



# GAZEBO

*e x p r e s s*

Your Community  
News and  
Event Resource  
for the  
Town of Highland

May 2009

## Switching Lanes on Kennedy

Six months after Grimmer Construction began a complete overhaul of Kennedy Avenue from Highway Avenue north to the Little Calumet River, the project is progressing ahead of schedule.

Highland Public Works Director John Bach said with the installation of new sewers nearly complete and paving scheduled for early June, the contractor should be ready to switch over the lane configuration and begin working on the east side of the street by the beginning of July.

Town Council President Dan Vassar said members of the council received plenty of inquiries about the timing of the project – and why they would begin construction in December.



Workman continue to install new sewer lines under Kennedy Avenue near LaPorte Street.

“This project is long overdue. We needed to allow the contractor to begin this project in December in order to keep a workable timetable for getting it finished this year,” he said. “We need to have Kennedy Avenue completed this year because next year, the bridge on Indianapolis Boulevard is scheduled to come down. We couldn’t have traffic

bottlenecks on two of the town’s north/south arterials at the same time.”

Although this past winter season resulted in more snow and cold than the region has seen in the recent past, Mr. Bach said the contractor was able to work most days and, as a result, shaved six months off the projected timetable.

“This was a really bad winter and I know there were some aggravations for people who drove on Kennedy,” he said. “But, I think those headaches are nearly over and we are well ahead of schedule. Once the underground work is completed, the paving portion of the project should proceed relatively quickly.”

In addition to the rebuilt roadway, when completed, Kennedy Avenue will have new sewer lines underneath the road along with new sidewalks and lighting. The \$8.5 million cost of the project was paid for, in large part, with federal and state highway funds. The town’s share of the project was about \$2 million.

W elcome to the town’s newest and best resource for news – the Gazebo Express.

This is the first issue of a newsletter designed to let you – the residents of Highland – know what is going on in your community.

In future issues, we plan to introduce you to residents of Highland who are engaged in interesting endeavors, and those who are serving our country overseas.

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If you would like to help sponsor future issues of this publication, please email Council President Dan Vassar at: [dvassar@highland.in.gov](mailto:dvassar@highland.in.gov).  
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We welcome you to browse this newsletter. If you have suggestions for future articles, please send them to:

**Gazebo Express c/o  
Highland Town Hall  
3333 Ridge Road  
Highland, Indiana 46322  
or via email to:  
[gazeboexpress@gmail.com](mailto:gazeboexpress@gmail.com).**

# Seeking to Tame Mother Nature's Fury

Town officials will invest nearly \$9 million over the next 18 months to help eliminate neighborhood flooding and reduce storm water infiltration into the sanitary sewer system.

Adding storm water capacity, eliminating infiltration into the sanitary sewers and adding generators to pump stations to safeguard the system during power failures are included in the comprehensive plan.

First on the list of projects is construction of a detention basin on land the town owns in the Homestead Gardens neighborhood, located in northeast Highland.

Residents of the neighborhood have been particularly hard hit during heavy rains with standing water in their yards and sewer back-ups in their homes.

At a meeting at Lincoln Center in March, representatives of the Highland Board of Sanitary Commissioners, members of the Town Council and Burke Engineering, the town's engineer for the project, met with about 50 residents of Homestead Gardens to talk about the benefits of the project.

Another meeting is planned to be held in early summer on the project site.

The basin, which is expected to cost about \$2 million, will serve as a holding area for storm water during heavy rains. As levels recede, the water will be discharged into the Little Calumet River at a controlled rate. The detention basin is planned to be about 1,000 feet long, 150 feet wide and six feet deep. It will have sloped sides and a relatively flat bottom that is expected to be dry 95 percent of the time. At capacity, the detention area will hold 1.6 million gallons of storm water.

Residents, who suggested locating the detention area east of its planned location in a marshy area, were told that moving the basin to non-town-owned property would delay the project for three years or longer.

"We know there are problems in this neighborhood and we believe constructing this detention pond will help solve them," Public Works Director John Bach told residents. "This is a high-priority project, a project we expect to be able to complete during the upcoming construction season."

In addition, the Board of Sanitary Commissioners will be looking to disconnect sump pumps that are illegally connected to the sanitary sewer system. The illegal connections discharge millions of gallons of storm water into the sanitary sewers during a single rain event, which overwhelms the system.

Rex Burton, chairman of the sanitary board, said as many as 1,000 homes in the area bordered by Highway Avenue, Strong Street, Liable Road and Kennedy Avenue currently have sump pumps that are connected to the sanitary sewers. The town has a program in place to help repay homeowners to disconnect sump pumps that are currently connected to the sanitary sewers.

The town is also in the process of finalizing the installation of auxiliary generators at three storm water pump stations. Generators have already been installed at the North Drive and 81st Street storm water pumping stations. A third generator will be installed at the Fifth Street pump station and will be operational in June. The cost of the generators is about \$1.3 million.

Town Council President Dan Vassar said the council considers the expense of the generators to be invaluable when it comes to protecting the town during heavy rains.

"It wouldn't matter if we put in all other safeguards and then the pump stations would go down and be unable to pump the water," he said. "We know we can't solve everything in the next two construction seasons but we are working with the Sanitary Board and prioritizing these projects to get the best bang for our buck and are working to get these projects implemented as soon as possible."

## Indianapolis Boulevard Bridge Planned to Come Tumbling Down

Years after it was considered, plans are underway to take down the bridge on Indianapolis Boulevard north of Ridge Road in 2010.

The bridge has been the scene of numerous accidents over the years due to slick road conditions and the bridge design itself, which was built to veer northwest at the top of the bridge deck.

Public Works Director John Bach said once the bridge is demolished, a new roadway will be constructed, which will be at grade, or nearly at grade.

"We might end up with a little hill there – or something more like a bump – but the bridge itself will be gone," he said. "This is a project that has been a long time coming."

## Trees Provide Environmental Fix

A grove of poplar trees has been successful in eliminating contamination in the soils on the former Bult Fuel Service property, opening it up for new, environmentally friendly development.

Located at 2605 Condit Street along First Street on the western edge of downtown Highland, Bult Fuel Service at one time provided heating oil to homes throughout town. When it ceased operations, the site was left with contaminants.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said the decision was made in 2002 to plant a grove of poplar trees as part of a soil-cleaning project, which is known as phytoremediation.

Phytoremediation is a process that uses plants to mitigate environmental problems without the expense of excavating and disposing of contaminated soils.

In Highland's case, it was the enzymes in the roots of the poplar trees, which have proven successful in breaking down petroleum products. For the Bult Oil project, which is just under an acre in size, 40 poplars were planted.

"We will now have the option of having several kinds of businesses develop on that site. We are anxious to tell people about what was done here and how well it worked," Ms. Petro said. "Although the site is currently zoned industrial, the Redevelopment Commission is considering requesting a zoning change that would allow other types of businesses to locate there."

The Redevelopment Commission plans to hold a press conference at the site in late May to talk about the project and plans for the future of the site.

The poplars, which are about 10 feet tall, are available for adoption by calling Ms. Petro at 838-1080.

## Neighborhood Enforcement Team Debuts in June

The Highland Police Department will initiate a program in June, which will provide additional neighborhood patrols during peak call-volume times. Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said the program, which will be paid for out of the department's overtime budget, will put additional officers on the street when they are most needed.

"We have divided the town into eight districts and we will have officers in marked – and unmarked – squad cars to saturate the neighborhoods and provide additional coverage," Chief Hojnicky said. "We will determine the patrol shifts based on the time of day that the highest call volumes take place. One day it may be Noon to 8:30 pm and on another it may be 3-11 pm. Our goal is to provide those additional patrols to deal with quality of life issues, such as loud stereos, speeding cars, vehicles that disregard stop signs and other issues like that."

In September, he said the department will evaluate how effective the neighborhood patrols have been and determine if there are ways to fine-tune the initiative.

## Stimulus Funds Planned for Public Safety Assist

Federal stimulus funds may be earmarked for the town to return the Police Department to its authorized strength of 42 sworn officers.

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said the town has requested funding through a grant program. Chief Hojnicky expects the town to receive the funds, which will pay the full salary of a first class patrolman for one year. If approved, the grant will also provide partial funding for an additional three to five years.

"It will be really nice to have that extra officer on board," he said. "This 42nd officer position is pivotal to the town not losing any specialized positions, which now exist on the force."

## Town Welcomes Commercial Realtors

Members of the town's Redevelopment Commission held their first Commercial Realtor Luncheon April 30 at the HI-FI Roadhouse, one of Highland's newest restaurants. Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said the event was planned to showcase Highland to the professionals who help market commercial properties.

"We want to create opportunities for commercial realtors in Highland; to help familiarize them with the Redevelopment Commission and discuss how we can work together to bring businesses to our town," she said. "During this discussion we were able to describe the tools we have available and share our vision for the town and the Redevelopment Area."

# Mark Your Calendars...

## American Girl Tea

This first-ever event will take place from 2-4 pm on Sunday May 17 at First Church of Christ, 2420 Lincoln Street. The cost is \$10 per person. All proceeds will go to the Highland 2010 Centennial Celebration. The event will include raffles, including one for an American Girl doll. RSVP to Laurel Roach at 838-3794.

## Memorial Day Remembrance

The town's annual honoring of military veterans will take place at 10 am, Monday, May 25 at the Gazebo at Main Square Park. The service will feature Amy Griggs, a Highland resident who has served in Iraq as part of the Indiana National Guard.

## Battle on the Ridge

Featuring 18th century re-enactors, this event will take place over the weekend of August 21-23. Participants will begin setting up camp on Friday. The event takes place throughout the day Saturday and Sunday, concluding about 6 pm Sunday evening.

## Highland Plans Birthday Bash in 2010

When the town turns 100 next April, Councilman Bernie Zemen hopes the community will turn out in force to celebrate.

Mr. Zemen and a group of Highland residents have begun planning a year-long celebration to commemorate the event.

The celebration will begin with a formal ball. Dress for the occasion will be 1910-vintage finery. In addition, the committee plans to offer specially designed birthday-themed merchandise to help commemorate the event.

## Fourth of July Festival 2009

### Preparations for the Fest...

Council of Community Events Chairwoman Laurel Roach said applications for this year's Fourth of July Parade will be mailed on May 15.

"Everyone who participates in the parade needs to read the rules that will be included with the parade applications," she said. "There are new rules this year that will need to be followed."

Organizations that participated in last year's parade will automatically receive an application for this year's event. If your organization did not participate last year and would like to participate in this year's parade, please contact the council of community events at laurelwilsonroach@yahoo.com.

Space is available for crafters who would like to sell their handmade items during the Fourth of July Festival. Deadline to sign up will be May 20. For more information about booth space sizes and costs, please contact Dawn Wolak at 923-0514.

### Schedule of Events

This year's Fourth of July Festival/Celebration will begin at 4 pm, Wednesday July 1 at Main Square Park.

The twilight parade will kick off at 6:30 pm, Friday, July 3. The parade begins at St. James the Less Catholic Church (located at 45th and Kennedy), continues north on Kennedy to Highway Avenue and east along Highway to the park.

Fireworks will begin at 9 pm at Homestead Park on Saturday, July 4.

Bands that will be featured on stage include; Crawpuppies, History's End, Relics, a Jimmy Buffett cover band and Mystic Fire.

### Festival Hours

**4 pm to 10 pm  
Wednesday, July 1**

**Noon to Midnight  
Saturday, July 4**

**4 pm to Midnight  
Thursday, July 2**

**Noon to 10 pm  
Sunday, July 5**

**4 pm to Midnight  
Friday, July 3**

**Ride bracelets will be  
\$20 again this year.**

