

Harris Cemetery GIS Database & Mapping

By Michele Smith - Clerk

In the fall of 2011, Harris Township began partnering with the City of Grand Rapids to compile an entire online inventory of the apx 2,300 platted gravesites in Harris Cemetery so that they could be accessed via computer and eventually via a smartphone.

This project was approved for perpetuity purposes, and in good stewardship to accurately confirm the location of all current Harris Cemetery residents. There was also the hope that this information would eventually be accessible to anyone searching for their relatives, friends, or historic individuals.

The goals of the project were to: (1) Determine the layout details of Harris Cemetery, (2) Plot the location of each cemetery site on an aerial map, (3) Transfer the location information to a Geographic Information System (GIS), customized for cemeteries, and (4) Make the GIS mapping system available to the public.

GIS is ideal for cemeteries because it combines a high quality, accurate on-screen map with a database. This means a person can start with an overview of the entire cemetery, and then 'drill-down' to a specific area or gravesite on the screen to determine the status of the site(s) by color code (e.g. for sale or sold), and the owner/occupant name. And, by clicking again, they can see even more details. GIS also allows the viewer to create a map of the entire cemetery for an office wall, or a one page map of a portion of the cemetery with the position and exact location of grave sites, burials, and information regarding surrounding sites. It is an ideal tool to help manage a cemetery.

Harris Township, through the work of ICC engineering student intern Allie Jurvelin, recently completed the piecing together of archival material to pinpoint and identify every grave in Harris Cemetery. Allie used a combination of maps, interment records, and other fragments of documentation to identify grave information. Many of the records stretch back to the early 1900s and were in varying degrees of completeness.

The city of Grand Rapids built the interactive GIS map for Harris Cemetery, and linked it to the database of grave information. This new GIS mapping system is currently being tested by township staff, and allows them to access the GIS cemetery database and use tools to search for specific names, burial dates, photos of marker, and obituaries.

Having Harris Cemetery information available at the touch of a screen will make visualizing its future much easier and maintaining its past more secure.

(Note: The GIS information is *not* yet available to the public.)



SKYWARN

By Gary Rosato- Supervisor



For many years weather watching and cloud formations sparked an interest within me. Sure, I'm one of those that has to see weather coming and during storms be able to analyze just what is happening outside in our area. Storm chasing could have been a hobby, but never pursued the act of leaving a safe place just to see or feel the excitement of roaring thunder, hail, wind, or huge snow falls.

A couple weeks ago my schedule allowed me to attend the "SKYWARN" training provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) of Duluth sponsored by the Itasca County Sheriff's office Emergency Management System. In this training you become a qualified "SPOTTER" of which you discover the meaning of various cloud formations and wind patterns. As stated in the training manual "the NWS has access to data from Doppler radar, satellite, and surface weather stations, technology cannot detect every instance of hazardous weather.

"SPOTTERS" help fill in the gaps by reporting hail, wind damage, flooding, heavy snow, tornadoes and waterspouts." Spotters provide vital "ground truth" to the NWS. They encourage spotters to use the ID code they provide you with and call the toll free number of the Duluth NWS; they want to know exactly what is happening in our area. During the meeting I was pleasantly surprised to see the number of "spotters" we have in our area.

Next time you see a notice of "SKYWARN" training and you have an interest in weather watching, take time to participate. This training is useful in all your travels throughout the United States and calling in weather information to the Duluth office at any time is beneficial as they have systems in place to notify other weather stations across the country.

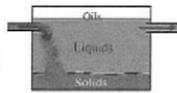
Rummage sales are now allowed at the Harris Town Hall at the same rental fee and deposit as all other rentals:

Resident: \$50/day + \$25 deposit
Non-resident: \$100/day + \$25 deposit
Rental includes use of the town hall and garage.
Large items, or those over 30 pounds, are required to be displayed in the garage.

From a Supervisor's Desk

By Larry Key- Supervisor

Septic Systems: What Do They Do?



Over one fourth of Minnesota's households use an outside sewage system commonly called a "septic system." Septic systems are usually designed to recycle the water we use in our own homes, returning the clean water to our ground water. This clean water shows up again in people's drinking water, to be used and cleaned again. Remember, we never get new water. It is our responsibility to clean what we use.

Properly treating sewage is every one's responsibility. Residents of Harris own, operate, and maintain their own mini-treatment plants—their septic systems.

Inadequate treatment of sewage allows the bacteria, viruses, and other diseases—causing pathogens to enter the surface and ground water. A failed septic system may allow excess nutrients to reach nearby lakes and streams, promoting algae growth which may make the lake unpleasant for swimming and boating, and can affect water quality for fish and wildlife habitat.

Many cleaning products, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals used in our homes can be toxic to humans, pets, and wildlife. If allowed to enter a septic system, these products may reach groundwater, nearby surface, or the ground surface.

We all have the responsibility to ensure septic systems are working properly. The water they recycle and clean today will show up later in someone's well—maybe yours. Help it be clean water.

Welcome Northwest Gas

By Michele Smith Clerk

On June 12, 2013, the Harris Town Board voted unanimously to approve a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Grand Rapids and Harris Township to Regulate Utility Rates for Northwest Natural Gas.

In 2012, Tom Pagel's search to bring natural gas to the recently annexed areas of Grand Rapids township found that Cohasset Gas came to the northwest corner of Harris Township, but they did not have interest in building outside the city limits. However, Northwest Gas operates Cohasset's system, and so their owner & operator, Mike Gorham, talked to Pagel to see if they were interested in their services.

After completing Phase I within the city limits of Grand Rapids, Northwest Gas approached the Harris Town Board seeking approval to install their natural gas distribution lines further south into Harris Township along and across Isle View Road, Mohawk Drive, Apace Drive, Chippewa Drive, Winnebago Drive, Pine Street, and Birch Street. However, before approving an expansion by Northwest Gas, the town board consulted with their attorney regarding a joint powers agreement with the city of Grand Rapids. Such an agreement would establish a Joint Powers Board, which acts as a governing body to enforce the terms of the agreement including rates, regulations and operations. That agreement was approved by both the Grand Rapids City Council and the Harris Town Board.

The Joint Powers Board will consist of 2 representatives from the City of Grand Rapids, and 2 from Harris Township. The 5th member will be the Mayor of Grand Rapids during even years, and the Chairman of the Harris Town Board during the odd years. The representatives of the Joint Powers Board members can be any member of the community who's interested; it does not have to be a government official.

Future expansion goals by Northwest Gas are to continue south along Mishawaka Road, across Highway 169 and down Harris Town Road, and eventually alongside Airport Road. And maybe ultimately out to Pokegama Lake (though not across it).

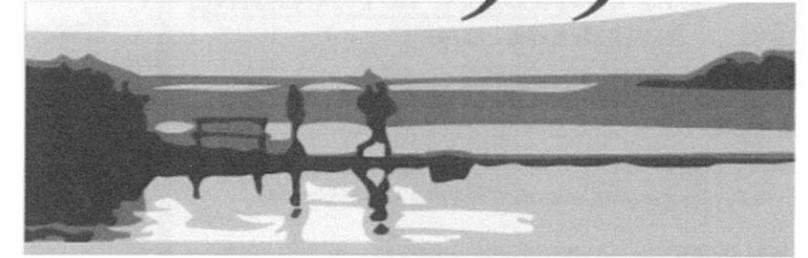
Also on June 12th, 2013, the right-of-way utility permits for the installation of Northwest Natural Gas lines in the Isleview area were approved by the town board.

If anyone has questions about Northwest Gas, they can contact any town board supervisor or Mike Gorham from Northwest Gas at 218-326-3495.

Harris Township
c/o Michele Smith, Clerk
30037 Harris Town Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Harris Township SINCE 1909



NEIGHBORS, SHORES & MORE

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.

July 2013
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Harris Township
c/o Michele Smith, Clerk
30037 Harris Town Road
Grand Rapids, MN

Harris Township reviews a PROPOSED Trail Connection study, between the Pokegama Lake Causeway & Grand Rapids

By Holly Busker- ICC Engineering Intern

Within Harris Township, there are several trails that service the community. As stated in the Harris Township Comprehensive Plan "It may be necessary to devise a system of designated motorized and non-motorized trails that permit town residents and visitors to move through the community and safely access Grand Rapids." This statement is made in regards to factors deemed most appropriate and critical to the development of the comprehensive plan.

It was the task of the ICC engineering interns, working for Harris Township, to do a feasibility study on trails. It would serve as a resource document should Harris decide to go forth with expanding this proposed system of trails. The focus of the interns work was looking at an effective trail connection between the City of Grand Rapids Trail System and the causeway across Pokegama Lake, and the associated costs.

This area was chosen to be looked at so that more residents would be able to access the causeway and Pokegama Lake, which is seen as perhaps the community's defining recreation and natural resource. Three different pathways have been analyzed for this particular connection in order to determine how practical it may be to make the addition. The new trail is being proposed as a relatively short trail connection, which would be eligible to apply for state aid grants.

The town board has opted not to move forward with any trail system connections as this time, but found the feasibility study beneficial and informative.

2013 Township Road Projects

By Glen Hodgson – SEH 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 2013:

- Forest View Trail
- Pennela Road
- River Ridge Road
- River View Road

The 2013 Road & Bridge Improvement Project consists of a pavement rehabilitation project for:

- Robinson Road
- Stony Point Road
- Southwood Road
- Westwood Drive
- Westwood Lane

The proposed project consists of new pavement surfacing and aggregate shouldering. Construction is expected to begin after July 1 and is likely to last until fall 2013.

HARRIS TOWNSHIP 2013 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Harris Town Board will meet on the following dates in 2013, 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)
June 12	June 26
July 10	July 24
August 14	August 28
September 11	September 25
October 9	October 23
November 13	November 20
December 11	TBD – if needed

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



DID YOU KNOW?

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

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 Smith327-9930
michelesmithclerk@msn.com

Treasurer:
> Becky Adams259-1192

History Books still available for \$14.95

Harris Township CENTENNIAL 1909-2009



You can find this book at the Village Book Store (Central Square Mall) or the Itasca County Historical Society, both in downtown Grand Rapids.

Visit our WEBSITE:

www.harristownshipmn.org