



PENDLETON N

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HOME TOWN NEWS ~ WINTER EDITION ~ 2025

YOUR TOWN BOARD SUPERVISOR

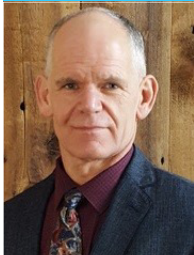


Joel Maerten
625-8833

COUNCILMEN



David Leible
957-6242



Joe Hickman
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Scott Lombardo
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Wolfgang Buechler
625-8601

WINTER PARKING REMINDER!

Parking is prohibited on all Town roads, North Tonawanda Creek Road, and Bear Ridge Road, between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. December 1st – March 31st



A message from your Supervisor...

It's still 2024, so I guess that means I'm still giving updates on work related to the community center project. Driving by, you'll see that work is substantially done. However, there are still miscellaneous items being finished and we're getting close to completion. We were hoping to have the building open this year, but we're now looking at an opening in early 2025.

One major item to be completed is paving of the existing stone parking lot in front of the community center. Efforts are underway to make this project a reality as soon as warmer weather returns in the spring. It's uncertain if the community center will be formally opened before the paving is complete or if the opening will be delayed. The practical thinking is that we've waited this long to make this project a reality, so it may be best to wait to avoid the risk of people entering the new building after walking through the existing wet and dirty parking area.

A major project that's been in the planning for a while that has been completed is the repaving of the town hall parking lot, which has been in need of work for quite a few years. Thanks goes to the Highway Department crews and Highway Superintendent Fischer for planning the work and playing a major role in the paving. If you've visited the town hall recently, you've seen this great improvement.

Recently the town board passed the town's budget for 2025. Since being signed into law in 2011, a property tax cap has been in place that limits a municipality's annual increase in tax levy. Though the law limits the annual tax levy

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING TAXES

If your primary residence is in the Town of Pendleton, and you will be 65 years of age or older by December 31, 2025, and on limited income; you may be eligible for additional tax exemptions on county, town and school taxes.

Applications must be received by March 1, 2025. Contact the Pendleton Town Assessor's office at 716-625-8833.

increase, there are provisions by which a municipality may exceed the tax cap, but this typically happens as a last option in balancing a budget. Each year, the tax cap rate is around 2% to 3%, which is low compared to the increases we see in expenses for all areas of town operations. Fortunately, sales tax revenue has remained consistent, so the town has not been in a position where exceeding the tax cap has been a necessity.

Looking to this winter, I'm confident our town crews are ready to handle whatever the weather brings us. We're hoping for the best and preparing for the worst. - Joel



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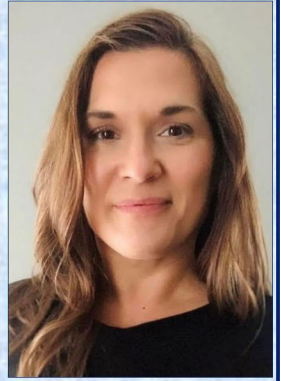
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I'm Christine, your neighbor and local Real Estate Agent! As a resident of Pendleton, I know the real value of what our neighborhood offers. I'd be thrilled to assist you whether you're looking to buy or sell a home, or if you're interested in learning about the current market. Please reach out to me for all your real estate needs!



Christine Wiseman
Licensed Real Estate Sales Agent
christine.wiseman@cbintegrity.com

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HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Hi All, I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

I just have some winter reminders, with the snow season upon us.

- Pushing snow across the road is unsafe and illegal. Please make sure if you have a plow service that they are aware of this law.
- Pushing snow into ditches blocks them from flowing freely as snow melts.
- Pendleton has a ban on street parking from December 1st to April 1st, beginning at 1 AM and ending at 6 AM.
- Please keep in mind that plows are out all hours of the day and night, so if you can keep your vehicles off the road as much as possible, it will make it easier for the plows to get through and would be appreciated by the drivers.

Mailbox Damage: While plowing the roads, mailboxes

can be damaged from the snowplow directly or by the force of the snow being thrown by the plow. In the event a mailbox is damaged by the snowplow, the Highway Department will, as a courtesy, replace with a temporary town issued box & post, so that mail may be received. Please notify the highway department if your mailbox is damaged by us.

PARKS

All bathrooms have been fully winterized and will remain closed until sometime in the spring, weather permitting. We had a very mild Fall and glad to see the park was being enjoyed so late in the year.

For the first year of the splash pad, everything went well. It was enjoyed by many during the hot summer days and they were able to remain open through September because of the nice weather.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 716-625-8033 or 716-909-1409 (cell).

David Fischer
Highway Superintendent



“The one thing that you have that nobody else has is YOU. Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live only as YOU can.” - Neil Gaiman

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“Your smile is your logo, your personality is your business card, and how you leave others feeling after having an experience with you becomes your trademark.”
- Anonymous

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PENDLETON LIONS CLUB

The Pendleton Lions have been busy this quarter! We have held our annual Peace Poster contest with the seventh graders at Starpoint Middle School. First place

was Landon Reinhard who received a \$100 check and donated \$50 to St. Jude's Children's Hospital for his charity donation. Anna Wollaber placed second and she received a check for \$50. There was a tie for third place so Alexa Wickham and Emily Flores each received a check for \$25. This is an ongoing contest from Lions International for seventh graders, or equivalent age, all around the world. The first-place poster at Starpoint will be hung in the Middle School for viewing along with past winners.

We have completed our Christmas Projects for the 2024 Holiday Season. This was the third year for the Annual Giving Tree set up at Craft Coffee House. We collected presents for 52 children from 19 families in the Starpoint School district. We also bought a gift card for Aldi's so each family we collected presents for also had a Christmas Dinner.

Another Christmas project we had is Santa Claus provided a requested present for each student at the North Tonawanda Learning Center. This is a BOCES that educates special needs children in our area of Niagara County. Over the past years we have provided toys to 85-95 children each Christmas Season. This has been going on for over 20 years.

I have an update to our Scholarship Awards!

Starting this school year, we will be awarding three Lions Scholarships for \$1000 each. Requirements are you must live in the Starpoint School District and be a High School Senior. These awards are not just limited to Starpoint students. Also, two and four year colleges are accepted. We Thank the Pendleton Community for supporting us in all the things we do during the year. Being able to do even more every Christmas Season shows how much we all care for each other.

We have solved our Medical Loan closet dilemma! We are going to work with Wheatfield Lions and assist them with their Loan Closet care and organization. We will also add equipment to it. In return, we are allowed into their Closet whenever needed.

Always keep in mind we do collect and distribute some minor medical equipment, canes, wheelchairs, shower seats, etc. This collaboration will allow us to have access to an even larger selection of items.

Recently we have acquired more ramp equipment, we are always trying to build our inventory of metal ramps. Please think of us if you ever have one become available. The requests are constant.

Please be on the lookout for our Lions glasses donation boxes in our local businesses since we do collect, refurbish and donate those all over the world. You may also put hearing aids in these boxes as we do distribute them when we get them.

As always thank you very much for all your support. Please check our Pendleton Lions website at www.PNYLC.org.

Lion Secretary, Cheryl Smith,
Pendleton Lion Secretary



Congratulations to our Annual Peace Poster winners: First Place: Landon Reinhard, Second Place: Anna Wollaber, Third Place (Tie): Alexa Wickham and Emily Flores.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENDLETON

The Historical Society of Pendleton was pleased to help out once again at the tree lighting ceremony. We again served our famous, fresh made popcorn to everyone at the event. We also served hot chocolate from Craft Coffee House, another favorite. We enjoyed helping out at this fun family Pendleton event and seeing younger Pendleton residents. Our December meeting was held at the Fieldstone restaurant on our regular meeting day of Monday December 16, at 1PM. Thanks to Emily for arranging this and Pat for making a small treat for those in attendance. At our November meeting we had Karen Koch, a Tonawanda resident, present a talk on brooms. All about brooms-lots of information on this old and new craft. Cheryl Smith, a member, spoke on Lockport connections to US Presidents. There have not been many visits of Presidents to our area, maybe what happened to McKinley has kept them away from the Buffalo and surrounding areas. Also, we are still meeting in the town hall, waiting for the community center to be finished-then our work will begin putting our displays together again. We do not meet in January and February, but I will call our club together if the center is open to begin working on displays. Time will tell. We are thinking of holding meetings at night to bring in more people. So, plan on March 17 as our next official meeting in 2025.

PENDLETON SENIOR CITIZENS

Winter has arrived with the cold days we expect in WNY! Why not enjoy the warmth of being with friends – just come to our once-a-month meetings with our Pendleton Seniors.

We meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Wendelville Fire Hall and will be there, until we move to the Town Community Center.

So, if you're a Town of Pendleton resident, age 55 or older, give us a try. A potluck lunch is served at noon. We welcome new members!

Officers were elected for 2025 and are as follows: President, Joyce Lane; Vice-President, Joan Wright; Secretary, Laurie Barnes; Treasurer, Renee Chase. Give Joyce a call at 716-625-8789 with any questions.

The Pendleton Seniors Travel Committee is working on the 2025-day trips. More information will be in the Spring edition of the newsletter. However, the 2025 overnight trip is set for September 15-17, 2025. We will go to Lancaster County, PA. The package will include the following: motor coach bus, 2 nights at the BW Eden Resort hotel, 2 breakfasts, 2 dinners: one at Miller's Smorgasbord and one at the Dutch Apple Dinner Theater, 2 shows: Sight and Sound theater for Noah and Dutch Apple Theater for the Buddy Holly Story, admission to the Hershey Museum and a visit to the Kitchen Kettle Village. Currently a price for this package is being calculated. There will be limited reservations.

Contact Joe Kania at 716-625-8118 for more information.
Ending with a heartfelt word of gratitude for those past and present, serving in the Armed Forces.

Quotes from Henry David Thoreau 1817-1862 - American naturalist, essayist, poet and philosopher. Also a leading transcendentalist, he is best know for his book, Walden, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discovered that I had not lived."

"Be not simply good - be good for something."

"Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it."

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters to what lives within us."

"Wealth is the ability to fully experience life."

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them."

"None are so old as those that have outlived enthusiasm."

"Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around."

"Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after."

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."

"A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone."

ASSESSMENT NEWS

This continuing section of our newsletter shows the Arm's Length sales for the previous quarter. Not included in Arm's Length sales are construction sales, estate sales, foreclosures and sales between relatives. Because sales will eventually affect your home assessment, it is important for property owners to see what is sold in town, and the sale prices.

DATE	ADDRESS	SELLER	SALE PRICE	ASSESSED VALUE	SQ FT LA	STYLE	YEAR BUILT	LAND (acre)
08/01/24	4427 Beach Ridge Road	Kenneth & Dawn Hess	485,000	190,000	2040	Colonial	1986	0.79
08/01/24	4 Alexander Parkway	William Vogel	288,000	90,000	1476	Ranch (Condo)	2002	0.67
08/02/24	6693 Dublin Lane	Kristopher Attwood	554,000	288,000	2732	Colonial	2017	0.57
08/05/24	4816 Meyer Road	Jacqueline Lueschen	275,000	150,000	1664	Colonial	1965	0.96
08/08/24	6625 Aiken Road	Antonia Greer & Dennis Robinson	426,400	172,400	1953	Old Style	1830	2
08/08/24	6122 Bear Ridge Road	David Boettcher	358,000	126,000	2260	Ranch	1985	0.54
08/09/24	5326 Oakwood Drive	Melinda Becker	239,000	118,400	1824	Cape Cod	1941	0.9
08/16/24	7040 Bear Ridge Road	Patricia Murphy	401,000	150,000	1780	Colonial	1949	6.7
08/22/24	32 Alexander Parkway	Carter & Joyce Bunce	330,000	90,000	1644	Ranch (Condo)	2000	0.67
08/28/24	5531 Oakwood Drive	Aaron Bair	243,000	83,000	990	Cape Cod	1959	0.59
08/30/24	6727 Campbell Boulevard	Craig & Susan Boyce	429,000	200,000	2230	Colonial	1986	1.4
09/04/24	6051 Tonawanda Creek Road	Todd & Teresa Hinchy	415,000	151,800	2420	Colonial	1952	1.4
09/06/24	5886 Fisk Road	Paul & Helen Bernier	255,000	140,100	1200	Ranch	1966	5.8
09/06/24	6755 Aiken Road	Yu Ping & Guo Ning	527,500	266,400	3058	Colonial	1994	0.6
09/13/24	4576 Beach Ridge Road	William Morgan	386,000	180,000	2086	Colonial	1979	1.1
09/17/24	6715 Townline Road	Louis Schiumo & Nicole Dudek	305,000	105,000	1040	Ranch	1964	0.92
09/17/24	6664 Campbell Boulevard	Regency Builders	535,000	286,000	2462	Colonial	2024	0.7
09/18/24	6114 Bear Ridge Road	Lindsay, Craig & Anne Zimfer	300,000	104,200	1753	Cape Cod	1957	0.52
10/2/24	4085 Mapleton Road	Aleksandr & Lyudmila Zhilewich	735,000	315,000	2672	Colonial	2024	1.08
10/03/24	7047 Bear Ridge Road	Kaitlyn Whitlock	365,000	160,000	1812	Ranch	1985	0.7
10/08/24	5501 Feigle Road	Eric Zellner	800,000	340,000	4070	Colonial	2017	7
10/15/24	5343 Mapleton Road	Phyllis Caputi	252,000	133,000	1332	Ranch	1966	2.5
10/22/24	6307 Townline Road	Nicholas Schmiegel	310,000	135,000	1508	Ranch	1972	1.4
10/23/24	4978 Cloverleaf Lane	Clinton & Amber Williams	549,900	267,000	2384	Colonial	2016	0.57
10/25/24	23 Alexander Parkway	Jeanine Liebel	350,000	85,000	1529	Ranch (Condo)	2001	0.67
10/28/24	4150 Mapleton Road	Cheryl Mapp	287,500	119,700	1586	Cape Cod	1950	3.5
10/29/24	4703 Meyer Road	James & Patricia Waugh	470,000	175,800	2396	Ranch	1972	0.7
10/29/24	6064 Transit Road	Casey Magaris	185,000	113,000	1208	Cape Cod	1953	1.9

REMINDER

If you move from your primary residence in Pendleton, it is your obligation to notify the Assessor's office. Each residence that is receiving the STAR Exemption signed the STAR application acknowledging that they would notify the Assessor of their change in residency.

As a resident/owner of property in Pendleton, there are property tax exemptions that you may be entitled to – including STAR, Enhanced STAR, Senior Citizens, Veterans, Agricultural, people with Disabilities and Volunteer Firefighters & Ambulance Workers. For information on any of these exemptions, you can visit the New York State Department of Tax and Finance website www.tax.ny.gov, our website www.pendletonny.us, or visit the Assessor's office at Pendleton Town Hall or contact us by phone at 716-625-8833.

If you are signing up for Basic STAR, you need to go to the New York State website noted above, or call (518) 457-2036 to sign up for the Basic STAR Credit (which is a check from New York State vs. receiving an

(Continued on page 7)

Exemption). Additionally, any resident/owner who is currently receiving a STAR Exemption can switch to the credit program by contacting the New York State Department of Tax and Finance, via their website or phone number.

All Enhanced STAR applications require enrollment in the New York State Income Verification Program (IVP). Note, if you are currently enrolled in the Enhanced STAR Exemption or Credit, you do not need to renew your application (unless you are contacted by our office or New York State).

If you receive the STAR Credit, you can sign up for Direct Deposit in the new Homeowner Benefit Portal. Visit www.tax.ny.gov, select the Real Property drop-down, select Homeowner Benefit Portal, then click on Create Individual Account. Homeowners with existing Tax Department Individual Online Services accounts can click Log in to visit portal, rather than creating a new account.

If your primary residence is in the Town of Pendleton, and you will be 65 years of age or older by December 31, 2025, you may be eligible for the Enhanced STAR Exemption for your 2025-2026 school taxes. Additionally, if you meet the above criteria, and are on limited income, you may be eligible for the Senior Citizen Exemption, which provides additional tax exemptions on County, School and Town taxes. Contact the Pendleton Assessor's office at 716-625-8833 ext. 118 for additional information.

The forms for all the exemptions and the IVP program are available at the Town Hall, or can be obtained via the Pendleton or New York State websites. Deadline for all exemptions is March 1st.

Quotes from John Burroughs 1837-1921 - American naturalist and nature essayist, he was also active in the Conservation Movement in the United States.

"A somebody was once a nobody who wanted to and did."

"For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice - no paper currency, no promises to pay, but the gold of real service."

"Nature teaches more than she preaches. There are no sermons in stones. It is easier to get a spark out of a stone than a moral."

"I still find each day too short for all the thoughts I want to think, all the walks I want to take, all the books I want to read, and all the friends I want to see."

"Leap, and the net will appear."

"If you think you can do it, you can."

"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order."

"To find the universal elements enough; to find the air and water exhilarating, to be refreshed by a morning walk or an evening saunter...to be thrilled by the stars at night, to be elated over a bird's nest or a wildflower in spring - these are some of the rewards of the simple life."

"A man can get discouraged many times but he is not a failure until he begins to blame somebody else and stops trying."

"To treat your facts with imagination is one thing, to imagine your facts is another."

"Naturalists, like poets, are born and then made only by years of painstaking observation."

"I have discovered the secret of happiness - it is work, either with the hands or the head. The moment I have something to do, the draughts are open and my chimney draws, and I am happy."

"The smallest deed is better than the greatest intention."

"How beautiful the leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days."

"To learn something new, take the path that you took yesterday."

"We are beginning to see that money, after all, is not the main thing. The real values cannot be bought and sold."

"If I were to measure the three most precious resources of life, I should say books, friends, and nature. And the greatest of these, at least the most constant and always at hand, is nature."

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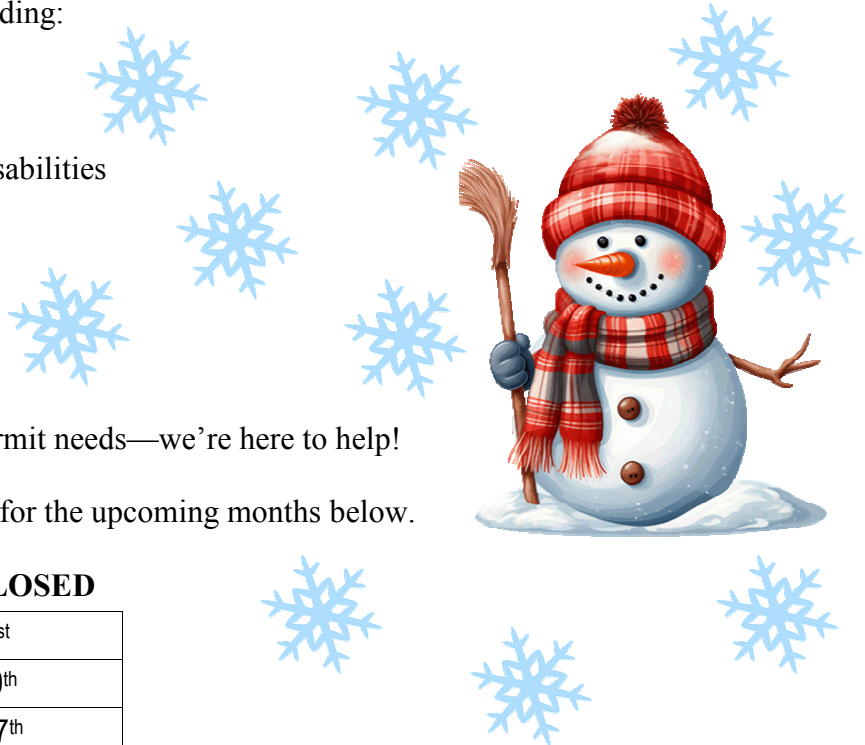
TOWN CLERK

Happy New Year, and warm greetings from the Clerk’s Office! As we step into 2025, I’m excited to share updates and opportunities to keep our community thriving. Winter is a season of fresh beginnings, and with the launch of our new online portal for recreation and facility registrations, we’re making it easier than ever to stay connected and engaged. Stay tuned for the launch in early spring!

I would also like to remind you that the Clerk’s Office offers ACH automated payments for water bills, providing a convenient, hassle-free option for residents. If you’d like to enroll, simply complete an ACH Authorization Form, available on our website or at the Clerk’s Office, and return it with a voided check.

The Town Clerk’s Office is open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (excluding holidays). We are proud to offer a variety of services to our residents, including:

- Dog Licenses
- Hunting/Fishing Licenses
- Marriage Licenses
- Parking Permits for Persons with Severe Disabilities
- Peddler/Solicitor Permits
- ATV Trail Riding Permits
- Additional Refuse/Recycle Tote Requests
- EZ-Pass Purchases
- First-time or Replacement Passports



Stop by and see us for all your licensing and permit needs—we’re here to help!

I have included some important information for the upcoming months below.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE – TOWN HALL CLOSED

New Year’s Day	January 1 st
Martin Luther King Day	January 20 th
Presidents’ Day	February 17 th

TRASH COLLECTION HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

Tuesday trash collection will not be affected by the holidays during this quarter.

You should have already received the 2025 Recycling & Trash Collection calendar from Modern Disposal. If not, stop by the Town Clerk’s Office for a copy. You can also find the schedule and other helpful information on our website.

Here are a few important tips to keep in mind:

- 1) Only waste placed inside the cart will be accepted. Bags left outside the cart must have a tag.
- 2) Extra bag tags can be purchased at the Town Clerk’s Office for \$5.00 each.
- 3) Additional tote/refuse service is available for an annual fee of \$55.00.
- 4) Bulk trash is collected once per month, with a maximum of three items allowed per parcel. (See schedule below.)
- 5) If you experience a missed collection, please contact Modern Disposal’s customer service directly at 716-754-8226.

(Continued on page 11)

"How do we change the world? One random act of kindness at a time." - Morgan Freeman

BULK COLLECTION SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

See maps and listing of roads on www.pendletonny.us



Week A (RED Map)	Week B (BLUE Map)
January 14 th	January 21 st
February 11 th	February 18 th
March 11 th	March 18 th

TAX COLLECTION

Town/County tax bills will be mailed out by December 31st. Bills must be either paid in person at the Town Hall, Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by placing in the locked drop box outside of Town Hall, or by mailing to:

Town of Pendleton
P.O. Box 2305
Buffalo, NY 14240-2305



*** THIS IS ONLY FOR TAX PAYMENTS.**

THE WATER BILL PAYMENT ADDRESS HAS NOT CHANGED. *



You may also pay online by going to <https://egov.basgov.com/pendleton/>.

IMPORTANT: If you pay your bills through your bank's online bill paying program, please make sure to allow enough time for your check to be mailed to and received at the collection office. The envelopes sent by your bank DO NOT have a USPS postmark that is stamped by the Post Office therefore it will be considered paid the day it is actually received in the office. The payment MUST BE received in the office by the due date in order to consider it a timely payment. (Real Property Tax Law §925.)

Please refer to the Tax Collector page on the town's website for additional information about your tax payments. This page contains several FAQs that you may find helpful.

TOWN HALL 625-8833	EXT.
ASSESSOR - TOM	116
ASSESSOR'S CLERK - MIRANDA	118
BUILDING DEPARTMENT CLERK - KIM	131
BUILDING INSP/CODE ENF - RON	115
DEPUTY TOWN CLERK - NOREEN	110
DEPUTY TOWN CLERK - AIMEE	109
JUDGE KEVIN MACK	128
JUDGE MACK'S CLERK - JIM	119
JUDGE TODD OSTROWSKI	117
JUDGE OSTROWSKI'S CLERK - BARB	120
PAYROLL/PERSONNEL - ALISHA	123
PLANNING BOARD - JOHN	125
SUPERVISOR - JOEL	113
SUPERVISOR'S SECRETARY - CLAUDIA	121
TOWN CLERK - DEBBIE	112
WATER BILLING	111
PUBLIC WORKS - 625-8033	
WATER/SEWER EMERGENCY - 7am - 3:30pm - 716-625-8033	
AFTER HOURS - PRESS #1 TO CONTACT ON-CALL ATTENDANT	

Thank you for your continued trust and support. Together, let's make 2025 a year of growth and success for our town. Stay warm, stay involved, and as always, feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or suggestions.

Wishing you a safe and fulfilling winter season!

Warmest regards,
Debbie Maurer

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." - Desmond Tutu

"Kind hearts are the gardens.
Kind thoughts are the roots.
Kind words are the blossoms.
Kind deeds are the fruits." - Kirpal Singh

"Life is an echo. What you send out, comes back. What you sow, you reap. What you give, you get. What you see in others, exists in you." - Zig Ziglar



WENDELVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Now that we are ringing 2025 in, we look forward to the future with joyous anticipation and high hopes for success! In a spirit of retrospection we glance back at 2024 and notice the triumphs and the times we really should have tried just a bit more. In that same spirit we must realize that we did the best we could with the knowledge we had. I stopped to wonder how well the average Pendletonian knows who we are, what services we offer and what we ask of you, our residents. I can share a bit of basic knowledge with you and, if you want more information on any point please call Joe Riester at 716 598 -1653 or Russ Talma at 716 572 – 3165.

Our correct title is the Wendelville Fire Company. We have approximately 60 active members and less than 30 members who, due to health or age reasons, are 25 year inactive members meaning they have done 25+ years of active service and have earned life membership. We have 3 female members, two of whom have achieved 25+ years. We are a Basic Life Support unit, with approximately 10 NYS certified Emergency Medical Technicians. We are aligned with the Niagara County Sheriff's Department EMS as well as Twin City Ambulance who monitor our calls and support us if needed.

We have an Auxiliary Organization with about 25 members who assist us with fundraising and special projects. They, too are seeking new membership. Contact them at their Facebook page: Wendelville Ladies Auxiliary, to learn more.

Two new projects we are acting on right now are the formation of a "junior" or restricted (age) group to help young people to prepare for membership in the actual company. More on this as it unfolds..! The second project is finding anyone who would be available to help with our fundraisers, data entry, clerical work or anything to assist the Company, excluding calls. Man or woman, age is not a barrier that would preclude the help you could give us!! You are the decision maker...it is to your ability and comfort the level of volunteerism you can give. Just give Joe Riester or Russ Talma a call and let them know you are interested in becoming a Support Member! Either would be happy to talk to you!!

This leads me to the main topic of today's newsletter..

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MEMBERS

This is of major importance to the continuation of the company, in fact, many companies. Although our official name is Wendelville Fire Company, we must note well that we are a totally volunteer company. Every member is a volunteer. No paid members; no paid drivers. We have made a commitment by taking an oath to be vigilant at keeping our town and our residents safe and assisting in emergencies. Are you aware that the average age of our active members is 55? We are constantly looking for people who have a strong sense of helping people in many forms; medical assistance, emotional support and promoting a strong sense of belonging. Do you have a penchant for solving problems? We have a place for you! Are you young and strong? We have a place for you! Are you blessed with wisdom and unshakable in crisis? There is most certainly a spot for you! Do you just want to help in any way you can? We need you NOW! Young, old, educated or not...we will provide training. You will not just be thrown in; we will mentor and guide you. You won't be alone, we were all beginners once. Would you just like to discuss it? Get a little more information...once again, Joe or Russ are great mentors and guides. This is a true calling, you will be in line for many rewards, emotional, spiritual as well as physical, to say nothing of instantly having 100 or more new friends!

Around here, we are preparing for our Sportsman's Raffle on March 8th. That's one of those activities that a support member could help us with! The future months will bring activities such as Lobsterfest at the end of Spring, and our Meat Raffle in the Fall. Don't forget our Fire Prevention Education Program; it has expanded exponentially in recent years!

In closing, we would be amiss to neglect saying "Thanks" to you our neighbors and friends. Thank you for your support, thank you for your generous donations and thank you for your expressions of gratitude. Be assured...we are there for you!

"Kindness is not an act..it's a lifestyle." - Author Unknown



NEWS FROM NIAGARA COUNTY

Column by Legislator Tony Nemi

As I am writing this column, there are snowflakes in the air, homes decorated with lights and holiday music playing on the radio, which can only mean one thing – we are deep into the budget season in county government. A tentative budget is released by our county manager in mid-November which is then followed by public hearings where residents can offer their input in early December. The Legislature then makes adjustments and votes on the final budget about a week before Christmas.

I am confident that we are once again producing a fiscally responsible budget that balances the requirement to provide important public services with the need to be accountable to property taxpayers. To that end, the county budget will again stay under the property tax cap for the 14th consecutive year. For 2025, the proposed full value property tax rate will decrease by 4.2 percent to \$4.83 per \$1,000 of assessed value. That is the lowest rate that I can ever remember, but I always like to point out that this figure will vary between municipalities based on the New York State Equalization Rate.

Staying under the property tax cap is always a priority, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult as New York State continues to burden county government with unfunded state mandates. An unfunded state mandate is a service or program that New York State requires counties to provide but does not fully fund. The New York State Association of Counties has sought to highlight this disturbing trend over the last few years through its "9 for 90 Campaign." What this means is that just nine New York State mandates can consume 90 percent or more of any county's property tax levy – and that's not including every single mandate. In 2023 in Niagara County, these 9 mandated items consumed approximately 84 percent of the county tax levy. This

number jumped to 93 percent last year. For 2025, the nine mandates will consume 94 percent of all property taxes collected in Niagara County. And it's a problem for all counties. For our friends in Orleans County, these mandates consume 107 percent of their property tax levy. That means they do not collect enough in property taxes to pay for state mandates.

Against this backdrop, we rely on other revenue sources to fund county government, most notably the sales tax. Over the last few years, we have been able to rely on robust increases in sales tax revenue, but that upward trend is slowing. Sales tax revenue took off a few years ago with two roughly coinciding events. First, the state began collecting sales tax on all internet purchases. And second, the pandemic hit, which really amped up people shopping for everything online. Now, two other events are slowing it down. First, the growth potential had to flatten at some point. Second, people are paying more for necessities, which are not subject to sales tax, and have fewer discretionary dollars left. We may be told inflation is lessening, but that does not mean that prices have come down. Family budgets are stretched to the maximum, belts have to tighten, and spending goes down. That impacts sales tax. Now, Niagara County being home to a major tourist destination certainly puts us in a little bit better position than some, since visitors come and spend money here. But the leveling off of sales tax is definitely a concern.

While we are indeed faced with some significant budget challenges, the Legislature recognizes the struggles that many families across the county face and that is why we go line by line through the budget to ensure accountability of your tax dollars. County-controlled spending is increasing by 3.5 percent this year, driven mainly by contractual and personnel expenses. At the same time, we continue to maintain a strong fund balance so we can weather anything unexpected. It is my belief this a very fiscally prudent budget and I want to acknowledge the work of our management team and department heads for their great efforts.

"Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who YOU are."
- Harold S. Kushner

"Kindness begins with the understanding that we all struggle."
- Charles Glassman

"The best index to a person's character is how he treats people that can't do him any good and how he treats people that can't fight back." - Abigail Van Buren

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will *never forget* how you made them *feel*." - Maya Angelou

PENDLETON VETERANS ASSOCIATION

We here at the Pendleton Veterans Association (PVA) want to open our newsletter this month with a HUGE thank you to the Niagara County Legislature, 11th District Legislator Anthony J. Nemi for the contribution to the PVA. This contribution will help our mission and commitment to honor Town resident Veterans past to present. Thank You TONY!



As long as we are talking about Niagara County and their focus and all the good they do for Veterans, we can not forget to bring to the table the “Niagara County Thank-A-Vet program”. The Thank A Vet program is staffed and managed by the Niagara County Clerk’s office. Visit in person or at their web site, get registered, get an ID card and list of over 400 businesses and providers that extend discounts to Veterans.

The Town of Pendleton ‘HOME TOWN HEROS’ Fence of Fame” has been added to with 8 new posters since last newsletter. The count now is 83 and growing. Thank you all for your service. Fence is located at town hall parking lot exit drive.

Need a flag? The PVA’s most popular residential and commercial sizes are in stock along with ability to order most any other size or style available i.e. special size, standard or heavy duty, military branch , EVEN watercraft size. Call Tom @ 716-210-3015 or Gordie @ 716-625-4470.

The lights are on at the new Community Center Building last night . We (PVA)are getting close to having a forever home, we will keep you posted .

May I repeat this message from past newsletters. If you are a graduating high school senior (male or female) and unsure of your future endeavors after graduation, you may want to consider military service. There are many avenues to explore in the military that will benefit you in private life not to mention free health care, College tuition assistance, pension benefits for career service and learning a trade that will carry over into private life after you serve. Contact your guidance counselor for more information and guidance.

If you are a Veteran and would like to visit Washington D.C. and many of the Veteran Memorials there, the “Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight “ organization can transport you there NO CHARGE by air and back, you will spend an overnight stay visiting these wonderful tributes to Veterans and National Heroes. You will be accompanied by a guardian of your choice, and with necessary mobility equipment (wheelchair etc.). They will also supply a guardian if you don’t have one. For full information and to apply for a future mission, view their web site at: <https://buffaloniagarahonorflight.Org>.

At this time there will be 2 Missions in 2025: Mission #19: April 5-6 , 2025/Mission #20: June 13-14, 2025.

On Veterans Day, 11/11/2024, the PVA held a wreath laying ceremony at the Town Hall Veterans Monument. It was well attended by town residents and Veterans alike. The invocation was said by Rev John Rance. There were words spoken honoring all veterans by PVA president Tom Thompson and town resident and PVA member Glen Seidel. Refreshments were enjoyed after the ceremony. Thank you Craft Coffee House.

Lastly, if you are a dues paying current member (PVA) and have not received a challenge coin from us please come to the next meeting and get your coin. Additional coins available for purchase.

Greg Metzger, *Vice President*
Pendleton Veterans Association





Discover a new way to worship at Holy Grounds Café.

Gather around tables, share coffee and pastries, and engage in meaningful worship and fellowship in a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

All are welcome!

Sundays at 11:00 AM



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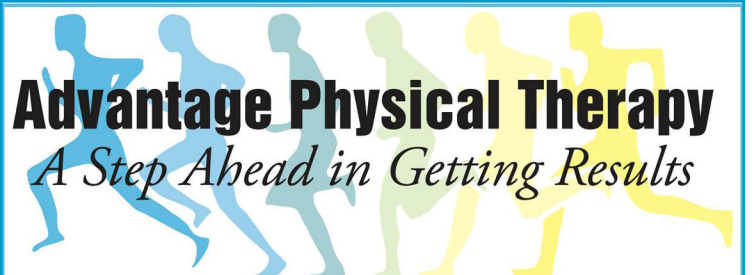
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WNY MEDICARE ADVISOR



MARK ZIEMBA

Hi Neighbors,

"I am thrilled to introduce myself as your local, trusted Medicare insurance agent here in Pendleton. Whether you're new to Medicare, exploring options during open enrollment, or simply seeking to better understand your current coverage, I'm here to assist. I'm honored to serve the Niagra region and I look forward to building lasting relationships."

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