

**ADMINISTRATION**

Twp Hall - 668-0270

Cemetery  
Clerk  
Information  
Manager  
Supervisor

Assessing - 669-6494

Building - 668-0278

DARA - 482-5117

Fire - 669-0071  
Administration

Planning/Zoning  
669-6576

Police - 669-6578  
Administration

Treasurer - 668-1411

**CLINTON COUNTY**

1-888-224-2450  
Toll Free

**POLICE & FIRE  
ASSISTANCE**

Fire - 9-1-1  
EMT/Ambulance  
Police - 9-1-1  
State Police - 322-1911

**TOWNSHIP BOARD**

Supervisor  
Rick Galardi  
Clerk  
Diane Mosier  
Treasurer  
Phyllis Daggy  
Trustees  
Max Calder  
Steve Musselman  
Brian Ross  
David Seeger

Manager  
Rodney H. Taylor

[www.dewitttownship.org](http://www.dewitttownship.org)

## HOW ARE THINGS IN THE TOWNSHIP?

From DeWitt Charter Township Supervisor Rick Galardi

“So how are things in the Township?” Now that’s a question I get asked quite often. I feel like those asking the question are expecting to hear the bad news – more doom-and-gloom in another Michigan municipality. Well, things certainly aren’t as they were a few years ago. But, that question’s answer in DeWitt Township has a lot of positives. Let’s take a look at a snapshot of DeWitt Township:

The Township continues to be a safe place to live and visit. While our population and commercial districts grew during 2004, 2005 and 2006, traffic accidents, burglaries, larcenies and assaults all went down. While auto thefts increased in 2006, our officer-initiated-stops, and arrests, substantially increased. With one officer on medical leave, and another on active military duty, our Police Department personnel proudly stepped up and delivered more with less. Our Fire Department’s roster of dedicated, well trained, volunteer professionals is second to none. These courageous community servants represent the pride of DeWitt Township - they stand ready to answer the call at any time, day or night. The department’s outstanding leadership has equipped and staffed an organization that delivers top-notch service at a fraction of the cost of a career department. Our Building Office diligently enforces the building codes that are designed to protect the public’s well-being. Our up-to-date inspectors ensure structures are built to the most current quality standards for the safety of our families and the protection of our property values. With an emphasis on accessibility, a “real person” provides information in a quick, efficient and courteous manner.

DeWitt Township continues to be a great place to raise a family. Township voters in the Bath School District recently approved a \$14.5 million bond for building additions, remodeling and technology upgrades. Those enhancements, combined with hiring strategies that are attracting energetic teachers, have certainly paid dividends. DeWitt Township residents in the Lansing School District look forward to continuing improvements. The School Board’s strong commitment to its new Superintendent, community-wide awareness programs, and a number of new residential developments, are all positive signs for the Lansing Schools. With consistently high MEAP scores, and large numbers of college-bound graduates, the DeWitt School District continues to set the standard of excellence in Mid-Michigan.

DeWitt Township homesteads pay one of the lowest local tax rates of any developing city or charter township, anywhere in Michigan. Tax payments collected by municipalities include millages levied by counties, school districts, community colleges, and others. The Township’s 5.97 mills local tax rate (the component that pays for most Township services) represents only 15% of your total tax bill.

DeWitt Township residents enjoy a local tax rate that is up to 20% lower than our charter township neighbors – up to 70% lower than residents in the larger cities that border our community. Particularly noteworthy is that DeWitt Township’s Board of Trustees remain committed to levy less than the total allowed by law and, forgoes an additional 1% administrative fee that virtually every other municipality in the region collects.

DeWitt Township's "quality of life" continues to prosper, satisfy its residents, and appeal to those looking to relocate in Mid-Michigan. The DeWitt Area Recreation Authority has added to our recognition as a forerunner in successful regional cooperation efforts. Program participation, by Township residents of all ages, is off-the-charts – the affordable costs of these expanded programs, and their participation levels continue to accent the efficiency of the Authority to our tax payers. Responsible acquisitions of park land, and projects such as the renovation of our southern-tier Community Center are examples of the community's commitment to its quality of life. The development of a new park, at Wood Road and Round Lake Road, will be an opportunity to focus attention on our most important natural asset: the Looking Glass River. The award-winning Southern Clinton County Municipal Utilities Authority is a premier model for regional cooperation. This "Clean Water Facility" is shared with three neighboring communities and represents a regional commitment to efficiently protect our environment. A green space study, conducted by a Board appointed ad-hoc committee, is due to be published. The study's goal is to provide some objective criteria for the amount of dedicated green space in DeWitt Township. Preliminary indications look quite positive.

Information provided by our highly regarded assessing staff, a staff dedicated to accurate property assessments, does point out some interesting trends. DeWitt Township's property values have not been immune to the effects of Michigan's sluggish economy. The good news is that, on average, properties in the Township continue to sell for more than 2Xs their assessed value. This indicates that DeWitt Township's appeal lessened the slow-down's impact on our property values, and our recovery will come sooner and stronger than in most areas throughout the region and state. The opening of our new Meijer store, the eventual Auto Owner's campus, and new family businesses like Gilbert's True Value will provide jobs, diversify our tax base and add texture to our community. Of course, along with the convenience of increased commercial options comes the issue of traffic. Township staff will be partnering with MDOT and the Clinton County Road Commission to monitor and sufficiently plan for our future growth.

The slow-down in housing starts and applications for new development comes at the end of a 10+ year cycle of dynamic growth that saw our population increase by 32%. Our forward thinking planning staff views this break in the action as an opportunity to get caught up. Tops on their to-do list is to facilitate the Township Board's commitment to focus resources on a South Central Area Plan. Generally, the Township's South Central Area is Stoll Road south to Sheridan and DeWitt Road east to Wood Road. The Plan's goals are to encourage continued new investment on that area's Business-27 corridor, and to help the residential neighborhoods continue to thrive and improve. Another important task at hand is the updating of our Zoning Ordinance to reflect the most current and responsible development trends and philosophies.

Sixteen years ago, our Township's Clerk's Office became the first in Michigan to order Optical Scan voting equipment. Last year, the State of Michigan mandated the use of that same equipment in all Michigan precincts! The DeWitt Township Clerk's Office continues to deal with changing regulations while meeting the needs of our historically high voter turnouts. Our Clerk's Office has never lost site of its core purpose, providing the Township's residents with a seamless and convenient voting experience on democracy's most important day.

To increase operating efficiencies, the DeWitt Township Treasurer's Office has spent the past year implementing systems that update our money management and banking practices. A major goal is to make everyone's favorite past time, paying taxes and utility bills, at least a more user friendly event. While faced with tighter budget restraints, and increased responsibilities, DeWitt Township's Maintenance Department continues to exceed expectations. Our buildings, parks and cemeteries are always well-kept; our investments in these assets are being protected by this conscientious crew.

Our Manager's Office continues to oversee and direct DeWitt Township's day-to-day operations. Its primary focus is to deliver the services and communications that Township residents deserve and have come to expect in a reliably efficient manner. A secondary focus of our executive management staff is an ongoing campaign to modernize and automate all Township policies, procedures and systems. This

campaign's objective is designed to ensure that DeWitt Township government remains a highly economical, and manageable, public services provider in the decades to come.

Well, as you can see, the sky has not fallen on our hometown. In a growing community as diverse as ours, there will always be issues to face and problems to solve. DeWitt Township's elected officials and staff will remain committed to solutions that reflect the peoples' will, and respect the value of each tax payer dollar. Ultimately, it is our unique sense of community and neighborhood pride that has moved us forward during these challenging times and will pave the way for an even brighter future.



Supervisor Rick Galardi meets with Brian Russell, Police Chief; Raynold St. Pierre, Chief Building Administrator; Phyllis Daggy, Treasurer; Laura Tafelsky, Assessor; Rodney Taylor, Manager; Diane Mosier, Clerk; Fred Koos, Fire Chief and Jeff Gray, Planning Director

## **NOTICE TO DEWITT TOWNSHIP PROPERTY OWNERS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (MDEQ)**

The DeWitt Township Treasurer's Office is required to notify property owners of the completion of the wetland inventories issued by MDEQ. A county wetland inventory has been completed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) pursuant to Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. The inventory map is on file with the County Extension Office, Register of Deeds, and County Clerk, and is also available at [www.michigan.gov/deqwetlands](http://www.michigan.gov/deqwetlands). The inventory map provides potential and approximate locations of wetlands but cannot be used to identify wetlands for regulatory purposes. Property containing wetlands may be subject to regulation under Part 303. For more information, including how to obtain a wetland permit or a determination of whether property contains regulated wetland, please visit the MDEQ Web site above.

## **GET A CLUE@YOUR LIBRARY**



Come and join us at the DeWitt Public Library for our Summer Reading Program! This year's theme is "Get a clue@your Library" and focuses on mystery. Our goal with this program is to encourage families to learn, read and grow this summer. The program is open to everyone, and you may join us at any point in the duration of the program with the finale on August 14<sup>th</sup>. We will have activities, programs and prizes for all ages every week, so please drop by and learn how to join the fun! For more information, call the Library at 669-3156 or visit us at [www.dewittlibrary.org](http://www.dewittlibrary.org). If you have a little free time this summer, why not volunteer at the Library to help us out?

## **NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

You are cordially invited to attend DeWitt's Annual National Night Out at the DeWitt Sports Park at DeWitt and Herbison Roads. This unique crime/drug prevention event has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 7, 2007 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. National Night Out was designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention and awareness
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community partnerships
- Celebrate good neighbors and public safety

Join us for an evening of family fun and refreshments. Enjoy one-on-one contact with our local firefighters and get a close up look at the fire trucks. Our local police officers will be on hand with our canine unit. There will be clowns and face painting and everything is absolutely free. Bicycle safety will be reviewed and there will be bicycles given away as prizes. Come out and meet with DeWitt Township and City Police, Fire and EMS Personnel.

## **SIGNAL LIGHT TIMING STUDY**

MDOT has received \$867,000 in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant monies to study and develop new signal timings to 215 signals in Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties. This includes the signals along US-127BR in DeWitt Township at Sheridan Road, State Road, Clark Road, EB I-69 off ramp, WB I-69 off ramp, Herbison Road and Round Lake Road.

The study will recommend changes to signal timings which will improve progression between traffic signals. These changes will allow traffic to move smoothly along the corridor, reducing delays and emissions. The study is ongoing. Changes to the signal timings along US-127BR are in place and being field reviewed. For further information, please contact the MDOT Lansing office at 517-324-2260.

## **WIN A FREE TRIP TO THE MACKINAC ISLAND LABOR DAY BRIDGE WALK**

Join DARA this summer and walk your way to fitness and register to win a free four day/three night trip to Mackinac Island for the Labor Day Bridge Walk. Four Walk Michigan events will take place in July. Each registered participant will have the chance to win one of two trips to the Mackinac Island Labor Day Bridge Walk (must be 18 years or older to win). Visit the DARA website at [www.dewittrecreation.org](http://www.dewittrecreation.org) for walk dates and locations or call the DARA office at 482-5117. All scheduled walks are free to all ages and there is no fee to register for the free trip.

## **CLINTON TRANSIT IS HERE**

Clinton Transit is now providing curb-to-curb transportation for all DeWitt Township residents. All vehicles are fully accessible, safe, convenient and air-conditioned. An additional bus was added that is dedicated just to DeWitt Township and DeWitt City. Bus service to your destination within the Township and City is available Monday - Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Other destinations are available on specific days. Call **989-224-8127** for information and to reserve your ride.



## **MOVIES IN THE PARK!**

Now showing! Movies at Riverside Park in DeWitt. Movies will start at dusk. All movies are free. Refreshments will be available from local non-profit organizations. So bring your blankets and chairs and enjoy a relaxing outdoor film. The following shows will be playing:

Tuesday, July 10, Apollo 13

Tuesday, July 24, Superman

Tuesday, August 7, E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial

Tuesday, August 21, Seabiscuit

Tuesday, September 4, Swiss Family Robinson

This program is sponsored, in part, by local businesses and local non-profit organizations.

## **SUMMER TAX BILL AND SUMMER DEFERMENT INFORMATION**

The summer tax bills are being processed and will be mailed out by July 1, 2007. If you do not receive one, and know you should, please let the Treasurer's Office know. If your taxes are in an escrow account, the tax bill will be mailed to the requesting financial institution. The due date for payment, without additional interest, is September 14, 2007.

Qualified residents may defer their summer tax bill until February 14, 2008 without interest or penalty fees. To qualify you must meet the following guidelines: household income less than \$40,000 for the prior calendar year, and one of the following:

1. Senior Citizen (62 years or older)
2. Paraplegic, quadriplegic
3. Eligible serviceman, veteran, widow-widower
4. Blind person
5. Totally and permanently disabled

Those that farm agricultural real property may also qualify. For an application, please call our office at (517) 668-1411. Residents who defer summer taxes must complete an application and submit it to the Treasurer's Office before September 17, 2007.

## **LIBRARY PUBLIC INPUT WORKSHOP #5**

On Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, the DeWitt Public Library will host the fifth public workshop seeking community participation regarding design of a proposed new library building. The consultants, David Milling Architects, will present drawings and models reflecting their understanding of community values based on previous public workshops, and interviews with library staff and board members. Previously, the Library Board formally accepted the Breton Group's needs assessment document—developed with local participation—recommending that the Library will need 31,000 square feet of library space by 2027. At this workshop, the architects will present designs for a building that can be constructed with as little as 21,000 square feet and then be expanded over time to achieve the target of 31,000 square feet. Budget recommendations for each of the options will also be presented. Previous workshops have been well attended. The Library and the consultants look forward to continuing dialogue with the community on Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the DeWitt Charter Township Hall on Herbison Rd.

## DARA RECREATION NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA) is located at the DeWitt Township Community Center, 16101 Brook Road, Lansing, MI 48906. Information regarding any event or program can be obtained by calling the DARA office at 482-5117. You may register for programs in person at the DARA office (16101 Brook Road, Lansing), DeWitt City Hall (414 E. Main Street, DeWitt) or the DeWitt Township Hall (1401 W. Herbison Road, DeWitt). Registration forms and program descriptions are also available on DARA's website, [www.dewittrecreation.org](http://www.dewittrecreation.org).

Program	Dates	Time	Registration	Age	Cost (Res/Non-Res)
Summer Day Camps	6/18-8/17	7:30 am-5:30 pm	Begins 4/27	5-12	\$90/\$95
Youth Golf @ Hawk Hollow	7/17-8/16	6:00-7:00 pm or 7:00-8:00 pm	Begins 6/1	8-15	\$50
Adult Softball-fall	8/12&13- 9/16&17	Evenings	Begins 6/29	18+	\$200/team + ump fees
Concert in the Park- Party of 7	7/31	7:00-8:30 pm at Riverside Park	n/a	All	Free
Flag Football	9/8-10/13	1:00-5:00 pm	7/27-8/17	Grades K-3	\$28/\$33
Fall Soccer	9/8-10/13	9:00 am-1:00 pm	7/27-8/17	4-6	\$28/\$33
Hunter Safety	9/17-9/19 & 9/22	6:00-9:00 pm TBA	Begins 7/27 until full (35)	All	\$10
Fall Tennis	9/3-10/14	Scheduled by participants	8/3-8/24	18+	\$8/\$13-singles \$15/doubles team
Concert in the Park- Medley of Memories	8/30	6:30-8:00 pm at Granger Meadows Park	n/a	All	Free
Girls Basketball- Grades 5 & 6	10/13-11/17	9:00 am-Noon	9/7-9/28	Grades 5-6	\$28/\$33
Drop Your Kids Off	9/21 10/19	6:00-11:00 pm 6:00-11:00 pm	8/24-9/14 9/21-10/12	4-12	\$15/child or \$25/2 children
Punt, Pass & Kick	9/25	6:00 pm	On Site: DeWitt HS football field	8-15	Free (age on 12/31/07)
Youth Basketball	11/3-12/15	9:00 am-1:00 pm	9/21-10/12	Grades 1-2	\$28/\$33
Preschool Sports Starter	10/20 & 27 11/10 & 17 12/1 & 8	9:30 am-Noon	9/14-10/5	3-5	\$28/\$33
Preschool Halloween Party	10/29	6:00-7:30 pm	9/14-10/22	3-5	\$6/\$8
Youth Volleyball	11/13-12/18	5:30-8:30 pm	10/5-10/26	Grades 3-6	\$28/\$33
Open Volleyball	Wed & Sun Begins 9/5	7:00-9:00 pm	Drop In	18+	\$2
Discount Cedar Point Tickets	Sold 5/7-8/31	Use during 2007 season	n/a	All	\$11.95-\$66.25
Discount MI Adventure Tickets	Sold 5/7-8/31	Use during 2007 season	n/a	All	\$22.50

## UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY VALUES

The Board of Review met the week of March 12<sup>th</sup>. Their role is to be a local review and appeal board for property owners questioning property values set by the Assessing Department.

During this year's Board of Review sessions, the concern and complaint heard most often was the increase in assessments and taxable values despite the stalled real estate market. There are three values that relate to all property under Michigan's tax system: *assessed value*, *state equalized value*, and *taxable value*.

The *assessed value* is based on market value and is required to be at 50% of the true cash value (fair market value). While real estate sales occur in real-time, the assessed values are set by the local assessing office based on neighborhood sales covering a two year period. For the 2007 assessments, the two year analysis used sales occurring from April, 2004 through March, 2006.

As a check and balance system, a review is conducted at the county and state levels each year to ensure the assessed values set by the local government and by each county are at 50% of true cash value. This review process is referred to as equalization and the result is a value known as the *state equalized value*.

The *taxable value* was established as part of "Proposal A" by the voters in 1994. Proposal A amended the state constitution to limit the increase in the tax base on each property to the inflation rate or 5%, whichever is less, unless a transfer of ownership occurred or physical changes resulting in additional value occurred. For 2007, the increase was a 3.7% increase in taxable value. Since 1994, annual increases have ranged from 1.5% to 3.7%.

Assessed values and taxable values move independently of each other. Since 1994, real estate values have generally gone up faster than the rate of inflation. Thus, assessed values have risen higher than the taxable values, which are limited or capped by the inflation rate. However, in a declining real estate market, the assessed values can actually decrease while the taxable values continue to increase by the inflation rate.

While understanding the concept of why there are increases in taxable value in an unsettled real estate market is difficult, understanding property values and how property is valued is an important part of being a property owner. If you have lived in your home for several years, you can see the difference between your assessed value and taxable value on your tax bill. The difference in value has been a savings in dollars for the homeowner since the passage of Proposal A. Prior to 1994, taxes were based solely on the assessed value. There was no cap on the amount of taxes paid. Proposal A has protected the property owner with taxable value increases limited to the rate of inflation. If you have any questions, please contact the Assessing Department at (517)669-6494 or via email at [assessing@dewitttownship.org](mailto:assessing@dewitttownship.org).

## TOWNSHIP TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE SOUTH CENTRAL AREA PLAN

So you are probably asking yourself, "What in the world is the South Central Area Plan?" It is a study of the area roughly bounded by Sheridan Road at the southern border of the Township, and Stoll Road at the north end. The east and west boundaries of the area are Wood Road and DeWitt Road.

You may not know that some of the earliest development in the Township occurred in this area along the Business-27 corridor and in the neighborhoods surrounding it. Subdivisions began springing up in this area

in the 1910's as Lansing grew into a manufacturing center. Until the 1960's and 70's, most of the new homes in the Township were built in the neighborhoods in the southern third of the Township.

Even though this is the so-called "older" area of the Township, we have seen some new investment in recent years. We are excited by this new investment and we want to see it continue. The purpose of the study is to identify the "positives" and the "negatives" in the southern area of the Township. Our goal is to develop a plan to build on the positives and reduce the negatives so that new investment will grow, helping to protect and enhance the property values of the homes and businesses in this part of our community.

The Township Board has hired the consulting firm of Vilican Leman to assist with the study. In the near future, we will be scheduling public meetings to get your input about the South Central Area. Keep an eye on future issues of the Township Newsletter and the Township's website, [www.dewitttownship.org](http://www.dewitttownship.org), for important meeting dates and other opportunities to participate. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please call the Planning Department at 669-6576.

## NEWS BITES

**OUTDOOR FACILITY RENTALS** – If you would like to rent a park picnic pavilion, softball field, inline skating rink, or soccer field, please contact the Treasurer's Office at the Township Hall at 668-1411.

**INDOOR FACILITY RENTALS** - (Community Center gym or activity room) will continue to be handled through the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority at 482-5117.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!** Fall Clean Sweep is scheduled for Saturday, October 6, 2007. You can make your required appointment starting September 4, 2007 by calling 668-0270.

**LOOKING FOR VETERANS** - Gordon Shipley is looking for names of deceased veterans to be put on the Clinton County Veterans Memorial Wall in St. Johns, MI. If you just have a name, or a birthdate, or where they went to school, it would be a big help. If you know of any Clinton County Veteran who died while on active duty (even those who did not die in a war zone) please call Gordon Shipley at 989-224-4792.

**THANK YOU** to Al Harrison, Koreen Smith, Helen Parker, Jean Heathman, Brenda Underwood, Ione Berg, Roy Peterson, Robert Miller, Ilse King and Elizabeth Walsh for their help labeling and sorting the Newsletter. Your help is greatly appreciated. If you have some spare time and would like to volunteer, contact the Township at 668-0270.

DEWITT CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
1401 W HERBISON ROAD  
DEWITT MI 48820-7900

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**TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER**