

Wakefield Township

414 N. County 519

PO Box 164

Wakefield, MI 49968

Fax 906 229-2309

Volume 16 Issue 2

December 2016



Manabezho Falls on the Presque Isle River

Wakefield Township Board Meetings: Dates and Times

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted.

December 6, 2016, 5:30pm

February 7, 2017, 5:30pm

January 3, 2017, 5:30pm

March 7, 2017, 5:30pm



DELMAR SMITH RETIRES-WELCOME JERRY NIEMI TO THE WAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor:

John Cox
906 224-3721
PO Box 164
jcox@wakefieldtownship.com

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, after serving in various positions for the past 25 years Delmar Smith has retired. He was presented with a plaque at his last regular Board Meeting.

Clerk:

Mandy Lake
906 364-0669
PO Box 164
mlake@wakefieldtownship.com

Jerry Niemi will take over as trustee. Jerry has lived in two areas of the township and has served as chairman of the Board of Review for our township. The Board is pleased to have Jerry on the Board and look forward to his vast life experiences to better our township.

Treasurer:

Joan Dalman
906 224-8201
906 364-1742
PO Box 191
jdalman@wakefieldtownship.com

Trustees:

Jerry Niemi
906 229-5553
jniemi@wakefieldtownship.com

Jim Spencer
906 224-6649
jspencer@wakefieldtownship.com

Custodian:

Robert Drier
906 224-2751

Don't miss the photo Gallery on pp. 5-6

WAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP TAXPAYER:

If you pay your taxes by mail, please enclose payment stub or the real estate index number(s). We are no longer automatically sending a receipt due to the high cost of postage. If you wish to receive a receipt, check the box indicating this on the stub of your tax bill and return it with payment. Payments must be postmarked by February 14, 2017 to avoid penalties.

If you prefer to pay in person, I will be available:

Friday, December 30, 2016 9:00 AM—12:00 PM at the Twp Hall and
1:00 PM—5:00 PM at my home office

Friday, January 13, 2017 1:00 PM—5:00 PM at the Twp Hall

Tuesday, February 14, 2017 9:00 AM—12:00 PM at the Twp Hall and
1:00 PM—5:00 PM at my home office (last day before penalties are added)

Tuesday, February 28, 2017 9:00 AM—12:00 PM at the Twp Hall and
1:00 PM—5:00 PM at my home office (last day before taxes are turned over to the county)

Joan Dalman, Treasurer

Spring Cleanup

Friday, May 19, 2017 (9:00am.-4:00pm) and Saturday, May 20, 2017-(9:00a.m. until 12:00p.m) at Western U.P. Recycling Center located at North 519 and Planter Rd.

Fire Numbers and Addressing

We have completed placing new fire number/address signs on all locations where there are buildings across the township. All locations have been verified by 911 emergency management using their GPS systems. This should make things safer in case of emergencies as they will now have an exact location, or in the case of camps a general location of where you are at.

Building permits

We would like to remind those who are building or adding on to their existing homes to call the Clerk at 906-364-0669 or visit our website for a permit application. Our permits are the most reasonably priced in the state and we are asking for your compliance in this matter as well. Failure to obtain a permit may result in enforcement of our zoning ordinance which authorizes up to a \$100 per day fine for not obtaining one.

Website Upgraded

The Board made it one of their goals to upgrade the website this year. It is much more user friendly for everyone to use. We encourage everyone to view our website. You can find applications for building permits, absentee voter forms, phone numbers, zoning ordinances, economic development information, links to businesses in Wakefield Township, recreational sites, a calendar of events, meeting minutes, and some nice pictures of our area. Our address is www.wakefieldtownship.com

Finance and Audit

A full audit of our township was done this year. The township is in good financial shape accordingly to our auditor, Karl Ahonen from Makela, Pollack and Ahonen. The township fund balance is \$559,000. This would give us at least 2 years of operation in an emergency, which is more than recommended. Last year we spent \$30,000 less than we budgeted for.

Assessments

The State Tax Commission is requiring that local governments re-assess at least 20% of the property in their jurisdiction each year. Occasionally she will be doing a field review of your property. If you would like to set up a specific time for entry onto your property or do not want entry onto your property please call our assessor Melissa Prisbe at 906-364-2910 and she will discuss that and any other issue regarding assessments. If you are planning to build and are wondering approximately how much your tax will be, we have put a link on our website to a state tax calculator to compare your tax rates with other towns or if you want to find out how much tax on your new garage, new house or addition would cost.

Roads

Due to storm situation that destroyed Lake Road and other roads in Ironwood Township the Road Commission suspended all county wide projects, except emergency repairs or projects that were underway already this summer. Fortunately for Wakefield Township some "total patcher" projects were completed and some mowing was done. However there are some areas that were not addressed. It remains to be seen how much work can be done next summer due to this natural disaster. The Road Commission assures me that the roads will be plowed this winter. Questions related to roads can be best addressed by the Gogebic County Road Commission at 906-667-0233.

Economic Development

Welcome George Dalbeck Logging to Wakefield Township-a legacy continues.

Clarence O. Dalbeck, grandfather to George and Clarence Dalbeck, was from Wakefield Township. During the war years of the 1940s, when production of pulpwood was deemed necessary for the war effort, and many of the able-bodied loggers were in Europe, Africa or the South Pacific, Clarence Dalbeck designed the truck-mounted loader. It is similar to the Prentice and home-made loaders that followed in the late '40s and early '50s, and very likely was the first of its type anywhere. Dalbeck was selling these loaders for \$400 for the basic loader, \$425 for the loader with cab guard, and \$550 for the loader with the "Heavy Duty Power Hoist." The loader could handle 3,000 pounds without breaking down, and it was advertised to be able to load or unload three cords in fifteen minutes with two men. It boasted an extendable boom, and the whole loader was on hinges so the truck would fit through a standard garage door. The whole rig was powered by the power take-off on the truck, which runs the drum the cable was wound on. No doubt, the Dalbeck loader made many a trucker loading by hand a little jealous.

We are happy to see that this family legacy is continuing in Wakefield Township. George Dalbeck, is a contract logger who can cut, skid, and haul forest products from the woods to the mill. He also constructs and fixes the roads to enable the wood that is cut to be transported to the mills and storage yards. George has constructed a new maintenance and operations garage on N.519 in our township. George has 13 employees and we welcome his business to Wakefield Township.

Big Snow Resorts (Indianhead/Blackjack Hotel/ Casino Project)

About 21 acres of land has been purchased by the L.V.D. tribe. The next step is to receive permission to operate a casino from the federal and state governments. This process is designed to protect all interests, especially the citizens and taxpayers. The approval is likely to occur by January 2018. Meanwhile, L.V.D. will be planning and starting construction on the casino portion of the project in January 2017. The last couple of winters have been difficult with the short snow seasons that we have experienced. Now called "Big Snow Resorts" Indianhead and Blackjack are offering more options for their guests, such as snowmobiling, a Yeti Cave Snow Fort and Tubing area, an outdoor ice skating rink, and the Big Snow Beanbag Theater. These exciting changes are just a start of a new era for the mountains.

Highland Copper

Highland Copper Company Inc. is a Canadian exploration company focused on exploring and developing copper projects in the Upper Peninsula. Recently Highland has been working towards a joint venture with other partners. Highland currently owns part of the former White Pine site as well as some other operations across the western U.P. Despite the fact that the copper prices are very low, Highland continues to move forward with its development plans. The township anxiously awaits the opening of this mine and continues to support this project.

Extreme Tool and Engineering has continued expansion of their business and we are pleased that they have chosen Wakefield Township to grow their business. They recently invested heavily in remodeling the interior and exterior of the buildings. They also have purchased high-end, high tech machine tool equipment. With these additions, they can continue to grow and prosper here, and be ready to meet the worldwide competition.

Industrial Park History (This information in an edited version was provided by Andrew Hill who was president of a group called "Forward Wakefield". They were instrumental in the development of the two Renaissance Zones and the current Industrial Park which currently houses Extreme Tool and Western U.P. Recycling/Verso Log Yard)

Forward Wakefield, was formed in 1995 in response to shattering economic news. White Pine closed, permanently, costing the region and Wakefield more than 1,000 well-paying jobs. Soon, the Connor Forest Industries Mill, which had historically generated up to 200 jobs in our tiny community, closed. In response, Forward Wakefield created a 501(c3) development corporation which included an active 15-member board and three active subcommittees. The committees included economic development, housing, and civic pride-public relations. The economic development committee partnered with the township government to create a new \$450,000 industrial site. At that time the Wakefield Township Board consisted of Bob Orlich, Supervisor, Pat Pikka, Clerk, Ingrid Allen, Treasurer, Delmar Smith, Trustee and Eugene Vittone, Trustee. In 1998 Eugene Vittone resigned and Melvin Rajala was appointed trustee and Joan Dalman was elected mid-term as treasurer. A partnership involving the township and the L.V.D. band of Chippewa Indians resulted in construction of a 10,000-square-foot speculative industrial building. That building attracted a tenant, which created 16 new jobs building cabinets. When the cabinet plant failed, a new industry was found. Extreme Tool located in the building in April, bringing more than 20 well-paying jobs with it. In addition, the group partnered with the township to erect a new industrial building in Planter during the 2002 construction season, and to complete more public utility improvements there.

In the period of 2001-02, Clyde Eilo who was the Interim Gogebic County Economic Development Administrator, spearheaded efforts to create a second site at the Planter Industrial site. In the year 2000 Ken Drier replaced Melvin Rajala on the Board. Wakefield Township had \$265,000 in equity in the first building, now housing Extreme Tool. The Gogebic County Road Commission paved Planter Road that summer and John Cox shepherded infrastructure grants for the industrial site, and for a fire suppression pond. A \$425,000 infrastructure grant was secured from MEDC and construction began on what is known as Chippewa drive. Subsequently a second speculation building was built, and now houses Extreme Tool's Plant number 2. Extreme Tool started with about 20 employees and now has about 85 employees. Wakefield Township Board Members at that time were Ken Drier, Supervisor; Pat Pikka, Clerk; Joan Dalman, Treasurer, Alan Davidson Trustee, and Delmar Smith, Trustee. In 2006 Supervisor Ken Drier passed away, and John Cox was appointed Supervisor. Shortly after, Alan Davidson moved away, and Jim Spencer was appointed as trustee.

In 2009 the Gogebic County Board donated forestry land to Wakefield Township for the purposes of expanding the Industrial Park. Western U.P. Recycling built a recycling yard and subsequently struck a deal with Verso Paper to construct a log storage yard. To date both businesses have expanded substantially. In 2012 due to the death of Clerk Pat Pikka, Mandy Lake was appointed Clerk.

On the other side of the township on the US-2 corridor, approximately 40 acres of land was purchased from Longyear. This area was added to the North Country Renaissance Zone. The entire parcel was sold to Mike Dianich who constructed an antique auto business. The business recently sold to Northland Basement Waterproofing

Western U.P Recycling and Verso Corporation

This diverse operation in our township has been very successful since its opening. Although the price of recycled metals has dropped, the timber industry has been moving forward, especially the pulp industry. We are fortunate to have a branch of the Verso Corporation sharing the same space with the Recycling business in our township. They recently signed a 5-year contract to continue to operate a yard here in our township.

Northland Basement Waterproofing

Located at 111 Commercial Lane, just off Highway US-2, Northland Basement Waterproofing offers the following services: Basement Waterproofing, Crawlspace Repair, Foundation Repair, Commercial Foundations, Concrete Lifting and Leveling, Sump Pumps, Radon Gas Mitigation, and Insulating Services. You can contact them at 906-224-1055

Recreational Trails

We are pleased to announce that a temporary ORV approved and legal trail now exists between Wakefield and Marenisco. Although the non-motorized trail from Ironwood to Bessemer does not run through our township, never-the-less we are pleased that the route has been completed and look forward for it to go into Wakefield. Jim Spencer represents Wakefield Township on the various trail committees and organizations throughout the county and state. Not only will this help bring more tourism to the area, it will also provide recreation opportunities for our residents as well.

Wakefield Township Appointed Boards

Due to the new terms of office, all appointed Boards will be acted upon at our December 6 meeting.

Board of Review Dates

Tuesday December 13, 2016 - 5:00 p.m.

This meeting is for errors and omissions, principal resident exemption and to consider poverty exemptions.

Tax Appeal Meetings

Monday, March 13, 2017- 9 a.m.-12:00 and 1-4 p.m

Tuesday, March 14, 2017- 9 a.m.-12:00

Wednesday, March 15, 2017- 6 p.m.-9 p.m



Verso Paper



Western UP Recycling



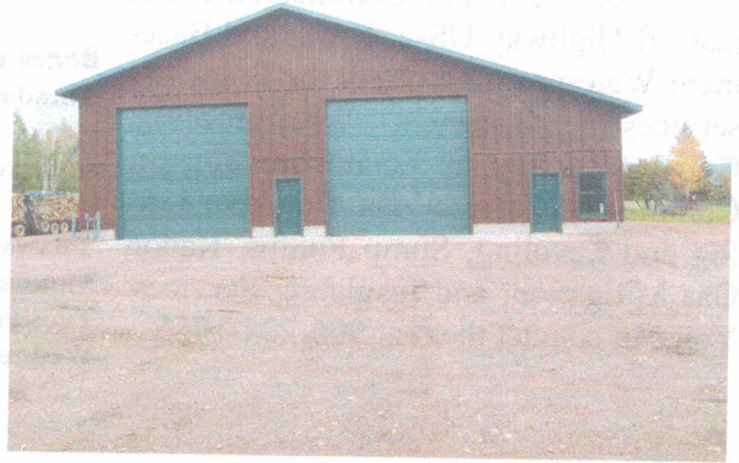
Northland Basement Systems



Extreme Tool's New Look



George Dalbeck Logging



New Building G Dalbeck Logging



New Casino Sight



Last Sign Installed