

TAX TIME & HOLIDAY SAFETY

Ushering in the Christmas Holidays also means that our property tax bills have arrived in the mail. This is an unpopular time for the citizens of Wisconsin in the wake of our state's financial malaise that has forced more and more of the cost of operating government on the homeowner. This has occurred as the state keeps more and more of income and sales tax collections to pay for its own spending habits.

The good news is that tax bills in our area are less than the previous year even with the inclusion of the costs of the new state storm water mandate "imbedded" in our tax bills. Manitowoc is one of only a handful of cities able to pay for the huge new cost in this manner. We will always try to keep our taxes low and our service level appropriate to fit the needs of our citizens.

Please have patience as you pay your taxes at City Hall. Remember, City Hall is now open at 7:30 in the morning for your convenience. It should also be noted that City Hall closes at 4:30 in the afternoon.

The most convenient method of paying your tax bill remains either mailing your payment or using the drop off box located outside on the north end of our building.

In either case, your tax payment will be processed with the appropriate receipt sent back to you at your home or business. This truly is a timesaving opportunity during an already intense time of the year.

Just a couple of notes on holiday safety.

Please, please remember to extinguish candles if you are using them to set the mood this Christmas Season. The number one cause of house fires in the Port Cities is the use of candles in one's home. Please be careful with candles and smoking materials.

Also, Consider putting your lights on a timer. They come in many different styles and price ranges. Do not overload electrical circuits. No more than three sets of lights to one extension cord. Do not run electrical cords under rugs or carpeting. Turn off all electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed. Be sure that lights used outside are clearly marked for outdoor use and also make sure that they are plugged into a ground fault circuit (GFI). And enjoy a safe holiday.

The old red-and-white-striped power plant chimneys will soon have a new coat of paint. The existing chimneys will be cleaned and repainted to compliment the facility's existing color. In addition, all exterior hardware will be replaced including ladder, platforms and electrical equipment.

The contractor performing the work (Balestrieri Environmental & Development) will be using platforms suspended from the top of each chimney. The cleaning process

2 December 18, 2006 3 MINUTES WITH The Mayor

will use high pressure washing with simultaneous high vacuum suction to prevent any dust or material from being released into the environment. The final protective coating will be brushed and rolled on, not sprayed.

Our MPU power plant will continue normal operations during this project. The east chimney will be completed first, with the west chimney set for completion next spring.

Please take good care of yourself and your loved ones during the Christmas season, and please accept my with for a Merry and Blessed Christmas.

Manitowoc Mayor Kevin Crawford may be reached at 920-686-6980.