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# FIRE/RESCUE MILLAGE RENEWAL ELECTION

<http://www.gh.org> • [info@gh.org](mailto:info@gh.org)

The Grand Haven Charter Township (GHT) Board has scheduled a special election to renew the millage for fire protection and medical/rescue operations for Tuesday, May 3rd. *(The GHT Board coordinated this election with the School Board's bond election for athletic fields and safety.)*

Today, the Fire/Rescue Department has 7 full-time and 22 part-time fire fighters, five fire/rescue vehicles and responded to a staggering **819 calls** for emergency service among the township's 15,566 residents during 2004. This represents an increase of over 618%.

This will be the fifth election during which the millage rate of 1.5 mills is being placed before the voters. This means that the requested millage rate has remained unchanged since 1985. However, the department has gone through tremendous changes over this same twenty year period.

All of these employees were hired and equipment was purchased with one goal in mind — to better respond to your health emergencies and protect your property.

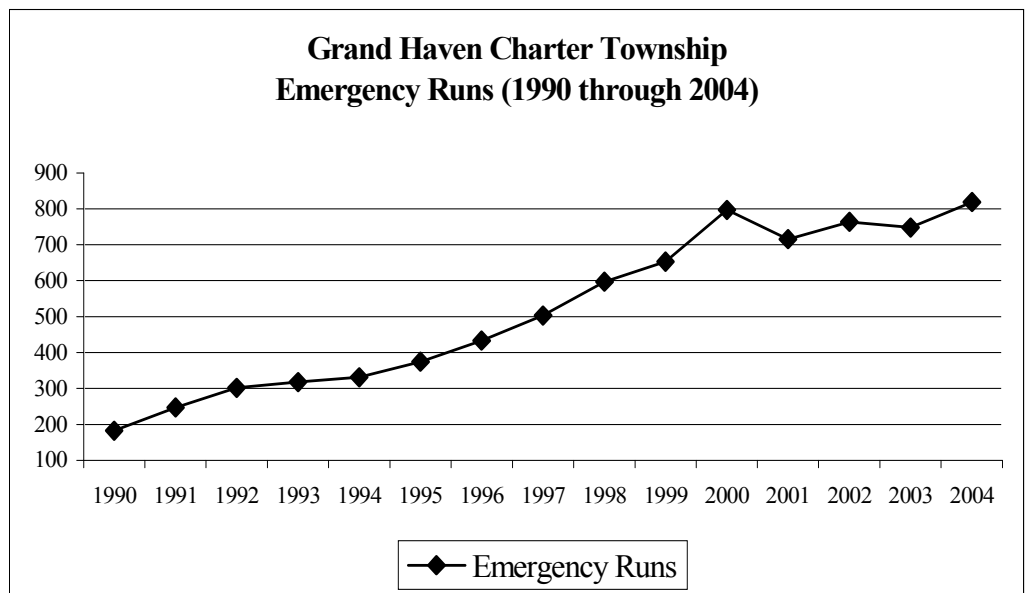
In 1985, the Fire Department had two fire vehicles and responded to only 114 calls for emergency service among the township's 8,474 residents.

GHT continues to emphasize training and emergency preparedness and can boast of the best trained personnel in Ottawa County.

You may wonder how the Fire/Rescue Department can go through such significant changes and improvements without having to request any increase in the millage rate. Briefly stated, the township's growth has been sufficient to fund this increased level of service.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Inside this issue:	
Fire Millage Renewal	1
GHT Millage Rates	2
Mercury Drive Widening	3
GHT Citizen Survey	4
Brief Project Updates	4
Citizen Committees	5
Cemetery Lot Sales	5
Fast Facts	5
Dates to Remember	6
Loutit Library Update	6



A basic axiom of planning is that “*Growth does not pay for itself.*” However, for the time, it appears as if the growth of the township’s tax base will pay for the associated increase in the calls for emergency service.

If you have any questions on the election to renew the 1.5 fire/rescue millage rate, please contact the township at 842-5988 or at [firerenewal@ght.org](mailto:firerenewal@ght.org).



## TOWNSHIP MILLAGE RATE AMONG LOWEST

The Annual Apportionment Report from the Ottawa County Treasurer shows that residents in Grand Haven Charter Township enjoy one of the lowest millage rates in West Michigan.

The average 2004 total homestead millage for each of the twenty-four (24) communities in Ottawa County is shown on the adjacent table. *(Some communities are covered by more than one school district, which leads to differing property tax rates from one part of that community to another. For these communities, the differing millage rates were averaged and all of the millage rates were rounded to the nearest hundredth.)*

In terms of nearby communities, GHT’s total tax rate is about 38% less than the village of Spring Lake, 27% less than the city of Grand Haven, 24% less than the city of Ferrysburg, 5% less than Robinson Township.

GHT’s homestead millage rate is slightly higher than three of the communities in Ottawa County, being about

COMMUNITY NAME	2004 HOMESTEAD MILLAGE RATE
Coopersville City	37.53
Hudsonville City	34.70
Spring Lake Village	34.65
Zeeland City	33.89
Holland City	33.65
Grand Haven City	30.96
Zeeland Charter Township	30.50
Ferrysburg City	29.70
Wright Township	28.05
Chester Township	27.86
Jamestown Charter Township	27.82
Holland Charter Township	27.49
Polkton Charter Township	27.40
Olive Township	26.83
Blendon Township	26.37
Allendale Charter Township	25.96
Georgetown Charter Township	24.53
Park Township	24.49
Robinson Township	23.64
Tallmadge Township	23.04
<b>Grand Haven Charter Township</b>	<b>22.48</b>
Crockery Township	22.13
Spring Lake Township	21.88
Port Sheldon Township	21.41
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>27.79</b>

5% higher than Spring Lake and Port Sheldon Townships.

However, GHT continues to be about five (5) mills under the average homestead property rate for Ottawa County, which is approximately 19% below the average homestead millage rate in the county.

## MERCURY DRIVE WIDENING PROJECT

The Ottawa County Road Commission (OCRC) and Grand Haven Charter Township (GHT) will be working together along Mercury Drive between the city limits at Moreland Street and Robbins Road to complete the first phase of the widening of this important roadway.

Mercury Drive is one of the main traffic corridors for the east side of GHT and acts as a main thoroughfare for much of the traffic coming from Robinson Township into the Tri-Cities area.

Sections of Mercury Drive have traffic counts of about 14,000 vehicles a day. And, it is expected that traffic counts will continue to increase as Robinson Township continues to grow and fill-in development occurs in the northeast portion of GHT.

The OCRC will be installing storm sewers, curb and gutter, relocating sections of bike path, and widening the roadway to better accommodate both current traffic and future growth.



Prior to this portion of the project, GHT will be replacing about thirty (30) “plastic” water service lines with copper pipe and relocating a section of the township’s second water transmission main, a twenty-four inch (24”) pipe from the water treatment plant that services the east side of the township and a small section of Robinson Township.

This will be the first phase of a three or four phase project that will eventually widen all of Mercury Drive and replace the bridge over the Millhouse Bayou.

The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of 2008, with additional construction occurring during the Summers of 2006 through 2008.

Together, the OCRC and GHT will spend about \$1.4 million to complete the initial phase of this important street improvement and widening project.

## BRIEF UPDATES

The following are short updates on a variety of projects:

- GHT has contracted with Liquid Dustlayers to treat the twenty miles of gravel roads in the township with liquid calcium chloride. This is the premier product from Dow Chemical to control dust. There will be two treatments — in mid-May and late August.
- GHT has contracted with Ottawa County to spray two areas of the township where severe infestations of gypsy moths are expected. These areas include the Forest Park subdivision adjacent to Hofma Preserve and the Riverhaven manufactured housing community along 144th Avenue.
- The North Ottawa Water System (NOWS) will be contracting to repair problems with the second water intake in Lake Michigan. The repairs which will cost about \$1.4 million will limit the production of water during critical summer months.

As in past years, the aerial spraying will use Bt, a native bacterium that is commonly found in soil and on plants. After 40 years of testing and widespread use, the minimal risk and safety of BT has been demonstrated. However, if you are concerned about exposure, remaining indoors during the spray application is a good, commonsense strategy.

Therefore, during certain periods over the next few months, GHT will take 100% of its water from the Grand Rapids water treatment plant located at the intersection of Lakeshore Drive and Lake Michigan Drive. Some residents find that Grand Rapids water taste slightly different than the NOWS water.

- GHT operates two water distribution systems, one for NOWS water and one for Grand Rapids water. Residents on the Grand Rapids water distribution system will see a rate increase from \$1.86 per 1,000 gallons to \$1.88. This will not affect customers on the NOWS water distribution system.
- In the past, the school district voting precincts had different numbers than the township precincts. Because of changes in state law, all precincts now have the same township designation. The location of the various voting precincts remain the same.

## GHT CITIZEN SURVEY

Grand Haven Charter Township (GHT) announced the results from its first annual telephone survey of citizens in a ninety page report released to the media and public.

The report concluded that by and large the citizens held a very high view of the quality of life in Grand Haven Township. Almost 95% of the respondents felt that the Township was an “excellent” or “good” place to live and almost 93% of the respondents felt that the overall quality of life in the Township was “excellent” or “good.”

One area that did not rate as high included a “sense of community” in the Township, with 28% stating it was only “fair” and about 5% rating the sense of community as “poor.” This finding reflects that a large percentage of township residents are new to the area and the fact that the Township does not have a clear identity.

When people think about the city of Grand Haven, they normally envision the downtown or waterfront. The Township does not have any ‘place’ that residents identify with the Township. Further, typical subdivision designs do not encourage residents to form close relationships with neighbors.

Citizens felt very positive regarding recreational opportunities in the Township, but many expressed concern with job opportunities (57%), and shopping opportunities (59%).

In related questions, 56% of the respondents stated that the speed of job growth was somewhat too slow or much too slow and 42% stated that the speed of retail growth was too slow or much too slow. Up to this point, GHT has seen itself mainly as a residential community. But, the survey indicates that the Township may want to explore increasing the



opportunities for manufacturing and commercial ventures.

82% of the residents rated GHT’s Fire/Rescue services as “excellent” or “good”.

Unfortunately, only 10% of the citizens were aware that the Township spends about \$200,000 each year to supplement the police services provided by the Sheriff’s Department. However, about 79% of the respondents rated the County Sheriff services as “excellent” or “good”.

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or “good” place to live.**

On a follow-up question, almost 78% of the residents stated that they would support a small ½ mill increase to continue or expand the supplemental police services provided by the Sheriff’s department.

While 70% of the citizens believe that the Township welcomes citizen involvement, only a small majority of 57% felt that the Township listens to the citizens. This was one of the more troubling findings in the report and explains why the Township needs to emphasize communications with residents.

Although a majority of the residents feel that the Township welcomes citizen involvement, the survey shows that there is room for improvement. And, this is the major reason the Township Board established a Communications Committee, to both ensure good information is going to the residents and that the Township listens and responds to citizen concerns.

The survey instrument included 20 questions with a total of 85 items. The survey consisted of 264 interviews with adult residents of the township and a margin of error of 5.9%.

Dr. Roy Cole from Grand Valley State University oversaw the development and execution of the survey.

This survey is the first of five annual phone surveys planned. A “Community Preference Survey” is also planned as part of GHT’s Master Plan update.

## COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Grand Haven Charter Township works best when residents become involved and offer their insights and expertise for the betterment of our community.

GHT has eight committees or commissions on which residents are eligible to serve. These include:

- Planning Commission — reviews all site plans and proposed zoning changes.
- Zoning Board of Appeals — acts as a quasi-judicial board that considers appeals to the rules and standards contained in the zoning ordinance.
- Community Hospital Board — is the governing body for the North Ottawa Community Hospital.
- District Library Board — is the governing body for the Loutit District Library.
- Board of Review — hears and decides any appeals of the GHT property assessment roll.
- Construction Board of Appeals — hears and decides any requests for interpretations or variances from the GHT Building Code.
- Downtown Development Authority — oversees the collection and spending of tax increment revenues for capital projects in the developing commercial area of the township.
- Recreation Board — is the governing body for the North Ottawa Recreation Program offering various recreation programs and opportunities.

If you are interested in being considered for membership on any of these committees, please forward an application to Supervisor Joanne A. Marcetti at:

Grand Haven Charter Township  
Supervisor Joanne A. Marcetti  
13300 168th Avenue  
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

or you may email at:

[jmarcetti@ght.org](mailto:jmarcetti@ght.org)

or you may phone by calling:

(616) 842-5988

## FAST FACTS – DURING 2004

- The Township's population reached 15,566 and remains the largest of the Tri-Cities' local communities.
- The State Equalized Value rose to \$718 million.
- The number of Fire/Rescue emergency runs reached 819.
- 525 million gallons of municipal water were distributed.
- 77 million gallons of sewage was collected.
- The total value of new building permits exceeded \$40 million.
- 156 new single family residential units and 42 apartment units were added.
- 7.8 miles of roadway were paved; and, 0.5 miles of gravel roadway were re-graveled.

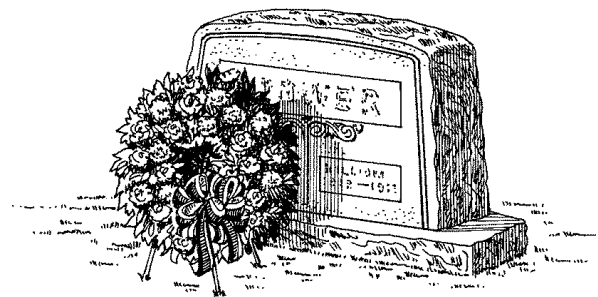
## CEMETERY LOT SALES

Grand Haven Charter Township (GHT) operates two municipal cemeteries — the Historic Cemetery on 168th south of Lincoln Street and the Lakeshore Cemetery on the southeast corner of Lincoln Street and Lakeshore Drive.

GHT staff often work with area residents who are struggling to find a final resting place for their loved ones after a death. Because of the huge loss and emotional upheaval, this decision can be difficult.

If you know that you will be living out your life in the Tri-Cities area, you may want to select a lot and purchase burial rights well before this necessity.

Residents of GHT pay lower fees than non-residents. For further information, you may contact Kristi Walsh at 842-5988 or [kw Walsh@ght.org](mailto:kw Walsh@ght.org).



*We are on the Web*  
*www.ght.org*

Supervisor Joanne A. Marcetti  
Treasurer William A. Kieft III  
Clerk Sue Buitenhuis  
Trustee Steve Karell  
Trustee Laurie Larsen  
Trustee Thomas Jenkins  
Trustee Matthew Horst

## **FIRE/RESCUE MILLAGE RENEWAL**

Tuesday, May 3rd – 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

## **YARD WASTE COLLECTION**

Leaf dumpsters will be located at the township parking lot from April 16th through May 2nd.

No dumping of wood, limbs or brush is allowed.

## **SPRING CLEAN-UP**

Saturday, May 14th – 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

A \$15 fee will be charged for appliances. Tires are limited to two per household. No hazardous waste.

# **LOUTIT LIBRARY AND THE TOWNSHIP**

The Loutit District Library serves the residents from Grand Haven Charter Township, the city of Ferrysburg, the city of Grand Haven, Robinson Township and the northern portion of Port Sheldon Township.

Last year the citizens of Grand Haven Charter Township were the most active users of the library borrowing 47% of all items circulated.

Over the past five years circulation numbers from GHT have more than doubled!

As GHT's population continues to increase, so will its demands on the staff and services of the Loutit District Library. While the library serves our community well, it is getting more crowded as circulation and participation in programs increases.

The Library Board continues to work to address the space needs of all the citizens in the 84 square miles the library serves.

If you have comments or questions about the library's operations or the building process, please contact the Township's representatives to Loutit's board: Eileen Hutton at [ehutton@brillianceaudio.com](mailto:ehutton@brillianceaudio.com) or Jeff Beswick at [jwbeswick@varnumlaw.com](mailto:jwbeswick@varnumlaw.com).

Library Director, Sandie Knes may also be contacted at 842-5560 Extension 212 or [sknes@llcoop.org](mailto:sknes@llcoop.org).

For more information about all that the Loutit District Library offers, visit their website at [www.loutitlibrary.org](http://www.loutitlibrary.org).

