

A² CITY NEWS



The Newsletter for the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan

July 2010, Volume 4, Number 7

This is a reprinted version of the original, which was e-mailed to A² City News subscribers on July 1, 2010. Further information on featured topics and current news can be found at www.a2gov.org.

*****Don't miss a word of what's new, important and exciting in our city. Subscribe to receive A² City News directly to your e-mail inbox. Go to www.a2gov.org/subscribe, simply select "Resident Newsletter: A² City News" from the list of subscription topics, and you are all set to receive the next issue, and in an earth-friendlier way.*****



Single-stream recycling starts July 5

July 5 marks the beginning of the city's single-stream recycling program, when Ann Arbor residents and businesses can recycle many additional materials, including all clean plastic bottles and tubs numbered 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (such as yogurt tubs, produce boxes and microwavable frozen food trays) except #3/PVC plastic and biodegradable plastics marked compostable or PLA. The recycling program will also accept clean frozen food boxes and bulky plastic items, such as laundry baskets and buckets. City customers may continue to recycle mixed papers (newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, office paper, flattened cardboard and cereal boxes) as well as milk cartons, juice boxes, metal cans and lids, glass bottles and jars, and scrap metal (up to 1 cubic foot, 20 pounds per piece). Simply put papers and clean containers into the same recycling cart!

Biodegradable/PLA plastics, #3 (PVC) plastics, Pyrex, and ceramics are not accepted because they contaminate the regional plastic and glass markets. Plastic bags or polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™) are prohibited because these items clog the sorting machinery. Go online for more details, www.a2gov.org/recycling.

Summer taxes

Summer property taxes are due in July. Taxes may be paid online, by mail, at the City of Ann Arbor Customer Service Center (220 E. Huron, diagonally across the street from City Hall) or at several local banks. TCF Bank, Bank of Ann Arbor, Michigan Commerce Bank, Fidelity Bank, Citizens Bank and Ann Arbor State Bank will accept tax payments July 1 through 31. Online payments can also be made at www2.a2gov.org/Mypropertyinformation/Taxlogin.asp

Payments made after July 31 are subject to a late fee and cannot be made at local banks. Go online to www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/treasury/Pages/TreasuryDivision.aspx for more information, including how property taxes are calculated.

\$25 Compost cart sale through July 30

Residents can order a compost cart for a one-time fee of \$25 when ordered by July 30, 2010. The pre-paid carts will be home delivered starting in mid September. Residents may select a 32-, 64- or 96-gallon compost cart. Additional carts may be pre-ordered to be delivered to the same address for the (regular) rate of \$50 each.

Buyers may place their compost cart order online at any time of day (and add the payment to your next water bill) or place an order in person or by phone to the Customer Service Center during weekday business hours, (220 E. Huron, diagonally across the street from City Hall / 734.994.7336, extension 0,) and pay by cash, credit or debit card, or place the order on your next water bill. The special factory discount rate for compost carts applies only to carts that are bulk-ordered and pre-paid by 5 p.m., Friday, July 30, 2010.

Compost carts purchased and picked up from the Customer Service Center after July 30 are priced at the regular cost of \$50 each.



The use of a rolling compost cart is a convenient alternative to paper yard-waste bags for collecting and transporting yard debris to the curb, and will be handy for the fall leaf management program, transitioning this year from two street leaf pickups each fall to weekly curbside collection, provided from April through the end of November.

For details on this sale and the compost program, visit the city website, www.a2gov.org/Compost.

City announces new CSA leader

After several months of serving in the interim role, the city is pleased to announce Sumedh Bahl has been appointed as City of Ann Arbor Community Services Area administrator. This service area includes the units of community development, parks and recreation, and planning and development.

Prior to the interim CSA appointment, Bahl worked at the City of Ann Arbor Water Treatment Plant for 20 years — the last 13 of which he's served as unit manager. He has also led several work improvement projects in other city service areas.

Bahl holds a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is a licensed professional engineer with the State of Michigan.



Annual Water Quality Report

The City of Ann Arbor's 2009 Annual Water Quality Report is now available. The report contains information about the city's water supply and treatment, as well as a listing of detected substances in the finished water. The report is available at the City of Ann Arbor's Customer Service Center, local libraries and online, www.a2gov.org/news.

Water system conservation: What does this mean to the city and for residents?

The benefit of conservation is most often not measured in the short term, but rather in the long-term ability to avoid future costs. The City of Ann Arbor water system, for example, has the vast majority of its cost related to the already-built, existing infrastructure: the treatment plant, the storage tanks, the water main pipes, etc., as well as the personnel to run the system. The city refers to all of these costs as fixed because they must be covered whether the system is operating at full capacity or less. This means that if less water is used, there are fewer units sold across which to spread those fixed costs.

Using less electricity and chemicals to treat less water provides some savings, particularly for the environment, but these are not big economic savings when considered in the overall operating budget.

However, in addition to the environmental benefits today, conservation means less investment in the future. For instance, consumers reducing peak water requirements in the summer over the past six years has meant that the city has been able to defer, perhaps eliminate, the need to secure additional water sources. Developing new wells and building pipelines to bring that water to the treatment plant would be at considerable new expense, both environmentally and economically, and that would mean significantly higher rates in the future. So again, conservation plays a very meaningful role in the long-term operational costs of our city's water system.

Conservation impacts aside, the city is doing everything possible to reduce or maintain operational costs to minimize the need to adjust rates. For example, more than \$1 million of deferred or permanent expense reductions were made in the 2010 water utility operations budget, which will also carry over to the next fiscal year. These cost-containment steps are taken while continuing to focus on maintaining high water quality and reliable service.

For more information on the environmental and economic benefits of water conservation, please see the city's Web page, www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/water_treatment/Pages/WaterConservation.aspx.

A² on the map

- City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation has been selected by the U.S. Department of the Interior as the 2010 Take Pride in America National Award winner (<http://www.takepride.gov/index.html>). This award recognizes local government's outstanding commitment to promoting the appreciation and stewardship of public lands.
- The City of Ann Arbor LED lighting initiative was recognized at the Energy Globe Awards Ceremony (www.energyglobe.com/en/award/), the world's most prominent



environmental award, earlier this month in Rwanda, Africa. The City of Ann Arbor has been installing LED lights in order to reduce lighting costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

- Several Ann Arbor Community Television Network staff and participants are national 2010 Hometown Video Festival winners, presented by the Alliance for Community Media (www.alliancecm.org/hometownwinners). First place awards were given in the News Category (Professional Division) for FYI: Ann Arbor's News Magazine, and in the Visual Arts (Professional Division) category for "Charles McGee – Nature."
- The City of Ann Arbor's use of the online service-request system for citizens, CityWorks, was recently featured by the application's creators in a video for their annual conference. The city uses CityWorks as an online resource for citizens to submit non-emergency service requests, such as for parks maintenance, pothole and streetlight repair — and, through July 31, online compost cart ordering. Click here for details and to watch the brief video, www.a2gov.org/GOVERNMENT/PUBLICSERVICES/CUSTOMERSERVICE/Pages/OnlineCustomerServiceRequest.aspx.

Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study

The City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update, completed in May 2009, identified key transportation concepts to support future growth in the city. One concept was the need for a "connector" to link proposed commuter rail stations planned for the Detroit to Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor to Howell commuter rail lines. Another concept involved potential "signature" transit corridors which would have high quality, high frequency transit service to enable higher density housing and employment concentrations. The Connector Feasibility Study is intended to link the "connector" and "signature" transit corridor concepts and evaluate the feasibility of advanced transit options for the city. For details, visit the city's transportation Web page,

www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/systems_planning/Transportation/Pages/Transportation%20Planning.aspx



Get ready for August and November elections

Tuesday, July 6 is the last day to register to vote for the Aug. 3 Primary Election. Residents can register at the City Clerk's office, second floor of City Hall, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.; at any Secretary of State branch office; or by mailing in a voter registration application postmarked by July 6. For details, call or e-mail the City Clerk's office cityclerk@a2gov.org / 734.794.6140.

Several polling place changes will take effect with the Aug. 3 election. Polling places previously located in University of Michigan dormitories have been moved to other on-campus locations due to university housing safety standards. In addition, Skyline High School (2552 N. Maple Road) has become a polling place, replacing the Mack School location. New voter registration cards were mailed to effected voters. View the updated polling place list from the city's elections website, www.a2gov.org/elections If in doubt, visit the Michigan Votes website, <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>, to find out your exact polling location.

Through July 13, the City of Ann Arbor is recruiting new election inspectors (poll workers) for the Aug. 3 Primary Election. Paid training is included, starting at \$8 per hour. Please e-mail recruiters@a2gov.org for details, qualifications or to sign up to be a new election inspector.

Siren warning system

The City of Ann Arbor office of emergency management conducts routine tests of the siren warning system at 1 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month, March through November. The tests consist of a continuous, one-minute siren. In the event of an actual tornado warning, the siren will sound continuously for three minutes. The City of Ann Arbor has used its siren system several times during the month of June. In the event you hear a siren, stay inside (preferably in the basement or, if you do not have one, stay in the interior of the lowest level of your house) and keep away from any windows. More information is available online at

www.a2gov.org/government/safetyservices/emergencymanagement/SirenWarningSystem/Pages/default.aspx.

Also online is information to help ensure you're prepared should an emergency occur. Visit the emergency planning pages of the city's website for ways to stay safe,

www.a2gov.org/government/safetyservices/emergencymanagement/planning/Pages/default.aspx.

A² fire services assists in Dundee rescue

When disaster strikes, it is common to hear of neighbors and communities coming together in extraordinary recovery efforts. This phenomenon held true when a tornado struck Dundee, Mich., roughly 25 miles south of Ann Arbor, in the early morning hours of Sunday, June 6, 2010.

The City of Ann Arbor Fire Services technical rescue team members were called in, along with the Washtenaw and Lenawee county TRTs, to rescue a woman and her dog trapped under her collapsed home. The team's extensive training proved effective, and the rescue efforts were successful.

The City of Ann Arbor often works and trains collaboratively with other communities to not only respond to, but to prepare for, emergencies. Visit the city's safety services area Web pages at www.a2gov.org/government/safetyservices/Pages/home.aspx for more information on the units that make up this service area: fire, police and emergency management.

Free family fun at Huron River Day, July 11

Enjoy the beautiful Huron River and participate in free family fun at the Huron River Day Celebration Sunday, July 11 at Gallup Park, 3000 Fuller Road in Ann Arbor. Now celebrating its 30th year, the event will kick off at 8:30 a.m. with the Gallup Gallop Run, a 5K run and a one-mile fun run hosted by the Ann Arbor Track Club. For more information and to pre register, visit the website, www.aatrackclub.org



From noon until 4 p.m., activities will include canoe and kayak rentals for \$5, children's activities, river exhibits, fishing fun, feeding live butterflies in a butterfly house, storytelling, music entertainment, theater shows, Metroparks Learning Center and river geocaching. Food will be for sale. Also, enjoy the history of the Huron River with the Classic Small Boat Show and an exhibit on Voyageurs. You can tour a pioneer grist mill at Parker Mill County Park, 4650 Geddes Road, on Sunday, July 11 as well, from 1 to 4 p.m.

This Huron River Day Celebration encourages partnerships among government, private and not-for-profit organizations and to educate citizens about the importance of water quality and Huron River preservation. Event sponsors are DTE Energy Foundation, Whole Foods and Toyota, with support from Stantec, Bank of Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Credit Union, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, National Wildlife Federation, Huron Clinton Metroparks and Huron River Watershed Council. For details, call 734.794.6240 or visit the website, www.a2gov.org/hrd.

Streetlight de-energizing

In response to the fiscal crisis that is affecting local governments across Michigan, the adopted Ann Arbor City Budget for fiscal year 2011, which begins on July 1, 2010, includes plans to de-energize approximately 1,250 streetlights to reduce \$120,000 annually in energy costs, which are supported by the general fund. Rate increases from DTE Energy have raised City of Ann Arbor annual streetlights general fund costs to approximately \$1.6 million in fiscal year 2010. The city has been actively working on other cost-saving measures, including converting downtown streetlights to LED to save \$100,000 per year, however, de-energizing some streetlights was deemed necessary in addition to other cost saving measures in order to balance the fiscal year 2011 budget.

Approximately 17 percent (approximately 1,250) of the city's 7,000 streetlights are slated to be de-energized. Streetlights slated for turn off do not include city-owned lights in the downtown district which have been converted to LED and already capture energy and maintenance savings. Specific lighting criteria were used to identify the streetlights that will be de-energized; these streetlights were found to surpass lighting guidelines. City streetlight specifications include: 190-foot maximum spacing between streetlights outside of the downtown and 40- to 60-foot maximum spacing between streetlights in the downtown. The 190-foot spacing is derived from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America's (IESNA) Recommended Practice for Roadway Lighting, and has been the city's standard specification since the late 1970s. The city's streetlight spacing specification is a maximum distance between poles. Many streetlights in the city were installed by developers of subdivisions or by DTE Energy and are spaced closer than the specification requires. In order to limit new installations and control costs, the city issued a moratorium on new street lighting in 2006, except where the developer installing the lighting agrees to a special assessment district to cover the lights' operating and maintenance expenses.

Prior to de-energizing all 1,250 identified lights after July 1, the City of Ann Arbor requested that DTE conduct a technical pilot in June which included de-energizing approximately 50 streetlights in an area that runs along Stadium Boulevard from Packard to Washtenaw Avenue and south to Independence Boulevard. (See the technical-area map located on the city website, www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/systems_planning/Pages/deenergizing.aspx.) DTE mailed letters to all DTE customers in the technical-pilot area in advance of completing the work on June 24. Staff will be reviewing the results of the pilot and making a decision with regard to full implementation in the very near future. Project updates will be made available on the project website, www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/systems_planning/Pages/deenergizing.aspx

ROUND-A-DAY GIVEAWAY!



Round-a-Day golf giveaway is in full swing

In an effort to help golfers explore the City of Ann Arbor's two beautiful and award-winning courses, a free round of golf is being awarded every day throughout the summer. The Round-a-Day Giveaway highlights the great golfing opportunities within the city at Huron Hills and Leslie Park golf courses. Here's how it works:

- Sign up to receive e-mail updates from the course by visiting www.a2golf.org and clicking the red envelope at the top of the page. Updates include information about special promotions and announcements. This information is never sold or shared with other entities.

- One name is randomly drawn each day for a free 18-hole round of golf voucher (greens fees only) at either Huron Hills or Leslie Park golf course.
- The lucky winner's names are posted online at www.a2golf.org each week. The two most-recent weeks worth of winners will remain posted, so be sure to check back often.
- If you see your name, you've won! Print off the page with your name on it, and redeem it for your free round within 30 days (you will need to verify your e-mail address at check-in).

It's that easy. Great golf in a great city could be yours for free. Sign up today!

Shedding light on the parks mowing cycle

The warm temperatures coupled with frequent rainfalls means the grass has been growing at an accelerated rate. Some residents have recently taken notice of the grass in some Ann Arbor parks, as it reaches atypical heights.

As part of the fiscal year 2010 budget recovery strategies, last summer, Ann Arbor City Council had approved to extend the parks mowing cycle from 14 days to 19 days, and to discontinue line trimming (weed whipping). These changes have been in effect since fall 2009 in the 130 parks on the city's regular maintenance schedule.

Not only does the rain make the grass grow more quickly, it can also make ground conditions too wet for the mowers. On occasion, a park due for mowing will have to be postponed because the ground is too saturated to support the weight of the equipment. To attempt to mow under those conditions would create deep ruts and/or would sink the equipment into the mud. Under such circumstances, the schedule is adjusted so that the park can be tended to as soon as conditions permit.

While the parks mowing cycle will remain at 19 days when the new fiscal-year budget begins July 1, 2010, the line trimming will be reinstated. Residents can again expect to see grass and weeds trimmed around trees, park equipment, benches, etc. as a part of the normal mowing cycle.

"Park neighbors" or anyone interested in volunteering at city parks can visit the city website for more information, www.a2gov.org/nap; or if you have a concern about a particular park, please submit an online citizen request for service: www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/customerservice/Pages/OnlineCustomerServiceRequest.aspx.

All aboard for the Greenbelt Bus Tour

Registration is going on now through July 10 for the Greenbelt Bus Tour, which departs from the Ann Arbor Farmers Market at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 17. Greenbelt staff will lead this tour of protected farm and open space. Passengers will learn about the Greenbelt program, local agriculture, and can talk with local farmers and representatives from the Huron River Watershed to learn how farmland protection helps the Huron River.



The bus returns to the market at approximately 1 p.m. The fee is \$15 per person and includes transportation on a luxury motor coach. Additional details can be found online at www.a2gov.org/greenbelt or contact Ginny Trocchio, 734.794.6000, extension 42798 / gtrocchio@a2gov.org

Argo Dam update

City staff continues to carry out the plan outlined in the Argo Dam consent agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Currently, the vegetation management plan is in progress. This ongoing and lengthy process, which includes, in part, the careful and necessary removal of identified vegetation from the embankment, will continue through the summer.

Staff presentations to explain the consent agreement and opportunities for public comment will take place at the Tuesday, July 20 Park Advisory Commission meeting as well as the Thursday, July 22 Environmental Commission meeting. Meeting details can be found on the Argo Dam Web page, www.a2gov.org/government/Pages/ArgoDam.aspx, or the city's meetings and events calendar,

www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/Pages/Events.aspx. If you are unable to attend this meeting in person or watch it live on Community Television Network, check out the Video On Demand online replay, <http://a2govtv.pegcentral.com/>, which will be available on July 21.

Art fairs, festivals and road work ... oh my!

Getting around Ann Arbor in the summer months can, at times, be second only to football Saturdays in terms of difficulty. Several months of construction-friendly weather brings about an increase in road work projects. In addition, there are the Art Fairs, taking place July 21 through 24, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, going on now through July 11, and several other special events taking place throughout the summer, and the year, for that matter.

Always know where to turn with road or lane closure e-updates from the City of Ann Arbor. Visit www.a2gov.org/subscribe to subscribe for scheduled closures to be sent to your e-mail.



Fun (and savings) in the sun

By heading to one of the city's three outdoor swimming pools you can get some sun — in more ways than one! For more than 20 years, the City of Ann Arbor has heated its three outdoor swimming pools with solar energy: Veterans, Buhr and Fuller parks.

The heating systems pump the pool water to solar panels to be warmed and sent back to the pool. Fuller Park Pool's system is perhaps the most visible, in the form of the "Sun Dragon."

The solar hot water systems have reduced the pools' peak natural gas demands during the summer swimming months, resulting in lower municipal energy bills. Energy data from the pools show that the solar water heating systems save about \$4,500 a year in natural gas costs at each facility.

And while many people think of Michigan as a cloudy state, domestic solar water heating is one of the most cost-effective ways to incorporate renewable energy into your life, and current financial incentives are making it even more affordable. For details, visit the city's energy website, <http://www.a2gov.org/energy>.

Parking fines adjusted

Beginning July 1, City of Ann Arbor parking fines and associated late fee changes go into effect. The last parking fee rate adjustment was approved by City Council in 2004.

The updated parking fee structure includes three key components:

- Similar violations are grouped into four categories and fines are standardized by category (Expired Meter, Minor & Near Hazard, Hazard, and Nuisance);
- An additional penalty is added to every fine at 30 days; and
- A \$10 discount is offered for early payment for all fines (previously, a \$5 early-payment discount was offered only to expired meter violations).

A complete overview of the expiring fees with a comparison to the new fee structure is available on the city's website, www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/treasury/.

Parking fines still can be paid in one of five ways: 1) via mail (check or money order only) to City of Ann Arbor Processing Center, P.O. Box 2066, Tarrytown, NY 10591. Postmarks are accepted as evidence of timely payment; 2) online via the city's website (www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/treasury/Pages/PayViaNet.aspx); 3) by calling toll free 866.890.4982; 4) 24-hour drop box located outside City Hall on the north side of Ann Street at 100 N. Fifth Ave.; or 5) in person at the City of Ann Arbor Customer Service Center located at the City Center Building, first floor, 220 East Huron.

More information is available on the parking page(s) of the city website: www.a2gov.org/parking.

City meetings and events

Visit the City of Ann Arbor website for the schedule of meetings and events. Of special note for July:

- City government offices will be closed for the Independence Day holiday, Monday July 5. However, curbside trash/compost/ and the launch of single-stream recycling will not be interrupted (www.a2gov.org/recycle).
- Tuesday, July 6 is the last day to register to vote in the Aug. 3 primary election (www.a2gov.org/gelections).
- Fuller Road Station Public Meeting No. 4 is Thursday, July 8 (www.a2gov.org/government/Pages/Fuller.aspx).

* * * * *