

# VILLAGE OF DIVERNON News

Issue 20

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**FROM THE MAYOR AND THE VILLAGE BOARD** Mayor Copelin and the Village Board wish you all a Happy New Year! Winter is here again. The kids will be out making snowmen and sledding, so please watch out for them. Stay safe and warm.

Christmas decoration winner awards were made Wednesday, December 23 at the Board meeting held at the Masonic Lodge. Those receiving awards were: Scott and Ashley Smothers for Best Traditional Show awarded by the Divernon Fire Department, Randy and Judy Graeser for Best Light Show, and Jay and Deb Sergent for Best Theme. A \$100 prize was awarded for each category. Congratulations to all!

The Divernon municipal election is scheduled for Tuesday April 6, 2021. Open positions include Village Mayor, Village Clerk, and three (3) board of trustees. Please get out and vote!

COVID-19 still continues to impact our daily lives. As COVID does not seem to be going away anytime soon, we must continue to be vigilant in practicing social distancing, wearing a mask in public, and washing our hands all in line with CDC protocols. Doing so will help in protecting our families and friends. We can't stress enough the importance of following social distancing practices. For more on COVID-19, go to the Village website at [www.divernonil.com](http://www.divernonil.com) or access this link for more information on other COVID-19 resources at <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>.

COVID continues to have a major impact on our small businesses. Please continue to support them as they struggle. Buying local will help them as they are an integral part of our community family. Times are tough, but we will get through this!

We understand the many hardships created by COVID. Ameren Illinois Economic Hardship Recovery plan, the Fresh Start program, offers bill paying assistance to help customers hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. The program offers the following to qualified customers:

- Household Income between 0–200% of the Federal Poverty Level: Up to \$400 on electric bills and up to \$300 on natural gas bills.
- Household Income between 200–350% of the Federal Poverty Level: Up to \$200 on electric bills and up to \$150 on natural gas bills.

For information on income guidelines and how to apply, go to [AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery](http://AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery).

If you're having difficulty with paying your gas bill, contact the Village Office to see if a payment plan can be arranged. Also, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has received additional funding for utility assistance. Assistance for other services is also available through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). For more information on LIHEAP and CSBG, please contact the Sangamon County Community Resources office at <https://co.sangamon.il.us/departments/a-c/community-resources/programs-and-services>.

The Village has had occasion to use our new emergency contact system to reach out with important information. If you haven't signed up, please go to the Civic Plus website at <https://divernonil.regroup.com/signup>. For your convenience, a link has been added to our website for easy sign-up. You can also sign up by texting JOIN DIVERNON to 30890 or by visiting the Village Hall and talking to Heather Rideout.

Board members and Village staff continue to identify unkept properties and inform residents that action must be taken to clean up the area. Failure to properly maintain a property will result in a violation/fine. The Village will continue to pick up storm debris, lawn waste and/or leaf bags placed on the street.

The Village website at [www.divernonil.com](http://www.divernonil.com) contains the most current information on Village activities. Please note that the Village website continues to be updated including a calendar of events and information on resources. It's important that you visit the Village website frequently to keep abreast of Village news, projects and programs.

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Jeremy Rhodes, Supt.

**THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** completed the water main replacement project they'd been working on for several weeks. When you see the crew around town working to improve and clean up our community, thank them for the work they do! Some sidewalks were replaced/repared this summer/fall making it safer to take a stroll. A number of streets were oiled and rocked, and holes were patched in other areas. Staff continue to pick up branches and yard waste on Mondays. The Village is looking good thanks to the Public Works Department!

**VILLAGE SEWAGE DUMP** - New cameras were placed at the Village Sewer plant/dump. Only Divernon Village proper (does not include Comanche Village) residents are allowed to dump at the site. Only yard waste, including grass clippings and tree branches, are allowed. Violators will be contacted and possibly fined.

**BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATIONS** are available at the Village hall. Prior to beginning any building project, an application must be filed. This includes sheds on skids. Please contact Jeremy Rhodes if you have questions. Completed applications must be submitted to Village hall. **NO WORK SHALL BEGIN UNTIL THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED!**

**PROPERTY MAINTENANCE** - Please keep drains and culverts clear of debris. Sticks and limbs must be piled neatly by the side of the road in the front of your property for the Village to pick up. If you have an extra-large load of branches, please call the Village office to check on pickup fees. Burning of yard waste is allowed on your property from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. only. Burning of garbage is prohibited at any time. Remember to keep your garbage cans stored off the street when not out for pickup. It's important that we take care of our properties in a manner that is inviting to people who visit our community!

**STORM SAFETY TIPS – STORM SAFETY TIPS** – We've already had our first snow, so it's important to remember to keep vehicles off the street to avoid being plowed in. Also, keep snow away from the furnace vent pipe. Failure to do so could result in poor furnace operation or carbon monoxide poisoning. *Natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. If you smell gas, or just think you might be smelling gas, leave the area immediately and call the Divernon Gas Dept. at 217-628-3416 or 911 from a neighboring home or business.*

Residents are reminded to make sure their cell phones are fully charged before severe weather hits, and to report any downed power lines, natural gas odor, or power outages as soon as possible. With winter thunderstorms a possibility, residents are advised to unplug sensitive electronic equipment, or protect it with a high-quality surge protector, and to stay away from downed power lines. For more safety tips or information, visit <https://www.ameren.com/illinois>.

In early December, the Village sent a mailer to all residents which included a pamphlet with valuable information on pipeline awareness, the One-Call System (811), and the steps to be taken to prevent a disaster. The mailer also included a survey to be completed and mailed. Survey responses will tell the Village whether the information in the pamphlet was understood. It is the responsibility of each resident to be aware of steps to be taken to prevent pipeline events. Please complete the survey and mail!



# POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Jason Martin

**THE POLICE DEPARTMENT** has been busy keeping our Village safe. Officers continue to patrol the streets protecting our families, especially our children. Please remember that Governor Pritzker has ordered that large gatherings, 10 or over, are prohibited to protect from COVID-19 spread. Police officers will monitor to ensure this order is followed. For more information go to: <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>.

**ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS** will continue to be addressed as needed. Junk vehicles or other junk or trash must be removed from properties. Properties in need of the owner's attention due to an ordinance violation will be identified, and the owner will be contacted. Please do not park vehicles on or block sidewalks or mailboxes. Vehicles parked on the street must be parked on the side of the street in the direction headed. Unless there is a shoulder for parking, cars cannot be parked in the street on a regular basis. Fines will be assessed for all occurrences. Please help us keep the Village safe and clean! As new issues arise, new ordinances will be considered.

**OPEN BURNING ORDINANCE 4-1-2** states that open burning of any garbage, hazardous waste, nonwood products, human or animal feces or human or animal flesh, on the ground or in any container is prohibited. No burning is allowed on public property including streets, gutter, curb, sidewalk, or property owned by the Village (alley). No fire may be located less than twenty-five feet (25') from any building or private property. No fires, except for permitted recreational fires, may be started before 7:00 a.m. or allowed to burn past 7:00 p.m. Failure to comply could result in a fine of \$75 up to \$300. Ordinance 4-1-2 can be found at <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/divernonil/latest/overview> updated June 2018.

**GOLF CARTS** must be inspected and approved by the Village Police Department. There is an annual fee for the sticker for each golf cart. Golf carts are not to be operated in any inclement weather. Please contact the Police Department for information on the correct requirements for your golf cart. Four wheelers and side-by-sides are not street approved.

## VILLAGE EVENTS, COMMUNITY CLUBS & SERVICES

**THE DIVERNON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** is always in need of volunteers and is hopeful volunteers from the newer classes will get involved. Please consider volunteering to keep this organization going. If you're interested, please contact Nancy Crawford at 217/725-4513. The 2021 Alumni Banquet is scheduled for the end of May. Please plan to attend. Further information will be available at a later date.

**SCHOOL NEWS** – School is currently being held remotely due to COVID-19. It's important to slow down and watch for the youngsters walking or riding bikes to the park, school playground or ball field. Visit the school website for school information at [www.auburn.k12.il.us](http://www.auburn.k12.il.us). A book box which was built by the Auburn Student Council and located on the north side of the square just off the sidewalk is available for all to enjoy. Feel free to borrow a book or add a book for others to enjoy!  
**Lunch pickup is available to all students in the circle drive at the Jr. High from 12 noon - 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when remote learning is in affect.**

**DIVERNON MASONS LODGE** - Contact John Lewis at 217/741-7567 if you are interested in joining the Masons Lodge or renting the building.

**AMERICAN LEGION NEWS** - COVID-19 has had a major impact on fund raising activities this year. In spite of COVID, the American Legion Annual Golf Outing was held and was again a great success. Thank you to the participants, sponsors, Edgewood Country Club, and the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary for all their help! We look forward to next year's outing. If you would like information on joining the Legion please contact Gene Brenning at 217/741-0920 or for building rental contact Jim Richards at 217/691-2881. Meetings are the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The men continue to make improvements in the building, and thank the community for their continued support.

**THE AMERICAN LEGION LADIES AUXILIARY** - Unfortunately fund raising was stalled this year due to the pandemic. The Annual Bazaar and Bake Sale, which was a favorite, had to be canceled. If you have Christmas decorations you're no longer using, please consider donating them to the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary. We were able to provide some joy to our seniors and senior veterans in July by providing goodie baskets decorated with a patriotic theme. We enjoyed packaging them and seeing the joy on the faces of those receiving our heartfelt gift. Funds raised during the year usually benefit the Legion building, veterans clothing and supplies, honor flight, scholarship, etc. We enjoy serving our veteran family, our seniors and a high school senior! Please contact Nancy Beaty at 217/628-3383 to arrange for pickup of your Christmas decorations.

If you have a loved one currently serving, please provide their name and mailing address as we like to reach out to our men and women in the military. Meetings are the 1st Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in joining please contact Nancy Beaty at 217/628-3383.

**DIVERNON YOUTH GROUP CLOTHING CLOSET** is available to all residents of Divernon and surrounding communities. All clothing is FREE with sizes from infant to Adult XXL. Shoes, belts, and other accessories are also available. Clean, gently used clothing is accepted. If assistance is needed after hours, please contact Melissa at 217/801-6533. The Clothing Closet is located in the Presbyterian Church, 265 S. Second Street on the SW side of the Square. The closet is open every Monday from 4:00–6:00 p.m. All donations are appreciated! Thank you!

**DIVERNON CHRISTIAN YOUTH GROUP** meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Divernon Presbyterian Church from 5:00–7:00 p.m. This group is open to all youth in the community from 5th through 12th grades. Food, activities and a community service project are provided at each meeting. If you would like to get involved or donate, either monetary or as a volunteer, please contact Melissa Layton at 217/801-6533.

**The youth group is not currently meeting, but will begin meeting soon.**

**THE DIVERNON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (DUMC) FOOD PANTRY** is in the Divernon Methodist Church, 503 South Second Street, Divernon. Hours of operation are 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. every Monday. Donations of non-perishable food items and paper products are always welcome. Drop-off locations are United Community Bank and the Village Hall. Arrangements can also be made to deliver items to the church by calling 217/628-3530. Monetary donations are always welcome and can be mailed to the address above.

**THE DIVERNON SPORTSMAN'S CLUB** has many activities available for children and adults. For information on joining, please contact George Brown at 217/652-8538 or Kevin Zimmerman at 217/717-7940. Check the sign at the Senior Center for times of events and other announcements.

