

# City of Effingham

## Newsletter

www.effinghamil.com

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### Numbers to Know

Mayor/Administrator  
217-342-5304

City Clerk's Office  
217-342-5301

Water Department  
217-342-2366

Public Works  
217-342-5303

Economic Development  
217-342-5304

Tourism Department  
217-342-5310

Helen Matthes Library  
217-342-2464

### City Hall Hours

Administration Office  
Monday to Friday  
8 am to noon  
1 pm to 5 pm

City Clerk's Office  
Monday to Friday  
7 am to 5 pm

Water Department  
Monday to Friday  
7:30 am to 4:30 pm

Public Works  
Monday to Friday  
8 am to noon  
1pm to 5 pm

## Message from the Mayor

I am happy to introduce you to the first edition of the City of Effingham's newsletter, which will allow everyone to keep in touch with the many varied and exciting opportunities that continue to set the City of Effingham apart from most communities in South Central Illinois. I hope this newsletter will provide all of us a valued community resource to serve our citizens and outlying area residents well.

This quarterly publication, which will arrive through the mail, is designed to better inform our readers of the progress and programs in the City of Effingham. The newsletter will feature many sections, including information on City programs

and community events, economic development, general news and contact information for staff and elected officials.

I want to open the lines of communication between City government and the people we serve. We will strive to educate, enlighten and explain our duties and responsibilities to you, resulting in a mutually beneficial understanding of our community and of the officials elected to manage our city. Effingham City staff, from support staff to administration to elected officials, will work hard to provide interesting news that will deliver better awareness and knowledge.

I want this newsletter to be a tool for all of us to gain facts, ask



Mayor John Lange

questions or simply enjoy reading about all the good things that Effingham nurtures and provides. Our goal is to fill this newsletter with so many useful and diverse articles you will be watching the mail for the next edition!

## From the Administrator

Welcome to the resurrected City of Effingham Newsletter. As the Acting City Administrator, I felt it was time to reinstate the newsletter to keep the residents of Effingham informed of events within our community as well as City Hall.

Hopefully, this line of communication will allow our local government agency to better serve you. As will be noted elsewhere in this newsletter, this publication will go out on a quarterly basis. We also hope to go green, as a cost savings measure, by sending the newsletter to as many residents as possible via electronic mail. So please, should you want an electronic copy contact Kim Jansen, our Tourism Director, at jansenki@ci.effingham.il.us or at 217-342-

5310 with your email address.

This will be both my first and last newsletter article. As most of you already know, I will be retiring in December of this year. At the time of this publication, my replacement will have been named and should be on board by mid-November.

Effingham has a great future ahead. Not only is there a lot of business expansion and development activity going on with Midland States Bank and Patterson Companies as well as many others, but also the creation of Effingham as a major regional center for health care and assisted living care.

At City Hall, the creation of the position of City Administrator and its new role will guide Effingham through these tough



Administrator Rick Goeckner

economic times and into the future. I feel this needed move will provide the leadership that will take Effingham to the next level. I truly wish I were here to be a part of the continued excitement, growth, and possibilities that will occur through this change in our

• Continued to Page 11

Section of Interstate 70 opened 50 year ago.  
Find out more on Page 3.

# Commissioners' Comments

## Progress & Patience

It has been a rewarding past 3 1/2 years since taking office. I question where the time has gone, and I look back on what has taken place in our community.

How fortunate we are here in Effingham to have come out of the recession with local jobs staying and major businesses expanding their companies in our community. This speaks volumes about our local work force.

The job market for white collar workers has taken a huge step forward with the construction of the new Midland States Bank facility and the new construction for Patterson Dental. Kudos to these businesses for investing their growth in our community.

On another note, one would have to admit that patience has played a part in the past 3 1/2 years too.

We're still working on find-



**Karen Flach**

ing a home for our library.

We also find it frustrating to admit that when you have local government working with state and federal government, many areas such as our infrastructure just take time to move forward on improvements.

We have a great team of city staff who work well together to get all the funding and grants that we need to continue to make these infrastructure improvements a reality. Time moves on, and as the City continues to grow and prosper, it truly is "GOOD TO BE HERE."

## City takes bold step

Effingham has always been a progressive city and in continuance of that, the City Council made the bold step of hiring our first city administrator.

As we are a \$28 million business, it makes absolute sense to hire a trained professional to manage that business on a daily basis. It is the same as hiring a superintendent to run the schools, while the board makes policy and shapes the future.

We will become a more efficient machine, offering the same quality services, but at a



**Alan Harris**

cheaper price.

I ask the citizens of Effingham to continue to support us as we strive to make Effingham a great place to work and raise our families.

## Effingham, a great place

With all the negative articles and comments coming out lately concerning the federal, state, and local governments and politicians, one could easily get caught up in this negativism. Once we have succumbed to this attitude, we may allow it to expand to other areas of our lives, including how we feel about the community in which we live. Sometimes we need something to occur which reminds us of what a great community Effingham is, and what great people live here. On Sept. 27, I attended such an event.

The Washington Savings Bank, Heartland Dental Care, and YB Next in cooperation with the Effingham Chamber of Commerce and Effingham Daily News, sponsored an award ceremony for the "Top 20 Under 40 Community Leaders." That these organizations took the time and effort to recognize a group of young people in our community who are so actively involved in making our community better is in itself a positive step. But, what impressed me the most is that the people selected were not whom one might expect.

They were not Effingham's wealthiest or presidents or CEOs of corporations, though some have been presented this award at past ceremonies. Some own their own businesses. Some work for private industry and others work in the



**Merv Gillenwater**

public sector. Some have degrees while others do not. Most of these people have probably never before had their names in the paper for their accomplishments and may never again. They were recognized because of their giving of themselves and their devotion to making this community a better place to live.

I moved my family to Effingham 24 years ago to get closer to my relatives who live near Decatur. Now that I am semi-retired, we could have moved from Effingham. Sitting there listening to the names of those young people being called along with their titles or positions, I was reminded why we continue to live here. I was reminded Effingham is a great city and a great community, thanks in part to those recognized and many others who were not recognized.

It takes a lot of people to build and maintain a city. It takes a lot of people working together to build and maintain a community.

## Be positive, part of the solution

It seems like everywhere there is nothing but a spirit of negativity. It seems all the news we read and hear is nothing but negative.

In today's climate it is easy to be negative and point fingers at the problems of society. It is another challenge to invest your energy in identifying solutions. A positive, can-do attitude has helped make Effingham the progressive community that we



**Larry Micenheimer**

are all proud to call home. Why not become part of the solution, not part of the problem?

The Effingham City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall. Meetings are open to the public.

# Resident recalls working on I-70

When Roger Mead moved to Effingham in June of 1959, it was a sleepy little town. But, all that would soon change.

In 1959, Effingham had earned the reputation of a Crossroads Community with U.S. 40 and U.S. 45 crossing in Effingham and with state routes 32, 33, and 37 serving the community. However, a construction project that Mead would participate in over the next several years would change the face of Effingham and transform it into a major transportation hub.

Moving from western New York to Effingham, Mead was hired to work as an engineer for the Illinois Department of Transportation, which was increasing its workforce to prepare for the construction of the interstates.

At the age of 21, Mead was pleased just to find work, even if it meant he had to move to another part of the United States.

"It was a job," remembers Mead. "It was during

a recession, and jobs were hard to find."

Mead's first major project was the stretch of Interstate 70 from Funkhouser Road to Fayette Avenue, which opened 50 years ago in the fall. Entrance and exit points on the Funkhouser Road and on Fayette Avenue accessed the portion of the roadway.

According to Mead, IDOT was anxious to open that particular section of the interstate because it would allow for traffic to be redirected off of U.S. 40. During that time, a portion of U.S. 40 had a dangerous curve, and IDOT officials thought it was essential to reroute traffic as soon as possible. Changes to improve that portion of U.S. 40 would occur in the future, which resulted in the section of roadway just east of the railroad overpass bridge and "the S curves."

Although the portion of the interstate Mead first worked on opened 50 years ago, he still recalls the event. Although at the



**Roger Mead of Effingham recalls working as an engineer of the first section of Interstate 70 to open.**

time, he had no idea how that project would affect the community.

"It was a job. When you got done with that job, you went on to another one. You didn't get time to sit back and see the changes you caused," said Mead.

But, Mead said it quickly became apparent that the project had the potential to create a great impact after it surpassed expectations.

Studies indicated the interstates would see an in-

crease in vehicles to 20,000 a day between the two tri-levels by 1975. However, the number surpassed those expectations in five years.

The results of the increase in traffic had a tremendous impact on the city.

"Effingham went from a little town to a thriving, growing community," said Mead. "Everything has come along with the interstates. The community wouldn't be much of anything, if it hadn't been for the interstates."

# Volunteers needed for holiday light display

With the holiday season just around the corner, the City of Effingham is making arrangements for its annual Wonderland in Lights display and is in need of volunteers.

Wonderland in Lights, a drive-thru light display at Community Park, features a variety of lighted holiday scenes, including reindeer flying, Santa coming down the chimney, and a Nativity scene.

Two shifts of two or more vol-

unteers are needed each evening to spread the spirit of the holidays by greeting visitors, passing out candy canes, and accepting donations for the light display. A small building located at the exit of the display provides shelter and heat for those volunteering.

The Tourism Office welcomes volunteers of all ages, including high school students who are in need of community service hours.

The display opens Thanksgiving

Day and runs through Christmas Day, with hours from 5 to 9 pm Sunday through Thursday and from 5 to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Also, Santa visits the display every Saturday to bring special presents to the children.

Those interested in volunteering may contact the Effingham Tourism Office at 217-342-5310.

For more information on Christmas activities, visit the tourism website at [www.VisitEffinghamIL.com](http://www.VisitEffinghamIL.com).

# Community Development

## Projects underway, despite economic climate

This year, there have been numerous projects undertaken or are underway in the City of Effingham in spite of the turbulent State and Federal economic situations.

The City has worked with numerous existing and new companies to assist them with their projects. Two of the largest projects are the Midland States Bank Corporate Office and the Patterson Technology Center which are both currently under construction in the north end of town off Althoff Drive.

*Midland States Bank* is constructing a 79,506 sq. ft. facility which will serve as corporate headquarters for its numerous banking facilities. The location in Effingham is of great significance as not many new corporate headquarters for large companies are being located in smaller communities – most are found in cities much larger than Effingham.

*Patterson Companies* is constructing a new 110,484 sq. ft. complex which is double the size of their currently leased building. Patterson considered numerous other locations in and outside of Illinois for the project but decided on Effingham to locate the new complex. One of the reasons for this decision was the City's commitment to extend the Enterprise Zone.

Another large project which occurred in 2010 was the construction of a new Center for Advanced Imaging at *St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital*. The new Center offers the highest quality, state-of-the-art equipment including a 64-Slice CT Scanner, a 16-Channel MRI Unit, and a nuclear medicine suite.

Taking a look at additional industrial projects, the City assisted *Bonutti Research* with drainage improvements as part of their 4,640 sq. ft. expansion to their facility located in the Effingham Business Park and also assisted *Mid America Motorworks* with improvements to their complex. *Sherwin Williams* continues



**Construction continues on the new corporate headquarters for Midland States Bank. Construction is expected to be completed by Fall 2011.**



**A site next to the Network Centre Hi-Tech Park was selected for Patterson Companies new complex.**

to make major improvements to their 1.2 million sq. ft. distribution facility as part of the retention project which was approved in 2009. The City also recently worked with *Solix CMR* with the location of a call center in the Network Centre Business Park and sold a lot in the Effingham Business Park to *Xtreme Seeding* for their new 4,800 sq. ft. facility.

In addition, the City and County worked jointly on an agreement to

build a new terminal at the *Effingham County Airport* and construction is anticipated to begin later this year.

The City continues to work with expanding and new industrial companies and several projects are coming close to fruition.

The Effingham Enterprise Zone has also been active with 13 projects undertaken over the last six months. The 13 projects encompass

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# Community Development

## Economic indicators show City still a prime location

Some economic indicators that continue to show that the City is still a prime location for expanding and new companies would be the real estate tax rate, sales tax revenue and the unemployment rate.

A new study just completed by Berns, Clancy, and Associates of Urbana shows that the total real estate tax rate for the City of Effingham of \$7.28085 was ranked 74th lowest out of 81 central Illinois communities surveyed. In other words, only seven communities out of the 81 surveyed had a lower tax rate than Effingham. Effingham's ranking actual improved going from a ranking of 73 to a ranking of 74 in comparison to the survey taken last year.

Sales tax revenue is another indicator which is closely tracked by the City. 2009 revenue was seriously affected by the negative economic situation with about an 8.5% decrease in total sales tax revenue in comparison to 2008 figures.

A good portion of this decrease was due to the increase in biodiesel usage by the truck stops whereby the City

does not receive any sales tax from purchases of biodiesel. By contrast, the first two quarters of sales tax revenue for 2010 reflect an increase of 6.9% in comparison to the first two quarters of 2009.

It is anticipated that this trend of increasing sales tax revenue will continue into the future months to come.

A last indicator which the City monitors is the unemployment rate.

Effingham County's unemployment rate for August 2010 was 7.9% which was the same as it was in August 2009 and a decrease from the 8.4% rate for July 2010.

While the rate is still significant, the unemployment rate in Effingham County is still one of the lowest in the 18 county South Central Illinois Region and was actually tied for the lowest rate along with Clinton and Washington Counties. For comparison, some of the other area county rates for August 2010 were the following: Clark – 12.2%, Coles – 9.9%, Cumberland – 9.7%, Clay – 12.0%, Fayette – 10.6%, Jasper – 9.7%, and Marion – 11.9%.

### Did you know ....

Effingham's overall primary trade area extends beyond Effingham County into all adjacent counties.

This trade area contains an aggregate income of over \$1.3 billion (2004 estimate).

The trade area is comprised of 21 zip codes.

Effingham businesses also draw from and beyond the defined primary trade area, attracting customers from 177 zip codes (not including out-of-state customers).

## Projects Underway -- Continued from Page 4

\$45,551,823 of new investment and will result in the creation of 82 new jobs over the next two years. The Enterprise Zone was created in 1988 and provides various tax incentives for businesses expanding or locating within the zone boundaries.

There has likewise been a good amount of activity in the commercial sector. *Bangkok Thai* and *Taqueria Don Pedro* are two new restaurants, and *Denny's* is currently constructing a new facility on their property off Keller Drive.

Assisted living and Alzheimer's facilities are being constructed all over the community. *Aspen Creek*

*Development* just finished a 6,400 sq. ft. Alzheimer's complex off Blohm Avenue and is currently constructing a second facility of 6,400 sq. ft. *Lavender Ridge* is another Alzheimer's complex being constructed off Evergreen Avenue and is 16,865 sq. ft. in size. Two assisted living facilities are under construction. The *Glenwood Assisted Living* facility of 35,635 sq. ft. and the *Villas of Hollybrook* of 41,405 sq. ft. are both slated for completion next year.

Some of the other new commercial projects include: the relocation and construction of a new *Dollar General*, *Sphinx Auto Sales*, *Carle Clinic*,

*Sarah Bush Lincoln Clinic*, *Uphill Grind Cycle and Fitness*, *Discount Eyewear*, *Beyond Ordinary Gift Shop*, *America's Mattress*, and the re-opening of *The Effingham Performance Theater*. Several new retailers are anticipated to open in the near future.

The City continues to be aggressive in its economic development efforts in both the commercial and industrial sectors.

The City is starting to see more and more businesses invest in their companies, and hopefully this trend will continue throughout this year and years to come.

# What's New

## City receives accreditation from IEMA

The City of Effingham was recently granted accreditation by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, after demonstrating the City met the eligibility requirements for the program.

Through the program, the City of Effingham will collaborate with emergency service programs already in place in Effingham County and neighboring communities to protect the public in case of disaster.

The Emergency Management Assistance grant program uses federal funds to aid in the administration of effective emergency management services. The program provides financial assistance for the development of the effective, integrated emergency management organizations in Illinois in order to perform administrative activities, and prepare for any natural, or technological emergency, or disaster in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency administers the EMA grant program. EMA grant funds are made available by the Department of Homeland Security through the Federal Emergency Management Agency in an allocation to states called Emergency Management Performance Grants.

The EMPG funds are utilized by states for a variety of emergency management programs.



Three phases of the Outer Belt West project are now open. The new road connects Evergreen Avenue, Fayette Avenue, and U.S. 40.

## Roadway alleviates traffic issues

The dream of solving the congested traffic issues on Keller Drive began in 1959 with respective mayors, Paul Taylor and Lolami Keller. Today, the final stage of that dream is about to be realized.

The first section of Outer Belt West was completed in the fall of 2004 with the help of funding from a Department of Commerce Economic Development Assistance Grant (EDA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Economic Development Program (EDP) funds, IDOT Truck Access Route Program (TARP) funds, local Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funds, and Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds and was constructed by Feutz Contractors. Since that time, new facilities have located on the corridor and existing facilities have expanded.

Responding to positive developments, the City solicited funding for the next sections receiving \$1.5 million from the Federal

Surface Transportation Bill. At the same time, the County received \$1.6 million for the extension of West Evergreen Avenue toward Lake Sara. With additional IDOT TARP funds and local TIF funds, the second section of Outer Belt West was built connecting West Evergreen Avenue and West Fayette Avenue and providing an alternate route in lieu of Keller Drive for travelers and the community. The project included a 200 foot bridge, 4,600 feet of pavement, sidewalks, and storm sewers. Kieffer Bros. Construction was the contractor on this project, completing the project ahead of schedule. The project was nominated at the district level for project of the year for PCC Pavement.

The next section of Outer Belt West, also constructed by Kieffer Bros. Construction, connected West Fayette Avenue to US 40 providing yet another alternate route for the community as well as access

to the new FedEx Freight facility. Funding was provided by another EDA Grant, IDOT Economic Development Program (EDP) funds, IDOT TARP funds, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) funds, and local TIF funds. The project included a 1,500 foot long site wall, 3,000 feet of multi-use pathway, 3,600 feet of pavement, and extensive reconstruction of Rt. 40 and the Petro Trucking Center parking lot, storm sewers, and water mains. The road was opened in August 2010.

The final section of Outer Belt West will connect all previous sections of the project to Ford Avenue on the far north end of Effingham at Keller Drive at an estimated cost of just under \$2.8 million with funding provided by the Illinois Jobs Now Fund. Construction could begin late fall of this year.

# What's New

## Visitor Center welcomes travelers to City

Over 1,200 visitors from across the country, and even from across the world, have dropped by the new Effingham Visitor Center looking for information about Effingham and the region.

In July, the Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau moved offices from City Hall to the renovated Visitor Center located just off Exit 160 on Hampton Drive. Through the Visitor Center, the tourism office is able to provide various services to travelers and also to residents who are seeking travel information for Illinois.

The staff at the Visitor Center provides assistance to travelers, whether it be recommendations on hotels and restaurants in the area, directions to various businesses in town, access to the internet, or clean restroom facilities.

Each traveler that visits the center is tracked in a logbook. Information collected includes where the traveler is from and what brings him or her to Effingham. Also, information on whether the traveler plans to stay in an Effingham hotel is logged.

The funds to operate and maintain the Visitor



**The Effingham Visitor Center opened in July and has served over 1,000 visitors.**

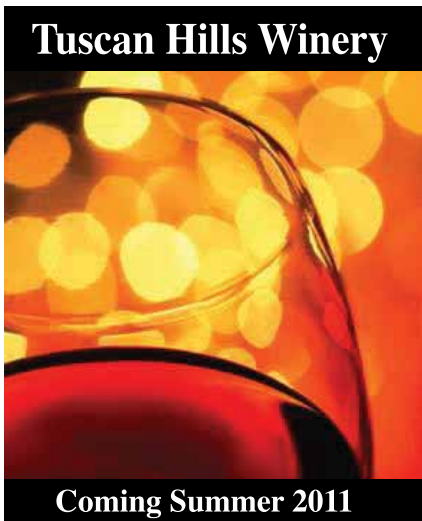
Center are paid 100 percent through Hotel/Motel Tax Funds, which is a restricted fund generated through overnight stays. Only those hotel customers who book an overnight stay in the community pay the tax.

Residents who are interested in checking out the

Visitor Center are encouraged to stop by. The Visitor Center is open during the fall and winter months from 8 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

For information on Effingham tourism, visit [www.VisitEffinghamIL.com](http://www.VisitEffinghamIL.com).

## Winery to Open in 2011



**Tuscan Hills Winery**

**Coming Summer 2011**

Fall 2010 marks the groundbreaking of Tuscan Hills Winery. The winery will be located on Historic Hills Drive, directly behind the Harley Barn, on eight picturesque acres and is destined to be a hot spot for locals as well as a great tourist attraction for Effingham.

Tuscan Hills Winery's goal is to create an Old World Tuscan feel in the heart of Effingham. The owners are particularly focused on creating elegant, approachable and perfectly balanced wines of the highest quality.

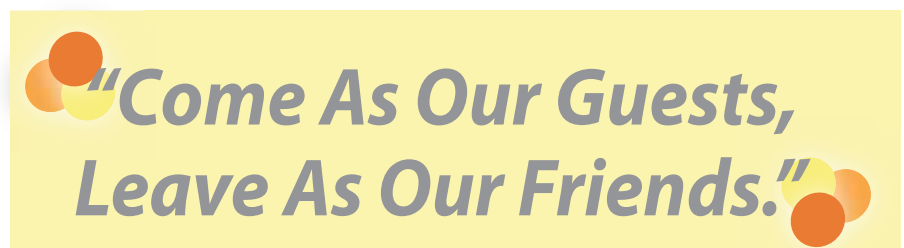
Tuscan Hills Winery's talented, award-winning winemaker, Larry Jackson, creates wines that express his passion for excellence and hand-crafted techniques. The owners, Wes, Wanda & Amanda Pitcher, and Larry & Annette Jackson, want all customers to "come

as our guests, leave as our friends"...something that will be easy to do as guests relax and enjoy the naturally beautiful views from the indoor/outdoor spaces.

Wine tastings, regular daily hours, and an open space for business or social gatherings are also features that the winery plans to offer.

Tuscan Hills Winery is expected to open Summer 2011.

For more information, email [info@effinghamwinery.com](mailto:info@effinghamwinery.com), or visit [www.effinghamwinery.com](http://www.effinghamwinery.com)



## Grandparent scam aimed at elderly

Chief Schutzbach and staff of the Effingham City Police Department want to make sure you don't get caught by a con artist

"You've won money!" There is only one catch ... you must deposit their check, then wire a portion back to the company to cover taxes or administration fees. You hesitate, but the caller is convincing and sincere. You cash the check and the money is deposited in your bank account. You are on cloud nine dreaming about spending your winnings, until the check is deemed fake and the money is removed from your account. You are out of the money that was wired to the "company," and you are unable to recoup your losses. You are the victim of a scam. You learn the hard way that you should never have to send money to receive any winnings from a lottery or sweepstakes and to always contact family members, an attorney, or local police before making the decision to send money for a lottery prize.

A con artist is a swindler who uses a confidence game to cheat or defraud people, or is someone who lies in order to make people give him money. Con artists target their victims in person, by mail, by telephone, or by internet and they are experts at manipulating people out of their money. The varieties of scams are endless. They prey on those who are vulnerable such as those who have a desire to help or those who are in financial need. Victims often feel foolish, embarrassed, and hurt that they have been taken advantage of, and often fail to report the con artist and crime.

Educate yourself so that you can spot scams before they take your money and self-esteem. Be wary of the following common phrases used by con artists: money guaranteed, no risk involved; cash only; last chance offer—you must act now; get rich quick. Identifying the common red flags of a scam is one way to protect yourself and your wallet.

Roughly 20 percent of American senior citizens, aged 65 and older, have fallen victim to a scam.

- 1) Always use common sense. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- 2) Be cautious of investment or money-making offers received that were unsolicited.
- 3) Say "no" to high pressure tactics. Con artists do not want to give you time to think about your decision. Take time to thoroughly read, discuss, and understand any paperwork you sign.
- 4) Never use a money transfer service to send money to someone you don't know or whose identity you can't verify.
- 5) Contact the Better Business Bureau to determine the legitimacy of a company.

Roughly 20 percent of American senior citizens, aged 65 and older, have fallen victim to a scam. Keeping the lines of communication open with elders regarding finances and educating elders on recognizing red flags of common con artists are important. A few common scams for the elderly include the Grandparent Scam, Bereavement Scam, and Deceptive Professionals Scam.

The Grandparent Scam, which involves the con artist impersonating a grandchild asking for financial help. An example follows:

Con artist: "Hi Grandma"

Grandparent: "Bobby, is that you?"

Con Artist: "Yes Grandma, I'm in some trouble and need you to send money"

The con artist may pretend to be a grandchild or may impersonate a police officer, or pose as an attorney requesting money be wired for various driving infractions, and is then followed by requests for court costs and legal fees. It may often be stated that grandchild is too embarrassed to call

their parents.

Senior citizens are vulnerable after the death of a loved one, particularly a spouse, and are often victims of the Bereavement/Obituary Scam. The con artist will target victims by reading the obituaries and then calling the widow or widower and claim their spouse has an outstanding debt that needs to be paid immediately. In another variation, the con artist claims to have items/services ordered by the deceased just prior to their death. Offer support to family members who have recently lost a loved one and are inexperienced in managing finances. If uncertain if the debt is owed, request written confirmation from the collector.

Deceptive Professionals/Contractor Scams are technicians, contractors, and others who come to the senior citizen's home for services. They are working in the neighborhood and stop by because they notice a problem with your roof. They quote a reasonable price for the repair and they begin work. You sign some papers without reading them because your glasses are in the next room. You later realize the papers you signed are a home equity loan with fees and a higher than normal interest rate. The contractor that began the job fails to show up to finish it, you are out a significant amount of money, and now you are missing shingles. The contractor scam can also involve lying about the extent of a problem in order to inflate prices. Be skeptical of any salesperson that appears at your door uninvited. Do not rush to sign a contract, carefully read the contract to ensure the oral agreement is the same as the written one. Do not sign a contract with a blank space to be filled in afterwards.

If you feel you have been the victim of a scam or have questions about the validity of an unsolicited request, contact the Effingham City Police Department, the Effingham County Committee on Aging (Senior Center), or the Attorney General's Office.

# Safety First

## Fire Department programs in full swing

### SMOKE DETECTOR PROGRAM

The Effingham Fire Department held its annual Smoke Detector Program in the months of June, July and August. This year alone, the firefighters installed 37 smoke detectors and replaced 45 batteries for residents in numerous neighborhoods across the city. During these same visits, firefighters were given the opportunity to educate the residents on the importance of working smoke alarms.

### CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY!

November 7 is quickly approaching – the date when residents will turn their clocks back for the fall season. The Effingham Fire Department would like to remind everyone to also take this time to change the battery in their Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector.

In addition:

- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button
- If an alarm “chirps”, warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom and one on every level of the home including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Smoke rises; install smoke alarms following manufacturer’s instructions high on a wall or on a ceiling.

### KEEP THE WREATH RED

Once again the Effingham Fire Department will be participating in the “Keep the Wreath Red” program during the holiday season. As you drive



Firefighter Brad Hecht installs a smoke alarm at a local residence as part of the Effingham Fire Department’s Smoke Detector Program.

past the fire stations during this time, please take note of the large wreath that will be prominently displayed in front of the buildings.

This wreath will be illuminated with red lights. When a fire is determined to be caused or related to Christmas decorations, one of the bulbs will be changed to white. The program is designed to remind the public of fire safety during the Christmas season.

Safety tips to remember this holiday season:

- If you want a natural tree, select only a fresh tree. Be sure the needles do not readily fall off.
- Make sure you keep water in the water reservoir.
- Avoid overloading circuits or extension cords. Use only manufacturer’s maximum number of light strings.
- Keep natural trees away from any

heat source that will cause drying.

- Never leave lighted candles unattended.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

### FOOD AND TOY DONATION

The Effingham Fire Department Central Fire Station, located at 505 W. Fayette Ave., will be a drop-off location for non-perishable food items this Thanksgiving season.

Toys for all age groups (teens too) may also be dropped off at this same location in anticipation of the Christmas Holiday.

All food and gift/toy donations will be divided among the local food pantries and various charitable organizations for distribution.

The Effingham Fire Department is not able to accept cash or check donations.

## Have you ever asked yourself if you should dial 9-1-1?

9-1-1 is only to be used in emergency situations. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from law enforcement, fire department or an ambulance service.

There is no charge for dialing 9-1-1, so if you are ever in doubt of whether a situation is an emergency you should call 9-1-1. It’s better to be safe and let the trained Telecommunicator determine if you need emergency assistance.

# Safety First



Melissa Coats, who works for the City of Effingham as a crossing guard, stops traffic for a group of students crossing Fayette Avenue.

## Be prepared to stop

The City of Effingham, Effingham Community Unit 40 schools, and St. Anthony Grade School request assistance in promoting school crossing safety. We ask the public's assistance in enhancing awareness by addressing on-going problems in the school zones.

The City of Effingham employs school crossing guards at West Side School (Fayette Avenue), South Side School (Wabash Avenue and Fourth Street), and St. Anthony Grade School (Third Street).

There have been numerous problems with motorists running the school crossing guards' stop signs, speeding in the posted 20 MPH school crossing zones, cell phone usage, and passing stopped vehicles in the right lanes of traffic.

The biggest problems are cell phone usage and speeding in the school crossing zones. As referenced in Illinois State Statute 625 ILCS 5/11-605, the 20 MPH speed limit is in effect from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day school is in session while children are present and close to the proximity of the traffic. The city and school officials are concerned about the safety of our children and employees.

The Effingham Police Department

will issue tickets to motorists disregarding school crossing guards' directions, cell phone usage, and speeding in the school zones. Many motorists may not be aware of the violation for using cell phones in school zones. There will be additional patrolling efforts by the Police Department in the various school zones during the morning and afternoon hours.

The city and school officials appreciate your support and commitment by providing a safer environment at these school zone locations. You as a motorist can definitely make a difference! If you have additional questions or suggestions, please contact Dan Bledsoe at 217-342-5366.

### Remember:

- Be aware of each school crossing zone.
- Drive 20 MPH in the school crossing zones.
- No cell phone usage in the school crossing zones.
- Watch for the school crossing guards and the children.
- Take extra care while driving during inclement weather.

## Winter weather is just around the corner

With winter just around the corner and the possibility of snow, this is a good time to explain how and why City employees remove snow from the roadways.

Sometimes the snow plows are out early, clearing the roadways long before most people arise in the morning, to allow citizens to go about their daily routines as soon as possible. If additional snow is in the forecast, you may see the snow plow come by a second time, pushing the snow farther from the roadway in order to widen the road and make room for the additional snow that may need to be moved later. Snow removal is a service to the citizens of the City of Effingham, but this process can take hours and sometimes means early mornings and late nights for our employees.

Unfortunately, as the blade of the snow plow pushes the snow off the road, it also pushes snow into residential driveways and business entrances. It is, of course, not the City's intention to deliberately plow entries shut or to inconvenience its citizens, but the snow must be cleared in a timely manner so that emergency vehicles, such as fire, ambulance and police, may promptly and safely respond to calls. Also, the mail still needs to be delivered, and drainage must be maintained.

While it would be great to be able to then return and remove the snow from all entrances, please also consider the number of driveways and entrances involved. The City simply does not have the manpower to provide this service, and the removal of the snow from the roadways must remain our first priority. However, if there is an emergency situation that would require the City's assistance, please do not hesitate to call us at 217-342-5304.

# Around Town

## Do you know where this is?



This little boy and girl quietly sit on a bench amongst the flowers at a popular spot in Effingham. If you know where, enter to win a gift basket full of hometown goodies!

Submit answers along with your contact information by emailing [jansenki@ci.effingham.il.us](mailto:jansenki@ci.effingham.il.us) or by mail to Effingham Tourism Office, 201 E. Jefferson Ave., Effingham, IL 62401. Correct answers will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win. Entries are due by Dec. 1.

<i>The EPC</i>	
<b>Dave Rudolf</b> <b>Halloween Spooktacular</b> 2:00pm & 4:00pm	<i>Oct. 30</i>
<b>David Church:</b> <b>Relive a Legend</b> 7:00pm	<i>Nov. 5</i>
<b>NBC's</b> <b>Last Comic Standing Live Tour</b> 8:00pm	<i>Nov. 13</i>
<b>4 Troops</b> 6:00pm	<i>Nov. 14</i>
<b>REO Speedwagon</b> 8:00pm	<i>Dec. 3</i>
<b>Jingle Bell Rock</b> 8:00pm	<i>Dec. 10</i>
<b>Sara Evans:</b> <b>Celebrate the Season</b> 8:00pm	<i>Dec. 17</i>

## From the Administrator -- Continued from Page 1

local government. Currently, and for the next couple of years, our City's financial picture will continue to be very tight. However, I do see light at the end of the tunnel. Our reduction of manpower, 18 percent this year alone and approximately 30 percent in the past 10 years, will see needed reduction in expenses to offset the loss of revenue due to the recession. This one cost saving measure alone could exceed \$400,000 a year. Please remember, with the reduced workforce, there will be some loss in service and its timeliness.

The national economic downturn has started to show some recent recovery in the City's sales tax revenue. We are just now starting to match the levels we were at 5 years ago. A factor that hit us harder than most communities as to sales tax is the conversion in

the past couple of years by our local truck stops from diesel to biodiesel. The State of Illinois currently exempts biodiesel from sales tax which is a major loss to our revenue base.

During the next couple of months, I will continue to pursue and implement other cost saving measures with Council approval. Along with the reduction of manpower, the City has also restructured the layout of the various departments to allow better efficiencies. We will now be able to share personnel between the four different utility/maintenance divisions. To aid this restructuring and expand the efficiencies and maintain quality service, the City has purchased new computer software from Civic Systems. For those of us at City Hall, this is a very exciting time to be able to finally upgrade our system to this high of

a level. We feel we will be able to not only maintain the internal workload with fewer personnel but in some areas offer more. Along with the software, there will be an upgrade of our failing hardware, which is very outdated.

I want to close in thanking all the current and former employees of the City for their hard work and dedication. They have been a great support team internally as well as for our residents and are committed to serving you.

It has been great working and living in Effingham, and I will miss you all. I've decided to take my retirement up north to Wisconsin and will be moving by year end. Prior to that, should you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 217-347-7169 or [Goeckner@ci.effingham.il.us](mailto:Goeckner@ci.effingham.il.us).

## Have a question for us?

Please, send to:

Effingham City Hall  
Attn: Kim Jansen  
201 E. Jefferson Ave.  
Effingham, IL 62401

- OR -

[jansenki@ci.effingham.il.us](mailto:jansenki@ci.effingham.il.us)

Questions will be answered in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

# Community Events

**1st, 2nd, 3rd Tues. of each Month** 10:00am & 2:00pm  
 Story Times  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**1st Thurs. of each Month** 10:00am-10:45am  
 S.W.A.G (Seniors With Attitude Group)  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**Oct. 19** 4:30pm-8:30pm  
 Girls Night Out  
*Thelma Keller Convention Center*

**Oct. 22** 10:00am-12:30pm  
 School's Out Movie Matinee--  
 The Karate Kid (2010)  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**Oct. 23** 11:00am-4:00pm  
 Blood Drive/  
 Vampire Costume Contest  
*The Harley Barn*

**Oct. 24** 2:00pm  
 Halloween Parade  
*Downtown Effingham*

**Oct. 31** 6:00pm-8:00pm  
 Trick or Treat  
*City of Effingham*

**Oct. 22, 23, 29, & 30** 7:30pm-11:35pm  
 Night Terrors  
*Old Rural King Building*

**Nov. 1** 6:30pm-7:15pm  
 The Internet, Cell Phones, And  
 Your Child  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**Nov. 2** 6:00am-7:00pm  
 Election Day

**Nov. 18** 5:30pm-7:30pm  
 Family Reading Night--  
 "Night at the Museum"  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**Nov. 26-Dec. 25**  
 Wonderland in Lights  
*Community Park*

**Sun.-Thurs. 5:00-9:00pm**  
**Fri.-Sat. 5:00-10:00pm**

**Nov. 27-28** 1:00pm-5:00pm  
 Christmas Trees Fundraiser  
*Dr. Charles Wright's House*

**Nov. 27** 1:30pm-3:30pm  
 Santa's Arrival in Effingham &  
 Old Fashioned Christmas  
*Downtown Effingham*

**Dec. 4** 8:00am- 12:00pm  
 Breakfast with Santa  
*Thelma Keller Convention Center*

**Dec. 4-5** 1:00pm- 5:00pm  
 Christmas Trees Fundraiser  
*Dr. Charles Wright's House*

**Dec. 6** 6:30pm-7:15pm  
 A Great British Christmas  
*Helen Matthes Library*

**Dec. 7** 11:00am-12:30pm  
 A German Taste of Christmas  
*Helen Matthes Library*

For a full list of  
 upcoming events visit:  
[www.VisitEffinghamIL.com](http://www.VisitEffinghamIL.com)

To register and see a full list of library events visit:  
[www.EffinghamLibrary.org](http://www.EffinghamLibrary.org)

[www.EffinghamIL.com](http://www.EffinghamIL.com)

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