

America in Bloom

Judges for this year's "America in Bloom" national competition visited our Village on June 25 and 26. With their results now pending, I would like to thank all those who rolled-up their sleeves and got involved. I am positive that Greendale fared well in this competition. From my perspective, winning or losing is not the true importance of Greendale's participation in "America in Bloom"; what matters is the team involvement of the residents in our community. Groups, individuals and businesses joined the effort; they worked together as one to tidy and beautify numerous areas of our Village. Win or lose, participation in "America in Bloom" is certainly a win-win for our community.

Knowing that Greendale would relish the idea of getting involved in a national competition, I am now even more impressed with our Village's community pride, spirit and sense of competition. Please allow me to give an extra special thanks to Park and Recreation Director Jackie Schweitzer, Mary Helen Block, Sherry Maierle, DPW Director Carl Tisonik and Robbie McFaul for all of their efforts. Additionally, I wish to thank Roy and Bobbie Reiman for their countless efforts to make our community stand so very proud. The Village of Greendale looks great and its residents can stand proudly together. I can't wait to see what Greendale will do for next year's competition.

Southridge Mall

The poor economy has taken its toll on efforts to gain new retailers at Southridge. As last reported, the Simon Property Group is attempting to attract new interest from retailers by placing a free-standing "retail village" at the south end of the property. Paralleling the current national trend, potential retailers showed little interest towards this expansion. Simon indicated that they will continue their efforts in hopes that the economy will turn back toward better times. Village government and Simon continue to work together to foster the mall's return to prominence.

Meanwhile, the Village Board asked our Plan Commission and Community Development Authority to begin an open discussion about economic development alternatives for our community. Both groups began these important discussions in May and have agreed to work together to eventually bring forward two separate strategic plans: One based on planning for the future of our entire Village and another strategy that is site-specific to the Southridge property. In addition, the Village Manager and I have reached out to the Simon Property Group and all Southridge anchor stakeholders to invite them to join in this planning process. Public input will also be solicited during this procedure. This effort will require significant deliberation as it is likely the most important economic challenge for Greendale and its residents for the next 50 years. I'll continue to keep you informed as we move in this direction.

Government Access Television and Village Website Revitalization

In an effort to better communicate with our residents, the Village Board is considering the resurrection of our government access TV channel along with the potential of broadcasting Village Board and associated committee meetings. Simultaneously we are also planning a major revitalization of our website. By joining these efforts with new technology and equipment, we would be able to marry these two mediums and offer a multitude of interesting topics at a very reasonable cost. For example, we would be able to broadcast informational and departmental "how to" videos, upcoming community events and meeting announcements, stream the video of meetings on TV and the website at the same time, or provide residents with the ability to watch an archived video on-line at a later date. Village parades and other community events could be recorded and aired on both forums and Greendale's historical productions and documentaries could also be aired. A lot of exciting possibilities exist with this effort which can make information more accessible and convenient for our residents.

The cost of this equipment would be paid for with grant monies already on-hand and which are intended for this type of equipment only. These Public Education and Government Access (PEG) fees are collected by municipalities through license agreements with cable providers.

Greendale's 70th Birthday

May 1, 2008 marked the 70th anniversary of when the first Greendale residents moved into the Village. For all of us, this year is a time of reflection on the history and principles on which this community was begun. Greendale was founded under the FDR Administration's New Deal policy and built as a planned community by the Works Project Administration in an effort to lift our nation out of the grips of the Great Depression. The goal of this initiative was to return citizens to meaningful employment and to provide improved housing and a better quality of life for America's working class. Today, city planners and architects travel from around the globe to Greendale to study one of the first planned communities in the United States.

Included in this issue is a short history quiz to test resident's knowledge of the first days of Greendale. A big thank you to Ron Faiola for offering these questions.

You will see more birthday ceremonies and celebration activities this year, especially during our Village Days celebrations. Please take time to embrace and enjoy all that Greendale offers and absorb its great history in this special birthday year.

Happy Birthday Greendale.

Community regards,
John R. Hermes