



The Village Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE VILLAGE OF YELLOW SPRINGS

A CALL TO SERVE



**JOHNNIE
BURNS**
VILLAGE
MANAGER

Yellow Springs has always been a place where people get involved. Whether it's organizing for social justice, attending public meetings, or volunteering for local organizations, our community has a long tradition of showing up for one another. That tradition is more important now than ever, and we need people who care about our Village to consider stepping into leadership roles.

In the upcoming November election, our community will vote on several open positions: seats on Village Council, the Mayor, School Board, and Miami Township Trustees. There are also opportunities to volunteer on Village commissions. Each of these roles is an opportunity to contribute to the decisions and priorities that shape our daily lives.

Leadership in Yellow Springs doesn't require a political science degree or decades of experience. What it does require is commitment, collaboration, and a genuine desire to serve. Democracy thrives when everyday people step forward. If you've ever asked yourself, "What can I do to help?" then running for office or volunteering on a board or commission might be your answer.

Serving your community doesn't just make Yellow Springs stronger, it also helps you connect more deeply to the place you call home. You'll gain insight into how decisions are made, how public resources are managed, and how collaborative leadership shapes outcomes.

In a time when national issues can feel overwhelming, local government gives us the chance to make a real and immediate difference.

If you're not sure where to start, attend a Village Council, School Board, or Miami Township meeting. It's a good way to see what the work looks like and where you might fit in. If running for office doesn't feel like the right fit, you can apply to serve on one of the Village's commissions. For information about openings contact the Council Clerk or visit the Village website.

Civic engagement is both a responsibility and a privilege. In Yellow Springs, it is also a longstanding tradition. If you have ever felt the call to serve, now is a great time to answer. Together, let's continue building a community where everyone has a voice and a place at the table.



Behind the Bench

Mayor Pam Conine's journey to office in Yellow Springs began in the classroom and continues today in the courtroom. A former educator with more than four decades of experience, she now serves not only as the ceremonial face of the Village but also as the presiding authority of Yellow Springs Mayor's Court.

"I moved to Yellow Springs by choice and fell in love with the community, quickly got a job teaching at Morgan Middle School, and proceeded to have 42 years in education which culminated with my retirement in Yellow Springs," the Mayor explains.

After teaching social studies for five years in Piqua, Ohio, she was drawn to Yellow Springs in the late 1970's by friends who described it as "a very do-your-own-thing community with a great school system." That was all she needed to hear.

She started as a substitute teacher and was hired full-time just a few months later. Conine remained in the Yellow Springs school system until her retirement in 2009. In addition to her work in local schools, she taught literacy and education courses at Antioch College and, later, at Antioch University Midwest, where she trained future educators. After retiring from teaching, she found herself pulled back into public service.

"Well, that brings us to the 2016 election, and we all know what happened there," she says. "Two years later, when it was time for another mayoral race, I was approached by a group of friends who said, 'would you ever consider running for mayor?'"

In Yellow Springs, the position of mayor is defined by the Village charter as primarily ceremonial and judicial, unlike in many municipalities where the mayor serves as an administrative arm of the council. Yellow Springs is one of approximately 300 municipalities in Ohio with a Mayor's Court.

A Mayor's Court is a legal body that allows a mayor to hear and rule on specific low-level offenses. These courts can only be established by municipalities that are not county seats and have a population of at least 200 residents. Yellow Springs is the only community in Greene County with a Mayor's Court. Mayor Pam Conine attends yearly training sessions relating to court procedures.

Cases handled in a Mayor's Court typically include traffic violations like speeding or driving without a license, along with ordinance violations and minor criminal offenses. It's a venue that is designed to keep justice within the community it serves.

Mayor Pam Conine is the judge of Yellow Springs Mayor's Court. In this role she can alter fines and drop charges, but cannot change charges. Mayor's Court does not hear civil cases. The majority of cases she hears are traffic-related, but the court also handles minor criminal offenses, such as trespassing.

Mayor Pam Conine emphasizes the educational component of her role as well as her role in establishing restorative justice.



Mayor Pam Conine addresses a citizen during Mayor's Court.

That local focus is key to the Court's function. Because residents appear before someone familiar, the process can be more personal. Mayor Pam Conine believes this closeness strengthens, rather than compromises, the Court's fairness.

Mayor Pam Conine believes that her familiarity with residents is an asset. To ensure fairness, she states "consistency is important." Still, she acknowledges that Mayor's Court is not without its critics. "Some believe Mayor's Court exists as a money maker," she says. Others, however, see it as "local justice for local issues."

Although the judicial role is central, the Mayor also embraces the public-facing aspects of her position. She views her work as Mayor as an opportunity to represent Yellow Springs in all its vibrancy and values.

"I see the Yellow Springs Mayor as an ambassador for the Village. That's how I view the role," she explains. "It's such a fun position."

Since taking office, she has performed 207 weddings, issued 131 proclamations, and led numerous parades. These ceremonial duties allow her to be a visible and celebratory presence in village life.

Yellow Springs operates under a council-manager form of government, which means the Village Council and Village Manager handle legislative and executive functions. The Mayor, meanwhile, leads the judicial branch.

"Being Mayor allows me to be there for people—to be of service to others through my elected position," she says. Whether from the bench, at a wedding, or in a parade, Mayor Pam Conine sees her work as rooted in compassion and community.

She is also committed to larger causes, especially environmental stewardship. One of the moments she's most proud of as Mayor is taking the World Wildlife Fund's Mayor's Monarch Pledge to protect monarch butterflies and their habitat.

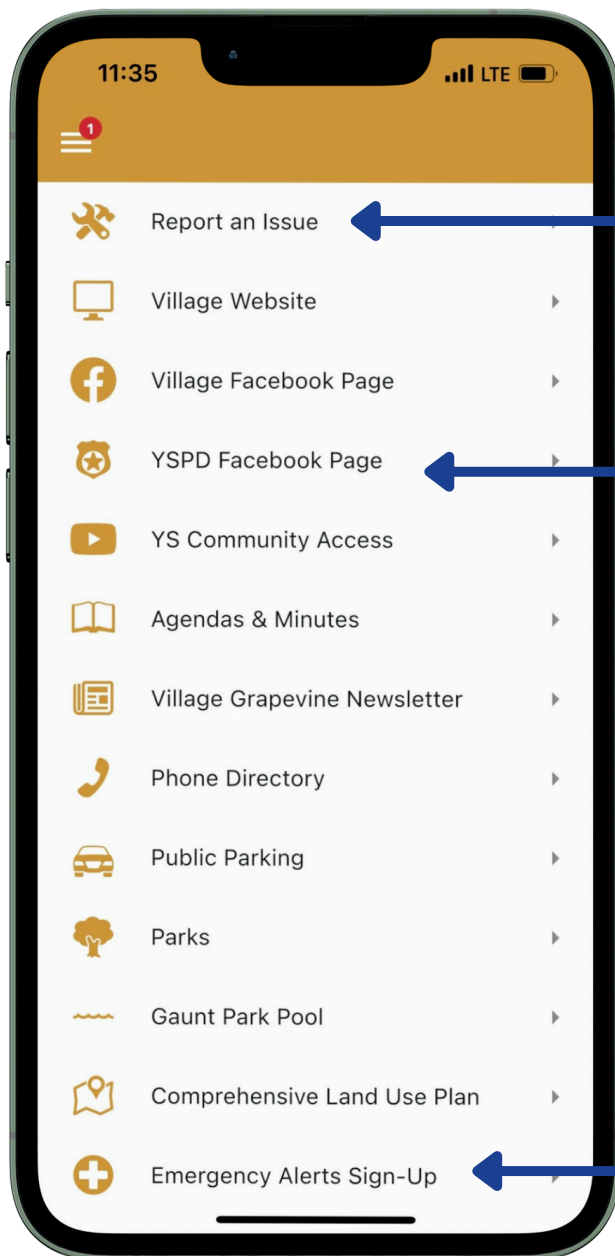
As she approaches the end of her tenure as Mayor, Conine continues to lead with a deep respect for fairness, education, and the people of Yellow Springs.

Introducing YSConnect



The Village has launched YSConnect, a free app that delivers non-emergency alerts straight to your phone. Get timely updates on street closures, events, office hours, trash and recycling changes, and Public Works projects. Available now for iPhone and Android — just search "YSConnect" (one word) in the App Store or Google Play. No sign-up or personal info needed. Download today and stay informed!

Explore a few of the features in our new app designed to keep you informed, involved, and empowered.



See Something? Say Something!

The "Report an Issue" applet makes it easy for Yellow Springs residents to submit concerns directly to the Village using the iWorQ system. Whether it's a pothole, a broken streetlight, or another public issue, your report helps us respond quickly and keep our community in great shape.

Community-Focused. Transparency-Driven.

The "YSPD Facebook Page" applet connects you to the new Yellow Springs Police Department Facebook page—your resource for learning about YSPD initiatives, urgent police matters, community policing efforts, department policies, and ways to get involved. Stay informed and engaged as we work together for a safe, inclusive village.

Be Prepared. Stay Informed.

The "Emergency Alerts Sign-Up" applet takes you to Hyper-Reach, a notification system administered by Greene County. Even though the Village does not create these alerts, it is a great way to receive real-time alerts about severe weather, safety hazards, and other urgent events affecting Yellow Springs. It's a simple step to help keep you and your loved ones safe.



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App Store



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Open camera, aim, tap link

Number One in Water

For nearly two decades, Brad Ault has been a quiet but essential force behind the scenes in Yellow Springs, helping ensure the Village's water and wastewater systems are running smoothly and safely. As Water and Wastewater Superintendent, Ault brings not only experience to the role, but also a lifelong connection to the field. Born and raised in Xenia, Ault's journey into water management began at a young age, thanks to his father, who worked as a wastewater operator for the City of Xenia. "I spent many days as a kid at the wastewater plant," Ault recalled. "My dad worked weekends, and we'd bring him lunch, so I got to see the inner workings early on. That's how I got to know the field."

Ault began working for the Village of Yellow Springs in 2007 as a summer employee, assisting at the wastewater plant. After earning his wastewater license, he was hired full-time in 2008 and expanded his responsibilities to include both the water and wastewater facilities. He credits his father and several mentors for helping him learn the ropes. "My dad's supervisor, Jason Tincu, was great at teaching me the plants, as well as my former supervisor Joe Bates and operator Ted Dunevant," he said.

As he advanced in his career, Ault found not just a profession but a purpose. "Water is key to life," he said. "Whether you're treating drinking water or cleaning wastewater, you're directly impacting human health. That's a responsibility I take seriously." Ault also appreciates the camaraderie that exists among water professionals. "It's a tight-knit group," he said. "You meet people from different communities at events and help each other out. That kind of teamwork keeps you engaged."

As Superintendent, Ault's days are full and varied. He oversees operations at both plants, helps set weekly goals, ensures required lab testing is completed, assists his team with daily tasks, and keeps the Village in compliance with Ohio EPA standards. "It's a big challenge maintaining both plants, their grounds, and equipment," Ault explained. "Plus, there's all the monthly and yearly reports, and keeping up with constantly changing regulations, especially with both water and wastewater rules evolving so fast."

In larger municipalities, these responsibilities are often split between multiple departments, but in Yellow Springs, Ault wears both hats. "It's rare to be in charge of both," he said. "But for a community like ours, it makes sense."

The field has changed significantly during Ault's career. "When I started, the plants were mostly manual, with lots of lights and buttons," he said. "Technology changes fast, and there's always something new to learn." When Ault started, the Yellow Springs water system had major challenges. The original water treatment plant, built around 1946, didn't filter out manganese, a mineral that caused frequent black water incidents. "It wasn't dangerous, but it looked bad, and sometimes, it would last for days."

That changed with the opening of a new treatment plant in 2018. Working with an engineering firm, Ault and his team spent a year researching different treatment technologies, visiting other plants, talking to operators, and designing a system tailored to the Village's needs. The result? A uniquely efficient setup using gravity filters, aeration, and a sand-based softening system that's rare in the U.S. but common in Europe. "We've had operators from other states come tour the plant," Ault said. "It's something people are curious about."

The new plant didn't just fix the manganese problem—it raised the bar entirely. Yellow Springs has since won Best Tasting Water in Ohio multiple times at state conferences. That's a long way from the discolored water days, and a point of pride for Ault. Among more recent improvements, Ault is especially proud of the installation of new chlorine pumps. "It might seem small, but those pumps are more reliable, and reliability is everything in our line of work."

Looking ahead, Ault is focused on upcoming regulations, particularly around PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), often called "forever chemicals." "That's the big thing right now," he said. "We're working on a solid plan to make sure we're prepared."

Ault encourages residents to take pride in their water and not take it for granted. "People wake up, turn on the tap, and there's water. But behind the scenes, someone might've worked all night to make that possible." He also urges residents to stay mindful about leaks. "Monitoring for water leaks really helps," he said. "And most of all, drink it and enjoy it!"



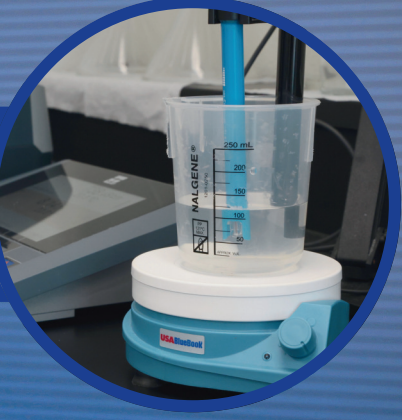
Water Softening
The water treatment plant uses a sand-based water softening system that is unique in the United States. Similar systems are more often found in Europe.



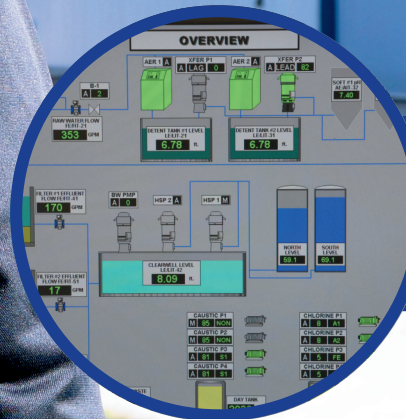
Chlorine Treatment
Recently the plant was upgraded with two new chlorine pumps. These pumps help finetune the treatment process and ensures the safety of the water.



Production Capacity
The Yellow Springs Water Treatment plant has a capacity of 1 million gallons a day. Currently, the plant is treating roughly 300,000 gallons of water per day.



Daily Water Sampling
The water in Yellow Springs is tested daily for pH, conductivity, chlorine levels, hardness, and various other important drinking water metrics.



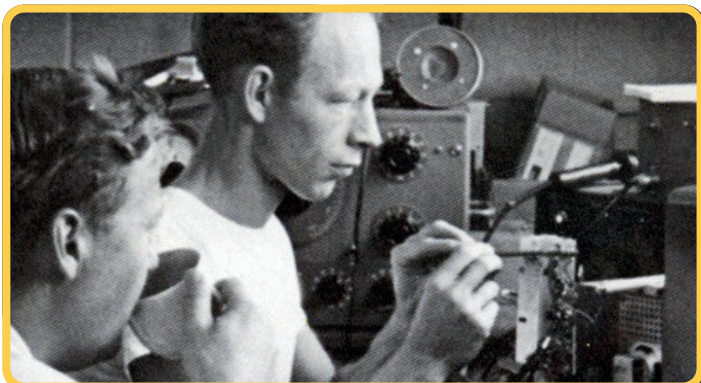
Advanced Technology
In addition to the manual testing and maintenance that takes place, the plant is outfitted with numerous high-tech features designed to detect problems as fast as possible.

A History of Innovation

In 1948, two engineers and a chemist formed a partnership at Antioch College, whose innovations would transform the world.

The three partners — Hardy Trolander, John Benedict, and David Jones — named their endeavor the Yellow Springs Instrument Company, or YSI, and they set out to apply good science to their work for the benefit of mankind. Within their first 10 years as a company, they developed the first practical medical electronic thermometer, the first commercial heart-lung machine, and the first instantaneous blood-gas analyzer.

“They were tinkerers,” says Brandon Smith, the Global Director of Marketing Operations for the Analytics division at Xylem Inc., the company that was created in 2011 when YSI merged with the Analytics division of ITT Corporation. “They started out supplying parts to Wright-Patt Air Force Base, but they shifted their attention quite quickly to the medical field and, eventually, the environmental field.”

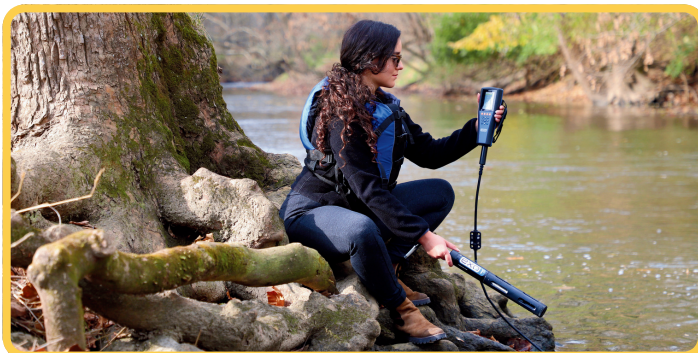


The early years at YSI were marked by significant innovations.

Over the next several decades, YSI became an industry leader in innovative, groundbreaking medical instruments. This, in part, was due to a collaboration with Dr. Leland Clark, who developed the first electrode to allow for blood oxygen measurements to be taken in real time. This invention allowed physicians to perform open-heart surgery for the first time. Dr. Clark would go on to develop the glucose biosensor, which led to YSI's creation of a pioneering glucose analyzer, a benefit to millions of people worldwide who live with diabetes.

As Smith notes, “This is pretty cool stuff that you don’t even think about. It just exists. Well, someone had to come up with it years and years ago. That all got started here in Yellow Springs.”

By the 1990s, YSI set forth with a plan to fill the need for instruments in the areas of environmental monitoring and testing, temperature measurement, and biotechnology. Throughout the decade, YSI released a line of products that allowed for monitoring water quality in the field, a huge leap forward for scientists who had previously been bound to laboratory work.



YSI, now a Xylem brand, continues to be an industry leader for instrumentation.

YSI remains Xylem's flagship brand for environmental monitoring worldwide. Joseph Schmidt, Lead Nature-Based Solutions Engineer for Conservation International, works around the world on water resource and habitat restoration projects. “I consider YSI the professional standard in field instruments,” Schmidt declares. “The equipment they produce is solid.”

The YSI facility in Yellow Springs has become the hub for the environmental monitoring division at Xylem; so much so that several smaller Xylem facilities around Ohio have been migrated to the YSI site. Now, with the backing of an \$8 billion parent company, YSI has many more opportunities to invest in maintaining its market-leading position in sensor technology.

Smith emphasizes that sustainability is central to Xylem's mission. The company is widely recognized as one of the most environmentally responsible in the world, ranking #6 on Barron's 2025 list of the 1,000 largest publicly traded companies. Having a prominent brand like YSI based in a sustainability-focused community like Yellow Springs reinforces that commitment.

“We’re extremely proud that our manufacturing site in Yellow Springs uses almost entirely renewable energy from the Village,” Smith concludes. “We all share the same goal, and that’s what made YSI such a great fit for Xylem. We were already headed in the same direction!”



A commitment to the environment remains a core value of YSI and Xylem.

New Faces at the Village



Jacob Cooper
YSPD Officer



Rebecca Duff
YSPD Recruit



Matt Hull
Utility Service Worker



Zach Speckman
YSPD Officer

Yellow Springs Film Festival Returns for Third Year

Eric Mahoney is excited. In just over two short years, he has witnessed his Yellow Springs Film Festival grow from a simple idea in April 2023 into a popular local event, now charging full steam toward its third edition.

"I'm incredibly proud of the work that we have all done," says Mahoney, referring to his team of collaborators and vast pool of volunteers. "The quality of films we've been able to program, the quality of guest speakers we've been able to bring to town, I think is really impressive for an upstart film festival."

Indeed, the recognizable names and faces that have popped up at the Yellow Springs Film Festival thus far have been notable. Actor and comedian Fred Armisen, independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch, Raekwon and RZA of the Wu-Tang Clan, comedian and musician Reggie Watts, and actor Steve Zahn are just some of the artists who have contributed to the first two festivals.

However, aside from an abundance of familiar faces, festivalgoers have been treated to mindfully curated festival schedules that have showcased some incredible short and feature-length films, many of which are hard to find once a project completes its festival run. This allows the Yellow Springs Film Festival to provide unique access to films that film fans might never see otherwise. The importance of this is not lost on Mahoney.

"I'm so proud and thrilled to be doing this," he reflects. "I'm super happy with where we're at and where we're headed. We're full speed ahead into the fall."

With that said, here are a few of the highlights on deck for this year's festival:

- A special tribute to Rod Serling, Antioch College alum and creator of *The Twilight Zone*.
- Kick Off Party with comedian and actor Kevin Nealon.
- Screening of the documentary *We Want The Funk*, followed by a Q&A with co-directors Stanley Nelson and Nicole London.
- A conversation with Academy Award-winning production designer Hannah Beachler (*Sinners*, *Black Panther*, *Creed*).
- A live episode of Dayton-based podcast *The Novelizers*, featuring actor and comedian Michael Ian Black.
- A FREE educational seminar with Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker Steve Bognar.
- The presentation of the Julia Reichert Award for emerging female documentarians.

Mahoney notes that the best way to get the most out of the festival is by purchasing a festival badge. Whereas each film or film block has individual tickets available, badges allow for festivalgoers to attend multiple screenings. So, if attendees know that there are two or three films they'd like to see, a badge offers them more options for the same amount as what they'd spend on individual tickets.

Though festival badges do not provide access to ticketed special events, they do permit badge holders special preference should stand-by seats become available. "Even if we have a special event where badges aren't accepted to enter, we will always have a standby line," Mahoney clarifies. "If there are empty seats and it's showtime, we'll fill those with badge holders."

This year's Yellow Springs Film Festival runs from October 2-5, 2025. For more information, including more headliner announcements, and to purchase badges or tickets, visit ysfilmfest.com.



Yellow Springs Film Festival founder Eric Mahoney (left) with acclaimed independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch.



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PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULE

Village Council
First & Third Mondays at 6:00 PM

Planning Commission
Second Tuesdays at 6:00 PM

Environmental Commission
Currently On Hiatus

Public Arts and Culture Commission
First Thursday at 6:30 PM

Check out our YouTube channel to watch livestreams of
Village Council and Planning Commission meetings:
youtube.com/@yellowspringscommunityaccess



OPEN CAMERA,
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TAP LINK

UPCOMING EVENTS



**ART ON
THE LAWN**



PORCHFEST



STREET FAIR

2025 YSPD

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Scan QR code or visit
www.yellowsprings.gov
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