

# BROWN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1830

Winter 2014

## Fire Levy to Appear on May Ballot

Issue #38, the tax issue on the November 5, 2013 ballot to support fire and emergency services in Brown Township, failed by a vote of 222-171, in what was considered very low turnout.

The Norwich Township Fire Department provides fire and emergency service to Norwich Township, the City of Hilliard, and Brown Township. Service to Brown Township is provided under a contract which contains a provision stating that the parties intend that the effective tax rates for the jurisdictions remain roughly equal. Norwich Township and Hilliard voters approved a similar issue on the ballot in May 2013.

Because the Brown Township Trustees believe the most cost-effective way to provide high-quality fire and emergency services to township residents is the cooperative agreement with Norwich Township, a new fire levy will be placed on the May 6 ballot.

In discussions of the November levy results and possible ways to move forward, the Trustees indicated their be-

lieve that a campaign must be mounted to demonstrate to township residents the value of the current arrangement.

While public funds may not be used to support a campaign, the Trustees seemed confident that funds could be raised and volunteers would emerge.

Details on the levy language will be determined in the near future.

## Lux Appointed to Advisory Panel

The Brown Township Trustees appointed John Lux as Brown Township's representative on the Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel, effective in January 2014 to complete a term that ends in June 2015.

Mr. Lux succeeds Joe Martin, who has stepped down. Mr. Martin has served as Brown Township's representative since the inception of the Panel and was its chair for several years.

Mr. Lux, whose property abuts Big Darby Creek, has long been an advocate for the creek and was involved in work to secure state and national scenic river status. A Brown Township resident since 1984, Mr. Lux is a mechanical engineer and owns the business, JLA Engineering. He and his wife, Kim, have two daughters, Amanda and Stephanie. Mr. Lux is a graduate of the University

of Akron, with a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois.

The Panel is made up of representatives of the Big Darby Accord partner jurisdictions and is responsible for review and non-binding recommendations on applications from the member jurisdictions for property located within the Big Darby watershed in Franklin County to confirm that land use changes and zonings are consistent with the general land use plan and plan policies, establishing open space conservation areas, ensuring adequate public facilities, and overseeing adaptive management principles.

Member jurisdictions are the City of Columbus, Franklin County, City of Hilliard, Brown Township, Pleasant Township, Prairie Township, and Washington Township.



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SUSPENDED

Because of concerns about uncertainties regarding the future of several of the key components of the draft Brown Township Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Trustees has requested that the Franklin County planners working on the plan suspend work to allow progress to be made in several areas. The Board took this action by motion at its October 21 meeting.

The motion specifically mentioned uncertainties regarding the future of:

- alternative wastewater treatment systems
- conservation development regulations
- transfer of development rights
- stormwater management
- agricultural conservation district regulations.

Because work by other governmental bodies is required to enable the items listed, the Trustees felt that insufficient information is available to allow a complete understanding of the implications of these provisions.

For example, work on regulations to govern conservation developments has been underway for some time, but residential densities and density bonuses have neither been proposed nor agreed upon by staff and committee members. Additionally, the details of how alternative wastewater treatment systems would be permitted, funded, and operated are unclear, even though such systems would likely be necessary for conservation development to go forward. A transfer-of-development-rights program is not currently enabled in state law, and while discussions have taken place over many years, it is uncertain when appropriate legislation might be passed by the Ohio

General Assembly. The Franklin County Drainage Engineer (part of the Franklin County Engineer's Office) has proposed changes to funding for stormwater management in the county, but the changes would require approval from the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and such approval has not been scheduled. Finally, work on regulations to govern the proposed agricultural conservation district has not begun.

The Trustees wish to express their gratitude to the residents on the Comprehensive Plan Working Committee for their commitment and input to the process thus far. In addition to Trustees Martin and Sayre, Working Committee members are: Lana Ahlum, Mike Harrold, Barbara Hoover, Paul Lambert, Kim Lux, Doug Maggied, Eric Manske, Nancy Rhynard, John Tholen, and Neall Weber. The Trustees are also grateful to township residents who participated in the process and to the Franklin County planners who provided the staff work.



The Trustees want to build upon the excellent work already done and, therefore, passed a second motion dealing with how the township might proceed during the year without the aid of the Franklin County planners, freeing them up for other work. In the near future, the Trustees will define aspects of the Plan that might be continued by a committee of township residents.

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# Ohioans Targeted by Utility Bill Email Scam



Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine warned Ohioans to beware of unexpected email messages that appear to be utility bills.

Since mid-January, the Attorney General's Office has received more than 30 reports of utility bill email scams from consumers across Ohio.

"With bitterly cold temperatures affecting the state, you might expect your utility bill to be higher than usual," Attorney General DeWine said. "But if you're receiving unexpected utility bills from a company that's not your utility company, it's likely a scam. Don't respond to the message and don't make a payment unless you have proof you owe the money."

In a typical variation of the scam, a consumer receives an email message claiming to be from PG&E, a west coast utility company, or another out-of-state utility company. The message often claims the consumer owes \$344 or \$559 and it may contain a link to view the consumer's account or most recent statement. Consumers should not click on these links.

**To protect themselves, consumers should follow these tips:**

- Don't respond to unexpected email messages from senders you don't know. A scam email may look very similar to one from a legitimate business.
- Don't click on links or open attachments. Doing so could put malware on your computer.
- Copy and paste the email's first few sentences into an Internet search engine and add the word "scam." The results may indicate whether others have reported similar email messages.
- Skim the email for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Because email scams sometimes originate outside the United States, errors could signal a scam.
- Designate unwanted email as junk before deleting it so future messages from that sender are routed to your junk mailbox.
- When in doubt, call your utility

company using a number you know to be legitimate, such as a number on your most recent statement.

- Know your rights. During the heating season (Nov. 1 through April 15), natural gas and electric companies generally must give you 24 days' notice before disconnecting your service. Contact the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov), to learn more and to compare electric or natural gas offers in your region.

Consumers who suspect a scam or an unfair business practice should contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office at 800-282-0515 or [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).

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*Provided by Mike DeWine,  
Ohio Attorney General*



## Safety Tips for Your Home

The following tips are drawn from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Newsletter of December 2013.

- Lock doors and windows whether you are home or not. Make it a nightly routine to check the locks.
- Hang a bell on the door. Anyone entering your home will trigger this simple, unobtrusive alarm.
- Keep your house well lit at night to discourage criminals. Motion-detecting floodlights are a great option.
- Use highly visible and easy-to-read house numbers so law enforcement can effortlessly identify your home.
- Under door mats, flowerpots, or fake rocks are the first places a criminal will look. Instead, give a key to a trusted neighbor.
- Have a family safety plan. The best defense against home invasion is planning and communication.
- Join a Neighborhood Watch program. These programs build cohesive neighborhoods that help reduce crime.

# Water Well Maintenance and Testing

If you have a drinking water well for your home in Brown Township, you are aware that there are maintenance issues associated with its use.

The well needs to produce sufficient water for your household use, the water needs to be of acceptable quality, and the pump needs to be in good operating condition.

The Ohio Department of Health regulates private water systems through Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-28. Franklin County Public Health administers the program, with little local flexibility, and issues permits for drilling, alteration, and abandonment, according to Gary Young, RS, supervisor of the Water Quality Program. Franklin County Public Health also assists with well testing and trouble-shooting.

A private water system is defined as any water system, other than a public water supply system, for the provision of water for human consumption, if the system has fewer than 15 service connections and does not regularly serve an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least sixty days each year.

Franklin County's involvement in newly drilled wells (by a contractor registered with the Ohio Department of Health) involves testing the system and sampling the water for total coliform bacteria, and e coli if necessary, plus test strip analysis for nitrates. If a well tests positive for total coliform at

a rate higher than the acceptable level, a notice is sent to the property owner and disinfection guidance is provided.

Homeowners can disinfect their wells using a simple set of procedures involving pumping the well, calculating the amount of chlorine needed to disinfect it, preparing a solution of chlorine and vinegar and adding it to the well for a sufficient time, then flushing the chlorine from the water system. A few days later, Franklin County Public Health should retest the well for total coliform. These procedures may be also used by homeowners on existing wells.

These disinfection procedures may not be sufficient, in which case an experienced registered private water systems contractor should be contacted to disinfect the well professionally, using the enhanced procedures prescribed by code.

Sampling of all new and altered private water systems is required as part of the permitting process and the sampling cost is part of the permit fee. Franklin County Public Health also offers sampling of existing wells for private homeowners, plus a program of inspections and sampling for real estate transfers as is often required by lending institutions. There is a fee for sampling existing wells. Request forms are available at [www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org). Instructions for proper chlorination of a well can also be found there.

Mr. Young reports that there is no current

pattern of problems with aquifers in Brown Township, but adds that it is never a bad idea to have private water systems sampled occasionally to verify the integrity of the system.

Drinking water wells are not the only types of wells drilled in rural areas of Ohio. Agricultural wells are common and may be installed without permits.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources maintains a log of drinking water wells throughout the state. Information is available at [www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/maptechs/wellogs/app/](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/maptechs/wellogs/app/) or by contacting ODNR, Division of Water at 614-265-6740.

The Ohio Department of Health registers and bonds private water systems contractors. The current list of registered contractors and other information is available at [www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/water/PrivateWaterSystems/List-of-PWSCContractors.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/water/PrivateWaterSystems/List-of-PWSCContractors.aspx).

Assistance with drinking water well questions and other information is always available from Franklin County Public Health at [www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org) or by contacting Gary Young at 614-525-3909 or [gryoung@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:gryoung@franklincountyohio.gov).

*Prepared by Elizabeth A. Clark, AICP  
Executive Assistant to the Brown Township  
Board of Trustees*



*Trustees L-R: Greg Ruwe, Gary Dever,  
Pam Sayre and Joe Martin*

## **Brown Township Administration Office**

2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 ..... 876-2133

### **Website**

[www.BrownTwp.org](http://www.BrownTwp.org)

### **Fiscal Officer**

Greg Ruwe ..... 876-2133

### **Trustees**

Mr. Gary Dever ..... 876-4768

Mrs. Pamela Sayre ..... 878-0199

Mr. Joseph Martin ..... 870-9601

### **Norwich Fire Department**

Robert Kaufman, Chief ..... 876-7694

### **Brown Township Board of Trustees Meeting**

**When: 3rd Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: 2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio**

**For Police, Fire and Medical Emergencies, Dial 911**