

# The Nosy Neighbor

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## ANCHOR MAIN STREET BUSINESS CLOSES

For the second time in a few short years shock ran through the community over the sudden departure of an Orion business.

The Orion Drugstore, a pharmacy and gift business purchased earlier in the year by Rich Woods of Dubuque, Iowa, shut down on a day's notice. No reason was given for the closure.

Woods sold the prescription business and store inventory to Hy-Vee on John Deere Road and listed the building for sale. The community later discovered that Woods made an agreement with Hy-Vee to prevent the operation of a pharmacy in the former pharmacy building for five years.

Main Street Orion organized the first of what turned out to be a series of meetings on October 14th. Because there was a high level of interest from the public to attract a new pharmacist, another meeting was scheduled in November.

The November meeting resulted in the formation of a task force. Those who volunteered to be on the task force are village president Jim Cooper, retired Orion pharmacist Bill Kalman, and retired BankORION employee Jerry Meyer.

The committee will report on its progress at the 3rd meeting of the series to be held December 2nd.



Adding insult to injury - signs in the former Woods' building advertising Hy-Vee's services

To side-step Woods' five-year agreement with Hy-Vee, Orion businessman Brent Bloomberg offered to purchase the Woods building and relocate his appraisal business, but an equitable arrangement would have to be made for a new pharmacist to purchase the Bloomberg building.

The public is invited to attend the 7 p.m., December 2nd meeting at Village Hall.

## 8th Street Oiled in Nick of Time

The village narrowly averted the prospect of having 8th Street go into the winter season in an unfinished state.

The Henry County Highway Department considered not oiling until next spring but at the last minute made a deci-

sion to squeeze in the project during a nice week of mid-November sunshine and warm temperatures.

As a result, residents along 8th Street in the Wilson's Addition had only a half-day's notice before a prime coat of

oil was applied. The seal coat and chips were applied two days later.

The village is grateful to residents in the Wilson's Addition for their patience during the lengthy street project.

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## Grants Few & Far Between for Orion

Throughout 2009 the village has pursued a dozen or more grant opportunities for water, sewer, and street infrastructure projects. In addition, police grants have been sought for equipment upgrades. All have failed to garner any funds for Orion.

In many instances, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) required communities receiving funds to qualify based on median household income, median home

value, the number of occupied housing units, vacant housing units, and other housing and income census data.

Though Orion doesn't meet the low-to-moderate income guidelines required to obtain ARRA grant funds, the community is still faced with large infrastructure needs.

The village has been able to secure a \$4,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for snowmobile

route signs. While hardly an important infrastructure need, the signs could help keep snowmobile traffic on designated routes and off private property.

The loss of population in the village's 1990 and 2000 censuses put an ever-increasing financial burden on fewer residents. In 1980 Orion's population was 2,013 and by 2000 it had fallen to 1,713.

## Bits & Pieces

Residents dumping yard waste and other debris on the south side of 15th Avenue east of 8th Street should cease the practice.

Property owners adjoining the south side right-of-way are unable to maintain the property when it is filled with debris.

Additionally, since the closure of the 13th Avenue bridge

many people driving north and south on 3rd Street fail to heed the yield signs at that intersection.

Drivers still must yield to traffic approaching the intersection from the east. Please take care to abide by all traffic signs.

Lastly, the village would like to thank Mrs. Ralph Ziemer for

volunteering to paint the hydrant near her house. She supplied the labor and the village supplied the paint.

With weather delays and one less summer employee the task of painting fire hydrants fell off the village's schedule this year.

## Money Matters

Village auditor Tom Englemann attended the Nov. 17th village board meeting and told the group his only notation for the FY2009 audit was in regard to segregation of duties. He said in a letter to the board that the issue was at the lowest level of concern.

He said hiring additional employees to circumvent the issue is not usually beneficial to a community of Orion's size.

Mr. Englemann recommended the board maintain adequate levels of internal control and oversight. He said the finance committee was providing good

oversight through consistent review of bills, credit card expenses, and budgets.

In other business, the board set a tax levy hearing for December 21st at 7 p.m. A levy amount of \$183,155 is proposed, which is a 4% increase over last year's request.

*The village share of your property tax bill normally equals 10% or less.*

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## Don't Forget These Important Snow Routes

Once two or more inches of snow have accumulated or are reasonably expected to accumulate, the police shall be authorized to cause the towing or other removal of vehicles that are in violation of the snow route ordinance.

The streets and avenues designated as snow routes are as follows:

- 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue on both sides from Division Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue on both sides from Division Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue on both sides from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue A on both sides from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides from 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 7<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the village limits south
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides from 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 13<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides from 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue A

Snow routes will be plowed first, followed by secondary streets. Alleys will be cleaned after all streets have been plowed and are open to traffic. Once streets are open to traffic, employees will return to push snow back to the curb.

## Be Prepared—Get Registered

The 2010 primary election will be here before you know it and is sure to catch some folks flat footed and without valid voter registration.

Residents of Henry County can register to vote in-person at Village Hall through January 5th. Registration will reopen three days after the Feb. 2nd election.

In-person absentee voting will start at Village Hall on January 11th and continue through the day prior to the election.

Village Hall cannot process ballots sent by mail. For information on how to vote absentee by mail you can access the Henry County web site at [www.henrycty.com](http://www.henrycty.com) or contact the

voter registration department by phone at 309-937-3578.

Henry County Sheriff Gib Cady will step down from office and four others are vying for his position in the 2010 election.

The sheriff's department manages contractual police protection for the village.

## Saturday with Santa

Saturday with Santa's toy giveaway will begin at 10:30 a.m. on December 5th in the Orion High School Commons.

Children from age two through 3rd grade should have their Christmas wish list ready for a visit with Santa.

Each child will receive a gift from Santa's toy bag and take home a photo of themselves sitting on Santa's lap.

Refreshments in the form of drinks and baked goods will be available.



*Get the Christmas spirit and join Main Street Orion for a visit with Santa*

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### A Step Back in Time

A suggestion was made that I write a continuing series in this little space of The Nosy Neighbor and I thought that was a good idea.

I got to thinking about the different people who've held the office of village president since I've been employed here, six in all, and thought you folks might be interested in hearing a bit about them.

Since current village president Jim Cooper is still creating his history, I'll only write about the previous five presidents.

I'll start the series in the March

2010 issue with a feature about Quentin Stromquist, village president when I was hired in 1976, and the series will end with the immediate past president, Bill Larkins, Sr.

The stories won't be tabloidesque and I won't dish any dirt, but some interesting things did happen over the last 33 and a half years.

Looking back, you gotta wonder what all the hullabaloo was about when people raised such a fuss about simple things like computerizing Village Hall.

One thing that all former presidents had in common was a genuine love of Orion. They all wanted nothing but the best for the community they lived in.

Two of the past presidents are now deceased, two have moved from Orion, and one still lives here.

For the next five editions of this publication you'll learn a little bit about the people who gave of themselves to lead the community through good times and bad. It's sure to be an interesting journey.

-Lori Sampson

*Quentin Stromquist  
Keith Payne  
A. Jan Ryden  
Barbara De la Paz  
William Larkins, Sr.*



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