



The Village Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE VILLAGE OF YELLOW SPRINGS



Photo courtesy of YS Pride



Photo courtesy of Village staff



Photo courtesy of Yellow Springs News



JOHNNIE BURNS
VILLAGE MANAGER

As the days grow longer and summer approaches, I find myself reflecting on the qualities that make Yellow Springs such a special place: our willingness to have difficult conversations, our sense of inclusivity, respect for one another, and the strong connections we share. These values are at the core of who we are, and they always will be.

Yellow Springs remains a beacon of inclusivity and respect for all. This summer, as we have done for years, we will celebrate the principles that unite us. Street Fair, our largest event of the year, gives us the opportunity to connect with the wider community and highlight our local values. On Juneteenth, we will celebrate the ongoing journey toward fairness for all, and we will support the LGBTQ+ community during Pride and the ongoing fight for equality.

Yellow Springs has always been a place where differences are celebrated and respected. We understand that our community is stronger because of the variety of voices, backgrounds, and experiences that each of us brings to the table.

This summer, perhaps more urgently than ever, we must continue to build on our legacy of mutual respect and support. Let's keep making Yellow Springs the kind of place where everyone belongs, where everyone is seen and heard, and where we stand together in what we believe.

Thank you for being part of this community. I look forward to seeing many of you at these events and engaging in the conversations, connections, and growth we will share in the days ahead.

UPCOMING SUMMER EVENTS



STREET FAIR

6/14



JUNETEENTH

6/19



YS PRIDE

6/28



FOURTH OF JULY

7/4



ART ON THE LAWN

8/9



PORCHFEST

9/20

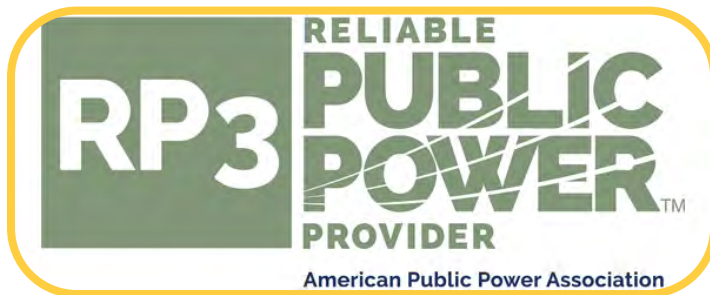
Leading in Utility Safety

The Village of Yellow Springs has proudly achieved Diamond Level status in two prestigious national awards from the American Public Power Association, recognizing excellence in safety and reliability within electric utility services— The Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) Safety Award and eReliability Award. This recognition underscores the Village's commitment to public safety and the delivery of efficient, dependable service.

Since 2015, the Village has worked diligently to enhance its utility services. In 2021, Yellow Springs reached Gold Level status in the RP3 award for safety. By refining practices, we raised our score from 84 to 98 out of 100, surpassing the Platinum Level to achieve Diamond status.

This accomplishment places Yellow Springs among a select group of small municipalities nationwide that have earned recognition for their exceptional electric utility safety. Village Manager and Public Works Director Johnnie Burns emphasized, "It's not just about safety for our employees, but also for our residents. It's about maintaining strong checks and balances in everything we do."

While larger Ohio cities like Bowling Green, Cuyahoga Falls, and Hamilton have received similar recognition, Yellow Springs is especially proud of its achievement as a small village. This accomplishment shows that communities of all sizes can achieve high standards through hard work and a focus on safety. As Electric & Water Distribution Superintendent Ben Sparks noted, "We are one of only four villages nationwide to earn this distinction. That's something we can all be proud of!"



From left to right, Public Works team members Ben Sparks, Rose Pelzl, Alex Kraus, Lane Dykman, Johnnie Burns

Safety is at the core of our success. Our utility team works tirelessly to ensure that our electric service is not only reliable but also safe for both our village residents and our dedicated Public Works employees. "We've always had a strong safety culture, especially in electric work. Over time, that culture has expanded to other departments like Water and Metering," said Sparks. This ongoing commitment to safety ensures that all operations, from handling power outages to routine maintenance, are done with the utmost care for both employees and residents.

The RP3 and eReliability awards evaluate safety practices, response times, and system reliability. For example, Yellow Springs' outage response time is 74 minutes—well below the national average of 135 minutes. This rapid response helps ensure residents face minimal disruptions, playing a key role in earning our Diamond status.

Safety is at the heart of everything we do at the Village. It drives our daily efforts and is reflected in the way we serve the community. Looking ahead, we remain committed to upholding high standards of safety and reliability, ensuring that both our employees and residents continue to receive exceptional service. Thank you for your ongoing support as we work to keep Yellow Springs a safe, reliable, and thriving community.

Economic Development

Welcome, Aaron!



Aaron Arellano

Planning & Economic Development Coordinator

We're excited to introduce Aaron Arellano in a new role dedicated to supporting and strengthening local businesses in Yellow Springs.

A graduate of the University of Dayton with a B.S. in Business Economics and a minor in Management, Aaron brings valuable experience in economic development.

He previously interned with the City of Centerville, where he helped secure grants and contributed to long-term strategies for business growth. In his new role, Aaron will be working closely with Planning and Economic Development Director Meg Leatherman to strengthen connections with local businesses.

He shared, "What excites me most about this role is building meaningful relationships with local businesses and residents. I'm looking forward to learning more about the vibrant community in Yellow Springs."

Something's Brewing at Trail Town...

Trail Town Brewing is the realization of a dream that began for Jake Brummett in his 20s, sparked by his love for local microbrews discovered in college. His journey into brewing took him from an assistant role at Lock 27 Brewing in Centerville to homebrewing. After years of honing his craft, he opened the doors to Trail Town Brewing on May 5, 2021. What sets his brewery apart is its commitment to small-batch brews, its status as a brewer-owned business, and, more recently, the addition of its own kitchen—creating a unique destination in the local beer scene.

From the very beginning, Jake and his wife Raina dreamed of combining a restaurant with their brewery. That dream became a reality in April 2024 when they launched their kitchen. Fresh poutine with hand-cut fries was the starting point for the menu, which quickly expanded to include gourmet burgers. Based on feedback from the community and from employees, the menu grew further, and monthly specials became a regular offering.

Jake is hands-on when it comes to sourcing ingredients, choosing to work with local suppliers. Many ingredients come from Tom's Market, and the cheese curds for the poutine are sourced from Young's Jersey Dairy. Even the bar top has local roots, crafted by the late Paul DeLaVergne from a tree that once stood where the Mills Park Hotel now sits.

The menu is the result of collaboration between Jake, Raina, friends, and employees. Jon Spiller, who started as a bartender and is now head chef, played a key role in refining the dishes. One of the most popular items, the Smokestack Burger, has inspired several new creations and additions to the menu.

But it's not just about the food and drink at Trail Town. Jake and Jon are passionate about bringing music back to Yellow Springs, especially after the challenges of COVID-19. By regularly hosting live performances, they've created a space to showcase local talent and breathe life into the local music scene. As Jake puts it, "It's great to see bands that have started and grown here."

For Jake, the true heart of Trail Town Brewing is the people. Whether it's hearing stories from long-time residents, enjoying live music, or connecting with customers, he values being a part of the community. With the addition of the kitchen, he hopes Trail Town will continue to serve as a gathering place for both locals and visitors. As Jake shares, "We hope to be a cornerstone of the community this season."



Trail Town Brewing offers seven unique smash burgers

Bentino's Goes Big!



Bentino's new dine-in seating area

Bentino's Pizza first opened its doors to the village in 2006, a humble tenant of 107 1/2 Xenia Avenue hoping to provide residents with a local food option that offered delivery. Nearly 20 years later, proprietors Carl and Kim Lea are reaping the benefits of hard work and dedication.

"Kim and I built this restaurant together. She was absolutely integral to our success," explained Carl. "She poured her blood, sweat, and tears into this place."

After years of enduring growing pains, personal challenges, a global pandemic, and – ultimately – establishing a successful business, the Leas found themselves with a dream opportunity: the chance to purchase the building that their business had called home since its inception.

"We always knew we wanted to expand into the space next to us," said Carl. Initially, after purchasing the building, expansion was not yet an option, so the Leas looked to lease the space vacated by Subway to another tenant.

After a short stint as landlords, the Leas were able to begin renovations for the space, which were completed in roughly five months. The new dining room area enables Bentino's to offer dine-in table service, as well as restrooms for their patrons.

The expansion has also allowed for the restaurant to once again offer a lunch menu, which was pulled with the downswing of public dining during the pandemic. Additionally, new kitchen equipment, such as a convection oven, offers the possibility for new menu items. There's even talk of bringing back old dinner menu favorites, such as their lasagna.

As for future plans, Carl said they intend to utilize their new space for community events, such as a recent anime painting workshop with local artist Oni Garrett. He also hinted at the possibility of adding an outdoor patio.

"We really just want the community to come try this new experience that we're offering," Carl concluded. "We're excited to share these changes with everyone."

Building a Sustainable Future

Green Investments

The Village currently provides 100% renewable energy through our electric utility. This includes investing in five hydroelectric dams to further offset carbon emissions.



Wellhead Protection

To ensure safe drinking water, the Public Works Department monitors the surface and subsurface around our wellheads for contamination.



Solar Array Joins Grid

In 2017, the Village of Yellow Springs added over six acres of solar panels which now help feed the electric grid.



YSPD Hybrid Truck

Per Council's request, the Village purchased a hybrid police truck to reduce emissions and save money on fuel and maintenance over time.



All LED at the JBC

All internal lighting in the John Bryan Center has now been replaced with new energy efficient LED bulbs.



As Earth Day (Tues, April 22nd) approaches, we are reminded of the importance of our ongoing commitment to sustainability. We have long been a community that values sustainability, and our efforts to protect the environment are stronger than ever. This infographic highlights the environmentally friendly initiatives that the Village of Yellow Springs is implementing to create a greener, more sustainable future. We invite you to explore the steps we're taking to making Yellow Springs a model for environmental stewardship. Together, we're building a cleaner, healthier, and more vibrant community for all.



Join us for the 5th Annual Earth Day & Community Habitat Celebration!

Sunday, April 27, 2025, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

NEW LOCATION: Lawn at E. North College & Livermore Streets, Yellow Springs, OH

- Native plant sales
- Eco-friendly booths
- "Milkweed for Monarchs" raffle
- Kids' activities
- Clothing swap
- Household battery recycling
- Live music
- Food truck
- And more!

Water Reclamation

Built in 1964, the WRF treats wastewater to a high standard before safely discharging it into Yellow Springs Creek and the Little Miami River.



Pesticide Policy

Yellow Springs began limiting the use of pesticides on Village-owned properties in 2013, formalizing the policy in 2023.



Battery Tools

The Public Works Department is moving towards using all rechargeable, electric hand tools such as chainsaws when possible.



Tree Partnership

The Village partners with the Yellow Springs Tree Committee to plant memorial trees as well as maintain trees around town.



Charging EVs

The Village of Yellow Springs has complimentary electric vehicle charging stations at the John Bryan Center.



H2Ohio Funds Yellow Springs

The Village of Yellow Springs is almost finished with its lead pipe replacement project, which has advanced significantly thanks to House Bill 168. However, as is often the case with infrastructure work, unexpected challenges – such as issues with valves and other unforeseen complications – resulted in additional costs. As a result, while there was approximately \$19,000 remaining in the project budget, it was clear that additional funds would be needed to fully complete the project.

In November 2024, Village Manager Johnnie Burns reached out to the Ohio EPA, which – through the H2Ohio program – generously provided \$176,240 to help bring the project to completion. On January 24, 2025, the Ohio EPA visited Yellow Springs to celebrate the successful collaboration between local, state, and federal partners. Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel was in attendance. Her remarks underscored the importance of modernizing the Village's outdated infrastructure without burdening residents financially.



Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel with State Senator Kyle Koehler

"At a certain point, you can't pile all these costs on your customers. But you need to have modern, updated distribution systems. H2Ohio is such a unique opportunity for the State of Ohio to come along and be able to fill gaps," noted Director Vogel.

Also in attendance for the January 24th event was Ohio State Senator Kyle Koehler (District 10), who celebrated the Village's receipt of these funds as a key illustration of the H2Ohio program's mission.

"This is a fantastic example of how they can come in at the last minute and preserve the one thing that's most important in the State of Ohio, which is our water," Koehler stated.

Village Manager Burns shared Senator Koehler's enthusiasm, highlighting the importance of various agencies working together to complete vital, large-scale projects.

"This initiative is a prime example of what can be achieved through collaboration at all levels – from our staff and contractors, to our external partners like the Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Development," declared Village Manager Burns.



Village Manager Johnnie Burns



Gaunt Park Pool Season Did you know?...

The
pool opens
May 24th!



Serving a number of communities, Gaunt Park Pool is the **ONLY** outdoor public pool in Greene County.

The pool offers **FREE** swim lessons to village residents, and a Junior Guard Camp for future lifeguards.



The Village provides discounted pool passes through its "Swim for All" program.

The pool has its own Lifeguard Training Program. If interested, email **Samantha Stewart** to apply.



Samantha Stewart | Parks & Recreation Supervisor
samantha.stewart@yellowsprings.gov

HOURS OF OPERATION

Adult swim	MON-FRI 11AM-1PM	SAT & SUN 12PM-1PM	MON-SUN 7PM-8PM
All ages	MON-SUN 1PM-7PM	*includes baby pool	

SEASON PASS

	VILLAGE RESIDENT	NON- RESIDENT
Age 3 & under	FREE	FREE
Age 4-18	\$78	\$129
Age 19-61	\$113	\$180
Age 62 & over	\$78	\$129
Adult + 1 dependent minor	\$130	\$250
Household (5 or fewer members)	\$150	\$267
Each add'l member	\$17	\$23

POOL RENTALS

• After hours ONLY • Mon-Sun, 8PM-11PM	1 hour	\$220
• Up to 100 guests • Add'l \$75 for extra guests	2 hours	\$280
• Min. 2 week advance notice • No rentals on swim meet days	3 hours	\$340

Resolving Disputes, Strengthening Community

For over 30 years, the Village Mediation Program (VMP) has been offering a peaceful alternative to the courtroom, providing residents with a way to resolve disputes and improve communication. The program, which is funded through the Village's General Fund and advised by a steering committee, has become a vital service for the community. What started as a small community initiative has since grown into a valuable resource that addresses a variety of conflicts, from neighborhood disputes to workplace disagreements.

Mediation offers several advantages, making it a unique and effective alternative to traditional legal proceedings. One of the primary advantages is its effectiveness. Legal battles can be expensive, involving attorney fees, court costs, and lengthy proceedings. In contrast, mediation is a free service available to all residents of Yellow Springs, making it an accessible option for individuals and families. As Village Mediation Director, Brady Burkett notes, "A service like a locally funded mediation program is truly unique," highlighting its distinct role in fostering community resolution.

In addition to being cost-effective, mediation is confidential, providing a space for individuals to discuss sensitive matters. This safe environment empowers participants by allowing them to take an active role in resolving their conflicts, rather than leaving the decision to a judge. "Mediation is a process. You're not always going to leave a meeting with a resolution," emphasizes Burkett. This process-oriented approach gives participants the time and space to work through issues, leading to more thoughtful, sustainable solutions.



Village Mediator Brady Burkett

For those interested in utilizing the VMP, the process is simple. Individuals or groups in conflict can request mediation services by contacting the program directly. Additionally, those looking to support the program or become involved can consider becoming a volunteer mediator.

The VMP plays a crucial role in maintaining the peaceful, cooperative spirit that the community is known for. By offering a free, cost-effective, and confidential alternative to the courtroom, VMP helps resolve conflicts in a way that strengthens relationships and promotes understanding. As the program continues to grow and serve the community, it stands as a testament to the power of mediation in fostering peaceful conflict resolution and creating a more connected and harmonious Yellow Springs.

Experiencing Conflict?

Contact the Village Mediation Program!



mediation@yellowsprings.gov



(937) 318-1542

2025 Safety Village

Monday, July 14 - Friday, July 18



HOW TO SIGN UP

If you would like to enroll your child in Safety Village, or serve as a volunteer, scan the QR code to the right! Spaces are limited and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.



SCAN ME

Entering its third year, Safety Village is a week-long interactive and educational experience for children entering kindergarten or 1st grade in the Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District.

Yellow Springs Police Department officers, along with guest speakers, will provide age-appropriate instruction on various topics, including traffic safety, pedestrian and bike safety, fire safety, stranger awareness, school and bus safety, 911 usage, and more! Children will also be able to enjoy a miniature town where they can "drive" around the streets and walk along the sidewalks with crosswalks, stop signs, and traffic signals.

To register, please complete an enrollment form available on the Village website (yellowsprings.gov) and return it to YSPD. You can submit registrations or direct any questions to the following email addresses:

Daysi Cusick: daysi.cusick@yellowsprings.gov

Chief Paige Burge: paige.burge@yellowsprings.gov

If you prefer to submit a paper copy of your completed registration, it can be dropped off at the Dispatch window at 100 Dayton Street.





POSTAL CUSTOMER
Yellow Springs, OH 45387

Village of Yellow Springs

100 Dayton Street, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387
937-767-7202 | www.yellowsprings.gov

VILLAGE COUNCIL / CLERK

Kevin Stokes, President
kevin.stokes@yellowsprings.gov

Gavin DeVore Leonard, Vice President
gavin.leonard@yellowsprings.gov

Carmen Brown, Council Member
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Trish Gustafson, Council Member
trish.gustafson@yellowsprings.gov

Brian Housh, Council Member
brian.housh@yellowsprings.gov

Judy Kintner, Council Clerk
clerk@yellowsprings.gov

VILLAGE STAFF

Johnnie Burns, Village Manager
johnnie.burns@yellowsprings.gov

Paige Burge, Chief of Police
paige.burge@yellowsprings.gov

Michelle Robinson, Finance Director
michelle.robinson@yellowsprings.gov

Meg Leatherman, Planning & Economic Development Director
meg.leatherman@yellowsprings.gov

Utilities Office
utilitybilling@yellowsprings.gov

YSPD (Non-Emergency)
767-7206

MAYOR / CLERK

Pam Conine, Village Mayor
mayorpam@yellowsprings.gov

MacKenzie Baird, Clerk of Mayor's Court
mackenzie.baird@yellowsprings.gov

PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULE

Village Council
First & Third Mondays at 6:00 PM

Planning Commission
Second Tuesday at 6:00 PM

Environmental Commission
Second Thursday at 6:00 PM

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



SCAN ME



Sunday, April 27, 2025
1-4 PM

Yellow Springs
Earth Day & Community Habitat
Celebration

at the corner of E. North College & Livermore Streets

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This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.