

Borough Administrator's State of the Borough

Heroes to Be Honored; Power Peak Shaving Saves \$\$\$!

Time is running out to get your loved one a Hometown Hero Banner. The Borough is proud to support the Schuylkill Haven Hometown Heroes Campaign – Phase II. The banners provide residents and visitors the opportunity to pay tribute to remarkable individuals and each of their outstanding commitment to serve their country.




Jessica Seiders
Borough Admin.

Bronze medals, if applicable.

The deadline for applications and payment is March

HOMETOWN HEROES



BANNER PROGRAM

1, 2024. The cost is \$185 for each banner. Guidelines and applications are available via e-mail at shhometownheroes@gmail.com, at Borough Hall and on the Borough website – <https://www.schuylkillhaven.org>. Reservations are on a first come, first served basis

with payment and application. If you have any questions or need help scanning your hero's photograph, send an e-mail for assistance. Family members will receive drafts to review in April, and the new banners will be displayed Memorial Day weekend.

Volunteers are needed to coordinate applications, scan pictures, manage communications and plan the celebration. Donations are welcome to help fund the May unveiling celebration, payable to Schuylkill Haven Borough. The program is non-political and nonpartisan and is a memorial to current service personal now serving and veterans who have served our country.

Kudos to our crews

As I share my thoughts on a cold and icy week in mid-January, I need to express my gratitude for how fortunate we are in Schuylkill Haven to have a reliable crew of Borough employees who have decades of experience. Our crews keep roads clean and safe during winter weather events and, as you drive around the county to other communities, you can really appreciate this perspective.

Cold snaps bring water main breaks. One of the more notable and unpleasant water main breaks occurred during single digit temperatures in January,

– Continued on page 2

Devine & Delicious

All are invited to enjoy an evening of acoustic Christian worship every second Friday monthly at Cake Pros, 323 Dock Street, from 6 to 9 p.m.



the intimate setting and soothing melodies create a space for genuine worship and reflection, lifting our voices in praise of Christ.

Indulge in the delightful aroma of freshly brewed coffee and treat yourself to the heavenly array of delectable treats available. Don't miss out on this harmonious blend of faith, friendship, and flavor – an experience that promises to uplift your soul and tantalize your taste buds!

As the music fills this cozy coffee house, immerse yourself in a community of believers, fostering connections and deepening relationships. Let

On the inside . . .

Tax Time! What to Know!..... Pg.	2
GSHABA Gives to Non-Profits Pg.	4
The Code Guy's Winter Tips..... Pg.	6
Haven Lions Club – We Serve!.... Pg.	11

Borough Administrator's State of the Borough

- Continued from Page 1

taking more than 12 hours to repair. Whether it's repairing a power outage, providing road safety, or maintaining your water supply, please thank the people who maintain our utilities and streets.

Electric generators update

The Borough's newly installed electric generators have been quietly doing their job at the substation. Not only do hot summer temps drive a surge in electric load, cold weather also drives higher energy demand on the grid.

These peak load demands prompt our generators to kick on. When you hear the humming, they reduce power consumption for a short period of time, reducing costs during peak load hours. In other words, it saves money for the Borough. In addition to reducing

electricity use during peak times, the Borough can use the generators in the event of a power outage, allowing for greatly enhanced reliability.

The Borough has owned and operated its own electric system since the early 1890s. It generated its own power until 1953 when the Borough started to purchase its power at the wholesale level. As an electric provider, the Borough is one of 35 municipal-owned electric systems, or a consortium, that purchases power from a nonprofit wholesale power supplier called American Municipal Power, Inc. (AMP).

The Borough continues to own, service and maintain all electrical systems within the community. One benefit of our partnership with AMP is the ability to participate in a Peak Shaving project that will lower the community's reported load during peak hours on the electricity grid.

Yes, It's Tax Season; Here's What to Know!

The 2024 Real Estate and Per Capita tax bills will be mailed the last week in February. Tax Collector office hours at the Recreation / Senior Center building, 340 Haven St., have changed from past years and are listed on the bills as follows:

- March/April - Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12 noon to 3 p.m.; June/July - office hours on the same weekdays will be 12 noon to 2 p.m.

- Hours for the remainder of the year will be posted on the Borough's website as well as the electronic sign on the Recreation/Senior Center building.

Appointments can also be made. Anyone with difficulties coming to the office should call 570-385-1313 to make an appointment to meet at your location.

We encourage payments by mail to expedite the collection process. There is a 2% discount for early payment by April 30, 2024. The face amount is due May through June 30, 2024. And, a 10% penalty period will be enforced July through December 31, 2024.

If mailing payment for any of the above periods, your payment must be postmarked by midnight within the period you are paying... discount by April 30, face amount by June 30, and penalty by December 31. Failure to pay taxes by the end-of-the-year will be turned into tax claim. Pay by check or money order only. If a receipt is needed, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The Borough/County bill must be paid in full; installment plans are not offered.

The Per Capita Tax is due from every resident, 18 years and older, regardless whether you are a renter or own your home. If you know of someone that has moved out of town, is recently deceased or in a nursing home, contact the tax office right away so they can be removed from the tax rolls.

Questions regarding the Borough/County Tax? Call the tax office at 570-385-1313 or email taxcollector@schuylkillhaven.org.

Questions regarding School District taxes should be directed to Berkheimer or the school district.

- Jake Whetstone, Tax Collector



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Greater Schuylkill Haven Area Business Assoc.

Giving to Non-Profits; Treating Children to a "Stroll"

The Greater Schuylkill Haven Area Business Association (GSHABA) honored five local non-profit organizations at its annual Night of Giving celebration on December 5. Monetary awards were given to representatives (pictured here) on behalf of The Frontier Girls, Schuylkill Haven



American Legion Ladies Auxiliary, Boy Scout Troop 622, Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches, the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry, and the Weekender Program.

Every year GSHABA identifies worthy non-profits. Awards are nominated by the business members based on need and contributions to the health, education and service to the local community.

Children's Christmas Stroll

Also in December, GSHABA hosted its annual Children's Christmas Stroll on Main Street. Businesses

and churches provided craft items, small gifts, hats and sweets to registered children.

Dry but cool weather allowed the 75 participants the opportunity to wear sweaters sporting reindeer, Santa, snowmen and elves. Many topped off their holiday attire with the decorative

head bands provided by GSHABA.

The Boy Scouts of Troop #622 sold hot dogs and offered information on their local programs. Haven area churches - St. Ambrose Catholic Church, Haven Baptist Church, First United Church of Christ, and First United Methodist - shared good will, carols, ornaments, hot chocolate and crafts. Schuylkill Hose Company #2 brought their fire truck and gave children a chance to sit in the driver's seat; Spottsie from the Spotts Insurance Group gave out Christmas hugs. Santa took Christmas wish orders and hung out at the Little Dipper Ice Cream Shoppe.



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Winter Tips for Your Safety . . . from The Code Guy

It's Still Winter! Be Smart – Stay Safe and Warm

Protect your plumbing from freezing

When temperatures dip below freezing, it's important to take steps to prevent ruptured plumbing. Leave water dripping slightly so that water is constantly running through the pipes to reduce the chances of freezing.

Open the cabinets in which indoor pipes are housed so they are exposed to the warmer temperatures in your home. Outdoor pipes should be wrapped with sufficient insulation to reduce exposure to the elements. Never leave a hose attached to an outside faucet during the winter months.

Check smoke/CO detectors



Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors save lives!

Every dwelling should have smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on each habitable level of the dwelling. Every sleeping room should have a smoke alarm.

Basements/cellars with a solid fuel heating appliance should have a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide

detector. Combination units are available and serve a dual purpose where both are needed.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless vapor that is sometimes produced by furnaces and space heaters. Symptoms of CO poisoning include nausea, dizziness, severe headache, confusion, and unconsciousness. If you notice these symptoms in yourself or a family member, go to the emergency room right away.

If you have a solid fuel heating appliance, use gas-powered space heaters, a kerosene heater, or have a fireplace, install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. If you already have detectors, test them regularly. Make sure they are in proper working order and change the batteries according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Clear snow and remove ice

Falls are the number one cause of injuries to adults. Reduce this risk for yourself and others in your neighborhood by clearing snow and ice from sidewalks, driveways, and walkways.

Keep these areas shoveled and free from debris. Simply clearing the snow may not be enough to keep the area safe. Ice is always a concern; so, apply sand or rock salt to slippery spots. Pay particular attention to stairs, since they can be hazardous and icy in colder months.

Safety tips when shoveling

Know if you shouldn't shovel. Some people, particularly if they've experienced heart, or other health concerns, should avoid shoveling snow.

Dress appropriately! Although it may be tempting to just run out and shovel the front walk in what you are wearing, you can prevent injury by dressing for conditions. Dress in layers so that you can remove some if you become too hot. Wear warm socks, a head covering, a scarf, and mittens or gloves. Wear waterproof boots with soles that are slip-resistant.

Before you begin shoveling, warm up your muscles for approximately ten minutes by doing stretches or other light exercises.

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Winter Tips for Your Safety . . . from The Code Guy

fits your body size and strength. Too short makes you lean forward more, risking back injury. Too long becomes awkward and difficult to lift or push snow.

Shoveling form is important to avoid strain on your back muscles and spine. Lifting a shovel of snow should be done with your back straight, bending your knees and squatting down with your legs apart. Don't throw snow over your shoulder or to the side. Instead, keep your arms close to your body while carrying it to where you want to place the snow.

Be careful with deep or heavy snow

Start removing the snow when the ground is lightly covered and keep clearing it often. This will avoid the accumulation of heavy, packed snow and allow you to push rather than lift. If you must lift the snow, don't overload the shovel. Remove it in layers.



Take a bottle of water with you when you go out to shovel. Drink regularly so that you don't become dehydrated as you work.

Don't overexert. Pace yourself, take breaks often, and go indoors fre-

quently to warm up and rest your body. If you feel pain or pressure in your chest, call your doctor right away.

Watch for slippery areas, patches of ice, and areas that are uneven. Once the driveway has been cleared, consider sprinkling some rock salt on it. This will be helpful if the local forecast calls for freezing rain. The rock salt will help to melt ice and lower the risk of slipping.

Meter notification requirement

All residents and contractors performing work that requires moving, un-securing, altering or disconnection of the meter or meter base in any capacity must contact the Code Enforcement Department at 570-385-2841.

No utility customer shall permit any person - excepting an authorized officer, agent or employee of the utility - do any work upon any meter, transformer, test switch or other utility apparatus located upon the customer's premises.

Failure to comply or allow work to be performed by any individual, other than stated above, can result in utility disconnection without notice. Service will only be restored on payment in advance of a fee for reconnection and all costs related to disconnection. In the case where evidence of tampering or fraud is evident, the above fees will be assessed plus all related enforcement, restitution and court costs.



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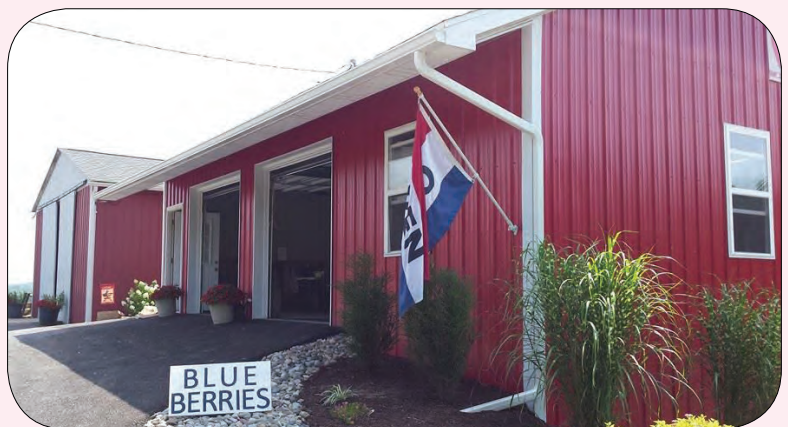
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Borough Services Update

Borough Office holidays

The Schuylkill Haven Borough municipal office and employee operations will be closed in observance of the following holidays in 2024: March 29 (Good Friday), May 27 (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), September 2 (Labor Day), November 11 (Veterans Day), November 28 and 29 (Thanksgiving), and December 24 and 25 (Christmas).

Help available for heating costs

Residents struggling to pay home heating bills can apply for assistance from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) now. This program runs until April 30, 2024.

The federally-funded LIHEAP program helps individuals and families pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance cash grants sent directly to your fuel/utility provider. The program includes crisis grants should there be an emergency or if a resident is in danger of losing his or her heat due to broken equipment, lack of fuel, or termination of utility service.

The income limit for an individual is \$21,870; for a couple, the limit is \$29,580; and for a family of four, it is \$45,000. Other family sizes have income limits, as well. The grant award amounts vary from \$300



to \$1,000 depending upon income, fuel source, and household size.

Residents may apply for LIHEAP online or by contacting your County Assistance Office.

Want to receive Boro notifications via text?

Rave Mobile's "Smart911" is a communication service that allows Schuylkill Haven Borough to notify residents quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency or need to convey critical information.

Smart911 uses cutting-edge technology to swiftly contact our residents via telephone or text. When the Borough needs to be in contact with its residents, such as a declared snow emergency or "boil water emergency," we can do so in a matter of minutes. This would also include other states of emergency, disaster announcements, road closures, parking restrictions, and other updates as necessary.

But, we need your help!

The Borough currently uses residents' phone numbers on file to place calls. If you would like to receive a text alert as your preferred form of notification, go to the Borough website - schuylkillhaven.org - and look for the quick link "Sign Up for Mobile Text Alerts."

In addition to choosing your preference for text messages through Smart911, please also call the Borough Office at 570-385-2841 so that your utilities account can be updated.

In order to reach every household and business, property owners with apartments should provide information regarding their tenants or recommend their tenants to sign up.

How do holidays affect trash/recycling?

Anthracite Waste Services, LLC observes Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day as official holidays that might affect normal trash pick-up days (Tuesday or Wednesday) and normal Thursday recycling collection.

As usual, Memorial Day (May 27) and Labor Day (Sept. 2) fall on a Monday. These weeks your trash pick-up and recycling will all be delayed one day.

This year Independence Day (July 4) falls on a Thursday, as does Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 28). Both of these weeks, trash pick-up days are not affected, but recycling will be delayed until Friday.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day 2025 fall on a Wednesday. These weeks, if your usual trash day is Tuesday, it will not be affected; however, those with normal Wednesday trash collection will be delayed until Thursday and recycling pick-up will be delayed until Friday.

The rules are simple. Be mindful of these holiday changes to trash and recycling pick-ups. Having your items spend an extra day at the curb is unsightly and risks inviting animals or wind-blown scattering.



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Borough Utilities and Recreation Services

Parks and Recreation

One of our favorite programs offered by the Recreation Department is Biddy Basketball. This season was a busy one, supporting 31 teams of young athletes across all skill levels with the opportunity to compete and develop as basketball players. Our volunteer coaches deserve a big thank you for making this program possible.

New for 2024 – the Recreation Department will be taking stewardship of the Community Garden. Plots – free to veterans, first responders, and senior citizens – are available to community members for a nominal fee. Interested? New or returning members are invited to attend an informational meeting at 6 p.m. on March 4 at the Recreation/Senior Center. Garden plots are limited; first come, first served.

Looking ahead to spring, we will be offering T-Ball for children five and six years of age. The season will take place in April and May; registration opens February 19.

In collaboration with the Schuylkill Headwaters Assoc., we will once again be stocking trout at Bubeck Park and the Island Recreation Park. These fish stockings are scheduled at both locations on April 5, 13, 20 and 28. All are invited to join us and help with these events.

As always, get additional information on these and other recreation programs online at **Havenrec.com** and **Facebook.com/Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department**. For answers to specific questions or needs, email havenrec@comcast.net.

– Mykal and Darle with the Rec. Department

Highway Department

The street sweeper begins its 8-month schedule once again with two consecutive weeks in April – Tuesday thru Friday, April 2 through April 5 and April 9 through 12 – to clear away winter's dirt and debris.



After that, normal operations will be the first Tuesday through Friday each month through November – May 7 through May 10, June 4 through June 7, July 2 through July 5, August 6 through August 9, September 3 through September 6,

October 1 through October 4, and November 5 through November 8.

Hours of operation are 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. Residents should check the sign posted for the weekday on your street. Vehicles must be removed so as to not impede the sweeper. Violators will be ticketed and face a \$15 fine.

Yard waste will be collected every 2nd Friday of the month. Please limit this to yard waste only! No other material should be in the bag – no dirt, rocks or garbage.

We find a lot of items other than yard waste when collected. If found guilty of this, your curbside service

will be suspended. Also, please limit the weight of each bag. Crew members must throw them on a truck.

Also, a reminder that the compost area is under video surveillance and anyone observed dumping anything other than compost will be penalized.

The Highway Department will be installing new drainage this year on Long View Drive, Blossom Lane, and Poppy Alley. Several streets will be paved with our state liquid fuels funds and low volume road grant.

And as always, we will be milling and hot patching areas of roadway. To report a pothole, call the Borough Office (570-385-2841) to report the location.

– Brian O. Murray, Foreman

Water Distribution / Wastewater Collection

There are many signs we look for that announce the coming of spring.

Robins are in our yards, bulb plants are busting through the soil, and signs of green are starting to show in our lawns. Spring also brings along many other forms of color and new life.

As mentioned in the fall issue of *Haven Highlights*, spring brings the first of our semi-annual maintenance tasks – flushing our water system through our fire hydrants.

As we say goodbye to the last remnants of winter's snow and ice, the spring warmth allows for the

– Continued on page 10

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Borough Utilities and Recreation Services

- Continued from Page 9

restoration of street paving dug up when making emergency repairs. Then in late spring, we start planning and laying out the projects our Water/Sewer Department has budgeted for 2024.

Every homeowner or property owner can assist Borough utilities and emergency responders by doing these easy, but important, items.

- Make sure your building or home has a street/unit address number visible from the street.
- Make sure the Borough Office has your current land-based and/or cell phone number and current address on file. These are crucial for the Rave Mobile Safety automatic notification system used if a utility or other emergency may affect you.
- Be alert while driving through a construction zone with workers doing their jobs. You and they want to return home safe and sound.

- Carter Hoffman, Foreman

Water Treatment Plant

Greetings from beautiful Tumbling Run. We spend most of our time with a lot of outside work during the summer; so, when the winter comes, we move inside. It's time to maintain the important inner-workings of the Water Treatment Plant - grease and change oil in high service pumps, service the blowers, paint whatever needs a little spruce-up, etc. In that way, we are

ready for the draw that spring puts on the water system.

Residents know what I'm talking about - winter with all the dirt from the salt trucks and snowplows! Everything needs to be cleaned. That takes a lot of water when washing and cleaning everything. So, the more water people use, the more we have to process.

Let's not forget where that water comes from - Mother Nature. That's right! We need that rain and snow through the fall and winter so we are strong in water storage for the spring.

For now, we are overflowing and that's a good place to be in February. Because, when March comes, that's when we all want to start that spring cleanup. Be mindful of how much water is being used. Utilize control nozzles on hoses so you can turn the water off when not needed. Conserve that precious water whenever possible.

Stay safe. Enjoy the rest of your winter.

- Kevin Butz, Foreman

Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

During my time working at the WWTP, I've been asked many times, "What are those big orange things in the front of the plant and why are they out when it rains?"

Those two "orange things" are actually diesel powered pumps that we put into place during heavy rain events. Their job is to pull flow from the plant to force it into the river. We must do this because during heavy rains the river level rises higher than our discharge pipe and creates a bottleneck.

With no place for the water to go, it would just overflow all our tanks causing localized flooding and, eventually, surcharge the collection system in town causing more flooding. These pumps are absolute workhorses for us. They were acquired through a grant in the mid 2010s and, since then, have been our backbone during emergency operations.

There is not much that can be done for the river backing up into our system. However, we can help reduce the amount of flow that comes to the WWTP during rain events and it starts with our town's residents. The first thing each resident should do is make sure that rain gutters are not tied into their sewer lines. This was a common practice many decades ago, but it is no longer permissible.

Another item that homeowners should check is most likely located in their basement. Unfortunately, many basements tend to take on a bit of water during heavy rains. Homeowners combat this by using sump



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Borough Utilities and Recreation Services

pumps to pump it out of the basement and away from their foundations. Sometimes these pumps are tied into sewer lines. Just like the gutters, sump pumps are also not allowed to be tied into sewer lines. If anyone has any questions regarding this, please contact our zoning office at Borough Hall.

- Zack Faust, Chief Operator

Electric Department

Spring is almost here! It's that time of year when the Borough's Electric Department trims trees away from wires in order to keep your lights on. When trees grow into power lines, they can cause outages and tree fires. This is why it's important the trimmers trim the trees that are under/near power lines.

The Borough's service area is divided into 3-year

cycles for trimming and cutting back branches to 10 feet from primary wires (the ones at the top of the pole). Trimmers cut and trim for clearance, not beautification.

Property owners concerned for the appearance of their trees that are encroaching on the electric wires should contract with their own professionals to sculpt their trees, providing that 10-foot clearance the Borough requires. Customers having questions about tree trimming should contact Borough Hall for assistance to get the proper personnel to provide answers.

Utility customers should ensure the placement of a house and/or unit address number is easily seen from the street to assist our crew getting to your problem quickly if an emergency occurs.

- Jim Haeseler, Foreman

Schuylkill Haven Lions Club - We Serve!

The Schuylkill Haven Lions Club had a successful 2023, providing needed services to our community.

Sight preservation has always been "in focus" as a key part of the Lions mission. Members collect used eyeglasses, forwarding them to Lions International for repairs needed and repurposing them for those in need all over the world. With the community's help, we provided a second life for more than 5,000 pairs of used eye glasses last year!



We are always accepting donations of used glasses at any of three convenient drop-off points - Dr. George Roberts' office (100 E. Main St.), Dr. Bernice Machamer's office (31 Parkway), and a drop box inside the Schuylkill Haven Free Public Library. Any Lion member will gladly accept them, also.

Fundraising events serve the community

Annual activities - our Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast held in the Schuylkill Haven Area High School cafeteria and our food stand and raffle in front of M & T Bank on Borough Day - help raise funds to provide services to the community. In the planning stages for 2024, we hope to host a Food Truck festival in July and a food stand during the Haven Halloween Parade.

Through our Lions Charities endeavor - designed to aid individuals and groups in need - we helped support Schuylkill Haven's Children's Christmas Stroll and provided donations to other groups.

Our Lions Foundation provides scholarship awards to students pursuing a degree in the medical professions. The Haven Lions awarded \$3,000 in funding this past July to graduated seniors entering college. Students can explore this possibility through their guidance counselor or get information from club members.

Local groups or organizations wishing to present what they do to the Schuylkill Haven Lions Club are

encouraged to contact any Lions member. The third Monday of each month is our "presentation" meeting. This past year saw Southern Area Baseball, the Boy Scouts, the Greater Schuylkill Haven Area Business Association, and the Schuylkill Community Foundation present to the club.

And, as always, anyone interested to join our club or wanting more information can contact Jake Whetstone at 570-990-6821. Our Motto is WE SERVE!

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