

ALAMO TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011

Happy
Holidays!

HOLIDAY HOURS

Township Offices will be closed from December 26 through December 30, reopening on January 2. Voice mail and e-mail messages will be checked during this time, calls returned and appointments scheduled as needed. The Supervisor may be reached on his mobile phone (501-2288), the Sexton at 349-2638 and the Building Official at 365-3766. Messages for the Building Department may be left at 382-3366.

Many Township forms are located on the Township website. Completed forms may be mailed, faxed or dropped off (a drop slot is located to the south of the office door handle for use during non-office hours). Tax and assessment information is current and posted on the Township website.

OFFICE HOURS - GENERAL

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 a.m. – noon

The Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and/or Deputy Supervisor are available at the Township Hall during office hours and at other times by appointment. Please feel welcome to stop in. Please note the Treasurer's office hours are Fridays from 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS - ASSESSOR

Thursday
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Winter taxes are due on or before February 15, 2012 without penalty. After this date, taxes are subject to a 3% late fee and may be paid to the Township through February 29, 2012 after which time payments are subject to additional penalties and must be paid to Kalamazoo County. **Summer (2011) taxes** may be paid to the Treasurer until February 29; residents must call to obtain the amount of late fees that must be included with the payment. Summer taxes paid after February 29 must be paid to Kalamazoo County.



RECYCLING

Recycling resumes on **March 10** at the Township Park on DE Avenue from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Additional bins will be available to accommodate the recyclables that residents store all winter in anticipation of the recycling program beginning its new year. Thank you to everyone who takes advantage of the program, reducing the amount of useable materials going to landfills. This service is funded by the Township and is free to Township residents. The Township accepts clean mixed paper/cardboard, cans (remove paper and flatten), tin foil, newspapers, clear glass and plastic (#'s 1, 2, 3 & 5, no bags). Please separate newspaper (including inserts) for the Scouts. A complete list of acceptable materials is on the Township website. Curbside recycling is available from local waste haulers.

SAVE THE DATE: The next **Junk Day** is **May 12**. Information will be published in the March newsletter in terms of what is and isn't accepted.



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

The Township provides funding to the **Household Hazardous Waste** program to allow residents free use of this County service. Please take advantage of the program by disposing of used oil, household hazardous waste plus old TVs and computers.

TREASURER RELOCATES TO TOWNSHIP HALL

Treasurer Mary Stoneburner has moved her office from her home to the Township Hall. Mary will keep her Friday office hours (9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) at the Hall plus be available at the Hall on and off during the rest of the week. Permanent hours will be published in an upcoming newsletter.

Monthly updates of **tax and assessment information** is now available on the Township website providing more current and responsive information for all website users.

Household hazardous waste may be dropped off at 1301 Lamont (off Lake Street near the Sheriff's Department). For a list of acceptable materials, visit www.kalcounty.com/hhw/accepted.htm or for a recorded message listing items accepted and hours of operation, please call 373-5211. This service is available year round.



ELECTION NEWS

Four elections are anticipated in 2012:

- February 28: Presidential Primary
May 8: State and County Proposals plus
School Board elections are possible.
August 7: Primary
November 6: Presidential Election

Precinct 2 will be voting at the Alamo Community Church (7925 North 6th Street), just north of the Township Hall. **Precinct 1** will continue to vote at the Township Hall (south side).

Registered voters age 60 and older can be placed on the Township's **permanent absentee voter list** when requested. Once placed on the list, an absentee ballot will automatically be mailed to the registered voter prior to each election. Please contact the Clerk if you wish to be placed on the permanent absentee voter list. Absentee ballots may also be requested by persons of any age when the voter will not be able to vote in person on Election Day.



MUSEUM

Brian Smith, Museum Curator, has done an outstanding job of renovating the displays as well as staffing the Museum during the times it is open to the public. If you are interested in donating an hour or two (or more!) to staff the Museum, please contact Curator Smith or Ron Feniger (phone numbers on page 3.) This could make an excellent community service for a responsible student who can work alone or provide time for a **volunteer** to use the hour or two to learn about Alamo's history. The Museum is open one weekend per month May through October.

Access to the Museum during off hours or the off season may be arranged by contacting either the Curator or Ron Feniger.



FIRE & RESCUE

Thank you to everyone who helped in this year's very successful Alamo Fire Fighters' **Holiday Food Drive**. Six families in need will receive a holiday meal plus food for their cupboards for the upcoming winter. Because of everyone's generosity, food was also donated to other organizations that maintain food pantries.

With the heating season well underway, this is a good time to check your **smoke detectors' and carbon monoxide detectors'** batteries and to make sure the units are still operating.

Fireplaces and wood stoves are designed to safely contain wood-fuel fires while heating your home. Creosote is a common by-product of fires. Creosote is highly combustible and can lead to chimney fires. You can **avoid chimney fires and creosote buildup** by only burning seasoned wood (dry wood is a more important consideration than hard vs. soft woods). Burn smaller, hotter fires that burn more completely. Do not burn paper, trash or other materials in your fire place or wood stove. It is recommended that your chimney be cleaned and inspected by a certified chimney sweep on an annual basis. Chimney fires can turn into structure fires very quickly and with almost no notice. If you experience a chimney fire, get everyone out of the house and call 9-1-1.

Alamo Fire & Rescue is looking for men and women with a desire to serve and protect the community. Fire Academy, medical training and equipment are provided by the Township. **Applications** may be downloaded from the Township website. Interested persons may obtain more information by calling Chief Kizer (345-3010) or by sending an e-mail to firechief@alamotownship.org.



TOWNSHIP BOARD

In September, the Township Board approved the Planning Commission's recommendations for revisions to the Outdoor Furnace Ordinance. Residents may now operate **outdoor furnaces** all year. A permit must be obtained to install an outdoor furnace and it must meet a minimum of the EPA Phase II standards.

The Supervisor is participating in discussions concerning the feasibility of establishing a fire authority amongst a number of surrounding townships. This is in the very early stages of discussion and no decisions have been made.

The Township Hall has received a facelift! Offices have been built on the north side of the Hall and two additional offices will be constructed in early January on the south side. As a result of the renovations, the Township Board made the difficult decision to stop renting the south side of the Hall.

The Board is currently reviewing roads within the Township and will be selecting which roads will receive work in 2012 no later than its February meeting. As is no secret, Township roads need more upgrades than there is funding to support. Because the Township is in solid financial shape, some funds may be redirected to road maintenance to prevent them from failing. Rebuilding a failed road runs close to \$160,000 per mile. The Township Road Management Policy was approved in June of 2009 and is available on the Bulletin Board page of the Township website.



PLANNING COMMISSION

In January the Commission will be attending a seminar that will allow the most current laws to be incorporated into a revision of the Township's **sign ordinance**.

At the request of the Township Board, the Commission is updating the **noise ordinance**. The Township's current noise ordinance has been in place since 1974. Opinions are varied in terms of the desired content of the ordinance. If you wish to express your thoughts, please feel welcome to attend an upcoming Planning Commission meeting (1st Tuesday of each month), contact the Chair of the Planning Commission (or other member) or send an e-mail expressing your opinions to planningcommission@alamotownship.org.



SERVING YOUR TOWNSHIP

This is your Township, **become involved**. All decision making and advisory boards welcome citizen attendance at their meetings. The full schedule is published on the township website. Meeting schedules are on the back cover. Appointments to the various Boards are not lifetime appointments, please let Township officials know if you are interested in serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, Park Board (advisory), Board of Review, Library Board or the Museum Committee

(advisory). Alternates for the Zoning Board of Appeal and the Board of Review are currently needed.



WINTER PROGRAMS: TOWNSHIP PARK

An ice skating rink will compliment the 3 miles of groomed cross country ski trails. The DE Avenue Park is open sunrise to sunset 7 days per week.

This year's Winterfest will be held February 11 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. It will include the second running of the Alamo Park Loppet cross-country ski race and a snowball softball tournament. Lee's Sporting Goods of Kalamazoo will be on hand to provide cross-country ski demonstrations and will have rental skis available. The Park Board runs a "donate your cross-country skis" program. Those wishing to donate may contact Lou Conti (808-5506). The skis will be rehabilitated and made available to Alamo Township kids.



THIS AND THAT

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Spring forward at 2:00 a.m. on March 11 for **daylight savings time**. This is a good opportunity to check batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

All winter decoration must be removed by April 1.

DOG LICENSES

Licenses are available from the Township Treasurer; proof of rabies vaccination is required.



WANTED: VOLUNTEERS

Become involved! Meet your neighbors! Earn community service hours! Lend a hand! Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

Contacts:

-  **Cemeteries.** Garilyn Sportel-Bogard (382-3366)
-  **Park.** Jack Landon (382-0765)
-  **Museum.** Brian Smith (217-3247)
-  **Recycling.** Ron Feniger (381-8478)