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MAY: A TIME FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

As we welcome the month of May, I wanted to take a moment to recognize an important initiative that is close to many of our hearts: **Mental Health Awareness Month**.

Now more than ever, it is crucial that we prioritize our mental well-being and support one another in navigating life's challenges. As we continue to adapt to the changing landscape of our work and personal lives, it's essential that we foster a culture of openness, understanding, and compassion.

Throughout the month of May, in shining a spotlight on mental health awareness, here are some ways you can get involved and support Mental Health Awareness Month:

1. **Educate Yourself:** Take the time to learn about mental health issues, including common symptoms, treatment options, and strategies for self-care. Knowledge is power, and understanding mental health can help reduce stigma and promote empathy.
2. **Start a Conversation:** Break the silence surrounding mental health by initiating open and honest conversations with your colleagues. Share your own experiences, listen to others without judgment, and offer support and encouragement.
3. **Access Resources:** We have compiled a list of resources, including helplines, support groups, and online tools, to help you access the support

you need. Don't hesitate to reach out if you or someone you know is struggling.

4. **Practice Self-Care:** Make self-care a priority by taking time to engage in activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul. Whether it's practicing mindfulness, exercising, or spending time with loved ones, find what works best for you and prioritize your well-being.
5. **Support Others:** Be a source of support and encouragement for your colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health. Offer a listening ear, check in regularly, and remind them that they are not alone.

Together, let's work towards creating a workplace where mental health is valued, prioritized, and supported. By coming together as a team, we can make a positive impact on the well-being of ourselves and others.

Thank you for your commitment to fostering a culture of mental health awareness and support. Together, we can make a difference.

Best regards,
India M. Rodgers, MFP, CCMO
Director of Strategic Communications & Government Affairs

EAP Resources from CIGNA
<https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/member-guide/employee-assistance-program>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health-awareness-month>

WELCOMING MAY AND EMBRACING NEW BEGINNINGS!



Hello Team,

I could not be happier to see the start of May knowing I will start in my official capacity as Town Manager on May 6th. As I sit in my hotel room this evening halfway home to CT from Fort Liberty, NC, I remain humbled and extremely optimistic about our next chapter together in the Town of Bloomfield.

My primary focus over the next 90 days is to build a stronger and more effective team. I will model the expectations of "what right looks like" every day as your Town Manager. My philosophy is very simple, "Be respectful, approach each day with a purpose, and be accountable." The climate survey which was issued last week will help me to understand where we are as an organization, and I encourage each of you to please help shape the environment for me by completing the survey. I will be taking the time to visit each town facility over the next 30 days and look forward to meeting the many wonderful team members I do not already know.

I have a number of planned initiatives to ensure our improved communications as well as build stronger interdepartmental relationships. I ask that you all get accustomed to the phrase "One Team, One Fight!", this will be our mantra under my leadership.

In fairness to those who do not know me well, please be advised, appearance is very important to me. No matter if you wear a uniform or civilian clothes, my expectation is that you will meet the standards of our organization each time you report to serve the citizens of Bloomfield, our citizens deserve nothing less.

I will always try to be short on words but will never be short on action. I wish you and your families the very best for the month of May! Happy Mother's Day in advance to all the awesome Moms we have in our ranks.

Very Respectfully,
AI

**Alvin "AI" D. Schwapp, Jr.
Town Manager**

CALENDAR HAPPENINGS

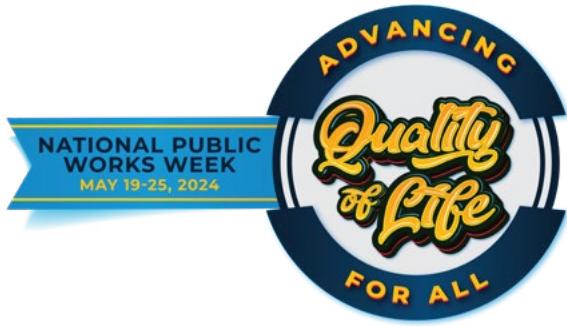
- Cinco de Mayo – May 5
- Annual Town Meeting - May 6
- Mother's Day – May 12
- National Public Works Week – May 19–25
- National EMS Week – May 19–25
- Memorial Day – May 27
- May Paydays – May 9 & May 23



FY25 BUDGET UPDATE

On April 3, 2024, the Bloomfield Town Council voted to approve the FY 2025 Budget. Our dedicated Finance Department has been working hard to ensure everything is ready for the Council's final approval at the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 6, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Bloomfield Town Hall in Council Chambers.





As we mark National Public Works Week, it gives me great pleasure to extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to each and every one of you who play a vital role in keeping our community safe, clean, and functional.

From maintaining our roads and infrastructure to ensuring the efficient delivery of essential services, your dedication and hard work do not go unnoticed. You are the unsung heroes who work tirelessly behind the scenes, often in challenging conditions, to ensure that our town runs smoothly and our residents enjoy a high quality of life.

On behalf of the entire Town of Bloomfield community, we want to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. Your contributions are the foundation upon which our town thrives, and we are truly fortunate to have such a dedicated team of public works professionals.

Thank you for all that you do, not only during National Public Works Week but every single day. Your efforts make a difference, and for that, we are immensely grateful.



It's National Building Safety Month throughout May and we would like to recognize our hard working Building Department employees for your unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety, resilience, and sustainability of our community.

National Building Safety Month serves as a reminder of the critical role that building codes, standards, and inspections play in safeguarding lives, property, and the environment. Your dedication to upholding these standards and promoting best practices in building safety is truly commendable and deeply valued.

Together, we can continue to build a safer, stronger, and more resilient community for generations to come.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE
TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD**



The Bloomfield Police Department Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division is responsible for Emergency Management and provides 24-hour coverage of the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance (BVA) service, utilizing a unique and effective blend of volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and contracted Paramedics. EMS provides both basic and advanced life support ambulance response.

The Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance Fund, Inc. is a 501(c) 3 organization,

incorporated in 1977 with the help of local businesses. Over the past 47 years, the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance Fund, Inc. has purchased or provided the funding for approximately 14 ambulances since their incorporation in 1977.

Thank you to all of the dedicated EMS professionals for your selfless service and commitment to saving lives. Your bravery and compassion make a difference every day.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

NEW HIRES



Shane O'Neill
Maintainer II
Public Works

Shane has joined the Public Works Department as a Maintainer II as of April 22, 2024, after successfully passing an oral board, practical examination, and final interview. Shane holds a CDL B with airbrakes endorsement and has previous experience as a Maintainer II in a municipal setting.



Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr.
Town Manager
Town Manager's Office

Al begins his duties as Town Manager on May 6, 2024. He was voted to become the next Town Manager of the Town of Bloomfield by the Town Council on March 11, 2024. He is a graduate of Bloomfield High School and was previously a member of the Bloomfield Police Department from 1994-2011. He holds an Associate of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology, Hartford State Technical College; a Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology, Central Connecticut State University; a Master of Science in Management, Johns Hopkins University; and a Master of Science in Strategic Studies, U.S. Army War College.

PROMOTIONS



Jonathan Colman
Director
Building & Land Use

Jon has been promoted to Director of Building and Land Use by the Interim Town Manager and incoming Town Manager after successfully serving as the Interim Director of Building and Land Use for the Town of Bloomfield since January 2024. He first came to the Town of Bloomfield in March of 2023 as our Interim Assistant Director of Building and Land Use. Jon was hired as the Assistant Director of Building and Land Use in April 2023. He is a seasoned professional in private not-for-profit and municipal government arenas.

RETIREMENTS

We wish you the best in your future endeavors

Angelo Musumeci
Building Department
Effective - May 31



WORK ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT
Kam Godley	5/30/05 – 19 years	Finance
Stephen Hajdasz	5/29/12 – 12 years	Police
David Melesko	5/22/00 – 24 years	Leisure Services
Dwight Carlson	5/23/22 – 2 years	Building
Angel Silva	5/5/21 – 3 years	Public Works
Rachel Tonucci	5/20/20 – 4 years	Library
Subrina Nelson	5/30/23 – 1 year	Social & Youth Services

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS EVENTS

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Are you feeling stressed?...the Human Resources Department has the answer!! **CHAIR MASSAGES!!**
All employees welcome. Registration is required... space is limited.

Who doesn't love a good mocktail?...the Human Resources Department is hosting a fun event. Stop by for a taste and to learn the tricks of the trade.
All employees welcome. No registration is required.

FOR CIGNA MEMBERS...as part of our wellness plan, the Human Resources Department will be offering the 4th annual onsite Biometric Screen administered by Quest Diagnostics.
Raffle prizes, giveaways, and healthy treats will be available.
Registration is required...space is limited.

CIGNA - VISION INSURANCE UPDATE

Important updates to Cigna Healthcare Vision.

New features and benefits are coming your way.



Healthy vision is important to your overall health. And a routine eye exam is just one of the steps you can take to ensure your eyes stay healthy for years to come. Cigna HealthcareSM wants to make sure taking care of your eyes is easy. That's why you'll enjoy enhanced benefits that offer convenience, choice and savings.

What about your vision plan from Cigna Healthcare is changing?

When your vision plan renews, you will be able to take advantage of a larger network and more opportunities to save. You'll also have access to enhanced tools that allow you to search for network providers, estimate costs and even schedule appointments online.*

How has the network changed?

The new network includes more than 24,400 independent provider locations and almost 11,000 national and regional retailer locations for added convenience and savings. Every provider in our vision network is carefully selected to ensure you have the flexibility to choose the right option for your needs. Examples of national and regional retail providers include **LensCrafters[®]**, **Pearle Vision[®]**, **Target Optical[®]**, **Walmart Vision Center[®]** and **Sam's Club[®]**. Plus, we offer online in-network options through **LensCrafters.com[®]**, **Ray-Ban.com[®]**, **Glasses.com[®]**, **TargetOptical.com[®]**, **contactsdirect.com[®]** and **Oakley.com[®]**.



How do I find an in-network provider?

You can find an in-network provider by visiting **Cigna.com[®]** and using the provider locator. Search for a new provider by using the following steps: **Cigna.com > Find a doctor > Employer or School > Additional Resources > Cigna Vision Directory (Serviced by EyeMed)**

You can search for in-network vision care providers by location or by name. Provider results will include additional information, such as languages spoken, office location, office hours, services provided, brands of designer frames sold and more. You can even make an appointment online with providers who offer this service.*

Cigna is moving to EyeMed as the servicing vendor for Vision. The move to EyeMed will provide access to a larger network and more robust plan management tools through <https://my.cigna.com/web/public/guest>. Please refer to the informational flyers below, to help you better understand and navigate the change, including how to determine if your provider will remain in-network.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT SECTION!

I'm thrilled to announce the launch of an exciting new feature in our newsletter: the Employee Spotlight section! This initiative aims to shine a spotlight on the incredible individuals who make up our team and showcase their unique talents, contributions, and stories.

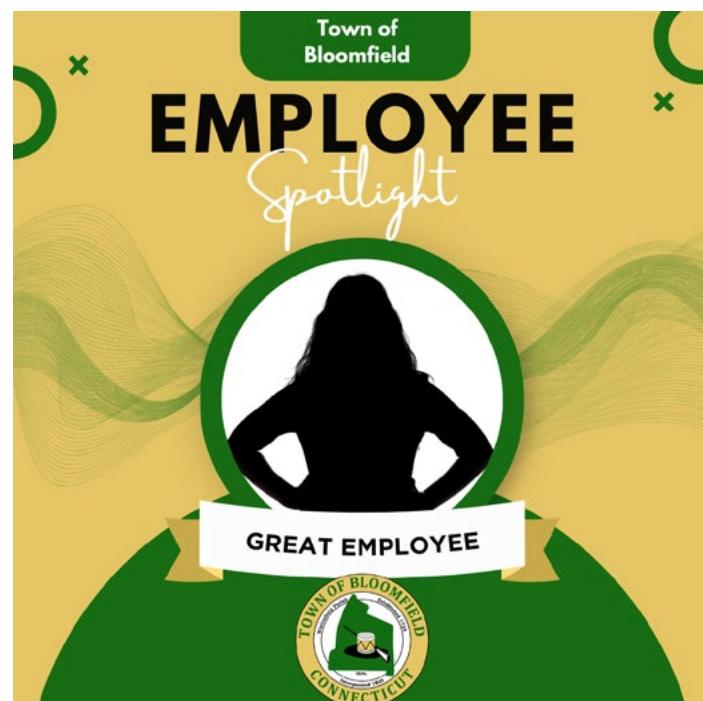
The Employee Spotlight section will provide us with an opportunity to get to know our colleagues better, celebrate their achievements, and recognize the valuable role each person plays from across all Town departments. Whether it's highlighting a team member's professional accomplishments, personal interests, or favorite hobbies, this section will serve as a platform to showcase the diverse talents and experiences within our team.

How it works:

- Each month, we will feature a different employee in the Employee Spotlight section of our newsletter, "The Monthly Tea".
- The featured employee will have the opportunity to share a brief bio, including their role within the organization, background, and any fun facts they'd like to share.
- We'll also highlight their achievements, projects they've worked on, and any special contributions they've made to our team or community.

I encourage all of you to participate in this initiative by nominating yourself or your colleagues to be featured in the Employee Spotlight section. If you know someone who deserves recognition for their hard work, dedication, or unique talents, please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know! I'm so excited to launch this new feature and look forward to celebrating the amazing individuals who make our team so special. Together, let's shine a spotlight on our colleagues and continue to foster a culture of appreciation, connection, and recognition within our organization.

Stay tuned for the first installment of the Employee Spotlight section in our June newsletter!





Q: Why did the scarecrow win a Nobel prize?

A: He was out standing in his field!

TIPS & IDEAS FOR NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Have a great idea for an upcoming newsletter? Please let us know by submitting the webform by clicking this link:

<https://ct-bloomfield.civicplus.com/FormCenter/General-Forms-4/The-Monthly-Tea-Employee-News-letter-Cont-72>

Or contact India Rodgers at irodgers@bloomfieldct.gov or Brian Wolff at bwolff@bloomfieldct.gov

The Bloomfield Fire Dept. Auxiliary

Hosts

THE CINNAMON BUN SALOON

FAMOUS
CINNAMON BUNS

SMOOTHIES

COFFEES

DESSERTS



****NEW TEMPORARY LOCATION****

37 Tunxis Ave

Bloomfield, CT 06002

Friday, May 31st 12pm-8pm

Saturday, June 1st 8am-4pm

Sunday, June 2nd 8am-3pm

A portion of profits will be donated to the Bloomfield Fire Dept. Auxiliary

RECIPE CORNER

Empanadas - Beef Turnovers

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- ½ lb. ground beef
- ½ medium yellow onion, finely chopped (about ½ cup)
- ¼ c. tomato sauce
- 2 tbsp. Sofrito
- 1 packet Sazon with Coriander and Annatto
- 1 tsp. minced garlic or 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1 pkg. Empanada Dough for frying (yellow or white), thawed
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- Oil (canola, vegetable, corn) for frying



Instructions

- Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add ground beef and cook until browned, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon, about 10 minutes. Add onions and cook until soft, about 5 minutes more. Stir in tomato sauce, olives, Sofrito, Sazón, garlic, oregano and black pepper. Lower heat to medium-low and simmer until mixture thickens, about 15 minutes.
- On a lightly floured work surface, using a rolling pin, roll out discos until ½" larger in diameter. Spoon about 1 tbsp. meat mixture into middle, fold in half to form a half-moon; moisten edges with water and pinch to seal closed, or seal with a fork.
- Fill a deep saucepan with oil to a depth of 2½". Heat oil over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking (350°F on deep-fry thermometer). Cook Empanadas in batches until crisp and golden brown, flipping once, 4 – 6 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Have a recipe you want to share with your fellow co-workers? Send it to Brian Wolff at bwolff@bloomfieldct.gov