



# From the Ground Up

JANUARY 12, 2009

## FLOODPLAIN MAPS UPDATE

Both the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Natural Resources have notified us that the challenge period for comments related to the implementation of the Preliminary Floodplain Maps released in June 2008 has been delayed. While the State of Illinois says the information noted on the maps can be utilized as best available information, they are not guaranteeing that it is accurate.

The City of Highland engaged a contractor to review the proposed preliminary maps, perform some hydraulic calculations and run hydrologic modeling to compare with the information noted on the proposed preliminary maps.

The City will be hosting an informational meeting sometime this spring and will be sending out formal notice of the meeting.

## NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS PROGRAM

As our job entails the enforcement of property maintenance concerns, we found that many citizens were not keeping their buildings repaired as well as should be. While some people may have family members locally that were able to help out, others had either no members available or did not have the financial means to hire someone to do the work. While Madison County had several programs available through Community Development Funding, most require the homeowner to take out a low interest loan or another program requires the owners to live in the structure for 5 years after having the repairs completed or else they must pay back the grant.

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors program is not intended to be a loan program. It is our objective to fill the gap for

- seniors on fixed income
- single parent families
- physically challenged homeowners



that do not have the resources or methods to perform the work on their single family structures. Establishing this program will allow the city to provide assistance in working with the homeowner instead of working against them.

Such things as painting the exterior, minor repairs to roofs, replace/repair windows, fixing exterior steps, minor wiring and plumbing repairs and install/replace exterior doors are just a few of the areas that we would be assisting with. The maintenance of those items should allow the homeowner to have a better safe and secure residence, take pride in their neighborhood and hopefully set an example for the neighbors.



*"It takes everyone in a community to keep our homes, schools, offices, stores and other buildings safe."*

### *Areas of Interest:*

1. *Floodplain Maps Update*
2. *Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program*
3. *Chimney and/or Furnace Vents*

**City of Highland's  
Community  
Development  
Mission Statement:**

*To ignite positive  
change through  
orderly  
development and  
revitalization of  
quality construction  
while serving in a  
courteous,  
professional, and  
ethical manner.*

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**We're on the Web!**

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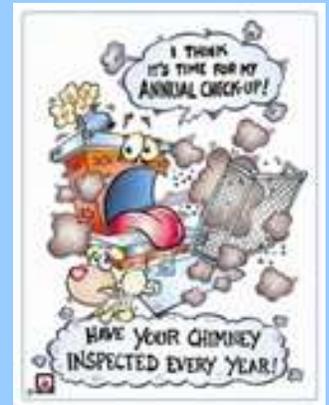
The benefits of this program besides helping the homeowner maintain their property values and allow the city to lessen the amount of time staff would need to address property maintenance issues, would also lessen the neighborhood tensions and lessen the burdens of the local government.

Staff is proposing to utilize Building Permit fine monies and un-refunded Certificate of Occupancy monies to start up the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program.

If you would like to donate time, materials, or monetary donations please contact Building and Zoning at 2610 Plaza Drive, (618) 654-7115 or via email at [highlandzoning@highlandil.gov](mailto:highlandzoning@highlandil.gov).

### **CHIMNEY AND/OR FURNACE VENTS**

As we are approaching the coldest time of the year, we would like to remind everyone to make sure that their chimneys and/or furnace vents are clear of any blockage or decay. Chimneys and other similar types of appurtenances are frequently ignored until they become nonfunctional or are in danger of collapse. Because of the corrosiveness of the exhaust gases, chimneys and smokestacks often deteriorate on the inside first and may crack and let deadly unseen fumes seep into the living spaces. Occasionally, deterioration may become sufficient to prevent the chimney or smokestack from operating properly. Unsafe chimneys have caused numerous carbon monoxide deaths.



Proper maintenance and an inspection of the chimney and furnace flue should be a regular part of your maintenance program. There are many qualified chimney inspectors – maintenance companies available in this area. Make sure to check their references before hiring them to perform any work.



Feel free to contact Building and Zoning at 2610 Plaza Drive, (618) 654-7115 or via email at [highlandzoning@highlandil.gov](mailto:highlandzoning@highlandil.gov) should you have any questions or comments.