

# Focus on Phelps from Mayor James E. Cheney July, 2009

## Department of Public Works

### Sidewalks

We will continue the program of replacing the worst sidewalks throughout this season. We expect to do quite a bit of this in the next month or so.

### Transfer Station

Thank you to everyone for your cooperation, patience and understanding during the transition to the new operating procedures at the transfer station. There are still some quirks to work out, but mostly, it went as planned. Thanks to all our employees for their extra efforts in making this as smooth a transition as it was.

Interestingly, the amount of waste disposed of was reduced dramatically in May, 2009 versus May, 2008. More recycling? Less water weight? We're not sure yet, but we'll be tracking to see if the trend continues.

### Downtown

Thanks to Carl Peake and his helpers for putting the flower carts together and keeping them healthy throughout the summer. We get a lot of nice compliments about the appearance of downtown.

### Franklin Street

We plan to begin work on replacing the water line on Franklin Street later this summer.

### Walnut Street

Even though we really aren't ready to rebuild Walnut Street, we will be putting a temporary surface on it because it has deteriorated so badly.

## Fire Department

### New Truck

At the request of the Fire Department, the Village recently purchased a new pumper truck. It was the intent of the department and the board to begin searching now for a purchase in a year or two. As the committee began its search, they became aware of a used truck that was in great shape and would more than fill our needs. Although there was some hesitation, the board and committee asked a lot of questions and were satisfied it was the right decision to purchase this vehicle, saving about 40% of the cost of a brand new equivalent vehicle. Thanks to all involved for their work on this.

## Youth, Parks & Recreation

### Summer Recreation

June 29<sup>th</sup> – August 14<sup>th</sup> at the Community Center, under the leadership of Mary Lowry. Daily 1:00 – 4:00 pm and requires no fees, except if your child participates in the field trips. We do ask that you register your children the first time you bring them so that we have appropriate information. The children can attend as often or as little as you want them to. They're sure to have a great time. Call the Village Office for more details and take advantage anytime of this wonderful program.

### Concerts in Redfield Park

Every Monday in July at 6:30 pm. In case of rain, the concerts will be moved to the American Legion.

7/6: For Dancers Only – (Big Bands Sound)

7/13: Two Steps Back (guitar & bass duo – old favorites)

7/20: Aaron DeRuyter – (Americana Folk)

7/27: The Bristol Brothers (Bluegrass)

Bring your blankets/chairs.

Thanks to the Legion for helping sponsor this activity again this year.

*It's going to be another busy, fun-filled summer for all ages in our Community. Please support all the efforts of those putting these events together. You can keep up with the schedule by reviewing the Community Calendar on [www.phelpsnyc.com](http://www.phelpsnyc.com). Anyone who says there is nothing to do in Phelps isn't looking very hard.*

### Community Picnic & Old Fashioned Baseball

The baseball team from Genesee Country Museum will be back on August 16<sup>th</sup> to play the Phelps All-Stars (if you're interested in playing, please contact team captain Dave Clark at 548-4045 – we could use a few all-stars). The picnic will be from 12:00-4:00, with the game starting at 1:00. We will have old fashioned prices on hot dogs and beverages served up by the Village and Town Boards and employees. We also will have a band playing in the gazebo and a lot of activities planned to get everyone involved. Mark your calendars and come join the fun! Everyone seems to be pretty stressed right now. Come relax and enjoy life in a small town as only we can!



### Sauerkraut Festival

The 43rd Annual Sauerkraut Festival will take place again this year at the Firemen's Field July 30 – August 2. Please come out and support this community project that is important to many organizations.

## Two Sides of Phelps

If you didn't know Phelps, what would you think of it? On the one hand, our downtown businesses are suffering like many other communities. On the other hand, we have new businesses that are trying to thrive. We have seen a number of businesses come and go in the past few years, while many of our mainstays are creatively finding ways to succeed.

We have some buildings that are in terrible shape, while we have buildings that are being fixed and improved. Many homeowners are doing their best to keep their lawns looking nice and painting their homes, while others are not being kept up at all.

We have strong leadership and participation in many volunteer organizations. But, if you're new to the community, try getting to know people and make new friends. Try fitting in or joining those same organizations. We're the "Friendly Town" when we know you and like you, but what if we don't?

There is a lot of activity and planned events by many organizations. What if you're a teenager without a car or a young couple with no children? What is there for you to do?

The answer to these questions and apparent contradictions is the same here as it is most small towns, I imagine. It's all true, but here we're mostly moving in a positive direction. We just need to keep pressing forward with a modified vision of where we want to be. When we don't get there or as the events and circumstances around us change, we'll tweak our vision and start the cycle over again.

One of the things that this community has always had going for it is that it has never been easy. Phelps has always been made up of hard-working people trying to make things better. So, as the rest of the world struggles, we continue to press on and do the things we need to do, just as we always have. We're used to it.

Looking around, there are some struggles. Downtown is largely empty again. Our branch of Bank of America is the latest casualty of the economy. The branch in downtown will be closed soon. Many feelers have been put out, but no other bank is ready to commit. On the positive side, we do have banks on either end of the Village, already.

Many of the organizations are working together on fundraisers and a flurry of activity over the next few months that will have people wondering, "What's happening in Phelps this week?"

The Arts Center has an unbelievable sculpture display that they are moving out into the community for more people to enjoy.

The Village will be closing soon on the Amber Fence property on William Street to create a park with access to Flint Creek.

The Historical Society is planning local events for you to learn more about our own history, while also planning trips to other places to learn about theirs.

The Community Center has increased their community education programs to reach a broader audience, bringing in people from throughout the county and beyond. They, along with the Youth, Park & Recreation Commission, are also trying to increase events that will draw in more people. They have a

circus coming on July 17<sup>th</sup>. And, with the Library, they are sponsoring the Phelps Phenomenal Race on July 25<sup>th</sup>, a knock-off of the Amazing Race TV show, which is sure to be a lot of fun.



The Business Development & Tourism Council (BDTC), through a grant from the Preston Foundation is helping business and property owners in the historic district paint their buildings, which will make a vast improvement in the appearance of

downtown.

All this is happening in a loosely coordinated effort to bring people to Phelps. I'm hesitant to talk about individual businesses, especially any I am involved in. But, if you pay attention, between the organizations and the downtown businesses, you can see where the trend is focused. I'm not sure I like to say that we're bringing tourists in, but rather that we're encouraging visitors.

The gallery my wife operates is drawing people from all over Western NY, Pennsylvania and even Canada. They're impressed with what our community offers. We have bus companies interested in bringing tours here. Finger Lakes Railway sees an opportunity for train rides to stop in Phelps and visit all that we offer. These people that the gallery, the Arts Center and the Historical Society bring in then visit Flint Creek Brewery, the Phelps Hotel, Waterside Wine Bar, the bakery and other restaurants and shops. A proposed stained glass studio downtown is going to compliment these efforts.

Through an Eagle Scout project, we will have an actual train stop shelter placed on Church and Pleasant, where the old depot was, to encourage more visitors via train rides.

The BDTC has been coordinating shared advertising between these businesses and organizations, such as the Historical Society and Arts Center, into adjacent counties and tourism publications. They, along with the Chamber, have recently completed a Visitor's Guide, with 10,000 copies being put in brochure racks throughout the state. People love to come to our old-fashioned, little village where they can slow down and watch families and community live the way it is intended and enjoy what appears to be a simpler way, a simpler time.

To make all these efforts, successful, however, we need more people to step up. We need people who have ideas for businesses downtown and always wanted to take a shot at it to take that shot now. What unique businesses will draw people here and compliment what is already started? What services do we need that we're missing? Will you invest in yourself and your community?

We need business owners that will provide 100% top notch, down home service to their customers, people who will treat them better than family.

We need organizations that are not only welcoming new residents, but reaching out to them to make them part of our community. We need residents who would rather join their community of real people than talk on the internet.

Sure, we have empty storefronts. But, those can be seen as opportunities, rather than an obstacle, by people who share a vision. There's no doubt that it is a struggle economically right now. But, what is the alternative? Giving up? More than ever, we need to show one, united side of Phelps ... the positive

**Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow**

side.