

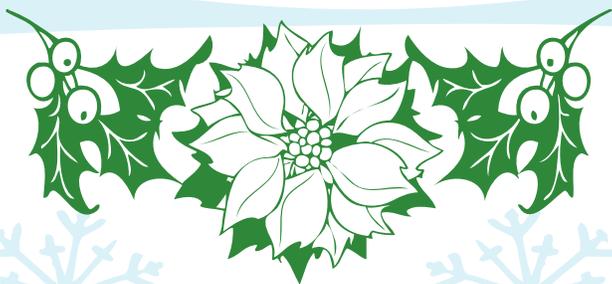


Cascade Connections



Winter 2007

A Newsletter from Cascade Charter Township



Happy Holidays

from your
Township Board
Commissions and Staff

ANGEL TREE

Cascade Township is proud to participate in the Angel Tree Program. The Angel Tree program allows a person to select a tag from the tree that represents a child in need. The tag is placed on an unwrapped toy and returned to the selection site and then collected for that child to have at Christmas time.

If you would like to participate in the Angel Tree program, please stop at the Cascade township Office, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. to select a tag from November 26 through December 14.



Lost and Found

We occasionally find lost items in our parks and place them in our lost and found. The items we are currently housing are:

- Bracelet
- Flashlight
- Keys
- Football
- Eye Glasses
- Camera

If you are missing one of these items, please call our office at 949-1500 or stop by to identify it.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Bring your used Christmas tree to the parking lot above the tennis courts at the Cascade Township Park from December 26th to January 9th for recycling. Please remember... trees can only be dropped off during park hours. Happy holidays!

TOYS FOR TOTS

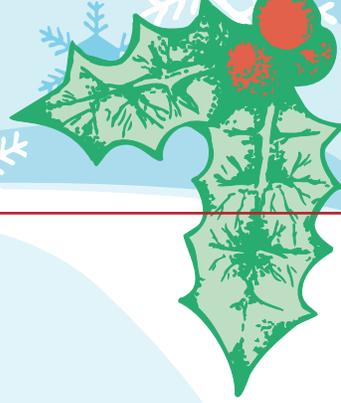
The Cascade Township Fire Department is accepting toys for the Toys for Tots Program. You may drop off new, unwrapped toys at the Fire Station, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE from November 18 through December 18.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The Cascade Township Office will be closed Monday, December 24th, Tuesday, December 25th and Tuesday, January 1st.



Cascade



OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Department Phone
Numbers:

Assessing:

949-6176

Building / Inspections:

949-3765

Clerk:

949-1508

Fire:

949-1320

Manager:

949-1500

Planning:

949-0224

Treasurer:

949-6944

Sheriff:

336-3113

From the Manager's Desk...

As the newest member of the Cascade Township team, I wish all of you a Merry Christmas!

I was appointed Cascade Township Manager by the township board this fall and started work here on October 23rd. I am a resident of the township, as I relocated to an apartment in the village the weekend prior to reporting for duty. My wife Meredith came with me; she has recently found employment in the township, so we are both assimilating to our new lives here. We have found the pathways and have taken numerous walks with our dog!

Some background—I started my local government career in 1988 and have worked for six communities in Michigan. I have a Public Administration Degree from Grand Valley State University. I served the country as a member of the U. S. Navy and deployed to Vietnam twice during my four-year career.

Meredith and I have been married for 37 years and we have two children that have wonderful spouses. They each have two children (all boys) which are great fun for Meredith and me to be with! We now live less than 80 minutes from all our kids and grand kids!

I am very honored to be a part of the Cascade Team that provides service to the residents, property owners and business owners in the township. It is very important for you to receive the best service possible from your local government. If there is something we are not doing, but should, let me know. If there is something we can do better, let me know. Sometimes we may be at odds over an issue, but please be aware that we are always willing to talk to you about the issue in an effort to resolve it. Often we are simply following an ordinance or bound by a procedure that gave rise to your dismay. But if we keep the lines of communication open, we should be able to reach a fair and equitable resolution to the situation and do it together.

Please call me (949-1500) with any questions or concerns you have about your local government. I look forward to meeting you and working with you to make Cascade Township an even better place to live! Stop in any time so we can get to know each other better!

Happy New Year—Bill Cousins



State Alters Method for Determining Assessment Levels

Due to the condition of the current housing market, the State Tax Commission has made changes to the current methods used to determine assessed valuations beginning with the 2008 tax year:

1. Local assessors will be allowed to consider foreclosed properties in the sales studies used to determine the “usual selling price” of properties. These are sales of previously foreclosed properties sold in the open market under specific conditions spelled out by the Commission. They must be listed openly, sold to an unrelated party, financed by a different institution than the seller, and be shown to be unchanged in physical condition. A new state form has been created which is to be completed by the selling institution to provide the assessor with the information needed to determine if the sale qualifies



Connections

for use in the statistical study of “usual selling price.” Buyers of these properties are requested to assist the Township by asking their seller to complete “Form 4546” available at the Michigan.gov website. They can further assist us by submitting copies of appraisals prepared to establish the listing and sale prices.

2. Local assessors will be allowed to use studies based on one year rather than two years of sales when the market is declining. This method has been in place in the past, but seldom used as markets have typically been rising. Based on the recent State guideline changes, the dates of sales included in the study will be from October 1, 2006 to September 31, 2007 rather than the calendar year required in the past. This change will allow all parties involved to meet their required December reporting deadlines in anticipation of more cities and townships implementing a one-year study.

Preliminary sales studies for Cascade based on the two year method (April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2007) indicate that assessed values of residential properties need to increase 1 percent on average to maintain assessed values at 50% of market value. To date, the one-year method is giving early signs of a slight overall decrease. Assessments will reflect the market in each area, increasing or decreasing, and ultimately resulting in the overall township average change. Some segments of the market are still showing increases in sale prices when compared with assessed values, while others are showing decreases. The final average level of assessment in Michigan is to be fifty percent of the “usual selling price.”

Please keep in mind that these changes affect the Assessed Value, not the Taxable Value. The Taxable Value is a calculated amount that increases annually at the rate of inflation (plus any changes to the parcel) on a parcel-by-parcel basis. In many cases the Taxable Value for a property is less than the Assessed Value. While initially created to keep the basis for your tax bills from increasing rapidly, the Taxable Value is now “catching up” to the Assessed Value on many properties. It will continue to rise by the CPI (Michigan consumer price index) each year until it matches the Assessed Value. This means that some property owners will see decreases (or no change) in their Assessed Value, yet will still see increases in their Taxable Value.

All changes in assessed or taxable values for the 2008 tax year will be communicated to the taxpayer of record in mid-February. Notices will be sent by mail, showing the 2007 Assessed and Taxable Values, and the new 2008 values. The times for appeal will also be shown on the forms.

2007 WINTER TAX BILLS

Winter tax bills will be mailed to all property owners the first week of December. This tax bill is due without penalty by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, February 14, 2008.

PAYMENT METHODS

Mail Early: Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Payments are receipted on the business day they are physically received in the Treasurer’s office. We recommend that you allow seven (7) days for mail handling. The Treasurer’s Department is NOT responsible for delays in the postal system. Postmarks are not accepted.

Return Receipt: If you would like a paid receipt returned to you, please mail your entire bill. We will stamp the top portion of the statement “paid” and return it to you. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your payment.

In Person: At Cascade Township office located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE. Office hours are 8:00 am –5:00 pm, Monday-Friday. The office is closed December 24 and December 25, 2007 and January 1st, 2008.

E-Z PAY: The tax payment is taken right out of your checking or savings account. E-Z Pay guarantees your tax payment will be made on time. Just fill out the form enclosed with your tax bill. Applications must be submitted three weeks prior to the tax payment date selected.

Credit Card Payments: Will be accepted through the Official Payments program until 5:00 pm February 14, 2008. Call 1-800-272-9829, or visit the website at www.officialpayments.com. Our Jurisdiction Code is 3230. The provider for this service charges a fee. Payment by credit card may not be made at the Township office.

Make checks payable to: Cascade Charter Township, c/o Mary J Carpenter, Treasurer.

Late payments which do not include penalty and interest will be applied as a partial payment.

Licensing Information

Michigan law requires that all dogs four months of age or older be licensed. Dog licenses will be available at the Township Offices beginning December 1, 2007 through March 1, 2008. Bring the post card that you received in the mail from the Kent County Health Department along with the rabies certificate and proof of neutering from your veterinarian. Dog licenses are discounted for senior citizens, and if your dog has been spayed or neutered.

2008 Dog License Fees

After March 1, 2008, all fees double.

Male or Female dogs:

- Neutered—\$9.00
- Nonneutered—\$20.00

For Senior Owners:

- Neutered—\$5.00
- Nonneutered—\$8.00

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Cascade

Continued from page #3

...After March 1, the cost of a dog license doubles, and these licenses may be purchased only at the Kent County Animal Shelter (616-336-3210) in person or by mail: 711 Ball N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Your pet must be licensed to avoid a substantial penalty and citation from the Kent County License Inspectors.



Chair:

Claude Robinson

Vice-Chair:

Robert Beahan

Secretary:

Jack Lewis

Treasurer:

Tammy Kerr

Board Members:

Cynthia Kay Afendoulis

Michelle Bottrall

Mary Carpenter

Cindy Fox

Jeff Hundley

Mike Miller

Sandra Frost Parrish

Eric Richards

Jim Williams

Honorary Board Member:

Michael Julien

Cascade Community Foundation

November 9, 2007

Dear Neighbor,

One of the many wonderful things about community foundations is that they help build quality communities today while simultaneously creating funds for communities of the future. Community Foundations throughout Michigan have adopted the phrase: "For Good. Forever." as a way of stating that promise.

Your Cascade Community Foundation is fulfilling that promise.

Thanks to the generosity of many Cascade families, our Cascade Community Foundation, though still relatively young, has been supporting programs which add to the quality of life in Cascade. And, we have begun to grow the endowment fund which will help serve families in the future.

We are working together finding new ways to make Cascade the best place to call home.

Cascade Community Foundation's largest project in 2007 was the highly successful River Beat Concert Series. Hundreds of people turned out for lovely summer evenings, sitting back, enjoying the music with neighbors and friends, against a backdrop of the Thornapple River in the beautiful Leslie E. Tassell Park. Does it get any better than that? Please stay tuned, we will continue in 2008 with four more concerts in Tassell Park. It is also our dream to provide even more opportunities for a strong community. Future plans include the continuation of musical and recreational programs as well as other cultural, educational and environmental programs. Plus, we are continuously strategizing on ways to build the endowment fund.

This is our community; the place where we have a voice in creating the quality of life we want. Yet it comes with a price.

As you make your year end charitable giving decisions, we ask that you please consider a donation to your Cascade Community Foundation. All donations are tax deductible and gifts of any size are welcome. Gifts of \$200 for a single person and \$400 for a married couple qualify for Michigan State Income Tax Credit. Yes, your dollars do make a difference. And you can rest assured that your donation is safe. As an all volunteer board driven only by a passion for our community, you have our commitment to the highest level of stewardship and accountability. And, because of a partnership agreement with The Grand Rapids Community Foundation which allows for very low administrative costs, almost all of your financial contribution goes directly into the endowment fund.

From all of us here at the Cascade Community Foundation we hope that this holiday season finds you and your loved ones happy and healthy.

Sincerely,

Cascade Community Foundation



Connections



In Memory Of...

The Cascade community lost a dear friend on November 12. Marilyn Meyer moved to Cascade in 1968 with her husband Al and children and soon became a regular visitor to “Moby”, the library bookmobile. She soon joined her neighbors and friends to advocate for a permanent library. She was a charter member of the Friends of the Library in 1972, where she served in all board positions, many times more than once. Marilyn’s keen knowledge of Robert’s Rules of Order kept the group on track and moving forward. Marilyn supported the library by being one of the first to volunteer for most anything. One of her most awesome tasks was to serve as secretary for 7 years for the Citizens’ Library Building Committee, the grassroots group that helped build our “new” library. Marilyn was also instrumental in fund-raising for the Wisner Center. She was particularly proud that the Friends could now hold their luncheons at the library. Marilyn and Al were the face of the July 4th Book Sale, missing only one in 35 years. We’re grateful to have known Marilyn and to have had the opportunity to work with her. She will be deeply missed by the library community.

Holiday Sales sponsored by Cascade Historical Society December 1st to December 31st

Give a piece of Cascade History to Family and Friends this Holiday Season. Share your love of Cascade area with an Heirloom afghan, Cascade Chronicles, and/ or Note Cards.

Heirloom Afghans—embroidered with Cascade’s significant historical sites. Afghans are 100 percent loomed cotton and machine washable. Five color selections are available.

• **Regular cost \$75.00 Sale \$60.00**

Cascade Chronicles—published in 1987. Our history book contains memories and collected history by the Historical Member Marjorie Mallory Wykes and Her Committee.

• **Regular cost is \$10.00 Sale \$8.00**

Note cards have pen and ink sketch of the Cascade Museum Building available in packets of 10. The cost of packets of 10 small is regularly \$13.50 Sale \$12.00 and Large \$ 22.50 Sale \$20.00. Limited Supply. Items are available at the Township Offices, 2865 Thornhills Ave SE, during business hours.

Membership

The Cascade Historical Society is having their annual membership drive. This is a great opportunity to learn more about Cascade’s history. The Society meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 10 am at the Cascade Historical Museum located on Thornapple River Drive and Cascade Road. Membership forms are available at the Township Office, Cascade History Room at the Cascade Library or from members of the Cascade Historical Society. Down load a membership application from the Township website or call Mary J Carpenter at 616-949-6944.



Fire Department Information

Fire Hydrants

If there is a fire hydrant by your house, please keep it clear of debris (snow, flowers, shrubs, etc.) throughout the year. We ask that there be a 3 foot clearance around the hydrant.

Natural Cut Christmas Trees

Remember to keep your natural trees watered at all times to keep it moist. When using decorations we suggest using power strips instead of extension cords.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Make sure you install carbon monoxide detectors in your house. If they are battery operated, please check the batteries to make sure the detector is working properly.

Furnaces / Chimneys

Have your furnace inspected to ensure it is in proper working condition. Do not use portable heaters. If you have a chimney, have it cleaned on a regular basis.

Emergency Calls

Dial 911. Please dial 911 for any type of emergency call. We may not be in the station and this could cause a delay in response. You may call the non-emergency fire department phone number (949-1320) for all non-emergency calls.

Remember

When you are driving and see an emergency vehicle approaching, please pull to the right and stop. This is for your safety as well as ours. If you see us at an emergency on the side of the road, move over one lane, if possible, and slow down when passing by the emergency.

We are Looking for...

The Cascade Library is looking for a donation of a new/used wheelchair to assist our patrons who are less able to move about. We are seeking a chair 21+” wide, clean and in good repair. Please contact **Diane Cutler 647-3580.**



Cascade



A Citizen's Guide to Cold Weather Practices

Winter means mounds of snow to shovel and layers of ice to remove from our sidewalks and driveways. We often make the job easier by applying deicers like salt, but besides sodium chloride, many deicers also contain chemicals like cyanide. When ice melts, the salts and chemicals dissolve and flow into street drains that lead directly to nearby streams and lakes, endangering aquatic life. By following a few tips, you can reduce your salt use and prevent water pollution.

1. Try an alternative.

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) was developed as a deicing alternative because it has fewer adverse environmental impacts than salt and doesn't cause corrosion. Although CMA is more expensive than rock salt, it is recommended for environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Reduce your salt use.

By limiting the amount of salt you use on sidewalks and driveways, you can reduce the amount of polluted snow melt washing into waterways.

3. Use that shovel!

The most important step in deicing is to physically remove as much ice as possible before applying salt. Use a shovel to break up the ice before you add another layer of salt to your sidewalk. Adding more salt without removing what has melted can result in over-application, meaning more salt and chemicals end up in nearby streams and lakes. You can also reduce salt use by limiting access to your home to one entrance. For every doorway that is not used, there will be less salt running into the catch basin in your street, and ultimately the Grand River.

Kent County Road Commission 2007/2008 Winter Maintenance Procedures

The Kent County Road Commission will be entering the 2007 winter season with fewer trucks on the road than in past years. Due to declining revenues since 2004, and a hiring freeze placed into effect in 2005, 20 fewer winter maintenance employees will be available to plow the 2,000 miles of Kent County Road Commission roads and the 1,000 Lane miles of MDOT truckline roadways this winter season. Managing Director Rice stated "our revenues have declined 6.5 percent since 2004 while the cost of materials and contract services have increased over 20 percent, requiring the Board to cut spending. This has resulted in major projects being delayed and vacant positions not being filled".

Winter maintenance service to motorists and residents remains a primary goal of the Road Commission, but it will take longer to complete coverage of the second largest County Road System in the State. It will also require that lower volume roads such as lake plats and residential subdivisions will not be routinely plowed on weekends unless five inches or more of snow has accumulated. Rice stated "We will need to balance the amount of time we can expect our employees to operate during storms with the projected forecast for additional snow accumulation. We ask motorists and residents to please be patient, we will get there, and to call only if you feel you have an emergency situation that needs to be addressed". The KCRC will again operate daytime and nighttime shifts during the weekdays for expanded coverage of peak driving times.



SNOWPLOWING

Snowplowing contractors and the residents they serve should be aware that State law prohibits the disposing of "snow, ice, or slush onto or across a roadway in a manner which obstructs the safe vision of the driver of a motor vehicle". The law further states that no snow, ice, or slush can be deposited on any roadway or highway (see MCLA 257-677a).

We recommend that residents who have a snowplow service make sure the snow from their driveway is deposited on their own property, not in the roadway, the road right-of-way or a neighboring property. The road right-of-way extends wider than the paved section of the roadway. For those residents who live along the pedestrian pathways, please do not pile snow across the path as it creates an unnecessary and hazardous obstacle for pedestrians. Additionally, if you have a snow plowing service, please be sure that they too are not piling snow across the path. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

If you call the Township with problems or concerns regarding a snowplow contractor, it is helpful if you can identify the contractor.



Connections



Halloween Party

On Wednesday, October 31, Cascade Fire Station 1 was transformed into a haven for ghosts, goblins and scary creatures from across the Township. Over 850 costumed kids were treated to a large bag of goodies and treats. Apple cider, donuts, cookies and coffee were provided for the kids and their parents.

To wrap up the evening, a costume contest took place and prizes were given for different age groups. The age groups ranged from 1 day old–4 years old, 5 years–9 years, 10 years–18 years and over 18 years old. The top vote getters in these groups received special prizes; however, due to the tough competition in these categories, all contestants received prizes for their involvement in the costume contest.

We appreciate your participation in this Halloween event and look forward to seeing you next year.

Stephen W. Korhorn

Cascade Township Fire Department

Thank you to the Halloween Party Sponsors

On behalf of Cascade Township and the Cascade Township Fire Department, we would like to send a special thank you to the following businesses and sponsors for their donations and contributions to the 2007 Halloween party. Without the help of these businesses, we would not be able to host this event. Please take notice of these businesses and express your appreciation of their help with the Halloween party.

Acosta
 Anonymous
 Applebee's
 Arby's
 Batson & Associates
 Best Cleaners
 Best Western
 Big Boy
 Blackie's
 BP–Cascade Rd.
 Brann's Steakhouse & Grill
 Carlos O'Kelly
 CarQuest
 Cascade Automotive
 Cascade Barber Shop
 Cascade Car Wash
 Cascade Firefighter's Association
 Cascade Hospital for Animals

Chase Bank
 Chemical Bank West
 Citgo
 Comerica Bank
 Costco
 Crowne Plaza
 Culver's
 D&W Food Center
 David & Lynne Deering
 Days Inn
 Elan Nutrition
 Family Fare
 Family Video
 Fifth Third Bank
 Funny Business
 Hampton Inn
 Huntington Bank
 Impact Collision

Independent Bank
 Joe & Beverly Albright
 Kingsland Hardware
 Koenes Auto Body
 Lake Michigan Credit Union
 LaSalle Bank
 Macatawa Bank
 Mama's
 McDonald's
 Medawar's Jewelers
 Meijer
 My Personal Credit Union
 Napa Auto Parts
 National City Bank
 Noto's
 O'Neill's Body Shop
 O'Neill's Transmission
 Panera Bread

Pepsi
 Perkins
 Powell Relocation Group
 Red Roof Inn
 Rite Aid
 S. Abraham & Sons
 Sam's Club
 Sentinel Pointe
 Spartan Stores
 SpringHill Suites
 Target
 Thomas & Joyce Wisner
 Tuffy Muffler
 United Bank
 Verburg's Automotive
 Walgreen's
 WalMart
 Wolverine Vending



Cascade Connections

Township Vehicle for Sale

Sealed bids are being accepted for a Township owned 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee until December 21, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. This vehicle was driven by the former Township Manager. The minimum bid that will be accepted is \$17,000.00. The vehicle is in excellent condition and has fewer than 28,000 miles. It is located at the Township office and may be inspected between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Sandra Otey for more information. Bids may be mailed or dropped off at the Cascade Township Office, 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Please mark the outside of the envelope "Bid for 2005 Jeep Cherokee". The Township reserves the right to reject any or all bids received.

Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
phone: 616.949.1500
fax: 616.949.3918
www.cascadetwp.com

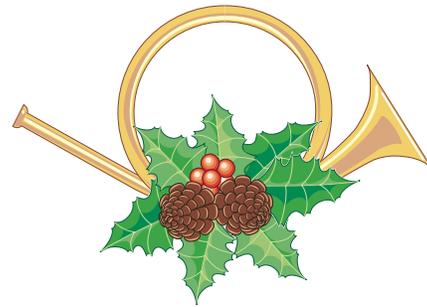
Pathway Clean up

I would like to express my thanks to the many volunteers that have made the first season of the clean up of the Cascade bike and walking paths such a great success. Your efforts have made our path system a show case for what can be done with a little volunteerism. We have many more weeks of good weather to enjoy biking and walking on our paths. Remember, a clean path is its own reward.

Best Regards

Kris Taylor

Pathway Coordinator



PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 1
GRAND RAPIDS MI