

# Charter Township of Brighton

Volume III, Issue 5

Summer 2007

## Township 101 Michigan Townships Matter

Michigan Townships directly impact the lives of families on a daily basis. Township governments efficiently, economically and effectively protect the public safety of families and enhance the quality of life for more than half of Michigan's residents. Townships are governed by everyday residents. Because neighbors are serving neighbors, townships match the needs of the communities they serve — and do it in an accountable manner.

As of this writing the State's financial crisis continues to linger in Lansing as do initiatives by State representatives to do away with Township government and strip townships of some of their authority. Some measures call for abandonment of township government while others call for the consolidation of assessing, election and tax collection duties. These services would be administered through the county but the townships would still pay for these services. They claim that consolidation of local government will save money thus helping solve the State's budget crisis.

Recently the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) provided local townships with some background information to share with the public and legislature stating the significance of Township government. MTA is a non-profit organization established in 1953 to provide a unified voice for Michigan's 1,242 Township governments. Some general information about Townships follows.

- The premise that combining smaller units of government into larger entities will produce cost savings in providing government services is overly simplistic. There is little evidence that larger units of government have lower costs — in fact, the opposite is generally true.

- According to US Census Bureau, Michigan cities spent nearly \$12 billion on municipal operations in fiscal year 2001-02. During the same period, townships spent \$1.7 billion — one-eighth the amount of cities.

- Cities received more than \$3.5 billion from state and federal sources while townships received only \$450 million.

- Michigan ranks relatively low in terms of the number of local governments per capita.

- There are 1,242 townships in Michigan

- Michigan is one of 20 states that have the township form of government

- More than half of Michigan's population lives in townships

See Michigan Townships Matter, Page Two

## Inside this issue:

---

Michigan Townships Matter (continued) 2

Earth-friendly Landscaping 3

Watershed Signs Go Up 3

Summer Safety Tips 3

Principle Residence Exemptions 4

Assessing Data On-line 4

Township Website Updated 4

---

*Regular Board Meetings are on the 1st and 3rd Monday's of each month. The meetings are held in the Board Room in the lower level of Township Hall and are broadcast live on Cable Channel 15.*

*Meeting start time is 7:00 P.M.*

---

*Michigan Townships Matter**Continued from Page One*

- Townships are characteristically low-cost entities and sharing services is far more prevalent than local governments are generally given credit for. In relation to the magnitude of the state's structural deficit the amount of state money transferred to townships is extraordinarily small.

- Of the 1,166 townships that provide fire services, 57 percent have a joint fire operation. Brighton Township is one of these as a member of the Brighton Area Fire Authority along with the City of Brighton and Genoa Charter Township.

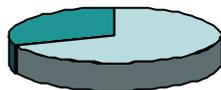
- Of the 351 townships that provide police services, 74 percent have police patrols through contract or some other agreement with another government unit.

- Of the 622 townships that operate ambulance services, 80 percent have services through joint operations or by contract.

- More than other local units of government, townships consistently do more with less. In 1946 revenue sharing was established to relieve local taxation and was designed to be flexible, non-restricted funding that communities could use to

**2006-07 Revenue Sharing**

□ Cities	(\$748,438,714)
■ Villages	(\$7,648,821)
■ Townships	(\$337,296,134)



best fit their needs. Now, money that local communities rely on to pay for services that directly impact residents' lives is continuously being threatened.

- Townships receive both statutory and constitutional revenue sharing from the State. The statutory revenue sharing has consistently been reduced over the years.

- Statutory revenue sharing for townships has gone from \$90 million to \$20 million since 2001-02.

- Brighton Township's statutory revenue sharing has been reduced to ZERO.

- Townships have more than 50% of the state's population yet receive considerably less funding per capita than cities and villages. Brighton Township has worked cooperatively with our neighbors over the years to provide essential public services and continues to identify opportunities for collaboration that will prove beneficial to its residents.

### Current Joint Services and Cooperative Arrangements

SELCRA—Southeast Livingston County Recreation Authority

BAFA— Brighton Area Fire Authority

LCWA—Livingston Community Water Authority

Phase II Storm Water Management—cooperative arrangement with other Livingston County Phase II communities

E Grand River Corridor Plan — Brighton & Green Oak Charter Townships developed a joint corridor plan

Enhanced Alcohol Enforcement through the Michigan State Police, Brighton Post

City of Brighton, Green Oak, Hamburg and Brighton Townships are working with Livingston County, Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce and SEMCOG to bring free wireless internet to the county

Country Club Annex Water Services—Contract Operations through the City of Brighton

Brighton District Library

### Choose Earth-friendly Landscaping

**Go Native.** Select plants native to Michigan. Native plants are better able to tolerate Michigan’s climate, require less fertilizer and water, and are more disease resistant. Not sure what’s native — visit your local greenhouses and nurseries.

**Water wisely.** Lawns need about one inch of water per week. Use a rain gauge and water only when necessary, instead of on a fixed schedule.

**Use mulch.** Place a thick layer of mulch (e.g. four inches) around trees and plants. This helps retain water, reduce weeds, and minimizes the need for pesticides.

**Mow high.** Three inches is the rule. Let grass clippings fall back on the lawn. Since clippings recycle nutrients back into the soil, fertilizer can be reduced by 25% OR MORE.

### Watershed Signs Go Up

As part of our ongoing Storm Water Phase II educational effort, signs have been erected throughout the Township designating



w a t e r s h e d boundaries and creek crossings. This is part of a c o u n t y - w i d e educational effort to make residents aware of the watersheds and streams in our community.

A recent study by the Southeast

Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) indicated that only 25 percent of the people in the region were aware that they lived within a watershed. Signs have been erected at the following locations:

S Ore Creek	McClements between Hunter and Hacker Hyne east of Hacker where S Ore Creek crosses Hilton near Oak Knoll
Woodruff Creek	Old US 23, south of Hilton Old US 23, north of Spencer
Mann Creek	Spencer between Pleasant Valley and Van Amberg Buno Road between Sunshine Trail and Pleasant Valley Pleasant Valley north of Della Drive
Noble Lake	Ben Hur at Noble Lake
Woodland Lake	Hunter north of Hilton on Woodland Lake

### Summer Safety Tips from the Building Department

#### Porches, Decks and Balconies

Porches can be at risk of collapsing if they are not properly constructed or in need of repair. Conduct a summer inspection and look for decks that are improperly attached to the building structure. Anchors and bolts should be used to secure them; not nails. Other safety hazards include:

- Split or rotting wood
- Wobbly handrails and guardrails
- Loose, missing or rusting anchors, nails or screws
- Poor end support of the porch deck joists or girders
- Excessive movement of the porch when walked on
- Swaying or unstable porches

Remember a building permit is required.

#### Grills

Grilling on or near combustible areas can be a fire hazard. It not only puts your family at risk it can also put your neighbors at risk, especially in condos or apartment buildings. The most common grilling hazards are open flames and heat generated in the grill base that can be transferred to the wood of a porch, deck or siding, causing a fire. When grilling, follow these safety tips:

- Place the grill away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches
- Periodically remove grease or fat build-up
- Use the proper starter fluid and store away from heat sources
- Check propane cylinder hoses for leaks
- Do not move hot grills
- Dispose of charcoal properly, keeping ash containers outside and away from combustible construction

#### Swimming Pools

Because they can be inviting and **dangerous** for young children, in-ground and above-ground pools should be surrounded by a fence or other barrier. Small, inflatable pools must also be protected. The Michigan Residential Building Code says that any pool with more than 24 inches of water has to have a four-foot fence or other barrier around it. Any gates in the fence must be self-closing and self-latching. Other things to consider when installing a pool:

- Building permit requirements
- Zoning requirements
- Electrical clearances
- Master deed and homeowner association rules

**More information is available by contacting the Building Department at 810-229-0562.**

## Charter Township of Brighton

4363 Buno Road  
Brighton, MI 48114  
Phone: (810) 229.0550  
Fax: (810)229.1778

### Principal Residence Exemption (Formerly Known as Homestead Exemption)

Please check your tax bill to make sure that the Principal Residential Exemption (P.R.E.) information is correct. If you owned and occupied your primary residence on or before May 1, 2007 you may qualify for a P.R.E. If you claim an exemption on another home in Michigan or any other state you must rescind that exemption before you can claim another. Your P.R.E. must be filed on your primary residence. This is typically the address that is on your driver's license and voter registration card. If you think there is an error on your tax bill regarding the P.R.E. please contact the Assessor's Office at 810-229-0558.

### Assessing Data Online:

The Brighton Township Assessing data is available on our website. Just go to [www.brightontwp.com](http://www.brightontwp.com), click on departments, then click on assessing. If you scroll down the page, you will see a link. You can search for data by parcel number, owner name, or property address. The following information is available: land information, legal descriptions, building information, tax information and building images and sketches.

You can also print assessing related forms from our website.

### Township Website Updated

Last Fall the Township hired the web development firm, Creative Web Spinner, Inc., to rebuild our website. The focus was to make the website more user-friendly and to provide information of interest to the community. Township staff and officials dedicated time to work with the development team to ensure that the new site was designed in a manner that was user-friendly, informative, and would allow for expansion. Visitors are able to access meeting minutes, agendas, a calendar of events, government information, tax information, election information and department information. It also allows access to forms for use in conducting business with the township.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact David M. Murphy, Township Manager, at 810-229-0550, ext. 710.

Please forward newsletter comments to the editor:  
[clerk@brightontwp.com](mailto:clerk@brightontwp.com) or  
[david.murphy@brightontwp.com](mailto:david.murphy@brightontwp.com)

Please be sure to add "newsletter" in the subject line

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

[www.brightontwp.com](http://www.brightontwp.com)

#### SUPERVISOR

H.E. "Bud" Prine  
[bud.prine@brightontwp.com](mailto:bud.prine@brightontwp.com)  
(810) 229-0550

#### CLERK

Ann Bollin  
[clerk@brightontwp.com](mailto:clerk@brightontwp.com)  
(810) 229-0560

#### TREASURER

Geri Harmon  
[treasurer@brightontwp.com](mailto:treasurer@brightontwp.com)  
(810) 229-0556

#### TRUSTEES\*\*

Cathy Doughty  
[cathy.doughty@brightontwp.com](mailto:cathy.doughty@brightontwp.com)

Tom "Murph" Murphy  
[tom.murphy@brightontwp.com](mailto:tom.murphy@brightontwp.com)

Mike Slaton  
[trusteemike@brightontwp.com](mailto:trusteemike@brightontwp.com)

Tim Winship  
[tim.winship@brightontwp.com](mailto:tim.winship@brightontwp.com)

#### MANAGER

[david.murphy@brightontwp.com](mailto:david.murphy@brightontwp.com)  
(810) 229-0550

#### *Regular Meeting Days and Times\**

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1st & 3rd Mondays of every month at 7:00 PM

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

2nd and 4th Mondays of every month at 7:00 PM

#### ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

4th Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM

*\*Meetings are subject to change. Contact the Clerk's office for more information.*

*\*\*Phone messages may be left at (810) 229-0550 for all trustees.*