



Sturgis Wire

A Newsletter Produced By The City of Sturgis For Its Citizens 130 N. Nottawa St. Sturgis, MI 49091 (269) 651-2321 www.ci.sturgis.mi.us

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From the City Manager's Desk: 425 Amendment Completed

The official signing of an amendment to an existing P.A. 425 agreement between the City of Sturgis and Sturgis Township was held on February 19th, 2007. As a critical piece in laying the groundwork for future development, the amendment demonstrates significant progress.

This event marks a pivotal point in the growth and success of Sturgis for two reasons. First, as a reflection of what seems an antiquated and arguably dysfunctional local government structure in Michigan, townships and cities have historically struggled to find common ground. However, Sturgis Township and the City of Sturgis found a way to overcome the pitfalls in which many communities find themselves battling over self-serving interests. In many ways, Sturgis Township and the City of Sturgis, through the P.A. 425 amendment, established a model for collaboration, partnership and sacrifice for what is really important: the overall betterment of the Sturgis community. Sturgis Township and the City have forged a strong ethic of collaboration through leadership that is committed to a common vision.

Secondly, as the ink dries on the 425 amendment, Sturgis Township, Lagrange County and the City of Sturgis are already looking toward new, exciting challenges in developing the I-9/M-66 Corridor. The Township will begin work to establish zoning that is aligned with the development study conducted in 2005. Lagrange County and the City of Sturgis are continuing to refine a sewer use agreement to provide sewer to the corridor area. And although this work is not as glamorous as new construction, this is the necessary work for it to occur. The community can be assured that the planning and staging of conditions for spurring growth are taking place as evidenced by the signing of the 425 amendment.

Sincerely yours,

Michael L. Hughes
City Manager

Area Recycling Program Begins; Some Tips for Recycling

The first month of Sturgis' free, trial year of curbside recycling has passed satisfactorily. Any questions, concerns about needing a bin, or having an unwanted one; please contact Republic Waste Services at 877-268-3867.

The three main ways to eradicate waste are "reduce, reuse and recycle." Reduce the amount of waste by car pooling, reusing grocery bags or planting a tree. Reuse items that retain their individuality such as printer cartridges, cell phones, eye glasses and smoke detectors.

Compost your organic refuse; you can reduce your yard waste 60-80 percent.

Recycle what you can. Recycling has become a valuable way to protect our environment and ecosystem. It is essential in the reduction of pollution, waste and green house gases.

Aluminum is one substance that can be recycled many times without any loss of material. Using recycled aluminum instead of refining new matter saves 95 percent of the carbon-dioxide emissions.

If all our newspapers were recycled, we could save 250,000,000 trees a year. In one year, the amount of paper and wood we throw away would heat 50,000,000 homes for 20 years -- the worth of approximately 1 billion trees. Americans use 85,000,000 tons of paper a year. For each ton of paper recycled, the natural materials saved are 17-31 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 3 cubic yards of landfill, 4,000 kilowatts of electricity and 7,000 gallons of water. The percentage of savings becomes 64 percent energy, 58 percent water and 60 pounds of air pollution. If left standing, the 17 trees would absorb 250 pounds of carbon dioxide, but burning those same trees creates 1,500 pounds of carbon dioxide.

Glass bottles and jars are recyclable, but care must be given as to the color and type of glass. You cannot mix bottles with windows, ceramics or other "glass" materials. Clear, green and brown jars and bottles are recyclable by Republic. Every month Americans throw away enough recyclable glass bottles and jars to fill a sky scraper. Left alone, it would take 4,000 years for a glass bottle to decompose.

Plastics are tricky. Items like 2-liter pop bottles and bleach bottles are recyclable, even plastic grocery bags can be taken to stores like Wal-Mart for recycling. However, not all plastics are equal and different types must not be mixed. Industries have developed a system of marking the types of plastic and glass bottles -- a triangle of arrows with a number inside. The numbers 1-6 represent the type

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of plastic of which an item is made. The higher the number, the harder it is to recycle. A number "7" in the triangle means it is a mixed or layered plastic and cannot be recycled. Every year Americans throw away 25,000,000 plastic beverage bottles every hour and 25,000,000,000 Styrofoam cups.

It is interesting to note that the "Fresh Kills" landfill in Staten Island, New York, and the Great Wall of China are the only two man-made objects visible from space; the highest point in Ohio is "Mount Rumpke," a mountain of trash at the Rumpke landfill; the average cost of disposing of a ton of trash is \$30 to recycle, \$50 to send to a landfill and \$65-\$75 for incineration; packaging represents about 65 percent of our trash; rain forests are being cut down at the rate of 100 acres per minute; a quart of motor oil can contaminate 2,000,000 gallons of fresh water; in every mile along an average U.S. highway can be found approximately 1,500 pieces of litter. Remember the restoration of our country is in our hands.



Police to Acquire New Equipment

A new technology to aid law enforcement in the fight against crime is coming to St. Joseph County. Homeland Security funding acquired through the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department is making new compact thermal imaging available on police units throughout the county. Sturgis received two such units in February that attach to a standard police spotlight allowing infra-red images to be viewed on the vehicles' laptop computers.

Police in Sturgis, Three Rivers and the Sheriff's Department had previously acquired handheld thermo imagers through another federal grant, but these are compact and readily available to regular patrols allowing officers to have the edge even in total darkness, aiding in fugitive apprehension, building security checks and various investigative capabilities. The previous cameras had proved very valuable in surveillance in combatting the theft of anhydrous ammonia from area farmers and suspect apprehension.

Sturgis Recycling Program Reminders

The City of Sturgis in conjunction with St. Joseph County and Republic Waste Services is proud to be offering a pilot recycling program to our residents. Bins have been delivered and residents north of U.S. 12 will have their recycling picked up on the first and third Tuesday of each month while residents south of U.S. 12 will have theirs picked up on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Bins should be placed near the road the Monday evening before the pick-up.

The following holidays will be observed: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. If your normal pick-up day falls on or after the holiday, your service will be delayed by one day.

Following are some acceptable recycle items, for your information: newspapers, magazines, catalogs, telephone books, office paper, junk mail, maps, post-it notes, cereal boxes, cardboard boxes, brown paper bags, food cans, foil, lids from jars, milk jugs, laundry and hair care bottles with recycle symbols #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5, and jars and bottles that are either clear, green or brown in color.

Here are some unacceptable items: plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam, microwave containers, materials not rinsed & clean, scrap metal, window glass, wire hangers, batteries, motor oil, motor oil containers, aerosol cans, juice or milk cartons, drinking glasses, plastic silverware, light bulbs, paper clips, pizza boxes, facial tissues, waxed or laminated paper, and food wrappers.

For further information contact Republic Waste Services toll free at (877) 268-3867. Customer service hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Also, information may be obtained on the City's website at www.ci.sturgis.mi.us



Community Housing Fair Presented By **Sturgis Neighborhood Program**

Sturges-Young Civic Center & Auditorium
Saturday, April 14
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

News from the Sturgis District Library

New Director

Todd Reed, the library's new director, started on February 19, 2007. He is new to the area. Drop by the library and welcome him.

Tax Forms

Michigan and Federal Tax Forms are available at the library. They are located in the hallway between the library and City Hall.

New Library Web Page

The library's new web page is under construction. Log onto www.sturgis-library.com and watch it grow. The web page will provide information on library events, new books, access to our card catalog and inter-library loan catalog and much more.

Wireless Internet

Wireless Internet access is available at the Sturgis District Library. Bring in your laptop and log on.

Library Cards

Library Cards are free to residents of the City of Sturgis, Fawn River, Sherman, and Sturgis Townships. Persons living outside our district can obtain a library card for \$50 for an individual card and \$75 for a family card.

Story Times

Story Times for ages 2-6 will be held on the following Wednesdays at 10 a.m. :

March 7, 14 & 21

April 4 (includes an Easter Egg Hunt), 11 & 18

National Library Week

Come celebrate National Library Week with us April 15 through April 21. There will be special events happening at the library.

Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Program will begin June 13, 2007, with special programs throughout the summer, and summer story times starting June 25, 2007. Stop by the Children's Room in May for more information.



STURGIS POLICE AWARDED 2006 TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARD

Sturgis Public Safety Director David Northrop was presented with a 2006 Excellence In Traffic Safety Award at this year's Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police conference in Grand Rapids on February 2, 2007. The award was for the department's 2006 Kids Safe Zones traffic project focusing on increasing safety for area children walking to school during darker morning hours. Kids were provided with blinking "tag lights" for their backpacks or jackets so they would be more visible. Officers sought to "catch" the kids wearing them and would present them with a choice of prizes as well as put them in for a drawing for the giveaway of two bikes at the end of the project. Area businesses provided prizes and support for the project. Ayres Insurance Agency supplied two bicycles as the grand prize. Director Northrop gave accolades to Public Safety Executive Secretary Ericka Kruszka for developing and implementing the traffic grant.

A benefit of the 2006 Excellence Award is a \$6,000 grant opportunity for traffic safety equipment or overtime to conduct traffic enforcement. Sturgis Police will purchase additional "tag lights" for a planned 2007 Safe Kids Zone Project as well as a digital mobile video camera for a patrol car. The Award and grant money is awarded through AAA of Michigan, OHSP (Office of Highway and Safety Planning) and the MACP (Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police).



Did you know?



Michigan Week 2007 is on its way with events scheduled May 18-25! The annual Michigan Week Kick-off Dinner and Variety Show (back by popular demand) will start things off Friday evening at Sturges-Young Auditorium. A parade at noon on Saturday is only part of the fun. Stay tuned for more information.

Sizing Things Up

A Message from Sturgis Economic Development Director John Hayes

In this information age we live in, we seem to be flooded with statistics. So how should we interpret the numbers? For example, did you know that the most recently reported unemployment rates were 6.4 percent in St. Joseph County, 5.0 percent in Cass County, and 7.2 percent in Branch County? The percentages are based upon those actively seeking or receiving unemployment benefits, but do not include the unemployed who have chosen retirement or those who have started a business or service of their own. Those unaccounted for new business start-ups and the cash-based underground economy would increase the 92.8 percent to 95 percent who show as employed. Or did you know that the Single Business Tax amounts to 5.1 percent of state revenues, a percentage equal to the 6 mills state education tax paid in the form of property tax by businesses and residents alike? Sales and use taxes are 20.2 percent, and income taxes are 15.3 percent of total state revenues. Of greater interest to the average resident however, is their opportunity for improving their standard of living through higher earnings. So here's more for self-comparison:

* The household income considered to be "moderate" for a family of four in St. Joseph County is in the range of \$27,000 to \$43,200. This range is factored by the area's cost of living.

* Nationally, the middle 60 percent of income distribution is \$18,000 to \$88,000. Falling within that 60 percent is the "middle class" defined as the 40-60 percent of income earners, earning \$36,000 to \$57,657.

* The minimum wage in Michigan will ramp up to \$7.40 as of July 1, 2008. On an annual basis that is about \$15,400. But hourly wages are more typically determined by the productivity or value added expected by the business owner than the minimum wage. For example, if the work performed does not have a value-added of \$7.40 to the employer, recoverable in sales price, the work has the potential of being outsourced.

* A "Living Wage" on the other hand is defined as the wage that a full-time worker would need to earn to support a family of four, equal to 100-130 percent of the poverty guideline set for an area by the federal government. In St. Joseph County that would translate into approximately \$8.00 to \$10.00 per hour. It is difficult to imagine one income supporting a family of four at this "Living Wage." According to the Economic Policy Institute, anything less than that wage, poverty level, and that family of four, becomes eligible for food stamps. However, as with the minimum wage, workers generally only have to settle for what their skills demand in the labor market and no less. Thus the need for continuing education.

In the now common discussions we read about and hear concerning the "middle class crunch", there are those who are convinced that American workers are being squashed by the government, big corporations, lenders and the system in general. In another camp are those who feel equally sure that there is no excuse for failing. Their view is that if you've fallen down the economic ladder it is solely and entirely your own fault. The answer likely lies somewhere in the middle: one has to save more, continually increase their skills, and be more financially cautious than ever before to maintain their 1990s standard of living. The problem is further complicated since the vast majority of U.S. workers come from the ranks of high school graduates. It represents the most significant sector of the labor pool, particularly in manufacturing. Not a good thing if manufacturing jobs are shrinking.

Alright, so how do you apply all these statistical measures to the local business economy and make the necessary plans to improve local residents' opportunities and living standards? It is a question that takes long term solutions and wide based community involvement and commitment. The data must be accurate, current, and unbiased. It is why we have engaged outside opinion toward creating such a plan for the Sturgis community. They call themselves the Chesapeake Group, and will produce an economic development strategy specific to Sturgis over the next six months. Step one requires a large amount of local information gathering including interviews, surveys, and a community public forum. You may be contacted for your personal views and perceptions in the coming months. Please take the time to be involved if you are asked.

Art Bounce

A Culture and Commerce Affair



Friday, April 20
5:30-8:30 p.m.



at Open Door Gallery, McGrady Jewelry, Headlines
Hair and Spa, Life House Books and Peacocks
Pieces

Featuring artwork by Cindy Heath (Jewelry), Mary
Davis (Paintings) Shanda Blue Easterday (Paintings),
Mrs. Peacock (Fabric Art), and more.

See you there!

News from the Public Services Department

HYDRANT FLUSHING SCHEDULE



The City of Sturgis Department of Public Services will be flushing hydrants in April following this schedule. This is a tentative schedule subject to weather conditions.

*TUESDAY, APRIL 17: THE AREA SOUTH OF EAST CHICAGO ROAD AND EAST OF SOUTH NOTTAWA STREET

*WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18: THE AREA SOUTH OF WEST CHICAGO ROAD AND WEST OF SOUTH NOTTAWA STREET

*THURSDAY, APRIL 19: THE AREA NORTH OF EAST CHICAGO ROAD AND EAST OF NORTH NOTTAWA STREET

*FRIDAY, APRIL 20: THE AREA NORTH OF WEST CHICAGO ROAD AND WEST OF NORTH NOTTAWA STREET TO NORTH CENTERVILLE ROAD

Should any water discoloration occur at your faucet, let the water flow for several minutes until it becomes clear. If the discoloration persists, or if you have questions, contact the Department of Public Services at 651-2879.



LEAF & BRUSH PICK-UP

The Public Services Department is preparing for this year's spring leaf and brush pick-up which will begin the first full week of April. Leaves and brush will be picked up at the same time. All brush should be cut to lengths of 8 feet or less and be neatly stacked and separated from the leaves.

Please do not pile leaves or brush near the roadway more than 48 hours in advance of the pick-up. See the following schedule for details.

*MONDAY, APRIL 2: ALL RESIDENTS NORTH OF CHICAGO ROAD SHOULD HAVE THEIR LEAVES AND BRUSH ON THE TERRACE OR IN THE YARD NEXT TO THE ROADWAY.

*THURSDAY, APRIL 5: ALL RESIDENTS SOUTH OF CHICAGO ROAD SHOULD HAVE THEIR LEAVES AND BRUSH ON THE TERRACE OR IN THE YARD NEXT TO THE ROADWAY.

PLEASE, FOR SAFETY REASONS DO NOT PUT LEAVES OR BRUSH IN THE ROADWAY.

DPS crews will begin the pick-up on the north side of the City and work their way south. Weather conditions and varying amounts of leaves and brush make it difficult to adhere to a strict schedule. Therefore, it is necessary to have your materials ready for pick-up and crews will get to them as quickly as possible. If you are unable to meet this month's schedule, our crews will be back the first full week of each month through October.

City residents may also take yard waste materials to the compost site beginning April 2. The compost site hours will be noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays.

If you should have any questions please contact the Public Services Department at 651-2879.

Look What's Happening at the Auditorium

Have you ever had a time when you were looking for something fun and entertaining to do? There are always the tedious chores that need to be done, but sometimes we all need to take a little time to enjoy. Whether it is a show with a famous entertainer, a program put on by the school, an informational meeting, or traveling the world via the Travelogue, check with us at the Sturges-Young Auditorium before you head to the big city. Simply check out our new website for our calendar of events. It has been an exciting project we have been working on for the past few months and while some of the areas are still in the construction phase, we hope to have everything in order soon. If you do not have internet access, just give us a call at 651-8541.

A few of the exciting things coming this spring are Les Folies Russes on March 9 and The Lettermen on April 21. These shows are sponsored by the Sturgis Council of the Arts. Pianist Rich Ridenour will be here on April 13. And don't forget the Travelogue. On March 20 you can travel to Egypt and on April 30 you can travel to the Northeast Coast, all without leaving your seat. Before each show there is a pre-show dinner.

If the thought of having to cook and clean up for Easter and Mother's Day gives you cold chills, let us do the cooking and cleanup for you. Come and spend the holiday here at the Sturges-Young Auditorium. On our menu is a full array of wonderful dishes that will tempt any palate. And always keep in mind that each Sunday we have our Sunday Buffet from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. We serve breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and lunch is available at 11:30 a.m., and if you can't choose which you want, you can have both since breakfast is available the whole time. We can accommodate large groups, just give us a call and we will set it up and all will be ready when you arrive.

As you can see, we have many exciting things coming and more in the planning stages. Come and spend an evening with us. We look forward to seeing you.

Doyle Community Center Notes

The Doyle Community Center will soon be offering the following programs. For information on these and other events, please contact the Doyle at 659-8110.

Date with Dad: From 6:30-9 p.m., March 23. For girls ages 3-12 and an adult.

Saturday Night "Free For All": Every Saturday night from 7-9 p.m. for students in grades 6-8 and from 9 p.m.-midnight for those in grades 9-12. Includes open gym type activities. FREE.

Girls Softball Sign-ups: From 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, March 7, and from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, March 10, at the Doyle. For ages 8-14 years.

Sturgis Area Youth Soccer Sign-up: From 9 a.m. - noon, March 10, at the Doyle.

No Large Item Trash Pick-Up In The City Of Sturgis

As a reminder, the City of Sturgis will not be performing the Large Item Trash Pick-Up this spring as it has in the past. Due to ever increasing expenses and a reduction of revenues, in part from a reduction in State Revenue Sharing, the City Commission was forced to make many difficult choices in determining the budget for fiscal year 2006-2007. In addition to many other budget cuts, the \$40,000 allocated to the Large Item Pick-Up was eliminated, just like in fiscal year 2005-2006, from the current budget for the City of Sturgis.

Residents are encouraged to utilize the Westside Recycling and Disposal Facility located on M-60 in Three Rivers (269-279-5444) or to contact their waste hauler to make arrangements for removal of large items. City residents should not place their large items in the terrace in anticipation of the City's pick-up. As budget constraints remain tight, it is not anticipated that this service will be reinstituted in the near future.

Did you know?

The City's 2006 Street Improvement Program consisted of the milling and resurfacing of 3.7 miles of local streets. The program included 28 streets in six areas of the City. The total project cost was \$264,073. And, the 2007 Street Improvement Program is now being prepared for construction in summer and fall of 2007!

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For Its Citizens

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Sturgis, MI 49091

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Help Keep Sturgis Beautiful

Do your part to help keep Sturgis beautiful. Please obey the following City of Sturgis ordinances and report any violations of those ordinances to Code Enforcement Officer Rick L. Sweitzer at 659-7215.

It is the responsibility of the owner and occupant of any lot, land or premises within the corporate limits of the City to:

- *not park any vehicle in the front yard of the property unless in an approved area.
- *not park any vehicle on the property in an unapproved area when selling a vehicle.
- *not allow any vehicle to remain parked or stored on the property that is unlicensed or inoperable.
- *cut and remove, or cause to be cut and removed, all grass and weed growth in excess of ten inches.
- *remove any garbage or rubbish that has been stored, collected, kept or placed on the property for more than twenty-four (24) hours.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

STURGIS CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Robert Sisson - At Large

Vice-Mayor Caralee Mayer - Precinct 1

Commissioner Lee Austermann - Precinct 1

Commissioner Barbara Fisher - Precinct 3

Commissioner P. Joseph Haas - Precinct 4

Commissioner Karl Littman - Precinct 4

Commissioner Kenneth Malone - Precinct 3

Commissioner Ronald Richards - Precinct 2

Commissioner Karen Stephens - Precinct 2

The City's Mission is to deliver high-quality services in a professional, efficient and nondiscriminatory manner to its residents and businesses; to continue to strengthen the economy and quality of life; and to ensure that the expression of views by citizens are recognized and responded to by the City.

The Sturgis

Wire

City of Sturgis

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