

# TOWN NOTES

*News from La Plata Town Hall*



## MAYOR'S CORNER

The holiday season for 2010 is over and we have commenced a new year. I trust that 2011 will be a very good year for each of you. Here at Town Hall, your Town Council and Town employees will be working to provide the services and improvements that will ensure that 2011 is a good year.

Providing vital services to all Town residents is a number one priority of being a municipality. The name of the game is simply: quality and quantity. We have the capacity to produce almost 3 million gallons of water per day operating our wells only 16 hours per day while our usage rate is approximately 900,000 per day. Our waste water treatment plant can process up to 1.5 million gallons per day. Accordingly, the production of water and the processing of waste water is well covered based upon quantity requirements. Our water quality meets all established standards and the effluent produced by the waste water treatment plant also meets established standards. Our treatment plant currently operates under a BNR (Biological Nutrient Reduction) system that was installed in 2000 well ahead of many similar systems. In 2007 the Town contracted with an engineering firm (Stearns and Wheeler) to conduct a feasibility study to find the most cost effective way to bring the plant up to ENR (Enhanced Nutrient Reduction) standards and to ultimately increase the capacity of the plant to 2.5 million gallons per day. The State of Maryland has agreed to pay for most of the ENR upgrade and to permit the addition of another module that will further reduce the amount of nitrogen and other nutrients released into the water

Continued on page 3

## Curious about La Plata?

Do you ever wonder what topics your Mayor and Council are discussing? Are you interested in Planning and Zoning projects? Would you like to be up to date on the many interesting things that happen in your community?



In an effort to keep the community informed, the Town is forming an email list for the purpose of sending Town Council and Planning Commission agenda's. The agenda's reflect the topics of discussion, public hearings, pending legislation, community recognitions, and many other items.

Town Council work sessions are on the second and third Tuesday of each month, and the business meeting is the fourth Tuesday. Planning Commission meetings are the first Tuesday of each month. The agendas are posted prior to each meeting on the Town's web site at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org), or may be emailed if you sign up.

Please email Danielle Mandley at [dmandley@townoflaplata.org](mailto:dmandley@townoflaplata.org) or call (301) 934-8421, if you are interested in being included on the agenda distribution list.

## Holiday Street Decorations:

The beautiful holiday street decorations could not take place without the annual help of volunteers from the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative. We would like to thank Jay Farrell, Steve Maddox, Donnie Hill, Scott Horn, Scott Imbriale, Jeremy Green, Jay Herbert, Chris Swann, Brent Hancock, Calvin Thomas, Chris Winkler, Will Robertson, and Tim Russell for giving up their time to install and take down the decorations.



Every year a dedicated group of residents coordinated by Bobbie and Carl Baldus check thousands of bulbs on the decorations and assure they are working well. The annual Screw the Bulb event takes two days with tremendous support from the volunteers.

The contributions everyone makes is a true benefit to the Town of La Plata. Thank you.

# COUNCIL COLUMN

## Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward 1

Let me start off by wishing everyone a very happy New Year. As we go into 2011 we are facing financial challenges that I consider to be opportunities to really look at ourselves and ensure we are doing the best possible job we can while staying within our budget. I don't believe we need to say that we need to do more with less, but I believe we need to look at technology to see if we can find ways to work smarter. The Town is installing a new accounting system that will allow citizens to pay bills electronically. We can now monitor our water and sewer systems at the Town Hall without having to go onsite, and staff can locate potential problems before they become problems. They can accomplish more work through the use of computers thereby reducing human error.

We are about to start the budget process for the next fiscal year and this is a great opportunity to look at past budgets to see how we did and where we can improve. During our budget review we sit with each Director and have them explain in detail how much funding they feel they will require and why. We go line by line and get a detailed accounting. This allows the Mayor and Council to better understand the overall operations of the Town of La Plata and at the same time

make staff think about how they are doing business and are there ways to improve. It's a very good checks and balance system.

There are a couple of ways you can help reduce the Town budget, use recycling, it just makes sense and is good for the environment while reducing the amount of trash we pay to be disposed of at the landfill. Another way is to send us your email address so that we can send you this publication electronically. I'm sure there are many more ways to reduce the overall expenses and as you think of them please let us know. Thanks for your support of the Town Staff and I hope we all have a great year.

## Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

As we head through the winter months, it is only natural to reflect on previous winters. While almost everyone likes a little snow to provide some winter fun, most people are not hoping for a repeat of the Blizzards of 2010. Hopefully this will be more of a normal winter for La Plata.

The Town Council is preparing to go through the budgeting process and set priorities for Town services for the next fiscal year. Some of the issues to be discussed include ways that the Town can continue to

provide the services our residents have come to expect even as the budget environment continues to be tight with the continued downturn of the overall economy.

One of the issues that all towns in Maryland are facing is the continued reduction in funding that the Town had previously received from the State in the form of a share of Highway User Fees. These funds have previously been used by the Town of La Plata to provide snow removal, street repair, and periodic maintenance to Town owned roadways. Without these funds, many if not all "non-emergency" projects must be delayed until alternate sources of funding can be identified.

There will be many meetings and debates over the next few months as we lay out the plans for the Town's next Fiscal Year. All citizens of La Plata are welcome to attend these meetings so that they can see how the priorities are developed for the Town.

I know that sometimes there are many issues that residents feel very strongly about. Please voice your concerns by either contacting your Councilman or attending a Business meeting of the Town Council. There is a Public Forum at the beginning of every month's Town Council Business meeting where you can provide your thoughts and input to the Council.

# GREEN BUILDING MINI-GRANTS

Do you have a conservation idea to make La Plata a better place for you and the environment. If so, apply for one of the Conservation Mini-Grants sponsored by the Town's Green Building Committee. The Town has a new grant round that will award several more **grants of up to \$500** each for projects that positively benefit La Plata environmentally.

Last year's recipients included the Hawthorne Green HOA who installed rain barrels, energy efficient lighting, and sponsored a series of green education sessions for their residents. Archbishop Neale School who implemented water conservation and

developed an educational program for their students. The Quailwood, Jamestowne and Hawthorne Green HOAs who worked together to put on a paper recycling event in July and educate their neighborhoods. What will you do to benefit the community?

Find a way to inspire action, educate the community, or directly benefit our environment. This is a great outlet for Home Owner Associations, school projects, scout groups, civic organizations, individuals, businesses, and other community members to do something that benefits you, the Town, and the environment. Applications

for the next round will be due by February 21, 2011.

Grant applications will be available for download from the Town's website, or you may get them directly from Town Manager Daniel Mears at (301) 934 - 8421 or [dmears@townoflaplata.org](mailto:dmears@townoflaplata.org). Grant applications will be reviewed by La Plata's Green Building Committee and successful projects will receive up to \$500 to help implement the idea. Thank you for your interest in helping our community by focusing on its environment.

# MEET THE TOWN STAFF



## Tamme McConnell

Tamme is the newest employee of the La Plata Police Department. Tamme graduated from the Police Training Academy on January 21, 2011. Tamme has been married to Bill McConnell for 8 years and is mom to Alicen age 6 and Billy age 2. Originally from Akron, Ohio she now makes her home in Waldorf. Tamme has a Bachelor's Degree in Child Development and is working on a Masters of Psychology with a concentration in Child and Adolescent Development. Tamme wanted to become a police officer because "I love helping people and being involved in the community in a positive way". She looks forward to working in the lovely Town of La Plata and meeting so many new people.

# Conservation Corner

## Green La Plata with a Community Clean Up Day

A clean La Plata is a green La Plata. By removing trash, debris, and litter from our neighborhoods, our community is more attractive, safer, and the environment benefits as well.



The Town would like to help you and your neighbors improve your neighborhood. If trash does not blow into our waterways or clog out storm sewers, our water quality improves. If debris containing chemicals does not degrade into the ground our soils and plants are healthier. Let's work together to make La Plata a better place.

It takes a lot of work to keep La Plata beautiful. A street sweeper cleans downtown once per week, sanitation crews remove trash, recycling, bulk items, and yard waste. People in the community lend a hand as well, walkers pick up trash as they walk and property owners work to keep their areas clean. A lot of things work against a clean community

as well, unfortunately some people litter, waste can blow out of trash containers and dumpsters, and other things get dumped or carelessly left. In La Plata's case, we have some areas that still contain debris from when the tornado blew through almost nine years ago that has not been picked up from wooded areas and along wetlands.

Some neighborhoods have gotten together to organize cleanup days and the Town of La Plata can assist your formal and informal neighborhood groups as well. The Town can provide dumpsters free of charge for organized events, and depending on the level of neighborhood commitment, we can assist in coordinating outside volunteer groups, provide Public Works staff, and bring a Town trash truck or other equipment.

If you would like to have a cleanup day in your neighborhood simply get a commitment of your neighbors and contact Mary Trollinger at (301) 934-8421 or via email at [mtrollinger@townoflaplata.org](mailto:mtrollinger@townoflaplata.org) to find out how the Town can assist. The Town can provide trash bags, gloves, dumpsters, and sometimes more for large community efforts. Please do your part to help keep La Plata beautiful.

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

system. This is a State mandated requirement funded through the Bay Restoration Fee on your utility bill. Work associated with the ENR upgrade will commence in the next several months. Our new Willow Lane pump station and associated piping is a substantial improvement to the overall system. This is not all, read on.

The Town has developed a water monitoring system that can track the operation and flow of water at any given period of time. Town fire hydrants have been tested, flushed and repainted. We have recently sent out to bid a contract to replace our water meters with an upgraded model that will permit electronic reading. We have upgraded our accounting and billing system that will, in the very near future, permit electronic payments for Town utility bills. We will upgrade our trash collection service by providing a large container to each residence as a replacement for the trash cans currently being used by residents. As other service improvements occur you will be so informed.

The Town Council has commenced our annual review of all Town projects and priorities in order to set our budget for the next fiscal year. With the loss of 90% of our highway user funds and a substantial portion of our police protection aid from the State, this will once again be an extremely important review. Providing a high level of service to all residents, even in a period of lower financial resources, is still our number one priority and the Town Council will set priorities and use available resources with this priority in mind.

We enter into this new year with a high degree of confidence that we are on the right path to continue providing the quality and quantity of services that will keep La Plata the shining example on the hill.

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

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

Commercial Building Permits Issued  
(11/1/10-12/31/10)

**Davis Nails & Spa**  
6611 Crain Highway

Commercial Occupancy Permits Issued  
(11/1/10-12/31/10)

**Halo Salon**  
6 St. Mary's Avenue, Suite 101B

**La Plata Pediatrics & Women's Health LLC**  
103 Centennial Street

**Dust -R- Us**  
401 Carroll Street

## Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

### Presidents' Day **Monday, February 21**

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

## TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

### Council:

Wayne Winkler ..... Ward 1  
C. Keith Back ..... Ward 2  
Paddy Mudd ..... Ward 3  
Joseph W. Norris ..... Ward 4

Town Manager:  
Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant  
Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner  
Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley  
Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder  
Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Inspections: Jorge A. Thompson

Director of Municipal Development:

David M. Jenkins

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

305 Queen Anne Street,  
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

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

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: [mminer@townoflaplata.org](mailto:mminer@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: \$12.75 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.10.

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

## Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Monday, February 21, 2011

Trash will be picked up on:

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

# 2010 CITIZEN SURVEY

In November 2010, 1,200 households in the Town of La Plata were randomly asked to again participate in The National Citizen Survey. The National Citizen Survey for La Plata was developed from a menu of questions about services and community issues as well including several policy questions. The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results from jurisdictions across the United States.

Resident opinions offer elected officials an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

The survey results are used by the Town Council for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement, and policy making. This is the Town's fourth year having the survey conducted and the elected body has used previous surveys in evaluating services, assisting in the development of Council priorities and guiding them in making decisions regarding the budget.

Overall quality of community life may be the single best indicator of success in pro-

viding the service and amenities that make for an attractive community. Since the first survey was conducted the overall quality of life in La Plata has steadily increased and over the four year period in comparison to other jurisdictions maintaining an excellent rating. 89% of respondents rated La Plata as a place to live as excellent and 92% of respondents would recommend living in La Plata to someone else.

The ability to move easily throughout a community can greatly affect the quality of life of its residents. In previous surveys, there has been a slight decline in the Transportation survey ratings, thus prompting the Town to propose a policy question. The policy question was: "Traffic on Charles Street through downtown La Plata has increased in recent years and traffic safety has become more of a concern. Safety could be improved by converting some downtown side streets to only be able to turn right onto and off of Charles Street. To what extent would you support or oppose converting the appropriate downtown side streets? Of respondents 71% strongly or somewhat support the idea.

We are happy to report that over the four years of survey reporting that Public Safety scores have all steadily increased. 93% of respondents feel safe in their neighborhoods during the day, 94% of respondents feel safe in La Plata's downtown area during the day. In the 7 rating categories for public safety all but one rated above or much above in the comparison benchmark to other jurisdictions and the one rated similar. No one wants to live in fear of crime and communities like La Plata, in which residents feel protected or unthreatened are communities that are more likely to show growth in population, commerce, and property value.

This is just a sampling of results from the survey. The complete survey with previous year results in regards to transportation, housing, land use & zoning, economic sustainability, public safety, environmental sustainability, parks and recreation, culture, arts and education, community inclusiveness, information and awareness, social engagement, resident priorities, and policy questions can all be viewed on the Town's website at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) under the section labeled Citizen Survey.

# BEAUTIFICATION HOLIDAY DECOR



Town Inspector, Jorge Thompson places a star at the top of the tree in the atrium, with direction from Beautification Commission members Margaret Boggs, Rose Goldsmith, and Helen Lucas.

La Plata Town Hall sparkled for the holiday season, thanks to the members of the Town's Beautification Commission. On the Monday after Thanksgiving, the Commission members and Town staff decked the halls – and the atrium, the Council Chamber, the lobby and more! By day's end, Town Hall was beautifully decorated for the season.

Special thanks to Beautification Commission Chairperson, Judy Norris, and Members, Helen Lucas, Margaret Boggs, Rose Goldsmith, Councilwoman Paddy Mudd, and Town Clerk Danielle Mandley as well as to all the Town staff who helped with the decorating.



Wreaths on the windows of Town Hall were part of the holiday decorations provided by the Town's Beautification Commission.

# FEBRUARY 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 pm	2 Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 am Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 pm	3	4 Yard Waste Pick-Up	5
6 Yard Waste Pick-Up	7 Special Pick-Up (call Town Hall by 4:00 pm 2/4 to be put on list)	8 Mayor and Council work session; 7:00 pm	9 Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 pm	10	11 Yard Waste Pick-Up	12
13 Yard Waste Pick-Up	14	15 Mayor and Council Work session; 7:00 pm	16 Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 am	17	18 Yard Waste Pick-Up	19
20 Town Hall closed No yard waste pick-up No trash pick up Green Building Mini-grants due	21	22 Trash pick up Mayor and Council business meeting; 7:00 pm	23	24	25 Yard Waste Pick-Up	26
27 Yard Waste Pick-Up Beautification Meeting; 4 pm	28					

# MARCH 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 pm	2 Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 am Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 pm	3	4 Yard Waste Pick-Up	5
6 Yard Waste Pick-Up	7 Special Pick-Up (call Town Hall by 4:00 pm 3/4 to be put on list)	8 Mayor and Council work session; 7:00 pm	9 Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 pm	10	11 Yard Waste Pick-Up	12
13 Yard Waste Pick-Up	14	15 Mayor and Council work session; 7:00 pm	16 Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 am	17	18 Yard Waste Pick-Up	19
20	21 Trash pick up Yard Waste Pick-Up	22 Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 pm	23	24	25 Yard Waste Pick-Up	26
27 Yard Waste Pick-Up	28	29	30	31		

# OLDE TYME HOLIDAY GATHERING

This year's *Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering* took place on Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup> at La Plata Town Hall. Friends and neighbors, young and old stopped by in the spirit of the holiday season to enjoy activities, entertainment, refreshments, and a visit from Santa.



The La Plata High School Choir led by Director, Blake Racer performed in the Council Chamber.

We had an addition to our **Holiday Gathering** for 2010: an activities tent! Heaters kept things toasty warm inside the tent — in spite of the chilly weather — so that children could enjoy crafts, face painting, holiday stories, and refreshments.



Story reading with staff from the Charles County Library in the activities tent.

Inside Town Hall, the music was non-stop with favorite holiday tunes from the La Plata High School Choir, Southern Mix Barbershop Chorus, John the Fifer — a revolutionary era musician — and an old fashioned sing along.

Of course, Santa was there to greet the children and listen to requests.



Everyone's favorite holiday party guest greeted children in the Town Hall atrium.

Thanks to everyone who joined us. And **thanks to those that helped out**, including

the La Plata High School Key Club who helped with refreshments and children's crafts, the La Plata High School National Honor Arts Society for face painting, and the Charles County Library staff for reading holiday stories.

## A Special Thank You



Joann Worden — who runs the concession trailer at Town Hall during outdoor events — has been an invaluable volunteer, helping out with food at all of our Fall events.

Special recognitions goes out to **Joann Worden** of Lifestyles! Joann runs the concession trailer to benefit Lifestyles, a La Plata non-profit organization, and her cheerful face is a fixture at Town events. Joann volunteered a lot of her own time this Fall to help serve food at our Harvest Halloween Party, the Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony, the Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering, and Breakfast with Santa. Thanks, Joann, you're an angel!

## Breakfast With Santa



Guests at the Town of La Plata's "Breakfast with Santa" included Jared, William, and Travis Crooks.

Our annual Breakfast with Santa was a lot of fun! Over 100 children signed up to join us at Town Hall for donuts, Chick-Fil-A chicken biscuits, and a visit with the Jolly Elf. All the kids went home with a Chick-Fil-A gift card and stuffed cow as well as visions of Santa's elves up in the North Pole working hard on those special requests!

## Recognize This Face?

**TOWN OF LA PLATA HOLIDAYS**  
**Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering**  
 Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> 3PM  
 La Plata Town Hall

The sounds and spirit of the season bring friends and neighbors together for an afternoon of good cheer. Join us for holiday music, activities, refreshments, and a visit from Santa!

**Breakfast with Santa**  
 Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup> 8AM to 12 Noon  
 Limited space available.  
 Reserve your spot soon by calling 301-934-8421.

When the Town's Special Events Coordinator, Marcia Keeth, was preparing a flyer to publicize our holiday events, she needed a picture of a child with Santa Claus to use for "Breakfast with Santa." In order to skip the extra layer of permissions and licensing, Marcia used a photo for which she already had the rights — her own! "That one has a few years on it," Marcia said, "but I like it because Santa Claus was with me then just as Santa is at our Town of La Plata holiday events, it made sense to use his picture. Obviously I've changed a lot, but Santa still looks the same!"

## Special Events 2011

We are busy planning our Town of La Plata Special Events for this year, so be on the lookout for more to come, including Celebrate La Plata in the spring, Community Yard Sales, Fourth of July festivities, our Summer Concert Series, and more. In the meantime, check out the photos, slideshows, and videos of all of our 2010 special events at our website. Go to [www.TownofLaPlata.org](http://www.TownofLaPlata.org) and click on "Events."

If you have any questions or comments about our Special Events, or are interested in finding out how you can participate, contact Marcia Keeth at (301)934-8421 x 142 or [MKeeth@TownofLaPlata.org](mailto:MKeeth@TownofLaPlata.org).

**Town of La Plata**

2010 Town of La Plata Summer Concert Series

- Home
- Town Council
- Commissioners
- Town Staff
- Events
- Celebrate La Plata Summer Concert Series
- 2010 Concert Series
- Memorial Day Ceremony
- Community Yard Sale
- 4th of July
- Waterworks Bash
- Club Cook Off
- Fall Festival
- Harvest Halloween Party
- Stable for Veterans Parade
- Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering
- Contact Information about Town Events
- Sign Up
- Community Guide
- Conservation Center

The 2010 Year Round looked off the scene on Memorial Day weekend and played the final show in the last days in September.

# 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:

*If the Town offered the ability to pay utility bills online, I would utilize the service.*

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

## December Website Poll Results

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

Given the challenges in the economy, would you support a revenue measure that would provide your most desired municipal service that is currently not provided? For example, a property tax increase in order to construct a public pool.

- Strongly Support – 11%
- Somewhat Support – 11%
- Neither Support nor Oppose – 8%
- Somewhat Oppose – 3%
- Strongly Oppose – 63%
- Don't Know – 5%

The services provided by the Town of La Plata mostly consist of things that affect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Whether it be law enforcement, utilities, or other public goods, the Town is responsible for their efficient and effective provision. There are other services that the Town provides or can provide that impact public values, and they consist of property values, quality of life, recreation, and other aspects that the community receives. The Town must find the means to provide for the community's needs, as well as its wants, while maintaining public trust.

As with many aspects of our lives, our wants exceed what we currently have. Members of our community regularly express desire for the Town to provide for their wants. While some items can be accommodated through efficiencies or changes in how service is delivered, other things require additional resources.

The challenges in our economy do not leave the Town of La Plata immune from fiscal stress. Reductions in property assessments reduce the Town's taxable base, its largest source of general fund revenue. This challenges the Town's ability to finance essential services, even with its history of conservative fiscal practices. The State of Maryland has removed revenue that was once shared with La Plata adding to that stress, and removing resources once available for road maintenance and law enforcement. The revenue is still generated in La Plata through gas tax and fines, the State is simply allocating it to its programs to reduce the amount of cuts or revenue enhancements it needs to make.

La Plata is a desirable, growing, and evolving community. To maintain that the Town must provide what the community needs and wants. By continually looking for efficiencies in its operations, and offering the things that the community wants to support, La Plata strives to make this a great home for you and your family.

# 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.

## Purposeful Technology

The Town is in the process of updating its finance software, which is giving more opportunities for both efficiency and accuracy. Beginning with this past January's utility bill, customers will notice a barcode on the top of the utility bill. This is the portion of the utility bill that is returned to the Town along with your payment. By using a bar code reader, our staff simply scans the top portion of your bill, and your account information is automatically brought up in the new system. Your payment is then applied.

Our staff no longer has to key in an account number, service address, or other information

**10% LATE CHARGE IF PAYMENT**

Please return this portion with your payment. When paying in person pl



<b>Service From</b>
9/15/2010
<b>Service To</b>
12/17/2010

PLEASE RETURN THIS STUB WITH PAYMENT		
<b>Amount Due</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>After Due Date Pay</b>
216.77	2/7/2011	237.71

<b>Status</b>
Active

<b>Account Number</b>
-----------------------

to bring up your account. This reduces the time it takes to process a payment. An additional benefit is the improvement in accuracy for the process. It assures that the payment being allocated in the system matches the ac-

count, reducing potential errors from miskeying a name, number, or address. Please help with this improvement by ensuring you return the top portion of your bill with the payment.

# 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.

## TOWN STAFF AND COUNCIL HOLIDAY DONATIONS



*Mayor Hale and Councilman Winkler hold some of the many goodies collected by Town staff and elected officials for the Christmas Connection. They are on their way to the National Guard Armory to make the delivery.*



*For the last several years, employees of the La Plata Town Hall have foregone exchanging gifts with each other and have opted to collect toys for the Christmas Connection instead. Pictured from left to right are Mayor Hale, Councilman Norris, Councilman Winkler and Town employee Mike Plumer gathering the donations to be delivered to the Christmas Connection. Also pictured is food that was donated by the Town, and residents during holiday events to be distributed by the Sacred Heart Food Pantry.*