



WALKER City News

FALL 2004

City of Walker Police Department

Silent Observer

Communication. Safety. Security. These are just a few of the things that make Silent Observer such an innovative and effective community program.

Silent Observer (SO) exists to provide a channel of communication between law enforcement and the citizens who wish to report crimes anonymously. Over 1500 people each year trust the program so much that they relay crime-solving information that leads to the apprehension of dangerous criminals. Homicides, bank robberies, sexual assaults and burglaries are just a few of the crimes that have been solved because of Silent Observer tipsters, adding to the safety and security of our neighborhoods and community.

Anonymity is the most important aspect of Silent Observer and Silent Observer is committed in keeping that promise. Citizens may use the program without fear of reprisals from criminals or the involvement in a criminal justice system that may not understand.

The Silent Observer tip-line is available at 774-2345 or toll free 866-774-2345. Silent Observer works behind the scene as a liaison between those who have information about crimes and law-enforcement agencies. It also provides advance information to law enforcement about upcoming threats to public health and safety. For instance, SO tips alerted police about new drugs such as Oxycontin and Katamine years before crimes involving these drugs were publicized in local media. The end product of the program is fewer criminals and less crime therefore helping to maintain a safer community.

Silent Observer has developed an innovative program the community has embraced to better fit the needs of the changing society. The Fast 50 Program is in 47 middle and high schools in Kent County. Fast 50 allows students to call the tip-line to report instances of drugs, weapons, vandalism, theft and threats of school violence. If information received leads to the recovery of contraband, the caller receives \$50 or if a weapon is recovered, \$100. This has been an extremely effective program. This school year, based upon information from Fast 50, 47 students were found in possession of drugs, 6 students under the influence or possession of alcohol, 19 weapons brought to school, 1 stolen vehicle, 1 larceny from lockers, 1 arson and 2 students who had caused \$3,000 damage.

Silent Observer's web site www.silentobserver.org features pictures of criminals police are looking for and outlines cases police need assistance with from the community. Tips can be e-mailed through the site.

Silent Observer continues to rely on the community for all of its expenses and is always challenged to raise the funds needed to sustain the program. For more information on how you can help, please contact Chris Cameron at 454-9110.

Silent Observer, time and again, has assisted the Walker Police Department in solving crimes and keeping our community safe. Chris Cameron has been a dedicated leader of the Silent Observer program, and her hard work and continued perseverance is much appreciated by the Walker Police Department. Help us keep our community safe by supporting and utilizing this important resource.

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Dear Citizens of Walker,

It is my privilege to once again share a few thoughts with you in this newsletter. I wish to use my space to share an experience with you.

The City Manager and I were recently invited to tour the United States Naval base in Norfolk, Virginia. We flew to the base on a United States Air Force refueling aircraft. The tour was organized by the “Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve” organization, an agency within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The purpose of the tour was to enhance understanding of the vital role played by the reserve component of our armed forces.

I wish that every citizen could have accompanied us on this tour. We were very impressed with the quality and commitment of the young people who serve in our armed forces. The war on terrorism has stretched the resources of our armed forces. Resources have been allocated both to Iraq and to the local needs of homeland security, including police and fire. Despite the obstacles and challenges, the “can do” attitude and spirit of public service we witnessed was very moving.

I was reminded again of the debt we owe to our veterans and those currently serving. The blessings of liberty and freedom we enjoy do not come without a price. As I write these lines, we are currently in the midst of a presidential campaign. The American people once again have the opportunity to select their leaders. It is a comfort to know that the men and women of the armed forces will be on duty no matter which candidates are elected.

There are a number of Walker residents currently serving in the armed services, including our own Deputy Chief of Police, Steve Dyke. Approximately 30 men and women from the Walker Army Reserve Center have also been called to active duty. Please keep each of them in your thoughts and prayers. I also encourage employers of guard and reservists to do what you can to assist these individuals and their families.

As a local unit of government, we are doing our best to meet the needs of our residents. We are trying to stretch our funds to address the police, fire, and public works needs of a growing, vibrant community. While each level of government has its unique role to play, it is good to remember that all government exists to serve the people. It was inspirational to observe first hand that this principle of public service is lived daily by the young men and women who serve in our armed forces.

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 - 453-4032; cdeschai@ci.walker.mi.us

THIRD WARD COMMISSIONERS:

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

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 — ddevries@ci.walker.mi.us

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Kelly Gibbs, Assessor
Phone: (616) 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 Vander Meulen
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 — 453-5765

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

City Engineer: Scott C. Connors, P.E.
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

Darrel Schmalzel, Planning Director
Phone: 791-6787 — dschmalz@ci.walker.mi.us

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

PUBLIC WORKS

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

Can We See Your Address!

If you called 911 for an emergency, could the agency responding find your home or business quickly and easily? If addresses are not prominently posted on mailboxes, posts or buildings, it can be extremely difficult for fire, police or ambulance personnel to find the location of an emergency—at a time when every moment counts.

If it's difficult to read your address from the street in front of your home or business, emergency responders, who may not be as familiar with your area, could be delayed in reaching you.

The Mayor and City Commissioners strongly encourage all Walker residents to post their address prominently on their mailbox, home or business so it is easily seen and recognizable from the road. The City of Walker does have an ordinance for posting addresses. An address number, as you know, is the number assigned to a property by the City in accordance with U.S. Postal Service regulations. Numbers may be displayed in either Arabic numerals or script. According to City Ordinance, the placement, size and visibility of address numbers should be as follows:

PLACEMENT

Residential buildings located 90 feet or less from the closest street must have address numbers displayed on the front of the building in a manner readily visible to emergency response personnel.

Residential buildings located more than 90 feet from the closest street should have address numbers displayed on a post or on a regulation U.S. Postal Service mailbox located on the same side of the street as, and directly in front of, the building. The post or mailbox should be located no more than 10 feet from the street's right-of-way and the address should be readily visible from the road.

Nonresidential buildings must have address numbers displayed in a manner readily visible from the street in front of the building. If address numbers cannot be placed in compliance with the above guidelines, the building official will determine appropriate placement of the numbers.

SIZE OF ADDRESS NUMBERS

On residential buildings less than 50 feet from the street, address numbers must be at least three inches in height. On residential buildings more than 50 feet from the street, address numbers must be at least four inches in height.

VISIBILITY

The color of address numbers must be in direct contrast with the background color of the building and must be displayed in such a way that they are readily visible during daylight hours.

WE CAN HELP!

Reflective address signs, measuring six inches by 18 inches, can be purchased from the Walker Firefighters' Association for \$10. The signs can be easily attached to a mailbox post and their three-inch-tall reflective numbers allow high visibility in the dark. If you would like to purchase an address sign, please call the Walker Fire Department at 791-6840.

Smoke Alarms

SMOKE ALARMS - Safety Tips and Important Information:

Install smoke alarms correctly and test them regularly!

Because fire can grow and spread so quickly, having working smoke alarms in your home can mean the difference between life and death. But these life-saving devices are only effective when they're working properly. Smoke alarms with batteries that are dead, disconnected, or missing can't alert you to the dangers of smoke and fire. Follow these tips to ensure that your smoke alarms are installed correctly and tested regularly.

Once the alarm sounds, you may have as few as two minutes to escape. By learning how to effectively use the smoke alarm's early warning to get out safely, you'll reduce your risk of dying in a home fire.

The right way to install smoke alarms

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, making sure that there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area. New homes are required to have a smoke alarm in every sleeping room and all smoke alarms must be interconnected.

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Smoke Alarms Continued

A life-saving test: check your smoke alarms regularly

- Test your smoke alarms once a month, following the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm once a year, or as soon as the alarm “chirps” warning that the battery is low. **Hint:** schedule battery replacements for the same day you change your clocks from daylight savings time to standard time in the fall.
- Never “borrow” a battery from a smoke alarm. Smoke alarms can’t warn you of fire if their batteries are missing or have been disconnected.
- Don’t disable smoke alarms even temporarily. If your smoke alarm is sounding “nuisance alarms,” try relocating it farther from kitchens or bathrooms, where cooking fumes and steam can cause the alarm to sound.
- Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarms, following the manufacturer’s instructions, can keep them working properly.
- Smoke alarms don’t last forever. Replace yours once every 10 years. If you can’t remember how old the alarm is, then it’s probably time for a new one.
- Consider installing smoke alarms with “long-life” (10-year) batteries.
- Plan regular fire drills to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Hold a drill at night to make sure that sleeping family members awaken at the sound of the alarm. Some studies have shown that some children may not awaken to the sound of the smoke alarm. **Know what your child will do before a fire occurs.**
- If you are building a new home or remodeling your existing home, consider installing an automatic home fire sprinkler system. Sprinklers and smoke alarms together cut your risk of dying in a home fire by 82 percent relative to having neither – a savings of thousands of lives a year.

Smoke alarms with flashing lights

There are special features available for people who have disabilities. People who are deaf or hard of hearing should use smoke alarms with strobe (flashing) lights. Make sure that the alarm you are using has been tested by an independent testing laboratory. The alarms for sleeping areas with strobe lights are required to be of a special high intensity that can wake a sleeping person.

Most major smoke alarm companies offer alarms with strobe lights. For information on availability and pricing, go to the manufacturers’ website.

Manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of smoke alarms that meet U.L. standard 1971 for people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Ace Hardware Corporation
- BRK Electronics
- Gentex Corporation
- Kidde Fire Safety
- Menard, Inc.

Avoiding nuisance alarms

Alarms that go off because of burnt toast, steam, or other non-threatening sources can be a real nuisance and can discourage people from using smoke alarms. Use alarms with a silencing feature that can be pressed to delay the alarm for a short period time. If the smoke does not clear in a certain amount of time the alarm will sound again.

You can always contact your local fire department for more information on fire safety practices and products to protect you from the hazards of fire.

“Practice Fire Safety, The Life Saved May Be Your Own”

WALKER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Open Burning Policy Reminder

A burning permit is required by any resident that burns in the City.

You may obtain your permit from the Receptionist at City Hall located at 4243 Remembrance Rd. There is no charge for the permit, and if your permit is obtained in the spring, it is also good for the fall burning season. Permits must be renewed each spring.

The City will be having leaf drop off sites again this fall. Notice of these dates and times are listed below and under the Leaf Recycling Program.

Approved outdoor fireplaces are allowed to be used in the City. Outdoor fireplaces shall be used only for the burning of wood or other solid fuel and shall not be used for the burning of garbage, rubbish, trash, grass clippings, leaves, paper, or any other materials other than wood or solid fuel. These fireplaces must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If you are using an outdoor fireplace, you **do not** need to call for permission to burn.

The following are the rules, regulations, and restrictions that must be followed when burning:

- Residential burning, by permit only, is allowed April 15 through May 15 and October 15 through November 15.
- **Burning is only permitted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.**
- **Notify the City each time you plan to burn by calling 453-6311 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. You must call on Friday to receive permission to burn on Saturday.**
- No commercial burning (contractors, businesses, clearing land, etc.) is allowed within the City limits at any time.
- Open burning must be supervised and kept under control by an adult who remains at the site of the fire at all times. An adult's presence at the site is required until the fire is completely extinguished and no longer smoldering.
- An adequate supply of water must also be available in the immediate vicinity of the fire.
- Burning site must be at least 50 feet from any building or overhead wires.
- Open burning is not permitted in any public street.
- Open burning is not permitted in ditches or drainage courses.
- No burning of garbage, rubbish or any other solid waste.
- No burning in trash barrels or other containers.
- No burning one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise.
- No burning when the wind is in excess of 20 mph.
- Materials to be burned must be dry and readily combustible.
- Fire must be kept small and its emission must be clear and odor free. No black smoke is permitted. Residents whose burning creates noxious or offensive odors for neighbors will be asked to extinguish their fire pursuant to Section 34-54 of the Open Burning Ordinance.

Each year the Walker Fire Department answers numerous complaints regarding burning. The department's response to these complaints creates unnecessary expense to the City. The City wishes to continue with its burning permit program for the convenience of residents. However, if there is misuse or abuse of burning permits, the City will review its permit policy and may have to adopt a no-burning policy as many other area communities have. Please be courteous of your neighbors while burning!

2004 LEAF RECYCLING PROGRAM

This year the Leaf Recycling Program will be located at:

City of Walker (Behind City Hall)
4243 Remembrance Rd. N.W.

The dates will be:

October 23, 2004 thru November 20, 2004
Monday thru Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

5 Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.:
October 23, 2004 November 6, 2004
October 30, 2004 November 13, 2004
 November 20, 2004

Biodegradable bags will be available to purchase at the Public Works office 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Also, we will sell the bags at the site on Wednesday nights and Saturdays. The cost will be 10 bags for \$2.50.

To speed up the leaf drop off, we encourage the use of the biodegradable bags. No plastic will be accepted. The resident will have to dump their leaves out of the plastic bags. We will also be accepting brush at these locations and running them through a chipper. No minimum length required.

Proof of Walker residency will be required.

Our offices are located at 4243 Remembrance Rd. N.W. directly across from the Library entrance. Any questions, please call 791-6854.

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's or relatives in case of a fire. This will also help you with your insurance company to prove the size, 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/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.

WALKER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

2006 Walker/Colac Exchange

As the 2004/2005 school year begins, the International Relations Committee is already busy getting ready for the 2006 Exchange. All current 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students who live in the City of Walker or attend KHHS are eligible to apply. Student Ambassadors will be traveling to Australia to explore the Land Down Under! Ambassadors will spend time in Melbourne, Sydney, Alice Springs, and our sister city, Colac, Australia. Applications for the 2006 exchange will be available in City Hall (Building Department: Rachel Nicks) as well as in the Kenowa Hills High School office (Jim DeRidder) in the fall. Do not miss this once in a lifetime opportunity! **For more information contact: Amy amyjvz@hotmail.com (subject: Australia Exchange) or 647-0535**

New Web Site Link

With so many things going on around town, it is difficult to keep track of everything that is happening! To help keep everyone up to date about events in relation to our sister city; Colac Australia, a new link on the City of Walker web site is being put together. You will be able to find dates for events, applications for exchanges, pictures, and more! This web site link will be available off the City of Walker web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us. Keep a close eye out because it will be up and running soon! **If you would like to submit something to be on the web site, please contact: Rachel Nicks at 791-6858.**

Young Artists Competition

Since 1988, the Sister Cities International Annual Young Artists Competition has engaged youth with the sister city mission to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation. Young artists from around the world, ages 13 through 18, use their imagination to express their concept of the sister city mission through the competition's yearly theme. **The theme for the 2005 Young Artists Competition is “Connecting Global Villages.”** (To view the 2004 winners, go to www.sister-cities.org/sci/sciprograms/yap/2004YAWinners)

The City of Walker is a member of Sister Cities International and may submit one piece of artwork by a local young artist. A panel of judges selects the winners based on originality, composition, and theme interpretation.

Each year ten winners are selected from around the world and awarded a cash prize. The winning artwork goes on a one-year tour, with the tour kicking off at the Sister Cities International Annual Conference in July.

The International Relations Committee is proud to participate in this program. If you will be between the ages of 13-18 by April 2005 and reside in Walker or attend Kenowa Hills, you are eligible to apply. Watercolors, oils, pastels, pen and ink, charcoal, photography, two dimensional mixed media, and computer-generated art are all accepted media. The International Relations Committee will host a reception for the winners of our City competition in March and will send one piece of artwork to be judged in the Sister Cities International Young Artists Competition. **For more information, please contact Jen at jtdunleavy@netzero.com or : Amy amyjvz@hotmail.com (subject: Young Artists) or 647-0535**

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FROM THE WALKER LIBRARY....

Look What's Coming This Fall!

Meet Miss Sarah – a new member of the staff who will conduct additional youth programs and will especially work with teens and their collection! Sarah is a graduate of Calvin College and has worked at the Hudsonville and Wyoming Libraries. We are so happy to have her at Walker!

Youth Programs

Laptimes, Storytimes, Pajama Storytimes, Family Storytimes – more days and times have been added to the program schedule! Register now! SpongeBob SquarePants, Blue's Clues, Teddy Bear Celebration and Polar Express, too..... Don't forget "Teen Read Week"!

Adult Programs

Book Discussion (second Tuesday of every month @ 10:00am) Fall Color Tour, Holiday Greeting Cards and Gift Tags and Let It Snow Kick Off Celebration....

ALL WILL BE HAPPENING @ THE WALKER LIBRARY THIS FALL!

The Walker Library's calendar of events as well as those of all the Kent District Library Branches is available in the Walker Library or on the KDL homepage, www.kdl.org.

The Walker Library is open 6 days a week M-TH 9:30am – 8:00pm. F-S 9:30am. – 5:00pm. Please stop by for a visit or call the library @ 647-3970 for more information regarding services and programming.

FROM THE ASSESSORS OFFICE.....

Who is that taking a photo of my home? We just wanted to let you know that it is our office. We are in the process of updating our computerized appraisal system with digital photos in hopes that soon we will be a paper free office. In two newsletters over the last few years, we have let homeowners know that we were going to start taking these photos soon, and now we actually have started. So if you see a car with a City of Walker emblem on the side and that person is cruising up and down your road taking a picture of every house, that will be a representative of the Assessors Office.

Please check your summer tax bills and assessment notices.

In years past, tax bills and assessment notices were generated off a centralized system down at the Kent County Administration Building. This year that centralized system is no longer active and each city or township is on their own to generate these documents. Prior to mailing the assessment notices, we tried to go through the entire assessment roll and compare what we had on our system to what the county had on theirs, and determine which name and mailing address was correct. Due to the fact that this is our first year generating these forms, some items may not be to your liking, so would you please take a minute to check the following:

Owners Name: Is it spelled correctly? Does it even have the right name? Once a deed is registered at the Kent County Registrar of Deeds office, it may take a few months to get to us, so the bill/notice may still have the prior owner's name on it.

Mailing Address: Is this correct? If yours is a newly built house, we may still have your previous mailing address.

Homestead or Principle Residence Exemption: If you own and occupy your home as your principle residence and you have filed a form with our office, then the percentage should be 100% for single family homes or 50% if you own a duplex and live in half of the dwelling.

These are the major items that you want to check. If the owner's name or mailing address needs to be corrected, you can either fill in the back of the tax bill and mail it in for us to correct, or you can simply give us a call. For some name changes we may ask you for proof of the name change (a copy of a deed, marriage license, or divorce papers). To qualify for the Homestead Exemption, not only do you have to own and occupy the house, but also you must reside in it as of May 1st. We can always add homesteads at July and December Board's of Review, so if you are not receiving this exemption and you qualify, give us a call and we will get you the form. As far as the valuation that we have for your property (assessed value, state equalized value, and taxable value), if you do not believe that your property is worth that much, the only time that you can appeal our valuation is at the March Board of Review. When the assessment notices come out in late February, that document will tell you how to appeal the value in March. As always, please feel free to call us with any questions – 791-6862.

FROM THE WALKER ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.....

As you are all aware by now after traveling in and around the City of Walker, there is a great deal of construction/roadwork currently taking place. Most notably is the reconstruction of Lake Michigan Drive (from Manzana in Walker) to I-96 (in Grand Rapids). This project is approximately 3 miles long and includes reconstruction at several intersections and resurfacing. Road closures are not anticipated but please expect intermittent lane closures.

Equally notable is the Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue reconstruction. Construction in and around this intersection is well underway, and is expected to be completely open to traffic in November 2004. One lane of traffic will be maintained in each direction during the course of this project. Construction updates will be available on the City web site at <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/>.

Various overlay projects/road maintenance will take place during the summer months throughout the City. Your patience during all of these road projects is greatly appreciated. And, as always, please remember to use caution while traveling through construction areas and be mindful of the posted speed limits.

SHOPPING BUS TRIP TO BIRCH RUN OUTLET MALL & BRONNER'S CHRISTMAS STORE

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to Birch Run Outlet Mall & Bronner's Christmas Store.

The trip will be on Saturday, October 16, 2004. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 9:00 a.m. The cost for the bus trip is \$28.00 per person. This will include donuts and juice to be served on the bus. Lunch and dinner will be on your own.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to:

**WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT
4243 REMEMBRANCE RD., N.W.
WALKER, MICHIGAN 49544**

The deadline for registration is September 24, 2004. For further information please call **791-6890**.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL * CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR * STARRING – THE ROCKETTES

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to the fabulous Fox Theatre in Detroit to see the world famous Rockettes. Come see the world's biggest Christmas show!! The show is Thursday, December 9, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 4243 Remembrance Road N.W. at 3:30 p.m., loading will begin at 3:15 p.m. The cost for the trip is \$86.00 per person. Seats for this fantastic show are on the main floor, center section. The cost also includes a box dinner and drink to be served on the bus. Dinner will be a sub sandwich from Subway, a bag of chips, a cookie, and a can of pop.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. Deadline for registration is Wednesday, November 17, 2004. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to:

**WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT
4243 REMEMBRANCE ROAD, N.W.
WALKER, MICHIGAN 49544**

For further information please call **791-6890**.

2005 SENIOR CITIZEN'S BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is having their 14th annual Senior Citizen's Bowling Tournament for men and women 55 years of age and over. The tournament will be held at Lincoln Country Club, 3485 Lake Michigan Drive N.W. on Thursday, January 20 and Friday, January 21, 2005. The cost will be \$ 8.00 for 3 games of bowling. Pre-Registration is required. Entry blanks will be available at all area bowling centers. Deadline for registration is Friday, January 7, 2005. For further information call the Walker Recreation Department at **791-6890**.

AEROBICS CLASSES

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering cardio combo classes for men and women. The next 10-week session of classes will begin the week of September 13, 2004.

Classes will be held at the Community Building/Fire Station #3, located at 1470 Three Mile Rd., N.W.

Cardio combo, which includes hi/lo, kickboxing, step, toning, and pilates will be offered on Monday and Wednesday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Cost for a 10-week session once a week is \$27.00, twice a week is \$43.00, three times a week is \$59.00 and four times a week is \$75.00.

Pre-registration is required for the classes. To register, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, choice of class, along with your check or money order payable to:

**WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT,
4243 REMEMBRANCE RD., N.W.
WALKER, MICHIGAN 49544**

FALL ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

The Walker Recreation Department will be having its 14th Annual Fall Arts & Crafts show on Saturday, October 30, 2004 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, 2004. If you are interested in participating, please call the Walker Recreation Department at **791-6890** for an application.

CORNWELL'S DINNER THEATRE CHRISTMAS BUS TRIP

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to Cornwell's Dinner Theatre in Turkeyville, Michigan. Come join us for, "A Cornwell Christmas." Song and dance and a heart-warming story will help you find the true spirit of Christmas.

The trip will be on Friday, December 3, 2004. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 9:00 a.m. The total cost for the bus trip is \$55.00. This includes the bus ride, theatre ticket, and buffet turkey dinner.

After visiting the buffet, complete with roast turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, fresh baked rolls, a second turkey entrée, and vegetables, you will have your choice of three delicious desserts. You will enjoy the wonderful Cornwell matinee that will help to make your Christmas season so special. Shopping at Cornwell's is a sure way to find that wonderful and unique treasure. Join us for a traditional celebration you will be talking about for years to come.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to:

**WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT
4243 REMEMBRANCE ROAD N.W.
WALKER, MICHIGAN 49544**

The deadline for registration is Monday, November 12, 2004. For further information please call **791-6890**.

SIGN ORDINANCE

On July 12, 2004, the City Commission approved the following changes to the Sign Ordinance:

Section 94-410 Signs in commercial, ORP and industrial districts.

Signs or signboards erected or used in a C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, ORP, ML, MH, MP, CPUD, MPUD or IPUD district, including signs not permanently affixed to a building or structure, shall not aggregate more than one and one-half square feet in area for each one foot of frontage on an improved public street providing access to the lot on which the signs are located.

Any sign in a C-1, C-2 C-3, C-4, ORP, ML, MH, MP, CPUD MPUD or IPUD district shall be located in compliance with section 94-406 and shall be located a minimum of two feet from the right-of-way line.

No freestanding sign shall exceed a maximum height of 35 feet.

Freestanding signs located 7 feet or less from the nearest lot line (but not less than two feet from the right-of-way line) shall have only structural support in the area between 3-1/2 feet and 8 feet above the ground. Freestanding signs located more than 7 feet but not more than 12 feet from the nearest lot line shall have only structural support in the area between 4-1/2 feet and 8 feet above the ground. Freestanding signs located more than 12 feet from the nearest lot line shall have only structural support in the area between 5-1/2 feet and 8 feet above the ground. However, these limitations shall not apply to a pole cover or other device used to cover the structural support of a freestanding sign, provided that the cover shall not exceed 12 inches in width or depth. Further, if the structural support of a sign consists of more than one pole, a pole cover may be used to cover each such additional support pole, provided that in no case shall the horizontal distance between a pole cover and another pole cover, or between a pole cover and any uncovered pole or other structural support, be less than three feet, as measured between the closest points of adjacent pole covers or poles within the area between 3-1/2 feet and 8 feet above the ground.

No freestanding sign shall be permitted on the same lot as a billboard unless the freestanding sign is not visible from the traveled portion of a freeway or the freestanding sign is located more than 500 feet from the billboard. The minimum distance between billboards shall be governed by section 94-412(c).

For a complete copy of this Ordinance please contact the Building Department at (616) 791-6858.

POLITICAL SIGNS

Residential Districts - Signs located in a residential district are limited to 6 sq. ft. or less and must be located 4 ft. behind the property line.

Commercial/Industrial Districts - Signs located in a commercial and industrial district are limited to 16 sq. ft. or less and must be located 2 ft. behind the property line.

ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

On July 12, 2004, the City Commission approved the following changes to the Accessory Building Ordinance:

c. Eaves height. The maximum eaves height of a detached private garage shall be as follows:

Side/Rear Yard Setback of Accessory Building	Maximum Eaves Height
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 5 feet	10 feet
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 10 feet	12 feet
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 15 feet	14 feet

(3) Additional accessory buildings; single-family and two-family residential dwellings. In addition to the attached or detached private garage permitted under subsection (2), and except as otherwise provided by subsection (3)d., only one additional accessory building shall be permitted right on a lot occupied for single-family or two-family residential purposes in the A, A-2, SA, S, AA and ARM districts, as provided by this section.

a. Maximum Size. In the A, A-2, SA, S, AA, and ARM districts, the maximum size of the accessory building shall be as follows:

Lot Area	Maximum Size
Not more than 1/2 acre	900 square feet or 5% of lot area, whichever is less
More than 1/2 acre but not more than 1 1/2 acres	1,200 square feet
More than 1 1/2 acres but not more than 3 acres	1,500 square feet
More than 3 acres	1,800 square feet

b. Setback. In the A, A-2, SA, S, AA, and ARM districts, all accessory buildings shall be located in the rear yard, shall have a side yard setback and a rear yard setback of at least 5 feet, and if located less than 10 feet from the dwelling, shall be made fire resistant in such manner as is required for attached garages.

c. Eaves Height. In the A, A-2, SA, S, AA, and ARM districts, the maximum height of eaves on accessory buildings shall be as follows:

Side/Rear Yard Setback of Accessory Building	Maximum Eaves Height
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 5 feet	10 feet
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 10 feet	12 feet
Both rear yard and side yard setback of not less than 15 feet	14 feet

d. Exceptions. Notwithstanding the limitations of this subsection (3), the following additional accessory buildings shall also be permitted per lot: A pool house, garden house, greenhouse, and/or a children's playhouse, or similar buildings for a use customarily incidental to the use of a lot occupied for purposes of a single-family or two-family residential dwelling, not to exceed 100 square feet in combined total area, and with an eaves height not to exceed ten feet.

For a complete copy of this Ordinance please contact the Building Department at (616) 791-6858.

Walker Ice & Fitness Center

Pubic Skating Times:

All times are subject to change.

Please call in advance to confirm times.

Open Skating times include:

- Mondays 12:00pm
- Wednesdays 12:00pm
- Fridays 12:00pm & 8:00pm
- Saturdays 2:00pm
- Sundays 2:00pm

Drop-In Hockey times include:

- Tuesdays 12 noon
- Wednesdays 10:30pm
- Thursdays 12 noon

Senior Skating times include:

- Tuesdays 9:00am

Freestyle Skating times include:

- Tuesdays 6:00am
- Thursdays 6:00am

Upcoming Ice Programs:

- **Learn to Skate** – Nov. 2
Saturdays 9-9:50 am
- **Learn to Play Hockey** – Nov. 2
Saturdays 10-10:50 am

Party Packages:

We offer Birthday Party and Group Packages starting at \$5.49 per person. Call the Walker Ice & Fitness Center at 735-6286 to schedule your party!



We're Proud of Our Facility	TRY Before You BUY	No Risk No Cost No Excuses
...and we stand behind it by letting you try the Walker Ice & Fitness Center for 14 days Free.	This is the best fitness facility in the area and you can prove it with no obligation.	No hidden costs. Nothing to pay. Simply bring in this coupon with your work-out clothes.

***To Qualify You Must:**

- Live in Grand Rapids area.
- Be able to show valid Michigan I.D.
- Not have applied for this offer within a 1 year period.
- Not have previously had a membership with W.I.F.C.

-Limit 2 trial memberships per household.

Words on Fitness...

To be or not to be...feeling good

No matter what your views are on health it's become very hard to ignore that what you put 'down-the-hatch' really matters and really does have a lasting impact on your well being.

There are those that simply say "well, we're all going to die someday anyway, so who cares." Look, being "immortal" is *not* the goal of most people taking steps to a healthy lifestyle! The real goal is to give yourself a *choice* as to *how you will live* until death happens. Refusing to be a statistic, and enabling yourself to live life to the fullest, without painful limitations – is the point of making healthy choices – not living to be 200! Do you do the necessary maintenance on your car because you want it to last for a century? Most of us do the required oil changes, break checks and car washes because we want to prevent costly repairs, and have our cars drive well and look good while we have them. The same is true for our bodies.

Ask yourself the question. How much suffering are you prepared to do before you go? Most of us do not want to spend years of our lives disabled or extremely ill and unable to care for ourselves. We are all aware that inactivity, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or Alzheimer's (among others) can lead to this condition. For some people – no matter what they have or haven't done – illness happens.

The good news is, we live in an age now where research continually shows us how most of us can beat the odds. That leaves us with a decision. What's worse – giving up fast foods, cigarettes or being inactive right now– or having to live in a nursing home, needing continuous care and pain medication later on? Ideally, most of us will take the necessary steps right now to prevent big problems in the future. Taking no steps – and living with your head in the sand is a decision as well.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

THE CITY OF WALKER, AND THE WALKER FESTIVAL COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO SAY "THANK YOU" TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES FOR THEIR PART IN MAKING

**WALKER FESTIVAL 2004
A HUGE SUCCESS!**

- Meijer • Bissell • Chemical Bank West • Macatawa Bank • Advance Packaging • Ridgeview Industries • Star Theatres • Top of the World Granite • National Pastimes • Hampton Inns • Billiards by Christopher • Cintas Uniform Rental • Paradigm Design • Cynthia Stek • Walker Tool & Die • Steenland Insurance Agency • Kamps Pallets • The Elks Lodge #48 • New Dimension Builders • Ranger Tool & Die • IKON Office Solutions

THIS EVENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THEIR GENEROUS DONATIONS.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

WALKER YOUTH COMMISSION

Walker Youth Commission – Become an active member in your community while you earn and learn!

Applications are once again being accepted for service on the Walker Youth Commission. The Youth Commission consists of area high school students, grades 9 –12 who are interested in learning more about local government while enjoying regular meetings, forming friendships and participating in a variety of enjoyable and educational events such as the Walker Memorial Day Parade, City Festival, Commission meetings and Michigan Municipal League conferences.

The Youth Commission is organized to:

- Represent the concerns of the youth in the City of Walker to the City Commission and various boards/committees.
- Learn, understand and practice the functions of government.
- Develop citizenship, leadership and planning skills in our youth.
- Participate in the “Adopt-a-Road” program.

As a Walker Youth Commissioner, you will be required to attend regularly scheduled meetings of various Walker City boards and/or committees.

For each City board/committee attended, Youth Commissioners will receive a \$15.00 meeting fee. At the end of the Youth Commission term, an award of \$100.00 will be given to those members who have reached 80% of required attendance. Youth Commission members will be encouraged to seek credit for their participation from their school.

Deadline for submission will be September 24, 2004. For more information, please contact Cindy Mielke at 791-6799.

Youth Commission Application

Requirements:

1. Must be in grades 9-12 during the school year you join.
2. Must attend 1-2 meetings per month.
3. Must agree to serve a one-year term.
4. Must have permission of parent/guardian and school official (principal, teacher or advisor).

Please complete the following by typing or printing clearly.

Name: _____ Home Ph.: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ School: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Date: _____

Please complete the following short answer questions on a separate sheet of paper – type your answers if possible. Your answers will determine your appointment to the Youth Commission.

1. What characteristics do you possess that would make you a good representative for youth?
2. I want to learn more about the City Government because....
3. What other activities do you plan to be involved in throughout the school year?

Attendance and participation in at least 75% of the scheduled meetings and activities is expected. By signing below, you agree that you will make this commitment.

Youth Signature

Permission to participate:

Parent/guardian

School Representative

Return completed application to City of Walker Youth Commission, c/o Cindy Mielke, 4243 Remembrance Road, NW, Walker, MI 49544 or fax to 791-6808.

"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

INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

Estimated Payments

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 2004 return, contact the Income Tax Department at 791-6880. We will send you 2004 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions.

The third quarter estimated payment for 2004 Walker Income Tax is due September 30, 2004.

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. Call Nancy at 791-6869 or visit the following link on the Walker website to request a New Employer Package.

New employer package request:

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

Meeting Dates and 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. City Commission Chambers

Planning Commission

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

Recreation Committee

Meets one Wednesday of each month.
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 the 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.