



Village of Lena

Fall/Winter 2023 Newsletter



Steve Buss
Village President

From the Desk of the Village President

We had a very busy summer and beginning of fall season with many completed projects, with even more in progress. Here are a few highlights on what is happening around town.

The work on Shippee Road north of Highway 73 has been completed. The tear out, replacement, and drainage work to Leet Street, School Street and William Street have kicked off, and should be completed by the end of October. The widening and drainage work on Dayton Street is set to be completed by the end of November. Regular maintenance of grinding and resurfacing blacktop, along with curb and inlet repairs will also be completed this fall. We have been working with the Village engineering firm to complete the plan for road and storm drainage projects for next year and beyond. Next year we are planning to have repairs and updates done on many blocks throughout the Village.

You may have seen the new pavilion downtown that is near completion. The stone pillars along the railroad tracks will be installed this fall in preparation for the new fence next spring. This project was made possible thanks to the Downtown TIF District. We would like to thank the Lena Lions Club and the Lena Economic Development Committee for their generous donation of the tables under the pavilion. These improvements continue to make Lena better, but it's always been the people that make Lena a community. As always, we welcome your input and feedback on our agenda.



On July 4th, Officer Reuter responded to Lake Le-Aqua-Na in reference to a subject that was last seen in the water and could not be found.

Without hesitation, Officer Reuter took off his equipment and swam to where the subject was last seen. Officer Reuter dove under several times before locating the subject on the bottom of the lake. Officer Reuter was assisted by Deputy Inden of the Stephenson County Sheriffs Dept and Abby Bland of Leamons who helped bring the subject ashore to awaiting paramedics. Unfortunately, the subject was deceased.

As a police officer, Officer Reuter had not been trained in diving to locate a victim, but did so without hesitation going above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you Officer Reuter for your bravery!

Officer Reuter was honored by Chief Wayne Gift for his heroic actions in July. Pictured, Officer Reuter and Deputy Inden were awarded the Distinguished Service Award by Stephenson County Sheriff Steve Stovall.



To All Utility Customers,

As previously communicated during a townhall meeting held May 17th at the Lena Community Center, our Village has identified the following priorities in need of investment:

Storm Water/Flooding Issues

- **Sewer Pipe Reline** – Reline miles of pipe under the Village to prevent stormwater infiltration during major rain events that overwhelm the system and cause it to back up into residents' basements.
- **Townline Road Flooding** – The road will be torn up and lowered to allow spillover. The culverts under the road will be resized to handle additional flow. The path of water south of Townline Road will need to be rerouted and expanded to handle additional flow. This will need to be routed under the service entrance to the Waste Treatment Plant and be diverted around the plant to the east.
- **Sherwood/North Freedom Street** (The Lena Drive Inn parking lot) - Replace the undersized drainage pipe through the Lena Drive Inn and out to Lake Road.

Waste Treatment Plant Issues

- **Influent/Screening** – The screening, flow metering, pumps, and building structure need to be repaired/replaced.
- **Clarifier** – The clarifiers need new equipment and the actual concrete holding tanks need modification.

What this means

This infrastructure investment totals about \$7.7 million dollars for the items listed above. This will impact two capital fees on your utility bill. The Storm Drainage Fee labeled (SD) will go up \$4.00 per month and the Sewer Capital Fee labeled (CS) will go up \$25.00 per month for a total increase of \$29.00. This is to pay for the 20-year loan needed to make these improvements. You will see these rate increases on the January 2024 utility bill.

We understand that this is a very significant increase, however, our sewer and drainage infrastructure has degraded and has not been adequately invested in over the years. Residents should expect the Village to work on their behalf to mitigate flooding issues and to have a safe sanitary sewer system for our community. This investment puts us on the right path so that Lena continues to be a great place to live.

Slides from the May 17th meeting can be found on the Village website under village information or at the link below: <https://www.villageoflena.com/about/village-information/>

Fall/Winter Reminders



- **Hydrant flushing** will be October 9th - October 20th. Please avoid washing clothing while the hydrants are being flushed in your neighborhood as it can cause discoloration.
- **Last Day of Brush Pick-Up** will be the 3rd week of October, tentatively October 16th.
- **Leaf Removal** is provided by the Village in the Fall. Leaves should be raked to the curb, but not overflowing into the street. No brush, lawn clippings, yard waste or other foreign objects should be included in the leaf piles or they will not be removed. Leaves must remain loose at the curb, bagged leaves will not be disposed of by the Village Street Department. **No open burning in the village.**
- **Live Christmas trees:** The Village of Lena provides a designated area at the Lena Street Department for the disposal of live Christmas trees. The Village Street Department **will not** pick up Christmas trees curbside. Trees must be free of all lights, tinsel, ornaments or any other type of decoration.
- **Parking: Snow Emergencies:** During times when there is an accumulation of at least two inches of snow between 11/1 and 4/30 of each year, all vehicles parked on the street must be parked on odd-numbered sides of the street on odd-number days of the month and on the even-numbered side of the street on even days of the month from 1:30 am until 6 am on that day. Vehicles parked in the lot on Main Street must park at the fence side closest to the railroad tracks. These parking restrictions are in effect for the following streets Main Street from Washington to Freedom – Railroad Street from Washington to Center – Center Street from Main to Mason – Rantoul Street from Main to Mason – Vernon Street from Main to Mason and Freedom Street from Main to Mason. Violations are subject to a \$75 fine.



TRICK OR TREAT!



Trick or Treat will be on October 31st from 5pm - 7pm.

Halloween Street Closures: From 4pm - 7pm the following areas will be closed: West Mason Street from Schuyler Street to Freedom Street and Oak Street from West Mason Street to Locust Street. Please be extra cautious during this time to ensure the safety of the trick or treaters.

LENA BURIAL PARK: Your Village Cemetery

A part of history! Lena Burial Park, established by Samuel Dodds in 1854 is the final resting place of many of Lena's founders. With 27 acres and almost 5,000 burials -- including almost 400 veterans -- it is the fourth-largest cemetery in Stephenson County. It also hosts a Civil War Memorial and Veterans Memorial. Did you know a small percentage of operating expenses come from your property taxes, averaging less than \$1.00 of a \$ 3,000 tax bill? This small amount helps keep burial costs somewhat lower.

What's new? More recently, a lot has been happening in Lena Burial Park. Cemetery records were digitized, new trees were planted, a columbarium for cremations was built, and the "cannon" was relocated to the Veterans' Memorial. The Sexton undertook a gravestone restoration project with volunteer Denny Talbert, a professional stone restorer. All veteran markers were cleaned and more than 150 stones were restored or reset.

Want to help? More activities will be reported in future newsletters. If you wish to help, donate, or have questions, please contact us: Call 815-541-4841 or via Village Hall at 815-369-4016 or cemetery@villageoflena.com or Visit our Facebook page



Before: McEathron Broken Markers



After: McEathron family markers restored

Village President - Steve Buss
Village Clerk - Claudia Simpson
Treasurer - Nicole Callos
Office Manager - Madi Becke
Chief of Police - Wayne Gift
Officers - Cameron Reuter
Louis Cusanelli
Hailey Carr
Sierra Maurer
Streets Department
Brandt Esling
Ben Cheeney
Water - Kory Polhill
Sewer - Jon Schoenhard

Trustees

Administration - Cathy Stevens
Health & Environment - Brooke Baldauf
Police - Christin Keeffer
Streets - Brian Peight
Water & Sewer - Brandon Smith
Zoning - Dean Rood

Village of Lena
PO Box 607
Lena, IL 61048

Upcoming Events:

Hometown Christmas Walk: November 17th & 18th

Small Business Saturday: November 25th

10th Anniversary Hometown Christmas Parade: December 2nd @ 6pm. Kids activities prior to the parade.

Winterfest Activities: Tentatively the weekend of February 3rd

Garbage Pick-Up Delayed to Saturday for:

Thanksgiving
Christmas
New Years Day



For more updates, visit www.gillsfreeportdisposal.com or download the WasteConnect app!



Thank you to our summer help for a job well done. Left to right Maisen Smith, Marey Roby, Luke Benson.

Contact us!
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www.villageoflena.com

