

A² CITY NEWS



The Newsletter for the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan

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This is a reprinted version of the original, which was e-mailed to A2 City News subscribers on Jan. 4, 2010. Further information on featured topics and current news can be found at www.a2gov.org.

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Subscribe for budget process updates

The City of Ann Arbor budget process continues, and details are featured on the Our Town page of the city's Web site:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/Pages/OurTown.aspx>. Sign up to be alerted when new information is available by clicking on the red envelope in the right column of the page.

Some city services temporarily unavailable Jan. 12

Except for emergency services, the City of Ann Arbor will temporarily close its operations on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010, during the following times to allow for a city staff meeting: 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Please plan accordingly (you may

wish to call ahead; see city phone numbers at <http://www.a2gov.org/contact/pages/contactus.aspx>), and thank you for your patience.

Labor contract successfully negotiated between Firefighters Local 693 and the City of Ann Arbor

After months of labor negotiations between the International Association of Firefighters Local 693 and the City of Ann Arbor, a tentative agreement on a new labor contract for fire employees has successfully been negotiated. The contract now goes to the union membership for ratification. Ratification of the agreement will reduce fire labor costs and protect public safety priorities through June 30, 2010. However, the bargaining committee will continue to negotiate mutually acceptable terms for fiscal year 2011.

"It is with pleasure, and a great sense of relief, that I announce the successful conclusion of contract negotiations between the City of Ann Arbor and Firefighters Local 693," said Mayor John Hieftje. "The financial terms of the contract streamlined labor costs and eliminated the necessity to layoff 14 firefighters on Jan. 1, 2010."

City Administrator Roger Fraser added, "I commend the bargaining committee for negotiating a fair contract that recognizes the contribution fire employees make in protecting our residents but also acknowledges the revenue constraints facing the City of Ann Arbor in the coming year."

Publication of city notices

In November 2009, City of Ann Arbor voters approved an amendment to Section 7.4 of the Ann Arbor City Charter to allow for publication of city ordinances in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or by posting to the city's Web site or by any other means or methods determined by City Council appropriate to properly inform the general public in matters of municipal concerns. This amendment does not change the current notification process for public notices. The Charter amendment only affects the publication of approved ordinances.

On Dec. 21, 2009, City Council passed a resolution that determined that, unless other means or methods of legal notice are required by law, charter, ordinance or regulation, the following methods of legal publication of ordinances are appropriate to properly inform the general public in matters of municipal concerns:

- Posting on the city Web site under a new heading "Legal Notices" and
- Posting on the city public announcement board maintained by the City Clerk's office

In addition, City Council recommended that notice of the passage of a new ordinance and where the full text of the ordinance is available for inspection by/and or distribution to the public also appear on the city's Community Television Network cable television channel as a public announcement.

The City Administrator and City Clerk were directed to implement these changes beginning on Jan. 1, 2010. If you have any questions about these changes, please contact the City Clerk's office via e-mail at cityclerk@a2gov.org or call 734.794.6140.

Christmas tree recycling

The City of Ann Arbor will collect Christmas trees from the residential curbside during a one-week period, Monday, Jan. 18 through Friday, Jan. 22, 2010. Before leaving the tree at the curb (by 7 a.m. on the normal trash collection day), all tree stands, nails, ornaments, tinsel and plastic bags must be removed and properly discarded. Since wreaths and evergreen roping are generally made with wire or plastic backing, these items should be placed inside trash carts. The trees will be chipped into mulch or composted; and any metal, glass or plastic ornaments left on the tree can ruin the processing equipment, harm the operators and spoil the mulch.



In the event that snow or ice hampers collection, the trees will be collected after a thaw.

Undecorated Christmas trees may also be dropped off in the parking lot adjacent to the Drop-off Station at 2950 E. Ellsworth through Saturday, Jan. 30. Beginning in February, Christmas trees must be delivered to the Drop-off Station during normal operating hours, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday for a small fee (734.971.7400).

The trees may be cut and tied into a bundle or placed inside a compost cart for curbside compostable collection, which resumes in April. Ann Arbor residents may also deliver up to 1 cubic yard (six paper yard waste bags) of acceptable yard debris, including trees, at no charge per visit to the municipal Compost Center, 734.794.6380, open week days 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Residents must check into the MRF scalehouse before depositing the materials. Non residents will be assessed a disposal fee.

For 24-hour information on the city's solid waste services, call 723.99.GREEN or visit the city's Web site: <http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/solidwasteunit/Pages/CompostSales.aspx>.

Roundabouts



Modern roundabouts are becoming more and more common in traffic intersections throughout Michigan and nationwide. The City of Ann Arbor completed its first modern roundabout installation in July 2009 at the Huron Parkway – Nixon Road intersection (http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/upcomingprojects/Pages/HuronParkway-NixonRoad.aspx).

Roundabouts are cited for improving traffic flow and providing a greater level of safety for motorists and pedestrians. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studied 23 intersections which had been converted to roundabouts and found 39 percent fewer vehicle collisions, 76 percent fewer injuries and 89 percent fewer serious injuries and fatalities. Environmental advantages are also associated with roundabouts: The amount of pollutants released into the atmosphere from idling vehicles is significantly decreased when compared to signalized intersections.

The city is currently working on an intersection improvement project with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Road Commission of Washtenaw County along the Geddes Road corridor between Earhart Road and Dixboro Road in the city of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township. A major component of this project involves replacing the signalized intersections at the northbound and southbound exit/entrance ramps with roundabouts. In addition, the Geddes Road and Earhart Road intersection will be reconstructed to include a third roundabout as part of the project. Details, including a construction schedule, can be found on the project's Web site: http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/projectsunderconst/Pages/GeddesRdUS-23InterchangeandGeddesRdEarhartRdIntersectionImprovement.aspx

The Road Commission of Washtenaw County Web site provides a comprehensive overview of the history of roundabouts, safety statistics, a video and much more: <http://wcroads.org/news/roundabouts/roundabout-index.htm>.

Buhr Park Outdoor Ice Arena grand reopening

Come celebrate the new rink surface when Buhr Park Outdoor Ice Arena reopens on Saturday, Jan. 9. Free season skating passes will be raffled off during the opening day's general skates, and raffles for free drop-in hockey visits will take place during the drop-in hockey times.

Jan. 9 General skate — 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. and 7:15 – 8:45 p.m.

Jan. 9 Drop-in hockey — All ages: 1:15 – 2:15 p.m.; women only: 9 – 10 p.m.

Buhr Park Outdoor Ice Arena is located at 2751 Packard Road. The facility has a heated lobby, vending, restrooms and four separate locker rooms for hockey. Skate rentals are available. Call 734.794.6234 or go online for details:

<http://www.a2gov.org/buhr>.



Library Lot interviews scheduled

The City of Ann Arbor will conduct interviews with the groups interested in developing the space above the underground parking structure being constructed at the site known as the Library Lot at 319 S. Fifth Ave., adjacent to the Ann Arbor District Library downtown branch. The interviews will take place at the library, 343 S. Fifth Ave. on Wednesday, Jan. 20, and time will be dedicated to addressing questions from the public provided in advance to the interview panel. E-mail a question for panel consideration: librarylotrfp@a2gov.org The schedule and process are posted on the project Web site: <http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/319%20S%205th%20Ave%20Lot%20-%20RFP/Pages/default.aspx> The interviews will be televised on Community Television Network.

Following the interviews, from 6 to 8 p.m., proposers will display their projects and answer questions directly from public. Visit the project Web site for further details:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/319%20S%205th%20Ave%20Lot%20-%20RFP/Pages/default.aspx>.



Parks and recreation scholarships

Teach a child the skills to swim, the joys of paddling a kayak, the chance to discover ice skating and provide a place to go on a hot summer day for swimming fun with the family. Donations are being accepted for the Ann Arbor Parks &

Recreation Scholarship Fund (<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/ParksandRecreation/Pages/scholarship.aspx>) which will, in turn, provide life-long health and recreation experiences for city residents in need.

The Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Scholarship Fund provides city residents access to park facilities and programs regardless of economic situation. The scholarship program provides income-eligible families exposure to positive experiences, active lifestyles and mentors, as well as opportunities to gain and refine life skills and develop positive personal and social assets.

The 2008 U.S. Census shows Ann Arbor experienced a significant jump in the number of people living in poverty. The number of city residents who apply and qualify for Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Scholarships continues to grow, and the city is committed to provide this service for all community members in need. The scholarship value awarded for fiscal year 2009 was \$521,500, with 771 individuals participating in park facility activities and diverse programs.

Your help is needed to provide recreation opportunities to build a sense of community, create safer neighborhoods and engage families in experiential learning and healthy physical activities. Please consider making a tax deductible donation to the Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Scholarship Fund. 100 percent of donations go directly to support scholarships for Ann Arbor residents.

How to make a donation: Contact City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Services at 734.794.6230 or visit the Web site: <http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/ParksandRecreation/Pages/scholarship.aspx>.

Owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

The Office of Community Development offers five housing rehabilitation programs for income qualified homeowners in the city of Ann Arbor. One program in particular, the Owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program, will provide up to \$25,000 in a low interest, deferred payment loan for eligible home repairs that address building, health and safety code violations as well as accessibility improvements. It is open to low-income homeowners (less than 80 percent of the area median income) that meet the eligibility criteria. The program provides the general rehabilitation necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes, rehabilitation standards and lead-based paint regulations. For more information on the program and to complete a pre-assessment, please contact the Office of Community Development at 734.622.9025, or visit:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/community_development/.

Sign up for snow removal updates

For street snow-plowing updates during heavy snowfalls, the City of Ann Arbor provides an online status so residents may track the progress (<http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/Pages/SnowRemoval.aspx>). You may also subscribe to receive snow-removal updates via e-mail by selecting the red envelope in the right column of the page, which will alert you whenever the online street snow tracking service has been launched.

Protect water meters and pipes from freezing

Remember to bundle up your water meter and pipes to keep them from freezing during extreme cold spells. The following precautions can help prevent frozen meters, burst pipes, water damage, and can avoid plumbing and meter replacement costs:

- Insulate water pipes in crawl spaces.
- Apply heat tape to the entire pipe in an unheated area (according to manufacturer recommendations).
- Add insulation between the outside wall and meter.
- Set up a space heater near the meter.
- Or simply leave the utility closet door open to circulate some heat.

Allowing a tiny trickle of water to run through one faucet to keep the water lines moving during a cold snap can also prevent pipes from freezing. If leaving town, you may call 734.794.6320 to have the water turned off.

NAP contest-winning photos on exhibit

City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation currently has a display of nature photos from its 2008 and 2009 photo contests in the Ann Arbor District Library through Thursday, Jan. 14. More than 300 photos from area photographers show a variety of landscapes and plant and animal life of southeast Michigan. NAP and ecological restoration information is also exhibited. For details, visit the NAP Web site:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/NAP/PhotoContest/Pages/default.aspx>.



A² on PBS

The City of Ann Arbor was recently featured on The PBS NewsHour's "Patchwork Nation" series. This series examines various communities over time, dividing America's 3,141 counties into 12 community types based on demographic characteristics. The NewsHour featured five of the 12 "Patchwork Nation" community types, specifically, "Industrial Metropolis" (Philadelphia); "Campus and Careers" (Ann Arbor); "Tractor Country" (Sioux City, Iowa); "Boom Town" (Eagle, Colo.); and "Service Worker Centers" (Lincoln City, Ore.). Additional elements of this reporting appear on the Online PBS NewsHour: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/patchworknation/>.

City government offices closed Jan. 18

In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, city government offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18. There will be no interruption in trash and recycling collection. Go online for a listing of other city events and meetings:

http://www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/Pages/Events.aspx.