



# City of Swartz Creek

<http://www.cityofswartzcreek.org> Phone:(810)635-4464 Fax: (810)635-2887

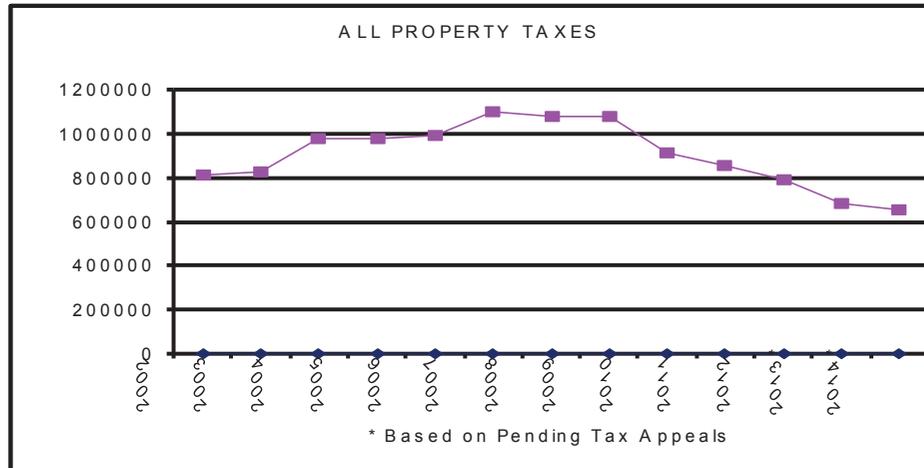
**NEWSLETTER** **Volume I** **2013**

## Public Safety Services - A Look At Revenues

The word tax always has, and always will, send a chill down the spine of all property owners. From my desk, I would like to take a minute to dispel some myths and perhaps, even confirm suspicions, on how our community derives revenue, what we do with it, where we are headed financially, and what has changed in the past few years that may vastly affect our future. To start, recent years have seen an intense focus on public employee salaries and compensation packages. To address this, we must go back and look at the history of our community. When the City's founding fathers set up the charter, they did something that no other city in the state had done. They limited Swartz Creek's taxing authority to 5 mills, 25% of what 98% of Michigan cities are permitted by law to levy. There is an upside and a downside to this. The upside is since we became a city in 1959, we have had no choice but to be frugal with our dollars. Today, the highest salary paid to any city employee is around \$60k per year. Benefit packages are bid out annually with the lowest cost basic packages provided. There are no lucrative public employee packages. The downside? Two decades of

poorly crafted legislation in Lansing by term limited, long gone elected officials set the stage for the failure of many, if not all Michigan communities. The crash of property values in 2009 accelerated the inevitable, and the end is years, if not a decade or more, away. The City has lost some 35% of its taxable value, something virtually every homeowner should now realize in their tax bills. Public safety, being police and fire services, account for a significant portion of our tax revenues. By state statute, the City will never recover these lost funds, unless all properties returned to the 2008 value *and* they all sold on the same day. In other words, as costs increase, service will have to be reduced. We are at the point where the next steps are less than 24 hour police coverage and limited City Hall hours. Based on limitations set by statutes, a ballot request for additional millage may be the only option left.

*Paul Bueche, City Manager*



\*\*City Council, Admin. Staff, IT, Elections, Board of Review, Treasurer, Assessor, Legal Council



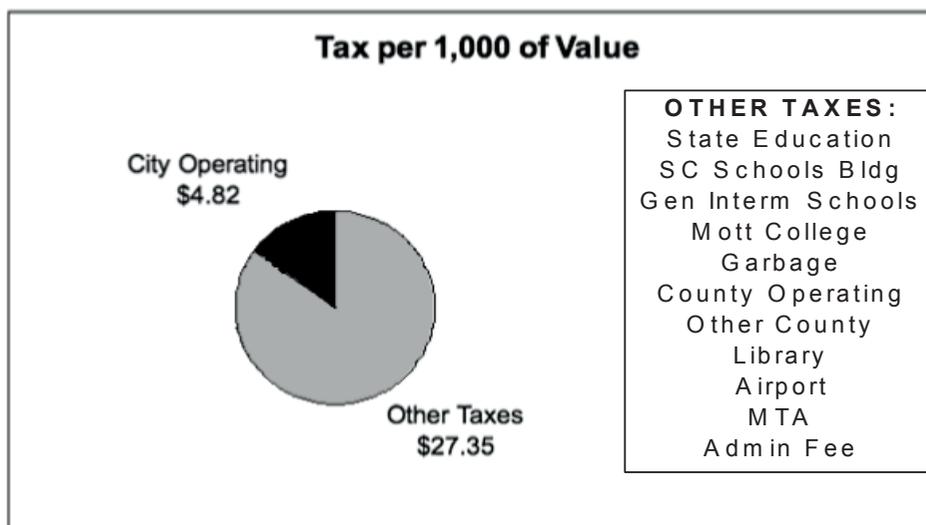


## Property Taxes

Property Taxes refers to taxes imposed by Townships, School Districts, Counties, Cities, Villages and other local units of government. Some property taxes are collected in the summer and others are collected in the winter. A resident of the City of Swartz Creek will see the City's operating and garbage taxes collected on the summer bill along with monies for the State Education Fund, Swartz Creek Schools, Genesee Intermediate School District, partial collection for Mott College and Genesee County's Operating millage. The winter tax bill currently collects monies for other county services which include parks, paramedics, health, senior services and veterans. The Genesee District Library, Mass Transportation Authority and Bishop Airport complete the items on the winter tax bill.

The tax rate is called a millage and represents the amount collected for each \$1,000 of taxable value. The City of Swartz Creek's tax rate is currently 4.8289 which means for every \$1,000 of taxable value \$4.82 is collected for the City of Swartz Creek to fund operations. A property with a taxable value of \$50,000 would generate \$241.44 of revenue which is then used to fund services including police services, parks, and roads.

The chart shows what the City of Swartz Creek collects on one thousand dollars of taxable value.



## Upgrade Your Neighborhood

The rash of home foreclosures and abandonments that has done so much damage to the cities of Flint and Detroit is hitting Swartz Creek also. Abandoned homes are more than an eyesore, they are an open invitation for vandalism and criminal activity. This is why abandoned houses quickly drag down the home values of an entire neighborhood. Most of these houses will eventually be put up for sale once all of the legalities of foreclosure, etc. have been taken care of, but in the meantime you may be faced with living next door to or just down the street from an empty house that is not being taken care of.

What can you do to preserve the value of your home and your neighborhood? Take charge of the situation to reduce the impact of the neighborhood eyesore! If possible, find out who owns the abandoned house, what they intend to do with it, and when. Ask the owner what you can do to help them keep up the property until it is sold and a new neighbor moves in. If you can't find out who owns the house, do everything you can to keep it from looking abandoned and deteriorating. You don't want copper thieves,

vandals and criminals coming into your neighborhood and causing trouble. Mow the lawn and pick up trash, old newspapers, etc. at the house. These are things that advertise the place is empty. Park your car in the driveway once in a while to give the appearance that someone is home there. Do the little things to keep up the appearance of the house so that its value does not drop and drag the value of your home down with it. Work with your other neighbors to share the work of keeping up your neighborhood since we are all in this together when it comes to home values. The new neighbor who eventually moves into that house will greatly appreciate your efforts.

If you can find out who owns that house, work with the owners to maintain the value of your neighborhood, not against them. Above all, let the city, and especially the Swartz Creek police department, know what you are doing. We do not want to mistake good neighbors for vandals and criminals. Thanks for helping to upgrade your neighborhood and our city.

*Mayor David Krueger*





## Police Department Information and Services

The Swartz Creek Police Department is located in the Public Safety Building, 8100 Civic Drive and is open Monday thru Friday, excluding holidays, 8:00 am to 5 pm. The office is closed for lunch from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. If you have general questions about our services, please call our office at **635-4401** during these hours.

**Available Services:** Services available at the Police Headquarters include: Copies of some police reports, concealed pistol permit information packets, and vacation home checks.

**Calls for Police Service:** Our officers stand ready to assist all citizens in calls for police service. Please be aware however, that all calls for police service are dispatched from the Genesee County 911 Center. If you are in need of police service of any kind, including non-emergencies, please call 911. This includes, but is not limited to, such things as vehicle "unlocks", suspicious activity, road hazards, and all police reports. Calling 911 directly may reduce the amount of time you wait for an officer to respond. Additionally, unless you are specifically requested to do so, it is not necessary to come to the Police Department to file reports. All police reports will be taken by an officer who will respond to the location from where you are calling.

**Camp 911** is a safety program which targets 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and addresses such safety

issues as; how to recognize emergencies, when and how to call 911, home, school and internet safety; gun and fire safety; bicycle safety; how to prevent common traffic and home injuries; and how to give simple but life-saving emergency care to injured victims. The Camp is an annual event and extremely popular with local youth. The Camp consists of 4 one-half day sessions. There are morning and afternoon sessions available. This year's Camp 911 is scheduled for July 8 -12, 2013. For additional information, call: (810) 591-1867 or (810) 635-4401.

**Cops in the Park** is a new program introduced in the summer of 2012. **CIP** is a program designed to develop a positive relationship between law enforcement and youth of all ages. The event is held at Elms Rd Park and includes summer activities, team based activities, safety, fun and games. The program is expected to run for 2 weeks this summer. Watch for more details.

**Vacation Home Checks:** Whether you will be gone for several months or just a few days, in addition to routine patrols in your neighborhood, the Swartz Creek Police Department will make regular checks on your home while you are gone. This service is available to all city residents and can be arranged by phone. Call the office for details.

**No Parking:** The City of Swartz Creek has had a long standing ordinance prohibiting parking on all city streets from 2 am to 6 am. Overnight parking restrictions are enforced by the Department. Save yourself some money and aggravation by ensuring that your vehicles are off the roadway during these hours. We appreciate your cooperation.

- **Water Rate Increase:** Due to a water commodity increase to the City by Genesee County Water & Waste, City residents will see an increase of .35 per 100 cubic feet of water used. The increase will take effect on June 20, 2013 and will be reflected on the October 2013 water/sewer bill.
- **Morrish Road Bridge-** Construction is set to begin on June 17, 2013 and may take up to three months to complete. Visit our website at [www.cityofswartzcreek.org](http://www.cityofswartzcreek.org) for updates.

### ALL AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES:

**Including water and sewer problems such as water main breaks or sewer backups- should be reported to 911. (City voice messages are not checked on the weekends or after 5pm on weekdays).**

## Wood Chipping

Following is a list of guidelines that the City of Swartz Creek would like the residents to follow when placing limbs at the curb for chipping:

- Must be four feet or less in length
- Must be four inches or less in diameter
- Arm load sized piles only. (keeps limbs from getting tangled)
- Cut ends towards the road
- No Lumber
- Homeowner cut only





## Free Entertainment at Pajtas Theatre This Summer



### Summer Concerts

June 18—The Clarksons (Country, Bluegrass, Easy Listening)  
June 25—The Fairlanes (50's and 60's Rock & Roll)  
July 2—Detroit Brass Society  
(Americana, Marches & Standards)  
July 9—Jump Street (Big Band Era Music)  
July 16—Allen as Tim (Tim McGraw Tribute Artist with the  
Dance Hall Rockers—Country Music)  
July 23—Remix-Rock & Roll (Country & Polka Variety)  
July 30—Rusty Wright Band (Blues Entertainment)  
August 6—Polka Riot (Beer Tent Style Polka Fun)

**Starting at 7 pm**  
At Pajtas Amphitheater on Civic Drive

### Family Movie Night



**Movies Start at Dusk**

June 14	Open Season
June 28	Rise of the Guardians
July 12	Pirates Band of Misfits
July 26	Up
August 9	Jumanji
August 23	Madagascar 3

Bring your own blanket or folding chair and enjoy a FREE movie with family and friends

*Movies May be Cancelled  
due to Bad Weather*

**FREE Bounce House**

At Pajtas Amphitheater  
On Civic Drive  
(Across from SC Fire Dept and Police)

Swartz Creek Senior Center (810)635-4122

Perkins Library (810)635-3900

**City of Swartz Creek**  
**Incorporated 1959**  
**8083 Civic Drive**  
**Swartz Creek, Michigan 48473-1498**  
**(810) 635-4464**

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