



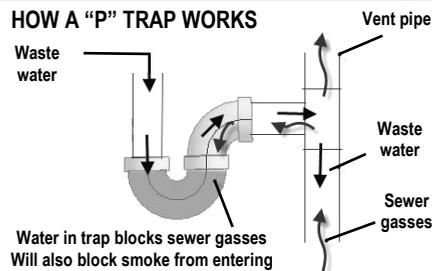
# THE SWANSEA REPORT

VOLUME 32, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2017

## READ THIS! Where There's Smoke There's Not Always Fire

### HOW A "P" TRAP WORKS



Residents in areas where smoke testing will be conducted need to realize that smoke could enter their home. When it does it might fill the house with the smoke and make you think there is a fire.

To help avoid this from happening, all residents in those areas should check drains - floor, sink, shower, tub, etc., to make sure there is water in every P trap. The water in P traps for drains that are rarely used, like a floor drain, tends to dry up. If you don't periodically add water, sewer smells can enter your home. Smoke from smoke testing will do so as well.

The Village will create a plan and schedule for which areas will be tested on specific dates, but that schedule might be impacted by weather or unforeseen events. Door tags will be put on buildings in the areas to be tested at least one day prior to testing. The Village may also use Code Red to notify residents registered on the system.

While these efforts might help prevent 'false alarms', anyone who experiences smoke in a building should still call 911 so the Fire Department can verify the source.

## Village Plans to Begin Smoke Testing To Locate Sewer Infiltration

### Illinois EPA Recommends Testing After Treatment Plant Inspection

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) chose to inspect Swansea's Wastewater Treatment Plant on August 15, 2016. It turned out to be the "perfect storm" - because it rained all day.

The flow through Swansea's treatment plant should not increase during a rain storm. The Village's sanitary sewers are collected in a closed system and not combined with any storm water system. Therefore, rain water should not enter the sanitary sewer system, and assuming people don't take more showers, wash more clothes or use the toilet more often during a rain storm, the flows through the plant should stay relatively the same day to day.

But on the day the inspector was present, the plant was trying to handle a significant increase in volume and it was a challenge for staff to keep up with the added flows and to ensure the proper operation of the plant.

So the Village was not surprised when the storm event became a "deficiency" in the inspection report issued on December 9th. The IEPA has recommended that the Village perform smoke testing in order to try to locate points of infiltration.

Infiltration occurs when ground water or rain water enters the 'closed' sanitary sewer system. This could occur in a village owned sewer main, particularly those in older sections of the community where pipes are older and made from clay and water might seep into joints, cracks or even holes. But it also occurs when homes or

businesses have cracked and leaking sewer laterals - the pipe owned by the property owner that connects their building to the public sewer.

In addition, infiltration occurs when people illegally connect sources of storm water to the sanitary sewer system, even though the two are to remain separate. For example, if a homeowner connects downspouts to underground piping and then taps that underground pipe into their sanitary sewer lateral, they will channel rain water from their roof directly into the sanitary sewer. Or if a homeowner has a sump pump to drain groundwater from around their home's foundation, and that sump pump is connected to the sanitary sewer, they will pump ground water into the sanitary sewer system.

### Why Should You Care ?

Some reading this might wonder why the IEPA or the Village would be concerned with rain water entering the treatment plant. There are a number of reasons. First, every plant is designed to handle a specific volume of flow per day. If the flows exceed that capacity there is a chance that the plant could not handle the increased flow. The fear is that raw sewage could bypass the plant and enter streams and lakes.

A second reason is that rain water is generally clean and does not need to be treated by a wastewater treatment plant. But the plant can not differentiate between sewage and

*See Smoke Testing, page 8*

## News Briefs

### Government Center Holiday Closings

#### Trash and Recycling Collection Will Not Be Affected

The Swansea Government Center and all non-emergency services of the Village will be closed on Monday, February 20th in observance of Presidents' Day. The Village Board and committee meetings normally held on Feb 20th, will be shifted to Tues, Feb. 21st. Meeting times and location remain the same.

This holiday will not affect trash and recycling collection. Republic Services will still make collections on Monday Feb. 20th.

### Thank You To Santa's Helpers

Marilyn Neumeyer, who coordinates the Santa House in Mel Price Park, reports that Santa visited with many children from the Swansea area this year and is looking forward to seeing them again in Dec 2017. She also expressed gratitude for all of Santa's helpers, especially those from the Swansea Police Department Explorer Post who were so helpful.

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### Tentative Dates For Community Wide Yard Sale & Spring Cleanup

The Village has proposed tentative dates for a Community Wide Yard Sale and Spring Cleanup in 2017. The event will be the first of its kind for Swansea.

The Community Wide Yard Sale has been proposed for Saturday April 22nd. Yard sales would be allowed Village wide without a permit on that date for individual residents and subdivisions / neighborhoods that normally have group yard sales. Several of those neighborhoods have already said they will participate on that day.

The Spring Cleanup is proposed for May 6th. On that date residents should be able to drop off large items, appliances, electronics, scrap metal, prescriptions and a number of other items for disposal or recycling, by bringing them to manned stations at Mel Price Park. As they become available more details will be provided.

### Village Plans To Seek Proposals For Boul Ave. Development

The Village Board has approved a Task Order with Moran Economic Development to create a Request For Proposals for the development of property recently purchased by the Village on Boul Ave. The Village has

an on-call contract with Moran for such services.

A few months ago the Village purchased over 7 acres along Boul Ave. The property wraps behind the new Government Center and Don's Hardware. Staff created concepts for how that property could potentially be subdivided and commercially developed. The intent is to attract retail generating businesses to the site. The property is within both a TIF and a Business District, so incentives are available. The RFP Moran is being tasked with creating will outline those incentives and the specific type of development the Village wants to attract to the site.

To help offset a need for property taxes and other sources of revenue the Village is focused on bringing more retail businesses into Swansea. The triangular area around Boul Avenue, IL Rte. 161, and IL Rte. 159 are high traffic areas that the Village thinks have redevelopment potential. Since that development has not yet occurred organically, the Village hopes to jump start it with some financial incentives.

### Sign Up For Code Red

While the height of tornado season is still months away, consider signing up for the Village's Code Red Emergency Alert system now. The Village uses the service to make residents aware of information they need to know. This could include specific impacts from winter weather

*(Continued on facing page)*

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## News Briefs

as well as summer storms. But the Village also uses the system to alert specific neighborhoods of crime events when the Police want residents to be aware and cautious.

Signing up is easy. Go to the

Code Red Signup 

Village webpage at [www.swanseail.org](http://www.swanseail.org) and click on the Code Red button at the top right of the webpage. Fill in the info on the form and click on the appropriate button to submit. You can have alerts sent to a landline, cell phone, by text or email, or via multiple forms of delivery.

### Correction to 911 Storm Statistics

Last month we reported that in an 8-hour span during the December ice storm, twenty-six 9-1-1 calls “rolled over” from St. Clair County, Belleville, Fairview Heights, O’Fallon or East St. Louis, to be answered by Swansea dispatchers. After additional information was provided, it became apparent that only 14 of those calls

were true rollovers from the O’Fallon/Fairview Heights dispatching center. Swansea was the interim backup for O’Fallon/Fairview Heights at that time.

The other 12 calls apparently originated from cell phones. 9-1-1 calls from cell phones get routed through the closest cell tower which typically sends that call to the dispatch center serving the territory in which the specific cell tower is located.

However, in times of heavy cell phone use, like when there are hundreds of vehicle accidents during an ice storm, weak wireless signals or overloaded cell towers can cause some calls to get bounced to any available tower. In that scenario, a call to request service from the East St. Louis Police Department, could get routed to a cell tower in Swansea, where the call would be answered by Swansea dispatchers.

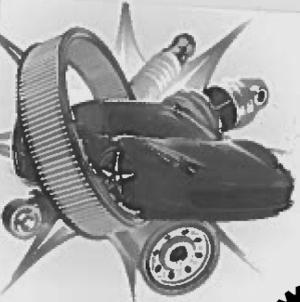
The Village should have reviewed the statistics more carefully after the storm event and not assumed that all were the result of rollovers.

### Recycling Bins Are Property Of The Village Leave Behind If Moving

Unless you have purchased a second recycling bin, the green bin assigned to your home is the property of the Village of Swansea and is to remain with that property should you move.

In the last 6 months the Village has distributed 50 “replacement” bins at a cost of almost \$500 to both owner occupied and rental properties where the previous owner or tenant apparently took the bin with them upon moving. The Village Board is discussing if additional action needs to be taken to encourage compliance and reduce the cost of replacements.





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# Village Board Discusses St. Clair County Proposed Sales Tax:

At recent meetings, the Swansea Board of Trustees has been discussing a referendum proposed by St. Clair County that will appear on the April ballot. That proposition reads:

*“To pay for public safety purposes, shall The County of St. Clair, Illinois be authorized to impose an increase on its share of local sales taxes by 1% for a period not to exceed 12 years?”*

The County is projecting that the 1% sales tax would generate about \$22 million per year. They have stated their plans to allocate those funds among a number of entities:

- \$5.5 million / year for municipalities and unincorporated areas on a per capita basis to be used for police or fire department enhancements
- \$2 mil / year for probation services
- \$6 mil / year for jail modernization and renovations
- \$1 mil for courthouse security renovations
- \$5.6 mil for sheriff's personnel
- \$500,000 for a county-wide use police shooting range

- \$50,000 for a countywide emergency alert system
- \$250,000 for the State's Attorney's office
- \$500,000 to the Metro East Police District Commission for the implementation of the District public safety plan
- \$200,000 for the coroner's office
- \$200,000 to support the Child Advocacy Center, Court Appointed Specials Advocates, senior citizen neglect and abuse prevention programs
- \$200,000 for Criminal justice information technology integration

If the County in fact shares \$5.5 million with municipalities, rough calculations suggest that Swansea might receive more than \$280,000 per year as its share. It depends upon how the formula is actually applied, but that prospect of course got the interest of the Village and prompted some discussion as to the potential pros, cons and unknowns of the proposed tax.

Allowing the creation of sales taxes specifically for public safety funding

at the county level, or for funding building construction and maintenance for schools (another referendum on the April ballot) is a new approach.

There was a time when sales taxes were a revenue source only available to the State and municipalities, but those provisions have been broadened over the years. Also, historically, municipal sales taxes have been distributed according to where the sales occurred.

The discussion included whether municipalities will be able to rely upon their share of the funds as proposed. The County resolution specifically outlines how funds are to be shared, and in a meeting on January 20th the County assured attendees that the resolution requires that distribution for the entire 12 years. But in the Village's discussion it was noted that the actual referendum language does not restrict the tax to that distribution formula. Therefore the County, or a future County Board, has the authority to pass a new resolution that would reduce the proposed \$5.5 million annual allocation to

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062015-05622AC

# Proposal Calls For Sharing Tax Revenue With Municipalities

municipalities. They could instead channel that money to some other County need under their public safety umbrella. In the end, the tax will be a County tax, to be used as they determine.

Discussion also noted that if both the County and the schools' referendums pass, the sales tax paid in Swansea would increase by two percentage points, to become 9.85% - 10.85% on general merchandise. It was noted that there is probably some tipping point at which shoppers could balk at the portion of their final bill that is going to taxes. While the rate would go up equally throughout St. Clair County, the increase might prompt some to shop in Missouri or in other adjoining counties with lower taxes.

That possibility could also make it more difficult for the Village to increase its own sales tax in the future, should it want to do so. This could include creating new business districts where an additional sales tax is used within that district for improvements that help support the businesses and attract shoppers. Business owners might be reluctant to support such an effort.

Swansea also currently levies a 1/2% non-home rule sales tax throughout the Village. That tax is projected to generate about \$370,000 this fiscal year. All of those funds are currently allocated towards roadway maintenance, repairs and their related costs.

But the Village has the ability to increase that non-home-rule sales tax rate to either 3/4% or 1%. If they did so to the maximum of 1%, that would potentially generate another \$370,000 per year to the Village.

The discussion noted that this approach would exceed Swansea's estimated \$280,000 share of the County sales tax by \$90,000 every year, and that a Swansea imposed tax would not be limited to supporting only public safety needs. So while some funds could support police and fire services, other funds could possibly be used for roadway repairs and construction, parks and recreating services, and other typical General Fund expenses.

In addition, a Swansea imposed sales tax would result in local shoppers only paying an additional

1/2% rather than the County's proposed 1%. So in essence, more money would be generated for the Village, with less impact on shoppers, and the Village would have complete control over how to allocate or spend that money.

Swansea residents of course benefit indirectly from many aspects of the County's proposed tax, such as improvements to the county jail. Every person arrested by Swansea police eventually goes through the jail and if they are forced to release prisoners early because of overcrowding, that affects every community, including our own. The State's Attorney's Office, probation office, and other related departments are all interrelated with the criminal justice process and helping victims of crime, and a lack of adequate funding impacts the services they provide.

The Village has not taken a position on either the County or schools' proposed taxes so this article is not intended to sway the reader to be in favor or against either. It is meant to be educational and to maybe start a conversation. Residents must decide for themselves come April.

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# Swansea To Contract With Belleville For 911 Dispatching; Non-Emerg

When it comes to emergency services dispatching, Swansea will not be allowed to implement the plan that it had proposed - a plan under which the City of Belleville would have answered all 911 calls and dispatched police, fire and EMS accordingly, but where non-emergency calls would still have been dispatched by an employee of the Swansea Police Department.

The Executive Director of the St. Clair County Emergency Telephone Systems Board (ETSB) sent a certified letter to the Village on December 29, 2016, in which he stated, "After much review and discussion with the Statewide 911 Administrator and the Emergency Telephone Systems Board Legal Counsel, it is with much disappointment that I must disapprove the submitted plan."

Representatives of Swansea and the Belleville Police Department subsequently met with ETSB staff on January 5, 2017 to discuss his denial and review his concerns. The Village attempted to address each concern but in the end was told that the Statewide 911 Administrator stressed that the County can not spend 911 funds outside a PSAP (Public-Safety Answering Point), and that if Swansea did not fully consolidate all dispatching with Belleville, the State would require that all equipment provided with 911 funding be pulled from Swansea.

The ETSB staff explained that the County's legal counsel was asked to interpret that statement by the Statewide 911 Administrator, and the

attorney interpreted it to mean that the radios used by Swansea police and fire departments, which were purchased with 911 funds - money in essence paid by everyone in Swansea with a telephone - would be pulled and taken away.

Swansea asked for a written copy of the concerns as well as the opinion of the County's legal counsel, but neither had been produced at the time of this writing.

In a January 8th email responding to that request, the ETSB Director stated "I gave much thought to your proposal, and after giving it my full attention there are three possibilities for me to meet the law. Swansea can have their calls and services provided by Belleville, East.Louis (sic) or CENCOM (St. Clair County). After reviewing the entire system on back up issues, and making sure our system is the best it can be, I feel the most practicable solution is for Swansea to seek the service of Belleville, or CENCOM."

The St. Clair County ETSB has the final say in how Swansea's 911 calls will be answered and the Village has little recourse other than to follow their directives.

Swansea will be allowed to retain the non-emergency phone number at the Swansea Police Department where it will be answered by Village employees 24/7. However, if a caller to the non-emergency line is still seeking a response from police, fire or EMS personnel, that call will be transferred to the Belleville PSAP where the appropriate personnel will be dispatched.

Swansea will therefore not dispatch officers in any circumstance.

This new procedure could impact response times to some degree but probably only in some rare situations. For example, say someone ran into the lobby of the PD to report an armed robbery in progress on the sidewalk out front. Currently, once our dispatcher had the essential details they would immediately dispatch an officer.

In the future however, a person coming into the PD lobby to report a robbery in progress would provide that info to an administrative employee who will then pick up a telephone and call the Belleville PSAP to have them dispatch a Swansea officer. This would occur even if an officer is standing behind the employee in the Swansea PD.

While that may seem illogical on its face, the ETSB staff argue that to do anything else might result in an officer safety issue, because the dispatchers in Belleville might not know that the officer responded from the station. This is an extreme example and hopefully these kinds of events will be rare.

In addition to Belleville, Swansea could consolidate with CENCOM or even the Fairview Heights / O'Fallon consolidated dispatching center. But Belleville and Swansea officers already work well together, back each other up frequently, and the communities share a significant border. Belleville therefore seems to be the most logical choice if Swansea has to change from what it really wants, which is to be left alone.



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## Agency Line Will Remain At Swansea PD

While the consolidation decision has been made, a number of challenges remain, the first of which is being able to maintain the current level of dispatching until an agreement can be worked out with Belleville and 911 telephone lines cut over to them. The ETSB has stated that they need at least 90 days to make that happen and by law consolidation needs to be completed in full by July 1, 2017.

So the deadline in itself might be a challenge, but since staff now know that there is no form of 'dispatching' that Swansea will be allowed to provide past June 30, 2017, those who want to remain telecommunicators will be seeking employment elsewhere. If they all leave before the cutover date, Swansea could be faced with having to still provide dispatching services without sufficient staff to do so.

The Police Chief, Mayor and Village Administrator met with all telecommunicators, explained the situation, and are working with them in hopes of a smooth transition.

Some could be hired by the City of Belleville, and those interested in that opportunity will apply early and hopefully be selected early. Those that want to continue as telecommunicators but are not interested in or hired by Belleville can continue to work at the Swansea police department at the same rate of pay until they find a position in their field. In both cases the staff would potentially work at Swansea up until or past the cutover date, providing sufficient coverage through the end of June.

The Village will be creating new administrative support positions in the Police Department, and staff who want to stay and work in those positions will be allowed to do so. In the past, the Department has had no clerical staff. The department's telecommunicators provide those and other support services to the police officers in addition to answering 911 and other calls.

This is why the Village has argued for so long that the State's 911 consolidation plan will not save us money as professed. If the Village wants to maintain safe and effective public safety to our community, some support staff need to remain. But not only will the Village now be buying dispatching services from someone else, it still needs to provide some level of 24/7 support to police officers at the Swansea station.

The Village knows that it could 'save money' by closing the police station to the public after a certain time and simply provide a telephone outside that would dial into the Belleville PSAP. It could also transport those arrested straight to the County Jail without allowing them to remain and post bond at the Swansea station, where they are currently monitored on video cameras by dispatchers so police can get back on the street.

Again, changes like that might 'save money' but the level of service to our residents would revert to where it was 30 years ago, and Swansea is reluctant to do that. Residents have come to expect a certain level of service and the Village is working to maintain that if it can.

### VILLAGE OF SWANSEA CONTACT INFO

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## Smoke Testing - continued from page 1

rain water, so it literally 'treats' everything as sewage. That means large amounts of chemicals and electricity are used to treat clean water unnecessarily, but at great cost. And those costs need to be recouped through sewer charges to the Village's customers.

The obvious solution is to identify where storm water or ground water is getting into the system and eliminate each point of infiltration. If the Village was 100% successful in doing so, flows would no longer vary with rain storms and the cost of operations and treatment would drop.

The Village has been replacing older sewer lines over time. It also has begun to line some older sewer mains with a sleeve that seals the inside of the pipe and inhibits infiltration. It tends to do this where excavation might be difficult or more costly. Each such step helps to decrease points of infiltration in the Village owned lines.

### What Do I Need To Know?

Smoke testing involves lighting and placing a highly concentrated 'smoke

bomb' into a sanitary sewer manhole. A strong fan on a circular base is placed into the top of the manhole and the fan forces the smoke into the sewer system.

Smoke will naturally rise from each manhole within the general area, that is connected to the manhole with the 'smoke bomb'. That is OK, since manholes are allowed open access points to the system. Smoke will also rise from roof vents on buildings connected to the sewer main because they are open points in the system, allowing sewer gases from the building to vent safely away.

But smoke will also rise from any other opening. So if a public sewer main has joints that have separated, smoke will rise through the ground at the point of each such joint. If a public owned pipe has a crack, smoke will rise in line with the crack.

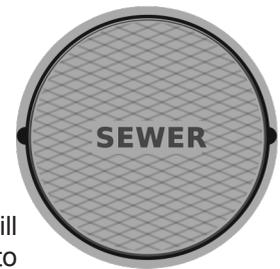
However, if the joint separation or crack is in a private sewer lateral, the smoke will rise through the ground on that private property at the point of each such joint or crack. The Village's employees will document each such incident and photograph

where the smoke escapes. That information will then be sent to each such property owner to notify them of the infiltration issue and instruct them on having it repaired.

The Village will also document smoke rising from gutters and downspouts and notify the property owner so that the illegal connection to the sewer can be removed and inspected by the Village.

There is also a chance that smoke will enter into a home or business. This can occur with a P trap that has been allowed to dry up and therefore won't prevent the smoke from coming up through drains. It can also happen with a sump pump illegally connected to the sanitary sewer so that smoke comes up into the basement from the sump pump and fills the house. If the connection is illegal, it will need to be disconnected and corrected.

If not corrected, the owner of any illegal connection could be fined and prosecuted for the violation.





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## News Briefs

### Travel Ordinance Takes Effect Mar 2, 2017

In compliance with a state law that became effective on January 1st, the Village Board has created a new ordinance that clarifies how Village employees, officers and elected officials will be reimbursed for travel, meal and lodging expenses. The Village's ordinance will subsequently take effect March 2, 2017, as required by statute.

While Swansea's travel expenses are minimal each year and the Village has had no issues with the submission for reimbursement of such expenses, it developed an ordinance because it is required by the State. That ordinance outlines general policies as well as specific amounts that will be paid or reimbursed for authorized travel.

For example, out-of-pocket expenses must be documented by receipt in

order to be reimbursed. Travel choices must take into consideration the best available value, and any payment or reimbursement to an elected official for such expenses must be approved by a roll call vote of the Board of Trustees in open session. The ordinance also specifically excludes payment or reimbursement for expenses that would be inappropriate if charged to the Village rather than to the individual, such as alcoholic drinks.

### Kelso Family Donates Pavilion for Schranz Park

The Kelso family recently donated five checks of \$7,000 each, for a total of \$35,000, to the Swansea Patriots who will use the money to pay for a new 20' x 30' pavilion in Schranz Park. The pavilion will be dedicated to the memory of their mother Ruth Kelso and is expected to be installed by Spring.



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## News Briefs

### High Mount School Says "Thanks"

The faculty and staff of High Mount School expressed appreciation to the Village of Swansea, Swansea Police Department, Swansea Rotary Club, Belleville / Swansea Moose Lodge, St. Teresa Catholic Church, MedExpress Urgent Care, Robert Trentman, Sue Rienhardt, and various staff and parents who adopted families of High Mount students in need this past holiday season. The school also extended a special thanks to FCB Bank and West Side Optimist Club for donating winter coats.

Yvette Hicks, Social Worker at HMS, said the school greatly appreciates all the support within the community.

"It is just outstanding to know that the community is greatly involved in ensuring our children's basic needs are met," she stated. "The smiles on the children faces were priceless. Again, we are so grateful for all the community support to help us accomplish our mission."



### Public Recognition

At the meetings on January 3rd Police Chief Steve Johnson and Deputy Chief Craig Coughlin recognized Ray Thompson and Mike Anderson of Classic Auto Body in Swansea for their efforts in raising funds for Swansea's K9, Leo. Both gentlemen have been untiring in their willingness to help and extremely effective in raising significant funding for the police.



The Village also recognized employee John Budde for 20 years of service to the Village. Budde serves as the Swansea's Street Superintendent and also donates a significant amount of time to the Village and its events.

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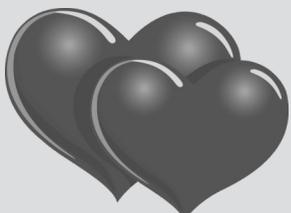
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# Swansea Community Calendar - February 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Committee Meetings 6:00pm Govt. Center Village Board Meeting 7:30pm Govt. Center	7	8	9	10 Chamber of Commerce Morning Mingle 7:45am - 9:00am Recreation Center Fairview Heights Rec Center, 10025 Bunkum	11 Swansea Park Board Meeting 7:00am Norman Lehr Center
12	13	14 Planning and Zoning Board Meeting (if needed) 6:00pm Govt. Center	15 Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours 5:00-7:00 pm	16	17	18
19	20 Presidents' Day Govt Center Closed	21 Committee Meetings 6:00pm Govt. Center Village Board Meeting 7:30pm Govt. Center	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	<h2>HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY</h2> 			

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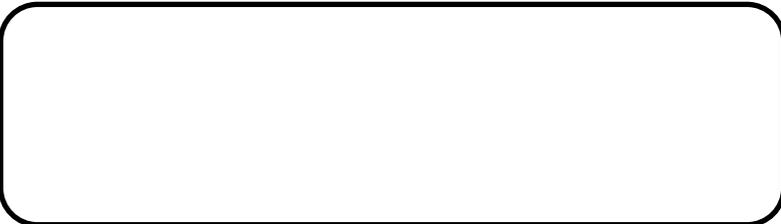
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