

The Profile

VOLUME XXXV NUMBER 1

OCTOBER 2009

Summer is Over

We are now officially into the fall season and the short summer is over.

This past summer was a very challenging time for Plainfield Charter Township. The main reason for the challenge is the economy and the widespread effects it has had on so many people, businesses, municipalities and our country in general. Although the summer is over, it doesn't mean the problems are. I do believe we all have a more defined task ahead of us in order to contend with the changes we must make in order to (attempt) to keep our status quo. The citizens of our township expect, and rightfully should, a level of service which they are accustomed to and pay for. Service and materialistic things can only be provided when they are paid for.

There are a few ways to enhance the revenue side of the township's ledger: 1) increase the tax millage; 2) charge for specific services, or; 3) **cut expenses**. There are other ways to enhance revenue, but I feel these are the main ones.



Our township is not alone in facing tough decisions to maintain the status quo. Of the three

ways I have mentioned, I feel strongly that the township board and the township manager *can* and *will* make every effort to reduce and contain expenses in order to pull through this economically challenged time. No one likes increases in their taxes or in the costs of services provided, but after all expenses are rolled back and cut to the bare bones, the township board must make some tough decisions, some of which will not be popular. What we don't want to do is to let the township's financial situation fall behind because catching up is very difficult and not always successful. Any decision made must be fair to all concerned without any special interests.

This being the last *Profile* of 2009, I want to wish all township residents a safe and happy holiday season.

George K. Meek, Supervisor

Plainfield Charter Township Wins Three Major Water Service Awards



Don Petrovich, Mary Trapp, and Matt Weldon display the AWWA awards.

The Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) bestowed three major recognition awards to the Water Department of Plainfield Charter Township (PCT) at its annual conference held in Traverse City, Michigan this September. PCT proudly accepted awards for the **2009 Best Consumer Confidence Report for a Medium Sized Water System**, **2009 Exemplary Well-head Protection Program Award for a Medium Sized Water System**, and the **Edward Dunbar Rich Service Award**.

The AWWA annually recognizes public water suppliers (small, medium and large) who prepare an exceptional “Consumer Confidence Report” (CCR) for its water distribution system. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires every public water supplier to annually prepare a CCR outlining the quality of the water provided to customers within their distribution system based on water testing performed the prior year. An effective CCR promotes consumer confidence in the quality and reliability of their water systems by providing the customers with the sampling results of the regulated substances in the

water supply and uses this public education platform to address any emerging consumer concerns. Each entry was judged on USEPA reporting requirements, public education elements and overall design. PCT was recognized for its achievement in demonstrating a creative and effective public communication for the 2008 reporting period winning the **2009 Best Consumer Confidence for a Medium Sized Water System**. Featured in the report were various water related topics, important health information, the continued commitment to safeguard the public water supply and the required water sampling results. In addition, the report highlighted the source of the Township’s water supply and summarized the water treatment processes.

PCT would like to recognize the efforts of Water Plant Superintendent Don Petrovich and Plant Operator Mike Slomski, in their yearly preparation of the CCR. Sampling details, system knowledge and public education awareness are required to analyze the vast data collected in preparation of this report. Our Annual Water Quality Report is mailed out yearly to all customers and additional copies can be

obtained at the Water Plant, Water Department, Township Offices and our website.

The second award received by PCT was the **2009 Exemplary Wellhead Protection Program Award for a Medium Sized Water System**. This award is given to communities that have developed and implemented model wellhead protection programs. Recipients of the state level award are also entered to compete in the joint AWWA/USEPA competition at the national level. Since 1996, a variety of cities, villages and townships across the state have received the award, with several winning at the national level.

PCT draws its 16-million-gallon-per-day water supply using 16 wells located in three separate well fields, and the protection of this sensitive area is imperative to the safety of our public water supply. The wellhead protection program is designed and implemented through public education platforms and enforced by an ordinance. The program and ordinance protect the public water supply by identifying potential pollution threats in areas where groundwater is vulnerable to contamination.

The Wellhead Protection Committee consists of 15 members representing various PCT departments, outside environmental and health agencies, residents, professional engineers, business owners, and officials from other townships. Their breadth of knowledge and commitment to protecting our public water system was instrumental in the development of our wellhead protection program and ordinance. PCT wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the committee and would like to extend additional recognition to Don Petrovich (Water Plant Superintendent) and Mary Trapp (Assistant to Director of Public Services) for their efforts in gathering information and writing submittals for the award win-

ning application.

The **Edward Dunbar Rich Service Award** is presented annually by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), in conjunction with the AWWA, to water utility personnel completing 25 years of service. Matthew C. Weldon, along with 27 other water utility service employees from various areas of the state, were recognized this year acknowledging their meritorious and faithful service in providing and maintaining a safe, dependable and adequate water supply. Matt has been with the township since 1984 and is currently the Water Distribution Assistant Superintendent. His many years of experience and dedication are instrumental in the department's safety program and the daily operations of the water distribution system. PCT would like to commend Matt for his 25 years of township service and congratulate him on the receipt of the Edward Dunbar Rich Service Award.

The receipt of these major AWWA awards... acknowledges the continued public safety commitment of PCT.

The PCT water distribution system supplies over 30,000 people located in Plainfield Township, Alpine Township, Algoma Township, Grand Rapids Township, and parts of the City of Walker. The public water supply system of PCT consists of a water treatment plant (full treatment/lime softening), a distribution system consisting of over 200 miles of water main, water meters in each customer's home and facility, and over 2000 valves and hydrants respectively. There are 13 water tanks ranging in capacity from 200,000 gallons to 4 million gallons of water. These tanks provide pressure and water for fire protection. Five pump stations move water to our tanks and four pressure districts. Maintaining and ensuring the safe water supply of this vast distribution system is no small or simple task. The receipt of these major AWWA awards regionally acknowledges the continued public safety commitment of PCT.

PARCC Side Clean Water Plant – WORKING FOR YOU, WORKING FOR EVERYONE

The Grand Opening of the newly operational PARCC Side Clean Water Plant finally happened on June 5. Although apparently not worthy of being covered by the area's largest newspaper, this ecologically friendly, \$48 million infrastructure investment by the communities of Plainfield, Alpine, Rockford (City of), Cannon, and Courtland Townships [PARCC] is a modern day testament to "doing the right thing the right way" by cleaning and disposing of the collective wastewater production of 50,000 people and dozens of commercial and industrial businesses.

Those who have followed the saga of this achievement will remember that it was conceived and given birth in a contentious atmosphere where the five partner communities ultimately rejected the City of Grand Rapids' ultimatum to submit to the City's new paradigm for accepting and treating our collective sewage. Our research and studies demonstrated to the satisfaction of the North Kent Sewer Authority communities' leadership that the new sewage plant would provide state-of-the-art processing of sewage to a reliable state of "clean" at a price that would be cost competitive with the Grand Rapids alternative for the next 25-30 years.

Does it cost the typical sewer user more than they were paying five year ago? Yes, it most certainly does. Would those sewer customers be paying lower rates if we had accepted the Grand Rapids ultimatum? Apparently not in Plainfield Township! Is the immediate and larger community of the Lower Grand River Valley getting a bigger bang for their money?

Ask the visitors to the PARCC Side Clean Water Plant who are able to *drink the final product of wastewater treatment with confidence and no ill effects!* Has any of the four million+ gallons processed daily been released untreated into the Grand River during moderate or heavy rainfalls? I think you would have read that in the *Grand Rapids Press* if that had happened. If this means anything at all – even to the naysayers, I submit that we are all getting a HUGE bang for our bucks.

Without any tongue-in-cheekiness, the beneficiaries of the PARCC Side CWP's operations can thank the City of Grand Rapids for insisting on a very steep increase in the cost of continuing to send our sewage to the Market Street Sewage Plant. Had this not occurred, it would have been business as usual, so I am thankful that we were pushed into taking the alternative, the hard road. Will there be problems? Will there be unforeseen, or even catastrophic, events that detract from this success? I feel comfortable in predicting there will be. Any pollution that may be caused by the effects of Murphy's Law will be the exception – not the rule, and it will be overcome and corrected.

Let us all pause here and remember the skill and dedication of the unheralded workers who maintain and operate our public sewer system – not just the Clean Water Plant, but the gritty people who do the unpleasant work of taking care of the collection system. Let us also recognize the decision-makers who properly support adequate funding of this important component of the public infrastructure.

Robert Homan, Township Manager

Celebrate Veterans Day November 11

Back on September 16, 2002, ground was broken for the Veterans Memorial Park at the intersection of Jupiter and Belmont. Recognition programs have been held since then every Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Please join Township officials, United States Representative Vern

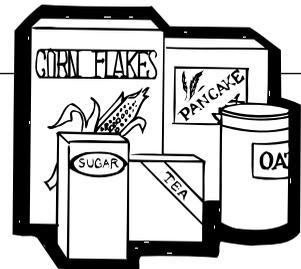


Ehlers, and the Sons of the American Legion Squad 258, at Veterans Memorial Park, on Wednesday, November 11, 7:00 pm, for a cel-

ebration in recognition of Veterans Day.

The establishment of the park was the accomplished with the help of many hard-working volunteers and monetary donations from community members and businesses. The beautiful landscape is maintained by a special

group of volunteers in cooperation with the Township's Buildings and Grounds department.



Commodity Distribution

Commodities will be distributed from River Grove Retirement Community, located at 5761 Jupiter Avenue, just north of West River Drive (enter from Jupiter Avenue) from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. To qualify, you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road.

Distribution dates are December 3, 2009, March 4, 2010, June 3, 2010, and September 2, 2010.

New families wishing to qualify may call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to the distribution site on the above date. Bring Social Security cards for each member of your family along with income statements.

Jim Granzotto, manager

Hard Times II

In the February issue of *The Profile* (available on the Township's website), I wrote an article entitled "Hard Times." I'm following up with another installment because time has passed, things have become clearer, and we are more certain about what Plainfield Township is doing – and what we may be doing – to address the problems of declining General Fund revenue and trying to balance our budget.

Over the past couple of months I submitted to the Township Board's Budget and Finance Committee a budget that included all of the requested appropriation of funds for 2010 by the various General Fund departments and offices. Also included in that submission were many suggested cuts to the requested departmental budgets that would help to result in a balanced budget – one that would bring proposed expenditures in line with anticipated revenue – revenue that will be reduced due to cuts from the State of Michigan and due to the dismal economy of our state and region.

Cutting requested budgets has been common for the past eight years, but the cuts that were relatively easy several years ago have become much more difficult as the economy has spiraled downward without any clear indication where the bottom will be and when things might improve. I have laid off two full-time employees from the General Fund and will recommend additional full-time positions be eliminated as opportunities to do so occur. There will be no across-the-board increases in employee compensation in 2010, and we are looking for reductions in the cost of employee benefits, especially health care insurance. An example of cuts that ought to be avoided if at all possible is the replacement of the leaking roof on Township Hall, which we

estimate at \$210,000. We can only hope that we can cope with dripping water from ceilings without experiencing serious damage in the process.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind *Profile* readers that local government is not optional; we have a job to do and services that need to be paid for. We are going to try hard to continue our work with fewer resources. This coming year is going to be worse than 2009, and I expect that 2011 and 2012 will get progressively worse in terms of the Township's ability to match available resources with required, prudent, and desired expenditures. I encourage you to go to our website,

www.plainfieldchartertp.org, as the Township Board considers the budget this fall and decides how to deal with this problem. Take this opportunity to see and understand what the Township is doing with the tax dollars it receives. If you have questions, please contact your elected representatives or me, and we will try to assist you. I can tell you right now that the Board will NOT be increasing property taxes for 2010. I provided the Board with three suggestions on how and why property taxes might be increased to provide for General Fund needs. The proposals would have resulted in modest increases in General

Fund resources; however, the Board declined to implement any of these three proposals.

Let me leave you with one request: Pay attention to what is going on in State, County, and Township government. The issues and the road to solving the fiscal dilemma we are facing are complex – but they are understandable. The opportunity and the ability to be informed are there, and good citizens should take advantage of them.

Robert Homan, Township Manager

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Hyser Rivers Museum

In September, an Open House was held at the Hyser Rivers Museum, in conjunction with the Grand Rogue Campground Civil War Re-Enactment Days. Visitors to the museum commented on what a “cool place” the museum is and how much history it contains about Plainfield Township and surrounding areas. The members of the Historical Commission Board enjoy showing off the museum and welcome all visitors.

The museum, located at 6440 West River Drive, is open the first Sunday of the month, from May

through December, 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Special tour arrangements can be made for other times by calling the Township Hall at (616) 364-8466. Please call for a special tour!

The fall and winter schedule of events are:

November 1st – Kids crafts – getting ready for Halloweeeeen! All little ghosts and goblins are welcome!

December 6th – An Old Fashioned Family Christmas Craft Day. Come “make and take” a craft project for the whole family to enjoy!

Township Benefits From Two Eagle Scout Projects

Nicholas Sevigny and Nathan Smith, of Plainfield Township, were honored at the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America 2009 Building Character Celebration earlier this year for achieving their Eagle Scout award in 2008.

Nicholas designed and installed cemetery lot markers for Oakwood Cemetery and Nathan built four wooden benches which were installed at the Plainfield Township Community Center. Thanks to both of these new Eagle Scouts and their Scout Masters, Christopher Powers and Lawrence Wilson, and all dedicated scout leaders that are helping our young people become the leaders of tomorrow.

A Novel Experience! KDL presents an evening with John Grogan, bestselling author, featuring “Life Lessons from Marley and Me.” Book signing to follow. Tickets are \$10 in advance and can be purchased at any KDL branch location, or any Schuler Books & Music location in Grand Rapids. Proceeds support KDL’s literacy programs for young children. Thursday, October 29, 7:00 pm at the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center

Free Computer Confidence Classes are being offered this fall at the **KDL Service Center**, 814 West River Center (behind the Wendy’s) in Comstock Park. Classes focus on keyboarding, basic computer skills, and internet and e-mail use. Please call 784-2007 or check www.kdl.org for more information.

Bring your whole family to the library for these free programs!

For Young Children (registration required)...

Babytime – Join us at the library for a special one-on-one bonding time with baby while we enjoy songs, rhymes, stories, and play time. For ages birth-18 months with caregiver.

Plainfield Branch – Wednesdays, Sept. 23-Nov. 18 at 1:00 pm

Toddler Time (formerly Lapttime) - Babies, toddlers, and their parents are invited to join us for stories, music, & rhymes. For ages 3 & under with caregiver.

Comstock Park Branch – Mondays, Sept. 14 – Nov. 2 at 10:30am

Plainfield Branch – Thursdays, Sept. 24-Nov. 19 at 9:45 am & 10:45 am

Preschool Storytime – Stories, songs, crafts, & other book-related fun with a different theme each week. For ages 3 ½ to 6.

Plainfield Branch – Thursdays, Sept. 24 – Nov. 19 at 9:45am and 10:45am

Comstock Park Branch – Mondays at 10:30am

Family Time – Stories, songs, crafts & other book-related fun for the family with a different theme each week. For ages birth-6 with caregiver.

Plainfield Branch - Mondays, Sept. 21-Nov. 16 at 10:00 am, and Saturdays, September 26-December 5 at 10:00 am

Pajama Storytime - Bedtime stories & night time fun. For ages 6 & under with caregiver. Comstock Park Branch – Monday, Nov. 9 at 10:30 am

Plainfield Branch - Wednesdays, October 7-November 18 at 7:00pm

Gaming Unplugged – Who needs electronics? Play tabletop sports games, test your knowledge of major league trivia and decorate sports pennants and helmets. Ages 6 and up. Comstock Park Branch – Thursday, October 22 at 6:30.

Come and See What’s in the Sea – KDL celebrates the 2009 Michigan Reads title: **The Pout Pout Fish** by Sarah Diessen, with an ocean of fishy activities, music, & critters. For ages 6 and under with caregiver.

Comstock Park Branch, Monday, Nov. 16 at 10:30 pm

Plainfield Branch - Saturday, November 14 at 10:00 am

NEWS ... NEWS NEWS ... NEWS

Ruff Readers – Ruff Readers is a unique read-aloud program that pairs **kids ages 6 and up** with trained therapy dogs & handlers who love to hear a good story. Call to register for a 15-minute session. Presented in partnership with the West Michigan Therapy Dog Association.

Plainfield Branch - Thursdays, September 24-
November 19 from 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

Gingerbread Lane - Take a stroll down Gingerbread Lane and enjoy some tasty gingerbread stories. Each child will make a simple gingerbread house. For all ages.

Comstock Park Branch – Tuesday, Dec. 1, 6:30 pm
Plainfield Branch – Saturday, Dec. 19, 10:30 am

Happy Holiday Magic Show - Bring the whole family to enjoy a holiday magic show full of snowmen, elves, and fun.

Plainfield Branch - Saturday, December 12 at
10:30am

For Teens—all at the Plainfield Branch...

Teen Book Discussion – Join us for discussion and snacks as we talk about the book “The Giver” by Lois Lowry.

Thursday, October 13 at 4:00 pm

Rock Band for Teens – Become a rock star at the library! Tap into your Rock & Roll Fantasy as you form a band and tour for fame in Rock Band.

Thursday, October 15 @ 4:00 pm

Guitar Hero – It’s a rhythm-packed event whatever you do as you move and groove to Guitar Hero!

Thursday, October 22 @ 4:00 pm

Nintendo Wii – Show off your Wii skills or learn some new Wii tricks with your friends.

Thursday, October 29 at 4:00 pm

Pizza Tasting – Help us decide who has the best pizza pie in the area! Sample local pizzeria offerings and determine which one you like the best! Registration is required and participation is limited.

Thursday, November 5 at 4:00 pm

Wii Super Smash Brothers Tournament – The KDL Teen Video Gaming Tournaments continue with Super Smash Bros. Brawl, snacks, prizes, and more. Many will enter; only one will be crowned champion!

Saturday, November 21, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

For Adults...

Scrapbooking Club – Meet with other avid scrapbookers to trade ideas and to inspire each other. Bring your own supplies.

Comstock Park Branch – The first Monday of each month at 6:00 pm.

See page 11 for news about *The Friends of Plainfield Library*.

PLAINFIELD BRANCH HOURS

2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930

Mon. through Thurs. 9:30 am to 8:00 pm

Friday, Saturday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

(during the school year only)

COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH HOURS

3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860

Monday 9:30 am to 8:00 pm

Wednesday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Friday, Saturday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

It has been almost a year since I was given the privilege of serving as your Township Clerk. Much has taken place during my rookie year. The economy has continued to present challenges to all who live in Michigan. I have to tell all of you how proud I am to tell people I work for the folks of Plainfield Township for several reasons. The first is the comments I started to get soon after the Plainfield Township Farmers market opened at our new location on Plainfield Avenue. The vendors all started to tell me how pleased they were with the customers that were attending the market. This made for a very exciting summer. The more the vendors were pleased with attendance at the market the larger it grew. This gave more growers the ability to sell their produce and attracted a variety of artisans and crafts sellers.

It is also a pleasure to meet many of you when you visit Township Hall to apply for a passport. Our goal continues to be to get the application processed in 10 minutes or less. With the success of the Farmers Market we have been able to open a Passport Office on Thursdays from 2 pm until 7 pm at the Farmers Market. We also will have a special Passport Day scheduled for Saturday October 31, 2009, at Township Hall from 8 am until 4 pm. Both of these efforts are being done to make this service available to all of you who need a passport, but find it hard to apply during your busy work days.

The State of Michigan began offering a new incentive program for commercial redevelopment and Plainfield Township became the first municipality in Kent County to have a business and the community benefit from this program. As clerk, I was given the opportunity to review the application. The result has been the creation of a rehabilitation district that freezes the property tax for ten years and the business will spend over \$500,000 to remodel a boarded-up structure on Plainfield Avenue. Even in this down economy, jobs are being created through cooperation between business and your local government.

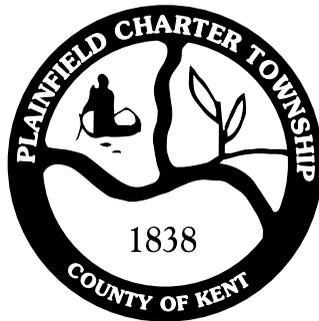
There will be a special election on November 3, 2009, for those who are registered voters in the Rockford School District. Polls will open at 7 am and will close at 8 pm that day. The ballot will contain a proposal for consideration of a millage renewal for property except

for your principle residence and other property exempt by law. If you live in the Rockford School District please make an all-out effort to get to the polls or apply for an absentee ballot if you will not be able to get to the polls on Election Day.

As this will be the last *Profile* printed in 2009, I once again want to tell you how pleased I am to be able to serve as your clerk. I want to wish all of you Happy Holidays as that time of year is rapidly approaching. May you be blessed during these times and enjoy those special days with your families.

Scott Harvey, Township Clerk

Proud to Be Your Clerk



Is Your Home Hazardous?

Many of the products we use in our homes every day are hazardous. If they are disposed of improperly, these products can end up in nearby streams and lakes and harm fish and wildlife.

A product is considered hazardous if it is toxic, flammable, corrosive, or reactive. Always check the label to see if a product is hazardous. The label may have a picture of a skull and cross bones or contain the words WARNING, CAUTION, DANGER, or POISON.



To protect our environment, follow these tips:

- Use products in accordance with the manufacturer's directions.
- Follow the proper disposal measures.
- Do not dump products into the storm drain, which may flow to a nearby stream or lake.
- Take any unused portions to your county's hazardous waste collection site.
- Use nontoxic alternatives when possible.



Friends of the Plainfield Library

The Friends of the Plainfield Library is a 501 c(3) nonprofit group that is dedicated to raising funds for the library to supply furnishings and equipment to make our library user-friendly and also to sponsor programs for tots, teens and adults. Donations of good-condition books, CD's, magazines and videos are greatly appreciated. Donations keep our Kiosk and Book Nook fund raisers running smoothly. **A BIG THANK YOU** to all you who continue to contribute items.

FYI! Friends' events for the fall and winter are listed below:

Saturday, October 24th: A Home-Based Business & Craft Show

Get an early start on your holiday shopping. The show will feature guest jewelry artist Sarah Martin, who turns junk into gems. **Silent Auction Baskets** and a **Bake Sale** are included in this show. **NO admission fee.** Hours are 9:30 am – 2:30 pm. (This is the 13th year for this event.)

Saturday and Sunday, December 5th and 6th: A Quality Used Book Sale

A Quality Used Book sale will feature items of gift-giving quality. As a special treat, Friends will be serving cookies and punch the morning of Saturday, December 5th, to thank the many patrons who donate materials for our used books sales, the Book Nook and the Kiosk.

If you would like to join this friendly group of people, the membership fee is nominal and the perks are great. Meetings are held the second Monday of every month at 6:30 pm in the lower level of the library; an elevator is available. Meetings are not mandatory, but networking ideas for fund raisers and meeting new people is worth your time.

For further information regarding membership and upcoming programs, please visit the library at 2650 5 Mile Rd NE or call (616) 647-3930. Attend a Friends' of the Plainfield Library meeting, get to know this great group of dedicated people and enjoy some great perks.

For Most, Taxable Value for 2010 to Stay the Same

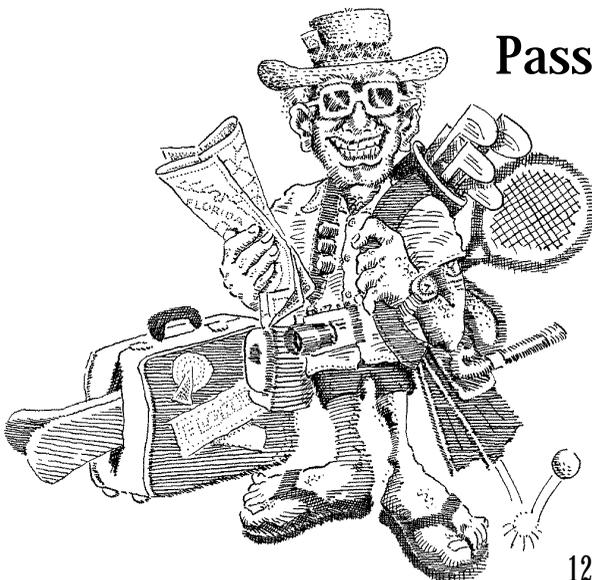
As of this writing, a decreased demand in the economy has contributed to an expected 0% CPI (Consumer Price Index). What this means is that the Taxable Value for 2010 will not increase due to inflation and therefore, taxable value will only increase because of new construction or items discovered on our field studies that have not been previously assessed.

There has been a significant decline in housing sales and the homes that are selling for less than a year ago. For the 2010 assessment year, we will be comparing sales to assessments from October 1, 2008, through September 30, 2009, as mandated

again this year by the State Tax Commission. Over 60% of our sales have met the taxable value and in those instances the taxable value could actually decrease if the assessment decreases.

These are challenging times for all of us and we intend to do our best to be fair and equitable when administrating the property tax. Foreclosure-related sales need to meet the market value test. Every foreclosure-related sale has to be verified to be determined if it is actually arm's length. An affidavit needs to be completed by either the buyer or lender in order to be considered for inclusion in our sales study.

Judy LaFave, Assessor



Passport Day is Back!

October 31, 2009 from 9 am until 4 pm
Plainfield Charter Township Offices
6161 Belmont Ave, Belmont

The Plainfield Township passport office is once again offering a special Saturday for your convenience to be able to apply for your passport. Remember we are a one-stop shop for accepting your passport application. Bring your driver's license, original birth certificate and your checkbook or cashiers check and we can process your application in 10 minutes or less.

2009 Summer tax collection...

From July 1 to September 7, the Township collected 46% of the summer taxes and from September 8-14, we collected 45%. So if you came into the office to make your payment, you understand why you had to stand in line for a bit. Please have your check made out before coming to the counter. More partial payments and payment by credit card were processed then in prior years.

2009 Summer taxes reminder notice...

As a courtesy, the Treasurer will mail special Reminder Notices to those taxpayers who did not pay their entire 2009 summer tax bill. Effective September 15th, there is 1% interest per calendar month added to the balance.



2009 Winter taxes due date...

The winter taxes are due on February 14th. Because the 14th is on a Sunday in 2010 and the 15th is Presidents Day, the winter tax due date for 2010 is February 16th. Starting the 17th all taxes not paid will have an additional 3% late fee.

Online tax and utility bill payments – two different mailing addresses...

If you pay bills online through your bank, please be aware of different mailing addresses for utility payments and tax payments. Send

utility payments (water/sewer) to: Plainfield Charter Township, 6161 Belmont Ave. NE, Belmont, MI 49306-9609. Send tax payments to: Plainfield Charter Township, P.O. Box 2165, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2165.

Taxpayer question: Have my taxes been paid?...

You can access your property information via the Internet by accessing the Township's web site, www.plainfieldchartertp.org. On the home page and in the \\Quick Find\\ box, trickle downward and click "Property Info" button on the Township's home page. You will get a screen that lists "Plainfield Township" and all you have to do is click the Login button. From there you can retrieve information by various search criteria. The Assessing and Tax information is available. All of this is public information. All of the pages are printable for Federal/State tax reporting. The data is updated daily and available 24/7. If you have any questions, feel free to call and we can walk you through the process.



Dog tags...

The Township will be selling dog tags from December 1, 2009, to March 1, 2010.

Happy Birthday, Profile!

With this issue, *The Profile* celebrates 35 years of serving the citizens of Plainfield Charter Township.

PLAINFIELD FD FIRE DEPARTMENT

FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

There are several topics relative to the Fire Department I would like to briefly review in this issue of the *Profile*.

BURNING – The Township Board passed new burning regulations this year. The revised ordinance limits open burning to two specific periods, one in the spring March 15 - May 15 and one in the fall October 1 - November 30. There will be no burning other than recreational fires allowed outside of these dates. The revised ordinance will be posted online at www.plainfieldfire.org before it goes into effect this fall.

FIRE DEPARTMENT MASTER PLAN – The Township Board has adopted a Master Plan for the Fire Department consisting of ten goals. The goals are:

- Minimize death and injuries due to fire -Minimize direct and indirect losses due to fire,
- Minimize death and suffering for people experiencing sudden illness, accidents, or injury,
- Improve the community's ability to avoid, prevent and appropriately react to fires and medical emergencies,
- Provide effective leadership and management by utilizing technology and management systems,
- Minimize deaths, injuries, and property loss due to natural, technological and weapons of mass destruction related disasters,
- Improve employee health and safety,
- Provide cost effective fire protection and emergency services,
- Protect local ecosystems, and
- Optimize citizen satisfaction.

The Department's members have worked very hard to not only develop these goals but also to identify current and potential future weaknesses that would prevent the department from maintaining a quality level of service. The next challenge is finding the resources to provide this service.

TAXES/GRANTS – Recently the Grand Rapids Press ran a small article saying that a request to apply for a grant from FEMA was rejected by the Township Board. That was correct. I asked the Board if they wanted the Fire Department to invest the time necessary to prepare a grant request for two additional firefighter positions. The additional staff would be filled with part-time employees who would be assigned to each station 24/7. They declined because they felt we did not have the funds for the matching 50% required to receive the grant. The Press reported that this would require a 25% increase in taxes. That was an error. What was stated in the Department's request was that .25 mills (one quarter of 1% of the taxable value of a property) would help to offset the grant match.

This has prompted me to provide a short lesson in where your tax dollars go. For every dollar you pay in taxes it is divided as follows: 40 cents goes to local schools, 16 cents goes to the State, 15 cents goes to Kent County, 12 cents goes to Kent Intermediate School District, 10 cents goes to Plainfield Charter Township, 5 cents goes to GR Community College, and 2 cents goes to the Kent County Library. The person who owns a home worth about \$240,000 pays one dollar a day for the services provided by Plainfield Charter Township, approximately

37 cents of which goes for the operation of the Fire Department.

We have aggressively sought grants for the past several years and have been fortunate enough to receive several over the past five years totaling close to \$500,000 with a required match from the Township of less than \$40,000. These grants have provided protective clothing, self-contained breathing apparatus, technology for training, computer software and other items that would have been purchased 100% by the Township had we not received the grants.

COST CONTAINMENT – The Plainfield Fire Department has always tried to be conscientious about cost. Our staffing model has saved nearly 2.5 million dollars since it was implemented in 2003. We have worked to save energy costs, we are making every effort to minimize overtime, we did not fill a fulltime position that became vacant due to a firefighter leaving and, unfortunately, we found it necessary to eliminate an administrative position to help balance the budget. All of the employees of the Fire Department understand that times are tough for many people and we are doing our best to contain cost.

CENTRAL DISPATCH – In 2007 I wrote about the need for improvements in our dispatch system and there has been progress in this area. The Kent County Central Dispatch Authority

is in the process of selecting software that will be placed in all of the dispatch centers. This new dispatch system and centralized call taking, should significantly improve how emergency responders in Kent County are dispatched and will be operational in 2010.

MUTUAL AID – With the addition of the new Computer Aided Dispatch software and the adoption and implementation of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), which the Fire Departments are working on, mutual aid will be easier to receive and give. The fire service has a long-standing tradition of helping one another out on big fires or responding in those pockets where our neighboring Fire Departments have a hard time responding in a timely manner. My fear is that as the budget noose tightens more and more, communities will see mutual aid as a panacea and try to “do more with less.” Unfortunately, this is not an everyday solution. If we cannot consistently conduct operations on a single-family residence without requiring mutual aid, then we are not really providing fire protection. I think if we are going to resort to that type of mentality we need to look at forming a fire authority, which could systematically coordinate the use of the resources for an area while equalizing the cost of fire protection to all who benefit from it. This is also something that the fire chiefs are looking at.

Chief David Peterson

Notice of Special Election – Rockford Public Schools

When: November 3, 2009 from 7 am until 8 pm

Where: At your regular Precinct polling locations

What is on the ballot? A proposal to allow the school district to levy the statutory rate of 18 mills on property, except for principal residence and other property exempt by law, required for the school district to receive its revenue per pupil foundation allowance and renews millage that will expire with the 2009 tax levy. Review the ballot for additional wording.

Please make sure you make every effort to cast your vote if you live in the Rockford School District.

The Profile

Plainfield Charter Township
6161 Belmont NE
Belmont, MI 49306

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
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GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT NO. 657

Plainfield Charter Township

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday
Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

George Meek, Supervisor
Scott Harvey, 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.painfieldchartertp.org