



The Message

Issue 260

September 2008 Edition

From the Desk of the Mayor

By Malinda Miles

August 12, 2008

Summer is almost over, and we are about to enter into the fall of the year. For many of us it is time to start thinking about getting our children back in school, and losing a few extra pounds gained over the summer. I am sure that the coming of fall is a time to do many different things. Below are a few other things that might be appropriate for this time of year.



Appealing your tax assessment

Every property owner has the right to appeal the notice of assessment of his or her property tax assessment within 45 days of the date of the notice. Regular reassessment notices are issued **once** every three years and usually mailed in late December. In addition to the regular reassessment notice, the law requires a notice be issued when the assessment on a property changes for the following reasons: a change in use or character of the property; substantial improvement to the property; or rezoning of the property. If you believe your tax assessment is too high, call and set up an appointment to appeal before the deadline (December 31 this year). If not, you will be stuck with paying your property taxes with no recourse. You may also **write a letter to your local tax assessment office.**

IN THIS ISSUE...

Councilmember Tarlau's Report	8
Councilmember Knedler's Report	9
Message from City Manager	10
Message from Chief Scott	11
Crime Statistics	14
MRTV Channel 71	17
MRBA Taste of Mount Rainier	17
Mount Rainier Passport Event	18
Trash Collection Notice	19
Trash Schedule	19
Directory of Important Contacts	20

In addition, the Department of Assessments and Taxation administers a number of property tax relief programs that are specifically designed to provide needed relief to certain groups of property owners. Obtain additional information about these Programs by calling the Department's Taxpayer services office at (410)767-4433 (Baltimore Area) or 1-800-944-7403 (toll free)

Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program

The Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program (Circuit Breaker) is the largest and most important program in that it provides annual property tax credits to one out of every 17 homeowners who qualify because of income. This State funded program provides over \$49 million in needed relief to homeowners who meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of age.

These tax credits **are not given** automatically. The homeowner must reapply each year and provide information regarding the total gross household income (under \$60,000) for the previous calendar year. ***The filing deadline is September 1.***

The tax credit is determined according to the relationship between the homeowner's income and actual property tax that is levied against the property owner's principal residence. The tax credit does not cover the full amount of the property tax. Rather, credits are computed according to a sliding scale, with the result that the tax credit diminishes as the gross household income increases.

Homestead Tax Credit Program

Another tax relief program is the Homestead Tax Credit. First enacted in 1977, the program has been amended so that homeowners may be eligible for a State tax credit if the assessment of their owner-occupied principal residence increased more than 10% over the prior year. State law requires that county and municipal governments set a Homestead Credit Percentage between 0% and 10% for purposes of local property taxation. Beginning in 2008, homeowners are required to submit a one-time tax credit application that is included in that year's Assessment Notice sent to one-third of the property owners.

Property Tax Deferral

This program allows property owners, age 65 or older, to elect to defer the increase in their property tax bill. Each local government must first adopt the program. The local government then has the authority under State law to impose income restrictions and interest rate amounts. The deferred taxes become a lien on the property and must be repaid when the property is transferred. Montgomery County makes this deferral program available to homeowners of all ages who meet certain residency and income requirements.

Senior MUST file to get the stimulus package

Senior even if you do not normally file an income tax form, this year you must file in order to receive the economic stimulus packet. To qualify for the stimulus payment, you must file by Oct. 15 of this year.

Not everyone is eligible for the stimulus package. If you do not file your income taxes, you will certainly not receive the stimulus packet even if you are eligible.

Normally certain Social Security payments are not subject to income tax. However, the economic stimulus law passed in February contains a special provision allowing Social Security recipients to count those benefits toward the qualifying income requirement of \$3,000 and thereby qualify for the stimulus payment.

For eligible Social Security recipients who do not normally file a tax return, the IRS has prepared an 8-page informational package that provides instructions, a sample Form 1040A and a blank Form 1040A — everything needed to file the tax form. Order or download [Package 1040A-3](#), 8-page informational package

Do you need help with filing for the economic stimulus package? Call 1-800-829-1040. You might have to wait for Assistance, but do not give up.

This is a one-time offer and it ends on October 15!

NOTE: If you have already filed to get your payment, but have a question or issue, try this link (or go to one of the walk-in offices):

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=177937,00.html>

Getting help with HIGH-energy bills

The Office of Home Energy Programs (**OHEP**) helps low-income Maryland citizens pay their heating bills, minimize heating crises, and make energy costs more affordable. A comprehensive energy package, which includes the Maryland Energy Assistance Program and the Electric Universal Service Program, has links to the community and the customer. These programs promote energy conservation, customer financial responsibility and energy independence.

The Maryland Energy Assistance Program (**MEAP**) provides assistance with home heating bills. Limited assistance is available to replace broken or inefficient furnaces.

The Electric Universal Service Program (**EUSP**) is a state program that is administered by the Department of Human Resources to assist eligible low-income electric customers with their electric bills. Assistance is available whether you are an active customer or you are currently without service. Eligible electric customers may receive help in three ways:

Help to pay current electric bills;

Help to pay past due electric bills; and,

Help with energy efficiency measures to reduce future electric bills.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (**WAP**) has moved to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). OHEP will continue to refer eligible customers to WAP. WAP may provide home weatherization services to eligible individuals such as weather stripping, caulking, plastic window covering, etc. to help make your home or apartment more fuel efficient and comfortable at no cost. For additional information, please call 1800-638-7781 or log on to www.dhcd.state.md.us

The Utility Service Protection Program (**USPP**) protects low-income families from utility cut-offs and allows MEAP eligible households to enter into a year-round even monthly payment program with their utility company. An equal monthly payment plan based on the estimated cost of the customer's average annual utility usage minus the MEAP benefit will be used to determine the even monthly payments for participation in the USPP.

You may apply for all of this energy assistance programs with a single application. Eligible customers may receive help from both programs. For information contact the [Local Home Energy Programs Office](#) in your area, or call 1-800-352-1446. (For the hearing impaired-1-800-925-4434).

100 Year Celebration Committee Members Needed (2010 Committee)

If you live, work, or even pass through this great City and wish to be a part of this celebration, this is your invitation to be a part of the planning committee. To sign on to the Committee, email Ms. Janis Lomax jlomax@mountrainiermd.org or call her at 301-985-6585. She will take your name, address, telephone number, email address, and begin setting up the Committee. The first meeting of the committee will be Saturday, September 27 10:30am Mount Rainier City Hall. We need to begin planning a grand celebration for 2010! Be a part of the action. Join this committee today.

Historian/Writer NEEDED!

Mount Rainier needs it's on **historian** to write our history from 1975 to present, and for becoming the depository for our history. This will be an awesome task for someone inclined to capture the history of our coming or age municipality. It will be well worth the time and energy to see our history come alive on paper. If you have the time and skills to take on this task or know someone who is, please contact Ms. Lomax or any member of the Mayor and Council with all necessary contact information so that we can discuss this project with you.

Gateway CDC

I am sure that we are all aware of the reorganizational efforts taking place at the Gateway CDC. I ask that you not rush to conclusions, but continue to get the facts. The Mayor and Council recently received a report from representatives of the Gateway CDC. Additional information has been requested, and members of the Council have vowed to continue the dialog. In addition, there are a few projects funded through the CDC that are in question that are being addressed by the Mayor and Council and will continue to be addressed until they are resolved. A meeting with the president of the Gateway CDC is scheduled and will be held before you receive this newsletter. An update on this meeting will be provided at a later date.

Mayor and Council Recess

At the last meeting in June, the Mayor and Council voted to recess July (work sessions only) and August with special meetings as needed. We held a number of special meetings to address issues about the Bass property; community development block grant (CDBG) programs, and to host a public hearing on the Bass property.

If you have not already heard, the City has agreed to purchase the Bass property (consisting of several properties) for a purchase price of \$954, 000. A \$50,000 good faith deposit was made this week following the signing of the contract to purchase. We expect to go to settlement within the next 90 days. Various sources of financing are being considered for this purchase. Rest assured, the City's coffers will not be drained, and every effort will be made to generate some revenue from the property as we seek to revitalize that area.

You may not know how the City manages to get much of its streets, curbs and gutters work done throughout the year. Well it is done through grants from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via our County government through CDBG grants. Each year for the past several years, Mount Rainier received \$100,000 for streets, curbs and gutter work. Last year many of the municipalities (including Mount Rainier) did not receive CDBG funding from the County. Yet, the County's allocation from HUD is based on its population as well as its needs (poverty, low income, etc.), and most of the inner beltway communities comprise the largest eligibility group and are found in municipalities. To participate in these funds under the County, the County requires a cooperation agreement from each municipality agreeing to participate, and to relinquish any say in how the funds are allocated. Because of this, the County has sole authority to distribute the funds, as it deems appropriate. Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) has asked for a greater say in this process and for its fair share of the funds awarded to the County. Our allocation for this fiscal year is again \$100,000 even though we were promised the funding from the previous year. This will have a negative impact on our streets, curbs and gutter work. Some much needed street work will be delayed, and your patience much appreciated.

Immunization requirement for Maryland Children



Vaccine Requirements For Children
Enrolled in Preschool Programs and in Schools
 Per DHMH Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.06.04.03
 Maryland School Year 2008 - 2009 (Valid 9/1/08 - 8/31/09)

Required cumulative number of doses for each vaccine for PRESCHOOL aged children enrolled in educational programs									
Vaccine Current Age of Child	DTaP/DTP/ DT	Polio ²	Hib ³	Measles ^{2,4}	Mumps ^{2,4}	Rubella ^{2,4}	Varicella ^{2,4,5} (Chickenpox)	Hepatitis B	PCV7 ³ (Prevnar TM)
Less than 2 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2 - 3 months	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
4 - 5 months	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
6 - 11 months	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
12 - 14 months	3	3	At least 1 dose given after 12 months of age	1	1	1	1	3	2
15 - 23 months	4	3	At least 1 dose given after 12 months of age	1	1	1	1	3	2
24—59 months	4	3	At least 1 dose given after 12 months of age	1	1	1	1	3	1
60 - 71 months	4	3	0	2	2	2	1	3	0

Required cumulative number of doses for each vaccine for children enrolled in KINDERGARTEN - 12 th grade								
Grade Level Grade (Ungraded)	DTaP/DTP/ Tdap/DI/Td ¹	Polio ^{2,7}	Measles ^{2,4}	Mumps ^{2,4}	Rubella ^{2,4}	Varicella ^{2,4} (Chickenpox)	Hepatitis B ³	
Kindergarten (5 yrs)	4	3	2	1	1	1	3	
Grades 1 - 11 (6 - 16 yrs)	4 or 3 ⁶	3	2	1	1	1 or 2 ⁶	3	
Grade 12 (17 - 18+ yrs)	4 or 3 ⁶	3	2	1	1	Not required	Not required	

PLEASE note that there is one revision to the 2008 – 2009 immunization requirements include:

- Varicella (chickenpox) and Hepatitis B vaccine requirements will be required for children entering preschool programs through eleventh grades.

If you have school age children, please make sure that you check their immunization before returning them to school. Your child may be eligible for health insurance, contact the local health department at 301-333-4822 or 301-324-2933. If you have questions about immunization requirements or enforcement of immunization regulations, please contact your local health department or the Center for Immunization at (410) 767-6679.

Drop-IN Basketball

June 6, 2008 Drop-in Basketball took off with “one” Mount Rainier youth showing up. He came the first day, probably only once after that, but he was the beginning of something wonderful. On that Saturday night, almost fifty (50) youths from Mount Rainier and Brentwood came out to play and to see what it was going on. Most of those young people came back each weekend and brought their friends, cousins, and some even brought their parents. At the end, the numbers

dropped and gave way to football practice, but not before the youth made it known that it was something that should be continued.

A play off between the youth and our police officers was scheduled, but cancelled at the last minute because of logistics. **It is rescheduled for Saturday, August 23, 208 at 6:00pm.** All are invited to come out and see our young people and our police officers interact in a positive manner.

Speaking of basketball, have you noticed how many young people are using the basketball court at Arundel and 30th Streets? It is an activity whose time has come, and the young people are thrilled to have a place to gather, chat, shoot hoops, play a game or even entertain their younger siblings. There have been some issues with noise, getting them to leave the park at dark, cleaning up behind themselves, and now and then some foul language. However, for the most part, the basketball court has been a success. It is always in use, and attracts old and young to its nets.

As responsible adults, let us not rush to judgment to take down the hoops. I have had at least one call complaining that the park has become infested with drugs. I truly believe that this is an unwarranted complaint. Our police officers have been asked to check the park regularly, and on at least two occasions they have actually been called and gone to the park to check, but nothing has been found.

Keep in mind as you look at the basketball court as a nuisance, that it is the only recreational park available for our teens. There is no recreation center with ongoing activities. Only in May did we get a soccer goal for the children to play soccer on the fields of Thomas Stone Elementary School. This has been the state of affairs for our older teens for years. So, let us give them a chance and work with them to make it work.

The noise level is down, the hanging out on apartment steps is down, and our children are getting in some real physical exercise – good for the body, mind and soul. As with anything, we still need to monitor the park and ensure the safety of our children as they continue to use the park and the basketball courts. Please report any negative behavior or activities. Here are some of the standing rules that should be enforced:

- 1) The basketball court is a shared space for the community.
- 2) The court is a part of the park and closes at dusk, no exceptions.
- 3) Consumption of alcoholic beverages or any kind is illegal and will be punished.
- 4) Everyone is expected to pitch in with keeping the park clean and available to others.
- 5) Profanity, fighting, and just plain bad behavior will not be tolerated and will be cause for the basketball hoops to once again be permanently remove.

A Community Activist Says Her Final Goodbye

On August 7, 2008, the City of Mount Rainier lost to cancer one of its most active citizens, Gloria Elizabeth Guess. Gloria came to Mount Rainier from Washington DC where she taught elementary students music for more than 35 years. She believed that music was the key to children learning history, math, reading, and civics. She also believed that as a teacher, she had to practice what she taught and so she rolled up her sleeves and became active in her beloved Mount Rainier. Gloria was an active participant in “We Can 2” a strong community activity group that began the initial work to get Bass to be a good cooperate citizen. With her orange hat friends and members, she walked the streets of the downtown area, and Kaywood to let the

world know that Mount Rainier was not the place to be to run drugs, prostitution, or any other criminal activity.

I will miss Gloria, but I believe those who walked shoulder to shoulder with her to clean up Mount Rainier will also miss her. Bon Voyage Gloria, thanks for all the hard work.

Trees!

It seems that Mother Nature has not been too kind to us recently with our trees. Many of them are dead, dying or in serious disrepair. Luther Smith, Public Works Director, and, I have surveyed the City making a list of all the dead trees and broken branches. Some of the work to remove the dead trees and branches was started a few weeks ago. It will be a long process, but we will get the trees and branches down on public right away.

NOW, that brings us to private property. There are a number of dead trees on private property throughout the City. According to our City Codes, property owners are required to remove their dead trees in a timely manner. This Code is a safety code and is there to protect residents, not just the homeowners, but neighbors whose house might be hit by a falling tree in a storm or the tree might land on a car, and God forbid that accidently someone is hit by a falling tree or branch that could have been avoided.

Volunteers needed for first day of school to give a child a pencil

Again, this year, the school board and school CEO John Deasy are asking members of the community and elected official to come out and welcome our students back to school. This activity was started a few years ago to show community support for our schools. This year, Prince George's County Public Schools and Prince George's County (Livable Communities) have partnered in this effort to have volunteers welcome students, administrators and parents back to school. If you are able to give an hour of your time on Monday August 25, 2008, please join me at one of the following schools on Monday to meet, greet, and welcome our students back to our schools. Children from Mount Rainier generally attend:

Mount Rainier Elementary School, Ms. Janet Reid, principal **(8:00am)**, 4011 32nd St., Mt Rainier, MD, 20712, 301-985-1810; (Contact: Malinda Miles – 302-237-3889)

Thomas Stone Elementary School, Ms. Helen Smith, principal **(8:00am)**, 4500 34th St., Mt Rainier, MD 20712, 301-985-1890; (Contact: Rev. Deborah Johnson – 301-350-7975)

Hyattsville Middle School, Ms. Gail Golden, principal, **(7:15am)**, 6001 42nd Ave, Hyattsville 301-985-1760; (Contact: not confirmed)

Northwestern High School, Mr. Jerome Thomas, principal, **(9:15 am.)**, 7000 Adelphi Rd, Hyattsville, MD 20782, 301-985-1820 (Contact: not confirmed).

Pencils will be available to hand out to students as they arrive. Please come join in this effort. Can't join us on Monday, you may drop off pencil to Mount Rainier City Hall. Thank you.

Don't Be Left Disconnected

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is encouraging families to be prepared for the national switch from analog to digital television. By February 17, 2009, the PGCPS cable television station aired on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon Channel 38 will begin digital broadcasting. This conversion from analog to digital broadcasting is known nationally as the

digital television (DTV) transition. Converter boxes are available, if you do not have Comcast Cable or Verizon.

Condolences to the following families on their loss: Delegate Doyle Niemann on the loss of his Mother, Mrs. Ruby Neder on the loss of her husband Donald Neder (also drove the Caller-A-Bus for the City); and to all of the other families in Mount Rainier that have lost a love one. No words can fill your void, but on behalf of the residents of Mount Rainier, I extend our sincere sympathy.

As always your comments, concerns, and responses are welcome. Contact me at mayormiles@malindamiles.com or post a comment on my blog.

Report from Ward 1 – Jimmy Tarlau

Positive Thoughts about Mount Rainier

Last month there was a great article in the Weekend Edition of the Washington Post highlighting Mt. Rainier as one of five places of interest for a daytrip in the metropolitan area.

It made me think about all the great things in our community and how we often don't appreciate enough how lucky we are to live here.

I love Mt. Rainier and made a list of some of the things I love about our town:

I love sitting at **Artmosphere Cafe** on a Monday evening and listening to free jazz.

I love going to a reception for a new art exhibition at the **H&F Art Gallery**.

I love having a stout ice cream cone at **Island Style**.

I love watching all the people improving their houses in our town.

I love watching a live dance performance at **Joe's** and seeing all the people who come from far away to attend the same performance which I walked to from my house.

I love visiting the artists' studios during the studio tour on **Mount Rainier Day**.

I love watching the volunteers from the **Bike Co-op** who repair bikes behind City Hall.

I love the fact that people from all over the area shop at **Glut** for the produce, cheeses, and breads and its right down the street from my house.

I love the diversity and the sense of community.

I love the fact that I live inside the beltway and can be in downtown DC in less than 20 minutes.

I love being five minutes away from **Franklin's** where I can have a beer and appetizers at half price during their happy hour.

I love the fact that there are so many social activists in our community.

I could go on and on and I'm sure people have other lists they could make.

I only state this because sometimes I hear too much negativity both on our list-serves and at our Council sessions. Yes, it is important to constructively criticize and try to improve our community. There is too much crime, too much litter, and too many abandoned houses. Things could be better, but many of these problems are symptomatic of the metropolitan area and the times we are living in.

Last month some members of Gateway CDC's Board of Directors came to the Council to discuss some of Gateway's recent problems with completing projects to which it has been committed. These volunteer board members were open with the Council and discussed what they were doing to correct the problems. The council, rather than thanking them as residents from our community who volunteer to help with the organization, chastised them for the problems they were trying to solve. It made many of them feel that it wasn't worth volunteering. I think this is the wrong message to send. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the residents who volunteer their time to serve on the Gateway CDC, the Design Review Board, Friends of the Library, the HMB Boys and Girls Club, the Tool Shed, Joe's Movement Emporium, and all the other civic associations in our community.

I want to thank the Mayor and the other Council members for dedicating their time and energy to helping improve our community. Let's create an atmosphere where more people are encouraged to volunteer to improve our City.

COUNCILMEMBER KNEDLER'S WARD 2 REPORT

VOTE TO PURCHASE LAND. The City Council voted unanimously in August to purchase the Bass properties in the 3200 block of Rhode Island Ave. for the negotiated price of \$953,000 (the appraised value). The exact method of funding the purchase will be decided in Sept. With bond interest rates so low, I suspect the council will lean toward bond financing.

A problem with our redevelopment effort is getting small parcels assembled under one owner. The City Council has very methodically and purposefully moved toward that goal. We patiently allowed private owners time to assemble the properties and that failed. We established the urban renewal zone. Then we found a developer partner via an RFP process. We had the properties appraised. We declared the properties to be blighted by resolution. We then sent out condemnation letters with our intent to use eminent domain powers as a last resort.

The City has no intention of being the developer of that block. The City is acting as a catalyst in this redevelopment. We will secure the Bass land which is the largest parcel. It has access to Eastern Ave., Rhode Island Ave, and the city-owned alley in the rear. The City will be in a much stronger negotiating position with a developer once we own the largest parcel. You may recall that the Council was heavily criticized from some quarters when we issued the RFP since we did not own anything other than the alley. We have eminent domain power to take the rest and we will find a developer to finance the eminent domain taking if absolutely necessary.

The City will likely keep a small ownership interest in the development in order to control not only what is built on the site, but more importantly, what businesses are given leases to operate there. Without some amount of ownership, the City in reality has very little control. Zoning only goes so far and the county controls zoning, not the city. Zoning prohibits certain uses in that zone (pawn shops, check cashing, churches, industrial uses, etc), BUT there are many allowed uses that might not be what the citizens want to see. Do we want yet another dollar store, hair salon, thrift store, fast food carryout? Do we want a cheap motel? Without ownership, we have zero say in who opens what business as long as it is permitted by the mixed-use zoning.

The City's involvement in redevelopment has a long history. Key projects have been part of the revitalization efforts in our downtown: the new city hall, a new "green" police station, and the state-funded roundabout. And, we are currently in planning for a new library building.

Also keep in mind other developments. The DC government is committed to redeveloping Rhode Island Ave. from our border to South Dakota Ave. Studies are being conducted. This was announced on Mount Rainier Day. There is a good bit of vacant or underutilized land in those blocks. The revitalization on that side of the line will undoubtedly increase the value of property in Maryland. Elimination of the blight will discourage loitering and crime. What do we do with this property meanwhile? The final assembly of all the parcels could take a couple of years. The Council has discussed the possibility of creating a city parking lot for use by the public and also commuters who may want to park and ride the bus into DC. The property has great access to two major roads, so it would be a good parking lot in the interim.

From the Desk of the City Manager

The City of Mount Rainier, like many others in our area, has been experiencing an increased number of burglaries during this summer season. Some residents have raised questions about the responsibility of PEPCO to provide additional lighting and the city's responsibility in terms of repair and maintenance of street lights, as well as tree trimming and other steps that can be taken to make this city safer. My response to those inquiries appears below:

The city is responsible for maintenance and repair of the street lights. If the problem with the lighting is a power source below ground, then PEPCO is responsible for making the repair. If the power source is above ground (e.g., the bulb has blown out), then the city has its electrical contractor repair the fixture.

The problem with increasing the wattage is that the exact location, pole number etc., is reported to PEPCO, with a map of the location indicating the lighting that is being requested for an upgrade. We then have to tell PEPCO based on recommendations of the increased wattage we are requesting. PEPCO then puts the request on a list for researching the cost. We currently have a request in to them now for increased lighting in other areas. Once we receive the cost estimate, the city then has to pay for the increased wattage up front, prior to any work being done. The costs generally run \$2,500 upward for each request. We did this at the intersection of 34th and Bunker Hill Road some time ago. Once we make the payment, then PEPCO puts in a work order for the project which could take months to complete. The council has to approve the increased wattage request at each location.

Residents should contact PEPCO to report outages, day burners (lights that remain on during daylight hours), lights that flicker or appear unusually dim. They need to report the pole number, whether the fixture is an aluminum or wood pole, and the exact location of the pole (house address). If the problem is not addressed within a reasonable time frame (say 10 days or so), then Ruth Sandy at PW or I should be called and we will then contact the city's PEPCO representative to address the problem. The number to call appears on the back page of the Message each month and is 1-877-737-2662. The live wire or other emergency number for PEPCO is 202-872-3432.

Tree trimming is also the responsibility of the City. In some instances, Public Works can handle the trimming. In most cases we must hire a contractor to perform the tree trimming due to the height of the tree. With the recent storms and the numerous trees that were uprooted, you can imagine the cost for this. Additionally, we still have a number of trees that must be taken down due to disease. PEPCO is only responsible for trimming trees that are touching and or tied up in electrical wires.

Turning on porch lights at night is something the Neighborhood Watch Group was promoting two years ago and something that the chief and the MRPD continually advocate. Two years ago, the city gave out hundreds of light bulbs during national night out. Citizens have to be diligent and help our police force as well. When a neighbor sees someone peering in a window and know that the owner is not at home, the non-emergency number should be called. On numerous occasions citizens have come to city hall to complain about suspicious persons walking or driving through various neighborhoods appearing to be "casing" properties. Yet, this information was never called into the non-emergency dispatch line. We continually ask citizens to contact this number (301-985-6566) to report suspicious activity as well as if they see a group of unknowns hanging together in alleys, on the corner, etc., which could be an indication of a drug trafficking, loitering, open drinking, loud boisterous behavior, etc. Oftentimes the complaints we receive are after the fact when the perpetrators are long gone and cannot be identified.

We will continue to work towards a better and safer community. Let's all look out for one another and be the additional eyes and ears for our police officer staff.



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL E. SCOTT, CHIEF OF POLICE



Home Safety

Over the past few months Mount Rainier Police and other surrounding jurisdictions have seen a marked increase in the number of residential burglaries, both in single family neighborhoods and in apartment/multi-family housing. Here in Mount Rainier, as disturbing as the burglary upturn is, we still are seeing fewer burglaries this year as compared to this time last year, and we continue to work closely with Prince George's County police detectives in Hyattsville to identify and arrest those responsible.

In many of our recent cases, burglars gained entry through open or unlocked doors and windows getting away with readily available items such as purses, laptop computers, cell phones and cash. In each of these cases the bad guy got an open invitation and an easy payoff because the residents did not practice the most basic of all home safety rules.

Studies have shown that if you can keep an intruder from gaining entry for just six minutes, the bad guy will give up and find an easier target. So please read and practice the home safety measures listed below. The bottom line is: *you* are responsible for your safety and that of your loved ones and property. Be diligent, be proactive and take the steps necessary to deny the bad guys the opportunity to do you harm and steal your stuff!

- Never open your door to strangers. Use peepholes or look out a window. There is no reason that you have to open the door to anyone. Teach this to everyone in your household.
- Never let a stranger into your home. If they need to use the phone, tell them that you will make the call for them.
- Make sure that all doors to the outside are metal or solid 1¾" hardwood.
- Install deadbolts on all exterior doors and use them. Be sure that the screws for the strike plate go at least 3 inches into the doorframe.

- If someone lived in your home before you, have the locks changed.
- **Use the locks you have. Always lock up your home when you go out, even if it's only for a few minutes.** You should also lock your doors and first floor windows when you are outside doing yard work or other chores. You should also lock up when you are occupied with personal matters such as bathing/showering or relaxing out back. Older teens that are home alone after school should always lock the doors behind them when they come home; studying, video games and TV always come before home safety!
- Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available bars or locks, or put a wooden dowel or broomstick in the door track.
- Make sure your windows, especially at ground and first floor levels, have good locks *and use them.*
- Close your window shades at night and be sure that the landscape around them is trimmed short.
- ***Make sure all porches and other possible entrances are well lit. Turn your front porch light on at dusk and leave it on throughout the night.*** This is a simple security measure that will not only help protect your property but that of your neighbors as well. You may want to consider using light fixtures that incorporate a photocell. Photocells automatically turn lights on at night and off in the morning. When selecting a bulb, consider switching to an LED (light emitting diode) bulb. LED bulbs use almost no electricity, generate zero heat, and are reported to last for 60,000 hours - that's 12 hours of light every single day for more than an entire decade. They also don't contain the mercury that CFL bulbs do, so they're more environmentally friendly and don't require special disposal when they burn out.
- Trim any bushes or trees that hide doors or windows. Keep ladders, tools, toys, and recreational equipment inside when you're not using them.
- Don't hide your house keys under the doormat or in a flowerpot. It's much wiser to give an extra key to a trusted neighbor.
- Keep written records of all furniture, jewelry and electronic products. If possible, keep these records in a safe deposit box, fireproof safe, or other secure place. Take pictures or a video, and keep purchase information and serial numbers if available. These help law enforcement track recovered items.
- Clearly display your house number, so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
- List only your first initial and last name on your mailbox, phone book, or door.
- If you see a screen that has been cut, broken windows, or a door that's been left open, don't go in. Call the police from a neighbor's house or a public phone.
- If you hear a noise that sounds like someone breaking in or moving around, quietly call the police and wait calmly until they arrive. If you can leave safely, do so. Otherwise, lock yourself in a room you are in and pretend to be asleep.
- Have a telephone extension or cell phone in your bedroom.

- **Report any suspicious persons, vehicles, and activities to the police as soon as possible.**
- Dogs are wonderful companions and also effective deterrents. Get a dog that barks loud! It doesn't have to be a big, mean, nasty Cujo-type dog; it just has to sound like one when it thinks someone is trying to break into your house. Bad guys don't like to get bit!
- Contrary to what some would have you believe, guns *are not* your best protection. Please think carefully before buying a firearm for protection. Guns can be stolen and sold to anyone, or captured and used on you or the police. If you do own a gun, keep it stored out of the reach of children and untrained adults and learn how to use it safely. The MRPD will provide gun locks to you free of charge. Stop by during business hours or call us and we'll have an officer drop one off to you.
- The MRPD has officers trained to do a security analysis of your home or business and recommend effective ways of securing your property. To arrange for a security analysis, please call our Records Section at 301-985-6580.
- If you are going to be away from your home for an extended period of time, such as for vacation or a business trip, please notify MRPD. We do "vacation" checks of your property while you're gone. Let us know the dates and who, if anyone is authorized to check on pets, do maintenance or be present on your property or in your house for any reason. You should also have delivery of your mail and newspapers delayed until your return. If you are going to leave a motor vehicle on the street you need to let us know that, too so that the vehicle won't be towed under the City's 48-hour parking ordinance.

Citizen Responsibilities

As a resident of Mount Rainier, you have certain responsibilities. By being a responsible citizen you can reduce crime and help improve the overall quality of life in your neighborhood. How? By following some of the steps listed below. Remember it's your neighborhood and your responsibility to do the following:

- **Report all suspicious activity to police:** You are the eyes and ears of the police department. You should report all suspicious activity in your neighborhood. If you witness a crime take place, it's your responsibility to report it. Unreported crime is a serious problem. By not reporting crime you are assuring that the criminal will not be arrested and that he/she will be allowed to commit another crime or prey upon another victim. If someone or something appears suspicious, call the police. An officer will respond and check the situation. All officers agree that they would rather show up, check a suspicious condition and determine everything is OK, then to arrive after the fact and find that a crime has taken place. To report suspicious conditions please call the MRPD Communications center at 301-985-6565/6566. If you have an emergency, or witness a crime in progress, please dial 911.
- **If you witness a crime it's your responsibility to testify in court if needed:** In many cases police need the help of eyewitnesses to prosecute criminals. If you witness a crime you should be willing to perform your civic duty by participating in the criminal justice system to help protect your neighborhood and family. Without the help of eyewitnesses many criminals are not prosecuted, thereby allowing them to continue their criminal activities.
- **Make your neighborhood a better place to live:** By reporting broken or non-working streetlights, cleaning up park areas and vacant lots, and advocating for better lighting in public places along with other improvements that help reduce crime and improve everyone's quality of life. It's your responsibility to keep your property and

neighborhood clean of debris, trash, weeds and animal waste, and to report abandoned vehicles and other hazardous situations.

- **Children:** It's your responsibility as a parent to educate your children about personal, family and community values.
- **Address numbers:** It's your responsibility to clearly mark your residence or business with the address number assigned to your property. A clearly marked address will assist emergency personnel in locating your residence or business without delay.
- **Get involved in your community:** Help organize and/or participate in neighborhood cleanup activities, block and neighborhood watch activities and walks, and volunteer to serve on one of our many citywide committees.
- **Always remember:**

The best crime prevention tool is a good neighbor!

June 2008 SELECTED Offenses by Team Policing Area

Date	Offense	Location			TPA
01-Jun-08	Aggravated Assault	3000	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
25-Jun-08	B & E - Residential	3200	BL	QUEENSTOWN DR	1A
07-Jun-08	B & E - Residential	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
04-Jun-08	B & E - Residential	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
28-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
28-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3200	BL	QUEENSTOWN DR	1A
26-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3300	BL	BUCHANAN ST	1A
26-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3700	BL	SHEPARD ST	1A
12-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
02-Jun-08	Robbery - Citizen	3200	BL	QUEENSTOWN DR	1A
23-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle		BL	BUCHANAN ST	1A
22-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	3000	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
30-Jun-08	Theft - From Auto	3300	BL	BUCHANAN ST	1A
24-Jun-08	Theft < 500	3200	BL	QUEENSTOWN DR	1A
05-Jun-08	Theft < 500	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL RD	1A
10-Jun-08	Theft > 500	3300	BL	CHILLUM RD	1A
18-Jun-08	Vandalism	3300	BL	CHILLUM RD	1A
27-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto	3300	BL	BUCHANAN ST	1A
09-Jun-08	B & E - Commercial	3400	BL	RHODE ISLAND AV	1B
21-Jun-08	Theft > 500	3400	BL	BUNKER HILL RD	1B
25-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto	4500	BL	34TH ST	1B
30-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	2500	BL	ALLISON ST	2A
28-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	2900	BL	ARUNDEL RD	2A
23-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4300	BL	28TH PL	2A
23-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4200	BL	RUSSELL AV	2A
22-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4500	BL	EASTERN AV	2A
11-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	2300	BL	VARNUM ST	2A
10-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4500	BL	29TH ST	2A

07-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4200	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
25-Jun-08	Theft - Identity	4300	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
24-Jun-08	Theft - Vehicle Tags	2700	BL	ALLISON	ST	2A
20-Jun-08	Theft - Vehicle Tags	4600	BL	25TH	ST	2A
02-Jun-08	Theft - Vehicle Tags	2300	BL	VARNUM	ST	2A
21-Jun-08	Theft < 500	2300	BL	VARNUM	ST	2A
14-Jun-08	Theft < 500	4500	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
10-Jun-08	Theft < 500	2300	BL	VARNUM	ST	2A
10-Jun-08	Theft > 500	4400	BL	29TH	ST	2A
28-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto	2700	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	2A
06-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto		BL	28TH	ST	2A
05-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto	4300	BL	28TH	PL	2A
26-Jun-08	B & E - Residential	4000	BL	31ST	ST	2B
04-Jun-08	B & E - Residential	4200	BL	34TH	ST	2B
13-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	3800	BL	31ST	ST	2B
10-Jun-08	Stolen Vehicle	4100	BL	33RD	ST	2B
18-Jun-08	Theft > 500	3200	BL	RHODE ISLAND	AV	2B
03-Jun-08	Vandalism to Auto		BL	32ND	ST	2B

July 2008 Selected Offenses by Team Policing Area

Date	Offense	Location				TPA
7/30/2008	Assault - Aggravated	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/25/2008	B & E - Residential	4200	BL	RAINIER	AV	1A
7/24/2008	B & E - Residential	3000	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/17/2008	B & E - Residential	3200	BL	QUEENSTOWN	DR	1A
7/22/2008	Robbery - Citizen	3300	BL	BUCHANAN	ST	1A
7/15/2008	Robbery - Citizen	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/14/2008	Robbery - Citizen		BL	32ND	ST	1A
7/12/2008	Robbery - Citizen	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/3/2008	Robbery - Carjacking	3200	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/16/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3300	BL	BUCHANAN	ST	1A
7/16/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3000	BL	ARUNDEL	RD	1A
7/15/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3300	BL	CHILLUM	RD	1A
7/12/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3300	BL	BUCHANAN	ST	1A
7/12/2008	Theft - From Auto		BL	BUCHANAN	ST	1A
7/2/2008	Theft - From Auto	3100	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/19/2008	Theft - Vehicle Tags	3000	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	1A
7/10/2008	Vandalism	4500	BL	34TH	ST	1A
7/29/2008	Theft - From Auto	3500	BL	OTIS	ST	1B
7/17/2008	B & E - Residential	4200	BL	34TH	ST	1B
7/16/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3700	BL	35TH	ST	1B
7/31/2008	Theft < 500	4000	BL	34TH	ST	1B
7/26/2008	Theft < 500	4000	BL	34TH	ST	1B

7/7/2008	Theft < 500	3400	BL	RHODE ISLAND	AV	1B
7/21/2008	Animal Bite	4300	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
7/31/2008	B & E - Residential	3000	BL	UPSHUR	ST	2A
7/25/2008	Robbery - Citizen		BL	30TH	ST	2A
7/17/2008	Robbery - Citizen		BL	27TH	ST	2A
7/9/2008	Sex Crime	4300	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
7/28/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4100	BL	RAINIER	AV	2A
7/22/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4300	BL	KAYWOOD	DR	2A
7/21/2008	Stolen Vehicle	2700	BL	ARUNDEL	RD	2A
7/9/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4300	BL	28TH	PI	2A
7/8/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4500	BL	29TH	ST	2A
7/6/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4200	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
7/4/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4200	BL	31ST	ST	2A
7/3/2008	Stolen Vehicle	4200	BL	28TH	PI	2A
7/31/2008	Theft - From Auto	2800	BL	TAYLOR	ST	2A
7/26/2008	Theft - From Auto	4500	BL	EASTERN	AV	2A
7/11/2008	Theft - From Auto	4300	BL	KAYWOOD	DR	2A
7/11/2008	Theft - From Auto	4100	BL	KAYWOOD	PL	2A
7/3/2008	Theft - From Auto	2700	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	2A
7/3/2008	Theft - From Auto	2700	BL	QUEENS CHAPEL	RD	2A
7/29/2008	Theft - Vehicle Tags	4200	BL	28TH	ST	2A
7/29/2008	Theft - Vehicle Tags	2500	BL	ALLISON	ST	2A
7/23/2008	Theft < 500	2300	BL	VARNUM	ST	2A
7/20/2008	Theft < 500	2700	BL	ARUNDEL	RD	2A
7/13/2008	Theft < 500	2300	BL	VARNUM	ST	2A
7/2/2008	Theft < 500	4200	BL	30TH	ST	2A
7/28/2008	Vandalism to Auto	4300	BL	EASTERN	AV	2A
7/21/2008	Vandalism to Auto	4300	BL	28TH	PL	2A
7/18/2008	Vandalism to Auto	4200	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
7/4/2008	Vandalism to Auto	4100	BL	RUSSELL	AV	2A
7/24/2008	B & E - Residential	4100	BL	31ST	ST	2B
7/24/2008	B & E - Residential	4100	BL	31ST	ST	2B
7/21/2008	B & E - Residential	3300	BL	OTIS	ST	2B
7/2/2008	B & E - Residential	4100	BL	29TH	ST	2B
7/4/2008	Sex Crime	3700	BL	34TH	ST	2B
7/3/2008	Stolen Vehicle	3200	BL	SHEPARD	ST	2B
8/1/2008	Theft < 500	3300	BL	RHODE ISLAND	AV	2B
7/7/2008	Theft < 500	3700	BL	34TH	ST	2B

MRTV

Mount Rainier Television
Comcast Channel 71 Verizon Channel 21

MRTV Program Schedule

Monday – Friday, 4pm, (see MRTV Bulletin for listing for shows)

1st Tuesday of each month, 7pm Live telecast of City Council Meetings

3rd Tuesday of each month, 7pm Live telecast of City Council Work Sessions

Program schedule and shows subject to change without notice

Shows to Watch: On Air with the Mayor

***MRTV*News "News You Can Use"**

CitiScope and Time to Represent

MRTV is still in need of volunteer producers, on-camera talent, and production crews for **On Air with the Mayor**, ***MRTV*News "News You Can Use"**, and **CitiScope**. If you have a show idea, let us know. We tape on selected Wednesdays and Saturdays. Call ***MRTV*** at 301-985-6585 ext 28 or email us at mrtvchannel71@yahoo.com for details.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS IN MOUNT RAINIER!

Community Movement Wellness Program begins Sept. 8 at Joe's Movement Emporium. FREE classes in yoga, tai chi, fitness, strength and stretch. Enroll in a nationally certified wellness program in partnership with Ivan Robinson Family Medicine. Program also includes health screenings, nutritional counseling and alternative health care.

For more information, 301-699-1819.

FREE Open House at Joe's
Sept. 6, 9am to 5pm
Activities for all ages

MRBA PRESENTS A TASTE OF MOUNT RAINIER

MRBA is inviting all business owners, commercial property owners, and prospective businesses to our **quarterly meeting** of the Mount Rainier Business Association

Sept. 10, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Enjoy the food and beverages of local establishments!

At Joe's Movement Emporium, 3309 Bunker Hill Road - RSVP at 301-699-1819

NEW TAX DEDUCTION FOR NON-ITEMIZERS

A new federal law permits millions of homeowners who do not itemize on their federal tax filings to claim a deduction for at least a portion of their local property taxes -- up to a maximum of \$500 for single filers and \$1,000 for married owners filing jointly. Among homeowners nationwide, an estimated one-half itemize, but one-third of homeowners have no mortgage debt against their property, and therefore does not claim mortgage interest as a deduction. Owners who opt for the standard deduction on their 2008 tax filings are expected to be eligible for the new write-off benefit.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY TAX CREDIT

The Prince George's County Council has established a tax credit for residential homeowners who utilize solar or geothermal energy conservation devices.

CB-11-2008 was sponsored by Council Members Eric Olson (D) – District 3, Tom Dernoga (D) - District 1, and Will Campos (D) – District 2.

Homeowners installing new heating, hot water, or electric generation systems using an alternative energy source such as solar or geothermal, would be eligible for a tax credit up to \$1,500 for a hot water supply system and up to \$5,000 for a heating system. The credit amount in any tax year may not exceed the amount of the County property tax imposed on the property in that tax year.

ARE YOU IN NEED OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE?

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc. is a non-profit organization established to provide quality civil legal services to the indigent and needy of Prince George's County. The services are provided by the lawyers of Prince George's County and by professional staff.

New clients with legal matters in Prince George's County may apply for a lawyer to represent them via a telephone intake line on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 a.m. until Noon. Proof of financial eligibility is required. Staff members speak English and Spanish. We operate a walk-in clinic for persons representing themselves in family law, domestic violence, small claims, and tenant matters. The clinic is located in the courthouse in Upper Marlboro and operates Monday thru Thursday from 9:00 – 4:00 and Friday 9:00 – Noon. You must sign-in between the hours of 9:00 – 11:00 and 1:00 – 3:00 to be sure to be helped.

For more information contact CLS at (301) 864-8353.

Need a U.S. Passport?

On September 27th, the United States Postal Service will sponsor a special passport event at Mount Rainier Post Office from 10am-4pm.

To apply, please bring the following:

Proof of Citizenship: Original documents only (e.g., Birth Certificate, previous passport, or Naturalization Certificate).

Proof of Identity: Driver's License, Government or Military ID.

Two recent identical photos. (Will be taken at event for \$15.00)

Fees: Adults-\$100.00, Minors (15 and under)-\$85.00

Fees must be made in two separate payments of \$25.00 to U.S. Postal Service and \$45.00 if photos are taken; \$75.00 (for adults) and \$60.00 (for minors) to the Dept. of State.

This portion must be paid by check or money order.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS RECYCLE AND TRASH COLLECTION NOTICE

All recyclables (aluminum cans, bottles, paper and cardboard) can be put in the same yellow recycle bin which will be picked up Friday of each week. These items will be taken to the County recycle plant as they now have the capability to separate the items.

Please bear with us as we continue to pick up regular trash on WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS. This will continue until the new trash truck is delivered. If your trash is not picked up on Wednesday, it will be collected on Thursday.

TRASH CAN REGULATIONS TO BE ENFORCED. *Public works and code enforcement will continue making special efforts to enforce the City's trash can requirements. The City Code Section 11-105 requires all regular residential trash to be placed in watertight and rodent proof containers with lids. Trash set out in plastic or paper bags is accessible to birds, rats and other rodents. The use of trash cans is a requirement to help improve the appearance of the city and deter rat infestations.*

Trash cans should be set out no sooner than 7:00pm the night before the trash pickup, and no later than 7:00 am on the day of the collection.

PUBLIC WORKS CALENDAR

Listed hereunder is the scheduled pick up dates for trash in the City of Mt. Rainier, for September and October 2008

DATE	PARTICULARS	DATE	PARTICULARS
September 1	Labor Day (Public Works and City Hall Closed)	October 1	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 2	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pickup	October 3	Recyclables Pick Up
September 3	Regular Trash Pick Up	October 6	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pickup
September 5	Recyclables Pick Up	October 8	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 8	Yard Waste Pick Up	October 10	Recyclables Pick Up
September 10	Regular Trash Pick Up	October 13	Columbus day (Public Works and City Hall Closed)
September 12	Recyclables Pick Up	October 14	Yard Waste Pick Up
September 15	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pickup	October 15	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 17	Regular Trash Pick Up	October 17	Recyclables Pick Up
September 19	Recyclables Pick Up	October 20	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pickup
September 20	Electronic Recycle drop Off	October 22	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 22	Yard Waste Pick Up	October 24	Recyclables Pick Up
September 24	Regular Trash Pick Up	October 27	Yard Waste Pick Up
September 26	Recyclables Pick Up	October 29	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 29	Yard Waste Pick Up	October 31	Recyclables Pick Up

Please have all bulk trash and yard waste out by 7:00 am on the respective pick up day and all bulk trash and Yard Waste appointments made before 12 noon on the Friday preceding pick up day