

# Torch Lake Township News - February 2008

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: NEW COMMUNITY SERVICES BUILDING

Here's an update on the progress made on the new Community Services Building during the past few months . . .

The "Construction Team" meets at the site every other Tuesday to review progress, resolve issues that arise and coordinate construction activities. This "team" includes the contractor, architect, township representatives, and representatives of the various trades working at the site. The meetings are important as they keep construction activities "on track."



During the past few months, several observable things have taken place concerning the exterior of the building including the installation of windows, completion of roofing and application of siding. Inside, there has been a lot of activity, too. Installation of electrical conduit, HVAC and plumbing has been taking place.

Also progressing are installation of insulation and interior door frames, as well as hanging and taping of drywall.

Vehicle bay floors have been poured and the bay doors have been hung. And, finalizing a general color scheme for the interior of the building is nearly complete. Painting the interior isn't far off and orders for interior furniture and furnishings will be placed soon.

Once spring weather arrives, exterior tasks can begin. These include, installation of an underground water storage tank for the Fire Department, landscaping, completing sidewalks, drives and parking areas and exterior signage. There is still much to do, but good progress is being made as we work toward completion of the project. A dedication ceremony and open house for the building will be scheduled in late May.

## MARCH 2008 BOARD OF REVIEW MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The purpose of the Board of Review is to make sure that all non-exempt property has been assessed at 50 percent of true cash value in comparison to other property in the same classification (e.g. - agriculture, commercial, residential). A taxpayer may appeal the assessed value and/or taxable value of the property. **No one can appeal an assessment to the State Tax Tribunal without first appearing before the Board of Review.** The Board of Review may also grant hardship or poverty exemptions, change clerical errors and correct mutual mistakes of fact on the July 2007 and December 2007 assessment rolls. The March 2008 meetings will be held at the Torch Lake Township Hall, 5081 N US 31, Eastport, MI 49627, on the following dates:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, March 4, 2008:    | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM = Organizational Meeting |
| Monday, March 10, 2008:    | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM = Appeal Hearings        |
| Wednesday, March 12, 2008: | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM = Appeal Hearings        |
| Friday, March 14, 2008:    | 9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon = Appeal Hearings     |

A non-resident taxpayer may file an appeal either by letter, fax or e-mail provided it is received by 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, March 4, 2008. Such appeals should either be: (1) mailed to the Torch Lake Township Board of Review, P.O. Box 713, Eastport, MI 49627; (2) faxed to the Board of Review at (231) 599-2981; or, (3) e-mailed to [bspencer@torchlake.com](mailto:bspencer@torchlake.com). Current Board of Review Members are Township residents Stan Dawson, Don Gaskell and Bill Laakko.

Upon seven (7) days prior notice, the Township will provide necessary, reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings. If you need such services, please contact Doris Leech, Clerk by mail at 5081 N US 31, P.O. Box 713, Eastport, MI 49627; by phone at (231) 599-2036; or, by e-mail at [dorisleech@torchlake.com](mailto:dorisleech@torchlake.com).



**TREASURER'S REPORT . . . . . Sharon Schultz**

**WINTER 2007 PROPERTY TAX PAYMENTS DUE:**

Winter 2007 property tax payments postmarked by February 14, 2008 will avoid a mandatory late-payment penalty. Starting March 1, 2008, all unpaid property taxes will become the responsibility of the Antrim County Treasurer's office.

A reminder: during the past three years, Antrim County taxes were shifted from a 100% winter collection to a 100% summer collection on your tax bills. As a result, your Summer 2007 tax bills contained 100% of the "county" tax for the first time. Because of the shift to a summer collection of this tax, no Antrim County taxes appeared on your Winter 2007 tax bill.

For Torch Lake Township taxpayers whose property is located in the Central Lake School district: starting with the Summer 2008 tax bills, 100% of Central Lake's school property taxes will be collected in the summer collection, rather than in the winter. Another reminder, Char-Em ISD property taxes will appear on your Winter 2008 bill; this is no change from past practice.

Please feel free to call me about any questions about your property taxes! I'll be glad to answer your questions.

**REMEMBER TO GET YOUR NEW DOG LICENSES:**

I'll be selling Dog Licenses at the Township Office through February 29, 2008. After that date, **the license fees double and they must be purchased at the Antrim County offices.** So, please make sure you have a current license for each of your dogs.

In order to purchase a license you will need a current rabies certificate. One (1) and three (3) year licenses are available depending upon the expiration date on your dog's current rabies certificate.

One year license fees, if purchased by Feb. 29th:

Unsexed dogs: \$5.00; Male/Female: \$8.00

Three year licenses fees, if purchased by Feb. 29th:

Unsexed dogs: \$12.00; Male/Female: \$21.00

For your convenience, a "Dog License" form has been posted on the Township's website [[www.torchlaketownship.org](http://www.torchlaketownship.org)]. Download and complete the form, then either mail it with a copy of a current rabies certificate, or call me and stop by the office with this information to get your dog license. I'm available evenings and weekends and am just a phone call away [(231) 599-2036].

Sharon Schultz, Treasurer  
[schultz@torchlake.com](mailto:schultz@torchlake.com)

**HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICE, HDTV & RELATED FRUSTRATIONS**

**So, what's the deal? Why is there no high speed cable internet here in Torch Lake Township?**

Charter Communications, the sole cable internet provider located in our township, has yet to upgrade its cable system in our immediate area. The original cable system, Village Cable, was purchased by Charter several years ago and remains a "low-tech" part of the Charter system. The existing cable system won't support high-speed services such as phones, HDTV, high speed internet service, etc.

**So, what's an Internet junkie to do?**

High speed internet options are available; just not via cable through Charter Communications. COLI Communications, Rapid City and Cherry Capital Connection, Elk Rapids, are two regional providers.

**How do I go about getting an HDTV signal?**

Two major satellite providers are available: "Direct TV" and "The Dish Network." These are satellite systems, so no cabling is involved. Availability of a strong satellite signal is critical to the quality of the HDTV /Internet signals provided by these companies. Other "wireless" vendors are slowly getting a toe-hold into the market here (e.g.—AT & T, Verizon, et al). Some folks have had great results with these satellite signal providers, others have gotten really frustrated. So, let the buyer beware!

**So, will Charter upgrade its cable system?**

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that this will happen soon, although Charter has upgraded its cable systems north, east and south of our township. Sigh.



# FIRE PROTECTION SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

## TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP, ANTRIM COUNTY, MICHIGAN

### FIRE PROTECTION SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

#### ATTENTION!

#### RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP, ANTRIM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Torch Lake Township Board will conduct a public hearing at the Township Hall located at 5081 N US 31 in Eastport, MI, at 9:00 AM on **Saturday, March 22, 2008**. Its purpose is to consider the proposed Special Assessment Roll prepared by the Township Supervisor pursuant to direction of the Township Board, concerning the previously created Fire Protection Special Assessment District.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the total amounts proposed to be specially assessed in the Fire Protection Special Assessment District and the proposed millage rate for FY 2008-09 are:

**TOTAL AMOUNT: \$212,709**  
**MILLAGE RATE: 0.9000**

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that copies of the proposed budget and proposed special assessment roll may be inspected at the Clerk's office at 5081 N US 31, Eastport, MI, on regular business days beginning on March 14, 2008. They may also be inspected at the public hearing.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that, at the public hearing, the Township Board will review the proposed special assessment roll and any comments or objections thereto that might be made or filed with said Board at, or prior to, the time of said public hearing. It will also consider any revisions, amendments or changes to said proposed special assessment roll and the amount of special assessments to be levied against benefited property.

Appearance and protest at the public hearing is required in order to appeal the amount of the special assessment to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. An owner, or party of interest, or his or her agent, may appear in person at this hearing to protest the special assessment, or shall be permitted to file his or her appearance or protest by letter received at or before the public hearing. If such a letter is filed, then the personal appearance of the person protesting is not required.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that, if the proposed special assessment roll is confirmed or is modified and confirmed, the Special Assessment will be collected in the same manner as property taxes, as provided for by law. The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforementioned time and place to submit comments concerning any of the foregoing, or to protest the proposed special assessment roll and/or Special Assessment.

\* \* \* \*

Please note that the proposed 2008 millage rate for the Fire Protection Special Assessment District is 0.9000 mill. This represents a 0.1000 mill (10%) reduction in the millage rate that was in effect during tax year 2007.

Also, please note that Torch Lake Township will provide required auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities upon receiving seven (7) days advance notice to the Township Clerk.

Please contact the Township Clerk at the following address and/or phone number: Doris Leech, Clerk, Torch Lake Township, PO Box 713, 5081 N US 31, Eastport, MI, 49627; telephone: (231) 599-2036.



TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP  
5081 N US 31  
P.O. BOX 713  
EASTPORT, MI 49627



Phone: (231) 599-2036  
Fax: (231) 599-2981  
Website: [www.torchlaketownship.org](http://www.torchlaketownship.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**. . . . TOWNSHIP BOARD INFORMATIONAL BRIEFS . . . .**

**ANNUAL TOWNSHIP MEETINGS: SAT. MARCH 22**

All Township residents and property owners are invited to attend meetings that will begin at 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 22, 2008 at the Township Hall.

The first of these will be the required budget hearings for FY 2008-09 and will include budget proposals for the Fire Fund, Ambulance Fund, Liquor Fund and General Fund. Next, the Annual Meeting of the Township Electors will be held.

During this meeting, electors have the legal right to act on resolutions establishing salaries of elected officials for FY 2008-09. Anyone qualified to register to vote in the Township can vote at this Annual Meeting. In addition, electors can advise Board members about matters important to them.

Finally, the Board members will conduct a business meeting to finalize budgets and related matters for FY 2008-2009, as they may determine appropriate.

**RECEIVING YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL?**

Editions of this newsletter are currently mailed to residents and property owners and are posted on the Township's website. However, distributing it via e-mail to interested residents and property owners is being considered. Why so? E-mail distribution is considerably cheaper and is much more efficient.

Consider that about 1,450 copies of each edition are mailed to township residents and property owners. When first class mail is used, as in this edition, postage costs nearly \$600 (by law, the notice on page 3 must be distributed by 1st Class mail). Bulk mailing, used for most issues, costs about \$400 per issue. In addition, printing costs about \$220 per issue. Mailing also requires attaching mailing labels and, in this issue, stamps to each copy, a process that requires several hours. So, each edition costs \$600-\$800; about \$2,600 per year. E-mail costs nothing. Interested in e-mail delivery? Think about it while this idea is researched more thoroughly.

