

# CITY OF BLUE ASH



## 2008 Annual Report



**2008 BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL TEAM**

*L to R, Sitting: Vice Mayor Mark Weber (Ward 5); Mayor Jack Buckman (Ward 4); & Stephanie Stoller, Ward 2. Standing: Henry Stacey, At Large; Jim Sumner, Ward 1; Lee Czerwonka, At Large; & Rick Bryan, Ward 3.*



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January 2009

Honorable Mayor & City Council Members:

It is with pleasure that Blue Ash's City Manager and Administrative team submit this 2008 Annual Report.

The Year 2008 was an exciting one for Blue Ash. Please note that this Annual Report is intended to only summarize highlights of major achievements and accomplishments of each department and division of the City during the year. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive listing of all that the City of Blue Ash has to offer to those who live, work, and visit our community.

It truly is a privilege to work for and be associated with the City of Blue Ash and its City Council. We look forward to continuing efforts associated with the many exciting opportunities and projects that face our community and its residential and corporate citizens in the future. Thank you sincerely for your continued support and leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

**BLUE ASH CITY ADMINISTRATION**

*David Waltz*

David Waltz  
City Manager

*Jim Pfeffer*

Jim Pfeffer  
Treasurer/Admin. Ser. Director

*Chuck Funk*

Chuck Funk  
Parks & Recreation Director

*Mike Duncan*

Mike Duncan  
Public Works Director

*Chris Wallace*

Chris Wallace  
Police Chief

*Rick Brown*

Rick Brown  
Fire Chief

*Sue Bennett*

Sue Bennett  
Public Information Officer

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# ADMINISTRATION

## Council & City Manager's Office

The Year 2008 was another exciting one for Blue Ash, featuring a number of significant accomplishments involving all departments and divisions. With Council's support and leadership, the team members based

within the City Manager's and Treasurer's Offices were involved with many of these major projects on an ongoing basis.



### PROGRESS ON ISSUE 15 RELATED CAPITAL PROJECTS

Issue 15 passed by voters in November 2006 provided the resources for a number of major capital improvements for the benefit of our citizens.

The first "Issue 15" capital improvement is the renovation and expansion of the Recreation Center. More information about this exciting capital improvement project for our community, including photos, is presented within the Parks & Recreation portion of this report.

Also related to the capital projects associated with Issue 15 resources, the City continued to establish the

ground work for a future Performing Arts & Conference Center (PACC) – just one amenity planned for the future 130-acre park development planned near the airport (see architectural rendering). The City also continued its work to explore potential revenue sources to fund this multi-million dollar community amenity that will benefit residential and corporate citizens throughout the region. In September, the City learned that it was awarded a grant for \$150,000 in State of Ohio Capital Improvement Program funds towards that project. Meetings with county,

state, and federal legislators were held to assure that Blue Ash's future PACC project remains top of mind when future capital expenditure decisions are made.



Architectural rendering of a future PACC. Rendering by Steed Hammond Paul.

### ADDITIONAL COUNCIL & CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE ACTIVITY IN 2008

#### NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In April 2008, our City received positive national recognition by **FOR-TUNE Small Business** magazine as Blue Ash was included among their 100 best



places in America to live & launch a small business. In fact, Blue Ash was the only Ohio community selected to be included within this prestigious list. A broad range of criteria was examined, including housing prices, schools, cultural and recreational attractions, quality of the labor force, taxes, and the regulatory climate. The selection process also included interviews of business owners, local officials, and economic experts. Blue Ash was listed as #62 on the list of "100 great towns that will feed your soul and nurture your business." The Administration is particularly proud of

this award because it acknowledges not only Blue Ash's efforts to create an environment that assures a quality place for businesses to invest and call home, but also attests to the fact that Blue Ash is a great place to live. The award reflects the government's commitment, requiring teamwork across all City departments, to provide an exceptional and prosperous environment for our residential and corporate citizens.

#### PASSING OF LONG-TIME BLUE ASH FRIEND RAY MACNAB

Unfortunately, in October, Blue Ash lost a long-time resident and friend with the passing of former Councilman Raymond MacNab. Mr. MacNab, a Blue Ash resident for over 49 years, retired from his long-standing Council position in September 2004 after serving on Council for over 32 years. At the time of his retirement, he held the honor of having served in

a Council position longer than any other person; however, today, current Councilwoman Stephanie Stoller retains that honor as she has been on Council for 35+ years.

#### 2008 CITIZEN SURVEY

In March, the City contracted with the University of Cincinnati Institute for Policy Research (IPR) to complete a citizen survey designed to measure residents' perceptions of issues facing Blue Ash and to identify attitudes and opinions about overall quality of life and development and redevelopment in the City, including the future 130-acre park near the airport. This is the second citizen survey in recent years where assistance from IPR, an institution which specializes in public policy and opinion research, was utilized to gather data from citizens. This telephone survey was conducted in mid March, with 487 Blue Ash resident adults inter-

viewed. Overall, the Administration viewed the results as a "vote of confidence" from residents that the City is moving in the right direction. Highlights of the survey results are summarized below:

**Quality of Life** – Blue Ash citizens remain extremely pleased with the overall quality of life in their community. 98.7% answered that they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the quality of life in the City of Blue Ash, and 84.3% answered that the overall sense of community in the City of Blue Ash is either "excellent" or "good." These ratings compare favorably to similar positive ratings received in the 2002 citizen assessment survey.

**Future Airport Park** – Residents are well informed about efforts related to the future 130 acre park near the airport as 85.8% answered that they have heard either "a great deal" or "some" about those efforts. Of specific overall City projects, the airport park ranked as the highest priority for the City over the next 10 years. The future airport park was also the most frequently noted item when asked an open-ended question regarding the single most important issue facing Blue Ash during the next five years. Regarding the nature of specific development within the airport park and when asked which they would like to see Blue Ash develop first, the performing arts & conference center and green space were most frequently selected.

**Downtown Blue Ash** – It is clear that Downtown is also on citizens' minds. Overall, 75.8% answered that they believe Downtown Blue Ash has a positive impact on the quality of life in Blue Ash. In addition, 63% answered that within the past year, they have visited Downtown Blue Ash

businesses "at least once a day" or "a few times a week." Furthermore, a clear majority (68.4%) answered that they would either "strongly favor" or "favor somewhat" the City providing financial assistance for downtown redevelopment to encourage the development of new businesses in downtown. When asked to rank first and second priorities for the City (over the next ten years), citizens answered attracting new business development downtown second most frequently only to development of the airport park.

**Miscellaneous** - Additional survey responses showed high satisfaction with Blue Ash's overall land use mix (89.7%), and nearly three-quarters of respondents indicating that physical connection of more Blue Ash neighborhoods to one another is at least somewhat important.

### **ADDITIONAL 2008 COUNCIL & CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE ACTIVITY:**

- Another successful Student Government Day was coordinated by the Admin team. In 2008, the event was moved to September (from its former spring period) to minimize competition experienced with the traditional springtime high school scheduling, such as graduation activities. Students from Sycamore and Ursuline participated.
- Public information outreach continued through the year, including the creation of three community newsletters (May, August, and December) and the 2009 Community Calendar. These publications are used year-round for promotional and economic development purposes.
- The residential tree program, coordinated through the City Manager's Office, was expanded towards the end of 2008 to allow residents to purchase additional trees to be

planted by residents due to recent relatively harsh conditions, such as the extreme drought experienced in 2007, the effects of the Emerald Ash Borer on many Ash tree varieties, and the major tree loss and damage after the September 2008 windstorm. The number of trees planted during the 2002 through 2008 phases of the program totaled 608, with 73 of those planted in 2008. The program offers residents the opportunity for the City to subsidize the cost of trees planted through the program in a location viewable by the public.



- Administration of the Veterans Memorial inscribed brick program continued in its 18th year. Additional bricks were inscribed and placed at the Memorial in May, bringing the total number of inscribed bricks honoring American veterans to 4,829.
- The City Manager's Office, with assistance from Parks & Rec staff, coordinated efforts associated with the City's annual Memorial Day parade and ceremonies. 2008 represented the community's 56th annual, and included the 338th Army Band from Columbus as the featured military band (also performing a concert on Towne Square the Sunday evening before to a large crowd). Keynote speaker from the Memorial Day ceremonies was Colonel Jay Strickler, Vice Commander of the 88th Air



*Blue Ash's Memorial Day Parade is the largest in the region. 2008 marked the 56th annual.*

Base Wing based at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

- The 16th annual Veterans Day activities in November took place, coordinated by the all-volunteer Veterans Day Committee, with logistical assistance provided by the City Manager's Office. This event also includes participation from Greene School students, and this year also hosted several classes from the Junior High. The annual luncheon traditionally held after the ceremonies was not held in 2008 due to construction ongoing at the Rec Center.
- The 2007 Municipal & Safety Center space needs assessment was followed up in 2008 with a micro study of the Police area. This effort, coordinated by the Assistant to the City Manager with assistance from Police Captain Jim Schaffer, Lieutenant Paul Hartinger, and Michael Schuster Associates, aimed at alleviating crowding in the locker rooms and consolidating detectives operations. Renovations conducted by the City's Facility Maintenance team are underway and began with a new meeting space in an area which formerly housed postal boxes.
- The City's record retention efforts were continued with the creation of

the City's Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition and the Blue Ash Records Commission.

- The Assistant to the City Manager worked with the Public Works Director on a Community Development Block Grant request. Coordinated by Hamilton County, the City is eligible for about \$90,000 of federal funds over a three year grant cycle (the current cycle is '09-'11). The City requested, and was granted, \$90,000 in 2009 for microsurfacing the streets of Hazelwood which will provide a new surface layer for the roadway, extend the life of the road, and improve safety by increasing friction.
- The Assistant to the City Manager coordinated an effort to place labels on public storm drains to help spread the word regarding the importance of protecting local watersheds. The prevention message: "No Dumping," since polluted runoff is one of the nation's greatest threats to clean water. She worked with the Rotary Club of Blue Ash/Montgomery, employees from Blue Ash based Sunny Delight Beverages Co., and students from Sycamore High School's Interact Club to place labels throughout several residential neighborhoods.

The storm drain labeling effort is coordinated by the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District to help prevent pollution from entering storm drains.

- In 2008, the City contracted with Gruen Gruen + Associates of Chicago to conduct a citywide housing assessment. This consultant was selected after a formal request for proposal process, in which 11 proposals were received. The goal of this study was to identify strategies to stimulate investment and reinvestment in homes and neighborhoods. The consultants, working with the Assistant to the City Manager and the Assistant Community Development Director, are expected to release the results of this study in spring 2009.
- The Assistant to the City Manager coordinated efforts associated with the City's Cable Franchise Agreement with Time Warner Cable (TWC) and kept abreast of changes affecting the City due to recent year's legislation. As of the end of 2008, TWC has a video service agreement with the State for the provision of video services in Blue Ash, as does Cincinnati Bell Telephone.



### ▶ ADDITIONAL TREASURER'S OFFICE ACTIVITY IN 2008

Although the Treasurer, a key member of the Administrative team, was involved on a daily basis with most efforts described in preceding sections, a summary of additional activity performed by the Treasurer's office not captured in those descriptions is offered below:

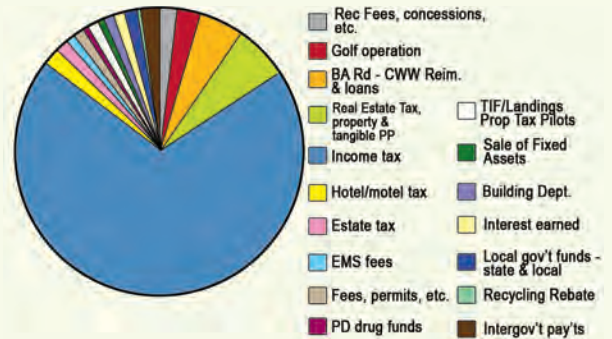
- General supervision and support for Finance, Tax, Technology, and Human Resource offices and staff.
- Overseeing of the City's risk management functions, including involvement with the insurance pool, Miami Valley Risk Management Association (MVRMA). MVRMA-determined average loss experience for Blue Ash was

\$150,585 in 2005; \$69,658 in 2006; and \$29,991 in 2007.

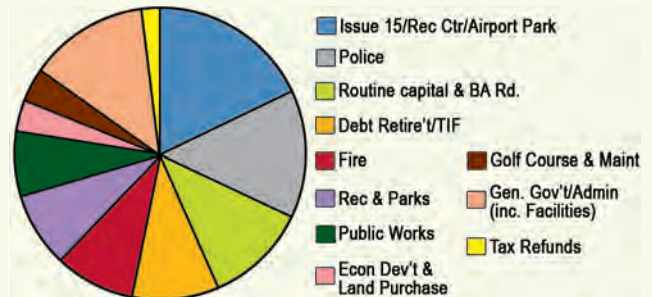
- Continual review of the City's overall financial position and updating of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which is extremely helpful for Council and the Administration in long-term planning efforts.
- Resolution of numerous complex real estate issues, including the City's purchase of 130 acres near the airport from the City of Cincinnati. This involves countless hours associated with finalization of the purchase agreement, "due diligence," surveys, environmental assessment requirements, etc.

- Worked with the Technology team on replacement of a computer at the Northeast Community Challenge (NECC) office, including data conversion and resolution of connectivity issues.
- Confirmed the safety of Blue Ash's liquid assets with Star Ohio and Fifth Third Bank and monitored the credit crisis impact on pension systems.
- Carefully followed and monitored the emerging "credit crisis" which impacted the national, and even global, economy, to gauge impact on Blue Ash projects, funding, and planning.
- Resolved numerous real estate issues, including easements, title issues, etc.
- The pie charts to the right give a pictorial description of where Blue Ash's revenue sources are derived (top) and the areas where expenditures are directed towards City operations (bottom). As can be seen in the top chart, the great majority (over 70%) of Blue Ash's revenues are derived from the City's earnings tax.

### WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM ...



### WHERE THE MONEY GOES ...



## SISTER CITY PROGRAM

2008 was a busy year for Sister City activities with Blue Ash's partner, Ilmenau, Germany.

In early May, a private tour group of 43 citizens who live in or near Ilmenau visited Blue Ash/Greater Cincinnati as part of a two-week visit to the USA/Canada, visiting Washington DC, New York, Niagara Falls, Philadelphia, Boston, and portions of southeastern Canada. The group ended their tour in Blue Ash, and it was reportedly unanimous: they were very impressed

with Blue Ash and thoroughly enjoyed their visit! The group stayed in the Blue Ash Crowne Plaza.

An official delegation also visited Blue Ash in mid September. Thirteen delegates enjoyed their visit to Blue Ash, including representatives from Ilmenau City Hall and Council, and the Ilmenau business and educational communities. The group also experienced more than usual occurrences as the hurricane-like wind storm happened in the midst of their visit, making various as-

pects of the group's visit extra challenging.

A student group from UC/Raymond Walters College (RWC) also visited Ilmenau Technical University for three weeks in August, led by Blue Ash Sister City Inc. Board member Debbie Page, Department Director of RWC's German Department. The RWC students earned college credits for the classes taken while in Ilmenau (see photo).



Left & below: pictures from the 43-citizen tour group who visited Blue Ash in May 2008.



Left & above: pictures from the delegation's mid September visit to Blue Ash.



Pictured left is the RWC/UC student/professor group with the Ilmenau Buergermeister. The group traveled to Ilmenau in August 2008.



The Blue Ash Tax office is responsible for earnings tax collection and reporting, and enforcement of the City's Tax Code. 2008 represented the second year of implementation of the earnings tax rate change from its prior level of 1.0% to 1.25% effective January 1, 2007. The Office has four full-time employees, in addition to the Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner who also oversees the Finance office operations. 2008 Tax office highlights include:

- The consolidation of management and oversight of the Tax and Finances offices a number of years ago was completed during the last months of 2007 and first quarter of 2008 with the renovation of a portion of the Municipal & Safety Center. This effort provided benefits for the citizens as to confidentiality and access to the Tax Office staff, but also provided significant improvements in efficiency and coordination. During 2008, the Tax Commissioner and her staff worked on customer service improvements, expanded utilization of the periodic citizen/business questionnaire process, the design of new tax forms and form letters, and utilization of a subpoena delivery service for taxpayers where communication problems persisted. Additionally, the Tax Office installed a complete upgrade to the computer software utilized in their operations, which included over a week of in-house training. The new Windows-based software is working well and will prove to be a wise investment.

- 2008 gross income tax collections totaled \$30,119,007.40, which represents a 9.27% increase over collection levels throughout 2007. Of that amount, \$6,686,241.99 (or 22.1%) related to net profit collections, while the remaining 77.9% relate to withholding collections totaling \$23,432,765.14. A review of withholding tax collections on a monthly basis for 2008 clearly showed a steadily reducing level of collections closely tied to the economic downtrend, or "crisis," evident at the time. Withholding tax collections, which are paid to the City on a monthly basis by nearly all the City's businesses, are a very accurate and timely indicator of employment levels. For example, withholding collections during the first several months of 2008 were ahead of projections, and they steadily declined throughout the year, so that the December collection was over 19% lower than the same period during 2007. Net profit collections during 2008 were clearly on the positive side, which would not be unexpected given the delays reflected when net profit is "earned" and when the returns are actually filed. Historically, net profit collection levels lag changes in economic climate by up to a year or a year and a half, so the City should be seeing a reduction in net profit levels beginning in 2009. Presented below is a summary of income tax collection trends 1998 through 2008, as well as the corresponding refunds paid during those years.

## INCOME TAX COLLECTION TRENDS - BY CATEGORY 1998 - 2008

YEAR	INDIVIDUAL NET PROFIT	BUSINESS NET PROFIT	WITH-HOLDING	TOTAL COLLECTIONS	% CHANGE	REFUNDS
1998	\$822,975.47	\$4,128,524.93	\$14,066,294.17	\$19,017,794.57	-2.33%	\$621,510.77
1999	924,925.96	2,941,725.95	14,768,702.92	18,635,354.83	-2.01%	666,147.98
2000	1,082,803.34	4,476,554.62	15,568,769.89	21,128,127.85	+13.38%	910,460.46
2001	991,648.81	3,717,073.33	16,951,098.00	21,659,820.14	+2.52%	972,764.89
2002	930,788.21	2,875,284.22	15,850,948.03	19,657,020.46	-9.25%	3,132,837.05
2003	952,778.24	3,542,606.89	16,099,710.59	20,595,095.72	+4.77%	1,118,006.61
2004	965,027.60	3,308,918.23	16,209,336.25	20,483,282.08	+0.54%	867,244.45
2005	1,062,636.94	5,061,717.32	16,295,486.48	22,419,567.74	+8.6%	658,119.96
2006	1,034,640.68	5,124,122.72	16,969,099.58	23,127,862.98	+3.2%	785,997.15
2007	1,288,605.77	3,747,225.59	22,528,565.40	27,564,396.76	+19.2%	1,529,796.04
2008	1,351,429.61	5,334,812.38	23,432,765.41	30,119,007.40	+9.27%	1,029,814.39

The Finance Office is responsible for overseeing all areas of financial administration, including revenue recording, investments, expenditure tracking, financial records administration, budgeting, debt financing, auditing, payroll administration, and financial reporting. In 2008, the Division had one part-time and three full-time employees, in addition to the Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner who also oversees the Tax Office. Highlights of 2008 activity include:

- A significant upgrade in the computer platform utilized for Finance operations (including billing, payroll, budgetary control, etc.) was installed during 2008, after waiting for several other cities to have successfully made the transition. This effort involved a change to a Windows-based format from the previous character-based application, necessitating a number of full days of training for the staff. The Finance team believes that the conversion was worthwhile as there were significant benefits and improvements provided by the new program which improve efficiency and smooth operations.
- Prepared and loaded the 2008 Final Budget and payroll accounts; prepared, presented, and delivered to the County the 2009 Tax Budget; and also prepared the 2009 Proposed Budget and related Capital Improvement Program/Maintenance Effort document for presentation to Council.
- Cooperatively handled the required audit of the 2007 financial year and prepared and submitted the 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Late in the year, the City learned that it earned the prestigious Excellence

## CITY OF BLUE ASH GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS 2008

<b>Beginning 2008 Gen. Fund balance*</b> .....	<b>\$12,928,564</b>
<b>Add: Revenues in Gen. Fund</b> .....	<b>\$37,137,109</b>
<b>Total Gen. Fund Resources</b> .....	<b>\$50,065,673</b>
<b>Less: Gen. Fund expenses</b> .....	<b>(\$22,359,424)</b>
<b>Less: transfers to other funds:</b>	
<b>Streets (SCMR)</b> .....	<b>(\$ 1,911,639)</b>
<b>Parks &amp; Rec</b> .....	<b>(\$ 3,988,736)</b>
<b>“Issue 15” projects</b> .....	<b>(\$ 4,051,643)</b>
<b>Golf operations</b> .....	<b>(\$351,891)</b>
<b>Debt retirement</b> .....	<b>(\$ 3,637,616)</b>
<b>Transfers/Advance health funds</b> .....	<b>(\$ 291,005)</b>
<b>= End of 2008 Gen. Fund balance*</b> .....	<b>\$ 13,473,719</b>

**\*Note: includes all reserves**

in Financial Planning Award -- representing the 21st consecutive year the City has received this award, and the tenth consecutive for the current Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner. This award is presented by the Government Finance Officer Association of America and represents the highest award and recognition available for governmental reporting.

- The Finance team, working with the Treasurer's office, finalized the loading and updating of all fixed assets for utilization in the 2007 CAFR. Efforts continued throughout 2008 on the loading of assets acquired in that year, and those programs will be finalized during the first several months in 2009.
- Although the City did not issue any bonds or bond anticipation notes during 2008, the second

payment for the City's acquisition of the 130 acres of future park property from the City of Cincinnati near the airport was made on a timely basis, and the Finance team carefully tracked the expenditures associated with the City's major capital projects during 2008, such as the Blue Ash/Hunt Road Improvements project and the renovation and expansion of the Recreation Center.



# HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources (HR) team has one part-time and two full-time (including the HR Officer) staff members. In addition to the routine internal support functions performed by the HR office on a daily basis for all City departments and divisions, the following offers a summary of 2008 achievements:

- HR teamed up with the Health & Wellness Committee to coordinate several health-related events for the benefit of employees. The Health & Wellness Committee is comprised of ±15 employee volunteers representative from all City departments. Examples include the incentive program (see below); third annual health fair; the Healthy Ohioans Walk-N-Lunch event in April; and opportunity for individualized employee health assessments, with over 50 employees participating. The Committee also coordinated monthly Brown Bag Lunch seminars giving employees the opportunity to learn more about various topics of interest (i.e. stress relief, financial planning, elder care, green living, etc.).
  - 2008 marked the first full year for the Health & Wellness Committee's Incentive program. The objective of the program is to establish employee health and wellness as an important part of employee satisfaction and well-being that is worthy of special recognition. The incentive program is a competitive and fun program established to help encourage healthy behaviors, with points given for participation in a variety of "healthy" activities and prizes awarded to top finishers. Eighty employees participated in the program.
  - An Employee Health Insurance Committee was created to review medical insurance cost savings options for the Nov. 2008 renewal. A high-deductible plan with a flexible spending account (FSA) and health reimbursement account (HRA) was carefully chosen by the committee and recommended to and accepted by the City Manager. Subsequent employee health insurance enrollment meetings were scheduled throughout the month of October for employees and family members to become better informed regarding their health insurance and FSA/HRA options.
- The City received a decrease of .15% (savings of \$2,821.36) for the medical insurance renewal, and the renewal for dental and optical coverage resulted in no change in costs.
  - The uniform accident review process first implemented in 2007 in combination with employee training in the areas of back safety, driver's safety, etc. has been successful in 2008, with an overall decrease in employee-related injuries/accidents by 17% and a decrease in BWC reportable employee injuries/accidents by 46% from 2007.
  - HR staff coordinated the periodic blood drives, on-site mammogram van visits (open to the community), and flu shot program.
  - The HR office coordinated the annual holiday luncheon in December. City employees raised more than \$1,600 in donations towards the creation of military care packages and made significant donations to "adopted" needy families in Blue Ash as well as donations of canned goods to the FreeStore Food Bank.
  - An additional employee appreciation event, the annual summer luncheon and golf outing, was held in July. This event is coordinated by the Golf Pro and Golf Maintenance Supt.
  - The Police Patrol Officer bargaining agreement was finalized in April. Negotiations began for Police Dispatchers and Fire Lieutenants in the fall.
  - Only one Civil Service exam took place in 2008 -- a promotional exam to fill an Assistant Fire Chief vacancy. The following non-Civil Service positions were filled in 2008: Public Works Director, Engineering Technician (promotion in the Service Dept.), Serviceworker III (promotion in the Service Dept.), Serviceworker II (promotion in the Service Dept.), Serviceworker I, and Maintenance Technician Specialist (Facilities Maintenance).
  - There were three retirements in 2008: Service Director and two employees in the Service Dept. (see public works section of this report for more info). Sadly, a fellow employee in the Police Dept. passed away in 2008 (see Police section for more info).



Photos from the employee health fair (far left) in Jan. 2008 & holiday luncheon in Dec. 2008 (remaining).

# TECHNOLOGY & PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICES

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Technology team plays a major support role city-wide, and includes two full-time employees. This office maintains and monitors the City's technology for all employees, including all desktop and laptop computers, copiers, faxes, printers, telephone systems, cell phones, internal and external websites, etc.

Major 2008 accomplishments include:

- Continued work with the Rec Center expansion team relating to the design and installation of IT, telecommunications and audio/visual infrastructure.
- Assisted the Fire Dept. with installation of laptop computers in emergency response vehicles, providing quick access to current maps and preplan info when responding to emergencies. In addition, the laptops serve as Mobile Data Computers to receive direct communications and dispatch alerts from Hamilton County. Ambulances will have laptops and software to allow efficient field reporting of patient care.
- In cooperation with City of Cincinnati CAGIS Agency, implemented the first phase of a Citizen Request

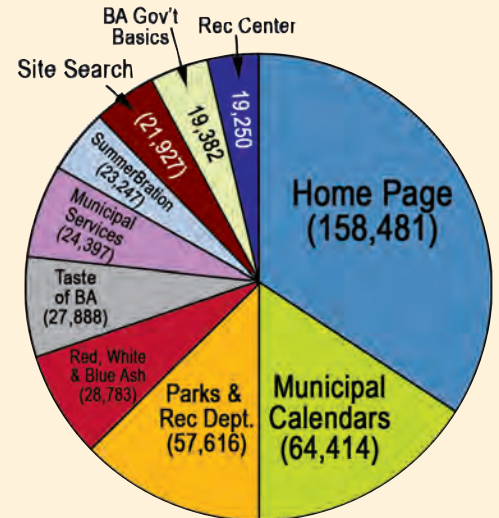
System with the Service Department. This system facilitates tracking of problems or requests from citizens relating to various public works issues. The calls are turned into work orders for prompt action. The next phase of this project involves a web-based form to allow direct submission by citizens and an expansion of the system to our Code enforcement efforts.

- Assisted with installation of multimedia presentation systems in Council Chambers and the Blue Ash Conference Room.
- Completed a comprehensive review of data and telecommunications services that facilitated a consolidation of services, cut costs, and improved services.
- Provided Northeast Community Challenge (NECC) with IT support to include the donation and installation of a new computer system.
- Provided emergency communications and IT support during and following the September wind storm.
- Developed a process to repair a series of defective computer motherboards by replacing two components in-house. The repair

cost: 60 cents, versus replacing each motherboard at a cost of \$267.

- The IT Officer continued assistance with the general website BlueAsh.com. In 2008, the additional site name "BlueAsh.org" was secured, and the process of obtaining a comparable ".gov" address also began. Users who click on these addresses will be seamlessly redirected to the ".com" content. The chart shows the number of page views in 2008 of the top 10 pages. Numbers represent the total number of pages viewed (repeated views of a single page will count).

BlueAsh.com Website - Page Views



## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- The Project Coordinator continued to play a key role on the Rec Center renovation team. In 2008, work included the completion and "closing out" of the Phase I portion of the improvements (addition of the new gym). The Coordinator was involved extensively with Phase II of this project, representing the bulk of the renovation and expansion, including assisting the design team preparation of specifications, prints, and bidding documents; coordination of bid-

ding procedures; review and documentation of job progress; and review and verification of progress payment and contract requirement follow-up.

- The Project Coordinator, working with Facilities Maintenance, completed work associated with required inspections, testing, and permitting relating to the City's backflow devices, boilers, detection systems, underground storage tanks, and elevators.
- The Project Coordinator continued

to serve as a key member of the City's storm water response team and was active throughout 2008 on a number of private and public drainage issues.

- Assisted the Parks & Rec Director and Parks Maintenance area with the bidding and award of a project to purchase and install synthetic turf on Soccer Field A (one of two soccer fields) at the Blue Ash Sports Center. (Ursuline Academy in Blue Ash is contributing funds towards this capital project.)

# POLICE DEPARTMENT



In 2008, the Police Department employed 58 full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel, 38 of whom are full-time sworn officers.

The Department consists of one Chief, two Captains, three Lieutenants, six Sergeants, 26 Patrol and seven Auxiliary Officers, six Dispatchers, one Mayor's Court Co-

ordinator, two Mayor's Court Clerks, and four staff personnel. The Department operates under two bureaus: Operations and Administrative. Operations performs all primary police functions, and Administrative performs a variety of functions that support the operation of the Department.

The operating budget for the Department in 2008 was about \$6.53 million, with actual expenses about \$6.33 million.

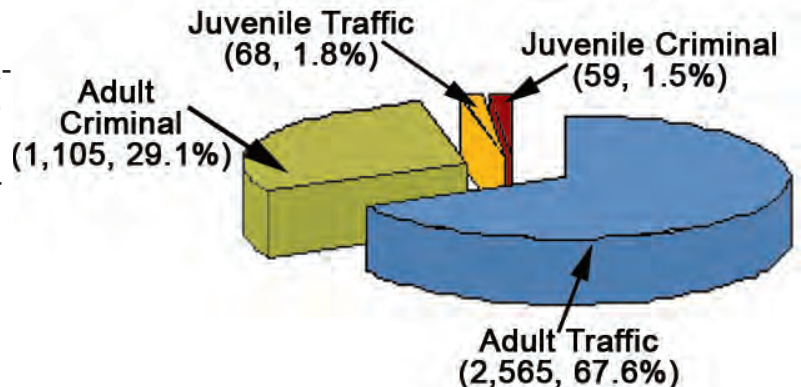
## 2008 POLICE STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- In 2008, the Department recorded 1,340 criminal and non-criminal reports, compared to 1,326 in 2007 and 1,744 in 2006. The three largest categories for these reports were theft (22.2%), non-criminal (21.7%), and Drug Offenses (14.3%). Of all reports, the Department successfully cleared 76%. This compares favorably to national statistics as the FBI Uniform Crime Report for 2007 shows that in metropolitan counties nationwide, 50.3% of violent crimes and 16.2% of property crimes were cleared. Blue Ash cleared 86% and 32% respectively in 2008.
- The Department made 1,164 criminal arrests, compared to 1,241 and 1,249 in 2007 and 2006 respectively. Of the 2008 arrests, 95% were adult. The Department's arrest statistics also compare favorably to national statistics, as Blue Ash made almost twice the Midwest's average number of arrests (based upon population). See pie chart describing composition of 2008 Police arrests/citations.
- The Department handled 15,210 calls for service and details in 2008, compared to 13,840 in 2007. About 15.5% of these involved proactive patrol

strategies, such as bike patrol, positive citizen contacts, etc. About 11.4% of the calls reflect service type details, such as public fingerprinting, background checks, bank runs, vacation house checks, etc. About 12.4% of these details involved providing assistance to the Fire Department.

- The busiest times of day for the Police Department were between 3 and 4PM, 4 and 5PM, 5 and 6PM, and 2 and 3PM respectively. These time periods aggregatedly accounted for over 24% of total calls.

## 2008 Police Arrests/Citations



## MAYOR'S COURT...

Blue Ash's Mayor's Court is allowed to hear only traffic or misdemeanor cases. No DUI, DUS, or felony cases are heard at this level. An officer can base a charge on either Ohio State law, or the Blue Ash Municipal Code. Whether a case is heard in Mayor's Court depends upon how the Officer writes the charge. If based upon Blue Ash Municipal Code, and if it is a misdemeanor or traffic violation, then the case may be sent to Blue Ash. Otherwise, the case must be sent downtown to be heard by the Hamilton County Courts. In 2008, about 53% of the total adult criminal and traffic cases were cited to Blue Ash's Mayor's Court.

Mayor's Court convenes generally two times each month. The total number of Mayor's Court cases in 2008 was 1,960, compared to a total of 1,929 in 2007. Of those 2008 cases, 1,720 were traffic citations and 240 criminal citations, compared to 1,697 and 232 in 2007. Mayor's Court collected \$132,023 total revenue in 2008.



In 2008, the Administration also monitored potential State legislation which, if passed, could affect the structure of Mayor's Court in the future. As of late 2008, no changes of this nature were made at the State level.

## ▷ OVERALL DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS & NOTABLE EVENTS:

- In February, the Department responded to a burglary in progress on Deercross Parkway. Two adult males from Cincinnati were arrested while attempting to break into a residence. Subsequent investigation resulted in clearances of numerous burglaries in Fairfield, West Chester, Blue Ash, and Hamilton County that were committed by these individuals.
- Residential burglaries on Ash Court in Sycamore Trace and Donjoy Drive resulted in the arrests of an adult female from Loveland (Ash) and arrest of an adult male and a juvenile male (Donjoy).
- Reported break-ins at a medical office and a restaurant on Cornell both resulted in the arrest of adults who were former employees of those businesses.
- Unfortunately, the Police Department lost a 15-year employee with the passing of Dispatcher Randy Richardson in late October. Randy died from injuries sustained from a motorcycle accident in Northern Kentucky. Randy will be missed by his many friends throughout the Department and other City divisions.
- The Department continues to maintain a high level of training for its police officers. In 2008, the State of Ohio required each sworn officer to attend a minimum of six hours of continuing professional training in order to retain certification as peace officers. For the staff of 38 full-time sworn officers and 7 auxiliary officers, 270 cumulative training hours were required, and the department provided over 3,100 cumulative training hours for its officers.
- In 2008, officers of the Blue Ash Police Department spent a total of 2,265 hours testifying in court on criminal and traffic cases. The courts included primarily the Hamilton County and Blue Ash Mayor's Courts.
- In 2008, the Department assumed the responsibility of Administrative Agency for the Hamilton County OVI (Operating Vehicle Intoxicated) Task Force. The Finance Office assists in managing the financial aspect of this role. The Police Department's Traffic Safety Officer coordinates the activities of the numerous Hamilton County police agencies who participate in the task force.
- On December 31, police canine Magnum was retired from service with the Department. Magnum, together with his handler, Officer Bob Rockel, had served as one of the Department's two canine units since 2002. Magnum will continue to live with Officer Rockel and his family as a pet.
- The Department continued to present the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program at the Edwin H. Greene School and also hosted two classes on Women's Self-Defense for the public.
- The Department provided its traditional support to the City's special events through 2008. As noted within the Parks & Recreation section of this report, the City's special events could not possibly be successful without true city-wide teamwork and support.
- In June, the annual Bike Safety Rodeo was held at the Nature Park. The event is coordinated through the Police Department; however, employees from multiple departments assisted with the free event attended by more than 100 citizens.



## ▷ AUTO ACCIDENT STATISTICS:

In 2008, the Blue Ash Police Department handled 655 auto accident reports, comparing to 648 in 2007. A total of 534 of those accidents occurred on public roadways, growing from 504 in 2007. Of the 655 total crash reports, 18.2% involved injuries (compared to 12.5% in 2007), 1.5% were DUI related, and one involved a fatality.



# FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Fire Department operates its 24-hour services out of two stations - the North (main) Station at 10647 Kenwood Road, and the South Station at 4343 Cooper

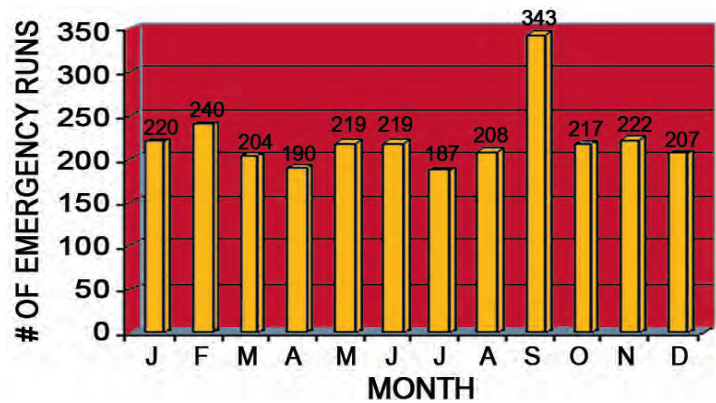
Road. Organizationally, the Department offers its scope of services and programs through four operational divisions, including Administrative, Fire Prevention & Life

Safety, Training, and Fire & EMS Operations.

In 2008, the Department had 31 full-time Firefighter/Paramedics (including the Chief and officers) most of the year; one full-time secretary; and about 15 part-time firefighters, short of the Department's goal of 21 (due to people leaving for full-time positions elsewhere).

## FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2008, there were a total of 2,676 emergency runs by the Fire Department. Emergency runs per month ranged from a low of 187 in July to a high of 343 in September (including the 140 runs attributable to the wind storm). The chart to the right offers a graphed summary of the runs per month made by the department (which average to nearly 8 runs per day).



## FIRE DEPARTMENT 2008 TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Training for fire personnel is required at federal, state and regional levels. In 2008, a total of 3,605 hours of training was conducted -- 2,687 hours involving full-time and 918 hours involving part-time personnel. Examples of training sessions include:

- Advance Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) 6-hour mandatory recertification class with all paramedics.
- NIMS (National Incident Management System) mandatory training completed by Lieutenants.
- Training of all personnel as Ice Rescue Technicians.
- City-wide online drivers training program.
- "Fit for Duty" testing for all Department members.
- Rapid Assist Team (RAT) training with Evendale.
- Ohio Fire Academy "Intro to Pumps" class.

- Haz-Mat Refresher Course instructed by Cleveland State University.
- Train the Trainer for Firefighter Survival.
- Encountering Mental Illness and Mental Retardation training class.
- Trench rescue training.
- Five training sessions with the assistant medical director.
- Over 20 mutual aid trainings with neighboring departments.
- AirCare conference/training.
- USAR (Urban Search & Rescue) training.



## LIFE SAFETY DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

This Division's main goal is prevention, with staff staying busy conducting annual inspections, reviewing plans, and inspecting new and remodeled businesses. To improve consistency and efficiency, an employee was moved to a 40-hour position for the purpose of inspecting businesses and increasing rapport with the business community. Additional prevention stats include:

- A 24% increase over 2007 levels of number of inspections completed (2,156). This represents about 88% of all Blue Ash occupancies (excluding one- and two-family dwellings).
- A 26% reduction over 2007 levels in number of plans reviewed (259). This decrease is attributed to the slowing economy.
- 93 Knox Boxes were installed, with the department nearing 100% compliance.
- Consulted (upon request) with business owners 63 times.
- A 27% increase in acceptance tests (402) were completed on new or modified fire protection systems.

## OVERALL DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS, ADMINISTRATION & EVENTS

**ISO Rating Improvement** - One of the Department's biggest accomplishments in 2008 was the upgrade of the City's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating from a "4" to an ISO rating of "2." This 2 designation makes Blue Ash one of the few jurisdictions in Ohio to achieve this high rating, with only 610 communities nationwide achieving this status (or better), and only 24 in Ohio, making Blue Ash among the top 1.3% across the nation and among the top 1% in Ohio. Major reasons contributing to Blue Ash's improved grade relate to the opening of the north station within recent years, as well as the automatic response agreements Blue Ash has with several surrounding fire departments, including Sharonville and Montgomery. These mutual aid agreements enhance fire protection in our region and assure an appropriate level of personnel available to respond to a fire.

**New Ambulance** - In August, the Department received its new 2008 Horton ambulance, replacing a 1999 ambulance sold at auction.

**Administration & Staffing** - In November, a promotional exam was given for a vacant Assistant Fire Chief position. This extremely competitive process resulted in award of the promotion late in the year to Greg Preece. Also in 2008, three full-time Firefighter III/Paramedic vacant positions were filled, welcoming Rob Suder, Eric Simon, and Blake Dalton to the team. Five part-time Firefighter/Paramedics -- Ben Alvis, Travis Burnett, Jason Graham, Amos Johnson, and Andrew Long -- filled vacant part-time openings.

**Open House** - Another successful open house took place during Fire Prevention Week. The event included a live burn demo, and other fire fighter demos and educational opportunities. (See photos.)

**Mutual Aid** - In February, Blue Ash began automatic mutual aid with the neighboring Sharonville Fire Department, allowing sharing and utilization of resources to assure the best and most efficient citizen service for both communities. Automatic mutual aid with Montgomery has been in place for over a year. Mutual aid is proving very successful in fire and EMS protection.

**EMS Billing** - Nov. 2008 began the fifth year with Medicount Management to handle EMS transport billing. The Fire Chief negotiated a reduced collection percentage fee from 10% to 7.5%, with this reduction partially due to increased technological capability. In recent years, the City has collected in excess of \$325,000 annually from this process.

**CO Detectors, Etc.** - The department continued to offer citizens carbon monoxide (CO) detectors at a subsidized cost, free smoke detectors and child car seat installations, and the Fire Explorer and Junior Fire Setters programs. Staff also participated with local schools (including Sycamore and Ursuline Academy) with various training and emergency planning.

**September 14 Windstorm** - The unusual hurricane-like winds experienced in Greater Cincinnati in mid September created a challenge for multiple City departments, including Fire. Extensive wind damage and massive power outages throughout Blue Ash occurred, with the Department responding to 74 calls for service within a 24-hour period, and 140 calls for service overall. Two of the calls were significant fires in buildings - one residential and one commercial. See Page 16 of this report for photos and other information relating to this major natural storm.



OCTOBER 11, 2008 FIRE OPEN HOUSE

## FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

84 public education classes were offered in 2008, and included a total of about 4,300 participants. Examples of these public education efforts include tours of the fire station; CPR classes; fire extinguisher training; "what to do before the squad arrives"; fire safe house; and spe-

cial education classes such as fire safety talks, tornado safety training, fire gear demos, neighborhood block party participation, truck/squad visits to schools, and school/business fire drills. Free home inspections were also continued for residents.

# ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Progress continued in the economic and community development arenas in 2008. This office is staffed with four full-time employees and one part-time Administrative Clerk, though the part-time position remained va-

cant for the last half of the year. Highlights of office activities are summarized on these pages.



## LIFE SCIENCES COLLABORATIVE

An exciting focus in 2008 in the economic development area was on establishing the Blue Ash Life Sciences Collaborative. The goal of the Collaborative is to harness our community's extensive life sciences expertise, grow the life sciences sector, and promote a healthy regional economy. The planning committee of the Collaborative consists of Blue Ash and regional life science firms, educational institutions and government officials. Their work culminated in the first program of the Blue Ash Life Science Collaborative held on November 13. Over 90 people registered to attend the Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Life Science Talent Program. The program attracted a diverse cross-section of professionals motivated by the need to address the multiple issues around talent attraction.

Attendees expressed favorable comments, which included, "excellent program", "well organized," "absolutely one of the best programs I've ever attended," and "networking was great." The City will continue to provide resources through our BlueAshAdvance.com website and to produce another Life Sciences program in 2009.

The Blue Ash Life Science publication, *Advancing Life*, was in the December 14 issue of the *Cincinnati Business Courier*. This publication features five Blue Ash Life Science firms and the University of Cincinnati. This publication will help promote the life science industry in Blue Ash and be used by the City, as well as the Blue Ash organizations featured in the publication, as a marketing tool to recruit additional companies.



## CINCINNATI USA PARTNERSHIP - Regional ED Participation

Blue Ash continued to work closely with the Cincinnati USA Partnership on economic development efforts. In 2008, the City selected Sogeti USA (a provider of IT services to business and public sector organizations), as the recipient of the Partnership's Growth Award program. Sogeti USA, headquartered in Blue Ash, added 100 full-time employees in 2007 to their 260 employee count and forecasted growth of an additional 100 full time employees in 2008.

The Chamber selected Blue Ash based Omya Industries as their recipient for a growth award. Omya relocated to Blue Ash from Vermont.

The City participated on a business development mission to Chicago with the Partnership to promote the region and community to site selection professionals in Chicago.

In April, the City Manager, along with several other representatives with Blue Ash connections, participated in

a business mission trip to the Netherlands coordinated by the Cincinnati USA Partnership. Among other learning opportunities, the group had the occasion to expand their regional knowledge on renewable and alternative energy through its visit to the world's largest waste-to-energy facility.



*Pictured L to R, Economic Development Director Judy Clark, John Suddarth from OMYA Industries, Mayor Jack Buckman, & Gene Gelasi from Sogeti USA at the Chamber's Growth Award event.*

## ▷ BUSINESS LUNCHEONS

Blue Ash continued to invite local business people to quarterly luncheons to personally thank them for their investment in our community. In 2008, the program hosted 55 local professionals who were honored to be a part of these small gatherings of City of Blue Ash and business leaders.



## ▷ BLUE ASH AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE

Research has indicated that over 65 to 80% of new jobs are created through the expansion of existing firms. The Ambassadors Committee, first initiated in 2007 and comprised of volunteers from several Blue Ash businesses and City staff, continued to assist the City on developing strong relationships with current Blue Ash companies through visiting with

business leaders and conducting a brief survey. The information gathered from these sessions provides insight for ways the City can become more competitive and to uncover barriers to expanding in Blue Ash. In 2008, the committee surveyed 98 Blue Ash businesses. Representatives have met with over 268 companies since the program began.

## ▷ EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION HIGHLIGHTS

A number of new businesses decided to call Blue Ash home in 2008, with examples listed below:

- The new 108-room Hilton Garden Inn at Cornell Park Drive & Cornell was completed and opened in 2008. This is Blue Ash's 16th hotel, offering a total of 1,811 total hotel rooms in the community.



*The new Hilton Garden Inn at Cornell Park Drive & Cornell Road.*

- Berenfield Containers headquarter/corporate staff was relocated from Mason to office space in Blue Ash.
- Epsilon (Alliance Data Systems) announced its intention to move to Blue Ash from Milford in February 2009. Epsilon plans to occupy 28,000 square feet in Duke's Lake Forest office building (space formerly occupied by Fidelity Investments).
- In December, City Council approved a rezoning request and special permit for construction of a new Target retail store west of Plainfield Road and south of Ronald Reagan Highway. The potential project includes about 12 acres and currently houses a small office park (Crossgate Square) and ten homes on

Penelope Lane (a private drive west of Plainfield Road). The new store will be about 140,000 square feet and will also include developer-provided major traffic improvements to the area, including additional signalization, lanes, median areas, and other improvements designed to improve traffic flow in the area. Unless impacted by the economy, construction is planned to begin in the summer of 2009 and be complete in 2010.

- Examples of additional new businesses relocating to or opening in Blue Ash in 2008 include: Arcadis (an engineering & consulting firm), Diversified Brokerage Specialists, Technical Training, Tri-Health Concern Services, Galaxy Associates, Select Staffing, U.S. Remodelers, and Rising Roll (restaurant).

Investment of existing businesses in Blue Ash continued in 2008, with just some highlights of major expansions or renovations described below:

- The Hyatt Place (formerly AmeriSuites) hotel on Reed Hartman received major investment, including 125 renovated guest rooms and public areas.
- Frisch's restaurant on Plainfield Road was reconstructed and renovated.
- Major expansion occurred at the Oncology Hematology Care facility at Reed Hartman and Malsbary.

## ▷ BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

In 2008, there were 126 residential and 384 commercial permits totaling 510 permits issued for an estimated construction value of \$41,059,253. In 2007,

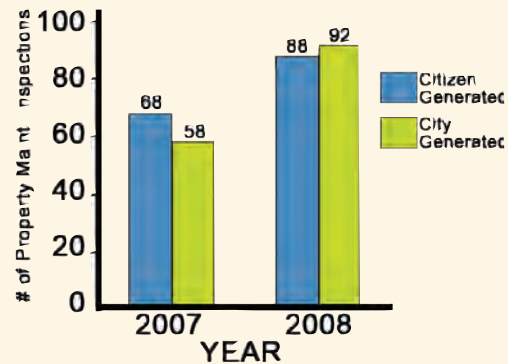
there were 161 residential and 423 commercial permits totaling 584 permits issued for estimated construction value of \$51,524,808.

## PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT

The property maintenance area is responsible for stabilizing and maintaining the character of the residential and commercial properties throughout the City. We performed 150 property maintenance code inspections and reinspections in 2008, 88 of those citizen generated and 92 City generated. This compares to a total of 126 in 2007 -- 68 and 58 of those being citizen and City generated respectively (see chart).

There were 100 property maintenance and 50 high vegetation inspections. Progress continues to be made on problematic violations which impact the visual appearance of our neighborhoods.

### COMPARISON OF 2007 & 2008 INSPECTION ACTIVITY



## HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In 2008, there were 12 applications for the City of Blue Ash Home Repair Assistance Program (HRAP). The total year-to-date amount of purchase orders processed for HRAP is \$37,019, slightly higher than

2007 levels. This program continues to be a viable program that enables the city to provide assistance for qualifying homeowners who desire to keep their property attractive but require assistance.

## DOWNTOWN BLUE ASH

The City received a Congestion Management/Air quality (CMAQ) grant to replace traffic signal lights in downtown. This grant, available in 2010, will largely fund traffic improvements, including the computer controlled signals, to facilitate the movement of traffic more efficiently, thus reducing fuel usage and emissions. Engineering for such began in 2008 and will continue through 2009. In addition, the City will replace the existing 20+ year-old poles for the traffic signals, as well as various other street lights to a more contemporary look. Combined with other possible streetscaping im-

provements such as sidewalks and curbs where appropriate, the City intends to update the public facility components in Downtown over the next few years.

The City also explored a potential mixed-use development opportunity involving property housed by the "Towne Court" office/retail building (Re/Max, etc.) as well as other City-owned properties. As this process unfolded and more details were examined, it was decided to not move forward with the project due to costs and the general economic climate.

## NATIONAL RECOGNITION & MARKETING EFFORTS

### National recognition

In addition to Blue Ash's being included in *FORTUNE Small Business* magazine's top 100 cities "to live & launch your small business" (described earlier), Blue Ash was proud of the inclusion of the Blue Ash Advance.com website in the National League of Cities' City Practices database. The program joins more than 6,000 proven city solutions that NLC provides to its 18,000 member cities on a variety of issues.

### Regional exposure

Members of the Community and Economic Development office have served as panelists and presenters at regional economic development programs. They also serve on committees including Hamilton County Development Corporation-Economic Development Steering Committee and CIC, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Great Oaks, and Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

### Radio Advertisements

Another component of 2008 marketing efforts included radio spots on WVXU to air during peak morning and afternoon drive times. A general ad for all Blue Ash businesses and one specifically highlighting Blue Ash life sciences firms was run in late summer and fall.

### Maps

Amenities maps were developed and included in new company folders as well as on the Advance website. These maps have provided tremendous value to our newest business and residential citizens.



# ▶ SEPTEMBER 2008 WIND STORM ... A Major Community Incident

On Sunday, September 14, the Greater Cincinnati area, including Blue Ash, experienced a wind storm like no other in its history. Hurricane-like winds, remnants of Hurricane Ike, were felt by the region, and resulted in long and massive power outages and property damage, including loss of many trees throughout the area.

Most business and residential areas of Blue Ash were without power for at least three to four days, and several areas were without power for as long as a week. Duke Energy crews worked diligently for many weeks, and also called in assistance from other areas of the country.

The wind storm event essentially affected operations of all of the City's departments and divisions. Most immediately, Police and Fire personnel received a major increase in calls for service especially during the initial hours of this occurrence. City staff also went door-to-door in residential neighborhoods checking with citizens who might need additional assistance during an extended power outage.

The City's Service Department was kept extremely busy for at least the next three weeks in cleaning up the debris, including massive amounts of downed trees, limbs, and brush.

With thanks to Blue Ash based Duke Realty, the Service Department utilized a portion of their property south of Osborne Boulevard to stockpile much of the debris collected, which was later ground and disposed of with assistance from the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District. City crews brought an estimated 1,000 loads of debris to this temporary site with its heavy equipment. This equates to approximately 5,500 standard-size pickup truck loads!

The City applied for, and is expected to receive, federal funds to recoup a portion of the additional expense to the City related to that wind storm experience. Distribution of these funds is coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and expected reimbursement in 2009 is anticipated to be in the \$175,000 to \$180,000 range.

As can be seen from the pictures, substantial damage throughout the community was sustained. Though the storm presented a major challenge and inconvenience to all, fortunately, no loss of life was experienced as a direct result of the storm.

## SCENES AROUND BLUE ASH FROM THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2008 WIND STORM (THE REMNANTS OF WINDS FROM HURRICANE IKE)



*Tree on home on Kenwood Road*



*Tree on utility lines on Kenwood Road. Thousands were without power for multiple days due to tree & wind damage.*



*Major damage was done to this house in the Peppermill Farms neighborhood.*



*Up-rooted trees were a common site in mid September throughout Blue Ash & Greater Cincinnati after the never-before-experienced-hurricane-like wind storm. Pictured above are downed trees in the Carpenter's Run/Carpenter's Ridge residential areas adjacent to the Blue Ash Golf Course. The Golf Course lost many trees due to this storm as well.*



# SERVICE DEPARTMENT / PUBLIC WORKS

The Service Department is responsible for a variety of major public works functions, including street and drainage maintenance, snow and ice removal, support of City events, administration of refuse collection and recycling, traffic signal maintenance, equipment maintenance, building maintenance support and administration of engineering

services. The Service Department attended to these and many other duties during 2008 with 18 full-time and two part-time employees. Three long-time employees retired in 2008, including Service Director Denny Albrinck, Service Coordinator Bill Stabler, and Serviceworker II Steve Gillespie.

## SNOW & ICE CONTROL

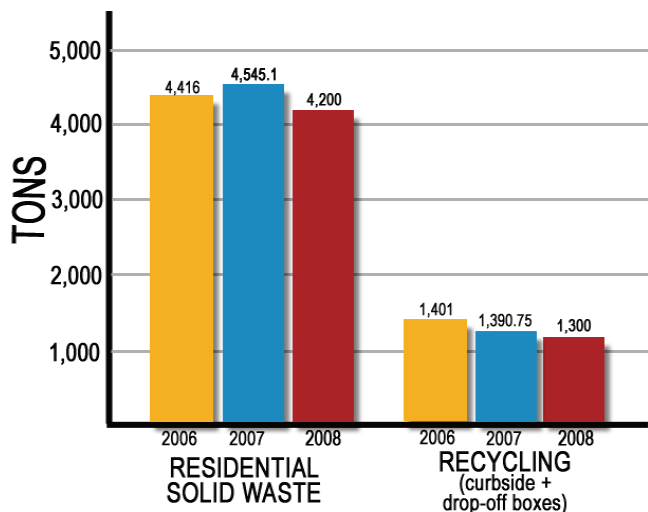
Snow and Ice removal continues to be one of the most important services provided by the Service Department. The 2007-08 snow and ice season was above normal with 30 inches of snow in Blue Ash. There were only three snowfalls of 3" or greater, but many smaller storms required Service Department crews to respond 35 times for anti-icing treatment and snow/ice removal. Crews applied over 2,600 tons of salt, 5,600 gallons of calcium chloride, and 1,000 gallons of geomelt, a more environmentally friendly anti-icing and deicing material. Over 1,900 staff hours were spent treating our roadways, driving approximately 18,000 miles. The large snow in March dropped 14 inches of snow and resulted

in the only declared Snow Emergency of 2008. Service Department crews had all roads in Blue Ash cleared from this major storm in only 2 days.

### SNOW & ICE STATISTICS SEASON

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
# of response times	24	29	35
Inches of snow	9.13	20.5	30
Salt used (tons)	1,288.1	2,231.01	2,600+
Calcium chloride used (gal)	3,005	5,908.9	5,600+
# hours treating roads	1,054.24	1,728.75	1,900+
Miles driven treating roads	8,832.50	14,153	18,000

## WASTE DISPOSAL & TRASH/BRUSH DROP-OFF PROGRAM



The Service Department administered the third year of the five-year solid waste contract with Rumpke. The cost of the contract for 2008 was over \$728,000. In 2008, Rumpke picked up and disposed of approximately 4,200 tons of residential solid waste and made 6,673 pick ups of dumpsters for selected business and commercial trash. Additionally, Rumpke collected almost 1,300 tons of recyclable materials under the residential and community drop-off recycling programs.

The City of Blue Ash received the 2007 Best Community Recycler Award for cities over 10,000 from the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District. Blue Ash citizens recycled 23.43% of their household waste as the City continues to move toward the recycle goal of over 25%.

## CURBSIDE LEAF & BRUSH COLLECTION

The City provides curbside leaf collection one day each spring and for two months from mid-October to mid-December. In 2008, crews spent over 1,400 hours collecting over 1,700 cubic yards of leaves.

The City also provides curbside brush collection for residential properties. The windstorm on September 14 from the remnants of Hurricane Ike caused widespread damage and large numbers of downed trees and tree limbs (see previous page). Department crews worked over 2,400 hours removing debris from the storm and

collected over 11,000 cubic yards of debris. For all of 2008, a total of 4,800 hours were dedicated to brush removal with approximately 14,500 cubic yards of brush collected and 1,230 cubic yards of chips collected and disposed. Although in 2008 this service was provided the week-day following regular garbage pickup, in 2009 it will only be available on Mondays and Tuesdays to better utilize Department personnel.



## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & FREON-CONTAINING APPLIANCE DISPOSAL

The City provides a free service to Blue Ash citizens to properly dispose of hazardous wastes including oil, batteries, paint, antifreeze, tires, etc. Certain hazardous materials can be dropped off at the Service Garage at 6131 Interstate Circle. In 2008, the City spent approximately \$22,500 to properly dispose of household hazardous

waste. Blue Ash citizens may also drop off appliances containing freon, such as refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners, and the City will dispose of them -- free curbside pick-up is also available. In 2008, the City disposed of 118 appliances after proper freon removal at a disposal cost of approximately \$2,400.

## PAVING PROGRAM / CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS / TRAFFIC SIGNALS

### BLUE ASH/HUNT ROAD PROJECT

The Blue Ash/Hunt Road Project started construction in February 2008. Blue Ash Road was totally rebuilt from the south City limit to Cooper Road with a new storm drainage system, a new 16" water line, curbs/gutters, sidewalks, handicap ramps, and a complete new roadway. Blue Ash Road was completed in early December. Work on Hunt Road will start in spring 2009 and be completed by late summer.



*The Blue Ash/Hunt Road improvement project was awarded to C J & L Construction in early 2008. Work on the project continued throughout 2008, with the Blue Ash Road portion complete by the end of the year. The Hunt Road portion of the project should be complete in summer 2009. This estimated \$3.1 million project is primarily funded via a no-interest loan through the State's SCIP program.*



### TRAFFIC SIGNALS

The City is in the second year of a five-year program to upgrade major traffic signals from incandescent lighting to Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights. LED traffic signals are brighter, require less maintenance and require significantly less electricity to operate. New LED signals were installed at the intersections of Kenwood and

Pfeiffer Roads, Kenwood and Zig Zag Roads (where a southbound left-turn signal was also added), Reed Hartman Highway and Glendale-Milford Road, Reed Hartman Highway and Cooper Road, Reed Hartman Highway and Peppermill/Plainfield, and Pfeiffer Road at the drive serving the Clarion hotel/Red Roof Inn/Bob Evans commercial area. Battery backup systems were also added to the signals at Kenwood/Pfeiffer and Reed Hartman/Glendale-Milford to provide continuous operation during short periods of power outages.

### ANNUAL PAVING PROGRAM

The 2008 Paving Program consisted of both pavement rehabilitation and pavement preservation methods. The deteriorated pavement on Reed Hartman Highway from Glendale-Milford Road to 900 feet north of Creek Road was milled and replaced. Other roadways received a preventive maintenance treatment called Microsurfacing that seals the pavement and provides a new friction surface. These roadways included Reed Hartman Highway from Peppermill to Cooper, Kenwood Road from the south City limits to Ronald Reagan Highway, McKinley Road, Deerfield Road on both sides of Cornell Road, and the south end of Mohler Road. Portions of Hunt and Cooper Roads had the cracks sealed to preserve the pavement.

In addition to the pavement treatments, deteriorated catch basins were repaired and over 2,000 linear feet of damaged curb/gutter was replaced. New pedestrian ramps were installed at required locations in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

## ROADWAY & STORM DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE

The Service Department maintains 167 lane miles of roadway either with in-house crews or by contract. Responsibilities include the maintenance and repair of pavements, curbs, storm drainage structures, sidewalks, signs, guardrails, traffic signals and street sweeping. In 2008, Service Department staff used over 90 tons of asphalt for road repairs, cleaned 1,600 catch basins

and repaired 20 catch basins, installed/repared over 1,000 feet of storm pipe, replaced 100 feet of guardrail, striped almost 44 miles of street and installed over 17,000 square feet of street stencils (arrows, etc.), and installed or repaired almost 1,300 signs. Additionally, street sweeping cleaned over 1,300 miles of pavement.

The Parks & Recreation Department had a busy and exciting 2008 as it continued its tradition of offering an abundance of quality recreational programs and facilities throughout the year. The Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for the operation of the Recreation Center, Towne Square and Veterans Memorial areas, Nature Park, Hunt Park, White Oak Park, Hazelwood Center, Golf Course, and Sports Center, as

well as grounds maintenance throughout the City. The Department also oversees and coordinates the City's many special events and concerts held year-round. Several times throughout the year, the Department mails a brochure to all residences and members describing classes, events, leagues, etc.



### RECREATION CENTER POOL & TENNIS & THE HISTORICAL HUNT HOUSE

2008 was an especially exciting year for the Rec Center, with construction on Phase I being complete and Phase II construction beginning in April. More info on this major capital project is included on Page 21. Other Rec Center highlights are summarized below:



*Blue Ash's outdoor pool is the second largest re-circulating pool in the Greater Cincinnati area (the largest is Coney's Sun-lite pool).*

- As of the end of 2008, there were 3,362 Rec Center memberships, comprised of 2,466 residential and 896 business memberships (figures include family, single, senior, and disabled for each category).
- About 158,621 persons utilized the Center in some manner, including 144,657 members checking in, room rentals, classes, tot room and special events held in the building.
- The City's six park shelters remained busy, with an estimated 20,178 rental patrons (a 25% increase from 2007).
- Due to construction, the indoor sports leagues were cancelled, though softball experienced a 29% increase in participation with 58 teams and 754 players.

- Projected revenues in admissions and programs were exceeded in 2008, and all areas stayed within their budgeted expenditures.

Recreation Center programming and staff highlights include:

- Two seasonal workers were changed to year-round (part-time) status.
- Full-time staff member Tiphonie Crane became a Certified Parks & Recreation Professional (CPRP). This is a nationally-accredited and recognized certification for professionals in the parks & recreation field.
- Swim lessons continue to be popular, with 2,278 participating.
- 2008 was the inaugural year for the Blue Fins recreational swim team, featuring a total of 62 swimmers and generating \$5,940 of new revenue.
- From June through August, there were 2,400 hours of tennis court reservations.
- High quality tennis instruction was maintained for all ages, and participation in adult and youth camps, clinics, and leagues exceeded expectations.
- Tennis Courts 5 - 8 were resurfaced in the spring.
- Blue Ash tennis courts continued to be the home court for both Moeller High and Ursuline Academy tennis teams.

- Camp Blue Fish purposely reduced the number of campers due to construction.
- The annual Ladies Distance Classic was hosted, featuring 1,360 participants - more than last year.
- The 7th annual Dog Day at the Pool event was held in September, and is later described in more detail.
- Staff participated in the Red Cross Regional Lifeguard Olympics and qualified a number of teams for the State competition.
- The early morning lap fitness swim and support to the Sycamore Schools "Flying Fish" and boys and girls water polo teams was continued in 2008.

### HISTORICAL HUNT HOUSE

The City's historical Hunt House at 4364 Hunt Road which was first open to the public in 2006, remained open for tours throughout 2008. Six open houses were held beginning in February and continuing every other month throughout the year. Each open house featured a different theme, and an estimated 370 guests toured the historic home in 2008.



### ▷ FITNESS CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

With construction underway for most of 2008, the fitness center facilities were temporarily relocated to the new gym, which was completed in late 2007. Even given the “temporary” home for the fitness center for most of the year, participation was brisk. In addition to tracking the maintenance and repairs of fitness equipment and treadmill mileage, additional highlights of 2008 fitness center activities are summarized below:

- The center generated \$14,059 in new revenue.
- Purchased four treadmills, new dumbbells, back extension bench, vertical knee raise seat, and free weight benches
- Staff highlights (all part-time) included the promotion of Scott Morrison to Assistant Fitness Coordinator in March, promotion of Kaitlin Smith to Assistant Fitness Coordinator in August, and the hiring of three new fitness aides in the fall to replace vacant positions.
- Incentive programs continued their popularity in 2008 and included 247 participants. Examples of programs include Jump Start, Mt. Blue Ash, Iron Man/Iron Woman, Ultimate Cardio Challenge, Early Bird Lap Swim, Blue Ash Madness, Tour de Blue Ash, and Million Pound Club.

- The number of Personal Training staff was doubled to six trainers due to high demand for the service. Trainers added include Ryan Phelan, Andrew Stallworth, and Kaitlin Smith. Trainers provided over 2,000 hours of training to members.
- A new Fitness Class Pass was offered to allow members and non-members to be flexible with their time and participation and pay an overall reduced rate.
- There were a total of 4,644 group fitness class participants. Classes offered include: Boot Camp Challenge (6-week program), Aqua-Step, Total Body Conditioning, Cardio Kickboxing, Tae Do, Cardio Core, and Kids in Motion.
- The fitness staff gave 193 fitness orientations and 47 Kids Orientations.



*For most of 2008, the fitness center was temporarily relocated to occupy half of the new gym, completed during the Phase I renovations. The other half of the gym was used as a group class/exercise room.*

### ▷ CONCESSIONS - Rec Center, Amphitheatre, Sports Center & Sandtrap Sandwich Shoppe

Concession operations are offered at the Recreation Center, Amphitheatre (East Side Players productions only this year), Sports Center, and the Sandtrap Sandwich Shoppe in the Golf Course clubhouse (approximately March through November). The pool concession operated out of a new trailer and the catering kitchen off the “blue” gym. Due to construction, lack of working and storage space, the menu was simplified and fountain drinks were replaced with bottled.

#### CONCESSION REVENUES - 2008

Rec Center, Amphitheatre .....	\$11,162
Sports Center .....	\$65,583
Sandtrap Sandwich Shop (including outings*) .....	\$135,793

\*Outings totaled 30(same as in 2007)

### ▷ HAZELWOOD CENTER & OAKWOOD PARK

Located in the northern part of the City within the Hazelwood neighborhood, this facility is used as a drop-in center, offers a variety of activities, and is operated on limited hours. The facility is also available to rent for events such as graduation parties, etc. 2008 highlights include:

- The 2008 Black History Program drew more attendees than ever before. The event featured many speakers and artifacts.
- Continued relationship with the non-profit group Op-

eration Giveback, which sponsored the weekly reading hour on Thursdays, Girls on the Run program, and afternoon tutoring at their nearby location (as they transported students to and from).

- The second annual “Untouchables Car Show” was held the same day as the annual Hazelwood Reunion. An impressive 100 cars participated in this event - up 50% from last year’s 65 cars.
- The neighborhood center had 28 rentals in 2008.

The passage of Issue 15 by Blue Ash voters in November 2006 made it possible for the City to move forward with improvements at the City's busy Rec Center.

The project is being completed in two phases to limit impact upon building operations. Phase I, construction of a new gymnasium (behind the existing newer gym), was completed in late 2007. Bidding for the Phase II portion of the project (the bulk of the renovation) took place early in 2008, with construction beginning in April.

The 2009 Community Calendar featured this major capital project within its overall theme: "Extreme Makeover: Rec Center Edition." In addition to many construction photos and other project information, one page of the calendar focused on the economic impact of this project (data gathered by the Economics Center for Education & Research, University of Cincinnati). Here are just some highlights of that data:

- This project will result in a total of about \$29,631,000 in economic output, including about \$16,831,000 in additional output beyond the construction of the expanded facility itself (such as purchase of local resources triggered by the construction project and local household spending of the earnings of employees of the project as well as their suppliers).
- The project will result in a total of about \$9,443,000 in earnings (\$4,636,000 paid to workers directly involved in the project plus \$4,807,000 additional earnings resulting from the project).
- The project is estimated to create 270 jobs – 125 of these directly involved in the project and 144 additional jobs created in other sectors.

- Given the Recreation Center's reasonable rates, the expanded Center would generate up to \$900 in annual savings for a single resident member, and \$500 for single business members.
- Research indicates that the expanded Rec Center is also likely to have a positive impact on property values and the potential to attract employers by increasing the value of a local public amenity.

Highlights of the Phase II work include demolition of the older (1979) portions of the Cooper Road elevation and reconstruction of a new area to accommodate a two-story fitness center; an elevated three-lane walking/running track (one-tenth of a mile in length); and new locker room areas towards the east. The plans also feature a second entrance facing Cooper Road and a new open centralized lobby-type space, including family café, and community lounge areas. This centralized area, essentially where the locker rooms formerly existed, will be very open, light, and will be accessible to all activity, including to the pool. Phase II also includes the potential for additional basement space. The family sculpture formerly located at Towne Square will be placed near the entrance of the new facility where hundreds will be able to enjoy it on a daily basis.

As of late 2008, the project is under roof and is ahead of schedule, thanks to favorable weather conditions. Plans for a grand dedication are in the works for late July 2009. The estimated cost of both phases of the project as proposed is \$14 million.

*(Aerial photos below courtesy of Schumacher-Dugan Construction.)*



*Aerial taken June 13, 2008*



*Aerial taken October 11, 2008*



*Aerial taken December 8, 2008*



*Mid April*



*Mid July*



*Early October*



*Early November*



*Mid November*

# PARKS & RECREATION ▶ Special Events

Year-round special events were continued in quality fashion throughout 2008. Although these events are coordinated and managed through the Parks & Recreation Department, none could be produced without substantial assistance and support provided from staff based within ALL City departments and divisions. The City's special events program is exemplary of the City's

true team spirit as they are illustrative of all departments and divisions working together to produce first-class events and to accomplish major goals for the City as a whole. The City's major (regional level) special events include SummerBration; Red, White & Blue Ash; and the Taste of Blue Ash. Other smaller special events are also described on these pages.

## ▶ 2008 SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships continue to be crucial to virtually all of the City's special events.

Media sponsors for all large special event were secured and included B105.1 and 97.3 The Wolf for SummerBration; WCPO Channel 9 for Red, White & Blue Ash; and 700WLW for the Taste. Sponsorships were up \$17,000 over 2007 levels with 2008 revenues of \$275,000. 2008 event partners in-

cluded: Absolute Lipo Dissolve, Academy Rentals, Applebee's, The Beach Water Park, Blue Ash Educational Building, Cadillac, Chick-fil-A, Cincinnati Concession & Catering, Cincinnati Enquirer, Coca Cola, Cricket Communications, Doubletree Guest Suites, Fifth Third Bank, GQ Business Products, Go Bananas Comedy Club, Gutter-Shutter, Hills Communities Development, Horan Associates, The

Kroger Co., Land Rover of Cincinnati, Larry's Lock Safe & Security Center, Inc., LSI Industries, Michael Schuster & Associates, Miller Lite, Nina Paul Jewelry, Ohio Lottery, Owens Corning Basements, Phillips Supply, Rozzi's Famous Fireworks, Samurai Sam's, Schumacher Dugan Construction, SmarTravel, Time Warner Cable, Toyota, Trauth Dairy, Trio's Bistro, University of Cincinnati, and Wilmington College.

## ▶ SUMMERBRATION 2008

This year's SummerBration took place May 30 through June 1, with an estimated total attendance of 75,000. In addition to local entertainment, national level country artists were featured each evening, including Tracy Byrd, Little Big Town, and Blake Shelton (with a surprise appearance by Miranda Lambert). Five restaur-

ants offered their popular barbecue fare, and their sales were up 50% over 2007 levels. The family fun area featured festival rides and free games. Title sponsors for the event were B105 and 97.3 The Wolf.



*Pictured L to R, 2008 SummerBration national entertainment: Tracy Byrd, Little Big Town, & Blake Shelton (with Miranda Lambert).*

## ▶ RED, WHITE & BLUE ASH 2008

Blue Ash's largest one-day event is held at the Sports Center on July 4th - Red, White & Blue Ash. This year's title sponsor was WCPO Channel 9, and national entertainment featured The Volunteer Jam, including Shooter Jennings, 38 Special, and The Charlie Daniels Band. Although weather was overcast and rainy most of the day, estimated attendance (on site) was 100,000. In addition to the world-class fireworks produced by Rozzi's, a family fun area and variety of food booths were offered as well.



*According to Rozzi's Famous Fireworks, Blue Ash's fireworks display is the largest 4th of July display in the Greater Cincinnati region!*



*Entertainers pictured above L to R, 2008 Red, White & Blue Ash national entertainment: Charlie Daniels & Shooter Jennings. Not pictured: 38 Special.*

### ▷ 2008 TASTE OF BLUE ASH

Blue Ash's largest special event is the Taste of Blue Ash, and was held the weekend of August 22, 23 and 24, with attendance estimated at 175,000. Nineteen restaurants participated offering a wide variety of fare, and national level entertainment was featured each evening, including WAR, Kenny Loggins & Eddie Money. Kenny Loggins drew the biggest on-site crowd in Taste history. The Hunt Road stage was again fea-

tured this year and offered great local entertainment and Ohio Lottery game shows, and the Go Bananas Comedy tent featured local comedians. The Title sponsor was 700WLW, and Presenting sponsor was Toyota. The "Best of Taste" competition, held earlier in August, included 11 of the 19 restaurants.



*Pictured L to R, this year's Taste of Blue Ash national entertainment: Kenny Loggins (Saturday), Eddie Money (Sunday), & WAR (Friday). Kenny Loggins drew the biggest crowd ever to Towne Square, with an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 on site.*

### ▷ OTHER 2008 SPECIAL EVENTS

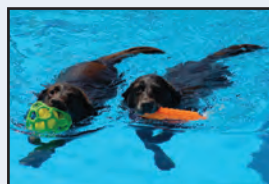
Though SummerBration, July 4th, and the Taste represent Blue Ash's largest special events, there is more offered year-round. Examples are summarized below.

#### CONCERT SERIES -

The Tuesday and Friday evening summer concert series continued their success in 2008. In 2008, Tuesday concerts, usually held in the Amphitheatre, were relocated to Towne Square due to the construction underway at the Recreation Center. In addition, the lunchtime Thursday Concerts at the Square were continued in September. Presenting sponsor for these series was Fifth Third Bank, and estimated attendance for the series was 49,605. A significant increase in concert attendance, especially the Friday series, occurred in 2008.



**DOGGIE DOO-ATHLON** - The City's seventh annual "dog day" at the pool was another success and featured a 1.5 mile run/25-yard swim competition along with the traditional open swim (the second year with this format). The run featured 67 human/dog teams competing. This event, held in 2008 on Sat., Sept. 6th, has become a favorite, with this year's event attracting over 400 participants.



**A CONCERT TO REMEMBER** - This free event, organized by the Alois Alzheimer Foundation, was held on Towne Square. The proceeds from the sale of food and beverage benefited the Alzheimer Foundation, and featured Cincinnati area jazz musicians.

**HERITAGE DAY** - The City's annual Heritage Day event took place in October, with attendance estimated at 4,000 on a beautiful sunny day. This event is held in the Amphitheatre/Nature Park area, and features many hands-on activities, entertainment, demonstrations, and concerts, centered around the "late 1800s Blue Ash" theme. The Hunt House was also open for tours, including transportation from the Park to the House via horse-drawn carriage through the nearby Ravenwood neighborhood.

**HALLOWEEN WALK IN THE WOODS** - This fun annual event was also blessed with beautiful weather on Sat., Oct. 25th. This Halloween event is geared for kids under ten. Attendance was estimated at 700, and the event featured fun Halloween activities, including trick-or-treating, face painting, and other family-friendly entertainment. Generous sponsors supplied candy and workers for their doors.



# GOLF COURSE - Programming & Maintenance

## GOLF COURSE -- PROGRAMMING & FUTURE GOLF AMENITIES

2008 was an exciting year for the Blue Ash Golf Course, representing the Course's 30th full season.

Despite the down economy and unusually wet weather in March, May and June, activity at the Course remained high. Total rounds in 2008 were down by about 2,200; however, during the months of March, May and June, due to unusually wet weather, rounds were down 2,750 over 2007 levels. Excluding those three months of bad golfing weather, rounds were up by approximately 550 during the remainder of the golf season.

With construction underway at the Recreation Center, the Golf Clubhouse was utilized for various events and civic meetings through the year.

Work continued on planning for the future golf course improvements made possible due to passage of Issue 15 in November 2006. Work on the feasibility and design of a family-oriented golf learning center on the airport park property continued throughout the year, as did work on overall design concepts for a new clubhouse/banquet facility. As of late 2008, the thought is to include a six-hole short course and a driving range on

the airport park property (oriented towards Plainfield Road/the Golf Course) that would require no major changes to the current championship layout golf course west of Plainfield Road. The new short course would be family-oriented, environmentally-friendly, and would be attractive to members of our business community who might not have the time to play a regular full round of golf. In addition, it was determined that the location for a new clubhouse/banquet facility would best be in the approximate location of where the current clubhouse sets. Since the timing of the development of the golf amenities on the future park is dependent upon Cincinnati's relocation of the existing airport facilities, the clubhouse/banquet center portion of the golf-related improvements can begin independently (i.e., earlier) than those future improvements planned for east of Plainfield Road.

Previous thoughts were that construction would begin on a new clubhouse/banquet facility towards the end of 2009; however, due to the downturn in the economy, as of late 2008, the goal is to start this improvement in late 2010 or early 2011.

*Golf-related amenities on the future 130-acre property would be oriented towards this section of the park & would include a short, family-friendly course plus a driving range.*



## GOLF COURSE -- MAINTENANCE

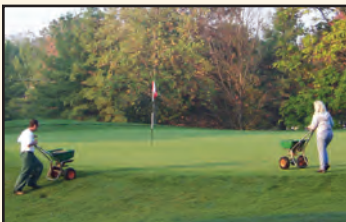
The Golf Maintenance team also had another productive year, and also continued to participate in planning meetings for the future Golf Course improvements.

The beginning of the year provided much-needed precipitation, bringing adequate rainfall and cooler temperatures which helped to restore the 2007 drought conditions. However, summer and fall months produced

several days with above average temperatures and minimal rainfall, causing drought-like conditions to return. The windstorm in September caused signifi-

cant damage to the Golf Course, and the staff spent over three weeks cleaning debris and removing several trees. It is estimated that over 60 trees were lost on the course due to that storm.

A major project in the spring involved this Division with help of the Service Department to complete block retaining walls on the course. During the summer, staff began bunker sand replacement and construction of a new tee on hole #13. The Division implemented a volunteer program, resulting in about 30 volunteers working about 1,400 hours during the season, helping considerably with daily and weekend duties.



# ▶ PARKS MAINTENANCE

The Parks Maintenance Division of the City is responsible for the maintenance of all public City-owned grounds, except for the Golf Course. The Parks Maintenance Division crews and equipment are based at 6171 Interstate Circle. 2008 represented the second full year at the newer facility. The Division has eight full-time and approximately 25 part-time employees (most seasonal). Parks highlights include:

- 2008 continued the beautiful displays throughout Downtown Blue Ash, including the hanging baskets, wall planters, and large containers. Many compliments from citizens and visitors were received again of this year's display.

- The Towne Square fountain and family statue were removed and replaced with brick pavers. The family and fountain will be re-created at the entrance of the newly renovated Recreation Center where hundreds of citizens and visitors will enjoy it on a daily basis.
- New lights were installed on Fields 2, 3 & 4 at the Sports Center.
- The division continued to maintain the median areas of several major roads, and older landscaping in several areas of the Glendale-Milford/Pfeiffer Road median areas was replaced.
- New wreaths with the more efficient LED bulbs were incorporated

into downtown's holiday decorations.

- Installation of artificial turf on Soccer Field A at the Sports Center was essentially complete by the end of the year. This project is being partially funded by Blue Ash's Ursuline Academy, who is contributing \$250,000 over the next three years, representing approximately half the cost of the turf's installation. This arrangement represents a "win-win" for both the City and Ursuline as the City will benefit by increased usage of the field and decreased maintenance costs. The Field should be ready to use in the spring 2009 season.



The City's extensive holiday light display in Downtown continued in 2008. The City receives many compliments about this effort each year. The more energy efficient LED lights are used in these decorations.

Landscaping efforts in Downtown will continue to be a focus. The beautiful displays of hanging baskets & wall plantings/decorations continued throughout 2008.



Parks Maintenance activities in 2008 at Blue Ash's 37-acre Sports Center, a premier sports center facility in the region, also resulted in showcase park areas for Blue Ash. The Sports Center includes 11 baseball fields & two soccer fields, many of which are lighted.

# ▶ FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

The Facilities Maintenance team is responsible for the routine day-to-day maintenance of all City-owned facilities affecting all departments and divisions of the City. In 2008, Facilities had eight full-time employees and about 18 part-time employees. Many of these part-time employees work just a few hours each week.

In 2008, the Facilities crews responded to over 1,450 scheduled and unscheduled maintenance requests city-wide. In addition to normal preventative maintenance tasks year-round, examples of this division's work include monthly facility checks; annual opening and closing of all parks, restrooms, concessions, pools and fountains; and assistance at all special events sponsored by the City, including the summertime concerts and other recreational programs and events. Ongoing effort continued towards identifying and implementing cost-savings measures to comply with the budget funding allocated. Those goals were accomplished within the budget constraints while successfully maintaining quality of service.

The Facilities Maintenance Superintendent was also a key member of the ongoing Recreation Center renovation and expansion design team working on both Phases I and II of that project.

The following paragraphs offer a summary of other 2008 accomplishments of the Facilities team.

## **Parks and Grounds**

The Facilities Maintenance team painted Sports Center concessions and epoxyed all restroom floors throughout the City. The damaged bridge in the Hunt Park was replaced, as was the wood decking in the Nature Park amphitheatre. The Facilities Superintendent also played a major role in the relocation of the Towne Square fountain and family sculpture. Partially due to needed expensive repairs to the fountain's underground plumbing, the decision was made to relocate the sculpture and fountain from the Square to the main entrance of the expanded and renovated Recreation Center. Although the sculpture and fountain were enjoyed at the Square throughout the summer months, it will be enjoyed year-round by hundreds on a daily basis when placed near the main entrance of the new Recreation Center.

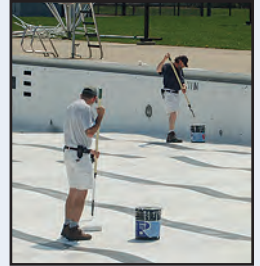
## **Municipal & Safety Center**

Facilities Maintenance converted the space formerly occupied by the Tax Office into an impressive and much needed Blue Ash Conference Room adjacent to our main lobby. The former postal mailbox area adjacent to the main lobby was converted into a new Police Interview room. Additional 2008 activity at the Municipal & Safety Center included the

start of renovation of the East Wing main hall, including installation of energy-saving lighting and devices, redecorated walls, and new carpet to be complete in 2009. The Facilities team also assisted the Technology Office with an improved and more efficient video system in the Council Chambers.

## **Recreation Center**

Facilities Maintenance was one of the key players in making the smooth transition of tearing down the portions of the old Recreation Center building to prepare for the new and renovated building. Many tasks were performed, such as separating domestic water lines, HVAC, hot and cold piping, electric, alarms and fire sprinklers. While trying to minimize shutdown of the Recreation Center and inconvenience for its members, Facilities also moved and facilitated temporary office, fitness, and programming space, as well as set up a temporary concession system for operation during the year-long construction of the new building. In addition, the whale-shaped interactive children's pool was resurfaced, as were four of the outdoor tennis courts.



## **Hazelwood Center & Oakwood Park**

Facilities Maintenance resurfaced the outdoor volleyball and basketball courts located within Oakwood Park in the Hazelwood residential neighborhood.



## **North Fire Station**

Facilities Maintenance improved insulation of the building's ductwork for enhanced HVAC efficiency. The crew also painted and maintained the arbor details of the building.

## **Service Department**

At the City's main public works facility at 6131 Interstate Circle, the Facilities team replaced the roof and added skylights to reduce electric costs by minimizing artificial lighting usage during daylight hours. Crews also painted the truck wash bay and all of the office areas of the building.

## **Street Lights**

Facilities Maintenance crew repaired 38 City-owned streetlights in 2008, and Duke Energy repaired 118. In addition, Facilities staff stained or painted all City-owned street light poles.

## **BLUE ASH TEAM VISION STATEMENT**

**WE WILL CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF COMMUNITY LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS CITIZENS TO ENSURE BLUE ASH IS ALWAYS THE "CITY OF CHOICE" THROUGH AN ENLIGHTENED, EFFICIENT, AND DYNAMIC UNIFIED MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.**

## **BLUE ASH TEAM MISSION STATEMENT**

**TO PROVIDE SUPERIOR SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS UTILIZING KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRITY, COMPASSION, INNOVATION, PROFESSIONALISM, AND COMMITMENT.**



*Blue Ash Municipal & Safety Center  
4343 Cooper Road*



This 2008 Annual Report was produced by the Blue Ash  
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