

ALPHA NEWSLETTER

Promulgations from the President

Dean Kernan

I bet you were thinking you would never get to see a newsletter from the Village. I was beginning to think the same thing! 2015 was a very busy year and 2016 has started to follow suit. The Village Board of Trustees and our employees have strived to make Alpha a better place to live, now and in the future.

Well, it looks like Spring may finally be here. Some of you have mowed your yards two or three times already! Flowers are blooming and yes, there is pollen in the air.

We have completed several projects over the last months and a few more to complete this year. Look in the report for each department to catch up on the news.

There is one big project that we are involved in that doesn't really fit into department per se. But it affects each one of us here in Alpha. There is a deadline looming on this project as well. I am talking about the three-phase rehab of the American Legion Building. The Village, Alpha Community Team and the Legion have joined forces to see this cause to its fruition. Our hope is to get this building into the condition that it can be used year around for Wedding Receptions, birthday parties, graduation parties, etc. and be used for a **Senior Citizens/Community Center**. The three phases are: 1. roof replacement, 2. insulation/efficient AC/Heat upgrades, 3. Kitchen rehab. The deadline that is looming is the Roof Project. This phase has an estimated cost of about \$40,000. As of this writing, we have held a highly successful Taco supper. (Another to come, by the way!!) A huge thank you is due to all involved especially Jack and Dorothy Anderson. Donations have been coming slowly and we are over the halfway point. Right now, however, you could help in two ways. We are holding a raffle that will end on May 7th. You have a 3 in 250 chance to win a prize. 1st place is \$5000, and 2nd and 3rd will receive \$250 each. The winner will be announced at the Fireman's Car Show coming up on May 7th. There are only a few tickets available so if you haven't purchased one yet, contact any member of the Legion, any member of A.C.T. or any village board member. You can also donate via a GO FUND ME site found on the Alpha Community Team Facebook Page.

Sincerely, Dean Kernan

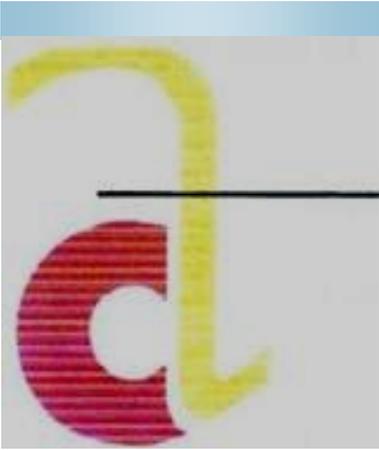


Inside this issue

A.C.T.....	2
Police	3
Street and Alleys	3
Water/Sewer.....	4

Special points of interest

- New Utility Building
- New Water Reservoir
- Street & Sidewalk Improvement
- New generators :
Water and Sewer
- New Computer Upgrades
- New in-car video (Police)
- Cross Connection Survey



Inside Story

As I stated in the opening letter, the Village has been making some much needed and essential improvements over the last year. Hopefully these little snapshots will give you an understanding of where our village dollars are spent and why. We try to set priorities and this board has the insight to keep focused on our great community.

Alpha Community Team (A.C.T.)

The Alpha Community Team sponsored the Thrifty On 150 again in 2015 and they are gearing up for another exciting time this year. If you would like to get your name and address on the yard sale map, call 309.883.3369 or email tpeterson13@outlook.com (Tracy Peterson). Hurry, there is no time to lose. The village wide yard sales are held in conjunction with the Fireman's Car Show.

A.C.T. is also co-sponsoring the Raise The Roof campaign to have a new roof built on the American Legion building. There are a few tickets available and you have a 3 in 250 chance to win up to \$5000!!

Last year's Moonlight parade was a huge success and grows every year. This year the event will be held on Sept 10th and the parade will begin at Dusk. If you have never experienced this parade, you won't believe what fun it can be. Pull up a chair and watch the parade go by or get out your Christmas lights, decorate your vehicle and entertain your friends and neighbors!

A.C.T. continues to maintain the Gazebo Park and they even decorate it for Christmas. A few years ago they added the Walk of Flags.

From flower pots brimming with flowers on "D" Street to the banners lining the streets, beautification is key to making our village look great too. The Beautification Award has traveled around Alpha for many years and has helped to bring some of that community pride back into Alpha.

Please consider joining this organization as they endeavor to improve and beautify this great village. These words written several years ago still hold true today:

"Why don't you ask yourself, 'What can I do for my community?'"

Please feel free to join this organization. They are in need of new members, new ideas and new activities.

It's your village and your future!

"Many mathematicians use Pi (π) in their algebraic formulas. Did you know that Alpha's zip code is π in reverse? Pi is 3.1416; our zip code is 61413. Seems like an excellent reason to have a Pi(e) day next 3-14... What do you think?"

Alpha Police Department

There have been a number of changes to our Ordinances and, as usual, the enforcement of those ordinances falls on the shoulders of our Police Department. Last year we approved the use of Golf Carts on village streets provided they met certain specifications and were issued a permit. So far we have had only one permit issued that met all the criteria. We also amended the ordinance in regards to the parking of Semi and livestock trailers. In a nutshell, it is illegal to park them on streets or village property. Another ordinance that was amended is the mowing ordinance. With this ordinance, we took several other neighboring town's ordinances and compiled one that will hopefully work for us. Our ordinance gives the property owner 10 days to abate the problem, whether it's tall grass or trees and brush. It also gives us authority after the 10 days to mow or remove brush at a cost to the property owner and place a lien on such property until it is paid.

Other than tall grass our number one complaint has to be loose cats and the occasional dog. There is still an animal ordinance in place. We recently contracted with the Henry County Animal Control to take care of any dog complaints. Barking dogs are still considered a nuisance and you will get a visit from our department if there are complaints. Feral Cats, on the other hand, have become a problem for many communities since most animal control people will not handle the cats due to the diseases they can carry. Vets cannot accept them due to health laws that state they must keep them separate from all other animals. So we have had a few people step up and have enticed the cats into a cage. Then they have taken it upon themselves to take them to adoption facilities. However we do have some live traps for loan for those of you who would like to help eliminate this problem. For the cat or dog owner, it is not permissible for you to let your pets run free and damage or cause harm to another person's property or pet. This includes and is not limited to defecating in someone else's yard or garden.

Lastly, it has been an active year for our department besides the occasional disturbances, we had 244 traffic stops but only 152 resulted in a traffic ticket. Of those stops, 129 were only given verbal or written warnings. Speeding topped our list of offenses, as well as registration violations, cellphone usage especially in a school zone and speeding in a school zone. One thing to remember, all our stops are now recorded on our new in-car camera as well as the audio. The a/v files are easily downloaded to our computer and transferable to the courthouse should the need arise. (Thank You to our former State's Attorney for paying for the camera and it's installation with forfeiture money from a large drug arrest!) This department will be looking to replace the squad car soon since it is well over a decade old.



Inside Story

The Village of Alpha currently has two very dedicated Police officers, **Officer Mark Bethell and Officer Rob Burford**, who work a variety of hours. Many times they will change around their regularly scheduled days to be on hand for special events. They follow up with their paperwork and enter any tickets issued on the Illinois Department of Transportation Racial Profiling website.

This past year or so, the Village President, Dean Kernan, has been filling in as Administrative Chief of Police. (Which basically means he has to keep the roster up-to-date with the Illinois Law Enforcement Document Exchange.) He must enter the officers yearly firearm qualifications and any separation or appointment information.

Our community owes these officers a big THANK YOU for their service and dedication. We would not be able to list all they have done for this community in the short space allowed in this newsletter!



Inside Story

The Streets and Alleys department has had a very active year. They oversee the maintenance of all of our streets and alleys. They conduct the necessary repairs to keep them in the best condition possible. Other areas that this department has control over is our Storm Water system, mowing and tree/brush removal, sidewalks, hanging of the greens at Christmas time, Snow and Ice removal and even watering the flowers in the pots along "D" Street.

Streets and Alleys

The Streets and Alleys department started last year off with many days of snow removal. The equipment held up ok with only minor break downs. This past winter was a fairly easy one with only a few snow events. Our aging trucks and tractor are being looked at for replacement some day but so far they are still plugging away.

We rented a concrete grinder and ground off many high spots on our sidewalks. Some areas were not able to be ground and were put on a list for replacement. And that's just what we did. Our village spent \$19,205 on sidewalk and curb replacement this past year. We still have a few more areas we need to repair in the streets but winter came along and stopped our progress. That will resume this spring and a new list will start for next fiscal year. If you have an area on your sidewalk that needs attention, please don't hesitate to call us at (309) 629-9881 and give us the location. A huge Thank You goes out to Mike Petrovich for his skills in spear heading the work and filing the necessary paperwork with the IL. Dept. of Transportation so that we can get this work reimbursed from our Motor Fuel Tax account. Another big Thank You to Scott Rowland who painstakingly maintains our gravel alleys, picks up brush, cleans gutters, assisted with the concrete work, marks the school zone areas on US 150, maintains our vehicles and etc. etc. etc. This past year with some help from Greg Anderson, Scott replaced all the stop signs and posts in town. These were purchased from a grant through the County Highway.

Another new addition to our village this past year was a new storage shed to replace the too-small and dilapidated garage that was located just west of the village hall. As of now it only a partial concrete floor and is unheated. However it does have electricity and is hooked up the generator so the doors and lights will work in a power outage. The cost of the shed was around \$48,000. We added electric door openers and some lighting to that project as well.

The village was asked to start paying the monthly fee for the Recycle bin at \$100 per month. It is vital that all items brought to this location are on the approved recycling list. (No car parts (i.e., tires), no electronics of any kind, no household paints or chemicals, no furniture). You are encouraged to use this bin but please do not leave items on the ground. To see that list, visit our village webpage at www.villageofalpha.org and click on the Recycling tab.

Water and Sewer

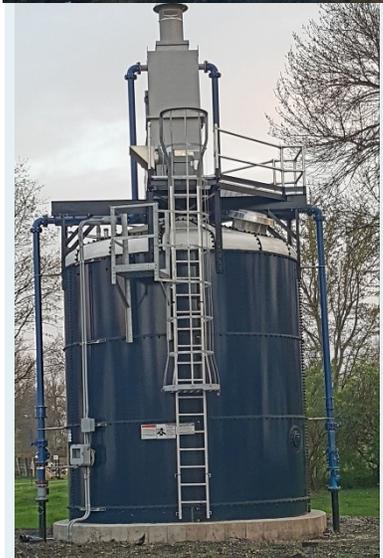
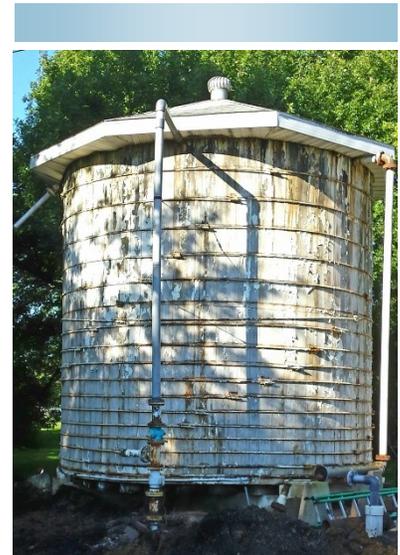
The water and sewer department probably got the most attention this year. We started off 2015 by finishing a waste water pipe lining project on Scandia and Yates St. This project was designed to seal up places where storm water can run into the our waste water system that is already filled to capacity with waste water. This causes our system to fail and waste water can back up into basements. So far the system has withstood some heavy rains but we still have some sump pumps that are hooked up to the waste water system. That project was paid for by a grant from the State of Illinois. The rest of the grant was for the purchase of a generator to run the lift station that pumps that waste water to the lagoon if the power goes out. Installation was of about \$17,000 was paid out of the Water/Sewer Fund.

After careful consideration, it was decided that instead of receiving an abysmal interest income on our CD's, it would be better if we use some of the funds to help rebuild our infrastructure. So we purchased and installed another generator to supply the village with fresh water if there were to be a power outage. So now we can supply water and sewer services in the event of said power outage. The cost of this project was about \$48,000.

One other project that we took on was to replace the 1952 ground water tank that is located on West "E" Street. After an unsuccessful attempt to get it rehabbed again, we went forward with the replacement. After securing a low interest loan for \$100,000 from the National Rural Water Association, we hired Missman and Associates to engineer and write up a contract to be let out for bid. After a few revisions and a construction permit from IL EPA, we hired Leander Construction to erect an Aquastore tank with an aerator in the site of the old tank. After some hurdles and some other construction hiccups, the new tank went into operation in late Dec of 2015. The total cost of the contract was \$235,000. The plumbing, electrical and excavation were hired locally at an additional cost of \$71,798. So the total cost of this project was \$306,798. **We are printing these figures so you can see what you pay for when you pay your water and sewer fees.**

Lastly, the generator system was put to a test when Alpha was out of power due to an ice and wind storm in December. The system worked well but soon afterwards we lost our number 4 well pump. It was replaced and after many weeks of testing (and another \$19,000), it has passed all the tests and we are back in full water production again.

PS: Look for the Cross Connection Survey enclosed in this issue. The Illinois EPA requires us to do this survey and we have to have 100% participation. Please complete and either mail or drop off this survey by May 31, 2016. If we do not get your response, someone will be contacting you.



Inside Story

The Water & Sewer department is by far the most active and the most critical department in Alpha. Providing safe and potable water to our residents is our number one priority. And about 90% of our income is derived from the water department as well. Studies show that we have some of the least expensive water in this part of Illinois, so it is paramount that we watch everything we do with this department with a caring yet, critical eye.

Village of Alpha

President—Dean Kernan

Clerk—Angie Spivey

Treasurer—Steve Norberg

Trustees:

Jason Lambin Edna Mahalovich

Ron Medley Tracy Peterson

Mike Petrovich Dennis Shannon

Public Works— Scott Rowland

Billing Clerk— Angie Althaus

Phone: (309) 629-9881

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Website: www.villageofalpha.org

Back Story

We hope you enjoy reading this 2015-2016 newsletter. It's been long overdue. As you remember, due to retirement, we lost our long-time, dedicated employee, Keith Taflinger. We have been trying to keep things going without him or someone actually in his place. We will continue for the time being, in that mode but soon (and very soon) we will be looking for someone to fill his position. We would be looking for someone who can get their water and waste water license and be able to learn all the facets of small town public works. That will mean getting their hands dirty and their clothes!!

For now, if you have an issue and need our help, please call our village number at (309) 629-9881 or you can call our village cell phone at (309) 945-7226. The answering service for both are available 24 hrs. a day. The cell phone will be answered between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 PM. Thanks for reading... Dean



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