



Charter Township of Van Buren *Lake Ledger*

S p r i n g 2 0 0 4

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP



Van Buren Township Streetscape in full bloom

As I end my third year as your township supervisor, I am compelled to reflect on these past few years. During this period of unprecedented change, time has flown by. Without question, Van Buren Township is transforming from a rural, agricultural community to a more diverse, cosmopolitan suburb. A sound economic climate during the mid- to late-90's, historically low interest rates, our proximity to both I-94 and I-275 and Metro and Willow Run Airports, as well as our beautiful six-mile-long Belleville Lake and abundance of large tracts of vacant land have all contributed to this transformation. As in the past two years, development remained the most significant issue facing the township in 2003.

A testament to the financial acumen of this Board and prior Township Boards, and perhaps of greatest

relevance for the future financial standing of Van Buren, the township earned its first ratings by national independent financial ratings agencies. In 2003, Standard & Poors rated the township as A- "stable" and Moody's Investors Service gave the township an A3 rating. The process of becoming a "rated" community was relative to the Visteon world headquarters project currently underway and slated for completion in July 2004. The ratings process was an arduous one that included a thorough examination of the financial health of our community, similar to an intensive financial audit. This included a review

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003
Continued on Page Two

Inside Info

- Police & Fire Info** Pg. 6-7
- Recreation Program** Pg. 12-15
- Home Irrigation Safety** Pg. 16-17
- Museum Info** Pg. 20
- Library Info** Pg. 21
- Trash & Recycle Guidelines** Pg. 22-23

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued from Cover Page

of current and past budgets, audit reports, percentage of fund balance compared to operational costs and current and encumbered debt. It also included an analysis of the growth of our tax base and existing land uses, and key components of the Visteon project. Among the many positive comments these agencies attributed to Van Buren were that "[t]he A3 rating reflects the Township's...sound financial operations supported by healthy, yet declining reserves; and low debt burden;" "...the Township's tax base averaged a strong 18.1% annual growth and currently stands at a solid \$2.2 billion;" and "[t]he Township's overall debt burden is moderate at \$2,234 per capita..."



Early 2003 was spent with the Local Development Finance Authority and Township Board negotiating and reviewing a multitude of documents related to the Visteon project including the issuance of a nearly \$28 million bond to fund various public improvements at the

site; improvements that include storm water management, ADA accessible facilities, sidewalks, streetlights, etc. Ultimately, the LDFA and Board approved a Development Plan and Agreement that set forth the mutual objectives and responsibilities of the company and the township pertinent to the bond issue and improvements to the site. This is a historic undertaking in our community and one in which the township relied upon a number of professionals to guide and assist us to ensure our decisions are in the best interests, both today and tomorrow, of this community. The Board is well aware of the considerable tax benefits that were afforded Visteon as an incentive to locate not only in Van Buren but also in the State, tax benefits that included those granted by the State of Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Indeed, the Visteon project was a collaborative effort of the company, and state, county and township authorities. It is our expectation, and I would assume that of the State and County as well, that locating the world headquarters - offices, research and design operations - of the Visteon Corporation here in Van Buren will benefit our community and the region. These benefits include new jobs, and an improved tax base to which Visteon will contribute and because the project may serve as an impetus for new economic development.

Visteon has demonstrated their desire to be a good corporate neighbor with a donation of \$75,000 worth of playground equipment for Van Buren Park that their employees helped to erect in 2002. Last summer, Visteon workers volunteered to help construct a new play scape at French Landing Park. Also in 2003, Visteon provided labor at no charge to assist in shoreline cleanup of Belleville Lake near French Landing

Dam. I look forward to Visteon's continued support of valued community services, and positive impact on our schools, and social and cultural attributes. I do believe that years from now people will look back on the decisions made today and will agree that they are the beneficiaries of a forward thinking group of men and women whose efforts in 2002/03 resulted in a quality of life those future residents value and enjoy.



While development continues to be the number one issue facing Van Buren, the pace of development continued, for the second straight year, to be less than the previous year. Undoubtedly, this is due to the national and state economies with many private sector

enterprises experiencing belt-tightening, downsizing or simply holding off on new projects. Throughout the year, work continued in a number of the residential neighborhoods with approval being granted for a new residential project in the area of Hoeft and Huron River Drive and the Belleville Road Walgreens. In 2003, 889 building, 779 electrical, 904 mechanical and 568 plumbing permits were issued, totaling roughly \$850,000.



May 2003 saw a renewal of our public safety millage of three mills used to fund routine, ongoing operations in the five components that comprise public safety; police, fire, emergency dispatch, emergency management and animal control. The community's support

for a renewal of this millage helped to maintain the level of service you've come to expect for public safety and provided about 50% of the department's operating revenue. The remaining 50% of the approximately \$4 million annual public safety operating budget is derived from contributions from the township's general fund and landfill fund.

For the first time in the history of Van Buren Public Schools, police officers were a daily part of the school routine in 2003 with two school resource officers working in the elementary, middle and high schools. These officers complement the existing contingency of D.A.R.E. officers but serve in a very different capacity. They are utilized for additional security and to educate faculty and students on various law enforcement matters including truancy, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency.

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued on Page Four

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Spring is about to be sprung, I hope. I haven't seen many robins but I'm hoping winter will soon release its hold and trees will start to bloom, flowers will push up all over and the grass will turn to green. Time to maybe put the snow shovels and snow blowers in the back corner of the garage and get the lawn mower tuned-up. All this makes for a good part of being a Van Buren Township resident and one able to enjoy the four very beautiful seasons offered in Michigan.

My staff has been busy getting the tax records in order, helping residents with tax questions and sometimes making extra copies of tax bills so everyone can make the April 15th IRS deadline. The tax books are balanced and will soon be on their way to the Wayne County Treasurer. A big thanks to my staff for a job well done. Now it's catch-up time to get all the little jobs done that had to wait. Hope your taxes are done and the refunds are in the mail.

Just a reminder that if you have remortgaged or purchased a home you need to notify my office so our records reflect the proper data. We need you to keep us updated on what mortgage company the bills get sent to and if any change has occurred as to where you want the tax bill sent. We want you to help us keep your tax record correct.

This time of the year the auditors are in the Township Hall to do the annual audit. Auditors usually mean numbers and here are a few I thought were interesting. The Treasurer's office handles 8,186 real property parcels and 596 personal property parcels in July for the school tax collection and that number again for the winter tax collection. We collect over 7,000 water bills. Every time the Planning Department issues any kind of permit it creates a transaction for the Treasurer's office. All the seniors, park and recreation revenues generated by classes, programs and park admissions are accounted for in my office. We collected and disbursed over \$41 million dollars in the year 2003. Because we collect the amounts addressed by all the entities on properties in Van Buren Township we are also responsible to see that those funds get remitted to the proper source, such as the schools and the County. The Treasurer's office works as the check and balance for all revenue as well as making sure funds are available to cover the checks issued for Township expenditures.

Van Buren Township is planning another drive-in dog clinic for Saturday, May 1st at the Van Buren Township Water/Sewer Building from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Residents will be able to get their dogs vaccinated and purchase dog licenses. Come and say hello to my staff, as we will be there to assist you.

The weather will soon be getting warmer so get out and enjoy the season. Always be kind to each other and remember the Treasurer's office remains committed to serving you.

Sharry A. Budd
Township Treasurer

CLERK'S OFFICE

Summer is generally when people relax and enjoy time with family and friends. In the case of the Clerk's Office we will be busy preparing for the August and November elections. Are you registered to vote? Do you care about your local community, the State legislature or who your U.S. Senator is? If you do and you are not registered to vote, now is the time to remedy the situation and get registered. You may register to vote at any Secretary of State office or here at the Clerk's Office. The registration form is short and can be filled out quickly. July 6, 2004 is the last day to register to vote before the August 3 Primary Election. Please take the time to vote on Election Day.



Jennifer Parker, Clerk's Office new account clerk

As we begin a new election cycle I would like to take the opportunity to introduce the newest member of the Clerk's Office staff. Jennifer Parker has joined our team as an account clerk to work on elections. She comes to us from the Department of Developmental Services and we are pleased to welcome her to our Clerk's Office family.

Finally, the Secretary of State has a wonderful web site with information on a variety of topics related to election information, such as checking to see if you are registered, where you vote and what type of voting system your community uses, vehicle licensing and renewal, notary and document certification and much more. I encourage you to take the time to visit the site at www.michigan.gov/sos.

Joannie D. Payne, CMC
Township Clerk

DATES TO REMEMBER

- May 1** Annual Drive-In Dog Clinic 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Twp. Hall
- May 31** Township Offices closed in observance of Memorial Day
- June 26** Fireworks at Beck Road Fields - show time at dusk
- July 5** Township Offices closed in observance of Independence Day
- July 6** Last day to register to vote for August 3 Primary Election

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued from Page Two

In 2003, the Animal Control Department adopted out over 30 dogs and a few cats, providing new homes to animals unwanted by others. The township issued 1,004 dog licenses last year and during the annual Drive-In Dog Clinic, 185 township dogs received rabies vaccinations.



The final Board meeting of 2003 resulted in approval to purchase two new Pierce fire engine trucks and authorization for Acting Director Smolen and myself to begin discussion with the

fire fighters union for establishing a new operations plan for responding to calls for service. A proposal to schedule our paid-call, "volunteer" fire fighters for 20 hours per day, seven days a week, was submitted by the fire fighters. The objective of the plan is to provide for a more stable workforce so that response times can be improved. Immediately following Board approval, Director Smolen and I had our first meeting with the union. We look forward to reaching a workable solution to which you will be the beneficiary.

Special Events Coordinator Meghan Mutch joined the Van Buren Team in January 2003 and quickly put to use her skills in such areas as: the Marshmallow Drop enjoyed by 700 children, Get Active! Family Fun Day, the Great Pumpkin Party, the Turkey Treasure Hunt, Holidays Around the World, Brunch with Santa and the Quirk Park opening dedication festivities. Look for Coordinator Mutch to expand opportunities for you in 2004!

Many new recreational classes were offered in 2003, including Bluebirds, Buntings & Baltimore Orioles, Jr. Jazzercise, How to Prepare for a Job, and Dulcimer Lessons. Other offerings included Scrapbook Making Workshop, Walk Michigan, Youth Football, Managing Your Money and Cooking Classes at the Bayou Grill.



Highly respected by recreational professionals throughout the state, Van Buren Township was awarded the Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness "Promoting Active Communities" Award along with a \$3,000 grant the department

intends to use to develop a Vita course in Quirk Park. 2003 was the second consecutive year in which Van Buren received an award from the Governor's Council and is something for which our entire community can be proud. Recreation and Facilities Director Ross' skills have further been recognized with his election to the position of Vice-President of the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association.

I was pleased and honored to be the only municipal official in Michigan to receive the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association Outstanding Community Service Award in 2003. Providing recreational opportunities for everyone, from parks to day camp to open gym time, is important to me as it speaks to the quality of life one can enjoy in our community. I believe it is important that we remember that not everyone has the ability to travel to exotic or fun places; some people rely upon leisure services such as those provided in the Parks & Recreation Department for the means to relax and enjoy themselves.

Continuing in the "awards" category, the Recreation Department's Men's Class C Basketball team placed second out of 125 recreational teams in the State in 2003. If you know of or see any members of the team, give them the well deserved "congratulations" that they deserve. Hey, guys, thanks for making us "look good!"



One project dear to me was the June opening of Quirk Park, a multi-use park directly behind the township municipal center. Initially used as an elementary school, these roughly 13 acres of land were purchased from Van Buren Public Schools several years

ago by the township's Downtown Development Authority. A few years back, the township was awarded a \$206,250 grant from the Clean Michigan Initiative to develop the site into a multi-use facility. The dedication ceremony was well-attended and included local dignitaries, residents of neighboring Quirk Subdivision and the Meadows, a Van Buren Soccer Association soccer team and other community members. Everyone enjoyed the music and barbecue and the opportunity to socialize with others. Today, this park, made possible with contributions from the DDA and the Environmental Quality Company, and the grant, is well used with children playing soccer and enjoying the play scape, and adults using the walking paths, pavilion and gazebo. I think you'll agree it is a good use of former elementary school property.

Economics continued to dominate the national and state agendas in 2003 and in local government, it was a high priority for us too. The State of Michigan was faced with a daunting \$900 million in cuts to achieve a required balanced budget and along with many other entities who receive funding from the State, Van Buren and all other municipalities realized a reduction in state shared revenue. State shared revenue is a 30-year partnership between the state and local governments to reimburse locals for revenues lost when the state repealed the intangibles and inventory taxes and an

alternative to communities implementing municipal sales taxes. Legislation was enacted to provide that a portion of the money generated by the State sales tax would be returned to the communities in which it was generated. As in previous years, the Township had to utilize "rainy day" or fund balance savings (General and Landfill Funds) in order to preclude service reductions when the State reduced state shared revenue distributions to local government. In fact, for the past four years, state shared revenue distributions to cities and townships have decreased. Van Buren in 2003 received less state shared revenue than was received in 2000. Since 2000, Van Buren Township has lost \$844,533 in state shared revenue! This reduction is particularly dramatic when you consider state shared revenue is about 20-25% of the township's annual revenue stream and these cuts have occurred during a period of unprecedented change and growth in our community.

On a positive note, 2003 was also a year in which Van Buren received \$18,369 from the Michigan Municipal League, the township's workers compensation carrier, for improved risk management in the area of worker compensation claims management. Everyone at township hall has worked hard to be ever mindful of managing risk and doing one's part to avoid risk. For the past few years, this effort has paid off in annual premium refunds.

Although more modest but nevertheless valued, the Public Safety Department received a nearly \$7,900 Bulletproof Vest Partnership grant to assist the township in outfitting police officers with these potentially life saving vests. The department also applied for a grant from the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority to offset our cost to purchase Taser guns, a new non-lethal tool available to law enforcement.

Several laws were enacted in 2003, including Public Act 191. P.A. 191 eliminates the requirement that charter townships adopt their budget at least 60 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Previously, the township was required to have its General Fund budget adopted no later than November 1 which often resulted in a document that needed immediate revision should revenue cuts such as those made to state shared revenue occur after November 1. P.A. 191 will give township boards more time to craft their budgets and allow them an ability to respond to economic changes such as cuts to revenue that could occur late in the year.

Van Buren Township's budget in 2003 was \$10.4 million. And again, the General Fund budget and all other township budgets were balanced. The General Fund budget also reflected a healthy "fund balance" or "rainy day" savings. The township currently has a fund balance in excess of 25% of annual expenses. If needed, this money could be used to offset

declines in revenue in the future in order to meet operating expenses.

Van Buren Township, despite declining reserves, is a financially stable, well-managed organization as has been confirmed by annual audits by an independent accounting firm and as was further validated during the ratings process. Maintaining healthy fund balances in the General Fund and the Landfill and Capital Improvements Funds have helped to offset economic downturns and have enabled the Board to improve and expand service to you without seeking additional tax increases. When we did seek a tax increase in November 2002 (Gubernatorial General Election) for public safety facilities, your response was heard and was heeded. Indeed, we have adjusted our efforts in concert with your objectives to keep taxes low and you will continue to see us doing our best to stretch your tax dollar while providing good, quality service and maintaining or building new facilities responsibly.



In 2003, the Board was faced with deciding how best to use nearly \$50 thousand in donations we received to assist Hop-A-Long, a stray dog that had been struck by a vehicle and left along a township roadway. After meeting Hop-A-Long's medical needs and finding him a suitable and loving family, a sizeable balance remained. After many long and often difficult deliberations, the Board accepted a recommendation from the committee created to address these funds, and acted to donate much of the money to various rescue groups in the community to assist them in their efforts at placing unwanted animals in loving homes. A portion of the money was also used to make needed repairs to the township's animal shelter.

In April 2003, the Board Room was the site of the investiture of the Honorable David Parrott as our new 34th District Court Judge. A township resident for many years as well as an active member of the township's Water & Sewer Commission for over a decade, we were pleased Van Buren was selected as the site of this significant community event and we look forward to Judge Parrott's continued contributions to public service in the community.

Ricardo, Inc., a United Kingdom based research and development company, celebrated the opening of their new North American headquarters on Haggerty Road in May 2003.

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued on Page Eight

FACTORY-BUILT SAFETY



Photo of a "Class A Pumping Engine" designed by Pierce

On March 10th, myself and three other members of the Van Buren Fire Department traveled to Appleton Wisconsin, home of Pierce Manufacturing, Inc. Pierce was the successful bidder awarded a contract for two "Class A Pumping Engines" by the Township's Board of Trustees on December 16th of last year. Since being awarded the contract, Pierce engineers have been creating the blueprints for our trucks. On this trip, we met with the engineers and designers to make sure that the details our fire fighters had specified would work in the reality of vehicle fabrication. Throughout a long day of design meetings and verification visits to the factory floor, we were able to solve the issues and finalize the plans for Van Buren's new fire trucks. With delivery expected sometime this summer, we are very proud and excited to add these vehicles to our emergency fleet. The modern capabilities of these fire engines will assist Van Buren's fire fighters in providing superior protection for each of us, our families, and our property.

Allen Smolen
Fire Chief

FIRE FIGHTERS WANTED!!

The Van Buren Fire Department is looking for men and women who would enjoy the challenge of serving our community as on-call (part-time) fire fighters. If you are:



Over the age of eighteen

A high school graduate

**Possess a valid
Michigan Driver's License**



Please stop by the Public Safety Department's Records window and pick up an application.

For more information, please call (734) 699-8930.

"CHILLIN' OUT FOR CHARITY"

"What am I doing here? I cannot believe that I thought it was a great idea when my buddy told me to go jump in the lake! Here I am standing in 30 degree weather, wearing a silly costume and it isn't even Mardi Gras or Halloween! Well, I can't stand here any longer since there are forty other people, dressed like me, ready to take the plunge too!"



Group Photo of Police Officers Association Hockey Team
Photo by: Matthew Damron of the Willow Run Flyers

Even though the third weekend in February was scheduled to be a busy one, members of the Public Safety Department found time to "Chill Out for Charity" and help raise money for some great causes.

On Friday, the Police Officers Association Hockey team, comprised of Police Officers, Firefighters, and local business supporters of the Van Buren Public Safety Department, laced up their skates and matched their skills in a charity event against the Willow Run Flyers, a local High School team. When it was all said and done, the energized crowd was entertained with great plays at both ends of the ice. Both teams played to a 9-9 tie and raised \$1,500 for local charities.

Saturday, however, moved the entertainment from ice inside a building to ice outside a building. When I say "outside a building" I mean out on the frozen tundra of Belleville Lake. The Public Safety Department's *Dive Team* took on the task of assuring everyone was going to have a safe and fun-filled morning raising money for the Special Olympics. The Dive Team took care of getting French Landing Park ready for nearly forty people who made the decision to hop off 14 inches of solid ice and land in the awaiting lake water below. This year's "Polar Bear Plunge", the 4th annual, raised about \$12,000 from the costume-wearing, cold-defying contestants.

The weekend, though a busy one, was filled with lots of laughter and smiles, while our Public Safety Family helped raise money for great causes.

Lieutenant Dan Besson
Van Buren Fire Department

A MESSAGE FROM SRO BIDWELL

Old man Winter has been banished for another year...at least in theory. After all, this is Michigan! Taking that into consideration, with the return of sunshine, warmer temperatures, green grass and flowers, we need to focus on seasonal safety. Soon children will be returning to the yards and streets to play. Now, more than ever, we need to be vigilant when driving, especially through neighborhoods.

Even though school is winding down, we need to remember sound school bus safety procedures. The following information is adapted from the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

The Safety City School Bus Check List

1. Getting to the bus stop

- Always get to the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is due to arrive.
- Do not run across the road to catch the bus.
- If you have to walk on the roads where there's no sidewalk, always walk against traffic. Stay off the road as much as possible.
- When crossing the street to get to the bus, always look left, then right, then left again. Cars will approach on the left first. If there are parked cars blocking your view, go to the nearest corner or cross walk.

2. Getting on the bus

- When the bus approaches, do the smart thing: step back and stand at least THREE GIANT STEPS away from the curb. That way the bus driver can pull up to the curb so you won't have to walk out in the street to get on.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says it's okay to board before stepping onto the bus.

3. While your riding the bus

- When the bus is moving, always stay in your seat.
- Let the bus driver concentrate on the road. Just imagine how hard it would be to pay attention to the road with 30 students TALKING, TALKING, TALKING all at once!!! Remember, the bus driver's job is to get you to and from school safely.

4. Getting off the bus

- When you leave the bus, use the handrail. It'll help you avoid a crash if you stumble.
- (Now this is really important!) Make sure there's nothing sticking out on you (your clothes, the hood of your coat, keychains, etc) or your backpack (straps, drawstrings, or anything else) that could get caught in the handrail on the bus or the bus door.

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the sidewalk (or along the side of the road) to a point that's at least 5 GIANT STEPS ahead of the bus before you cross. Be sure that the bus driver can see you, and you can see the bus driver.

In addition to the above safety guidelines, I would like to suggest that a parent wait with their child at the bus stop and greet them there upon their return home if at all possible. Elementary aged school children should always be met by a responsible adult or older sibling. If you work, try to make arrangements with a trusted neighbor or friend who can watch your child before and after school and be there at bus time. Lastly, remember that by working together, we can all ensure the safety of our children.

As SRO I have been receiving many concerns about the congested conditions in school parking lots during drop off and pick up times. We all have schedules to keep and places to go, but remember that patience is the key. Delays are relatively short and can be shorter if we take into consideration those around us. Speak to your child about being ready to go at the end of the day and not "hanging out" with friends. Once your child is seatbelted in the car, proceed on your way so other parents can pick up their child. Driving while distracted, and inventing parking lot short cuts (like cutting through the grass or going the wrong way through a lot) are dangerous for everyone and can be illegal as well. Finally, when a police officer, staff member or school administrator asks you to move your car or tells you that you cannot park in a particular location, keep in mind that our goal is a simple one...keeping our school children safe!! Let's remember our common goal - SAFETY!

SRO Ryan Bidwell
Van Buren Public Safety

SENIOR CITIZEN SCAMS

The caller had a nice voice. He asked how the family was doing? How about the pets? Before the listener knew it, he was convinced to give the caller his social security and bank account numbers. Furthermore, he was persuaded to buy low cost, no strings attached life insurance policy which required a credit card number for the initial deposit. The caller assured him that even with poor returns on his current retirement investments, he could buy high yield investments which would provide him with lifetime security.

SENIOR CITIZEN SCAMS

Continued on Page Eleven

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued from Page Five

Attendees had an opportunity to tour this state of the art facility and ride in a prototype vehicle valued at \$1 million. The Board appreciates the economic investment Ricardo has made in Van Buren Township and wishes them many successful years of operation here.

In June 2003, we joined members of the Van Buren Public Schools community in congratulating retiring School Superintendent Larry Tabor for his many valued years of service and later that year, welcoming incoming Superintendent Peter Lazaroff as he takes the helm of this Class A school district. Those of us at Township Hall are very cognizant that the changes occurring in the township have impacted the school district and we strive to maintain good channels of communication with the Administration to assist them in their strategic planning endeavors. We also look forward to Superintendent Lazaroff's contributions as a member of the township's Local Development Finance Authority.



In 2002, the Township Board approved a Planned Residential Development Agreement between the township and Creative Land Design, Inc. for the construction of "Country Walk," a residential development located along Martinsville and

Savage Roads. The agreement provided for the conveyance of about 31 acres of land owned by the developer to the township. This land, which includes the historic Riggs homestead, is located at the intersection of Huron River Drive and Martinsville Road. How best to develop that site was the topic of a visioning session hosted in July by the Recreation Committee and McKenna & Associates, the township's planning consultants. Visioning session attendees were separated into three groups with each group being asked to create their idea of how that land should be developed into a park.

The results were interesting with some suggestions being similar such as walking paths and benches and other reflecting some unique amenities. The results of the visioning session will lead to a master plan for Riggs Heritage Park to guide the transformation of that land to a park that is welcome and used, and hopefully, to a restoration of the old farmhouse. It is my understanding that the Rotary Foundation remains committed to providing some funding to assist in the restoration of the home and barn.

In September 2003, the fourth Home Tour, featuring the efforts of 60 volunteers and the homeowners to showcase six lakeside homes in the Belleville/Van Buren area, was held as a fundraiser for the Belleville Area Historical Society. 370

attendees were able to view many beautiful local residences and the Society raised \$5,040 that will be used to support the work of the Society. The Historical Society has decided that this well-received cultural event will be held on a bi-annual basis to ensure community interest and adequate preparation time. As for me, I can hardly wait for 2005!

The township's annual Trick or Treat at Township Hall was held just before Halloween. Several hundred young ghosts and goblins participated in this safe and free event with much of the candy being donated by area businesses. If you were one of

those who contributed candy or volunteered to help pass it out, our heartfelt thanks.

The township's annual Household Hazardous Waste Day was held in October with over 300 cars entering the Environmental Quality facility to properly dispose of household waste considered hazardous. EQ sponsors this service free for Van Buren residents and shares our objective of a safer environment by preventing hazardous waste from being discarded along with non-hazardous waste as could happen absent this collection day.

Every year, the township is required to report to the Wayne County Department of Environment an Annual Municipality Solid Waste Stream Report. For 2003, the township reported that of the township's 9,867 households that receive curbside pick-up, roughly 2.26 pounds of waste per person per day was generated. This amount does not include bulk waste, commercial or industrial waste streams. Further, the report indicates that residents recycled slightly more waste than in 2002, with materials that were recycled increasing by .31% to a total of 22.7% material (recycleables, compost/yard waste) that would otherwise go into landfills being recycled. Further, Waste Management, Inc., whose sanitary landfill, Woodland Meadows, is located at Hannan and Van Born Roads in Van Buren informed the township that less than 8% of the waste landfilled at that facility comes from Canada.

Waste Management is the same company who provides free toters and free curbside garbage, recycling and composting pick-up to township residents per the terms of the Host Community Agreement. Absent the Agreement, these services would cost residents about four mills or \$2.6 million per year, or \$262 per household per year. The Agreement also provides a number of other financial considerations to the township including a percentage of tipping fees, annual royalties for public safety, recreation and environmental services and

the free annual fireworks display held every summer. The Landfill Fund helps augment general fund revenues for providing township services, particularly public safety service, in Van Buren.

At an October Board meeting, the Board approved entering into a contract with Kelly and Stone, for providing an evaluation of the Department of Public Safety. The primary objectives of the study are to reassess the feasibility of our nominally consolidated Public Safety Department and whether it should remain so, and to offer suggestions for improving upon the service provided. Bill Kelly, the Police Chief of Abington Township, Pennsylvania, and Tom Stone, Executive Director of the FBI's Law Enforcement Executives Development Association, have spent considerable time in the Department interviewing and meeting with employees, Board and Public Safety Committee members, and members of the community. They have also been reviewing a variety of documents and information to better understand how the department provides public safety services to the community. The Board is anticipating their report in early 2004.

The Fred C. Fischer Library celebrated its 50th year of existence in November with library staff hosting a celebration of this momentous achievement. The 220 attendees, many of whom were attired in 1950's garb including varsity jackets and poodle skirts, were treated to a variety of delectables including punch and a celebratory cake, and enjoyed "dancin' in the stacks" to the tune of the Steve Nardella Band. Improvements in library service that occurred in 2003 can be attributed to a change in the funding formula agreed upon by the three communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren. The new formula provided additional funding to hire another librarian to assist with programming and to permit the library to open two hours earlier in the mornings, Mondays-Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Tot time, a new program for children ages 2-3 1/2 years, also commenced in 2003.



Wrapping up 2003 and certainly a highlight of the year, September Days Senior Center held their annual holiday dinner dance with a record breaking 430 attendees! The gym was packed nearly to overflowing as guests enjoyed an evening of fine food, fine conversation, dancing and, of course, a visit by Mr. and Mrs. Claus. September Days Senior Center membership reached an all time high of 1,550 members and is a testament to the many valued skills of Senior Director Linda Combs and her dedicated team of senior volunteers, 150 of whom were recognized for their efforts earlier in the year.

So what can you anticipate in 2004? First and foremost, a continued dedication to providing you with high quality public service, whether it's new recreational offerings, professional public safety or a friendly "hello" from our water meter reader. The township's 2004 general fund budget reflects a less than 3% increase over that of 2003 and is set at \$10,832,260. With annual growth at about 18%, this 3% increase in budgeted operating costs is modest. The General Fund budget reflects most of the services you receive from the township including administrative services such as those provided by the Clerk's, Treasurer's and my offices, police and fire protection; environmental oversight, and code enforcement. It also includes funding for parks and recreation, senior services, animal control, and building inspection services. While the potential exists for continued cuts to be made to state shared revenue and with other revenues the township receives dependent upon our national and state economies, you have our pledge to be ever mindful of your tax dollar and to use that money as wisely and effectively as possible.

We anticipate the economic climate of Michigan will continue to impact upon the township as the State grapples with a budget shortfall of \$1.3 billion and the loss of 33,000 jobs in December alone. With respect to development, can you anticipate more building occurring? I believe so, however, likely at a lower volume than in past years. I think a slow down of new development may be a good thing as we continue to monitor legislation that impacts upon the property rights of landowners. We will continue to watch development trends to ensure that as property develops, it is well managed. As I've said numerous times before, development and regulating growth is not as easy as "just say no." In fact, that answer would not be responsible or mindful of the many laws that exist to protect the rights of property owners. However, the township will continue to stay abreast of methods by which we can manage that growth with such tools as our master land use plan, zoning classifications and ordinances such as our Planned Residential Development (PRD) ordinance that regulate the appearance and aesthetics of development, densities, open space, and ability to provide appropriate infrastructure.

We look forward to finalizing the townships first water distribution and sanitary sewer systems master plans. These plans will take into account the current regulations and guidelines of federal and state agencies, and will provide a long-term approach for managing these two essential infrastructure systems. Indeed, this Board is proud of our efforts to develop these two master plans because they've never before

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued on Page Ten

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2003

Continued from Page Nine

existed and because they will complement the land use master plan. These master plans will serve as valuable planning tools for the next several years.

Did you know that despite several years of ever-improving fire protection and building codes including significant advances in fire-suppression technology, fire is still the largest single cause of insured property loss in America? While the installation of commercial sprinkler systems and residential smoke detectors have improved upon fire safety, fire losses remain costly; with more than \$122.9 billion in losses for personal and commercial property combined since 1991!

That's why the Board and DDA are excited about the prospects of commencing construction of new fire facilities in 2004. These capital improvements to replace small, outdated buildings 40 and 70 years old have been discussed for many years, over 10 years in the case of the DDA, so having them actually come to fruition would be quite an achievement. While not the same number or scope of facility improvements we proposed in 2002, the result could be two new, modern facilities, capable of housing the equipment one needs today to provide service. Further, the southern facility would be located in a more geographically desirable location, better centered in the southern part of the township at the intersection of Sumpter and Hull Roads which we anticipate should improve response times. As was said earlier, when you said "no," we listened and downsized these capital improvements. Nonetheless, these facilities would be able to accommodate the equipment needs of today, would provide appropriate training and public meeting rooms, and would benefit the community. They are another indication of our dedication to providing quality public service to the community.

In addition to new fire stations, the Board is anticipating crafting a workable solution in collaboration with the men and women who comprise the fire department to improve upon fire service in Van Buren. Already several positive discussions between management and the union have taken place with respect to developing a 20-hour per day weekly schedule for staffing one of the fire stations with our paid-call "volunteer" fire fighters to supplement our traditional method of providing service. I remain confident this improvement will be implemented and you will be the beneficiary with lowered response times and an improved contingent of fire fighters available to provide fire safety service.

Finally, the Board is anticipating receiving an evaluation of the Department of Public Safety from Kelly & Stone, the professionals hired by the township in October 2003, to evaluate the structure and operations of the department. The efforts of Kelly & Stone have won many accolades from those most directly involved in the study, namely the employees,

police officers and fire fighters, of the department. Admittedly, the Board and staff could and does make decisions about department structure and operations without consultants. However, the objective observations of Mr. Kelly and Mr. Stone have been refreshing and eye openers for many of us. In concert with their efforts, it has become apparent that the Board, the public and department personnel all share an objective that public safety service is of high quality and effective. Once their study is complete, the Board can begin the task of finding a suitable individual to take over leadership of the department. Until then, the community can count on the combined efforts on Acting Director Smolen and Lt. Brooks to ensure the department continues to provide professional services to you.

The Recreation Department intends to improve upon their offerings with new events such as Women's Month Celebration, Awesome Adventures Winter and a Pre-Marshmallow Drop Pancake Breakfast scheduled for 2004. The Department is also kicking off a new day camp this summer entitled "Tween Camp" and geared for those not so young, not so old 11-12 year olds. Already membership in recreational activities is 20% higher this year as compared to last so if you've not taken advantage of the many classes and activities offered by the Department, I would encourage you to do so. Remember, Van Buren Park is open year round for your enjoyment.

The Environmental Department will be hosting a Lake Expo in 2004. The Expo, geared to lakefront property owners, will provide information and suggestions for helping us keep Belleville Lake the beautiful and healthy natural amenity that it is. Representatives from the MDEQ along with vendors who provide services and products of interest to lakefront residents will be on hand to answer questions and provide information. Township staff will have a variety of handouts on preventing lake pollution, erosion control and other environmental matters.

We look forward to the opening of Walgreen's, the submission of site plans for a Target, new houses in Mission Pointe on the Lake, and the sounds of kids playing in the park. Take the time to visit French Landing Park and partake in the beautiful view of Belleville Lake and the new playscape. The Senior Garden area at Quirk Park should be ready in time for summer visitors.

Van Buren Township will continue to maintain cooperative relations with neighboring communities as demonstrated by jointly funding with the City of Belleville and Sumpter Township library services and the D.A.R.E. program, and in the case of Belleville and Van Buren, the Belleville Area Museum. We are mindful that good communication with County, State and Federal officials and agencies is necessary so that

our voice is heard when decisions are made that affect this community.

This Township Board also pledges continued open communication with the public. Look for questions related to service being posed on the township's web site www.vanburen-mi.org. While not the science of more formal polling, the answers you provide will be given consideration as we make decisions affecting municipal service. You can continue to look to the quarterly *Lake Ledger* as a source of information about the many and varied services provided in our township as well as VBT 12 which provides a variety of programming plus a bulletin board containing notices of public meetings and other events. Keep in mind that all of the departments are only a phone call, or e-mail away and that most documents are public. We know that serving you is our job.

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, the department directors and everyone else at Township Hall who endeavors to provide service to you, I pledge our continued focus on quality, effective service with a watchful eye on the bottom line. We are well aware that it takes every person at Township Hall, from the field crews and clerical staff, from the department directors to the Board, and with your cooperation and support, to provide the municipal services that help in making this community a good place to work, recreate or raise a family. Ours is a vibrant community, one that values family and friends, hard work and looking out for one's neighbor. I think the words of Henry Ford capture the spirit of this community. "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." My best wishes for health, happiness and prosperity in 2004.

Cindy C. King
Township Supervisor

SENIOR CITIZEN SCAMS

Continued from Page Seven

According to the U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. Attorney General, telemarketing fraud is a \$40 billion epidemic in the U.S. alone. The majority of the victims are senior citizens. Pennsylvania (the State with the second largest concentration of senior citizens) experiences more telemarketing fraud than anywhere else in the nation.

Most of the Michigan senior citizens who become victims are conservative investors who rely on their investment to supplement their social security. Many are afraid they will outlive their source(s) of income and will take any measure to stretch whatever resources they have. It is this fear that many fraud criminals prey upon. Those who have been defrauded feel foolish and frustrated. They are too embarrassed

to ask for help. They don't want anyone to think they can't take care of themselves.

Many of these scams operate out of another country. It is nearly impossible to prosecute or regulate these swindlers. A note of extra caution: a caller advises that a supposed "toll free" number should be called to obtain information on an extraordinary investment opportunity. This scam operates out of the Dominican Republic. The area code is "809", but calls to this number are \$25.00 per minute. Some people have been charged more than \$1,000 for a single telephone call!

Stolen identity is another increasing problem. Key pieces of someone's identifying information, including social security, credit card numbers or even mothers' maiden names are obtained. This information enables the identity thief to take over a financial account, make credit card purchases or apply for loans. One important precaution is to shred any pre-approved credit applications you receive. Save all credit card receipts and match them with your monthly bills. Should identity theft occur, call the three Credit Bureau Fraud units listed below and ask that your accounts be marked with fraud alerts.

Helpful hints to avoid being a victim of scams:

Be alert to fraud baits:

foreign lotteries, low-cost vacations, sure-fire investments requiring an immediate decision and front-door payment pickups, credit repair schemes and "work at home" offers.

Be skeptical of phrases such as:

You have been specially selected; Free bonus if you buy...; Tax free or risk free; Trust me-you just won the big money; Limited time offer...;You have to make up your mind now; offer will not be repeated.

Protect yourself:

Ask for information in writing. Do not act quickly. Check a caller's record with the Better Business Bureau or the Postal Inspector, or simply hang up the phone.

Never give out information over the phone unless you initiated the call (i.e. credit card number, social security number, bank account number).

You can:

- Check with financial or legal advisors.
- Check the background of a charitable organization.
- Never send money by messenger or package delivery firms.
- Make sure you know the charge(s) for any toll calls.

Remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

SENIOR CITIZENS SCAMS

Continued on Page Eighteen

Recreation Program - Spring/Summer 2004

Tots of Fun

This program is designed for children to expand their motor and social skills in a nonstructural, safe and fun environment. Tots of Fun is simply a drop-in playtime for children ages 2-5.

Parent or guardian must accompany children at all times.



Mondays & Wednesdays
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Van Buren Residents = \$2.00/child
Non-Residents = \$3.00/child

K-9 Obedience Class

Join dog trainer of 40 years experience, Lila Warner, for **six weeks** of one on one training. What to bring: your dog, a training collar and a six foot leash. Dogs must be six months or older.

We teach you to train your own pet under our supervision. Must bring proof of rabies, distemper, and a recent proof of negative fecal report to the first class. Your dog's tags must be up to date as well.

Only 18 and older can train.
7:30 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, June 1 - July 6
Tuesdays, July 13 - August 17
Tuesdays, August 24 - September 28

Classes are held at the Belleville High School (small gymnasium)

Van Buren Resident = \$30.00
Non-Resident = \$35.00



Get Up & Get Active!

Did you know - "the number of overweight children in the United States is double what was reported in the 1980's, and the increase spans the country in all age, race and gender groups". **source:** Fitness Management

This is why Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department, Michigan Recreation & Parks Association, Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Jazzercise, Inc. and Belleville Chiropractic Wellness Center are teaming up to provide information and activities to get youth up and active!

Every other Saturday starting May 15 - August 14

Youth ages 7 & up are encouraged to sign up to take advantage of this **Free** unique program!

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Let us know if you will need transportation to the Community Center. Van Buren staff will pick up/drop off your child on these Saturdays.

Health Menu includes:

Feelin' Good Fitness Day!
Striking Out Sports Day!
Activating an Active Mind Day!
Relay For Life Day!
Nuts about Nature Day!
Have a Heart Healthy Food Day!
Very Rewarding Volunteer Day!
Get Active Family Fun Day!



Highlights include: Free swimming, canoeing, scavenger hunt, cooking.

Introduction to T'ai Chi

T'ai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art designed to strengthen the body, relax the mind, and enhance internal energy. T'ai chi improves balance, flexibility, muscle strength, and blood circulation throughout the body.

This course will cover basic t'ai chi movements along with breathing, relaxation and energy exercises.

Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

Ages: 16 and up



Spring Session: Fridays, May 7 - June 11
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (6 weeks)

Summer Session Fridays, July 16 - August 20
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (6 weeks)

Van Buren Residents = \$10.00
Non-Residents = \$15.00

Sensational Scrapbooking

Saturday, May 15
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

“The Road of Life: Remembering Days, Capturing Moments” is the theme of our National Scrapbook Day event this year. You’ll enjoy your album-making journey along the tour that’s set before you regardless of which route you take. Beginners and children welcome. Scrapbook supplies available.

Van Buren Residents = \$15
 Non-Residents = \$20



Saturday, June 5
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Scrapbooking punch pizzazz. We’ll make boarders, critters and unique shapes with the circle, square, hexagon and heart punches. Card-makers, beginners and children welcome. Supplies included.

Van Buren Residents = \$20
 Non-Residents = \$25



Hershey's Track and Field Youth Program

Local Competition

Hershey Track and Field is a physical fitness participation event for the youth of North America. Van Buren Township Recreation Department is inviting all youth between the ages of 9-14 to come out to the:

Belleville High School Track
Local Competition: Sunday, June 27
Starting at 12:00 p.m.
Cost: FREE!

Youth will compete in various events such as 50 meter, 100 meter, 200 meter, 400 meter, 800 meter dashes, short jump, long jump and softball throw. One winner from each age bracket and gender will advance on to compete against other agencies at the State Finals in Holt, Michigan on Friday, July 9.

Van Buren Township will provide transportation to the State Finals. Participants are required to bring a sack lunch and water bottle on this day.



Tae Kwon Do

8 and up



Tae Kwon Do is a Martial Art from Korea. This class is designed for students of all levels, white belt through black belt. In addition to learning a scientific form of self defense students will learn values such as self respect, self control, and increased self esteem. Through training in class students will speed reflexes, increase coordination, and develop a physically fit body.

Testing dates will be announced throughout the class. Results of the test will be given during class time, if you are not present to receive the testing results, you may pick up results at our recreation office.

Mini Spring Session (8 weeks)

Tues. & Thurs. April 27 - June 17
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Van Buren Residents = \$30.00
 Non-Residents = \$45.00

Summer Session (10 weeks)

Tues. & Thurs. June 22 - August 26
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Van Buren Residents = \$45.00
 Non-Residents = \$60.00

Leisure Pursuits, Inc. Amusement Park Tickets Sold here...

Support your community:
 Purchase your discount amusement park tickets at your
 Recreation Department!

Amusement Park	Ages	Price	Savings
Cedar Point	Child 3 & Under	\$24.50	\$0.45
	Adult 3-59, 48" & over	\$33.50	\$10.45
	Ride/Slide (2 day)	\$63.50	\$6.45
Detroit Zoo	Child 2-18		
	Adult 19-61		



*Prices for Detroit Zoo TBA Call: (734) 699-8921.

Cash ONLY for payment of discount tickets - NO checks!

Walk Michigan Win a trip to Mackinac Island

This is a free statewide non-competitive walking and fitness program for all ages through MRPA (Michigan Recreation & Park Association).

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Starting every Wednesday May 5 - August 11 you can simply walk your way to earning tickets. The more you walk the more tickets you earn to put in a drawing to win an all expense paid trip to Mackinac Island. The trip to Mackinac Island will take place over Labor Day weekend for the annual walk across the "Big Mac".

Walk Michigan will be held in two places this year, Lower Huron Metro Park and Quirk Park. Even though this is a free event, a fee will be charged for those to enter Lower Huron Metro Park. Quirk Park will not have an entrance fee.

- * Participants will not be able to start walking until Van Buren Recreation staff is present. You must check in with staff prior to walking so we can keep track of how far you walked.
- * Participants can only walk up to three miles every Wednesday to earn tickets.
- * Walking the whole 3 miles each Wednesday will increase your opportunity to win the trip.
- * Only one winner will be drawn.



Summer/Fall Ball



Softball registration for:

Returning Teams starts Tuesday, May 4th. New Team starts Tuesday, June 1. Deadline to register is Friday, July 2. A late fee of \$50 will apply if league money is not turned in by July 2.

Tuesday Recreational = \$460.00 2 umpires
Wednesday Competitive = \$460.00 2 umpires
Friday Co-ed = \$440.00 1 umpire

Managers meeting - July 20 at 6:30 p.m.

(Fees include 8 weeks of games, 1 or 2 umpires, lights, maintenance, double elimination tournament, t-shirts for 1st place and trophies.)

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

June 12 - 13

10:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (24 hour event)
Belleville High School Track

This event is organized to raise awareness and funds for the American Cancer Society. This is a community event with teams of walkers from schools, businesses, families, churches, clubs, etc. All you have to do is form a team of 10 or more. Try to earn money for the society using numerous fundraisers. The day of the event you and your team will take turns walking on the track for 24 hours.

Various activities for all ages will be available throughout this event.

Why get involved? "Because one in three Americans will get cancer in their lifetime." The Relay For Life gives everyone in our community an opportunity to fight back - together we will be able to make a difference in the battle against cancer.

For more information Email: Renay Weiss at renay.weiss@cancer.org or call us at (734) 699-8921.

Jazzercise

A 60-65 minute dance exercise class that includes warmup, 30-35 minute aerobic workout, weight training and stretching. Now with fresh new moves and new music it's pure motivation. Please call Patti Rukkila for class information at (734) 340-3686.

Ongoing, Mondays & Wednesdays

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
(childcare \$2.00)
and

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
and

Ongoing, Saturdays 9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

4 week EFT (electronic funds transfer) = \$35.00
8 week (cash or check) = \$80.00
Walk-in = \$8.00

****Register with Jazzercise ****



Registration/Waiver Form

Participant's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Age, if under 18 _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

In case of Emergency - person should be available during program hours

Name	Relationship	Phone
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Activity	Day and Time of Class	Fee

of classes _____ **Amount Paid** _____ **Receipt #** _____

I hereby accept all responsibility for and will not hold the Charter Township of Van Buren, Van Buren Township Board of Trustees and/or Van Buren Parks and Recreation Department or its employees liable for any loss, damage, or injury to property or any person as a result of involvement in Van Buren Township's recreation classes or programs.

In the event of sudden illness, accident, or injury which may occur while myself or my child is participating in an activity supervised by Van Buren Township employees, when neither the parents or guardian can be contacted, I hereby give my consent for emergency medical treatment as shall be necessary under the circumstances by any physician licensed under the laws of the State of Michigan.

I understand that the Township may take photographs for use in Township publications and news releases without my written consent.

I have read the above waiver/release of liability and understand it.

Signature (Parent or Guardian, if not over 18)

 Date

Please Mail to: Van Buren Recreation Department, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Twp., MI 48111

HOME IRRIGATION SAFETY

Don't let your Irrigation System Contaminate the Water you Drink

BACKFLOW PREVENTION ALTERNATIVES FOR HOME IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Irrigation systems make watering lawns and gardens easier and save time, BUT, water that may be contaminated by weed killers and/or fertilizers can be backsiphoned (backflow) into your drinking water. Irrigation systems not protected by approved backflow prevention assemblies could endanger the health of a household, neighborhood or community.

ALL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, new or existing...MUST BE EQUIPPED with an approved backflow prevention assembly. Only properly installed, state-approved backflow prevention assemblies meet the plumbing code and provide health protection for your family and neighbors. Your local water utility can give you a free list of state-approved assemblies and certified testers.

Please Note: ALL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS supplied by public water systems REQUIRE A PLUMBING PERMIT before installation. All piping and materials upstream of (before) the backflow prevention assembly must be of a type which is approved by the STANDARD PLUMBING CODE.

THREE TYPES OF BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLIES:

FREEZE PROTECTION

All backflow prevention assemblies need to be protected from freezing. Here are three methods used to protect backflow preventors:

- Shut off water supply to backflow preventer. Open both inlet and outlet valves. Open all test cocks. (This method only works on those systems that are not being used in winter months.)
- Leave your water running continuously.
- Wrap your backflow preventer with insulation. Usually wrapping alone does not protect the assembly unless some type of heat is provided. (Heat tape, light bulb, etc.)

PVB...PRESSURE VACUUM BREAKER ASSEMBLY

- Only one PVB required to serve the whole system; control valves can be located downstream of (after) the PVB. (Maximum size = 2").
- PVB's must be installed a minimum of 1 foot (12") above the highest point of water they serve.
- PVB's must be tested by a Certified Backflow Assembly Tester...at the time of installation...annually...when moved or repaired.
- No chemical or fertilizer may be introduced into an irrigation system equipped with PVB's.
- No pumps or back pressure on downstream side of (after) a PVB.

DCVA...DOUBLE CHECK VALUE ASSEMBLY

- Only one DCVA required to serve the whole system; control valves can be located downstream of the DCVA.
- DCVA should be installed a minimum of one foot (12") above ground level.
- Some water suppliers may allow the DCVA to be installed below ground, check for proper clearance on all sides of the assembly.
- DCVA must be tested by a Certified Backflow Assembly Tester...when installed...annually...when removed.
- No chemical or fertilizer may be introduced into an irrigation system equipped with DCVA's.

RPBA...REDUCED PRESSURE BACKFLOW ASSEMBLY

- Only one RPBA required to serve the whole system; control valves can be located downstream of the RPBA.
- RPBA's must be installed a minimum of one foot (12") above ground level.
- RPBA's must be tested by a Certified Backflow Assembly Tester...when installed...annually...when moved or repaired.
- In an RPBA equipped system, fertilizer and other agricultural chemicals may be introduced down stream of (after) the RPBA.

Important information for Do-It-Yourself Irrigation System Installers

Installation of lawn irrigation systems and backflow prevention devices require a plumbing permit. Testing of backflow prevention devices must be performed by a State-certified backflow prevention tester. Please contact the Van Buren Water Department at (734) 699-8925 for further information.

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IRRIGATION SAVINGS

Homes with automatic sprinkler systems use more than twice as much water on average than homes that manually irrigate with a hose and sprinkler (Mayer, et.al. 1999)

An automatic sprinkler system is almost always the largest use of water in a home. If you're looking for a way to save water it makes sense to focus on the big uses. It doesn't get any bigger than the sprinkler system. Over-irrigation costs you money in two primary ways:

- Over-irrigation unnecessarily drives up your water & sewer bill and is a waste of resources.
- Over-irrigation stresses the water distribution system, which can lead to low water pressures which require costly upgrades to meet the peak demand.

From a horticulture standpoint, over-irrigation occurs much too often. However, it is most prevalent in rainy periods when irrigation schedules have not been revised to meet the current

weather conditions. Over-irrigation causes two problems with your lawn and garden:

- Over-irrigation pushes water beyond the root zone and is wasted. This occurs most notably in the case of turf grass.
- Over-irrigation, in general, degrades plant health by keeping the roots too wet.

Over-irrigation also causes excessive run-off, which contributes to environmental pollution. As the water runs off your lawn it carries pollutants with it such as soils, fertilizers, and pesticides. This run-off is not treated and runs through the storm water system, directly into nearby lakes and streams. The following environmental problems have been documented as a result of excessive run-off from residential lawns:

- Sediments from soil erosion can clog storm sewers, fill in storm water detention ponds, cause sedimentation and flow disruptions in streams, and smother fish and other aquatic creature habitat.
- Excess nutrients from fertilizers can cause algae blooms and other aquatic plants to grow out of control.
- Pesticides in the run-off can lead to health problems in wildlife that live in and around our waterways and can also lead to pollution of public drinking water supplies.

IRRIGATION SAVINGS

Continued on Page Eighteen

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING SEWER BACKUPS OR BASEMENT FLOODING CLAIMS

Michigan Statute, Act 222 Public Acts of 2001*, clarifies municipal liability for sewer backups. A key provision of the statute requires that a person seeking compensation for property damage or physical injury must file a written claim within 45 days of the event.

If you experience an overflow or backup of a sewage disposal system or storm water system, you must file a written claim with the Van Buren Township Water Department within 45 days after the overflow or backup was discovered. Notice must be mailed to Van Buren Township Water Department, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren, MI 48111. Failure to provide the required notice will prevent recovery of damages.

Contact the Van Buren Water Department at (734) 699-8925 immediately upon discovery of an overflow or backup. Like you, the Water Department considers a sewer backup or basement flooding an emergency, and will respond to your call day or night, holidays and weekends.

*The full text of P.A. 222 of 2001 is available on our web site: www.vanburen-mi.org under Departments, Water & Sewer or copies are available upon request by calling (734) 699-8925.

IRRIGATION SAVINGS

Continued from Page Seventeen

There are a number of ways to reduce outdoor water use and automatic irrigation:

- Convert turf grass to low-water use landscaping.
- Improve your irrigation schedule by reducing the run times.
- Adjust your sprinkler heads to avoid hard surfaces like driveways and sidewalks.
- Install a rain shutoff device.
- Harvest rainwater in a rain barrel.

Below is the form that will help you calculate how much water you are applying to your lawn. This process may take a little while, but it will give you a good idea how much water you are using and how much that is costing you on your water & sewer bill.

1. Locate your water meter (typically in the basement) and record the current meter reading. Enter this number in space A below.
2. Run your lawn irrigation system through one complete cycle.
3. Record the new meter reading and enter this number in space B below.
4. Complete the calculations as indicated to determine your cost of lawn irrigation.

B Meter reateing AFTER watering	A Meter reading BEFORE watering	Water Consumption (May be in gallons or thousands of gallons- check your meter)	Only if your meter reads in gallons
	-	=	/ 1000 =

Thousands of Gallons Used	Cost per 1000 gal.	Cost of 1 day of lawn irrigation	Days in Bill Cycle (assumes you water everyday)	Total (3-month) cost of lawn irrigation
X	\$3.15	= \$	90	\$

Improving irrigation efficiency is a win-win situation all around. You save money on your water bill and your landscape gets the water it needs without waste. What could be better?

For more information, we recommend the following web site:

<http://www.h2ouse.org>

SENIOR CITIZEN SCAMS

Continued from Page Eleven

Coalition Contacts:

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

1001 California Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15290
(412) 359-7900
(800) 846-4677

Report Identity Theft to:

Equifax Fraud Bureau

(800) 525-6285

Experian Solutions (formerly TRW)

(888) 397-3742

Trans Union Credit Bureau

(800) 680-7289



Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox's web site: <http://www.ag.state.mi.us/> has a link labeled Helping Seniors. The page contains valuable information on using the Internet as well as general information for seniors including links to: Michigan Access to Services for Seniors, AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), Caregiver Alliance, Internet Resources for the Aging, National Aging Information Center, National Council on the Aging and Online Resources for Financial and Retirement Planning.

Sgt. Gregory Laurain
Investigative Division
(734) 699-8930

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

The Township's Assessment Department has completed its last step in the preparation for finalization and certification of the 2004 Assessment Roll. We now immediately begin the process of compiling data for the 2005 Assessment Roll. During the past ten (10) years Van Buren has seen a significant increase in parcel growth (nearly 41%) and the ever-changing assessment laws and procedural modifications have expanded the assessor's duties and responsibilities greatly.

While Wayne County Assessment and Equalization is the certifying assessing officer for submission of the Assessment Roll to the Michigan State Tax Commission for the State Equalization process in May; the Van Buren Township Assessment Department works "hand in hand" with the County to provide effective customer service to you and assist in monitoring the Township's records. Van Buren maintains and is responsible for things such as property record cards "field sheets" for over 8,000 parcels, keeping tax maps updated, and is part of the review and approval process for lot splits/combinations. We also submit lot splits/combinations to Wayne County for completion, assign addresses, perform

HONOR AND PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY NAME AT THE BELLEVILLE AREA MUSEUM

As you've strolled Belleville's Main Street sidewalks, you may have noticed the names etched into some of the bricks.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have your family name preserved on a brick at the site of the Belleville Area Museum?

The Belleville Area Historical Society is continuing its sale of personalized bricks to be installed this spring/summer in the sidewalks which surround the museum (on Main, Fourth, and Roys Streets).

This is your opportunity to preserve your name or that of a loved one at our historical museum. A brick can also be engraved to mark the date of a significant event in your life, such as a wedding, birth of a baby, etc.

The purchase of a brick is a perfect gift for family and friends. At your request, we can send a gift certificate of purchase to the person you are honoring.

Cost per brick: \$50

Your message must fit within the spaces provided (Two lines at 12 spaces each)

If you would like to preserve your name in Belleville area history, please call the museum for an order form (734) 697-1944.

Funds raised from this endeavor will be used to support the projects and programs of the museum.

Patches and Patterns



During the month of March, the Belleville Area Museum presented an exhibit "Patches and Patterns: A Celebration of Quilts." 118 quilts were displayed throughout the museum.

2005 - BELLEVILLE'S CENTENNIAL YEAR

In 1905, the little rural community of Belleville incorporated as a village, and from this point forward functioned as the commercial and social center of Van Buren Township.

Next year in 2005, Belleville will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and to mark this historic event, the Belleville Area Museum and Historical Society plan to open a series of special exhibits. To be entitled "100 Years of Community Life," the exhibits will focus on several fundamental community elements which the city and township share, including the school system, post office, library, and lake, as well as several historic civic organizations.

The museum is accepting the loan or donation of memorabilia for this exhibit, including photographs and newspaper articles, old library cards, 1905 calendar, old post cards & stamps, school report cards, class lists, etc. We are also seeking documents and items representing the history of long-time community organization, including membership rosters, programs, scrapbooks, tokens, etc.

If you have any artifacts you wish to loan or donate to our Centennial exhibit, please contact the museum at (734) 697-1944.

Diane Wilson
Museum Director



**Motor US-12
Uncovering Unique Auto Stories Project**

**Share an Automotive History
Photograph and Story Day**

at the

Belleville Area Museum

405 Main Street, Belleville

Wednesday, May 12 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Southeast Michigan is rich with history of how automobile manufacturing and the automobile culture changed our country and the world. Yet, the places and stories of this auto history are quickly fading. The Motor US-12 Project is looking for help in their efforts to preserve these valuable pieces of automobile related history.

Please visit the museum on **May 12** and bring your photos, documents, and memories to share. Project volunteers will be on hand to digitally record your images and stories, copies of which will be given to our museum.

The Motor US-12 Project is funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

www.belleville.lib.mi.us***New Hours:***

Mon-Thurs 10a.m.-9p.m., Fri & Sat 10a.m.-5p.m.

April Showers Bring...

...a new online catalog and circulation system to our library. Our current automation system, shared by 56 libraries and branches in The Library Network, has served us well over the past nine years. Migrating to the new system means moving more than 3 million records representing library materials and more than 560,000 records representing patrons.

The new system will have all of the features of our current system plus many added enhancements. Like our existing web catalog, the new catalog will allow you to view the holdings of all of the libraries in our shared system from home, place online holds, check your account, and renew materials online. In addition, the new catalog will be enhanced with pictures of book covers, reviews, and summaries.

Switching computer systems will be a major undertaking, so please pardon our dust while we make this transition. Beginning April 1, you will not be able to place requests online. Please call us (734) 699-3291 for assistance. Beginning May 2, YOU MUST BRING YOUR LIBRARY CARD in order to check out materials. We will not be able to look you up. Also, beginning May 2, the online "My Account" function will not be available. We anticipate "going live" with our new system on May 6. The ability to place holds will resume as soon as possible after May 6.

Great Parents. Great Start

Special programs for parents and children ages 0-5 will explore the many assets young children need to succeed. Have fun with your preschooler through songs, stories, and activities. The programs focus on positive themes such as reading for pleasure, creative stimulation, and service to others. Call the library for registration information (734) 699-3291.

Program Schedule

Wed., April 14, 7:00 p.m.	"In Home Adventures"
Sat., April 17, 11:00 a.m.	"In Home Adventures"
Wed., May 5, 7:00 p.m.	"Lets Take a Ride"
Sat., May 8, 11:00 a.m.	"Lets Take a Ride"
Wed., June 9, 7:00 p.m.	"Readers on the Open Range"
Sat., June 12, 11:00 a.m.	"Readers on the Open Range"

Pathways: Improving the Garden Journey with Janet Macunovich

Learn how to lay out, surface and furnish pathways in your landscape. Get plenty of ideas, tips and construction details for plotting a practical, graceful, beautiful path to take everyone and everything where it must go.

Janet Macunovich, a featured writer for the *Detroit News* and the *Michigan Gardener*, is a professional gardener and landscape designer whose own path through the garden spans thirty years.

This free program is on Wednesday evening, June 2, from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., and registration is required (734) 699-3291.

Discover New Trails...Read!

Summer Reading Program sign-up begins Monday, June 7. Programs for children grades 1-6 are scheduled each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. between June 22 and July 27. Read-To-Me programs for ages 3 1/2-6 will be held on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., June 23 - July 28. Be entertained and enlightened by special guests, including live animals, music, comedy, storytelling, and more!

Summer Reading Program Schedule

June 22	Mark Rosenthal - Animal Magic
June 29	Paws With a Cause - Service Dogs
July 6	Joel Tacey - Comedy & Variety Show
July 13	Kitty Donohoe - Stories and Songs
July 20	The Bubble Man - Amazing Bubble Creations
July 27	Awards Program & Refreshments

Read-to-Me Program Schedule

June 23	Drop-In Craft Day (2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)
June 30	Beverly Meyer - The Music Lady
July 7	Ming the Magnificent - Magic
July 14	Jacqueline Blake - Stories & Puppets
July 21	Geri's Jamboree - Music
July 28	The Farm Lady - Summer on the Farm

**For more information on library activities and events please call:
Fred C. Fischer Library at (734) 699-3291.**

TRASH GUIDELINES:

Homeowners of Brand New Homes:

Please call the Community Services Department at (734) 699-8926 to order your garbage container (toter) and recycle bin. You should receive them both within 2-3 weeks following your call.

Please use a 32 gallon or smaller container until you receive your toter. Boxes are not acceptable rubbish containers.

Toters and additional containers:

Please bag all items placed in toters or additional containers. Bagging the trash keeps your toters/containers cleaner and does not allow items to stick or freeze to bottom. **Please DO NOT place LOOSE TRASH in toters/containers or they will not be picked up.**

Additional containers must not exceed 32 gallons and must not weigh more than 50 lbs.

Damaged Containers:

Broken or damaged containers supplied by Waste Management may be replaced or repaired if necessary. Please call (734) 699-8926 to notify us if your container needs to be replaced or repaired.

Waste Management will only provide maintenance or replacement of cart due to normal wear and tear including broken wheels, worn out bottom, broken or bent front bar or lid damage.

Stolen Containers:

If your Waste Management toter is stolen or missing, you will need to contact Waste Management at (888) 937-2489 to acquire a new one at a cost of \$85.00. If you do not wish to purchase this container you may use a 32 gallon or smaller container at the curbside.

Holiday Pickup Schedule:

As holidays arrive the trash schedule is subject to change. Always set out your trash on your normal day. Waste Management will try to do two days in one in order to catch up the routes. We frequently receive calls when residents have not set their trash out on their normal day expecting Waste Management to be a day behind. The only day in which trash is collected a day later is for those whose trash day falls on the actual holiday ***not those that are the day following.***

All Homeowners:

Your trash must be set out the night prior to pickup day. Waste Management starts rubbish removal early and there is not a set schedule for the starting point of each route. Trash that is missed due to late set out will not be picked up until the following week - **NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

Special Pickups:

Refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners are the only items that need to be called in ahead for special pickups due to Freon. These items will be picked up by a different truck than the normal trash truck. Doors on refrigerators/freezers must be removed and the shelving units from inside must also be removed and properly disposed of in a rubbish container.

To schedule a special pickup, please call the Community Services Department at (734) 699-8926 **one day prior to pickup day.**

If you are moving:

Please leave the rubbish container and recycle bin that were provided by Waste Management on the property for the next homeowner as the cart remains the property of Waste Management.

Large Quantities of Trash:

All remodeling material or large amounts of rubbish must be taken to the landfill directly. As a Van Buren Township resident you have the option to utilize the landfill (Woodland Meadows) free of charge. This is a courtesy that is passed on to our homeowners. Please keep in mind that this ***privilege cannot be extended to contractors. Commercialized vehicles and/or commercialized jobs are prohibited.*** In order to utilize the above privilege you must provide a driver's license that reflects a Van Buren Township address when you enter the landfill. Yard waste and household waste must be kept separate.

Attention Mobile Home/Manufactured Home and Apartment residents:

If you wish to recycle, you may take your recycleables to the Woodland Meadows Recycling Center.

Woodland Meadows is located on the south side of Van Born Road just west of Hannan Road. The Landfill is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. To contact Woodland Meadows please call (734) 326-0993.

COMPOST GUIDELINES:

Brush



Bundle all brush that is less than 6" in diameter. Bundles must not weigh more than 50 lbs. Bundles must be no longer than 4 feet in length and 18" around. Brush larger than 6" in diameter must still be bundled, however, it is considered trash and will be picked up as such.

If your trash, yard waste, or recycling is not picked up by 4:00 p.m. on your regularly scheduled day, please call (734) 699-8926.

Compost season ends November 29 - no compost will be taken at the landfill or at curbside after that date.

Please be sure that all yard waste is set out at the curb tied and bundled, in the appropriate container, and properly labeled.

If you have any questions, please contact the Community Services Department at (734) 699-8926.

ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS:

Yard Waste Pick up **RESUMES**

The first full week in APRIL

Leaves and Grass Clippings

Leaves and grass clippings may either be placed in paper compost bags purchased at your local grocery store, or placed in a trash can with a compost sticker. Compost sticker must face the road.

Do not overload compost bags, and be sure to fold down the tops for easier lifting.

Do not use plastic bags!!



If you are using a can, it must have a yard waste sticker. Face the sticker toward the street and place the container 10 feet from your garbage. It should not be any larger than a 32 gallon can. 50 lb limit.

RECYCLING GUIDELINES:

Plastic

Bottles and Containers: Must be marked on the bottom with a 1 or 2 symbol. Butter tubs and trays from microwaveable foods are not acceptable.

Rinse and remove all caps.



Tin

Tin Cans: Remove all labels and rinse them out before placing in bin.

Aluminum: Containers and foil.

Glass

Bottles and Jars: Any color except brown. You do not have to peel the labels off or remove the little plastic rings that remain from twist off caps.

Rinse and remove all caps.



Please Recycle!



Paper



Newspapers: Including all inserts, advertisements, and magazines that are delivered with them.

White Paper: Including office paper, computer paper, and envelopes.

Brown Paper Bags: Keep them separate from your paper.

Cardboard

Cardboard: All cardboard boxes must be broken down (including moving boxes) into 3' x 3' bundles. Cardboard boxes are not acceptable rubbish containers.

**** No pizza boxes ****

Concerts in the Park

The Van Buren Park Concert Series will take place at Van Buren Park, located on the South I-94 Service Drive between Belleville and Rawsonville Roads. Each week we'll feature a different type of music for the whole family. Bring a blanket or a lawn chair and enjoy a variety of music. Daily park entry fee (\$2).

Concerts start at 7:30 p.m.

- July 7** Impact 7 (Motown, R&B)
- July 14** Jeremy Kittel and Garden of Souls
- July 21** Carl Vanover & Friends (Country)
- July 28** Rich Eddy's Rockin Oldies Band
- August 4** "Symphony in the Park"
In cooperation with the Belleville Area Council for the Arts.
- August 11** Don Middlebrook and Living Soul

Concert Series performers are subject to change



Township Meetings

- | | |
|---|---|
| Board Meetings:
1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. | Cable Commission:
2nd Thursday 7:00 p.m.
(Meets January, March, May, July, Sept & Nov, changes will be posted) |
| Work Study Meetings:
1st & 3rd Mondays 4:00 p.m. | Board of Zoning Appeals:
2nd Tuesday 7:00 p.m. |
| Environmental Commission:
2nd Wednesday 7:00 p.m. | Public Safety Committee:
2nd Tuesday 5:30 p.m. |
| Planning Commission: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7:30 p.m. | Recreation Committee:
2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
(Meets February, April, June, August, October & Dec, changes will be posted) |
| Water/Sewer Commission:
4th Monday 7:00 p.m. | Endowment Committee:
2nd Tuesday 1:00 p.m. |
| Downtown Devel. Authority:
2nd Tuesday 5:30 p.m. | |
| Local Devel. Finance Authority:
2nd Tuesday 2:00 p.m. | |

Board of Trustees

- Cindy C. King** (cking@vanburen-mi.org)
Supervisor 699-8910
- Joannie D. Payne** (jpayne@vanburen-mi.org)
Clerk 699-8909
- Sharry A. Budd** (sbudd@vanburen-mi.org)
Treasurer 699-8903
- Phillip Hart**
- John Herman**
- Jeffrey Jahr**
- Walter Rochowiak**
Trustees 699-8910

Township Departments

Public Safety

- Director of Public Safety 699-8930
- Police, Fire, Dispatch 699-8930
- Animal Control 699-8930
- Emergencies 9-1-1

Developmental Services

- Bryce Kelley, Planning & Economic Development Director 699-8913
- Patti Duha, Director of Water & Sewer 699-8944
- Ordinance Enforcement 699-8913
- Dan Swallow, Environmental Director 699-8913

Community Services

- Bruce Ross, Director of Recreation & Facilities . 699-8926
- Cable 699-8926
- Parks & Recreation 699-8921
- Linda Combs, Senior Director 699-8918
- September Days Senior Center 699-8918

Lake Ledger

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Editor:

Christina Harman
Community Services Department

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