

2011 Code Annual Report

George Obren, Director

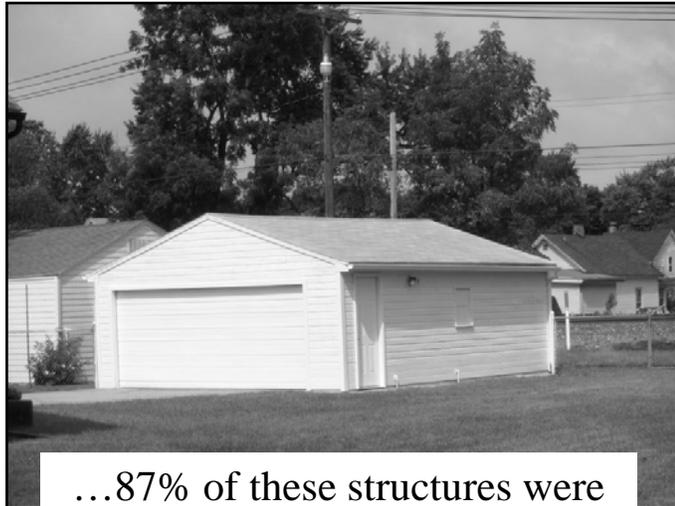
Mishawaka has always been known for having very clean and safe neighborhoods. It is Code Enforcement's responsibility to make sure properties are satisfactorily maintained throughout the city. Code officers accomplish this by patrolling their assigned areas daily and responding to reported code issues in a timely manner.

Code officers handled 5,081 cases in 2011. It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of those cases were self-initiated through routine inspections. Code officers always take a common sense approach when dealing with residents and are always mindful of any financial or physical issues that they may have. The staff in Code continues to enjoy a great relationship with the citizens of Mishawaka.

...a great relationship with the citizens of Mishawaka

Top 100 Program

The Top 100 program has played a huge roll in the great overall appearance of Mishawaka. Code is now in the sixth year of the Top 100 Program where during the winter months code officers identify the top 100 structures they feel need the most attention in the coming year. In 2011, 87% of these structures were brought into compliance, which is fantastic!



Our Top 100 list for 2012 is now being compiled and in the coming spring we will begin contacting owners of these properties to point the issues out to them and to establish reasonable completion dates for the repairs to be done. Our Top 100 Program is even more significant when it is realized that in a six year period code officers have addressed 600 of the worse structures in Mishawaka. The vast majority of these structures have been brought back into compliance.

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Substandard Structure Cases

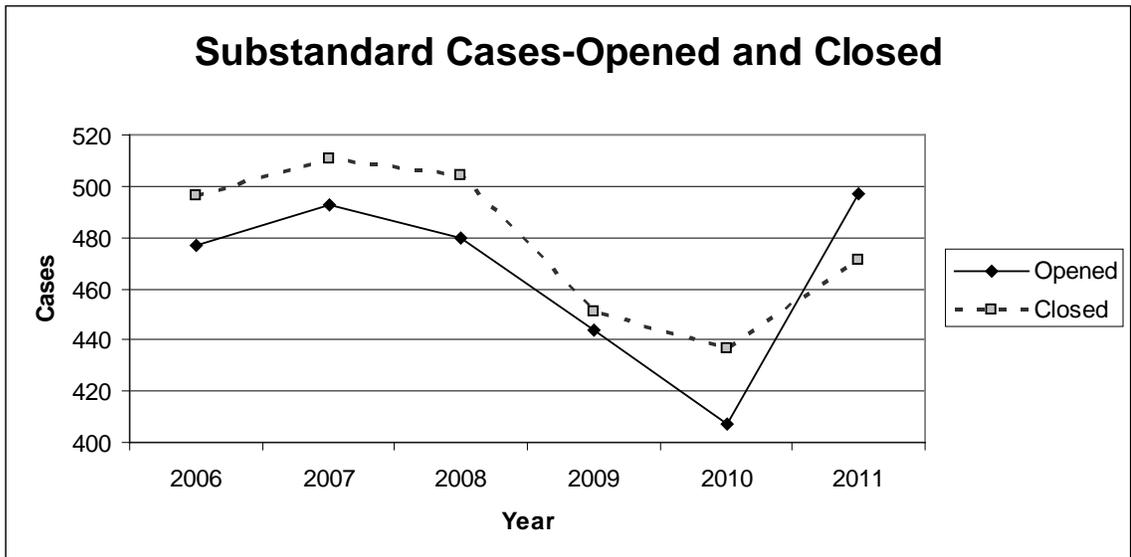
Substandard structures still demand a lot of attention from the code enforcement department. Code addressed 497 such cases in 2011. This includes our Top 100 previously mentioned. Many property owners have done a great job as they promptly began working on substandard issues code officers pointed out to them. Code has actually closed 471 substandard cases in 2011. Some of those cases were from previous years.

Code took a total of nine properties and their respective owners before our hearing officer in 2011. These cases were substandard structures where the owners simply refused to cooperate with us. Many of these cases have been resolved before or shortly after the initial hearing. These hearings are extremely valuable in bringing the most difficult cases to resolution.

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Public Nuisance Cases

Code officers handled a total of 4,584 public nuisance cases in 2011. Those violations include but are not limited to tall grass, snow removal, abandoned autos, animal issues, noise complaints, and trash. We managed to successfully close 97% of those cases.



From May to October, tall grass cases remain the biggest code issue in our neighborhoods and it takes a large amount of our time to keep them in check. These types of cases are usually involve vacant properties. In many cases, properties that have been foreclosed on are being maintained by local property maintenance groups hired by the lending institution. Hopefully, they place the property on a routine mowing schedule during the growing season so we don't have to.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

Code continues to assist the Department of Community Development by providing them with locations of vacant properties complete with owner information within the targeted Neighborhood Stabilization Program areas. This information has proved to be extremely valuable to the Department of Community Development as they progress with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Many vacant and blighted structures have been purchased and demolished with new single family dwellings taking their place. The overall appearance of some of our older neighborhoods has greatly improved. Code hopes that the newly constructed and re-modeled houses will continue to serve as an impetus for other homeowners to improve their properties and take even greater pride in their neighborhood.



Car parts were violating city ordinance



Graffiti on this concrete fence/sound barrier was removed

Stewardship

A total of \$14,058.95 was spent in 2011 for board-ups and clean-ups. Most of this was for mowing by our contractor. The department has recouped a total of \$840.00 for 2011 in weed, trash, and lien monies.



Property was cited for loose trash.

Weights & Measures

Roger Shields is the City's Weights & Measures inspector and he inspects all kinds of measuring devices such as computing scales, prescription scales, taxi meters, package scales, and gas pumps. The Weights & Measures Department has obtained a new fuel calibration unit to make certifying gas pumps much safer and efficient. Roger has inspected over 500 devices in 2011.



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Teamwork

The Code Enforcement office continues to work very closely with other city departments on many neighborhood issues. This includes Planning where we assist on some zoning and signage issues, Community Development (vacant houses), Fire Department (burned structure initiative), and with the Police Department in remedying noise complaints, animal issues, parking, and abandoned autos.

Code also attends monthly meetings held by members of the common council and various neighborhood groups.

