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COME VISIT BEECHER'S MUSEUM IN THE HISTORIC DEPOT

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon every Saturday - Admission is free!

The Historic Depot, located at 620 Reed Street, was constructed in 1870. In 1970, it was relocated to Monee, IL where it became a studio for the Thompson Winery. In 2001, the Village obtained a grant to relocate the depot back to its original location at 620 Reed and a volunteer effort restored the depot back to its original condition. As a result, the depot is recognized by Will County as an historic structure.



The Beecher Historical Society then relocated its Washington Township Museum from the Beecher Community Hall to the depot.



Today the depot is maintained by the Village's Historical Preservation Commission and the Washington Township Museum inside the depot continues to be curated by the Beecher Historical Society. This is a wonderful museum loaded with photographs, fire apparatus, printed material, apparel, and other memorabilia from Beecher's rich, cultural past.

The museum is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays and you are encouraged to stop by. You will not be disappointed!

Village of Beecher

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Greg Szymanski
President

Trustees:

- Scott Wehling
- Ronald Kuhlman
- Gayle Ahrendt
- Jonathan Kypuros
- Marcy Meyer
- Frank Basile

Janett Conner
Clerk

Lynne Orr
Treasurer

Robert O. Barber
Administrator

Jeffrey Weissgerber
Chief of Police

Harold "Bud" Cowger
Supt. of Public Works

VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring is here! Hopefully the winter weather of 2015-2016 has passed.

Sales Tax Referendum

I would like to thank all of you who voted in the recent primary election which included our sales tax referendum for public infrastructure. The referendum did pass. 739 yes and 403 no. The additional 1/2% sales tax will become effective after July 1st.

Penfield Street Water Main Project

We are continuing to do the engineering for the Penfield Street water main project. While it obviously is to replace the water main, it also includes repaving of the street, repairing or replacing the bridge at the creek, and improves lighting and esthetics from Dixie Highway to Reed Street. Work on the water main is scheduled in the fall of 2016 unless there are unforeseen delays. The road and bridge construction is scheduled to begin in 2020.

Old Downtown

Several buildings in the old downtown area on Gould Street North of Penfield are currently being renovated. Current plans are for two tavern type restaurants and a

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pottery store with an open area possibly to be used for consignments or special sales on a specific day of the week for crafts, paintings, etc. The Village is currently making plans for improvements in that same area which includes repairs to the sidewalk on the West side of the street, installation of a railing, cosmetic repairs to the raised portion of the sidewalk, and additional amenities.

Also in the old downtown area, on Penfield between Reed and Woodward, a video gaming café is planned in what was Bills Restaurant and another video gaming café may come to Beecher along Route #1. A video gaming café provides a different atmosphere for gambling machines. Due to a recent ordinance approved by the Village Board, anyone who intends to have gambling machines in Beecher must serve alcohol and food. State law only requires an establishment serve alcohol to have video gaming machines. The number of liquor licenses issued by the Village is controlled by Village Ordinance and is based on population. With that in mind, the number of gaming machines allowed in the Village is controlled by population since you must serve alcohol to have a gaming machine.

Parkway Trees

We are continuing our efforts to remove dead parkway trees caused by the emerald ash borer. We will continue to remove these trees based upon how bad they are. Usually in the fall, we contract a tree removal service to take out the stumps in a group, as the budget will allow. We will replace the trees also as the budget allows. If you have a concern over the safety of your tree, call the Village Hall.

Beecher Water is Safe

Someone recently made a comment concerning the safety of our drinking water. At times, your water may appear to be rusty and there may be several reasons for that: a water main break, hydrant flushing, or possibly your water softener, hot water heater or filtration system. Our drinking water is periodically tested. Once a year, in July we are required to publish a Consumer Confidence Report in the newspaper and on our website indicating the quality of our water. At any time, if you have a question or concern over the quality of our drinking water, please call the Village Hall.

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter, have a great Spring and Summer!

Greg Szymanski
Village President



ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING SITES CLOSE

In February, all permanent electronics recycling sites closed in Will County. A new contract is being negotiated by the County for new sites. Since it became illegal in 2012 to dispose of electronics in landfills, efforts are being made to reopen electronics recycling sites later in the Spring of 2016 to accommodate changes in the program. For updated information on electronics recycling go to:

<http://www.willcountygreen.com/greenguide/electronic.aspx>

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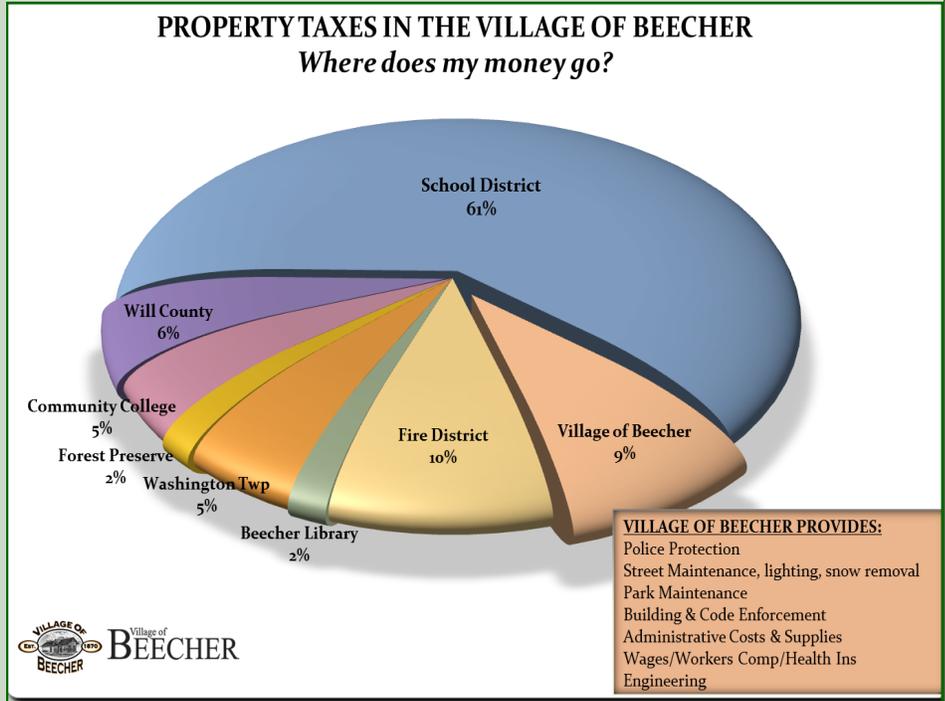
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WHERE DO MY PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS GO?

This is a very legitimate question, and it deserves an answer from your various governing bodies. For the purpose of this article, we will focus first on where your property tax dollar goes if you live in the Village and pay a property tax bill. We will then look at the Village's revenues and expenses and break down a water bill so you can see exactly what you are paying for.

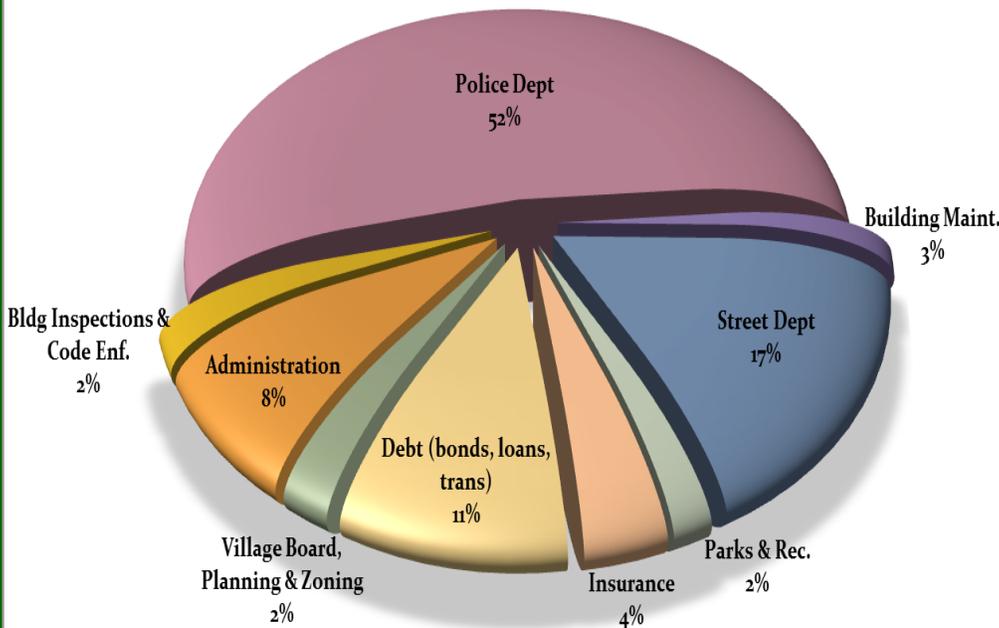
The chart to the right gives you a visual representation of where each of your property tax dollars ended up in 2015. The Village of Beecher receives 9% of the property tax you pay. Other local governments receive more. This is because the Village has other options for obtaining revenue, such as income taxes, sales taxes and water and sewer fees. The fire and school districts rely on the property tax as their main source of revenue which is why they receive more.



GENERAL FUND

The Village has three major operating funds. The first is the General (or Corporate) Fund, which supplies resources for the police, streets, building inspections, code enforcement and general administration. The total revenue collected this year is \$2,359,188 and includes; Property Tax (40%), Income Tax (18%), 1% Municipal Sales Tax (18%), Licenses and Fees (7%), Video Gaming, Personal Property and Telecommunications Tax (9%), Fines and Penalties (3%), and Miscellaneous Revenue (5%).

How General Fund Revenues Are Spent

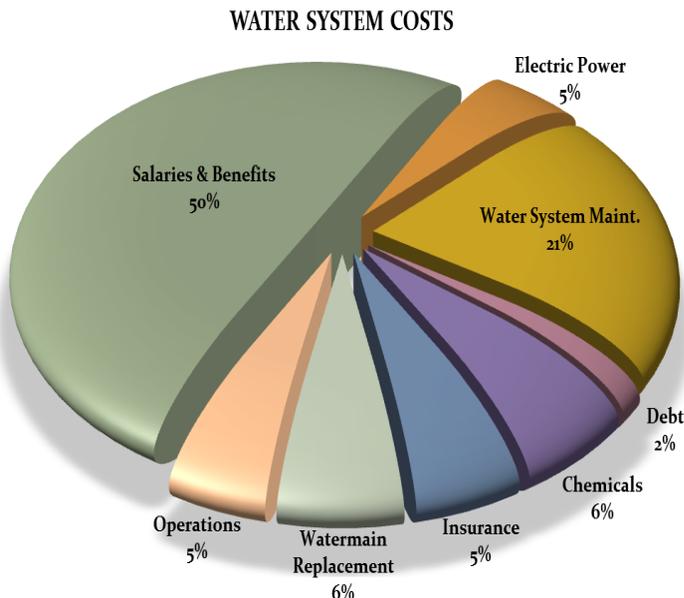


You can see from the chart to the left that police protection consumes most of the General Fund and this is rightfully so. Several Village resident surveys indicate that the most important reason they moved to Beecher or live in Beecher is that they want to feel safe. Residents do not want vandalism, theft, burglary or drug abuse in their neighborhoods. Providing even a bare minimum level of security (two patrol cars per shift) 24 hours per day, seven days per week takes a significant amount of resources. Approximately 6% of your total property tax bill goes to police protection in the Village.

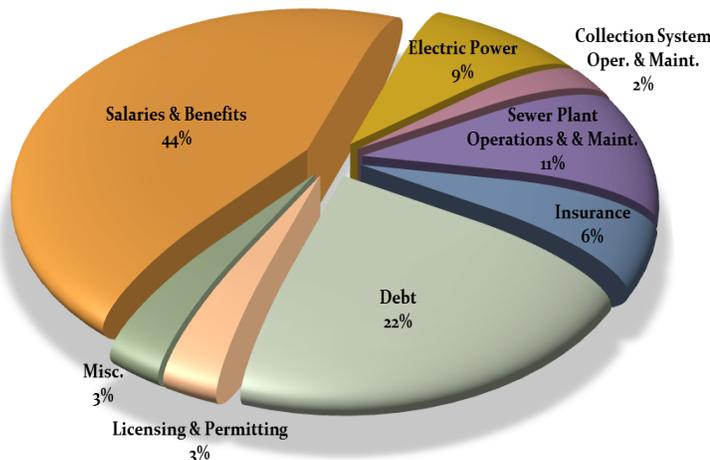
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WATER SYSTEM

The Village also runs a water and sewer utility. The water system has three wells, two storage tanks, a booster station and about 29 miles of water main. 197,000,000 gallons of water was provided to our customers in 2015. The water system generated \$627,159 in revenue in 2015 with the majority of this income coming from your water bill. Here is where your water payment goes:



SEWER SYSTEM COSTS



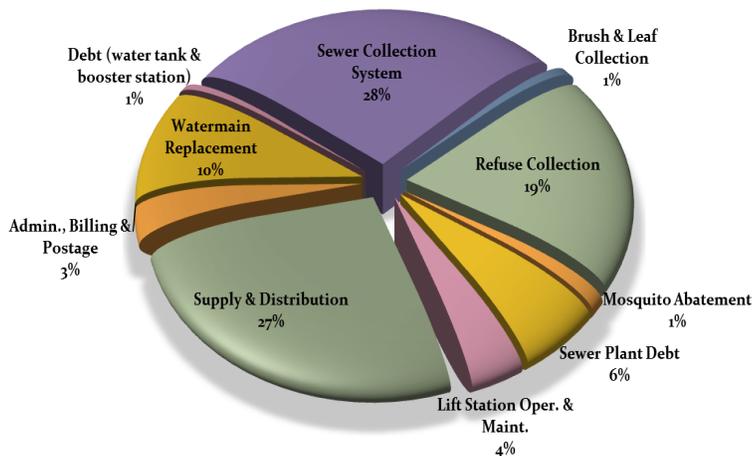
SEWER SYSTEM

The sanitary sewer system includes five lift stations, the wastewater treatment plant, and about 28 miles of sanitary sewer. These sewers carry waste water to the treatment plant, unlike storm sewers which carry rain water and snow melt directly to ponds or to Trim Creek. The treatment of wastewater is a highly regulated activity. In other words, it is equally expensive to flush your toilet as it is to refill it. The sanitary sewer system generated \$626,917 in 2015 with almost all of this income coming from the sewer portion of your water bill. Here is where the sewer portion of your bill goes.

YOUR WATER BILL

Now, let's break down your water bill. We all call it a water bill, but there are many other fees which are included in this bill. Bills are for 60 day periods and you receive six bills each year. For this review we will assume that your usage is 12,000 gallons (which is about average), and you are served by a sanitary sewer lift station. The total bill for 12,000 gallons is \$161.06. Here is how your bill breaks down.

WHERE YOUR WATER/SEWER/REFUSE BILL PAYMENTS GO



We hope that this helps you to understand where your tax dollars and water bill payments go. You are our customer and deserve to be treated as such. If you ever have any questions about what you pay or Village finances in general, feel free to call the Village Hall.

VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since the Fall of 2015:

- ✓ Conducted a request for proposals for auditing services for the next three fiscal years. After receiving six proposals, the Board awarded a three year contract to Lauterbach and Amen of Warrenville, Illinois.
- ✓ Approved the purchase of leak detection equipment to allow Public Works to find leaks in the water system.
- ✓ Approved the installation of a concrete median along the east edge of Cardinal Creek Boulevard from Church Road to Bald Eagle to provide separation between pedestrians and the roadway in the amount of \$34,620. Developer escrow funds were used.
- ✓ Approved a tax levy for 2016 with a 0% increase.
- ✓ Approved the performance of an actuarial study by Lauterbach and Amen in the amount of \$2,500 to determine the potential cost to the Village for entering the Downstate Police Pension Fund as early as the 2020 U.S. Census.
- ✓ Authorized the replacement of water mains on Elm and Birch south of Penfield and east of Catalpa at an estimated cost of \$200,000. Water main replacement funds will be used and the project will be bid at the same time as the Penfield water main replacement project (June, 2016) in hopes of getting lower bid prices.
- ✓ Approved a referendum for increasing the sales tax by 1/2% to pay for future sewer plant debt. (This referendum passed on March 16, 2016.)
- ✓ Approved participation in the new Lincoln/#I-394 Enterprise Zone which will put all of the Village's commercial and industrial zoned areas into this new incentive program. It will take several months for the State to review the proposal before it is approved.
- ✓ Approved the appointment of Lynne Orr as Village Treasurer replacing Kim Koutsky who resigned. Approved the appointments of Nicholas Hoehn and Cameron Ohlendorf to the Beecher Fourth of July Commission replacing Larry Cox and Greg Ohlendorf who resigned. Accepted the resignation of George Obradovich and Nelson Collins from the Fourth of July Commission but replacements have not yet been appointed.

- ✓ Approved the appointments of Dianna Jerkitas, Amy Kramer, Judy Cook, Joe Tieri and Tiffany Messana replacing Kyle Mose and Elizabeth Delgado who resigned and to fill the three remaining vacancies on the Beecher Youth Commission.

- ✓ Approved a bid in the amount of \$0.099 above low rack FOB Chicago per gallon from Reladyne/Mansfield Oil for the purchase of 87 Octane unleaded and diesel fuel for the coming year to be purchased by the intergovernmental fuel committee for fuel used by local taxing bodies.

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103 S. Creek Dr. – Manteno	901 Dixie Hwy – Beecher

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

- ✓ Approved an engineering study on the Penfield Street bridge in the amount of \$3,000 from Baxter and Woodman to determine structural integrity and the need for replacement.
- ✓ Approved the creation of a Beecher ESDA Department in a partnership with the Beecher Fire District and Washington Township using a team of volunteers under the Chief of Police.
- ✓ Approved a five year financial plan for the Village from 2016 through 2020. The plan can be viewed on the Village's website.
- ✓ Approved an agreement with IDOT to complete the Safe Routes to Schools Grant Project in the amount of \$176,220. The Village will utilize Motor Fuel Tax funds to provide its 20% match of \$34,522.
- ✓ Learned that State law will require the consolidation of regional dispatch centers across the State and that the Lincoln-Way, EASTCOM and Will County Sheriff dispatch centers may have to merge. Will County has offered to build a building for this new center. The Village is currently a member of EASTCOM.
- ✓ Learned that St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights plans to close in 2018 with all emergency and hospital care to move to Olympia Fields. The Village is participating in discussions on how to better provide emergency health care to the area given these recent developments.
- ✓ Approved a change to the liquor code requiring that prepared food must be available at all places where liquor is consumed on premise.

The Village Board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Beecher Village Hall, 625 Dixie Highway. Residents are always invited to attend these meetings. Board meetings can also be viewed on WPAL Channel 4 or on You Tube.



BRINGING BEECHER BACK TO NATURE WITH THE HELP OF THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY

Partnership to help bring the Forest Preserve Programs to Beecher residents

The Village of Beecher and the Beecher Community Library are collaborating with the Forest Preserve District of Will County to increase and promote offerings to Beecher residents at Plum Creek Nature Center in Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve. The Nature Center will have a presence at the library and many of the Beecher events throughout the year offering fun interactive programs and live reptiles. The Village will assist by promoting these and other nature center programs, amenities, and events in town.



If you are not familiar with the Beecher location, the core of Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve began with the purchase of a Boy Scout camp in 1977. Since then, the preserve has grown to 891 acres which has been renovated and restored adding popular amenities like the Plum Creek Nature Center, sledding hill, nature trails, picnic shelters, camping area, a skating pond and newest Spot's Nature Playground area. The property is a hidden gem home to a multitude of habitats including prairie, forest, meadow and marsh protecting rare, threatened and endangered species native to the area. The preserve is part of the Plum Creek Greenway, conserving more than 2,300 acres of land.



To learn what Plum Creek Nature Center has to offer, visit and stay tuned to future newsletters for more information! In the meantime, you can always drop in Plum Creek Nature Center located at 27064 S. Dutton Road, Beecher. Enjoy the exhibits, owl prowls, Nature Playdays, or many other popular programs like the upcoming Salamander Safari or events like Earth, Wind and Fire Festival on April 30, or Fall Fest on September 10. Visit your neighborhood nature center located in your own backyard!



MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC AGGREGATION UPDATE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND SMALL BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

Since October, 2012, the Village of Beecher along with other communities in Will County, has negotiated a fixed price electricity supply contract for our residents and small businesses. The goal of this program has been to provide electricity cost savings compared to purchasing your electrical supply from ComEd. We are pleased to say that since 2012, we have been able to save the participating residents and businesses nearly \$30 million when compared to the ComEd supply rates. This is approximately \$400 per household.

ComEd electricity supply price changes at various times during the year to reflect Summer and Non Summer Pricing. It is anticipated that the ComEd rate for the Summer Months (June-September 2016) will be approximately \$.0660/kWh. This rate will be below our current fixed price contract with Homefield Energy of \$.0695/kWh. This means the average customer during the Summer Months (June-September) period will see approximately \$3.00-\$4.00 per month in electricity supply costs over and above the comparable ComEd supply rate (the rate you currently pay will not change).

Per the terms of the fixed price contract with Homefield Energy, your price will drop to \$.0685/kWh beginning in October, 2016. We cannot predict what the ComEd price will be at that point, therefore we do not know if the ComEd price will be higher or lower than the fixed contract price at that time.

Based upon the terms of the fixed price electricity supply contract, you have the right to return to ComEd for your electricity supply. Depending on when you notify ComEd of your desire to return to utility supply, the switch-over will occur starting with your next effective meter read date, meaning it could be 4-6 weeks for the change to take effect. If you elect to return to ComEd utility supply, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to rejoin the program until a new contract is negotiated in October, 2017.

We understand that utility costs are a large part of your monthly expenses and may prefer to switch back to ComEd utility service. If you choose to return to ComEd utility supply, please have your account number ready and call ComEd at 1-800-EDISON-1 and let them know that you would like to return to utility service at the earliest date available.

If you have any further questions about the Will County Electric Aggregation program, please call the Will County Governmental League, who manages the program on behalf of the Village of Beecher at 815-729-3535. If you'd like more information on electrical aggregation rates in Illinois visit www.pluginillinois.org.



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VILLAGE BRUSH COLLECTION PROGRAM

The 2016 brush collection program began on April 4th. Brush pick-up will occur every other Monday on the same day that recycling is picked up by Star Disposal and will continue through November. To ensure your brush is collected by the Village, you are asked to follow the rules below:

1. Brush is to be placed out to the roadside by 7:30 a.m. on collection day. Brush put out the same day of pick-up is not guaranteed to be collected that week.
2. Grass clippings, leaves or mulch mixed with brush WILL NOT BE PICKED UP. Grass clippings, leaves and mulch should be disposed of in yard waste bags except in the fall when the Village collects leaves with a leaf machine.
3. Brush pick-up is intended for branches removed during routine trimming or due to storm damage. Entire trees that have been taken down by a private resident or contractor will not be picked up by the Village.

These rules are set in place to provide an efficient and cost effective brush collection program for Village residents. Any questions about this program should be directed to the Village Hall. Thank you for your cooperation!



YARD WASTE BAGS

Collection of yard waste bags by Homewood/Star/A&J Disposal resumed April 4th. Yard waste bags may be placed at the curb for regular Monday pick-up until the end of November. Yard waste bags should not be placed out to the curb for pick-up prior to 5:00 p.m. the day before pick-up. Residents must use bags with the Homewood/Star/A&J Disposal logo on them or purchase a sticker to put on other brands of yard waste bags. The cost of the bag includes the fee for disposal of the yard waste. Bags can be purchased at various local businesses and at the Village Hall. The Village Hall charges \$2.70 per bag and \$2.30 per sticker. Yard waste bags without the Homewood/Star/A&J Disposal logo/sticker will not be picked up.



MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM

It's that time of the year again! The Public Works Department will begin spraying for mosquitos on Thursday evenings beginning at the end of April. Spraying will begin around dusk and be completed by around 1:00 a.m. Spraying can only be conducted when the weather conditions meet certain criteria. Temperature, wind speed, and precipitation may prevent a spraying on Thursday evening. If this is the case, spraying may be delayed until Friday evening or pushed ahead to Wednesday evening. Weekly spraying will continue through September unless mosquito counts are low.

During mosquito spraying we want to remind you to keep children away from the spray fog cloud directly behind our spray trucks. If you have asthma or any other type of breathing problems, you may want to remain inside with doors and windows closed during application in your area. It is important to note that the chemicals used for the Village's mosquito program are non-toxic to humans and animals.

ANNUAL WATER & SEWER RATE INCREASE ON MAY WATER BILLING AND ANNUAL REFUSE RATE INCREASE ON JULY WATER BILLING



The annual water and sewer rate increase will be reflected on the May 2016 water bill. Water rates will be increased by 10 cents per thousand gallons and sewer rates by 10 cents per thousand gallons effective March 1st. These annual increases were previously implemented to keep up with rising costs for chemicals, testing supplies, electric, natural gas and other materials needed for keeping the water and sewer systems running. The overall increase for a resident who uses 8,000 gallons or less of water will be \$1.60 per billing period.

If you live in one of the newer subdivisions and pay a Lift Station (LS) charge on your water bill, the lift station charge will also increase by 2 cents per thousand gallons of water used.

An annual refuse rate increase will be reflected on the July 2016 water bill. The refuse rate will increase by \$1.00 per billing. In March of 2013 the Village negotiated a new 10-year contract with Star/Homewood Disposal for refuse and recycling collection services. These annual increases are necessary to keep up with rising landfill tipping fees, maintenance, and manpower costs associated with these services. However, entering into a 10-year agreement has enabled us to lock into fixed rates even if costs increase further than anticipated.



**BEECHER FOURTH OF JULY COMMISSION
RELEASES TENTATIVE 2016 SCHEDULE**

More bands, more rides, more fireworks, more Family Fun!

This year's Fourth of July schedule includes a full weekend, which gives the Commission more opportunities to offer family activities. The bean bag tournament returns this year, after a one year hiatus last year due to scheduling conflicts. There are several bands making their first Beecher appearance including Wild Daisy, ARRA and Kingfish. The carnival is also planned to remain in the parking lot and on Penfield Street this year. A video gaming trailer is also on its way for Saturday, and for animal lovers the Prairie 4-H Farm Show returns for a two day run and the Will County Forest Preserve will provide an animal exhibit Saturday afternoon.

All activities will be at Firemen's Park, 675 Penfield Street. Below is the tentative schedule, subject to the weather:

Friday, July 1st - 6 pm to Midnight

- 5:45 pm - Kiddie and pet parade (line-up at 5:15 pm)
- 6-10 pm - \$20 Wrist bands
- 7:30 pm - 11 pm - Maggie Speaks on main stage
- 11 pm - Early bird car drawing

Saturday, July 2nd - 12 Noon to Midnight

- 12-4 pm - \$20 Wrist bands
- 12-4 pm - Prairie 4-H Farm Expo
- 11-11:30 am - Bean Bag Check in
- Noon—Bean Bag Tournament
- 1-5 pm - Video Gaming Trailer
- 2-5 pm - Replay on main stage
- 4-8 pm - Will County Forest Preserve Animal Exhibit
- 7:30-11 pm—Wild Daisy on main stage
- 11 pm - Early bird car drawing



5K Run/Walk

Sunday, July 3rd - 12 Noon to Midnight

FAMILY DAY

- 12-6 pm - Prairie 4-H Farm Expo
- 4-7 pm - Chamber of Commerce Pork Chop Dinner
- 12-4 pm - \$20 Wrist bands
- 2-5 pm - KGB on main stage
- 7:30-11pm - ARRA on main stage
- 11pm - Early bird car drawing

Monday, July 4th - 12 Noon to Midnight

- 7-7:50 am - Lions Club 5K Run/Walk Registration
- 8:15 am - Lions Club 5K Run/Walk begins
- 12 pm - Carnival and car stands open
(all other stands open after parade)
- 2-3:30 pm - Parade line-up and registration
- 3 pm - Float judging
- 4pm - Parade
- 7 -11 pm - Kingfish on main stage
- 9:30 pm - Fireworks
- 11 pm - Car drawing



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Youth Commission Kentucky Derby Fundraiser • May 7th at Cardinal Creek

**Chamber of Commerce Car Cruise Nights
1st and 3rd Wednesdays from May 18th thru September 7th**

Bicycle Rodeo • June 4th in Firemen's Park

Chamber of Commerce Garage Sale Days • June 10-11

4th of July Celebration • July 1-4 in Firemen's Park

Youth Commission Movie Night • July 29th in Firemen's Park

Lions Club Annual Beef Roast • August 6th in Firemen's Park

Youth Commission Campout at Goodenow Grove • August 13th

