



# THE BINGHAM FARMS POST

Summer, 2007

## COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW ORDINANCES

Ever wonder what those folks on the Village Council do? It's a lot. The trustees set policy, work hard to keep the Village finances in the black and adopt ordinances to keep the Village a desirable place to live. Sometimes, those decisions are not easily made.

One of the major concerns the trustees are facing is the economic condition of the state. The Village is not immune to economic downturns; neither are its residents.

In June, Council toughened up its Nuisance Ordinance with regard to property maintenance, more specifically grass cutting.

If grass height reaches 8 inches or more, the Village will notify the property owner and allow 10 days to remove the violation. If the grass is not cut within that time, the Village will hire a landscape company to go in and cut the lawn. The property owner may also be subject to a civil infraction ticket. In addition, the village will tack on an administrative fee for handling the situation. If that invoice is not paid, the amount will be placed as a lien on the property and be added to the tax bill.



Village ordinance requires all recreational vehicles such as motor homes, boats and trailers be stored in a garage or other storage building. Owners were allowed to have such vehicles stored outside for no more than 12 hours. The Council has amended the ordinance to extend this time to 48 hours.



The complete Village code book may be accessed online at [www.binghamfarms.org](http://www.binghamfarms.org).

## CABLE COMPETITION IS HERE

Move over Comcast. Direct competition is here. AT&T is now marketing U-verse, a 100% Internet Protocol (IP)-based video service to Bingham Farms residents. It integrates digital video and AT&T Yahoo! High Speed Internet.

AT&T has several different programming packages and pricing levels based on the number of channels selected.

For more information log on to <https://uverse1.att.com/launchAMSS.do>.

## VILLAGE ELECTION SET FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

Every two years Village voters go to the polls to elect representatives to the Village Council. This year there are three trustee seats that will be filled.

Five residents are running for these three seats. The candidates are incumbents Bill Gollnitz, Dave Leckie and Delores Tripp along with newcomers Steve Kates and Karl Ochadlaus.

The election will be held on September 11th at Bingham Farms Elementary School. The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.



Residents who wish to vote in this election and are not yet registered have until August 13, 2007 to do so. One may register to vote simply by going to Southfield Township located at 18550 W. Thirteen Mile Rd. or to any Secretary of State office.

Any voter over age 60 may apply for an absentee ballot by filling out an application. Call the Village office at 644-0044 and an application will be mailed to you. A voter over the age of 60 may also be placed on a permanent absentee voter list and each election an application for an absentee ballot will automatically be mailed to you.

Also, any voter (except those voting for the very first time) who is either incapacitated or will be out of town on election day may request an absentee ballot application.

One final note. The Village is always looking for good help. If you would like to be an election inspector, call the Village office. The hours may be long and the pay may not be great, but the feeling of helping out will be priceless.

## TAXES ARE DUE

### BINGHAM FARMS

**Due without penalty by August 31, 2007**

### SOUTHFIELD TWP.

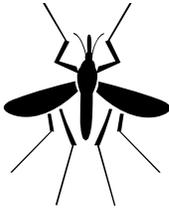
**Due without penalty by September 14, 2007**

## WEST NILE VIRUS STILL WORRISOME

Summer is in full swing with family picnics, barbecues and golf. The more time spent outside means the greater the chance of being bitten by those nasty mosquitoes. And with that, comes the threat of West Nile Virus.

The public is doing a great job taking the precautions necessary to limit the risk of succumbing to this potentially deadly virus. Only 4 human cases were reported in Oakland County last year and fortunately no fatalities.

People often ask why there is no wide-spread spraying. This is not recommended as these chemical assaults could damage other healthy eco-systems and create problems for people with respiratory problems. Some municipalities will do a general spraying of large open areas such as parks and golf courses but do not spray populated areas.



Oakland County continues to promote its Mosquito Smarts program, encouraging residents to take steps to prevent exposure to virus-bearing mosquitoes.

REDUCE areas where mosquitoes breed.

REPEL through the use of protective clothing and appropriate spray.

REPORT mosquito-breeding areas to proper personnel.

Here are a few recommendations that will help protect against the mosquito.

- \* Avoid areas where mosquitoes may be present (shaded and wooded areas).

- \* Limit outdoor activity at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

- \* Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants and use netting over strollers and playpens when outdoors.

- \* Do not use insect repellent on children younger than two years of age; use repellents containing not more than 10% DEET sparingly on children 2-6 years of age; insect repellents containing up to 35% DEET may be used on older children and adults before outdoor recreational activities.

- \* Eliminate standing water that collects in children's toys, buckets, tires, unused pools, boats and other containers.

- \* Maintain window and door screening to keep mosquitoes out of homes.

- \* Clean gutters.

- \* Remove debris that can trap water such as old tires, paint cans and empty flower pots.



## PERMITS REQUIRED

**Rental Permits** are required when a property owner decides to rent his home. This permit provides the Village with contact information for the tenant and the property owner. This information is crucial in an emergency.

The permit also requires that a rental property be inspected prior to occupancy to make sure the property is in compliance with building codes. Any necessary repairs must be performed by a licensed contractor and be completed prior to a tenant assuming occupancy.



The cost of the permit is \$60. The City of Southfield, which performs all building inspections for the Village, also has a fee for the inspection.

**Driveway Permits** should be pulled at the Village office for any driveway work, including sealcoating. The fee is \$25.00. While most contractors are reliable, there are some who carelessly damage village roads. The permit provides contractor contact information.



The bond requirement has been suspended until October, 2007 as the Village undertakes major road repairs.

**Building permits** should be acquired for all electrical and plumbing work. These permits are pulled from the City of Southfield and permit fees are paid to the City.



Work performed on the outside of a home may require permits from the Village and may require approval from the Design Review Board. This includes additions, decks and patios.

When in doubt, just call the Village office. Having all the permits and approvals up front will avoid unnecessary delays.

**Tree permits** are required if a homeowner intends to cut down more than two healthy trees in a year. This tree ordinance was adopted in 2003 to prevent clear-cutting of land. It is an effort to protect the natural beauty of the Village.



A permit is not required to cut down diseased, dead or dying trees.

It's always prudent to check with the Village office should there be any question.

## **LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*Mary Jane Bauer*

Summer is here and we love driving in our Village with the windows rolled down, but we notice our car has a tendency to go faster than 25 MPH and wants to slide through stop signs. We hope that your car doesn't suffer from this too. We are working very hard with our car to overcome these bad habits. Our policemen tell us that they are embarrassed because Bingham Farms residents get most of the tickets.

Although the warm weather brings construction, paving and seal coating, our ordinances state that only political and for sale signs are allowed on residential property. Contractor signs don't qualify. Call the Village office if there are any questions.

If you notice any questionable or suspicious activity, or roaming solicitors or door-to-door salesmen please call our Franklin-Bingham Police at 248-626-5444. They will get involved immediately. It is better to have a "false alarm" than regrets. If you will be out-of-town for any length of time, fill out a House Check form with our Police Department; they will keep an eye on your house.

Just a reminder, garbage day is Thursday. If you don't have your garbage and trash at roadside by 7:00 a.m. on pickup morning, you may be chasing the trucks, (although our garbage trucks generally come later). The next free large item pickup will be this fall. You may schedule special pick ups at other times by contacting Car Trucking at 586-791-8480. There may be a fee charged to haul away certain items.

We are always looking for volunteers for Village commissions and advisory boards. Please send a short resume to our Village Office if you want to help. Two positions on the Planning Commission were recently filled by Nathaniel Towle and Kathleen Yaremchuk. Thanks to them for volunteering and accepting those appointments. Our Mobile Watch is always looking for volunteers. If you have some spare time and can help in any way, give our Village Office a call at 248-644-0044.

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## **TOWNSHIP COLLECTS USED CELL PHONES**

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Southfield Township is accepting used cell phones which will be sent to the "Secure the Call Foundation", a non-profit which refurbishes cell phones for 911 Emergency Calls. They are made available to individuals and organizations nationwide.

Bring your used cell phones to the Township offices located at 18550 W. 13 Mile Rd.

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## **EASY & HELPFUL**

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In between tours through the Village, Mobile watch members are busy planning their next special event (we have three every year). It is the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Pot Luck Picnic and Prize Drawing, honoring the members of our police and fire departments. It will be in August as usual, with plenty of food and lots of prizes (for police and fire families).



It seems like we just finished our spring event (again between tours of the Village), an evening with the mounted division of our police department. Did you know the Department has mounted police officers, uniformed and riding the Villages on their own horses? You would now know the names of some of the horses if you were a member of Bingham Farms Mobile Watch.

Despite the "interruption" of these special events, we push ahead, assisting our police and fire departments. It is actually very easy work, of short duration, and with practically no expense.

Even if you don't like monthly cookies and coffee, a Holidayfest in December, a special spring event, and a big picnic, you might enjoy touring the Village. It's easy for anyone to do, and is a big help to your Village.

Learn more by asking any Mobile Watch member or by calling Dick Holloway at 248/644-2622.

Bingham Farms Mobile Watch

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## **FRANKLIN BINGHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING**

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A special invitation is extended to all residents of Bingham Farms from the Franklin-Bingham Fire Department to attend their annual meeting.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 6, 2007  
AT 8:00 P.M.  
FIRE HALL  
32707 FRANKLIN ROAD**



## **A WORD FROM POLICE CHIEF BROWNE**

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According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation there are 2 million break-ins a year in the United States. In Michigan there are approximately 70,000. The majority of these break-ins occur during the daylight hours between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Thieves usually gain entry into a house by forcing open a door or through an unlocked door or window.

As a home owner there are steps to take that lessen the risk of becoming a victim. From investigations of break-ins and interviews of those who have committed them, police departments have identified certain deterrents.



Robbers usually avoid a house that appears occupied, has an alarm, quality dead bolt locks, a dog, lack of concealment by trees and shrubs near windows along side the house, and adequate exterior lighting at night. By adding each of these additional levels of security and making sure you've locked your doors and windows when you leave your house you'll make it less attractive to a thief and more difficult for them to break in.

Also consider installing a safe. Select one that can be secured to the floor and make sure your jewelry and other valuables are locked in it. It's always a good safety precaution to lock up your jewelry, watches and other valuables whenever you're having work done in your house. By leaving valuables on top of dressers or counters, it's easy taking.

Summertime creates additional opportunities for thieves. When working in your backyard, make sure the front door is closed and locked. It's not uncommon for a thief to enter through an open front door while the residents are out back. Also remember to keep the garage door closed. We usually see an increase in thefts of tools and other items from open garages.

If out walking, take your cell phone and pay attention to your surroundings. If you see anything suspicious, call the police. A few months ago a Bingham Farms couple was out for a late afternoon walk and became the victims of an unarmed robbery. They were quick thinking and obtained the license plate number of the suspect's vehicle. From this information the suspect was tracked down and arrested.

For more information on how to make your house more secure and protect your valuables, please contact us or stop in at the police station and pick up the handouts we have on home security and safety.

One last thought. When going on vacation, fill out a house check form at the police station. It provides local contacts and a phone number to reach you in case of an emergency.

On behalf of the police department I want to thank all of the residents and business owners for your support and help in making the Village of Bingham Farms a safe and exceptional community in which to live, work and visit.

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## **POLICE OFFICER HONORED**

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Officer Brian Crane was recently named the 2006 Optimist Club "Officer of the Year". Officer Crane was selected for his professionalism, dedication, loyalty and commitment to teamwork. He has been with the Franklin Bingham Farms Police Dept. since 1985.

Officer Crane has received more than 16 awards for his exceptional work during his 22 years of service and more than 40 letters of appreciation from other law enforcement agencies and residents.

In addition to regular police work, Officer Crane serves as the senior accident and arson investigator, firearms instructor and back up detective. And let's not forget his stealth motorcycle patrols.



Officer Crane w/Chief Browne

When not in his police uniform, Officer Crane dons another uniform—that of a volunteer firefighter with the Franklin Bingham Farms Volunteer Fire Department, a position held since 1980.

Great job, Officer Crane. Bingham Farms is very grateful for your dedication and outstanding police work.

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## **CONGRATULATIONS DETECTIVE CASTRO**

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How intense is intense? Try combining an accelerated college program with police work that never seems to end. Detective Sgt. Castro spent 5 days a week, more than 8 hours a day for 8 weeks at the Northwestern University Staff & Command School. The program spanned 4 months, two weeks on and two weeks off.

Detective Castro indicated that this course was the most intense, grueling program he's attended.

In the off time Sgt. Castro was back at the police station working open cases. During this time, he managed to nab a suspect in an armed robbery, solve several home invasion cases and follow up on old cases.



Det. Castro w/ Chief Browne

Sgt. Castro is the master at interrogation. The unspoken word at the police department is that a suspect best beware. If he's guilty, Sergeant Castro will get that confession.

Congratulations Bill on this outstanding achievement.

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## **FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

The Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Village Budget has been approved by the Council. The budget totals \$1.9 million dollars, up 1.4% from last year. The millage rate remains 6.8. This rate has not increased in the last nine years, even in light of continued state revenue sharing shortfalls.

The Village derives its income from several sources: property taxes (both residential and commercial), fees (DRB fees, building permits), state revenue sharing, franchise fees and court assessed fines (traffic tickets, ordinance violations).

The breakout is as follows:

- Residential/Commercial Property Taxes - 64%
- Personal Property - 3%
- State Revenue Sharing - 4%
- Fines & Fees - 1%
- Franchise Fees/Interest - 4%
- Special Assessment Districts - 14%
- Reapprop. from Fund Balance - 10%

Property taxes pay for road maintenance, police and fire protection, library services, rental of office space, salaries, attorney and engineering fees, rubbish pickup and snow removal.

The largest expenditure is public safety (48%) which covers both fire and police protection followed by administration (20%), and road projects (15%).

Budgeted expenses are as follows:

Administrative	\$386,718
Engineering	13,000
Appropriations/ Road Improvements	300,000
Library	140,636
Contingency	30,000
Public Safety	940,200
Legal	35,000
Rubbish	<u>102,916</u>
 Total Budget	 \$1,948,470

**CONGRATULATIONS  
SGT. EDWARD GIRARDOT  
ON YOUR RETIRMENT  
AFTER SERVING  
28 YEARS  
WITH THE FRANKLIN/BINGHAM  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS CREATE RESIDENCY ADVISOR POSITION**

Bingham Farms property owners pay a significant amount of taxes to support the Birmingham Public Schools. As is well known, the Birmingham School system is highly recognized for its teachers, programs and student success.



Last December the Birmingham Board of Education adopted a new policy on residency and tightened verification procedures. The goal was two-fold: make sure paperwork for every student is complete and investigate concerns about the eligibility of students.

To accomplish this, the School Board created a Residency Advisor position to handle the workload. Andrew Wilson has that job, which is a temporary part-time position. He first started with 90 open cases. By June, 40 have been resolved. As a result, approximately 16 students were disenrolled.

This summer, Mr. Wilson is working on verifying approximately 400 cases that involve lease expirations and status of guardianships. Paul DeAngelis, Deputy Superintendent, pointed out that the majority of cases are quickly resolved by a parent or guardian providing updated information.

The cost for the Residency Advisor position is funded by non-resident tuition fees which more than cover the cost. Depending on grade level, non-resident tuition fees range between \$11,000 and \$13,000 per student, per year.

Should an individual have a concern relative to student eligibility, contact the Residency Advisor at 248-203-4040.

## **VILLAGE TEAMS UP WITH BEVERLY HILLS**

After years of frustration trying to find contractors to perform small DPW type jobs in the Village, a solution has been found.

The Village has just entered into an agreement with Beverly Hills to purchase DPW services from them. This agreement will allow the village more timely access to services such as road patching and crack sealing, drainage work and other small projects.



The Village hopes to gain economies of scale by joining with Beverly Hills in bidding smaller projects. In the past, the Village has paid premiums to get small projects completed.

The Agreement takes effect on July 1.

# MOUNTED DIVISION KEEPS TROTTING ALONG

Seems like horses are becoming a main attraction at many municipal events. This makes for a very busy schedule for the Franklin Bingham Farms Mounted Police Division which boasts four horses.

There's Jake and Ha-ley and Josey and King whose owners willingly bring them to festivities in neighboring communities.

This picture shows Officer Hirschfeld on Jake at Farmington Hills Citywide Open House. And that is a Black Hawk helicopter straight from Selfridge Air Base. Never phased Jake one bit.



Photo courtesy of Dane Gussin

The next big event for the horses will be Franklin's Labor Day Parade.

Officer Hirschfeld and Reserve Officers Schaefer and Berris pay for the upkeep of these horses. The police department does accept donations and offers some really cool clothing for sale, such as t-shirts and polo shirts. Check it out at the police department. All proceeds go to defer the costs for equipment and training the horses.

For more information, contact Officer Hirschfeld at the Franklin Police Department at 248-626-9672.

# CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

## U.S. SENATORS

**Carl Levin (D)** 202-224-6221  
senator@levin.senate.gov

**Debbie Stabenow (D)** 202-224-4822  
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## U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

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## STATE SENATOR

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**Chuck Moss (R)** 517-373-8670  
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## STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Mike Cox (R)** 517-373-1110  
www.michigan.gov/ag

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