

CITY OF DOUGLAS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008
Volume 4, Edition 1

DOUGLAS EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Researching over 25,000 towns throughout the United States, Douglas emerged at No. 23 on Business Week.com's top 50 "Great Places to Raise Kids-For Less".

It was one of three cities in Michigan to crack the top 50 list. One of the factors taken into account was education. Saugatuck Schools Superintendent Tim Wood was not surprised considering the Blue Ribbon Award winning Douglas Elementary School attracts quality educators from all over. Most crimes the police department deals with are traffic related, stemming especially from tourism. With plenty of recreation and culture, Douglas keeps its history intact while involving the children. Currently money is being raised to turn an old schoolhouse into an interactive museum. Then there's the beaches, lake and many parks.

Superintendent Wood and City Manager David Kowal agree that while the City is thrilled with the article, we've known for a while that Douglas is a great place to live and raise children.

Local police receive TEAM certification

Saugatuck-Douglas police officers Mark Giles and Celestino Reyes were among 14 law enforcements officers to receive Michigan State Police Training Academy certification to teach personal safety in schools. They are graduates of the Teaching, Educated And Mentoring (TEAM) School Liaison Program. The program works to make schools and communities safer by promoting an understanding of social rules, the consequences of unlawful behavior and students' responsibilities as good citizens. This training session included a new bullying awareness and prevention program that helps police address bullying situations more effectively. TEAM training allows officers to teach at elementary, middle or high school levels.

The Saugatuck Douglas Area Parks and Recreation Committee is asking for input on a community attitude survey. Go to www.douglasmichigan.com or stop at City Hall to complete the survey.

Allegan County Tourist Council

The Allegan County Tourist Council has launched its newly designed website at www.VisitAlleganCounty.com. The site is a companion marketing tool to the 2008 Allegan County Visitor's Guide. Both invite visitors and locals to stay, play, shop, taste and experience our vibrant area.

HOURS AND SCHEDULES

CITY HALL (269) 857-1438
Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm

COUNCIL MEETINGS
First and third Mondays 7:00pm

PLANNING COMMISSION
First and third Wednesdays 7:00pm

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Fourth Tuesday 7:00p.m.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Second Tuesday 6:00pm

All City meetings are held in Dutcher Lodge City Hall unless otherwise noticed.

City Manager David Kowal

City Clerk Jean Neve

City Treasurer Vacancy

City Assessor Kelley Ziesemer
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-4:30pm
Or by appointment

Planning/Zoning Ryan Kilpatrick
Office Hours:
Tuesdays 8:00am - 4:30 pm
Thursdays 8:00am - 4:30 pm

Police Department Chief Ken Giles
47 W. Center Street
Douglas (269)857-4339
Dial (616) 836-2038 or 911 after hours to speak to an officer.

Department of Public Works Max Rodgers
(269)857-2763 Superintendent

Building Permits 1 800 626-5964
Michigan Township Services
111 Grand Street
Allegan MI 49010

Council meeting minutes and agendas are available at the City offices, the Library or on the City website at: www.douglasmichigan.com
City Financial Statements for fiscal year ended June 30, 2007 are also available online.

E-Mail Addresses for City Hall

General e-mail
douglas@douglasmichigan.com

Manager David Kowal
dkowal@douglasmichigan.com

Clerk Jean Neve
jneve@douglasmichigan.com

Zoning Administrator Ryan Kilpatrick
rkilpatrick@douglasmichigan.com

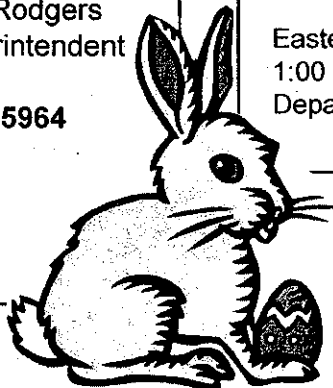
Treasurer
treasurer@douglasmichigan.com

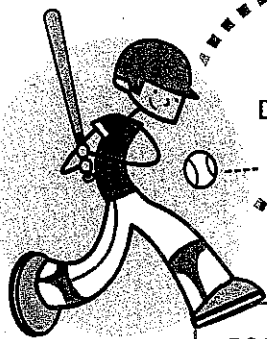
Assessor Kelley Ziesemer
assessor@douglasmichigan.com

EVENTS.....

Easter Sunday, March 23rd
Sunrise Service 7:00 a.m.
Wades Bayou.

Easter Parade and Candy Hunt
1:00 p.m. Douglas Police
Department and Beery Field





Get ready for more vintage base ball! The Douglas Dutchers begin their season in May. Huzzah!!!

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

City Council

Matt Balmer, Mayor
Diane Bailey
Martha Hoexter
Greg Harvath
Robert Moore
Jane Mayer
Renee Waddell, Mayor Pro Tem

Planning Commission

Alexa Urquhart
John Piggins, Chair
David Burdick
Ron Dellartino
Renee Waddell
Karen Van Pelt
Christopher Nern

Zoning Board of Appeals

Rich Beebe
Ronald Colton
Jeff Greenwood
Kenneth Kutzel
Tarue Pullen
Bill Schumacher, Chair
Alexa Urquhart

DDA

Nancy Ayers
Dan Esterline
Mary Glinski
Rob Goeke
Tanya Sheridan
John A. Slater
John Thomas
Jeffrey Mead
Helen DeGeatano
William Smith, Chair

Assessment Board of Review

Linda Anderson
Herb Conlon
Maria Droz

Community Relations

Alan McPhail
Carol A. Peterson

THE CITY'S NEW PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES PUT NEW PLOW VEHICLES TO THE TEST



Pictured left to right: Superintendent Max Rodgers, Tom Bruursema, William Horvath, James Perry and Larry Dean

During January and February the Public Works Employees got the chance to show off and test the new 2008 International Plow Truck and a 2008 Ford Super Duty Dump Truck. With plenty of snow Superintendent Max Rodgers along with the city's Department of Public Works full-time employees James Perry, Tom Bruursema, Larry Dean and temporary employee William Horvath worked hard to keep the City roads in top notch shape.

Volunteerism Alive & Well in Douglas

A big community "thank you" is extended to Mike Woodke, Tad Bystry, Bill Beery and the staff at Grounds Management Solutions (GMS) for keeping the Beery Field Public Ice Rink in Douglas free of excess snow and safe for skating this winter for all to enjoy. The best part....GMS is contributing all of its labor and use of equipment free of charge to the taxpaying public. Congratulations to all of those at GMS for keeping volunteerism alive and well in Douglas and for giving back to the community. We thank and congratulate GMS for its outstanding civic efforts!

City Accepts McKean Sculpture

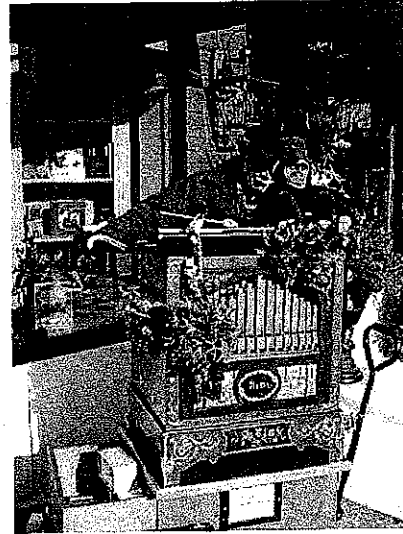
Local residents Arthur Frederick and Herb Bills asked the Douglas City council to accept a donation of a 10-foot high steel sculpture by artist Cynthia McKean. The "Sea Gulls" sculpture will be graciously accepted in memory of the late arts supporter Priscilla Mueller. Purchase of the sculpture was funded through donations raised by the Chamber Music Festival Society.

The city will install a concrete sculpture pad just south of the beach house at Douglas Beach on Lakeshore Drive. An interior light will accent the "Sea Gulls" from dusk to dawn.

City Council members enthusiastically accepted the sculpture at their February 4th meeting..

HOLIDAY SHOPPING FUN

Holiday shoppers in Douglas were treated to a little something extra this year.



Robert Engel and his street organ provided happy holiday music along Center Street. Street organs were an integral part of all Dutch, German and French communities in the mid 1800's. America imported similar mechanical organs for dance halls, parks, merry-go-rounds and street musicians; eventually to be used in vaudeville houses and the early movie theater. Today there is a growing interest in reviving these organs and their "happiest music on earth".

Did you know?????

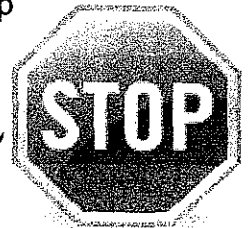
You may look up tax and assessing information on the City website. Log into: www.douglasmichigan.com, then click into the civic information section. On "Our City" page you will see a link to "Tax and Assessing" information.

Recycle bags are available, free of charge, at the City Hall. Used batteries are now being collected curbside. Homes within the City of Douglas are serviced every other Tuesday. Stop in and pick up bags and a schedule.

The City Clerk's Office provides notary services to residents free of charge. A notary is actually witnessing your signature on a document, and not verifying the accurateness of the document. If you need a "Certified True Copy" of a document, you need to go to the place of origin to obtain it. A notary cannot certify a true copy of a document.

NEW FOUR-WAY STOP

A new stop sign has been installed on Center Street creating a four-way stop at the Center / Union Street intersection



2008 ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

The average increase in assessed valuation for residential property in the City of Douglas for 2008 is 5.4%. This overall increase was determined by the Allegan County Equalization Department after reviewing sales and comparing them to the City assessments. They set the rate as an average for the City, broken down by each type of property. As required by State Law, the City Assessor is required to maintain a fifty percent level of assessment.

In Douglas, sales are tracked and compared to assessed valuations at the time of the sale to determine the amount of increase (or decrease) necessary to maintain this fifty percent level in each neighborhood. Your change in assessment is based on property sales in your direct area. Please note that due to the reassessment, the range of assessment increases and decreases will vary greatly as equity is established for each area and individual property assessments more accurately reflect market value.

The CPI (consumer price index) this year is 2.3%. All property that has not been transferred or improved during the past year will have an increase in their taxable value of this amount. **This includes properties that have been visited and revalued. Even if your assessed value increases more than the rate of inflation, the level you pay taxes on will only be 2.3% higher than last year's taxable value.**

For those that are interested, all sales data is open and available in the assessor's office.

APPEAL INFORMATION

Assessment change notices are mailed the first of March. Your assessment change notice will contain information on how to appeal. The Board of Review will meet, on an appointment basis, **March 12 and 14, 2008** to hear appeals. If you feel the assessed valuation on your property does not accurately reflect market value, please call 269 857-1438 to schedule an appointment.

If you have a fire hydrant on or near your property, the Fire Department is asking for your help in keeping the snow cleared away from it. Every second counts when fighting a fire!



Please be considerate of others by cleaning up after your dog. When walking your pet, bring along a plastic bag to pick up the waste.

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DOUGLAS MI

Douglas Remains Committed to Curbside Recycling Program

Did You Know.....?

- ◆ In 1999, recycling and composting activities prevented about 64 million tons of material from ending up in landfills and incinerators. Today, this country recycles 32 percent of its waste, a rate that has almost doubled during the past 15 years.
- ◆ While recycling has grown in general, recycling of specific materials has grown even more drastically: 50 percent of all paper, 34 percent of all plastic soft drink bottles, 45 percent of all aluminum beer and soft drink cans, 63 percent of all steel packaging, and 67 percent of all major appliances are now recycled.
- ◆ Twenty years ago, only one curbside recycling program existed in the United States, which collected several materials at the curb. By 2005, almost 9,000 curbside programs had sprouted up across the nation. As of 2005, about 500 materials recovery facilities had been established to process the collected materials

Source: US Environmental Protection Agency