



AKRON CITY COUNCIL NEWS

VOLUME TWO 2008

Providing up-to-date news for the people of Akron

Voters to decide on scholarship plan

Akron high school graduates of the class of 2009 could have an opportunity that their predecessors may have never imagined in their lifetimes if a much-talked-about ballot issue passes Nov. 4.

For the first time in the city's history, an ambitious city plan to lease the Akron sanitary sewer system to a private operator could result in free scholarships for every Akron resident who wishes to pursue higher education upon graduation from high school.

Akron City Council interrupted its summer recess to pass an ordinance that places Issue 8 on the ballot, giving voters the option to say 'yea' or 'nay' to the Akron Scholarship Plan. The ordinance passed adds a new section to the city charter which, among other things: establishes the Akron Scholarship Plan; authorizes the lease of the sewer system to a private operator; and guarantees a 3.9 percent cap on annual rate increases.

That initial step – getting the issue on the ballot – was important enough for Council to move on quickly. That way, Council President Marco Sommerville said, the will of the people can be heard on the issue come Election Day.

"We have a tremendous opportunity to accomplish something that's never been done in this city's history – give every high school graduate who wants it an opportunity for free higher education," Sommerville (W-3) said. "No matter what the arguments are on either side of this issue, the implications for the concept alone are just so exciting that the idea deserves serious thought and consideration."

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic introduced the idea during his State of the City Address early this year. Plusquellic said proceeds from



These students who graduate from Akron's Firestone High School and other Akron public and private schools could be recipients of college scholarships if voters approve Issue 8. Council approved the ballot initiative to lease the sewer system during its summer recess.

the lease would be placed into a scholarship fund to be managed by the Akron Community Foundation. Scholarships would pay for tuition at the University of Akron and other trade or community colleges in the area.

Some residents have questioned whether turning over the reins of the sewer system to a private operator would mean higher rates, a decline in services and job losses. To address some of those fears, the mayor appointed an Akron Scholarship Plan Advisory Committee to study all of the implications of the plan and offer recommendations in the best interests of Akron residents.

The committee recommended a plan which includes employee and consumer protections, caps on rate increases and maintaining environmental and customer service standards.

Council's Public Utilities Committee Chair James P. Hurley III (W-1) served on the advisory committee. In his capacity as committee chair and as an electrician who works with public utilities, Hurley was asked to participate. He accepted the invitation because he wanted to make sure that protections for workers and for vital city services would be part of the plan.

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Biomedical Corridor beginning to bear fruit

When people think of cities that are at the forefront of health and medical research, development and technology, perhaps they'll soon think of Akron.

Akron is in the midst of big things in the biomedical field, and the evidence is visible before the eyes of residents who drive and walk along East Market Street every day.

With the emergence of the new Biomedical Corridor in the heart of Akron, the city could very well be transformed into one of the nation's leading producers of the best in medical research and technology. The corridor will stretch from Akron General Medical Center, around downtown and to Akron City Hospital.

City Council remains a vital component in this transformation, as evidenced in the many pieces of legislation related to the Biomedical Corridor that have been moved along since Mayor Don Plusquellic announced the initiative two years ago.

The transformation began in 2006 when Council initially approved a city plan to spend almost \$4 million on land and site improvements along East Market and accept back taxes and property taxes as payment. The special financing allowed Akron Legacy Real Estate Development to embark on the \$30 million development that included the restoration of the historic 1929 Main Post Office at 168 E. Market St. – which it acquired

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Akron City Council
166 S. High St., 3rd Fl.
Akron, OH 44308

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #207
Medina, OH

Council urges "yes" vote on Issue 5

Akron City Council unanimously passed a resolution of support for State Issue 5, the referendum on reform of payday lending, which appears on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The issue caps interest rates on so-called payday loans at 28 percent, increases the term of those loans from a typical two-week term to 30 days, limits borrowers to four maximum \$500 loans per year, offers access to other small loan alternatives and bans Internet lending.

Issue 5 also is supported by the Akron Beacon Journal, AARP, the Ohio Manufacturer's Association and statewide religious leaders.

Teens learn and earn green in Ward 4

Teens reap salary and praises through Buchtel Neighborhood Group senior lawn maintenance program

WARD 4 – If some West Akron lawns have been looking a bit neater lately, it may be due to a group of hard-working teens who have been beautifying yards of senior citizens in and near Ward 4 since the summer.

Ward 4 Councilwoman Renee Greene and caring volunteer mentors in the Buchtel Cluster neighborhood helped to create the Buchtel Neighborhood Group's "Learn to Earn SLR (Shovels, Leaf blowers and Rakes) Youth Empowerment Program." It pays young people an hourly stipend to help seniors and residents with disabilities maintain their lawns at no charge.

Since July, 20 youths ages 12 to 16 have been cutting, raking and clipping lawns of area residents, earning \$6.50 an hour for their labor and also learning some things about community, responsibility and helping others.

Greene said the idea was actually born out of resident concerns about young people in the neighborhood who didn't have any constructive activities to keep them occupied and out of trouble.

"It started at my ward meetings," Greene said. "Everybody was complaining about the youth wandering the neighborhood with nothing to do. I would ask 'what do you think we should do?' and one of the Buchtel Neighborhood Group mentors took the time to research the cost for lawn equipment and wrote a grant application."

In June, City Council approved \$5,000

in grant money to be awarded via the Akron Community Foundation to the Summit 2010 Quality of Life Task Force, the parent organization of the Buchtel Neighborhood Group. Part of the grant money funded the SLR program, and helped purchase lawn mowers, gasoline and gasoline cans, leaf vacuums, leaf blowers, weed whackers, edgers, clippers, goggles, face masks, t-shirts and sweat shirts. Greene said the group will soon purchase winter yard equipment.

Twice a week, four Buchtel Neighborhood Group adult volunteer mentors pick up the teens and transport them and all of the lawn equipment in their cars to the work site where they get to work under the volunteers' supervision.

Typically two groups of three youths and an adult volunteer work two sites for four hours each week, currently serving 14 customers. Greene said the teens rotate each week so that everybody has a chance to get some hours in.

Not even a bee sting or a case of poison ivy deters the teens, who look forward to the work, Greene said.

"The kids call me about working as much as the seniors call about getting the



Ward 4 Councilwoman Renee Greene (seated) takes a break from yard work with Christopher Bargainer, SirVonte Rice, Antonio Rollins, Ashley Moore, homeowner Dolores Golson and Minnie Lash.

service," Greene said. "The volunteers and the customers call me to praise the children for their good manners and their willingness to do the jobs right. They're really some great kids."

Greene said she hopes to involve the children in this program in any plans by the city to provide snow removal services for Akron's senior citizens. Council will soon decide on a proposal to plow senior residents' driveways for a shared cost of \$10, split evenly between the resident and the city.

Another important component of the SLR youth program is the monthly enrichment

meetings the volunteers hold with the youths every second Saturday of the month at the Forest Lodge Community Center. During the sessions they may discuss nutrition, career choices or even issues that are on their minds. Greene said once the conversation turned to an informative discussion on the real reasons some teens sag their jeans.

"But we don't have any of that with our kids," Greene joked. "They understand where we're coming from on that issue."

More than something to do and a paycheck, Greene said, the young participants are gaining much more in the way of responsibility, community involvement and realizing the possibilities available to them in the world.

"We initially thought it would always be an activity that the kids would benefit from," Greene said. "But as we've been learning along the way since starting this program, we realized with our mentoring piece that we're giving them something more than an activity."

Any seniors or residents with disabilities who would like to request the lawn service may pick up application forms at the Lawton Street Community Center, 1225 Lawton St., or call Greene at (330) 375-2256.

Above all else, government's role is to consider the greater good



Marco Sommerville
President of Council

Corporate responsibility and the government's role in regulating it have been on the minds of many Americans lately.

From Wall Street, to Washington, to Akron, people are watching and worrying. People are watching the markets and their bank accounts, and wondering what government's role should be if they are threatened. For if they are, individuals,

families, society and our very livelihoods are greatly endangered.

Even the most hard-and-fast capitalist cannot deny that now, more than ever, government does indeed have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the greater good in a civilized society. Whether or not everyone agrees with the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout, rescue, or whatever you may choose to call it, Republicans and Democrats together made clear arguments for the dire economic crisis this nation would face – the likes of which have not been seen since the Great Depression – should the government fail to act.

I always thought 'trickle-down' economics as a theory was unfounded, disproven and cruel at its core. Still, as a business man I respect and understand the need for free markets and the freedom for every individual to make money if they've worked hard for it.

That's why in some cases, I can concede that the private sector can be better at running a business than the government. Take the proposal to lease the city sewer system to a private operator in order to fund scholarships to send our city's high school graduates to college or technical schools.

The greater good in this case is two-fold: our dedicated city workers' livelihoods are protected; and any Akron high school graduate who could otherwise not afford it will get a college education on the city.

Some people oppose the idea because of a very legitimate fear that private operator equals *laissez-faire*, no government protections. I can assure those fearful that while the sewer system may no longer be operated by the city should Issue 8 pass, they have my word that we on Akron City Council will keep a watchful eye on the new operators, and we

have legislation in place that holds the Mayor to his promise that no sewer worker will be without a job and health care from the city if the issue passes.

We on Council also have our eye on the state of health care access for all Akron residents. We are encouraged by the progress made in health research and technology, as evidenced lately by the growth of the Biomedical Corridor and the Akron Health Department's commitment to close health care gaps between the haves and have-nots of our city.

Still, we continue to look out for any threats to access to care for our residents, and are ready to step in should such a threat appear eminent. That's why I'm proud of Council's record of support for public and low-cost health services for Akron residents.

Government is not and should not be this ominous "big brother" in the shadows poised to pounce on the free market. Rather, it's been proven lately that we in government should instead be viewed as keepers of this great nation's promise that its citizens can enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without fear of complete chaos if our free society should teeter over the edge of stability every now and then.

Biomedical

from page 1

for \$1.2 million – and construction of Select Specialty Hospital’s 60-bed long term acute care facility nearby.

Council’s Economic Development and Job Creation Committee Chair Terry Albanese said a comparably minimal investment on the city’s part is practically paying for itself with what has taken place in the corridor so far. Further, the project opens the door to the limitless potential for additional interest and investment from other major players in the biomedical industry, she said.

“We’re creating the infrastructure and investing dollars. Then those dollars bring the students and researchers,” said Albanese, herself a researcher with Summa Health System’s health Services Research and Education Institute. “All of this makes Akron and Akron-area institutions more attractive options.

“The opportunity for clinical practice and bringing top residents from all over the country is an exciting thing.”

Doors opened at the \$8 million, 60,000-square-foot newly restored former post office last fall, when 200 Summa Health Systems employees were transferred from overcrowded Summa offices around the city to provide support, information technology, financial and other vital services for Summa entities such as the Summa Enterprise Group, Ohio Health Choice and the Summa Health Network.

Fast forward to 2008, and witness a near snow-ball effect of new investments, collaborations and business ventures.

In May of this year, Council authorized the city to contribute \$50,000 in matching grant monies toward the creation of the Akron Academic Health Center. The center will be a comprehensive education and research facility for health professionals involving The University of Akron, Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine (NEOUCOM) and all three Akron hospital systems. Also planned for the center is a clinic where under- or un-insured patients can receive quality care.

The city’s portion represented six percent of the total investment in the Academic Health Center.

That same month, the Orthopaedic Research Cluster of Northeast Ohio (ORCNEO) learned it was awarded an \$8.7 million Third Frontier Commission grant from the state. The money will help recruit the nation’s top scholars and researchers to form the Orthopaedic Research Institute of Northeastern Ohio, where they’ll conduct high-level research on bone, joint and connective tissue problems. The biomedical corridor is a strong possibility for the site of the planned institute.



Council’s Economic Development and Job Creation Committee Chair Terry Albanese (W-6) on the steps of the restored 1929 Post Office, the anchor of the city’s ambitious Biomedical Corridor project.

Albanese said the award is just one more piece of proof that Council was wise to green-light the Biomedical Corridor. The Third Frontier Commission looked for strong local support for projects seeking funding, and with Council, city and county government among the supporting bodies, the application’s chances were that much greater.

“The application had to show very specifically how investment dollars would translate into bringing dollars back into the state,” Albanese said. “Because of the collaboration with the hospitals, the nursing schools, the medical schools and the city’s involvement, this cluster was a strong candidate for the award.”

In July of this year, a ribbon was cut to mark the opening of Select Specialty Hospital’s long-term acute care hospital. The 53,000-square-foot, 60-bed facility is another collaborative endeavor involving Akron General Medical Center and Akron City Hospital that treats patients who require longer hospitalization to promote healing and recovery from critical and complex medical and surgical conditions. The \$19 million facility retained 100 – and is poised to create 70 new – health professional jobs.

Recently, a five-partner venture operating as the BioInnovation Institute in Akron debuted, thanks to a \$20 million injection of cash from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. In addition to the Knight Foundation money, the founding institutions – Akron Children’s Hospital, Akron General Medical Center, Summa Health System, NEOUCOM and The University of Akron – are contributing \$4 million each in matching funds. Plus, First Energy Corp. pledged \$10

million over the next 10 years for the institute, whose activities will include the aforementioned Orthopaedic Research Institute, a medical device concept laboratory and center for biomaterials and medicine located on the University of Akron campus.

Meanwhile, Albanese said, Akron’s economic development officials are knocking on doors around the nation and around the world to sing the praises of the corridor to generate interest in other players.

“The city is constantly trying to bring companies here. They’ve been in discussions with Germany, Israel, China and other places, trying to get the word out about what we now have to offer,” Albanese said. “That’s why we have to do some land banking. We have to be able to show them something now.”

Albanese said Council didn’t have a crystal ball that showed visions of a prosperous return on the initial investment in the Biomedical Corridor, but knew the city would see at least \$17 million in tax revenues from the development. She also knew that Council support for such an ambitious venture into biomedical research and technology would yield serious interest from the local and national medical and academic community.

She thinks what’s started thus far could be the beginning of many more great things to come for a renewed Akron, poised to be a national leader in the biomedical industry.

“Besides economic, the benefit is more local and collaborative efforts between the three hospitals, the city and the academic community,” Albanese said. “To have them all linked in this way is so important for Akron to become a strong medical presence in Northeast Ohio by itself.”

Ward Meeting Schedule

Ward 1/Hurley		
11/12/08	6:30 p.m.	North Hill Branch Library 183 E. Cuyahoga Falls Ave.
12/17/08	6:30 p.m.	Highland Square Branch Library 807 W. Market St.
01/14/09	6:30 p.m.	North Hill Branch Library
Ward 2/Kilby		
10/30/08	6:30 p.m.	Mason Community Learning Center 700 E. Exchange St.
11/20/08	6:30 p.m.	Forest Hill Community Learning Center 850 Damon St.
01/29/09	6:30 p.m.	Forest Hill Community Learning Center NO DECEMBER MEETING
Ward 3/Sommerville		
10/25/08	10 a.m.	Ed Davis Community Center 730 Perkins Park Dr.
11/22/08	10 a.m.	Ed Davis Community Center
01/24/09	10 a.m.	Ed Davis Community Center NO DECEMBER MEETING
Ward 4/Greene		
11/20/08	6 p.m.	Forest Lodge Community Center 260 Greenwood Ave
12/02/08	6 p.m.	Lawton Street Community Center 1225 Lawton St.
01/06/09	6 p.m.	Lawton Street Community Center
01/15/09	6 p.m.	Forest Lodge Community Center
Ward 5/Jones		
10/30/08	6 p.m.	Lauer Senior Building 666 N. Howard St.
11/06/08	6 p.m.	The Mayflower Building 263 S. Main St.
12/03/08	6 p.m.	East Akron Community House 550 S. Arlington St.
12/04/08	6 p.m.	The Mayflower Building
01/29/08	6 p.m.	Lauer Senior Building
Ward 6/Albanese		
10/28/08	7 p.m.	Ellet Community Center 2449 Wedgewood Dr.
11/25/08	7 p.m.	Ellet Community Center
12/23/08	7 p.m.	Ellet Community Center
01/27/09	7 p.m.	Ellet Community Center
Ward 7/Merlitti		
11/26/08	7 p.m.	Firestone Park Community Center 1480 Girard St.
01/28/09	7 p.m.	Firestone Park Community Center NO DECEMBER MEETING
Ward 8/Keith		
11/12/08	7 p.m.	Northwest Community Center 1730 Shatto Ave.
12/10/08	7 p.m.	Northwest Community Center
01/14/09	7 p.m.	Northwest Community Center
Ward 9/Freeman		
12/2/08	7 p.m.	Kenmore Senior Community Center 880 Kenmore Blvd.
01/06/09	7 p.m.	Kenmore Senior Community Center NO NOVEMBER MEETING
Ward 10/Crawford		
11/11/08	6:30 p.m.	Goodyear Branch Library 60 Goodyear Blvd.
12/09/08	6:30 p.m.	Goodyear Branch Library
01/13/09	6:30 p.m.	Goodyear Branch Library

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Extracting the gold within

Alchemy program for young men shines at All-America City presentation

An Akron organization for urban male youths that traveled to Tampa with Akron City Council in June to compete for the All-America City title left a shining impression on Council President Marco Sommerville.

Council authorized the city to spend \$25,000 toward the cost of sending a delegation of 66 to Tampa. Some of the young men impacted by Alchemy Inc. were a part of the delegation. They said that they felt honored to share the company of Sommerville and five other members of Council, and members of the city administration. Sommerville said he was as impressed with the young men of Alchemy as they were with him.

"While in Tampa, I kept hearing the young men say what an honor it was for them to be among us. In reality, the honor was ours," Sommerville said. "Whether they realize it or not, those young men in the Alchemy program represent the reason we in public life chose our paths: to make a better world for future generations.

"I'm proud to lend my support to a group like Alchemy."

Alchemy is a nonprofit organization founded by G. Kwame Scruggs in 2003. The program serves at-risk adolescent males in Akron middle and high schools through after school and summer enrichment programs. The organization is funded through several public and private sources, including a Housing and Community Services Grant from the city, and grants from the Akron Community Foundation Neighborhood Partnership Program, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Robert A. Kutz Foundation.

Proverbs and other life lessons from myths and stories are some of Alchemy's key tools for getting through to the young men in the program. Each session starts with a drum circle and a myth whose moral can be applied to a modern situation. The young men then interpret the story, extracting a valuable lesson, Scruggs said.



Alchemy Inc. participants Tyrell Butts (right) and Devonte Roper traveled to Tampa with Council President Marco Sommerville and Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic to present in the All-America City competition finals.

"Through the stories they can open up and view life more objectively," said Scruggs, who earned a Master of Arts degree in mythology with an emphasis in Jungian Depth Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, Calif. "The myth helps to remove them from situations that could cloud their minds. The boys learn that common themes in myth are often common themes in life."

Scruggs said it was only fitting that his organization has the name that it does. Just as an alchemist's objective is to extract the most valuable material from metals, he explained, his mission is to tap into the potential of the young men he reaches through Alchemy's programs.

"The alchemist takes a base metal through a chemical process to extract gold from it," Scruggs said. "I thought that was ideal for working with youth. We're taking them through a process and getting the best out of them."

Scruggs said he noticed the boys who went to Tampa were

struck by being in the company of so many responsible, professional and successful males of all races while vying for the city's third All America City title.

"Being able to have access to people like Mr. Sommerville, Councilman (Jim) Shealey, Mr. (former Planning and Urban Development Director Warren) Woolford and the Mayor in Florida was a life-changing moment for those boys," Scruggs said. "They were surrounded by adults who were consistently giving them praise. If they could get that in every environment, we would not have the problems with urban male youths we have now."

Tyrell Butts is a 14-year-old Buchtel High School freshman who participated in Alchemy at Perkins Middle School. He said the trip changed his impression of men in powerful positions.

"We met all kinds of people we thought we'd never meet, like the Mayor and Dr. (Sylvester) Small. It changed my way of thinking," said Butts, who enjoys history and social studies, and has aspirations of becoming a SWAT officer. "I thought the Mayor would be heavily guarded and kind of stuck up, but he was a down-to-earth person."

Butts said everything he learned in Alchemy manifest into the big picture in Tampa.

"It was an honor to be there, and then to win the award," Butts said. "It makes me think more of Alchemy."

Scruggs said public and private financing deserves much of the credit for Alchemy's continued success. However, the trip to Tampa and being in the company of so many men of accomplishment underscored how important it is that the young men in the program are exposed to the limitless possibilities available to them.

"We need the money," Scruggs said. "But having access is almost, in the long run, going to be more valuable than the money."

Councilwoman Greene seeks health equity for Akron's underserved

Ward 4 Councilwoman Renee Greene has become part of something that could have huge implications for improving the health of Akron's underserved populations.

As chair of Council's Health and Social Service Committee, Greene has been tapped to serve as a Council liaison to the Akron Health Department's newly created Center on Health Equity. The center, part of the department's Division of Community Health Assessment and Health Promotion, was formed at the beginning of the year to coordinate community health programming which targets underserved populations in Akron and Summit County.

"Councilwoman Greene is the one who has the voice on Council and she has certainly got the respect of her colleagues. We're a mile ahead by having her as a conduit to city officials," said Thomas Quade, deputy director of the Akron Health Department.

Greene said that as Health and Social Service Committee Chair, she is in direct

and frequent contact with many area health agencies, and knows what their needs are.

"My role will be as a resource for other organizations in the community that may be in need of the center's service or to help them garner possible matching funds down the road," Greene said. "Because it does affect my committee and how we interact with the community, it's a good place to be as far as checking the data and holding people accountable."

A \$100,000 grant from the Ohio Commission on Minority Health jumpstarted the center's primary objectives, which are to gather and publish all pertinent data that area health agencies can use to further their efforts, and to help the agencies seek funding sources.

The grant is issued to Ohio cities with large urban and minority populations, with the aim of closing the gaps in health care access for people of color, the elderly, the disabled and low-income residents. Quade said the

center is expected to be an unprecedented source of help for local agencies engaged in efforts to circumvent limits to health care that at-risk populations face.

"The state Commission on Minority Health said if a local office on health disparities can identify local communities, that local office would be in a much better place to direct money to the community agencies doing the work than the commission would in Columbus," Quade said. "We do an awful lot of reporting of data with regard to health disparities, but we really haven't been getting it out to the folks in the community that can do something with it."

With additional funding from Akron General Medical Center, Summa Health Systems and the Healthy Connections Network, the center was able to purchase health risk behavior data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and hire a staff made up of a center coordinator, a graduate assistant from Kent State

University and a researcher from the Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM).

Quade also assembled a 12-person advisory board, made up of the people who stand to benefit from the center's resources. The advisory board, he said, will provide his center the direction it needs to divert resources where they're most needed.

The center will be particularly concerned with data which deal with reasons why minority and other at-risk populations suffer in worse ways from certain diseases than their majority population counterparts. Its staff will analyze and interpret studies on treatment and mortality rates for such ailments as HIV-AIDS, hypertension and pneumonia.

Quade said the center will publish monthly reports on a particular health issue that affects underserved populations in Akron.

Akron Public Schools makeover moving along

Schools' transformations earned city third All-America title



When the East/Goodyear Community Learning Center opens, it will house middle and high school pupils in grades 7 through 12. Like all Akron CLCs, East/Goodyear will be open to the community after school hours and during the summer.

Little by little, Akron's schools are being transformed into modern, spacious Community Learning Centers.

Imagine Akron Community Learning Centers is an aggressive, 15-year plan that began in March 2005. Overseen by the Joint Board of Review, it is the largest construction project ever in Akron, transforming Akron's 58 public schools – 71 percent of which are over 70 years old – into modern buildings that benefit students and the general community.

Akron City Council President Marco Sommerville chairs the Joint Board of Review and was among a delegation of city representatives to travel to Tampa over the summer to compete for the All-America City title. The unique school building initiative caught the attention of the National Civic League, contributing to Akron's third All-America City award.

"It's no surprise that the judges were impressed with the school building element of our presentation," Sommerville said. "Akron residents should be proud to know that no other city that made the list of finalists presented a school building plan remotely similar what we presented in Tampa."

To date, 10 CLCs have been completed under Phase 1 of the construction plan, three of which opened doors to students for the first time this school year – Sam Salem, Robinson and Forest Hill elementary schools.

After school, on weekends and during the summer, the community at large can use the facilities for recreation, adult education, meetings and other activities.

Eight more are currently under construction in Phase 2.

The majority of Phase 3 schools are currently in schematic design, excluding Innes CLC, which began construction last fall. The 10 other community learning centers planned for Phase 3 include Portage Path; Hyre; McEbright; Buchtel/Perkins; East/Goodyear; Innes; Leggett; Rankin; Schumacher and Windemere.

The Buchtel/Perkins and East/Goodyear middle and high schools had raised concerns with parents and community members. However, Akron Public Schools is working to establish a plan so that students will be segregated by grade throughout the school day. Plans include multiple gymnasiums, alternate start and finish times, and separate wings.

Twenty-one more schools are planned for Phases 3 through 6 of the project.

When all of the buildings in the project are completed, 13 Akron schools will have permanently closed. Scheduled to close in the near future are: Erie Island Elementary; Essex Elementary; Goodyear Middle School; Kenmore Annex; Lincoln Elementary and Smith Elementary.

The eight CLCs currently under construction in phase 2 are, by cluster:

BHS BUCHEL

Crouse Community Learning Center

1000 Diagonal Rd.
Projected Completion Date: January 2009
Grades: K–6
Swing Location: Current Site
Square Footage: 67,925

EHS EAST

Barber Community Learning Center

665 Garry Rd.
Projected Completion Date: Fall 2009
Grades: Pre-K–6
Swing Location: Old Mason Elementary
700 E. Exchange St.
Square Footage: 68,692

East/Goodyear Community Learning Center

80 Brittain Rd.
Projected Completion Date: Fall 2010
Grades: 7–12
Swing Location: East Students to Central Hower, 123 S. Forge St.
Goodyear students, current location
Square Footage: 250,000

EHS ELLET

Ritzman Community Learning Center

629 Canton Rd.
Projected Completion Date: August 2009
Grades: K–5
Swing Location: Central Learning Center, 400 W. Market St.
Square Footage: 54,890

GHS GARFIELD

Glover Community Learning Center

935 Hammel St.
Projected Completion Date: December 2008
Grades: K–5
Swing Location: Central Learning Center
400 W. Market St.
Square Footage: 55,826

KHS KENMORE

Rimer Community Learning Center

2370 Manchester Rd.
Projected Completion Date: July 2009
Grades: K–5
Swing Location: Voris Elementary
1885 Glenmount Ave.
Square Footage: 53,000

NHS NORTH

Findley Community Learning Center,

65 W. Tallmadge Ave.
Projected Completion Date: Fall 2009
Grades: K–5
Swing Location: Old Jennings Middle School
225 E. Tallmadge Ave.
Square Footage: 52,000

OPEN /SPECIAL ENROLLMENT

National Inventors Hall of Fame Center for STEM Learning

221 S. Broadway
Projected Completion Date: August 2009
Grades: 5–8
Swing Location: N/A
Square Footage: 80,000

Fall leaf removal schedule set

New bagging option available

The City of Akron Street Cleaning Division began the annual bulk leaf removal program Oct. 22, but with an added service to make the process more convenient for some residents.

As before, residents may rake leaves within two feet of the street curb the day before their scheduled pickup. But this year residents may also collect leaves in special biodegradable paper leaf bags to be placed on their curbs for removal during their scheduled garbage pickup times. Street Cleaning officials said the new bag option allows residents to bag leaves at their convenience.

Bags are priced between \$1.95 and \$2.50 for five 30-gallon bags, and are available at local retailers such as Home Depot and Marc's, and even online at Amazon.com.

For the safety and convenience of residents and street cleaners, residents should NOT:

- Allow children to play in leaves on or near the street;
- Place branches or other debris in the street with the leaves;
- Rake leaves into the street after leaves have been removed; or
- Park vehicles over leaves, as the heat from the undersides could cause a fire.

Signs will be posted to remind residents of their leaf removal schedule. The schedule for the first and second round of removals by ward follows.

Ward 1: Nov. 1, Dec. 2	Ward 6: Nov. 11
Ward 2: Nov. 1, Nov. 29	Ward 7: Nov. 13
Ward 3: Oct. 28, Nov. 21	Ward 8: Oct. 29, Nov. 24
Ward 4: Nov. 15	Ward 9: Nov. 6, Dec. 5
Ward 5: Nov. 19	Ward 10: Nov. 8

For more information on leaf removal in Akron, call 3-1-1 or (330) 375-2311 from a mobile phone or business line, or visit www.ci.akron.oh.us.

CITY COUNCIL BRIEFS

New recycling center reuses old warehouse

WARD 2 – Say goodbye to the empty warehouses lining the east end of Exchange Street. The old abandoned Pepsi plant is now the new home to a group that's known for making old and used things into new – Recycling Coordinators Inc.

A branch of Recycled Technologies Inc., established in 1993, Recycling Coordinators has taken up shop in Akron's east side and has provided approximately 50 jobs which offer health and retirement benefits for Akron workers.

Ward 2 Councilman Bruce Kilby was instrumental in efforts to bring the company to Akron, both because of the job opportunities for residents, and because the project involved no public money.

"This recycling center is incredibly significant to Akron," Kilby said. "They are providing a vital service while creating new jobs without costing Akron's residents anything."

Recycling Coordinators recycles post-industrial plastics and metals, with a special concentration on removing the nickel, copper and other metals out of the used debris from steel mills. No garbage, consumer waste or other organic materials will be processed at this plant.

Modern, urban living ahead at Spicer Village

WARD 2 – With the first of a two-phase plan nearly complete, University Park's new Spicer Village is transforming a once unsightly area surrounding The University of Akron into a chic place to live.

The \$35 million housing project, which began in early June, aims to bring young professionals and medical personnel back into the city, as well as out-of-state students and downtown Akron workers.

Council authorized the city to fund \$2.1 million worth of improvements to the 40-block radius surrounding Spicer Village, which includes road surfaces, curbs, sidewalks, underground utilities and ornamental lighting. The city also has set aside \$10 million to continue improvements to the area in its attempt to bring people back to the central city.

"This new community is a great addition to the city of Akron and its residents as a whole," said Ward 2 Councilman Bruce Kilby. "It's not just positively impacting those in the University Park area – it's impacting everyone."

University Park Alliance is also contributing to this project by assisting with a pedestrian-friendly public open space, which will function as both green space dividing the buildings and as a park-like area that will be open to the public.

The 25 1,800- to 2,900-square-foot, four-floor town homes feature secure two-car garages, rooftop terraces, two to three bedrooms, two baths and translucent exterior wall panels that provide natural filtered sunlight during the day and a soft, lantern-like glow at night.

Units start at \$170,000, and special financing is available for U of A employees. To schedule a private viewing of a furnished model, contact Spicer Village at (330) 936-2276 or visit www.spicervillage.com.

New apartments underway in Cascade Village

WARD 5 – Once Akron's oldest public housing development, Elizabeth Park – now known as Cascade Village – has undergone a major transformation, and is nearing the end of its revitalization process.

With Cascade Village North and South complete, construction has begun on the final element to one of Akron's newest neighborhoods – Cascade Village East and West. This last component, scheduled to be complete by the end of 2009, consists of a four-story building located on Howard Street, containing 40 one- and two-bedroom units as well as 25 units located where the gymnasium once stood on the east side of Elizabeth Park.

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority secured a \$19.25 million Hope VI Grant, funding from the city and other local sources to fund the \$50 million revitalization project.

The first phase of Cascade Village consists of 27 new single family homes and 242 townhomes. The site, nestled between the Little Cuyahoga River and the Oho and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, will also feature a village green anchored by a new community center that will link the development on both sides of the river.

A sobering experience

Council members often jump through hoops to keep liquor permits from nuisance premises

Over the summer, Akron City Council passed resolutions objecting to two establishments' applications to transfer or renew liquor permits because they were seen as nuisances in their communities.

Those objections are being considered during the Ohio Division of Liquor Control's formal hearing process. The process allows both sides to explain their cases, and no decision will be made until every legal option has been exhausted.

The process has become a point of frustration for some Council members because it is not always a given that a nuisance permit holder's application will be denied. Like any other legal proceeding, evidence must be presented to prove each side's points, and the law must be followed when rendering a decision.



Mike Freeman
Ward 9

Ward 9 Councilman Mike Freeman and Ward 4 Councilwoman Renee Greene are behind recent objections to establishments' applications to transfer or renew permits in their wards. Freeman said a financial incentive may drive the division

to grant such applications in order to keep revenue coming to local governments in the way of license fees, usually around \$100 per application, plus taxes. But when compared to what some nuisance establishments mean to residents, Freeman wonders if Akron really benefits.

"They may say the city gets income too, but if you look at the income that we get from liquor licenses versus what it costs us in additional police hours, I don't think it's a bargain for us," said Freeman, who sponsored legislation objecting to a permit transfer for Jaikissoon Singh Enterprises Inc., doing business as Leprechaun Party House. "I wish the division would look at it a bit more from the standpoint of the history of a place, or when residents show up to a hearing to protest, they would pay a little more attention."

When an establishment submits to the Division of Liquor Control its annual application for permit renewal or transfer, a series of steps are involved before either can happen. One of the first steps is notification of the local legislative body. In Akron's case that body is City Council.

If Council objects to the permit renewal or transfer, it will adopt a resolution of objection and forward it to the division within 30 days of notification.

Like any other legal case, the burden of proof is always on the plaintiff. In the case of permit objections, City Council must prove – within the law – that the establishment in question is a nuisance.

"Once that hearing officer comes from Columbus and listens, and we haven't proven that business owner unworthy to hold a permit, they give that license back," said Ward 4 Councilwoman Renee Greene, who sponsored a resolution objecting to a permit renewal for OP Market, doing business as Mr. Pantry on Copley Road. "It doesn't matter what the community says. Our attorneys have been extremely frustrated with the process."

Greene said the strict interpretation of the law, coupled with the burden placed on the permit objector, make it difficult for Council to successfully win a permit denial. Plus, she said, some permit holders have gotten cleverer with the application process.

"One thing some owners have done is select a person that has no ties to the business, but whose name they place on their license application as the owner of the establishment," she said. "In a couple months after winning

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The burden of proof

Just because a bar or carryout has a bad reputation in the neighborhood doesn't mean its application to renew or transfer a liquor permit will be denied.

Akron City Council must prove, within the law, that granting an establishment's permit application will disrupt the peace and sobriety of a neighborhood.

Below are some components of the objection process and other community options for dealing with nuisance permit holders.

THE OBJECTION PROCESS

Council adopts a resolution objecting to the permit renewal or transfer.

The applicant and objector attend hearings.

Once a decision is made, both sides have rights to appeal to the Ohio Liquor Control Commission.

OTHER COMMUNITY OPTIONS

While individual residents don't have much say in the objection process, some community options are:

- Letters to Council objecting to an establishment's permit renewal or transfer;
- A local option election: voting an entire precinct "dry"; or
- The padlock procedure, which closes a premise for a year, and may result in a renewal denial when the owner reapplies the following year.

Scholarship

from page 1



James Hurley
Ward 1

In fact, Hurley said he would not have participated or voted for the ballot initiative without any provisions for job protections. It is because of that commitment to jobs that Hurley said Council passed the second ordinance to make sure

sewer employees who choose not to work for the new operator have jobs in the city with the same pay and benefits.

“Certainly I had reservations because of the jobs question; I am a firm believer in a fair day’s wage,” Hurley said. “But as a whole, I agree with what the mayor is trying to do if it means educating our citizens.”

Council passed additional legislation that makes clear who is eligible. Originally, the mayor proposed scholarships for graduates of all Akron public and approved nonprofit high schools. The ordinance expands eligibility to include Akron resident G.E.D. recipients, home schooled students and those who – due to state law – attend schools in adjoining suburbs such as Coventry, Springfield and Copley.

Household income will not be considered when awarding scholarships, but applicants would be directed to first apply for available financial aid. They would also be required to live and work in Akron for 30 years, or repay the scholarship money if they decide to move.

Sommerville said Council’s decision to pass the three related ordinances boils down to the greater good for the greater amount of people.

“If this passes, this city will have a period of adjustment to deal with,” Sommerville said. “But at the end of the day, what’s at stake here is the potential for every high school graduate in Akron to have a quality education no matter their family income.

“We’re on the verge of something big here.”

Sobering

from page 6

the permit, they’ll get the title transferred back into their name.”

Though Freeman hasn’t challenged many permits in his ward during his time in office, he agrees that the burden placed on Council to prove an applicant unworthy is tough, and one whose process he would like to see changed one day.

“I’ve seen the Liquor Control Division grant licenses to bars that continue to have problems,” Freeman said. “That, plus the fact that you may have to resort to drying up an entire precinct to address one business is troubling.”

Accountability, responsibility go both ways when civilians, police interface

Auditor, Public Safety Chair share ideas for building trust

Accountability for one’s actions during the course of a civilian-police officer encounter is the responsibility of both parties, said Akron’s Independent Police Auditor Phillip Young.

For their safety, both should have certain guidelines to follow. Of course, he said, police guidelines should be strictly adhered-to, department-mandated policies. For civilians, however, Young said the rules may not be as clear.

The auditor has been on a mission to help citizens and police departments understand the importance of policies and procedures since he assumed the role one year ago, and he has come up with some recommendations to help achieve that mission.

Some of his initial recommendations were aimed at transparency and accountability, like suggesting that all use of force and complaint calls be recorded, that the complaints be heard by the Akron Police Department’s Internal Affairs Division rather than Patrol Operations, and new policies be instituted to protect citizens and officers from retaliation when a complaint is made.

Lately, questions of police officer accountability and department procedures have been raised by members of Council and Akron residents. Young and Council’s Public Safety Committee Chair Jim Shealey (At Large) have discussed a possible recommendation that certain officers’ cruisers be equipped with cameras. That, both agree, may help tear down a wall of mistrust and skepticism over what really happens during a contentious encounter – especially where a suspect or officer is wounded or killed.

“Not only does having cameras help the officers as far as any controversy or question, the citizens know at least the encounter is on video,” Shealey said. “If we could get a camera in every car, that will encourage more transparency and cut down on a lot of the negative perceptions of police.”

In Young’s travels throughout the state, visiting police departments small and large, he found that the Canton Police Department’s use of car-mounted digital video cameras could be helpful tools to accurately record encounters.

“The cameras play a big part in their (Canton’s) Internal Affairs Division, and now they have audio and video on a lot of things they’re investigating,” Young said. “The Canton police have used cameras since 1999, so they have a pretty firm grip on policy and procedure and enforcing how the officers use the cameras and use them properly.”

Young said the Akron Police Department recently purchased 22 digital cameras. He said he has been advised that the cameras may be split between the Traffic and Patrol divisions. Young and Shealey recommend that APD start off with cameras in cruisers that patrol high-crime areas and in vehicles of officers that have numerous use of force and citizen complaints.

“Then, we will be able to hear what the suspects are saying to officers and what commands are given by the officers,” Young said. “In a lot of cases there may not be video but we will still have audio which will indicate language, tone and commands given. At the same time, verbiage can be picked up from suspects who are speaking back to officers.”

Young has not formally presented the recommendation to Akron police, but did invite some officers to a demonstration of Canton’s system.

Since taking office, Young has been working on a list of recommendations for civilians when they find themselves in contact with a law enforcement officer. Shealey said a how-to guide for citizens is long overdue, and noted that citizen education was one of the reasons behind his push for an independent police auditor.

“We need to educate our citizens that responsibility is a two-way street when you’re stopped by police,” Shealey said. “I’ve always pushed for some plain guidelines that explain if you don’t want to initiate an arrest and end up in jail, here’s what you don’t do.”

Following are some helpful tips and a quick-reference guide containing some Do’s and Don’ts from Young for citizens to keep in mind if ever in an encounter with police.

- Do make sure all vehicle lights are working, including the license plate bulb, tail lights, headlights, turn signals and reverse lights.
- Do not overly modify your vehicle with dark window tints, hydraulics, blue lights and clear tail lights.
- Do not drive on bald tires.
- Do not operate a vehicle without a front plate.
- Do not operate a vehicle with a loud exhaust.
- Do not drive with a loud stereo system, especially between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m.
- Do obey all traffic laws.
- Do have your driver’s license with you at all times.
- Do wear a safety belt.
- Do not attempt to buckle a safety belt or remove it if stopped by an officer. (Such movements may put the officer on high alert.)
- Do not “bad mouth” or run away from an officer.
- Do ask questions, but do not challenge an officer.

Remember, you can always report misconduct later.

Cut out the quick-reference card below to keep in a wallet, vehicle glove compartment or even on a home refrigerator.

7 Helpful Tips to Remember If Ever Contacted by Police



1. If you are approached by a police officer, be respectful and do not assume the worst.
2. Realize your appearance and attitude may send a message, either good or bad.
3. Do not have your hands in your jacket or pockets; officers will be concerned that you may have a weapon.
4. Avoid sudden movements. The officer may think you are trying to hide something or reaching for a weapon.
5. Remain calm. Fear and adrenaline can get both you and the officer in trouble.
6. Remember: What you may think is harassment may be proper police procedure necessary to conduct an investigation.
7. If you are stopped, do as the officer tells you to do. This is not a time to take on the officer. You can always argue your case in court or file a complaint later.

Akron students paint the town

Although the summer has come and gone, Akron residents can still spot its colorful remnants around town, thanks to the city-sponsored Summer Arts Experience and the Neighborhood Canvas Summer Arts Experience.

Now in its sixth year, program participation has expanded from 60 Akron high school students 100 as a result of incorporating the Neighborhood Canvas Summer Arts Experience component.

"The Summer Arts Experience is one of those programs that Council supports hands down," said Parks and Recreation Committee Chair Kelli Crawford (W-10). "This year, we made sure the city contributed nearly an additional \$10,000 in order to fund this much-needed expansion."

Program organizers say the two programs benefit the city by providing employment to professional local artists; summer jobs for student apprentices; and public works of art for the community to enjoy.

"Through working with the professional artists, these kids develop crucial workplace skills, confidence and the ambition to always push themselves one step further to achieve greatness," said Suzie Graham, Akron's Coordinator of Arts and Children's Programs. "Not only do they expand their judgment skills, problem-finding and problem-solving skills, they know how to implement them by the end of the session."

The 2008 Summer Arts Experience and

Neighborhood Canvas Program participants completed 10 projects throughout the area, six of which are located downtown in and around Lock 3. Projects include: an abstract mural located in the Chemstress Building courtyard led by Kelly Urquart; a botanical mural on the wall along the sloped driveway under State Street that leads to Lock 3 led by Cornelius Butler; sculptural additions to downtown bike racks led by Don Parsisson; a ceramic mosaic on the wall of the O'Neil's Building facing Lock 3 led by Bob Yost; a video about the Cuyahoga Valley Railroad led by Mike Pritt; and a percussion ensemble under the leadership of musical therapist Edie Hardin-Steiner composed cadences they performed at percussion workshops held at



Summer Arts Experience participant Geno Thomson, a 15-year-old Buchtel High School sophomore, takes a break from working on a mural in the Chemstress Building courtyard to smile for the camera.



Above photo: Summer Arts students painted this mural along State Street downtown.

more than 15 locations throughout the city.

Other projects include: murals at the Reservoir Park playground and the Summit Lake Community Center led by Aaron Graham and Matt Miller, respectively; a quilt for the Kenmore Senior Community Center led by Cynthia Fahey; and several three-dimensional sculptures based on facts and stories about Simon Perkins and John Brown on display at the Perkins Mansion led by Carol Adams.

Under the expanded programs the students in the Summer Arts Experience have five full weeks to plan and execute the projects, while the Neighborhood

Canvas Program allows them three days to complete the projects. However, the artist mentors in the latter program developed their projects ahead of time so their groups could get started right away.

The students received a stipend for their participation in the programs, which could attribute to the growing popularity of the programs. More than 200 students applied to participate in each of the 2007 and 2008 sessions, and with the addition of the Neighborhood Canvas project, nearly half of them were able to participate this year.

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic started the Summer Arts Experience in 2003. To date, more than 300 students have participated. Plans are underway for next year's Summer Arts Experience, including artist proposals and scouting for sites. For updates on the 2009 Summer Arts Experience, visit www.ci.akron.oh.us/lock3Live/sae.htm.

Pedal more, pay less

Cyclists, motorists to officially share Akron roadways

As Americans are looking for alternatives to driving in the face of high gas prices, Akron has come up with a way to welcome bicyclists on the city's roads – and to perhaps convert four-wheeled commuters to two-wheelers.

Soon, shared lane markings, known as "sharrows," painted on many city streets will inform cyclists and motorists that certain travel lanes are intended to be shared.

The first sharrows in Akron can be seen in the 50-block radius surrounding The University of Akron, also known as University Park, and the initial bike plan should cover about 14 miles of streets this year, including Buchtel Avenue, High Street, Broadway Avenue and several others. The project, when completed, will cover 50 miles of city streets.

Sharrows will also assist cyclists in their positioning in the travel lanes by moving them out of parked cars' "door zones" and away from the curb where they are not as visible. The center line of the sharrows is 11 feet from the curb, which positions cyclists



Shared lane markings, or "sharrows," will be painted on 50 miles of city streets to inform cyclists and motorists that certain travel lanes are intended to be shared.

approximately four feet away from parked vehicles. Cyclists are often forced over by vehicles on roadways, thus creating danger to themselves and to motorists exiting their vehicles from on-street parking.

Under Ohio law, bicyclists have the right to pedal on the roadway. The city hopes the sharrows will increase awareness of the law while encouraging residents to cycle more often.

Of the 2,051 bicycle accidents statewide reported last year by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, more than 12 percent resulted in an incapacitating injury or death.

"Akron's bicycle plan is designed to eliminate many of these accidents," said Andy Davis, Akron Bicycle Plan project manager. "We want to encourage residents to ride their bikes while also ensuring their safety."

The goals of Akron's bicycle plan are to decrease this number dramatically, while creating a city that is more

bicycle-oriented. The sharrows will also eliminate wrong-way riding by cyclists, showing them to pedal with traffic rather than against it.

New city-wide bike racks are included in Akron's bicycle initiative. Inverted "U" style bike racks, similar to those found in Cleveland and Chicago, will be placed on sidewalks near business and public buildings or venues.

This year's funding for Akron's shared lane markings comes from both the City of Akron and University Park Alliance, who contributed \$15,000 each. The city also is earmarking approximately \$50,000 for the 2009 bicycle plan, which will translate to about \$1,000 per mile for the 50-mile project.

The Akron Engineering Bureau, Planning Department, other city departments, Akron City Council members and a Bicycle Advisory Group will hold neighborhood meetings to promote and increase the community's awareness of the new lane markings and provide information to residents to keep motorists and cyclists safe on Akron's streets.

For more information on upcoming meetings visit www.AkronBikeInfo.org. Citizens can also e-mail a request for a bike rack installation to akronbikeinfo@ci.akron.oh.us.