



# *Town of Manchester*

## **General Manager's Report**

**Scott Shanley**  
**General Manager**

**January 2009**

### **Happy New Year!**

#### **Holiday Closings**

On New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup> all Town offices and Libraries will be closed in observance of the holiday. There will be no Trash Collection on January 1<sup>st</sup> and collection will be a day late for the remainder of the week.

On Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, all Town offices and Libraries will be closed in observance of the holiday. There will be Trash Collection on January 19<sup>th</sup> and collection will be on the regular schedule all week.

#### **Christmas Trees**

Residents are reminded that Christmas Trees can be left out for curbside pickup through January 16<sup>th</sup> only (must be out at curb for the person's regular trash collection day). After January 16<sup>th</sup>, trees must be brought to the Landfill for disposal.

#### **Digital Cities Survey Award**

The National League of Cities (NLC) partners with e.Republic's Center for Digital Government and Digital Communities magazine to produce the annual Digital Cities Survey. The Town of Manchester has again placed in the top ten of cities in the 30,000 – 70,000 population category. This is the fifth year in a row for Manchester. To quote the Center, the annual survey "examines how cities use technology to create a seamless environment between local government and constituents". Manchester's accomplishments in the area of such things as the precedent-setting Manchester Municipal Fiber Net that connects all schools, libraries, and town facilities and the media production, broadcast and Internet Web Site feed of live and on-demand public meetings are a few examples of this community's national leadership in the use of digital technology.

#### **Finance Department**

##### Assessment and Collection

Tax bills for the Motor Vehicle Supplemental Grand List of October 1, 2007 were mailed in December. These bills cover vehicles registered after October 1, 2007, and cover a time period through September 2008. Over 9,400 bills were mailed and payments are due by February 2, 2009. Anyone with questions concerning a Motor Vehicle Supplemental Tax bill is asked to refer to the brochure enclosed in the envelope in which the tax bill was

mailed, or call the Office of Assessment and Collection at 860-647-3016. In addition, taxpayers may visit the Office of Assessment and Collection weekdays between the hours of 8:20 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. or visit the Office of Assessment and Collection's web page on the Town of Manchester's website.

The Supplemental Grand List (for vehicles purchased after 10/01/07) contained a very similar number of vehicles as last year's Supplemental Grand List. The net assessment on this list was slightly higher than last year's Supplemental Grand List, due to a number of higher priced vehicles, mostly commercial vehicles that were purchased by taxpayers during the assessment year. The revenue produced by this list should be close to last year's amount.

Current tax payments for the second installment of Real Estate and Personal Property bills for the Grand List of October 1, 2007, are due by the February 2, 2009 deadline. In addition, some residents will be receiving Motor Vehicle Supplemental bills, which are due by February 2, 2009. The Tax Office will be open Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:40 p.m. with extended hours to 6:00 p.m. on January 30, 2009 and February 1, 2009. The Manchester branches of New Alliance Bank are now accepting January payments only. Residents should bring the bill since the bank has no tax information. The night drop box located behind Town Hall can also be used. The Customer Service and Information Center in Town Hall will also accept current (not delinquent) tax payments.

Tax payments may also be made online at the Town's web page, [www.townofmanchester.org](http://www.townofmanchester.org). The tax bill number is needed to pay taxes online with either e-check or credit card.

Work on the Grand List of October 1, 2008, continues and should be on target for signing in late January 2009. The CT Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) provides the motor vehicle registration data that is needed for this Grand List. DMV is statutorily required to send out this data to each Assessor in the State by December 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Usually, this data is a week or two behind every year. This year, DMV did not send this file until 4:00 p.m. on December 18<sup>th</sup>, well behind the statutory deadline. This presents a hardship for the Assessment and Collection staff in Manchester, and for assessors throughout the State since there is a requirement to value the over 47,000 registered vehicles in Manchester. When the data is nearly three weeks late from DMV, it makes this process much more difficult.

After the Grand List is signed, the Office of Assessment and Collection will send out final assessment notices to all real estate and personal property owners. Although Manchester's revaluation was performed two years ago, as of October 1, 2006, the 2008 Grand List represents year three of the three-year phase-in. Real estate letters will be sent to taxpayers to inform them of the new amounts. Since the 2008 Grand List is the final year of the phase-in, all assessments on the 2008 Grand List will be equal to the mandated assessment ratio of 70% of the market value as of October 1, 2006.

After assessment notices are sent, owners who wish to appeal their assessments may file an application to appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA). BAA applications may be obtained from the Office of Assessment and Collection and must be filed by February 20, 2009. This deadline cannot be extended and is a statutory deadline. Anyone who files a BAA application after February 20, 2009, will not receive a BAA hearing for the 2008

Grand List. The BAA will begin their hearings in March 2009, and conclude in March or April 2009, after which the final Grand list will be established.

Real estate taxpayers are reminded that the revaluation date is October 1, 2006, thus all real estate values are set as of that date. This means that all real estate appeals are of the value as of October 1, 2006, and no other date either before or after October 1, 2006.

## **Human Services**

### **Earned Income Tax Credit and Free Tax Filing Sites in 2009**

The Town of Manchester will once again be offering free tax preparation with evening and Saturday hours beginning in February for residents. Contact 647-3092 for an appointment. The Town is particularly interested in reaching residents that might be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Those that earned less than \$41,646 may qualify for as much as a \$4,824 tax refund. In addition, free tax preparation will be offered at the Manchester Senior Center through AARP (walk-in) and at the Weiss Center contact 647-3095 for an appointment starting in January.

### **Manchester Energy Forum**

An Energy Forum was planned and coordinated by the Human Services Department and held on November 13, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Manchester Senior Center, 549 East Middle Turnpike. The Forum was for Manchester residents of all ages interested in learning about heating assistance programs, lowering energy costs through weatherization, and fire safety information.

There was a panel discussion with speakers from the Community Renewal Team, the Manchester Area Conference of Churches, the Manchester Fire Department, the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund - which administers the WRAP program and the Town of Manchester Department of Human Services.

Following the panel discussion there were information tables with helpful resource material about energy and other local programs. Manchester Public Library had staff attend and a display regarding saving energy and alternative energy sources.

The event was video taped by Manchester High School and will run on Channel 16 during the cold weather.

## **Recreation Department**

The Bennet Leisure Center Open House and Demo Night is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. This is a chance to tour the facility and meet fitness, dance, martial arts and wellness instructors and participate in some free class demos.

All Winter session classes begin during the first two weeks of January.

Winter session youth swim lesson registration is scheduled for January 3 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon at the Community Y.

**Manchester Police Department**

**Police Activity for November**

Total Calls for Service	4,615
Total Police Cases	1,284
Total 911 Calls	629
Emergency Calls	
Eighth District	58
Town Fire	258
Police Department	1,374

**Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS**

**Activity Report for November 2008**

Medical/Rescue	484
Fire Related	11
Hazardous Conditions	21
Public Service	40
Good Intent	39
False	28
Mutual Aid	6
TOTAL	629

**Emergency Management News**

An "Emergency Operations Center (EOC)" is a central command and control facility responsible for coordinating large special events and emergency and disaster functions at a strategic level and ensuring the continuity of operations for the town. Manchester's permanent EOC is one step closer to becoming reality. Due to be completed in the spring of 2009, the EOC will be located on Olcott Street on the second floor of the Town's Field Services building. The center will include a Command Center, Communications area, Information Technology area, redundant Police and Fire Dispatch area, conference area and the central office for Emergency Management. Currently the town utilizes a small second floor community room in Fire Headquarters. The EOC operates during the Thanksgiving Day Road Race and Cruisin' on Main as well as during major storms. Funding for the new EOC comes from a combination of Federal and State grants.

Fifty-seven citizens recently graduated from Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and graduation ceremonies were held at Cheney Hall to recognize the graduates' accomplishments. Over 250 citizens have been trained in basic CERT and many have continued on for more advanced training. CERT graduates are trained in the basics of disaster survival in order to help themselves, their families, friends, neighbors and business associates post disaster. Advanced CERT training enables citizens to further aid the community by serving as Shelter Managers, Ham Radio Operators, Mountain Bike Rescuers, Outdoor Navigation Specialist or Fire-Police.

### **Live Fire Training Concludes**

Live fire training exercises are a crucial element in maintenance and improvement of Firefighter skill. Manchester, together with responders from East Hartford Fire Department, West Hartford Fire Department, New Britain Fire Department and South District of Middletown Fire Department meet each Friday morning on Hartford Fire Department's training grounds to practice the search and rescue, ventilation, suppression and overhaul skills necessary to maintain proficiency at what they do. Training exercises are four to five hours long each week and are required training for all career firefighters. Live fire training has concluded for the year and will begin again in Spring 2009.

### **Move to the Right for Sirens and Lights**

If you or someone you love is in need of emergency assistance, you want to get there right away. Did you know that there's one thing everyone can do to help the firefighters provide this emergency assistance as quickly as possible? It's as simple as Moving to the Right for Sirens and Lights! Every year in the United States, there are almost 16,000 collisions involving fire department emergency vehicles while responding to or returning from incidents. These collisions result in over 1,000 firefighter injuries and almost 50 deaths. Many people panic or simply don't adhere to the rules of the road for approaching emergency vehicles. The law is very specific; drivers must yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle, and failure to do so can cause serious accidents or delays in ambulance, fire engines and fire trucks arriving at the scene of an emergency. Firefighters are careful to avoid vehicle collisions by driving slowly when traveling against traffic, or coming to a complete stop at intersections, however, the cooperation of ALL vehicles on the roadway is essential. There are some simple rules to follow when you're on the road and encounter an emergency vehicle:

#### **DO:**

- Stay calm.
- Pull to the right and come to a complete stop.
- If in the left lane, pull over into the right lane as traffic to the right moves over.
- If moving to the right is not possible due to another vehicle or obstacle, just stop. The action will let the driver of the emergency vehicle know and anticipate where to drive.
- When an emergency vehicle approaches from behind while stopped at an intersection, stay unless a move to the right can be done.
- Careful when driving by or around a motor vehicle accident or any situation where emergency vehicles are parked and firefighters are working.
- Drivers should stay at least 500 feet behind emergency vehicles.

#### **DON'T:**

- Don't panic.
- Don't play radio so loudly that sirens are unable to be heard.
- Don't stop in the middle lane when there is room to pull to the right.
- Don't pull to the left in the center lane or left turn lane.
- Don't race ahead to make the green light or turn before the emergency vehicle gets there.

- Don't turn quickly to the left onto a street or driveway.
- Don't drive through a red light or stop sign when an emergency vehicle approaches from behind.

### **Health Department**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates January as National Radon Activity Month. Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Radon is present at elevated levels in about one out of every five homes in CT. People are often unaware that there might be a silent threat in their homes since you can't see or smell radon.

The EPA estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Manchester residents are urged to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to the community's health but there is a straightforward solution.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple by using a Radon Test Kit. During the month of January, 50 free Radon Test Kits will be available in the Health Department to Manchester residents on a first-come, first-serve basis. In addition, brochures and testing information will be available. The test kits and brochures have been provided through the State Department of Public Health Radon Awareness Program. If high levels of radon are detected in the home, residents should not panic. Qualified contractors can fix radon problems. Please call the Manchester Health Department with any further questions at 647-3173.

### **Health Department Statistics November 2008**

#### Community Health Statistics

47 Reportable Diseases

108- Flu Clinic (total 762)

#### Environmental Health Statistics November

61 Restaurant Inspections

4 Other Inspections

12 Food Licenses Issued

13 Complaints

1 Septic & B100A

#### Geriatric Statistics

185 Blood Pressures

**Public Works Department**

**Building Inspection Activity for November 1 – November 30, 2008**

Building Permits	November	October
Total Applications received	244	381
Total Permits issued	229	361
Total Revenue	\$37,354.26	\$72,841.36
Construction Value*	\$2,372,791.60	\$4,952,148.86
Inspections conducted	519	673
Code Enforcement		
Cases opened	27	31
Cases closed	24	40
Inspections conducted	64	112
Neighborhood Inspections ***		
Cases opened	0	52
Cases closed	5	66
Inspections conducted	5	125

Comparison of fiscal years July 1 – November 30

Building Permits	FY 2009	FY 2008
Total Applications received	1506	1332
Total Permits issued	1473	1297
Total Revenue	\$288,962.96	\$285,483.24
Total Construction Value*	\$21,013,827.86**	\$23,063,672.39
Inspections conducted	3033	3364
Code Enforcement		
Cases opened	178	268
Cases closed	181	320
Inspections conducted	461	708

\*Includes the value of Town projects where fees were waived.

\*\*This value has yet to be adjusted for value added due to cost affidavits at Certificate of Occupancy issuance

\*\*\*Note that the Neighborhood Inspectors have been performing early morning recycling inspections on the daily trash collection routes. This started on 10/27/08 and will continue until further notice.

**Winter Parking Ban**

Residents are reminded that overnight parking is not allowed on public streets or municipal parking lots between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. from December 1 – April 1.

**Removal of Snow from Sidewalks**

Town ordinance requires that owners and occupants of buildings and vacant lots are responsible to remove snow, sleet, and ice from the public sidewalk abutting their property within 24 hours after the conclusion of a storm. Failure to comply with this ordinance may result in a fine. Please cooperate so that school children and other pedestrians will be able to use the public sidewalks and avoid having to walk in the street.

**Catch Basins and Storm Inlets**

Please help minimize street flooding by keeping leaves and other debris off the catch basin grate nearest your house. This includes removing snow and ice from the front of storm inlets during the winter. Everyone's assistance is greatly appreciated.

**Employee News**

**Recently Retired**

Richard White – Lt. Police Department  
Donald Turner – Officer, Police Department