

CITY OF ST. JOHNS/CITY MANAGER NEWSLETTER
SUBMITTED TO CLINTON COUNTY NEWS
April 1, 2014

STREET CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: With the passage of the dedicated street millage last November, the upcoming 2014 construction season marks the first year these funds can be applied to much needed city street projects. City staff has used the winter months to refine the plan for this first year of the four year street improvement project. Streets that will be repaved in Year One have been designated. The “request-for-proposal” bid documents have been drafted and are ready to be disseminated. Before we know it the frost will leave the ground, the construction contracts will be executed and construction will be in full swing.

In addition to our reliance on the street reconstruction millage, city staff has submitted grant requests to the State of Michigan for Sturgis and Gibbs Street projects. One grant request is in response to limited money recently made available by the state for local projects. The other grant submission involves street resurfacing projects where the successful grantee uses recycled automotive tire material as part of the street resurfacing material. The latter grant project is sponsored by Michigan DEQ.

As previously indicated in materials sent to our residents prior to the vote, Area 2 on the street construction map will receive our initial attention. We expect construction to begin this spring on portions of Travers, Kibbee, McConnell and Cass streets in the area south of M-21 and east of BR US 27. The second phase of this year’s street construction will commence in August—after Mint Festival—and will involve segments of the following streets: Gibbs, Ottawa, Higham, Oakland, Church, Clinton, Wight, Baldwin and McConnell. In advance of some street reconstruction residents will see Consumers Energy working in the public right-of-way upgrading underground gas mains. The City also intends to replace 11 fire hydrants in conjunction with the street improvement program.

The effects of the long, cold winter will have some impact on street program because sub-surface frost penetrated deeper than usual. This could affect the timing of some street repaving efforts, but will not compromise the overall plan. The unusually harsh winter also took its toll on the City’s budget for snow removal and ice mitigation. While the state provided some additional (one time) Act 51 funds (gas tax monies) to municipalities to offset higher costs in this area, the increased revenues received by the City covered approximately only one-third of our over-budget expenditures.

REVENUE SHARING: This topic has resurfaced in light of projected state budget revenue surpluses over the next two to three years. The state has engaged in significant revenue sharing cuts over the last decade, creating a fiscal crisis in many communities around Michigan. St. Johns has seen its annual revenue-sharing reduced approximately 30% during the economic downturn. While the state has committed to increasing revenue sharing over the short term, it should be noted the present proposal out of

Lansing would only see our city receive an additional \$18,000.00, which translates into an increase of less than 3% from the prior fiscal year. While any increase is welcome, this addition to our treasury will do little to fund essential services or help us rebuild our streets or other infrastructure. The legislature continues to debate how much money will be available through statutory revenue sharing, what formula to use, and what communities will benefit most. It appears urban areas are slated to see larger increases in their revenue sharing than rural communities like ours. The City continues to lobby our state elected officials to restore revenue sharing funding levels so the critical services that we provide to our citizens may continue.

PUBLIC WORKS: Spring is just around the corner; you will begin to see our street sweeper around town cleaning up the streets. Also, our DPW crews will be out collecting brush and leaf bags.

TORNADO WARNING SYSTEM/TORNADO SEASON: As we enter the tornado season it is the City's standing procedure to test its tornado sirens (early warning system) at noon on the first Saturday of each month, beginning in April and running through October. These tests will be conducted unless there is severe weather in the area.

SPRING CLEAN-UP SET FOR MAY 10th: It's once again that time of the year; **BIG TRASH DAY** is right around the corner. That means it's time to begin scouring your home, garage and shed for items that have outlived their usefulness. The annual Big Spring Clean-Up, conducted this year by Waste Management Services, will begin promptly at 7:00 a.m. on May 10. **Residents can begin placing unwanted articles curbside seven days before the clean-up.** Waste Management will be coming through neighborhoods throughout the week prior to May 10th to do early pick ups and will be back on the 10th for another entire run through the city. Please be reminded that this service is paid for by City residents and is therefore restricted to those items owned by City residents. Refer to the City's website, or call City Offices at 224-8944 for further information.