

Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department

BUILDING SERVICES Mid-Year Activity Report



OUR

MISSION

To protect the lives and safety of residents and visitors of Franklin County, preserve the quality of life and contribute to economic development.

VALUES

Respect: Open to all, honoring the diverse nature of those we serve.

Excellence: Striving for the ideal outcome in everything we do.

Passion: Dedication to and passion for building safety.

Trust: Demonstrating character and integrity to customers, associates and communities.

GOAL

To promote building safety and guide the pursuit of information and knowledge of building codes and standards.

Commissioners
Paula Brooks
Marilyn Brown
John O'Grady



OVERVIEW

The Building Services Section of the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is responsible for the unincorporated townships of Franklin County and six contract jurisdictions.

The **purpose** of the Building Services Program is to ensure compliance with the Ohio Residential Building Code for 1, 2, and 3 family dwellings.

Our **services** include plan examinations, new construction building inspections, building permits, electrical permits, HVAC permits, building condemnations, court testimonies, preventative inspections, complaint-based inspections, technical assistance, and consultations.

The Building Services Mid-Year Activity Report is meant to update the community on how this office is working to ensure building safety.

This report uses specific measures to outline the progress of the Building Services Section on a monthly basis for the first half of 2012. It outlines the growth and change of a number of our main services such as new home permits and inspections.

Resources

Building Services Section

Residential building permits
Franklin County Building Services Section
614-525-3166
Building Clerk

Community Services Section

The following is a list of services and programs offered by the Community Development section of the Economic Development and Planning Department that residents may find useful.

In order to receive these services, recipients must reside in Franklin County but outside the Columbus city limits and meet certain income eligibility guidelines.

- Single Family Rehabilitation Loans
- Handicap Accessibility and Minor Home Repair Grants
- Urgent Repair Grants
- Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance
- Sewer Tap-In Assistance
- Adaptive Equipment for the Hearing Impaired
- Fair Housing Services

For more information visit our website:
<http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners/edp/>

Jurisdictions We Serve

The following is a list of townships and jurisdictions in Franklin County that the Building Services section serves. In addition to the Townships we work with, six other jurisdictions contract with us to conduct building inspections and other essential duties.

Townships

Blendon Township
Brown Township
Clinton Township
Franklin Township
Hamilton Township
Jackson Township
Jefferson Township
Madison Township
Mifflin Township

Norwich Township
Perry Township
Plain Township
Pleasant Township
Prairie Township
Sharon Township
Truro Township
Washington Township

Villages

Harrisburg
Lockbourne
Minerva Park
Riverlea
Urbancrest
Valleyview

Clinton Township



MONTHLY SAFETY TIP

SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT! *A Monthly Safety Tip from the EDP/Building Services Section*

You can't talk household safety without talking about electricity. It has become an integral part of our homes. When electricity first appeared in houses a century ago, its only purpose was illumination. Nowadays it is used for virtually everything – heating, cooling, air quality, cooking, communication, and entertainment. This means that we are using electrical energy constantly, even as we sleep.

In order to keep people safe from electrical shock, we require ground fault circuit interrupters or GFCIs. There are three types of electrical failures in a circuit. The first is an overload. An overload happens when the circuit cannot provide enough energy to the circuit, causing too much heat which results in a higher current than the circuit is rated for. This action causes the breaker to trip out. The second type of fault is a short circuit. This is the most dangerous, but the easiest one to detect. This happens when two conductors are electrically connected together, which causes a very high release of energy and can blow up. You should never reset a breaker if there is evidence of a short circuit. The circuit must be tested with an ohm meter to ensure that the fault is clear before resetting the breaker. The third type of electrical fault is a ground fault. This occurs when current is going somewhere it is not supposed to go. This current can be under the circuit's rating, and the breaker will not open the circuit which means it is undetected.

The human body can perceive 1 milli-amp (mA). 10 mA is the let-go threshold, 15 mA is the freeze sensation and at 30 mA breathing is difficult and will cause ventricular fibrillation in small children. 100 mA to 200 mA will cause adult ventricular fibrillation and at 4 Amps heart paralysis and serious tissue damage occurs, and organs burn. The smallest overcurrent protection in the house is 15 Amps. This is why the code requires GFCI protection in certain high potential areas of the house. The way the GFCI works is that it utilizes the neutral to measure the current going out with the current coming back in, and if the difference is between 4 mA and 6 mA, the energy to the circuit is disconnected.

GFCIs come in two types: breakers and receptacle devices. The one thing to keep in mind here is that the device must be readily accessible so that it can be tested once a month. The code defines readily accessible as capable of being reached quickly for operation without requiring any type of tool. These devices have a test button on them that, when pressed, cuts off power to the circuit. If it does not de-energize the circuit, the GFCIs are not functioning properly and you'll lose your protection and never even know it. GFCIs have saved countless lives and prevented numerous injuries since man has dared to use electricity, so please remember to install and test your ground fault circuit interrupters.

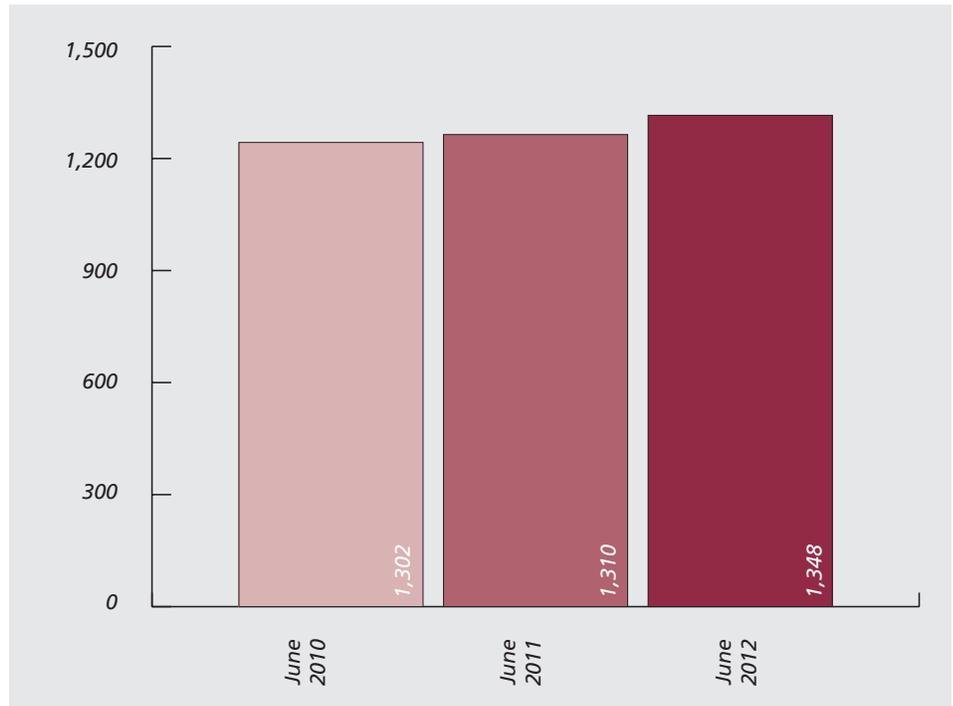
And, as always, **SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT.**



INSPECTIONS COMPLETED

The Building Services section inspects electrical and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems to ensure they are working properly and comply with all relevant Ohio codes.

For the first half of 2012, building inspections are slightly up from previous years.

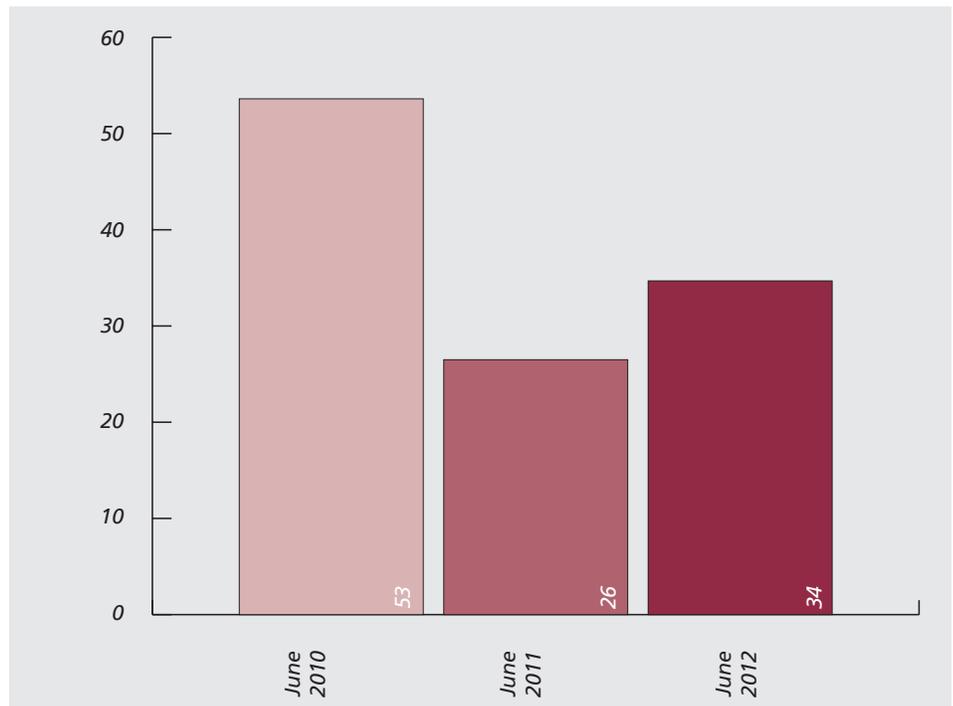


BUILDING PERMITS FOR NEW HOMES

The Building Services section issues permits to developers seeking to construct new homes in Franklin County townships.

Building permits for new homes are a key indicator of economic growth and are reported nationally to gauge the health of the nation's economy.

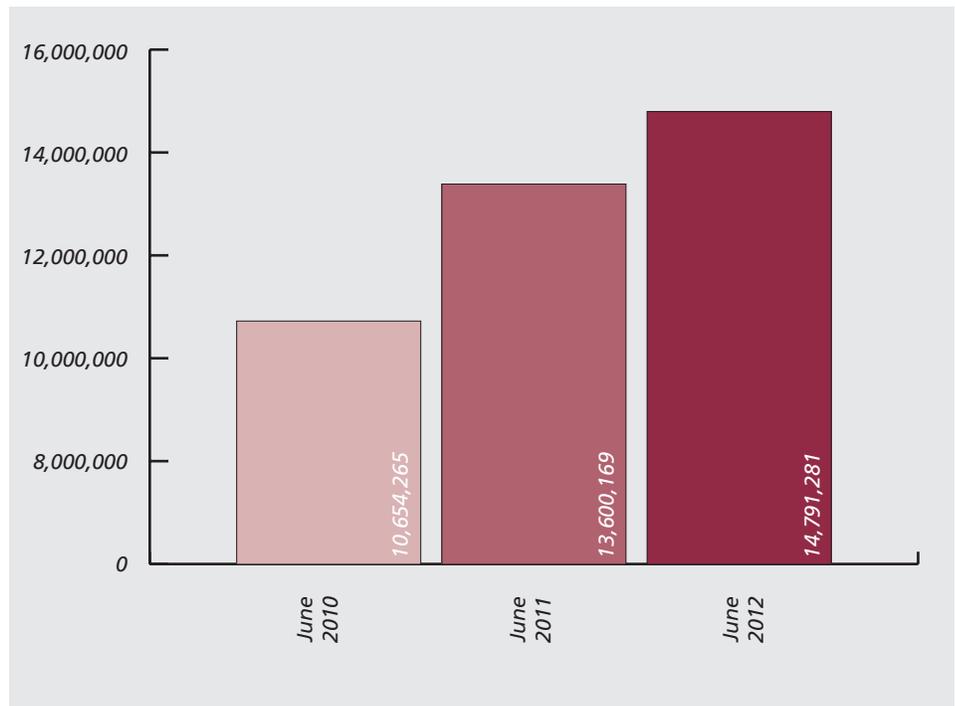
Franklin County has seen a 31% increase in the number of new home starts in the first half of this year, most likely an effect of the rebounding economy. Market trends show that developers are once again focusing on new home construction in Franklin County.



ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTION

The estimated cost of construction is the amount of money we expect to go toward construction projects for which we have issued permits. This includes new builds as well as reconstructions.

After a slump in 2010, the estimated cost of construction has continued to rise. The increase in cost of construction this year is correlated to the increase in building permits and renovation projects throughout the first half of 2012.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Smart Works in Franklin County

Launched by the Franklin County Commissioners in July 2012, Smart Works in Franklin County is a coordinated effort to target and highlight workforce development, job retention and job creation. Franklin County invests in numerous efforts to grow the region's smart workforce, by giving people the skills and training they need to get and keep good-paying jobs. At the same time, the County encourages the growth of existing businesses and the creation of innovative new ventures by investing in entrepreneur training and financial support.

Housing Development

For each of the affordable single-family and rental housing developments the County supports, many full-time construction jobs in the local community are created. In 2011, rental housing development and single-family home repairs funded by EDP resulted in approximately 1,016 jobs. In addition, the County's Neighborhood Stabilization Program has impacted approximately 160 jobs in the local economy through the redevelopment of foreclosed single-family properties.

Infrastructure

The County's investments in road, sidewalk, and sewer infrastructure assists families that live near these improvements and now have better access to transportation and water. However, these projects also create jobs for local residents. In 2011, EDP funded three infrastructure projects throughout the County, resulting in the creation of approximately 36 construction and related service jobs.

PILOT DEMOLITION PROGRAM

In 2012, EDP launched the Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program, providing each of the 17 townships in the County the opportunity to address severely blighted and unsafe residential properties through demolition.

Five townships are participating in the first round of demolitions (Clinton, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, and Mifflin townships), leading to the demolition of eight structurally unsafe single-family properties.

Additional properties in these townships will be addressed in subsequent rounds of demolition. The demolition of these structures will not only eliminate unsafe buildings that often harbor pests and sometimes criminal activity, but will also remove community eyesores and help to stabilize or increase property values in the surrounding area.

Demolition Project - Mifflin Township

Mifflin Township was approved to demolish three properties under the first round of the Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program and will submit additional properties for demolition in future rounds.

Mifflin Code Enforcement Officer Steve Blake was interviewed by the Columbus Dispatch in November 2011 regarding the Demolition Program and the blighted homes he deals with in Mifflin Township on a daily basis.

In one property being demolished in the first round, 2096 Minnesota Avenue, Blake said that a tent had recently been set up by squatters and the property has harbored several criminal incidents in recent years.

For years, Blake has been on a crusade to raze abandoned homes, which he says are dramatically dragging down property values and keeping officers busy because of safety concerns.

Blake keeps in his briefcase a file of a dozen or so decrepit houses, which grows more often than it shrinks. "I'm trying to get creative on a lot of this stuff," Blake told the Dispatch. "I just know that I try and take an aggressive approach in finding a solution for this."

Township officials provided \$3,000 recently to demolish one home. The County's Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program will help Mifflin Township to make a bigger impact in the community by addressing additional properties that are a drain on the township's resources.

The Township Nuisance Abatement Program, in addition to removing blight, enhancing neighborhood safety, and stabilizing property values, will impact approximately 34 jobs in the County.



2096 Minnesota Ave. in Mifflin Township



County Commissioners Paula Brooks and Marilyn Brown join EDP Director Jim Schimmer at the first Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Project

NSP Program

The **Neighborhood Stabilization Program** (NSP) was established to combat the issue of abandoned and foreclosed homes. Franklin County was awarded \$5,439,644 in **NSP1** funds (a special Community Development Block Grant allocation) and \$3,412,500 in **NSP2** funds (as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties that would otherwise become blighted. NSP funding was targeted at redeveloping properties in normally stable neighborhoods or those at the “tipping point” to improve home values and prevent further neighborhood deterioration as a result of the foreclosure crisis. Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department chose five areas to target this investment: Eastern Franklin County, the City of Whitehall, the Westland Area, American Addition, and the Northland Area.

AWARE Manual: In 2009, Franklin County and the City of Columbus created and adopted the AWARE (Accessibility, Water Conservation, Air Quality, Resource Conscious, Energy-Efficient) Manual to be the performance standard for all federally funded residential projects in these jurisdictions.

The AWARE Manual was modeled after the Enterprise Green Communities criteria and is a performance standard to provide housing that is healthy, accessible, and environmentally friendly. Homes that meet the AWARE standards, matched with resource-conscious behaviors in the home, can lead more efficient energy use and lower utility bills.

The **Neighborhood Stabilization Program** will impact 142 residents and 385 jobs in Franklin County, and will be used to leverage \$11,425,000 in other funds for housing programs. To date, 14 newly constructed homes have been built and 26 homes have been purchased and renovated.

WHO WE ARE

Bertram Walker returned to the Economic Development and Planning Department on September 4, 2012, serving as a Building Permit Tech. Bert offers technical assistance regarding building code requirements, ordinances, and building permits. Prior to his return, he served as the permit clerk for 19 years.



Jack Todd has served as a Building Inspector for Franklin County for thirty-four years. Jack performs hundreds of on-site and in-house inspections per year. He is responsible for the recording of and the ongoing status of all jobs. Mr. Todd provides the highest standard of accuracy and in-depth code review on hundreds of jobs annually.



Rick Erbe is a state-certified Residential Building Inspector and an interim Residential Plans Examiner. Rick works directly with hundreds of homeowners and contractors to ensure a safe and code compliant project. Mr. Erbe also performs on-site and in-house inspections to ensure code compliance, including oversight of all county AWARE housing projects.



Mike Kelleher is a Professional Engineer with more than thirty-five years of experience in the construction business. He is a state-certified Electrical Safety Inspector, Commercial Building Inspector and Residential Building Official. His responsibilities include overseeing all Building Services activities in his capacity as Residential Building Official.



Camellia Richey who was the face of the Building Section, retired on June 30, 2012. Camellia acted as receptionist, building clerk and secretary; all while processing over a thousand permits per year. Camellia was an asset to this department and her hard work was appreciated and will be missed.



Franklin County Board of Commissioners



Commissioner Paula Brooks
President



Commissioner Marilyn Brown



Commissioner John O'Grady

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