

City of West Branch News

Inside This Issue

Water	1
Sewer	1
Manager	2
Events	4

NEWSLETTER

July 2008



Services Offered by the City

- ❑ **Brush pick up** is offered from March - November (barring any large snowfalls). We cannot accept branches any larger than 4" in diameter. We cannot take full tree removal (stumps, trunks, or branches). We are set up to take only small amounts of trimming. For additional information call City Hall at (989) 345-0500.
- ❑ **Compost Pile** - The City has a compost pile located in the back of Brookside Cemetery. You are welcomed to deposit any soft vegetation (please do not leave your bag, box or container). You are also welcomed to help yourself to some of the rich dirt created by this compost.
- ❑ **Leaves** - The only time you may rake your leaves to the curb is during Spring Leaf Pick Up and Fall Leaf Pick Up. At those times you may rake leaves to the curb. Do not mix in any twigs or sticks.
- ❑ **Sprinkling Meters** are available for outdoor water usage. Meters are \$80. Once you purchase a meter, it is yours to keep. Meters MUST be brought inside when the temperatures get cold – to avoid freezing. All sprinkling meters are self-reporting.
- ❑ **Channel 26 – WBTW** Thank you for your patience. We have had some difficulty with the computer and the program used. We are now getting back online with a new system and a new program. Keep your eyes open to the updated screens!

What's Happening with Our Water?

As most of you know, when the EPA changed the acceptable level of arsenic in public drinking water the City no longer tested at a proper level. The former standard was 50 parts per billion (ppb). The new level is 10 ppb. Our water tests about 11 ppb.

Quarterly letters have gone out informing all users of the system that we have this problem. The letter also informed you that we are working to have this problem remedied by May 2008.

Good news! West Branch Township (whose water does not have high levels of arsenic) has agreed to sell us water. They will sell us water while we continue to look for a site or sites to drill new wells.

In February we started using water

from West Branch Township wells. We realize the Townships water has a higher iron content than what we are use to. We have provided you with a list of some cleaning and laundry aids to help with this problem. If you know of other products, give us a call at (989) 345-0500.

- ❑ Iron Out
- ❑ CLR
- ❑ Red-B-Gone
- ❑ Mineral X Iron & Mineral Cleaner

The test wells were completed the end of May. City staff and our engineering firm, Wilcox & Associates, will be looking at the most cost effective way to provide you with quality water that meets the EPA requirements.

Why not treat the water coming

[Water continued on next page](#)

Sewer Plant Update

The City of West Branch, West Branch Township and Ogemaw Township are working together to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant. The current plant is over 25 years old. The staff, over the years, has worked very hard and diligently to keep the plant in working condition. However, our area has grown and we need to upgrade. This is a very lengthy and hard process.

The process will be hard for our customers as well because these changes and upgrades will come at a

cost. City Council, Township Boards and staff are working to find the most effective way to improve our sewer system.

We will be looking at some rate increases over the next couple of years. We are very concerned about the impact these fees will have on our residents ad businesses.

We are working with a financial advisor to help us get the most for our money.

[Sewer continued on next page](#)



Russell C. Jackson

Thank you to Russ Jackson for all of your years of service to the City of West Branch! You will be missed.

Russ served from October 2, 1996 to May 19, 2008 – just short of 12 years on the City Council.

From July 9, 1996 to June 15, 1998 and January 8, 2001 to May 19, 2008 on the Planning Commission.

From April 5, 1999 to May 19, 2008 on the Airport Board.

Russ resigned from his Board seats due to an illness that took his life on May 28, 2008.

Thank you again Russ, you will be missed.

Water (continued from page 1)

from our current water supply? The biggest reason we are looking at drilling new wells has to do with the age of our current system. It is estimated that the current wells were drilled in the early 1900's. Besides needing a lot of attention their location to the river is no longer acceptable. We are also being told that to treat this water would be very costly.

City staff and Council continue to research all areas of this process to give you the best possible water quality.

If you have any questions concerning this process, please call City Hall at (989) 345-0500.

NEW City Manager!!

On Tuesday, June 24th our new City Manager, Tom Youatt started! Tom came to us from a 15-year tenure with Harbor Beach. Make sure you stop by and welcome Tom to West Branch!

Downtown Building Renovation

Several of our downtown businesses have a new look. Thanks to the business owners that participated in the building renovation program! Those businesses include: Silver Lining, Morse Clark Furniture Store, Abigail's Antiques and West Branch Creative Arts Association.

A special thank you to Housing Director, Stacy Alley, for getting a grant to help this project along. Also a big thank you goes out to the City's Downtown Development Authority for offering low interest loans to these business owners.

It is great to have such dedicated downtown business owners that help keep our City looking great! Just look around, our downtown looks good!

City Council Members

Todd Thompson – Mayor
Chad Lucas – Ward 1
Greg Clark – Ward 2
Rusty Showalter – Ward 3
Kim Ervans – At-Large
Paul Frechette – At-Large
William Ehinger – At-Large

Council meetings are the 1st & 3rd Monday's at 7:00pm in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

Please join us!

Sewer (continued from page 1)

Our engineering firm, C2AE, has all the paperwork in to the DEQ. The Townships and City are working on developing a sewer authority for bonding purposes.

For more information on this important project for our area, please call West Branch Township officials, Ogemaw Township officials or City of West Branch officials.

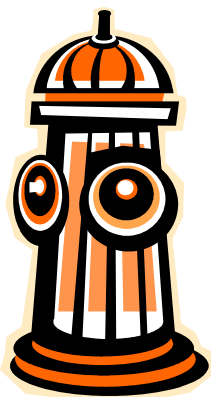


Important Info.....

Please make sure that your garbage is in closed bags before putting it into your cart. Waste Management has noticed that there has been loose trash in the carts that flies out when being dumped. Thank you.

Master Plan

The West Branch Planning Commission is working on a new Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. We would like to hear your thoughts on what you like about the City of West Branch and what you don't like. Please put your thoughts in writing, you don't need to sign, and send it to or drop it off at City Hall.



Hydrant Flushing

City crews flush fire hydrants to keep the water distribution system fresh and well-exercised. Flushing sometimes loosens mineral deposits which gives our water a "rusty" tint. Residents experiencing "rusty" water should flush their own lines by letting the water run for a little while (several minutes should do it). **DO NOT** wash your whites when the water is "rusty." The Department of Public Works is expecting to start flushing in September. Watch WBTV – channel 26 or call City Hall for detailed information on flushing schedules.



Helpful Information

Large Item Pickup – is limited to two items. Items will be picked up each Wednesday of the month. Items could include a couch, chair mattress, and piece of furniture. If you have something with coolant in it, you would need to get a yellow tag from City Hall before putting the item out for pickup. There is no charge for the yellow tag.

Green Trash Bags are available at City Hall to accommodate any garbage that will not fit in the garbage cart. The bags are a package of 10 for \$15.

The **Recycling Center** is located behind the Family Video building. Hours are Tuesdays from 2pm – 6pm and Saturdays from 9am – 1pm. You now need a recycling card in order to use the Center. If you do not have a card, stop by City Hall and fill out an application.

The Center accepts: Newspapers, phone books, magazines, junk mail and cardboard – all clean and bundled. Aluminum and tin cans rinsed and flattened. Glass (clear, green & brown) rinsed and unbroken. Plastic #'s 1 & 2, detergent bottles and milk jugs – clean, labels removed and crushed.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MATERIALS IF THE ATTENDANT IS NOT THERE!!

Ordinance Info...

No Overnight Parking – City Ordinance prohibits the parking of vehicles on City streets or in City parking lots between the hours of 2am and 6am. Such rules are necessary so that we can sweep and remove snow from the streets without obstruction. Some exceptions are permitted – call City Hall at 345-0500.

Noxious Weeds – Section 92.15 of the Ordinance Code prohibits excessive weed growth within the City Limits. If a property is found to be in violation of this section, the homeowner will be given notice to cut, remove or destroy noxious weeds and/or excessive weed growth by a certain date. Failure to remove will result with a **minumun** charge of \$50 being billed to the owner.

Don't Forget To Vote!

August 5th – Primary. You may only vote straight ballot at this time – meaning you can only vote either Democratic or Republic. Any ballot proposals are a separate issue. **Remember to bring your picture ID!**
November 4th – General. If you will be gone during these election times call City Hall and request an Absentee Voter Application.



**Summer Music Series
2008
7pm – Irons Park**

- 7/10 – Mandy G & the Saxophone Family
- 7/24 – Robert Jones & Matt Watroba
- 7/31 – Leslie Frederick Wilvis Dillon featuring Wil Engemann & Tom Ebelt
- 8/21 – Kinsfolk

Farmers Market

8am – 1pm every Saturday July – first week of October. This year’s market will be located on S 3rd Street.

Fireworks

July 4th
Off of M-30 after dusk.

Parade

July 4th
1:00pm
Theme-“America’s Founders”

Heritage Days

July 3 – 6
Irons Park

***Fabulous Fridays!
Downtown Victorian West Branch
5:00pm – 8:00pm***

July 4 – 4th of July Celebration. Come celebrate our independence! Make it a day & watch the parade in the afternoon, at 5pm visit Uncle Sam, enjoy the bicycle parade, fill up on hotdogs and cotton candy and much more – all before heading out to see the fireworks! For more info call Clara at 345-0355.

July 11 – Show Off Your Iron. Motorcycles galore! Ride your bike on in and show it off while admiring others. Fun for the whole family! For more info call Beth at 345-8001.

July 18 – “Rock” & Read. Rock-a-thon, Book Exchange, Meet the Author, Book Signings, Story Telling and much, much more! For more info call Marsha at 345-2235.

July 25 – West Branch Idol. Come see the local talents of West Branch as they sing their way to the top in hopes of being our first “West Branch Idol”! For more info call Kathy at 345-0044.

August 1 – Big 3 Auto Show. Featuring the Big 3 of West Branch: Dean Arbor Ford, Team Hodges & Hart Pontiac! For more info call John at 345-0044.

August 8 – County Fair Festival. A fun filled evening with all of the down-home goodness of the county fair! Pet the cows and enjoy old-fashioned apple pie too! For more info call Christie at 345-3955.

August 15 – Music in the Streets. Music is in the air! Stroll the downtown streets as you listen to local musicians. For more info call Samantha or Pete at 345-5226.

August 22 – Downtown Sports Night. Batter up! Hike! Come out for a night of sports in the street! Fun for the whole family! For more info call 345-3955.

August 29 – Big Boys & Their Toys. Guy toys of all kinds including tractors, boats, all terrain vehicles, motorcycles, tool, golf activities, hunting supplies, hot cars & more! For more info call Pete at 345-5226.

More Summer Events

- WBRMC Fun Run/Walk – July 5th
- Ogemaw Hills Bike Week – July 6-13th
- Pioneer Power July 17-20th
- Honda Gold Wings Rally – July 18-19th
- Relay for Life – July 26-27th
- Rods & Relics – August 2-3rd
- Victorian Art Fair – August 9-10th
- Ogemaw County Fair – August 10-16th

City of West Branch

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The City of West Branch would like to graciously thank all of the volunteers from Wal-Mart and Home Depot for their long hours and hard work. The time these volunteers gave was to clean-up and restore the City’s Irons Park after the June 8, 2008 storm. City crews did have a cookout for these volunteers on Thursday, June 11. Thank you to Glens for your help with the items needed.

If you would like to donate a tree to Irons Park, call City Hall for more info.