



Photos by Randall Pippert

Midtowne Crossing Owners Association

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Keeping the Sewers Fat-Free

Greasy and fatty food wastes are common causes of sewer line blockages and backups.

Sewer overflows and backups caused by grease build-up can result in health and environmental hazards. If grease clogs your private or a shared sewer line, sewage can backup in your plumbing and cause damage inside your home. You may have to pay to have the sewer line cleaned out. City maintenance personnel spend hundreds of hours a year degreasing sewer lines—a service that you pay for through higher sewer rates [higher assessments for condominium owners]. Fort Wayne City Utilities spends more than \$500,000 every year cleaning grease out of City-owned sewer lines.

Lots of grease get into sewers from household drains. Grease is a by-product of cooking and comes from meats, lard, oil, shortening, butter and margarine. Even baked goods, sauces and dairy products are a source of fat and grease.

When any of these food products go down the drain, the

grease can stick to the inside of sewer pipes. Over time, the grease can build up and completely clog a pipe. Home garbage disposals don't eliminate the grease. Grease may disappear from your sink, but it can build up down the line.

There are some easy things you can do to help keep sewers "fat-free"

- Never pour grease down a sink drain or into a toilet—not even a little bit.
- Scrape grease and food scraps into the garbage or trash for disposal, then wipe pans and plates with paper towels before you wash or rinse the dishes.
- Large amounts of grease can be poured into a coffee can or gallon jug. Add kitty litter to soak up the liquid then put the lid on and put the container in the trash.
- Put a basket or strainer in the sink drain to catch food scraps, then empty the strainer into the trash.

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Inside this Issue

Recent Actions by the Board	2
Energy Tax Credits	2
Governing by Representation	4
Reminders	4

Free Stuff

Find everything from tips on buying a car to building a good credit rating in the 2009 Consumer Action Handbook available for free from the Federal Citizen Information Center. The handbook is available online at www.consumeraction.gov.

To order a free copy, visit www.consumeraction.gov and click on "Order Handbook," or send your name and address to Handbook, Pueblo, CO 81009. Or you may call toll free (888) 878-3256.

2009-2010 Board Members

- **Thomas Steigmeyer**
President
- **Jack Spindler**
Secretary
- **Douglas R. Adelsperger**
Treasurer
- **Michael Connolly**
Director
- **James Schmelzer**
Director

Recent Actions by the Board

The following actions were taken by the Board of Directors at its December 21, 2009 and January 25, 2010 meetings:

- A budget was approved for 2010.
- It was determined that a gap in a window between the side jamb and the sash is a functionality issue and that, under current policy, the condominium owner, not the association, is responsible for repair.
- There was discussion of converting the north exercise room to a gathering area.
- It was decided that business services may not be advertised for free in the bulletin board, but an ad may be placed in the newsletter under previously adopted guidelines.
- The board approved opening a checking account at Wells Fargo Bank, to be used in conjunction with the reserve fund account.
- Consideration was given to a request by J.K. O'Donnell's to have the board sign street closing petitions on behalf of the residents for special events.

Energy Tax Credits

U.S. homeowners can lower home energy bills, lower federal income taxes and increase home comfort by making energy efficiency home improvements that qualify for up to \$1,500 in federal income tax credits.

Consumers who make energy-efficient upgrades can also reduce their personal carbon footprint because using less energy at home means emitting less pollution too.

The federal income tax credits for specific home improvements are available now through 2010, thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

While the tax credits are similar to those in effect a few years ago, consumers should be aware of some changes, according to Steve Nadel, executive director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE). Consumers must install the specific products and equipment that qualify for the 2009-10 tax credits. Some important details on the home improvement tax credits include:

For each type of qualifying equipment, the credit is for 30

percent of the cost, up to \$1,500.

It is a one-time tax credit that can be claimed in part or in whole for tax year 2009 and/or tax year 2010.

Homeowners who claimed the \$500 credit available in 2006-2007 can claim the remaining \$1,000 credit for additional products bought and installed in 2009 and/or 2010.

There are two basic categories of qualifying equipment—"building envelope" products and heating and cooling equipment.

Individual condominium owners would not benefit from the building envelope credit, but may be able to use the credit on a new heat pump. If you need to replace your heat pump, be sure to ask the installer about equipment that qualifies for the energy tax credit. Installation costs are also covered for heating and cooling equipment.

For some products, the qualifying criteria are more stringent than they were in prior years. For detailed information on what qualifies, visit www.energytaxincentives.org.

❖❖ MCOA BULLETIN BOARD ❖❖

The **BULLETIN BOARD** is a new feature for our Newsletter and is intended to be a tool for providing a voice to all owners and residents enabling us to speak with one another and to improve the socialability of living at Midtowne Crossing.

All desired postings to the **BULLETIN BOARD** should be sent via e-mail to: schmelzer_225@comcast.net, and need to include the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the originator. Submissions should be formatted so that they may be copied & pasted into the **BULLETIN BOARD**.

IMPORTANT SURVEY - Resident input is requested

Please provide your input regarding a potential change in usage of the exercise room in the Wayne Street building.

THIS IS THE SECOND REQUEST FOR RESIDENT FEEDBACK

We need resident input in order to decide how to best utilize this room.

A suggestion has been made to convert the Wayne Street exercise room into a Gathering Room. This would entail removing all of the exercise equipment and making the room available for use as a location for social events, eg., small gatherings, parties, card playing, etc.

Please e-mail schmelzer_225@comcast.net or telephone 260.444.4344 with your thoughts regarding how Midtowne Crossing should best utilize this resource.

The Social Committee is looking for some suggestions for social events that we can plan for all residents and we are in need of additional volunteers to help us with planning. Please contact Jim Schmelzer at 444-4344 or schmelzer_225@comcast.net.

FOR SALE: Mens' Rolex - YachtMaster (Replica)

Two years old - 98% accurate compared with the genuine article. Solid stainless steel, waterproof (screw-down stem), sapphire crystal, full automatic movement with sweeping second hand, threaded screws in links. Only a jeweler can tell the difference. \$200.

Call Jim Schmelzer at 444-4344 or send an e-mail to schmelzer_225@comcast.net.

A REQUEST to all residents

Please refrain from leaving your unwanted mail items on the ledge next to the the mailboxes. This creates an unsightly mess and requires that someone else to clean up after you. PLEASE, be courteous to your fellow residents.

❖❖ MCOA BULLETIN BOARD ❖❖

Notes & Reminders

Phone Numbers

- **Midtowne Crossing**
management office
426-5505
- **Light & Breuning**
(for Midtowne parking)
422-6456

City Offices

- **Police**
(non-emergency)
427-1222
- **One Call to City Hall**
311

Utilities

- **AEP**
1-800-311-4634
- **Verizon**
1-800-483-4600
- **Comcast**
456-9000

Heating & Electricity Requirements —

Please remember that you are required to keep a minimum temperature of 50 degrees inside your condominium at all times. Owners are also required to keep electricity service on, even if the condo is vacant. Without power, you will not have heat. The management office will be checking electric meters to make sure power is maintained in all condominiums throughout the winter.

Heat Pump Service –

If you plan to have service performed on your heating system before winter, don't forget to contact the management office in advance. You will need a key for the roof and the contractor must provide the association with evidence of insurance before gaining access to the roof. Please call the management office as soon as you have your service scheduled to make sure everything is in order and to reserve a key.

HISTORY IN FEBRUARY:

Remember bottle caps with cork inside? The design was patented in 1892.

Black History Month started as a one-week event in 1926.

In 1940, Frank Sinatra made his singing debut in Indianapolis.

Eight of the nine planets aligned for the first time in 400 years in 1962.

In 1987, the Dow Jones average closed above 2,200 for the first time.

Governing by Representation

Community associations are a representative form of government founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the people. Much of our country is based on the principles of representative democracy. It starts with organizations like community associations and progresses through our schools boards, city governments, county governments, state governments—all the way to the federal government. We vote for a person, or persons, who will act on our behalf.

Some might advocate that a board should not take action without a vote of the members to find out what the people want. That would be counter-productive. If association members were to vote on every issue before a decision was made, there would be no need for a board, but simply someone to send out ballots and tally results. However, boards find out what their constituents want in other ways. Many make time to hear from residents at each board meeting. But, it's up to you to attend meetings, voice your opinions and participate in the exchange of ideas with the board. We also encourage your involvement and participation. Perhaps you would consider joining a committee. We want your input, ideas, thoughts and opinions.

Source: Community Associations Institute

Midtowne Crossing Owners Association

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www.midtownecrossing.org