

THE READING OUTLET

THE MONTHLY PUBLIC NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF READING, PA

ISSUE #8

MESSAGE FROM THE



MAYOR

Later this month, we will all celebrate Thanksgiving, when we take time out from our busy lives to recognize how much we

have to be thankful for. When we sit with our loved ones around the dinner table, we are thankful for family and friends and that they are a part of our lives.

I'd also like you to remember the hard-working employees of the City of Reading, who keep this city running and work to make your lives better. Whether it is Public Works employees, who cleared trees that were blocking roads and cleared storm drains to prevent flooding during the recent storm or those in the Citizen's Service Center who answer the phones and deal with your complaints and issues, there are numerous employees who go unnoticed and receive little recognition, that help to make this City function.

I am thankful for their hard work and dedication, and I want to thank each and every one of them and wish them a wonderful holiday season. I wish the very same to you and your family and to every citizen of our great City, as well.

READING WEATHERS THE STORM

When Hurricane Sandy was bearing down on the East Coast, the City of Reading went into full preparation mode in advance of the unprecedented weather event that the news media called "Superstorm Sandy." The city's first Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was established in the IT Training Room on the third floor of City Hall, equipped with 15 workstations to handle all facets of any weather emergency.

"These guys did an outstanding job throughout the night, especially our Public Works employees who spent the night making sure the storm drains were open and responding to downed trees," said Mayor Spencer. "Our EOC was staffed all night and were able to instantly react and send responders to all possible situations. My thanks to all who prepared for this weather event and who were away from their families and worked during this powerful storm."



The EOC was officially opened at 9:30 a.m. the morning of Monday, October 29th, hours before the storm affected the city. Mayor Vaughn Spencer declared a State of Emergency and signed a Declaration of Disaster at that time. This was necessary in order to receive funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for reimbursement of expenses incurred before, during, and after the hurricane.

The EOC was staffed for 24 hours during the height of the storm and managed by Emergency Management Coordinator Deputy Chief James Conrad and Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Lt. Sean Hart. The EOC was staffed by Chief Dave

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VOLUNTEERS REVITALIZE IRON STREET PLAYGROUND

On Saturday, October 6th, over 100 Wells Fargo employees and community residents joined together to volunteer to revitalize the Reading Iron Playground on Laurel Street. The effort was a partnership with the City of Reading, Wells Fargo Bank, Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks, and Reading Beautification, Inc.

Wells Fargo purchased new picnic benches, new bleachers and replaced damaged fencing at the baseball diamond. The volunteers pulled out all the weeds along the fencing of the community garden as well as landscaped the entire park; repainted and refurbished the basketball courts; refurbished the baseball field and pavilion; repainted the playground equipment and children's blacktop games; and created a serenity garden and barbeque area.

Immediately following the project, a community festival was held in the park which included performances by local youth organizations, a DJ and line dancing, Community resource tables, a literacy area, children's activities including a moon bounce and face painting, and free food and beverages for the volunteers and community residents.

"We can't thank all the volunteers enough, especially the Wells Fargo employees, many of which don't even live around here," said Mayor Spencer during the community festival that immediately followed. "This playground really needed an upgrade, and the neighborhood kids now have a clean, safe place to play."

Local artists Ed Terrell spearheaded a mural project on the side of a building next to the playground. Neighborhood children as well as volunteer artists completed the mural which depicts images of the past, present and future of Reading. A separate ribbon-cutting was held on November 7th with Mayor Spencer and representatives from all the partners that worked on the playground project.



BERKS PACKING PLANTS BINGAMAN ST. TRIANGLE



Berks Packing recently donated \$16,000 to the City of Reading to plant trees, shrubberies and roses at the Bingaman St. triangle traffic island at the bottom of the Bingaman Street Bridge.

Mayor Vaughn Spencer was joined by Charles Boylan, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Berks Packing at a news conference to announce the revitalization efforts of the triangle at the intersection of 4th and Laurel Streets. Berks Packing, who had previously planted trees along Laurel Street across from the triangle, wanted to voice their support of the Mayor's Partnership for a Cleaner City initiative.

"These are the type of Public/Private Partnerships that get things done," said Mayor Spencer. "I'd like to thank Berks Packing for committing the money to get this project done, as well as Anewalt's and Pennaco. When the city and business community work together, we can do great things."

Pennaco Excavating performed the site work and Anewalt's Nursery provided and planted the greenery.

"As the Mayor said, Public/Private partnerships are an important tool in revitalizing a city," said District One Councilman Randy Corcoran. "Everyone working together is going to make this a great entrance into the City of Reading."

Boylan pointed out that Berks Packing, founded by his grandfather in 1933, will be celebrating its 80th year in business next year.

Ongoing Programs at the Reading Public Library

NORTHEAST BRANCH

FREE ADULT COOKING CLASSES

People Eating and Cooking Healthy (PEACH)

Every Wednesday through November 28th, a free cooking class is being offered at the Reading Library Northeast Branch.

The class includes:

- Low-Cost Cooking Ideas
- Nutrition Tips
- Grocery Store Tours
- Food Tasting
- Give-Aways and Raffles!

The Reading Library Northeast Branch is located at 1348 N. 11th Street. For questions contact the Northeast Branch at (610) 655-6361 or email: rplne@reading.lib.pa.us



Animal Secrets

Learn animal secrets and more as you explore the hidden habitats and secret lives of forest animals — in the stream, meadow, woodland and cave. Imaginative role play and hands-on activities!

Predators

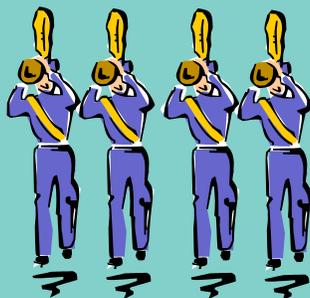
Explore the lives of the world's most ferocious creatures in a way like never before. Discover their favorite meals at the Carnivore Café, or step into a diving cage and meet a 15-foot Great White Shark face to face.

Animals in Art

Drawn from The Museum's impressive collection of works on paper, this exhibition examines etchings, engravings, lithographs and watercolors which depict animals.

Animals in Glass by Taylor Backes

Well-known glass artist Will Dexter of Taylor Backes in Boyertown, Pa., will be the focus of a special exhibition in our Cove Gallery. A gathering of birds, turtles, fish and other sea creatures made of glass will create a dynamic aquatic environment in the space. Dozens of examples of his work are included in this luminous exhibition.



READING HOLIDAY PARADE

The 2012 City of Reading Holiday Parade will kick off on Saturday, November 17th at 9:00 a.m. at 11th and Penn St. and Finish at 2nd and Penn around 11:30 a.m. At approximately 9:15 a.m., Mayor Spencer will stop at 5th and Penn to light the Holiday Tree and Menorah. The tree, a Douglas Fir that stands 25' above 5th and Penn was donated by Russell Yeich of Kenhorst and will be decorated with brand new ornaments donated by

Bon-Ton. After the tree is lit the RHS Marching Band will regale the crowd with holiday music. Over 3,500 participants will be in the parade. Get there early and get a good spot as thousands are expected to line Penn Street.

MAYOR'S INSTITUTE ON CITY DESIGN

On October 10-12, Mayor Vaughn Spencer attended the 2012 East Regional Session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) at the University of Kentucky's College of Design in Lexington, Kentucky. The conference, which was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the American



Architectural Foundation, and the US Conference of Mayors, was held in conjunction with the City of Lexington and MICD Staff.

The MICD features collaborative sessions where Mayors present a case study on an issue in urban design facing their city to a resource team of professionals, as well as the other Mayors in attendance. The closed door sessions are designed to foster an understanding of and appreciation for the role of design in creating vibrant, livable cities, and the importance of mayors as advocates for good design.

Mayor Spencer gave a presentation on a plan for the improvement of the North 9th St. corridor and received valuable feedback and ideas from the design team as well as the other Mayors. "I made some good connections with the other Mayors and brought back a lot of ideas that we can use here in Reading," said Mayor Spencer. "It was well worth

the trip, and I want to thank all of the sponsors who paid to send us there. It was extremely productive."

Mayor Jim Gray of Lexington served as the host mayor of the session. Other participants included: Melodee Colbert-Kean, Mayor of Joplin, MO, Henrietta Davis, Mayor of Cambridge, MA, Kim McMillan, Mayor of Clarksville, TN, Lorenzo T. Langford, Mayor of Atlantic City, NJ, Neil O'Leary, Mayor of Waterbury, CT, and Liz Rogan of Lower Merion, PA. The resource team included Gary Bates of Spacegroup, Shane Coen of Coen + Partners, Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang Architects, Paul Morris, Deputy Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Roberto de Leon of de Leon and Primmer Architecture Workshop, Susan Sellers of 2x4 Design, and Roger Sherman of Roger Sherman Architecture and Urban Design.

NON-PROFIT SPOTLIGHT



GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

You can make a big difference in the lives of local people fighting hunger.

For every \$1 donated to the GBFB we are able to acquire \$20 worth of food – a remarkable return on your investment in our community.

The GBFB puts your donation to good use as 96% of all donations we receive go directly to food and services, helping us to continue to meet demands and start even more programs.

Monetary donations from individuals, corporations, and organizations are essential for the Greater Berks Food Bank to meet the increasing demands on its services. Please help by making a financial donation today!

Donate Online: http://www.berksfoodbank.org/monetary_donations.html.

MAYOR GEARS UP WITH FIRE RECRUITS

On Thursday morning, November 8th, Mayor Vaughn Spencer, Building Inspector Brian Nicary, and Legal Specialist Fred Lachat joined the 12 new recruits at the Reading Fire Academy and entered a simulated fire during a training exercise. The three were invited to take part in the scheduled training exercise by Fire Chief Dave Hollinger and Fire Marshal Todd laeger in order to better illustrate the need of strict code enforcement in the City.

laeger performed a 2-part flash-over simulation in front of several invited officials from the City and County including Councilwoman Donna Reed, that showed the effectiveness of sprinklers in a simulated living room quickly putting out a fire, and how quickly a room will become fully engulfed without any sprinklers.

The Mayor, Nicary, and Lachat then donned full firefighters gear and entered the training building where a fire had been set. "I couldn't see anything," said Mayor Spencer. "The smoke is so thick. We had to feel our way down the hall until we reached the room that the fire had been set in. I can't imagine these firefighters entering buildings not knowing the floor plan and not being able to see. The other significant point was I almost fell over from the weight of the gear on my back when I stood up after kneeling outside the door. These men and women really have a difficult job."



READING WEATHERS THE STORM (continued)

Hollinger and members of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services, Chief William Heim and members of the Reading Police Department, members from the Department of Public Works, and Media Consultant Michael Dee, who updated the media and the city's Facebook page throughout the storm.

"We really dodged a bullet," said Mayor Spencer. "The damage could have been a lot worse. Our hearts go out to those who were devastated from the storm. We were lucky that our damage was limited to downed trees and downed wires. I understand our residents have been inconvenienced from the lack of power, but I know that the Met Ed crews were working 24 hours a day to get the power back on, so I thank them for their hard work as well."