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This Month's Top Stories

Ongoing Disaster Recovery

FEMA and the Small Business Administration have been here in Island Pond at the Disaster Recovery Center (Town Hall Gym) for a little over a month. Their job is to answer questions and help folks through the process of applying for federal assistance. The July 30 flooding was just declared a disaster at the federal level, which doesn't sound great but is actually good news. This declaration allows us to access recovery aid. FEMA/SBA is likely leaving town soon, so if you haven't dropped into the DRC for help, now is the time to do it.

MERP

The Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) helps municipalities throughout Vermont complete projects related to weatherization, thermal efficiency, and supplementing or replacing fossil fuel-based heating systems with more efficient options. Good news: We have submitted our application! In November, the state will conduct a final review and determine the amount of the grant (up to \$500,000). By late 2024/early 2025, we should find out when the funds will be dispersed – and then we can get ready to launch some exciting projects in our town-owned buildings.

Wastewater Treatment Facility: Sludge Removal

Some things get better with age, like wine, cheese, and cast iron skillets. Others, like our Wastewater Treatment Facility, definitely do *not*. This essential facility is well past its useful life. We need to upgrade ASAP to maintain safe operation, meet state regulations, and give residents the high-quality service they deserve.

One of the biggest concerns now is removing excess sludge. If not addressed, conditions will deteriorate and leave the town at risk for serious safety and environmental hazards. But we have a bit more good news here too, folks: The sludge removal bid came in lower than expected, and we anticipate starting this work in late spring/early summer.



Just a heads-up: When sludge removal occurs, there will be trucks coming in and out, transporting waste from the treatment facility for safe disposal. This will likely mean increased heavy truck traffic, primarily on Meadow Street out through Railroad Street and East Brighton Road. If it causes any minor inconvenience, please just remember what they're hauling out of here!

And a quick update on the Drinking Water Treatment Facility: The aged facilities at the North Plant, South Plant, and reservoir also need significant upgrades. We are actively working with H2O Innovations to procure contractors for this work and continuing efforts to secure grant funding to push these projects forward. Our top priority is ensuring that when Brighton/Island Pond residents turn on the tap, they get safe, clean water.

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Community members are always encouraged to attend Selectboard and other Town Department meetings to stay updated on our projects. You can do so in-person or virtually. Get the [Zoom link](#) to attend on our homepage. And... Don't forget, now you catch up on our [YouTube channel](#)!

What's New with Brighton Rec?

Brighton Recreation has become a prominent force around town, thanks to members who are committed to bringing fitness and fun to the whole community.

A popular favorite is coming back: Circuit Training will return, as soon as we work out a location. With FEMA currently occupying the gym and basketball season soon to start, securing space is a challenge – which Brighton Rec *will* overcome! The committee is developing alternatives so we can get our sweat on. You can also look forward to Friday Fun Nights, a family-oriented program to help beat the winter blahs. Stay tuned for updates on these and other Brighton Rec initiatives.

The Rec committee is also looking for:

- A yoga instructor (certification not required) to lead classes. Compensation available.
- Volunteer committee members. Your time commitment can be as little or as big as you want to fit into your lifestyle/schedule.
- Ideas! What kind of programs do you want to see around town?

Please reach out. You can message [Brighton Recreation on Facebook](#), email info@brightonrecreationvt.org, or call (802) 723-0931.

