

Valparaiso citytalk

2012, Vol 1.

A CITY OF VALPARAISO QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

A Round Town



Valparaiso's newest roundabout – at Silhavy and Vale Park roads – is substantially complete, efficiently moving more than 10,000 vehicles each day. New LED streetlights and internally lit street signs will offer the best in visibility and efficiency, requiring very little energy or maintenance.

The roundabout will get finishing touches this spring – a final surface layer, sidewalks, and landscaping, though the flowers got a head start as many bulbs were planted in the fall. The new roundabout is just the start of positive changes for this gateway to Valparaiso. The Indiana Department of Transportation has plans to build an interchange for the Vale Park and Ind. 49 intersection in 2013, designed to improve safety and efficiency.

The \$1.5 million Silhavy/Vale Park roundabout received 80 percent of its funding through a federal grant, with the match coming from the city's Redevelopment Commission.

In addition to adding efficiency, the project saves the city more than \$12,000 annually that was being spent on police to direct traffic there each weekday. "We've had no issues with the new roundabout at all. It's doing a fine job of moving many vehicles each day – safely and swiftly," said Sergeant Michael Grennes of the Valparaiso Police Department.



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Business is Blooming

Economic Development brings and retains jobs

While Valparaiso already has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the area and a thriving business community, economic development remains a top priority for Valparaiso. Over the past two years, dozens of businesses have committed more than \$20 million in start-ups and expansions, resulting in hundreds of new or retained jobs.

In Touch Pharmaceuticals is just one company that has put down roots in Valparaiso with help from economic development. Back in 2004, company founder Rick Rondinelli met with Mayor Jon Costas and the Economic Development team with an idea to start a business. At that time the City Council granted the company 5-year tax abatement with the goal of growing the business to about nine employees. Today, with the help of several tax abatements, In Touch Pharmaceuticals has grown to 124 employees with an annual payroll in excess of \$3.2 million.

"It's so valuable for the city to understand small businesses. Valparaiso welcomed me with open arms when I had no employees and not one dollar of revenue," said Rondinelli. "The things the city has done to attract business continues to help other business. Not only has the city never looked better, but the improvements in our thoroughfares makes us more accessible. We look forward to continued growth for the city and for our business," he said.

Other businesses are realizing similar benefits. "While no one looks forward to an economic downturn, Valparaiso is fortunate to have planned ahead. While many communities are seeing their downtowns shuttered, we have no vacancies

downtown other than regular turnover," said Matt Murphy, Valpo's Economic Development Director.

The recent announcement that Urschel Laboratories has outgrown its longtime facility on the city's north side has prompted the city to make the retention of Urschel's the number one economic



In Touch Pharmaceuticals at 3000 Murvihill Road, Valparaiso

development goal for 2012. "Urschel Labs and Valparaiso have an over 100-year history together. Urschel's impact on the community has been immeasurable and our goal is to find a way to keep them in Valparaiso. We aren't taking anything for granted," said Murphy. "Yet good things continue to happen in Valpo."

Some of these good things include the expansion of North Coast Distributing. The sprawling 250,000 square foot distribution center is nearly complete on Rt. 49, just north of Aldi. North Coast is investing \$15 million in the expansion, retaining 140 employees. "There are more opportunities ahead. We're currently working with the Paul Wurth Company and we're optimistic that they'll be another success story as they hope to acquire the old Task Force Tips building on Evans," said Murphy.

Dear Citizens:

What a winter! I'm hearing very few complaints about the weather and the mild conditions this season have helped us to complete more projects, such as the roundabout at Silhavy and Vale Park, and the sidewalks along Silhavy Road.

Visit www.valpo.us for City News, Announcements & Events

This season also has us looking back and reflecting on our previous year and we're delighted to see progress. Our recycling numbers are up, preserving our environment as well as our bottom

line. Our V-Line and ChicaGo Dash bus services are truly on the move with record ridership and bright futures. Businesses are succeeding in our city and we're looking for more ways to encourage

others to land here and expand. And we've been able to maintain and even increase the city's Rainy Day fund.

Let's celebrate these last days of winter and look ahead to warmer temps and opportunities to enjoy our city. Remember that no matter the weather, you can always visit the city's website at valpo.us to learn the latest city news and events. So no matter which way the wind is blowing, we're here to help in Valparaiso.

All the best,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas
Mayor

DID YOU KNOW?

Homes and businesses are required to have their address posted visibly on the building to ensure that Police and Fire Departments can respond quickly in an emergency. Homeowners having trouble affording or installing these numbers can contact the city's Building Department at 219.462.1161

A Round Town

Continued from front page

The city's first roundabout opened in 2007, replacing the awkward triangle intersection at LaPorte, Lincolnway, and Sturdy roads. The roundabout quickly demonstrated its effectiveness. In 2006, prior to the roundabout, there were 29 accidents at the intersection, resulting in 13 injuries. These days traffic has increased, yet accidents – and especially injuries – have been reduced. "We expect these improved crash and injury statistics," said Burkman. A recent national report reported that roundabouts reduce accidents by an average of 35 percent and reduce injuries by an average of 76 percent. "When navigating the roundabout, just remember that it's a slow dance; not a break dance," said Mayor Jon Costas.

In a roundabout, all traffic flows in a single, counterclockwise direction.

Here's how it works:

- ➔ Drivers entering the roundabout yield to traffic already circulating in the roundabout. As you approach the roundabout, be prepared to stop and wait for a gap in the circulating traffic.
- ➔ To enter the roundabout, turn right – into the circle.
- ➔ Once inside the roundabout, continue moving until you reach your exit. Do not stop while inside the roundabout, but continue to flow with the traffic.
- ➔ Before exiting the roundabout, use your right turn signal to inform other drivers of your right turn from the roundabout.
- ➔ Always yield to pedestrians.



Rainy Day Fund

A BRIGHT SPOT FOR VALPO

The city of Valparaiso has been able to accumulate nearly \$3.7 million in a Rainy Day fund, which positions the city for both rainy and sunny days, according to Sharon Swihart, Clerk-Treasurer. "We've been able to use the Rainy Day fund to save additional money because we can borrow from our own fund rather than the Bond

Bank on those occasions when we need the money in advance of tax revenues," she said.

The city has also banked funds in a cumulative capital development (CCD) fund, to available to make necessary purchases without passing the expense on to taxpayers. This fund has helped purchase safety equipment for the Police Department and replaced aging trucks for the Building Department.

"We're fortunate not to be in the situation that many cities are in, unable to pay the bills without severely cutting services. Not only have we lived within our means, but we have a reassuring savings," said Mayor Jon Costas.



Valpo Transit is On the Move

Valparaiso is in the fast lane when it comes to providing transportation options for residents and visitors.

Both the inter-city bus (the V-Line) and the express bus to Chicago (ChicaGo Dash) are setting ridership records these days.

The ChicaGo Dash ended 2011 with the best ridership ever, approaching an average of 100 riders per day, according to Tyler Kent, the city's Transit Manager. The service is performing so well that a fourth bus is planned for later in 2012. "In November we upgraded the Wi-Fi capabilities to make it easier for riders to work or surf the web as they ride," said Kent. The \$600,000 needed for the added bus will come primarily from a federal grant as part of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. The remainder will come from the city's Redevelopment Commission as well as fare revenues.

"I love the service," said Maxine Snyder, a tax accountant who has been riding the ChicaGo Dash daily since the service launched in October, 2008. She likes

the bus because parking is free and convenient, the ride is comfortable and the riders and drivers are pleasant. "My husband and co-workers report that I have been in a much better mood since I began riding the bus!" she said. "My husband is also pleased with my safety, both on the bus and in the station," she said.



"My husband and co-workers report that I have been in a much better mood since I began riding the bus!"

The V-Line intra-city bus is showing similar success. This past year saw an increase in riders of more than 15,000 over 2010. The city will add eight new bus shelters early this year, with new locations planned for Calumet Avenue (in front of Fazoli's), Vale Park Villas, and the transfer point at Indiana and Michigan avenues, among others.

To learn more about riding either service, visit the "Valparaiso Transportation" department on www.valpo.us



LOOKING Good

An easy way to get a rapid response

The Visual Valpo program is working well, making us all "city inspectors" and giving us ways to easily report problems that compromise public safety or appearance, such as a light bulb out, pothole or graffiti. If you spot something amiss, Visual Valpo encourages you to report it in one of three easy ways:

1 Call the Visual Valpo line at 548-4850 and leave a message detailing the location and nature of the problem.

2 Text your message to 313131. Your initial message must say "visualvalpo" only. Text your issue after receiving the confirmation message.

3 Report online at www.valpo.us/requesttracker.aspx or clicking on the "Let us Know" tab on the city's homepage, www.valpo.us.

In all cases, your message will be directed to the proper department for prompt attention. A free cell phone app for iPhone is also available (called "Citizen Request Tracker"), which provides a shortcut to the online request base.



3 WAYS TO REPORT IN:

- TEXT 313131 KEYWORD VISUALVALPO
- CALL (219) 548-4850
- WWW.VALPO.US/REQUESTTRACKER.ASPX

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Go Green!

Recycling is up in Valparaiso

The numbers are in and Valparaiso continues to be a city that recycles more than it throws away. "Recycling participation is way up since we consolidated routes," said Mayor Jon Costas. In 2011 76 percent of households recycled, up 9 percent over 2010 rates. "Our goal is to have 100 percent participation in recycling. We've tried to make it easier by supplying larger, wheeled totes and picking up both trash and recycling on the same day," he said. To get a wheeled recycling tote, contact Public Works at 219.462.4612.

Acceptable Items:

- The city accepts the following for recycling:
- Clean paper and cardboard
- Clean glass bottles and jars
- Clean metal (steel, aluminum, tin) cans and jar lids
- Clean plastic containers (including water bottles, detergent bottles, yogurt cups, and frozen dinner trays) that are labeled for recycling, numbers 1 through 5 only.

Holiday Closures

Note that the only scheduled holidays for Trash and Recycling pick ups are: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. On these days, pick ups are delayed by one day.

Please see the city's website at www.valpo.us or call Public Works at 462.4612 for more information.



It's in the Bag

These days the city diverts **54.6%** of its trash from landfills through recycling. In fact, in 2011 Valparaiso recycled a whopping **2,960.03 tons!** Last year alone, Valpo residents recycled **299.40 tons** of aluminum cans and **1,938.81 tons** of paper.

The paper alone represents:

32,959 trees

13,571,670 gallons of water

7,755,240 kilowatts of energy

897,669 gallons of oil

116,329 pounds of air pollution

Join your fit city



Since Mayor Costas first introduced the Fit City initiative in 2005, more than 5,000 of us have participated in programming to make us healthier and more active. To receive a monthly e-newsletter of Fit City events and ideas to stay fit and healthy, e-mail Christy Graf at cgraf@valpo.us.

Fit City Community Garden

The Fit City initiative's Community Garden will return to Foundation Meadows Park this spring. The Community Garden is available for planting, growing and harvesting May through October. Grow your own fruits, flowers, vegetables, and more! Reserve a garden space through the Valpo Parks office for only \$20! Call 219.462.5144.



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Facebook

Find us on Facebook by searching for **Valparaiso**

Now and clicking 



Check us out!

Use this code with your smartphone to access the city's new site or visit **www.valpo.us**