



CITY OF BLUE ASH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER WINTER 2012

A Newsletter Published by
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Airport Park Plan Accepted

Blue Ash City Council has accepted a draft plan for the new park to be developed at the Blue Ash Airport. The plan calls for large community gathering spaces, walking/running trails, multipurpose pavilion, seasonal ice rink, and several dining options. Construction is expected to begin late 2012.

Extensive public input was a part of the process which will create a signature park that will serve Blue Ash for generations to come.

"We are creating the park Blue Ash residents asked for via an extensive public input process," said Mayor Mark Weber. "There were dozens of stakeholder meetings, open houses, and community display booths, as well as over 1,500 surveys completed as part of this process. The City worked very hard to make sure we are providing the amenities that make the most sense for our community based on this input."

The first phase of developing the park will consist of installing walking/running trails, infrastructure improvements (such as water, sewer, utilities, and roadways), and site work to prepare for additional park development. When complete, the park will have nearly 4.5 miles of trails. The trails will likely be the first amenity that the public will be able to access. It is expected that the first phase will be started in late 2012 and will take 12-18 months.

"It is important to us to provide access to the park for Blue Ash residents as soon as possible," said Weber. "By starting the trails first, we will be able to open some of the park for public use while other development is taking place there."

The second phase of development is slated to begin sometime in 2014.

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Cooper Creek to Open in January 2012

Construction of the Cooper Creek Event Center has entered the final phase. Crews are putting the final cosmetic touches on the exterior of the building. Inside, workers are finishing construction and adding the finish carpentry work.



While heavy snow last winter and an abnormally rainy spring have presented challenges to the construction schedule, Cooper Creek Event Center is on pace to hold its first event in early January.

To date, Cooper Creek has scheduled more than 35 events including weddings and several corporate and social events. The City will offer two resident and two corporate "preview" nights prior to the Grand Opening celebration in April 2012. Additionally, the City is partnering with WGRR to host a Mardi Gras Party on February 18, 2012, and WMKV to host a dance featuring big band music on March 22, 2012.

Experience the "new look, new feel" of the Cooper Creek Event Center and Blue Ash Golf Course Clubhouse.

For more information about Cooper Creek Event Center, or to contact us about an upcoming event, call (513) 745-8596 or visit www.coopercreekblueash.com.

Airport Park Plan Accepted (continued from page 1)

During that time, a multipurpose pavilion, entryways, gardens, playgrounds, observation tower, and a sledding hill will be built. Restaurants and bistros also will be developed during this phase but exact timing, number, and selections have not yet been finalized.

Future phases of construction and amenities will likely occur in 2016 and beyond depending on funding, future demand, and other research. Future ideas include a Performing Arts Center, a family-friendly golf training facility, a dog park, and Extreme Sports areas that could feature a zipline course and an Action Adventure area.

“This park will not only serve a variety of interests for our community, it also will be a destination on a daily basis, all year long,” said Weber. “In addition, we also have the ability to expand and adapt the park for future needs,” Weber added.

Building a park at the airport site became a reality when voters approved Issue 15. Issue 15 generated additional revenue used to fund the purchase of the land and development of the

park. The funds are also being used to build the new Cooper Creek Event Center and for improvements at Blue Ash Golf Course, in addition to the now complete renovation of the Recreation Center.

The City of Blue Ash is currently surveying residents on potential names for the new park. Those prospective names include: Blue Ash Park, Crossroads Park of Blue Ash, Blue Ash Central Park, Watson’s Aviation Park, Blue Ash Airport Park, Blue Ash Summit Park, Landings Regional Park in Blue Ash, Blue Ash Legacy Park, and Blue Ash Generations Park. To view the survey, read an explanation for these names, vote for your favorite or suggest an alternative, please access the survey at www.blueash.com by January 15, 2012. It is anticipated that a follow-up survey with the top three choices will be available in February 2012.



The park will feature large community gathering spaces, walking/running trails, multipurpose pavilion, seasonal ice rink, and several dining options.



Citizen Input Drives Park Plan

Planning efforts for the new park at Blue Ash Airport centered on an extensive public input process. During the process, planners conducted dozens of stakeholder meetings involving residents, corporate citizens, and special interest groups. Blue Ash also hosted open houses and community display booths. In total, more than 1,500 surveys about the park were collected.

Citizens were asked about specific park amenities and how they would likely use the park. They were also queried about specific retail and dining options that have been considered for the park.

Other planning efforts included a site inventory and analysis, which incorporated a review of access to the park, existing physical conditions, current infrastructure, sight lines and view corridors, as well as a park comparison matrix. Planners also performed a regional market/need assessment. Utilizing citizen input, survey data, and a review of regional park facilities, planners set out to determine the need for and success of proposed amenities.

“City Council and staff, working with our park planning consultants, did a great job of developing a plan that provides a lot of great amenities for our residents,” said City Manager David Waltz. “This will be a great gathering place for our community and a place that families and visitors will enjoy for generations.”

Airport Park Amenity Overview

- 4.5 miles of walking/running trails
- Entryway features
- Roundabout with park identity sculpture
- Park commons
- Event pavilion
- Multipurpose facility
- Seasonal ice skating rink
- Farmers’ market
- Contemporary play area
- Picnic area
- Terraced lawn
- Restaurants and bistros
- Lawn games
- Community health/fitness programming
- Great lawn
- Observation tower
- Plaza/stage
- Restrooms
- Seasonal sledding hill
- Shelter
- Pond/stream enhancements
- Community gardens
- Access drives and parking

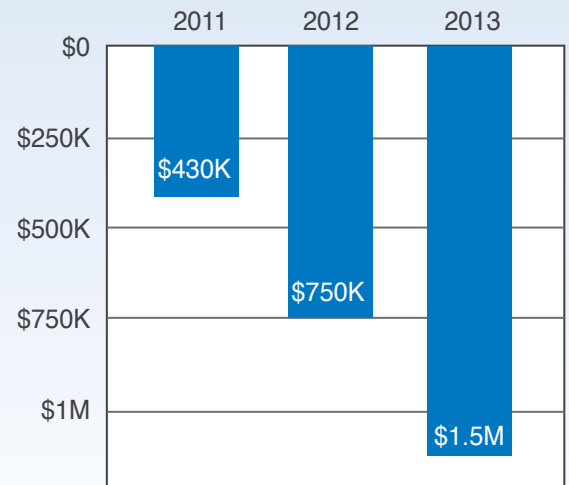
State Cuts Affect Blue Ash

Municipalities throughout Ohio, and most of the United States, continue to battle budget restraints due to the economic realities we face today. Blue Ash has managed to weather the storm so far, but new challenges are forcing the City to remain vigilant on budget issues.

The State's new budget is placing additional stress on municipal budgets throughout Ohio. The acceleration of the phase out of Ohio's Tangible Personal Property Tax (TPPT) cut about \$430,000 from revenues this year. Next year, the combined TPPT cuts and reductions to the State's Local Government Fund will bring a reduction of about \$750,000 to our 2012 revenue. In 2013, the Estate Tax, of which Blue Ash generally collects \$500,000 - \$800,000 annually, will be eliminated. After the completion of the State cuts, combined annualized loss of revenue will be between \$1.5M - \$1.8M. The cumulative effect of these cuts is a 2.5% decrease in total revenue each year for the next three years.

Blue Ash continues to make operational adjustments to keep expenditures flat while allowing for the same level of capital improvements as we have in the past. While the challenges will continue for several years in the future, the City remains well positioned to maintain the level of service expected by our community.

Reductions in State Funding



Effects of State reduction of Local Government Fund and elimination of the Estate Tax and Tangible Personal Property Tax Reimbursement.

BAFD Recognized, Wins Grant

Recently the Blue Ash Fire Department has been honored with two awards. BAFD was recognized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. This award was presented for special contribution to the advancement of fire protection. The Ohio City Management Association has recognized the Northeast Fire Collaborative (NEFC) with its Intergovernmental Cooperation Award. The NEFC is made up of departments from Blue Ash, Loveland-Symmes, Sharonville, Mason, and Sycamore Township. The NEFC serves more than 105,000 residents in the region.



In other BAFD news, the Blue Ash Fire Department was awarded a \$10,247 grant for a fire extinguisher training system. The grant, which was written by Assistant Chief Chris Theders, was provided by the Firehouse Subs Foundation. The new live-fire extinguisher training system provides many advantages over conventional burn pans because it eliminates the need to discharge and recharge costly dry-chemical or CO₂ extinguishers. Additionally, it is more environmentally friendly.

Special thanks go out to Chad Whitaker, franchise owner of the Blue Ash Firehouse Subs location, for his support of our department.

Osborne Blvd. Development in Full Swing

itelligence Inc., Duke Realty Corporation, and the City of Blue Ash have partnered to develop a new commercial center at Osborne Boulevard and Reed Hartman Highway. itelligence's new headquarters building and data center are the first buildings under construction at Legacy Pointe. The City of Blue Ash is providing infrastructure enhancements in and around the site to improve accessibility and the appearance of the area.

itelligence's new headquarters is a two-story, 70,000-square foot, Class A building. The headquarters and the company's state-of-the-art, 14,700-square foot data center are being built by Duke Realty. Both buildings will be built on an 8.1-acre site in Legacy Pointe that itelligence purchased. Ilmenau Way, named in honor of Blue Ash's Sister City, Ilmenau, Germany, will connect Reed Hartman Highway and Osborne Boulevard. Ilmenau Way is being constructed by the City of Blue Ash.

A flag topping ceremony was held in November on the new headquarters building.

"The City of Blue Ash is pleased that itelligence's new facility is underway and looks forward to its move to our community," said Mark Weber, Mayor of the City of Blue Ash. "Duke Realty's Legacy Pointe is a first-class development and an outstanding location. We also are pleased to be involved in the growth of this area by providing infrastructure improvements that add to its appeal."

Legacy Pointe is a 26-acre land site in Blue Ash owned by Duke Realty. itelligence Inc.'s two structures will be the first buildings in the office park that is located near several Duke Realty developments in Blue Ash, including Lake Forest Place, Pfeiffer Woods, Pfeiffer Place and The Landings.



Economic Development News

Target has opened its doors in Blue Ash. In addition to the usual shopping fare found at other area Target stores, the Plainfield Road location features an expanded grocery selection of fresh produce, meats, and baked goods. The store also houses Starbucks Coffee and Pizza Hut outlets.



Located near the intersection of Plainfield and Hunt Roads, Target is 135,000 square feet. Blue Ash worked with Target on mutually beneficial road improvements near the store, this including widening Plainfield Road and adding a signal at the intersection. Target donated right-of-way and contributed in the cost of these traffic improvements.

Target has hired 200 employees to work at the Blue Ash store.

Several new restaurants have opened recently in Blue Ash. These new dining options include:

- Café Mediterranean
- Cazadores
- City BBQ
- Firehouse Grill
- Firehouse Subs
- Ho's Diner (previously Jade Kitchen)
- Jimmy John's
- Smashburger

Social Media

For the most up-to-date information, follow Blue Ash on Twitter (@BlueAsh) and Facebook (City of Blue Ash). From the City's Facebook page, you can follow our other Blue Ash pages for the Recreation Center, Blue Ash Golf Course, Cooper Creek Event Center, and the Blue Ash Police Department.



Public Works

Road Construction Update

Blue Ash has had a busy year in road construction. Much of the road work this year included resurfacing of roads following earlier projects by Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW). Since many of GCWW's projects involve repair/replacement of pipes under road surfaces, the City is able to make improvements in a timely and cost-effective manner as a portion of the cost is paid by GCWW.

Following GCWW completed work, Blue Ash resurfaced portions of Cooper Road, Home Acres ("Birdville") subdivision, Hunt Road, Mohler Road, and Aston Place.

Blue Ash also resurfaced Cooper Road between Reed Hartman Highway and Blue Ash Road, and Kenwood Road in the downtown area.

Blue Ash continued to invest in sidewalk improvements to provide expanded connectivity between neighborhoods and businesses to frequent destinations, such as the Recreation Center, downtown, Blue Ash Golf Course, and the future 130-acre park. This included new concrete paths on the west side of Reed Hartman Highway in areas between Glendale-Milford and Anderson Way, and between Carver and Cooper Roads.

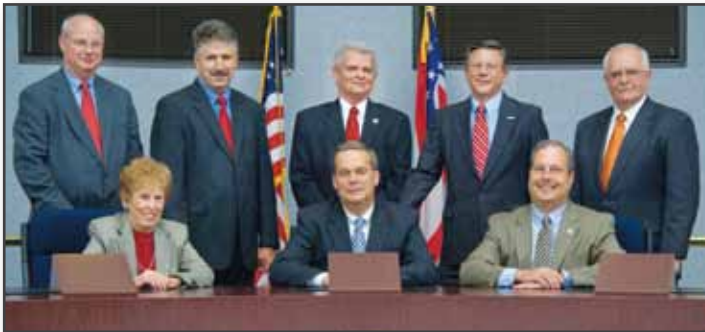
Blue Ash has an ongoing program to upgrade traffic signals from incandescent lights to LED lights. The new LED lights use significantly less electricity, have a longer useful life, produce brighter signals, and include battery back-up systems. Also, "count-down" pedestrian signals are being installed at intersections with wide roadways. Six new traffic signals have been installed downtown and two new systems were installed on Reed Hartman Highway. The downtown signals are coordinated to provide improved traffic flow during heavy travel times.



Construction crews insert a trench box in the intersection of Kenwood and Cooper Roads in order to install a new 36" waterline eventually leading into The City of Montgomery. The trench was close to 20' deep in some areas of the intersection in order to get under and around other utilities proving to be a very challenging and dangerous project.

City Staff Notes

City Council: On November 8, 2011, all seven incumbents were re-elected for the two-year Council term that began December 1, 2011.



Sitting, L to R: Stephanie Stoller, Ward 2; Mark F. Weber, Mayor (Ward 5); & Lee Czerwonka, Vice Mayor (At Large).

Standing, L to R: Mark A. Vander Laan, Solicitor (appointed by Council); James W. Sumner, Ward 1; Robert J. Buckman, Jr., Ward 4; Thomas Adamec, At Large; & Rick Bryan, Ward 3.

Not pictured: Jamie K. Eifert, Clerk of Council (appointed by Council)

Our hearts go out to the family of Judy Bacher, Mayor's Court Coordinator, who passed away on January 31, 2011. Judy served the City for 27 years.

During 2011, a number of long-time Blue Ash employees retired:

- Ed Hamilton, Firefighter/EMT, 41 years with the City
- Sue Bennett, Public Information Officer, 32 years with the City
- Bill Mayer, Golf Professional, 32 years with the City
- Kurt Lyons, Police Sergeant, 30 years with the City
- Jayne Flege, Dispatcher, 30 years with the City
- Mike Duncan, Public Works Director, 3 years with the City

Similarly, we also had several full-time hires:

- Gordon Perry, Public Works Director
- Karla Plank, Administrative Assistant in the City Manager's Office
- Anthony Andrews, Golf Course Professional
- Benjamin Degenhardt, Firefighter/Paramedic
- Brian Mayer, Firefighter/Paramedic
- Brent Johnson, Firefighter/Paramedic

Other changes:

- Jim Pfeffer - Assistant City Manager
- Sherry Poppe - Treasurer/Administrative Services Director
- Barb Griffin - Banquet/Golf Superintendent
- Scott Noel - Police Sergeant
- Justin Burress - Fire Lieutenant
- Officer Beth Roach - D.A.R.E. Officer

Sister City Visit

A delegation of Blue Ash government, education, and cultural leaders traveled this summer to Ilmenau, Germany. Blue Ash and Ilmenau have been Sister Cities since 2000. The trip included discussions on how to continue to improve and grow the exchange of ideas and understanding between the two cities. The eight day trip began June 16, 2011.

The Blue Ash delegation also met with U.S. Consul General Katherine Brucker, in Leipzig. Brucker complimented the two cities on their strong relationship. She stressed the importance of citizen-to-citizen diplomacy in forging stronger relationships between countries.

"This is an important relationship for Blue Ash," said Blue Ash Mayor Mark Weber. "It gives us a unique perspective on different ways to provide service to our citizens and allows for a distinctive cultural exchange."

Blue Ash will honor the relationship by naming a new roadway in the Legacy Pointe development, Ilmenau Way.



Blue Ash and Ilmenau, Germany have been involved in a Sister City partnership for nearly a decade. In 2011, two exchanges occurred which included an 18-member delegation of government, educational, and cultural leaders who traveled to Ilmenau in June and a 23-member school delegation of juniors and seniors from Ilmenau who visited Sycamore High School in October.

Community Notes

100,000,000 Blessings

In 2011, Matthew 25: Ministries celebrated 20 years of service as well as the shipment of their one hundred millionth pound of aid. Local and domestic partners as well as partners in more than 35 countries around the world have benefited from Matthew 25: Ministries' shipments.

CCM offers Classes at UC Blue Ash

CCM Prep is pleased to offer classes at various sites throughout the Greater Cincinnati area, including the latest site, University of Cincinnati's Blue Ash campus (formerly Raymond Walters College).

The winter term begins Saturday, January 14, 2012, and runs through March 3, 2012. For more information or to register for a class, please call 513-556-2595 or visit ccm.uc.edu/prep/registrationinfo.html.

Sycamore Senior Center Offers Zumba

The Sycamore Senior Center is now offering Zumba Gold, a musically accompanied exercise fitness program especially moderated for 55+ year old men and women. To learn more about Zumba and other offerings of the Senior Center, call (513) 984-1234.

Sycamore Helps Troops

Sycamore High School students collected items to fill more than 60 boxes to send to a Sycamore grad based in Afghanistan. Sycamore High School's Interact Club, a community service and volunteer organization sponsored by the Rotary Club of Blue Ash and Montgomery, sent the supplies to the Army platoon of 2008 Sycamore grad Scott Ferris in Afghanistan.

Composting Seminar

Blue Ash will host a seminar by the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District on composting. The hour-long evening seminar will be April 3, 2012, at 6 p.m. at the Recreation Center and will focus on the basics of backyard composting. Attendees will learn how to balance a compost bin, what materials are compostable, and some troubleshooting tips. Those who attend will receive a \$20 coupon redeemable at partnering stores toward the purchase of a compost bin, as well as a free kitchen collector. Call 946-7734 to register.



Emerald Ash Borer Update

The Emerald Ash Borer is a non-native beetle that has destroyed millions of trees in the Midwest. As this beetle has migrated, it has begun to damage trees in Blue Ash. Numerous affected ash trees will be removed next year including many from the medians of Glendale-Milford Road. Blue Ash recommends that residents begin taking steps to protect and/or remove ash trees from their property.

Snow

BAPD Winter Driving Tips

With winter coming, roads become more challenging. The Blue Ash Police Department recommends that drivers prepare a winter "car kit" to leave in your vehicle in case of emergency. The kit should contain:

- Jumper cables
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Windshield washer fluid
- Small shovel
- Ice scraper
- Blanket, gloves, and hat
- Non-perishable food
- Candle and matches
- First-aid kit
- Cell phone and charger
- Sand or cat litter for traction and extra weight to help prevent vehicle slipping



Blue Ash Recreation Center Membership Changes

The Blue Ash Recreation Center will change its membership packages for 2012. In order to simplify the membership packages and to keep memberships more in line with increasing costs, the Recreation Center is doing away with a la carte options. Thus, members will now have access to more amenities than ever.

ALL memberships will now include:

- Fitness Center access for those of qualifying age
- Tennis privileges
- Free days of climbing wall on Mondays
- An opportunity to take each of our fitness classes for free the first time
- Guest passes; 10 per family, 5 per single membership
- Racquetball court booking privileges

For the first time since 1979, there will be an increase in costs to membership at the Recreation Center. However, our costs continue to be significantly less than other similar facilities in the area.

New Annual Recreation Center Membership Fees

Type	Single	Family
Resident	\$50	\$100
Resident Senior or Disabled	\$25	\$50
Business	\$170	\$340
Business Senior or Disabled	\$85	\$170

For further information regarding our new memberships and fees, please visit blueash.com or contact us at (513) 745-8551.



Mark Your Calendars....

January 21 Parks and Rec Job Fair at the Rec Center, 11 AM - 1 PM

January 21 Saturday Night Social at the Rec Center, 7:30 - 11 PM

January 28 Family Fun Night at the Rec Center, 6:30 - 9 PM

February 11 Blue Ash Historical Society presents Open House at the Hunt House, 11 AM - 1 PM

February 11 Valentine's Dance at Cooper Creek Event Center

February 12 Blue Ash/Montgomery Symphony Orchestra Concert at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, 7:30 PM

February 18 Saturday Night Social at the Rec Center, 7:30 - 11 PM

February 25 Family Fun Night at the Rec Center, 6:30 - 9 PM

March 10 St. Patrick's Day Dance at the Rec Center, 6:30 PM

April 9 Spring Curbside Leaf Pickup (1 day only)

April 9 Recreation Summer Program Registration Begins for Residents at the Rec Center, 9:00 AM

April 10 Recreation Summer Program Registration Begins for Members at the Rec Center, 9 AM

April 20 Earth Day Celebration at the Rec Center

April 21 Blue Ash Historical Society presents Open House at the Hunt House, 11 AM - 1 PM

April 21 Movie on the Square, Dusk