

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER



Aging gracefully in Bloomfield Township

For John Bellefleur, it's watching the view of the sky through the west-facing windows of his house. For wife, Janice, it's that and a lot more. Both are long-time Bloomfield Township residents and find retirement in the Township easy.

"This community is very good, a perfect location," Janice said. With a fine view of the Forest Lake Country Club, and only a short distance from Square Lake Road and Telegraph, the Bellefleurs enjoy the amenities of a sedate neighborhood just minutes away from a bustling shopping area.

"We have a nice mix in the neighborhood," Janice said. She's 77 and a retired nurse. He's 82 and a former teacher. Both accept the limitations of movement that growing older can impose, but the Township makes it easier to get around. Both like to walk, and "the safety paths have served us well," John said. They make it especially easy to get to the nearby E.L. Johnson Nature Center where the Bellefleurs like to stroll when the weather is better. Before the arrival of the safety paths, walking on Franklin Road to get to the center was hazardous.

And while the Township can't take credit for this, the freeways are nearby, making more distant

travel easier. They both like to go to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and see Tiger games in Downtown Detroit, as well as visit other venues between here and there. There are also plenty of restaurants in the neighborhood.



John and Janice Bellefleur enjoy living in the Township

Another important quality of life factor for them, like many other senior residents, is the availability of medical services. "We're close to all the medical help we need," Janice said. (And more is on the way. See related article on page 5). "We have encountered various health issues," Janice said, so they appreciate being connected to the community and not isolated in a neighborhood.

One way they keep connected is by both serving on the advisory council of the Township Senior Center. They go back to the days when the Mature Minglers met at Wing Lake School, but the senior cen-

ter on the Township campus offers so much more. Janice is a member of a book club there and attends Italian Club meetings. She isn't Italian, but the club has excellent guest speakers and you don't have to be Italian to take part. "It's a lot of fun," she said.

John and Janice were married in 1988. Each was married before and each has three children. Janice's kids attended the Bloomfield Hills Schools, which she rated as "excellent."

Add to all of that fine police and fire services, and the Township stacks up well as a fine place to live, both agreed.

"We're just happy," John said. "We're both optimists who don't complain a lot."

The Bellefleurs exemplify the message the Township is hoping to promote to current residents and potential new senior residents: Bloomfield Township is a great place to grow older. In the coming months the Township will begin promoting the theme of "Aging in Place." The goal is to point out to current residents the fine quality of life that Bloomfield Township offers and maybe draw some folks from outside our borders to consider living here too.

After all, John, who is a former pilot and Air Force veteran, said, "You can't beat watching the playful clouds in the sunlit sky."



BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD 2015

ELECTED OFFICIALS

ADMINISTRATION

Leo Savoie, Supervisor
Janet Roncelli, Clerk
Dan Devine, Treasurer

TRUSTEES

David Buckley
Neal J. Barnett
Brian Kepes
Corinne Khederian

APPOINTED POSITIONS

PLANNING COMMISSION

Thomas Petinga, Chairman
Lisa Seneker, Vice Chairman
Richard Atto
Neal Barnett
Tad Krear
Richard Mintz
Jeff Salz

BOARD OF APPEALS

James Aldrich, Chairman
Carol Rosati, Vice Chairman
David Buckley
Brian Henry
Tracy Leone
Lisa Seneker
Robert Taylor, Jr.
Justin Winkelman, Alternate
Pam Williams, Alternate

Pictured above: Township police officers undergo regular training at the gun range. See the story on page 6.

Save the date...

April 18

Electronics Recycling,
Medication Disposal &
Bulk Paper Shredding
See the website for details

April 18 & 19

Clean Sweep
See the website for details

May 2

Household Hazardous
Waste Drop-Off Day

May 5

Special Election
<http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/Clerk/Elections.asp>



Board of Trustees

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 2nd and 4th Monday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

Planning Commission

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 1st and 3rd Monday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

Zoning Board of Appeals

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 2nd Tuesday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

NOTE: The Charter Township of Bloomfield will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services at all meetings to individuals with disabilities. All such requests must be made at least five days prior to said meeting. Please contact the Bloomfield Township Clerk's Office, 4200 Telegraph Road P.O. Box 489 Bloomfield Hills MI 48303--0489 248-433-7702 Fax: 248-433-7714

Don't forget to vote in May 5 special election

Registered electors statewide are expected to turn out in record numbers for the special election on Tuesday, May 5. The main interest is State Proposal 15-1, an amendment to the State Constitution. In Bloomfield Township, voters in the school districts of Birmingham, Bloomfield and Pontiac have additional proposals to consider.

State Proposal 15-1 asks voters to amend the State Constitution to increase the sales/use tax from 6 percent to 7 percent to replace and supplement reduced revenue to the School Aid Fund and local units of government caused by the elimination of the sales/use tax on gasoline and diesel fuel for vehicles operating on public roads, and to give effect to laws that provide additional money for roads and other transportation purposes by increasing the gas tax and vehicle registration fees.

Bloomfield Township electors who live in the school districts of Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Pontiac will vote on one of three school proposals:

- Birmingham Public School District: School Improvement Bond Proposition.
- Bloomfield Hills School District: Operating Millage Renewal.
- School District of the City of Pontiac: Millage Proposal, Building and Site Sinking Fund Tax Levy.

The complete text for the proposals and sample ballots is available on the Township website at

www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/Clerk/Elections.asp. Polling locations can also be found through this same link. Voter registration information can be found at <http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/Clerk/Voting.asp>



For those unable to vote in person at the polls, absentee ballot applications are available online or by calling the Clerk's Office at (248) 433-7702. The last

day for absentee ballots to be mailed from the Clerk's Office is Saturday, May 2, 2015. On that day, the Clerk's Office will process absentee applications and issue ballots from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The final day to request an absentee ballot at the Clerk's Office is Monday, May 4, 2015, until 4 p.m. Electors receiving a ballot on Monday must vote in person at the Clerk's Office. Our website provides important information for this election. Be sure to visit <http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/Clerk/Elections.asp>.

If you are not a registered voter, the last day to register to vote for this election is April 6, 2015. Remember, your vote makes a difference.

Fighting the pothole plague

Spring is here – so are the potholes. And as much as we like the melting snow and rising temperatures, they are just the right combination to make a mess of the roads. And potholes can damage vehicles and are safety hazards.

To help prevent potholes from getting to this point, the Township's Department of Public Works Road Division is patrolling the subdivision streets on a daily basis filling the holes. The Township maintains 213 miles of roads so not every neighborhood will be patched every day. But if you spot a bad pothole call the DPW at (248) 594-2800 to report it. Or email the DPW at road@bloomfieldtwp.org.

Remember, Bloomfield Township only maintains the subdivision roads. Major roads, like Telegraph, Woodward, Square Lake, Maple, Quarton and others, are maintained by the

Road Commission for Oakland County. To contact the RCOC, call the Customer Service Department at (248) 858-4804 or email dcs-mail@rcoc.org. Working together we can help reduce the pothole plague.



This is just the beginning.



A NOTE FROM

Leo Savoie, Bloomfield Township Supervisor

DTE issue a lesson on service to residents

In my tenure as supervisor of Bloomfield Township I have never received as many calls from residents as I have over the Detroit Edison program to remove trees that it claimed were endangering its overhead wires.

I was flooded with calls from residents who were alarmed to see crews hired by DTE come through their neighborhoods, cutting down trees. Many were huge, mature trees that had been there for decades.

The residents were understandably upset, not only because they were losing their magnificent trees but also because of the manner in which this was done. They had no warning that the trees were coming down. It seemed like one minute they were there and the next they were gone.

As soon as I heard from the residents – and wow, did I hear from them – I went out to see for myself what was going on. They were right. The whole flavor of the neighborhood was being changed. This was not a mere tree trimming – this was devastation. I contacted DTE, city officials in Bloomfield Hills, where tree removal also was taking place, and had Township DPW come

out to a removal site. We had DTE stop work on the project until we could get a better understanding of what was being done and figure out a way to resolve the situation. To its credit, DTE was cooperative and listened to our concerns. As a result we were able to work out an agreement with DTE. From now on, DTE will meet with Township officials to inform them of cutting projects. It will use door hangers, mailings and phone calls and will meet with residents whose property will be affected. We have insisted a Township representative be at these meetings; however, as of yet DTE has not agreed to it.

DTE also promised to replace trees that are removed with other trees when that won't interfere with its lines. DTE will also remove all the stumps, logs and debris from the property unless the homeowner objects. And DTE won't remove trees on private property without written consent of the property owner.

DTE has a legitimate concern in that falling trees and tree limbs are a major source of power outages in our area. Tree branches get loaded with ice and snow in winter and

sodden with water in the warmer months, often snapping off and landing on the wires. And we know how many times we lose power in this area. That is disruptive and dangerous; however, there has to be a balance between reliable electricity and the beauty of our area.

We know that our beautiful trees add to the character of Bloomfield Township and affect property values. What we have done is worked out a balanced agreement that should satisfy our needs and DTE's needs. We put a lot of effort into reaching this agreement, but that is what we are supposed to do as Township officials. Our job is to listen to the concerns of the residents, carefully weigh the situation and act appropriately, with the best interests of the residents in mind.

That's not always easy but it is essential. We're here to serve you even as we are mindful of the welfare of the Township as a whole. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made and we don't always get everything we would like, but we never settle for less than the best we can achieve. That goes beyond the issue with DTE. In recent months we have negotiated an

extended trash pickup contract with Rizzo Waste Services that our Board of Trustees feels is very beneficial to our residents and the community.

I'm pleased that Gov. Snyder has now signed into law a bill I proposed to have SAD costs for road repairs linked to the property assessed, not to the property owner. That means that owners can now sell their property without having to pay off SAD assessments first. This is an incentive for homeowners to approve road improvements in their neighborhood, thus increasing their property values while not being locked into their property until the assessment is paid off. By the time you read this, the Board of Trustees will have approved a resolution allowing SADs to utilize this legislation.

Getting this into law was a long, arduous process, and I want to thank our State Rep. Mike McCready and retired Sen. John Pappageorge for taking the lead on this in the Legislature. You'll be hearing more on this soon as it is attracting even more attention across the state.

As always, if you have any issues or concerns please feel free to contact me.

New features are being added to the Bloomfield Township website

On the bar at the top of the home page, a section has been designated Living in Bloomfield. This is designed to focus on community, including information for new residents, environmental issues, the community calendar, links to other pertinent sites, such as the Bloomfield Township Public Library, and more. Soon we will be adding another section about Aging in Bloomfield, which focuses on the special quality of life that the Township offers to retirees and senior residents.

Also new on the web page is the Watch BCTV link at the left side of the home page. Click on that and you can see what is being carried on Bloomfield Community TV as it is being aired.

In addition, the link for Township Board minutes now also includes a listing of all vouchers approved by the Board.

Go to www.bloomfieldtwp.org and see what we've added. Watch for more changes to come.



From the Police Department

Team effort busts a bad gang

Sometimes it takes a team of good guys to catch a team of bad guys.

Take the FBI Oakland County Violent Crime Task Force, which is a consortium of police from across the county working with the FBI, Michigan State Police, Michigan Department of Corrections and the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Working together, the task force busted a major smash-and-grab ring of thieves, who themselves came from across the tri-county area. The gang is believed to have been involved in a host of 40 smash-and-grab robberies in the last two years. There were 25 such robberies in

Michigan alone.

Bloomfield Township played a role in bringing this to an end.

Township police officer Bryan Pizzuti likes to keep a low profile. So low, in fact that we can't even picture him, as he needs to work undercover. But he was part of the investigation team that helped bring an end to the smash-and-grab ring.

But the job is not like what you see on TV, he said. "It's time consuming, a lot of detail work."

That suits him. "I like the investigative part," Pizzuti said. "A minimal amount of information can develop a case. Every piece of informa-

tion is important."

Surveillance, tips and investigation lead to unravelling gangs.

"You always have to find new tools to beat them," Pizzuti said. And the dogged police work pays off not just in catching the bad guys but in disrupting the ones that get away. "It's caused a lot of trouble in their own game," he said. "Nobody trusts anybody."

And likely there are still more people to be arrested in connection with this gang. They were pretty sophisticated, carefully picking out their targets – upscale jewelry stores – and smashing counters with sledgehammers to

steal jewelry, especially Rolex watches. This gang had become so notorious that some jewelry stores were refusing to sell Rolexes.

But all the police agencies in the consortium shared information and worked as a unit to track down the wrecking crew. So far, 17 individuals have been indicted in this case. "These defendants travelled around the country to commit their crimes in hopes of dividing and conquering witnesses and investigations. But with the collaboration of law enforcement agencies across the country, these schemes have been thwarted," said U.S. Attorney Barbara L. McQuade.

Bloomfield Township rates top in safety

There's no question that Bloomfield Township is a comfortable community. And you can add safe and secure to that description.

A survey released by Value Penguin, a personal finance research and analysis firm, has rated Bloomfield Township as the safest town for its size in Michigan.

Value Penguin used FBI crime statistics to compile its ranking. It examined the rate of murder/manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault along with property crimes such as burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and

arson.

The data were standardized to reflect violent and property crime per 100,000 of population. Violent crime



Township residents enjoy safe and beautiful neighborhoods.

was weighted at 90 percent and property crime at 10 percent.

A "crime score" was deduced from the analysis.

Crime scores ranged from 28 to 7,256. Bloomfield Township was assigned a score of 355. That is 87 percent better than the average town in Michigan.

Value Penguin noted that the Township's median income "is significantly higher than the state average." It also specifically cited the Detroit Skating Club as an amenity where "many world-class skaters train."

Bloomfield Township has a population of about 42,000, and was rated as the safest among towns with 25,000 or more people. Plymouth Township followed in second with West Bloomfield in third.

What's going on around town?

You can find out on a weekly basis through the Bloomfield Township eNewsletter. The eNewsletter is now being sent every Thursday afternoon. It contains items on what's happening in the area as well as timely announcements, such as snow emergency and other weather alerts, changes of office hours and news bulletins. ENewsletters are also sent whenever there is an immediate need to relay a message to the public.

You can subscribe to the eNewsletter by going to the Township website, www.bloomfieldtwp.org and clicking on the box at the upper left of the page. Or send your email address to gkowski@bloomfieldtwp.org and it will be added to the subscription list.



From the Fire Department

Pilot program offers unique care

Doctors will be able to make house calls – electronically – in a pilot program between the Bloomfield Township Fire Department and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac.

In the program, which is designed especially for seniors and disabled residents, doctors at the hospital will be able to meet with patients through the use of computer tablets. Patients will receive basic medical care without being transported to the hospital. The tablets, with appropriate training, will be given to 57 Township firefighter/paramedics.

St. Joe doctors will use the tablets to have face-to-face meetings with patients in



Firefighter/paramedics will visit patients at home to ensure their well-being.

their homes or in a nursing facility. The tablets would be used specifically for scheduled visits for education and reassessment within five to seven days of being dis-

charged from the hospital. They also would be used for unscheduled consultations with emergency doctors to provide care in a person's home to prevent an unneces-

sary emergency room visit or re-hospitalization.

“The idea is to be proactive and prevent our residents from having an emergency,” said Fire Chief Dave Piche. “Working in cooperation with St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, the firefighter/paramedics would visit people released from the hospital to check that they are doing well, receiving proper care at home and ensuring they are not having trouble with their medication. The goal is to prevent them from having an emergency that would require them to go back to the hospital.”

The program is expected to start later this year.

DTE takes a new approach to tree removal

Responding to a flurry of complaints from outraged residents in Bloomfield Township and Bloomfield Hills, DTE Energy has revamped its tree removal policy and scrapped its “Ground to Sky” clearance program in favor of a more neighborhood friendly one.

DTE caused a furor when it began a program to remove trees that pose a threat to its power lines. Residents watched with shock as magnificent old trees were taken down.

After meeting with DTE representatives, Supervisor Leo Savoie told the Board of Trustees that he had received more complaints from residents on this topic than anything else he had ever received.

Under the new program, DTE will use door hangers, phone calls and mail-

ings to inform property owners when trees are in line to be removed.

Residents will be informed of work to be done on their property and trees will not be removed on private property outside of DTE easements without written permission of the property owner.

“They will stay in constant contact with the Township,” Savoie said.

Supervisor Savoie’s memo to the community giving a full overview is available on the Township website, www.bloomfieldtwp.org. Go to “Township News”

on the home page and click on the heading “DTE Responds to Tree Removal Complaint.”



DTE cleared swaths through stands of mature trees, angering many residents.



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On the firing line

Taking quick aim at the armed figure appearing in front of them, two officers fire off a volley of rounds.

The roar would have been deafening - if everyone there hadn't been wearing ear protection. But this was a controlled environment and even the poor soul who got hit with dozens of rounds through the day didn't feel a thing. It was just a picture of an armed attacker.

All the gunfire was part of the regular training exercises all sworn officers in Bloomfield Township, including Bloomfield Village, undergo. The officers train at the Township shooting range, at

the DPW building.

The training is remarkably realistic. Part of it is done in near darkness since studies

have shown that officers working evening or early morning shifts are most likely to come under fire.



Officers take careful aim at a target during training.

Officer Pete Matejcik, who coordinated the training, also built a mobile platform with a police car's roof lights to simulate the flashing lighting conditions officers in the field would encounter.

The officers trained with handguns and rifles, learning and sharpening their skills on the proper techniques for approaching and responding to an armed person.

"They have to be comfortable with a wide variety of tools," Matejcik said.

Officers also received training on the proper way to use a taser. "It's an awesome tool in getting compliance," Matejcik said.

Administration 433-7700
 Accounting 433-7712
 Assessors' Office 433-7710
 Building Division 433-7715
 Clerks' Office 433-7702
 Community Cable 433-7790
 Engineering & Env. 594-2800
 Fire Non-Emergency 433-7745
 Ordinance Division 594-2845
 Planning Division 433-7795
 Police Department
 Administration 433-7750
 Non-Emergency 433-7755
 Animal Welfare 433-7757
 Investigations 433-7760
 Alarm Info 433-7775
 Property 433-7777
 Records 433-7776
 Public Works
 Road Division 594-2800
 Water & Sewer 594-2800
 Senior Services 723-3500
 Adult Day Service 723-3530
 Treasurer's Office 433-7705

Water/Sewer Emergency 433-7730
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BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

