



Meet the Manager

Expectations Are High

Hello, Oak Park!

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Erik Tungate. I am delighted to be here in Oak Park as your new city manager.

See **MANAGER** on page 3



Can You Pass?

School Bus Safety Law Quiz

School is in session for thousands of young Oak Park residents. This means dozens of those big yellow school buses will be back on the streets throughout the community.

See **SCHOOL BUS** on page 3



Officials to Explore Options in Wake of Proposals

City officials will begin the process of studying the best course of action to deal with ongoing budgetary problems following the defeat of a revenue-generating initiative in the Aug. 8 Primary Election.

Had both Proposal #2012-03 and #2012-04 been approved by voters, a separate retirement system for Oak Park's Public Safety officers would have been authorized and created, thereby relieving Oak Park's General Fund Budget of a major financial burden. Because "both" is the key word in the previous sentence, the plan was rejected by a tiny margin.

The propositions were mutually dependent – in legal language, co-contingent – meaning that both would have to be passed in order for the plan to be enacted. Proposal #2012-03, which would have amended the City's Charter so that officers would become members of their own exclusive retirement system, actually was approved by an 85-vote margin, 2,219-2,134. However, Proposal #2012-04,

which would have authorized Oak Park under a state law to establish the separate system for department retirees and to levy property taxes annually at a level adequate to fund their pensions and health care costs, lost by 20 votes, 2,183-2,163. This measure, which has been implemented by other cities over the years, is made possible by provisions of Michigan Public Act 345.

The results essentially maintained Oak Park's budgetary outlook for fiscal year 2013-2014 at status quo, which is not optimistic.

"We are projecting a \$1.5 million reduction in tax revenue through 2014 due in large part to economic conditions outside of our control. Our primary goal is continuing to provide the highest level of services to our residents. While maintaining those services under a declining revenue situation is always difficult, minimizing our legacy cost obligation under PA 345 will allow us to use funds to immediately strengthen our financial position and fo-

See **OPTIONS** on page 2

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Affordable Mini-Dumpsters Available: Recommended Protection from Rodents

The City of Oak Park has been working with our trash collector, Tringali Sanitation, on affordable options with regards to your weekly trash pick up. For a rate of \$90.00 Tringali will deliver a mini dumpster to your home for storage of your weekly trash (for \$80, residents may purchase/pick-up a bin from Tringali's location). The City of Oak Park recommends the use of these receptacles. These 92 gallon dumpsters are made of polyethylene that is 100% recyclable, are easily maneuverable, and have attached lids to keep rodents away.

Call Tringali to order a dumpster today: (248) 585-9120



OPTIONS

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cus on the priorities set forth by the taxpayers," said City Manager, Erik Tungate.

Because the target date for implementing effective revenue-generating actions is July 1, 2013, the beginning of the next fiscal year, there is time for City officials to carefully explore their options. According to Tungate, a new comprehensive ballot proposal initiative based on implementing the Act 345 approach will be on the ballot in November. Tungate went on to explain, "It is my hope that this is the last time we will need to come to the voters, and that market conditions improve over the life of the millage to the point where a renewal will not be necessary. Furthermore, we will be looking at all areas of our operations regardless of whether the millage passes to identify cost savings and process refinements."

By law, all millages levied for funding and maintaining an exclusive Public Safety retirement system is dedicated solely to that purpose: It cannot legally be used for any other purpose.

Recreation Office Hours

Monday through Thursday
10 a.m.-1p.m. & 2-4 p.m.

New Recreation Brochure

The fall/winter edition of The Family City Fun Guide will be on its way to Oak Park households this month. The comprehensive brochure covers all of Recreation's programming from October through next spring—a complete listing of athletics, classes, activities, and events. The mailing will include the Senior Center's Odyssey newsletter.

Activities continue as Community Center renovation progresses toward completion

<http://www.ci.oak-park.mi.us/recreation/>

Personnel, furniture and activity locations are still being shifted around to accommodate the needs of work crews and their equipment, but programs and services are continuing at the Community Center.

This reminder to the many residents who regularly visit the facility for a variety of purposes will be even timelier during the next several months than it has been since the project began in the spring. There are two reasons: 1) Things are about to get very busy again with the start of Fall/Winter programming; 2) Contractors are endeavoring to complete all aspects of the job no later than the end of this year, meaning that work will be proceeding at a steady pace simultaneously with the increase in recreational activities.

The Community Center modernization includes installation of new flooring, ceilings and windows throughout the building and upgrading of the main entrance foyer. The renovations will meet all applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Refurbishing of rooms 1, 2 and 3 and Recreation Department and Technical and Planning Services Department offices, including new furniture, will be finished this month. Then the next phase will begin.

This project was funded by a bond issue authorized by voters who approved a millage proposal in 2010 to finance construction of new City Hall and Public Safety buildings and improvements in the Library and Community Center. It follows the completion of major renovations in the Library, which were completed in April after more



than six months of work.

Among the benefits of the construction program are significantly improved energy efficiency and much lower annual maintenance costs.

The Technical and Planning Services Department's offices will be permanently located in the Community Center after having been moved from its long-time location in a half-century-old structure that was demolished to make room for construction of the City Hall and Public Safety buildings. Its responsibilities include administration of property development code provisions, blight eradication and prevention, engineering services, issuance of building, electrical and plumbing permits and animal control.

SCHOOLBUS

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The school buses in the three school districts serving Oak Park are all in top shape, and their drivers are trained and experienced. It's now up to residents to make sure that the children who ride the buses will be as safe as possible.

Do you know the state law which defines how motorists must respond in traffic situations involving school buses? The stakes couldn't be much higher: kids' safety can be at risk every time a driver violates the regulations because he or she either doesn't know them or decides to ignore them.

If you aren't completely certain about the major practical points of the law, you can refresh your knowledge by taking the following Q&A-style safety quiz:

- **You are driving behind a school bus when its lights begin flashing. Does the color of the lights make any difference?**

Every color means the same thing. As soon as you see the lights start you should slow down and prepare to stop your vehicle three car lengths behind the rear of the bus. Once the lights begin flashing do not attempt to pass the bus.

- **When should you start moving again?**

You may proceed only after the flashing stops. It isn't enough to be pretty sure that all of its passengers have either gotten off or finished boarding. Note that school buses that travel around Oak Park also are equipped with stop signs that the driver will project outward to keep traffic halted until he or she is satisfied that all of the exited children are clear of the bus. It is illegal to proceed until the stop sign is retracted.

- **Does this mean that when the flashing stops and the**

MANAGER

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I am originally from southwest Michigan and have lived here in the Detroit area since 1999. I attended Western Michigan University for my BA and Wayne State University for my MBA. Throughout the last several years I have spent time working in a variety of roles at the state, county

and local government levels in addition to a stint as a financial analyst at Comerica Bank. While working in government, I worked extensively in an economic development capacity. I intend to use my education, experience, and positive attitude to bring a new spirit to this great community.

As the new city manager, my job is to ensure that the City maintains services, programs and facilities that meet your needs in a fiscally responsible manner. I take special pride in serving the public. Make no mistake, our services will continue to meet the needs of our diverse residents and businesses will find a welcoming home.

I recognize the tremendous financial difficulties



sign is retracted all of the kids are safe and secure?

Not necessarily, and this is a very important point! A school bus driver cannot possibly see everything around the bus, especially in the areas closest to it. This means that it is up to you to make absolutely certain all of the children who exited are safely out of the street before you accelerate.

- **Do the same rules apply to vehicles that are traveling in the opposite direction of the way the school bus is headed?**

Yes, they apply on any residential street that is not a divided roadway. In the "opposite direction" situation you are required to stop your vehicle three car lengths before reaching an imaginary straight line drawn across the bus's front bumper and extended across your side of the street. Remain in that location until the bus's stop sign is retracted.

There can be serious legal consequences for failure to comply with these regulations. Public Safety officers will ticket violators and the court system will most often issue maximum penalties because of danger to children.

Residents seeking additional details about the school bus safety law can obtain further information by calling **248-691-7504**.

we have faced here in the past due to the overall financial collapse. While refinements and efficiencies must continue to be identified, we have to begin looking at a pro-growth strategy that helps us refine process and grow at the same time. In the coming days, I will be working with the Mayor and City Council to deliver a plan that meets those requirements.

Throughout my time here, I will be focusing on the following major initiatives in the City of Oak Park: economic development, refinement of City operations, financial stability, and creation of synergies between like-minded entities doing business with the City.

I look forward to serving you and moving this City in a new direction. Look to future editions of the Oak Park Branch for regular updates from my office. My goal is to make sure you have timely and accurate information at your disposal at all times.

Respectfully,

Erik Tungate
Erik Tungate

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Monday, September 10

Author at Oak Park Library

Dr. David L. Holmes discusses his book *The Faiths of the Postwar Presidents: from Truman to Obama* - 7pm

Hall in the council chambers. Regularly scheduled meetings begin at 7pm. Find info via the City website: ci.oak-park.mi.us/

September 21-30

Junk-A-Way Days

Residents can bring unwanted items that cannot be discarded via curbside pickup. Hazardous items are prohibited. Located in Ice Arena parking lot, behind the Library.

Wednesday, September 12

Friends of the Library Mtg.

Join fellow community members to help provide support to the library in a variety of ways.

Community Center Meeting Room #5 at 7pm

Monday, September 17

City Council Mtg.

Council convenes at City

Saturday, September 22

Mom 2 Mom Sale

10am - 2pm at the Oak Park Community Center

Wednesday, September 26

Arts & Cultural Comm.

Join fellow residents in an effort to study & recommend plans for City-wide cultural programs. Community Center Meeting Room #5 at 7pm

Monday, October 1

Curbside Leaf Pickup Begins

Tuesday, October 9

Voter Registration Deadline

Residents are advised to register to vote on or prior to this date if they are planning to vote November 6, 2012. No late registration is possible. Visit the Clerks office or local SOS branch.

SALE!
MOM 2 MOM
Saturday
September 22, 2012
10am - 2pm
at the Oak Park Community Center
Fee: \$20 for one 6' table Entry: \$1
More Info: 248-691-7555

Appreciate the Arts?
Want to make an impact on our community?
Join the
Oak Park Arts & Cultural Commission
We meet the 4th Wednesday of each month in Room 5 of the Recreation Center at 7:30 p.m.
Check out OPAACC on Facebook or call 248-691-7487 For more information




Scam Alert



Medicare cheats often target seniors

Public Safety officials are urging Oak Park's many senior residents and their families to heed both the warnings and advice of national authorities regarding health insurance swindles.

Medicare fraud is a huge and growing problem throughout the country and senior citizens are frequently targeted. Several types of schemes are commonly implemented because they can be extremely lucrative for the perpetrators. For example, some medical equipment manufacturers offer seniors free medical products in exchange for their Medicare numbers. Because a physician has to sign a form certifying that certain equipment or testing is needed before Medicare will pay for it, con artists fake signatures or bribe corrupt doctors to sign the forms. Once a signature is in place, the manufacturers bill Medicare for merchandise or service that was not needed, was delivered although not actually ordered, or was neither ordered nor ever delivered.

Another prominent category comprises so-called "rolling lab" schemes. Unnecessary and sometimes fake tests are given to individuals at retirement homes, health clubs or shopping malls and billed to insurance companies or Medicare.

So how can seniors and others protect themselves? Here are eight guidelines, provided by experts for avoiding health care and health insurance fraud:

- Never sign blank insurance claim forms.
- Never give blanket authorization to a medical provider to bill for services rendered.
- Ask your medical providers what they will charge and what you will be expected to pay out-of-pocket.

- Carefully review your insurer's explanation of the benefits statement. Call your insurer and provider if you have questions.
- Do not do business with door-to-door or telephone salespeople who tell you that services of medical equipment are free.
- Give your insurance/Medicare identification only to those who have provided you with medical services.
- Keep accurate records of all health care appointments.
- Know if your physician ordered equipment for you.

Residents also are being warned to watch out for counterfeit prescription drug schemes. These also are pervasive nationally because they are highly lucrative. Following are experts' tips for avoiding being victimized by counterfeit prescription drugs:

- Alert your pharmacist and physician immediately if your medication causes adverse side effects or if your condition does not improve.
- Closely examine the packaging and lot numbers of prescription drugs and be alert to any changes from one prescription to the next.
- Consult your pharmacist or physician if your prescription drug looks suspicious in any way.
- Use caution when purchasing drugs on the Internet. Do not purchase medications from unlicensed online distributors or those who sell medications without a prescription. Reputable online pharmacies will have a seal of approval called the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site (VIPPS), provided by the Association of Boards of Pharmacy in the United States.
- Be aware that product promotions or cost reductions and other "special deals" may be associated with counterfeit product promotion.