

Revenue Sharing and You

It's possible that you have heard the term "revenue sharing" in the news. Like many, it may come across as one of those "government" words that you don't completely understand.

Did you know that revenue sharing helps pay for essential services that keep you safe? Or that revenue sharing helps us maintain the roads within the township? It does these things and much more. Revenue sharing has a direct impact on you as a resident of Nelson Township.

What exactly is revenue sharing?

Revenue sharing is money that local governments, such as townships, cities, villages and counties, receive from the state. Revenue sharing was established in 1946 by a vote of the people through a constitutional amendment to replace and relieve local taxation. The state promised to give local governments a portion of the money it received from other state taxes, including the sales and income taxes, and the Single Business Tax. The primary purpose of revenue sharing, when first implemented, was to limit local taxing authority while increasing state taxing authority, with the idea that a predetermined amount would be shared with the local government on a per capita basis.

Revenue sharing was designed to be flexible, non-restricted funding that a community could use to best fit its needs. Local communities rely on revenue sharing to pay for services that directly impact your lives.

There are two types of revenue sharing in Michigan: statutory revenue sharing and constitutional revenue sharing. In 1996, the state stopped distributing revenue sharing from the income tax, Single Business Tax and intangibles tax, instead dedicating a percentage of the first 4 percent of the sales tax to revenue sharing. Constitutional revenue sharing is funded by taking 15 percent of the first 4 percent gross collection of the state sales tax. Statutory revenue sharing is funded by using 21.3 percent of the 4 percent gross collections of the state sales tax. The remaining 63.7 percent of revenue from the 4 percent gross collections is used to fund other state obligations. The remaining 2 percent of sales tax collected is dedicated to the school aid fund.

Due to the method used by the State Legislature to cut revenue sharing in order to balance the state budget, of the 1,242 townships across the state, less than 300 townships receive any amount of statutory revenue sharing. More than 945 townships receive only constitutional revenue sharing. Nelson Township receives constitutional revenue sharing only.

So how does this affect life in Nelson Township?

Revenue sharing funding, although promised by the state, is also at the mercy of the state's economy and how much revenue the state takes in each year. In recent years funding for revenue sharing has seen dramatic cuts as the state's economy has lagged. And as we look to future years, with skyrocketing gas prices and people cutting back on extras, revenue from sales tax could decrease, further impacting our revenue sharing funding and local services.

As lawmakers in Lansing battle over the 2008-09 fiscal year budget, which begins on October 1, 2008, revenue sharing is once again high profile topic. Now more than ever money that local communities rely on to pay for essential services, that directly impact your lives, is continually being threatened. It is important that the township, on behalf of their residents, receives the appropriate level of funding to assist with local services.

Here at Nelson Township, we are doing all we can to make sure our state representative and senator are aware of how revenue sharing impacts our community. Just like you are counting on us to make this community a better place to live, we are counting on Lansing lawmakers to make sure we receive proper funding from the state.

Nelson Township Revenue Sharing as a percentage of total revenues

2002	62%
2003	54%
2004	51%
2005	49%
2006	51%
2007	48%



Established 1854

Volume XV Issue 1

Summer 2008

From the Supervisor

Hello, my name is Glen Armstrong. In May I was privileged to be appointed supervisor of Nelson Township. I replaced Dorothy Bishop who retired from office.

I have lived my entire life in Nelson Township and have served a total of 18 years as a trustee. I have also served on the planning commission and most recently as deputy supervisor. I follow a distinguished list of predecessors/neighbors – Dorothy Bishop, Robert Clouse, Patsy Spiedel, and Bob Hughes. I worked with or knew all of these supervisors during my tenure in office.

As I begin this chapter in township history I welcome your ideas and advice. I look forward to working together for the betterment of Nelson Township. I have always felt that elected officials must represent the interests of the residents – not their own. That is what I will continue to try to do. I know I can't please everyone but I will try.

glen armstrong

An Honor and a Privilege

By the time you receive this newsletter you will probably be aware that I am no longer Nelson Township Supervisor. Although I had six months of my fourth term remaining I made the decision to retire, from the office, for personal reasons.

Since 1992, the year of my election, our township board has continued to make improvements for this municipality. The planning commission forged a new master plan in 1997 and updated the plan in 2007 which was adopted by the township board. We instituted a township newsletter and annual recycling cleanup, supported improvement of the White Pine Trail, which was paved through our township and the Village of Sand Lake, remodeled our outdated township offices, paved over 5 miles of gravel roads, established (by vote of the people) a .5 mil fire/emergency services, and built a beautiful new library.

The township board appointed my deputy Glen Armstrong who will take office on May 30th. I have great confidence in, and admiration for,

Glen and I leave you in good hands. Glen served as trustee of the township from 1984 through 1996 when he chose not to run again. He was appointed to once more fill a trustee's seat that was left vacant upon the death of Richard Mahoney in 2004.

Glen is honest, knowledgeable in township government, forthright, considerate and conservative. He will serve you well. I will continue to finish my term in office as a trustee.

It was my honor and privilege to serve this township and I appreciated your confidence in electing me to office. When I was approached to think about running by Bob Clouse, our previous supervisor, I asked him why he had chosen not to run again. His answer was, "Because it's time." And I understand now what he meant by that statement. I was much younger then and almost sixteen years have come and gone. I am well over the legal age of retirement - according to the Federal Government.

I am retiring from the office of supervisor, "Because it's time."

dorothy bishop

NELSON TOWNSHIP

2 E. Maple Street, Sand Lake 49343
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Telephone (616) 636-5332
FAX (616) 636-4452
www.nelsontownship.org

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor: Glen Armstrong
Clerk: Laura Hoffman
Treasurer: Kathy Reed
Trustees: Dorothy Bishop, Tom Noreen
Assessor: Jason Rosenzweig
Zoning/Enforcement: Jerry Gross

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

VILLAGE OF SAND LAKE

2 E. Maple Street, Sand Lake 49343
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday
9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Telephone (616) 636-8854
FAX (616) 636-4564
Clerk: Beth Miller
Treasurer: Brenda Arnold

VILLAGE COUNCIL MEMBERS

President: Kirk Thielke
Trustees: Dave Dewey, Tonia Parkhurst,
Carol Simpson, Billi Jo Thielke, Dave Tibbe,
Roger Towsley

VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Holiday Closings

**The Village and Township
Offices will be closed
Monday, June 30th through
Friday, July 4th**

Clerk's Corner

This is an election year.

Presidential Primary – Tuesday August 5, 2008
Presidential Election – Tuesday November 4, 2008

Register to vote

You can register to vote by mail or in person. You must register 30 days prior to an election.

Absentee ballots

As a registered voter, you may obtain an absentee voter ballot if you are:

- age 60 years old or older
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- expecting to be out of town on Election Day
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence

How do I get an absentee voter ballot?



Your request for an absentee voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to the township clerk.

Your request must include one of the six statutory reasons and your signature.

You must request an absentee voter ballot by mailing the online application, a letter, a postcard, or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk's office. Requests to have an absentee voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk not later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election.

Once your request is received by the clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. You must be a registered voter to receive an absentee ballot. Requests for absentee voter ballots are processed immediately. Absentee voter ballots may be issued to you at your home address or any address outside of your city or township of residence.

For more information

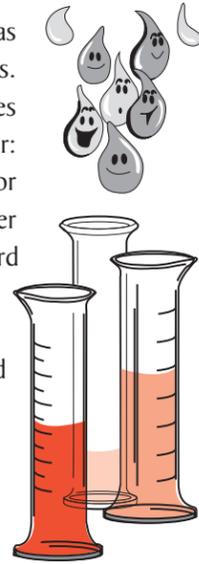
Call our office at 636-5332. Office hours 9 am to 3 pm Monday through Thursday or email www.clerk@nelsontownship.org.

laura hoffman

Free Water Test Kits

The Kent County Health Department has supplied our office with water test kits. Each kit contains two collection bottles and instructions for testing your water for: drinking water coliforms, fecal coliforms for surface/wastewater, swimming pool water coliforms, non-potable water standard plate count-pools and automated partial chemistry, including fluoride, chloride, hardness, nitrate, sulfate, sodium and iron.

Analyzing fees are \$15.00 and \$17.00 dollars. Samples may be mailed or taken directly to the Heath Department.



Treasurer's Tidbits

Treasurer's Hours:

Monday through Thursday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Monday, September 15, 2008 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. September 15th is the last day to pay summer taxes without penalty.

There is a drop box at the Township Hall's main entrance for your convenience.

You may go to the township website and get your millage rates and estimate your taxes.



The website will also give you all the information you need to pay your property taxes with your credit card. There is a convenience fee charged based on the amount of your transaction. www.nelsoftownship.org

Deferred Payments:

For those who qualify for Deferred Payment of their 2008 Summer Taxes, applications are now available at the Nelson Township Treasurer's office. Filing of this form is voluntary. However, your tax due date will not be extended unless it is certified each year with the Township Treasurer by September 15.

kathy reed

From the Assessor's Office

This summer and fall, the Assessor's Office will begin work on digitally photographing each dwelling within the Township. The photographs are used for assessing purposes and are maintained as part of the property record card system as we continue to shift to an all digital record system. Any person photographing buildings will have picture identification with them.

Also, in accordance with state guidelines stating that properties be re-inspected every five years, I am planning on visiting those homes in the following areas: Carolyn Drive, and Wildwood Lane and Court, and will be visiting select homes in the Metes & Bounds description properties in the township. I will have identification and will provide it upon request

If you plan on splitting your property, you must file a land division application with the assessor. Land division applications are available at the township hall or on the township website www.nelsoftownship.org

Other forms available on the website include: Property Transfer Affidavit, Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption Affidavit, & Request to Rescind Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption.

The Assessor's normal office hours are Monday's and Thursday's from 9:00 to 3:00.

jason rosenzweig/assessor

Township Website

Are you looking for township information? It can be found on our website at www.nelsoftownship.org.

The site is updated with additional information regularly.



Get Involved!

..... in Township government

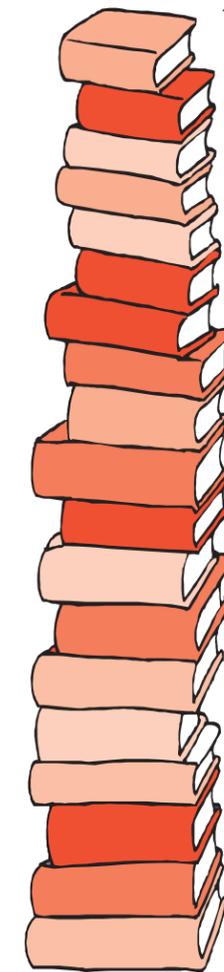
Nelson Township is taking applications for positions on the Planning Commission, Board of Review and Zoning Board of Appeals (you must be Township resident).



Election workers are also needed (you must be a Kent County resident). Call 636-5332 for more information.

We Need You!

Library Programs & Events



The Nelson Township/Sand Lake Library is offering many programs and events during the month of July. Programs offered are: Family Storytime, Crafts with Liz Langenberg, Teen Theatre, Kevin Kammeraad (children's author), Apple Country Dulcimers, Smoothie Blast, Nintendo Wii @ Your Library, Play-Grow-Read Make & Take, Professor Bug Presents, Pajama Story Time, and a Pet Show.

Other offerings and events include: Fireside Chatters Book Discussions, Book Sale at the Library during the 4th of July festivities during regular library hours; Kids and Teen Craft Sale; KDL-Wide Design a Deck Contest; Crop 'Til Your Drop Workshop; and Blue Grass In the Park featuring "Brownfoot Bluegrass" and "Missy Kay and a Mess-A-Blue-Grass".

Stop in at the library for a program featuring dates, times, and complete descriptions of all events.

Library Hours

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	12:00 TO 8:00	9:30 TO 5:00	12:00 TO 8:00		1:00 TO 5:00	9:30 TO 5:00

CLOSED - Independence Day - Fri. July 4th