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STATE OF THE VILLAGE

March 2015

Dear Fellow Oakers,

As I write this, the last of what we all hope is the final snow is melting and the weather is turning a little milder. Spring is the season of renewed hope, baseball, summer vacation and the anticipation of good times to come. All of us fortunate to be able to serve the people of Three Oaks are looking forward to some good things happening in our Village in 2015.

As I hope all of you know by now, we are in our new digs at 21 North Elm Street at the intersection of Maple Street. The historic building is known as Three Oaks Professional Building, County Building or "the old bank" depending on your generation. It's a great use of the building, built in 1923 as the E.K. Warren Bank. Please stop by during our open house in May, the exact date to be released later. The old Village Hall on Maple Street is being leased to the American School of Music for use as an arts and learning center for the community. We were able to negotiate a very favorable lease with the County so that the operating expenses for Village Hall are only slightly more than at the old building. And we all get a new arts and learning center to enjoy! We hope you stop by and get acquainted with the school and all their offerings.

We just received the results of the audit for our fiscal year ended September 30, 2014. We continue to improve our financial condition. We are setting aside money for equipment purchases and infrastructure repair so that we can keep up with our needs and do so without borrowing money. The last remnant of the financial crisis is the note to Berrien County for the repurchase of Watkins Park. We are happy to report that the note will be paid off next year, three years ahead of schedule. The audit is available on line at <https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/LAFDocSearch/>. Our reserves have increased to the point that we feel comfortable enough to invest in significant improvements in several areas of the Village. One of the projects is an upgrade to Carver Park in partnership with Three Oaks Township. We will be taking bids soon on a pavilion for the park, including electrical and water service to be located within the foundation of the Village's first schoolhouse. Other amenities include picnic tables, benches, refurbishing of the Carver Memorial, bike racks, walking paths, shrubbery and more. We hope to get more bang for our buck with volunteer labor, so if you are inclined to help, please contact the Village office or any Council member!

The long awaited rebuilding of Maple Street along with new water lines will begin this spring. In conjunction with that work we will be doing the same for Cherry Street from Maple to Sycamore Street

and repaving the parking lot adjacent to Vickers Theatre. We will be finalizing later this year a longer term Capital Improvement Plan laying out street, water, sewer and other major improvements. We will publish it as soon as it is completed.

We have entered into an agreement with Three Oaks Township to market the Enterprise Park at U.S. 12 and Schwark Road. We continue to talk to developers interested in coming to Three Oaks with a variety of plans for residential, commercial and industrial development there and elsewhere. These things take time, so we have been learning to be patient. Hopefully we have more details for you soon. You may have heard talk of a proposed residential development near Watkins Park. The developer proposed a rental community that included 16 three story apartment buildings. The Planning Commission turned down that idea as not conforming to the character of Three Oaks among other things. I whole heartedly agree with that assessment. Hopefully the developer can come back with a more acceptable proposal.

We are all excited about something new coming this year. We are calling it The Big Event. We will be organizing volunteers to help spruce up the Village. We will be working on the parks, benches and planters downtown, and even helping seniors who need help on routine maintenance. It should be a great time and an opportunity for you and your family to help out your fellow citizens and those who for one reason or another need some assistance. The Big Event is scheduled for May 15. Be sure to mark it on your calendars. Like the cool people said back in the day, "be there or be square". We may even have some hot dogs and drinks in Dewey Cannon Park. Please call the Village Hall to volunteer or suggest one of your neighbors who needs our help.

The hardest working Planning Commission in Berrien County is revamping the zoning ordinance. The updates will make it easier for residents to know what activities and construction is allowed on their properties, businesses, etc. We are also in the final stages of codifying Village ordinances. We have numerous instances of conflicting laws, ambiguous, outdated and/or revised ordinances that will be updated and easier to understand. Once that is done we will have them online via the Village's website along with the updated zoning ordinance.

We currently have two openings on the Downtown Development Authority. The Board meets one evening a month. If you are interested in serving your community, please contact Village Manager Adam Umbrasas or Village President David Grosse.

Those are the highlights. We will try to keep everyone up to date on how we are spending your tax dollars. In the meantime, just keep on doing what you all are doing. You're doing something right because Three Oaks is STILL the greatest place on the face of the earth to live and raise a family

On behalf of the Three Oaks Village Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Grosse', is written over a horizontal line.

David Grosse, Village President

Cheryl Capiak, President Pro Tem
Steve Graziano
John Kramer
John Pappa
Troy Zebell
Darlene Heemstra