

# THE BEECHER BULLETIN

"Your Village Newsletter"

Fall 2020

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## Village of Beecher

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### COVID-19: WHAT BEECHER RESIDENTS NEED TO KNOW

2020 has truly been a very stressful and trying year for The real impact of the pandemic struck our community on March 16<sup>th</sup>, when the Governor basically shut the entire state down. Since that time, we have experienced a slow return to a "new normal" with a setback which occurred



in September when we were required to close indoor dining once again for two weeks.

What is the "new normal"? Will we ever return to the old normal? How long is this pandemic going to last? These are questions your Village government is unable to answer, but we wish we could. All we can give you are the facts and what the Village recommends you do until this crisis is over.

**Reported Cases:** As of September 28<sup>th</sup>, there were 147 reported cases of COVID 19 among residents in the 60401 zip code since the pandemic began. 62 of these cases have been reported since August 10<sup>th</sup>. 63 of these cases have been reported from the Beecher Manor Nursing Home, which means that 84 cases have been reported in the general population. Below is the trend in the 60401 zip code over the last 45 days.

WEEK	NEW CASES REPORTED	POSITIVITY RATE (positive tests/total tests)
8/10 - 8/16	3	4.1%
8/17 - 8/23	0	0.0%
8/24 - 8/30	2	4.4%
8/31 - 9/06	4	4.3%
9/7 – 9/13	3	4.4%
9/14 – 9/20	32	8.2%
9/21 – 9/27	18	4.7%

# HALLOWEEN SAFET

Trick-or-Treat hours set for 2-6 p.m. on Saturday, October 31st

Although traditional trick-or-treating will TO HALLOWEEN OR NO look different this year due to COVID-19, the Village still anticipates having regular trick-or-treating hours on Halloween. We believe that trick-or-treating can be accomplished safely if we all work to make it safe for everyone.

Continued on Page 2



### **VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Hello, welcome to fall. I hope you have had a chance to enjoy our beautiful weather.

#### RAILROAD QUIET ZONE

I thought I would bring you up to date on our quiet zone. The process has certainly been frustrating. It has not helped that some of the personnel at the railroad working on our application are working from home or get reassigned. We are almost there, plan review has finally been completed, and we have issued the necessary payments to the railroad to complete the application. We have contractors lined up to widen roads where needed, and create cement barriers to protect their railroad gates. Some of the work is being done by our Public Works Department. We have ordered and received the signs and pylons necessary to complete the project. Finally, the driveway to the scales at FS Grain has been moved as part of the project. We are hoping to complete the project by the end of the year. Unfortunately, as colder weather approaches, it may have to wait to spring.

#### THANK YOU!

I want to take a moment to applaud all of our residents for helping us during the pandemic by wearing a mask, sanitizing, keeping your distance, limiting the size of your social gatherings and shopping local. I also want to thank our businesses for doing the same, but also thank them for staying open, even when mitigations were placed upon our region. We will get through this together as we continue to work as a team.

All of you are in my thoughts and prayers. Stay safe and healthy.

Greg Szymanskí Village President



## TRICK OR TREAT SAFETY GUIDELINES

- ♦ The Village has provided the enclosed sign to help residents show whether they plan to welcome trick-or-treaters to their home or that they choose not to participate this year. If you will be welcoming trick-or-treaters please turn on your front porch lights and put the green side of the enclosed sign on your door facing the street. Turn off your front porch lights and put the orange side of the enclosed sign on your door if you would prefer not to have trick-or-treaters knock on your door.
- Consider ways for contact-less candy distribution. Provide treats that are already individually wrapped and sealed.
- ◆ Wear proper face covering (not the Halloween kind) and maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer should be carried and used frequently.
- Do not leave bowls of candy on your porch that multiple people will touch (or one person who will take the whole thing).
- If you are uncomfortable with your children trick-or-treating, it is always your choice as a parent not to have them participate.

We encourage everyone to practice social distancing to the extent possible.

Enjoy Halloween. Be safe. We can participate in trick-or-treating while still taking necessary precautions and respecting the concerns and decisions of others who may not be comfortable participating.

### **COVID UPDATE** (continued)

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, the highest positivity rates in Will County were reported in Joliet and University Park at about 10%. The lowest positivity rates were reported in Wilmington and Beecher (4.7%).

Why all of the Fuss? In its current form, COVID 19 is not necessarily more deadly than any other strain of the flu, but the major concern is its ability to spread very easily; the rapid increase in the number of cases can cause hospitalizations and the need for medical care could spike beyond the current system's capabilities. Most of the patients which have died from COVID 19 had other complications such as pulmonary disease. However, it appears that some of the patients had no prior complications whatsoever.

Until there is a proven vaccine effective against contracting this virus, prevention is the only effective recourse. The best form of prevention is isolation; staying at home and not having personal contact with anyone else. This method of prevention is not sustainable in our society for longer than a few weeks so other less effective but manageable prevention measures are recommended. Before we review these measures, we have to remember that this virus is a living organism and wants to live and thrive just like we do. It's ability to live outside of its host (or us) for longer periods than normal and its ability to travel in the air is of great concern to the medical profession. For example, medical professionals believe it can remain suspended in unventilated air for up to three hours. It also appears that the changing of the seasons does not affect its life cycle. The virus also mutates over time and can become less or more contagious, and less or more fatal. It may also disappear altogether at some time.

It also affects people differently. There are documented cases where an entire household tests positive for the virus and one person may never experience any symptoms but another needs to be hospitalized and yet another passes away. The people that do not know they are asymptomatic pose a great danger to those they come in contact with. To be safe you have to assume that everyone could have the virus, and take precautions accordingly.

What Do I Need to Do? If you suffer from any type of heart or lung condition or have compromised immunity the easy answer to this question is to STAY HOME. Have someone else run your errands or buy your groceries for you. Also, if you have come in contact with someone who has COVID 19 or if you feel ill, STAY HOME and get tested. Call your local physician or the Will County Health Department for a testing site.

For the rest of us who are healthier and have to work, run those errands, and try to squeeze out some type of social life, we just have to become a little smarter. As this pandemic wears on, we tend to let our guard down, and begin to believe in comprising some precautions. For example, many claim that if you are six feet apart indoors you do not need to wear a mask; not true! If the virus can live for up to three hours in the indoor air do you believe six feet apart is enough? WEARING A MASK AND STAYING AT LEAST SIX FEET APART are both necessary to be safe.

Also, be aware of where your hands go. Door handles, elevator buttons, gas pumps, cash and coins are all germ collectors. If we all WASH OUR HANDS more frequently or use hand sanitizer, there is much less of a chance we are moving these germs around from surface to surface with our hands and causing either ourselves or someone else from becoming infected.

**BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.** As the weather gets colder more of us will be moving back to indoor activities. If a store aisle is too crowded skip it and go back to it later. Order your carry outs by phone and arrange a time to pick them up instead of hanging around the counter.

WE ALL HAVE TO DO OUR PART. Yes, it is very difficult and inconvenient to wear a mask! Lots of times we have to go back to the car because we forgot to grab it. When we talk it sounds like a we are the teacher in the Charlie Brown cartoon and we often have to repeat what we say. Washing all the time and using that dreadful sanitizer dries out our hands and with winter coming this will only get worse! But think about the alternative. The sooner we stop the spread, the sooner we can get back to normal.

Where Do I Get More Information? The Will County Health Department has created a Coronavirus Hotline for you to talk directly to a health professional regarding your concern. This number is 1-815-740-8977. The Village's website, <a href="https://www.villageofbeecher.org">www.villageofbeecher.org</a>, also has several links to the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control. And as always, we would be glad to try to answer your questions if you call us at 708-946-2261. We are not health professionals but we can get you headed in the right direction.

# CONVENIENT NON-CONTACT OPTIONS FOR RECEIVING AND PAYING YOUR WATER BILL, DOG TAGS, BUILDING PERMITS, ETC.

### **WATER BILLING PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Go paperless and have your bill emailed to you. Simply email Donna at <a href="mailto:drooney@villageofbeecher.org">drooney@villageofbeecher.org</a> and request to have your bill emailed. Please include your name, service address, account number and email address.



**WATER BILL AUTOMATIC PAYMENT.** Enroll in Autodraft which would automatically deduct your water bill directly from your checking account <u>on the due date</u>. You would still receive a bill but no longer have to worry about getting it paid on time. Check the "Document Center/Water & Sewer" section of our Village website for a form.

**PLACE IT IN OUR DROP BOX** at the Village Hall. It's located to the left side of the outside glass doors.

**USE OUR DRIVE THRU for any check or cash payment** - No credit card payments at the drive thru.

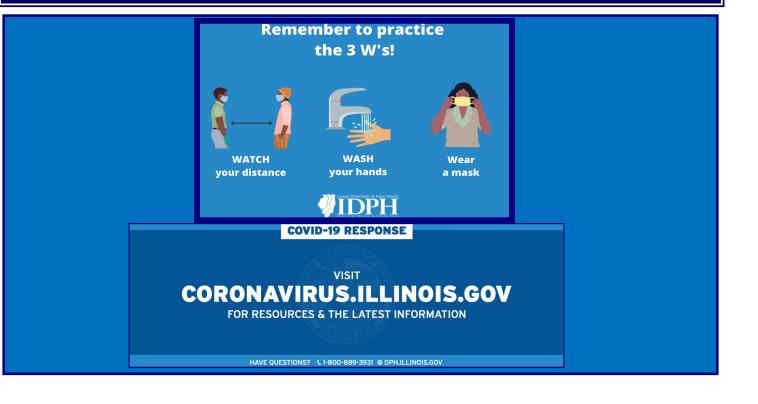




#### DOG TAG, BUILDING PERMIT, CONTRACTOR PERMIT, ETC. PAYMENT OPTIONS

**PAY ONLINE** with your credit card or e-check for water bills, dog tags, building permits, etc. Just click on the **EPAY** link on our website **www.villageofbeecher.org**. THERE IS NO LONGER A CONVENIENCE FEE! (Make sure you are on our official website. There are other online payment sites that try and look like ours.)

Go to the Village website at <u>www.villageofbeecher.org</u> or contact the Village Hall for forms and further information.



## VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since September 2019. There was no newsletter for the Spring of 2020 due to the pandemic. The Village Board has continued to meet in person throughout the crisis using CDC guidelines in order to conduct the business of the Village. Links to videos of all meetings can be found on the Village's website or on our YouTube channel.

For October and November, the Village Board will only hold meetings once a month on the third Monday at 7:00 p.m. in order to reduce contact and exposure.

- ✓ Imposed a local tax of 3% on the sale of recreational cannabis.
- ✓ Approved the continued progress toward a quiet zone and approved a loan from water and sewer debt fund to the general fund to pay for the \$170,000 expense.
- ✓ Approved a two-year moratorium on all tap-in and cash in lieu of land fees for new residential construction through October 31, 2021 and established a flat \$1,500 building permit fee for a new home.
- ✓ Approved the hiring of Brayden Baker in the Public Works Department replacing Jacob Pevion.
- ✓ Approved a comprehensive land use plan which runs to the year 2040 after it was recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This planning process lasted 18 months and was funded by a \$130,000 grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.
- ✓ Re-authorized the establishment of an enterprise zone for an additional 20 years in certain commercial and industrial zoned areas of the village. This classification provides certain sales tax and utility tax savings to new businesses and industries locating or expanding in the zone.
- ✓ Approved the use of a vacant lot next to the post office for temporary housing for paramedics to man the ambulances in town while the fire station is being remodeled and expanded.
- ✓ Hired special counsel Christian Jorgenson to defend litigation against the Village filed by a developer for breach of contract from a 2007 agreement.
- ✓ Approved the Village's participation in a South Suburban Joint Auto Theft Task Force. The Village supplies one of its officers to this task force and the complete cost of the officer is covered by a grant for four years by the Illinois Secretary of State's Office.
- ✓ Approved an application for an IEPA loan and grant to remove lead service lines over the next four years which remain in the old part of town.
- ✓ Approved an agreement with Illinois Department of Transportation for engineering and bidding out the Penfield Street improvement project. The Village will pay 20% of the \$309,750 design fee. The project will be designed and approved and will then be allocated its scheduled bidding time which is now in January of 2022.
- ✓ Appointed Jenna Barber to the Beecher 4th of July Commission replacing Bill Voss, and Ben Juzeszyn to the Planning and Zoning Commission replacing Diane Basile.
- ✓ Approved an ordinance amending the zoning code to allow for the cultivation and sale of recreational cannabis in certain districts as a special use permit outside established buffer zones. Each application for such use would require review and hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- ✓ Approved the hiring of Brian Fravel as a full-time police officer replacing Corporal Sipple who joined the south suburban joint auto theft task force.

#### Board Meeting Highlights Continued

- ✓ Approved the appointments of Michelle Panozzo, Kim Wojciechowski and Megan Haddon to fill open seats on the Beecher Youth Commission, replacing Terry Kasput and Brandi Flores.
- ✓ Approved an agreement with Baxter and Woodman engineers in the amount of \$50,000 for compliance reporting to the IEPA pertaining to the new wastewater treatment plant.
- ✓ Approved application for federal funds for the reconstruction of Church Road from Dixie to Cardinal Creek Boulevard in the year 2026.
- ✓ Approved an application for federal funds for the resurfacing of Gould Street from Penfield to Indiana in 2022.
- ✓ Issued a compliance letter for mandated repairs to a building at 752 Penfield as a safety concern.
- ✓ Amended the zoning code to allow solid fences up to six feet in height in rear yards of residential districts.
- ✓ Amended the municipal code pertaining to civil emergencies to provide executive powers to the Village President for 30 days of declaration instead of 7 days to accommodate the anticipated duration a pandemic may require for a response.
- ✓ Appointed Ryan Drew as a police officer replacing Ron Mazurek.
- ✓ Approved a loan with the IEPA in the amount of \$4,126,250 for replacing all lead service lines remaining in the Village over the next two years. All but \$61,000 of this amount will be forgiven after the project is complete.
- ✓ Approved motions authorizing the purchase of a new mosquito sprayer, a 60" zero turn mower, and the replacement of the 2006 mini dump and 2011 pick up truck. The older trucks will be kept as part of the fleet but will no longer be in replacement rotation.
- ✓ Approved contracts for the completion of the quiet zone improvements, install a generator for back-up power at well #4, replacing the computer that runs the water system, an internal inspection of the water tower, and the overhaul of the bypass diesel pump at the wastewater treatment plant, and the resurfacing and patching of certain streets.
- ✓ Annexed 6 acres at 229 W. Indiana avenue (former Layne Western property) and rezoned the parcel for semi-trailer leasing. Omega Freight Sales plans to lease trailers long term from this location.
- ✓ Approved expenditures related to COVID-19 response and prevention in the amount of \$183,500 which will be covered by a reimbursement from the federal CARES grant program.
- ✓ Approved a three-year agreement with Will County Animal Control for services related to abating rabid or vicious wildlife.
- ✓ Approved a five- year labor agreement with IUOE Local #399 for full-time Public Works employees.
- ✓ Applied for grant funding from the Illinois Department of Transportation ITEP program for \$250,000 to install all infill sidewalks in unfinished subdivisions.
- ✓ Authorized the purchase of a replacement police patrol vehicle in the amount of \$49,000 using CARES grant reimbursement funding.

Board meetings can be viewed on the Village's YouTube Channel and are shared on the Village of Beecher Facebook page at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/beecher.illinois/">https://www.facebook.com/beecher.illinois/</a>.



#### PLEASE KEEP GUTTERS AND STREET DRAINS CLEAR TO PREVENT FLOODING

# Don't let THIS.....turn into THIS



As the leaves fall, protect your home from storm water flow by cleaning your house gutters and the street drains. It takes a surprisingly small event to cause serious damage when the storm drain is blocked. Leaves break down quickly when mowed or placed in a compost pile.

**Storm drains** are the metal grates that are found on streets, often at corners and on the sides of curbs and gutters. The purpose of the **storm drain** is to help prevent flooding by diverting rainwater and melted snow off of the streets and other paved surfaces and into a natural body of water.

## 

## Protect Water Quality in Your Own Yard in Every Season!

- Gardens need bedcovers. When cleaning out vegetable and flower gardens, don't leave the soil bare for the winter. Use chopped leaves as mulch or plant a "green mulch" to add nutrients and organic matter to the soil.
- Plant! Early autumn is the best time to transplant shrubs and other perennials and to reseed lawns. Choose grass seed mixes that match your site. Consider adding a little clover seed for a free source of nitrogen fixation. Early autumn is the best time for a single dose of fertilizer for good grass root growth and a healthy lawn next spring. Slow-release or organic fertilizers stay where plants can use them and out of the local waters and wells. Keep watering all new plantings until the ground is frozen to give the roots plenty of opportunity to grow.
- Save the leaves. Leaves have lots of landscaping uses. Make a compost pile, chop them and mulch the landscaping and garden beds, or create new beds under the trees from which they fell. If your property is just too small and the town has community composting, use it, but go back for your leaf mulch next spring.

To learn more or report possible illegal discharges to the storm drain system, call the Village of Beecher at 708-946-2261. (Source: Clean Water Fact Sheet, produced by NEMO and Sea Grant Connecticut)

# NEW WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT COMPLETED (\$10.3 Million Project Went On-Line on June 1<sup>st</sup>)

Prior to the pandemic, there were plans for a grand opening and guided tours of the most significant capital improvement project in the history of the Village; the new wastewater treatment plant located at the south edge of town. This new

plant increases the treatment capacity from 600,000 gallons per day (6,000 residents) to 1,200,000 gallons per day (12,000 residents) and improves the treatment quality of the water it discharges into Trim Creek as an Illinois EPA Class I facility. The IEPA provided a loan to the Village for 30 years at 1.12% to help get this project completed. As a result, the Village did not have to raise sewer rates to cover debt and applied the existing debt payments being made to this project. In future years the cost of operating the new plant may require a rate increase but for now the Sewer Fund is solvent.

The Village is very proud of its new plant, and cannot wait for the public to see what it takes to treat the wastewater we all create and then pay for. However, it is still unsafe for an open house and guided tours of the facility due to the flu virus. Once it is safe an open house will be planned.





## **BRUSH COLLECTION PROGRAM TO CONTINUE THROUGH NOVEMBER**

Brush pick-up will continue every Tuesday through November, and begin again in April, 2021. Please remember to follow brush pick-up rules which can be found on the Village website to ensure your brush is collected. Brush will not be picked up during the winter months unless there is a storm and then the crews will go out on an as-needed basis.

## DOG TAGS GO ON SALE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

Dog tags go on sale Tuesday, December 1st. The price is \$10 per dog and the deadline for purchase is March 15, 2021. After the March 15th deadline, the price of dog tags increase to \$15 each. Tags may be purchased at the Village Hall or online by clicking on the "EPay" option on the Village website. The dog's name, breed, color and date of last rabies vaccination will be required to purchase the tag. Dog tag fees are used to pay for the services provided by the Beecher Veterinary Clinic for picking up, feeding and boarding stray animals and lost pets.



## **BE AWARE OF SNOW PARKING REGULATIONS DURING WINTER WEATHER**

With winter approaching, the Village wants to remind residents that for a period of twenty-four (24) hours after a snowfall of two inches or more, it is illegal to park on any residential Village street or in any business district public parking space commonly maintained by the Village between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. This includes curbed streets and driving lanes but does not include parkways maintained by residents. It is also illegal to deposit snow onto public streets. When clearing your driveway, direct the snow into the yard and not the street. Remember, the snow will end up back in your driveway anyway when the plow comes back by! The Police Department may issue tickets to those that deposit their snow onto the street.





#### CURBSIDE LEAF COLLECTION



Leaf raking season is here again! Leaves raked in rows along the curbside are picked up by a large vacuum machine 🛭 used by Public Works crews on a weekly basis until the end of November (depending on the weather).

Residents should place leaves in a pile or row in the parkway, between the sidewalk and curb as near to the street as possible. Leaves should not be placed in the streets because it will clog storm drains when it rains, potentially causing flooding. In areas without curbs, leaves should be placed in long rows on the grass or parkway at the edge of the street. Do not mix leaves with branches or grass clippings. These things will damage the leaf machine. The leaf machine will make at least one pass per week down each street in the Village depending on the weather.

# VILLAGE RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM STATE OF ILLINOIS FAST TRACK PUBLIC INFRASTUCUTRE PROGRAM



# Funds to be used to replace 120 year-old watermains on Gould Street

In June of 2019 the Village opened bids to replace the watermains on Gould Street with the intent of borrowing funds to at least get this project started. Then the Illinois Legislature passed a capital bill which listed the Gould Street Watermain Project for future funding. When the opportunity arose to apply for fast track grant funding, the Village Board did not hesitate and hired a certified grant administrator to apply for the funds. Over 400 projects were submitted statewide and only 17 grants were awarded totaling \$25 million. Beecher was one of the fortunate ones being selected for \$1 million.

The project will hopefully begin sometime this winter and be completed by late spring. There are two very critical sections of main to be replaced under the railroad tracks on Penfield and on Indiana Avenue that will require much coordination with the railroad and the County. These mains are among the oldest in town having been installed sometime prior to 1910 and need to be replaced. So, please pardon the mess and continue to patronize our Gould Street businesses during construction. Thank you!



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BEECHER! Beecher Turned 150 Years Old on August 1st!

In the Summer of 1870, T.L. Miller took a day long trip to Joliet to file official documents creating the original town of Beecher, about a one square mile area bounded by Dunbar Street, Miller Street, Maxwell Street and Block Street. That was 150 years ago! This recorded plat preceded the laying of the first set of tracks by the Chicago, Danville and Vincennes Railroad

through the new town in 1872, and the construction of the new depot building on Reed Street which still stands today as our museum.

Several events were planned to celebrate Beecher's sesquicentennial, but the pandemic canceled those plans. However, the legacy of this Sesquicentennial will be another volume added to Beecher's history book collection. In 1970, the book "From Schooners to Satellites" was released which provided tidbits of Beecher history and a comprehensive look at civic organizations from that era. In 1995, the Quasquicentennial Commission copyrighted a book called "Beecher, 1870 -1995" which covered the history of that era. This year, a new book was released and will

be considered the third volume in this collection. It covers just the last years from 1995 to 2020, and is in full digital color. The Village more than doubled in size during that time, and there were significant changes made in the community. What has not changed, however, is the author of this series of historical perspectives. Shirley Biery, the author of the 1995 book, has authored this latest edition and began her work back in 2018. Over \$17,000 in sponsorships and ads have been given toward this effort! This newest edition is for sale at the Village Hall and the Beecher Public Library for \$25. There are also a few copies of the 1995 edition remaining, and you can buy both for \$40. Proceeds are being used to issue reprints of these books for future historians.





## **Village of Beecher**

625 Dixie Highway / P.O. Box 1154 Beecher, IL 60401

## Village Hall Hours

Monday thru Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## Village Hall Phone

946-2261

Emergency Police & Fire 9-1-1 Police Non Emergency: 946-2341 Fire Non Emergency: 946-6585

Web Site: www.villageofbeecher.org E-Mail: clerk@villageofbeecher.org PRSRT STD ECRWSS U.S. POSTAGE PAID EDDM RETAIL

# LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER BEECHER, IL 60401

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# BEECHER HAZARDOUS WASTE, MOTOR OIL & ELECTRONICS COLLECTION WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP CENTER

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2020 ♦ 08:00 AM - 03:00 PM APPOINTMENT REQUIRED: CALL 815-727-8834** 

Collection of nearly all types of electronics and household chemicals, hazardous materials and liquids. **All participants must make an appointment.** There is a limit of 2 TVs per vehicle, maximum 15 gallons of paint, and ID required. This is open to Will County residents and residents partially within Will County.

Will County has implemented an appointment system to improve all participants' drop-off experience. The system is intended to provide predictable lines and smoother service.



**Electronic Items Accepted include:** Televisions (limit 2), Computers, laptops, tablets, notebooks, monitors, printers, copiers, mice, speakers, cameras, video cameras, telephones, answering machines, microwaves, radios, stereos, vacuum cleaners, toaster ovens, blenders (no glass), coffee makers (no glass), power tools, etc.



HHW Items Accepted include: All types of paints/stains (limit 15 gallons), Old/Unwanted medication, Paint thinners, Solvents, Drain cleaners, Cleaning products, Rechargeable batteries, Mercury & mercury items, Aerosol paints & pesticides, Lawn & garden chemicals and fertilizers, Used oil, Used oil Filters, Old gasoline, Antifreeze, Automotive/ Boat batteries, Fluorescent light bulbs (limit 15), Compact fluorescent bulbs, Pool chemicals, Driveway Sealer

For more information visit www.willcountygreen.com