

Town of Somerset

Volume 27, Issue 1

Spring 2012

From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

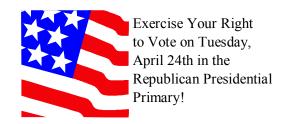
As we embark on Spring, we tend to clean out. Remember that you can recycle *all your electronics*. Electronic recycling is weekly at the Somerset Wastewater Treatment Plant. Just bring your accepted items to the plant on regular garbage day from 7AM—3PM. **REMEMBER** TV's are no longer pickup up at the curb. They must be dropped off at the plant.

You can also drop off your used ink toner cartridges, cell phones, iPods, digital cameras, laptops, camcorders, dvd players gaming devices and all cords at the Town Hall.

At the Town Hall, we also have a drop off for USED FLAGS. They are disposed of properly by the American Legion.

Enjoy the beginnings of another season, and as always, if you should have questions, feel free to contact me at 795-3575 or beckyconnolly@roadrunner.com

Becky Connolly, Town Clerk/Editor





REMINDERS:

DOGS are to be licensed at the age of 4 months. Stop at the Town Clerks Office to license your dog.

We are having a large number of stray dogs being found and also dog bites being reported by unlicensed dogs. Please help us avoid having any person have to get the rabies shot series by licensing your dog.

PAVILIONS

If you would like to use the pavilions in the Somerset Park this season, please make a reservation by calling the Town Hall at 795-3575.

Access the Town's Website <u>www.somersetny.org</u> for the latest up to date information and calendar of events.

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Annual Water Quality Report (Insert)

A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel Engert 795-3575 daniel.engert@gmail.com



Greetings to friends and neighbors in Somerset! The Town Board has been working very hard in the new term on a number of critical budget issues, quality of life/service enhancements and economic development strategies. Where do I begin? It's important that you are fully apprised on the status of the AES facility. The implications are obvious and enormous. The production of electricity there has been a source of confidence for our community and it's disconcerting to see the facility in its current state.

Let me begin by summarizing where we are at this point. As you are surely aware, their energy market has collapsed, federal and state environmental policy makers have imposed stringent regulations on coal plants which are intended to necessarily shut them down, frankly. The industrial demand for power is just not there largely as a result of a subpar business climate in this state and lastly, there is a tremendous need to upgrade the transmission system so WNY power plants can sell their power where it's needed. Budget decisions in Albany have neglected this critical energy infrastructure for far too long. The situation is tenuous right now as the facility is essentially shut down and remains in bankruptcy protection. There will undoubtedly be more setbacks as the facility strives to survive this period however, I want to convey in my letter to you a real sense of hope and optimism as we enter this most challenging time for our County, Town and School District. Let me share some reasons for which we can remain optimistic and hopeful.

First, the facility has undergone significant emission control improvements and is fully compliant with all current regulations including the most recent EPA version issued recently. While these regulations will certainly impact numerous plants throughout the country, Somerset is positioned well in this critical area. Second, the facility has an exceptional workforce and numerous evaluations by the bondholders have concluded that they are extremely proficient, productive and efficient in the manner by which they have operated the facility. Third, the bondholders, who are highly sophisticated financiers, have signaled a huge financial commitment to continue to operate the facility. They have begun organizing a "New Company" as part of a plan to bring the facility out of the bankruptcy court. Note that no other bidders came forward to purchase the plant clearly affirming a depressed market value at this time. Fourth, the basis upon which these major investors made their decision is their analysis of the energy markets. They signal confidence that the market will turn around in 2-3 years and will provide for an opportunity to attract an energy buyer to purchase the facility as the market value and investment prospects improve. They have noted that coal prices have dropped considerably (approaching 30%) even in the past year and the slowing of the natural gas drilling both are directly driven by market pressures in the plant's favor. To back up their projections, they are poised to inject millions of dollars in a facility that they believe absolutely can and should remain a viable coal facility. These are solid rationale for hope, I believe.

The bondholders have asked that the PILOT payments be reduced. The market value of the facility is clearly and significantly reduced at this time and the taxing jurisdictions are very mindful of this. They have also asked for significant concessions from their workforce. Each and every one of us are stakeholders at this point whether we like it or not. We now have, as I see it, one shot at success here. I do not anticipate the bondholders holding onto and investing in this facility after the current PILOT is up and they have said as much. It will either return to a marketable value and be sold or it will close. We all clearly have a great stake in this and I am encouraging us to approach this as a chapter in a great story of survival. The facility weathering this period, being sold and returning to profitability is the mission. The alternative is simply not an option.

(continued on Page 3)

NEWS FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPT. Ken Bigelow 795-3866

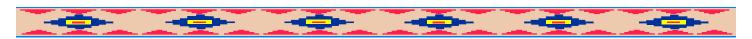
If you are planning to have your driveway paved in the future, make sure your contractor has the finish grade of your driveway the same as or lower than the road. The wing plows on our trucks will damage the driveways if they are higher than the road. Also, if you intend to have a concrete driveway installed, it is necessary to end the concrete at the road right of way which in most cases is 33 feet from the centerline of the road

Remember to crush your lightweight plastic containers before you recycle them. It keeps them from blowing out of the bins and trucks and prevents them from blocking drainage pipes and it keeps our Town looking good.



Town highway projects are in the planning stages at this time. The cost of highway construction materials are directly affected by the price of oil which in the present climate will significantly reduce the amount of work that can be completed with the dollars budgeted. As always your patience and cooperation during construction season is greatly appreciated.

Have a safe summer.



Supervisor's Corner (continued from Page 2)

A resident recently asked, "So, how is the Board preparing for such an unknown future?" While we are hopeful for a future that includes a viable facility, at the same time please know that we are squarely focused on the strengths of our community and are striving to attract more economic development opportunities to diversify the source of our tax revenue. We have tasked the Planning Board to revise our Comprehensive Plan focusing directly on our community assets to entice corporate site selectors and we have included the Village of Barker to be part of this effort. We are positioning the planning and zoning documents to be cohesive and thus eliminating roadblocks for economic development projects. I am engaged with our Town engineering and planning consultants as well as the Center for Economic Development. We are in the process now of promoting an aggressive marketing plan for certain development opportunities that coincide with the Regional Economic Development funding which has been committed to WNY. I hope to be able to report very soon on a project under consideration currently. Further, this Town Board has demonstrated a genuine commitment to face difficult budget issues head on and not just take the easy or the convenient route. We believe it's important that the spending levels be reduced, every budget line needs to be squeezed and we are intent to do this. We also have a certain level of reserves on hand (or fund balance) that were strategically collected for the very purpose to help offset unexpected events and help our taxpayer's transition gradually. The Board's view is that those reserves were already paid by the taxpayers and should be committed before considering tax increases. We also believe that future spending must be evaluated with less revenue projections and we are not going to just live off our savings, so to speak. We need to be ready to come out of this in either direction, with or without a viable coal facility. From the Town's perspective, I would characterize our approach as an "all hands on deck" type of effort. From each of our valued employees who deliver exceptional service in every manner to each and every Board and committee member, we are strategically planning and preparing for an uncertain future with the taxpayer at the forefront. Our community demands and depends upon it!

In closing, I sincerely encourage you to reach out to me or any Town Board member and express your thoughts, concerns, and ideas concerning the Town. It helps us to better represent you at Town Hall.

In your service,

Daniel Engert

Supervisor

Water/Sewer Department News

By Melvin Denny, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent 795-9919



BEFORE YOU DIG - <u>Please remember to call for underground utility location before you do any digging</u>. The number is **811.**

DOUBLE CHECK BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES - These devices are REQUIRED on all new construction and when there is a CHANGE of property owner. Final readings for property sold will include inspection for the double check valve. All irrigation meters also must have backflow prevention devices.

TOWN EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION - If anyone comes to your door saying he is from this department and needs access to your house regarding your water or sewer, he will be driving a marked Town of Somerset truck and will have Town employee identification. If this is not the case, do not let them in and call this Department immediately at 795-9919.



Our <u>ANNUAL TIRE DROP OFF</u> will begin on Monday, April 23, 2012. The tires may be dropped off at the Waste Water Treatment Plant at 8500 Lower Lake Road during the following times:

April 23rd—April 27th 7AM—3 PM

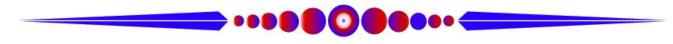
April 28th - 8AM—Noon

April 30th—May 4th 7AM—3PM

Limit 8 tires. This service is provided for the Town of Somerset and Village of Barker residents only. Truck tires on rims will not be accepted.



Do you take great photographs? Don't miss your chance to enter the 2012 Amateur Photo Contest at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge! Stop by the Town Hall for official contest rules and an entry form. Contest entries must be received at the Wildlife Refuge by September 1, 2012.





SAVE THE DATE – August 4th is the Town Wide Yard Sale – As you are doing your spring cleaning, save those items for the sale to make them someone else's treasure!!



Deputy Supervisor's Corner

Randy Wayner 795-9316 rjwvw@juno.com

The Town's New - Police Constable Force:

I thought that this would be a great time to provide an accurate account and update regarding police services within the Town.

I am pleased to report that:

- Our Police Constables are <u>fully empowered</u> under the law as certified police officers and can perform commensurate law enforcement functions. (a copy of our approved law can be found on the Town's website)
- We are within our budget.
- Our Police Constables are now engaged in patrol functions.
- Our Police Constables are missioned to protect life and property in the Town.
- Our Police Constables are pleased to conduct professional house security checks while you are away. There is a form that you can fill out and is available on the Town's website or at the Town Supervisor or Clerk's office.

Police services have been strategically refocused to enhance their effectiveness by concentrating manpower during the times when the call volume is greatest. The Town residents have communicated that they don't believe full scale coverage is necessary but rather prefer a consistent presence. The Town Board has worked to deliver those expectations and will allocate your town budget's dollars accordingly. The feedback to the Board has been overwhelmingly in support of this scope of service delivery, but as with every budget line it will be closely evaluated throughout the year to determine if further adjustments are appropriate. The Public Safety Committee that was implemented by Supervisor Engert is in place to measure feedback and assess impact. The Town Board is committed to the implementation of a "Community Based" policing model for our Town. You can expect that the Police Constables will be visible, approachable and pro-active in getting to know those whom they serve.

The Board will be introducing the Police Constables in another communication, but please know that the services of four experienced (and highly decorated) officers with more than 100 years of police experience make up your force. They include two Town residents and two men from neighboring towns. In the near future there will be an informative communication that will provide you with a great deal more information about these fine officers. They are well trained and have received a comprehensive "Rules of Operation and Procedure" manual which was implemented by the Supervisor.

At this juncture I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that Supervisor Engert's law enforcement administration experience, RISK management expertise, and training have worked in concert with his high level of knowledge regarding the structure and various layers of legal and procedural issues and have served the Town and the Board extremely well. He has successfully guided the implementation of the Department and provides direct oversight of the operation for the Town Board.

I would like to close by acknowledging the input of the Public Safety Committee volunteers: Matt Pestinger, Herb Linderman, Dale Howard, & Tom Carestia. Along with Board members Jeff Dewart and me, the Committee is charged with being a conduit for ideas and information between the Town Board and the public. I sincerely thank each of them for their suggestions as I worked through the content of this article. There will be more information coming out when the introduction to the Police Constables communication is released. The officers can be reached during the evening hours DIRECT at 716-255-0503, or they will be dispatched by the Sheriff's Office at 438-3393 for non-emergencies. **If you have an emergency call 911**.

With best regards for a Happy and Safe Springtime!!

Historian's Corner - Pete Deveraux 795-3459

Niagara County 4-H Clubs 75 Years Old

The 4-H clubs of Niagara County started in 1936. One of the first clubs in the Somerset area was the Jolly Millers, which was a band under the direction of Mrs. Burton Porter. The Historian's office has a picture of them playing a concert at Krull Park in Olcott, NY. Some of the other clubs in Barker and Somerset were: Barker's Best, Barker Bumble Bees, Barker Corn Cobblers, Barker go-Getters, Barker Honey Bees, Clever Clovers, Somerset Happy Gang, Somerset Gals, Somerset Horsemen, Somerset Hummingbirds, West Somerset Squareshooters, West Somerset Wise Guys, and West Somerset Whipper-Snappers.

Every year since 1941, an award is given to a 4-H family for all the hard work they do for the organization.

There have been several families in Somerset who have won this award:

1954—Fred Atwater Family

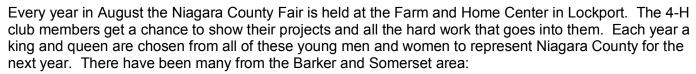
1956—Fred Atwater Family

1958—Frank Alt Family

1980—Chris Czelusta Family

1983—Mrs. Barbara Alt Family

2003—John E Sweeney, Jr. Family



1956—Fred Atwater, 1958—Ronald Alt, 1982—Rick Czelusta, 1983—David Alt, 1996—Heather Nellist, 2008—Matthew Sweeney, 2011—Brian Alt

I apologize if I missed anyone.

The 4-H motto is: I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living for my club, community and my world. This is a pretty good motto to live by, even if you are not a member.

UPCOMING NEARBY RABIES CLINICS:

Saturday, April 21 2:00PM—4:00PM Town of Hartland Highway Garage

Saturday, September 22 2:00PM—4:00PM Town of Lockport Highway Department

All animals must be properly restrained. It is requested that anyone bringing more than six animals to one clinic contact the Niagara County Department of Health at 439-7511 up to one week prior to the clinic so paperwork can be processed more efficiently.

If the above dates are not convenient, there are more clinics scheduled. Stop by the Town Hall for a complete list.







BARKER FIRE DEPT. By CHIEF RANDY HILDEBRANT



It's that time of year for spring clean-up...and along with that comes fires from all sorts of vegetation. The NYS DEC and the Niagara County Dept of Health have very strict laws and guidelines pertaining to open burns. Basically, an open burn in Niagara County is illegal. A small controllable fire coupled with high winds, dry vegetation and exposure to nearby structures can become very large and uncontrollable in a matter of seconds. Composting or bagging up your yard debris for weekly pick-up is a safer way of disposal.

I would also like to inform our residents that April 21st and 22nd is the 2nd annual NYS Fireman's Assoc. Recruit New York program. This program encourages fire departments all across the state to open their doors to the public in the hopes of recruiting new members to the volunteer ranks. Therefore, the Barker Fire Dept will open their doors for an open house on Saturday April 21st from 1pm until 4pm. We will have static displays of our equipment, loose equipment displays, a "Jaws of Life" demonstration, as well as other displays and activities. Free hot dogs and refreshments will also be served to our visitors. So come down and let us show you what we do and maybe we can make you a part of our team.

We will also be holding our annual Spring Raffle on Sunday April 22nd from 1pm until 4pm. Doors will open at noon. Tickets are \$20 and available from any fireman or you can call Dick Wayner at 795-3173 or Jeff Dewart at 795-9268. There will be side raffles, 50/50 splits and many more prizes. Ticket also includes all you can eat spaghetti dinner and refreshments. All ticket holders must be at least 18 years of age.

As always, if anyone needs a home fire inspection, smoke alarm or C/O inspection or fire prevention tips, please do not hesitate to contact myself at 471-6080 or ask the assistance of any firefighter. We will be more than happy to assist you.

On behalf of myself and the members of the Barker Fire Dept, have a safe and healthy summer!!!

FREE Sportsman's Education Program 2012-2013 (All students must be 11 years of age or older)

Gun:

May 14,16,18 from 6:00PM—9:30 PM

July 16-18 from 5:30PM—9:30PM

Lockport Conservation Club

Lockport Conservation Club

Wilson Conservation Club

Aug 6-8 from 5:30PM—9:30Pm

Hess Road Wesleyan Church

Bow:

May 7,8 from 6:00PM—10:00Pm

May 21,23,25 from 6:00PM—10:00Pm

June 11,12 from 6:00Pm—10:00PM

Little Ridge Archery, Gasport

Wolcottsville Sportsmen Club

Trapping:

Aug 3 from 6:00Pm—9:30PM; Aug 4 from 9:00AM—? Wilson Conservation Club

Aug 25 from 8:00AM—Finish Middleport Rod & Gun Club

MANY other dates available for Gun and Bow Courses. The complete list is posted at the Town Hall.

Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Open House

Monday, April 30, 2012



Somerset Town Hall

Open House: 6pm

Presentation: 7pm

What are our goals for the Town?

What is the future of Somerset?

The Comprehensive Plan Update will help guide zoning and development decisions in the Town

FOOD EXPRESS PILOT PROGRAM

The Faith United Methodist Food Pantry has been chosen to be a pilot location for the Food Express and we need your help to make it successful! Food Express is a truck carrying fresh food with local donations for low income families. They need 60 families to keep the program going. Must be income eligible, not necessarily a food pantry client. You will need to bring picture ID with proof of address, and bags or boxes to carry your own food. **Food Express dates: MAY 7th and JUNE 4th at 10AM.** Income eligibility guidelines 2011-2012:

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEARLY GROSS INCOME	MONTHLY GROSS IN- COME	WEEKLY GROSS INCOME
1	\$20,127	\$1,679	\$387
2	\$27,214	\$2,268	\$523
3	\$34,281	\$2,857	\$659
4	\$41,348	\$3,446	\$795
5	\$48,415	\$4,035	\$931
6	\$55,482	\$4,624	\$1,067
7	\$62,549	\$5,212	\$1,203
8	\$69,619	\$5,802	\$1,339
Each additional family member	\$7,067	\$589	\$136

<u>CODE ENFORCEMENT</u> - Randy Hildebrant

795-9556

It's spring time and what comes with it are the home improvement projects we all thought about all winter. I would like to remind our residents that The Code of the Town of Somerset requires a Building Permit for all construction, erections, alterations, additions and remodeling. Permits are also required for all swimming pools that hold 24" or more of water. Swimming pools also require an electrical inspection and pool alarms.

I will also be actively enforcing the NYS Property Maintenance Code and the Town of Somerset Weeds and Grass ordinance. Enforcing these laws is critical to the health and safety of your family, the prevention of fires and for the overall aesthetics of our town.

The office has also been receiving numerous calls as to whether or not permits are required for fences. At this time, fences do not require a permit; however, there are some restrictions to fences depending on where you live and what your property is zoned for. It's always wise to contact my office to find out if any of the fencing requirements pertain to your particular project.

All of the town's codes and laws can be found on our website at www.somersetny.org. You can also find all the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Codes at http://publicecodes.citation.com/st/ny/st/index.htm

And as always, feel free to call my office at 795-9556 if you have any questions or if you would like me to help you with your project.

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER!!!!!

GARBAGE AND RECYCLING NEWS

You may have noticed that the people who pick up your garbage have been placing your recycling in the same truck. Modern is changing their fleet to a single source truck. The truck has a divider inside that allows both trash and recycling to be placed into the same truck while being kept separate. The truck has a better compacting system and allows for more volume to be placed in the new truck as well. Although it appears that they are being mixed in the truck, the items are being kept separate so it's still important to continue to separate your recyclables!

Some items that you may not be aware that are acceptable for recycling: Cardboard (pizza boxes included) flattened and cut into pieces; kitchen cookware (metal pots, pans and utensils); empty household plastic containers (#3-#7) such as aspirin containers and cd cases.

UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS for recycling: paper milk or juice cartons, Styrofoam containers/packing, propane tanks, paint cans, colored glass, medical waste/syringes, flammable liquids, household cleaners, chemicals (dry or liquid), wood items, concrete, garden hose, and electrical cords.

If your recycling bin is full, clear plastic bags can be used for additional items.

Visit www.moderncorporation.com for more information about recycling and how you can help.

Assessor's Office
Bob Glidden—Assessor
Carol Maines—Clerk

795-3243

somersetassessor@roadrunner.com assessorclerk@roadrunner.com

The 2012 Assessment Update has now been completed. On May 1, 2012 the Tentative Assessment Roll will be available on the Town's web site with a link to Niagara County. There will also be paper copies in the Assessor's and Town Clerk's offices. **Grievance day** will be Tuesday May 22, 2012 **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.** You may pick up forms and instructions from the Assessor's & Clerk's offices or obtain the forms from the state's website (www.orps.state.ny.us/). This is also a great source for understanding the assessment process.

Completed forms <u>must be returned to the Town on or before May 22, 2012</u> for scheduling of appointments. No forms can be accepted after May 22nd.

The Assessor's staff will be available during normal business if assistance is required. If you feel that your assessment is fair but your taxes are too high, your comments should be addressed to the appropriate taxing jurisdiction. The assessor's office has no control over tax rates or budgets. The Assessor's job is to make sure every property owner is assessed at a Fair and Equitable Market Value.

Barker Free Library Events:

Drive thru Chicken BBQ, Sunday April 22, 2012 from 12:30PM—2:00PM

Faith United Methodist Church, 1449 Quaker Road

Prepared by the Barker Lion's Club Tickets are \$8.00

Bon Ton Community Days, Friday April 27th and Saturday April 28th

For a \$5 donation you get a \$10 coupon to use at Bon Ton during their Community Days. All proceeds benefit the Library.

Toddler Story Hour

Three Mondays per month 10:30AM—11:30AM for 3 and 4 year olds

We read a story, make a craft, and have a treat! Call (716) 795-3344 to register.

<u>Basket Raffle</u>—a new basket every month! Tickets are \$1.00 each. Stop in the Library for tickets and to check out the basket.

Friends of the Library

Everybody needs a friend. Please consider joining Friends of the Barker Free Library. It is with their support that we are able to hold these fundraisers to raise much needed funding for our library. The Library Board would like to **thank all** who have donated and to those who plan to.



JULY 27-29, 2012

Hosted by Niagara County Community College

- Balloon Launches
- Community BBQ
- Live Entertainment
 - Alumni 5K Run
- Community Fair
- Artisan demos
- Food Vendors
- Classic Car Show

Crafters and Vendors needed for Community Fair

For more information regarding Community Fair, please contact Lynn McIntosh (716) 614-6439 or Cheri Dunn (716) 614-5922

Visit their website: www.niagaracc.suny.edu/balloons



The Town of Hartland is celebrating their 200th Birthday with numerous events. There will be a Kick-off on May 6th at the Hartland Fire Hall from 1—4 PM and the Grand Celebration Summer Festival will be held July 28th beginning at NOON at the Hartland Town Park and ending with fireworks. You can get more information on their website: www.townofhartland.org



Mother's Day Chicken BBQ will be held by the Barker Lions Club on Sunday, May 13th from 11:30AM until gone at the Youth Building on Main Street. Tickets are available at the Town Hall or from any Lions Member—\$8.50 presale/\$9.00 at the door.

Volume 27, Issue 1 Spring 2012

Town of Somerset 8700 Haight Road PO Box 368 Barker, NY 14012-0368

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: 716-795-3575 Fax: 716-795-9041

Website: www.somersetny.org

Don't forget our annual tire dropoff starts on April 23rd! See page 4 for complete details!



TOWN BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH.

U.S. Postage
Standard
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Middleport, NY 14105
Permit #21

RURAL ROUTE BARKER, NY 14012



April 21	Free Rabies Clinic—Hartland Highway Garage, 2PM-4PM	May 7	Food Express at Faith United Methodist Church Food Pantry, 10AM
April 22	Barker Free Library Chicken BBQ Drive Thru at Faith United Methodist Church 12:30PM-2PM, Tickets \$8	May 7	Planning Board Meeting 7PM (Moved from May 9)
		May 13	Barker Lion's Club Chicken BBQ
April 22	Spring Raffle at Barker Fire Hall		11:30AM
	1PM-4PM Doors open at Noon,		
	Tickets \$20	May 22-24	Grievance Hearings by appointment 2PM-5PM and 6PM-9PM
April 29	Somerset Conservation Club Chicken		
	BBQ 11:30AM-2PM, Tickets \$8.50 presale/\$9 at the door	Aug 4	Town Wide Yard Sale
		Sept 16	Old Fashioned Farm Festival at the
April 30	Public Input Meeting for Town Comprehensive Plan,		Babcock House, 10AM-4PM
	Open House 6PM, Presentation 7PM	Sept 22	Free Rabies Clinic—Town of Lockport Highway Garage, 2PM-4PM