



# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Winter 2016

**Office Hours:**

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

**Township Board:**

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**Community Development**

Steve Peterson; 949-0224  
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**Fire:**

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**Sheriff/Non-Emergency:**

632-6100



FROM THE  
SUPERVISOR

ROB BEAHAN

## FROM THE SUPERVISOR...

I know I have said this before, and fortunately, I get to say it again. I want to thank the Cascade Township Board, the Township management, and our many dedicated employees for another successful year. Here are some of the highlights we accomplished in 2015.

The Downtown Development Authority completed a major project in the village area that will help traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety and improve the overall look at the Museum gardens.

Drury Hotels started construction of a seven story hotel at 28th Street and I-96 with completion scheduled for later in 2016 and two high end apartment projects opened, The Ridges and Whitewater Place. Other businesses in Cascade have opened, remodeled or expanded and the trend should continue.

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport continued to see record increase in flights and recently completed their \$20 million dollar Stormwater/Glycol Treatment System, the first of its kind in the State of Michigan. Industrial growth around the airport area continues, thanks in part to Cascade expanding sewer and water utilities in the industrial/ manufacturing area.

The Mary Free Bed YMCA opened their doors in December making the vision of “universal access” a reality to so many in the area. Shortly after the opening, Cascade expanded bus service from The Rapid to not only include the YMCA but all of 28th Street to Cascade Rd. The new 28th Street route will not only serve the residents of Cascade but also the businesses on or near the route and help employees get to their place of employment. The expanded bus service is in line with our vision and goal of continued economic strength in Cascade and creating infrastructure that supports economic development.

The popularity of the Township Parks continues to grow. We recently acquired a small parcel on Thornapple River Drive for possible expansion of Tassel Park. Both Burton Park and Peace Park trails are now marked and both parks have had work done removing invasive species such as garlic mustard, autumn olive, multi-floral rose and oriental bittersweet. The Cascade Recreational Park had extensive work completed which included new basketball courts, an added entrance, more parking and a realignment of the ever popular disc golf course.

A new one and a half acre dog park was also created at the Rec Park that includes separate fenced areas for both small and larger dogs. The new dog park allows dogs to run free in a safe environment and is due in large part to a very generous donation from Dr. Richard Siegel and Cascade Hospital for Animals. While the dog park is open for use now, a grand opening of The Cascade Hospital for Animals Dog Park will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2016. It’s a great example of collaboration of Township and private resources.

Positive changes occurred with the Township staff. Stephanie Fast was hired as our Community Standards Officer, Steve Petersen was named Community Development Director and Sandra Korhorn appointed as the DDA/ Economic Development Director to better serve our community. We also have been working on a feasibility study to replace the existing Township offices and will continue that into 2016.

A number of our Firefighters took part in training conducted by The Department of Homeland Security for Emergency Responder Hazardous Materials Technicians. The training increases their readiness for rapid response to keep our residents and businesses safe. The Fire Department also took delivery of a new fire truck, Engine 6, which replaced the 23 year model donated to a fire department in Ohio which lost all their equipment in a major fire.

Looking to 2016 from a position of economic strength and possibilities, Cascade Township will stay focused on high quality services, resources and infrastructure that residents and businesses value deeply.

## FROM THE DESK OF YOUR ASSESSOR ...

**Assessment Change Notices** 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 2015;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption on your property for 2016. **If you purchased the property in 2015, please check the PRE status carefully. Contact the Assessor office if the PRE status is wrong.**

**Board of Review will hear assessment appeals on March 14 and 15, 2016.**

- Appointments will be made beginning on February 29. 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 27.
- 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 7, 2016. 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 2015.

## Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions...

**Filing deadline** for new exemptions is June 1, 2016. Filing deadline for Winter only exemption is November 1, 2016. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2016, 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 2015, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2015, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2016 because the taxable value was *uncapped*.

**1.003 % is the inflation rate established by the State for 2016.**

***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<sup>(s)</sup> 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."*

**Poverty Exemption Applications** are available for those low income property owners who are unable to pay their property taxes. Applications are available at the Assessor Office and are approved or denied by the Board of Review. Form is available from the Assessor Office.

**Veterans Exemptions Applications** - Veterans who the Veterans Administration has determined are 100% disabled are eligible for a property tax exemption. Surviving spouses are potentially eligible also. Form is available from the Assessor's Office.

## 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 June 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 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Feel free to come in or call (616) 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

## TAX PAYMENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

With the IRS income tax filing deadline approaching, Cascade Township property taxpayers may need to verify the amount of property tax paid in 2015.

For your convenience, this information is available thru a link on the Township's website.

### Instructions for the link on the website are:

- ▷ Property / Parcel Lookup (from Quick Links)
- ▷ Search Municipal Records (BS&A)
- ▷ Search by Parcel Number, Address or Name
- ▷ Click on the parcel number on the next screen
- ▷ Click on the Tax Information tab and scroll down for the tax payment history



## DOG LICENSES FOR 2016

The Treasurer's office is selling dog licenses to Kent County residents on a regular basis for the entire year. This is a new collaborative effort on the part of the County and the Township to offer another easy access service to the residents. We will sell both 1 year and 3 year licenses to coincide with the rabies vaccination expiration. Please bring your dog's rabies certification, and proof of spay/neuter, if any.

## WINTER TAXES

The Winter property taxes are due on or before **Tuesday, February 16, 2016**. If you did not receive a tax statement, please check the township's website or call the Treasurer's office at (616) 949-6944. The last day that Cascade Township will accept 2015 property tax payments is Monday February 29, 2016. After this day all outstanding taxes are considered delinquent, and should be paid to Kent County.

## NEW... 2015 MICHIGAN RESIDENTIAL CODE

*Starting February 8th, a new statewide construction code will take effect.* The new code, based on the 2015 International Residential Code, has amendments specifically for Michigan. For example, we do not require residential sprinkler systems, the stair geometry is different, and other changes based on laws and input from the building industry in Michigan.

Some of the significant changes for the 2015 MRC include:

1. Egress windows are not required in *existing basements* where a family or recreation room is created. (Bedrooms in basements must have egress)
2. Swimming pools equipped with a power safety cover do not need to have a fenced enclosure.
3. All new homes will need to be tested for energy performance by a blower door test. This test demonstrates how much air leakage is present in the home; and therefore, how effective the heating and air conditioning system will operate.
4. New homes will need to provide mechanical ventilation. Since houses are now being built relatively air-tight, it is important to provide fresh air into the environment.
5. Several new areas will need to have GFCI devices including laundry areas and dishwashers. These receptacles will also need to be readily accessible.
6. Arc fault breakers are no longer required.

\*\*these requirements are enforced when a project that requires a permit is undertaken.

Building codes are developed as a minimum safety standard. The Cascade Township Building Department strives to enforce the codes in a consistent and professional manner. Our office is staffed with full-time building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical inspectors that serve Cascade Township and several neighboring communities.

# 4 CASCADE CONNECTIONS

## BOOK SALE

The Friends of the Cascade Library will sponsor a Spring Used Book Sale on Saturday, March 5, 2016, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday, March 6, 2016, from 1 - 3:30 p.m. in the Wisner Center at the Cascade Township branch of the Kent District Library.

The Members-only Preview Sale is from 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 5. You may join at the door for only \$10.

Adult hardcover books are \$1; paperbacks are 50 cents, OR fill and buy a bag of books for only \$10.

You will find more than 8,000 adult and children's books sorted into many categories of fiction and nonfiction. Also featured are hundreds of specially priced collectible books and other surprises.

### Location:

Cascade Township Branch of the Kent District Library  
2870 Jacksmith Ave., SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
Telephone 616-784-2007  
[www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org)  
[www.CascadeFriends.org](http://www.CascadeFriends.org)



## FOREST HILLS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Membership to the FHBA is open to all entities interested in the Forest Hills area businesses and community. Membership runs from January through December and is priced at \$150. 2016 memberships are available now! Call (616) 676-9774 for more information or visit: [www.fhba.org](http://www.fhba.org).

Upcoming events are highlighted below:

### February 11, 2016 -

Topic: Where we are, where we are going, and how we will get there!

Speaker: Grand Rapids Police Chief David Rahinsky  
7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Location: Mary Free Bed YMCA  
Sponsor: Crossroads Eldercare

### March 19, 2016 -

Forest Hills Expo!  
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Location: Ada Christian School

A great way to showcase your business!



## GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON 2016



## GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON 2016

The Grand Rapids Triathlon will be making a return to Cascade & Ada Townships again in 2016. Thank you for continuing to welcome us to your community. The 2016 Grand Rapids Triathlon will once again be the host of this year's USAT National Championship for Clydesdales & Athenas and will take place Sunday, June 12th.

Please be aware of road closures in the area of the Thornapple River on both June 11 and June 12. If you have any questions please contact Andy Vidro (616) 805-3059. [www.grandrapidstri.com](http://www.grandrapidstri.com)

## NOMINATING PETITIONS

Nominating Petitions and Affidavit of Identity for the August Primary are now available for the positions of Trustee, Clerk, Treasurer and Supervisor.

Candidates may obtain these petitions from the Cascade Township Clerk's Office Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The filing deadline is April 19, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. at the Clerk's Office. The withdrawal deadline elapses at 4:00 p.m. on April 22nd. Please contact the Clerk's office with any questions. (616) 949-1508.



## RIDE THE RAPID

The Cascade Township Board approved a three-year trial of a bus service extension on 28th Street.



Route 28 began servicing Cascade Township on January 11, 2016. The route will extend bus service on 28th Street east to the Thornapple Center, just across Cascade Road with a loop down Patterson to Burton to Kraft.

To view the full schedule, visit [www.ridetherapid.org](http://www.ridetherapid.org). Click on Schedules and Maps, 28th St. Crosstown, or visit [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com) for the schedule.



## MARCH 8TH PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

- All precincts will remain at the same locations. Please check Cascade's web page for locations.
- Just a reminder, the Presidential Primary requires the voter to choose a Republican or Democratic Ballot.
- Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cascade Historical Society has a number of projects nearing completion. By early spring we will complete the reprinting of the "Cascade Chronicles", which is the history of Cascade Township and roughly covers the period between 1837 and 1987.

Additionally the Cascade branch of the Kent District Library recently gifted the Historical Society with copies of newspapers published in the 1950's and 1960's. That newspaper was entitled "Suburban Life", and reported the weekly account of news and advertisements in the communities of Cascade, Ada and Eastmont. The content is a wonderful account of the mid-century. The Society is currently preparing to have the papers scanned and placed on a web site to be searchable.

Last but not least, the Society was recently presented several display cases from the Gerald R. Ford Museum. We hope to use those display units to enhance the presentation of some of our artifacts.

# 6 CASCADE CONNECTIONS

## GETTING HERE FROM THERE

While modern day travellers often experience discomfort, delays and frustrations, imagine traveling overland from an eastern state to the wilderness of the Michigan Territory in the mid-1800's. The first settlers to Kent County came from New York State. They were soon followed by large numbers of Vermonters, New Hampshiremen and others, lured by "government land" at \$1.25 per acre.



They came by the way of Detroit, up the "Grand River Trail" which was an arduous journey over an Indian trail through heavy forest. Some traveled by flatboat, transferring their oxen-pulled wagons onto a flatboat on the Grand River at Lyons or Ionia. There were no developed roads at this time. The Grand River was the link to the outside world.

In time, the Grand River Trail became a developed road. To the south a route known as the Gull Trail became an established route going through the present towns of Ada, Middleville, Hastings and Richland where it branched east to Battle Creek and west to Kalamazoo. There were no lodgings for travelers along this route, so travelers depended on the hospitality of families who had settled in the area to provide rest and a hot meal, for a fee of course. As traffic increased along the Gull Trail some entrepreneurs opened taverns or post houses to accommodate the weary and hungry.

As the population and commerce grew, it became clear that regular transport for passengers, mail and goods was very much needed. Perhaps the first "stage" arrived in the spring of 1837, when a lumber wagon arrived from Battle Creek carrying mail, freight and passengers. The journey took 12 hours. At first the trip was made once or twice a week, as need arose, but soon there was a daily trip in each direction. The Good Intent Line of Stages, operated by C.W. Lewis began a regular schedule in the early 1850's. The company used real Concord stagecoaches that boasted lightweight bodies suspended from leather springs attached to enormous wheels. This arrangement greatly increased passenger comfort. Also, the stages, pulled by four horses, reduced travel time significantly.

Although the stages improved, the roads did not. Gravel was occasionally spread over soft spots, and low areas were filled in with dirt-covered rocks. Swamps were bridged with corduroy roads in an attempt to ease travel. Corduroy roads were paved by laying logs about the size of railroad ties across the road. Spaces between the closely laid logs were filled in with dirt or gravel. The result provided a bone shattering travel experience along with delays caused by broken axles and wheels.

In 1855, a plank road was completed to connect Grand Rapids with Kalamazoo and the Central Railroad. It was a toll road regulated by various acts of the Legislature. A plank road had to be 18 feet wide with at least nine feet of that width to be covered with 3-inch thick planks laid on stringers of heavy timber. Every ten miles a tollgate was to be erected where a toll of one-cent a mile per horse in a team was levied.

The plank road was considered a luxury and soon eight stagecoaches a day ran between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. In 1856, nearly fifty coaches and over two hundred horses were in daily use moving people and the mail. The heyday was short-lived. Railroads were building toward Kent County, the first entering Grand Rapids in 1858. Before long the stagecoach routes went out of business and many of the tavern stops and inns also closed.

Kent's Tavern near Caledonia was one of the first to be built and one of the first to be lost. It was torn down in 1869. Most residents of Cascade are familiar with the Whitney Tavern Stand, built in 1853 by Mr. Whitney founder of the town of Whitneyville, a few miles south of Cascade. The original building was much larger than what stands today.

The Tavern was widely known as having the largest and finest ballroom in the area. The entire upper floor had a "spring floor" hung by cables between the joists of the outside walls. The floor really put a bounce in one's step.

*From On the Michigan Stage by David and Marilyn Hanks*

The Cascade Historical Society invites you to join us on the first Thursday of each month at 9:30 am. at the Old Township Hall.

**CASCADE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION  
REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKER ORDER FORM**



VERTICAL



HORIZONTAL

PREFERED MOUNTING (Should be close to driveway):

- Steel Post                       Existing mailbox fixture                       Yard light post
- Use our experience               Leave at front door                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address(es) to be on sign(s) (Up to 5 numerals): \_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Signs are \$18.00 each and the installation is included (within 15 miles of Cascade). Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery or installation. Method of payment: CASH \_\_\_\_\_ CHECK \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **CASCADE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed form and payment to: Cascade Firefighters Association  
2990 Buttrick Ave SE  
Ada, Mi 49301

Thank you for your order. Questions or concerns may be directed to us at 616-949-1320.

-----OFFICE USE ONLY-----

Amount received: \_\_\_\_\_ Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Installation completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date installed: \_\_\_\_\_ Method of installation: \_\_\_\_\_



**Cascade Charter Township**

2865 Thornhills Ave SE.  
Grand Rapids MI 49546  
phone: 616.949.1500  
fax: 616.949.3918  
[www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)

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

**PATHWAY NEWS...**

We have been very lucky this winter. We have not experienced the extreme cold temperatures and snow storms that we have had in winters past. I have used this to my outdoor walking advantage, and the mild temperatures have motivated me to pick up debris along the trail on Cascade Road. I'd like to think that what I pick up now won't be there in the spring, but inevitably trash accumulates no matter the season. Alas, it will still be waiting for me this spring.

By the time you get this news letter it will be February. The temperatures in Scottsdale, Arizona should be approaching the upper seventies and low eighties. Oops, wrong forecast. There is still a great deal of winter to tolerate or enjoy, depending on your perspective. If you traverse our wonderful trail system, please be safe and alert for the black ice that may be on the trails at various places. If you see downed trees or limbs please report them. Should you happen to encounter a dead deer on or near a trail, please take the time to report that also. In the 20-plus years that we have lived in the area I have probably reported at least 200 dead deer on the roads and trails.

As always I cannot tell you how grateful I am to those of you that help pick up trash along our wonderful trail system. Remember, **KEEP CASCADE BEAUTIFUL!**

Kris Taylor  
*Pathway Coordinator*

