



# City Newsletter

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Police: (517) 676-2458

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201 W. Ash St.

P.O. Box 370, Mason, MI 48854-0370

www.mason.mi.us

## CITY OF MASON NEWS BRIEFS

### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS IN MASON!

BY KATHY REVELS  
Administrative Services Director

Do you have any special skills? Are you interested in becoming involved in your community? Do you want to get to know your neighbors? Are you willing to participate in unskilled labor? Are you a leader, an organizer, someone who wants to be in charge? Are you retired, but want to stay active? Are you a caregiver who craves networking opportunities outside the home?

The City of Mason is interested in creating a pool of volunteers with a variety of interests. Volunteers now work in the parks, and we encourage more of you to join our faithful group in their efforts.

To sign up, go to "Rayner Park Volunteers" on Facebook or send an email to papamaddix@aol.com. There are, however, many other avenues to community service. Some of them would be outside, some inside. Opportunities are available for serving on committees, some that meet only once or twice each year.

City staff would like to hear from you if you have talents to share or a desire to give of your time to benefit your community. We would love to have you be part of our team. Contact Kathy Revels, Administrative Services Director, at 676-9155.

### NOTICE OF CHANGES IN ASSESSMENT

Assessment change notices will arrive in the mail to property owners late in February 2011. The assessment notices will have times and dates for the March Board of Review meetings along with the 2011 Assessed, State Equalized and Taxable values and the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) percentage.

The Assessed and State Equalized values represent an amount that should not exceed 50% of market value.

The Taxable value along with the millage rate determines the amount of your July and December 2011 tax bills. Unless there was a transfer of ownership (i.e. purchase or inheritance) of your property or a physical change (i.e. new construction or demolition) in 2010, your taxable value will only change by the rate of inflation which was determined to be 1.7% for the 2011 assessment year.

The Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) should be 100% if you own and occupy your property as your principal residence.

Please review the assessment, taxable value, and PRE when you receive your assessment notice. If you have questions regarding the information provided, please contact the assessor's office.

If you feel that your assessment or taxable value is incorrect, you may want to schedule an appointment with the Board of Review. In regards to PRE, you may bring concerns to the assessor's office anytime.

The City of Mason Assessor is available Mondays & Tuesdays @ 676-9155.

### NEW FEES FOR CITY OF MASON MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS

Over the years the City Municipal Parking Lots have been available for citizens to park in overnight with a Parking Sticker. As the economy is changing, we try to make changes to adjust. In the past, parking stickers were purchased for a one year duration.

As of February 2011, the parking stickers are now available in three month increments. With rental units being leased for less than one year, jobs changing and so forth, the City now offers parking stickers as follows:

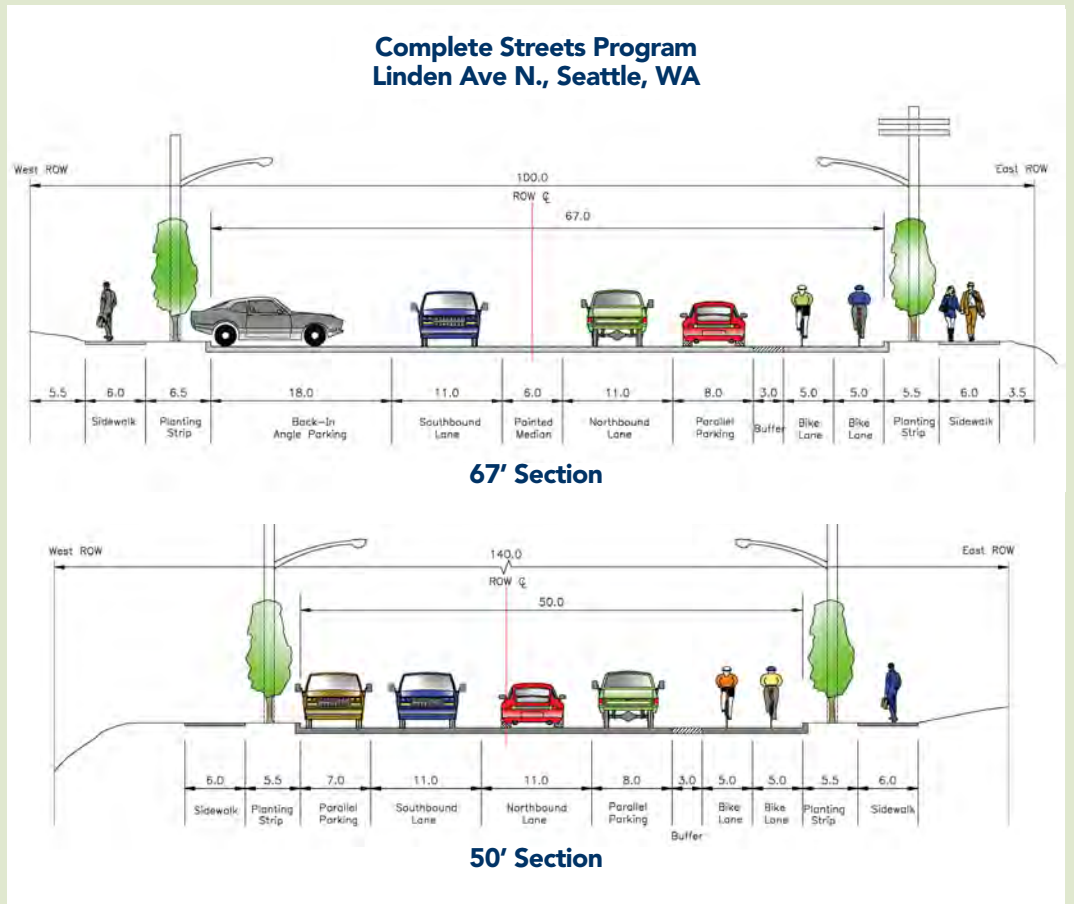
3 MONTHS .....	\$ 35
6 MONTHS .....	\$ 65
9 MONTHS .....	\$ 90
12 MONTHS .....	\$100

There are four (4) lots available for parking overnight. They are located below:

- Lot #1- Corner of Park & E. Sycamore Streets, behind Beach's Tanning Salon
- Lot #2- Corner of E. Sycamore & Barnes Streets, behind the Hilliard Building
- Lot #3- 100 Block W. Ash Street, behind Kean's Store (2 hour parking limit)
- Lot #4- Southeast Corner of E. Sycamore & Barnes Streets

Parking Stickers can be purchased at offices of the Mason Police Department, located at 201 W. Ash Street. The office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. To purchase a parking sticker, you will need to bring with you a drivers license, registration and proof of insurance.

## COMPLETE STREETS



Courtesy of www.seattle.gov/transportation

## NEW LAW CREATES SAFE STREETS FOR KIDS, BICYCLES

Recently the Michigan Legislature passed several new laws (Public Act 134 and 135 of 2010) requiring the Department of Transportation and local municipalities to consider all modes of transportation when planning improvements to transportation systems. Public Act 134 now requires local master plans to provide adequate space on streets for a variety of modes of transportation, including motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and other legal users.

### What is a Complete Street?

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Complete streets make economic sense.

A balanced transportation system that includes complete streets can bolster economic growth and stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.

Complete streets improve safety by reducing crashes through safety improvements. One study found that designing for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduced pedestrian risk by 28%.

Complete streets encourage more walking and bicycling. Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic, and complete streets can help. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough.

Complete streets can help ease transportation woes. Streets that provide travel choices can give people the option to avoid traffic jams, and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network. Several smaller cities have adopted complete streets policies as one strategy to increase the overall capacity of their transportation network and reduce congestion.

Complete streets help children. Streets that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence. More children walk to school where there are sidewalks,

COMPLETE STREETS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BY DAVID HAYWOOD  
Zoning & Development Director



Photo courtesy of the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water, [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org)

## YOU'RE NOT JUST FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN

BY KEN BAKER  
*Superintendent of Public Works*

Storm drains found in our streets and yards empty into our lakes and streams. So, when we fertilize our lawn we could also be fertilizing our lakes and streams! While fertilizer is good for our lawn, it's bad for our water. Just like in your garden, fertilizer in rivers and lakes makes plants grow.

In water bodies, extra fertilizer can mean extra algae and aquatic plant growth.

Too much algae harms water quality and makes canoeing, fishing and swimming unpleasant. As algae decay, they use up oxygen in the water that fish and other wildlife need.

### How Can You Care for Your Yard and Help Keep Our Environment Clean?

You can help keep our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater clean by applying the following tips.

- Sweep it. Sweep excess fertilizer and grass clippings from pavement back onto your lawn so that they don't wash into storm drains.
- Buy low and go slow. First, find out if you even need fertilizer! Contact your Michigan State University Extension office to get a soil test. If you do need it, choose a fertilizer with no or low phosphorus - phosphorus causes algae growth. You can also use an organic or slow-release nitrogen fertilizer, which causes less harm to water. Follow the manufacturer's recommended amounts, and don't fertilize before a rain storm.
- Hire smart. Select a lawn care service that follows the practices noted above.
- Mow high. Keep your lawn at three inches in height. Taller grass strengthens roots and shades out weeds. Also, remember that the nutrients from grass clippings left on your lawn act as a great fertilizer.
- Don't over water your lawn and garden. Consider using a drip system or soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.
- Go natural. Use commercially avail-

able compost or make your own using garden waste. Mixing compost with your soil means your plants will need less chemical fertilizer and puts your waste to good use. And, consider using organic fertilizers and pest control methods whenever possible.

- Make fertilizer-free zones. Keep fertilizer at least 20 feet away from the edge of any lakes, streams, or storm drains.

In recent years sources of pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced.

Now more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like excess fertilizer applications, cars leaking oil, pet waste and failing septic tanks.

All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too, and that adds up to a pollution solution!

Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape.

All of us benefit from clean water - and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater clean.

For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit [www.mywatersheds.org](http://www.mywatersheds.org).

*This article was provided to the City of Mason from the Greater Lansing Regional Committee as part of our ongoing effort to help our residents to be informed about Storm water responsibility.*

# MERCURY, THE ENVIRONMENT & YOUR SAFETY

The City of Mason Wastewater Treatment Plant treats wastewater from households, industries, institutions and commercial business. In order to discharge the treated wastewater into the surface waters of the state (Sycamore Creek), we are required to have a NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems) permit.

Our permit requires us to have a Mercury Minimization Program, in order to reduce our effluent discharge for that pollutant. We are asking all our users to assist us in this endeavor.

Mercury is classified as a hazardous waste, and has become a contaminant of great concern.

When mercury enters the waters, certain microorganisms can change it into methylmercury, a highly toxic form that builds up in fish, shellfish, and the animals that eat fish, including humans.

Outbreaks of methylmercury poisonings have made it clear that adults, children, and developing fetuses are at risk from ingestion exposure to methylmercury.

It is the City of Mason's goal to inform citizens of the damaging effects that can result to human health, wildlife, and the environment, due to the improper disposal of mercury.

Many citizens may not be aware of items containing mercury that are disposed of daily. Household items that may contain mercury include fluorescent light bulbs, thermometers, telescopes, thermostats, and medicines (mercurochrome).

Proper recycling of products containing mercury is an important step we should all take to reduce the amount of mercury entering our environment.

Each year, an estimated 600 million fluorescent lamps are disposed of in the U.S. landfills amounting to 30,000 pounds of mercury waste.

In America, one in six children born every year have been exposed to mercury levels so high that they are potentially at risk for learning disabilities, motor skills impairment and short-term memory loss.

In the states of California, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan, it is unlawful for anyone to dispose of fluorescent bulbs as universal waste.

For information on how to recycle mercury containing products, and other toxic waste, you can contact the Ingham County Health Department at 517- 887-4312.

Together, we can reduce the mercury levels that are entering our waters and environment.



COMPLETE STREETS CONTINUED FROM COVER

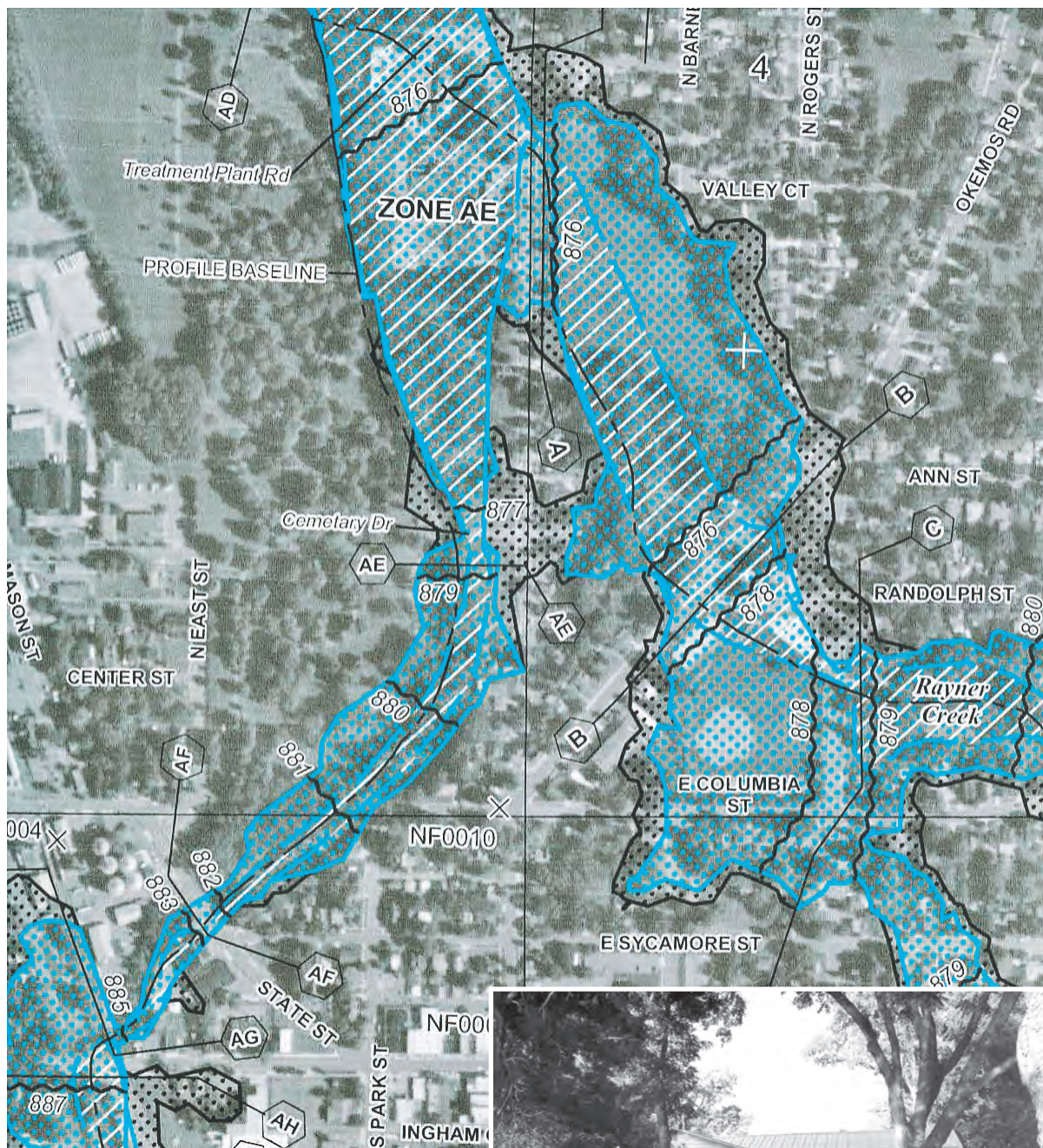
and children who have and use safe walking and bicycling routes have a more positive view of their neighborhood. Safe Routes to School programs, gaining in popularity across the country, will benefit from complete streets policies that help turn all routes into safe routes.

Complete streets make fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later.

Complete streets are good for air quality. Poor air quality in our urban areas is linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses. Yet if each resident of an American community of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip just once a month, it would cut carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 3,764 tons of per year in the community. Complete streets allow this to happen more easily.

Complete streets make fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later. Jeff Morales, former Director of Caltrans, said, "by fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including facilities for these travelers are minimized."

For more information on these new laws visit the Michigan Legislature website at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). For more information on complete streets visit the National Coalition of Complete Streets website at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org).



NEW REVISED MASON FLOOD MAP



# ARE YOU AT RISK?

## Mason Flood Maps Revised

BY DAVID HAYWOOD  
Zoning & Development Director

Flood risks can change over time, altering the floodplain boundaries within the City. Changes in the status of dams, levees, surface erosion and land use and development can all change the size and shape of our floodplains.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently updating and modernizing the nation's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), including the City of Mason.

The new maps will reflect recent changes to floodplains and flood risks, and will drive changes in flood insurance requirements for some property owners.

### What Does This Mean To You?

It is important for residents and property owners of the City to understand that the flood zones on these maps have changed, some areas more than others, potentially affecting your property. The preliminary maps are available for viewing at the Zoning and Development Department at City Hall. To learn more about how this affects your property or to view the preliminary flood maps, please contact David Haywood in the Zoning

and Development Department at (517) 676-9155 or go to [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) for more information.

### National Flood Insurance Program (Nfip) – Top Ten Facts

Here are the top ten facts that every property owner/occupant should know about floods and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP):

1. Everyone lives in a flood zone.
2. Flood damage is not covered by homeowner's policies.
3. You can buy flood insurance no matter what your flood risk is.
4. The Low-cost Preferred Risk Policy is ideal for homes and businesses in low-to moderate-risk areas. Rates may be as low as \$112 per year.
5. Flood insurance is affordable.
6. Flood insurance is easy to get.
7. Contents coverage is separate, so renters can insure their belongings too.
8. Up to a total of \$1 million of flood insurance coverage is available for non-residential buildings and contents.
9. There is usually a 30-day waiting period before the coverage goes into effect.
10. Federal disaster assistance is not the answer.

Source: United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Association, National Flood Insurance Program

## INGHAM COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL Pet Adoptions

*You Can Buy Love!*



*Wonderful Pets  
for Adoption...*

Dogs, cats, puppies, kittens, others!  
Please visit: Ingham County Animal Control  
600 Curtis St., Mason, MI 48854  
517-676-8370; 517-676-8380(fax)  
[www.ingham.org/AC](http://www.ingham.org/AC)

#### Shelter Hours:

11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Tuesday–Wednesday  
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Thursday–Saturday  
Excluding all County holidays  
Shelter is CLOSED Mondays

## MASON AREA Organizations & Clubs

ALAIEDON SCOUTS 676-6499, Tony Assaf	MASON BREAKFAST OPTIMIST 676-2791, Pete Hanover
AMERICAN LEGION 676-1651, Bob Raab	MASON BULLDOG BOOSTERS 676-6535
CAPITOL CITY CAR CLUB 676-5046, Shirley Wilcox	MASON CHAPTER 150 ORDER EASTERN STAR 676-2014, Mary Ruttan
COUNTY SEAT OLD CAR CLUB 676-5978, Arnold Short	MASON COLLEGE CLUB 676-5876, Kris Taylor
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY 244-6332, Marco Broggio	MASON COMMUNITY PARTNERS 676-4519, Ext. 215
EAA55 – EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOC. 663-1318, Tom Botsford	MASON FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 694-0499, Marie Sheridan
FARM BUREAU YOUNG PEOPLE 676-4034, Steve Cheney	MASON FIRE DEPARTMENT 244-9025, Chief Minshall
FRIENDS OF THE MASON LIBRARY 676-4175, Elaine Ferris	MASON HOMESCHOOLERS NETWORK 676-5073, Rebecca Schwartz
GIRL SCOUTS OF MASON 676-6093, Christine Hesch	MASON KIWANIS CLUB 676-2272, Lawrence Howe
INGHAM COUNTY FARM BUREAU 676-5115, Barb Chapman	MASON LIONS CLUB 676-2518, Stan Jordan
INGHAM CO. GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY 337-8925, Grove Sandrock	MASONIC LODGE #70 F&AM 676-5040, Ivan Kerr
INGHAM FESTIVAL CHORALE 676-4815, Anne Coady	MASON ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY 676-3678, Kay Rinker-O'Neil
MASON ANTIQUES/ COBBLESTONE VILLAGE DEALERS ASSOCIATION 676-1270, Larry Silsby	MASON ROTARY CLUB 676-8376, Jamie McAloon-Lampman
MASON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 676-1046, Doug Klein	MASON WOMEN'S CLUB 676-4689, Cheryl Howe
MASON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 676-2209, Randy Gladstone	MICHIGAN STEAM ENGINE AND THRASHERS CLUB 676-5160, Sandy Smalley
MASON AREA SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB 676-2555, Lorraine Larkins	MICHIGAN TRAPSHOOTING ASSOCIATION 676-2295, Rick Shirkey
MASON AREA UNITED WAY P.O. Box 13	NORTH AURELIUS SCOUTS 694-3624, Suzanne Ferris
MASON ART GUILD 676-5926, Bea VanAndel	STEELE SCOUTS 676-8569, Wade Johnson
MASON BAND BOOSTERS 676-9055, Beth Bousfield	VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS 676-7309, Bob Jordon

## INGHAM COUNTY Recycling Programs

CELL PHONES Mason City Hall, 676-9155	MERCURY THERMOMETERS 887-4521
COMPUTER RECYCLING Mason Goodwill Store, 244-9306	OIL, ANTIFREEZE, & CAR BATTERY Carquest, 676-2464
COOKING OIL Delhi Township WWTP, 699-3873 Delta Township Recycling Center, 323-8500	NAPA Auto Parts 676-5481
CREATION STATION WISH LIST (517) 371-2451	PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING Meijer, 244-1900
MID-MICHIGAN FREECYCLE NETWORK <a href="http://www.freecycle.org">www.freecycle.org</a>	POLYSTYRENE Dart Container, 500 Hogsback Rd. 24 hours a day/7 days a week
HOUSEHOLD BATTERY COLLECTION Ingham County is no longer collecting household batteries	PROPANE Kerr Hardware, 676-5040
HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION 887-4521	REUSE-A-SHOE 483-4400
	SHARPS COLLECTIONS 272-4145
	TIRE RECYCLING 887-4521

## 2010 Tax Bill Information and Payments online



Tax information on our  
Website [mason.mi.us](http://mason.mi.us)!

# THE MASON CITY COUNCIL



**MAYOR**  
Leon Clark



**MAYOR PRO TEM**  
Michael Waltz



**COUNCIL MEMBER**  
Jon Droscha



**COUNCIL MEMBER**  
Elaine Ferris



**COUNCIL MEMBER**  
Neal Johnson



**COUNCIL MEMBER**  
Robin Naeyaert



**COUNCIL MEMBER**  
Barb Tornholm

## CITY OF MASON 2011 Public Meetings

### MARCH 2011

March 21.....City Council Meeting  
March 28.....Historical District Commission Meeting\*\*

### APRIL 2011

April 4.....City Council Meeting  
April 6.....Downtown Development Authority Meeting  
April 12.....Planning Commission Meeting  
April 13.....Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting\*\*  
April 18.....City Council Meeting  
April 26.....Historic District Commission Meeting\*\*

### MAY 2011

May 2.....City Council Meeting  
May 4.....Downtown Development Authority Meeting  
May 10.....Planning Commission Meeting  
May 11.....Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting\*\*  
May 23.....City Council Meeting  
May 24.....Historic District Commission Meeting\*\*

\*\*Meetings scheduled only if there are agenda items.  
Call 676-9155 for more information.

## MASON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENT CALENDAR

### FRIDAYS THROUGH APRIL 15 • 4:30-7 PM

Knights of Columbus St. James Fish Fry  
1010 S. Lansing St. Mason

### THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2011 • 6:30 PM

St. Patty's Day Wine Tasting Dinner  
Country House Banquet Center  
3056 Okemos Rd.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2011 • 7 PM

Mason Firefighters Association  
St. Patrick's Dinner Dance  
Ingham County Fairgrounds Community Building

### SAT AND SUN, MARCH 26-27, 2011

Antique and Collectibles Show  
Masonic Center, 840 E. Columbia

### SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2011 • 10 AM

All-American Miss Ingham County Fair Beauty Pageant  
Ingham County Fairgrounds Community Building

### APRIL 28, 2011, 7:15 A.M.

Good Morning, Mason! Meeting  
Ingham County Fairgrounds

### SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011

28th Annual Spring Fling  
Courthouse Square

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS VISIT:

[www.MasonChamber.org](http://www.MasonChamber.org)

"EACH YEAR ABOUT A THOUSAND TORNADOES TOUCH DOWN IN THE UNITED STATES. ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE ACTUALLY STRIKE OCCUPIED BUILDINGS, BUT EVERY YEAR A NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE KILLED OR INJURED."

## EMERGENCY WARNING SIRENS

BY CHIEF KERRY MINSHALL  
FIRE DEPARTMENT

Springtime is almost here. This means that we will soon be entering the time of year where we may experience severe weather. Some of these storms may even produce tornados or other severe weather related events.

The City of Mason has three emergency warning sirens located throughout the city to alert our residents to the possibility of severe weather such as a tornado or other possible emergency with the potential risk of injuries or property damage.

These sirens are usually sounded on the advice of the National Weather Service; however if conditions and reports from the field warrant it, they may be activated at anytime. The sirens may be activated by either the fire or police department. If a tornado "watch" is issued for your area, it means that a tornado is "possible."

If a tornado "warning" is issued, it means that a tornado has actually been spotted, or is strongly indicated on radar, and it is time to go to a safe shelter immediately. When a warning is issued, the sirens will be activated.

The sirens will have a high/low wailing sound for a tornado warning, and a steady tone for the all clear. Both of these signals have a duration time of three minutes. The sirens are also tested the first Monday of the month at noon for about one minute.

The sirens are designed to alert and warn the people who are outside during these emergencies. They are not designed to penetrate into houses with closed doors and windows.

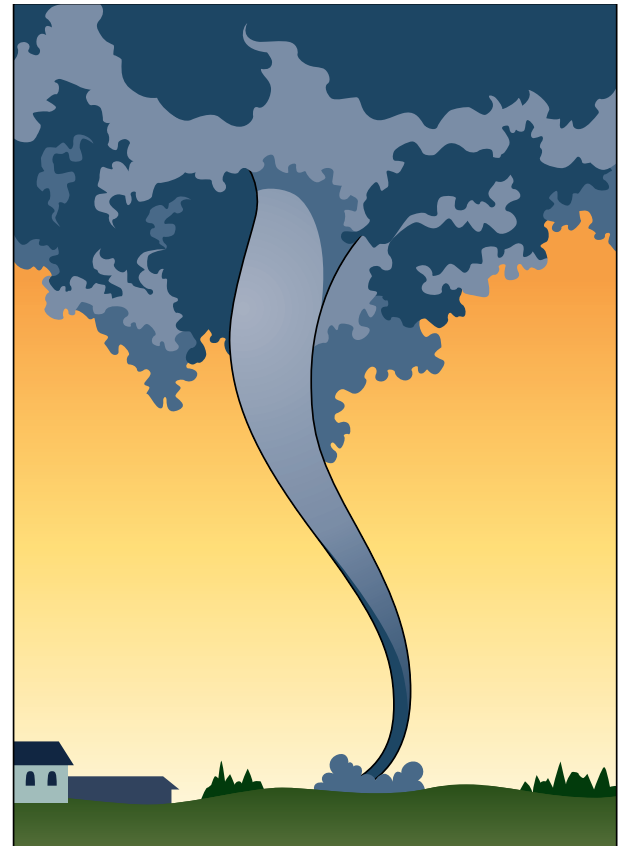
When the siren is heard, you should take shelter immediately. Tune to the radio or television to determine the nature of the emergency and information on how to protect you and your family. For weather related emergencies you should go to your designated shelter or if you don't have one, the basement of Mason City Hall is opened for that purpose during severe weather emergencies.

When you hear the "all clear" message over the emergency broadcast system, it is safe to leave your shelter or return to your home.

Each year about a thousand tornados touch down in the United States. Only a small percentage actually strike occupied buildings, but every year a number of people are killed or injured.

However, the chance that a tornado will strike a building that you are in is very small and you can greatly reduce the chance of injury by doing a few simple things.

- Be aware and alert as to the weather forecasts. Many people who are injured or killed by tornados were unaware of the severe weather conditions.



- Plan ahead before an emergency occurs. Have a designated shelter and make sure that everyone in the household knows where it is.
- Assemble a "disaster supply kit" that you keep in your shelter area. It should contain:
  - A first aid kit with essential medication in addition to the usual items.
  - A battery powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
  - Canned and other non-perishable food and a hand operated can opener.
  - Bottled water.
  - Sturdy shoes and work gloves.
  - Written instructions on how to turn off your homes utilities.

I hope that we never have a tornado touch down in the Mason area but if we do, we can all do our part to help reduce the possibility of injury or death.

## Did you forget to pay your 2010 Real Estate Taxes?

They are now payable to the  
Ingham County Treasurer.



## NOTICE TO READERS

The Mason City Newsletter is a paid advertising insert that is delivered with the Ingham County Community News to Mason residents. All copy and photos are supplied by city staff.



For everything about the City of Mason, go to [mason.mi.us](http://mason.mi.us)