



*Established 1725*

# London Britain Township Newsletter

**Chester County, Pennsylvania**

**Spring 2009**

## ***Septic system maintenance protects our waterways***

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that decentralized wastewater treatment systems (septic systems and private sewage systems) collect, treat, and release about four billion gallons of effluent per day from an estimated 26 million homes and businesses in the United States.

In London Britain Township, all wastewater is treated through decentralized systems. Based on the EPA's average daily residential wastewater flows, it is estimated that LBT's 3,000+/- residents release over 180,000 gallons of wastewater per day into 1300 +/- onsite systems.

In correctly functioning systems, the wastewater is treated and the cleaned water enters our waterways. When systems fail or are not properly maintained, untreated wastewater can contaminate the local water system. According to the National Environmental Services Center's newsletter, *Pipeline*, EPA research shows that one of the biggest causes of pollution to our waterways is septic systems that are not working as they should.

Protecting the waterways is part of the federal MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer systems) program, in which London Britain Township must participate. The goal is clean water. The legislation mandates local municipalities to remove contamination and pollutants from local waterways. In the case of London Britain Township this includes the White Clay Creek, which flows into the Delaware Bay estuary, and the headwaters of the Big Elk Creek, which flows into the Chesapeake Bay estuary.

As the owner and caretaker of a septic system (or other onsite wastewater treatment system) it is your responsibility to understand how the system works and how to properly maintain it. Inside are three articles, *Septic Systems 101*, *Septic System Maintenance Pays*, and *Conserving Water Prolongs Septic System Life*, (reprinted with permission from *Pipeline*, Summer 2008, National Environmental Service Center, 800-624-8301). These are intended to help homeowners better understand and manage their onsite treatment systems.

## ***The LBT On-Lot Sewage Management Program***

In 1989 LBT enacted the LBT On-Lot Sewage Management Ordinance. This ordinance required residents to have their on-lot sewage systems pumped every three years if they have 1.75 acres or less of property or are located within 200-feet of a body of water. Residents with cesspools are required to pump every year. Residents with retaining tanks must have a yearly contract stating appropriate pumping.

In 2005, Chester County mandated a Municipal Wastewater Management Revision, which resulted in the creation of On-Lot Sewage Management Ordinance #5-03, adopted in 2005. It mandates that any person owning a property in London Britain Township served by an on-lot septic tank shall send proof of pumping to the Township on a three year cycle, and shall submit with each required pumping a written statement from the pumper/hauler that the baffles in the septic tank have been inspected and found to be in good working order. Any repairs/replacements to the septic system require that the Chester County Health Department (CCHD) be contacted first for approval.

It is the resident's responsibility to send proof of pumping—a copy of the pumping receipt—to the Township in a timely manner. In October, notices will be sent to all properties that should have the on-lot sewage systems pumped in 2009, but have not turned in the required documentation.

It is recommended that property owners keep septic management records for the property and that when the property is sold, these records be transferred to the new owners to aid them in properly managing the on-lot sewage.

In 1997, while in the planning process for developing the Township's Act 537 plan (state document outlining how the township handles wastewater treatment), an analysis showed that 15 percent of residents in LBT were experiencing repairs to their septic systems. In addition, a survey of residents identified additional repairs that had not been reported to the CCHD. If the failures continued, the Township would be forced to find a solution, which generally results in some type of central-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Message from Supervisors

Dear Residents,

The Real Estate Tax in our Township for 2009 has been established at 2.991 mills, a reduction of .73 mills from 2008.

In 2008, the R/E Tax in the Township reflected an increase. We listened to your concerns regarding this increase; explained that the revenue required for the park construction projects demonstrated the need for a one-time adjustment and, as we planned for 2009, we intended to return to a lower level of tax, providing there were no extraordinary events to be addressed in 2009. We are delighted to reduce the mills by .73.

If you are interested in the details of the budget, the reports are available for review at the Township Office.

Sincerely,

The Board of Supervisors of  
London Britain Township

*Glenn Frederick  
David Owens  
Aileen Parrish*

## Home projects require building permits and licensed contractors

Spring is here. It's a time when many homeowners start home improvement projects, such as renovations, additions, landscaping, or installing swimming pools. Many of these projects require permits from London Britain Township. If any contractors are doing the work, they must have a Township license, too.

The permitting process ensures projects will conform to township ordinances and meet the health, safety, and welfare needs of the community. It is strongly recommended that you call the Township to inquire about permits, and associated fees, before starting any project because fines and project delays could occur if work begins before all permits are issued.

Common permits include:

- **Site Investigation permit**- any disturbance of ground requires a SI permit. An example would be a Perc test.
- **Road Access permit**- for all permanent and temporary access onto a London Britain Township road.
- **Building permit**- required for all site improvements, change in use of land, construction of new structures, alteration of existing structures, additions, repair/replacements, demolition, finishing of basements.
- **Occupancy permit**- A certificate of occupancy (CO) is required for the use/occupancy of vacant land, change in use of land, or for the change in use of an existing structure. A certificate of occupancy is not required for the resale of properties.
- **Health Department Permits**- Sewage and well permits shall be obtained from

the Chester County Health Department, Sewage and Water Division, 610 Westtown Road, Suite 288, West Chester, PA 19380, 610-344-6526.

- **Occasional/Seasonal Permit**-required to establish permission to operate a seasonal/occasional business on a specific lot.
- **Sign Permit**- required prior to erection/alteration/enlargement of any sign or sign structure.
- **Paving Permit**- required for all driveway work prior to the start of any work.

LBT's Zoning Officer, Dave Gargula, issues all building permits. He is available during London Britain Township's office hours plus he has additional office hours by appointment. Please call him at 302-218-7173 to arrange a convenient time to meet.

The Township maintains, and updates monthly, a list of licensed contractors, who can perform services in this municipality. It is illegal for any contractor to work in the Township without being currently licensed and insured.

London Britain Township is not endorsing any of the contractors on this list, but simply providing the public with a better means to choose contractors. The list can be accessed from the Township's website, or is available at the Township Office.

LBT recommends that residents request to see the Township issued license from the contractor to verify a license has been issued and is current before work begins.

## White Clay CreekFest is May 2

Join the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the formation of the White Clay Creek Preserve in Pa. and Del. on May 2.

In the morning, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the White Clay Creek State Preserve (Pennsylvania) is focusing on trout-related activities including displays, a trout release and a fly-fishing clinic.

From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. stop by the Carpenter Recreational Area of the White Clay Creek State Park (Delaware) for displays, activities, and fun. Activities include the following hikes: Park Ruins Hike, Native/Invasive Plant Walks,

and Family Hikes to the White Clay Creek Tributary. Many local organizations including the White Clay Watershed Association, the Stroud Water Research Center, the National Parks Service and the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic Program will share the story of the White Clay Valley.

Details can be found at [www.whiteclay.org](http://www.whiteclay.org)



## LBT On-Lot.....

*(Continued from page 1)*

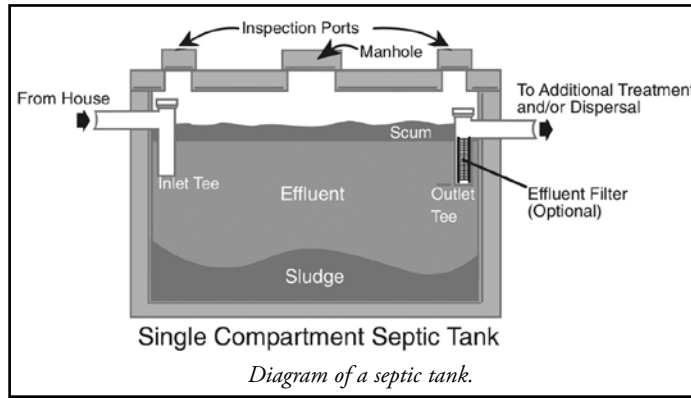
ized sewage treatment facility. Estimates for such a program would be in the millions of dollars. Proper treatment of existing on-lot systems could put off the need for Township intervention for many years, and thus may never be needed. Armed with this analysis, the Township took the steps needed to enforce the on-lot pumping requirements enacted in the 1989 Ordinance. The enforcement objective is to protect Township residents from a significant expense that could occur should there be a continuing number of septic failures.

# Septic Systems 101: How a system functions

Septic systems are wastewater treatment systems that collect, treat, and disperse wastewater generated by your home or business. The wastewater is treated onsite, rather than collected and transported to a centralized community wastewater treatment plant.

A typical septic system consists of two main parts: a septic tank and a soil absorption system, also known as a drainfield, leachfield, or disposal field. Underground pipes connect the entire system.

The septic tank is a buried watertight container usually made of concrete, fiberglass or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow the solids to settle out and the fats, oil, and grease to float to the surface. It



the system, poor design, faulty construction, incorrect operation, and poor or no maintenance of the system.

By following the basic recommendations mentioned on this page, you can help ensure that your system continues to function properly.

As many of us migrate further from central cities and occupy homes served by decentralized treatment systems,

septic system care is more important than ever. By keeping your onsite system in top working condition, you can save money, increase the value of your home, and also feel good that you've helped your community both now and for future generations.

also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. Effluent from the middle layer flows out to the drainfield for further treatment in the soil.

Septic systems can contribute to source water contamination for various reasons including improper location of

## Septic System Maintenance Pays

Of course the best way to deal with a broken septic system is to not let it get broken in the first place. Since it can be difficult for homeowners to know if their systems are slowly failing, you can greatly reduce that likelihood, and gain peace of mind, simply by having your system regularly pumped and inspected. This preventative measure costs thousands less than does the cost of repairing or replacing a non-functioning system.

The following tips will also help maintain a healthy septic system:

1. Do not use caustic drain cleaners on clogged pipes. Instead use boiling water

or a drain snake to open clogs.

2. Conserve water to avoid hydraulic overloading of the system. Repair leaky faucets and toilets. Use low-flow fixtures.

3. Use bathroom cleaners and laundry detergents in moderation.

4. Your septic system is not a trash can. Do not flush disposable diapers, tampons, condoms, paper towels, "flushable" wipes, cat litter, or cigarettes into the system. These items quickly fill your septic tank with solids, decrease the system's efficiency, and will require it to be more frequently pumped.

5. Avoid dumping grease or fats down the kitchen drain. They solidify and the accumulation may contribute to plumbing and system blockages.

6. Keep paint varnish, thinners, oil, photographic solutions, pesticides and other hazardous chemicals out of your system. Even in small amounts, these items can destroy the biological digestion taking place in your septic system.

7. Do not flush unused medicines. Check with your local health department for disposal recommendations.

8. The use of garbage disposals is discouraged. It adds unnecessary solids and nutrients to the system.

9. Do not drive over the drainfield. This can compact the soil and break the piping of the system.

10. Redirect surface water flow away from your system.

11. Plant a 'green belt' or grassy strip between the drainfield and shoreline if near a water body.

12. Periodically check for signs of system failure: areas in the yard that remain moist during dry weather or patches of lush grass or plant growth. If you see signs of failure, schedule an inspection immediately.

## Conserving Water Prolongs Septic System Life

Overloading a septic system can cause it to malfunction. Here are some steps to reduce water consumption in the home:

1. Use dishwashers and clothes washers only when fully loaded.

2. Take short showers instead of baths and avoid letting faucets run unnecessarily.

3. Replace old water fixtures with new water-efficient shower heads, faucets, and toilets. Look for the new WaterSense rating given by the EPA. This rating system helps consumers identify high-performance,

water-efficient products that can reduce water use in the home and help preserve the nation's water resources. You can find EPA's WaterSense related products at [www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm).



4. Repair and replace any leaking fixtures immediately. Nearly 14 percent of the water entering a household is never used—it leaks down the drain.

# London Britain's News and Notes

## LBT FIRE STATION UPDATE

LBT is moving ahead with the agreement for West Grove Fire Company's second sub-station at Nichol Park.

The Township received PennDOT permitting for the entrance. Grading, construction, and paving of the entrance road is expected to occur in the near future.

## AVON GROVE LIBRARY

Avon Grove Library's satellite branch at the London Britain Township Meeting Hall is open on Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Satellite Branch holds a small collection of books for children and adults and DVDs. Check it out.

Looking for a specific book? Order it online from the Chester County Library System at [www.ccls.org](http://www.ccls.org) and it can be delivered for pickup at the London Britain Satellite Branch.

Need a library card? These are also available at the Satellite Branch.

For more information about all the services available at the Avon Grove Library go online to [www.avongrovelibrary.org](http://www.avongrovelibrary.org).

## ABOUT SECCRA

The Southeastern Chester County Refuse Authority (SECCRA) is the landfill that accepts all the trash our community generates. SECCRA is a full-service environmental center that provides free recycling at 10 drop-off centers, plus used oil, composting and Christmas tree recycling, plus large appliance disposal (including those with Freon) at its site at 219 Street Road (near Route 926) in Cochranville.

Did you know the SECCRA site is also a Salvation Army used clothing drop-off site? Or that SECCRA is generating electricity from the methane created at the landfill and selling it back to energy companies?

Check out the SECCRA website at [www.seccra.org](http://www.seccra.org) to learn more. There's information about the best ways to conserve the limited space available in the landfill from recycling to reusing to not creating trash. Of special note, click on the Recycling link for a comprehensive "Do's and Don'ts of Recycling."

## RECYCLING CANS AT NICHOL PARK

The Nichol Park recycling bin is for cans only. Please do not put trash in this receptacle.

Glass is prohibited in the park.

There are no provisions for regular trash removal at the park. Please pack out everything but the recyclable cans you bring in.

## DISCHARGING OF FIREARMS

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not legislate the discharging of firearms for non-hunting activities, such as target or trap shooting, on private properties. Individuals who cause injury or damage by discharging a firearm in the Township will be held responsible for their actions. The Township refers all questions about this issue to the Pennsylvania State Police, Avondale Barracks (610-268-2022).

The Pennsylvania Game and Wildlife Code establishes rules for any and all hunting activities. The Code establishes safety zones (34 Pa.C.S.A Section 2505) to define where the discharging of firearms may occur. In general terms, it establishes a safety zone of 150 yards for firearms around (and below) all occupied dwellings, barns, stables, playgrounds, schools, and day care centers for all licensed hunters while they are engaging in hunting-type activities. For detailed information, 34 Pa.C.S.A Section 2505 can be accessed online at: <http://law.onecle.com/pennsylvania/game-and-wildlife-code/00.025.005.000.html>.

## TOWNSHIP TAX QUESTIONS

2009 Municipal Tax bills taxes are due by June 3.

Please contact Janie Schnelle at 610-274-8347 with any township-tax related questions or concerns.

## CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

As warmer weather arrives and we spend more time outside, please be aware of your actions and how they might affect your neighbors.

## TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS

London Britain Township's office hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:45 a.m. to noon. London Britain Township's Zoning Officer, Dave Gargula, has additional office hours by appointment. Please call him at 302-218-7173 to arrange a convenient time to meet.

## Township Directory

### Board of Supervisors

Glenn Frederick - *Chairman*  
David Owens - *Vice Chairman*  
Aileen Parrish - *Member*

### Staff

Carolyn Matalon -  
*Secretary and Parks Manager*  
Dave Gargula - *Zoning Officer*  
Joe Ferguson - *Roadmaster*  
John Dennis, Dan Tracey, Steven Henry - *Road Crew*  
Pat Walsh, Walsh Eng. - *Township Engineer*  
Janie Schnelle - *Tax Collector*  
Annette Stejskal - *Treasurer*

### Contact Info

#### Office/Meeting Hall/Garage:

81 Good Hope Rd.  
Landenberg PA 19350

#### Mailing address:

P.O. Box 215,  
Kemblesville PA 19347

**Phone:** 610-255-0388

**Fax:** 610-255-3542

#### Website:

[www.londonbritaintownship-pa.gov](http://www.londonbritaintownship-pa.gov)

#### Email:

[carolyn.londonbritaintwp@comcast.net](mailto:carolyn.londonbritaintwp@comcast.net)

## Township Meetings

All meetings are held at the LBT Meeting Hall on Good Hope Road 7 p.m.

Agendas are posted on the Township website by noon on the day of the meeting

### Board of Supervisors

Second and fourth Mondays of the month

### Planning Commission

Tuesday following a Board of Supervisors' meeting

*This newsletter is published by the London Britain Township Board of Supervisors, and produced by Secretary Carolyn Matalon and Lucas Communications and Publications.*



Photos (4) by Carl Keiler

Chainsaws and brute strength help to get the job done.



Piling the removed Tree of Heaven plant for....



Land Trust license plates are for sale at the Township Office. Get yours today!

# Invasive Species Removal Day great success

## More opportunities to come

"We accomplished everything we wanted to do," said Aileen Parrish, supervisor and member of the London Britain Township Land Trust, about the Township's first Invasive Species Removal Day on Saturday, February 21.

In three hours about 20 volunteers clipped, pulled, sawed and shredded vines, multiflora rose and the invasive species, Tree of Heaven. The vegetation was removed in a wooded area on LBTTL lands on Strickersville Road near Flint Hill Crossing. The work crew also removed piles of trash from the site.

The LBTTL thanks all who came to help.

"We were so energized by the turnout and all we accomplished as a group that we want to schedule other work days this year," said Parrish.

If this type of activity is of interest to you, and you want to be notified of future events, please call the Township Office at 610-255-0388 and ask to be placed on a contact list, or email [carolyn.londonbritaintwp@comcast.net](mailto:carolyn.londonbritaintwp@comcast.net) (in the subject line write: add to Invasive Species Day notification list). Also, the information will be posted on the Township's website, when available.

Invasive Species Removal Days are not only a great time to help your community, but a day of education to learn which plants to remove from your property and how to correctly accomplish the task.



Ladders helped extend the reach.

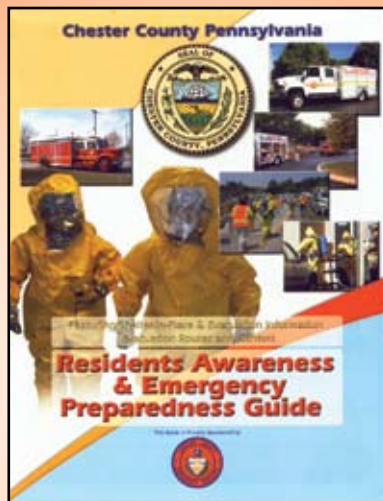


.....Dave Rickerman to chip.

## Emergency Management in LBT

In the event of a natural or human-caused disaster, the best prepared individuals are the ones who have taken steps well in advance of the emergency to provide for their family's safety and survival. The Chester County Department of Emergency Services (CCDES) recently completed a Resident's Awareness Guide loaded with information on evacuation routes, shelter facilities, and many suggestions to help with your personal preparedness. This full color guide is available at the township building upon request. Much of the information is available on the Township website, too.

"There is no substitute for proactive measures applied by households at the local level," said Chuck Freese, LBT's Emergency Management Coordinator and a member of the Avon Grove Regional Emergency Management Task Force (AGREM). Recently appointed to this vacancy in the Township, Freese's role is to assist our community in preparing for emergencies and coordinating help, rescue, and relief efforts if a disaster should strike the area.



Freese is highly involved in emergency preparedness initiatives and emergency coordination within Chester County. He, and other members of AGREM, have participated in some of the most aggressive training programs formatted by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the

guidance of the CCDES.

Freese is assembling a team of township volunteers for the LBT Emergency Management team. "These members will be a valuable resource to their community in time of need," said Freese. Members will be trained and expected to serve the community in the event of a disaster.

On another note, Freese encourages anyone with a special need to stay in touch with the Township. A confidential list of residents with special needs is maintained and continuously updated. The time to inform the Emergency Management team about special needs is before a disaster when advance plans can be made.

If you would like to volunteer for LBT's Emergency Management team, have a special needs situation to report, or questions regarding your household preparedness, please feel free to call the London Britain Township building at 610-255-0388; leave your information and a member of the LBT Emergency Management team will contact you.

## Nichol Park News



*The new playground equipment is almost ready for its final mulch topping.*

By the time this newsletter reaches our residents' mailboxes, it is hoped that the fencing around the Nichol Park Phase II construction project will be down and people can start to enjoy the new amenities.

Most of what remains to complete the project is weather dependent jobs, such as paving the basketball court and some of the walkways, planting trees, and mulching the new playground equipment.

Once these tasks are complete, the new sections of the park will be opened. Stop by this spring and checkout the new additions to our park.



*Beginning the paving process for the basketball court!*

## Show support for changing outdated legislation

"Townships are subject to a host of laws, some adopted decades ago, that don't make sense in today's economy," said Jennifer

Hawbaker in her article "Outdated State Laws Sap Townships' Budgets, Taxpayers' Wallets," (*PA Township News*, March 2009). This year the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) is working on behalf of all townships

in the state to change the laws regarding such issues as prevailing wages, bidding thresholds, and increasing transportation funding. Below are brief summaries from the article about these issues:

- The commonwealth's prevailing wage law was enacted in 1961 with a threshold of \$25,000, which almost 50 years ago was a lot of money. In today's dollars, local governments must pay prevailing wages on jobs that should not be covered under this provision, raising the costs on many projects, including road repaving and maintenance. PSATS is supporting legislation to rescind the law altogether, but would compromise with raising the limits to at least \$250,000.
- Competitive bidding is required for all purchases over \$10,000, which involves advertising in a local newspaper, waiting for bids and voting in a public meeting. Last year, legislation bumping the thresh-

old to \$25,000 and providing for yearly adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index did not pass. It is being reintroduced

during this year's legislative session.

- Townships receive yearly allocations from the state's liquid fuels fund for local road projects based on the township's population and miles of local roads. When the tax

was introduced in 1955, municipalities received 20 percent of the funds. Today municipalities split 14 percent of these funds.

Without these changes there's two courses of action at the local level: raise taxes or cut services.

"We must convey to legislators that with the economic crisis that we're in, addressing these mandates and artificial rates can help to alleviate the burdens on townships without them having to raise taxes," said Elam Herr, assistant executive director of PSATS. "Otherwise with no more costs to cut, that's the only remaining option, and higher taxes are the last thing residents need in these tough times."

PSATS is asking all residents in the commonwealth to contact their state legislators (contact information is in green box) and urge them to deal with these issues.

### LBT'S STATE LEGISLATORS

**State Senator Dominic F. Pileggi**

e-mail: [dpileggi@pasen.gov](mailto:dpileggi@pasen.gov)

631 W. Baltimore Pike, West Grove, PA 19390

Phone: (610) 345-1084 Fax: (610) 345-1087

**State Representative Chris Ross**

e-mail: [cross@pahousegop.com](mailto:cross@pahousegop.com)

P.O. Box 835, Unionville, PA 19375

Phone: (610) 925-0555 Fax: (610) 925-5408

**Check out LBT's website: [www.londonbritaintownship-pa.gov](http://www.londonbritaintownship-pa.gov)**

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