

LAKETON TOWNSHIP

FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

WEBSITE: WWW.LAKETON.ORG

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SAVING THE TREES

Everyone loves a scenic roadway with a canopy of trees. Laketon Township has gone to great lengths to save as many trees as possible during the current water/sewer construction project.

A certified arborist was flown in from Toledo to consult with the contractor on all trees along the construction route. It was found that some trees were not worth the expense to preserve them (example, Ash trees which were infected with the Emerald Ash Borer). In areas where trees were to be protected, the contractor utilized protective measures to save them. For example, some areas called for hand digging rather than using heavy equipment. In other areas a "jack and bore" method was used to push a steel sleeve under the trees (about 5 feet deep) and the water pipe is placed inside the steel sleeve. This method costs approximately \$100 per linear foot installed and the steel sleeves are roughly 30 to 40 feet in length.

When the construction is complete, Laketon Township will be looking into a tree replacement program to restore the scenic route. Total cost is in excess of \$50,000.



To the left is a photo of the "jack and bore" process used to save as many trees as possible within the construction route.

RAISING THE ROAD

During the sewer construction project, the contractor and Muskegon County Road Commission decided to raise some roads about 4 to 5 inches. It doesn't sound like much, but this small amount can add 5 years to the life of the road, thus saving taxpayer dollars by reducing road maintenance costs.

It is important to remember that homeowners along the roadway need to maintain the drainage swales/ditches at the road side. Water drainage away from the road and keeping the road's gravel base dry is the secret to maintaining the road in the best condition possible for as long as possible. In our area, we average around 40 freeze and thaw cycles each winter season. Water under the paved surface is not a good thing and results in the road surface deteriorating prematurely. Please do not fill in these drainage ditches. Below are examples of good drainage vs bad drainage.



Example of good drainage with road edge in good condition

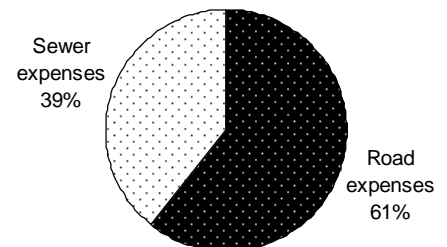


Example of bad drainage with road edge crumbling

Sewer Costs vs. Road Costs

Currently, the assessment cost for connection to the county sewer system is \$7,800. Typically, the main sewer lines are constructed down the middle of the road. Replacement costs for reconstruction of the road is \$95 per linear foot. Therefore, the cost of the road in front of a typical 100 foot wide lot is \$9,500.

Subtract 1/2 of the road construction cost (\$4,750) from the sewer assessment cost for each home and there is \$3,050 left to apply to the sewer expense. (see the graph at left)



"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) 35th President of the United States

Sewer and Water Update/Information

Laketon Township has received many questions about the current water and sewer construction project, and water and sewer services in general.

The water and sewer project currently under construction was undertaken to provide water and sewer to subdivisions platted in the 1920's (Bayshore Subdivision which is along Memorial Drive west of Green Creek Rd) and the 1960's (Green Ridge Subdivision, which is at the south end of Green Creek Rd). The water in that area was contaminated by the oil wells near Fenner Road in the 1980's. The Department of Environmental Quality has been trying to secure funding for municipal water ever since. They were finally able to do that in 2008, some 20 years after the contamination occurred. If the Township had not received the \$2.5 million dollars from the DEQ for the water, the Township would not be undertaking this current project.

In the early 1990's, and again around the year 2000 the Township officials conducted two public meetings to propose expanding the water and sewer in the township. There was such a vocal outcry of opposition at the meetings that the officials concluded that they would not proceed with any further expansions. Any expansion would have to be initiated by the residents circulating a petition for a Special Assessment District

Around 1998, the Department of Environmental Quality forced the Township to "loop" the water line by connecting the Dykstra Road water line with the Giles Road line. At that time, the Township mailed postcards to all the residents in subdivisions of Sherwood Forest, Bear Lake Meadows, Northland Park and along Horton Road asking if anyone was interested in getting city water. Again, a resounding 90% said no to any project. However, over 80% of the homes, along the DEQ required water line, have connected to it since that time.

No further expansion is planned by Laketon Township, but if anyone is interested in having water and sewer constructed in their neighborhood the Township can prepare a petition for you to circulate and collect signatures. If enough signatures are collected in support of the water/sewer (which is at least 51% of property owners in the designated neighborhood or area) a special assessment district can be created for that neighborhood/area.

Water and sewer projects have very little initial impact on the Laketon Township tax base. If public water and sewer are constructed in an existing neighborhood, the Township Assessor is not permitted to increase the property assessment. The effect of water and sewer construction only shows up years later as homes sell and the value of these services are reflected in the selling price.

With regard to the current construction, the contractors working on site give the Township periodic updates. These updates are posted on the township website and are also e-mailed to those that have requested e-mail notifications. Your e-mail address can be added to the construction update list by calling or e-mailing (vwest@laketon.org) Veronica at the Township Hall. In addition, the construction update notices are posted at the Township Hall.

Pedestrian Path Update

The Township Board authorized it's engineers to proceed with the design of a pedestrian path along the current construction route. The plan is to have a path from Witham Dr and Dykstra Rd to Horton Rd, then south to Fenner Rd, and along Fenner Rd to Bear Lake Rd. From there south along Bear Lake Rd on the west side to Pennsylvania Ave then west on Pennsylvania Ave to Memorial Dr then Memorial Dr west to Weber Rd. The extent to which this is completed, will depend upon the funding available at the end of the construction project.

TIDBITS

- **Mail Slot/Night Drop Box**—located in the door on the west side of the building for dropping off payments or other information after regular office hours—please do not leave cash payments—Laketon Township will not be responsible for cash left in the mail slot.
- **Message/Notice Board**—Several months ago, the Township erected a message board located at the front of the Township Hall. Notices are posted to alert the public to special meetings, public hearings, cancelled meetings etc. If you do not have internet access you can stop by the township hall and check this message board for important information.
- **Township Website**—visit the website for a variety of information such as holiday closings, yard waste hours, community news, meeting dates and times, links to other government, charitable and business websites etc. www.laketon.org
- **2009 Muskegon County Dog Licenses**—dog licenses will be available at the Laketon Township Hall starting on December 1st, 2008. Your renewal notice will come in the mail as it usually does, but it will be in postcard form this year.