

The Milemarker

EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP

No New Taxes in 2009

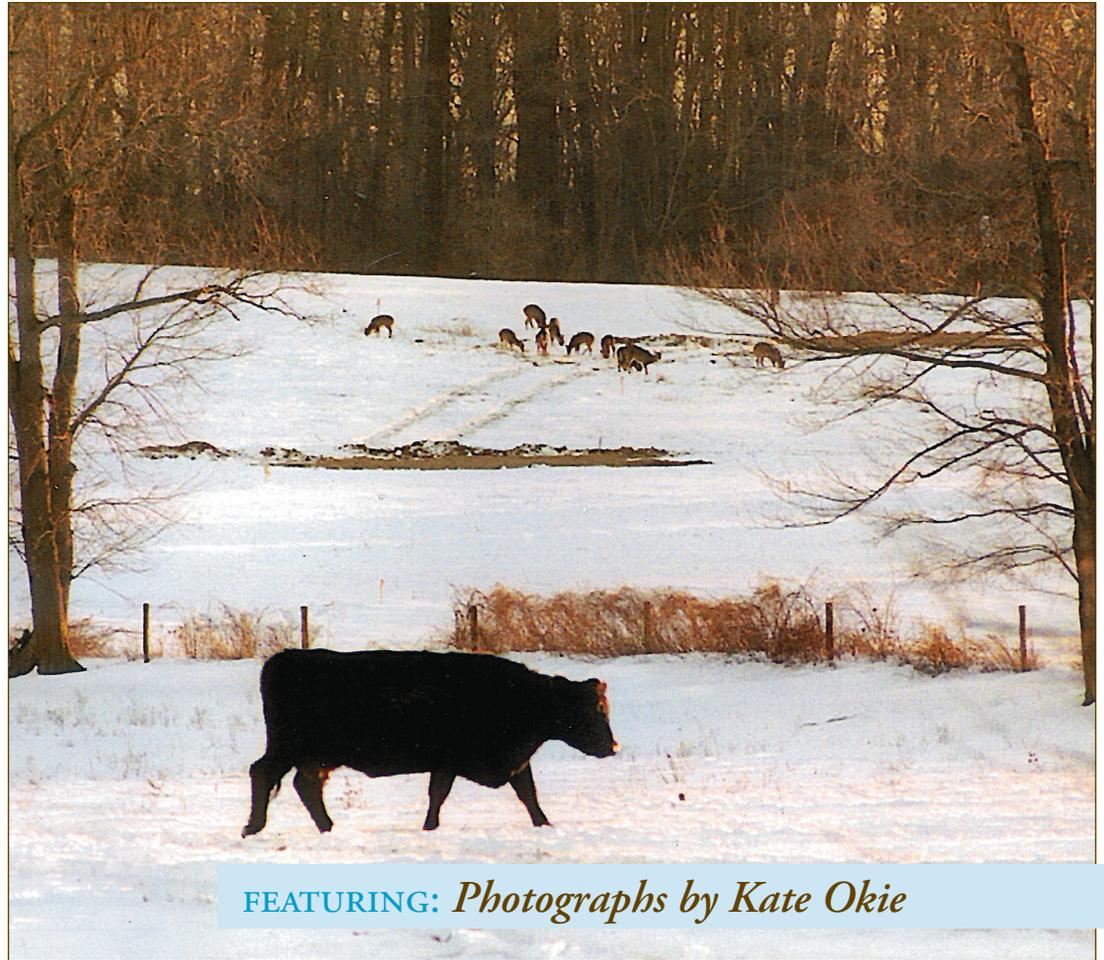
Township Finances Rated 'Good'

There'll be no increase in local real estate or earned income taxes this year. Refuse removal is going to cost \$10 more.

On a scale that runs from poor to excellent, the Supervisors rate the Township's current financial health "good."

Longer term, the Supervisors worry about getting the best investment return on cash in hand. They're concerned about the falling values in the administrative and police pension funds. And they're frustrated by the Township's inability to build up cash for a rainy day. Because of the "ever-increasing need to expand resident services and park maintenance," says Vice Chairman David Kirkner, "the Township is unable to create, maintain and grow a capital reserve fund."

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FEATURING: *Photographs by Kate Okie*

Wonders Outside Your Door

Once upon a time, not so long ago, cattle were a familiar sight trudging across East Brandywine farmland. Here photographer and author Kate Okie captures a nostalgic winter scene in the fields bordering Dilworth Road, one of the last places these big animals roam in the Township. One of Ms. Okie's rare gifts is her ability not just to look at the world around her, but actually to see what is happening there with animals large and small, birds, butterflies and colorful insects and then to record their activities.

For a snapshot of the wildlife she sees within yards of her front door, turn to page 4.

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WHO, WHEN AND WHERE

Township Board of Supervisors

CHAIRMAN
Hudson L. Voltz, Esq.
VICE CHAIRMAN
David A. Kirkner, CPA
MEMBER
Jay G. Fischer, Esq.

Township Public Meetings

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
First Thursday at 7:30 a.m.
Third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
PLANNING COMMISSION
First Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
Second Tuesday at 7:30 a.m.

Public Committee Meetings

HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Second Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Second Monday at 7:30 p.m.

ORDINANCE TASK FORCE
Fourth Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE
First Monday at 7:30 p.m.

*Township Meetings held
at the Township Building,
1214 Horseshoe Pike*

Important Numbers

Fire and Ambulance..... 911
Police (emergency)..... 911
Police (non-emergency)..... 383-7000
Police Administration..... 269-4300
Township Administration ..269-8230

*Township Offices open M to F
9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.*

Telephone Staff Directory

Tax Collector, Patti Piersol
Home Office (610) 269-4054
Weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For all other staff members, call
269-8230 and press the extension.

200 Norann King, Building Dept.

201 Mary Beth Smedley,
Secretary/Treasurer

203 Scott Piersol, Twp. Manager/
EMC and Fire Marshal

204 Matthew Van Lew, Roadmaster

100 Police Administration

Web Addresses

TOWNSHIP
www.ebrandywine.org

POLICE
www.ebtpd.org

Support Sought for Local Quaker Site



The Old Caln Meeting House

By John Bryer
*Chair, Board of Trustees
Old Caln Meeting House*

The Old Caln Meeting House at North Bailey Road and East Kings Highway is the oldest building in Caln Township, built in 1726 and expanded in 1801. For centuries it has been a place of worship for Quakers. The meeting house is largely unchanged over its 282-year life.

The stone walls were made entirely by hand; every stone in Old Caln was individually gathered from local fields and lifted into place. Floors were made of white oak more than an inch thick. The interior walls, sliding panels, chair rails and benches are primarily of poplar. Heat for winter meetings for worship continues to be provided by wood stove.

The graveyard contains roughly 730 known graves, although many are unmarked. Today, fewer than half of the known graves can be identified. Several African-American Civil

War veterans are buried at Old Caln, although none died in the war. The last burial at Old Caln was in 1932. There will be no others.

In the early 20th century, the Old Caln Monthly Meeting was “laid down” or retired. In the intervening years the meeting house suffered from neglect and vandalism. The Old Caln Historical Society, local Quakers and meeting house neighbors were instrumental in preserving the structure. Their hard work and dedication resulted in the meeting house being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since 1998, the Old Caln Historical Society has used the west room as a museum. Today a board of Quaker trustees and the Old Caln Historical Society maintain the meeting house which once again is active as a Quaker meeting. Meetings for worship are held at 10:30 each Sunday, except the last Sunday of the month, and all are welcome.

Over the past ten years costly repairs have been required to

preserve the meeting house. In 2006 the white oak flooring in the oldest rooms was replaced due to insect damage. The most recent roof work was in 2007 when the roof on the south side of the meeting house was replaced with a cedar roof that will last for approximately 50 years.

To learn more about the Old Caln Meeting House please look at www.OldCalnMeetinghouse.org. With your support, the Trustees can care for the meeting house and help to ensure that this historical treasure continues to be a witness to the past and a treasured part of our future. Contributions may be made online or by sending a check to Old Caln Meeting House, PO Box 96, Downingtown, PA 19335.

[Editor's note: We include this report because the Old Caln Meeting House is just over the municipal border from East Brandywine and has close ties to the Township. Mr. Bryer was creator of the original Township Web site and an active member of the Traffic Impact Committee.]

Tips for Tax Payers

The Township Tax Collector, Patti W. Piersol, offers the following tax tips to residents. Bills for 2009 Township taxes and fees are scheduled to be delivered by early February.

- Do not round up the payment amount; make the check out for the exact amount due.
- Double check the amount due for the date (discount, base or penalty period) before mailing the check.
- If you escrow tax monies with your mortgage company, your taxes may be paid by the mortgage company, even if you do not send your bill to them. The mortgage companies often obtain the information electronically from Berkheimer Outsourcing. Check with the tax collector before writing your check. You should also contact the mortgage company to determine if it will also pay other charges shown on your tax bill.
- Return the bottom portion of the bill with your payment.

Mrs. Piersol provides this additional information:

- Your account number may change each year.
- Your parcel number is the same as the map number.
- A postmark is accepted as the date the tax payment was submitted for payment.

If you have a question, please call Mrs. Piersol's home office (610 269-4054). When calling with tax questions, please leave a detailed message, including all names listed on the property. Payments may be dropped off at the Township office during normal business hours.

Becky Corbin is Volunteer of the Year

Rebecca P. Corbin was selected as East Brandywine's 2008 Volunteer of the Year.

Mrs. Corbin, a resident of the Township since 1976, has long been involved with local affairs, serving as a member of the Zoning Hearing Board, vice chairman and member-at-large of the Brandywine Regional Police Commission—until the regional force was dissolved at the end of 2008—and a member of the Bondsville Mill Park Committee until time conflicts led her to resign.

For a day job, Mrs. Corbin is a long-time legislative aide to State Representative Curt Schroder, also an East Brandywine resident.

Mrs. Corbin began her professional life as a forensic chemist for the Commonwealth of Virginia ("I was a CSI before most people knew what that was," she says). She specialized in drugs and narcotics.

Mrs. Corbin is the 10th person to be named Volunteer of the Year. Her husband Michael, chairman of the Township Municipal Authority and a member of the Planning Commission and the Ordinance Task Force, was the first, giving the Township a rare husband-and-wife distinction.

The Corbins have a son and a daughter.



Becky Corbin

NO NEW TAXES IN 2009

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All that being said, thanks to cautious budgeting and a tight control on costs, the Township has avoided the fiscal crises that afflict many local and state governments, not to mention the debt-drenched Feds.

The increase of ten bucks in the trash and recycling fee—from \$205 to \$215—is due to increases in the hauler's contract and the landfill tipping costs. To help keep other costs in line in 2009, the Township will defer hiring of a full-time employee in the Public Works Department.

Repair and restoration work on parts of Hopewell and Highspire roads may be postponed to 2010. Total revenues for 2009 are projected to be \$4,500,438; total expenses are budgeted to be \$4,469,600.

The Township's two primary sources of revenue, the real estate and the earned income taxes, came in much as budgeted in 2008, in spite of an economic slowdown that affected many jobs and brought construction of new homes here (and the arrival of new residents) to a snail's pace. The real estate millage

tax produced about \$84,000 more than anticipated while the earned income tax produced about \$61,000 less. The real estate levy is projected to bring in \$1,125,000 in 2009; the earned income tax expected total is \$1,140,000.

Income from building permits, as might be expected, did not meet expectations in 2008. The original budget called for income of \$195,000. The final total was closer to \$181,000 and the 2009 budget figure is \$150,000.

The total cost of police protection is expected to be around \$1.6 million in 2009.

The police budget will be affected by the dissolution of the Brandywine Regional Police—covering both East Brandywine and Wallace Townships—and the reestablishment of the East Brandywine force. Wallace failed to make its full 2008 contribution to the regional force. East Brandywine is discussing recovery of this money. Under terms of the regional agreement, the party which chooses to dissolve the joint venture is responsible for all legal costs involved in the dissolution. East Brandywine's Supervisors anticipate the final dissolution may bring a significant amount of litigation.

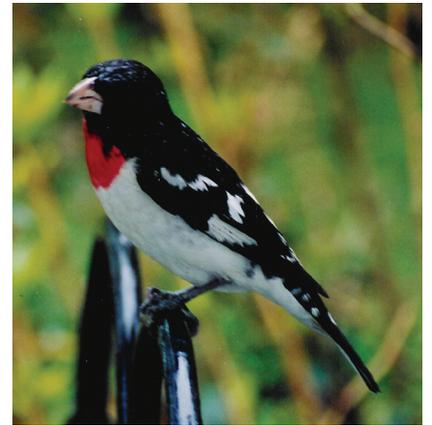
Wonders Outside Your Door

If you live in East Brandywine you can't avoid the squirrels, the Canada geese and the occasional rabbit. You have to be more observant to appreciate the great variety of other wildlife in our community.

Keep your eyes open and you may come upon the wily raccoon nibbling at a birdfeeder. Look, too, for the flashy, loud-voiced blue jay or the not-so-often seen sharp shinned hawk. The blue bird is another cheery visitor. The rosy-breasted grosbeak travels through our neighborhood as a spring visitor on its migration to New England from points south and a return visitor in the fall. The spotted fawn munches on grassy fields. The brown thrasher is a year-round friend, feeding on winterberries in December and favoring barberry bushes and rose and honeysuckle hedges in the warmer weather.

And don't forget to enjoy the very small creatures—the marbled orb spinner in the center of his web and the leggy grasshopper clinging to the stem of a flower.

All these images, and many, many more are captured by Kate Okie's inquiring camera and brought together in her book, "Enough for One Day's Grace." Fittingly, the book is subtitled "Living Wonders that Wait Outside the Door." Very limited quantities of the book may still be available at the Chester County Book Company in West Chester or through the Brandywine River Museum Gift and Book Store.





Recycling Change in the Works

Look for a new twist in the weekly recycling program later this year. Thanks to better sorting technology, residents will be able to put plastic containers 1 through 7 in the green bins rather than the current limit of #1 and #2 plastic containers. Other regulations will continue without change.

There's a possibility that East Brandywine will change to single stream recycling at a later date. In this arrangement all recyclables—papers, cardboard, cans, bottles, plastics—are placed in a single container.

New technology makes it possible to sort commingled recyclables and the idea of dumping all recyclable material in a single container makes life easier for the householder. The system works successfully in other parts of the country, most importantly encouraging a significant increase in recycling rates.

Residents will be notified when collection changes will occur.

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

The Township is moving ahead with plans for an audiovisual/multimedia system for its principal meeting room. Bids were solicited in November.

The system includes basic audio for the audience and Township officials at the main dais. The acoustics of the hall at times make it difficult to hear all presentations and discussions.

The video system would be most useful for displaying various developer plans on a screen for all to see. It also could be used to present various documents for public view.

The project is included in the 2009 budget. It could be done in stages but Township Manager Scott Piersol favors completing the installation in one move. At their Dec. 4 work session, the Supervisors approved a bid of \$59,230 from VistaCom Inc. of Allentown. The Township expects to recoup some of this cost by charging developers and others who use the system and/or by encouraging developers to make a contribution toward the total cost.

TOWNSHIP SEEKS VOLUNTEER TO MANAGE WEBSITE

The Township plans to recruit a professional Web design firm this year to restructure its on-line site and add new features. It's also seeking a Township volunteer who will act as manager of the site, making sure that important Township information is posted in a timely manner.

The Fire Company operates with such a system with input from members of the firefighting force feeding stories and pictures to the site overseer.

East Fisherville Traffic Reprieve

Representatives of East Brandywine and Caln Townships have decided that the bridge linking East Fisherville Road to Bonds-ville Road may be reopened to light traffic, subject to an engineering report. The bridge was closed in August 2007 after it was damaged by an accident. The bridge is located in Caln but most residents on the road live in East Brandywine.

The closure creates difficulties for emergency vehicles; school buses will pick up students only at the junction with Osborne Road. To help residents in the short term, East Brandywine and Caln Townships have agreed to install concrete barriers to reduce the bridge width to one lane, and create safe passage across the structure for passenger vehicles and possibly school buses. Heavier vehicles would still be prohibited from using the bridge. It was hoped all the necessary work could be done and the bridge reopened on a limited basis shortly after the New Year.

The Townships are also considering construction of a turn-around area close to the bridge so larger vehicles could safely come and go on East Fisherville. Michael Gambone, whose property would be affected by the turn-around, said he is interested in helping the Township.

After 7-Year Battle, Wawa Drops Plans, Cites Business Climate

Wawa Inc. caught its critics and supporters by surprise in early December by dropping its plan to build a gas station and convenience store in the center of Guthriesville.

In a letter to the Township Supervisors, Michael S. Gill of Buckley, Brion, McGuire, Morris & Sommer LLP, the law firm representing Wawa, said that the company's exposure "to process costs outside of its control" persuaded it that the economic outlook for its proposed operation didn't support going ahead. He added that lengthy and costly legal challenges to past and likely future permits and approvals made the outlook for the project "ever more unclear"—though he said Wawa is confident "it would have prevailed in any such proceedings."

The decision to abandon the development at the corner of Horseshoe Pike and Bonds-ville Road came after a seven-year battle that consumed hundreds of hours of debate at the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, extensive legal costs and a determined effort by the Township Historical Commission and others to save the old General Store Building, which was slated for probable demolition to make way for the new Wawa construction.

After a Wawa marketing effort last summer failed to find a buyer for the building, it seemed that demolition was almost inevitable. Indeed, the Historical Commission had already started to inventory historic parts of the 139-year-old structure that

could be saved. Wawa was required to help in this effort and create an interpretive display for these pieces, probably in or next to the municipal building.

At their Dec. 4 work session, the Supervisors conceded that Wawa's sudden decision raised a host of questions that could not be answered easily or quickly. Among them:

- What happens to the General Store Building? Owner Claudio DiGiamberardino's deal with Wawa is now off and he has a demolition permit good until February. It was on hold while the Township and Wawa tried to reach agreement on the site.
- Can the owner find a new buyer if he launches a more aggressive marketing plan?
- What happens to the architectural bits and pieces proposed to be saved by the Historical Commission if the owner decides to tear down the building? John Black, chairman of the Commission, said Mr. DiGiamberardino's permit stipulates that historic parts of the building could be saved—but the Commission probably would be able to save fewer pieces than under the Wawa agreement.

The Commission's original "to save" list included about 35 doors, 40 windows, timbers and flooring, interior treatments, stairways and various light fixtures, radiators and chimney pots. The plan was to store most of them at the Bonds-ville Mill Park, where

some weather protection is available, and more delicate pieces at the municipal building.

Mr. Black urged the Supervisors to make every effort to persuade Mr. DiGiamberardino not to demolish the building. The Commission planned to prepare arguments in favor of keeping it—a building it feels is critical to the future success of Guthriesville's master development plan.

And what happens to the site whether or not the general store building is saved? What other business might want to locate there?

Meanwhile, Wawa says it is "disappointed" that it will not build its proposed market and gas outlet, "a market for which there is obvious consumer demand and desire." Mr. Gill also notes that Wawa continues to own the former Good Machinery property on Bonds-ville Road, which it bought as it assembled a site for its business, and "remains a taxpayer within the Township of East Brandywine."

The
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POLICING REMAINS IN GOOD HANDS

By **Mark D. Kocsi**

Chief, East Brandywine Police Department

The East Brandywine and Wallace Township Board of Supervisors negotiated the dissolution of the regional police department for several months last year. The dissolution of the department took place at midnight on December 31, 2008.

The East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors, by resolution, created the East Brandywine Police Department. It began 24/7 police operations at 0001 hours on January 1, 2009. There will be no interruption of service for the residents of East Brandywine Township. The address, phone numbers, emergency numbers etc. will all remain the same.

At this time, Wallace Township appears to be opting for Pennsylvania State Police coverage. This decision by Wallace Township forced the furlough of some full time officers by the end of 2008.

The East Brandywine Township Police Department will be staffed with 10 full time police officers and part time officers, as needed. We anticipate that during most shifts a minimum of two officers will be scheduled for duty and available. Our business window operations will continue to be Monday through Friday 9am – 5pm.

The dissolution of the regional department has been difficult for all of us. But we are equally excited about the future of the East Brandywine Township Police Department. We want to express appreciation and thanks to all the residents who have shown us support and to the East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors and staff for their continued trust and confidence in the police officers who protect and serve this community. We remain dedicated to our oath and to protecting you all.

ATV DEBATE: HOW LOUD IS LOUD?

As 2008 came to an end, the Township continued to wrestle with the All Terrain Vehicle issue. The Supervisors want to tackle the issue in two steps: one to create a noise ordinance acceptable to ATV users and critics and, two, to come up with specific rules about when and where a resident may use an ATV.

It appears that everything hinges on adopting a fair noise level. Scott Piersol, Township Manager, the police department and other interested parties were experimenting at year's end with decibel readings of machines at rest and in operation.

The other key issue will be hours of operation. The Planning Commission recommends limited or no operation of ATVs on Sundays and holidays. The Supervisors appear to favor less stringent rules.

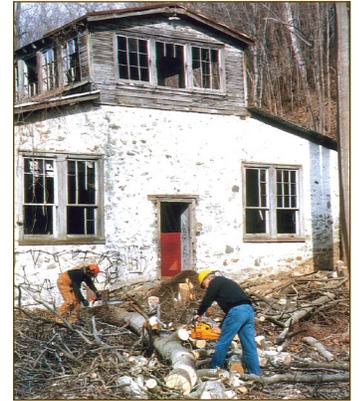
Planning Future for Bondsville Mill Park

The proposed Bondsville Mill Park has taken another infant step forward. The Township's 2009 budget includes funds needed to pay the cost of a master development plan for the project. The plan will formalize many of the ideas that have been kicked around by the Mill committee over the past two years. These will include such things as the layout of the trail system, what sort of interpretive displays should be created, what portions of the park to set aside as birding and animal habitat areas and how to design the passive recreation areas. Most importantly, the plan should spell out how to finance the entire project.

As in many civic ventures, getting the money to turn dreams and wishes into reality is difficult. Hard economic times make it even more difficult than usual yet progress can be made only as the funds come in. Thus, realistically, completion of the park plan and opening up the property to the public are more likely to be years rather than months away.

In its comprehensive study of the mill property and its potential, the Mill committee estimated the total cost of transforming the derelict site into a useable park would be close to \$700,000. The two biggest costs were for demolition and removal of the collapsed buildings (\$250,000) and limited restoration of four selected building portions (\$300,000).

Some of the former cost could be greatly reduced or eliminated if the Township can



Volunteers have stabilized and restored part of one old mill building. Most of the complex will be torn down leaving behind only a footprint of this once prosperous venture. Signs will tell future visitors of the mill's long history.

find a so-called zero bidder—a firm that would demolish and remove the buildings in return for the metal it could salvage. The bid was scheduled for late last year but has been postponed until 2009.

Some funds already have come in. The state Department of Community and Economic Development started the ball rolling with a \$25,000 grant. The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will pay \$30,700 toward the cost of the \$63,100 master plan. Once the Township has the master plan in hand, it then can go to the county and back to the state for additional funds. The fact that the park will be a municipally-owned historic site may also make it available for funding from other state or federal sources.

Meanwhile, volunteers continue to work on cleaning up and preserving sections of the old mill.

Fire Company Needs a Few Good Men/Women

Chester County's population has been booming these past few years but its fire and emergency services to protect these residents—almost entirely volunteer—has been contracting just as sharply. Quick conclusion: more people, more thinly-spread protection.

A few numbers. At most recent count there were 1,514 volunteer firefighters in Chester County; in the early 1990s, there were more than 1,800. State wide, the total of volunteer firefighters has collapsed from around 300,000 to between 50,000 and 60,000 over roughly the same period.

East Brandywine residents are lucky. Our Fire Company has more than 20 active members,

well above the state average, but finding people who can give the time and dedication to do the job is getting tougher and tougher.

Our group is very busy. Through the first 11 months of 2008, they answered 295 fire emergency calls and 410 quick response medical calls.

To help recruit more fire and rescue emergency personnel, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security last March made available a SAFER grant of \$445,000 to the Westwood Fire Company, on behalf of all Chester County fire companies. The money is being used for advertising and programs in schools and elsewhere to raise public consciousness of the issue.

Fire Marshall and Township Manager Scott Piersol is determined to get more residents here involved. Some involvement is through support of the annual fund drive, which draws response from only 30% to 40% of all residents. Mr. Piersol stresses that there are many more ways to help. In addition to emergency personnel, there's always a need for administrative support—report data input, grant writing, legal and accounting expertise and fund-raising among other duties.

To learn more about opportunities, contact the Fire Company headquarters on Bondsville Road by calling (610) 269-2625 or by e-mail at info@ebfc49.org.

Order from the Fire Co.
Website: www.ebfc49.org

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