

North Township NAVIGATOR

YOUR GUIDE TO NEWS AND SERVICES IN EAST CHICAGO, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING • SPRING 2013

RIDERSHIP ON THE RISE

Even before Dial-a-Ride's extended hours went into effect in March, the service has continued to post record numbers of trips.

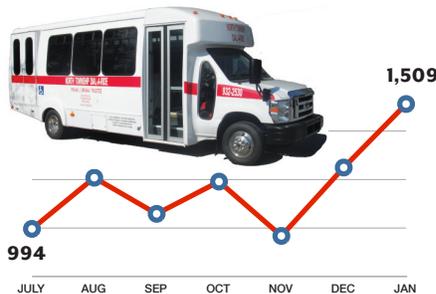
Dial-a-Ride Director Jerry Siska said the service provided 1,509 trips in January – and that's before the fourth bus is put into service, which is expected in April.

"We had our best January ever in 2013. Contrast that to the 879 trips in January 2012 and you can see how much we have been able to ramp up to meet the demand," Siska said. "We've added a relief driver and are better coordinating our trips. We are continuing to adapt to higher volumes and provide greater services to residents throughout the township."

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said the increasing demand for Dial-a-Ride service is right in line with the numbers he had been told to expect when the regional bus service was disbanded last summer.

DIAL-A-RIDE IN DEMAND

Ridership has nearly doubled since the collapse of the easygo Lake Transit bus system last summer.



"Our number one goal is to have no denials," Mrvan said. "We want to provide ride to everyone who needs them." ▲

RESERVATIONS: Dial-a-Ride operates Monday through Friday except holidays. Email dial-a-ride@ntto.net or call (219) 932-2530. Follow the prompts and push #4.

TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP HELPS RESIDENTS GAIN SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Ezekiel Battles had his sights set on a new career when opportunity knocked, compliments of North Township and a unique partnership.

The East Chicago resident is the first to take part in a transportation training initiative that provides education and hands-on skills with the result being gainful employment.

"I was ecstatic to learn I had been chosen and eager to begin training," Battles said. "The idea of starting a new career is exciting."

The Transportation Partnership includes key stakeholders: North Township, Ivy Tech Community College, Driveco, Schneider National and Holistic Community Coalition.

The partnership is planning to seat its first class of 10 in March. The Foundations of East Chicago are picking up the tab for the \$4,000-per-person training costs.

Those eligible for semi-truck driver training must have a valid driver's license and be a resident of East Chicago, "I am the kind of person who likes to stay with a job," Battles said. "I was at my last job for 12 years. I am really looking forward to this new job and a long, gainful career." ▲

INFO: Call Resource Coordinator Cindy Rivera at (219) 803-0659 or email riverac@ntto.net to learn about training opportunities for you!

TOWNSHIP CAREER FAIR

If a new job would help your future appear brighter and your financial future rosier, mark your calendars for the North Township Career Fair.

The event will feature local and regional businesses that are looking to fill available job openings with local talent.

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m. March 22

WHERE: Circle of Services, Hammond

FEE: Free

INFO: Call Resource Coordinator Cindy Rivera at (219) 313-1024.

FREE TAX SERVICES

Tax preparers from the American Association of Retired Persons will be at the Wicker Memorial Park Clubhouse to help residents 60 and older who have an income of \$35,000 or less prepare their income tax returns.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesday, Fridays and Saturdays through April 15

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Clubhouse, 2215 Ridge Road, Highland

FEE: Free

INFO: Call (219) 237-9030 and leave a message with the time and date you prefer. Visit www.northtownshiptrustee.com for a list of paperwork to bring to appointments.

OAK HILL CEMETERY

A director has been hired to create order from chaos at Oak Hill Cemetery.

Kelly Vicari, a former ambulance dispatcher and community organizer, will spend the next several months computerizing records for the more than 10,000 who have been interred at the long-neglected Hammond cemetery, which was taken over by North Township in 2012.

"She's a go-getter and that's what is needed here," North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said. "We're making progress at Oak Hill and want that to continue."



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM.



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EAST CHICAGO OFFICE

2105 Broadway, East Chicago, IN 46312
Phone: (219) 398-2435 **Fax:** (219) 397-2190
Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Tuesday through Friday; closed Mondays.

HAMMOND OFFICE

5947 Hohman Ave., Hammond, IN 46320
Phone: (219) 932-2530 **Fax:** (219) 937-4412
Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Monday through Thursday; closed Fridays

HESSVILLE OFFICE

Circle of Services, 2835-165th St.
 Hammond, IN 46323
Phone: (219) 803.0659
Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Monday through Friday

NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:
northtownship@theideafactory.us.com

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NORTH TOWNSHIP SAVES MONEY IN PILOT PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM

Five weeks into a pilot prescription drug program, North Township is already reaping significant savings.

Known as Data Rx, Chief Deputy Jane Dudley said prescriptions that cost the township \$3,700 in December now cost \$900, which saved \$2,800 in a single month.

“We went into this program because we were looking for cost savings but even we weren’t expecting to save more than two-thirds,” she said. “The other benefit is that it streamlines processes and makes it easier for our clients and for us.”

With an annual average cost of about \$40,000 in prescription drug benefits for township clients, Dudley said she expects the agency to realize about \$25,000 in savings in 2013.

“That is money that can be used for other deserving programs,” she said. “We are always looking to save money on one program to fund another.”

The township’s partner in the program is Fagen Pharmacy. “We are expecting other townships to join,” she said. “They may not see the volume that we do but they should see a similar percentage reduction in their costs.” ▲



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Data Rx is a Georgia-based company that provides health savings programs for insurance brokers, third-party administrators, employers, municipalities, HMOs, hospitals and pharmacy groups throughout the United States. “Data Rx partners with clients to provide the highest quality prescription healthcare services at the lowest possible price.”

HOW YOU QUALIFY

North Township’s prescription drug assistance program is available to low income individuals and families who reside in East Chicago, Hammond, Highland, Munster and Whiting. Income requirements are listed online at www.northtownshiptrustee.com. If you need assistance paying for prescription medications and believe you qualify, call the trustee’s office at (219) 932-2530.



LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

Ground-breaking partnership changing lives – and the status quo – in North Township

In this issue of the North Township Navigator, you have the opportunity to learn of an innovative initiative that shows the rewards of collaboration.

The ability of our township to work with higher education, nonprofits, foundations, private corporations and other units of government is giving us an unprecedented opportunity to provide greater services for residents in Whiting, Hammond, East Chicago, Munster and Highland.

Ezekiel Battles is our first success story of a unique partnership forged between Ivy Tech, Holistic Community Coalition, the foundations of East Chicago, Schneider Trucking and North Township.

I am convinced he will not be our last.

In upcoming weeks and with the assistance and support of all these groups, Ezekiel will be starting a program to learn how to drive a big rig. In need of a new career, he can look at graduating in a few short months with a job and a salary that will more than help him maintain a decent standard of living. For every success, Schneider Trucking has pledged to donate funds to help train others.

It’s the very best news I could hope to hear.

Our goal at the township is to help make people self-sufficient but we know we can’t do it without the support and assistance of others who have faith and believe as we do. We are grateful – and so is Ezekiel.

FRANK J. MRVAN
 North Township Trustee

SPRING IN THE PARK

The turf is lush and the oaks and maples are budding. It's the season that heralds promise, growth, a return to warmth, even a hop in by the Easter Bunny. Welcome spring at Wicker Park. Come. See for yourself what makes this park a special place.

GOLF COURSE NOW OPEN YEAR ROUND!

If you're looking for a challenging and beautifully maintained 18-hole golf course year round, you've come to the right place! This par-72 course offers tree-lined fairways, a practice green and driving range. Spring rates – good through May 5 – start at \$25 to ride 18 holes on the weekend or \$21 for nine holes. Weekdays with cart are \$21 for 18 holes or \$15 for nine holes. For more info or to schedule a tee time, call the Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809.

DOG RUN

Conveniently located along Indianapolis Boulevard, the Dog Run is open every day dawn to dusk. It has been so well used, the township is securing funding to double its size. Look for improvements in 2013!

WALKING AND BIKING TRAILS

The 2.5-mile trail that runs along the perimeter of the park is perfect for the avid walker, runner or bicyclist. The half-mile inner trail takes you on a scenic tour of the park, volleyball courts and playground. All trails are paved and open from dawn to dusk.

TENNIS AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS

The park features five tennis courts and three volleyball courts for the community to enjoy. In need of a tennis lesson? Call our park office at (219) 838-3420 to sign up or receive information on our tennis camps.

PICNIC AREAS AND SHELTERS

Picnic areas, shelters and the pavilion are available for rent from Memorial day through Labor Day. For a reservation or to request more information, please contact the Wicker Memorial Park office at (219) 838-3420.

BANQUET FACILITIES

Looking for a place to host your party, spring wedding, retirement party or meeting? Our banquet facilities are perfect for you. To make an appointment to view our spaces, call Bridget at (219) 923-3830. For rental fees and catering, visit our caterer's website at www.diningsolutionswickerpark.com.

For more information

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK

8554 Indianapolis Boulevard
Highland, Indiana 46322

www.wickermemorialpark.com



Around the Township

Whiting

GARAGE MAHAL

Sellers, browsers and buyers flock to Whiting's neighborhood garage sale. Pick up maps with the addresses and items sold on your way into town!

WHEN: May 18

WHERE: Whiting neighborhoods

INFO: Call (219) 659-0292.

Munster

MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEA

Honor and spend quality time with each other as you enjoy a catered 'tea style' lunch by Tiffany's Tearoom.

WHEN: 12:30 to 3 p.m. April 28

WHERE: Community Park Social Center, 8751 Lions Club Drive, Munster

FEE: Resident couple \$40, nonresident couple \$50, additional person \$10

INFO: Call (219) 836-PARK.

East Chicago

WELL WALKERS CLUB

This walking club is for adults over the age of 18. Receive a free pedometer when you join. Monthly meetings feature guest speakers.

WHEN: 10 a.m. March 1, April 5, May 3

WHERE: Roberto Clemente Center, 3616 Elm Street, East Chicago

INFO: Call (219) 391-8485.

Hammond

FISHING DERBY

Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and the Hammond Port Authority invite you to the 16th annual Fishing Derby. Prizes and trophies will be given for the largest salmon, trout and bass.

WHEN: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 20

WHERE: Hammond Marina, 701

Casino Center Drive, Hammond

FEE: Free entry, parking, refreshments

NOTE: Fishing will be allowed inside the marina on the west end, bin wall only. Land, dock fishing only; no boats.

INFO: Call (219) 659-7678.

Highland

EASTER EGG HUNT

Grab your basket and head to Wicker Memorial Park for the 7th annual North Township Easter Egg Hunt. Children ages 1 to 12 are invited to hunt for eggs until all are found! DJ music, a moon walk bouncy house and a visit from the Easter Bunny will be a part of the day's activities.

WHEN: 10:30 a.m. March 16

WHERE: Wicker Park Pavilion, 8554 Indianapolis Blvd., Highland

FEE: Free

INFO: Call 219-932-2530, ext. 331 or visit www.wickermemorialpark.com.

HOLIDAY HAM BINGO

Grab a friend and head over to Wicker Park for an afternoon of fun. Every winner gets a gift card good for a ham at a local grocer!

WHEN: noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 21

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

NOTE: North Township residents only

FEE: Free



FOUR WINDS CASINO TRIP

Roll the dice and let Lady Luck guide you to fame, fortune or at least a rollicking good time on this trip to New Buffalo, Michigan.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, April 22

WHERE: Four Winds Casino, New Buffalo, MI

FEE: \$26 per person. Upon arrival at the casino, you will receive a \$15 slot credit and a \$10 food credit.

Deadline to register is April 12.



SENIOR HEALTH FAIR

Join us for free on-site health screenings – bone density, blood pressure, blood glucose – as well as massage therapy, information and programs in a relaxed atmosphere. Refreshments will be served.

WHEN: noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, April 25

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: Free



SENIOR MOTHER'S DAY DANCE

Dick Elliot and his orchestra will entertain moms and all of those who love them at a special Mother's Day event in May. Make plans to join us as we celebrate mothers everywhere with a special dinner that will be following by an afternoon of dancing.

WHEN: 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 9

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center, Highland

FEE: \$20 per person includes a delightful dinner, gifts and entertainment.



FOUR WINDS CASINO TRIP

We'll test our luck again and make a second trip – rabbit's foot in hand – to Four Winds Casino.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 23

WHERE: Four Winds Casino, New Buffalo, MI

FEE: \$26 per person. Upon arrival at the casino, you will receive a \$15 slot credit and a \$10 food credit.

Deadline to register is May 14.



RESERVATIONS: For more information or to make reservations for any of these senior events, please call Special Event Supervisor Eleanor Uribe at (219) 313-3934 or email uribee@ntto.net.



EMERGENCY & DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS



FIRE RELIEF: The North Township Trustee's office provided emergency relief when the beautiful old building on the corner of 119th Street and Sheridan Avenue burned down Jan. 20. Ten families were displaced when their apartments were destroyed in the devastating blaze.

NORTH TOWNSHIP IN ACTION

When a fire decimated a dress shop and apartments on 119th Street in Whiting leaving 10 families without shelter or belongings, representatives from the North Township Trustee's office were there to help them pick up the pieces.

Roxanne Bartoszek, case manager in the township's East Chicago office, said Trustee Frank Mrvan has worked to establish protocols to provide assistance in those first critical hours following a fire, flood or tornado.

"We check to see if people need emergency shelter, food or clothing," she said. "We help until other service providers or insurance can start doing what they need to do to get people back on their feet."

Whiting Mayor Joseph Stahura was grateful for the help.

"The assistance provided by the North Township Trustee's office is a crucial component in our overall emergency plan," Stahura said. "In an environment where our resources are stretched to their limit, the Township provides valuable services to the victims of an emergency that can simply no longer be provided by our municipality." ▲



EMERGENCY RELIEF WEBSITE

The North Township Emergency website – <https://northtownship.recovers.org> – is a community-powered resource for the North Township communities of East Chicago, Hammond, Whiting, Highland and Munster. Once registered, township residents can volunteer, donate or request aid.

FLOOD RELIEF: North Township helped residents secure FEMA relief and other assistance when residents experienced flood damage and backups in basements during heavy storms in 2006 and 2007.

TORNADO RELIEF: A tornado knocked down hundreds of trees and destroyed property throughout North Township in 2008, adding to the already severe flood damage that had taken its toll on the township in 2006 and 2007.

WATER BOIL: North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan and his staff provided bottled water to residents when water service to the entire City of East Chicago was shut off in 2011 because of a water main break at the filtration plant.



READING PROGRAM

Frank Mrvan finds great joy in one of his least traditional tasks – reading to second graders throughout North Township.

The book is always the same. It's the students who change each year.

My favorite children's book is, "When I Grow Up," the trustee said. "The main point of the story is helping children understand there is a connection between what they do every day – going to school, doing their chores – and doing the very best that they can now, which will prepare them for success when they are grown."

He reads the book with the uplifting message so often, he can recite it from memory and does so whenever he forgets his well-worn copy.

SENIOR LUNCHEONS

Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for only \$5 at the monthly luncheon at Wicker Park Social Center in Highland. Doors open at 11 a.m.

MARCH 13: Mixed green salad, spaghetti, garlic bread and peppermint ice cream.

APRIL 17: Mixed green salad, chicken ala king on rice and orange sherbet.

MAY 8: Mixed green salad, pork loin, roasted potatoes, applesauce, peas and carrots and peach cobbler.

RESERVATIONS: Call (219) 932-2530 and Press 2 to reserve your seat today!

SERVICE PROVIDER BOOK

A booklet of service providers is available for the asking. It features information on community organizations, churches and departments within local government that provide low- or no-cost assistance for counseling, clothing, emergency shelter, prescriptions, child care and gas vouchers.

The directory is available in book format at the Trustee's Hammond and East Chicago offices or digital format online at www.northtownshiptrustee.com.

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.



Frank J. Mrvan



NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM.

First Annual
CLASSIC CARS
IN THE PARK

10 AM - 4 PM • MAY 12

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK
2215 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND

REGISTRATION
BEGINS AT 9 AM

JUDGING
AT NOON

AWARDS
AT 3 PM



FOR MORE INFORMATION: CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.com OR CALL (219) 932-2530, EXT. 331