



# MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWS

SPRING 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**TOWNSHIP'S STANDARD & POOR'S  
RATING IMPROVES - AGAIN!**

**3<sup>RD</sup> PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT**

**COMMUNITY GARDENS RIBBON CUTTING**

Hidden Lake by James Furiosi - Resident



Middle Smithfield Township  
**mstEatLocal.com**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 9 -  
SUNDAY, APRIL 17**

## RESTAURANT WEEK 2016 IS BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Judy Acosta

Running *Saturday, April 9th through Sunday April 17th*, local residents, neighbors and visitors alike will enjoy discounted menus from participating restaurants in Middle Smithfield Township.

There's cuisine to tempt every palate: Italian, American, Asian, and more. Smaller eateries in the Township are also participating and offering great options for locals looking to grab a quick bite to eat. After last year's success, this year promises to be even better.

### **FREE FOOD SAMPLES - FREE WINE TASTINGS!\***

*Stop by Whispering Pines on Friday, April 8th, 6:30pm at 8:30pm*, and sample some of the great menu items you can find in Middle Smithfield Township during Restaurant Week.

The Pocono Photo Club is hosting their third Photography Exhibit in Middle Smithfield Township and joining with our Economic Development Committee to kick off Restaurant Week with a unique food and wine pairing. This free event will feature participating restaurants with a full list available on our website **mstEatLocal.com**.

\*Must be 21 years or older to attend event.



# MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWS

## WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

- APRIL 1** | Golf Course Opens  
(weather permitting)
- APRIL 2** | Homeowners Association Networking Meeting
- APRIL 8 - APRIL 17** | Restaurant Week  
[MSEatLocal.com](http://MSEatLocal.com)
- APRIL 8** | Pocono Photo Club Exhibit Opening  
Reception - "Hungry for Photography"
- APRIL 9** | Pike & Monroe County Master Gardener:  
Gardening Seminars
- APRIL 16** | 1000 Feet of Street Litter Cleanup
- APRIL 25** | Leaf Collection Begins
- MONTH OF MAY** | Mastodon May Madness
- MAY 6 - 7** | "Dumpster Day" Spring Cleanup & Freecycle
- MAY 12 - 13** | Freecycle
- MAY 13** | Pocono Wildlife Rehab & Education Golf  
Fundraiser
- MAY 13** | Painting Exhibit Opening Reception  
"Natural Wonders & Wildlife"
- MAY 20** | Leaf Collection ends
- MAY 22** | Mady's Angels Golf Fundraiser & Dinner
- MAY 22** | Veteran Memorial Pedication Playground  
Ribbon Cutting
- JUNE 4** | Community Gardens Park Ribbon Cutting
- JULY 14** | Mid-Year Report to the Public
- AUG. 20** | Memory Makers Luncheon
- SEPT. 10** | Home Owners Association Networking Meeting
- OCT. 15** | 1000 Feet of Street littler cleanup
- OCT. 7 - 8** | Fall cleanup and Freecycle
- OCT. 12** | Fossil Day - Marshall's Creek Mastodon
- OCT. 13 - 15** | Freecycle
- OCT. 22** | Trunk or Treat at Resica Park
- OCT. 24** | Leaf Collection begins
- NOV. 18** | Leaf Collection Ends
- NOV. 18** | Person of the Year & Volunteer Appreciation
- NOV. 19** | Shop Local Discount Cards Available
- NOV. 26** | 4th Annual Tree Lighting at Echo Lake Park
- DEC. 1** | Presentation of the 2017 Budget to the Public

## STAY CONNECTED WITH US



FACEBOOK.COM/MSTOWNSHIP  
[MIDDLESMITHFIELDTOWNSHIP.COM](http://MIDDLESMITHFIELDTOWNSHIP.COM)

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST TODAY!  
CALL 570-223-8920 ext. 100 OR EMAIL US  
AT [INFO@MSTOWNSHIP.COM](mailto:INFO@MSTOWNSHIP.COM)

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## PERSON OF THE YEAR 2015

**Holly Freese**

The 2015 Person of the Year, Chauly Younger, is a passionate gardener that brought her skills and enthusiasm to the newly created MST Community Gardens on Coolbaugh Road to benefit the Bushkill Outreach. Embracing and promoting the "Grow a Row" program, Chauly inspired a community effort that led to the donation of more than 150 pounds of fresh produce. In addition to Chauly, two finalists were also recognized.

Finalist Michelle Cacko has done work over the past 5 years with the Independent Bikers of PA and their annual KidsPeace Toy Run, as well as playing an active role in the East Stroudsburg Youth Association, where she now acts as General Manager.

Finalist Timothy O'Donnell plays an active role in Kiwanis Club of the Poconos Daybreak. There he led an initiative with the National Parks Service, the Pocono Environmental Education Center, Middle Smithfield Elementary and East Stroudsburg University that would allow children to learn about the rich, natural features of the area. To learn more about the 2015 Person of the Year, the finalists and their causes visit [mstPersonoftheYear.com](http://mstPersonoftheYear.com).







## A WORD FROM YOUR TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Mike Dwyer, Mark Oney, and Annette Atkinson

Presidential election years are often the most unpredictable as far as economic growth, job creation, and overall stability in the commercial industry. While current policies dictate what will happen this year, no one is certain about the future. It is up to you to take the time to research the candidates and vote. Sitting on the sidelines can affect all of us.

While the Board of Supervisors do not affect national economics, we can affect our local residents and business owners. It is our goal to see Middle Smithfield Township flourish; commercial and industrial growth will expand the tax base, create jobs, and bolster our local economy.

As you might have already read or heard about, after nearly 2 years of hard work, Middle Smithfield Township has enacted a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA) that we hope will attract new business to locate here and existing business to improve their properties within our commercial and industrial zones. Our township is the only one in the county, and possibly even the State, that has enacted such an incentive throughout all commercial and industrial zones.

As homeowners, we believe that a thriving business district will improve property values. While the real estate market is improving in many parts of the country, we are seeing an increase in property transfers (sales of homes) and that is a good thing.

We also saw a tremendous increase in our citizen's earnings; the Earned Income Tax (EIT) revenue in 2015 was 13% greater than 2014. While probably none of us saw a 13% pay increase, it does indicate that there are more residents employed than the year prior.

Another way to attract business and improve our local economy is to prove to be a thriving, vibrant, and beautiful township. As you will read in this newsletter, there are many residents that are contributing to Middle Smithfield Township's success. New playgrounds have been added to Echo Lake and Coolbaugh Parks (okay, as of this writing they were just starting the install so we hope by the time you are reading this we've been able to take a test run down the slide.) We are also memorializing the great Marshall's Creek Mastadon find with a historical marker, and "Mastodon May Madness", and are improving each township road systematically and with a stated goal to improve every road within 10 years. Our aging sewer system is finally seeing much needed improvements.

There are many successes made each year and we always welcome volunteers to pitch in! Your Supervisors are accessible nearly all the time, and we look forward to working with all of you. Have a great Spring and we look forward to a wonderful Summer here in the diamond within the mountains, our own Middle Smithfield Township, Gateway to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

**Middle Smithfield Township Administrative Office**  
147 Municipal Drive East Stroudsburg, PA 18302  
570-223-8920 | [info@mstownship.com](mailto:info@mstownship.com)  
[MiddleSmithfieldTownship.com](http://MiddleSmithfieldTownship.com)

### Middle Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors

Annette Atkinson | Chairperson | x124  
Michael Dwyer | Vice Chairman | x123  
Mark Oney | Supervisor | x125

### Middle Smithfield Township Staff

**Michele Clewell** | Township Secretary  
Human Resources and Administrative Coordinator  
[mclewell@mstownship.com](mailto:mclewell@mstownship.com) | x112

**Joan Woisin** | Sewer Department Manager  
Open Records and Right to Know Officer  
[jwoisin@mstownship.com](mailto:jwoisin@mstownship.com) | x115

**Dave Manter** | On Lot Sewage Enforcement Officer  
[dmanter@mstownship.com](mailto:dmanter@mstownship.com) | x128

**Ray Wolfe** | Budget and Finance Manager  
[rwolfe@mstownship.com](mailto:rwolfe@mstownship.com) | x131

**Karen Stapleton** | Public Works and Roads Manager  
[kstapleton@mstownship.com](mailto:kstapleton@mstownship.com) | x118

**Shawn McGlynn** | Zoning and Code Enforcement  
Officer  
[zoning@mstownship.com](mailto:zoning@mstownship.com) | x126

**Judith Acosta** | Zoning Administration  
[jacosta@mstownship.com](mailto:jacosta@mstownship.com) | x128

**Chantel Wilder** | Director of First Impressions  
and Historical Commission Liaison  
[cwilder@mstownship.com](mailto:cwilder@mstownship.com) | x100

**Christopher Rain** | Community and Municipal  
Projects Coordinator, Parks and Rec Liaison,  
Banquet Hall Liaison  
[crain@mstownship.com](mailto:crain@mstownship.com) | x119

**Holly Freese** | Community & Municipal  
Projects Coordinator, Golf Committee  
Liaison, Homeowners Association Liaison  
[hfreese@mstownship.com](mailto:hfreese@mstownship.com) | x132

**Courtney Woytko** | Community & Municipal  
Projects Coordinator and Economic  
Development Committee Liaison  
[cwoytko@mstownship.com](mailto:cwoytko@mstownship.com) | x121

**Steven Natiello** | Digital and Operations  
Projects Manager  
[snatiello@mstownship.com](mailto:snatiello@mstownship.com) | x130

**Robert Rengifo** | Spring Intern from ESU  
[rrengifo@mstownship.com](mailto:rrengifo@mstownship.com)

### Committees

**Ray White** | Golf Advisory Committee | x205  
[goldadvisorycommittee@mstownship.com](mailto:goldadvisorycommittee@mstownship.com)

**Abigail Graham** | Parks & Rec | x201  
[parksandrecreation@mstownship.com](mailto:parksandrecreation@mstownship.com)

**Abigail Graham** | Litter & Beautification | x202  
[litter&beautification@mstownship.com](mailto:litter&beautification@mstownship.com)

**Carrie Wetherbee** | Historical Commission | x203  
[historicalcommission@mstownship.com](mailto:historicalcommission@mstownship.com)

**Bob Hetu** | Economic Development | x204  
[EconomicDevelopmentCommittee@mstownship.com](mailto:EconomicDevelopmentCommittee@mstownship.com)



# FINANCE: TREASURER'S NOTE

## STANDARD AND POOR'S **RAISES RATINGS** FOR THE TOWNSHIP

Ray Wolfe

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has reviewed the township's 2014 financial records and has once again raised Middle Smithfield Township's rating based on its 2014 performance. The rating for Middle Smithfield Township has been raised from "A+" to "AA-" and the outlook has been upgraded from "stable" to "positive". The S&P rationale states, in part, that the upgraded ratings are "due to a history of strong financial performance that has led to increased general fund reserves, resulting in the maintenance of very strong budgetary flexibility."

"We are very pleased that a Big Three credit rating agency has recognized the advanced financial stability this administration has made", said township Supervisor and Treasurer Mike Dwyer. "The improved rating confirms our fiscal policies are working for the betterment of Middle Smithfield Township."

Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC (S&P) is an American financial services company. It is a division of McGraw Hill Financial that publishes financial research and analysis on stocks and bonds. S&P is known for its stock market indices such as the U.S.-based S&P 500, the Canadian S&P/TSX, and the Australian S&P/ASX 200. S&P is considered one of the Big Three credit-rating agencies, which also include Moody's Investor Service and Fitch Ratings.

The full rating can be found at [standardandpoors.com](http://standardandpoors.com).



## RE-ASSESSMENT: A NOTE FROM YOUR MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

John Moyer, Charlie Garriss, & John Christy

### WHAT IS REASSESSMENT?

A reassessment is the process by which the assessed value of real estate property is revised to keep the value consistent with what the property is worth on the open market and to assess properties fairly in comparison with each other.

### WHY IS MONROE COUNTY CONSIDERING A REASSESSMENT NOW?

Property assessments are intended to reflect market values at the time of reassessment. Between reassessment periods market values change. Reassessments are intended to restore equity within the county so that values are at a uniform percentage of market value.

The last reassessment in Monroe County took place in 1989, twenty-seven years

ago. Because of property value fluctuations within areas of the county and the thousands of assessment appeal hearings that have been heard, similar properties, even those in the same neighborhood, have widely varying assessed values resulting in inconsistent taxes.

### WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE REASSESSMENT PROCESS IN MONROE COUNTY?

During 2015, the Monroe County Commissioners started outlining their concerns with the process and investigating firms that could conduct the reassessment. They are part way through the process, but it's unlikely that an assessment firm will be selected before late summer or early fall 2016. Once a contract is signed, it is likely to be two to three years before the reassessment is complete.

### HOW WILL A PROPERTY VALUE BE DETERMINED?

A residential property value is determined by collecting the characteristics of each property and comparing these characteristics to similar properties in comparable locations that have recently sold. Adjustments for differences in properties are then made to arrive at a market value for the property. For commercial and industrial property, rental income and expenses are also considered in the valuation process.

### WHAT PROPERTY INFORMATION IS COLLECTED DURING THE REASSESSMENT?

For residences, information such as location, lot size, topography, zoning, square footage, style, grade of construction, condition, number of bathrooms, garage size and type, number of rooms, basement type, year built, effective age, porches, decks, pools, other improvements and view. (Cont. on page 16)



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Bob Hetu | Vice Chairperson: Carrie E. Wetherbee | Secretary: Carl Wilgus | Member: Gina Bertucci  
Member: Beverly Brown | EDC Liaison: Courtney Woytko - cwoytko@mstowship.com

## RESTAURANT WEEK: FREE SAMPLES AT KICKOFF EVENT!

To kickoff Restaurant Week in style, participating restaurants will have samples of their food, paired with the appropriate wine from Blue Ridge Winery, at the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall the evening of Friday, April 8th, from 6:30-8:30pm. Blue Ridge Winery will also have a free wine tasting at the kickoff. More and more restaurants are joining every day.

**Featured Restaurants include:**  
**The Big A, Pub 570, Royal Asian Buffet, Tom X Pub, and Wintergreens.**

### FREE KICKOFF EVENT DETAILS

FRIDAY APRIL 8TH, 6:30-8:30PM

WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL

FREE; LIVE MUSIC,  
LIGHT FOOD, WINE TASTING

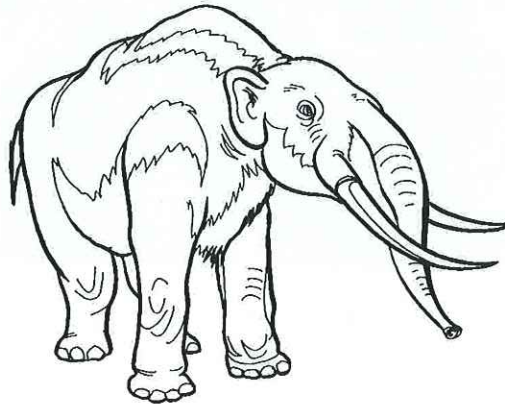
[MSTEATLOCAL.COM](http://MSTEATLOCAL.COM)

## MASTODON MAY MADNESS: SCAVENGER HUNT AND PRIZES!

Bob Hetu

During the month of May, participating stores in Middle Smithfield Township will have fun fossil stuff for kids to collect, ending with prizes and more at the Eastern Monroe Public Library. Sign up for an email newsletter to get more details this month!

One of the largest and most intact Mastodon skeletons was discovered right here in Middle Smithfield. While the skeleton now resides in the museum at Harrisburg, recently the township received a life-size replica of one of the Mastodon's skeletal feet. The township, together with its Historical Commission, is in the process of obtaining a roadside Historical Marker. To celebrate, the township is conducting a Mastodon May Madness Scavenger Hunt!



### MAY MASTODON MADNESS: SCAVENGER HUNT DETAILS

MONTH OF MAY

IN MIDDLE SMITHFIELD

PRIZE EVENT AT HUGHES  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

SIGN UP FOR EMAILED DETAILS:  
[INFO@MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM](mailto:INFO@MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESIDENT SURVEY

Middle Smithfield Township Economic Development Committee wants to hear from **YOU**...the residents of Middle Smithfield Township. Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey to help us improve our community.

### QUESTION 1 OF 3

Did you know Middle Smithfield Township has an Economic Development Committee whose vision is to create a diverse business community?

☐ YES ☐ NO

### QUESTION 2 OF 3

Our Business Directory consists of five (5) categories. Which of the categories listed below would you like to see expanded in MST?

- ☐ **SHOP**  
MORE OPTIONS  
TO SHOP
- ☐ **EAT**  
MORE MENUS  
TO CHOOSE FROM
- ☐ **PLAY**  
I WANT MORE  
FUN THINGS TO
- ☐ **LIVE**  
MORE RESOURCES FOR  
MY FAMILY & HOME
- ☐ **STAY**  
I WANT TO VACATION WITHOUT  
HAVING TO DRIVE FOR HOURS

### QUESTION 3 OF 3

If you could choose what businesses were included in our community, what would they be? You can list as few or as many as you'd like. You can list a specific business or a type of business.

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Drop off or mail this survey: Middle Smithfield Township - 147 Municipal Drive, East Stroudsburg, PA 18302  
or to complete this survey online visit [www.mstShopLocal.com/survey](http://www.mstShopLocal.com/survey)

Thank you for sharing your opinions. It is our desire to improve the community through economic growth and development. If you would like to join us in that mission, please attend one of our monthly meetings held on the second Monday of the month at 6:30pm at the MST township building.



# PUBLIC WORKS

Karen Stapleton | Public Works and Roads Manager  
kstapleton@mstowship.com | 570-223-8920 x118

## TOWNSHIP SPRING CLEANUP (AKA "DUMPSTER DAY") AND FREECYCLE

Karen Stapleton

Middle Smithfield Township's annual Spring Clean Up is on May 6 and 7, with the Freecycle Event on May 12-14. Residents can drop off gently used items knowing they won't go to a landfill. Instead, they will go to a neighbor or char-

itable organization that will put them to good use. Spring Clean Up costs \$5 per car load (price varies for larger vehicles) and tire disposal starts at \$4 per tire.

Charitable organizations such as Bushkill Outreach, The Salvation Army, and the Women's Resource Center can pick up

any items left after the Freecycle event. Any books left in good condition will be delivered to the Hughes Library for their annual book sale in June.

Residents must bring proof of residency such as a tax bill, rent receipt, etc., in order to participate. Acceptable Items: bulk items, furniture, toys, washers, dryers, bicycles, lawn mowers, water heaters, batteries, nails, screws, empty paint cans. Unacceptable Items: Household garbage, construction debris or hazardous material.

### DUMPSTER DAY DETAILS

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY: MAY 6-7<sup>TH</sup>**  
**7AM-4PM AT MUNICIPAL BUILDING**  
**147 MUNICIPAL DRIVE**  
**MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM**



### 2016 ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

*We continue to be ahead of our 10 year Road Improvement Plan*

**UPPER LAKEVIEW DRIVE**  
SPOT PAVE, TAR, & CHIP

**TIMBER MOUNTAIN DRIVE**  
PAVE

**MARJORIE COURT**  
PAVE

**COOLBAUGH**  
TAR & CHIP

**WOODDALE ROAD**  
TAR & CHIP

**FRUTCHEY DRIVE**  
PAVE

**TEGO LAKE**  
PAVE

**BESECKER DRIVE**  
PAVE

**POCONO DRIVE**  
PAVE

*In 2016, we expect to receive \$496,912 in Liquid Fuels funds from the State.*

## "1,000 FEET OF STREET" LITTER CLEANUP

Karen Stapleton

The "Make it Pretty Committee," along with the Public Works Department and the Adopt-A-Road participants will work hard at cleaning up local roads on Saturday, April 16.



**LITTER CLEANUP DETAILS • SATURDAY, APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2016 • 8AM-AFTERNOON**  
**CALL KAREN X119; COSTS VARY • MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM**

As the township works toward improving the appearance of their "Main Street," they hope to attract more visitors and patrons to the area. Volunteers are always welcome. As a volunteer you can clean your road or to be grouped with other volunteers on a designated road. You can also "Adopt-A-Road," have a sign placed in your honor and clean that road.

Bags, pickers, gloves, safety vests and shirts will be provided by the township, as well as light refreshments.

## ADOPT A ROAD

Karen Stapleton

Middle Smithfield Township offers an adoption program as a way for caring individuals and groups to "adopt" town-

ship roads and help keep them litter free. All it takes is a concerned person or group of volunteers to be part of the solution in keeping Middle Smithfield Township litter free. (Cont. on page 7)



# LITTER & BEAUTIFICATION

[litter&beautification@mstownship.com](mailto:litter&beautification@mstownship.com)



(“Adopt a Road” cont. from page 6)

Middle Smithfield Township recognizes the volunteer’s effort with a sign that tells visitors and residents that someone cares enough about removing trash and litter to “adopt” an area.

Middle Smithfield Township supervisors thank all our adopt-a-road participants. Contact Karen Stapleton to obtain your supplies for our “1000 Feet of Street” event on April 16th.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

**LEE PRUTZMAN** - 11 ROADS IN LEISURE LANDS

**TOM WATSON** - CHURCH & OAK GROVE DRIVE

**TIM ARNST** - FRUTCHEY DRIVE

**SELLERSVILLE HUNTING CLUB**  
SELLERSVILLE DRIVE

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** - MUNICIPAL DRIVE

**RUTH VAN WHY (TOM X PUB)** - TOM X ROAD

**ROBERT POST** - UPPER LAKEVIEW

**RESICA FALLS SCOUT RESERVATION**  
FIRESTONE LANE

**MONROE COUNTY MEALS ON WHEELS**  
FOXMOORE DRIVE

**ANNETTE ATKINSON** - TURKEY RIDGE ROAD

## OAK GROVE & RECYCLING

### TAKE YOUR LEAF WASTE TO A MULCH BETTER PLACE

**Karen Stapleton**

The Oak Grove Multi-Municipal Compost Processing program is jointly operated and available to residents of Middle Smithfield, Smithfield and Lehman Townships. The facility is centrally located on Oak Grove Drive in Middle Smithfield Township and is staffed on a regular basis, from Monday- Saturday, 7am- 2pm. To use the facility you must be a resident of one of the participating townships or a commercial business located in the townships. Participants must obey posted signage, and materials need to be placed in designated areas. The attendant also has the final say on whether or not items may be unloaded.

**Acceptable Materials:** Leaves, Christmas trees, shrubs (no roots) and shrubbery, tree trimmings, and branches cut into 6 foot lengths and no longer than 12 inches in diameter. **Unacceptable Materials:** Stumps, grass clippings, garbage, bulk items, dirt, stones, bricks, construction debris, concrete, hazardous materials, fruits and/or vegetables, lumber, metals, plastics, plastic or rubber bags. All materials must be completely free of contaminants.

### 2016 SPRING LEAF COLLECTION

**Karen Stapleton**

*Please keep in mind that only leaves will be picked up-- no sticks, limbs, stumps, grass clippings or any other yard waste. Leaves must be placed at the road edge and must not be in bags.*

The schedule is subject to change without notice depending on weather, volume of leaves or other emergency that might arise. Under township ordinance, open burning of leaves is prohibited.

If you do not live on a Township Road your leaves will not be collected. However, you are welcome to drop off leaves and brush at your HOA’s central drop-off or the Oak Grove Multi-Municipal Compost Facility located at 3305 Oak Grove road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18302. The hours of Operation are Monday through Saturday, 7am-2pm.



Oak Grove Multi-Municipal Compost Facility delivery of one Hook Truck, two dumpsters and belt loader at NO cost to our township from another municipality who received the equipment via a grant, but can no longer use it.

### WEEK 1 & 2

**April 25th- May 6th**

Includes Wooddale Area and Coolbaugh Drive.

### WEEK 3

**May 9th- May 13th**

Includes Route 402 and Oak Grove, Hidden Lake and Timothy Lake.

### WEEK 4

**May 16th- May 20th**

Includes Lower Lakeview Drive and Sellersville Drive.

A complete leaf collection road schedule can be found at [MiddleSmithfieldTownship.com](http://MiddleSmithfieldTownship.com)



# PARKS & RECREATION

Vice Chairperson: Jenna Componovo  
Lead Coordinator, Community Gardens Park: Michelle Dellavalle  
Lead Coordinator, Resica Park: Jamie Frailey  
Liaison: Christopher Rain - [crain@mstowship.com](mailto:crain@mstowship.com)

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

Christopher Rain

Eagle Scout candidate Joe Schuon of Boy Scout Troop 87 has completed the Veterans Memorial at Echo Lake Park as his Eagle Scout project. He is planning a dedication ceremony on **Sunday May, 22 at 1pm** and will invite local boy and girl scouts, VFW posts, and the public. This dedication ceremony will also include an official opening for the new Echo Lake Park playground.

Eagle Scout candidate Dustin Diaz of Boy Scout Troop 87 will build a flagpole and benches at the MST Dog Park this spring as his Eagle Scout project. After fundraising to cover the costs of supplies, Dustin hopes to have the project completed by Memorial Day.

**DEDICATION CEREMONY DETAILS • SUNDAY, MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>  
1PM • VETERANS MEMORIAL AT ECHO LAKE PARK**



Eagle Scout candidate James Senholzi of Boy Scout Troop 83 continues his work on the Community Gardens tool shed for his Eagle Scout project. The shed is located at the Community Gardens where he hopes to complete it by the end of spring.

## COMMUNITY GARDENS PARK & RIBBON CUTTING

Christopher Rain

[www.mstcommunitygardenspark.com](http://www.mstcommunitygardenspark.com)

A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for Saturday June 4th for the Community Gardens Park on Coolbaugh Road. Community Gardens is Middle Smithfield Township's newest park.

The ribbon cutting celebrates the official opening of the park, which brought together residents with a love of gardening and promoted community outreach, helping to build a stronger, healthier community.

The next stage of development at the park will include additional garden plots, a shade pavilion, a tool shed, benches, playground area, and a walking path. Most of the garden plot renters from

2015 are returning for 2016, along with several new plot renters.

150 pounds of produce was donated to the Bushkill Outreach last year and the Parks and Recreation Board hopes that this year will be even more "fruitful" than last year.

For more information or to rent a plot at the Community Gardens, please call Chris Rain at 570-223-8920 x119.

**\$50 REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT PER PLOT  
WITH A LIMIT OF 3 PLOTS PER PERSON.**

### EVENT DETAILS

**SATURDAY JUNE 4TH, 9AM AT  
COMMUNITY GARDENS PARK  
ON COOLBAUGH ROAD**

**[MSTCOMMUNITYGARDENSPARK.COM](http://MSTCOMMUNITYGARDENSPARK.COM)**





## EGGS-TRAVAGANZA

Christopher Rain

Middle Smithfield Township hosted its 9th annual Easter Eggs-Travaganza at Resica Park and Resica Elementary School on Saturday March 19th.

Children of all ages came out to collect candy-filled eggs, meet the Easter Bunny, have fun and win prizes. All attendees went away with a bag of eggs in their hand and a smile on their face. There were even dinosaur eggs!

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

**GOLDEN EGG** | Bushkill Group

**SILVER EGG** | Rotary Club of the Smithfields, Mignosi's Super Foodtown, and ESSA Bank

**GOOD EGG** | Annette & Doug Atkinson, Mike and Kathy Dwyer, Mark and Kelli Oney



## SLIDE YOUR WAY INTO FUN

Christopher Rain

Middle Smithfield Township together with their Parks and Recreation Committee is excited to see the installations of two new playgrounds at township parks this spring. BYO Recreation is scheduled to install a playground at Echo Lake Park in mid-March.

Another playground is also scheduled to be installed late March at the Community Gardens Park on Coolbaugh Road. Middle Smithfield Township's Public Works Department prepared the sites for both playgrounds.

## 2016 VOTING INFORMATION • PRIMARY DAY IS APRIL 26TH

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU VOTE?

*If you live East of Route 402, you vote at the*

**MIDDLE SMITHFIELD EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**5205 Milford Rd (route 209), East Stroudsburg, PA**

*(right across from Echo Lake Park)*

*If you live West of Route 402, you vote at*

**THE TOWNSHIP BUILDING (SCHOONOVER MUNICIPAL CENTER)**  
**147 Municipal Drive, East Stroudsburg, PA**

*(right across from Judy Putek Park, in between Milford Road/Rte 209 and Lower Lakeview Road)*

**POLL HOURS: 7:00 AM-8:00 PM**

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

**MARCH 28, 2016** • LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE

**APRIL 25, 2016** • LAST DAY TO RETURN ABSENTEE BALLOT

**VOTER REGISTRATION/VOTER INFORMATION: (570) 517-3165**

### HELPFUL LINKS

[pavoterservices.state.pa.us](http://pavoterservices.state.pa.us)

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:**  
[lwvmonroecountypa.com](http://lwvmonroecountypa.com)



# ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION

Judith Acosta | Zoning Administration  
jacosta@mstowship.com | 570-223-8920 x128

## DO I NEED A ZONING PERMIT?

Judy Acosta & Shawn McGlynn

Zoning permits are required whenever a property owner intends to build a structure, add onto a building or structure, alter a building or structure, and/or change the use of land or buildings. So, if you're planning on making improvements to your property, the answer to the question, "Do I need a permit?" is probably yes.

A permit is issued when the property owner, through submission of an application and supporting documentation, (such as a plot plan), demonstrates the proposed improvements are in compliance with the zoning ordinance, i.e., the proposed shed will be set-back far enough from the property boundary. Obtaining a zoning permit prior to the start of work is a legal obligation of the property owner. Issuance of a zoning permit demonstrates the proposed improvement is lawful, and as such, obtaining a zoning permit helps to protect the value of the investment.

Most people are aware that a permit is required to build a house or garage, but sometimes it's not so clear when contemplating projects of a smaller scope. The lists below identify some common residential improvements and whether or not a zoning permit is required.

*Keep in mind:* In addition to the requirement of a zoning permit, projects may also require a building permit in accordance with the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code, and building permits may be required when a zoning permit is not, such as for changes to plumbing or electrical work.

### The following projects need a zoning permit:

- Building a deck
- Building a patio
- Constructing a pergola or trellis
- Building a shed, or having a prefab shed installed on your property
- Enclosing an existing screened-in porch
- Building a roof over an existing deck
- Building/installing a fence
- Finishing an unfinished basement
- Finishing an unfinished attic
- Starting a business at your residence
- Construction/installation of above-ground and in-ground swimming pools

### The following projects do not need a zoning permit:

- Planting a garden
- Planting trees and landscaping  
\*Unless it involves construction of walls and/or hardscaping
- Constructing/installing a garden pond.  
Note: Large ponds involving alteration of drainage patterns and storm water flow require a permit.
- Erecting a swing set or trampoline
- Placement of a seasonal, child's wading pool, provided it is less than 24" deep
- Replacing siding
- Replacing roofing  
\*Building permit is required
- Replacing windows and doors provided the size of the openings are not changing, and the work does not involve alterations  
e.g., changing a door opening into a window or a window into a door.
- Home repairs, cosmetic improvements, and maintenance

Your home improvement, such as a deck, fence or roof repair, may require a **PERMIT**. Check with our Zoning Office at **570-223-8920 x128**.

## PLANNING COMMISSION

In the first quarter of 2016, the members presided over the submittal of three separate plans in order to provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The main focus of the Planning Commission to date has been reviewing and making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors about final minor subdivisions, sewage planning modules and a proposed sign ordinance revision and a zoning amendment.

Continuing education for the members is very important. They do not encounter the dos and don'ts on a day to day basis as each member is a volunteer. Land development, minor and major subdivisions plans fall under what is known as the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance ("SALDO") requirements. Pennsylvania also requires that municipalities adhere to the Municipal Planning Code ("MPC"). Our members have opportunities throughout the year to participate in training events and stay current with these and other rules and regulations.

**Chairman** | Bob Early

**Vice Chairman** | Mark W. Oney

**Members** | Wayne Bolt, Carrie Wetherbee, Dr. William W. Suriano, Parin Shah

**Engineer** | Gilmore & Associates Fred Courtright, PE

**Solicitor** | Firm of Scanlon, Lewis Williamson Todd Weitzmann, Esq.

**Recording Secretary** | Michele Clewell

Having a yard sale this spring? Don't forget to get your **YARD SALE PERMIT**. Contact the township at 570-223-8920 ext. 100 for more information.

There is **NO BURNING** allowed in Middle Smithfield Township Please bring your yard waste to the Oak Grove Composting Center.



# SEWER DEPARTMENT

Joan Woisin | Sewer Department Manager  
jwoisin@mstowship.com | 570-223-892 x115

## SHORT TERM RENTAL OF SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES

The Township reminds residential property owners that the short term rental of a single family house constitutes a transient lodging use under the Township Zoning Ordinance, and not a single family dwelling use. The Township considers rentals for less than 30 days to be transient, short term rentals.

Short term rentals are only allowed after the property owner obtains a change in use zoning permit. Such use would only be allowed in an appropriate zoning district. Because of their transient nature, short term rentals are incompatible with traditional residential neighborhoods.

In the case of Oval Management of PA, LLC vs. Middle Smithfield Township Zoning Hearing Board, the Monroe County Court of Common Pleas recently upheld the Township's zoning policy on short term rentals. The Township was willing to incur considerably expense in the (Cont. on page 16)

## NEW & IMPROVED

Joan Woisin

### PUMP STATION #6

Near CVS on Milford Road and Sellersville

This project involved the installation of a new electrical control panel, and the construction of a 2'x2'x6' concrete block wall around the pumping station. The pump station has been relocated and the new electrical control panel is complete. New decorative concrete block walls are complete.

### THE NORTH PARK PUMP STATION #7 REHABILITATION

This rehabilitation is estimated to cost \$115,580. This project includes new pumps and piping, and a new control panel and will begin shortly.

### BIG RIDGE PUMP STATION REHABILITATION

This rehabilitation project is to include a new generator, new piping, fiberglass building and new chemical feed system. This rehabilitation is estimated to cost \$275,000.

In 2016 we are also striving to rehabilitate the Steel Bridge Pump Station in Winona Lakes and the UV disinfection system at the Fernwood Treatment Plant. The estimated cost of these rehabilitations is \$400,000.

### SAVINGS

We are always looking to lower our costs. We recently entered into an agreement with a supplier that will save us \$3,000 a year in shipping fees for a product we are already purchasing. We have outsourced the printing of the sewer inserts lowering the cost per page and saves copier ink and paper supply costs.

### PAYMENT METHODS

At the request of our customers, we have instituted the ability to make monthly or quarterly payments. We also have automated payments if a customer wants their payments deducted automatically on a quarterly or monthly basis.

## SIGN OF THE (POLITICAL) TIMES

This is not just an election year, but a Presidential Election Year, which means you can expect to see lots of folks expressing their views via lawn signs.

Middle Smithfield recently passed a new sign ordinance.

### POLITICAL SIGNS

Political signs are permitted in all zoning districts, provided that:

- No political sign shall be displayed more than 15 days after the election or vote to which the sign pertains
- A political sign shall not be posted on

Township property (e.g., township parks, township building, or golf course), except as may be allowed outside of a polling place on election day.

- The maximum sign size shall be 16 square feet on each of two sides. Any larger sign shall be regulated as an off-premises sign (such as on a billboard).
- A political sign for any candidate or issue shall not be located within 100 feet of any other sign for the same candidate on the same lot that is readable from the same street.

### SIGNS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

A sign posted on Township property or within a public street right-of-way without governmental permission may be removed and discarded.

### SIGNS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

No person shall post a sign upon private property without permission from the property owner. A sign posted on private property without permission of the property owner may be removed and discarded by the property owner or his/her designee.



# GOLF COURSE COUNTRY CLUB OF THE POCONOS

Kevin Dixon | Member and Pro Shop Manager | 570-223-8099  
Holly Freese | Golf Committee Liaison | 570-223-892 x132

## PREPARING FOR SALE Kevin Dixon

Country Club of the Poconos Municipal Golf Course 2015 was a great year. The Country Club of the Poconos Municipal Golf Course had over 13,000 rounds of play, including 48 golf outings, increased golf merchandise sales and increased food and beverage sales. The Whispering Pines Banquet Hall had 29 non-golf events during the year and also an increase in food and beverage sales. While memberships are down following a national trend, our rounds played have increased an average of 10% each of the last three years. We are optimistic that 2016 will be even better!

Since acquiring the golf course and banquet hall, it has always been the goal of the current Board of Supervisors to sell the course to a qualified buyer. Commencing in 2016, the Township Supervisors and Golf Course Advisory Committee are focused on furthering the steps necessary to put the course up for sale.

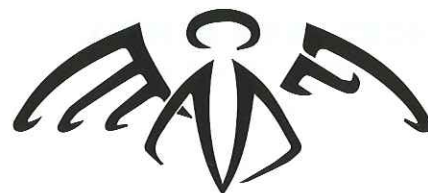
The golf course within CCP is required through zoning ordinance, as part of a "Planned Residential Development" (PRD) to be maintained as open space for recreation. Therefore, use of the land for additional housing or other non-recreational use cannot occur. The continued operation as a golf course is the most logical use of this open space if a suitable buyer can be found.

Until the course is sold, it will continue to operate to defray its cost of maintenance, and as always, serve the public and continue to be a resource for local charitable organizations. The staff, township and Golf Course Committee recently completed their annual mailing to charitable organizations to offer the golf course gratis for fundraising events. So far for 2016, the township course is slated to serve local charities Mady's Angels, Tall Cedars, the Pocono Wildlife Rehab and Education Center,

the Knights of Columbus and Marshall's Creek Fire Company.

In addition, the township's Whispering Pines Banquet Hall offers special 501c3 rates to charitable organization to help them in their fundraising efforts. So far for spring of 2016, the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall is slated to host another Pocono Photo Club Photo Exhibit (their opening reception will be the kick off to Restaurant Week). The Whispering Pines will also host the Monroe and Pike County Master Gardeners Spring Seminar of classes, as well as a spring Fine Art Painting Exhibit featuring the paintings of local artists Stephen Washington, and Middle Smithfield's own Patricia Griffin and of course, the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall will host MST's Person of the Year in November.

**Chairperson** | Ray White  
**Vice Chairperson** | Craig Wetherbee  
**Secretary** | Mike Sweeney  
**Member** | John Smith  
**Member and Pro Shop Manager** | Kevin Dixon



## MADY'S ANGELS GOLF & DINNER FUNDRAISER

CCP is proud to once again host Mady's Angels 3rd Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser on May 22nd, 2016. Mady's Angels was founded in 2011, in honor of Madyson Law, and is a 100% volunteer local charitable organization dedicated to community outreach and animal welfare.

### EVENT DETAILS

SUNDAY MAY 22ND

10:30AM REGISTRATION

NOON SHOTGUN START

COUNTRY CLUB OF THE POCONOS  
MADYSANGELS.ORG



## FOR THE WILDLIFE: POCONO WILDLIFE

Our neighborhoods are home not only to us, but many different creatures which can often lead to some critter conflicts. To the rescue is the Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center.

Their goal is to provide humane, professional care for injured and orphaned wildlife for the purpose of return to the wild when appropriate. The facility takes in more than 1000 animals annually including, fawns, owls, hawks, squirrels, rabbits, songbirds, raccoons and bears. With spring being baby season, the center needs help in caring for the many babies that come to the center.

And now, the center finally has the opportunity to purchase and renovate the property they have leased from The Nature Conservancy for the last 12 years so that Pocono Wildlife can have a permanent home to continue to serve the people and wildlife all of eastern and north-eastern PA.

**RAISE THE ROOF:** Middle Smithfield Township is glad to host a fundraising golf tournament at the Country Club of the Poconos Municipal Golf Course followed by a dinner at the Whispering Pines



# BANQUET HALL AT WHISPERING PINES

Christopher Rain | Banquet Hall Liaison | 570-223-892 x119

## ENRICHING YOUR LIFE THROUGH GARDENING: CLASSES FOR GARDENERS BY GARDENERS

Monroe & Pike County Master Gardeners team up to give a series of gardening classes from 9am - 2pm on Saturday April 9th. To register, call Julie at 570-421-6430.

The Keynote Speaker is horticultural educator Emelie Swackamer, who will demonstrate endless possibilities in gardening. The classes that follow are all taught by Master Gardeners and include

- Herbs & Everlasting: Culinary to Creative by herbalist Coretal Walker
- Rain Gardens by arborist Mary Pat Appel
- Miniature & Fairy Gardens (great for kids!) by author Pam Hubbard

Based on the great success of Middle Smithfield Township's newest park:

- Developing a Community Garden by Township Supervisor and Master Gardener, Annette Atkinson.

**GARDENING CLASS DETAILS • SATURDAY, APRIL 9TH, 2016 • 9AM-2PM**  
**WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL • \$20 PER PERSON • [EXTENSION.PSU.EDU/PLANTS](http://EXTENSION.PSU.EDU/PLANTS)**



## FREE PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS:

POCONO PHOTO CLUB PRESENTS  
ARIK GORBAN: SEE CREATIVELY

Arik, past president of Somerset County Photography Club, is a celebrated photographer whose work has won numerous competitions and been exhibited locally and published.

In this **FREE CLASS**, Arik will share ideas and present images that will encourage the photographer to "see creatively", to help find interesting subjects, and make creative compositions.

Most snap pictures of interesting subjects, pretty sights, or to record an event, place, or person. But a good photograph should not just record history, but convey a unique perspective and impression of the subject.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS DETAILS

**SUNDAY, APRIL 10TH, 3-5PM**

**WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL**

**FREE; POCONO PHOTO CLUB**

**[MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM](http://MIDDLESMTHTOWNSHIP.COM)**

**CLASS DETAILS AT**  
**[TINYURL.COM/FREEPHOTOCLASS](http://TINYURL.COM/FREEPHOTOCLASS)**

## REHABILITATION & EDUCATION CENTER GOLF FUNDRAISER - Holly Freese

Banquet Hall, and opening reception of a Fine Art Painting Exhibit.

The proceeds from this fundraiser will be used to renovate animal enclosures such as the bear enclosure, which needs to be reinforced and have the open top trussed and fenced in.

"What we need are folks like Katie Uhler" said Annette Atkinson, township Supervisor. "Folks who recognize what makes our area unique, who see a vacuum then selflessly step up to the plate and fulfill a need. Unlike its neighboring states, Pennsylvania does not have a state

agency such as Animal Control. There is literally no other place for folks to call with questions, or when there is a human-wildlife conflict."

The Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Center educates the public about the natural history, importance of, and ways in which humans can coexist with the rich diversity of wildlife native to Pennsylvania. Thousands of students, tourists, scouts, teachers, homeowners, seniors and others attend the Center's education programs annually. As this region continues to draw new residents from urban areas, the need for advice,

assistance, information, education and referrals will grow.

## WILDLIFE GOLF DETAILS

**FRIDAY MAY 13TH**

**11AM REGISTRATION**

**NOON SHOTGUN START**

**COUNTRY CLUB OF THE POCONOS**

**CALL KEVIN DIXON 570-223-8099**

There will also be a buffet dinner for 5-6pm with raffles, prizes and a painting exhibit opening to follow.

**Contact Kevin Dixon at 570-223-8099 for more information or to register.**



## HUNGRY FOR PHOTOGRAPHY 3RD POCONO PHOTO CLUB EXHIBIT

Holly Freese

Middle Smithfield Township will host the 3rd Pocono Photo Club's free photography exhibit. The month long photography exhibit will have its opening reception, with free light refreshments and live music is on April 8th at 6:30 at the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall at the Country Club of the Poconos golf course at 1445 Big Ridge Drive in East Stroudsburg.

The photo exhibit will also include a group of photos with a local restaurant and local food theme and will kick off Middle Smithfield Township's 2016 Restaurant Week. Featured foods from local restaurants will be paired with the appropriate wine and served up free at the opening reception, and Blue Ridge Winery will conduct a free wine tasting. Of course, the beautiful photographs of flora, fauna, vistas, still life, and people of the Pocono region will also be on display. Every photograph will be an original of a local photographer, and every photograph displayed will be for sale.

Come join us and meet some of the most talented and enthusiastic local photographers as they share the compelling stories behind their photography over a local bite to eat. Converse with photographers and learn their inspiration for each photograph. Light food and drink will be served at the reception provided by participating local restaurants in addition to live entertainment and a wine tasting by Blue Ridge Estate Vineyard and Winery. There will be a cash bar.

**PHOTO EXHIBIT DETAILS • FRIDAY APRIL 8TH, 6:30-8:30PM • WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL**  
**FREE; LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, WINE TASTING • MIDDLESMITHFIELDTOWNSHIP.COM**



Patricia A Griffin - Cheeky Gina  
 48 x 72 | Oil on Canvas

## NATURAL WONDERS & WILDLIFE: FINE ART PAINTING EXHIBIT

*Local artists Patricia Griffin and Stephen Washington paint a wild picture.*

The Opening Cocktail Reception for "Natural Wonders & Wildlife: a Fine Art Painting Exhibit" will be on Friday, May 13th at 6:30pm at the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall, complete with local live music and light refreshments of locally grown and produced food. These fine art oil paintings will be on display through the months of May and June.

**PAINTING EXHIBIT RECEPTION DETAILS • FRIDAY MAY 13TH, 6:30-8:30P**  
**WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL • FREE; LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, WINE TASTING**

### *Patricia Griffin, Middle Smithfield Township Resident:*

Mother, wife, painter, farmer, naturalist, and constant traveler, the first animal Patricia remembers painting is Smokey Bear for a contest in First Grade. Smokey in his overalls, shovel in hand, standing next to a smoldering tree.

40 years later, she continues to paint with the goal of stirring stewardship within the viewer. She recently returned from a trip to Alaska with her daughter to photograph polar bears in their natural habitat. Visit [giffingallery.org](http://giffingallery.org).

### *Stephen Washington*

British born artist, Stephen Washington, originally trained as a painter at Southport College of Art and Hull College of Art and then worked as a graphic designer and commercial photographer between 1982 and 1999 before relocating to the USA. He has exhibited his large color abstract and pop art inspired images in the U.K. and the U.S.A. Stephen is now exploring "Post Analog Painting" using digital data to create expressive and painterly abstract works that blur the realms of pigment and pixel in digital paintings that present complex but unified "surfaces" that exist behind the picture plane. He now lives in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania with painter Susan Molina-Washington.



# HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Carrie Wetherbee | Vice Chairperson: Robert Huffman

Secretary: Diane Huffman | Member: Kim Williams | Member: Marie Summa

Chantel Wilder | Historical Commission Liaison | cwilder@mstownship.com | 570-223-892 x100

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION NEWS

Chantel Wilder

The Historical Commission is already having an exciting year, with the planning for 2016 with Memory Makers, installation of the Mastodon Foot Historical Marker, the Mastodon Foot on loan and newly appointed Historical Commission member Marie Summa. This year's Memory Makers will be on Saturday, August 20th at Pocono Palace. The theme will be on historical events of local resorts such as the Hillside Inn.

The Historical Commission has been researching local resorts in an effort to capture historical facts and provide guests with an inside look at the area's past as a resort mecca.

The Township in conjunction with the National Park Service, will dedicate a Historical Marker for the Mastodon, near its excavation site. Installation of the Marker will be announced spring of 2016.

The Marshall's Creek Mastodon remains were first discovered by John W. Leap, his wife Claire Leap, and his employee Paul Strausser on July 5th, 1965.

We are also excited to report that our Mastodon foot replica will be on display at the Monroe County Public Library in Stroudsburg from March - May. We encourage residents to go to the library and check out the display. In February, the Historical Commission welcomed a new member, Marie Summa. Marie is a longtime resident and author of, *Eastern Poconos: Delaware Water Gap to Bushkill*, which provides a history of the Northeast. Marie Summa and her wealth of knowledge is a wonderful addition to the Historical Commission.



**POCONO PHOTO CLUB OPENING RECEPTION • FRIDAY, APRIL 8TH, 6:30-8:30P • WHISPERING PINES BANQUET HALL**  
**FREE; LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, WINE TASTING • MIDDLESMTHTFIELDTOWNSHIP.COM**



("RE-ASSESSMENT") cont. from page 4)

## **WILL A COUNTY-WIDE REASSESSMENT AFFECT MY PROPERTY TAXES?**

Until the reassessment is nearly complete, it is impossible to determine how the taxes on an individual parcel will be affected. Typically, taxes on about one-third of the parcels will increase; another one-third of the parcels will see taxes decrease, and taxes on the remaining one-third will stay the same.

If the assessed value of your property increases, this is still no guarantee that your taxes will increase. All three of the taxing authorities (school, municipal, and county) are limited in the amount of additional tax they can collect in the year following a reassessment. If the value of all previously assessed property in a given municipality increases, the taxing authorities will be required to adjust their millage rates downward. Taxes due are determined by multiplying the millage rates by the assessed value.

For more information visit  
[www.monroecountypa.gov](http://www.monroecountypa.gov)

("SHORT TERM RENTALS" cont. from page 11)

litigation because the Township had received complaints from residents about the adverse impacts of short term rentals in their traditional residential neighborhood.

The Board of Supervisors is also considering amending the Township Zoning Ordinance to further address short term rentals. Lastly, property owners who lease residential dwellings for less than 30 days are also advised to consult the Monroe County Hotel Tax Regulations, as they may be applicable to short term rentals even if the leased building is not a traditional hotel or motel.

## **NEED FLOOD INSURANCE?**

### **NEW WEBSITE HELPS HOMEOWNERS FIND AFFORDABLE OPTIONS**

Mike Megoulas has lived in a Dauphin County township for more than a decade and never thought twice about flood insurance. In October 2012, however, he received a letter from his mortgage company notifying him that his house was in a flood zone. "When I bought my house," he says, "I never even knew I was in a flood zone — and now I need flood insurance."

### **PLUGGING A FINANCIAL DRAIN**

Many homeowners in Pennsylvania and elsewhere are finding themselves in a similar situation. "For most Pennsylvanians trying to buy individual flood insurance coverage, especially for their homes, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) run by the federal government was thought to be the only option," state Insurance Commissioner Teresa Miller says. "However, now that Congress is mandating that federal subsidies end for NFIP coverage and that premiums be based on the property's actual risk, costs for this coverage are rising and may become difficult for many homeowners to afford.

"In addition, redrawn Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps are placing many properties in flood zones that had not been there before. That's why my office is committed to finding ways to help consumers identify lower-cost coverage." The agency, for instance, has created a new one-stop shop at [www.insurance.pa.gov](http://www.insurance.pa.gov), where homeowners and renters can find information about available insurance. (Note: To access the page, click on "Flood" under "Top Pages.")

For decades, Miller says, the National Flood Insurance Program kept its premiums artificially low, but an unprecedented number of claims following Hurricane Katrina sent the program into billions of dollars of debt.

The result? Large premium increases. The good news for Pennsylvania consumers is that these rapidly rising NFIP premiums are making flood insurance more attractive for private market insurers, which are in many cases offering coverage at substantially lower costs.

Just ask homeowner Mike Megoulas. "NFIP insurance would have cost me \$2,700 a year, but I was able to find private coverage for only \$718 annually." Pinpointing insurance options Most private-market residential flood insurance in Pennsylvania is sold by "surplus-line" insurers, which are licensed in other states or countries and offer the higher-risk coverage that other companies tend to shy away from. The state Insurance Department's new one stop online shop has links for these and other insurers providing flood coverage. In addition, the page has a link to the NFIP and lists the coverage written by each licensed insurer. "My goal is to make sure Pennsylvanians can find good coverage at affordable prices, and this one-stop website will help homeowners and renters be able to do this," Miller says.