

FUNDING FOR THESE AGENCIES PROVIDED BY WHEELING TOWNSHIP

Wheeling Township funds a variety of important human care services for residents of all ages. Almost half of the Township's general budget funds 25 social service programs. Because of Township funding, services provided by these agencies are available to residents on a sliding-scale basis.

- ⊙ @Home Matters
- ⊙ Alexian Center for Mental Health
- ⊙ Avenues to Independence
- ⊙ CEDA (emergency shelter, child care, Head Start)
- ⊙ Catholic Charities (housing, senior services)
- ⊙ Center for Enriched Living
- ⊙ Children's Advocacy Center
- ⊙ Clearbrook Center
- ⊙ Countryside
- ⊙ Faith Community Homes
- ⊙ Greater Wheeling Youth Outreach
- ⊙ The Harbour
- ⊙ Journeys from PADS to HOPE
- ⊙ Life Span
- ⊙ Lutheran Services of Illinois Behavioral Health Services Program
- ⊙ Midwest Council for Children with Disabilities
- ⊙ Omni Youth Services
- ⊙ P.H.D.
- ⊙ Salvation Army
- ⊙ Shelter, Inc.
- ⊙ Suburban Primary HealthCare/ACCESS TO CARE
- ⊙ WINGS

Please call Jo Stellato at (847) 259-7730 to learn more about these agencies.

VETERANS' SERVICES... HERE AT WHEELING TOWNSHIP

If you are a veteran and have questions regarding benefits and services, Jim Lopez, Veterans Service Officer (VSO) is at the Wheeling Township Office on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

You may call (224) 345-3446 to talk with Jim or to make an appointment. Walk-ins are also welcome. Learn more about what benefits may be available for you and to discuss your individual concerns.



PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR...



**16th Annual
5 Township Senior Job Fair
Thursday, October 22, 2009
Cotillion Banquet Hall
360 Creekside, Palatine, IL
10:00 a.m. - 12 noon**

WHEELING TOWNSHIP ELECTED OFFICIALS



Michael Schroeder, DDS
Supervisor



Paula Ulreich
Town Clerk



Dan Patlak
Assessor



Scott Saewert
Highway Commissioner



Mike Domrzalski
Trustee



Ruth O'Connell
Trustee



Kathy Penner
Trustee



JoAnne Schultz
Trustee



Stephen Sharer
Collector

Wheeling Township Report, Inc.

1616 N. Arlington Heights Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
847-259-7730

www.wheelingtowship.com

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ECRWSS

Hours: 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays

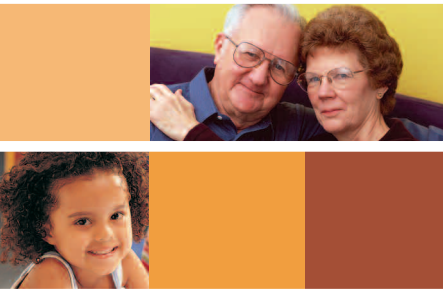
Township Board Meetings: 8:00 p.m.
on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Residential Postal Customer



FALL 2009

Wheeling TOWNSHIP



From the Supervisor



Michael Schroeder
Supervisor

Many **thanks** to everyone who has donated either food or gift certificates to help us continue our tradition of service to the less fortunate of our community. Because of donor generosity, over 3,768 people received food from our Food Pantry last

year. Bushels of fresh vegetables were donated by local gardeners and Northwest Community Hospital, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and the Jaycees held food drives that filled in the gaps on our shelves. In June, Harvest Bible Church sent 13 teen volunteers to sort and verify expiration dates on canned goods. And our sincere gratitude goes to the congregation of **Hebron Presbyterian Church** in Prospect Heights for their considerable donation. They collected canned goods and winter coats for those who are struggling because of the economic recession.

One individual, who wishes to remain **anonymous**, purchased the winning steer at the Kane County Fair and donated over 100 pounds of ground beef, wrapped

Please see page four for a list of the most needed items for the Wheeling Township Food Pantry.



Frank Lauerman, Maryann Hernandez, and Thelma Talamantes accepted donations from Hebron Presbyterian Church members.

in individual one-pound packages, to our Pantry. We also received more than 20 cartons of premium ice cream and 50 boxes of cereal from two residents.

I'm also grateful to the throng of dedicated volunteers, and Food Pantry Coordinator **Maryann Hernandez**, who have been quite busy sorting and packing bags for the many people who walk through our doors. Even though food donations have declined slightly, the demand for food assistance is quite high. If you can help, we and those we serve will be most appreciative.

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From the Administrator - Jo Stellato

Wheeling Township **Supervisor Mike Schroeder** is one of three dentists featured in the September/October 2009 edition of the *Chicago Dental Society Review* magazine. The article highlights individuals whose days aren't over when they leave their dental practices; instead they are out in their neighborhoods acting as community leaders. Mike was raised in Arlington Heights and feels it's important to take every opportunity to give back to the community that has given him so much.

As CEO of Wheeling Township, he is responsible for providing human need services to residents with little or no income. Wheeling Township helps citizens who income-qualify for the state mandated General Assistance program with property tax dollars. However, Wheeling Township is always seeking alternative revenues to assist the growing numbers who fall between the cracks. Mike actively recruits volunteers and donations through his business, and community involvement, for all Township programs. Elected officials and staff congratulate Mike Schroeder on the article and a job well done!

Adopt-a-Family 2009

BRING JOY TO A NEEDY FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON...

One of the strongest messages of Christmas is the spirit of sharing. Throughout the years, the Adopt-a-Family program has served as an avenue of opportunity for neighbors to help their needy neighbors. The families that qualify for our programs have experienced job loss or lay offs, or are the "working poor" who struggle to make ends meet. So, we are asking for your help in bringing joy to these families during the holiday season. Last year, thanks to the generosity of donors and volunteers, over 1,400 children and their parents had a cheerful Christmas.

The program is fully confidential for both the donor and the recipient. You can adopt one or more families. Family sizes range between 2 and 10 members. To participate, please follow the guidelines below. Thank you for your support!

Guidelines for donor's participation in the 2009 program are as follows:

1. Each donor must complete a registration form (below). To assure proper registration, please provide all the requested information on the form.
2. Forms should be received in our office by **November 20, 2009** by either mail or fax.
3. Upon the receipt of your registration, we will provide you with the requested family information, and written detailed program information.
4. Each child should receive at least one toy and one article of clothing. Adult family members should receive at least one gift.
5. To ensure equality for all participants, the suggested spending guideline per family member is \$50 to \$100.
6. All gifts should be wrapped and labeled with recipient's first name and assigned family number.
7. Boxes, bags or containers must be of a size that can be easily handled and have the assigned family number on it.
8. Gifts should be dropped off at the Wheeling Township Community Center on Monday, December 7 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m.), and on Tuesday December 8, (1 p.m. - 7 p.m.) 2009.
9. Please remember that it is crucial that each donor fulfill his or her pledge and provide delivery of the donation on the specified date and time.

For more information, please contact the General Assistance Office at 847-259-7730 or canderson@wheelingtowship.com. Our office hours are: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 pm.

2009 ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

Sponsor' Name, Group/Company/Family or Individual

Name of Contact Person (if applicable)

Address (city/state/zip)

Phone number 1

Phone number 2

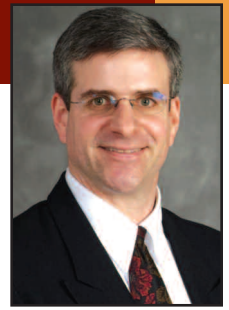
Fax number

Email Address

Size of the family you wish to adopt

Mail to: Wheeling Township: 1616 N. Arlington Heights, IL 60004 or Fax to: 847-259-1570

FROM THE ASSESSOR... DAN PATLAK YOUR TAXPAYER ADVOCATE



Due to the closing of the Cook County Assessor's office in Rolling Meadows, our office has been exploring several cost effective ways we can continue to provide efficient service to an anticipated increase of visitors to our office. During periods of heavy traffic, one improvement you will notice when you visit us is a ticket machine and an electronic numeric display. We have installed this equipment to make sure constituents are serviced in a fair, orderly and efficient manner. The system will be used only during those times when we anticipate large numbers of constituents, i.e. tax bills, appeal periods and exemption renewal periods.

2nd Installment Property Tax Bills

Property tax bills should come out some time in October or early November. These tax bills represent the second half of your 2008 taxes. Examine them carefully to be sure you are receiving all of the exemptions to which you are entitled. If there is no dollar amount next to an exemption you believe you should have received, you may need to file a certificate of error (C of E) to get a refund. You have three options in order to obtain the C/E:

- Contact us at 847-259-1515 (Have your permanent index number (PIN) ready when you call).
- Visit the Skokie branch of the Cook County Assessor's office located at the Skokie Courthouse, 5600 W. Old Orchard Road, Room #149, Skokie, IL 60077 or their Chicago location in the Cook County Building at 118 N. Clark Street, 3rd floor.
- Visit the CCAO website at www.cookcountyassessor.com to download specific C/E forms and instructions and mail them directly to the County at the address found on the forms.

Assessment Adjustments for 2009

Assessment notices for 2009 are still to be mailed for Wheeling Township property owners. The Cook County Assessor's office (CCAO) has not assigned a specified mailing date at this time for Wheeling Township. We have been told they should be mailed sometime later this year or very early next year. Please watch for this notice in the mail as it will provide the **new lowered assessed value** on your home along with a description of your home and property. If you see any discrepancies on the notice or feel the assessment is incorrect, you will have a limited time in which to appeal the information with the CCAO; and a deadline date should appear at the bottom of the notice. If you need our assistance, it is wise to call first (847-259-1515) as we anticipate long lines and can answer many of your questions over the phone and mail appropriate forms and information to you.

Again, please have your permanent index number (PIN) that is found at the top of your assessment notice available when you call or visit the office.

Our office of professionally trained staffers stands ready to assist you with your property tax related questions. Please contact us by phone at 847-259-1515 or stop by to visit us in person on the second floor of the Township building. We're here to help.



FROM THE HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER... SCOTT SAEWERT

Diligent Pre-Planning leads to "Shovel Ready" Road Grants...



As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, \$150 billion was provided for investment in new infrastructure, which is the largest increase in funding of our nation's roads, bridges and mass transit systems since the creation of the national highway system in the 1950's. Illinois ranks first among all the states in the total expenditure of ARRA funds, which means the State, County and local governments are committed

to dispersing these funds as quickly as possible to do new infrastructure projects and help spur economic development in our state.

Long before this act was even considered, I had worked with my staff to prepare plans for future projects throughout the unincorporated areas. These were meant to be implemented over several years, but this pre-planning enabled me to successfully apply for ARRA grants for "shovel-ready" projects. I am overjoyed to report that we have been

awarded substantial grants for specific larger projects that I normally could only complete in phases, but can now accelerate:

- Road drainage restoration and road re-construction/repaving on **Hill Street, Graylynn Drive and Gregory Street;**
- and Road drainage restoration and road repaving on **Portwine Road and Forest View Road.**

In addition, we received some smaller grants for general road drainage and repaving projects. The first project using these funds will be for repaving of **Ellen Drive** during the first half of September.

Depending on the timing for actually receiving the funds, these grant awards may offer me an opportunity to reduce the Road District tax levy next year.

Thank you for the pleasure of serving you! If you have any questions or if we can be of service, please call our office at 847-259-7730.

FROM THE CLERK'S OFFICE... PAULA ULREICH



A NEW SERVICE – Residents may now stop by the Wheeling Township Clerk's office to pick up birth, death and marriage certificate **applications**. They can also be downloaded from the Cook County Clerk's website. To obtain a marriage license, a couple must go in person to the Cook County location to apply.

UPCOMING VOTER INFORMATION – Candidates for the February 2, 2010 primary election have already started circulating nominating petitions to be on the primary ballot. To be eligible to sign a petition you must be a registered voter.

When to register:

- If you have just moved into the Township
- If you have moved to another residence
- If you have changed your name

Where to go:

Just come to the Clerk's Office, 1616 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, Monday – Friday, between 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. to register. All you need are two forms of identification, one showing your current address, be a citizen of the United States, and be 18 years of age or

older by the next election. Once you have registered, there is no need to re-register unless to move or change your name again. For additional information call 847-259-7730.

Early Voting will take place from January 6, 2010 – January 28, 2010. Wheeling Township will again serve as an Early Voting location. **Hours will be from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 9:00-12:00 noon Saturday.**

Election Judges

Want to be an **election judge** for the February 2nd Primary Election? To qualify, you must be a registered voter and live in Cook County. If you are interested in serving on Election Day, call either Republican headquarters at 847-632-1774 or Democratic headquarters at 847-253-9032.

HISTORICAL TIDBIT – On December 2, 1858, an application was approved to make Prairie a through street across the St. Paul and Fondulac Railroad crossing and extend Wing Street west on the railroad grounds to the east side of Prairie Street, in Dunton Illinois. The Prairie Hotel was then located at the northeast intersection of Prairie and Wing. Today we know the town of Dunton as Arlington Heights.



FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

We wish to thank everyone who has donated in the past. We are always in need of supplies for those less fortunate, so if you are able to donate, the following items are especially needed:

- pancake mix and syrup
- dry milk
- dry beans/peas
- rice
- sugar (small size)
- peanut butter, jams & jelly
- toothpaste
- canned meat
- tomato products
- cooking oil
- coffee
- juice boxes
- toilet paper
- shampoo/conditioner
- paper towels
- cleaning products
- detergent

Other products are welcomed. Thank you!



NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Val Profit, Wheeling Township's Job Counselor, is here every Thursday to address your employment needs. She meets with job seekers one-on-one to review resumes, assess work histories, and determine employment paths for the future. Val introduces job seekers to area employers when applicable. Call Val to make an appointment at 847-259-7730.



Val also coordinates a great networking session: the Job Club, which is a support group for job seekers 50 years of age and older. After the session, our famous Job Bank is distributed, which is a listing of 100 open positions at companies that are currently hiring. Meeting one-on-one with job seekers determines the entries in the Job Bank. For instance, if a number of clients are in search of Administrative Assistant or I.T. positions, Val works hard to include information on those positions in the next Job Bank. The Job Club's goal is an extension of the employment search and to help you find employment.

Our last Job Club of the year will be held on October 27, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at Schaumburg Township, One Illinois Boulevard, Hoffman Estates. That day, 15 fantastic companies will be present to recruit for various open positions; a mini job fair! Mark your calendars for the October 27th event.

THANK YOU... YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN!

Our gratitude goes to everyone who contributed to our "School Supplies" and "Giving Garden" programs. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to help over 300 children with new backpacks and basic supplies to get off to a great start this school year. We were also able to distribute over 1,000 pounds of fresh produce to needy families. Both of these programs were essential avenues of help and wouldn't have been possible without your help. Thank you!



Senior & Disability News

CALL (847) 259-7730 TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS

SENIOR SCENE PROGRAMS...

Join us and expand your horizons learning about new topics of interest.

SENIOR SCENE programs, hosted by the Wheeling Township Senior Advisory & Action Council, offer free educational opportunities to all seniors, age sixty and over. The timely topics and lively discussion, give older adults a chance to expand their knowledge and share fellowship.

Just call our office to register for the upcoming free programs offered from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. on the following dates:

MEDICARE PART D... WHAT COVERAGE IS RIGHT FOR YOU ?”

Tuesday, October 13

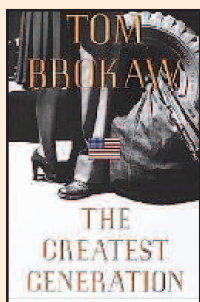
At a time when healthcare is a timely topic, come out of this presentation with a better understanding of Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and the programs that can help with the costs of paying for prescriptions. Basic information about Medicare Part D, Illinois Cares RX (the state pharmaceutical program) and the Extra Help Program will be explained. This timely presentation will help you make informative decisions during the open enrollment period for Medicare Part D. (Open enrollment for Part D begins November 15 and ends on December 31.)

Honoring our “greatest generation”...a special event honoring our veterans...

“THE GREATEST GENERATION” BY TOM BROKAW

Tuesday, November 10

On the day prior to Veterans' Day, join us for this timely discussion. Tom Brokaw defines “the greatest generation” as American citizens who came of age during the Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America. Joyce Voss, Community Services Manager at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, will lead a book discussion of this stimulating book. (Limited paperback copies of “*The Greatest Generation*” may be purchased for \$9.50 from the Township.) Read the inspiring personal stories and attend this special event, paying tribute to those who served. Tom Brokaw has autographed a hardback copy of the “The Greatest Generation” which will be included as a special drawing the day of the event. Limited seating available, so sign-up now to reserve your place!



TRANSPORTATION SERVICE... SCHEDULE A RIDE...MEET NEW FRIENDS...

Accessible and affordable, the Wheeling Township Transportation Service offers curb-to-curb transport to older adults (age 60 and over) and permanently disabled residents (age 18 and over). This service provides older adults and the disabled with a vital connection to their community overcoming isolation and dependence.

If you are in need of our transportation services, please call the Transportation Department at (847) 259-7743 for detailed information regarding program services and eligibility. (First time riders must register for services and reservations are required.)

Make A Difference Day

The national day to help others October 24, 2009, the 19th annual Day



MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Bring Your Child With Special Needs to the Wheeling Township Halloween Fun Fair

Wheeling Township invites all special children, ages 2 -12 years, to our annual Halloween Party! This is a safe and accessible free event for special needs children and their families to celebrate Halloween with games, prizes and food.

Prizes will be awarded for best costumes, so be creative with your attire and let's celebrate together!

When: Saturday, October 24

Where: Riley Elementary School
(Northgate Subdivision)

1209 E. Burr Oak Drive, Arlington Heights

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lots of prizes and a free pizza lunch!

Admission: A Happy Heart!

Please call to reserve your space no later than October 19th! Let us know if you may need special accommodations.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

As simple as it sounds, making a difference in your community can change lives. Through volunteering and donating to the Township's Halloween Fun Fair for children with disabilities, you can improve their lives and bring smiles to their faces.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

DONATE The following new items: (Sorry, we are not able to accept used items.) • Children's toys, books, stuffed animals, wrapped candy • Halloween decorations, paper plates and napkins, canned pop and juices, cookies. Too busy to shop? Cash donations are always welcomed to help defray our costs.

VOLUNTEER as a service group to sponsor a booth. (Call us for more details.)

Senior & Disability News

CALL 847-259-7730 TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE DISABLED...

YOU ARE INVITED...

Visually Impaired Support Group (VIP) – This group meets the first Thursday of every month from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.



A Night in Vienna...

Beautiful music provided by the Chicago Symphony, perfect weather, delicious food and time spent with friends made for a perfect evening for the Wheeling Township VIP annual outing to Ravinia. A special thanks to Northwest Special Recreation Association for helping to plan the event and providing transportation.



Seniors and disabled enjoy a Night in Vienna at Ravinia.

VOICES – This Therapeutic Support group meets every Thursday of each month (except the 1st Thursday) from 12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.

The Township Transportation is available to help you attend these groups. Just call our Transportation Department at (847) 259-7743 to register for transportation services or to make a reservation.

SENIOR ADVISORY & ACTION COUNCIL...

This dedicated group of Township residents meets in the 4th Tuesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. If you would like to share your time by serving on this Council, please call Kris Freeman.

FLU SHOT CLINIC



In partnership with Northwest Community Hospital, Wheeling Township will be hosting our annual Flu Shot clinic on **Thursday, October 22 from 9 a.m. – 12 noon** at the Wheeling Township Community Center for persons 18 years of age or older.

Please call 847-259-7730 on Monday, October 5 to schedule your appointment.

The flu shot is free, if you are on Medicare or Railroad Retirement. Please bring your card with you the day of the clinic.

Those with PPO, HMO and Medicare HMO will receive the vaccine for \$20 (cash and checks accepted, but no credit cards). The Center for Disease Control recommends vaccination for individuals 65 years and older, people with chronic disorders of the lung or heart, including asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, immune system problems or HIV infection, and women who will be four to nine months pregnant during the flu season. Pregnant women need a physician's order to receive a flu shot.

Flu clinic information is added to the NWCH Community Flu Shot hotline as it becomes available. Call 1-847-618-4358 for the most current information.

DON'T FORGET TO FILE YOUR TAX RETURN...

Are you a senior citizen who needs help filing your 2009 State and Federal income tax forms? Wheeling Township partners with the AARP Senior Tax Assistance Program to have trained tax counselor volunteers at our facility to assist with filing simple income tax forms.

Call to schedule an appointment for the following Fridays:

- **February 5, 12, 19 and 26**
- **March 5, 12, 19 and 26** • **April 9**

Please bring the following information with you at the time of your appointment in order to maximize the tax counselor time and expedite the filing process.

- Copy of your 2008 filed tax return
- Verification of your 2009 income and sales/purchases of assets



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES... IT'S TIME TO LEND A HELPING HAND!

It's that time of year to clean out your closets and donate those unused items. Perhaps you have some unused minutes you would like to donate to help your neighbors in need. Volunteer for the **Friendly Visitor Program**. Your time commitment is 2-3 times a month for approximately an hour. You determine the day and time to visit; very flexible.

The **Meals on Wheels Program** is in need of volunteers to drive meals Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.. If you can't commit to a regular schedule perhaps you can volunteer as a substitute driver with a schedule that fits your needs.

Give Chris Guth a call ... a great way to make a difference.

MEDICAL SERVICES OFFERED...

Wheeling Township recognizes the importance of older adults to remain living independently in their homes and their communities. The following health services, administered by the Township nurse, are available by appointment, for residents 60 years and over.

TUESDAY & THURSDAY – 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Blood Pressure (no charge)

Blood Sugar Screening (\$1.00 charge)

PRO Time - Anticoagulation Therapy Testing (\$6.00 charge)

2ND & 4TH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH - 9:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Cholesterol Screening: (Available to residents 18 years & older)

Eight hour fasting (water only) lipid profile including total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides and blood sugar (\$15.00 charge)



STOP IN TO IMPROVE YOUR DRIVING SKILLS

Secretary of State Drivers Refresher Course

The one-session Secretary of State Refresher Course will help prepare you for your driving test and soothe those road test jitters! This class is designed to give drivers – especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities, the knowledge and confidence needed to renew or obtain a driver's license. The review course, taught by knowledgeable volunteers, combines an explanation of the driving examination with a practice written examination.

If you are interested in this course offered from 9:30 a.m. - noon, please call our office at (847) 259-7730 to register for one of the following classes:

- November 12
- January 14

AARP – SAFE DRIVING PROGRAM

Tune Up Your Driving Skills

In cooperation with AARP, Wheeling Township offers the AARP Safe Driving Program, designed to help you **tune up** your driving skills, **learn** about normal age-related physical changes, **adjust** your driving to allow for the changes and **reduce** your traffic violations.

Call our office to register for one of the following two-day sessions.

A \$12.00 charge for AARP members and \$14.00 for non-members applies for the two-session class. Checks should be made payable to AARP and mailed or dropped off at the Township office prior to your first class.

Class time is 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. on the following dates:

- Monday, October 5 & Wednesday, October 7
- Monday, November 9 & Wednesday, November 11
- Monday, December 7 & Wednesday, December 9
- Monday, January 4 & Wednesday, January 6

Upon the completion of the two-session class, you will be issued a certificate, which may be submitted to your automobile insurance company for a possible discount.

RENEW YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE AT WHEELING TOWNSHIP!

When: Wednesday, October 28

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Services Available: Vision screening, duplicate license, corrected license, driver's license renewal, State I.D. card

There are NO road tests available!

NOTES FROM THE NURSE...



Flu season will soon be upon us. This year's flu season is especially worrisome. Besides the seasonal flu, novel H1N1 virus, otherwise known as the swine flu, is making an encore performance this fall.

Here are a few facts about this disease:

H1N1 is a type A influenza virus that is a respiratory disease which is spread by coughing or sneezing. Touching something with the virus on it and then touching your nose or mouth will also spread the disease.

Symptoms of this virus are similar to other flu - sudden onset of fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches and chills. Some people have also experienced nausea and vomiting. A person with the flu can infect others even before symptoms begin. Once you become sick you are contagious for a week or so after that therefore before you even know you are sick, you can pass this virus on.

Although there is a vaccine in the works for H1N1, it is not available now (August 2009). We need to protect ourselves from catching H1N1 by taking simple precautions.

- Get plenty of sleep, at least 7 to 8 hours per night for adults is suggested.
- Eat three balanced meals per day.
- Wash your hands with soap after using the rest room and prior to eating.
- Always cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Try to avoid anyone who is sick. If you become ill, stay home and limit your contact with others.

If you think you have the flu, contact your doctor. There are antiviral drugs that can be prescribed to prevent serious complications. If you test positive for the flu virus, your doctor may prescribe an antiviral medication.

The health department is hoping to have H1N1 flu vaccine available sometime late this fall. A shortage of the vaccine is not expected, but initial availability may be limited. The most updated information states that all children from 6 months through 18 years of age, pregnant women, young adults 19 through 24 years, and those with compromised immune systems will be the first to be offered the vaccine. Current studies show that people over the age of 65 have not experienced the same rate of infection as younger people have. This is why children will receive this vaccine initially.

For now it is important to schedule your appointment for your seasonal flu shot. (See the article highlighting the Wheeling Township Flu Clinic.) This will not protect you against H1N1, but will offer protection against other viruses that are out there.

As fall begins and those flu bugs surround us, we need to remember to take care of each other, cover our mouths, wash our hands, and get plenty of sleep. Sometimes these basic measures our mothers taught us are still our best defense!

