

Zion Township



**Cheri N. Ditzig
Supervisor**

Spring 2011

Town Board: Lloyd DeTienne, Frank Flammini, Jim Taylor, Shantal Taylor • Town Clerk: Judy Mackey • Assessor: Larry Wicketts

Letter from the Supervisor

Ten years. It is so hard to believe that I have had the honor of serving as the Zion Township Supervisor for ten years. The saying, "God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called," certainly applies here! At the time, I had worked for IDOT driving a snowplow for 12 years. I was a single mom with a double bachelor's degree in Psychology and Human Behavior in Society and a bucket of mistakes that God had magically turned into life lessons. When I say I had no idea what I was stepping into, I mean it. So I thought in this issue, I would share with you the top ten lessons I learned as your Township Supervisor, so far. But that was too long so I had to cut it down to my top six...

First and foremost, as a public servant it is crucial to love your enemies, as you never know when you will need them. I have been amazed over the years at people who were determined to make sure I was unsuccessful with projects and plans that I believed would enhance Zion, later ending up being the ones defending me and helping me to achieve other goals.

The second lesson came from my Dad. He always told me to picture anything I do or say as a headline on the front page of the newspaper. How does it read? Those words have saved me from countless embarrassing moments and helped me to make sound decisions.

Third, you don't know what you don't know. But that is no excuse for not knowing. Gail, the Assistant Township Supervisor, strongly encouraged me to go back to school for business management. Others asked why I would go to school for a job I already had? My decision came from that question. I want to be the best Township Supervisor I can be. I now know common sense will only get you so far and that there are many things that I need to know to make the best decisions for our community.

continued on page 2

What DO my tax dollars get me at Zion Township?

There is a serious threat in Springfield that Township government will be dissolved within the next two years. My thought was that if that happened, then there must be another plan for me. But, while visiting one of the senior housing complexes, a senior asked, "if they take your staff away, then where will we go for help?" I joked and said that I wasn't moving out of Zion and she could still call me, but my heart sank. I couldn't help her in the way my team does. Where would she go? Call the Illinois Department of Aging? Would they sit down with her to review the paperwork that the state mailed to her? Would they give her hope when she faced a difficult situation? It was then that I realized that this isn't about me and that I need to speak up about the movement in Springfield. With taxes at an all time high and no relief in sight, what exactly do your tax dollars get our community at Zion Township (which average \$200 per home):

Senior services, including but not limited to: a yearly \$100 prescription card at Kmart, farmers market coupons for \$10, 15 monthly 1/2 fare Taxi Tickets to local destinations, a handyman that will come to your home and assist with one hour of minor repairs as well as youth that will complete summer projects that don't require power equipment, Meals on Wheels, RTA pass application processing, as well as Pace Dial-A-Ride services, and having a resource person to go to for help when you don't know where to go. See pages 4 & 5 for additional information regarding senior services.

Youth services, include scheduling babysitting courses and First Aid, and providing up to 100 youth ages 14- and 15-years with a real life work experience to teach them how to obtain and maintain future employment.

ALL residents have access to Zion Township's Emergency Assistance program for up to \$400 in a crisis. If you are working, do not receive or qualify for other governmental assistance and have a shut-off notice for a utility, a 5-day notice for rent or face a situation that could impair you from maintaining your current employment, call us to make an appointment for Emergency Assistance. See page 6 for additional information.

ANY residents who are currently unemployed with no income and do not receive or qualify for any other governmental assistance program (with no children) can apply for our General Assistance program, which helps with \$250 in vouchers towards basic living expenses and to obtain employment. See page 6 for additional information.

Zion Township provides experts to go to with human service issues, including attending to aging parents and volunteer opportunities.

In addition, there are many other community programs that Zion Township supports to ensure they continue to exist to serve the Zion community.



Congratulations Lady Zee Bees and Coach Johnson! Way to represent our community!

In this issue...

- Youth Corner.....Page 2
- Pearce Resource Center.....Page 3
- Senior Happenings.....Pages 4-5
- Assistance Programs.....Page 6
- Assessor's Office.....Page 7
- News You Can Use.....Page 8

Know a 14 or 15 year old looking for work this summer?

Zion Township provides an educational opportunity for youth aged 14 and 15 to learn what it requires to get and keep a job, in our six week "on the job training program. Youth must live in the City of Zion. Applications are available at Zion Township, Zion Park District, Zion-Benton Township Library, Zion Central Middle School, Beach Park Middle School and Zion-Benton Township High School and others starting April 1, 2011.

This year, Township Supervisor, Cheri Ditzig, will be working as a crew supervisor in an effort to further enhance the program. "It is my goal to make this program one that, when an employer sees that a youth had completed this program through Zion Township, it is a seal of approval that he or she will make a great employee. This is our way of preventing residents from needing General Assistance later in life." Cheri and her

team will be creating a pre-test, designing a curriculum to teach the youth the many facets of accountability, post testing and then providing letters of recommendation for youth who are successful in the program. One youth, as well as one supervisor will also be chosen at the end of the year as the best of the best.

Currently, youth are required to complete an application including a letter of recommendation, go through an interview and are then held responsible to work for three hours, five days a week for six weeks, completing projects throughout the community or at an assigned work location in the community. The number of youth hired is based upon positions available in the community. Partners include Lake County Workforce Development Training Center, NorthPointe Resources, Sheridan Health and Rehab

Center, Zion Park District, Zion Police Department, Zion Benton Township High School, and Zion Elementary District. New non-profit partners are always welcome!! Dates of the summer work program are as follows:



Application deadline:

May 2nd at 4:30 p.m.

Orientation:

June 20th in the evening

Training Day:

June 21st

1st Day of Work Assignment:

June 22nd

End of the Year Celebration:

July 29th



*Zion Township
appreciates their
2011 Queens!*

Letter from the Supervisor (continued from Page 1)

Fourth, there are always three sides to every problem: yours, mine, and the truth. I have come to appreciate that my view may be skewed. In any situation, I try to not draw any lines in the sand because when I do, new information is brought up and I look like a fool.

Fifth, I am only as good as my team. This sounds simple but is actually the hardest thing I have ever had to do, as it means letting people go when there isn't a perfect fit. I say perfect because you have entrusted me with a portion of your income to give you the biggest bang for your buck. If I keep someone on staff that isn't a perfect fit, I am robbing you of a valuable resource - the wasted energy that could have gone into that position. I am not proud of the fact that in my position, I have let more people go than in the entire history of any of Zion's government agencies. And make no mistake, that responsibility has caused me intense heartache. When I would go to my dad for counsel, he would only remind me that if letting someone go was easy, then that person shouldn't be in a position to let someone go. As hard as it has been, one thing I can do is look you in the eye and tell you that you are absolutely getting the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to Zion Township Staff. Each one of them is an expert in their given role and takes their job very seriously.

Sixth, Township government really does matter. There is an effort in Springfield to get rid of townships in Illinois. When I look at what some

townships are doing, part of me agrees with it. But when the opinion was asked of a customer at It's All Good, the response was, "okay, but where would we go when we needed help?" The gal I was with, who is also a huge proponent of getting rid of townships, said, "Well, you could go to the county!" At which he responded, "Are you kidding? I'd rather keep my township." The reason that townships were created is so that there would be a place for people to go when they don't know where to go for help. The impact of the township's ability to serve well is solely based on who the township supervisor is. If a community doesn't take seriously putting someone in that position that will maximize resources to have the best benefit to the community, then it is not townships that are a waste, but those who hire the supervisor - the VOTERS. I have no idea what the future holds, but Election Day in April 2013 is my job review. If you like what I am doing, vote for me. If you don't like what I am doing, for the sake of the community, find someone who will do a better job and have them run for the position. Our community deserves the best. And if you don't care, don't vote; but then, don't complain either.

If you have any concerns, suggestions, or comments, please do not hesitate to give me a call. I am always interested in hearing what your thoughts are about how to move Zion forward.

Come see me,

Resources Available in Your Community

FREE Financial Counseling and Seminars at Pearce

Zion Township has partnered with Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS) to offer FREE one-on-one financial counseling and seminars to community members. Seminars take place on the third Monday of each month at CREW, Inc. (1632 23rd Street in Zion) and run from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. For more information or to register for a seminar, contact Eunice Bridges at 847-872-2811. To schedule a financial counseling appointment with CCCS staff, please call 815-338-5757.

Community Resources for Education and Wellness (CREW, Inc.)

CREW, in partnership with Nicasa, continues to provide Substance Abuse Counseling and Anger Management services to the community. In addition, the Community Development Division works to bring resources to clients and their families in an effort to provide comprehensive care that addresses the whole person. For more information about CREW, call 847-872-2830 or visit www.crewinc.org.

Family Resource Center of Zion

Family Resource Center of Zion (formerly CareNet Family Resource Center) provides educational



Brenda Benegas and Leah LaBelle,
Family Resource Center Staff.

resources to help people make informed choices regarding pregnancy. These services include pregnancy tests, parenting classes and support

groups. The center is open on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. All services are free and confidential. Brenda Benegas, the Center Director, and Leah Labelle, Administrative Assistant, oversee a growing volunteer staff that serves new and returning clients every week. To learn more about the services and opportunities available through Family Resource Center of Zion, please visit www.frczion.org or call 847-731-8370.

Love INC Lake County Northeast

Love INC Lake County Northeast coordinates efforts between churches, agencies and government programs to help people in need. Love INC provides furniture, food, clothing, home repair, transportation and financial consulting services. To learn more about Love INC's programs and services visit www.loveinlakecty.net or call 847-731-0526.

FREE Tutoring at Zion-Benton Public Library for Adults

The Lake County Adult Learning Connection offers free tutoring services in reading, writing, spelling, and math to Lake County residents ages 18 and over at Zion-Benton Public Library. To learn more about these free programs, call 847-623-2041 ext. 222. A staff member can meet you at Zion-Benton Public Library to find out more about your needs and goals.

Volunteer as an Adult Literacy Tutor

Interested in becoming an Adult Literacy Tutor? The Lake County Adult Learning Connection uses volunteers to teach adults who want to improve their reading, writing or basic math skills. Tutoring involves a commitment of 3 hours per week. Volunteers must complete the tutor training series prior to being placed as a tutor. An evening orientation session will be held in late May with information about volunteer literacy tutoring and a daytime tutor training will be held at Waukegan Public Library on June 14th, 15th and 16th. To sign up to attend or if you have questions, please contact Onice Pitts at 847-543-2024.

Zion-Benton Children's Service

Zion-Benton Children's Services (located on the main floor of Pearce Community Resource Center) provides dental care of uninsured children ages four through seventeen who live in Zion, Beach Park or Winthrop Harbor. For more information, call Theresa Mendoza at 847-872-9227.

Volunteer In Your Community

Meals on Wheels at
847-872-2811

Lunch Buddy Program at
847-872-5455 ext. 118

Family Resource Center at
847-731-8370

Adult Literacy at
847-623-2041 ext. 222



Benton Township Supervisor Jan Suthard (far left) and Zion Township Supervisor Cheri Ditzig (far right) welcome State Representative JoAnn Osmond and Senator Suzi Schmidt to their new home at Pearce Community Resource Center.

Meet the Voices for Your Community!

Senator Suzi Schmidt and State Representative JoAnn Osmond recently announced they will rent office space at Pearce Community Resource Center, which will be opening later this spring. In the meantime, you can reach them via telephone:

Suzi Schmidt 224-372-7465
JoAnn Osmond 847-838-6200

Community Coalitions Merge to Improve Services to Residents

PEC (Partners for Effective Collaborations) and RESPOND (Respecting Every Single Person through Outreach, Networking and Diversity) combined in January to form RESPOND Lake County. This new partnership includes front-line service providers from approximately 30 different agencies across the county. The focus is to remove duplication of services, create collaborative initiatives and leverage manpower and effort. Meetings are held at alternating locations the second Wednesday of each month. To learn more, contact Grace Gamboa at graceg@crewinc.org.



Adriana Ortiz, Zion Township and Willie Lewis, Department of Human Services participate in speed networking.

To learn more about the services and resources available at Pearce Community Resource Center, please visit www.crewinc.org/pearce or contact Maggie Morales, Community Development Manager at 847-872-2811 or maggiem@ziontownship.org.



Senior Center

Zion Township



Senior Center

Senior Resource Day

The 9th Annual Senior Resource Day will be held on Wednesday, April 20th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Zion Park District. Local vendors will showcase their agency and share valuable information, resources and services available to seniors. Come join us for door prizes, giveaways, a raffle drawing, and lunch! Call Zion Township, at 847-872-2811 to register.



Thank you Kmart for supporting Senior Resource Day!

Kmart Prescription Credit

Each January, Zion Township partners with Kmart to provide a \$100.00 prescription credit to 200 Zion seniors. To qualify, you must be at least 55 years of age with a monthly income of less than \$3,000, or have at least \$100 in prescription costs each month. Eligible seniors may apply at anytime during the year.

911 Emergency Contact Cell Phone

In cooperation with RSVP, Zion Township has established the award winning Anytime, Anywhere Emergency Contact program designed so that seniors have the ability to dial 911 for assistance anytime, anywhere. The Township collects old cell phones that are refurbished by Mr. Al Hillberg, and then reissues them free of charge to interested seniors. These phones work only when a 911 emergency call is made and do not require a service provider. So, there are no associated charges involved.

Zion Township accepts cell phone donations between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Donated phones must include chargers.

Farmers' Market

Instead of waiting for the limited supply of coupon books from Illinois Department of Aging, Zion Township decided to develop their own Farmer's Market packet which includes (1) \$10.00 coupon booklets and a purple recycle shopping bag to carry fresh produce and vegetables for Zion seniors to use at Zion or Beach Park Farmer's Markets. Zion Township works closely with Benton Township, the City of Zion's Economic Development Department and the vendors to ensure quality service and smooth transactions between the vendors and consumers. Zion Farmer's Market is held every Thursday from 2:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. beginning June 23rd and ending September 29th. The market is located at 26th Street and Sheridan Road in Zion. Zion seniors can pick up their packet at Zion Township, 1015 27th Street anytime after June 20th!



Senior Handyman Program

Zion Township's Handyman program is in full swing. With so many homeowners that face day-to-day struggles with home maintenance, Zion seniors can rely on this program to assist them with minor home repairs. Minor repairs are considered any repair completed with hand tools such as a hammer, screwdriver or pliers. In many cases, if additional work is needed, referral resources are available. This process helps reduce the incidence of scams, exploitation of seniors and poor contractual outcomes. Each qualified senior will receive

one hour of free service per year. As we recognize the importance of ensuring our seniors safety in their home, Zion Township provides this program to give our seniors peace of mind. To qualify for the program, you must be a Zion homeowner, at least 65 years old and reside at the address where service is requested. At Zion Township we believe "there's no place like home." For more information or to schedule your appointment, contact Eunice Bridges at (847) 872-2811.

Senior Center at Zion Park District

Zion Park District has opened their new Senior Center! Monday through Friday there are activities for every senior, including Beach Volleyball, Light Aerobics, Tone-up classes, a Monday Morning Walker Club and evening Line Dancing Social with Potluck dinner and entertainment. On the 1st Friday of each month, there is a Brunch & Lunch Potluck. Computer classes are also available every Tuesday. Look for two new 6-week programs this year, Matter of Balance beginning April 4th and Chronis Disease Self Management beginning July 11th. Reservations are required for 6-week programs. For more information, call Zion Park District at 847-746-5500 for dates and times.

Senior Prom - The Senior Advisory Board is excited to announce the theme for this year's Senior Prom, "Dancing with the Stars." The dance will be held on Saturday, May 21st with a picnic following on Sunday, May 22nd. For more information or to purchase your ticket, contact Zion Township at 847-872-2811.

Zion Park District Senior Outings - On the third Wednesday of each month, the Zion Park District distributes a list of trips scheduled for the following month at the Senior Meeting. These outings may include plays, trips to the Chicago Botanical Gardens, baseball games, concerts, picnics, and four or five extended tours per year! Contact Zion Park District at (847) 746-5500 for additional information, or just attend the weekly Senior Meeting every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. at the Zion Senior Center (27th and Emmaus). You won't want to miss it!

Senior Programs held at the Zion-

Benton Public Library

AARP Driver's Safety Class - If you are 50 years of age or older, consider signing up for the AARP Driver's Safety to freshen up your driving skills and, in some cases, receive a discount on your insurance. Future classes are scheduled for 6/21 & 6/22, 7/12 & 7/13, 9/13 & 9/14, 10/18 & 10/19 and 11/29 & 11/30. Classes are held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Zion-Benton Public Library, 2400 Gabriel Avenue in Zion. The reimbursement cost for materials used is \$12.00 for AARP members and \$14.00 for nonmembers. For more information or to register, call the Zion Park District at 847-746-5500.

Tax Assistance - Zion-Benton Public Library also offered AARP Tax Assistance every Wednesday now through April 13th from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Please call 847-872-4680, extension 3 to schedule your appointment.

Super Senior Program - Illinois Secretary of State, the Zion-Benton Public Library and Zion Township have partnered to provide Lake County seniors and other individuals an opportunity to participate in the Super Senior program. The program will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at the Zion-Benton Public Library. This program offers a 2-hour Rules of the Road course, vision screening and renewals for Driver's License and State ID. For more information or to register at Zion Township, call (847) 872-2811.

Senior Transportation Programs

Half-Price Taxi Fare

Zion seniors who are at least 65 years old can take advantage of the Township's Half-Price Taxi Fare program for travel within the city limits, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. AST and USA Taxi companies provide local taxi services. Contact the Zion Township office at (847) 872-2811 to sign up or obtain additional information.

Dial-A-Ride

Zion Township subsidizes the PACE Dial-A-Ride program that provides curb-to-curb services to limited destinations in Gurnee and Waukegan for any Zion resident. Service days and times are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please call the dispatch number at 1-800-201-6446 at least 24 hours in advance to schedule your trip. Round trip cost is \$1.60.

The PACE Para transit program (stipulated by the American Disabilities Act) also offers curb-to-curb service for disabled individuals, six days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except on holidays. To qualify, you must have an ADA certification number. Please contact the ADA Program hotline at 1-312-663-4357 for an application. Round trip cost is \$5.00.

RTA Free & Reduced Bus Fare

Zion Township is an RTA "Key Center." As an authorized agency, the Township accepts and processes new applications for seniors at no charge. Individuals should present a picture ID in the form of a Driver's license or State ID at the time of application. Participants must be at least 65 years old to qualify and applications are processed daily.

Weekly Grocery Shopping

Thanks to the Zion Park District, curb-to-curb service is provided to Zion senior residents every Friday to and from their local grocery store of choice. Please call the Zion Park District at 847-746-5500 to schedule your trip.

Senior Meal Programs

Meals on Wheels Program

Since January 5, 2009, Zion Township and Catholic Charities have partnered to ensure that qualified seniors and shut-ins receive a hot meal five days a week, including holidays, delivered straight to their door. Meals are prepared and packaged fresh by Maristella Catering. The trays are recyclable and suited for both microwave and conventional oven reheating. Mr. David Hipplemann of Catholic Charities oversees the meal preparation, while Rosie Teser, Zion Township MOW Coordinator coordinates routes and manages the daily program operations. For more information about the Meals on Wheels program, call Catholic Charities Senior Services at (847) 546-5733.

The Zion Township Meals on Wheels program is still in need of volunteer delivery drivers. Each route can include up to 10 stops and takes less than 45 minutes to pick up the thermal containers from Zion Township and deliver each individual meal. Volunteers typically deliver just one route per week!

For more information about the Meals on Wheels program or to apply as a volunteer, please contact Eunice at the

Township office at (847) 872-2811.

Meals On Wheels

Volunteers Drivers...

Thanks for keeping us rollin'!

- Ms. Flo Cheek
- Ms. Evie Hakeem
- Ms. Karol Brandt
- Mr. Tom Brandt
- Ms. Cissy Moss
- Ms. Patricia Neal
- Ms. Geneva Owers
- Ms. Heidi Paschke
- Mr. Steve Bernardy
- Mr. Fred Roberts
- Mr. Leon Lee
- Mr. Tom Ash
- Mr. Victor Labarbera

- Ms. Marylin Scheck
- Ms. Jean Scheve
- Mr. Leone Scheve
- Ms. Maiko Shaw
- Ms. Jean Tewes
- Mr. James Tims
- Mr. Dave Williams
- Ms. Mya Williams
- Mr. Richard Schimenti
- Ms. Carol Eaton
- Ms. Amy Ochoa
- Ms. Ann Stewart

Ms. Flo Cheek represented Zion by receiving the Meals on Wheels Volunteer of the Year award at Catholic Charities 13th annual awards dinner. Ms. Cheek has been an outstanding volunteer for the program since April of 2002. Flo stated that because she enjoys interacting with people, this role has been a good fit for her. She explained, "At times I find myself getting attached to some of the recipients because they become like a part of your family. Delivering Meals is fun and I enjoy doing it." Congratulations Flo!



Ms. Flo Cheek



Workforce Development

Primary Purpose of Township

The primary purpose of Township government is to administer the General Assistance (GA) program. The GA program provides vouchers to assist adults with limited resources to achieve self-sufficiency. The Supervisor is charged with overseeing the General Assistance fund where she has sole discretionary control. However, the Illinois State Statutes governing GA are extremely rigid with regard to the disbursement of this money. Eligible clients receive a \$250.00 monthly "In-Kind" benefit that is applied toward basic living expenses.

Mrs. Adriana Ortiz administers the General Assistance (GA) program at the Township and is available five days a week at 847-872-2811.



Adriana Ortiz

GA Success Story

Mr. Jimmie Cole is a Zion resident who approached Zion Township in December of 2010 seeking assistance through the General Assistance Program. He had lost his employment in September of 2010. He had no income and was struggling to pay his rent.



Jimmie Cole

Through the General Assistance program, Mr. Cole attended workshops provided by the Lake County Job Center to help him improve his job-search techniques and strengthen his resume. His determination and follow through really paid off because after only two months of being in the General Assistance Program, Mr. Cole found employment! He is now employed full-time as a cook at a local restaurant. Mr. Cole plans to enroll in classes at CLC to prepare him to take the test for his GED.

This is what Mr. Cole has to say about his experience at Zion Township:

"I would like to take this time to show my sincere appreciation to the staff of Zion Township, Workforce Development Department and a special thanks to Mrs. Adriana Ortiz, who has gone above and beyond to help me succeed and overcome my past. She has assisted me with finding a job and providing the necessary guidance and resources to help me begin my search and also enrolled me in other programs to assist where needed like workshops provided by Lake County Job Center."

"I really appreciate the fact that she took the time to understand my situation, looked beyond my past, and treated me with respect. It is people like Adriana and the Zion Township organization and staff that give me the encouragement I need to be successful in life. Once again I am truly appreciative for everyone's help in my journey."

*Thank You Very Much,
Jimmie Cole*

On behalf of Zion Township, I would like to thank the Lake County Job Center for helping Mr. Jimmie Cole obtain employment and other Zion constituents who are also in situations of need.

Emergency Assistance

The Emergency Assistance (EA) program provides a benefit to Zion Township residents for rent, electricity, natural gas, water or to help a resident overcome an obstacle that will keep them from maintaining their employment. There is no earned income limit, but applicants cannot be receiving money from another cash assistance program; must be able to demonstrate that an emergent situation has occurred (and it isn't their normal life circumstance); and must present a shut-off or eviction notice verifying the emergency. The maximum benefit for the EA program is \$400 for the first time a resident applies and scales down from that point. Applicants must also complete a class on "Personal Finances" in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements.

Mrs. Eunice Bridges administers the Emergency Assistance (EA) program at the Township, and is available five days a week at 847-872-2811.



Eunice Bridges

Free Financial Workshops in Zion!

Each month, Zion Township, in partnership with Consumer Credit Counseling Service offers a Personal Finance Workshop to assist Zion residents in financial planning strategies. Located at Pearce Campus, ALL residents are invited to attend a 2-hour session to learn how to budget and survive during these hard economic times. If you would like to meet with a financial counselor for a free one-on-one consultation to design a personalized budget plan to help you gain financial freedom, this option can also be arranged by calling 815-338-5757.

Past workshop participants have commended the program for its practicality. They have expressed that the workshop helps them to focus on personal financial goals, which are adaptable and attainable. One participant stated that the information made him think about a friend who could definitely benefit from the workshop. Another participant stated that if she follows her personal plan, she couldn't believe that she would have \$166.00 in the clear each month because in the past, she was always in the negative. All participants agreed that they felt a weight lifted off their shoulders and encourage everyone to take advantage of what the Personal Finance Workshop has to offer our community.

For more information, call Zion Township at 847-872-2811 or Consumer Credit Counseling at 815-338-5757 to schedule your appointment today.



A Letter from your Assessor

As the Assessor of Zion Township, I am charged with placing value on all properties within my jurisdiction to establish a base for real estate taxation. This is not an enviable position to be in, particularly in the current economic climate. However, I feel it is necessary to take a few moments to thank all of the Zion taxpayers for their professionalism and understanding in these tough times. The residents of Zion Township have shown time and again to be a uniquely diverse group of citizens who care about their community and are willing to sit down and reach amicable agreements with regard to the assessments placed on their properties. We all know that nobody wants to pay more than their fair share of taxes; however, we do have to pay our fair share. I believe with the seven percent reduction most people received on their 2010 assessments those values are both fair and agreeable to most taxpayers.

I also want to be sure the taxpayers of Zion realize that even though assessments were lowered that does not guarantee a reduction in property taxes. The taxing districts still need to obtain their operational funds through property taxation, so it is very possible that although the assessments went down the actual tax dollars paid could remain steady or even increase.

2011 is the General Reassessment year (formerly known as the quadrennial) for Zion Township. At this time, the Chief County Assessment Office has informed me that we can anticipate a twelve percent reduction in residential value for 2011. This projection is based upon sales ratio studies from 2008 through 2010, and this percentage is subject to change. We are currently undertaking a residential land revaluation of the township to bring more equity to the land values throughout Zion Township. I anticipate our assessments will be published in mid-August this year. At that time we will know our final reduction factor. You are welcome to call my office with any questions you have regarding your assessment; my staff and I will be happy to discuss your assessment with you and work with you if you feel your assessment is incorrect. Please remember, it is not necessary to pay for outside representation to dispute your assessment. I will be holding a workshop in August to walk people through the appeal process and filing of appeal forms should you feel the need to appeal your assessment.

I look forward to a continued partnership with the taxpayers of Zion. This economic climate remains difficult for all of us, but thanks to the effort we put forth together as a community, we will weather the storm and hopefully come out of it better and stronger than ever. Again, I thank you the taxpayers of Zion.

Sincerely,
Larry Wicketts, CIAO
Zion Township Assessor



Circuit Breaker Outreach

The Zion Township Assessor's Office will be holding two outreach sessions to assist with the filing of Circuit Breakers: February 3rd, 2011 and April 14th, 2011 from 9:00 to 11:30 am and 1:30 to 3:30 pm, in our offices within Zion City Hall. This outreach session is for residents of the City of Zion that are age 65 or older. Please bring all income information with you.

Senior Freeze Outreach

We anticipate the Chief County Assessment Office will be sending 2011 Senior Freeze forms in late March. Please watch the Zion Benton News for the date of the annual Senior Freeze outreach in April 2011 or stop in our office once you receive your freeze form if you need assistance with filling out the form or if you need it notarized.

Homestead Exemption Information

There are several exemptions available for owner-occupied properties that will help to save money on your property tax bill. The exemptions are listed below. If you have any questions, just give my office a call.

General Homestead Exemption - This exemption is for all owner-occupied properties. This exempts \$6,000 from your equalized assessed value. This exemption is automatically applied by our office if you qualify.

Homestead Improvement Exemption - This exempts, for four years, any increase in the assessment of your owner-occupied property due to an addition or other improvement to your home for which the township assessor would add value, up to a maximum of \$25,000 equalized assessed value. This exemption is automatically applied by our office if you qualify.

Senior's Homestead Exemption - This is for properties that are owner-occupied by a senior citizen age 65 or older. This exempts \$4,000 from your equalized assessed value. A form must be filled out in our office to enact this exemption.

Senior Freeze Exemption - To qualify you must also receive the Senior Homestead Exemption and have had the property you are applying for be your principal residence for a period of time that would include the past two January 1st. This exemption freezes the assessment on your property if your total household income is \$55,000 or less. First-time applicants can obtain forms from the Chief County Assessment Office or your local township assessor's office. This exemption must be renewed annually.

There are also several more exemptions that may be of interest to you: **Disabled Person's Exemption, Disabled Veteran's Standard Homestead Exemption, Disabled Veteran's Exemption and the Returning Veteran's Exemption.** More information on these exemptions can be found by calling our office at (847) 872-5031 or on the county website at <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/assessor/taxrelief>.

Town Board Meetings

April 19, 2011	Annual Township Meeting
May 17, 2011	4/12/11 at 6:00 p.m.
June 21, 2011	Public Hearing on Township Budget
July 19, 2011	4/19/11 at 6:00 p.m.
August 16, 2011	

Meetings are held at Zion City Hall Chambers at 6:30 p.m.

Run For Your Community

Support local agencies by running or walking a 5k! You can even sign up for a Zero to 5k Run Training Program all at the Zion Park District! www.zbrun.org



Pace Bus Passes Sold Here!

One day.....	\$4.00
Ten Ride.....	\$17.50
30 day.....	\$60.00

Passport Application Processing



Zion Township offers passport services Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. by appointment only. For additional information, call our Authorized Passport Agent, Ms. Margarita De La Cruz at 847-872-2811.



Accounting Manager and Passport Agent, Ms. Margarita De La Cruz.

Please visit us at:
www.ziontownship.org



Frequently Dialed Numbers

Zion Township.....	847-872-2811
Benton Township.....	847-746-2100
Assessor.....	847-872-5031
City of Zion.....	847-746-4000
Police (non-emergency).....	847-872-8000
Police (Emergency).....	911
Fire Dept.....	847-746-4036
Street Dept.....	847-746-4050
Bldg/Zoning.....	847-746-4060
Water Dept.....	847-746-4016
Zion Cemetery & City/Town Clerk.....	847-746-4014
Zion Post Office.....	847-872-5412
Zion Park District.....	847-746-5500
Zion-Benton Public Library.....	847-872-4680
CREW, Inc.....	847-872-2830
PACE Dial-A-Ride.....	800-201-6446
Catholic Charities.....	847-782-4000
Lake County CAP.....	847-249-4330
Love INC.....	847-731-0526
LC Health Dept.....	847-377-8170
LC Housing Authority.....	847-223-1170

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 253
Zion, IL
60099

ECRWSS
Postal Customer
Zion, Illinois 60099

Zion Township

Editor & Writer: Ms. Gail Gloudemans

Contributing Writers:

Supervisor Cheri N. Ditzig
Ms. Eunice Bridges
Ms. Adriana Ortiz
Ms. Maggie Morales
Ms. Margarita De La Cruz
Ms. Lisa Woodman

Many pictures contributed by:
Photos By Gibbie