

TUSCARORA TOWNSHIP

“THE ONLY LIMIT TO OUR REALIZATION OF TOMORROW WILL BE OUR DOUBTS OF TODAY. LET US MOVE FORWARD WITH STRONG AND ACTIVE FAITH.” FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Throughout 2014 you will see some of the projects we have been working on come to fruition. None of these projects would be possible if it were not for the many, many volunteer hours from our different committees, our DDA and other citizen committees and organizations. **Thank you.**

TRAILHEAD WILL BRING FRESH LOOK TO DOWNTOWN INDIAN RIVER

Design plans for a new trailhead in Indian River are completed. The town parking lot has been redesigned in order to create more green space and allow for a main entrance to the North Central Trail and Marina Park. The public restrooms will be winterized so they can be available for year around use. Funds for the project are coming from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund with matching funds from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The plans and bid package will be sent to the DNR and the Trust Fund in December for their final approval. Construction of the new trailhead will be done in conjunction with the new streetscape. The new trailhead and streetscape will enhance both visitors and residents visit to downtown.

VETERANS PIER PROJECT FUNDED

The Tuscarora Township Veterans Pier is well on its way to becoming yet another valuable asset to our Indian River community. All matching funds required to receive the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant award have been generously donated and currently design engineering for Veterans Pier is being completed. Construction of this universally accessible pier at DeVoe Beach will begin spring 2014 with completion expected by July 4, 2014.

SEWER SYSTEM UPDATE

Approximately two years ago, the township board was presented signatures well in excess of the required amount to create a special assessment district for the purpose of constructing a sanitary sewer system. The cost was not to exceed \$8,000 per REU.

Over the last two years, the board has created the special assessment district, hired an engineering firm to design and engineer the system, acquired easements, and applied for and received a number of permits including a special use permit for the treatment plant, ground water discharge permit from the DEQ, soil and sedimentation and health department permits. A special thank you to the 14 property owners granting easements that have allowed most of the sewer mains be located behind the buildings. This will allow for minimal disruption to Straits Highway during the busy tourist season and, as most septic systems are in the back of the buildings, lower hookup costs.

The project has been bid twice with both bids coming in over the original budget. After the October 25, 2013, bids were received and analyzed, additional funding was requested from USDA Rural Development. On November, 19, 2013, Tuscarora Township received a letter from USDA revising the Township's funding eligibility. The loan amount has been revised to \$3,287,000.00 (an increase of \$630,000.00) and the grant amount has been revised to \$2,653,000.00 (an increase of \$1,153,000.00). While this is an extremely generous offer from the USDA, additional revenue will be needed to meet the loan repayment obligations. Currently the most viable solution for this would be the inclusion of the Burt Lake State Park. The Burt Lake State Park would not only generate the revenue required to repay the loan, it would also reduce the long-term operation and maintenance costs. From the beginning of the project, the Burt Lake State Park has repeatedly expressed an interest in being included in the project and as their November 18, 2013 letter indicates, that commitment continues.

Currently the Township is working with the Burt Lake State Park, USDA Rural Development, Bond Council, Financial Advisor, General Counsel and Engineer to obtain the required documentation and financing package allowing the project to move forward. All costs for the loan repayment and operation and maintenance are the responsibility of the special assessment district and any other users such as the Burt Lake State Park. They are not the responsibility of the entire township as stated by Township Financial Advisor, Robert J. Bendzinski in his September 25, 2013 e-mail: ***“The Township will NOT be pledging the full faith and credit behind the bonds”.***

We hope to break ground in the spring, 2014 and be ready to operate spring, 2015. Additional information regarding the sewer project can be found on the Township website.

PATHWAY PROJECT - DDA

Over the past nearly seven years, the DDA has periodically entertained “doubts” about the Indian River Pathway Development project. We would have all our forms and applications filed and accepted, only to encounter a snag with one of the three funding agencies. The industrious perseverance of Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering guided us through all of it, and we are pleased to report our progress.

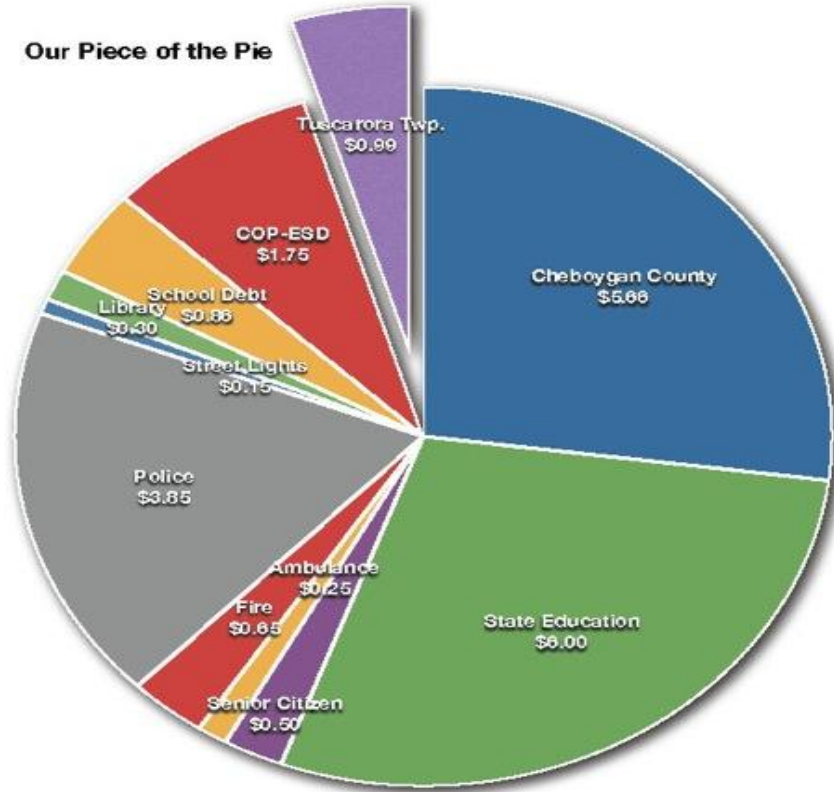
The project construction budget was \$859,000. Bids came in at \$844,000, or about 2% under budget (even after adding the pedestrian island at a cost of nearly \$18,000). The new path will be 1.33 miles long and the bridge over the Sturgeon River will span 100 feet.

The project is due to be complete by May 22, 2014. There will be a winter shutdown; however, we are expecting the bridge contractor to be back working on the foundations in December and/or January.

Work began at the elementary school and pathway grading has been completed; gravel has been placed and compacted, and topsoil was spread along the pathway from the school to the State Park crossing. The contractor refrained from removing any driveways this fall to allow complete access through the winter months. When work starts up in the spring, there will be temporary disruptions to driveway access, however, the contractor will strive to minimize the inconvenience and maintain access to the extent possible.

Now is a good time to mention that the pathway is a non-motorized trail and that snowmobiles and ATVs are not allowed. Your compliance is greatly appreciated.

WHERE DO YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS GO?



**For each mill Tuscarora Twp. collects \$20.95
Tuscarora Twp. Keeps \$.99**