

Kindred Spirit

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Mark your calendars for October 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. for an informational public meeting at the Westmont Hilltop Middle School Auditorium to learn about the Borough's comprehensive sewer project scheduled to begin in 2016. This meeting is

intended to provide residents with important information about the entire sewer project, the anticipated construction schedule and responsibilities of residents. The meeting will also provide residents with the opportunity to ask questions. This is a great opportunity for residents to

obtain information first hand on what the Southmont sewer project will entail versus relying on rumors and possible misinformation from residents from other municipalities. We hope to see you there.

Richard Wargo
Borough Manager

BERKHEIMER TAX ADMINISTRATOR NOTICE

It has been brought to our attention that a taxpayer has posted a photo of their 2014 Local Earned Income Tax Reminder Notice on social media claiming that the notice is a scam. This photo has been shared via social media and has gone viral. As a result other taxpayers may also believe this to be true and will disregard the reminder notice and fail to file their Local Earned Income Taxes.

We have placed the following statement on our website:

"If you received a 2014 Local Earned Income Tax Reminder Notice, our records show that no return was received

from you. If have already submitted the tax return to our office, please return the Reminder Notice with a copy of your entire return (the tax form & all supporting documentation) to PO Box 25108, Lehigh Valley PA 18002-5108. Act 32 of 2008 requires taxpayers to file a return of an income tax and/or to pay an income tax. Act 192 of 2004 permits the taxing district and tax collector to impose the costs of collecting any delinquent taxes directly upon the taxpayer's account. To avoid unnecessary costs and charges, you should promptly file and pay your earned income taxes accordingly."

As Pennsylvania's most experienced tax collector we know how important it is to maintain good relations with our clients and their taxpayers. Having Berkheimer as your appointed collector promises a partnership that will preserve the local interests of your community, and maintain the excellent reputations you work so hard to establish.

Please feel free to direct any taxpayer question or concerns you may receive to Berkheimer at 610-599-3136 or 1-866-701-7203.

Special Points of Interest:

- Borough Office will be closed Thursday, November 26th, Friday, November 27th and Friday, December 25th.
- Daylight Savings Time ends November 1, 2015
- Trick or Treat Night will be Saturday, October 31, 2015
- Leaf Collection will be mid-October through November.
- Brush Clean-Up will be Sept. 21, 22 and 23, 2015.
- Trick or Treat will be Saturday, October 31st from 6 pm—8 pm

TRICK OR TREAT

Trick or Treat Night 2015 for Southmont Borough will be held on Saturday, October 31, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Turn Yard Waste Into Compost

Autumn is fast approaching and the leaves will soon be falling. What will you do with all those leaves? Some residents bag the leaves and they end up in a landfill. Others rake them to the curb, where they may get blown or washed into storm sewers. The best alternative is composting. Composting has the ability to provide soil with the key nutrients needed for optimum plant growth. Leaves and grass clippings are great "ingredients" for a compost pile.



It is very easy to get started! All you need is an enclosed area of 3 cubic feet (it doesn't have to be enclosed, but this is the best method). It can be enclosed with a fence, straw bales, wood or concrete blocks. Once you have the structure, start adding the grass and

leaf mixture. By turning the pile every week, adding moisture, and shredding the "ingredients," you can speed up the decomposition process.

The compost is ready to use when the pile shrinks down and no longer generates heat. Spread about 1" over your garden each season to provide a fertile, well drained material. The composted material can be placed in the bottom of the holes you dig when planting and also in the pots you use.

Yard debris and food wastes make up 35% of all municipal waste. By composting you reduce the price of hauling material, save landfill space and also provide your soil with the nutrients it needs to thrive.

What's New?

Local Tax Collector

As many of you already know we have a new local tax collector, Jeanine Matse. Office hours at 148 Wonder Street are:

DISCOUNT - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
9:00 am - 11:00 am

FACE/PENALTY - Wednesday 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Payments may also be mailed to:

Jeanine Matse
112 Mabel Street
Johnstown, PA 15905

Southmont Borough Bi-Centennial

On June 2, 1919 Southmont Borough became an incorporated community, which means our community will be celebrating its bi-centennial in 2019! We are looking for any documents, photographs, etc. from over the years to compile as part of our bi-centennial celebrations. Please contact the borough office at (814) 255-3104 to make arrangements.

Resident Reminders

Leaf Clean-Up

Southmont Borough leaf clean-up will begin in mid-October and will continue through the end of November. No limbs or grass and other yard waste. Residents are requested to rake the leaves to the curb, not in the street. Bagged leaves will be picked up with your garbage on your regular pick-up day. Help avoid street flooding and clogged catch basins by cleaning leaves and other debris from the catch basins near your home.

Brush Clean-Up

Southmont Borough brush clean-up will be September 21, 22 and 23, 2015. Residents should have brush and limbs at curb side. Limbs and branches no longer than 6' to 8' lengths and no larger than 6" in diameter. No leaves, grass trimmings or rooted shrubs. No return trips will be made.

Snow Removal

Residents are requested not to plow, shovel or blow snow from their side-

walks or driveways back into the street.



When clearing your driveway, push snow to the right of your driveway or "down stream". It is impossible not to have snow pushed into your drive-

ways. Priority is given to streets along bus routes and hills, secondary streets and alleys are done as quickly as possible. Residents have been requested to park in their driveway or off the main streets during heavier snow conditions, to better accommodate snow plows and material spreading vehicles.

Animal Nuisance

Please remember you must carry clean-up equipment when you are walking your dog. According to Ordinances #374 and #419,

- No person shall permit their dog to run at large upon public places, streets, alleys, sidewalks, or private property of others.
- Dogs must be restrained with a leash not exceeding 6 feet in length

at all times while on public places.

- No person shall allow their animal to defecate on said properties without immediate cleanup, removal, and proper disposal of feces.

Violators are subject to fines and penalties.

Please keep our community looking nice.



Tenant/Landlord Registration

Just a reminder to all tenants and rental property owners, you must file a landlord/tenant registration form when any tenant moves into or from the Borough of Southmont. This is to make sure we have current rental property owner information at all times in case any issues arise. There are no fees and forms may be picked up at the borough office or can be found on the borough website: www.southmontborough.com

10 TIPS TO WINTERIZE YOUR HOME

1. Furnace Inspection

- Call an HVAC professional to inspect your furnace and clean ducts.
- Consider switching out your thermostat for a programmable thermostat
- If your home is heated by a hot-water radiator, bleed the valves by opening them slightly and when water appears, close them.

2. Get the Fireplace Ready

- Call a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote.
- Inspect the fireplace damper for proper opening and closing.
- Install fireplace doors and keep them closed.

3. Check the Exterior, Doors and Windows

- Inspect exterior for crevice cracks and exposed entry points around pipes; seal them.
- Use weatherstripping around doors.
- Cover window wells with a plastic shield.

4. Inspect Roof, Gutters and Downspouts

- Check flashing to ensure water cannot enter the home.
- Replace worn roof shingles or tiles.
- Clean out the gutters and use a hose to spray water down the downspouts to clear away debris.

5. Service Weather-Specific Equipment

- Drain gas from lawnmowers.
- Service or tune-up snow blowers.
- Replace worn rakes and snow shovels.
- Buy bags of ice-melt/sand.

6. Check Foundations

- Rake away all debris and vegetation away from the foundation.
- Seal up entry points to keep small animals out.
- Tuckpoint or seal foundation cracks.
- Secure crawlspace entrances.

7. Install Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Buy extra smoke detector batteries.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector near your furnace and/or water heater.

8. Prevent Plumbing Freezes

- Locate your water main in the event you need to shut it off.
- Drain all garden hoses.
- Insulate exposed plumbing pipes.
- Drain air conditioner pipes.

9. Prepare Landscaping & Outdoor Surfaces

- Trim trees if branches hang too close to the house or wires.
- Seal driveways, brick patios and wood decks.

10. Prepare and Emergency Kit

- Buy indoor candles and matches/lighter for power shortages.
- Store extra bottled water and non-perishable food supplies, including pet food, blankets and a first-aid kit in a dry and easy-to-access location.
- Prepare an evacuation plan in the event of an emergency.

5 Safety Tips for Fall Driving

1. Be Aware of Poor Visibility

- Falling leaves, while beautiful can obscure vision, as can rain and fog. Shorter days are of the fall season, making it more difficult to see children playing or people walking and riding bicycles. Be aware of limitations in your visibility, and slow down if you can't see well. Use your dimmed headlights in bad weather with decreased visibility. If possible, try not to be on the roads when it's hard to see.

2. Watch for Children

- Children love to play in piles of leaves, so use extra caution where leaves are piled at curbs. In addition, the school bus will be making its rounds now that school is back in session. In addition to educating children about back-to-school safety, it's important to stay vigilant as a driver.

3. Slow Down on Wet Pavement

- In many areas of the country, rain is common during the autumn. If it's raining, keep a safe distance from the car in front of you. Wet roads make it more difficult to stop. When wet leaves are on roadways, they make the pavement slippery, and it can be difficult for drivers to get good traction.

4. Be Prepared for Bright Sunlight

- When sunrise occurs later in the morning, it can also present challenges for drivers. Have a pair of sunglasses in the vehicle to wear when the sun is bright is a good strategy. If it becomes too difficult to see because of bright sunlight or glare, a good strategy is for the driver to pull over until he or she can see again.

5. Watch Out for Ice

- As the temperatures drop further at night, a driver will need to spend some extra time in the morning scraping frost off his or her vehicle. Shady spots on the roadway may be home to black ice, which a driver may not be aware of until his or her car starts to skid on it.

Winter Tips

Winter Activity Safety Tips

Know the Signs of Hypothermia

According to the National Institute of Health, anyone who spends extended periods outside in cold winter temperatures is at risk for hypothermia. Hypothermia can happen when your body temperature drops from its usual 98.6 degrees. It is a medical emergency if a person's temperature is 95 degrees or less.

In addition to the lowered temperature, someone experiencing hypothermia may have the following symptoms:

- Confusion
- Clumsiness and stumbling
- Dizziness and drowsiness
- Apathetic mental state
- Shivering
- Slurred speech
- Weak pulse and slow breathing

Dress Appropriately

When heading outdoors to participate in wintertime activities, whether you'll be hiking, skiing, shoveling snow from your driveway, or any other outdoor activity, make sure that you dress warmly. It's wise to dress in layers when you'll be exerting yourself in frigid temperatures so that you can start out properly insulated and then shed layers as your body temperature starts to rise as a result of your level of activity. Make a point of wearing clothing made from synthetic materials to help conserve body heat. Avoid wearing clothing made from cotton fibers. If cotton gets wet, it takes some time to dry and during that time, you run the risk of becoming severely chilled and losing much-needed body heat.

Use Caution on Frozen Lakes and Rivers

The color or thickness of the ice will not necessarily tell you how much weight it can support. In general, new ice, which has formed in the last couple of weeks, is stronger than ice that has been there for months. Ice on moving water, such as rivers, is generally weaker than ice on lakes. Always consult your local DNR about ice safety before heading out on the lake for ice fishing, ice skating, or other sports.

Take Regular Breaks

Taking breaks at regular intervals is a good idea when you are enjoying the great outdoors in the winter. Go inside to warm up and get a snack and something to drink. While it may be tempting to go on one more run as the day winds down, a safer choice may be not to push yourself if you are already tired.

Tell Someone About Your Plans

Before you head out in the snow, tell someone where you are going and what time you will be coming back. That way, if you are overdue, someone can alert authorities to start searching for you. It's also important to stay on well-marked trails. Take a trail map with you and keep track of where you are while snowmobiling or skiing.

Winter 2015



10 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE WHILE AWAY

1. **Hire a house or pet sitter.**
-If you do not have family or friends that can stop by to water plants or feed pets, consider hiring a pet or house sitter.
2. **Hold your mail.**
-The post office can hold mail from 3 to 30 days.
3. **Stop newspaper delivery.**
-A pile of newspapers is a sign that your home is unoccupied.
4. **Keep eyes on your property.**
-Have a neighbor or relative check on your home on a daily basis.
5. **Make your home look lived in.**
-Consider purchasing a light timer to make it appear that someone is home.
6. **Keep the landscape trimmed.**
-High grass is another indication that your home may be unoccupied.
7. **Lock up.**
-Make sure all windows and doors are locked.
8. **Don't project your moves.**
-Show caution when discussing your trip. Also, do not announce your vacation plans on social media.
9. **Pull the plug on electronics.**
-Unplug some electronics to save some money.
10. **Install added security features.**
-Install a home security system or exterior lights.

Christmas Tree Safety

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer.

Picking the tree

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

Placing the tree

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1" - 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet

away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.

- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

Lighting the tree

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three



strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.

- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas

- Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

West Hills Regional Police

The West Hills Regional Police, again, caution all motorists to be extra observant now that school is back in session, not only because of the children who may be walking and crossing the roadways, but also for children who are entering and exiting school buses. Motorists are reminded to drive cautiously, particularly when traveling through areas where schools are located, and to obey the speed limits and school bus regulations. Remember, fines for failure to comply are significant.

Everyone should also be aware of the many different types of scams that are continuously going on throughout the area via the telephone, internet, in person, and by various other means. The Police continue to caution everyone not

to give out any personal information unless you are absolutely sure you know the person to whom you are giving that information. The Police receive reports, almost daily, from residents who are victims of scams or fraudulent activities.

Protect yourself. Don't be a victim!

The Police also ask that residents be vigilant and call the police without delay if they observe any suspicious activities. An officer is available 24/7 and no time is too early or too late to call the Police. A West Hills Regional Police Officer can be contacted at any time by calling either 1-800-281-1680, the non-emergency 9-1-1 number, or the office number of 255-4145, which will roll over to the non-emergency

number if there is no one in the office. Residents should immediately dial 9-1-1 if an emergency situation should arise.

The West Hills Regional Police Department operates under the direction of Chief Michael W. Lose, with the assistance of Captain George Musulin, III (Criminal Investigator) and Sergeant Edward F. Fisher. The Administrative Secretary is Judith Fetcko. The Police office is located at the rear of the Westmont Borough Municipal Building, 1000 Luzerne Street. The administrative staff is available between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday residents are encouraged to call if they have any questions or need police assistance.

Southmont Volunteer Fire Company

The Southmont Fire Department has been busy with many projects. Recent projects include replacing all hose and nozzles on Engine 26 and purchasing and installing 2 new saws on Special Service Unit 26. These were both made possible because of local and state grants. Other projects include installing a new bed on Utility 26. This bed makes the unit more versatile for the

fire service in our community. The utility is now equipped with most of the equipment that the bigger units have. This was made possible with the multiple fundraisers done throughout the year and your support. Also, firefighters are working on updating the area for the jubilee. As always, we are looking for volunteers. Not all volunteers have to fight fire fires. There are multi-

ple administration and fundraising duties that would be helpful to the department. If interested, please call 255-2633. Please remember that if you are able to help the fire department in the winter time by shoveling out your closest fire hydrant that would be greatly appreciated. If not, a firefighter will be around to do this.



SOUTHMONT BOROUGH

Office Hours:

8:00 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

**148 Wonder Street
Johnstown, PA 15905**

Phone: 255-3104

Fax: 255-4150

E-mail:

smtboro@atlanticbbn.net

Website:

www.southmontborough.com

Presorted Standard

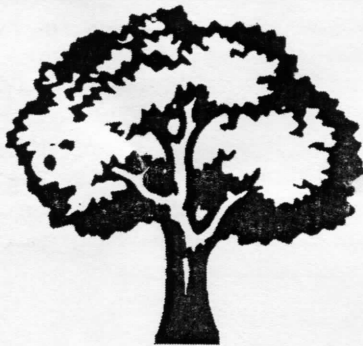
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 468

Johnstown, PA

15905\$2628 C085



SHADE TREE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Robert Morgan, ~~Chairman~~; Sheree Speicher & Herb Ewald; Councilmembers

Advisory Board: Jennifer Drummey, Judy Kelly & Ellen Singleton

YES, I want to sponsor a tree and help Southmont Borough re-new its Urban Forest. Enclosed is a check for \$100.00 or more.

Address _____

Name for whom the tree is planted _____

YES, I would like to contribute to Southmont Borough's Ur-ban Forest Project, in the amount of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

Southmont Borough would like to thank Dottie Glass and Mr. & Mrs. Mark Pasquerilla & Family for their contributions to the Southmont Urban Forest. Contributions are tax deductible and very much appreciated by all who enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the Southmont Borough Urban Forest.