

Elizabeth

The heart of Jo Daviess County

Special points of interest:

- **budget update**
- **Christmas in Elizabeth**
- **Electronic Sign**
- **TIF Update**
-

Village of Elizabeth Newsletter

Michael Dittmar, President

Message from the Mayor

As we are currently now full swing into fall with winter approaching, the Village is working to get big projects done before the weather turns bad. We have received a 100% grant of around \$60,000 to put insulation foam around our water tank to help keep it from freezing as it did last year. We are working hard to get it installed before this winter. We also got a 80% \$100,000 grant to fix a collapsed sewer/storm sewer pipe that goes under Highway 20 near Sycamore St. That work is schedule to begin soon.

The park grant that we mentioned in the last newsletter is complete. I had some people ask me why we spent so much money on the park. As I have stated before, that was a 100% grant that could only be used on certain things and a park was one of them. As you can see above, we got \$160,000 worth of grants for infrastructure so we are doing our diligence for all aspects of local government. The park grant was a DCEO grant given to us by our former State Rep Jim Sacia. We have received lots of compliments about how our town is looking with the park and the downtown project and the Village is committed to keep going!

The Village is not done working on the park, we plan next spring to either put in a band shell, a pavilion, new fence for the lower ball diamond, or new

fence along Highway 20. We only have enough money for one project so we will be prioritizing them soon. If you have a preference, please let a board member know. (all the improvements will be paid by TIF money that can only be spent on things in the TIF district).

I stated in the June Newsletter that the future looked bright for 2014. As you can see, many things were accomplished and hopefully we can get some more things done before the new year if not in early spring. As many of you can see, work for the new FS gas station has started and hopefully will be completed soon. The Village made a TIF redevelopment deal with Dollar General and that is still moving forward. Speaking with the folks at Westmore Equity (the company that is putting in the Dollar General), they would still like to have it up by Christmas but IDOT has asked for some additional requirements that probably will push it back to early spring. We will keep you updated on it! We currently have 4 empty stores on Main Street but the Village is working with three new businesses that are interested in bringing their business to Elizabeth. Please keep your fingers crossed. We are also working to replace the railway ties next to the funeral home.

The budget is looking very good. Two years ago we had the first surplus in several years at

around \$43,000. Last year, according to our figures, we had a surplus of around \$60,000. The audit for last fiscal year has not been completed yet so we don't know for sure. This current year just passed the quarter mark and everything looks good but most of our expenses come during the winter with snow issues, salt, and water main breaks so we will see....

Speaking of the budget, the Village Board passed a resolution to offer one of our employees an early retirement incentive. I have spoken to some people that are opposed to early retirement incentives on principal. I understand and respect that. But, I also feel that is our duty to safeguard the citizens money to the best of our ability. This incentive, because of lower insurance and salary, will save the Village taxpayers \$15,000. I think that if we can save \$15,000, we should save \$15,000.

Lastly, don't forget that at 11:00 am on December 5th and 6th, the Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Christmas in Elizabeth. I hear Santa and Mrs. Claus might be stopping in Elizabeth that day. Hope to see all out and about.

Michael Dittmar

Village, President

815-858-9823

Public Works Report

As winter approaches, don't forget to move your cars so we can snow plow in a timely manner. Also, don't forget on Catlin Street that alternate parking will be starting soon.

Second, the Village will be cutting down several trees in the next few weeks. Most of this will be done for safety so motorists can see at upcoming intersections. Don't forget, that the

Village will pay to have any tree removed on property that is between the sidewalk and the street. (don't forget that you are not supposed to plant new trees in that area as well).

Recently, the Village just sent out a survey of all water users in the town for cross connections. Cross connections surveys are required by the IEPA every two years. Some homes

or big buildings might use water boilers to heat their home and are required by law to make sure they have a backflow preventer valve so boiler water doesn't go backwards into the drinking supply. All valves with the survey are inspected every year. If you have any questions on this issue, please don't hesitate to call James Mensendike with the Village.

TIF Update

As many of you know, TIF stands for Tax Increment Financing. TIF does not increase or decrease taxes. All new property taxes (growth) in a TIF district are reallocated to the Village. A TIF district is one of the only tools municipalities have for economic development.

If it wasn't for the TIF district, our ability to recruit new businesses would not exist. Here is how we used it with the recent

redevelopment agreement with Westmore Equities (Dollar General).

At the regular board meeting in September the Village Board approved to give Westmore Equities \$250,000 over ten years of TIF funds to build in Elizabeth. They have a store in Warren that is assessed by the County at 1.5 million dollars. A similar building in Elizabeth would pay \$35,000 in property taxes a year. The Village, will

"give back" \$25,000 a year for the next ten years, still leaving \$10,000 of new increment to be used in other areas of the town (downtown businesses).

Recently, we have given several TIF incentives to help fix up buildings downtown totaling over \$60,000 that included new roofs, new windows, and just general upgrades.

New Electronic Sign

As many of you have seen, the new electronic sign is up and running. We have received many compliments about it but also some concerns on why we have money to build the sign but have water rates that are high (or something similar). That is a great question. As we have stated earlier in past newsletters, water money can only be used for water projects and TIF money can only be used for things in the TIF district. The sign was paid for by using TIF money.

The Village had been asked by several community groups for awhile to have some kind of electronic community sign. When the Village did the Mapping Process, it was decided by that group to make it a priority. The Mapping group did raise about 1/3 of the total cost of the sign through donations.

So who can use the sign? The sign will be free for anyone that donated to it, non-profit organizations (churches, boy scouts, farmers market, GEAR), any community event, and paid advertisers. It has been decided that no

political ads will be allowed, even if paid. Currently, we have had two paid advertisers (Dittmar Farms Pumpkin Patch and an auction). We encourage more paid advertisement as it will help reduce the cost of the sign.

If anyone is interested in using the sign, please contact the elizsign@gmail.com. A sign up form is being created and will be linked onto the Village web-page as soon as possible.

Police Chief Report

This year I have been dealing with a type of crime I have never dealt with before. When I started in Law Enforcement in 1989, the internet did not yet exist, and if it did, it was in a very limited form for business and government transactions. Computers existed; however, not like now. The world we live in now is similar in one way to the world in 1989. Predators have always existed who swindled you out of your money, but in my opinion, the predators have turned these swindles into an art form through the use of the internet. I can only encourage you to be very cautious with

purchasing anything on the internet, especially if not done through an established institution or business. Be very leery of anyone wanting prepayment for an item upfront. People who use the explanation : someone else is interested so if you send me the money first, you will get the item." The FBI maintains a website regarding reporting Internet swindles, www.ic3.gov. They have an ability to track predators and shut down the larger swindlers. Don't hesitate to enter information from an internet scam that you may think is going on. It may save your fellow law abiding citizen a

great deal of grief and financial suffering.

Beware of any phone calls asking you for your personal information. Beware of people calling you and saying your loved one is in jail and they need the money wired for bond. Law enforcement will not call relatives or anyone for posting bond. Please be cautious, many phone and internet scams exist and the scammers gain new victims every day.

Scott Toot, Chief of Police

GEAR Update

Greater Elizabeth Arts & Recreation (GEAR) would like to thank the community for supporting our latest event, Funky Munky Wrestling. If you attended, we hope you had a great time! Our next big event will be Alumni Day on January 3rd, a chance to play in the gym where River Ridge basketball first started. We'll soon send out info about how to register to play, so save the date! We are in need of a few people to help collect forms, contact people, and split up teams. If you're able to help, please contact GEAR president, Jeremy Knauer,

at jknauer@riverridge210.org.

The Jacked in the Box Fitness class is filled to capacity and doing well. The GEAR Judo class is still accepting new students, teenagers or adults. The class meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:30 PM at the Elizabeth gym. First class is free, so you have nothing to lose!

With cold weather quickly approaching, no doubt the community is interested in gym usage. For the latest info about

the gym and how to schedule use, please contact GEAR secretary, Erin Horn, at erinkeyserhorn@gmail.com.

Our annual Manny's Pizza fundraiser will be in November, as well as youth basketball sign-ups. For more updates from GEAR, visit our website at www.gearelizababeth.wordpress.com. From there you can sign up for our email newsletter or like our Facebook page. Thank you for your continued support!

Odds and Ends

- Anyone interested in running for Village Trustee can pick up a petition to circulate now. They are due in December. Call The Village Hall for more info

- Don't forget we start plowing at 5:00 am and go to 8:00 pm during snow events. On Friday and Saturday nights we go to 9:00 pm.

- The Village still has money left for this year's beautification program (\$250 grant to paint your house). The Village has expanded it to include siding and major landscaping. Please apply at the Village Hall.
- The Village of Elizabeth continues to make improvements on the School

We have rebuilt three heaters, will be installing a new gas heating system in one room, rebuilt the boiler, fixed a tube leak in the boiler, fixed an air line leak that ran the heating system and a ton of other odds and ends. Please come down and check it out.

The Village Municipal Building has its own drop off box for water bill payments. The "Mail Boss Package Master" is a large, secured mail box system with a slot specifically designed for "drop offs". It is a locked box and is fully secured for your cash and check payments. It will be checked on a daily basis. Payments can still be made at the Apple River State Bank, by mail or dropped off inside the Village admin office. This is just another convenience the Village is offering you.



The Village of Elizabeth

310 West Street
PO Box 236
Elizabeth, IL 61028
Phone: 815-858-3911
Fax: 815-858-9212
E-mail: villageofelizabeth@aeroinc.net
Mike's E-mail: mikedittmar210@yahoo.com



We're on the Web!

(Village Municipal web-page) <http://villageofelizabeth.pbworks.com>
(Relocation web-page) <http://www.riverridge210.org/welcome/Elizabeth.html>
Facebook—Village of Elizabeth, Illinois



The Village Board of Elizabeth published this newsletter in an effort to better communicate with the residents of the Village of Elizabeth. We intend to continue a tri-annual newsletter and will do our best to keep it up to date. The Village welcomes any organization that would like to use the newsletter or the Village websites to help advertise/communicate local events. Please contact Michael Dittmar or the Village Hall at 815-858-3911 if interested.

*Sincerely,
The Village Board of Elizabeth*



Upcoming Dates and Community Events

Upcoming Dates

Dec 2nd Public Works Committee meeting 7:00

Dec 3rd—Administrative Committee meeting 7:00

Dec 10th—Regular Meeting 7:00

Dec 17th—Winter Concert at River Ridge

**Christmas
in Elizabeth
Dec 5th
and 6th**

Promote your event here.
Just let us know!