



News About Town

A Message From Our Town Manager

Hello Citizens and Friends of Gray,

Before we start putting pumpkin spice in every type of food and drink, it's worth a moment to reflect on the great work done around town this summer—there were some remarkable events, and we received valuable input from the community regarding the future of Gray.

This summer saw the conclusion of a four-day Gray Village visioning charrette, and I'm looking forward to the final report from our planning experts at the Principle Group. We are excited about incorporating residents' insightful ideas into plans for the Village Center, and creating an environment that attracts new business and real estate investment. Our goal for Gray is long-term fiscal responsibility, and that work starts with bold plans for a vibrant, safe, and welcoming Gray Village. If you are one of the many people who attended the block party, or participated in the design work at the Henry Pennell Municipal Complex, we would value your feedback if you would please fill out our [survey](#).



Nate Rudy, Town Manager

Gray was packed on August 13th for the 6th Annual Maine Wild Blueberry Festival. I was so pleased to see people from all corners of the country come together to celebrate. A special heartfelt thanks the [Wild Blueberry Festival Committee](#) for their diligent work all year preparing for this event. and the Town staff and volunteers who helped make the festival an enormous success. You'll see some photos from the event – including images from the ever-important volunteer awards given at the event – in this newsletter.

This month, I'd also like to highlight information about Maine's Property Tax Stabilization Program, which allows certain seniors in Maine to stabilize the property taxes on their homestead. I hope providing the information here will be of assistance.

Here's looking forward to maroon and orange tree leaves and a few more loon calls on the lakes!

Thanks,
Nate Rudy



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Wild Blueberry Festival Welcomes Thousands to Gray

The 6th Annual Wild Blueberry Festival was an enormous success, offering people from all over the state and the country the chance to come together in a show of community, local business, and love of Maine's natural resources.

More than 2,500 people came to the Henry Pennell Municipal Complex in Gray to see live music, shop local vendors, and enjoy the versatility of Maine's wild blueberries.

The Wild Blueberry Committee would like to thank everyone who: attended, entered a contest, bought a Festival T-shirt, had a booth, cooked and served food, judged contests, shared their hobby, performed live music, printed/folded programs, donated items, volunteered (2022 Festival Committee and day-of), and the Town of Gray for hosting this annual summer event. They also want to thank Nate Tsukroff for being the traffic guard.

Special thanks to the generous financial support of the festival's 2022 sponsors:

Presenting - Enercon Technology

Major - Bruns Bros., Cumberland County Federal Credit Union, Patriot Dental, Shad's Custom Countertops

Supporting - GoNetSpeed, Giffords Ice Cream, Gray Family Vision Center, Hannaford, Licht Environmental Design, Maine Community Cookbooks, Norway Savings Bank, Pineland Farms Market, Spring Meadows Golf Course, Wyman's

Creative - Carll Clan Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Dean & Allyn Inc., Gray True Value Hardware, Lakeside Custom Wood Creations, Maine Pie Co., The Whitening Lab Co., Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

See the next pages for photos from the festival!

Upcoming Events

September 6

7p.m.: Town Council Meeting — Zoom and 24 Main Street,

September 15:

5:30 p.m.: Town Council Workshop— Zoom and 24 Main Street, Gray

September 21

6 p.m.: Community Media Night—Gray Public Library

September 23

6:30 p.m.: Stephen King Movie Night—Gray Public Library

September 24

1:30 p.m.: Stephen King Trivia—Gray Public Library

September 28:

7 p.m.: Zoning Board of Appeals—24 Main Street, Gray



The Wild Blueberry Festival featured plenty of kids activities, local food, and visitors from all around! You really had to be there to see it all! Check out the festival's [website](#) to see all they had to offer!



From top left to right:

Landowner of the Year Award

The Durgin Family

The Durgin family recently sold 147 acres they owned on Libby Hill to the Royal River Conservation Trust to help create the new Thayer Brook Preserve.

Organization of the Year Award

GNG ATV Club

This club has operated for decades in Gray. Its members picked up trash on Community Clean-up Days, and worked to make trails around Gray safer.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Robert Coleman and Al Schaeffer

Robert and Al (not pictured) recently helped the Open Space Committee complete the Open Space Plan.

Evelyn Morrill Durgin Award

Gail Cote

Gail is an amazing volunteer and was essential in coordinating the Wild Blueberry Festival.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Galen Morrison

Galen's service to Gray is too lengthy to list here, but he is currently Gray Historical Society's president, and has previously served as the town's fire chief.

Spirit of America Award

Mary Sweeney Underwood

Mary is a well-known face around town. She started the Nordic walking group, a social and exercise club for residents. Mary also painted several birdhouses for the CEDC's birdhouse project, and is a member of the Recreation Committee.

Committee of the Year Award

Open Space Committee

This committee recently completed the *Open Space Plan*, a guiding document that serves as a road map for preserving open space in Gray.



Save the Date!

Saturday, August 12, 2023

7th Annual Gray Wild Blueberry Festival!



Solar Array Near Gray Transfer Station Now Monitorable Online

When you visit the Transfer Station on Seagull Drive in Gray, you probably notice quite a few solar panels next to the station. If you've ever been curious about the solar array, including how much energy it provides, now you can track it online!

When the sun is shining, the solar array produces electricity that is either used in real-time by Town buildings, or fed back to the electricity grid where it benefits our community (and earns the Town a credit). Each year, the system will offset about 475,995 pounds of carbon, the equivalent of over 607,446 miles driven in a gas-powered car.



The solar array near the Transfer Station on Seagull Drive in Gray.

To see the power produced by the solar array, both today and throughout its lifetime, click [here](#). You can view a gallery of drone imagery of the solar array [here](#).

What Did You Think of This Summer's Gray Village Visioning Work?

This summer saw the Town, its staff, outside consulting partners, and Town residents work diligently on various [visioning events for the Gray Village](#). Expect to see a report soon about residents' feedback. Thank you for participating in this important visioning work!

We hope you also enjoyed the [block party](#) on July 29. It was a great chance for residents to come out and enjoy local food, live music, and continue the valuable visioning work. We want to hear your feedback about the visioning process and the block party. Please take a few minutes to complete this [survey](#). The results of this survey will, in part, allow us to plan similar events in the future.



Gray residents expressed plenty of ideas during the Gray Village visioning week!



What You Need To Know About the Senior Property Tax Stabilization Program

Gray residents who will be 65 years or older by April 1, 2023, can now apply for a new program called the Senior Property Tax Stabilization Program. This program, which went into effect on August 8, 2022, allows certain qualified citizens to stabilize, or freeze, the property taxes on their homestead.

In addition to the age requirement, you must be a permanent resident of Maine, have owned a Maine homestead for at least ten years (this does not have to be ten consecutive years or in the same municipality), and be eligible for a homestead exemption on the property you are placing in the stabilization program.



The tax stabilization program freezes the amount of tax you owe on your home.

“One benefit of this program is that, unlike other assistance options, there is no income component for qualification,” says Town of Gray Assessor Lauren Asselin. “The only requirements are that you meet the age, residency, and ownership qualifications. It is important to remember that you must submit an application by December 1st of each year that you wish to be enrolled in this program.

If you do not submit an application by the December deadline in any given year, your property tax bill will return to its “normal” amount. If you re-apply after the missed year, your new stabilized amount will reset to the missing year’s normal tax amount.

“Once you apply and are accepted into this program, the property tax billed to you for the next tax year will be frozen at the amount you were billed in the previous year,” explains Asselin. If you change homesteads, you can transfer your stabilized tax amount to your new homestead even if your new homestead is in a different town.

You can apply for this program [here](#), or by visiting the Town Office.

If you have any other questions about this program, please contact the [Town of Gray Assessor’s Office](#).



Learn How To Protect Yourself From Fraud and Scam Attempts

Scams and identity theft rob millions of Americans of their hard-earned money every year. Scammers are smart, creative and relentless, but there are simple steps each of us can take to protect ourselves and our families from these crimes.

AARP is proud to be a leader in the fight to combat fraud everywhere, and right here in Maine, too. Join the AARP for a workshop that will help you recognize common scams and what you can do to avoid them. You'll learn about useful resources and receive your own fraud prevention guide. Join the workshop on September 13, 2022, to learn more.

This informative program will be presented by an AARP Maine Fraud Watch Volunteer at the American Legion at 15 Lewiston Road in Gray at 6 p.m. Questions should be directed to [Julie Flynn](#).

Join Movie Time at the Gray Public Library

The Gray Public Library is proud to present films the way they were meant to be seen! Every Tuesday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 1 p.m., the library screens films free of charge on their 150-inch screen, using a state-of-the-art 4K projector, with an eleven-speaker / two-subwoofer sound system that rivals even top-end movie theaters. And what better way is there to enjoy a movie than with free snacks?

They screen new releases, remastered masterpieces, and classics like you've never seen them before. The full screening schedule can be seen [here](#).



The Gray Public Library offers movie showings and book, music, and movie rentals.



Gray Waste Site Formally Removed From EPA's Superfund List

Following a [proposed delisting](#) of the former McKin Company Superfund Site located in Gray from the [National Priorities List](#) (NPL), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has now formally removed the site from the NPL.

Deleting a site from the NPL signals to communities that remedial activities on the Site are complete, and allows them to move forward in reusing and/or redeveloping the land as appropriate - although some restrictions remain.

The Agency and the Town of Gray have implemented institutional controls to maintain the site's continued remediation, including an [ordinance](#), adopted in 2002, prohibiting the use of groundwater within a designated area surrounding the site. There are also [restrictions on 21 sub-dividable properties](#) within the designated area.

You can read more about this development on our [website](#). Our website also contains points of contact should you have any questions.



An image of the former McKin site.

Community Media Night Introduces Residents to Gray Community Television

On Wednesday, September 21, 2022, from 6 – 8 p.m., the Gray Public Library, in coordination with the Town of Gray Communications and Information Department and Standing Oak Media, is hosting Gray's first-ever Community Media Night.

The informative event, hosted by broadcast media professional Randy Visser, aims to explain to community members how they can utilize the public access platform offered by [Gray Community Television](#).

You can expect to learn the history of community media generally, and in Gray specifically, during this event, important GCTV policy information, and how to create and sponsor content for the channel.

Please visit our website to learn more about this [event](#).



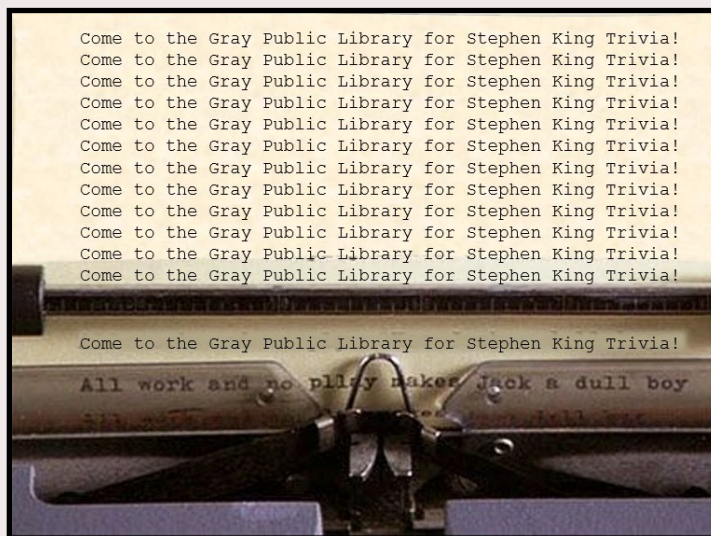
Community Media Night aims to educate Gray residents about GCTV.



Test Your Stephen King Knowledge at the Gray Public Library

We're celebrating Maine's Eeriest Author this September! Join the Gray Public Library for Stephen King Trivia on **Saturday, September 24th at 1:30 p.m.** Test your knowledge of the King of Horror in honor of his 75th birthday. Attendees will be treated to an array of spooky snacks and have the chance to win amazing prizes. You know what they say: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy - so come have some fun at the library!

This event is suitable for teens and adults, and will be held at the Gray Public Library (5 Hancock Street). Participants are welcome to play on their own or in teams of up to five people. For more information, call 207-657-4110 or email libcirc@graymaine.org.



How well do you know the Master of Horror?

GCTV is Watchable Wherever You Are!

Did you know there are many ways to watch Gray Community Television? Not only can you watch live via graymaine.org/gctv and on cable channel 2, but if you have an AppleTV, Roku device, Android phone, or iPhone, the Cablecast Screenweave app will allow you to watch GCTV live, wherever you are.

Just visit your device's app store and search for Cablecast Screenweave. The app uses your phone's location to display the nearest community television stations, so Gray's will probably be at the top of the list once you launch the app.

Remember, YOU can sponsor content for Gray Community Television; that's why it's there! Visit graymaine.org/gctv for more information, call the GCTV Station Manager at 207-657-3339 x116, or email gctv2@graymaine.org.



Watch GCTV via the Cablecast Screenweave app!



Gray is Looking for Committee Members

Serve your town by volunteering for these committees!

Blueberry Festival Committee: Celebrates and promotes local businesses, community and school organizations, and the Pennell Complex.

Community Economic Development Committee: Promotes community and cultural connections in Gray and supports established businesses.

Community Television Advisory Committee: Makes recommendations regarding broadcast options for Gray, and recommends improvements to public, educational, and governmental programming.

Dry Mills School House Committee: Preserves the rich history of the Dry Mills School House.

Open Space Committee: Makes recommendations to the Town Council to help secure access to land/corridors through acquisitions, easements, land swaps, and other forms of agreements.

Planning Board: Reviews and approves subdivision plans, site plans, conditional uses, and Shoreland Zoning applications in accordance with State Statutes and Town Ordinances.

Resiliency Committee: Promotes climate action planning and influences the path our community will take toward climate resilience, energy efficiency, waste management and renewable energy.

Zoning Board of Appeals Committee: Hears and decides administrative appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination by the Code Enforcement Officer.

MSAD15 School Board: Shapes the functioning of the Gray-New Gloucester school system.



Mary volunteers on the Recreation Committee, leads a walking group she started, and is one of the most visible faces in Gray. Be like Mary!

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."

- Sue Premo, Volunteer Coordinator, Green Bay, WI



The Town of Gray is Hiring!

We hire great people from a variety of backgrounds to do the town's important work. If you are looking for a career opportunity, check out our [Employment page](#) to see if there's an opening that's right for you!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- Absentee ballot applications are now available to request via the [State of Maine's website](#) for the November 8, 2022 General Election. You can also request an absentee ballot by coming into the Town Office located at 24 Main Street in Gray during our [open hours](#), or calling the Clerk's Office at 207-657-3339.
- FY23 property tax bills are now available to view on our [website](#).

If you have an idea for a newsletter submission, please fill out this [form](#).

Questions can be directed to:

Kyle Hadyniak, Digital Media Coordinator

Gray Town Office

207-657-3339 x116

