



WALKER City News

Spring 2010

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2010 Walker Summer Festival

Walker's 2010 Summer Festival is on Saturday, June 19th 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Every year, the City of Walker's Festival Committee produces a wonderful, family oriented Summer Festival, with activities ranging from a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament to rock wall climbing. The event concludes with fireworks at dusk.

New for 2010:

We will not be charging an admittance fee. Anyone five years and older participating on any activities will pay \$5.00 for the day to enjoy unlimited activities. Four years old and younger can also participate for no charge.

2010 US Census is Important for Walker

Why is your response to the 2010 US Census important? By being counted, you help ensure that the City of Walker receives its fair share of political representation and government funding for things like roads, bridges, public transit and community development grants.

According to the US Census Bureau, the census form will only take about 10 minutes to complete. You can research the upcoming census process at

www.census.gov.

Here is some interesting information from the US Census Bureau's website:

The Four Principal Ways We Conduct The Census

We're getting closer to the days when the Census request will go out to everyone. It's probably a good time to remember the four different ways that we do the census for people who live in traditional housing units (i.e., not in group quarters like dormitories or assisted living facilities).

Mailout/Mailback The vast majority of households (about 90% of the population) will receive a census form in the mail via the US Postal Service. This partnership with the USPS has continued since 1970, when the first mailout/mailback US Census was conducted. We ask that you fill it out and mail it back by April 1. (Note: The Grand Rapids area will receive the mail form.)

Update/Leave In areas of the country (about 9% of the population) where mail is not delivered to residences uniformly, census staff will visit each housing unit, update our list of addresses, and leave a census form package in a plastic bag at the entrance door of the unit. This is the technique will we use in the Gulf Coast areas that were heavily affected by hurricane damage and are in the middle of their recovery.

Update/Enumerate Just like in remote Alaska, there are parts of the US (about 1% of the population) that both don't uniformly receive mail at their residence and are far from any town. Some of these have demonstrated very low return rates of questionnaires in the past. In these areas, we will visit each housing unit and take a face-to-face interview with those in the household.

Large Military Installations At big military installations (e.g., Fort Bragg, NC) field work is coordinated with a military representative, and the Census staff is escorted to each housing unit to deliver the questionnaires. The military representative ensures that all questionnaires are returned.

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CENSUS DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS!



Dear Friends,

I wish to thank you for your support of our recent move to close City Hall on Fridays. This was not an easy decision but at this time it appears to be working well. I have received very few negative comments. It is clear that you understand that this decision was necessary to manage our finances and you are accepting the change.

We are not sure how much this step will save over the course of the year. This will depend on a number of factors including snow and weather events which may occur on Fridays. However, we are certain that it is saving tax dollars. We apologize for any inconvenience you may have encountered.

I would also commend the City Employees for their acceptance of this change. The economic and scheduling impact of this decision is felt most by our employees. They have reacted in a very supportive fashion. We are grateful that both the residents and our City Employees understand why this cost cutting measure was necessary.

In these winter months, I would be remiss to overlook the wonderful work being done by our Department of Public Works. Despite the budget challenges, our roads are being cleared quickly after a snow event. Remember to use caution when driving in winter conditions.

On an unrelated front, I want to share a recent personal experience. I was privileged to witness a son in law become a naturalized citizen of the United States. The event was held at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum and was presided over by a United States Magistrate. The new citizens originated from all over the world and it was moving to hear their names and countries of origin announced. I was impressed by the fact that despite the economic, social, and political challenges facing our country, it is still a beacon of hope and opportunity for people all over the world. We often take our country for granted and it may take an event such as this to remind us of the blessings we enjoy as citizens of the United States. If you ever have the opportunity to witness a naturalization ceremony I would highly recommend it.

We are currently reviewing budgets for the next fiscal year. I will not overwhelm you with negative financial data but will simply report that the times are very difficult. Your City Commission, City Manager, and the entire team are working hard to maintain essential services in challenging times. Your cooperation is critical if we are to succeed and we thank you for your continuing support.

Rob VerHeulen, Mayor
City of Walker

City Commission

CITY HALL 453-6311

MAYOR

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

FIRST WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Al Parent - 262-1204
al.parent@ci.walker.mi.us

Dan Kent - 784-5591
daniel.kent@ci.walker.mi.us

SECOND WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Barbara Holt - 551-0935
barbara.holt@ci.walker.mi.us

Chuck Deschaine - 453-4032
chuck.deschaine@ci.walker.mi.us

THIRD WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Cynthia Stek - 791-9381
cynthia.stek@ci.walker.mi.us

Steven Versluis - 791-9247
steven.versluis@ci.walker.mi.us

City Services

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Kelly Smith, Assessor
Phone: 791-6862 - kelly.smith@ci.walker.mi.us

CITY MANAGER

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

CLERK'S OFFICE

Hours: M-Th - 7:30 am - 5:30 pm, Fri Closed
Sarah Bydalek, Clerk
Phone: 791-6865 - sarah.bydalek@ci.walker.mi.us

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - BUILDING & ZONING

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

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

DISTRICT COURT - 59TH

Hours: M-Th - 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Fri 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
Judge Peter P. Versluis -- Phone: 453-5765

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

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

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Deputy Chief: Robert Walker
Phone: 791-6840 - robert.walker@ci.walker.mi.us

INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

Julie Blok, Income Tax Director
Phone: 791-6866 - julie.blok@ci.walker.mi.us

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Catherine Garcia-Lindstrom, Police Chief
Phone: 453-5441

PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE

Mark Koning, DPW Director
Phone: 791-6854 - mark.koning@ci.walker.mi.us: or
tracey.muilenburg@ci.walker.mi.us

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

TREASURER'S OFFICE

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

Walker Ice & Fitness Center

Mike Slobodnik, Director
Phone: 735-6286 - mike.slobodnik@ci.walker.mi.us

City of Walker Police Department

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS TO CONSIDER

There are numerous things that a homeowner can do to ensure their property is safe from intruders, such as installing adequate outdoor lighting, properly installed deadbolt locks and keeping the shrubs and hedges trimmed at the house's perimeter to eliminate easy hiding spots for would-be criminals. However, if someone is bound and determined to break into your home while they believe you are away, these safeguards may not be enough to deter their actions.

There is another component that can be initiated, that is being part of a neighborhood watch program. A neighborhood watch program is an excellent way to help deter criminal activity and discourage criminals from feeling comfortable in your neighborhood. Criminals focus on not being detected by anyone while they perpetrate their misdoings. Therefore, if a criminal believes he/she is being observed the chance of them moving out of the area is highly probable. A neighborhood watch program is just that, when one neighbor looks out for the well-being of another. If you notice a suspicious person or vehicle lurking in the neighborhood, specifically near a neighbor who is known to be gone, immediately contact the police with a description and all pertinent details for officers to attempt to locate and investigate.

A watchful neighbor is the best alarm system available! Also, remember the Walker Police Volunteer Patrol Unit provides vacation property checks for Walker citizens during their scheduled leave. Simply contact the dispatch center at 453-5441 and request to be placed on the list for these checks along with notifying your neighbors of your vacation, to thoroughly enjoy your trip.

MINORS IN POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL (AKA MIP)

Area neighborhood watch, youth, school, church and business groups, along with the City of Walker and Grandville Police Departments, have formed a coalition to address underage drinking by partnering with Silent Observer. This was done by offering a reward through the "Fast 50 Program" about underage drinking parties/locations. Tipsters can call in their tips to the Silent Observer and receive \$50 for tips leading to police action concerning underage drinking. This program has already resulted in a number of successful interventions concerning underage drinking in our area.

Another concerning alcohol related fact is that the Walker Police Department has noticed recently that minors are becoming more creative in their attempt to obtain alcohol beyond the usual method of attempting to purchase it from liquor stores. Recently, patrol officers responded to various calls concerning incidents of minors entering unlocked and open garages. Once there the young people are taking alcohol (generally beer and wine) that is kept in garage refrigerators or storage sheds. This behavior can be prevented by simply keeping garages, or other storage areas containing alcohol, locked and secure. Officers believe that vigilance by individuals and neighbors, coupled with police patrols, can curb this unintended access to alcohol by our young people.

In addition the Walker Police Department recently conducted undercover underage alcohol stings of all businesses selling alcohol (both stores and restaurants) in our City. We were pleased to find that only one neighborhood store and one restaurant offered to sell to a minor during the operation. Those two matters are currently being addressed by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC).

Finally, a recent survey done of young people in Kent County by the area coalition discovered that the average age for a minor in our area to try alcohol is 12 years old! It is this startling fact that has caused us to ask parents to sit down and talk to their sons and daughters about the dangers associated with underage drinking. Please help pass these important facts to your friends and neighbors and help us address underage drinking.

City of Walker Fire Department

SPRING FIRE SAFETY TIPS

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

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

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

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

CHANGES TO THE CITY OF WALKER OPEN BURNING ORDINANCE

THE BURNING OF LEAVES AND GRASS CLIPPINGS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS IS PROHIBITED!!!!

- Fire rings are allowed in residential areas without a permit. However they must comply with the following criteria:
 1. The fire ring is used only for the burning of clean wood or other solid fuel and is not used for the burning of any waste materials or other materials including, but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, trash, grass clippings, leaves, and paper. NOTE: Clean wood means natural wood that has not been painted, varnished, or coated with a similar material; has not been pressure treated with preservatives; and does not contain glues as in plywood or other composite wood products.
 2. The maximum width is four (4) feet.
 3. There must be a noncombustible ring six inches in width surrounding the ring.
 4. The fire ring must be set back a minimum of 25 feet from buildings and overhead wires and 10 feet from adjoining lot lines.
- Outdoor Fireplaces are still allowed in residential areas without a permit. However they must comply with the following criteria:
 1. Owners, operators and users of outdoor fireplaces shall use such fireplaces in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for safe use.
 2. To be used outside of a dwelling or residence on non-combustible surfaces including, but not limited to, brick, flagstone or concrete and are kept away from any flammable liquids and other combustible materials.
 3. Outdoor fireplaces shall be used only for the burning of clean wood or other solid fuel and shall not be used for the burning of waste materials or other materials, including but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, trash, grass clippings, leaves and paper. NOTE: Clean wood means natural wood that has not been painted, varnished or coated with a similar material; has not been pressure treated with preservatives; and does not contain glues as in plywood or other composite wood products.
- 4. IF BURNING CAUSES A HEALTH HAZARD OR NUISANCE AS DETERMINED BY OUR RESPONDING FIRE OFFICER, IT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED!!!!

Department of Public Works

CITY OF WALKER WALKER CLEAN UP DAYS

May 6, 7, 8, 2010. Behind City Hall, 4243 Remembrance Rd. NW.

Signs will be posted soon.

Hours are; Thursday, May 6, 2010 - 8:00 am To 6:00 pm

Friday, May 7, 2010 - 8:00 am To 7:00 pm

Saturday, May 8, 2010 - 7:00 am To 12:00 pm

2010 Fee schedule: Single car or minivan - \$5.00 per visit Single car with trailer - \$10.00 per visit Single pickup truck \$10.00 per visit Single pickup truck with trailer - \$20.00 per visit \$5.00 per tire \$10.00 per tire with rim. Payment by cash or check only please.

Proof of Walker residency required such as drivers license, tax bill, or voter card.

We will accept; Appliances, refrigerators with coolant removed along with a certificate. (check with an appliance store), wood, brush, leaves, grass clippings, metal, misc.

We will not accept; garbage, computers, commercial vehicles, hazardous waste. Kent County has a household hazardous waste program. This would be toxic, flammable, corrosive or reactive materials such as; rat poison, weed killers, bug sprays, mercury, oil base paint, paint thinners, lighter fluid, gasoline, acids, lye, oven and toilet bowl cleaners, propane tanks, gas tanks, CO2 cylinders, car batteries, household batteries, & bleach mixed with ammonia.

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

City of Walker Recreation Department

EASTER EGG HUNT

The Walker Annual Easter Egg Hunt is being presented by The Greater Coopersville Area Jaycees and The City of Walker. It will take place on March 27th at 10 am. We will have Easter Egg Hunts for kids ages 2 – 10, Pictures with the Easter Bunny, and lots of fun! Please join us for a wonderful morning of fun. For more info contact Banda Crans at (866) 370-6070 ext.702 or visit our website <http://www.coopersville-jaycees.org>.

2010 WALKER MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The Walker Memorial Day Parade, sponsored by the City of Walker Downtown Development Authority and Keller Ford Kia will be on Monday, May 31, 2010 at 12:00 noon. The parade route will be on Lake Michigan Dr. between Lincoln Lawns and St. Clair, N.W. Veterans, marching bands, floats, and local groups/organizations who are interested in participating in this year's parade can contact the Walker Recreation Department for an application.

VETERANS!!!! Please join us and be an integral part of our parade!! We would love to have you participate and be recognized for your unselfish service to our country. Please call for an application.

Deadline for registration is Monday, May 10, 2010. For further information, call the Recreation Department at 791-6890.

2010 ADULT SOFTBALL REGISTRATION

The Walker Recreation Department offers Adult Softball Leagues for Men's, Women's and Coed teams. All leagues will have an eight game schedule beginning the week of June 7, 2010. Registration will be on March 29, March 30 and March 31, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Walker Recreation Department. Team entry fee is \$320.00 per team. There is also a \$12.00 non-resident fee for any player that does not live or work in the City of Walker. Please call 791-6890 for an information packet.

SOFTBALL UMPIRES

The Walker Recreation Department is accepting applications for umpires for their Adult and Girl's Softball Programs. The Adult softball season begins the week of June 7, 2010. Leagues are offered for men, women, and co-ed teams on Monday through Thursday evenings. Umpiring classes are required. The Girl's Softball Program is offered for ages 7 through 13. The season will begin on April 27, 2010. Games will be played on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. If you are interested in umpiring, please contact the Recreation Department at 791-6890 for further information.

City of Walker Clerk's Department

SCHOOL ELECTION

There will be a school election on May 4, 2010. The polls will be open from 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM. Your last day to register to vote and be eligible to participate in the election is April 5th. Register at the Clerk's office or any Secretary of State branch. If you are 60 years old or older and are not currently on the permanent Absentee Ballot Voter List but would like to be, contact the Clerk's Office.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

A 2010 Business Directory is available in the Clerk's Office. Listing all the registered Walker businesses, it is a handy reference when shopping local. The cost is \$2.00, pick one up today!

Also, if you are a business owner and are not yet licensed visit the Clerk's Office to complete the required application. All businesses in Walker are required to be licensed, including home occupations.

PASSPORTS

The Clerk's Office processes passport applications. Our hours are 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM Monday through Thursday. If you need an evening or weekend appointment call (616) 791-6865. Visit our website at www.ci.walker.mi.us for details regarding passports. We also take passport pictures!

BROOKLAWN CEMETARY

Visit our website at www.ci.walker.mi.us to see Brooklawn Cemetary on ReGIS. We are in the process of updating our records and making the public record as complete as possible. If you or a family member owns plots at Brooklawn, please contact the Clerk's Office with the owner's name and plot number(s). A copy of the original deed would help us to verify the information.

DOWNTOWN STANDALE ACTIVITY

The new Standale welcome sign is under construction at the northeast corner of Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue, which is in front of the new Walgreens. The brick columns and sign pedestal are in place. The sign cabinet is currently being assembled and will be installed soon. The sign lettering will be illuminated by LED bulbs.

The process to this point has been typical of a “home remodeling” project. We have held numerous meetings with the various stakeholders. We reached agreement on the design, colors and materials of the new sign. And then, once construction began, we were forced to adapt to conditions in order to supply electricity to the sign. You never know what is going to happen once you start digging.

The “Welcome to Standale – City of Walker” sign and circle improvements are being paid for from a self-imposed streetscape assessment fund in the Standale DDA. Businesses in Standale are working together to maintain and improve the look, design and function of their business district.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Walker is a diverse community from an economic development standpoint and is maintaining activity, despite the very difficult economy. The following is a list of economic development projects in the city:

- Avastar Park (the former Lear / GM / Fisher Auto Body plant on Alpine Avenue): Those familiar with the south end of Alpine Avenue know the importance this site holds for the entire neighborhood. A public-private partnership has enabled the ongoing redevelopment of this property, which is now called Avastar Park.

Grand Rapids Spring and Stamping and Haviland (two local businesses) have moved into the northerly parts of the structure. Haviland is expanding into an additional large space in the middle part of the building. Another business, potentially a bottling company, will occupy the rest of the building’s middle area.

Recent headlines have noted the creation of a large movie studio in the “old plant” portion of the former factory. Hangar 42 has already filmed one movie in the building. More are planned. The Hangar 42 website notes the building’s large interior space (up to 300,000 sq. ft.), 45-foot ceiling height and convenient location.

Avastar Park is a positive example of the re-use of a large, existing industrial building. State and local tax incentives provided the spark for the redevelopment and reinvestment process. Maintenance of the Walker income tax made the deals more palatable to city officials.

- Best Buy at 3410 Alpine Avenue NW (Greenridge Shopping Center): This project was approved by the planning commission on Feb. 3rd. Best Buy will move into the vacant space that was formerly occupied by Circuit City. The Best Buy lease area will be approximately 45,000 sq. ft.

The planning commission attached several conditions to the site plan approval, including stormwater, sidewalk, exterior lighting and parking details.

This project is good news for Walker. We have been lucky with large vacant buildings...both commercial and industrial. The working solution has been the luck of good location combined with progressive public-private partnerships.

WEBSITE UPDATES AND REGIS PUBLIC ACCESS

We have updated the Walker Community Development Department website to improve navigation and access to information.

From the Walker homepage at www.ci.walker.mi.us, hold your mouse over “Departments” and drop down to “Community Development.” To the side you will see three options...building, zoning and community planning. If you hold your mouse over one of these options, another menu appears. Here you can find permit applications, links to ordinances and master plans plus feedback opportunities.

Let us know how we can continue to improve the look and usefulness of the website.

Walker staff continues to upgrade and refine our use of the REGIS technology. Recent projects include the following:

- Fire department response time mapping
- 3-D hill shade mapping to predict the flow of hazardous liquids during a roadway spill
- Municipal storm drain inventory and maintenance database
- Standardized zoning and master plan maps
- Standardized street maps
- Updated stormwater management zones map.

You can access a public version of REGIS at <http://ims.gvmc-regis.org/website/public>.

Understanding your 2010 Assessment Notice in today's Turbulent Real Estate Market

By the time this newsletter arrives in your mailbox, you should have received your 2010 Assessment Change Notice (aka Notice of Assessment) for any real property that you own in the City of Walker. This article is intended to help you understand everything that appears in that notice.

First and foremost – look at the boxes toward the top of the paper that contains the name, address, parcel number, property address, and legal description. Does everything appear to be in order – are there any errors – did we mail you the wrong notice? If there is something wrong, please call our office and we will make every effort to correct any errors. If everything at the top of the page looks in order, then proceed to the next box that contains the property classification. Classification is something that we use in our office to group like properties together for analysis purposes. Classification is not zoning – the two do not always go hand in hand. The following chart contains all of the classifications that we utilize in the City of Walker – if you do not agree with your classification then you are allowed to appeal that with the March Board of Review.

	Real - Improved	Real - Vacant	Personal Property
Commercial	201	202	250
Industrial	301	302	350
Residential	401	402	n/a
Utility	n/a	n/a	550
Tax Exempt	701	702	n/a

The set of boxes that appear in the middle of your Assessment Change Notice are the heart of this document, as number 1 through 4 lay out Walker's values for your property for 2010.

1. Taxable Value – this is the figure that your 2010 property taxes will be calculated against. To get this figure you take the 2009 taxable value, subtract any losses, multiply that times the Consumers Price Index (CPI), and add any new construction – this calculation is the capped formula. Then the taxable value is the less of the capped value or the assessed value – unless there was a transfer of ownership in 2009, in which case the taxable value automatically uncaps to the assessed value. In this declining real estate market, it is good to point out that the taxable value can never be larger than the assessed value. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2010 is .970 or -.30%. This is the first year since Proposal A went into effect that the State of Michigan has issued a minus CPI.

2. Assessed Value – this is the figure that is our estimate of 50% (or ½) of market value of your property. This is the figure that most people tend to appeal.

3. Tentative Equalization Factor – this figure is a factor that Kent County Equalization will apply to your assessment if your local assessor's office does not conduct their analysis as set forth by the State of Michigan tax laws and we do not spread the increase (or decrease) across a class of property as calculated by Kent County Equalization. This factor is a rarity – Walker has not had one of these factors in my tenure.

4. State Equalized Value – this figure is simply the assessed value times the Equalization Factor – which means that unless there is that rare factor, it should equal the assessed value.

Number 5 on your Change Notice states whether there was a transfer of ownership (or sale) in 2009, which would result in an uncapping of the taxable value for 2010. If we have made an error with a transfer, please let us know.

The last item that should be pointed out on your Assessment Change Notice is the Homeowners Principal Residence percentage, which is located in the bottom-most set of boxes. If you own and occupy your home and it is your main/principal residence, then your percentage should say 100% (less if you own and occupy part of a duplex) - which exempts you from 18 mills of school operating taxes. If you qualify for this exemption and you do not agree with the percentage, please contact our office.

Now that we have reviewed the inner-workings of your Assessment Change Notice, let's switch to the topic of the current real estate market. WOW! These last 3 years have been really scary when it comes to real estate – not to mention the economy in general. While it is nice a few years back, when new construction was booming, property was selling for top dollar, and things were just good all over. Now we are dealing with home values and equity in our homes dropping drastically. For 2010, Walker's residential class has decreased on average of -6% in assessed value. That means that over the last few years, on average, homes have decreased a total of -12% to -13% in assessed value. That is a lot of value lost. When I say "on average" that simply means an average across that class of property – the studies that I have to conduct on individual neighborhoods may result in more than the -6% decrease, or it may result in a less than -6% decrease – not everyone will have to same percent change. Other changes in assessed value for 2010 include: a -4% decrease (on average) for the commercial class; and a -5% decrease (on average) for the industrial class.

We are nearing the end of our 5-Year Reappraisal, where we go door to door to update our records on every home in Walker. This is something that the State of Michigan mandates that every assessing office does in their yearly activity, and we started this reappraisal prior to the market turning south – but it is something that we must do. We find items to add and we find items to remove. If you were in this year's round and we found something was missing from your record, then we added it so your assessed value may have increased as a result of this. Please keep in mind that our end result is to have a figure that represents 50% of market value. If you feel that your 2010 assessed value is out of line with what you could sell your property for, then please contact us for an appointment before the March Board of Review.

Your Assessment Change Notice will have dates and times of Walker's March Board of Review (MBOR). If you wish to appeal your assessed value, taxable values, or your classification, please do not hesitate to contact us – directions are in the Notice. What will you need for a successful appeal before our MBOR? There are numerous items that you could bring to prove your opinion of value of your property: a recent appraisal, a recent arms-length sale/deed, recent sales of similar homes in your neighborhood, other assessed values of similar homes in your neighborhood, current sales listings, and much more – anything that you can think of that will help support your opinion of value. We are here to answer your questions, please call 791-6862.



Walker Ice & Fitness Center

2010 WALKER PUMP & RUN

The Walker Ice & Fitness Center will be holding its 5th Annual Pump and Run competition on Saturday March 27, 2010. Involved in this competition is lifting a percentage of your body weight and running a 5K. Participants will bench press a percentage of their body weight (80% for men and 60% for women) as many times as possible. Each successful bench press will result in 30 seconds being subtracted from your 5K running time. A lunch provided and awards presentation will follow after the race has been completed.

There is a \$25.00 entry fee which includes a commemorative short sleeve, moisture wicking shirt. Awards will be presented to the top five overall males, first two overall females, first two Master's division (40 + males), and first two Clydesdale's (200 pounds + males) division. Check in begins at 8:30 am and the events begin at 9:00 am. The bench-press will begin after all participants have been weighed in and the 5K run will start immediately after everyone has completed the bench press portion. Participants must be 16 years or older to participate. For more information or to register please contact Megan Bozek at 735-6286 x16 or visit our website at www.walkericeandfitness.com. You must pre-register to participate. The entry fee will be \$30.00 if you register after March 12th and \$35.00 if you register the day of the event.

Walker Newsletter Publication Changes Coming

We would like to inform our readers that effective this year, the City of Walker Newsletter will be published three, rather than four times per year. Readers will receive the spring newsletter the first of March, the summer newsletter the first week of June, and a combination fall/winter newsletter the second week of November. All editions will continue to be available on the City's website.

For those who would like to do their part for the environment, the City will begin offering distribution via email beginning with the summer edition. If you are interested in receiving your newsletter through email, rather than regular mail, please visit our home page (www.ci.walker.mi.us) to sign up for this service. Please call the City manager's office at 791-6860 if you have any questions about our new publication schedule. Thank you.

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Change Notice

Effective March 24, 2010, the City's Zoning Board of Appeals regular meeting dates will change to the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Please make a note of this change.

City of Walker Board Appointments

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

Newsletter Comments

Direct comments, questions, or suggestions regarding this newsletter to: Attn: Newsletter, City of Walker, 4243 Remembrance Road N.W., Walker, MI 49534.

Phone: 616-791-6860 E-mail: Julia.Kozminski@ci.walker.mi.us

www.ci.walker.mi.us

Meeting Dates & Times

City Commission Meetings:

8:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Monday of each month.

Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Board of Zoning Appeals

7:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month to hear appeals on the City's zoning regulations.

Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Planning Commission

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

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Phone 791-6865 for more information on the following committees: Traffic, Historical, Community Relations / Volunteer, International Relations, Festival, & Mineral Mining Review Board