



# NEWSLETTER

## February/March 2010



### From the Supervisor....

An interesting article was provided to us by the Michigan Township News about funding for improving county public roads within the township. The following Q/A is a portion of the article:

*(Article reprinted with permission Michigan Township News, January/February 2010)*

#### **Q. Is a township required to contribute funds for the improvement, maintenance or repair of county public roads within the township?**

No. The township has no legal obligation to contribute funds for work on county public roads unless the township levies a road millage, when the township is then restricted to the use of the revenue from such millage exclusively for road improvement. The road commission's argument that, under MCL 247.662(15), the county road commission is prohibited from expending "Michigan Transportation Funds" for "construction" purposes on county local roads unless such expenditure is "matched by money from other sources" does not require that such matching money come from a township. It can come from county road taxes, county commissioner contributions, and county or township special road assessments. Furthermore, the matching fund requirement does not pertain to primary roads nor to "maintenance" of county roads.

A township, however, is authorized to expend general fund monies within budget appropriations for work on county roads under agreements with the county road commission, but it is not obligated to do so. However, county road funds are frequently limited in amount to accomplish needed improvements without financial help from other sources. It may well be politically and cooperatively appropriate for the township to contribute funds for the improvement of local roads within the township under contract with the road commission, even though not obligatory.

A township may also, with approval of the county road commission, upon petition of abutting property owners fronting on a particular county road, or upon initial motion of the township board, create a special assessment district for such improvement and levy all or a portion of the costs of such improvement against the benefited properties within such district. If the improvement is initiated by township board motion, the record owners of more than 20 percent of the frontage on the portion of the road being improved can protest the project by petition to the township board, which then requires a petition of the owners of more than 50 percent of the frontage on the road in favor of the project to authorize the township to proceed with the improvement under the special assessment

procedure.

Where at least 75 percent of the lands fronting upon a proposed road improvement has been subdivided into parcels having a frontage of not more than 300 feet each, or, where there is an average of at least one building for each 300 lineal feet, the owner of 51 percent of the lineal frontage along the proposed improvement may petition the county road commission to improve that particular county road, which then requires the county road commission to conduct the special assessment proceedings and to perform the required improvement. In this situation, the township may be assessed up to 25 percent of the cost of the project with the county road commission also paying the balance of the cost not assessed to the private property owners.

**Frank Force**  
Supervisor

### From the Clerk's Side....

#### Elections

The election dates this year are February 23, May 4, August 3, and November 2. **Upcoming dates to remember are:**

	<u>May 4th</u>	<u>Aug. 3rd</u>	<u>Nov. 2nd</u>
Last day to Register to vote by:	Apr. 5th	Jul. 5th	Oct. 4th
Last day to Request Absentee Ballot by Mail	May 1st	Jul. 31st	Oct. 30th

There are of course, many more dates for deadlines associated with each of these elections. If you have an interest or need for this information, a great source is the Kent County web site.

That site address is:

<http://www.a2cs.kent.com/YourGovernment/Elections/>

This year, the State of Michigan will be moving to electronic/computer based operation of the elections. This should be transparent to voters coming into the polling places. You will notice that there will be less people working at the polling place and there will be a laptop computer in place of the various binders that have been used in the past.

Using the laptop computer, the work performed by the Election Inspectors (poll workers) after the close of the polls will be streamlined and completed in much less time. The result is that elections will be conducted at a lower cost to all.

#### Census

As we all know, this is the year for a US Census. The census data has the potential for a great effect on a community. The census population and demographic data is used by many organizations to establish thresholds for grants. Often the demographic data, such as per capita income, is used by

organizations, both public and private, that offer grants to establish eligibility guidelines.

We would encourage all residents to complete the census forms and return them.

NOTE – If you are visited by anyone claiming to be a census worker, they should have identification in full view. They will never ask for social security numbers or any type of account numbers or PIN numbers. They do NOT need to be inside your home.

#### Clean Up Day

As in the past couple of years, our clean up day will be limited to one Saturday morning. We are tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 17, 2010.

The event will be managed and operated by the same company that has been running our clean up days for the past several years. As in the past, there will be a charge for such items as batteries and appliances.

### From the Desk of the Fire Chief...

There is a great concern about accessing some dwellings in Grattan Twp. in case of fire or medical emergencies do to long narrow driveways. If you are of concern please contact the fire chief with this matter to see if there is something you can do to help remedy the situation. Please call 485-5925 or 691-8523.

We now have smoke detectors on hand at the fire station. They are free to the Grattan residents. If you need one, please call 691-8523 or 485-5925. Water sources for fire suppression is a priority when fighting any type of fires. we feel we need to expand the number of sites in Grattan Twp. through dry hydrants, pump stations and or portable pumps. we are currently getting quotes on all options. these projects of course require \$\$\$ any contributions through private or local organizations would be of great help. Make cash donations to the Twp. and or checks in lieu of Grattan Fire Dept. for fire suppression.

Spring is just around the corner and the ice will be weakening, please be careful when on our lakes and ponds, winter sports are a fun time lets be safe.

Grattan Fire Dept. received a grant through the D.N.R. for wild land fire leather boots for \$2812.00. Lets thank Ken Brandes for his efforts in putting this grant together good job Ken.

**Lou Kirkbride**  
Grattan Fire Chief

# GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

## Grattan Township Dock Ordinance Updated

As we eagerly await the ice to go out on the lakes it's an opportune time to remind new and long time lake residents that Grattan Township has a Dock Ordinance. The objective of the Dock Ordinance is to preserve and protect the quality and safety of the lakes and shorelines and the rights of riparian owners and users, as well as the Township as a whole, and to promote the public health, safety and welfare of all persons making use of lakes within the Township.

In 2009 the Safety Board Appeals (SBA) recommended a number of updates and changes to the Township Board to update the ordinance. This was a result of input from residents and our Zoning Administrator and variance requests reviewed by the SBA over the past few years.

Following are the majority of changes to the Dock Ordinance that were passed in 2009.

### Raft and Dock Ownership Identification

A raft or swimming platform shall be anchored on and kept only over the bottomlands owned by the owner of that raft or swim platform. Each raft or swimming platform shall have a minimum of two (2) reflectors affixed to two external sides of the raft or swim platform.

### Dock Width

All docks shall have a minimum width of two and one-half feet, but shall not exceed a maximum width of eight feet. "I" or "L" or "U" sections may be used. Any such "I" or "L" or "U" dock section may be located at any part of the dock, so long as all portions of the dock conform to all setback and lot line requirements in this Ordinance (and other Township ordi-

nances) and all portions of the dock are located only on or over the bottomlands of the owner of the dock.

In no event shall a dock (including any and all portions thereof) extend laterally (as measured parallel to the shoreline) so as to encompass an area greater than fifty percent (50%) of the lake frontage of the lakefront lot(s) involved.

A dock (including any and all portions thereof) shall only be located on the bottomlands of a lot owned by the owner of the dock. Where a canal or channel is involved, refer to Section 5.13.

### Boat Storage Device Design Requirements

(f) No fill or the addition of any permanent or stabilizing structure or material shall be added to the bottom lands of any lake, channel, canal, river, or stream to support any boat hoist or shorestation.

### Channels and Canals

(a) This Section 5.13 shall apply to any channel or canal (and to properties fronting on any such canal or channel) which lawfully existed prior to April 1, 2001.

(b) No part of any dock, shorestation, boat hoist, or moored or docked boat or watercraft shall extend into (or be located within) the traveled or navigable portion of a canal or channel. For purposes of this subsection, the phrase "navigable portion of a canal or channel" shall mean the area located within ten (10) feet on either side of the centerline or center thread of the canal or channel or the centermost fifty percent (50%) of the total width of the canal or channel, whichever is greater.

(c) Any channel or canal which was created on or after April 1, 2001 (or which was expanded

after April 1, 2001), as well as the properties abutting any such canal or channel, shall not have any dock, boat hoist, swim platform, or similar item located therein or on the shore or bottomlands thereof. Furthermore, any property fronting on such a canal or channel shall not be utilized for any dock, shorestation, mooring, docking, or the launching of any watercraft or boat.

### Single Family Usage Only

If a single family rents or leases a dwelling (and occupies the same) on a lawful lakefront lot, the family shall be considered the owner of the lake property involved for purposes of this Ordinance, so long as no more than one family is occupying or using the dwelling and lakefront property involved.

The Township would encourage all lakes residents to review the Dock Ordinance, which can be accessed via the Grattan Township website. If you have any questions or concerns relative to a new or existing dock please feel free to contact the Township offices.

Let's all do our part to make it a safe season on our lakes this upcoming summer.

**Paul Knoerl**  
Trustee

**Chairman-Safety Board of Appeals**

### Grattan Township Business Hours

Mon—Thurs 9:00 to 4:00

Phone: 691-8450 ♦ Fax: 691-8804

### Township Board

Supervisor      Frank Force  
Clerk              Jim Fues  
Treasurer        Sabrina Freeman  
Trustee            Dennis Heffron  
Trustee            Paul Knoerl

### FAMILY, FRIENDS and NEIGHBORS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in the Toys for Tots Campaign. We collected over 500 Toys!

Many of you may have seen the progress that is being made on the Veteran's Memorial. We have more fundraisers planned in the upcoming months. Please watch the Township's cable channel or visit the web page for upcoming events and this year's Bridge Walk and Memorial Day events and activities in Grattan.

For information on any Family, Friends and Neighbors sponsored activities please contact Dianna at 616-826-1872

### HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Jan. 19      Martin Luther King Day  
Feb. 15      President's Day  
May 31      Memorial Day Observed  
Sep. 6      Labor Day  
Nov. 11      Veteran's Day  
Nov. 24      Closing at Noon  
Nov. 25      Thanksgiving Day  
Dec. 24 to Jan. 2   Christmas Break

PLEASE NOTE GRATTAN TOWNSHIP OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON ABOVE DATES

### TAX & ASSESSING INFO Free for Grattan Residents NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

[www.grattantownship.org](http://www.grattantownship.org)  
Go to Assessing & Tax Lookup

FOR SEWER INFO CALL  
TOWNSHIP 691-8450

### Grattan Township Meeting Schedule Location: Township Hall Time: 7:00pm The public is always welcome!

Township Board	2nd Mon. each month
Planning Commission	1st Wed. each month
ZBA	3rd Wed. each month
Safety Board	4th Thu. each month
Fire Admin. & Safety Comm.	4th Wed. each month