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**CITY NEWSLETTER      DECEMBER 2015**

**Expanded and Upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant Is Up and Running**



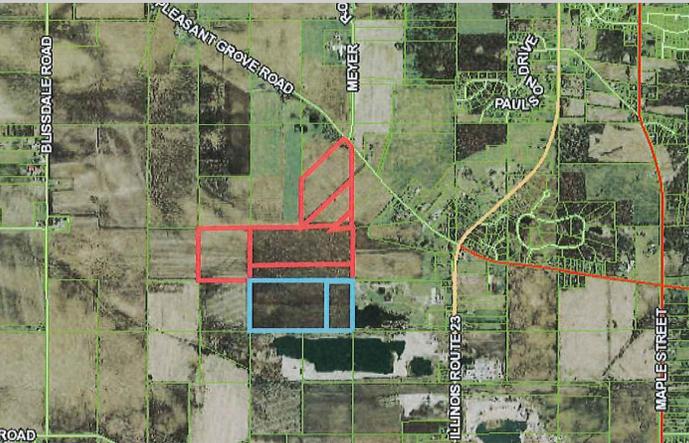
Work on the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion was substantially completed in July of this year. The \$12 million expansion and upgrade is the single largest Public Works project in the City’s history. Final adjustments to the plant’s operations will be continued throughout the winter.

Pictured (above) is one of three new sequencing batch reactors (SBR), which are responsible for treatment of the sewage influent. Each one of these 25 foot deep tanks can hold about 300,000 gallons of influent. Part of the treatment process contained within the SBRs involves aeration of the waste via air bubbles being forced through the influent. The air comes from dispensers at the bottom of the tank. After several stages aeration and chemical treatment occurring within the SBRs, clear water ultimately evolves at the top of the tanks. From there the water passes through other treatment stages outside the SBRs prior to it being filtered and discharged into the Kishwaukee River. Weekly testing of the discharged water is completed by the City staff in order to assure the cleanliness of the effluent going into the river.

***Super Mix Quarry Up for P & Z Review This Month***

On December 16, the Planning and Zoning Commission is slated to review and make a recommendation to the City Council as to whether to approve the development of a quarry located between Pleasant Grove Road and the Prairie Aggregates quarry (which faces State Highway 23). Access to this proposed quarry would be on the south side of Pleasant Grove Road across from the “T” intersection at Meyer Road.

The proposal, advanced by Super Aggregates and its owner Jack Pease, includes an upgrade of Pleasant Grove Road to handle the heavy truck traffic that would come in and out of the quarry. The road improvement would extend from Meyer east to State Highway 23, since the company indicates that their trucks would only travel to and from east and south of the site. (Super Aggregates has other quarry facilities that cover their markets north and west of the proposed “Pleasant Grove Lakes” site. The quarry would have a limited view from Pleasant Grove Road, given that the gravel extraction would occur no closer than about 2100 feet from the road entrance.



The proposed quarry includes property that is within and outside the City limits. The four parcels in red, totaling 175 acres are already in the City limits. The two parcels in blue, that total 80 acres, would be annexed into the City.

## For the First Time in Seven Years

# City's Equalized Assessed Valuation Increases

For the first time in seven years, Marengo's Equalized Assessed Valuation is projected to increase - by \$5,678,161. This year the EAV for property taxes to be extended in the upcoming spring it is expected to increase to \$109,772,445 – about 5.4%. Some of this growth can probably be attributed to small additions to the tax base, but most is due to a slight appreciation in property values. If Marengo has truly “bottomed out” with this increase in EAV, it will reverse a trend that saw the city's EAV fall from \$179,497,233 in 2008 to \$104,094,284 in 2014, a fall of 42 percent.

While this news indicates an improvement in the local real estate economy, the EAV will not reflect a similar increase in property tax revenue for the city. State law places significant limitations on local governments' ability to raise property taxes. The allowable property tax increase for city's government in this next year is projected to be about \$12,200 or about 40 cents on a homeowner's monthly budget for a house with a value of \$150,000. With all of this new revenue intended for the city's General Fund, this amount reflects about a 3/10s of one percent revenue increase for services ranging from Police

to Streets and Public Property to Economic/Community Development to Code Enforcement. Not very much.

Actually, for several years now property taxes have not been a source for growth in the city's General Fund. While GF revenue is projected to total \$1,236,787, it accounts for about a third of the city's GF revenue. As a result, Marengo is expected to get about the same GF property tax allocation as it did eight years ago in 2007/08. Another \$261,254 of projected municipal property tax collections will not go into the General Fund; these monies are allocated into state required segregated funds, with most of it going into the Police Pension Fund.

These numbers again point out the need for the city to expand and diversify its local economy by adding more businesses and industry. With the work being done right now toward improving the city's infrastructure and toward gaining an interchange at Route 23 and I-90, the upcoming year could see significant progress toward the goal of improving our marketability for business and industrial expansion.

## Marengo Municipal Property Taxes 2000-2015 Equalized Assessed Valuation, Municipal Total Property Taxes Collected, and General Fund Property Tax Allocation

Year	Equalized Assessed Valuation	% Change	Municipal Property Tax Collected	% Change	Gen Fund Property Tax Allocation	% Change
2015 (Projected)	109,722,445	5%	1,498,041	1%	1,236,787	1%
2014	104,094,284	-6%	1,485,841	-3%	1,224,899	-3%
2013	109,999,448	-10%	1,535,341	4%	1,266,799	3%
2012	121,380,151	-18%	1,473,769	-1%	1,232,025	-2%
2011	143,620,757	-14%	1,488,584	-2%	1,260,611	-5%
2010	164,300,542	-7%	1,521,946	3%	1,324,285	1%
2009	175,682,207	-2%	1,475,967	1%	1,306,007	0%
2008	179,497,233	3%	1,461,116	5%	1,300,313	5%
2007	173,879,800	8%	1,388,045	5%	1,234,318	4%
2006	160,624,239	7%	1,325,056	6%	1,188,316	5%
2005	148,682,359	11%	1,251,031	8%	1,129,744	7%
2004	132,002,035	8%	1,156,034	8%	1,046,049	8%
2003	121,961,278	12%	1,064,617	9%	964,964	9%
2002	107,230,187	8%	973,339	5%	882,460	5%
2001	98,423,443	6%	919,925	6%	835,673	9%
2000	92,716,803	4%	868,554	3%	757,363	3%

*Willow, Sunset and Van Buren*

## **Water Main Replacement and Street Repaving Project Completed on the Northwest Side**



The City has received many compliments and thank yous from the residents in this area for the long desired improvements to their streets. This project points out that the real cost of redoing streets, which often times includes the underground water and/or sewer infrastructure, is a significant financial undertaking. The street reconstruction of these three blocks accounted for about 15% of this project in total. The City spent just over one million dollars, most of it for water main replacement on this 0.7 miles of residential streets.

## **2016 Police Interceptor SUV** *Written by: Sergeant Rich Solarz*



The Marengo Police Department recently purchased a 2016 Ford Police Interceptor SUV to add to its fleet. The SUV comes with standard all-wheel drive. It also has electronic stability control, which uses sensors to detect and prevent a driver from losing control when he/she swerves or is driving on slippery roads. The City recently annexed land that takes in many rural roads that extend out past the toll way, these features will come in handy during the times of adverse weather conditions when responding to calls in those areas.

The SUV was purchased through a dealership that has the Illinois State contract. In doing so the price of the vehicle is very equivalent to that of a squad car. The current squad cars get on an average 18 miles per gallon of gas, the SUV is averaging 16 so the fuel cost is very reasonable.

The SUV comes with more storage space which enables officers to carry more gear to process crime scenes without having to stop at the station to get the extra equipment they need. The officers sit higher in the SUV as compared to the squad cars, this gives them a better observation point when looking for offenders texting and driving.

# *Discussions Continue On Arnold Engineering/300 West LLC Annexation Agreement*

Discussions between the City of Marengo and the two defendants named in a court order requiring the clean up of groundwater contamination and the provision of potable water to affected Marengo Township properties, all are continuing.

City staff is in negotiations with Arnold Magnetic Engineering and 300 West, LLC about providing access to the municipal water system and perhaps access to the city's sewage treatment system so as to resolve this problem first documented in a court order requested by the Illinois Attorney General's Office in June, 2013.

Somewhat indirectly, the City of Marengo also has concern about this contamination problem. While test well and private property well sampling, and soil sampling have to date indicated that the plume of subsurface contamination is all outside the city limits and likely heading in north and westerly direction (apparently all north of the Union Pacific railroad tracks), the city's planned construction of a municipal water well, to be located about three-quarters of a mile southwest (just south

of USH 20) of the contamination source, are on-hold until remedies that address the contamination are put in-place. It is the City's understanding that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency would not be willing to permit the development of the municipal well until an defendant developed plan to remediate the Arnold contamination is certified.

Until two months ago, the city and its municipal water system has been thought of, but never formally called upon, to provide potable water to those properties along West Railroad Street and Ritz Road that have been affected by the contamination plume. In October 2013, and again in December of last year, the city had been approached, and was ready to publicly discuss at the City Council level, proposals from 300 West to build water main – only to have these proposals retracted by 300 West, the factory property's holding company.

This attitude changed on October 6 when the Mayor, City Administrator and the city's consulting environmental engineer attended a meeting at the Thompson State Office Build-

ing in Chicago. It was then recognized by those in attendance that the City could and probably should provide clean drinking water to these affected properties. Representatives from Arnold, 300 West, the AG's Office and the IEPA, along with our area's State Senator Pamela Althoff, were all in attendance at this meeting.

As a result, the formation of an annexation agreement for all of the property owned by 300 West is underway. It is understood by the parties that the cost of any utility extensions related to the needs of Arnold/300 West and the Marengo Township residents and property owners would be borne by the defendant and not by the city. It is also understood that the need to have a groundwater contamination plan, which can be approved by the AG's Office and IEPA, and which would be paid for and implemented by the defendants, is essential to the agreement. It is expected that the annexation agreement will be readied form City Council review in February so as to accommodate spring construction of the water main.



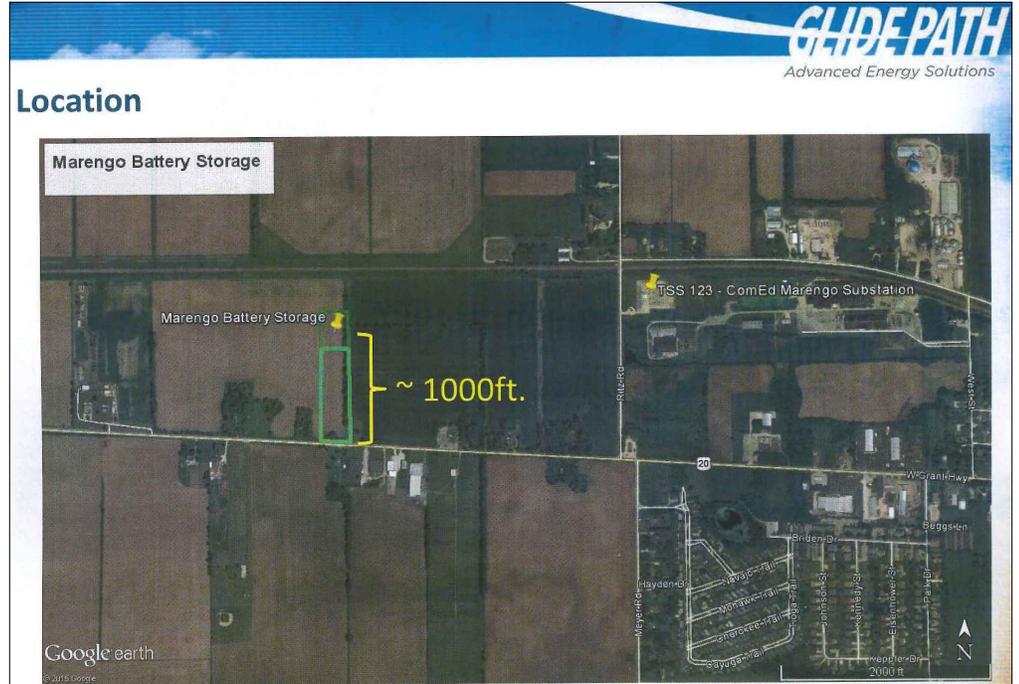
Annexation of the parcels outlined in red would add about 80 acres into the City limits. In doing so the City would not come under any obligation or liability to perform groundwater contamination clean up. Those responsibilities remain with the property owners and the factory operators as defined by district court. The annexation agreement would not only address the extension of infrastructure to and through the site, but it could also address other future development plans such as roadway easements and zoning changes .

# 8.25 Acre Annexation For Electric Grid Surge Protection Development Due for City Council Vote this Month

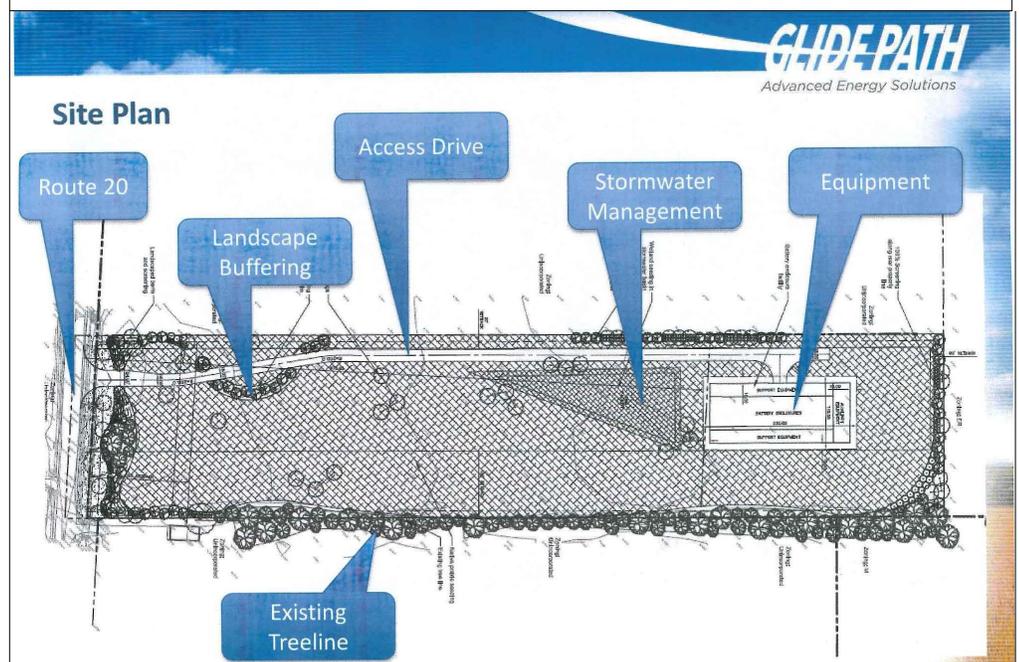
City Council is scheduled in December to review and take a vote on whether to approve an 8.25 acre annexation for a small industrial development that would provide surge protection for the Commonwealth Edison electric power grid in our area. Glidepath Advanced Energy Solutions would be developing a series of batteries that would even-out ComEd's transmission of power by accepting additional or dispatching more electric energy into the ComEd grid to keep the system's current at a 334,000 kilovolt constant. The Marengo facility would be the fourth energy storage site to be developed by Glidepath in Chicagoland area. Right now, the company has one under construction in City of McHenry.

The actual size of the battery "field" would be approximately .75 acres, which would be located toward the north edge (near the south side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks) of the 275 foot wide by 1413 foot deep parcel that fronts the north side USH 20, a half-mile west of Ritz Road. The batteries would be enclosed in air conditioned shelters that would be about 12 feet high. They would be connected by overhead wire running along the railroad tracks (next to other power lines) to the Commonwealth Edison substation at southeast corner of Ritz Road and Railroad Street.

The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of this zoning reclassification during its November 16 meeting. Council approval of this project would require the zoning of this property to an "M-Manufacturing" classification with a special use permit specific to this project. In addition, to the manufacturing zoning classification, all industrial development typically requires a special use zoning permit, which more specifically defines a project's construction parameters. The project will not require any city utilities and will cost about \$15 million to develop. Other than occasional maintenance visits, the plant would be unmanned. Its fenced-in security would be similar to that of an electrical substation. Glidepath representatives have indicated that they expect the facility would be operational in about 18 months.



The location of the "battery field" is a half mile West of the ComEd substation at the Southeast corner of Railroad Street and Ritz Road. They would be linked by overhead wires running on existing ComEd poles that closely parallel the Union Pacific railroad tracks. While the site is accessed off of USH 20, most of the development will be to the rear of the acreage.



The surge protecting batteries will be housed in 12-foot high boxes on just 3/4 of an acre off set from the rear property line by about 100 ft. The 15 million dollar battery facility will be screened by existing and by new landscape buffering, and will be accessible by a service drive running parallel of the West property line of the site. Once the facility is up and running it is expected that it will be visited by maintenance people just a couple times a year.

# Regalia, Reminders and other References

## **Snow Plowing**

Numerous variables on each snow/ice event will dictate the preparation or response to each event. Under “normal” 1-4 inch snow fall of moderate duration, arterial roads are plowed once or twice during the event while the entire town will be cleared once snow has subsided. The City has a fleet of 7 total plow trucks, however only five are used on “normal” snow events.

## **Snow on Sidewalk Removal**

Marengo Ordinance 6.14 requires removal of snow and ice accumulating on sidewalks or public walkways within 24 hours after a snowfall. If removal is not possible within that timeframe, surfaces may be treated with salt or sand to lessen hazard for pedestrians until weather permits.

## **E-Pay**

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve service to our residents, we are offering the following electronic payment options at [www.cityofmarengo.com](http://www.cityofmarengo.com):

- Water/Sewer Payments
- Vehicle Sticker Payments
- Parking/Bond Ordinance violations

Payments can be made by Mastercard, American Express, Discover or E-Check. The convenience fee charged for using credit services is not charged or collected by the City of Marengo.

## **Email Updates**

Want to stay connected with City happenings? Have Marengo City Council agendas, news releases, calendar’s of monthly meetings and general updates delivered right to your inbox. To register, go to [www.cityofmarengo.com](http://www.cityofmarengo.com) and enter your email address in the “subscribe to email updates” box or stop by City Hall.

## **Travel Trailers & Recreational Vehicles**

Parking of travel trailers, utility trailers or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the front property line between the dates of April 15 and October 15. After October 15 and prior to April 15, the parking of travel trailers, utility trailers and / or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the setback line. Please call City Hall with any questions.

## **Overnight Street Parking**

Parking is not allowed on any residential street between the hours of 12:01 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Central Business District parking is not allowed between the hours of 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Violators are subject to a \$25 ordinance violation fine.

## **2015/16 Vehicle Stickers**

The 2015-16 Vehicle Stickers are still on sale. The cost is \$40 per vehicle or \$10 per vehicle for those aged 65 or over. Fees have doubled since August 1, 2015. Residents not displaying a current vehicle sticker are subject to an ordinance violation fine of \$150.

## **Letters to Santa**

Santa loves reading your letters! Drop your letters to Santa between Nov 15th and Dec 15th into the special North Pole mailbox at the front entrance of the Marengo Park District building. Be sure your name and return address is on each letter so Santa can reply.



## **Approved Resolutions and Ordinances August, September, and October 2015**

### **August**

- 15-8-1 An Ordinance Authorizing the Sale or Disposal of Surplus Property
- 15-8-2 An Ordinance Authorizing the Sale of City Owned Property Consisting of 2,029 Sq. Feet, Located North of State Route 176
- 15-8-3 An Ordinance Authorizing the Sale of City Owned Property Consisting of 1,249 Sq. Feet, Located North of State Route 176

### **September**

- 15-9-1 An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for Self-Storage Facility and Setback Variation for Prairie Enterprises, LLC

### **October**

None

The *December 2015 Marengo Newsletter* has been produced by the following staff members: *Article contributors:* Gary Boden, Josh Blakemore and Rich Solarz. *Desktop publisher:* Megan Lopez