

City of East Tawas

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August 2008

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The City has a contract with Waste Management for solid waste collection. With this contract, residents may include one large item per week to be picked up with regular household trash. The State has regulations that prohibit Waste Management from collecting certain items including carbonated beverage containers, used oil, motor vehicle tires, lead acid batteries, medical waste, sewage, yard clippings, asbestos and items containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Information on proper disposal of these items may be obtained from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's website at www.michigan.gov/deq/waste or by contacting Waste Management at (989) 362-9562.

GARAGE SALE SIGNS

For the past several years, the City has been enforcing the ordinance pertaining to garage/yard sale signs. The ordinance prohibits signs that are attached in any way to utility poles, meter posts, or trees in or along any street right-of-way, along with any on a building, wall or fence without first obtaining consent from the owner. (A copy of the ordinance may be obtained at City Hall.)

To accommodate those having garage sales, the City has erected a sign in the parking lot of the Tawas Bay Play House, located at 401 Newman Street. The goal is to prevent traffic hazards at intersections and to allow people a place to park and write down locations of garage sales. Any other signs that are tacked, pasted, or otherwise affixed to utility poles, trees, or posted in the City right-of-way will be removed.

Also, please remember that the ordinance states that garage sales may not last for longer than three

days at any one time and may only be allowed two times in a calendar year.

The 2007 Water Quality Consumer Confidence Report for the City East Tawas was published in the Osco County News Herald in June. If you would like to view this report, it is posted on the City's website at



www.easttawas.com or you may stop by City Hall for a copy.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS DVD'S

The East Tawas Library was chosen in April 2008 as one of the initial 36 libraries nationwide to receive a donation of the television series *Friday Night Lights* on DVD. The donation was funded by the group *Save Friday Night Lights*, which was formed by fans of the show who organized a successful campaign to fight for the show's renewal for a third television season. The group's plan was to donate DVD sets of the first two seasons of the show to at least one library in each of the top 100 television markets. The East Tawas Library applied and received the donation as a library in the Flint/Saginaw/Bay City TV market.

The DVD's are available at the East Tawas Library desk for checkout.

The library also has available for checkout the book *Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream* by H. G. Bissinger.

CHILTON MANUALS ONLINE

Michigan residents are now able to access Chilton Auto Repair Manuals via the Internet.

The Michigan eLibrary (MeL) allows state residents free access to a large variety of computer databases through their website at www.mel.org. The auto repair manuals are found in the section of the website entitled *MeL Databases*.

For those who prefer to use books rather than the Internet, the East Tawas Library has a large collection of various auto repair manuals. Many of these manuals have been obtained from donations and rummage sales. If you have repair manuals (automotive, motorcycle, marine, small engine, etc.) that you are no longer using, please remember the East Tawas Library welcomes donations.

COMMUNITY CENTER PASSES

Users of the East Tawas Community Center will see an increase in the rates for recreation passes beginning in September. The current rates have not increased since October 1, 2002 and the yearly recreation passes, which expire on September 30th each year, will increase as follows:

		RESIDENT	
		Current Rate	New Rate
Individual		\$10.00	\$12.50
2-Member Family		\$15.00	\$20.00
Family		\$20.00	\$25.00
		NON-RESIDENT	
Individual		\$20.00	\$25.00
2-Member Family		\$30.00	\$40.00
Family		\$40.00	\$50.00

Daily passes will increase from \$2.00 per person to \$3.00 per person. The new rates will take effect with the sale of the 2008-09 recreation passes which will go on sale September 1st.

Burning permits are now issued through the State of Michigan.
866-922-2876

STREETSCAPE PROJECT

The streetscape project in the downtown area has successfully begun and you can expect to see lots of new and exciting improvements to the area.

- New sidewalks embedded with alternating geometric and sweeping curving brickwork will punctuate Newman Street.
- The intersection at Newman Street and Westover Street will become a four-way stop and will be highlighted with an elaborate compass rose pointing true north.
- Modified bumpouts at the main intersections along Newman Street at Bay, Westover, State and Lincoln Streets have been designed to calm traffic as motorists move through our downtown corridor, allowing pedestrians safer crossing.
- Streetlights, like those at the harbor area and along the end of Newman Street, will tie the harbor area to our downtown district all the way to the end of Newman Street.
- Baskets bursting with flowers and seasonal color will anchor each corner at each main intersection along Newman Street.
- Fresh landscaping, new benches and trash receptacles, bike racks and a drinking fountain will further provide a friendly and inviting welcome to residents and visitors alike.
- East Bay Street will become one-way, moving west from Main Street to Newman Street, with a right-turn-only onto Newman Street.
- The driveway behind the rear entrance of Mooney's Ben Franklin off East Westover Street will be moved closer to Main Street and a raised sidewalk will run along the back of businesses from Ben Franklin to Edward Jones Investments. This will move the alley away from the buildings and toward Main Street, further increasing safety to both pedestrians and motorists.

We appreciate your patience during this massive, head-turning project.

I M P O R T A N T D A T E S

<p>Aug 5 Primary Election at City Hall</p> <p>Sept 1 Labor Day City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p> <p>15 Summer 2008 taxes due</p> <p>Oct 13 Columbus Day City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Thurs</p> <p>31 Halloween Trick-or-Treating will be 5-8 p.m.</p> <p>Nov 3 compost pickup ends</p> <p>4 General Election at City Hall</p> <p>27-28 Thanksgiving holiday City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p> <p>Dec 1 Winter 2008 taxes mailed</p> <p>18 Santa Claus comes to town East Tawas Fire Department</p>	<p>Dec 24 Christmas Eve City Departments close at Noon</p> <p>25 Christmas City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p> <p>Jan 1 New Year's Day City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p> <p>Feb 15 Winter 2008 taxes due</p> <p>May 4 compost pickup begins</p> <p>5 School Election at City Hall</p> <p>11-22 Greenwood Cemetery cleanup</p> <p>25 Memorial Day City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p> <p>July 1 Summer 2009 taxes mailed</p> <p>4 Independence Day City Departments closed; garbage pickup will be Friday</p>
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LIBRARY UPDATE

Several years ago the City Council appointed a Library Committee to explore ways to expand the East Tawas Branch Library. A Needs Assessment indicated that the current library of just over 1,400 square feet should be expanded to somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 square feet. The variance in the suggested size of a library is the result of the tourist population in the summer greatly affecting the use of the library and the difficulty of determining the true service population of the library. With the Needs Assessment in mind, the Committee began researching options to either expand the existing library or build a new library and, as a result, recommended that a new library of 7,500 square feet be considered. The Committee then began investigating sites to accommodate the larger library. After considering many alternatives, including remodeling the existing building, they recommended the site at the corner of West Westover Street and Church Street as the preferred site for a new library.

Because the library is used by many people other than residents of the City, the Committee and the City needed to find a way to build a new library without raising the millage or issuing bonds that would be repaid through tax dollars. As a result, the City had a Feasibility Study conducted to determine if there was public support for building the new library. An architectural firm provided a rendering and schematic floor plan for a 7,500-square-foot library that would be used during the Feasibility Study.

The Feasibility Study was performed last winter and included approximately sixty confidential interviews of selected individuals representative of our community. The results, which were given to the City Council in April 2008, indicated interviewees were nearly unanimous in believing that a library is important to the community. They generally agreed that something needed to be done about the library but there was not a consensus that the community had the willingness and the ability to financially support the construction of a new library at this time. One finding of the Study was that members of the community did not feel sufficiently informed about the process that resulted in the Library Committee recommending building of a new library, the size of the proposed library, the building design and the means of supporting the operation and maintenance of a new, expanded library.

The City Council accepted the results from the Feasibility Study and the Committee is implementing the recommendations included in the Study including preparing a series of informational sheets to help the community understand the work that has been done and the reasons for the recommendations that were made. Committee members will also be making informational presentations at meetings of various groups and organizations throughout the community. The complete Needs Assessment, Feasibility Study, and architectural rendering and schematic floor plan are available for review at City Hall.

Property Information

INTERNET SERVICES

East Tawas has been using a new billing software since September 2007 which allows us to provide property information online. Anyone, including property owners, residents, mortgage companies, realtors, title companies, accountants and banks, can access information on assessments, taxes or utility bills for the City of East Tawas by following the links on the City's website at www.easttawas.com.

PROPERTY TAXES

Last year we began printing the tax bills in-house so the bill has a new look. With the new layout, tax payers keep the top portion which eliminates the need for the City to mail a receipt once the bill is paid. The summer tax bills, which are printed on yellow paper, were mailed on July 1st and are due by September 15th and the winter tax bills, which are printed on blue paper, are mailed on December 1st and are due by February 14th. If you don't receive your bills shortly after the mailing dates, please contact City Hall at (989) 362-6161 or cityhall.etch@charterinternet.com.

DEFERMENT OF SUMMER TAXES

Eligible taxpayers can defer the payment of the summer tax on their principal residences until February 14th by completing an Application for Deferment of Summer Taxes and submitting the application by September 15, 2008. Because income changes from year-to-year, the application form must be submitted every year to defer your taxes.

The application is available by contacting City Hall or through the Michigan Department of Treasury website at www.michigan.gov/treasury by clicking on "Forms" and inserting "471" or the key word "deferment." Eligible taxpayers are those whose gross household income for the preceding calendar year did not exceed \$40,000 and who qualify for the deferment provided for in the General Property Tax Act under one of the following classifications

- 62 years of age or older, including the unmarried surviving spouse of a person who was 62 years of age or older at the time of death;
- paraplegic or quadriplegic;
- eligible serviceperson, eligible veteran, eligible widow or widower;
- blind person;
- totally and permanently disabled.

Additional information on these classifications is available on the Department of Treasury website.

INCREASE IN WATER CHARGES

During the budget process for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the City Council decided to raise the water ready-to-serve charges beginning with the October 2008 bill from \$7.40 per month for most residential customers to \$10.00 per month. Customers with a meter larger than 3/4" or customers not subject to property tax will pay proportionately higher ready-to-serve charges. Water rates have not been raised since October 2003 and this increase is needed due to increased operating costs. The cost for 100 gallons of water will remain at \$.30 for customers subject to property tax and \$.44 for customers not subject to property tax.

The Council also decided to start charging a \$10.00 turn off fee beginning October 1, 2008. Customers are currently charged \$10.00 to have water turned on but are not charged to turn water off. With the increased cost of fuel and the time it takes an employee of the Department of Public Works to turn water on or off, the City Council decided to institute the charge. This charge will appear on the monthly bill anytime the water is turned on or off at request or due to delinquency.

Election Information

2008 ELECTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION - The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, August 5th and the General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 4th. The polls are open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm on both days and voters registered in the City of East Tawas vote at the East Tawas City Hall and Community Center located at 760 Newman Street in East Tawas. Elections are usually held in the Council Chambers but, because of the anticipated large participation of voters, this year both the Primary Election and General Election will be held in the Community Center gymnasium.

PLEASE REMEMBER
State law requires ALL voters to
present photo identification
before voting at the polls.

PRIMARY ELECTION - Other than Precinct Delegates to the County Convention, no candidates are elected at the Primary Election but are instead nominated for the General Election. The Primary Election is a partisan election which means that voters must choose to vote for either Republican candidates or Democratic candidates. Candidates for both parties appear on the same ballot but voting in both the Republican and Democratic sections will cause the ballot to be rejected. This is commonly referred to as "splitting your ticket" and is not allowed in a partisan primary election. In addition to the partisan candidates, the ballot also contains a nonpartisan judicial section and a proposal for the City which is explained in another article in this newsletter.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Absentee ballots for both the Primary and General Elections are available at East Tawas City Hall. Registered voters must first complete an application for an absentee ballot or submit a written request which includes the reason for requesting the ballot, the registered address of the applicant, the address to which the ballot should be sent and the signature of the applicant. Michigan election law allows for registered voters to submit one request for an absentee ballot for both the Primary and General Election. If you are interested in an application for an absentee ballot for either election, please stop by City Hall or call (989) 362-6161 or email cityhall.etch@charterinternet.com.

AUTOMARK VOTING EQUIPMENT

Every voting precinct in the State of Michigan has been provided with voting equipment that can be especially helpful to voters with disabilities. This voting equipment is called AutoMARK and is a voter-assist terminal which allows a voter to have his or her ballot marked electronically. A voter may record his or her choices by using any one or combination of the following options: touch screen, Braille keypad, sip-puff or other personal ADA device. The AutoMARK is also equipped with headphones and ballot choices can be read to the voter. This voting equipment is available for use at all elections and can be used by any voter.

BALLOT PROPOSAL

Registered voters of the City of East Tawas will be given the opportunity to vote on the following proposal during the August 5, 2008 Primary Election:

Shall the East Tawas City Council be authorized to transfer legal title to lots 7 and 8, block 2 of the Plan of the Village (now City) of East Tawas, commonly known as "Bay Park Towers North Apartments", to the Bay Park Towers North Limited Dividend Association Limited Partnership, an entity created by and under the supervision of the City of East Tawas, and for the sole purpose of obtaining financing from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and other sources necessary to refurbish and rehabilitate the Bay Park Towers North facilities?

The City Council and the East Tawas Housing Commission have been working to apply for funding from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to completely refurbish and rehabilitate Bay Park Towers North located at 109 Church Street. In order to proceed with the application, the legal title to the property will need to be turned over to a new entity. This new entity would be called Bay Park Towers North Limited Dividend Association Limited Partnership. The City and the East Tawas Housing Commission would create this entity along with other financing partners. The ballot proposal is needed due to a provision in the City Charter that requires approval by a majority vote of the electors of the City voting at an election for the City to sell, lease or dispose of a public building. Even though the City is not really selling the building and the property will eventually be again solely owned by the City, the City's legal counsel has recommended that the proposal be submitted to a vote of the people.

If MSHDA approves the application, the primary source of funding for the project would be a bond issued through MSHDA along with financing from other sources. The funding will allow the Housing Commission to completely rehabilitate Bay Park Towers North building by replacing all of the windows, doors, carpets, bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances and fixtures in each of the 44 units. An outside consultant will complete a comprehensive needs assessment and other general improvements including a new elevator and roof may be made to the building upon recommendation of the consultant. Once completed, this rehabilitation project would extend the life of the building by 30-40 years.

During the rehabilitation period, the residents of Bay Park Towers North would be relocated and, upon completion, the project would have no impact on the Housing and Urban Development subsidy for the building or the rent paid by tenants.

PROCESSING FEE

The City has instituted a \$25.00 processing fee for all dishonored checks, drafts or orders for payment of money made payable to any department in the City. Previously the City only charged a fee for dishonored payments made to the Water and Sewer Department. The new policy became effective on July 22, 2008. Within the policy, the City reserves the right to follow additional procedures described in the State of Michigan Revised Judicature Act of 1961 which would allow the City to charge additional fees if payment is not made promptly and further authorizes the City to bring civil action against the maker subject to the provisions of the Act.

OFFICIAL PAYMENTS

You can now pay your taxes or water and sewer bills with a credit or debit card. Follow the links for Internet Services and Official Payments on the City's website at www.easttawas.com to complete the transactions. Official Payments charges a convenience fee for using this service. The convenience fee for water and sewer bills is \$3.00 per transaction and the convenience fee for taxes is 3% of the total taxes paid for each transaction. At this time, credit or debit card payments can only be made online.



STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Just over a year ago the City hired Wilcox Engineering to put together a plan for improving West Westover Street from Newman Street to Pine Street. As designed, this project would include sidewalk and resurfacing improvements, curb and gutter, and provide additional drainage for the downtown parking lots. The cost estimate of \$550,000 is more than the Street Fund can finance on its own so we considered funding from the City's Tax Increment Finance Authority and the General Fund to make the project a reality. However, with indications that asphalt costs will increase significantly, we began looking at other streets that are a high priority for resurfacing. The City determined that West Washington Street and West State Street are both in need of resurfacing so they are strongly considering delaying parts of West Westover Street to provide enough money to resurface the other two streets. It has yet to be determined how much of the West Westover Street project will be accomplished at this time, however we expect to resurface West Westover Street and West Washington Street before the asphalt prices increase and West State Street is scheduled to be resurfaced in 2009.



EAST TAWAS PORT-OF-CALL STUDY

Researchers working on a Feasibility Study to bring cruise ships to East Tawas are now in the early fourth quarter of the project.

To date, the group of volunteers has conducted a cultural assessment of the area's attractions and amenities, which will be compiled in a massive book in addition to being available on the Internet. Members have also conducted port analyses of Great Lakes communities which already have cruise ships and how East Tawas stacks up in comparison.

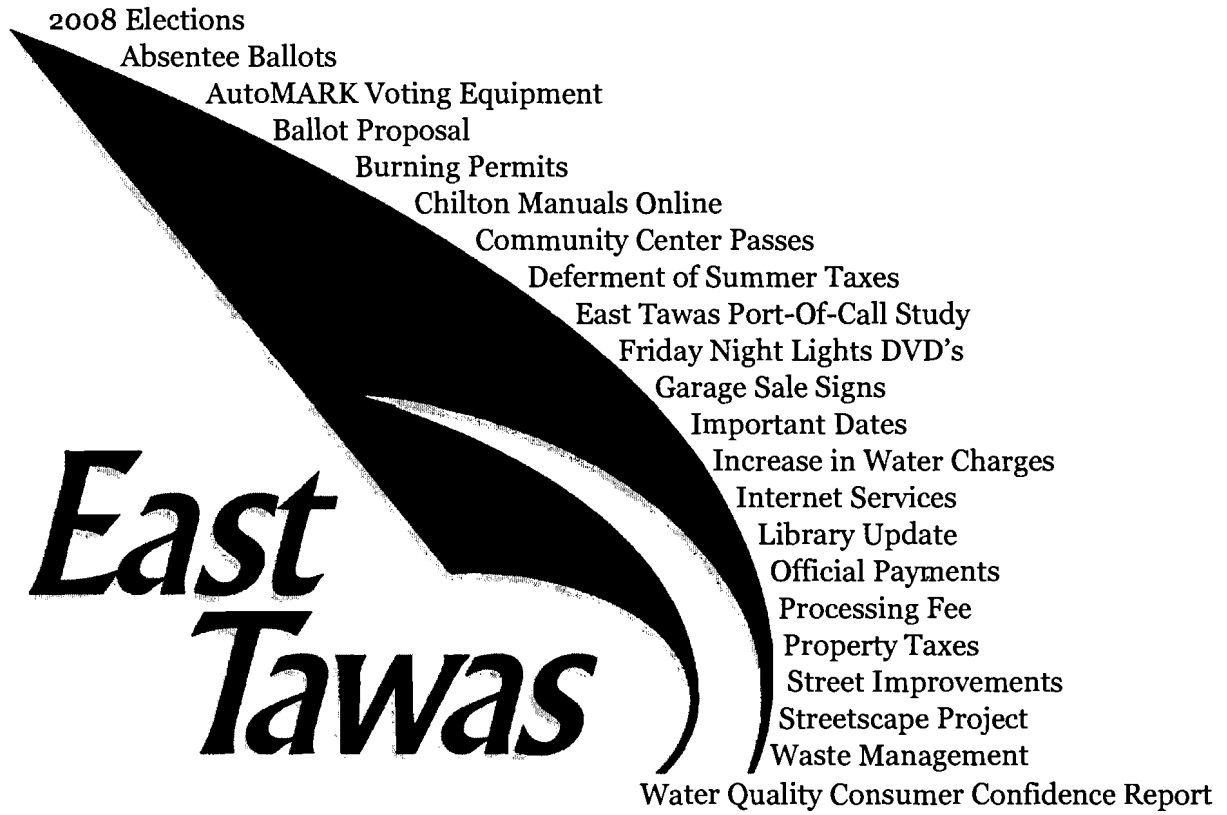
The group is in the process of creating five to seven shore excursions to be pitched to potential cruise lines (e.g., Tawas Point Lighthouse tour, bird-watching tours at Tawas Point/Tuttle Marsh/AuSable River, flora/fauna walking tours, AuSable River Queen paddleboat tours, fishing charters on Lake Huron, flyfishing the AuSable River; agri-tours of farms and gardens, etc.) in addition to the substantial time that will be allotted for shopping and enjoying our businesses.

In addition, the group is creating a list of activities that cruisers can do on their own including kayaking, canoeing or tubing in Lake Huron, Tawas Lake or the AuSable River, historic homes walking tours, or tours of geological points of interest, to name a few.

The next major portion of the Feasibility Study is to assess the East Tawas dock and harbor and determine what modifications are needed to accommodate cruise ships. They are creating a "request for proposal" to solicit engineering firms to conduct this technical study and assessment. The intent is to bid out the project by the end of July and have engineers in the field by mid-August. The study itself has been estimated to take six to seven weeks.

This project is a massive undertaking and will be completed by September 2009. Compiling all this information will provide a strong marketing plan to take to cruise lines in hopes of enticing ships to the port of East Tawas by the year 2010-2011. Ships ahoy!

Find information on these topics in this newsletter:



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