

Scio Township

COMMUNITY REPORT

Fall 2008

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FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK - BY CHARLES NIELSEN

Scio Autumn

Public Safety Reminder

Last June you were sent a special edition of the Scio Newsletter, which was dedicated to our Public Safety Committee's final report. This is a vital issue and Scio's biggest challenge at this time. I hope you read it. If not, you can access it through our website, <http://www.twp.scio.mi.us/newsletters/index.html>. It is my hope that you will understand the nature of the problem and help support a solution. Your participation will be critical to keeping your children and all of us safe. See related article on page 6.

Public Transportation Expands

On July 28 Scio Township launched a new public transportation service: a bus route that uses People's Express and it is being funded by Scio's Downtown Development Authority. As I wrote in my last issue, this is a trial program and it will depend on private sector funding to sustain it beyond the first trial period. If you work in the Township please ask your employer to help and if you live here, please



ask your landlord or homeowners association. Meanwhile, over 600 riders have used the system in the first month and I have heard many positive comments from residents. Ridership is currently averaging 35/day so I expect the total to be even higher in the coming months.

Our citizens living in the area of Parkland Plaza and Little Lake Drive have bus service for the first time and residents of Scio Farms Estates now have another option. One consequence of this program that has emerged is

From The Supervisor's Desk continued on page 2

BY DARRELL A. FECHO, TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Restriction on Use of Local Funds

Recently, you may have seen some confusing and troubling information about the use of Township funds. Some have argued that state law allows the Township to use revenues from proprietary funds (such as the water and sewer or land preservation funds) for other Township purposes or endeavors. Simply stated, this is not legal.

Proprietary funds are restricted

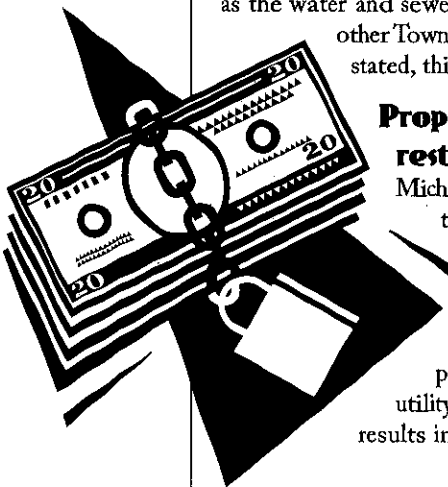
Michigan law and court decisions prohibit the use of proprietary fund revenues for general government operations, such as police and fire protection. The use of sewer and water fund revenues for purposes other than supporting the utility system for which they were raised results in the revenues being categorized

as an unlawful tax. It is a very serious violation of public financial management practices. Although section 26 of the Revenue Bond Act, 94 PA 1933, provides that certain "surplus" revenues of a utility system "may be transferred to other accounts of the public improvement or may be used for the purpose or purposes as the governing body may determine to be for the best interests of the borrower," this section does not stand alone. This law was enacted in 1933 and since then, there have been numerous opinions of Michigan courts, including the Michigan Supreme Court, which severely restrict the use of utility system revenues.

Funds must be kept segregated

In order to adhere to decisions of the Michigan courts, revenues raised by the water or sewer system must be segregated and can only be used to support the system's related operating and capital expenses. Less than one-half

Cooperation continued on page 2



This area would be able to support biking and walking trails, fishing, canoeing, nature studies, and active recreation in the form of soccer and baseball fields.

some competition with the existing service, Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE). The DDA did not engage in this program to create such competition; it did so to provide more frequent service and to service some areas that WAVE cannot at this time. I believe that some careful thinking, patience, and cooperation between all involved parties will lead us to the development of a plan that will maintain both of these bus routes successfully. For more details, see accompanying article on page 4.

Local Road Repairs

The Township Board recently passed resolutions to resurface Jackson Plaza and Aprill Drive. This is a cooperative effort between the DDA, the Washtenaw County Road Commission, and the Township. The ultimate goal of this cooperation is to provide a program that will enable repairs for all of our local roads that are in need. The tools to do this are local Special Assessment Districts and a township road repair revolving fund. Our Local Roads Committee has had meetings with many of the residents in the area along Liberty Road that often floods. I appreciate the input, cooperation, and patience of these residents as the Road Commission provided us with various options to try to solve this problem. Unfortunately all of the options that should provide a long term solution are very expensive, as would be expected considering the magnitude and nature of the problem. As a result, no significant remediation is planned at this time, just increased routine maintenance.

Boulevard Expansion and Bridge Repair

Jackson Boulevard construction is moving along well and pretty much on schedule. One undesired and unexpected side effect has been the emptying of some of the ponds in Scio Farms Estates and along the boulevard. This was caused by the large scale de-watering that had to occur in the construction area due to wet soils. This was done

to ensure the safety of workers as they trench and install new sewer lines. These ponds will start to recover after the operation has ceased, which should be in November. Work on the Delhi Bridge rehabilitation is behind schedule due to great difficulty encountered in installing the coffer dam metal panels. The project is about a month behind, but work is continuing.

Is a Scio Township Park Coming?

A Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grant application has been successfully filed. This grant is to provide 75% of the funding for parkland acquisition. The target area is on the west side of Baker Road to the banks of Mill Creek, just south of the Village of Dexter, and south down to the area around the nursery. This area would be able to support biking and walking trails, fishing, canoeing, nature studies, and active recreation in the form of soccer and baseball fields. We have received many letters of support, including enthusiastic support from Dexter Village Council. I look for the Village and Township to cooperate on this project to make the most of it for the benefit of both Scio Township and Dexter residents.

Signing Off

Since my term expires on November 19, this is my final writing for this newsletter. In closing, I wish to express my gratitude for being able to serve the residents of Scio Township for the last four years. Though we still have challenges as yet unresolved, like Public Safety and Sewer Capacity, I believe that I have helped move the Township in the right direction and during difficult economic times. I have worked hard and learned and experienced a lot during my term, and I thank the Township for providing me this opportunity. It has been a privilege and honor serving you and since I will remain active in the community, I look forward to the next time we meet.

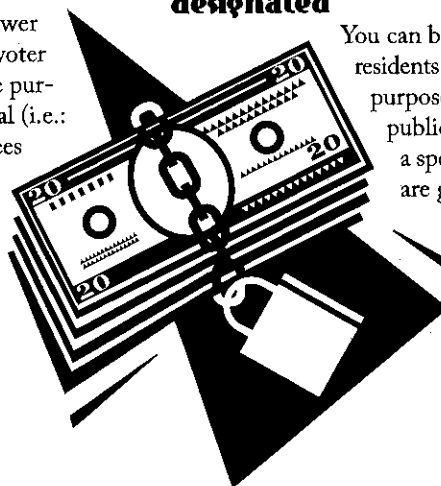


The funds that are generated will be restricted for the purposes stated and will not nor cannot be transferred to other uses

of Scio is served by the public water or sewer system. Likewise, the funds raised by the voter initiated Proposal J can only be used for the purpose described in Proposal J's ballot proposal (i.e.: land preservation). Governmental program fees are also restricted to offsetting the costs of programs for which they apply. The use of such revenues for other purposes or the general benefit of the Township would be a grossly inappropriate use of the money and would be reported as such in the annual independent audit of the Township.

Funds will be used as originally designated

You can be assured that when Township residents approve funds levied for specific purposes, such as land preservation or public safety, or if you participate in a special assessment, the funds that are generated will be restricted for the purposes stated and will not nor cannot be transferred to other uses. Such transfer is illegal under current Michigan law.



Master Plan Update Nears Completion

It is expected that this final draft will be released for distribution by October 15th.

On this date, it is hoped that the draft will be posted to the website and thus made generally available to the public for review and comment.

I'm happy to report that the Master Plan update is nearing completion and that we are ready to enter the final stage of review. State law is very specific regarding requirements during this stage. If all interim conditions are met on schedule, the new Master Plan should be in place and operational by January 2009.

Draft Copies Online In October

At this writing, the final draft of the Master Plan Update is scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at its September 22nd meeting. It is expected that this final draft will be released for distribution by October 15th. On this date, it is hoped that the draft will be posted to the website and thus made generally available to the public for review and comment. Additionally, all entities will be notified, as required by law, and will receive a copy for their review. These comments are advisory only.

Public Hearing In December

The required comment period of 63 days is expected to close on or around December 18th at which time the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing. Action to approve the Master Plan Update may be taken directly after the public hearing or may be delayed for future action. Check the website postings for actual dates and offer your comments in person or in writing.

New Officers

The Planning Commission bylaws provide that each year in July members of the Commission nominate and elect from within members for the offices of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary. This year Allison Arscott continues

in the office of chairperson, Gerry Kangas takes over as vice-chair replacing Tom Hanson, and Doug Fuller becomes the new secretary replacing Chris Green. Marty Mayo continues as the planning commission representative to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Doug Fuller as the representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and Allison Arscott as representative to the Land Preservation Commission. Our thanks go to these folks for their service to the Township.

Improvements Underway For Suburban Chevrolet And Nicholson Honda

Fresh, new looks are in the works for two properties on the south side of Jackson Boulevard. Both properties have been granted administrative site plan approval to proceed with façade improvements, site lighting and landscaping upgrades to meet new zoning ordinance standards. Suburban Chevrolet, on the southwest corner of Jackson and Wagner, will redo the existing building façade creating some height and add some mezzanine space. Nicholson Honda at 4405 Jackson will add a small expansion at the rear of the building. Both businesses will redo site lighting to meet ordinance requirements for pole heights and light intensities and will redo Jackson Boulevard landscape to meet the greenbelt requirements adding trees, shrubs and foundation plantings.

Staebler Road Offices

At the very north end of Staebler Road just south of I-94, a new commercial/office development is in the final stages of site plan review. The 16.53 acre parcel is zoned industrial and is currently being used for storage of some construction materials. Almost half of the site is covered by state regulated wetlands. Access to the west half of the site requires MDEQ and Township wetland permits to cross the regulated wetlands. The proposed development includes three new office buildings (4,032 sf) fronting on Staebler Road and will be developed over 5 phases. Two of these offices are planned to be leased and the third will be occupied by the site owner, E.T. Mackenzie, an underground construction contractor. A materials storage area with a contractor's workshop/office (5,440 sf) is proposed on the rear (west) half of the parcel.

Site will require replacement trees

The site contains substantial wooded areas which are regulated by the Township's Woodland Ordinance. The plan calls for removal of 10 landmark trees and 231 other regulated trees. According to ordinance, 343 replacement trees are required to mitigate these removals but only 190 replacements will fit on the site. Therefore, the 153 remaining replacement trees will be converted to a dollar value and deposited into the Township's Tree Fund for use as determined by the Fund's provisions. This is the first use of the Tree Fund since the Township's Woodland Ordinance was adopted.

Stay informed

Please feel free to attend the Planning Commission meetings scheduled for the second and fourth Mondays of the month. Our schedule and agendas are online at <http://www.twp.scio.mi.us/administration/planning>.





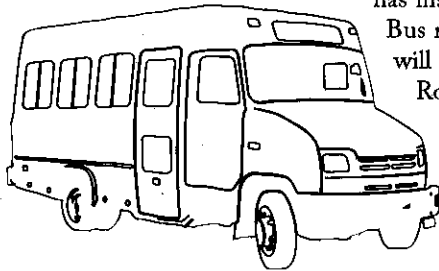
Don't forget to VOTE!

The presidential election will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2008. In addition, there are many local and state positions and issues to be decided. Polls will be open from 7:00 am until 8:00 pm so please remember to vote.

For your reference,,a precinct map can be found on our website at: <http://www.twp.scio.mi.us/about> or stop by the Township Hall to determine your polling place.

BY TRUSTEE JEAN LEDWITH KING

Scio Introduces the FlexBus



There is really good news for Scio residents who need transportation to or from Ann Arbor's bus system, Scio Township Hall or the county buildings on Zeeb Road. Scio's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has instituted a one-year field study of the Flex Bus run by People's Express. This new system will operate on Jackson Road between Wagner Road and Scio Farms Estates, on Zeeb Road between Jackson Road and the Township/County buildings, and on Parkland Plaza between Jackson Road and Sunward co-housing and Lake Stone Apartments. Its hours are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday (except holidays).

One-year trial period

The bus holds 20 people and it is very important that we utilize this service as much as possible. If we can show there is a demand for this service, there is a very good likelihood that it will continue beyond its one-year trial period.

Flexible pick-up points

Riders can wait at one of three bus stops: Scio Farms Estates, Meijer's, and AATA bus stop. Passengers can also stand on the curb along the route and flag down the bus. Additionally, if you are located within 3/4 mile of Jackson

Road, you can chose to "flex it"- simply pick up the phone and call (734) 678-3935 for a pick up.

Scheduled to run all day

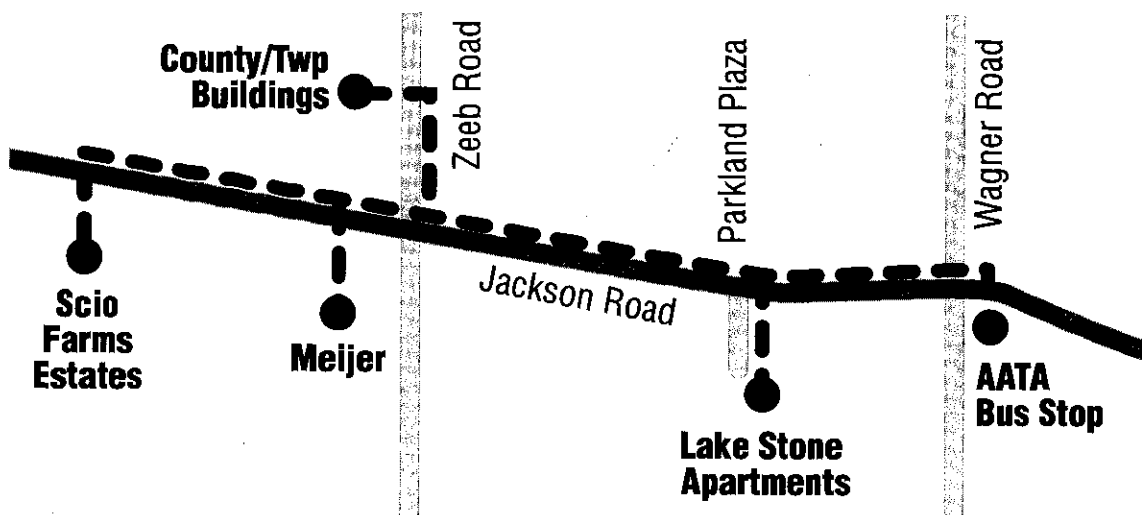
The first Flex Bus pick-up of the day is on the hour at 7:00 a.m. at the Scio Farms Estates mailboxes. It arrives at the AATA bus stop on Jackson at Wagner on the half hour where you can connect with the Ann Arbor bus system. Along the way, the Flex Bus stops at Meijer's (approximately 5 after the hour), Parkland Plaza (approximately 11 after the hour), Sunward co-housing on Little Lake at 15 minutes after the hour, and Lake Stone Apartments at 16 after the hour. After completing its run at the AATA bus stop, the bus then turns around and heads west on Jackson Road stopping at Scio Township Hall at 45 after the hour and then back to Scio Farms Estates. This is repeated each hour with the eastbound bus leaving Scio Farms on the hour and the return westbound run leaving Jackson and Wagner on the 1/2 hour. The last pickup at the AATA bus stop on Jackson Road is at 6:30 p.m. and this bus returns to Scio Farms.

Rates are reasonable

The normal one-way fare for the Flex Bus is \$0.50. If you require a pickup off route, (called "flex-it"), the one-way fare is \$1.00. In order to qualify for a flex pickup, you must be within 3/4 of a mile from Jackson Road. To schedule a flex pickup, call (734) 678-3935. All vehicles are handicap accessible and you must have exact change. Currently, the Flex Bus does not have a bike rack but there may be one available in the future.

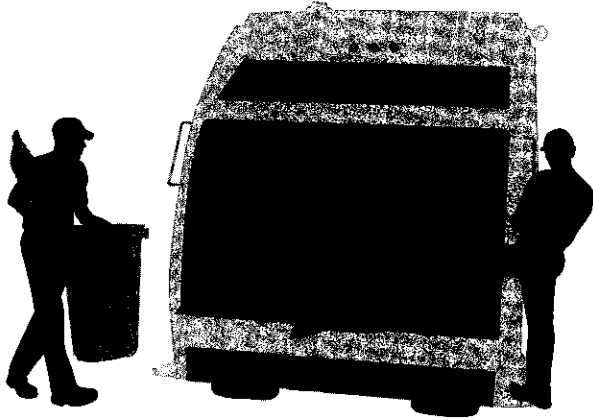
Keep informed

If you have any questions, check the Township's web site, www.twp.scio.mi.us or call People's Express at (734) 678-3935. Please try to use this service so that we can keep it going past its initial one-year trial period.



Trash Talk

In December 2007, the Township contacted all waste haulers in the area in an effort to negotiate a preferred rate for collection services for Township residents. Only one company responded with a proposal. That firm required an "exclusive" contract to become the "sole" residential hauler in Scio. The Township Board had serious reservations about banning other haulers from doing competitive business in Scio.



Other bids sought

The Township sought out haulers who were willing to publish guaranteed rates. The responsive companies guarantee these rates for solid waste and recycling services in exchange for making the details available in a public forum. Residents can make an informed choice among private companies. Any hauler

not honoring their stated prices will lose their "preferred status". The initial companies committing to this program are: Modern Waste Systems, Inc.; Monroe's Rubbish Removal, Inc.; and Waste Management of Michigan, Inc.

Guaranteed Rates for Residential Solid Waste Collection

You can review guaranteed fee schedules in Scio Township from preferred private waste haulers. The Township does not directly provide solid waste hauling services; each property owner must make their own arrangements for this service. The new preferred hauler program assists residents in selecting reputable private waste haulers who provide the most economical services.

Stay informed

You can compare the prices and services, and get contact information for the preferred waste haulers at the Township web site: www.twp.scio.mi.us.

BY TRUSTEE CHUCK REAM

Citizen Feedback on a Festival for Scio Township

If you would like to help make an annual Festival for Scio happen, please contact township-board@twp.scio.mi.us.

Readers have sent ideas about an annual festival or event for Scio Township encompassing such varied themes as local foods, pies, and fireflies.

Pies are popular

Pies have many fans. One of them, BB, says, "Let them eat pie!" She described a small town event she enjoyed where there was music and activities in the evening and people brought blankets or chairs to sit on. She said, "A very popular thing was the pie tent... It was really a town event and people love pie! I love the idea of a festival!" Another pie lover, BS, wrote "All kinds, fruit pies, meat pies, veggie pies, pasties." She proposed activities like a parade, folk music, art poster competition, pie demonstrations or contests, children's activities and a raffle. AM was full of ideas, outlining plans for a local food festival, a firefly festival, a circus themed event, an Italian festival and a costume festival. She proposed a stage for entertainment, possibly at night, maybe including a movie, a band or a comedian.

Focus on local products

JM e-mailed in support of a German Festival. Supervisor Nielsen thought this would give us a great excuse to drink beer. A local attorney, VM says, "I like the idea of a festival for our Township, especially one focusing on local



produce and products - and tips on gardening in Scio Township, canning, freezing local products, and raising/keeping chickens." That's an energetic attorney!

Let us know how you feel

A few people have enthusiastically volunteered to work on a Scio festival. Time will tell whether enough people want to work on creating a festival for Scio, and how the Township Board that takes office in November will evaluate the idea. If you would like to help make an annual Festival for Scio happen, please contact townshipboard@twp.scio.mi.us.

Thank you for the honor of being elected a Trustee of Scio Township for the past 20 years.

Fast Facts About Fire Protection in Scio Township

The majority of the fire department calls are for medical emergencies, not for structure fires, downed wires, or other problems.

What fire services are available in Scio Township?

A full-time Fire Chief, three full-time fire fighters, and a part time Assistant Fire Marshal regularly staff the STFD. Depending on availability, fourteen on call fire fighters (i.e.: those who are only paid for the time spent responding to calls.) participate in training and delivery of emergency services as needed. One fire fighter is in house and prepared to respond at all times. It should be noted however that, while the Chief is on call 24/7 and, during regular working hours is the second assigned firefighter, 30% of the time there is only one firefighter on duty. This limited staffing is below national standards. Scio's fire fighters are trained first responders. This means that they respond to medical emergencies as well as fire and other emergency calls. In fact, the majority of the fire department calls are for medical emergencies, not for structure fires, downed wires, or other problems.

How often does the Township use fire services?

The Scio Township Fire Department (STFD) had a total of 3,425 calls during the years 2003-2006. These calls were for the following services:

- 47% medical emergencies
- 19% motor vehicle accidents, medical
- 14% other (such as downed wires)
- 12% responding to alarms
- 3.5% structure fires
- 3% motor vehicle accidents, non- medical

How does the Township pay for fire protection?

The Township uses general funds to pay for fire protection. The three main sources of revenue for the General Fund are property taxes, state shared revenue and tax administration fees all of which are expected to decrease in the coming years. In past years, the cost of fire protection services, plus the cost of the services the Township is obligated to provide, exceeded the Township's revenue, and the Township had to use reserve funds to balance the budget. This year, the estimated cost for fire protection is \$678,100, about 20% of the Township's total budget.

The Township collects a lot of property taxes. How come there isn't more money for fire?

The Township only collects 0.95 mills of taxes for the Township. (The Township also collects 0.4942 mills for open space preservation, which can only be used for that purpose.) The Township's 0.95 mills is 3.1% of the total property taxes on residential property. For example, if your house has a taxable value of \$175,000, you pay \$5,414.76 in property taxes but the Township only keeps \$166.57 for the General Fund. The rest goes to local schools (Ann Arbor or Dexter), the library, Washtenaw County, Washtenaw Community College, the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District, land preservation, and the state education fund.

Extra manpower required

The Public Safety Committee has recommended increases to the fire and police staff that will add approximately \$1m to the budget. The Board has put the Fire Protection Proposition on November's ballot. If passed, it will add \$157.50 to the taxes of the above home or about \$0.50 a day. The additional funds raised by the proposed special assessment will be used to fund the current and additional fire services as recommended by the Committee.



The Fire Department can reach a Scio Township resident faster than a Huron Valley Ambulance in almost all cases (because the fire fighters are stationed here, but the HVA ambulances are on call all over the county at all times.) The STFD usually arrives on scene at least three minutes before HVA.



Get involved in your community

Scio Township Information

Scio Township Hall
827 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 665-2123; info@twp.scio.mi.us
visit us at: www.twp.scio.mi.us

Township Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Township Board of Trustees

Charles Nielsen, Supervisor
Kathleen Knol, Clerk
Donna Palmer, Treasurer
Jim Dries, Trustee
Jean Ledwith King, Trustee
David Nacht, Trustee
Charles Ream, Trustee
Darrell A. Fecho, Township Manager... (734) 665-2123

Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Township Hall. E-mail sent to townshipboard@twp.scio.mi.us will be forwarded to all members of the township board.

Scio Township Department Heads

Carl Ferch, Fire Chief... (734) 665-6001
Scott Martin – Utilities Director... (734) 665-2606
James Merte – Assessing... (734) 665-2123

Phone Numbers

Emergencies... 911
Fire Department
Administration... (734) 665-6001
Sheriff's Department,
Zeeb Road Sub-Station... (734) 994-8105
Utilities Emergency... (734) 651-4770
Utilities Administration... (734) 665-2606
County Building Inspection Services... (734) 222-3900
County Drain Commissioner:... (734) 994-2525

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SenLBrater@senate.michigan.gov

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(202) 225-6276;
e-mail via www.walberg.house.gov

District 15 – John Dingell
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e-mail via www.house.gov/dingell

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senator@stabenow.senate.gov

Carl Levin

(202) 224-6221;
e-mail via www.levin.senate.gov

President of the United States:

George W. Bush
(202) 456-1111; president@whitehouse.gov



It's a Halloween Party!

The Scio Township Fire Department will hold its annual Halloween Party

**Sunday
October
26th
from
1 to 4 p.m.**

Come join us for fun, food and surprises!

BY JACK GERMAIN, ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHAL

Fire Prevention Week

It's that time of year again, Fire Prevention Week, October 5-11th. As many of you know, Fire Prevention Week was established to help commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of October 8, 1871. Perhaps fewer people know that on the same date, the entire town of Peshtigo Wisconsin was destroyed with a much greater loss of life. This year's theme is "Prevent Home Fires". We like to feel safe at home but the fact is 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur in our homes. In 2006, 2,500 people died in home fires and 12,500 were injured in the 400,000 home fires reported in the U.S. There was \$7 Billion of direct property damage as a result of these fires.

Be safe at home

What can you do? Check your batteries in your Smoke and Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors. In the past two years Scio Firefighters, with a generous donation from Meijer's, have installed (free) 75 new Smoke and CO detectors in residents home. If you still don't have a smoke detector on every level of your house, give us a call (665-6001) and we'll try to get out to your house and install them for you. Every home should have at least one CO detector as well.

Have a plan

Make sure everyone in the family knows the Home Fire Escape Plan and the Meeting place. Also make sure your heating equipment is in good order and maintained. Approximately 66% of fire deaths involving heating equipment are from fires caused by portable heaters. Keep them away from things that can burn and turn them off when you leave the room.

Keep informed

If you would like more information contact us or go online at NFPA.org. This is also a great site for teachers and educators.

Think about Fire Safety

It's rumored Mrs. O'Leary's cow started the Great Chicago Fire by kicking over the lantern. Even if true, it's safe to say the cow didn't put the lantern in harms way. We can prevent fires by what we do.



October 5-11

**DREAMING UP THE IDEAL RETIREMENT
IS YOUR JOB. HELPING YOU GET THERE IS OURS.**

To see why it makes sense to get ready for retirement now, call today.

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Financial Advisor

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Edward Jones

Larry G. Skidles Jr.
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Ann Arbor, MI 48103
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Scio Township

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