

At Your Service



A Newsletter for the Citizens of Midland, Michigan

June 2009

City Expands Communications Offerings

- Websites...
- On-demand video...
- Print publications...
- 24/7 electronic message board...
- E-mails...
- "City in 15" news magazine
- Electronic newsletters...



These are the primary ways you can find out what's happening at the City of Midland. Even with this long list of communications methods, we're always looking for more ways to share timely City news and give you the opportunity to communicate with us.

With that in mind, we've recently expanded our communications offerings to include a Media Room on the City's website, a new Facebook web page, and a YouTube channel.

MEDIA ROOM

The City's Media Room (www.midland-mi.org/new/mediaroom.htm) is a one-stop shop for links to the City's many communications vehicles, such as press releases, past "At Your Service" newsletters, our weekly e-newsletter "City Hall News," on-demand video of City meetings, the City Calendar/Services Guide, plus our new YouTube and Facebook web pages, just to name a few. We've also created a video viewing area with links to some of our most popular YouTube videos.

You'll want to visit the City's Media Room to find out the many ways we're working to reach you.

FACING THE FUTURE

Facebook is one of the fastest-growing and best-known sites on the Internet, with more than 200 million active users worldwide. The free service is a popular social networking tool that connects people.

The City's Facebook page, launched in March, already has nearly 375 fans! Sign up to view our new page, where you'll find news about hot topics at City Hall, a photo gallery of some of our community's many amenities, and a chance for friendly banter.

A key feature of Facebook is the ability to e-interact by commenting on information and asking questions. Another popular feature is Discussion Boards.

(cont. on Pg. 2)



Communications *(cont. from Pg. 1)*

From time to time, we'll start a discussion on specific City topics of interest to the community, such as the recently-approved 2009-2010 budget. Comments are gathered and shared with City Council and/or the appropriate City departments.

We want to hear from you! Check out the City's Facebook page by visiting www.facebook.com, becoming a free member (a simple registration process), and searching for *City of Midland*. Once you've perused our page, tell us what you think of it by writing on our Facebook "Wall."

YOUTUBE NOW OUR TUBE

Originally a website with videos geared towards Generation X and younger, YouTube.com is quickly becoming a popular portal for business and educational purposes. The City of Midland is utilizing this free service to post videos that educate and inform about City services, programs, and events.

The City's YouTube channel has a growing list of videos produced by City staff at the MCTV Network. The segments come from "City in 15," our 15-minute news magazine that airs daily on MGTV-5 and is available on demand on the City's website.

Video segments are short – 2 to 5 minutes long – and cover everything from Health & Safety topics (such as how to spot a police imposter), to Sports & Recreation news (such as Midland Civic Arena information), to City service how-to's (for example, how to pay your water bill online). After viewing our videos, you can comment and rate the segments right on the YouTube page.

Be sure to visit and bookmark the City's YouTube channel, which can be found at www.youtube.com/CityMidland.



Election News



Since there are not more than two candidates running for any of the Midland City Council positions on the ballot this fall, there will be no August Primary Election in 2009.

Candidates vying for a Council seat will square off in the Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009 Council Election. Candidates who will appear on the ballot include:

- Ward 1:** Tom Adams (*incumbent*) & Michael Westendorf
- Ward 2:** Maureen Donker (*incumbent-unopposed*)
- Ward 3:** Scott Gaynor (*unopposed*)
- Ward 4:** Bruce Johnson (*incumbent-unopposed*)
- Ward 5:** Marty Wazbinski (*unopposed*)

To vote in November, Midland voters must be registered at the City Clerk's Office, 333 W. Ellsworth St., by Monday, October 5 at 5 p.m. If you are already registered to vote, there is no need to re-register. Call the Clerk's Office (837-3310) with any questions.

Serve Your Community

Looking for a way to give back to the community? Consider applying for a City board or commission.

Currently, the **Aviation Advisory Commission** is looking to fill two positions, both requiring that applicants be active pilots who base their planes or fly planes based at Jack Barstow Municipal Airport, the City's general aviation airport. The commission advises City Council on user charges and other costs affecting the airport. They also advise on airport development plans such as building construction, runways, etc. One post – to fill a vacancy – expires June 30, 2011, and the other is for a three-year term that expires June 30, 2012.

The **West Main Street Historic District Commission** has two citizen-at-large positions to fill: one with a term expiring June 30, 2012, and the other – a vacancy – with a term ending June 30, 2010. This commission develops and administers guidelines for work conducted on properties in the historic district.

Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Thurs., July 2. Forms are available online (www.midland-mi.org), or as hard copies at the City Manager's Office, City Hall.

Flood Safety & Insurance

Flood Rating Means Cost Savings...

Because of the City's exemplary floodplain management programs and services, Midland has the lowest flood insurance rates in Michigan, according to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). Those wishing to purchase or renew flood policies for owned or rented properties in the city will automatically receive a 25% discount over standard insurance rates.

Per the NFIP, a home within a special flood hazard area (SFHA) or floodplain has a 26% greater chance of being damaged by flood over the life of a 30-year mortgage than by fire or other loss. Your homeowner's insurance will not cover flood damage; that's why flood insurance is mandatory for all federally-backed mortgages.

For NFIP questions, call 1-800-427-4661. Or, call your local licensed insurance agent for more about the city's excellent Class 5 flood rating and the savings it will mean for you.

Local Hazard Areas... There are several flood hazard areas throughout Midland. Most flooding occurs from the Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers, Sturgeon and Snake creeks, and Inman Drain.

To find out if your home or business is located within the SFHA (a.k.a., the 100-year floodplain) contact Midland's Planning and Community Development Department at 989-837-3374.

Flood Warning

System... Many times, flooding in Midland can be predicted days in advance, giving ample warning for preparation and evacuation. In the event of flash flooding, public safety officials will assess the damage after the flooding has subsided, per Midland County's Emergency Operations Plan.

During a flooding event, contact Midland County's Emergency Information Hotline at 1-888-TELL-MORE, or tune in to MGTV Cable Channel 5, WMPX 1490 AM, or WMRX 97.7 FM. These sources can provide the latest on flood levels and road closures.

Safety Tips... Many roads and low-lying areas in Midland are quickly covered by water during yearly flooding events. If you come upon "Road Closed" barricades while driving, locate an alternate route. Most flood-related injuries and deaths occur when unsuspecting citizens drive on flooded roadways. Your vehicle can become buoyant in as little as two feet of water, causing you to lose control of your vehicle. A simple way to avoid flood-related accidents is to follow this simple adage: *Turn Around Don't Drown!*



Protect your home from flooding: clean gutters, down spouts, and drain lines; re-grade your lot; and flood proof your house with water-tight doors.

Local waterways can be problem areas due to debris. Large numbers of County and City drains and waterways receive annual maintenance to ensure that man-made debris and naturally-occurring vegetation are removed, but we need your help as well... keeping smaller drains, ditches, and streams free of debris can greatly improve the outflow of water run-off from low-lying areas as well as reduce the occurrence of ice jams during the cooler months. It is a violation of City ordinance to dump materials into waterways.

If you observe any waterways adjacent to your property that are filled with sediment, vegetation, and debris, call Utilities (989-837-3500), and crews will be sent to clean them.

More flood safety information can be found online:

- www.midlandcounty.org/emergency
- www.midland-mi.org/services/services.htm (*look for the Flood Information link*)

Flood Protection and

Permits... If your property is located within the 100-year (or 1%) floodplain, there are several regulations that the City of Midland enforces to ensure that homes and businesses are reasonably safe from flooding. Midland's Building Department enforces the International Construction Code (ICC) as it pertains to proposed construction within a floodplain. Call the Building Department (989-837-3383) with your construction questions.

It's important to note that those who develop land within floodplains – including filling, excavation, construction of fences, etc. – must have a Part 31 Floodplain Permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) before a City building permit can be obtained. Contact Joy Brooks, Saginaw Bay District, at 989-894-6226 or brooksj@michigan.gov for an MDEQ permit application.

Flood Hazard Maps & Floodplain

Determinations... The City's Planning Department has copies of all Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-issued Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). FIRMs can be purchased by calling 877-FEMA-MAP. When purchasing maps, please reference Midland's community number: **260140**.

Planning also maintains copies of Letters of Map Amendments on properties and structures that have been removed from the SFHA.

Contact the City's Planning Department at 989-837-3374 (or by e-mail, kbaker@midland-mi.org) with your questions.

Take Note!

Because of budget reductions stemming from financial challenges in the 2009-2010 City budget, several City departments will see changes in their hours of operation.

Dial-A-Ride (837-6940)... Effective July 1, Dial-A-Ride will no longer offer Sunday bus service. Service will continue to be provided as follows:

- Monday – Friday.....6:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.
- Saturdays.....9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Also starting July 1, Dial-A-Ride’s phone service hours will be as follows:

- Monday – Friday.....8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Saturdays.....8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

An emergency hotline (989-631-5140) is available during bus service hours for passengers who miss or wish to cancel a scheduled ride outside of Dial-A-Ride’s regular phone service hours.

Grace A. Dow Memorial Library (837-3430)... These new hours begin July 1:

- Monday – Friday9:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. (*changed from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.*)
- Saturday.....10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (*no change*)
- Sunday 1–5 p.m. during school year (*no change; Sunday hours resume Sept. 13*)

MCTV Network (837-3474)... Also starting July 1, MCTV’s hours will be as follows:

- Monday – Friday9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (*changed from 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.*)
- Weekday Evenings
and Some SaturdaysFor access users to produce programming (by reservation only)

Teens Learn Building Blocks of Construction

A program designed to teach teens the ins and outs of building construction has resulted in a beautiful home for two individuals with disabilities.

The second barrier-free house to be built by students in Midland Public Schools’ Building Trades Program was completed June 10. The 1440-square-foot, two-bedroom home at 204 Vail St. is handicap-accessible, barrier-free, zero step, and built to universal design standards.



This hands-on educational project involved 39 students working under the supervision of teacher Kevin Dodick; para-pro Jerry LeVasseur; and City of Midland Housing Technician Bill Brown. Students learned the art of construction by installing tile, kitchen and bathroom cabinets, windows and doors, and drywall while at the same time creating a home that suits those with special needs. Brandi Palmer, a co-op in the City’s Planning Department, designed the home. In addition, 35+ local businesses helped with planning and construction.

The program is a collaboration between MPS and the City. This past year, the ARC of Midland and Midland-Gladwin Community Mental Health joined the program, which is funded through the Housing Commission Fund with support from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation.

Lots to See, Do, and... Touch?

Be sure to visit the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library this summer to enjoy a variety of activities for the whole family, including the annual Summer Reading Program and the ever-popular Touch-A-Truck program.

The Summer Reading Program is open to all ages. Participants can pick up a reading log at the library and keep track of their completed books to earn great prizes and enhance their reading skills. Through the program, participants can enjoy exciting shows, fun storytimes and crafts (for young children), and free movies for all age groups. The program runs through August 15.

Touch-A-Truck is the perfect outing for kids and grandkids, who will have the chance to sit inside a refuse collection truck, fire engine, and other vehicles that are part of the City’s fleet. The event is set for Thursday, July 23, 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the library parking lot.



A calendar of events is available in hard copy form at the library or on-line at www.midland-mi.org/grace-dowlibrary/. Call the library with any questions (989-837-3430).



At Your Service

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Midland City Council
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Maureen Donker, Ward 2
Hollis McKeag, Ward 3
Bruce Johnson, Ward 4/Mayor
Joe Rokosz, Ward 5

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