

RE-ELECT MIKE
LYONS

AS **MAYOR**
Village of Richfield



The election on November 6 is a vote on the way we want to approach our future as a community. During the twenty years I have been active in Village government I have learned government usually moves slowly, and so elected officials must focus on the long-term planning process to achieve sustainable improvements in a community. The Village of Richfield has made significant progress through the years because our leaders have had a vision for the future, and we have had sufficient continuity of leadership to carry out that vision. Your vote on November 6 will be an expression of whether you think this is an appropriate approach for our community.

I have emphasized thorough planning, and with Village Council's support we have taken action based on the priorities that arise from a thoughtful planning process. Sometimes situations and citizen needs require immediate action and it is important that we in local government jump in quick response. But, as I have learned from my Village experience and from experience representing officials in other towns, government that only reacts to problems, that plans only day-to-day, and acts with only short-term responses, is eventually ineffective. Yesterday's forward-thinking is what improves our ability to respond to the problems of today.

In this newsletter I want to discuss the state of affairs in the Village, explain my priorities, and convince you it will be in the best interest of our community to continue under my leadership.

STATE OF THE VILLAGE

The Village of Richfield is a stable, safe and beautiful place to live and raise a family. Village services are superior and compare very well to any community in the region, yet local real estate taxes to fund Village services are among the lowest in the region.

For a community the size of Richfield, we have made impressive investments and improvements in utilities and infrastructure. At the same time, we have jealously protected the natural beauty and open spaces we love, and we have worked vigorously to balance development so that it will be sustainable into the future. In the following sections I will discuss the many components of our success.

VILLAGE FINANCES

Neither the income tax rate nor the property tax rate has been increased during the past fifteen years to fund the Village's operations; and there will be no need to increase Village taxes in the foreseeable future. Yet the excellent services provided to the residents of Richfield have expanded and improved during the same period. The strong position of our community is not the result of happenstance, but comes from strong, forward-looking leadership, of which I have been an active part for the past twenty years.

Village finances are as healthy now as they have been since I was first on council in 1988. We ran into a fiscal crunch in the early 1990s because of a dip in the economy, our heavy reliance on the trucking industry as our primary tax base, and increases in employee health insurance and solid waste disposal costs to the Village. Our tax base has expanded through the development of high quality office buildings in environmentally friendly developments such as Kinross Lakes and Stonegate Office Park. These developments have brought high paying jobs to Richfield, with relatively low impact on the community, and have diversified our tax base so we are no longer as dependent upon the trucking companies. The Village now receives less than 20% of its tax revenues from trucking operations.

I have encouraged high quality development in our tax base. In 2006 I personally prepared and submitted two applications to obtain state funds to improve infrastructure (the new state of Ohio Job Ready Sites Grants). One of our applications ranked first among those submitted by municipalities in Summit County.

VILLAGE SERVICES

The Village provides a high level of service through its police, fire, service, parks, planning and zoning, finance, and human services departments.

- **Fire Department & Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** The Village of Richfield has a long tradition of providing quality fire and EMS services. During the past twenty years the Village has moved from a predominantly part-time fire department (with one person on duty 24 hours a day) to a mixed full-time/part-time department staffed with three EMS qualified personnel 24 hours a day. During the past four years the Village replaced an old fire-pump truck and an equipment truck at a total cost of more than \$500,000. All of these improvements were accomplished without a property tax levy and without the need for any increase in the income tax rate.

During the past year Bath Township and Richfield Village worked together to place a fire department training officer in the schools.

- **Police Department and Dispatch Services:** The Village has a very professional police department and a state of the art dispatching unit. Both are 24-hour operations. During the early to mid 90s we upgraded to an 800Mhz radio system, and five to six years ago we added personnel to provide police services to Richfield Township. During the past four years we added a new database program to track calls and operations, a new reverse 911 function in dispatch, and a digital fingerprint system that links directly with the state's system.
The police department coordinates each year with the fire department to provide Safety Town training to the children of the community, and the Village has coordinated for years with Bath

Township to provide a DARE training officer in the schools.

- **Service Department and Highway Maintenance:** The service department does more work than residents might realize. The department maintains the cemeteries, parks, ball fields and public buildings; repairs roads and prepares them for our annual pavement program; maintains culverts and ditches; maintains and repairs 67 Village vehicles and many items of equipment; maintains 31 miles of sanitary sewer lines, 19 sanitary sewer pump stations and 250 fire hydrants. During the winter the service employees are on call 24-hours a day for snow removal duty, and they do an excellent job of keeping Richfield's roads clear. The service department also provides leaf pickup in the fall and spring and brush chipping year round, services not available in every community.
- **Trash Pickup:** The Village of Richfield provides trash pickup, through a trash hauling company, at no cost to the residents, a service offered in only two other communities in Summit County, one of them Richfield Township.
- **Planning and Zoning Department:** This department is small, but it performs important work for the citizens of this community. At my initiation and under my oversight the Planning Commission and staff have mapped all land uses in the Village and have identified the priority conservation and priority development areas throughout the community. This work is part of our current ten-year update of the Village's comprehensive land-use plan. On a day-to-day basis the staff enforces the zoning code as they process complaints, applications for subdivisions and zoning permits.
- **Park and Recreation Department:** This department is relatively small, but developing. The Park and Recreation Board has, at my urging, been working on its own comprehensive plan, and we are establishing clear direction and goals to serve residents of all ages.

I have supported the Village's purchase of property during my term for the specific purpose of improving recreational opportunities. The purchase of the Johnson property to the south of Richfield Woods will allow the Village to expand playing fields, improve the entrance to the park and establish a walking and biking path to connect the park with Route 303. The acquisition of the Pedigo property to the south of the town hall gives us a tremendous opportunity to create public space for recreational and community use.

The acquisition of the Eastwood and Carter properties was made possible by State of Ohio grants to which I devoted much time and personal effort. These properties must be preserved to improve water quality, but they can also serve as parks with trails and public access.

- **Human Services and Senior Center:** Mayor Larsen established the Human Services Commission and the Senior Center to provide programs and services for the seniors of our community. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Jan Weber this has been a successful service to the community, and I continue to support the program.

Few communities the size of Richfield Village provide the level of service we enjoy, and fewer yet do so without the need for a single real property tax levy.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I have devoted a great deal of time and effort during my administration to the management of several large capital improvement projects, and to the development of plans for future projects. Residents may not realize the scope of the Village's responsibility when it comes to long-term capital improvements. The following provides a brief overview.

- **Sewer Lines:** The installation of public sanitary sewers in the Village dates back to the late 70s and early 80s when the planning was started, and it is a good example of the value of long-term planning in Richfield. The Village started to tuck money away to pay for a trunk

line 30 years ago. By 1988 plans for the trunk line were completed and construction began around 1990. Since then broad improvements to our tax base have been possible, and we have extended the system to the center of town and the residential areas between Brecksville Road and I-77 north of Everett Road. The existing system consists of 31 miles of sewer lines and 19 pump stations. The Village is now ready to bid a project to extend sanitary sewers to the Motor Road, Ratener, Five Oaks and Harold Drive area east of I-77. We will continue to plan for appropriate extensions of this system.

- **Storm Sewers:** I have many requests to help solve long-standing storm water problems in a number of areas, including Farnham Road, Everett Road west of Brecksville Road, Harold Drive, Grant Street, Wheatley Road, and the area of 303 and Ridgeview Drive, as well as other areas. I have personally visited most of the problem areas. I have met with engineers to plan out realistic solutions and to set priorities for the work that needs to be done. Unfortunately, many of these are longstanding problems that date back to when subdivisions were done without good planning, and it will take time and, in some cases, very expensive work to solve the problems.

- **Water Lines:** The extension of City of Cleveland water lines into Richfield Village dates back to the late 1960s. Until fifteen years ago the water lines extended south from the Brecksville Road line along Brecksville road only to the clinic at Brush road. Since then a trunk line has been extended the full length of Brecksville Road to Everett, and east along Everett to serve the Revere School Complex. There is a need for the extension of water to residential areas where the wells are inadequate. Some extensions can be accomplished without a significant change to the existing infrastructure, but other areas, like the center of town at Broadview and 303 cannot be served until a major infrastructure improvement is done to provide adequate water pressure, most likely through the installation of a water tower. I am working with the City of Cleveland Water Department to accomplish this.

- **Roads:** The maintenance of roads will always be a priority, and we have an annual program to repave Village roads so each will be done every ten years or so. We have, of course, recently completed the reconstruction of Brecksville Road, which was the largest road project the Village has ever undertaken. Roads are in good shape.
- **Public Buildings:** The construction of the new police and fire stations and the renovation of the town hall have been completed. The planning for these improvements began about 1997, when it became painfully clear the facilities for the police and fire departments had become inadequate. We analyzed where the facilities should be located and how much space would be needed. The new space is more than ample for our needs at this time, but that is as it should be, because we planned the buildings to meet our needs into the foreseeable future.

For years we have discussed and debated whether we should build a recreational facility with features like an indoor pool, exercise facilities and indoor courts. I have heard from citizens strongly in favor of such a facility, and from those opposed to it because they feel the operational costs will not be affordable. I hope I can lead the discussion to a consensus, and we can arrive at an affordable plan to meet the recreational needs of our kids and families.

MAINTAIN THE QUALITIES OF RICHFIELD

Richfield is at a unique place in its history, a time when we still have the opportunity to preserve the qualities that we appreciate. A number of the remaining large parcels have or will in the foreseeable future pass from one generation to the next, and the choice between the

preservation of that land or its development will be made. The Village ought not buy all the vacant land, but we should be aware of this circumstance and pursue the preservation of land where we have the opportunity, whether by acquisition (especially with public/private grants), by judicious planning, or by encouraging environmentally respectful development. As a lifelong resident I appreciate the history of the community and the need to preserve its essential qualities.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS

I am aware of the needs and desires of residents, and I am responsive. Those needs range from immediate issues like trash left on the curb, a key locked in a car, the need for emergency transport, and zoning disputes, to long-term issues like the extension of water utilities, the resolution of storm water problems and the development of recreational facilities.

To meet these needs in an orderly and sustainable manner we must always be planning and establishing priorities. I believe my approach to leadership in local government will achieve the greatest benefits for the citizens of Richfield, the most broad and the most fundamental benefits.

CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP

Your choice on November 6 will determine whether we will continue with the same quality of leadership we have enjoyed for many years. Your vote for Mike Lyons on November 6 will provide continuity of leadership to achieve our goals for the common good. Thank you for your support.

I need your vote on November 6th.

MY RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

- ✓ Assistant Prosecutor in Medina and Cuyahoga County – 11 years.
- ✓ Law Director, City of Norton – 7 years
- ✓ Richfield Village Council–14 yrs (Pres–5 yrs), Planning Commission-4 yrs.
- ✓ Law Degree (Case), Political Science (Kent), Education (Cleveland State)

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Paid for by Committee to Re-Elect Mike Lyons, Barbara Lanford, Treasurer, 3300 Broadview Road, Richfield, Ohio 44286