Laketown News

Terry Hofmeyer, Laketown Township Supervisor

Trip - Election - Internet

It was just a couple of weeks ago that my wife and I returned from a Colorado vacation. We traveled about 2,500 miles through portions of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado. Driving to and from Colorado was, for the most part, uneventful. Cornfields, truck stops and rest areas are pretty much the same whether you're in Michigan on the interstate or on the highway in any other state. Arriving in Colorado we were struck by the colors, mostly yellow and rusty reds, of the aspens on the mountain sides. I thought of the vibrant fall colors that we will be shortly enjoying here in Laketown Township. I think that I much more enjoy and prefer our local colors. We were staying in Grand Lake, Colorado and visited their historic site and landmark - the Grand Lake Lodge. It's old, well maintained and it welcomes you to the Rocky Mountain National Park. I thought of our own historic site, the Felt Estate/Mansion which welcomes each of us and our visitors to the beautiful expanse of the Lake Michigan shoreline. That my friends is a real joy to behold! It snowed during our last night in Colorado. It was a hard, crusty and icy mixture. I much prefer a gentle blanket of white, fluffy, gently falling snow. The point of all of this is although it is great to travel and be exposed to new vista, people and ideas we should never apologize for what we have to offer since, in my opinion, we have a community that can compete with the best in our country. Experience it! Enjoy it!

The General Election is upon us and I expect and urge everyone to vote this November. I have had friends, on both sides of the aisle, express unhappiness over some of the choices offered to them in this year's election. My response: this is not the time to be "faint-of-heart"! Each of us needs to step up and exercise our right to select our future leaders. Every vote counts and I would like to see yours count as well. It's important! VOTE!

Internet access remains a topic of interest with residents voicing opinions both for and against continued study to provide service for all township residents and property owners. Our township Manager and I have met with representatives from Charter Communications to discuss expanded service areas, but this will not happen without costs to township property owners and, although we have had discussions about probable costs, we do not have a formal proposal from Charter. Wireless access has been suggested as a viable alternative, but the need for multiple towers and potential "blocking" by trees may lessen its impact as an option for consideration. I believe that the township should not cease to explore options until we arrive at a solution that may be acceptable to our residents.

Michigan Cares for Tourism Transforms the Felt Estate

The only word to describe our Michigan Cares for Tourism workday at the Felt is WOW! Over 175 tourism professionals from across the State of Michigan joined together and descended on the estate on September 14 and completed 17 projects. From painting the chapel and barn to creating a 1500 foot path (that will eventually connect with the State Park), volunteers gave of their time and money to “give back” to our site and to our great State. To see over 500 photos of the event, visit the Michigan Cares for Tourism Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/MichiganCaresForTourism/

AMAZING work by amazing people.
GENERAL ELECTION – NOVEMBER 8, 2016

MICHIGAN VOTING POLLS OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES: 7 AM TO 8 PM

VOTER REGISTRATION: Check to see if you are registered to vote, print out an application for an absentee ballot, see your sample ballot for the upcoming election, track the status of your absentee ballot, verify your voter registration on line at the Michigan Secretary of State’s Office at https://vote.michigan.gov/mvic/.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS: A voter who wishes to receive an absentee ballot must request it in writing from the clerk. An absentee ballot application form is available online at www.laketowntwp.org, under the Elections and/or Forms tabs or at https://vote.michigan.gov/mvic/.

ELECTION INFORMATION: The following offices will appear on the November 8, 2016 Ballot: President and Vice-President; Congressional; Legislative; Members of State Board of Education; Regent of the U of M; Trustee of MI State University; Governor of Wayne State University; County; Township; and Board Members to Holland, Hamilton and Saugatuck Schools; and two proposals for Hamilton Public School.

SAMPLE BALLOT: A sample ballot is enclosed.

STRAIGHT PARTY VOTING: Voters may select a partisan section, straight party ticket, or you may also “split” your ticket.

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 11 -- If you are not currently registered to vote.

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GIBSON CEMETERY

Before the arrival of cold weather and snow, we ask that all flower baskets and mementoes be removed from the gravesides in the cemetery.

See You in The Parks

Michelle Sall

As the cooler weather rushes in, the leaves begin to fall, and we head indoors to the warmth and comfort of our homes, it’s a good time to reflect and thank those who worked hard over the spring and summer to make our parks safe, accessible, and clean.

All year long, our parks maintenance employee, Dan Williams, can often be found removing a downed tree, mending a walkway, or tackling a multitude of fix it projects.

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, you may see Jason Schrotenboer at Laketown Beach clearing sand from the walkways - no small task when working with a shifting dune and energetic visitors who stray from the boardwalk. We are also fortunate to have had a volunteer group of students from Holland Christian High School’s “Senior Serve Day” lend a hand with sand removal in May.

More recently we received expert advice and help with the Blueberry fields at Huysler from Brad Moorer CFO/VP Value Added Business.

The parks were also a popular location for the 16th annual Greater Ottawa United Way “Day of Caring” volunteer day. Held Thursday, September 15, the township received over 50 volunteers, many dressed in white T-Shirts with the words “Live United.” Volunteer crews were sent to Huysler Farm, Fairview, Sanctuary Woods, and Wolters Woods. Projects for the day involved trimming trails, improving walkways, weeding the gazebo area at Huysler Farm, hauling wheelbarrows full of bark or gravel, and improving access to the blueberry rows by removing trees, invasive vines, and thorny bushes.

Special thanks to the following companies who provided work teams throughout the day: Barber Ford, Fifth Third Bank, Holland BPW, ITW Draw-form, Macatawa Bank, Two Men and a Truck, and Tyson Foods.

We continue to evaluate ways to improve access, restroom facilities, and grant opportunities. We encourage your input regarding the types of recreational activities as well as improvements to the parks. Feel free to attend a Parks meeting held the third Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the township hall, or call with any comments or suggestions you may have. In addition, please consider a donation to a project you wish to see.
I always begin this article with something about nature in Laketown and now continue that tradition. Please share your observations with me and send them to my township email. I am curious what I am missing and where in the township you make your observations. We live in a wonderful township with Lake Michigan, complete with small lakes, a big lake and rivers, a multitude of hiking and biking options, and many other outdoor activity options. Autumn activities abound and we need to enjoy those before the white stuff comes. My wildlife observations: deer, coyote, fox, bald eagle, a great variety of waterfowl and song birds, and a lot of squirrel preparing for winter.

Builders and building contractors are busy in West Michigan right now and I am thankful for that. Our house is close to some upcoming developments and I am thankful for how our planning commission thoughtfully and carefully looks at all plans. Change is inevitable in our area and we all like to keep things the way they have been for years, and our Zoning Board and Planning Commission work really hard at attempting to maintain quality and density of development.

Summer taxes have been collected and distributed to schools, the Herrick Library, the Holland Pool Authority, the county, and the state. Our township runs pretty lean and of the money collected we only keep a small percent. If you did not pay your taxes on September 14, a late fee of 1% was added to the base tax amount on the first of each month. Call the township office at 616-335-3050 for current payoff amounts.

Winter tax bills will be mailed the first week of December and will be due on Tuesday, February 14, 2017. Prompt payment helps our township budget. Remember that postmarks are not honored. Interest and penalty will be added to any unpaid balance on February 15, 2017. The last day to pay taxes at the township office is February 28, 2017 and all unpaid tax balances will be sent to the Allegan County Treasurer on March 1, 2017 for collection. Additional interest and penalties will be added at that time.

If you wish to have your winter tax payment to fall in the 2016 calendar year, please remember the last business day of the calendar year is December 29, 2016.

Holidays at the Felt Mansion

The holidays seem far off – considering we’ve just entered autumn. But, the next newsletter will be too late to tell you all of the exciting happenings at the Felt Estate during the holiday season.

We will kick off our season on Saturday, December 3, with a fabulous fashion show with a 1920’s theme called “All The Jazz.” Featuring the incredible fashions of local designer Kirk Johnson, this fashion show will feature a few vintage pieces and many modern pieces inspired by the vintage designs. Before the show begins, we will have a catered lunch and holiday teas and coffees. This will be an event you won’t want to miss. It starts at noon. Tickets ($40 per person or 8/$300) go on sale online November 1. These fashion shows always sell out, so be sure to get your tickets early.

Saturday, December 10, is our annual Winterfest – a free family-fun day at the Felt Estate. With face-painting, horse-drawn wagon rides, self-guided tours of the mansion, and a free lunch --- this is a wonderful event for the whole family. No admission charge. Noon – 2:00 p.m.

Saturday evening, December 17, is our annual Taste and Tour event. This is one of our most popular events at the Felt Estate! Join us for this fun wine-and-beer tasting evening. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Guided tour of the mansion with director Patty Meyer begins at 6:00 p.m. $25.00 per person. The first 50 people through the door receive a free Felt Estate wine glass.

And, of course, throughout December we have both guided and self-guided tours. Self-guided tours are Mondays through Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. beginning December 12. Self-guided tours are $12 for adults; $10 for seniors and students. Children 12 and under are always free. Daytime Guided tours are Sunday afternoon, December 11, at 2:00; and Evening guided tours are December 16, 22, 23, 29, and 30 at 6:00 p.m. and on New Year’s Day at 2:00 p.m. ALWAYS consult the online calendar on the tour page of the website. http://www.feltmansion.org/private-guided-tours/

We are closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Eve.
Fall is here and October 9-15 is Fire Prevention week. The slogan for this year is “Don’t Wait, Check the Date”. This refers to the date your smoke alarms were manufactured, if they are over 10 years old they should be replaced.

Why focus on smoke alarms three years in a row? Because NFPA’s survey data shows that the public has many misconceptions about smoke alarms, which may put them at increased risk in the event of a home fire. For example, only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced.

As a result of those and related findings, we’re addressing smoke alarm replacement this year with a focus on these key messages:

* Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years, this includes interconnected (110 volt) smoke alarms.
* Make sure you know how old all the smoke alarms are in your home.

To find out how old a smoke alarm is, look at the date of manufacture on the back of the alarm; the alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date.

*A working smoke alarm is even more important today than it was 30 years ago. The reason can be found in actual home construction. Let’s take a look at Legacy Homes vs. Modern Homes.

A home that is referred to as a Legacy Home, is a home that was built with mostly dimensional lumber and has furnishings made of wood, cotton, silk and wool, non-synthetic materials.

A Modern Home is built with mostly engineered lumber (pieces of wood held together with glue), has more open space and has most if not all furnishings made of synthetic materials (manmade materials). Some examples of synthetic materials are nylon, polyester, acrylic, rayon and spandex. Synthetic materials are made by forcing chemicals that are derived from coal, oil or natural gas through tiny holes, that when they cool, form a thread of material, that is then used to make many of today’s home furnishings. So the bottom line is, synthetic materials are highly flammable, and when burned produce large amounts of noxious smoke. There is nothing wrong with these materials or furnishings, until they are subjected to heat or flame.

Research has shown that 30 years ago you had about 17 minutes to escape a house fire. Today you have only 3-4 minutes to escape a house fire, mostly due to the construction and furnishings used in today’s homes. This is why it is vitally important to have working smoke alarms in your home.

The Today show had a great demonstration of how fast fire can spread with the furnishings used today. Here is the link: http://www.today.com/home/newer-homes-furniture-burn-faster-giving-you-less-time-escape-t65826. Or just search, less time to escape a fire Today show.

If you need battery operated smoke or carbon monoxide alarm and cannot afford them, or are unable to install them, call the fire station at 616-396-4060. We are able to help.

As you clean your yards this fall, consider composting your leaves instead of burning them, your neighbors will appreciate it. Any open burning in Laketown requires a permit, and residential areas where lot sizes are smaller will only be given permits on odd numbered days if the conditions are favorable. Call the station or the township office to obtain a burn permit.

Have a safe and enjoyable Fall.
Laketown Township
4338 Beeline Road
Holland, Michigan 49423
Phone: (616) 335-3050
Fax: (616) 335-5459
www.laketowntwp.org

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Streets Lights – contact Consumers Energy 800-477-5050 or email at customer@consumers.energy.com
State Representative - Mary Whiteford (517) 373-0836
State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (517) 373-0793
U.S. Congressman - Fred Upton – (269) 982-1986

Laketown Township Board
Township Office - (616) 335-3050
Supervisor - Terry Hofmeyer
Treasurer - Gary Dewey
Clerk - Wendy Van Huis
Trustee - Linda Howell
Trustee - Ed Stielstra
Planning Commission Chair - Bob Cook
Zoning Board of Appeals Chair - David Weishaar
Parks and Recreation Chair - Michelle Sall

Township Staff
Manager - Al Meshkin
Assessor - Paul Smith
Administrative Assistants: Kathy Stoike, Charlene Fields, Jenifer French, Diane Ybarra, Staci Veldt
Facilities Operations - Dan Williams
Graafschap Fire Department - (616) 396-4060
Building Inspector - Al Ellingsen - (269) 214-2582
Mechanical Inspector & Plumbing Inspector - Bob Modreske - (616) 477-4940
Electrical Inspector - Gordon Bosch - (616) 396-1448

Allegan County Directory
County Commissioner -
Dean Kapenga - (616) 218-2599
Animal Control – (269) 673-0519
Central Dispatch – (269) 673-3899
County Clerk - (269) 673-0450
Drain Commissioner – (269) 673-0440
Health Department – (269) 673-5411
Register of Deeds – (269) 673-0390
Road Commission – (269) 673-2184
Senior & Veterans Services – 877-673-5333
County Treasurer – (269) 673-0260

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