



# Message

**Issue 231**  
**September 2005**

Community Updates from Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Mount Rainier Office	2
Mount Rainier Community Watch Group Formed	2
Island Style Cream Parlor Did You Know. . .	2
Free Books and Free Software!	3
Spotlight Yards of the Month	3
Youth Recreation Programs	3
City Meets with Northern Area Representatives from Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)	4
City of Mount Rainier Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Schedule	4
City Attends Community Meeting with Councilmember Will Campos	5
Public Notice Concerning WSSC Project Activity	5
Calendar	11

**The deadline for submissions for the Message is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

[www.mountrainiermd.org](http://www.mountrainiermd.org)

## Mayor's Report

Summer has come and is fast retreating into fall. Soon we will be discussing the removal of snow and emergency parking. For now, the Mayor and Council is in recess for the month of August. This brief break in Council meetings and work sessions provides an ideal time for Mayor and Council to enjoy family, friends and a little vacation during the summer months.

Even though the Mayor and Council have not met during the month of August, each member of the Council has continued to be directly involved in the day-to-day operation of our City's affairs. The following is a brief recap of some of the Mayor and Council activities prior to and during the month of August (and we still have about two weeks of August left).

1. **Reviewed and approved the City Attorney Contract.** The City Attorney contract had not been reviewed and updated since it was issued in 1994. As I am sure you are aware, the needs of the City have changed, almost as often as the Mayor and Council since 1994. This update was long over due. In addition, the Mayor and Council conducted its first formal evaluation of the services rendered by the City Attorney, and entered into a dialogue that will help to enhance future services and working relationships. The new contract is for a period of two years, and requires ongoing dialogue between the Mayor and Council. In addition, the Mayor and Council will periodically host a mixer to allow Mayor and Council to become better acquainted with the attorneys and the staff of Silber and Perlman P. A. The first mixer will be held in the next few months at City Hall.

2. **National Night Out at 2300 Varnum Street.** The Mayor and Council extend

kudos to everyone involved in the planning and implementation of National Night Out. It was truly one of the best one hosted on Tuesday, August 16, 2005. We had full participation in this event from our border sister, Washington, DC. More than ten of their officers came out and actively worked with our Police Department for the entire evening. Chief Keeney, Ophelia Baxter, and Robert Taylor took the lead on putting this all together and once again made us proud and look good all at the same time. Thanks also to Public Works staff under the leadership of Paul Messersmith who did an awesome job in getting everything set up, taken down, and cleaned up. Visits to our fair City by elected officials included County Executive Jack Johnson, Delegate Doyle Niemann, County Councilman Will Campos, and County Sheriff Michael Jackson. Councilman Campos also contributed from his discretionary funds \$500 to National Night Out as did the Mount Rainier Business Association under the leadership of Mr. Samuel Reynolds. The water was donated to this event by WSSC through its Community Relations Office. The Moon Bounce was made available by Mr. Eric Battles of 30<sup>th</sup> Street.

3. **Lobbyist for the City.** Mayor and Council are taking a close look at engaging Steve Proctor and Associates to represent the City as lobbyist at the County, State and Federal levels. In looking at its financial situation and the continued tightening of the belt, the City is seeking to find new sources of revenue. Other municipalities (Seat Pleasant, Capitol Heights, Glendarden, etc.) have engaged lobbyists

**Mayor, continued on page 6**

---

## Community Updates from Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Mount Rainier Office

---

Congressman Van Hollen has been working hard in the community and on Capitol Hill to focus on issues that are important to you. The congressman joined residents to celebrate the Mount Rainier Day festival on May 21, 2005 and walked with other local and state officials in the city's annual parade. He showed his support for public safety by attending the anti-car theft workshop on June 18, 2005 hosted by the Mount Rainier Police Department and he joined business leaders from around the county at the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on June 23, 2005.

In an ongoing effort to help law enforcement officials deal with the growing level of gang violence in the Washington metropolitan region, Congressman Van Hollen has been advocating for the Prince George's and Montgomery Counties Joint Gang Suppression and Prevention Initiative in Congress. In June, after strong support by Congressman Van Hollen, this initiative was given the important distinction of being identified as a priority program in the FY 2006 Science-State-Justice-Commerce Appropriations bill (H.R. 2862). This initiative pursues a zero-tolerance policy for gang violence through community-based programs that serves youth and families and provides gang prevention education, mentoring, and outreach services.

Congressman Van Hollen recently secured more than \$46 million for

projects important to the Eighth Congressional District and the State of Maryland. The funding was included in the House-Senate Transportation Equity Act Conference Report (H.R.3) and also includes \$376,200 for the current developmental phase and initial construction work for the Intermodal Center in the City of Mount Rainier. This project will improve the City's pedestrian mobility and reduce vehicular traffic within the Mixed Use Town Center (MUTC) and Downtown Business District (DBD).

Many local residents have expressed fears about Washington Gas' proposed construction of a LNG terminal in the neighboring Chillum community. This issue is of great concern to Congressman Van Hollen as it affects the safety and security of many residents in the district. The Congressman believes that authority over the siting of LNG storage facilities should remain a local issue and will continue to work to ensure that local and state governments retain authority over the local issues affecting their residents.

Our office at 3409 Rhode Island Avenue is here to serve you. Whether you need assistance with Social Security and Medicare, Federal employee issues, immigration matters, workers' compensation claims, or other issues related to federal agencies, please feel free to stop by or call.

---

## Mount Rainier Community Watch Group Formed

---

As a result of a community meeting held between the Mount Rainier Police Department and concerned citizens on August 15, 2005, a neighborhood and block watch group was formed called the Mount Rainier Community Watch Group.

The "Mount Rainier Community Watch" group includes both neighborhood watch and block watch groups.

A Board was established with the following officers: Ophelia Baxter – President, Greg Welter – Vice President, Stephen Brundage – Treasurer, Kelly Moser – Co-Secretary, Jennifer Teel – Co-Secretary, and Joe Robbins – Asst. Secretary.

---

## Island Style Cream Parlor Did You Know...

---

*by City Manager Jeannelle Wallace*

*This one the second in a series of articles showcasing the City's fine businesses*

Were you aware that the City of Mount Rainier has its own homemade ice cream parlor? Well it is located at 3829 34th Street, Mount Rainier, Maryland. The proprietor is Pancita Drydson (also known as "P") is from Jamaica and hand makes along with her partner all of the flavors. Ms. Drydson started out with eight (8) flavors and now has 20 including favorites like vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate, as well as specialties like peach, ginger, and banana chip ice cream.

Ms. Drydson also sells chicken and beef patties shipped from New York, as well as various sodas, snacks, and homemade pound cake. Many of you may have bought her delicious cakes at the Mount Rainier Day festival. But her ice cream is also excellent, made from fresh fruit and other organic ingredients (she would not tell her trade secrets!). She actually makes each flavor right in the rear of the shop.

I can tell you, the strawberry was my favorite, as I sampled all 20 flavors! Ms. Drydson has gift certificates available and anyone can purchase by the scoop (cone or cup), pint or gallon. She says business has been good and her experience in Mount Rainier, fantastic. You are really missing a treat if you don't drop by and get a "Taste of the Tropics".

Check the listing on your Bulletin Board on the City's Cable Television Station 71 during the month of September. That is when the taping of my live interview with Ms. Drydson and her partner will air. Go on by and indulge yourself, I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

---

## Free Books and Free Software!

---

Come to the Mount Rainier Public Library, 3409 Rhode Island Avenue (just east of the traffic circle) on Saturday, September 10, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

For more information, go to <http://mtrainierfol.org/>.

### Free Books !!

Friends of Mount Rainier Library (FOL) will be giving away books, including hundreds graciously donated by the former Riverdale Bookstore. We have mysteries, classics, popular novels, nonfiction, and much more. FOL seeks further donations, especially children's books and books in Spanish. Everyone, especially those who may not find everything they want, are strongly encouraged to get a FREE county library card that day and get the rest of their favorite books through the Mount Rainier Public Library for FREE !

### Free Software !!

As a celebration of Software Freedom Day (<http://softwarefreedomday.org/>), FOL (led by Board Member Jeff Elkner), in collaboration with Capital PC User Group (CPCUG, <http://www.cpcug.org/>) and Yorktown High School Library Users Group (YHS-LUG) will be giving away free CDs with Edubuntu Linux for Personal Computers (including those with AMD64 processors) and Macintosh Computers ! There will also be free educational software for Edubuntu and Windows systems that should be of interest to students and teachers!

What is Edubuntu? Edubuntu is an "Ubuntu" version of the Linux operating

system software that is designed especially for classroom use. "Ubuntu" is an ancient African word, meaning "humanity to others." Ubuntu also means "I am what I am because of who we all are." The Ubuntu Linux software is free to the public and, thus, brings the spirit of Ubuntu to all software users. Edubuntu is part of the Ubuntu free software project. Information about Ubuntu is available on the web at <http://www.ubuntu-linux.org/>.

What are the Goals for Edubuntu? As a simpler form of Ubuntu, Edubuntu is specifically designed to help enable teachers with limited time, money, and technical skills to set up computer labs and online learning environments that are amazingly easy to use. Information about Edubuntu is available on the web at <http://www.edubuntu.org/>.

Who is using Edubuntu? Colin Applegate and Jeff Elkner at Yorktown High School in Arlington County, Virginia, are developing and using the first USA prototype of Edubuntu. The Shuttleworth Foundation's tuXlabs are using an early version of Edubuntu called Skubuntu, which is operating in 50 schools of South Africa, with planned expansion to 200 schools by March 2006.

The first major public release of Edubuntu is slated for October 2005 to coincide with the release of Ubuntu version 5.10, code named "Breezy Badger." See: <http://udu.wiki.ubuntu.com/UbuntuDownUnder/BreezyGoals> for more information.

---

## Spotlight Yards of the Month

---

The Beautification Committee of Mount Rainier is pleased to inform you that the winners of the Spotlight Yard of the Month for July are:

*Spotlight Yard of the Month Winners (July)*

- Ward 1—3510 Perry Street
- Ward 2—3117 Perry Street

Let's Keep Mount Rainier Beautiful.

---

## Youth Recreation Programs

---

### Hyattsville-Mount Rainier-Brentwood Boys & Girls Club

The PG County Boys & Girls Club offers boys & girls ages 5-18 opportunities to participate in baseball, basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, and track.

- 301-864-1112; Carrol McLaurin, 301-422-3141; Basketball: Jeffrey Lindsey, 301-559-0602
- [www.pgpc.org/things/pgcbgc/contacts.html](http://www.pgpc.org/things/pgcbgc/contacts.html)

### Boys Scouts Troop 224

Meets in St. Jerome's Church, Hyattsville

- Thursday evenings, 7:30-9 p.m.
- 6th grade through high school
- [users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html](http://users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html)

### Cub Scouts Pack 224

Meets in St. Jerome's Church, Hyattsville

- Tuesday evenings, 7-8 p.m.
- 1st grade through 5th grade
- Ages 6th grade through high school
- [users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html](http://users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html)

### Girl Scouts

- Mount Rainier E.S., Tues., 2 p.m.
- Thomas Stone E.S., Tues., 2 p.m.
- Hyattsville Middle Sch., Fri., 6 p.m.
- Tiffany Lathan, 301-449-5690

### Boys and Girls Club, Northwestern H.S.

- 301-985-1423
- M-F, 3:30 to 8 p.m.

### Joe's Movement Emporium

- After-School Programs
- 3802 34th St., 301-699-1819
- [www.worldartsfocus.org/youth.html](http://www.worldartsfocus.org/youth.html)

### Mount Rainier Nature Center

- 31st and Arundel Rd.
- 301-927-2163; TTY 301-699-2544
- [www.pgpc.org/places/nature/rainier.html](http://www.pgpc.org/places/nature/rainier.html)

The Nature/Recreation Center is a unique facility which operates as both a nature center and a recreation center.

### Nature Club for Kids

Bladensburg Waterfront Park, 4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg. Kids, learn about nature and ecology through games, crafts, stories, and other nature-themed activities. The club meets the first Sat. of each month.

- 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544
- Ages 6-12
- Fee: \$1, Non-Resident \$2

---

## City Meets with Northern Area Representatives from Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

---

by City Manager Jeannelle Wallace

In response to recent citizen concerns about the lack of recreational programs and the need for a community center, the City Manager and Assistant City Manager met with northern area director of M-NCPPC Joe O'Neill, Nature Center Director Kevin Beale, and other representatives of M-NCPPC.

One of the challenges facing Mount Rainier, is that there no "real" community center within the City that sports a basketball court, weight room, etc. In many communities that lack such a facility, there is a middle school or high school that has a gymnasium which can lend support to community athletic activities. Mount Rainier has two elementary that to date have not been asked to support such an effort. Director O'Neill indicated that M-NCPPC would contact Department of Education about pursuing this issue.

Due to the fact that this initial meeting was held during the final days of July, many of the programs for youth were ending or scheduled to end the first week in August. The City's Nature Center sponsors activities related to school science projects as well and other activities primarily for adolescents and pre-teens. Many of the activities for older teens through the age of young adults are offered out of community centers in

nearby jurisdictions like the Town of North Brentwood.

M-NCPPC will provide transportation from these centers for Mount Rainier youth participants, but the City would have to provide transportation for the youth from Mount Rainier to the designated community center. All participants would be required to register and obtain a Smart-Link card for identification purposes. The registration is free of charge.

In response to the feasibility of enlarging the Nature Center to incorporate a gymnasium to house a full basketball court and other activities like exercise classes for the young and older populations, representatives indicated that there is little land available for expansion. The area around the Nature Center is either used for soccer and other outdoor activities or is not owned by M-NCPPC. Director O'Neill did indicate that the City could make a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding request to enlarge the Nature Center at the M-NCPPC budget hearing scheduled for September 20, 2005. Mayor Miles is scheduled to testify at this hearing.

A follow-up meeting was held with M-NCPPC on August 16, 2005 at the parks on 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Wells Avenue.

\$100,000 has been secured to upgrade the park on 30<sup>th</sup> Street. These funds will be available in 2005. Suggestions discussed included improved lighting, repair/replacement of existing fencing, an asphalt play court, bank shot basketball court, and replacement of play equipment. There was much discussion around replacing the existing layout with an asphalt bike/walk trail with fitness stations.

The Commission will make a presentation to the Mayor and Council at it September 13, 2005 work session showing at least two concept designs for this park. Please plan to attend and provide comments.

Another \$175,000 has been allocated to upgrade the park on Wells Avenue. Discussion focused on making the upper tier of the park on 37<sup>th</sup> Street a sitting area and replacing the play equipment. The lower level could be redesigned as a skate park for the younger aged group 5-12 years of age. There is another skate park being designed for Mellwood in Hyattsville, Maryland. The money for this park will not be available until June 2006, so there is still time to develop concept plans for this park. Ideas and suggestions for this area can be explored at the September 13 meeting as well.

---

## City of Mount Rainier Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Schedule

---

**When:** Friday, September 30 through Sunday, October 2, 2005

**Where:** City Hall - Mount Rainier  
For info and to register contact Regina Wardwell by phone at 301-864-7895 or send an e-mail to [rbbe@starpower.net](mailto:rbbe@starpower.net).

• Friday, September 30, 2005  
7:00-9:30 p.m., Unit 1 (Disaster Preparedness 2:30 Jim)

• Saturday, October 1-3, 2005  
8:00-10:30 a.m., Unit 2 (Fire Suppression)  
10:30-1:00 Unit 3 (Disaster Medical 1)  
1:00-1:45 LUNCH  
1:45-4:15 Unit 4 (Disaster Medical 2)  
4:15-5:00 Unit 7 (Critical Incident Stress Management))

• Sunday, October 2, 2005  
8:00-10:30 a.m., Unit 5 (Light Urban Search And Rescue)  
10:45-12:30 Unit 6 (Incident Command System)  
12:30-1:30 LUNCH  
1:30-4:30 Unit 8 (Intro to Terrorism)



## City Attends Community Meeting with Councilmember Will Campos

*City Manager Jeannelle Wallace*

City Councilmember Alta Morton and the City Manager attended Prince George's County Councilman Will Campos' August 9, 2005, quarterly Mayor's Meeting held at the Mount Rainier Elementary School. Mayor Beverly of North Brentwood and Mayor Denny of Brentwood were also in attendance as well as Mount Rainier and Brentwood residents. Also in attendance were representatives from the Prince George's County police and the Department of Environmental Resources to answer pertinent questions. The next quarterly meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 20, 2005.

### Washington Gas Special Exception Request

Council member Campos reported that the Washington Gas property on Chillum Road is still an important matter as Washington Gas has requested a Special Exception to store liquefied gas on this property. At issue is the aging infrastructure on the property where surrounding jurisdictions have complained about smelling gas for several years. It has been reported that several of the leaks have been repaired. On July 28<sup>th</sup> the County Planning Board received a hearing request on this matter. A hearing date has not been scheduled as yet. **Anyone wishing to be a Party of Record on this matter can contact the Council member's office at 301-952-4436.**

### Prince George's County Police Efforts

Council member Campos further reported that the County budget has allocated for 200 more officers to increase patrols in the unincorporated areas and have engaged in a marketing strategy to increase the number of police officers in the County. 21 schools have police resource officers and 19 deputy officers are to donate training for resource officers. Civilian positions have been created to take over the administrative work previously performed by police officers in order to increase the number of police patrols. Council member Campos touched on the Mutual Aid Agreements between municipalities that allows the participating police departments more freedom to help each other in various enforcement efforts. In terms of gang related problems, Council member Campos reported that his office is trying to work on this through the County police and the Boys and Girls Clubs in conjunction with the Archdiocese. Campos planned to meet with Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan to address gang issues.

### CDBG

Campos announced that Community Development Block Grant funding was allocated for Fiscal Year 2006 for the Town of Brentwood (\$88,000), for street repaving, Town of North Brentwood (\$50,000) for the African American Museum, and the City of Mount Rainier (\$120,000) for street, curb and sidewalk repairs.

### Soldier's Memorial Garden

Campos indicated that his office would request \$100,000 to renovate Soldier's Memorial Garden park in Brentwood next year and set aside \$200,000 for the Anacostia Bike Trail.

### Department of Environmental Resources

Representatives from the County's DER office were available to answer questions. The City manager asked about vacant property in the City that had a history of code violations for several years. DER indicated that in certain instances it could declare a property unfit due to certain conditions, e.g., boarded windows, and utilities disconnect. (The City's code enforcement office is currently investigating this with one of the County inspectors.)

In other matters, Campos stated that he spoke with Mount Rainier Mayor Malinda Miles concerning participation in a youth summit to address the lack of activity for these youth in the area.

The Prince George's County police department answered questions from the audience pertaining to slow response time or no response from the department when calls for service were made.

**WHENEVER ONE CALLS FOR POLICE SERVICE AND AN OFFICER DOES NOT RESPOND, CALLERS SHOULD CALL AGAIN AND INFORM THE DISPATCHER THAT THEY WISH TO SPEAK TO THE SUPERVISOR ON DUTY. NORMALLY, THERE ARE TWO (2) SERGEANTS AND ONE (1) LIEUTENANT ON DUTY ON A SHIFT.**

## Public Notice Concerning WSSC Project Activity

Contract No. BR3805A04--Mt. Rainier  
Beginning Aug. 2005, ending Nov. 2005  
Area of Work:

- Otis Street from Rhode Island Avenue to Wells Avenue
  - 36<sup>th</sup> Street from Perry Street to Otis Street
- Work to be performed: Water main construction

Contractor: Sagres Construction.

Completion of the entire project is estimated to be about November 15, subject to weather conditions.

Questions regarding this project and its progress may be directed to our field inspector, Spencer Washington at the site or Larry Johnson at 301-206-4243 or 800-828-

6439, x4243, weekdays from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Every effort will be made to restore any disturbed areas as near practical to their original condition.

Your cooperation and understanding is much appreciated.

**Mayor, continued from page 1**

to work for them in lobbying for their priorities. As a result, many of them have been able to increase their revenue sources that would have otherwise been unavailable to them. No decision has been made on this, but the Mayor and Council will be meeting with Steve Proctor and Cheryl Harrington at one of its September meetings.

4. **Recreation, employment, and our youth.** This continues to be a major issue for the Mayor and Council even though funds were appropriated in the last round of budget development last fiscal year. There is no easy solution to this long standing problem. During budget deliberations, the Mayor and Council voted to set aside \$30,000 for recreation, employment and our youth in this fiscal year's budget. At a Council meeting in July, I proposed that \$5,000 of that money be used to employ some of our youth to paint curbs and do other odd jobs around the City, but to not try to spend the remaining \$25,000 for these activities until spring of next year. The rationale for this decision is that 1) our budget is a "paper" budget, and 2) during this period (May through September) the City has a serious cash flow problem and must draw down on its line of credit just to pay staff and keep the City functioning. In my opinion, it would have been an unwise decision to spend money for these activities while being unable to pay staff and/or critical City vendors. In addition, the spring date provides the City with time to carefully plan viable activities, seek additional matching funds, and engage someone with the necessary expertise to develop and implement a viable youth program.
5. **The Mayor and Council have also started looking toward the next financial audit.** Based on a review of our financial records, I believe that the City's financial books and supporting documentation is in better order than it has ever been.

Because of the work of Mr. Vijay Manjani, the last financial audit was done without a lot of the work being done by the auditor. The current expectation is that the next audit will be awarded in September and completed prior to the close of business on December 31, 2005. Thereafter, the City's financial audits should be started and completed in a timely manner. The Mayor and Council have also decided to retain our current auditors for this fiscal year in order to maintain stability in the audit process.

6. **Major construction problems with Artspace, Police Station, Bunker Hill Fire Station and City Hall.** Over the past few years, the City has been faced with the issue of addressing major construction problems with newly constructed buildings. These problems have resulted in the issuance of temporary Use and Occupancy permits that have expired.
- a) *City Hall.* In the past year, City Hall's lower chambers have been flooded and resulted in large repair bills (some damages were covered by insurance, but most were not). If you have wondered why Council Chambers were moved upstairs, the flooding of the lower chambers was a great incentive. Work is being done to correct the flooding and to install larger sump pumps. The roof has also required repair, and the front door is being replaced. Another major problem is that of little or no storage space for City records. This problem is not the fault of the contractors, but the design of the building. In addition, the City has spent limited funds over the years in maintenance and upkeep of this facility.
- b) *Police Station.* This building has not passed inspection, and does not meet the County's standards for issuing a U&O. The City is working to correct the many violations on this building, however, the building is more

than two years old and many of the problems identified should have been corrected by the contractor prior to the City signing off on the contract. As I am sure you know, each phase of the work on new construction should be reviewed, evaluated and signed off on by a County building inspector. According to our records, each phase of the work was signed off on in its current incomplete state, and now it is up to the City to follow up with the County to get the corrections made and the U&O issued.

- c) *Bunker Hill Fire Station.* This is a County building that has never had a grand opening because it too has not been able to get a U&O because of the many problems that exist in the construction of the building.
- d) *Artspace.* If you were watching or in attendance at the July Council meeting, I am sure you heard the horror stories told by the new residents of Artspace. Many of the corrections are being made, but others are still under discussion. It is also a building that was inspected by the County's housing inspectors.

From a surface view of the many problems in each of these buildings, there seems to be a pattern of incomplete and unacceptable work being approved by County that later comes back to haunt the City or occupants of the buildings. The problems are major enough to warrant the County issuing only temporary U & O's. One would think that the County would insure that its use and occupancy requirements are met by its contractors prior to signing off on its contracts. In three of the above buildings, this did not happen, and now the City is seeking to prevail upon the County to come back and correct the deficiencies.

The City Manager, at the request of the Mayor and Council has written a letter to the appropriate County authorities to seek redress of these issues,

and will stay on top of these issues until full redress has been accomplished.

7. **Police Union Contract Negotiations.** The City Manager and the Chief of Police have received an initial proposal from the Police Union for upcoming negotiations. This is a long process and in light of the recent turnovers, and intensified recruitment of County police officers, this process will be even longer. The City is looking at ways to increase salaries, and benefits for our officers, but recognize that there is a limit to the amount of money available for staff and services. A major problem for the City is the recruitment and retention of officers. Mount Rainier, like most municipalities compete for officers with the County and larger more financially wealthier cities. As a result, the City finds itself in a catch twenty-two—we recruit, pay for training, and provide experience for new officers entering police work. Once the experience level is obtained, these officers move on to better paying jobs with better benefits, always leaving us with the job of recruiting. The Mayor and Council will be addressing this issue during the next few months, and will be seeking ways to work with other municipalities that are having the exact same problems with their recruitment and retention of their police officers. Mount Rainier is currently one of three/four cities with police unions.
8. **The Cable Commission** started meeting in late June and are looking at ways to increase the use of our cable channel. As the City continues to enhance its image, it is important to keep the citizenry informed of activities and events in the City. In addition, with the fast rise of new cable and internet services, it is important that the City has a voice in decisions that are being made in this industry. Currently the City holds a franchise with Comcast Cable that provides almost \$65,000 to our revenue. Some of this money goes into our general revenue funds while other money is restricted to the

purchase of equipment and other cable needs specified in the franchise agreement. The \$65,000 revenue to the City comes from the number of subscribers using cable services. The more users of Comcast Cable services the larger the increase in revenue to the City. In the past few weeks, Verizon has been attempting to carve an inroad into this area to provide cable services and more, however, Verizon does not want to enter into any franchise agreements with the municipalities. If allowed to do this, Comcast would no longer have to honor its franchise agreement because the proposed new law would require that they get the same deal given to Verizon. PGCMA and its members believe that Verizon should have to follow the same rules and regulations as Comcast, and that municipalities should have a voice in the way Verizon or any future similar service is made available to our constituents, and that their should be some compensation to the municipalities. Currently, municipalities have “no” say in telephone decisions, and Verizon is proposing the same for cable. Should this proposed legislation be passed by Congress, the City would almost immediately lose more than \$65,000 in its budget with no replacement. This bill is on a fast track in Congress and you are encouraged to contact your congressional representative to ask him to oppose this bill. This bill is being supported by Congressman Albert Wynn, but it is not good or friendly to municipalities.

9. **Prince George’s County Fair** will be hosted at the Equestrian Center September 8-11, 2005. The Prince George’s County Fair began in 1842 as a friendly gathering for local farmers to showcase their produce and livestock and have a little fun. Prince George’s County has the distinction of being the oldest running fair in Maryland! Though it started out as mostly livestock and field crops, eventually it came to include women’s arts as well, with competitions for the best jams, jellies,

canned goods, pies, breads, cookies, clothing, quilts, and handicrafts. It was (and is) quite an honor to be deemed the best in the County! The Fair has seen its share of difficulties and has sometimes struggled to survive. This is where **you** come in—the Fair simply cannot do without you! We need you to come visit, bring your family and friends, have a good time, maybe enter something in the Open Class competition, and most importantly come back year after year! Fair Entrance fees are \$5 for adults 18 and older; \$4 for children ages 6 to 17 and free for 5 and under. Day ride wristlets are \$17. Hours are 9/10 4 to 10 p.m. (senior day); 9/9 5 p.m. to 12 a.m.; 9/10 11 a.m. to 12 a.m.; and 9/11 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

10. **CSAFE Grant. The City has again been approved for the CSAFE Grant. This grant given to the City’s Police Department provides for Victim Services - \$8,150, personnel - \$7,000, contract service - \$780, and operating - \$370; Community Policing - \$15,328 for all overtime; Coordination - \$22,300, personnel - \$20,200; contract service - \$1,100, other - \$500; Youth Prevention (After School) - \$23,615, personnel - \$22,250, operating - \$1,050, and equipment - \$500. Our CSAFE Coordinator is Ms. Monica Slade. You can reach Monica at 301-985-6580.**
11. **Security Cameras.** A few years ago, the City partnering with the Mount Rainier’s Business Association and working through the Gateway CDC secured a grant for security cameras. During the past few months, the cameras have been received, installed or in the process of being installed. In phase one of this process, MRBA provided a \$12,840 for the cameras and the County provided the remaining \$13,000 for the three cameras (one on Varnum and two on Rhode Island Avenue). The City is responsible for budgeting \$3,000 each year for the upkeep and maintenance of the cameras.

**Mayor, continued on page 8**

**Mayor, continued from page 7**

Through the visit of Lt. Governor Steele, Chief Keeney learned of some additional money that could be used for phase two of the City's security cameras process. Through his efforts, the City secured an additional \$26,000 for the purchase of three or four additional cameras that will strengthen our surveillance of the City's criminal activity and hopefully reduce petty and other crime activity in the City.

**12. Mount Rainier Police Department.**

There has been a lot of unrest in the Police Department over the past few months. Much of the unrest has been between members of the Mayor and Council and the Police Union. In my sincere opinion, the unrest is more of an issue of communication, respect, trust, and a willingness to adhere to a chain of command for processing complaints, information, and reporting to the Mayor and Council. It has been my personal observation that the Mayor and Council are provided only positive information about activities in the Police Department. Complaints and other information are not shared at any level, and there appear to be a consensus that that is all the information Mayor and Council needs, however, Mayor and Council is obligated to pay any cost incurred by the police department for hearings, investigations, lawyer fees, lost time and wages, etc. in addition to salaries and benefits. The Mayor and Council are divided on this issue, and the Police Union has not come before the Mayor and Council to have a discussion on this matter. Over the next few weeks, efforts will be made to create a dialogue with the Police Union, and set policy regarding communication needs between the Police Department, Mayor and Council, and the Police Union.

**Chief Keeney Host Community/Police Relations Meeting.** On July 18, Chief Keeney hosted a very challenging and rewarding community relations forum at the Police Department. The forum was well attended but did not

reflect the number of residents in the City or very many of those who perceive the Police relations with the community as troublesome. Two outside facilitators were brought in to host the meeting, and they were able to generate a healthy dialogue about the current state of affairs in the City with constituents and the police department. Some of the issues discussed included a need to see more police officers on foot or bike patrol, gang related issues, communication and community interaction in our diverse communities, professionalism and sensitivity to different cultures (e.g., Black, White and Gay Relations) not uniform, lack of community awareness of police processes and services, consistent police services/mutual respect and trust, police community expectations need to be identified, etc. There was also positive feedback from the participants which included recognition of the overall improvement of the police department in reducing and addressing serious crime, recognition of individual excellence by officers, increased outreach by police department, improvement of police professionalism and attitudes, and increased two-way communication between police and the community. It was emphasized that this meeting was just the tip of the iceberg for creating a dialogue and action plan. It left participants with the question of where do we want to go from here. Stay tuned; I am sure there will be follow up meetings to continue discussing relationships in the City.

**13. Reports from Committees/Departments.** One effort being made to create better communication between all levels of City government is to receive monthly reports from each department and City appointed committees. Effective September 1, all departments and committees will be notified of this change in policy, and requested to make reports to the Mayor and Council, either in writing or in person (preferred method). In addition, meetings of committees will be recorded and/or televised live on our cable Channel 71. I believe these changes will open up dialogue, provide more timely information,

and meet the requirements of Maryland's Open Meeting law.

**14. 3409 Rhode Island Avenue (Old City Hall and Police building, and current City Library).** At least three forums have been held to discuss future use of this building. At the last meeting, three drawings were provided for review and discussion. The Friends of the Library and others attended the subsequent public hearing on the drawings, and made some fairly solid recommendations for better use of the footprint (current building size) in a new facility. At this juncture, the Mayor and Council is in the process of selecting the best possible rendering to develop a proposal around to request community legacy funds for a feasibility and environmental study. This decision will be made rather quickly in order to be included in this year's Community Legacy Proposal. Most of the initial leg work on this project has been done by Ms. Jan Townshend of the Neighborhood Design Center. Councilmember Bryan Knedler has been spearheading this project and comments and questions should be directed to his attention as we move forward. At this point in the process, the City is not allocating any funds for a library, however, we are looking at best possible use of that facility, and how it could be developed to provide a new revenue stream for the City. This is an area in which the City Lobbyist would be able to champion the City's need for funding from County, State and Federal funding sources as well as any private funders that might be out there.

**15. Liquor Board to Appeal Circuit Court's Bass Liquor Decision.** This is not an effort to over rule the closing of Bass Liquors. It is an effort to clarify/appeal a portion of the Court's decision with regard to the testimony of the officers in the case. Because of its low level impact on the outcome of the decision, the City has decided to become a party of records and go in with the Liquor Board on its appeal to the Circuit Court. This



is a minimal cost to the City, and will help to keep the City in the loop of any decisions that are being made on this subject matter.

**Class D Licenses.** In addition to the appeal issue listed above, the City is requesting information from the Liquor Board about Class D licenses that are issued to businesses without requiring them to serve food. This is a very important issue for the City to avoid having just bars open up in the City. It is the intent of the Mayor and Council to support the opening of good restaurants and cafes that are allowed to serve on site liquor, but to restrict single and off site sales. To address this issue, the Mayor and Council has sent a letter to the Liquor Board addressing our concerns and seeking clarification and support.

16. **Annexation.** The City has remained the same size for many years, and has attempted different annexations over those years with little or no results while Hyattsville has successfully annexed several properties to increase its taxable base. During the coming months, Mayor and Council along with City Staff James Booth will actively develop and annexation strategy for expanding the City's borders and tax base. Of primary interest are the businesses along the west side of Queens Chapel Road and along Chillum Road. Preliminary exploration is underway and will become a major thrust for the Mayor and Council in the coming months.

17. **Development of the South Side of Rhode Island Avenue.** Some preliminary discussions have occurred about the development of this area. The Mayor and Council will be moving forward with these discussions over the next few months. It is anticipated that meetings will be held with the Prince George's County Housing Authority, the three owners (Larry Solomon, the Bass family, and Samuel Reynolds) of the properties. The purpose of the discussions will center on future use and development of the properties as well as the City's interest in helping to redevelop

the properties. A number of developers as well as the owners have indicated an interest and willingness to move forward with the development of these properties.

18. **Community Tool Shed and 34<sup>th</sup> Street.** Earlier this year, the City was awarded \$75,000 for streetscape and other enhancement on 34<sup>th</sup> Street (\$58,000) and for the Community Tool Shed (\$17,000). Mayor and Council are discussing implementation strategies, and would appreciate input from the public. One of the items that is under consideration is the replacement of the kiosk for posting notices of City activities; another item is the type of lighting system to put on 34<sup>th</sup> Street that would enhance the area while also increasing the lighting. The Community Tool Shed needs electrical work, plumbing, a complete paint job on the outside and inside, and some renovation work on the inside to make the building more conducive for City programs and services. If you would like to look at the specifics of this project, please contact James Booth at City Hall.
19. **Streets, Curbs, and Gutters.** In a recent public announcement County Executive Jack Johnson indicated that there would be \$1 million available to cities and town for streets, curbs and gutters. A few weeks ago, I sent out an email asking for your help in identifying streets, curbs and gutters that require attention. Several of you responded, and I appreciate your input. Your streets are being included in the list that must be provided to the County Executive by August 31. If you know of streets, curbs or gutters that require attention please continue to send them in.
20. **The Message (the City's Newsletter).** Over the past few months, there has been a lot of discussion regarding the timely distribution of the *Message* and other form of communication to constituents. As a possible way of producing a more meaningful and timely document, I am proposing that the City create a newsletter

board with responsibility for generating news worthy items for inclusion in the *Message*, working with the City Manager and the editor to get the *Message* to print and to residents in a timely manner, and to ensure that the *Message* is reaching all constituents. To date, I have received volunteer information from Mrs. Melissa Barringer and Mr. Houkje Ross, both have interest and experience in newsletters development. With their help, we hope to improve our delivery of information via the *Message*.

**Community Listserv.** Another area of information sharing has also been revised and is ongoing. It is the listserv hosted by Joe Robbins who aptly noticed how long it takes to get information out to residents. He has revised a solution that was put into affect a few years ago by Councilmember Bryan Knedler, the Mount Rainier Yahoo Group. Yahoo email addresses and groups are free. If you do not have an email account (or even if you do) you can create one at [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com). You can also join the Mount Rainier Yahoo Group by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MountRainierMD/> and clicking on the "join this group" button or you may contact Joe at [robbins629@msn.com](mailto:robbins629@msn.com). We would like to make this a main source of information for residents since it is one of the fastest ways to get information out.

**Mount Rainier Website.** Another source of information about news in the City as well as a wealth of other information is the City's own website. If you haven't visited it recently, I encourage you to do so. It will continue to improve and grow as our webmaster takes on the awesome job of keeping it up to date with timely and useful information.

**Channel 71.** If you subscribe to Comcast Cable, you can also get up-to-date information about activities in Mount Rainier on Channel 71. You may also post information on this channel. If you are a frequent visitor to channel 71, please note that we have added background music to make your viewing more pleasant. Stay tuned, the Cable Commission is working on ways to better use this  
**Mayor, continued on page 10**

**Mayor, continued from page 9**

channel for community news and updates.

21. **Maryland and the District of Columbia Partner to Enforce Drunk Driving laws.** Mount Rainier Police Department, along with neighboring police departments (Hyattsville, Riverdale, Bladensburg and Riverdale) and the Washington Metropolitan Police Department conducted simultaneous DWI enforcement and educational checkpoints on Rhode Island Avenue on Friday evening, July 22 from 8:00 pm until 3am. Maryland's checkpoint was conducted on the south bound lanes of Rhode Island Avenue (Route 1) at Thrifty, and Washington Metropolitan Police Department conducted their checkpoint at Sonny's in the northbound lanes of Rhode Island Avenue (Route 1). This effort was funded through a grant from the Maryland Highway Safety Office. This was the first coordinated drunk driving enforcement effort by these jurisdictions which was an absolute success and will be repeated at a future date.
22. **New Memorial Park to be built at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Arundel Road.** Councilman Will Campos has allocated \$200,000 for the creation of a memorial park to be designed by Jan Townshend of the Neighborhood Design Center. Work on the Park will begin in the next few months and will be welcomed addition to that corner. The design for the park was reviewed by the Mayor and Council in July. It will provide a small arena with seats and lots of shrubbery. The park is a tribute to minority women from all over the area and specifically here in Mount Rainier.
23. **\$3,800 for our Neighborhood Watch Program.** Obie Pinckney on behalf of the County Executive presented the City with a check for \$3,800; however, it is only a check and has no magical or mystical powers. To make neighborhood watch a critical part of the City's safety and defense mecha-

nism it is important that residents sign up and become active members of the City's Neighborhood Watch Program. The \$3,800 is for purchasing t-shirts, caps and other items to be used with the Neighborhood Watch Program. On August 15, Chief Keeney held a Neighborhood Watch meeting, if you were out of town or unable to attend this meeting, please contact the Police Department to sign up. You and your neighbors are the best defense against crime. With your involvement, our Police Department would have more than 4000 members working together to keep our neighborhoods safe. Block Captains are needed, home bodies are needed, noisy neighbors are needed, homemakers are needed, and our youth are needed to make our neighborhood block watch program a success. Get involved today. Get out and meet your neighbors. Join the Watch Program by registering your car with our Police Department and get a free club for your steering wheel.

24. **Mount Rainier is part of Byrne Memorial Grant.** Maryland Governor Ehrlich awarded a BYRNE Memorial Grant to the Hyattsville City Police Department on Wednesday, August 3, 2005. The \$294,792 grant will be used to complete the first phase of a project to establish radio and data sharing among the police departments of Bladensburg, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Mount Rainier and Riverdale Park, as well as the Prince George's County Police Department.
25. **Public Hearing.** The Prince George's County Council and Planning Board invite you to attend a JOINT PUBLIC HEARING on the PRELIMINARY TRANSIT DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PROPOSED SECTIONAL MAP AMENDMENT FOR THE WEST HYATTSVILLE TRANSIT DISTRICT OVERLAY ZONE on **Tuesday, September 27, 2005 - 7:00 p.m.** First Floor Council Hearing Room, County Administration

Building (14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro)

The transit district development plan area encompasses the West Hyattsville Transit District. The public hearing is part of a process leading to the approval of a new transit district development plan (TDDP) and sectional map amendment, which will amend the 1998 West Hyattsville Approved Transit District Development Plan and the 2002 Prince George's County Approved General Plan.

The hearing is important to Mount Rainier because the plan establishes policies, which will help define the type, amount, character and location of future development in this area. Proposed zoning changes are identified in the Sectional Map Amendment portion of the plan document.

For additional information or copies of the plan, call the M-NCPPC Community Planning Division at 301-952-3972.

## **Announcements**

**GRAND OPENING OF NEW GROCERY STORE, ALDI.** Thursday, August 18, 9:00 a.m. 3025 Hamilton Street ALDI's store will give away approximately 500 gift baskets to customers. In addition, check your mail for the ALDI coupon that takes \$5 off any \$25 or more purchase August 18-20 and \$10 off \$40 or more purchase August 22-27.

**Mount Elementary School has a new principal.** Her name is Ms. Janet (Jan) Reed. She is already on the job and getting ready for the new school year. Join with me in welcoming Jan to our community by calling 301-985-1810 or dropping by the school.

**Alan Binstock's Art Exhibit** on display at the University of Maryland University College. It was my pleasure to attend an all day retreat at the University of Maryland Conference Center and to see Alan's work on display there. I could not help telling everyone that Alan lives in Mount Rainier. The display will be there until October 2, 2005.

**City Offices Closed.** Mount Rainier's City Administrative Offices will be CLOSED on Monday, September 5, 2005 in observance of Labor Day.

**Council Meetings**

**1st and 3rd Tues., 7 p.m., City Hall lower level**

**Beautification Committee—3rd Mon., 7:00 p.m., City Hall**

**Cable Commission—2nd and 4th Fri., 7:00 p.m., City Hall**

**Friends of Library (mtrainierfol.org)—Mon., 7:30 p.m., Community Vision, 34th St.**

**Gateway Municipalities CDC—2nd Thurs., 7:00–9:00 p.m., 4102 Webster St.**

**MRBA—2nd Weds., 6:30 p.m., Mount Rainier Police Station**

**Tool Shed Committee—2nd Mon., 7:00 p.m., City Hall**

**MUTC Town Center Design Review Committee—2nd Weds., 6:15 p.m., City Hall**

**Design Review Board—3rd Weds., 7:00 p.m., City Hall**

**Tree Commission—2nd Thurs., 7:00 p.m., City Hall**

*Note: The above Committees are scheduled to meet according to the above schedule. Please check the City’s website or contact City Hall to verify if a meeting is being held on a particular date. Meeting notices are posted at City Hall prior to the scheduled meeting.*

# September–October calendar

Every Monday is yard waste day. No appointments necessary. Please have all bulk trash out by 7:00 a.m. on bulk trash day and all appointments made before 12 noon on the Friday preceding bulk trash day.

September 2	Recyclables Pick Up
September 6	Bulk Trash (by appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up  Mayor and Council Meeting 7:00 pm Council Chambers, Upper Level City Hall
September 7	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 9	Recyclables Pick Up
September 12	Yard Waste Pick Up
September 13	Mayor and Council Work Session - Special Presentation by Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the upgrade of City Parks on 30th Street and Wells Avenue, 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers, Upper Level City Hall
September 14	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 16	Recyclables Pick Up
September 19	Bulk Trash (by appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up
September 20	Will Campos Quarterly Mayor’s Meeting  Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Planning Board Budget Hearing 6600 Kenilworth Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium
September 21	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 23	Recyclables Pick Up
September 26	Yard Waste Pick Up
September 28	Regular Trash Pick Up
September 30	Recyclables Pick Up

October 3	Bulk Trash (by appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up
October 5	Regular Trash Pick Up
October 7	Recyclables Pick Up
October 11	Yard Waste Pick Up
October 12	Regular Trash Pick Up
October 15	The Mount Rainier Beautification Committee will host a Garden Tour—time and start location TBD. This tour will feature several of our ‘Spotlight Yard of the Month’ winners, along with other select Mount Rainier gardens.
October 14	Recyclables Pick Up
October 17	Bulk Trash (by appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up
October 19	Regular Trash Pick Up
October 21	Recyclables Pick Up
October 24	Yard Waste Pick Up
October 26	Regular Trash Pick Up
October 28	Recyclables Pick Up
October 31	Yard Waste Pick Up

www.mountrainiermd.org

*Mayor*

**Malinda Miles**  
301-699-1378

mayormiles@malindamiles.com

*City Manager*

**Jeannelle B. Wallace**  
301-985-6585, ext. 22  
fax: 301-985-6595

jwallace@mountrainiermd.org

*Asst. City Manager*

**James Booth**  
301-985-6585

fax: 301-985-6595

jbooth@mountrainiermd.org

*Councilmembers*

*Ward 1*

**Carol Gandee**  
301-277-6377

gandydncr@aol.com

**Alta Morton**  
202-309-5455

altaward1@hotmail.com

*Ward 2*

**Pedro Briones**  
301-277-1833

PBriones@mountrainiermd.org

**Bryan Knedler**  
301-699-3134

bknedler@mountrainiermd.org

*Message*

**Terry Kelly**

tkelly60@aol.com

## Important Numbers

City Hall open: Mon.-Fri., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Police Department admin. offices open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Public Works open 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

47th District Reps  
301-858-3745

Sen. Gwendolyn Britt  
301-858-3326

Del. Doyle Niemann  
Del. Rosetta Parker  
Del. Victor Ramirez

Call-A-Bus 301-985-6586  
(hours M-F, 9 am-2 pm)

City Code Enforcement Office  
301-985-6551

City Hall  
301-985-6585; fax: 301-985-6595

**City Police Department**  
FKeeney@mountrainiermd.org  
301-985-6565 (emergency calls)  
301-985-6566 (nonemergency calls)  
301-985-6590 (administrative)

City Public Works 301-985-6583,  
Bulk Trash Appts. 301-985-6558

Child Abuse  
and Neglect Hotline  
301-699-8605

Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Mount

Rainier Office Information:

3409 Rhode Island Avenue  
301-927-5223 (voice)  
301-927-6122 (fax)

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Consumer Affairs  
301-470-7534

County Animal Control  
301-499-8301

County Building Permits  
301-883-5784

County Executive  
Jack Johnson  
301-952-4131

County Councilman  
Will Campos  
301-952-4436

Energy Assistance  
301-422-5110

Family Services  
301-699-2680

Fire Department  
301-985-5406 (non-emergency)  
911 (emergency)

Gateway CDC  
4102 Webster Street  
301-864-3860

Gazette Circulation  
301-670-7350

Health Department  
301-386-0300

Library 301-864-8937  
Hours: M-W 10-6:30 (closed 2-2:30)  
Sat. 10-5

Landlord-Tenant Commission  
800-487-6007

Mt. Rainier Nature/Rec Center  
4701 31st Place  
301-927-2163

M-National Capital  
Park and Planning,  
Park Permit Office  
301-918-8111

North Brentwood Comm. Ctr  
4012 Webster St.  
301-864-0756

Office of Handicapped Services  
TDD 301-627-3352

Park Police  
301-459-3232 (emergency)  
301-459-9088 (non-emergency)

Parks and Recreation  
301-699-2407

Pepco  
*Lights Out*  
1-877-737-2662  
(you must give the 10-digit phone number  
or 10-digit account number for location of  
outage)

*Live Wire, Other Emergency*  
202-872-3432

Post Office  
301-864-5168

Public Defender  
301-699-2760

Public Schools  
301-952-6000

State's Attorney  
301-952-3500

Washington Gas Light  
703-750-2500

WSSC  
301-206-8000  
301-206-4002 (emergency)

The City of Mount Rainier is an equal opportunity employer, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability, political or union affiliation.

Postal Customer  
Mount Rainier, MD 20712

September 2005 Message  
City of Mount Rainier  
One Municipal Place  
Mount Rainier, MD 20712

Pre-sorted  
Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 171