

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

Spring has arrived, the snow has disappeared, and we are looking forward to the warm days and beautiful flowers and shrubs that this time of year brings to our community. It is a time to enjoy everything our Town and community has to offer.

Our Town's Public Works personnel performed in an outstanding manner in keeping our streets and road clean of snow and picking up our trash even in extreme cold weather and they deserve our sincere appreciation. They responded rapidly to broken and frozen water mains that can cause severe problems if the situation is not resolved quickly. A large part of what Public Works does is not always immediately apparent but work goes on 24/7, as required. When you see Public Works people in your neighborhood let them know they are appreciated.

I am often asked why La Plata has its own Police Department and why we do not let the County police cover the Town. Many years ago, La Plata had just one police officer and today we have sixteen sworn officers. As much as we would like to keep things the same, times change and we must be able to respond to increasing demands for a secure downtown and secure neighborhoods. Having our own Police Department provides a first line of defense whereby the officers' primary responsibility is to the Town and its residents. This produces shorter response times to calls and provides for a greater police presence in the Town than would be possible without our own Police Department.

Continued on page 3

Mayor Hale visits 4th grade class



Mayor Hale had the pleasure to visit Claudia Knudsen's 4th grade class at Grace Lutheran Church and School to help students understand how municipal government works. Mayor Hale spent over an hour explaining to students the different levels of government and how the local municipal government directly affects their families. The students asked many questions and participated in a lively discussion.



Casey Jones Restaurant celebrated their 30th anniversary on February 2, 2015.



TownofLaPlata



LaPlataPD



COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

We are finally seeing some warm weather after a very cold Winter season. Hopefully you and your family made it through it without too many issues. I hope all of La Plata can have a great Spring season. Enjoy the warmer weather we will be having and take time to spend some time outdoors with your family and friends in this wonderful area in which we live. Before you know it, Summer will be here! Don't forget to take a look at all of the events planned around the Town during the Spring and Summer. And don't forget to take advantage of the warmer weather to walk around and shop at the local La Plata businesses.

The biggest issue the Town Council is now working on is the upcoming budget for the next fiscal year for the Town. The challenge continues to be how to provide the level of services the residents of La Plata deserve

and maintain our infrastructure across the town while at the same time keeping our tax rate from increasing. When you combine the fact that the economy continues to be flat and that we cannot be guaranteed to receive additional funding from the State of Maryland to help maintain our streets, this is a continuing challenge. If you have any comments or ideas for any of your Town Council on services or the budget please pass them along and attend a budget public hearing when they are announced. We had a historic turnout a year ago when the topic was the Wal-Mart annexation, it would be great to get more people involved with other topics that are of everyday concern to the running of our town.

The Town Council will at some point in the near future be working on another annexation request, "The HUB at CSM", which could have the potential to bring a large number of employment opportunities to the Town in the future. Please come out to fu-

ture Town Council and Planning Commission meetings to hear more and provide your input to this proposal that could potentially provide a great benefit to the Town.

As I have stated many times in this newsletter, your Town Council can only take actions on things that matter to you, the Citizens of our Town, if we know what those concerns are. Please make your concerns known through coming to the Town meetings, sending a written message to the Council or Staff, or by giving one of us a call. We look forward to your input.

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT



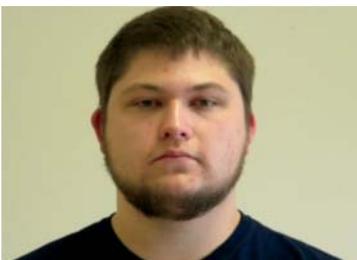
Jeanine Harrington

Jeanine Harrington joined the Town of La Plata Staff at the end of February as the Senior Planner. She was raised in St. Mary's County and graduated from Leonardtown High School. Jeanine has a Bachelor's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Frostburg University and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. She was a Planner for St. Mary's County Government for seven years before coming to the Town of La Plata.



Aaron Felton

Aaron Felton joined the Town staff in February as a Public Works Tech. I. Aaron was born in Prince Georges County, but was raised and still resides in Charles County. He is a graduate of North Point High School. In his free time, Aaron enjoys working on cars, going to the race track, and duck pin bowling.



Stephen Claggett

Stephen Claggett joined the Town staff in February as a Public Works Tech. I. Stephen was born and raised in Charles County, he is a graduate of Lackey High School. In his spare time, Stephen enjoys reading, drawing, and lifting weights.

Code Corner

No signs on signs

Please don't affix signs on signs. Under the Town Code section 191-63 'Prohibited signs and devices' it states that 'Any sign attached to a utility pole, light pole, telephone pole, or traffic control sign, etc.', is not permitted. Signs that are attached to these public structures are not only unsightly, but they cause damage as well. Staples, nails, tacks, and other fasteners damage wood poles and sign posts. Often when the sign is removed, the person removing it leaves the nail or staples in place leaving an unattractive and damaged structure. Public Works employees who maintain and replace signs must contend with the remnants of these small metal remnants, which over time reduce the integrity of the pole.

Tape and other adhesives leave an unsightly residue on the structures, and tape is often not fully removed. Tape stuck to signs can remove reflective coatings of the sign and visibility strips when the tape is pulled off, making them unsightly. This also reduces the reflectivity and night visibility of these signs necessitating more frequent replacement.

Whether it is a yard sale, missing pet, or party announcement; no sign, no matter how affixed, may be attached to poles and signs in Town. Your sign will be removed by code enforcement staff, and you will face a fine for the violation. If you see a sign attached to a pole or another sign, please feel free to carefully remove it, and dispose of the sign. Help keep La Plata attractive and free from these small signs that degrade our infrastructure.

SAFE TRANSACTIONS



A Better, Safer Way to Conduct Your Online, In Person Transactions

In a proactive effort to safeguard our citizens, the La Plata Police Department is welcoming the public to our department to close their online transactions in a safer way. The public can take advantage of our depart-

ment's lobby or exterior to meet and to handle their transactions. In addition, La Plata police officers will be available at any time needed to stand by to increase both the buyer's and seller's sense of security. Along with our commitment to the personal safety of both the buyers and sellers, the La Plata Police Department is also committed to ensuring the transactions are free of stolen merchandise. With this, the La Plata Police Department will be available to check any item's serial number against both the State of Maryland and national databases to ensure every item is clear and not reported as stolen.

Contact Us and Setup Your Meeting Time

Schedule an Appointment

Please contact our front office between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:00 pm, Monday -

Friday, to schedule a time to meet at the department and have an officer standby: 301-934-1500

After Hours

Our officers will also be available after hours for those who were unable to schedule a time with our front office. For after-hours assistance and to have an officer dispatched to the department, please contact the Charles County Communication Center: 301-932-2222

SPECIAL THANK YOU

A thank you to the La Plata Lions club for also helping to get the Christmas lights that adorn the Town ready for installation during the holidays.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Friday, April 3, 2015
Monday, May 25, 2015

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
Lynn D. Gilroy 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

Police Chief: Carl H. Schinner

Director of Planning:

Jeremy D. Hurlbutt

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

Manager of Inspections: James Q. Yates

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@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

MAYOR'S CORNER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Our new Chief of Police, Carl Schinner, has implemented many policies and programs that increase police presence and provide residents the opportunity to feel safe in protecting their family and property. When you leave your home for a vacation or trip, notify the Police Department and they will perform vacation checks while you are out of town. If you are attempting to sell something on the Internet to someone you do not know, you can arrange with the Department to conduct the transaction at the police station thereby providing a safe location to conduct the sale. The Chief or his representative will speak at homeowner association meetings in order to keep residents apprised of ongoing police initiatives. Clean-up days and block parties have also been arranged by the Department to help improve our neighborhoods. These are just a few reasons why I am glad we have a strong and productive Police Department.

Your Town Council and Town Staff are deeply involved in setting the priorities for our next fiscal year beginning, July 1. Our revenues are expected to remain flat for at least three more years thereby limiting new projects but we will continue to maintain our basic services at the high levels expected and will continue to work to upgrade our parks and recreational areas. Our events program remains extremely popular and will always be a high priority for the Town.

Our business community is setting new priorities through the effort of the La Plata Business Association and we expect this will provide opportunities and expanded recognition for our local businesses. The Town supports all our local businesses and we will work with the association on common issues and events.

As your Mayor, I am always interested in your comments, be they positive or critical. You may reach me at Town Hall (301) 934-8421 or at home (301) 934-4850.

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. Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Household hazardous waste collection resumes on Saturday, April 4, 2015, from 9



CHARLES COUNTY
**HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION**

a.m.-3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Department of Public Works building, located at 10430 Audie Lane, off of Radio Station Road in La Plata. Household hazardous waste collection is a contracted service and items cannot be accepted when the contractor is not on site.

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.

For more information, call the Charles County Department of Public Facilities, Environmental Resources Division at (301) 932-3599.

Yard Waste Pick Up

Residential yard waste pick ups will only take place on Monday and Fridays. 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 50lbs. 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:

Friday, April 3, 2015
Monday, May 25, 2015

Yard Waste Pick Up

Friday, April 3, 2015
Monday, May 25, 2015

Recycling Pick Up

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Special Pick Up

Monday, April 6, 2015
Monday, May 4, 2015

Trash will be picked up on:

Thursday, April 2, 2015
Tuesday, May 26, 2015

No Pick Up
No Pick Up

Pick Up late in Day 5/27 or 5/28

MISS UTILITY



Call 811 before you dig. There are a variety of utility services running underground – do you know where they are? If you plan on any type of excavation or digging

on your property, call Miss Utility first. Miss Utility is your partner when it comes to safe digging.

Miss Utility is a one-call notification center that informs subscribing facility/utility owners of proposed excavation. So, if you plan to

install a new mailbox, plant a garden, or do other digging on your property, contact the Miss Utility Call Center at least (48) business hours prior to your intended digging. Miss Utility will notify your facility/utility owner of your proposed plans to dig; they in turn will locate (mark your dig site or verify the site is clear) before you put the shovel in the ground.

The phone number for the Miss Utility Call center is **1-800-257-7777** or call **811**. Visit Miss Utility on the web at <http://call811.com>.

Just a reminder!



On windy days please make sure your recycling is secure by placing heavier items on top of lighter ones. Or, request a 96 gallon rolling container with a lid.

APRIL 2015

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			1 Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m. Crime Watch Council meeting; 7:00 p.m. Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.				
			2 Town Hall Closed 4/3 trash Picked Up 4/2 No Yard Waste Pick Up				
			3 Hazardous Waste Collection				

5  Easter	6 Yard Waste Pick Up Special Pick Up, (please call by 4/2 to be put on list) Ice Cream with the Easter Bunny	7 Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 p.m.	8 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting; 5:00 p.m.	9 Yard Waste Pick Up Beautification Commission meeting; 10:00 a.m.	10 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	11 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Yard Waste Pick Up	Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m.	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Yard Waste Pick Up	Yard Waste Pick Up	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	

19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Yard Waste Pick Up	Business Form; 5:30 -7:00 p.m.	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Yard Waste Pick Up	Yard Waste Pick Up	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Celebrate La Plata		

26	27	28	29	30			
Yard Waste Pick Up	Town Council Business meeting; 7:00 p.m.	Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.					

MAY 2015

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 2

Yard Waste Pick Up
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Yard Waste Pick Up
Special Pick Up
(please call by 5/1 to be
put on list)
Yard Waste Pick Up
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Design Review Board
meeting: 9:00 a.m.
Crime Watch Council
meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Yard Waste Pick Up
Beautification
Commission
meeting: 10:00 a.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Mother's Day
Yard Waste Pick Up
Town Council work
session: 7:00 p.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Parks and Recreation
Commission; 5:00 p.m.
Yard Waste Pick Up
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

Yard Waste Pick Up
Town Council work
session: 7:00 p.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Design Review Board
meeting: 9:00 a.m.
Yard Waste Pick Up
25th Hour Band:
7:00 p.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

24/31 25 26 27 28 29 30

 Town Hall Closed
No Yard Waste Pick Up
Memorial Day
Ceremony: 11:00 a.m.
Town Council business
meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Yard Waste Pick Up
Federal Brass of the
U.S. Army Field Band:
Americana: 7:00 p.m.
Farmers Market:
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Town of La Plata 2015 Special Events Schedule is now available. You can pick up copies of the new **Special Events brochure** at Town Hall or from merchants around town. A pdf version is available for downloading from our website. Go to www.TownofLaPlata.org and click on Events.

Ice Cream with the Easter Bunny

Monday, April 6th: 11 AM to 1 PM

Hop on in for ice cream with the Easter Bunny! Stop by the La Plata Town Hall on the Monday after Easter, April 6th from 11 AM to 1 PM. Bring the kids for ice cream, crafts, and visit with the Easter Bunny.



Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 25th

11 AM at La Plata Town Hall

Please join us to remember and honor the men and women who died while in the military service.

To remember and honor those who have served in the armed forces, the Town will have stars available for loved ones to write a message on. The stars will be displayed at the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 25th. Stars will be available in the Town Hall lobby from May 4 to May 20. Town Hall is open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday and there will be a box in the lobby to place the stars. Stars will also be available at the ceremony. For more information please contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or cwilson@townofaplata.org.



Friday Night Summer Concert Series

Join us for the Friday night Summer Concert Series. The weekly concerts take place from 7 pm to 9 pm on the lawn at La Plata Town Hall at 305 Queen Anne Street. Concert goers are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. Coolers are allowed, but no alcohol, please. Concessions are available from the Town's food trailer located in the back of the parking lot; an ice cream truck is stationed there for your enjoyment. A play area for children, the Kids' Zone, allows parents to enjoy the concert while keeping an eye on the little ones.



Check out the schedule for May and June! For a complete concert schedule please visit the Events page on the Town's website.

MAY

Friday May 22nd: 7 PM to 9 PM

25th Hour Band

Motown, Jazz, Classic, & Contemporary Rock

Friday May 29th: 7 PM

Federal Brass of The U.S. Army Field Band
Americana

JUNE

Friday June 5th: 7 PM to 9 PM

Franklin Square Band
Rock, Modern Rock, Country, Blues, 90's Alternative, Acoustic, Bagpipes, and Drums

Friday June 12th: 7 PM

Four of a Kind
Oldies, Classic Rock, Country, Funk, & Blues

Friday June 19th: 7 PM

U.S. Navy Band The Sea Chanters
Traditional choral music, including sea chanteys & patriotic fare, opera, Broadway, & contemporary

Friday June 26th: 7 PM

Drivin' Muzzy
Country

If a concert has to be cancelled due to the weather we will post the information in the following locations:

[Town of La Plata website](#) - on the home page and concert page

[Town of La Plata face book page](#)

Call (301) 934-8421 for a recorded message, press #7 for special events

Town of La Plata emails - to sign up please send your email address to cwilson@townofaplata.org

Summer Fun at Town Hall

The Town of La Plata will host five kids' summer shows at Town Hall. The shows are geared towards preschool and elementary age children and are approximately 45 minutes long. The shows are free and open to the public. Shows will be held outdoors on the West lawn where the Friday night concerts take place (weather permitting - shows will not be moved indoors). Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. No concessions will be available, but you are welcome to bring drinks and snacks along.

Tuesday, June 23rd: 10 AM

Blue Sky Puppet Theatre

Tuesday, July 7th: 10 AM

Science Tellers - Super Heroes

Tuesday, July 28th: 10 AM

Class Acts Art - DinoRock - Dinosaurs Forever

Tuesday, August 18th: 10 AM

Reggie Rice, SuperMagicMan

Tuesday, August 25th: 10 AM

Rocknoceros

More information about the performers listed on the Events page at www.townofaplata.org.

TESTING OF EARLY WARNING DEVICES/SIRENS

The Town of La Plata will be testing our early warning devices/sirens on **Saturday, May 2, 2015 at approximately 10:00 a.m.** Testing is done twice per year in early May and early December. The testing lasts about a half hour. The tests consist of both siren alerts and audible notifications. The tests are conducted in conjunction with the Charles County 911 Communications Center, which controls and operates the system for the Town.

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
- 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.

The siren is followed by a pre-recorded message to advise people in the community what to do in the event of a tornado warning. The pre-recorded message states "Attention!

A tornado warning has been issued. Seek shelter now. Do not delay. Seek shelter now." This message is used during all threats of a tornado.

When you hear the siren going off, please do not delay in seeking shelter. Get indoors, get to an interior small room or basement, and get low. It can be loud during a storm. You do not need to wait by a window or door to listen to the pre-recorded message. For some tornado tips, please visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's site at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/safety.html>

LA PLATA POLICE OFFICERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Corporal Jason Posey

La Plata Police Department Corporal Jason Posey joined hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the State of Maryland as they took the plunge for Special Olympics at Sandy Point State Park on January 24, 2015. The plunge has a dual purpose, the first is to raise awareness of those who have special needs throughout the State of Maryland. The second reason officers take the plunge is to raise money to ensure local special Olympians can participate in Special Olympic events throughout the State and Nation.



Corporal Michael Payne

SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

National Night Out Mini-Grant



National Night Out (NNO) brings 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. Town of La Plata National Night Out Mini-Grant is designed to provide an opportunity for Town of La Plata residents to strengthen their neighborhoods through producing a National Night Out celebration for their community. National Night Out is scheduled for Tuesday, August 4, 2015.

The Town of La Plata invites neighborhood associations and communities to submit the National Night Out Mini-Grant application for review. Eligible grants will be awarded up to \$200. Deadline to submit application is June 22, 2015. Grant applications are available for download from the Town's website or email Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator at cwilson@townoflaplata.org or (301) 934-8421 ext. 142.

On January 9th at approximately 11:30 P.M., Corporal Michael Payne was on patrol in the area of the 100 block of Charles Street when he noticed an individual who had no place to shelter for the night. With the temperature predicted to be well below freezing local shelters were found to be at capacity. Corporal Payne, at his own expense, transported the individual to a local hotel to ensure they had a safe and warm place to shelter from bitter cold.

Corporal Payne's actions are found to uphold the highest traditions of the law enforcement profession. He observed an individual in need and acted to ensure their health, welfare, and safety.

WEBSITE POLL



Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.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:

In which department was the La Plata employee you had the most recent contact?

- Administration
- Finance
- Planning
- Police
- Public Works

February Website Poll Results

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

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

In your neighborhood during the day

Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
55	30	0	10	5	0

In your neighborhood after dark

Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
29	53	0	6	12	0

In La Plata's downtown area during the day

Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
53	35	0	12	0	0

In La Plata's downtown area after dark

Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
0	50	21	25	4	0

Every two years as part of the Town's citizen survey, the four questions above are asked to gauge resident's perception of safety in the community. The survey conducted in the fall of 2014 showed a slightly higher feeling of daytime safety in neighborhoods at 91% compared to the 85% listed here. For downtown daytime safety both the citizen survey and this snap poll had the safety feeling at 85%. We asked the same questions asked in the citizen survey to give a sense of the consistency between the snap poll, which is unscientific, and the Citizen Survey, which is a professionally conducted scientific survey.

The snap poll also provides an opportunity to highlight some of the Police services that the Town offers, in what is overall considered a safe community. La Plata has 16 sworn officers who provide 24 hour police coverage for the Town. That is supplemented by a memorandum of understanding with the Charles County Sheriff, who is responsible for investigating serious crimes against persons, such as armed robbery, rape and murder, which are very few and far between. Our Police are also dispatched by Charles County in order to help coordinate emergency response.

La Plata's officers are dedicated to the community policing, and as such, are not called to service calls all across the County. The local focus allows officers to become very familiar with the community, the people who live, visit, and work here. La Plata Police can offer small town oriented service, like child safety seat checks, coffee with command staff, neighborhood watch, home and business security surveys, vacation checks, and as highlighted in this newsletter, the new safe transaction program.

La Plata is a safe community in a safe county, often people's perceptions of how safe they feel end up being more important to them than any statistic can indicate. In La Plata, the Police Department is available to provide service to this community, and if you have a concern about any criminal activity, suspicious behavior, or unsafe practices, please contact our local police. Simply call (301) 934-1500 for information about police services, or you may attend one of the monthly Crime Watch Council meetings.

LA PLATA POLICE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GRANT



The La Plata Police Department (LPPD) is pleased to announce that the agency received a training grant from the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT). The purpose of the grant is to provide funding for a La Plata police officer to attend a training conference on law enforcement's best practices as prescribed by the Commission on Accreditation

for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). LPPD is committed to providing the best possible law enforcement services to the all those who live, work, visit and trade in the Town.

The purpose of CALEA's best practices is to improve the delivery of public safety services, primarily by: maintaining a body of standards, developed by public safety practitioners, covering a wide range of up-to-date public safety initiatives; establishing and administering law enforcement's best practices; and recognizing professional excellence.

CALEA best practices is a proven modern

management model; once implemented, it presents the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), on a continuing basis, with a blueprint that promotes the efficient use of resources and improves service delivery—regardless of the size, geographic location, or functional responsibilities of the agency.

LGIT is a nonprofit association authorized by state law, wholly owned and managed by its local government members. The Trust's main purpose is to provide joint self-insurance programs or pools for towns, cities, and counties in the State of Maryland.

IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is on the increase nationwide. Sometimes the victim's identity is stolen by a thief halfway across the world, while other times it is stolen locally. Identity theft occurs when someone possesses or uses your name, address, social security number (SSN), bank or credit card number, or other piece of other personal information without your knowledge or consent. If you believe you have been a victim of identity theft, please call the La Plata Police Department at (301) 934-1500.

Skilled identity thieves use a variety of ways to gain access to your personal information. Here are just a few ways that a victim's identity is stolen:

- ◆ They may steal your wallet or purse.
- ◆ They may obtain your information through a telephone "scam."
- ◆ They may obtain your information by skimming your credit card information without your knowledge.
- ◆ They may rummage through your trash, a practice known as "dumpster diving."
- ◆ They may intercept your mail, including bank/credit card statements, new check, or tax information.

It is important to know what you can do to protect your personal information:

- ◆ Monitor the balances of your financial accounts. Look for unexplained charges or withdrawals.

- ◆ Review your credit reports frequently.
- ◆ Place passwords on credit card, bank, and phone accounts.
- ◆ Avoid using easily available information like your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four numbers of your SSN or your phone number, or a series of consecutive numbers.
- ◆ Secure personal information in your home especially if you have roommates.
- ◆ Find out how your personal information is handled by workplaces and businesses that collect your personal information.
- ◆ Carry only the identification information and credit and debit cards you actually need when you go out.
- ◆ Shred any information you are discarding which contains personal identifying information.
- ◆ Protect all PIN numbers and change them frequently. Just like passwords on the computer, a PIN is a confidential code issued to you that lets you have access to your account. Memorize your PIN and never give it out to anyone. Never write your PIN on your debit or credit card or on a piece of paper in your wallet.
- ◆ Use the ATM safely. Be aware of others waiting behind you.

Position yourself in front of the keyboard to prevent anyone from seeing your PIN. If something looks out of place, unusual or disturbed on the machine, choose another one in case a skimming device has been covertly placed on a legitimate machine.

If you become a victim of identity theft, call the La Plata Police Department. It is imperative that you call police as soon as the theft is discovered, this will generate a report that may help you dispute any charges made afterward. Additionally, place an initial fraud alert on your credit reports. You need to contact only one of the three consumer reporting companies. The company you call is required to contact the other two: Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; Experian: 1-888-397-3742; TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289

Once you have contacted one of the three consumer reporting companies, close the accounts that you know, or believe, have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. When you open new accounts, use new PINs and passwords. Ask each company for the appropriate forms to dispute fraudulent charges and/or debits. You may also file a report with the Federal Trade Commission, <http://consumer.gov/ncpw/category/identity-theft-privacy> or 1-877-ID-THEFT. Finally, keep detailed records of all correspondence and conversations with creditors, the FTC, and local police departments.

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

Commercial Building Permits issued 1/2015-3/1/2015

11 Washington Avenue – Charles County Department of Public Works

Commercial Occupancy Permits issued 1/2015-3/1/2015

101 Drury Drive – Ace of Fades Barber Shop

6790 Crain Highway – ZOE Outreach Church

LA PLATA POLICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS BANQUET

On January 24, 2015 the La Plata Police Department held an awards banquet. Sgt. Brooks and Cpl. Norris received the Chief's award for significant professional contributions to the department in 2014. Cpl. Bagley was selected Officer of the Year.



From Left to right: Sgt. Bill Brooks, Cpl. Bobby Bagley and Cpl. Matt Norris

LA PLATA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

In 2009, the Town Council formed the La Plata Community Foundation, Inc. The Town Council receives a variety of financial request from organizations and they saw a need to create a Not-For-Profit Corporation, such as the Foundation for a fair way to distribute to financial request.

The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes and for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life and conditions of the citizens of the Town of La Plata. The control and management, and all powers of the Corporation, are vested in a Board of Directors. Since the Foundation's

inception, the Town Council has been able to contribute funds each year. Private donations have also been accepted over the years. For more information visit the Town's website www.townoflaplata.org.

\$2,500 TO SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK

The La Plata Community Foundation received a grant application from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc. on behalf of the Southern Maryland Food Bank requesting a donation. Members of the Foundation approved their grant application for \$2,500. According to the Food Bank, \$2,500 will purchase approximately 20,000 pounds of food.

Founded in 1983, The Southern Maryland Food Bank advances the Catholic Charities mission by alleviating hunger and food insecurity in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties. Supporting the vital work of local food pantries, shelters, group homes, and soup kitch-

ens, the Southern Maryland Food Bank provides community organizations with access to a steady supply of bulk food.

Last fiscal year (7/1/2013 to 7/20/2014) the Southern Maryland Food Bank distributed 1,127,136 pounds of food, an 11% increase from the previous year. Of this number, a total of 139,809 pounds of food were distributed in La Plata. Nearly 9,300 people in the region reached out and were helped by the Food Bank. Typically, the Food Bank needs to receive or purchase at least 15,000 to 18,000 of food per week to maintain operations.

Monsignor John Enzler, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Archdiocese

of Washington thanked the Foundation for its generous support. In his thank you letter Monsignor Enzler said, "Your investment in our work enables Catholic Charities to assist the people we serve in achieving self-sufficiency, fulfilling our mission to strengthen the lives of those in need by giving help that empowers and hope that lasts. Without partners like the La Plata Community Foundation, the work we do every day to help low-income people improve their quality of life would not be possible".

TOWN OF LA PLATA

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

Celebrate LA PLATA!

Saturday, April 25th
12 PM to 4 PM
La Plata Town Hall

Free Family Fun!



Visit the Family
Fitness Zone

Craft & Food Vendors

Face Painting

Kids' Art Activities

Magic Show

Live Music

Moon bounces



La Plata Bed Races start at 3 PM!