



The Profile

VOLUME XXX NUMBER 2

MARCH 2005

Plainfield Charter Township Fire Department has been in existence for 60 years. In 1945, Dexter Hamilton organized a group of Belmont residents to create the Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Department. Their purpose was to provide faster service than could be provided by the County of Kent from their DPW garage near downtown Grand Rapids. Following Chief Hamilton's retirement in 1968, Jack Brydges was appointed Chief, becoming the Township's first full-time Fire Chief in 1989. He served the community until his retirement in 1993. Today, our third Chief, David Peterson, leads a combination full-time / part-time / paid-on-call department consisting of 13 full-time, 15 part-time, and 29 paid-on-call fire professionals. Visit the Fire Department's neat website at www.plainfieldfire.org.

The Mission Statement of the Plainfield Fire Department (PFD) is: "To provide those services, either proactive or emergency, necessary to enhance the quality of life for the citizens and visitors of Plainfield Charter Township." The fire service has changed

Plainfield Township's Fire Department

This is the third in an ongoing series of PROFILE articles featuring the eight departments comprising the Plainfield Township organization. So far, the Planning and the Building Departments have been described. This issue of The PROFILE introduces the Fire Department, the largest department in the General Fund, which is supported almost entirely by shared revenue from the State of Michigan and local property taxes.

considerably over the decades since the PFD was formed:

- Residents expect more services,
- Training requirements have been established by law, and
- There are more regulations governing the operation of the fire department.

It is no longer just a group of guys who can respond to the station when the alarm sounds; today's fire service requires many hours of training and an even greater level of dedication.

PFD provides a full range of services:

- EMS first response
- Extrication from accidents
- Technical rescue - cave-ins, high angle, structure collapse, confined space
- Carbon monoxide investigations
- Building safety inspections
- New construction site and plan reviews
- Community safety education (CPR and fire for all ages)
- Juvenile fire setter screening

Plainfield Fire Department

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- Issuing burning permits (we are very particular about these.)
- Pre-planning for emergencies (from tornadoes to terrorism)
- Fuel spills and other hazardous material responses
- Limited water rescues (Department has no boat)
- And, of course, fire suppression and rescue

Deputy Chief Don Bigger manages the Suppression Division, Assistant Chief Steve McKellar manages the Prevention Division, and Administrative Assistant Ruth Plambeck, is responsible for managing the office. PFD responded to 2109 emergency calls in 2004.

- 50% of these were medical calls,
- 15% were public service (hazardous conditions, assists to citizens, police, and ambulances),
- 13% were rescues,
- 10% were good intent or false alarms, and
- 9% were actual fires (grass, vehicles, dumpsters, structures).
- The remaining runs being mutual aid and miscellaneous.



The PFD works out of two stations: Station #1 at 6145 Belmont and Station #3 recently relocated in a new building at 4343 Plainfield Ave. Station #3 was cited in the *Fire Chief* magazine design award contest. One might think that this recognition for quality would imply a relatively high unit cost, but the station was completed for less than \$90 per square foot – which is remarkably low.

Next to the Station #3 is the fire department training center, located in a building that was remodeled as part of the new station project. The training center is equipped with the latest technology for instructional purposes, and it

will accommodate 60 students at tables and chairs. Much of the expense of equipping the training center was offset by a \$71,000 Federal grant. Over 80 days of use are scheduled at the training center in the first six months of the year.

The PFD has grown over the last sixty years to keep pace with the community's size and needs. The current annual budget for the PFD is \$1,839,216. Personnel costs amount to \$1,328,864 – 72% of the total budget. The two stations together are staffed by a minimum of 5 people round the clock, with 2 full-time Equipment Operators, 2 part-time firefighters, and 1 full-time officer who responds when supervision is required. Additionally, the paid-on-call staff, including two lieutenants, responds from home on an as-needed basis. This staffing formula enables us

to provide services at the current level for a significantly lower cost than employing only full-time people.

Staffing the 5 positions, 24/7, would take about 18 full-time people. Using

part-time employees to staff two of these five positions cost \$210,000 last year. If we staffed those two positions with fulltime people, we would need eight more full-time people at a cost of about \$500,000. We therefore avoided paying about \$290,000 last year by addressing our emergency personnel staffing needs in a non-traditional manner. Chief Peterson gets the credit for this, and I am taking this opportunity to give him the credit that is due.

The fire department administration has worked closely with the Township's Public Safety Committee to plan for the future and make decisions based on the Committee's input. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Township Board on major capital purchases and new programs undertaken by the fire department.

As the Township continues to grow, the number of calls for emergency services will also continue to grow. As the population center shifts northward, stationing equipment and personnel further north may also be needed. The increased personnel costs for two full-time people on duty at a new station would be about \$450,000 annually. A new building, equipment, training, and other operational costs would probably total another \$300,000 annually. If these additional costs (\$750,000) were entirely supported by local millage, current property taxes levied by Plainfield Township (3.29 mills) would have to be increased by about 8/10ths of one mill — \$75 on a home valued at \$150,000).

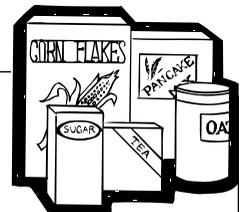
...with sidewalks and accessibility for all!

If you are all familiar with sidewalks in Plainfield Township, you know that there are many neighborhoods and also many main roads where sidewalks are located. Sidewalks are a very nice and desirable amenity for people who must walk or enjoy walking. Spring, summer, and fall are great times to do this, but part of the wintertime presents a problem. The problem is not just snow. The problem is that residents and business owners neglect to clear the walks of snow and ice. Particularly in areas where school children must use the sidewalks, uncleared walkways are most noticeable.

The solution is obvious. Many property owners “do the right thing.” Good citizenship involves thinking of others. If you are able to clear your sidewalks, please do so. Your efforts will be appreciated.

I have performed this little exercise to focus on the cost of emergency services. They are not provided free. On the other side of the coin are the potential benefits of the additional expenditures. The many emergency and non-emergency services listed above would be available quicker, with greater back-up and support, and with greater reliability. When you are trapped in a wrecked automobile, when you are having chest pains and have difficulty breathing, or when you awake at 1:30 AM and hear your smoke alarms going off, you will not be thinking of the expense of emergency response; you’ll be glad it is available. Your fire department is a great community asset, and you are paying for dedicated personnel, excellent training, good equipment, and the availability of all that they can do for you in a hurry.

*Robert C. Homan
Township Manager*



Commodity Distribution

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

- June 2, 2005
- March 3, 2005
- September 1, 2005

To qualify you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road. Distribution is at 6156 Belmont Avenue (Rogelio's Pizza). between the hours of 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. New families wishing to qualify may call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to our distribution site on the above dates. Bring your social security card and an income statement.



WHITE PINE TRAIL UPDATE SPRING 2005

By Dick Granse, Friends of the White Pine Trail

It does not seem possible that this will be the seventh summer season for this very popular community asset, which traverses the Township from the southwest to the northeast corner. This season a couple projects will be visible. Root damage between Belmont and Rockford will be repaired with replaced pavement early in the season, and in fact, construction began this winter with installation of a buried root barrier along the damaged sections. This will be a joy for roller bladders and all other users. The Historic Trestle in Algoma Township near Summit Road will undergo restoration as the stone facing of the 120 year old structure will be repaired and some internal stabilization will be done. Traveling on the trail above the trestle should not be affected. When repairs are completed Algoma will install a vault toilet and other improvements to the beautiful park they maintain along Stegman Creek at the trestle which is available to trail users.

Maintenance of the trail will again be carried out by The Friends of the White Pine Trail under their "Adopt A Trail" agreement with the DNR, including the City of Rockford in their area, and Plainfield Township which will continue mowing between Belmont and 5/3 Ball Park. Volunteers are always welcome to join the Friends and help with maintenance and other activities. Contact information is available below. In the future, Kent County Parks has expressed interest in managing the trail.

Another wonderful opportunity to help is to join the Courtesy Trail Patrol under the direction of the Kent County Sheriff's Community Services Dept. For the past several seasons, this volunteer trail patrol, traveling by bike or foot, has performed many helpful functions for the trail user and adds a measure of security. A mandatory meeting for all those interested is on April 19th at 6:30 pm at the Kent County Sheriff's Office. Further information can be obtained by calling Sandi Jones at (616) 632-6221.

In the last issue we mentioned the many organized events that use the trail, often in connection with very worthwhile causes and charities. These events have increased significantly in number, occur mainly on Saturdays, and in a few cases have resulted in inconveniences and interference to the casual trail users. All organized events using the trail for any part of an event are required to have a permit in advance from the DNR. Contact the Mitchell State Park Manager at (231) 775-7911 for this requirement. A courtesy notification to the Friends of the White Pine Trail will enable our organization to work with the events to minimize impact to other users of the trail.

The paved trail will not always stop at Russell Road. Plans are still on-going to pave the trail not only to Sand Lake but farther north. At present the Friends are the only organization

fund raising to bring this about. We continue to explore private and public sector opportunities to expand the trail and your private or corporate donations to help make this happen, in care of the Friends of the White Pine Trail, would be most appreciated.

Finally, The Friends will host a special Spring Program at the Plainfield Township Hall on April 13th at 7pm. Mr Jack Nestell of Wildbirds Unlimited will speak on “Wildbirds Along the Trail” with many interesting slides. So as not to miss this fascinating program, come early as seating may be limited.

FRIENDS OF THE WHITE PINE TRAIL INFORMATION

Website: www.whitepinetrail.org

Address: Box 159, Belmont 49306

Become a member for \$5 per year and receive e-mail updates & newsletter

Scheduled workdays start the first Saturday of each month on May 7th. Meet at Rockford Parking Area near Arnie’s restaurant at 8:45 a.m. Other workdays as needed. Check the information line, the website, or the kiosk at Belmont for other activities

Meeting Schedule: Second Wednesday at 7 pm.

March 9: Cedar Springs Historical Museum—*17 mile & Northland Dr.*

April 13: Plainfield Township Hall: **Program—“wild birds along the trail”**

May 11: Algoma Township Hall

June 8: Krause Memorial Library — *downtown Rockford*

FROM THE ASSESSOR’S OFFICE

Assessment Notices Out Soon

Assessment Notices for 2005 should reach your homes and businesses by the end of February. Board of Review will meet on March 14th and 15th 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 14th. Shirley Norman has been appointed to the Board of Review to replace Gary VanderMeulen who has moved from the Township. I would like to thank Gary for his years of service and also members Ron Wooster and Bob DeLano for their continued service on the Board of Review. This is a sometimes thankless but necessary job and we appreciate their service.

Taxpayers can expect an increase of no more than 2.3% (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.plainfieldchartertp.org. Sometimes all that is necessary is an explanation by one of the staff to clear up any questions you may have.

KDL Kent District Library NEWS

Watch for these upcoming special programs, and please join us. 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 (to register please call your KDL branch at the telephone number listed above).

New this spring is **BABYTIME**—a special one-on-one program for parents and their babies aged birth-18 months. Did you know children learn reading skills starting right from infancy? This program uses songs, bounces, rhymes, baby signs and playtime as building blocks for later reading and writing. It's so much fun—try it and you'll be hooked! Begins the week of March 28.

Plainfield Branch – Mondays at 10:30 a.m.
Comstock Park Branch – Thursdays and Saturdays—both at 1:00 p.m.

Spring Laptime programs also begin the week of March 28. Stories, music and rhymes for babies, toddlers and their parents.

Plainfield Branch – Thursdays at 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Comstock Park Branch – Mondays at 10:30 a.m.

Spring Storytime programs also begin the week of March 28. Stories and crafts for ages 3-6.

Plainfield Branch – Thursdays at 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Comstock Park Branch – Mondays at 10:30 a.m.

Other programs for children include Family Storytimes, Pajama Storytimes, "Paws with a Cause," and "The Mad Hatter Party."

Just for Teens

Both branches welcome all teens to attend their **Teen Advisory Board** meetings to give input on library furnishings and purchases. New books, books-on-tape and CD, music, DVDs and CD-Roms are arriving daily. Come and see what's here for you!

Teen poets take notice! Kent District Library is sponsoring its second annual teen poetry contest. Each branch will have a prize winner whose poems will be posted online and in a special booklet. Check the www.kdl.org for rules and entry forms. Deadline is March 31.

Especially For Adults

Both library branches welcome you to join our monthly "no-pressure" book discussion groups, where you can relax and talk about books with other avid readers. Call your branch for a list of upcoming titles and dates—and give it a try!

PLAINFIELD BRANCH LIBRARY
2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930
HOURS

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)

Did you know that everybody in Kent County is reading the same book this spring? It's called *Plainsong*. The author, Kent Haruf, will be speaking in the Calvin College Fine Arts Center on March 22 at 7 p.m. Seating is limited but free tickets are available at any library or at Schuler Books & Music.

Other upcoming adult programs include:

Only at the Plainfield Branch

"A Lifebook Workshop for Adoptive Parents" - March 7 at 6:30pm.

"West Michigan Therapy Dogs" - March 15 at 6:30pm

"Travels in Scandinavia" - March 1 at 12:30 pm. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, this luncheon program features environmentalist Mary Jane Dockeray. Cost for the salad/soup lunch is \$4.50 or just \$1.00 for coffee only.

At the Comstock Park Branch

"Searching the Internet—The Basics." April 12 at 10:00 am. Limited to 7 people, please call the branch to register.

At both branches

"Papermaking with Liz Langenbert." Please call to register.

COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH LIBRARY
3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860
HOURS

Monday	9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Thursday	12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday, Saturday	1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Summer Reading Club

Summer Reading Club for kids begins on June 6th and runs for eight weeks. Some of our special programs will include a magic show and "Magic Academy," movie/craft days, "Farm Animals on the Go," "Taming Dragons," puppet shows and a great musical group called "Like Water Drumworks." Teens will be able to participate in a summer volunteer program, a concert by "The High Strung", hair braiding, making flip flops, candle decorating and a spa program

Friends of the Plainfield Library

The Friends of the Plainfield Library invites new members. We raise money for the library for furnishings, programs, and other incidentals that are not in the everyday operating budget. We are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that "loves" its library. For a nominal yearly fee you get a monthly newsletter that lets you know all of the upcoming events before the general public. Members only get to come early to certain events before they are open to the public. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month. As a member, you help to plan programs and vote on how monies that are raised are spent.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the library and a staff member will put you in touch with a Friends Board Member. The next fundraiser is a used book sale scheduled for May 13th - 16th (Friday to Monday). Contact the Plainfield Branch Library for more information.

Plainfield Charter Township has had a website available for public use for several years. The site contains useful information for citizens and businesses, as well as those wishing to visit or relocate to our township. Over the years, the site has been tweaked here and there, but there have not been any major modifications.

That's all about to change!

The website is being redesigned and there will be many changes in store for our site. Not only will the site have more useful and better information, it will be more colorful, informative and loaded with pictures from our township. We know that people use the world wide

- Current millage and tax rates
- Calendar of events for township functions
- Who's on Township boards, committees and commissions
- Current assessing information – PAL website – NO password is required
- Passport information
- Township forms from various departments
- Emergency telephone numbers
- Township Profile Newsletters (current and past editions)
- Local schools with links to their sites
- Rates and charges



Explore the Web: www.plainfieldchartertp.org

web 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, whether the township offices are open or not. The web is always open!

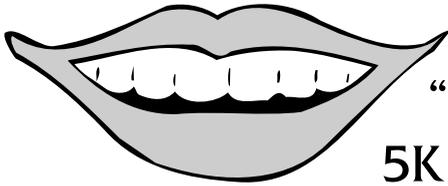
The new site will allow for information to be easily obtained at the time you are looking for it. Here are just a few of the things that you will be able to find:

- Agendas and minutes for Township Board, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings

- Links to federal, state, county and surrounding community websites
- Links to all township departments
- Voter information and precinct map
- And more to come...

Maintaining a website requires time and dedication to ensure that the contents are up-to-date and useful for the community. The current website information is being updated and changed to offer a new look, allow for ease of use, and provide updated information to encourage regular use.

If you are using our website and cannot find information you need, call the Township Offices at (616) 364-8466. Hours are Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the winter, and 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during summer months.



2ND Annual “RUN A MILE FOR A SMILE” 5K Run/Walk

On March 26, 2005 the Plainfield Fire-Department is hosting the second annual “Run a Mile for a Smile” 5K Run/Walk Race. Last year there were 200 participants and we are hoping to hit the 300 mark this year. This is a fund raising event, with last year’s race raising about \$3,000 for the regional burn unit to support services provided to burn survivors and educational efforts to prevent burns.

For the non-runner, there will be a pancake breakfast starting at 9:00 am., with donations going towards the same cause. Both events will be held at the Plainfield Township Of-

fice Complex with the registration for the race held at the Township Office at 6161 Belmont Avenue and the pancake breakfast held at Fire Station #1, located next door to the Township Offices, at 6145 Belmont Avenue.

The cost of the race is \$20.00 prior to the day of the race and \$25.00 the day of the race. Race participants will also receive a long sleeve mock neck shirt for participating in the race. You can register online at www.classicrace.com or contact Steve McKellar at 361-2895 for more race/walk information.

Hyser Rivers Museum – 2005 Programs

The following programs are scheduled for this year. Please note that area educators may arrange special visits to the museum to learn about the history of Plainfield Township. For a special tour, or if you have any questions regarding the Museum, please call the Township Hall at 364-8466, and your call will be forwarded to a member of the museum board.

The Hyser Rivers Museum is open April through December, the first Sunday of the month from 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The Historical Preservation Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, March through November.

April 3	Open House – Welcome Visitors
May 1	Family Craft Day
June 5	Open House – Welcome all graduating classes of 2005
July 3	Closed for July 4 holiday
August 7	Friendship Day (Dulcimer band pending)
September 4	Closed for Labor Day
September 18	Patriot Day / Re-enactment
October 2	Family Paper Craft Day – may pick up contest rules for 11/6 contest
November 6	Contest for best Patriotic Picture – prizes awarded
December 4	“An Old Fashioned Christmas” Craft Day for the entire family

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

- Meat Fats
- Lard
- Cooking Oil
- Shortening
- Butter & margarine
- Food scraps
- Baking goods
- Sauces
- Dairy products

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the inside walls of sewer pipes — both on your property and in the streets. Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain. Commercial additives, including detergents that claim to dissolve grease, may merely allow temporarily dissolved grease to pass further down the line and cause problems in other areas.

The results can be:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid by you, the homeowner;
- Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yard and streets
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs for local sewer departments, which causes higher sewer bills for customers.

What can residential sewer customers do to help? The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place.

information and helpful tips



on preventing fats, oils and greases from causing damage to your home and the public sewer system

from The Water Environment Federation

There are several ways to do this.

1. **Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.**
2. **Scrape grease and food scraps** from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills and cooking surfaces **into a can or the trash for disposal** — or recycling where available. One neat trick is to pour your bacon (or other) grease into an empty bottle or plastic container that can be thrown into routine trash for collection.

3. **Do not put grease down garbage disposals.** Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.
4. **Mention this information** to your friends and neighbors about the problem of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out. Call your local sewer system authority if you have any questions.

What Restaurant and Commercial Building Owners Need to Know About Grease Traps or Interceptors

Restaurants, large buildings (such as apartment complexes), and other commercial establishments may have grease traps or interceptors that keep grease out of the sewer system. For a grease trap or interceptor to work correctly, it must be properly

- **Designed** (sized and manufactured to handle the amount that is expected),
- **Installed** (level, vented, etc.), and
- **Maintained!** (cleaned and serviced on frequent basis).

Solids should never be put into grease traps of interceptors. Routine, often daily, maintenance of grease traps and interceptors is needed to ensure that they properly reduce or prevent blockages.

Be wary of purported “magic solutions” of chemicals and additives (including soaps and detergents) that claim to dissolve grease. Some of these additives simply pass grease down pipes where it can clog the sewer lines further down the line.

Sewage is unpleasant and easy to put out of our consciousness. Remember that public sewage disposal systems constitute a major component of our urban infrastructure. Intelligent use of sewage disposal systems is needed. “Out of sight – out of mind” is the WRONG attitude!



***GREETINGS
FROM
THE
SUPERVISOR***

In *The Profile* dated November 2004, my predecessor David M. Groenleer bid Plainfield Charter Township *FAREWELL* after a superb 37 years of service to the Township. Dave served the Township with enthusiasm and dedication in the capacities of Trustee, Planning Commission member, and most recently as Supervisor for four years. During his tenure, Dave also service with compassion on a variety of sub-committees, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to his Township positions, for the benefit of every person in Plainfield Township.

I was elected trustee the first time in 1980, serving for two terms until 1988. During my eight years as trustee, I sat next to Dave at the township board meetings, which were then held in the basement of the former township hall. In 1986, the Township offices moved into a new building – its current location.

Coming from different backgrounds, Dave and I brought different dimensions of experience to our Township positions. I learned a great deal about David Groenleer and I feel the Township is a better place to live because of his endless contributions to a community he loves.

The next time you see or talk to Dave, tell him **THANKS** for a job well done.

*George K. Meek
Supervisor*



At the regular meeting of the Plainfield Charter Township Board on January 24, 2005, the number of precincts in Plainfield was reduced from 15 to 11.

Why: Effective January 1, 2005, municipal clerks will be conducting all elections in the state. The schools will no longer conduct elections. There are now only four possible election dates for the state: the last Tuesday in February, the first Tuesday following the first Monday in May, August, and November. There are no more “school” elections. The spring election date (May) is the preferred choice of all the school districts in Plainfield Township for their annual elections. The schools and the municipalities may use any or all of the four approved dates, but no other dates. Any of the four election dates may have an issue or candidate placed on the ballot for the schools or the municipality. This new arrangement will assist the voters in knowing when there is an election because they will be regularly scheduled each year - no more special election dates. The schools will pay for the election costs based on the percentage of registered voters in each precinct. If there is a municipal question on the ballot as well as a school proposal or school board election, the cost of the election will be split between the school and the township.

Precinct Changes— The Why, Where, Who, and When of It

In an effort to reduce the cost to the schools, since their money is our tax dollars, Plainfield Charter Township reduced the number of precincts. There will be more voters in each precinct. At first glance this might concern some voters, however, more legislative changes are on the horizon. A new law, *No Reason Absentee Voting*, is being actively supported in the legislature and stands a good chance of passing. This would permit any registered voter of any age, and for any reason, to vote absentee. This

is good news. Voting absentee permits a person to vote up to 45 days before the election using an absentee ballot. The law is very specific regarding absentee ballots security, verification, and tabulation. More than 4300 voters voted absentee in the General Election of 2004. The more absent voters we have, the smaller lines we will have at the precincts.

Voters may choose to place their name on a permanent absentee voter list. This list will be used for all elections. Each voter on the list

will be mailed an application for the upcoming election. Voters must apply for each election. The application may be returned by fax, mail, in person, or by dropping it in the ugly, mustard colored mailbox on the south side of the township office any time of the day, any day of the week. If you do not care to vote absentee in a specific election do not return the application.



If you return the application, a ballot will be mailed to you as soon as they are available.

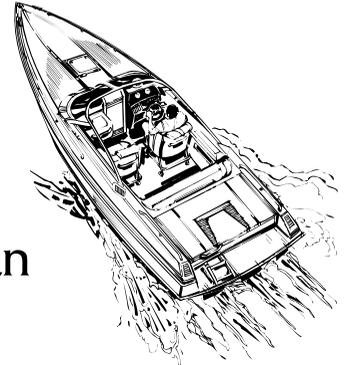
Where: Since the Township Clerk is conducting the elections, the township precincts will be the only precincts used by the voters. There will be no more “school” precincts. Each voter will use only one precinct location for every election. Voters will receive a new voter registration card indicating the location of their precinct. Plainfield Township has more than 21,000 registered voters, and only about 5000 of those voters will experience a precinct location change. The precincts have also been renumbered to accommodate the reduction from 15 to 11.

Who: Every voter in Plainfield Charter Township will receive a new voter registration card. Please save it. There are four election dates each year including 2005. No elections will take place on February 22 in Plainfield Charter Township. There will be various issues on the spring ballot on May 3. At this time I do not know what issues might be on the August or November ballots. If you lose your voter registration card please go to the township web site, www.plainfieldchartertp.org, for information about the precinct locations and the election dates.

When: The changes are in effect for the spring election to be held on May 3, 2005. Please direct any questions to the Clerk’s office **before Election Day** to afford us plenty of time to be of assistance to you. Please call 364-8466 and ask for the Clerk’s office.

Thank you for reading this important article. A precinct map will be printed as soon as possible and will appear in future editions of the Profile.

Susan L. Morrow, MMC 13



Michigan Boater Safety Course at Plainfield Township

The Kent County Sheriff’s Office will offer a boater safety course to be held at the Plainfield Township offices, 6161 Belmont Avenue, on Tuesday March 29, and Thursday March 31, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Michigan Safe Boating Course covers all the laws, ethics, and safety procedures needed to legally and safely operate a boat or personal watercraft (jet ski/wave runner) in Michigan. Also, much emphasis will be on water safety and “drown proofing.” Upon successful completion of the class, a Michigan Boating Safety Certificate will be issued. This certificate is also accepted in most other states.

Who needs the class?

- Anyone born after 1978 who wants to operate a personal water craft
- Anyone 12 – 16 years old who wants to drive a motorboat alone
- Everyone who is concerned about the laws and how to safely operate a vessel on the waterways
- Anyone who spends time around lakes and rivers

Requirements for this class

- Must be 12-years-old by August 1, 2005
- A pencil and a pen

To register, call Deputy Scott Cook at (616) 632-6230. There is no charge for this course.

During the collection process of the 2004 winter taxes, my staff was asked many times "what was the tax for seniors all about? As a senior, do I qualify?"

In 1998, the voters of Kent County approved .25 of a mill for senior services. The Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan was selected to administer the millage. The senior millage was approved for eight years and the services began in the summer of 1999. The tax rate for 2004 was .2444 of a mill because of roll-back required by state law.

To be eligible for services, you must be a Kent County resident and 60 years of age or older. All services request a donation towards the continued expansion of the service and some services require a cost share to be paid based on an individual's income.

In 2004, \$4.4 million dollars were allocated to services. The millage funds have allowed expansion of the services that are also funded by State and Federal dollars. Millage funds have also allowed new services to be developed. The 60+ population continues to increase and despite the great



Senior Services: What Are They and Who Qualifies?

benefit of the senior millage, some services have waiting lists.

Services are divided into four categories. The following explains each category and how much of the current funding is allocated to each service. There is also an emergency fund for services related to weather or local emergencies.

Priority Services 54% \$2.4 million

In-home and nutritional services for the most frail and needy elders and their caregivers in order to maintain their care and independence in their own homes. Some of these services are: Adult Day Care, Bathing Services, Home Delivered Meals, Respite (Overnight), Senior Pantry, Transportation, Prescriptions Assistance Programs and others.

Supportive Services 10% \$434,000

These services strengthen and sustain the priority services to lengthen the time frail individuals may remain living at home in a safe environment; encourage self-reliance on the part of the less frail and support independence of the more active older adult. Some of these services are: Congregate Meals, Home Repair, Medication Management,

Personal Emergency Response Systems, Stepping Stones and Weatherization.

Access Services 23% \$1.026 million
Essential for older adults and/or their caregivers for entrance to the senior services network. Some of these services are: Care Management, Home Support, Information and Referral, Long Term Care Ombudsman and Outreach & Assistance.

General & Preventive Services 13% \$564,000
Includes health promotion-disease prevention programs, first line support programs and volunteer opportunities. Some of these services are: Adaptive Equipment Purchases, Assisted Living Directory and Counseling, Dementia Screening, Emergency Need Fund, Flu/Pneumonia Vaccination, Friendly Visitor, Guardianship Services, Health Education, Home Chore,

Independent Living program, Legal Assistance & Hotline, Options-Home Modification Assessments, Predatory Lending Prevention program, RSVP, Senior Companion Program, Telephone Reassurance and Vision Services

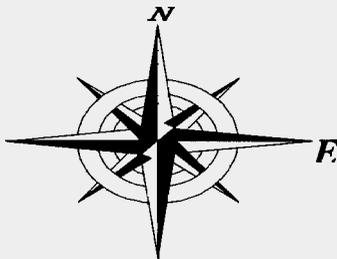
Emergent Needs .7% \$31,000
Addresses needs usually based on weather emergencies.

If you want to know if you qualify for any of these services or want to know more, please call the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan at (616) 456-5664. The Agency will forward you to the proper party to assist you.

NOTE: The next issue of *The Profile* will address the shift for the County Operational taxes from the winter tax bill to the summer tax bill.

Jim Stover, Treasurer

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An Invitation from the North East Business Association

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 a.m.– 1:00 p.m. at the Boulder Creek Golf Club located 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.

March 16 – Plainfield Township Update

April 20 – Mark Thomas, Northview High School Principal

May 18 – Brian Jackson, Cornerstone University

June 2 – 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 2, 2005 at Boulder Creek Golf Club with the proceeds benefiting our scholarship fund.

Plainfield Charter Township

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

David Groenleer, Supervisor
Susan Morrow, Clerk
James Stover, Treasurer
Wendell Briggs, Trustee
Robert Heindricks, Trustee
William Parris, Trustee
Charles Weldon, Trustee



MANAGER

Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 p.m.
First and Third Mondays

www.plainfieldchartertp.org

THE PROFILE

Plainfield Charter Township
6161 Belmont NE
Belmont, MI 49306

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