

Valparaiso Launches Lead-Safe Inventory for Water Service Lines

The City of Valparaiso is launching a program to complete a full inventory of the city's water service lines, including those in residences, announced Matt Zurbriggen, Deputy City Services Director for the City of Valparaiso. The inventory is required by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) as part of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2021 revision of the Lead and Copper rule.



service lines in their home in the future," said Zurbriggen.

Authorized door knockers will be working throughout the Valparaiso community, beginning in February to complete the inventory by the deadline of October 16, 2024. They will have badges to confirm their identities and the appointments may also be scheduled ahead of time, at the customer's convenience.

"We truly appreciate the cooperation of our community as all Indiana communities are doing this inventory. We want to complete the process as quickly and conveniently for customers as possible," said Zurbriggen.

To learn more about the Lead-Safe Valpo service line inventory and how to report your information to the inventory, visit tinyurl.com/LeadSafeValpo or scan the QR code here.



"We want the public to know that the water in Valparaiso is safe and that we have an extensive inventory of the service lines on our side of the utility. We are required to submit an inventory showing the materials used on the customers' side of the line now and ask for the community's help so that we can complete this requirement," said Zurbriggen.

How to Report YOUR Residence

To compile the required information, residents are asked to participate in either of two ways:

1. Inspect your service line in a simple test and submit the information online. OR

2. Allow an authorized door knocker to briefly enter their home to do this examination.

Instructions for how to do the self-inspection and how to schedule the brief visit are available online at tinyurl.com/LeadSafeValpo, visit the "Report" tab, or you may call to schedule at (219) 462-6174, option 4 during business hours.

"Compiling this information is a federal requirement. However, the information also benefits our community as we learn of any potential lead service lines in homes. We want to help residents to be aware and also to qualify for any potential funding that may be available to them for replacing lead

Dear Neighbors,

First off, I want to thank the community for the warm welcome back. I'm spending a lot of time listening and looking at the big picture with fresh eyes. I'm grateful for an engaged community and a talented team.



The new year brings many projects and I'd like to use this newsletter to share what's coming. We're looking ahead to recognizing March as Disability Awareness Month, welcoming speakers and experiences that make us better allies in the community. We're launching a program to get a complete inventory of water service lines and ask for your help as we look to get a complete report. Please help us meet this requirement by sharing your information or scheduling an appointment for a short visit from our team.

Look for good things happening all over our city. Our Neighborhood Improvement Grants continue. Our website keeps getting better for users. Our services are strong and sustainable. Valparaíso is a truly remarkable community and I look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor

Council Corner

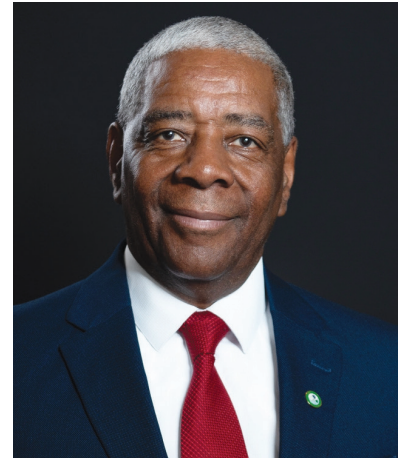
Featured member of the City Council

ROBERT COTTON

District 2 and City Council President

Robert Cotton has been a resident of Valparaíso since 1969 and has served on the Valparaíso City Council since 2016. His priorities are balanced growth, accessibility, transparency and inclusion.

You can reach Robert Cotton at RCotton@Valpo.us or (219) 246-3336.



To access City Council agendas, meeting minutes, a map of City Council districts and contact information for each representative, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoCouncil.

Elevating the Arts

Artist Maria Overlay shows her design at the corner of Valparaíso Street and Vale Park Road. The City of Valparaíso is featuring local artists on utility boxes throughout the city in a program funded by the City's Redevelopment Commission. Stay tuned for more striking designs this year!



City Highlights Disability Awareness Month

Joining with the State of Indiana in recognizing March as Disability Awareness Month, the City of Valparaiso is featuring activities and opportunities to make us all better allies. "Disability Awareness Month is an opportunity to come together, become more educated and build a more supportive community," said Mayor Jon Costas.

The initiative is coordinated by the Advisory Human Relations Council's Disability Awareness and Inclusion Subcommittee and community partners. Highlights of Valparaiso's 2024 Disability Awareness Month include:

1. Disability Awareness Spotlight featuring Team Agar

Featuring the incredible story of Team Agar, a father-son team of Jeff and Johnny Agar. Johnny was born with cerebral palsy and doctors predicted he would never walk. He overcame adversity to participate in long-distance endurance races with his dad, Jeff, pushing him until the final mile when Johnny walks across the finish line. Johnny's memoir, *The Impossible Mile*, shares that no obstacle is too difficult to conquer. Featured on ESPN, NBC



Nightly News, Today, and other media outlets, Team Agar shares a message of family, faith and courage.

The free presentation will be at 6:00 pm on March 20 at the Harre Union Ballroom, Valparaiso University. No ticket or RSVP is necessary.

2. Tenacious Author Reading and Wheelchair Basketball Demonstration with Author and Paralympian Patty Cisneros Prevo

Patty Cisneros Prevo is a proud disabled Latina and picture book writer. She has competed in the sport of wheelchair basketball since 1998. She competed in

three Paralympic Games, won back-to-back gold medals and served as captain of the 2008 Paralympic gold medal team. In 2015, as a parent and 4th grade teacher, she saw a gap in children's literature when it came to diversity. She wrote *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.

The free presentation will be at 10:00 am on March 16 at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. No ticket or RSVP is necessary and the event includes booths hosted by local nonprofit organizations.

In addition to these events, local organizations are hosting their own discussions surrounding disability awareness and inclusion, including the Valpo Chamber, Porter County Public Library System, Valparaiso Noon and Sunrise Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Club of Valparaiso and more. The City has also shared online resources, including an Ally Toolkit to help us all think more carefully about our interactions with others. Visit tinyurl.com/ValpoDAI to learn more and access materials.

Neighborhood Improvement Grants Continue

This Free Little Library in the Banta neighborhood was an idea neighbors submitted, winning the support of a Neighborhood Improvement Grant. The grant program has funded 98 projects since it was introduced in 2018, resulting in more than \$1.3 million in neighborhood improvements. These grants help neighbors come together for common goals, like community spaces, projects that add neighborhood pride, physical improvements and more. Applications for the upcoming grant cycle are due on March 1, 2024. To learn more about the program, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoGrant2024. For questions or guidance, contact Community Engagement Director Maggie Clifton at MClifton@valpo.us or at City Hall, (219) 462-1161.



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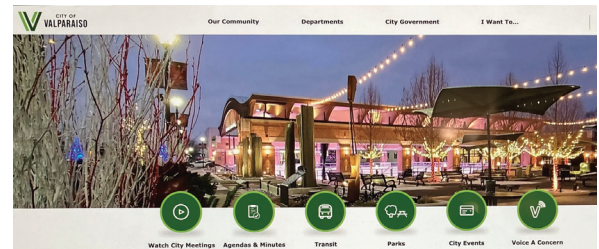


Transit Keeps Us Moving

The City of Valpo offers two dedicated buses to get us around town and to Chicago, with convenient features like bus tracking and mobile ticketing to make your travel more convenient, reliable and efficient.

- The V-Line is the intra-city busy service for the citizens and visitors of Valparaiso. Established in 2007, the V-Line offers routes to many popular destinations throughout the city. Brand new V-Line buses arrive this year, featuring lower entries to improve accessibility.
- The ChicaGo Dash is Valpo's own express bus to Chicago, providing convenient, comfortable and cost-effective transit to Chicago's Loop each weekday. The Dash offers airplane-like seating, on-board lavatories and bike racks to transport your own wheels to the city. The ChicaGo Dash buses have recently been replaced with sparkling new models.

For routes, schedules and more information, visit ValpoTransit.com.



Working on the Web

City Strives to Strengthen Valpo.us to Serve Community

The City of Valparaiso is working to enhance features on the official website, Valpo.us. "We're listening and responding to customer comments about what they want to see and how we can best meet needs," said Mayor Costas. "Our goal is to make information accessible and transparent."

Changes being made include to improve the customer experience include:

- Making pages more uniform in appearance so they communicate faster
- Reviewing all data to keep only current information, speeding searches and access
- Maintaining the search bar, "Watch City Meetings" and "Agendas & Minutes" on the home page for easy access.

To find the official webpage for the City of Valparaiso, visit Valpo.us.



State of the City

Mayor Costas delivered the State of the City address at the annual event hosted by the Valpo Chamber. To read his address and learn more about 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals, visit the Mayor's page (under "City Government") at Valpo.us.