

## **CENTRAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

*Ronald E. "Mike" Watson, Street Commissioner – Director of Central Services*

In order to improve efficiency, at the beginning of 2010, the City created a Central Services Department to bring together, under one department, employees that were performing similar jobs throughout the City and Utilities Departments. The Central Services Department is responsible for all facilities maintenance, all grounds maintenance, all vehicle maintenance and all street maintenance.

The department still has a Motor Vehicle Highway budget and a Park budget, but all the Union workers are covered under one contract which was negotiated in 2010 to take effect in 2011. There was great cooperation from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 364, which helped the department and employees transition smoothly to one contract. The City is proud to report that the cooperation earned an award from CALMR- the Council for the Advancement of Labor & Management Relations. In October of 2010, The City of Mishawaka Central Services Department and Teamsters Local #364 were presented an award for "successfully negotiating a Labor Agreement which will benefit the parties, as well as our community for the next 2 years."



*Let it snow Central Services staff  
prepare a snow thrower for duty*

As a team, we took a comprehensive look at all aspects of the services that now one department will need to provide to 8 major and 17 minor City owned buildings, 270 acres of grass and some 420 lane-miles of roads to maintain. In the winter, we move from maintaining the grass to removing snow from 15.5 miles of sidewalks around the City-owned property and all 420 lane-miles of roadway. We have updated much of the equipment we use from cleaning bathrooms, cutting grass and removing snow from the sidewalks. The newer equipment allows our employees to work smarter with less fatigue and more productivity.

***There was great  
cooperation from the  
International Brotherhood  
of Teamsters, Local 364***

### **Employees**

The Central Services Department has a total of 57 employees, 32 are assigned to the Motor Vehicle Highway Division, 15 are assigned to the parks grounds and maintenance crew and 10 work as Fleet Maintenance Technicians and facilities maintenance crew.

Two members of the Central Services Department retired in 2010. Skip Keiser retired after 16 years of service and Ron Alford after 33 years of service. The citizens of Mishawaka are extremely grateful to both Skip and Ron for their hard work and service to the citizens of Mishawaka.

### **St. Joseph County Solid Waste District**

Our Department also works in partnership with the Saint Joseph County Solid Waste District to provide the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) drop-off location at 1105 East Fifth Street. The goal of the HHW is to maximize the amount of hazardous waste that would normally go to the landfill or down the drain, and dispose of it in environmentally safe ways. The HHW site will also accept old electronic devices for disposal. The HHW site, on average, serves approximately 5,000 citizens a year, with about 2,500 being Mishawaka citizens. At our Fifth Street location, we allow Mishawaka citizens to bring brush, tree limbs, and miscellaneous yard waste for disposal. In 2010, the facility accepted approximately 7,000 loads of various size.

### **Ground Maintenance**

Our Grounds Maintenance has a large responsibility with the many acres of grass to cut, weeding of flower beds, trimming bushes and trees, weed-eating around fences, sidewalks, trees, and utility poles, and maintaining City ball diamonds for league play. The Grounds Division is also in charge of collecting all the trash in the parks and helping to set up for all events that take place in our City parks. During the winter months, Grounds must remove the snow from the sidewalks that are adjacent to all City-owned property. We also call upon the Grounds employees to help repair and paint all the picnic tables during the winter months. With the new contract in place, the union employees at the Golf Course, Merrifield Pool and Ice Rink fall under the Central Services Department, making it much easier for everyone to work together.

### **Building Maintenance**

Central Services has over 100,000 square feet of buildings to clean and maintain. In the past, many of the buildings had a custodian on staff to perform some of the minor repairs or clean-up duties during the day. A tight budget has resulted in the need to improve efficiencies by consolidating these duties. Each Department is asked to make a request for repairs, so that we can prioritize and complete them in a timely manner. We also ask each facility to let us know if they have any major repairs, so that we can determine if our employees can handle the request, or if we need to hire a contractor to do the work. This year we completed two painting projects for the Police Department, one for the Electric Department, and two at City Hall. Each building that is accessed by the public is cleaned Monday through Friday.

*...over 100,000 square feet of buildings to clean and maintain*

### **Fleet Maintenance Technicians**

Our Motor Pool employees, now known as Fleet Maintenance Technicians, are also under the Central Services Department. We currently have six (6) Fleet Maintenance Technicians that are responsible for all City vehicles and small hand-held equipment.

Keeping the nearly 300 vehicles up and running for all the departments is no easy task. They not only perform regular maintenance, but also are called upon to perform major repairs. The Fleet Maintenance Technicians can also assist in all the other duties that the Central Service must deliver.

### **Motor Vehicle Highway**

Motor Vehicle Highway, more commonly known as Street Department, must be factored into the work load for the Central Services Department. Much like the Grounds portion of Central Services is seasonal, so is the Street workload. Spring is the time we clean up the City from all the winter debris that is left after the snow melts. Our employees take great pride in the work they perform on behalf of the citizens we serve. Our street sweepers are out for approximately nine months each year. We are in most neighborhoods once every nine to eleven working days. If you have read previous State of the City reports, you may have noticed that the time frame for sweeping has changed from every seven days, to nine to eleven days. We removed one sweeper from service when we decreased the number of employees in our budget. We believe that our streets are as clean as they were before.

Spring is when the dreaded potholes keep 6 to 8 employees busy until the weather warms up, so we can make permanent repairs. The last couple of years we have made a one-week leaf pick-up for the leaves that just don't want to come down in the fall. We also



begin work on our list of streets that did not fare well during the winter. We must compile a list for summer Street Paving. Most of the time, with summer Street money, we were able to pave approximately 65 blocks of residential streets. A typical block is 350 ft. long and 30 ft. wide. Sixty-five blocks equates to 4.31 miles repaved with summer Street Paving money. The City Engineering Department was in charge of the Stimulus money received by the City for paving some of our major roads during 2010.

The warmer weather of the summer and fall months allow our department to paint the center lines, crosswalks, stop bars and fog lines on the roadways. Like most citizens, we take advantage of the warmer months to perform repairs to the outsides of our buildings such as roof and fascia repair, painting, and constructing new buildings in the Parks. In the fall of the year, we gear up for our Leaf Pick-up on the public streets in residential areas. We believe our Leaf Pick-up Program is second to none. Beginning in mid October and continuing through the end of November allows our citizens ample time to place their leaves at the curb for pick-up. Most Leaf Pick-up Programs offer pick-up once or per season. We will be in front of your home at least 7 to 8 times for pick-up.

Winter is right behind the Leaf Pick-up Program, and sometimes during the program. Clearing the snow from our public streets is the biggest responsibility for the Central

***Clearing the snow from our  
public streets is the  
biggest responsibility...***

Services. All aspects of travel are affected by the snow and ice on the public streets. We also believe that our snow clearing of the public streets is second to none. The employees again take great pride in keeping our roadways as

safe as possible. I believe the snowfall over the weekend of January 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> tells our story the best. A record setting amount of snow fell in a 24 hour time period, and yet our employees were able to stay up with the clearing of our streets in a timely and organized manner. We can always find ways to improve the delivery of services, therefore we will continue to look for ways to deliver what we believe are world class services to our citizens in a more efficient and timely manner.