

FISH LAKE TOWNSHIP *NEWSLETTER*

THE YEAR 2007 HAS BEEN REMARKABLE IN MANY WAYS FOR FISH LAKE TOWNSHIP.

At least 65 people attended our Jan. 12th meeting. There was a lot of good debate and several issues discussed. Of the 65 people, more than 40 came to talk about ways to improve our internet service. There was also interest in zoning issues, creating a township park, bike/walking trails, and a siren to warn of approaching bad weather. We decided to form separate groups to focus on these items to insure that they were all addressed. These groups will be autonomous of the Board and proceed as they see fit. If you are interested in being involved please call the Township Clerk.

THE TWP. WAS INVOLVED IN SEVERAL PROJECTS OUTSIDE OF OUR NORMAL ROUTINE LAST SUMMER.

The biggest item was the joint paving project with Nessel Twp. of Blue Heron Trail. With only a small contribution from the Twp. the residents financed the cost of the job. This was the first time a subordinate service district was established in the Twp. This mile of blacktop required little re-grading, yet cost about \$225,000.00. There were 32 property owners involved and without their spirit of cooperation and an occasional compromise it would not have gotten done. Thanks also to Rick Klick for his work as liaison, keeping everyone informed.

LITTLE HORSESHOE LAKE BOAT LANDING

The Township rebuilt the boat landing on Little Horseshoe Lake using concrete planks provided by the DNR. In my ten years on the board I've had more calls about this landing than anything else. I've never determined if there are a lot of people who use the landing or simply one large well-organized family.

COUNTY ROAD 10 CONSTRUCTION

While the County was working on CSAH 10 we tried to acquire some new right of way and improve it's intersection with Skogman and CSAH 4. Unfortunately, we weren't successful. We were able to work with the County and get the intersections of several Twp. roads and CSAH 10 paved back further than normal. Anticipating this, we had set aside funds for the extra blacktop. However, after some discussion the County agreed to pick up the tab for this. This should make these intersections safer and easier to maintain, particularly at Skogman Lake Road. Incidentally, at Skogman, we wanted to raise the road about 2 feet. Before we did that we needed to replace the old culvert under the road. The County's contractor was working right there; so Gary got an estimate from them for this work. It was about \$3,000. Figuring wages, fuel, material and hiring Leaf Construction to do the digging, Gary determined that if he and Doug could get it done in less than 4 hours the Twp. would save money. It took them 3 1/2 hours to complete the work and cost the Township about \$1500.

Township Directory

Town Hall & Garage: 2170 Brunswick Road, Harris, MN 55032

Phone: 651-674-7709 / Fax: 651-674-8837 / Email: clerk@fishlaketownship.com

Clerk: Andrea Nekowitsch Treasurer: Sharon McAndrew

Public Hours: Thursdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm Call ahead if possible

Supervisors: Chair: Bob Carter-651-674-8790 / Bob Cupit-651-674-4850 / Tim O'Keefe-763-689-5965

Meetings: Regular monthly meetings of the Board of Supervisors are held on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00 PM.

HAIL STORM

Our Township buildings sustained about \$78,000.00 in damage from this summer's hailstorm. This was covered by insurance except for the deductible. All the repairs have been completed. Since the contractor was on site we decided to convert the cold storage area in the back of the shop into usable, heated space.

TOWNSHIP SEPTIC SYSTEM

We called for and received 3 bids to upgrade or replace the septic system that serves the Twp. buildings. We are going re-advertise for bids again next year with the caveat that Gary will haul in the required granular material.

COUNTY ROAD 7 CONSTRUCTION

When the County shut down CSAH 7 this summer a lot of people chose to use our Deer Drive as a detour. This extra traffic really abused the road and created a lot of dust issues. We had Gary set out the traffic counters, and with that information and a former traffic count from 2004, we convinced the County to apply chloride on the road. Without the counts I don't think we would have gotten their attention.

OAK LEAF GRANGE

We interceded with the County and were able to get the taxes on the Oak Leaf Grange Hall in Stark set at a more reasonable level. If you really want to get a sense of the country and history of our area you should check out this old style farm organization. Contact Arlene Burda at 651-674-7752 for more information or to apply for membership.

SPRING TIME

In spite of the extremely dry summer we had a very wet fall. This may well cause a lot of roads to break up this coming spring. In anticipation we have stockpiled extra rock. Dumping rock into these frost boils is the only means we have to keep roads passable until they eventually dry out and become firm again.

We always seem to get a snowfall late in the spring. Often, when the roads are starting to thaw and become soft. Usually the next day dawns with clear blue skies, warm temperatures, and the snow starts melting. It is impossible to plow the roads under these conditions without putting a lot of gravel into the ditch. Since gravel has gotten so much more expensive in the last few years it is challenging to choose the line between safety and wasting tax dollars. We will continue to try to make the best choices, always keeping safety first.

FIRE CONTRACTS

Fire contracts continue to be a vexing problem. We are still under contract with North Branch, Rush City and Cambridge Fire Departments. We now pay the Rush City Fire Dept. more than we used to pay all three fire departments combined. They have gone from \$5500 in 2006 to \$11066 in 2007. All of the departments expenses have increased as they try to maintain good equipment and good training levels. All we can do at the moment is try to develop a working relationship with them and see that we are getting all we can for our tax dollars. We have been told that, Sunrise Township, which contracts with Harris and Almelund Fire Depts., was paying each about \$30,000. They recently received a bill from Harris for \$60,000. If anyone has experience with fire contracts or ideas about ways to contain costs please feel free to contact the Township. The stand pipe, which is a source of water for the fire trucks, is in place and operable on Big Horseshoe Lake.

EQUIPMENT

We have replaced the 1989 and 1993 tandem trucks with a 1994 model, which was formerly, a Chisago Co. truck. It appears solid but carries the same risk as any other used vehicle.

We have now had the Caterpillar grader for 7 years. There were a few small problems which were corrected under the 5 year warranty. Like every other vehicle owner we are now faced with the same decision. Should we think about trading it while it has relatively few hours and a high trade-in value or keep it for the long haul and hope that we don't have any major problems. Incidentally, if you aren't familiar with what it costs to maintain a piece of equipment like the grader we recently replaced just the 4 rear tires at a cost of \$5,780.21. At this time the Board is wide open to suggestions and looking forward to some discussion at the annual meeting in March.

You may have seen the Township's new 1 ton truck. This is the first new truck the Twp. has bought since 1993. We replaced the old 1988 1-ton. We tried to put off replacing the old truck as long as possible by making repairs. Then we made some repairs just to keep it running so we could sell it. Gary and Doug used it to go get the new truck. It finally gave up the ghost on the way back and had to be towed to the Twp. shop. We sold it for \$1500.00.

GRAVEL AND CHLORIDE

As has become our practice we have a 3 year supply of class 1 gravel crushed and stockpiled. This not only saves some money, but helps with budgeting and planning which roads to gravel.

It was just on the news that the price of road salt for sanding mix has increased by 66% this year. We use more sand/salt each winter and quickly hear if certain roads aren't sanded. The price of chloride will almost certainly take a similar jump. We rely on chloride to hold the moisture in the gravel on the roads. The moisture keeps the gravel compacted so it doesn't roll into the ditches, keeps the binder from blowing away, and keeps the roads smoother longer requiring less blading. In lieu of blacktop it has helped to provide better driving surfaces and keep costs down.

BUDGET

The budget that will be presented at the Annual Meeting, if approved, will require a 7% increase in the levy for the year 2009. Over the last several years the Twp. has worked hard to improve many of the old road problems ie; bad culverts, poor drainage, poor road sub-grade, erosion etc. The 2009 budget will put that program on hold for a while. At least until the economy improves and people are more comfortable with their living expenses. REMEMBER, the levy is set by the residents who come to the meeting, not by the Town Board.

Fish Lake Township is very fortunate to have Gary, Doug, Andrea, Sharon and Pat as full and part-time employees. Their dedication to the Township goes way beyond simply getting a paycheck. They are always making suggestions and looking for ways to improve service to our residents.

**PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE TWP. ELECTION ON MARCH 11TH AT THE FISH LAKE TWP HALL.
POLLS WILL BE OPEN FROM 12:00 NOON TO 8:00 PM.
THE ANNUAL TOWNSHIP MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 8:05 pm.**

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION AND BOARD OF CANVASS

Notice is hereby given to qualified voters of Fish Lake Township, Chisago County, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Township Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2008. In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the third Tuesday of March 2008. (Check WCMP 1350 AM for information)

The election poll hours will be from 12:00 noon to 8:00 pm. At which time voters will elect ONE SUPERVISOR FOR A 3 YEAR TERM.

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:05 pm. To conduct all necessary business prescribed by law. The Annual Meeting and Election of Officers will be held at the Fish Lake Town Hall at 2170 Brunswick Road, Harris, MN 55032. Absentee ballots are available by calling the clerk at 320-358-3924.

The Board of Canvass will meet directly after the annual meeting adjourns to certify the official election results.