

**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.

June 2011

Volume 5, Issue 1

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

# Harris Township Newsletter

## Neighborhood Meetings – A valuable tool

*By Gary Rosato, Supervisor*

A few years ago, we started a highlight of sharing information in strategic areas where the township money is used for improvements or other changes. Neighborhood meetings have proved to be successful in many ways. Once an idea or change is needed, we send notices to landowners adjacent to the affected area. This could include any part of our responsibilities, including roads, right of way, recreation, lake accesses, cemetery, or variance requests. It could also include improvements by another entity, such as the electric power company, cable service, county, or state.

Neighborhood meetings give everyone a chance to speak, meet with local officials or leaders of companies, address problems, get facts, ask opinions, form a fact finding group, and/or build a consensus on a course of action. The town board's most important task is to report back and keep everyone up-to-date. Establishing a point of contact for people makes for easier reporting, problem sharing, conflict resolution, and compromise.

These meetings have been very successful; we've improved road designs, been the informational gathering point for other groups, at times cut cost in construction, and met the schedule of our neighbors. So if you receive a notice of a neighborhood meeting, please come and join us in the conversation. If you would like a neighborhood meeting, please contact any board member or our clerk for scheduling. We want to know how we can serve you, what is being overlooked, and learn what you see in the future years to come. ---

## 2011 Township Road Projects

*By Julie Kennedy – Twp Engineer*

In accordance with the Township's **Gravel Road Management Plan**, the following roads will receive a **new 4" lift** of Class 5 aggregate in 2011: **Hughes Rd, Jane Lane, Vroman Road, and Wagon Wheel Road**. Construction will take place in June.

The 2011 Road & Bridge Improvement Project is the **reconstruction of Mishawaka Road** from the east end of the corner near the public landing north to the Township line. The proposed project consists of pavement rehabilitation, 3 speed humps, traffic calming striping, as well as minor ditching improvements near the corner to prevent the shoulder from washing out. Construction is anticipated to **begin after July 4, 2011** and is expected to last approximately one month. Mishawaka Road residents will be notified when dates are set. ---

## From a Supervisor's Desk – Town Hall History

By Larry Key, Supervisor



In preparing to write this article on the history of the Harris Town Hall, I reviewed the early minutes of the Harris Town Board meetings. And while I did find some good information, I also found that a lot of the minutes were very vague about the meeting places.



Before Harris Township had a town hall, most meetings were held at various board members' homes. Elections and annual meetings were held at Wendigo School. The last meeting date held at Wendigo School, according to the minute books, was March 10, 1954. The following election and annual meeting were held at the Wendigo 4-H Memorial Center on March 8, 1955. This building was used until Feb 15, 1965 and then the polling place was changed to the Flyway Club, located on Airport Road, where the current town hall is.

On Feb 22, 1965, a vote by the people present at the meeting was held, to have all future annual meetings at the Flyway Club. That vote passed, and the Flyway Club house was rented by Harris Township until Dec 6, 1985. At that time, the Flyway Club and 3.03 acres were then sold to Harris Township for \$1.00 and the name was officially changed to the "Harris Town Hall". -----

### Census of Harris Township

- The 2000 census was 3,328
  - The 2010 census was 3,282
- A change (reduction) of only 46 people

# NEW!!

## TOWN HALL

Rummage sales will be ALLOWED at

**HARRIS TOWN HALL & Garage**

\$100 rental, \$100 deposit, and large items to be displayed in the garage

- Also -

WIRELESS INTERNET will soon be available at the Town Hall !

## WILD PARSNIP

By Dennis Kortekaas, Supervisor and Twp Weed Inspector



**Watch out for wild parsnip in ditches, especially when flowering!**

In the good old days, the only plant people had to watch out for was poison ivy. Now, there's wild parsnip, the evil sister of Queen Anne's lace. A native of Europe and Asia, it has spread like wildfire across Wisconsin and Minnesota, and fire is what it feels like on exposed skin

"Most people get a nasty, nasty rash from it," says Karla Kinstler, naturalist and director of Houston Nature Center in southeast Minnesota. "It's not like nettles or poison ivy; this is like a chemical burn. If you get it bad enough, it can scar you for life."

**It's actually a sunburn,** caused by plant chemicals that, when energized by ultraviolet light, destroy cells and skin tissue. In mild cases, the skin simply reddens. But if skin has been extensively exposed to the plant and then to sunlight, **it may blister,** leaving a purplish discoloration that may last a long time.

(Excerpt above is from the following website::

[http://www.midwestweekends.com/do\\_it\\_now/summer/wild\\_parsnip.html](http://www.midwestweekends.com/do_it_now/summer/wild_parsnip.html)

**Concerns? Call Dennis Kortekaas: 326-1882 ----**

## Pokegama Lake Walkway & Gardens

By Jennifer Utecht – Harris Twp Resident

This winter was very successful in bringing together MnDOT, the Pokegama Lake Association, Harris Township, and the Trails Task Force to support me (Jennifer Utecht) in maintaining & cleaning up the Pokegama Lake walkway & gardens.



I prayed for volunteers to come, and they came. I prayed for rain, and it has rained. We planted 153 plants on May 20<sup>th</sup>, and MnDot will be out after Memorial Day to begin the weed control. They have asked us to leave the weeds in place so they know what they will need to work with. Once the weeds begin to die off, I will contact MnDOT to bring out new wood chips and place in front of the gardens. **I will then need volunteers** to help spread them in the gardens.

The crab apple trees did not survive, and so MnDOT will be removing them and replacing this area with perennials. They will also cut down all the tall dead grass from the slopes on the west side. I would also like to fill in the empty spots under the bridge where the kids rolled the boulders away.

I have contacted L&M to see if they would be willing to donate or give us a discount on getting a small pump to keep the gardens watered. I have been working with the manager on this, to come up with the supplies that will be needed.

I would like to see a “Pick up after your pet” station at both entrances. **If anyone knows how we can accomplish this, please contact me.**

And, MnDOT is checking into the right-of-way of the parking area by Zorbaz, so we can keep that area maintained as well.

A very special thank you to all volunteers and MnDOT for supporting me in this mission, and for continued support in keeping this area free of litter. **Thank you everyone for helping maintain this area by picking up garbage and reporting vandalism.** I hope you take a walk around our beautiful Pokegama Lake walkway & gardens!

**If you'd like to help with this project, please contact me at:**  
Jennifer Utecht 218-259-2500

[utechtcustomhomes@mchsi.com](mailto:utechtcustomhomes@mchsi.com)

Thanks! -----

## What's going on?

By Michele Smith – Township Clerk

Are you wondering what is going on with the property at the SE corner of Harris Town Road and Wendigo Park Road intersection? It was purchased by Harris Township, and will be used as a part of a future “township complex”; it adjoins the current Service Center & Harris Cemetery properties.

Habitat for Humanity Restore went through the home, and “deconstructed it”. Next, the township will contract for the demolition of the remaining buildings, cap the well, and remove the septic system. The lot should be empty and leveled this summer. Thanks for your patience!

## Hello from your new Treasurer!

By Becky Adams - Treasurer

Hello Harris Township members –

I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself to all of you. My name is Becky Adams and I am your new treasurer for Harris Township. I have lived here for twelve years and have had a family cabin here for almost seventeen years. I currently work at the Blandin Foundation in the Leadership Department as the Recruitment Coordinator.

My past experience includes being part owner of an industrial sales company in Hibbing, accounting consultant for some of our local businesses, and controller of a CAD/CAM business out of Dallas, TX (working remotely from my home in Grand Rapids). My education includes a Bachelors degree in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Community Leadership.

I appreciate the opportunity to do my part in working for our township, and I look forward to meeting all of you. -----

### THANK YOU!!

Supervisor Rosato performs roadside clean up along the Town Board's 3 mile “Adopt a Highway” section of River Road, using his 4-wheeler and trailer. (Supervisor Larry Key also helped with the clean-up, but is not pictured.)



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## HARRIS TOWNSHIP 2011 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Harris Town Board will meet on the following dates in 2011, with the meetings starting at 7:30 p.m., and held at the Harris Town Hall, 21998 Airport Road.

<b>Regular Meetings:</b> (Second Wed. of the month)	<b>Planning &amp; Development Meetings:</b> (Fourth Wed. of the month)
June 8	June 22
July 13	July 27
August 10	August 24
September 14	September 28
October 12	October 26
November 9	November 16
December 14	TBD – if needed

**Visit our WEBSITE:**  
[www.harristownshipmn.org](http://www.harristownshipmn.org)

**For Cemetery Information,** contact Clerk Michele Smith at 327-9930 or [MicheleSmithClerk@msn.com](mailto:MicheleSmithClerk@msn.com)



History Books still available for \$14.95



You can find the books at the Village Book Store (Central Square Mall) or the Itasca County Historical Society (Old Central School – second floor), both in downtown Grand Rapids

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can view/print previous township newsletters on our website:

[www.harristownshipmn.org](http://www.harristownshipmn.org)

**Town Hall Rental**  
**BONNIE KEY – 327-0435**

## BOARD DIRECTORY

- Supervisors:**
- > Larry Key..... 244-5248
  - > Gary Rosato ..... 326-4704
  - > Dennis Kortekaas... 326-1882
- Clerk and Cemetery Sexton:**
- > Michele Smith .....327-9930  
[michelesmithclerk@msn.com](mailto:michelesmithclerk@msn.com)
- Treasurer:**
- > Becky Adams .....259-1192