

HONORING, REMEMBERING CELEBRATING



WR MEMORIAL DAY 2015



Wood-Ridge residents gathered together at the Veterans Walk of Freedom this Memorial Day to honor the local men and women who have served our country in various theaters of combat, some giving their lives, and others returning to continue to serve their communities. Local civic organizations placed wreaths and a parade followed, ending with music and refreshments at Veterans Park on Valley Boulevard. Council President Ezio Altamura and Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy served as parade Co-Chairs. Gene Postaski and Nicholas D'Alusio were the Grand Marshals of the parade. Joe Brown, Ronald Puri, John Ferguson and Edith Hager (posthumously) were this year's honorees.



WOOD-RIDGE NEWSLETTER

2015 EDITION #2

COME OUT AND PLAY AND GRANTS ADD NEW PARKS AND IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT WR ...INSIDE STORY



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Welcome to latest edition of the *Wood-Ridge Newsletter*. In this edition, we highlight continued progress in our community through strategic investments in Wood-Ridge's schools, parks, other infrastructure and amenities. At the same time, Westmont Station rises steadily on the western side of town, bringing new homes and a brand new New Jersey Transit station that is the first of its kind, funded and constructed through a unique public-private partnership between NJ Transit and Somerset Development.

Also deserving of acknowledgment is strong planning and financial management right here in our own Borough Hall. In that regard, this newsletter highlights nearly \$800,000 in Bergen County Open Space grants applied to parks and recreational fields throughout Wood-Ridge over the past ten years. While undertaking these and other improvements, Wood-Ridge has balanced its municipal budget and exceeded State standards for budgeting, commendable successes which have earned Wood-Ridge a "AA" bond rating.

In conclusion, I invite you to join me in appreciating all of the little things that make our Borough special this summer, whether it's patronizing a local business for dinner, taking a run or walk around the community, bringing the family to a park, volunteering, or celebrating at an annual gathering like our recent Memorial Day ceremony and parade.

Very truly yours,

Paul A. Sarlo
Mayor

BIANCHI HOUSE RENOVATIONS COMPLETED

Past Meets Future as Children's Programs Are Planned

Work on the historic Arnault-Bianchi House has been largely completed, reported Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy.

Outside, beautification work has resulted in all new clapboards, vivid coats of fresh paint, and weatherizing. The 'home improvements' are surrounded by walkways, benches, and perennials which have firmly taken root since the grounds were transformed into a public park five years ago. Bianchi House's quaint carriage house, along the walkways, is being renovated to match the house's appearance.

"The Bianchi House and Bianchi House Park have truly reached a point, though the application of various historic and open space grants and the generosity of the family which donated the property to Wood-Ridge, where they harken back to what they looked like when some of the Borough's earliest residents lived there," said Cassidy, who also serves as Liaison to the Wood-Ridge Historical Society. "We could ask for no greater success for this property, which has earned a spot on both the New Jersey and National History Registers of places."



Inside of the Bianchi House, the various rooms of the more-than-100-year-old landmark are receiving refurbished floors and walls, new coats of paint, and renovated bathrooms. The electrical wiring has also been upgraded.

Once finished, one of the oldest buildings in Wood-Ridge will host some of its youngest residents, as small children of age groups 1-3 and 3-5 will be invited to the house's former living room for "Story Hours" organized by the Wood-Ridge Memorial Library.

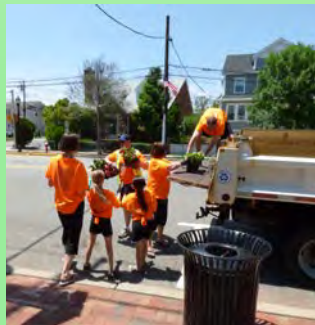
Currently, the Borough is assessing the suitability of using the Bianchi House for other clubs, educational programs, lectures and meetings.

MAIN PHOTO, ABOVE: Cherry blossoms on 14th Street in full bloom this spring.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A GREENER WR

"On behalf of the Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Committee and the Mayor and Council, we would like to thank the more than 140 volunteers who came out on Sunday, June 7th for our sixteenth annual Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Cleanup Day, and all of the residents, organizations and area business that made it a success!"

- Council President Ezio Altamura and Councilman Ed Marino, Co-Chairs of the Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Committee



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14TH STREET PARK RECEIVES NEW JUNGLE GYMS, MARKING NEARLY \$800K IN GRANT-FUNDED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

New Playground Being Considered for Catherine E. Doyle School



Recent improvements to Wood-Ridge's parks have included the installation of new playground equipment at 14th Street Park (above) and Veterans Park (right).



Since 2005, the Borough of Wood-Ridge has received Bergen County Open Space Grants totaling \$782,000, reported Councilman Joseph DiMarco, who serves as Liaison to the Community Development Committee.

The grants have resulted in steady improvements to Wood-Ridge's parks and recreational facilities. An \$80,000 Open Space Grant provided for new jungle gyms at the 14th Street Park this year. A \$150,000 Open Space Grant will bring new bleachers, fencing and dugouts to the 6th Street Little League Field in the fall of 2015. A \$107,000 Open Space Grant will provide improvements to William Kour Park on 13th Street, with work beginning in the spring of 2016.

Following a groundswell of community support and a First-Runner-Up finish in a multi-state 'Playground Challenge' sponsored by Colgate and Shop Rite, the Wood-Ridge Mayor and Council will also be meeting with the Wood-Ridge Board of Education about the potential installation of a small-scale playground for children ages 3-5 at Catherine E. Doyle School. The new playground would provide recreational opportunities to the Pre-K and kindergarten students attending Doyle. "Recognizing the desire of parents and residents in the Borough for a new playground at Doyle School, one that offers

opportunities for age-appropriate physical activities, is particularly important to the Mayor and Council," said Councilman DiMarco. "Working with the Board of Ed., we are currently investigating potential funding sources for the playground, which would be designed to keep our kindergarten and pre-K students active and healthy during the school day."

Students and their families at Doyle School collected more recyclables, including snack food packages and juice drink pouches, than all but one other school among participating schools across New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.

SUMMER RECESS MARKS START OF PHASE TWO SCHOOL RENOVATIONS IN WOOD-RIDGE

The 8th Grade Class that graduated in the sweltering 85 degree heat of June 22, 2015 will be the last one to do so, as the very next day, June 23, kicked off major renovations which will turn the Wood-Ridge Junior/Senior High School Gymnasium into a state-of-the-art facility. The renovations include installing air conditioning, new bleachers on both sides of the gym, and new lighting, refinishing the floor, painting the walls, and replacing the sound system, scoreboards, backboards and wall pads.

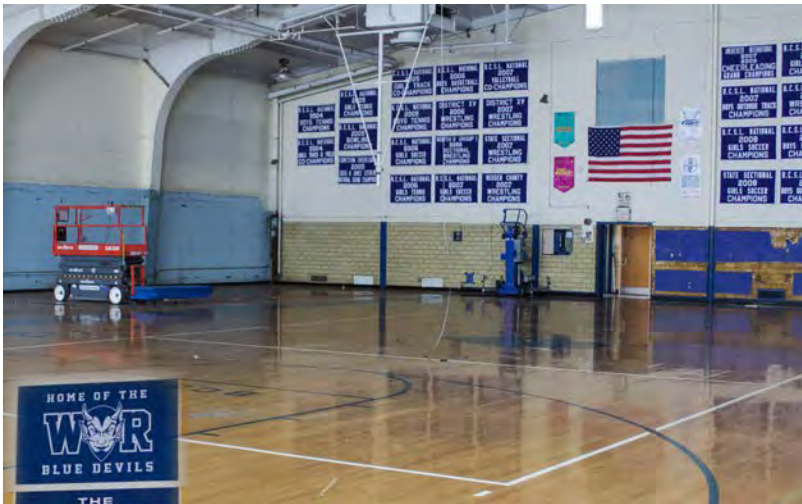
Across the Borough at Catherine E. Doyle School, work crews are replacing the roof and installing a new boiler system this summer. The new boiler is replacing an obsolete boiler that architects and engineers determined was on the verge of breaking down, reported Councilman Joseph DiMarco, who serves as Chairman of the Special Council Committee on Educational Facilities.

The next round of school improvements will begin in the fall, when windows are replaced classroom by classroom at Doyle School. Councilman Dominick Azzolini, who serves as Liaison to the Wood-Ridge Board of Education, explained that the replacements will occur after hours, leaving the classrooms safe and fully usable.

"We have set up a workplan with a professional contractor who will undertake the replacements one classroom at a time, so that our school does not become a construction zone, and studies and activities can continue as planned," said Azzolini. "While the project is ongoing, students and teachers will go home at the end of the school day and arrive to brand new windows in their classrooms the next morning."

Doyle School will receive the new windows first, followed by Greta R. Ostroksy School and Wood-Ridge High School. After the windows are installed and the school year is over, the three schools will receive new air conditioning systems, with work winding up during the summer of 2016. The science labs at Wood-Ridge High School will also be replaced during the summer of 2016, and will be ready for students returning in September 2016. The comprehensive school renovations, envisioned by the Mayor, Council, and Board of Education to bring Wood-Ridge's original school buildings forward for the next generation of students, began with the installation of a new roof on Wood-Ridge High School last summer.

The improvements have been funded by revenues generated by the Wesmont Station redevelopment, nearly \$5 million in state grants, and the issuing of a bond to match the grants, reported Councilman Ed Marino, Chairman of the Borough Finance Committee. The bond was met with overwhelming support by Wood-Ridge voters in a special referendum held September 2014.



(PHOTOS, TOP) Work is currently underway this summer to transform the gym at Wood-Ridge Jr./Sr. High School into a state-of-the-art facility for students, teams and spectators; work at Catherine E. Doyle School (3RD PHOTO) includes a new boiler and new roof.

2015-2016 BUDGET REFLECTS STRONG FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Wood-Ridge has passed a \$16 million municipal budget for 2015-2016, coming in at \$100,000 below the State appropriations cap and \$233,000 below the State tax cap levy. The budget was passed while the Borough continues to maintain its status as a "AA" rated municipality by Standard and Poors Ratings Services (S&P), reflecting relatively low debt in relation to strong property values.

"Despite increasingly restrictive mandates from the State and aid which has been flat since 2010, Wood-Ridge has once again passed a municipal budget that represents sound financial management and fiscal responsibility," said Councilman Ed Marino, who also chairs the Finance Committee.

Wood-Ridge's assistance from Trenton has been stagnant at \$784,000 since 2010, a marked decline from the nearly \$2 million in state aid received in earlier years. Despite funding losses, the Borough took advantage of extremely low interest rates to make strategic investments in infrastructure, including parks, roads, schools and recreational facilities. This has had the effect of raising private property values and encouraging private investment, renovation of existing homes, and construction of new homes.

ROAD TO PROGRESS INCLUDES TRACKS AT WESMONT STATION

The new New Jersey Transit Train Station at Wesmont Station is nearly complete, and slated to provide service to a new Wood-Ridge stop on the Main Line beginning this fall. Also in the fall, Highland Avenue will be opened into the mixed-use redevelopment, offering residents access to buildings at the site as well as the station.

In advance of the opening, Wood-Ridge will institute traffic calming and safety measures along Highland Avenue, including three-way stops at the intersections of Highland and 12th Street and Highland and 14th Street. These measures have been designed to dramatically slow traffic in the area, particularly because of its proximity to Doyle School, explained Councilman Phil Romero, who serves as Liaison to the Traffic Safety Committee.

Plans are also in place to restrict parking in the area of the Highland Avenue extension to residents only, so that commuters do not park in the area to avoid NJ Transit fees. More details can be expected this fall via future newsletters, and on the Borough's website, www.njwoodridge.org.



TEN YEARS OF BERGEN COUNTY OPEN SPACE GRANTS AWARDED TO WOOD-RIDGE

YEAR	PROJECT	YEAR	PROJECT
2005	Donna Ricker Memorial Field	2010	Gazebos at Veterans Park
2006	Donna Ricker Memorial Field	2011	New Jungle Gyms at Veterans Park
2007	Donna Ricker Memorial Field	2012	New Jungle Gyms at 14th Street Park
2008	Bianchi House Park Renovations	2013	6th St. Little League Field Renovations
2009	Veterans Park Renovations	2014	Improvements to William Kour Park



* Representing a total of nearly \$800,000 awarded for park enhancements in Wood-Ridge