

The Profile

VOLUME XXXI NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2006

For more than eight long years, Plainfield Township has been working with its North Kent Sewer Authority partners (City of Rockford and Alpine, Cannon and Courtland Townships) to plan for the future of the North Kent Sewer system. We worked together to repair, rehabilitate, and replace large common trunk lines and pumping stations at a cost of about \$15 Million. Since 1999, we have been responding to major changes in the way the City of Grand Rapids approves and charges us for sewer extensions and sewer treatment.

In 1999, Grand Rapids presented these changes to the NKSA communities, and we were asked to cancel the “old” contract signed in 1968 and exchange it for a “new” agreement, nine years before the old contract was to expire. Unlike almost all of the other communities that send sewage to Grand Rapids for treatment, the NKSA communities had the choice of building their own waste water treatment plant, having concluded that

New Clean Water Plant for North Kent: It's For Real!



the cost of both options were about the same. **The very large increase in the cost of doing business with Grand Rapids made it possible (and feasible) for the NKSA communities to consider the option of building a Clean Water Plant.**

I use the term “Clean Water Plant” instead of “waste water treatment plant” to emphasize the fact that the level of treatment to be achieved from the new NKSA facility will be extremely better than the treatment at the Grand Rapids facility. Technological improvements have reached the point where newer plants and improvements to older plants are able to achieve much better performance and hardly any negative impact on the waters to which Clean Water Plant effluent will be discharged. Our need to assure a higher level of treatment than that provided by the GR plant was clear to us from the very beginning of our six-year sojourn through this critical period in our his-

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Clean Water Plant *from page 1*

tory. The “membrane bio-reactor” (MBR) process that the NKSA will be using is an adaptation of a micro-filtering process that is used in drinking water treatment plants. The results will be spectacular, and I personally plan to drink the final, treated end product!

Following approval by the Alpine Township Board of Trustees in October of 2005 and approval of floodplain and wetlands permits by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality soon after, the site preparation construction project began on the 38-acre Clean Water Plant site between Coit Avenue and the Grand River. Subsequently, the NKSA selected Triangle Construction Company to be our Construction Manager-Partner in building this project. The NKSA has already contracted for the purchase of the membranes and equipment. What remains is the final design and bidding, which should occur later this summer. As lengthy and difficult as the past six years have been, I find it gratifying that “we” (50 square miles, 50,000 people, 33 elected officials, and about a dozen “staff” and professional consultants) have actually seen this project through to commencement of construction.

I am proud and satisfied of my role in this effort, and I give great credit to the Plainfield Township Board for its consistent support and encouragement. NKSA Chairman, Michael Young, and NKSA Board Members, Engineers Mark Prein and Tom Newhof, Attorney Jim Scales, financial consultants, and supportive

citizens are all responsible for making this happen. Nothing less than a fully operational Clean Water Plant with well-qualified operators running it will cause me to consider this the success story that we envisioned.

On a less dramatic and less pleasant note, let me remind everyone that this is going to cost a significant amount of money – much more than we have been experiencing under the existing contract with Grand Rapids. The “old” contract and the “old” basis on which we did business with GR are going away – forever. This was not our choice or our desire. We felt it fair and equitable, but it was a contract that had an expiration date on it, and the other party was not willing to renew it without major, expensive, and unacceptable consequences. We tried very hard to convince the City to change it enough to make it acceptable, but they would not. Facing this, we chose to take the money we would have paid to Grand Rapids and to use it to develop and maintain our own, better system. We did what we concluded was in the best interest of the NKSA communities by going our own way. Now we look to the future and the challenges ahead. One of those challenges is to develop and maintain the appropriate funding for the NKSA sewer system. There will be sewer rate increases. We have always known that. We knew it eight years ago. The only question was: “To whom do we pay the money – Grand Rapids or ourselves.” That has finally been decided. Stay tuned.

Robert C. Homan
Township Manager

SOUTH ELEVATION



A columbarium has been installed at Plainfield Cemetery, which is located at the intersection of Packer Drive and Rogue River Road. A columbarium is a structure with many small compartments called niches, in which urns, holding the ashes of an individual, are placed. Our columbarium will hold two urns in each niche, depending on the size of the urns. There

are twelve niches in our first columbarium. Additional columbariums will be added if the

Columbarium Installed at Plainfield Cemetery



sales indicate a need for additional space. Below is a list of rates and charges for the columbarium. If you have any questions regarding the purchase of niches, please contact the Clerk's Office at 364-8466, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Please stop by the south end of the Plainfield Cemetery to look at the new addition.

Columbarium Niche Fees

Cremation Niches - $11\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$

Resident	\$825.00
Non-Resident	\$1,000.00

Columbarium Opening & Closing Fee

For Each Urn - Two (2) Urn Maximum Per Niche

Weekday	\$100.00 - plus \$100.00 per hour after 3:30 PM
Weekend	\$250.00 - plus \$100.00 per hour after 3:30 PM

Columbarium Inscription Fees

"Scooped Letter" - Done By Patten Monument

First Four (4) Characters	\$140.00
Additional Characters	\$8.00 each



The upcoming season on the White Pine Trail promises to be exciting with possibilities for improvement of the trail and further expansion of the pavement. Funding for pavement and the various construction details seem to take much longer than expected, however The Friends of the White Pine Trail have been awarded the remainder of the matching funds to complete the pavement from Russell Road to Sand Lake. This award has come through the Friends' partnership with the West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition a rapidly emerging and expanding organization of volunteer trail groups and governmental entities working to connect and expand recreational trails in a large area of West/Central Michigan. The Friends are starting to work with the DNR and local communities on a timeline to complete the project, possibly before the end of the current season.

In addition, The White Pine Trail was awarded 4

Additional Paving Planned

a 2.24 million dollar grant through the Federal Transportation Bill passed in the summer of 2005, which is designated for paving north of Kent County. These funds become available in increments, with approximately 60% being available for use this coming fall. The Funds also require a 20% match before they can be applied and the Friends' are

working with the Trail & Greenway Coalition and local communities and other funding sources to secure this match. Donations are always welcome from businesses, individuals, corporations and foundations for this project and can be sent in care of The Friends of The White Pine Trail at the address below.

Trail maintenance this season will again be carried out by local communities in cooperation with The Friends under their "Adopt a Trail Agreement" with the DNR. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

Meeting Schedule for Friends of the White Pine Trail

(all meetings at 7pm and open to public):

February 8th Howard City Village Offices - downtown Howard City
March 8th Cedar Springs Historical Museum 17 Mile & Northland Dr. Cedar Springs
April 14th Algoma Township Hall, 10531 Algoma Rd. near 13 Mile Rd.
May 18th Plainfield Township Hall, 6161 Belmont Rd.

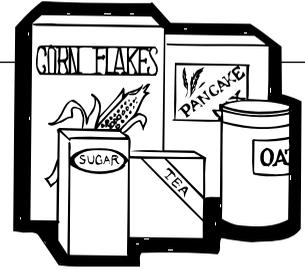
Membership in the Friends is available for \$5 per year and entitles the individual or family to periodic newsletters and e-mail notifications.

Friends information line at 616-866-8464 *** Website: www.whitepinetrail.com

Address: Friends of the White Pine Trail, PO Box 159, Belmont, MI 49306-0159

Members and volunteers are always welcome!

Commodity Distribution



Commodities will be distributed to qualified low-income persons on these dates:

- March 2, 2006
- June 1, 2006
- September 7, 2006
- December 7, 2006

To qualify you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road. Distribution is at 6156 Belmont Avenue, directly across from the Township Offices. Distribution hours are from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm.

If you are a new family wishing to qualify, call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to the distribution site on the above dates. Bring your Social Security card for each member of your family along with income statements.



Greetings from the Supervisor

My article for this issue of the PROFILE is about an area of great concern that the warm weather of spring and summer brings to our community:

skateboards and rollerblades. During the early, unseasonably mild weather we have been experiencing, the skateboarders and rollerbladers have been out, using the private sidewalks and parking lots of businesses without permission. During the 2005 season and already this year, I have received complaints from business and building owners about the invasion of young people on boards and blades, trespassing on private property and causing damage. Just like any other form of activity, a few young people give the boarding and blading people a bad

name because of their total disrespect for other people's private property. When these young people are caught on the property and asked to leave, they leave only to return when the buildings are closed to do their damage, secretly. As a result, some businesses are going to be installing video cameras to monitor the "after hours" activity around their buildings and then they will turn the video evidence of any property damage over to the authorities for the appropriate action. Business and property owners are getting real tired of the young boarders and bladers using private property after business hours. These business and property owners have large investments in our township and they have a right to protect their asset holdings.

If you have young skateboarders or rollerbladers in your family, you should caution them that private business property does not become a public playground after business hours.

George K. Meek

In previous PROFILES, we have covered the Planning, Building, Fire, and Water Departments. There are seven township departments to go. In this article, I will introduce and overview what Plainfield Township's Assessing Department is all about. The "what" and the "how" of assessing are complicated. The "who" is not.

Plainfield Township is blessed with probably the most competent and productive group of people ever to do assessing in this community, although we have certainly employed good people who made good efforts in the past. What we have now is a very experienced team of five sharp women who know what they're doing. Keeping up with the many changes and (sometimes bizarre) ideas coming down from Lansing has been a challenge to assessors throughout the state. Keeping up with growth, new software, more demands, more requirements, and increasing expectations of the banking, real estate, and development sectors is a never-ending struggle. These are challenges that our assessing staff continues to address competently and diligently. Who are these behind the scenes specialists?

Judy LaFave is our Director of Assessing, with 21 years of experience in Plainfield Township. Teresa Zimmerman, Deputy Director, has been with us since 1997. Jennifer Genter, Residential Appraiser since 2003, began as Assessing Clerk in 2000 and has been making good progress since her promotion. Lynne Carr is our Assessing Clerk, with lots of work and plenty of people contact in her daily routine, has been with us for 2 + years. Last, but importantly,

we have the services of Stacy Hollis, part time intern-assistant for almost 2 years.

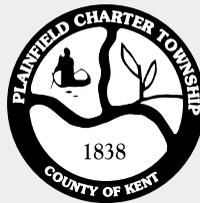
These women are helpful, friendly, knowledgeable, and quietly competent. The work they do is all about assuring that the property owners of Plainfield Township are fairly, equitably, and uniformly treated for property valuation purposes. This state-required function of local government, by its very nature, does not easily

generate warmth and good feelings. Since our township is required to do this work, we hire and develop the best people we can get. This particular type of work is not for everyone, but these five women have shown that they can do the job.

Their task involves a lot of explaining, some apologizing for inaccurate information that may not be their fault, and patience – lots of patience. Not everyone comes gliding cheerfully down the hallway to engage our assessing staff. Not everyone leaves satisfied. Yet I've

seen these ladies exercise extremely skillful public relations and be civil and polite in the face of some really unpleasant clientele. Fortunately, these encounters are not frequent – but it happens. Generally, customers quickly sense our commitment to service and our efforts to assist and explain. Like everyone else, our assessing staff likes to be appreciated and treated nicely. Mutual respect and goodwill usually produce good results.

The "who" of assessing is closely related to the "how." The cold, hard requirements of assessing can be learned and accomplished relatively



The Assessing Department

**(4th In a Series of Articles
Featuring
Plainfield Township
Services)**

easily in a vacuum. If our staff were simply working in a back room with their documents, their drawings, their files and their computers, then maintaining records of over 12,000 parcels and hundreds of “personal property” accounts would be a piece of cake — probably even boring. But they don’t work in isolation. They work with people. They work with you and your agents. They work to serve you.

Property tax revenue funds local government services. I haven’t met many people who enjoy paying their property taxes, and it is quite unusual for taxpayers to express their appreciation of the whole process. Assessors do not collect taxes. Their job is to make sure that the basis for the taxes we pay is solid, correct, uniform, and properly administered up to the point where the Township Treasurer prints and mails our tax bills. If it is not fair, not right, or not understood, people do not have confidence, and they cannot be satisfied.

Our assessing staff must do what they can to overcome all of this and make us feel that rich and poor, special and common, informed and uninformed are treated the same in assembling the basis for the taxes they pay.

Our people must understand what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how to explain it to people who haven’t a clue. Probably their greatest challenge is how they handle situations when they have done their best to explain it, perhaps to sympathize with a customer’s predicaments, and then having to accept less-than-gratifying outcomes to those conversations.

What is your property worth? What is taxable value, state equalized value, and true cash value? What is a Principle Residence Exemption affidavit (previously called a Homestead

Exemption)? What difference does having one make on your tax bill? Why is it important that you notify the Assessing Department of property ownership and mailing address changes? Why doesn’t the purchase price of the property you just acquired automatically become its true cash value? These are all distinct, meaningful, and important elements in assessing. If you care, if you want to know, then you must get educated about it. There are not many places that you can get clear and correct answers to these questions. You can research this arcane terminology and what it means to you by accessing the information on the Internet or in the library. Search www.Michigan.gov and go to “Tax Commission” for an explanation. Check our website at www.plainfieldchartertp.org.

If you don’t understand property taxation, you cannot effectively complain about it or make improvements on it. Please remember that, although we did not design this system, it is our responsibility to understand and administer it. We can also get you the answers to your questions about assessing. Give us a call. Come in and see us.

*Robert C. Homan
Township Manager*

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*Standing: Lynne Carr and Stacy Hollis
Seated: Teresa Zimmerman, Judy LaFave, and Jennifer Genter*

KDL

Kent District Library NEWS

Let it Snow Reading Club for Adults. You have until March 31 to play KDL Bingo and win! Read books in various categories on your bingo card; one bingo wins a prize; two bingos gets your name in weekly drawings for \$20 gift certificates. Register at any KDL Branch Library.

2006 One Book, One County. Have you heard about the book everyone is reading together: *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult? If you would like to join a lively discussion of this thought-provoking title, you are welcome to join us at the Plainfield Library on Thursday, March 9th at 1pm. The author herself will appear at Fountain Street Church on Tuesday, March 21st at 7pm. Parking and admission are free. Books are available at the library.

One Book, One County for Kids. This year kids have their own "everybody reads" selection: *Donuthead* by Michigan author Sue Stauffacher. Meet the author on Wednesday, March 15 at 6:30 pm at Celebration Cinema North. On March 21 at 6 pm, join our discussion of the book over pizza at the Plainfield Library. KDL has many copies available for 9-12 year olds to check out.

Watch for these upcoming special programs, and please join us! You can now register online for programs listed on the Calendar of Events by clicking on the individual program. A registration form will be displayed if the program is open. If you supply your email address, you will be sent an email reminder of the program. Stop in or call the library for specific times, or check the events calendar on the KDL Homepage (www.kdl.org).

For Young Children and Families

Spring Babytime, Laptime and Storytime programs begin the week of April 3.

Babytime – One-on-one rhymes for babies and their parents.

- Plainfield Branch – Mondays, 10:30 am
- Comstock Park Branch – Thursdays, 1:00 pm

Laptime – Stories, music and rhymes for babies, toddlers and their parents.

- Plainfield Branch – Thursdays, 9:45 am and 10:45 am
- Comstock Park Branch – Mondays, 10:30 am

Storytime – Stories and crafts for ages 3-6 years.

- Plainfield Branch – Thursdays, 9:45 am and 10:45 am
- Comstock Park Branch – Mondays, 10:30 am

Pajama Storytime – Stories and fun for the whole family

- Plainfield Branch – Thursday March 16, April 20 and May 18, 6:30 pm

Other programs for children include

Hawaiian Luau – Join us for Hawaiian crafts, games and even some hula dancing to brighten up the wintry days. Ages 6 and under.

- Comstock Park Branch – Mon., February 27, 10:30 am
- Plainfield Branch – Thurs., March 9, 10:30 am

Under Construction – Truck and bulldozer fanatics, don't miss our fun construction-themed program. Ages 6 and under.

- Plainfield Branch – Thurs., March 30, 10:30 am
- Comstock Park Branch – Mon., May 1, 10:30 am

Garden Crafts – Make decorative plant markers, and start some plants to take home. Let's

PLAINFIELD BRANCH HOURS

2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930

Mon. through Thurs. 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(during the school year only)

COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH HOURS

3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860

Monday 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Saturday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

All KDL branches will be closed on Presidents' Day, Monday, Feb. 20, for a staff inservice.

welcome gardening and spring! For the whole family.

- Plainfield Branch – Sat., April 1, 10:30 am
- Comstock Park Branch – Mon., April 3, 3 pm

Kidz Konstruct! – Are you feeling creative? Become part of an assembly line whose task will be to erect a construction wonder. Ages 6 & up.

- Plainfield Branch – Sat., April 8, 10:30 am

Looking far ahead, we are gearing up for the 2006 children's Summer Reading Club beginning June 12. With a theme of Paws, Claws, Scales, and Tails, we're happily planning all kinds of great animal-themed programs for this coming summer.

For Adults:

Both library branches warmly welcome you to join our monthly "no-pressure" Thursday book discussion groups, where you can relax and talk about books with other avid readers. The Plainfield Branch also offers basic computer and Internet classes. Call your branch for more information.

Other upcoming adult programs include:

- Only at the Plainfield Branch
 - "40 Shades of Green: Plants and Gardens of Ireland," March 15
 - "Introduction to Herb Gardening," April 3
- At both Branches
 - "Buckets, Boxes and Boots"
 - Comstock Park Branch – Tuesday, April 4 at 6:30 pm
 - Plainfield Branch – Monday, May 15

The Friends of the Plainfield Library also sponsor programs throughout the year.

On Tuesday, March 21st at 12:30 pm, popular local personality and environmentalist Mary Jane Dockeray will present "Nature's Spy" – a program about nature and "animal critters." \$4.50 for lunch or \$1.00 for coffee; Registration is required.

On Tuesday, May 9th at 1:00 p.m., Eleanor Vollwieler, reading specialist and bibliophile, will present a review of the book: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. Light refreshments will be provided; registration is required.

The Friends of the Plainfield Library [incorporated as 501 (c)3 organization] is an active association of library volunteers who helps raise funds for the library and also sponsors programs for the community. Friends are offering a "Spectacular Book Sale" Friday, March 3rd to Monday, March 6th. Great books at great prices are nicely organized into categories. The Friends and the Kent District Library Alliance of Friends is sponsoring an **Antique Book Sale** on Saturday, April 22nd. There will be hundreds of books, some dating back to the 1800's.

Through the Friends' many fundraising activities, over \$30,000 for the library has been raised to incorporate Kent District Library's major investment in RFID technology for new Express Check-Out stations along with new furnishings for customer service and Express Pick-Up. Please support the Friends through your memberships, contributions and donations.

Plainfield Township Offers Passport Photos



In addition to being a Passport Acceptance Agency, Plainfield Charter Township now takes passport photos. The cost is \$8.00 for two photos, which meet the exact specifications for the size

and quality required by the US Department of State.

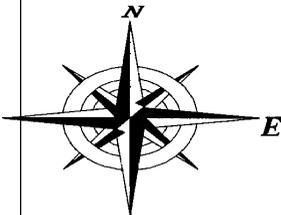
Passports applications are accepted Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Application forms are available at the Township offices or can be downloaded from the Internet at www.plainfieldchartertp.org or www.travel.state.gov. At the time of application, you must submit a certified birth certifi-

cate with a raised seal, issued from the state or county where you were born, photo identification such as a state issued drivers license or ID card, and two personal checks or money orders. Adult passports cost \$67.00, plus an execution fee of \$30.00, for a total cost of \$97.00. Passports for children 15 years and younger, cost \$52.00, plus an execution fee of \$30.00, for a total cost of \$82.00. All passport fees are set by the US Department of State and are the same no matter where you apply for a passport. Each applicant must come to the office and be seen in person, regardless of age. There are no exceptions!

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, requires that by January 01, 2008, all travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico and Canada have a passport or other secure, accepted documents to enter or re-enter the United States. If you have any questions, please call the Clerk's Office at 364-8466, or visit the websites listed above.

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The North East Business Association would like to announce their upcoming monthly luncheons. Our luncheons take place on the third Wednesday of every month from 11:45 am - 1:00 pm at the Boulder Creek Golf Club at 5750 Brewer NE, Belmont. Each month we have a speaker with important issues facing all of us personally and professionally. The cost for the luncheon is \$12.00, but your first visit is on us. For reservations and questions, please contact Lynette at 451-2494.



- February 15, 2006 – Larry Goodlander, CPA - Tax Updates
- March 15, 2006 – NEBA Business Spotlight - "Member Open Forum"
- April 19, 2006 – Mark Thomas, Northview High School Principal
- May 17, 2006 – Laura Braunholer, CPR Certifier
- June 1, 2006 – Annual NEBA Golf Outing at Boulder Creek

The NEBA raises money to award scholarships annually to qualifying graduating seniors at Northview High School. So far we have given away over \$10,000.00. Our annual golf outing is scheduled for June 1, 2006, at Boulder Creek Golf Club with the proceeds benefiting our scholarship fund.



Free Tree Program 2006

In an effort to encourage reforestation of the land within Plainfield Charter Township's boundaries, two evergreen trees will be given to the first 400 residents who call to place an order the morning of April 18, 2006. Trees MUST be pre-ordered by calling 364-8466, beginning at 9:00 AM on April 18, 2006, until all trees are reserved, which usually takes about one hour!!! YOU MUST BE A PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP RESIDENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PROGRAM. NO FAX ORDERS OR WALK-INS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

The random use of eight telephone lines has been a fair way for everyone to have a chance to get trees. Only ONE tree order per address, per call will be accepted. The trees will be available for pickup on Friday, April 21st between 11

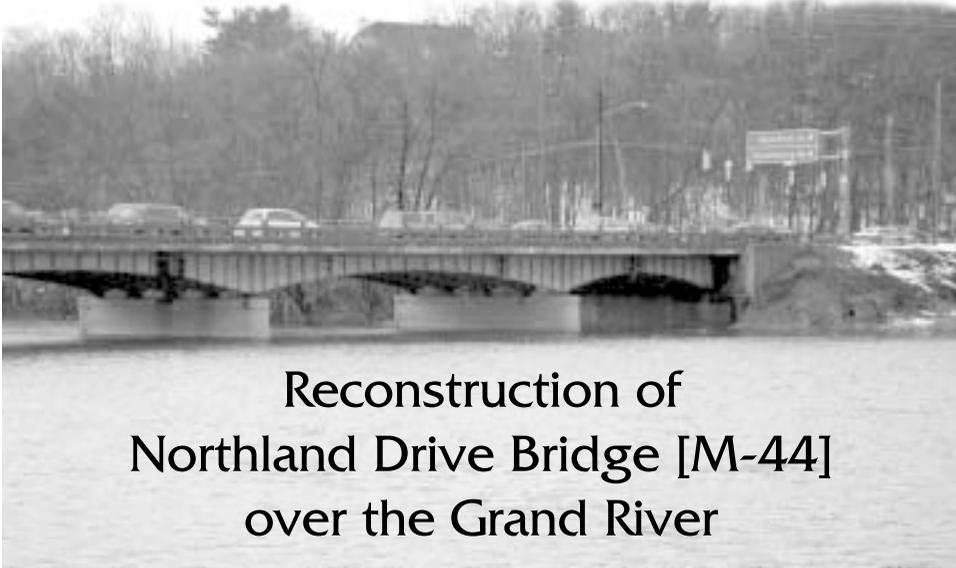
12:00 PM and 4:00 PM ONLY, at the Township offices at 6161 Belmont Avenue NE. Recipients will be given two trees in one-gallon pots, 12 to 18 inches tall with 6 years of growth. Please enter the township office driveway and follow the directions of the employees assisting with traffic flow. Trees that are not picked up will be used in Township projects.

The Officers and Trustees of the Township encourage interested residents to participate in this program, now in its 17th year. However, due to budget cuts, the number of trees distributed will be reduced. If you received

trees or bushes in the past, please consider waiting for another year when, hopefully, the Township is able to purchase more trees for distribution.

*Susan L. Morrow, MMC
Plainfield Charter Township Clerk*





Reconstruction of Northland Drive Bridge [M-44] over the Grand River

In early May 2006, the Michigan Department of Transportation is going to start construction work on the Northland Drive (East Beltline) bridge over the Grand River, located just south of the intersection at Northland Drive and West River Drive/Cannonsburg Road.

Work on the structure includes a deep concrete overlay to resurface the bridge deck, structural steel repairs to the existing beams and substructure repairs to the existing concrete columns and pier caps. Additionally, the structure is going to be widened for the addition of a seven foot wide pedestrian walkway, along the west side of the facility and will be separated from traffic by an aesthetic bridge railing.

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, the construction for this project will be completed in two stages.

Stage 1: Starting in early May 2006 through the end of June 2006, Stage 1 will have one lane of traffic maintained in each direction on the west half of the existing structure.

Stage 2: Stage 2 will begin in early July 2006 and be completed in early October 2006, when traffic will be switched to the east half of the newly reconstructed bridge and will have one lane of traffic maintained in each direction.

Access to the local businesses will be maintained at all times. MDOT will be holding an informational meeting for the public tentatively scheduled for mid-March. There will be a link on MDOT's website www.Michigan.gov/mdot to keep the public informed about the project in addition to MDOT's Lane Closure Web Page for current lane closure information during construction.

Having experienced many road construction projects in the Grand Rapids area in recent years, most of us know that they are necessary and that patience and understanding is required. Businesses and commuters are adversely impacted, but there is no way to avoid these hardships and inconveniences. Please think about the necessity of this project and the long term benefits that will result.

Assessment Notices for 2006 should reach your homes and businesses by the end of February. Board of Review will meet on March 13th and 14th and you must call to schedule an appointment at that time. You may also appeal by letter as long as it arrives in our office by March 13th. You will not be able to continue on to the Michigan Tax Tribunal without first appealing to the March Board of Review. The Board of Review is comprised of three residents of the Township and each appointment is for 10 minutes. In order to utilize your time, please come prepared to defend your estimate of market value. Our sales records and comparable properties are available for review in the office during our business hours 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM or online at the address listed below.

Taxpayers can expect an increase of no more than 3.3% (CPI) this year on their taxable value unless their neighborhood has been part of our ongoing field inspection or there has been new construction on the property. If you have questions regarding your notice, please call the Assessor's office at 364-8466, or send an email. Our addresses are listed on the Plainfield Charter Township website, www.plainfieldchartertwp.org. Sometimes all

that is necessary is an explanation by one of the staff to clear up any questions you may have.

In an effort to inform our taxpayers, we will be discussing an item of interest in this and future editions of the PROFILE. This quarter we will try to explain why we do not place an assessment of 50% of the sales price on transferred properties.

It is unlawful for assessors to assess properties that have recently sold, differently from properties that have not recently sold. This is termed "following sales" and is not good assessing practice. In other words, assessors must review and examine all properties for discrepancies regardless if they have transferred ownership. We commonly find that if our assessments are not close to what a property sells for it is be-

cause of "omitted property" that we are not aware of. These items could be things such as finished basements, added bathrooms and other amenities. Therefore, it becomes even more important to maintain all properties with assessed values of 50% of market value in the event they do transfer and become uncapped. With a transfer, the assessed value will then become the taxable value. Our ultimate goal is uniformity in assessed values.

Understanding Your Assessment



PLAINFIELD FD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Every year in the U.S., there are over 16,000 collisions involving fire department emergency vehicles while responding to or returning from incidents. As a result of these accidents, over 850 injuries occur and 20 firefighters are killed annually. Recently, an Ann Arbor firefighter was killed while out of her vehicle at the scene of an accident. We have taken many steps to make our response as safe as possible from our end; including wearing reflective vests when working on emergency scenes, having a drivers training and certification program, marking our equipment so that it can be seen, and developing response policies and procedures.

There are two things everyone can do to help emergency responders provide emergency assistance as quickly as possible? The first is as simple as "Moving to the Right for Sirens and Lights!" Many people panic or simply don't adhere to the rules of the road for approaching emergency vehicles. The law is very specific: Drivers must yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle, and failure to do so can cause serious accidents or delays in ambulances, fire engines and fire trucks arriving at the scene of an emergency. Firefighters are careful to avoid vehicle collisions by driving slowly when traveling against traffic, or coming to a complete stop at intersections. However, the cooperation of ALL vehicles on the roadway is essential. The second is to follow the Michigan Emergency Vehicle Caution Law. That law states that you should follow these steps.

Roads with two or more lanes of travel in the same direction: The operator of a vehicle traveling on a highway designed with two or more lanes of travel in the same direction shall, upon approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with its emergency lights activated, carefully move into an open lane at least one lane away from the emergency vehicle. If this is not possible due to traffic, weather, or road conditions, the operator shall slow down and pass with caution, allowing the emergency vehicle as much space as possible.

Roads with one lane of travel for each direction: The operator of a vehicle traveling on a roadway which only has one lane of travel for each direction shall, upon approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with its emergency lights activated, carefully move over into the open adjacent lane if possible. If this is not possible due to traffic, weather, or road conditions, the operator shall slow down and pass with caution, allowing the emergency vehicle as much space as possible.

Safety Tips

There are some simple rules to follow when you're on the road and encounter an emergency vehicle:

DO:

- Stay calm.
- Pull to the right and come to a complete stop.
- If you're traveling on a high-speed road or if there is no room to stop, slow down as much as possible.

- If you are in the left lane, pull over into the right lane as traffic in the lane to your right moves over.
- If you cannot move to the right because of another vehicle or obstacle, just stop. Your action will let the driver of the emergency vehicle know what you are doing and allow the driver to anticipate where to drive.
- When an emergency vehicle approaches you from behind while you are stopped at an intersection, stay where you are unless you can pull to the right.
- On a 4-lane highway or street without barriers, both sides of traffic should pull to the right.
- Be careful when driving by or around a motor vehicle accident or any situation where emergency vehicles are parked and the firefighters are working.
- Drivers should stay at least 500 feet behind emergency vehicles.

DON'T:

- Don't panic.
- Don't play your radio so loudly that you are unable to hear sirens.
- Don't stop in the middle lane when there is room to pull to the right.
- Don't pull to the left in the center lane or left turn lane.
- Don't race ahead to make the green light or turn before the emergency vehicle gets there.
- Don't turn quickly to the left onto a street or driveway.
- Don't drive through a red light or stop sign when an emergency vehicle approaches from behind.
- If the emergency vehicle is traveling on the opposite direction of a divided highway or street, you do not need to pull over.
- Don't disregard the presence of the emergency vehicle by continuing to drive.

David Peterson, Fire Chief

On March 25, 2006, the Plainfield Fire Department will be hosting the 3rd annual "Run a Mile for a Child" 5k Run/Walk Race. Last year, 225 individuals participated and we hope to increase that number to 300 this year. In 2005, this fund raising event raised \$3,000.00 for the regional burn unit to support services provided to burn survivors and to support educational efforts for burn prevention. There will also be a pancake breakfast, with donations going towards the same cause. Both events begin at 9:00 AM. Event registration will be held at the



Run a Mile for a Child

Township Offices, 6161 Belmont Avenue and the pancake breakfast will be held across the parking lot at Fire Station #1. The cost of the race is \$25.00. All race participants will receive a long sleeve, mock turtleneck shirt for participating in the race. Registration forms are available at both Plainfield Fire Stations and the Plainfield Township Offices, or register online at www.plainfieldcharterswp.org or www.classicrace.com. You may also register the day of

the race, beginning at 7:30 AM. For more event information, please contact Assistant Fire Chief Steven McKellar at 616-361-2895

Plainfield Charter Township

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 am to 4:30 pm
Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

George Meek, Supervisor
Susan Morrow, Clerk
James Stover, Treasurer
Rebecca Borek, Trustee
Jack Hagedorn, Trustee
Robert Heindrichs, Trustee
William Parris, Trustee



MANAGER

Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 pm
First and Third Mondays

www.plainfieldchartertp.org

The Profile

Plainfield Charter Township
6161 Belmont NE
Belmont, MI 49306

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