



# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Winter 2013

### Office Hours:

Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### Township Board:

#### Supervisor:

Rob Beahan; 949-1500  
[rbeahan@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:rbeahan@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Clerk:

Ron Goodyke; 949-1508  
[goodyke@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:goodyke@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Treasurer:

Ken Peirce; 949-6944  
[kpeirce@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:kpeirce@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Trustees:

Jim Koessel  
[jkoessel@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:jkoessel@cascaadetwp.com)

Cynthia Porter Janes  
[cjanes@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:cjanes@cascaadetwp.com)

Jack Lewis  
[jlewis@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:jlewis@cascaadetwp.com)

Fred Goldberg  
[fgoldberg@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:fgoldberg@cascaadetwp.com)

### Department Phone Numbers:

#### Manager:

Ben Swayze; 949-1500  
[bswayze@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:bswayze@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Assessing:

Roger McCarty; 949-6176  
[roger@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:roger@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Building & Grounds:

Amy Waugh; 682-4836  
[awaugh@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:awaugh@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Building Inspections:

Brian Wilson; 949-3765  
[bwilson@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:bwilson@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Fire:

John Sigg; 949-1320  
[jsigg@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:jsigg@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Planning:

Steve Peterson; 949-0224  
[speterson@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:speterson@cascaadetwp.com)

#### Sheriff/Non-Emergency:

632-6100

# Happy Holidays

from your Township Board, Commissions and Staff

## CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Bring your used Christmas tree to the parking lot behind the Buttrick Fire Station (Buttrick & 30th Street) from December 26 - January 5. Please remember to remove all ornaments, lights, tinsel, & tree stands. Happy Holidays!

## 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 25 through December 18.

## HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

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

## SNOW REMOVAL

With the winter season upon us, please note that Cascade Township recently adopted an ordinance regarding snow removal. This ordinance applies not only to property owners but to contracted plow drivers. The ordinance reads as follows:

### Snow Removal

1. Leaving snow and/or ice removed from driveways on public property, road rights-of-way or another private property is prohibited without consent.
  - A. No snow or ice shall be removed from private property and deposited or left upon any road, road right-of-way, public sidewalk or non-motorized pathway, driveway or parkway of another person without that person's consent.
  - B. All snow removed from any driveway shall be deposited only on the property or parkway of the same property as the driveway.

2. Responsibility by owner, employee or contractor.

If a property owner or occupant has snow removed from private property by a snow removal contractor or another party, the contractor or person removing the snow shall have the same responsibilities as the property owner or occupant to adhere to the regulations described in Section 1 of this ordinance.

3. Penalties

Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance is responsible for a municipal civil infraction, subject to payment of a civil fine determined in accordance with Chapter 40 of the Code. This information is on our website at <http://www.cascaadetwp.com>. Click on Reference Desk, Ordinances, then General Ordinances.



## FROM THE SUPERVISOR

ROB BEAHAN

### FROM THE SUPERVISOR...

It was another busy year for the Cascade Township Board and staff. Ben Swayze, our Township Manager, is completing his first year here and has done a great job. Ben and his family have moved into the Township and are thoroughly enjoying living here in Cascade.

In August the voters approved millages for the library, police and fire protection. The passage of all three requests will help assure that we are able to maintain the same level of service and protection we have had in the past. Our partnership in the East Precinct, run by the Kent County Sheriff Department, gives us added security. We continue to have the benefit of 24/7 fire and emergency protection with full time staffing of two fire stations: Station 1 at Thornhills and Station 2 at Buttrick and 30th.

The entire staff has done a wonderful job of keeping a close eye on costs and expenditures. Once again the Board has passed a balanced budget and staff has helped ensure a budget surplus at the end of our fiscal year.

As the seasons change from fall to winter, I would like to wish everyone in Cascade a wonderful and joyous Holiday Season. Things tend to get hectic from Thanksgiving to New Year's, but I hope you are able to relax and look around the wonderful community we live in. Enjoy the holiday decorations in the business district and in the many residential neighborhoods. It's a great time to get out on the pathways and in the parks and look at everything in a different perspective with the leaves down and shrouded in snow. It's cold but well worth the effort.

### WINTER 2013 TAX INFORMATION

Winter 2013 tax bills and informational notices **were mailed** December 1, 2013. Winter taxes are due on or before Friday, February 14, 2014. If you do not receive a tax statement during December, please check the township's website or call the Treasurer's office at 616-949-6944. Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. We recommend that you allow 7 days to ensure a timely delivery. An informational letter is enclosed with the bill for alternative payment instructions and E-Z pay application.

March 1, 2014, all unpaid real property taxes will be forwarded to the Kent County Treasurer for collection. Postmarks are **not** accepted.

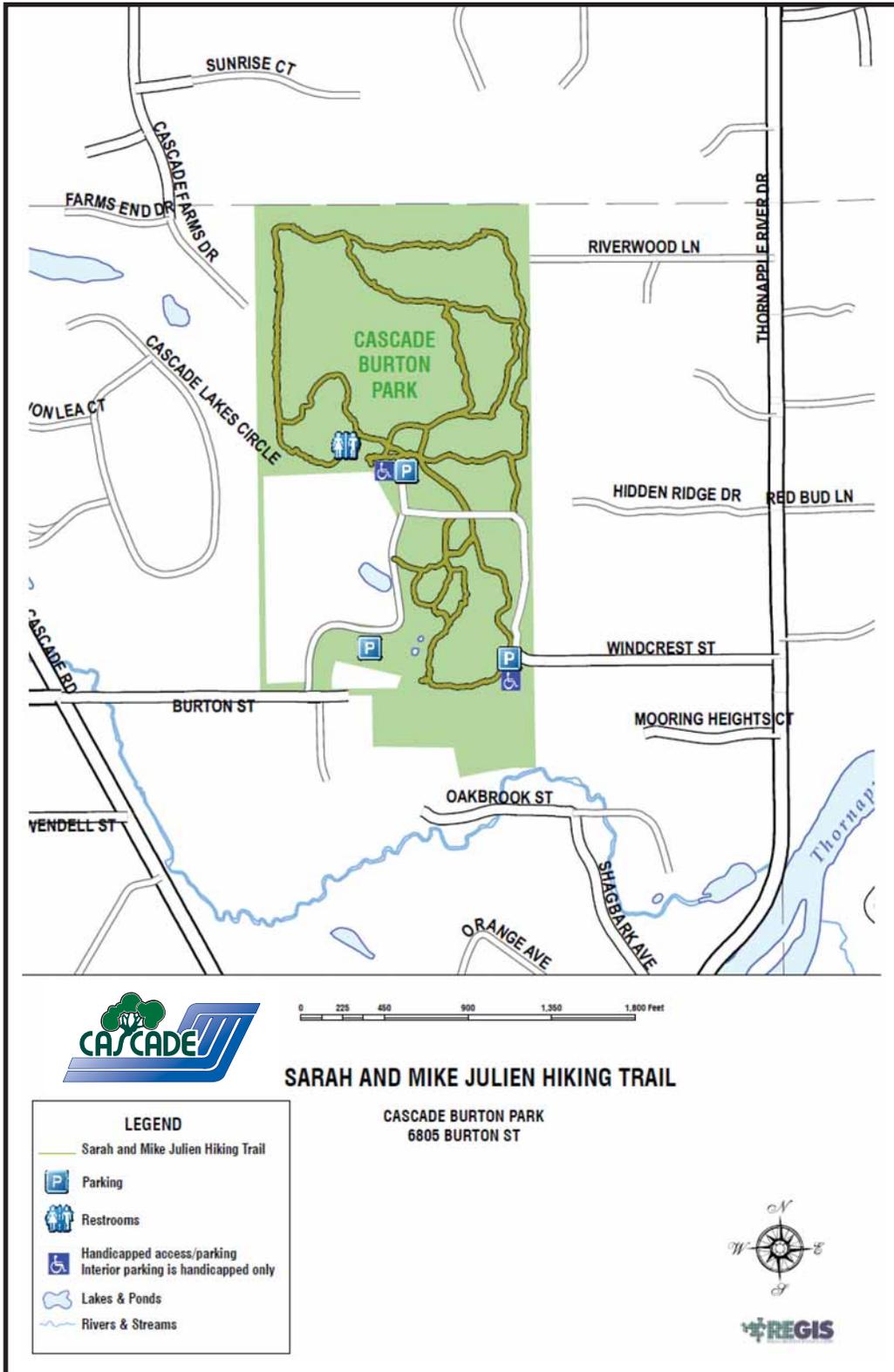


### DOG LICENSES

Kent County is in the process of offering 3 year dog licenses. Due to a tag manufacturer delay and implementing the new process, our office will not have dog licenses available until **January 2, 2014**. We apologize in advance, for any inconvenience that this may cause you. The Treasurer's office will be selling the dog licenses throughout the year after **January 2, 2014**.

### BURTON STREET PARK CHANGES

Bicycles are now permitted on the paved surfaces of the Burton Street Park. The Township Board has recently amended the ordinance for Burton Street Park. Please be aware that some of the property is still private so please pay attention to the signs at the park. This change will now allow bicycles to get from the pathway on Thornapple River Drive to Cascade Road by cutting through Burton Street Park.



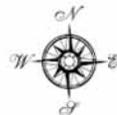
0 225 450 900 1,350 1,800 Feet

#### SARAH AND MIKE JULIEN HIKING TRAIL

CASCADE BURTON PARK  
6805 BURTON ST

**LEGEND**

- Sarah and Mike Julien Hiking Trail
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Handicapped access/parking  
Interior parking is handicapped only
- Lakes & Ponds
- Rivers & Streams



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS



The legislature has made significant changes to the Personal Property tax law which will impact small business owners. **Starting in 2014, personal property owned, leased or controlled by an**

**owner or related entity in a jurisdiction with a true cash value of less than \$80,000 is exempt from property taxes.**

There are several important points the property owner must be aware of:

1. The law does not allow a property owner to divide up his property among separate entities to avoid taxes. Additionally, leased equipment is included in the calculation of total value.
2. In order to claim the exemption, the property owner will have to file an affidavit with the Assessor's office by February 10th. Failure to file the affidavit means you will not receive the exemption – even if you would otherwise be eligible.
3. Personal property owners who file the affidavit are not required to file a personal property statement. They are required to maintain records documenting their property value and make those records available to the Assessor upon request in order to confirm qualification for exemption. The Assessor may deny the exemption and go back up to 3 years if he or she believes the equipment is not eligible. Revised tax bills including interest and penalty would be issued.
4. For 2014 only, a property owner can file an appeal with the March Board of Review to add the exemption for 2014.
5. As of now, there is no provision for the exemption to be addressed by the July or December Boards of Review.

The law is subject to change prior to the beginning of tax season so property owners should be on the lookout for changes. As of now, the Tax Commission has not issued the Exemption Affidavit. The Assessor's Office will send out personal property statements to accounts that prior years indicate likely will not be eligible for exemption. Accounts that might be eligible will receive notification that either personal property statements or an exemption affidavit are available for download from the Cascade Township website. Accounts that receive a personal property statement but are eligible for exemption may still file the affidavit.



## FLOOD INSURANCE INFORMATION

On July 6, 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the *Biggert Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Act)*. The Act calls on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other agencies to make a number of changes to the way the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is run. Some of these changes have already been put in place, and others will be implemented in the coming months. Key provisions of the legislation will require the NFIP to raise rates to reflect true flood risk, make the program more financially stable, and change how Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates impact policyholders. The changes will mean premium rate increase for some – but not all – policyholders over time.

The new law encourages program financial stability by eliminating some artificially low rates and discounts. Most flood insurance rates will now move to reflect full risk, and flood insurance rates will rise on some policies. Actions such as buying a property, allowing a policy to lapse, or purchasing a new policy can trigger rate changes. Fortunately, there are some actions you can take to minimize the effect of these increases.

Whether or not your rates increase, it may be possible to lower your flood insurance costs. You should talk to your insurance agent about specific insurance options available to you. Make sure you discuss deductibles, content coverage and structural coverage, and ask for an estimate for all of the options.

Your agent may recommend obtaining an *elevation certificate*. The elevation certificate is an important document used to determine the correct rating for your structure. A licensed surveyor or registered engineer will collect elevation data on your specific structure, which can be used to re-rate the policy.

For more information go to <http://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance-reform-act-2012>

## 2014 ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Prior to Proposal A, property taxes were based upon State Equalized Value (SEV). Property taxes are now based upon Taxable Value. Each year, the Assessing Office must calculate the SEV for every property based upon the study period mandated by the State Tax Commission. A property's taxable status is determined as of December 31, which is called Tax Day.

Additionally, each property has a Capped Value. Capped Value is calculated by multiplying the prior year's Taxable Value, with adjustments for additions and losses, by the CPI as calculated by the State of Michigan and cannot increase by more than 5%. **For 2014, the CPI has been calculated at 1.6%.** Taxable Value (TV), which property taxes are based on, is defined as the **lower** of State Equalized Value or Capped Value. Generally speaking, this means that unless the current year's SEV is less than the previous year's Taxable Value multiplied by the CPI, the current year's Taxable Value will increase by the CPI.

**SEV = 50% of True Cash Value**

**Capped Value = (Prior TV-Losses) x (1+ CPI\*) + Additions**

\* CPI = Percent of change in the rate of inflation or 5%, whichever is less, expressed as a multiplier

**Taxable Value = The lesser of State Equalized Value or Capped Value unless there is a transfer of ownership.**

### The Equalization Timetable

For the last few years, the State Tax Commission has mandated local assessors use a 12-month sales study to determine values. For the 2014 assessment cycle, the Commission has ordered assessors go back to the 24 month study.

**For 2014 assessments, the 24-month sales study begins October 1, 2011 and ends September 30, 2013.**

### Actual Sale Price is not True Cash Value

The law defines True Cash Value as the **usual** selling price of a property. The Legislature and the Courts have very clearly stated that **the actual selling price of a property is not a controlling factor in the True Cash Value or State Equalized Value** as calculated by the Assessor. For this reason, when analyzing sales for determining assessment changes, the Assessing Office will review all sales but exclude non-representative sales from the assessment analysis.

### Foreclosure Sales

Inherent in the definition of usual selling price is the assumption that the sale does not involve any element of distress from either party.

Distressed sales, such as sales involving **mortgage foreclosure** or sales involving transfers to or from relocation companies, are usually not considered as typical sales in the valuation of property for assessment purposes nor are they necessarily reliable indicators of value when making market comparisons for current assessed values or appeals.

### So what does it all mean?

#### How can I expect my assessment to change in 2014?

As stated in the Equalization Timetable, for 2014 the time period of the sales study for assessment review is October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2013. Sales occurring after September 30, 2013 will not be reviewed until the 2015 assessment cycle.

The residential market has been improving over the past few years and the sales studies will reflect that. The larger study period and greater market activity will provide a larger sample to base the new assessments on. Areas with limited sales data may still require assessment adjustments be based on market activity in the surrounding neighborhoods and general market trends. With the larger sales study period, you may find that your 2014 assessment may not go up as much as you think it should.

#### What does it mean if my Assessment goes up more than my Taxable Value?

Taxable Value is used to calculate your tax bill. If the taxable value increase is less than the assessment increase, your tax increase will be limited and will not reflect the total increase in value of your property.

Remember that in the year following a transfer of ownership, the property uncaps and the Taxable Value becomes whatever the Assessed Value is for that year.

## SAVE THE DATE...

The Grand Rapids Triathlon will be held in Cascade and Ada Township on Sunday, June 8, 2014. See future newsletters for more information on the date, routes, road closures, etc. or visit their website at <http://www.grandrapidstri.com/>.

## NEW SERVICE AT KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY:

### Streaming Videos: Join the "Hoopla"



Big news! We've been offering free downloads of eBooks, eAudiobooks, magazines and music for awhile now, but we have something new to add to the mix. We are thrilled to announce that **KDL cardholders can now stream movies and television shows**

for free through [hoopla](http://hoopla.com), a library-based video streaming service!

Hoopla specializes in educational movies, documentaries, foreign and independent films and children's and family content. Their database of over 10,000 movies and television shows includes:

- Classic films such as Brigadoon, The African Queen and The Kid
- Family favorites like The Neverending Story, Black Beauty and A Little Princess
- Documentaries and educational programming by National Geographic, Ken Burns and Bill Nye the Science Guy
- Fitness and yoga videos, including Jillian Michaels
- Children's shows such as Arthur, Caillou, and Super WHY!
- and much more!

### KDL cardholders can stream 4 items per month from hoopla.

Multiple patrons can view the same content at the same time, which means **no need to place holds**. Most items have 72-hour checkouts and borrowed items are returned automatically when the loan period expires, so there are **never any overdue fines**. Videos stream directly in your web browser, or through a **mobile app** available for Apple and Android devices. (Mobile device users can also download a temporary copy of content for playing offline if necessary.)

Don't miss out! Try [hoopla](http://hoopla.com) today!

*Cascade Township Branch*  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE  
(616) 784-2007  
[www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org)

## CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cascade Historical Society members have been inputting historical data into our computer data base for the past two years and are pleased to announce we can provide assistance in finding information about Cascade's history. Our data includes birth, death and voting records from the late 1800's through the early 1900's and Cascade Civil War veteran information. We have discovered some remarkable tales and details about what our amazing ancestors accomplished and we want to share these stories.

If you would like us to search our records for relevant family history, please email the following link with your inquiry. The Cascade Historical Society meets on the first Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the old township hall next to Cascade Christian Church on Thornapple River Dr. Do join us. Our email address is [cascadehistory@cascadetwp.com](mailto:cascadehistory@cascadetwp.com).

We have collected many photos, letters, diaries, journals, newspaper clippings, family histories and other historical artifacts. We would love to copy your newspaper clippings, photos, family histories, diaries and other items which are relevant to Cascade's history. If you have such items, contact us.

Our files include the following family names. If your family's name is listed here, send an email and we can share the information we have.

Arner, Auble, Baker, Barkley, Barnett, Beard, Bishop, Boles, Blakeslee, Bos, Bouwman, Brass, Brown, Buffinga, Burch, Buttrick, Campau, Clark, Cook, Cotter, Crane, Dalman, Danforth, Darling, Delaney, Denison, Dinturff,, Doane, Dorsey, Dykehouse, Eardley, Ellinger, Field, Foster, Gale, Gaylord, Heintzelman, Hilferink, Holt, Hooker, Johnson, Keagle, Kerr, Kirby, Kilmer, Koetsier, Korhorn, Kraft, Laraway, Lawyer, LeBarge, Lennon, Linton,, Magee, McClellan, McCotter, McCords, McDougull, Mead, Moses, Niles, Oosterhouse, Osmer, Patterson, Penfield, Penmoyer, Perkins, Pettit, Ploeg, Quiggle, Randall, Reynolds, Saunders, Schenck, Scott, Seeley, Sherman, Shumacker, Slater, Smith, Somerville, Spaman, Spaulding, Stark, Stevens, Streeter, Teeple, Theule, Thomas, Thompson, Timmer, Van Amberg, Vanden Berge, Van Norman, Warner, Watterson, Weldon, Wilbur, Winslow, Withey, Wood, Wride, Wykes, Yates and Yeiter.



[www.CascadeCommunityFoundation.com](http://www.CascadeCommunityFoundation.com)

November 25, 2013

**President:**

Michelle Bottrall

Dear Neighbor,

**Vice-president**

Tracy Sianta

Jacob was A+ student at Forest Hills, involved in band, a lover of physics and a survivor of depression. But that last part was a secret. He didn't want to tell anyone that he was seeking help from therapy and medication but when the Mental Health Foundation came to his school because of a grant from the Cascade Community Foundation, he realized that he wasn't alone, and that his story needed to be told.

**Secretary:**

Curt Monhart

**Treasurer:**

Sara Trapp

"In my experience, I've found that students who excel academically in today's environment face significant stress and often don't feel comfortable talking about the problems they face, because they're worried about being perceived as strange, weak, unable to handle the "pressure," don't want to jeopardize their social standing, or because they think feeling overwhelmed is normal for students who want to excel...It's that the people we least expect to be in need of help...are sometimes the ones who need it most."

**Board Members:**

Rob Beahan

Brian Downs

Kim Drabik

Cindy Janes

Theresa Smith Lanning

Rachel Laug

Jack Lewis

Val (Jager) Milliken

Jill Mulder

Jim Williams

Jacob and his classmates took part in the LIVE LAUGH LOVE Program. It is a ground-breaking secondary school curriculum that includes a variety of interactive lessons, helping students, parents, and teachers recognize the symptoms of depression and the warning signs of suicide in themselves, a friend, or family member. ***This year, the curriculum was continued at Forest Hills Public Schools through a grant from the CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.***

Our mission is to continue to create an exceptional community by funding projects and creating partnerships that nurture neighbors, enhance places, and connect community. Jacobs's courageous story is just one small example of how the Cascade Community Foundation is working to make our community excellent. We are thankful for the support of all our donors. This crucial programming couldn't have continued without it.

**Honorary Board**

**Members:**

Mike Julien

Claude Robinson

Tom & Joyce Wisner

I hope you will consider making a financial contribution to the Cascade Community Foundation. Becoming a LifePreserver with a \$500 gift ensures we can continue to give life-changing grants. In addition, you will receive special invitations throughout the year that are both social and informational about the activities of the Foundation. We are appreciative for donations of all levels and especially for your commitment to help make our community the best place to live, work, and play.

With appreciation,

Michelle Bottrall  
Board of Directors, President

## WINTER POWER OUTAGE TIPS

Cascade Inspection Services would like to remind you in the event of an electrical power outage these simple tips that you can perform before, during and after the loss of power.

### Before an Outage

- Check flashlights and battery-powered portable radios to ensure that they are working, and you have extra batteries. A radio is an important source of weather and emergency information during a storm.
- Have sufficient heating fuel, as regular sources may be cut off. Have emergency heating equipment and fuel (a gas fireplace, wood burning stove or fireplace) so you can keep at least one room livable. Be sure the room is well ventilated.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated. Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to keep cold air out.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside to provide insulation.
- To keep pipes from freezing, wrap them in insulation or layers of newspapers, covering the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture.
- Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing.
- Know how to shut off water valves.
- If pipes freeze, remove insulation, completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they are most exposed to the cold. A hand-held hair dryer, used with caution, also works well.
- If your water supply could be affected (a well-water pump system), fill your bathtub and spare containers with water. Water in the bathtub should be used for sanitation purposes only, not as drinking water.
- Pouring a pail of water from the tub directly into the bowl can flush a toilet.
- Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings (remember to reset them back to normal once power is restored). During an outage, do not open the refrigerator or freezer door. Food can stay cold in a full refrigerator for up to 24 hours, and in a well-packed freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if it is half-packed).
- If you have medication that requires refrigeration, check with your pharmacist for guidance on proper storage during an extended outage.
- Review the process for manually operating an electric garage door.



### During an Outage

- Dress for the season, wearing several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing, rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- Mittens are better than gloves.
- Wear a hat; most body heat is lost through the top of the head.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Watch for signs of frostbite: loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in the extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, seek medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove any wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages, if the victim is conscious. Get medical help, as soon as possible.
- Snowdrifts can be used as a makeshift freezer for food. (Be aware of attracting animals).
- Snow can be melted for an additional water source.
- In order to protect against possible voltage irregularities that can occur when power is restored, you should unplug all sensitive electronic equipment, including TVs, stereo, VCR, microwave oven, computer, cordless telephone, answering machine and garage door opener.

### After an Outage

- Be extra cautious if you go outside to inspect for damage after a storm. Downed or hanging electrical wires can be hidden by snowdrifts, trees or debris, and could be live. Never attempt to touch or moved downed lines. Keep children and pets away from them.
- Check with/help neighbors.
- Continue to stay off streets.
- Do not touch anything power lines are touching, such as tree branches or fences. Always assume a downed line is a live line. Call your utility company to report any outage-related problem.

## NATURAL GAS LEAKS

Knowing what a natural gas emergency is and how to react will help keep you and your family safe. Examples are natural gas leaks and damaged underground pipelines or service lines. Leaks can occur on indoor lines or when outdoor lines are damaged.

### The 3 Rs of Natural Gas Safety

Knowing how to recognize, react to and report natural gas emergencies can eliminate or minimize their consequences.

#### Recognize

Signs of a natural gas leak include:

- A "rotten egg" odor
- A blowing or hissing sound
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area
- Flames, if a leak has ignited
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Bubbling in wet or flooded areas

#### React

If you suspect a natural gas leak, follow these steps:

- Leave the area immediately **and then** call your natural gas provider.
- Do not use any electrical device, such as light switches, telephones or appliances such as garage door openers. They could spark and ignite the gas.
- Do not use an open flame, matches or lighters.
- Do not try to locate the source of the gas leak.
- Do not try to shut off any gas valves or appliances.
- Do not start vehicles.
- Do not use any phones, including cellular phones.
- Do not re-enter the building or return to the area until the service provider says it's safe to do so.
- If the natural gas ignites, let it burn. Do not put out the flame; burning gas will not explode.
- If you are digging and think you may have damaged a natural gas pipeline, leave the area immediately. If you are using motorized equipment and can turn off the motor safely, do so to prevent the ignition of any leaking gas. Then abandon the equipment and leave the area. Never restart equipment until the surrounding environment has been checked and declared safe.

#### Report

If you think you have a natural gas emergency, go to a safe location. Then call your natural gas provider.

- Consumers Energy toll-free at **1-800-477-5050**.
- DTE Energy toll-free at **1-800-947-5000** (gas leak reporting only)

This information was obtained from the following websites:

[www.dteenergy.com](http://www.dteenergy.com)

[www.consumersenergy.com](http://www.consumersenergy.com)

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN A MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH

What is a vehicle crash? The state of Michigan defines a crash as a motor vehicle in transport that crashes and causes death, injury, or property damage of a value over \$1,000.

The Kent County Sheriff's department responds to anywhere from 5,000-6,000 crashes a year, depending on the winter weather. If you are involved in a crash and call dispatch, they will ask you a series of questions. Here are the most common questions asked if you are involved in a crash:

- Where are you? Check your location. Where you are depends on who responds.
- Is it private property? Private property is property owned by someone other than the government. A parking lot at the grocery store would be private property.
- Is anyone hurt? Check for injuries. Are you or your passengers hurt in any way?
- Are you blocking traffic? Check to see if your vehicle is drivable. Does the car start and can you move it safely?

When you call 911 those are questions dispatch will ask you. I have added some additional information that will assist you if you are involved in a crash.

- If the crash is on private property, you would most likely be referred to contact your insurance and would not need a police report. If you still request one, dispatch would have you report it online or at the sheriff's department. This occurs if the damage is minimal and there are no injuries. If you are not on private property, you again would be asked the same questions above and most likely an officer would respond.
- It is ok to move the cars. If you are involved in a crash on a busy street and your vehicle is drivable but you are blocking traffic, it is ok to move the vehicle to the shoulder or off the road.
- Exchange insurance information. That is something the insurance companies would like. Get the driver's information along with insurance company and policy #.

I hope this information is helpful and that you don't have to use it.

Be safe and aware,

**Ryan Roe, Deputy**  
**Kent County Sheriff Department**  
**[ryan.roe@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:ryan.roe@kentcountymi.gov)**





## FIRE HYDRANTS

The fire department is requesting your help in keeping fire hydrants clear of snow and easily accessible. If you have a fire hydrant in your yard, near your home, or place of business, please make an attempt to keep the snow cleared 36" around the hydrant as well as a clear access from the plowed roadway to the hydrant. Keeping your hydrants clear will help avoid unnecessary delays when minutes are critical.

Thank you!

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## SMOKE DETECTORS HAVE CHANGED! HAVE YOU CHANGED YOURS?

Check your smoke alarms! Now take an extra close look; you need to do more than just change the 9 volt battery twice a year and push the test button every month. Smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old need to be replaced. It doesn't matter what type or power source they are. Even though they may work when the test button is pushed, they lose their sensitivity and ability to respond quickly. Check for a manufacture date on the back of your smoke alarms. Since 2002 it has been mandatory for the manufacture date to be on the label. If it isn't, you can be sure it is older than 10 years old.

Technology has changed. The new smoke alarms have a 10 year lithium battery that is sealed and cannot be removed. After 10 years you simply replace the whole unit. They also come with a "Hush Button" feature that can be pushed in the event of a false alarm. Then the smoke alarm will shut off for 15 minutes; then reset itself once the smoke has dissipated. Never remove or disable a smoke alarm, because rarely do they get put back in place.

Code requires that in new and remodeled construction, smoke alarms are to be inter-connected; but in older homes it is often not feasible to run wires to do so. Manufacturers now have smoke alarms that communicate with each other via Blue-tooth technology. Soon to hit the market is an app for your iPhone or Android that will send you a message stating that your smoke alarms have activated.

The last improvement is a "Dual Chamber" smoke alarm. It utilizes both types of detection being photoelectric and ionization. One of our other most frequently asked questions is which type of smoke alarm is best to have. There has been a lot of discussion in the last few years of the differences between photoelectric and ionization and which is better to have in your home. Each alarm works differently to detect smoke; ionization works better on a fast building fire with less smoke, where photoelectric works better on slow smoldering fires that produce a lot of smoke. Dual chamber detectors utilize both technologies for quicker response.

We would strongly advise not to skimp on price when choosing these life saving devices. Your family's safety is worth way more than a \$5 smoke alarm. The homes and furnishings that we have today are different than our parents had 20-30 years ago. Furniture and furnishings in our home contain a lot more plastics and synthetics which burn faster and hotter than those from natural textiles of yester-year. Plastics and synthetics produce extremely thick & toxic smoke. Your time to respond to a fire is now 2-3 minutes to get out of your home and survive compared to 8-10 minutes 20 years ago.

Also, our homes are built differently than 20 years ago. Lightweight construction is cheaper to use and offers great strength under normal conditions. When a fire occurs the glue softens and attachment plates fail quickly from the heat and collapse of the structural components happens much sooner. Think of what happens to glue when it goes through a hot glue gun.

So even if you have changed your battery & pushed the test button on those smoke alarms, go back and see if it needs to be replaced. Keep your family safe this winter and through-out the year. *Have current & working* smoke alarms on every floor and inside every sleeping area; have working carbon monoxide alarms; have a good fire extinguisher in an accessible place; make sure every member of your family knows at least two ways out of every room in your house; and finally have a central meeting place outside your home. If you are building a new home or doing major renovation, consider a residential sprinkler system. The cost of the system can be easily recovered by the savings in your insurance premiums! In the event of a fire it can greatly increase the survivability of your loved ones.

Look to [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) for home fire safety information. Remember, home fire safety; it's in **YOUR** hands!

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Cascade Fire Department at (616) 949-1320. We would be happy to do a risk survey of your home and offer suggestions to help keep you and your family safe.

*Cascade Township Fire Department*

## HALLOWEEN PARTY

On Thursday October 31st the Cascade Fire Department Station #1 became a gathering place of ghosts, goblins and many other costumed creatures. Over 700 bags of candy were shared with visitors as well as doughnuts, cookies, apple cider, and coffee.

Later in the evening the costume contest took place with many great prizes being awarded to the winners. Age groups for the contest start with newborns and are broken into various groups up to and including the adults. We greatly appreciate the involvement of the community, sponsors, and volunteers! We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

### *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 2013 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.

**Batson & Associates**  
**Blackie's**  
**Cascade Automotive**  
**Cascade Car Wash**  
**Cascade Firefighter's Association**  
**Cascade Hospital for Animals**  
**Chemical Bank West**  
**Costco**  
**D&W Food Center**  
**Forest Hills Foods**  
**Frontline Services**  
**Funny Business**  
**Goldfish Swim School**  
**Gordon Food Service**  
**Kingsland Hardware**  
**Lake Michigan Credit Union**  
**Lynne Deering**  
**Meijer**  
**NAPA Auto Parts**  
**ONeill's Body Shop**  
**Ranir Corporation**  
**S. Abraham & Sons**  
**Sentinel Pointe**  
**Spartan Stores**  
**Tassell-Wisner-Bottrall Foundation**  
**Walgreen's**  
**Wal-Mart**



## FIRE SAFETY



With October being Fire Safety Month, Cascade Firefighters went to Thornapple Elementary and Pine Ridge Elementary October 21st, 23rd, and 25th. Firefighters taught the students about smoke detectors, Get Out and Stay Out, 9-1-1, what to do if there is a fire in their home, Safe Meeting Place (outside the home), tools vs. toys, and of course STOP, DROP, and ROLL.

A teacher in each group was dressed up as a firefighter to show the students what firefighters look like and explained that they are there to help them. The firefighters also sent home homework with all of the students to complete with their family. When the homework was returned to their teacher, they received a free scoop of frozen custard from Culver's.

Cascade Fire Department received a generous donation from the Cascade Community Foundation and used it to provide the students with coloring books filled with fire safety material and customized Cascade Fire Department fire helmets.

Teaching Fire Safety to children is extremely important. According to the latest U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Incident Reporting System in 2010, there were 236,200 1-or 2 family residential Structure Fires causing over 5.5 billion dollars of loss. 355 children under the age of 15 died that year with an estimated 2,000 injuries.

If you would like more information about how to keep your family safe in the event of a fire in your home, or would like a copy of the PowerPoint the firefighters presented to the children, please contact Chief John Sigg at [jsigg@cascadetwp.com](mailto:jsigg@cascadetwp.com) or call Cascade Township Fire Department at (616) 949-1320.

Chief Sigg and the Cascade Township Fire Department would like to send out a HUGE THANK YOU to Principal Mike Lareau (Pine Ridge) and Principal Greg Shubel (Thornapple) for allowing us to come in and teach fire safety and to the Cascade Community Foundation and Culver's for their generous donation for this event.



## Cascade Charter Township

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## Pathway News...

As the holidays approach, I'd like to take a moment to digress from my thoughts on trash and reflect on how fortunate and grateful my wife and I are to live in Cascade Township. We've lived in the same house in an older neighborhood for more than 25 years. No matter where we go, we are always overcome with the sense of serenity when we turn into our neighborhood to return home.

Whether you live in an older or newer neighborhood, the mature trees provide a park like setting for most Cascade residents. Additionally, most residents are in close proximity to any goods and services that are needed.

Our elected officials run this township with a fiscal responsibility that eludes most government bodies these days. They are also readily accessible to anyone who needs to be heard.

Our multi-use pathway system has made it possible to move about in our athletic endeavors with utmost safety. I hope Kathy and I are not the only persons who pause and reflect on what a wonderful place this is to live. Have a great holiday season, and remember, **KEEP CASCADE BEAUTIFUL.**

*Kris Taylor – Pathways Coordinator*

