

# North Township NAVIGATOR

YOUR GUIDE TO NEWS AND SERVICES IN EAST CHICAGO, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING • WINTER 2012

## DIAL-A-RIDE TO EXPAND HOURS, FLEET TO MEET RIDERSHIP NEED

A doubling in size of North Township's Dial-a-Ride service is under way.

Another full-time driver began work in early December, which effectively added a fourth active bus to the fleet. Plans in the works will extend on-demand hours beginning Feb. 1 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"The stakes are very high," North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said. "Our goal is to have zero declines – meaning that everyone who calls us in need of a ride gets one."

By the middle of next year, Dial-a-Ride should have another four buses on the road. The fleet expansion was made possible when the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission extended \$1.8 million in federal air quality funds to the township to continue

transit after the easygo Lake Transit bus system ceased operations last summer.

Mrvan said he and his staff are working overtime to ensure that the para-transit population – the blind, disabled, deaf and elderly – will have their needs met.

"We are doing everything we can to run a perfect system to the best of our ability," Mrvan said. "We are creating a system that is efficient, effective and transparent and we are inviting ADA advocacy groups to the table to help determine how the system will ultimately look going forward." ▲

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

## COMMUNITY-POWERED DISASTER RECOVERY

A computer program designed to expedite the coordination of people and necessary services during a disaster will be operational Jan. 1.

North Township Chief Deputy Jane Dudley, one of the disaster relief coordinators, said she is in the process of contacting emergency service agencies and inputting data about the organization and specific relief it can offer.

Examples of the coordinated relief include matching a family that lost everything in a fire with an agency that has furniture to donate.

"We are basically creating a Craig's list for disasters," she said. "Our goal right now is to get as many organizations on board and understanding what we are doing. That way, when we have a disaster, we'll all be ready." ▲



### EMERGENCY RELIEF WEBSITE

The North Township Emergency website – <https://northtownship.recovers.org> – is a community-powered resource for the North Township communities of East Chicago, Hammond, Whiting, Highland and Munster. Once registered, North Township residents can volunteer, donate or request aid.

### SHOP WITH A COP

Ten lucky North Township children had the time of their lives when they were selected to Shop With a Cop Dec. 8. Each school age child was paired with an officer from the Lake County Police Association and given \$100 to spend. Children were allowed to pick out a game or toy valued at \$35 and then allowed to spend the balance on necessities, like shoes, socks and clothing. Highlighting the day was lunch at Outback Steakhouse, where employees volunteer their time to cook and serve during a time when the restaurant is closed to the public.

### SERVICES JOIN CIRCLE

Just six months after Circle of Services opened to the Hessville community, the center is bustling and organizations that provide additional social services are working to establish themselves there. The goal is to continue adding social services to the community center through additional providers that locate there. Coordinator Cindy Rivera said there is room for three or four more agencies in addition to; Geminus, Devoted2Healing, Inc., The Young Fatherhood/Re-entry program, and Social Security one day a week.

### COAT DRIVE A SUCCESS!

After collecting gently used coats/jackets and buying new ones with donated funds, North Township Trustee and Kusiak Care's fifth annual coat drive distributed 900 coats to help residents stay warm this winter. The brainchild of David Kusiak and his wife, Lisa, the two have spearheaded the annual coat drive since 2007. "This year, we had a line that started at the (Wicker Park) pavilion and snaked halfway to the gate," Lisa Kusiak said. "People have been so very generous and really want to help."

**INFO:** There are a limited number of coats still available. If you are in need, please call the trustee's office at (219) 932-2530.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT [NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM](http://NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM).



**FRANK MRVAN**  
 North Township Trustee  
 (219) 932-2530  
 fjmrvan@comcast.net



**LORI POLGAR**  
 Director of Operations  
 (219) 932-2530, ext. 324  
 polgarl@ntto.net



**RICHARD J. NOVAK**  
 Board member  
 novakr@ntto.net



**RALPH FLORES JR.**  
 Board member  
 floresr@ntto.net



**PETE AUKSEL**  
 Board member  
 auksel@ntto.net

### EAST CHICAGO OFFICE

2105 Broadway, East Chicago, IN 46312  
**Phone:** (219) 398-2435 **Fax:** (219) 397-2190  
**Office Hours:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Tuesday through Friday; closed Mondays.

### HAMMOND OFFICE

5947 Hohman Ave., Hammond, IN 46320  
**Phone:** (219) 932-2530 **Fax:** (219) 937-4412  
**Office Hours:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Monday through Thursday; closed Fridays

### HESSVILLE OFFICE

Circle of Services, 2835-165th St.  
 Hammond, IN 46323  
**Phone:** (219) 803.0659  
**Office Hours:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Monday through Friday

### NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:  
[northtownship@theideafactory.us.com](mailto:northtownship@theideafactory.us.com)

The Navigator is produced by:  
**The Idea Factory** • (219) 779.9041  
[www.theideafactory.us.com](http://www.theideafactory.us.com)

Printed by Miss Print  
 8244 Calumet Avenue  
 Munster, IN 46321



## FOR 88-YEAR-OLD PRO SHOP WORKER, EVERY DAY IS PAR FOR THE COURSE

Long before the sun peeks up over the eastern horizon, Mark Corey is brewing the coffee and getting ready to start his work day at the Wicker Memorial Park Pro Shop.

Many think it's remarkable that Corey, who is well past the typical age of retirement, remains on the job. Others think it's extraordinary that he works every day of the year – and, yes, that includes holidays and weekends – and has been doing it for the last 25 years.

Corey, who will be a spry 88 in February, sees it simply as doing what he loves most.

“When I sold the bakery, I had nothing to do and it was driving me nuts,” said Corey, as he prepared for the Pro Shop’s Christmas party. “When I first started, I was parking carts and it worked itself into a full-time job – taking care of the old guys who golf here.”

The man who is quick to laugh and even quicker to smile, arrives every morning at 4:30 with doughnuts in hand.

No matter the season, temperature or humidity, Corey knows it won't be long before members of the park's golfing posse will be out in force. “Golfers are goofy,” he said. “Thanksgiving – they were here. They'll be here Christmas Day and New Year's, too.”

If there is too much frost on the greens in the winter or storms the rest of the year, the guys will sit down to a fast – or slow – game of cards. A couple of times a year, he has a pig roast. On St. Patrick's Day, the group celebrates with corned beef and cabbage.

“I've never played a game of golf in my life but I love it here,” Corey said. “I love meeting with the guys and taking care of the new people who come in. This job is what keeps me going.” ▲



**Mark Corey works every day of the year at the Wicker Park Pro Shop and has been doing it for 25 years.**



### LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

## As residents' needs change with the seasons, we're here to help with winter assistance plans

With a lifetime of living in Northwest Indiana under my belt, I am used to the seasons and actually welcome crisp temperatures, just as many of you do. It is a consistent reminder that the needs of our township residents change with the seasons.

We provide more assistance with utilities this time of year and work to make the season bright even if family resources are running low. We have tried to include resources in this issue of the North Township Navigator you can use – whether that is signing up for help in shoveling your walk when the snows finally come or you find your winter coat simply won't make it through another January and you missed this year's coat drive.

We have an initiative that has been in place about six months to help families keep their pets by providing food for them. Already, we provide about 1,200 pounds of pet food every month. The township's field investigators believe the actual need is more than double that amount and we continue to encourage donations of food and pet toys to supplement what we have.

I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I hope to see you at one of the many activities that will be happening in and around North Township this winter.

**FRANK J. MRVAN**  
 North Township Trustee



# WINTER IN THE PARK

A special kind of magic fills Wicker Park this time of year. Diehard walkers wrap their scarves a little tighter and quicken their paces when temperatures dip. Although you won't see snowy white egrets or the Great Blue heron until spring, the red-headed woodpeckers, blue jays and cardinals dazzle as they dart for food. Come. See for yourself what makes Wicker Park a special place.

## **GOLF COURSE NOW 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. Winter rates start at \$15 to ride 18 holes or \$10 to walk 18 holes. Cart covers are available for an additional \$10. For more information or to schedule a tee time, call the Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809.

## **WINTER SNOW TRAILS**

The 2.5-mile trail that runs along the perimeter of the park is perfect for the avid walker and runner. The half-mile inner trail takes you on a scenic tour of the park 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. It has been so well used, the township is securing funding to double its size. Look for improvements in 2013!

## **BANQUET FACILITIES**

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



# Around the Township

## Highland

### NEW YEAR'S FIREWORKS

Ring in the new year with fireworks at Main Square Park on New Year's Eve. Hot chocolate will be served.

**WHEN:** Midnight December 31

**WHERE:** Main Square Park

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-0114 or visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org).

## Hammond

### A CHRISTMAS STORY

This annual exhibit features Macy's window displays depicting scenes from "A Christmas Story." Kids also can make crafts and write letters to Santa.

**WHEN:** Now through January 6

**WHERE:** Indiana Welcome Museum, 7770 Corrine Drive, Hammond

**INFO:** Call (800) ALL-LAKE or visit [www.southshorecva.com](http://www.southshorecva.com).

## Munster

### WINTER CRAFT FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at this winter event, which features homemade arts and crafts as well as business vendors.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. February 16

**WHERE:** Munster High School

**INFO:** Call (219) 836-7275.



## East Chicago

### PICTURES WITH SANTA

All North Township parents, grandparents and guardians are invited to bring your little ones for a free photo with Santa! One photo per family please. Photos will be available for pickup December 20 or mailed to you.

**WHEN:** 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. December 20

**WHERE:** North Township Trustee's East Chicago office, 2105 Broadway

**INFO:** Call (219) 398-2435.

## Whiting

### OPEN BOWLING

Looking for indoor fun during the cold and snowy months? The Whiting Community center has a great, 12-lane bowling alley featuring open bowling.

**WHEN:** 3:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday

**WHERE:** Whiting Community Center, 1938 Clark St.

**FEE:** Children 17 and under are \$1.50, adults \$2, seniors and league members \$1.25. Shoe Rental is \$1.25. Every Tuesday is Dollar Bowling day: \$1 per game and \$1 shoe rental.

**INFO:** Call the Whiting Community Center at (219)659-0860.

## SWEETHEART'S DANCE

Join us for a heart-felt evening of food, fun, family and friends at the North Township Friends and Family Sweetheart's Dance. The event features dancing, food and entertainment, including games, prizes, crafts and face painting!

**WHEN:** 4 to 7 p.m. February 9

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

**FEE:** \$5 per couple, \$3 each additional child.

Admission is paid at the door and includes entertainment and food – two slices of pizza, one drink and one cupcake per person.

**RESERVATIONS:** For more information or to make reservations, call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331

## FEBRUARY SENIOR LUNCHEON

The luncheon features vegetable soup, baked fish, scalloped potatoes, green beans and tapioca pudding. Includes bread and butter, coffee or hot tea.

**WHEN:** Noon February 13. Doors open at 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

**FEE:** Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for \$5.

**RESERVATIONS:** For more information or to make reservations, call (219) 932-2530 and Press 2

## SENIOR VALENTINE'S DANCE

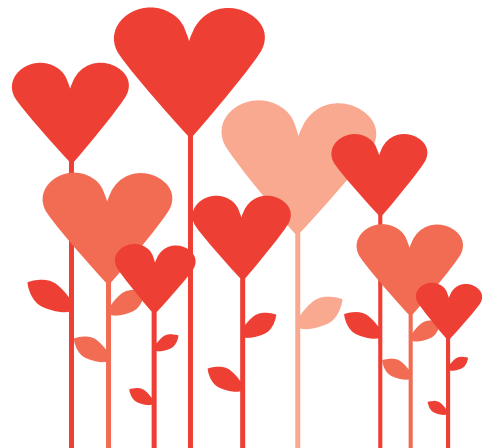
Peter Oprisko wows audiences across the country and for an afternoon, he's all ours. Listen to this Whiting native's take on treasured pop and jazz as we welcome Valentine's Day – North Township style. After a special senior Valentine's meal, gifts will be distributed from 1:30 to 2 p.m. and Oprisko will perform from 2 to 4 p.m.

**WHEN:** 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. February 12. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Dinners served at 12:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

**FEE:** Reservations include a special Valentine's Day meal and entertainment. The menu and cost will be announced after January 1.

**RESERVATIONS:** For more information or to make reservations, please call Senior Event Coordinator Eleanor Uribe at (219) 313-3934 or email [uribe@ntto.net](mailto:uribe@ntto.net).





# WINTER ASSISTANCE

## ENERGIZING INDIANA PROGRAM HELPS RESIDENTS SAVE ON WINTER UTILITIES

A statewide program is improving home comfort and efficiency and providing additional funds for energy assistance in North Township.

Known as Energizing Indiana, the program relies on home energy assessments and energy advisers, who will lead you through the process to produce long-term, cost-effective energy savings. Advisers also assess heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems to determine if they are operating efficiently.

They may also inspect a home's air duct sealing and insulation levels to evaluate your home's energy consumption and efficiency.

The Home Energy Assessment may include replacing traditional light bulbs, installing low-flow faucet aerators /shower heads and providing water heater insulation.

- ❖ Every assessment will generate a comprehensive report detailing what can be done to save energy.
- ❖ Eligible dwellings must be 10 years or older and have not been assessed in the last three years.
- ❖ Weatherization services are available for income-qualified homeowners.

**REGISTRATION:** Call the Trustee's office at (219) 932-2530.

## THERE'S ASSISTANCE FOR PETS, TOO!

When Rick Garcia, North Township's disaster relief and employment coordinator, saw families scrimping on meals so they could feed their pets, he knew he needed to find help.

He found the solution during a chance meeting with Cheryl Plomann at a local pet store. As great fortune would have it, Plomann is the founder of Buddies Pet Pantry, a food pantry for all manner of family pets.

A deal was struck and six months later, North Township families receive about 1,200 pounds of pet food a month, compliments of the Chesterton charity.

"Our mission is to keep families and their pets together," Plomann said. "North Township is one of our biggest clients and we are happy to help."

The food is available to North Township residents who meet the income criteria.

**INFO:** To find out if you qualify, call a township case manager at (219) 932-2530. If you would like to donate cash, pet food or toys, call (219) 728-1401 or email buddiespetpantry@yahoo.com. Donations are also accepted at Petco in Highland and Munster Animal Hospital.

## WINTERIZATION KITS

The North Township Trustee's office has vouchers to local Menard's stores to keep winter's chill out of your home. Eligible residents can use one \$40 voucher per month – December through February – to purchase items that help conserve energy and heat. Most popular are window insulation kits and draft stoppers. The township typically distributes 500 to 600 vouchers per month.

**INFO:** Eligibility is based on income but North Township Chief Deputy Jane Dudley said if you need help and can't afford insulating items on your own, call the township at (219) 932-2530.

## SHOVELING ASSISTANCE

North Township is looking to match seniors who are going to need help digging out this winter, with volunteers, who have a shovel or snowblower and want to help. During periods of snowy and icy weather, the township will implement an automated call system to ensure those who need to get out of their homes will be able to do so.

**INFO:** If you need assistance or want to volunteer, please call the Snow Hotline at (219) 256-5773.

## FOOD & CLOTHING HELP

Don't forget this winter that the North Township Service Providers Directory features organizations, churches and departments within local government that provide low- or no-cost assistance for food, clothing, emergency shelter, prescriptions, child care and gas vouchers. You can pick up a copy at the Trustee's Hammond and East Chicago offices or access it online at [www.northtownshiptrustee.com](http://www.northtownshiptrustee.com).



Frank J. Mrvan



**NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE**  
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE  
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT [NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM](http://NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM).



*Friends and family*

# SWEETHEART'S DANCE

4 - 7 PM • FEBRUARY 9

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK CLUBHOUSE  
2215 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND

**DANCING • FOOD • GAMES  
PRIZES • CRAFTS • FACE PAINTING**

WHO CAN ATTEND? ALL NORTH TOWNSHIP CHILDREN  
– AGES 4 THROUGH 12 – ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

ADMISSION: \$5 PER COUPLE, \$3 EACH ADDITIONAL CHILD.  
ADMISSION PAID AT THE DOOR AND INCLUDES FOOD.

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