



WILSON TOWNSHIP NEWS

Winter 2013

Surprising Discoveries in Township Cemeteries

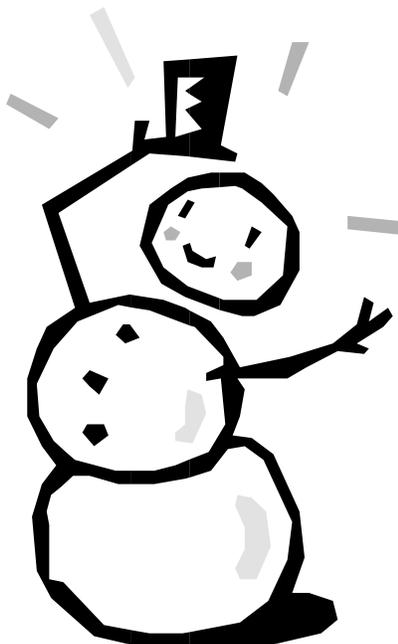
In 1967, many of the Wilson Township three cemetery records and maps were lost in a fire. Since that time, we have been looking for and finding other maps and records. In May of this year, we received a call from Georganna Monk with the Charlevoix County History Preservation Society. Georganna had in her possession several maps of the Wilson Township cemeteries. This find went a long way helping to update the cemetery records. But there were still concerns about unknown burials.

In the late 1800's, and during the flu epidemic of World War I, burials were conducted in unmarked graves without township knowledge. There were and still are situations where

people who own a plot have buried urns from cremations in a cemetery without notifying anyone. Sometimes these buri-

als were made in the wrong location. Because of the concern of disturbing an existing burial, the township decided to have Abonmarche, a company that specializes in ground penetrating radar, survey Wilson, Lewis, and Todd cemeteries.

After the ground scanning was completed this spring, 50 unmarked graves in Lewis Cemetery and over 90 in Todd Cemetery were discovered. Currently we are going through records and contacting anyone who may own a cemetery plot that has an unknown burial, of which we were recently made aware. If you are affected by this, we will be contacting you to make arrangements to correct the problem. If you have any questions, please contact the Wilson Township Cemetery Sexton, Jeff Argetsinger at 582-2270 or email jeffargetsinger@yahoo.com.



Township Regular 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)*

Wilson Township Website

www.wilsontownship.org



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: kerrereinhardt@gmail.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/ 582-9418
E-mail: louisfall@yahoo.com

Grant Awarded to Wilson Township

During the past several years, the Wilson Township hall has been vandalized and broken into a number of times, costing the township money for repairs and equipment replacement.

The township board had considered installing a security camera system but could not justify spending limited taxpayer dollars on the system.



Enter the Michigan Township Participating Plan (MTPP), the township's property and casualty insurance provider. The MTPP awards grants to townships to assist in risk management and loss control.

While the security camera system will not prevent break-ins and vandalism, it will allow us to see the perpetrators and increase the chance of the Charlevoix County Sheriff department apprehending the culprits; as well as increasing the chance of reimbursement for damage.



Important News from the Township Treasurer

You can now review, pay, and print your property tax records from 2005 to the current year on-line by logging onto the township website at: www.wilsontownship.org. To create a free account, click on Property Tax Inquiry in the lower right hand corner.

The township has partnered with **Point & Pay** to offer on-line 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 tax bill 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 Friday, February 14, 2014. The treasurer's office will be open on February 14, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM for anyone wishing to pay their tax bill 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 notification 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, Treasurer
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Avoiding Uncapping of Property Taxes on Family Transfers

By: *Neil L. Kimball*

On December 31, 2012, Governor Snyder signed into law Public Act 497 of 2012 which provides that beginning December 31, 2013, a transfer of residential real property is exempt from uncapping property taxes if the transfer is to family members of "the first degree of kinship" and the use of the residential real property does not change following the transfer. This means that you can transfer your cottage or other residential real estate to your parents, siblings, or children without having to worry about the property taxes being reassessed at fair market value.



This is a huge break for families who have owned cottages and other residential real estate for a long time. Before this legislation, a transfer to family members would uncapped the property taxes and the increase in the property taxes often made continued ownership by the family impractical. In recent years, Michigan court cases have held that under certain circumstances, joint ownership between parents and children avoided uncapping. However, owning property jointly with one or more children also has its disadvantages (liability exposure and loss of control, etc.).

The new legislation would allow you to transfer property to children at death without having the property taxes uncapped. The legisla-

tion does not specify how the property must be transferred. For example, it is not clear that a conveyance of the property to a trust for the benefit of one's children will avoid uncapping. It may be better to consider a "ladybird" deed that would allow you to keep control of the property during your lifetime and then allow the property to pass to your children if you still own the property at death. This would allow you to keep control of the property because your children would not have a vested interest until your death, and the property would pass free of probate proceedings. The State Tax Commission may provide more guidance on its interpretation of the legislation in the future.



Township Planning & Zoning Update

During 2013 the Planning Commission reviewed and approved the following permits and applications:

- Special use permit from Bulmann Dock and Lift for retail showroom, light manufacturing, and outdoor display of boat docks and lifts
- Special use permit from Eagle Marine Service for a boat sales and service business
- Special use permit to operate a home-based business for John Hilderbrant for auto repair and restoration
- Site plan amendment from Boyne City Bowling Alley for the addition of an 8' x 32' unenclosed covered walkway in front of the existing doorway on the front of the building.
- Site plan amendment from Raven Hill to construct a new 1,000 square foot building to house a technology room and display area.

The Planning Commission is also tasked with reviewing and updating the township's plans and ordinances. Most significant actions during 2013 include:

A review of the 2013 Township Road Improvement Plan with a recommendation to adopt the plan to the Township Board of Trustees.

After a year of development and holding the mandatory public hearing and reviews, the Planning Commission recommended and the Township Board of Trustees adopted the Wilson Township Master Plan. The Master Plan is the document that provides the Township with the basis to make informed decisions and to coordinate individual developments by providing a guide that establishes the community goals, objectives and policies for land use and development.



The Planning Commission also reviewed zoning ordinance provisions for grandfathering and nonconforming uses. Grandfathering is a term used in relation to pre-existing nonconforming uses of land and structures that provides specific protec-

tions to property owners in regard to the continuation of those uses. The protections offered to nonconforming uses is not a discretionary privilege offered by the Township, but is a property right recognized and detailed in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. For a nonconforming use to be terminated the property owner must "abandon" the nonconforming use. In addition to nonuse, abandonment must include the intention to abandon the nonconforming use and the burden of proving abandonment is the responsibility of the municipality.

In upcoming months, the Planning Commission will be proposing zoning ordinance changes for the approval of site plan amendments and minor modifications. The proposed language would change the threshold for an amendment that can be approved by the planning commission from 500 to 1,000 square feet and would exempt unfinished floor area or unenclosed structures. The threshold for zoning administrator approval for minor changes would be raised from 100 square feet to 500 square feet and would also exempt unfinished floor area and unenclosed structures.

From the Clerk. . .

2014 elections are coming — are you registered to vote?

To register to vote, you must be all of the following:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- A resident of Michigan
- A resident of the city or township where you are applying to register to vote.

If you want to check to see if you are registered, visit www.Michigan.gov/vote. There you will find information about registering to vote and voting, voting equipment, polling place locations, state and local ballots, the candidates, campaign finance and more. Your local clerk can help with questions about your voter registration, polling place location and working at the polls.

You must be registered to vote at least 30 days before an election. You can obtain a registration application at one of the following:

- Your local Secretary of State (SOS) branch office
- Your local county, city, or township clerk's office
- Offices of state agencies, like the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth
- Military recruitment centers
- Voter registration drives
- Online at www.Michigan.gov/sos

Michigan law states that the same address must be used for voter registration and driver's license purposes. That means, if the residence address you provide on the application differs from the address shown on a driver's license or personal identification card issued by the state of Michigan, the SOS will automatically change your driver's license or personal ID card address to match the resi-

dence address entered on this form. If a change is made, the SOS will mail you an address update sticker for your driver's license or personal ID card.

If you move to a new city or township, you must re-register. If you move within a city or township and are already registered to vote, you only need to update your address.

If you are living outside the U.S., you may send a Federal Postcard Application

to register to vote. This application is distributed through U.S. embassies and military bases. It also serves as a way to request an absentee ballot.



Broadband Initiative Update

Past township communications have indicated that Airiston Wireless Broadband was going to begin providing broadband services to Wilson Township residents in the fall of this year. Unfortunately, this is not going to happen. The funding for Airiston was, for the most part, coming from a low interest loan from USDA Rural Development Broadband Initiative.

Funding problems started when Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Budget Control Act of 2011. The law was supposed to allow an increase to the debt ceiling in 2011, with a provision to have a Congressional super committee make cuts to Federal Government spending. If the super committee couldn't make the cuts, automatic cuts would be made under the Budget Control Act of 2011. Guess what? The super committee couldn't

come to a decision on cuts, so the Budget Control Act made them. Those cuts are known as the *Sequester*.

That brings us to the USDA Rural Development Broadband Initiative. The Sequester made cuts to the USDA, which in turn made the USDA put a hold on their low interest loan program - the same program Airiston was awarded grant monies.

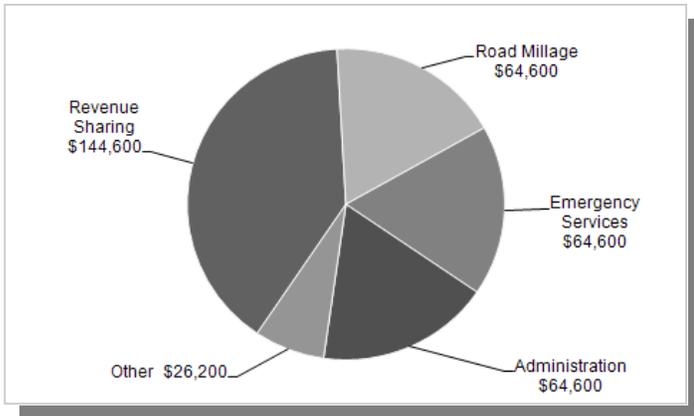
Another problem arose when the Federal Government hit the debt ceiling—again. In a recent conversation with Michael Witulski, a representative for Airiston Wireless Broadband, Wilson Township was informed that the USDA has held back on funding Airiston's loan and will not be able to make any determinations on funding levels until January 15, 2014.

Wilson Township Budgeted Income and Expenses FY 2013-2014

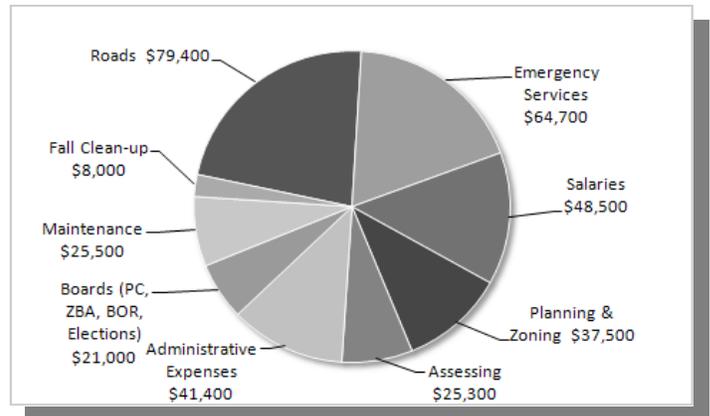
Wilson Township receives voted millage of one mill each for road improvements, fire and ambulance protection, and township administration. The Township also receives State Revenue Sharing monies, which are the portion of sales tax returned to the Township. Other income includes administrative fees, special meeting fees, permit fees and interest income.

The charts below show the Township's budgeted income and expenses for fiscal year April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. During 2013, Wilson Township is expected to spend less than it takes in. The difference will be put into the Township reserve funds that are held for major road projects and in case of an emergency

Budgeted Income Fiscal Year 2013–2014



Budgeted Expenses Fiscal Year 2013–2014



Emergency Services Costs

Wilson Township contracts with Boyne City and East Jordan for fire and ambulance services. To cover the contractual costs, residents of Wilson Township passed an Emergency Services millage of one mill. This means that for every \$1,000 in taxable value of your property, \$1 is used to pay for fire and ambulance. For example, if your property has a taxable value of \$50,000, then \$50 of your taxes goes to cover fire and ambulance services for Wilson Township.

The graph below shows the costs of the emergency services within Wilson Township. It should be noted that Boyne City Emergency Services cover 66% of Wilson Township, while East Jordan Emergency Services cover 33%.

The budgeted cost for emergency services for Fiscal Year 2013 - 2014 is \$64,700. The one mill collected for emergency services is estimated to be \$64,600. The difference will be taken out of reserve funds.

