

CITY OF DOUGLAS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2005

FACTS AND STATS ON DOUGLAS

“The Village of Friendliness
since 1870”

Douglas became a city on
December 13, 2004.

US Representative	Peter Hoekstra
State Senator	Patty Birkholz
State Representative	Fulton Sheen
County Commissioner	Randy Brink
Area in Square Miles	1.8
Miles of Street	16
Population (2000)	1,214
Total 2005 SEV	140,092,000
Number of Homes	972
Average Home Value	\$217,000
2004 Village Millage	9.60140 mills
2005 City Millage	10.4214 mills*
School District	Saugatuck Public
Business Licenses Issued	102
Registered Voters	912
Average Election Cost	\$3,000
Full-time Employees	17
Part-time Employees	8

*Includes cemetery, roads, sewer, and operating.

Publication Notes.....
86 W. Center Street
Douglas, MI 49406-0757
(269) 857-1438
www.douglasmichigan.com

City Council

Matt Balmer, Mayor
Cindy Engel
Martha Hoexter
Steve Laughner
Paul Marineau, MayorProTem
Jane Mayer
Renee Waddell

Planning Commission

Dan Cooke
Mark Neidligner
John Piggins, Chair
Dawn Schumann
Michelle VanStedum
Alexa Urquhart
Renee Waddell

Zoning Board of Appeals

Rich Beebe
Joseph Dukic
Robert Harris
Kenneth Kutzel
Tarué Pullen
Bill Schumacher, Chair
Alexa Urquhart

DDA

Nancy Ayers
Sharon Bauer
Krista Cadwallader
Rob Goeke, Chair
Fran Martin
Robert Rank
Dee Schnoenich
Larry Sharp
Tonya Sheridan
John Slater
John Thomas

Board of Review

Linda Anderson
Herb Conlon
Maria Droz, Chair

HOURS AND SCHEDULES

CITY HALL

Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm

COUNCIL MEETINGS

First and third Mondays 7:00pm

PLANNING COMMISSION

Third Wednesday 7:00pm

City Manager

Jill Eyre

City Clerk

Jean Neve

Zoning Administrator

John Wallace

Office Hours: Monday 8am-5pm
Wednesday 1pm-5pm
Friday 8am-12pm

Assessor

Alan Jeffries

Office Hours: Wednesday 8am-4pm
Or by appointment (616) 218-6963

City Treasurer

Dan Visser

Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday

9:00am-5pm

Police Department

Chief Bill Giles

47 W. Center Street
Douglas (269) 857-4339

Department of Public Works

Tim Goede

(269) 857-2763

Supervisor

Building Permits

Michigan Township Services
111 Grand Street
Allegan MI 49010
(269) 673-3239

PLEASE NOTE:

The Douglas City Offices will be closed on Monday, July 4th and Monday, September 5th for observance of the holidays.

DID YOU KNOW.....

Council meeting minutes and agendas are available in the City offices, Library or on the City website at www.douglasmichigan.com

Saugatuck Douglas

District Library

10 Mixer Street, Douglas

“Your local source for global information”

Mon - Thurs	10am - 8pm
Fri	10am - 6pm
Sat	10am - 2pm
Sun	1pm - 4pm

Greetings from the Mayor

Well, we're 6 months into city hood and I am pleased to report the transition is going quite well. We have certainly encountered some bumps in the road and even a few hills, however given the drastic scale of changes that we were faced with, I feel we have witnessed far more positives than negatives. The city council members have worked well together and have been able to get up to speed on past issues in a relatively short period of time, especially considering that entering into city hood brought with it several challenges of its own. A huge round of applause is owed to our staff at City Hall. Our City Manager Jill Eyre, City Clerk Jean E. Neve and Deputy Clerk Kristie Van Plew, not only helped us navigate through uncharted waters, they did it amidst a storm and have helped get us through to the other side. I would like to thank both our Police Department and Department of Public Works for their continued efforts and for their patience with allowing us to go through our growing pains. I want to welcome three new contractors that the city has hired to help us continue to grow and prosper, our Planning and Zoning Administrator John Wallace, Assessor Alan Jeffries and Treasurer Dan Visser. We are pleased to have you as part of our team and I'm sure that the residents of our community will feel the same. A special thanks goes out to all who volunteered service and support as community representatives. Congratulations to the DDA members for helping secure a tremendous amount of grant monies that will go toward the storm sewer repair and beautification of Center Street. It has been several months in the making, but it appears that all of the efforts will soon pay off, thank you and keep up the good work. Without making this sound anymore like an Academy Award speech than it already does, I would like to close by saying, thank you to every appointed official that volunteers their time to help make Douglas a better place to live. Last, but certainly not least recognition must be given to the members of the Charter Commission. They were the driving force that allowed us to finally realize our independence. Thank you Jerry Wagner, Arlene Philip, Louise Pattison, Jerry Bekken, Robert Rank, Tom Anthrop, Bill Overholtzer, Martha Hoexter and Chuck Kandalac. These nine individuals played an extremely important roll in Douglas finally being able to break away from its former nest and allowing it to mature to its potential. Although we are almost a 135 year old community, this is just the beginning of many good things to come.

Respectfully,

Matt Balmer
Mayor

CITY OF DOUGLAS TAX BILLS

The City will mail summer tax statements during the first week of July. City of Douglas property owners will no longer receive any billing from Saugatuck Township. Both the summer and winter tax bill will come from and be paid directly to the City of Douglas. The summer bill will be due September 14, 2005. The winter bill will be mailed the first week of December and be due February 14, 2006.

To qualify for a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) you must own, occupy and file for the exemption by May 1st. If you have questions regarding this exemption please contact the City Assessor, Alan Jeffries, at (269) 857-1438 or (616) 218-6963.

If you do not receive a summer tax statement by the middle of July please contact the City offices.

The chart below shows how tax dollars are dispersed.

HEADLEE ROLLBACK

The Headlee rollback is the amount each millage rate is reduced by each year. The rollback amount is calculated by using the amount of additions, losses and the State calculated Consumer Price Index (CPI). This reduction is used for keeping taxpayers from paying higher taxes each year without having a say in the matter. A Truth-In-Taxation hearing must take place if a municipality wants to collect the maximum tax rate allowed by law, after it has been reduced by the Headlee rollback calculation. In most cases the millage rate is still lower than the previous year, it just allows the municipality to collect the amount allowed by law and allows taxpayers to ask questions at the hearing. The Headlee rollback is the tool that makes taxation fair and keeps millage rates in check with the growth rate of the municipality.

The City of Douglas will hold its Truth-In-Taxation hearing at the June 20th council meeting.

WHERE DOES THE TAX MONEY GO?

<u>Summer</u>	<u>Mills</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Mills</u>
STATE ED (SET)	6.00000	SCHOOL OPER	8.16970
SCHOOL OPER	8.23440	SCHOOL DEBT	1.30000
SCHOOL DEBT	1.30000	SCHOOL SUPPL	0.83030
SCHOOL SUPPL	0.76560	COUNTY OPER	5.02960
COUNTY OPER	1.56130	ROADS	1.88140
CITY OPER	10.20040	CEMETERY	0.22100
INTERMED SCHOOL	4.21090	TRANS AUTHORITY	0.45390
		DIST LIBRARY	0.42260
		FIRE DISTRICT	1.29320
TOTAL	32.27260	TOTAL	19.60170

If your property has a 100% Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) you are exempt from School Operating millage.

VILLAGE TO CITY HOW WILL IT EFFECT MY TAXES?

The above question was the single most prominent question that everyone had asked prior to the vote on city hood in December 2004. It was too early for anyone to make an accurate calculation at that time, however it now appears that for the 2005 tax roll, you the tax payer will not see an increase in the overall millage (excluding the school and Allegan County) regarding your tax bill. That's right folks, for the 2005 Douglas City tax roll you will not see an increase in the bottom line millage that you will pay in 2005 compared to what you had paid to the Village of Douglas and Saugatuck Township in 2004. You will actually experience a slight decrease in the overall amount of taxes that you will pay. Fortunately through many months of straightening out what was budgeted and where it was being expensed, our staff was able to figure out how Douglas will be able to continue to run without increasing the overall millage. That's great news!!! This does not mean that Douglas is sitting comfortable as far as finances are concerned. The reality is that Douglas is barely staying afloat when it comes to its' revenues and expenses. I can tell you that I have learned a great deal about the lack of funds in relation to what we pay in taxes. Although we see a millage rate that appears to be very rich, what Douglas actually gets from that overall millage is quite small. In fact last year in 2004, Douglas operated on only 6.5 mills, the lowest operating millage that Douglas has had in 30 years, and Douglas is suffering from that right now. One might argue that while this is true, you must also figure in that the taxable value of land has risen considerably and that Douglas benefits from those tax dollars. Well they're right, the taxable value has risen and Douglas does receive more money in tax dollars as a result. The problem is that the money that Douglas receives from this is not significant. This year the taxable value of properties rose more than 10.5 million dollars over the previous year, however the City will only capture about \$35,000 from the increase in taxes from these developed properties. In other words, times are still extremely tight. However, we were very fortunate to have our City Manager, Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor and Auditor find out what was going on with our money and how we could move things around so that we could stop the bleeding. We didn't have to increase the millage rate this year and we are diligently trying to cut the fat from the budget, but it might be only a band-aid to the big picture. Therefore Douglas will still be trying to do business next year while continuing to operate with one of the lowest operating millage rates of any Village or City in the State of Michigan. It's our job to be fiscally conservative with your money. It is also our job to provide the services that you expect from your government. The trick is to be able to balance the two as equally as possible. I can assure you that we will continue to try to provide you with the best services your money can afford, while not extending ourselves too far. Our goal for next year will be to find out just how low we can keep our operating millage without suffering financial crisis. Please believe me when I say that our primary agenda is to look out for you, our friends, neighbors and fellow residents of Douglas.

Matt Balmer
Mayor

DOUGLAS DUTCHERS BASEBALL CLUB
2005 SCHEDULE

June

4 1:00 pm Beery Field
Fallasburg Cubs

11 9:00 am -5:00 pm John Ball Park, Grand Rapids
Silas K. Pierce Tournament

26 2:00 pm Benton Harbor
The House of David Echos

July

16 2:00 pm Beery Field
Bonneyville Millers

30 1:00 pm Fallasburg Park, Lowell
Fallasburg Cubs

The Dutchers have been
invited to play at Disney World.
Come out and show your support.
For more information call
Helen DeGeatano at
(269) 857-7055.

August

7 2:00 pm Beery Field
Kent Baseball Club

26-28 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Greenfield Village, Dearborn
1867 World Tournament

September

2-4 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Columbus, Ohio
Ohio Cup

17 4:00 pm Beery Field
Heritage Festival
Ludington Mariners

24 1:00 pm Beery Field
The House of David Echos

19th Century Baseball Slang

Aces:	runs
Club nine:	team
Cranks:	fans
Dew Drop:	slow pitch
Dish:	home plate
Huzzah:	Hooray!
Leg it:	run
Willow:	the bat

BOAT LAUNCH TOKENS

Tokens for boat launching at Schultz Park are available at City Hall for \$5.00 each or 20 tokens for \$50. Daily passes for Union Street are \$7.00. Union Street seasonal passes are free to City tax payers or \$50 for non-residents. Come in and get your seasonal pass.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The annual Classic Car Show will be held on September 11, 2005. The City is looking for a few volunteers to help make this event an enjoyable success. If you would like to offer your assistance please call the City offices at 857-1438.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Douglas DPW will continue to pick up sticks and brush during the last week of the month through the end of October. Place piles neatly at curbside. (No greens, stumps, or leaves please.)

The Schultz Park drop-off site is closed until further notice.

During the busy summer months the DPW is often called upon to assist groups with their events. If your group is planning an event that requires assistance with picnic tables, fencing, etc. please contact Tim Gohde well in advance of the event. Tim and his staff will do all they can to accomodate your needs.

DPW appreciates your help in spotting and reporting potholes to 857-2763.

MILLAGE RATE COMPARISON

DOUGLAS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Millage</u>
2004	9.60140
2003	10.02430
2002	13.29090
2001	13.37490
2000	14.67830
1999	14.98140
1998	15.27800
1997	15.46840
1996	15.60770

2005 OPERATING MILLS

<u>City</u>	<u>Millage</u>
Parchment	16.67720
Fennville	12.90000
Saugatuck	12.20000
Coloma	16.68990
Stanton	12.73400
Newaygo	18.85000
Scottville	17.36590
White Cloud	17.56890

SUMMER EVENTS

There is always a lot to do in the Saugatuck / Douglas area and this summer is no exception.

Come on out for Art on Center June 25 and 26.

July 4th fireworks will be launched from a barge positioned in Kalamazoo Lake beginning at dusk. The fireworks are entirely funded through donations. Every dollar collected is used to purchase fireworks for the 4th of July, Venetian Festival, and New Year's Eve. Donations may be sent to: Fireworks Fund, Box 1116, Saugatuck, MI 49453 or placed in cannisters located at the Douglas Post Office and Macatawa Bank.

Thursday Night Summer Socials begin July 14 and will be held every other week through September 8th for 5:00 - 9:00 pm at Beery Field.

Venetian Festival will be held July 30th. This is a day long event featuring an Art Fair, Chicken Bar-B-Que, Dinghy Poker Run, Lighted Boat Parade, and Fireworks.

Don't miss any of these fun-filled summer events!!

City of the Village of Douglas
86 W. Center St.
Douglas MI 49406-0757
phone: 269 857-1438
fax: 269 857-4751
www.douglasmichigan.com

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #3
DOUGLAS MI