



The Villager

February 2023

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- Godfrey Engages in Promotional Campaign
- Godfrey's New Electronic Sign
- Commercial Property Enhancement Grant
- Meet Village Staff – Erica Schmieg
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- Featured Business of the Month – Tony's Ranch House
- Oh, and one more thing...

Village of Godfrey Office of Economic Development

6810 Godfrey Road

Phone: 618-466-3325

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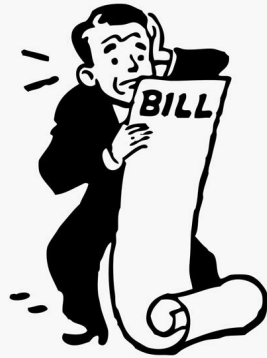
You can see your future from here.



Michael J. McCormick

Mayor

Electric Bill Sticker Shock!



By: Karen Sinks

As you've opened up your most recent utility bill, you may have experienced a range of emotions from shock to outrage to despair. The reason Godfrey residents are seeing such a

dramatic increase is because they have been enjoying a really great electric rate for so long ... and those days are over, at least for the foreseeable future.

A brief history

More than a decade ago, a referendum on the ballot gave Godfrey residents an option as to whether or not to participate in an electric aggregation program, which passed. Along with close to 30 other communities in Illinois, Godfrey joined a consortium called 'Good Energy' in an effort to use their collective purchasing power to secure lower energy rates for residents and business owners. Every two years, an energy supplier is chosen via a competitive bidding process, and the new rate is then locked in for a two year period. Homefield Energy has historically been our supplier, but they chose not to submit a bid this past fall and their contract drew to an end in December. The new supplier that was agreed upon, Constellation NewEnergy, will begin in February, so residents will experience two bill cycles with electricity supplied by Ameren during the interim.

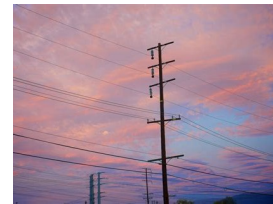
The bad news? The price of energy is skyrocketing, and this can be blamed on inflation, rising supply costs, the closure of power plants, and the 'green agenda' initiatives that have been passed in the last few elections. At the time of this writing, the national average price per kilowatt of electricity is around 16 cents, and forecasters predict that it could be 2030 before the prices stabilize.

The good news? Constellation NewEnergy's rate of 12.1 cents/kilowatt is a flat rate and is locked in for two years, so therefore won't be

affected by the predicted increases ... unlike Ameren.

Some things to consider when looking at your utility bill

While the Constellation NewEnergy rate is locked in for two years, Ameren's rate fluctuates and there are predicted increases looming. If you should elect to opt out of the municipal aggregation program, you'll have to wait a full year before rejoining, and while waiting, you could experience a great degree of price fluctuation. Ameren's rate, which at the time of this writing is fairly comparable to the aggregation program rate, has add-on fees that are not altogether straightforward or easy to decipher. Also something that bears consideration ... Ameren offers tiered pricing, meaning that the price per kilowatt decreases if you use more than 800 kilowatts in a billing period, whereas Constellation NewEnergy does not offer tiered pricing discounts. So, if you use a great deal of electricity, you may want to do some math and see which option is best for you.



It's a frustrating and troubling time for many as the cost of living has increased so dramatically. In the

case of utilities, it used to be a straightforward process ... get the bill, write the check. Now, though, people should really take the time to understand their bill and select a supplier that is the best fit. Let's hope that there's some good news on the horizon.



Karen Sinks is Assistant to the Mayor. She has been handling many of the inquiries regarding electricity bills during this transition period.

If you would like to receive "The Villager" by email, please contact Jim Mager at:

jmager@godfreyil.org

Godfrey Engages in Promotional Campaign



Be it a stroll through it's parks, taking in the gardens or a concert at Lewis and Clark College, watching a summer sunset on the Mississippi River or dinner at one of numerous establishments, Godfrey has many attractions available to families and individuals. With such an array, it is difficult to be aware of what is available. With

that thought in mind, the Village has entered into a partnership with Big Z Media to promote Godfrey and its many assets. If you listen to radio stations WBGZ or MyMix 94.3 you will be hearing 30 second spots highlighting Godfrey attractions and businesses. You can also be watching for advertisements in both the Riverbend and Jerseyville Advantage. Perhaps you have seen spots on your Facebook and Youtube viewing?

Each month you can go to 'www.gotogodfrey' and register to win a \$100 gift card to one of our premier establishments around town. There is no obligation for registering; and, you have an opportunity express your opinion on what you think would make Godfrey even better. The featured business for February is Josephine's Tea Room. Register now!



Godfrey has a new electronic sign! It is located at the intersection of Godfrey Road and Lars Hoffman Crossing.

Postings on this sign can be available for Godfrey organizations having upcoming events of interests. Contact Jim Mager, Economic Development for submission considerations.

jmager@godfreyil.org

Don't forget..... Commercial Property Enhancement Grant

Businesses located in the Godfrey Business District are eligible to take advantage of the "Commercial Property Enhancement Grant" program.

Funding: First \$5,000 – maximum grant is 50%; and, \$5,001 and above is 25% of eligible expenses. The grant limit is a maximum of \$20,000 per project.

Eligible Expenses: Significant facade renovations, signage, awnings, doors, windows. Landscaping if it follows Godfrey Ordinance No. 15-2007. Parking lots if brought up to ADA compliance and Village codes. All appropriate permits must be secured.

Ineligible Expenses: Regular repairs and maintenance, demolition, design, permit fees; and expenses incurred or contracted prior to grant approval.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions: Owners and tenants of properties within Godfrey's Business District (at time of application). The property's primary use must be for commercial use. Tenants must provide written authorization from the property owner for the contemplated improvements and participation in the program. If the tenant or owner who receives grant funding should close, move, or remove work financed with a grant within five years of grant date, repayment of the grant may be required, pro rata for a period of the remaining three-year term. No additional grant funds are available for similar work at same space for a period of at least three years. Application for the grant does require three bids. *The grant must be approved prior to commencement of work.*

Application is available at: www.godfreyil.org; or, Contact Jim Mager, Economic Development Ph.:618-466-3325



Godfrey 311

Electronic 311
Smartphone App

Easily report potholes, broken street lights and other problems.

Call or email local officials, the police department, city offices and others.

Access activity calendars, receive village alerts and more.

If you would like to receive the monthly issue of "The Villager" by email, please contact Jim Mager at;

jmager@godfreyil.org

Getting To Know Village Staff — Erica Schmieg, Building and Zoning Administrative Assistant



As explained in previous newsletters, Building and Zoning is a busy department. In the November 2022 issue of this newsletter, readers were introduced to Pat Vambaketes, B & Z Administrative Assistant. Also, meet Assistant, Erica Schmieg.

Erica assists in the day-to-day functions of the department and its staff. Her position involves contact with the public, as well as special assignments.

Erica is not new to the operations of the office. She joined the Village staff on a part-time basis in March 2022. She became full-time in the B & Z Department in June.

She will carry on with the tradition of generally being the first person that a visitor might meet in the Building and Zoning department. She may spend her day doing the following tasks:

- Providing general information
- Receiving and preparing documents
- Coding and filing materials
- Receiving and processing fee payments
- Preparing agendas and minutes for B & Z meetings
- Scheduling inspections
- Tracking ordinance violation and compliance documents
- Researching property ownership
- Determining zoning classifications and definitions for residents and real estate agents; and,
- Assisting with functions in other departments.

Erica worked for eight years as a pharmacy technician at Schnucks. In 2020 she left that position to stay home and care for her children during COVID.

A challenge that she finds working in Building and Zoning is assisting residents navigate Village requirements and ordinances. Still, she enjoys her job for the opportunity to be involved in the community and being part of making Godfrey a great place to live.

Erica's personal interests are camping trips with her husband, two daughters, and their dog. "I always look forward to our yearly trip to Montauk, Missouri, the most," she said.

*Erica can be reached at:
Godfrey Building and Zoning
618-466-1206*

How Can Business District Funds Be Used?

"Business district project costs" shall mean and include the sum total of all costs incurred by a municipality, other governmental entity, or nongovernmental person in connection with a business district plan, including, without limitation, the following:

- Costs of studies, surveys, development of plans and specifications, implementation and administration of a business district plan, and personnel and professional service costs including architectural, engineering, legal, marketing, financial, planning, or other professional services, provided that no charges for professional services may be based on a percentage of tax revenues received by the municipality;
- Property assembly costs, including but not limited to, acquisition of land and other real or personal property or rights or interests therein, and specifically including payments to developers or other nongovernmental persons as reimbursement for property assembly costs incurred by that developer or other nongovernmental person;

- Site preparation costs, including but not limited to clearance, demolition or removal of any existing buildings, structures, fixtures, utilities, and improvements and clearing and grading of land;
- Costs of installation, repair, construction, reconstruction, extension, or relocation of public streets, public utilities, and other public site improvements within or without the business district which are essential to the preparation of the business district for use in accordance with the business district plan, and specifically including payments to developers or other nongovernmental persons as reimbursement for site preparation costs incurred by the developer or nongovernmental person;
- Costs of renovation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, relocation, repair, or remodeling of any existing buildings, improvements, and fixtures within the business district, and specifically including payments to developers or other nongovernmental persons as reimbursement for costs incurred by those developers or nongovernmental persons;
- Costs of installation or construction within the business district of buildings, structures, works, streets, improvements, equipment, utilities, or fixtures, and specifically including payments to developers or other nongovernmental persons as reimbursements for such costs incurred by such developer or nongovernmental person;
- Financing costs, including but not limited to all necessary and incidental expenses related to the issuance of obligations, payment of any interest on any obligations issued under this Law that accrues during the estimated period of construction of any development or redevelopment project for which those obligations are issued and for not exceeding 36 months thereafter, and any reasonable reserves related to the issuance of those obligations; and
- Relocation costs to the extent that a municipality determines that relocation costs shall be paid or is required to make payment of relocation costs by federal or State law.

Source: Moran Economic Development

"If we're not meant to have midnight snacks, why is there a light in the fridge?" – Unknown

Featured Business of the Month: Tony's Ranch House



When considering landmarks in Godfrey, Tony's Ranch House has to come to mind. When talking to people, most cannot remember when the Ranch House was not around.

Johnny Vambaketes was not sure when the restaurant was first established. He said his grandfather got involved with the business in 1960 when he bought it from the Carroll family. At the time it was known as Carroll's Ranch House. In the early 1980's, Johnny's father, Tony, took over the business and it was renamed Tony's Ranch House.

There are three Vambaketes siblings involved in the business. Bothers Johnny and AJ and sister, Mary. Johnny is actively involved in the day to day operations. Both AJ and Mary have other life responsibilities; thus, when it comes daily responsi-

bilities, Johnny assumes that role. After all, he had been in working in the business since he was a kid. Still, Mary works in the business nearly everyday and. AJ, who is a teacher, fills in.

The present-day Ranch House is not the one of the 1970's and 1980's. In those days, the restaurant was open 24 hours, it was a late night stop for those who had been out on the town all evening. Today, the business is open for lunch and dinner and provides a more family-style atmosphere with daily menu specials. Johnny said that one of the mainstays are the \$2.25 cheese burgers that are served on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The very popular offering is the "Greek Night" that occurs every last Wednesday of the month. Johnny says, "We serve the original recipes given to me by my Yiayia (*Greek for grandmother*). Greek Night has become so popular that it is reservations only, and is completely booked up every month.

Mr. Vambaketes feels there are many opportunities for Tony's Ranch House. "Godfrey is on the upward movement," he said. The new BJC Outpatient Clinic will bring many additional employees who will be needing a place to have lunch and dine. He also thinks that other new development in Godfrey will be a great advantage for his business.



When asked what is a competitive advantage for Tony's Ranch House, Johnny said it's dedicated employees, the daily specials and good food at good prices. "We are a hometown establishment with loyal and repeat customers. Everybody knows everybody," he said.

Tony's Ranch House is located at
3330 Godfrey Road.

Kitchen hours of operation:

Mon. thru Sat.

11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Sunday Kitchen is Noon to 8 p.m.

Bar hours:

Mon. thru Thurs.

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Friday and Saturday

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Phone:

618-466-9734

Oh, and one more thing.....

Hopefully, you've noticed, in terms of development, there are some things happening in Godfrey. The construction of Scooters Coffee is well underway, the derelict buildings on the old Halloran property have been removed, the Illinois American Water project behind Walmart is in process, work on the BJC Outpatient Clinic is in full force, and we have a new contract for sale of the lots across from Moto Mart. There are also some other projects in the works that are not for public release at this time.

If you have been out by Village Hall, you will note the nice, new, electronic sign at the corner of Godfrey Road and Lars Hoffman Crossing. The really big development is that, somehow, I'm learning to program the messages — will wonders never cease. If your Godfrey organization was some events that would be of interest to the community, let me know. Maybe we can post it on the sign!

A bit of heads-up for the summer - Godfrey Road is going to be resurfaced. Needless to say, there will be disruptions. Let's all be patient.

Speaking of Godfrey Road, have you notice the addition of street light at the junction of Godfrey Road and MLK? For years, there have been complaints about the darkness of that area. I'm happy to report that the area has been lit up a bit.

In closing, I'd like to thank the Mayor and the Board of Trustees for their support of economic development efforts and our businesses. Remember, you can't buy happiness, but you can shop local.

Here's looking forward to the end of winter!!!!



Jim Mager

Economic Development

618-466-3325

jmager@godfreyil.org

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim".