

# THE VILLAGE VOICE

## A Newsletter From Your Village Administrator: Douglas Hockman

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### THOUGHTS: Happy Holidays, A New Year, Things That Matter Most...

Happy Holidays to one and all!!! As the cold chill from the North comes our way, I send this newsletter with the warmest of wishes. This time last year, we were finishing the storm water separation project. This year, we are finishing the storm water connector line up Purvis Ave. and are going full tilt with the curbs and gutters on Fort St. As you can see, we are very busy going into the winter months. Our workers agreed to come in on the Friday after Thanksgiving (their day off) and finish gathering the leaves in the Village. As of this writing, we are now ready to re-lay bricks on the west side of Fort St. By the time you receive this, the curbs and gutters should be poured also on the east side of Fort St. May your Holiday wish for the Village workers be a wish of reasonable to mild weather to help them with brick placement.

We have also been very busy at the Waste Water and Water Plants. We have had to spend a significant amount of money recently. At the Water Plant, we had trouble with two pumps and needed replacement costing the Village several thousand dollars. At the Waste Water Plant, we had three huge screw pumps to draw the waste up into the plant. One pump had gone down about 15 years ago and left dormant because the other two were more than substantial to handle our waste flow. However, the other two decided to break down at the same time. They were not repairable being 27 years old. This caused us to do some quick thinking. The screw pumps cost about \$170,000 each. We decided to go with submersible pumps and reconfigure how the pumps would lift the waste into the plant. With this new design, our costs will be kept in the \$65,000 - \$80,000 range. We had written a grant for 2013 hoping for some help with funding to upgrade the Plant but the situation demanded we do the fix now rather than later. We explored the possibility for any emergency funding through the EPA but there is no emergency funding. The good news is we are now set for the future. Each pump has a 7 year warranty and when we have a pump go down, the costs will only be between \$7,000 - \$10,000 per pump. The electricity usage will now be greatly reduced as well.

I tell you all this because we usually carry a balance of over \$500,000. With all the recent demands, the balance is down to \$340,000. It is our hope that nothing else of significance happens to drain the account further and that we can slowly rebuild the accounts back up. This is when I say THANK YOU to all who pay their monthly WATER, SEWER, & TRASH BILL in a timely manner. It costs significant money to maintain our infrastructure needs and your faithfulness in payment allowed us the money we needed in the emergency. We do not "make" money from your payments but rather build the reserves we need for later.

**FOOD PANTRY NEEDS YOUR HELP...** The Food Pantry is housed at the Calvary United Methodist Church on Purvis Ave. The Pantry is in need of your nonperishable food items as well as monetary donations. Your donations can be dropped off at any church, The Bremen Bank, or dropped off at the Village Office between 8:00 – 3:30 Monday through Friday if a church site is not convenient.

**Note:** If you are in genuine need for a Christmas Basket to help with your holiday meals, **YOU MUST SIGN UP** at the “Next to New Sale” held at the Bremen First United Methodist Church (corner of Walnut and Mulberry) on December 7<sup>th</sup> (9am – 5 pm) or December 8<sup>th</sup> (9am – 12 noon)

There is already appearing to be an even greater need than last year; so it is **IMPORTANT YOU SIGN UP**. If you do not sign up, you will not be eligible for a Christmas Basket.

**PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS:** Have your little ones write their letter to Santa and put it in the red box downtown. Every letter will get a personalized letter in return from Santa.

**SPEAKING OF SANTA...** He will be in the Santa House, downtown the first three Saturday mornings from 9:30 – 11:00. Make plans for the kids to see Santa Claus.

How can I not mention the **ONE AND ONLY LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE...** Scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. There is still time to get your float or entry into the parade. Call the Chamber Office at 569-9150 or go on-line [www.bremenvillage.com](http://www.bremenvillage.com) to get your registration form. The parade will start at the Bremen Elem. School and proceed east on Marietta to Broad St. then loop onto Main St. in the downtown. Our school children will then sing to us several Christmas favorites and celebrate Santa Claus. The Bremen Chamber will provide cookies and hot chocolate for all! Let me encourage the Churches and all the Groups in the Village to be in the Parade!!!

**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:** During the winter months, especially in bad weather, keep an eye out for the Village workers who may be out plowing snow or salting the roadways. If you see flashing lights, slow down and proceed with caution. Be especially cautious on Fort St. with the road being worked on. Listen to your radio or television for updated school information and snow emergency levels. I hope you take advantage of local resources for food and other needs and not have to drive to Lancaster.

We have finished gathering leaves. The few remaining leaves need to be bagged up and put at the curb for the refuse hauler. Thank you for getting the leaves to the curb for pick up.

Take this time, before winter is upon us to stock up on non-perishable foods in case of prolonged inclement weather, especially items like crackers, tuna and peanut butter which do not need heated. Do you have an ice chest to put perishables in so you can set them outside? Clean your fireplace if you have one and check your chimney. Test any gas connections or move your firewood closer to the house. Change your furnace filter and check the batteries in your smoke detectors. Did you get your gutters and down spouts cleaned out with your leaf raking? Are your blankets and warm clothing ready to use? Do you have ample food in reserve for your pets? You may want to buy extra bags or cans.

**SEASONAL WARNING: SCAM SEASON IS UPON US...** It's that time of year again with many people going door to door. **FIRST:** There is **NO SOLICITING** door to door in Bremen unless they have a permit. Your first question to them is **"DO YOU HAVE A PERMIT?"** If they don't, contact the Village Office at 569-4788 **OR** after hours and weekends **CALL 652-7900**, the non - emergency number for the Sheriff's Office. **SECOND:** Be able to give any information such as vehicle color and license plate as well as a description of the person at your door.

**Other SCAMS** include people coming around and wanting to do work around your house. They will say, "You need to do thus and such to your house or tree or roof before winter." They will make it seem really urgent that it get done. **HAVE ANOTHER FAMILY MEMBER OR NEIGHBOR** check it out **FIRST - BEFORE** you make any commitments or give them any money. Even if you agree on a project and choose (not pressured) to give them the work, **DO NOT GIVE THEM THE MONEY UNTIL THE JOB IS DONE TO YOUR SATISFACTION!!!**

There are a lot of people raising money for **"CAUSES"**. Make sure the "cause" is real by asking for literature with a phone number you can call and verify. If it is real, the person asking for the donation won't mind you making a phone call first. If they say they are representing the School District, and doing a fund raiser; if you do not know the people asking... call the school first. This just happened in the last year near Logan. The people were putting the money in their pockets!!!

**THE EASIEST PREVENTIVE CARE IS:** Please keep your garage doors shut at all times. Make sure your windows are locked. Be aware of any "smells" and have them checked out. Keep a bag of **ICE MELT** or **ROCK SALT** at home and in your car. Do not leave keys hidden under a mat or behind a downspout; or under a decoration. Especially after Christmas, tear down all the boxes. If you get a computer or new television, tear down the boxes and put them in garbage bags, the same for anything of value. A thief is a thief and will look for any way to get into your home and rob (or possibly hurt) you. Keeping outside lights on is a great deterrent. It may cost a little extra on your electric bill **BUT** it could save you from becoming a victim.

**PHONE CALL SCAMS...** If you get a phone call saying a family member is in jail and needs money... **DON'T BUY IT...** get their information and call another family member first to see if the situation could be real... if you get a phone call saying you have won a "sum of money" but they need you to send them money first to release the winnings... it is a scam... if any one wants personal information such as credit card numbers or bank account numbers to make a transaction awarding you money and you have no idea who they are... it is a scam.

Never think... you cannot be scammed... These people are slick willies and they have done it enough times to know what to say to fool you into believing them...

**FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF WINTER:** Make a plan to check on your elderly neighbors and those who have limited mobility. Check on those neighbors that you know have been sick or had surgery. Your kindness will be rewarded to you tenfold and you will restore your neighbor's belief in the goodness of all. Thank you for helping.

**Remember, your water usage in the holiday season will be reflected in the February, March, and April billing cycle. So... if you have house guests, parties, or even just visitors, they can drive up your water usage. Many are surprised when their water bill jumps up during the above months. The extra cooking, cleaning, toilet usage, and laundry adds up quickly.**

**I want to take the time and space to do some Thank You's:**

**Thank you to Byron, Ed, and Michael whose primary responsibility is the Water and Waste Water Plants and sewer lines. The work day in and day out that they do is remarkable. The work they do in laying pipe and the fix at the Waste Water Plant is unheard of in most municipalities. Over the years, (and this year being no exception) they save the Village hundreds of thousands of dollars that most pay to outside contractors.**

**Thank you to Gary, Doug, and Mike whose primary responsibility is Streets, Parks, Facilities, and Grounds. These guys work hard and are always doing above and beyond what is expected. Their skills in fixing machinery has saved the Village much money and allowed for the existing machinery to make it as long as it has. They truly take pride in the Village and want the Village to look its best.**

**Thank you to Fran whose primary responsibility is Utility Billing and the General Office functions. She genuinely knows the ins and outs of all the utility billing. Fran is so good at greeting customers and when I have guests coming in, she is the utmost of professional. She does so much that helps me with my day to day functioning.**

**Thank you to Jennifer whose primary responsibility is handling the Records and working with our clerk-treasurer. What seemed to be an insurmountable task, she has tackled with knowledge and organization. She has taken us through our first shredding, in many years, of outdated records. Her enthusiasm is appreciated and welcomed.**

**Thank you to Kelley, our Clerk-Treasurer. You are detailed and always with the information needed. Your knowledge is a great benefit to the Village. The timeliness of your reports is impeccable. You keep me on task with budget items.**

**Thank you to the Mayor and Council Members for all your hard work. The progress of the Village of Bremen is certainly showing and appreciated by all.**

**Thank you to all who live in Bremen! May the Holiday Season provide the opportunity to reflect, be thankful, and to cause us to make decisions to better our lives. For those with heartache this year, may the new year create perspective and be your Peace. For families with little ones, may you see the Hope and Joy evolve with a new generation. Find those things that make life worth it and always remember there is nothing so terrible but that it can't be overcome. I wish my warmest of Love and Care as we continue together to make Bremen the most wonderful Village in which to work and live.**

**HOLIDAY GOOD WISHES TO YOU AND YOURS FROM THE VILLAGE STAFF, WORKERS, MAYOR AND VILLAGE COUNCIL. MAY YOUR DAYS BE BRIGHT AND FULL OF CHEER!!!**