



The Beecher Bulletin

“Your Village Newsletter”



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TORNADO SEASON IS UPON US!

Does Your Family Have a Plan When the Warning Sounds?



Sunday, November 17th, 2013: one week before Thanksgiving and at high noon, the tornado sirens wailed in Beecher. The skies darkened and looked threatening, but then the sky cleared. At 1pm on that same day, the sirens went off again. Was this an “all clear?” Was there another storm approaching? Many residents asked these questions and were confused. Five minutes later, the answer came. The skies turned green and a 90 mph wind hit town, knocking down several trees and blowing shingles off roofs. There was no confusion then; a second storm did come through.

“All Clear” siren signals have not been used for over 20 years, because they were confusing to residents. If the sirens activate, assume that a warning exists in Beecher for a period of one hour, and seek shelter immediately. If the sirens go off a second time, start the one hour clock all over again. On November 17th, this was one of the rare times that this happened. Two tornadic thunderstorms passed through the Beecher area within one hour. This resulted in two activations of the warning sirens. **THERE IS NO LONGER AN “ALL CLEAR” SIGNAL.** If you hear the sirens a second time, add one hour to your sheltering time.



Warning sirens are only meant to be heard outside. The best source of indoor severe weather information is a National Weather Service Alarm Radio. Also, the best defense from severe weather is common sense. If threatening weather is approaching or it just looks funny outside, go indoors and listen to radio or television for weather information. Newer technologies and Doppler radar have significantly increased warning times. Warning sirens were at one time the only method of notifying the public about tornadoes. This is no longer the case. Make sure you have several different ways in which you can be notified of approaching severe weather. Discuss a plan of action with your family. If you do not have a basement, make plans to relocate to a neighbor or a friend’s home with a basement if there is time. Early warning systems sometimes allow the time. However, if the storm is too close, stay at home and go to an interior room of the house such as a closet or bathroom without windows and sit on the floor or in a bathtub. A car is not the place to be in a tornado. There have been several terrible storms in recent years, but the death tolls have gone down dramatically as more people heed the earlier warnings and have time to execute a plan of action for their families that includes sheltering in a basement. History has proven that a basement is the safest place in a tornado, hands down.

The tornado season is now upon us! Are you prepared?

Village of Beecher

OFFICIALS

Greg Szymanski
President

Trustees:

Scott Wehling
Ronald Kuhlman
Gayle Ahrendt
Brian Cleary
Jonathan Kypuros
Marcy Meyer

Janett Conner
Clerk

Robert O. Barber
Administrator

Kim Koutsky
Treasurer

Jeffrey Weissgerber
Chief of Police

Harold “Bud” Cowger
Supt. of Public Works

READY FOR SUMMER?

**Plans are almost complete for this year's 4th of July Celebration
Wednesday, July 2nd - Saturday, July 5th**



The smell of smoke from burning fireworks and grilled meat fill the air. Empty chairs lining the parade route early in the morning. The sight of old friends at the beer garden in Firemen's Park. Did someone mention "Maggie Speaks?" Bingo! Pulled pork on those oversized buns. Sweet corn drenched in melted butter. The hum of the carnival rides. Does that remind you of Summer? The 4th of July is only eleven weeks away!

The Beecher Fourth of July Commission understands tradition, but there is also the need to change things up every few years. That will definitely be the case this year, as Beecher will be welcoming a new carnival (Big H Amusements) and a new fireworks company (Mad Bomber Fireworks). Both of these new vendors promise a larger and more diverse style of entertainment. Listed below is the tentative schedule for this coming year. Please note that the festival will not be open on Sunday, July 6th. The parade will start at 4 p.m. on Friday, July 4th. The fireworks will also begin at 10:00 p.m. on Friday, July 4th. All events are held in Firemen's Park, located at 675 Penfield Street behind the fire station.

Wednesday, July 2nd - 6 pm to midnight

- 5:15 pm - Line-up for Kid and Pet Parade at Zion Lutheran Church parking lot
- 5:45 pm - Kid and Pet Parade
- 6-10 pm - Carnival wrist bands \$20
- 7:30 pm - "Maggie Speaks" on main stage
- 11 pm - \$250 Early bird car drawing

Thursday, July 3rd - 6 pm to midnight

- 6-10 pm - Carnival wrist bands \$20
- 7:30 pm - "Frank Paul Band" on main stage
- 11 pm - \$250 Early bird car drawing

Friday, July 4th - 12 noon to midnight

- 7 am - 5K Race check-in
- 8 am - 5K Race begins
- Noon - Carnival and all stands except beer open
- 3 pm - Beer stand opens
- 2-3:30 pm - Parade line-up and registration
- 3 pm - Float judging
- 4 pm - Parade
- 7 pm - "KO Bossy" on main stage
- 10:00 pm - Fireworks
- 11 pm - \$250 Early bird car drawing



2014 RAFFLE CAR!

Saturday, July 5th - 12 noon to midnight

FAMILY DAY

- Noon-4 pm - Carnival wrist bands \$20
- 1 pm - Bean bag tournament
- 1-4 pm - Balloon artist
- 1-4 pm - Zip line rides
- 2-5 pm - "Shout Section" jazz/swing band on main stage
- 2-5 pm - "Greg Schneider Band" on main stage
- 4-7 pm - Chamber of Commerce pork chop dinner
- 7 pm - "Heartsfield Band" on main stage
- 11 pm - Raffle for 2014 Chevy Camaro

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<http://www.facebook.com/beecher4thofjulyfestival>

2014 Parade Theme: Celebrate with music



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VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

First off, many thanks to our Public Works Department and our residents as well for enduring one of the worst Winters in decades. Public Works logged over 1,000 hours of overtime, used 1,300 tons of salt and 4,688 gallons of fuel, and repaired eight watermain breaks in the last 90 days. The cost to the Village of this brutal Winter will be in excess of \$150,000. The unique situation we faced this Winter was the number of snowfall events. It seemed like it snowed every other day. In years past, we would have one or two big snows and that was it. This year, we logged 23 salt runs and 17 snowplowing events; more than the last three years combined. The Village used money it has saved from the past years' shorter Winters to pay for the long one this year. Hopefully we will have a normal Winter next year.

Secondly, we have received word from Will County that the assessed value of the Village dropped by 7.9% in 2013. This increased the Village's tax rate from .6459 to .7012 *even though* the Village did not increase its property tax levy. This means that those property owners who saw their assessed values decrease will pay less to the Village but if your assessed value did not change you may actually end up paying more. I want to stress that the Village did not increase taxes and has not done so for three years now. However, how the tax rate is calculated can change the amount of tax you pay.

Have a great Summer!

Greg Szymanski
Village President

Lawn Care the Environmentally - Friendly Way

Know Your Lawn Mower

How a lawn is mowed can help or hurt lawn health. Even the choice of lawn mower and its maintenance can make a difference. Gas-powered lawn mowers produce the same amount of air pollution in one hour as driving a car for 350 miles. Consider electric power or reel-type push mowers if you have small lawn areas to manage. Keep the mower blade sharp so grass blades are cut cleanly, reducing moisture loss and limiting disease spread. A mulching blade cuts grass clippings into very small pieces so they can be left on the lawn without clumping.

Always try to mow when the grass is dry to prevent spreading disease problems. Mow the lawn to the recommended height for the grass variety but never less than two inches. Grass plants have a hard time recovering from mowing if they have little blade left with which to photosynthesize. Reduce plant stress by never removing more than one-third of the blade at a time. The recommended mowing height for standard lawn Kentucky Bluegrass is 2 ½ inches.

To learn more or report possible illegal discharges to the storm drain system, call the Village of Beecher at (708) 946-2261. (Source: Clean Water Fact Sheet, produced by NEMO and Sea Grant Connecticut)



LITTLE PEOPLE'S PRE-SCHOOL II

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Fax 708-946-2146
hackfuneral@yahoo.com
Hackfuneralhome.com



VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since the Fall of 2013:

- ✓ Authorized the purchase of 2013 New Holland L 225 Skid Steer Loader from DeJong Equipment in the amount of \$28,750 replacing the 1999 skid steer loader.
- ✓ Hired Teska and Associates of Plainfield, IL as the new Village Planning Consultant.
- ✓ Approved a contract at the request of the Beecher Fourth of July Commission with Mad Bomber Productions, Inc. for the 2014 fireworks display in the amount of \$28,500.
- ✓ Approved a five year collective bargaining agreement with Teamsters Local 700 representing Beecher Police officers.
- ✓ Increased the number of part-time police officers on the roster from 12 to 15 at the request of the Chief of Police.
- ✓ Approved a lease agreement with Lange Excavating of Beecher providing space in the old Public Works garage for storage of a front end loader for a period of two years in exchange for the installation of new watermain on Elm Street.
- ✓ Approved the appointments of Jeanette Chose and Terry Kasput to the Beecher Youth Commission.
- ✓ Approved the appointments of Barb Hodgett and Trish Moran to the Beecher Fourth of July Commission.
- ✓ Authorized the purchase of a building at 625 Dixie Highway in the amount of \$125,000 for a new Village Hall and for the payment of an ALTA survey in the amount of \$1,700.
- ✓ Authorized a contract with Michael Stanula Architects in the amount of \$1,200 to design and let bids for the rehab of 625 Dixie Highway. A budget of \$265,000 was established for this work.
- ✓ Approved a tax levy for calendar year 2014 having a 0% increase from the prior year.
- ✓ Joined the Illinois Municipal Insurance Cooperative as a founding member of this new insurance pool for the purposes of self-insuring for liability and property. Over the long term this arrangement should reduce premiums for insurance coverage.
- ✓ Learned that the Village's Standard and Poors bond rating had improved from A+ to AA+ which is a better rating than that of the State of Illinois and equal to the rating for the Federal government.
- ✓ Approved the installation of new street name poles and signs in Hunter's Chase and Hunter's Chase West subdivisions. This work will begin in the Spring.

Continued on next page

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Board meeting highlights continued

- ✓ Approved a special use permit for a Casey's General Store at the southwest corner of Dixie and Miller with several conditions.
- ✓ Authorized an application for a "safe routes to schools" grant in the amount of \$148,000 with a \$29,000 local match using Motor Fuel Tax funds to install solar-powered flashing warning lights, new signage and striping in school zones along Dixie Highway, Cardinal Creek Boulevard, Miller Street and Penfield Street.
- ✓ Accepted a water and sewer master plan completed by Baxter and Woodman which provides a logistical plan to extend water and sewer to anywhere in the Beecher School District should the need ever arise.
- ✓ Approved a four year strategic plan of policies and objectives for the Village to follow in the coming years.
- ✓ Approved a five year financial plan for the Village which can be viewed on the Village's website.
- ✓ Approved the installation of a watermain along Prairie Avenue linking Pasadena with Melrose Lane in order to eliminate two long residential service lines which froze this Winter. Sunset Sewer and Water was hired to complete the work for \$14,025 and the materials will be supplied by the Village.
- ✓ Approved a one year contract with Heritage FS for the purchase of bulk fuel for all local taxing bodies in the Beecher Community Fuel System. Unleaded gas price is \$3.24 and diesel price is \$3.50.
- ✓ Approved a special use permit for a security fence around a silo at Dutch American Foods, 1362 Dutch American Way.
- ✓ Approved a contract with Twin Supplies to seek grant funds to replace all lighting fixtures in Village buildings to reduce electrical costs. The total program will cost \$27,551.55 and the Village's portion of the project will be \$5,510.31.
- ✓ Approved a contract with Constituent Outreach Consultants in the amount of \$3,750 for a municipal/community smart phone application to connect Village residents with municipal and local business services.
- ✓ Approved a contract in the amount of \$2,750 with NIXLE Engage to provide electronic notifications by either e-mail or text of critical incidents which occur in the community that may affect residents.
- ✓ Approved a new intergovernmental agreement for the Eastern Will County Emergency Communications Center (EASTCOM) to include Steger and South Chicago Heights in order to reduce overall dispatching costs to each participating agency of EASTCOM.



The Village Board normally meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington Township Center, located at 30200 Town Center Road, Beecher, IL. Check the online meeting schedule or call the Village Hall for any meeting changes or cancellations. All meetings are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend.

Meetings are televised on Comcast Cable, Channel 4, WPAL. Please check local listings for dates and times. Meetings are also broadcast on WPAL's YouTube Channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/WPALTV> and can be found by typing "Beecher" in the search box.

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STAY INFORMED WITH NIXLE!

nixle

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The Police Department launched a Community Notification Service called “Nixle” about 5 years ago, to improve communication with people who live, work and visit our area. This service is being expanded to include all facets of Village government to enhance the communication of information, not just emergency notifications. The system provides a quick, efficient, and secure way to get neighborhood-level information out to community members who subscribe to the system. Through www.nixle.com, the Village will be able to send text messages (SMS) and email alerts to subscribers in a specific area, down to a quarter of a mile.

Examples of notifications might include: A young child or adult with Alzheimer’s disease walks away from their home; A public safety emergency requiring people to stay in or remain away from their homes; Notification of crime alerts and frauds; A serious injury or fatal crash in which traffic investigators close down the road for several hours; Watermain breaks and; community events such as parades, fireworks, picnics, etc.

Through Nixle, we deliver messages securely to citizens by e-mail and cell phone, supporting and expanding our community outreach efforts. Obviously, the system will be most effective when we have large numbers of subscribers, so please spread the word and sign up for Nixle. Any questions about the service and its capabilities can be answered through Frequently Asked Questions found at <http://www.nixle.com/faqs.html>. You can also go on the Village’s website home page and click on the NIXLE link at villageofbeecheer.org to sign 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. Sprayings 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 is non-toxic to humans and animals.

For further information, questions and comments about the Mosquito program please call Public Works Superintendent Bud Cowger at 946 -3636 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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 2014 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 2014 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.

VILLAGE BRUSH COLLECTION PROGRAM



The 2014 brush collection program began on April 7th. 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. All brush should be placed to the front of the property (next to the road - but not on the road) for pick-up.
3. 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.
4. 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. A 5 minute rule applies: A brush pile should take no longer than 5 minutes for Public Works to pick up.

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!

GARBAGE PICK-UP RULES

Residential garbage collection in the Village is conducted by Star Disposal every Monday (unless a major holiday falls on Monday then collection is on Tuesday). Garbage should be placed at the curb by 6:30 a.m. on collection day. **The Village of Beecher has an ordinance that garbage and yard waste bags cannot be placed at the curb for pick-up prior to 5:00 p.m. the evening before collection day. Those that put out garbage or yard waste bags before 5:00 p.m. the day before pick-up may be ticketed.** All containers must be removed from the Village parkway within 24 hours of the pick-up time. Garbage should be placed in the container previously supplied to each resident by the disposal company.



YARD WASTE BAGS



Collection of yard waste bags by Homewood/Star/A&J Disposal resumed April 7th. 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 \$2.50 per bag and \$2.15 per sticker. Yard waste bags without the Homewood/Star/A&J Disposal logo/sticker will not be picked up.



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UPCOMING BEECHER EVENTS

Youth Commission "Parent's Night Out" Fundraiser • May 3 at Beecher Amvet Hall



Youth Commission "Beecher's Amazing Race" • May (date to be determined)



Chamber of Commerce Car Cruise Nights
1st and 3rd Wednesdays, May 21st thru September 3rd
in grassy area south of Buddys Drive In

Bicycle Rodeo • Saturday, June 7 in Firemen's Park

Youth Commission waterpark trips • June & July (dates to be determined)

Chamber of Commerce Garage Sale Days • June 13-14

**Lions Club Annual Beef Roast/Craft Show in conjunction with
Drivin' the Dixie & Chamber of Commerce Annual Street Dance**
All activities will be held in Firemen's Park • June 21

4th of July Celebration • July 2 - July 5 in Firemen's Park

Tractors For a Cure • July 12 in Firemen's Park

Youth Commission "Movie in the Park" • August (date to be determined)

BEECHER TREE FOUNDATION MEMORIAL TREES



Since the Beecher Tree Foundation's inception in 2002, some residents have decided to plant a memorial tree to remember a special person, date or occasion. These trees have been planted in one of our parks for a donation and the person's name or occasion has been engraved on a plaque in the Village Hall. A tree is a living tribute that stays green for many years to come. We have 15 donors on our memorial tree plaque at this time.

Please contact Ron Kuhlman at the Village Hall at 946-2261 if you would be interested in purchasing a memorial tree.

Village of Beecher

724 Penfield Street/P.O. Box 1154
Beecher, IL 60401

Village Hall Hours

Monday thru Friday:
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Village Hall Phone

946-2261

Emergency Police & Fire
9-1-1

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