A Message from the Mayor

Happy New Year!

Has anyone ever been more excited to hear those words? As I reflect on where we are today, and consider the unprecedented (promise that will be the last time I use that word) things we have dealt with during this past year, I can’t help but feel this new year is especially significant in all our lives - a fresh start, a new beginning, and a much-needed opportunity for growth.

In keeping with the age-old tradition of making New Year’s resolutions, I would like to share some of my 2021 resolutions with you.

Let me begin with my first resolution, to expand and improve communication with our residents. I don’t think the need for clear communication has ever been more important. This past year, we have had to explore new and innovative ways to connect while keeping each other safe during quarantine. We’ve learned to master Zoom meetings and Google meets, provide many services online, and create new ways to talk to our residents. We have issued timely press releases as important events occurred, expanded our social media presence, and increased the number of Hills Heralds we print to now send one to every household in our city. We also published this Winter 2021 Special Edition Hills Herald to share our most recent news, and more importantly, present our completely updated website and community notification system.

I invite you to visit our new website at rochesterhills.org and explore the many options and services we offer. While you are there, I encourage you to sign up for our new notification system, RHConnect! This is really important and designed with your family in mind. I am hopeful you will find it helpful as we strive to stay informed.

Another resolution that is especially important to me is to do whatever I possibly can to support our local businesses during this extremely challenging time. Small businesses are at the very heart of our city and they have been hit hard during the shutdowns. I am continually amazed at the innovative steps they’ve taken to survive and succeed. They need our help though. Whether it’s Shopping Local or Take Out Tuesday initiatives, we need to continue to support our local businesses to help see them through to a brighter day. It’s coming, let’s join together to help them get through to it. Who’s hungry?!

Continued Page 2

Mayor Barnett surprised shoppers who were “caught in the act” of supporting our local businesses with a gift card to a Rochester Hills restaurant!
Speaking of brighter days, let me share with you a very exciting story that happened here in Rochester Hills at the end of 2020. I received a phone call late in the evening of December 23 from a Rochester Hills businessman who was calling to say he had a good year and wanted to share his good fortune by paying it forward to a few local organizations that serve our community. After explaining what he wanted to do, I had the absolute privilege of letting the non-profit recipients know they were in for an unexpected Christmas surprise. As you can imagine, their happiness was palpable and their joy overwhelming. For more information, please see page 7 of this publication.

Finally, I ask that you join me in rejoicing in and sharing all the good news we have here in Rochester Hills. Through all the challenges and trials we face, there is no place I would rather be than right here in our city. Oftentimes trials can reveal much about a person or a community, and 2020 showed me exactly why we remain the preeminent place to live, work, and raise a family. We are stronger and more resilient. Kinder and more compassionate. We have been tested and we have thrived. Together, let’s keep our spirits up and our eyes on the prize.

Thank you and God Bless.

Be Connected • Be Informed • Be Safe

On the following page, you will read all about our new notification system, RHConnect! The details are described on Page 3, but in short, by subscribing to this system, you will receive text or email notifications from Rochester Hills when updates occur.

This up-to-the-minute information will keep you connected, well informed, and in the case of an emergency situation, help keep you safe.

While supplies last, each new subscriber will receive a monogrammed Rochester Hills mask just for enrolling in RHConnect! Once you receive your confirmation email, please forward it to mayorsoffice@rochesterhills.org and include your mailing address so we can send your mask. If you’re notified by text only, please call us at 248-656-4664 with your mailing address!

Let’s work together to keep each and every Rochester Hills resident safe. We are in this together, and we will get through this together.

Please see the enrollment instructions on the next page and join us at RHConnect!

COMMUNITY PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT!

On January 25, 2021, all Rochester Hills K-12 students (and students attending schools that primarily serve Rochester Hills) will be invited to submit artwork that exemplifies the theme: “What Community Means to Me”

Winning pieces will be enlarged and printed directly on to the asphalt surface of Auburn Road.

This style of printing has an expected lifespan of approximately 10 years!

ART ON AUBURN is a collaboration between the City of Rochester Hills, Paint Creek Center for the Arts, and Rochester Hills students.

For more information, please visit rochesterhills.org/artonauburn
Introducing RHConnect!

In Rochester Hills we firmly believe a happy resident is an informed resident and there is nothing we like more than having you, our residents, happy. After careful consideration, resident survey-result studies, and communication team meetings, we determined the best way to provide the most updated, timely, and important information you need to stay informed is through our newly revamped notification system, RHConnect!

Some of the information you can subscribe to includes:

- Emergency Notifications (like Boil Water Alerts)
- Snow Emergencies
- General Announcements
- Election Information
- Hills Herald Notifications
- Community Notifications
- News and Events
- Calendar Updates: General, Museum, Parks & Natural Resources, and Public Meetings
- City Council Updates
- Meetings of Boards and Commissions
- Parks Events
- Outdoor Engagement
- Special Events
- Sports Fields Info and Calendars
- Press Releases
- Tax Bill Mailings and Deadlines

Click the box next to the information you are interested in, and when updates occur, you will get a text message, email notification or both if you choose.

In addition, our new site allows you to connect to information from a variety of other agencies and organizations including the State of Michigan, Oakland County, surrounding cities, and schools and universities.

ENROLLMENT IS EASY:

1. Visit [www.rochesterhills.org/RHConnect!](http://www.rochesterhills.org/RHConnect!) - or -open the site using this QR Code*:
2. Enter your email or mobile number and choose Submit.
3. Then click on the box next to the items or categories that interest you.

* To use the QR Code simply open the camera on your phone, point to the QR Code and center it in the outline. When the code is read, a pop-up box will appear at the top of your phone. Touch the box and it will take you to RHConnect!

---

HELP US HELP YOU STAY INFORMED

The City of Rochester Hills also maintains an informative and vibrant social media presence.

Subscribe or follow us for the latest news and happenings in Rochester Hills! Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to like and share our pages.

We love to hear from you and welcome your feedback.

---

The Fastest Way to stay connected

[Twitter](https://twitter.com/RochesterHills)
[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CityOfRochesterHills)
[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/city_of_rochester_hills)
[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/rochesterhillstv)
City of Rochester Hills Website Updates

The primary objectives of our newly redesigned website were focused on providing our residents, business owners, and visitors an easier way to learn about Rochester Hills’ services and functions. At the same time, we worked to improve the appearance, simplify our content, add new resources for you to use and increase the number of ways residents can communicate and provide us with feedback!

The new design also allows for streamlined menus, clear navigation, and a responsive layout for all electronic platforms. Now, the Rochester Hills website will look and function the same on your phone or tablet as it does on your desktop computer! We also updated our notification system, RHConnect!, to make it easier and faster for you to be notified of all the updates you are interested in. We truly did design our new website with you in mind. Explore the site to learn more about our full spectrum of services!

Our Home Page serves as a portal to a wealth of information, resources, and services provided by and through the City of Rochester Hills.

If you are not sure exactly where to find what you are looking for, simply type it in the Search Bar for an extra quick response.

We are so proud of the scrolling photographs on our Home Page and believe they are a reflection of the beauty of Rochester Hills.

Our Residents and Services Pages are portals to a varied list of services you may be interested in.

Developed with your convenience in mind, you can apply for a permit or a Passport (once that service becomes available again) pay your water bill or pay your taxes all with just a click.

Through our Government Page, you can connect with your Mayor or City Council Members, determine when the next meeting will be held, view city ordinances, peruse the City Charter, or visit the Boards and Commissions pages to see if there is something you may be interested in. All areas of our city government are included in this section.

Our Departments Page includes information on all of our departments and how they work individually and collectively to form your city government. If you are looking for more information, or wonder what department covers which service, this page will be very helpful.
We know residents and visitors like to be able to connect to social media from our website so we added convenient links on all pages. For example, if you click the Facebook icon in the upper right hand corner, you will be taken directly to the city’s Facebook page. We encourage you to visit, subscribe, and like our social media pages. It’s a great place to find the latest news and information.

You will also notice the highlighted black box on the lower right corner. This is where you will find important and timely announcements.

In Rochester Hills, we know residents and visitors speak a wide range of languages. To that end, we have a quick and simple way to see our website in 70+ languages. By clicking the icon on the top right, you are able to change the language of our site while keeping all of the content the same.

It’s so rewarding to be able to say “Welcome to Rochester Hills” in over 70 languages!

If you scroll down on our Home Page, you will find our popular Quick Links and News & Updates links. From here, you can easily finding what is happening in Rochester Hills.

This is a great way to connect to areas and events you find most interesting!

Hopefully you find this guide helpful as you navigate our newly redesigned website. Our goal was to make the most user friendly, visually appealing, informative and inclusive website we possibly could. We welcome you to visit www.rochesterhills.org and we look forward to your feedback.
Warming to Winter in Rochester Hills

Winter always brings special challenges, but this year we are all looking for ways to survive and thrive in terms of optimizing health, home, work, mental health, and social interactions. The following are just a few ways to make a positive move toward spring.

Get Cozy -
- Make your home a little hygge (hoo-guh) - the Danish word describing cozy and comfortable.
- Read a book you’ve wanted to read.
- Write a list of things you love.
- Enjoy hot chocolate and a bonfire.
- Light a candle or light the fireplace.

Take Care of Yourself -
- At home or in a studio, there are many benefits to practicing yoga.
- Make a better sleep resolution.
- Start a gratitude journal to make note of things you are thankful for.

Connect to Loved Ones - this one pays off twice - bringing love and warmth to you and your loved ones.
- Send a sweet care package.
- Plan a virtual party - invite all your friends and neighbors.
- Handwrite notes and letters to mail.

Outdoor Exploring - for details visit rochesterhills.org/parks.
- Find animal tracks in the snow along the Paint Creek Trail.
- Go cross-country skiing or snow shoeing along the Clinton River Trail.
- Check out the winter sky from the hill at Innovation Hills.
- Check out the sledding hill at Bloomer Park.
- Make a snow sculpture at Borden Park.

Volunteer to Help Neighbors in Need - In 2020, OPC prepared, served, and delivered 97,963 meals! In addition to Meals on Wheels, there are many volunteer opportunities at OPC including:
- Fitness & Aquatics
- Art Department
- Programs and Activities
- Cultural Arts/Technology
- Special Events.
- Senior Resources
- Welcome Center/Volunteer Assistant

Training is provided for all OPC volunteer positions. At this time, due to COVID limited operations, they are only using volunteers for meal prep, to deliver MOW and commodity foods. This will change once they fully reopen. Please note their virtual and in person programming at opcseniormcenter.org and programs on their Older Persons’ Commission YouTube page.

Help Yourself by Helping Others!
Some Good News - A Christmas Miracle

With extreme gratitude, we present the recipients of a most generous $50,000 donation divided among a group of organizations that truly make a difference in our city. These organizations were selected based on their value to our community and the wishes of the donor.

**Dutton Farm** is a nonprofit vocational and learning skills center for individuals with physical, mental, or emotional impairment. CEO Jenny Brown said, “We are so grateful for the incredible generosity from this local donor. Because of this gift, we are able to continue and expand our support of individuals with disabilities to have the opportunity to learn, make friends and enjoy their community. Funds will be used for our gardening and farming cultivation. Our goal is to continue to develop our property as a place that everyone can enjoy together as one community.”

**The Yellow Ribbon Fund** is a veteran service organization, 501(c)3 providing housing, transportation, caregiver and family support to severely wounded, ill and injured post-9/11 service members from every branch of the United States Military, following unexpected medical crises. Vito A. Pampalona, Board Member expressed his gratitude by saying, “Thank you for your generous donation for our recovering wounded Military men and women in their special time of need.”

**Neighborhood House** was founded more than 50 years ago under the principle of “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” in the greater Rochester area. It assists those in our community in need of food, clothing, interim financial assistance, counseling services, transportation services and vocational education. Notably, it operates a full service food pantry which provides emergency food for individuals and families who are struggling to feed themselves and their children. “We are so grateful for this generous gift! As COVID continues to impact our community, this donation will help us provide vital emergency services to our neighbors facing unexpected needs this winter. Thank you!” --Kathy Losinski, Executive Director

**Leader Dogs for the Blind** empowers people who are blind, visually impaired or Deaf-Blind with skills for a lifetime of independent travel, opening doors that may seem to have closed with the loss of sight. Leader Dog programs are crafted to address individual situations and adapt to our clients’ changing needs at any point in their lives. From youth camp to orientation and mobility cane training through guide dog training and GPS technology integration, Leader Dogs’ programs give clients the confidence and skills they need to live independent lives. President and CEO Susan Daniels said, “We are so very grateful for this meaningful donation which comes to Leader Dog at a most significant time; this gift will help us provide safe home delivery of Leader Dogs to people who are blind during this challenging pandemic period.”

**Innovation Hills Playground** “A Park for a New Generation,” Innovation Hills is the City of Rochester Hills’ first park development in 25 years. The City’s vision for the Park is for it to become a one-of-a-kind regional attraction and the playground will be the centerpiece for this. It will include a large, nature-themed universal design play area with inclusive features that are appealing and accessible to all. The main attraction will be a two-story tree house/slide and the playground will also incorporate areas for group play, social interaction, as well as flowing water, rock and sand interaction areas. Innovation Hills is already recognized as one of the most comprehensive and inclusive natural parks in our region and is on track to host 100,000 - 150,000 guests each year. Donations are matched by the City of Rochester Hills City Council.

Rochester Hills continues to win with our recycling program partner, Recyclebank. Through education and rewards, Recyclebank works to promote a greener, more sustainable lifestyle. With points you earn each week, you can save at local businesses like Rochester Holistic Arts, Zo’s Bubble Tea, Clean Juice, Hollywood Market, and more! Not only can you get discounts, you can donate your points to local charities. In 2020, Residents supported Neighborhood House, Leader Dogs for the Blind, and Haven with donations totaling over $7,000. To top it off, in the last month over $10,000 was donated to our “Green Schools” initiative. Green Schools provides our schools with funding for different sustainable projects. Thanks to this year’s donations, Rochester Community Schools will now have single stream recycling at every building. Truly an educational win, environmental win, and community win!

To participate, visit [www.recyclebank.com](http://www.recyclebank.com) to create or log into your Recyclebank account!

If you have a local business and would like to become a Recyclebank partner, please contact Community Outreach Coordinator, Elise Nalu at elise@rts.com.

Thank you for participating in Recyclebank!
In Rochester Hills, guests can visit parks, trails, and open spaces as a way to relieve stress, get some fresh air, stay active, and enjoy nature.

Please visit our website at [rochesterhills.org/parks](http://rochesterhills.org/parks) for the latest park guidelines.