

City of Lewiston

FEBRUARY 2014

City Administrator's Report



Greetings from the City of Lewiston

Each month, this report from the City Administrator's office provides a brief summary and update of major activities, events, projects, and programs that impact the community of Lewiston. Feel free to send your comments and suggestions.

Edward A. Barrett
City Administrator
ebarrett@lewistonmaine.gov

Phil Nadeau
Deputy City Administrator
Director, Labor-Risk Management
Service & Freedom of Access Officer
pnadeau@lewistonmaine.gov

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Items of Interest



L/A's Complete Street Policies Gain National Attention

For additional information, visit
www.smartgrowthamerica.org/completestreets.



Alfred A. Plourde

Scholarship Opportunity

**The City of Lewiston is now accepting applications for the annual
\$500 Alfred A. Plourde Memorial Scholarship**

The scholarship - in memory of one of Lewiston's most popular mayors - was established by donations from family and friends in 1990. The scholarship is awarded each year to the Lewiston High School (LHS) senior who is pursuing a post-secondary education and shows the most interest and promise in a career in public service.

The application deadline is April 15, 2014, and an application must consist of the following: an essay of 500 words focusing on the topic "The Role of the young Political Leader in Today's World;" a copy of high school transcript; a statement of public service career goal and major in post-secondary education; and name, address, and contact phone number.

Following the April 15th deadline, Mayor Robert E. Macdonald will narrow down the applicants to three (3) finalists, and the winning LHS senior will be selected by the Lewiston City Council. The scholarship award will be presented to the winning student at the May 6, 2014, City Council meeting by Council President Mark Cayer.

Students may forward their application to Community Relations Coordinator Dottie Perham-Whittier, City Administrator's Office, Lewiston City Hall, 27 Pine Street, Lewiston, ME 04240 or via email to dottie@lewistonmaine.gov.

City Elected Official Biennial Planning Session

The City Council and Mayor spent most of Saturday, February 8th in a facilitated planning session working to establish goals and priorities for the next two years. Five focus areas rose to the top of the City's priority list: Economic Development, City Operations, Housing, Community Development, and Planning.

In the area of Economic Development, we will continue to pursue both downtown and riverfront development. This includes continuing implementation of the Riverfront Island Master Plan; finalizing a joint agreement with Auburn on the services to be provided by the Lewiston Auburn Economic Growth Council; working to retain existing businesses through a new business visitation program; working to gain control of the Lewiston Canal System as an essential part of our riverfront island plan; and ensuring that the community is well served by its natural gas and broadband infrastructures.

On City Operations, our elected officials want to see improved communications with our residents through both electronic and traditional media and other means; the creation of a technology plan and budget that will ensure that the city is capitalizing on new and up to date technologies; maintaining a stable property tax rate; working to replace already lost or declining state and federal revenues; and continuing to address welfare abuse.

Housing remains an area of major concern. The Mayor and Council would like to see the City develop an overall housing plan that identifies key issues and options and follows up on key landlord and stakeholder concerns including investigating incentives for converting properties to natural gas. In addition, our elected officials indicated support for continuing the City's acquisition and demolition program to address abandoned and hazardous structures.

For Community Development, there was interest in improving the City's efforts to recognize the contributions made by our citizens to improve our community – from volunteering to serve others to improving their properties. This would reinforce the importance of individual efforts. Other items include continuing the Lewiston Police Department's community policing efforts; supporting the downtown as the location for the next new school; and improving public rights of way and open space through trees and landscaping, especially along major roads and highways.

Planning remains a priority – both to complete the comprehensive planning process now underway and to work to improve the tracking and coordination of the many plans the City has completed in recent years.

These five focus areas, along with a large number of other items of interest to the Council and Mayor, set out a challenging agenda for the City going forward. A better economy; stronger community ties; planning for the future; improving housing; and operating more effectively and efficiently will help us take the next step toward the Lewiston of the future.



Assessing

Joe Grube

The 2015 tax year canvass has begun

- ◆ Real estate declaration forms were sent to non-resident taxpayers
- ◆ Local mobile home owners and taxpayers who owned homes on leased land were also contacted due to the lack of recorded deeds on these types of properties

This mailing helps ensure that the tax billing will go to the correct party. A mailing was also done to existing business taxpayers for personal property schedules.

Homestead & Veteran's Exemption Programs

Lewiston, in conjunction with Auburn, once again published a legal notice advising taxpayers of eligibility requirements for the Homestead and Veteran's exemption programs. The filing deadline for each of the above programs is **April 1st**; the date that determines taxable status in Maine.



City Clerk's

Kathy Montejo, City Clerk

Nomination Papers for Joint Charter Commission

The office prepared the nomination papers and related material for the nomination process for the Joint Charter Commissioners. The papers became available on February 10 and are due back to the office by April 11. A minimum of 100 valid signatures are required for the application to become a candidate for this office.

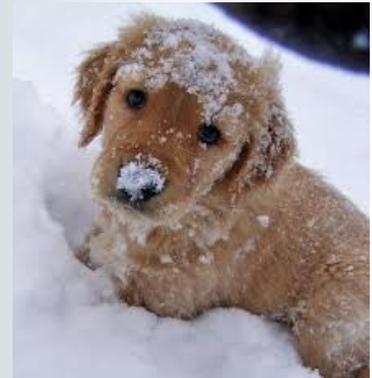
Verifying State Nomination Petitions

The office has been extremely busy verifying nomination papers for various federal, state, and county offices, including Representative to Congress, Governor, State Senate, State Representative and a variety of county seats. Nomination forms became available from the state on January 1 and are due for filing by March 17.

Dog Licensing



By state law, a late fine of \$25 goes into effect for any dogs licensed after January 31. The office was very busy with owners licensing their pets late and needing to pay the late fine. This fee cannot be waived by city staff and is required to be charged for each dog that is licensed after the state deadline of January 31.



FY15 Budget

Review session with City Administrator and Finance Director.

Energov

Working with MIS on a daily basis to identify and correct programming errors in the business licensing module of Energov software. Many are now identified and the company will be making those corrections.

On-going Work

Our office processes appointments to boards and committees, business licenses, state corrections to vital records; updates traffic schedule and policy manual; prepares agenda binders for Council meetings, Council meeting minutes; sale of miscellaneous permits, issues birth, marriage, and death certificates; records legal documents; and staff is on rotation for processing mail and switchboard coverage.

Fire

Paul LeClair, Chief



LFD Supports Bates College Outreach

In keeping with the City's efforts to "stay connected" with the community, the Lewiston Fire Department has teamed up with Bates College student Hannah Miller. Hannah, a senior at Bates, chose the fire department as part of a community engagement class requirement. During her tenure as a ride-along, she has been given an up close understanding of the day-to-day operations of the department. Hannah has donned firefighter bunker gear and an S.C.B.A., (*pictured top left*), learned to read fire district maps, identify the location of streets and hydrants (*pictured left with Pvt. Matt Wiers*), job shadowed with Inspector Paul Ouellette on numerous city inspections, and toured the department's sub-stations and the 9-1-1 communications center with Captain Paul Fournier. In the coming weeks, Hannah will visit with area agencies and City departments that help support the LFD in times of emergencies and crisis. It is the department's intent that she have a good understanding of what is needed to ensure the safety of our residents (who, what, and how). In turn, part of Hannah's assignment is to share her knowledge with peers and safety personnel at Bates College. It is our hope that she will be able to enlighten us on ways we can better serve the college community. It's been a pleasure working with Hannah, and we wish her the very best in her future endeavors.



February 12th, 5:00 PM

The department responded to a porch fire (*right*) at 434 Webster Street. By the time firefighters had arrived on scene, occupants had extinguished the fire using pails of water. There were no injuries and only minor damage to the porch. The cause of the fire was improper disposal of smoking materials.



February 15th, 7:03 PM

Firefighters responded to a reported mobile home structure fire at 40 Oxbow Street (*left*). Upon arrival, condition **Yellow** was called due to the heavy black smoke coming from the home. The condition quickly changed to **Red** when firefighters entered the kitchen area which was ablaze. Extensive damage was sustained and it was considered a total loss - leaving a single mom and her son temporarily homeless. The cause of the fire was deemed an electrical short.

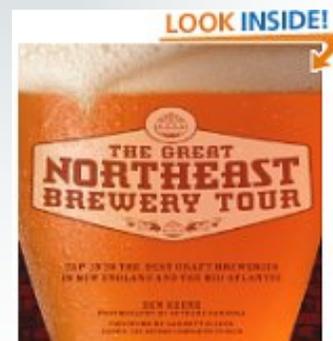
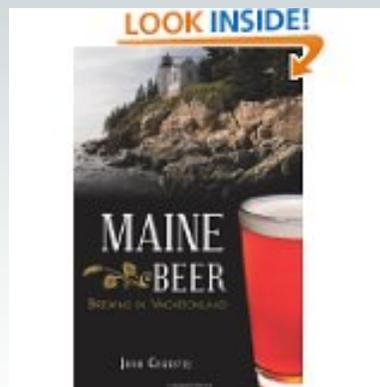
Library Personnel Changes

Maurice LeBlanc retired from the Library on February 28 after 40 years of service. Maurice had most recently been working as a Library Assistant in our Technical Services Department.

Marcela Peres was promoted to the position of Adult Services Librarian, replacing Jake Paris who left the City to take a web development position at Bates College. Marcela has been with us for the last two years, working as a Library Technician in Adult Services and helped to introduce a number of innovative public programs including World Book Night, Star Wars Reads Day, and Pages & Pints.

Library Partners with Baxter Brewing Company on Innovative Program

On Friday evening February 28, LPL held its first “Pages & Pints” program, a unique partnership between the Library and Baxter Brewing Company. The evening began with Maine author Josh Christie talking about his recent book, ***Maine Beer: Brewing in Vacationland***. Following the presentation, the program continued at Baxter Brewing Company for tours of Lewiston’s own craft brewery and a beer and cheese tasting featuring cheeses from Forage Market. The second in this newly inaugurated “Pages & Pints” series will take place on Friday, April 25 with author Ben Keene talking about his new book, ***The Great Northeast Brewery Tour***.



Planning & Code Enforcement

Gil Arsenault, Director

Comprehensive Plan Update: Legacy Lewiston

In November, Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative, LLC (TPUDC) provided staff and the Comprehensive Plan Committee/Think tank the first draft of the new comprehensive plan. The Committee met seven times November through February to review the draft plan with the goal of ensuring that all the substantive issues from the Planapalooza were addressed, that statistics were accurate, typos corrected, etc. before going public with a draft for public consumption. The Comprehensive Plan Committee/Think Tank comments have recently been submitted to TPUDC for their evaluation. It is expected that TPUDC will consider such comments, that they will make changes as they deem appropriate, and they will provide a revised draft for public consideration.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee/Think Tank decided that it would be advantageous to go above and beyond what is currently proposed for future public input opportunities. Therefore, we hope to have TPUDC conduct an additional round of public meetings by conducting a mini Planapalooza once the next draft is released. Staff is working with TPUDC to explore this option as it is in the best interest of the community and the plan to have additional public participation. Staff will be advertising the release of the draft and public meeting dates once determined and will remind citizens and other interested people to visit the following sites as this process moves forward:

<http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/comprehensiveplan>

<https://www.facebook.com/LegacyLewiston>

Enforcement Action

Staff issued four (4) citations in response to housing violations. The City Council ordered that the following multi-family buildings be demolished: 44 Birch Street, 86 Nichols Street, 47 Knox Street, and 10 Nomar Court.

PERMIT ACTIVITY

February 2014

- ◇ 20 building permits with a reported value of \$4,818,828
- ◇ 12 plumbing permits
- ◇ 20 electrical permits

The highest reported dollar value building permit was in the amount of \$4,349,828 for renovations to 10 Oak Street (i.e. Oak Park - 91 units of senior housing)

February 2013

- ◇ 32 building permits were issued with a reported value of \$353,115
- ◇ 6 plumbing permits
- ◇ 29 electrical permits

Planning Board

The Board convened meetings on February 10th and 24th and took the following actions:

After considerable study and deliberation, the Board provided a favorable recommendation to the City Council on the FY 2015 Lewiston Capital Improvement Program. Their recommendation included several specific funding recommendations.

A request by Andrew Knight to conditionally rezone the property at One Walnut Street, formerly St. Patrick's Church, from the Downtown Residential (DR) district to the Centreville (CV) district was entertained. Allowed uses of the property shall include those uses which are presently permitted and conditional uses in the DR zoning district, including the following as conditional uses: "drinking places," "places of indoor assembly, amusement, or culture." The Board sent a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the requested conditional rezoning to pave the way for Mr. Knight to establish an event venue at the former church. Events will primarily include weddings and conferences.

A request by Rockingham Electrical Supply Co. Inc. to amend the existing conditional rezoning agreement for the property at 170 Summer Street was approved. The amendment will permit Rockingham to operate their wholesale sales, warehousing, distribution, and retail sales business at this location. One Source Printing is also located at 170 Summer Street. The Board sent a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the requested conditional rezoning.

The Board granted site plan review approval for a project submitted by Northeast Civil Solutions on behalf of Franklin Land Associates, LLC to

construct a 9,100 square foot Dollar General retail establishment at 1079 Sabattus Street.

Board of Appeals

On February 19th, the Board granted the following requests:

- ◇ A side and rear setback modification was granted to Ann and Bruce Richardson for the placement of an 18' diameter above-ground pool on the property located at 19 Simard Avenue.
- ◇ A conditional use permit was granted to Adam Smith for an automotive and heavy duty truck repair facility on the Pepperell Mill property located at 550 Lisbon Street.
- ◇ Approval was granted to Chad Roy to change the nonconforming use of 930 Sabattus Street from a two-family home to a single-family home.

Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee (DNAC)

On February 26th, DNAC conducted a video conference with several students from the Harvard Community Development Project and discussed the students draft Downtown Lewiston Recommendations for Neighborhood Redevelopment. The eighty-three (83) page draft plan includes a vision statement, addresses current conditions, and contains numerous recommendations including, but not limited to, density and other zoning considerations. DNAC provided the students with feedback and it is expected that revisions will be made and reviewed at the DNAC meeting of April 23rd. The plan is a very professional document and it should dovetail very nicely with the pending comprehensive plan.

Police

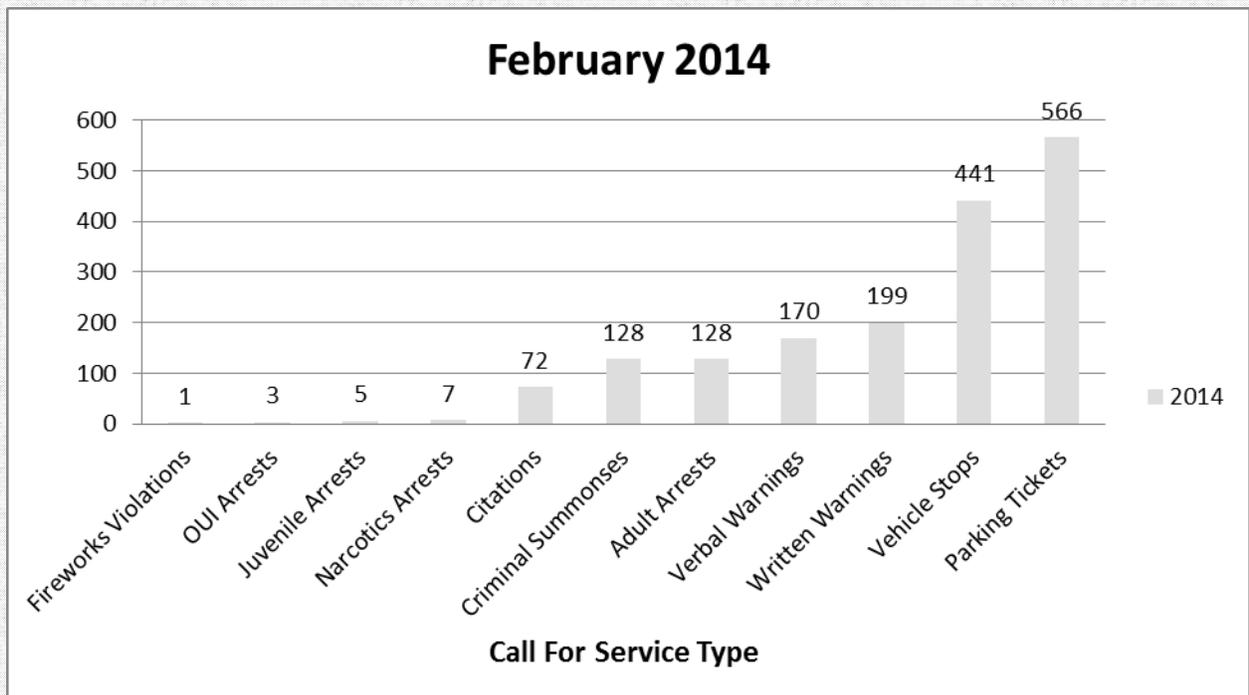
Mike Bussiere, Chief

STATISTICS

In the month of February, the Lewiston Police Department responded to a total of 3,029 Calls for Service (CFS).

A summary of CFS initiated, in February of 2014, is below.

Calls For Service	02/2014
Total CFS	3,029
Vehicle Stops	441
Citations	72
Written Warnings	199
Verbal Warnings	170
Adult Arrests	128
Juvenile Arrests	5
Criminal Summonses	56
Narcotics Arrests	7
OUI Arrests	3
Parking Tickets	566
Fireworks Violations	1



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Corporal Murphy attended meetings with the Oak Park Community and Community Credit Union.

Officer Philippon conducted a safety awareness class at Kaplan University and a cultural orientation class at City Hall.

Officer Griffin conducted two “Coffee With a Cop” meetings at Hillview.

Officer Weaver attended a career fair at Farwell Elementary School, distributed over 150 books to Lewiston children via his Badges for Books program, and conducted traffic enforcement on Russell Street in response to community complaints regarding speeding.

Sergeant Ullrich, along with Officers Griffin, Weaver, and Philippon conducted a prostitution enforcement detail in response to community complaints. The detail resulted in four arrests.

Several sworn personnel played ice hockey in the P.A.L. versus Bruins All Stars charity game on February 14th



Officer Griffin instructed personal safety to a group of Lewiston senior citizens at the Armory.



TRAINING

Officer Pearce instructed radar training to the Sabattus Police Department.

Corporal Kavanagh and Officers Beauparlant, Gagne, and Rousseau attended Crisis Negotiators training.

Officers Bourgoin and Martin attended Narcotics Pouch Testing training.

Officers Hood, Johnson, and Wade participated in CPR re-certification along with Corporals Murphy and Kavanagh.

Officer Hood attended K-9 training.

Detective Stone trained staff of the Children's Advocacy Center. Staff was instructed on the signs of physical abuse: what to look for, what questions to ask, and who to notify.

RECRUITMENT

Officer Wade taught crash reporting at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA).

Corporal Kavanagh taught law enforcement classes at Central Maine Community College.

Sergeant Ullrich and Officers Philippon and Weaver instructed a community policing class at MCJA.



Public Works

David Jones, Director

“Winter Weary” is what we are calling it! The seven storms we got in the shortest month of the year totaled 38 inches and brought our seasonal total to slightly more than 70 inches. We are all tired of this and the cold, which seems to be continuing into early March! We began a night snow removal effort for the downtown area on February 26th. This effort not only helps eliminate snow banks that cause visibility issues at intersections, but it also removes a lot of the sand and pollutants in the snow banks before it becomes an environmental issue by getting washed into the storm drains during the spring melt. Let’s hope we see a turn in the weather soon!

Here are some specifics addressed during the month:

Street/Road & Sidewalk Improvement Projects

Contracted Projects. Here is the status of a number of projects:

- Main Street, Route 202/11/100 highway improvements Memorial Avenue to Stetson Road (0.57 mile) with replacement of Stetson Bridge. Project is scheduled for 2014 construction;
- R. J. Grondin & Sons continued work on the \$5.1 million MTA project to upgrade the Exit 80 ramps. This is the first step towards development of the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI);
- A project to construct a bike and pedestrian path along the Androscoggin River from Sunnyside Park to Tall Pines Drive has been approved and funded by Maine DOT with a local share from the City (already funded). The final property easement acquisition should be in place this month allowing work to begin this year.

The crews completed the following:

- Seven plowable storms (14 year to date) and 25 sand/salt events to date;
- Night-time snow removal began February 26th;
- The freeze/thaw cycles this year are creating a “bumper crop of pot-holes!” Crews have been dispatched every day weather allows to patch the numerous pot-holes and pavement scabs that are appearing;
- The Arborist crew removed damaged trees at four locations and pruned trees on Baril Street, Baird Avenue, and Dove Lane. They also completed chipping Christmas trees into mulch;
- Continued efforts on sign repair, sand-box maintenance, downtown litter patrol, training, etc.



Water, Sewer, and Stormwater

Construction Projects and Studies. The following are being worked on:

- ◆ Lake Auburn is frozen with a minimum of 19 inches of ice over the lake. We will continue our increased sampling efforts in the spring. We hope to have the consultant report and recommendations soon regarding the algae issue we experience in 2012;
- ◆ Oak Street Sewer and Stormwater Improvements, St. Laurent & Son, \$1,279,259. The contractor will return in the spring to work on side streets;
- ◆ Jepson Brook Phase 4 of the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Sewer/Stormwater project (five streets on the north side of Sabattus Street near the intersection with Russell Street), Gendron & Gendron, \$916,039. Work will return next spring;
- ◆ A study of Jepson Brook began to evaluate the capacity of the drainage channel and pipes, identify improvements necessary, and forecast future needs;
- ◆ A new contract was awarded to Longchamps & Sons to install a blow-off pipe to flush water at the Main Street pump station;
- ◆ A new contract to replace the 8" and 12" water line on East Avenue from Fairlawn Avenue to Montello Street was awarded to St. Laurent & Sons in the amount of \$444,495. The total project including materials is ~\$670,000 and work will begin later this spring.

Work performed by the Water/Sewer crews included:

- ◆ Responding to two water main breaks, and one service leak. These are tough jobs with four feet of frost in the ground and temperatures around zero with wind chills far below;
- ◆ Responding to numerous frozen water services and one frozen water main;

- ◆ Responding to five sewer back-ups (three of these were private issues and one of them was frozen);
- ◆ Completing ten hydrant repairs due mostly to accidents, but some due to frost action;
- ◆ Clearing 750 hydrants after each snow storm;
- ◆ Responding to 30 customer concerns and 48 dig-safe requests;
- ◆ Continuing the water meter replacement program, with some being nearly 25 years old;
- ◆ Continuing progress on water valve maintenance and sewer flushing programs despite the cold weather;
- ◆ Continuing maintenance on all city and watershed properties.

Solid Waste

- ◆ The snow created some challenges for our trash and recycle collection contractors resulting in some missed stops. City staff is working with the contractor to address and correct these service issues.



Miscellaneous

⇒ The Building's Division worked with the Highway crew between storms and other workload to convert the former Business Office into a first-class Training and Conference Room. We received Homeland Security funding to purchase tables, chairs, and a "Smart Board" then used in-house, self-help labor to repair walls, ceiling, floors, windows, and lighting. The results were impressive as can be seen in the photos below. This room can now be used for public meetings as it is handicap accessible.



RECREATION

Maggie Chisholm, Director

Activities/Events/Meetings at the Armory

Lewiston Senior Citizens:

- ◇ Monthly Board and membership meetings
- ◇ Bi-monthly Bingo
- ◇ Weekly Cribbage, Pinochle, Bridge, and other card games

Veteran-Related Monthly Meetings:

- ◇ American Legion Post 22
- ◇ Franco-American War Veterans and Auxiliary Post 31
- ◇ L/A Veterans
- ◇ Post 9150
- ◇ Post 210

Political Monthly Meetings:

- ◇ Androscoggin Democrats
- ◇ Lewiston Democrats
- ◇ Lewiston G.O.P.

Other:

- ◇ A.C.A., Dr. Fortier #52 monthly meeting
- ◇ Central Maine Christian Academy weekly basketball practices
- ◇ Lewiston Area Youth Cheering weekly practices
- ◇ Fly football weekly cheering practices
- ◇ L/A. CA\$H Coalition weekly tax preparation

Gymnastics Meet

On February 16, one of several gymnastics meets took place at the Armory. The teams that competed were Lewiston with 25 participants, Bath with 29 participants, and Waterville with 55 participants. Several Lewiston Rec Department gymnasts received first place, and the pre-team (6 and 7 year olds) also did very well.

Activities/Events/Meetings at the Armory

Lewiston Rec Department:

- ◇ Travel basketball practices and games
- ◇ Grade-school games
- ◇ Gymnastics weekly practices and games
- ◇ Volleyball games
- ◇ Co-ed winter basketball weekly practices and games
- ◇ Open gym twice weekly
- ◇ Vacation open gym
- ◇ Kinder basketball program

Programs

The winter programs finalized at the end of February. Planning, scheduling and sign-ups for the spring programs are underway T-ball, Lacrosse, Gymnastics, Batting Cages, Spring Track, Kiddiesticks Lacrosse, etc. There were four Youth Travel Basketball Teams this year: 3/4 boys, (new) 5/6 girls, 5/6 boys, and 7/8 girls. The 5/6 grade girls team placed runner-up in the championship games and 3/4 grade boys finished in third place. Results for the other two teams have not been finalized.

A meeting was held with Auburn Rec Department to review the upcoming season for the Wednesdays in the Park series. Lewiston and Auburn Rec Departments provide the summer series to both communities. This will be the 35th-year for the program.

Lewiston Senior Citizen Comedy Event Fundraiser

It's the March Magic Show, family fun and bicycle drawing. The Amazing Lou will perform magical tricks for his audience on March 15th at 1:00 PM at the Lewiston Memorial Armory. Food will be sold at the concession stand.

RECREATION

Maggie Chisholm, Director

Charitable Donations Applications

Fiscal year 2014-15 applications were emailed to approximately 40 non-profit groups. All applications are due by March 3, 2014.

Lewiston-Auburn CA\$H Coalition Super Saturday

The Coalition held their annual Super Saturday on February 8th at the Lewiston Memorial Armory. Approximately 219 people were scheduled. According to Dottie Perham-Whittier, "they received FREE services from IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers, were connected to resources at a Community Financial Resource Fair, and had their credit reports accessed and reviewed free of charge."

Photos of this event are displayed here.



Financial Literacy Fair in action.



Free Tax Prep



Brenda Akers opening a NEXTGen savings account for her son



Free Tax Prep



WELLNESS



2014
Wellness Challenge
Weigh-In
Get Healthy!

Weigh-Ins and Blood Pressure Screenings Continue

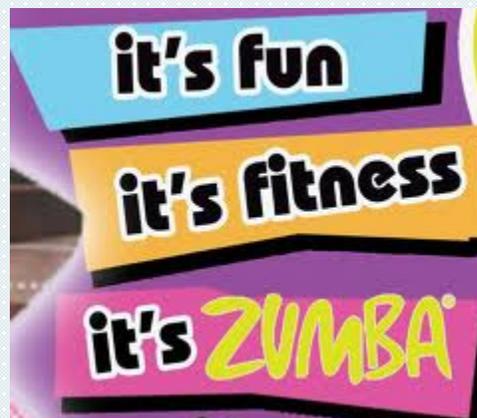
February Participation Award Winners included:

Sandy Brown & Debra Morin: \$10 gift card to Subway

Allison Pease & Ken Priest: movie tickets to Flagship Cinema

Leola St. Amour, Kathy Montejo, Richard Main & Craig Starr: popcorn

Zumba has also continued at the Library's Callahan Hall, led by our very own Mike Laliberte



COMING SOON



APRIL LUNCH & LEARN

Rainbow Bicycle will be here to discuss Cycling Clubs, Charity Rides, Training, etc.

Jim Ward is coordinating the event and will have more details soon.