



# GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

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## POLICE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

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Police services in Grand Haven Charter Township (GHT) are provided by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department.

Unfortunately, this base level of service is not sufficient to meet the needs of the township's 16,000 residents. As a result, beginning in 1997, GHT began to contract for additional Sheriff deputies, which are often referred to as Community Oriented Police Service (COPS) deputies.

Originally, these officers were partially funded through a federal grant. However, the cost of these officers is now the financial responsibility of GHT.

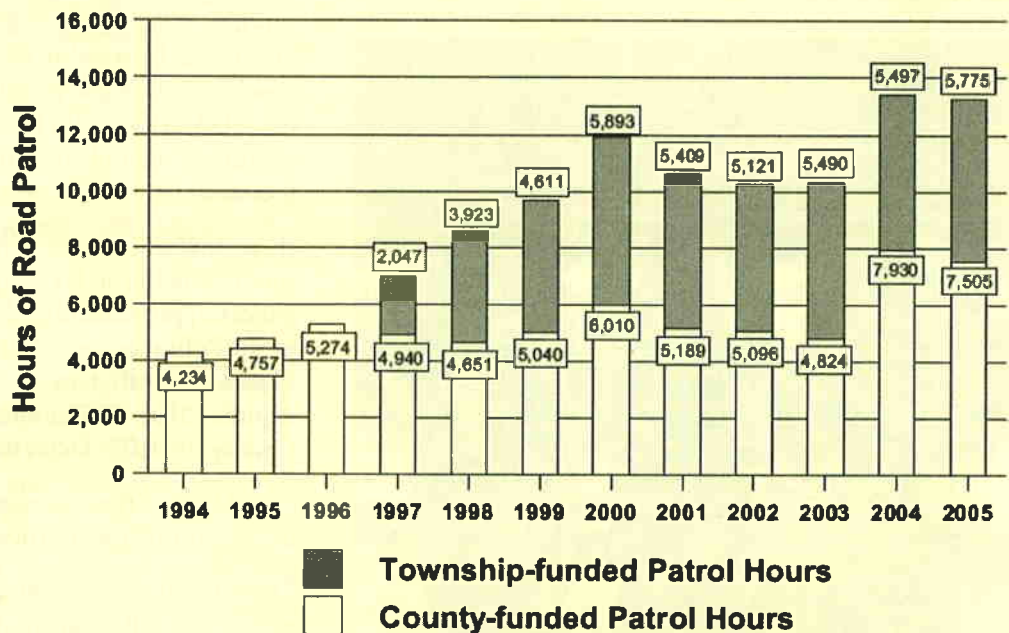
When the COPS program began, the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department committed to maintaining a

basic level of service (*i.e.*, about 5,016 hours annually) within GHT. This service level would ensure that the COPS program would **not** be used to replace the existing basic service level provided by Ottawa County. During the past nine years, the basic service level within GHT averaged 5,687 hours annually, or about 13% above the base level of 1997.

In addition to providing additional officers "at cost", Ottawa County has committed to paying for all administrative and support services for these deputies. This includes the necessary clerical staff, detectives, and sergeants to supervise the COPS deputies.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Sheriff Hours in Grand Haven Township



Inside this issue:	
Police Special Assessment	1
GHT Millage Rate	3
Project Briefs	4
Phosphorous-Free	5
Photos for Web Site	5
Fast Facts	5
Dates to Remember	6
Mid-Decade Census	6

# NEWSLETTER

Besides being less expensive than contracting with other nearby departments, the Sheriff's department provides specialized services ranging from canine units to drug enforcement programs.

GHT remains a safe community for residents to work, play and raise a family. But, even the safest community has crime.

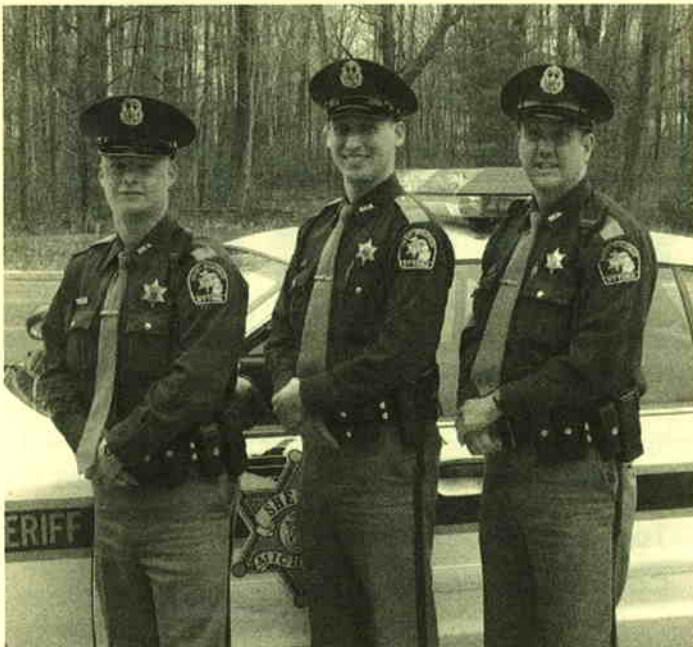
During 2005 the Sheriff's department arrested 412 adults and 150 juveniles while responding to 4,764 calls for service. About 35% of these calls for service were handled by the GHT COPS deputies.

As the township continues to grow, the need for additional police services will also increase.

GHT believes that the next sheriff deputy added should emphasize traffic enforcement needs. Unfortunately, while the need for police services expands, GHT is being impacted with significant reductions in state revenue sharing.

In 2001, GHT received \$1,227,960 from state revenue sharing. In 2005, GHT received only \$917,255 from the state of Michigan, **a reduction of over \$310,000 annually or 25%.**

The result is predictable. If the township's population and demand for services are increasing at the same time that state shared revenues are decreasing, deficits will occur. GHT has always explained that growth will not pay for itself. This fact was fully realized during the 2006 budget process.



GHT's three current contract Sheriff's deputies — Deputy Jim Scholma, Deputy Mike Veldkamp, and Deputy Tim Smith.

The 2006 budget has a deficit of over \$1 million. Much of this deficit was planned and utilizes cash reserves to fund important construction projects.

However, the deficit within the General Fund is related to "discretionary" spending for services such as police protection. Fortunately, the township has sufficient "Rainy Day" reserves to weather short-term deficits in the General Fund operations.

To address the short-fall within the General Fund, three proposals are being considered by the GHT Board. One of these is to create a township-wide special assessment district for law enforcement equal to 0.5 mills, which is about 50 cents per thousand dollars of taxable value.

Creating a township-wide SAD has three specific advantages over a typical tax increase. First, the assessment would not be captured by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) under its tax increment financing plan.

Second, unlike a millage rate, the assessment would not be reduced through any existing or future industrial tax abatement.

Third, an assessment could remain unchanged in future years since it would not be subject to the Headlee tax rollback. *(However, since the levy is based upon the taxable value of all the real property in the township, the levy is subject to Proposal "A".)*

An SAD would decrease the total tax burden by 7% while providing 3.25% more in revenues for police services when compared to a tax millage. Initially, the difference between a tax millage and a township-wide special assessment levy is only about \$10,000. But, as the DDA grows with the addition of new businesses and apartment complexes, this disparity will continue to increase.

If a township-wide SAD is established for police services using a levy equal to 0.5 mills, GHT would collect approximately \$302,000, which would be placed in a "Police Service Special Assessment Fund". This would be sufficient to fund the current three COPS deputies that GHT contracts with through the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department (*i.e., about \$212,500*).

In addition, the assessment would also fund a new traffic enforcement officer (*i.e., about \$89,500*).

The special assessment would be included on the 2006 winter tax bills that are due in February, 2007.

All property owners within GHT will soon be receiving notices regarding an upcoming public hearing to

establish a special assessment district for police services. If you would like more detailed information on this proposed special assessment, please attend this hearing.

If you are unable to attend the hearing or have any questions or concerns, please contact Bill Cargo at bcargo@ght.org or call 842-5988, ext. 324.

Many residents may recall that a citizen survey conducted in conjunction with Grand Valley State University indicated that almost 78% of GHT residents would support small tax levy to continue and/or expand the supplemental police services through the Sheriff's Department.

GHT's elected officials are hopeful that this township-wide police SAD will solve the financing issue associated with this popular and vital law enforcement service.

## TOWNSHIP'S TAX RATE AMONG LOWEST

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

The total average 2005 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 40% 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 two townships in Ottawa County, being 0.07 mills higher than Crockery Township and about 1 mill more than Port Sheldon Township.

**GHT continues to be about five and one-half (i.e., 5.57) mills under the average homestead property rate for Ottawa County or about 19% below the average homestead millage rate in the county.**

It is also interesting to note that all of the charter townships in Ottawa County have millage rates between two and six mills higher than Grand Haven Charter Township.

COMMUNITY NAME	2005 HOMESTEAD MILLAGE RATE
Spring Lake Village	37.62
Coopersville City	37.61
Holland City	35.00
Hudsonville City	34.69
Zeeland City	33.88
Grand Haven City	30.79
Zeeland Charter Township	30.56
Ferrysburg City	29.69
Wright Township	28.05
Chester Township	28.04
Jamestown Charter Township	27.94
Holland Charter Township	27.45
Polkton Charter Township	27.37
Olive Township	26.85
Blendon Township	26.42
Allendale Charter Township	25.91
Georgetown Charter Township	24.56
Park Township	24.44
Robinson Township	23.59
Tallmadge Township	23.03
Spring Lake Township	22.55
<b>Grand Haven Charter Township</b>	<b>22.44</b>
Crockery Township	22.37
Port Sheldon Township	21.43
<b>Ottawa County Average</b>	<b>28.01</b>