



# SPECIAL EDITION OF The Beecher Bulletin

## RESULTS OF VILLAGE RESIDENT SURVEY *(Your responses from Fall, 2011)*

In Fall, 2011 the Beecher Village Board developed a survey and included it in the last Village newsletter. The survey was also provided on SurveyMonkey. The Village Hall received 236 paper survey responses and 97 electronic responses for a total of 333 responses out of a possible 1,500. This produced a response rate of 22.2% which is extremely high for a survey of this type and provides a good sampling of how residents feel about the Village and some of the issues facing the Beecher community. The purpose of this article is to provide our residents with the results of the survey without any interpretation or conjecture. The responses speak for themselves. Many written comments were also received, but are not included in this article due to lack of space. The Beecher Village Board would like to thank our residents for taking the time to complete and turn in their surveys. This information will be used by Village Trustees as they make decisions concerning the daily operations of the Village and the future of our community. Thank you and enjoy reading!



### VILLAGE SERVICES

**Overall, are you satisfied with the following services the Village provides:**

Police Protection	YES: 268 (or 82%)	NO: 36 (or 11%)	NO OPINION: 23 (or 7%)
Snow Plowing	YES: 269 (or 82%)	NO: 36 (or 11%)	NO OPINION: 21 (or 7%)
Refuse Pick-Up	YES: 293 (or 89%)	NO: 18 (or 5%)	NO OPINION: 19 (or 6%)
Building Permits/ Inspections	YES: 139 (or 43%)	NO: 36 (or 11%)	NO OPINION: 152 (or 46%)
Leaf Collection	YES: 242 (or 73%)	NO: 11 (or 3%)	NO OPINION: 78 (or 24%)
Water Quality	YES: 198 (or 61%)	NO: 100 (or 31%)	NO OPINION: 27 (or 8%)
Brush Pick-Up	YES: 252 (or 77%)	NO: 10 (or 3%)	NO OPINION: 66 (or 20%)
Code Enforcement (weeds, litter, etc)	YES: 170 (or 52%)	NO: 86 (or 27%)	NO OPINION: 69 (or 21%)

### MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE VILLAGE

**2. Do you believe an Illiana Expressway is necessary linking I-65 in Indiana to I-55 in Illinois?**

YES: 210 (or 63.4%)

NO: 121 (or 36.6%)

**3. The Illiana Expressway will most likely be within ten miles of the Village of Beecher, and perhaps much closer. Do you believe that such a roadway should run north or south of the Village?**

NORTH: 93 (or 28.0%)                      SOUTH: 128 (or 38.6%)  
DO NOT NEED ROAD: 89 (or 26.8%)                      NO OPINION: 22 (or 6.6%)

**4. The State of Illinois continues to buy ground and plan for a South Suburban Airport between Beecher and Peotone. Do you support or oppose this project?**

SUPPORT: 70 (or 21%)                      OPPOSE: 232 (or 69.7%)                      NO OPINION: 31 (or 9.3%)

**5. The Village of Beecher participates in the planning process for the airport to stay informed and not be left out. Do you believe the Village should continue participating and push for local control of the airport if it is built?**

YES: 283 (or 85.3%)                      NO: 25 (or 7.5%)                      NO OPINION: 24 (or 7.2%)

**6. Do you want a “dog park” in the community?**

YES: 93 (or 38.1%)                      NO: 74 (or 30.3%)                      NO OPINION: 77 (or 31.6%)

**7. Would you support a park district which would be the same boundaries as the Beecher School District with an elected Board and the ability to levy a property tax for parks and recreation programs?**

YES: 105 (or 31.4%)                      NO: 186 (or 55.7%)                      NO OPINION: 43 (or 12.9%)

**8. The Village has considered a proposal to initiate “quiet zones” through Beecher along the railroad tracks to eliminate the blowing of train horns. However, the cost to improve the safety of railroad crossings in town is quite high and would have to be paid for by the Village at the expense of other projects or programs. Would you be in favor of establishing quiet zones that would be recognized by the railroad even if the project cost could exceed \$750,000?**

YES: 80 (or 24.3%)                      NO: 219 (or 66.6%)                      NO OPINION: 30 (or 9.1%)

**9. The Village will be required in a few years to make substantial upgrades to its sewer treatment plant to meet new USEPA guidelines. One of the methods being considered for paying for these improvements is an additional 0.5% sales tax on all goods in the Village. Is this revenue source more favorable to you than a sewer rate increase?**

YES: 223 (or 69.0%)                      NO: 70 (or 21.7%)                      NO OPINION: 30 (or 9.3%)

**10. The Village has been working with Washington Township to provide a multi-use/bike path which would link the Village to the Will County Forest Preserve’s Goodenow Grove. Do you support this project and would use the multi-use/bike paths if they were constructed?**

YES, BUT I WOULD NOT USE THEM                      YES, AND I WOULD USE THEM                      NO  
74 (or 22.3%)                      146 (or 44.0%)                      112 (or 33.7%)



**★★★★VILLAGE OF BEECHER MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup> REFERENDUM★★★★**  
**AGGREGATION OF ELECTRIC SUPPLY**  
**TO ACHIEVE LOWER PRICING FOR RESIDENTS**

Commonwealth Edison is now an electric distribution and transmission company. It does not generate its own electricity but instead it must purchase electric supply through a state auction process in three year increments. Those ComEd customers who wish not to purchase power from ComEd can purchase electricity from any one of 23 licensed providers in the State of Illinois. However, this new de-regulated industry has become quite confusing and residential customers have been bombarded by offers from these suppliers. As a result, a transition to a more competitive market for the supply of electricity has been slow.

In 2010, the Illinois General Assembly granted municipalities the right to purchase electricity on behalf of all of their residents and small commercial businesses if the residents of that municipality approved a referendum allowing for the “aggregation (or pooling) of accounts to create more purchasing power and drive down rates.” Many municipalities in Will County, through their membership in the Will County Governmental League, want to take this aggregation one step further and create a customer pool of all residential customers in Will County who wish to opt in and create a purchasing cooperative consisting of over 200,000 customer accounts to achieve the lowest electric supply rates possible for the residents of Will County who choose to participate.

This is a new concept for Illinois, but not in other states that have de-regulated their utilities. In Ohio, a 300,000 customer pool was created in one region which has saved those residents 25-30% on their electric supply. The process of aggregating electric supply may be somewhat confusing, but it can be accomplished without any risk since ComEd must always be able to supply electricity to its customers at the rates provided by the Illinois Power Authority. Therefore, the most you will ever pay for electricity is the current ComEd rate. Also, ComEd will continue to be your electric service provider and billing entity. Nothing changes. You will call ComEd if the power goes out or if a line goes down, and they will bill you for your electric service and include the supplier’s portion of the bill on their bill. In other words, your electric supplier name would change on the ComEd bill but everything else would stay the same. The only change is that the electric supply of your ComEd bill should go down if your electric usage stays the same.

Electric supply cost is about 60% of your total electric bill. Therefore, if this aggregation process reduces rates by 30%, you would only see an 18% reduction in your total electric bill. In other words, if your ComEd bills run \$100 per month, you would save about \$18 per month or \$216 per year on your electric bills based on the above scenario. This is the only goal of this aggregation process; to lower your electric supply rates as much as possible.

Are there any drawbacks to this proposal? One can argue that the municipalities should not be in the electric buying business. This is a valid argument. That is why a referendum is required. However, if a referendum is approved and you feel this way, or if you would like to remain with ComEd or some other electric supplier, there is a requirement that ComEd must notify you in writing of the proposed change in the electric supplier and you can “opt out” of the program. If you have already chosen an alternative electric supplier, you may have to opt out for the term of your current contract regardless of the pricing. When your current contract expires, you can compare the rates generated by the aggregation to what you can achieve on the open market and make your own decision. This is the advantage of “opting out” if you wish to control your own electric purchasing options.

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There are several steps that must be taken for the Village to aggregate the electric supply of residents and small businesses. The first step is the referendum which will be held during the Illinois primary on March 20<sup>th</sup>. This referendum will read as follows:

**VILLAGE OF BEECHER REFERENDUM QUESTION:**

Shall the Village of Beecher have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of such program?

- YES
- NO

If this referendum fails, no changes will occur to your electric bill. If the referendum passes, the Village will begin the aggregation process by entering into an intergovernmental agreement with other municipalities in Will County to form an electrical supply cooperative and develop a plan of action. This plan of action will then be subject to two public informational meetings and public hearings. The next step is the bid process. An electrical consultant and broker has been retained by the Will County Governmental League to solicit bids for the electric supply from the 23 providers currently licensed by the State of Illinois. If the lowest bid is lower than the current ComEd rate, then the new supplier will be selected. If the bids are higher than the ComEd rate, then the group will remain with ComEd for its supply. The first bid for the electric supply will be for a period of one year. After the first year, different periods of time will be analyzed by the broker and consultant to determine how to achieve the lowest bid.

Yes, this is a very confusing process. However, the Beecher Village Board has decided to pursue aggregation because it may save all residents some money. This is the only objective. Now it is your turn to decide if this should be pursued. Please vote on this binding referendum on Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> on whether the Village of Beecher should aggregate electric supply on behalf of its residents and small businesses. If you have any questions or would like more information on this referendum, please go to the Village's website at [www.villageofbeecher.org](http://www.villageofbeecher.org) and look for links to the aggregation website or go to [www.willelectricaggregation.org](http://www.willelectricaggregation.org)

This information provided by:

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