

Forsyth Township Road Millage **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Why do we need a road millage?

Most residents recognize the poor state of our roads just from driving on them. A study completed by UP Engineering and Architects indicates that, of the roughly 70 miles of roads that the Township is responsible for maintaining, only 6 miles are rated as being in good repair (with a PASER rating of above 4), or less than 10%. Ninety percent of our roads have a PASER rating of 4 or below, indicating "Critical distress". **Note: A copy of the study and map of the streets in distress is located in the Club House**

Aren't there more than 70 miles of roads in Forsyth Township?

Yes. However, the State of Michigan is responsible for maintaining all State Highways that run through Forsyth Township, such as M-35 and M-553, and Marquette County is responsible for maintaining all main arterial roads, usually numbered roads such as County Road 557. That leaves 70 miles of roads that are the responsibility of Forsyth Township to maintain.

Don't we pay gas tax to maintain our roads?

Yes, in Michigan we pay a gas tax on each gallon of gasoline or diesel fuel purchased for on road usage. Of the money collected by the State of Michigan for roads, some undoubtedly goes to roads that the State is responsible for maintaining, and there is a formula for distributing the remainder of the money. The formula addresses the population of any given area and the "lane miles" of roads in that area. (A lane mile is a one lane road for one mile. A two-lane road for one mile would equate to two lane miles, etc.) While Forsyth Township is geographically one of the largest townships in Michigan, we have a proportionately low population. Likewise, Marquette County is the largest County geographically in the State, but is relatively low on population per square mile. As well, as gas prices have risen, and cars/trucks have become more fuel efficient, that does not mean more money for road maintenance.

Who gets the gas tax money from the State?

The Marquette County Road Commission is the agency that receives the money for maintenance of all Marquette County Roads. With that money, they are responsible for maintenance such as pothole repairs, repairs of culverts and drainage issues, grading of gravel roads, tree trimming and lawn cutting along all roads, snow plowing and salting in winter. The result is that there is very little left for repaving/resurfacing any roads. Fifty years ago, the money they received was adequate to repave or resurface a roadway periodically. As gas prices rose, the cost of asphalt, a petroleum-based product, has also gone up substantially. Later the County adopted a model of sharing the cost of repaving with the local government units. As time has passed, the amount available for repaving and resurfacing has become significantly less.

Why do we need a new millage to fix our roads? Can't the Township do it with what we already pay?

As our roadways have deteriorated, Township costs for water, sewer, police and fire protection have all gone up. The Township is also responsible for maintaining the Clubhouse and all public buildings as well as Township Parks and the Library. In the past, with the US Air Force Base in this area, the Federal Government contributed substantially to supporting the infrastructure in this area, which is no longer the case. Although there is an annual budget for road maintenance in the Township budget, it covers only small repairs.

What does the rest of Marquette County do to pay for their road repairs?

Of the 22 governing units (cities and townships) in Marquette County, 16 of them already have a Road Millage to help them repair their roads.

Does the Road Commission do anything for our roads in Forsyth Township?

Yes. This summer/fall, the Road Commission partnered with Forsyth Township on three projects: Iron Street in Gwinn from M-35 (Catholic Church) to vicinity of the Tourist Park, replacement of the collapsed culvert on Halfway Creek near the High School, and three streets on KI Sawyer. The township contributed \$220,000 for these projects, with the Road Commission augmenting the remainder. Collectively, these projects cost \$400,000.

Why did many of the residents of Gwinn and New Swanzy get most of their streets repaved?

Repaving of the city streets was part of the major project to replace nearly 100-year-old water/sewer lines and is paid by water / sewer users.

How will the decisions be made to decide which streets will get fixed and when?

The Forsyth Township Supervisor, in consultation with the Roads Committee, the County Road Commission, and potentially an engineering firm, will formulate an annual work plan which will be presented to the full Forsyth Township Board for approval, each year.

How much will the Road Millage cost me?

How much your taxes will increase depends on the Taxable Value of your particular property.

On a home with a taxable value of \$50,000, this will equal \$80 a year, or approximately \$7 a month.

To make a more exact calculation, look at your tax bill. Take the "taxable value" and multiply that amount by .0016. That is the annual amount the millage will cost you.

What are the alternatives if the road millage does not pass?

Our roads will not be substantially repaired, with a band-aid approach only for critical issues. Difficult decisions will have to be made between critical roadwork and other township services. We will continue to pay the "cost" of poor roads by increased car repairs, most notably:

- Vehicles being knocked out of alignment by bumps and pot holes
- Excess wear on items such as shocks, struts, tires, bearings, ball joints
- Increased flat tires and tire repairs/replacement
- Increased risk of accidents

Additional information is available on the Township Web site at: www.forsythwpmi.org