



Wayne County Commissioner Joseph Palamara

County News Bulletin • District 15 • Summer 2016

A newsletter for constituents of
Ecorse, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile Township, River Rouge, Riverview, Southgate, Trenton and Wyandotte.

County's Finances Stabilized

Joseph Palamara
Wayne County Commission



City of
Ecorse



City of
Gibraltar



Grosse Ile
Township



City of
River Rouge



City of
Riverview



City of
Southgate



City of
Trenton



City of
Wyandotte

Dear Downriver Resident:

After years of declining tax revenues and challenging budgets, Wayne County's finances are better than they have been in many years. The factors leading to an improved financial position include Wayne County's consent agreement with the State of Michigan.

Wayne County's administration reported that the structural, annual deficit of \$52 million has been eliminated – and the accumulated deficit of \$88 million has been wiped out. As of September 30, 2015, the end of the last fiscal year, the County now has a general fund surplus of \$5.7 million.

The biggest factors in righting the County's financial ship were a transfer of an excess of \$178 million by the Treasurer's Office from the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund, and significant cuts taken by County employees and retirees, namely via their benefits.

After becoming Chairman of the Ways and Means (Budget) Committee this past fiscal year (Fiscal Year 2015-2016), nearly every department has seen its budget reduced. Priorities need to be, and were, regularly re-examined, with keeping our residents' safety our top priority. Striking the right balance between providing necessary services – and doing so within budget – will go a long way toward restoring trust in county government.

Best wishes for a healthy summer.

Sincerely,

Joseph Palamara
Wayne County Commissioner

Investing in Michigan Communities



River Rouge Mayor Mike Bowdler (left), Trenton Mayor Kyle Stack, Commissioner Joe Palamara, Gibraltar Mayor Jim Gorris and Grosse Ile Township Supervisor Brian Loftus attended a recent summit meeting of community leaders in picturesque Elizabeth Park that focused on the issue of “Investing in Michigan Communities.”

Drivers To See Several Road Improvements

With the warmer weather, orange barrels pop up like dandelions – but these Wayne County road repairs are desperately needed.

Fifty seasonal employees and 62 new pieces of equipment are part of a \$30 million plan, which includes several road projects in the Downriver area.

The Wayne County Commission recently approved more than \$1.2 million for improvements on West Jefferson Avenue and Grosse Ile Parkway in Trenton.

Of the projects that are part of the bigger plan, almost half affect Downriver, including:

- West Road between Allen Road and Fort Street in Trenton and Woodhaven will be resurfaced
- Goddard between I-75 and Dix-Toledo in Southgate, Lincoln Park and Allen Park will be resurfaced
- Sibley Road between Dix-Toledo and Allen in Brownstown Township will be reconstructed
- Southfield Road between Lafayette and Fort Street in Lincoln Park will be resurfaced
- Eureka Road between Racho and Allen Road in Taylor will be resurfaced.

Downriver Parks Improvements

Voters in Wayne County will have the opportunity on the August 2 primary election ballot to renew the Wayne County Parks Millage that was last approved in 2010.

The Wayne County Commission voted on May 5 to submit the ballot language for Proposition P to the Wayne County Clerk’s office for inclusion on the August 2 ballot.

The funds will be used to maintain, improve and operate county parks – including Elizabeth Park in Trenton, Chandler Park and Hines Park – and some funds will continue to be sent to communities for improvements at local parks.

The millage will be at the estimated 2015 rollback rate of 0.2459 mills, or about 25 cents per \$1,000 of taxable property value, and will run from 2016 to 2020.

The millage rate would remain the same as the 2010-2015 proposition.

For the owner of a property valued at \$100,000, it would cost about \$12.30 annually.

Jefferson Bridge Repairs Nearly Completed

“Please fix the bridge!”

That has been the mantra of River Rouge residents and business owners since the West Jefferson Avenue bridge over the Rouge River was severely damaged in 2013. People have been waiting patiently – very, very patiently – for repairs to be completed and, finally, it appears likely that later this summer the bridge will be re-opened.

As all Downriver residents are aware, the bridge has been in the upright position since the incident, turning West Jefferson into a pair of dead-end streets, cutting off the River Rouge business community from southwest Detroit, especially the work lunch crowd.

Wayne County officials made a presentation to the River Rouge City Commission on April 5 about the progress on the bridge. Last year, the Wayne County Commission unanimously voted to award a \$16.7 million contract to make all the final necessary repairs.



Colleen Minter, Wyandotte resident and community leader, has spearheaded a number of events, along with Commissioner Palamara, that urge the expedited repair of the Jefferson Bridge, connecting Downriver with Detroit.

Insurance covered most of the repair costs. As this bridge is nearly 100 years old, and the only one of its kind still in use in Michigan, the repair process, including extensive underwater work, has been uniquely challenging.

Commission Approves \$1 Million for Rape Kits

Wayne County has pledged \$1 million from its general fund to test and investigate more than 11,000 rape kits that had been discovered in 2009 after being abandoned in a Detroit Police Department storage unit. County commissioners joined Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans, Prosecutor Kym Worthy and other county officials in November to make the announcement.

The Commission later approved adding the \$1 million to Worthy’s 2015-16 budget. The county also gave 5,000 square feet of space in the Guardian Building for investigators, prosecutors and task force members to use.

Downriver Senior Olympics Coming To Wyandotte

The annual Downriver Senior Olympics — open to residents age 50 and older in 18 communities, including all eight in the 15th District — is coming to the city of Wyandotte July 25 to 29. Participants have until June 30 to register. Competition will be divided into the following age groups: 50-59; 60-69; 70-79; 80-84; and 85 and older.

Wyandotte will host the weeklong competition, kicking off with the opening ceremony at Roosevelt High School, 540 Eureka Road, though events will be held at venues throughout the Downriver area.

Seniors will compete in such events as basketball shoot, beanbag toss, bowling, dance contest, golf, horseshoes, 1-mile run, swimming and tennis.

To register for the competition, ask for a form from your local senior coordinator, or print out the form at downriverseniorolympics.org.



WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSIONER

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