

Beacon Kicks Off 2014 Fundraising

It's that time of year again – time for Andover residents, all of whom receive the *Beacon* in their mailbox each month at no charge, to make a voluntary contribution for 2014 to help keep the *Beacon* going.

If you receive your *Beacon* at an Andover address, you should find a "Round Tuit" envelope in the February issue. Please use it to make your 2014 donation (or donate online at AndoverBeacon.com, or use the coupon on page 4 of any issue). If you donate now, we won't have to contact you in the Fall when we do our canvassing campaign to contact everyone who forgot to "get a round tuit" earlier in the year!

**Don't wait for a call in the Fall!
Donate today, and you could win \$50!**

This year, we've even added an incentive to help you remember to "get a round tuit" and support the *Beacon*: every local donation we receive by May 15 will go into a random drawing, and three people will each win a \$50 pre-paid Visa card.

So don't wait for a call in the Fall! "Get a round tuit" today, and you could win \$50!

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Bond Proposed to Catch Up Highway Projects, Minimize Costs

Deferred projects critical, interest rates favorable

By the Andover Board of Selectmen

This year's Board of Selectmen is as guilty as many previous Boards of deferring work on our roads and bridges in an effort to keep the tax rate down. The highway plan from 1994 to catch up and keep up with all our highway projects was essentially derailed by the recession. But now we have arrived at

the point where deferring projects is no longer in the best interest of the Town, if we are to maintain the safety and condition of our roads and bridges.

Thankfully, interest rates are at historic lows, so much so that using a bond to catch up on many deferred road and bridge projects is now not only possible, but fiscally prudent.

Here are the issues as we see them:

- Costs of oil-based products go up

See Bond on page 5

Andover Moves to Semi-Annual Tax Bills in June

Will save town about \$9,750 per year

By the Andover Board of Selectmen

Once again, the issue of semi-annual tax billing was brought before the Andover Board of Selectmen at a selectmen's meeting in November. Analysis shows that the cost to the Town of borrowing money is not insignificant.

From 2006 to 2012, the Town has paid \$79,602.70 in interest to borrow money in order to pay our bills. Our financial year begins on January 1, but our tax bills don't go out until November. The Town begins to run out of money in June each year, requiring us to borrow from the bank to keep the town running until the tax payments for the year start arriving in December.

Andover's representative at the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) has been telling us we're one of the last towns to still be on an annual billing schedule. Most other towns have recognized and realized the benefits of not having to borrow money to pay their bills. The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to begin semi-annual billing in 2014.

This means that instead of receiving

one bill in late November of this year for your entire 2014 property tax obligation, you'll receive one bill in June of this year for about half your 2014 property tax, and a second bill in late November for the rest. Payment for each of the two bills will be due 30 days after the bill is mailed, and the usual interest and penalties will accrue after the due date of each bill. But no tax liens will be filed based solely on a taxpayer missing a June payment.

Because the tax rate is set in November every year by the DRA, the June tax bill is an "estimated" tax bill based on half of the previous year's total tax obligation. The November bill then makes up the difference between the June bill and the taxpayer's total tax bill for the current year, based on the new rate that DRA sets in November.

Two tax bills a year will give the Town better cash flow and will reduce the need for the Town to borrow. Analysis shows that with an average cost of \$11,000 per year in interest on borrowing, versus about \$1,250 to cover the cost of issuing a second tax bill every year, the savings to the Town would be about \$9,750 per year, or about \$7.31 on the annual tax of a \$200,000 property.



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Proposed Budgets Up 3.4% for 2014

Reduced revenue could mean 10% tax hike

By Ed Hiller

Andover Budget Committee

The Andover Budget Committee recommends a 2014 budget for the Andover School District of \$4,704,553, up \$88,597 over last year's appropriation. The recommended budget for the Town, net of directly offsetting revenues, is \$1,637,331, up \$148,188 over last year's net appropriation. The recommended budgets for the two Fire Departments total \$106,624, the same as last year. Assuming that the charge to the Town from Merrimack County remains the same as last year at \$752,807, the recommended total net budget for 2014 is \$7,215,365, up 3.4% over last year.

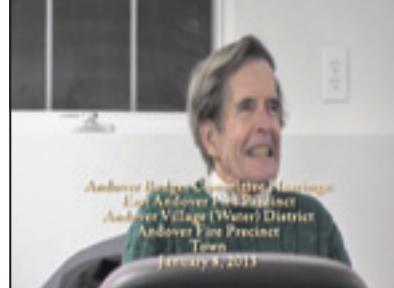
Revenues that will offset the tax impact of these budget recommendations are predicted to be significantly lower. As a result, the estimated tax rate for 2014 is above the rate for 2013 by about 10%.

Andover School Budget

The Budget Committee recommends an operating budget for the School for fiscal year 2014-15 of \$4,654,533. The Committee also recommends approval of Warrant Article 7 for \$50,000 to fund a building maintenance and improvement study. The total recommended budget is \$4,704,553. This is an increase of \$88,597 (1.9%) over the appropriation for 2013-14.

Last year there was an unexpended surplus of \$309,095 that was used to reduce the tax burden. This year there is

See Budgets on page 2



Budget Hearing Videos Available

Andover Cable TV Channel 8 has made the Andover Budget Committee's public hearings on the Town and School budgets available on the Town Web site at Andover.NH.us.

Beacon Trying to Hire Part-Time Production Help

Can we find the right person here in Andover?

By Charlie Darling, Beacon staff

To ensure that the *Beacon* will be sustainable into the future, it's time to hire a paid, permanent part-time Web and Print Production Specialist. I'd like our new hire to be an Andover person (or at least have a strong connection to our community).

In a nutshell, the job is to prepare ads, photos, and articles to appear in print and on the Web site. The articles and photos – and many of the ads – will have been created by others. The new specialist's job will be to work them through our rather elaborate computer processes to get them ready to appear in print and on the Web site.

At AndoverBeacon.com/Hire you'll find a detailed job description and a description of what we're looking for in candidates for the position. We're not worrying a lot about what skills a candidate has. What we're really focusing on is the personal qualities that a candidate would bring to the team – qualities like organization, motivation, reliability, maturity, and many other qualities that we need in a new team member.

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