

## Palm Saturday: People Helping People

Saturday, April 19 will mark the first Palm Saturday: People Helping People program presented by the Sturgis Ministerial Association. During Palm Saturday, volunteers from area churches will go out in teams to work on people's homes and yards completing projects such as clean up of winter damage and clutter, painting, and light repair and maintenance work for those in need.

Work requests were to be submitted by March 1, 2008. Representatives from the Sturgis Ministerial Association will evaluate each request to see if it involves work that the Palm Saturday teams are able to accomplish. Not all requests for work will be able to be fulfilled because of either the scope of work required, the number of work requests received, and/or the number of volunteers able to participate in the project.

People interested in serving as a volunteer for the April 19th event may pick up a blue card to fill-out and mail to the Sturgis Ministerial Association at Sturgis City Hall and some of the local churches in Sturgis. Please contact Pastor George Cleverley of Church of Christ at 651-2684 with any questions.

## City Commission Meeting Minutes and Agendas Online

The City of Sturgis provides all residents access to City Commission Meeting minutes and agendas. Full-text minutes and agendas from 1996 to present day are available for PDF download on the City of Sturgis website. More information and links to the files can be found at [www.ci.sturgis.mi.us/commission\\_minutes.php](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us/commission_minutes.php)

## Action Line: the City's Online Service Request

Did you know the City of Sturgis offers an online tool for residents to request service from the City? Action Line allows visitors to submit requests for information, requests for service, or comments for review. Requests can be submitted in a number of categories, with the request automatically forwarded to appropriate City staff. The service also provides a tracking number, allowing the requesting citizen to track progress of their submission. Action Line is available on the City of Sturgis website at [www.egovlink.com/sturgis/action.asp](http://www.egovlink.com/sturgis/action.asp)

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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.

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](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us)

## City Employees Top 10 in Donations to the United Way



City of Sturgis employees were recently recognized as being one of the top ten contributors in St. Joseph County for the 2007 United Way campaign and for this, the City would like to thank all of its employees for their contributions. Pictured from left are Robert Olsen, 2007 United Way Campaign Honorary Chair; John Hayes, City of Sturgis Economic Development Director; Kenneth Rhodes, City of Sturgis Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Hopkins, City of Sturgis Deputy Fire Chief; and Kelly Hostetler, St. Joseph County United Way Director.

## Connect with your Community!

A weekly online newsletter, The Sturgis eWire, is your source for City of Sturgis events, topics of interest, City services, emergency notifications, and more. If you do not receive the eWire, online subscription is easy! If you do receive the eWire, be sure to tell a friend to sign up. Everyone can subscribe online at [www.ci.sturgis.mi.us/ewire\\_info.php](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us/ewire_info.php)

### STURGIS CITY COMMISSION

#### UPCOMING CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month – 7:30 p.m.

City Hall, 130 N. Nottawa Street



Mayor  
Caralee Mayer  
Precinct 1



Vice-Mayor  
Karl Littman  
Precinct 4



Commissioner  
John Carmichael  
Precinct 1



Commissioner  
Barbara Fisher  
Precinct 3



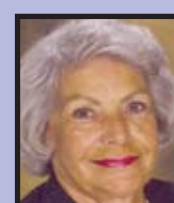
Commissioner  
Suzanne Walters  
Precinct 4



Commissioner  
Michael Gay  
At-Large



Commissioner  
Kenneth Malone  
Precinct 3



Commissioner  
Ina Taulbee  
Precinct 2



Commissioner  
Karen Stephens  
Precinct 2



# The 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](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us)

MARCH 2008

[www.ci.sturgis.mi.us](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us)

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

## Newport Development: First House Nearly Complete

It's been a long time coming, but years of planning are about to pay off. The construction of the first of five homes on the former Newport property on Jacob Street is nearly complete, signaling a major milestone for the City.

It all began more than 10 years ago when the City acquired the land surrounding the former Paramount building and shortly afterward also acquired the adjoining former Newport building and property. With the Newport building beginning to collapse, the City applied for a Brownfield Redevelopment Grant for the demolition and environmental testing needed for the building. To get the grant, the City needed a redevelopment plan and they were encouraged to redevelop the once industrial area into a residential area, in keeping with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Next came finding a builder and the City did so in establishing a relationship with Stan Mast of Stan Mast Homes. Mast plans to build five homes on the former Newport property and to later build more homes on the former Paramount property. The first home is nearly complete and currently for sale at an asking price of \$115,000. An open house is in the works for later this month.



*This home on Jacob Street is the first of five to be built on the former Newport property as part of a Brownfield Redevelopment project.*

Homes built on the property will range in size and price. Homes could be anywhere from 800-1,650 square feet and anywhere from \$85,000 and up. Each will have a full basement and will have the option for an attached garage or storage shed. Lots are 66x132 feet and all driveway entrances will be on Jacob Street. Under development requirements, all homes must be single-family, owner-occupied. Mast hopes to build future homes according to owners' specifications. Anyone interested may contact him at 269-483-2648. Mast plans to have the first five homes completed in the next three years.

Homes on the former Newport and Paramount properties are located in a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone. That means owners can apply for a tax certificate that reduces property taxes by approximately half of what they would normally be for a period of up to 12 years.

City of Sturgis Economic Development Director John Hayes hopes the redevelopment project will help promote the revitalization of not only the former industrial sites, but also the surrounding areas. He says housing improvement programs will be offered there as well.

"The State of Michigan views this as a model project of what Brownfield Redevelopment can do because it's generally difficult to take old industrial sites and redevelop them into residential," Hayes said. "When finished, the State will use this as a model for what Brownfield Redevelopment can do in other communities."

## Police Department Accepting Applications for VIP Program

If you are interested in enhancing the effectiveness of services of the Sturgis Police Department, promoting community awareness in public safety, and promoting crime prevention, please consider becoming involved in the Volunteers in Policing Program.

The VIP Program is accepting applications from a select few, in order to lend a hand in areas of volunteerism. Areas where volunteers are utilized include vacation home checks, transporting police vehicles for repairs, special crime prevention events, conducting home security assessments, the neighborhood watch program, and assisting in traffic control when needed, just to mention a few.

If you have further questions regarding the VIP Program call Jim Cook at 651-5386, or pick up an application at the Sturgis Police Department.

## A Message from the City Manager

### Fawn River Crossing: A Result of Effective Intergovernmental Cooperation

Our community can hold up the Fawn River Crossing project as a best practice model for intergovernmental cooperation. Government in its purest form is represented at the local level through city, village, township and county governments – people living and working in their community making decisions that affect them directly today and in the future.

The latest milestone in the development of the I-9/M-66 Corridor Project, now branded as Fawn River Crossing, is the partnership between Sturgis and LaGrange County to construct sewer infrastructure. After two years of planning and negotiating agreements, the City of Sturgis and the LaGrange County Sewer District will construct wastewater collection systems to accommodate development around the Toll Road, conveying the waste to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant. This was a difficult task considering the many challenges of satisfying two sets of State regulations that were not designed to cross paths.

Early on it was determined that as an identity the "I-9/M-66 Corridor" certainly did not carry the appeal necessary to communicate the development potential of the project. As a result local representatives from both Michigan and Indiana formed the Indiana/Michigan Regional Marketing Committee and with assistance from a professional marketing firm developed branding for the project. This marks another important collaboration that tested the common vision, but in the end helped clarify to the stakeholders involved the overall goals.

In order to provide some perspective on the extent of the collaboration, the following is a list of local government units that have been involved in this project: LaGrange County, LaGrange County Redevelopment Commission, LaGrange County Sewer District, Sturgis Township, St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation, and the City of Sturgis.

I am most proud of the fact that this project is driven by a common goal in which each entity gave something up so that the community as a whole could gain. The inspiration of the Fawn River Crossing brand was that the Toll Road interchange is a crossroads of sorts where the Michigan and Indiana communities meet. It is now a place where many local governments have met with the purpose of improving their communities. This is the essence of effective government – serving people.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Hughes



## The Sturgis Wire

City of Sturgis  
130 N. Nottawa  
Sturgis, MI 49091

[www.ci.sturgis.mi.us](http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us)

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Notes from the Public Services Department

Spring 2008 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 22: THE AREA SOUTH OF EAST CHICAGO ROAD AND EAST OF SOUTH NOTTAWA STREET.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23: THE AREA SOUTH OF WEST CHICAGO ROAD AND WEST OF SOUTH NOTTAWA STREET.
THURSDAY, APRIL 24: THE AREA NORTH OF EAST CHICAGO ROAD AND EAST OF NORTH NOTTAWA STREET.
FRIDAY, APRIL 25: 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.

Spring 2008 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 residents should have their leaves and brush on the terrace or in the yard next to the roadway. For safety reasons, please do not put leaves or brush in the roadway. All brush must be cut to lengths of 8 feet or less and should 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 7 - Pick-up for residents north of Chicago Road.
THURSDAY APRIL 10 - Pick-up for residents south of Chicago Road.

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.

The Compost Site
City residents may take yard waste materials to the compost site beginning April 7. Please note that new compost site hours are as follows:

The compost site hours during the months of April, October and November will be 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays. The compost site hours during the months of May through September will be 12:00 noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays.

A Note on Potholes
Due to this year's extreme winter weather with numerous freeze-thaw cycles, a large number of potholes have developed in city streets. The Department of Public Services will have crews filling and patching potholes throughout the City as they develop. If you see a dangerous pothole that we have not yet filled, please take a moment to call and report its location to the DPS at 651-2879.

LIBRARY NEWS

ONE BOOK, ONE COUNTY
Join the libraries of St. Joseph County in the One Book, One County Reading Program. This year's selection is "Stuck in Neutral" by Terry Trueman. Copies of the book are available at your local library. Meet Terry Trueman for a presentation and book signing on April 22, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sturges-Young Auditorium.

Join a book discussion group at your library:
Burr Oak - April 7, 7:00 p.m. Sturgis - April 14, 7:00 p.m.
Colon - March 20, 7:00 p.m. Three Rivers - April 9, 7:00 p.m.
Constantine - April 16, 9:30 a.m. White Pigeon - March 17, 11:30 a.m.
Mendon - March 19, 2:00 p.m.

CALLING ALL WRITERS!!
This is an opportunity to read your original work, have it critiqued by other writers, and to critique the work of other local writers in a group setting. Learn what is good about your writing, and what needs improvement. You may be chosen to read your selection at the Michigan Week Kick-off Dinner on Friday, May 16, 2008. This may evolve into our own local Writers' Group if there is interest.

WRITERS' GROUP WORKSHOP
May 12-14, 2008
At the Sturgis District Library

Pick up an entry form at the Sturgis District Library. There is a \$10 entry fee (to cover the cost of copies). Your manuscript of 4,000 words or less is due by April 15th.

If you have any questions you can call Barbara Rowe at the library, 659-7224 or email at browe@sturgis-library.org.

Playing the Name Game

One of the priorities for the Sturgis City Commission this year was implementation of the Excellence in Neighborhoods Initiative, a comprehensive strategy that utilizes several programs to help improve neighborhoods and stabilize property values by building pride in home ownership and community. The initiative is the collaborative effort of the City of Sturgis and the Sturgis Neighborhood Program (SNP).

Starting in January, the City and SNP began the Neighborhood Designation program, one of the Excellence in Neighborhoods components. The program is utilizing a series of community meetings to help gather citizen input on neighborhood boundaries and names. The ultimate goal is to use the resulting designations to increase community pride and neighborhood togetherness, as well as to provide organizing units for future community meetings and gathering of public input.

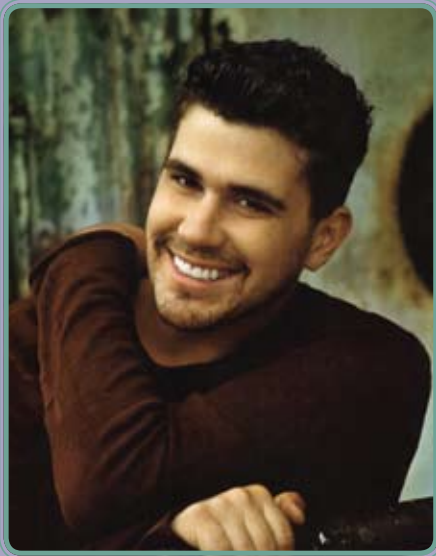
In February, three community meetings were held, with participating citizens developing a preliminary map of neighborhoods with suggested names. All boundaries and designations are at this point tentative, with the hope that publicizing these citizen efforts will produce greater community feedback. To be truly successful, the Neighborhood Designation program needs citizens to take an active roll in the process so that the results are ones that they are comfortable with and willing to utilize in the future.

Both the City of Sturgis and Sturgis Neighborhood Program thank all the citizens who volunteered their time to participate in one or more of the community meetings. If you have not had a chance to participate, you are encouraged to provide feedback about the neighborhood maps that are currently being circulated. Look for information on future meetings and opportunities to comment on the City's website (www.ci.sturgis.mi.us) and the weekly Sturgis eWire electronic newsletter.



Look What's Happening at the Auditorium

Spring is coming and for those of us who are not fond of the winter months, it is about time! Here at the Sturges-Young Auditorium we have many events planned for the spring and many in the planning stages.



Josh Gracin performs March 15 at Sturges-Young Auditorium.

On March 15 the Sturgis Council of the Arts is sponsoring Josh Gracin at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Information and tickets are available by calling 269-659-7211. There will be a pre-show dinner available. For reservations and information call the auditorium at 651-8541. Also in April the Merling Trio and "War Bonds: A Musical Journey through World War II" will be coming.

If you do not want to cook on Easter Sunday come and visit the auditorium for our Easter Sunday Buffet. We will serve a wide array of dishes that will tempt any palate. Stay tuned for more information or call the auditorium offices.

Our Travelogue Series for the 07/08 season will wrap up in March and April. On March 25 "Mayday-Tugs of War" will be the program followed on April 29 by "The Other Side of Mexico." Before each show a pre-show dinner is available. Come and join us for dinner and a nice vacation. The best part is you don't have to travel far to enjoy a trip to a new place and if you come for dinner, no dishes to wash. It is a fun, economical way to spend a family-friendly evening.

Don't forget that we are here for any event that you wish to plan. If you are having a wedding reception, baby shower, informational meeting, graduation party, seminar or other event, just call the auditorium offices for assistance. We also have catering services for events outside the building.

Check out our website for auditorium happenings. Enter sturgesyoung.com for information or call 269-651-8541.

Come and join us for some fun and exciting events!



The Merling Trio takes the stage in April.



Local Business Spotlight



The Downtown Development Authority, Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Sturgis are partnering to help promote local businesses. The purpose of the "Local Business Spotlight" is to promote newsworthy items about new and existing businesses. Our hope is that the "Local Business Spotlight" will be another valuable tool in promoting and creating awareness of our businesses, keeping them strong and healthy. Submittals for the "Local Business Spotlight" should be sent to John Hayes at jhayes@ci.sturgis.mi.us. John can also be contacted at 659-7233.

Pressing On — A Sturgis Company Grows its Global Market while Keeping Jobs Close to Home

Oak Press Solutions - 504 Wade Street

About the Business
Since its inception in 1965, Oak Products Inc., now Oak Press Solutions Inc., has been a manufacturer of some of the world's best industrial presses. Oak Press Solutions was created by its sister company, Burr Oak Tool, out of a need for presses with closer tolerances, greater accuracy and higher speeds. Such equipment was and still is critical in the heating and cooling industry for which Burr Oak Tool manufactures specialized machinery, and was not supplied by other press makers. In 2006 Oak Press Solutions Inc., with a new management team, a new name, and a new strategy, focused on increasing its market share in the general stamping industry all across the globe. While still working collaboratively with Burr Oak Tool to share ideas and technology, the focus of the organization is on building their global presence and expanding their business at home.

Expanding Worldwide
In moving forward with a global expansion strategy, Oak Press Solutions and Burr Oak Tool have recently worked together in establishing the Wuxi Oak Technology Company in Wuxi, China. Unlike many corporations expanding overseas however, Oak Press Solutions is not sending jobs or workload away,

but rather strengthening the local workforce. Operations at Wuxi Oak Technology are primarily service and support in nature, so the new presses being sold overseas are still made in Sturgis before being shipped to buyers in China or other places around the world. Since Wuxi Oak Technology started operation in early 2007, Oak Press Solutions has seen an increase in workload as sales in China and other markets have grown. While a majority of Oak Press Solution's business is still for Burr Oak Tool, today the company is truly a worldwide name in the industry with machinery operating in nearly 70 countries.

Close to the Community
While expansion into the global marketplace is an important business goal, Oak Press Solutions is also committed to maintaining close ties to the community. A third generation family-owned business, Oak Press Solutions is run by David Franks, grandson of Burr Oak Tool and Oak Press Solutions founder Newell Franks, Sr. Today Oak Press Solutions employs 45 individuals at its Sturgis plant on top of the more than 350 employed by Burr Oak Tool. Both companies strive to be responsible corporate citizens, by involvement in local schools, participating in local blood drives and non-profit fundraising campaigns. The Oak Companies maintain a humble and low-profile attitude about their accomplishments, which was instilled by their founder.

Today Oak Press Solutions is a business experiencing new growth and an expanding global reach. Yet they remain at their core what they have been since their creation; a local industry which is truly proud to call Sturgis home.

News from the Downtown Development Authority

Spring and summer are just around the corner and the Downtown Development Authority is gearing up for another year of fun! Mark your calendars because the Open Door Gallery will host their second annual Bowls for Hunger on March 14. The next Art BOUNCE will be April 18 and the first Farmer's Market is slated to start Friday, May 16. Then comes the Open Door Gallery Community Art Show June 26-July 6 and don't forget the annual sidewalk sales July 25 and 26. The US-12 Garage Sale will also return August 8 and 9.

The DDA is looking for anyone who may be interested in participating in any of these events. For further information contact the DDA at 651-1907.

Recycling Continues in Sturgis

This January the City Commission voted to continue a curbside recycling program within the City of Sturgis. Since last February, the City had been participating in a curbside recycling pilot program with St. Joseph County that provided the service free of charge. Requests for proposal from curbside recycling service providers were collected February 12th and on February 27th the City Commission approved a proposal for service submitted by Borden Waste-Away Service. Details of the service contract are being negotiated and are expected to be approved at the time of publication. To ensure seamless curbside recycling service, in January the City extended its contract with Republic Waste. Service will continue as before through April of 2008 when Borden Waste-Away will take over service provision.

As of February 1st, 2008, the program is funded by the City and paid for with a charge to residents on the summer tax bill. The charge will be of an amount no greater than \$2.00 per month. The charge for recycling and disposal service is authorized by state statute and approved by the City Commission. The final charge you will see on your tax bill will depend on the new service contract. Again, the City can only charge up to \$2.00 per month. The charge will appear on your tax bill as one dollar amount, so the amount on your tax bill will be up to, but not more than, \$24.00 once a year.

The fee will be assessed to all Sturgis City residents, regardless of use of the service. Once the new contract is finalized, only City residents will have curbside recycling collected. Residents of township "islands" within the City will not receive the service. Currently, apartment complexes do not receive recycling service. For the new contract, the City has requested service to apartments, so depending upon contract costs, these properties may receive service in the future.

An electronic copy of the City's information sheet, with the recycling schedule and answers to frequently asked questions, is available for download at: http://www.ci.sturgis.mi.us/pdfs/green\_recyclingprogram.pdf

**Recycling Schedule: March and April 2008**

Residents North of US 12: Pickup on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday

Residents South of US 12: Pickup on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday

**Please Note:** In months with 5 Tuesdays (such as April) no pickup will occur on the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday.

MARCH 2008						
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30	31					

APRIL 2008						
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