PIQUA Spirit

UNITED WE STAND

WINTER 2008

From the Office of the City Manager

Government
STREETS
Health & Sanitation
Fire
Police
WATER
DEVELOPMENT

# Fort Piqua Hotel Renovation: What will it mean to the City of Piqua?

By Fred Enderle, City Manager

*Ballroom & Structure (Completed) - Artist's Rendering*

At about this time next year, the Fort Piqua Hotel will be restored to all its majesty. What a great sight that will be! However, there is more to it than just the restoration of a Piqua landmark that has long been neglected and a community eyesore. This magnificent structure will belong to the people of Piqua. Not only has this project been a labor of love for many people, restored in large measure by donations from community members, it will also be primarily for the public's use. It will house our expanded public library, which will be one of the finest in the State of Ohio. It will contain a first class banquet and meeting space like nothing else in the region north of Dayton. And, we are diligently working to land a fine dining restaurant and other retail space with such uses as a coffee shop which would be a nice combination with the library use and overall will add to the already strong mix of downtown businesses. The project's completion will signal not only the rebirth of a grand structure, but the beginning of a new phase in the economic life of the downtown and the City.

I am especially pleased and honored to be a part of this project. We still have a distance to go before that grand reopening, but as we make our final push to get this project completed, I want to share with you why I think the project is important for Piqua. This project is an important achievement for the City in many ways, such as:

*Artist's Rendering*

- ❖ It cleans up a major eyesore in the center of our city and adds to the vitality of downtown, by filling a big hole in the fabric of downtown. It puts back activity on a block face long void of any life.
- ❖ It contributes to the economic vitality of the City by putting a historic and architecturally significant building back into productive use. The property will go back on the tax roll after years of no economic return to the City. In addition, I feel it will serve as a catalyst for additional economic development in the downtown and the City. It will showcase Piqua as a community that can pull together and get things done and demonstrates to prospective business, industry and residents that Piqua is a great place to call home.
- ❖ It meets significant community needs: providing a new library facility, which will provide a better atmosphere and result in better service to its customers, and will provide another venue in the community for banquet, conference and meeting space.
- ❖ It draws attention to Piqua. The restored Hotel will showcase Piqua throughout the region and state, and provides another point of interest for attracting tourists. Downtown Piqua will be a destination for regional travelers.

Is it worth the money spent? Most definitely! Especially, when you consider that more than one-half of the funding for renovating the Hotel came from sources outside the Piqua area and only twenty-eight percent from the City of Piqua. More importantly, when you consider what the project means to the health and spirit of the community, the value of this project is immeasurable.

## *Meet.... Brent Pohlschneider*

Brent Pohlschneider, Captain for the Fire Department on shift three, started working for the Fire Department in 1992. Brent had no prior experience in Fire or EMS. Upon being hired, he went to the State Fire Academy for his 240 hour Fire certification. After fire certification, Brent underwent EMT Basic certification and then Paramedic certification. Those combined for approximately 13 months of schooling. Brent was promoted to Captain in February of 2007.

Brent is a life long resident of the City of Piqua. He graduated from Piqua High School and then graduated from Wright State University in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in marketing. He is married to his wife, Barb. They have a son, Ethan who is a first grader and a stepson, Jack. Jack is now working for AT&T in Sacramento, California. Brent and Barb enjoy watching Ethan play several sports. They also enjoy visiting Jack in California when they get the chance. They also have Westie Terrier named Sophie that tries to get into mischief when left alone. Brent and his family reside in Piqua.

Brent is responsible for assigning the daily shift assignments and filling in as the acting Assistant Chief when Assistant Chief Maggert has a day off. Brent also is currently on the city's technology committee and also new engine selection group. Brent is a CPR and C.E.R.T. instructor.

Brent concludes that he has always enjoyed working with people and gets a great deal of satisfaction in helping the community. Whether it is with a medical problem or instruction to a group of citizens. Brent states that he thinks the Fire/EMS service is the most interesting job one could ever have. "Each call faces one with potential for new challenges."

## CITY COMMISSION

**John Martin***
Commissioner, 1st Ward
Home: 773-2778
Ward1comm@piquaoh.org

**William Vogt**
Commissioner, 2nd Ward
Home: 773-8217
Ward2comm@piquaoh.org

**Thomas D. Hudson**
Mayor & Commissioner, 3rd Ward
Home: 773-1977
Ward3comm@piquaoh.org

**Julia (Judy) Terry**
Commissioner, 4th Ward
Home: 773-3189
Ward4comm@piquaoh.org

**Lucy Fess***
Commissioner, 5th Ward
Home: 773-7929
Ward5comm@piquaoh.org

*New City Commissioners as of Jan. 7, 2008

# Retiring City Commissioners

Frank H. Barhorst began his dedicated service to the City of Piqua as Commissioner of the First Ward beginning in January of 1988. In addition to serving as Commissioner, Commissioner Barhorst served as Mayor from 1998-2001.

Commissioner Barhorst has served on various Boards for the City of Piqua, which include: the Energy Board, Miami County Council Board, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission Board and the Piqua Improvement Corporation Board.

Frank J. Patrizio was elected as 5th Ward Commissioner in January of 2004 with his term ending in December 31, 2007. In addition to serving as Commissioner, Commissioner Patrizio has dedicated time to serve on the Forest Hill Union Cemetery Board, the Piqua Improvement Corporation Board and the Grow Piqua Now Board.

In addition to serving on many Boards and Committees, both Commissioner Barhorst and Patrizio have given of their personal time to attend many meetings and functions throughout the City of Piqua.

We thank both Commissioners for their dedication to the City of Piqua and wish them the best in the future.

## "E-Gov" for Citizens....Here in Piqua Now

The City of Piqua is pleased to announce the addition of "E-Gov Services" to the City's online presence. A click on this link (currently located in the "Quick Links" listing) on the city web site front page will send you to the City of Piqua's E-Government Services website.

The features currently available are Action Line, Online Documents, Subscriptions and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). In the future, other features including accepting online payments, accepting of meter readings and online permits will be added.

The program is very user friendly. While not required, it's recommended that a first-time visitor to the City of Piqua E-Gov Services link complete the online registration process. This process takes less than 2 minutes. Once a user is registered, the data will never need to be re-entered in the future and the submitter will have easy access to their previously submitted action requests. Also, when a user has a new action request it will take little time, literally as long as it takes to enter the request message.

The Action Line section allows citizens to request information, make suggestions and to notify the city of problems or issues in the community. The initial release of the Action Line section focuses on Health Department type requests, but it also has a "generic" suggestion/issue form that can be used. Action Line messages to other departments, such as the City Manager's Office, Planning & Zoning, Water, etc. will be online in the future.

As stated above, in addition to the Action Line section, the City of Piqua has also implemented E-Gov Services' Online Documents, Subscriptions Sign Up, and the Frequently Asked Questions sections. These sections are currently being built and content will continually be added.

The City of Piqua is committed to the continued expansion of our Online Services in order to meet the ever-growing desire from our citizens for better access and ease of communicating and obtaining information online.

# Did You Know ?
# Facts about City Operations

- ✓ City utility customers can pay Piqua Utility bills automatically. It's free to all through the safe and convenient BillPayer 2000 program (automatic payment from your checking account). To apply, simply contact the Utilities Business Office at 778-2000.
- ✓ The City has organized a speaker bureau for school groups, community service and any other group. Speakers can be provided if you have a topic or individual in mind or if you are simply looking either. Contact Andy Burner in the City Manager's Office at 778-2054 or e-mail him at aburner@piquaoh.org).
- ✓ Potholes in city streets, which occur as the weather changes in the winter and spring, should be reported promptly by calling the Street Department at 778-2095 or using ***E-Gov Services*** online (see article).
- ✓ During periods of significant snowfall, the City Manager may declare a snow emergency and require vehicles to be removed from designated streets to facilitate snow removal. (See article on snow plowing and shoveling walks)
- ✓ Questions about Fair Housing? The Miami County Fair Housing Committee handles all local housing discrimination matters. The City's Fair Housing Coordinator, Bill Lutz (778-2062, housingrehab@piquaoh.org) can assist individuals in the initial steps of filing a complaint.
- ✓ The City's financial standing is well regarded. Moody's Investment Services Rating gives the City an **A-1 rating** for its bonds, the highest rating possible. The City has had this rating for well over 38 years according to the Finance Director.
- ✓ Need a ride? Piqua's needs, as are those of all Miami Countians are served by Miami County Public Transit. Service operates throughout the entire week. Prescheduled rides (preferably 24 hours advance) can be arranged by calling toll-free 335-RIDE (7433).

## Upcoming city dates of note

- ♦ ***NOW*** - Golf Course memberships on sale. Call 778-2086 for more info.
- ♦ January 9-March 12, 2008 - Parks & Rec. "Ballet for Kids" program. Call 778-2085 for more info.
- ♦ March 1 - Golf Course opens for regular play.
- ♦ March 9 - Change your clocks (Spring forward)-Daylight Savings Time begins (Ends Nov. 4, 2008)
- ♦ April 15 - City Income Tax filing deadline
- ♦ April - Tentative: Dates to be announced - Spring City-Wide Cleanup. See http://www.piquaoh.org/cleanup.htm - call either 778-2095 or 778-2060 for more info.

## Group Workcamps & Renew Piqua

By now many of you have heard of a community project called the *Great Miami River Group Workcamp* (GWC) that will be gracing Piqua and the area from July 19-25, 2008.

Both programs that have many of the same goals – 1) to rehabilitate housing, thus helping the homeowner who does not have the necessary financial and physical means to make repairs. Such rehab work improves the appearance of the house, neighborhood and the city. The work of the volunteers in each program creates a bonding and relationship that connects different generations and great friendships and appreciation for one another's gifts. Both programs are ***totally free*** to the homeowner.

There are differences. Group Workcamp involves not only exterior painting, but more repairs to that home. The homes eligible for repairs with Group Workcamp has groups with five high schoolers, plus an adult, and work on that single house alone for 4 ½ days, a much longer period than Renew Piqua work crews usually do.

Volunteers from the cosponsors of the *Great Miami River Group Workcamp* (GWC): 6 churches including Family of Grace, Freedom Life Ministries, St. Boniface Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, St. Mary Catholic, Upper Valley Community Church and the City of Piqua as well as, other volunteers have been working hard to prepare for the week of the Workcamp. More volunteers are needed. If anyone wishes to help, call Andy Burner at 778-2054.

One of our biggest needs now in GWC is obtaining more applicants. Those homeowners in northern Miami and southern Shelby Counties who are elderly, disabled, single parents and are low income may request assistance. Starting about January 9th, another round of applications will be available at many locations throughout the counties. Application deadline is February 21st. For questions about the application, you may call GWC volunteer Debbie Foster at 773-1264. Finally, both programs seek to not only renew the housing stock, but seeks to renew the spirit of the people.

## Winter Snows In Piqua

With December comes winter weather, and with winter weather comes snow removal from public streets. Thus, the City of Piqua Street Department is geared up for snow and ice, whenever it hits. Standard procedures are to salt all bridges and hills first, then U.S. routes, State routes, and main thoroughfares. The minor arterials and residential feeder streets are addressed next, and last are the residential streets.

When snow accumulation reaches two inches, snowplows are mounted on all trucks. Plowing routes are prioritized the same as salting route.

Motorists are urged to use caution and common sense when driving on snow covered streets. Specific hints include:

- Allow plenty of extra time for trips – even short journeys. Travel time is considerably longer in snowy weather.
- Drive slowly and maintain a longer safe stopping distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you, especially on down-grade hills.
- Motorists are asked to refrain from parking on the street when possible. Parking on side streets rather than main streets is also desirable to accommodate efficient snow removal.

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The street department is assigned the task of keeping roadways open. While it is not intentional, occasionally snow plowing frustrates homeowners who have recently shoveled out driveways, or sidewalks where there is no tree lawn. When shoveling driveway approaches, the snow should be pushed to the left side of the driveway so that the snowplow will not push the snow back into the drive, to be shoveled again.

It is the legal duty of the owner, or of the occupant (renter) of the property, residence or business, to keep the sidewalk abutting the premises free and clear of snow and ice. Snow and ice must be removed within a reasonable time, which will ordinarily not exceed 12 hours, after the storm during which snow and ice may have accumulated stops.

And last, but not least, those who are out shoveling and have a neighbor who is unable to clear their property, please spend a little time to help them out. Such acts of kindness are a positive way to build a stronger neighborhood.

Questions regarding snow removal may be directed to the Street Department at 778-2095.

# Residence Pride Awards

**Piqua citizens…**

**We need your nominations for Residence Pride awards. You may nominate a home or a business that has been improved. Maybe you may have noticed a neighbor who has helped someone else with an exterior home improvement project that deserves recognition. We encourage you to submit a nomination to the Residence Pride Committee.**

**Residence Pride nominations are encouraged in the winter months in order to make early spring awards.**

**The Residence Pride Committee meets on a regular basis to select the winners. The Committee will be meeting in the near future to select the spring award winners.**

**The Residence Pride award is based on the following criteria:**

- **Property appearance**
- **Landscape appearance**
- **Helpful neighbor in regards to landscape or home improvement project**
- **Home improvements-general clean-up of a property**
- **Business owner/landlord property**

**Nomination forms will be available on the City's website at www.piquaoh.org, the Municipal Government Complex in the City Managers office, or the front Reception Desk. Nominations or questions may also be emailed to: residencepride@piquaoh.org.**

*One of October 2007 Recipients - 434 S. Roosevelt, Home of Todd & Peggy Richardson (Background Photo)*

## FIXING UP YOUR PROPERTY?
## THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA PROGRAM MAY BE FOR YOU!

Certain property owners in Piqua may be able to receive a property tax abatement on improvements made to their property through the Community Reinvestment Area Program. The program can abate up to 100% of the taxable value of new improvements to residential, commercial and industrial property for up to fifteen years. Call William Lutz, Development Program Manager at 778-2062 for more information.

***Piqua Spirit*** **is a quarterly newsletter from the City of Piqua. The purpose is to keep you informed about what is happening in your City.**

**CITY MANAGER**
**Fred Enderle**

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER**
**Andy Burner**

**Articles and photos by City Staff**

**Design and Layout by Preferred Printing Company**

**Your comments and questions are welcomed.**

**Call (937) 778-2054**
**aburner@piquaoh.org**
**www.piquaoh.org**

Piqua Municipal Government Complex
201 West Water Street
Piqua, OH 45356

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