

# Newsline

Vol.25 Issue1

## Breaking Ground on a New Community Park

The Town of Normal's Shepard Park project will provide residents with their first new community park in over 20 years. The project involves a 14.4 acre site that is currently farmed on the east side of Normal, near the intersection of Shepard and Hershey Roads. The park will be a great attraction for residents of the nearby neighborhoods in eastern Normal, and it will also serve the larger community with a unique mix of open space and recreational amenities.

Included in the park project will be a large pavilion, restrooms, parking area, two baseball diamonds, basketball court, playground and related site amenities. Trees will be planted throughout the new park and an attractive landscaped entrance will be installed. In addition, a passive natural area will be established along the northeast side of the property.

The park and its planned improvements are identified in the Town's Master Plan for Parks and Open Space as a high priority. Construction of Shepard Park will begin this summer, with completion expected by the summer of 2010. Funding for the \$985,000 project comes from two sources, including a \$400,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Other project dollars are being provided through the Town's Parkland Dedication Fund.

*A large playground is one of the amenities that will be featured at the new Shepard Park*



A community newsletter published by the Town of Normal

## Uptown Bustling with Activity This Summer

You certainly do not want to miss all the excitement in Uptown this summer. This year's construction season is in full swing with infrastructure and streetscape improvements currently taking place. Don't miss this opportunity to see the Uptown area be redefined in front of your eyes!



Although vehicular patterns are changing, pedestrian walkways to all businesses in Uptown are accessible and clearly marked. Stop by your favorite shops, restaurants and entertainment venues or check out some new local merchants that have made Uptown their home. Abundant parking is available at the College Avenue Parking Deck, where the first hour is always free!

Continuous construction and project updates are available online at [www.normal.org](http://www.normal.org), on the Uptown hotline at 433-3463 (F-I-N-D), or by visiting the Uptown Renewal Office at 108 E. Beaufort Street.

## What's Inside...

Township Assessor.....	2
Mayor's Desk.....	3
Uptown Update.....	4

Parks and Recreation Update.....	7
Councilmember Fritzen Spotlight.....	9
Going Green.....	11

# Normal Fire Chief To Retire After 37 Years

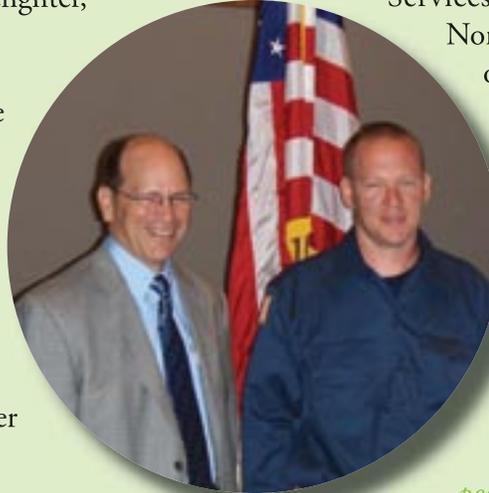
After 37 years of service, Normal Fire Chief Jim Watson will be retiring from the Town in July. Chief Watson started with the Fire Department in 1972 and has served as a firefighter, Lieutenant, Assistant Chief and Chief.

Under Chief Watson's leadership the Normal Fire Department successfully opened a third station in the community, implemented a comprehensive public education program, developed a highly specialized Technical Rescue team, and also implemented a paramedic level of emergency medical service.

In his last year as Chief, he oversaw a \$7.2 million dollar budget and 66 employees that responded to over

5,100 calls for service in the community. Chief Watson leaves the Fire Department with a Class 2 rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO), which places Normal among the elite company of only 595 other communities in the nation with a rating that high.

The Town of Normal will be forever grateful for Chief Watson's excellent public service and wishes him the best in his retirement years.



*Fire Chief Jim Watson (left) poses for a picture with Firefighter Chad Stengel (right)*

## A Message From the Normal Township Assessor:

*There has been much news lately about the state of the housing market, both nationally and locally. The primary function of the assessor's office is to study, analyze and reflect what is happening in that market. The office gathers every sale that occurs in the Normal Township and compares that sale price to the assessed value.*

*The reason the township gets a township multiplier greater than one nearly every year is that the comparison of sale price to assessed value shows that overall assessments are below the statutory level of 1/3 of market value. The multiplier forces assessments to the 1/3 of market value level.*

*Because of the state of the economy and housing market we are studying the sales vs. assessments reports on a monthly basis. While we do see much slowing down in both new construction and marketing time, we are not seeing the drastic declines in market value that some markets across the country have seen that have made the headlines. We have found some neighborhoods that seem to be affected and we will adjust those for 2009.*

*I want every taxpayer to know that we are tracking the market. If we find evidence that any segment of the market is changing, we will reflect that change. The main goal of this office is to reflect the market, and if that market is going down, I have no problem showing that in our assessments. I get no benefit from having high assessments, only from having accurate assessments.*

*As always, if you have questions about the assessment process or the property tax, please don't hesitate to call or stop in the office.*

**Rob Cranston**  
Normal Township Assessor



# From the Mayor's Desk...

## Citizen's Shaping Normal's Future Through Committee Involvement

The closer that government is to the people it represents the more effective it will be. I strongly believe in this simple, yet powerful, principle. One of the ways I have attempted to bring government closer to the residents of Normal is through ad-hoc citizen committees.

Ad-hoc committees are typically charged with one issue and meet on a regular basis until such time they are prepared to share their findings and recommendations with the entire Town Council. When appointing people to these committees I attempt to make sure that various perspectives are represented so that the process truly has to be consensus building. In the past few years we have effectively used ad-hoc committees for topics such as the minor league baseball project and to review the Town's operations of the Normal Theater.

I'd like to briefly highlight two of these committees that are currently discussing important community topics. A committee representing business owners, Illinois State University stakeholders, residents and elected officials are developing recommendations for parking management policies in Uptown Normal. This committee previously recommended the rate structure that

was approved for the College Avenue Parking Deck and is now shifting their focus to future parking decks, surface lots and on-street parking areas. Their in-depth discussions will lead to an acceptable consensus that will ultimately help the Uptown area flourish for years to come.

*“Their in-depth discussions will lead to an acceptable consensus that will ultimately help the Uptown area flourish for years to come.”*

A second citizen committee is focusing on a sustainability plan for Normal. They are investigating what it means to be sustainable, from a social, environmental and financial sense. They will ultimately recommend a course of action for current and future elected leaders to consider as they make decisions that impact the future health of our community.

I have been greatly encouraged by the work performed by citizens who volunteer their time on these committees. Through their commitment, government is more transparent, rooted in a stronger consensus and ultimately more effective.



# COOL OFF

*with Normal's Tree Planting Program*

Did you know that the Town of Normal will reimburse residents up to \$60 for tree planting on private property?

For more information on how the Town can help you save some green while cooling off your property visit:

[www.normal.org/Gov/ParksAndRec/TreePlantingProgram.asp](http://www.normal.org/Gov/ParksAndRec/TreePlantingProgram.asp)

Apply online or at the Parks and Recreation Office at 611 S. Linden Street.



# SUMMER

# Festivals!



Sugar Creek  
Arts Festival  
JUL. 11-12

Sweet Corn  
Blues Festival  
AUG. 22-23



## *Uptown* Farmer's Market:

The Destination for Fresh, Local Foods

The Uptown Farmers Market, now in its fifth year, takes place on Tuesday's in June through September from 3:30 to 6:00pm. The market will be held in the Parkinson Street parking lot, which is located near Amtrak and behind the Children's Discovery Museum. The popular market will feature the freshest vegetables, fruits, home baked items, and much more!



The market will also showcase live entertainment on most Tuesdays during the season including the following musicians, Denise LaGrassa, Old Time Jam, Kevin Hart and the Vibe Tribe, Austin Found, and Free Range Fiddle.

Plenty of parking is available in the Parkinson lot as well as the adjoining City Hall parking lots. The market is also conveniently located off of the Constitution Trail making it an ideal stop for walkers, joggers and bikers.

## Coming Soon!

### Marriott Hotel and Conference Center

The Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Uptown is currently on track to be open for business in the late summer of this year. Management and sales staff have been hired and are currently booking special events and conferences. For more information on this opportunity please contact: **Heather VanVoorhis**  
*Director of Sales and Marketing*  
[heather.vanvoorhis@jqh.com](mailto:heather.vanvoorhis@jqh.com)  
309-230-1120

### CVS Pharmacy

JSM, a developer based in Champaign, is constructing a new mixed-use building across from the Normal Theater, and CVS Pharmacy was recently announced as the anchor tenant. The building, called *Uptown Crossing*, will be five stories tall and contain a mix of retail, office space, and one and two bedroom apartments. You can expect to see the building up and operational in the summer of 2010.



## Safe, Convenient Parking at the College Avenue Parking Deck



- First Hour is Always Free  
\$1 Per Hour Otherwise
- Free after 6pm and on Sundays
- Cash, Credit and Debit Accepted
- Monthly Permits Available
- Library Patrons Always Park Free!

### Get Connected with Free Uptown Wireless!

Enjoy a cup of coffee, ice cream or your favorite meal while surfing the Web



# NAVIGATING *the Uptown Circle*

It's As  
Easy As...

## 1. Yield

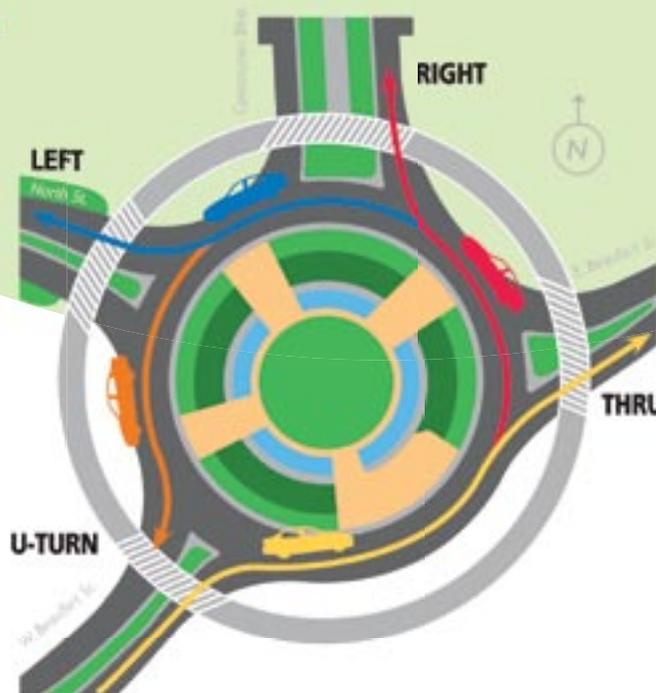
to traffic, pedestrians,  
and bicycles

## 2. Enter

counterclockwise only

## 3. Exit

at desired point



### Important Reminders

- Slow down as you approach the circle.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Yield to traffic in the circle, wait for an acceptable gap in traffic, and then enter the circle while maintaining a slow speed.
- Within the circle, do not stop except to avoid a collision; you have the right-of-way over entering traffic.
- Always travel in a counterclockwise direction.
- Exit the circle at your desired point, again always yielding for pedestrians and bicyclists.

# 2009

NORMAL RESIDENTS HONORED AT THE  
*Dr. Martin Luther King*

## Awards Luncheon

**T**he 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Luncheon was held at the Illinois State University Bone Student Center on January 10, 2009. The Normal and Bloomington Human Relations Commissions co-sponsored this event to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King, honor local citizens for their human relations work and re-energize our community to further our positive human relations efforts. Both cities select one high school student and one adult for their human relations efforts and recognize those individuals at the awards luncheon. The Town of Normal accepts nominations year round for this event. For more information on the Normal Human Relations Commission or the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Luncheon visit [www.normal.org/Gov/Boards/HumanRelations.asp](http://www.normal.org/Gov/Boards/HumanRelations.asp)



*From left to right, Normal Human Relations Commissioner Mandava Rao, Judith Sevel (representing Normal youth award recipient Jessica Rardin) Guest Speaker Dr. Samuel Betances, Normal adult award recipient Brandon L. Caffey and Mayor Chris Koos.*

## *Youth Softball at its Finest* **National Championship** *Returns To Normal*

### July 27- August 2

**T**he Town of Normal will be hosting the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Girls 12 and Under National Fastpitch Championship July 27 through August 2. The ASA is the nation's premier fastpitch organization featuring highly competitive teams from across the country. Over 90 teams are expected to compete at Champion

Fields for this prestigious championship. The Town of Normal has hosted a number of ASA National Championships during the past 15 years, however, this will be the 12 year old division's first appearance in Normal.

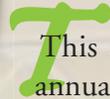


A tournament of this magnitude requires support from the entire community. Numerous volunteers are needed for announcing and scorekeeping as over 300 games will be played from the first pitch to the final out.

For information on how to volunteer contact Becky Strack, Volunteer Coordinator, at [bstrack@normal.org](mailto:bstrack@normal.org) or 454-9556.

Free Summer Fun at the

# Connie Link Amphitheatre



This summer the Connie Link Amphitheatre will be hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual concert series, outdoor movies and children's storytelling at 611 S. Linden next to the Normal Parks & Recreation office. All of the concerts, movies and storytelling are free to the public. A limited concession stand is on site with popcorn, soda, water and candy. Parking is available at the Parks & Recreation parking lot, the apartment building parking lot across Linden Street from the amphitheatre and also in the grass lot located at the northwest corner of Underwood Park off of Linden Street. The schedule for the summer includes:

## Sounds of the Connie Link Amphitheatre

July 9	Brian Choban Jazz Quintet	6-8pm
July 11	Midwest Jazz Collective	6:30-8:30pm
August 6	Bygones	6-8pm
August 30	Heartland Jazz Orchestra	4-6pm
September 12	33 <sup>rd</sup> Ill Volunteer Regiment Band	4-6pm
September 20	Protégé	4-6pm

## Dress Up Movie Nights

(All movies begin at dusk)

July 28	Jimmy Neutron
August 22	Little Mermaid
September 18	The Game Plan
October 2	Monster House

## Summer Stories

(All stories start at 10:00am)

June 25	Forest Stories
July 1	Boat Stories



# July 4<sup>TH</sup>

at Fairview Park

Live music, hot July weather and a fireworks show that is one of the best in Central Illinois. If this sounds like your idea of a good time, then make Fairview Park your July 4<sup>th</sup> destination!

On Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-8:30pm come out and enjoy the "Bygones" as they play your favorite 60's 70's and 80's music. Shortly after the music stops there will be a fireworks show that has been a crowd favorite for almost 20 years. The show is choreographed and set to music provided by WJBC, 1230 on your AM radio, and is sponsored by State Farm Insurance. This is a great family friendly event so please come out and enjoy the show. Get there early because the park fills up quickly!



## New Police Program

# Reaching Out To Local Youth



**T**he Normal Police Department Youth Intervention Program (YIP) began in August 2008. It is designed to provide services to youth who are at risk of committing criminal acts. The program was created to promote accountability among youth, support families and youths in their ongoing development and reduce the likelihood of further juvenile delinquency.

By obtaining needed services and holding youth accountable for their behavior, the YIP strives to assist youth in becoming law-abiding citizens with a promising future. The YIP goals are to address delinquent behaviors, refer appropriate services, and provide ongoing support to youth and families. Overall, the Police Department hopes the program will

eliminate future criminal behavior and provide an opportunity for youth to reach their full potential.

The Youth Intervention Specialist screens referred youth, assess appropriate cases, offers service referrals, and provides continual support to youth and families. Youth are held accountable for their choices and behaviors while parents and guardians are required to be active participants in the program. Services are free to all who choose to participate in the program and are available to those who reside in the Town of Normal or attend a Unit 5 school.

*Youth Intervention Specialist, Nikki McCall speaks with a participant. (Photo courtesy of the Pantagraph)*

## CREATING

# A SAFE Basement Bedroom

**M**any people today are using their basements as additional living spaces and bedrooms. Before taking this step to improve your home please fully consider the following potential hazard.

There is often only one way out of a basement, usually a stairway to the ground level. If that stairway becomes compromised by smoke or fire, escape becomes much more difficult. Second, the basement is often the location for the house's mechanical systems, such as the furnace, water heater, circuit breakers, etcetera. Those appliances naturally pose additional dangers as they age and often break down.

Here are some state and local requirements to follow when finishing your basement:

- A sleeping room **MUST** have two means of escape. A stairway and a window are the most common means of escape. The window is required to be at least 5.7 square feet in area, at least 20 inches wide and at least 24 inches high. The bottom of the window must not be more than 44 inches above the floor.
- Smoke detectors **MUST** be installed in all sleeping rooms, in the immediate vicinity (hallway) outside the sleeping rooms, and on each level of the home, including the basement.
- Illinois state law requires **ALL** homes to have at least one carbon monoxide alarm within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes.

Lastly, keep basement clutter to a minimum. Anything that increases fire load or that might impede escape needs to be eliminated to the extent possible. If you have questions or want additional information, please feel free to contact the Normal Fire Department at 454-9622.



# Have A Question? Need to Report a Problem?

Communicating with the Town has never been easier or more convenient. Simply log onto [www.normal.org](http://www.normal.org) and use our electronic communication tools 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A Town representative will email you a response as soon as possible. Average response time is approximately three business hours!

During business hours residents can also call the Town switchboard at 454-2444.

## Contacting Your Elected Officials

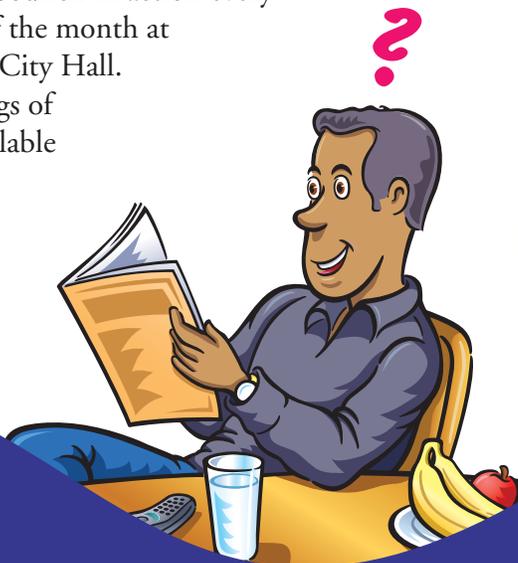
<u>NAME</u>	<u>E-MAIL</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Chris Koos ( <i>Mayor</i> )	mayor@normal.org	454-9777
Sonja Reece	sreece7@earthlink.net	452-6782
Cheryl Gaines	cgaines@normal.org	452-6696
Adam Nielsen	anielsen@normal.org	862-3385
Jason Chambers	jchambers@normal.org	451-0189
Jeff Fritzen	jfritzen@normal.org	454-2186
Chuck Scott	cscott@normal.org	452-3136

You can email the entire Normal Town Council with one click by logging onto [www.normal.org/Gov/Council/index.asp](http://www.normal.org/Gov/Council/index.asp).

Come see the Town Council in action every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Normal City Hall.

On demand recordings of meetings are also available by logging onto

[www.normal.org](http://www.normal.org) and clicking the Videos link.



## Spotlight On...

### Jeff Fritzen

Councilmember

**Term began:** 1983-1999, 2003-present

**Occupation:** Executive Vice President, Bloomington Offset Process, Inc.

I've been a Normal Town Councilman for nearly a quarter of a century. When one phrases it in that manner, it sure sounds like a long time, doesn't it? It's amazing how quickly those years have passed. I can only imagine how many hours of meetings I've attended and how many times I've cast a vote at the Council table during that time.

Much of what we consider could be termed routine business. A few times we've had to really wrestle with some big issues, developments or policies. The hope is that, on balance, you've contributed in a positive manner to the general welfare of the community.

For the past year and a half, I've been involved with an unbelievable group of people who are tackling a difficult subject in a significant manner. The Bloomington-Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) grew from providing training for those involved in the serving of alcohol at licensed establishments to a broad based committee addressing the effects of high risk drinking among college students.

...continued page 10

# How Do I Dispose of This?

**Landscape Waste** such as leaves, flowers and garden plants should be placed in open bags or cans not exceeding 35 pounds and placed at the curb for collection. Landscape waste may not be collected on your regularly scheduled waste day.

**Food Waste** such as fruits and vegetables should be included with your regular household trash.

**Bulky Waste** such as furniture or appliances is collected each week on your regular garbage day. Bulky waste items, weighing less than 500 pounds should be placed at the curb separate from regular garbage cans.

## Spotlight continued...

The committee is comprised of dedicated professionals representing Illinois State and Illinois Wesleyan universities, Heartland Community and Lincoln colleges, police agencies from Bloomington, Normal, ISU and McLean County, healthcare providers such as BroMenn and St. Joseph's hospitals and Chestnut Health Systems, Project Oz, local clergy, retailers, ISU student government, District 87, Unit 5, Bloomington City Council and Normal Town Council. These are people who bring a high level of care and concern

along with talent to the committee's tasks and it has been a privilege to get to know them and work alongside them.

It didn't take long for the committee to learn the target group of college students had to be expanded to include both high school students and young

adults. It also learned the public reaction to attempts to remedy high risk drinking behaviors and attendant problems such as vandalism, violence, sexual assault and, at times, damaged lives and health can be harsh.

The BNCCC is not about interfering with individual rights to participate in legal activities. It is, however, committed

to raising community awareness to the multiple risks of excessive drinking and establishing agreed upon standards of behavior.

My concern is we're constrained by the lack of conviction in our culture that alcohol and drug use is as serious a problem that data reveals. That may sound unbelievable because the trail of woe left by substance abuse is seemingly everywhere. Yet, it's difficult for groups like the BNCCC to get any traction. Perhaps it's because ours is a society free to make bad choices, but I contend when it comes to our youth we have no alternative but to try to intervene on their behalf. Too many adults either are in denial about or accommodate underage drinking, which makes the BNCCC's job all the more difficult, yet we must keep looking for a way to break through.

The BNCCC wants to be the agent of change in our community's attitude towards high risk behavior related to alcohol. If a representative committee such as ours can help change that environment, I would consider it the most important accomplishment of my public service career. Will you join us in our efforts?

Please visit [www.bnccc.org](http://www.bnccc.org) for more information.

# *Going Green Can Be Easy*

# **PRACTICAL TIPS**

## *For Greening Your Lifestyle*

### **Live Green:**

- Use CFL or LED light bulbs to decrease energy consumption
- Buy Energy Star appliances that conserve electricity and water
- Use bedding, rugs, curtains, and furniture that are organic or use natural fibers
- Use natural cleaning products and detergents rather than ones composed of harmful chemicals
- Have an energy audit on your house to learn more about ways to green your home

### **Eat Green:**

- Buy organic foods and avoid the chemicals
- Buy seasonal and locally grown foods that create less transportation related pollution

### **Shop Green:**

- Bring a tote bag to carry purchases home rather than using a disposable plastic bag
- Choose organic clothing or clothes made of natural fibers
- Do not get a receipt from the ATM or the clerk if you will not use it
- Buy in bulk to reduce packaging waste
- Look for natural and organic labels on everything you buy from beauty products to food items

### **Discard Green:**

- Recycle paper, plastic, and aluminum at convenient drop locations throughout Normal
- Throw fruit, vegetable, and yard waste into a garden to compost and convert into fertilizer

### **Party Green:**

- Use reusable decorations, tablecloths, napkins, silverware, plates, glasses, mugs, etc.
- Rent decorations and tableware rather than buying new
- Request caterers use reusable serving platters and dishes
- Set up recycling areas for guests
- If you need disposable products, make sure they are biodegradable and/or recyclable
- Give gifts in reusable bags, baskets, or tins

### **Travel Green:**

- Ride your bike or walk instead of driving
- Carpool with people going to the same place or nearby destinations
- Use the public bus when possible

### **Write Green:**

- Use recycled paper, envelopes, invitations, notepads, advertisements, and pictures
- Avoid printing out notes or information. When possible, send it in an e-mail or store it on a thumb drive
- If something needs to be a hard copy, print it double-sided
- For mass-mailings, use postcards or brochures with self-mailer panels to decrease paper, envelope, and postage waste



**For more information  
and helpful tips visit:**

**Ecology Action Center**  
[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)

**Town of Normal  
Recycling Page**  
[www.normal.org/gov/publicworks/  
waste/recycling.asp](http://www.normal.org/gov/publicworks/waste/recycling.asp)

**Ameren's Act On Energy**  
[www.actonenergy.com](http://www.actonenergy.com)



## Town of Normal

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Normal, IL 61761  
[www.normal.org](http://www.normal.org)

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Town of Normal

### Mayor

Chris Koos

### Town Council

Sonja Reece  
Cheryl Gaines  
Adam Nielsen  
Jason Chambers  
Jeff Fritzen  
Chuck Scott

### City Manager

Mark Peterson

### Assistant City

Manager

Pamela Reece

### Assistant to the

City Manager

Normal Newsline

### Editor

Geoff Fruin

# Normal Residential Customer

## Normal, Illinois 61761



Printed on  
Recycled paper.

## *Normal Provides Safe Disposal for Prescription Drugs*

The Normal Police Department recently implemented a Pharmaceutical Drug Collection Program. The program provides a safe and secure option for citizens who wish to dispose of unused or expired prescription medications in an environmentally friendly manner. Through this program residents can help ensure that medications do not infiltrate public lands and waterways.

The secured prescription drug lock box is located in the front lobby of the Police Department at 100 E. Phoenix Avenue. Residents can access the box 24 hours a day, seven days a week.