



# WALKER

## City News

### SUMMER 2004

### City of Walker Engineering Department

#### 2004 Construction Update

If you live near Lake Michigan Drive the colors of summer will include lush green grass, beautiful flowered parkways, and construction orange. Don't be alarmed by all the orange. It's not deer season. It's construction season!

During the 2004 construction season Lake Michigan Drive will be under reconstruction at multiple locations. Additionally, a trail project is underway just south of Lake Michigan Drive and west of Sunset Hills Avenue. Here are some of the important project notes:

Lake Michigan Drive Reconstruction – The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is administering a project to reconstruct M-45 from Manzana (in Walker) east to I-196 (in Grand Rapids). This project corridor is 3 miles long and includes reconstruction at several intersections. Most notably to Walker residents, Maynard will be reconstructed to allow center turn lanes in each direction. The Walker portion of the project begins at Manzana and ends at Maynard. We were successful in partnering with MDOT to upgrade the originally proposed resurfacing in this area to a full scale widening to include a center turn lane and curb and gutter. There should not be any road closures in this area but we should expect lane closures as crews work to widen the existing pavement surface to accommodate a 5th lane. Work on the Walker portion of the project is already underway and should be completed this year.

Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue – the City of Walker is administering a project at this location to reconstruct the existing roadway and add turning movements in each direction. Project partners include MDOT, the Standale DDA, and Meijer. Plans for a proposed Meijer store have been approved for the south west quadrant of this intersection. The roadway construction is expected to start after the July 4th weekend. The project will have an aggressive 3 month schedule and should be completely open to traffic on November 1, 2004. We would expect to follow up in the spring with landscaping and decorative lighting to restore the existing infrastructure in the Standale Business District. The construction will take place in phases to minimize the impact to the motoring public. We will be maintaining one lane of traffic in each direction. This will allow the contractor to work on half the road while vehicles use the other half of the roadway. Once the project begins we will post construction updates on our web site at <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us>. This will be a great way for business owners and residents to stay up to date on the lane closures.

Standale South Trail – The City of Walker is working with the Kent County Community Development Department to construct a 3/4 mile long trail from Lake Michigan Drive south and east to Sunset Hills Avenue. The project will allow for a bike and pedestrian trail to connect the Standale Business District on the west with Harmon Park on the east. The trail will be placed on property owned by Consumers Energy and leased to the City of Walker. It will include both paved surface and a wetland boardwalk. We expect the project to be completed and open to the public later this summer. We are using Community Development Block Grants to fund the trail. You can obtain more information about this trail and our Bike and Pedestrian Trail Master Plan by contacting the Friends of the Walker Highland Trails <http://www.walkertrails.com> or by visiting our web site at <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/Services/Engineering/BikeTrail>.

The City of Walker will also be performing pavement overlays at two key locations. Alpine Avenue will be resurfaced from Hillside north to Three Mile Road. Walker Avenue will also get a new layer of asphalt from I-96 south to Three Mile Road. In addition, city staff will also be performing other road maintenance around the city. We appreciate your patience during the construction and road maintenance season.

If you have any questions about these project please feel free to visit our web site or contact city hall at 453-6311.

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## Dear Citizens of Walker,

Best wishes from your City Commission. Please allow me to share with you a couple of the many things happening in our City.

### Police and Fire – Citizens Advisory Committee

As you may know, the City Commission appointed a citizens advisory committee to evaluate the staffing, equipment, and facilities needs of our police and fire departments, and the 59th district court. This committee consisted of citizens from each of the three wards of our City. 17 official meetings were held. 15 guests including university professors, police, fire, and court officials, and others with expert skills and knowledge presented materials and insights. Over a thousand pages of written materials were reviewed. An open public comment meeting was held. Tours of various facilities were conducted.

The committee recently made a formal presentation to the City Commission. A copy of the presentation is reproduced on the City web page, and I encourage each of you to review the recommendations. For those who do not have access to the web, please give me a call and I will get you a copy of the presentation.

The recommendations of the citizens advisory committee are being evaluated by the City Commission at this time. The Commission has accepted the long term service level objectives of the citizens advisory committee, but must now determine how to best achieve these objectives. The Commission is very sensitive to the financial condition of the City, and the citizens who ultimately pay for enhanced levels of service.

I wish to thank the residents who volunteered their time to assist in this effort. There is no doubt in my mind that the final result will be much better as a result of those who volunteered to serve our community. Those of us in government should seek citizen participation whenever possible. We were fortunate to have a very active committee.

The citizens advisory committee consisted of the following: Chairman Stan Stek, Julian Arizola, Len Bigler, Mark Bydalek, Judy Fex, Doug Gardner, Herb Hunt, Dan Ostapowicz, Lisa Rios, Scott Scheidel, Al Vanderberg, Mary Tanis, and Jackie Weeber.

The City Commission has decided to move forward with the construction of a new fire station in Standale. This has been a “priority” item for many years and we can not delay this any longer. The Standale area, and the southern portion of our City require additional resources and the new station will be the first step in meeting this need.

We will make every effort to keep everyone informed and solicit input as this process continues. In the meantime, please feel free to call any member of the City Commission if you have questions, comments, or suggestions.

### Walker Ice and Fitness Center

The other item I wish to mention is the Walker Ice and Fitness Center. We have changed the management of the facility in an effort to be more responsive to our community, and to reduce the financial burden on the taxpayers. Mike Slobodnik is the new ice director. Amy Alonso is the fitness director. We are excited about this change and confident that we will be able to accomplish three primary goals. These include (1) reduce operating expenses, (2) increase operating revenues, and (3) make the facility more available to Walker residents and Walker based organizations. To accomplish these goals our directors are developing a number of new programs designed to better utilize the existing facility and staff.

Mike and Amy would be very pleased to discuss their plans with any interested person. Please assist us in making this facility a resource for all Walker residents.

On behalf of the City Commission, I want to thank you for your continuing support as we address the many issues that confront us. I would also thank the dedicated city employees who continue to find ways to get the job done with reduced funds.

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. Conners, 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

## What is neighborhood watch?

The Neighborhood Watch program is the most important tool in crime prevention. The basis of Neighborhood Watch is observation and reporting. The Neighborhood Watch sets up a communication network between the Walker Police Department and the community.

Neighborhood Watch is a program involving a group of concerned people working together with the Walker Police Department to drive crime from their neighborhood. Area residents get to know their neighbors and work with them to spot and report suspicious activity to the Police. This way neighborhoods and the Walker Police Department work together towards the elimination of crime.

The security of the neighborhoods and its citizens depend heavily upon the people themselves. The Police Department cannot function properly unless it has the support and cooperation of the people it serves. The Neighborhood Watch program establishes a communication system between the Police Department and the neighborhoods they serve. The best Neighborhood Watch Programs involve as many people as possible. Once the program is started on a street the goal is to have at least 50 percent of the neighborhood actively involved. The more participation, the more effective the program is. It is recommended that new groups should start with only one city block and then involve the streets around it.

What are the responsibilities of the neighborhood watch members? The first part is to get to know your neighbors and be able to recognize them and where they live. This will enable you to know if someone is prowling around or if it is just your neighbor. The next part is to observe beyond your own home. Look around and see what is happening in your neighborhood; is someone prowling around a house, is there a strange car in the driveway, are the lights on when they are not normally? If anything suspicious is observed the Police Department needs to be notified by calling 911.

Today, there are many active Neighborhood Watch Groups currently operating in the City of Walker. However, not all areas are organized. If you wish to become involved, and are not already in an organized area, a trained Walker Police Department professional will work with you in setting up the program.

Remember, we at the Walker Police Department cannot do it without you! Together we can keep our neighborhoods safe for our families and ourselves. For more information regarding the Neighborhood Watch Program, please call 791-6800.

Thank-you.

## WALKER POLICE / FIRE MEMORIAL

September 11, 2001. This day will forever be etched in our memories. It was a day that all Americans felt the pain and sorrow of being brutally attacked by terrorists. It was a horrific act meant to destroy a nation but what it did was bring a nation together.....

West Michigan was quick to react. A grass roots charity effort spearheaded by the Walker Police Department was started as a way for people to share their feelings of frustration and patriotism. It was an effort never before seen in this area. In the end over \$175,000.00 was raised and given directly to the families of the fallen heroes from New York Firehouse Squad 288 & Haz-Mat-1. West Michigan will always be welcomed at this firehouse. The families we helped have kept in touch with us and have said they will never forget our kindness.

Three years later a new effort has been started. We are in the process of trying to build our own "Walker Police & Firefighters Memorial." It will be a place of honor which will bear the names of any fallen comrades who might be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice for our community. Our hope is to build a memorial that will be located in the City of Walker in order to let them know their community is behind them. It is an effort that comes from the very heart and soul of everything good in this nation.

Therefore, Walker Police and Fire personnel have set up a non-profit organization (separate from the City of Walker) in order to receive any tax-deductible contributions from local "heroes" who wish to contribute to this worthy cause.

If you would like to send a tax-deductible donation, please address it to the "Walker Police-Fire Memorial" c/o 4343 Remembrance Rd., Walker Michigan 49544. Or if you need more information please contact Police Chief Catherine Garcia-Lindstrom at 791-6800. Thank-you for your continued support and helping us keep alive our hopes that we "Never Forget."

**Dear Resident:**

**The Walker Police Department is working with neighborhoods on various possession and use of fireworks concerns. This letter is being sent in order to better explain what is legal and safe. In the past it was discovered that in many instances people did not know what fireworks were legal to use without a special permit issued by the Fire Department.**

**State Laws concerning fireworks allows the possession and use of only "Class C fireworks." "Class C fireworks" means: toy smoke devices, toy caps containing not more than .25 grains of explosive mixture, toy propellant devices, cigarette loads, trick matches, trick noise makers, smoke candles, smoke pots, smoke grenades, smoke signal, hand signals devices, sparklers, explosive auto alarms, and other similar devices.**

**State Law makes the possession or use of any fireworks that are projectiles or emit a loud sound illegal in the State of Michigan.**

**The Walker Police Department wants everyone to enjoy the Fourth of July weekend. We are committed to keeping the neighborhoods safe and enjoyable for all members of our community and are asking your assistance in accomplishing this task. If we can be of further assistance in any way please don't hesitate to call.**

Sincerely,

**Catherine M. Garcia-Lindstrom  
Chief of Police  
City of Walker**

## AT THE WALKER LIBRARY

### Friends of the Walker Library

Friends of the Walker Library have used their hard earned funds to purchase 4 reading lamps for the periodical area and a large colorful rug for the youth department. The library looks so inviting!

The group is busy planning a book sale for Walker Days, Saturday, June 12 and is working on other assorted projects.

If you are interested in becoming a "Friend" (no dues!) please call the Walker Library at 647-3970.

### STANDALE GARDEN CLUB

Many thanks to the Standale Garden Club for providing plants and lovely floral arrangements to the Walker Library. Their efforts make the library a nicer place to be!

### ARTWORK

The Library is making an attempt to display artwork from local artists. Presently we are displaying 2 paintings and are excited about creating a cultural and stimulating atmosphere with local talent.

### SUMMER READING CLUB AT THE WALKER LIBRARY

Summer reading club will begin June 14 and end Aug. 7. this 8 week long program is for children and young adults of all ages.

**THEME THIS YEAR:** "DISCOVER NEW TRAILS – READ!"

Programs for ALL AGES including ANNUAL PET SHOW,  
Wednesday, June 16, at 6:30 pm

Some lucky reader who completes the summer reading  
Club will win a bike from the VILLAGE BIKE SHOPS

FOR MORE INFORMATION on a summer filled with fun activities,  
stop by or call the library at 647-3970!

### Kent District Library Millage Election Tuesday, August 3.

Library services provided by the 18 branches (including Walker Library) of the Kent District Library depend upon a millage. The current millage, approved in August 2000, will expire in December 2004. Therefore, continued library service will depend on the results of a millage question offered to voters on the August ballot. Please remember to vote as the future of Kent District Library and Walker Library depends on it!

The Walker Library is open 6 days a week.  
Monday -Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Friday – Saturday 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Please call or visit the KDL web page  
616-647-3970  
www.kdl.org

## SPECIAL EVENTS



### A DIFFERENT KIND OF TALK, ANOTHER WAY TO ACT

The National Issues Forums is part of a non-partisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored forums for the consideration of public policy issues. The forums are rooted in the simple notion that people need to come together to reason and talk – to deliberate about common problems. This process allows participants to share, listen and learn as well as explore new possibilities for action.

Come join in this unique opportunity for citizens to discuss and better understand YOUR community:

←—————→  
**A NICE PLACE TO LIVE:  
GROWTH AND CHANGES IN OUR CITY**

WALKER CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
4243 REMEMBRANCE ROAD NW

**JUNE 22, 2004  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Please PRE-REGISTER for this FREE EVENT by calling  
Liz at (616) 632-2055.



## CITY OF WALKER

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**Major Overlay 2004  
will be:**

**ALPINE AVE. – Hillside to 3 Mile  
City Adopt –A– Road  
Call 791-6854**

### Reminder:

**City of Walker Festival  
June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>  
City Hall Complex  
4243 Remembrance RD.**

## A note to our residents and businesses:

The Walker Building and Zoning Department would like to remind residents of the need for proper storage and parking of all major recreational vehicles. Please contact our office if you have any questions at (616) 791-6858.

Also your cooperation in keeping your yard free of debris and keeping your lawn mowed would be greatly appreciated.

## WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT

### 3-ON-3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is hosting its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, June 12, 2004.

The tournament will be held at the Walker City Hall complex, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. The cost per team is \$ 80.00. If you are interested in participating, please call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890 for an application.

### Senior Citizens

The Walker Recreation Department invites all senior citizens to come and join the Walker Senior Citizens. They meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Walker Fire Station #3, located at 1470 Three Mile Rd. NW. Social hour and blood pressure clinic is from 10:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. The meeting is from 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon. Potluck lunch begins at 12:00 noon followed by entertainment or speakers. Field trips are planned throughout the year. Come join the fun.

*For more information contact the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890.*

### 2004 CO-ED FALL YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering a Co-Ed Fall Soccer Program for boys and girls 7 through 12 years of age. Cost is \$23.00 per player. Practices will begin the week of September 13 and games will begin on Saturday, September 25. Registration forms will be available at the Recreation Department, located at 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. during the following registration dates and times:

Monday, July 12	3:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday, July 14	3:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday, July 20	3:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

For further information, please call 791-6890.

### 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.

### GOLF LESSONS

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering beginner golf lessons for youth 7-15 years of age and adults 16 years of age and older. Lessons will be offered on Monday evenings beginning June 21 or Wednesday evenings beginning June 23 at Community Park, located at Cummings and West Grand, N.W.

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

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

To register send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, day preference, along with your check or money order payable to: WALKER RECREATION DEPARTMENT, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W., Walker, Michigan 49544. The deadline for registration is Monday, April 26, 2004.

When registering for the lessons, please indicate whether you will be needing golf clubs.

For further information call 791-6890.

**Amy Alonso, Fitness Director**



Originally from Grand Rapids, Amy pursued her Masters in Health and Fitness Management in Washington, D.C. at The American University. After working with the Army Material Command in work-site health promotion, and community health education through Adventist HealthCare in Rockville Maryland, Amy moved to Denver, Colorado. She spent several years there gaining further experience in fitness instruction, personal training, marathon training and health promotion. Amy has had the good fortune of living and working in two major metropolitan areas and has had exposure to the latest fitness trends and sound techniques in health promotion and health risk reduction for the general public. Amy is currently certified in personal training through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) and group exercise through the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA). Amy is committed to making the Walker Fitness Center not only a profitable business, but also a true resource for the best in health and fitness in the Walker Community.

<p><b>We're Proud of Our Facility</b> ...and we stand behind it by letting you try the Walker Ice &amp; Fitness Center for 14 days Free.</p>	<p><b>TRY Before You BUY</b> This is the best fitness facility in the area and you can prove it with no obligation.</p>	<p><b>No Risk No Cost No Excuses</b> No hidden costs. Nothing to pay. Simply bring in this coupon with your workout clothes.</p>	<p><b>*To Qualify You Must:</b> -Live in Grand Rapids area. -Be at least 21 years of age. -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.</p>
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**Mike Slobodnik, Hockey Director**



A native of Kentwood, Mike grew up playing hockey in the Grand Rapids area. After graduation, Mike con-

tinued his career playing Junior A hockey for the Cleveland Barons of the North American Hockey League. His next step was the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point for a four-year college hockey career and a diploma in Business Administration. After completing his undergraduate degree, Mike attended Michigan State University where he earned his Masters Degree in Athletic Administration. He has spent the past three years as an assistant coach for East Kentwood High School and various travel teams. Mike has his Advanced Level Coaching Certificate from U.S.A. Hockey. Mike plans on bringing Walker Ice and Fitness Center to a new level of excellence that he believes the city of Walker and its residents deserve.

**Public Skating Times:**

All times are subject to change.  
Please call in advance to confirm times.

**Open Skating times include:**

Mondays	12:00 noon to 1:50 PM
Wednesdays	12:00 noon to 1:50 PM
Fridays	12:00 noon to 1:50 PM
	8:00 PM to 9:50 PM
Saturdays	2:00 PM to 3:50 PM
Sundays	2:00 PM to 3:50 PM

**Drop-In Hockey times include:**

Tuesdays	12:00 noon to 1:50 PM
Thursdays	12:00 noon to 1:50 PM
Sundays	8:00 AM to 9:20 PM

**Senior Skating times include:**

Tuesdays	8:00 AM to 10:00 PM
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**Freestyle Skating times include:**

Tuesdays	6:00 AM to 7:50 PM
Thursdays	6:00 AM to 7:50 PM

**Upcoming Ice Programs:**

- **Learn to Play Hockey** Contact Main Line Number 735-6286
- **Learn to Skate** June 5th – Aug. 14th

**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!

## Even “Legal” Fireworks are Dangerous

Summer is here and the Fourth of July holiday is right around the corner. Along with family get togethers and picnics, a big part of the holiday celebration is the use and viewing of fireworks.

Michigan law allows the use of what are now referred to as “consumer fireworks” (formerly known as “common” or Class C fireworks). As a promotional technique, their advocates have labeled the fireworks allowed under this classification “safe and sane” fireworks. “Safe and sane” fireworks include devices such as sparklers, fountains, snakes, party poppers, and ground spinners. Laws based on this approach allow considerable private use of fireworks, but exclude any explosive type devices that lift off the ground and or produce a loud bang.

“Safe and sane” fireworks are neither. When things go wrong with fireworks, they typically go very wrong very fast, far faster than any fire protection provisions can reliably respond. Fireworks are a classic attractive nuisance for children. If children are present to watch, they will be tempted to touch. Children can move too fast and be badly hurt too quickly if they are close to fireworks, as they inevitably are at home fireworks displays.

In 1999, there were 24,200 reported fires started by fireworks. These fires resulted in 12 civilian deaths, 55 injuries, and \$17.2 million in direct property damage. Most of the fires were outdoor brush or refuse fires, but most of the loss occurred in fires with structures involved. These fires can start with outdoor use of fireworks, as when a bottle rocket, launched outside lands on a roof or other location not easily accessed, where it can ignite combustibles before anyone can retrieve it.

The risk of fire death relative to exposure shows fireworks as the most risky consumer product. Risk estimates relative to exposure time are very rough, but even an estimate designed to give fireworks the benefit of the doubt supports the above conclusion.

First, consider cigarettes, the product associated with the largest number of fire deaths per year and the only other product likely to have the highest risk of fire deaths relative to exposure time. Recent figures indicate 425-435 billion cigarettes are smoked per year by a smoking population that constitutes about one-fourth of the adult population, who themselves constitute three-fourths of the total population of roughly 280 million people. This translates into roughly 28 cigarettes per smoker per day and 52.5 million smokers. Assuming it takes at least five minutes on average to smoke a cigarette, this translates into just over two hours per day of exposure to the fire risks associated with a lit cigarette. The latest death toll from fires started by lit tobacco products, nearly all of which are cigarettes is about 800. The risk is therefore estimated as  $(800 \text{ deaths}) / (2 \text{ hours/day} \times 365 \text{ days}) / (52.5 \text{ smokers}) = 2.1 \text{ deaths per hundred million person-hours of exposure.}$

Now, consider fireworks. Recent figures indicate 120-130 million pounds of fireworks are used per year. Fireworks are typically used by households, so we assume that, on average, 2.6 people (the average size of household) are exposed in any use of fireworks. A pound of fireworks will translate into varying number of devices, depending on the type of device, but assume that on average a pound of fireworks burns for no more than 20 minutes. (The longer the time, the longer the estimated exposure time, and so the lower the estimated risk.) In

recent years, fires started by fireworks have averaged seven deaths a year. The risk therefore estimated as  $(7 \text{ deaths}) / (2.6 \text{ people/exposure} \times 1/3 \text{ exposure-hour/pound} \times 130 \text{ million pounds}) = 6.2 \text{ deaths per hundred million person-hours of exposure.}$

The cigarette calculation is probably high, because 5 minutes is a low-end estimate of smoking time per cigarette, particularly if one factors in the long smolder time of imperfectly extinguished cigarettes, which are a common scenario for fire. The fireworks calculation is probably low, because 20 minutes is a high-end estimate of the average burn time for a pound of fireworks, possibly high by a factor of two to four. Yet, even with these assumptions, the risk while fireworks are burning that a fire death will result is three times the corresponding risk when cigarettes are burning.

Since at least 1910, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has crusaded to stop the dangerous private use of fireworks, which accounts for nearly all of the injuries and deaths from fireworks in most recent years. Many states still permit untrained citizens to purchase and use fireworks- objects designed to explode, throw off showers of hot sparks, or reach surface temperatures as high as 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit. The thousands of serious injuries and extensive property loss nearly all arise from this misguided activity, rather than the only acceptably safe way to enjoy fireworks, which is in public fireworks displays conducted by professionals in accordance with applicable codes and standards.

The Walker Fire Department urges everyone to have a safe July 4<sup>th</sup>. Do not allow children to use fireworks. If you feel a need to use “legal” fireworks, be sure that an adult uses them, and there is a water source nearby.

If you have any questions about the use of fireworks or what is legal or not legal feel free to call the fire department at 791-6840. A good rule of thumb to determine the difference is if it makes a loud bang or leaves the ground, spins or twirls, it is illegal.

## Fire Pits—What’s Acceptable and What’s Not

Recreational fires in approved outdoor fireplaces purchased from a retailer are allowed in the City of Walker. A homemade fire pit or burning in a barrel in your back yard is **not** acceptable by our ordinance.

A recreational fire is allowed in an outdoor fireplace without a permit using solid fuels such as firewood. Using an outdoor fireplace to burn yard waste is **not** allowed by our ordinance. When using an outdoor fireplace, the side screening must be in place and the lid must be on.

If you are having a recreational fire in an approved outdoor fireplace and we receive a complaint from a neighbor of smoke and odor, the Duty Officer from the Fire Department has the authority to require you to extinguish the fire if he determines your fire is creating a nuisance for your neighbors because of noxious odors or excessive smoke. This is strictly left to the judgment of the responding officer.

Please be conscientious of your neighbors when having a recreational fire, and make sure you are not creating a nuisance for them.

## "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

### 2003 Returns

**Who must file:** Every resident or part-year resident of Walker (this includes renters) who had taxable income in 2003 of \$750 or more should have filed a return as of April 30, 2004. Even if you filed your Federal and/or state of Michigan return electronically, *you must mail a paper return* to the City of Walker. We are not able to accept e-filed returns, but are working on the technology so that taxpayers will eventually be able to e-file their Walker return.

**Required attachments:** Please see page two of the Walker resident return for a list of required attachments. Missing attachments have delayed the processing of many returns. If the missing attachment related to credits or deductions, we have not sent a request for the missing document, but have disallowed the credit or deduction and sent a notice of proposed assessment. After receiving a notice of proposed assessment, you have 30 days to file a written protest with the income tax administrator. If you do not file a written protest, the assessment will become final 30 days after you receive it. You will not have another opportunity to provide the missing information or to reduce the assessment after this time period has elapsed. Please respond promptly to all correspondence from the Income Tax Department.

### Estimated Payments

*Tax Year 2004:* 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. If you filed estimated vouchers for 2003, you should have automatically received 2004 vouchers in the mail. Please call us if you need the vouchers and have not received them.

The second quarter estimated payment for 2004 Walker Income Tax is due June 30, 2004.

### 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.