



C O M M U N I T Y R E P O R T

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING TOWNSHIP EMPLOYEES AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Andrea Garrett, Assessing, 27 years
 Rich Hughes, Utilities, 20 years
 Kristy Aiken, Administration, 11 years

Glen Cobb, Fire, 7 years
 Chris Collier, Fire, 7 years
 Chris Samborn, Fire, 7 years
 Brandon McNeil, Utilities, 2 years

Chris Cheng, Administration, 2 years
 Joel Foster, Treasury, 1 year
 Michael Simpson, Fire, 1 year

FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK

BY JILLIAN KERRY, SUPERVISOR

One of the last official acts of the 2016-20 Board of Trustees was to adopt an updated Solid Waste Ordinance. The major change in this update required that residential waste hauling services be provided through a Township-issued contract. **While waste service is not mandatory for households, any household that chooses to use a trash hauling service must do so through the company selected by the Township.** At that time, Green for Life (GFL) was awarded a five-year contract, with an option to extend it for an additional five years.

On July 1, 2024, GFL sold its residential services to Priority Waste. The management of Priority Waste requested patience during the transition, indicating that issues would be resolved within a few months. Unfortunately, the transition has not gone as smoothly as hoped for some

residents. While many customers have received satisfactory service, others have experienced ongoing issues, including missed pickups and billing problems, leading to frustration.

At the Board of Trustees meeting held on December 23, 2025, the current Board approved a two-year contract extension with Priority Waste at reduced rates. The new fees are \$73.50 quarterly (effective November 18, 2025 to November 17, 2026), and \$75.72 quarterly (effective November 18, 2026, to November 17, 2027). No other contract terms were changed. The purpose of this short-term extension is to maintain continuity of service while the Township prepares a Request for Proposals to secure a new waste hauling contract. Ongoing updates will be provided through this newsletter.

For residents who may not be aware, Priority Waste offers a 5% senior discount for individuals

aged 65 and older. Additionally, residents who need to suspend service periodically ("snowbirds" for example) may do so for a minimum of 30 days and up to 90 days by visiting the main Residential Waste and Recycling page on our website, sciotownshipmi.gov and downloading the form, "Temporarily Suspend Service." Contact Priority Waste customer service at (855) 927-8365 or billing@prioritywaste.com to request the discount or to submit the temporary suspension of service form.

In the meantime, **if you need assistance with your trash and recycling services, please complete the form found at sciotownshipmi.gov/waste.** Or contact me directly at jkerry@sciotownshipmi.gov or 734-369-9406.

USEFUL CONTACT INFO

TOWNSHIP HALL

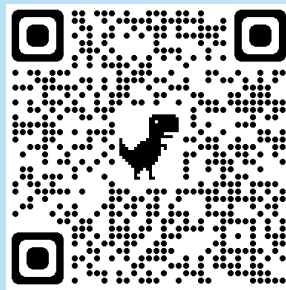
827 N Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor
(734) 369-9400
Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 am – 4 pm
sciotownshipmi.gov

OFFICERS

Supervisor Jillian Kerry
jkerry@sciotownshipmi.gov
Clerk Jessica Flintoft
jflintoft@sciotownshipmi.gov
Treasurer Ryan Yaple
ryaple@sciotownshipmi.gov
Trustee Kathleen Brant
kbrant@sciotownshipmi.gov
Trustee Kathleen Knol
kknol@sciotownshipmi.gov
Trustee David Read
dread@sciotownshipmi.gov
Trustee John Reiser
jreiser@sciotownshipmi.gov
Office Coordinator Kristy Aiken
kaiken@sciotownshipmi.gov



STAFF DIRECTORY



FIRE STATION 1

1055 N Zeeb Rd
Business line (734) 665-6001
Emergencies 911
sciotownshipmi.gov/fire
Fire Chief Andrew Houde
ahoude@sciotownshipmi.gov
Fire Marshal Brandon Sears
bsears@sciotownshipmi.gov

THE SCIO TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY REPORT

Is published quarterly by the Scio Township Board of Trustees for the residents of Scio Township.

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

827 N Zeeb Rd
Billing (734) 369-9351
After-hours emergency (734) 651-4770

Director Brandon McNiel
bmcniel@sciotownshipmi.gov
sciotownshipmi.gov/utilities

Loch Alpine Sanitary Authority
Billing (248) 433-8904
Water/Sewer emergency.... (248) 433-8904
https://lasawater.org

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Director Murphy Harrington
mharrington@sciotownshipmi.gov

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

Assessor Andrea Garrett
agarrett@sciotownshipmi.gov
Assessor-of-Record Becky Baiocco
bbaiocco@sciotownshipmi.gov

CLERK'S COLUMN

BY JESSICA M. FLINTOFT, CLERK

In 2026, we will have the statewide Primary Election on August 4 to select Democratic and Republican nominees for state and local offices, and the statewide General Election on November 3 to elect candidates. The offices on the ballot include: US Senator, US Congressional Representative, Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State House Representative (most of Scio is in District 47, with parts in District 33, 48), State Senator, Michigan Supreme Court, County Commissioner (most of Scio is in District 1, some is in District 9), School Boards (Ann Arbor or Dexter), Ann Arbor District Library Board, and Precinct Delegate.

Locally, we have one position opening up for Township Trustee where an appointment is expiring. Scio Township electors interested in running for the Democratic or Republican nomination to this position should request necessary paperwork from the Scio Township

Clerk's Office, and file completed paperwork by not later than 4 pm on April 21. Anyone interested in running for Township Trustee without political party affiliation must file necessary paperwork by July 16 at 4 pm. Please reach out to me for further information.

Various proposals may be placed on both the August 4 and November 3 ballots, including a proposal to hold a state constitutional convention.

Please continue to rely on your Township Clerk and Secretary of State for official, reliable information about your voting rights, election procedures, and outcomes.

The Secretary of State maintains an official website with voting information at <http://michigan.gov/vote>. You may contact me by calling, stopping by, or emailing my office at clerk@sciotownshipmi.gov. Please be wary of any information you get about voting from

any other source. I encourage you to call our office with any question you may have about the validity of any texts, letters, or phone calls related to voting in any way. Per the Constitution and statute, the Township Clerk is the local official responsible for the administration of elections for Scio Township voters. The federal government and political parties have little say in the administration of elections. Scio Township and the Secretary of State are the best sources of information. Be mindful of your rights as voters and know that we are here to uphold and facilitate your exercise of those rights.

As a side note, a special election could be called for May 5, 2026, and we will know by mid-February if that is the case. The Scio Township Board of Trustees is not contemplating calling an election, but if another entity does so, I will send a postcard notification by March.

LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

BY ANDREW HOUE, CHIEF
SCIO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

As I write this newsletter article in early 2026, planning for the construction of Fire Station 2 is complete and the project has gone out for bids. There are still several approvals from outside agencies that are in progress (through EGLE and the county Road Commission, Health Department, and Water Resources Commission), but we anticipate a spring groundbreaking for the building. **When open, the addition of this fire station will dramatically improve our response times to many residents** and improve our response capability throughout the community. Thank you for your continued support for your Fire Department and the work it does in the community.

The new building is designed to be near net-zero GHG, meaning that we have put several components in the project to reduce our reliance on greenhouse gas-generating

technology. One such component is an array of solar panels. The plan is to have an operational solar array like the one added to Fire Station 1 in May of 2023 by the time Fire Station 2 is completed. Since commissioning the solar array at Fire Station 1, we have generated about 114 MWh (megawatt hours) of electricity. For comparison, an average home uses about 30 kWh of electricity per day. In other words, in 2.5 years we generated enough electricity to power an average home for just over 10 years.

While the system does not produce electricity when there is no sunlight, it often produces more power than is needed during the daytime, building up a credit that gets used by nighttime electricity usage at the station. **The solar array has significantly reduced our electricity costs, and we expect it will continue to do so for 25 years.** When installed, it was projected that the array would generate enough

electricity to completely offset the cost of the system in just 7 years. The array that will be installed on Fire Station 2 will be less expensive per kWh and more efficient, meaning that its cost could be recovered in less than 7 years.

In total, we have reduced the environmental impact of operating the station significantly since placing the solar panel system in service. It is estimated that we have reduced our carbon emissions by 176,786 pounds to date (data provided by SolarEdge). Information on the solar array and the native plantings surrounding it can be found at sciotownshipmi.gov/solar.

Note that the cumulative data on the Solar Edge site is accurate from the replacement of an inverter in 2024. The figures quoted in this article combine data from before and after the inverter was replaced.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

The 2026 Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM) used to calculate the 2026 Taxable Value has been issued by the State Tax Commission. The calculated rate for 2026 is 2.7%. Per Proposal A, adopted by voters on March 15, 1994, the Inflation Rate Multiplier cannot be higher than 5% or the rate of inflation, whichever is the least.

If you would like to get an idea of the 2026 taxable value of your property, multiply your 2025 taxable value by 1.027%. The resultant figure is the 2026 taxable value and will be used to calculate your 2026 taxes. Please note that if you recently purchased your home, built a deck, finished a basement, or demolished a structure on your property, your 2026 taxable value will reflect the increase or decrease in value. Contact our office if you would like information

on how that calculation was performed.

Your annual 2026 assessment notice will be mailed mid-February. **The March Board of Review is the only opportunity in 2026 to appeal the 2026 Assessed Value.** Per MCL 211.30, the Board of Review must meet on the second Monday in March. The dates for this year's March Board of Review are Monday, March 9 and Tuesday, March 10. Should you wish to appeal the assessed value, please contact our office for an appointment during one of those days.

In addition to Assessed values, the Board of Review considers Poverty Exemptions. To see if you qualify for the exemption, go to sciotownshipmi.gov/assessingforms to find the 2026 Poverty Exemption Information. Should

BY ANDREA L. GARRETT,
ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

you wish to apply for the 2026 exemption, please contact our office and we will get the proper application and supporting paperwork to you for submission to the March Board of Review.

It is also important that we have your correct mailing address on file. Any returned notices may not have sufficient time to be re-mailed before the Board of Review convenes.

As always, the Assessing Department can be contacted by phone at 734-369-9400 or via email at Assessing@sciotownshipmi.gov. Additional information regarding various assessing topics and forms can be found on the Scio Township website under the Community tab.

FROM THE TREASURER

This year, winter taxes are due by end-of-business on February 17. Those homeowners who have been around for a few years may recognize this as a different date than every other year you have paid your winter taxes. This year is different because the usual date of February 14 is a Saturday, and the next business day, February 16, is President's Day, a national holiday. Therefore the State Tax Commission has extended the deadline this year for winter tax collection to Tuesday,

February 17. If you intend to wait until the last moment, please make sure that your payment is brought into Township Hall by 4 pm on that day. A postmark date does not qualify as an on-time payment. Alternatively, payment can be made online until 11:59 pm on February 17. Access the online payment portal through the PAY YOUR BILL button on the front page of the Township website, sciotownshipmi.gov. Scio Township will not be sending reminders to past-due taxpayers for winter taxes.

BY RYAN YAPLE, TOWNSHIP TREASURER

**WINTER TAXES ARE DUE
FEBRUARY 17, 2026,
BY 4 PM**

LATE TAX PAYMENTS

Late tax payments will be accepted online through 11:59 pm on February 28 and at Township Hall through March 2 at 4 pm. Any tax payments made after March 2 must be paid at the Washtenaw County Treasurer's Office located at 200 N Main St in Ann Arbor.

SCIO FOOD WASTE COMPOSTING PILOT UPDATE

The Scio Food Waste Compost Drop-Off site is now open 24/7/365 for residents! More than 120 households have already registered as participants. Here's what has been accomplished in the first two months of the program: 2,370 lbs of food waste diverted from landfills. This is equivalent to 106 gallons of gas, 1,047 lbs of coal burned, and 15 10-year-old trees planted. Learn all about the program and register at sciotownshipmi.gov/compost. Let's keep it going!



FROM THE UTILITIES DIRECTOR

We would like to inform you of an important initiative the Township Utility Department will be undertaking this year. As part of our ongoing commitment to protecting the public water supply, the **Utility Department will be conducting residential cross connection inspections starting this spring.** These inspections are required to ensure that plumbing systems within homes do not pose a risk of contaminating the public water system.

WHAT IS A CROSS CONNECTION?

A cross connection is any physical or indirect connection between a potable water supply (safe to drink) and a non-potable source (unsafe to drink). Non-potable sources may include sewage, chemicals, irrigation systems, boilers, or other sources of contamination.

Cross connections can allow contaminants to enter the drinking water system through a process known as backflow, which occurs when water flows in the opposite direction than intended. Backflow events can happen due to changes in water pressure and may result in contamination of the public drinking water supply. Identifying and correcting cross connections helps protect the health and safety of all water customers.

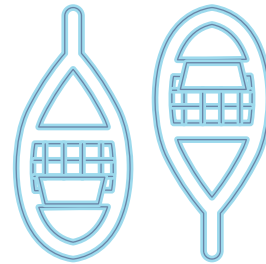
INSPECTION PROCESS

To complete these inspections, Utility Department personnel will need temporary access inside customers' homes. **Inspections are typically brief and will focus on identifying potential cross connections or backflow hazards.** All Utility staff will carry proper identification, and appointments

BY BRANDON McNIEL,
DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES

will be scheduled in advance to minimize inconvenience.

Additional information regarding scheduling, what to expect during the inspection, and contact details for questions will be provided prior to your inspection date. Look for a letter in your quarterly bill. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to maintain the safety and quality of the Township's drinking water.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT DEXTER SENIOR CENTER

Dexter Senior Center is the place to be in 2026! With 10+ weekly fitness classes included in a \$35 annual membership, along with arts, education, and travel opportunities, there is always something happening to keep you busy and entertained.

This winter and spring, the Center is offering a strong lineup of health and educational programs. Topics include Alzheimer's and dementia education, hearing loss, SNAP benefits, and a monthly Thrivent Financial education series. Additional offerings include a Washtenaw Community College Spanish study group, history presentations, gardening education, and practical workshops designed to support healthy aging and independence.

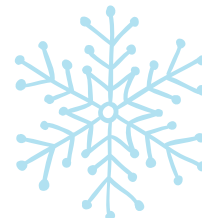
Fitness and wellness programming continues to grow, with circuit training classes twice weekly, a free eight-week balance and fall-prevention workshop, and a variety of ongoing group exercise options that promote strength, mobility, and confidence.

For those interested in arts and lifelong learning, upcoming programs include canvas painting, watercolor workshops, origami, ukulele classes (beginner and fretboard), and live dance performances from Washtenaw Community College. Intergenerational programming also continues, with local elementary students visiting the Center for shared learning experiences.

BY ANNA PEKRUL,
DSC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Members can also enjoy our travel and trips, including museum visits, theater outings, and guided day and overnight trips. Highlights include local museum tours, professional theater performances, a Detroit Prohibition tour, and a multi-day Mackinac Island excursion.

To explore full program details and monthly schedules, visit us at 2740 Baker Road or online at dexterseniors.org.



FROM OUR CORNER OF THE WOODS

BY MURPHY HARRINGTON,
PARKS DIRECTOR

Exciting changes are coming for the Parks Department! In 2026, the department will be hiring 2 regular staff and 2 seasonal staff, opening a world of potential for what can be accomplished in years to come. The 2 regular staff will devote their time to invasive species removal throughout each season, programming, wildlife monitoring, and public outreach. This will contribute to continuity in our long-term management goals and preservation of historical knowledge. The first notable change that our residents may notice is the ability to offer community members consistent educational programs and opportunities to interact with the Scio Township Parks and Preserves in new and meaningful ways. *Below you will find a list of these opportunities for the entirety of 2026.*

We will be offering a new way to register for these programs, as well – registration will now take place through Eventbrite. This change will ensure guests can pre-register for events and receive reminders of event places and times, as well as receive updates in case of cancellation or change in venue. Please check in regularly to our Parks, Preserves, and Pathways page to be alerted to the full implementation of this change. You will always be able to find our list of events with details at sciotownshipmi.gov/sciooutside. We are grateful to the Scio Township residents whose millage dollars go to support our conservation and public outreach efforts.

Happy Hiking, Scio!

SCIO OUTSIDE 2026 EVENTS

- Vernal Pool Party – March 14
- Backyard Birding – March 20
- Nature Detectives – April 12
- Nest Fest – April 23
- Spring Flower ID Hike – April 23
- World Migratory Bird Day Hike – May 9
- Macroinvertebrate Exploration – May 28
- Gay Hike – June 5
- Butterfly Walk – July 18
- Summerween – July 31
- Birding Hike – August 30
- Night Hike – September 11
- Nature Art – September 20
- Twilight Flyers – October 8 and 9
- Nature Detectives – November 8
- Winter Plant ID – November 19

IT JUST MAKES SENSE

It just makes sense to protect the health of the Huron River and its tributaries. According to the Huron River Watershed Council, clean, reliable water from the Huron River contributes to an estimated \$95 billion in economic value annually. The river's health directly affects water treatment costs, manufacturing and agricultural output, recreation revenue, and expenses due to flood damage. Learn more and get involved at HRWC.org.

DESIGN YOUR OWN RAIN GARDEN

Become the neighborhood expert—sign up for the latest online Master Rain Gardener class! Protect your home from flooding while creating habitat for birds and butterflies. Learn from 2,000+ rain gardens built by homeowners just like you, with live Q&A, an in-person rain garden visit, and neighborhood discussion groups. Earn your certification (including a t-shirt and yard sign) by building your own rain garden or adopting a public one. Register for the next class at HRWC.org/masterraingardener.



TOWNSHIP MEETINGS TEMPORARY LOCATION

Phase 3 of the HVAC renovation in Township Hall began in late January and is expected to be completed by the end of February. As a result, some regular meetings of the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals will be held at Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD), 1819 S. Wagner Road.

AFFECTED MEETINGS ARE:

- February 3, Board of Trustees
- February 9, Planning Commission
- February 10, Board of Trustees
- February 19, Zoning Board of Appeals
- February 23, Planning Commission
- February 24, Board of Trustees

The February meetings of the LASA Board (Feb. 23 at 3 pm) and LASA Operating Committee (Feb. 12 at 1 pm) will be held at Webster Township Hall located at 5665 Webster Church Road, Dexter.

YOUR MONEY MATTERS

BY KATHLEEN BRANT, TRUSTEE

As a member of the Board of Trustees since 2024, I have focused my efforts on fiscal and environmental matters. **Every officer of the Township is charged with the fiduciary duty to manage taxpayer dollars wisely.** What follows is a brief recap of three significant financial decisions made by the Board in recent months.

SEPTEMBER 2025

The Board of Trustees rejected a financing request for an apartment complex at the southwest corner of Liberty and S. Wagner. The total request would have diverted \$18.9 million tax dollars from the Township's General Fund, and millage funds supporting fire, parks, land preservation, and state and local schools, over 15 years. The Board did not approve the request because it was felt that the potential benefits of the project did not justify giving \$5M to the developer and \$4.9M to the county and state for administration. The Board intends to develop

a finance policy which is driven by Township goals and not by developer requests.

NOVEMBER 2025

Land purchase at 500 S Zeeb. A very large and dedicated group of residents advocated for over three years to reduce a developer's plan to clear-cut the mature forest and drain the wetlands abutting their community. The developer refused to change their plan and so the Board denied their plan as not in keeping with the surrounding neighborhoods. When the developer filed legal action against the Township for this decision, the Board negotiated to purchase the property for \$1.5 million, preventing further legal challenge by the developer, and designating the land as a nature preserve for public use in perpetuity.

DECEMBER 2025

The Board approved final payment to Supervisor Kerry for the costs of her criminal defense against felony charges initiated by previous Supervisor Hathaway's filing a complaint. The amount paid by the Township totals \$357,750. The final payment is to cover agreed costs through the Supervisor's trial. No further monies will be expended for this purpose by mutual agreement. The Board has been grappling with paying the cost of this legal defense since October 2024.

If any of these topics are of interest to you and you would like to further discuss I am available via email at kbrant@sciotownshipmi.gov, and in person for 30 minutes before the start of Board meetings, held at 6 pm every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Find the schedule for Board meetings and all official committees of the Township at sciotownshipmi.gov/meetings.



MI HOME ENERGY REBATES (MI HER)

Home energy rebates are available to Michigan residents to help make their homes and our state cleaner, and more efficient, reliable, and affordable. For more information, visit Michigan.gov/homeenergyrebates.

LOOKING TO BUY, RENT, OR LEASE FARMLAND IN MICHIGAN?

Whether you're a beginning farmer searching for land or a landowner exploring future options for your property, MIFarmLink.org connects people to farmland and supports long-term, successful land access. Join this growing network to find resources, build relationships, and keep Michigan's farmland farming for generations to come.



Scan for map of farms in Washtenaw County.

ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

For those who don't know us, the Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) works with the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) to establish which roads will be improved each year, with Board of Trustee (BOT) approval. In 2025, we accomplished improvements to the following local roads: paving Liberty Road from Stag's Leap to Parker, and maintenance on several gravel roads, including Railroad Street, Pineview East and West, Parkridge, and Lakeview Drive. We also partnered with Ann Arbor Township on a 4-inch gravel uplift on Maple Road from Huron River Drive to Stein Road, reducing the cost for both townships and improving a road that had not received any work since 2012. We plan to bring our project list for 2026 to the Board for approval in February.

The RAC cares very much about maintaining and improving all our roads for our residents. With that in mind, we have prepared a 6-year Capital Improvement Plan to take to the Board of Trustees for approval. Factors taken into

consideration in preparing the plan include work history of the road, condition of the road, and traffic patterns, keeping in mind projected funding sources. We hope you will attend upcoming BOT meetings to express your support for continued maintenance and improvements of your roads. Find the schedule for Board meetings and all official committees of the Township at sciotownshipmi.gov/meetings.

WINTER IS UPON US AND IT'S TIME TO PREPARE FOR SAFE TRAVELING:

BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

Keep an emergency kit in your car with blankets, flares, a medical first-aid kit, a flashlight, jumper cables, bottled water, snacks, a shovel, candles, and matches.

MAINTAIN YOUR VEHICLE

Check your tires, including the pressure and tread; install new wiper blades, make sure your car has enough washer fluid and plenty of gas.

DRIVE SAFELY

Drive slowly, especially on icy, wet, or snowy

CAROLINE ALTOMARE,
ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

roads, leaving plenty of space between your car and the car in front of you.

HOW DOES THE WCRC DETERMINE WHEN THEY WILL PLOW SNOW AND SPREAD SALT?

According to WCRC, the amount of snow, temperature forecasted for the next 24 hours, and any forecast of upcoming snowstorms are considered equally to determine when and where plowing and salting occur. The Road Commission knows that it can be frustrating to have to wait for your road to be treated and appreciates residents' patience. They request that if possible folks park in a garage or driveway during a snowy weather event so plow trucks will have easier access to the roads. We encourage you to use the WCRC website, wcroads.org, to report hazardous conditions.



NEW MI LICENSE PLATE

Michiganders can now order the new semiquincentennial legacy vehicle license plate at Michigan.gov/SOS, when purchasing a vehicle through a dealership, or by scheduling a visit to any Secretary of State office. Visit Michigan.gov/LegacyPlates for more information.



PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

The Michigan Public Service Commission's latest annual report shows that renewable energy generation increased by 28% from 2023 to 2024. According to the MPSC, Michigan remains a national leader in energy waste reduction efforts. The report highlights a wide range of financial and other benefits of Michigan's strong energy waste reduction programs, including ways to upgrade lighting, heating, ventilation and cooling, weatherization, energy education, appliance recycling, and other ways residential customers can use energy more efficiently and save money on their utility bills. Investments made in 2024 are estimated to have saved Michiganders about \$1.4 billion.

WINTER SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE

Please be kind to your neighbors, local dog walkers, and joggers: keep your sidewalks free of snow and ice. In Scio Township, it's also the law. Ordinance 28-21 requires property owners to remove snow and ice accumulations from sidewalks adjacent to or abutting their property promptly: by 6 pm on the day following overnight snow, and by noon the next day for daytime snowfall.

GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A new year brings a fresh start. If you're thinking about making healthy changes to your life, consider how these changes can also benefit the environment in your home and township. Here are a few simple ideas to get started:

DRIVE LESS, MOVE MORE

Most of everyday air pollution comes from vehicle traffic. When possible, swap a car trip for walking, biking, transit, or carpooling. You'll help keep our air cleaner and improve your own fitness and energy levels. It's also a chance to connect with others, something research shows has a positive impact on personal well-being.

EAT (EVEN A LITTLE) MORE PLANT-BASED FOODS

After the holidays, many of us look for a healthy reset. Meals built around vegetables, legumes,

and grains are high in fiber and nutrients but low in calories, helping maintain a healthy weight and reduce heart-disease risk. Eating fewer animal products, especially beef, is also one of the most effective ways to reduce your environmental impact. Try one or two meatless dinners a week or substitute beans for half the volume of a chili or taco recipe. Small changes add up and build lasting habits.

WANDER IN OUR WINTER WONDERLAND

Spending more time outside is a win for your health and the environment. Research shows just 20 minutes outdoors can improve sleep, lower stress, and boost your immune system. Walking our parks, trails, and rivers offers a way to recharge and keep connected to Scio's protected natural areas. Find a Township park near you at sciotownshipmi.gov/parks.

BY MOLLY MAHER, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE MEMBER

Upgrade to Cleaner Appliances. Need to replace an appliance this year? Consider switching to efficient electric systems such as a heat pump water heater or induction stove. These efficient technologies use less energy and reduce indoor air pollution. The EPA notes that gas stoves can increase levels of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants linked to asthma and respiratory irritation. Electric equipment reduces exposure risks and carbon emissions.

SMALL CHANGES ADD UP

Let's make 2026 a year of healthier residents and a healthier environment. Look for more ideas for improving your life and your environment at sciotownshipmi.gov/ESTF.

RUN FOR THE TREES

Want to race- and support nature in the process? Sign up for this spring's Run for the Trees: Happy Little (Virtual) 5K. This event, which takes place between April 18-26, honors iconic art instructor and television host Bob Ross while supporting tree-planting and forest-protection efforts.

"What started as a creative way to connect people with Michigan state parks and tree plantings has grown to a nationwide movement," said Michelle O'Kelly, race director. "Participation grew again last year - more than 10,000 people, in Michigan and across a dozen other states, participated in the 2025 event - showing that more and more people are eager to make a difference."

Find out more and register at RunSignUp.com.
Questions? Contact Michelle O'Kelly at 517-899-5211.

NALOXONE VENDING MACHINE

Free Naloxone kits available to the public from 8 am to 4 pm in the Township Hall vestibule.



RECENT LAND PRESERVATION PROJECTS

Scio Township's Land Preservation Program completed conservation easement purchases on three small but important properties in 2025. Conservation easements are permanent deed restrictions on the use of a property, preventing future development. Purchasing easements costs less than buying the property and keeps the property on the tax rolls and contributing to the local economy. All of the properties featured in this article are privately owned and not accessible to the public.

The first project covers 10 acres with frontage on the south side of Stein Rd. west of Maple Rd. and was conveyed by the Peter Heydon Trust. Most of the property is wooded and features a restored historic house. Peter and his late wife Henrietta (Rita) purchased this property and many others in the area 40 years ago to keep them from being developed. The

Heydons have donated conservation easements to Legacy Land Conservancy on much of their holdings over the years, creating a large block of protected land mostly in Scio Township but including some in Ann Arbor Township and Webster Township. This latest property borders those earlier conserved lands.

The second project covers 16 acres on the east side of Zeeb Rd. north of Scio Church Rd. owned by Carol Fletcher. Carol and her late husband Robert (aka "Fletch") purchased their farm in 1978 and raised their family there. The Fletchers are only the second owners of the farm, which was started by the Aprill family in the 1800s (so it was already a centennial farm when the Fletchers purchased it). The property features an historic house plus all of the barns and outbuildings. This purchase ensures the property will continue to function as a farm under future owners.

BY BARRY LONIK,
LAND PROTECTION CONSULTANT

The third project covers 3.4 acres owned by Judy Lobato. Judy and her late husband Duane Thomas previously donated two conservation easements, donated the small parcel with the historic barn at the northwest corner of Wagner Rd and Scio Church Rd and sold a conservation easement to the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program. This final easement on 3.4 acres covers the remainder of their property.

Scio Township's dedicated land preservation millage provided the funding for all three of these conservation projects. The Township program has been involved in protecting 1,738 acres from development to date, with more projects set to close in the coming months.



Barn at Fletcher Farm. Photo by Barry Lonik.



WELCOME NIKI TIMMONS, FINANCE DIRECTOR

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

Scio Township is grateful to be joined by Niki Timmons as Finance Director. Hired in November, just at the start of budget season, Niki had to hit the ground running. Coming from work for the city of Detroit, Wayne County, and the US Department of Treasury, **Niki is well used to the high-stakes work of government finance.** Niki was attracted to the posting here in Scio because it is a new role for the Township. "It was a great opportunity to establish policies, procedures, and internal controls, and provide financial insight from my wealth of knowledge," she says. Niki is looking forward to having time to evaluate current financial policies, ensure that industry standards are being applied here, and more fully utilizing the capabilities of the financial software module (BS&A) than we currently



do. She gave as an example the manual labor currently involved in tracking employee time through timesheets. There is a module for doing payroll in BS&A that is more efficient and would allow us to go paper-free. But all that will have

to wait until AFTER budget season!

Niki loves to travel and has been shopping (a favorite pastime) all over the world. She enjoys attending concerts and live sporting events. She is a perpetually smiling presence in Township Hall and decorated her office for the holidays to within an inch of its life. (I insisted on taking her photo during the holiday season so residents could see the extent of her dedication to celebrating the season. **She doesn't actually wear reindeer antlers year-round.**)

"Everyone has been so friendly and welcoming to me here," she says, "and accepting of my unique personality." Niki, you've been a ray of sunshine in Township Hall, and we're glad you came to Scio!

WELCOME MICHAEL BLACKBURN

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

Scio Township Utilities Department and Township residents are fortunate to now have the services of Michael Blackburn, who became the Department Field Supervisor on September 15. **Michael comes to Scio from Dearborn Heights, where he spent 31 years in the Department of Public Works,** the last ten as superintendent of the department. In addition to being a much larger department (a staff of 45 devoted to buildings and infrastructure compared to 5 here in Scio), the system in Dearborn Heights is much older in general and experiences many more after-hours emergencies due to water-main breaks. When you're in charge of a system that experiences upwards of 150 water-main breaks each year, you become something of an expert in that area. Michael came to Scio for the opportunity to both share that kind of knowledge and to learn more about the kind of system we have here in Scio, which relies on booster stations (for example)



to maintain water pressure through our hilly environs.

Above all, customer relations is what inspires Michael, who loves nothing more than taking a call from a customer disgruntled by the smell of their water or the cost of it, and diagnosing the source of the problem. He hopes that solving

these mysteries (an ageing faucet affecting water quality or an undetected water leak are the usual culprits) will not only help those he talks directly to, but those folks will share that knowledge with their neighbors, friends, and relations, spreading good information through the community. **"The only way to make residents happy is by giving them the knowledge to solve the problem,"** he says, becoming animated at the thought of educating the public on water and sewer infrastructure. Michael is a divorced father of five, and grandfather of two. He intends to remain at his current home in Dearborn Heights, where he lives close to his ageing father, and enjoys home improvement projects. Got a question about your tap water? Call Michael! He'll be happy to talk it through with you. Welcome to Scio Township Michael!



Scio Township Hall
 827 North Zeeb Road
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Shout out to all our hard-working employees here at the Township, especially during the HVAC construction, and to support newly onboarded employees. Thank you for using your remarkable talents and skills to serve the people of Scio Township. Your hard work and dedication are inspiring. Thank you for going above and beyond in recent months—it has not gone unnoticed!

Older Adults Transportation Program



Older Adults Transportation

Free transportation for adults aged 60 and older that reside in Washtenaw County.



Transportation providers shown for their pickup area; contact individual providers for more information on destinations and roundtrips.

- WAVE or JFS
- PEX or JFS
- JFS
- JFS, PEX, or WAVE

Contact Information

- Jewish Family Services (JFS) (734) 769-0209 prompt #2
- People's Express (PEX) (877) 214-6073
- Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE) (734) 475-9494

Funded by the residents of Washtenaw County through the Older Adults Millage. For questions, comments, or concerns contact AgeingServices@washtenaw.org or (734) 222-6850. As of 10/1/2025

People's Express