



2827 7TH AVENUE
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
309-788-3417

rockislandtownshipil.gov



Supervisor's Message



On November 23, 2015, the Town Board approved the Township's \$545,000 tax levy. That was -0.2% (about \$1,000) less than 2014. We are holding the line on taxes and expenses, becoming more efficient and effective when and where we can.

Putting this in perspective, there are about 17,000 people in the Township, so the cost per person is about \$0.09 per day. This allows us to provide our full range of programs and services, maintain and improve the building, support local agencies assisting youth, seniors and veterans through small grants or sponsoring events, educate people about Townships and be part of other groups trying to improve the quality of life in Rock Island and the Quad Cities.

For example, I am honored to serve on the following:

- 】 Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities Neighborhood Revitalization Advisory Board
- 】 Rock Island / Milan School District's Council for Continuous Improvement
- 】 Opportunities Quad Cities (anti-poverty group)
- 】 Independent Rock Island

I continue to have a strong emphasis on informing people about Townships and the services they offer. To that end, Don Wooten, local Renaissance Man and host of WVIK's "Saturday Morning Live" invited me to talk about Townships in general, and specific Rock Island Township activities, on September 19th. As I expected, topics ranged from what Townships do and whether they are needed to citizen expectations, community engagement and political philosophies. It made for a quick hour (at least from my perspective).

Our marketing and education efforts include our new full color, double sided LED message board sign, Facebook page and group, website and news releases. It is too easy to dismiss the importance of something if you are unaware what services or functions they offer or support. We'll continue using all of these media.

This newsletter is another of this multi-pronged effort to inform. If, after you read this newsletter, you have questions about programs, services, activities or functions, or if you have a suggestion for us to do something differently or new, let me know.

Alan M. Carmen
Township Supervisor

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Mission Statement

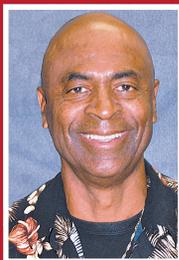
To professionally, courteously, equitably and efficiently administer general assistance, property assessment and other programs and to properly maintain the Township Hall and property for the benefit of Township residents and the building's tenants.

SPRING | SUMMER
2016

Rock Island Township Trustees



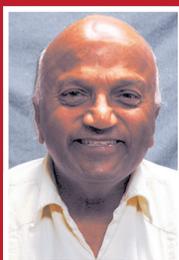
Heather Gray
Trustee



James "Jim" Kerr Sr.
Trustee



Rita Kirk
Trustee



Vincent G. Thomas
Trustee

Assessor's Office

Brenda L. Carmen \ \ \ Assessor

If you were born in 1951 you will be 65 this year which qualifies you to receive the **senior property tax exemptions**. You don't have to wait until your exact birthday, just drop in anytime and we'll get you signed up for the Homestead Exemption and check to see if you qualify for the Senior Freeze.

If you had the Senior Freeze last year you will have to renew it for 2016. When you come to see us, remember to bring something with you that verifies your income for 2015. Your Federal Tax Return is perfect. A statement from Social Security is also acceptable. As always, if you can't get to us, we'll come to you. Call 786-2961 and we'll set up a time that's convenient for you.

The **Disabled Persons Exemption** and the **Disabled Veterans Exemptions** also have to be renewed and some changes in the law came into effect in 2016.



NEW THIS YEAR:

- ◆ Veterans with a VA service connected disability rating of 30% or 40% can receive an exemption that takes \$2,500 off of their primary dwelling's equalized assessed value.
- ◆ Veterans with a VA service connected disability rating of 50% or 60% can receive an exemption that takes \$5,000 off of their primary dwelling's equalized assessed value.
- ◆ Veterans with a VA service-connected disability rating of 70% or greater can receive an exemption that makes all of their primary dwelling's equalized assessed value exempt from property taxation.
- ◆ The equalized assessed value of the property must be less than \$250,000 and it cannot be used for commercial purposes.
- ◆ You must produce your current VA award certificate and your DD214 that lists your discharge as honorable.
- ◆ **Veterans must apply thru the Rock Island County Assessment Office, 1504 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, IL 309-558-3660**

To be eligible for the Veterans exemptions:

- ◆ The property must be the principal residence of the disabled veteran as of January 1st.

Beginning in 2015 an un-remarried surviving spouse of a veteran can also continue to receive the exemption on his/her spouse's primary residence, provided the exemption had previously been granted to the veteran.

The **Owner/Occupied** and the **Senior Homestead exemptions** do not have to be renewed each year.

We are currently working on assessments for the 2016 tax year for taxes that will be payable in 2017. We will turn these assessments in to the County by the middle of June, 2016. If you think that we may have some information about your property that is incorrect, **NOW** is the time to tell us. In 2015 did you rip off a porch or tear down a garage, add a room or turn your duplex back into a single family home? All of these items may affect the market value of your home.

Assessor's Contact Information:

If you have questions about your property's value, or to see if you qualify for one or more of the property tax exemptions, **please contact the Assessor's Office at 309-786-2961 or riassessor@sbcglobal.net**. The fax number is 309-786-3731. Office hours are 8 a.m. - Noon and 1-4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Call the Assessor's Office at 309-786-2961.

We're here to answer your questions and provide assistance.

VISIT OUR NEW LOCATION!

2215 4TH AVENUE • ROCK ISLAND, IL • 309.786.4973
WWW.STECKERGRAPHICS.COM

Clerk's Corner:

Joan Clark  Town Clerk

Happy New Year!

As the public cries for greater transparency in government, all public entities are working towards keeping the public more aware of the happenings in their townships, towns, cities, etc. Over the last three years, Rock Island Township has set up a website (thanks Augustana Web Guild!) www.rockislandtownshipil.gov. We posted budget and tax levy ordinances, policies, monthly meeting agendas and the minutes of each meeting; as well as announced upcoming events and the overall work of the Township. We are also now on Facebook (thanks to page administrators Supervisor Carmen and Trustees Thomas and Kirk). Three years ago, none of those media connections were available to keep the public informed! We are certainly proud of what we've accomplished and we have all played a role in it; including the public who consistently comment about our efforts to get out the word about township happenings.

The Clerk is involved in almost all the information that is shared with the public. I recently attended a webinar on "How to Better Demonstrate Your Value as a Clerk". In talking about what we do as Clerks, a quote from a Bryan, Texas, City Secretary Mary Lynne Stratta struck me: "There isn't anything that occurs within our municipal organizations that we are not a part of — we either record it, archive it, prepare it, post it, publish it, engross it, enroll it, report it, facilitate it, organize it, handle it, manage it, or lead it."

The Clerk's role in government can be traced back to biblical times; we were called Remembrancers and Tax Collectors (some are still in existence today). In mid 17th century England we were called town clerks; a term used today at all Illinois townships. Some municipalities call us Secretaries. Whatever the term used — we all do the majority of items listed in the quote and then some! We are encouraged to help meet the needs in our specific communities in whatever ways we are able. Clerks do what needs to be done. It's that simple. The hard part is keeping aware of the new government standards that affect our township. Missed filing dates or inaccurate newspaper filings can cost fines from the state

and additional posting expenses. It is so important to keep up with changes in the laws that apply to our form of government.

I truly enjoy working behind the scenes or behind the lens of a camera. I really wonder if many of you would know who I am without a camera in my face! I really enjoy visiting with our Township residents helping them by notarizing documents and often hearing of their history in our community! I also enjoy taking photographs at our various activities and seeing the pictures of you participating in our Trunk or Treat Halloween Party or the Senior Holiday Dinner. It's even more fun to see those joyous faces on Facebook and our Webpage (who says "not everyone can be a star"?).



Gladys Hawkins and Town Clerk Joan Clark

In January, Trustee Rita Kirk and I visited with 24 friends who attended the Senior Holiday Dinner to give them their pictures from the event. In our travels we realized that one of our dearest friends had not attended the dinner and we decided to stop in and say hello. Gladys Hawkins was so happy to see us and so sorry she was unable to attend this year's event. Of course we took pictures and wished her a Happy New Year!

In closing I want to remind each of you, if you are homebound (for any reason) and need to have a document notarized, I'm available to come to your home and notarize your documents.

You can reach me at 309-721-1556 or call Rock Island Township at 309-788-3417 and leave me a message.

"A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again." — Maya Angelou

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Nearly 75 seniors, caregivers and volunteers enjoyed a wonderful turkey dinner and all the trimmings at the 14th Annual Senior

Holiday Luncheon. Lunch was catered by Montford's and Friends. Santa and Mrs. Santa shared candy and ho-ho-ho's with all present. The Rock Island High School Chamber Singers performed before the meal was served. Gift cards and poinsettias were given away, with no one leaving empty handed. The Township was happy to provide a festive holiday meal to our seniors!

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ELECTION

The Illinois Primary Election is Tuesday, March 15th. Polls are open from 6 a.m.-7 p.m. Rock Island Town Hall is a polling place — you can find your voting location on your voter registration card. Early voting starts on 2/4/16 at the Rock Island County Clerk's Office, 1504 3rd Avenue, Rock Island. Absentee voting by mail also begins 2/4/16. Call the County Clerk's office at **309-786-8683** or go to their website (www.votercounty.org) for an application.

While voter registration closes 2/16/16, with all completed forms returned to the County Clerk's office within 48 hours, grace period registration/voting is open 2/17 – 3/14 provided you bring two forms of identification and vote at that time.

Go to www.votercounty.org or call **309-786-8683** for more information.

FREE COPIES AND FAXES

We will make a limited number of copies for Township residents or send a fax on their behalf. These can be related to employment, taxes, driver's licenses, etc.

Help St. Joseph Evening Meal

By: Trustee Rita Kirk

Are you looking for a meaningful way to begin the New Year? Would you like to help someone in need and feel like you've made a difference? The St. Joseph Evening Meal is just the place to get started. You, your family or an organization (book club, church group, etc. – any group you meet with) are invited to prepare and serve dinner to some very grateful people. You can do it just once, make a monthly commitment or whatever your group decides. You can come by yourself and help another group to see if it is something you want to do. **Interested? Call Rita Kirk at 786-3799.** We have a place for you!

The St. Joseph Evening Meal is a Ministry of St. Pius Catholic Church. It provides meals for the hungry in our community. The Evening Meal has a 35-year history. It began at St. Joseph's Church in Rock Island. When St. Joseph's closed in 2005, the meal site needed to relocate. Rock



(from left to right) Assessor Brenda Carmen, Supervisor Alan Carmen, Trustee Vince Thomas, Clerk Joan Clark, and Trustees James Kerr, Sr., Heather Gray and Rita Kirk

Island Township opened their doors and has been home ever since. It's a perfect fit, the Township had the space and the ministry has the service. In 2015, the Evening Meal served 12,259 people who live right here in our community!

Over the years the evening meal has been cooked and served by churches representing many different faiths, fraternal organizations, retailers, townships (the Rock Island Township Board serves at least two meals a year) and people just interested in serving the community. The guests are singles, families, elderly; some are just lonely, and don't desire to eat alone. All are grateful. **Meals are served promptly at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.**

**Rita is available to answer your questions.
Give it a try – you won't be sorry you did!**

NAACP Resource Fair

Assessor Brenda Carmen and Supervisor Alan Carmen represented Rock Island Township at the 9/12/15 NAACP Resource Fair. They provided information about Township programs, property assessment and exemption details and voter

registration. It was also a chance to talk with staff from other agencies so we could learn what they do and they better understood what Townships do (and don't do).



Rock Island Township Salutes World War II Veteran

By: Trustees Rita Kirk and Jim Kerr

Rock Island Township continues to recognize our World War II Veterans with a salute to Rev. Gabriel Barber.

Gabriel Barber was born in Clarksville, Missouri on October 25th, 1927. Clarksville was his home until, at age 16, his family moved to Rock Island in search of a new home and better wages. He attended Rock Island High School for awhile; but decided to go to work at Farmall. In 1945, while on strike at Farmall, Gabriel decided to enlist in the United States Army.

The Army trained Barber as a truck driver and deployed him to Germany; that training put him in the field of transportation. He transported everything from food stuffs and soldiers to ammunition that had been buried underground. In 1947 he finished his tour of duty and returned home as a Private First Class.

Back home in Rock Island he completed his GED and married Lee, his lovely wife of 66 years. Gabriel and Lee set out to build a life together. They are the proud parents of three children. They have lived in the same house in Rock Island Township for 45 years! He retired from Farmall having served the company for 40 years. Gabriel was called to church ministry throughout his life. He retired as pastor of Davenport Temple Baptist Church after 28 years with the congregation. He is currently back home at Temple Baptist serving the people as Interim Pastor. He continues to serve when needed!

Rev. Barber has led a full life! While working at Farmall, leading and supporting many churches, he also found



Rock Island Township Trustees Rita Kirk and James Kerr Salute World War II Veteran Rev. Gabriel Barber.

time to serve his community. Gabriel served as a Trustee on the Rock Island Township Board for 12 years. He also served on the Rock Island County Board for approximately 30 years, retiring in 2007. The County Board recognized his service by naming a park in his and Lee's honor. Recently, the park was turned into a parking lot and the sign now appears between the Rock Island City Hall and the Rock Island County Office Building.

When asked after all he has done "what one thing made the greatest impact on you?" He responded that, while serving as the chairman of the committee overseeing Oak Glen and Rock Island Health Care facilities, he noticed many of the new residents came in undernourished and weak. It amazed him how quickly their strength returned with the change in their environment; along with proper nutrition.

Life Lessons Learned — he passes his wisdom on to young people; it's necessary for every family to raise their own children. Train them how to live in the community and be a part of the community.

Gabriel Barber — son, Army Private First Class, husband, provider, father, pastor and community leader. **Wonderful man!** It was an honor to hear and now share his story with you.

COMMUNITY SHRED DAY AT MAIN LIBRARY

On Friday, April 29, from 10 a.m.-Noon you can bring up to three normal-sized file boxes of personal documents per vehicle to the Main Library's parking lot for secure document destruction by The Shredder. This is a free service that is part of Money Smart Week Quad Cities.

SPRING EGG HUNT

The Parks and Recreation Department's 2016 Spring Egg Hunt is set for 9:30 a.m. (sharp), **Saturday, March 19th** at Lincoln Park (11th Avenue & 38th Street). Rock Island and South Rock Island Townships are pleased to co-sponsor this year's event. There are four age groups and age appropriate prizes and candy can be found in the 10,000 eggs. There is likely to be a Bunny visit, so come join in the fun. Call **309-732-PARK** for more information. (Rain location is RIFAC.)

ROCK ISLAND LIBRARY WEBSITE

Check out the **NEW AND IMPROVED** Rock Island Library website at **rockislandlibrary.org**. There are an incredible number of things you can do with a library card — not just check out books, but get music, e-books, decorative cake pans, digital magazines, do genealogy research and much more.

INCOME TAX PREPARATION

United Way's Volunteer Income Tax assistance program is available to Quad City residents earning \$57,000 or less. Trained tax preparation volunteers will prepare your 2015 tax return for free.

Call 211 or 563-355-9900 to make an appointment.

Rock Island Township is pleased to be one of 12 sites where this is being done.

SPRING COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Upper Longview Park will be the site of the Park Department's Spring Community Garage Sale on Saturday, April 23rd, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. **If you want to rent space, contact the Park Department at 309-732-PARK.** Or, come out to see what treasures (toys, videos, DVDs, furniture, clothes, antiques, etc.) are for sale.

Trunk or Treat/Open House/Evening Meal

Greenbush Neighbors and the Town Board co-sponsored the Evening Meal and Trunk or Treat on Friday, October 30th. More than 50 neighborhood children in costume attended this fun event. It featured perfect weather and costumed Town Board members. The Evening Meal had 92 guests served, including 42 children.



A trunk filled with treats greeted the neighborhood children and adults last year.



MIGHTY MESSAGE AWARD

Our website won the Township Officials of Illinois 2015 Mighty Message Award in the 15,000 – 25,000 category. It was recognized for timely updates and pictures featuring elected officials and residents attending Township events.

Supervisor Alan Carmen shown holding the Mighty Message Award for the Rock Island Township website.



TRY-Play PROGRAM

The Township Recreation Youth Play program provides scholarships to Park and Recreation programs and facilities. These include Whitewater Junction, RIFAC, camps, inter-session programs, among others. If you are interested in becoming an American Red Cross Certified Lifeguard, and working as a lifeguard, TRY-Play can help offset some of the course costs. **Contact RICAP at 309-794-1100.**

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EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Town Board approved an Emergency Assistance Program in 2015. We will continue offering it this year. We can pay your rent, mortgage or utilities (water / sewer or gas / electricity) up to a maximum of \$400 if you were unable to do so because of an emergency situation. An emergency could be a job loss or reduction in work hours, medical expenses, auto or appliance repair or replacement. We do not pay for these directly, but cover rent, etc. if you used those funds to pay for the emergency.

If you qualify for our General Assistance program, you are not eligible for this program. Application forms are available during regular business hours. We helped 43 applicants between September – December 2015. We hope to assist another 50 families during 2016. **Call 788-3417 for more information.**

TOWNSHIP GRANTS

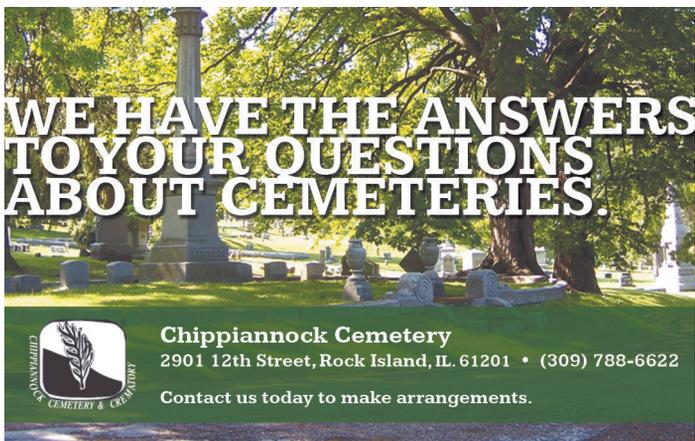
We have limited funding to support agencies and organizations providing services and programs that benefit youth, seniors and veterans. Past grants were awarded to local food pantries, the King Center's A.C.T.I.V.E. Club, Rock Island Little League, Community Gardens, Rocktown 340 Basketball Club, among others. **If you are interested in receiving a grant application, contact the Township at 788-3417 or go to our website where you can download it.**

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

If you have applied for disability benefits but have not been approved, or are an unemployed single individual looking for work who needs temporary help, the Township's General Assistance Program may be for you. If you qualify, we can pay up to \$200 for rent, provide a \$10 food voucher (in addition to food stamps) and a \$57 Kmart voucher for personal needs. **Contact the office during business hours to get more information.**

VOTER REGISTRATION

We have several Deputy Registrars who would be happy to register you to vote, update your address, or change your voting status.



WE HAVE THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT CEMETERIES.

Chippiannock Cemetery
2901 12th Street, Rock Island, IL. 61201 • (309) 788-6622
Contact us today to make arrangements.



SENIOR CARE VOUCHERS

Our Senior Cares food voucher program is still available, BUT based on budget limits, we are at the maximum 30 seniors per month who receive the \$35.00 Save-a-Lot II voucher. If you are 65 or older and earn \$980.83 per month (or \$1,327.50 for a couple) or less, you might qualify.

Call us at 309-788-3417 and an application will be sent to you. Once you have the required paperwork, call for an appointment where we'll review the details and see if you qualify. There are so many people in our Township that qualify for this program that a waiting list is usually necessary as we try to help all those in need.



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MEETING SCHEDULE:

The Rock Island Township Board of Trustees meets the fourth Monday of every month at 4:15 p.m. in the Town Hall, 2827 7th Ave., Room 7. Our meetings are always open to the public. Please join us to watch, offer comments or ask questions. Our meeting agendas are posted on the Town Hall's bulletin board and our website www.rockislandtownshipil.gov.



HOURS:

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Please join the Town Board on Tuesday, April 12th at 6:01 p.m. in Lund Hall at our Annual Town Meeting. You can hear reports from the Assessor and Supervisor about property value trends, home sale information, how specific neighborhoods are doing, Township sponsored programs, activities, events, initiatives and plans for the future.



Rock Island Township, IL

The Assessor's Office and Township administrative offices are open from 8 a.m.-Noon and 1-4 p.m. Monday through Friday (except holidays noted below).

The building is open until about 6:30 p.m. or until those attending the evening meal have cleaned up and left.

Please note that the Food Pantry, Evening Meal and building tenants (Safer Foundation, Roofers' Union and Delacerda House) schedules differ. Call 309-788-3417 to see if they are open.

CLOSED: Good Friday, 3/25; Memorial Day, 5/30; Independence Day, 7/4; Labor Day, 9/5; Columbus Day, 10/10; Veteran's Day, 11/11; Thanksgiving Day, 11/24-25; Floating holiday in lieu of Election Day, 12/22; Christmas Eve, 12/23; Christmas Day, 12/26; New Year's Day (observed), 1/2/17

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

4th Monday every month, 4:15 p.m. at Town Hall
Open to public.

NEW LED SIGN

"Where are you located?" "Which building is the Town Hall?" Both questions have been asked too many times to count. Our building is pretty bland; well maintained, but not exactly an architectural gem. So, how do we address the situation? Something visible and eye-catching.

A full color double-sided LED message board was the solution. After bidding the project, the Town Board awarded the contract to Acme Sign Co. of Davenport. They installed the sign just before Christmas. It features full color LEDs, software that is very flexible when it comes to colors, fonts, images and scheduling and the Township's logo.

The sign, manufactured in Michigan, has been used to promote Town Board meetings, United Way's Income Tax program, holiday schedules, meal site and food pantry hours, among other events and programs. We'll continue to do this routinely.

If there is a community event that you want us to promote, let us know — 309-788-3417 or ritownsupervisor@gmail.com.



Our new LED sign welcomes you and will be used to promote upcoming community events.