I have received many calls and emails asking why the Department of Public Works seems to be behind in its work schedule this summer for drainage projects, catch basin and gutter repairs, and sidewalk installations. Many projects have been started but delayed due to the frequency and unusually high amount of rainfall this spring and summer. To give you an appreciation for the amount of rainfall we have had, which was a real eye opener for me as well, please note that June’s total rainfall was 6.27 inches. By comparison, the normal monthly average for June is 0.27 inches! For the year-to-date totals we have seen 21.32 inches of rain through June 30, this is nearly five inches above average. Further, the July 3 “micro-burst” storm raised the level of Irondequoit Creek an amazing five feet at Blossom Road and two feet at Allen’s Creek in a matter of an hour. And on a final note...the Town Engineer informs me that in a typical year, the month of August brings us our highest rainfall totals. So please bear with us; we will finish all the work we have started by the end of the construction season come “heck or high water”!

The July amphitheater series is underway with the start of “Cool Jazz” Tuesdays and “Kids Fest” Thursdays. Please join us each Tuesday and Thursday for great music and entertainment on the Kiwanis Stage throughout the month of July. I would like to recognize and thank this year’s sponsors of the concert series: Dick Ide Honda, Family First, Baker Commodities, M&T Bank, Brown & Brown Insurance, Synergy Global Solutions, and the Penfield Perinton Kiwanis Club.

On July 1 the governor signed legislation which, effective immediately, creates new penalties for texting-while-driving for young and new drivers to better protect New Yorkers on the road. The new law imposes the same penalties on drivers with probationary and junior licenses for texting-while-driving and using a hand-held cell phone as are issued for speeding and reckless driving. Penalties are 60-day suspensions for first convictions and revocations of 60 days (junior licenses) or six months (probationary licenses) for subsequent convictions incurred within six months of license restoration following a suspension. Also, the number of points has been increased from three to five upon conviction.

A special shout out to the Friends of the Penfield Public Library for being designated a “Community Champion” in a contest sponsored by Fairport Savings Bank. This honor comes with a $1,250 award that I am sure the “Friends” will use to further support programming and equipment for use in the library. On behalf of the entire Penfield Community, congratulations on this very special recognition of your hard work throughout the year and your legendary annual book sale.

As I mentioned several columns ago, we have begun the 2014 budget process. As we start to roll up the cost projections for next year, several components will once again present some real challenges. The first is health care—by leveraging our twelve-community consortium, we were able to hold our cost increase at 9 percent. With new mandatory health care requirements kicking in on January 1, added taxes and fees amount to another 3.5 percent; therefore health care costs for 2014 will increase 12.5 percent. The next big cost is for pensions. New York State has informed us to budget for a 21 percent increase. My goal is to present a fiscally responsible budget to the Penfield Town Board in September, seeking ways to offset these increases through reducing costs, managing spending, and increasing productivity. As the numbers continue to roll up for 2014, I will keep you updated via this column and our website.

Important Dates and Events in History: July 18, 1914 – The United States Army Air Corp is established; July 20, 1969 – American astronaut Neil Armstrong is the first human to walk on the moon; July 26, 1788 – New York is the 11th state admitted to the Union.

Until next week, enjoy the nice stretch of dry weather!

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