

# Town Notes

*News from La Plata Town Hall*



## MAYOR'S CORNER

The last week of June, I, together with the members of the Council and senior appointed officials from La Plata, attended the Maryland Municipal League annual convention held in Ocean City. The Maryland Municipal League or MML represents 157 municipalities throughout the State, La Plata being just one. The League's convention, spread over two and one-half days, is an opportunity to attend workshops and joint sessions that are structured to provide current information on municipal issues and promote interaction between municipal officials that is beneficial in finding ways to solve problems that affect every incorporated town or city.

One of the highlights of the convention was the opportunity to witness former Mayor Bill Eckman receive the first Lifetime Achievement Award issued by the Maryland Municipal League. As we all know, this award could not have been presented to a more deserving person. We have been the recipient of Bill's leadership for many years and through his tenure on regional and state-wide boards and committees he has made La Plata a highly respected town throughout the State. He continues to serve us all by his willingness to serve on our Water and Sewer Commission and by being a true friend of our community.

A common theme heard from all sectors of the State at the convention, and from municipalities large and small, was the state of economy and the affect this has on the ability of a municipality to govern effectively. It is an important question and one that your elected and appointed officials deal

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## National Night Out August 3, 2010

National Night Out (NNO) is designed to bring residents, law enforcement agencies, community groups and businesses together to celebrate crime prevention awareness while sending a message that crime will not be tolerated in our community. Each year, on the first Tuesday in August, people across America gather in their own communities to take a stand against crime. To find out if your neighborhood is holding a NNO event on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, please visit the Town's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> and go to the Events section.

For NNO, neighbors plan barbeques, picnics, cookouts, safety fairs, and other events to celebrate their efforts to maintain safe and healthy neighborhoods. They also get organized to promote police and community partnerships, crime, drug and violence prevention, safety, and neighborhood unity.

The purpose of NNO:

- Heighten crime and drug awareness.
- Through block-by-block organizing, support anti-crime efforts such as community oriented policing and safe streets.
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and unity.
- Support community police relations and cooperation.
- Send a clear message that our neighborhoods are organized and are not prey for illegal activity.

Please join with your neighbors and law enforcement in this year's event. For additional information on how your community can participate in NNO next year contact Sergeant William Brooks of the La Plata Police Department at [wbrooks@townoflaplata.org](mailto:wbrooks@townoflaplata.org) or call 301-934-1500.

## La Plata receives Banner Town designation for the third year in a row!

The Banner Town designation is the Maryland Municipal League's (MML) highest member achievement award. The program is designed to encourage and reward exceptional participation in MML programs and activities and to foster teamwork among municipal officials. The program criteria consists of participating in all of the following: Visits to at least one school to encourage 4<sup>th</sup> graders to participate in the "If I Were Mayor, I would..." essay contest, have at least one representative from the Town attend four Southern Maryland Municipal Association chapter meetings, send a representative to the annual MML fall conference and have at least one elected official participate in at least one of the following: serve on the MML Board of Directors, enrollment in the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance program or participate in the Student Shadowing Experience Program. All of the criteria must have been accomplished between June 1, 2009 and May 25, 2010. Of the 157 municipalities in Maryland, La Plata was one of twenty five to receive the designation. The Council has already begun working toward next year's requirements.

# COUNCIL COLUMN

## Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward 1

This is my third term on the La Plata Town Council, which I thoroughly enjoy. Every two months the Council provides an article for this newsletter. We can write on any topic, but I would like your help. Please let me know what each of you finds of interest. I will write about things of interest to you in future newsletters.

There are many things going on in La Plata. Before the Council is a proposed annexation of approximately 14.5 acres north of La Plata, up by Lowes, that would consist of 181,500 sf of Wal-Mart, 6,000 sf of restaurant, 4,000 sf of retail building, 4,000 sf of bank, and 50,000 sf of 3-story office space.

In 1990 the future Heritage Green sub-division that will consist of approximately 3,100 homes was annexed into the Town of La Plata. Part of the proposed development is an 18 hole golf course. Do we really want that? We have a golf course in White Plains, one at the Hawthorne County Club, and one in Swann Point. A couple of my concerns is the amount of water that would be needed for the grass and that not as many people play golf as they did 20 years ago.

We are working on a Comprehensive Park Plan now, and need feedback from you on the survey on our website. The survey asks what recreational amenities we need now and will need in the future. Please share your opinions.

Dairy Queen that was just approved near the Safeway and will be under construction soon and the Panera Bread should be opening around Labor Day.

In La Plata your property taxes going down by approximately 1.4 cents on an assessed \$100 because the County increased our tax differential from 7.1 cents to 8.5 cents. The County property tax rate is reduced for property in the Town. We pay less County taxes because La Plata provides Police, planning, and other services that the County does not have to provide.

Please take a couple of minutes and send me an e-mail and tell me what's of interest to you. Thanks for your help. Wayne Winkler. [wwinkler@townoflaplata.org](mailto:wwinkler@townoflaplata.org).

## Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

La Plata recently held its annual Fourth of July Watermelon Bash on the grounds of Town Hall and this year's event was a huge success. Despite the hot weather, the event was well attended and everyone both young and old seemed to be having a great time whether they were getting their face painted, tossing watermelons, participating in the watermelon eating contest, or just enjoying the free hotdogs, ice cream, and watermelons. This is one of the many events free to all residents that give La Plata that small town feel that many of us still enjoy. Make sure you watch for other fun events for your family during the rest of the year.

It was my honor to be a representative for the Town of La Plata at the Maryland Municipal League conference held in Ocean City in June. It was a great opportunity to meet and talk to elected officials from across the state in order to compare how they are accomplishing things for their towns in these troubled

economic times, to talk to vendors of materials and services that can be used in La Plata, and to attend educational seminars and workshops on topics that can be applied to our community.

As we head into the new school year, please make sure that you watch for the children either walking or waiting for their school buses. Let's keep everyone safe for the New Year.

## Councilman Joseph W. Norris, Ward 4

We recently joined many of our fellow municipal officials for the Maryland Municipal League 2009 Convention. It was a great opportunity to learn from our peers how they are dealing with problems similar to ours. I especially enjoyed the education sessions for the Fellowship Program of the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance. As a newly elected council member these are especially helpful. I am looking at some of the same subjects that I have encountered before from a new perspective.

As Council Representative to The Design Review Board, I plan to keep you informed of any interesting items that come before us. Because of the economy, the agenda has been very light since I have been a member. In time, this will change.

Please remember to enjoy our Friday Night Concert Series and Screen on the Green. The schedule is on the town website at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org).

If you have any issues or concerns I may be reached by phone at 301 934-9230 or by email at [jnorris@townoflaplata.org](mailto:jnorris@townoflaplata.org).

Have a great summer.

# LA PLATA COMMUNICATES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA



Get up to date information from the Town of La Plata through your choice of social media outlets.

Add your email to our contact list by emailing [cjohnson@townoflaplata.org](mailto:cjohnson@townoflaplata.org)

Sign up for text and email alerts through Nixle at <http://www.nixle.com>

Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/Townoflaplata>

Watch Town videos on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/LaPlataEvents>

Find out about the Town at <http://www.townoflaplata.org>

## LA PLATA RECEIVES GRANT FOR PARK PROJECT

During the summer of 2009, the Town applied for a Community Parks and Playgrounds grant through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Our project, bathroom facilities at Tilghman Lake

have been included in the FY 2011 Maryland Executive Budget. Once the funds have been approved by the State Board of Public Works, the Town will finalize design and begin construction of the new facility.



### Friendly Reminder:

Please remember that pets, alcohol, and smoking are prohibited at all Town-sponsored events.

## 2009 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT AVAILABLE

The report is designed to inform you about the water quality and services the Town delivers to you every day. Maryland Environmental Service, an agency of the State of Maryland, operates the water treatment facility and prepared the report on behalf of the Town.

Last year more than 800 tests for over 120 compounds were conducted on the water in La Plata. The Town continually makes efforts to improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources.

The Town is pleased to report that your drinking water met both Federal and State require-

ments. The report shows the water quality and explains what it means. The report was mailed to all utility customers on June 30 and printed in the Maryland Independent on June 30. The report is also available on the Town's website [www.townofaplata.org](http://www.townofaplata.org).

## MID SUMMER CONCERT ATTENDEE SURVEY

We are just over halfway through this season's Friday Night Concerts at Town Hall. We would appreciate getting your feedback on the bands and the event itself. Log on to <http://www.townofaplata.org> and take the

Summer Concert Attendee Survey on the Event page. Rate the facilities, services, and most importantly the music. If you know a great band that you would like to hear perform at the Town Hall, indicate so on the

survey. Your opinion matters to us and the Town wants you, your families, and the entire community to have enjoyable experiences this year and for many years to come.

## YOUR AVERAGE DAILY WATER CONSUMPTION

You can use the information on your La Plata utility bill to see your average daily water usage. Your bill contains both the total amount of water consumed over the previous quarter, as well as the average daily amount based on the number of days in the quarter. Typically bills that cover the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters of the year are higher, due to seasonal water

use. Those months include April, May, and June in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, and July, August, and September in the third quarter.

If you have questions about your bill or usage, please don't hesitate to contact Carolyn Johnson at 301-934-8421 or [cjohnson@townofaplata.org](mailto:cjohnson@townofaplata.org).

### MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

with on a day to day basis. We are fortunate, in La Plata, to have a strong financial base, one that will permit us to transition through these difficult times without a reduction in the quality or quantity of services that are expected from your Town government. But no one is sure what the future will bring and therefore we have to find ways to operate effectively within the framework of limited resources. Not an easy task but one that we are dedicated to accomplish.

As we all look for ways to reduce the stress of our daily activities, please do not overlook our Special Events Programs at Town Hall. Our Friday night concerts are very well attended and it is an excellent way to spend an evening in a lawn chair or on a blanket listening to music. Our 4<sup>th</sup> of July event was a smash hit with events and programs for all ages and you did not have to travel far to enjoy the festivities. The watermelon bash activities and a hose down provided by the La Plata Fire Department were a perfect addition to a very warm day. We feel that these events, and there are many more planned for the rest of the year, foster strong community ties and therefore are an important part of our overall governmental responsibilities. I trust that you agree.

As your Mayor, I will always welcome your comments, be they positive or critical. You can reach me at the Town Hall (301-934-8421) or at home (301-934-4850).

### Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

**Labor Day      Monday, September 6**

If you have a **water or sewer emergency** after hours, call (301) 934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

## TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

### Council:

Wayne Winkler ..... Ward 1

C. Keith Back ..... Ward 2

Paddy Mudd ..... Ward 3

Joseph W. Norris ..... Ward 4

Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Inspections: Jorge A. Thompson

Director of Municipal Development:

David M. Jenkins

Director of Planning and Zoning:

Catherine N. Flerlage

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

305 Queen Anne Street,

La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Telephone: 301-934-8421 / 301-870-3377

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: [mminer@townofaplata.org](mailto:mminer@townofaplata.org)

Website: [www.townofaplata.org](http://www.townofaplata.org)

## Conservation Corner

The summer days are getting shorter, but La Plata has again been enduring a long dry period with below average rainfall. Many people in the community have been taking steps to reduce their water consumption which has benefitted the community and their landscapes have been able to withstand the dry summer better. When dry, turf grass goes dormant, reducing its water needs and also reducing the frequency that mowing occurs. Native plants and rain gardens add interest to properties, while reducing the landscapes water needs. In the summer months La Plata uses significantly more water than in the cooler months due to seasonal water use. Please be aware of your water use. Below are some active landscaping steps you can take to reduce your water consumption, and your utility bill.



**Reduce the Turf** – Turf grasses consume more water than trees, shrubs, and other plants.

By expanding your garden areas, installing a new rain garden, and planting native plants, you can reduce the amount of water your landscape needs.

**Mulch Plants** – It adds organic material to soil, helps retain moisture, and keeps roots cool during warm months.

**Remove Weeds** – They take ground water away from desired plants.

**Don't Fertilize** – It encourages plants to grow fast and increases water needs. Instead plant native species that are accustomed to growing in natural conditions and don't need fertilizer to thrive.

**Reduce tree pruning** – Branches keep plants and turf shaded and cooler in summer.

**Plant Shade Trees** – New trees will add to the shade of your property keeping you and your landscape cooler.

**Replant Lost Plants** – If plants have died or are not performing well, plant low water-use and native varieties in place of the failed varieties.

**Water Absorption** – Incorporate water absorbing crystals into your potting soils and planting projects to extend the time needed between watering. These hydrogels come in many brand names, but all are the same polymer, polyacrylamide. It breaks down in 7-9 years into CO<sub>2</sub>, water, and nitrogen, all good for plants.

**Redirect Downspouts** – Collect rain water from your roof into rain barrels or cisterns to use for irrigation. Direct surface water to a low point on your property and build a rain garden.

**Watch your watering** – Don't water when it recently rained. Install a moisture sensor on irrigation systems instead of watering on a specific timed schedule. In La Plata irrigation may only take place between 6pm and 10am, the cooler hours of the day.

Thank you for your help in conserving water.

## LA PLATA INVESTS IN ITS PARKS

As part of the continued investment back into the community, the Town of La Plata resurfaced the basketball court in Wills Park. The court is available on a first come first served

basis, so please be respectful of other players.

The rehabilitation of this amenity is part of the continuing effort the Town is making to improving its existing infrastructure. Please

enjoy this refurbished facility, and help keep it clean by not leaving behind any trash. Please provide feedback on the Town's parks by completing the survey on the Town's website.

## LA PLATA TOWN SERVICES

### Hazardous Waste Collection

Household hazardous waste collection days for 2010 resumed the first Saturday in April and continue on the first Saturday of each month through December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Charles County Sanitary Landfill on Billingsley Road East between Piney Church Road and Route 5 in Waldorf.

Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription drugs, and other poisons that are around your house. Please keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring them to the collection site in cardboard boxes to ease unloading.

Household hazard waste collection dates during 2010 are: August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, and December 4.

For more information, call the Charles County Department of Public Facilities at (301)

932-3599 or (301) 870-2778, or the landfill information service at (301) 932-5656.

### Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Minimum fee: \$12.75 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.10.

A fee of \$6.00, or the current Landfill disposal fee, shall be charged for each tire collected. Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.

### Yard Waste Pick Up

Residential yard waste pickup will only take place on Monday and Fridays. Containers must be of yard waste ONLY – leaves, grass, and shrub clippings, brush or branches may be put out on Mondays and Fridays. The containers must be marked "Yard Waste". Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed – if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

### Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:  
Monday, September 6

Trash will be picked up on:  
Tuesday, September 7

# AUGUST 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Yard Waste Pick Up Special Pick Up (call by 4:00 p.m. July 30 to schedule)	3 No Planning Commission Meeting  National Night Out	4 Planning Commission Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m. Crime Watch Council; 7:30 p.m.	5	6 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "Rusty Spurs"; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	7 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
8	9 Yard Waste Pick Up	10 Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	11 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 p.m.	12	13 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "None the Wiser"; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	14 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
15	16 Yard Waste Pick Up  No Beautification meeting this month	17 Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	18 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m.	19	20 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; US Navy Band "Country Current"; 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.	21 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Movie "Up" rated PG; 8:30 p.m.
22	23 Yard Waste Pick Up	24 Town Council regular meeting; 7:00 p.m.	25 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	26	27 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "Southern Maryland Concert Band"; 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.	28 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
29	30 Yard Waste Pick Up	31				

# SEPTEMBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m. Crime Watch Council; 7:30 p.m.	2	3 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "Son of Pirates"; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	4 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
5	No regular trash pick up <b>Town Hall closed</b> No Yard Waste Pick up No Special Pick up	6 Sept. 6 regular trash pick up  Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 p.m.	7 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 p.m.	8	9 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "Sweetwater Band"; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	10 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. La Plata Chili Cook- Off; noon to 4:00 p.m.
12	13 Yard Waste Pick Up	14 Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	15 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m.	16	17 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; US Navy Band "Cruisers"; 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.	18 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
19	20 Yard Waste Pick Up Beautification Meeting; 4:00 p.m.	21 Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	22 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	23	24 Yard Waste Pick Up  Concert; "25th Hour"; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	25 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
26	27 Yard Waste Pick Up	28 Town Council regular meeting; 7:00 p.m.	29 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	30		

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## Summer Highlights



### Memorial Day Ceremony

Memorial Day is a day to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country's freedom and values, and that we did on Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, at La Plata Town Hall with our annual Memorial Day Ceremony. Guest speaker Commander James Cox, United States Navy, spoke about our nation at war and what a typical day is like for those serving in far away lands. He asked us to remember those who won't be coming home and their families. The Town thanks Commander Cox for his very moving speech and the many others who participated in the ceremony. A beautiful rendition of the National Anthem was sung by Emma Raphael, an 11 yr. old from Port Republic, Maryland. We thank Lt. Christilene Whalen, chaplain at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, for her very moving benediction and invocation. We appreciate the La Plata High School JROTC who presented and retired the colors, and we thank the Port Tobacco Player Encore Kids for their performance and musical program. The ceremony was concluded with playing of "Taps" by Mr. Bill Foreman. Many contributed to make the Memorial Day Ceremony something special indeed!



### Friday Night Concert Series

Friday Night Summer Concert Series kicked off on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, and will continue each Friday through September! The concerts begin at 7:00 p.m. on the concert lawn at La Plata Town Hall. We invite you to join the many that come out each week for a relaxing evening listening to talented bands. We have had a great turn-out for our concerts with several hundred people attending each week. Thank you to the La Plata businesses who have provided giveaway prizes for our



raffle at intermission. We've had some fantastic prizes from **House, Candy Clark Boutique, Josen's, Martin's, Green Turtle, Casey Jones, Miss Vicky's Therapeutic Massage, Charles Street Bakery and Apple Spice Junction.** We'd also like to thank **Chick-Fil-a** for providing dinner for our bands each Friday and door prizes. For a complete list of upcoming bands, visit the Town website at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) and look under the Events section.

### Screen on the Green

Our first two movie nights took place Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, when we showed the movies "Rudy" and "Where the Wild Things Are." Movie-goers enjoyed watching a movie under the stars! Our next movie night will take place on Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, at 8:30 p.m. The award winning movie "Up" by Disney-Pixar pictures will be shown on the concert lawn at Town Hall. The movie is rated PG, and parents can visit [www.kids-in-mind.com](http://www.kids-in-mind.com) for complete content information. A man, saddened by the death of his wife, decides to take the adventure they had always dreamed of together. In a rather unorthodox fashion, he attaches thousands of helium balloons to the home they shared for many years and sales away to South America. He is joined by an unexpected guest who happened to be on the front porch at the time of lift off. [1:44]



### July 4<sup>th</sup> – Watermelon Bash

The Town of La Plata's Second Annual Watermelon Bash was a big success with over a thousand people coming out to celebrate Independence Day on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>! Upon walking up to Town Hall, spectators were greeted by the La Plata Fire Department's ladder truck spraying water down on delighted kids and adults! The inflatable surf and slide was also a big hit for those wanting to keep cool as was the inflatable obstacle course. Several folks signed up for and competed in the watermelon eating contests and the watermelon toss. The face-painting,



hair painting, and air brush tattoos were a huge success with people lined up to get their "Fourth of July" look! No one went hungry as the Town of La Plata gave away hot dogs, watermelon, and bottled water, and

the La Plata Business Association gave away red, white, and blue popsicles. Thank you to Joe Lehan for being our emcee for the day, and to the Public Works crew for all the work they did to make the day successful!

## Upcoming Events

### La Plata Chili Cook-off

Think you make the best chili out there? Do your friends and family always tell you how great your chili tastes? Then enter the 2010 La Plata Chili Cook-off taking place on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. We will have chef judges from some of the best local restaurants judging in three categories: Best Vegetarian Chili, Best All-Meat Chili, and Best Meat and Bean Chili. We will also have a People's Choice Award where the festival go-ers can vote for their favorite chili. Visit the Town website to download an entry form to enter your chili in the La Plata Chili Cook-off!

### La Plata Community Yard Sale

Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup> is the date for our Fall Community Yard Sale. The yard sale is from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Vendor spaces are \$10 for a 10x10 space with a maximum of two spaces per vendor. Vendor forms are available on the Town website [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) under the Events section.

### Fall Festival featuring Taste of La Plata

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, for the Fall Festival featuring Taste of La Plata! The festival takes place at La Plata Town Hall from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. There will be live music by the Wise Guys, children's activities, costume contests, crafts, scarecrow making, entertainment, and more! The Taste of La Plata will feature sample sized portions available from local restaurants; tickets are \$1 each for the samples. Be sure to check the Town website for updates.

### Accepting Veterans Day Parade Entries

La Plata's Salute to Veterans Parade will take place on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m. The parade goes down Charles Street, through downtown, ending at Town Hall for a Veterans Day ceremony. If your group is interested in participating in the parade, please visit our website [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) to download an entry form.

## WEBSITE POLL



Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> to participate in an on-line poll. Click on the 'Snap Poll' link on the left side of the web page to go to the poll and see the results to date. The current question is:

*Are La Plata's park and recreational facilities meeting your needs?*

### June Website Poll Results

Below are the website 'Snap Poll' results from the last issue. The question and results are:

Did you or any other members of your household visit one or more of the listed Town of La Plata owned parks or open space areas in the past year?

Yes – 63%

No – 37%

La Plata's parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities are available for everyone in the community, yet more than a third of survey respondents have not been to one of the Town's parks in the past year. These recreational amenities are intended to serve La Plata's citizens, yet many in the community are not aware of these places, or they do not meet their needs.

La Plata has not been delivering what the community wants, and with that, the Town needs your help to communicate your wants and needs. This past spring the Town engaged a consultant to develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (CPRMP). The purpose of the plan is to coordinate all of the parks and recreation development for the Town, as it grows in the coming years. An important part of that plan

is to ensure that the needs of the community can be met today and in the future.

La Plata residents are needed to respond to a survey located on the Town's website that will gauge the community's needs for parks and recreation. Please go to <http://www.townoflaplata.org> and follow the link to the Park Survey. The information gathered from this survey will be used to develop recommendations to the Town for recreational facilities.

**The survey is open until August 27<sup>th</sup>.**

## LA PLATA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2010/2011

On August 12, 2010 at the next LPBA General Membership Meeting the members will vote for the following as the next slate of officers for the 2010/2011 year.

President: Jon Johnson  
 Vice President: Sharon Richards  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Debbie Almassy

Director at Large: Tom Mudd  
 Director at Large: Cecil "Butch" Hunt  
 Director at Large: Michelle Miner  
 Director at Large: vacant  
 Director at Large: vacant

The LPBA represents businesses within the Town of La Plata and pursues projects and advocates for the benefit of the entire business community. If your business is interested in joining the LPBA, please contact Michelle Miner for more information at [mminer@townoflaplata.org](mailto:mminer@townoflaplata.org) or 301-934-8421.

## TOWN FEES

The Town of La Plata charges a variety of fees for services that the Town provides. These fees are for permits, new construction, rentals, Town utilities, and other services. Fees for services are generally set to recover the costs associated with providing the service. As a result, the Town adjusts these rates on an annual basis.

For a complete list of the fees effective July 1, 2010 please visit the Town's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org>. Most fees in the Town increased 3% to account for inflationary costs. The recycling fee will remain the same at \$9.60 per quarter and refuse collection fees will also remain the same. For a single family dwelling unit the charge stays at \$73.10 per quarter.

Two years ago, the Town began tiered billing rates for water service and for sanitary sewer service, which charges more for a portion of higher consumption. There are two rates for water and two rates for sewer. For the first 15,000 gallons used per quarter (gpq), the water rate will be \$2.80 for each 1,000 gallons of consumption and the sewer rate will be \$8.65 for each 1,000 gallons of consump-

tion. For consumption from 15,000 gpq to 100,000 gpq, the water rate will be \$3.20 for each 1,000 gallons of consumption and the sewer rate will be \$9.65 for each 1,000 gallons of consumption. Consumption over 100,000 gallons per quarter will be billed at the 1<sup>st</sup> rate per 1,000 gallons.

Consumption per quarter	Rate per 1,000 gal	Water	Sewer
0 to 15,000 gpq	1 <sup>st</sup> Rate	2.80	8.65
15,001 to 100,000 gpq	2 <sup>nd</sup> Rate	3.20	9.65
100,001 gpq and up	1 <sup>st</sup> Rate	2.80	8.65

### FY10 & FY11 quarterly cost comparison for a customer using 15,000 gallons per quarter

	Water	Sewer	Total
FY10	40.50	117.00	157.50
FY11	42.00	129.75	171.75
Difference	1.50	12.75	14.25

In La Plata over 59% of residential customers averaged 15,000 gallons per quarter or less of consumption in 2009, and would be charged only the 1<sup>st</sup> Rate. The tiered rate helps cover the higher cost of large consumers and high seasonal use, educates consumers about their water consumption, and encourages water savings, by offering lower rates for those who use less water.

The charge of \$3.75 per quarter on a customer utility bill for storm water will not change. The State of Maryland has been on the forefront of addressing storm water issues. Legislation like Maryland's Storm Water Management Act of 2007 increase municipal government's responsibilities in managing storm water and the related required infrastructure. The revenue will help the Town address these needs.

Please feel free to visit the Town's website for additional information. The Town is striving to provide quality and reliable services to its customers.

## FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 BUDGET

Annually the La Plata Town Council meets to discuss its service priorities for the coming fiscal year. Your elected officials take into account the Town's Citizen Survey results and comments on Town Services and Community Perceptions. The adopted FY2010-2011 Financial Plan and Budget addresses the service priorities of the Town, to maintain and enhance the Town's services. The Town's budget covers its General fund operations and self-supporting enterprise funds, which include Sanitation, Water, Sewer, and Storm Water.

The Town Council adopted the Financial Plan and Budget with General Fund Expenditures of \$6,441,650 including Capital Expenditures of \$542,710, Sanitation Expenditures of \$1,223,020 including Capital Expenditures of \$133,000, Water Expenditures of \$996,325 including Capital Expenditures of \$54,000, Sewer Expenditures of \$17,619,900 including Capital Expenditures of \$14,672,595, and Storm Water Expenditures of \$82,780.

The budget contains significant Capital expenditures to maintain the Town's vital infrastructure as well as meet State and Federal requirements. The largest single project is the upgrade of the Town's Waste

Water Treatment Plant to the Enhanced Nutrient Removal standard. The upgrade is presently being designed, and must be completed to accommodate a higher standard of clean water requirements. The majority of the \$8.5 million dollar project will be financed with a State Grant funded by Bay Restoration Fees. That State revenue is generated from the recurring \$7.50 quarterly charge on your utility bill. The Town is continuing with the Willow Lane Pump Station upgrade project for which it received ARRA financing. \$3.2 million is budgeted for the completion of that project by the end of this calendar year.

The most challenged part of the budget is for the repair and maintenance of streets in La Plata. The State collects a tax on fuel purchases which is then redistributed to local governments for street repairs. The Town has historically received over \$400,000 from the State, however recent cuts have significantly eroded that funding. The State of Maryland will provide the Town of La Plata just \$17,710 for the 2011 fiscal year. This is an insufficient amount of funding for the Town to maintain its streets. In conjunction with the Maryland Municipal League the Town sought to pro-

tect its share of Highway User Revenues, however the State allocated those funds for other State expenditures. The Town will continue to work to reverse and mitigate the State's impact before the deterioration of Town streets becomes unacceptable. The Town has submit a legislative request to the Maryland Municipal League to mitigate this significant budget impact. The State's actions indicate there will be a long period of inadequate funding for street repairs.

Besides street repairs, the Town is able to maintain the quality of all of the Town's services. Budget challenges effect the community, and they effect the Town of La Plata as well. Through pursuing efficiencies in Town operations, and planning for the future, the Town is working to continually reinvest in itself, maintain quality in its services, and be responsive to the needs of the community. The budget does not require an increase to the Town's property tax rate. The tax rate remains at \$0.32 per \$100 of Assessed Valuation.

For a complete FY 10/11 Budget please visit our website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> and follow the links on the left to the FY 11 Budget.

## MAKING LA PLATA MORE EFFICIENT

With resources strained by challenges in the economy, it is vital that the Town explore ways to make its operations more efficient to save money, time, and add value to the services provided. Town staff is charged with finding new ways to improve services, and the Town regularly invests in technology or implements process changes to drive efficiencies.

### La Plata Makes Money by Using Less Electricity

Electric rates are on the rise and La Plata uses a lot of electricity in its operations. Including streetlights, wells that pump our fresh water, pumping stations that move sewage to the waste water treatment plant, and especially the treatment plant with a host of pumps, blowers, and monitoring equipment the Town spends several hundred thousand dollars a year just on electricity. The Town has been working

to reduce its electrical demand by using high efficiency pumps and motors, as well as manage its operations to maximize operational efficiency.

This summer the Town began a new program that pays large electric consumers for going off the electric grid at peak usage times. The concept is known as demand response, and takes advantage of peak utility pricing. As demand for electricity peaks on hot weather days during the summer, the price of buying and producing that electricity rises. Utility companies often bear much of the peak use price fluctuation. The Town entered into an agreement with Enernoc, a company that manages demand response to limit peak electric loads on the electric grid. When demand for electricity is high, the Town of La Plata can shut off its well pumps and sustain its water supply through our four water storage tanks for the six hour limit of the demand response. Also, the waste water treatment plant can go off the

grid, and operate using generator backup, which is regularly run and tested anyway.

By pulling the Town's peak electric demand from the grid, less electricity is needed in the region, and power prices don't go as high. In compensation for the Town taking its major electric uses off the grid for a few hours at a time, the Town is paid by Enernoc. Depending on the number of times and the duration that the Town takes its equipment off of the power grid, the Town could receive tens of thousands of dollars.

This is the first summer La Plata has participated in the program, and by mid July the Town has gone off the grid twice for several hours, with no disruptions in service to our water customers. The process is automated, and staff is notified and can monitor our water needs remotely. The Town is also exploring opportunities to conduct additional demand response through SMECO to save rate payers even more in electricity expense.

# COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN (CPRMP)

A Public Meeting was held on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Town Hall to obtain valuable public input from residents, and community groups. The public was asked about existing needs, future needs, where will new parks be needed, what should be in them and what special opportunities can the Town take advantage of. The Town remains open to your input.

Environmental Resources Management (ERM), the study consultant, provided an overview of the project work program, progress to date, current inventory of parks, recreation and open space areas within La Plata and a preliminary analysis of existing needs. The needs assessment should be completed by August, to be followed by implementation

strategies in September and a draft plan by October.

Comments provided at the public meeting included the following:

- Need to water parks, water spray areas
- Design new parks with community input and review
- Develop skate parks, working through insurance liability issues
- Need for a La Plata Community Center for activity and meeting areas for the community
- Better sidewalks for access to parks, recreation areas

- Need for recreational facilities west of US 301

There will be additional opportunities for public input during review of the draft plan with the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and Town Council. You are encouraged to take to the Parks Survey, available through August. It is located on the Town's website at <http://www.townofaplata.org> then follow the link to the Park Survey.

Additional information and study progress will be provided in the Town's website or contact David M. Jenkins, AICP, Director of Municipal Development at (301) 934-8421, Ext 117 or [djenkins@townofaplata.org](mailto:djenkins@townofaplata.org).

## NOW OPEN IN LA PLATA AND COMING SOON TO LA PLATA

Commercial Building Permits Issued 4/29-7/2

### La Plata Manor (renovations)

1 Hickory Lane

Use & Occupancy Permits Issued 4/29-7/2

### McDonald's

109 Drury Drive

### Verizon

9 Shining Willow Way

### La Dolce Vita Salon

6509 Crain Highway

### Mr. Handyman

406 Charles Street

### La Plata Barber Shop

11 North Maple Avenue

### Charles County Court House

11 Washington Avenue

### Crazy for Ewe

6 St. Mary's Avenue

### Accountable Solutions

1 St. Mary's Avenue

### Goodyear Tire & Auto

6560 Crain Highway

## Meet the Town Staff

### Donnie Cox, Jr., Public Works Technician II



Donnie Cox, Jr. was hired in April as a Public Works Technician II. Donnie was born and raised in Charles County and graduated from McDonough High School in 2004. He enjoys drag racing and fishing.

### Tamme McConnell



Tamme McConnell is the newest employee in the La Plata police department. Tamme is originally from Akron, OH and served in the Air Force for 12 years. Tamme moved to her duty station of Andrews Air

Force Base from Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina in 2001 and now resides in Waldorf.

Tamme and her husband Bill have two children; Alicen, 5 years old and William, 18 months old. Tamme has always wanted to become a police officer and give back to her community and is very pleased to have the opportunity to serve the Town of La Plata.

## LA PLATA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION MEMBER



Standing Left to Right: Chris King, Bob Askey, Rick Tepel, & Dave Messersmith

On June 17, 2010 Robert W. Askey, CPA, CFE, CFFA and Dave Messersmith, Survivor Consulting, LLC, representing Raley, Watts & O'Neill provided valuable information regarding occupational fraud and fiduciary liability to a group at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center. The two hour speaking engagement informed employers about the risks involved with occupational fraud by employees.

Robert Askey, CPA a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) and a Certified Forensic Financial Analyst (CFFA) detailed the reasons why employees steal, how they perpetrate their thefts, and the warning signs of a potential ongoing fraud. Sharing local examples of how employee dishonesty and fraud affect our businesses, Robert explained what employers can do to minimize

the exposure to a potentially devastating fraud in their business.

"Small businesses generally have inadequate internal controls over assets such as cash. Owners place far too much trust in individual employees to be honest and ethical in these very difficult times," said Robert Askey. "Current economic conditions coupled with simple greed and man's need for financial survival require that employers be aware of potential employee thefts and embezzlements."

Dave Messersmith identified the risk and the proper insurance available to help protect your business against the consequences of employee dishonesty and fraud. Raley, Watts & O'Neill made the explanation of how to insure your business from the financial losses caused by employee fraud clear and easily understandable.

Each participant received a fraud prevention checklist designed to help identify potential areas of risk for employee dishonesty and fraud within their businesses.

"The information provided was very timely and is what all business owners must know and pay close attention to," said Ray Dodson, Chief Financial Officer at Tidewater Dental. "Indifference to the possibility of employee fraud can easily result in significant loss to the business."

# TOWN OF LA PLATA

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**Town Notes** is a publication of the Town of La Plata.

## Code Corner

### Yard Sale Signs

Yard sale signs are permitted provided that only one such sign shall be on the lot where the yard sale is located, plus no more than one additional sign shall be located on a different private property, provided such property is not a private common area. Signs shall not exceed 4 square feet in area per side and 42 inches in height and the sign shall remain in place only from 5:00 p.m. Friday until the immediate following Monday at 8:00 a.m. No signs of any kind may be attached to a utility pole, light pole, telephone pole, stop sign, traffic sign, etc.

### Deck Inspections

If a deck is not constructed properly, its failure could lead to injury or even death. A deck inspection is required in the Town of La Plata to ensure that minimum standards have been followed in construction.

Deck failure can occur due to increased loads from people, snow, ice, and other items on a deck. Failures often occur when large groups of people have gathered on a deck for a get together.

It is estimated that 2.5 million new or replacement decks were built in the US last year. Many new homes constructed today include an elevated deck or porch. In addition, existing decks on older homes are frequently replaced.

The International Code Council (ICC) suggests concerns on decks, balconies, or porches. These include split or rotting wood; loose or missing nails, screws, or anchors where the structure is attached to the building; missing, damaged, or loose support beams and planking; and wobbly handrails or guardrails.

Good construction techniques, building inspections, and plan review will continue to make a positive impact on deck safety. Public awareness of the possible hazards will also aid in the prevention of accidents. If you are planning on replacing or adding a new deck, please contact Town Hall for a building permit at 301-934-8421.