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DATES TO REMEMBER

Fire/Rescue Open House:
 Tuesday, October 12th, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Fall Leaf Drop-off:
 A collection program will be held from October 23rd until November 21st. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays and 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays.

General Elections:
 Tuesday, November 2nd, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

TRUTH IN TAXATION

Michigan's Truth in Taxation law adds a possible rollback to the annual property tax millage rate to eliminate "extra" revenue to a government as a result of inflationary increases in property values greater than the rate of the Consumers Price Index. A taxing unit may not generate more revenue than it generated in the prior year unless it holds a Truth in Taxation public hearing.

Historically, Grand Haven Charter Township has held the Truth in Taxation hearings each year indicating that GHT would collect more revenue than in the prior year even though the Township did not increase the property tax millage rate.

This year, for the first time, the Fiscal Year 2011 property tax revenues will not exceed the amount of revenue received in Fiscal Year 2010, but will actually

decline. The most recent estimate indicates that GHT will collect about \$199,780 less in property taxes during the 2011 fiscal year.

Therefore, GHT is not required to hold a public hearing prior to the Board approval of the millage resolution for the winter tax levy.

HARBOR TRANSIT

The Harbor Transit Strategic Plan Working Group was created to allow this on-demand transit service to expand its operations, which currently cover Grand Haven City, Ferrysburg City and Spring Lake Village, into Grand Haven Charter Township. Moreover, the governance of this City department would be changed into a Transit Authority allowing all of the communities to have an equal voice in its operations.

This expansion of service is a change that many in the Township — especially senior citizens — have been requesting for several years. In addition to providing on-demand transit service for those without transportation, Harbor Transit services will allow many of the seniors citizens to remain independent and in their homes.



The final draft of the report, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and operating agreement will be presented to the various municipalities later this fall. Township voters will make a final decision on the proposed expansion in 2011.

HOFMA TRAILS PROJECT

Hofma Park and Preserve contain over 411 acres of nature preserve and many miles of trails and pathways that can be confusing.

Further, because many of the original colored trail markers have been damaged or destroyed, the trail marker system is only marginally helpful to those hiking through these woodlands.

In response, GHT researched various trail marker options to identify the best way to mark the Hofma trails, while reducing the costs and maintenance of the signs. The Township Board determined that GHT

would use a trail marker system patterned after one used in certain National Parks that works well in extreme environments, provides easy to understand directions, shows the user's current location along the trail, and is constructed of a durable material that resists vandalism.

In brief, each intersection along the Hofma trails will be uniquely numbered and identified on a full trail map that is erected on a 6" x 6" treated post.

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A numbered sign is mounted immediately under the map. In addition, the sign post will include the numbers for and direction arrows to adjacent intersections that will enable the user to identify the direction they wish to travel.

The Ottawa County Parks Department has utilized this trail marker system for their signs over the last few years with great success.

GHT staff will assist the Friends of the Grand Haven Charter Township Parks group with both the removal of the old trail markers and the installation of the new trail signs during September and October.

If you would like to assist, you may contact Paula Smith with the Friends of the Parks group at (616) 430-0297 or psmith@specialtyheat.com.

DON'T FLUSH MEDS!

Don't flush unwanted meds ... instead, safely dispose of your personal medications at any of three (3) Ottawa County Health department offices that include:

1. Grand Haven Township: 16920 Ferris Street (846-8360)
M, W, F 8:00 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
2. Holland Charter Township: 12252 James Street (396-5266)
M – F 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
3. Hudsonville: 3100 Port Sheldon Road (669-0040)
M, W, F, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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NEWSLETTER

Please remove pills from the pill bottles and place them in a plastic bag before dropping them off at the Ottawa County Health Department of your choosing.

If you have questions about the Ottawa County's unwanted medication collection program, please call 616-393-5645.

MONEY TALK (part two)

You may recall that the April newsletter outlined a series of cost saving measures that the Township implemented over the past two years to reduce expenditures. These measures saved over \$412,000.

Nevertheless, because of the severity of the economic downturn, these measures were not the end. During 2010, the Township implemented further cost savings, including the following:

- The Township's Community Development Director accepted a position as Hudsonville's City Manager. Because of the economic slowdown and the limited number of pending development projects, rather than filling this vacancy, the duties were delegated among staff — mostly to the Township Manager. This will save GHT about \$98,470 annually in wages and benefits.
- The Township's part-time Collection Clerk accepted a position with a bank. Rather than filling this vacancy, the duties were delegated among the full-time office staff. This will save GHT about \$19,160 annually in wages.
- The 2001 Northwest Ottawa Water System Intake No. 2 Bonds were refinanced at a lower interest rate saving GHT about \$116,810 over the next eleven (11) years or about \$10,620 annually.
- The Fire/Rescue Department — which will be the Township department most severely impacted by the decline in property values — has implemented a series of measures that will reduce costs by about \$78,000 in 2010. However, many of these savings are one-time savings related to deferred equipment purchases that will eventually have to be addressed.

In addition, many of the expenditures that GHT historically funded to supplement the work of the Road Commission have been severely curtailed including a three-year freeze on subdivision road resurfacing. This is, at best, a short-term solution to an immediate fiscal

crisis and the Board understands that additional monies are needed to maintain the streets and roads.

However, GHT can report some positive news. **First**, although most Charter Townships have a millage rate of about 5.0 mills, Grand Haven Charter Township continues to enjoy a millage rate of less than 2.72 mills.

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Second, all of the Township's eleven (11) funds have healthy balances that will continue to act as a "Rainy Day" reserve.

Third, GHT does not offer any guaranteed pension benefit program for employees. This means that unlike many local and state governments, GHT does not have any unfunded pension liabilities.

Rather, GHT provides a guaranteed pension contribution that is similar to what is found in most of the private sector that uses Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) or 401(k) plans.

And finally, the residents of GHT continue to enjoy the second (2nd) lowest total residential millage rate of the twenty-four municipalities in Ottawa County — that being about 23.22 mills. *(The lowest average residential millage rate is Port Sheldon Township at about 22.55 mills, the highest is Coopersville City at about 39.02 mills and the average residential millage rate is about 28.82 mills — which is about 5.6 mills higher than GHT.)*

BIKE PATH TRIMMING

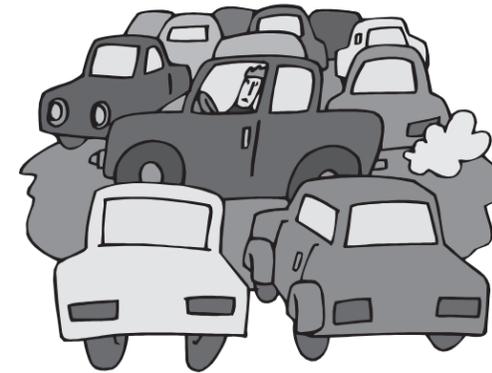
During the next few months, the Public Works Department will be driving on the bike path and removing brush and branches that are growing into the pathway.

Please be aware of the crews and adjust your use of the pathway accordingly.

ROBBINS ROAD STUDY

Robbins Road serves as a boundary between the City of Grand Haven and Grand Haven Charter Township. This road is owned by the City, yet decisions on its design, maintenance and future improvements will have a significant impact on the properties immediately South in the Township.

Perhaps because Robbins Road is a "border" area, a series of unfortunate planning decisions by both communities created some poorly designed commercial developments and roadways that are dangerous for pedestrians and bikers.



Therefore, in 2009 the City and GHT began a series of jointly funded engineering studies to redesign this heavily used corridor. At this stage, it has been determined that this four-lane roadway can be safely redesigned with:

- A two-lane road plus a center turn lane;
- A bike track; and
- Sidewalks.

Now the fun part of the planning process begins. LSL Planning and Progressive Engineering have been hired to draft a design and access management guide for this corridor that will act as a blueprint for the future redevelopment of this border street.

The end result will be a "complete" street that can safely manage future traffic, provide a safe lane for bikers and make the corridor safe and "walkable" for pedestrians.

A joint meeting between the elected officials, planning commissioners and residents from both communities is scheduled for October 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Haven Community Center.

\$23,182 ENERGY GRANT:

GHT was awarded a \$23,182 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

The federal dollars will be spent to retrofit the lighting in the Administrative Office Building, the Department of Public Works Building and the Public Works Storage Building. This will save GHT about \$3,465 annually in electrical costs. Based upon these energy savings, the payback will be less than seven years.

Special thanks are offered to Ottawa County that is managing the program and assisting with the drafting of bid documents for the electrical work necessary to complete the project.

\$79,800 FEMA GRANT

The Fire/Rescue Department received a FEMA grant in the amount of \$79,800 to replace 17 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs), 17 extra tanks, and 13 extra face plates.

SCBAs are necessary whenever a firefighter is required to enter a burning and smoked filled building and allows for up to 45 minutes of clean air for breathing.

The GHT Fire/Rescue department also showed the importance of collaboration with other local fire departments. If GHT had purchased the equipment on its own, the cost of the equipment would have been about \$5,200 per unit.

However, with the use of a joint purchase agreement with Holland Charter Township, Park Township and the City of Holland, GHT was able to develop uniform standards that allowed for the combined purchase of 100 SCBAs at a cost of about \$4,550 per unit. This is a savings of about 12% for each unit.

