

## Spring is in the Air...

It's February and Mother Nature has finally given us a break in the weather. Temperatures have been unseasonably high for this time of year, a complete contrast to what we all have endured over the last year. During that time, the community has been faced with many weather challenges including record levels of snowfall last winter, a Blizzard, and multiple Nor'easters. Last August the east coast was rocked by an earthquake in Virginia with shockwaves that measured 5.8 on the Richter scale and were felt as far away as Canada. Several days later, the east coast suffered the devastation of Hurricane Irene that destroyed many homes right here in our own town. In September, a Cyber burst dropped nearly five inches of rain within 20 minutes, causing flash flooding in many of our neighborhoods. These weather patterns lend credence to Global Warming, a condition that affects the whole world. We see stories on the news about Tsunamis, tornadoes, fires and droughts, floods and storms causing catastrophic conditions across the globe.

We as a community need to be prepared for unexpected severe weather. We depend on our emergency personnel to get through the devastation that may accompany these storms. Such violent acts of Mother Nature expose our weaknesses, and show us where we need to improve our infrastructure, emergency equipment and flood control structures. To that end, the town has four emergency alert systems that were installed by the County several years ago. They are at the following locations; the plaza, Koelle Boulevard, Laurel Hill and Secaucus Road. This town wide alert notification system allows for live voice instructions, which will assist us in getting information out in the event of a serious emergency. Residents are also advised to tune into local radio stations as well as channel 36 and the town website [www.secaucusnj.org](http://www.secaucusnj.org) for important information.

Flooding has always been a major concern in our community. You may not be aware of the fact that Secaucus is an island, surrounded by water on all sides including the Hackensack River, Penhorn and Cromakill Creeks. This makes the town prone to flooding in extreme weather and during times of astronomical high tides. This administration is making flood control a top priority. In fact, if you watch the town council meetings, longtime resident Sam Maffei continually reminds us of the devastation that flooding could cause.

Our newly formed flood control committee has met with town engineers to review our flood plans, flood reports and surveys done over the last several years. The committee is working with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, NJ State Department of Transportation, FEMA and our local state and federal legislators to discuss long term solutions. There are several projects either being designed or already underway. For instance, a contract was awarded to rebuild the Penhorn Pump Station to bring it up to modern standards. This should alleviate flooding that exists on Secaucus Road, Penhorn Avenue and Henry Street.

We are also working closely with the County to address flooding on Paterson Plank Road in the area of Home Depot. A new sewer line was installed to reduce residential flooding on Humboldt Street and Golden Avenue. Every berm, (raised barrier), is going to be rebuilt to higher elevations to better manage flooding on Meadow Lane, Mill Ridge, Farm, Oak and Acorn Roads.

Design work was also completed to install a new storm line on Farm Road. Construction is expected to begin in the spring.

There will be \$500,000 allocated in the capital budget to further address the need for improvements throughout our community. The town and the NJ DOT are working together to improve flooding conditions during flash floods and storm water in the plaza that drains into Mill Creek under Route Three to the state highway flood gate.

Additionally we will be working with our professional engineers, planners and others to continue updating and creating new and more comprehensive town wide flood plans. We are committed to do the best we can to resolve these issues. However there are some weather conditions Mother Nature throws at us that are very challenging to control. In the event of an emergency, weather or otherwise, contact the local Police, Office of Emergency Management or Fire Department. For non-emergency issues call 201-330-2060. Dial 911 for an emergency.