

# MIDDLETOWN MATTERS

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1  
SPRING 2013



## Council cuts electric rates

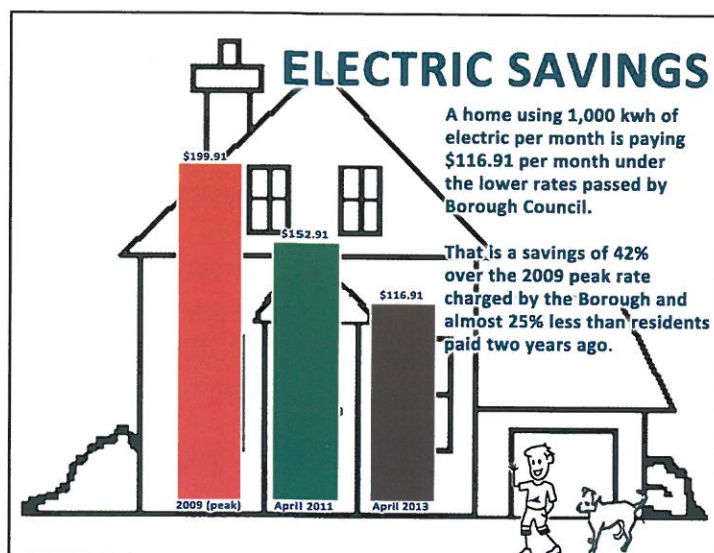
For the first time since the late 1990s, residents of Middletown are paying less for electricity than residents of surrounding communities who get their power from PPL.

The news gets better.

According to PPL's Web site, the difference between Middletown's new, low rates – implemented in February by Borough Council – and what PPL charges is about to get even wider.

Council's February action, lowering residential rates to 10.6 cents per kilowatt hour (kwh), means a Middletown resident using 1,000 kwh per month, pays about 42 percent less than they did when the Borough's electric rates hit their peak in October 2009.

Back then, fueled by a variable rate wholesale electric contract with AMP Ohio, and exacerbated by the Borough's Purchase Power



Cost Adjustment multiplier formula, the rate reached 18.9 cents per kwh. Add in the \$10.91 base service charge, and a resident using 1,000 kwh that month would have received a bill for \$199.91.

Last month's bill for the same amount of electricity, including the service charge, was \$116.91. That is nearly 25 percent below the rate that customer would have paid in April 2011, when residents were being charged 14.2 cents per KWH.

The reduced rates are the combination of a new, fixed rate contract for

wholesale electric, which ends the wild swings the Borough's rates used to see, and a fiscally responsible \$5.1 million General Fund budget.

"It was the right thing to do for our citizens,"

— please see *ELECTRIC*, Page 8

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet the new folks - p. 2
- Finally, a fix for police - p. 3
- Students run borough - p. 4
- Employee costs an issue - p. 5
- Where to go to vote - p. 6
- Development update - p. 7
- Rate cuts help business - p. 8
- Grievances pose burden - p. 10
- Laudenslager honored - p. 11

-Also inside -

2012 Water Quality Report

WWW.MIDDLETOWNBOROUGH.COM

## New faces in town

### Mulligan excited about future of town's Library

The woman chosen as the new director of the Middletown Public Library is excited about the library's future.

So, too, are the people who chose Stacey Mulligan for the job.

"The people will love Stacey," said Sandra Robins, a member of the board which runs the library. "She is very eager. She has so many good ideas. She likes fundraising. She is really on the ball."

Mulligan comes to the library after a stint at Piedmont Airlines. But her roots are in libraries and she is happy to be returning to that arena.

"I really wanted to get back to using my degree and my library experience," said Mulligan, who



**STACEY MULLIGAN**

Library Director

holds a Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Indiana in Bloomington, Indiana.

Born in Denver, Mulligan moved to Oregon when she was 10 and lived there through her graduation from Oregon State, where she majored in International Studies. Her library experience

— please see *LIBRARY*, Page 9

### Wheeler brings 30-plus years of experience to job

Modernization and professionalization of the Borough's police force; those are the two top goals of new police chief, Steven R. Wheeler.

On the job since February, already Wheeler has taken significant steps in those directions. The police department's policy and procedures manual, which dates to 1984, has been completely reworked to bring it up to date with the myriad changes in the past 28 years.

Officers are being provided with increased professional training, the police vehicle fleet is being overhauled and standardized and new, homogenous uniforms intended to help improve the department's public image, are on the way.

"Our officers are good police officers. We want to increase our profile in the community and highlight that we're doing good work," said Wheeler, who brought over 30 years of law enforcement experience to the post.

In the short time Wheeler has been in command, Borough police have attended a number of training sessions and law enforcement conferences, including the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement



**STEVEN WHEELER**

Chief of Police

Accreditation Conference.

Sgt. Richard Heister recently attended a conference at Bucknell University designed to help him upgrade the department's firearms and defensive tactics training. Heister and Sgt. James Bennett are also slated to attend police supervisory training at Penn State.

Officers have also attended traffic safety law enforcement seminars held by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, participated on a committee for the new Dauphin County judicial center and have received updated CPR and defibrillator training.

"By June we will be in our new building (see story next page) and we hope to have the policy manual to Council," Wheeler said. "Our next step will be to pursue accreditation."

— please see *CHIEF*, Page 9

## MIDDLETOWN MATTERS

**Middletown Matters** is the official newsletter of the Borough of Middletown, Pa. Published quarterly, the newsletter is distributed to every residence and business in the Borough. For information on advertising in **Middletown Matters**, please contact Borough Secretary Chris A. Courogen at 717.902.0430.

### MAYOR

ROBERT G. REID

### BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

CHRIS MCNAMARA

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

BARBARA ARNOLD • JOHN BRUBAKER

DONALD BROOKS • ROBERT LOUER

JUDY PUTRIC • DAVID RHEN

SCOTT SITES • SUZANNE SULLIVAN

### BOROUGH MANAGER

TIM KONEK

### BOROUGH SECRETARY

CHRIS A. COUROGEN

# Police to get long-needed upgrade

*Chief says new station will be facility "community can be proud of"*



Then Borough Manager George Merkel and Chief Harold Houser are shown in the Middletown Historical Society photo to the left, supervising the construction of the new addition to the Police Station in 1970/1971. One must wonder if they knew it would be 42 years or so until Chief Steven Wheeler and Borough Manager Tim Konek would undertake a similar project to provide the Borough's police with their first significant facility upgrade since the 1970s.

Middletown Borough Police will soon be operating out of a new, safe, modern headquarters when renovations to the former Behney Building at 300 East Emaus Street are complete.

The decision to move the police to the new location stems from the aftermath of a Christmas Eve incident in which four officers had to seek medical treatment due to a leak in the exhaust system of a gas-powered emergency backup generator in the basement of the current station.

The initial decision was to use the Behney Building on a temporary basis while the situation at the current station was resolved. Space at the

Behney Building was available after the former electric department supervisor's offices were moved to the wastewater treatment plant when the consolidated Public Works Department was created.

After receiving a four-page list of problems with the current station from the Middletown Police Officers Association, it was obvious coming up with a fix would take much more than just a new exhaust pipe on the generator.

The list of problems ranged from fire hazards to health issues, with a unifying theme of simply not having enough space. There were electrical problems such as

overloaded receptacles, exposed wires and open, uncovered breaker panels; mold issues; leaky sewer pipes; and bathrooms with plumbing problems that were not ADA compliant and ventilation problems throughout the building.

The bathroom problems are not a recent development. Back in November of 2006, then Borough manager Jeffrey Stonehill penned a memo to the Mayor and Borough Council about proposed capital improvement projects to be paid for with a bond the Borough planned to issue.

"We have a dangerous and negligent situation in the Police Station," Stonehill wrote. "The Borough

is one accident or incident away from an expensive lawsuit which would cost a lot more than new bathrooms."

In the officers' locker room, shower stalls were rusty, urinals didn't flush properly, and exhaust fans vented into common spaces in the station, not outside. On top of that, as former Chief Mark Hovan once noted, the locker rooms were so small, officers had to step out in the hall to change their minds.

There were other problems, too; problems noted by new Chief Steven R. Wheeler when he inspected the space. Most notably, the evidence storage area and the department's

— please see STATION, Page 11

# MAHS students run town for a day

## *Local Government Day event includes special Borough Council meeting*

Nine students from Middletown Area High School walked a mile in Borough officials' shoes April 15 as Middletown observed Local Government Day.

The students spent the afternoon in Borough Hall, hearing from a variety of speakers on an array of municipal topics ranging from finances to law enforcement. In the evening, those students who did not have other commitments returned to take over the running of the Borough Council's workshop meeting.

Senior Katlyn Flasher, who serves as the Student Council President at MAHS, gaveled the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and presided over an agenda which included recognition of Mark Laudenslager as the Borough's Police Officer of the Year, staff and committee reports, and a mock legislation passage by the students.

That proposal, to appropriate \$1,000,000 for a "Middletown Community Center," complete with a pizza shop, chapel and a host of other amenities, ended when Council was unable to muster enough votes to override the veto of student Mayor Megan Martz.



Among the Middletown Area High School students who took over Borough Government April 15 were, from left, Megan Martz, Emily Burke, Andrew Hardison (rear), Katlyn Flasher, Andrew Korb and Hope Dehnert.

Andrew Korb, who earlier in the day spent time shadowing Borough Police Chief Steve Wheeler, provided Flasher and the Council with legal advice during the legislative process as the student Borough Solicitor.

The presentation to Officer Laudenslager was made by student Andrew Hardison, who filled in for Public Safety Committee chair Dave Rhen. Emily Burke spurred the debate over the MCC proposal as fill in for Third Ward Councilor Sue Sullivan.

All of the proceedings were recorded for posterity by Hope Dehnert, who served as the Borough Secretary and Direc-

tor of Communications. Dehnert also hosted the media covering the meeting during a post meeting press conference.

Students Will Botterbusch, John Ponnett, and Jordan Smith also participated in the afternoon program.

The student participation was coordinated by Jodi Sessa, a gifted teacher with the Middletown Area School District, and district Superintendent Lori Suski.

Among the speakers who led the afternoon discussions were Ed Knittel, Senior Director, Education and Sustainability with the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs; Mayor Robert

Reid, Council President Christopher R. McNamara; Borough Authority Chair John Patten; Borough Manager Tim Konek; Mark Morgan of Susquehanna Group Advisors, the Borough's financial consultant under the state Early Intervention Program; and Borough Secretary/Director of Communications Chris A. Courogen.

The event marked the first observance of Local Government Day by Middletown Borough Council in more than 10 years.

Once a traditional annual occurrence, Middletown Borough Council last observed the day in 2002.

# Employee related costs an issue EIP advisor tells Borough Council

Borough Council has already implemented most of the cost saving measures suggested by the financial consultant preparing Middletown's Early Intervention Program (EIP) report. But unless there are significant concessions in two contracts currently being negotiated, higher taxes and/or the sale of assets loom in the future.

That was the message May 6, when Mark Morgan presented a draft of his report to Borough Council.

"The Borough has to stop giving away the kitchen sink when it comes to its union contracts," said Morgan, who was retained to help chart a path to fiscal stability after the Borough was accepted into the EIP.

Administered by the state's Department of Community and Economic Development, the EIP provides funds to financially challenged municipalities to pay for the hiring of state approved experts to help find ways to avoid ending up classified as a distressed municipality.

Standard procedure is for the state and the municipality to split the



Phyllis Zimmerman - PennLive.com  
Borough financial advisor Mark Morgan talks about Middletown's financial challenges during a recent community meeting.

cost of the advisor 50-50. In Middletown's case, the state decided the challenges facing the Borough were serious enough to warrant the state picking

up 75 percent of the tab.

At the root of the problem, Morgan explained

again, is Middletown's history of general fund budgets which spent more than was brought in by general fund taxes and fees. To make up the difference, the Borough relied on multi-million dollar transfers of revenue

generated by the sale of high-priced electricity.

The high electric rates placed a burden on both residential and business customers, who

were paying electric rates well above those paid by residents in surrounding communities. They also stifled economic development by discourag-

ing businesses and home buyers from coming to Middletown.

Librandi Plating, for example, moved 25 machine shop jobs to a new facility in Swatara Township after deciding the savings on electric costs would offset

the cost of the new facility. More cuts at Librandi could be on the way.

Already the company has lost three major contracts because high electric rates in Middletown made its cost structure uncompetitive.

The loss of those contracts, worth more than a million dollars in revenues, forced the firm to cut hours for employees, owner Tom Librandi said, and more cuts could be in the offing if the company keeps losing contracts to competitors able to underbid Librandi because of lower energy expenses.

Lost work at Librandi will result in the company using less electricity, thus less revenue for the Borough. If the lost work results in lost jobs, it could also impact the Borough's earned income tax base.

High electric rates also had a self-destructive impact on the revenue generated from residential sales. As rates got higher, people found ways to use less electricity, switching to gas heat and taking other efficiency measures.

The only way to continue generating the millions that were being transferred to the general fund

— please see EIP, Page 10

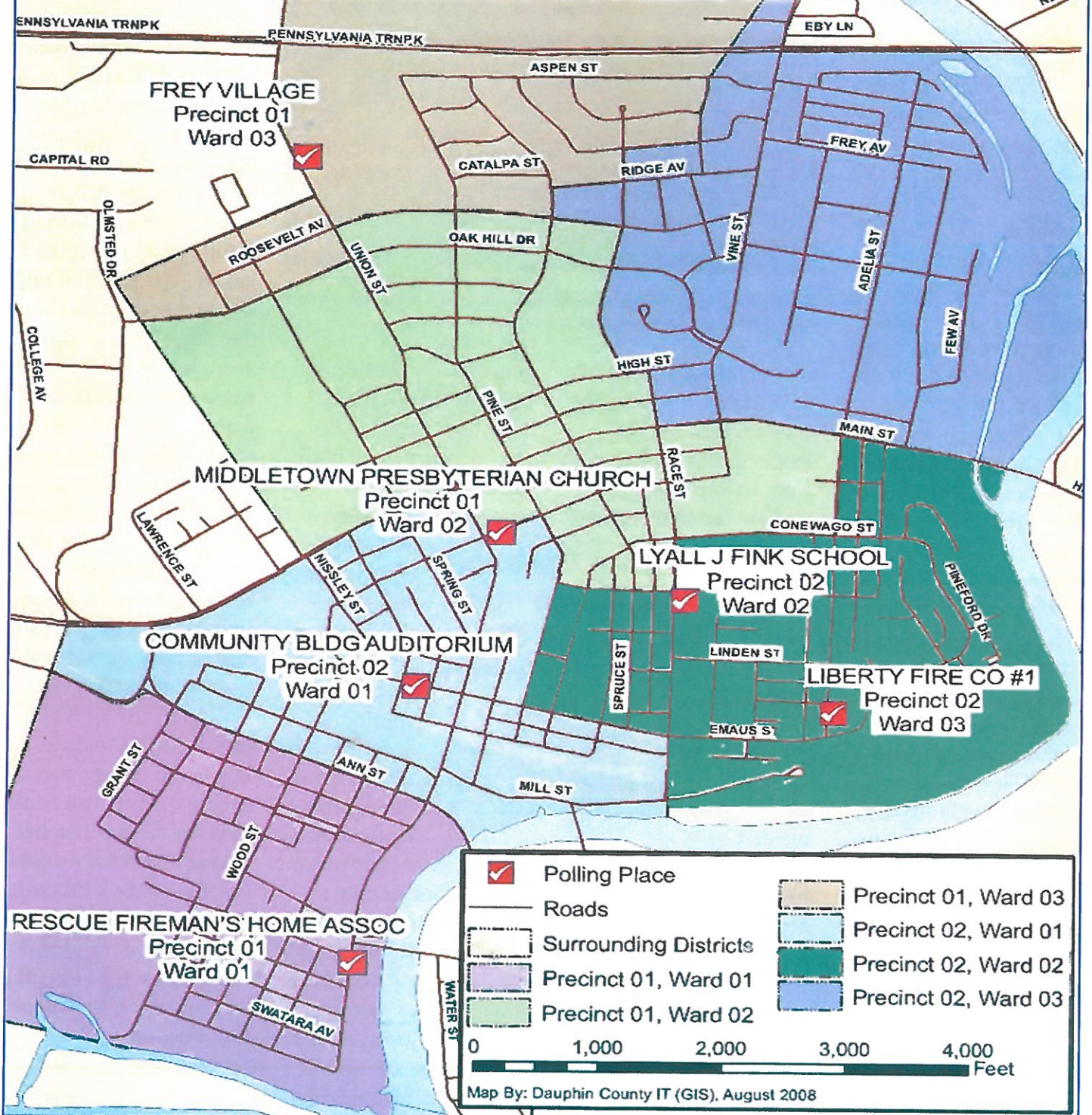
**“The Borough has to stop giving away the kitchen sink when it comes to its union contracts.”**

**-- Mark Morgan**

# VOTE

**Municipal primary May 21 Polls open 7 a.m.-8 p.m.**

## MIDDLETOWN BOROUGH VOTER DISTRICTS & POLLING PLACES



# Consumer Confidence Report

Issued May, 2013

## BOROUGH OF MIDDLETOWN 2012 Annual Water Quality Report

PWS ID: PA7220038

### Your Water Supplier

The Middletown public water supply system is owned by the Middletown Borough Authority and leased to the Borough of Middletown, which operates and maintains the facilities.

The Borough has operated the water system since 1957 and serves customers in Middletown, as well as 57 customers in Lower Swatara Township.

In addition, The Borough of Middletown is the exclusive wholesale provider of drinking water to the Borough of Royalton.

*Dear Customer:*

*This is an annual report on the quality of water delivered by the Borough of Middletown. It meets the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requirement for "Consumer Confidence Reports" and contains information on the source of our water, its constituents, and how it compares to (EPA) and state standards.*

*Safe water is vital to our community. Please read this report carefully and, if you have any questions, contact the Borough at (717)902-0706.*

*In 2012, we routinely tested samples of your water to assure that it met established water quality standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. (Pa DEP).*

*We are proud to report that your water met or exceeded all of the standards for safe drinking water. All test results are kept on file and available to the public.*

*-- Borough of Middletown*

### Your Water Source

Our system is supplied by groundwater, which is pumped from 6 wells located in the Borough of Middletown. All sources are treated with chlorine, and a fluoride solution is added.

Two sources are equipped with an air stripping tower for the removal of organic chemicals.

To ensure the safety of your water, State-licensed operators monitor each source, all treatment processes, and collect water samples for analysis at State-certified laboratories.

## Protecting Your Water

Groundwater used as a public water supply is less expensive to use than surface water due to land acquisition costs and various treatment requirements for surface water supplies.

However, if groundwater contamination occurs, it is very costly to treat and clean up to comply with drinking water standards. Once groundwater is polluted, it remains

contaminated for a long time and any attempt to restore water quality becomes a long and difficult process.

We recognize the possibility of potential pollution of your water supply and drafted a "Wellhead Protection Plan" (WHPP).

This plan identifies the rainwater capture areas surrounding each well and the potential sources of pollution

within each capture area. Also, the plan defines rules and procedures to be employed to prevent ground water contamination in the capture areas of each of the six (6) wells which supply your drinking water.

In addition, a Source

Water Assessment of our sources was completed by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (Pa DEP). The assessment has found that our sources of water are potentially most susceptible to:

*- Please see next page*

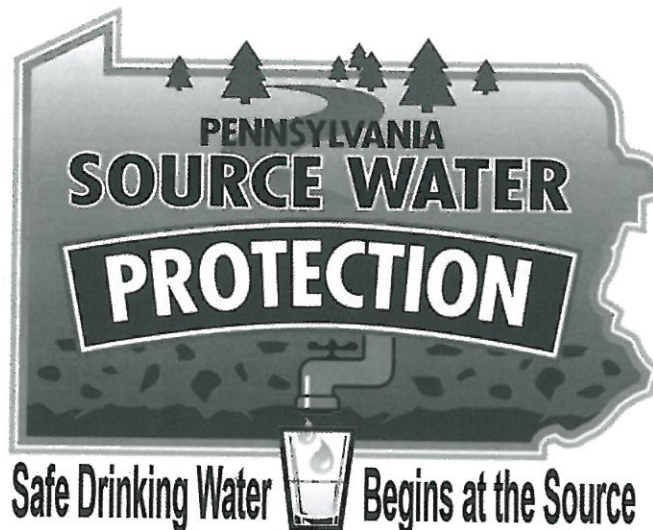
This report contains important information about your drinking water.  
Translate it or speak with someone who understands it.

*Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua beber. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.*

-- Cont'd from Front

- Military operations
- Manufacturing and / or handling of hazardous material
- Sewer pipelines
- Facilities where release of regulated substances were detected already
- Household hazardous waste disposal
- Lawn care chemical applications in close proximity to our wells
- Auto-repair shops, gas stations
- Storage maintenance facilities
- Transportation corridors

Overall, our sources have a moderate to high risk of significant contamination.



A summary report of the Assessment is available on the Source Water Assessment & Protection Web page at

(<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/water-mgt/wc/Subjects/SrceProt/SourceAssessment/default.htm>).

Complete reports were distributed to municipalities, water suppliers, local planning agencies and Pa DEP offices. Copies of the complete report are available for review at the Pa DEP Regional Office, Records Management Unit at (717) 705-4732.

We need your help to protect our groundwater sources. Find out where each of your six water supply sources are located.

Properly dispose of hazardous household products such as paint, thinners, pesticides, fuels and oils. For more information and information on the proper disposal of wastes, call 902-0706.

## Why Do We Need to Test Our Water?

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes limits on the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems.

FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than is the general population.

Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections.

These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

EPA / CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* are available, as well as more information about contaminants and potential health effects from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

## Substances that may be present in source water

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present include the following:

(a) Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

(b) Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

(c) Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

(d) Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organics, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff and septic systems.

(e) Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

# Water Quality Table

During 2012 your water met or surpassed all standards for safety. This water quality table shows the substances that we detected in our water in 2012, and the amounts found, if any, were less than the amounts allowed by the EPA.

## Chemical Contaminants

Contaminant	MCL	MCLG	Highest Level	Range of Detections	Units	Sample Date	Violation Y/N	Sources of Contamination
Arsenic	10	0	0.0033	0 – 0.0033	ppm	02/23/2012	N	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
Barium	2	2	0.35	0.11-0.35	ppm	02/23/2012	N	Drilling wastes, metal refineries & erosion of natural deposits
Chromium	100	100	0.0042	0.0038-0.0042	ppm	02/23/2012	N	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride	2	2	0.52	0.32-0.52	ppm	02/23/2012	N	Water additive which promotes strong teeth
Nitrate	10	10	5.3	3.3-5.3	ppm	05/30/2012	N	Run off from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage or erosion of natural deposits
Trichloroethylene	5	0	0.54	0 – 0.54	ppm	02/13/2012	N	Discharge from metal degreasing sites and other factories

## Distribution System Disinfectant Residual

Contaminant	MRDL	MRDLG	Highest Level	Range of Detections	Units	Sample Date	Violation Y/N	Sources of Contamination
Chlorine	4	4	1.30	0.22-1.30	ppm	12/26/2012	N	Water additive used to control microbes

## Entry Point Disinfectant Residual

Contaminant	MinRDL	Lowest Level Detected	Range of Detections	Units	Sample Date	Violation Y/N	Sources of Contamination
Chlorine	0.50	0.72	0.72 – 1.32	ppm	03/09/2012	N	Water additive used to control microbes

## Microbiological Contaminants

Contaminant	MCL	MCLG	Highest Level	Sample Date	Violation Y/N	Sources of Contamination
Total Coliform Bacteria	1	0	1	August 2012	N	Naturally present in the environment

### Other Violations:

- We took 26 samples to test for the presence of total coliform bacteria during August 2012. Two samples on different dates showed the presence of 1 total coliform bacteria. The standard is that no more than one sample per month may do so. An investigation determined that both samples were positive for total coliform due to the introduction of the contaminate during the sample collection procedure. PaDEP Violation # 39278

## Key To

### Water Quality Table

**AL** = Action Level

**MCL** = Maximum Contaminant Level

**MCLG** = Maximum Contaminant Level Goal

**MFL** = million fibers per liter

**NTU** = Nephelometric Turbidity Units

**mrem/year** = millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)

**pci/l** = picocuries per liter (measure of radioactivity)

**ppm** = parts per million or milligrams per liter

**ppb** = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter

**ppt** = parts per trillion, or nanograms per liter

**ppq** = parts per quadrillion, or picograms per liter

**TT** = Treatment Technique

**MRDL** = Maximum residual disinfection level

**MRDLG** = Maximum residual disinfectant level goal

**MinRDL** = Minimum Residual Disinfectant Level

## What Does The Water Quality Table Mean?

The above reporting table is based upon tests conducted in the year 2011 by the Borough of Middletown. The table lists substances which were detected in your water in 2011. Many other tests were conducted, but were not found in your water. The following are some terms used in the Water-Quality Table and in other parts of this report.

**Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL:** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal or MCLG:** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Maximum Residual Disinfection Level or MRDL:** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal or MRDLG:** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contamination.

**Minimum Disinfectant Residual or MinRDL:** The minimum level of residual disinfectant required at the entry point to the distribution system.

## Availability of Monitoring Data for Unregulated Contaminants

Our water system has sampled for a series of unregulated contaminants. Unregulated contaminants are those that don't yet have a drinking water standard set by the USEPA. The purpose of monitoring for these contaminants is to help EPA decide whether the contaminants should have a standard. As our customers, you have a right to know that this data is available. If you are interested in examining the results, please contact the Borough's Water Department at 717-902-0706

# Water—Our Most Valuable Resource

Water makes up 2/3 of our bodies, and it is the main substance found in all living things.

Without water, life wouldn't be able to exist.

We encourage our customers to use water wisely and help protect water supplies from contamination.

## Conserve Water

- Take shorter showers; install water saving shower heads.
- Repair leaks to faucets. One drip per second wastes 2400 gallons of water a year.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Don't use your toilet as a trash can.
- Toilets are notorious for hidden leaks. A toilet that does not properly shut off can waste hundreds of gallons of water in one day.
- Only run dishwashers and washing machines when full.

## Protect our water supplies

- Identify hazardous wastes used around and in your home. Some examples are motor oil, antifreeze, acids, insecticides, gasoline, kerosene, oil based paint, polish and varnish.
- Never dump hazardous wastes down your drain or on the ground.
- Find out where important water supplies are located and help protect the local areas around them, called "capture zones" from contamination or activities that could contaminate them. If you have a septic system, pump it out every one to three years.
- Report any suspicious activity around water pumping or storage facilities.



## What You Should Know About Nitrate and Lead In Your Water

**Nitrate** -- We detected Nitrate in the water at a level less than the EPA standard. Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant, you should ask advice from your health care provider.

**Lead**-- Although no lead was detected above EPA's action level, it is possible that lead levels in your home may be higher than at other homes in the community, as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing.

Infants and children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than adults.

If you are concerned about lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested, and flush your tap prior to using it for drinking or cooking whenever the plumbing has not been used for 6 hours or more.

Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791), or at (<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>).

*We encourage public interest and participation in our community's decisions affecting drinking water. Find Borough Council and Borough Authority meeting schedules on the Web at [www.middletonborough.com](http://www.middletonborough.com)*

### OFFICE HOURS

*The Water Department Office can be reached Monday through Friday between 8 am and 4:30 pm at (717) 902-0706. Billing inquiries should be directed to (717) 902-0706. For Weekend and after hours water emergencies, please call (717) 9443-2895.*

# Train station, Woodland Hill projects move forward

There is good news on the development front, with two major projects showing signs of progressing.

PennDOT recently completed surveying in the area of the former A.P. Green plant and has begun the process of acquiring land for the planned new Amtrak station.

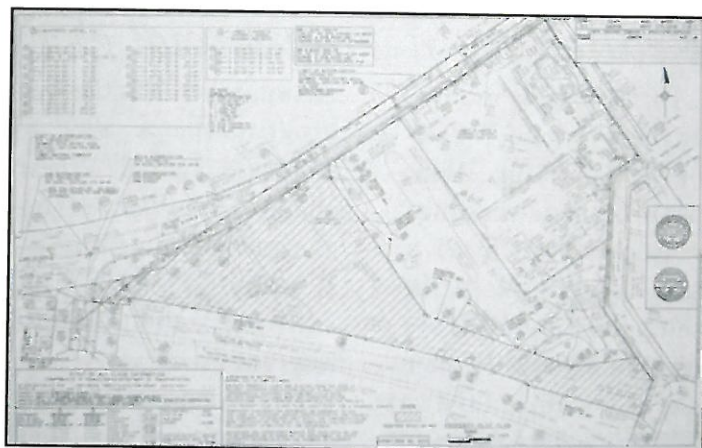
According to developer James Nardo, who owns much of the property PennDOT plans to acquire, talks between he and PennDOT about the sale of the property broke down when the two could not agree on a price.

Since then, PennDOT has notified Nardo it is

proceeding with legal action to acquire the property. The matter will go to court, where a judge will determine what compensation Nardo will receive.

In related news, plans have been filed with the Borough for a major renovation of the Family Dollar store in Nardo's Westporte shopping center. Those plans are currently in the review phase of the building permit process.

About a mile north of the Westporte/train station site, developer Greg Kile says he is optimistic he will break ground on the first phase of his planned Woodland Hills



PennDOT's engineers have completed Drawings Authorizing Acquisition of Right of Way for the planned new Amtrak train station.

development late this year or early in 2014.

According to Kile, the latest snag for the oft-delayed project involves engineering reviews and changes necessitated by PennDOT's highway occupancy permitting process. Engineers also have

been working on some minor sanitary sewer plan revisions, which were recently submitted to the Borough Authority for review.

"The light is at the end of the tunnel," says Kile. "Things are definitely coming together."

## GIVE US A CALL

**We have made some changes to our phone system in an effort to provide better service. Please note the following numbers:**

**MAIN NUMBER: 902-0706**  
(use for all non-police borough business)

**AFTER-HOURS UTILITY PROBLEMS: 943-2895**  
(use for NON-BILLING related after hours utility emergencies)

**POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE: 9-1-1**  
(use for all emergency calls)

**POLICE NON-EMERGENCY: 902-0627**



# Business owners applaud cuts

*Reduction in commercial electric rates helps boost bottom line*

April is a busy month at Hairport and Touch of Class Tanning. With prom season, wedding season and beach season all getting close, the salon's tanning beds are used more heavily than any other time of the year.

"It's the peak season for tanning," said Dana Ward, the shop's owner.

It's also peak season for Hairport's electric consumption.

An average tanning bed uses about three kilowatts per hour.

So it is easy to understand Ward's reaction when she opened her April electric bill and saw \$754.53 listed under "amount due."

That probably sounds high to most homeowners, but for Ward, it represented a huge savings over the \$1,350.72 she was billed in April 2012.

"I had more than a \$500 reduction," she said. "That's \$500 I can use to go shopping."

Ward's lower bill is thanks to action taken in January to lower commercial and industrial electric rates to 9.6 cents per kilowatt hour (kwh). Commercial and industrial

customers in Middletown also pay what is called a "demand charge." When that charge is figured in, the end result is in the neighborhood of 11.6 cents per kwh for heavy users of power.

"I've seen a significant decrease," said Ward. "Everything else is the same."

**"That is 100 or 200 bucks I can spend at Roberto's, the Brownstone, or Karn's."**

**-- Marc Kello, My Tailor**

We have been just as busy as we were last year."

The reduction in electric rates is possible due to belt tightening that produced a 25-percent reduction in the 2013 General Fund budget. The reductions on the commercial and industrial side, which accounts for about half of the Borough's electric use, are also a necessary step as the Borough strives for economic development.

With rates higher than surrounding communities, it was difficult to convince businesses to locate in Middletown.

"There were two reasons the cuts needed to be made," said Mark Morgan, the Borough's consultant under the state's Early Intervention Program.

"The first is to preserve your commercial and industrial base."

"Also, if we didn't stabilize the utility base, the real estate tax rate would have to increase substantially. Council has taken actions to avoid that having to happen."

Marc Kello has also seen a difference. Kello, who along with his father Paul, runs My Tailor, at 140 South Union Street, said his savings are "probably around 25 percent, easily."

## **ELECTRIC (from Page 1)**

said Borough Council President Christopher R. McNamara. "We owe it to them to tighten our belts and to provide them with electricity at prices comparable to what their neighbors in nearby boroughs and townships pay."

This is the second time in as many years Council has reduced electric rates. In January 2012 they voted to lower the old rate markup cap by 30 percent.

That move resulted in significant savings over what bills might have been. But fluctuating wholesale rates in the AMP contract made it difficult to see the savings.

The new savings are easier to see. They were

"It used to be discouraging. You'd say to yourself 'What am I doing this for? All I am doing is working to pay the electric,'" said Kello. "Now, when my dad reads me how much our electric bill is, he has a smile on his face."

Kello said his shop's savings are between \$100 and \$200 per month.

"That is 100 or 200 bucks I can spend at Roberto's, the Brownstone, or Karn's."

obvious the instant the new rates kicked in. The previous month's rate – 12.6 cents per kwh, was 2 cents per kwh higher than the new rate.

One person who has noticed a difference is Marc Kello, who with his father Paul, runs My Tailor, located at 140 South Union Street.

"I used to hear people coming in here complaining about their electric bills," Kello said, while taking a break from ironing clothes.

"I remember one guy said his daughter lost her home because her electric bills were so high."

"You don't hear that anymore."

## LIBRARY (from Page 2)

runs the gamut from a stint as a librarian at an elementary school to time spent working as a librarian for the CIA.

After the strict security and top-down direction of the CIA's library, Mulligan said she is anxious to return to a more creative setting.

"Middletown Public Library is a very interesting library. It has a lot of history and a staff and board that are open to new ideas," Mulligan said. "There is a lot of room for creativity and development. I really like the community focus."

According to Robbins, Mulligan is one of the key pieces to fall into place

as the library charts its future as an independent entity. The paperwork for establishing the library as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization has been filed, the library is fully staffed – including a strong bunch of volunteers, and plans are in the works for reaching out to corporations and others for grants and support.

"We have no complaints. People are stepping up," said Robbins. "We are looking forward to the future."

As is Mulligan.

"My goal with the library is to see it succeed," she said. "I want to see people able to read good books and to go away happy."

## CHIEF (from Page 2)

Wheeler's police career began as a patrol officer in Freeland, Luzerne County, in 1981. In 1984 he joined the state Attorney General's office as an agent in the Bureau of Narcotics, working as an undercover agent out of the Reading regional office.

From there he moved through the ranks in the AG's office, culminating in his 2011 appointment as Chief of Criminal Investigations.

Along the way, Wheeler has served as an assistant regional director in the Wilkes Barre office, where he supervised narcotics agents and spent 14 months on assignment to the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency's Violent Trafficking Task Force in Philadelphia.

In 1992 he became a regional director, first in Erie, then in Allentown, before becoming the Deputy Chief and Director of the Bureau of Narcotics Investigation.

As Chief of Criminal Investigations, Wheeler oversaw nearly 300 agents statewide and led the agency to accreditation by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission.

Wheeler, who holds a Masters degree in Public Administration from Gannon, has also served

as an instructor for a variety of law enforcement training programs, including a stint as an adjunct instructor in the criminal justice department at Alvernia College.

"(Steve Wheeler) is one of the finest law enforcement officers I have ever known," said Col. Frank Noonan, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police, who recommended Wheeler for the job. "He is a person of tremendous knowledge, experience, and judgment . . . a man of integrity who can be counted on in any situation."

Borough Council President Christopher R. McNamara said landing Wheeler as chief was a "real steal for Middletown."

Wheeler, who served in the AG's office under now-Governor Tom Corbett, decided to leave that agency following the recent change in its leadership with the swearing in of new Democrat Attorney General Kathleen Kane.

"We were very fortunate to have a man of Steve Wheeler's caliber fall into our laps when Chief Hovan decided to step down. When we found out he was willing to come to Middletown to help us, it was a very easy decision," McNamara said.



## *Work rules, greivances, also place burden on Borough finances*

The combination of private sector high wages and employee benefit packages that are generous even by traditional public sector standards poses a difficult financial challenge for the Borough.

Those are not the only contractual difficulties faced as the Borough works to provide services to its residents in a more efficient and cost effective manner.

Police contract rules make it extremely difficult to minimize overtime expenses through the use of part-time officers to supplement the full-time force.

On the non-uniform side, prior to the recent consolidation of the highway, water-sewer, and electric departments into a centralized Department of Public Works, artificial departmental barriers made it impossible to utilize the work force efficiently and resulted in the hiring of more total employees than were needed to provide those services once those barriers were removed.

Contracts, so-called "past practices," and side-letter deals, many of which were never ratified by Council, result in restrictions on the Borough's ability to hire part-time, casual summer workers to help with grass mowing.

Grievances filed by the unions also are time, and money consuming. Here are a few examples:

- After a library volunteer, acting on her own, with no direction from the Borough, kindly donated, and planted flowers in the garden near the library entrance, the Teamsters representing non-uniform employees demanded two employees receive call-out compensation
- After community minded volunteers, including Borough employees decorated the Square in the fall, and Hoffer Park and the Square for Christmas, the Teamsters filed a grievance claiming they should get compensated because in the past they had done the decorating.

### **EIP (from Page 5)**

would be to raise rates even higher.

"Raising electric rates really has a negative impact. It really stifles economic development," Morgan said.

The only way to avoid raising taxes or electric rates is to get spending under control.

Cost cutting steps taken thus far have been a significant help, Morgan said.

The biggest remaining hurdle is getting personnel costs under control.

"The Borough cannot continue to pay private sector wages, wages that are way above what the average citizen in the Borough earns, and to continue giving them a very generous public sector benefits package," Morgan said. "That is the big issue

council needs to clear up."

Currently, Middletown police officers contribute nothing to the cost of their health care premiums. The Borough even pays 100 percent for spouses and family. Non-uniform union members make a minimal \$44 monthly contribution. Deductibles and most co-pay charges are reimbursed for both uniform and non-uniform personnel.

Pension costs continue to soar, and on top of the generous defined benefit plans Borough employees receive, employees are allowed to accumulate large amounts of vacation, personal and sick time, which they are paid for when they retire. That benefit cost the Borough nearly a million dollars

in 2011. And that does not include the \$854,000 annual cost to provide retirees with free medical, prescription drug, dental, vision and life insurance.

Spouses are also covered, with non-uniform employee spouses also receiving those benefits at the taxpayers' expense (pre-Medicare age police spouses contribute \$75 per month towards health care).

"We strongly urge that the Borough take strong steps to restructure collective bargaining agreements that would cut or limit cost growth, improve productivity and provide for the long-term stability of the Borough," Morgan wrote in a summary of his recommendations.

The consequences of

failing to contain costs could be drastic, Morgan warned.

Higher taxes and/or utility rates, the potential need to sell the Borough's utility operations, or even, as a last resort, filing for Act 47 distressed municipality status like Harrisburg did, could be in the offing if attempts to find other solutions fail.

Morgan's draft report has been submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development for comment. Once the comments are received, Morgan will incorporate them into a final plan for Council to take action.

Once Council accepts the final report, copies will be posted on the Borough Web site and made available to the public.

## STATION (from Page3)

armory – where weapons and ammunition are stored – were both built from two-by-four frames covered with chicken wire, which made them anything but secure.

The renovations to the Behney building will eliminate those problems, and more, said Wheeler. They will also add to the safety of the community.

“This will give our citizens a place where they can feel comfortable interacting with the police and our officers in a modern, clean, and safe environment in which to work,” said Wheeler. “It will be a facility our community can be proud of.”

No longer will police walk those they arrest through an entrance to Borough Hall which is

also used by members of the public. A new “sally port” will allow officers to pull their patrol vehicle inside a secured area, with an adjacent holding area that will eliminate the public’s exposure to potentially dangerous criminals.

That area will be completely separate from the public entrance to the new station, where citizens seeking to speak with officers will be greeted by the department’s receptionist.

In addition to a modern locker room with a new shower stall and working plumbing, the first floor will also include two sound proof interview rooms, and a lunch room, which will eliminate the current practice of eating

lunch at the same table where evidence is processed.

The evidence storage and armory facilities will be constructed with cement block walls and a steel sheet roof covered by concrete, which will be a major security upgrade from the current facilities.

The first floor will also house the chief’s office and an IT room which will house the backbone of the department’s powerful new In-Synch records management system. The In-Synch system is funded in part by the Dauphin County District Attorney’s office, which coordinated the county-wide shift to the new system.

On the second floor will be offices for sergeants

and detectives, a squad room for patrol officers, and a small group area for training and meetings.

“The work area will be centrally located to allow more interaction and better communications between the officers,” Wheeler said.

It’s also worth mentioning, the propane gas-powered emergency backup generator for the new facility is located outdoors, meaning there is no risk of any repeat of the Christmas Eve situation.

According to information on the Police Association’s Web site, the new station will be the first major improvement in “42 years or so” to the department’s facilities.

## Laudenslager honored as Borough officer of the year



Katlyn Flasher, who served as the student President of Borough Council during the April 15 Local Government Day event, congratulates Borough police officer Mark Laudenslager after he was honored by Council for being named American Legion Post 594 Officer of the Year

Officer Mark Laudenslager, of the Middletown Borough Police, was honored during the April 15 Borough Council meeting for his recognition as the Middletown American Legion Post No. 594’s Policeman of the Year for the Borough.

Laudenslager was presented with a certificate recognizing his winning the POY award by student Mayor Megan Martz and Andrew Hardison, the student head of Council’s Public Safety Committee, during the Council meeting, which was presided over by student fill-ins for several Borough officials as part of Middletown’s observance of Local Government Day.

Mayor Robert Reid, Police Chief Steven Wheeler, and Dave Rhen, the chair of the Public Safety Committee, also took part in the presentation.

Laudenslager received the POY award March 17 at the Legion’s Annual Birthday Dinner. He was honored for his commitment to community service.

BOROUGH OF  
**MIDDLETOWN**  
60 WEST EMAUS STREET, MIDDLETOWN PA 17057

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
EDDM RETAIL

LOCAL  
Postal Customer

# Permit Applications Now available online

BOROUGH of MIDDLETOWN, PA.  
CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

**PERMIT**

[www.MiddletownBorough.com/codes](http://www.MiddletownBorough.com/codes)