

Scio Township

Spring 2012

COMMUNITY REPORT

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FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK – BY SPAULDING CLARK, SUPERVISOR

Emergency Sirens

With the coming of warmer weather, apparently comes bad weather, like the recent tornado. A number of residents have inquired about the location of warning sirens, which has caused us to revisit the issue. Some twelve years ago, the County Emergency Services Division had funding for warning sirens, and they then installed one warning siren in the Township near Baker and Jackson, intended to serve the dense population at Scio Farms Estates. At the time they made no further recommendations to us, and given that county-wide emergency services was their forte, we didn't question the recommendation. In addition, while they did anticipate to periodically add sirens, their funding was cut and they have not been able to add sirens as planned. In light of the recent tornado, we are asking that they review the situation in the Township with a view of adding additional sirens in the more populated areas. Note that while sirens are not available everywhere, particularly in rural areas of the County, public radio stations can provide the same information. If you are interested in the current locations of sirens throughout the County (or for other information about emergency preparedness), you can go to their website at: http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/emergency_management/em_Siren_Info or see the map included in this newsletter.

Fire service

On the fire department consolidation front, while draft documents have been prepared which would consolidate the fire fighting services of Dexter Township, Dexter Village, Webster Township and Scio Township, matters seem to be bogged down in more mundane matters such as the name, though most had agreed that a new fire service needed a new name. The majority of the participating communities seem in agreement, but 100% is needed to establish and implement a new department.

Land Preservation

This month the Township Board will authorize an extension of the land preservation millage, seeking voter approval to renew it for another ten years. Note that in accordance with Michigan law, the millage has been rolled back through the Headlee Amendment from .5 mills to what is now .4942 mills. The ballot proposal which will

seek to renew and continue the millage, does not seek to increase it to the amount originally approved, but rather, will leave it at the currently reduced rate. More information will follow about what the millage has accomplished for the Township's land preservation efforts, but from my point of view, it has been extremely successful.

The new website

As some may already have noticed, we are in the process of completely revamping the Township's website. While we wanted to dress it up and make it more user friendly, we discovered it was more involved, and the process has taken much more time and effort than originally expected. Famous last words. However, we continue to work on it, and the results are beginning to show.

Business Development

We remain hopeful that Michigan's economy has begun a turnaround, and that we will begin to see some evidence in Scio soon. Some hopeful signs: Menards now plans a location in Scio near where Framer Grants once was on Jackson Road; a new Culvers is under construction in front of Lowes, along with a Zippy Auto Wash on Zeeb south of Jackson. A new Mini Cooper dealership is under construction at Wagner and Zeeb. And after several years of review and renegotiation, the Township, assisted by State DNR and Washtenaw County Parks funding, is about to purchase 33+ acres for parkland use along Baker Road which will have access to Mill Creek. Multiple issues delayed the purchase, but we are now prepared to close the transaction and details will follow.

Thanks to Bill Upton

The Township wants to extend a formal thank-you to Bill Upton, VP of Operations at the newly combined Edwards Brothers Malloy Printing firm. Bill volunteered to serve on the then newly established Scio Township Downtown Development Authority twenty four years ago, when a divided boulevard was a mere fantasy in a few perceptive minds. Bill guided the DDA for twenty four years before retiring this year. He had a vision for the future of Scio's business corridor, and then provided the leadership to bring our community to where it is today. Twenty-four years is a long time, and the community is grateful for his commitment and leadership over this period, and the evidence of his success is to be seen in the three miles of boulevard that have been created to date. Thanks again, Bill.



Please check your records

Another tax year is completed. My thanks to all who made it a pleasure to be your treasurer. A couple of things have been brought to my attention. I need everyone to check and make sure the correct "Principle Residence Exemption" choice is reflected in your record. If you should have the exemption, make sure you have notified the Township office. It means tax dollar savings to you. The same applies if you should not have the exemption.

Though the tax dollars are more, the associated fines and billing of all back taxes to the point in time of the change can be very costly. PLEASE check your records.

The option for paying the tax bill and/or utility bill with a credit card or electronic check had considerable use. This will continue to be available until further notice.

CLERK'S CORNER BY NANCY HEDBERG, CLERK

Election News

Ann Arbor Public Schools

Early May will bring us another election. Ann Arbor Public Schools will be holding a special election to request a millage for technology. I know we have changed polling locations often over the past couple of years, all in the spirit of saving the schools money, but this time almost everyone will go to their regular polling place. Only Precincts 5 and 9 will go to another location. Precinct 5 will be voting at the Fire Hall, and Precinct 9 will be back at WISD. It is easy to find your information by checking the Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center". The State's website address is: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>. You can find links on the Township's website as well.

Election Inspectors

We are expecting a large turnout for the August Primary and the Presidential Election in November and will need a number of new election inspectors. If you have ever thought about filling this important roll, please contact the Township Clerk and ask to receive an application. We have changed over to using the Electronic Poll Book in all of our precincts, so we are looking for workers who are comfortable working on a computer. If you enjoy meeting your fellow Township residents please contact me to discuss how you can help.

Redistricting

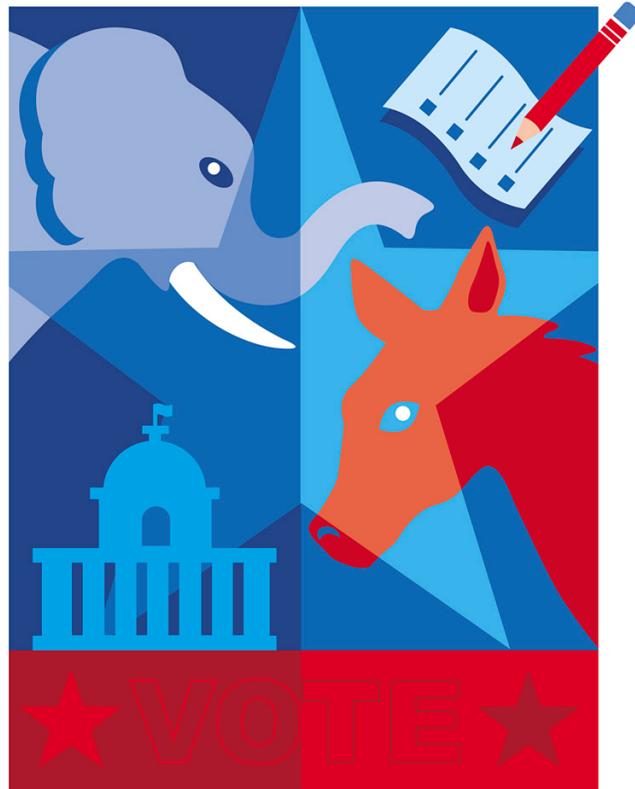
Based on the census figures that were tabulated in 2010, the State has undergone "Redistricting". The US Congressional District has changed significantly in Scio Township, and the District designation numbers have changed as well. State Senate districts have changed slightly, State House remains the same, and the County has changed our districts so that we are represented not by 5 County Commissioners but now by 2. The State has recently completed changing all of the data that applies to your voter registration, so you can expect a new Voter ID card within the next month.

Don't forget to register

April 6, 2012 was the last day to register to vote in the Ann Arbor Public Schools election. If you have a change of address please be sure to update your information with the Secretary of State's office, or here at the Township offices as soon as possible. You only have to register once (unless you move) and you can check your registration status by going to: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/> Address changes must be made within 6 months of your permanent move.

**Last day to register before the August 7th Primary:
July 9, 2012**

**Before the November 6th Presidential Election:
October 9, 2012.**



It means
tax dollar savings
to you.

Check the
Township's
website to
be sure
you get to
the right
polling place.

Scio Business News

No matter what your activity, you can probably buy gear for it, actually do it, or at least learn how to do it somewhere along the Boulevard.

Is Scio a Sports and Exercise Mecca?

Here's another well kept secret about Scio's active (sic!) business community. Hidden along the Jackson Corridor are no fewer than 22 businesses that cater to sports and fitness enthusiasts. These businesses cover a broad range of interests. No matter what your activity, you can probably buy gear for it, actually do it, or at least learn how to do it somewhere along the Boulevard.

These are not new or fly-by-night businesses. Several have outlets in other cities and chose to locate in Scio as well. One, Sylvia's Studio of Dance, has an 80-year history teaching ballet. The Michigan Academy of Gymnastics has been in business for 30 years. Running Fit has seven other outlets in the State and was recently recognized as one of Michigan's Top 50 Companies to Watch. Two Wheel Tango, our bicycling shop, has two other stores, one in Ann Arbor and one in Canton.

Scio has a broad array of activities

So, how broad an array of sports and fitness activities are represented along the Boulevard? Here's a list. One business each: ballet, ballroom dancing, bicycling, bowling, fishing/hunting, golf (indoor), off-roading, running, rock climbing, scuba/snorkel, tennis (indoor), wrestling, and yoga. Two businesses each: fitness/exercise, gymnastics, and kids' exercise. And finally, there are three martial arts schools. The list above represents only what is located directly along the Jackson corridor. Expand the arena to the whole of Scio and we find another seven businesses providing sports and fitness services. These include one business each: canoeing, golf (outdoor), and swimming. Three businesses offer horseback riding and boarding for horses. Finally, there is the Liberty Athletic Club, which offers a wide variety of sports and fitness activities, including several exercise programs, swimming, indoor and outdoor tennis, martial arts and yoga.

Scio's residents are enthusiasts of sports and fitness activities

It should be no surprise that Scio has such an array of sports and fitness businesses. A survey of residents in 2007 established that 95% of Scio residents either participated in sports or fitness activities themselves or have a participating family member. Furthermore, Jackson Boulevard gives easy access to these wonderful businesses for folks who live east and south of Scio.

We noted in an earlier article that EDAC has discovered several "clusters" among Scio's 900+ businesses. Sports and fitness is certainly one of these clusters.



Perserving Scio Township

The property includes a wetland with several ponds that are connected to Frey-Fitzsimmons Creek.

New Farmland Project Completed

Scio Township's Land Preservation Program closed on its eleventh project on March 28. This project protects a farm property on the west side of Streiter Rd. north of Scio Church Rd., in the township's high priority agricultural preservation area. The property is owned by Jerry and Ruthann Helmer and has been leased for farming for many years. In addition to prime agricultural soils, the property includes a wetland with several ponds that is connected to Frey-Fitzsimmons Creek.

Conservation Easement purchased

The Township purchased a conservation easement on the Helmer property, allowing for agricultural use while protecting its natural resources. The project was assisted by an \$87,360 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program. Scio Township's land preservation millage contributed \$136,640. A second project on adjacent land is in the final stages and is expected to close within the next two months. As is usually the case with agricultural conservation easements, there is no public access on the Helmer property. Nevertheless, protecting its scenic, natural and agricultural resources are of tremendous benefit to the Scio Township community. The Scio Township Board of Trustees and Land Preservation Commission are pleased to keep this land open and productive forever.




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BY IRWIN MARTIN, CHAIR OF THE LAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Update from the LPC

Millage renewal for land preservation will be on the November ballot. Be sure to vote!

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the preservation successes continue. Along with the second project mentioned, the LPC has recently recommended to the township Board of Trustees an acquisition that we have been working on for some time. "Watch this space" for more news of this exciting parcel.

As a reminder, the millage renewal for land preservation will be on the November ballot. Be sure to vote! A summary of the Scio preservation successes to date may be found on www.ScioWatch.org.

**Interested in Serving on the
Scio Township
Downtown Development Authority?**
Contact Spaulding Clark, Township Supervisor
for details
734-369-9400
OR
ESClark@twp.scio.mi.us



**Countywide Transit Board
District Advisory Committee Meeting**
Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Scio Township Hall
*Learn about the 5-year Transit Plan
Meet your District's Board member – David Read*

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Scio Barn Wins Award

“Barn of the Year”
Awarded by the
Michigan Barn
Preservation
Network

The “Scio Barn”, located on the Township’s southern border at the corner of Scio Church and Wagner Roads, has been a Township landmark for decades. It now has the added distinction of being named “Barn of the Year” by the Michigan Barn Preservation Network. The award honors this “Basement Barn,” so-called because farmers could increase the usefulness of barns by exposing all or most of the basement story. By so doing, farmers also provided space for animals below, while processing and storing grain above. Built in the late 1800s, the barn was damaged during a storm and rebuilt in 1933. Built in traditional barn format, it is, however, engineered and built of sawmill lumber. This reflects both an increase in agricultural technology and a decrease in available hardwood forest needed to produce traditional large hand-hewn posts. When looking at the barn’s construction, it doesn’t require a stretch of the imagination to see that an engineer and not a farmer designed it. The barn is owned by the Township but leased to The Friends of Scio Barn, which uses it for storage. In return, they have made significant repairs to the barn and plan to maintain it so that the “Scio Barn” will continue to welcome folks as they enter the Township from the south.



AROUND SCIO TOWNSHIP BY JOSH MILLER

Keep Honey Creek clean



Photo: Dick Chase

One of the unique features of Scio Township is that it encompasses almost the entire watershed of a major tributary to the Huron River—Honey Creek. Is it safe to swim or wade in Huron River creeks? In most cases throughout the watershed, the answer is yes. However, there are important exceptions. In areas where the water contains high

bacteria counts, there is the possibility of serious illness if water is ingested during casual recreation. Presently, one of those exceptions is Honey Creek.

High bacteria counts

Water quality monitoring by the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has documented consistently high E. coli bacteria counts in Honey Creek. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) confirmed HRWC data with sampling in 2007. As required by state and federal water laws, the DEQ initiated the process to identify and

reduce bacterial sources. In December 2011, HRWC, in partnership with Scio Township, the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, and the City of Ann Arbor, launched a new project to address the contamination. The DEQ awarded HRWC a grant to carry out this work.

Monitoring to begin in May

The first stakeholders’ meeting for the project took place at Scio Township hall on March 29th. HRWC volunteers will begin monitoring Honey Creek in May and continue throughout November to pinpoint the likely sources, which can include pet waste, agricultural runoff, and illicit septic connections. Once the most likely sources have been identified, a plan will be developed and implemented to eliminate or significantly reduce E. coli in Honey Creek.

Your help is needed

If you are a resident of Scio Township, check HRWC’s website (www.hrwc.org) for more information on the project and for announcements of community stakeholder meetings (search: “Honey Creek”). No matter where you reside, HRWC will need volunteers to help safely collect water samples. Sign up on the volunteer page or contact Ric Lawson at rlawson@hrwc.org or 734.769.5123 x609. No prior experience is needed. To learn more about how you can help keep bacteria out of Honey Creek, visit the “Take Action” section of their website.

Consistently
high
E. coli bacteria
counts in
Honey Creek

Trails Update

The Washtenaw County Border To Border (B2B) trail planned to follow the Huron River across the entire 36 miles of the county.

Connecting Communities Grant awarded

Progress continues in the planning for a shared-use pathway along Zeeb Road connecting the Township center to the Huron River corridor and the Washtenaw County Border-to-Border Trail (B2B). It was last reported in this newsletter that the Township would resubmit to the 2012 Connecting Communities Grant Program. That submission was made and on March 6, 2012 the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission awarded Scio Township a \$250,000 Connecting Communities Grant for the construction of Phase 1 of the Zeeb Road Pathway (about 0.8 mile from the end of the sidewalk at the County Building on the west side of Zeeb to the Dexter-Ann Arbor/Zeeb intersection). The Township has 2 years to move the project along and, at the end of the 2 years, must be prepared to begin construction. The grant monies may be spent for construction only and will cover about 80% of the total. Additional funding sources are being developed.

Final siting to be determined

The next steps include continued talks with property owners along the route and development of a Request for a Proposal for construction documents. By the time you receive this newsletter, flagging of the Zeeb Road right-of-way boundary should be complete. The 10-foot asphalt path will be located somewhere in the vicinity of the flags, depending on easement agreements. Where easements are not granted, the pathway could be constructed in the existing Zeeb Road right-of-way with the addition of curbs and gutter where necessary. For help in visualizing the pathway planned for Zeeb Road, take a look at a couple of examples of built pathways in Pittsfield, one along Lohr Road and the other along Platt Road from Ellsworth to Textile.

Connection to the Border-to-Border Trail

One of the main goals of the Zeeb Road Pathway is to connect, eventually, to the Washtenaw County B2B trail planned to follow the Huron River across the entire 36 miles of the county. Significant portions of this project in the vicinity of Scio Township have recently been completed or are under construction this year. Visit the new boardwalk at Warrior Park (soon to be Mill Creek Park) in Dexter scheduled to be connected to new B2B trail segments in Hudson Mills Metro Park. Take a look at the new bridge construction at Dexter/Huron Metro Park that will connect to the Village of Dexter. It is only about a mile's distance from the Dexter/Huron Metro Park to Zeeb Road and early planning is underway for this segment of the B2B. Perhaps our trail project will finish about the same time the County brings the B2B to Zeeb Road. When that happens, citizens of Scio will be able to ride/walk/jog on an off-road trail system all the way to Hudson Mills!

Want to learn More?

Learn more about the project by going to the township website <https://twp-scio.ewashtenaw.org/news/Zeeb%20Road%20Path%20Design>. Additionally, the Paths Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) meets every 2nd Thursday of the month at 8:30am at the township hall. And as with all public meetings, public comment is a standing item on the agenda.



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visit us at: www.twp.scio.mi.us

Township Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Utility Department Hours:

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Utilities emergency: (734) 651-4770
Utilities Administration: (734) 369-9350

Township Board of Trustees

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Christine Green, Trustee
Jack Knowles, Trustee
David Read, Trustee

The Scio Township Community Report

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

Editor
David Read
Graphic Design
Julie Tanguay
Photographer
David Read

Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. 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
Scott Martin – Utilities Director
James Merte – Assessing

Other Phone Numbers

Emergencies 911
Fire Department Administration (734) 665-6001
Sheriff's Department,
Zeeb Road Sub-Station (734) 994-8105
County Building Inspection Services . . . (734) 222-3900

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Washtenaw County Information:

www.ewashtenaw.org

Water Resources Commissioner:

(734) 222-6860; drains@ewashtenaw.org

County Road Commission

(734) 761-1500; wrcr@wccroads.org

County Commissioners:

District 1 – Rob Turner
(734) 341-6612; turnerr@ewashtenaw.org
District 2 – Dan Smith
(734) 449-2985; smithd@ewashtenaw.org
District 3 – Alicia Ping
(734) 548-5160; pingad@ewashtenaw.org
District 9 – Leah Gunn
(734) 663-7307; gunnl@ewashtenaw.org
District 10 – Conan Smith
(734) 662-0268; smithco@ewashtenaw.org

State Information:

www.michigan.org

State Representative

District 52 – Mark Ouimet
(517) 373-0828; markouimet@house.mi.gov

State Senator:

District 18 – Rebekah Warren
(517) 373-2406; senrwarren@senate.michigan.gov

Governor:

Rick Snyder
(517) 373-3400; rick.snyder@michigan.gov

Federal Information:

www.usa.gov

U.S. Representatives:

District 7 – Tim Walberg
(202) 225-6276; e-mail via www.walberg.house.gov
District 15 – John Dingell
(202) 225-4071; www.house.gov/dingell

U.S. Senators:

Debbie Stabenow
(202) 224-4822; senator@stabenow.senate.gov
Carl Levin
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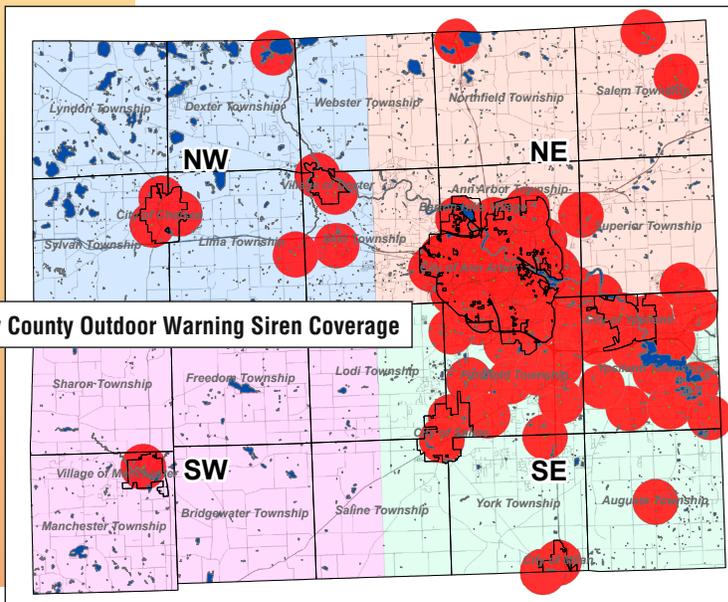
BY WASHTENAW COUNTY SHERIFF

Outdoor Warning Siren Test Notification

Be
Prepared!

Washtenaw County's 39 warning sirens (see map below) will be tested at noon on the first Saturday of every month from March through September.

If there is a threat of severe weather on the day of a test, it will be cancelled. Except for scheduled testing, the sirens will be activated for the following emergencies:



The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning
A severe thunderstorm has been detected with damaging winds in excess of 70 MPH

A hazardous materials accident requires immediate protective action by the public

An attack on the United States is imminent, underway or has recently occurred

Warning siren activation is a signal to members of the public to immediately go indoors and monitor local Emergency Alert System media outlets for official information. Washtenaw County's emergency broadcasters are:

- WEMU 89.1 FM
- WTKA 1050 AM
- WWWW 102.9 FM
- WLBY 1290 AM
- WQKL 107.1 FM