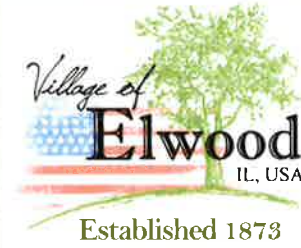


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Elwood Days Celebrates the Children's Garden 20th Anniversary



SEPTEMBER 2017

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Elwood, IL 60421
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Mayor's Message...



Hello! Hope all are doing well. With summer ending and school back in session, please be extra careful while you are driving around town.

Another amazing and wonderful Elwood Community Days went off smoothly thanks to the many tireless volunteers, especially Lori Jenco who coordinated the event. Also, a special thank you to all of the sponsors for their generous donations.

Thanks to Kevin Barry, our new soccer coordinator. The soccer season is in full swing at O'Connor Park.

I am excited and looking forward to the addition of a K9 unit to help strengthen our already phenomenal Police Department. Congrats to James Hartley III and Andrew Anderson on their promotions to Sergeant. (See the story on Page 3).

Let's all try to be respectful and vigilant with information about happenings in and around Elwood. I am always available or please contact the Village Hall with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Todd Matichak
mayor.matichak@villageofelwood.com

Why is the Village Creating a Financial Management Plan?

In the August newsletter we shared the need for a financial management plan for the Village of Elwood, in part due to General Obligation bonds issued more than 10 years ago which will begin coming due in 2023.

At the time the bonds were issued, Will County was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. Housing developments were springing up everywhere. Like many other municipal taxing bodies in Will County, Village officials expected significant housing growth and some commercial growth for the Village. It was anticipated that the revenue to retire the bond debt would be generated by additional tax revenue from new development within the community.

To support the anticipated development and growth, significant infrastructure improvements were required. To fund the \$46 million in infrastructure needs approximately \$36 million in bonds were issued by the Village and a \$10 million grant was awarded by the State of Illinois, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The funds were used for a large number of projects designed to overhaul the village's infrastructure. Approximately \$12.5 million was spent in water supply improvements. These improvements included wells and a water tower as well as necessary improvements to the water treatment plant based on anticipated growth.

Village streets were reconstructed with sidewalks and curbs and gutters were added. The Village Hall was also constructed using these funds.

Additionally, the water delivery system was upgraded to 8-inch pipes to support the necessary water flow for business and residential uses as well as to improve flows for

fire protection.

Another \$21 million was spent on waste water system upgrades. A large portion of these funds were used to construct a new waste water treatment plant which increased plant capacity. Additional improvements were made through-out the village to our waste water collection system infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the Great Recession struck in 2007 and the anticipated growth did not occur. Over the past several years, Village officials have taken many steps to manage the Village debt. These steps include negotiating loan forgiveness of approximately \$11 million along with refinancing of outstanding debt to obtain loan terms which are more favorable to the Village.

Even with all the work that has been done, the demands of the debt service payments will place a strain on the Village's long term financial situation. While the General Fund currently operates at a "break-even level", looking to the future the bond repayment schedule will require additional revenues that are not available today. Starting in 2023, annual debt payments will be almost 2.5 times the current payments and a large balloon payment is due in 2025.

In order to make sound decisions for the long term financial stability of the Village, the Board of Trustees has retained a municipal financial consulting firm, Ehlers, to evaluate the Village finances and develop a roadmap to long term financial stability. The study is underway and is expected to be completed in the next few months. Look for future newsletter articles discussing the results of this important study.

Public Works Staff Installs First Culvert



Elwood's Public Works staff were trained in culvert installation during the replacement of two culverts on South Chicago Road.

Public Works now have the equipment necessary for them to complete culvert replacements.

The South Chicago Road culverts had been in place for more than 40 years and were framed with 2x12 lumber and the con-

crete was poured in place. There were several holes in the old culverts and street signs and asphalt had been used to patch them.

The new culverts, 30 and 42 inches, are pre-cast and pre-engineered culverts and are expected to last 50 years.

The material cost for the three-culvert project was estimated at \$47,000. It is estimated that it saved the Village over \$160,000 to do the replacements.

Public Works will be installing a third culvert on Diagonal Road when EPA approval is received. The project is part of the Village's ongoing infrastructure improvement program.

Homefield Energy to Continue as Village's Electric Provider

The Village of Elwood participates with several other municipalities in Will County to seek competitive bids for an electric provider for our residents.

Several weeks ago a group of representatives from Constellation Energy were going to door-to-door in the Village misinforming residents by stating that the current electric provider had gone out of business.

In reality, the current Village provider Homefield Energy (a Dynegy Company), came in with a lower rate than Constellation Energy and so they will remain as the Village's electric provider.

When Village officials' learned of the illegal door-to-door solicitation by Constellation, they contacted Constellation getting approval for residents to cancel their contract at no cost.

If you have signed up with Constellation Energy, but wish to remain with the current provider, contact **Justin Wise at Constellation, 866-833-3902**, to cancel your contract with them. If you have any problems please contact the Village Hall.

Can You Help the Children's Garden?

Staff at the Garden are in need of wicker baskets, medium to small. Also they need dollies, hankies and napkins. These will be used for activities during the Fall Fest. Please drop off your donation by September 28. If you have any questions call **815-693-0214**.

Family Fall Fest at the Children's Garden

October 1, 12:30 to 3:30 PM

Community Service Hours Available to Meet Graduation Requirements



If your son or daughter needs community services hours for a graduation requirement, please contact the Village Hall.

We can provide opportunities at various village activities such as festivals, children's parties and holiday activities. There are also special projects where help is needed.

Fall Clean-up Day – November 13th

Waste Management will pick-up white goods (refrigerators, doors must be removed or restrained, water heaters, washers, dryers, etc.) and up to four rimless automobile tires. They are unable to accept electrical items such as televisions, computers, full paint cans, etc. Please contact "At Your Door Service" (800-449-7857) or atyourdoor@wm.com.

Halloween Party at Village Hall



Halloween is just around the corner and plans for the Village activities are being finalized. Mark your calendar to attend the Halloween Party at the Village Hall on October 31.

Contact Marie at the Village Hall if you would like to vol-

Hartley, Anderson Promoted to Sergeant

At the Village Board meeting on September 6, 2017, the Mayor and Board of Trustee's unanimously approved the promotion of veteran Elwood Police Officers James Hartley III and Andrew Anderson to the rank of Sergeant. "I know they will serve the citizens of Elwood well," said Mayor Todd Matichak "This puts the police department in a good position for the future."

The department currently has (1) full-time vacancy due to the retirement of Commander Kerr. It is recognized that the past organizational structure of the department provided little front-line supervision or street level supervision.

Sergeant James Hartley is a 13-year veteran of the police department with experience as a Lead Criminal Investigator and Field Training Officer. Sergeant Hartley is also assigned to the Will/Grundy Major Crime Task Force.

Sergeant Andrew Anderson, who is a graduate of the University of St. Francis, is a 4-year veteran of the department. He has worked the midnight shift since joining the department and is also assigned to the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS), Mobile Field Force (MFF) team.

"It's great to have two well qualified veterans as supervisors working to keep our community safe" said Chief Fred Hayes. "They both have strong local family connections to the Village of Elwood," he added.

In 2015, both Hartley and Anderson worked with the Will County Sheriff's Department in apprehending two burglary suspects which led to the resolution of over forty residential burglaries and yielded the seizure of over \$30,000 in stolen property and more than ten stolen firearms.



Andrew Anderson (left) and James Hartley were sworn in as Sergeants by Village Clerk Julie Friebele.



Village Receives 20 Trees Through Grant

The Village of Elwood will be receiving 20 trees through the Illinois Forever Tree program.

These trees will be used in conjunction with the Village's multi-year tree replacement project to restore the Village tree inventory destroyed by the Emerald Ash Borer.

These 20 trees will be planted in the Meadowbrook Subdivision and Lloyd Erickson Park, where the Village lost a significant number of trees.

Five different species of trees, Ohio Buckeye, Kentucky Coffee, Hackberry, American Linden and River Birch will be planted.

The Elwood Public Works department staff assisting with the planting and maintaining the new trees.

Quiet Zone Coming for Manhattan Road Crossing

The Village has filed for the establishment of a quiet zone for the Union Pacific crossing at Manhattan Road.

The application for the zone, which was filed earlier this year, is currently in the public notice and comment period which will end on October 20th. If there are no objections to the quiet zone, a 20-day notice will be issued to the railroad that a quiet

zone will be established. This means that trains will no longer sound horns when approaching the Manhattan Road crossing, except in emergencies.

We anticipate the process will be completed around the end of November.

The Village Board has changed their meeting schedule for October through December, eliminating the meeting on the third Wednesday. Meetings will be held on October 4, November 1 and December 6.

All meetings start at 7 PM.