

State, federal funds to transform Roosevelt Road

The goal of revitalizing Roosevelt Road from Harlem Avenue to Austin Boulevard moved from concept to reality in December with a written commitment from the Illinois Department of Transportation authorizing \$7 million in state and federal funds for the project.

With IDOT's commitment, efforts to create a more pedestrian-friendly, landscaped and vibrant commercial corridor along the busy Roosevelt Road thoroughfare shared by Oak Park, Berwyn and Cicero are now scheduled to begin by summer 2010, officials say.

The initial groundwork for the project first was laid in 2000 when the Berwyn Development Corporation, working with the City of Berwyn and the Village of Oak Park, received an *Illinois Tomorrow Grant* to develop general guidelines for improving the Roosevelt Road corridor. That plan, released in 2003, recommended that the three communities adopt a shared vision and unified regulations to make it possible.

The project took a dramatic step forward in 2006 when Berwyn and Oak Park, along with the City of Cicero, signed an intergovernmental agreement pledging to work together to revitalize their shared border.

Creation of specific design plans for streetscape improvements and new



The future view west from Highland Avenue.

consistent, zoning regulations for all three communities were authorized in 2007. Streetscape design plans were adopted in 2008, and the zoning regulations approved in 2009. The only remaining obstacle was to secure funding for the project, a hurdle swept away by the December letter from IDOT.

Included in the funding commitment is \$3 million IDOT will allocate toward the project. IDOT also committed \$3.95 million in federal funds for streetscape improvements and \$25,000 for bike-

way signage along the corridor, money administered through the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).

The project is expected to enhance the economic vibrancy and aesthetics of the corridor, and improve property values for residents of Oak Park, Berwyn and Cicero.

For more information on the Roosevelt Road project, including copies of the planning documents, visit www.rooseveltroad.com.

H1N1 flu vaccinations offered to all

With increased availability of H1N1 flu vaccine, the Oak Park Department of Public Health now is offering vaccinations to any resident who calls for an appointment. Vaccinations initially were limited to those considered most at risk from complications from the disease. However, state public health officials say that enough vaccine now is available to vaccinate any individual regardless of age or health status. The H1N1 vaccination is free, but an appointment is required — just call 708.358.5601. In the meantime, health officials recommend the following ways to minimize chances of getting or spreading the flu:

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water — especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Practice respiratory etiquette. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. No tissue? Then cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick. Don't share your virus with others.

For more information on H1N1 clinics, e-mail health@oak-park.us or call 708.358.5480.

2010 budget retains critical services, continues to rebuild fund balance



The 2010 budget has kept municipal finances on track toward building the fund balance so critical to strong bond ratings, meeting cash-flow needs, attracting private investments and being prepared for emergencies.

The \$40.6 million balanced operating budget approved in November includes modest fee increases that were essential to maintaining the Village's emphasis on public safety and public works. Together, these fundamental municipal government services will account for about 75 percent of all 2010 spending.

While the Village did increase its property tax levy by about 2.19 percent to meet state mandates for police and fire pension funding and debt obligations, no new property tax dollars were sought for municipal services. Even with this increase, the Village's municipal government share of each property tax dollar residents pay is less than 13 cents.

Property owners will be asked to pay a little more for water and sewer services in the year ahead. The water and sewer service rate increases are estimated to cost the average homeowner about 84 cents more a month. Refuse hauling rates will increase slightly as well. Fees will increase 57 cents a month for large carts and 48 cents a month for smaller ones, to \$19.50 and \$16.43 respectively. Property owners are billed quarterly for water, sewer and refuse hauling services.

Cost reductions are in the budget, too, as the Village, like individuals, struggles to deal with the continued economic downturn. The Village workforce has been reduced by 60 positions over the past 24 months.

For more information on the budget call 708.358.5460 or e-mail finance@oak-park.us. A copy of the budget is posted at www.oak-park.us/finance — just click on the budget book cover icon.

HOUSING NEWS

Call 708.358.5410 or e-mail housing@oak-park.us

Condominium owners and boards...The Village is collaborating with the Oak Park Area Association of Realtors to give a presentation to condominium property owners and boards on how to make it easier for prospective homebuyers to purchase a unit in their building. The presentation is scheduled for 7 – 9 p.m., Jan. 27, at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Participants will learn about new financing rules and ways to make their buildings more marketable.

Building owners and managers...The annual management seminar is scheduled for March 10. Two sessions will be offered — one from 10 a.m. to noon, the second from 7 – 9 p.m. Among the topics discussed will be fair housing, new lead-based paint rules, how the Village and the Housing Authority will work together to coordinate apartment inspections and how to ensure that residents are counted in the 2010 census.

Multi-family building owners...Applications are now being accepted for the Multi-Family Housing Incentives matching grant program for owners of buildings with four or more units. Applicants may apply for matching grants up to \$10,000 or \$1,000 per unit, whichever is less. Grants must be matched two-to-one by the owner. Funds may be expended on common areas, security or individual units, including improvements designed to reduce energy consumption.

Single-family homeowners...No-interest rehab loans of up to \$5,000 are available to owners of single-family homes to help with emergencies such as replacing a furnace or boiler. Loans are repayable after five years or when the property is transferred. The loan is placed as a junior mortgage against the property. The application process and rehab work are expedited so that the emergency can be corrected quickly.

Police departments join forces



The Police Departments of Forest Park, Oak Park, River Forest and Elmwood Park have joined forces to create a regional law enforcement group to prevent and solve crimes by sharing timely intelligence, combining resources and providing multi-community public safety messages. Called the *FOREcast Regional Crime Analysis and Intelligence Sharing Initiative*, law enforcement officials from the founding communities say they hope other contiguous police departments will join in on this regional approach to fighting crime. The acronym FOREcast is an incorporation of the first letter of each of the four founding communities. Municipal boundaries mean nothing to criminals, so crime in one community has an impact on its neighbors, police say. That's why police hope that by working together at both the strategic and tactical levels, they will be able to spot trends, organize broader geographic responses to shared criminal activity and alert citizens with a unified message, all activities that can help reduce crime across the entire area. Collecting, analyzing and disseminating information from a broader database, police say, will help identify crime patterns, connect suspects and anticipate criminal activity. For more information on the program, call 708.386.3800 or e-mail police@oak-park.us.

Don't hesitate to call 9-1-1



Oak Park's community policing approach relies on residents taking an active role. If you see unusual activity, suspicious people or vehicles in your neighborhood, call 9-1-1 immediately. For more information on the Community Policing Program, or to contact your Resident Beat Officer, call 708.386.3800 or visit www.oak-park.us/police.

PUBLIC WORKS NEWS

Call 708.358.5700 or
e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us

Holiday trees...will be picked up on regular trash and recycling collection days during the weeks of January 11 and 18. So that trees can be recycled, please follow these instructions:

- Place tree in the regular collection area next to the refuse cart — only residents with no alley should put trees at the curb.
- Trees should be free of all tinsel, decorations and stands.
- Do not put tree in plastic disposal bag.
- Put wreaths and garlands in the refuse cart — they are held together with wire and not recyclable.

Tree pruning...is scheduled from early-January to mid-March, weather permitting. The 2010 trim area is bounded by Chicago Avenue, Division Street, East Avenue and Harlem Avenue. Some 1,500 trees are scheduled to be trimmed this cycle by Forestry Division crews and a private contractor. For more information on tree pruning, replacement and removal, or questions about general tree health, call 708.358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.

Yardwaste, refuse stickers...will cost a nickel more in 2010. Green yardwaste stickers will be \$2.10, up from \$2.05, and pink refuse stickers will be \$1.85, up from \$1.80.

Counting CFLs...The Village is counting compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) wrappers to help document the community's effort to go green and earn access to financial incentive programs offered by ComEd. Wrappers can be recycled during regular business hours at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., or the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd.

A shoveled sidewalk is a safer sidewalk

Property owners who shovel their sidewalks are making it safer for all pedestrians, especially children and senior citizens. Village ordinance requires snow and ice to be removed from the public sidewalk within 24 hours following any snow, sleet or freezing rain. If the snow or ice have become too hard, then sand, salt or other abrasive material may be used to make pedestrian travel reasonably safe. The shoveling requirement applies to both business and residential property owners. While failure to clear a sidewalk fronting or abutting one's property could lead to a ticket and fine, the Village is counting on the community to comply willingly — especially since so many sidewalks in Oak Park are walking routes to and from neighborhood schools. Being a good neighbor is important, too, so property owners are urged to help those who may need help clearing a sidewalk. The Village also has compiled a list of resources where those in need can turn for help. For more information on the shoveling requirement or help resources, call 708.358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.



Weather forecast key to planning for parking when it snows

The Village has specific rules that govern parking when it snows — rules that are enforced seven days a week, including holidays. Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. When a snow emergency is declared by the Public Works Department — typically after a two-inch snowfall — all parking is prohibited on the main streets posted as snow routes. Parking on other streets is restricted to one side from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. in residential areas and from midnight to 8 a.m. in designated commercial districts, the side determined by the date. To find out if snow-related parking restrictions are in effect, call 708.358.SNOW (708.358.7669) for a recorded message. Cable television subscribers can tune into VOP-TV, broadcast on Comcast channel 6 and AT&T channel 99. The snow emergency parking rules and a list of frequently asked questions also are posted at www.oak-park.us/snow.

Primary election approaches

Several important dates and deadlines are approaching for the Feb. 2 Primary Election. Here's an overview:

- **Local voter registration ends** Tues., Jan. 5 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., and at the Oak Park Township, 105 S. Oak Park Ave., including changing a name or transferring registration information to a new address. However, residents can register from Jan. 6 – Jan. 26 at the Cook County Clerk's Office, 50 W. Washington St., in Chicago, and other county sites. Call 312.603.7790 for more information. Voter registration requires two types of identification, at least one with a current address.
- **Early voting at Village Hall**, 123 Madison St., will open to registered voters on Mon. Jan. 11 and continue through Thurs., Jan. 28. Early voting hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Mondays through Saturdays, including Martin Luther King Day, Mon., Jan. 18. Early and in-person absentee voting both require a photo ID.
- **In-person absentee voting** will be underway from Fri., Jan. 29 through Mon., Feb. 1, at the Cook County Clerk's Office, 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, and other county sites. Call 312.603.7790 for more information.

Residents are urged to visit www.voterinfonet.com to confirm their voting precinct, which may have changed since the last election. For more information about the election process, call 708.358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us.



Fire Chief retires

Fire Chief William Bell has retired after nearly 30 years of service to the community. Bell, who joined the Oak Park Fire Department in 1980, has been chief since December 2004. An interim chief likely will be appointed from the current ranks of the Fire Department command staff. While Bell has retired from Oak Park, he is not retiring from the fire service. He will become fire chief for the City of Richland Hills, a community of about 8,100 residents in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. Bell is an Oak Park native who attended Longfellow School and Oak Park-River Forest High School. He joined the Oak Park Fire Department as a firefighter in April 1980, rising through the ranks to hold numerous positions within the department, including Paramedic, Fire Investigator, Inspector, Lieutenant, Training Officer, Shift Commander, Deputy Chief of Operations and Fire Chief. For more information on Oak Park Fire Department operations and services, visit www.oak-park.us/fire.



Get the latest Village news

Via e-mail... Sign-up to receive information on municipal activities via e-mail at www.oak-park.us — just click on the e-news icon at the bottom of the page. No information other than an e-mail address is collected. Unsubscribing is just as easy. For more information, call 708.358.5770 or e-mail village@oak-park.us.

Find us on Facebook

TV and online... Cable television subscribers can learn about Village government and life in the community by tuning in to VOP-TV, Oak Park's municipal television station available to Comcast subscribers on channel six and AT&T subscribers on channel 99. Selected original programming also can be viewed online at www.oak-park.us as well as at www.youtube.com/vopnews.

Twitter... Find out what's going on with Village government in 140 characters or less on the Oak Park twitter page, www.twitter.com/vopnews. You do not have to join twitter to check out the page.

Facebook... Become a fan of the Village and be instantly connected to upcoming events, board meeting schedules, videos, photos and more. Just visit www.facebook.com/vopnews.

Volunteers needed for A Day in Our Village

June may seem like a long way from January, but planning already is well underway for the 37th annual *A Day in Our Village*, Oak Park's annual festival celebrating diversity and community involvement. This year's event is scheduled for Sun., June 6. A variety of volunteers are needed to help promote and staff the event, which includes activity booths representing Oak Park civic, cultural, social service, educational, religious and business organizations, as well as demonstrations, entertainment and food provided by local restaurants. Anyone interested in volunteering — or more information — is urged to call 708.358.5407 or e-mail community@oak-park.us.



Residential resource fair set

Oak Parkers can learn about a wide range of assistance programs at a free resource assistance fair scheduled for 1:30 – 5 p.m., Sat., Jan. 23, at the Barrie Center, 1011 Lombard St. Representatives from the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County (CEDA) will provide information on energy assistance, employment, training and housing. The event is sponsored by the Village and Oak Park Township. For more information, e-mail planning@oak-park.us or call 708.222.3824.

Clip and Save

Who to Call at Village Hall

Dial Direct (area code 708)

Village TTY	383.0048
Police/Fire TTY	848.1911
Automated Info Line	445.3340
Adjudication	358.5479
Building and Property Standards	358.5430
Licenses/permits	358.5433
Codes/status of plans	358.5434
Property complaints	358.5443
Inspections	358.5440
Community Planning/	
Development	358.5420
Business Services	358.5648
Housing	358.5410
Historic Preservation	358.5417
Zoning	358.5449
Community Relations	358.5405
Graffiti Hotline	358.5429
Neighborhood Programs	358.5405
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (non-emergency)	445.3300
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Police (non-emergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	
Day Parking Passes	358.DAYS
Night Parking Passes	358.NITE
Parking Office	358.PARK
Snow Hotline	358.SNOW
Extended Passes	358.5750
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770
Village Web Site	www.oak-park.us

Police, Fire and Medical
EMERGENCIES

911

Local bank co-sponsors crime-fighting effort

Police urge Oak Parkers to blow a whistle and help stop a crime



When Oak Park Police officers began handing out free whistles to residents at CTA train stops they are combining the low-tech tool of a loud, shrill sound with the high-tech speed of a cell phone to help fight crime. The program, based on similar police initiative popular in the 1980s, is rooted in the simple idea of citizens looking out for each other. Called *Blow a Whistle*,

Stop a Crime, the goal, police say, is to give individuals another tool for letting everyone within ear shot know that someone needs help and to call 9-1-1. Preventing crime is not about just having police officers everywhere, all the time, police say, but having alert citizens who are willing to get involved. And that's what the whistle program is all about — alert citizens getting involved. Individuals don't need to wear the whistle around their neck or always have it in their hand, according to police. They just need to keep it handy, such as in one's purse or on one's keychain and then pull it out when they think they might be about to encounter a risky situation. In fact, police say individuals don't even have to carry a whistle to get involved in the program — they only have to call 9-1-1 immediately if they hear a whistle being blown. Most of the crime in Oak Park involves bicycle thefts and garage burglaries. But such statistics mean little if you are the victim of a robbery or a snatch-and-run, police say, which are the very types of crimes they believe the whistle program can help prevent. Community Bank of Oak Park River Forest is co-sponsoring the program by helping underwrite the cost of more than 3,000 whistles and related crime-prevention educational materials. The program would not have been possible without the bank's participation, police say. While CTA train riders were the first to get free whistles, police are distributing them to others as well — at least while supplies last. Police say they also are open to other local businesses that might want to help support the program by helping purchase more whistles. For more information on the *Blow a Whistle, Stop a Crime* program, call 708.386.3800 or e-mail police@oak-park.us. Information also is posted at www.oak-park.us/police.

Walking routes to schools made safer

The Village's *safe walking routes to schools* program includes new traffic control signs, high-visibility pavement markings and detailed maps parents can use to help their children choose the safest route to each of the community's elementary and middle schools. The following improvements have been made throughout the Village:

- Stop signs added and upgraded at key intersections, some with advance warning signs to alert drivers.
- Higher-visibility school speed limit signs installed within close proximity of school zone boundaries.
- Additional school crossing signs and directional arrows added to key crossings.
- School names with arrows stenciled onto sidewalk along routes to schools.

Maps for the safe walking routes to each school are posted at www.oak-park.us/publicworks. For information, call 708.358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.



Changes inside Village Hall

Parking Service Center opens with extended hours...Residents who come to Village Hall to purchase or renew a parking permit, or request a special parking pass, should find it even easier to get help. All parking services are now located together in the new Parking Service Center, located just inside the south entrance to Village Hall by the parking lot. The new center also will be open from 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Mondays, beginning Jan. 4. Regular hours are 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information, call 708.358.PARK (7275) or e-mail parking@oak-park.us. Parking information also is posted at www.oak-park.us/parking.

Cashier services consolidated...All payments for Village services made at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., will now be made at a single window by the new Parking Service Center. Among the transactions handled by the new cashier window will be parking permit renewals, refuse and recycling stickers, real estate transfer tax stamps and water bills. While residents will continue to need to visit the relevant department first, payments will be made at the cashier window. The former cashier window near the Village Clerk will be the future home of the Office of Administrative Adjudication. For more information on cashier services, call 708.358.5460 or e-mail finance@oak-park.us.

Community Relations moves to second floor...The Community Relations Department has a new home on the second floor of Village Hall. The Department enforces the Village's Human Rights Ordinance and Fair Housing Policy, as well as promotes racial diversity, including investigating complaints. In addition, the department provides referral services to community resources, mediates landlord/tenant and neighbor disputes, responds to neighborhood quality of life issues and provides resident training in community outreach and block organizing. For information, call 708.358.5405 or e-mail community@oak-park.us.



Village of Oak Park

Village Hall

123 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Village President

David Pope

Trustees

Glenn Brewer

Ray Johnson

Jon Hale

Colette Lueck

John Hedges

Jan Pate

Village Clerk

Teresa Powell

Village Manager

Thomas W. Barwin

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort

Oak Parkers urged to participate



Oak Parkers who take a few minutes to answer 10 simple questions will be helping to make sure the community gets its fair share of the more than \$400 million in federal funds distributed each year to various governments. Forms for the 2010 Census will begin arriving in mailboxes in March for the April 1

official population count day. Residents who do not return the questionnaire by the end of April can expect a census taker to be knocking on their door in May through July, as efforts focus on making sure the constitutionally mandated count is as accurate as possible. With one of the shortest questionnaires in history, the 2010 Census asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship and whether you own or rent your home. The questions are intended to gather information about how we live as a nation, our diversity, education, housing and jobs. All information provided to the Census Bureau is used for statistical purposes only, and is strictly confidential. In addition to grant funding, accurate census data also helps determine congressional representation and guides local decision-makers on where to build new roads, hospitals, housing, schools, places of worship and more. For more information, visit www.2010census.gov or contact the Office of the Village Clerk at 708.358.5670 or clerk@oak-park.us.

Part-time workers sought for the community

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting temporary, part-time census takers for the 2010 Census — including 6,000 workers for the 7th Congressional District that includes Oak Park. These short-term jobs offer good pay, flexible hours, paid training and reimbursement for authorized work-related expenses, such as mileage incurred while conducting census work. Census takers work right in their communities and earn a minimum of \$13 per hour. Applicants must be 18 years old when work begins in the spring and pass a test of basic math, clerical and reasoning skills. Tests are offered in Oak Park. For more information, visit www.2010censusjobs.gov or call 1.866.861.2010.



Online vehicle sticker renewals to get price break

For the first time in more than 25 years, vehicle sticker rates will increase in 2010. However, residents who choose to renew online will pay 2009 prices, since electronic renewals are less costly to process. Instructions will be included in the vehicle sticker renewal mailing residents will receive in May. The Village also hopes to allow residents to go paperless in future years, opting to receive renewal notices online rather than in the mail, a greener approach that will save tax dollars by reducing paper, printing and postage costs. The new vehicle sticker rates for owners of passenger vehicle who do not renew online will be \$50, up from \$45. Seniors and drivers with disabilities will pay \$39 instead of \$35. Late fees have been adjusted to \$20. Any Oak Park resident who owns a vehicle — even if kept in a garage or rarely driven — must purchase a vehicle sticker annually by 5 p.m., June 30, and display it by July 1. Failure to display a Village sticker on a resident-owned vehicle can result in a \$21 ticket per day, in addition to the late fee. Valid vehicle stickers are required to obtain parking permits. For more information call 708.358.5670, or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us.