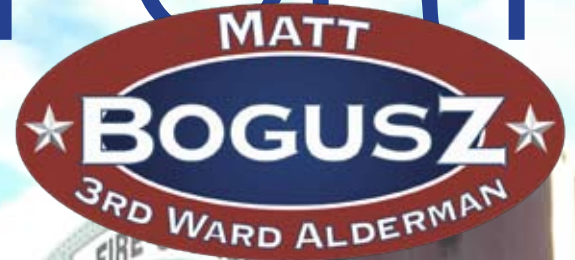


FALL 2010

# WARD R3PORT

3RDWARD.ORG



**FIREFIGHTERS AND CITY OFFICIALS FROM THE NORTHWEST SUBURBS KICKED OFF FIRE PREVENTION WEEK WITH HANDS-ON FIRE FIGHTING AND RESCUE DEMONSTRATIONS.**

*Photo by City of Des Plaines*

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OFFICERS TEACH RESIDENTS SAFETY

# RESIDENT SAFETY

By Denise Smith Rodd



*DES PLAINES POLICE OFFICERS, JOHN HUTSON AND MATT BOWLER,  
INSTRUCT RESIDENTS ON HOW TO USE SELF-DEFENSE TECHNIQUES.*

Alderman Bogusz invited patrol officers John Hutson and Matt Bowler from the Des Plaines Police Department to the September 3rd Ward Meeting held in the West Park field house. As the defensive tactics trainers for the police force, Hutson and Bowler also provide hands-on demonstrations to local groups on ways to stay safe when confronted with danger.

Hutson explained that in situations where an offender demands money or property, the safest thing to do is hand them over. "These are things that can be replaced," he said, "and not worth getting hurt over." If an offender demands that the victim comes with him or attempts to remove the victim from their location, self-defense practices can mean the difference between life and death.

A group of about 20 residents paired up and followed the officers' self-defense moves on each other. Hutson and Bowler demonstrated scenarios from arm-grabbing to physical entrapment on the ground, and residents practiced



**OFFICER BOWLER SHOWS EILEEN KRUTSCH HOW TO WARD OFF AN ATTACK DURING A SELF-DEFENSE CLASS HELD AT WEST PARK FIELD HOUSE DURING A 3RD WARD NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING.**

these with their assistance. Besides learning these techniques and common-sense tips on how to stay safe when alone in public, attendees gained some confidence from the class as well.

Officer Hutson recently opened his own martial arts academy

"Threshold" with two other instructors at 1361 Oakton Street in Des Plaines. He instructs Gracie (Brazilian) Jiu-Jitsu, kickboxing and self-defense to classes of all ages. For more information, visit [www.thresholdmartialarts.com](http://www.thresholdmartialarts.com).

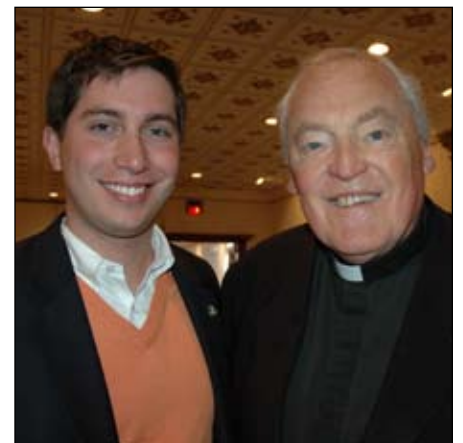
### 3RD WARD ALDERMAN IS ... MATT ABOUT TOWN



*The Mayor's Bike Ride wound through the 3rd Ward and the rest of Des Plaines along with Deputy Police Chief Angela Burton and Ald. Bogusz. Photo by City of Des Plaines.*



*Des Plaines aldermen (l. to r.) Patricia Haugeberg, Matt Bogusz, and Jean Higgason attend the American Legion Golf Outing. Photo by Gus.*



*Ald. Bogusz and Father John Smyth at the First Lady's Lunch hosted by Lisa G. Moylan to benefit Fr. Smyth's Standing Tall Foundation. Photo by City of Des Plaines.*



**MEET DION KENDRICK:**

# NEW LIBRARY BOARD MEMBER

**By Denise Smith Rodd**

ing one of the most difficult financial times the City had ever seen.

A line in Des Plaines taxpayers' property tax bills goes to the City of Des Plaines Library fund, and determines the amount they are appropriated for operating expenses. Like many municipal bodies throughout Cook County, the Des Plaines Public Library has received its property tax levy late in the past few years. This has created a strain on the Board as it seeks to keep the award-winning Library running at a time of increased patronage. Kendrick found that the operating expenses of the Library have increased 7.5% each year over the last 10 years, while property tax income has declined due to various factors including the state of the economy. His research also showed that from 2007-2009, the Library's operating fund came up short, and the City covered the difference.

As the economy declined and the City had to slash its own budget, the City told the Library Board that they were no longer able to pay for payroll, benefits, legal or accounting services for the Library. The Board was able to come up with a solution to fund these services independently; however, the budget was still coming up short. Kendrick said that "this year, the Library has to go to the [City] Council

## ***THIRD WARD RESIDENT, DION KENDRICK, JOINED THE DES PLAINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN JULY.***

The Des Plaines Public Library Board of Trustees swore in 3rd Ward resident, Dion Kendrick, on July 20 as one of its newest Board members. Before he took the oath, Kendrick had already submitted a memo to the Board featuring where he saw room for improvement in the Library's budget, and what his suggestions were for saving money. "I wanted to get out of the blocks quickly," Kendrick explained. With a charge by Mayor Marty Moylan and a passion for municipal finance, he came into the position ready to research budget challenges and to assist in trimming the Library's budget—a priority task the Board has taken on in recent years.

As a Vice President and

Real Estate Business Advisor for PNC Financial Services in Park Ridge, Kendrick became interested in the City's financial matters 10 years ago when the downtown tax-increment financing (TIF) district was formed. He was asked to join a citizens' advisory panel for the City budget, where his voice on fiscal issues became well known. One night after the panel met, Mayor Moylan and Alderman Jean Hig-gason pulled Kendrick aside and asked if he would consider an appointment to the Library Board of Trustees. "It came out of nowhere," he said, because he did not know the mayor until his involvement with the panel. Kendrick accepted the Library Board appointment dur-

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 7**

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## DES PLAINES FINANCE DIRECTOR FINDS BALANCE

# DP CITY STAFFER

For the second year in a row, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded the City of Des Plaines the "Distinguished Budget Presentation Award." Dorothy Wisniewski, Director of Finance, and her staff are credited with earning this award for the city. Striving to maintain this honor, Wisniewski said they are "providing updates and continually enhancing the information that is presented to ensure that residents have the details behind City government."

Facing economic challenges again this year, Wisniewski has had to ensure that the City is financially stable. "It is really difficult in these tough economic times to maintain and build fund balances

and keep the City in a fiscally sound position while many of the revenue sources have taken significant declines over the past few years—and being able to do all of this without affecting the services offered to residents," she said.

Wisniewski has been interested in accounting since high school and went on to earn bachelors and masters degrees in the field from the University of Illinois at Chicago. While earning her masters, Wisniewski knew that she wanted to get involved with municipal finance. After working in banking and auditing for KPMG, she leapt at the chance to work for the City of Des Plaines when the assistant finance director position opened in 2007. She said, "I felt extremely lucky that

I was able to get the position and work for a great city such as Des Plaines." Wisniewski streamlined procedures and implemented new policies in her department while serving as Acting Finance Director since 2008, and was named Finance Director last year.

As the mother of two boys, ages 4 years and 6 months, Wisniewski faces challenges at home as well, but the experience of parenthood has brought new perspectives to her career. "I think my life is a constant balance, and being able to multitask in order to get everything completed is key." Wisniewski continues to work hard and find balance as she and her staff complete the 2011 budget for the City of Des Plaines.

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## RESIDENTS DESERVE 0% PROPERTY TAX INCREASE IN 2011

# BUDGET SUMMARY 2011

By **Matt Bogusz**, *Des Plaines 3rd Ward Alderman*

Last year's 2010 budget process was riddled with challenges. Our relatively new City Council was faced with a growing debt burden, rising pension obligations, a depressed housing market, commercial inactivity, a bleak State/National economic outlook, and record unemployment. Given those challenges, we reduced the City's overhead by 10%, invested in local infrastructure, began an aggressive flood control plan, and reinvested in our depleted general fund reserve—all while keeping layoffs rare. While I would count that effort as a job well done, these challenges for 2011 linger still.

The municipal budget process is complex and I would be remiss if I pretended that the Council

did the majority of the heavy lifting. City Staff begins work on their budget recommendation mid-summer and they present their initial plan of attack in the fall. Then, the Council weighs in, providing direction and highlighting priorities. This year's 438-page budget manual covers every penny and detail of City finance—from pension actuarial rates to the projected cost of road salt.

Staff initially proposed a 1.9% property tax increase. As an example: of a \$5,071 property tax bill, the City of Des Plaines accounts for \$672 (13% of total bill). This proposed increase would amount to a \$12.77 total increase. While City Staff initially proposed this increase, it is important to remember that their proposal in-

cluded a 0.26% decrease in the operating cost of the City. You may be asking, if the cost of operating the city decreased, why would City Staff propose a property tax increase? The roughly \$450,000 represented by this increase is attributable to rising Police and Fire pension obligations.

After receiving this recommendation, many Aldermen - myself included - worked together with City Staff to identify additional cost savings with the goal of covering public safety pension obligations without raising taxes. While this process is far from over, I believe we have reached this goal. A 0.0% property tax increase is possible, and I will fight to make this a reality in 2011.

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 8**

## DES PLAINES' RAILWAY TOURIST DESTINATION

# DEVAL INTERLOCKING

By **Brian Wolf**, *Revitalize Des Plaines*

Anyone who has spent time driving in Des Plaines has undoubtedly noticed that we are part of a major railroad hub. We are a town that grew up around the railroads, so it's inevitable that we have to interact with them.

But have you ever stopped to consider our railroad infrastructure? For many years, the single "key" to our railroads was Deval Interlocking Plant, controlling the intersection of the three major rail lines. The tower was staffed 24 hours a day/7 days a week, and its series of interlocking levers could only be pulled in a precise sequence. This ensured that no two trains were given conflicting signals or routes that could lead to a collision at the busy intersection.

The oldest line is the Chicago & Northwestern, built in 1854 as the Illinois and Western, now known as the Union Pacific Northwest Line that runs northwest through downtown. The Wisconsin Central, later known as the "Soo Line" and now the Canadian National, was built in about 1890 and runs northeast through town. The last railroad built in 1911 was the Des Plaines Valley Railway. The C&NW immediately acquired it as its "New Line," and it is now known as the Union Pacific's Milwaukee Subdivision.

When the Wisconsin Central was built, it intersected with the C&NW, and a wooden interlocking tower was built to control this crossing of two busy railroads. This was an especially important intersection, as the C&NW's Norma Yard, was just ahead, located between what is now Wolf Road and Northwest Highway. Norma Yard was then used to store many of the C&NW's passenger coaches in the evening, as there were few commuters beyond Des Plaines.

The Des Plaines Valley Railway was built at the same time as



the Proviso Yard in Franklin Park, which is still visible on the west side of I-294. Hailed as the largest freight classification yard in the world, it dramatically improved C&NW's freight-handling capabilities. The triangular intersection of the Des Plaines Valley Railway became all the more complex. The old, wooden interlocking tower with mechanical levers was replaced with a modern, attractive brick interlocking tower containing an intricate system of 97 electro-mechanical levers to control the varied train movements. The new levers allowed the integration of signal upgrades over the years.

If this wasn't complicated enough, Northwest Highway was built in the 1920s. It initially stopped at Graceland and restarted at Golf Road to bypass the train intersection and the Benjamin Electric plant. It was finally completed in 1929 with

the unique solution of having the Soo and C&NW lines cross on a bridge, creating the "S-curve." The combination of a three-line, six track intersection, a complex interlocking, and the one-of-a-kind bridge made the Deval Interlocking Plant a prime destination for rail fans and photographers.

On March 26, 2005, the switchboard caught fire, accelerating plans to replace the plant. Control was moved to Union Pacific's Clybourn computer-controlled facility in Chicago on June 11 of that year, and the transfer was completed over the next year. This ended an era for the last C&NW interlocking tower outside of the City of Chicago limits. It is believed there are fewer than 100 towers remaining in the country. The tower has since been used to store equipment, and has been slated for demolition.

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## NEW LIBRARY BOARD MEMBER *continued*

and borrow \$1.5 million to make payroll and keep the doors open until the property tax money from the 2nd installment is received. When? We don't know."

The Des Plaines Public Library is an institution that sits in the heart of the city and provides services to the community for free. Books aren't the only draw at the Library. Especially in these times, free services like computer use, DVD and music rentals, computer classes, and career counseling have been very popular. Combine these services with a state-of-the-art facility and friendly, helpful staff, and you have a vibrant community center that serves its residents well. However, with expenditures that increase every year, tax revenue that decreases, the threat of loss of services such as the Mobile Library, and the threat of laying off talented people, a dark cloud looms over the Library. Kendrick sees a straightforward solution, "Be more efficient through a better deployment of resources (both in dollars and people)

and increase investments in virtual technologies."

Kendrick believes that an institution with a \$7 million budget should operate like a lean business. He sees the basic business model of the Library changing to use more part-time employees and making it work with less full-time employees. He also sees an investment in more downloadable books and other virtual media because the generation of Library users coming up will demand them. Kendrick compares services offered by the Des Plaines Park District, who also receives a tax levy from residents' property taxes. Parks are free, but a good number of residents pay extra for programs in dance, sports, room rentals, and other activities. He doesn't see why the Library couldn't charge for extras like room rentals, seminars, and DVD and other media rentals. Citing one revenue-generating example, Kendrick said, "If people are willing to pay \$1 for a new movie release at a red box outside a grocery store, they may be willing to

pay \$1 at the Library."

When the current budget came up for a vote, Kendrick voted against it because he felt it had "no mechanism for saving money." He continued to take forward steps and convinced the Board to post the Library's budget and financial statements on the Library website. Kendrick continues to research, write memos, and pursue his personal goal of reducing the Library's property tax levy by 25% by the end of his 3-year term. He is facing his own challenge with tenacity and a desire to save his fellow residents some money on their tax bills.

The 33-year Des Plaines resident has been outspoken about financial matters in the City as well as in the Library. Kendrick believes that residents should voice their opinions, and may even be able to influence the Board at the monthly meetings. These are open to the public and take place on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of the Library.

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# ARE YOU DRIVING 25?

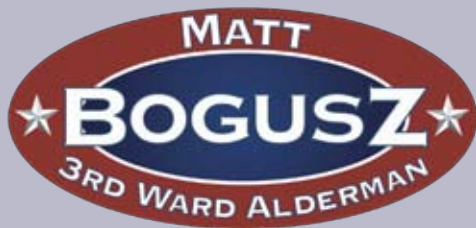


The **Keep Kids Alive Drive 25<sup>®</sup>** traffic safety campaign recently popped up along Prairie Avenue from Wolf Road to Fifth Avenue in the Third Ward. Aimed at making drivers aware of speed limits on residential streets, the parkway sign program is one way of calming traffic on residential streets in Des Plaines.

Prairie Avenue residents saw vehicles slow down when the signs first went up, but said they were back to speeding after a while. Most of the people observed speeding were locals, who are familiar with the streets and forget or ignore that the speed limit

is 25 miles per hour. Residents believe the awareness the program brings is helpful but that the long-term effects are yet to be seen.

**Keep Kids Alive Drive 25<sup>®</sup>** is a non-profit organization that discourages distracted driving with their parkway sign program throughout the country. The City of Des Plaines Police Department participates in the program, and makes the signs available to neighborhoods that request them. Contact the Police Department at (847) 391-5400 for more information about the program.



## WARD R3PORT

WARD R3PORT A QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER OF THE  
DES PLAINES 3RD WARD

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## BUDGET 2011 *continued*

Follow the 2011 budget process  
on [3rdward.org](http://3rdward.org).

### PERSONNEL SUMMARY

Budget Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
City Manager Office (IT, Legal, HHS, HR & Media)	17	20	20.5	16.5	16.75
Community & Economic Dev.	18.75	22	20	18	18
Elected Office	4	4	3	2.75	2.75
Emergency Mgmt	1	1	1	1	1
Finance	15.75	14.5	14	14	14
Fire	103.5	104.5	104.5	98.5	98.5
Police	132.25	131.25	130	116	116
Public Works & Eng.	104	104	96.25	83.25	81.25
<b>Total Full Time Equivalents</b>	<b>396.25</b>	<b>401.25</b>	<b>389.25</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>348.25</b>
<i>Change From Prev. Yr.</i>		+5.00	-12.00	-39.25	-1.75

### 2011 PROPERTY TAX SUMMARY

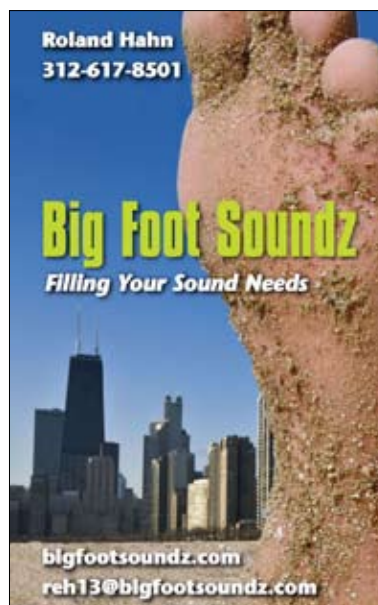
Taxing Jurisdiction	Tax Amount	% of Bill
School District 62	\$1,882	37%
High School District 207	\$1,274	25%
<b>City of Des Plaines</b>	<b>\$672</b>	<b>13%</b>
Cook County	\$277	7%
Des Plaines Park District	\$242	5%
Des Plaines Library	\$210	4%
Water Reclamation Dist	\$204	4%
Oakton Comm College	\$113	2%
Maine Township	\$91	2%
NW Mosquito Abatement	\$6	0%
	\$5,017	

### HOW DOES THE CITY SPEND YOUR TAX DOLLARS?

	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Total Property Tax Bill Paid by a Resident	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Annual Property Taxes Paid to Des Plaines	\$529.60	\$662.00	\$794.40
Monthly Property Taxes Paid to Des Plaines	\$44.13	\$55.17	\$66.20
City Department	Percentage of City Budget	Monthly Cost	Monthly Cost
Elected Office	0.92%	\$0.41	\$0.51
City Manager's Office	5.59%	\$2.47	\$3.08
Finance Department	1.79%	\$0.79	\$0.99
Police Department	35.45%	\$15.64	\$19.56
Fire Department	30.40%	\$13.42	\$16.77
Police & Fire Commission	0.08%	\$0.04	\$0.04
Emergency Management	0.21%	\$0.09	\$0.12
Geographic Information Services	0.43%	\$0.19	\$0.24
Community Development	3.67%	\$1.62	\$2.02
Public Works Development	19.23%	\$8.49	\$10.61
Overhead Expenditures	2.24%	\$0.99	\$1.24

## 3RD WARD RESIDENT

# BIG FOOT SOUNDZ



Third Ward resident, Roland Hahn, has his own voice over business here in Des Plaines. From his website at [www.bigfootsoundz.com](http://www.bigfootsoundz.com): "Are you looking for the right voice to make a lasting impression on your audience? Big Foot Soundz offers the variety, clarity, and professionalism that will leave the lasting impression you're counting on!" Be sure to visit his site to hear some of Hahn's samples.