



BEDFORD BYLINE

Provided by the Town of Bedford describing its services for residents. Responses to Town Manager, 10 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730 are welcome. The Town's website for more information on services is www.bedfordma.gov.

January, 2010

Page Road Bridge Opening

By Adrienne St. John, Engineer

The Page Road Bridge is now open for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The Town of Bedford appreciates your patience and cooperation during this project and would like to thank the following people who made it so successful:

- The Massachusetts Highway Department, who funded the project; specifically Patricia Leavenworth and her construction staff, including Mark Cain, Scott Kelloway, Mark Fedele, Brian Polley, and Jack MacDonald, who provided day-to-day oversight of the work.
- The contractor, Northern Construction Service, Peter Kelly, Sean Hoey, and all the operators and tradesmen who built the bridge and were attentive to the Town's requests.



The Selectmen and Town Manager Richard Reed attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the Page Road Bridge on November 24, 2009

- Matt Card, Dan McCormack, and Ed Baumann from Purcell Associates, who began designing the project for the Town back in 2004, and provided on-call engineering assistance during construction.
- The public utility companies and their sub-contractors who worked with Northern Construction to coordinate relocation of their conduits and cables without disruption of service to the residents of Bedford.
- The abutters who granted easements to the Town of Bedford without hesitation so that the project could be built – Bob and Mary Jacobs, Steve Walker, and Kotcherlakota and Lakshmi Rao – as well as the other residents who endured looking at construction equipment for a year – the Fish, Clement, and Lentine households.
- The DPW labor force who responded whenever they were asked to assist with the project.

Without the efforts of the aforementioned individuals and businesses, and the patience and support of the citizens of Bedford, the successful opening of the new bridge on November 24, 2009 would not have been possible.

Bedford Wins Prestigious Pickard Award

Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) received notification from the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) that Bedford will be one of three towns honored to receive the Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award as part of the MMA Annual Meeting in January. Bedford will be honored for the Parent Education Series coordinated by BYFS and involving several Town organizations in collaborating on a cohesive program for its residents.

In the award letter, Geoffrey Beckwith, Executive Director of the MMA, said, "Your Parent Education Series has demonstrated your dedication, commitment and ability to increase the effectiveness of local government by successfully implementing a unique and creative program." The Town will be presented with the award at a reception on Saturday, January 23rd at the Sheraton Boston where the other Innovation Contest and Town Report Contest winners will be honored.

In the application for the award, BYFS Director Sue Baldauf highlighted the goals of developing and

coordinating a parent education series:

- Ensure a positive community-wide approach to raising children to be healthy, caring adults.
- Establish a year-long calendar that both meets parents' needs and avoids schedule conflicts that can negatively impact family life.
- Develop a culture of coordination and communication among different groups, avoiding duplication of effort.

Baldauf credited Bedford Community Partnership (BCP) as the impetus to develop such a series based on discussions at their regular monthly meetings. Initial plans began a couple of years ago with representatives of all school parent associations meeting to plan a coordinated effort, and program evaluations of those early attempts further enhanced the offerings over the past two years. The current award-winning series includes more local groups and new collaboration, with several speakers offering themselves at no or low cost and the sponsoring organizations of several workshops sharing in speaker costs. *Continued on page 2*

FY10 Property Tax Rates Set

In December the Town's property tax rates for the current fiscal year were finalized. The January 1st property tax bills reflected the final tax rates for Bedford as certified by the state. The FY10 certified tax rates for each of the classifications of property are as follows: Residential - \$13.08; Open Space - \$9.81; Commercial, Industrial, and Personal Property - \$29.51. The same rates for the previous year were \$12.43, \$9.32, and \$28.45, respectively.



deviate from the average, the residential values declined from the previous year by 2.5%. Commercial, industrial, and personal property values declined 9.1%. These declines are likely related to the overall economic conditions facing the region and the country.

In FY09, the average Bedford single family home was valued at \$516,200. Applying the FY09 tax rate of \$12.43 yielded an average single family home tax bill of \$6,416.37. In FY10, the average Bedford single family home is valued at \$506,600. Applying the FY10 tax rate of \$13.08 yields an average single family home tax bill of \$6,626.33, representing an increase of 3.3% from the prior year's average single family home bill.

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When compared to FY09, property values in all classes of property declined in FY10. While individual properties and neighborhoods will

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Improved Town Website

By Sherwood Ives, IS Manager

The Town of Bedford is pleased to announce its new website at the new address:

www.bedfordma.gov

The primary purpose of the website is to provide easy access to services and information for Town residents and other users. New elements include email lists, online citizen requests, condensed services sections, and departmental news items, all within the bounds of a newly designed format. *Continued on page 2*

Town of Bedford Massachusetts 01730	Standard Mail U. S. Postage Paid Permit No. 42
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Improved Town Website

(Continued from page 1)

Navigation of the site begins at the top horizontal menu with key pull-down categories including Departments, Services, Committees, and Publications. These main menu options are recreated vertically on the left side. Coupled with the top banner and search option, these elements provide a fixed, consistent framework in which the rest of the site information is presented. The home page, along with the rest of the site, is being refined to provide the quickest access to key information. The picture of Town Hall on the home page is one of five tabbed items which include "Livable Community," "Historic Flag," etc. This "prime real estate" will change as it is updated with new items.

One of the exciting new options under the Services menu is the Citizen Request page. In this section, online requests can be made for services and information relating to public works, building and code enforcement, and public records. Additionally, users are able to create logins in order to track their specific requests. The list of requests will expand in the next few months as request options from other Town departments are incorporated. Another new service area is email lists. Users may subscribe to particular email lists including Affordable Housing, Meeting Notification, and the What's New List. Other interactive web elements such as Twitter are under consideration pending demonstration of their actual utility.

Key information from the old website is still available on the new site. This includes links to online bill

payments, the Bedford GIS Property Finder, the Wetlands Finder, and the Community Events Calendar. The Assessors Database has a new format for the presentation of assessment data for all Bedford properties.

Each Town department has a unique image and menu (usually on the right side of the screen). The "Files" menu item links to documents associated with that department. ("Files" may also be accessed from "Publications" on the top menu.) Each department may contribute news items, both to the department page and to the homepage. Behind the scenes, the workings of the new website facilitate contributions by users in all the Town departments to help insure that information will be current.

Please explore the Town's new website and be aware that it is a work in progress and new features will be added. Note that most pages in the site can be converted to a pdf file or emailed – these options are identified by three small icons in the upper right corner of a page, below the top menu; hovering the mouse over the icon will identify its purpose. Also, the font size may be adjusted by using the control at the bottom of the left-side menu.

All questions, comments, or suggestions are welcome and may be submitted via the Citizen Request option, by email to webmaster@bedfordma.gov, or by calling Sherwood Ives (781-275-2218 x308) or Anna Collins (781-275-2218 x313), who are the staff of the IT division of the Finance Department.



Have Your Next...

Meeting • Function • Festivity • Special Event

In This Vintage Railroad Car!

Budd Rail Diesel Car 6211 was built in 1955 for the Boston & Maine Railroad. It operated throughout New England for a quarter century, including on the Bedford Branch. The car was rescued from scrapping and cosmetically restored for display at Bedford Depot Park.

PHONE

781-275-4880

E-MAIL

rentals@BedfordDepot.org

- Heated and air-conditioned
- Fixed seating for up to 30 people in the main passenger section
- An open area of the car is suitable for small meetings or food service
- Two eight-foot tables with chairs
- Sound system and AC power outlets
- Refrigerator, coffee brewer and sink are available in the adjacent Freight House with prior arrangement
- Public restrooms are accessible at the rear of the Freight House



Bedford Common – Bedford's Own Television News Magazine

Bedford Common is an hour-long television news magazine dedicated to what's going on in our town. The show features interviews with members of the Town's governing bodies – Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, and Finance Committee – as well as timely features on events of general interest around Bedford. Recent shows have highlighted various local artists, the award-winning Bedford High School Robotics Team, local members of the regional 4-H club, the Citizen of the Year presentation, scenes from Bedford Day, pole-capping, and many other Town events. Addition-

ally, interviews with candidates for contested Town offices are held each year, along with a review of the warrant before each Town Meeting.

Now in its second year, Bedford Common can be seen every Wednesday at 7:00 on Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 38, as well as other times during the week. Please see the complete schedule at www.bedford.tv. If you would like to help produce segments for the show, please contact Ron Cordes (781-275-6181), Julie Turner (781-275-0742), or e-mail bedfordcommon@bedford.tv.

Pickard Award

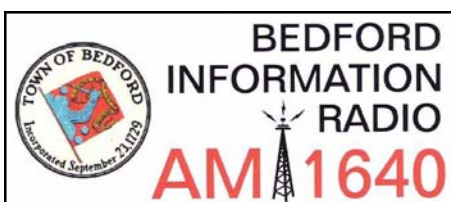
(Continued from page 1)

Baldauf was quick to note the success of the series as being due to the many groups providing the workshops. In addition to BYFS, other groups featuring workshops include John Glenn Middle School, Bedford Family Connection, A Place to Grow, LEAP School, Friends of the Bedford Library, Bedford Special Education Parents' Advisory Council, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Bedford Public Schools, and the Violence Prevention Coalition. "We could not do this without Town and Selectmen support – Bedford is

lucky to have this department as a resource," Baldauf stated.

The Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award is sponsored annually by the MMA to recognize cities and towns that have developed unique and creative projects or programs to increase the effectiveness of local government. It is named in honor of Kenneth E. Pickard, Executive Secretary of the Massachusetts League of Cities and Towns from 1969 to 1973.

For questions about the series or for more information, please contact BYFS at: 781-275-7727.



Town of Bedford Bedford Byline

Selectmen

Mark Siegenthaler, Chair
Angelo Colao
Catherine Cordes
Michael Rosenberg
Walter J. St. Onge III

Richard T. Reed,
Town Manager

Jessica Porter, Editor

Chrissie Webb, Graphics

The *Bedford Byline*, an official publication of the Town of Bedford, Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730, is delivered to all residents of Bedford. For information about or response to the *Byline*, please write, or call the Town Manager's Office at (781) 275-1111.

Articles without a byline have been written by staff of the Town Manager.

Volunteer for Local Government

Several local government committees and boards are looking for new members to fill vacancies.

Committees and boards with vacancies at this time are:

- Arbor Resource
- Cable Television Advisory
- Conservation Commission
- Fair Housing
- Housing Partnership
- Patriotic Holiday
- Youth and Family Services
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Housing Authority (elected position)

For questions, please contact a member of the Volunteer Coordinating Committee:

Dawn Theodore	781-275-9243
Lora Goldenberg	781-275-7354
Ilsa Gottlieb	781-275-0953

Senior Citizens: You May be Eligible for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit in 2009

By Pat LeVan and Kathy Mull, Co-Directors, Council on Aging

Whether you own or rent, you may be eligible for a tax credit of up to \$960. This credit is "triggered" when your annual payments of allowable residential property taxes, plus 50% of your eligible municipal water and sewer charges, exceed 10% of your total income for the same period. Two hundred forty-seven Bedford households received the Circuit Breaker (CB) Tax Credit for tax year 2008.

Even if you have not filed Massachusetts income tax in recent years due to your income level, you may still be eligible for the CB Tax Credit. If this is the case, you would receive the credit in the form of a refund check. All you would need to do is file the simple Form 1 and the CB Schedule.

To be eligible for the credit, you must meet certain criteria:

1. You or your spouse, if filing jointly, must be a Massachusetts resident age 65 or older by December 31, 2009.
2. Total gross income cannot exceed **\$51,000** for single or **\$77,000** for taxpayers filing jointly. Married taxpayers must file a joint return to receive the

credit.

3. Assessed value of your principal residence as of 01/01/2008 must be less than **\$788,000**.
4. Your property tax in 2009 must exceed 10% of your total income for 2009. This includes all income whether it is tax-exempt or not.

Example: Jane Smith is a widow, age 83, who has an annual gross income of \$45,000 from Social Security, interest income, and a small pension. Her house is valued at \$520,000. Her property tax for 2009 is \$5,917 (based on \$11.38 per thousand).

$$10\% \text{ of } \$45,000 = \$4,500$$

$$\$5,917 - \$4,500 = \$1,417$$

Jane Smith would be eligible for a refund of \$960 (maximum allowed) from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It would be a credit toward any tax owed or, if no tax were owed, she would receive it in the form of a refund check.

In February, AARP-trained tax assistants will be at the Council on Aging to assist seniors with simple income tax preparation for tax year 2009.

Make Sure Our Kids Are Cyber Safe

By Sue Baldauf, Director, Youth & Family Services

Speakers: Middlesex Partnerships for Youth Director Margie Daniels and Assistant District Attorney Onyen Wong

**When: Tuesday, March 2, 2010
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

Location: Bedford Town Hall Auditorium

Target Audience: All Parents and School Personnel

The internet offers almost limitless opportunities to gain knowledge and make contact with others. When used appropriately, it is a powerful and positive tool. However, school staff and parents need to be aware of the risks inherent in this technology. Effective prevention and inter-

vention strategies for parents, school staff, and administrators will be outlined and discussed.

Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization affiliated with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office and designed to foster collaboration among community leaders, public safety agencies, and educators to safeguard students in Middlesex County. Bedford Public Schools is a member of the partnership.

Sponsored by Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Bedford Public Schools, and Violence Prevention Coalition of Bedford (VPC).

Bedford's New Community Events Calendar

By Madeleine Altmann, Executive Director, Bedford TV

Bedford TV is hosting a new community-wide calendar for Bedford at www.bedford.tv/calendar.



Bedford TV currently receives information about events around town and also actively contacts all organizations and collects info from local publications and emails to create as complete a calendar as possible. This is the place to go if you are planning an event, both to post it to the schedule as well as announce any last-minute changes or cancellations. This streamlined calendar will also be useful in order to see what else is planned when deciding on a date for your future event.

Organizations are encouraged to post an event as soon as a date is set; details can be filled in later when they become available. In addition, this calendar has advanced functionality with the options for an RSS feed as well as download and notifications to most email programs. This service is free of charge, but be aware that calendar postings are not available for commercial purposes.

Please email events@bedford.tv for postings and for any questions you may have.

Thank you to the Bedford Cultural Council for partial funding of this project.

Encouraging Diversity Activity

The Town of Bedford has a long history of proactively recognizing issues of diversity, engaging residents in building inter-group understanding and respect, and preventing acts of bigotry, hate crimes, and civil rights violations.

The Town has also worked closely with the Violence Prevention Coalition of Bedford (VPC). Established in 1997, the VPC served Bedford with programs from its beginning and also during our Town's participation in the No Place for Hate Program from 2002 to 2007. The VPC mission of believing that "*all forms of violence are unacceptable and that community life requires non-violent resolution of conflict*" ties in with our community goals of being welcoming to all.

The VPC continues to focus on their goal "*of being proactive in stemming the tide of violence through education, resource identification, referral networking, and direct assistance, where appropriate, and in general creating an atmosphere for peaceful resolution of conflict.*" This includes activities such as "Keeping the Peace" monthly columns in the local newspaper, diversity training for local businesses, and Guidelines for Civil Discourse established by the Selectmen on September 20, 2004, and posted in Town Meeting warrants. Programs and forums related to ensuring a safe community for all will continue to be offered.

This past year the VPC developed a Block Party Guide designed to help residents develop relationships with their neighbors, hosted an educational community forum on genocide, and cosponsored anti-bullying education at John Glenn Middle School. The Block Party Guide can be downloaded from the Town's website:

<http://www.bedfordma.gov/youth>

As you know, Bedford has a long history of encouraging respect for diversity and understanding in both its Town and school programs, as well as in its many civic organizations. The Town as well as Bed-

ford's religious and civic organizations encourage respect for diversity in their many long-standing activities.

Response System in Voluntary Partnership (RSVP), is a network of Town, school, police, clergy, and citizen representatives. RSVP exists to share and collaborate in an attempt to prevent and consider responses to hate crimes. The Town is committed to continuing our long tradition of proactively recognizing issues of diversity and building inter-group understanding. We can only continue to do this in partnership with you.

Bedford community groups and residents can work with the Town and the VPC on these goals by thinking of activities that your department or organization might be planning or interested in doing to advance respect and understanding over the next fiscal year. It could be anything from a diversity day, to a book display, to an educational program on preventing hate crimes. It could be staff training or a forum on tolerance and dignity. The VPC welcomes collaboration with you on these events and would also like to be informed of any such activities conducted.

Should your organization need ideas about possible activities, many resources exist to help communities create programs related to their specific needs and concerns. One of the ones with which we are most familiar includes "Close the Book on Hate: 101 Ways to Combat Prejudice," available for download on the ADL website at <http://www.adl.org/prejudice/closethebook.pdf>. Other resources may be found at:

<http://facinghistory.org>
<http://publicconversations.org>

Questions or ideas about an activity, or requests for more information may be directed to either Town Manager Richard Reed at 781-275-1111 or Youth and Family Services Director Sue Baldauf at 781-275-7727. Also, please inform them of the activities that your organization conducts.

FY10 Property Tax Rates Set (Continued from page 1)

The property tax limitation law in Massachusetts, known as Proposition 2 1/2, does not regulate the tax rate itself. Instead, this law regulates the monetary amount that may be raised by property taxes. This is why, in a period of declining property values, the tax rates are increased to compensate for the need to maintain revenue that is no more than the sum of 2.5% above the prior year's allowed tax levy, plus taxes resulting from the value created by new real property investment in the community, plus taxes needed to pay

any debt which has been added to the tax levy by voters.

Bedford, like many communities in Massachusetts, is on a quarterly property tax billing cycle. The first two property tax bills in each fiscal year in July and October are *estimated bills* based on the prior year's tax rate and property values applied to the current year expenses. Once the tax rate is certified (usually in December), the remaining two property tax bills in January and April are referred to as *actual bills* and are adjusted to reflect the approved tax rate for the entire fiscal year.

The National Citizen Survey Community Ratings

The following text and tables are excerpted from the National Citizen Survey for the Town of Bedford, MA, 2009. The complete results of the survey are on the Town's website: www.bedfordma.gov

Civic Engagement

Government leaders, elected or hired, cannot run a jurisdiction alone and a jurisdiction cannot run effectively if residents remain strangers with little to connect them. Staff and elected officials require the assistance of local residents whether that assistance comes in tacit approval or eager help; and commonality of purpose among the electorate facilitates policies and programs that appeal to most and causes discord among few. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and par-

ticipation in local government, the Town can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. Communities with strong civic engagement may be more likely to see the benefits of programs intended to improve the quality of life of all residents and therefore would be more likely to support those new policies or programs.

Respondents were asked about the perceived community volunteering opportunities and their participation as citizens of the Town of Bedford. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the Town of Bedford favorably. Opportunities to attend or participate in community matters were also rated favorably.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

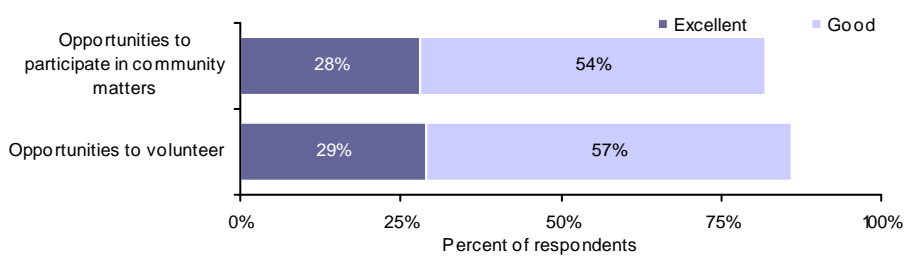


FIGURE 66: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Above
Opportunities to volunteer	Above

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting, watched a meeting of local elected officials, or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions.

FIGURE 67: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

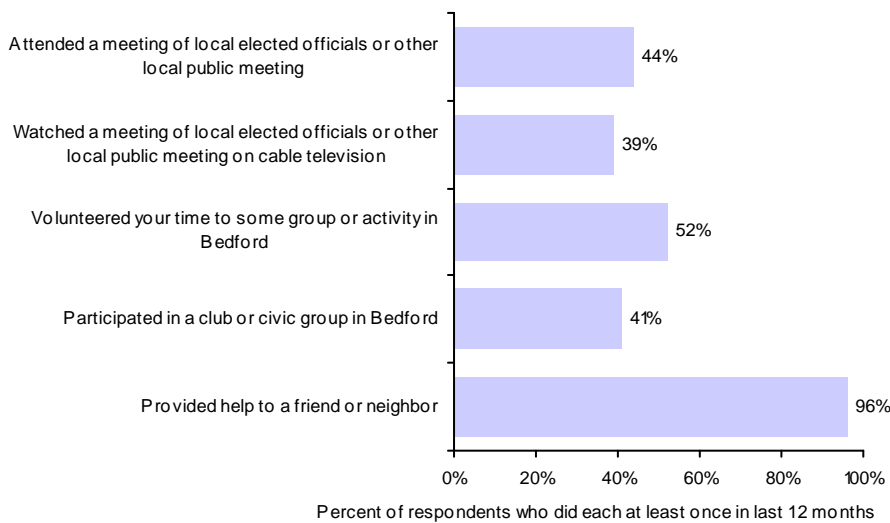


FIGURE 68: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	Above
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	Below
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	Above
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	Above
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	Similar

Town of Bedford residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Eighty-nine percent reported they were registered to vote and 84% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was higher than comparison communities.

FIGURE 69: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR

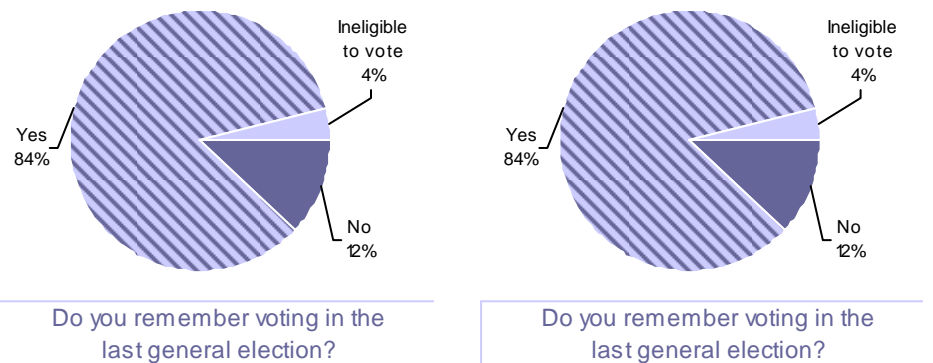


FIGURE 70: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Registered to vote	Above
Voted in last general election	Above

Bedford Street Light Outage Program

STREET LIGHT BURNT OUT?

If you notice a street light that is either off or flickering, please call Republic ITS at 1-800-LIGHTSON (1-800-544-4876). Republic ITS has been contracted by the Town of Bedford to maintain our 1,500 street lights, and they can be contacted directly to report a street light outage. If possible, please have the pole number of the affected street light when you call. If there is no visible number on the pole, please provide the closest house or building address.

Important note: If you are reporting more than one street light please send information for all.



Bedford Local Transit's New Discounted Rates

The Bedford Local Transit (BLT), the Town of Bedford's public transportation service, is now offering a discounted fare program. The fare for all riders is \$1 each way in town and \$2 each way out of town. Riders may now purchase a card which entitles them to (25) \$1 fare tickets for just \$20. The discount fare card may be purchased from the Council on Aging (781-275-6825) or directly from the BLT driver.

The BLT offers scheduled fixed runs to shopping malls and other stops in Bedford, Burlington, and Billerica, as well as on demand door-to-door service within Bedford, and to Emerson Hospital in Concord and Lahey Clinic in Burlington. Anyone may ride the BLT, and the van is wheelchair-accessible.