

WINTER 2015

Laketon Township

2735 W. Giles Rd, Muskegon, MI 49445 P. 231-744-2454 web: www.laketon.org

TIDBITS:

- **2015 Winter Tax Bills** are due **Tuesday February 16, 2016**. Laketon Township Hall will remain open an additional 1/2 hour, until 5:00 pm on Tues. 2/16/2016 for the purpose of accepting property tax payments. *Partial payments are accepted. Keep all tax receipts for income tax filing!*
- **Historical Information:** If you have any old documents/photos/signs etc, we'd love to borrow them and put them on display here in the Township Hall in recognition of this year's sesquicentennial celebration!
- **2016 Yard Waste Cards:** Cards will be available for the 2016 calendar year starting in December 2015 so you may purchase it when you come in to pay your winter tax bill. The cost is still \$15.00 per calendar year!

Dog Licenses REQUIRED by State Law

Did you know the dog license you purchase is required by State Law? It is known as the Dog Law of 1919 and Section 287.266(1) requires dogs age 4 months or older to have a license issued by the County.

Why should I license my dog? There are several reasons; it's the law, people will know it's not a stray, it helps animal control protect neighborhoods from dangerous dogs & investigate dog bites, and most importantly it prevents the spread of rabies between wild animals, pets and people. Rabies is a dangerous & deadly viral disease that is spread by the bites or scratches of an infected animal. Rabies can be spread not only to other animals, but to humans. The disease can only be diagnosed after symptoms appear and once symptoms appear, the disease is nearly always fatal. Section 287.266(8) of the Dog Law of 1919 states in part that owners "shall keep the dog currently vaccinated against rabies by an accredited veterinarian with a vaccine licensed by the United States department of agriculture."

A dog with a current County dog license has shown proof of being vaccinated. The same cannot be said for unlicensed dogs. Dogs that are not licensed have not submitted proof of vaccination and therefore, may or may not be properly vaccinated.

Failure to license your dog can result in fines &/or jail time as per Section 287.286 (26) of the Dog Law of 1919. Vaccinate and license all dogs—public health & safety depends on it!

The Treasurer's Corner

Hello Residents,

Here are a few commonly asked questions concerning property taxes and property tax payments.

1. **When are property taxes billed and due?** Taxes are billed July 1st and December 1st every year. They are due September 14th and February 14th respectively (unless these dates fall on a weekend or holiday).
2. **Why do you ask for my phone number on the bill remittance stub?** Sometimes the payment check is missing a signature or the payment amount is incorrect. If we have your phone number, we can call you quickly and easily to resolve the issue.
3. **Do I have to pay the bill in full all at one time?** No, you can start making payments as soon as you receive the bill in the mail. We will accept payments on any schedule and in any amount that works for your budget. FYI—Late fees only apply to remaining balances due after the due date.
4. **How and where do I pay my property taxes?** Payments can be made: in person at Laketon Township Hall and Community Shores Banks; by mail—send to the Laketon Township Hall; or online at www.laketon.org (online payments will incur additional fees, fees are explained in detail on the webpage).

Thank you,

Lori Archer

Laketon Twp Treasurer

2016 Yard Waste Card—Mail in Order Form

Property Owner Name(s): _____

Phone Number: _____ Property Address: _____

2 cards can be issued per household—Number of Cards requested: _____

If you would like your card mailed to you, please also include a self addressed postage paid envelope with this form and we will gladly mail your card(s) to you. Thank you.

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." ~Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States

TIDBITS....continued....

- **Snowplowing Reminders:** Please— DO NOT plow snow ACROSS a roadway (per state law). DO NOT plow in a fire hydrant—it is important for public safety to keep them clear of vehicles, yard décor, overgrown landscaping and snow banks. DO NOT place or plow any snow onto any bike path or sidewalk. Please also keep snow banks low enough and far enough off the roadway to maintain clear vision. Thank you for your cooperation!
- **2016 KNOWN ELECTION DATES:** March 8th, 2016 Presidential Primary. August 2, 2016 Primary Election. November 8, 2016 General Election. If you have any election or voting questions, please feel free to call the Township Clerk Christina Achterhoff or her Deputy Clerk Molly Joslyn 231-744-2454 during normal business

Safe Routes to School Ribbon Cutting on National Walk to School Day!

For more on the Safe Routes to School story, visit www.laketon.org or see more photos on Facebook—visit the Laketon Township Community Information Page.



Pictured from left to right: Lori Archer, Randy Parrett, Paul Bouman, Mike Lyons, Kathryn Maki, Tiffany Carter, Kim Arter, Steve Cousins, Terry Sabo, Paul Hoppa, Cindy Zaagman, Deputy Michael Grillo, Pam Turner, Art Green and Bryan Armstrong. Photo Credit to A. Arter. More photos of the Ribbon Cutting & National Walk to School Day are on Facebook: Laketon Township Community Information—Like our page!

VITA—Volunteers Needed to Serve Low to Moderate Income

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Services for West Michigan provides **FREE tax preparation services to working families with incomes up to \$60,000** and promotes the awareness of EITC and other valuable tax credits for working families. Last year, VITA Services partners filed over 2,700 free tax returns and returned more than \$3.2 million to local families and communities. Volunteers are needed to file free tax returns for low- to moderate-income taxpayers in Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and Ottawa counties. **No experience is required to be a VITA volunteer. Free training and certification is provided through IRS on-line programs, or through scheduled class-**

room training sessions. Volunteers should have computer and typing skills, and be able to commit to at least one four-hour shift of service each week during tax season. Services are provided by appointment. The sites operate from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and on select Saturdays. Tax season begins February 1 and lasts through mid-April. For more information on the EITC or volunteering, please contact Amanda Grover at 231-722-7871, ext. 246 or by e-mail at agrover@goodwillwm.org.

If you are a low to moderate income family—don't miss out

on credits & possibly a refund you may be eligible for! According to the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities, between 20 and 25% of people who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) are not claiming this credit because they don't know they are eligible. The EITC is a credit provided to low-to-moderate income workers. Larger credits – up to \$6,000 – are available to workers with dependents in the household.

To schedule a tax appointment, please contact CALL 211 mid-January, just dial 2-1-1 and an operator will assist you.

DELINQUENT SEWER USAGE BILLS

As per Section 708 of the Sewer Usage, Rate and Connection Ordinance (available online at www.laketon.org) any property with outstanding sewer usage balances due as of November 10, 2015, will have said outstanding balances, plus a 15% penalty, transferred to the 2015 winter property tax bill. This procedure is the same that has been followed for many years. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Laketon Township Hall, Monday—Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Quarterly Sewer Rates Increasing—Reflected on Jan. 1, 2016 Bill

Laketon Township sewer customers will see an increase of **\$3.90 per month** on their next bill—the rate increase will take effect October 1, 2015. The rate, billed quarterly, will change from the current \$78.00 to **\$89.70 per quarter**. The first bill you will see this on is January 1, 2016 which is for October, November & December 2015 usage.

Why an increase?

- Usage rate increases from the Muskegon County Wastewater System.
- Adequate funds needed for sewer system maintenance and repair.
- Amortization of principal amount of Muskegon County Wastewater Management System Bonds.

Need help budgeting for your bill? There are options for paying the bill:

- Quarterly payments with the bill or
- Monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly payments are accepted—the bill must still be paid in full by the due date to avoid late fees.

To schedule a convenient payment plan, please call us at 231-744-2454.

"America is too great for small dreams." ~Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States