

# HILLS HIGHLIGHTS

Spring 2009 #76

## Mayor

Michael T. Zambricki

## Mayor Pro Tem

L. David Kellett

## City Commissioners

Michael McCready

Patricia A. Hardy

John E. Utley

## City Manager

Jay W. Cravens

## City Hall

45 E. Long Lake Road

Bloomfield Hills, MI

48304-2322

phone: 248-644-1520

fax: 248-644-4813

[www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net)

## City Office Hours

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday-Friday

## Non-Emergency

Police and Fire: 248-644-4200

## Emergency: 911

## City Commission Meetings

Second Tuesday of every

month at 7:30 p.m.

## Planning Commission Meetings

Second Tuesday of every

month at 4:00 p.m.

## Zoning Board of Appeals Meetings

Third Tuesday of every

month at 4:00 p.m.

## Commission Sets Blueprint for the Future of our City

*By: Mayor Michael T. Zambricki*

Issues on our agenda this fiscal year have run the gamut, from planning and zoning to the library, from infrastructure and street paving to employee handbooks, from DPW and Public Safety to coyotes and sidewalks. Two noteworthy projects will be particularly important to our city's future.

First, we are completing the most comprehensive revision of the Master Plan in our City's history. The Master Plan provides a roadmap for future land uses and development. Spearheaded by Planning Commission Chairman Bob Toohey, the City reviewed existing zoning and land use patterns, surveyed residents, and obtained opinions from citizen, business, and community focus groups. A draft plan has been prepared and is ready for citizen comment.

The Plan highlights our planning values and goals, and reflects our residents' desire to maintain the low-density residential character of our neighborhoods. Retention of pristine landscaping and abundant natural features were additional desires high on the list, as were environmental and "green" building practices. The document is comprehensive and worth reading, and includes other important topics such as community and business development and transportation. You are invited to review and comment on the Draft Master Plan that can be found on the City website: [www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net). The official public comment period ends on April 19, and we intend to make final adjustments to prepare the Master Plan for adoption shortly thereafter. Following its adoption, the implementation of the Master Plan will rest with elected and appointed City officials and staff.

Our 5-year financial forecast has just been completed, which will prepare the city to navigate through rough waters ahead. The state of the economy and the housing market have had a dramatic negative impact on home values, and city tax revenues. At the same time, falling pension plan valuations and rising legacy costs will require greater expenditures for retirement and health care. Based on financial assumptions and projections compiled by Plante and Moran, we will be running a deficit by the 2011-2012 fiscal year, if we do not adjust our revenues and/or expenditures.

Obviously, we cannot allow that to happen. It will be necessary to make substantive changes to our budget in order to retain the highest possible AAA bond rating, which allows us to sell municipal bonds to fund capital projects at the lowest capital cost.

Finally, the City Commission has considered many decisive, and sometimes divisive issues over the past year. I am happy to report that unlike Congress, these issues have been debated in a healthy and constructive manner. Indeed, process has triumphed over politics, and a healthy discourse has produced a vibrant local government. One important issue that has resulted from that process is the library referendum. Whether you are in favor of retaining our current library services with the City of Troy, or in favor of passing additional millage to switch to the Township Library, please, don't forget to vote.



Planning Commission Chairman Bob Toohey and Mayor Mike Zambricki agree: The Master Plan looks good and, once adopted, will serve the City well.

# Treasury Notes

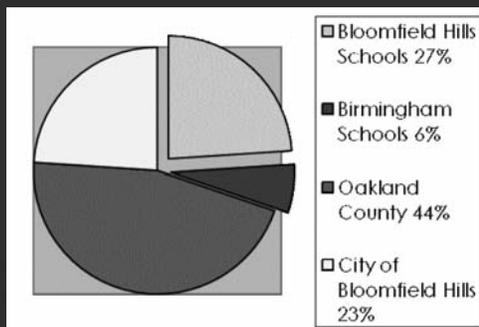
By: Finance Director & Treasurer  
Carolyn Lorenz

## Property Tax Update

- As of March 3, 2009 all unpaid 2008 taxes must be paid to the Oakland County Treasurer. Please contact their office at (248)858-0611 for the correct payoff amount, which will include penalty and interest.
- Recently added to the City's website is a property tax estimator. This site is currently using the 2008 millage rates. These rates will be updated as soon as the 2009 millage rates become available.

[www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net/Departments/Finance](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net/Departments/Finance)

- How were your 2008 tax dollars distributed:



## Homestead Exemption Affidavits

- Please file your homestead exemption affidavits and property transfers with the Treasurer's office at the City Hall. Your deed must be registered at Oakland County Register of Deeds office.

## 2009 Dog Licenses

- Dog Licenses are available for purchase at City Hall. The license fee is \$10.00 for all dogs. Proof of rabies vaccination is required. Your information is shared with the Public Safety Department so that they can continue to reunite lost pets with their owners.



# It's a Great City!

By: L. David Kellett, Mayor Pro-Tem

Look around you.

What a great city – I think you will agree that we are truly fortunate to have an outstanding and devoted Administrative Staff--the City Manager, City Clerk, Treasurer, and the front office staff are professional and efficient, as well as a pleasure to work with. From my position on the City Commission and as a general contractor in the area, I have found this to be true. Our Building Official developed "SPARE"\* , a program to provide first responders critical information about your home, which is unique in the USA. Our Public Safety Department is led by our experienced chief who developed the citizen alert program "CODESPEAR"\*. He,

along with his command, police and fire officers and dispatch [PSO] represent the best of the best. Last but not least, kudos to our Department of Public Works (DPW); did they not do an excellent job this last season? The answer is easy when comparing our roads to those of other local municipalities.

We can all take pride in our great city.

*If you have a chance, please attend some of the Commission meetings -- City, Planning, or Zoning Board of Appeals -- to see how your local government works, and, if you can, get involved --- after all, it's your City!*

\* Visit the City's website for up-to-date information: [www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net)

# Clerk's Corner

By: Amy L. Burton, City Clerk

2009  
ELECTION  
CALENDAR



May 5, 2009  
City Election

November 3, 2009  
School Election

Absentee ballots are available approximately 30 days prior to Election Day. If you wish to vote via absentee ballot, an absent voter application must be completed before each election. Absent Voter Applications are available at City Hall or on the City's website at [www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net).

### Precinct # 1

Bloomfield Hills City Hall  
45 E. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI

### Precinct # 2

Congregational Church of Birmingham  
1000 Cranbrook Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI

Election Day polling locations are consistent for every Election. If you have any questions or would like a new voter identification card, please contact the Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1403.

## COME JOIN THE BLOOMFIELD HILLS ELECTION TEAM

We are always accepting application for election inspectors. Qualified election inspectors must be registered voters of Oakland County and must declare a political party affiliation and must attend one training session before Election Day. You will be compensated for your day's work. Applications are available on the City's website at [www.bloomfieldhillmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillmi.net). For more information call the Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1403.

# Difficult Times Face Our City

By: Jay Cravens, City Manager

Bloomfield Hills is now in the process of developing its 2009-2010 budget. Unlike past situations, the City is facing seriously declining property values. For the upcoming budget cycle, property values are anticipated to decline 6 1/2 to 7%, and they are expected to decline another 11% next year.

The City has traditionally operated in what one city commissioner has called the "pay-as-you-go" philosophy. Under this spending policy, the City generally kept the millage rate in check with current expenditures. This worked well when property values were increasing, but now, with declining values, it will not cover the City's long-term obligations, such as retirement health care costs and pensions.

Approximately 78% of City revenues are derived from property taxes. Given these forecasted property value declines, the City, with assistance from its financial consultants, has developed a five-year forecasting model to help understand the long-range financial implications of declining revenues and ever increasing expenses.

The model allows us to see what will happen to the City's financial condition if current spending patterns continue. It also enables us to see what could happen if spending patterns do change. Using this tool, and comparing it to current spending patterns, the City could conceivably have a General Fund balance deficit of \$2.2 million by the end of 2012. Fortunately, we can make budget and financial changes now to avoid this deficit possibility later.

No matter what options the City Commission considers during budget discussions, City residents will likely see a General Fund millage increase. The amount will depend upon the cost cutting measures adopted by the Commission. For the past

five years, the millage rate has been steady at 8.3 mills, but to avoid the projected General Fund balance deficit, the City may need to raise the millage by as much as 2.25 mills, which would bring it up to 10.55 mills.

As the City reviews its options, there may be a way to reduce the amount of the millage increase. One option is to reduce manpower. However, manpower reduction and its associated costs would have minimal affect given the relatively small staff employed by the City. The number is low, due in large part to past City Commission actions to keep City government small in size. Currently, there are 42 employees, 30 of whom are employed in the Public Safety Department, which is the City's largest department.

Another option is to reduce spending on capital improvement projects, such as police and fire supplies, vehicles and city beautification improvements. Capital improvement projects account for 4.5% of the entire budget, so reductions in this area would not dramatically resolve the impending deficit.

The largest area for potential cost reduction is in health insurance and pension costs for current employees and retirees, which constitutes 26% of the budget. With union contracts set to expire at the end of June, it is clear that the City and its unions must work cooperatively to find lower cost alternatives that will provide equal levels of service and coverage. This is probably the best option for reducing the deficit amount.

Undeniably, Bloomfield Hills is a creative community. If you have any suggestions for budget reducing measures, I hope to hear from you. [jcravens@bloomfieldhillsmi.net](mailto:jcravens@bloomfieldhillsmi.net).

## It's A Sign of the Times

By Larry Rospierski, Building Official

The struggling economy has fueled an increased rate of illegal construction activity in the City, specifically work performed by an unlicensed individual or company without proper permit or inspection.

Building permits are required for additions and alterations even if no "structural" work is involved. Virtually, all electrical, plumbing, and heating/AC work conducted in the State requires a permit. A complete list of all activities requiring a permit may be found on our website, but, if you have a question, it is always best to call us at 248-644-1520. A permit places the responsibility for the job on the applicant, so beware the contractor who wants you to pull a homeowner's permit: You could then be liable for his work.

**Watchword:** Always have the contractor

pull his own permit. (There is no cost savings if the homeowner rather than the contractor pulls the permit!)

The City has initiated an aggressive program to review all permits that have not been properly closed out. Many contractors pull the permit, but never have the work inspected. Now, even years later, we are discovering defects that must be corrected, and many of those contractors are out of business. **Watchword:** Never pay a contractor until the job is complete and the work has been approved by the City inspector.

We have also discovered more contractors operating with expired licenses. State law requires that all contracts in excess of \$600.00 be performed by licensed Builders or Maintenance & Alteration Contractors.

Builders are licensed to do any task in residential construction, while M&A contractors are only licensed for their specific task. If you hire an improperly licensed individual to work on your home, the State has no recourse in the instance of a dispute.

**Watchword:** Hire only licensed contractors authorized to perform the task for which they are quoting. (We check all licenses when applications for permits are received. Permits are NOT issued to unlicensed parties.)

**Final Watchwords:** Permits, licensing and inspections protect the homeowner. It is in your best interest to insist that only properly licensed contractors pull permits for the work they are contracted to do, and to withhold final payment until the work has been inspected and approved by the City inspectors.

# INCH HOUSE

Residents Dwight Diener and Katie Kiyo, at 1945 Tiverton Road, live in a house originally owned and designed by H. Augustus “Gus” O’Dell who began his architectural career in 1903.

Spurred on by friends intrigued by the home’s unique characteristics, Dwight and Katie, historians by nature, started investigating both the history of the house, its creator and his ties to Bloomfield Hills and the greater Detroit area. Fortunately, they were able to track down the O’Dell’s daughter, Elizabeth, now in her 90’s in Seattle, Washington who was eager to cooperate.

In summary, here are some of Katie’s findings:

*“Gus O’Dell was a modest man of exceptionally fine character. In his own words, he was “a gentleman and architect who looks as straight as he is, and is as straight as he looks.” Over the course of nearly 60 years, firms with which he was associated were responsible for a large number of meritorious structures and facilities in Detroit.*

*In 1925, he and his wife, Agnes Cleveland O’Dell purchased a lot carved out of farm property being sold off by the heirs of Charles Stinchfield, Sr., a wealthy timber man and banker. The 286-acre working farm named “Stonycroft” was the first farm in the area to be electrified, through a unique arrangement with the railroad. O’Dell thought the lot was idyllic and ideally suited for a country house. He named the house “Inch House” after his ancestral home in Athy, Ireland, and named Tiverton Road after his mother’s birthplace in Tiverton, England.*

*O’Dell was always active in civic affairs. He was a member of the first Village Planning Commission. The work of this small group was without a doubt a contributing force in the development of Bloomfield Hills into one of the most desirable places in which to live in Michigan. He was on the Board of Review and the Board of Appeals, and was Justice of the Peace for many years—although he disclaimed any knowledge of law saying he was “impressed upon the job as my civic duty.”*

*He was a colorful man with many interests including hunting, fishing, golfing, and riding. Thus, he surely enjoyed his work on the Black River Ranch (1923), the Bloomfield Hills Country Club men’s locker room (1925), Tam O’Shanter Country Club (1926), and the Bloomfield Open Hunt Club Indoor Riding Ring (1929)—all places that still please us today.*

*We are pleased to say that the Inch House in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009—one of only two owner-occupied private residences in our community to be so honored.”*

## Two Private Residences in Bloomfield Hills are now in the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to Cranbrook and the Affleck/Frank Lloyd Wright House, Bloomfield Hills now has two owner-occupied private residences in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the nation’s official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture.

### Well Worth the Effort

Did you know that if your home is in the National Register, expenses you incur for qualified renovations may entitle you to the Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credit worth 25% of the total cost of your project(s)? More information can be found at [www.michigan.gov/shpo](http://www.michigan.gov/shpo), and at [www.michigan.gov/hpcredit](http://www.michigan.gov/hpcredit), and through our flyer available at City Hall.

**Homes in the National Register are NOT subject to restrictions or regulations.** Listing a property will not prevent you from selling your home, renovating it as you see fit, or even adapting it to a new use.

H.A. O’Dell House - 1926 (*Inch House*)



John Endicott House - C1906



Photos and article compliments of  
Katie Kiyo ([katiekiyo@aol.com](mailto:katiekiyo@aol.com))

# Bloomfield Hills Environment & Infrastructure

## Message from the City Manager

Spring weather is just around the corner, which means it is time to start thinking about lawn care. This season, consider practices and options that protect water quality. Lawn fertilizing practices (if performed incorrectly) can create excess nutrients into the ground water system and surface waters.

Several lawn care service providers in Southeast Michigan have worked cooperatively with public agencies and education groups over the past two years to develop a river-friendly lawn care program. Currently 14 local lawn care companies are endorsed by the Michigan Green Industry Association (MGIA) as having an environmentally-sound lawn care program that offers:

- 1) soil testing to determine your lawn care needs;
- 2) low-phosphorus or no phosphorus, slow-release nitrogen fertilizer options;
- 3) spot-treatment of pesticides; and
- 4) no-maintenance buffers along waterways if needed

For more information on these endorsed companies and their options, please contact MGIA at: (248) 646-4992 or the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA) at: (248) 288-5150.

## Road Improvements Program Update

The 2009 City of Bloomfield Hills Road Improvement Program is underway! The intersection of Long Lake, Vaughan, and Barden will be going through a major renovation to improve the safety of travelers at that intersection. In order to accomplish this, coordination with the major utility providers in the area was necessary and much of their work is currently being completed to clear the way for the City's Contractor.

**Please be aware that the City has proposed a complete shutdown of the Long Lake, Vaughan, and Barden intersection to complete the renovation of the intersection. The anticipated timing of this shutdown is Mid-May to Mid-July.**

While this may be an inconvenience for many drivers in the area, please note that through diligent efforts between the City, their Consultants, and the Contractor, the duration of the closure of this intersection has been cut in half. Additionally, the City has been working with the Road Commission for Oakland County to revise the timing of the signal at Lahser and Long Lake to accommodate detour traffic, which is directed to use either road in lieu of Vaughan.



Local road improvements along the roadways of Guilford, Barden, Keswick, and Denbar will also be completed as part of this project, including water system and storm sewer system upgrades. The project is anticipated to last most of the summer with completion scheduled by late September. We ask for your patience during this time. Thank you!

## Sanitary Sewer Update

As part of the City's Short Term Corrective Action Plan (STCAP), the City of Bloomfield Hills has contracted with Liquiforce Services, Inc. to investigate the City's sanitary sewer system to identify and eliminate sources of non-sanitary flow.

The City has completed metering and manhole investigations throughout the City. The City is finalizing its last televising program based on the meter results. Supplemental televising may be completed in some areas if time and budget allows. To date, approximately 105,000 lft of sanitary sewer have been televised. The City is currently performing one additional televising program in the southeast corner of the City and is currently working on the third phase.

The City has finalized the fifth phase of mainline rehabilitation. One more phase is scheduled for late summer/early fall. The City has completed its second manhole rehabilitation program. Today, approximately 290 manholes have been rehabilitated. The goals of the rehabilitation projects are to:

- Avoid major infrastructure projects;
- Reduce conveyance and treatment costs;
- Protect the environment from sewage overflows; and
- Protect property values.

# Stormwater Update

## SMALL ACTIONS MAKE BIG IMPACTS IN YOUR WATERSHED

Just because you may not live next to the Rouge River, doesn't mean your actions can't directly impact them. EVERYONE living within the Rouge River Watershed can either have a positive or negative affect on their watersheds, depending on the choices made.

Contrary to popular belief, industry causes only about 2% of all pollution entering our rivers and lakes, which means that individuals contribute the majority of pollutants to our waterways, from storm water runoff. Storm water can carry pollutant sources such as fertilizers, detergents, oils, greases, grass clippings, and leaves. There are several things you can do to become a watershed steward:

- 1) Pick up after your pet.
- 2) Compost yard and kitchen waste.
- 3) Read labels. Use low-phosphorus or phosphorus-free dishwashing detergents and fertilizers.
- 4) Use water wisely. Consider installing rain sensors for your irrigation system and re-direct your sprinklers to water your lawn and gardens only, not your driveway and sidewalks.
- 5) Become a member of Friends of the Rouge (FOTR), or volunteer your time and efforts to events sponsored by FOTR.
- 6) Volunteer at a Rouge Rescue event each June. For more information, visit the Friends of the Rouge website at: [www.therouge.org](http://www.therouge.org) or call: (313) 792-9900.
- 7) Encourage your friends and neighbors to become watershed stewards.

## RAIN GARDENS OFFER A BEAUTIFUL SOLUTION TO POLLUTION

Gardeners who want dryer landscapes, cleaner rivers and lakes, and natural landscapes should consider installing a rain garden.

Rain gardens are a natural "solution to water pollution" that can be planted by home gardeners in areas of excess rainwater runoff. A rain garden is a depression (dish-shaped garden) that traps storm water runoff from streets, driveways, and rooftops. Planted with native wildflowers, shrubs, and compost, rain gardens trap and recycle rainwater and remove pollutants in the storm water.



The idea of rain gardens is appealing to environmentally-minded gardeners. SOCWA (Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority) is working cooperatively with municipalities throughout Southeastern Oakland County to teach and promote rain garden methods. Over thirty home gardeners in southeast Michigan have successfully installed and planted their gardens – reporting dryer front lawns and streets.



As part of the City's 2009 Road Improvement Program (mentioned on the previous page), a series of three rain gardens will be installed at Briarbank Subdivision, off of Vaughan, Keswick, and Barden Roads.

A mixture of colorful, perennial flowers, plants, and sedges will be installed throughout the rain gardens, which will create an attractive landscape, blooming from early Spring to late Fall. Interpretive signs will be installed, that will educate residents and the general public on the project. We hope that this demonstration project will serve as a useful tool in educating area students and residents on the importance of rain gardens to protect water quality.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, or if you would like to help with the plant installation, please call the City of Bloomfield Hills Office at: (248) 644-1520.

# Master Plan Ready for Public Hearing

*By Robert Toohey, Chairman, Planning Commission*

State law requires each city to have a Master Plan and charges the Planning Commission with its preparation. Since our city has no planning department, the Planning Commission created a four-member Master Plan Task Force, consisting of myself, Planning Commissioner Virginia Fox and City Commissioners Pat Hardy and John Utley, to work jointly with LSL, the City's planning consultants.

Both the Planning Commission and the Task Force concentrated on providing opportunities for public involvement, starting with a survey mailed to all city residents. The Task Force then invited officials from neighboring communities, representatives from public and private agencies and community leaders to participate in information and idea gathering meetings. In addition, a Master Plan Open House was held for residents who wished to take part in the overall discussion of what our Master Plan should address.

The accumulated data became part of several drafts of the Master Plan, and the Task Force submitted draft #6 to the full Planning Commission on February 10, 2009, asking that it be approved for distribution to various governmental agencies. On that same day the City Commission accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission. The plan was then distributed to the governmental agencies to give them their 63-day review period required by state law.

A draft of the Plan is available at City Hall and on the City's website at [www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net), and you are most welcome to attend the April 21st meeting of the Planning Commission to participate in the Public Hearing. Since State law requires both the Planning and City Commissions to agree on the plan, the City Commission could approve the plan on either April 21 or May 12, 2009.

I wish to thank everyone who contributed to this effort, especially to the Task Force Style and Drafting sub-committee members, Planning Commissioners Virginia Fox, Chair, and Walter Cueter and City Commissioner Pat Hardy, who reviewed the plan to insure its language, charts and other data properly reflect what the Planning and City Commissioners approve.

## Transit Services in Southeast Michigan?

*By Robert Toohey, Chairman, Planning Commission*

We had the good fortune of preparing our Master Plan at the same time the Regional Transit Coordinating Council [RTCC], under the able leadership of John Hertel, was developing its multi-modal plan for transit services in Southeast Michigan. Our separate but concurrent efforts provide a unique opportunity to make the short, mid and long-term transportation planning in our two plans as compatible as possible, wherever possible.

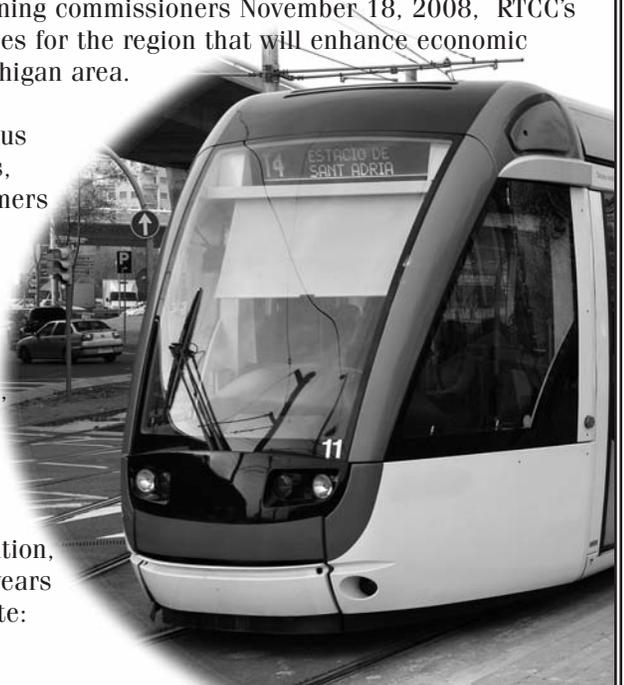
According to Mr. Hertel, who spoke at a joint meeting of our city and planning commissioners November 18, 2008, RTCC's Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan identifies a network of transit services for the region that will enhance economic development and maximize public mobility in the tri-county Southeast Michigan area.

The multi-modal plan is designed to build a solid foundation for regional bus transit by working with current providers to improve basic transit services, including expanding fixed route service and para-transit service for customers with disabilities for whom fixed route bus service is not a reasonable alternative.

Mr. Hertel described the use of low platform hybrid buses on signal coordinated corridors, articulated buses on rapid transit lanes and light rail on-grade rapid transit. He noted that of the top 30 metropolitan areas, Detroit is the only city without an airport-to-downtown light rail system.

Mr. Hertel said all transit modes contemplated by the Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan, including commuter and regional rail service on existing right-of ways, depend on formation of a Regional Transit Organization, funding sources and community support. It is estimated it would take 27 years to fully implement the plan. The entire plan is available on our city web site:

[www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net)



# - Commissioner's Connection -

## Farmers Market To Open In July

By: Pat Hardy, Editor/City Commissioner

To think that I have lived in Bloomfield Hills for 36 years and am just now discovering the wonders of the Bowers School Farm makes me wonder how I could possibly miss such a treasure.

I'm sure the Hardy girls went there on field trips. Was I asleep at the switch when they came home with what had to be exciting stories of their visit? Maybe we need field trips for parents! Are there others out there like me, or am I the only one in our fair city who doesn't realize that there is a place at 1219 E. Square Lake Road that time has not touched...much.

We may not have parks in the Bloomfield area—which is not a good thing—but our School Farm is the only school run farm in Michigan! It has in residence several sheep, 2 llamas, lots of goats, chickens, roosters and rabbits, riding horses, two draft horses and one dynamic Farmer/Manager by the name of Holly Glomski who just loves being a farmer.

In her short time with the Bloomfield Hills School District, she initiated the successful corn maze, which has drawn thousands to the 90+ acre Farm, a free-will offering corn sale, and she has plans for a Saturday

Farmers Market, featuring fresh, Michigan grown produce, beginning the third week in July.

A 15 hour work-day of farming, teaching, tending the animals, etc. is nothing unusual for Holly, and if it were not Brad

Webster, her Assistant Manager, she might never make it home to Clarkston at day's end. Meet her once, and you will catch Farm Fever—which isn't so bad considering fresh, farm air is an instant cure.

Why not spend some family time at the Farm? Draft horse wagon rides, tours of the farm, community garden plots, 4-H youth programs can be arranged by calling the Farm Office at 248-341-6475. In addition, the Farm traditionally holds two Open Barns in the spring where you can get in touch with your "inner farmer." This year, they are scheduled for Saturday, April 18 and May 16 from noon to 4:00 pm. Check <http://farm.bloomfield.org/> for more farm related opportunities.

If you truly are a farmer at heart, contact Lisa Yamin at [Lisa.Yamin@gm.com](mailto:Lisa.Yamin@gm.com) and join "The Friends of the Farm"-- then you'll

always know what's happening at the Farm. Holly would love it!



Holly with draft horse, "Mack". Notice the State of Michigan map on his face! Attend the **Open Barn Day on Saturday, May 16 from 12-4pm** and meet them both in person.

## We Are Not Alone

By: John Utley, City Commissioner

For the past year I have had the privilege of being a member of the group tasked with development of the City's master plan. We have met with a number of groups who have had input for the plan including those cities and townships surrounding our borders. It has become very apparent to me the influence of our neighbors is important to the future of our city.

In earlier days when cities such as Bloomfield Hills were entities unto themselves, it was not as critical to have interacting relationships. When we look at the current issues facing our city, intergovernmental cooperation is helpful, if not essential, in making decisions involving safety, development, beautification, bus service, future transit, library services and roadway improvements especially along main corridors such as Woodward Avenue.

Although we currently have service sharing agreements in various departments with other municipalities, the difficult financial climate we are now experiencing may necessitate

extending those efforts. I feel our public safety, public works, administration and other city departments do an outstanding job of providing our residents with unmatched service. We don't want to see this diminished! However, we also must look to our fiscal health and be always aware of the need to run our city in a financially secure manner not only now but in the future. As such, I feel we need to be ever mindful of the opportunities to reduce city costs. A part of this effort may involve more cooperation, not less, with our neighbors. Let us know what you think.



# - Commissioner's Connection -

## Times Are Changing

By: Mike McCready, City Commissioner

The stock market appears to be leveling off, and we hope this is a sign the economy has hit bottom. This is a good time for all local governments to look at their budgets, short and long-term costs and make adjustments to reduce spending. It is also a good time to consider what basic services we will need for the future. One of those services may be mass transit.

The last time we filled our car with gas, we paid \$30, and that was cheap compared to what we had been paying last summer. If you do not have a job, or you are paid minimum wage, \$30 can go a long way. Considering the billions of dollars our Government has recently given to insurance companies and banks, a rail system looks very affordable.

As a city commissioner, I believe it is the duty of city, county and state leaders to consider the transportation needs of the public. Mass transit would require a major investment by all government units. Will people use it? If the bus system is not sufficient, can we add more buses and more bus routes? In time, we'll know the answers.

The idea of driving a car or SUV with only one or two passengers will need to change. Group and mass transportation may be a necessity. The effect of the recession we have encountered will have lasting impact. For many people, the ability to own more than one car may not happen, but the need to go to work, schools and stores will not change.

One last thought--if you have some money left and are considering a new car, please buy an American-made car, specifically from General Motors, Chrysler or Ford. We must support our friends and neighbors who work or supply these companies. Auto companies are a big part of our local and national economy. They employ thousands of people and support many more in Michigan and throughout the U.S. The quality of their products has never been better. Mass transit will take a while--your best time to buy a new car is now.



## Library Millage Vote You Decide – Tuesday, May 5, 2009

In addition to voting for City Commission candidates on May 5th, residents will decide to pass or reject the following millage proposal which would re-establish a contractual relationship to borrow books from the Bloomfield Township Public Library:

“Shall the City of Bloomfield Hills be authorized to levy a new Library Millage for .72 mills per year for a period of 5 years commencing with the December 2009 levy to fund a library contract with the Bloomfield Township Public Library to provide library services for residents of the City of Bloomfield Hills? Library services would include full library privileges. Approval of this proposal would permit a tax limitation levy of \$0.72 per \$1,000.00 of taxable value on all taxable property in the City. The amount of revenue the City of Bloomfield Hills will collect if the millage is approved and levied by the City in the first calendar year is estimated to be \$607,120.00 if approved and fully levied.”

If the millage passes, City residents will be able to use all of the services offered by the library including the ability to place holds on library materials and books, reserve meeting and study rooms, use the computer lab and access a special needs collection and on-line tutorials. Coordination with local

schools on homework assignment will also be provided. If the millage fails, residents will still be able to use the Troy Public Library under the City's current cost reimbursement program which allows our residents to purchase a non-resident library card, currently priced at \$200 per family. The city will continue to reimburse residents upon receiving a copy of the receipt. The Troy Public Library provides the same full library services as the Bloomfield Township Public Library, but does not provide coordination with local schools on homework assignments.

To determine how the .72 mills would impact your tax bill, multiply your property's taxable value (as shown on your latest property assessment) by 0.00072 to determine your tax increase. For the average residential property with a taxable value of \$525,000, the first year cost of the library would be \$378.

To showcase the remodeled library and the services offered, the Township Library has scheduled two Open House meetings for City residents. The Sunday, April 26th Open House begins at 2:00 p.m. and the Monday, April 27th Open House begins at 7:00 p.m. For those who are unable to attend, a self-guided library tour and a library services fact sheet have been set up on the Home page of the Library's website at [www.btpl.org](http://www.btpl.org).



# Disaster Preparedness – *Are You Ready?*

By: Rick Matott, Director of Public Safety/Emergency Coordinator

With Spring comes the potential of severe weather. The Bloomfield Hills Public Safety Department will utilize our Codespear notification system to supplement County sirens if severe weather or other danger is imminent.

Because of our 911 phone data base, we have the capability of notifying you at home of any problem, but by registering for our Codespear notification system, we could notify you of any problem on your cell phone or wherever you are. Have you registered yet? Simply visit the City website at [bloomfieldhillsmi.net](http://bloomfieldhillsmi.net) to register.

CONSTRUCTION ... it's not a four letter word but it does result

in inconvenience and aggravation when traveling. The Vaughan, Barden and West Long Lake Road intersection will be under construction and closed from approximately May 15th through August 15th. Numerous signs and barrels will be erected to divert traffic, as needed. For the sake of workers' safety and your own, please be cautious while driving in any construction zone.

We expect to take delivery of a new mini-pumper/rescue truck in April. This vehicle will respond to medical and fire emergencies, as well as injury accidents, and have the ability to maneuver into most of the hard-to-get-at locations in the City.



## *“You Don’t Want To Miss It!”*

Mark your calendars now for the **Open House on Sunday, September 27, 2009**. This is a great time to meet the men and women of the Department, visit with friends and neighbors,

participate in fire education opportunities and observe the various police and fire demos.



**City of Bloomfield Hills**  
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### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**City Election**  
**Tuesday, May 5, 2009**

**Mother's Day**  
**Sunday, May 10, 2009**

**Memorial Day**  
**Monday, May 25, 2009**  
**City Offices Closed**

**Father's Day**  
**Sunday, June 21, 2009**