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**SHHA Office**  
 12700 San Rafael Avenue NE, Suite 3  
 Albuquerque, NM 87122  
**Office Hours:** M-F, 9 AM – 4 PM  
**Closed on federal holidays**  
**Phone:** 505-797-7793  
**Fax:** 505-856-8544  
**Website:** [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org)  
**Emails:** [sandiaheights@comcast.net](mailto:sandiaheights@comcast.net)  
[shha@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:shha@sandiahomeowners.org)



### SHHA Annual Meeting — Save the Date

The Annual Meeting of the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association membership will be Saturday, February 20, 9:00–10:30 AM. Due to the pandemic, this will be a virtual meeting. Any member of the Association may attend, but you will need to register in advance, no later than noon on Friday February 19, so that you can receive the link for participating via the Zoom application.

The first part of the meeting will be a business meeting where the Board’s officers and the committee chairs will report on 2020 activities and accomplishments. After the business meeting, the Board of Director’s members will be available to answer your questions.

As the Annual Meeting date gets closer, further details including the full agenda will be published here in The GRIT, on the SHHA website, via email blast, and in utility bill inserts.

We encourage you to attend.



# Mouse Control

By Susan McCasland, GRIT editor

We all love being close to nature or we wouldn't have moved into Sandia Heights in the first place. But sometimes nature is a little too close, as when mice move into our homes. In addition to the obvious problems of getting into food and the potential for spreading disease, mice can do really serious damage to structures. A few years ago right here in Sandia Heights, a mouse chewing on an electrical cord caused a fire that destroyed a home.

Here are some thoughts on keeping mice at bay.

**Control by predators.** A lower mouse population is obviously a way to decrease the number wanting to move in with us. We have several mouse predators here in Sandia Heights: coyotes, road runners, snakes, owls and other birds of prey, and bobcats in particular. Keeping the predator population healthy is a first line of defense. To that end, **do not poison rodents** whether the poison is indoors or outdoors. A poisoned mouse when eaten can sicken or kill the predator. Also, do not kill snakes or other rodent predators. Understandably, you may not want rattlesnakes in your yard. They can be removed and continue to eat mice further away from you. Sandia Heights Security can help with this. Bullsnares, plentiful in Sandia Heights, are harmless to humans and pets and are fairly prodigious mouse consumers. One study estimated that an adult male bullsnake can devour 1,000 field mice in a single season.

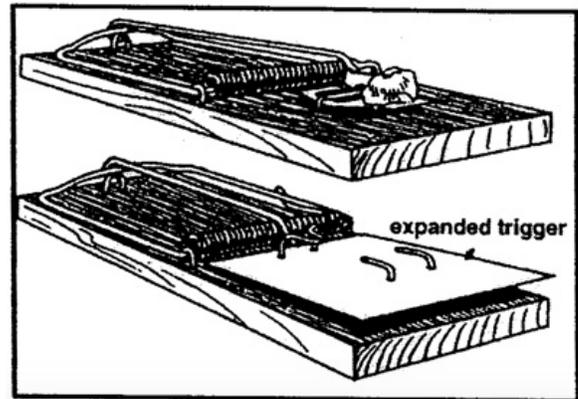
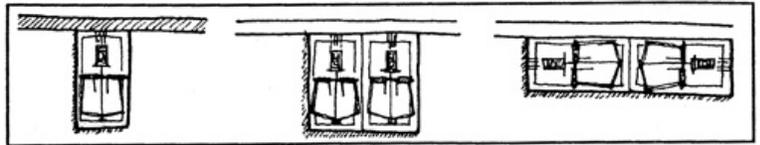
**Control indoors.** Mice move in with us in search of shelter and food. Good sanitation is a way to reduce indoor mice. Store foodstuffs in rodent-proof containers, such as metal containers, glass bottles, and heavy plastic containers with tight-fitting lids. Rodents easily chew through paper boxes, plastic bags, and cellophane packages. Waste and garbage also should be disposed in tightly covered metal cans. Keep all pet food cleaned up after each feeding and store feed in a metal container so it is unavailable to rodents.

Mice can enter our home through very small openings—roughly the size of your pinky fingertip. All openings rodents can enter should be covered with rodent-resistant materials, such as 1/4-inch hardware cloth. For irregular openings such as around pipes, stuff the opening densely with steel wool. Mice can climb downspouts to get on your roof and find openings there. Cover either the top or bottom of the downspout with hardware cloth, and be sure to remove leaf litter regularly so your downspout isn't blocked.

There are several things that seem to repel mice. A couple of these that don't also repel humans are Bounce dryer sheets and peppermint extract.

The standard wooden snap trap is an effective way to kill indoor mice. Set snap traps along travel routes where you see rodent signs, such as droppings. Snap traps should be set at right angles to the wall and such that the rodent, in following its natural course, will pass directly over the trigger. To make the trap more effective, attach a 2-by-2 inch piece of cardboard to the trigger. Peanut butter, oats, chocolate, and bacon are good baits. Although cheese often is used for bait, it quickly becomes stale and loses its attractiveness. All baits should be fresh and changed daily. Be sure to place traps where pets and children will not be able to get into them. If you have any empathy for the mice, avoid the sticky traps. The mice break most of the bones in their bodies trying to escape.

If you know of other ways to control mice, let us know. We'll publish an update in the spring.



## Into the Clouds, Part 3

### The Short, Tragic Flight of TWA 260 : Crash Determination By Hugh Prather, SHHA Member

*Less than 2 miles due east of the Sandia Heights boundary with the Sandia Wilderness, but 4 steep, uphill miles by trail from the tram terminal, a hiker encounters the debris field of the tragic TWA accident that took the lives of 16 people and spawned a series of myths and legends. Here's the third and final part of the real story.*

What had led TWA 260 approximately 10 miles off course and into the face of a granite pinnacle?

In October 1955 the CAB issued its determination: Capt Ivan Spong had made an intentional variation from the prescribed flight route resulting in the crash. The word “intentional” was a damning indictment and left the TWA pilot community shaken. Crank calls, angry letters, and veiled threats assaulted both the Spong and Creason families. As the invectives piled up, a veteran TWA Captain, who had years of experience both as a World War II veteran pilot and thousands of hours flying the Martin 404, stepped in to correct this injustice.

Captain Larry DeCelles, whose father had also been a pilot with an initial license signed by Orville Wright (!), believed that the real answer to the tragedy lay in one of two very different directions. In an experience several months prior, DeCelles had been flying a Martin 404 en route to Dayton and was using an instrument approach in the clouds. As he neared the airport and cleared the cloud cover, he discovered that the compass reading from one of two fluxgate compasses in the tip of the left wing was sending an erroneous message. Unfortunately, a design flaw allowed that erroneous message to present on instruments in front of the Captain's instrument panel, while the correct data from the other fluxgate compass was being delivered to an obscure instrument to the lower right on the First Officer's instruments. (A very early version of the same type of problem that the airflow indicators on the Boeing 737 MAX would create some 60 years later.)

The other alternative that DeCelles was confronted with was the challenge the flight crew of TWA 260 was facing as they were flying the “back course” of the instrument landing system (ILS) from the Albuquerque airport during the first leg of their flight to Santa Fe. Briefly, the ILS generated a radio beam that an incoming aircraft would acquire and the beam would signal on instruments in the cockpit whether an adjustment to the left or to the right of the flight path was needed to line up with the runway. The problem with flying the “back course” was that the pilot had to think in reverse: if the instrument said make a left adjustment the pilot needed to make an adjustment to the right and vice versa. Although this was part of the training all pilots underwent it was not a common procedure.

Armed with these alternative scenarios Captain DeCelles, who was now officially the TWA safety officer and was

representing the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA), along with his team met with CAB officials in 1957 and presented the findings. After reviewing the additional data, the CAB did modify the finding by deleting the word “intentional” but the judgment related to Spong was still no less harsh.

DeCelles went back to the drawing board with his team and added weather data and testimony from multiple other pilots who had flown with Spong regarding his competence. This three-year undertaking culminated with a virtually unheard of second hearing in which the CAB completely reversed both their initial and subsequent findings and determined on June 15, 1960, that the tragedy was caused by “deviation from the prescribed flight path for reasons unknown.”

We will never know those reasons—in those last tragic seconds as Spong and Creason turned their aircraft away from the mountain in a valiant but fruitless attempt to save the lives of all on board, the reasons that led them into that canyon died with them. Had they started that turn to the left back toward the airport two seconds earlier or had they been flying even 200 feet higher they would have cleared the Dragon's Tooth.

On February 19, 2005—50 years to the day—a solitary hiker carried a *descanso* to the site and mounted it on the largest piece of wreckage as the trail enters the debris field. The *descanso* provides its readers a picture of the aircraft and a brief description of the accident along with the names of the 13 passengers and the three crew members aboard TWA 260 that fateful morning. It closes with the observation “May they rest in Peace—Please respect the sanctity of this site.”



The author of this article, Hugh Prather, would like to hear from those who would like a more in-depth presentation. If there is sufficient interest, he will set up a remote lecture and discussion session. If you are interested, please email Hugh directly at [hugh.h.prather@gmail.com](mailto:hugh.h.prather@gmail.com).

## OCTOBER CALLS TO SANDIA HEIGHTS SECURITY PATROL

The following statistics are the latest provided by Sandia Heights Security since the last GRIT. **Please be reminded that Sandia Heights Services (they provide water, sewer, trash and recycle collection, and security services) is a subscription service separate from Sandia Heights Homeowners Association membership.** Also, Membership in SHHA does not include Sandia Heights Security membership. You can call Security to confirm your membership with them. If you have questions, please call **Sandia Heights Security** at 856-6347, **mobile** 263-4654.

October 2020	# of calls		# of calls
Alarms	11	Parking Problem	1
Attempted Breaking & Entering	1	Special Extra Patrol	2
Customer Assist	2	Special Request/Vacation	58
Family Dispute	1	Suspicious Activity	1
Fire/Smoke	0	Suspicious Person	4
Lost/Found Item	1	Suspicious Vehicle	3
Loud Music Party	1	Utility Co. Assist	0
Miscellaneous Call	1	Vandalism	0
Motorist Assist	1	Vehicle Burglary/Break In	0
Newspaper/Package Pickup	5	Welfare Check	0
Noise Complaint/Suspicious Noise	2	<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>95</b>

**Useful Numbers: Emergency Police/Fire/Rescue:** 9-1-1 (Be sure to let the operator know you are in Sandia Heights – an unincorporated area of Bernalillo County) **Bernalillo County Sheriff Non-Emergency:** 798-7000 **Bernalillo County Fire Department Non-Emergency:** 468-1310 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies (M-F 7AM – 4PM):** 856-6345 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies After Hours:** 888-5336 **NM Gas Co. Emergencies:** 697-3335 **PNM Outage & Emergencies:** 1-888-342-5766

### Announcements & Notices:

- **Office hours:** Monday – Friday 9 AM – 4 PM.
- **Board Meeting:** scheduled for Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 7 PM via Zoom Meeting.
- **Office Closures for Holiday(s):** The office will be closed Wednesday, December 23, 2020 through Sunday, January 3, 2021 for the Holidays. The office will reopen Monday, January 4, 2021 at 9 am.
- **Notary services, copies (20 per month) and faxes, e-mail alerts, and contractor evaluation binder** are free to members. **Also, voter registration in office.**
- **Committee meeting dates** are posted on our website calendar: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org).
- **Classified ads** can be found on the website on the top bar menu under Notices and Information/Classifieds.
- **Safety vests for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$2.50 per vest for members, \$4.00 for non-members. Cash or check only.
- **Tram passes for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$7 per ticket for members on a **first-come first-served basis**. Cash or check only. Tickets purchased must be for one date at a time per residence. To view the Tram Pass Procedures for SHHA Members go to

<http://sandiahomeowners.org/notices-and-information/notices-and-information/96-tram-passes>.

- **ACC Color Reference Guide** is available to borrow in the SHHA Office for up to 30 days. \$20 refundable deposit is required. Cash or check only.

### SHHA Member Benefits:

Check out the entire SHHA Member Benefits Program and the discounts offered to SHHA members at [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org), under the **Notices and Information** tab. Each participating merchant offers a discount to SHHA members. The following is a list of participating merchants:

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Barnett Aldon Iron Works
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Remax Select – Pete Veres
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# THANK YOU!

Our 6th Annual Food Drive was our biggest success to date! With your help, we collected 2,400 pounds of food for the Roadrunner Food Bank of NM plus 4 boxes of food for PACA & NMAF.

*We always have such a wonderful time visiting with our Sandia Heights Neighbors and it was so nice seeing all of you (even at a distance with masks on). Thank you for your generosity. Roadrunner is now feeding twice as many families as they were this time last year so your donations were gratefully received. We look forward to seeing you all again at our Events in 2021.*

## Happy Holidays!



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## HOW WILL THE 2020 ELECTION AFFECT REAL ESTATE IN ALBUQUERQUE AND IN THE NATION?

Whether we're ready for it or not, the 2020 presidential election is happening.

As if this year hasn't brought enough uncertainty, an election could be causing people to question their buying and selling plans...again. Rocky political environments can create instability in the stock market, causing consumer confidence to drop. But the real estate market isn't rocky...it's rock solid! And delaying plans could mean you are missing out on once-in-a-lifetime affordability.

### The Real Estate Market Might Slow Down, But Not for Long

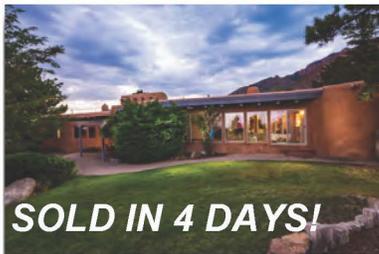
Historically speaking, home sales typically slow down in the fall following the spring and summer rush. BTIG, a research and analysis company, looked at new home sales from 1963-2019 and noted an average decline of -9.8% in November compared to October. In that same report, they noticed that this decline becomes slightly more exaggerated in presidential election years, dropping as much as -15% from October to November.

So, why the decline? Buyers and Sellers are just becoming more cautious during that time. This caution is temporary, and ultimately results in deferred sales, as the economy, jobs, interest rates and consumer confidence all have far more meaningful roles in the home purchase decision than a Presidential election result in the months that follow. Considering the current state of real estate across the country, we can anticipate that while a slow down may occur, its effects will only be temporary. Home sales have remained strong throughout the last couple of winters, and the competitive nature of today's current market suggests this year should be no different.

### The First Year After an Election is the Best for Real Estate

While presidential election years may cause consumer weariness, another study looked at how the housing market performs after too. Meyers Research and Zonda, a leading real estate research firm, found data that the year following an election can be the best of the presidential term for home sales.

While this is definitely not your typical election year (understatement of the century), experts believe that once the election is over, we could see the real estate market perform even better in the months following. I'll keep you informed.



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**FOR A FREE REAL ESTATE REVIEW, CALL OR EMAIL GREG**

## Some Notes on Reflective Surfaces

By Bob Bower, ACC Chairman  
& David Crossley, ACC Member

While most roof surfaces within Sandia Heights are flat, some residences have all or portions of the roof sloped at various pitch angles. The ACC occasionally receives applications where a resident wants to install solar collectors or metal roof materials on these sloped surfaces. Either of these on a sloped roof have the capability to reflect nuisance levels of sunlight onto nearby properties.

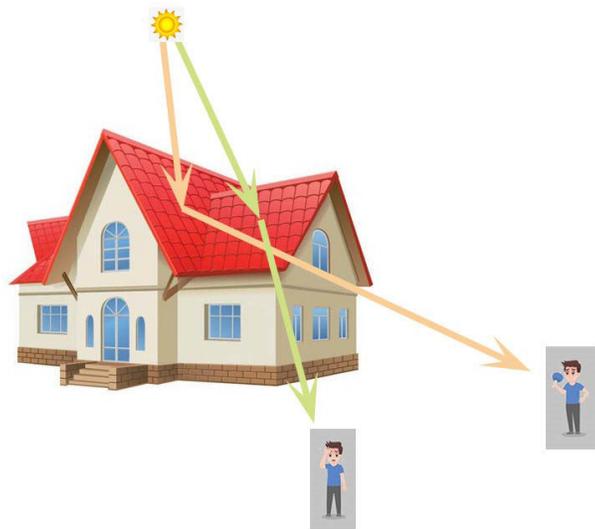
Let's start with a discussion of roof-mounted solar collectors. These collectors consist of a wide range of devices designed to capture and convert solar radiation into heated gasses or liquids, or to produce electrical power. It is rare that the ACC receives an application for solar collectors other than those used for production of electrical energy—the photovoltaic or “PV” systems. All types of solar collectors are mounted to the roof, whether flat or sloped, using some sort of supporting framework. The ACC *Design Guideline for Solar Collectors* is available to all residents who want to install solar collectors. The *Guideline* specifically mentions that solar collectors should be mounted so as to not produce objectionable light reflections onto neighboring properties at any time during the year. In its approval letters for installation of solar collectors, the ACC includes a disclaimer that places the responsibility on the resident and the contractor for resolving any glare issues stemming from complaints by nearby property owners.

The use of metal materials on sloped roof surfaces can have a glare effect similar to that of solar collectors. In the ACC *Design Guideline for Roofing*, there are discussions of roof colors and surface finishes and how these features affect reflectivity. Gloss is a measure of the degree to which a surface functions as a mirror. A high-gloss finish has the potential to reflect nuisance levels of light onto nearby properties. The *Guideline* indicates that flat and “eggshell” finishes, or “low-sheen” finishes have low gloss characteristics and, as such, are acceptable for use. The ACC has learned that even though metal roofing materials are rated as “low reflectivity,” the tests that manufacturers use are not what are needed to predict where reflected light will appear. The reflectivity is measured “straight on” to the surface and does not account for the fact that the material will have a contour that produces reflections in many directions at once, as well as from the roof angles themselves. Bottom line: any smooth surface acts as a good mirror at

any angle. Again, as with the solar collectors, the ACC, in its approval letters for metal roof installations, will place the onus on the resident and contractor to resolve glare issues should they arise from the installation of the roof material.

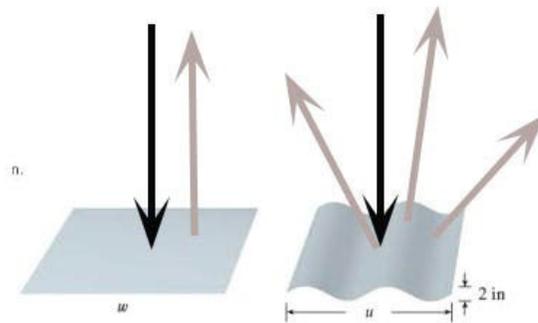
### **Why are people worried about my roof choice?**

The material and finish of the roof affects how it reflects sunlight. A badly chosen roof can produce annoying beams in unexpected directions. Nearby neighbors, or even observers at a long distance may be subjected to unacceptable glare.



### **But the material is rated as low reflectivity!**

The tests that manufacturers use is not what you need to predict where beams will show up. The reflectivity is measured “straight on” to the surface. But the roof material will have a contour that produces reflections in many directions at once, as well as the roof angles themselves.



Also, surprisingly, the surface color is not very important to the reflections, only the surface gloss. Any very smooth surface acts as a good mirror at low angles. (Rather like a flat stone skipping off water.)

**So, it is to everyone's benefit that the permitted choices of roof materials be carefully monitored**

# ACC Activity Log

Summary of **Approved Projects** activity since the last GRIT:

23 Cedar Hill Road – Replace Balcony
29 Rock Ridge Drive – Replace Furnace and Swamp Coolers with Refrigerated Air Units
29 Rock Ridge Drive – Replace Garage Door, Installation of Gutter and Rain Barrels, and Replace Windows
71 Pinon Hill Place – Canale and Stucco Repair
109 Whitetail Drive – Remove Asphalt Driveway, Coyote Fence, Courtyard Wall, Gate, And Ramada Installations, and Landscaping
165 Juniper Hill Road – Silicone Coat Metal Roof
177 Big Horn Ridge Drive – Replace Concrete Driveway and Walkway
190 Big Horn Ridge Drive – Replace Wood and Wrought Iron Fencing with Retaining Wall
311 Big Horn Ridge Drive – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panel Installation
412 Live Oak Loop – Parapet and Stucco Repair
425 Live Oak Loop – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panel Installation
430 Live Oak Lane – Re-roof Pitched Roof and Drip Edge Installation
455 Live Oak Road – Storage Unit Installation
539 Black Bear Road – Re-stucco House and Walls
637 Cougar Loop – New Construction
646 Cougar Loop – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panel Installation
649 Cougar Loop – Repaint House Trim and Add Semi-Circle Driveway to Existing Driveway
673 Bluebird Lane – Natural Gas Heater Installation
720-21 Tramway Lane – Cement Front Courtyard Area
804 Tramway Lane – Replace Wooden Fence
806 Tramway Lane - Reroof
905 Tramway Lane – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panel Installation
1002 Tramway Lane – Landscaping
1017 Tramway Lane – Stucco Security Mailbox
1018 Tramway Lane – Stucco Security Mailbox

1041 Red Oaks Loop – Installation of a Tesla Battery for Backup Power to the House
1134 Marigold Drive – Repave Existing Driveway with Asphalt
1134 Marigold Drive – Fence Replacement
1169 Laurel Loop – Re-stucco Backyard Wall
1169 Laurel Loop – Replace Concrete Driveway
1429 San Rafael Avenue – Replace Gates
1553 Eagle Ridge Lane – Replace AC/Heat Pump
1606 Quailwood Drive – Replace Garage Door
1806 Tramway Terrace Loop – Replace Windows
1862 Tramway Terrace Loop – Replace Windows
1903 Quail Run Road – Repave Asphalt Driveway
1903 Quail Run Road – Replace Windows
1919 Quail Run Drive – Re-roof
1922 Quail Run Drive – Landscaping
2002 Quail Run Drive – Replace Heating/Cooling Combo Unit
2002 Quail Run Drive – Replace Windows and Sliding Doors
2301 Calle de Rafael – Sidewalk Installation
2722 Tramway Circle – Re-roof, Replace Skylights, and Re-stucco Parapets
2751 Cliffrose Drive – Gate Installation
2828 Tramway Circle – Re-stucco, Paint Trim and Garage Door
2867 Tramway Circle – Fence Replacement
2892 Tramway Circle – Patch Stucco and Color Coat
2898 Tramway Place – Gravel Installation

Visit the website: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org) to read about all projects currently under ACC management.

**“This Holiday Season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us.”**





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**Sandia Heights MARKET UPDATE PAST YEAR 11/2019 to 11/2020**

8 Larger homes For Sale Over 2400 sf on Larger Lots Avg price/sf \$199.86  
15 Pending Average Asking Price/sf. \$185.50 | 98 Homes Closed past year to date Average Sold Price/sf \$190.52

Smaller homes on smaller lots : 2 for sale Average asking Price/sf \$196.17  
5 pending Average Asking Price \$188.75 price/sf | 66 closed past year to date Average Sold Price /sf \$182.65

Note Price is always based on condition, updates, location and views

Current Interest rates hovering around 2.875% for 30 year conventional & 2.625% 30 year VA!



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54 Rock Ridge Court NE



617 Cedar Hill Road NE



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**Sandia Heights Homeowners Association**  
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The SHHA office will be closed Wednesday, December 23, 2020, through Sunday, January 3, 2021, for the Holidays. The office will reopen Monday, January 4 at 9 AM.

