



BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

2013: A year of accomplishments

From fine tuning fiscal policy to flashy Ferraris on display, 2013 was a busy year in Bloomfield Township.

As the grip of the Great Recession that began in 2008 finally began to fade, property values in the Township began to climb upward. But that did not mean a boost in revenue, as assessments on taxable value of property are limited to 5 percent or the rate of inflation by state law. And with the inflation rate hovering at about 1.6 percent, that means little new income coming into the Township.

But the Township didn't sit still, and instead took an innovative approach to reducing its long-term debt. Using a new state law, the Township issued some \$80 million in bonds to cover the unfunded portion of its pension obligation. That should save the taxpayers \$3 million a year for the next 20 years.

There was also good news on the building front – as in new construction. The Township Planning, Building and Ordinance Department has been busier than ever, and as the year came to a close was on track in 2013 to meet or exceed the total number of home permits issued in over 10 years. The department also took

on the review, permitting and inspection services for several area schools, including the new Bloomfield Hills High School



Police Officer Kelly Marthen gives a helping hand to a young visitor at the Township's Open House event.

being constructed.

The Planning Division also introduced its new web page on the Township's newly redesigned website. The web page and site are more attractive and interactive, making it easier to find information about the Township, including the progress of building projects.

George Kilpatrick, also of the PBO, received special recognition as he was named the recipient of the Thomas Ricketts Award given to the Region's Outstanding Building Official by the Home Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

2013 was also notable as a year of particularly bad weather. The Township DPW was pushed to the limit dealing with

the aftermath of several bad summer storms, particularly an exceptionally violent storm that produced major flooding in June.

The Township held meetings with DTE to discuss the problem of power outages and DTE has been working on a program to reduce outage incidents.

To help manage such events, and to be prepared for even worse situations, the Township held Emergency Management training sessions. These brought the various Township depart-

ments together to map strategy to deal with a variety of disasters such as a massive tornado.



Perfect weather helped make the Township's Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise events a success.

But the weather was perfect in August for the Township's annual Dream Cruise events. Hundreds of people came to the Dream Drive the evening before the Dream Cruise, Please see 2013 on page 5



BLOOMFIELD
TOWNSHIP
BOARDS
2014

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

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

BOARD OF APPEALS

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

Save the date...

February 14

Last day to pay property taxes without penalty

See the website for details <http://www.bloomfield-twp.org/Services/Treasurer/Taxes.asp> or call 248-433-7705

March 17

Yard waste collection resumes

May 3

Household Hazardous Waste drop-off day

Need a passport fast? We can help.

In a hurry for a passport?

Unexpected overseas travel can cause anxiety if you need a passport. The Bloomfield Township Clerk's Office can expedite a passport application for delivery within two to three weeks. The expedite fee is \$60, in addition to the regular fees. Next-day air fares to and from the processing agency also apply.

For travel plans that require a passport in less than two to three weeks, the Detroit Passport Agency can provide immediate assistance. Applicants no longer have to pay expensive handling fees to a third party agency for an appointment in Chicago. The expedite process is available in Detroit.

The Detroit Passport Agency, at 211 West Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226-3269, can issue the U.S. passport book and the U.S. passport card on-site. A \$60 expedite fee is required when applying at this agency. Will-call service is offered for life/death emergencies and immediate travel abroad (leaving within five business days).

In these instances, it is strongly recommended that you bring proof of travel. The agency will prepare the passport for pick-up at will call based on your documented travel plans. For all other customers, passports are issued within five business days of applying at the agency. The agency will advise how the passport will be sent to you and the postage charges.

Schedule an appointment at the Detroit Passport Agency, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using the automated appointment system at 1-877-487-2778. Appointments are available from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. When calling the automated appointment system, you will hear the requirement for travel plans, but it does *not* apply to the Detroit Passport Agency. Better yet, walk-in hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Call the Bloomfield Township Clerk's Office at (248) 433-7702 or see our website at <http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/Clerk/PassportServices.asp> for further information on the documents and fees required for a passport.



Clerk's Administrative Assistant Natalie VanderMale takes a passport photo.



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

Township sells \$80+ million bonds for pension obligation

Looking to save an estimated \$3 million a year for the next 20 years, Bloomfield Township took the proactive step of selling \$80,780,000 in bonds to cover previously unfunded pension obligations.

"The sale allows us to pay \$6.2 million a year for 20 years, versus \$9 million had we done nothing," said Township Treasurer Dan Devine. The money from the sale will allow the Township to fund pensions of retirees and current employees who are under the old defined benefit pension plan. That plan has since been replaced by a defined contribution plan.

"This is an excellent opportunity for the Township to reduce its debt in a fiscally responsible manner," said

Township Supervisor Leo Savoie. "This is a proactive way to deal with a financial issue that has posed great problems for many communities. We are way ahead of the curve on this."

The Township had no difficulty in selling the bonds as they were rated AAA by Standard & Poor's Rating Services and Aaa by Moody's Investor Service – the highest ratings assigned by the firms. Both firms cited the Township's strong financial base and solid business operations in making the ratings.

Covering the unfunded pension liabilities will allow the township to save millions of dollars while still meeting its pension obligations. The top ratings could also help lower

borrowing costs for future projects in the township.

Bloomfield Township is the first community in Michigan to issue bonds to cover unfunded pension mandates under a state law passed in 2012 that allows municipalities with a AA or better bond rating to issue bonds for pension obligations. The Township was given the go-ahead to sell the bonds by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

The Township began looking into the possibility of issuing the bonds last February and determined the market was right for the move. The bonds will carry an average interest rate of 4.5 percent, which is exceptionally low for taxable [Please see Bond Sale on page 3](#)



A NOTE FROM

Leo Savoie, Bloomfield Township Supervisor

New year brings new priorities

This has been a busy fall. The change of seasons requires a change of priorities. Different departments all prepare for Mother Nature's onslaught. Roads and snow removal become a number one priority. The salt dome has been replenished. The motor pool has gone over each vehicle and truck to make sure it is ready to go. Parts and supplies have been ordered and are on hand to take care of any problem that will inevitably arise.

Fall and winter months mean budget time. Our fiscal year ends March 31 with the new budget year starting April 1. We start almost immediately in the new fiscal year looking forward to the following year. Putting together a new budget starts in earnest approximately seven months in advance. Since September we have been meeting with all of the individual departments reviewing expenses and funding sources. From there we look for any savings for the upcoming year.

I have been saying for a

number of months this will be one of the most difficult budget years ever. Proposal A limits any increase in the Taxable Value of a piece of property to the rate of inflation (CPI) or 5 percent, whichever is less. This helps us as homeowners (yes, I pay taxes, too); however, it severely limits the resources available to deliver the services expected by the residents who live in Bloomfield Township. It was apparent early on the CPI was going to be low. In fact it came in at 1.6 percent.

We also knew expenses were going to go up 3 to 4 percent. Unfortunately, most items used within a municipality are not factored into the CPI. Health care increases and pension increases run considerably higher than the CPI. Not too many households purchase fire trucks, large snow removal equipment or road equipment. All of that being said, we presented a balanced preliminary budget on Nov. 25. We will continue to refine this budget and the final version will be presented to

the Board of Trustees sometime in late February by each department head.

The budget presentations are interesting to watch and I would encourage everyone to do so. Not only does it show how much is being spent, it allows the departments to show how they are spending it. Every department head is proud to work here. They are proud of the services they deliver and they are proud of the community.

Speaking of proud, we should all be proud to be part of Bloomfield Township. We dealt with Standard & Poor's as well as Moody's for the Township's credit rating. We were all very concerned what impact Detroit as well as other municipal bankruptcy filings would have on us. Even with all of the negative publicity in municipalities as a whole and the close proximity of Detroit we were able to maintain our AAA rating, which is the highest you can achieve.

As I write this my own home is in its fourth year with-

out power. I have heard from many residents voicing their unhappiness and frustration over the power outage. At the peak of this power outage we had approximately 1,800 homes out of 16,000 homes without power.

I know I have written about DTE in the past. Over the last two years we have met with them four times to go over improvements that must be made in our area. They have made significant improvements, but more must be done. I will be contacting DTE to go over the areas where substations were updated in relation to previous outages and see what can be done in other areas where the outages are high. In the last year my home has lost power at least three times, and there are other neighborhoods that have had significantly more outages than that. Hopefully, we can continue to make progress.

I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. If you ever need anything please don't hesitate to contact us.

BOND SALE from page 2

bonds.

"This was the most complex and intriguing bond sale during my tenure as an elected official. The end result was significant. It eliminated Bloomfield Township's unfunded pension liability for the defined benefit plan retirement program," said Township Clerk Jan Roncelli.

"It was the best move we could make for the Township," Savoie said.



From the Police Department

Don't get scammed

This is the time of year when scam artists posing as snow removal companies begin plying their trade, sending out flyers to Bloomfield Township residents, trying to get their money. Beware of anyone who approaches you with an offer of services. If you will need snow removal this year, ask your neighbors who they use. A personal reference is always the best way to find contracted services. Alternatively, forums such as Angie's List may be useful in finding a reliable contractor.

Stay informed about what's happening in the Township! Subscribe to the e-newsletter to receive an update on the latest news each week. Go to www.bloomfieldtwp.org and click the e-newsletter button on the left side of the page to subscribe.



From the Fire Department

Stay safe during the winter

Winter is upon us. Here are some common causes of fires that occur during the season, and what to do to prevent them.

Cooking with care

- ◆ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period, turn the stove off.

- ◆ Keep anything that can catch fire – potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags – away from your stovetop.

- ◆ Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.

- ◆ Always keep an oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on the oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool.

Everyday electrical safety

- ◆ Keep lamps, light fixtures and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, such as lamp shades, bedding, curtains and clothing.

- ◆ Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords.

- ◆ Use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician if you need more plugs.

- ◆ Homes with young children should have tamper-resistant electrical receptacles.

- ◆ Call a qualified electrician or landlord if you have recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, discolored or warm wall outlets, flickering lights or a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance.

Healthy heating

- ◆ Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms to avoid risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

- ◆ Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

- ◆ Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least three feet away from heating equipment.

- ◆ Turn portable space heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.

- ◆ An oven should not be used to heat a home.

Stay warm but stay safe. For more information and tips on fire safety check the website

<http://www.bloomfieldtp.org/Services/Fire/FireSafetyTips.asp>
Questions? Call the Fire Department at 248-433-7745 during business hours, Monday - Thursday 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



Kitchen fires can spread rapidly, as this Fire Department demonstration shows.

Open House a shining success

Blazing sunshine helped make the Township Open House a perfect day.

The event, held Sunday, Oct. 13, at the Township campus, drew a huge crowd, possibly the largest ever recorded at the annual Open House. Visitors got to see a wide array of Township equipment, like DPW loaders, fire trucks and police cars and took part in many activities. A highlight of the day was a kitchen fire demonstration by the Fire Department. Firefighters set a model kitchen ablaze to show how fast a fire can



Firefighters demonstrated use of the ladder truck.



spread and what damage it can do. The Police Department offered rides in scout cars, a demonstration at the firing range, and the kids got to climb aboard various other vehicles.

A University of Michigan emergency helicopter was a big draw as it landed nearby, allowing visitors to take a close look at its sophisticated mechanize. Would-be media stars had a chance to try out the video equipment at the Bloomfield Cable TV truck.

And there was food – hot dogs, pizza, popcorn, candy, donuts, tacos and pumpkin pie.

“We love it,” said Jessica Rowland. “It’s a great time. She was there with husband J.J., and kids Peyton, 4, and Jack, 2.

Susan and Jay Brody pitched in to help the Meals on Wheels program. They were among the people who



“bought” a Meals on Wheels food box to toss into a front end loader. The fundraiser collected \$411 for the program. And Susan signed up to volunteer as a Meals on Wheels driver.

“It’s something I absolutely have to do,” she said.

And everyone who attended the Open House found something to do. Not a frown could be found anywhere on the Township campus that day.



Bailey Ragsdale, 4, takes the wheel of a vehicle at Open House.

Water main breaks often occur in winter

Water main breaks happen year round for a variety of reasons, but are more frequent and visible in the winter. During a water main break, the ground or pavement will rise and water will flow out in a constant stream. Repair times vary due to conditions such as weather, ground types, and conflicts with other utilities. To make a repair the crew has to shut off the water main, leaving the water off for approximately 4 to 6 hours for the average repair. The crews typically knock on the doors or leave a notice card to inform the affected homes of the water main break, unless it's late at night.

When the water is turned back on it may be discolored, but after running the cold water for approximately 20 minutes it should flow clear. This discoloration is generally due to mineral sediments in the water main that are disturbed by the repairs. Unless you are specifically notified otherwise, the water remains safe to drink.

Damage to lawns, sprinkler systems, roads, driveways, or landscaping that occurred during the water main break will be repaired in the spring. If you suspect a water main break, call the Water Division at 248-594-2800 during normal business hours, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. After hours, call the Water Emergency Line at 248-433-7730.



2013 from page 1

where they got a chance to ride in classic sports cars, and to the Classic Car Show and Bill Wells Car Club Classic on Dream Cruise Saturday.

As good as the weather was at the Dream Cruise events, it was even better for the annual Open House held in October. On that Sunday afternoon, the Township campus was bursting with people who came to see the Township's equipment and learn about the services it offers. Highlights included the landing of a U-M emergency helicopter, firefighting demonstrations and rides in police cars. This year's Open House likely drew the biggest attendance in the event's nearly 20-year history.

Attendance was also good at the Township's senior center. The number of visits to the center each month topped several thousand, with nearly 7,000 recorded in April.

Other highlights of the year include the continuing extension of the Safety Path system, including along Maple from Westbourne Drive to West Bradford and along Bloomfield Crossing to Opdyke.



A musical performance was just one of the many events held at the Senior Center during the year.

Bloomfield Community TV renovated its studio and purchased some

Be aware of snow emergency rules

Bloomfield Township's Snow Emergency Ordinance requires that cars be moved from streets within six hours of a declared snow emergency. Residents will be notified about snow emergencies by an announcement from the Township, by way of the website, Facebook, Twitter, radio and television stations, including Bloomfield Community Television. The hotline, 248-594-2848, will also inform callers when a snow emergency is in effect. Please remember that noncompliance with this ordinance may result in a fine of up to \$100 and illegally parked vehicles may be impounded.

Store equipment for the winter

Now that winter is here, be sure to store all items used in yard care, such as lawn equipment, unused mulch bags and empty plastic plant containers, in your garage. Keeping yards neat and tidy helps to maintain property values in your neighborhood and in the Township as a whole.

The Township prohibits storage of all types of watercraft, campers, RVs and trailers in private driveways. These items must be stored in a garage or in a storage facility. Contact the Ordinance Division at 248-594-2845 with any questions.

new equipment. It also began expanded coverage of high school sports and added an innovative program, "Beyond the Box Score," previewing sports at Seaholm and Groves high schools.

And finally, the Township inaugurated Operation Medicine Cabinet. Under this program,

persons can drop off old and unneeded prescription medicines at the front desk of the Police Department

where they will be deposited in a special drop box for disposal. All in all, 2013 was a year of many accomplishments and positioned the Township for a potentially even better 2014.



Clerk Jan Roncelli cuts the ribbon officially opening the Operation Medicine Cabinet at the Police Department. Also participating are (from left) John Ciecko of the Birmingham Bloomfield Community Coalition; Supervisor Leo Savoie; BBCC Executive Director Carol Mastroianni; Sheriff Michael Bouchard; Treasurer Dan Devine and Police Chief Geof Gaudard.



BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

4200 TELEGRAPH ROAD
PO BOX 489
BLOOMFIELD MI 48303-0489

TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY

Water/Sewer Emergency
433-7730

Administration	433-7700
Accounting	433-7712
Assessor's Office	433-7710
Building Division	433-7715
Clerk's 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

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROYAL OAK, MI
PERMIT #759

BCTV: In tune with the community

From art to exercising, Bloomfield Community TV continues to offer the best in local television.

This year BCTV produced about 600 shows, including the new "Beyond the Box Score" with Andy Aubrey and Brad Fedders; "Making a Difference at TCH," produced by Gigi Nichols and hosted by Camille Jayne; and "Living Karma Yoga," produced by Katherine Austin. Several

BCTV shows were recognized for honors this year. "Village Players 90th Anniversary" won first place Philo Awards for Excellence in Cinematography and Best Documentary. The show was directed by Steve Rota, BCTV Operations Manager. Rota also won first place in the Best Series category for "Soup! & Company."

In addition, BCTV won two Finalist Awards for "Agebusters," directed by Rota, and for "BBSO Holiday Cheer," directed by Zack Florance. Florance also won Second Place in the Live Sports Coverage of the NATOA competition for "Girls Basketball, Seaholm vs. Groves."

Looking ahead, BCTV is positioning itself to adapt to the changing technology of the future. In addition to upgrading the studio sets and purchasing new lighting, new equipment that will allow digital playback and computer-based program mastering was purchased. These updates will

improve the quality of BCTV's productions. Some of the new upgrades were accomplished through BCTV's continuing partnership with the Birmingham Area Cable Board. With the BACB, Bloomfield Community TV serves Birmingham, Bingham Farms, Franklin and Beverly Hills, in addition to Bloomfield Township and Bloomfield Hills.

"It's always important to keep up with technology," Rota said. "It's always changing so fast."

BCTV welcomes community involvement. Those interested in learning about the operations of a TV studio, running a camera and volunteering on shoots can attend a Volunteer Workshop. For those interested in producing a show, attendance at a workshop is required. Workshops are held four times a year. For more information go to <http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Services/cable/OverviewCable.asp> or call 248-433-7790.



Director Zack Florance works with producer Katherine Austin, at left, and her guest on *Living Karma Yoga*.