



Downers Grove Township

Frank Wurster • Supervisor

www.dgtownship.com

Issue 4 • Spring/Summer Newsletter 2009

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

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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



“Here to serve you!”

2009 New Beginnings...

It is hard to believe, but summer is almost here. Where did spring go? Like the seasons, Township Government has seen many changes over the last few months with retirements and appointments. With change comes a natural learning curve, and I speak from experience when I say the professionals in the Downers Grove Township offices made certain the transition went smoothly. I feel fortunate, that as your newly elected Supervisor, we have been able to hit the ground running.

While it has only been a few short weeks since the new board took office, we have already passed our 2009-2010 fiscal year budget, completed our audit process and laid out a calendar for the coming year. Over the last several months, you have heard me and the rest of board talk about enhancing services without increasing your tax burden. Additionally, it is the goal of the board to increase transparency in government, making it easier for you to see your tax dollars at work. Through the hard work of the Township Trustees, and with the cooperation of our other Township officials, we have begun to lay the groundwork for these goals.

This is just the beginning. Over the next several months, I would appreciate your thoughts on Township Government. Please email me at frank.wurster@dgtownship.com and let me know what you would like to see from us. I am comfortable speaking for the eight elected township officials, in announcing our number one goal has been, and will continue to be, making Downers Grove Township the best run township in the state—and with your help and support we will make that happen.

Frank Wurster - Supervisor

A message from the Assessor...

Will my tax bill go down due to this economy?

In short, the assessments for 2009 will remain about the same as in 2008, which will be a first in many, many years. Beginning in 2010 assessments will actually begin to decrease throughout Downers Grove Township and the other townships in DuPage County, another first.

Does that mean TAXES will go down as well? Probably not! That will only happen if all of the taxing bodies request less money than the previous year. The likelihood of that being a first is pretty slim. Here's how it works:

- When assessments decrease and taxing bodies request less money = a lower tax bill
- When assessments decrease and taxing bodies request more money = a higher tax bill

- When assessment increase and taxing bodies request less money = a lower tax bill
- When assessments increase and taxing bodies request more money = a higher tax bill

For more information, please go to our website at www.dgtao.com.

Do you own a home in another state?

If you own a home in Illinois and another state make sure you are not benefiting from the Homeowner's Residential Exemption in both states at the same time. In recent years, Michigan and Florida are cracking down on property owners who are receiving these exemptions in two states – to the point of prosecution.

Both Florida and Michigan have very generous homeowner exemptions and “double dipping” is being investigated. In a recent incident, Florida was going to prosecute an Illinois property owner for fraud if they did not pay the taxes lost from the benefit of having the same exemption in two states. Since the property owner had the benefit of the exemption in both states for over eight years this amounted to thousands of dollars in taxes, which had to be paid back.

Should you own a home in more than one state make sure you know the law regarding property tax exemptions by contacting the local Tax Collector or Assessor's Office.

Note: If you own two or more houses in Illinois, only the home that is your primary residence is eligible for the homeowner exemption(s).

Theresa A. Cockrell - Assessor



“Beginning in 2010 assessments will actually begin to decrease throughout Downers Grove Township...”

A message from the Clerk...

Town Clerk Responsibilities...

People have often asked me how one gets to be elected to township office. As Clerk I am the local election authority and have many responsibilities leading up to the election. This process began in December when the Clerk must notify the chairman of each political party, not less than 30 days before the caucus, of their obligation to notify me of the time and location of their caucus. They in turn must notify me not less than 20 days before the caucus of the time and place of their caucus. Ten days before the caucus I publish a notice in the local paper of the time and location of each parties caucus. Each party sets the rules and procedures for their respective caucus. The township pays the cost of each caucus. Once the candidates have been nominated the party chairman files a Certificate of Nomination by Caucus, listing each candidate and office each is seeking, with my office. This is filed between the 78-71 day before the election. The Certificate must include for each candidate a Statement of Candidacy, receipt for filing a Statement of Economic Interest with the county clerk and the Loyalty Oath (optional). It must be signed by the chairman and secretary of the caucus. The Assessor must also include proof of his or her qualifications pursuant to the provisions of the Property Tax Code. I then send each candidate a Notice of Obligation (form D-5) within two days of filing of nomination papers. I notify each party chairman that I will be holding a lottery to decide ballot placement. Each is invited to attend or send a representative. Once this is done the nominees must be certified and placed on the ballot in the order they appear on the caucus certificate. In addition to the names, the party name, number to be elected, and term of office must be included on the certification. All nominating papers are kept for a period of six months. This concludes my official duties leading up to the election.

Another part of the Clerk's job is holding the Annual Town Meeting. The Township Clerk is the only township official acting in any capacity at the Annual Town Meeting. Everyone else, if there, are there as voters. By State law the Annual Town Meeting is held the second Tuesday of April unless this occurs during Passover when the date may be changed. Our meeting was held at Ashton Place in Willowbrook, on April 14th this year. Notice of the time and place was published in the local paper and posted at the Westmont Library, Indian Prairie Library and the Downers Grove Library 10 days before the meeting. It is my job to obtain from the county election board a copy of all registered voters in the township. Only registered voters of the township may vote at the annual town meeting. The agenda for the meeting is adopted at regular board meeting at least ten days before the meeting. My duties at the meeting include: calling the meeting to order, reading the rules of the meeting and the legal notice, calling for moderator nominations, administrating the Oath of Office to the moderator, reading of the financial statement and any resolutions that will be presented for vote. We had 99 registered voters attend our meeting this year. Cub Pack 48 from Downers Grove presented the colors and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. All in attendance had a chance to speak on matters

pertaining to the township. It was nice to see so many residents of the township take part in this process.



Have you moved recently? Remember if you have moved or changed your name you must reregister to vote. Please stop in any time Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:00 pm and get registered. You must be a citizen of the U.S., 18 years old by Election Day and reside at your current address 30 days prior to registering. Bring two forms of identification, one showing your current address and we will be happy to register you.

Passports are required for travel out of the country. We take applications and passport photos. The total cost is \$100 for a new passport. The service fee is \$25 and passport fee is \$75. We charge \$7 for two passport photos. If you qualify you may renew by mail if – the issue date of your last passport was less than 15 years ago, you were 16 or older when it was issued, your name was the same or you can submit name change documentation (marriage certificate/court order), you can submit this passport and it is undamaged. The cost to renew by mail is \$75. Visit: <http://travel.state.gov> for more information.

Diane A. Konicek - Clerk

A message from the Highway Commissioner...

Our Services

The Downers Grove Township Highway Department offers a wide range of services to those residents who live in the unincorporated areas of our township. Those services include road and bridge repair, storm water drainage, snow and ice removal, sidewalk repair, removal of dead or dangerous trees, a traffic sign system, roadside mowing, wood chips for landscape mulch and a brush removal program. Approximately half of our 72 miles of roads are fully improved, with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters with storm sewers.

Road Maintenance

Along with warm weather, budding trees and blooming flowers, spring inevitably brings road work. Right now, some members of our crew are spreading gravel along the shoulders of roads we paved last year. The purpose of this is to shore up the road edge, so that it will not be easily broken up by traffic. We use a mix with lots of screenings, a finer material that tamps down, hardens and stays in place better than larger gravel. Later, we will be doing crack filling and slurry seal work. This work is done annually on streets in need of it. Sealing cracks prevents water from seeping into the roadbed, thereby prolonging the life of the road base. The streets that are crack filled one year are generally slurry sealed the following year. This work is done by a private contractor, following our bidding procedures. Still later in the year, we will completely repave streets where necessary. This job is also done by an outside contractor. Budget constraints, of course, always influence how much work the Highway Department can accomplish in a given year.

Safety First

Spring and summer mean street maintenance projects go into high gear. We know this is no fun; but with your cooperation, we will get the work done as quickly and safely as possible. Please watch for construction signs and be considerate of working crews. Slow down and stay alert!

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), uninterrupted 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...

Connecting Teenagers of All Ages

This year, in addition to working on the District 99 Operation Snowball, which combines students from both Downers Grove North and Downers Grove South, I had the privilege of planning and implementing the very first Operation Snowflake for Districts 58 and 66, in cooperation with not only the township, but also District 99, HGNA (Helping Girls Navigate Adolescence), and the Downers Grove Police Department. Being a part of both of these wonderful events was a great experience, though also a challenge.

The District 99 Operation Snowball has been done for many years, although this was my first. It was a great opportunity to see how the two high schools work together to create an awesome weekend for the students, one that is not only fun but also a learning experience that gives the students a chance to grow as a person. Snowball is all about being yourself, whoever that might be, and meeting new people who accept you for the person you are. The event is a two-day overnight excursion to Camp Duncan in Ingleside, Illinois. When the students arrived early Thursday morning, the yelling and cheers of the madly dressed student leaders greeted them. Each group has its own theme, whether Black, Blue, or Safari, and the leaders dress to impress using these themes as their guides. Throughout the weekend the students not only have speakers, workshops and various large group activities, but they also have time to talk and bond with their small groups. Led by two high school students and one adult chaperone, who are more like participants than chaperones, the small groups are the focal point of Operation Snowball. Each large event is processed and discussed, allowing each student to have their opinion and thoughts heard and appreciated. The students also give each other "warm fuzzies," which are strings of yarn passed on to a fellow participant while giving him or her a compliment. By the end of the two days, not only do they collect a necklace full of different colored fuzzies from all the groups, but they also leave with a bag full of written warm fuzzies from anyone at the event, adults included.

Each pair of leaders worked alongside an adult at the event, who is an integral part of the group. As an adult leader, you not only participate in many of the activities, but you share your own thoughts and experiences with the students, and in many cases end up learning more about yourself through the process. Also, besides working with an adult, each pair of leaders consisted of a student from each high school, so that they worked with a peer that was new to them. The degree of cooperation throughout the event was remarkable, and the cooperation continued through the new Operation Snowflake event.

As Snowball is for high school students, Snowflake is for junior high students. Specifically, we targeted 7th grade students from Herrick and Lakeview Middle Schools, with the goal of including more schools in the years to come. Snowflake was unique in that it was a joint effort of many different facets of our community. The participants themselves came from the middle schools, the student leaders came from both Downers Grove high schools, and the adult directors came from Districts 58, 66, 99, Helping Girls Navigate Adolescence (HGNA), The Downers Grove Police Department, and the Township of Downers Grove. Through a collaborative effort, everyone put together a spectacular event that went extremely well, even though it was the first. After seeing high school students come together at Snowball, I saw high school students come together again and lead middle school students along with all kinds of adult help. The parent volunteers that came to the event were amazing; I couldn't describe the event without mentioning them.

The daylong event began on a Saturday afternoon when the junior high students began to arrive. They were checked in and moved to the cafeteria, where the high school leaders were leading them in icebreakers, which are different kinds of cheers and dances to get everyone excited. After the keynote speaker energized the students and got them thinking about some important issues, the students separated into their small groups and moved to their own classrooms in the school. During this first small group session, the leaders concentrated on playing name games and getting everyone familiar and comfortable with one another. After dinner, there was more small group time and some more group activities that encouraged the students to begin to think about relationships, healthy living, and just life as a seventh grader in general. The event ended with a dance and celebration that had the high school and junior high students dancing and celebrating the incredible day.

Just like Snowball, Snowflake was an accepting, fun environment where the students could be themselves and meet new people. Also, it offered some opportunities for critical thinking, reflection and discussion. These two events are examples of how various members of a community can work together to create something positive and powerful. Not only does it include different adults, but they also combine students of different ages, knowing that each group has something they can offer. I am looking forward to continuing both of these programs next year.

Tyler Hill - *Prevention Specialist/Human Services Department*



**“In early
2009...
we had our
very first
Operation
Snowflake for
Districts 58
and 66!”**

A message for Seniors...

Volunteer Opportunities: Give and You Shall Receive

There are many volunteer opportunities in our community. Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 19 - 25. This is a good time to consider giving your time to help others.

You can make a difference in the lives of individuals who face great challenges. For example, you can offer compassionate care to sick and frail persons. Contact a hospital, a nursing home, or the adult day care center at (630) 968-1060. Consider volunteering with the In-Home Senior Respite program. You would visit with a senior in the home for up to three hours a week to allow the caregiver much needed free time. Call the Metropolitan Family Service DuPage at (630) 784-4875. Or become a "Hospice" volunteer and offer support and comfort to terminally ill people and to their families. Call St. Thomas Hospice, Burr Ridge (630) 856-6990, or Advocate Hospice, Downers Grove (630) 963-6800.

If you drive and own a car you can deliver nutritious meals for homebound persons. Call the DuPage Senior Citizens Council (630) 620-0804. Or, you can help at a food pantry. Call: Downers Grove FISH (630) 964-7776 or the Hinsdale Community Service (630) 323-2500.

If you enjoy tutoring you can teach English as a second language to adults who do not know English. Call Literacy DuPage (630) 416-6699.

Do you like spending time with children? Read stories to school children or assist a teacher in the classroom. Call your local school to inquire. You can volunteer your time at the DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (630) 637-8000 ext. 4680, or connect with a family in your neighborhood and develop a relationship with their child. For more information log on www.GrandFriendships.com.

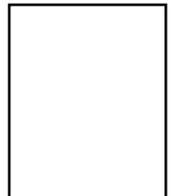
The above are just a few of the many volunteer opportunities offered in our area. Many more opportunities are posted on the Giving DuPage website: www.givingdupage.org or call (630) 407-6458.

For additional information, please call the Downers Grove Township Human Services office at (630) 789-6670.

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.