

The Pulse of Plum

Visit us on the web!
www.plumboro.com

Office:
4575 New Texas Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15239

Phone:
412-795-6800

Hours:
Monday - Thursday
8 am to 5 pm
Friday
8 am to 4 pm

Borough Council:
Mike Doyle, President
Keith Nowalk, Vice
President
John Anderson
Mike Dell
Don Knopfel
Len Szarmach
Steve "Skip" Taylor

Mayor:
Richard Hrivnak

Borough Manager:
Michael A. Thomas

*Council work sessions
are held the 1st
Monday of each month
and Council Meetings
are held the 2nd
Monday, both at 7 pm*

From the desk of the Borough Manager:

Nobody likes paying taxes, but most of us know that they are necessary to provide basic services. The real question is, "Am I paying too much in taxes?" What is the appropriate amount of local taxes? What is the appropriate level of services? The answers to these questions are very personal and depend greatly on your individual values. Regardless of your personal opinion; it helps to consider how well Plum Borough compares to other communities in Allegheny County with respect to taxes and spending?

The Allegheny Institute for Public Policy, a Pennsylvania based think tank devoted to local government issues, recently produced a report entitled, "Municipal Spending and Taxation in Allegheny County: An Update." The report compares per capita spending and revenue levels for Allegheny County municipalities based on the annual financial reports which all municipalities are required to submit each year to the PA

Department of Community and Economic Development.

The study takes a look at spending for various government categories such as public safety, general government, streets and recreation.

"Public safety" includes police, fire and EMS. "General government" would include things like building inspection, code enforcement, finance, and tax collection. "Streets" would include services such as paving, street signs and winter maintenance.

According to the Allegheny Institute, the average Allegheny County community spends \$638 for every person in their community for all services. So how does Plum compare with the rest of the communities? Plum spends \$460 per person or about 30% below the average for all communities.

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When it comes to the specific spending categories, Plum stacks up as follows:

	County Average	Plum	% above/below average
General Government	\$75	\$46	-39% below average
Public Safety	\$220	\$165	-25% below average
Sanitation	\$43	\$64	49% above average
Highways & Streets	\$105	\$111	6% above average
Recreation	\$40	\$6	-85% below average
Debt Service	\$54	\$67	24% above average
Total expenses	\$638	\$460	-30% below average

So, that's how Plum compares to the entire County; however, Allegheny County has 130 communities and most of these communities are much smaller than Plum. The average Allegheny County community population is about 9,400 (Plum is roughly three times that amount) and the average community is about 5.7 square miles (Plum is more than five times larger). 60% of the communities in Allegheny County have populations of less than 5,000.

Our comparison would be more meaningful if we compare Plum to similar communities. So, if we limit the study to only those communities which are similar in size and population because they have more in common with Plum; now how does Plum stack up against the rest?

There are 15 other communities in the County that have populations of 15,000 or above (Baldwin, Bethel Park, Hampton, McCandless, McKeesport, Monroeville, Moon, Mt. Lebanon, Penn Hills, Ross, Scott, Shaler, Upper St. Clair, West Mifflin and Wilksburg*). When it comes to population and median home values, Plum is pretty much at the average for the County. (see below)

	Population	Median Home Value	General Government	Public Safety	Sanitation	Highways & Streets	Recreation	Debt Service	Total Expenses
Average*	25,385	\$ 140,000	\$ 67	\$ 236	\$ 64	\$ 90	\$ 53	\$ 62	\$ 649
Plum	27,126	\$ 133,500	\$ 46	\$ 165	\$ 64	\$ 111	\$ 6	\$ 67	\$ 460
Difference	1,742	\$ (6,500)	\$ (21)	\$ (71)	\$ 0	\$ 21	\$ (47)	\$ 5	\$ (189)
	7%	-5%	-31%	-30%	0%	23%	-89%	9%	-29%

Over all, Plum spends about a third less per resident than the other similar communities in the County. When it comes to specific spending categories, our spending varies. We spend well below average on general government, and public safety. We are last in spending on recreation. However, we spend well above average on highways & roads (this is mainly due to our spending on salt and snow plowing).

When it comes to collecting taxes, the average community collects \$438 per person; compared to \$279 in Plum. The following chart demonstrates our relative position with respect to taxes in Allegheny County:

	County Average	Plum	% Above/Below Average
Median Income	\$47,961	\$64,415	35% above
Real Estate Taxes	\$ 214	\$ 131	-36% below
Total Taxes	\$ 438	\$ 279	-39% below

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When we limit the comparison to those same 15 similar communities from above, Plum is in the upper third with respect to median household income but has the lowest total taxes of the entire group.

	Median Household Income		Total Taxes
Upper St. Clair	\$109,223	Upper St. Clair	\$755
Hampton	\$77,096	Monroeville	\$701
Mt. Lebanon	\$74,003	Mt. Lebanon	\$686
Moon	\$71,399	West Mifflin	\$567
McCandless	\$70,480	Penn Hills	\$428
Plum	\$64,415	Wilkinsburg	\$412
Bethel Park	\$59,795	Bethel Park	\$386
Shaler	\$59,533	Scott	\$385
Monroeville	\$58,408	Hampton	\$381
Ross	\$56,257	McKeesport	\$378
Scott	\$51,349	Baldwin Borough	\$375
Baldwin Borough	\$48,675	McCandless	\$370
Penn Hills	\$44,749	Moon	\$356
West Mifflin	\$43,968	Ross	\$324
Wilkinsburg	\$28,355	Shaler	\$294
McKeesport	\$26,009	Plum	\$279

Because of the way that taxes are assessed, whether or not you feel that you are paying too much in taxes is mostly a function of your personal opinion about the tax structure here in Pennsylvania. But, no matter what your position, it's clear that you would be paying more elsewhere in the County.

BUILDING INSPECTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Building Permits are required for the following:

- Single Family Dwellings
- Manufactured/Modular Homes
- Two-Family Dwellings
- Townhouses
- Apartments
- Additions to Existing Residential Structures
- Porches
- Porch Roofs
- Decks
- Swimming Pools (above-ground and in-ground, greater than 24" deep)
- Spas and Hot Tubs
- Accessory Structures over 1,000 square feet
- Structural Alterations to Existing Structures
- Removal or Change of any Required Means of Egress
- Fences **over** six (6) feet high
- Retaining walls **over** four (4) feet high
- Sidewalks more than 30 inches above adjacent grade
- Driveways more than 30 inches above adjacent grade
- Demolition of Existing Structures
- Commercial Buildings
- Commercial Renovations
- Replace of windows, if bedroom windows are being replaced

Zoning Certificates are required for the following:

- Accessory Structures Under 1,000 square feet. These include:
 - Sheds
 - Detached Garages
 - Carports
 - Pavilions
 - Gazebos
 - Greenhouses
 - Pool houses
- Agricultural Buildings

Occupancy Permits are required for the following:

- Non Residential Structures or Additions, prior to occupancy
 - All Residential Structures which change ownership or residents (occupancy permit to be issued prior to new residents occupying the structure)
 - All Commercial Structures or Additions, prior to occupancy
 - All Commercial Structures which change ownerships or tenants (occupancy permit to be issued prior to new tenants occupying the structure)
- 

PA's New Graduated Driver Licensing and Passenger Restraint Law

In October of 2011, Pennsylvania joined a growing number of states by enacting a process of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). The legislation (Act 81) limits the number of passengers inexperienced drivers may carry. It also requires drivers less than 18 years of age and their passengers under 18 to use seat belts/passenger restraints. For drivers under 18, seat belt use is now mandatory. It is **NOT** a secondary offense.

Nationwide, traffic crashes are the leading cause of teenager's deaths.

Inexperienced drivers, unrestrained passengers, and in-car distractions are a deadly combination. There is no question that lives will be saved through enforcement of PA's new law.

The standard for a traffic stop under PA's Graduated Driver Licensing and Passenger Restraint Law is reasonable suspicion, not probable cause. In *Commonwealth v. Chase*, the PA Supreme Court approved Section 6308(b) of the Vehicle Code, which permits an officer to stop a vehicle if he/she possesses reasonable suspicion of a violation.

If an officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger in a car full of youths who appear to be high-school age, this observation can provide reasonable suspicion of an Act 81 violation.

Additional information is needed; however, for the officer to know whether a violation has occurred. The traffic stop will serve the "investigative purpose" of determining whether the driver and/or passengers are under the age of 18, and subject to more stringent requirements.



PA's Graduated License Law (GDL) ... Frequently Asked Questions

What is the charge and penalty?

The driver will be cited with violating Section 4581(a) (2) (ii) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code. The fine for violating Section 4581(b) is \$10.00.

If the Driver (belted) is under 18, and a passenger (unbelted) is under 18, who is charged?

Under Section 4581(a)(2), it is the Driver's obligation to make sure that all passengers are properly secured. The Driver will be cited.

If the Driver (belted) is under 18, and a passenger (unbelted) is over 18, is there a violation of 4581(a) (2) (ii)? **No**

How many passengers may a junior driver carry?

According to Section 1503(c) (2.1), a junior driver in his 1st 6 months may only carry one additional passenger, **unless** the additional passengers are immediate family members. This provision does not apply if the junior driver is accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

What is an "immediate family member?"

Section 1503(c) (2.1) defines "immediate family" as "brothers, sisters, stepbrothers or stepsisters of the driver, including adopted or foster children residing in the same household as the junior driver." Cousins, in-laws, and more distant relations are not covered by this exception.

What is the charge and penalty for violating the restriction on number of passengers?

The Driver will be charged with violating Section 1503(c) (2.1) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, which is a summary offense that carries a fine of \$25.00 and additional court costs.

When does a junior driver earn the ability to carry more than one non-family passenger?

The junior driver can only carry one non-family passenger for six months from the **issuance** of their junior license. After that, they can only carry **three** non-family passengers until their 18th birthday.

Can a junior driver lose the ability to carry more than one non-family passenger?

Yes, if they are responsible for a reportable accident under Section 3746(a) **OR** if they are convicted of any Vehicle Code violation.

If the Driver is under 18 and there are more passengers than belts in the vehicle, is it a violation?

Yes...the DRIVER will be charged with violating Section 4581(a)(3) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code. The fine is \$10.00. Note that for this charge, it doesn't matter whether passengers are over 18 and/or family members of the driver.

Plum's Recycling Increases with New Carts!

New carts were introduced in October and recycling has increased over 100% in the Borough. The new carts give residents twice the amount of space to place their recyclable materials.

The week of July 25, 2011, before carts, we recycled 18 tons of material; the week of January 9, 2012, we recycled 41.5 tons of material. With new carts, Plum residents have started to really get into recycling!

Recycling is not only beneficial to the environment but also reduces costs to the Borough and its residents by keeping rates lower.



ANNUAL YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Spring is now upon us and many of you are probably thinking about sprucing up your yards.

In order to assist you, Plum Borough will be sponsoring its annual yard waste collection this Spring. The yard waste collection will allow you to dispose of shrubbery, chipped shrubbery, tree trimmings, garden residue and other vegetative materials at no cost. *No grass clippings or leaves will be collected with these special collections.*

Collections will be held on April 14, May 12, and June 9, 2012.

Allied Waste will come to your house to pick-up the yard waste as long as you have scheduled the pick-up with them.

Please contact Allied Waste at 877-788-9400 to schedule a pick-up of your yard waste.

You must call Allied by noon the day before the scheduled collection dates in order for your yard waste to be collected that day.

Please place all yard waste at the curb prior to 7:00 a.m. the morning of the pick-up.

Trucks will only be dispatched to those homes that requested a yard waste pick-up and will not be canvassing the Borough looking for yard waste. If you don't register, your yard waste will not be collected!

PLUM COMMUNITY DAYS 2012

Plum Rotary and the Borough of Plum are in the planning stages of the Plum Community Days Festival.

The festival will be held July 27, 28 and 29th at Larry Mills Park.

New and exciting additions, as well as traditional favorites are being planned.

Here is a sneak peak of what to look for:

Car Cruise, Bingo, Bocci Tournaments and the Plum Community Days Rugged 5K Challenge.

The event concludes on Saturday, July 29th with a fireworks extravaganza by Zambelli.

If you or your organization is interested in participating, contact 412-795-6800 ext. 224



Have you ever wondered where your tax dollar goes?

\$.71 to Plum Borough School District
\$.15 to Allegheny County
\$.14 to Plum Borough

The Plum Fire Chief's Association is selling:

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKERS

\$15

Ensure your home can be located by emergency personnel.

Send your name, address, phone number and payment to:

PFCA, PO Box 14466, Pittsburgh, PA 15239

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**Support your local fire department
by stopping by their fish fry during
the Lenten season!**



The Plum Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a "Cash Bash" on Saturday, April 21st at Gateway Fire Hall.

Only 500 tickets sold! Tickets are \$25. Call the Chamber Office at 412-798-2300 for tickets.



Primary Election Day is Tuesday,
April 24, 2012

Plum Borough Polling Places:

District	Location
1	Plum Senior High School
2	Logans Ferry Volunteer Fire Dept.
3	Oakmont East Golf Course
4	St. John the Baptist School
5	Center Elementary School Cafeteria
6	Plum Senior Community Center
7	Regency Park Elementary School
8	Holiday Park Elementary School
9	Holiday Park Elementary School
10	Holiday Park Volunteer Fire Dept.
11	A.E. O'Block Junior High Cafeteria
12	A.E. O'Block Junior High Cafeteria
13	Adlai Stevenson Elementary School Cafeteria
14	Adlai Stevenson Elementary School Cafeteria
15	East Suburban YMCA
16	East Suburban YMCA
17	Regency Park Elementary School
18	Pivik Elementary School
19	Plum Senior High School Gym
20	Pivik Elementary School
21	Pivik Elementary School



Visit:
www.pbsasports.org
For information on Plum
baseball and softball
programs!

**Call 412-795-6800 ext. 224
If you are interested in
joining the Plum Rotary!**



SERVICE Above Self

**PLUM SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTER HAPPENINGS
APRIL – MAY – JUNE 2012**

Daily/Weekly Activities...

Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:00 am					Tai Chi	
9:15 am	Low-Impact Aerobics		Silver Sneakers Cardio Circuit		Low-Impact Aerobics	
10-11:30 am			Blood Pressure Testing & Craft Group	Blood Pressure Testing		
10:30 am	Silver Sneakers MSROM	Yoga Stretch	Silver Sneakers MSROM and Tai Chi		Silver Sneakers MSROM	Zumba
11:30 am	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch Stroke Survivors Group Meeting	Lunch	
12:30 pm			Country Western Band			
12:45 pm	Bingo	500 Cards	Euchre	Bingo		
1:00 pm		Dominoes				
6:30 pm	Zumba		Tai Chi Advanced			
7:30 pm			Tai Chi Beginner			

MSROM—Muscle Strength Range of Motion

More Daily Activities...

Have Lunch at the Plum Senior Community Center!

Hot lunches are served daily from 11:30 to 12:15 pm. Reservations are required by Noon the day before your desired lunch date to reserve your meal.

Suggested donation is \$3.00 ~ Discount cards available!

Visit www.plumseniorcenter.org.

If you are recuperating from an illness, accident or surgery, our Home Delivered Meal Program delivers meals though out the community five days a week.

You can request meals from a week to several months, as necessary.

To be eligible for Home Delivered Meals, one must be 60 years of age, live in Plum Borough and need assistance.

Cal 412-795-2330 and ask for Toni.



Monthly Activities...

Program	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Poetry Café				1st Thursday 1 to 2 pm	
Advisory Group Meeting				2nd Thursday 10 am	
Caregivers' Group				3rd Thursday 6:30 to 8:30 pm	
Book Club				4th Thursday 6:30 to 8:30 pm	
Birthday Party			3rd Wednesday 11:30 to 12:15 pm Cake, gifts & games		
Dinner Club	Call for details!				

Upcoming Events at the Center...



Saturday, April 14, 2012
1 to 4 pm
Tickets \$25
Jackpot \$500
Complimentary pastries & coffee!
Anyone who purchases tickets in advance will receive a free gift.
412-793-2330

MENTAL AEROBICS CLASS

Must be a resident Of Allegheny County.
Classes are free!
Class Dates:
April 12, 19, & 26
12:30 to 2:30 pm
Register by
April 4th at
412-795-2330

TECHNOLOGY BOOT CAMP

Tuesday, April 17
Tuesday, April 24
9:30 am to 11:30 am
Call 412-795-2330
and ask for Melanie to sign up!



HEALTHY STEPS PROGRAM

How to prevent slips, trips and falls!
Class is
Friday, April 20th
10 am to 2 pm
Lunch is provided
Call the center to register!



Say "good bye" to the old center and "hello" to the new PSCC.
Wear your favorite Hawaiian shirt, shorts, toss a beach ball & sing your favorite Beach Boys tune!
Prize for best costume!

SILLY HAT DAY

May 16th wear your silliest or favorite hat!
Share your silly (but clean!) jokes

PICNIC LUNCH DAY

May 24th enjoy our hot dog roast, potato salad & ice cream!
Register 412-795-2330

DRIVER'S SAFETY REFRESHER CLASS

One-day course open to drivers of all ages!
You must have taken the Driver's Safety Course within the past 3 years & have your card. At completion participants 55+ are eligible to receive 5% discount on auto insurance.
\$12/AARP Members

\$14/Non-AARP
Non-refundable Fee must be paid in full one week prior to event.
Bring your PA license & AARP card

COMING IN JUNE
2nd Annual Inter-generational Pet Parade & Pet Show

We hope you enjoyed "The Pulse of Plum"....Plum Borough's first electronic newsletter!

Email your comments/suggestions to mcozanza@plumboro.com