

Community Issues 4th Qtr 2008
10:00 PM (Monday-Sunday) 35 minutes
"Fox 66 News at 10"

OCTOBER 2008

October 3 – Local reaction to the federal bailout of the banking industry. The financial system is collapsing in the US. The federal government is providing money to keep the banks and financial institutions in business.

October 6 – Africa 6000 Series – On this day we began a week long series of stories about the effort to bring fresh clean drinking water to regions of Africa. An Erie based organization called Africa 6000, is attempting to save some of the estimated 6000 children who reportedly die every day, because they lack clean water. Our report was prepared by the Executive Director of Africa 6000, who was there to bring us the story of what the local organization is doing to save lives.

October 21 – Judge Joyce Trial – Jury selection began today in a four week trial for former Superior Court Judge Michael Joyce. He was charged by the federal government with using his influence as a judge to obtain a quick and favorable insurance settlement, following an auto accident. He received \$440-thousand dollars. He was eventually convicted in November of all charges against him following a trial in Pittsburgh. Coverage dominated most newscasts during the trial, and included regular reports from Pittsburgh.

Election Coverage

Many of our newscasts this month contained stories pertaining to the upcoming presidential and local elections. Stories on voter registration efforts, suspicions of voter fraud, debates, town hall meetings, meet the candidate events, visiting candidates, and those stumping for candidates. We also featured profile reports on all of the key races in our region, and televised a live debate between the candidates running for Congress. These stories aired throughout the news cycle during the month.

October 27 – Preparations begin for visit of VP candidate Sarah Palin on October 30th. Our daily reports focused on the efforts of the local GOP to gear up for this candidate, who has energized the party. Our coverage continues up through the evening of her appearance, Oct 30th.

NOVEMBER 2008

November 4th – Presidential and Local Election – As with the rest of the nation, locally, all eyes were on the Presidential election. We had a major Congressional race here, with a 14 year incumbent being unseated by a Democratic challenger. We also had several contested races for State House and Senate. Our coverage began in Good Morning Erie and continued throughout all of our newscasts on this day.

November 8-Gudegeonville Bridge Destroyed by Fire – An historic wooden covered bridge was destroyed by arsonists on this date. Over 100 years old, the bridge went up in a fireball. Efforts eventually lead to the arrest of two people in connection with the fire. Local municipality must now decide how to remove the old bridge and what or how to replace it. Many are calling for the costly reconstruction of the landmark. We had coverage of the weekend fire, several reports on meetings of Girard Twp officials figuring out what to do next, and ultimately, the arrest of two suspects in the case. Coverage of this story continued on Nov 21 and 25 and into December.

November 21 – Terri Rhodes Sentenced – A local college student who secretly gave birth to a baby, and then killed it, was sentenced to serve almost two decades behind bars. There was both shock and relief in the community. Many thought the punishment was too severe. And others were happy the court did not go lightly on this upper class white Catholic college student. The defense requested the reconsider the sentence within days. This story appeared in all of our newscasts this day, and then again on November 24th. The attorney was back in court Dec 1 asking for a new sentence.

November 24-25-26 – Preparing for Digital Television - The transition to DTV happens on February 17th. Christmas is coming and many people are shopping for new TV's. As a public service, we presented a three part three day series on how to prepare for DTV, what to look for in a new HDTV, and how to get answers to your DTV questions. We also hosted a live televised phone bank of DTV experts answering viewer questions for 90 minutes.

DECEMBER 2008

December 1 – Holiday Shopping, Cyber Monday, Black Friday, and holiday shopping all made the news frequently this month. It turned out to be one of the most dismal holiday seasons in decades for area merchants. We did fairly regular stories on the shopping season from the day after Thanksgiving, up to the end of the month. Each of these stories appear on both JET and FOX.

December 3 – Kenneth Barnes Sentenced – One of the most notorious crimes in Erie history came to a partial resolution when Ken Barnes was sentenced to serve 45 years in prison for his role in the infamous Erie Pizza Bomber Murder case. Barnes was involved in the collar bombing death of pizza delivery man Brian Wells back in 2003. Our coverage included the sentencing, prosecutors reaction to the sentencing, comments from the defense attorney for Barnes, and members of the Wells family. The story dominated our news coverage on this date on both JET and FOX.

December 11 – Erie Bay Hawks Open Season – Erie's new NBA basketball D-league team, the Erie Bay Hawks, had their home opener. Our coverage included the value of this new sports franchise, what it means to the community economically, what it means to sports fans, its affect on other sports entertainment opportunities, and of course, complete coverage from our sports department on the team, players, fans, and their big win on opening night. Our coverage dominated our coverage on this day, and continued through the home stand.

December 15 – Troyer Farms Sold – A local potato chip factory was sold to an out-of-town company. Word was, the plant would remain open, where a couple hundred people are employed. By the end of the month, it was announced that lay-offs were being made. Our first story aired December 15th and the lay-off story aired on December 30th.

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3rd Quarter 2008

JULY 2008

July 3- 21 There is a murder outside an Erie bar that leaves one person dead and another injured. It's another killing in what's becoming a deadly summer on city streets. It's the second shooting death outside Llamas Bar on Erie's eastside. Area residents are concerned, and want this magnet for crime shut down. It's a community concern. Later this month, there's a peace vigil at the scene of the crime to remember the victim. :55

July 18-20-23-24-30 Erie man John Kanzius has invented a radio wave machine that may cure cancer. It's being tested here in Erie and in labs at UPMC in Pittsburgh and MD Anderson in Houston. These stories report on the Kanzius machine being used to kill cancer cells in human blood; the Kanzius story appearing on CBS 60 minutes; the visit of Dr Stephen Curley to Erie to detail the latest research at MD Anderson; and Kanzius declining UPMC's offer to take over and control the research. These appeared significantly in our newscasts on these days. 1:15

July 22 – National Fuel Gas announces a huge rate increase in time for the winter heating season. It's estimated the increase could hike heating bills this winter 30 to 50-percent. We talked to NFG about why such a steep increase, and talked to consumers to get their reaction, and to learn how they will pay the bills to stay warm this winter. :45

AUGUST 2008

August 3-4-7-22 – Three people in one night are shot outside an Erie bar, and neighbors have had it with the violence. Police spend several weeks searching for the shooting suspect, Johnny Ray Roberts, also known as Tennessee Tuxedo, an ex-felon. Finally, he's captured in a dramatic 4 hour manhunt. Our coverage included a special report on the manhunt, live coverage from the scene, and reaction to the arrest from the community. It also included the suspects preliminary hearing later in the month. :55

August 4-5- 6-12 - A local judge hands down a decision, ruling that county government does not have ultimate authority in the distribution of millions of dollars in revenue generated by casino gaming. That decision rests with the host municipality and those that adjoin that municipality. Our coverage includes the judges ruling, what it means, what county officials are going to do, and the decision making process. 1:05

August 8-9-10-11 The 2008 Presidential election comes to Erie. It's announced that GOP candidate John McCain will be making a visit to Erie. Our coverage includes the announcement that he's coming; details on what he'll be doing; preparations for his visit; coverage of his arrival and news conference; interviews with former Gov Tom Ridge; coverage of McCain and Ridge at dinner; coverage of McCain's townhall style meeting at Erie's GE plant; and a one-on-one interview with the candidate. Our coverage was live from Erie Int'l airport upon his arrival, and live from GE following his town meeting. 2:15

August 17-29 - It's announced that the radio wave therapy for cancer invented by John Kanzius of Erie may be receiving federal funding. That's announced by Congressman Phil English. Later in the month, Kanzius receives a visit by golf legend Arnold Palmer, who is considering raising money for the Kanzius research. CBS's 60 minutes is here when Palmer and Kanzius meet. 1:15

SEPTEMBER 2008

Sept 2-4-7-8-10-11 The State of Pennsylvania new smoking ban went into effect September 11th. Leading up to that day, we did multiple stories on how the community was preparing for it. How smokers were getting ready, how restaurants and bars were preparing, and what it was going to mean for establishments like our local casino Presque Isle Downs. We also talked to health officials about the benefits of the smoking ban, and what help is available for those looking to quit. The subject pretty much dominated our broadcasts the first half of the month. 1:25

September 15-16-17 The stars of ABC's Good Morning America came to Erie. We were a stop on their Whistle stop '08 Amtrak Train Tour across the NE US. They were traveling to find what issues mattered most to Americans in the Presidential race. We promoted their arrival for days. We sent Good Morning Erie anchor to Niagara Falls, NY to ride the train into Erie with the folks from GMA. We did an interview with Robin Roberts and Sam Champion which aired exclusively on GME. We also reported on the casts stop at Erie's Union Station to meet with a cross section of Erie voters. 3:05

September 15-24-28-29-30 On September 15th, the stock market plunged 500 points. It was the beginning of a financial catastrophe on Wall St. There was extreme nervousness in financial markets. Banks and investment firms were on the verge of going out of business. The Federal government stepped in and bailed out the system. It was a huge international story, that we got local experts to help put into perspective, measured the fear, and tried to keep viewers from financial panic. This news pretty much dominated our local and national news that last half of the month. 2:15

COMMUNITY ISSUES REPORT
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"Fox 66 News at 10"
2nd Quarter 2008

April 2008

A month heavily dominated by politics as Pennsylvania played a key role in the Democratic Presidential primary contest.

April 1 & 2 –Presidential Politics

1:25 Senator Hillary Clinton was in Erie for a rally at Mercyhurst College. WJET carried her campaign speech live, as part of our commitment to carry the campaign speeches of both Democratic candidates. We also had an opportunity to interview Clinton one on one. Our coverage on preparations for the event dominated every newscast leading up to it, and dominated our newscasts following her live event.
YourErie.com

April 6 & 7 – Malcolm Kysor Captured

1:15 The convicted killer escaped from SCI Albion back in November, by hiding in a garbage can removed from prison grounds. The escape led to the firing of the prison warden and other disciplinary measures. Kysor was captured in a California park. Our coverage included telephone interviews with people who played a part in turning in the escaped killer. It also included community reaction to his capture and information the following day on when Kysor would be returned to Pennsylvania to face escape charges.
YourErie.com

April 11 – Presidential Politics

:55 Chelsea Clinton comes to Edinboro University to campaign for her mother, Sen. Hillary Clinton. Our coverage detailed preparations and plans for her event. We also covered her event with a liveshot just ahead of her appearance, and then a wrap-up on what she had to say in Edinboro.
YourErie.com

April 14 & 15 – Presidential Politics

2:15 Sen. Ted Kennedy came to Erie today to campaign on behalf of Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama. He made three different campaign stops in Erie. Our coverage previewed his planned visit, and covered the events.
YourErie.com

April 16-17-18 - Presidential Politics

2:35 Sen. Barack Obama came to Erie to campaign. His appearance at Penn State Erie was carried live on WJET-TV. Our coverage included announcement of his visit, the anxious supporters lining up for tickets, a problem with a shortage of tickets, preparations at the college for the event, and the event itself. The coverage dominated nearly all of our newscasts for the better part of three days. In the middle of all that, Bill Clinton even returned to Erie on the 17th to campaign again.

April 19th – Presidential Politics

:45 Former President Bill Clinton campaigned for his wife, Sen Hillary Clinton at Allegheny College in Meadville. We covered that event. It was his third stop in the Erie area leading up to the primary election in Pa.
YourErie.com

April 21 – Presidential Politics

2:15 Chelsea Clinton returned to Erie for a rally in Perry Square in downtown Erie. She was stumping for her mother once again. We were live in the park just prior to her speech, and then reported on the event throughout the day, on this election eve.

April 22 – Election Day

1:35 Pennsylvania played a key role in the Democratic primary election race. Our election coverage began early in the morning on election day. We were live at the County Courthouse in GME, and then live at the polls throughout the rest of the day. Our evening coverage included the first election results, the fastest election results, the most accurate election results, interviews with key candidates, and all the key winners. The election dominated our newscasts throughout the day.

May 2008

May 1 – Parade St Crime

:45 Mayor Joe Sinnott and other city officials joined residents of the Parade St area to protest crime in the neighborhood and to bring awareness to the issue. There continues to be drug and gun violence in that section of the city.

May 16-17-18 - Ravine Flyer II Debut

1:45 A new roller coaster opened at Waldameer Amusement Park. It's been 10 years in the making. The wood and steel coaster is a multi-million dollar investment for the local family owned amusement park. And the park is a huge economic engine for the summer tourist economy. Our coverage included details of the coasters grand opening plans, the first riders who paid big bucks to be on the first trip, and a controversy over a young rider who was not allowed to ride the coaster.

May 14-21- 22 – 23 – Gas Prices Up

2:35 The price of gasoline and diesel fuel continue to soar. As we approach the Memorial Day weekend, prices are only getting higher. The cost of fuel is crippling truck drivers, and changing travel plans for many families. Our coverage looks at the impact of higher gas prices on the motoring public, and those who drive for a living. These stories appeared consistently in the days leading up to the holiday weekend in most newscasts.

June 2008

June 2 – 8- 11- 19 – Skyrocketing Gas Prices

2:15 We continue to cover the soaring gas prices. This month we looked at what the local transit company is doing to pay higher costs. We also reported on the prices topping the \$4/gal mark. We reported on how gas prices are affecting local boaters; Senator Casey weighed in on what oil companies should do for consumers, there was an effort to dump the pump, and the city is rewarding resident who recycle with gas cards. Our coverage dominated our newscasts on the days listed.

June 5 – 10 – 13 Pa Goes Smoke Free

1:45 As the state legislature debates a smoking ban, St Vincent Health Center announced it was no longer going to let employees smoke while at work. Then on June 10th, the legislature approved a smoking ban, and on June 13 the Gov. Rendell signed it, allowing it to become law in 90 days. Our coverage included those who smoke, those who don't, local business owners, and the legislators and Governor who approved the measure.

June 15-16 Pit Bull Problem

:55 There's seems to be a growing problem with vicious attacking pit bulls. Our coverage included the most recent attack of a man. And was followed by what to do to help prevent injuries if confronted by what appears to be a dangerous dog.

6pm – 10pm – 11pm - GME - 12 noon – 5pm – 6pm – 10pm – 11pm – GME.

COMMUNITY ISSUES REPORT
10:00 pm (Monday-Sunday) 35 minutes
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1st Quarter 2008

JANUARY

January 8-9-10-11-14-18

Strange Illness at County Courthouse/OYC

A strange illness overcomes workers in the domestic relations department at the Erie County Courthouse. Nearly half the staff becomes ill. For some time, the source of the illness remained a mystery. Meanwhile, a worker at the Office of Children and Youth dies from MRSA. Both incidents concern county employees. Eventually it was discovered that the source for the courthouse illness was coming from a mechanical room, next to the domestic relations department. A decision was made to move all workers out of the courthouse and into another office building until the problem is fixed. It may be 6-12 months before they can return. The new location is in the same office building as OYC. It was determined later that while the OYC worker had MRSA, her cause of death was related to cancer. 1:55

January 15-16

Internet Child Predators

Three area men are charged by the Pa Attorney General's office with sending pornographic images of themselves to minor children. Actually, the children were agents posing on-line as teens. Our coverage of the AG's office arrest, was followed by a report on what motivates on-line child predators to do what they do. :45

January 23-24

Tire to Energy Plant

A private company wants to build a Tires- to- Energy plant on Erie's eastside. This plant would burn tires and convert the energy to electricity. There is significant community opposition to the proposed project, sighting pollution and health concerns. This story is about a meeting attended by 400 local residents to learn more about possible environmental concerns. Most left with few questions answered. This is an on-going story. 1:15

January 25-28-29-31

Ethics Allegations Against County Executive

Erie County Controller Sue Weber alleges that County Executive Mark DiVecchio used county employees to perform personal services for himself and members of his family. This allegation generated considerable debate and charges of politics. But as the county financial watchdog, Sue Weber believes she has the right to question the County Executive. Eventually, DiVecchio admitted errors in judgement and apologized to the community. He also offers to pay the county for those services. Coverage of this controversy extended many days over most shows. 1:45

FEBRUARY

February 1-2-4

Dreamland Ballroom Destroyed by Fire

The historic Dreamland Ballroom at Conneaut Lake Park burned to the ground. The overnight fire sent flames soaring high into the air that could be seen across the lake. The amusement park in Crawford County has been troubled by lack of finances in recent years. It didn't even open in 2007. The destruction of this key element of the park, takes most dreams and hopes of the park someday reopening, up in smoke. The day after the fire, demolition crews began tearing down the dangerous portions of the ballroom, but the work was halted so fire investigators could continue to search for a cause. Arson is suspected. 1:15

February 11-12-13-14-19-25-26

Erie Cop Steals Cocaine from Evidence Room

Veteran Erie Police Lt Robert Liebel is charged with stealing cocaine from the Erie Police Department evidence room. His arrest sends shockwaves through the police department, the court system, and legal community. The case raises questions about how much cocaine has been stolen, how many criminal cases may be affected by this evidence tampering, and how secure EPD evidence handling procedures might be. Liebel was placed in another county's jail, for security purposes, and his bail was set extraordinarily high. His defense attorney eventually petitioned and received a lower bond, so the officer could begin drug rehabilitation. Our coverage continued over the course of two weeks.

:55

February 28-29

Former State Representative Charged

Former State Representative Linda Bebko Jones and her former chief of staff, Mary Fiolek, are charged with forgery and other crimes by the Pa Attorney Generals office. These charges have been a long time coming. LBJ dropped plans to run for reelection after allegations surfaced that her campaign had forged the signatures of voters on her nominating petitions. LBJ denied the allegations, but subsequently, dropped out of the race and retired from the state legislature. The AG's office has been investigating ever since. Now, the 14 year veteran of Harrisburg and her former aide could face jail time and loss of her pension. 1:15

MARCH

March 5-6-7-8-9-10

Ice Storm and Blizzard Cripple Area

An ice storm left area roads, trees, and power lines covered in thick ice. Power outages left people in the dark for days. Damage was extensive. No sooner did the ice melt, and Erie was hit a a blizzard of snow. It dumped two feet of snow in two days. Some roads didn't get plowed for a week. City residents were unhappy with the snowplowing effort. Our coverage extended over multiple days and newscasts. :45

March 11-12-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31

Primary Election Candidates

Pennsylvania's primary election is next month. Two important races receiving considerable attention are the contests for President and Congress. Former President Bill Clinton came to rally for his wife at a local high school. We did a one on one interview with Barrack Obama and aired that over four consecutive nights. Hillary Clinton came April 1, so we did stories on preparations for her rally at a local college. We also featured profiles of our Democratic Congressional candidates over four consecutive nights, leading up to a planned televised debate featuring the candidates. :55