

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
Mike Dell, Vice-President
John Anderson
Don Knopfel
Leonard J. Szarmach
Steve "Skip" Taylor
Dave Vento

Mayor:
Richard Hrivnak

Borough Manager:
Michael A. Thomas

Council work sessions are held the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm and Council Meetings are held the 2nd Monday, at 7 pm

From the desk of the Borough Manager:

If you find yourself in the Borough Building for a permit or to pay your bills, you may notice the administration staff dressed casually on Fridays. To show our commitment to our community, administrative staff members can make a cash donation every Friday to wear jeans in the office.

The money collected is then directed towards local charities on a quarterly basis. The "casual Friday" program began in 2011 and, in the three years since its inception, this small group of staff members (less than 10) has already donated over \$3,000 to Plum residents or for causes near and dear to the hearts of Plum residents.

The administrative staff members also donate their time for many community events, delivering meals on wheels to Plum seniors who are not able to prepare meals for themselves and even performing volunteer work on their own time on various projects to help our Plum neighbors who are in need. I am very proud to work with such a dedicated group of professionals who continually demonstrate their commitment to Plum Borough both in the office and out in the community.

Speaking of dedicated professionals, I am extremely proud to announce that Lieutenant Jeff Armstrong was promoted to the rank of Chief of Police at the January 14th public Council meeting. Chief Armstrong has been with the Plum Police Department for twenty years as a patrolman, sergeant, lieutenant and now as our new Chief. Chief Armstrong brings with him not only the invaluable experience of having dedicated his professional career to the public safety of our community but he also possesses the intellect and vision to lead the Plum Police Department into the future.

Of course, the promotion of Chief Armstrong means that we must unfortunately say goodbye to one of the most distinguished law enforcement professionals in the commonwealth. Frank Monaco was sworn in as the Chief in July of 2007. Prior to that time, Chief Monaco had been a trooper with the PA State Police for 32 years, achieving the rank of "Major" by the end of his career with the State Police. On behalf of the Mayor, Borough Council and the employees of Plum, I would like to wish Chief Monaco all the best in his retirement and he best of luck to Chief Armstrong in his new position.

Michael A. Thomas
Borough Manager

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS

Sometimes at this time of the year it seems like winter will never end. No one knows that more than the dedicated and professional employees of the Plum Borough Public Works Department who work hard to keep the streets of Plum Borough clear of snow and ice during the winter. These employees are on call 24/7 during the winter months and spend many evenings and weekends away from their families to keep you safe. It is not uncommon for these employees to work a 24 hour shift or longer performing their duties.

In an effort to continually improve the service, a number of changes have been made to the snow plowing and salting operation in the past three months. The first and most important change was the move to a new facility on November 4, 2013. The Plum Borough Public Works Department relocated from its home for the past 40 years to a new 24,000 square foot facility on Old Mine Road. This building contains 24 individual garage bays which can accommodate all of the trucks in the Public Works Department fleet. This is important because the Public Works Department can now keep all 13 of the trucks used for plowing and salting loaded with salt in anticipation of a storm. Previously only three trucks could be kept in the old Public Works Building. Keeping the trucks loaded at all times improves the response time of the Public Works crews and gets the trucks on the road 30 to 45 minutes sooner than in the past.

Along with the Public Works Building, a new salt storage building was constructed simultaneously. This new building can hold 6,000 tons of salt, which is the average amount of salt used annually by the Public Works Department. The old building held less than 800 tons of salt and left the Borough at the mercy of the salt suppliers if there was a shortage of salt during the winter months. We are now able to fill the salt storage building prior to winter when salt is readily available.



Our dedicated crew of 16 drivers plow over 120 miles of Borough owned roads and 10 miles of state owned roads during every storm. Each driver has a dedicated route and he does not vary from it unless he needs to assist a fellow driver with an emergency, assist an ambulance, fire truck, school bus or garbage truck. With approximately 10 miles of roads to plow and salt, each driver can complete his route in between 90 and 120 minutes depending on the road conditions. When a driver completes his route, he typically refills his truck with salt and returns to the route for a second pass and continues driving his route until the roads are clear.

We are often asked if the Borough is running low on salt and if the Borough is trying to save money on salt and overtime. The answer is a resounding “no”. Plum Borough started the winter with 6,000 tons of salt on hand and has taken delivery of an additional 2,500 tons in the past six weeks. It is true that we have used more salt than in previous winters due to the number of small storms we experienced beginning in November, but we have not depleted our salt supplies. The only major change that has been made to the salting and plowing routine in the recent past is that fewer trucks are called out late at night and on weekends. If these trucks cannot keep up with snowfall then additional trucks are called out by the supervisors as needed. On school days the full crew is mobilized in any snow event so that school can be held as usual at the discretion of the Plum Borough School District. This has remained unchanged for the past ten years.

Many times during a snowstorm a full contingent of trucks is not necessary since the amount of snow throughout the Borough is not always uniform. There have been many instances when there have been two to three inches of snow in one part of the Borough and no snow in others. This makes the storm difficult to assess since the snow may move to other areas of the Borough quickly or it may stay localized. The Public Works Department tries to call out the appropriate amount of staff to keep the roads safe, but not waste tax dollars when it is not necessary.

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS (continued)

The Public Works Department also assists the Plum Borough School District with their efforts in plowing and salting the schools. The Borough provides the School District with salt for their facilities and loads the School Districts' trucks. The Borough has also plowed and salted the school parking lots and driveways when the School District truck is out of service. The Public Works Department staff is in constant communication with School District representatives on any school day when there is snow. Public Works Department supervisors notify the School District any time there is a mobilization of Public Works crews for plowing and salting so that the School District is fully aware of the road conditions from the time the Public Works Department is notified.

The routes that the drivers run have been slightly modified this year since the Public Works Department has moved to a new facility. The management staff in the Public Works Department constantly works to refine these routes to maximize efficiency and safety and to provide the highest level of service to the residents of Plum Borough. When the snow is falling, the drivers are on the road regardless of the time of day or the day of week driving their set routes. The routes are set up to cover the most critical areas first; main roads with the highest traffic volumes and steep grades are plowed and salted first while roads such as cul-de-sacs in subdivisions are typically plowed and salted last as they have the least traffic. There really is no need to call the Public Works Department during a snow-storm to inform the staff that your road has not been plowed or salted. The drivers are on a pre-determined route and the Department of Public Works Management is in constant contact with the Police Department monitoring the conditions of the roads.

It is a common misconception that the roads are safe just because the plow/salt truck has been through. Many factors influence whether or not the road is safe for driving including the air temperature, surface temperature of the road, how long it has been since the road was treated, continued precipitation, type of precipitation and duration of the storm. When salt is applied to the road it does not work immediately to melt all of the ice and snow. Salt actually works better after there has been some traffic on the road to help spread the salt around as well as warm up the road from the friction of the tires. Motorists should always be cautious when driving in the winter even if the road looks wet as there could be icy spots that are not apparent. Motorists should also remember that the effectiveness of salt is reduced as the air and surface temperatures drop. When this occurs the Public Works Department mixes salt with sand or pea gravel to provide an anti-skid material to help with traction on the roads.

In order for the residents and motorists to be safe, the Public Works Department asks that everyone use common sense when driving in winter weather conditions. Reduce your speed on untreated roads, increase the distance between you and the car in front of you, drive defensively and anticipate what other motorists are going to do and when you see a plow truck on the road, give the driver room to get through the area and don't tailgate any snow plow.

In order to minimize property damage during snow and ice events, **do not park on the street** and remove all basketball hoops, hockey nets and other movable items from the roadway and road right-of-way.

Accidents do happen during these events and sometimes mailboxes, fences or other permanent structures are damaged by the weight of the snow coming off of the plow. If this happens, please notify the Public Works Department and we will repair any damage as soon as possible. Curbs and yards may also be damaged during snow plowing. We will also fix these problems that are reported to the Public Works Department as soon as practicable in the spring. Movable items such as basketball hoops, hockey nets and other similar items will not be repaired or replaced by the Borough as they should not be placed in the right-of-way at any time.

Plum Public Works employees are always on call for your safety. Slow down, be patient and be safe.



Aggressive Driving Enforcement

The Plum Borough Police Department will be participating in the PA Aggressive Driving Enforcement and Education Project's (PAADEEP) Spring 2014 Enforcement Wave, which begins the last week of March and concludes the first week in May.

This project (PAADEEP) is a statewide initiative that utilizes crash data to identify aggressive driving locations throughout Pennsylvania. High visibility target enforcement, coordinated earned media, public awareness and training are conducted on these roadways to reduce the number of needless aggressive driving injuries and deaths. The project is a partnership comprised of municipal police departments, the Pennsylvania State Police, PennDOT, and the United States Department of Transportation.

Aggressive driving behaviors include speeding, failing to stop at stop signs, red light running, making illegal turns, passing other vehicles in no passing zones, careless driving, tailgating, aggressive lane changing, and other similar moving infractions.



During the enforcement wave, the police department will be conducting traffic details on specific roadways looking for drivers who engage in the types of behaviors described above. When identified, drivers will be stopped and may be issued citations for any violation which may have occurred, including failure to wear a belt, which is a zero tolerance offense under the guidelines of this program.

The police department urges everyone to drive safely, not only during the project wave, but all year around. Seemingly harmless driving behaviors such as those described above can start a chain of events that lead to life altering consequences.

Don't put yourself, your family, or others at risk. Drive safe, drive smart.





PLUM ROTARY—SHOES FOR NICARAGUA PROJECT

It's hard to picture life without a pair of shoes to protect your feet, but thousands of children in Nicaragua are deprived of this comfort. The rural population of Nicaragua is overwhelmed with poverty. One of the answers to this poverty is to educate the children. Education is available; however, a requirement for school attendance is students must wear shoes. Most families cannot afford shoes for all of their children, so they buy shoes for one child and that child goes to school. When that child comes home, it is their responsibility to pass on what was learned that day to the other children of the family.

An idea evolved and the "Nicaragua Shoe Project" was born. The Nicaraguan children need shoes and American children have used shoes that they've outgrown or simply just don't wear.

In an effort to help these children, Plum Rotary, in conjunction with several local Rotary Clubs, is sponsoring a collection of gently-used children's shoes.

Participating is easy! Simply bring your gently-used children's shoes (any type and size) to one of the following drop off locations:

Plum Borough Municipal Building, 4575 New Texas Road, Pittsburgh
S and T Bank, Holiday Park Shopping Center, Route 286

Any and all types of school supplies are also being collected. Please drop off your donations by May 1st.

WANTED:



(When possible, please tie laces together!)

ROTARY MEMBERS WANTED! Rotary members are men and women of all ages and professional backgrounds who use their talents, skills and energy to improve the lives of people in communities at home and around the world. To learn more about the Plum Rotary, email mcostanza@plumboro.com

Protect Yourself from Phone Scams

The police department regularly receives reports of frauds or scams which result in the loss of large sums of money by the victim. One such scam which has resurfaced recently targets the elderly and relies on playing to the emotions of the victim.

In this scam, the victim, who is usually elderly, will receive a phone call from an individual identifying themselves as a relative of the victim, such as a grandson or granddaughter. The suspect will sometimes identify themselves by name, which adds credibility to the scam. The caller will then explain to the victim how they got involved in an unfortunate circumstance which has resulted in them needing a large sum of money to rectify the problem. The situation always contains an element of urgency to it, as to require the victim to act quickly without consulting others.

For example, in one of our most recent reports the victim was told by his “grandson” that he had been involved in an automobile accident while traveling outside the country and did not have insurance. Because of this, the “grandson” was going to be jailed if he did not come up with \$950. Once establishing credibility with the panicked victim and providing the dollar amount needed to save them from their unfortunate circumstance, the caller will plead with the victim not to tell any other family members of the situation in an effort to avoid parental punishment or family embarrassment. In the example referenced earlier, the “grandson” asked the victim not to tell his parents as to avoid them being angry and disappointed with him. This request made by the suspect serves two purposes. It creates an illusionary bond of trust between the victim and the caller and it buys the suspect time to have the victim execute the remainder of the plan without others interfering.

Once the victim has bought in to the scam and has agreed to assist the caller by providing the money needed, the caller will give the victim instructions as to how to get him the money. This is routinely done as a wire transaction through Western Union or similar service. The victim is given a fictitious name to send the money to on behalf of the relative in trouble and the destination of the transfer is almost always outside of the United States. If the transfer is complete and the suspect receives the money requested, it is not unusual for the suspect to call the victim again and request additional money due to some unforeseen circumstance. In our most recent report, the victim was contacted by the suspect again only 5 hours after the initial transaction stating he needed an additional \$940 to get out of jail. These calls will continue as long as the suspect continues receiving wire transfer of cash.



A variation of this scam plays out the same way; only the suspect will identify himself as a police officer who is calling on behalf of the relative. The “police officer” will tell the victim that his relative has been jailed due to some innocuous event and must come up with a sum of money to be released. If the victim buys into the story, the scam will play out the same way as above. In our most recent report, the suspect or a co-conspirator called the victim back a third time after the victim had grown suspicious and questioned the suspect during the second call and identified himself as an officer from a local police department. The suspect began asking the victim questions about the incident as if he was conducting an investigation. During this time, the suspect requested the victim’s bank information, which he provided to him. When the victim attempted to call the local police department to speak with the officer he spoke to on the phone, he learned that there was no officer who worked at the department with the name which he was provided.

What makes these types of crimes so difficult to solve is that they most often originate and conclude outside the country. The wire transfers may originally go to Mexico City, for example, only then to be rerouted to other international destinations. The individuals involved are almost impossible to identify or locate, as the names used are always fictitious. Complicating matters is the inability of some elderly victims to provide pertinent information or their unwillingness to cooperate due to embarrassment.

If you have a friend or relative who is elderly and who you may believe could be susceptible to these types of frauds and scams, please make an effort to educate them as to the dangers of engaging with people unknown to them who contact them via telephone. Remember these simple rules to protect yourself from you or a loved one being victimized by these types of scams:

- Be suspicious when receiving a call about a relative who has run into legal trouble while outside of the United States; especially if you have no knowledge of a family member traveling outside of the country.
- If someone on the phone identifies themselves as a relative but you are not 100% certain that they are who they say they are, ask them a specific question that only the actual person would know, such as a birthday or family pets name.
- If you receive a call about a relative in trouble outside of the United States, speak with another family member who would have knowledge of their whereabouts and who could confirm that they are traveling outside the country.
- A police department or other legitimate law enforcement agency would never contact you and ask for cash to be sent to them directly.
- If an individual calls, identifies themselves as a police officer and begins requesting personal information, ask the officer if you can hang up and call him back at the police department phone number listed in the phone book.
- Do not give personal information such as social security numbers or bank account numbers to individuals who contact you by phone.
- Do not wire money to individuals that you do not know or cannot readily find.
- Do not wire money outside the United States unless you know for certain where it is going and who is receiving it.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

You asked and we answered!



Is there a violation for that?

This is one frequent question that the Plum Borough Code Enforcement Department is asked. Common code violations are: high grass, junk and debris, vehicles without current inspection and registration, sight obstructions due to vegetation, dumping, building without a permit, grading without a permit, sign permits, and zoning violations.

The Code Enforcement Department is largely complaint driven from the Borough's residents.



So how do I log a complaint?

If you think there is a property with a code violation you should contact the Code Enforcement Department at 412-795-6800 extension 4504. Linda, the Department secretary will log your complaint. You will need to provide the address of the violation as well as your name and contact number in case we need to contact you to follow up on the complaint. *Please note that your name and information is kept confidential.* The violation must be able to be seen from the street since our employees are not allowed to trespass on to a private property. If the violation can be seen from your property let us know if we can enter your property to view the complaint. Once we receive the complaint it will be issued to a Code Enforcement Officer for investigation. If a violation is found we will notify the property owner via certified or registered mail of the violation and amount of time to rectify the violation. Please note that there is a determined amount of days per each individual Borough Ordinance for the complaint to be rectified. The time period begins when the certified or registered mail is received by the violating property owner. It is the goal of the Code Enforcement Department to have the violation addressed. We will work with the property owner to comply. If compliance is not received a citation will be issued with the District Magistrate. If a citation is issued a hearing is scheduled before the Magistrate within 2-4 weeks. Any fine or extension of time to address the violation is then decided by the Magistrate.



2014 PLUM COMMUNITY DAYS

FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH

SATURDAY, JUNE 28TH



The 2014 Plum Community Festival will be held on Friday, June 27th from 5:30 to 10 pm and Saturday, June 28th from 4 to 10 pm. The festival will be held at Larry Mills Park in Holiday Park.

Rotary Committee members have been meeting diligently and are hard at work to bring you an event that you won't forget! The festival celebrates fun, food and entertainment. The goal of the Rotary is to host a family-oriented festival that brings Plum Borough residents and businesses together for an enjoyable weekend.

Sponsorship requests will soon be mailed to local businesses who in the past have supported this event. Without the business community's support this entertaining weekend would not be possible. However, the support which is received by the Borough and local businesses is not enough to finance this event. In an effort to raise additional funds, Plum Rotary will be sponsoring a raffle ticket. Tickets are only \$5 and winners will be determined by the PA Daily lottery evening drawing, everyday during the month of June! See any Rotary member or stop by the Municipal Building to buy tickets.

And remember . . . there are four ways you or your group can take part! Sponsor an activity booth, participate as a crafter, a food vendor or a non-food vendor. Details about each category and registration forms are available by visiting www.plumboro.com

Support, Participate and Contribute to this wonderful event for the people of Plum Borough!



**COUNCIL
CHAMBER**

Due to a scheduling conflict the regular monthly meeting of Council for the month of February will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at 7:00 pm

Plum Community Center News

Plum Community Center 499 Center New Texas Road Plum PA 15239 412-795-2330

Open: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm, Fridays until 3:30 pm Café - Monday - Friday 11 – 2 pm

Check out our website for a full and updated listing of services, programs, trips & activities!

www.PlumSeniorCenter.org www.Facebook.com/PlumCenter www.pinterest.com/PlumCenter

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

GAMES

- **BINGO** 12:30 pm Mondays & Thursdays
- **Dominos** Tuesdays at 12:30 pm
- **Poker & 500** etc. Tuesdays at 12:45 pm
- **Euchre** Wednesdays at 12:45 pm
- **Scrabble & Game Day!** 12:30 pm Fridays

Every Friday is Game Day @ PCC!

Card Games, Board Games, & Wii!
Bring your favorite, or play one of ours!
Bring your family, bring a neighbor,
bring your mailman—the more the
merrier! :)

**Come early to eat a yummy
lunch in our Café.**

MUSIC

- **Country-Western Band** Wednesdays @ 12:30 pm 50/50 raffle too
- **Line Dancing** Thursdays @ 10 am

Fitness Class Pass!

Did you know that depending on your health insurance plan you might be able to attend SilverSneakers classes for free!?!
If your plan does not, anybody of any age can attend SilverSneakers day classes for only \$3 a class. Or check out our Fitness Class Pass discount card for even more savings!

For only \$25 you can:

Attend ten \$3 classes @ \$2.50

Attend five \$7 classes @ \$5 a class!

Good for your health & your wallet!

FITNESS DAY CLASSES

- **Low-impact Aerobics** Mon & Fri 9:15 am
- **SilverSneakers Cardio** Wednesday 9:15
- **SilverSneakers Sitdown Exercise** Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:30 am
- **SilverSneakers Yoga Stretch** (nonreligious) Tuesday at 1:30 pm relaxing & stretching.
- **Line Dancing** Thursdays 10:00-11:30 am only \$2! **Free introductory beginner's class @ 9:30 am. Come early & learn the moves!**
- **Yoga (nonreligious)** Fridays at 11:30 am starting January 17th.

FITNESS EVENING CLASSES

TAI CHI EVENINGS every Wednesday. Tai Chi is slow rhythmic movements coupled with deep breathing to circulate energy throughout the body. Come to decrease pain and increase mobility! Everyone welcome ages 18+. **6:30 pm** for Advanced & Intermediate **7:30 pm** for Beginner 1 & 2 classes. \$40 for 8-week classes.

TRIPS!

LUNCH TRIP to Fortune Star Buffet

Join us for an All You Can Eat BUFFET & LUNCH @ the Chinese Buffet Restaurant Fortune Star in Miracle Mile Shopping Center Thursday FEBRUARY 20th @ 11:30 am. OPT leaving PCC @ 11 am for Lunch @ 11:30. Please RSVP so we can reserve enough seats at the restaurant, and also if you are using OPT for those 60+.

NY CITY TRIP

Get ready to see the "Big Apple" this fall October 10-13, 2014. Only \$449 for 4 days & 3 nights!! Includes: motorcoach transportation to and from NY, 3 nights lodging, 6 meals, two guided tours of the city and more!

\$449 price is per person based on double occupancy. \$75 is due upon signing with the final payment due 8/3/2014. For more info and to reserve your space which is limited, visit Plum Community Center today and talk to Melanie or Nici!

Plum Community Center News Continued

www.PlumSeniorCenter.org

SPECIAL EVENTS! Monthly Birthday Party

Our birthday lunches are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. People 60 and over are encouraged to call 412-795-2330 before Noon the day prior if they plan on eating the congregate meal. The Holiday Park Shop 'n Save donates the birthday cakes and Flowers in the Attic provide carnations for each celebrant!

FEBRUARY

9th - Plum Baseball Vera Bradley Bingo Plum Baseball Cooperstown Team holding Vera Bradley Bingo at the Center. Details will follow soon.

13th - Valentine's Pizza Party 11 am



11 am holiday craft, 11:30 yummy lunch special: pizza, salad & drink only \$4.25! Please sign up to let us know if you will be participating in the craft, lunch special or both so we can have enough.

20th - LUNCH TRIP to Fortune Star 11 am

Join us for an All You Can Eat BUFFET & LUNCH @ the Buffet Restaurant in Miracle Mile Shopping Center. OPT leaving PCC @ 11 am to arrive for Lunch @ 11:30 am. Please RSVP so we can reserve enough seats at the restaurant, and also if you are using OPT for those 60+.

20th - Caregivers Support Group

will have a speaker Janet Matthews talking about Mental Aerobics. Call Earlene for details 412-795-2330.

MARCH

22nd - Indoor Fleamarket "Fleatique" 9 am - 2 pm

Come buy some great deals! Or sell some of your stuff—table rentals only \$15! Reserve a table now as space is limited! Or want to help us fundraise? Donate items for us to sell at our table to benefit seniors. Yummy Lunch Special also available

APRIL

5th Craft Show - One day only, so make sure you don't miss this opportunity to buy some great handmade items!

6th - Les Miserable Sunday April 6th 2 pm Only \$15! Space is limited, so to reserve your seat pay \$15 ASAP! Due to limited seating, tickets are available for seniors only. Musical is Victor Hugo's eternal message of compassion and hope, set to an uplifting score, featuring classics "One Day More" & "Master of the House".

12th - Spring Super Bingo

Fundraiser for PCC! Early birds, regular games, specials, Chinese Auction, door prizes, raffles and \$500 jackpot! \$25 tickets--buy early & get free dauber!

Resources Available

Benefits Check-Up, Information & Help! Taxes, Medicare, Transportation, Meals-on-Wheels and more! Call and set up a time to see Earlene or Val and make sure you are getting your correct benefits. 412-795-2330

Lunches at the Plum Center

Congregate lunch available to anyone 60 or over from 11 am-12:15 pm. \$3 suggested donation. Call 412-795-2330 by 12 pm the **business day before** to reserve your lunch.

CAFÉ PLUM

For those under 60 or those who would like to eat something different, our Café cooks up yummy food weekdays from 11-2pm.

Home Delivered Meals

Have a meal delivered to your home! You can get the meal delivered as little or as often as you would like. You can even get the meal delivered for just a week or two if you are recuperating from a hospital stay or illness. The only requirements are: you must be age 60 or above, live near Plum, and need assistance. Call 412-795-2330 for Toni Franco.

Check out our menu on our website
www.PlumSeniorCenter.org