

North Township NAVIGATOR

YOUR GUIDE TO NEWS AND SERVICES IN EAST CHICAGO, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING • FALL 2014



The Prompt Ambulance Communication Center moves dozens of vehicles that make up to a thousand trips a day. The communication hub tracks weather as well as traffic and dispatch duties. Adding the township's Dial-a-Ride to the Prompt system is expected to reduce costs while increasing customer service.

ENHANCING DIAL-A-RIDE

On-demand transit remains a hot-button issue for North Township: Ridership continues to rise without any new sources of funding in sight.

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan has been working for nearly two years to increase capacity, efficiency and customer service using the proceeds of a three-year grant, which amounts to \$600,000 per year.

Since the expansion of Dial-a-Ride was announced two years ago, Mrvan has cultivated unique partnerships with private companies to optimize township resources.

One of the most recent is an agreement with Prompt Ambulance owners Gary and Shar Miller to assist with communication between Dial-a-Ride customers and the township transportation center.

Two township employees began working at Prompt's state-of-the-art Highland communication center in mid-August. During normal business hours, the two should be able to answer most calls to Dial-a-Ride. When they can't meet the demand, Prompt's

NEW RIDERSHIP RULES

Changes are in-the-works for the North Township transit customers. Trips are being bundled to include multiple riders, which means users may get to their destinations up to an hour early.

If you need to cancel, please call as soon as possible. Three no-shows within 30 days means an individual is suspended from using Dial-a-Ride for a month.

RESERVATIONS: Dial-a-Ride operates Monday through Friday except holidays. Email dial-a-ride@ntto.net or call (219) 932-2530. Follow the prompts and push #4.

dispatchers will pick up the slack.

"We have been faced with the challenge to sustain the rides for the duration of the grant, which ends in 2015," Mrvan said.

"With the assistance of other dispatchers at Prompt – who are on duty around the clock – every person who calls to schedule a ride will be talking to a live person and not an answering machine. This will make the service more efficient and user-friendly to those who depend on Dial-a-Ride." ▲

FARMER'S MARKET

North Township will host its final farmer's market of the season at the Hessville Circle of Services. Scheeringa Farms will bring its bounty of fresh produce – from ripe, juicy tomatoes and fresh cucumbers to sweet watermelons and cantaloupe. Township clients may redeem vouchers in exchange for fruits and vegetables. You may qualify based on income/age.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 18

WHERE: Hessville Circle of Services, 2835-165th Street, Hammond

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 313.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Raised vegetable gardens at the Circle of Services parking lot in Hessville are overflowing with nature's bounty. Tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, peppers and eggplant have taken root in the sunny location and are available to those in need.

One of three pilot gardens underwritten by Fifth Third Bank, Circle of Services Coordinator Cindy Rivera said the garden has transformed the landscape and is hoping the bank and township can partner for a repeat performance in 2015.

INFO: Call Cindy Rivera at (219) 803-0659 or email riverac@ntto.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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NORTH TOWNSHIP SEEKS FAMILY FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan is on the hunt for the perfect candidate to work with Habitat for Humanity to rehab a home on Tennessee with the idea of owning it and becoming part of the neighborhood.

“This is a home that definitely needs work, but will become a great addition to Hessville when it is repaired,” Mrvan said. “Habitat for Humanity has the best thing going for people who want to have that pride of home ownership but, for whatever reason, haven’t been able to make it happen.”

Part of Habitat’s requirement is that potential owners have the ability to contribute either through actual work on the home or at Habitat’s Restore in Calumet Township. For those who are disabled, family members or friends

can provide the sweat equity on their behalf.

North Township took title to the home from the Lake County Commissioner’s tax sale with the idea of helping a family find a home while repairing an unloved home for the community.

Dan Klein, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Indiana, said the agency will be repairing the roof to keep it watertight for the winter until a suitable candidate is found.

“We all hope by this time next year, there will be a family living in this home,” Mrvan said.

If you are interested or know someone who might be a great candidate for home ownership, please contact Township Chief Deputy Jane Dudley at (219) 932-2530. ▲



LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

Join for a day of food, fun and fellowship at our Victory for Veterans Memorial Ride

I love autumn. I look forward to the moderating temperatures and colors that change the look of the landscape.

Since becoming North Township Trustee, autumn has also come to symbolize another opportunity to celebrate our veterans with the men and women who served in the Navy, Army, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard and laid their lives on the line for each of us.

Join me from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. September 28 as we celebrate this year’s Victory for Veterans Memorial Ride, which attracts up to 1,700 motorcyclists each year.

This year we have more activities, food and snack vendors than ever before.

Members of the Lima Lima Flight Team will perform a flyover of Wicker Memorial Park for the first time ever. If you are not familiar with the name, you might recognize the squadron of lemon yellow propeller planes that were flying precision maneuvers long before the Blue Angels or Thunderbirds.

Money raised will be donated to the Veterans Build – a collaboration between the



Northwest Indiana Veterans Action Council and Habitat for Humanity that has one goal: to provide housing so that no Northwest Indiana veteran is left homeless.

If you are in the region on September 28, I hope you will consider stopping by Wicker Memorial Park and spending a few dollars while enjoying a day with our veterans.

I believe it is imperative for all of us, who have been so richly blessed, to do what we can to help raise funds for our veterans and what better way to do it than through a day of fellowship at the park! ▲

FRANK J. MRVAN
 North Township Trustee



AUTUMN IN THE PARK

AT THE PARK ...

There's nothing quite like a cool, crisp fall day at Wicker Memorial Park in Highland. Enjoy our 18-hole golf course, 3 miles of scenic trails and one-of-a-kind dog run amid autumn's colorful splendor.

SCENIC TRAILS

The 2.5-mile trail along the perimeter of the park is perfect for the avid walker, runner or bicyclist. The half-mile inner trail takes you on a scenic tour of the park, volleyball courts and playground. Trails are paved and open from dawn to dusk.

DOG RUN

Located along Indianapolis Boulevard, the dog run is open every day – dawn to dusk. Give your pup the freedom to run while playing with other canines.

GOLF COURSE

If you're looking for a challenging 18-hole golf course, you've come to the right place! This par-72 course offers tree-lined fairways, a practice green and driving range. For more information or to schedule a tee time, call the Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809.

TENNIS & VOLLEYBALL COURTS

The park features five tennis and three sand volleyball courts for your enjoyment.

BANQUET FACILITIES

Looking for a place to host your wedding, retirement party or meeting? Our banquet facilities are perfect for any occasion.

To make an appointment to view our facilities, call Bridget at (219) 923-3830. For rental fees and catering, visit www.diningsolutionswickerpark.com.



Food! Friends! Fun!

CELEBRATE MEXICO!

Celebrate Mexican Independence Day with Visions of Santana, a group that covers the music of Carlos Santana like no other. Cash bar and concessions are available. You must be at least 21 years of age with valid ID to attend.

WHEN: 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Sept. 11
Doors open at 7 p.m.

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center Gazebo

ADMISSION: \$5 — rain or shine!

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.

GUARD GOLF OUTING

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan will host local soldiers for a day of fun at Wicker Memorial Park. This National Guard appreciation day includes a free cookout and a round of golf.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. September 22

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.

BEARS TAILGATE PARTY

Join us for a tailgate party as the Bears take on the 49ers. Bring your own lawn chair to watch the game on our outdoor big screen while enjoying \$2 drafts, \$2 hot dog and chips or \$3 brat and chips.

WHEN: 6 p.m. September 14

Game starts at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Wicker Park Pro Shop

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.

CEMETERY TOUR

The Hammond Historical Society will host its 16th annual tour at Oak Hill Cemetery. Participants will learn about the lives and experiences of Civil War soldiers who are buried there.

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m. Oct. 5

WHERE: Oak Hill Cemetery, corner of Hohman Avenue and 165th Street

ADMISSION: \$5, children under 12 free

INFO: Call Richard Lytle at (219) 931-5100, ext. 307 or email lytler@hammond.lib.in.us.

ANNUAL COAT DRIVE

After collecting gently used coats/jackets and buying new ones with donated funds, North Township Trustee and Kusiak Care's 7th annual coat drive will distribute hundreds of winter items to township residents.

WHEN: 9 to 11 a.m. November 15

WHERE: Wicker Park Pavilion

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.

WANT TO MAKE A DONATION?

Drop off your donations at the following locations: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center; Wicker Park Pro Shop; Kusiak Construction, 8338 Kennedy Ave., Highland; and Ridge United Methodist Church, 8706 Columbia Ave., Munster.



COVERED BRIDGE FESTIVAL

Join us on this day-long bus trip to visit central Indiana's fabled covered bridges while enjoying the festivities, food and artisan shops set up for the annual fall festival.

WHEN: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 14

WHERE: Parke County, Indiana

FEE: \$35 per person; deadline is Oct. 7.

RESERVATIONS: Call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

FOUR WINDS CASINO TRIP

Roll the dice and let Lady Luck guide you to fame, fortune or at least a rollicking good time on this trip to New Buffalo, Michigan. Seats fill up fast and are first come, first served! Reserve your spot today!

SEPTEMBER TRIP: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. September 25

OCTOBER TRIP: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. October 28

WHERE: Four Winds Casino, New Buffalo, MI

FEE: \$26 per person. Upon arrival at the casino, you will receive a \$15 slot credit and \$10 food credit.

RESERVATIONS: Call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

HOLIDAY TURKEY BINGO

Grab a friend and trot on over to Wicker Park for an afternoon of fun. Every winner gets a gift card good for a free turkey at a local grocer!

WHEN: noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

RESERVATIONS: Call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

LEGACY GIRLS CHRISTMAS SHOW

Close your eyes and let The Legacy Girls take you back to the swing and boogie-woogie songs made famous by the Andrews Sisters as they put their own delightful twist on the Christmas songs you love.

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, December 2

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: \$20 includes dinner and show

RESERVATIONS: Call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

SENIOR LUNCHEONS

Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for only \$5 at the monthly luncheon at Wicker Park Social Center in Highland. Doors open at 11 a.m. Lunch begins at noon.

SEPTEMBER 17 PICNIC AT THE PAVILION:

BBQ chicken, coleslaw, corn on the cob, dinner roll, watermelon, soft drinks and beer.

OCTOBER 8 MENU: Mixed green salad, beef stroganoff over noodles, bread and butter, chocolate cake, hot tea and coffee.

NOVEMBER 19 MENU: Chicken noodle soup, roasted turkey breast, stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, bread and butter, hot tea and coffee.

RESERVATIONS: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 301.



EDUCATION & JOBS



TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP

Individuals interested in a career as a big-rig operator should know there are still opportunities through North Township, which participates in a Transportation Partnership with Ivy Tech, Driveco, Schneider National and the Holistic Community Coalition.

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said the unique partnership has expanded access to good-paying jobs. "We provide assistance in the short-term but have always made it our goal to help individuals become self-sufficient," Mrvan said. "People are happier when they are able to provide for themselves."

PURDUE CAL ELECTRICAL PROGRAM

A collaboration between the North Township Trustee's office and Purdue University Calumet is opening the doors for those seeking a career as an industrial electrician.

As part of a Department of Labor grant, Purdue Calumet will offer a 21-week course to prepare individuals for careers in advanced manufacturing. Known as Project AWAKE, the training program is free to qualifying individuals. The Department of Labor is investing \$2.7 million in the program, which is designed for veterans, workers affected by foreign trade job loss as well as those in manufacturing who desire advanced certification.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for individuals in our community to get the training they need to qualify for good paying jobs, which are available right here in the township," Trustee Frank Mrvan said. "Individuals who complete the course receive certification as well as 12 credit hours from Ivy Tech."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Classes are limited to 15 individuals, who attend classes 16 hours each week for 21 weeks. A new group of students will begin each month until the grant is exhausted. For more info, including an online application, visit www.purduecal.edu/technology/awake.



BRICKLAYER APPRENTICE PROGRAM

When the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 4 open their apprenticeship program in February, East Chicago's Makesha Jones plans to be one of the first in line.

Jones, 29, heard about the possibility of becoming a bricklayer's apprentice through the North Township Trustee's office, which is collaborating with the union on education and training programs that lead to full-time employment.

"I had never thought about a career as a bricklayer but was intrigued when I heard about it," she said. "This is something I am really interested in and a career that could provide a good, livable wage."

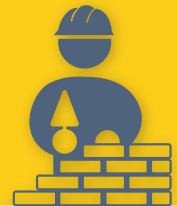
Bricklayers representative Pete Severson said there has been quite a bit of interest in the apprenticeship program since he spoke to a group from North Township in July. "We take applicants twice a year. We start them off by teaching them how to use a trowel and then have them show some mastery of it," Severson said. "We have an apprentice board that evaluates how they are doing to see if they have promise. Those that pass move on to the math-and-ruler test and a full interview."

Although he can't imagine getting rich as a bricklayer, Severson said it is the kind of job that allows a family to live comfortably and even put a couple of children through college.

"There are many avenues for bricklayers once they become journeyman. You can travel anywhere in the country as long as you remain certified."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the apprentice program or to apply, please call the BAC Local 4 offices, 7985 Marshall St., Merrillville at (219) 769-3655 or visit them online at baclocal4.org.



HEALTH JOBS

Want to become an emergency medical technician or pharmaceutical tech?

North Township has teamed up with Work One, the state agency charged with retraining the workforce for today's employers. Circle of Services Coordinator Cindy Rivera said North Township has been working with Work One to create opportunities for township residents looking at career advancement.

"We had a class of 15 last year who were trained as patient access coordinators," she said. "One-by-one, they are getting hired for jobs that pay a living wage."

WORK CLOTHES

If you have office-appropriate clothing in great condition you no longer need or want, North Township will happily take it off your hands. The township has dedicated space at its Circle of Services location in Hessville, creating an outlet for residents who have a need, but not the means, for such clothing – for job interviews or until they get their first paycheck at a new job.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more info on any of these opportunities, please call Cindy Rivera at (219) 803-0659 or email riverac@ntto.net.





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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (219) 932-2530, EXT 331.

Frank J. Mrvan



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