

The Kenny Lofton mural, just completed by the very talented Marco Salazar (left), is our gift to the baseball great. New ball fields at the complex that bears his name was Lofton's gift to the children of East Chicago. [Steve Segura and Jonathan Madera photos]

MURAL HONORS ONE OF EAST CHICAGO'S OWN

As a kid growing up in East Chicago, Marco Salazar remembers watching Kenny Lofton do the same.

Today, Salazar is the professional artist responsible for the newest mural of East Chicago's very own hometown hero.

"I remember watching him play professional baseball on television," he said. "He had so many achievements, was a wonderful leader and even made it into the Cleveland Hall of Fame. I never imagined I would be the one commissioned to create public art in his honor."

The art has been in the conceptual stage for the last two years as a tribute to Lofton, who grew up with his grandmother in the city and donated the new fields to East Chicago. Once the project was a go this year, it took nine days and great weather to turn the concept into life-size reality.

The mural – 16 feet tall and 35 feet wide – graces one side of the East Chicago Little League concession stand and has received Major League Baseball's stamp of approval.

"They loved it a lot," he said. "Their only request was that we change the uniform to conform with Cleveland's current MLB presence on all league attire."

As the project now looms large in Salazar's rear-view mirror, the city is planning a ceremony to commemorate Kenny Lofton. Stay tuned!

BEACH CLOSED

Jeorse Park Beach and its amenities – the splash pad, beach shelters and H2Oh water sports rentals – remain closed because of high water levels, beach erosion and the pandemic.

Marina Director Natalie Adams said nature has ravaged beaches up and down the southern basin of Lake Michigan. Water levels, while lower than they were just two months ago, remain higher than normal.

"We are working with the Army Corps of Engineers and others to determine where drop-offs have shifted and how to replenish sand on our beaches," she said.

"We have already removed decades-old debris that landed close to shore. We know it is a disappointment and ask you remain patient as we complete our work to keep the harbor safe."

MARINA OPEN

The East Chicago Marina is open for slip rental, boat launching and fishing off the marina breakwall.

However, there is no rental of venue space at this time while the city remains under a 50-percent guideline for indoor use of its facilities.

POOLS CLOSED

East Chicago city pools at Washington and Kosciuszko parks will remain closed for the season. Parks and Recreation Director Vanessa Hernandez-Orange said the decision was based on health department guidelines for safe social distancing during the pandemic.

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
4525 INDIANAPOLIS BOULEVARD
EAST CHICAGO, IN 46312

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
EDDM
PAID
Gary, IN
PERMIT # 121

RESIDENT
EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA 46312



EAST CHICAGO life
YOUR LOCAL SOURCE FOR EAST CHICAGO NEWS AND EVENTS

City of East Chicago
Hope & Progress
INDIANA

EAST CHICAGO STRONGER TOGETHER

FIREWORKS RULES & TIPS

Fire Chief Damon Carpenter urges residents to be safe this Independence Day. **Fireworks are allowed between 5 p.m. and two hours after sunset June 29 through July 9. The exception is July 4 between 10 a.m. and midnight.**

State law bans fireworks on public property. Please:

- ★ Approach fireworks with caution and only when adults are present.
- ★ Be aware of your surroundings.
- ★ Celebrate only on private property and with permission.

LET'S ENJOY OUR SUMMER SAFELY

NUISANCE PROPERTIES

In this issue of East Chicago Life, I want to discuss a newly implemented ordinance I submitted – and the Common Council voted to enact – several years ago.

The goal from the start was to tackle nuisance properties, whether due to negligence in upkeep, criminal activities, or both. As it turns out, the two are often connected and most frequently the result of renters, not homeowners. Whatever the root cause, the properties are a nuisance and detract from the enjoyment of your home and neighborhood.

By partnering code enforcement with law enforcement, the city is reaping the benefits of having both teams engaged in identifying problem properties and making those responsible – accountable.

That addition to city law brings landlords into the mix. Just three months into this initiative, numerous landlords have been brought in and threatened with hefty fines. Nearly a dozen tenants have been evicted. There will be more.

It is important that residents of our city – whether they are homeowners or renters – understand their role in keeping our city both safe and beautiful. Read more inside.



FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA

As it turns out, our very talented team dedicated to fun has created a series of fireworks locations for the Fourth that make them visible from anywhere you are in the city.

Talk about creativity and a dedication to our families who know it just isn't an Independence Day celebration without a tribute to America that is all about lighting up the night sky.

From my home to yours: Enjoy all the Fourth has to offer with family and friends. Just remember to stay safe.

ANTHONY COPELAND
Mayor City of East Chicago



Keeping East Chicago beautiful – and safe!

Code Enforcement and the East Chicago Police Department are reaching out to all homeowners, landlords and tenants that occupy property within the City of East Chicago to assist in the beautification – and safety – of our city through the maintenance of property by adhering to local municipal codes.

A city law that expands the definition of nuisance properties beyond vegetation and dilapidated structures is having great success while also providing a never-before opportunity to reduce crime.

Code Enforcement Manager Damian Ventura said three months into implementation, the law that describes a nuisance property as a hub for criminal activity as well as the site of an unkempt property is working because landlords are getting involved.

Given the choice to evict problem tenants or face stiff penalties, property owners are taking swift action with tenants who don't follow city laws.

"Landlords are responding very well, Ventura said. "This pushes them to be more responsible and to perform background checks before signing a lease. East Chicago needs more quality renters. Our city will become better and more beautiful as we deal with those who break the law."

A declaration of a nuisance property due to criminal activity triggers monitoring by both police and code enforcement for additional issues at the address.

"The fines start at $2,500 and work their way up from there," he said. "Out of 11 nuisance issues, 10 have already been dealt with through discussions with the landlord and no fines have had to be issued. We hope that will be the same situation with number 11."

[PUBLIC NUISANCE]

Public Nuisance: Conduct occurring in property which is injurious to public health or safety, illegal, criminal, unsafe or a violation of any Federal or State Law, Local. Ordinance, Fire Code, or Health Code, or injurious to the peace and safety of adjoining occupied structures. **Municipal Code Chapter 93.**

[ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP]

In a prior chapter in East Chicago history, the city had considered making code enforcement part of law enforcement. Turns out, they were on to something. Code Enforcement Manager Damian Ventura and Patrol Cmdr. Justin Orange, who heads the newly minted Street Crime Unit, agree a new partnership between them is the next best thing. They say working two avenues of enforcement simultaneously is curbing crime and beautifying the city.



[RUBBISH REMOVAL] [Ryan Lomax photo]

Removal of rubbish from public right-of-way: Keeping yards – both front and back – along with sidewalks, alleys, lots and parkways free of debris is essential as is the disposal of yard waste and trash. **Municipal Code Chapter 98.**

Of all the infractions tracked by he and his crew of three, Code Enforcement Manager Damian Ventura said it is garbage in alleys that is the worst.

"It's non-stop and so easy to remedy," Ventura said. "Part of the problem is caused by garbage cans that spill over. Other times, it is people dropping what they were carrying instead of disposing of it properly. We ask everyone to pick up and dispose of garbage."

[GARBAGE & CONTAINERS]

Garbage and Containers: Dumping yard waste, trash, litter or debris on city property is prohibited. Every householder shall provide and at all times maintain adequate containers for garbage and trash in good condition and repair. Code Enforcement urges East Chicago residents to report missing or broken lids and containers to help control easy access by pets and wild animals. Please call Public Works at (219) 391-8463 for a replacement. **Municipal Code Chapter 55.**



[GRAFFITI] [Steve Segura photo]

Graffiti prohibited: All sidewalks, walls, buildings, fences, signs and other structures or surfaces shall be kept free from graffiti. Report graffiti on garages, vacant buildings, signs and city-owned property to public works at (219) 391-8463, with an address and exact location. **Municipal Code Chapter 133.**

[WEEDS & RANK VEGETATION]

Removal of weeds and rank vegetation: It shall be unlawful for any person to allow thistle, weed, brush, undergrowth or vegetation of any kind to grow to a height of 6 inches from the ground on any lots, parcels or tracts of land within the city. It is the duty of the owner or the person responsible for the property to cause undergrowth to be removed from the front and rear yards, alleyways, sidewalks, parkways, etc. **Municipal Code Chapter 93.**

[LAWN MOWING]

Lawns, bushes and trees. Lawns, alley lines and parkways shall be manicured to a height no taller than 6 inches. If you get a violation, you have five days to mow your lawn. Bushes, trees and shrubs shall be maintained and cut so as to not grow into or obstruct any public way. **Municipal Code Chapter 93.**

[ABANDONED VEHICLES]

Abandoned vehicles: Vehicles that are left abandoned on private property, yards, driveways or lots, that are in disrepair and unmoved will be stickered and given 72 hours to remove or vehicles will be towed. Abandoned vehicles must be properly plated and moved regularly unless kept in an enclosed garage. Reciprocity vehicles with out-of-state plates will be stickered and given 60 days to have Indiana plates. **Municipal Code Chapter 103.**

[FENCES]

Maintenance and repair of fences: All fences shall be maintained in a state of good repair. Any dilapidated, dangerous or unsightly fences/retaining walls must be repaired, painted or removed when so ordered. Call (219) 391-8294 to find out if a permit is required before starting work. **Municipal Code Chapter 156.**