



# Bellbrook

## Community Events & Important Dates

December 2 – Annual Christmas Open House (Open Arms Health Clinic)

December 9 – Light Up Bellbrook Parade (City of Bellbrook) & Christmas in the Park (Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Park District)

December 21 – A Christmas Concert (Winters-Bellbrook Community Library & The Bellbrook Presbyterian Church)

December 22 – Christmas Eve Observance (City Offices closed)

December 24 – Christmas Eve

December 25 – Christmas Day (City Offices closed)

December 31 – New Year's Eve

January 1, 2024 – New Year's Day (City Offices closed)

## Bellbrook Light Fight & Light Up Bellbrook Parade

The City of Bellbrook is hosting two new events to celebrate the holiday season with the community. The first event is a community-wide holiday "light fight," where participants light up and decorate the exterior of their home or business. A panel of judges will review each entrant and vote on a winner. The contest winner will be announced at Christmas in the Park on Saturday, December 9, and presented with custom brick to be installed in the Bellbrook Historical Museum's Yellow Brick Road.

The second event is the Light Up Bellbrook Parade, hosted with Christmas in the Park on December 9. The parade will consist of vehicles, tractors, ATVs, golf carts, horses, and pedestrians decorated with lights. The parade will start between 5:15 and 5:30 p.m., depending on when the sun sets. The parade route will go from East South Street to South Main Street to East Walnut Street and back to the former Sugarcreek Elementary School (51 South East Street). We hope to see you there!

## City of Bellbrook Newsletter

December 2023

### Message from the Mayor



Season's Greetings, friends and neighbors! Here we are again entering the holiday season, which comes sooner every year. This time of the year, we have opportunities to reflect, give thanks, and celebrate all things in the past year. First, we celebrate and honor the veterans of our nation's armed services for the sacrifices they and their families give to protect the freedoms we all enjoy. Next, we celebrate and give thanks for friends, families, and all things we have in our lives. Each year presents its challenges, but I hope everyone has an opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the past year.

I am thankful the City of Bellbrook continues to expand and grow our sense of community and improves the delivery of service the residents deserve. Throughout this year, we have seen a number of new events and activities that bring the community together and create more opportunities for engagement. We have continued to take on important projects that help improve the quality of life for our residents and businesses. With continued input from our citizens, we hope to continue identifying the projects and services needed for improvements to our infrastructure, public safety, livability, and quality of life. One of those projects was the Franklin Street Bridge. While the project caused some disruptions, the end result brought about significant improvements to walkability, safety, and appeal for the gateway to our Downtown.

With our newly elected and re-elected members of Council, we will continue to enhance the quality of life for our citizens, and we look forward to an exciting future. I am committed to being available and engaged with all residents to work together to keep Bellbrook a great community. I want to personally wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Mayor Mike Schweller

### Bellbrook Garden Club

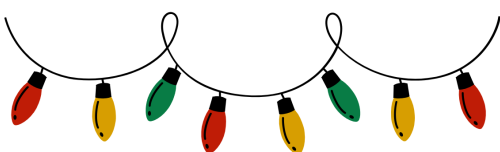
Germany developed the Christmas tree in the 1500s. Supposedly, a German theologian was uplifted and inspired by stars shining through evergreen trees during a winter's night. He brought a fir tree into his home and covered it with candles. German Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, brought Christmas trees to England. By 1900, these trees had become popular in the United States.



Poinsettias were brought to the U.S. in 1828 by Joel Robert Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico. The colored leaves are not flowers—the small yellow buds in the center are the flowers. Poinsettias prefer bright but indirect light for six hours a day. Keep soil damp (not soaked) and maintain them in 65-70 degrees rooms. You can plant them outdoors in warm weather.

Because holly endures with little water, it was thought to bring luck, especially to men. Ivy was associated with the feminine and symbolizes new growth. Thus, the source of the English carol is "The Holly and the Ivy." Ancient Greeks and Romans were the first to decorate with holly and other evergreens. They sent holly wreaths as good wishes. Holly is toxic, so keep it away from small children and pets. The yew, one of Earth's oldest evergreens, was symbolic of everlasting life and often used in decorating homes along with fir and spruce. Yews were planted in European churchyards to symbolize a long life.

If you use evergreen wreaths and cuttings indoors, keep them misted daily with cold water or periodically soak them in cold water. Due to rain and cold temps, outdoor porch pots with cuttings can last well into the new year. Visit [www.bellbrookgardenclub.org](http://www.bellbrookgardenclub.org) for information or the club's Facebook page.



## Citizens Academy of Bellbrook



Earlier this fall, the City of Bellbrook hosted its first Citizens Academy of Bellbrook. Over the course of eight weeks, Bellbrook residents had a unique opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look into the operations of local government through this fun and educational program. The participants received instructions and tours of each department operated within the City government, including hands-on experiences, such as a fire extinguisher demonstration with the Fire Department, a tour of Bellbrook's water plant with the Service Department, and a deep dive into law enforcement with the Police Department. Throughout the program, the participants interacted and worked with City officials and staff to gain insight and better understand their City's operations.

The objectives of the program were to involve and engage residents to learn and understand the operation of city government and to improve the communication between the City and the community to build and strengthen relationships throughout the entire community.

During the program, participants learned about:

- Bellbrook's City Council, boards and commissions, and structure
- Administration and Community Development
- Police Operations
- Fire Operations
- Public Works
- Intergovernmental Services
- Historical Museum



Fall 2023 Citizens Academy of Bellbrook members

The program culminated with a presentation of certificates and recognition during the City Council meeting on October 23. Thank you to this year's participants in the Citizens Academy of Bellbrook!

## Little Miami Watershed Network: Seasonal Changes & What to Do

Fall has arrived and is in full swing. The colors were beautiful this year, absolutely breathtaking at times. Nature is a gift, isn't it?

As trees, plants, and some wildlife move into their resting phase to build their reserves for next spring, there are some actions we can take to support them, our river, and its watershed during the winter months. Here are a few to consider:

What do we do with our leaves?

- Use your mower to mulch the leaves on the grass. It provides nutrients for your yard the following year.
- If your leaves are picked up, make sure to rake them to the edge of your grass instead of the street. This reduces the number of leaves that make their way into our storm drains and into the Little Miami River. Excessive leaves create an imbalance in the river's ecosystem and the creatures that call it home.
- If you have woods behind your home, rake the leaves into the woods.
- If you have a garden or flower beds, cover them in a layer of leaves for a nice leaf mold, which does wonders for your soil.
- Put leaves into your compost bin to create rich soil for next year. On average, leaves take about six months to decompose. Great for summer use.

Winter is on its way—what do we do to keep us safe from icy sidewalks and driveways and protect our watershed at the same time?

- Juice from sugar beets works to lower the melting point of ice and snow and works in sub-zero weather. It's also safe for plants, wildlife, and concrete.
- Organic, salt-free deicers feature chemical compounds that break down naturally, causing minimal damage to the environment. Check out the webpage on the United States EPA website for Safe Choice-certified products to see recommendations on products you can use. Click on the product type and scroll down to deicers. Or check out the article, "No-salt alternatives for deicing driveways and walkways," from [www.cleveland.com](http://www.cleveland.com), from a place that we all know has its fair share of snow and ice.
- Kitty litter, coffee grinds, and sand are good, too. They don't melt ice or snow, but they provide traction.
- If you still want to use salt, remember that more salt does not mean more melting. Less is more. Pam McCurdy from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recommends residents use less than four pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet. For reference, one pound of salt is equal to the amount of salt in a 12-ounce coffee mug.



The Little Miami Watershed Network hopes you will explore some of these options as we work together to keep our rivers, creeks, and environment healthier and safer. We are making a difference. Let's continue to build on our success.





## Bellbrook Sugarcreek Optimist Club



The Bellbrook Sugarcreek Optimists are pleased to announce the lighting of the Christmas tree at Bellbrook Park for the holiday season. We are able to do this because of the funds generated through the Avenue of Flags (AOF) program.

The Bellbrook Sugarcreek Optimist Club appreciates our subscribers and encourages others to join the program in 2024. To become an AOF subscriber or to renew your subscription, see our website, [www.bellbrookcreeksugarcreekoptimist.com](http://www.bellbrookcreeksugarcreekoptimist.com), or call (937) 469-7644.

## Open Arms Health Clinic

Let's keep expanding and healing for ten more years, Bellbrook! For those in the community who are without adequate health insurance, the Open Arms Health Clinic is quite actively planning for the next ten years of treating basic, non-urgent medical conditions. Yes, we would like to offer more times and types of services beyond the Tuesday evening Clinic, but we also need your enthusiasm for good health!

Are you the one who might be available part-time to offer care and skills as an executive director, nurse, phlebotomist, office administrator, board member, social media assistant, or occasional event coordinator? Inquire about these very flexible opportunities at [www.bellbrookopenarmsclinic.org](http://www.bellbrookopenarmsclinic.org) or visit our Annual Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 2, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. This friendly, casual gathering is another ideal opportunity for you to learn more about the clinic and its mission. Join us for some delicious custom refreshments and meet volunteers, medical providers, and medical students from the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine who work together diligently to provide countless hours to keep our doors open.



Please note that we are a 501(c)3 charity to consider as you complete or begin your 2023 year-end tax planning. Thank you, neighbors!

## Bellbrook Historical Museum



The Bellbrook Historical Museum would like to wish the community a happy and healthy holiday season! We invite everyone to visit the Museum during Christmas in the Park on December 9 for refreshments and festivities! We hope to see you there!

The Museum is located at 42 North Main Street in downtown Bellbrook and is open Tuesdays from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (any changes in hours will be updated on the City's website and social media pages). If you would like to visit outside the open hours, please call (937) 848-2415 to make an appointment. Admission is free.

## Winters-Bellbrook Community Library

There is so much happening at the Winters-Bellbrook Community Library! You'll want to check our event calendar and even inside the library for so many activities and events that you won't want to miss. There will be some craft programs, entertainment, Dungeons and Dragons, and many more unadvertised surprises happening all month long. The Winters-Bellbrook Community Library cordially invites you to our annual Christmas Concert to be held at The Bellbrook Presbyterian Church on December 21st at 7 p.m. This free event is a wonderful way for the entire family to relax and enjoy holiday music provided by the brass quintet Beaver Creek Brass. This has become a highly anticipated event for our neighbors and the musicians alike. We hope you will attend. Call the library at (937) 352-4004 for more information. For all ages.

WINTERS BELBROOK LIBRARY AND  
THE BELLBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
PRESENT

# A Christmas CONCERT

WITH BEAVERCREEK BRASS

DEC | 21<sup>st</sup> | 2023

7PM - A FREE FAMILY EVENT

THE BELLBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
72 WEST FRANKLIN STREET, BELLBROOK

We are also excited to announce that we have Tabletop Games available for a three-week loan! The Greene County Library system has 70+ games to choose from and can be requested from any location. We consider this a fantastic new edition to our collection. Remember that the library has loads of fun things to borrow for holiday vacations, including holiday movies, Roku sticks, Maker Kits, STEM activities, Learning Tablets, and more. Ask any one of your librarians for more information. From all of your librarians and clerks at the library, we hope you have a most peaceful holiday season and Happy New Year!



# City Council



Bellbrook's City Council is the City's legislative and policy-making body. The Council comprises a mayor and six council members elected at large on a non-partisan basis.

The Bellbrook City Council invites you to attend its regular meetings on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7 p.m. of each month (unless otherwise noticed).

For information about the City Council, past meetings, and current issues, call (937) 848-4666 or visit the City Council page on our website at [www.cityofbellbrook.org/page/council\\_home](http://www.cityofbellbrook.org/page/council_home).

## Employee Recognition

At the November 13 City Council meeting, three employees were recognized for reaching milestone years of service with the City.

The City is grateful for all our employees and volunteers who work to provide excellent services to our residents and businesses. The City provides police, fire, street, water, and other services.

Thank you to each of these employees for their hard work and dedication!



Jordan Ewing, Fire Department – 5 years of service

Alexi Stout, Police Department – 5 years of service

Jay Leach, Fire Department – 10 years of service



## Thank You to Mrs. Elaine Middlestetter



The Mayor, City Council, and staff would like to thank outgoing Council Member Elaine Middlestetter for her dedicated service to the City. Mrs. Middlestetter has served on the Council since January 2012, when she was first elected. She served three full terms after her re-election in 2021. She has also served as the chair of the

Community Affairs Committee, a member of the Safety Committee, and as delegate for the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Chamber of Commerce and Historical Museum Board. Thank you, Mrs. Middlestetter!

## Boards & Commissions Vacancies

The City of Bellbrook has several boards and commissions to carry out various functions. They include the Planning Board, Board of Zoning Appeals & Property Review Commission, Village Review Board, Records Commission, Historical Museum Trustees, and the Charter Advisory Commission. Current or upcoming vacancies for Bellbrook's boards and commissions are as follows:

- Planning Board
- Historical Museum Trustees

Residents interested in becoming more involved in their community are invited to contact the City Administration Department at (937) 848-4666 and submit their names for vacancies. Any applicant must be a registered voter.

# Planning & Zoning



## What is the Public Right-of-Way?

The public right-of-way, also referred to as the ROW, is the land on which the streets are located, including the land on either side. In most residential areas, the right-of-way is a variable distance, normally, about ten to fifteen feet from the edge of the pavement.

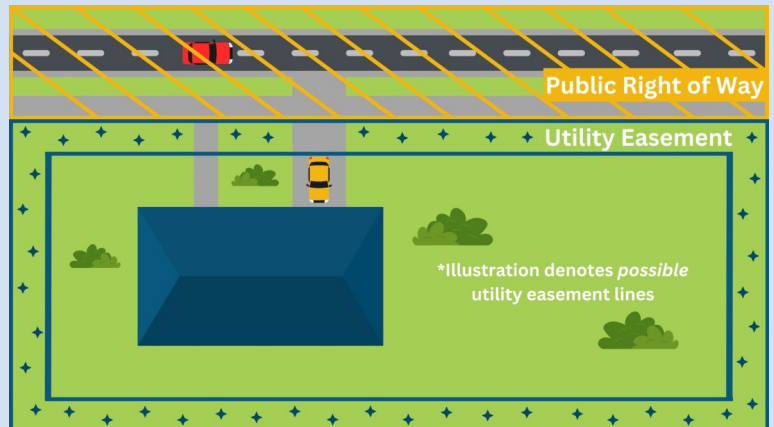
### Purpose of the right-of-way:

- Can be used for public improvements.
- Contains street signs, fire hydrants, storm sewers, underground and open ditches, sidewalks, and driveway approaches.
- May be used for public utilities such as water lines and sanitary sewer lines.
- Gives the City the ability to ensure proper sight distance for pedestrians and motorists.

### Public right-of-way maintenance:

Property owners must maintain the public right-of-way along any road frontage. Maintenance includes lawn mowing, tree trimming, and maintaining driveway approaches and sidewalks.

- Do not plant bushes or trees close to the street.
- Do not install sprinkler systems in the right-of-way.
- Do not place electric pet fences in the right-of-way.
- Do not place a garage sale or for sale sign in the right-of-way.



Any work done in the right-of-way by a resident or contractor must be permitted by the City. This ensures the work does not infringe on public safety or accessibility. For questions or concerns, please contact Ryan Pasley, Service Department Director, at (937) 848-8415 or Jason Foster, Community Development Administrator, at (937) 848-4666.





## Officer Jackie Jones Retires



Bellbrook Police Officer Jones retires after more than 34 years of service and was recognized at the November 27 Council meeting. She began her career with the City of Bellbrook Police Department in 1988 as an Emergency Services Dispatcher and has served both Bellbrook Police and Fire Departments throughout her career.

Notable achievements include her receiving commendations for instructing the Bellbrook Citizen Police Academy and for instructing a bullying presentation at the Greene County Academy for Independent Learning. Officer Jones is also a 2015 recipient of the Hometown Heroes Award presented annually by Optimists International.

The City of Bellbrook would like to thank Officer Jones for her dedicated service to the community and the Bellbrook Police Department, and wish her the best for her retirement.

## Holiday Season Tips

As the holiday season draws closer, the Bellbrook Police Department wants to remind everyone to please secure their vehicles and not leave valuables behind. Every year during the holidays, the Bellbrook Police Department takes multiple calls from residents who left their vehicles unattended, and their valuables were taken by thieves during the night. Situations like these understandably create anguish and concern for residents and the police officers trying to recover the valuables.

Myth: I don't lock my car because thieves will just break the window.

Fact: Often, these thieves are opportunists and look for easy thefts from unlocked cars. They will check hundreds of cars at night by pulling on car doors, and they do not typically break car windows because this would create unwanted noise, and residents would be alerted, the thieves seen, and the police being called.

If you are a victim of theft, we need to know about it. Please call us ASAP at **(937) 848-8484**. In many cases, items of value get pawned or sold on auction sites. The sooner a report is received, the higher the likelihood of recovering your lost valuables.

Remember to: Lock your car - Take items of value with you - Don't leave items of value in plain sight in your car or truck. This is especially true for the upcoming holiday season when it may be tempting to leave items in your vehicle.

The best way to keep from being a victim of theft is to lock your vehicle and not leave valuables in your car unattended. With non-emergency questions or concerns, please call the Bellbrook Police Department at **(937) 848-8484**.

## Waste Collection



### Rumpke Holiday Pick-Up Schedule

For City residents, the regular Friday collection will be delayed one day (Saturday) during the week of major holidays if they fall on a weekday. The regular schedule will resume the following week.

#### 2023

Christmas Day - collection on Saturday, December 30

New Year's Day 2023 into 2024 - collection on Saturday, January 6



#### 2024

Memorial Day - collection on Saturday, June 1

Independence Day - collection on Saturday, July 6

Labor Day - collection on Saturday, September 7

Thanksgiving Day - collection on Saturday, November 30

Christmas Day - collection on Saturday, December 28

New Year's Day 2024 into 2025 - collection on Saturday, January 4

## Bulk Pick-Up

For bulk pick-up items, please call Rumpke directly to schedule a bulk pick-up. Please call in advance of the pick-up day. Rumpke can be contacted at **(800) 828-8171**. Items such as furniture and appliances can be picked up by Rumpke. Rumpke may have specifications for the preparation of certain bulk items, and a fee may apply for certain appliances.

# Fire Department



The Bellbrook Fire Department is a combination department with seven full-time employees and 13 part-time employees. The fire services provided to the citizens of Bellbrook have a Class 2 Public Protection Classification, placing the community in the top 3% of those evaluated throughout the nation. The Department operates two engines, one ladder truck, three ambulances, and three staff/support vehicles. They have 11 paramedics, 9 Emergency Medical Technicians, and one medical director.

## Can Santa Find You?



Every second counts during a fire, police, or medical emergency. Valuable time can be lost if your house number is not clearly posted where emergency responders can see it. Police officers, firefighters, and EMS responders can't provide lifesaving services to you and your family if they cannot find your house. The Bellbrook Fire Department is offering to provide you with a highly visible sign for responders to locate your residence in a timelier manner, potentially saving time and lives!

The signs are made of aluminum with a reflective color backing and 3" reflective white numbers on both sides. They are 6" wide and 18" tall. They are designed to be installed on a mailbox post for the greatest visibility from the street. For information on how to order your address sign, call the Fire Department at (937) 848-3272.



## Before Heading Out or Going to Bed

Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.






Facts:

- More than one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- More than two of every five decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



Source: NFPA® Applied Research

## Winter Holiday Safety

-  Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame-resistant or flame-retardant.
-  Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
-  Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
-  Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read the manufacturer's instructions for a number of light strands to connect.
-  Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.

## Winter Holiday Fire Facts

- Between 2014-2018, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 160 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of two deaths, 14 injuries, and \$10 million in direct property damage annually.
- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in almost half (45%) of home Christmas tree fires.
- More than one-fifth (22%) of the Christmas tree fires, some type of heat source, such as a candle or equipment, was too close to the tree.
- Fifteen percent of Christmas tree fires were intentional.



- Roughly three-quarters of Christmas tree fires occurred in December or January.
- More than two of every five (42%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room.
- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in almost half of the home Christmas tree fires.
- Nearly one in five Christmas tree fires were started by decorative lights. Candles started eight percent.
- Roughly two of every five home Christmas tree fires started in the living room.
- Year-round, more than one-third (35 percent) of home decoration fires were started by candles. This jumped to almost half in December when candles started 45 percent of such fires. Cooking started one-fifth (19%) of decoration fires.

Source: NFPA® and the US Fire Administration (USFA)



# Service Department



The Bellbrook Service Department operates and maintains the water system serving the City and part of Sugarcreek Township. Currently, the City has one employee with a Class 2 Operator's License and five employees with a Class 1 Operator's License. The Ohio EPA requires the City to have a minimum of one employee with a Class 1 Operator's License. The water system serves over 9,200 people in the City and Township. The department also maintains City streets, storm sewers, and City buildings. Our staff has worked for a combined total of 158 years!

## Snow Removal: Residents Can Help

'Tis the season of snowfall! Residents can assist the Service Department during a snowstorm by heeding these suggestions:

- Remove all parked cars from City streets.
- Reduce your speed and drive cautiously.
- Remain off the road during snowstorms unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not allow children to make snow forts at the edge of the road.
- Do not plow, blow, or throw snow back into the roadway.
- Before the final cleanup of your driveway, check the road. If it does not appear to be widened out, a plow will return to plow again and may push snow back into the entrance of your driveway. Doing this might keep you from clearing your driveway entrance more than once.

- During plowing operations, some lawns will inadvertently be torn up. Remember, anything installed within the City's right-of-way is placed there at the owner's risk.



Most City right-of-ways are ten to fifteen feet from the edge of the street.

- Finally, please have patience. Snow plowing is a time-consuming and arduous job - covering approximately 42 miles of road. Some residents will have their roads plowed first, and some will be last, but all City streets will be cleared. The Service Department is devoted to providing the residents with dependable snow removal in the shortest time possible.

If you have any questions concerning the snow removal policy, please call **(937) 848-8415**.

## Christmas Tree Disposal



Please be advised that Rumpke will pick up trees during the month of January.

Please note that trees over six feet in length must be cut and bundled.

With questions or concerns, please call the City of Bellbrook Utility Billing Office at **(937) 848-4638** or Rumpke at **(800) 828-8171**.

## Franklin Street Bridge

The Franklin Street bridge project was completed on November 16, with much-needed updates made over its course. The project included the installation of a multi-use path and realignment of the Franklin Street bridge. This project is one of several measures to improve our infrastructure, enhancing safety and access through Downtown. We appreciate our community's patience during this time!



## Storm Drain Dumping & Stream Pollution: Keep Creeks Clean & Storm Drains Clear

To report an illegal discharge, call the Bellbrook Service Department at **(937) 848-8415** Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After hours, call **(937) 848-8484**. Storm drains are designed to handle stormwater runoff only and do not provide treatment to water or other substances that enter the system. The Bellbrook Service Department manages the storm drain system in the city. Public education and participation in reporting sightings or evidence of suspicious substances being dumped down a storm drain or directly into our local creeks are an important part of preventing water pollution. Odors, unnatural colors, or dead fish indicate something harmful has entered the water. As part of our Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) program, we ask citizens who suspect that they have witnessed illegal dumping into a storm drain or water pollution to contact the Bellbrook Service Department at the numbers above. If you are unsure whether an illegal discharge has occurred, please report it, and we will determine whether action is required to protect the water supply and the environment.

What are some examples of illicit discharges?

- "Gray water" such as laundry, shower, or kitchen wastewater
- Paints, solvents, cleaning products, and other toxic household substances
- Gasoline, motor oil, brake fluid, engine coolant (antifreeze), and other toxic automotive products
- Septic tank pump-out and other types of human or animal waste.
- Fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and other agricultural products
- Leaves, grass clippings, or yard waste of any kind



15 E. Franklin Street  
Bellbrook, OH 45305

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## City Council

Mayor Mike Schweller  
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Deputy Mayor Forrest Greenwood  
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## Departments

- Administration.....(937) 848-4666
- City Manager.....(937) 848-4666
- Community
- Development.....(937) 848-4666
- Police.....(937) 848 3252
- Fire.....(937) 848-3272
- Service.....(937) 848-8415
- Utility Billing.....(937) 848-4638

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[www.cityofbellbrook.org](http://www.cityofbellbrook.org)



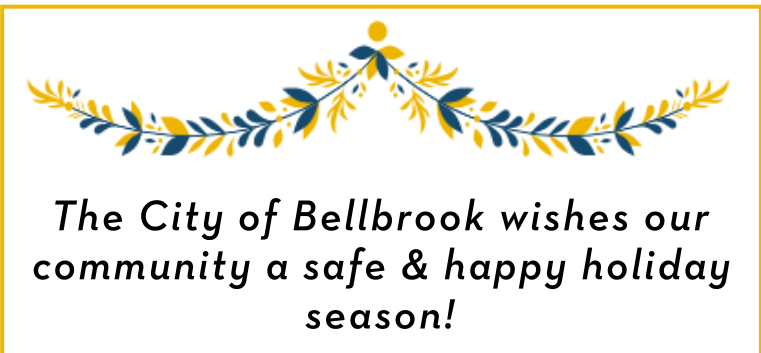
[www.facebook.com/BellbrookCity](http://www.facebook.com/BellbrookCity)



[www.twitter.com/BellbrookOhio](http://www.twitter.com/BellbrookOhio)



Spectrum—99.2 / U-Verse—99



*The City of Bellbrook wishes our  
community a safe & happy holiday  
season!*