

Fall 2019

Wilson Township News

Wilson Township, Charlevoix County

Changes to the Voting Process for 2020 Elections

“The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.”

John Lewis

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With a government elected by its citizens and that affects every aspect of our lives from schools to health care to homeland security, voting is an important right in our society. By voting you are making your voice heard. It's more essential now than ever to cast your ballot. But, before you can vote in an election, you must be registered. With the passage of Proposal 18-3 last November, significant changes will have an effect on the registration and voting processes for voters and clerks alike.

Voter Registration Changes: The registration process for Michigan voters has changed. When an eligible citizen who is not already registered to vote completes a driver's license or personal identification card transaction through the Michigan Secretary of State, the voter will be *automatically* registered to vote unless the voter declines.

Also enacted with the Proposal, the deadline to register to vote is no longer 30 days before an election. Under the new law, voters may register in person, by mail, or online up to 15 days prior to an election. Voters may also register in person with their local clerk within 14 days of an election, up to and including

Election Day. A voter registering in the final 14 days, including Election Day, **must show proof of residency in addition to proof of identity** (or an ID that proves both). Those same registrants can request an absentee ballot at the time of registration.

Absent Voter Balloting Process:

Did you know . . . *anyone* can skip the line on Election day and vote by mail? With passage of Proposal 18-3 voters are no longer required to provide a reason to request an absent voter ballot. This means any registered voter may request an AV ballot simply by submitting a signed request (an application or note) to their local clerk.

Permanent Absent Voter List:

A voter can request to be placed on a permanent absent voter list. This assures the voter that they will receive, by mail, an AV Application prior to every election. In order to receive an Absentee Ballot, the voter must complete the AV Application and return it to the Clerk's office by the deadline for the election. If a voter does not wish to receive a ballot, they do not return the application.

Time frames for issuing ballots were also changed. Key times to note:

Last Day to Request an AV Ballot by Mail –The deadline for voters to request an absent voter ballot by First Class mail has changed to the Friday prior to the election at 5 p.m. Clerks must honor requests received by that time and mail ballots to voters.

AV Emergency Time Frame – The time frame in which voters may request emergency AV ballots now runs from 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election through 4 p.m. on Election Day.

Weekend Hours – The local clerk's office must be open at least 8 hours on the weekend prior to an election. These hours can be offered in any combination of Saturday and/or Sunday hours. Times must be determined and posted.

Election Day – A clerk or deputized staff must be available on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Clerk's office to register voters and issue absentee ballots.

Ballots issued on Election Day must be delivered to the Precinct or AV Counting Board for processing as soon as possible after the polls close.

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Upcoming 2020 Elections: March 10th—Presidential Primary
August 6th—Primary Election

May 5th—Special Election
November 5th—General Election

Changes to the Voting Process Continued . . .

Residents voting by absentee ballot will notice something a little different this election cycle: the envelope. The change comes from the move from the former “craft brown” envelope to a white envelope with a blue stripe on the side that will arrive at voters’ homes. The envelope that gets sent back to the Clerk’s office will have a green stripe.

If you want to register to vote, request an AV application or be placed on the permanent AV

list, call the Clerk’s office at (231) 582-1033 or email: marilynbeebe@charter.net. A voter registration form can also be downloaded from the Wilson Township website: www.wilsontownship.org.

Visit www.Michigan.gov/vote to:

- Find out if you are registered to vote
- View your sample ballot
- Find your voting location
- Track your absentee ballot
- And much more

Good News for Wilson Township Roads

In the last election for Wilson Township, the residents approved a one (1) mill increase for road improvements, giving the Township a total of two (2) mills or approximately \$150,000 for roads every year. This past year with the increase in millage, the Wilson Township Board of Trustees approved the improvement of Crozier Road at a total cost of \$185,885.60. It should be noted that the Charlevoix County Road Commission also covered some of the cost, reducing the Township

outlay to \$158,145.72.

One of the problems both the Road Commission and the township face with road improvements, is the rising cost of asphalt. Asphalt four (4) years ago cost \$45 to \$50 per ton. This past summer the cost rose to \$70 to \$80 per ton. Regardless, the Wilson Township Board of Trustees will do everything possible to improve roads in Wilson Township.

Get Rid of Those Tires!

“The Michigan Department of EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) offers a grant program”

If you were at the Fall Clean-up in September, or you received a post card notifying you of the clean-up, you probably saw that tires were not accepted this year. Some of the problems with accepting tires is that the township has to pay to dispose of them plus are not made aware of what is done with them after they are hauled away.

Ground rubber accounted for 25% of scrap tire usage in 2017. Ground rubber is used to

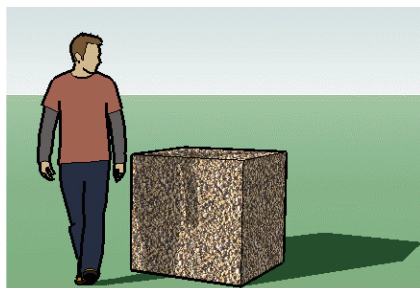
manufacture a number of products, ranging from asphalt rubber, sports track material, synthetic sports field underlay, animal bedding, and more.

About 43% of scrap tires were consumed as TDF (Tire Derived Fuel) in 2018. TDF offers a viable alternative to the use of fossil fuels, as long as proper regulatory controls are in place. Major applications include cement kilns (46% of TDF), pulp and paper (29%) and electric utility boilers (25%).

The Michigan Department of EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) offers a grant program that collects and recycles scrap tires. Wilson Township and Charlevoix County both applied for and were each awarded an EGLE Scrap Tire Grant. The township in conjunction with the county and the Charlevoix County Road Commission will be scheduling a Tire Pickup Day next year to eliminate and recycle scrap tires from Wilson Township and Charlevoix County.

Fall Clean-up was a big success!

The 2019 Fall Clean-up held on the last Saturday in September was a big success. Residents of Wilson Township managed to remove over 175 compacted cubic yards of trash from the township. To put this in perspective, in the picture the block represents one (1) cubic yard. Now multiply that by 175. Well, you get the picture.



In past years, the Fall Clean-up was held in October. Hoping for better weather conditions, this

year the clean-up was held in September. As a result, future township clean-ups will be held the last Saturday in September.

If you came by the clean-up, you probably noticed the “Be Prepared to Stop” signs and speed monitors. One of the problems in past events, was motorists driving too fast past the vehicles lined up to drop off trash. With the help of the Charlevoix

County Road Commission (signs) and the Charlevoix County Sheriff’s Department (speed monitors), we were able to slow traffic down and make a much safer clean-up for everyone. The Township wishes to thank the County Road Commission and the Sheriff’s Department for assisting. Next year’s clean-up is scheduled for September 26, 2020 starting at 8:00 AM and ending at noon.

Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption

Veterans who have illnesses, injuries, hearing loss, mental health concerns, etc. that they believe occurred or was caused by military service are encouraged to speak to a Veteran Service Officer regarding their conditions to determine their eligibility for VA compensation. Veterans currently with Service Connected Conditions should assess whether their conditions have worsened, which may warrant an increase in their rating percentage.

In 2013, the State of Michigan passed P.A. 161, which allows Military Veterans who are 100% disabled (determined by the Veterans Administration) to file for 100% exemption from property taxes for their principal residence. Eligibility Requirements: The disabled veteran must have been honorably dis-

charged from the armed forces of the United States, must be a Michigan resident and must meet one of the following criteria:

A) Has been determined by the United States department of veterans' affairs to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans' benefits at the 100% rate.

B) Has a certificate from the United States veterans' administration, or its successors, certifying that he or she is receiving or has received pecuniary assistance due to disability for specially adapted housing.

C) Has been rated by the United States department of veterans' affairs as individually unemployable. The un-remarried surviving spouse of the disabled veteran is eligible for the exemption based upon the eligibil-

ity of their spouse; therefore the spouse must also be a Michigan resident. The exemption will continue only as long as the surviving spouse remains un-remarried.

Eligible Veterans MUST file for their Property Exemptions ANNUALLY! To apply for the Disabled Veterans Exemption you will need to complete the State Tax Commission Affidavit for Disabled Veterans Exemption form 5107 along with a copy of their Summary of Benefits Letter from the VA showing the Veteran has met the previously stated eligibility requirements. Although it is encouraged that these forms be submitted PRIOR to the March Board of Review, Veterans who obtain 100% ratings have until the December Board of Review to submit their paperwork for exemption for that year.

Wilson Township will work with any eligible Veterans to file their property exemption on an annual basis. All forms are located at the Wilson Township Website: www.wilsontownship.org. You can also call the Wilson Township Assessor, Todd Sorenson, anytime at: 231-582-7122 or email: tbsorenson@gmail.com. The State of Michigan website has a Frequently Asked Questions booklet that is also on the Wilson Township website.

Anyone interested in hearing more about their VA related benefits is encouraged to contact Cheryl Young, Charlevoix County Veteran's Service Officer at the main Charlevoix Office Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 547-7220 or the Boyne Falls Sheriff's Annex Mondays and Wednesdays 8-4:30 @ 231-308-3726 or email: youngc@charlevoixcounty.org.

Planning & Zoning Update

Changes along M-75 Corridor: In February, an application was submitted by Bulman Ventures LLC to amend a previously approved site plan. The original plan approved a building addition of 28,800 square feet for new manufacturing space. The amended plan reconfigured the parking area and approved a phased plan that would construct a 14,400 square foot addition as part of a first phase with the remainder of the previously approved addition to be constructed in future phases. With the approval of the phased plan, the building that was the location of R&B excavating, previously proposed to be removed, will be maintained and used for temporary storage until the construction of the future phases. Construction of the addition began in the spring and was completed this fall.

Bunnell Hill Development received Site Plan and Special Use approval for a Tractor Supply retail store in February. Con-

struction on the site began in April and the store was open to the public in September. The approved plan included a 19,000 square foot building, 17,000 square feet of outdoor merchandise storage, 5,880 square feet of outdoor product display areas and 69 paved parking spaces. In all, the proposed development added approximately 2.6 acres of impervious surface to the site. This large amount of impervious surface area and the topography of the site made storm water runoff control a primary consideration during site plan review. The township plan approval required that all storm water runoff from all new impervious surfaces be retained on site. To accomplish this, the plan included a storm water drainage system and storm water retention ponds. These systems have been significantly tested with the large amount of rain this fall, and so far, all of the systems have performed as designed.

Other activity on M-75 included new construction at Eagle Marine and Boyne Valley Storage. In February Eagle Marine received site plan approval for the addition of a new cold storage building located on the east side of their existing facility. In March, a site plan for phase 2 of the Boyne Valley Storage condominiums was approved. The original site plan for Boyne Valley Storage was approved in 2007 and was subsequently amended in 2014 that changed the lay out and orientation of the buildings and divided the project into two phases. In the approved phase 2 there are 10 additional storage buildings that would be 50 feet wide and range in length from 100 to 160 feet.

Ordinance Changes:

The Township made changes to the Home-Based Business zoning ordinance requirements. The maximum size of an accessory building that can be used for a home-based business is

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now capped at a maximum of 2,400 square feet and home-based business special use approvals now terminate with the transfer of ownership of the property.

Recreation Planning:

The Township 5-year Recreation Plan expired in 2019. Through the summer and fall, work on updating the plan was completed. After final approval by the Township Board, the plan is submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. A current recreation plan needs to be approved and on file with the MDNR in order to qualify for various grant programs.

Trustream Internet and Voice Service

By now most Wilson Township residents know that Great Lakes Energy (GLE) has developed Trustream high-speed fiber internet and voice service. GLE is completing a service area in Emmet County and small parts of Charlevoix and Cheboygan counties. The next development for internet is being driven by interest expressed by residents who have GLE. In other words **you have to preregister with Trustream.** As they see interest grow in communities, GLE will set goals for how many homes and businesses need to

take service before construction will begin. **Preregistration goals must be met before construction plans can be finalized.**

Ok, so how do you preregister? If you have access to any internet you can register at : www.jointruestream.com. Or if you don't have internet access, you can call the GLE Call Center: 1 (888) 485-2537. The Township has spoken to the GLE Call Center and they have said that you can speak to anyone—just let them know you want to preregister for Trustream fiber internet.

Welcome Karen Hellebuyck
as the new Wilson Township
Deputy Treasurer!

Wreaths Across America Continues

Last year the township lost a devoted trustee, a caring sexton, an unselfish volunteer and an amazing friend in Jeff Argetsinger. Jeff's devotion to his cemetery duties was beyond compare. The Wilson Township Board of Trustees will continue his work with Wreaths Across America to the best of our ability.

The inspiration for this year's theme was a recommendation made by ten-year-old "Mighty Miles" Worcester, the grandson of the founders of Wreaths Across America. Last May, while in Washington D.C. for an event, Miles saw a U.S. Service member in uniform at the hotel where he was staying. As he always does, Miles walked up to the gentleman, reached out to shake his hand and thanked him for his service. And his response was simple and impactful: "Thank you . . . everyone

plays a part." Miles went directly to his grandmother, WAA Executive Director Karen Worcester, to tell her that he believed this statement would be the perfect theme because, as he said, "those serving in the military are doing their part, but it is our part as Americans to remember and honor them, and that's what Wreaths Across America does."

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, December 14, 2019. Wilson Township will celebrate the event at 10:00 AM at Knup Cemetery on the corner of Wilson and Behling Roads. It is always a free event and open to all people.



National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Floods are the nation's most common natural disaster, however flood damage is rarely covered under your homeowners or renters policy.

In 1968 the Congress of the United States created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This program allows the residents of the township to purchase federally backed flood insurance and receive disaster assistance for flood-related damage. The National Flood Insurance Program aims to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures. It does so by providing affordable insurance to property owners, renters and businesses and by encouraging communities to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations.

In March of 2019, Wilson Township, with the concurrence of Charlevoix County, started the process of joining the National Flood Insurance Program. If you are interested in purchasing flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program, and would like more information or have questions, go to :

www.floodsmart.gov.

We are on the web!

www.wilsontownship.org

Monthly Township Meeting Schedule

- Planning Commission - 1st Wednesday
- Board of Trustees - 2nd Wednesday
- ZBA - 3rd Wednesday (if an appeal is pending)
- Board of Review 2020
 - ◆ March 3 (Organizational mtg.)
 - ◆ March 9 & 10
 - ◆ July 21 (corrections & appeals)
 - ◆ December 15 (corrections & appeals)

Interested in becoming involved in your township government? Wilson Township is looking to fill the following positions:

- Cemetery Sexton
- Zoning Board of Appeals Member
- Board of Review Member

Please mail, email, or fax an application to:

Marilyn Beebe, Clerk
P.O. Box 447
Boyne City, MI 49712
Email: marilynbeebe@charter.net
Fax: 1-866-998-1922

Applications can be found on the township's website:
www.wilsontownship.org.