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## VILLAGE OF RYE BROOK

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**MAYOR**

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September 2007

To my Rye Brook Friends and Neighbors:

I write this update with some trepidation: it seems every time I note how lucky we have been regarding weather-related events, things start to change. I recall one letter in which I noted how pleased we were to be enjoying a surprisingly mild December, which saved us money on snow removals and salt, only to have to eat my words as we were soon dealing with heavy January and February storms. More recently, a dry and warm January and February segued into a blustering and wet March and a flooding April. As my grandmother once said, loosely translated, "Don't tempt the fates!" (Actually, didn't all of our grandmothers warn us of the "evil eye"? Why don't we listen to their sage advice?)

Mindful and respectful of my grandmother's warning, and recognizing that despite a relatively calm summer (several hot days did not lead to the unbearable and persistent heat waves of the past few years) we are still in the midst of hurricane season, I bravely press on and thematically use the reference to environmental matters to discuss our Village's infrastructure and how we are coping with the elements.

Over these past few years, we have spent countless hours and meaningful dollars on improving and enhancing the quality of life in Rye Brook by investing in our structural assets. We have repaired more roads, replaced more storm drains, studied more water course flows and built or acquired more "green space" for athletic fields or passive parkland than ever in our Village's twenty-five year history. I am pleased to say that many of the funds for these capital improvements were obtained from Federal, State and County grants that significantly reduced the cost to the Rye Brook taxpayers. Thus, while we all enjoyed a substantial return on these investments, we continue to use our balance sheet prudently and, as a result, did not take on an unreasonable debt load to meet our needs.

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In a word, we are using our access to capital markets wisely. As a result, we are all benefiting from an enhanced quality of life while still keeping our current tax burden fairly stable and relatively low when compared to other communities in Westchester - even as our valuations increase.

By their very nature, capital improvements are long-lived assets and investments in them are critical to the well being of the community now and in the future. A look at the 2007-2008 budget shows how much we continue to invest in our infrastructure, and while we do not need the kind of bridge disaster that occurred in Minneapolis to serve as a wake up call to make these investments, that tragic incident is a brutal reminder that all roads, bridges, fields, storm drains, sewers, etc. need upgrading and maintenance if they are to remain useful and safe. I mention this because summer is the peak season for making improvements and we spent much of this time in fixing and maintaining our infrastructure.

You can already see a number of physical changes around the Village – and you can expect to see more in the coming weeks, months and years. Rye Brook is in the throes of a massive rebuilding effort. From the new look taking shape at the Rye Ridge Shopping Center, to the many projects that homeowners are undertaking in their residences, to the construction projects at our schools, we are updating and improving. We are already enjoying the benefits of public projects. The most visible example being the Athletic Fields complex on King Street. Open now for just a year, the fields are already a gem in our midst. The Rye Brook field, along with the newly completed one at Blind Brook High School, garnered rave reviews from players and coaches alike who used this venue for the men’s soccer event at this year’s Empire State Games.

Future physical changes that may come to pass include the construction of new town houses on the “peninsula” portion of the site on Bowman Avenue with an attendant “lakefront” public park being built by the developer on behalf of Rye Brook residents, and a new athletic fields complex, including a “miracle field” for the physically challenged, to be constructed on excess land at the Port Chester Middle School. The former project, while receiving Village Board site plan and Planning Board approvals, remains subject to a number of conditions; the latter project, a combined effort of the Town of Rye, the Port Chester School District, Westchester County and the Village, is at an early, conceptual stage, but could become an exciting reality.



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For those affected by the flooding earlier this year, Rye Brook has been proactive in making the necessary repairs to affected areas and planning for additional flood mitigation. Some of the projects underway include the following:

- The Village received approval for \$98,281 in FEMA public assistance funds for reimbursement of storm response and restoration expenses.
- The Village is preparing to bid an estimated \$700,000 stormwater project on the eastern branch of Blind Brook from King Street to Edgewood Avenue.
- The Village previously received a \$218,750 NYS grant for a new stormwater basin near Edgewood Avenue, and is preparing a work plan for NYS review.
- The Village has engaged the engineering firm of Charles H. Sells to study the areas near Brook Lane and Avon Circle, and to identify any stormwater infrastructure improvements that could be made in these areas. This study is a supplement of one being conducted by the City of Rye to examine the Bowman Avenue area. Any improvements to these areas are expected to have a positive impact on Rye Brook properties downstream near Brookridge Court and Wyman Street.
- The Village submitted seven Letters of Intent for NYS Hazard Mitigation grants, and six were deemed to be potentially eligible projects by NYS. One project is a joint grant application with the City of Rye along Bowman Avenue. The next step for these grants is to file formal applications in November.
- The NYS Emergency Management Office has approved Rye Brook's Hazard Mitigation Program, which is currently pending approval by FEMA. Currently, only four (4) municipalities in Westchester County have FEMA-approved plans, so we should be well ahead of the curve and hopefully help us receive additional grant funds.
- Rye Brook will remain involved in the longer-term U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study of the entire Blind Brook watershed.
- As a member of the Long Island Sound Watershed Inter-Municipal Council (LISWIC), Rye Brook participated in evaluating the implementation of a Stormwater Utility District that will be further considered by each of the municipalities in this watershed.

As for other related infrastructure work, as many know, Greenwich has undertaken an extensive repaving and storm water effort on King Street, which is expected to be completed by October. While this work caused a lot of traffic delays over the summer, the improved roadway condition



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and additional drainage should make for a smoother ride in this area for both Rye Brook and Greenwich residents.

One last word about the “look” of our community: Your officials - both the staff and those residents who volunteer their time to serve on our boards, commissions and councils - are devoted to keeping Rye Brook a desirable and desired place to live. But we need everybody’s cooperation. Our laws, regulations and rules exist so that our community remains beautiful.

Thus, from adhering to our building codes, to abiding by the lawn and trash pick up schedule, to enforcing the laws that prevent unsightly signs in the Village’s right-of-way, for example, your assistance is required. At the end of the day, as vigilant as we are, you can help. When you see violations, let us know; when you see papers strewn on the streets, pick them up; and now, as our children return to school, help us by driving safely and please stay alert. Speeding and use of cell phones while driving are two of the most serious issues we face, but these are situations we can all correct. It is up to us to keep a good thing going, and living in Rye Brook is definitely a good thing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'han'.

P.S. Leaf collection season is almost upon us. Please check our website, [www.ryebrook.org](http://www.ryebrook.org), for schedules. As you place leaf piles at the curb, please make sure that leaf piles are separated from branches and other matter that can destroy machinery and injure our workers.

