



# Cascade Connections

Winter 2009

A Newsletter from Cascade Charter Township

## 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



## Supervisor's Message

Dear Cascade Residents,

2008 saw Cascade Township take some important steps that will help ensure that Cascade will continue to remain a desirable and unique area to live and do business into the future.

Beginning in January of 2008, Cascade Township, with the help of Williams & Works, a local planning consulting firm, began an extensive undertaking to develop a Master Plan that expressed the desires of the community. The process included monthly citizen advisory committee meetings, a Township-wide opinion survey, seven focus group meetings, two community visioning meetings, and a follow-up open house. Throughout the process, the Advisory Committee and planners also involved adjacent municipalities and agencies for their input and expertise to make sure the Master Plan functions within the framework of other Township and regional plans and policies.

The Master Plan is a blueprint that expresses a desired future for Cascade Township that may take years to achieve and should be used in helping understand the level, type and placement of development.

This has, and continues to be a process that a number of residents put many hours of work and I would like to extend our gratitude to all those that have participated in creating this important document.

To learn how you can review or comment on the Master Plan I encourage you to look at the information in the Master Plan Update in this edition of the Cascade Connections.

An important milestone was also reached in 2008 with the acquisition of two incredible natural parcels of land in different areas of Cascade. A 78 acre parcel was purchased at the end of Burton Street, east of Cascade Road, because the voters approved a millage allowing us to buy the land for future use as a park.

A grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund for 1.2 million dollars was awarded to Cascade Township toward the acquisition of 198 acres of pristine scenic natural land in the Bolt Drive and Grand River Drive area. To get a grant of this amount and magnitude was incredible and was accomplished only because of the long, hard work of Steve Peterson, our Planning Director, Tom McDonald and other members of the Open Space Committee. Coupled with money from the millage and the funds already in the Open Space Fund, area residents will have these areas to enjoy for generations to come. The Township is still in the process of determining the best way to provide access for the public to enjoy these lands. As soon as that is done we will be able to open them up for everyone's enjoyment later in the year.

The Cascade Township Board and Staff are committed to serving the needs of our residents and urge you to visit our website or stop by the Township offices to access any information you need. Also, please feel free to contact the Board with any questions or concerns you may have.

*Rob Beahan*

# Cascade

## Meet Your Township Board...

The Township Board is the general governing body of the Township. The Board meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Wisner Center at the Cascade Library. If you would like to contact your board, below are the email addresses for each member.

**Supervisor Rob Beahan** . . . . [rbeahan@cascadetwp.com](mailto:rbeahan@cascadetwp.com)

**Clerk Ron Goodyke** . . . . . [rgoodyke@cascadetwp.com](mailto:rgoodyke@cascadetwp.com)

**Treasurer Marjorie Dood** . . . [mdood@cascadetwp.com](mailto:mdood@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee Jim Koessel** . . . . . [jkoessel@cascadetwp.com](mailto:jkoessel@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee Cindy Fox** . . . . . [cfox@cascadetwp.com](mailto:cfox@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee Jack Lewis** . . . . . [jlewis@cascadetwp.com](mailto:jlewis@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee Fred Goldberg** . . . . [fgoldberg@cascadetwp.com](mailto:fgoldberg@cascadetwp.com)



*Front Row (L to R): Treasurer Marjorie Dood, Trustee Jim Koessel, Supervisor Rob Beahan, Trustee Cindy Fox, Trustee Jack Lewis*

*Back Row (L to R): Clerk Ron Goodyke, Trustee Fred Goldberg*



## Tax Payment Information Available on the Web

With the IRS income tax filing deadline approaching, our property taxpayers may need to verify the amount of property tax paid in 2008. For their convenience, this information is available thru a link on the Township's website. The link will connect them to our software provider, BS&A, for information on property taxes and assessing information.

Instructions for our website are: [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)

- Departments
- Treasurer's Office (last listing on left side of screen)
- Tax, Assessing, & Building Information
- Click on the link to BS& A in the first paragraph
- On the left side of the screen click Current Tax Search
- Enter your parcel number, name (last name only), or address
- Click "Search" at the bottom of the screen
- Scroll down for tax year/season; amount paid and date paid
- More detailed information is available by clicking the plus sign
- Property Information is on the left side of the screen and by clicking one of the choices, more property information is available.

### Attention!

Some 2008 Winter Tax bills for Cascade Township included return mailing envelopes for the City of Troy. Please check your return mailing envelopes. Payments should be mailed to:

**Cascade Charter Township**  
Marjorie M. Dood, Treasurer  
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-7140

If you have any questions regarding the website, tax payments, or anything else that the Treasurer's Office can assist you, please call 616-949-6944.

# Connections

## From the desk of your Assessor ...

### Assessment Change Notices will be mailed on or before February 25, 2009

If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1st, please call our office. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- If there was a transfer of ownership in 2008;
- If there is a Principal Residence Exemption on your property for 2009.

**Board of Review** will hear assessment appeals on March 9 and 10, 2009.

- Appointments will be made beginning on February 28. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available in the Assessor's Office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning February 28.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 9, 2009. Please send them to:

**Cascade Township Board of Review**  
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for residential properties. Commercial / Industrial properties do not have to appeal to the Board of Review to appeal to the State.

## PROPOSAL A Reminders...

**Property Transfer Affidavits** must be filed with the assessor for any transfer of ownership that occurred in 2008.

### Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions ...

Filing deadline for new exemptions is May 1, 2009. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2009, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must rescind your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer either own or occupy the property as your principal residence. Exemptions expire on December 31st of the year you move out.

### Taxable Value Cap ...

It is the **taxable** value that is capped by Proposal A – not the assessed value. The taxable value is used to calculate your taxes and is capped at 5% or rate of, inflation unless there was a transfer of ownership in 2008, any new construction, field work, reappraisal

changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2008, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2009 because the taxable value was *uncapped*.

### 4.4% is the inflation rate established by the State for 2009.

**A special note to those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year...** Proposal A does not authorize the assessor to automatically set the assessed value of a property which has sold at one half of the sale price. An individual sale price may or may not be a good indicator of the true cash value of the property for a variety of reasons. Section 27(5) of the General Property Tax Act states that *"the purchase price paid in a transfer of property is not the presumptive true cash value of the property transferred."*

## Did you know?

- Annual changes of assessment are based on sales in the neighborhood. We have at least 75 sales neighborhoods in Cascade. Your neighborhood rarely consists of just the homes on your street.
- Your taxable value can never exceed your assessed value.
- The May 1st filing deadline for Principal Residence Exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
- It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
- The assessing staff is available Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m. Feel free to come in or call 949-6176 if you have any questions on your property. The assessing system is quite complex, and we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how the system works.
- **The assessor is not permitted by State Law to automatically set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.**

## BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Barbara Manus - Averill  
John Meyer  
Sara Fazio



# Cascade

## Gerald R. Ford International Airport

### No Holding Pattern for Airport Construction Activities

Though much of nature may be lying dormant during these winter months, just the opposite is true at Gerald R. Ford International Airport, where many changes and much progress are occurring on the Terminal Area and Parking Improvement Program (TAPIP) project.

One of the most noteworthy changes is that the temporary passenger pick-up and drop-off area and associated roadway have now been closed, with the pick-up/drop-off area returning to the all new, permanent curb-front immediately in front of the terminal building. Concrete has been poured for curb and gutter and sidewalk, the new asphalt roadway in front of the terminal has been laid, and the roadway is now open. Taxi cabs, hotel vans, valet parking, and other vehicular activity have also returned to the permanent curb-front location. Even though construction activity will be ongoing in the vicinity of the terminal curb-front for the duration of the project, this construction activity should have little or no impact on customer service.

Back in September, the final girder and supporting trusses were installed for the new roadway canopy. Painters then had to brush paint the entire skeleton. Following the painters were the glass installers. Although finishing work on the canopy will continue this year, airport customers can now begin to benefit from the weather protection provided by the new canopy. Underneath the canopy, work continues on the two pedestrian sky bridges that, upon the opening of the parking ramp, will connect the ramp to the passenger terminal.

Meanwhile, work on the northerly two-thirds of the parking deck continues. All major concrete pours, as well as the entry helix, have been completed. Now that the temporary passenger pick-up/drop-off area has been closed and this activity has returned to the permanent terminal curb-front, work has begun on the remaining, southerly one-third of the parking deck.

On many days, it is not unusual to find 250 men and women working on the various components of this extensive project. These workers represent such trades as excavators, iron workers, welders, heavy equipment operators, truck drivers, electricians, carpenters, painters, general laborers, and many more.

The TAPIP project represents a significant addition to the customer services and amenities being added at Gerald R. Ford International. The new parking ramp, with its associated elements such as the roadway canopy and pedestrian sky bridges, will offer safe, secure, close-in, covered parking. It will also serve to elevate the airport to the next level as we continue to serve the air transportation needs of West Michigan.

As we look forward to a Fall 2009 completion of the TAPIP project, I thank you for your patience and, as always, for your patronage of Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

*John Van Laar, Chairman,*

*Kent County Aeronautics Board*



# Connections

## Kent District Library – Valuable Community Resource in Tough Economic Times

by Janice Fonger, KDL Development Coordinator

The Cascade Branch of the Kent District Library (KDL) has a long history of service to the community. In the early 1970's Cascade Township began their quest for library services for their residents. One resident, Marilyn Meyer, unsatisfied with bringing her children to the old Cascade Pharmacy parking lot to meet the bookmobile, organized a group of friends to fix what she considered a "major deficiency in the township's cultural amenities." As a founding member of the Friends of the Cascade Library, Mrs. Meyer played a large role in making the Cascade Township Library a reality. Today the Cascade Branch of the Kent District Library is carrying on the legacy of Mrs. Meyer by providing a robust offering of programs and services that support and enhance the health and vitality of the residents Cascade Township (and surrounding areas).

Especially during these difficult economic times, the services and resources provided by the Cascade Library and KDL are invaluable to area residents of all ages. In December 2008, NBC News Anchor Brian Williams reported that "libraries offer free relief from tough economic times", and pointed to the dramatic increase in library usage across the country over the past year. According to the story, "more Americans have library cards than ever before" and are accessing the variety of services and programs offered by the library.

This increase in usage is also true not only for the Cascade Township branch but also throughout Kent District Library. Overall materials circulation has increased by over 22% in the past year and program attendance is up by 33%.

According to Diane Cutler, Cascade branch manager, "our branch is more vital to our community now than ever in our history. In the early 90's as we contemplated a new building, many questioned the viability of libraries due to the recent introduction of the Internet. Yet our circulation has increased overwhelmingly since opening in 1996. In our beautiful building and comfortable surroundings it's easy to provide the services that our community wants and needs."

KDL feels very fortunate to have the support of the communities we serve. The residents of Cascade Township and the Friends of the Cascade Library have generously and tirelessly supported this gem of a library for well over 30 years. And for this KDL is extremely grateful.

Kent District Library is a millage-supported system. Current millage levels sustain existing programs and services, but it does not allow for growth. In order to adequately address the needs and challenges of our community, new sources of revenue must be cultivated.

In 2007 the KDL Fund was created to support KDL's role in preserving and growing an excellent library system. The KDL Annual Fund is used to strengthen programs and initiatives aimed at

the youngest learner. The KDL Endowment Fund (managed by the Grand Rapids Community Foundation) is a lasting legacy to meet the future needs of our library, citizens, and community.

Kent District Library is committed to insuring that a vibrant library legacy remains in our community for generations to come.

For more information about KDL and how you can support your community library, visit us online at [www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org).

The poster is for a "MOVIE NIGHT" event. At the top right, it says "CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION". The main title "MOVIE NIGHT" is in large, stylized letters. Below that, the date and time are "Monday, February 16, 2009; 6:30 p.m." and the location is "Kent District Library - Cascade Branch - Wisner Center 2870 Jacksmith Avenue SE". The central image is the DVD cover for "Walt Disney's THE JUNGLE BOOK 40th ANNIVERSARY EDITION PLATINUM EDITION", featuring Baloo, Mowgli, and Bagheera. To the left of the cover is a green starburst that says "FREE!". To the right is a blue starburst that says "POPCORN!". At the bottom, there are three logos: the Cascade Community Foundation logo, the KDL logo (Kent District Library), and the website "www.Cascadecommunityfoundation.com".

# Cascade

## Master Plan Update

After 12 months of public input, community-wide surveys, visioning meetings and focus groups, the draft Master Plan Update for Cascade Charter Township is ready for public review and comment. A copy of the draft Master Plan Update can be viewed at the Township Hall or on the Township's website. The Master Plan Update includes goals, objectives, and implementation steps to guide land use decisions over the next 20 years. Topics include transportation, utilities, land use, sustainability, public outreach, open space, economic development, housing, and Cascade Village. If you are interested in reviewing and commenting on the Plan, please contact Planning Director Steve Peterson at (616) 949-0224 or [steve@cascadetwp.com](mailto:steve@cascadetwp.com). A public hearing before the Planning Commission is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23rd at the Wisner Center.

## Attention Neighborhood Associations!

The Township would appreciate your most up to date contact list of your association officers. We use these lists to relay information that may be of specific interest to your neighborhood officers. We also share these lists with our sheriff deputies at the East Precinct. Please send your updated information to Sandra Otey via email at [sotey@cascadetwp.com](mailto:sotey@cascadetwp.com) or mail it to 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546.

## Attention: Dog Owners

Please remember that despite these wintery conditions, there is an ordinance regarding leashes and cleaning up after your dog. The ordinance states that all dogs on public or private property other than their own shall be controlled and on a leash not exceeding twenty (20) feet in length at all times.

It goes on to state that any person shall not permit a dog to commit a nuisance within the Township by defecating upon any public or private property without the consent of the owner or person in lawful occupation of such property. Remember to clean up after your dog. These ordinance violations are a misdemeanor and could result in a fine. If you would like to read this ordinance in its entirety, feel free to visit our website at [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com).

### Dog Licenses for 2009

Dog licenses are available at the Township office until the end of February. License fees are: \$20.00 or \$8.00 (seniors), and if your dog is spayed or neutered \$9.00 or \$5.00 (seniors). The cost of a dog license doubles after March 1, 2009, and they may only be purchased at Kent County facilities. Please call the Cascade Township Treasurer's office at 616-949-6944 if you have any questions regarding dog licenses.



# Connections

## Fire Department News...

### Fire Hydrants Need Your Help

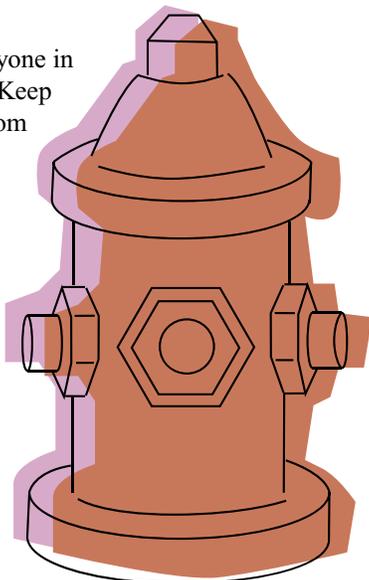
Winter has, again, made a strong appearance in Western Michigan. Blankets of snow have added a glistening beauty to our township. As we approach a record-setting season snowfall, we see mountains of snow building as plow operators work to keep our roads, parking lots and driveways clear.

This winter has also seen an increase in fires all across West Michigan, and Cascade Township is no exception. Fighting fires in the frigid cold brings its own set of challenges, but the Fire Department remains most concerned with water supply. Water supply is an issue where our residents have an opportunity to make a difference.

We are asking all residents to be aware of the accessibility of any hydrants located on their property. Keeping the snow shoveled from around each hydrant improves the accessibility of this critical supply. Clear and accessible hydrants make it faster and easier for the Fire Department to find and establish a dependable water supply.

In addition to keeping the snow cleared away from hydrants on your property, we are asking neighborhood associations to discuss this issue with their private snow plow operators. Plow operators should be reminded not to pile snow on and around the fire hydrants. Not only does this plowed-in snow make a hydrant almost impossible to use, it increases the risk of plow operators driving into, and damaging, the hydrants in your neighborhood.

Please work to keep everyone in your neighborhood safe. Keep the snow cleared away from all fire hydrants.



## East Precinct News...

### Hello everyone!

My name is Deputy Jason VanDyke. I recently took over the community police position (Cascade and Grand Rapids Twp's) vacated by Deputy Coil.

I would like to mention our Citizens Police Academy coming up. We are still taking requests to attend the citizens academy. It starts Thursday, February 19th and runs 10 consecutive weeks from 6:30pm to 9:30pm. Applications for the program are available at [www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com).

For this newsletter I picked a few home safety points to keep in mind. If you have questions regarding safety or are interested in programs we offer, please contact me at 632-6435 or you can email me at [jason.vandyke@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:jason.vandyke@kentcountymi.gov).

Take Care and Have a Safe winter!

### Home Safety:

- How safe is your home - i.e. Locks, Doors, Lighting, Alarms, etc?
- Exterior Lighting - Where? Motion? Working? Used? Great Deterrent!
- Landscape – Overgrown? Can people see windows, doors? Can you see out? Are there hiding places?
- Snow Removal – Are you going away? Does it look like the house is being used?
- Exterior Doors/Locks – Do the locks work? Dead bolts? Peep hole? Are the locks being used at all times? Do not make it easy for criminals!!
- Windows – Are they locked at night? Open when you are gone? Valuables in plain sight? Curtains closed at night?
- Interior lighting – Lights left on at night or while gone? Are lights on timers when gone for long periods?
- Address Numbers – Are they easily visible? Lighted? Reflective? On the mailbox? Can they be seen from the road? Great for emergency responders!
- Alarms – Do your smoke alarms work? Carbon Monoxide detectors? House Alarms? Do you know cancellation codes, what to do?
- Strangers – Avoid letting into house, make phone call for them while they remain outside, call police if they appear suspicious.
- Neighborhood Watch Programs – These programs are an excellent deterrent for crime in your area. It helps to bring back the neighboring in your neighborhood. Neighbors look out for one another by observing and reporting suspicious activity to the police department.

# Cascade Connections

## Do you have a Septic System?

A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. The tank holds wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out. The remaining liquid exits the tank into the drainfield. Microbes in the soil will digest or remove most contaminants from the wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.

If properly maintained, your septic system can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't maintained, you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars.

To prevent septic system failures, hire a professional to pump out your septic system **every three to five years**. Local professionals and licensed contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages under the heading "Septic Tank & Systems-Cleaning."



[www.lowergrandriver.org](http://www.lowergrandriver.org)

## Cascade Charter Township

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