

Mission Statement:

The Harris Town Board strives to enhance the quality of life, protect the environment, and maintain the economic stability for the residents of their community.

March 2009

Volume 3, Issue 1

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Harris Township
 C/O Michele Smith, Clerk
 30037 Harris Town Road
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Harris Township Newsletter

Harris Township Motto: Neighbors, shores and more...

Township Day ! March 10, 2009

By Gary Rosato, Chairman

Tuesday, March 10, 2009 is Township Day where all township citizens take part in "Grassroots Government". This is the day we hold the Annual Township Election to elect or re-elect our officers, have the Annual Town Meeting, and set the levies and budget for the upcoming year. While some townships have decided to hold their election in November, their Annual Town Meetings will still be held the second Tuesday of March, on *Township Day*.

Harris Township will have its **election polls open from noon to 8:00pm on March 10th** at the Harris Town Hall, to elect one Supervisor for a three year term and one Treasurer for a two year term.

The **Annual Meeting begins promptly at 8:15pm on 3/10/09** at the town hall. The Township Annual Meeting is unique from other forms of government as residents have the opportunity to exercise their privilege, honor and responsibility to participate.

Once a moderator is elected to chair the meeting, the Town Board becomes virtually non-existent. All Supervisors sit in the audience as *residents*, as this is a meeting of the town's people, and not of the town board. Together, the residents vote to set the levy and make other important decisions which may be brought to the floor.

Setting the annual levy is by far one of the most important functions performed at the Annual Meeting. The levies deal with general expenses, fire protection, equipment funds, building funds, debt payments, road expenses, cemetery expenses and public safety.

(Continued on page3....)

SAMPLE BALLOT

Town Election Town of Harris General Election March 10, 2009	
↓	Put an (X) in the square opposite the name of each candidate you wish to vote for:
TOWN SUPERVISOR <i>Vote for one</i>	
	Gary Rosato
	Write-in, if any
TOWN TREASURER <i>Vote for one</i>	
	John R. Jokela
	Write-in, if any



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The proposed fund levies for 2010 will be voted on during the Annual Town Meeting on March 10, 2009, beginning at 8:15pm.

The same total levy amount for 2010 is being proposed by Harris Town Board as was passed the previous two years: \$845,000.

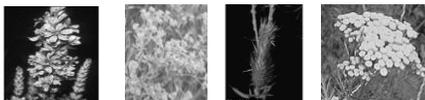
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Noxious Weeds

By Dennis Kortekaas, Supervisor

The plants listed below are some of the prohibited noxious weeds located in Minnesota and specifically in Itasca County. They are injurious to public health, the environment, public roads, crops, livestock, and other property. Prohibited noxious weeds must be controlled or eradicated as required in Minnesota statutes, section 18.78.

Do you know the names of the most common noxious weeds found in Harris Township?



The Purple Loosestrife grows 3 to 7 feet tall and has stems that are square with a dense root system. It is an aquatic plant that grows in wet soils in wet meadows, pasture wetlands, cattail marshes, streams and river banks, lake shores and ditches. Purple loosestrife infestations are increasing in Minnesota and have been identified in more than 75 percent of Minnesota's counties.

Leafy Spurge is an aggressive weed, poisonous to most livestock. Contact with the milky sap from the 1 to 3 foot tall stem may cause skin irritation for humans. It grows primarily in pastures, waste areas, and along roadsides. Leafy spurge can be found throughout Minnesota with the heaviest infestations in the western half of the state and along most of the roadsides in Minnesota's metropolitan areas.

Bull Thistle grows 2 to 6 feet tall with a large stem that is hairy and spiny. It is usually found along roadsides, pastures, ditch banks, and unused fields. The flower heads are compact, 1 to 2 inches in diameter and each flower head is surrounded by spine-tipped leaves. The flowers are reddish-purple. Flowering occurs from late June through August and the seed matures in July through September. The seeds are 1/8 inch long, oblong, flattened, curved and are light brown with dark brown stripes.

(Noxious Weeds continued on page 4...)

From a Township Supervisor's Desk

By Larry Key, Supervisor

It is time for another news article for the Harris Township newsletter. This time, I will write about Wendigo Picnic Area.

Where is the Wendigo Picnic Area? It is located on the east end of Sunny Beach Road, between Wendigo Park and Bayside/Troop Town Marina. There is a new township sign marking its location. It is blue with white lettering.



This past summer, our maintenance crew installed a new entrance to this picnic area, and Tree Care removed dead birch trees and stumps. This coming summer, our crew will install class 5 for a parking area.

There are two picnic tables and two grills at the Wendigo Picnic Area. The access to the lake is poor, as there is a large bank to the water, but it is a very nice area for a family get-together. I hope you will check it out as the weather gets warmer.

WENDIGO PICNIC AREA:



Harris Township's Centennial History Book



By Peggy Bishop, Treasurer

Help! We sent out over 150 letters to residents (past and present) who we thought might be able to help with information for our history book....but we've only heard back from about 25 people. We need your help to make this book a full and accurate history of our wonderful township.

Some of the chapters we want to include in our book are: people, community, farmers, forestry, youth, businesses and schools.

If you have pictures and /or information to share from your days in 4-H club or sports teams in the township, please share it with us. If you had or have a business in the township, please share that with us. If your family has been here for the last 40 years - or if you've only been here for five years - please share your stories with us. They are all a part of our history.

If you have any information to share, or questions, please call Peggy Bishop at 326-6368 **ASAP** - our Centennial celebration is set for July 5, 2009!

RECIPE CORNER

By Peggy Bishop, Treasurer

CROCK POT WILD RICE SOUP

- 3/4 cup uncooked wild rice
- 7 to 10 slices bacon (cooked and crumbled)
- 1 cup cubed chicken
- 1 can mushrooms
- 1 cup half & half
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups finely chopped celery



Put ingredients into crock-pot and cook on high for 4 hours. Add water as needed. Enjoy!

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First day of Spring: March 20

Talks with Paul Bunyan resume



By Michele Smith, Clerk

In response to numerous calls from residents asking if Paul Bunyan Cable & Telephone is expected to expand into Harris Township, the Town Board invited representatives from Paul Bunyan (PB) to the Planning & Development meeting on January 28, 2009. The hope was to open up a dialog with PB to revisit the possibility of coming to Harris Township sometime in the future.

The Board was pleased to hear that Paul Bunyan *was* still interested in expanding into Harris Township. However, PB expressed that the stipulation to serve the entire township was still a sticking point, as it was back in 2007 when they approached the Board about a Cable Franchise Agreement.

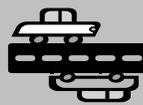
Because Harris Township already has a Cable Franchise Agreement with Mediacom, there are state statutes (laws) that apply if another company applies to also provide cable service in the same township. One of those statutes is that all cable providers must serve an equal area of the township. Because Mediacom is required to serve the entire township, in areas of sufficient density (25 homes per cable mile), the law dictates that Paul Bunyan would need to do the same, or the Township risks being sued by Mediacom.

Paul Bunyan indicated that while they would initially only be able to serve the area north of Pokegama lake, they would expect to serve the entire township eventually. However, given the current economic times, they would not be able to commit to that expectation.

The Harris Town Board voted to seek legal advice from their local Township Attorney on this matter, to investigate if statute restrictions had changed or if there was any way in which Harris Township could have both Mediacom and Paul Bunyan serve Harris Township while still being in compliance with state laws.

Watch for an update in upcoming issues of the Harris Township Newsletter.

SPRING ROAD RESTRICTIONS



By Julie Kennedy, Township Engineer

A few days of warm weather and we're already thinking spring! Though it is likely still a few months away, we felt it may be helpful to discuss seasonal road weight restrictions.

Who?

Individuals who drive vehicles that exceed a 5-ton axle weight.

What?

Restrictions on the roads in which you are allowed to drive during the spring thaw period.

Where?

Unless posted otherwise, all County and Town roads are by law automatically reduced to 5-Ton Axle Limit.

Why?

During the spring thaw, the soil under roads and highways becomes saturated with melted snow and rain. This results in a soft, mushy condition under the pavement. Even loads that would be considered normal at other times of the year can do irreparable damage to the roadway at this time of year.

When?

Itasca County follows MnDOT's Spring Load Restrictions which are set based on the type of weather we have in early spring. The start of the load restriction period in the spring is determined using measured and forecast daily air temperatures for several cities within each frost zone.

The ending dates for Spring Load Restrictions are based on how weather is affecting roadway strength. These dates are established by monitoring roadway strength as weather conditions change. Therefore, the ending dates for Spring Load Restrictions will vary from year to year.

The minimum duration of spring load restrictions is set at 4 weeks, while the maximum duration typically will not exceed 8 weeks unless extraordinary conditions exist that require additional time or route specific signage is posted.

Need more information?

Road Restriction maps indicating the locations of weight restricted routes and those state highways open to maximum ten-ton axle weights are listed on the Mn/DOT Seasonal Load Limits website at

www.mrr.dot.state.mn.us.

Click on "Seasonal Load Limits," then click on "Spring Load Restrictions (SLR)."

Did You Know?

The Harris Town Board determined that it was *not* appropriate to donate public township funds to private or non-profit organizations as the direct benefit to the citizens of the township is difficult to ascertain, and that the funds are better used by the township directly for the cost of providing township services.

As a result of this determination, Resolution #2008-004 *Donation or Contribution Request Policy* was passed in April 2008. This means that requests for donations and contributions will no longer be considered at the Annual Town Meeting, with the exception of levy requests from the Itasca County Historical Society and/or Agricultural Fair Board, which are specifically allowed by Minnesota state statutes.

(Township Day continued from page 1)

Harris Township is an Urban Township, and its board has three **Supervisors**. One Supervisor is voted in as the chairperson, yet all have equal rights and responsibilities. The chairperson signs paperwork and checks, and conducts the meetings. Harris Township rotates this position annually amongst the supervisors.

The Township **Clerk** is usually the first point of contact for township business and handles the day to day paperwork. This is a very important position as the Clerk not only prepares for and records all meetings, but also makes sure the board is compliant in the rules and guidelines provided by the state. The Clerk is also responsible for posting and publishing meeting notices, overseeing all elections, and maintaining cemetery records.

The **Treasurer** handles all financial functions of the township. The Treasurer suggests investments, receives allotments, pays the bills, handles payroll, recommends the annual budget, and makes sure the audits and bookkeeping are in compliance with state regulations.

Tuesday, March 10th is a very important day in Harris Township. Please consider taking part in the election and annual meeting.

March 2009

Harris Township
C/O Michele Smith, Clerk
30037 Harris Towns Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

HARRIS TOWNSHIP 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Harris Town Board will meet on the following dates in 2009, with the meetings starting at **7:30 p.m.**, and held at the **Harris Town Hall**, 21998 Airport Road.

Regular Meetings: (Second Wed. of the month)	Planning & Development Meetings: (Fourth Wed. of the month)
March 11	March 25
April 8	April 22
May 13	May 27
June 10	June 24
July 8	July 22
August 12	August 26
September 9	September 23
October 14	October 28
November 11	November 18
December 9	TBD – if needed



(Noxious Weeds continued from page 3)

Common Tansy is a cultivated plant that escaped into the wild and has become invasive. It is a perennial herbaceous plant, 3' to 5' tall in shaded areas, and erect. A single stem branches extensively toward the top into short stems forming a flat-topped cluster of numerous button-like flower heads. Tansy is distasteful and even toxic to some grazing animals, however, one source claims that sheep graze it and are not affected

Some control methods being used in Itasca County, and being considered for use in Harris Township, is a biological form of control, using the Purple Loosestrife Pray Beetle and the Leafy Spurge Pray Beetle.

There is a weed meeting planned in April by the Itasca County Agricultural Department after which more information will be available.

Please contact the Township Weed Inspector, Dennis Kortekaas, with questions or concerns at 326-1882.



For Cemetery Information, contact Clerk Michele Smith at 327-9930 or MicheleSmithClerk@msn.com

Town Hall Rental
BONNIE KEY - 327-0435

BOARD DIRECTORY

Supervisors:

- > Larry Key..... 326-3608 or 244-5248
- > Gary Rosato 326-4704
- > Dennis Kortekaas... 326-1882

Clerk and Cemetery Sexton:

- > Michele Smith327-9930
michelesmithclerk@msn.com

Treasurer:

- > Peggy Bishop.....326-6368

WEBSITE: (check out our new look!)
www.harristownshipmn.org

