

# CASCADE CONNECTIONS



A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Spring 2019

- + Community Cleanup Day
- + Spring Safety
- + Latest Events

# NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR



Most Michiganders have heard the expression about our state's two seasons — winter and road construction. Recently, we have experienced both with the February storms and ongoing major MDOT project on the Beltline and I-196 interchange.

With spring approaching, we will hope to leave the snow, ice and sleet behind and head into road construction season in Cascade Township. This marks the second year of a major commitment by the Township to partner with the Kent County Road Commission to improve and maintain our local roads.

Last year, nearly 12 miles of residential Cascade roads were resurfaced with a \$1.5 million investment by the Township Board that was matched by the KCRC for a total investment of \$3 million. 2018 also saw more than six miles of local Cascade roads chip sealed, which helps maintain and extend their years of use. The chip seal treatment was entirely funded by the KCRC.

As we look forward to the 2019 construction season, the Township Board has partnered again with the KCRC on another \$3 million residential road resurfacing project in Cascade. Over the next two years, additional work is planned for the roads in the Centennial Office Park and residential areas along with the 33rd Street industrial and office areas.

This major commitment and partnership made by the Township Board with the Kent County Road Commission will help improve the safety and quality of the local roads for those living in and visiting Cascade Township.



## Township Contacts

### Office Hours

Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Supervisor

Rob Beahan; 949.1500  
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

### Clerk

Sue Slater; 949.1508  
sslater@cascadetwp.com

### Treasurer

Ken Peirce; 949.6944  
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

### Trustees

Jim Koessel  
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com  
Jack Lewis  
jlewis@cascadetwp.com  
Tom McDonald  
tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com  
John Shipley  
jshipley@cascadetwp.com

### Manager

Ben Swayze; 949.1500  
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

### Assessing

Roger McCarty; 949.6176  
roger@cascadetwp.com

### Building Inspections

Brian Wilson; 949.3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

### Community Development

Steve Peterson; 949.0224  
speterson@cascadetwp.com

### Fire

Adam Magers; 949.1320  
amagers@cascadetwp.com

### Sheriff/Non-Emergency

632.6100

[cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com)





## FROM THE CLERK

*Sue Slater*

In a recent unanimous decision, the Township Board approved the expansion of the 30th Street Cemetery to meet the needs of our growing township.

Of our three cemeteries, 30th Street is the only one with vacant land available for expansion. Established in 1854, the cemetery was the only developed property on that hill and the vacant portion has been purposefully set aside with the intention to grow along with the community. Since its establishment, only two new sections within the original designated area have been developed.

There are approximately 650 grave spaces now available – many of which are single spaces with no adjacent companion plot. Two grave spaces are available to Cascade residents at the time of need.

The cemetery has averaged 50 to 60 burials each year. At this rate, we will run out of room in approximately six to eight years. However, based on the engineer's calculations, this expansion will add 2,500 spaces, extending availability for another 25 to 40 years.

Depending on weather and the tree removal schedule, construction is expected to begin later this year.

---

## CLEANUP DAY

As you begin your spring cleaning, keep in mind a community cleanup day will be held on Saturday, May 18 at the Forest Hills Central Middle School, 5810 Ada Dr. SE, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The event is for residents of Ada and Cascade townships and identification is required. Please note: those living in Grand Rapids Township with an Ada mailing address do not qualify.

### Services on site:

- **Republic Services:** For general trash, junk, appliances and scrap metal.
- **Salvation Army:** For used or new household items such as furniture, kitchen items and clothes. Donation receipts will be available.
- **Shred-It:** For shedding of office paper, personal files and other documents. Up to 100 pounds of personal sensitive documents.
- **Comprenew:** For electronic items such as computers, televisions, small appliances, cell phones and household batteries.

Hazardous materials such as paint (open and dried paint cans are OK), cleaners, batteries and yard waste will be not accepted.

Please note, you can take advantage of our leaf pickup program April 1 - 29. The yard waste dumpster will also be behind the Thornhills Fire Station from April 26 - 28. More information at [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com).

Ada Township is coordinating the Cleanup Day. For questions, call them at **616.676.9191 ext. 29**.

# new tools for **SHOPPING, DINING AND RECREATING IN CASCADE**



check it out and, if the businesses you shop at or frequent are not featured on the website, feel free to remind them to take advantage of this tool.

**Business Guide:** The second edition of the Business Guide has been distributed to area hotels, sports facilities and event venues. We will update the business guide a couple times a year, adding new businesses as they sign up and additional information that might be important to residents and visitors. The guide also features events taking place in Cascade Township. Feel free to stop in the Township office and pick up one up for your guests. The third edition of the Business Guide will be printed soon.

**C**ascade's Economic Development Department strives to attract and retain businesses, while maintaining a healthy business environment that enhances the lives of residents and allows businesses to thrive.

As part of that strategy, Cascade DDA has introduced online tools for residents and visitors to take advantage of, providing easy access to information about businesses, activities and events in the community.

**MadeinCascade.org:** This website allows businesses to provide their company's information, hours of operation, events and news. Please

While these tools are ready to be used, it's important to note they are new and still in the development phase. As more information becomes available and businesses apply to be included, we will continue to improve these resources to ensure residents and visitors can take advantage of the exciting things happening in Cascade Township.

For more information, visit **[madeincascade.org](http://madeincascade.org)**.

## new online options for **BUILDING PERMITS**

The building department has expanded its online services to include building permit applications. You can fill out an application and upload necessary documents from the web portal accessed via [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com).

For the tech-savvy, we now have a web app available for iOS and Android devices by searching "cascade inspections." The app is still under development, but includes convenient links to the website, online services and important code information.

Our professional inspectors are ready to make sure your project is safe and meets the requirements of the Michigan Residential Code. We can be reached at **616.949.3765** or stop by our new location:

3040 Charlevoix Dr. SE, Suite 175  
Mon – Thurs 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Fri 7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

From the

# HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**W**ithin the archive boxes of the Cascade Historical Society, William Wheeler Denison has a bulky folder. His story particularly intrigued me as he was a Civil War Veteran in his adulthood, but died less than five years after the war.

We deduced Denison was born in New York in 1830 to G.H. and Christianna Denison, who also had five other children. We found Denison was highly educated, finishing school in 1850 when he was just 20 years old.

After working in a lab and then as an artist, Denison enlisted in the Union Army on April 24, 1861. He was placed with the Wisconsin 1st Heavy Artillery Division Company

A, being promoted a little over a year later to Army Corporal.

During his time in the army, he wrote letters to his acquaintances, some stored in the National Archive. In a letter dated September 17, 1862, Denison writes:

*“Since I last wrote you there has been many changes in the aspect of affairs, and for some time it looked dark, very dark, and gloomy, and almost made one feel like despairing [sic] for the success of our army to see the remains of the army.”*

The records in the Cascade Historical Society provide pieces of Mr. Denison’s life story, but more intriguing questions remain.

Presumably his death resulted from a physical illness contracted during the Civil War. Would his death be counted in the war’s death toll, or not since his death did not occur on a battlefield during the war? It is likely not, but still a question worth pursuing to find out more about his life and the lives of other Civil War veterans.

Cascade Historical Society meets the first Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the old Township Hall, 2839 Thornapple River Drive. Read the full story and find more information at [yourhistoryonline.com](http://yourhistoryonline.com).

*Written by Liesl Bruxvoort, 2018 intern from Calvin College*

## events at KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY

### SUNDAY AFTERNOON LIVE

The library finishes off its Sunday Afternoon Live concert series for the 2018/2019 season with two exciting shows you won’t want to miss. On April 28 at 2 p.m., enjoy Latin sounds from Cabildo. On May 5 at 2 p.m., join us for the final concert as Irish music trio One for the Foxes takes the stage.

### MONEY SMART WEEK: TEEN GAME NIGHT AND PIZZA PARTY

Everyone needs some practice at adulting! Come to the library on Wednesday, April 17 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. for teen game night and pizza party. Prepare for your future with an action-packed board game – will you go broke early or make smart financial decisions and come out on top? Teens will work together choosing their collective financial adventure as they navigate career choices, debt and retirement.

### SPRING BREAK AT THE LIBRARY

Planning a staycation for spring break? Stop by the Cascade branch of the Kent District Library the first week in April for some great family activities.

- April 2 and April 3 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. – Disney movie marathon
- April 4 from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. – Plant a seed! Make a rainbow! Celebrate the spring season with exploratory play, simple experiments and hands-on science and math activities for children pre-school and up
- April 5 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. – KDL Lab with Snap Circuits® and Lincoln Logs®

For more information about these and all events at the Cascade Branch of Kent District Library, visit [KDL.org](http://KDL.org).

# A note from Deputy Toonstra



As we prepare to enter the warmer months, I would like to take a minute to reflect on traffic. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, keeps annual statistics on vehicle collisions and reported:

- Nearly 7.3 million traffic crashes were reported to police nationwide in 2016, the most recent year available
- Of those crashes, more than 3.1 million resulted in injury, with 37,461 fatalities occurring
- Last year, Kent County's East Precinct (Ada, Cascade and Grand Rapids townships) had 1,533 reported crashes with four fatalities

I regularly receive calls and emails regarding traffic complaints throughout the East Precinct. These complaints revolve mostly around speed, stop sign violations and school bus passing. Most of the complaints are in residential neighborhoods.

When I conduct selective enforcement in these areas, the most common excuse I receive from the drivers is "I'm in a hurry." It is important to remember that a vehicle has the same potential for serious damage as a dangerous weapon. When motorists drive too fast, or are not paying attention, the results can be deadly.

I want to challenge our community to be more mindful drivers. Please think twice before you race through a residential street or pass a stopped school bus with its flashers activated.

Avoid distractions by putting your cell phone away while driving. If you have a hard time avoiding the temptation of making calls while driving, place your cell phone in your glove box or trunk while driving. You should also always wear your seatbelt!

Remember, the consequences for unsafe driving can be far worse than just a citation from your friendly community officer. Drive safe and arrive alive.



community

## +EVENTS

### BOOK SALE

MARCH 16, 17 & 18

Saturday, 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. member only presale, sign up at the door; Sunday, 12 - 3 p.m.; Monday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. More than 10,000 books. Bargain bag of books \$10. All proceeds go to Cascade Library. [cascadefriends.org](http://cascadefriends.org)

### CASCADE DAM

#### DRAW DOWN

APRIL 11 - 14

Remember, the spring dam draw down will take place in April. Depending where you are located on the river, it can take up to 24 hours for the water level to drop. Make sure you plan accordingly to accomplish your tasks. [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com)

### VAI PURPLE 5K RUN

APRIL 27

Register for the fifth annual Consumers Credit Union Purple Community 5K at the Mary Free Bed YMCA. Please note, Burton Street will be closed from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Look for Purple Community on [vai.org](http://vai.org)

### HEALTHY LIVING

WED, MAY 22

This free event by Mercy Health doctors will take place from 12:30 - 4:30 p.m., with a keynote from Jennifer Feuerstein of AARP Michigan. There will be exhibitor booths, massages, screenings and door prizes. Forest Hills Fine Arts Center [enjoylearning.com](http://enjoylearning.com)

### GR TRIATHLON

JUNE 9

The GR Tri will return to the Cascade area for its ninth year. Race registration is now open and volunteer registration will open soon. Please be aware of road closures near Thornapple River on June 8 and 9. Questions? Contact Andy Vidro at 616.805.3059. [grandrapidstri.com](http://grandrapidstri.com)



## PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE exemption

**T**here is a significant tax break that residential property owners are benefiting from that they may not even realize they are receiving. The **PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION**, or PRE, has been around since 1994. Most property owners sign the form to apply for it among the many forms they sign at closing. The PRE gives a significant reduction on the homeowners' property taxes. If a property qualifies for the exemption, it is important to submit the exemption affidavit as the exemption is not automatically added to the property.

For purposes of this exemption, the principal residence is defined as the residential property you own and occupy as your primary residence. You spend the majority of your time at this location, it is where you are registered to vote, the address on your driver's license and on your tax return. These are examples of what you can show to demonstrate it is your principal residence.

The Principal Residence Exemption reduces your taxes. It does not change your assessment or taxable value. Properties with an exemption do not pay the School Operating Millage tax. This reduces the millage rate by 9 mills on the summer and 9 mills on the winter tax bills.

When a home becomes your primary residence, you should file a **HOMEOWNER'S PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION AFFIDAVIT** to obtain the exemption for the property. June 1st is the deadline to own and occupy the home to be eligible to claim the exemption for the entire current year. Property owners who move in after June 1st and before November 1st will have their exemption start on the Winter tax bill. Property owners who occupy the home after November 1st will have their request activated in their name the following year. If the prior owner already has an exemption, it will stay active for the rest of the year. You do not need to reapply each year. The exemption continues until the property status changes.

When a property is no longer your principal residence, you must file a **REQUEST TO RESCIND HOMEOWNER'S PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION** form with the City or Township you had the exemption in. The exemption will be rescinded for the year following the change. For example, if a property stopped being your principal residence in 2018, the exemption will be removed for 2019. If you have moved to a new principal residence, you may be able to request a **CONDITIONAL**

**RESCISSION of PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION** to continue the PRE on the old home for up to three years while you sell it

The Principal Residence Exemption Program is a State program administered by the Michigan Department of Treasury. They audit the validity of the exemptions and may deny an exemption.

The tax bill will indicate the PRE percentage and show if school-operating millage is being charged. The **CHANGE OF ASSESSMENT NOTICE** you received in February shows the exemption status. You may also check on our website or stop in at the Assessor's Office.

Property owners who discover their exemption status is wrong may request the July or December Board of Review correct it. The Board may add an exemption for the current year and three prior years.

If you do not have a Principal Residence Exemption and believe you qualify, contact the Assessor's Office at **949.6176**.



## Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
(p) 616.949.1500  
(f) 616.949.3918  
cascadetwp.com

# Touching Lives

2018 Cascade Community Foundation Grant Recap

In 2018, the Cascade Community Foundation awarded ten grants. Organizations awarded were required to have a focus on community benefits, community enhancement or community activities and entertainment.

The Cascade Community Foundation is proud of the contributions grants make in Cascade and its ability to positively impact so many lives. For more information about the Cascade Community Foundation, please visit [cascadecommunityfoundation.com](http://cascadecommunityfoundation.com).

### 2018 AWARDEES

- The American Heart Association for a hands-only CPR kit for Forest Hills Central High School
- The Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan for one adult and two youth mental health first aid courses at the Mary Free Bed YMCA
- Senior Sing-Along for the fall season of Senior Sing-Along for Cascade seniors
- Junior Achievement for the Ada Junior Achievement program
- Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation for its junior wheelchair sports camps
- Cascade Charter Township for the Fourth of July parade and fireworks celebration
- Safe Haven Ministries to provide domestic abuse and prevention education to students at Forest Hills Public Schools
- Kent District Library for its Sunday Afternoon Live! concert series
- Cascade Metro Cruise Warm Up for the 2018 event
- Forest Hills Central High School for the 2018 DECA National Competition

