

North Township NAVIGATOR

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

NORTH TOWNSHIP PARTNERSHIP SAVES 21 HOMEOWNERS FROM FORECLOSURE

Michael Ratkay was conscientiously current with his mortgage payments – until Dietrich Industries closed in 2008, taking his position as an overhead crane operator down with it.

“I couldn’t make one mortgage payment and then the situation snowballed,” said Ratkay, a Hammond homeowner. “I didn’t know what to do until I found help through North Township.”

Indiana’s Hardest Hit Fund was created to stave off foreclosures for those who have:

- ✓ Involuntary and substantial reduction in employment income
- ✓ A substantial reduction in household income due to the death of a household member
- ✓ Significant expenses related to non-elective medical procedures or emergencies
- ✓ Military service

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan entered into a partnership with Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Northwest Indiana to launch a Hardest Hit initiative and the township’s faith-based community to help spread the word.

“I believe the best and only way to get things done is to bring people together,” Mrvan said. “These partnerships are helping protect home-

ownership for individuals while strengthening our communities. When a home is foreclosed in your neighborhood crime values go up and property values go down.”

Indiana ranks sixth in the nation for foreclosures and has \$221 million allocated to assist property owners. A homeowner can tap up to \$30,000.

CCCS Executive Director Warren Callahan said 21 homeowners have been helped so far. The program will continue through 2016.

“The North Township Trustee’s office deals with individuals who have financial difficulties but does not have funding to assist with mortgages,” Callahan said. “That’s where we come in.”

Mrvan said the faith-based community is pivotal in reaching community members in need.

“As churches, we are often one of the first to know of people whose financial situation has become problematic,” said Sally Van Bokkelen, coordinator for mission and outreach at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Munster. “The hardest hit fund is able to keep the American dream of owning a home alive for people who want to stay in their homes and contribute to their communities.” ▲

FARMER’S MARKET

The North Township Farmer’s Market begins June 1 and will continue through the growing season. Chief



Deputy Jane Dudley said clients will be given vouchers redeemable at Scheeringa’s Farms & Produce, 9436 Cline Ave., Highland. You may

qualify based on your income/age. The township will also distribute fruits and vegetables at various township offices. Dates will depend on the growing season.

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

BRIDGES OF CARE

A partnership is in the works to create a clearinghouse for individuals in need. Known as Bridges of Care, the group will focus on the social service needs of East Chicago residents and create a single entry point into a system that will provide a needs assessment and access to providers.

Areas of focus include education, health, economic opportunity, community/family and public safety. North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan, who is part of the planning team said, “This partnership will provide greater efficiency and access for those who need us most.”

INFO: Call Director of Operations Lori Polgar at (219) 932-2530, ext. 324.

CIRCLE OF SERVICES BECOMES PILOT SITE FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN

Fifth Third Bank is tilling the soil and putting down roots on the Circle of Services property in Hessville.

North Township’s Hessville location is one of three pilot sites for the “Giving to Grow” community garden project sponsored by Fifth Third, which has nearly two dozen branches in Northwest Indiana.

Andrew Hayes, vice president of marketing for the bank, is hoping the garden will produce a bountiful harvest from the seeds planted there. Seasonal and root vegetables, such as tomatoes, zucchini, carrots,

potatoes and beets, will provide a bumper crop of produce for local families, who pitch in to help.

“As a bank, we have always raised money and donated food, but wanted to make a deeper commitment,” Hayes said. “This garden will provide something that is more sustainable.”

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan, who was eager to partner with the bank on the project, said: “This garden is already a source of pride for the community. Bank employees as well as residents have

high hopes and big plans for our community garden.”

The other two pilot sites taking part in the community garden project are located in Rockford and Chicago.

For more information about the community garden or how to participate, please contact 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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5947 Hohman Ave., Hammond, IN 46320
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
Phone: (219) 398-2435 **Fax:** (219) 397-2190
Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday – Friday

HESSVILLE CIRCLE OF SERVICES

2835-165th St., Hammond, IN 46323
Phone: (219) 803-0659
Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Friday



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WICKER MEMORIAL PARK REPLACES TREES LOST TO EMERALD ASH BORER

Holes 4 and 5 at Wicker Memorial Park Golf Course are sporting dozens of young oak, elm, tulip, cypress and river birch trees.

The saplings were planted this spring to replace 99 ash trees felled by the dreaded emerald ash borer, a beetle native to China and eastern Russia that was unintentionally introduced in the United States in 2002.

Park Superintendent Brett Bierman said the township has received funds from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission to replace diseased trees, which are killed when the borer tunnels under the bark.

“All of the new trees that are being planted are native varieties, which aren’t susceptible to anything – yet,” Bierman said. “Those portions of the course look very different and will for some time.”

The trees, which were 80 years old, have been replaced by 6- to 8-foot slow-growing trees.

“It’s going to be years before they will be tall enough to provide the shade canopy and foliage our golfers are accustomed to,” he said.

This spring’s cool, wet weather has been perfect for the young saplings. Bierman said through June, the young trees will be watered regularly. If the summer becomes particularly hot and dry, additional waterings will be scheduled through July and August as well.

Another 450 trees will be removed over several years, followed by mass plantings each May.

“We have a great deal of work ahead of us and we don’t mind that,” he said. “It has been heartbreaking to see so many of our mature trees destroyed from the top down in such a relatively short amount of time.” ▲



LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

Habitat for Humanity partnership offers unique housing opportunity for veterans

Partnerships.

If you have been reading the Navigator in recent months, you know that we have talked increasingly about new partnerships to enhance educational opportunities, create new life-enhancing programs as well as cost savings to stretch township dollars.

Partnerships are a lot of work but we have found value for North Township in each and every one. It wasn’t always that way.

When I became trustee, we did what we could and every other social provider did their best, too. The result was a fragmented system that wasn’t easy for our residents who needed to tap into more than one social service provider to help them get through the tough times.

We also found it was harder for those we served to climb out of financial difficulties. Our partnerships are changing that.

Recent efforts have given our residents new opportunities for education that provides decent wages, a steady paycheck and a better quality of life.

Today, I want to introduce you to a new partnership between the township, the NW Indiana Veteran’s Action Council and Habitat for Humanity that is providing a unique opportunity for veterans.

By November, we are planning to have the first Habitat home in the region built for a veteran. Lake County has 37,000 veterans, one-third of whom have inadequate housing. We are halfway to our goal of raising \$90,000 and are taking applications from veterans, or spouses of veterans who have died. If the veteran is disabled, we will ensure the home is equipped to meet his or her special needs. If you qualify, please contact Chief Deputy Jane Dudley at (219) 932-2530 ext. 313.

In tandem with that project, the township is working with Habitat to restore a long-abandoned Hessville home, and ultimately, pride in the community. We are a proud partner in these very important initiatives.

FRANK J. MRVAN
 North Township Trustee

SUMMER IN THE PARK

Wicker Memorial Park features an 18-hole golf course, 3 miles of scenic trails, volleyball/tennis courts, a dog run, playground, picnic areas, shelters, banquet facilities and a one-of-a-kind Splash Pad for summer family fun.

SPLASH PAD

If you are looking for a cool place on a hot summer's day, check out Wicker Memorial Park's Splash Pad. This 8,500-square-foot water playground, which boasts more than 30 spray features, has become one of the region's most popular water attractions. It's open seven days a week during the summer. For hours and admission, please visit wickermemorialpark.com or call (219) 838-3420.

SCENIC 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 tour of the Splash Pad, volleyball courts and playground. All trails are paved and open from dawn to dusk.

DOG RUN

Conveniently located along Indianapolis Boulevard, the Dog Run is open every day dawn to dusk. Let your dog enjoy the freedom of being a dog, while playing with other canines and pet enthusiasts.

GOLF COURSE

If you're looking for a challenging and beautifully maintained 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 summer rates or to schedule a tee time, call the Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809.

BIKE RENTALS

Our bikes are a great way to get around the park or enjoy the trails. Rentals are available in a variety of styles and sizes for adults and children. The cost is \$7 for one hour or \$10 for two hours. A valid driver's license is required.

TENNIS AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS

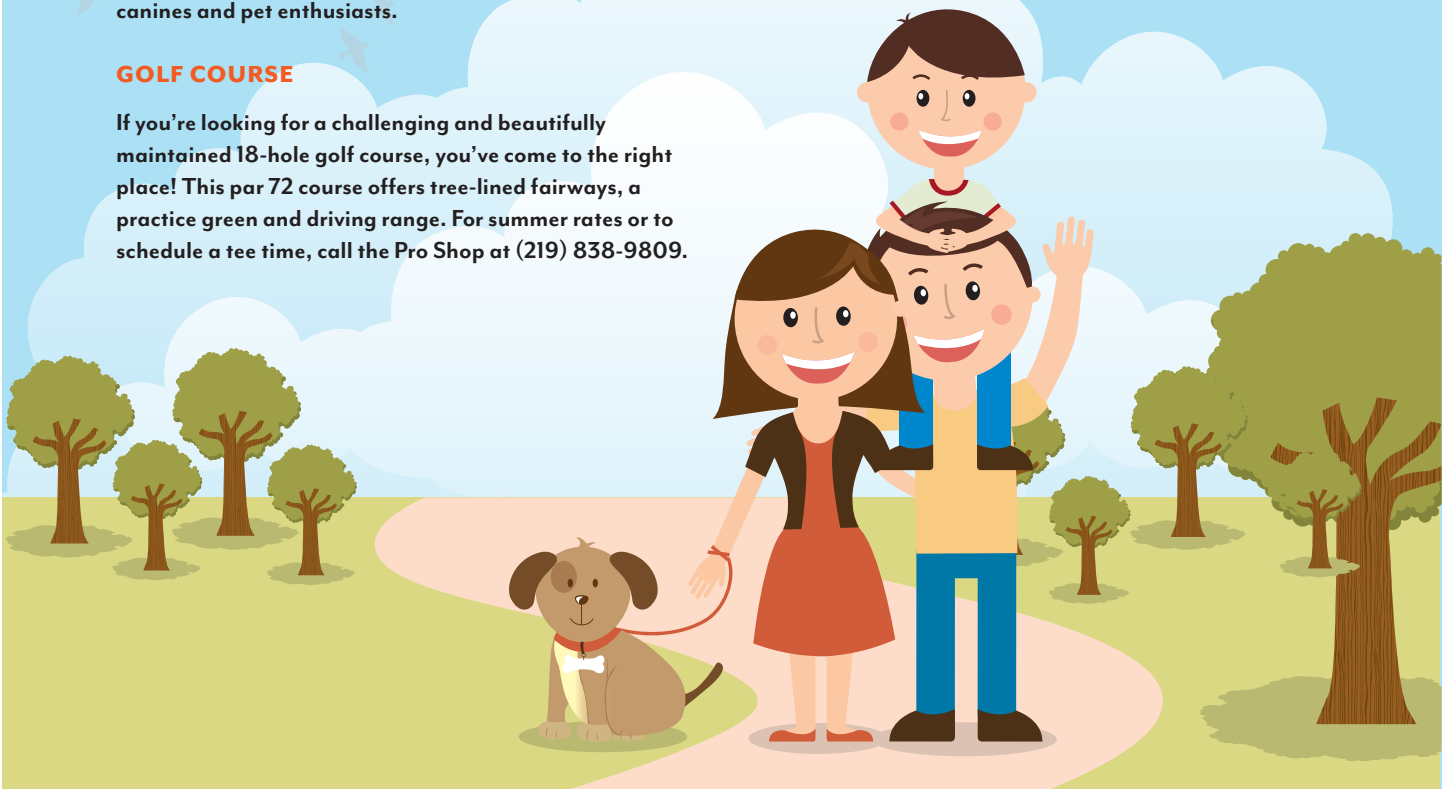
The park features five tennis courts and three volleyball courts for the community to enjoy.

PICNIC AREAS AND SHELTERS

Picnic areas, shelters and pavilion are available for rental from Memorial day through Labor Day. For a reservation or more information, please call (219) 838-3420.

BANQUET FACILITIES

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



SOUNDS OF SUMMER



WICKER MEMORIAL PARK CONCERT SERIES

WHEN: Doors open 7 p.m.
Showtime is 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center Gazebo,
2215 Ridge Road, Highland

TICKETS: \$5 per person – ages 21 and over

NOTE: No coolers allowed.

MORE INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 327
or visit www.WICKERMEMORIALPARK.com.

JUNE 19

FINAL SAY

Kick off summer with the greatest hits from the '80s, '90s and today! You've got the final say!

INFO: www.finalsay.com

JUNE 26

THE HAT GUYS

The summer party continues with your favorite modern and classic hits and a dazzling fireworks display.

INFO: www.thehatguys.com

JULY 10

BAM

From rock and pop to hip-hop and funk, BAM brings high energy. You won't believe the nonstop party!

INFO: facebook.com/bamandrocks

JULY 17

GONE 2 PARADISE

Get your Margaritaville on with the ultimate Jimmy Buffett experience. Tropical shirts and flip flops optional.

INFO: www.gone2paradise.net

JULY 24

DICK DIAMOND & THE DUSTERS

Get your groove on with Dick and his backup band of eccentric and over-the-top '70s characters.

INFO: www.dickdiamond.net

JULY 31

KASHMIR

This Led Zeppelin experience comes alive with costumes, special effects and the sounds of Zeppelin!

INFO: www.kashmirchicago.com

AUGUST 7

ECHOES OF POMPEII

Check out one of the hottest Pink Floyd tribute bands in the Midwest, complete with light show!

INFO: www.echoesofpompeii.net

AUGUST 14

ALLEN WRONKO

Join one of the hottest modern country bands, featuring hits from top artists like Jason Aldean and Keith Urban.

INFO: www.allenwronkoband.com

SEPTEMBER 11

VISIONS OF SANTANA

Celebrate Mexican Independence Day with Afro-Latin-blues-rock fusion to the modern sounds of Santana.

INFO: facebook.com/visionsofsantana

FOOD • DRINKS • LIVE ENTERTAINMENT UNDER THE STARS

Sensational Summer

SUMMER DAY CAMP

This summer day camp combines fun, learning and exercise in a structured environment for children ages 6 to 12. Price includes two snacks per day, access to our splash pad, field trips and all craft materials.

SESSION 1: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 9-27

SESSION 2: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 7-25

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland

FEE: \$300 per 3-week session or \$550 for the entire summer.

OVERNIGHT CAMPOUT

Grab the family, your tents and head to the park for an overnight campout. Activities include a scavenger hunt, games, campfire songs and a movie.

WHEN: 7 p.m. July 11 to 9 a.m. July 12

WHERE: Wicker Park Pavilion, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland

FEE: \$5 per tent - bring your own

INFO: For more information on these park activities, please call Activities Director Kelly Bridges at (219) 932-2530, ext. 331 or visit www.northtownshiptrustee.com.

MOVIES IN THE PARK

Join us for an evening in the park. Sit back, relax and watch cinema on the big screen. Participants are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair for comfortable seating.

JUNE 20

"Singing in the Rain"

JULY 18

"Mary Poppins"

AUGUST 15

"My Fair Lady"

WHEN: Starting at dusk

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland

SPECIAL NEEDS DAY

Take a break from the summer heat at our Splash Pad - reserved for those with special needs and abilities.

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 10 and August 12

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Splash Pad, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland



SENIOR MOTOWN DANCE

Join us for a non-stop afternoon of high-energy entertainment that showcases Motown's glory days with the music of Marvin Gaye, the Four Tops, Diana Ross, The Temptations and countless others.

WHEN: noon to 3 p.m. July 22

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: \$8 includes entertainment and table snacks

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!

JUNE TRIP: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 30

JULY TRIP: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 29

AUGUST TRIP: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. August 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 \$10 food credit.

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

FRANK SINATRA TRIBUTE

Relive the good times with Dave Halston, Chicago's leading Frank Sinatra crooner. This exciting afternoon includes dinner and entertainment.

WHEN: 11:30 to 4 p.m. Thursday, August 21

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: \$30 per person includes dinner featuring mixed green salad, pot roast, mashed sweet potatoes, vegetable medley, homemade bread, hot apple pie ala mode, iced tea and coffee.

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.

JUNE 18 MENU: Chicken salad, cottage cheese, tomato, beets, Hawaiian rolls and fresh strawberries.

JULY 16 MENU: Mixed green salad, pot roast with boiled potatoes and carrots, apple pie and ice cream.

AUGUST 20 MENU: Taco salad with beef, lettuce, tomato, cheese and sour cream. Nacho's, salsa and lime Jell-o will also be served.

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



Pints in the Park

CRAFT BEER • FANTASTIC FOOD • LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Sample craft beers from 3 to 8 p.m. Saturday, August 23,
at Wicker Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland.
The event includes fabulous food and live entertainment.
Receive five-star perks for \$75 with our VIP admission from
3 to 8 p.m. General admission is \$45 from 4 to 8 p.m.

FOR MORE INFO: CALL 219.923.3830

Frank J. Mrvan



NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

★ ★ *American Cancer Society Fund-raiser* ★ ★

RUN 4 FREEDOM

WICKER PARK PAVILION

2215 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND

ENTRY INCLUDES FREE ADMISSION
TO OUR SUMMER CONCERT!

JUNE 26

Registration begins at 4:30

5K RACE STARTS 6 PM

Early registration: \$20 Race day: \$25

www.NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.com