



# The Village Spotlight

A Publication of the **Village of Grafton** designed to provide the community with a snap shot of village life today.



*The Pride We Foster Today will  
reflect upon the Pride We Have Tomorrow.*

## A Message from Mayor David DiVencenzo



*Village of Grafton  
Mayor David DiVencenzo*

Dear Grafton Residents and Businesses,

The community comes alive during the autumn season and as this most colorful time approaches, our citizens and businesses have long used the events and activities that take place to greet one another with encouragement, hope for the future, and anticipation of the forthcoming holiday season. The fall harvest in Grafton means tractor, wagon, and semi traffic taking the fall harvest to the grain mill. There's nothing like the subtle aroma of the dried crops in the air. Soon, leaves will brown,

and fall to the earth, signaling an end to all that has been good about the year 2023. The Village of Grafton will enjoy the months of October, November, and December by partaking in our community environment. As stated many times in the past, at no other time does Grafton truly shine more than during the final few months of the calendar year.

This edition of the Village newsletter provides updates from around town, showcasing the accomplishments of our infrastructure initiatives, business community, and other special stories about the achievements of the last several years. With so much activity in our Main Street corridor, the movement and connectivity through the Envision Grafton project, it's easy to see the excitement within our corporation limits. With each passing day, Downtown Grafton flows with life. Residents and non-residents patronize our business. New enterprises continue to open along this corridor. Citizens have great reason to congregate along the Main Street thoroughfare. On behalf of the business community, we thank our citizens for their support and for

shopping at local establishments. Your consumerism is the engine of our downtown economic development, and Village officials intend to keep that engine running for many years to come.

Our infrastructure projects are investments in our future. The Village routinely reports on these, because enhancing our streets, sewers, electrical, and storm water systems, and upgrading sidewalks helps to improve the quality of life in Grafton. Our desire is to be a premier community in which to live, work, visit and raise a family. Continuing to improve infrastructure affirms our desire to keep current residents connected and attract new families to town. Be sure to read pages 4, 5, 6, and 7 for a full recap of the milestones reached over the last several years.

We thank everyone in the community for joining us at the annual Fall Fest, where many came to officially kick-off the Fall season. With antique vehicles to inspect, hearty seasonal snacks, fall decorations of mums, pumpkins, corn stalks, and straw bales, participants could truly feel fall in the air. Our annual Fall Fest has become a signature event for the Village of Grafton on our yearly calendar, for the community to celebrate one another and the season.

Thank you for the privilege to serve as your Mayor. Our collective community achievements help to focus our positive intentions for the future... together.

Sincerely,

Mayor David M. DiVencenzo



*The fall season brings out the best in decorations and seasonal emotions throughout the Village.*



*Village Hall joins the other establishments in downtown Grafton which has ushered in the autumn season with appropriate décor.*



Annual Fall Fest  
Saturday, October 7th, 2023  
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Willow Park

*A wonderful celebration of the fall season, with activities, food and drink, antique automobiles, fun, and so much more with Village residents and citizens from nearby communities. Welcome Fall!*





# BECAUSE LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE!



## Maker Space Open Periods

Tuesday, October 24, 2 PM

Tuesday, November 28, 5 PM

**Come and play with our new gadgets!**

No Registration Required | Adults ages 18 +



## SAVE THE DATE

### Old-Fashioned Christmas

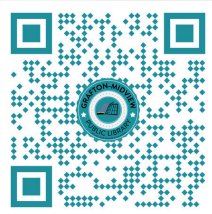
Friday, December 1, 6 - 8 PM

Visit with Santa \* B-I-N-G-O \* Raffles and plenty of fun for the entire family.



## DOWNLOAD OUR APP

- Search our Catalog
- Download and Stream
- Place Items on Hold
- Use the Self Checkout Feature
- And more!



## FRIENDS OF GMPL Fall Book Sale

**OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 3**

*Make our old books your new Friends. Supporting the Friends supports the Grafton-Midview Public Library.*

**Monday, October 30**

Friends Preview 9:30 AM - 1 PM

Public Admitted after 1 PM

**Tuesday, October 31 through**

**Friday, November 3**

Enjoy the sale during Library hours.

November 3 is Bag Day



## Library Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

9:30 AM - 8 PM

Wednesday & Saturday

9:30 AM - 5 PM

Friday

9:30 AM - 6 PM

Sunday

1 PM - 5 PM

Labor Day - Memorial Day

**983 MAIN STREET  
GRAFTON, OH 44044**

**440-926-3317**

**FAX: 440-926-3000**

**[www.gmplibrary.org](http://www.gmplibrary.org)**



# Village of Grafton Updates, Milestones, and Accomplishments

## THE GRAFTON SPOTLIGHT SHINES ONTO THE PATHWAY TO PROGRESS MADE!

*By Joe Price, Village Administrator*

Eight years in the making and Grafton has caught the eye of many both regionally in Lorain County and throughout Northeast Ohio... making Grafton the **BEACON of LORAIN COUNTY**.

When appointed in 2015, Grafton's economic base had not rebounded from the post 2008 recession. Infrastructure concerns were many, home values were low, and Grafton remained known as 'the community where the prisons are.' Given the blessing of council the administration worked to rebrand Grafton to build pride and attract economic development... the results were fast as income tax paid to those employed in Grafton grew by double digits in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. During COVID as communities were reporting double digit revenue losses, Grafton fared well with only a 3% decline and quickly restored double digit income tax increases in 2021 and 2022. Throughout COVID, your Grafton employees did not have a positive COVID test until January 2022. Your local government stayed open, did not work remotely and all council meetings were held in-person.



*The Village's Gazebo is prepared for visitors to climb its short steps and enjoy the seasonal weather!*

Entering the office in 2015, the administration was presented with a 4' x 7' whiteboard filled with a list of lingering, unfinished projects. The highest priority was a water distribution system we inherited experiencing 58% in water loss monthly, more than twice the acceptable amount. Action was taken to address aging infrastructure dating back to 1929... leaks abounded. The Main Street North project followed by multiple roadway and street improvements included new water mains, valves, and hydrants. Projects included Mechanic Street reconstruction Phase 1 (2015) & Phase 2 (2016), water main replacement from Erie Street to Becker Court (2017), new Willow Park pump station (2017), new Downtown water tower (2018), Oak Street reconstruction (2018), Becker Court reconstruction from Main Street to Center Street (2018), North Water Tower complete rehab (2019), Chestnut Street reconstruction Phase 1 (2019) & Phase 2 (2020), water main replacement on Mechanic Street and Crook Street from Railroad Street south (2021), Envision Main Street Phase 1 reconstruction from Erie Street to Mechanic Street (2022), the Historic Downtown streetscape and lighting improvements (2022), Mechanic Street & Crook Street reconstruction from Railroad Street south (2023), Envision Main Street Phase 2 reconstruction from Mechanic Street to Willow Park (2023), and Washington Drive water main replacement & loop to Woodland Chase (2023). In all we have lowered water losses to as low as 14% monthly... with more work being planned. With limited resources, multiple applications for grants and low to no interest loans, much has been accomplished in just 8 years.

Adding to the long list of streets improvements include Hickory Street (2016), Railroad Street (2017), Hyanis & Chippewa & Commerce Drive (2018), Wellfleet (2019/2020), and storm water collection and management improvements throughout Grafton.

Like water, your electric distribution system, established in 1930, was plagued with aging resources. In September 2015, GVP&L had 1 full-time employee. Today GVP&L has three full-time linemen, all certified through the Northwest Ohio Lineman's College and a fourth employee about to enter his second year as an apprentice lineman. Ongoing investments made in continuing education, safety, modern equipment, modernizing distribution and infrastructure are made annually. In 2016 the line shop was moved from Willow Park to Vivian Drive. The Line shop construction was estimated by engineering to cost \$412,000, the bid award after a redesign lowered cost to only \$127,000. In 2019 Grafton set a new model in municipal Solar generation that other Ohio communities now mirror. The solar behind the meter has lowered transmission costs to GVP&L customers by 67%. The current First Energy market transmission costs have risen to \$18 a megawatt hour while GVP&L customers in 2022 paid an adjusted rate of only \$6 a megawatt hour for electric transmission. Every kW of power generated from GRAFTON SOLAR 1 & 2 lowers transmission costs. Solar has also lowered costs through Peak Shaving. Grafton's local generation lessens the load on the PJM Market and the market rewards GVP&L with lower load demand charges saving the system more than \$400,000 in 2022. Additionally, GVP&L earns SRECS (renewable energy credits) that have become a market commodity, when sold the SRECS return to GVP&L about \$10,000 monthly. Now in 2023, GVP&L is wrapping up system reliability improvements with the construction of a new \$3,000,000 substation on Vivian Drive and a more than \$1,000,000 system upgrade from 4kV to 12.47kV distribution... and **all without a ratepayer electric rate increase since 2014**. Grafton is recognized regionally as **the only electric power provider that has not increased rates in the past 9 years**.



# Village of Grafton Updates, Milestones, and Accomplishments

## POINTS OF RECOGNITION FOR GRAFTON & GVP&L:

***November 2019*** Grafton and GVP&L commission behind the meter **SOLAR GENERATION** and distribution from Grafton Solar 1 and Grafton Solar 2. Grafton Solar becomes the largest single site 4MW generation site in a five-county region making **GRAFTON** Northeast Ohio #1 **SUNSHINE HARVESTER**, completing the first phase of Project Beacon and lowering GVP&L customers monthly Power Cost Adjustment.

***June 2021*** at the APPA National Convention in Orlando, Florida, the American Public Power Association (a national public power association representing 2000 communities throughout 50-states and territories) recognizes Grafton Administrator Joe Price for his professional contributions in Planning & Design, Administration, Public Relations, Field Supervision, Human Resources, and Community Leadership.

***September 2022***, Grafton is elected to (a non-political, non-public seat) the Board of Trustees for American Municipal Power, Grafton's first board seat since the creation of AMP in 1971. On September 27, 2023, Grafton was reelected to the AMP Board of Trustees and it first 3-year term as a board member.

## WASTE WATER TREATMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION SUCCESSES AND PROGRESS

The Grafton Wastewater Treatment system and facilities have likewise been given much attention. The 5,500,000-million-gallon EQ Basin completed in 2015 at a cost of \$3,500,000 has nearly eliminated all sanitary sewer backups during heavy storm events. This combined with the many roadway reconstruction improvements, each with sanitary sewer capacity improvements, have improved the quality of sanitary service. The 2019 plant improvements included a new \$1,300,000 centrifuge dewatering system that improved the quality of product and lessens shipping weight lowering trucking costs. The facility had sought to construct a new administration and service building in 2012 at a cost of \$875,000. We were able to finally build the new administration building in 2021 at a project bid price of less than \$700,000 with added items. Even with the number of improvements, ***the most remarkable benefit comes in the low sewer rate Grafton WWTP customers pay... the lowest cost regionally in monthly minimum and cost per 1000-gallon of treatment.... 40% less than other areawide operators.***



*Enhancing the Parks has been a top priority over the last 8 years!*

Some of the many Parks & Recreation improvements include the Willow Park playground and concert sunshade. The North Park splash pad sunshade, playground expansion & community room exterior renovations (2019). The trails at Reservoir Park are beautiful and a program of restocking the reservoir has our local outdoors-loving citizens of all ages enjoying this scenic part of Grafton.



*Washington Drive infrastructure is well underway to enhance water lines and adding a T-shaped turnaround for emergency vehicles*

By year end 2023, Grafton becomes a more walkable community as residents can now walk from the north to the south, south to the north along Main Street on improved and widened sidewalks and crosswalks. Funded roadway projects have afforded Grafton the ability to improve pedestrian safety and connect neighboring subdivisions with more planned ahead.

***Coming Soon:*** January of 2024 will see Novak Road Phase 1 reconstruction bid for work from Main Street to Wellfleet. Curb & Gutter, roadway reconstruction, sanitary sewer capacity improvements, stormwater capacity improvements with every home being provided a no-cost lateral tap to receive their stormwater discharge. Funding for this in part comes from the federal ARPA revenue paid to Grafton in late 2021. Also, out to bid in January 2024 will be the roadway resurfacing of Erie, Ontario, and Huron Streets. We believe ***bidding the projects separately will yield a favorable outcome and give the Village options that could shorten the timeframe of the projects.***

While the administrator does not serve as Safety Services Director, it is well known Grafton is a safe community and one that supports and provides a full-time Grafton Police Department. The full-time police personnel are fully staffed with an increased number of full-time personnel in 2023 and still supported by part-time and auxiliary personnel. The Fire Department remains a paid part-time department now staffed with 26-members, a division of officers, a qualified fire marshal, 23 members are certified EMS, 2 are certified Medics. COVID CARES ACT monies were used to purchase a new EMS Squad in 2020. The Fire Department received in 2022 a long-awaited new pumper truck and in 2023 the department added an additional EMS Squad to its fleet.

***WASHINGTON DRIVE UPDATE:*** The new water main work is complete; all Washington Drive home waterline laterals are connected. Pavement work is underway. The Administration was approached by the contractor who proposed the use of fast curing MS-Concrete that could see all roadway and driveway work completed by end-of-month October. The Administration has approved the change order to use MS concrete to shorten cure time as proposed. Roadway work will be completed one side of the street at a time and will allow driveway access within 3-days as opposed to 14-days.



# Village of Grafton Updates, Milestones, and Accomplishments

## REFLECTING BACK ON THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS WITH PRIDE

*As we reflect on all that has been accomplished in the past 8 plus years*, we also know the work is not done. In 2019, after 3-years of negotiations with the State of Ohio, Grafton was able to purchase 711 acres of former prison farmland.

**Project BEACON** was created and centered around one word, "OPPORTUNITY." The State institutions are by design industrial operations and uniquely well separated from the Village Downtown and neighborhoods. The State has been a Grafton area partner dating back to 1922.

In 2016 the administration saw then and still sees now the OPPORTUNITY for significant future economic development. The challenge was to **embrace and preserve the charm of a small Ohio Village** while creating growth from industrial investments set-back from the Grafton residential neighborhoods. The goal may sound simple... implement a plan that will recognize Grafton as the largest Village in Ohio (population under 5000), while avoiding Grafton becoming the smallest city in Ohio. The reasoning behind this is multi-layered and mostly revolves around statewide funding that helps keep Grafton cost of living low.

**The interest in Grafton has never been greater.** Your land investment is now recognized by Jobs Ohio as an **Ohio mega-site** for regional development. This year alone your Village has **engaged in several active and future multi-billion-dollar investment interests** with the support of Jobs Ohio and Lorain County Community Development. The opportunity to locate one or more emerging technologies manufactures, bio medical or pharmaceutical manufactures, is more than hopeful. The future local job creation is significant with estimates within the Village corporation limits ranging from creating 3000 to 5000 full-time careers. One positive feature is Grafton's strategic location. **The Grafton site has access to a 2.4 million population within 60-minutes of Grafton, the work force development potential rates Grafton atop most Northeast Ohio communities.**



*Main Street in Downtown Grafton is participating in the seasonal fun as well!*



*The Centerra Store has wonderful decorations for sale and for warming the seasonal senses.*

**The challenges of public service come often:** In September 2015 the Village Water department lost its only licensed water distribution Operator of Record. The supervision of the streets and water had not motivated or trained backup water personnel. In September 2015, Grafton water was required to hire an out of department licensed operator to cover hours and reporting. The department would not have an in-house licensed operator until 2020 when an employee successfully passed the licensing requirements, a second operator was licensed in 2021, a third in August of 2022 when we released the out of department licensed operator hired in 2015, we had full confidence in the qualifications and experience of the (then) two in-house department licensed operators. As it happens, April of 2023 saw the operator of record, trained by Grafton, move on to another opportunity. Still having two licensed operators provided the needed backup and a new operator of record was assigned and registered with the EPA in April 2023. Water samples were still pulled daily, reports to the EPA were kept up to date. The 2022 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) report was due to the EPA in June 2023, it was submitted to the EPA, approved by the EPA, and was published prior to the EPA deadline. Lead & Copper samples and reports are current, the Grafton water distribution system maintains the high quality and standards you expect.



# Village of Grafton Updates, Milestones, and Accomplishments

## **LET'S SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT:**

*The Village of Grafton's water department and its Operator of Record are in full compliance with EPA licensing regulations. Any suggestion to the contrary is both specious and irresponsible. The water distributed in and through Grafton comes from the Rural Lorain County Authority and is produced by Avon Lake Water. Avon Lake Water produces 22,000,000 gallons daily for areawide consumption. The same water produced by Avon Lake Water passes through Avon, North Ridgeville, Eaton, Grafton, and communities too many to list, with each community testing water daily. Layers and layers of daily testing by multiple entities to assure quality from this single water producer. The local school district, homes and businesses outside Grafton receive water from the same source.... Grafton Village Water is SAFE!*

*To all the readers of this article, you've received this newsletter as you live or own a business in Grafton. You've witnessed firsthand the progress made the past 8-YEARS. Construction, although challenging our patience at times, is a necessary process to renew, renovate and restore, and when complete it is something we all can appreciate. As the question is asked; is the Grafton of today better than it was just 8 years ago? I believe it is and hope you agree.*



*Ringing true above the streets and thoroughfares of Grafton is our beloved Water Tower.*



*SpaB always does a great job with seasonal decorations.*



*Fall is alive and well in Grafton, Ohio.*



# Upcoming Village Events

Please remember to check the Village Website and Facebook page for updates on a regular basis.  
Thank you for your continued support.



☆☆☆ October ☆☆☆						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Midview Kiwanis Village Hall 12 - 1 PM	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Midview Kiwanis Village Hall 12 - 1 PM	25	26	27	28
29 Halloween parade 1 p.m. Fire Station	30	31 Trick-or-Treat Village-wide 6-7:30 p.m.	1	2	3	4

☆☆☆ November ☆☆☆						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall Election Day Polls Open 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Midview Kiwanis Village Hall 12 - 1 PM	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall	22	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26	27	28 Midview Kiwanis Village Hall 12 - 1 PM	29	30	1	2

☆☆☆ December ☆☆☆						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1 Old Fashioned Christmas 6 p.m. Main Street	2
3	4	5 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Midview Kiwanis Village Hall 12 - 1 PM	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 Village Council Meeting 7:30 PM at Village Hall	20	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve Day	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve Day						

## Non-Emergency Contact Information

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Utilities (440) 926-1093 opt. 1

Streets (440) 926-2260

Electric (440) 926-2912

Sewer (440) 926-2765

Fire (non emergency) (440) 926-2075

Police (non emergency) (440) 926-2261