



Downers Grove Township

Frank Wurster • Supervisor

www.dgtownship.com

Issue 5 • Fall/Winter Newsletter 2010

Elected Officials

Assessor

Theresa A. Cockrell

Phone: (630) 719-6630

Fax: (630) 719-6653

www.dgtao.com

Clerk

Diane A. Konicek

Phone: (630) 719-6610

Fax: (630) 719-6608

Highway Commissioner

Lawrence C. Anderson

Phone: (630) 719-6620

Fax: (630) 719-6624

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Supervisor

Frank Wurster

Phone: (630) 719-6610

Fax: (630) 719-6608

Trustees

William J. Swanston

Robert C. Del Sarto

Rita J. Carlson

Kathleen A. Abbate

Additional Departments

Human Services

Phone: (630) 719-6670

General Assistance

Phone: (630) 719-6610

Downers Grove Township

4340 Prince Street

Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Office Hours:

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Monday - Friday

Dear neighbor...

Can you believe winter is almost here? It seems like spring came and went, and we hardly noticed summer! Now that our children and grand-children are back in school, vacations have ended, and the leaves have begun to turn, I wanted to take a few minutes to share with you our accomplishments from the summer and my thoughts on the fall/winter activities at Downers Grove Township.



This past summer, we greatly increased our exposure by attending a number of summer festivals and carnivals. I speak for your entire Township team, in saying how much we enjoyed talking with and hearing the concerns and thoughts of our residents. Whether it was concerns about how we handle snow removal, or your appreciation for our increased correspondence, know that all of us in the Township offices are grateful for your support.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Downers Grove Township invested a great deal of time and volunteer hours in a number of projects. Two things we are particularly proud of and thankful for, were our Township Cemetery cleanup program and our Highway Department recycling program. Both of these efforts were a remarkable success, and everyone throughout the Township is owed a thank you for making them a success.

Finally I want to take a moment to share some General Assistance information: Downers Grove Township is now taking applications for LIHEAP (Low income home energy assistance program). The months of September and October are for seniors and disabled. Applications for the general public will start in November. You may be eligible to receive assistance if your monthly household combined income is at or below the following levels:

Number of people living in household	(30) day income prior to application dates
1	\$1,354
2	\$1,821
3	\$2,289
4	\$2,756
5	\$3,224
6	\$3,691
7	\$4,159
8	\$4,626

As always, thank you for your continued support. The Township offices are here for you and we appreciated hearing from you regularly.

Frank Wurster - Supervisor

A message from the Assessor...

ASSESSMENT, LEVY, TAX RATE or TAX BILL

What comes first?

The assessment is to be one third of the market value of your property. The Illinois Property Tax system uses the **ASSESSED VALUE** to determine your **PORTION** of the local tax burden. Assessments are normally published in September or October in Downers Grove Township and are available on our website.

The **LEVY** is the request for revenue determined by each taxing body. Schools, villages, county and Township governments, the forest preserve, park and fire districts, etc. calculate the cost to operate and deliver services to you. The levy requests are submitted to the County Clerk, Gary King, by the last Tuesday in December.

The County Clerk calculates the **TAX RATE**. Once all Board of Review decisions are made, exemptions have been applied and the determination by the Department of Revenue of State Equalization Factor, the County Clerk arrives at the net taxable assessed value for each taxing body. The Clerk divides the levy requested by the net assessed value to arrive at the **TAX RATE**.

In the beginning of May, the Clerk prints and mails the **TAX BILLS**, which list all of the taxing bodies that provide services you or your property. Individual tax bills are calculated, as follows:

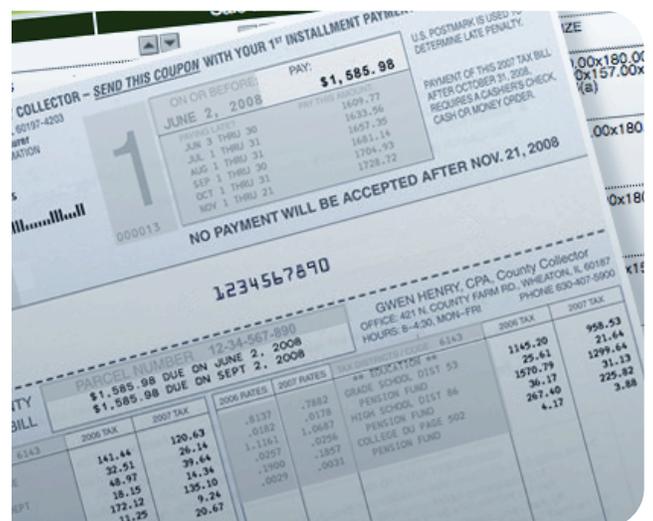
$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Assessed Value} \\ & - \text{Exemptions} \\ & = \text{Billing/Net Assessed Value} \\ & \times \text{Tax Rate} \\ & = \text{Tax Bill Amount} \end{aligned}$$

The **TAX BILL** is normally paid in two equal installments due June 1 and September 1 to the DuPage County Treasurer, Gwen Henry. After the taxes are paid, the Treasurer begins to transfer the collected funds to each taxing body.

Shortly thereafter the cycle begins again! What comes first, I suppose, depends on your viewpoint.

Theresa A. Cockrell - Assessor

“In the beginning of May, the Clerk prints and mails the TAX BILLS, which list all of the taxing bodies that provide services you or your property.”



A message from the Clerk...

Township Officials Conference...

I will be attending the 2009 [Annual TOI Conference](#) held in Springfield, November 8 – 10. The conference is open to elected Township officials in every Township in the state. There are many educational classes to keep us abreast of changes in the laws and new requirements we have to meet. It is an excellent time to meet with with Clerks from all over the state and share ideas. I am looking forward to the event.



It was said that we would have less paper with the use of computers. I think I have more now than ever! With all the identity theft in the news I want to make sure I destroy any personal documents properly and safely. There is a company called Rock-Tenn that will do this for free. Yes, I said for FREE! They are located at 1601 Mountain Street in Aurora. They can be reached at (630) 429-2466 or on the Internet at: www.rocktenn.com. They will accept grocery store boxes – cereal, cracker, etc., junk mail, magazines, catalogs, pizza boxes, corrugated boxes, newspapers, phone books, manila folders, bank statements, cancelled checks, etc. You can actually witness the destruction of your personal documents. It's a win-win for both you and Rock-Tenn as they turn your recycled waste paper into Binders Board that is used for many products from text books to air filtration devices.

Diane A. Konicek - Clerk

A message from the Township Trustees...

At the end of August, I attended the "swearing in" ceremony for new jurors within the Peer Jury Program directed by Lori Wrzesinski. Several dozen area high school students and their parents along with local police officers and an official judge were present for the ceremony. An overview of the program was presented along with a mock jury format to illustrate the responsibilities of a Peer Juror before each of the students were sworn in. The Peer Jury Program is built on the principles of balanced and restorative justice. It is designed to provide a meaningful and remedial method of dealing with juvenile offenders without reference to the Juvenile Court. The purpose of Peer Jury is to provide a means for the offender to account for their behavior to a group of their peers and repair the harm caused to the victim and community. Through a series of questions, Peer Jurors attempt to understand why the offender committed the offense and then assign consequences to help hold them accountable for their actions. Some of the consequences may include community service, an apology letter, or a class in self-management skills.

As an observer, it is my opinion the Peer Jury Program offered by the Downers Grove Township is outstanding. It offers a terrific service to our youth whether you are an offender or a juror. The education experienced in the "mock" courtroom is invaluable. It provides the students with information about our Justice System and how to become an active and productive participant in our community. It is also an excellent collaborative effort with all of the local municipalities to help serve and educate our youth. As a Township resident and Downers Grove Township Trustee, I am extremely impressed by what the Peer Jury Program has accomplished.



Kathleen Abbate - Township Trustee

A message from the Highway Commissioner...

Winter On The Way

As we face a long winter once again, please remember that you can help crews keep the roads clean. Please do not park on the streets when it snows. A Township Ordinance states that there shall be no parking on any street at any time when the National Weather Service predicts a snowfall of two inches or more. Vehicles left on the street may be ticketed or towed.

Also, please do not shovel or plow snow into the street. This is a dangerous practice that could have legal consequences for you should someone be hurt.

When crews are plowing snow, give them lots of room. Do not drive alongside the truck, or follow too closely (the driver cannot see you); and be sure you know whether a truck is plowing to the left or to the right before passing it.

Mailboxes

Postal Service regulations require that mailboxes be eight (8) inches in from the back of the curb (or edge of the road or shoulder). Posts should be of either 4" x 4" wood or 2" thin-wall steel pipe. Posts larger than 4" x 4" (e.g. railroad ties or brick piers) are hazardous. Property owners will be liable for any damages resulting from collisions with unacceptable mailboxes or posts.

Properly installed mailboxes will withstand heavy slush discharged from a plow. The Township is not responsible for damage to mailboxes, which are improperly placed, or in a state of disrepair. However, if your mailbox meets standards and is damaged as a result of our work, you can contact the Highway Commissioner, Andy Anderson, at (630) 719-6620 for repair or replacement.

Wood Chips Available

Wood chips from our brush pickup program are available to any resident of the Township. They are delivered by the truckload (small load is about 2 cubic yards, large is about 6 cubic yards). Anyone wishing to receive some should call the Highway Department office at (630) 719-6620. Please be aware that the chips are "as is"; we cannot control the size or quality. There is no charge for this service.

Electronic Recycling Program

The Highway Department is pleased to announce we have entered into an agreement with Sims Recycling Solutions to collect unwanted electronics from Township households at no cost to tax payers. <http://www.simsrecyclingsolutions-na.com> or [download brochure](#) for more information.

Beginning June 20, 2009, electronics may be dropped off at 318 East Quincy, Westmont, IL.
On the third Saturday of every month from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm (except holiday weekends).

For further information or questions please call, Downers Grove Township Highway Department at (630) 719-6620.

A list below will describe equipment that will be accepted.

Computers and Peripherals: CPU's, laptops, monitors, flat panels, keyboards, mice, cable, printers, plotters, external hard drives, tape drives, network hardware (servers, routers, hubs), communication hardware (modems), and subassemblies of any of the above.

Data Center Equipment: Power Distribution Units (PDU's), uninterruptible power supplies (UPS Systems).

Office and Telecommunication Equipment: copiers, fax machines, phone systems, cell phones, hand held devices, projection equipment, audio equipment, video equipment, TV's, calculators, security equipment, videotapes, beepers, and typewriters.

Thank you in advance for your participation in the electronic recycling program.



Lawrence C. Anderson - Highway Commissioner

A message from Human Services...

Serving with Heart...

Every person in this world is valuable. People can create a real and lasting impact in the world around them. Many people tend to think that significant change can only be accomplished by the Gandhi's or Obama's of the world when the reality is, almost all of us are just regular, every day, ordinary people. We're all just average. It is our hearts and our values that make us truly extraordinary. The staff here at the Division of Human Services do the work that we do every day because we believe that every life has value and that every person can "be the change that they want to see in the world". What we do isn't a job; it is a mission.

"Within the Division of Human Services, our mission is to, based on the needs of the community, promote positive quality of life for youth and their families who live and work within the Township of Downers Grove. We seek to achieve this by being a resource for education, training, support, networking, collaboration, and program development." We take the pursuit of that mission seriously. The world is not static and the changing dynamics of people and environment within our communities has us always examining the needs of our residents and how we are serving them.

One important way we gain knowledge about the people within the Township is through our advisory committees. There are both a Youth and Family Advisory Committee and a Senior Advisory Committee. Both of these groups are comprised of representatives of various groups within our communities: schools, police, parents, senior residents, treatment providers, and recreational and social service organizations. These representatives meet with human services staff on a regular basis throughout the year. The purpose is to share information and provide training between the advisory members and staff. The sharing of this information helps our staff to keep our "fingers on the pulse" of the community through these organizations and the particular needs they hear about from the individuals they are interacting with in their specific organizational capacity.

Another manner in which we gain key information that guides us in our programming efforts is various survey instruments, such as the Illinois Youth Survey. In 2008, the Youth and Family Advisory committee promoted the use of this free tool to all of the middle/jr. high/high schools within the Township. This instrument is scientifically designed to gather up-to-the-moment student information and is provided to schools at no cost from the Illinois Department of Human Services for use in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. It gives the background that can help us address key risk factors such as access to drugs, peer drug attitudes and family rules that lead to substance abuse. This in turn helps us to provide more targeted education and prevention efforts. It not only gives accurate rates of substance abuse, it also looks at related problems such as youth violence. During 2008, nine of the jr. high and high schools within the Township participated in the survey as a result of our committee's promotion of the tool. The results of this survey have been valuable for our staff to understand key risk and resiliency factors. Time and time again, as we talk about information that we are gathering, we find ourselves talking about the importance of parents and other adults in a young person's life.



Growing up is a long process and despite the 'legal' age of adulthood being 18, social, emotional and brain development continue into the early 20's. This means that our children need consistent teaching, boundary setting and effective discipline for far longer than many people realize. The expectations that we set for adolescents to be "young adults", while beneficial, need to be more in line with what they are capable of achieving with their developing social and emotional intelligence. When you begin to look at the choices that they are making as they begin to spread their wings, there is cause for celebration as well as concern.

The celebration is for them taking healthy risks and acquiring and mastering new skills. The concern is for them taking unhealthy risks in the pursuit of fitting in and having fun with their peers. It is a basic human need to want to fit in and have fun. However, there are ways of fitting in and having fun that present less physical and emotional risks than what some of our kids are pursuing. Thus, the mission that we hold dear to our hearts here at the Division of Human Services at Downers Grove Township is important. From our life skills programs, our peer mediation program, Operation Snowball retreats to our juvenile offender programs, the desire is the same: to provide a place where youth and families can get the support, resources and services that

they may need over the long course of a youth's development. We all need that, no matter how "together" we might have it or how bad we may think it is. It's what makes us all human. Please, call us any time and if you ever have a need, let us know and some how we will work to meet that need, whether it is through our programs or pointing you to the right resource.

Lori Wrzesinski, M.A. - Director, Youth & Family Services

A message for Seniors...

Using Your Home to Stay at Home

Many older persons would like to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. However, they may worry about being able to afford to stay in and maintain their homes as they get older. Several programs exist to help older homeowners maintain their independence in their own homes by tapping into their home equity. These programs include reverse mortgages, tax relief options and low-cost home repair programs.

Real Estate Tax Deferral Program, homeowners age 65 or older whose annual household income is below \$50,000 can defer payment of their real estate taxes. The State pays the real estate taxes and repayment plus an annual interest of 6% is made when the home is sold or when the estate is settled. Applications must be filed by March 1st in the year the taxes are due. Call the DuPage County Collector at (630) 407-5900.



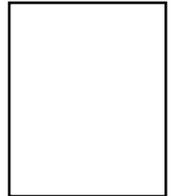
Reverse mortgage is a special loan that allows homeowners age 62 or older to convert home equity into cash while living at home for as long as they want. Borrowers continue to own their homes and do not need to make any monthly payments. They can choose to receive the funds as a lump sum, line of credit or as monthly payments. The loan comes due when the last borrower moves out, dies or sells the home. Note: Since reverse mortgages can be complicated, the law requires that applicants receive independent counseling before obtaining the loan. The designated agency in our area is the DuPage Homeownership Center. They have trained counselors who provide free, confidential, unbiased information and counseling to senior homeowners. Call (630) 260-2500 for an appointment.

Low-cost home repair programs: To obtain information about these program call the Homeownership center (630) 260-2500 or DuPage County Senior Services (800) 942-9412.

Hanna Benioff - Senior Services Coordinator



Downers Grove Township
4340 Prince Street
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515



Downers Grove Township Resident

Visit www.dgtownship.com for more Township news.