

Vergennes Township

A Place Where People Like to Live
www.vergennestwp.org



10381 Bailey Dr., P.O. Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331

897-5671

Hours: M, W, F – 9 A.M.–3 P.M.

WINTER 2010-11

SUPERVISOR: TIM WITTENBACH
TREASURER: JEAN HOFFMAN
CLERK: MARI STONE
TRUSTEES: RICK GILLET
ALLAN BAIRD

*Township Board Meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.
Planning Commission Meetings are held the first Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.*

CLERK'S CORNER

by Mari Stone, Vergennes Township Clerk

I don't ski anymore, so it's pretty hard for me to get excited for snow and cold weather. But the thought of cozy winter evenings with a fire (gas or otherwise) to sit by sounds kind of nice for a while. That's what I love about Michigan. Weather is never boring here.

Being a Township Clerk is never boring either. The monthly duties might sound the same (agendas, minutes, payroll, bills, meetings) but it's always something different. The pace has been a little slower over the past year, but changes have still occurred and I have several updates to share with you.

Elections 2010

The best news is – they're over! No more political ads, robo-calls or junk mail galore. In my world that's also no more absentee ballots, testing machines and programs, preparing precincts, opening and closing down the polls, taking results to the county.....well, you get it. This year we used lap top computers for the first time to check in voters on Election Day. It was a lot of work to get started, but now I think I can say it was worth it. One of the hardest jobs for our election inspectors is balancing the numbers at the end of the night. They have just worked a 14 hour day, and are bone tired. The lap top uses a program which logs voters in all day, keeps track of the number of voters and ballots used, and computes the numbers after the polls close. Those numbers must match the numbers on the tabulators, or that precinct can't be recounted. Of course, that is only one of many things they are sworn to be responsible for, and I would like to thank all of our workers for their service and commitment.

Precinct 1 – Chair, Dee McKendrick, and her team of Joann Hudson, Marcia Host, Ann Sowle, Sally Gould, Doug Wester, and Katie Moore.

Precinct 2 – Chair, Barb Porter, and her team of Shantell Ford, Bev Anderson, Chuck Hudson, Joe Host, Angie Poll, and Katy Mork.

Also, a big thanks goes out to the members and staff at the Vergennes United Methodist Church for their willingness to host our Precinct 2. It's great to have good neighbors.

We will only have the May Election for the schools in 2011, but I am already thinking about 2012. If you are interested in serving as a poll worker, please let me know and I will take your contact information for next time around!

Internet Accessibility

If you have been following this topic in the last several newsletters, you might remember that we were waiting with baited breath to see if a provider of high speed internet service from the Grand Haven area would be awarded funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The company used the marketing tool kit developed by a joint citizen task force from Vergennes, Lowell and Ada townships to apply for these "stimulus" funds. In a nutshell, they were not successful. This is a quote from Chris Borek, the representative from Azulstar which had applied for the stimulus funds:

"We were not awarded stimulus funds and without those funds there is not a business case for AzulStar to expand into these areas. I have been working with Clear on expanding their 4G coverage to your area. There is no firm commitment from Clear at this point but they were quite interested when I showed them the broadband report. I have created a web address where people can sign up so that we may be able to entice Clear to expand.. <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/adalowellvergennes/> I cannot guarantee that this will happen or even begin to estimate a time frame but I will continue to keep pushing Clear and see what happens with them."

So, if you are waiting on dial-up for better internet service, you might want to check into one of the wireless net cards offered by the cell phone providers. Everyone is competing in the wireless arena - Verizon, Sprint, and AT&T Wireless
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are providing users with great internet service where they have signals. And all of them are starting to pay attention to “underserved” areas like ours by boosting their current signals. AT&T applied this fall for permits to enhance their 3G service on the two towers in Vergennes. I don’t think Verizon or Sprint are very far behind.

It has become very obvious that, especially in the current economic climate, hard wired providers (AT&T, Comcast, and other cable/telephone companies) can’t make a business plan work in areas that don’t have city-style housing. Our desire to live in a more rural setting really leaves us with only wireless options.

REDFrog, a local internet provider, has been working with individual neighborhoods in Vergennes Township to bring them broadband service. According to REDFrog's Kirk Gee, "We are committed to making this a reality for the entire township as well as for Lowell and Ada." They are installing a point of access near the corner of Parnell and Bailey within the next 3 weeks, and would like to hear from residents in the area who would be interested in their service. They are also willing to talk to neighborhoods or clusters of homes who are willing to establish their own point of access. When asked about cost, Kirk said "We are planning on a \$99 installation and \$49.95 per month fee with a 2 year commitment. Each neighborhood will have different circumstances so the prices may vary but I think this is a good benchmark." Please call REDFrog at 897-5814 to get more info.

Another local entrepreneur, Ryan Peel, has started a serious initiative called "Vergennes Broadband". He is taking action by researching the survivability of a high-quality, broad-reaching wireless Internet service in Vergennes Township. In order to know if the business can be sustained, he needs your help. You can start by taking a look at the proposed coverage map available on the Vergennes Broadband Facebook page. <http://on.fb.me/VergennesBroadband>

“911” Reflective Address Signs

If Emergency Services can’t find you, they can’t help you! Is your home address prominently displayed? You can order your own “911” reflective address sign from the Lowell Area Fire Department Cadets. They are only \$15.00, and if you order more than one the rest are \$12.50 each. To order your sign, or to purchase a sign as a gift, fill out the order form on the back of this newsletter. Proceeds from all sign sales go to the purchase of equipment for the Lowell Area Fire Department.

Cemetery News

Over the last two years, youth group volunteers have painted fences and performed clean ups in the Bailey, Foxes Corner and Krum-Blanding cemeteries. Fallasburg is up next, and if you have a group willing to do community service work we would like to hear from you. I would like to thank the Vergennes United Methodist and Alton Bible Church youth groups for their service, and especially our Supervisor, Tim Wittenbach, for coordinating these efforts.

The Board amended the Cemetery Ordinance this year and adopted a policy regarding unused family burial spaces. The amended language is as follows in italics: “Hereafter, cemetery lots or burial spaces shall be sold only to residents or taxpayers of the township for the purpose of the burial of such purchaser or his or her heirs at law or next of kin.” The adopted policy reads “Any individual who represents to be a surviving heir of a lot or grave space in any of the cemeteries owned by Vergennes Township, asking for burial rights or applying for a new deed must provide proof in writing that there are no other surviving heirs with rights to said lot, or grave space. Said paper work must be notarized.” If you have any questions regarding the cemetery ordinance or this policy please give the office a call.

Reception Area Remodel

Our staff at the township office suggested several improvements to the reception/waiting area which were implemented this fall. A larger waiting area was created by moving partitions, and this provided additional transaction space as well. The staff loves the results, and we hope you do too.

Lowell Area Community Fund

The Board would like to thank our past representative on the Lowell Area Community Fund Board, Betsy Davidson, for her service and commitment over the last 4 years. Term limits required that she be replaced, and we appreciate Dr. Jeff Bunn, who owns and operates the Equine Medical facility, for agreeing to serve.

Notary Services

The Township offers free Notary services to our residents. Jean Hoffman, Treasurer, and Mari Stone, Clerk, are both Notaries. If you are wondering what notarization actually does, the Notary is simply certifying that the signature on the document is that of the identified person. That is why you must show ID to the Notary, and the Notary must witness the signature. Should you need a document notarized, please call the township during office hours to make sure one of us are there. Appointments can also be made.



FROM THE TREASURER



WINTER TAX 2010-11

Jean Hoffman, Treasurer

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year – The office will be closed on Friday the 24th and Friday the 31st for the Christmas holiday. For your convenience, the office will be open on December 27th and December 29th. The last day to pay your tax bill in 2010 will be the 29th of December.

Taxes are due Monday, February 14, 2011. **IMPORTANT:** Please mail early. **Postmarks are not accepted for due date!!** We are not responsible for delays in the postal system. Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statements. If you would like a receipt, please enclose the entire bill and a self-addressed envelope. We will stamp the upper part and return it to you.

Remember that you can make partial payments from the first of December through February 14th.

Payments received after the due date must include the penalty and interest. State law prohibits the township from waiving these charges. You may pay summer and winter 2010 taxes at the township through February 28th. All unpaid taxes will be turned over to the county treasurer on March 1, 2011.

Make checks payable to: Vergennes Township Treasurer,

Please do not include dog licenses in the same check. ONLINE PAYMENTS must have the parcel number printed on them. **If you are having difficulty in making a one-time payment,** feel free to make partial payments. You will then only have interest on the total of the unpaid taxes.



DOG LICENSES



**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO
KENT COUNTY TREASURER**

Dog Licenses will be available at the township hall from December 1, 2010 - March 1, 2011.

Rabies vaccinations and dog licenses are required in Michigan for all dogs four months of age or older.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1. PREPRINTED APPLICATION FORM FROM THE ANIMAL SHELTER**
- 2. UPDATED RABIES VACCINATION (IF NEEDED)**
- 3. PROOF OF SPAYING OR NEUTERING (IF NEEDED)**

If you do not have preprinted form from the animal shelter, you must have a rabies certification and proof of neutering. Call the shelter at 616-632-7300 if you have any questions.

******HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS WISH LIST******

Request from the Kent County Animal Shelter

- *New bags of dog/puppy food
- *New bags of Cat/kitten food
- *Bleach
- *New collars and leashes
- *Laundry detergent
- *Brushes and pet shampoo
- *New Holiday Volunteers
- *New or gently used blankets & towels
- *New dog or cat treats (bring them in personally and hand them out to the animals)
- *Pet store gift certificates
- *Pet toys (new or gently used)

******PLEASE CALL AHEAD 616-632-7300******





REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGNS



911 REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGNS

If Emergency Services can't find you, they can't help you!

One Sign \$15.00; Additional signs \$12.50 each

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please send me _____ "911" Reflective Address signs. Enclosed is my payment of \$_____. (Make checks payable to Lowell Area Fire Dept. Cadets).

Address Numbers to Appear on your sign: _____
Vertical ___ Horizontal ___

If necessary, place additional addresses on the back side of this form. Proceeds from all sign sales will go toward the purchase of equipment for the Lowell Fire Dept. More Info? Call Frank @ 897-7354 or 893-0521. Send orders to:

**"911 Signs" c/o Robert Rogers
301 E. Main Street
Lowell, MI 49331**

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RADON



Surgeon General Health Advisory – "Indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and breathing it over prolonged periods can present a significant health risk to families all over the country. It's important to know that this threat is completely preventable. Radon can be detected with a simple test and fixed through well-established venting techniques." January 2005

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas. You can't see radon and you can't smell it or taste it. It could be a problem in your home. Radon is estimated to cause many thousands of deaths each year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths.

You should test for radon. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. Testing is inexpensive and easy—it should only take a few minutes of your time.

You can fix a radon problem. Radon reduction systems work and they are not too costly. Some radon reduction systems can reduce radon levels in your home by up to 99%. Even very high levels can be reduced to acceptable levels.

For more information contact the Kent County Health Department at (616) 632-7100. They have radon testing kits available for \$5.00.

