

Message from Mayor Paul J. Smith Jr.

On June 8th we suffered the tragic loss of one of our volunteer firefighters Robert "Hawk" Meyer. He lost his life protecting others while fighting a fire on Union Avenue in Union Beach.

In the days that have followed since that terrible evening, we have once again seen our community come together as a family. This time, to mourn our loss and to show our support to his family.

He will never be forgotten. May God Bless him and his family.

Residents of Union Beach cannot help but notice that it seems everywhere you go in town, there is some construction going on. Our construction official, Bob Burlew, tells us that this summer Union Beach is the largest residential construction project in the state of New Jersey. I don't think anyone can disagree with that statement. With this much construction going on we realize how busy our construction department continues to be. In order to try to better serve the residents, we have once again hired additional part time staff for the construction office. Despite the added staff, we ask you to be patient when you call. It is very encouraging to see so many residents getting closer to moving back in to their homes, but that doesn't mean everyone is back home yet by any means. This governing body continues to do everything that we can to assist all residents in getting home again. If you or anyone you know is still in need of help with seeking out resources or filling out paperwork, please feel free to contact me, any council member or the borough administrator's office.

We have all noticed that the utility companies opened many of our roads over the past year to lay new pipe. While this was done to upgrade their equipment to prevent future problems, which is good for the residents, we have had to deal with some bumpy roads during the past winter. I am happy to assure you that the repairs to these roads are in the works. Our Engineer, Dennis Dayback, has been working very closely with the utility companies to make sure that the roads which were dug up are repaired, repaired properly and in a timely fashion. You will notice that New Jersey American Water Company already restored Poole Ave. We want to thank them for doing such a nice job on the restoration of that road.

New Jersey Natural Gas has recently supplied us with a listing of roads that will be repaired due to their work in the borough. This has impacted Dock, Front, Second, Third, Fourth, Center, Fifth, Seventh, Eighth and Pine streets. The gas company restoration project is expected to begin in September. We will post the actual schedule for this project once it is finalized. Since Florence Ave. is a county road, that reconstruction will be coordinated through the county road department.

A reminder for residents who want to park at the beachfront, parking is free for all residents. You can obtain a parking decal for your car at Borough Hall.

I want to thank everyone for their help and participation in our recent Memorial Day Parade. Our firefighters held a beautiful service at Firefighters Park in the morning, followed by a touching ceremony by the American Legion at the Veterans Memorial. The return of the repaired "doughboy" (actually its official name is "The Guard" looking over our fallen veterans) just days before made it a special event.

The beachfront area is almost completed. The only remaining item is the application of the colored walkway areas. You will agree it looks beautiful and I hope everyone has a chance to enjoy our jewel once again.

Other projects going on in the borough that you may notice:

The reconstruction and raising of Pine St at Third St. and Spruce at Center St and Fifth St. is underway

The creek at the end of Third St. will be dredged by the Mosquito Commission to further help control flooding

The Borough has been awarded a grant for \$220,000 for the reconstruction of Orange and Harrison Ave. from Poole Ave to Johnson St. That work should begin in July 2014

Our new Turf Maintenance Plan is working with the Soccer Association to coordinate the reseeded and fertilization of the field at Helen Hayes Park to make a better playing surface for our young players.

Finally our Finance Committee has reported that the Standard and Poors rating for Union Beach has been upgraded from an "A" rating to a "AA" rating. This helps us as we bond for major improvements since we are able to save money by securing a lower interest rate. In these difficult financial times, it shows that we are still being fiscally responsible and watching how every dollar of taxpayers (your) money is spent.

Myself and the entire Council wish all of you a pleasant summer.

Be sure to visit the website on a regular basis for information on upcoming events.

Keep smiling!