

the Voice

FALL 2016

A PUBLICATION OF COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

Local Crime Mapping Tool Allows Search for Criminal Offenses

RAIDS Online can be used to see details of crime broken down by neighborhood, offense and more.

View timely criminal activity in your neighborhood or other parts of Columbia Township through the free online program RAIDS Online. Recently added as a resource by Hamilton County Sheriff's Office District 4, the RAIDS Online program allows users to easily search for crime information and view nearby offense activity broken into specific criminal categories.

Lt. Thomas Butler, commander of the District 4 substation, said his district began using the tool in July

"as a way for us to track criminal trends on our end and for township residents, homeowners and business owners to see what is going on in real time in their neighborhoods." Butler said information is entered each day into the program so that this data is kept up-to-date regarding where offenses are taking place and what the offenses are. "We are trying to keep on the cutting edge as much in real time as we can be," he noted.

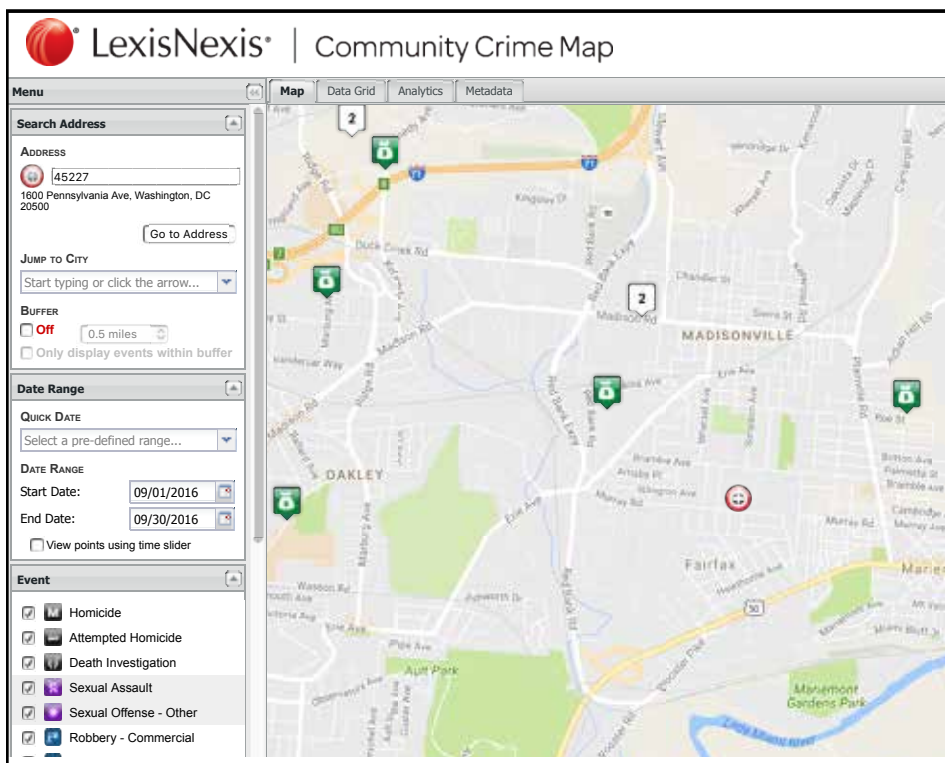
While Butler said the information

supplied by the crime mapping tool was not a surprise, it was a confirmation of what deputies already knew about more active crime areas. "You can look at a week snapshot or go back a year and look at statistics," Butler said. The radius of the tool allows viewing of a half mile radius at a time. Butler said he has found it helpful to refer the crime mapping tool to individuals calling the district asking about crime in specific neighborhoods. Crime mapping can help the public learn more about criminal activity in certain areas and make informed decisions based on that data.

It only takes a few minutes to sign up for RAIDS Online at raidsonline.com. Users can search by offense, address, offender, date and synopsis. Many common criminal offenses are listed, such as burglary, alcohol and drug offenses, theft from motor vehicles and more. Users can also view locations of convicted sex offenders, supplied to RAIDS Online by Watch Systems.

Learn more about the program by going to www.columbiatwp.org and search for keywords: RAIDS Online.

A mobile app for tracking criminal offenses via your cell phone also is available for the public's convenience.



Local crime mapping of Columbia Township is now available. This view is of a one-month period for multiple kinds of offenses.

Get involved in making Columbia Township more vital!



Susan Hughes
Trustee Vice President

I hope you are enjoying the resurrected newsletter. We trustees are working to reach out and keep our residents informed on events and topics in the township.

As part of this effort, we also want to invite our residents to get involved in the community and take pride in it. Although the parts of the township may be scattered, we have much in common to share with each other. It would be great to have volunteer activities like a garden club, a tree committee, neighborhood clean-up patrols and neighborhood watch programs. It's time to unleash the volunteer spirit in Columbia Township and continue the momentum of positive change occurring throughout the township. I would love to hear ideas from you for volunteering or how to make our township more special.

As we update our Comprehensive Community Plan, we will be addressing the desire for greater visibility and identification of our neighborhoods and business districts through better signage, plantings and banners or flags. We are proud of Columbia Township and want others to know who we are and where we are.

Being a trustee since 1998, I have seen dark periods and bright periods in the running of the township and the future looks brighter than ever. We have a good, cooperative board, working together for your best interests. We also have a good administrator and great staff who provide some of the finest services in southwest Ohio.

As you read this newsletter and future ones, I hope you will appreciate all the advancements happening in the township and observe the dedication and spirit of our employees in providing the best possible service to you.



Sacrifice of deputy remembered in Columbia Township

One of Columbia Township's memorials located at the township office honors a member of law enforcement who gave his life while on duty more than 50 years ago.

On July 16, 1962, Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Emil Kleinwaechter was investigating an auto crash on Wooster Pike near Newtown Road. He was struck and killed by a vehicle operating too fast for conditions.

Kleinwaechter was a 13-year veteran of the Hamilton County Sheriff's office at the time of his death. Columbia Township officials gathered this summer to dedicate the memorial to his honor. Said Lt. Tom Butler of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office District 4, "There is a saying that goes as follows, 'Men do not die until they are forgotten...the sacrifice made by Emil on July 16, 1962, has not been forgotten and therefore he is still here with us.'"



Get your leaves ready for pickup

Pile 'em up, so we can load them up!



Free leaf removal in Columbia Township was expected to be started as of press time, depending on how fast Mother Nature lets loose of her leaves. Once leaves have been picked up, road crews will return to your street within seven to 10 business days up until December 25.

Each fall, the township road crews cycle through the township at least seven times, if not more, according to John Servizzi, road maintenance supervisor.

- You can help expedite the process and help road crews do their job by following these steps:
- Place leaves as close to the curb as possible.
 - Leave the area in front of your home open (no cars parked) until the road crews pass through.
 - Do not rake leaves into the street. Leaves left in the street could cause clogged storm drains or be a factor in an auto accident.
- Servizzi said he and his team will blow the sidewalk and street lawn in front of your home on both sides of the streets during their pass through. Changes to the leaf pickup schedule will not be honored so the crew can maintain their seven to 10-day pickup rotation.

November fire levy on ballot for Ridge Road-Highland Avenue residents

Shortfall predicted unless levy funds realized.

Some residents of Columbia Township – those who live in the Ridge Road-Highland Avenue area - will see a 3.4 mill fire levy on the ballot when they go to the polls this November.

The Golf Manor Fire Department covers the Ridge Road-Highland Avenue area of Columbia Township. A shortfall of more than \$120,000 per year in this fire district is projected by Columbia Township if no increase in revenue is realized, said Township Administrator Mike Lemon.

The cost to a homeowner with a \$100,000 home would be \$119 additional annually for this service, according to information supplied by the Hamilton County Auditor's Office.

"We listened to the residents of the Ridge Fire District to keep Golf Manor Fire Department even though at a higher cost," said Trustee Vice President Susan Hughes. "We hope they'll remember our effort to preserve the services and vote for the levy."

Due to its scattered borders, Columbia Township also contracts with two other fire departments: Deer Park-Silverton Joint Fire District and the Little Miami Joint Fire and Rescue Department, which cover different sections of the township.

The Ridge Fire District is the only fire district in Columbia Township facing a levy this year.

"The township is looking for the support of the residents renewing the levy with a slight increase," noted Trustee Chris Kritkos. "That modest addition of funding would allow us to contract with Golf Manor and continue to provide high quality services."

"We have looked in the past at alternative fire departments at less of a cost, but the residents of Ridgewood were passionate and vocally not in support of such change," he said. "As costs are rising, we are working to keep costs to the residents as reasonable as we can," Kritkos said.

Streets that will see a fire levy vote include: Blueridge Avenue, Brackenridge Avenue, Charloe Street, Cliffridge

A shortfall of more than \$120,000 per year in this fire district is projected by Columbia Township if no increase in revenue is realized.

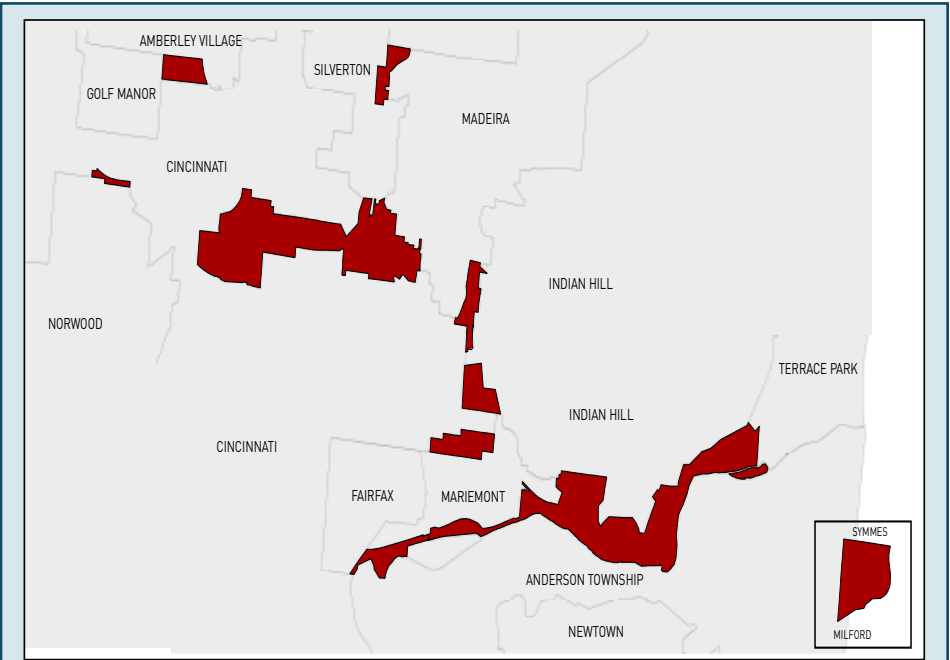
Mike Lemon,
Township Administrator



Avenue, Crestridge Circle, Dogwood Lane, Donald Drive, Highland Avenue, Hill and Dale Drive, Kennedy Avenue, Kenoak Lane, Losantiridge Avenue, Lucille Drive, Monardi Circle, Ridge Circle, Ridge Road, Ridgewood Avenue and Viewpoint Drive.

The Ridge Fire District includes

the Ridge Road and Highland Avenue business district, the Ridgewood subdivision and township streets off Kennedy Avenue.



Columbia Township boundaries: Yes, It's confusing!

Columbia Township is a group of nine "islands" surrounded by other municipalities. Our diverse township contains neighborhoods known as Norwood Green, Ridgewood, Madison Place, Stewart Road, Ridge-Highland, Old Red Bank, Camargo Road, Plainville/Little Miami and Camp Dennison.

Columbia Township trustee, neighborhood bar find spot on the big screen in a mobster movie

A movie about the rise and fall of the notorious mob boss John Gotti hits the big screen next year, featuring (surprise!) a bit role for a Columbia Township trustee and a local neighborhood business.

Chris Kritikos, the township's newest trustee, saw a Facebook call for extras this past July for a movie that would recreate New York in the 1970s and 1980s. The featured film, "The Life and Death of John Gotti" was being shot in the Queen City, headlined by John Travolta and Kelly Preston.

Kritikos made his way the next day to the casting call at Xavier University, just to satisfy his curiosity. What he found was a room full of some 700 applicants and a potential long day ahead of him, which made the opportunity seem less likely and not as interesting.

While he was deciding what to do, he randomly met up with a group of friends- all who looked the part of roughneck Italians- and the group caught the eye of a casting agent. "He (the agent) kind of picked us out and cut us in front," he said. "I was the first one to get called and all my friends were extras in the movie as well."

Kritikos, of Greek descent, had never been involved in theater or entertainment in any way except a brief stint in a Greek reality singing show in his self-described "rock star" days in 2005. But soon he was on set for three days in a non-speaking part, Scenes included a Christmas party, an outside bar-b-que and a disco club where he sat with noted restaurant owner Jeff Ruby.

One day's work involved shooting a car blow up scene at the Bramble Patch adjacent to Columbia Township, half a mile from his home. "The movie was shot right in front of the bar with a large number of onlookers trying to get a glimpse of the action."

While not starstruck by rubbing shoulders with Hollywood types, Kritikos said he found Travolta "kind, polite and down to earth. In fact the entire cast was sincere and made an effort to greet us and thank us for participating in the movie."



Actor John Travolta and Columbia Township trustee Chris Kritikos

"I would not mind doing it again," he said of the long three days of movie making. Even while filming all night several days (and then going to work the next day with an hour or two of sleep) Kritikos said he relished the experience. "Everyone had such a blast, it was such a neat experience and I made some friends in the process. I really could care less about being in the movie."

What Kritikos said he found interesting was the movie-making process itself. "I really appreciate what goes into it. From casting to makeup to directors and set people working together in unison, it was like an orchestra. It was all happening so fast. All this can be attributed to the professionalism and sheer talent that the actors and everyone else involved has and used to the fullest."

Lionsgate Premiere is scheduled to release the drama in the United States.

"Everyone had such a blast, it was such a neat experience and I made some friends in the process."

Chris Kritikos



The Bramble Patch Inn adjacent to Columbia Township was one site in a recent movie shoot in the area for the film, "The Life and Death of John Gotti."

Ridge-Highland businesses invited to connect with Columbia Township

Communications network forming to strengthen economic development.

An effort to connect the large Ridge-Highland business district with township officials is in its initial stages with the launch of a business communications network.

Barry Strum, senior economic development specialist with HCDC, works with Columbia Township to strengthen its economic development outreach. In the last six months, one of his goals has been to stir up interest in the northeast corridor of I-71 where there is room for growth and redevelopment.

Strum has been working on building connections and reaching out to Ridge-Highland area businesses to bring them in contact with each other and the township, he said. Thus far, he's built a base of about 30 businesses in the Ridge-Highland area that are talking to each other and to the township about issues of mutual concern.

"I hope to engage them with what the township can do for them, what services can be improved and what kind of public improvements would serve the area," Strum said. "I'm trying to get interest in the process of redevelopment to exercise peer group potential to maybe promote the area."

"The Ridge and Highland area has the most presence, size and number of businesses of Columbia Township's business areas," Strum noted.

"If you tally it all up with retail, light manufacturing and service businesses, it is about a 1.25 million square feet of potential. A lot of it is underutilized, some is vacant." The area serves as a regional commercial center rather than just a neighborhood service area, he said.

The Ridge-Highland region could be more "more intentionally developed," Strum said, as the Columbia Township portion of the corridor north and south is relatively undeveloped. "One of my roles is to drum up some interest in these sites," he said.

An identifiable trend of area residents moving back to the city has fueled growth and change in the Oakley area in recent years, he noted.

That is identified both "conceptually and financially as a major place for young people."

The Ridge and Highland area is the largest commercial center of Columbia Township's three business areas; the other are the Plainville Road corridor and the Wooster Pike corridor, both in eastern Columbia Township.

With a goal of creating an ongoing dialogue about the needs of the area and ideas for improvement, Administrator Mike Lemon said Columbia Township is interested in hearing from businesses in the area who could have influence in recruitment and retainment of businesses in the area.

"With the addition of UC Health (along I-71) and CBT, which just opened its new facility this summer, we are trying to get more focused on drawing either light industrial or office development in this area," he said. More medically-related businesses and other businesses that might compliment CBT and reduce the oversaturation of retail area would be desirable for this area, he said.

Columbia Township has made an ongoing investment in upgrading infrastructure there in recent years, Lemon said. "Over the past decade we have installed sidewalks throughout the area for pedestrians, placed street furniture for bus stops and installed refuse containers. A streetscape plan led to new trees planted throughout the district, planters full of flowers and other beautification measures," Lemon said. Additionally, the streets were resurfaced and new turning lanes helped improve traffic flow.

"By having more business in the community and a strong business community, this means a more valuable service area for the region and

increased revenue for the township that helps keep taxes down or lower for the residential citizens," Lemon said.



The Ridge-Highland business district is about 1.25 million square feet of potential

Columbia Township road maintenance department goes ‘above and beyond’

Longtime employee John Servizzi takes his job personally when it comes to keeping the roads clean and clear.

A big-hearted township employee whose roots go deep in the Columbia Township community is a familiar face when it comes to getting things done around the township.

Seen driving a snow plow or working alongside his three employees tackling the many piles of fall leaves, John Servizzi takes his commitment to provide high-level public services seriously.

For the past 18 years, the 10.5 miles of Columbia Township’s streets have been the place in the world he makes better as the road superintendent for Columbia Township. To him the community “is a little like Mayberry,” Servizzi admits, as he notes, “I would say I’m rooted in this place.”

Whether he is staying up all night monitoring the weather to assure residents have timely snow removal, or whether he’s planting street trees in front of residential property, Servizzi likes staying close to his residents. In fact, he’s been known to give out his personal cell phone number to residents when there is an issue to be solved.

“I like the idea of being able to help people,” he says. “I like public service. I don’t think you need to be in this job if you don’t.”

For a small department, only four employees all told, the Road Maintenance team led by Servizzi gets the job done, notes Township Administrator Mike Lemon. “John is one of a kind. He is knowledgeable, conscientious, dedicated, dependable and affable. He is truly the key to the routine great service residents receive and to keeping the township in good shape.”

Lemon said he is proud of the high level of services provided to township residents, including full leaf removal, twice monthly brush removal, street sweeping twice a month and leaf



compost deliveries. For a township to offer curb to curb leaf removal is an unusual feat, Lemon said, especially noting that the leaf removal crew comes around to homes about every 10 working days, not just circling through the township once a month.

“Nobody picks ‘em up like we do,” Servizzi notes with a grim. “We blow leaves, walk the streets and blow. We don’t go from pile to pile; we have people walking through the streets blowing,” he said.

Columbia Township also is known for its excellent snow and ice removal services, Lemon said, a fact noted by surrounding communities. “Because we are so small, we are able to get the residential roads clean, quickly. We pride ourselves in our reputation for snow removal,” Servizzi said. “We have such dedicated employees, everything pretty much goes off without a hitch.”

“Jim Groen, Dustin Frazier and Jamey Evanchyk are reliable, dedicated and high-performing individuals,” said Lemon. No matter the cold, snow, ice, no matter the heat or rain, these great guys do their jobs without complaint.

(continued on next page)



John Servizzi

Services provided by Columbia Township



LEAF REMOVAL



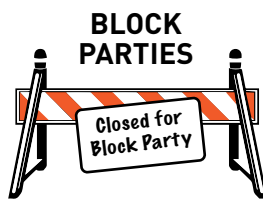
REMOVAL OF DEAD ANIMALS



RECYCLING BIN DELIVERIES



SNOW REMOVAL



BLOCK PARTIES



STREET SWEEPING



NUISANCE PROPERTIES

ALSO

- Brush removal
- Woodchip deliveries
- Reseeding of right-of-way
- Backfilling right-of-way
- Curb cuts



People are always surprised how much work gets done by so few employees,” Lemon said.

In spring, after dealing with the ice and snow, Servizzi said all the township’s more than 200 street trees are trimmed, as they are again in the fall. Two township road maintenance workers are ISA certified arborists, who took the certification classes on their own time to understand the best way to trim trees.

It’s almost time for leaf removal, and

Servizzi says the leaf removal service draws the most comment from residents. Leaves are picked up from approximately mid-October through Christmas.

As for job satisfaction, Servizzi has no trouble identifying parts of his employment that he enjoys. “I like being able to help people,” he said. “I like it when residents compliment us. We have people from other communities drop off food trays, platters of food, cakes and Christmas cards saying thanks for the job we do (on the roads),” he said.

Besides all these tasks, Servizzi notes the road crew also does recycling bin deliveries, reseeded of the right-of-way, backfilling in the right-of-way, block parties, curb cuts and nuisance properties. “I treat this job like my own household,” he said. “I’m very frugal with township dollars. I do everything I can do to save a dollar.”

All in all, Servizzi said he feels good about the way he runs his department. “We take care of our residents. We really do.”

Need permits for new fence, home improvements?

Before you build, check with Hamilton County for permits.

Many residents may not know that Columbia Township does not operate its own planning and zoning department. Hamilton County administers zoning in the township.

“Many smaller communities, like Columbia Township, who do not have the resources or staff to administer building and zoning matters defer to the county,” noted Administrator Mike Lemon.

While the township does not administer this part of government responsibility, Lemon noted that it does interact with planning agencies on broad zoning concerns in the community.

“Columbia Township works closely with the Planning Commission, the Rural Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals regarding any building permits, zoning matters and appeals. They also provide maps, studies and reports to us,” Lemon said. The township also clarifies local zoning by providing a Comprehensive Plan, Special Public Interest (SPI) zoning overlay districts to help zoning while also providing township position letters on zoning issues and more, he said.

Whether you plan to add a deck, garage or new fence, or open a new business or want to learn more about zoning requirements for installing a swimming pool, Hamilton County serves as the authority for helping you meet zoning and permitting conditions so that your project can move forward.

For answers to common questions: building.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/.

Hamilton County Planning and Development Department

Phone: 946-4550

Fax: 946-4511

Office Hours

M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Inspectors are in the office between 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Check your facts!

What do you know of Columbia Township history?

■ **In 1803, Columbia Township** was reduced in size when Ohio became a state. Columbia was subdivided into several townships including Sycamore, Symmes, Spencer and Columbia.

■ **Camp Dennison** was founded as a military training camp for Union force in the Civil War. Between 1861-1865 an estimated 50,000 soldiers went through training at the camp.

■ **In 1884 Columbia Township** built a Township Hall in Pleasant Ridge which was the township center. The building is now the Pleasant Ridge Masonic Temple.

Important Phone Numbers in Columbia Township



Trustee President
David Kubicki
272-7870
dkubicki@columbiatwp.org



Trustee
Chris Kritikos
272-7871
ckritikos@columbiatwp.org



Trustee Vice President
Susan Hughes
272-7872
shughes@columbiatwp.org



Fiscal Officer
Paul Davis
272-7867
pdavis@columbiatwp.org

Township Administration

Administrator
C. Michael Lemon
561-6046
MLemon@columbiatwp.org

Administrative Assistant
Kimberly Gray
272-7877
kgray@columbiatwp.org

JEDZ Tax Administrator
Jane Fette
272-9954
JFette@fairfaxoh.org

Property Maintenance Code Enforcement
792-7256
columbia@sycamoretownship.org

POLICE PROTECTION—Emergency- 911

Columbia Township—Non-Emergency
825-2280

City of Cincinnati—Non-Emergency
765-1212
www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cpd

Hamilton County- Non-Emergency
825-1500
www.hcso.org

FIRE PROTECTION—Emergency- 911

The Little Miami
Joint Fire & Rescue District-
271-3636
<http://lmfr.org>

Deer Park—Silverton Joint Fire District
791-2500
www.dpsjfd.org

Village of Golf Manor Fire Department

531-2022
www.golfmanor.org