



Lincoln Charter Township Communicator

Township Supervisor: Dick Stauffer - Ext. 14

Meijer Store Update:

Now that the site cleanup is complete, construction of the new store will begin. The Township's Planning Commission has carefully reviewed all aspects of the design for the store and the site plan has been presented at several public meetings. A resident recently asked about what provisions have been made regarding light spillage from the site. I can report that the Twp. has a Dark Sky Lighting Ordinance (section 230.701 of the Zoning Ordinance) and has reviewed all of Meijer's proposed lighting to ensure that light spillage (off the property) is contained. We required a lighting plan as well as a photometric plan, which shows the light levels throughout the property and at the property line. All the lighting is downward facing, and lumen levels at the property lines are around .1 (compared to 4.3 under a parking lot light). Light poles are 30' tall and on a 2' concrete base. In exchange for fewer lights on the property we agreed to the taller lights. There are approximately 26 light poles throughout the 26 acre site. With an average of one downward facing light pole per acre, we believe that Meijer has provided a very good lighting plan. The area will look very different compared to the vacant lot we've all been looking at for years. If anyone has any other questions, please let us know.

Road Projects for 2010:

Sometimes you have to spend money today to save it tomorrow. Our current plans are to reseal the following Twp. roads this summer; S. Cedar Tr, Juniper Dr, Birch Ct, Spruce Ln, Welch Dr, Carpet St, Jeffrey St, W. Velvet St, Elizabeth Dr, Gail Dr, Leonora Dr, Monica Rd, Second St, Short St, First St, Lane Ct, Jacob Tr, Lara Ln, Perry Dr, Kendall and Tudor. Residents will be notified before the resealing begins to minimize any inconvenience. The Road Commission will need your cooperation in doing some high shoulder removal where water is trapped on the pavement. This area will be reseeded.

Cleveland Avenue Residents:

Cleveland is one of the gateways to our community. A big thank you to those who keep the grass mowed and trimmed between the sidewalk and the curb. It reflects very well on our entire township.

Safety Grant Awarded for Widening John Beers from Cleveland Ave. to Washington Ave.:

The Berrien County Road Commission has been awarded a \$270,000 safety grant to widen John Beers Rd and add a center turn lane to reduce the numerous accidents that occur near the Middle School. The match for this grant is \$54,000 and will be shared between Lincoln Twp., Lakeshore Schools, and the BCRC. The project is expected to be completed during summer break this year. Thank you BCRC.

Interested in Green Infrastructure?

Find out more about this new terminology by going to our Twp. Website click on "Storm water Public Education Plan, then click on SWMPC-Wetlands, etc. and Green Infrastructure will appear on the left side of the screen.

Township Clerk: Stacy Loar-Porter - Ext. 20

Census:

"Take 10" and Help Lincoln Charter Township Get What it Needs for the Next 10 Years

In March 2010, more than 130 million addresses will receive a 2010 Census form by mail or hand delivery. The 2010 Census will document the changes in our nation since the last decennial census in 2000, and tell us how we've evolved as a country. Because census data affects how more than \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed to tribal, state and local governments, the census also will frame the future of our country and our community for the next 10 years.

During Census 2000, the mail participation rate was 72% as of the April 2000 cut-off. About \$85 million is saved for every one percent increase in mail participation. For these and many other reasons, we must work to encourage everyone's participation in the census.

Here's what you should know about the 2010 Census:

It's easy. One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The individual in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned should complete the form on behalf of every person living there, both relatives and nonrelatives.

It's important. Census data is used to reapportion seats in Congress and ensure proper district representation in state and local governments. Information from the census helps determine locations for child-care and senior centers, new roads, hospitals, schools and community centers.

It's safe. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Finally, the most efficient way to respond to the 2010 Census is to complete the form as soon as it arrives and return it in the postage-paid return envelope. Census workers will visit households that do not return forms to take the count in person. Lincoln Charter Township is issuing a challenge to our residents to increase the mail participation rate and help ensure a complete and accurate count in 2010. For more information about the 2010 Census and the "Take 10" initiative, visit 2010.census.gov.

Lincoln Charter Township Police Department
Chief of Police: Dan Sullivan <http://ltpd.org> 429-2444

The Lincoln Charter Township Police men and women would like to thank the community for their continued support. The agency strives to provide professional and efficient police services to everyone within Lincoln Charter Township 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

2009 was the busiest year to date for calls for service since the department's founding in 1987. Our agency responded to nearly 6,000 calls during the calendar year. LTPD employs eleven full time certified officers, and two clerical staff—we also utilize 7 volunteer reserve officers whose dedication and service is greatly appreciated.

The 2009 Benton Harbor—St. Joseph Exchange Club officer of the year award was presented to Patrolman Robert Peterson on February 23 during a lunch ceremony at the Whitcomb banquet room in St. Joseph. Seven officers from the twin cities are honored by Exchange Club each year. This year the award has been dedicated to the late Ken Woltman, who organized this event for over thirty years. Congratulations to Officer Peterson and the other Officers honored at this event.

Citizens are reminded to please use caution driving, especially during school times when pedestrians are present on or near the roadways. The flashing lights at the crosswalks at three locations within the township are there to remind drivers of the presence of pedestrians trying to cross safely while walking to/from school routes.

Lincoln Charter Township

2055 West John Beers Road
P.O. Box 279
Stevensville, MI 49127-0279
Phone: 429-1589 Fax: 429-0880
www.lctberrien.org

Office Hours 2010

The twp. office hours are
9 AM to 5 PM Monday thru Friday

Holiday Closed Dates

April 2.....Good Friday
May 31.....Memorial Day
July 2.....4th of July
July 5.....4th of July
Sept.6.....Labor Day
Nov. 25 & 26.....Thanksgiving
Dec. 24.....Christmas Eve
Dec. 27.....Christmas Day
Dec. 31.....New Year's Eve

You can obtain the minutes for meetings, public notices, building permit applications and other helpful materials on our website: www.lctberrien.org

Board of Trustees: Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in regular session. Special meetings are held as posted. The fourth Tuesday is reserved for possible special meetings.

Street Light Outages: To report a street light out or not working properly, **copy down the pole number**, which is located on a metal tag on the pole and call the Twp. Office at **429-1589 Ext 24**.

Garage Sale Permits & Signs: Permits are required for garage sales and may be picked up at the Twp Hall. **NO signs are allowed on public property such as street signs, utility poles, or ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY.** (The road right-of-way is 33 feet from the center of the road.) **Any signs found on public property will be removed, including property along the cemetery on St. Joseph Ave., 2 permits per household.** (Residents of the Village of Stevensville need to pick up permits at the Stevensville Village Hall.)

2010 Cemetery Clean-up Dates:

Spring:
Remove floral decorations: Mar 17-24
Maintenance Clean-up: Mar 25-31
Put new floral decorations out: April 1

Fall:
Remove floral decorations: Oct. 18-22
Maintenance Clean-up: Oct. 25-29
Put new floral decorations out: Nov. 1

2010 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Dates:

Go to www.berriencounty.org/recycle for collection dates and other recycle information, or call direct to **269-983-7111, Ext. 8234** for info by phone.

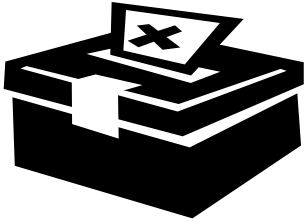
Earth Day: Thurs., April 22, 2010, from 8 AM to 5 PM Boelcke Heating Co. will be accepting compressor-bearing appliances. This would include refrigerators, window air conditioners, freezers, water coolers and ice makers. They will remove the refrigerant and dispose of the appliance at no cost to our Township and Village residents. For questions and more details, please call Boelcke Heating at **429-9261**.

Sewer Backups: Make us your first call if you have a sewer backup. We will check the main line, which may save you from having to call a plumber. If available we can print you a copy of your sewer line & clean outs. **After hours call 983-7141.**

Also, please call at anytime if you notice the red light on at any of our lift stations.

Spring Clean-up Passes: For the month of April there will be Reliable Disposal dump passes available for Lincoln Charter Twp. residents. **2 passes per address** Passes are good for the following Saturdays: April 3rd, 10th, 17th, & 24th, 2010. Refuse will be accepted during the hours of **7 AM to Noon**. You will be responsible for charges if you take refuse to Reliable other than the dates and times noted on the pass. Passes may be picked up at the Twp Hall.

Don't forget to VOTE!



2010 Election Information

Next Election:

Tuesday, May 4, 2010
Polls are open 7:00 am-8:00 pm
Close of registration is April 5, 2010

This election is a local school election. The candidates and issues on the ballot are as follows:

Lakeshore School District:

2 four year Board positions-

Candidates are: Michael R. Welch and Mark D. Whitwam

St. Joseph School District:

3 four year Board positions & Proposals-

Candidates are: Thomas Arent, William Chickering and Chris Cook

Proposals are: Operating Millage Renewal Proposal and Bonding Proposal.

Upcoming Elections:

August 3, 2010 Primary Election
Close of registration is July 6, 2010

Nov. 2, 2010 General Election
Close of registration October 4, 2010

Absentee Ballots: If you are 60 years or older, expect to be absent for the entire time polls are open or are physically unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another; you may apply for an [Application for Absent Voter Ballot](#). You may contact Jen Koeppel for details at 269-429-1589 ext 12 or you may obtain the application on our website; http://lctberrien.org/election_info.htm or on the State of Michigan Website; <http://www.michigan.gov/sos/> under Elections in Southwest Michigan.

Lost & Found: Check with the Twp. Hall if you have lost anything at our parks.

Assessing Department: Barb Cheek/Assessor - Ext. 13

Change of Assessment Notice: The 2010 Assessed and Taxable Values have been finalized and you should have received your annual **Change of Assessment Notice** in February. Assessments were calculated on how the property stood on December 31 of the prior year (Tax Day). **New** for 2010 Assessments, the State Tax Commission ordered the use of a one year sales study of sales that occurred during the months of *October 1, 2008 thru September 30, 2009*. By law Assessors and Boards of Review are not allowed to use foreclosed sales unless they are properly verified. Also, the practice of "Chasing Sales" is strictly prohibited. This means that an Assessor or Board of Review cannot automatically lower an Assessed Value (AV) to 50% of the sale price without also reviewing other properties in that "neighborhood". All Taxable Value's (TV) in Michigan decreased by **-.30 % unless** there was a transfer of ownership in 2009 or a new or loss of value to the property. The multiplier applied to the 2009 TV for calculating the 2010 TV was .997. We encourage you to read your Change

Notice to verify that the information is correct - especially your mailing address and the percent of your Principal Residence Exemption. We also encourage you to review your record card for accuracy. All properties in Lincoln Township have a record card on file that contains pertinent information about your property. You may view the card on-line or visit the Assessing department at the Twp. Offices. The **Board of Review (BOR)** meets once a year in March for appeals of Property Values. The BOR meets in July and December of each year only for the purposes of correcting clerical errors or mutual mistakes of fact.

Realtors and Buyers: **May 1** of each year is the deadline for qualifying for a **Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)**. *If you are moving or in the process of buying a home please keep this date in mind.* In order to qualify for the exemption you must **own and occupy** the home by this date. Under some conditions it is possible to receive the benefit of the previous owner's exemption for one year. We suggest you call the local Assessing office to verify those conditions.

Conditional Rescissions of Principal Residence Exemption: If you are a property owner who has recently purchased a new home and are trying to sell your previous residence *and* you meet all of the requirements as set by law, then you may be eligible for a Conditional Rescission. This Rescission allows you to keep the exemption on the home you are selling as well as qualify for an exemption on your new home. The property must have been your principal residence, must be for sale, not rented or leased, not being used for business purposes and you must be claiming another exemption in Michigan. The Conditional Rescission Form takes the place of a Principal Residence Rescission and is good for up to 3 years. It may be obtained on-line or from the Assessor's office. After the first of the year and each year thereafter it must be renewed on or before December 31, no late renewals are allowed by law and no reminder notices are sent out by the State.

On-Line: To obtain forms or for more information regarding assessments you may go on-line to the Assessing department on the Lincoln Charter Township website at <http://www.lctberrien.org/> or call this office at 429-1589 ext 22 for Linda or 13 for Barb. Please feel free to call this department at any time.

NEW SERVICE: To view **PROPERTY RECORD CARDS on-line** go to Township website <http://www.lctberrien.org/> under the Assessing department and scroll down to the Property Data Information link.

Department of Building Safety James L. Pheifer/Building Official & Zoning Administrator - Ext. 15

For additional questions regarding Planning & Zoning call:
Judy Dunlap - Ext. 16

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that Lincoln Charter Township enforces its Litter and Debris Ordinance. This Ordinance not only addresses Litter and Debris but also talks about trash removal and motor vehicles. The trash receptacles in no case shall be curbside more than 24 hours prior to pickup and removed from curbside the day of pickup. Motor vehicles must be licensed, currently registered and in running condition, or they must be stored within an enclosed structure. Please be considerate of your neighbors, look at your property like you look at theirs. Outside storage is addressed in the Lincoln Charter Township Zoning Ordinance and may be viewed on-line or at the Township business office.

Zoning Board of Appeals: In 2009, the ZBA had one petition for variance where the applicant withdrew the application. A variance request may only go to the ZBA after the project has been denied by the Department of Building Safety due to conflicts with the Zoning Ordinance. A petitioner must file the request three weeks before a scheduled ZBA meeting. The ZBA normally meets the first Monday of each month at 6:00pm.

Planning Commission: In 2009, the Planning commission held eleven regular meetings, four public hearings and two joint workshops. The PC normally meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00p.m.

2009 Permit Report: In 2009, the Department of Building Safety (DBS) issued permits for the following projects: 9 Single family residences: Average size 2,045 square feet/ Average construction value \$241,801.00. 3 commercial additions, alterations, repairs/ 5 demolition permits/ 33 fence permits/ 2 garages attached, 1 detached garage/ 2 industrial additions, alterations, repairs/ 3 new mobile home installations/ 5 pole barns/ 74 residential additions, alterations, repairs/ 7 residential decks/ 1 mobile home carport/1 residential utility building/ 95 roof permits/ 3 commercial sign permits/ 3 above ground pool permits, 4 in-ground pool permits/ 93 electrical permits/ 125 mechanical permits and 64 plumbing permits.

Lincoln Charter Fire Department

FUNDRAISERS: Pancake Breakfast has not yet been scheduled for this spring, however we will be hosting one. Please look for our sign this spring.

ADDRESS SIGNS: Green reflective address signs are available at the Township. Our Firefighters make the signs which are being sold for \$15 each. **(Make checks payable to Lincoln Firefighters)**. Call or stop in the township for more details.

BURN PERMITS: Due to the large quantity of rain last year, undergrowth in the Grand-Mere area, as well as fields and wood lots will likely be higher than past years. This can create higher potential for wildland fires. Residents living in these areas can now get information on how to better protect their property by going to www.firewise.msu.edu. Information contained on this site will give you ideas to make your property less likely to be targeted in case of fires.

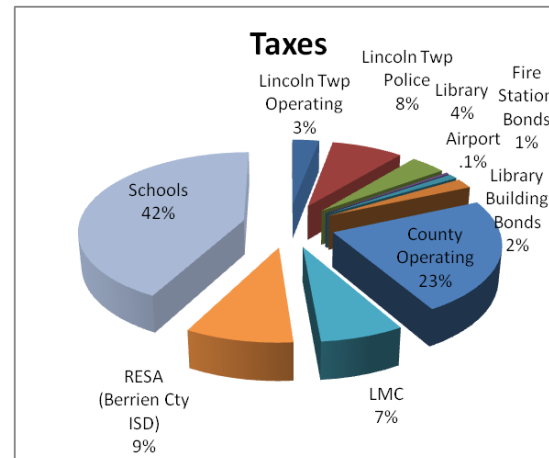
Lincoln Charter Township
2055 W. John Beers
PO Box 279
Stevensville, MI 49127

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
STEVENSVILLE MI
PERMIT NO. 279

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Treasurer Department: Terrie Smith/Treasurer - Ext. 17



Where Do All My Tax Dollars Go?

The pie chart on the left illustrates where your tax dollars go that are collected at Lincoln Charter Township. The three percent operating that goes to the township along with the revenue sharing funds are used to supplement the Building Department, Township Parks, Fire Department, Cemeteries, Township Improvements, Township Staff and all Township Boards, General Township Maintenance, Drains at Large, Road Improvements, Police and Parks Capital, print out assessment and tax notices and manage the Twp. Parks.

Treasurer's Corner

Another tax year has come to a close. Anyone still owing **real property** tax bills after March 1, 2010 will have to **pay their taxes at the County Treasurer's office**. Anyone still owing **trailer or personal property taxes** after March 1, 2010 will have to **contact Lincoln Charter Township for final payment**. In both situations, additional interest and penalties will be owed. Please contact our office if you need to set up payments for either trailer or personal property taxes. We know that times are tough right now and we are willing to work with you on partial payments to help get you caught up on overdue taxes.

As many of you noticed, the winter tax bills had a new look. We will be using the same format for the summer tax bills this summer. We were one of about six municipalities that were testing a new format. Everyone in Berrien County will be switching over to the new bills in the summer of 2010.

As we all face shortages in the current economic times, we too at the Township have had staff cuts and budget cuts. As we continue to figure out ways to cut expenses, one change that we will be making will be in the returning of tax receipts. If you would like a stamped receipt when mailing in your tax bill, **please enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope for your return receipt**. When paying in person, please bring in the **entire tax bill** so we may stamp your portion. If you lose your receipt you may come into the office to request a copy and you will be charged 25 cents per copy. If you have a mortgage company paying your bill, we will have a stamped receipt in our office when the company makes the payment. I am sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause you, but we are trying to do our part.

Lincoln Township Recreational Parks & Beaches

Lincoln Charter Township summer. We have partnered with South Shore Health and Racquet Club to host a tennis



July 28. The lessons will be adult. Brochures to register

from Lincoln Charter Township Hall, Lincoln Charter Township Library and South Shore Health and Racquet Club. Mark Ficks (USPTA P-1, PPTA P-1) and his staff will be presenting the tennis lessons. If you have any questions, please call South Shore at (269)429-2101. Pre-registration is required. Register by June 1st and save \$5.00. Classes will run from 9:00 am-12:15 pm Monday and Wednesday for the children and Thursday 6 pm-7:30 pm for the adults. The tennis courts at Lakeshore Middle School and Lakeshore High School will be available for other residents wanting to play tennis during camp times.

This spring the township will be placing doggy receptacles at the Community Center Park, North Lake Park and the Lincoln Township Beach. Dogs will not be allowed at the baseball and soccer parks. Please be kind and pick up after your dogs. The park is for everyone and we would like to let our children run free in the parks without stepping in animal feces. Thank you in advance for your help.

We hope the community will enjoy the extension and enclosures to the Community Center and North Lake Park. We want you to enjoy your parties even if the weather chooses not to cooperate. Also, the Community Center has been opened up again giving you more added space inside as well as kitchen appliances.

Finally, this spring you will see construction going on at the soccer park as the new concession stand and restrooms will be built after a very long waiting period. The water and sewer lines will begin to be installed in late April. Due to the placement of the restrooms it should not interfere with any playtime for any of the leagues.

Ron Burkett/Fire Chief 428-2385 Ext. 12

FREE TRAINING: Our Department will be holding a CPR / FIRST Aid class for any Township residents that are interested. The class will be held at our Fire Station on May 15th, starting at 9:00 A.M. Please call the Twp. Hall to reserve a spot as class size is limited. If we receive enough interest, we will schedule additional classes. Our Department will also be holding a FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING class for any Township resident that would like to learn the proper use of extinguishers. The training will be held on April 17th, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Fire Station.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Our department has been fortunate enough to receive a grant through the DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY for \$20,500.00. This money will buy much needed communication equipment. The taxpayers matching share is only 5%. Thanks to all who helped.