

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

This holiday season we will once again come together to celebrate the season with family and friends. It is a special time of year that is not limited to the joy and excitement expressed by children although that is a very special part of the Christmas experience. It is also a time to take stock of what we hold most precious and to reinforce our faith in the religious beliefs we hold sacred.

Each year, Bobbie Baldus pulls a group together to replace the broken and worn-out bulbs in our Town decorations. We owe her and her group of volunteers a deep appreciation for keeping our Town looking so festive. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me. With the street decorations in place many businesses add to the holiday season by adding their own decorations and once again our Town demonstrates that we are ready for the arrival of Old Saint Nick. It is the community spirit that is reflected in these decorations as well as the many homes that join in with outstanding decorations of their own that makes it a season to behold. Let us hope that we do not receive quite as much snow this winter as last, but a white Christmas is always on most people's wish list. Do not overlook La Plata's special holiday events listed in this newsletter. They are only special when you are in attendance.

The November elections are over and hopefully all the political signs will come down and our landscape can return to a normal state. We owe the winners our congratulations and to those not so successful our appreciation for entering the race and a willingness to serve in an elected office. In today's economic and

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Stay in La Plata for the Holidays

Our local businesses help give La Plata so much of its special character. We have all experienced going to a local store or restaurant and running into a friend or a family member. The holiday season is filled with hustle as we go from place to place shopping for our loved ones. This year reduce the hassle in your hustle, and stay in La Plata as you purchase gifts, entertain, dine out, and treat yourself and your family. You will find the holiday spirit in town especially as you interact with the friendly employees and business owners in La Plata, and see those friends and catch up in the aisle of a local business.

The Town of La Plata is full of opportunities for entertaining, shopping, and dining every holiday season, especially when getting together with family and friends. Out of town guests will find unique places in La Plata, so please show off your hometown. From major retailers to unique local establishments found only in La Plata there are many great options to satisfy everyone on your shopping list.

The holiday decorations in downtown La Plata attract people from all over the region. Be sure to see the displays and stop to see what our unique stores have to offer. The Town of La Plata encourages your support for our local businesses and small business owners. There are many to choose from and whether you support an independent business or a chain, often the owners of the business live right in our community.

By shopping and dining in La Plata you help to support your neighbors and your community, keeping and multiplying our resources locally. The success of our local businesses helps maintain the success of our community. It adds to the character and vitality that all our establishments provide to the Town. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

Municipal Government Works Month – November, 2010

Working Together Anything is Possible!

Since 1993, Cities and Towns throughout the state have been celebrating Municipal Government Works Month in an effort to educate citizens about the role and function of the government closest to them. To help promote municipal government awareness, the Town Council issued a Proclamation on October 28, 2010 proclaiming November as Municipal Government Works Month. In addition, throughout November, Mayor Hale welcomed students to the Town Hall to discuss municipal government in an effort to promote student recognition and understanding of the government in their community. This exercise will help students to become informed, responsible and involved citizens.



Sidewalk Improvements

Throughout October and November the Town replaced concrete sidewalk curb ramps throughout Town. The sidewalk/ADA improvements were funded as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

There have been a lot of things going on in the Town of La Plata this past year and many more exciting things to come in 2011. The Town Council has been taking action on many infrastructure improvements and developing plans for future enhancements to our parks, water and sewer services. Of particular interest to many in the Town right now is a comprehensive review of Parks and recreation amenities available to our citizens. Please watch for upcoming discussions where you can learn more about what is being done in this area.

The holiday season is almost here and I want to wish all of the residents of La Plata and the hard working Town staff a safe and happy season. Since moving to this area, my family and I have always loved the look of our town over the Christmas holidays. The decorations over the streets in the downtown area and the lights in the neighborhoods always brighten the spirits of all that visit La Plata.

Take time during your busy holiday season to enjoy the small things in life that in the long run mean the most anyway. Enjoy time off with your family or a quiet moment talking with friends. And come out for some of the Holiday events that are provided at Town Hall.

If you have the opportunity, please take time to thank those who are serving our country in the armed forces, police or emergency services. They deserve our thanks everyday but especially during the holidays when many must be away from their families in order to keep us safe.

Please support our local businesses as you do your Christmas shopping so that La Plata continues to be seen as a viable place for new businesses to open. If you will be traveling

for the holidays, please be extremely careful on the highways.

Also, please watch out for your neighbors and visitors once the weather becomes cold, clean your sidewalks of snow and ice to help prevent accidents. Hopefully we will not have a repeat of last years Mega snows, but we need to be ready just in case.

I look forward to a wonderful holiday season here in La Plata and I wish you and your family all the best for the coming New Year.

Councilwoman Paddy Mudd, Ward 3

Our fall events were very successful. Come out and enjoy our Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering on December 5th and be sure to make reservations for children under 10 for Breakfast with Santa on December 11th. Have a wonderful holiday season! I can always be reached at pmudd@townofaplata.org or (301) 934-4804.

Councilman Joseph W. Norris, Ward 4

I am looking forward to the colorful lights and decorations of the coming holiday season, though I admit missing the beautiful fall colors. The tradition of the beautiful decorations along our main streets goes back many years, and is something I always look forward to. It is another thing that makes our town special.

Please plan to join us Sunday December 5, from 3 to 6 P.M. for the annual "Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering" at Town Hall. There will be entertainment including story telling, holiday crafts, Santa's arrival on a fire truck and lighting of the Town Tree. There will be light refreshments and we encourage everyone to bring a canned food item for our less fortunate neighbors. Breakfast with Santa

takes place on December 11th for children 10 years or younger. As always more details are available on the town website at www.townofaplata.org.

The Design Review Board has been very busy working on updating the Community Design Guidelines for The Commercial Highway and Central Business Districts. I must commend Joy Mandley Planning Assistant and Cathy Flerlage our Planning Director and as always Bob Turgeon Chairman of the DRB for all of their efforts. They have spent a lot of time to try and help us produce a more useful document.

In late October, I had the opportunity to attend the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference. There were numerous educational sessions on various subjects including Basics of Risk Management, Public Information Act, and Structures of Municipal Government. Overall it was educational and I believe will help me be a better representative for the citizens of La Plata. One of the most valuable parts of the conference is interacting with other elected officials and hearing and sharing our common problems and solutions.

To our Veterans my sincere thanks for your service and sacrifice. We had a great Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony to honor our vets on November 7. If you missed it please join us next year as we honor our veterans as they so much deserve. Our thanks to the Port Tobacco Theater Encore Kids, for a great performance. The many high school bands and ROTC Units were impressive. As usual it was always exciting to see our Fire and Rescue Units participate. Thanks to all for a great day.

If you have any questions or issues, I may be reached by phone at (301) 934-9230 or by email at jnorris@townofaplata.org. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE LA PLATA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION?

The new Board of Directors have been very busy the past few months. The association has recently launched its website www.laplatabusinessassociation.com take a few minutes to browse the site and visit some of the participating businesses.

A new membership incentive drive has begun. Local businesses that are non-members can join now until June 30, 2012 for a reduced cost

of \$65.00. Current members will automatically have their memberships extended until 2012 with no additional charge. New businesses that join before December 15 will be included in the annual full page Maryland Independent Holiday Ad featuring the names of all the La Plata Business Association businesses.

If you are interested in finding out what the association is all about the next General

Membership meeting will be held Thursday, December 2 at 8:00 a.m. at the La Plata Town Hall.

Greetings for a happy and prosperous New Year.



Conservation Corner

Holiday Recycling

The holiday season is when most people consume more food and more products than any other time of the year. Holiday parties leave numerous bottles and cans about our homes.



Presents have more packaging and wrapping than the present itself. Below are some tips to help you give a gift to our environment as well as loved ones.

- Consider gifts that have high recycled content material, are reusable, are recyclable, are durable.
- Send E-card holiday greetings to reduce physical waste.
- Consider gifts with minimal packaging.
- Get rechargeable batteries and a battery charger for your electronics.

- Don't wrap gifts in materials that are not recyclable, such as foil or metallic papers. Use recycled-content wrapping paper.
- If you send holiday cards, buy recycled-content cards and envelopes. Or make your own cards or gift tags out of last year's cards and the wrapping paper you saved.
- Use reusable shopping bags. Recycle paper bags and plastic ones at the grocery store.
- Remove your name from catalog mailing lists.
- Reuse packaging material when shipping a gift. If you don't have any, save some this year to use next year. Styrofoam is recyclable.
- Recycle your tree and wreath. The Town begins tree pickup on Dec 27th and turns them into compost.
- Get a balled tree (with roots) and plant it on your property after the holidays.
- Set out and label an extra container for guests to deposit their bottles, cans, and other recyclable waste.
- Compost you biodegradable food waste.
- Make a New Year's resolution to benefit the environment in a new way this year. Then make it happen by applying for a Green Mini Grant.

NOW OPEN IN LA PLATA AND COMING SOON TO LA PLATA

Commercial Occupancy Permits Issued

Dairy Queen
22 Shining Willow Way

Commercial Building Permits Issued

Davis Florist
6643 Crain Highway

Contemporary Therapeutic Services

200 Kent Avenue, Suite B

Mark Hochman, Dental Office
105 Centennial St. Ste C

Port Tobacco Consulting, LLC
103 Centennial St. Ste D

Mary Baker, LCPC

109 La Grange Ave, Ste 103

Cornerstone AME Church of La Plata
9375 Chesapeake St #117

Adaptive Therapy

109 La Grange Ave, Ste 102

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Christmas Eve | Friday, December 24 |
| New Years Eve | Friday, December 25 |
| Martin Luther King, Jr Day | Monday, January 17 |

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.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

political climate most successful candidates will have to face many challenges and we wish them well as they undertake the difficult decisions that will be necessary over the next four years.

La Plata, as a growing and thriving community, is not immune to what is occurring in our county, state, and nation. The affect of decisions made, both good and bad, that occur outside our borders will have an impact on many actions taken by your Town Council. As a municipality we can chart our own course, to a limited degree, but the options and choices available are often closely tied to decisions that are outside our area of control. For this reason the Town Council, as a body, will maintain an open and responsive relationship with county officials, our state delegation, and congressional representation.

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

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

TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

Council:

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

Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Inspections: Jorge A. Thompson

Director of Municipal Development:

David M. Jenkins

Director of Planning and Zoning:

Catherine N. Flerlage

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

305 Queen Anne Street,
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

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

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: mminer@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. 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.

Loose Leaf Pick Up Schedule

The Town of La Plata Public Works Department will be offering loose leaf collection from October 18, 2010 to December 17, 2010. 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 18, 2010 – October 22, 2010 and
November 15, 2010 – November 19, 2010

Kings Grant, Agricopia, Quailwood, Port Tobacco Road, West Hawthorne Drive and adjacent side streets.

October 25, 2010 – October 29, 2010 and
November 29, 2010 – December 3, 2010

St. Mary's Avenue, Oak Avenue, Washington Avenue, Charles Street, Hickory Ridge and adjacent side streets.

November 1, 2010 – November 12, 2010
and December 6, 2010 – December 17, 2010

Clarks Run

There will be no pick-up the week of November 22, 2010.

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

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Friday, December 24, 2010

Friday, December 31, 2010

Monday, January 17, 2011

Christmas Tree Pick Up will be Monday, December 27, 2010 to Friday, January 7, 2011.

Trash will be picked up on:

Thursday, December 23, 2010

Thursday, December 30, 2010

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Two upcoming events will bring friends and neighbors together as we celebrate the holidays in December.

Old Tyme Holiday Gathering
Sunday December 5th 3PM to 6PM
La Plata Town Hall

Join us for an afternoon of good cheer with refreshments, activities for children, entertainment and more. We'll light up the tree and enjoy a visit from Santa, himself, who will arrive with the help of his friends at the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department. We hear that they're busy polishing up the fire truck just for Santa! For more information, contact Marcia Keeth at (301) 934-8421 or MKeeth@TownofLaPlata.org.

Breakfast with Santa
Saturday December 11th
La Plata Town Hall
8:00-8:45, 9:00-9:45, 10:00-10:45,
11:00-11:45

This annual event is by reservation and accommodates a limited number of guests. This event fills quickly. To reserve your spot, call Town Hall at (301) 934-8421.



MEET THE TOWN STAFF



Town of La Plata staff Carolyn Johnson, Donna Shorter, and Gale Crooks brought the spirit of Halloween to Town Hall, dressing in costume for the Friday before Halloween.

DECEMBER 2010

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | |
|--|--|---|--|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 am Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 pm | 1 | 2 | 3 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 4 |
| 5 Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering, 3 pm to 6 pm | 6 Yard Waste Pick-Up Special Pick-Up (call by 4:00 pm on Fri., Dec. 3 to schedule) | 7 Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 pm | 8 Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 pm | 9 | 10 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 11 Breakfast with Santa (reservations required) Early Warning Device testing; 9:00 am | |
| 12 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 13 Yard Waste Pick-Up Beautification Meeting; 4:00 pm Christmas Decorating judging; lights on by 5:00 | 14 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 pm | 15 Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 am | 16 | 17 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 18 | |
| 19 | 20 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 21 Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 pm | 22 | 23 Trash Pick-Up for Dec. 24 | 24 Town Hall closed No trash service | 25 | |
| 26 | 27 Yard Waste Pick-Up Christmas Tree pick up begins | 28 | 29 | 30 Trash Pick-Up for Dec. 31 | 31 Town Hall closed No trash service | | |

JANUARY 2011

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|----------|--|----------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 Yard Waste Pick-Up Special Pick-Up (call by 4:00 pm on Dec. 30 to schedule) | 4 Planning Commission meeting; 7:00 pm | 5 Design Review Board meeting; 9:00 am Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 pm | 6 | 7 Yard Waste Pick-Up Last day for Christmas Tree pick up | 8 |
| 9 | 10 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 11 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 pm | 12 Parks and Recreation Meeting; 5:00 pm | 13 | 14 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 15 |
| 16 | 17 Town Hall closed No trash service | 18 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 pm Trash Pick-Up for 1/17 | 19 Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 am | 20 | 21 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 22 |
| 23/30 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 24/31 Yard Waste Pick-Up Beautification Commission Meeting; 4:00 p.m. | 25 Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 pm | 26 | 27 | 28 Yard Waste Pick-Up | 29 |

SPECIAL EVENTS

Fall Events



What a fun fall we've had here in the Town of La Plata! We sold, we sampled, we celebrated and saluted. And there's still more to come before the year's done.

Over 40 vendors came out for the **Fall Community Yard Sale** on Saturday October 9th – our biggest yard sale to date! The Town Hall parking lot and east lawn were filled with yard sale finds of all descriptions – household items, clothing, books, furniture, toys, jewelry, and more. One buyer said it was the best selection she'd ever seen at a yard sale – both in quantity and quality. And before it was over, sellers were ready to sign up for the next one! Thank you to everyone who came out to buy, sell, and recycle! We'll see you in 2011!

In mid-October, the Town of La Plata welcomed visitors who spent their time hanging out on street corners. The annual **Scarecrow Festival** sponsored by the Charles County Chamber of Commerce



brought out some whimsical and creative entries along the streets of La Plata's central business district. Our own entry in front of Town Hall took on a tropical theme with a bikini-clad scarecrow sipping a tropi-

cal drink. This year's Scarecrow Festival benefitted Hospice of Charles County, and winners were selected in several categories: scary, sports, and fictional character.



Those winners were announced at La Plata's annual **Fall Festival**, which took place on Town Hall grounds on Sunday October 24th. That event featured the **Taste of La Plata** tent with restaurants, caterers, and food providers selling samples of their menu items for just a dollar or two. The selection included a tasty variety, from pancakes to crab cakes, turkey wraps to egg rolls, hot dogs to pumpkin ice, and many other sweet and savory choices. Outside the tent, it was non-stop classic rock with Southern Maryland's own **The Wise Guys** while festival goers voted for their favorite Scarecrows in the People's Choice category. Over on the lawn, youngsters of all ages were enjoying big, inflatable activities, including the Titanic Slide and Iceberg Obstacle Course, the Funny Farm Slide and Moon Bounce, and the Equalizer Touchdown Challenge. You can see a slide show of the day at our website, www.TownofLaPlata.org. Just click on "events" to get to the video.



The following weekend was Halloween, and little ones got a head start on the fun at our Harvest Halloween Party on Saturday October 30th at Town Hall. We had snacks, activities, favors, and plenty of fun. Kids came in costume and got their pictures taken – see the slide show on at www.TownofLaPlata.org home page. They also got to take home crafts that they made themselves, including Halloween masks, door hangers, and bags to decorate.



The first weekend in November brought the annual Town of La Plata **Salute to Veterans Parade and Ceremony**. Veterans of all ages – from WWII to the present – led the procession from the Charles County Courthouse down Charles Street to La Grange, past La Plata Town Hall, and ending at Sacred Heart Church on St. Mary's Avenue where we had free hot dogs waiting for all the parade participants. In addition to veterans, the parade included boy scouts, cub scouts, and girl scouts; high school ROTC groups and marching bands; community groups, motorcycles, corvettes, antique tractors, and of course lots of fire trucks bringing up the rear.

After the parade, a ceremony at Town Hall honored our men and women in uniform with a moving speech from Captain John Lemmon, a performance from the Port Tobacco Encore Kids, and the beautiful singing of La Plata's own Justin Hancock.



WEBSITE POLL



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

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

October Website Poll Results

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

The storm water system near me is inadequate.

Strongly Agree – 24%

Somewhat Agree – 20%

Neither Agree nor Disagree – 15%

Somewhat Disagree – 10%

Strongly Disagree – 12%

Don't Know – 20%

When the rain falls it must go somewhere, and depending where you are in La Plata, it may have more of an impact than other places. When La Plata was beginning there were no systems for storm water control. Most of the ground was covered with vegetation, and people did not build within the natural channels that water flowed. As

development continued and rooftops, roads, and other impervious surfaces began to cover the area, there was less space for rain to be absorbed into the ground. Storm water still flowed to the same places, but people began to dig ditches and put culverts in place to help manage its flow.

Federal regulations of water systems, mostly dealing with sewage began with the implementation of the Clean Water Act in 1972. In 1987 the Clean Water Act was expanded to address storm water specific regulation in 1987 with the requirement for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permits. Phase I and Phase II of the NPDES permits came into force in 1991 and 2003. Local governments have had to ensure compliance with these requirements through plan review, and construction inspection to ensure proper construction practices and storm water detention and retention facilities have been put in place.

States have also imposed their own storm water regulations, and Maryland's are the strictest in the nation in an effort to help improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Most recently the State adopted the Storm Water Management Act of 2007 which required local governments to update their own storm water ordinances in conformance with State guidelines by May of 2010. La Plata was the first municipality in the State to submit its draft storm water ordinance for the State's review, and La Plata adopted its ordinance as required.

As requirements have changed over the years, storm water systems are different throughout Town. Some neighborhoods have no storm water control, neighborhoods like Clark's Run have swales and ditches along roadways that direct storm water to Redwood Lake or directly to Clark's Run. Quailwood has sections without curbs and gutters, and other areas with a full collection system. King's Grant, Agrico-

pia, and other neighborhoods with newer construction have complete curb and gutter

systems, detention basins, with comprehensive conveyance systems. Future construction in La Plata will need to comply with the State's requirement to utilize Environmental Site Design, in which the preferred alternative is to manage storm water on site.

The requirements continue to evolve, and additional requirements are anticipated as a result of mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency to assure the quality of water in the Chesapeake Bay. Regulations regarding the maintenance of these systems are in place, and municipalities in Maryland are beginning to be fined for violations by the EPA. La Plata is in its second year of having a small storm water utility fee on the quarterly utility bill. The small amount of funds collected is being used to inventory, map, and assess the storm water infrastructure in the Town, which is owned and maintained by businesses, Home Owners Associations, the Town, private residences, Charles County, and the State.

The mix of public and private ownership ensures challenges for the maintenance of the system. Some of the older parts of the system have been deteriorating, which causes problems on private property, under sidewalks and roads, and downstream in the channels that the storm water flows. La Plata leads many municipalities in the State with its efforts to address storm water infrastructure, however the resources available are inadequate. The Town must continue to improve in order to assure compliance with Federal and State requirements.

GREEN BUILDING MINI-GRANTS

For three years, La Plata's Conservation Corner has been providing ideas and information to help conserve resources, save money, and make La Plata a better place for you and the environment. The Town has also pursued green options for how it does business by conserving water, using recycled and other green products, and constructing its Town Hall as a LEED Certified building, among other activities.

In order to help the community turn more ideas on helping our environment into reality, the La Plata Town Council again approved funds to provide Conservation Mini-Grants. 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 HOA's who worked together to put on a paper recycling event in July and educate their neighborhoods. Do you have an idea that can 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. 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.

EFFICIENCY CORNER

Making La Plata More Efficient

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

La Plata Reaches Residents with Electronic Media

Communicating with the community can be challenging. The Town has historically used a variety of means to get messages out, and some of those have costs for printing, mailing, or other distribution costs. The Town publishes its Town Note newsletter six times per year. It is distributed to residents and businesses through the mail and is an effective means to ensure a message is communicated to everyone. Printing, layout, and postage costs are the main costs associated with each newsletter. The information distributed is not the most timely. Most of the material written for the newsletter is written a month in advance of distribution. It is not a good way to get a message out quickly. You can opt in for an electronic version of the newsletter

to be emailed to you, and cut down on the extra printing and postage costs or visit the Town's website www.townofaplata.org. Quite a few people go with that option.

The Town can use its address database to send a letter or postcard out to residents. The time it takes to get one out is just a few days, depending on preparation and when it can be delivered to the post office. The printing and postage costs to deliver to over 3,000 addresses are the main drawback to this form of communication. Depending on the message needing to go out, it may not be a cost effective solution.

The Town also purchases ads in the Maryland Independent, or issues a press release to local media outlets. The message is distributed to a wider audience than just La Plata, so it is not always an appropriate means to communicate. Cost of the ad and loss of editorial control are drawbacks to this form of communication, in addition to realizing not everyone gets the newspaper, and those that do read the paper don't always read every article or ad. Information can get out twice per week, so it is about as timely as sending a letter or postcard.

For several years the Town has had a website where it posts valuable information. It is an excellent and cost effective means to ensure information is available to our residents. Routine communications, meeting notices, minutes, special event, and other information

is easily accessible, and easy for the Town to update quickly. For three years the Town has been collecting email addresses, and it regularly sends messages to interested people who have requested to receive email information. This past year, the Town has been working more on using a few of the more common social media venues, including Twitter, YouTube, and Nixle. These are very cost effective means to get messages to the community, and information is pushed quickly to recipients. The only challenge is encouraging people to follow us on Twitter, or sign up through Nixle. These are the most timely, most affordable, and most convenient for our community. All you need to do is check out the ones that interest you.

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

Add your email to our contact list by emailing cjohnson@townofaplata.org

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

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

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

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

TOWN POSTS SNOW EMERGENCY ROUTES:

Old man winter is just around the corner, this means the possibility of snow. The Public Works Department has posted snow emergency routes throughout the Town. Parking will be prohibited on these streets while a snow emergency plan is in effect for Charles County. Vehicles parked along these roads will be ticketed or towed at the owner's expense during a snow emergency. To aid snow removal crews and improve safety, please do not park along streets when winter weather is in the forecast. Instead park in your garage, driveway, or designated parking space. The following is a list of the Town's snow emergency routes:

Agricopia Drive
Bath Drive
Clarks Run Road
Cornwall Drive
East Patuxent Drive
Fescue Circle
Garrett Avenue
Hawthorne Drive (between Rt. 301 and Washington Avenue)
Heritage Green Parkway
Hickory Circle
Hickory Lane
Kent Avenue
La Grange Avenue
Llano Drive
Magnolia Drive

Norfolk Drive
Oak Avenue
Oriole Lane
Quailwood Parkway
Queen Anne Street
Redwood Circle
Savanna Drive
Shining Willow Way (between Rt. 301 and Washington Avenue)
Somerset Street
St. Mary's Avenue
Suffolk Drive
Wales Drive
Wicomico Street
Willow Lane



Testing of Early Warning Devices/Sirens

The Town of La Plata will test our early warning devices/sirens on **Saturday, December 11, 2010 at 9:00 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.

TOWN OF LA PLATA SNOW POLICY

| County Plowed Roads | Town Plowed Roads | State Plowed Roads |
|---|--|---|
| Glen Albin Road St. Mary's Avenue from Frederick Drive to Rt. 301 Washington Avenue from Route 301 to Route 6 Radio Station Road | St. Mary's Avenue from Rt. 6 to Frederick Drive Quailwood Parkway from Hawthorne Drive to Route 6* Hillary Court, Aura Court, May Day Street, Morgan's Ridge Court, Morgan's Ridge Road* *portions or all in County (Town has a joint agreement with the county to plow some streets that are out of Town and vice versa) | Route 301 Route 6 - Charles Street Route 225 - Hawthorne Drive west beginning at Route 301 Route 488 |

Snow Preparation Procedures

- Snow removal crews will be put into action at the call of the Director or Asst. Director of Public Works
- snow removal will begin when 2" of snow has accumulated on roadways.
- snow removal efforts will be ongoing during the event and will continue until all streets in the Town are cleared.
- It may be necessary to pile snow in front of mailboxes, especially in smaller courts and cul-de-sacs.

Plow Routes

- The Town will normally plow to provide better access to the higher traveled streets first (Primary Roads, Collector Streets and Major residential roads). In addition, the Town has agreed to provide snow removal and salting for treatment of ice accumulation from all roadways, parking areas, vehicle entrances, sidewalks, and bus stop location at the MTA lot located on Washington Avenue.
- Secondly secondary streets and municipal buildings are plowed.
- Lastly cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are plowed.

Icy Conditions

- Salt distribution will be determined based on the following criteria and priority:

- Main Collector Streets
- Streets with Hills
- Difficult intersections – stop lights and stop signs
- Major residential roads

- cul-de-sacs and courts may not receive salt treatment

Sidewalks

- Town crews are responsible for clearing sidewalks at public facilities, Town Hall and Parks.
- Town of La Plata property owners are responsible for keeping all sidewalks along their property clear and free of snow and ice.

Parking

- Residents are asked not to park vehicles on any street.
- If you must park on the street park as close to the curb as possible and on one side of the street.

Examples of Street designations:

| Primary Roads | Collector Streets | Major Residential | Secondary |
|---|--|---|---|
| Agricopia Drive East Patuxent Drive Oriole Lane Shining Willow Way | St. Mary's Avenue Washington Avenue Heritage Green Pkwy. | Llano Drive Martin Drive Laurelwood Court | Baltimore St. Cecil St. Calvert St. Howard St. |

Snow Emergency Routes

Parking of vehicles on marked snow emergency routes is prohibited when the snow emergency plan is in effect for Charles County. Parking shall continue to be prohibited until the snow emergency plan has been cleared. Any vehicles that are illegally parked, that are obstructing traffic, or interfering with the clearing of snow and/or ice are subject to a parking violation or the vehicle being towed at the owner's expense.

Mailbox Replacement Policy

Please contact the Public Works Department at 301-934-8421, if your mailbox is damaged during snow removal. The Public Works Department will investigate the claim to determine if the damage was caused by the Town or contracted equipment making physical contact with the mailbox. If it is determined by the Public Works Department that the mailbox damage was at fault of the Town or contracted equipment the following options are available.

1. Replacement by the Town of existing mailbox with a standard wooden post and mailbox.
2. Property owners may be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$45.00. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to replace the mailbox.

Mailboxes damaged by snow flowing from plows will not be replaced or reimbursed.

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.

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

Sunday, December 5th 3PM to 6PM
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!
