

# THE RILEY REPORT



## News of the Township,

by Supervisor Donna Bernardi



*Township Directory*

*Supervisor:*

*Donna Bernardi*

*Ph....597-4011*

*Fax....597-4011*

*Assessor:*

*Barb Rooney*

*Ph....568-8326*

*Highway Comm.:*

*Dave Diamond*

*Township Garage,  
Riley Road*

*Ph....568-6221*

*Clerk:*

*Karen Schnable*

*Ph....568-7335*

*Fax....568-7335*

*Trustees:*

*Thomas Hines*

*Cathy Johnson*

*Theodore Oberg*

*Rebecca White*

**Pace Bus Service Continues....** Riley Township residents will continue to have Pace Bus service through June 30, 2009 due to an agreement made between Riley Township, The City of Marengo and Marengo Township. The above parties will meet again to discuss possible expansion of services and cost fee implementation before any renewal of the Pace contract for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Currently the Pace Bus gives riders curbside pickup and drops off in the City of Marengo and the Village of Union, and/or anywhere in Marengo or Riley Townships. This is between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday. The last call for service is taken at 3:30 pm. The fee for riders is currently \$1.50 per trip with students, seniors, and disabled persons are only \$.75 each ride.

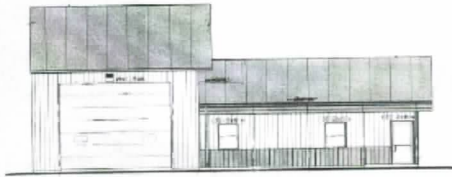
Call 1-800-273-5939 to schedule

your pickup. Service is on a first come, first serve basis and is available to "all" residents of Riley Township. Bus's are handicap accessible.

**Greibel Apply for .....**The only new "improvement request" in the Township is that of Judith Griebel. Ms Griebel has applied for an amendment of her Conditional Use Permit (CUP) asking The McHenry County Board "to allow indoor and outdoor storage of commercial equipment and vehicles" and "to allow for 4 accessory structures without having a principal structure". They are also asking for an "expansion of an existing building" on the same property. The property in question is located on Route 23, near Coral Road.

**The Consolidated Election...**this election is held in April, and will be for your Township officers. Sadly, I would like to share with you that our Assessor, Barbara Rooney has decided not to run for re-election for her current position as the Township Assessor. The Assessor's term ends in January of 2010, at which time Barb will leave her position. A candidate for the Assessor must hold a Certified Illinois Assessing Officer Designation from the Illinois Property Assessment Institute at the time of pulling for a Petition to Run for Office. With this job comes a lot of ridicule. A successful candidate must have a strong back bone along with a flare for communicating with the public. Everyone criticizes the Tax Assessor, as if the Assessor actually mandated what size home or how many out buildings a resident should have. The Assessor follows the tax laws of the County and State for which you live and basically just records what type of home and other permanent structures are on each parcel. They do not create the rules, but a good assessor enforces them. Simply put, without an assessor there are no tax dollars, without tax dollars there are no services, the more services you require, the more tax dollars are spent. Basically, the Assessor is the blood line of the township. Anyone interested in the position can call me, Donna Bernardi, your Township Supervisor, the Riley Township Clerk, Karen Schnable, or if more comfortable, the McHenry County Supervisor of Assessments Office to help answer questions.

## A Preview of the Riley Township Offices



Pictured is a sketch of the new Riley Township Office Building with an attached Road District Garage as it will look from Route 23. This building will be under construction this fall and hopefully the garage will be completed before winter.

As you may remember, the property was originally purchased with a home on the site. During a cold 2006 winter, the water pipes in the attic of the house loosened, spraying water throughout the house. The damage was so severe that it caused the existing building (house) to be uninhabitable.

The new construction project is being funded by the insurance payout, and from monies saved in the "Town Fund". As a result, no additional tax burden will be put on the residents of Riley Township for this project. The Office Building on the south side will house the offices of the Supervisor, Assessor and Clerk. This will give our elected officials an appropriate environment to meet with constituents and to attend to duties.

The garage will be heated to enable the Road District to do necessary maintenance and repairs on the equipment and the Highway Commissioner will have an office to do necessary paperwork and document storage for the Road District. An office building for the Township Supervisor, the Highway Commissioner, the Assessor, and the Clerk, along with their files, is not a luxury, but a necessity. This will be a centralized office that citizens can identify as a place to go when they have business with Riley Township. Throughout history, our local officials have always used their private homes as the place to do Township business. It is imperative that we get our Township records out of private citizens' basements and into a Township owned facility.

### **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AVAILABLE TO MCHENRY COUNTY TAX PAYERS provided by Tax Assessor Barbara Rooney**

**General Homestead Exemption** – For all owner-occupied residences. Reduction in equalized assessed value up to \$5,000.

**Home Improvement Exemption** – Reduction in assessed value increased up to \$25,000, caused by new improvement to existing structure.

**\*Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption** – A \$3,500 reduction in the assessed value of property for an owner of record or person with equitable interest in the property 65 years of age or older during the taxable year for which application is made.

**\*Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption** – Allows qualified senior citizens to elect to maintain the equalized assessed value of their home at the base year value and prevent any increase due to inflation. To qualify you must be 65 years of age or older during the taxable year and have a total household income of no more than \$50,000.

**\*Disabled Persons' Homestead Exemption** – This exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of your property by \$2,000 starting in tax year 2007, and may be claimed in addition to the Homestead Limited Exemption and the Senior Citizen's Homestead Exemptions.

**\*Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption** – This exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of your property of \$2,500 if your disability is service-connected and you are at least 50% disabled, but less than 75% disabled. If you are at least 75% disabled this exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of your property by \$5,000. This exemption is limited to residential property with an equalized assessed value of less than \$250,000.

**\*Returning Veterans' Homestead Exemption** – This exemption started in tax year 2007 and lowers the equalized assessed value of your property by \$5,000 in the year you return from active duty in armed conflict. Exemption limited to one year.

**\*Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral** – Allows qualified Seniors to defer all or part of property tax on their owner-occupied residence. It's a form of loan with a six percent interest rate which is repaid after the tax payer's death or at the time the property is sold. Must be 65 years of age by June 1, household income not more than \$50,000 and occupied the property for at least three years.

**Circuit Breaker** – Qualified applicants can receive a grant of \$1 to \$700. Available to persons over age 65 and those disabled over age 16. Household maximum income levels between \$21,218 to \$35,740 depend on number of persons in household. Contact McHenry County Clerk's Office (815) 334-4242

# THE REALITIES OF THE ROAD DISTRICT

BY: DAVE DIAMOND  
HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

By now all of us have heard the ramblings by many political entities of "your tax dollars at work". In one ear and out the other is often the time we give such discussions. Often times we think of government as bloated and reeling from too much excess revenue and inventing ways to spend it.

For many Townships across Illinois that is far from reality. In Riley Township, the Road District has to stretch each and every dollar because our funds are so limited. Each dollar is carefully spent to try to maximize the benefit to residents by improving and maintaining our 47 miles of roads. The Road District has no full time employees and our newest truck is a 1996 model. The deicing material loaded onto the trucks for winter maintenance is loaded with our 1965 Loader.

Riley Township receives the majority of its revenue through taxes assessed to property within the boundaries of the Township. A small percentage of revenue comes from permit fees, court fines and interest payments from our bank accounts. Another source of revenue is derived from the State Motor Fuel Taxes and this money is used for road paving projects to improve our network of roads. Other than those sources, that's it! In 2007 that total revenue amounted to \$205,465.73. Sounds like a fair amount doesn't it?



Well, to say the least, we get by. Immediately, after having our tax levy verified by the County Clerk, a percentage goes back to the Riley Township residents that live in the corporate limits of the City of Marengo. So that fifty cents per dollar paid in to the Road District goes right back to the City of Marengo, in 2007 it amounted to \$14,639. Then we are responsible for providing basic service to the residents and motorists who utilize our network of roads. We paid \$33,392 in labor costs in 2007 for our dedicated group of part time employees of the Road District. That is not even a full time salary for a single maintenance worker at any similar public works operation in this area. Fuel costs were over \$17,000, utilities over \$5,000. When it came time to patching and paving and adding road gravel to the roads nearly \$80,000.00 was spent on road maintenance. After trading off an older mowing tractor, we were able to purchase a new tractor for \$13,326. In the winter of 2007-08 we spent nearly \$10,000 on road salt. Last year road salt was slightly over \$40.00 per ton when purchased through the State purchasing program. The program usually allows smaller units of Government such as ours to participate with the State and other agencies in getting a better rate on materials and equipment. Salt prices, like many other items continue to rise and price increases are expected.

In August of 2008 we were informed that no salt bids were received for only McHenry and Lake out of the 102 counties in Illinois. The State Department of Central Management Services has told us that since there was so much demand for salt last winter, supplies were depleted and the producers feel they can not meet demand. For CMS to leave two counties in Illinois without any reasonable means of obtaining salt is an unacceptable answer. I have been working with our State Senator and various contacts at IDOT and other agencies. For now, the Highway Commissioners group in McHenry County has been exploring salt purchases on the secondary market and the prices quoted have been extremely higher. Three to four times last years price is the average. I am concerned about our ability to affordably purchase road salt and will continue to explore ways to economically maintain our roads this winter. At this point I want to urge everyone to slow down and be patient, we will do our best in providing snow removal service this winter. As the escalating prices of asphalt paving combined with salt and fuel deplete our available cash we are increasingly aware that our overall performance may suffer, we do however, remain committed to providing the best service your Riley Township Road District Tax dollars will allow. Please contact me anytime with questions you may have.

Supervisor Bernardi  
7918 Marjorie DR  
Marengo IL 60152

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Working for You



Your Riley Township Board of Trustees meet on the second Tuesday of every month. We meet at 7 pm in the Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

## SEEKING PHOTO HISTORY.....

The Riley Town Hall has been host to many special occasions and happy times in our township. Residents have often told stories about their parents being married in the Town Hall or meeting each other at a dance at "The Old Grange Hall". There is a lot of history here in Riley Township. I have heard talk that there was once a tavern and a gas station in the rural area's of the Township. Before we realize it, our common knowledge turns into someone's history.

I would like to call on residents of Riley Township to donate captioned photo's of happenings at the Town Hall or the Grange Hall. Whether they are recent or old, they will be appreciated. I would like to hang a couple of nice pictures in the Town Hall for viewing.

I do know that with every new generation that comes to life, a bit of our history becomes forgotten. That is why I am asking now before it becomes to late. Your photos could be mailed to the Riley Township Supervisor, Donna Bernardi, 7918 Marjorie Drive, Marengo IL 60152. If you have a question, leave a message on the recorder at phone number (815)597-4011, and I will return your call as soon as possible.

