

Zion Township sees significant revenue loss

By **MONA SHANNON**
ZION-BENTON NEWS

Before Tuesday's township board meeting could begin, Cheri Neal was sworn into her new term as Zion Township Supervisor by Judge George Bridges. Newly elected State's Attorney Mike Nerheim and Judge John Phillips also stopped by to extend their congratulations to Neal.

Both judges commented on Neal's passion for not only Zion but the larger Zion-Winthrop Harbor-Beach Park community.

Budget

Neal reported to the board of trustees Tuesday that the Township has seen a 33 percent decrease in revenue in the last four years. She said revenue went from \$1,150,250 in fiscal year 2010-

11 to \$957,006 in FY 2012-13.

The Township will hold a budget hearing on June 18. The budget for FY 2013-14 is \$910,548 with revenue at \$777,005 and an estimated reserve of \$283,000.

Neal said Zion Township Assessor Larry Wicketts had estimated a 15 percent decrease for the FY 2014-15 which will create an estimated \$51,000 deficit. Wicketts said he thinks now the decrease is more likely to be a 13 percent.

Neal asked the trustees to schedule a budget workshop to begin "making hard decisions."

Wicketts said the township is finishing its work and owner-occupied property is down 10 to 12 percent. He said the blue cards should be

mailed in early August and an open house will be held to help people learn how what to do to file an appeal.

Wicketts noted there will be an extra \$1,000 off the senior exemption next year. So seniors eligible for the senior freeze could see an additional savings of \$180.

Programs

Neal said the summer work program interviews are complete and the township will be hiring 74 young people to work this summer.

Also Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver meals one day a week. She said it takes 45 minutes. Training will be held June 13.