



Fruitland Township E-News

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www.fruitlandtwp.org

January 8, 2015

Township Holiday Closings

Fruitland Township offices will be closed on the following days in January and February:

Monday, January 19, 2015 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, February 16, 2015 – President's Day

2014 Winter Taxes

Just a reminder, the last day to pay your 2014 winter property taxes in person without penalty is February 17, 2015. If you are unable to pay in person at the Fruitland Township Hall, the Treasurer's Office will accept U.S. mail postmarks dated on or before February 17, 2015.

Also, we will accept any tax payments that are put into the Township Hall night drop box after 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 13 until 8:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 17, 2015.

Payments made after February 17, 2015 will include a 3% penalty.

White Lake Community Business Expo 2015

The White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce will host its 3rd Annual White Lake Community Business Expo. The date will be Saturday, March 14, 2015, and will be held in conjunction with the Rotary Pancake Breakfast. This event will be held in the Whitehall High School gymnasium and will be free to the public. I urge everyone to put this event on your calendars and plan to attend.



Muskegon County Road Commission

7700 East Apple Avenue Muskegon, MI 49442-4999
Telephone (231) 788-2381 Fax (231) 788-5793

Jack E. Kennedy
Chairman

Melvin L. Black
Vice Chair

John J. DeWolf
Commissioner

Lewis J. Collins
Commissioner

Gerald J. Walter
Commissioner

November 26, 2014

RE: Ballot Proposal

Statistics show that for the last 50 years Michigan has been in the bottom five states nationally in terms of the funding provided by state government for our public road system. The current overall condition of our road system statewide is reflective of that lack of funding. As you are probably well aware the last increase in road funding occurred in 1997, some 17 years ago. The increase at that time was minimal and within a few very short years was easily overtaken by inflation. If the state would create a "dashboard" for road funding, the visual would show that the tank is nearly empty.

This lack of funding impacts all of us in many ways. We are subject to driving on substandard, deficient roads and bridges, our daily commutes to and from work are often a series of pothole dodging maneuvers, adequate maintenance was often deferred due to this lack of funding causing an already distressed system to diminish even further and vehicle repair costs due to road condition are excessive and frustrating. The list of negatives regarding the condition of roads in Michigan goes on and on.

What many of our constituents may not realize is that dating back to the early days of transportation law, it was expected and anticipated by the legislature that most of the local road improvements and rebuilds would be funded by local sources. The state severely limited its contribution of gas and weight taxes for local roads since the 1930's and that limited involvement is even further diminished today by the lack of legislative action since 1997. Recently, however, there has been some discussion and activity in the legislature to increase funding for roads in Michigan. The amount passed by the Senate last week, while significant, is about 50% of what most studies show is needed to create and maintain a public transportation system that is adequate for the needs of Michigan's businesses and citizens. The anticipated House of Representative version is expected to be even less. Given where we are at currently, the Muskegon County Road Commissioners are requesting that a ballot proposal be placed county wide before voters in early February.

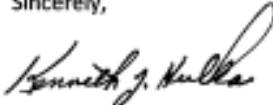
Attached you will find the proposed ballot language for what we have been planning is a February request of the voters of Muskegon County to supplement State road funding, subject to County Board approval. This language guarantees that each municipal unit listed will get the funds raised within that unit. For a municipal unit such as Norton Shores that currently has a millage, their Council would have the option to either keep the funds generated in addition to what they already levy or to not levy their existing millage keeping the impact on their residents at zero. For the Road Commission we would receive the funds generated in the townships. Our finance and accounting department will keep the funds separate by township so that whatever is generated within each township would be spent only within that township. We would anticipate being able to give each unit a report on where their funds

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stand at any given time. Given that the total cost of some projects may be more than what is generated in any one year within the townships, it can be expected that funds may need to be built up over one or two or more years to fund that project. The bottom line is that over the total life of the millage all funds generated within a local unit would stay in that local unit. If the millage is successful the plan is to meet with each township and jointly select and prioritize several projects using asset management principles.

The language that is being proposed here is the language that was used by the polling firm that was jointly funded by the County and MCRC. Their strong recommendation is that we proceed with a February election based on the polling results. There are 28 counties statewide that now have millages. There were four first time millages passed two weeks ago during the November election, and four during the primary election in August. Only two counties that tried this year failed to pass a county wide millage and one of those, Ionia, failed by just a few votes. We have been trying to move this forward as best we can for well over six months working with former County Administrator Hammersley and Finance Director Kaplan. The time has come to move forward on this issue. If you have any questions, please call me at 788-2381 ext. 7222.

Sincerely,



Kenneth J. Hulka,
Managing Director

KJH/amj

Enclosure

Shall the limitation on the total amount of taxes which may be levied against all taxable real and personal property within the County of Muskegon, as provided for by Section 6 of Article IX of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, the amount not to exceed \$1.50 per thousand dollars of taxable valuation (1.5 mills) for a period of ten (10) years, 2015 through 2024, inclusive, for the sole purpose of funding the repair, maintenance and improvements of primary roads, major streets, local roads, and bridges in each city, township and village in the County of Muskegon? The money raised can't be used for any other purpose. The proposal would increase property taxes for 10 years by a 1.5 mill county-wide, which would raise approximately \$6,750,000 annually. That means that for every \$100,000 in the market value of a home and \$50,000 in taxable value, property taxes would increase by \$75 per year, or a little over approximately \$6.25 per month, for the next 10 years. The funds to be disbursed to the Muskegon County Road Commission, the Cities of Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, Whitehall, and the villages of Casnovia, Fruitport, Lakewood Club and Ravenna. If approved this would be a new millage, to be levied beginning July, 2015.

As always, supervisor@fruitlandtwp.org
Sam E. St.Amour
Supervisor