



# EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS

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*EPCIC Board members Dr. Jessica Rocco, Barb Herriott, Tom Brittain, Chris Page and Melissa Smith at the purchased property.*

## Property Purchase to Become Public Plaza

### EPCIC Acquires Former PNC Bank Drive-Through Lot

The East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (EPCIC), a non-profit organization created to support the economic development of the Village of East Palestine, acquired 74 North Market St. (the former PNC Bank drive-through lot) in December of last year.

The property was purchased so that it can eventually be turned into a public plaza for the benefit of the community as part of a planned downtown revitalization effort. There are examples in the region of appealing, vibrant downtowns that become drivers for business and population growth. East Palestine seeks to do the same. Having a public gathering space can be

important to communities whether it's used for friends meeting on a park bench to chat over coffee, a greenspace for kids and pets, a musical performance on a summer evening or the center of a community festival.

"A key component of the economic recovery plan for the village is downtown revitalization," said EPCIC President Chris Page. "This property in the center of the downtown will eventually become a key gathering space for events, performances and celebrations. We still have a lot of work to do to develop the plaza and revitalize the downtown, but securing this property

*(Continued on page 3)*

## 2025 East Palestine Village Council CALENDAR

Per the Village Charter: The East Palestine Village Council meets at the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month unless otherwise posted. If a holiday falls on or around these days, the meeting may be rescheduled by a vote of council. The date and time of any rescheduled meetings will be posted as will any special meetings of council called in accordance with and as provided by its rules.

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| • January 13  | • July 14      |
| • January 27  | • July 28      |
| • February 10 | • August 11    |
| • February 24 | • August 25    |
| • March 10    | • September 8  |
| • March 24    | • September 22 |
| • April 14    | • October 13   |
| • April 28    | • October 27   |
| • May 12      | • November 10  |
| • May 26      | • November 24  |
| • June 9      | • December 8   |
| • June 23     | • December 22  |



## New EP Council Members Appointed

### Meet Barb Herriott and John Simon

The Village of East Palestine Council is made up of six elected members, serving overlapping terms of four years. Whenever there are vacancies, new members are appointed to fill the open positions.

**Barb Herriott** was appointed to fill the open council member seat left by Doug Simpson's resignation at the East Palestine Village Council meeting on November 25. She will serve out the remainder of the term until 12/31/2025. Barb was also appointed as the new Board Member to fill the open position left by Linda May on the East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (EPCIC).

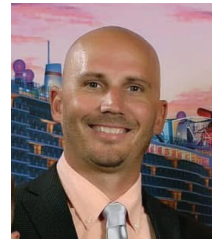


**Barb Herriott**

A resident of East Palestine for over 27 years, Herriott recently retired after a 45 ½ year career at The East Fairfield Coal Co., aka The East Fairfield Stone Co. There she served in a variety of roles including Human Resources Manager; Mine Safety and Health Administration Certified Instructor; managed the trucking division; maintained inventory and royalty records for each mine; as well as completed several high-visibility special projects for the company.

Barb notes, "East Palestine has a lot to offer. I believe in trying to improve my community and would like to help my hometown any way possible."

**John Simon** was appointed to fill the open council member seat left by Linda May's passing at the East Palestine Village Council meeting on December 30. He will serve out the term through 12/31/2027.



**John Simon**

John has been a resident of East Palestine for 39 years, and works as a civil engineer in Pittsburgh, PA. In his current role, he has worked with several government agencies on projects in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He has also served as the President of the East Palestine Youth Sports Association for the last 10 years.

John says, "East Palestine has an opportunity for substantial growth, and I look forward to helping our community thrive."

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## Linda May Remembered



**Linda May**  
Village Councilmember

East Palestine has lost a leader, advocate and friend with the unexpected passing of councilmember **Linda May** in her home on Dec. 9, 2024. Following Linda's wishes, a celebration of life will be announced by her family at a later date.

Born Jan. 13, 1950, in Salem, Ohio, the daughter of Howard and Louise Smith May, May spent a career in education before devoting her time to civic duties. She was a graduate of East Palestine High School

and Ohio State University, where she earned a Bachelor in Education before continuing her postgraduate studies at Youngstown State. She returned to East Palestine as a social studies and history teacher for East Palestine Schools, teaching for several years and later working as consultant for the Ohio Education Association.

In January of 2022, May was called to public service and was appointed to fill an empty seat on council. When that term expired, she was re-elected in November of 2023. As a member of council, May helped lead the village through last year's Norfolk Southern train derailment, focusing on rebranding the

village and fostering economic development to not just move East Palestine past the derailment but forward into a future of prosperity.

May served on the Park and Recreation, Street and Development/Finance Committees, the latter of which she chaired. May took her chair role seriously, advocating for the economic health of East Palestine through relationships she forged with the Columbiana County Port Authority and the Greater Lakes Rural Community Action Partnership (RCAP). May was a member of the village's economic steering committee and helped establish the village Think Tank – a group dedicated to fostering economic growth in the village. It was through her work with the Think Tank that May created dialogue between residents, business owners and the village leaders — giving a voice to the community and allowing residents a say in development direction. She was instrumental in the creation of the East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation and served as a board member where she was in constant contact with state and federal officials to leave no stone unturned and no resource untapped when it came to the village's economic recovery.

"The loss of Linda is immeasurable," council clerk and acting village manager **Misti Martin** said. "She cared deeply for the community and worked tirelessly to make East Palestine a better place now and in the future. She will be greatly missed by all."

## Property Purchase to Become Public Plaza *(Continued from page 1)*

was a critical first step. The EPCIC is extremely grateful for the sponsors of the Brighten Our Future Campaign that allowed us to buy this property. We have a plan, we are collaborating, and we are action-oriented."

Since it first met in March of 2024, the EPCIC has been working to improve the image of East Palestine through various public relations and marketing efforts. For downtown revitalization efforts, the EPCIC obtained an Opportunity Appalachia Grant to develop a plan for repurposing the old freight depot off of Taggart Street. It has also been working with the Village on the Safe Streets for All planning grant that should help secure future grant funds for elements of a streetscape, for instance: improved sidewalks, decorative streetlights, planters, benches, burying utility lines and pedestrian safety measures.

The EPCIC extends its heartfelt appreciation to all who supported the Brighten Our Future campaign. More sponsors were added after the publication of the December newsletter, **bringing the total raised to \$161,500!**

Thank you to all the sponsors, including: the East Palestine Community Foundation, East Palestine Rotary Club, Chevy All Stars and Brittain Chevrolet, Superior Beverage Group, MS Consultants, Norfolk Southern, East Palestine Chamber of Commerce, Bricker Graydon, McDonald's and the Telischak Family, the Morgenstern Family, WRL Advertising, Rapid SOS, Compco, Covelli Enterprises, Mullen Insurance Solutions, Bush Heating and Greenwood Chevrolet.





## Annual Santa Run with the EPFD

Excited Children Receive Early Visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus



Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Grinch hitched a ride with the East Palestine Fire Department and delivered Christmas cheer to nearly 300 children over the course of two evening runs on Friday, December 13 and Saturday, December 14.

Thanks to all Santa's helpers: Featuring Firefighter Dan Matthews, Jerrica Hoyt, Firefighter Dan Kibler and Firefighter/EMT Robbie Hill. Helping as drivers and elves were Battalion Chief Josh Foster, Captain Zach Gorby, Firefighter Ross McCoy and Firefighter Shane Griffith.

Merry Christmas and to all a good night! We'll see you next year!





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## The Rotary Club of East Palestine, Ohio

### Dedicated Service to the Community

The Rotary Club of East Palestine was proud to be a Platinum Sponsor donating \$25,000 to the 'Brighten Our Future' Fundraiser organized by the East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (EPCIC).

Chartered on May 14, 1956, with 31 charter members and the motto "Service Above Self," the Rotary Club of East Palestine, Ohio, has been dedicated to serving our community for many years. Although our numbers are fewer now than in the past, our commitment remains strong. We organize numerous events and collaborate with other organizations to benefit our village and surrounding areas.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 12:10 p.m. in the East Palestine Park Community Center. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings and apply for membership.

Our members work together to raise funds for various initiatives, including the East Palestine High School Interact Club and leadership meetings like World Affairs and RYLA. We also support the literacy program at the East Palestine Library, provide scholarships for graduating seniors and promote public speaking through the 4-Way Test District Speech Contest.



#### OUR COMMUNITY EVENTS INCLUDE:

- **Easter Breakfast with the Easter Bunny**
- **Memorial Day Bike Brigade**
- **East Palestine Rotary Youth Soccer Program**
- **East Palestine Rotary Cross Country Invitational**
- **East Palestine Rotary Car Cruise**
- **Breakfast with Santa**
- **Display of military flags at our cemetery**

We are proud to serve the village and residents of East Palestine and the surrounding communities.

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## BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT

### More Than Books

#### Enriching Lives and Inspiring Minds

Located at 309 North Market Street, the East Palestine Memorial Public Library was built on this property in 1959, but library service first began in the town in 1920 with the first public library established in 1934. It is a municipal public library overseen by a seven-member Board of Trustees appointed by village council.

**Tamra J. Hess**, Library Director, shared the library's mission statement: "The East Palestine Memorial Public Library provides materials, services, programs, technology and meeting spaces to meet the needs of all members of the community. The library upholds the principles of intellectual freedom and the public's right to know by providing people of all ages with guidance and access to educational, informational, cultural and recreational collections which reflect all points of view."

In 2020, the library joined with four other libraries in Columbiana County to create the PLUS (Public Libraries United in Service) Consortium. The consortium shares a computer system and library catalog, allowing access to a larger collection for each community. Interlibrary loan services provided through Search Ohio and Ohiolink, enables borrowing from large metropolitan libraries, colleges and universities throughout the state. Situated on the state line, East Palestine's library also serves nearby Beaver County, PA residents.

"Our main focus is promoting literacy to the community. And that's achieved through access to reading materials and many formats, including access to databases Libby and Hoopla that allow access to ebooks and digital audiobooks," explains **Noreen McBride**, Assistant Director/Youth Services Librarian. "We also offer preschool storytime, a toddler play group, an afterschool program for school-age children, a homeschool program, a tween and teen program and family events. Book clubs and programs for adults on a wide variety of topics are also presented throughout the month."

The Friends of the Library organization meets throughout the year and holds two annual book sales and a silent auction to raise funds to help provide services and programming.

[east-palestine.lib.oh.us](http://east-palestine.lib.oh.us)



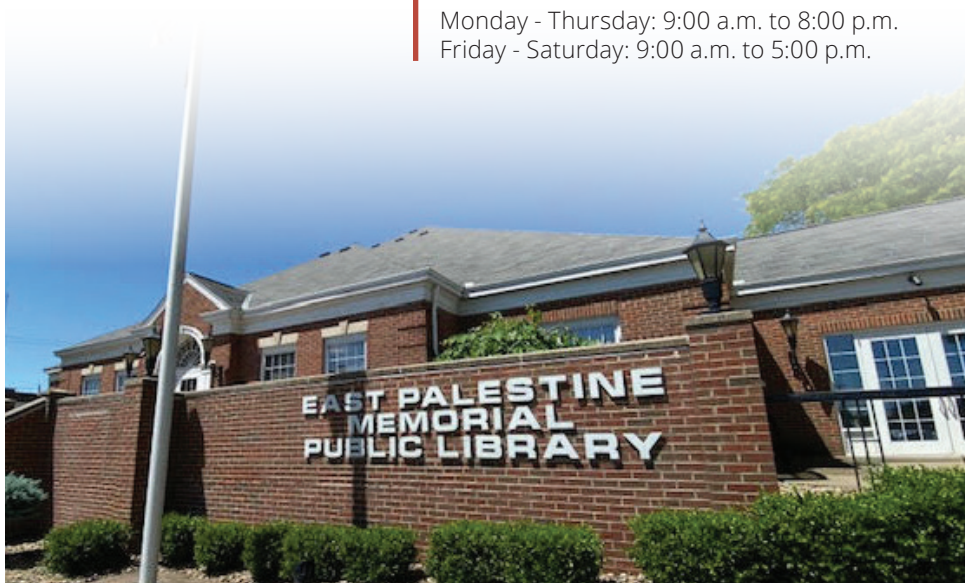
East Palestine Memorial Public Library



epmpl

#### Library Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Friday - Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



(Above) The Dryden Green Space was created on the lot next to the library primarily through a gift from the late East Palestine Elementary teacher, Ruth A. Dryden, and a Community Grant awarded by Norfolk-Southern. The green space was dedicated in 2024.



### GET YOUR LIBRARY CARD



#### Adults aged 18 and older

Photo identification card along with proof of current address.

#### Children aged 5 and older

Parent or Guardian fills out an application and presents their photo ID and proof of current address.

Library Patrons can enjoy access to additional services such as family admission passes to the Akron Zoo, the OH Wow! Science Center in Youngstown and the Neighborhood North Museum of Play in Beaver Falls, PA.





## Impact Through Action

Making an impact in the daily lives of others, developing keen leadership skills, and recognizing the importance of giving back within a community. These are just some of the lifelong lessons being developed and enhanced by the students at East Palestine High School. Members of the Chick-fil-A Leader Academy and the Bulldog Choir participated in "Do Good December."

Students were tasked with participating in activities that held a reach further than the walls of EPHS. These Bulldogs helped elementary students shop for their loved ones at Santa's Secret Shop and also spent time entertaining and visiting residents at Covington and Christian House. What better way to make an impact than through the gift of time spent with others – talking, listening and sharing a smile. We are proud of their leadership!



## Unlocking Potential Mentorship Program

The Unlocking Potential (UP) Mentorship Program at East Palestine Middle School is thriving in its second year. This program, a valuable initiative of the United Way of Northern Columbiana County, aims to provide consistent one-on-one support to students.

Each month, mentors and mentees engage in meaningful interactions, focusing on developing essential life skills. These interactions foster respect, accountability and strong communication.

Over 20 individuals from the East Palestine community and surrounding area have accepted the role of mentor, giving of their time every month to support students. All mentors undergo rigorous background checks (BCI/FBI) as per school district requirements.



United Way Services of Northern  
Columbiana County





85 North Market Street  
East Palestine, OH 44413



# EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS

## Don't Miss an Issue!

Register to Receive Monthly Digital Newsletter as Print Version Becomes Quarterly

It's been nearly a year since the *East Palestine Progress* debuted with its first issue. We hope you have enjoyed reading the positive news and information we have shared about our forward momentum. As we begin the second year of publication, we will be printing fewer issues, cutting back to quarterly starting with the April issue, but distributing an online version each month to your email inboxes. In preparation for this transition, please [fill out this form](#) to continue reading the articles to stay up to date on all the issues affecting the village.

