

BROWN

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TOWNSHIP

Fall 2010

Broadband in Brown Township

As many residents know all too well, broadband (high-speed Internet) service is not universally available in Brown Township.

Bart Winegar, state operations manager for Connect Ohio, said broadband, an unregulated service, is largely market-driven with no government requirements concerning provision of service to particular geographic areas.

Connect Ohio is a nonprofit, public-private partnership that works with telecommunications providers, business and community leaders, information technology companies, researchers, public agencies, libraries, and universities in an effort to help extend affordable high-speed Internet service to every Ohio household.

A market analysis prepared last year by AT&T indicated no justification for

extending DSL service, at that time. Connect Ohio is pursuing additional information from AT&T. WideOpenWest provides various services, including high-speed internet services, in areas near to Brown Township. Time Warner provides cable service in the township, but not broadband, at this time. Satellite service is another option, with HughesNet being the largest provider. Approaches to these providers could be made with requests to extend service into the township.

Winegar offered the following short-term suggestion for Brown Township residents who require high-speed internet service. One option that is available now from AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon is the use of an air card for the personal computer. Winegar said the performance is better than dial-up or satellite service. He said Sprint currently offers unlimited cell phone calls, unlimited text messages, and broadband service for a bundled price of \$69 per month and that other providers likely provide similar opportunities.

One additional possibility is seeking federal funds for a specific project. This approach, according to Winegar, requires a significant amount of local leadership and private investment. In the case of projects that are partially funded with federal money, the funds can be used only for the project identi-

fied geographically in the grant request. This is perhaps the only example where broadband service is not entirely market-driven.

Bart Winegar, state operations manager for Connect Ohio, can be reached at 740-777-7065.



Neighborhood Watch Meeting Set



The Brown Township Trustees will host a Neighborhood Watch Program meeting in conjunction with the Franklin County Sheriff's Community Programs Division.

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 18 at 7 p.m. at the Township Hall, 2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026.

Officer Zach Scott will present information on preventive practices and services available to help fight crime and distribute materials on how to establish a Neighborhood Watch Program.

If you have questions, please contact the Trustees at Ron_Williams@brown.twp.franklin.oh.us, Pam_Sayre@brown.twp.franklin.oh.us, or Gary_Deaver@brown.twp.franklin.oh.us

Legislature Passes New Sewage Disposal Law

Earlier this year, the Ohio Legislature passed a sweeping new household sewage disposal law. The new law replaces one passed by the Legislature in 2006, that was rescinded in 2008, and it significantly changes the types of sewage systems that can be installed for new homes:

- Aerators, systems that use mechanical components to treat the sewage and discharge it to a stream or tile, are prohibited for new construction;
- Leach fields can be installed only where the seasonal water table, or bedrock, is at least 18 inches below the bottom of the leach trenches. If this requirement cannot be met, a shallow system or a mound system may be required. Both are expensive and contain mechanical components that must be maintained.

Further, because Franklin County is an urban area, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) has issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Stormwater Permit to the County Commissioners. This permit further restricts what the Board of Health may permit for new construction and it requires the Board to find systems that are illegally discharging sewage to a storm drain, tile, or ditch, and require the property owner to repair or replace them.

The new law does not affect existing systems if they are maintained, working properly in compliance with the County's NPDES permit, and not causing a public health nuisance. If an aerator or septic tank and leaching tile field is found to be discharging poorly treated sewage to the surface of the ground, or into a creek or ditch, the Board of Health, by law, must require the homeowner to repair or replace it.

New sewage systems are expensive. The best way to avoid having to repair or replace an existing system is to maintain it properly. Maintenance varies with the type of sewage system:

Aerators

Aeration systems work by injecting air

into the sewage to promote growth of air-loving bacteria that can digest the solid material. An aeration system consists of a treatment tank, where sewage from the house collects so that it can be treated, along with the aerator itself which has a motor that runs an air-injecting device, such as a blower, or an agitator. For the system to work the way it was designed, all of the components must be maintained. Consider these tips for proper maintenance:

- Keep the tank pumped. Most families should have the tank pumped every three years, but larger families and homes with garbage disposals (which are not recommended) may fill the tank with solid material sooner, so the tank would need to be pumped more often.
- Avoid allowing paint, lawn chemicals, motor oil, and other chemicals to go down the drain. Aeration systems are not designed to treat such chemicals and they may foul the motor and aerator.
- Do not flush plastics, diapers, or other non-degradable materials down the toilet. They may damage the aerator unit.
- Make sure that the aerator motor is running. Lift the lid on the aeration tank. If the motor is not running, it will need to be repaired or replaced. It is a good idea to purchase a service contract for your system.
- If the motor is running but the water in the tank is not moving, the aeration unit itself is broken or clogged. It must be repaired immediately.

Septic Tanks and Leaching Tile Fields

- Septic system failure is almost always caused by too much solid material clogging the leaching system. It is important to keep the septic tank pumped to prevent the sewage solids from reaching the leach lines. For most people, septic tanks should be pumped at least every three years. Large families may need to pump the

tank more often, and garbage disposals are not recommended. A septic tank is designed to treat human waste and wash water. Chlorine, oil, paint, and plastic will foul the system and kill the bacterial that digest the sewage.

- Enzyme treatments do not help the performance of the system and they often seriously damage the leach lines.
- If the leaching system has two sets of leach lines, once a year close off the lines that have been in use. There should be a concrete or plastic box or port with a valve in it at the head of the leach lines. Turn the valve and direct the water into the dry half of the system. This allows the leach lines that have been in use to dry out and for the bacteria and sludge that have accumulated in the soil to be digested, which opens the pores in the soil so that it can accept water more efficiently. After a year, switch back to other side of the leach field.
- Be careful not to drive over the leach lines and avoid building anything on the leach field. Some people like to plant a garden over the leaching field, but if the system is close to the surface of the ground, this can damage the leaching lines. Also, root vegetables will take up harmful chemicals and bacteria and should not be eaten.

No sewage system is designed to handle roof runoff, footer drains, or swimming pool water. Be sure that the down spouts and sump pump are not connected in to the sewer.

With maintenance and care, an aerator or a septic system and leaching field can last thirty years, and many last much longer.

Contributed by Paul Wenning, Franklin County Board of Health

Mr. Wenning can be reached at paulwenning@franklincountyohio.gov or 614-462-3928.

Prairie Oaks Update

Prairie Oaks, the nearly 2,000-acre Metro Park located partially in Brown Township is looking for volunteers. Park Manager Tom Cochran said there are volunteer opportunities for community members and scouts. Residents are invited to contact him at 614-879-0020 or cochran@metroparks.net.

The park, which opened to visitors in 2003, has seen steadily increasing attendance in the years since. Attendance for all areas of the park (the main area of the park off State Route 142, Beaver Lake, Darby Bend Lakes, the Sycamore Plains area and the Upper Darby Creek canoe access) totaled 469,000 in 2009, the last full year of attendance figures. Attendance growth is shown in the chart below.

2003 71,200	2007 327,100
2004 128,700	2008 381,800
2005 126,200	2009 469,900
2006 294,100	2010 351,182 (through September)

The park offers a variety of natural features and activities. There are nearly 500 acres of prairies and grasslands, mature wooded floodplain, Big Darby Creek itself, quarry lakes, and trails. Among the more popular activities are hiking, picnicking, non-motorized boating on all three quarry lakes, horseback riding, and dog swim-

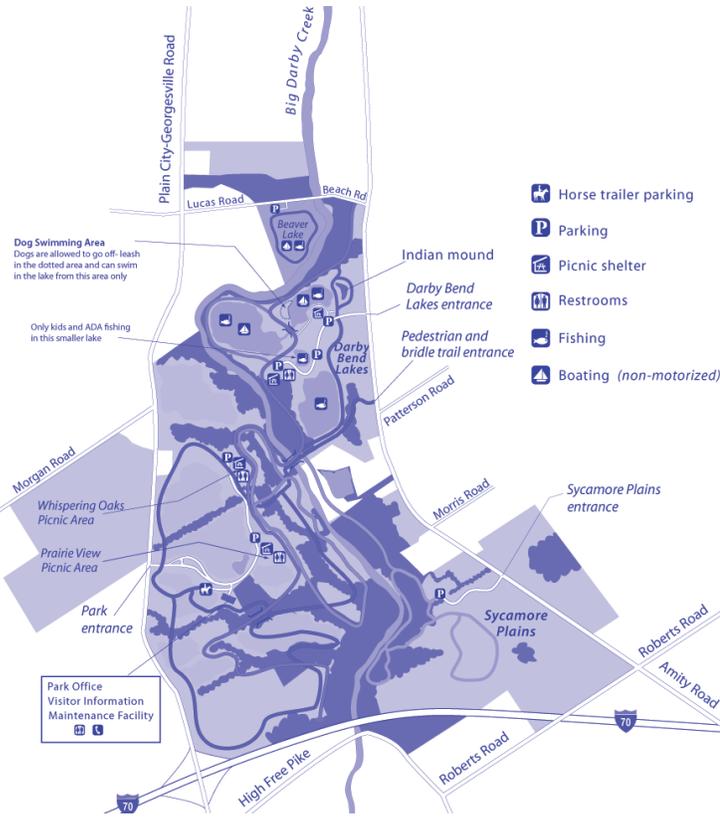
ming. Many trails are open to pet owners with leashed pets.

A recent success in programming has been the late night fishing program. Normally, the park closes at dusk, but in late spring, summer, and into fall on the last Saturday of the month, fishing is permitted until midnight. That program will begin again in the spring.

Residents should expect to see successional burning on the Madison County side of the park this fall.

There are no current plans for a nature center at Prairie Oaks. Cochran points out that Metro Parks has decided to move ahead with bison at nearby Battelle Darby Metro Park along with a nature center and education facility.

Cochran heads up the Prairie Oaks staff of 10 including a new ranger and a full-time naturalist, with Brown Township resident Mike Sherman newly appointed as assistant park manager. Cochran intends to begin attending township meetings in the near future.



Detailed information on Prairie Oaks, its facilities, features, and activities is available at www.metroparks.net.

Columbus Plan Released

The City of Columbus Planning Division has released a draft plan for an area south of Hilliard, north of I-270, and east of Alton-Darby Creek Road. The draft Trabue-Roberts Area Plan includes recommendations for the Big Darby sub-area of the overall document which is bounded on the east by the Big Darby Creek watershed boundary. Recommendations for this sub-area include:

- Development and redevelopment proposals should acknowledge and respect the character of the Big Darby Watershed.
- Properties identified and located within the Big Darby Watershed

should adhere to the future land use recommendations and associated provisions outlined in the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan.

- New development and redevelopment and expansion proposals should be consistent with the subarea's proposed land use map.

The entire document is available for review and comment at <http://development.columbus.gov/planning/trabueroberts.aspx>.

Senior Planner Marc Cerana can be reached at mpcerana@columbus.gov or 614-645-0662.

Hilliard Comp Plan Update

An update to the Hilliard Comprehensive Plan is still in the hands of consultants and staff. City staff members are reviewing the draft chapters of the plan dealing with transportation, utilities, and economic development, according to City Planner John Talentino. With the next month, all chapters are expected to be compiled and submitted to the city's task force for review. Meeting dates for the task force have not been established. The next step is finalization of an implementation plan.

Presentation of the overall document to the Hilliard Planning Commission and City Council is expected next spring with adoption expected to be effective in June, 2011, Talentino said.

John Talentino can be reached at 614-334-2444 or jtalentino@hilliardohio.gov.

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2491 Walker Road
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Clockwise from left: Gary Dever, Ronald Williams, Pamela Sayre and Barbara Bloxam

Brown Township Administration Office

2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 876-2133

Website

www.brown.twp.franklin.oh.us

Fiscal Officer

Barbara Bloxam 876-2133

Trustees

Mr. Gary Dever 876-4768

Mr. Ronald Williams 876-6118

Mrs. Pamela Sayre 878-0199

Norwich Fire Department

David Long, Chief 876-5367

Brown Township Board of Trustees Meeting

When: 3rd Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m.

Where: 2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio

For Police, Fire and Medical Emergencies, Dial 911