



# City of Otsego Agenda

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Winter 2015

**Holiday Wishes  
From  
The City of Otsego  
Staff  
Have a Happy &  
Safe Holiday Season!**



**VISIT US ON THE WEB  
[CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG](http://CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG)**



**WELCOME NEW MAIN STREET MANAGER  
JOSH OWENS**



I have always called West Michigan my home. I grew up in Battle Creek and then moved to Kalamazoo where I attended and graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in Public Policy. While attending WMU I started volunteering as a board member for a small non-profit organization named Thrive: A Refugee Support Program in Grand Rapids. After graduating from WMU I started attending Grand Valley State University in pur-

suit of a Master of Public Administration degree in Urban and Regional Development. A few years ago I moved to the Plainwell/Richland area where I currently live with my beautiful wife Raquel, our two crazy boys and a lazy Great Dane. My family and I are very happy and excited to start this new chapter of our lives here in Otsego. I feel very fortunate to be able to be a new part of such a well-run organization and a wonderful community.

**ELECTION NEWS** - The Presidential Primary Election will be held on **Tuesday, March 8, 2016**. Absentee Ballot Applications can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office.



**City Hall Will Be Closed**

**December 24, 25, & 31, 2015, & January 1, 2016**

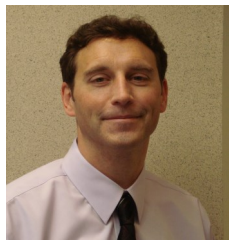
## Hometown Christmas Celebration

### Schedule of Events!!

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 • 2015

<b>ALL DAY</b>	<b>Downtown Scavenger Hunt!</b> <i>Pick up your instructions at any downtown business. Prizes if you complete the hunt and solve the puzzle!</i>	
<b>7am-10:30am</b>	<b>Breakfast with Santa at VFW...\$7.00 (12 &amp; up) \$4.00 (11 &amp; under)</b> <i>Eggs, link sausage, pancakes, hash browns, milk, juice, coffee. Thank you to VandeBunte Eggs for their donation of eggs.</i>	
<b>10am - 2pm</b>	<b>Kids Crafts - Hosted by the Otsego Historical Museum</b>	
<b>11am &amp; 12:30pm</b>	<b>"Frosty" Lunch!</b> Enjoy a holiday lunch featuring Frosty the Snowman Our Table. Limited seating. Reservations required. 692-2336	
<b>11am - 5pm</b>	<b>Christmas Craft Show</b> - Location is Otsego Historical Museum	
<b>12pm - 5pm</b>	<b>Christmas Music</b> - Barn of Blues D.J. downtown	
<b>1pm - 3pm</b>	<b>Decorate a Cookie</b> at Otsego Gourmet Goodies!	
<b>3pm - 6pm</b>	<b>Chili Cook Off</b> at the Chamber of Commerce (Masonic Temple) Register at the Chamber of Commerce. 694-6880	
<b>4pm - 7:30pm</b>	<b>Hot Cocoa</b> with mounds of whipped cream! Outside of the the Chamber of Commerce and by the community tree (Church of God)	
<b>5:00pm</b>	<b>Old Fashioned Hayrides</b> around town!	
<b>5:30pm</b>	<b>Visits with Santa!</b> Otsego Fire Department (Presented by the Chamber of Commerce)	
<b>5:30pm</b>	<b>Musical Entertainment:</b> The Real Fantastics	
<b>5:30pm</b>	<b>Chestnuts Roasted on an open fire</b> (Hosted by Chamber)	
<b>6:15pm</b>	<b>Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony</b> , Church of God	
<b>7:00pm</b>	<b>Parade</b> (Hosted by Chamber of Commerce)	
<p><b>Will you be the lucky winner of a GOLDEN TICKET this year?</b> <b>Midway Chevy will be handing out a very limited number of Golden Tickets during the parade.</b></p> <p>These tickets are a Christmas version of our Downtown Dollars. They can be used like cash in downtown Otsego businesses! There is <b>NO CATCH!</b> Redeem your ticket at Midway and receive an envelope with Christmas Cash, from \$10 - \$200! <b>No purchase necessary!</b> Just a special gift from Midway to spread holiday cheer in Otsego!</p>		
<b>7:30pm</b>	<b>Visits with Santa!</b> Otsego Fire Department (Presented by the Chamber of Commerce)	
<b>7:45pm</b>	<b>Snowball Drop</b> Join us in the center of town as we drop nearly 2,000 ping pong balls with special holiday discounts, to be used at your favorite Otsego area businesses!	

# City Manager's View



City Manager  
Thad Beard



**SOUTH FARMER STREET PROJECT:** While snow is now eminent, we begin the planning for next year's street projects. In 2016, we will focus all of our funds (with help from the State Small Urban Funding) to reconstruct a section of South Farmer Street. While all of South Farmer is in need of replacement, we simply cannot afford to fund it in one fiscal year. The section we plan to repair is from Hammond to Orleans. This will include removing and replacing the entire road (including curb and gutter), as well as the underground city utilities (water and sanitary sewer). The project will also include resurfacing the street from Orleans to Allegan Street. This project will require traffic detours due to the entire road being removed.

**AUDIT:** Another seasonal event is the presentation and review of the Annual Audit. I am quite pleased of the fact that the City obtained another unqualified (clean) audit. The clean audit is significant but the increase in Fund Balance is just as significant. The sale of property generated a onetime revenue of approximately \$280,000 increasing the General Fund - Fund Balance 16% to 29%. While the revenue is a onetime increase, it still provides a source of funding for the unexpected financial situations which appear ever more present in Michigan.

Be sure to drive through the downtown and by Brookside Park at night. The City employees take pride in making them both light up for Christmas. I am (we are) blessed with great employees who make Otsego a great place to work, play and ultimately stay. Happy Holidays!

## TRANSFER STATION HOLIDAY HOURS

**CLOSED - Thurs., December 24, 2015**  
**CLOSED- Thurs., December 31, 2015**

## REMINDERS

As Winter Returns -

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- WATCH FOR SNOW PLOWING VEHICLES
- REMEMBER FRONT YARD PARKING IS PROHIBITED.
- REMEMBER SIDEWALKS NEED TO BE KEPT CLEAR



## FROZEN WATER PIPES

If you experience discoloration in your water or reduced water pressure, please notify City Hall immediately at 692-3391. Leave one faucet running with a pencil size stream of water. Please be aware that although temperatures may rise above freezing, the potential still exists for freezing water lines. Do not stop running water until you have called City Hall and been advised to do so. Otsego City Hall **must be notified when you begin running your water, for any potential adjustment to be made on your utility bill.**



## WINTER PARKING RULES

Beginning November 1, parking is once again PROHIBITED on any public street in the City of Otsego from 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. Parking is prohibited during the months of November through April in order to facilitate snow removal. Violators will be ticketed.



## 2015 DECEMBER BOARD OF REVIEW

The December Board of Review will be meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. If you have a discrepancy regarding your Principal Residence Exemption on your Winter 2015 taxes, **you must contact City Hall before Friday, December 11, 2015.** If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer's Office at 692-2741.



## 2015 Winter Taxes

Matthew Storbeck, City Treasurer

Winter tax bills were mailed to arrive on December 1. Please note that tax bills are now sent to property owners, as well as mortgage servicers. If you do not receive one, please call 692-2741, and we will send another bill. Residential property owners are encouraged to check their Principal Residence Exemption to make sure they are receiving the proper percentage of credit for school operating taxes. If not, please call before December 11<sup>th</sup>, and an adjustment can be made for this year's taxes. Otherwise, corrections to the Winter Tax cannot be made until July of 2016.

Taxpayers wishing to have their tax payments taken directly from their bank account may contact us to set up this service. Payments will not be transferred until December 28<sup>th</sup> or February 12<sup>th</sup>, at the taxpayer's discretion. This will allow us time to make contact in cases where problems arise. Also, please remember that receipts will not be mailed back for payments received by mail unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is sent with the payment. Please keep the top part of the tax bill and check number for your receipt. Also, you may access the City's web site at [www.cityofotsego.org](http://www.cityofotsego.org) to retrieve tax and payment information, as well as make electronic payments.



**SALE - 1/2 Priced**

**CITY LOTS FOR SALE**

**THINK SPRING!**

The City of Otsego has several lots remaining in the improved Eley Acres Residential Subdivision. Choice single family residential home sites are for sale in this restricted plat. Lot prices range from \$23,000 to \$37,000. For additional information please contact the City Clerk's Office, 692-3391.

## POLICE BEAT



*Police Chief, Gordon Konkle*

By now I'm sure everyone is aware that Mother Nature has changed and because of that so must we. Warmer coats and snow tires along with extra time in the morning to get where we are going are in order. I would guess that most of us know someone who has already been involved in or had a close call while driving because of the weather. It takes some time to get used to the winter driving again, but if we slow down it will all come back. Please make sure you give yourself plenty of time so you don't have to rush and make sure you and yours are dressed properly just in case you find yourself in one of those unfortunate accidents where you might just have to walk.

Another change with the seasons is the parking regulations here in the City. It all starts with the necessity of leaf removal and then moves right into snowplowing. Parking on any city street is prohibited from November 1<sup>st</sup> through May 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been reminding people for several weeks by placing notices on the windshields of cars left out overnight warning them that parking tickets will soon follow. Hopefully those warnings will help to avoid the sting of a \$10.00 parking ticket

should they continue or forget. Parking, in particular parking tickets, is always a hot topic. No one likes getting a ticket and you would be surprised on how some people express that they are being unfairly targeted when they violate the ordinance. This sentiment seems particularly strong when it comes to parking in the front yards in violation of the ordinance. A very simple way to remember whether you are parked in the front yard is this. Draw an imaginary line from the front of your house to each property line. Any time you are parked (not including your driveway) in front of that line, and then you are parking in the front yard. Now for those lucky few who live on corner lots, your front yard is the portion of your yard on both streets. Yes, lucky you, you have two front yards when it comes to the front yard parking ordinance. The same principle applies; you just have to go from the corners of your house to the property line on both street sides. If you have questions please contact us, we will always try to work with you.

Unfortunately, we have to say no to some requests. Many people believe that the Police Department makes the laws or ordinances. This could not be further from the truth! I have to go way back to remember my High School Social Studies or perhaps it was Civics Class. Regardless, our constitution whether nationally, at the state level, or for the local level has three separate branches of power to ensure there is a mechanism to control the power and possible abuse by any one of the three. The Legislature, Executive, and Judici-

ary branches are present in all forms of government in this country. The laws, or in our case the ordinances, are made by the legislative branch which is our elected body (City Commission). The Police Department is part of the Executive Branch. We enforce laws and ordinances that are passed by the legislative branch. Our job, whether we like our ordinances or not, is to enforce them, we can't pick, choose, or make up rules as we go along. Finally, the courts are the Judiciary Branch who decide whether our laws and ordinances are legal and within the Constitution.

Citizens who are unhappy with our ordinances should contact their elected officials to change them. We could go on and on about the checks and balances afforded by our form of government, but I think most of us remember when we all had to learn about the balance of power afforded to all of our citizens. Nothing is perfect, but most laws and ordinances are made for the protection and well being of the community as a whole, not just one person. This is a wonderful community and with a little patience and cooperation it will continue to be a great place to live and raise a family.



# CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

## DECEMBER, 2015

3	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
7	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
8	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
14	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
21	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
21	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
24 & 25	CITY HALL CLOSED	
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
31	CITY HALL CLOSED	

## JANUARY, 2016

1	CITY HALL CLOSED	
4	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
4	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
5	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
11	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
18	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
18	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
25	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## FEBRUARY, 2016

1	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
1	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
2	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
4	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
8	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
16	WINTER TAXES DUE	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
15	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## MARCH, 2016

1	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
7	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
13	DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	
14	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
15	BOARD OF REVIEW	
17	BOARD OF REVIEW	
21	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
21	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
25	CITY HALL CLOSED—GOOD FRIDAY	
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## APRIL, 2016

4	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
4	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
5	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
11	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
18	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
18	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
25	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## MAY, 2016

2	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
3	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	ELECTION	
5	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
9	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
16	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
16	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
23	PLANNING COMMISSION	
30	CITY HALL CLOSED—MEMORIAL DAY	

## CITY CONTACTS

Police & Fire Emergency.....	911
Fire Non-Emergency.....	694-4390
Police Non-Emergency.....	692-6111
Chief of Police.....	692-6111
City Manager .....	694-6146
City Clerk .....	692-3391
Finance Director .....	692-2741
Main Street Office.....	692-2336
Dept. Public Works .....	694-6636
Treatment Plant.....	694-9194

**Website:** [www.cityofotsego.org](http://www.cityofotsego.org)



The Agenda is a quarterly publication of the  
**CITY OF OTSEGO**

Tom Gilmer.....	Mayor
Kathy Misner.....	Mayor Pro-Tem
Stacey Withee.....	Commissioner
Ryan Wieber.....	Commissioner
Cyndi Trobeck.....	Commissioner
Thad Beard.....	City Manager
Angela Cronen.....	City Clerk
Mike Bosch.....	DPW Supervisor
Tom Dunn.....	WWTP Superintendent
Gordon Konkle.....	Chief of Police
Matthew Storbeck.....	Treasurer
Brandon Weber.....	Fire Chief
Kevin Harris.....	Assessor
Josh Owens.....	Main Street Manager

117 East Orleans Street  
Otsego MI 49078  
269-692-3391



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"The City of Otsego Citizen's Guide, Performance Dashboard, Debt Service Report and Projected Budget Report are available for viewing at the Otsego City Hall or online at [www.cityofotsego.org](http://www.cityofotsego.org)."



# OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

It seems like just a few weeks ago that we were basking in the summer sun, and now winter is upon us.

With the change in seasons should come a change in our mindset with regard to safety.

If you haven't already done so, it's not too late to consider having an appropriately licensed contractor inspect and service your furnace, chimney, and any other heating appliances. This time of year, these are frequently the cause of fire related incidents which might have otherwise been prevented.

Likewise, alternative heating sources have been the cause of more than a few fires, fire related injuries or deaths, and carbon monoxide exposure incidents. Kitchen stoves/ovens should never be used as a heating source. Kerosene heaters need to be properly maintained the same as furnaces. Use of proper fuel types, timely replacement of wicks, and cleaning of the unit are critical for safe and proper operation. Spare fuel should never be stored indoors or in close proximity to the heating unit. Kerosene and space heaters should never be left running while unattended or while occupants are sleeping, and proper clearances on all sides as specified by the manufacturer should be adhered to.



With our recent time change away from daylight savings time, hopefully you've already checked your smoke alarms for proper operation and changed the batteries. As a reminder, with Christmas soon upon us, people may be tempted to "borrow" the batteries out of smoke alarms to power consumer electronic devices that were received as gifts. Please avoid this temptation, since if the battery is the only source of power, the smoke alarm cannot function without it. If the smoke alarm doesn't work, it can't warn occupants of dangerous smoke conditions that may occur. Smoke alarms should be installed in all sleeping areas, at least one (1) on each floor, and ideally in the kitchen as well.

Many residences have and use carbon monoxide alarms. These need proper installation, maintenance, and replacement the same as heating appliances and smoke alarms. If not plugged directly into a 120v AC outlet, then the battery needs to be checked and/or replaced as prescribed by the manufacturer. Even if the battery is properly maintained, these units do not have an unlimited life span. They need to be replaced as prescribed by the manufacturer, on average every 2-7 years, due to the sensor inside it that detects the carbon monoxide. Fortunately, most carbon monoxide alarm calls that the Otsego Fire Department responds to are false. The most common causes of these false alarms are depleted batteries or a sensor within the unit that has exceeded its useful life span. It

is important for residents to know the differences between an actual alarm tone, and a notification tone. On both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, a periodic "chirp" indicates something needs servicing or the unit needs replacing. A loud, shrill, continuous tone or series of tones indicates a dangerous conditions, necessitating occupants to take appropriate action, such as evacuating the building and contacting 911 immediately!

Speaking of Christmas, please use caution with Christmas trees. Artificial trees should have an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or similar certification label attesting to its flame retardant properties. Real trees should be watered at regular intervals to delay drying out, and should be removed from the home when they are no longer wanted or useful.



Once dried out, real trees pose a serious fire hazard due to their volatility, rapid flame spread, and high heat output if they are ignited. Make no mistake, real Christmas trees pose no greater safety hazard than artificial trees if properly maintained.

Along the same lines, the incidence of structure fires related to Christmas lights and trees has been decreased for many years thanks to safer lights such as miniature bulbs with low power consumption, and now LED lights. Nonetheless, lights should be inspected at least annually to make certain that they are in good condition and safe for use. Look for conditions such as nicked or cut wires, plugs or wiring that is brown or stiffer than adjacent areas, broken bulbs, and similar findings.

Many of us will be traveling over the Holidays and of course, throughout the winter. Make certain to give yourself a little extra time to get to your destination, allowing for road and weather conditions, and other drivers. Keeping your cell phone charged and keeping a spare phone charger with you are good ideas. A cell phone is just a tool, and any tool is only as good as its user. While advances have been made in coordinating GPS with cell phone technology, knowing where you are in the event of an emergency is key to getting help to you quickly. Emergency responders are frequently delayed in locating emergency scenes while waiting for 911 dispatchers to lock onto a cell phone's GPS signal, identify latitude and longitude coordinates, apply those to mapping software, and relay an address or approximately physical location to responders. Precious minutes can be lost trying to find people in an emergency.

Also consider carrying an emergency survival kit in your vehicle. Suggested lists of contents can be found on many websites.



## 2015 Tax Year

Below is a breakdown of the property taxes collected by the City of Otsego by resolution of the Board of Supervisors October 15, 1962 under the auspices of Act 82, Public Acts of 1961. The separate taxes of each operating unit have been combined into one column as shown below. The millage rates represent dollars per \$1,000 of taxable value. [Note: Residential properties are exempt from school operating millage up to the percent that property is claimed as the homeowner's principal residence (P.R.E.).]

<b>TAXING UNIT</b>	<b>TOTAL RATE</b>	<b>BREAK-DOWN</b>	<b>NON-P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>SUMMER BILLING</b>	<b>WINTER BILLING</b>
City	14.0367					
Operating		12.0854	20.7%	30.0%	12.0854	
Solid Waste Reduction		1.5199	2.6%	3.8%	1.5199	
Fire Truck Debt		0.4314	0.7%	1.1%	0.4314	
Allegan County	6.0937					
Operating		4.6377	8.0%	11.5%	4.6377	
Ops. VET Relief Fund		0.0200	0.0%	0.0%	0.0200	
Road Tax		1.0000	1.7%	2.5%		1.0000
Senior Service		0.4360	0.7%	1.1%		0.4360
Otsego Public Schools	25.5000					
Operating		18.0000	30.9%	EXEMPT		18.0000
2004 Debt		7.5000	12.9%	18.6%		7.5000
Allegan Area Educational Svc Agency	4.9457					
Operating		0.1157	0.2%	0.3%		0.1157
Voted Special Ed.		3.0500	5.2%	7.6%		3.0500
Voted Voc. Ed.		1.7800	3.1%	4.4%		1.7800
State Education Tax	6.0000		10.3%	14.9%	6.0000	
Otsego District Public Library	1.6988					
Operating		0.9888	1.7%	2.5%		0.9888
Debt		0.7100	1.2%	1.8%		0.7100
<b>TOTAL MILLAGE (NON-P.R.E.)</b>	58.2749		100.0%		24.6944	33.5805
LESS SCHOOL OPERATING FOR EXEMPT HOMESTEADS	-18.0000					-18.0000
<b>TOTAL MILLAGE (HOMESTEAD)</b>	40.2749			100.0%	24.6944	15.5805



**Happy  
New Year!**

