



South Russell Village NEWSLETTER

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www.SouthRussell.com

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Property Tax Levy Clarification

After the recent income tax initiative, we received a number of comments and questions regarding how property levies actually work. I thought it might be helpful to provide some information pertaining to how property tax levies are actually structured and work.

Property tax levies are based upon millage – a factor of the aggregated property value throughout the community. A common misconception is that the revenue brought in from a property tax levy will increase as the aggregated value of the property within the community increases – either due to additional development or increases to individual property values. Actually, the revenue for a given property tax levy is designed to generate the same amount of revenue over time even as property values increase.

Property taxes have some other

interesting characteristics which can be somewhat confusing. Property tax levies last for 5 years, after which they must be presented to voters for approval. When a property tax has expired, it can be either renewed or replaced. If a levy is renewed, it continues to generate the same level of revenue it did when it was first passed. A good example of this is one of the safety levies that the village passed back in 1976. When the levy was initially passed in 1976, this particular levy provided approximately \$150,000 in revenue to the village each year. This levy has been renewed each time since 1976 and therefore today this levy continues to generate the same \$150,000 per year even though property values in the village have increased substantially since 1976 and inflation has eroded the value of that original \$150,000 levy valuation.

When levies are replaced, it can be a bit

confusing as millage rates are recalculated and may actually have a lower millage rate, yet may yield more revenue due to the fact that property values may have increased over time. Over the past 40 years, the village has only replaced a levy one time (safety levy) as opposed to a renewal.

One other point of clarification is that only a small percentage of your property tax dollars actually stay in South Russell Village. The vast majority of property tax dollars go to support the very strong Chagrin Falls School system. Currently, approximately 10.5% of what is paid in property tax dollars by South Russell residents stays in South Russell Village.

We hope that this helps clarify some of the confusion regarding how property taxes operate. As always, feel free to contact village hall if you have other questions or need assistance.

Mayor Matt Brett



*Happy Holidays
to Everyone
from
South Russell
Village*

Fourth Annual Fall Festival

South Russell Village celebrated the fourth annual Fall Festival on September 26, 2010 at the Park. Coordinated by the Parks Committee under the auspices of Mayor Brett and the Village Council, the Festival welcomed more than 650 residents on a windy, rather chilly day. The Festival attendees enjoyed hot dogs, lemonade, chocolate chip cookies and potato salad. Hayrides through the Park were conducted by residents Ted Kruze and Mike Hogan. The Chagrin Falls Volunteer Fire Department displayed some of their trucks and fire fighting equipment. Residents were also treated to a fly-in by Metro Life Flight, and had an opportunity to tour the helicopter. Lawn and farm machinery were provided for display by Chagrin Pet and Garden. Mayor Brett recognized the landscaping project completed by John Sullivan in fulfillment of one of his Eagle Scout award requirements. Village employees from the Service and Police Departments provided very efficient assistance in setting up and overseeing the Festival events. Transportation provided by Lollie the Trolley helped ensure a smooth traffic flow. We hope all residents can attend next year!



2011 Village Budget Comes Into Focus

It has been the strategy of the village to operate with a balanced budget – to always ensure that anticipated expenses are in line with forecasted revenues. With the income tax increase ballot issue not passing this fall, additional financial reductions will need to be considered. Working together through our budget process, the various department heads and elected officials have made a series of additional cuts to bring the budget close to balance. Some of the cut backs that will be enacted for 2011 will include:

- The elimination of the 2011 village road maintenance program
- A second consecutive year of salary

freezes for all village employees and elected officials

- A reduced safety force in non priority times/shifts
- A reduced snow removal staff during minor snow, off hour events
- A reduced village health care contribution for all village employee health care plans
- A reduced village capital improvement engineering budget for long term village projects like storm sewers, parks, cemetery, roads, etc.

The village is committed to its mission of providing a high level of

essential services - safety, snow removal, and road maintenance, and doing it in a fiscally responsible manner. The village has worked diligently over the last decade to continue to keep expenses under control and as low as possible. In fact, over the past ten years the village has averaged a 2.5% rate of increase per year in expenses which is quite remarkable when one considers that health care costs, fire and EMS contract costs with Chagrin Falls, workers' compensation, fuel costs, and other personnel costs have been increasing at a much faster rate than 2.5% over that same period of time.

How will you afford a college education?

Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation (LEAF) can help.

Accessing college can be overwhelming. Ask any high school senior or his/her parents. "It's a huge process with a lot of information to keep track of, forms to fill out, and deadlines to meet. When you are going through it for the first time, it can really be daunting," remarked one parent at a recent scholarship information session held by the Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation (LEAF) in Concord.

LEAF is a college access and scholarship program that began delivering services to the community in 1990. As a non-profit organization, LEAF is dedicated to providing access to information to anyone in Lake or Geauga counties interested in continuing their post-

secondary education.

Because Chagrin Falls High School is located in Cuyahoga County, LEAF does not have advisors who work in Chagrin Falls High School; however, South Russell residents may access LEAF's myriad of services by scheduling an appointment with its advisors at the Resource Center, which is located at 8221 Auburn Rd. in Concord. Students and parents can call 440-458-8045 to schedule an appointment. They can also visit the web site at www.leaf-ohio.org. All services are free.

The LEAF programs provide students living in the area with help in the following areas:

- Academic planning for higher education
- Financial aid advising and resources such as help completing the FAFSA Application
- Last Dollar Grants
- College advising and resources
- Career advising and opportunities research
- Scholarship resources
- Encouragement

In addition, its website offers students a resource from which to gather information about financial aid and scholarships. The site has a database of more than 300 local scholarships available to students living in the area. It also offers helpful advice to navigate the financial aid process, a timeline for parents and students, and information on frequently used scholarship scams.

LEAF also serves residents of Lake and Geauga counties through its Resource Center in Concord. Throughout the school year, LEAF counselors conduct a variety of informational sessions on topics such as Admissions Application, Researching Colleges On-Line, Scholarship Presentation, FAFSA Application Prep, and Loan Session. These sessions are conducted free of charge and are held in the evenings and on Saturday mornings at the Resource Center. These sessions are open to all residents of Lake and Geauga counties but reservations are required. Check the website at www.leaf-ohio.org for the schedule of 2010-11 programs offered.

A Ton of Shoes, a Ton of Hope

Over 2,800 pairs of shoes weighing more than a ton is the result of a successful shoe drive conducted by South Russell Village resident and Hawken School senior, Kalle Nelson. The shoes will be shipped to the charitable organization Soles4Souls which

will distribute them to those in need of footwear in the US and around the world. Since 2004 Soles4Souls has distributed over 10 million pairs of shoes in over 125 countries, including the US, to persons in need, whether they are victims of a natural disaster or subject to living in extreme poverty. As part of her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Kalle and her volunteers collected shoes door-to-door in South Russell and at the farmers markets over the summer. Though Kalle has concluded her shoe drive, she hopes that people will continue to support Soles4Souls and their important global cause. Information on shoe and monetary donations, distribution trips, as well as local shoe drop off locations is available on their website, www.soles4souls.org.





SNOW WORRIES



The 2010 - 2011 winter season has arrived. The Service Department's winter equipment is ready to handle any snowy conditions that Mother Nature delivers. The Village of South Russell and its Service Department take pride in keeping our roadways clear and safe during the winter months.

VILLAGE POLICIES FOR THE WINTER SEASON

As road surfaces become snow covered, road crews will address them in a priority system. Primary roads will always be attended to first, which include Bell Road, Snyder Road, Daisy Lane, East Washington Street, Manor Brook Drive, Alderwood Trail, and Chillicothe Road (St. Rt. 306) if the State of Ohio ODOT Highway Department has not attended to it yet.

Plowing of secondary roads and side streets will be cleared as the driver's route dictates. Cul-de-sacs and turnarounds are low on the priority once a single pass has been made. Clean up and widening of all the cul-de-sacs and turnarounds will be addressed after all roads are in a safe and passable condition.

Additional plowing may be required on side streets following the practice of the Sensible Salting Policy (using minimal salt) until snows have subsided. Salting of hills, curves and intersections will still be addressed for safety issues. Plowing and salting will not be scheduled between the hours of 11:00 pm and 3:00 am unless road crews are directed to continue.

Snow Parking Ban: A snow Parking Ban will be declared whenever there is two or more inches of snow on any village streets or the National Weather Service



forecasts a severe snowstorm warning. No parking is allowed on any streets in the community. The purpose is to make sure the streets are clear for snowplowing. This Parking Ban is in effect from November 15 through April 15. Signs have been posted at all entrances to the village as a reminder to residents and visitors. The Snow Parking Ban policy has been in effect since 1999 and violators are subject to vehicles ticketed or towed.

Private Snow Removal: No person shall cause any snow to be moved from any premises, drive, parking area or sidewalk, onto or to be placed upon any portion of the traveled surface of any public street within South Russell Village, including pushing or mechanically blowing snow across Village streets.

Trash Cans and Totters: Weekly trash pickup containers must be placed off the road surface and to one side of your driveway apron. Do not place containers in the roadway

This is a reminder that snow plowed from your driveway must remain on your property or pushed to the sides at the end of your driveway apron. Snow cannot be pushed onto or across the road surface for several conditions may result from this action:

- 1) Snow from the private plowing contractor left on the road surface can refreeze, becoming slippery or rutty and cause a safety issue.
- 2) Materials such as salt and cinders placed on the road surface by the service department for snow and ice control are removed.
- 3) Large snow piles are not pushed off the road surface reducing lane traffic size.
- 4) Materials are present on roadways after melting from gravel driveways.
- 5) Plow damage to properties opposite your driveway may occur and become a neighbor's responsibility in the spring.

The village does not require private snow plowers to obtain permits for plowing driveways yet. Homeowners are requested to notify their private driveway plowers that snow plowed should remain at the end and off to the sides of each driveway. **Plowing snow across the street is prohibited.** Snow removal around mailboxes is required, so delivery by the post office can be

maintained. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to correct or notify their contractor of the problem. The village will not practice tracking down individual contractors working within the village. If a reoccurrence is noted and a citation needs to be issued, the citation will be delivered to the homeowner unless the contractor is caught in the act of the violation. The homeowner will then be responsible to address the problem of the citation with their contractor.

With the holiday season upon us, residents may be having social events at their homes. The snow removal crews will work their best to maintain passable roads although cars may be parked on the roadway. Vehicles should be parked on the same side of the road and not in the cul-de-sacs. All night and over night parking without previous approval from the South Russell Police Department is prohibited and may result in early morning towing of a vehicle. Please refer to and obey the village "Parking Ban" ordinance in effect from November 15 through April 15. It is at this time of day/night when much of the snow removal and clean up work is accomplished.

The Service Department of South Russell is here to serve its residents and visitors throughout the year. At this time of year we want to make your visits and travels safe. Please consider the job we are trying to accomplish and the size and weight of the vehicle we are operating. Road conditions will always be in better condition behind the snowplows than in front. Please give the plow operators a "brake". With slower speeds and a little bit of patience, we will all get to our destination safely.

Wishing you a happy and safe holiday season and safe travel for the 2011 New Year.

The South Russell Service Department.



**Village of
South Russell**
5205 Chillicothe Road
South Russell, Ohio 44022

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RUSSELL**
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 Building Dept. 338-6700 ext. 233
 Streets Dept. 338-6700 ext. 236
 Police Dept. 338-6700 ext. 290
www.southernrussell.com

There is One More Gift to Give This Holiday Season...

You don't have to go shopping. You don't have to worry about the size.
 It will only cost you about one hour of your time. It will help those in need of it NOW.

It is **"The Gift of Life!"**

The Village of South Russell is joining together with the



and will host a



being held at

GURNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1155 Bell Road – South Russell

Wednesday, December 29, 2010 • 2:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

You may donate every 56 days. If you donated on or before November 4, 2010,
 you are eligible to donate on December 29th.

Blood comes
 from the 



Please Give

You must be at least 17
 years old,
 weigh at least 105 pounds
 to donate
 and be in good health.
 Please bring a current form
 of identification.
 Please bring all current
 medications being taken.