



# NEWSLETTER

Grattan Township Staff  
Wishing you  
a Safe & Happy Holiday Season!



WINTER 2008/09

## Sewer Update

### From the Supervisor.....

Things have been happening with our sewer system this summer and fall and I would like to share the latest news with our sewer customers.

The township board is currently working with Sierra Consultants to reduce the annual costs of operating and maintaining our sewer system. Our overall costs have been creeping up the last two years and are on track to do so again this year. Sierra is receptive to this endeavor and is working with the township to get this done.

The township Clerk is also working with a telephone broker to reduce our telephone costs for the upcoming year. Telephone fees are a major issue since most of our sewer pump stations use telephone lines to communicate with our operators and emergency answering service.

The "Mission dialers" that were proposed to reduce the chances of overflows, like we experienced last winter, are now being installed after a lengthy wait due to financial considerations and some parts that had to be back-ordered and were slow in coming. I can share some of the blame with the delay as well since I took it upon myself to manage the installation project to help save money earmarked for engineering. Nine new dialers should be installed and on-line by the end of December. All of our pump stations will then have dialers.

These dialers are state of the art equipment that are cell phone based and do not require a land phone line. They send information from the pump station to assigned computers and instant messages to cell phones and pagers during emergency situations. They broadcast critical information from the pump stations once every hour. This capability dramatically reduces the need to inspect these stations on a weekly basis which is the case for the old land line phones that are in the remaining 17 major stations. The best part is the fact that they cost only 20% more than the old phones and cost less to operate.

The township is also in the process of upgrading our insurance coverage to provide

better coverage for damage due to sewer back-ups at a very reasonable cost. This coverage has not been available in the past. We will have a \$100,000 aggregate limit for each year of coverage with a \$0 deductible.

The MDEQ (Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality) is currently reviewing the townships application for the renewal of the discharge permit for the Grattan/Vergennes irrigation site. As a condition of this approval they are requiring the township to do a series of soil borings at the irrigation site to determine if high levels of sodium and chloride have permeated the clay sub-layer and may be affecting the deep water aquifer that supplies surrounding wells. The cost of doing these soil borings will be in the neighborhood of \$20,000.

Along with some limited engineering help, I am currently attempting to reduce these requirements or to eliminate them altogether by arguing that the monitoring well showing the high concentrations of Sodium and Chloride is not representative of the deep water aquifer. Stay tuned and I will update this as events occur.

The discharge permit for the Grattan Treatment site comes due in 2009 and it is reasonable to expect requested upgrades from the MDEQ during this renewal process as well.

Work is progressing on the irrigation upgrade at the Grattan/Vergennes treatment site. As most know the MDEQ has called for an upgrade of the irrigation system at that site to replace the old "drip" irrigation system that has become ineffective. I am doing most of the work with soliciting proposals from the various vendors that will be required to complete this project. The township is hoping to mail out questionnaires to sewer customers to gather opinions of how they would like to finance this project.

At this time I do not have a deadline for completion of the project but I anticipate this to come down from the MDEQ next year. Currently I am planning on beginning the project in 2010 unless the MDEQ deems it must be done sooner.

*Please help to keep our sewer system working efficiently. Report all power outages, always call when warning lights or buzzers are apparent. Be mindful of things that you flush. Sewers are designed for only one thing and flushing foreign objects will cost you, our customers, money and inconvenience. Do your best to drain your water softeners in a separate reservoir so the Sodium and Chloride do not enter the sewer system. Minimize your water usage during power outages especially when you are generating your own electricity.*

### REQUEST: TO ALL SEWER CUSTOMERS

Please feel free to call the Sewer Administrator during regular office hours if you have any questions regarding the sewer. Frank Force at 616-691-8450 or [supervisor@grattantownship.org](mailto:supervisor@grattantownship.org)

I have a request for all of the sewer customers and especially those living on Big Pine Island Lake. As these residents are painfully aware, Big Pine Island is subject to numerous power outages that are unpredictable and quite often short-lived and may affect only portions of the lake.

When these power outages occur, the pump stations do not operate to remove wastewater from homes and move it down the line to the next pump station. During extended power outages, many residents use generators to run their wells and consequently pump water into the system that the pumps cannot remove. This water fills the pump stations and could cause overflows if not attended to promptly.

Even during short outages the pump stations will not return to service since the three phase power has to be reset manually after a power outage. Our operations people are not always aware when these isolated short-term outages occur and a timely phone call could save us from an overflow.

I am currently working with Consumers in an attempt to explain why Big Pine Island seems to be plagued with mini-power outages. Very little progress so far.

Continued next page.....

**Sewer update continued.....**

What I am asking of the sewer customers is that they call the emergency phone number whenever they experience a power outage. This call will alert our operators that some pump stations need attention promptly.

**EMERGENCY NUMBERS ARE ON THE CLIP & SAVE COUPON ON THE AD PAGE!**

A simple phone call could save all our customers money and headaches if the sewer backs up due to loss of power.

**Frank Force, Supervisor**

**From the Assessor.....**

Understanding that the housing market is declining and taxes seem to be increasing, I thought that we should try to make sense out of what is happening with the property taxes for 2009. In 1994 Michigan voters approved the constitutional amendment known as Proposal A. Prior to Proposal A, property taxes were based upon State Equalized Value (SEV). With the implementation of Proposal A, property taxes are now based upon Taxable Value.

Each year, the Assessing Office must calculate the SEV for every property based upon the time frame as outlined 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 more than 5%. **For 2009, the CPI has been calculated at 4.4%.**

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 SEV is less than the previous year Taxable Value multiplied by the CPI, the current year Taxable Value will increase by the CPI.

If you have any questions, please contact the Grattan Township Assessing Department.

**Matt Frain, Assessor**

**Treasurer's Note.....**

**Dates to Remember:**

**December 1, 2008**—2008 Winter Tax bills mailed

**December 1, 2008**—February 28, 2009-Purchase dog licenses at the Township

**December 30, 2008**-Township Office will be open to collect taxes only 9:00am-5:00pm

**February 17, 2009**-Winter taxes Due

**February 28, 2009**-Last day to pay 2008 Summer and Winter taxes at the Township-Township Office will be opened 9:00am-5:00pm to collect taxes only

**March 2, 2009**-Taxes sent to Kent County as delinquent Contact County at (616) 632-7500 after March 9, 2009

**Have a Save & Happy Holiday!!**

**Sabrina Freeman, Treasurer**

**From the Desk of the Fire Chief...**

The Grattan Fire Department has made application to the State to upgrade their medical response from a 1st Response level to a Basic Response level, which will allow us more skills to better serve our community.

Within a couple of weeks the Grattan Fire Dept. will be receiving Fire Alarms & C. O. Detectors to install in the Grattan Township community. This will be Free of Charge. For more information please call Lou Kirkbride at 691-8523, or cell 485-5925, or the township office at 691-8450. This was sponsored by Kent County Health Dept through the Homeland Security Grant.

As you may have noticed, we had a well put in at the Fire Station. This will serve to fill tankers in the event of structure fires. It has been test run at 500 gal/minute. This was financed through Kent Community Block Grant.

The Grattan Fire Dept. along with the F.A.S.C. are working on preparing for lowering I.S.O. rating for home owners. Hopefully we will have everything in place to be tested this Spring.

The Grattan Fire Department welcomes 5 new personnel to the department. They currently are going through Fire Fighter I & II. They will finish school in April.

Welcome Aboard: Mark Visser, Shane Madden, Larry Mercer, Joe Drye and Mark Reitsma.

The cold weather will enhance all winter sports. Please be careful when going out on the ice. Please call **911** immediately if someone should fall in; Hypothermia sets in in a very short time.

**Lou Kirkbride, Fire Chief**

**Potential Fitness Class**

The Grattan Fire Department is currently considering the establishment of a physical fitness class at the fire station. They currently have a weight room with many of the devices that would be beneficial to a class of this type. This is still in the thought stage but the class would probably be conducted once or twice a week, perhaps for an hour or a little longer. Not sure yet. Feedback will be important here.

If enough interest is shown, it may be possible to procure a grant to provide additional equipment that would be used in a class of this type.

The basic motivation here is to provide a service for the community that would enhance their health and welfare. Commitment of course would be an important requirement from the participants.

At this stage we are requesting those who would be seriously interested in participating in a fitness class to call the township office. We are simply taking names to see if there is enough response for this type of service.

**From the Planning Commission...**

This year the Grattan Township Planning Commission addressed the requests of current building projects and also instituted two new ordinances and are working on a third one.

The two now in place outline usage for wind turbines and portable on demand storage units.

As wind power becomes more affordable and an alternative residents are exploring, we felt it necessary to look at these sources of energy and be certain to have guidelines in place to allow their installation to be good for all parties, including neighbors.

We also saw the expanding use of the "portable containers" for moving and temporary storage while remodeling a home etc. These were not meant to be used for permanent storage and it

was felt we needed some guidelines as to the length of time these should be on a property and the placement of them.

The third issue we addressed is the "outdoor wood burning furnaces". These are relatively new and seem to be gaining more use. We have most of the guidelines in place. The only issue yet to be resolved is the distance they need to be placed from neighbors homes or lot lines.

**Alan Rumbaugh, PC Chairman**

SEV = 50% of True Cash Value

Capped Value=

(Prior TV-losses) x (1+CPI\*) ÷ Additions

\*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.

Approximate property tax increases are:

2008 TV	CPI	2009 TV	TV Increase	PRE Millage Rate	Increase
\$50,000.00	1.044	\$52,200.00	\$2,200.00	0.0303935	\$66.87
\$100,000.00	1.044	\$104,400.00	\$4,400.00	0.0303935	\$133.73
\$150,000.00	1.044	\$156,600.00	\$6,600.00	0.0303935	\$200.60
\$200,000.00	1.044	\$208,800.00	\$8,800.00	0.0303935	\$267.47
\$250,000.00	1.044	\$261,000.00	\$11,000.00	0.0303935	\$334.33
\$300,000.00	1.044	\$313,200.00	\$13,200.00	0.0303935	\$401.19
\$400,000.00	1.044	\$417,600.00	\$17,600.00	0.0303935	\$534.93
\$500,000.00	1.044	\$522,000.00	\$22,000.00	0.0303935	\$668.66



Grades K-12

- No Tuition Fees
- Small Class Sizes
- All Day, Every Day Kindergarten
- Daycare Available
- Outstanding MEAP Scores

Grattan Academy Elementary School  
Kindergarten - 5th Grade  
12047 Old Belding Road - Belding, MI  
(616) 691-8889, FAX 691-9857

Grattan Academy Middle High School  
Grades 6 - 12  
9481 Jordan Road - Greenville, MI  
(616) 754-9360, FAX 754-9363  
www.grattanaacademy.com

## GRATTAN BAR & RESTAURANT

MON: Buy one Sizzler Dinner GET ONE FREE

TUES: \$1 Tacos & 1 off Drinks and Appetizers

WED: ALL YOU CAN EAT Fish Fry \$7.99

THUR: Pot Roast \$9.99 Drink Special - U-call-it \$2

FRI: BUY A BEVERAGE GET ONE FOR 1.00 8:00pm - 11:00pm

SUN: Pizza \$5 & All Baskets \$1 OFF 12:00 to 5:00  
Drinks Buy one Get one for \$1

TAKE OUT-- 691-8221

KARAOKE SATURDAY 9PM



## Lillie Digging & Dozing, LLC

Septic Systems  
New or Repair

616-691-7540  
Jim Lillie



Linda Anderson  
Branch Manager

www.choiceone.com

## ChoiceOne BANK

Rockford Branch Office

6795 Courtland Dr  
Rockford, MI 49311  
616-874-8390

Professional. Instincts.  
Personal Touch.  
Now that's choice!



## Firstbank

- Mortgages
- Auto Loans
- Lines of

Marilyn McDougall  
Firstbank - Lowell  
616-897-6171



Member FDIC

## MAKE MORE MONEY & SELL FASTER

WHY PAY 7%, PAY 3.5% OR LESS



## Susie Manikowski

SusieM@grar.com  
616-446-4695

REAL ESTATE CONSULTANTS  
**J T Henderson**  
& Associates LLC (516) 364-4441

"A Tradition of Excellence for over 115 Years"

- ✓ Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- ✓ Family atmosphere and small class sizes
- ✓ Experienced, highly qualified teachers
- ✓ Practicing faith and prayer daily
- ✓ Computer lab, classroom computers, gym, art, music & band, GRACEAC league sports
- ✓ Call for information and a school tour, (616) 691-8833



## Prudential

Preferred, REALTORS®

502 Northland Dr.  
Rockford, MI 49341  
Bus 616-866-1212  
Cell 616-648-7070

jamesfues@pprmi.com

Jim Fues  
REALTOR®



An Independently owned and operated member of  
Prudential Real Estate Affiliates, Inc

## SEWER CUSTOMERS CLIP & SAVE

POWER OUTAGE EMERGENCY

QUICK RESPONSE: 691-7784

TOWNSHIP OFFICE: 691-8450

## GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Please NOTE that we have  
updated our website.

Go to [www.grattantownship.org](http://www.grattantownship.org)

For more information regarding  
Events in & around Grattan, visit our  
website or Channel 25 on Cable TV.

Email:

[grattanweb@grattantownship.org](mailto:grattanweb@grattantownship.org)



Grattan Township  
12050 Old Belding Rd  
Belding, MI 48809

PRESORTED STD.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BELDING, MI  
PERMIT #101

**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 Knoert

**Grattan Township Meeting Schedule**

Location: Township Hall Time: 7:00pm

The public is always welcome!

Township Board	2nd Monday
Planning Commission	1st Wednesday
Zoning Bd of Appeals	3rd Wednesday
Safety Bd of Appeals	4th Thursday
Fire Admin & Safety Comm.	4th Wednesday

Township Board Meetings held Monthly  
Other boards and committees held as needed

**FAXING**



\$1 1st sheet  
50 each additional

Grattan Township  
12050 Old Belding Rd.  
Phone- 691-8450  
FAX - 691-8804



**H & W FARMS**

13375 Belding Road • Grattan • (616) 691-8802

Apples, Cherries & Blueberries

100% Flax Seed • Soybean oil • 100% Cherry Juice Concentrate

Raw Honey, Maple Syrup, Frozen & Dried Fruits

Stop in and check out all of our great NEW products!

Gift Baskets Available

Email: sales@hwfarms.com  
www.hwfarms.com

OPEN YEAR AROUND  
Mon-Sat. 9:00am to 5:30pm