Remember to vote on August 6

Around The Township

Serving the needs of the citizens and businesses of **Butler Township**

SUMMER 2013

Passage of the JEDZ District critical for Butler Township Police

Butler Township voters will have the opportunity to vote on two Joint Economic Development Zones (JEDZ) as part of the upcoming August 6 ballot (Commercial District and Hotel District).

The JEDZ is a new funding mechanism that would provide the township a 1% only income tax from all employees and employers on Miller Lane, York Commons Boulevard, Towne Center Drive, Commerce Center Drive, the north side of Benchwood, the east side of North Dixie Drive, the south side of Maxton Road and the north side of Maxton Road at Miller Lane, and the former Rodeway Inn site.

This income tax will not increase property taxes. If you are a resident of Butler Township and you do not work in this area, then you will not be affected.

All employees and corporations in the area will be subject to the 1% income tax. It's estimated that 60% of these employees already live in a city where an income tax is collected by their employer and sent to their city of residence. For instance, if you live in Vandalia, your employer currently withholds a 2% income tax and sends it to the city of Vandalia.

If the JEDZ is approved...

The employer in the above example will still withhold the 2% income tax, but 1% of that will be directed to Butler Township. The remaining 1% will go to the city of Vandalia.

This tax will mostly redirect tax funds that are already being paid. So if an employee happens to live in the city of Union, where the city income tax rate is 1%, and works on Miller Lane, then they would pay 1% to Butler Township and no income tax to the city of Union.

If an employee lives in another township with no income tax, they would be required to pay the full 1% to Butler Township. The table on page 2 shows income tax rates in nearby communities.

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JEDZ District — continued from Page 1

Most JEDZ funds will support police

The JEDZ would provide the township additional monies that can be used for any public purpose. Butler Township has made the commitment to use most of that money to fund the police department in order to

- Reduce the crime rate (see related article, *Business area places highest demand on police time*)
- Increase officer-initiated calls, and
- Restore police officer safety.

"Voters will have the opportunity to agree – or not – when they cast their ballots in the special election on August 6," said Township Administrator Kim Lapensee.

Jurisdiction	Current Income Tax Rate	Distribution of Tax Funds under JEDZ*
Vandalia	2%	2% (1% Vandalia, 1% Butler)
Clayton	1.5%	1.5% (.5% Clayton, 1% Butler)
Huber Heights	2%	2% (1% Huber, 1% Butler)
Union	1%	1% (1% Butler, 0% Union)
Trotwood	2.25%	2.25% (1.25% Trotwood, 1% Butler)
Dayton	2.25%	2.25% (1.25% Dayton, 1% Butler)
Townships	0%	1% (Butler)

*Applies only to people who work in the JEDZ area.

How is the JEDZ different from a TIF?

Both the JEDZ and TIF are funding tools for local government – but that's where the comparison ends.

And both of them are different from tax abatement.

First, it's important to clarify some misconceptions about tax abatement. As the name implies, tax abatement is a reduction or elimination of taxes for a period of time. It's used as an incentive to encourage businesses to locate in a community.

No tax abatements were given on any properties in the Miller Lane/ York Commons Boulevard area. Such incentives were not needed to encourage companies to locate in that area. They are simply there due to the good location.

Instead, in 2002 a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) was created on some of the parcels in the Miller Lane area. A TIF defers the taxes solely on the increased value in property once improvements have been made to the property (such as a new building) into an account that is controlled by the township. This money can be spent only on capital improvements that benefit the TIF district.

In the past, Butler Township has used this money to purchase street lights, installation of the utilities and roadway system in the district, police and fire vehicles, and to help pay for the debt service on the new government center and fire station.

Business area places highest demand on police time

Many times we hear of calls for service as a measure of police activity. For example, the proposed JEDZ area generates approximately 25% to 28% of all police department calls for service.

But not all calls for service are created equal. Something as simple as a complaint about neighborhood traffic or a barking dog requires a relatively short amount of the officer's time. For example, the officer could easily check an area for a speeding car or ask an owner to take a dog inside.

On the other hand...

If an officer responds to a call for service and has to initiate a police report to document the incident, and then investigate it, the time invested could range from 30 minutes to several weeks.

For example, if the officer responds to a theft or shoplifting call at one of the businesses, it triggers a process that includes the officer interviewing victims, interviewing suspects, completing the necessary arrest forms, documenting the arrest in the written police report, making the physical arrest, and transporting the suspect to jail.

After that, the officer must make several court appearances over the following weeks to successfully prosecute the crime.

Here are the results of a recent police department study comparing the number of police reports taken within the JEDZ area to reports taken within the rest of the township:

- 2010 – 54% of all police reports were taken within the JEDZ area
- 2011 – 57% of all police reports were taken within the JEDZ area
- 2012 – 51% of all police reports were taken within the JEDZ area

Continued on Page 3

Business area *— continued from Page 2*

One recent weekly report shows that the police department initiated and investigated 33 police reports during that weekly period. Of those, 28 were taken within the JEDZ area, representing nearly 85% of the reports that week.

What's even more alarming

The most disturbing trend in the township is that officer-initiated calls have been drastically reduced from 15,566 in 2010 to 4,500 in 2012 – a 71% reduction. This stems from reduced police force staffing from 15 to 11 officers.

"There is simply less time for the officers to conduct proactive patrols and self-initiated crime-prevention activities," said Township Administrator Kim Lapensee. "Because of the 27% reduction in police staffing, crime rates have increased while arrests have decreased by 32%."

Here are the statistics:

	2010	2012	% Difference
Burglaries	22	42	+91%
Thefts	175	250	+43%
Robberies	4	7	+75%
Arrests by police	680	461	-32%

If approved by voters, the JEDZ will generate an estimated $750,000 to $1,000,000. The township trustees have committed to using most of these funds to restore police staffing and services to more acceptable levels.

"Public safety is one of the township's top priorities," said Township Administrator Kim Lapensee. "The JEDZ is an attractive funding option because it would require the heaviest users of police services to pay a more equitable share of the cost."

What's causing the police staffing issue?

Last year, two police levies were defeated by a narrow margin. These levies would have been used strictly by the police department because Ohio law prohibits townships from using levy monies for any other purpose.

The township trustees are asking voters to approve the JEDZ as an alternative to additional police levies.

These facts explain the need

FACT: Sharp increases in the cost of running the police department can be traced largely to health insurance premiums, which have doubled in cost over the last 10 years.

"We are making strides to decrease our operating costs," said Township Administrator Kim Lapensee. "We've instituted health insurance plan changes and employee contributions."

In 2010, the township paid more than $750,000 dollars in premiums for health care, compared to $394,000 in 2013, a reduction of 47%.

FACT: The township has no control over certain costs such as pensions, workers' compensation, and Medicare – and all of them continue to increase.

"New health care laws will also cause heartburn for all of us as the cost of health care could increase by as much as 125% in 2014," Lapensee added.

FACT: The state of Ohio reduced all of the funding it once provided to local governments. In Butler Township's case, $850,000 was lost to all funds, including general, police, fire, and roads.

FACT: State law prohibits the township from collecting anything other than property taxes or creating Joint Economic Development Districts, including JEDZs.

FACT: The Butler Township Police Department has had to borrow money from the general fund for the last 20 years. Now that Ohio has eliminated all the estate tax, utility deregulation and tangible personal property taxes, the general fund will continue to decline to the point where the transfer can no longer be made.

FACT: This reduction will result in the dramatic loss of half the police department by as early as 2015. If this happens, the police officer staffing would be reduced to one officer on the street each shift per day. There could potentially be days where there would be no officer on duty due to sick or vacation days. This is completely unsafe for the officer on duty and will be detrimental to the township.

"The quality of police services directly affects our safety, image, and property values," said Township Administrator Kim Lapensee. "JEDZ is our best alternative to pay for the police services we need to keep the entire community safe."

Welcome, new businesses!

Butler Township would like to extend a warm welcome to Progressive Insurance. The company is currently developing the lot next Fifth Third Bank and will be open for business in the fall. The 17,000-square-foot facility will house around 50 employees from offices that are being consolidated in this area.

United Dairy Farmers will also complete renovations at the corner of Little York Road and North Dixie Drive by the end of summer. The new store was pushed to the westernmost property line from the intersection to make room for expanded fuel pumps.

Taco Bell will also be a new addition to the York Commons area as it has submitted plans to construct a new building at the corner of York Commons Boulevard and North Dixie Drive just across from McDonald's.

Does that project require a permit?

If you're planning a summer project...

Permits are required before construction of an accessory structure. Accessory structures include detached garages, sheds, gazebos, pools, and decks. If you're not sure whether a permit is required for your project, please call the Butler Township Zoning Department at 898-6735. Permit applications and zoning regulations can be found on our website at www.butlertownship.com.

Garage sales

Garage sales and yard sales lasting no more than three consecutive days are permitted without obtaining approval from the Zoning Department. Two off-premise signs (not greater than 4 square-feet) pertaining to garage sales, are allowed as long as the signs are removed within 24 hours following your event. Please do not post signs on poles, street signs, or other traffic control devices within the public right-of-way, as those signs will be removed.

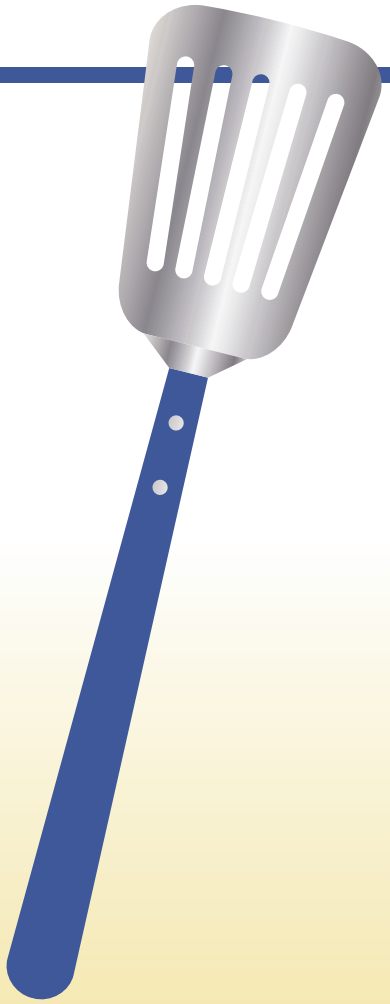
Recreational vehicle, boat, and trailer parking

Recreational equipment, including RVs, boats, and trailers, may be parked or stored on a residential property as long as they are not located in the front yard. Recreational equipment must be located no closer to the right-of-way than the front foundation of your home and no closer than 3 feet to a side property line.

For additional zoning information, please contact Erika Vogel at 898-6735 or evogel@butlertownship.com

Be safe while grilling out

By Fire Captain Mike Blakesly



The National Fire Protection Association reports that gas and charcoal grills cause about 8,300 home fires each year, which includes 3,400 structure fires and 4,900 outdoor fires.

Before you put your grilling skills on display, be sure you take these precautions:

- Never using a grill in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, under an awning or any other surface such as balconies that can catch fire. Charcoal grills should never be used indoors, even if ventilation is provided.
- Keeping grills at least 10 feet from houses and buildings.
- Before using a grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line.
- Be careful when using lighter fluid to start charcoal. Do not add fluid to an already lit fire because the flame flash could back up into the container and explode. Never use gasoline or kerosene to light the charcoal fire.
- Wait until coals have completely cooled before disposing them. A suggested practice is to douse them with plenty of water, and stir them to ensure that the fire is out. Never place them in plastic, paper or wooden containers.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing while cooking on a grill.
- Make sure everyone knows to Stop, Drop and Roll if a piece of clothing does catch fire. Call 911 if a burn warrants serious medical attention. All burns to the face, hands, feet or lower body area require medical attention.

For a more complete list of grilling safety tips see www.ul.com/grillsafety.

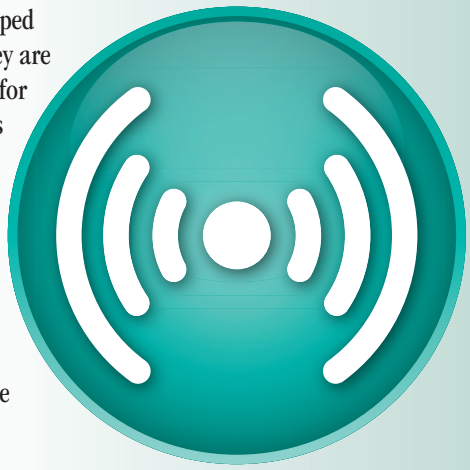
Grant helps fire department communicate

The Butler Township Fire Department was recently selected to receive a grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The grant will pay 95% of the $160,000 price for replacing existing handheld portable radios and vehicle-mounted mobile radios.

The department purchased the majority of the current radio equipment ten years ago. The hardware has become obsolete because the manufacturer and parts are no longer available. These original radios also will not be compatible with planned future updates to the regional radio system.

The new radios have been developed with the fire service in mind. They are equipped with controls designed for use by firefighters wearing gloves as well as rugged construction features for longevity.

The new radios will also be compatible with planned upgrades to the regional radio system and have manufacturer support during the lifecycle of the product line.



Fall brush drop-off will return

Mark your calendar for fall brush drop-off, a free service provided by the township exclusively for residents. Brush will be accepted every Saturday from October 12 to November 16, from 8 a.m. to noon.

More details will be available in the fall issue of this newsletter or by visiting the township's website at www.butlertownship.com.

Fire station updates underway

The Butler Township Fire Department has begun a renovation and remodel project at Fire Station 88 on Little York Road. The building, which has served as fire headquarters, is in need of various updates and improvements.

"This station has served the fire department well since 1989," said Fire Chief Dan Alig. "Many people can't believe the building is 24 years old."

Along with this construction project, the Township will locate a meeting hall on the east side of the fire station.

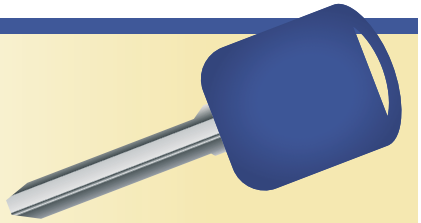
During construction the building will be closed and no fire department personnel will be at the building. Once the work begins, on-duty personnel will operate from the Vandalia Fire Station 1 on Peters Pike and Vandalia Fire Station 2 on Brown School.

"All administrative staff and a first responder will be relocated to the current township hall to assist with emergencies" said Alig.

If you need to contact the fire department, you may call the existing phone number 890-2491 and it will be answered at the government center during normal business hours.

As always, if you need to report an emergency please call 911 and for non-emergency calls to the dispatch center please call 233-2080.

Thefts from vehicles: 5 tips for protecting what's yours



Each year, $1.25 billion worth of personal items are stolen from motor vehicles throughout the U.S. That amounts to more than $3.4 million per day.

Many of these thefts could be prevented if owners would take some simple precautions. Here are five strategies that will help reduce the chance that you or your vehicle will be targeted by thieves:

1. Lock your doors.

This is the easiest way to protect your belongings. Butler Township police officers find that one of the most common factors in thefts from motor vehicles is that the doors are left unlocked.

2. Don't leave anything of value in your car.

Place all belongings out of sight if you can. Better yet, take them with you. Don't leave any clues that anything of value is inside the car. Hide iPod cables, cell phone chargers, and GPS suction mounts out of view before leaving your vehicle. Don't give thieves the impression that if they look hard enough, they'll find your valuables.

3. Place garage door operators out of view.

If your vehicle is in your driveway, the garage door operator will give a thief access to your home, as well.

4. Completely close windows and sunroofs.

With nicer weather upon us, it's easy to forget that you've left a window or your sunroof open. Open windows also disable pressure sensors in some vehicle alarms, potentially giving thieves more time to take your belongings.

5. Park in visible areas.

Parking in well-lit areas at night is an excellent deterrent. Thieves don't want to be seen breaking into your vehicle. Avoid coverage from large fences, larger vehicles, and foliage if you can too.

How to display the US flag properly

Most people who display the American flag at their home are doing so to be patriotic. But many aren't aware of the basic guidelines that are spelled out in federal laws.

Here are some rules to follow when displaying the flag at your home:

- Display the flag in public only from sunrise to sunset.
- You may display the flag at all times if it is illuminated during darkness.
- The flag should not be exposed to weather damage. It should not be displayed during rain, snow and wind storms unless it is an all-weather flag.
- The flag should be displayed often but especially on national and state holidays.

For more information on flag etiquette, visit this website: http://publications.usa.gov/epublications/ourflag/flaglaws1.htm.

Commerce Center Sidewalks

The Butler Township Trustees plan to install sidewalks on both sides of Commerce Center Drive later this year. The sidewalks will help improve the walkability of the business district and make the area more pedestrian friendly. The sidewalks will be installed from Benchwood to the Sam's Club entrance. The proposed cost of the project will be $250,000 and will be paid from the Harson Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Fund.

Around The Township

3510 Sudachi Dr.
Dayton, OH 45414

Township Trustees
(937) 898-6735
Doug Orange, President - x 1199
Michael Lang, Vice President - x1196
Martin Russell - x1197

Mark Adams, Fiscal Officer
(937) 898-6735 - x1198

Kim Lapensee, Administrator
(937) 898-6735 - x1121
Erika Vogel, Ass't Twp Admin.
(937) 898-6735 x1113
John Cresie, Police Dept.
(937) 890-2671
Dan Alig, Fire Dept.
(937) 890-2491
Doug Brunk, Public Works
(937) 890-1218

Trash Department
(937) 898-6735
Zoning Department
(937) 898-6735 - x1111
Police, Non-emergency
(937) 890-2671
Fire, Non-emergency
(937) 890-2491

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Independence Day Celebration

On Wednesday, July 3rd, Butler Township and the city of Vandalia will present the Star Spangled Celebration at the Vandalia Sports Complex located on Stonequarry Road. The evening begins at 7 p.m. with entertainment by Stranger, followed by fireworks at 10:00 p.m. There will also be family activities, food vendors and fun for everyone.

The fireworks are being sponsored by Fifth Third Bank, the Ohio National Guard, Beau Townsend, Joseph Airport Toyota, and Smedley's Chevrolet.