



WALKER

City News

Spring 2005

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City of Walker Summer Festival

2005 Walker Summer Festival

Location: City Central Park
(Behind City Hall on Remembrance Rd)

June 17 FRIDAY

Hospitality Tent and Music	5:00 PM ~ 11:00 PM
Band: GEEZERS (TBD)	5:00 PM ~ 7:00 PM
Band: Stouper Stupid	7:00 PM ~ 11:00 PM
Children's Inflatables	5:00 PM ~ 10:00 PM
Food Booths	5:00 PM ~ 10:00 PM

June 18 SATURDAY

Art & Craft Sale	10:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM
Classic Car Show (TBD)	10:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM
Library Book Sale	10:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM
Police & Fire Dept Activities	10:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM
Petting Zoo	10:00 AM ~ 6:00 PM
Children's Play Area (Inflatables)	10:00 AM ~ 10:00 PM
Hospitality Tent & Food	12:00 PM ~ 1:00 PM
Rapid City Dance Factory	12:00 PM ~ 2:00 PM
<i>1 Hour – Sleeping Beauty Performance and 1 Hour of Children's Recitals</i>	
MUSIC – S.O.B.'S	7:00 PM ~ 11:00 PM

Fireworks at Dusk

Walker Downhill Race

DOWNHILL RACERS – START YOUR ENGINES

Spring has sprung and it's time again for the Walker City Downhill Race. Many Walker residents are probably unaware that we even have a Downhill Race. The race is always held just after the parade on Memorial Day. This year May 30th will be the day, and the hill on Cummings Street, north of Lake Michigan Drive, is the place.

The Walker Police Department has two kit cars, which will be entered this year. Our Walker Stalker Car and our Walker Police Volunteer car. We are looking for a few good kids to drive our cars. You have to be 8-11 years old, attend one of our local schools, and be enthusiastic. All you need to do to show your interest is write in 25 words or less why you think you would be a good candidate. You can send your letter to the Walker Police Department, c/o Officer "Butch" Redzinski, or talk to your principal and Officer Redzinski will pick up your letter at your school. You must have your letter in by Friday, May 13th. There will be food, prizes, and fun for the whole family. For more information call Officer Redzinski at 616-791-6835.

There are two other categories for racers that are available to the general public. The "Kit Car Division" and the "Home-made Car Division" Kit cars can be purchased from The All-American Soapbox Derby in Akron, Ohio. Tx #330-733-1370. Kits (including wheels) range \$400-\$600. Many choose to make their own with 2x4's and plywood or whatever works and enter the Home-made Car Division. Winners for each category are awarded photo trophy plaques. The age requirement is 8 years old to adult.

See the website for more details at www.ci.walker.mi.us or contact Officer Shannon VanderHeuvel at 616-791-6826. See you at the races!



Dear Citizens of Walker:

Greetings on behalf of the City Commission.

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you some of the things that are happening in our City life. While much of what we hear and read about government is focused on the difficult economic times, there are still positive things happening in Walker.

I wish to thank our road crews for an excellent job this past winter. I have received many very positive comments about the professionalism with which the streets are plowed and salted each time we experience a significant snow storm. We often overlook the incredible job done by our Department of Public Works. Whether it is snow and ice removal in the winter, or road, park, and facility work in the other months, we are fortunate to be served by this great team.

I also wish to mention that we are well on our way regarding the new fire station that will be constructed on M-45. A committee of elected officials, City department heads, and representatives of the Downtown Development Authority has selected the team of Houseman Construction Company and Paradigm Design, both Walker companies, to design and construct the new station. This station will also house our newest piece of fire equipment, a tanker pumper which is scheduled to arrive this spring.

Recently, the City and Planning Commissions met to kick off our Master Plan revision project. As you may know, the Master Plan which was adopted in 1998 provides a guide for land use and development in the City. Since 1998 there have been many changes to our City and it is time to update the Master Plan. We have identified priority areas in all three wards of the City. It is essential that our Master Plan be kept relevant if we are to achieve the goals of improved quality of life, more efficient use of financial and other resources, a cleaner environment, and an economically healthy community.

One last point I would like to make. Government is often accused of wasteful spending and ignoring the fact that it is the taxpayers' dollars that are being spent. However, in the three years that I have been privileged to serve as Mayor and work with our City employees, I must say that they have demonstrated that they have earned the trust they have been given by the public. While there are many examples to demonstrate this, allow me to describe just one which was recently brought to my attention.

Our Income Tax Department recently reported that we are now using recycled paper and only black and white printing on income tax forms. This decision has reduced the department's printing costs by twenty-five percent from the levels of seven years ago. While this small change does not solve the problems resulting from reduced revenue sharing from the state, it does illustrate the kind of initiative used by our employees in their efforts to provide quality services at the lowest possible cost. We are fortunate to be served by employees who are committed to public service.

On behalf of the City Commission, I extend our best wishes for a safe summer season. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

**Best Regards,
Rob VerHeulen**

City Commission:

CITY HALL

453-6311

MAYOR

Rob VerHeulen - 791-6860 Office; 453-2201 Home
rverheul@ci.walker.mi.us

FIRST WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Al Parent - 784-2860; aparent@ci.walker.mi.us
Dan Kent - 784-5591; dkent@ci.walker.mi.us

SECOND WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Barbara Holt - 784-5327; bholt@ci.walker.mi.us
Chuck Deschaine - 435-4032; cdeschai@ci.walker.mi.us

THIRD WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Cynthia Stek - 791-9381; cstek@ci.walker.mi.us
Steven Versluis - 791-9247; sverslui@ci.walker.mi.us

City Services:

CLERK'S OFFICE

Hours: M-F -- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sandra A. Wisniewski, CMC
Phone: 791-6865 -- swisniew@ci.walker.mi.us

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Dan DeVries, Treasurer
Phone: 791-6861 -- ddvries@ci.walker.mi.us

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Kelly Gibbs, Assessor
Phone: 791-6862 -- kgibbs@ci.walker.mi.us

BUILDING/ZONING DEPARTMENT

Jeff Nelson, Building Official
Phone: 791-6858 -- jnelson@ci.walker.mi.us

CITY MANAGER

Cathy VanderMeulen
Phone: 791-6859 -- cvanderm@ci.walker.mi.us

DISTRICT COURT - 59TH

Hours: M-F -- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Judge Peter P. Versluis -- Phone: 453-5765

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Scott C. Conners, P.E., City Engineer
Phone: 791-6792 -- sconners@ci.walker.mi.us

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Cindy Mielke, Finance Manager
Phone: 791-6799 -- cmielke@ci.walker.mi.us

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief: William Schmidt
Phone: 791-6840 -- bschmidt@ci.walker.mi.us

INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

Julie Blok, Income Tax Director
Phone: 791-6880 -- jblok@ci.walker.mi.us

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Marcy Kneibel, Recreation Director
Phone: 791-6890 -- mkneibel@ci.walker.mi.us

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Frank Wash, Planning Director
Phone: 791-6787 -- fwash@ci.walker.mi.us

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Catherine Garcia-Lindstrom, Police Chief
Phone: 791-6812

PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE

Mark Koning, DPW Director
Phone: 791-6854 -- mkoning@ci.walker.mi.us: or
TCritten@ci.walker.mi.us

City of Walker Fire Department

As spring approaches, the Walker Fire Department would like to make you aware of some points of interest.

Tornado season is approaching. In the event of a tornado warning, be sure to take cover in a protected area such as a basement or storm shelter. Remember to stay away from windows, doors and walls that face outside. Take shelter in the smallest room, closet or hallway near the middle of your house on the lowest level possible. Use blankets or cushions from furniture to cover you. You can also take shelter under a heavy table, under a bed or under stairs.

Also, our outdoor warning sirens are tested on the first Friday of every month at noon from April through October. If you hear them sound off, other than during testing times, you are encouraged to turn on your radio or television for any important announcements regarding the weather, etc.

When doing your spring cleaning, check your appliances for dust and lint buildup near heating sources. Please pay special attention to the back of your refrigerator and in the motor compartment of your clothes dryer. Also, check your clothes dryer vent stack for lint buildup.

Residential open burning begins on April 15 and runs through May 15. Just a reminder that burning permits are needed to burn, and they can be obtained at the main reception area at City Hall. There is no charge for a burning permit. Also, open burning is only allowed on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. You must call 453-6311 before you burn, and you must call in on Friday to burn on Saturday.

Police - Fire Memorial

The Police-Fire Association would like to gratefully acknowledge the following persons and businesses whose generous contributions will help make the Police-Fire Memorial a reality. We are getting closer to our goal, but we still have a little way to go. Anyone still wishing to make a contribution may do so by sending it to: Walker Police-Fire Association, 4343 Remembrance Rd., NW, Walker, MI 49544. If you have any questions, please call 791-6800.

Aboufadel, Edward and Kathy
Andy J. Egan Company
Baker Auto Parts
Bergman, Tom
BioCare
Bissell, Inc.
Bouwens, James
Burton, Philip and Gladys
Chulski's Salt Service
Cullinane, James and Mary
Deschaine, Charles and Roxanne
Duffy, Scott and Meribeth
Dykstra, Michael
English Hills Ltd.
Freeman, Lloyd (In Memory of)
Gibson, Brian and Kim
Greenridge Mall Developers
Grooters Foundation
Hayes, Jennifer
Hickory Lane Farms
Image Masters
Imperial Graphics

Kamantas, Vytautas and Grazina
Law, Wethers and Richardson
Leys, JoAnn
Lindstrom, Paul and Catherine
Magniant, Jane
Marckini, Ron and Shirley
Meijer, Inc.
Michigan Creditors
Middlebrook, Don
Noorman, Ronald
Nyenhuis, Edward and Lorraine
Oasis Hot Tub Gardens
Pelton, David
Raymer Water Supply Contractors
Schoor, Terry and Mary Ann
Shots Pub
Tallman, Mike and Sherry
Troeger, Rebecca
Universal Wireless
Van's Interstate Service, Inc.
Vander Vennen, William
Vander Meulen, Gary and Cathy

VanHaver, Ron and Jan
VerHeulen, Robert and Norma
Walker, John C.
Williams Distributing
Vera, Chris, Pam & Taylor
Zink, Fr. William F.

In Memory of Jim Bartholomew:
Bartholomew, Gary and Lisa
Fitzpatrick, Edward and Jill
Ford, Eugene and Janice
Halperin, Arthur and Patricia
Hostetter, James and Marilyn
Lynch, Virginia
Nichols, Gordie and Lois
Norton, Thomas and Jane
Rothfuss, Richard and Patricia
Rothfuss, Thomas
Sieler, William and Sandra
Waldorf, Stephen and Sally
Wiedmann, Richard and Mary

OPERATION IDENTIFICATION - DON'T BE A VICTIM TWICE!

Recently the Walker Police Department had a rash of burglaries in a residential area and caught the perpetrators responsible. However, in solving the crime we discovered that the suspects had pawned more stolen goods than we had burglary reports for. Consequently we began the time-consuming job of trying to identify the owners (via our Neighborhood Watch captains) in areas we suspected the unreported crimes occurred. In a few cases we were successful in reuniting stolen property with its rightful owners but we were not successful in every case. Therefore, some victims were victimized twice, whether they realized it or not!

Why? Because when a Police Department is not able to find the rightful owner it ends up auctioning the item(s) off when they purge their evidence room. You can avoid this problem by participating in “**OPERATION IDENTIFICATION**.”

What is **OPERATION IDENTIFICATION**? It's easy, just follow these quick and easy steps:

- Make a list of your valuables (especially the serial numbers of electronics items). This can be done with a camera by taking photos of each room of the house and putting the make, model and serial number on the back of the picture. Or take a video of each room and voice record the necessary information.
- Mark your driver's license number, and include the state as “MI”, onto easily fenced items (like TV's, stereos, computers, etc.) by engraving them or using a special pen that will show with the use of a black light. (**CAUTION**: Do not use your social security number because police agencies do not have access to you through them—it also makes you a target for identity theft.)
- Keep your list, photos, or videos in a safe place. (HINT: If you take photos/videos, make a copy and keep the other copy in a safety deposit box, or at a trusted friend or relatives house in case of a fire. This will also help you with your insurance company to prove the cost of items lost.)

Marked items have little or no value at a pawnshop if they are stolen. Most thieves don't take such things—or avoid those homes and businesses altogether. If such an item is stolen and recovered, it is easily traced back to the rightful owner and returned.

Remember, no home is burglarproof. By taking a few simple steps, you can make your home more secure. Most burglars look for an easy target. Don't be that easy target.

WARN YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE OF WHAT IS BEING TERMED “GIRLIE DRINKS”

A new type of alcoholic drink is proving to be very popular with girls. These drinks go by names like “alcopops,” “malternatives,” “low alcohol refreshers,” or “girlie drinks.” These drinks generally have a fruity flavor and aren't as harsh tasting as beer, or their hard liquor counterparts. They have become popular among young female drinkers, thus the term “girlie drinks.”

Brand names of these drinks include Mike's Hard Lemonade, Smirnoff Ice and Black Ice, Sublime, Bacardi Breezers, and Bacardi Silver.

Two recently released studies done by the American Medical Association point out that while the alcohol industry continues to claim that they do not intentionally target people under 21, what teen girls report seems to indicate otherwise.

According to the two studies:

- Approximately one third of teen girls surveyed reported having tried alcopops.
- 82% of teen girls who reported using alcopops reported that they tasted better than beer.
- More teens girls have tried alcopops in the past month than have boys (girls 31%, boy 19%).
- Teen girls reported drinking alcopops more than other alcoholic drinks, while women 21 and older report them as the least consumed alcoholic beverage.
- One out of four teen girls who reported using alcopops reported driving after drinking or riding with a driver who had been drinking.
- One out of five teen girls drinking alcopops reported throwing up or passing out after drinking.
- Nearly half of girls aged 16-18 reported seeing alcopop ads on television, versus only 34 percent of women 21 and older.
- One-third of the respondents thought (incorrectly) that alcopops contained less alcohol than other types of alcohol.

In addition to the heavy alcopop advertising that appeals to them, teen girls face health risks that are not shared by their male counterparts.

- Teen girls who binge drink are up to 63% more likely to become teen mothers.
- For young women whose bones are still developing, alcohol use increases the risk of osteoporosis later in life by decreasing bone density and weakening the bones.
- Girls who binge drink are three times more likely to think about attempting suicide.
- All females are more susceptible to the development of alcohol related medical disorders such as hepatitis and cirrhosis, cardiac problems and brain impairment than their male counterparts.

As a result of these findings, the American Medical Association is urging physicians to help educate young women and their parents to the dangers of alcohol use.

You are invited to join us at the Annual Night Glow Golf Outing

“Glow Hawaiian”

A Fun Night of Dinner, Golf, Entertainment, Games, Contests and Much More

Saturday, May 14, 2005 at Gracewill Country Club
Registration and Hors d’oeuvres – 6:30 p.m.
Buffet Dinner and Entertainment – 7:00 p.m.
Night Golf (6 holes) – 9:00 p.m. or Dusk
Dessert afterwards with winners to be announced.
NON-GOLFERS WELCOME!

- Golf amenities courtesy of Gracewil Country Club.
- Gift bag for every participant.
- Casual dress – Hawaiian attire welcome for the occasion.
- \$50 per player registration fee (\$55 at the door).
You don’t need to know how to golf,
just come to have a good time.

All proceeds will benefit the Kenowa Hills Education Foundation.

Please send completed form with payment to Gracewil Country Club, 2597 Four Mile Road N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49544 by Wednesday, May 4, 2005. Checks should be made payable to the Kenowa Hills Education Foundation. If you have any questions, please call the Kenowa Hills Education Foundation at 784-2620, ext. 411.

- \$50 per golfer for _____ golfers (includes buffet dinner). Total \$ _____
- \$55 per golfer at the door for _____ golfers (includes buffet dinner). Total \$ _____
- \$25 per guest for _____ guests (buffet dinner only). Total \$ _____
- I am unable to attend but have enclosed a tax deductible contribution. Total \$ _____

	<u>Player Names</u>	<u>Address/City/Zip Code</u>	<u>Home/Work Phone</u>	<u>E:Mail</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

News You Can Use

COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTER OPPORTUNITIES

Did you know that you can make TV and Radio programs that are seen and heard in Walker? Your home-made, non-commercial videos air free on GRTV, cable channel 25. You can videotape a message or an event that is important to you and put it on for all to see. Don’t have your own equipment? GRTV lends high quality TV-making tools (camcorders, editing computer laptops, a studio, etc.) after attending low-cost training workshops. You can also train to learn how to get a radio air shift where you can play the music heard on WYCE 88.1 FM. If you are a high school student and are interested in learning how to record, mix and produce audio programs, the Community Media Center is currently offering a free, 8-week training where students will learn how to use ProTools software to create radio projects.

Call 459-4788 ext.0 to get the schedule for CMC’s free Orientation sessions offered each month. Attend and learn how to make your own media. www.grcmc.org

THANKS TO THE FRIENDS!

Many thanks to Friends of the Walker Library who have been particularly busy this year promoting and enhancing the Library!

The Teen area is really cool thanks to new furnishings paid for by the Friends. They also purchased a sturdy bench that sits next to the front door. In addition, hundreds of their dollars have been spent to enrich the collection and programming schedule. The profits from their many sales projects – from flowers to books to candy – have really made a difference!

The Friends have also participated in the Derby Race and marched with library staff in the Memorial Day Parade. Presently they are working with local art teachers to bring artwork from our schools into the library. Their activities are wide and varied!

The Friends of the Walker Library meet once a month from September to May on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00a.m. If you are interested in joining this friendly, creative, and motivated group of library supporters, please call the Walker Library at 647-3975 for more information.

SUMMER 2005 IS ALMOST HERE!

Did you know last summer over 1,200 local kids and teens participated in Summer Reading Club? Summer Reading Club 2005 begins **June 6!** Youth librarian Miss Barb will be going out to the local schools to talk about this year's upcoming summer events. Our theme this year is *Dragons, Dreams, and Daring Deeds*. Starting June 6, come sign up for exciting summer programs and register for your chance to win cool prizes!

Don't forget! Library Crew applications will be available starting in May.

Walker Historical Commission

EDISON HOUSE UPDATE



The Edison House project continues to move full-steam ahead into the spring months. By spring, the old pioneer homestead will be sporting not only a new roof; it will also be showing off its new exterior courtesy of Quality Edge, Inc. Located right next door to the Edison House, Quality Edge had inquired with the City about partnering with the Historical Commission in its volunteer restoration of the house.

Additionally, our friends at Macatawa Bank, located at Three Mile and Walker, gave the Edison House a large financial push. Macatawa's first level of generosity came in the form of a five thousand dollar check. They then increased their support by offering to match the Historical Commission dollar for dollar from our Limited Edition Drawing sale (see related article). The overwhelming generosity of our friends at Macatawa Bank, Houseman Construction, and Quality Edge has allowed us to move rapidly forward. Please support them by patronizing their businesses.

Meanwhile, the Historical Commission working with volunteer workers from Houseman Construction have sanded most of the floors on the main level. Over sixty labor hours have been spent so far working on the hard-pine floors. Work also continues to be done on the restoration of the hardware on the main level. A little bit of polishing has many pieces shining as bright as they did back in 1890 when the house was built. Volunteers from the Historical Commission are also progressing in the removal of old wallpaper. Special care is being taken to preserve as much of the original horsehair plaster walls as possible.

The Historical Commission is still hoping to open the main level to the public sometime in late 2005, or early 2006. Anyone wishing to contribute antique items, pictures, or volunteer their skilled labor can do so by calling the Walker City offices.

EDISON HOUSE FUNDRAISER

This past winter, the Historical Commission engaged the services of local artist Gene Long to provide the Edison House Project with a Limited Edition drawing. There were only 100 prints made, and many have already been sold. So, don't miss out on your opportunity to help preserve Walker's history. Each print is individually numbered and signed by Mr. Long, and can be purchased for only \$100. Pictures may be purchased at the Walker City offices, the Walker Library, or at Macatawa Bank on the corner of Three Mile and Walker. Additionally, our friends at Macatawa Bank have agreed to match dollar for dollar our efforts from this fund-raiser, so please help support your new Historical Museum.

2005 WALKER MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The Walker Recreation Department is hosting the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 30 at 12:00 noon. The parade route will be on Lake Michigan Dr. between Lincoln Lawns and St. Clair, N.W. Veterans, marching bands, floats, and local groups/organizations who are interested in participating in this year's parade can contact the Walker Recreation Department for an application. Deadline for registration is Monday, May 2.

3-ON-3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is hosting its 11th Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, June 18, 2005. The tournament will be held at the Walker City Hall complex, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. The cost per team is \$80.00. Registration deadline is June 6, 2005.

2005 CO-ED FALL YOUTH SOCCER

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering a Fall Soccer program for boys and girls 7 through 12 years of age. Registration forms will be sent home with students at area schools in May and will also be available at the Recreation Department during registration. Registration will be in July.

TENNIS LESSONS

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering tennis lessons for youth 7 to 15 years of age, and adults 16 years and older, beginning the week of May 2, 2005. The following lessons will be held at City Central Park:

Tuesday: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. 7 - 10 years of age
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. 11 - 15 years of age

The cost of four 1-hour youth lessons will be \$35.00.

Wednesday: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Adult Beginners
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Adult Intermediate

The cost of six 1-hour adult lessons will be \$45.00.

To register send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, day, time and class preference along with your check or money order payable to:

WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W., Walker, Michigan 49544.

The deadline for registration is Monday, April 25, 2005. For information on June lessons, please call 791-6890.

GOLF LESSONS

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering beginner golf lessons for youth 7-15 years of age and adults 16 years of age and older. Lessons will be offered on Monday evenings beginning May 2 or Friday evenings beginning May 6 at Community Park, located at Cummings and West Grand, N.W.

Youth lessons will be from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and adult lessons will be from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The cost for 4 – 1 hour lessons will be \$ 35.00.

To register send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, day preference, along with your check or money order payable to:

WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W., Walker, Michigan 49544.

The deadline for registration is Monday, April 25, 2005. For information on June lessons, please call 791-6890.

SOFTBALL UMPIRES

The Walker Recreation Department is accepting applications for umpires for their Adult and Girl's Softball Programs. The Adult softball season begins the week of June 6, 2005. Leagues are offered for men, women, and co-ed teams on Monday through Thursday evenings. Umpiring classes are required. The Girl's Softball Program is offered for ages 7 through 12. The season will begin on April 26, 2005. Games will be played on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. If you are interested in umpiring, please contact the Recreation Department.

FALL ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

The Walker Recreation Department will be having its 15th Annual Fall Arts & Crafts show on Saturday, October 29, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The show will be at Kenowa Hills Intermediate School, located at 4252 Three Mile Road, N.W. Entry fee is \$30.00 per space and \$5.00 additional for each table. Registration deadline is September 30, 2005. If you are interested in participating, please call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890 for an application.

City of Walker Public Works Department

ADOPT-A-ROAD The City of Walker wants to work together with your group to Adopt-A-Road. This is similar to the Michigan Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway Program. The purpose of Adopt-A-Road is to involve Walker citizens in keeping their local roads clean, safe and attractive. Your group can adopt as little as 1 mile or as much as 4 miles.

WHO CAN DO IT? Any group of 10 or more people can adopt a road. We encourage service organizations, schools, scout troops, senior groups and businesses to get involved in the program. Participants must be at least 16 years of age or older unless otherwise approved.

All we require from participating groups is a time commitment to pick up roadside trash a minimum of four times per year. It's especially important to make sure the roads are clean during the spring and summer seasons. Dates and times for roadside clean up will be determined by the City of Walker. The City will provide trash bags and pickup service for filled bags.

All participants must wear orange or a hunter's orange vest while cleaning up the roadside. The City of Walker Department of Public Works will supply the vests for the first outing, but the adopting group will be asked to replace their vests at their own expense if they are lost or stolen.

ROAD ASSIGNMENTS Groups that request a specific roadside area will be assigned to that area on a first come - first served basis. Every attempt will be made to assign you to your road of choice.

RECOGNITION All groups that adopt a road will have a sign displayed on their portion of the road recognizing their involvement in the program. Each group will also receive a certificate to display in their lobby or business. The City of Walker Department of Public Works will supply the signs recognizing your group's involvement in the program. Only the initial set of signs will be provided at the City's expense. Any signs, which are stolen, damaged, defaced or destroyed, may be replaced at the adopting group's expense.

SAFETY All participants in this program must conduct a safety meeting once a year prior to their first pickup. The City of Walker Department of Public Works will provide a permit, rules and guidelines to insure that your group has a safe and worthwhile experience.

Issuance of a permit and/or participation in the Adopt-A-Road program does not indicate the City of Walker supports or endorses any organization or position.

If interested, call the Department of Public Works at 791-6854.

Adopt-A-Road dates for 2005: Week of 4/4/05 Week of 6/6/05 Week of 8/8/05 Week of 10/10/05

POTHLES Spring has arrived! With all the thawing and freezing, our roads take a beating and potholes are inevitable. We are always on the look out for potholes. Please help us by reporting any potholes to our office at 791-6854.

DRIVEWAYS In the past several years, the Department of Public Works has received complaints about some of the contractors that are overlaying asphalt driveways. These contractors will stop randomly at a resident's home and tell them they have leftover asphalt from another job and will give them a good deal to overlay their driveway. Our past experience has shown that it is not always a good deal.

We would encourage residents to get a quote from another contractor to compare prices. If the work performed will be in the City right of way, we recommend the resident ask if the contractor is bonded, insured, and licensed with the City of Walker and secures a permit. The permit is important because it gives us a chance to inspect underground utilities, drive culverts that may need replacing, and to verify the contractor does the work to City standards.

It is required for the contractor to be licensed, bonded, insured and to obtain a permit.

Please call us and confirm if the contractor is licensed. Our phone number is 791-6854.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION SAFETY The orange color construction signs are going to start popping up. Please take into consideration that there are men and women doing their jobs in these work zones. So, please slow down. It is our goal to create a safe work zone for the workers and for the motoring public.

ROADSIDE MOWING Usually, roadside mowing is done three times during the summer months. The first cut starts toward the end of May. This can depend on how wet of a spring and the growing season. We try to start when the vegetation is about 2 feet to 3 feet tall. We concentrate on mowing the roadside and also on drainage courses. The first cutting is completed by July 4th, approximately. The second cutting usually starts in August. This cutting may be skipped if we have a dry season and the vegetation doesn't grow to 2 feet or 3 feet. The third cutting will start in September depending on the timing of the first or second cuttings. At this cutting, we will do roadside and drainage courses.

STREET SWEEPING Street sweeping starts in early spring. We start on the major roads first. Then the order is secondary roads, residential roads. It takes an average of 4 to 6 weeks to complete a cycle. We sweep the entire city once in the spring and once in the fall. If we have a problem area, we will return as needed.

Please note: There is a dual purpose to street sweeping. It makes our city streets look good and it helps keep our lakes and streams cleaner. We ask your cooperation and help by not blowing leaves, grass clippings and dirt into the roads.

City of Walker Clerk's Department

This will be the first year of Election Consolidation. The Cities and Township Clerks of the State will be conducting all elections for School, City, State and Federal. The school election will be held this year on May 3, 2005.

Every registered voter will be receiving a new ID card showing that your polling location for school elections is the same as it is for all other elections. We will be using our absentee voter list to send applications for absentee ballots. If you require an absentee ballot please contact the Walker City Clerks department.

There are two precincts within the City of Walker that have two different school districts within its boundaries. They are split precincts and will be handled differently than a precinct that has one school district. Names in the precinct books will have the school designation next to it. There will be two different ballots. The voting machine will be programmed to read both ballots and keep them separate.

The City Election will be held on Tuesday, November 8, 2005. If a Primary Election is required, (3 or more candidates), it will be Tuesday, August 2, 2005.

Petitions are available for Mayor, 1st Ward Commissioner, 2nd Ward Commissioner and 3rd Ward Commissioner. Filing deadline for these positions is Tuesday, May 10, 2005 at 4:00 pm. You can pick up petitions at the City Clerk's office any day between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm.

If anyone would be willing to be a chairperson for elections, please contact the City Clerks office at 791-6878, 791-6893 or 791-6865 for an application.

Sandra A. Wisniewski, CMC
Walker City Clerk

City of Walker Planning Department

2005 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Walker City Commission and Planning Commission have started our master plan update process.

Your City officials have divided the community into four major neighborhoods, both to increase the budgetary efficiency of the master planning process and to make public involvement more personal and meaningful.

Please watch the local newspapers for notices of upcoming master plan meetings. You can also check the City of Walker website at www.ci.walker.mi.us. Click on "City Services" and then "Planning." We will be adding master plan information as it becomes available.

The City of Walker Master Plan is a guide for many decisions...zoning changes, budget priorities, park and trail projects, etc. The Master Plan consists of a map (called a Future Land Use Plan) and a book. The book portion contains information about Walker's housing stock, school districts, roads, drains, natural areas and citizens. The book also explains and expands the basic ideas found on the map.

We have partnered with Michigan State University to provide our updated Census 2000 information. This is called the "socio-economic" portion of the master plan book. The Michigan State project allows us to work together with the university faculty and students. Partnerships are an important part of the governmental process. The City will also receive high-quality information for a bargain price, which is a good thing during these rough public budgeting times.

We will also be working with another student intern to help update the Walker land use map and associated information. The student is from the Grand Valley State University Graduate School of Public and Non-Profit Administration. We will work together with our partners at the REGIS Agency to cost-effectively complete this important technical piece of the master plan update. It is good to know how changes in land use are occurring over time.

Finally and most importantly, the Walker City Commission and Planning Commission have directed staff to initiate the process for hiring a master plan consultant. Staff hopes to attract a consulting firm that can make the public involvement portion of the master plan more productive and interactive. The ability to listen to the public's concerns and provide visual options for potential solutions will be very desirable in a consultant.

A visionary yet realistic master plan can help to maintain and improve quality of life standards within a community. Staff is looking forward to the master plan update and we hope you are as well.

2004 INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURNS ARE DUE APRIL 30, 2005 New for 2005

Estimated Payment forms are now included in the *Resident Forms and Instructions* booklet. They will no longer be mailed out separately. You may also go to our web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us to download the 2005 W-1040ES forms

Estimated Payments

Tax Year 2004: If you owe more than \$100 with your 2004 return due April 30, 2005 and you have not paid in at least 70% of your current or prior year liability through estimates, credits or withholding, you will be receiving a bill for penalty and interest.

Tax Year 2005: If your employer does not withhold Walker Income Tax or you have non-wage income (rental income, capital gains, premature pension distributions, etc.) that is subject to tax and you think you may owe more than \$100 with your 2005 return, you must make quarterly estimated payments. The 2005 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions can be found:

- In the 2004 Resident Forms and Instructions booklet
- On our web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us/incometaxforms
- By mail--call us at 616-791-6880

The first quarter estimated payment for 2005 Walker Income Tax is due April 30, 2005.

Who must file

Every resident or part-year resident of Walker (this includes renters) who has taxable income in 2004 of \$750 or more must file a return. Married persons may file either a joint return or separate returns. There seems to be quite a bit of confusion, especially among renters, over whether or not they are Walker residents. All Walker addresses have Grand Rapids mailing addresses. Visit the following link on the Walker website to check whether your address is within the City limits of Walker.

Walker street directory: <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/services/assessor/streetdirectory.html>

Need help? We will be happy to prepare your Walker income tax return free of charge at City Hall. Please call 791-6880 for an appointment. Return preparation hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please bring your completed 2004 Federal return, all W-2 forms and any other City returns that you are required to file.

Required attachments

During the 2003 filing season, a large number of returns that were completed using tax preparation software designed for home use (TurboTax, Tax Cut, etc.) were missing required attachments. Please read the face of the form carefully--frequently the requirement to attach a federal form, schedule or other city form is shown on the return itself and not listed in the instructions. The required attachments may not automatically print.

Please see page two of the Walker resident return for a list of required attachments. Missing attachments will delay the processing of your return. If the missing attachment relates to credits or deductions, we will not send a request for the missing document, but will disallow the credit or deduction and send a notice of proposed assessment. For example, if you take a credit for tax paid to another city and fail to attach a copy of the other city's return, we will disallow the credit and send a notice of proposed assessment. After receiving a notice of proposed assessment, you have 30 days to file a written protest with the income tax administrator. If you do not file a written protest, the assessment will become final 30 days after you receive it. You will not have another opportunity to provide the missing information or to reduce the assessment after this time period has elapsed. Please respond promptly to all correspondence from the Income Tax Department.

Employer Withholding

A company is required to withhold Walker income tax from an employee's pay if the company has a location in the City of Walker. A company must also withhold Walker tax if they are doing business in the City of Walker even though the company has no location in the city. Companies outside of the City of Walker are not required to withhold Walker tax but may voluntarily do so as a convenience to their employees. Employers may call Nancy at 791-6869 or visit the following link on the Walker website to request a New Employer Package. <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/Services/IncomeTax/DepartmentOverview.htm>

Business Taxes

In addition to filing and paying withholding taxes on employees working in Walker, businesses are also subject to Walker income tax. Sole proprietors that file a Schedule C for Federal income tax purposes must also report this income on their individual Walker returns if the business is located in Walker or has activity within the City limits. Corporations located in or doing business in Walker must file form W-1120 to calculate tax due on the income apportioned to Walker. Partnerships located in or doing business in Walker must file form W-1065 to report the amount of partnership income apportioned to each resident or non-resident owner. Partnerships have the option to pay the Walker income tax on behalf of all owners as well.

For more information or if you have any questions regarding filing requirements for businesses, please contact Julie Blok at 791-6866 or e-mail jblok@ci.walker.mi.us.

Walker Assessor's Office

As many of you may recall, the controversy that revolved around the City of Grand Rapids Assessing Department over the last few years. The State Tax Commission (STC) stepped in to review Grand Rapids assessing records, and it was determined that their records needed updating. As a result, they have started a mass reappraisal of all of their residential properties, which is going to be conducted on a five-year cycle. The City of Walker Assessor's Office conducted a reappraisal of all of our residential records roughly ten years ago. We now feel that we should start reappraising our residential properties on a five-year cycle as well, which means that barring any new construction, we will be by your home every five years to update our records. While we feel that our records are in pretty good shape, we also feel the need to get going on this five-year reappraisal cycle to avoid any questioning from the STC.

In May, we plan to start our reappraisal. Don't worry; we plan to perform this operation as painlessly as possible for all Walker homeowners. We will be hiring a seasonal staff member for the task (more on that to follow). This seasonal person will be sent out to a neighborhood, camera and clipboard in hand. This seasonal person will approach a house, knock on the door and attempt to talk to the homeowner with a list of questions in hand. These questions are easy and should only take a few minutes to answer. They may want to take a couple exterior measurements, walk around the exterior of the house, take a new photo, and then be on their way. Our goal is to verify the information that we already have on the homes and update any irregularities. If no one is home when the seasonal person stops by, they will still take a quick walk around the exterior of the house, check some measurements, take a photo, and leave a card at your door, asking you to give us a call here in the office. When you call us back, we will then ask you a couple quick questions and take very little of your time (thank you in advance for calling us back).

That seasonal person that will be conducting the fieldwork for this reappraisal will be hired sometime over the next month or two. We will be looking for someone that we can train and would want to come back for at least the next two or three years in the summertime to work for us. A college student would be ideal, but we will definitely consider other qualified applicants. If you or someone you know would be interested in this seasonal, part time position, please pick up an application at the City of Walker's main reception desk at 4243 Remembrance Rd, NW.

Finally, May 1st is the cut off date to qualify for the Principal Residence Exemption (formerly known as the Homestead Exemption) on your property taxes. To qualify for this exemption, you must own and occupy your home as your principal residence (rentals and 2nd homes do not qualify). If you just purchased your home, you probably filled out one of these forms at closing. If you have lived in your home for a while, chances are that you already have this exemption in place. When your summer tax bill comes in July, you should verify that the Principal Residence Exemption is in place: if you own a single family home, it should say 100%; if you own a duplex, it should say 50%. As always, please feel free to contact us with any assessing questions 791-6862.

City of Walker Clean Up Days

LOCATED BEHIND CITY HALL, 4243 REMEMBRANCE. THERE WILL BE SIGNS.

DATES & HOURS:
MAY 5 - 8:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.
MAY 6 - 8:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.
MAY 7 - 7:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.

VOTER REGISTRATION CARD OR TAX BILL WILL BE REQUIRED.

WE WILL ACCEPT:

*APPLIANCES - REFRIGERATORS MUST HAVE COOLANT REMOVED w/CERTIFICATE (check with an appliance store)
Wood, brush, leaves, grass clippings, metal, miscellaneous.*

WE WILL NOT ACCEPT:

Garbage, computers, and hazardous waste(see examples below)
Rat poison, weed killers, bug sprays, mercury, oil base paint, paint thinners, lighter fluid, gasoline acids, lye, oven and toilet bowl cleaners, propane tanks, gas tanks, CO2 cylinders, car batteries, household batteries, & bleach mixed with ammonia.

Kent County has a household hazardous waste program to handle toxic, flammable, corrosive or reactive material. Call the Kent County Department of Public Works at 336-3695 or 336-2501

Any questions, call the City of Walker Public Works Department at 616-791-6854.

"Your" Newsletter!

We value your communication. You may contact us with your comments or suggestions for "Your" newsletter at any time.

CITY OF WALKER
Attn: Newsletter
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49544
Phone: (616) 791-6860
E-Mail: newsletter@ci.walker.mi.us

Also let us know if you need to correct your mailing address or need to add a new resident to our current list of recipients.

Thank you!

CITY OF WALKER
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49544

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT #1

Save The Date

NOTICE OF MEETING

South Walker Community Meeting

An informational meeting for South

Walker residents is planned for:

Tuesday, April 26, 2005 ~ 7:00 p.m.

at Cummings Elementary School

4261 Schoolcraft S.W.

Topics will include discussions on

Millennium Park, public water utilities,

Master Plan and updates from the Police

and Fire Departments.

Board Appointments

The City of Walker is looking for citizens interested in volunteering their time by serving on various boards and commissions. Most groups meet only once per month in the evening. If you would like to be considered for an appointed position on one of these boards, please stop by the City Clerks office and fill out an application or you may find an application on our website.

Meeting Dates & Times

City Commission Meetings:

8:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Monday of each month.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Board of Zoning Appeals

7:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month to hear appeals on the City's zoning regulations.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Planning Commission

7:00 p.m. - 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month to make recommendations regarding land use planning and zoning concerns.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Recreation Committee

Meets one Wednesday of each month.
Walker City Hall Conference Room

Historical Committee

Meets 1st Monday of every month to discuss museum displays and preservation of artifacts.
Walker Museum

Community Relations / Volunteer Committee

Meets 3rd Thursday of every month to identify individual & community needs. (Veterans, seniors, etc.) Also recognizes and awards special achievements in the community.

International Relations Committee

7:00 p.m. - 2nd Wednesday of each month to discuss Sister City school exchange program with Colac, Australia

Mineral Mining Review Board

Meetings as needed. Reviews applications for mineral extraction in the City.

Traffic Committee

Meetings as needed. Discussion on transportation matters brought by residents.