

The Village Voice

Bremen Ohio's Monthly Newsletter

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April 2015

Spring Fever Epidemic Hits Bremen!

It was just a few weeks ago that we endured yet another winter storm that left a few inches of snow.

But since then, we've been blessed with several mild, sunny days. Birds are singing, flowers are blooming, and people are coming out of hibernation.

On these first mild days of the season, it's nice to see so many people enjoying Howell Park.



Left to Right: Lydia Stearns, Kaiden Coe, Dillon Gray, Zach Stearns, Isaiah McPeak and Nicholas Gray enjoying a warm afternoon at the park.

Dowling Park Update

This is the "pocket park" in downtown Bremen, that has the potential of being a nice place for people to relax and socialize.

A special committee has been pondering the question about how best to revitalize Dowling Park. What's it going to have? A gazebo? Benches? A fountain? Trees, shrubs and flowers? Something else?

If you would like to participate in upcoming Dowling Park Committee meetings to help make the decisions, please contact Mindy at the Village office, phone: 740-569-4788.



Mike and Gary dealing with the potholes on Marietta Street

Pothole Patching

As soon as the weather permitted, and the asphalt plant was producing fresh mix, our street crew was able to get out and deal with the crop of potholes that developed over the winter.

Marietta Street at the west end of town had the dubious distinction of having the most and worst potholes.

Our crew has reached most areas of the community, but please let us know if there's a pothole that still needs attention.

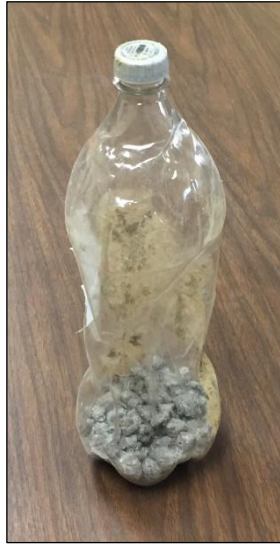
Taking Care of Business

Reminder: For those of you who walk your dog along the streets, on sidewalks and in other public areas, please remember to pick up after your pet has done its business.



PUBLIC SAFETY ALERT

Within the past week, the object pictured here was found at Howell Park. It is a 2-liter beverage bottle with metallic-looking objects inside.



Upon investigation by a detective from the county sheriff's office, this was determined to be the makings of either a so called "MacGyver" bomb or a device for making illegal methamphetamine, otherwise known as "meth."

The detective could not determine definitively whether it was intended as a bomb or a mobile meth lab because the fluid that would have also been inside the bottle that would have allowed for a chemical analysis had leaked out through a split in the bottom of the bottle.

Either way, **these types of devices pose a serious public safety hazard. Not only can they result in violent, fiery explosions, but they also produce extremely toxic fumes.**

These kinds of devices could potentially be encountered anywhere.

If you come across a suspicious looking bottle, especially with unknown contents, **DO NOT** pick it up or disturb it. Instead, call the sheriff or fire department immediately.

Be sure to train your children to be vigilant about this as well.



Photo Source: Mount Desert Islander newspaper, Maine
www.mdlander.com

The Local Economy



Worthington Industries' March 24th bombshell announcement that nearly 80 employees were laid off at the Bremen plant, was certainly sad news. In addition to the direct impact to those employees and their families, it will have a ripple effect on our community's economy. For example, consider the loss of revenue to local businesses that were patronized by those employees each day. This will also affect the Village government's budget due to the loss of that payroll tax revenue. Whenever you can, please support local businesses to help keep the money circulating here. For more information along those lines, please see the Bremen Area Chamber of Commerce's website at <http://www.bremencoc.org>.

Know What's Below

As the warmer weather arrives, more people start making plans for their outdoor home improvement



projects. By law, everyone (including homeowners) must contact the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) at least 48 hours, but not more than 10 working days (excluding weekends and legal holidays), before beginning any digging on their property. By calling OUPS at 8-1-1 or 1-800-362-2764, they will coordinate with local utilities to have underground lines marked.

Ohio Utilities Protection Service
Call 811
before you dig

Upcoming Meetings

Members of the public should feel welcome to attend and participate at the following meetings regarding Village business:



- ❖ Zoning Committee: April 1st at 6:30 PM
- ❖ Administrative Process Committee: April 2nd at 7:00 PM
- ❖ Recreation & Facilities Committee: April 7th at Noon
- ❖ Village Council: April 13th at 7:00 PM, preceded by a special meeting starting at 6:30 PM
- ❖ Financial Process Committee: April 29th at 6:00 PM

These are the meetings scheduled as of the time this newsletter is going to press. Should the need for other Village meetings arise, they will be publicized by legal advertisement in the Lancaster Eagle-Gazette.

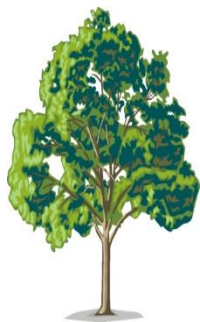
These meetings are scheduled to be held at the municipal building, 9090 Marietta Road, SE.

Village Office Hours

Just as a reminder, the Village offices will be closed on April 3rd in observance of Good Friday.



Celebrating Arbor Day in Bremen



The Village of Bremen will be celebrating Arbor Day on Thursday, April 23rd at 7:00PM with a tree planting ceremony at Howell Park.

The event is hosted by the Bremen Tree Board and Bremen Boy Scout Troop 95 and Cub Scout Pack 95.

The public is invited to attend the event.



Financial Help

If you are struggling financially and don't know where to turn for help, try calling the agency known as Fairfield County 211. They specialize in linking callers with organizations in the area that provide financial assistance. Just dial 2-1-1.



FAQ's about Utility Billing:

Since our water and sewer customers often have questions about the Village's utility billing process, we'll take time here to provide some insight.



This aspect of village operations is somewhat like a business insofar as services are provided to customers and the customers pay for those services.

As with any successful business operation, maintaining and managing the cash flow is important to be sure operating costs are covered and funds are being set aside for future equipment and system costs.

As such, the village has a process for billing its customers, and procedures for what happens when customers do not pay their bill.

Those processes and procedures are perhaps more easily explained with pictures rather than lengthy text. See the attached diagrams that depict both the annual utility billing cycle, and what happens on a monthly basis.

Perhaps the single most complicated part of the process has to do with how the monthly bills are calculated. In Bremen, water meter readings are performed just four times a year (January, April, July, October). Those readings show the water usage for the preceding three months. The total amount owed for those three months of usage is then divided by three. That determines the monthly bill amounts for the next three months.

In the next newsletter, we'll look at how to interpret the numbers on your utility bill.

Bird Observations at Howell Park

The list of bird species seen within, above and around Howell Park has grown since last month's report, adding the following: Mallard,



Eastern Meadowlark

Northern Pintail, Black Vulture, Killdeer, Downy Woodpecker, Mockingbird, Eastern Meadowlark and Red-winged Blackbird. More kinds can be expected as the northward migration progresses over the next couple months.

Infrastructure Projects for 2015



Our crews will be busy this year with several special projects that are beyond their usual maintenance tasks. These projects all involve streets. Unfortunately, that means that there will be noise plus disruptions to normal traffic flow.

The projects include:

- Curbs, gutters and catch basins on Strayer Avenue will be replaced this Spring. To make way for the concrete work to be performed, some of the street's bricks will need to be taken up beforehand and then replaced afterward.
- Further progress will be made on the goal of establishing a storm drainage system that is separate from the sanitary sewer system. This is mandated by the EPA, to prevent the rain water that drains from the streets from going to the sewage treatment plant. The affected pipelines are under streets.
- Several locations where the pavement remains disturbed by last year's projects will be finished.
- Norfolk Southern Railroad is planning to renovate the crossing at Carter Street, replacing the ties and pavement.

For each of these undertakings, details about specific locations and schedules will be provided as the logistics are determined.

A Convenient Place for Gatherings

Howell Park's picnic shelter house and concession stand can be reserved for group functions like birthday parties, family reunions and wedding receptions, to name a few examples.

Several reservations have already been booked for various dates this year.

A reservation fee is required, part of which will be refunded if the facilities are left in acceptable condition.

For details and reservation form, please contact Mindy at the Village office, phone: 740-569-4788.

Parting shots of winter...

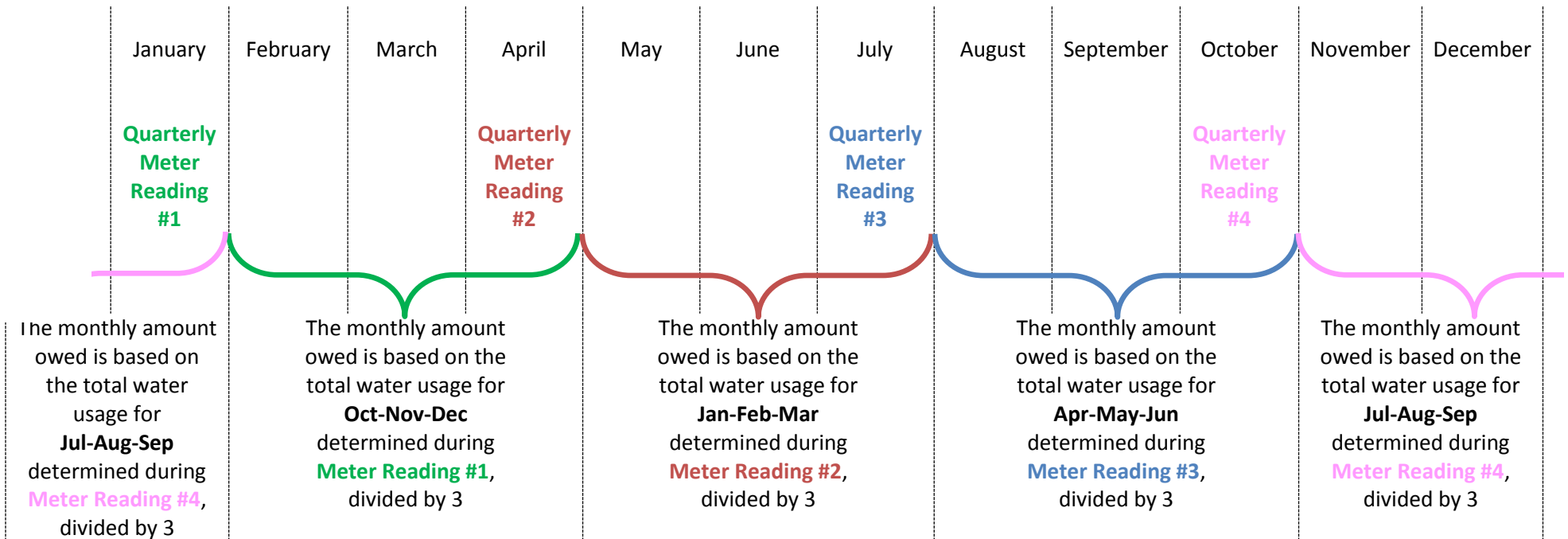


Byron and Ed repairing a water main break and damaged water service and sanitary sewer lines on a frigid February day, working in the cold water and mud for several hours.



A snowy scene in Bremen. Do you recognize the location?

Village of Bremen Annual Utility Billing Cycle



EXAMPLE: A water meter reading in July indicates that \$600 worth of water has been used since the time of the prior meter reading (which was in April). So this July meter reading covers the water usage for April, May and June. This \$600 is to be paid during the next three months following the meter reading. Therefore, the \$600 is divided by 3, resulting in \$200 being owed in August, September and October.

Village of Bremen Annual Utility Billing Cycle

Bills Mailed

- Bills are mailed on the 1st of each month. If the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday, then bills are mailed on the next day that village offices are open.

Delinquency Letters Sent

- Delinquency letters are sent to account holders who have not paid their utility bill.
- Delinquency letters are mailed 20 days after bills are mailed (except not on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays).
- The letter warns that water service will be shut off if payment is not received or call not received from customer within 10 days.

Late Payment Deadline

- This is 10 days after the delinquency letters are sent.
- Delinquent accounts are due to be paid by this date.
- The Village Utility Office attempts to make a follow-up courtesy call to customers who have not responded to the letter.

Water Service Shut-off

- A customer's service is subject to be shut off if the amount they owe is \$99 or greater.
- Water shut-offs are performed the day after the late payment deadline, but not on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays.

Water Service Restoration

- As soon as the account balance is less than \$99, and the customer pays a \$25 reconnection fee, plus a \$100 deposit if the customer hasn't previously paid a deposit, water service may be restored.