



December 2012

Wilson Township News

Wilson Township, Charlevoix County

An important notice from the treasurer

New for 2012! Property tax records and on-line payment options are now available at www.charlevoixcounty.org/wilson.asp.

By clicking on the "Property Tax Inquiry" link, you will be directed to a site where you can create a free account that will allow you to view your tax records and to print receipts from 2005 to the current tax year.

Also, the township has partnered with **Point & Pay**, a service that offers credit card and E-check payment options. Credit card payments will incur a fee of 3% of the total charged. The fee for an E-check payment is a flat fee of \$3.00. All fees are collected and retained by **Point & Pay**.

Regular Township Treasurer's office hours are Monday through Friday 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM with limited availability Saturday and Sunday. This is a home office and the treasurer respectfully requests no calls after 8:00 PM. Messages and e-mails are returned daily. The office is closed on major holidays. If you would like to pay your taxes in person, please call ahead to be sure the treasurer is available.

Tax bills are mailed by December 1st for the winter bill and July 1st for the summer bill. If you do not receive your tax bill, it is your responsibility to call the township treasurer's office for a duplicate copy

The due date for the winter tax bill is Thursday, February 14, 2013. The treasurer's office will be open on February 14, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM for anyone wishing to pay their taxes in person to avoid interest and/or penalty.

Mortgage Escrows: Tax information will be forwarded to your bank per their request.

Receipts are mailed only on request. To request a receipt, make a note on your payment stub and a receipt will be mailed.

Taxes paid by a mortgage escrow or a title company will automatically generate a receipt to the owner.

Postmarks are NOT accepted by Wilson Township as an on-time payment. If you decide to mail your payment, please be sure to allow for delivery time.

Address corrections/changes should be made with the treasurer as soon as possible to avoid a delay in receiving your tax bill.

Name changes must be made by contacting the Charlevoix County Register of Deeds at 231/547-7204.



Board of Review (BOR) Corrections for the current billing year (July & December) will be made within a week of the BOR action. If you receive a corrected bill and have a mortgage escrow, be sure to immediately notify and forward the corrected bill

to your mortgage company. Prior year BOR corrections are handled by the Charlevoix County Treasurer's office. Contact them directly for their correction date timeline at 231/547-7202.

For questions regarding assessing or Board of Review, contact:

Todd Sorenson, Supervisor/Assessor
Telephone: 231/ 582-7122
Fax : 231/ 222-2300 or
E-mail: tbsorenson@charter.net

Kerri J. Reinhardt, Wilson Township Treasurer
Telephone: 231/ 582-9963
E-mail: kerrreinhardt@ymail.com

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 447
Boyne City, MI 49712

Physical Address:

00909 BC-EJ Road
Boyne City, MI 49712

Board of Trustees:

Todd Sorenson
Supervisor/Assessor
Phone: 231/ 582-7122
E-mail: tbsorenson@charter.net

Kerri Reinhardt, Treasurer
Phone: 231/ 582-9963
E-mail: kerrreinhardt@ymail.com

Marilyn Beebe, Clerk
Phone: 231/ 582-1033
E-mail: marilynbeebe@charter.net

Jeff Argetsinger
Trustee/Sexton
Phone: 231/ 582-2770
E-mail: jeffargetsinger@yahoo.com

Louie Fall
Trustee/Park Maintenance
Phone: 231/ 852-9418
E-mail: louisfall@yahoo.com



Township Meeting Schedule:

Planning Commission meets the 1st Wednesday of the month

Board of Trustees meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month

Zoning Board of Appeals meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month (if necessary)

Township Planning & Zoning Update—2012

Over the past year, the Wilson Township Planning Commission has been working on updating the township's Master Plan and the Recreation Plan. It is important to keep these plans updated as they are used as guides for the future growth and development of the township. Up-to-date plans are also requirements by the State and are needed to qualify for many types of grants.

Prior to developing any specific plans, a survey was sent out to all township property owners to get input. The township received 206 responses to the survey, for a return rate of approximately 17%, which is above average for this type of survey. The responses to the survey showed that many residents were supportive of having the township improve access to Deer Lake. One of the specific questions on the

survey asked about dredging the canal at Fall Park. Fifty-six percent of the respondents to this question were in favor of dredging the canal.

The canal was originally dug in the 1950's and was 8 to 9 feet deep at that time. Since then, the canal has filled with leaves and sediment and is now 3 to 4 feet deep and even shallower at the mouth of the canal. The canal would need dredging to some degree to allow access for pontoon boats and most small fishing boats. The exact extent of what would need to be dredged has not been determined, but if the project did move forward it would be the goal of the township to dredge as little as possible to limit the impact on fish habitat and to keep costs down.



Assessor's Updates

Property Taxes and CPI

If you own property in Wilson Township, or the State of Michigan for that matter, your taxes are probably going to increase in 2013.

Proposal A that was passed in 1994 allows the State of Michigan to increase property taxes every year by 5% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is lower. Usually this means that taxes go up. In 2010, taxes went down for the first time since 1995. The change was a reduction of 0.3%. In 2011 taxes increased 1.7% and for 2012, the current year, taxes went up 2.7%. For 2013, the State of Michigan has determined the CPI has increased by 2.4%, so taxes will increase by 2.4%.

What determines the CPI? The CPI is established by the Federal Government and is based on consumer spending for all goods and services purchased for consumption by the population. Items such as food, beverages, apparel, home furnishings, medical care, education, insurance (except life insurance), communication, shipping of goods, tobacco, heating fuels, electric, and most important, at least for this year — **gasoline**. What is paid for gasoline and diesel fuel this year is driving the CPI higher by making shipping of goods cost more.



Can I have two Principal Residence Exemptions?

Under Michigan law, if you purchase a new home and claim a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) on the purchase but you still own your old home, which you are trying to sell, you may be eligible to claim a PRE on both properties.

If you are in such a situation, please contact the Wilson Township Assessor, Todd Sorenson by e-mail at tbsorenson@charter.net or phone 231/ 582-7122.

Adjacent Principal Residence Exemption

If you have a Principal Residence Exemption (Homestead Exemption) for the parcel of property your home is on and you also have vacant property on a separate deed that is next to your home parcel, you may be eligible for an Adjacent Principal Residence Exemption.

If you would like to check (you will need to provide both parcel numbers), please call Todd Sorenson at 231/ 582-7122 or e-mail at tbsorenson@charter.net.

Northern Michigan is being invaded by invasive weeds

Invasive *Phragmites*, a non-native reed, has gotten a foothold on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan and also in Lake Charlevoix. There are five major problems with *Phragmites*:

1. It pushes out all native vegetation and will fill any wetland.
2. It can grow up to 15 feet tall (native *Phragmites* only grows to 8 feet and coexists with other native vegetation).
3. Just a small piece of the plant floating in a lake or stream or carried in the wind can grow into a literal forest, filling, for example, the Fall Park channel within a summer. A piece caught on a car tire or boat propeller can be carried from one lake to another.
4. The dense stands degrade fishing, hunting and access to lakes and wetlands.
5. You can't simply cut or mow *Phragmites*. The only way to really control it is with the use of chemicals that kill it, then burn the stand.

Eurasian Milfoil is another weed problem facing Northern Michigan. It competes with native Milfoil and other aquatic vegetation and will eventually push out all other vegetation. Left uncontrolled it will grow into mats that take control of a lake, like Deer Lake, within two year's time. These mats not only affect



Eurasian Milfoil

recreational boating but because the Milfoil displaces plants eaten by fish and water fowl, it will also reduce the fish and water fowl populations. Another problem with the mats of Eurasian Milfoil is that they create the perfect habitat for mosquito larvae.

As with *Phragmites*, the Eurasian Milfoil can be carried into any lake on a boat or in a bucket of bait fish. Control of the invasive Milfoil is not only expensive but has drawbacks. Mechanical raking for the weed is time consuming and doesn't end the problem. Chemical eradication is expensive and may harm other vegetation. Milfoil weevils are another control method; but as with the other control methods, weevils are expensive and additional applications of the weevils may be needed for annual control.

If you see any of these plants growing in Wilson Township, please contact us in writing at P.O. Box 447, Boyne City, MI 49712 or email wilsontownship@gmail.org.

For more information on invasive *Phragmites* or Eurasian Milfoil, go to www.watershedcouncil.org.



Stands of Invasive Phragmites



Broadband Update

Back in April and May of this year, a survey was sent to Wilson Township residents to determine if there was interest in developing wireless broadband for the township and the surrounding area. Of 836 surveys that were sent out, 103 were returned because of a bad address (no mail box or it was a vacation home or camp, etc.). Of the remaining 733 homes that the survey was sent to, responses were received from 43%, four times higher than anticipated.

Of the surveys returned, 84% answered they would be likely to subscribe if Wilson Township were to develop broadband internet (if you have internet access, you can look at the responses from the survey at www.wilsontownship.org).

With the number of residents in favor of going forward with developing broadband access for the township, the Wilson Township Board is now actively reviewing how to accomplish this goal.

The first step in developing broadband access is to have an access point or a pipeline large enough to handle the traffic. Merit Network (www.merit.edu) has received grant money from the Federal Government to run fiber optic cable (the pipeline)

throughout Northern Michigan. Merit Network is currently finishing laying fiber optic cable from East Jordan along Behling Road to Pleasant Valley Road and into Boyne City. Our hope is to access the fiber optic cable somewhere along this corridor.

The second step is to have a company run the cable to locations where towers will be installed. While the exact locations for the towers have not been finalized, coverage maps have been developed to determine the best locations to give the most coverage for the township.

The third step, once the tower locations have been selected and use of the land has been established, is construction of towers either by Wilson Township or a company who will be supplying the broadband access.

The township board is currently in the process of meeting with Merit Network and other companies to find the best working relationship to accomplish the goal of broadband access for Wilson Township.

Updates on the process can be viewed on the Wilson Township homepage www.wilsontownship.org.

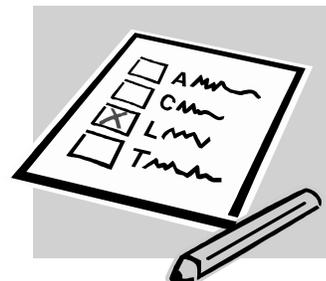
Election news from the clerk . . .

Wilson Township voter turnout for the 2012 General Election was recorded at 64.13% (vs. 66.73% for the 2008 General Election). Of the 1,483 registered voters in the township, 951 cast ballots. Of the 951 ballots cast, 184 absent voter ballots were tabulated, which means that 767 voters came to the hall to vote in person on November 6th.

Waiting times were minimal considering the length of the ballot and that nearly every minute the polls were open, one additional person came through the door to vote.

Kudos to the ladies who gave up their day to work as election inspectors. At times the pace was hectic and stressful and the day was long, but they stuck it out! Thank you to Pat Henning, Carol Clavier, Joan Janack, Ruth Gee, Shirley Crozier, Roseann Herrmann, and Pat May. I would also like

to thank the kind person or people who brought in the cinnamon rolls and peanut brittle. It was very thoughtful and the gesture was genuinely appreciated!



An interesting quick fact: Of the eight states that administer elections on the local level, Michigan is the largest—involving 83 county clerks, 1,240 township clerks, 274 city clerks and 93 village clerks. Michigan elections are administered by 1,690 county and local election officials—making it the most extensive election system in the nation (Bureau of Elections, June 2011).



Wilson Township Cemetery Notes

Wilson Township is home to three cemeteries: Knop Cemetery on the corners of Wilson and Behling roads; Lewis Cemetery on Healey Road; and Todd Cemetery on Fuller Road

If you are interested in purchasing a lot, contact Jeff Argetsinger by phone at 231/ 582-2770 or e-mail at: jeffargetsinger@yahoo.com.

NOTE: A Cemetery Ordinance is in effect. Please contact Jeff with any questions or concerns about cemetery regulations.

New Township Website Under Construction

Wilson Township has been part of the Charlevoix County website since the county site was first created. The problem with the county website is that there is no flexibility and little identity.

We are in the process of creating our own site at www.wilsontownship.org. The site is under construction but most of the old site has been linked to the new site until construction is completed. Please check it out and share your thoughts!

Are you having problems with your cable or satellite provider?

The "Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act" (Public Act 480 of 2006) was signed into law to promote competition for video services in the state of Michigan. The Act charges the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) with the responsibility to handle cable inquiries and complaints.

If you are having problems with your cable provider, you should first contact your provider and attempt to resolve the dispute with them.

If you are dissatisfied with the provider's response, or the dispute is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file an informal complaint with the MPSC.

If you remain dissatisfied after competing the informal complain process, you may file a formal complaint.

For more information about filing a complaint, PA 480, or the dispute resolution process, go to the MPSC website at: www.michigan.gov/mpsc and click on the video/cable button. You can also reach the MPSC at 1-800- 292-9555.

If you are experiencing a problem with your satellite provider, you should contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at 1-877-382-4357 or at their website www.ftc.gov.

Both links are posted on the Wilson Township website www.wilsontownship.org.