

North Township NAVIGATOR

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

RIDERSHIP SKYROCKETS

Ridership is off the charts for North Township's Dial-a-Ride program, which logged nearly 33,000 trips in 2013.

"We knew the ridership numbers were going to be dramatically higher, but even we were shocked to see they nearly tripled since 2012," North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said.

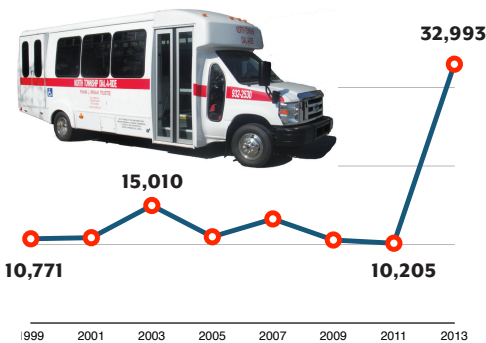
Two new buses have been ordered to expand Dial-A-Ride's capacity. Mrvan said the vehicles should be delivered in late spring and put into service by early summer, bringing the number of buses in the township's fleet to eight

"We expect demand will continue to grow throughout 2014 when we will have eight buses on the road Monday through Friday," he said. "We will continue to utilize AAA Express in Highland to help handle overflow."

The new buses are being purchased through the proceeds of a \$1.9 million, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant. The federal dollars designated for CMAQ funding are nonrenewable. Mrvan said the township is already looking for funding options after the three-year grant is exhausted at end of 2015.

DIAL-A-RIDE IN DEMAND

The number of passengers ballooned to nearly 33,000 in 2013, triple the number of riders in 2012.



"The lifespan of the new buses should extend long beyond the life of the grant," Transportation Director Jerry Siska said. "The trustee is looking for additional financing to continue to employ drivers and pay operating costs when the grant funding is no longer available." ▲

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.

FORECLOSURE RELIEF

An initiative aimed at reducing the number of foreclosures in North Township will have its inaugural meeting April 24.

Coordinated by Trustee Frank Mrvan, in collaboration with Westminster Pastor Dave Comstock, the goal is to create a safety net to help township residents retain ownership of their homes despite illness, death of a spouse or loss of a job through no fault of their own by tapping into the federally backed "Hardest Hit Fund."

WHEN: 9:30 a.m. April 24

WHERE: Westminster Presbyterian Church, 8955 Columbia Ave., Munster

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 324.

TOWNSHIP CAREER FAIR

If a new job would help your future appear brighter and your financial future rosier, mark your calendars for the North Township Career Fair.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 27

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center

FEE: Free

INFO: Call Resource Coordinator Cindy Rivera at (219) 313-1024.

WELCOME KELLY BRIDGES!

Highland resident Kelly Bridges is the new North Township activities director.

Bridges, who worked in the insurance industry for 34 years while planning parties and fund-raisers, said she is loving her job.

"Party planning is a lot of fun. I get to stage events that others enjoy," said Bridges, who is also president of the Highland Council of Community Events, the event planner for the Morton High School alumni and a member of ABATE, a charity aimed at motorcycle rights and education.

"I am also enjoying the time I get to spend out in the community, meeting residents and letting them know of the valuable services we provide at the township."

PARK READIES GREENS FOR SPRING GOLFERS



For all golfers just itching to get back on the course, it's going to be another month or so before anyone will be able to call, "Fore!"

"We're looking at several weeks of cold and mixed precipitation. This could go on for a while," Wicker Park Superintendent Brett Bierman said. "All the snow needs to melt and the greens dried out before we can let anybody on the course."

Bierman expects the earliest the course will be ready for play is late March or early April.

"This has been a terrible winter for the grass," Bierman said. "It's not good to have snow sitting on top the turf for such a long time. We spray the greens and tees in the fall but it lasts only a couple of months so once the snow and ice are gone, we'll spray again and that should take care of it."

"We know it's been a long winter and we're just asking our golfers to be patient."

INSIDE: Check out **SPRING IN THE PARK** for our early season golf rates. **PAGE 3**



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



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 Phone: (219) 932-2530 Fax: (219) 937-4412
 Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Thursday

EAST CHICAGO OFFICE

2105 Broadway, East Chicago, IN 46312
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HESSVILLE CIRCLE OF SERVICES

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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:
 northtownship@theideafactory.us.com

The Navigator is produced by:
 The Idea Factory • (219) 779-9041
 www.theideafactory.us.com

Printed by Miss Print
 8244 Columet Avenue
 Munster, IN 46321



ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR SEEKING COUNSELORS FOR SUMMER CAMP

Calling elementary school teachers and others who have experience with children in grades K-6 and would like to earn extra cash over the summer: the North Township Trustee's office is looking for you!

Activities Director Kelly Bridges is accepting applications through March for individuals who want to be camp counselors this summer.

The township's camp program is made up of two, three-week sessions that have been created with the elementary school student in mind.

The camp begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and is planned to be enriching as well as fun.

"We have outdoor crafts, scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, environmental projects, recreation and field trips," Bridges said. "We will begin registering kids for both sessions in April." ▲

WANT TO BE A COUNSELOR? Call Kelly Bridges at (219) 932-2530, ext. 331 or download an application from our website at www.northtownshiptrustee.com.



Our summer camp counselors provide an enriching, yet fun experience for children ages 6 -14. Day camp activities includes outdoor crafts, scavenger hunts, environmental projects, field trips and more.

WHEN: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

SESSION 1: June 9 through June 27

SESSION 2: July 7 through July 25

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park

INFO: For more information or to register your child, please call Kelly Bridges at (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.



LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

Thanks to the Clark and Morton high school football teams for volunteering to shovel snow

After a solid three months of cold and more snow than we ever imagined, I'm more than ready for spring.

It's been a hard winter for all of us. Utility bills climbed higher. The snow and cold made getting to and from our destinations measurably harder. I can't say goodbye to winter, though, without first thanking the football teams from Clark and Morton high schools, who made our volunteer snow-shoveling assistance program such a success.

Both of the coaches – Roy Richards and Jason Novak – wanted their teams to help, to be involved in the community and these guys worked – hard. As soon as one snow would be cleared, it seemed there was another one that followed and these guys never said "no."

As we move into spring – and warmer temperatures – we are looking forward to our

job fair in March and the opening of the golf course at Wicker Park.

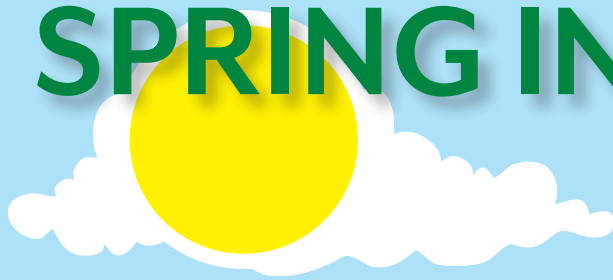
The job fair attracts 300 to 400 individuals and this year, we are hoping for at least that many. We are adding a LinkedIn workshop before the fair opens to enhance job opportunities.

We will also be providing links for residents who want to apply for available jobs in the weeks leading up to the career fair. If you are interested, please visit our website for details.

I hope you are looking forward to getting out and taking a stroll in the park under a canopy of green. There is nothing more beautiful than Wicker Park in the springtime. There truly is something for everyone. See you at the park!

FRANK J. MRVAN
 North Township Trustee

SPRING IN THE PARK



After a long, hard winter, Wicker Park is coming alive again. All that snow that fell in January is making for a lush green spring. The trees are leafier, the flowers showier. Spend some time this spring – at the park.

GOLF COURSE OPEN YEAR ROUND!

If you're looking for a challenging and beautifully maintained 18-hole golf course year round, you've come to the right place! This par-72 course offers tree-lined fairways, a practice green and driving range. Spring rates start at \$25 to ride 18 holes on the weekend or \$21 for nine holes. Weekdays with cart are \$21 for 18 holes or \$15 for nine holes. For more info or to schedule a tee time, call the Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809.

DOG RUN

Conveniently located along Indianapolis Boulevard, the Dog Run is open every day – dawn to dusk. This fenced in area gives your dog the freedom to run around while playing with other canine friends.

WALKING AND BIKING TRAILS

The 2.5-mile trail that runs 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. All trails are paved and open from dawn to dusk.

TENNIS AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS

The park features five tennis courts and three sand volleyball pits for the community to enjoy. Grab your sunscreen, water bottle and favorite sports gear and head to the parks! First come. First served.

PICNIC AREAS AND SHELTERS

Picnic areas, shelters and the pavilion are available for rent from Memorial day through Labor Day. For a reservation or to request more information, please contact the Wicker Memorial Park office at (219) 838-3420.

BANQUET FACILITIES

Looking for a place to host your party, spring wedding, retirement bash or meeting? Our banquet facilities are perfect for you. To make an appointment to view our facilities, call Bridget at (219) 923-3830. For information about rental fees and catering, visit our caterer's website at www.diningsolutionswickerpark.com.

For more information

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK

8554 Indianapolis Boulevard
Highland, Indiana 46322

www.wickermemorialpark.com or (219) 923-3420



Around the Township

Whiting

GARAGE MAHAL

Sellers, browsers and buyers flock to Whiting's neighborhood garage sale. Pick up maps with the addresses and items sold on your way into town!

WHEN: May 17

WHERE: Whiting neighborhoods

INFO: Call (219) 659-0292.

Munster

MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEA

Honor and spend quality time with each other as you enjoy a catered 'tea style' lunch by Tiffany's Tearoom.

WHEN: Noon to 3 p.m. April 27

WHERE: Community Park Social Center, 8751 Lions Club Drive, Munster

FEE: Resident couple \$45, nonresident couple \$50, additional daughter \$20

INFO: Call (219) 836-PARK.

East Chicago

TECH TUESDAYS

Join us for a free technology workshop, "Top 10 Tech Skills You Should Know," presented by Apple System Administrator Joe Daddazio, School City of East Chicago.

WHEN: 5 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 8

WHERE: East Chicago Public Library, 2401 E. Columbus Dr.

INFO: Call (219) 397-2453

Hammond

FISHING DERBY

Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and the Hammond Port Authority invites you to the 17th annual Fishing Derby. Prizes and trophies will be given for the largest salmon, trout and bass.

WHEN: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 12

WHERE: Hammond Marina, 701

Casino Center Drive, Hammond

FEE: Free entry, parking, refreshments

NOTE: Fishing will be allowed inside the marina on the west end, bin wall only. Land, dock fishing only; no boats.

INFO: Call (219) 659-7678.

Highland

EASTER BUNNY BREAKFAST

Join the Easter Bunny and his furry friends for a continental breakfast. Sponsored by the Highland Chamber of Commerce, the event also features a bike drawing, basket raffles and photos with the bunny.

WHEN: Saturday, April 12

SEATINGS: 9 and 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Highland High School cafeteria, 9135 Erie Street.

TICKETS: \$6 and must purchase in advance at Lincoln Center or the Highland Chamber office.

INFO: Call the Highland Chamber of Commerce at (219) 923-3666.



EASTER HAM BINGO

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

WHEN: noon to 3 p.m. Monday, April 14

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

NOTE: North Township residents only

FEE: Free



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.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, April 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 a \$10 food credit.

Deadline to register is April 10.



SENIOR HEALTH FAIR

Join us for free on-site health screenings – bone density, blood pressure, blood glucose – as well as massage therapy, information and programs in a relaxed atmosphere. Refreshments will be served.

WHEN: Noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, April 25

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: Free



SENIOR MOTHER'S DAY DANCE

Geno Sciacca / Don Manin Band will entertain moms and all of those who love them at a special Mother's Day event in May. Make plans to join us as we celebrate mothers everywhere with a special lunch that will be followed by an afternoon of dancing.

WHEN: 12:30 to 5 p.m. Thursday, May 8

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: \$20 per person includes a delightful luncheon, gifts and entertainment.



FOUR WINDS CASINO TRIP

We'll test our luck again and make a second trip – rabbit's foot in hand – to Four Winds Casino.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 27

WHERE: Four Winds Casino, New Buffalo, MI

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

Deadline to register is May 7.



RESERVATIONS: For more information or to make reservations for any of these township senior events, please call Special Event Coordinator Eleanor Uribe at (219) 313-3934 or email uribee@ntto.net.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

TRUSTEE'S OFFICE HELPS TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS SIGN UP FOR COVERAGE

If you are uninsured and have not yet signed up for an insurance policy as part of the Affordable Care Act, assistance is available at the North Township Trustee's office.

Navigator specialists from Community HealthNet are onsite twice a week to help enroll individuals in a policy that is best for them.

Jane Dudley, chief deputy for the trustee's office, said the township made itself available to help take some of the confusion out of the process.

"Our clients are already familiar with coming to our offices, so it made sense to bring the navigators to them," Dudley said. "Our case managers are advising all of their clients to spend some time with the navigators to see what kind of insurance they may be eligible for."

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said many individuals, who have no income, are qualifying for an option known as the Healthy Indiana Plan, which they are able to access at no cost. HIP is available to uninsured Hoosiers ages 19 to 64 who meet poverty income guidelines. Those who have income are charged 2 percent of their family earnings for coverage.

Mrvan said the township is already beginning to see a dip in the monthly cost of providing medical assistance.

"Many of our clients are qualifying for HIP or Medicaid, which reduces the amount we pay for healthcare emergencies and prescription medications for them," Mrvan said. "Every dollar we are able to save in one area is a dollar we have to help in another."

RESIDENTS BENEFIT FROM JOBS, TOO!

A group of 17 students, all of whom successfully completed an 11-week-targeted education course to become patient access specialists in the local healthcare industry, has just one more hurdle to cross.

Cindy Rivera, coordinator of the township's Circle of Services, said all that remains for these individuals is a national test that will certify them for their jobs.

The students, who took their course of study at Ivy Tech in East Chicago, are all but guaranteed a job that carries with it a starting pay of \$10-\$15 per hour.

Available through a collaboration of government, education and social service agencies, the first class will not be the township's last.

"We are already gathering names for the next class of students, who will start later this spring," North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said.

"Once we select the group, we will determine the academic location for classes," Mrvan said. "Our goal is to locate the classes where they are most convenient for the students."

INFO: Please call Coordinator Cindy Rivera at (219) 803-0659 or email her at riverc@ntto.net.



PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM

When Frank Mrvan became North Township Trustee in 2005, he inherited a prescription drug assistance program that cost the township about \$7,000 per month.

Without any drastic cuts or loss of service, the township began working toward reducing the cost for such items as prescription medications.

Data Rx, which pools drug costs with a single pharmacy provider, drastically reduced the township's monthly outlay. Other, similar programs help, as well.

Today, the program costs about \$600 a month and North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said changes resulting from the Affordable Care Act promise even greater savings because of an increased number of individuals who now have an insurance plan with prescription drug benefits.

INFO: Income requirements are listed online at www.northtownshiptrustee.com. If you need help paying for prescription medications and believe you qualify, call the trustee's office at (219) 932-2530.

TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE

A booklet of service providers is available for the asking. It features information on community organizations, churches and departments within local government that provide low- or no-cost assistance for counseling, clothing, emergency shelter, prescriptions, child care and gas vouchers.

The directory is available in book format at the Trustee's Hammond and East Chicago offices or digital format online at www.northtownshiptrustee.com.



SPIRIT OF CHICAGO CABARET LUNCHEON CRUISE

Cabaret luncheon includes salad, BBQ sirloin, Caribbean roast chicken, penne al forno, roasted vegetables, double-baked/mashed potatoes, cookies, cakes, pastries and seasonal fruit.



Let North Township whisk you away for a day of fun in Chicago. Set sail aboard the Spirit of Chicago for a cabaret luncheon cruise like no other. Once you disembark, enjoy shopping at Navy Pier.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. June 24

WHERE: Navy Pier, Chicago

ADMISSION: \$75 includes round-trip transportation, lunch and cruise.

INFO: For more details or reservations, please call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

Frank J. Mrvan



NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

8TH ANNUAL NORTH TOWNSHIP EASTER EGG HUNT

North Township children – ages 1 through 12 – are invited to hunt for eggs until all are found! DJ music, a bouncy house and a visit from the Easter Bunny are all part of the day's festivities. Admission is free.

10:30 AM • APRIL 12
WICKER PARK PAVILION • HIGHLAND

For more information

www.NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.com

219.932.2530, extension 331

