

**Summer 2012**

# Milton Township News

32097 Bertrand Street Niles, MI 49120

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## Office Hours:

Monday 9:00-5:00

Wednesday 9:00-1:00

Friday 9:00-5:00



## Special Points of Interest

### Primary Election Day

August 7th, 2012, 7am - 8pm

### Public Hearing

Ambulance Assessment Renewal—  
Mon. July 23, 2012, 630pm

### Special Planning Commission

Meeting, Mon July 30, 2012,  
630pm

## Regularly Scheduled Meetings

### 3rd Monday Each Month

Township Board of Trustees  
7:00pm

### 1st Monday Each Month

Planning Commission  
6:30pm



## From Our Township Supervisor

Wow!!! It sure has been hot so far this summer. Please stay safe and cool. Here is some information that I hope you find useful.

If you are unable to come in and vote for the August 7<sup>th</sup> or November 6<sup>th</sup> elections due to travel or other hardship, contact our township clerk and request an absentee ballot application. The application can be completed at the township hall or mailed back in. Your township clerk can provide you with the details and application.

Residents that have a total gross household income of under \$40,000 or less for the preceding tax year and are either 62 years or older, eligible service person, or totally permanently disabled may be eligible to defer their summer property taxes to February with no additional penalties or interest. Please contact our township treasurer for additional information and an application.

Also, residents who have household incomes below the Federal Poverty Limits may be eligible for Poverty Exemption. When granted, a Poverty Exemption may reduce the amount of township property taxes you have to pay. The Milton Board of Review makes the final decision. For additional information and an application, please contact me, your township supervisor.

I continue to work with at least two companies on providing internet services to our rural sections of the township. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the township's planning commission discussed this issue and is looking for finding solutions that will work for our community. If you do not have Internet services available to your property and want it, please let me know so I can add you to our list. Hopefully we will have options available soon.

The board approved a new fireworks ordinance that is aligned with the new state regulations. We have posted it online and it reflects what types of fireworks are legal as well as during what times they are allowed. Please be careful of the dry conditions if setting off fireworks.

As always, I want to invite you to our township board meetings. They are every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 7:00pm at the township hall. We post our board packets online for your convenience and you can come into the township hall on the day of the meeting to review too. If you have any concerns/questions please feel free to contact me or any other board member

Robert Benjamin, Milton Township Supervisor  
(269) 262-0111, [supervisor@miltontwp.org](mailto:supervisor@miltontwp.org)

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION From The Township Board...

Here is an update on Milton Township's **Ambulance** and **Fire Services**, and their respective assessments/millages.

**AMBULANCE SERVICE:** The Milton Township Board is in the process of **renewing** the yearly \$20 ambulance assessment. This is an assessment that is being **renewed** every 8 years. This fund pays for the ambulance service provided to our residents. Some may wonder why there are two public hearings about this. The first meeting that was held on May 17th set the ambulance district as to where coverage will be and who is included in the assessment. The district will be the entire township. Businesses and industrial users were added to the assessment district and will now be charged \$20 a year as they are consumers of the services. Multi-family dwellings, such as apartments and duplexes, as well as campgrounds will see adjustments to be equal to \$20 per household dwelling per year. **Residential properties are still going to be charged \$20 per year, as they have been done in the past.** The meeting on July 23rd will be to hear any objections to the assessment for those who feel they should not be included in the assessment. You must protest the ambulance special assessment district in writing at the July 23rd public hearing (or before at the Township Hall) in order to later appeal the special assessment district. ( Article Continued on Page 2 >>>)

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP BOARD (Continued from Page 1)** The township board has voted to change ambulance services to SMCAS starting April 1st, 2013. SMCAS is currently looking to renovate the Milton Township community center in such a way that an ambulance and crew can be housed 24x7 thereby providing for the township and the surrounding communities. They are also planning the renovations so that elections can still be operated in the building. We will have more information available as we move into next year. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please contact the township.

**FIRE SERVICE:** On August 7th, a fire millage is proposed on the ballot. One mill is being requested for fire services only and cannot be used for other purposes. The township has decided not to make this an assessment, but rather have it as a millage that the voters can renew every 4 years. Without this millage the township will need to consider cutbacks in all services including fire. Keep in mind that running elections, collecting taxes for schools/counties, and zoning and planning are mandatory functions of township government, **whereas providing fire services and ambulances services are not.** With this millage, fire services will not be subjected to the budget cuts of the future. Here are a couple of examples of the projected cost impact. A person owning a \$100,000 house would have a maximum \$50,000 taxable value which would result in a \$50 yearly tax line item. A person owning a \$300,000 house would have a maximum \$150,000 taxable value which would result in a \$150 yearly tax line item.

Lastly, the township board is currently gathering feedback from residents regarding fire coverage for the township. Currently everyone on the east side of Gumwood is serviced by Edwardsburg Fire, and everyone touching Gumwood and to the west is serviced by Niles Township Fire. The need to update the township's fire contracts has prompted the board to examine all options for fire services. The board is talking with both fire departments about what is best for Milton Township residents. The board voted last month to discuss formally with Niles Township regarding contracting options. At next month's meeting on August 20th, the township board will be considering whether to stay status quo or to change to have Niles Township cover the entire township. This is an important decision and the board would need and appreciate your input. Please send e-mails, letters, or come to our board meeting on August 20th should you have an opinion or concern

## Commissioner's Corner

- The county held its annual Household Hazardous Waste, Electric Waste, Used Tire, Used Flag and Used Eye Glasses collection on May 19, 2012. It was a huge success with more than two times the participants from previous years. We collected a semi-trailer load of Hazardous Waste, two trucks full of Electronic Waste, two and one-half cages of tires, 60 US Flags (disposed of with a ceremony on Flag Day) and over 110 pair of glasses that were given to the Lions Club. This really made me feel proud and gave me a real sense of accomplishment because this was my first year being in charge of the event. I replaced the retired MSU extension agent who handled our collection event in the past.
- With the results of the 2010 census and re-apportionment, Milton Township will now be in the newly created District 5. You should have received a new voter registration card reflecting these changes. Beginning next year the number of County Commissioners and County Commissioner Districts has been reduced from 15 to 7. This means that the size of each district is more than doubled and each Commissioner's representation has increased from 3600 residents to 7600 residents.
- The Southwest Michigan Solid Waste Consortium, of which I

am currently one of two representatives for Cass County, has applied for and received a Tire Grant from the State. This means that each of the eight counties in the Consortium will be allocated \$3,000 for the collection of used passenger tires. Once a date, time and location have been established I will let you know when this free passenger tire collection will take place in our county.

- The Board of Commissioners recently hired an Interim County Administrator. He is Louis Csokasy and he was the previous manager of the Road Commission. He has both public and private service experience and has done an outstanding job while at the Road Commission.
- We are still working on the annual county budget. The State Revenue Sharing Funds that Cass County is to receive has been reduced. We are also currently in negotiations with one of the employee unions and we do not yet know what the impact of these negotiations will be on the county budget for fiscal year 2012-2013.

Don't forget to VOTE in the Primary Election on August 7, 2012.

Robert L. Ziliak, Commissioner, District 15

### FROM TRUSTEE DON KRONEWITTER

**Did you know?** All meetings of The Edwardsburg Fire Board and Edwardsburg Ambulance Service are open to the public? Meetings are held the 1st Tuesday every OTHER month at 7:00 p.m. The Fire Board meets at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Edwardsburg Ambulance Service. Location: Ontwa Township Hall, 26225 US 12, Edwardsburg, MI 49112. Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 7th at 7:00 p.m.

**NATS MEETINGS:** Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study. If you travel the streets and roads of Cass and Berrien Counties by Car, Truck, Bicycle, or on foot – the NATS meetings provide valuable information of how future road changes will affect you, your families, and friends. For NATS meeting handouts and future plans for our area, visit the following website: [http://www.swmpc.org/fy\\_2012\\_nats.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/fy_2012_nats.asp) Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. Location: Niles City Hall 508 E. Main Street Niles, MI 49120. Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 24, 2012 at 1:30 p.m.



# Treasurer

## From Our Township Treasurer

Summer weather brings Summer taxes.

Summer taxes are due no later than September 14th, 2012 without penalty. Payments mailed into the Township must be postmarked by September 14, 2012.

Summer tax collections began July 2nd, 2012 at Milton Township. Hours are Monday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00p.m.

I am retired now and will be even more available for appointments and collections. No appointments necessary on Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., as those are my set office hours. Have Questions? Stop in and chat!

If for any reason you do not receive a tax bill please call the office right away. It is the responsibility of each property owner to be sure the taxes are paid on time. For escrow accounts, if requested in writing, the tax bill will

be mailed to the financial institution. If you receive your tax bill, it is your responsibility to forward it to your financial institution.

Applications for deferments of Summer taxes may be obtained at the township office if you qualify. Please talk to Linda DeBroka, Treasurer for further information.

Delinquent personal taxes (NOT property taxes) are collected by the treasurer at Milton Township Office.

Please take precautions in this hot, dry weather and try to stay cool. Think cool and have a great summer!

Primary Elections are August 7th, 2012. Don't forget to vote!

Linda DeBroka



## From The Planning Commission

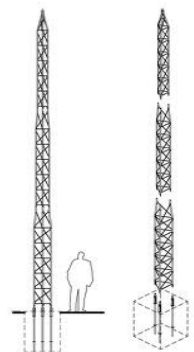
The **Master Plan** for Milton Township is now complete and was approved by the Board of Trustees at their June Meeting. Many thanks to all of the people who offered comments and visions for this Master Plan. The Plan will guide our process for the next 5 years. We are now beginning the process of implementing the Master Plan and updating our Zoning Ordinances to match the master plan. We are very excited about all of the work that we have completed in the fiscal year, please visit the Milton Township website to read the "Annual Report to the Board of Trustees."

On July 9, the PC received a presentation from a company about providing **Wireless Internet Service** to under-served parts of the township. The service involves using small wireless communication towers, similar to towers used for home television antennas. The PC was supportive of the technology available and is reviewing possible changes to Section 14.14 of our Zoning Ordinance to make it easier for residents to use small towers to receive wireless internet from any provider of this technology. Please watch the Township Official Notice Board, and website for updates.

Please feel free to join us at our monthly meetings, which are usually the first Monday of the Month. Some of the more interesting topics we will be discussing in the coming months are Home Occupation-Home based business Ordinance, Condominium Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and Lot Line and Parcel Combination Ordinance.

Kelly Sweeney-Chairman

Example of a Wireless Communication Tower for Internet Service . Height would vary by location.



### ELECTION SIGNS DURING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD

By: Paul J. Sniadecki, Zoning Administrator

The Milton Township SIGN Ordinance has been in place since 1985, with major revisions effective in 2009. The Ordinance permits **ELECTION SIGNS** to be a maximum of six (6) square feet in size. So, everyone is permitted to participate in the campaign process and express their opinion about candidates or ballot initiatives. Please remember that no **ELECTION SIGN** can be placed closer than 10 feet to a neighbor's property line, or in a manner that obstructs or confuses vehicle traffic. For more specifics, review Section 13.14 of the Ordinance. Also, no sign can be placed on your property without your permission.... that includes the road easement area if your deed shows you own it.



MILTON TOWNSHIP  
32097 Bertrand Street  
Niles, MI 49120

NEWSLETTER - Summer 2012

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## Postal Customer

### TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor Robert Benjamin (269) 262-0111  
supervisor@miltontwp.org

Treasurer Linda DeBroka (269) 684-7262  
treasurerdeboka@miltontwp.org

Clerk Eric Renken (269) 340-0122  
clerk@miltontwp.org

Trustee Sharon Ward (269) 683-9505  
trusteward@miltontwp.org

Trustee Don Kronewitter (269) 684-0467  
trusteeKronewitter@miltontwp.org

### Planning Commission

Kelly Sweeney, Chair (269) 683-2564  
Kara Boyles, Vice Chair, (574) 292-4737  
Sandra Redman, Secretary (269) 687-1635  
Ronald Jureziz, (269) 684-8546  
Jeremy Clanton, (269) 684-7111  
Richard Hebard, (269) 663-3324  
Sharon Ward, Ex-Officio Member, (269) 683-9505

### Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer

Paul Sniadecki (269) 329-8320  
zoning@miltontwp.org

We're on the Web at  
[www.miltontwp.org](http://www.miltontwp.org)

### Assessor

Douglas Brousseau  
Edwardsburg, MI  
(269) 699-7619

### Building Inspector

Wayne Hardin

At the Ontwa Twp. Hall in Edwardsburg  
(269) 663-2347  
(Tue., Thu., Sat. / 9am to Noon)

### Electrical Inspector

Johnny Hamilton (269) 684-7848

### Mechanical/Plumbing Inspector

Ed Wainwright (269) 663-8542

### Board of Review

Roger Kempton, Chair (269) 683-2875  
Robert Thibodeaux (269) 683-8659  
Steve Sante (574) 220-6085  
Virginia Kraft, Alternate

### Zoning Board of Appeals

Vacant (Chair) (269) 663-7508  
Linda DeBroka (269) 684-7262  
Sandra Redman, (269) 687-1635  
Robert Ziliak (Alternate)