



THE SWANSEA REPORT

VOLUME 33, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2018

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READ THIS ONE

Hopefully the above headline got your attention, especially if you don't always read the Swansea Report when it arrives every month.

During 2018, the Board of Trustees is expected to take a critical look at the cost of producing this newsletter along with the revenue it generates, and evaluate that in relation to its effectiveness in getting information to residents of Swansea.

Because of comments that are regularly made, the Village knows the Swansea Report gets read by at least some residents, and those generally appreciate the information it contains. But with over 13,000 people in Swansea, there could be a lot of residents we never hear from, so it becomes difficult to effectively gauge the efficiency of this form of communication.

With printing, postage and processing the newsletter costs about \$35,000 per year to produce. If each monthly issue contained the equivalent of 42 business card sized ads, the newsletter would break even. Less than that, and the Village needs to supplement the publication with other funds. The Village has been willing to do so to some degree, knowing that the Swansea Report helps us communicate important information to residents. But we also realize there are now less expensive ways to do that.

For example, all of the information in each issue could simply be posted to the Village's website, at no additional cost. That would save the Village whatever financial gap exists between the newsletter's advertising revenue

and its expenses each month. But there is still no guarantee that communication through the website would be more effective.

Now, when the Swansea Report lands in your mailbox, we know that someone carries it into each home and business. Whether it gets read that day, set aside to hopefully be read later, or thrown away as 'junk mail', we don't know. But it at least touches a hand in each household.

Simply publishing on the website is only effective in getting the same information to our residents if you remember to go to the Village's website each month and read it. In today's busy world, that sometimes seems less likely than for a printed and mailed publication.

The Village will try to find a way to evaluate our readership in the near future, and consider that information in our analysis.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT WITH ADVERTISING

This deliberation could become moot if enough businesses, organizations or civic minded citizens were willing to spend at least \$70 every month for that business card sized ad. Doing so allows you to reach 6,300 mailboxes for only 1.15¢ per mailbox. Aside from any potential return on that investment, the support of those advertisers would help to ensure that the Village can continue to use this form of communication and would help us continue to bring important information to our residents.

News Briefs

Government Center Closed Jan 1st & 15th For Holidays

Refuse & Recycling Collection Also Affected on Jan 1st

The Swansea Government Center and all non-emergency services of the Village will be closed on Monday, January 1st in observance of the New Years holiday, and on Monday January 15th, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



The Village Board and committee meetings normally held on Jan 1st, will be shifted to Tues, Jan 2nd, and the meetings normally held on Jan 15th will be shifted to Tues, Jan 16th. Meeting times and location remain the same.

Republic Services will still make collections on Jan 15th but the New Year's holiday on Jan 1st, will shift Monday collections to Tuesday, Tuesday collections to Wednesday, Thursday collections to Friday and Friday collections to Saturday.

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67 Families Helped By Swansea Family Christmas Program

This year, 67 Swansea families, comprised of 124 adults and 94 children, benefited because of generous donations from individuals, families, civic organizations, and businesses, all of whom helped make Christmas brighter for their neighbors.

Cash donations exceeded \$7,900.00 this year, and are up from 2016. In addition, several organizations and individuals donated toys and clothing, one business collected canned goods for the food pantry, and the Metro East Regional Chamber of Commerce donated half the proceeds from their Morning Mingle Holiday event, sharing the other half with Caseyville Township's Christmas Program. Cash donations were used to purchase gift certificates at local stores which in turn allowed families in need to purchase specific gifts for their children and buy food for their holiday meal.



While coordinated by the Village, the effort is successful each year because of the generosity of many and the volunteer hours put in by a few, including Gene Kish, Doris Rebenstorff and Maryann and Larry Wilson. Thanks to all who helped or participated in any way in this long-standing Swansea tradition.

If Your Sewer System Backs Up, Call The Village First

A recent incident has prompted the Village to issue this reminder to residents: call the Village first if your sewer system starts to backup.

Because storm water can infiltrate the sanitary sewer system during periods of heavy rain, that additional water can overload the system and cause it to slow down or backup. It generally will do so into low lying basements. Residents who have experienced that before probably recognize the signs, or have installed a check valve to prevent backups.

But a recent incident during dry weather was unusual. In that case, tree roots traveled down a sewer lateral from a neighboring home and collected in a manhole. Growing there, they eventually blocked flow causing a backup next door. The Village had never had problems there previously, so it was not on a 'watch list'. Unfortunately, the affected homeowners called a plumber first and incurred significant cost when the blockage was not in their line. Looking in the manhole first would have made that apparent.

On non-holidays, Mon - Fri, 8:00am - 4:30pm, call 234-0044, and Government Center staff will dispatch Public Works. After hours and on weekends, call 233-8114. A police dispatcher will answer, but explain that you need Public Works to respond to a sewer backup and they will route your call or message.

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News Briefs

Village Plans To Assume Occupancy Inspections in March

In 2015 the Village adopted the Occupancy Code of St. Clair County and subsequently entered into an agreement with the County to provide occupancy inspections for locations in Swansea. However, the County has been short staffed recently, and made the Village aware of its desire to end this inspection relationship.

As a result the Village Board passed a resolution on Dec 4th to formally notify St. Clair County of the Village's intent to terminate the current agreement. The Village plans to begin performing its own inspections effective March 5, 2018.

In the meantime the Village will adopt its own code, set up processes and procedures internally, and hire additional staff. While that will add cost, revenue from the inspections will now be paid to the Village, rather than to the County, with the intent that the new revenue cover all costs.



Village Board Sends Video Greetings to Swansea Wales

Swansea elected officials recently filmed a short video for Swansea, Wales, to express support for their bid to become the United Kingdom City of Culture for 2021. Swansea, Wales is in competition with four other cities from across the UK for that distinction. The 'City of Culture' is a UK Government initiative that awards one city the title every four years. That city then plays host to a series of cultural events and festivals lasting the whole year. Winning the bid could bring up to \$1.3 billion (US dollars) of investment to Swansea, Wales, along with thousands of jobs and an increase in the economy of up to \$170 million. As a PR effort, the Welsh Swansea requested supporting videos from all other "Swanseas" in the world. In addition to Swansea, Wales and Swansea, Illinois, there are eight other cities in the world named "Swansea". Four more are located in the United States, in Arizona, California, Massachusetts, and South Carolina; Two are in Australia, in New South Wales and Tasmania; One is in Ontario Canada, and one is in Saint Catherine Jamaica.



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Village Board Adopts Property Tax Levy For New Year

On December 18th the Village Board levied property taxes for the next year totaling slightly more than \$1.96 million. While this is an increase from last year, that increase is less than 5%, so it did not require a public hearing or special notice publication.

Two tax categories were added into this year's levy. Swansea requested \$12,240 in taxes towards the cost of Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) pensions. While the Village has levied for police and fire pensions, it has not done so recently for the pension costs of all other employees covered under IMRF. The actual annual cost of those pensions is over \$90,000 and in the past was funded from the General Corporate Fund and other revenue sources.

The Village also requested \$25,500 in taxes specifically for Public Parks, where it again has not done so in the past. These funds are intended to be used for capital expenditures for park projects, not for operational costs.

An additional \$34,000 was levied towards Police Pensions to match the Village's contribution recommended by the actuary, and an additional

\$26,900 was levied for the general Corporate Fund. The levy for Insurance was reduced by \$6,500 to reflect savings in the Village's insurance premiums this year.

Using a sample home with a market value of \$162,300 - the median home value in Swansea - a property owner would have paid about \$409.00 last year in municipal property taxes. This year that amount is expected to increase by about \$20.00 to \$429.00.

While some might be critical, the Village Board deliberated over the levy at length, and did not take this increase lightly. The Village has consistently tightened its budget and lowered operational costs where it can, balancing that against the need for new revenue streams to fund the ever increasing cost of providing efficient and effective public services.

Their diligence is evident in a side by side comparison to the municipal tax rates in neighboring communities (general municipal services + fire protection). Using last year's rates, the latest available for all of those communities, the chart to the right shows the taxes paid in each of those

towns on a home with the same \$162,300 value as the sample home in Swansea. As you can see, Swansea's taxes are the 3rd lowest.

Municipality	Combined Tax Rate	Relative Tax On \$162,300 Home
Cahokia	6.6143	\$ 3,578.34
East St. Louis	3.4346	\$ 1,858.12
Belleville	2.1817	\$ 1,180.30
Fairmont City	1.9812	\$ 1,071.83
Highland	1.9005	\$ 1,028.17
New Athens	1.4816	\$ 801.55
Wood River	1.4760	\$ 798.54
Glen Carbon	1.4225	\$ 769.57
Mascoutah	1.4201	\$ 768.27
O'Fallon	1.3819	\$ 747.61
Jerseyville	1.3601	\$ 735.82
Collinsville	1.2711	\$ 687.67
Bethalto	1.2554	\$ 679.17
New Baden	1.1698	\$ 632.86
Troy	1.0816	\$ 585.14
Maryville	1.0496	\$ 567.83
Fayetteville	1.0186	\$ 551.06
Columbia	1.0064	\$ 544.46
Freeburg	0.9925	\$ 536.94
Millstadt	0.9472	\$ 512.44
Smithton	0.9426	\$ 509.95
Hecker	0.9423	\$ 509.78
Lebanon	0.8912	\$ 482.14
Waterloo	0.8481	\$ 458.80
Swansea	0.7568	\$ 409.43
Shiloh	0.6672	\$ 360.96
Fairview Heights	0.4826	\$ 261.09

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Raffles, Like Queen of Hearts, Require Local License First

A "raffle", (specifically defined in the state statutes 720 ILCS 5/28-2(b)), is a form of lottery where a player pays something of value for a chance, represented by a number designating the winning chance, and the winner is to be determined through a drawing or by some other method based on an element of chance by an act of the persons conducting the raffle.

In Swansea, as in other Illinois communities, you must first have local license to hold a raffle, obtained at the Government Center. By law, those licenses are only issued to genuine religious, charitable, labor, business, fraternal, educational or veterans' organizations that operate without profit to their members. The organization also needs to have been in existence continuously for a period of five years immediately before making application for a license and needs to have had a bona fide membership engaged in carrying out the organization's objectives during that entire five-year period.

The license application requires a sworn statement attesting to the above and signed by the presiding officer and

the secretary of the organization, along with proof of tax exempt status. The license fee is only \$25 and is good for one year between the dates of May 1 and April 30. No more than 50 raffles can be conducted by the organization during that license period and the maximum number of days during which chances may be issued or sold for any one raffle cannot exceed 365 days.

In Swansea, the retail value of any one prize, and the combined value of all prizes or merchandise awarded in a single raffle, cannot exceed \$200,000, so the current prize pools in other area Queen of Hearts drawings would not be permitted here. The maximum price that can be charged for each raffle chance sold in Swansea cannot exceed \$100.

Other rules associated with conducting a raffle in Swansea include:

- The entire net proceeds of any raffle must be exclusively devoted to the lawful purposes of the organization licensed to conduct that game.

- No one except a bona fide member of the sponsoring organization, may participate in the management or operation of the raffle.
- No person may receive any pay or profit for participating in the raffle's management or operation.
- Raffle chances may be sold or issued only within the area specified on the license and winning chances may be determined only at those locations specified on the license.
- A licensee may rent premises on which to determine the winning chance, but only from an organization which is also licensed by Swansea.
- A person under the age of 18 years may participate in the conducting of raffles or chances only with the permission of a parent or guardian.

Complete local rules can be found on in the Municipal Code on the Village of Swansea's website, under Chapter 114 "Games of Chance", Section 114.02 "Raffles".

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Understanding Sales Tax and On-Line Purchases: Why You Sho

The Christmas shopping experience is now behind us, which makes this a good time to explain in depth the impact of sales tax to the Village of Swansea. In Illinois, "sales tax" is the net of a combination of taxes imposed on the sale of specific products and services, plus use taxes that are imposed on purchasers. Sales tax includes revenue to the state, the mass transit district, park district, and to Swansea, including non-home rule occupation and use tax as well as business district taxes within specified areas.

By law, if you as an Illinois resident make a purchase out-of-state, or through an on-line retailer, they should charge you sales tax. But some do not. In those cases, you as the purchaser, are required to pay the tax due directly to the Dept. of Revenue. State tax forms now include an automatic and assumed use tax calculation unless you provide specific data to the contrary.

The advent and growth of on-line shopping, while very convenient for consumers, has a big impact on municipal finances. As sales tax revenue flattens or diminishes from sales made on-line, communities like Swansea have to either cut basic services residents want and expect, or find other more stable sources of funding those services. Sales taxes were often a way to minimize reliance on property taxes, but many municipalities today are struggling with these changes.

Some Illinois communities are pushing for changes in sales tax policy that would consider this trend

occurring in the economy. While the State of Illinois has been aggressive in pushing for the payment and collection of State sales taxes from on-line purchases, in most cases the State's laws do not allow or provide for the collection of local sales tax. If those laws were changed, the playing field would be leveled to some degree for brick-and-mortar stores. And Swansea would potentially receive revenue when residents made on-line purchases.



Municipalities have benefited from what some refer to as the "Amazon tax". In 2015, the State began to collect 6.25% state sales tax from online purchases if the seller had a physical presence in the State – such as an office or distribution warehouse. All local governments receive some percentage of that tax on a per-capita basis. But those that have distribution center within their borders, like Edwardsville does with its new Amazon fulfillment facilities, receive additional revenue from any purchases shipped from those warehouse facilities.

But In Terms Of Revenue To Swansea - Does It Matter Where You Buy Your Gasoline?

While most retail purchases generate sales tax to the local government where the purchase is made, Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) is distributed differently. So buying fuel in Swansea

versus another Illinois municipality really does not make a difference in the money the Village receives from MFT. Yet buying that fuel in Missouri has an indirectly negative impact on Swansea revenues. Sound confusing? Here's how it works.

The Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund gets its money from a tax imposed "...on the privilege of operating motor vehicles upon public highways and of operating recreational watercraft upon the waters of this State, based on the consumption of motor fuel." So when you fill up your vehicle at any gasoline pump in the state of Illinois, the price includes a tax of 19 cents per every gallon – money that is collected by the station and sent to the State of Illinois to be deposited in the Illinois MFT Fund. If your vehicle uses diesel fuel, the station collects an additional tax of 2.5 cents for every gallon, which is also sent to the state and deposited in the MFT Fund.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for allocating these monies in accordance with state law, including distributing some of that money to counties, townships, and municipalities like Swansea. So each month the state direct deposits Swansea's share of all the Motor Fuel Tax Fund collected for the preceding month into our account.

But before that happens, there is some money 'taken off the top' of the MFT Fund. Of the money deposited each month into the Illinois Motor Fuel Tax Fund the full distribution is as follows:

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Justin Chapman
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Dave Demond
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Should Buy Local When You Can

- First, the 2.5 cents tax collected on every gallon of diesel fuel is transferred into the State Construction Account Fund. None comes to municipalities.
- Then \$420,000 of the tax collected each month is transferred to the State Boating Act Fund.
- Next, \$3.5 million of the tax collected each month is transferred to the Grade Crossing Protection Fund.

A sufficient amount of money is set aside each month to cover costs for:

- The Department of Revenue's administration of the MFT Law;
- IDOT's administration and supervision of the use of MFT funds;
- Any tax refunds allowed by law;
- A set \$30 million per year into the Vehicle Inspection Fund;
- Any amounts required to be paid by the Court of Claims; and
- All International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) payments owed to other states.

Now, from the remaining MFT tax monies collected that month, 45.6% is deposited as follows:

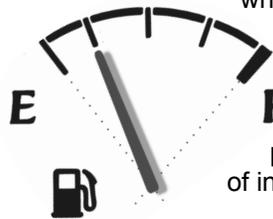
- 37% of that portion goes into the State Construction Account Fund;
- The other 63% goes into to the Road Fund, which includes \$1.25 million per month to fund the Township Bridge Program.

Finally, here it comes! The other 54.4% of the remaining MFT tax monies collected each month are distributed by IDOT as follows:

- 16.74% to Cook County;
- 18.27% to all other Counties;
- 15.89% to townships and road districts in proportion to the total miles of roads in the State; and finally
- 49.10% to the municipalities, like Swansea, on a per capita (population) basis.

So in the end, Motor Fuel Tax revenue has nothing to do with where you buy that gasoline in the State of Illinois. Swansea gets a share because you live in the Village. As our population increases, we receive more MFT funds. Should our population decrease, we would receive less. Swansea does not impose a sales tax on fuel sales, so in reality it does not matter where you buy your fuel in the state – in terms of the revenue impact to the Village.

Now it does matter if you also run into the convenience store to make purchases in addition to fuel. Some of the sales tax you pay on those items, stays within the municipality where that purchase is made. So for that reason, you help your own community by making those purchases in town instead of in another community.



As to buying your gasoline in

See Sales Taxes, page 8

VILLAGE OF SWANSEA CONTACT INFO

Swansea Government Center
1444 Boul Avenue
Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm, M-F
www.swanseail.org

**Administration,
Mayor's Office, Village Clerk,
Utility Billing & Public Works**
Phone: 618-234-0044
swanadm@swanseail.org

Building, Zoning, Permits
Phone: 618-355-0280
swanbnz@swanseail.org

**Swansea Police Department
Emergency: 911**
Non-emergency: 618-233-8114
swanseap@swanseail.org

**Swansea Fire Department
Emergency: 911**
Engine House: 618-234-3291

Village of Swansea Officials

President: Mike Leopold
mayor@swanseail.org

Village Clerk Lauren O'Neill
loneill@swanseail.org

Treasurer John Walter
jwalter@swanseail.org

Trustee Matt Lanter
mlanter@swanseail.org

Trustee Rocky McDonald
rmcdonald@swanseail.org

Trustee Brian McGuire
bmcguire@swanseail.org

Trustee Marilyn Neumeyer
mneumeyer@swanseail.org

Trustee Stephen Pulley
spulley@swanseail.org

Trustee Brian Wells
bwells@swanseail.org

If emailing multiple officials it may be best to also include swanadm@swanseail.org among those email addresses so staff can help coordinate any requested response.

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Sales Taxes

continued from page 8

Missouri? Well, none of that money comes back to the State of Illinois Motor Fuel Tax Fund. It all stays in Missouri to help build and maintain their roadways, not ours. So while you may buy gasoline on the St. Louis side of the river because the price per gallon is lower, buying that fuel in Illinois would result in revenue to the Village instead.

So Does It Matter Where You Buy Your Car? Actually, yes it does...

When you buy any 'vehicle' required to be registered with the State of Illinois – including cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles, boats and other watercraft, aircraft, trailers and even mobile / manufactured homes – the dealer collects sales tax and sends it to the Illinois Department of Revenue. The State in turn takes the portion of that sales tax collected on behalf of the municipality where the sale occurred, and sends it to that municipality.

So if as a resident of Swansea, you purchase a vehicle in Belleville or in O'Fallon, you are charged the sales

tax rate where the dealership is located, and the municipal share of that tax goes to that city. It makes no difference whether the vehicle purchased is new or used, the taxation is the same in either case.

Midwest Transit on IL Rte. 161 in Swansea does sell new busses, transit vehicles, and accessible vans, but sales tax is collected only on sales to those purchasers who are not tax exempt. Obviously, public schools buying buses do not pay sales tax on those purchases. So the impact of their sales is minimized to some degree. Swansea does not have any other new car dealerships located within our borders.

And since car manufacturers and dealerships now prefer to locate along Interstate highways, smaller communities like Swansea and even some larger ones like Belleville, have lost dealerships in the past and would have a difficult time attracting any new ones. Unfortunately, this eliminates the potential for a major source of tax dollars from

the sale of 'big ticket' items in those communities.

However, there is one situation where Swansea receives the benefit of your vehicle purchase.

If as a Swansea resident, you purchase a vehicle outside of Illinois, such as from a dealer in St. Louis or in its surrounding communities, when you register that vehicle in Illinois you will pay a "Vehicle Use Tax" of 6.25%. On these purchases the State then takes 16% of that use tax – 1% of the vehicle's purchase price – and sends it to Swansea, because it is where you, as the customer, reside. You would pay no sales tax to Missouri.

The Village strives to maintain good working relationships with our neighboring communities in Illinois, and realizes that they rely upon the sales tax revenue from automobiles purchased in their communities. But it is good to know that if a Swansea resident chooses to buy a vehicle out of state, the purchase will bring revenue into the Village's coffers.



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News Briefs



Metro Landing to Break Ground For New Complex

The official groundbreaking is scheduled for January 5th, but construction activities have already commenced for Metro Landing, a new, \$10.5 million senior apartment living facility adjacent to Swansea's MetroLink Station. The project is a joint effort of the Southwestern Illinois Development Authority (SWIDA), Bywater Development Group, and Bi-State Development (BSD),

The transit-oriented development (TOD) project will feature a three-story building with 62 one- and two-bedroom apartments for older adults seeking an independent lifestyle. Its proximity to MetroLink offers those residents car-free transportation

options via MetroLink and MetroBus to the entire bi-state region. The MetroBikeLink trail and its connection to the regional trail system will also provide those seniors with direct opportunities for exercise and recreation.

Aaron Burnett, President of Bywater Development Group, previously commented that, "Metro Landing of Swansea is reflective of a very strong and effective public/private partnership and stands to serve as a model for transit oriented senior housing. It will create both a positive impact on the community and an ideal living environment for its residents."

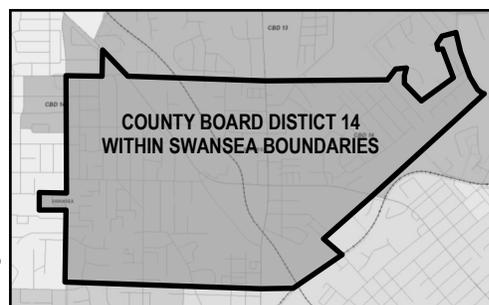
St Clair County To Offer Large Item Pick Up In County Board District 14

The St. Clair County Clean Sweep effort has set dates for large item pickup in County Board District 14 - the southern sections of Swansea. Pickups will be made the weeks of January 22, January 29, February 20, and February 26. Which specific

streets will be served during the respective weeks has yet to be determined.

The County typically prepares flyers that are distributed to residential properties in advance of the Clean Sweep effort in their area. Those will be distributed once the routing is finalized. County Board District 14 generally lies south of Fullerton Rd to the southern edge of Melvin Price Park and from 17th Street eastward to Old Collinsville Road.

Under the Clean Sweep effort, residents are allowed to place large items at the curbside for pickup and disposal on the specified day of collection at no charge and without using refuse stickers. The program is operated under grant funding.



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Sgt. Keith Howard was recognized on Dec. 4th for creating and coordinating the Police Department's Citizens Academy each of the three years the event has been held.



On Dec 4th, Chief Steve Johnson and Dennis Blick, Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners, recognized PK Johnson IV for his service as a Police Commission. Johnson recently left that Board after serving 15 years.



Mayor Leopold and his daughter Kaki donated \$1,500 to the Police Dept. towards the purchase of a ballistic helmet, which helps protect the head and face of officers. The two decided to make the donation while attending the Citizens Academy where former Belleville police Sgt. Jon Brough, who was blinded by a shotgun blast when entering a building, spoke about the need.



Police officers Paul Brault and Jason Tutterow were acknowledged for their quick actions that resulting in saving the life of a woman who had gone into cardiac arrest at the Moto station on IL Rte. 159. Officer Brault responded within one minute and used a defibrillator to restart the woman's heart. Officer Tutterow assisted. The woman was released from the hospital in two days.



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Swansea Community Calendar - January 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 New Years Holiday Govt Center Closed	2 Committee Meetings 6:00pm Govt. Center Village Board Meeting 7:30pm Govt. Center	3	4 Swansea Rotary Club 7:30am - 8:30am; Thompson Center - Gloria Tialdo "Dinner Auction"	5	6
7	8	9 Planning and Zoning Board Meeting 6:00pm Govt. Center	10	11 Swansea Rotary Club 7:30am - 8:30am; Thompson Center— Dr. Jeannette Freed "Advocate"	12	13 Swansea Park Board Meeting 7:00am Norman Lehr Center Swansea Patriots Meeting 8:00am Norman Lehr Center
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Govt Center Closed	16 Committee Meetings 6:00pm Govt. Center Village Board Meeting 7:30pm Govt. Center	17	18 Swansea Rotary Club 7:30am - 8:30am; Thompson Center - Student of the Month "High Mount & Wolf Branch"	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Swansea Rotary Club 7:30am - 8:30am; Thompson Center— Rebecca Wuest "History of 4204 West Main"	26	27
28	29	30	31	JANUARY 		

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After seeing over 500 children at his house in Melvin Price Park, Santa is back at the North Pole. The children enjoyed talking with him and receiving gifts and ornaments.

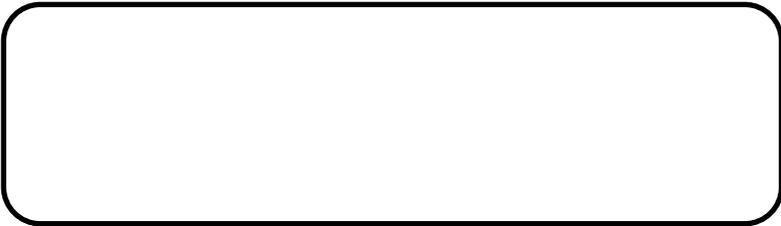
Thank You to all of Santa's Helpers who worked with him while he was in Swansea.



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