

# Porter Township Newsletter

Cass County, Michigan — December, 2010

Check out our Website — <http://www.portertownship.org>

## Working to avoid a sewer rate increase

Your Porter Township Board is working to avoid raising sewer rates. Monies coming into the sewer department are intended for bond payoff and for sewer system operation. Money received for paying off the bonds has come in faster than expected. That is good. The fees received to cover the cost of operating the system have come in as expected, but there have been unexpected system failures that have increased the cost of operation. This is not good.

As you may recall, the sewer rate, which started out at \$40 per month, was raised to \$46 per month in January of 2008. This increase was intended to cover the unexpected increase in the operating costs, and it did, for a while. During the first part of this year the Porter Township Board was feeling pressured to institute another rate increase. Instead, the board started looking for — and found — an alternate solution.

The Porter Township Board is in the process of implementing a three-part alternative to a rate increase.

The first part of the solution involves paying off sewer bonds ahead of schedule. Currently each year the sewer

department must pay off \$900,000 worth of bonds plus interest on the bonds. It has been determined that in May of 2012, more than the usual number of bonds can be paid off. It would appear that instead of the usual \$900,000, it might be possible to pay off as much as \$3 million. If the remaining bond balance is then spread out through 2024, the sewer department would only need to have \$750,000 (plus interest) each year to retire the remaining bonds. Paying off the bonds early will save the sewer department over \$500,000 in interest over the life of the remaining bonds. This will translate into more money available to operate the sewer system.

The second part of the solution involves reducing cash flow in the sewer department until 2012. To accomplish this the Porter township Board authorized the establishment of a "line of credit" (LOC) for the sewer department. Expenses incurred by the sewer department and owed to Porter Township will be placed in the LOC until the LOC comes due in 2013. In 2013 funds made available from the early retirement of bonds will be available to repay the LOC.

The third part of the solution involves obtaining certification, from the state of Michigan for the sewer plant to accept septic waste. The township engineer (Whiteman Petrie) has determined that the sewer department would see additional income to support the operation of the system by accepting septic waste. To that end, the township board has requested that the township engineer acquire the necessary information to support our application to the state.

Initial estimates indicate that septic waste might be worth an additional \$25,000 in income per year. This additional income would be directly involved in supporting the cost of operating the sewer system.

The township board needs your help in lowering operating costs. The system has experienced premature and unnecessary pump failures because of foreign objects that should not be in the system. The most notable foreign object is sanitary napkins and the like. If foreign objects (foreign to a sewer system) were not flushed into the system there would be a decrease in maintenance costs.

## Porter Township news roundup

### Middle Man Out

The Porter Township Board is no longer in the middle between Newberg Township and the Southeast Public Safety Authority (SEPSA). In the past, the Porter Township Board had a contract with Newberg Township which, in the past year, required the payment of \$102,000 to Newberg Township for providing fire and EMS service to the north half of Porter Township.

Until about a year ago SEPSA reimbursed the Porter Township Board for the contract with Newberg, since SEPSA was receiving a 2-mil tax from the north half of Porter Township.

When SEPSA stopped reimbursing Porter, Porter found it necessary to sue Newberg and SEPSA in order to get out from between the two. The lawsuit encouraged Newberg and SEPSA to develop a contract whereby SEPSA will

pay Newberg directly for fire and EMS services in the north half of Porter Township, thus removing the middle man, the Porter Township Board.

### US-12 Gone (but it will be back.)

Starting in April 2011 US 12, from Union to Mottville will be removed and replaced. The work is scheduled to be completed by November. The project will be accomplished in two stages. The first stage will be Union to M-40 and the second stage will be from M-40 to the bridge at Mottville. During the project, WHEN US-12 is open for traffic you will only be able to travel EAST.

During the time that the bridge just east of Union is being replaced, NO traffic will be permitted. When the project moves to the second stage, the bridge east of M-40 is going to be replaced, and NO vehicle traffic will be permitted.

Plan Ahead! Prepare your alternate routes before you need them.

### Township Repairs MORE Roads

Porter Township spent \$226,000 on road repairs. This had Porter Township spending more than any other township in Cass County. The following roads were resurfaced:

- Wayne St., from Baldwin Prairie Rd. to the joint east of Hilltop Dr., a distance of 0.80 miles.
- Harvey St., from Walnut Road to Birch Road, a distance of 1.30 miles.
- Teasdale Lake St., from Birch east to Robbins Lake Rd., a distance of 0.68 miles.
- Trout Rd. from, US-12 south, a distance of 0.76 miles.

The following roads were graveled:  
■ Bellows Road from, US-12 south past Sweet Road, for a distance of 0.68 miles.

- Guyer Road from, Union Road to the township line, a distance of 0.53 miles.
- Lewis Lake Road from, Brownsville to Monkey Run, for a distance of 1.07 miles.

**Commodities Distribution Dates**

**CSFP**

|          |         |         |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 12/15/10 | 1/12/11 | 2/16/11 |
| 3/16/11  | 4/13/11 | 5/18/11 |
| 6/15/11  | 7/13/11 | 8/17/11 |

**TEFAB**

|         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 2/16/11 | 5/18/11 | 8/17/11 |
|---------|---------|---------|

The hours for distribution will be 2

to 4 pm at the Mason Township Hall. It you qualify to receive commodities you will receive a box containing items such as cereal, pasta, dried beans, peanut butter, and canned milk, vegetables and meat. To qualify to receive commodities, there must be children under the age of 6 and/or seniors over the age of 60 in the home. In addition, there are limits on the maximum household income less, out of pocket, medical insurance costs.

In order to receive commodities you must register with Donna Kruse at 269-

641-5214 prior to the CSFP pick up date or at the time of pick up. When registering you will need to have the Social Security cards from everyone living in the home, proof of your income, and a picture ID.

**WINTER MONTHS:** Dates are subject to change if schools are closed on a distribution day. Distributions will be on the day following the next day that schools are open. If there is a time when you cannot pick up your commodities on the scheduled date, call Donna Kruse.

**General Information**

**TOWNSHIP BOARD**

- Supervisor .....Dan Harvey
- Clerk .....Marty Russell
- Treasurer .....Helen Croninger
- Trustee ..... Leard Wylie
- Trustee ..... Steve Northrup

Dan Harvey, Supervisor, will be in the office Mondays and at other times by appointment.  
 Marty Russell, Clerk, will be in the office Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.  
 Pam Penninger Deputy Clerk works Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday  
 Helen Croninger, Treasurer, will be in the office on Wednesdays. During tax collection time she will be in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.  
 Nancy DuFour, Deputy Treasurer, will be in the office on Wednesday.

Pat Keirn or Connie Bickel, Sewer Department, Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Closed Thursdays. Sewer bills may be paid in person or by mail.

**ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

Mike Alwine

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**

Connie Dalrympale

**BUILDING INSPECTORS**

Building, Rich Drews, Randy Schmeling  
 Electrical, Jack Hughes  
 Mechanical & Plumbing, Ed Wainwright

**Office Hours**

Township Offices are open 10 am to Noon and 1-4 pm Monday through Friday

**MEETINGS**

**Township Board Agenda meetings** are held the first Tuesday of each month at 3:30 pm, unless otherwise posted.

**Township Board meetings** are the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm, unless otherwise posted.

**Building Night** meets weekly from 5 - 6 pm during the winter and until 7 pm when time changes to let you apply for building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Township Office .....269-641-2375  
 Hours .....10 am-Noon and 1-4 pm  
 Fax.....269-641-2571  
 Fire Department.....269-641-7100  
 Emergency.....911  
 E mail.....porter@portertownship.org

**Porter Township**  
**69373 Baldwin Prairie Rd.**  
**PO Box 517**  
**Union, MI 49130**

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 Permit No. 3