

Tax Amnesty Cont.

in full, in certain circumstances, the City will make arrangements for taxpayers to satisfy their tax liability. An associate in the Citizens Service Center can provide additional information. If you need a Business Privilege License, stop in at the Citizens Service Center and pick up an application. Applications are also available on-line. If you mail the application in, your signature must be notarized; if you present ID and sign

in the presence of an associate in the Citizens Service Center, notarization is not required. "Tax Amnesty is an important part of my vision for sound fiscal management for Reading and something that I campaigned on," said Mayor Spencer. "I'm happy that we're ready to implement a fair and equitable manor for residents to pay their unpaid taxes. We're willing to work with them, but if they don't cooperate, we're ready

to aggressively collect what they owe. It's not fair to those who do the right thing and pay their share for City services, and their neighbors not even attempt to pay at all. This program gives them an opportunity to correct that."

Mayor Fights Graffiti

Mayor Vaughn Spencer joined Graffiti Abatement Manager Steve Harity and his crew to help erase the graffiti in E.J. Dives Playground on Upland Ave. The Mayor used a power washer to eliminate graffiti on a wall of a utility shed on the playground. "Steve's team is doing a great job getting rid of this eyesore," said the Mayor. "One of my initiatives is clean and safe, and our children should be able to play on safe playground equipment in a clean environment. People feel safer in a clean environment. That's why we started the 24 Hour Up/Down Program."

"If a property owner or landlord reports graffiti on their property, it will be down within 24 hours," said Harity, explaining the program. "If it's not on their property, it will take longer since we need permission from the property owner. If you see any graffiti on playgrounds or public property, call us and we'll take care of it right away" he added. To date, the Graffiti Abatement Program has completed over 200 projects in the City since mid-March including most of the playgrounds and parks. They also have picked up and disposed of over 70 abandoned tires since the first of the year. Harity works with only two part-time employees who work three days a week. Graffiti can be reported to the Citizen's Service Center at 1-877-727-3234.



815 Washington Street
Reading, PA 19601

THE READING OUTLET

THE MONTHLY PUBLIC NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF READING, PA

ISSUE #3



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

My message of the month of May is: Clean and Safe. It is one of the main points in my Vision for Reading. Now that Spring is here we all are spending more time outside enjoying the weather as well as working in our homes and yards.

We've held several press events to remind residents on proper yard waste disposal, and the return of our residential recycling program.

The cleaner we keep our properties, streets and parks, the safer our children will be. I believe that a cleaner City encourages people to spend more time outside, which is a huge factor in deterring crime. Please get involved and help organize your own neighborhood cleanup and block watch programs. Remember, we need to work together to keep our neighborhoods clean and safe.

LENIN AGUDO BEGINS AS NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Mayor Vaughn Spencer held a news conference at the end of March to introduce the new Director of Community Development for the City of Reading, Lenin Agudo. Agudo has been involved in Community and Economic Development in the City for several years through his work as Director of the Kutztown University Latino Business Resource Center (LBRC). He fills a vital role in the Mayor's administration and served on the Mayor's Community and Economic Development Transition Team. He also volunteers as Chairman of the Berks County Latino Chamber of Commerce, and mentors and trains at-risk youth.

"This is the person I wanted for this position from day one, so I'm glad he's finally able to join us. There's nobody better qualified for this position than Lenin.

He's going to help us do great things in the City of Reading," stated Mayor Spencer.

As Director of the Kutztown University LBRC, Agudo provided technical assistance to Hispanic entrepreneurs so they could start and grow businesses and has consulted over 170 Hispanic-owned businesses and trained over 200 existing and aspiring entrepreneurs in Reading, Harrisburg and Coatesville. He is a graduate of Pace University in New York City, has a Master's in Business Administration Degree from Kutztown University, and a Post-Graduate Degree in Economic Development and Growth from the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I'm grateful to the Mayor for giving me this opportunity to work for the City of Reading. I have a vested interest in the prosperity of our community, and our Community deserves a responsive government to which they can relate to and

understand. I believe that my experience, motivation, work ethic, and commitment will be of great benefit to the citizens of Reading. I'm excited to be on the Mayor's team and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Community Development Department, because Reading's success is our mission," Agudo said.

INSIDE THE OUTLET

City Employees Honored

Recycling News

Playful City

P.I.L.O.T. Program

Tax Amnesty

Mayor Fights Graffiti

www.readingpa.gov



Friend Reading on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/readingpagov



Follow Reading on Twitter!

@readingpa

United Way Honors City of Reading Employees



Employees of the City of Reading received the United Way's Community Partnership award for "their commitment and dedication to making Greater Reading a better place to live, work and play" at the United Way Dinner held recently at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Wyomissing. "This shows you the type of people that work here in City Hall," said Mayor Spencer. "Dedicated, hard-working employees who give back to their

community. They volunteer their spare time for a variety of causes in the area, and deserve to be recognized for their work," he said.

The United Way has chosen the City of Reading employees to be featured in their next promotional campaign and recently took a group photo on the steps of City Hall. "I'm proud that our employees are now "the face" of the United Way campaign. It's a big honor," concluded the Mayor.

Reading: Ready to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

Curbside Recycling = Jobs for Reading Residents

On April 30th, the City began collecting residential recyclables. They will be picked up the same day as your trash. Recyclable materials accepted are aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, cardboard, product packaging (thin cardboard called paperboard) newspapers and magazines, junk mail and office paper, and any plastic with the recycling symbol and the number 1 through 7.

Please, no pizza boxes! The grease on the cardboard contaminates the paper and other cardboard. The City is getting additional revenue from this program, so PLEASE RECYCLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!!!

Please follow proper yard waste procedures. Debris like leaves, twigs and pulled weeds should be put in brown, recyclable bags. Branches should be no thicker than 3" in diameter and not longer than 4' in length and MUST be bundled and tied with string. GRASS IS NOT COLLECTED! Grass should be mulched and left on your lawn to be used as fertilizer.



Kids Recycling Keeping Reading Clean

Mayor Vaughn Spencer and Recycling Education Director Mike Schorn visited Glenside Elementary School to encourage Reading School District students to recycle at home since the City is now handling residential curbside recycling.

"We just want to remind you how important it is to recycle at home, as well as here at school," said Mayor Spencer. "We used to pay a company to pick up your recyclables at home, but now the City is doing it and we're making money that pays for

the jobs that were created, so please encourage everyone at home to recycle," he added.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to support the "Mayor's Kids For A Clean City Club." The Club, in its fifth year, encourages students to improve their block, neighborhood, city and environment by: not littering and volunteering for cleanups whenever possible, therefore serving as a positive example for family and friends; recycling at home and at school, thus showing respect for our

environment, and doing small acts of kindness and helping the needy and less fortunate. Each student who signs up for the club receives a personalized certificate from Schorn. "I think it's important to educate the students as young as possible about recycling and doing their share to help their city," said Schorn. I'm proud of the program and the participation we get from the Reading School District and I appreciate the Mayor's support in continuing this program."



Reading: Playful City USA

The City of Reading has been designated as a 2012 Playful City USA by KaBOOM! and the Humana Foundation. Reading is one of 213 cities in 41 states across the country to receive the designation, and one of only six cities in Pennsylvania including Allentown, Bethlehem, Pittsburgh, Scranton, and York.

Reading was nominated for the designation by the Gilmore|Henne Community Fund's executive director, Christine Anderton. The application process involved mapping and photographing each park in the city and developing essays on public policy changes that would benefit local parks and their surrounding communities. Letters of recommendation were submitted by Mayor Vaughn Spencer

and other area organizations including the Berks County Community Foundation.

"We started the Gilmore|Henne Community Fund in 2010 to raise money for local parks and recreation programs so Berks County children have safe, clean places to play," said John Gilmore, a Berks County native who currently plays in the NFL. "Being recognized as a Playful City USA is a testament to the hundreds of people who've donated time, materials and money for this important cause."

"Play is an important part of childhood," Anderton said. "Being named a Playful City USA is a wonderful honor that fuels our drive to provide great playgrounds where local children can stretch their muscles and their creative minds."

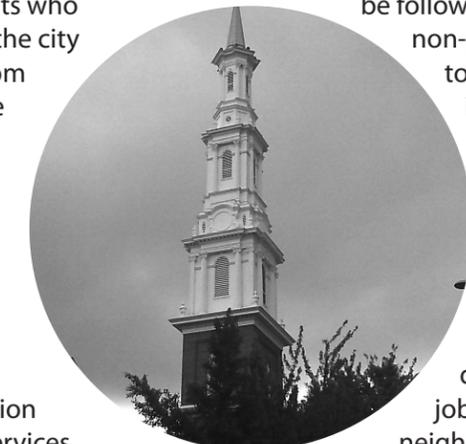
"We're proud of our parks here in Reading and proud of this designation," said Mayor Spencer. "I want to thank the Gilmore|Henne Fund for all they do for the parks in our City and Berks County and for the work they did in applying for this designation."



Churches Support P.I.L.O.T. Program

Several churches have publicly supported the City of Reading's new P.I.L.O.T. program. Reading City Councilor Stratton Marmarou, who also serves on the Board of Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, said today the congregation's board voted unanimously to support Mayor Spencer's request to non-profits for payments in lieu of taxes, or P.I.L.O.T.s. "Father Orsolot said that churches should support the city, and our board agreed whole-heartedly," Marmarou said. In addition, The Rev. Fred Opalinski, Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church,

also supports the program and will send a payment on behalf of the church. The Mayor recently sent letters to more than 400 non-profits who own real estate in the city and are exempt from property taxes. The letter suggested they consider voluntarily contributing 30% of what they would otherwise have to pay if their properties were taxable in recognition of the municipal services from which they benefit. "I



Tax Amnesty In Reading

The City of Reading is offering an opportunity for citizens to pay their Per Capita tax owed back to 2001, and for businesses to file and pay their Business Privilege Tax returns for income generated in the City back to 2001. In addition, during this Amnesty, the City is offering to forgive penalties and interest on unfiled taxes. This program applies to those who have unreported and unpaid tax liabilities.

The Amnesty is being offered from June 18 to August 17, 2012. After the Amnesty ends, the City will pursue additional collection efforts to recover unfiled tax liabilities.

The 2012 Tax Amnesty Program is being administered by the City's Citizens Service Center (CSC). For information, call 1-877-727-3234. The Citizens Service Center is located in Room 1-27 on the First Floor of City Hall and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. An associate in the Citizens Service Center can assist you in preparing your return.

If a citizen is unable to pay their taxes

See Tax Amnesty on Page 4.

appreciate the support of these church leaders," said Mayor Vaughn Spencer. "Their leadership should be followed by the other non-profits I sent letters to. I recognize their importance to the city, but I need their cooperation to create sound fiscal management, open and transparent government, economic development and job creation, safer neighborhoods, and a higher quality of life," he added.