For the first time in nearly 50 years, Highland Police have a new department to call their own. Equipped with all of the necessities of modern-day policing, Chief Pete Hojnicki said he, the department’s 42 sworn officers and 25 VIPs are eager to welcome residents to the new facility.

“This is a beautiful new building that will allow us to function even better as a department,” Hojnicki said. “We have had interest from other departments that are finding their physical plant doesn’t operate as they had hoped. The Council hired an architect that specializes in public safety to guarantee our building meets our needs.”

Councilman Bernie Zemen is eager to see the building in action. “These guys have been working in what amounts to a dungeon for the last 45 years. Every room in the new building has natural light – and that’s just for starters.”

Councilman Dan Vassar said it’s exciting to watch the facility take shape, knowing the town is providing our officers with the tools they need to do their job. “It’s a beautiful building. More than that, though, it’s what our town – and our police department – need.”

OPEN HOUSE & DEDICATION
Join the Highland Police Department for a public open house and dedication of the new, state-of-the-art police station. Meet our community’s law enforcement officers and tour the new digs they call home.
WHEN: 10 a.m. Saturday, DEC. 19.
WHERE: 3315 Ridge Road. The dedication ceremony starts at 10 a.m. in the Community Room, located off the lobby on the second floor. Guided tours will follow.
NOTE: An open house for the law enforcement community will be held at a later date.
INFO: Call (219) 838-3184.

SNOW RULES HELP KEEP HIGHLAND STREETS SAFE DURING WINTER
A wallop of the white stuff that arrived earlier than normal this year packed a punch that left residents scrambling for gloves, scarves and the rules for winter parking and snow shoveling.
The dos and don’ts of winter were delivered earlier this year and are intended to be an easy reference guide to make it easier for snow plows to do their job while you do your part to keep your walks and drives shoveled.

“These rules were created by the Town Council, police, public works and code enforcement to keep everyone safe,” Public Works Director John Bach said. “We also need to keep all streets passable no matter how much snow falls.”

LEAF SCHEDULE EXTENDED
Recent snowfall put leaf collection crews one full week behind schedule. New collection dates are as follows:

DECEMBER 7: Area 6
DECEMBER 8: Area 7
DECEMBER 9: Area 8
DECEMBER 10: Area 9
DECEMBER 11: Area 10
Visit highland.in.gov for collection map.
FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

The Redevelopment Commission has granted preliminary approval for a façade improvement grant for property located at 8411 Kennedy Avenue. The building houses three Highland businesses: Mark R. Machnic, CPA; the Edward Jones office of Doug Lewis; and the Family Eyecare office of Dr. James Ferguson.

The total façade project cost is $28,000, including the façade grant of $8,400. This is the ninth Façade Improvement Grant approved by the Redevelopment Commission. Total grants approved for all nine projects is $107,268. The total project costs were about $386,000.

Washington D.C.-based Main Street America concluded in May that even a small investment in the exterior of a property had measurable impacts on sales and the ability of a business to attract new customers.

Eighty percent of businesses surveyed saw an increase in the number of first-time customers and 90 percent saw an increase in overall sales.

LAKE COUNTY 911 LEADERS ‘WILL NOT REST UNTIL THERE ARE NO MORE MISTAKES’

One major problem with an inadequate response to a 911 call by dispatchers at the Lake County consolidated dispatch center has been followed by two other major failures. In each case, a county resident was left dead.

Fire Chief Bill Timmer, who serves as Highland’s liaison to Lake County 911, said each of the three instances showcase problems in a system that is expected to work flawlessly.

“We have zero tolerance for any failing. We need to depend on 911,” he said. “Our confidence has been shaken, but will continue to work to make the system what it needs to be to protect every resident who calls 911.”

In addition to the administration at Lake County 911, the county fire chiefs meet weekly to discuss performance and remedies. The county’s police chiefs also meet regularly and stakeholders meet at least once a month.

“We are working to improve the system every day,” he said. “Our expectation is that six months from now, the situation will be better than it is today. We will not rest until there are no more mistakes.”

HIGHLAND GETS FIRST RAILROAD QUIET ZONE

Griffith-based Walsh & Kelly is creating a quiet zone at the CSX tracks that cross Kennedy Avenue midway between 45th and Main.

Necessary to make an at-grade crossing a no-horn zone requires automated crossing gates and the installation of a concrete median between northbound and southbound traffic. Cost of the projects is about $60,000.

The Town Council will be studying the effects of this first no-horn zone before considering similar changes at other crossings in town.

Highland has seven crossings but only three automated gates. Equipping remaining crossings would cost $2 million to $3 million and require the consent of the rail companies.

“We have several crossings that could benefit from automated gates,” Council President Mark Herak said. “We are grateful we’ve had no recent accidents, but are always looking at ways we can enhance safety.”

THE 411 ON 911...

Although the dispatching function for police, fire and ambulance have become part of the county’s unified call center, it will be Highland police and fire who respond to your call.

CALL 911 to request all police, fire or medical services — both emergency and nonemergency.

CALL 911 to report or cancel an activated alarm at a home or business. Alarm companies must call the 911 center at (219) 755-6546 for a confidential phone number to report an active alarm.

CALL (219) 838-3184 to leave a message for Highland police personnel. The department remains staffed 24/7 to take recovered property, make reports and monitor e-bay/Craigslist transactions as well as parental custody transfers.

SIGN UP FOR NIXLE...

Did you know nearly 4,000 people have signed up for Highland’s Nixle alerts? Have you? In the event of an emergency, police send out details via text message, email — or both.

INFO: Visit highlandpolice.com or register online at www.nixle.com.

ABOUT QUIET ZONES

A quiet zone is a section of a rail line at least one-half mile in length in which railroads no longer routinely sound their horns when approaching at-grade crossings.

Train horns are prohibited in quiet zones when approaching and entering crossings and does not include horn use within passenger stations or rail yards.

Train horns may be sounded in emergency situations or to comply with other railroad or Federal rules even within a quiet zone.

Quiet zone regulations do not eliminate the use of locomotive bells at crossings.

**HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS**

*Tis the season when crime can flourish. Police Chief Pete Hojnicki says there are things each of us can do to protect ourselves and our property during the upcoming holidays.

- Keep doors locked and valuables out of plain view.
- Make arrangements for a trusted neighbor or relative to pick-up or take delivery of mailed packages.
- Leave outside/inside lights on after dark. Preferably on a motion sensor.
- Beware of phone scams seeking personal information.

**IF YOU ARE ON VACATION ...**

- Contact the police at (219) 838-3184 to put your residence on a vacation checklist. Highland VIPs will physically check the security of your home while you are away.
- Put lights, radios and TVs on timers when leaving for an extended time.
- Make arrangements for your mail and newspapers to be picked up.
- Have someone shovel your driveway and walkways.
- Take in your trash cans.
- Inform a trusted neighbor or relative to check your house.

**IF YOU ARE SHOPPING ...**

- Shop with friends or family.
- Do not carry large sums of money or all of your credit cards. Carry only what you need on your person.
- Park in a well-lit area.
- Lock your vehicle.
- Store valuables in the trunk.
- Avoid carrying purses.
- Be aware of your surroundings.

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

Residents are asked to immediately report suspicious people, behavior or vehicles to police by calling 911.

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**TOWNSHIP OFFERS RESIDENTS 211 SOCIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE**

Did you know social service assistance can be accessed simply by dialing 211? A call to 211 activates a personal emergency response system designed to keep North Township residents from falling through the cracks. An online chat feature is available at nwil211.com.

Help is available 24/7 for crises that cannot wait—such as the threat of suicide, addiction issues and senior assistance.

The 211 system provides a vital safety net for the most vulnerable members of the community. These are the kind of emergencies that come without warning.

The 211 system is free and confidential and works in concert with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It provides an advocate for individuals who are not in a place where they can advocate for themselves.

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**INDIANA’S BICENTENNIAL**

Indiana’s 2016 Bicentennial celebration aims to honor our state’s 200 years of history, and to do so in a modern way that engages all 6.5 million Hoosiers and leaves a lasting legacy for future generations. Join the conversation on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

**LEARN MORE:** www.in.gov/ibc
ZUMBA 2-WEEK MINI
Ditch the workout and join the party. Zumba is a high-energy, dance-inspired workout for all ages and levels. No experience required.

WHEN: 6 to 6:55 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, DEC. 9 through DEC. 18
WHERE: Lincoln Community Fitness Center
FEE: $19.50 residents / $21.50 nonresidents
ONLINE CODE: 300023
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

CANVAS PAINT NIGHT
Trained Instructor Fred Holly will show you step-by-step how to paint your own 16" x 20" canvas. It's a fun, stress-free class and no experience is required. Snacks and refreshments included.

WHEN: 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, DEC. 16
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
FEE: $25 residents / $30 nonresidents
ONLINE CODE: 349003
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

FLORIDA BUS TRIP
Register now for Park & Recreation's spring trip to Florida from March 5-13. Visit the Fountain of Youth and the historic Kingsley Plantation. Take a narrated cruise on the St. Johns River and enjoy guided tours of Amelia Island, St. Augustine and Jacksonville. Trip includes 14 meals.

WHEN: MARCH 5-13
WHERE: Amelia Island, St. Augustine and Jacksonville, Florida
FEE: $740 per person based on double occupancy. Add $240 for single occupancy. A $75 deposit is due upon signing.
DEADLINE: Balance is due DEC. 29
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

DINING SAVVY WORKSHOP
Join Community in Schools of Lake County for a two-day Dining Savvy workshop. Students ages 8-14 will learn about table manners, napkin etiquette, handling silverware dining in public, hard-to-eat foods and more. Lunch is served.

WHEN: 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. DEC. 28-29
WHERE: Theo's Steak and Seafood, 9144 Indianapolis Blvd., Highland
FEE: $45 per person. Register online at www.cislakecounty.org and click on "Sign Me Up" under upcoming events.
INFO: cislakecounty.org or (219) 378-9114.

YOUTH WITH DISTINCTION
Students ages 8-14 will learn leadership skills such as remembering names, telephone etiquette, addressing grown-ups, thank you notes, classic dances and more.

WHEN: 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. DEC. 12 and 19
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
FEE: $15 per person per session. Register online at www.cislakecounty.org and click on "Sign Me Up" link under upcoming events.
INFO: cislakecounty.org or (219) 378-9114.

HOME DECORATING CONTEST
Decorate your home for the holidays and you could be eligible for cash prizes. Enter the contest and let your Park Board be the judge of the best decorated homes. Highland residents only please. Entry forms available at Lincoln Center.

ENTRY DEADLINE: December 6
JUDGING: 6 to 8 p.m. December 10
AWARDS: Announced December 12

NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS
Ring in the new year with a fireworks display at Main Square Park. Bring the family to enjoy the midnight show. Hot chocolate will be served.

WHEN: Midnight December 31
WHERE: Main Square Park

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's annual Christmas concert.

WHEN: 7 p.m. December 17
WHERE: Highland High School Monbeck Auditorium

WANT TO JOIN US? Email Director Greg Jasek at maestroflute@att.net.

MORE INFORMATION
For more information on these Parks & Recreation holidays events, please call (219) 838-0114 or visit www.highlandparks.org.