

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

Late summer of 2011 has been almost historic in La Plata. We have experienced an earthquake, a hurricane and constant rainstorms that seem unprecedented. Any one of these natural events, let alone all three, place a tremendous amount of pressure on the systems that support the Town. We were fortunate in that the earthquake and hurricane had a limiting effect but the rainstorms produced so much storm water that our sewer collection system was inundated with almost three times its designed capacity. When this occurs, some unfortunate things happen. For those of you who suffered through sewer overflows and storm drain malfunctions you fully understand; for those who were a little more fortunate, you were spared dealing with these events.

La Plata's sewer collection and storm water management systems were developed over many years. Some of the facilities such as the Willow Lane Pump Station are new; other parts of the system are not so new but the system functions well under normal circumstances. As I reported on several occasions, we are working to improve or waste water treatment plant and sewer collection systems. A considerable amount of work has already been accomplished and more is underway. This work is complex, expensive and highly regulated but will continue unabated.

When problems occur in the system, such as sewer backups, residents are sometimes unclear as to what is required to resolve the problem. Reporting all problems to the Town is the first step; assignment of responsibility between the property owner

Continued on page 3

Thanks to the La Plata Garden Club...

The La Plata Garden Club coordinated, organized and collected donations for the installation of a new sign at Wills Memorial Park, in cooperation with Louis Palmer Brick Mason, Stricker Signs, Wentworth Nursery, Town of La Plata Beautification Commission, and International Bronze Plaque Manufacturers & Designers Ltd. If it wasn't for the donations provided by The Wills Group, Technical solutions, LLC, The Chaney Foundation, Michael J Pellegrino PAS Architecture, Community Bank of Tri-County, County First Bank, Chick-fil-A, La Plata Kiwanis Club, and Styles LLC, this project wouldn't have been possible.



Thank you for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to our community!

Trick or Treat Evening

Trick or Treat evening in La Plata is **Monday, 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 31st are asked to be especially careful of the children walking through the neighborhoods.

Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward 1

Since I last wrote an article for News and Notes we have experienced some of the strangest weather I have ever seen. I have traveled to California many times and was always scared I would experience an earthquake, never happened. Then, there I was sitting in Starbucks in La Plata, and we have one. Next, we all prepared for hurricane Irene and that was minor in comparison to what we have experienced in the past. And the last weather we experienced was the tail end of another hurricane and we had more rain than I have seen in all of my life. Basements flooded, roads caved in, bridges failed, people were without water and electricity, and our sewer plant went beyond capacity. Hopefully, we are now getting back to normal.

Now, let's talk about what the future holds. By the time you read this article we will have voted on the annexation of land that will be the site of a super Wal-Mart. Union Local 400 is against it because they feel it will cost jobs at Giant and Safeway. Local merchants in the shopping center are for it because they feel it will bring more traffic in the area of their stores. A lot of people on fixed incomes are for it and a lot are against it. This is a tough decision to make but we elected officials report to the people of La Plata and must vote their wishes and that is what I will do. Years ago, I was against the original Wal-Mart because I thought small businesses would suffer and close, and no one did. A couple of thoughts I have to consider is job creation and more shopping opportunities. One last thought, I wish they sold American products.

Finally, let me talk about what used to be called the American Legion ball field. Years ago, Rainbow Construction, purchased the property and have filed to have it annexed into La Plata. They propose to build three story apartment buildings and some commercial stores. Some of the things we have to look at, are the impact it will have on existing neighborhoods, how much traffic it will generate, what is the potential school impact, etc. The Town of La Plata will have two public hearing on the annexation request, that will be publicized in the local newspaper, we will notify the adjoining neighbors of the annexation and we will discuss this annexation with any and all homeowners associations that ask us to, and I will vote the way Ward 1 voters tell me to.

Hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season.

Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

One of the items that will be discussed in the near future by the Town Council is related to an annexation. There has been some discussion and feedback by a very small number of citizens about this at previous meetings, in the press, and through letters sent to the Town. I want to briefly address this and hopefully solicit a wider range of comments from the public.

The developers of the planned Heritage Green Subdivision have submitted preliminary plans for a change to their development as it relates to the recreational amenities that will be provided with their project. Last winter the Town adopted a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the proposal incorporates elements more in line with the Town's plan. The original annexation agreement for this property requires the developer to build a golf course before constructing homes. This golf course will be a private enterprise but must be made available for La Plata residents to pay to use for the first five years. After that they can make it an exclusively private club or can leave it open to the public. The developers have proposed that in place of this golf course that they be allowed to use the same land to provide a number of public parks with both passive and active recreational uses that can be

used by all Town citizens, in accord with the Town Park Master Plan.

Some have argued that this is a proposal to just help the developers. Others have argued that this will provide parks and trails that all citizens of the Town can use, both young and old without time restrictions. This will have to be decided by the Town as a change to the annexation agreement and therefore will require a Public Hearing. I cannot speak for the other members of the Council, but I for one would like to hear from a broad group of citizens on whether they would like to have the golf course built or they would like to see a broader more inclusive set of parks built and provided to the town.

Once the developers have submitted a revised annexation package to the Town, the annexation modification process will continue as it is discussed by the Town Council and a Public Hearing is held. When the public hearing is announced, please come out and make your thoughts known. The Town Council needs to hear from the public on how they feel on this topic and why they feel that way. This is an important issue and will shape the look and feel of the Town for a long time. The Town Council needs to hear from a broad range of the Town's citizens not just the few people that typically come out to voice their concerns on all issues.

The new trash cans are expected to be delivered to homes in the coming weeks. The vendor adding the auto tipplers to the trash trucks has caused delay in Town trash trucks being ready. Notice of the date of delivery will be sent to all customers. If you know you would like a smaller size can, please contact Public Works at (301) 934-8421. Please look at TownofLaPlata.org for further information.

Code Corner

Prohibited Signs and Devices

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 when the tape is pulled off. This reduces the reflectivity and night visibility of these signs requiring 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.

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.

On-line Utility Bill Payment Options

The Town has a new On-line Services portal that is providing access to utility account information and allowing for on-line payment of utility bills. The Town's utility customers now have the option of paying their bills using a credit card (VISA, MasterCard or Discover) or they can authorize the Town to automatically withdraw their payment from their bank account each quarter. Credit card payments can be made on-line, in-person, or over the phone.

In-person credit card payments are handled exactly the same way as they are in typical retail setting. The customer merely needs to come to the Town Hall and tell one of the cashiers they want to pay their bill using a credit card. The cashiers will swipe the card, get the customer's signature, and give them a receipt.

If a customer wants to pay their bill over the phone, they can call the Town Hall at (301)

934-8421 and inform the staff of their desire to pay their bill using a credit card. The staff will need standard information (name on the card, credit card billing address, card type, card number, security code, etc.), process the payment, and provide the customer with an authorization code as their receipt.

To make a credit card payment on-line, the customer must first set-up an on-line account with the Town. It is a simple and straight forward process. Customers will need to connect to the Town's on-line services portal which can be accessed directly at www.municipalonlinepayments.com/laplata or from the link on the Town's website www.townoflaplata.org. Once the customer has set-up their account, they can view their usage history and initiate credit card payments. If a customer chooses this option they have to initiate the payment each quarter, it will not happen automatically.

If customers want their payment to be made automatically each quarter without them having to do anything, they will need to authorize the Town to automatically withdraw their payment from their bank account. To do this they will need to complete an "Automatic ACH Withdrawal Authorization" form, which is available on the Town's website and at the Town Hall. Once the form has been completed, returned, and identification shown, the customer's payment will automatically be withdrawn from the account they designate, each quarter,

typically 2 or 3 days before the due date.

All customers will still receive utility bills each quarter regardless of which payment method they choose to use.

Whether customers are interested in any of the new utility payment options or not, they are still encouraged to check-out the new portal and create an account because with an account they will have on-line access to their utility usage history.

Please contact the Finance office at (301) 934-8421 if you have any questions. Credit card payments are available to customers immediately, and ACH withdrawals can now be set up in advance of your December bill. These new services are being offered as a result of investment in a new finance system that the Town has been converting to over the past year and a half.

Are you a senior or person who needs assistance with your trash? The Town of La Plata offers house side collection of your trash for qualifying seniors and individuals with disabilities. Please contact Carolyn Johnson at (301) 934-8421 or cjohnson@townoflaplata.org for additional information.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and the Town can then be determined. Problems that occur on private property are usually covered by the homeowner's insurance policy and notifying your individual insurance carrier is an important first step. Arranging for professional assistance, whether it is a cleanup company, electrical or plumbing contractor, is also the property owner's responsibility. Taking photographs and documenting all out of pocket expenses are important and will expedite the payment of costs associated with the problem whether paid by the private property owner's insurance carrier or the Town's insurance carrier. When problems do occur, I can assure you that we are concerned and we will do whatever we can to be of assistance and supportive but we must work within the legal constraints that are applicable to the Town.

I commend the Town's Staff for the tremendous work accomplished with these numerous storms most of which goes unnoticed by the public at large. Working long hours under difficult circumstances is the norm and they performed exceptionally well.

I hope that the sailor's prayer for fair winds and following seas will carry us into autumn and well beyond.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Veterans Day	Friday, November 11, 2011
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 24, 2011
Day After Thanksgiving	Friday, November 25, 2011

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 Planning and Community

Development: David M. Jenkins

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

Senior Planner: Theresa C. Dent

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

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



CHARLES COUNTY
**HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION**

Household hazardous waste collection days for 2011 are on the first Saturday of each month through December from 9 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. This site relocated from the recycling center at the landfill on Billingsley Road. 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.

Loose Leaf Pick Up Schedule

The Town of La Plata Public Works Department will be offering loose leaf collection from October 17, 2011 to December 16, 2011. The crews will be picking up this year on the same schedule as last year, 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 for 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 17, 2011 – October 21, 2011 and November 14, 2011 – November 18, 2011 - Kings Grant, Agricopia, Quailwood, Port Tobacco Road, West Hawthorne Drive and adjacent side streets.
- ◆ October 24, 2011 – October 28, 2011 and November 28, 2011 – December 2, 2011 - St. Mary's Avenue, Oak Avenue, Washington Avenue, Charles Street, Hickory Ridge and adjacent side streets.
- ◆ October 31, 2011 – November 11, 2011 and December 5, 2011 – December 16, 2011 - Clarks Run

There will be no pick-up the week of November 21, 2011.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Public Works Department at (301) 934-8421 or mtrollinger@townofaplata.org

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Friday, November 11, 2011
Thursday, November 24

Trash will be picked up on:

Thursday, November 10, 2011
Wednesday, November 23

La Plata Beautification Commission

Beautification Grant Program

The La Plata Beautification Commission started the Beautification Grant program in an effort to improve the community for our residents, visitors and businesses. What will you do to benefit the community?

This is a great outlet for Home Owner Associations, school projects, scout groups, civic organizations, individuals, businesses, and other La Plata community members to do something that benefits you, the Town, and all who visit La Plata.

Grant recipients for the spring and summer grant rounds include: Hawthorne Greene HOA Embankment Project; Washington Square HOA Low Maintenance Entrance Project; Prospect Street Screening Project; Hemlock Court Facelift Project; Hickory Ridge Huckleberry Hill Restoration Project, and; Phoenix Run Flowers Project.

Grant applications will be available for download from the Town's website, or you may get them directly from Danielle Mandley at (301) 934 - 8421 or dmandley@townofaplata.org. Grant applications will be reviewed by La Plata's Beautification Commission and successful projects will receive up to \$500 to help bring the idea to life. Thank you for your interest in helping our community by focusing on ways to make La Plata a better place.



"Volunteers bring beauty to life"

NOVEMBER 2011

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			1	2	3	4	5
			Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 a.m.	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.			 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
		Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 p.m.	Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 p.m.			Yard Waste Pick Up	

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Veterans Day Parade Daylight Savings ends	Yard Waste Pick Up	Special Pick Up, please call Town Hall by 4:00 p.m. 11/4	Town Council work session; 7:00 p.m.	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting; 5:00 p.m.		Town Hall Closed No Yard Waste Pick Up Veterans Day	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Yard Waste Pick Up		Town Council work session; 7:00 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	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Yard Waste Pick Up	No Loose Leaf pick up this week	Town Council regular meeting; 7:00 p.m.	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Trash Pick Up for 11/24	Town Hall Closed Thanksgiving Trash Pick Up will be 11/23	No yard waste Pick Up	 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

	27	28	29	30			
	Yard Waste Pick Up	 Beautification Commission Meeting; 4:00		 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.			

SPECIAL EVENTS

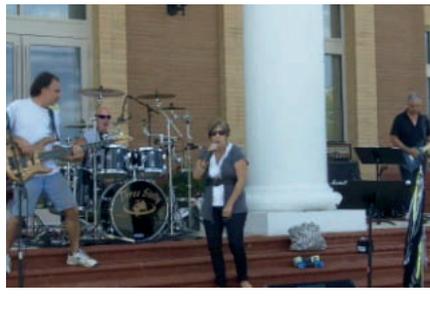
Summer Concert Series

What a fun summer it was with all the great music every Friday night on the lawn of La Plata Town Hall. Thanks to everyone who came out and joined us. We look forward to seeing you next summer.



La Plata Chili Cook Off

Twenty four teams cooked up 26 entries for the annual La Plata Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, September 10th. Hundreds came out La Plata Town Hall to sample the chili, watch the judging, and listen to the Three Sixty Band while the kids enjoyed moon bounce, slides, obstacle course, and face painting. Missy Reynolds of White Plains took home the People's Choice Award. Tim Smith of La Plata won first place for his traditional red chili, the Rotary Club of La Plata won in the non-traditional category for their lobster chili, and the top place vegetarian trophy went to Tim Priddy of La Plata.



Still to come:

Community Yard Sale – Saturday, October 8th; 8AM to 12 Noon

Household items, clothes, toys, books, it's always an amazing selection of finds. Come shop or sell.

Fall Festival – Sunday, October 23rd 12 Noon to 4PM

Fun and games for the kids, good things to eat, music, art, vendors, and more; join friends and neighbors for an afternoon of family fun.

Harvest Halloween Party – Saturday, October 29th, 11AM to 1PM at La Plata Town Hall

Spooky fun for kids. Come in costume and enjoy snacks, crafts, photos, and fun for the little ones.

Salute to Veterans Parade and Ceremony – Sunday November 6th, 1PM

Come out for a good old-fashioned parade and stay for a ceremony to recognize those who served. You can download a parade entry form at our website, or just make plans to bring the kids and watch!

Get more information for all of these Town of La Plata events at our website, www.TownofLaPlata.org. Just click on "Events" for the complete schedule, to download registration forms, and see pictures and video of past events. For any questions, please contact Marcia Keeth, Special Event Coordinator at (301)934-8421 x 142.

Water meter installation is expected to begin during the beginning of 2012. Production of La Plata's new water meters has met a production delay. Please look at TownofLaPlata.org for further information.

WEBSITE POLL

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

Recent heavy rain events highlight challenges in La Plata's storm water system. Do you feel storm water infrastructure near your home or business need maintenance or improvements?

Strongly Agree

Somewhat Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Somewhat Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Don't Know

August Website Poll Results

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

What is your main source of information about La Plata's Special Events?

Town Notes Newsletter – 26%

TownofLaPlata.org – 40%

Special Events Brochure – 0%

Town of La Plata Facebook page – 0%

Town email list – 3%

Word of Mouth – 3%

Newspaper – 23%

Other publications – 4%

Attendance at La Plata events has been strong in the past year. Many people have come to Town events for the first time, joining friends and family, who have been attending for years. The past year has seen a surge in the Town's efforts to communicate events, and what will be happening at them. The most comprehensive source of information on Town events is the Events section of TownofLaPlata.org. The site contains information on upcoming events, video from past events, participation forms, general information, and more. In July and August the Events page on the website had over 2,600 visitors looking for information on events. Many of the other communication media direct people to the Town's website for more information.

Three sources of print material have a wide distribution in the community. The Town Notes is the Town's newsletter which is distributed to every utility customer every other month. It contains some information on events coming in the next couple months. Through press releases, news stories, and ads the local newspapers there are details and stories in the week before and week after La Plata's larger events. A special events brochure

listing event dates and times is available at events, Town Hall, and some locations in Town.

Electronic communication has been taking a larger role in communicating with the public. Through the email list maintained by the Town, residents receive regular updates on events and other announcements through Constant Contact. There are almost three hundred people that receive those emailed announcements that come at least weekly during the Town's event season. The email links recipients to the freshest content on the Town's web page, the Facebook account, and new videos on the Town's YouTube channel. In July and August there were over 4,200 views of Town of La Plata videos.

In May the Town started its own Facebook page. Just search for Town of La Plata, and the page with the Town Seal as the profile image is the Town's page. Like the Town to be connected to the Town's posts. Whether it is this new media, or another more traditional form of communication, there are lots of ways to find out what is going on in La Plata.



BOARD VACANCY

Your Mayor and Council are looking for members of the community who are dedicated to help form the future of La Plata. If you are motivated to make a difference in your community you are invited to apply for a position on one of the various Boards, Commissions, and Committee's. Citizen volunteers are a valuable part of the decision making process.

Currently there is a vacancy on the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission develops a Comprehensive Plan for the Town every six years, reviews all subdivision plats and major construction in the Town, and makes recommendations to the Town Council on requests for zoning amend-

ments. Meetings held the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7 PM.

Please contact Danielle Mandley via phone (301) 934-8421 or email dmandley@townofaplata.org if you have any questions. Applications may be downloaded from the Town web site www.townofaplata.org.

NOW OPEN IN LA PLATA AND COMING SOON TO LA PLATA

Commercial Building Permits Issued

7/1/11-8/31/11

Addition to WWTP ENR Upgrade

Curley Hall Road

Outback Interior Remodeling

6649 Crain Highway

CCNRC – Dialysis Center

10200 La Plata Road

Chipotle

La Plata Village Square

Commercial Use & Occupancy Permits

Issued 7/1/11-8/31/11

Valvoline

6660 Crain Highway

Baldus Building – Office Space

101 Charles Street 3rd Floor

La Plata Liquors

503 Charles Street

Tasty Pain Tattoo

602 Charles Street

ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE

Councilman Keith Back; Town Manager, Daniel Mears; Town Clerk, Danielle Mandley and Assistant Town Manager, Michelle Miner all receive the “Academy for Excellence in Local Governance” Certificate.

The “Academy for Excellence in Local Governance” certificates were presented at the 2011 graduation of Fellows from the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance held September 18 at the University of Maryland after completing training provided by the Maryland Municipal League. Coursework topics included economic development, municipal issues in court, the new critical area law, Maryland State grant assistance, municipal budgeting, and structure of municipal government.

The Academy is provided as an educational response to the professional education needs of Maryland local government officials. Local governments are increasingly asked to do more, often with fewer resources. The downsizing of the federal and state government has placed more decision making at the local level and, at the same time, reduced the training and technical support available to local officials. Often officials are called on to understand and make decisions on highly complex issues with grave implications to their jurisdictions. Citizen distrust, accountability mandates, and public apathy complicate an already difficult situation. The Academy’s curriculum is designed to help local officials, especially newly elected of-

ficials, meet the challenges of their role.

By providing enhanced educational opportunities, the Academy will train informed and responsible local officials to give Maryland jurisdictions the leadership needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Specific objectives are (1) to increase understanding of local government and how it functions; (2) to promote high ethical standards in public service; (3) to provide an informational base for more informed policy making; (4) to develop capacity of local officials to govern effectively; and (5) to recognize local officials for their educational efforts.

LA PLATA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In the spring of 2009, the Town Council adopted an ordinance creating a Community Grant Policy. The purpose of the policy was to establish processes and procedures governing the disbursement of Town funds to local, non-profit, community organizations that serve or promote the public health, safety or welfare of the Town and its residents and to provide accountability to ensure that the funds are expended properly. One of the primary directives of the policy was the establishment of an entity to oversee this entire process. This entity is the La Plata Community Foundation.

The Foundation is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. It is managed by 5 person Board of Directors that is currently comprised of Jon Johnson/Chairperson (County Drug), Donna Harley/Assistant Chairperson (Charles County Social Services), Bob

Oliphant/Secretary-Treasurer (Town of La Plata), Margaret Steffens (DH Steffens), & Patti Murphy (County First Bank). The Board has decided that the most equitable way to disburse funds is to do so through a competitive grant process.

Organizations desiring funding are required to submit applications for funding that describe the services they provide, how they benefit the Town its residents and how the funds being requested will be used to enhance their programs. The applications are to be reviewed and evaluated by the Board and grants will be awarded based on this review and evaluation process. Grant recipients will be required to submit documentation of how the funds were actually used.

To date, virtually all the Foundation’s funding has come from the Town and has been

relatively limited and thus far the Foundation has awarded grants to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, Charles County Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Chemical People (Project Graduation).

The Board is working to increase community awareness about the Foundation and its purpose so that it can expand its efforts and offer support to more well-deserving community organizations. To this end, it encourages residents and business owners that are interested in supporting community organizations to make contributions to the Foundation c/o the Town of La Plata.

Please watch for future articles in the “Town Notes” on how organizations can apply for grant funds.

NEW EMPLOYEES



James Costanzo

James Costanzo was hired in August as a Public Works Technician II. James was born and raised in Prince George’s County and now lives in St. Mary’s County, in his spare time, he enjoys riding his motorcycle, shooting pool and fishing.



Jimmy Yates

Jimmy Yates was hired in August as a Manager of Inspections. Mr. Yates has over 30 years experience and training in building construction, engineering, code enforcement, and public safety. Jimmy holds numerous certifications from the NFPA, International Code Council, National Fire Academy, and others. He retired from the Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department in 2004. Jimmy lives in St. Mary’s County, enjoys travel, spending time with his family, and riding his Harley-Davidson in his free time.

TOWN OF LA PLATA

305 Queen Anne Street

P. O. Box 2268

La Plata, Maryland 20646-2268

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