

Focus on Phelps from Mayor James E. Cheney

January, 2010

It's hard to believe that we're entering a new decade. The decade that is ending has been quite a rollercoaster ride for many people. One of the good things about living in a small community is that we tend to even out that ride. Situations never get to the highs or to the lows that we read about happening elsewhere. Deputy Mayor Brian Hemminger and I have been on the Village Board throughout this past decade, having been elected in 2000. Trustees Joe DeBrock and Howard Hughson have been serving longer than that. Trustee Greg DeRuyter is our newbie being elected a couple of years ago. We're hoping he'll provide the consistency into the future. That consistency and dedication to service is what helps keep the ride in the Village of Phelps as smooth as possible.

But, we really have to thank the people who really make this Village work: our terrific group of Village employees, along with the various people who sit on committees, commissions and the Planning and Zoning Boards. Whenever I am at meetings with people familiar with local communities, I hear how lucky we are to have the group that we do ... people who care that much about their community. These folks make our job as the Village Board of Trustees much more effective. Combined, our six full time employees have over 100 years of experience. Carl Peake is at 37 years and Ken McAllister is at 26.

Be sure to thank them when you get a chance.

While 2009 will probably be remembered most for state and national issues, we continued to work on local issues and to plan for, maintain and improve our village.

Reflections on Completed Projects in 2009

The new Transfer Station was completed and opened in May. It has worked even better than expected, thanks in large part to your cooperation. A side benefit has been on the environmental front. Even though usage of the facility has increased, the tonnage we are disposing has dropped, almost in half. At the same time, the recycling has increased significantly. The Village Board recently looked at the costs of operation and we expect to hold the per pound charge at least through this fiscal year, which ends in May.

The water line on Franklin Street has been replaced, upgrading service to this area.

The Youth, Parks & Recreation program held or assisted with summer recreation activities, concerts in the park, the Old Fashioned Picnic at Redfield Park, the Harvest Festival, the Halloween Parade and the Tree Lighting; plus, many other projects.

Walnut Street was re-paved.

The Business Development & Tourism Council, with a grant from the Preston Foundation, and the cooperation of property owners, has begun a façade improvement project downtown, painting many of the buildings.

The Arts Center renovated the sanctuary of their building and continues to grow and bring art displays, events and visitors to the village.

The Historical Society renovated and re-opened the Country Lawyer's Office as a museum.

The Village acquired the former Amber Fence property on William St, with the help of the Preston Foundation, to develop a water side park.

More sidewalks that were in bad shape were replaced.

New exterior doors are being installed at the Community Center.

These are the "out-of-the-ordinary" projects that got done on top of the normal day-to-day maintenance and operational issues that get taken care of by Village employees and other organizations. It's pretty humbling to realize how much gets done in what the Board considers a "slow" year.

Looking towards 2010

Given the uncertainty with our economy, the Village has gone into somewhat of a "maintenance mode", where we're not planning a lot of projects. The few things we know will continue to be worked on are:

Sidewalks

Downtown facades hopefully will be completed by the property owners and BDTTC

Franklin St will be re-paved

The park by Flint Creek will start to be developed

Our normal youth & recreation programs will continue and hopefully, be enhanced.

Part of the community center will receive a new heating / air conditioning system will help from the Preston Foundation

On behalf of the Village Board, the Village Employees and everyone associated with the Village of Phelps, thank you for the opportunity to serve our community and best wishes for a prosperous 2010!

Thank you for continuing to share your thoughts, ideas and talents with our community. Please feel free to contact any Village Board member regarding issues you feel are important, including me at 548-8017 or mayer@phelpsny.com.