:00pm
- 28th Catching Fire: Decorate district cupcakes & create art
Teens grade 6 - 12
Rockaway Township Public Library
4:00pm - 5:00pm

MARCH

- 1st Free rabies clinic
Rockaway Township Public Works Garage
9:00am - 11:00am
- 12th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 19th Health education seminar
Rockaway Township Public Library
7:00pm - 8:30pm

APRIL

- 5th Easter Festival
Copeland Middle School
10:00am
- 9th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 12th Opening Day Fishing Contest
Mt. Hope Pond/Hibernia Fire Co. #1
8:00am
- 12th Little League Parade
Fleetwood Drive
9:00am

The Rockaway Township Public Library will be holding adult computer classes throughout February and March. Topics vary and include E-reader training, keyboarding, computer basics, internet basics, email orientation, Microsoft Excel training and more. Please check the Public Library's website for a full calendar and more details.

* Pre-registration required for some Township events. Please call the appropriate department for information.

Update from the Tax Collector

2013 Property Tax Reimbursement (Senior Freeze) applications are usually mailed to qualified residents in March every year. For any questions regarding qualifications and applications, please call the Division of Taxation at 1-800-882-6597. Information is also available on the Division's Website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/buffer.shtml.

Residents are reminded that they may visit the Rockaway Township website to make online payments for property tax bills, sewer maintenance bills and water bills. Residents may also subscribe to our email list to receive quarterly reminders of property tax due dates and to receive notifications of any updates from the State of New Jersey on property tax relief programs. To subscribe, go to www.rockawaytownship.org and click on subscriptions.

Mayor's Special Recognition

At the December 3 meeting of the Mayor and Council, Fire Marshall Craig Babcock announced that for the third consecutive year, the Rockaway Township Fire Prevention Bureau had completed all of its annual inspections by November 30. That is not only the 94 Life Hazard Use inspections required by the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety, but also 335 other annual inspections including all schools, small businesses, churches and multi-family dwellings. Mr. Babcock stated that he believes this continues to make Rockaway Township somewhat unique among the 565 municipalities in the State of New Jersey. As Chief of the Fire Prevention Bureau, he stated that he is justifiably proud of the work that the Bureau inspectors do to keep Township residents, businesses and visitors as Fire Safe as possible.

Mayor Michael Dachisen is pleased to announce that Rockaway Township is recipient of a \$43,000 award from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Local Aid Infrastructure Fund for the Mount Hope Road Pavement Replacement Project. A 10" water main recently broke on Mount Hope Road, just south of the Interstate 80 overpass. Emergency repairs were conducted and the road was reopened within about a week from the time of the water main break. Mount Hope Road, being a major access route for the community, necessitated the emergency repairs. Township Engineer James Lutz, knowing the magnitude and cost of the road replacement, made application to the NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure Fund to offset the cost of the project. "This is the kind of proactive approach my Administration expects from our Township employees, said Mayor Michael Dachisen. "Mr. Lutz's action in applying for and securing these funds benefits all Township taxpayers."

The Mayor wishes to congratulate Dave Novak, who passed his AICP National Planners exam. Last but not least, Mayor Dachisen congratulates Amy Baysa, Bill Willadsen and Bob Howland on their retirements after distinguished service to Rockaway Township, and wishes to welcome new employees Amanda Smith and Cory Gardepe.



Health: Stay Warm During Extreme Weather

As we've been reminded this exceedingly cold winter, when temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures also may be accompanied by a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads.

Although staying indoors may reduce the risk of car accidents and falls on the ice, there are indoor hazards to contend with. Power failures or inadequate heating systems can render a home too cold during extreme weather events. In addition, the use of space heaters and fireplaces for warmth may increase the risk of household fires or elevated carbon monoxide levels.

While infants and the elderly are most at risk during such events, anyone may be susceptible to accidents, hypothermia and frostbite. Following are some tips in preventing cold-related health problems during emergencies.

Plan ahead at home with emergency supplies like:

- dry firewood
- kerosene for kerosene heater
- furnace fuel
- electric space heater with automatic shut-off
- blankets, matches, flashlights
- dry-chemical fire extinguisher
- first aid kit
- battery-powered radio
- extra batteries
- non-electric can opener
- snow shovel & rock salt
- special needs (i.e., diapers, medications)
- food that needs no cooking or refrigeration
- bottled water

Don't forget to plan ahead by also preparing your car:

- regular maintenance, including antifreeze
- cold temperature wiper fluid
- replace worn tires & check pressure
- keep gas tank near full to avoid ice/condensation
- blankets, tool kit, first aid kit
- mobile phone
- windshield scraper
- booster cables
- road maps & compass
- sand or cat litter for traction
- tow rope & collapsible shovel
- flashlight & extra batteries

The Township will be holding its free rabies clinic at the Public Works Garage on March 1 from 9am - 11am.

Please remember to vaccinate your pet!

Decorate District cupcakes and create your own District cupcake art at the Rockaway Township Public Library on February 28 from 4pm - 5pm!

Library Musings

There have been lots of exciting changes at the Rockaway Township Library. The Library is pleased to announce that Scott Davan, formerly the Director of the Mt. Olive Public Library, was appointed Director of the Rockaway Township Library in December 2013. Mr. Davan comes to Rockaway with over 12 years of combined experience in both public and special libraries. While at the Mt. Olive Public Library, Mr. Davan was able to overcome many of the financial obstacles that libraries face today, having found creative solutions to decreased funding – all with minimal impact on services. The Library will miss our former Director, Michele Reutty, who recently retired. Having over three years with the library, Ms. Reutty forged strong relationships with the Mayor, the Council and our community.

The Library is also excited to announce the hiring of Pierre Rosen as the new Head of Reference and Information Technology. Pierre was the Adult Services Coordinator at the Oakland Public Library in Bergen County. Pierre earned his Masters in Library and Information Science from Rutgers University with a specialization in digital libraries. He also attended Villanova University for his JD and Washington University in St. Louis for his undergraduate degree.

Adults

The Library is rolling out brand new computer workshops. In February and March, we are hosting 'E-readers 1 on 1' and "bring your own

device" workshops on Monday mornings and evenings. Let us help you troubleshoot your devices and teach you how to download free e-books and audio books! On Tuesday mornings, we are unveiling a new series of basic computer classes including training on Microsoft Office 2013. Please call or visit the library for more details.

On Saturday, Feb. 8 from 2:00pm – 3:00pm, we are having a 'Getting to Know Your Digital Camera' workshop, presented by Walter Choroszewski. On Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 6:00pm – 7:00pm, we are proud to be presenting a Social Security Benefit Maximization Workshop with Ronald Gelok. Lastly, we are proud to announce that the Library will begin hosting Tuesday evening sessions of the wildly successful job networking and support group, Neighbors-helping-Neighbors, starting in February and March. Volunteer peer moderators are needed – please contact the Library for more information.

Children

The Library will have plenty of activities for children through March on Mondays! Activities include *Baby Time/Play and Rhyme* at 9:45am, *Winter Wonderland Story Time* at 10:45am and *School Skills* at 1:30pm. Our popular drop-in fun programs at 3:30pm include *Winter Crafts*, *Rainbow Loom*, *Valentines Crafts*, *Legos* and *Leprechauns!* And don't forget about our *Twilight Story Times* on Wednesday evenings at 7:00!