

Solway Section Lines

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2010

Happy New Year!

Happy 2010! As we begin our Section Lines 1st edition for 2010, it's hard to believe another year has slipped by and has become history. It makes me realize that each moment is special

and presents me with a new opportunity. Your township board wishes you and yours abundant opportunities for enjoying family, good health and happiness during the New Year!

Citizen of the Year Award Criteria

Each year we welcome nominations for the Solway Citizen of the Year Award. Criteria for the award include the nominee being a township resident, 18 years of age or older and has donated considerable time and talent to the betterment of our community as a volunteer.

The winner of the award is honored for his/her contributions at the Township Annual Meeting in March. The recipient receives a personal plaque of recognition. In addition, the winner's name is added to the hall of fame plaque at the town hall which honors all previous winners of the award. Please submit your nominations to the town office by the first of March.

Election Filings

Township elections are fast approaching. Any qualified voter of Solway Township may file for town office beginning Dec. 29, 2009 and running until Jan. 12, 2010 at 5:00 pm. Affidavits of candidacy are filed with the town clerk at the town hall at 4029 Munger Shaw Road. You may call the clerk at 729-5134 to arrange a filing. The cost to file is \$2.00. The office to be filled at the March 2010 Annual Election is one supervisor, three-year term.

2009 Accomplishments

Looking to 2010, your Township Board reviews the accomplishment of 2009. Some of them are listed below:

- WLSSD grant awarded for our recycling shed operations
- Scheduled road improvements, dust control, roadside mowing, brushing completed
- Timberline shingles installed on handicapped ramp roof
- Remodeled downstairs of town hall including new kitchen cabinets, counters and appliances, new tile and carpet, new tables and chairs
- Purchased new padded chairs for both upstairs and downstairs gathering areas
- Designated our gabled shed next to the warming shed as our rental center that stores tables and chairs for resident use
- Purchased front end loader for our parks John Deere tractor
- Held a non-recyclables items collection day in October

If you have suggestions for improvements you would like the Town Board to pursue, give us a call or bring your ideas to a board meeting.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Census/Snowbirds	2
Annual Meeting	2
Skating Fun	2
Winter Fun Day	3
Recycling Shed	3
Club News	5
Assessors Corner	5

SOLWAY TOWN BOARD

Chairperson: Ron Gajewski

Supervisors: Clare Stromlund and Scott Welsh

Clerk: Regena Merritt

Treasurer: Cindy Moe

Office Hours: T, W, Th 9-3

For Hall Rentals call 729-5134, leave your name, number and date wanted.

Phone: 218-729-5134
Fax: 218-729-5651
Township website: solwaytownship-MN.gov

Email: solway-clerk@hotmail.com

Halloween Carnival A Success

On Oct. 30 both the young and old enjoyed an evening of fun and games. Youngsters were decked out in costume finery eager to try their skills on a game, win a cake or some other treat. Many with some apprehension went through the haunted pavilion. Lucky picking of purchased chances made some participants winners in the raffle at the end of the evening. Bingo and good food topped off the carnival.

The Solway Special Events Committee would like to thank the following businesses, organizations and individuals for their contributions to the 2009 Halloween Carnival: Adolph Lumber Co., Boundary Ave. Mobil Mart, Midway Spur, Solway Senior Citizens, Blackwoods Proctor, Shelton Excavation, Paulson's Super Valu, Proctor Federal Credit Union, Proctor Country Kitchen, Mary and Leon Forstrom, Cub Foods, Dry Dock Restaurant, Frank and Bonnie Siiro, LTC Prescription Providers, Betty and Larry Everett, Munger Goodfellowship Club, Lakehead Harvest Reunion, Inc., Hermantown Wal-Mart, Valeria Witte, Menards, Clare Stromlund, Luipakka, Inc., Isabelle Callahan, McDonald's, Maple Grove Homemakers, Burger King, Moe & Sons. Without their support, the event would not be possible. Please consider returning the favor to our contributors. Thank you!

Annual Meeting & Township Elections, March 9, 2010

The Election polls will be open from NOON to 8:00 pm to elect one supervisor for a three-year term. The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:30 pm to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

Some of the agenda items to be discussed at the Annual Meeting are as follows:

- 2010 Citizen of the Year
- Report of the 2009 Receipts and Disbursements
- Town Hall rental fees
- Discussion as to whether residents would like a dog ordinance
- Review of Cemetery regulations
- Fire Department Report
- Proposed Budget and Levy for 2011

In case of bad weather, the Annual Town Meeting and Election will be held at the same time and place on the third Tuesday of March.

Skating Fun

Plans are made for getting our skating rink flooded

and the ice readied for another winter of skating fun. When the rink is opened it will be posted on the township sign. We are hoping to have it ready by Christmas vacation. Feel free to use the rink anytime at your family's convenience. The rink is lighted from dusk to 10:00 pm everyday.

For your comfort the warming house will be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. During this time a township staff member will be available to sell hot chocolate and assorted goodies. Staff will be manning the counter and not be in a position to provide supervision on the rink so it's important if your children are of an age needing supervision that you or another adult will be present. Needless to say if we have bad weather on the weekend the warming house will be closed, as skaters won't be expected to be out. Enjoy!

Snowbirds – What You Need to Know – Census April 1, 2010

The Census counts residents at their "usual" address. You are to decide what is your usual address and by deciding Minnesota you benefit your home state of Minnesota.

The Census will mail questionnaires in mid-March to regular mailing addresses. You will receive Census questionnaires at both your Minnesota address and your snowbird address. The Census Bureau will hand-deliver questionnaires to addresses with non-home delivery, such as a P.O. Box, RFD or Star Route and questionnaires will NOT be forwarded.

Do NOT answer the questionnaire that is delivered to a temporary residence such as Arizona, Florida, or Texas if you consider yourself a Minnesota resident. Wait to answer your Minnesota questionnaire. If you didn't receive a questionnaire in Minnesota, request one from a Questionnaire Assistance Center or directly from the Census Bureau.

Contact Information is www.mn2010census.org or Barbara Ronnigen – 651-201-2473 Demographer or Ryan Dolan – 651-201-2479 Campaign Coordinator.

Fire Department Receives Much Needed Grant

The Solway Township Volunteer Fire Department received some financial help from the Minnesota Power Foundation. Six year veteran Jeffrey Nelson wrote the grant to be able to purchase a multi-gas detector, which will aid the department in detecting potentially fatal gases and at what levels they are. We wish to thank

Minnesota Power Foundation for their generosity and hope to work with them again in the future.

“Dance Around” at the Town Hall

Did you ever wish you could square dance, round dance or line dance but never had the opportunity to learn? Well good fortune awaits you to learn these dances at no cost right at the town hall Thursday evenings 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The lessons and dancing are open to everyone—singles or couples—bring a friend. They are open to all age groups so the whole family can dance together. All dances are cued and called so you have the opportunity to learn the steps. If you have any questions, call Tom at 348-6191 or Linda at 729-8405. Have a great time kicking up your heels!

Country Music Continues in 2010

Bill Pelto and his entourage of singers and musicians continue their country music shows at the town hall. The show is the second Saturday of each month. First quarter dates are January 9, February 13 and March 13. The music starts at 6:00 pm and runs till about 9:15 pm. A potluck (bring a food dish to share) starts at 5:00 pm prior to the music show for those wishing to participate.

None of the performers are paid as they volunteer their time and talent. A free will offering is appreciated to cover show production expenses. Let's all support the show so we can keep live music performances at the town hall.

Winter Fun Day; “Free For All”

Our winter fun day is scheduled for Saturday, January 30, 1:00 to 6:00 pm. This FREE event is sponsored by Solway Township's Special Events Committee for all township residents so remind your friends and neighbors.

Activities planned at the writing of this article include skating, sliding, bonfire, bingo and free food — coffee, hot chocolate, hot dogs, chips, cookies and bars. Food is served all afternoon so come for lunch and stay for supper. The Special Events Committee is picking up the tab.

Free bingo will run 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Each player may play up to four free cards at a time to vie for a \$10 winner's pot. If an individual wants to play more than the four free cards they may do so for 25 cents per extra card. The extra money will be added to the pot.

A Special Events Committee meeting is being held Tuesday, January 5 at 6:30 pm to complete planning for the day. New faces and ideas are always welcome so if you'd like to help, come to this meeting at the town hall.

Recycling Shed Hours

Wednesday 3:30 TO 6:30 PM

Saturday 7:00 am to 12:00 noon

If schools or businesses are closed because of bad weather or the temperature is -20 degrees or colder, the Recycling shed will also be closed.

Minnesota Home Ownership Center

Do you or someone you know need assistance? Nearby community agencies will answer your questions, offer free advice, and help you create a plan. Are you worried about your next house payment, or home equity payment? Have you have already missed one or two payments? Are you concerned about your interest rate changing? Don't waste another sleepless night. Call 651-659-9336 or toll free 1-866-462-6466 or visit www.hocmn.org.

Local Board of Appeal & Equalization

The purpose of the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization is to provide a fair and objective forum for property owners to appeal their valuation or classification. The Local Board often serves as the first formal step in the appeals process for taxpayers.

One of the most important duties placed by law upon the governing body of a Township or City is to serve as the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization. Effective actions taken by the local board may potentially make a direct contribution to attaining assessment equality.

Always keep in mind that any changes made by the Board must be substantiated by facts. Any value reductions must be justified because they have the effect of shifting the tax burden to other property in the jurisdiction. Further, any changes made by the Local Board must meet statutory guidelines.

Legislation enacted in 2003 required that there be at least one member at each meeting of a Local Board of Appeals and Equalization who has attended an appeals and equalization course developed or approved by the Commissioner of Revenue within the last four years. In Solway Township, all 3 board members have attended the required courses.

The Minnesota Revenue definition of Local Board of Appeal and Equalization is 'a group of people', typically the Town Board or City Council, authorized to determine whether the assessor has properly valued and classified all parcels of taxable property located within the District.

The local process is much like a court. Let's put the process in these terms:

1. The assessor is on trial, is the defendant, and is

innocent until proven guilty.

2. The property owner (appellant) is the plaintiff, and must provide evidence.
3. The Board is representing the people of the township, and is the judge.

The total amount of property taxes for the State, County, School District and Township have been determined and will not change for the tax year.

In other words, there is one pie and everyone has a slice of the tax burden. The size of the pie will not change, only the size of the slices. If your slice gets smaller, everyone else's gets bigger. If your slice gets bigger, everyone else's gets smaller. The job of the board is to insure fairness.

To help you prepare for your appeal, a fact sheet is available at www.taxes.state.mn.us. The fact sheet is titled 'Property Tax Fact Sheet 10'. There are also copies available at the Town Hall.

Frequently asked questions by property owners
Is it legal for the assessor to increase my value so much in one year?

Yes. The assessor must value property at market value each year. Property values change continuously with changing economic conditions. There is no limit to the amount of increase or decrease in estimated market values in a given year. The assessor is required to review the values and classifications as of January 2 of each year.

When will my value stop changing so much?

This is impossible to predict. Estimated market values are dictated by the market. If sale prices are increasing, estimated market values will increase. If sale prices are decreasing, estimated market values will decrease.

Why are my taxes so high?

Taxes are not within the authority of the local board. The property tax on a specific parcel is based on its market value, property class, the total value of all property within the taxing area, and the budget requirements of all local government units located within the taxing area. Only concerns relating to the current year valuation and/or classification may be heard by the local board.

Will I be taxed out of my home?

The local board cannot reduce tax amounts. There is relief for property classified as homestead. The market value homestead credit directly reduces the property taxes on a parcel. In addition to the homestead classification, Minnesota provides property tax relief

to homeowners through the Property Tax Refund program. This program has been around for many years and includes two different kinds of refunds: the regular refund and the special refund. The regular refund was designed to relieve the burden on homeowners whose property taxes are high in relation to their income. The special refund is for homeowners who experience a property tax increase of more than 12 percent (and at least \$100), regardless of their income level. Both of these refunds must be applied for using form M1PR from the Minnesota Department of Revenue. There are specific requirements for each refund, which are included in the M1PR instructions.

In addition, qualifying individuals may participate in the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral program. This is a deferral of tax, not a reduction. The taxes accumulate along with interest at a rate not to exceed 5 percent and a lien is attached to the property.

Forms and instructions for the Property Tax Refund and Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral program are available on the Department of Revenue website (<http://www.taxes.state.mn.us>).

Comparison of Duties: Local and County Boards

Local Board	County Board
Ensures individual assessments within the jurisdiction are properly valued and classified.	Ensures equalization among individual assessments, between classes and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

What can local and/or county boards do?

They both can increase or decrease value of individual property, add improvements to the assessment list and change the classification of a property.

The local board can add properties to the assessment list and the county board cannot.

The County board can increase or decrease value for an entire property class but the local board cannot.

What local and county boards cannot do:

- The board cannot change prior year assessments.
- The board cannot reduce aggregate assessment by more than 1 percent.
- The board cannot exempt property.
- The board cannot make change benefiting owner who refuses entry by assessor.
- Individual board members cannot participate in actions or discussions of appeals involving their own property, property of relatives, or property in which they have a financial interest.

Community Club News...

Solway Senior Citizens

Thanks to all who came to our Seniors Bazaar in Sept.

In October we donated money to and attended the Township Halloween Carnival. We also had election of officers in October. Gerald Thilmany played accordion music for us in November and Loren Lindevig will be here in December for our Christmas party.

If you aren't busy New Years Eve Day, Dec. 31, we are hosting a pot luck at noon and music by Rick Walkowiak and the Out of Towners. Bring a dish to pass for noon and listen to the music until 4 or if you don't want to come in at noon stop later and enjoy the music. Hope to see you there. You don't have to be a senior, everyone is invited.

Flamettes

We had our Christmas Party on December 7. Our next meeting will be February 1, 2010 at 7:00 pm. Come join us, our meetings are short and to the point. Our next events will be Easter Bingo on March 26, 2010 and Pancake Breakfast on April 25, 2010.

Our dance and Thanksgiving Bingo was very profitable for the fire department. Thanks to all who helped support the fund raising projects we put on.

Munger Goodfellowship

We were busy in October. We served lunch at the October Craft Sale, went to the Holiday Fest in French River for Area Homemakers, donated money and attended the Solway Township Halloween Carnival. We had an auction at our November meeting. We had our Christmas Party in Dec. and sent out cards to seniors.

We have not made any plans for 2010 yet. We wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The South St. Louis County Fair Assoc.

Our organization held their annual dinner and meeting on Oct. 21 at the Solway Town Hall. Frank Siiro, Jackie Magarener, Jim Johnson, and Crash Carlson were reelected to the Board. Valerie Fox was elected as a new member. Frank Siiro was named president, Jackie Magarener named vice president, Valeria Witte named secretary and Gus Omundson named treasurer. No date has been set for the 2010 Fair, carnival plans are not completed, and there will be more information in the next newsletter. The Board members and volunteers will be busy with the Snow Cross parking at the Fairgrounds.

The Board extends a big thank you to all those who volunteered at the Fair and through out the year.

Maple Grove 4-H

The Maple Grove 4-H members have enrolled for another year. The 2010 calendars for hosting and demonstrations will be completed in January.

The Club enjoyed the presentation by Glenn and Nancy Krause on bears from the Bear Center in Ely. Family Night was very successful with forty three adults and members attending. Former County agent Richard Herman and wife Joanne were guests.

The Club meets the third Monday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Solway Town Hall.

Assessors Corner

By now everyone has received their proposed tax notice. Be sure to look carefully at the notice, such as homestead last year non homestead this year. This would happen if you purchased a home and had not called to apply for homestead classification. This is not an automatic carry over.

This notice gives you an approximate tax amount for the next year, some things could change, since the notices have to go out before the county board actually sets their levy.

Sometime in March you will receive a yellow notice that says Market value and or Classification changes. This is a very important notice as it will effect your taxes for 2011. This notice will reflect changes in the township regarding sales that have taken place between Oct. 2008 and Sept. 2009. The State of Minnesota requires that we have market values set at 100% of what the sales show us.

You have the right to appeal your market value with the Town Board at the Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting. This meeting is set by the county usually in April. Notice of this meeting will be published, posted and in the next newsletter. However, prior to that meeting you may call me and we can discuss it, sometimes resolving the issue without going before the board of equalization. If you are unable to attend the meeting you may write your clerk a letter, or write me a letter, or call me and I will present it at the meeting for you. You do not have to be there in person, your appeal will be presented the same way as if you were there. If anyone has purchased a home during the year and not applied for homestead classification yet, please call your assessors office at 427-2616 right away as the year is closing for applications. If you have any questions regarding you market value or classification please give me a call, if I am out of the office, leave a message along with your phone number.

Jan Jackson Solway Township Assessor

Town Office
4029 Munger Shaw Road
Cloquet, MN 55720

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 665
Duluth, MN

Phone: 218-729-5134
Fax: 218-729-5651
Email: solwayclerk@hotmail.com

Change Service Requested

Solway Section Lines

Township Events Calendar

December 31..... New Years Eve Day Party noon to 4:00 pm
January 9Country Music Show and Potluck 5:00 pm
January 12 Filing for Township Election Closing at 5:00 pm
January 12 Town Board Meeting 6:30 pm
January 30 Winter Fun Day
February 9..... Town Board Meeting 630 pm
February 13Country Music Show and Potluck 5:00 pm
March 9.....Township Elections noon to 8:00 pm
March 9..... Annual Meeting 8:30 pm
March 13Country Music Show and Potluck 5:00 pm
March 26 Easter Bingo 7:00 pm
April 10.....Country Music Show and Potluck 5:00 pm
April 13..... Town Board Meeting 6:30 pm
April 25..... Pancake Breakfast 6:00 am