

# TOWN NOTES

*News from La Plata Town Hall*



## MAYOR'S CORNER

The last few months have been very busy in La Plata. We have passed our budget for the current fiscal year, developed a Comprehensive Plan that will carry the Town through the next six years, and we continue to work on implementing the Vision Plan for the future of La Plata. We have approved a bid to repaint the water tower at Wills Park; the Town Hall has received a new coat of paint as well as the Train Station. Clean-up work has been completed at Tilghman Lake Park and grant funds should be available soon to resurface the tennis court at Silver Linden Park and complete other park projects. The Town Staff continues to work on water and sewer projects that are important in maintaining and upgrading these critical systems that benefit all Town residents. All in all it has been a very productive period.

From time to time, questions are raised concerning the power and intent of Town government to regulate the maintenance of private property. Several issues affect the health, safety and welfare of the community and required enforcement action by the Town Staff to address them. Other concerns fall into a grey area between the power of the Town to regulate and the private property rights of homeowners. Admittedly, the line between individual rights and community responsibilities can be debated. This important issue warrants some discussion.

La Plata is an incorporated municipality and we have numerous ordinances that apply

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## Judy Frazier thanked by Town



for a very long time." The Mayor's sentiment runs true with all the staff and elected body and we all wish Judy the best.

Judy Frazier, the town clerk has retired after over 35 years of dedicated service to the Town. She began her career with the Town in 1974 as an Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager and has worked under five Town Managers, four Mayors and more than 20 Town Council Members during her career. Mayor Hale who has known Judy for over 16 years says, "It's been a pleasure to know her and work with her for so many years. Her dedication to her job and to the Town of La Plata has been outstanding. Her warm, outgoing personality coupled with a desire to help anyone at any time will leave a legacy that will be remembered

## Trick or Treat Evening

Trick or Treat evening in La Plata is **Saturday, October 31**, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. As an alternative to door-to-door trick or treating, the Town continues to encourage community parties as a means of providing safe fun for our children. However, for those who allow their children to go door-to-door, we ask that you limit this to the 12 and under age group, and encourage you to accompany your children as chaperones and keep your children in their own immediate neighborhood. We encourage these safety precautions for all children who go out trick or treating:



- \* **Wear reflective tape or other reflective material on your costume so you are visible as you walk along the streets.**
- \* **Use a flashlight to help light your way.**
- \* **Don't wear a mask that would keep you from being able to easily see vehicles or other hazards as you walk from house to house.**

*All who are driving through Town during Trick or Treat Evening on October 31<sup>st</sup> are asked to be especially careful of the children walking through the neighborhoods.*

## Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

**Wednesday, November 11**  
**Thursday, November 26**  
**Friday, November 27**

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.

# COUNCIL COLUMN

## Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward 1

There is a lot of talk these days about going green and protecting the environment. This makes sense. When the Town Hall was built it received the LEED Certification. What this means is that the location was right with open space. We have storm water management. We have water efficiency. We conserved energy. We used some reusable materials and last, we used Energy Star products.

These are fancy words but they mean a lot. When you go into the men's bathroom the lights come on automatically and go off the same way. The urinal is waterless saving at least 1 gallon of water per use. When you use the sink you get a premeasured amount of water. This is water and energy conservation. The Town has its own storm water management pond which prevents run-off. The Town used geothermal for its heat and air conditioning system and the list goes on. What this should mean to all of us is the Town Hall is energy efficient which saves the environment and tax dollars. That's a good thing.

Now let's talk about us and saving green dollars in our wallet. Have you ever looked at the amount of phones you have in your house. And what about cell phones? If they are portable they are using energy to recharge. Plus you have bills for land lines and cell phones.

Let me tell you what my wife and I did to save energy and money. We are empty nesters so this worked well for us. We took our home phone number and ported it over to my wife's cell phone. If you call our house number it goes to her cell. We threw out all of our regular phones. We eliminated a \$43.05 monthly phone bill and we saved energy by not recharging. I have a small business and a business line as well as a cell phone. All I did with the business line was use it for call forwarding. I had my business phones ported over to my cell phone and eliminated my business line. Next, I eliminated my DSL in my office and purchased a WIFI card that I can use in my office, with my laptop, and at home. Total savings, \$90.00 plus per month. My wallet is a lot greener.

Another thing that we looked at was all of the lights in the house that said appliances were ready. We have a stereo upstairs and one downstairs that we never use. We

unplugged them and saved the energy required for two green lights.

I suggest you look at the way you use energy, phones, driving habits, etc. and see if you can reduce your need for energy. And one more suggestion, get your children involved when it comes to going green.

For additional information the Maryland chapter of the Green Building Council, located in Baltimore, has an excellent website: <http://www.usgbcalt.org>.

## Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

The La Plata Town Council has been working on a number of issues this summer that are finally coming to closure and a few new initiatives for the fall. By the time this is published or very shortly afterwards, the Town will have adopted the 2009 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of La Plata. I want to thank the members of the La Plata Planning Commission for the 18 months of effort they put into developing this plan that will be used for the next 5 years.

In this time of continuing economic hardship for our country, I want to encourage everyone to support our local businesses when you are purchasing something or taking your family out to eat. We have many wonderful specialty shops and restaurants in La Plata that need your support now more than ever.

The summer concert series was a big success again this year and drew large crowds for many of the shows. These concerts along with the new First Friday events provide free entertainment for residents and a way for neighbors to gather in a fun and safe environment. If you have not brought your family out to Town Hall on a Friday evening to enjoy the shows, plan on giving it a try next year.

There are many other opportunities and events available to residents of La Plata. Make sure to check the calendar of events in the newsletter as well as on the town website. Amy Peña, the town's Special Events Coordinator, has lots of things planned for the coming months.

## Councilwoman Paddy Mudd, Ward 3

Our Friday Concerts, First Fridays and Screen on the Green have been well at-

tended and very successful this summer! Although I was out of town for much of August, I was told that we had large attendance and the concession stand sold out often. Lifestyles of Southern Maryland, located within La Plata, runs the stand and benefits from this to help those in need.

The Council's major focus over the last several months has been the receipt of a \$6 million dollar loan at very low interest which is part of the federal stimulus package. Our financial team has spent many hours working on this to build a new Willow Lane pump station and associated lines to the treatment plant for the benefit of all of La Plata. This project has been planned for several years and will solve some of our problems with Inflow and Infiltration, sewer overflows, etc. By creating a special taxing district with the agreement of the developer, the new residents of Heritage Greene will be repaying this loan over a twenty year period.

Our 2009 Comprehensive Plan and Rezoning Plan has passed and met the October deadline set by the State. So much background time and effort by our professional staff goes unnoticed until the final results are ready and approved by the Council.

Plan to come out and participate in our Fall Festival and Veteran's Day Celebrations. We guarantee a good time for your family!

## Councilman Joseph W. Norris, Ward 4

It is hard to believe that fall is here already and the children are busy back in school. I hope you had the opportunity to attend some of the concerts or the *Screen on the Green* for one of our kid friendly movies. Please check this newsletter for fall events coming up in town. A big "thank you" to Amy Peña for planning and putting together all of our events. I look forward to meeting you at one of them.

The design review board has approved concept plans for a new class A office building on Charles Street next to the Baldus Centre. Access to the building and parking will actually be off of Howard Street. It is designed to have both underground and surface parking. The entrances are far enough from Charles Street that it should not impact that traffic at all.

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# COUNCIL COLUMN (CONTINUED)

We have also received plans for an office building with residential on the second floor at North Oak Ave. and Kent Avenue just behind the Port Tobacco Players building. Preliminary review of the plans seems to show a good blend with the Port Tobacco Players Building. We are also reviewing plans for a renovation of the old Golden Corral Restaurant at 6810 Crain Highway. The building is being converted to headquarters office space for an I-T Company.

Plans are underway for another Citizens Academy later in October. There is more detailed information about the Citizens Academy in this newsletter. I attended the first academy last fall with about a dozen of other citizens and it was certainly worthwhile. The purpose of this session is to educate our citizens about our water and sewer operations and the improvements being made, and the challenges we still face. I thought that I was pretty knowledgeable

from my time as an employee of the town, but after attending the academy I found out how much more there was to learn. Please try and attend and you won't be sorry for the time invested.

If you have any questions or concerns on any issue I may be reached by phone at 301-934-9230 or by email at [jnorris@townoflaplata.org](mailto:jnorris@townoflaplata.org). Have a colorful fall.

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

[This information is current as of September 1, 2009.]

The following businesses were issued Building Permits and/or Commercial Occupancy Permits during the period of June through August 2009:

### Commercial Building Permits

#### **American Legion Renovation**

6330 Crain Highway

#### **Southern Maryland Trade Center**

9475 Catalpa Drive

#### **McDonald's Rebuild**

6385 Crain Highway

#### **World Gym**

6649 Crain Highway

### Occupancy Permits

#### **Chick-fil-A**

107 Drury Drive

#### **Star Martial Arts Academy**

112 Drury Drive

#### **Birthdays & More**

226 Rosewick Road

#### **Con-Res, LLC (office space)**

305 Centennial Street, Unit D

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

to everyone who resides in the Town. Ordinances do not cover every possible issue nor should they since we live in a free country which promotes the inherent rights of property owners to enjoy their homes without undue interference from local government. People have the right to expect the Town to regulate what should be regulated, but not to over-step this authority whereby private property rights are placed in jeopardy. Our ordinances and Town Staff take action when property becomes a problem due to health or safety concerns. It is the state of property prior to reaching the health or safety level that frustrates many homeowners.

When residents spend considerable time and resources in maintaining their property and witness other property owners who, for whatever reason, do not maintain the same standards, frustration can occur. Landscaping that is not maintained, accumulation of trash or debris, buildings in need of repainting, broken windows, and other upkeep problems all add to the level of frustration. Most people maintain their property; a few do not for various reasons: limited resources, physical inability, vacant property, or just lack of attention to name a few. Home Owner Association covenants that apply to some of our residential communities serve to solve some of these problems, but where sections of Town are not covered by covenants, it may take an encouraging word or an offer of assistance from a neighbor to resolve the issue. I trust that we all want to keep La Plata a beautiful community and I want to encourage everyone to do your part to ensure that it remains so.

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).

## Email addresses wanted



The Town is compiling a database of resident email addresses in order to expand its use of email communication within the Town. Residents who send their email address to the Town will be able to receive information easily, quickly, and cost-effectively. Providing your email address to the Town is completely voluntary. The Town is simply seeking an additional means to be able to communicate with residents.

If you would like to have your email address included in our database for future communication, please send your email address to Carolyn at [cjohnson@townoflaplata.org](mailto:cjohnson@townoflaplata.org) along with your name and street address.

## 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: [mmminer@townoflaplata.org](mailto:mmminer@townoflaplata.org)

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

# LA PLATA TOWN SERVICES

## 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: \$12.50 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.*

## La Plata Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market offers for sale fresh produce, flowers and handcrafted items. It is located in the north parking lot behind the Charles County

Courthouse on Washington Avenue. The Market is open on Wednesdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Farmers interested in selling at the market can contact the Town Hall for an application (301) 934-8421.

## Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Charles County Sanitary Landfill accepts household hazardous waste products the **first Saturday of each month during April through December, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.: August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7 and December 5.**

The landfill is located at 12305 Billingsley Road East, Waldorf. For driving directions from your location, visit their web page at <http://www.charlescounty.org/pf/sww/landfill/default.htm>. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, fluorescent lights, expired prescription medicines and other poisons that are around your house. They advise that

you should keep the materials in their original labeled containers whenever possible, and bring the items to the collection site in cardboard boxes for ease in unloading. *If you need more information, please call the Charles County Dept. of Public Facilities at 301-932-3599 or 301-870-2778, or the Landfill information service at 301-932-5656.*

## Yard Waste Pickup on Mondays and Fridays

*Effective April 1, 2009, a change was made to when residential yard waste pickups will occur. Yard waste pickups will only take place on Mondays and Fridays. If a holiday falls on one of those pickup days, there will be no yard waste pickup on that day.*

Containers 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 inches in diameter or more 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:  
Wednesday, November 11  
Thursday, November 26

Trash will be picked up on:  
Tuesday, November 10  
Wednesday, November 25

# TOWN CODE CORNER: DO YOUR DOODY - CURB YOUR PET!

### Per Town code 67-5.1

No person in possession of an animal shall walk or exercise such animal without being in possession of a container sufficient to immediately remove and dispose of the animal's excreta in a sanitary manner.

It is unlawful for any person or owner in possession of an animal to fail to remove any of

the animals' excreta deposited on the public ways, recreational parks or other property, public or private, not owned by the person or owner in possession of the animal.

### 67-5 Animals at large

No person shall permit an animal to be at large at anytime within the town. Each animal shall be confined to the property of its owner or

the person who has its possession or control, except when the pet is leashed, harnessed or otherwise similarly and securely restrained and accompanied by its owner or keeper.

### 67-3 Prohibited farm animals

No person shall keep or maintain any horse, goat, donkey, mule, cow, calf, cattle, sheep, swine, or poultry within the town.

# TOWN RECEIVES BEAUTIFICATION AWARD



The Town is happy to announce that we are the recipient of the Charles County Garden Club special recognition in the Route 301 Corridor Beautification Promotion, an extension of the Charles County Beautification

Program for our Public Works Building on south bound Crain Highway. Establishments on the highway extending from Waldorf to the Harry Nice Bridge have been selected to receive awards for their efforts in landscaping and beautifying their premises. An awards ceremony was hosted by the Charles County Commissioners and the Charles County Garden Club on September 15. Jeff Garner, the Director of Public Works represented the Town during the presentation.

# OCTOBER 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 2 5:30 p.m., First Friday – <i>Special Blend</i> Yard waste pickup day	3 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
4 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 10/2 to schedule.) Yard waste pickup day	5	6 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	7 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	8	9 Yard waste pickup day	10 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Recycle La Plata Fall Community Yard Sale
11 Yard waste pickup day	12	13 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	14 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	15	16 Yard waste pickup day	17 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
18 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Fall Festival & Taste of La Plata	19 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting Yard waste pickup day	20 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	21 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting	22	23 Yard waste pickup day	24 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
25 Yard waste pickup day	26	27 7:00 p.m., Town Council regular meeting	28 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	29	30 Yard waste pickup day	31 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Trick or Treat Evening

# NOVEMBER 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 2:00 a.m., Daylight Saving Time ends. Set your clocks and watches back 1 hour.	2 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 10/30 to schedule.)	3 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	4 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	5	6 Yard waste pickup day	7 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
8 1:00 p.m., "Salute to Veterans" Parade and Ceremony	9 Yard waste pickup day	10 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	11 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market <b>Veteran's Day</b> <b>Town Hall Closed</b> (Wed. trash will be picked up on Tues., 11/10.)	12	13 Yard waste pickup day	14 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
15 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting Yard waste pickup day	16	17 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	18 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting	19	20 Yard waste pickup day	21 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
22 Yard waste pickup day	23	24 7:00 p.m., Town Council regular meeting	25 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	26 <b>Thanksgiving Day</b> <b>Town Hall Closed</b> (Thurs. trash will be picked up on Wed., 11/25.)	27 <b>Town Hall Closed</b> (No change to trash schedule) <b>NO YARD WASTE PICKUP</b>	28 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
29 Yard waste pickup day	30					

## Conservation Corner – Mulch Your Leaves



Each fall as the leaves turn colors we begin to think about cooler weather, kids jumping into piles of fallen leaves, and hours of raking, bagging, and removing those fallen leaves from our properties. This fall the Town would like to encourage its residents to not utilize one of its popular services, leaf collection.

In this newsletter you will see information about when the Town will be traveling through our neighborhoods with a small crew of Public Works employees. They bring with them a truck, and a leaf vacuum machine that clears the road edges of leaves that our neighbors have raked to the curb for removal. The leaves are shredded and blown into a leaf box. The truck then drives the leaves away to the landfill to be turned into compost which is used by Charles County. Each fall, La Plata property owners send tons of organic material away from their property, reducing the amount of nutrients available for future plant growth.

This fall you can benefit the environment in your own yard.

First, use a mulching mower on your property, and mulch in fallen leaves to return organic material to your lawn, and reduce fertilizing needs. By taking the catcher off your mower, the grass and leaf clippings will fall below the blades of grass and decompose into natural fertilizer.

If your home has more leaves than you want to mulch back onto the ground, consider composting. Each autumn, trimming, weeding, and raking generates a lot of organic material. By composting, natural processes will biodegrade that material, and turn it into valuable mulch you can reuse on your property. By mulching plants and trees organic material is added to the soil, which helps retain moisture, and keeps roots warm during the winter and cool during summer months.

Using greener landscaping techniques, keeping organic material on your property, using appropriate plants and seed varieties result in a beautiful property and healthier landscapes that are good for the environment as well. It will not only help your yard, but save the Town staff time spent collecting and disposing of yard waste, reduce fuel consumption of Town vehicles, and reduce wear on equipment. Please think about alternatives before raking your leaves to the curb this fall.

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE VACANCIES ON THE TOWN'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

To assist in carrying out its responsibilities, the Town Council has established a number of Boards and Commissions staffed by volunteers. These Boards and Commissions are very much a part of the decision-making process.

Any Town resident interested in being

considered for appointment to any vacancies on any of the boards and commissions is encouraged to fill out the Town's personal history/application form and send it along with a letter of interest to the Town Clerk. A printable version of the form is on the Town's web

page at <http://www.townoflaplata.org>. Click on the "Commissions" link on the left side of the web page, then click on "Application to Boards-Commissions" to access the form. You may also call the Town Hall to have one sent to you, or stop by and pick one up.

## CITIZEN ACADEMY

The Town of La Plata is proud to again offer a Citizen Academy for La Plata's Water and Sewer Systems. The Citizen Academy brings interested members of the community together to learn about a particular government service. Last fall, community members participated in the Town's first Academy. They were impressed with the complexity of providing water and sewer to the Town and what they learned by attending this program.

The Citizen Academy will help residents of La Plata better understand how these vital public services work and the resources it takes to provide them. The Academy will begin on Wednesday, October 21. Space is limited. **Please sign up for the Academy by calling Town Hall at 301-934-8421**

**or email Donna at [dshorter@townoflaplata.org](mailto:dshorter@townoflaplata.org).**

Sessions will all start and end at La Plata Town Hall. Session dates are set for:

### **Wednesday, October 21, 7:00 PM**

Session - Public water systems in general and La Plata's system in particular.

### **Saturday, October 31, 10:00 AM**

Field trip - Tour of La Plata's wells and water storage tank. Maintenance demonstration.

### **Thursday, November 12, 7:00 PM**

Session - Sewer treatment facilities, collection systems, and Sanitary Sewer Overflows.

### **Saturday, November 21, 10:00 AM**

Field trip - Tour of La Plata's sewage

treatment plant and at least one pump station.

### **Wednesday, December 2, 7:00 PM**

Session - Operation and Maintenance of La Plata's water and sewer systems.

### **Wednesday, December 9, 7:00 PM**

Session - Budgeting, capital expenditures, long range planning.

At the time of registration, please advise if any special accommodations are required for your participation. This program would be most effective if participants can attend all six sessions, but there is something to be gained by attending any of the sessions. The Town looks forward to your participation, and the opportunity to share one of a kind insight into the Town's operations. You will not be disappointed.

## WEBSITE POLL

Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townofla-plata.org> to participate in an online 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:

***Ownership of wireless computing devices is steadily increasing. Would you support the Town of La Plata facilitating the expansion of a wireless system like WIFI to be developed in its downtown?***

Strongly Support	Somewhat Oppose
Somewhat Support	Strongly Oppose
Neither Support nor Oppose	Don't Know

### Website Poll results from last issue of *Town Notes*

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

*Sanitary Sewer Overflows are a public health hazard and the Town of La Plata should continue to make the elimination of the causes of these overflows a top municipal priority.*

Strongly Agree – 74%  
Somewhat Agree – 12%  
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 7%  
Somewhat Disagree – 0%  
Strongly Disagree – 5%  
Don't Know – 2%

Sanitary Sewer Overflows are primarily caused when storm water from heavy or persistent rain gets into the sewer system and overflows the lines. Sewer lines primarily flow by gravity to the Waste Water Treatment Plant next to Archbishop Neale School. As the rainwater floods the lines, low points in the system can see rainwater and sewage come out of low man-

holes. The most evident of these in La Plata is the manhole at the intersection of 301 and Centennial Street where untreated sewage can leave the system, and directly enter the storm water system and enter our creeks and rivers.



The Town is required to report discharges of this type to the Maryland Department of the Environment, and that agency can issue fines and direct abatement action. The Town of La Plata is under a consent decree in which six projects have been identified for the Town to complete, which would eliminate weather related sanitary sewer overflows. To date, three of those projects have been completed, and the Town continues to work toward completion of the next project.

The problem with the Town's sewer system exists today, and is a result of the age of the existing system which allows lots of rainwater to get in, and an inability to transfer the sewage and rain water to the treatment plant quickly enough. The Town is required to fix these problems; therefore it must be a top priority for the community and public health. Significant underground construction is still required to provide adequate capacity in new sewer lines that are not cracked or broken to address the issues. Unfortunately, the problem will cost many millions of dollars to correct, and La Plata is not alone in this country with aged deteriorating infrastructure.

La Plata has been making progress and has a plan to continue to improve our sewer system. To learn more the Town will be holding another Citizen Academy this fall, where residents can learn from experts why the problem exists, and what the Town is doing to fix it.

## LA PLATA RECEIVES MELWOOD EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

On Friday, August 28, on behalf of the Town, Mayor Roy Hale was presented with Melwood's Employer of the Year Award for the Town's landscaping contract. The award was given at their training facility in Waldorf during an Americans with Disabilities Act celebration. Also present were Congressman Steny Hoyer, Commissioners Collins and Graves, Delegates Jameson, Levy, and Murphy, as well as many other elected officials. Melwood is a nonprofit organization that offers job training services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and finds many of them employment. The Town

has entered into a contract with Melwood to provide landscaping and grounds maintenance services to the Town Hall and other Town owned property, among other services.

Bobby Stahl, Director of Operations manages the contract with Melwood. Stahl said, "This partnership is a tremendous benefit to the town. It allows us to use our public works employees to do other jobs. It's worked out extremely well for the town and it's a wonderful opportunity to help

people who have developmental disabilities."



# BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS FROM THE LA PLATA POLICE DEPARTMENT



Town of La Plata children and parents are back in the fall routine of squeezing five more minutes of sleep before hastily throwing together breakfast and lunch, then going off to work and school. These daily treks during the time we commonly refer to as “rush hour” represent the time that most pedestrian and fatal crashes occur. Here are some tips to help motorists and school-bound children stay safe.

## ► School Bus Safety

### For motorists:

- Maryland State Law forbids the passing of a stopped school bus while

its lights are flashing and its stop arm is extended.

- Stay alert. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- **Slow down.** Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.

### For children riding the bus:

- Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter.
- Make sure the driver can see you.
- Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do. Protect yourself and be on the lookout.

- Safety when walking or biking to school:

- Work out a safe route to school with your parents.
- Choose the quickest route with the fewest street crossings.
- The correct way to cross the street:
  - All pedestrians should always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look left, then right, and then left again before crossing. Pedestrians should continue looking in this manner until they are able to cross safely.
  - Use intersections with crossing guards.
  - Walk your bike through intersections.
  - Walk with a buddy.
  - Wear reflective material...it makes you more visible to street traffic.
  - Make sure if you are riding a bike to school, you wear a helmet.

## Loose Leaf Collection



The Town of La Plata Public Works Department will be offering loose leaf collection from October 12, 2009 to December 11, 2009. The crews will be picking up this year on a new schedule program, so there will be no need to contact the Town Hall for pick-up service. The Town would like to ask our residents to support our “Going Green” program by mulching your leaves and using it for fertilizer in your yards. For our residents who wish to bag their leaves, the pick-up will be on our Yard Waste schedule of Mondays and Fridays.

The loose leaf pick-up schedule will be as follows and is subject to change.

October 12, 2009 - October 16, 2009 and November 9, 2009 - November 13, 2009: King’s Grant, Agricopia, Quailwood, Port Tobacco Road, West Hawthorne Drive and their side streets

October 18, 2009 - October 23, 2009 and November 16, 2009 - November 20, 2009: St. Mary’s Avenue, Oak Avenue, Washington Avenue, Charles Street, and their side streets

October 26, 2009 - November 6, 2009 and November 30, 2009 - December 11, 2009: Clark’s Run.

There will be no pick-up the week of November 23, 2009 - November 27, 2009.

Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Public Works Department at 301-934-8421 or [jgarner@townoflaplata.org](mailto:jgarner@townoflaplata.org).

## Public Hearing Procedures

The Council of the Town of La Plata is required to hold Public Hearings to hear public comment for certain items of Legislation. To notify the community of an upcoming Public Hearing an ad is placed in the legal section of the Maryland Independent newspaper, with the purpose, location, date, and time of the hearing.

On the date of the hearing the public is encouraged to attend and sign in on the meeting Attendance Roster and the Speakers List if they wish to comment on the hearing topic. Written correspondence can also be submitted for the record before the close of the hearing. The Chair of the meeting states the guidelines pertaining to public hearings and is responsible to administer order for the proceedings.

The Speakers List for the Public Hearing is only for comment pertaining to the advertised Public Hearing items. Any other comments or questions not related to the hearing topic can be addressed at the Public Forum portion of the Town Council Regular Meetings, held the fourth Tuesday of each month or by contacting Town staff or Town Council directly.

Your comments and questions are always welcome.

## SUMMER CONCERT ATTENDEE SURVEY

Did you enjoy the Friday night concerts this season at the Town Hall? Do you have suggestions for next year? Let us know! Log on to <http://www.townoflaplata.org> and take the Summer Concert Attendee Survey. Rate the parking, restrooms, food, 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 community to have enjoyable experiences this and many years to come.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Recycle La Plata Fall Community Yard Sale

**Saturday, October 10, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
**La Plata Town Hall**

Join us for our final Community Yard Sale of the year on the grounds of the La Plata Town Hall. Come out and search for treasures and grab a bite to eat from some local food vendors. If you would like more information on reserving a table, please go to <http://www.townoflaplata.org> and follow the link on the left to Events.

### Fall Festival and Taste of La Plata

**Sunday, October 18, 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.**  
**La Plata Town Hall**



Come out and enjoy samples from local eateries, free children's activities, and plenty of entertainment. The "Wise Guys" band will be providing great music throughout the event. The kids will enjoy the fun moon bounces and can make free crafts perfect for the season. In addition to this community celebration of food and family entertainment, this event also kicks off the "Festival of Scarecrows" hosted

by the Charles County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of La Plata, and the La Plata Business Association. Tickets for food samples are \$1.00 per ticket and free bottled water will be provided. For additional information, contact Amy Peña at 301-934-8421.

### "Salute to Veterans" Parade and Ceremony

**Sunday, November 8, 1:00 p.m.**

Bring your family and friends to the La Plata Town Hall to watch the always spectacular Veteran's Day Parade. Wave at the fire trucks, school groups, veterans and more as they proudly march down La Grange Avenue. The "Salute to Veterans" Ceremony will take place on the grounds of the La Plata Town Hall immediately following the parade. If you would like to participate in the parade please contact Amy Peña at 301-934-8421 for a registration form.



## 2010 CENSUS

The 2010 Census is fast approaching and the Town of La Plata encourages all residents to participate by filling out their Census forms on April 1, 2010. The information gathered by the Census serves many important purposes, including serving as the basis for how intergovernmental revenue is shared from the State and Federal governments. Inaccurate information could result in reduced revenue for Town services. Funding for education, highway and street maintenance, healthcare, public transportation, community development, social services, and more is

based upon population and demographic information collected from the Census. If you would like additional information you may go to the Census Bureau web site at <http://www.2010.census.gov/2010census>.

What is the Census?

- The census is a count of everyone living in the United States every 10 years.
- The census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- The next census is on April 1, 2010.

- Your participation in the census is required by law.
- It takes less than 10 minutes to complete.
- Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census.
- Census data are used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$400 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year.

## CITIZEN SURVEY

The Town will be engaging in a Citizen Survey beginning in late October early November. The National Citizen Survey is sponsored by the International City/County Management Association in cooperation with National Research Center, Inc. The questionnaire and survey procedures were designed based on the experience of hundreds of local governments of all sizes. Scientific sampling and weighting of the responses ensure accurate and reliable results. Because each survey is developed using a standard template, the National Citizen

Survey is a very efficient way to measure citizen opinion.

Questionnaires will be sent to a random sample of 1,200 Town of La Plata residents, asking for feedback on the quality and usefulness of Town services.

The survey results are used the Town Council and staff in annual planning and budgeting for the next fiscal year. Based on previous surveys the Town has concentrated heavily on the water and sewer system, as well as embarked on green initiatives and

other policy issues. Allocating resources to improve Town services is directly impacted by the survey results. Improvements across departments and services can be made based upon need demonstrated through the survey results. The survey is just one tool for citizens to provide feedback to the Town of La Plata.

If you receive a survey you are encouraged to complete and return it. Your responses truly help the Town improve the quality of services it offers.

# TESTING OF EARLY WARNING DEVICES/SIRENS

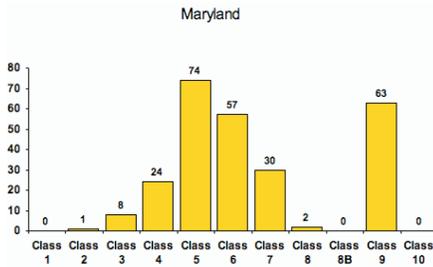
The Town of La Plata will be testing our early warning devices/sirens on Saturday, December 5, 2009, at approximately 10:00 a.m. The testing will last about a half hour. The tests will consist of both siren alerts and audible notifications. This test will be conducted in conjunction with the Charles County 911 Communications Center, which controls and operates the system for the Town. *The text of the pre-recorded message that accompanies the siren can be found on the Town's*

*website, <http://www.townoflaplata.org>, under Siren Testing.*

The devices are installed at the following locations: on Charles Street in front of the Charles County Courthouse, on Curley Hall Road at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (near Quailwood Subdivision), in Clarks Run Subdivision, in King's Grant Subdivision, and on Shining willow Way next to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department.

Emergency Management Officials remind you that in the event of a real emergency to stay tuned to local radio stations for more information, to have emergency supplies on hand – including a radio which can be operated during a power outage, and to know where the safe haven is in your home. It is everyone's responsibility to plan for an emergency.

# LA PLATA RECEIVES AN ISO RATING OF 4



The Insurance Services Office (ISO), a leading source of information about risk, assigns jurisdictions a fire protection rating. The ISO

supplies data to a variety of users, including the insurance, finance, real estate, human resources and health serviced industries.

Insurance companies – not ISO – set premiums for policyholders, but most insurance companies rely on ISO's classification system to rate risk.

The ISO uses a 1 to 10 rating system, with 1 the highest rating. The fire protection rating is based on a number of factors, including number and location of hydrants, number and location of fire stations, fully equipped local

fire department and local water system to draw from just to name a few. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program doesn't meet ISO's minimum criteria. La Plata received a rating of 4. Only 24 jurisdictions in Maryland have a rating of 4, eight have a rating of 3, and one has a rating of 2. All others have a lower rating than La Plata. The La Plata Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of La Plata work very well together to achieve this very good rating.

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

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