

City of Lewiston

NOVEMBER 2012 City Administrator's Report



Greetings from the All-America City of Lewiston

Each month, this report from the City Administrator's office provides a brief summary and update of major activities, events, projects, and programs that impact the community of Lewiston. Feel free to send your comments and suggestions.

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Items of Interest



Follow the steps of the picture board to the left to see the tree's journey from the home of Gerry and Simone Mathieu, of Lewiston, to Dufresne Plaza. The tree lighting is one of the highlights of the Twin Cities annual holiday celebration attended by thousands each year.



WINTER PARKING BANS

- * Sign up to be notified by email or text
- * Go to: www.lewistonmaine.gov and click on the "Notify Me" icon
- * Type your email address & sign in - It's that easy
- * Don't forget to click SAVE.
- * You'll receive a message when the City issues a Parking Ban



Call 513-3018 with any questions.



**Emergency Winter Parking
Ban Hotline: (207) 513-3141**

City Administrator

Edward A. Barrett

Council Meets With Legislative Delegation

In Maine, the financial stability of local government is tied closely to that of the State. While local finances have stabilized over the last several years, recent news from the State is not encouraging. Revenue shortfalls and overruns in the Health and Human Services budget will require state budget cuts this year and dramatically worsen the projected shortfall over the coming two year budget. This could impact Lewiston in reductions to state education aid, municipal revenue sharing, and general assistance reimbursements.

Within this context, the Council and School Committee recently met with our newly elected state legislative delegation. Key issues of City concern were:

- **Protect/Restore Municipal Revenue Sharing.** Municipalities once received 5.1% of state sales and income taxes. Revenue sharing has been repeatedly raided recently to help balance the state budget. Two years ago, the City lost \$1.5 million; last year, \$1.8 million. This year, almost \$2 million. If fully funded, our property tax rate could go down by \$1.06.
- **General Purpose Aid to Education.** Protect current funding and work to develop plan to achieve 55% funding level as approved by state-wide referendum.
- **Waive Minimum Required Local Share for Schools.** The State sets a required minimum local share that must be raised for public education. Due to the recession and funding limitations, many school districts, including Lewiston, have fallen below that minimum but have been protected by a legislative waiver. Without this waiver, schools below the required share would be harshly penalized by reduced state support. Immediate re-imposition of the minimum would be a disaster for Lewiston and would result in layoffs and significant program cuts, even as we continue to experience enrollment growth.
- **General Assistance/Welfare.** The City's General Assistance Program has been impacted by the recession, a 60 month limit on the State/Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, asylum seekers who are eligible for local benefits but not for state/federal programs, and a reduction in state reimbursement rates by 5%. The City strongly opposes further transfers of the cost of this program to communities. Similarly, evaluation systems should be put in place to measure the effectiveness of state Human Services in assisting its clients toward economic independence. Where barriers exist under current regulations, the State should address and overcome them. When the TANF program does not achieve the goal of economic independence, that failure impacts our General Assistance Program.
- **Infrastructure Investments.** To grow and prosper, we must have robust transportation and utility infrastructures. Improved infrastructure supports short and long term job growth. Today's economic environment often results in very competitive pricing for such projects.
- **Turnpike Toll Structure.** The toll structure on the Turnpike disadvantages our area and toll equity must be addressed. At the same time, other less expensive commuter options must be explored/expanded including Go Maine and the possibility of commuter bus service to/from LA to Portland.

These suggestions appeared to be well received by the delegation, which suggested that monthly update meetings be held to keep City-Legislative communications open.

Deputy City Administrator

Phil Nadeau

Auburn City Council Approves Expansion of Auburn CityLink Terminal

As Chair of the Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee, I am pleased to report that the Auburn City Council, with Mayor Labonte's leadership on the proposal, unanimously approved adding up to \$250,000 of additional funding to a proposed CityLink transit terminal in Auburn. The expanded facility would result in the doubling of the original 600 square foot design and would pave the way for a facility that would serve both CityLink and other possible transit and city operations. Negotiations have been ongoing to site the facility for several years, and we anticipate announcing the proposed location soon.

Assumption of Secretary Duties for the Maine Service Center Coalition

I was formally appointed as the new Secretary for the Maine Service Center Coalition during its November 15th annual meeting in Bangor. The Maine Service Center Coalition (MSCC) serves as the legislative voice for most of Maine's largest communities and has advocated for legislation that reflects many of our economic, educational and other legislative priorities, particularly when it comes to the more significant funding sources such as revenue sharing and school funding. I have previously served as the MSCC Treasurer/Secretary and as its Chair, so I am working in very familiar territory. Given that our city has experienced a significant amount of budget and staff-reduction, it was difficult for me to participate regularly. Things are a bit less unpredictable today, and I am hopeful that I will be able to spend more time advocating for our residents at the state and federal levels.



LAWPCA Proposed Budget Lower than 2012

As Chair of Lewiston-Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority, I am pleased to report that our Board will be voting on a budget that is \$34,000 less than last year, which will help minimize rate impacts in both Lewiston and Auburn (our services are only part of the costs associated with both sewer operations). Though it is only a 0.7% reduction over last year, it is a reduction - no small feat as you already know. I am also pleased to report that we believe that the anaerobic digester may come on line as soon as April 2013. Construction is ahead of schedule and on budget (music to anyone's ears). LAWPCA will keep you posted on the AD project's progress as we get nearer to activating the facility. 2013 is off to a good start and we will continue to work hard to keep it that way. Visit our website at www.lawpca.org

Assessing

Joe Grube, Chief Assessor

Personal Property filings for the Business Equipment Tax Refund program continue. As of the end November, 240 taxpayers have filed with the State for reimbursement on over \$90 million dollars in assessed personal property valuation.

This equates to \$2,321,000 in refundable taxes.

- ◆ Ongoing four-year reviews have continued in the Grove Street area.
- ◆ Inspection of commercial building permit activity has begun with emphasis on larger projects.

All assessing staff volunteered to assist the City Clerk with the November presidential election.

Clerks

Kathy Montejo, City Clerk



**DON'T FORGET TO LICENSE YOUR DOG
BY DECEMBER 31ST**



Fire

Paul LeClair, Chief

Holiday and Winter Safety Tips from the Lewiston Fire Department

Holiday and Christmas Tree Fire Safety

Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing holiday tradition. Unfortunately, these same decorations may increase your chances of fire.

Following a few simple fire safety tips can keep electric lights, candles, and the ever popular Christmas tree from creating a tragedy.

- Don't put your live Christmas tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks.
- Place trees away from heat sources, including fireplaces or heat vents. Heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame, or sparks.
- Always keep the live tree stand filled with water.
- Use only nonflammable decorations.
- Don't link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it's safe. *Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.*
- Avoid using lit candles; consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell, and feel like real candles.
- Ensure that Christmas trees and other holiday decorations don't block an exit way.



Keep Fireplaces and Wood Stoves Clean

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.



- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations, and flammable materials.
- Leave glass doors open while burning a fire. Leaving the doors open ensures that the fire receives enough air for complete combustion and keeps creosote from building up in the chimney.
- Close glass doors when the fire is out to keep air from the chimney from getting into the room. Most glass fireplace doors have a metal mesh screen which should be closed when the glass doors are open. This mesh screen helps keep embers from escaping from the fireplace area.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets on wood stoves open and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. Otherwise you may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire.
- Use fire-resistant materials on walls around wood stoves.

Planning & Code Enforcement

Gil Arsenault, Director

Permit Activity NOVEMBER 2012

- ◆ 51 building permits with a dollar value of \$491,569
- ◆ 3 plumbing permits
- ◆ 27 electrical permits



Permit Activity NOVEMBER 2011

- ◆ 45 building permits with a dollar value of \$1,029,726 (4 per permits for single-family homes)
- ◆ 11 plumbing permits
- ◆ 35 electrical permits

Planning Board and Related Activities

- ◇ A number of citizens and staff interviewed three consulting firms regarding the development of a new comprehensive plan for the City of Lewiston.
- ◇ Staff met with Richardson Associates to discuss design work needed in order to implement “first phase” Riverfront Master Plan projects.
- ◇ The Board voted to recommend that the City Council enact a proposed amendment to the Zoning and Land Use Code with respect to political signs. The amendment will eliminate time restrictions associated with the placing political signs on private property.

Staff Review Committee Meeting

- ◇ The Staff Review Committee granted approval to the Lisbon Road Animal Hospital for a 2,936 square foot expansion to their veterinary facility along with accessory parking at 1981 Lisbon Street.



Police

Mike Bussiere, Chief

NOVEMBER	2012
Calls For Service	2,721
Vehicle Stops	370
Citations	73
Written Warnings	156
Verbal Warnings	141
Adult Arrests	130
Juvenile Arrests	16
Criminal Summonses	72
Narcotics Arrests	11
OUI Arrests	4
Parking Tickets	611
Fireworks Violations	1

Project Hot Spot

A community meeting was held to discuss Project Hot Spot. Officers fielded questions and comments from the community in reference to Project activities and initiatives as well as crime trends in the downtown area.

The meeting was attended by: Chief Bussiere, Deputy Chief Minkowsky, Lt. Higgins, Lt. St. Pierre, Sgt. Theiss, Cpls. Baril and Vierling and Officers Rousseau, Griffin, Philippon, and Rawstron.

Prior to the meeting, Lt. Higgins, Sgt. Ullrich and Officers Rousseau and Griffin distributed flyers announcing it.

Parking Ban Awareness Campaign

Officer Griffin assisted City Hall officials with the parking ban awareness campaign and was photographed issuing Councilor Saddlemire a parking ticket for violating the City's winter storm parking ban. (left)



Training

- ⇒ The Patrol Division received Emergency Vehicle Operations training at Oxford Plains Speedway
- ⇒ CPR/AED recertification and quick clot training were attended by many from the PD
- ⇒ Methods of Interrogation training at MCJA was attended by Officer Strout
- ⇒ Officer D. Michaud attended training on domestic violence related homicides
- ⇒ K-9 training and New Drug Trends training was attended by Officer Hood
- ⇒ Officer Burkhardt attended Search & Seizure and Crimes in Progress training
- ⇒ Patrol Interdiction training was attended by Officer Weaver
- ⇒ Det. Murphy, SRO Jacques and SRO Johnson attended a seminar on Drug Addiction and aspects of Drug Court
- ⇒ Officer Rousseau participated in a panel discussion on marijuana at the annual MPASA (Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse) conference

Community & Involvement in Education

- ⇒ The Oak Park Community meeting and Citizens Police Academy meeting were attended by Cpl. Murphy.
- ⇒ Sgt. Ullrich and Cpl. Cramp and his K-9 Chico attended the bi-weekly coffee with Blake Street Towers residents. Chico and Cpl. Cramp stopped in to visit the residents as well.
- ⇒ The Festival of Lights Parade was a great success this year; assisting were Lt. Higgins, Sgt. Chick, and Officers Griffin and Rousseau.
- ⇒ The PAL Board of Directors meeting was held and attended by Sgt. Bradeen and Det. Brochu.
- ⇒ Det. Brochu also instructed the Lewiston High School Law Enforcement Program on Juvenile Crime.
- ⇒ Officer Johnson taught a handcuffing class to CMMC security staff
- ⇒ Officers Rousseau and Griffin represented the department at the Central Maine Community College Career Fair

Pictured to the right is Cpl. Cramp and his K-9 Chico.

Below are the officers that assisted with the Festival of Lights Parade at the end of November.



Public Works

David Jones, Director

Cold weather finally arrived, but so far we have been lucky with not yet having to plow! (We did salt/sand once in November.) Last year we had two major snow events by this time.

Most of our summer projects have been buttoned up for the winter and we are moving into winter mode.

PW Highlights for the month include:

- ◇ Holiday preparations with decorations being installed in downtown and the annual transport and installation of the City Christmas Tree in Dufresne Plaza. (see page 2 for pictures) *This year's tree was the largest to date at 49 feet tall and weighing in at more than 6,500 pounds!*

Street/Road & Sidewalk Improvement Projects

- ◆ The Maine DOT project on Main Street (Pettingill to Bearce) was completed;
- ◆ Street Paving came to an end following the work below.

Here is a summary of November street paving completed:

- ◇ Montello Street waterline (Fair to Buttonwood)
- ◇ Pinewoods Road (Vista Bella Drive to City line)
- ◇ Charles Street (East Avenue to Farwell)
- ◇ Gendron Drive (end of pavement to dead end)



Additionally, in-house crews completed the following workload:

- ◆ Storm Drain catch-basin and culvert repairs at five locations and roadside ditching and shoulder work for more than a mile on Pinewoods Road;
- ◆ Maintenance street sweeping in the downtown section;
- ◆ General patching at 27 locations;
- ◆ The cold weather ended our efforts for street line and marking painting.
- ◆ Traffic signage repair/installation continued;
- ◆ Roadside mowing of road shoulders;
- ◆ Paving prep and follow-up raising catch-basins, grinding, and paving driveway entrances;
- ◆ The arborist, parks, and open space crews winterized landscaped gardens, playing fields, cemeteries and parks.

Water, Sewer and Stormwater

- ◇ Work on Jepson Brook (St. Laurent & Sons) was closed for the winter and the Oak Street sewer/stormwater separation (Gendron & Gendron) were completed. Paving to close up and finish the streets was completed in November;

Work inside the Joint Chloramine Facility is complete. The only work remaining are the connections with the adjacent transmission main;

Other work performed by the crews included:

- ◆ Responded to and repaired five water main leaks and three service leaks;
- ◆ Winterized all 750 hydrants including installation of marker flags;
- ◆ Responded to and completed 39 Customer Concerns (E-Govs) and 170 Dig-Safe requests;
- ◆ Installed a driveway, three walk-ways, and drainage beds at the UV Facility;
- ◆ Replaced a number of cross-country manhole covers which had deteriorated;
- ◆ Continued to maintain all watershed properties and water & sewer facilities;
- ◆ Hydrant painting and rehab;
- ◆ Water meter reading, testing, repair, and replacement;
- ◆ Sewer flushing and work with contractors for CSO projects;
- ◆ Water meter reading and GIS updates and locates;
- ◆ Water gate, locate, cleaning, and operation program.

Solid Waste

Lewiston residents continue to improve their recycling habits for the household waste they generate. The following table illustrates this improving trend. The information in the table is an average of waste for August, September, October, and November of each year.

	2010	2011	2012
Lewiston Recycling (tons)	66	91	102
Total Recycling Shipped (tons) (includes materials from Auburn, Leeds, Waterford, West Paris & Wilton)	203	232	239
Trash to MMWAC from Lewiston (tons)	963	970	923

- ⇒ **Summary** – Lewiston’s curbside recycle rate has improved 55% since Lewiston converted from the curb sort program to the Single Stream recycling program and waste hauled to MMWAC for disposal has decreased 4% during that time.
- ⇒ **Other Solid Waste news** – the Maine DEP conducted their annual site inspection of solid waste facility operations on November 15. DEP’s comments were generally favorable and the facility is in compliance with DEP regulatory criteria.

Building Maintenance

- * The Building Division completed the relocation of the Social Services folks into their newly renovated spaces;
- * The crew worked on resurfacing the decks in the Chestnut Street Parking Garage. They developed a unique method to remove the old decking surface which greatly increased production while simultaneously reducing the chance of our workers being injured.
- * The garage is now ready for the coming winter.

Recreation

Maggie Chisholm, Director

Activities/Events

Lewiston Senior Citizens

- ◇ Monthly Board and membership meetings
- ◇ Bi-monthly Beano
- ◇ Weekly card games: Cribbage, Bridge, Pinochle



Lewiston Rec Department

- ◇ Weekly gymnastics classes
- ◇ Weekly band practice "Just Us"
- ◇ Volleyball games at Armory and MPC
- ◇ 5/6 grade girls basketball clinics
- ◇ 5/6 grade school basketball games at MPC and the Armory
- ◇ 5/6 grade boys & girls travel basketball practices and games
- ◇ 7/8 grade girls travel basketball games
- ◇ Winter co-ed basketball evaluation, practices and games – all divisions

Other

- ◇ Fly Football cheering practices (2nd year)
- ◇ Lewiston area youth cheering practices
- ◇ Central Maine Christian Academy and St. Dom's Academy basketball practices
- ◇ Lewiston & Androscoggin County Democrats monthly meetings
- ◇ American Legion – Post 22
- ◇ VFW – Post 9150, monthly meeting
- ◇ Franco-American War Veterans and Auxiliary Post 31, monthly meetings
- ◇ L/A Veterans – monthly meeting
- ◇ Association Canado-Americanne Chapter Dr. Paul Fortier, monthly meeting
- ◇ Election Day – 11/6/12
- ◇ Veteran's Day Celebration 11/12/13

Park Events

- ◆ Lewiston/Auburn Parade of Lights
Dufrense Plaza

Athletic Events

The Basketball Programs are off to a great start:

- ◆ Monday -Thursday 5/6 grade school basketball program has 12 boys and seven girls teams with over 200 students participating.
- ◆ The co-ed basketball program has six teams in Micros (grades 1/2), six teams in Minors (grades 3/4), four teams in Majors (grades 5/6), and four teams in the Junior Division (grades 7/8). There are over 200 students participating in this program.
- ◆ The 2012-13 travel basketball teams include 3 teams: (1) 5/6 grade girls, (1) – 5/6 grade boys, (1) 7/8 grade girls
- ◆ Travel Teams have one practice per week and games played at locations throughout central, northern, and western Maine from November - February.
- ◆ In addition, three schools are used by these teams for additional practice time.
- ◆ Approximately 84 adults participate as coaches.
- ◆ The gymnastic classes, pre-team and team sessions continue every Tuesday and Thursday at the Armory. 61 gymnasts are enrollment for the November-December session.



New Application

As of January 2013, the Disabled American Veteran Chapter 11 will schedule their monthly meetings at the Armory on the third Tuesday of the month.

Armory Flag Pole

The flag pole was removed from the Armory roof in late October; a very special thank you to the Lewiston Elks Club of Lewiston and Derek Ouellette and his crew from LOCBID Construction. Their generous donation of time, manpower, and materials is deeply appreciated.

New Elevator Service

The Lewiston Senior Citizens are pleased with the new entryways, especially the elevator. Each activity group as well as individual members will be receiving their keyless entry FOB starting the week of December 3rd. The FOB system is programmed to allow entry Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

El/Aaron's Inc.

The Recreation Department accepted a **\$500 donation** from Aaron's of Lewiston. The funds will be used to purchase basketball equipment for programs scheduled throughout the year at the Armory. A very special thank you goes out to Aaron's staff for this generous donation.



Social Services

Sue Charron, Director

CLIENTS SEEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Beginning with the new fiscal year, July 1, 2012, our reimbursement, from the state, is at the 50% rate. Once we reach our threshold (\$685,620) we will receive reimbursement at 85%— reduced from the prior 90% rate.

Statistical Activity	NOVEMBER 2012	FYTD 7/1/2012 - 6/30/2013
Office Traffic (Duplicated)	554	2,628
New Clients	62	321
Households Served (OT) (Unduplicated)	205	367
Housing Expenditures	\$71,800.50	\$332,243.41
Total Expenditures	\$77,793.67	\$372,888.97
State Reimbursement	\$38,896.84 (50%)	\$184,871.33 (50%)
SSI Reimbursement	\$22,623.82	\$39,381.31
Other Reimbursements	\$0	\$3,146.34
Actual Municipal GA Cost (net)	\$16,273.01	\$145,489.99

Workfare	NOVEMBER 2012	FYTD 7/1/2012 - 6/30/2013
Cases (unduplicated)	77	173
Clients (unduplicated)	102	230
Hours Performed	2,817.00	15,676.25
Dollar Value (\$7.50 per hour)	\$21,127.50	\$117,757.88
Percentage of Cases Assigned Workfare	38%	47%

Able-bodied recipients are required to participate in the workfare program. The number of hours assigned are calculated by dividing the amount of assistance the recipient receives by minimum wage.



CHANGES TO THE GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BEGINNING 7/1/12 - 6/30/13:

- The overall GA maximums are reduced by 10%.
- Housing assistance is limited to 9 months out of the calendar year unless a person has a severe and persistent mental or physical condition.
- The reimbursement rate, once the threshold is reached, is reduced from 90 to 85%.

- The work group that was convened to review the GA program, has finalized their recommendations, which include \$500,000 in savings.
- The DHHS Commissioner will submit the report to the legislature in December 2012. The report will include the recommendations regarding law or rule making related to the GA program, including changes that will achieve \$500,000 in General Fund savings from January 1, 2013—June 30, 2013.
- **REFERRALS ARE NOW BEING MADE TO THE STATE DISABILITY ADVOCATES TO ASSIST CLIENTS WITH THE SS AND VA PROCESS. THE GOAL IS TO DECREASE THE TIME IT TAKES FOR CLIENTS TO BE APPROVED FOR SS AND VA BENEFITS, ELIMINATING OF THEIR NEED FOR GA.**

TANF 60-MONTH IMPACTS

- **As of 11/30/2012, 99 families consisting of 448 household members have applied for general assistance because their TANF benefits were eliminated due to the 60-month time limit. To date, a total of \$16,336.86 has been granted on behalf of 35 families. Many of these families live in subsidized housing and that reduces the expenditures.**
- Some of the remaining families have been granted temporary TANF extensions; others are still pending eligibility determination. Each month, we continue to see new families that are losing their TANF.



FRAUD CASES AND REIMBURSEMENT MONIES

- General Assistance clients who commit fraud--those who attempt to receive GA and those who actually receive GA are disqualified from receiving GA benefits throughout the state for 120 days. All cases are reported to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Many of the cases that are receiving the DHHS Food Supplement are also disqualified from receiving the Food Supplement for the 120 day GA disqualification period.
- The cases involving clients who have actually received General Assistance by fraudulent means are reported to the DHHS and to the Lewiston Police Department (LPD) for potential prosecution. Some cases have resulted in convictions.
- Reimbursements from retroactive SSI awards, Workers Compensation settlements, and other sources are actively pursued and tracked, resulting in decreased GA expenditures.

LENGTH OF TIME CLIENTS RECEIVE G.A.

FY2012 (7/1/2011 - 6/30/2012)

- **1-3 Months:** 60%
(34% received GA for only one month)
- **4-6 Months:** 18%
- **7-12 Months:** 22%
- **More than 12 Months:** N/A

5-YEAR PRIOR HISTORY (7/1/07—6/30/12)

- **1-3 Months:** 62%
(38% received GA for only one month)
- **4-6 Months:** 16%
- **7-12 Months:** 11%
- **More than 12 Months:** 11%
- Approximately 35% of GA clients have SSI pending. These clients are mentally and/or physically disabled and require GA for longer periods of time. These clients tend to cycle in and out of GA throughout the years.

