

NEW FIRE STATION MOVING FORWARD

Timeline and details on PAGE 2

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Part 2 of a 3-part series on the history of Meridian Township PAGE 4

SAFE DRIVING INITIATIVE

Police Department encouraging safe driving PAGE 6

Fall/Winter 2014

MERIDIAN MONITOR



FALL INTO WINTER The Beauty of Meridian

Cross Country Skiing
Snowshoeing

Sledding

Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk

Ice Fishing Derby

Snow Sculpture Contest

Winter Wonderland

Family Winter Sports Weekends

See back page for event dates

Community of Choice Budgeting Quality Public Services

The 2015 General Fund budget focuses on continuing and enhancing the quality of services provided to residents in Meridian Township and improving upon the quality of life. The goals of the 2015 budget included no layoffs, maintaining effective services, meeting legacy cost obligations, investing in aging Township buildings, and sustaining the Township Board's directive to maintain a \$5,250,000 General Fund balance.

Police, fire, and parks and recreation are essential components to the quality of life in Meridian and residents can look forward to the completion of the new fire station in December 2015 (Details on page 2) and enhancements to our parks (Details on page 5) as recently approved by voters through millage proceeds. Residents and visitors to our parks will also see new picnic tables, trash cans, and grills (\$11,500), contributing to Meridian Township being a Community of Choice.

Continue on page 2...

PROPERTY VALUES INCREASE

1.62%

2014 ESTIMATED TAXABLE VALUES



CONNECT with MERIDIAN



New Fire Station Moves Forward

By: April Jones

Plans for the new fire station are moving forward after a unanimous vote by the Township Board awarding Weiland-Davco Corporation the contract for professional construction management services. The new station will be built at the corner of Okemos Road and Central Park Drive, replacing the Central Fire Station, which closed earlier this year.

"We have now hired a construction manager to oversee the building of the new fire station. We believe this partnership is best to get the fire station constructed. The fit and finish will be the highest quality for the best value," Fire Chief Fred Cowper said.

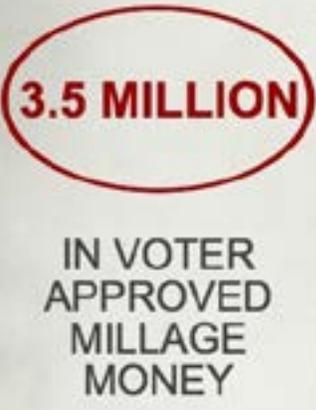
The new fire station will have amenities the previous Central Fire Station was not equipped with. It will include separate men's and women's locker rooms along with separate bunk rooms. A training/community room is planned that will also function as the Township's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the backup center for the county EOC. The new station will also make room for the fire administration to move back into the fire station. Fire administration had been removed from the fire station back in the mid 90's.

In December, the final draft plans will be presented to the Township Board for final approval with an expected completion date of December 2015. ●

Stay up to date with the Fire Station build by becoming a fan on facebook:

www.facebook.com/MeridianTwpFD

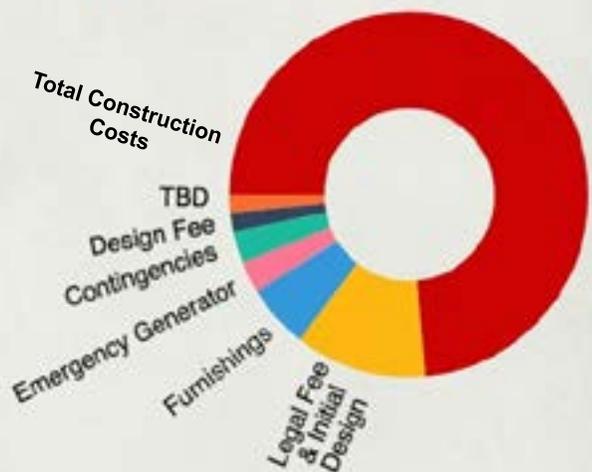
THE NEW CENTRAL FIRE STATION



3.5 MILLION

IN VOTER APPROVED MILLAGE MONEY

Project Cost Breakdown:



Fire Station Project Time Line:



Design & Budget submitted to Township Board

Nov. 18, 2014

Final Approval from Township Board

Dec. 2, 2014

Breaking Ground!

March 1, 2015

Fire Equipment & personnel move into new fire station

Dec 15, 2015



FOR MORE INFORMATION, RESIDENTS CAN VISIT:
www.meridian.mi.us

DID YOU KNOW?

Christmas Tree Disposal

There is **ONE** location to dispose of holiday trees this year:

Nancy Moore Park Parking Lot

Located just off Okemos Road at 1960 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett Wonch Park is no longer a designated drop-off location.

Trees should be free of wire, metal bracing or nails, and must not be in a plastic bag. Trees may be dropped off from December 26 to January 31. For more information, please call 517-853-4440.



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Community of Choice Budgeting Quality Public Services

While the Police and Fire Departments total \$9,686,135 or 55% of the total General Fund expenses, they also account for an estimated revenue of 21% or \$3,705,000 of General Fund revenue. In 2015, three new police vehicles (\$111,000) and a new ambulance will be purchased (\$180,000) while \$150,000 representing 1/2 of the cost of a new fire truck will be set aside to purchase the truck in 2016, contributing to maintaining the quality of life in Meridian Township.

Residents will continue to experience the quality of services provided by the 155 team members which will increase by one to include a Part Time Code Enforcement Officer (\$29,000). All team members will receive 1% increase as Meridian strives to continue to provide unparalleled customer service. The roof at the Okemos Road Service Center will be replaced (\$195,000).

The housing market has turned the corner after several years of declining property tax values. Meridian Township expects to see a 1.62% increase in 2014 taxable values providing an additional \$102,000 in General Fund tax revenue.

To read the entire budget document, please visit the Township website. ●

www.meridian.mi.us



Meridian Township A Community of Choice

By: Brett Kast

Meridian Township has proven to be a community of choice with award winning schools, quality parks, and excellent services. Residents and visitors to the area have also seen and will continue to see Meridian become a community of choice by popular companies and local startups.

This year alone, at least 10 businesses have held grand openings with Meridian Township's Community Planning and Development Department including Cravings Gourmet Popcorn, Marco's Pizza, Pilates Silver Sensations Studio, Marriott Residence Inn, and retailer H&M.

Two highly anticipated companies are coming to the area in the near future. The clothing and furnishing store, Gordmans, is renovating 30,000 square feet and building an additional 19,000 square feet to Meridian Mall.



Whole Foods took over the abandoned trailer park location on Grand River Avenue and is currently under construction. Whole Foods is investing approximately \$2 million in the Township and will bring 250 new jobs to the area.

"The economy is coming back, the market is stronger, we've seen that not only with new users coming into the mall, but also for other areas in the Township. Most of our major retailers have started to look at or have made millions of dollars in improvements," said Mark Kieselbach, Meridian Township's Director of Community Planning and Development. "Meijer invested more than \$7 million into their store to remodel it, and Target and Kroger both spent more than a \$1 million in remodeling their sites in the last few years." Courtesy Ford will be investing \$1.2 million dollars into making a larger waiting area and renovating their facade.

As of the end of August 2014, construction value is the highest area of growth in Meridian Township, valued at \$19.1 million compared to last year's total of \$9.6 million. ●



New Pedestrian Bridge Puts Safety First

By: April Jones

Downtown Okemos will be seeing some changes within the upcoming year. The bridge that stands on Okemos Road over the Red Cedar River near Wonch Park will be getting an addition— a new pedestrian bridge.

For years, pedestrians or bikers who needed to cross north or south bound across the bridge used a small sidewalk on the existing bridge; however Township officials said that method was not safe. "It's really not intended to be a sidewalk," said Raymond Severy, Meridian Township's Director of Public Works and Engineering. "It's only about three to four feet wide. When people use it in the summer, it's kind of ok because it's dry and not slippery, but in the winter, even after the snow is removed, it can be slippery. It's very narrow and if someone were to fall off they'd fall right into the traffic lane."

According to the Michigan State Police Traffic Crash Reporting System there were two reported bicycle-car collisions in the immediate area in 2010 and 2014, which raised more safety concerns among community members.

At the September 16th Township Board meeting, the Board unanimously authorized a contract of more than \$655,000 with Toebe Construction, LLC to build a new arched non-motorized bridge over the Red Cedar River on Okemos Road.

The new pedestrian bridge, which will cross the Red Cedar River west of the southbound vehicular bridge, will be separate from the existing bridge, will be used solely by non-motorized traffic, and will eliminate any connections to the existing narrow walkway on the existing bridge.

Cameron Bridges Works, LLC will be building the new bridge in Elmira, New York. The bridge will be brought to Meridian Township in 3 – 4 sections for assembly at the site. The bridge foundation will be constructed this fall and the bridge will be put in place in March 2015. ●

History of the Camelback Bridge

One of the main thoroughfares through the Township known as the camelback bridge is located on Okemos Road near Ferguson Park. The bridge dates back to 1924 and is noted as a historic landmark in Meridian Township. It originally carried two-way traffic, but now carries only northbound traffic. The 90-foot, curved camelback bridge was built by the Wolverine Engineering Company of Mason and is said to be one of only two known surviving examples of concrete girder camelback bridges in Michigan with sidewalks built as an integral part of the original structure. ●



Back to the Beginning (Part 2): History of Haslett

About three miles north of Okemos is the village of Haslett. By the 1840s, thirty five farms and a school made up the swampy area around Lake Lansing, which used to be known as Pine Lake. Jane Rose, Executive Director of Meridian Historical Village, explains, "The Haslett area was actually the area that saw the first settlers. When settlers come to an area, they want to pick the best property to claim or to purchase; they are going to go for the best water sources."

In 1879, the inner-urban trolley was established and it came from the city of Lansing to Pine Lake. Suddenly, Pine Lake became a popular summer destination. The Spiritualist Association led by James and Sarah Haslett bought up land around Pine Lake making it into a resort area mainly for spiritualists. After James Haslett's death, Sarah gave the land to the Haslett Park Association and an amusement park where the spiritualists' camp had been was complete with a figure 8 wooden roller coaster, tilt-a-whirls, and cars that spun around up into the air over Haslett Road and a merry-go-round.

One of the most popular ballrooms in Michigan, The Dells was built in 1924. Jane Rose stated, "It was a real magnet. I mean they drew large, big-name people." Haslett has seen much change from its early days. The Dells was hit hard by the depression, the amusement park closed and its merry-go-round was sent to Cedar Point in Ohio.

Tourism still thrives in Haslett during the summer but one can tell much has happened since the late 1800s. However some of the old remains, such as the Haslett Women's Club which began in 1905 and still persists to this day. Education has also remained largely important in Haslett with residents being strong supporters of education. Haslett is a village with a past worth remembering. ●

Thanks to the following people who helped with historical information and dates: Jane Rose, Meridian Historical Village; John Grettenberger, Okemos resident; Eric Stelljes, Historian; and Elaine Davis, Historian.



Read Part 1 online in the "Media Room", www.meridian.mi.us

RETIREMENT & ASSISTED LIVING HOMES

The Marquette
ASSISTED LIVING
New Life Assisted Living (2015)
ASSISTED LIVING
Marsh Pointe
LOW INCOME
New Life Assisted Living
ADULT FOSTER CARE
Clare Bridge
MEMORY IMPAIRED
Wynwood
ASSISTED LIVING
Okemos Health & Rehabilitation
ASSISTED LIVING
Stratford Place
LOW INCOME
East Lansing Health Care
NURSING
Trilogy
ASSISTED LIVING
Bickford Cottage
ASSISTED LIVING
Ingham County Medical Care Facility
LONG TERM CARE & SHORT TERM REHABILITATION
GO TO WWW.MERIDIAN.MI.US FOR MORE DETAILS

There's No Place Like Home

By: Morgan Hall

Many would agree that there is no place like home, which may be why almost 90 percent of people surveyed by AARP Michigan said they would prefer to age in the comfort of their own homes. Aging-in-place means the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. To prepare for aging-in-place, many companies offer solutions that can help make homes safe and accessible. Caregivers and aging-in-place specialists offer people alternatives to moving to assisted care facilities.

There are more than twelve facilities in Meridian Township that provide for low income housing for seniors, assisted living, adult foster care, long term care, and care for the memory impaired.

There are physical changes that can be made to a home's interior and exterior that may help make aging-in-place more convenient. "There is an endless list of things that can be done to a home to make it easily accessible to almost anyone," said co-owner of Custom Built of Okemos, Michael Flory. "Ramps can be installed, doorways can be widened, master bedrooms can be moved to the main floor, and kitchens and backyards can be redesigned so they are easy to get around."

The preparation for aging-in-place may not only be more convenient than moving to an assisted living facility, but it may also be more cost-effective. "The median annual cost for a private, one bedroom in an assisted living facility is \$36,000, while the median annual cost of receiving 30 hours a week of homecare is \$29,453," said Associate State Director of AARP Michigan, Karen Kafantaris. "By planning and knowing your options you would most likely be able to overcome obstacles that keep individuals from even a short term rehab, nursing home stay." ●

Watch the Video Versions of the MONITOR Online

Watch the videos by scanning the QR Code or online at www.meridian.mi.us by clicking "Township Publications" under the "Media Room" tab.



Staying Safe with Man's Best Friend

As we take a walk with our furry companions along the trails and sidewalks in Meridian, remember that keeping your dog on a leash is not only an ordinance, but that it is in place for the benefit of the dog owner and your friendly companion. Keeping your dog on a leash keeps your canine safe from running into cars or other mischief, as well as preventing them from running towards people and possibly jumping on them to which some people may not be physically capable of handling. A leash also prevents any unfriendly possible attacks. ●

For more information go to the [Ordinance link on the Township website](#)
www.meridian.mi.us Ord. No. 58-34 Dogs



DID YOU KNOW?

Snowshoe & Ski Rentals

\$5/hour Tues-Fri \$15/day Tues-Fri
 \$7/hour Sat-Sun \$20/day Sat-Sun

Equipment Rental Hours:

Tues-Sat, 9am-3pm
 Sun, 12pm-3pm



Endless possibilities...



Winter in the Parks Provides Beauty and Outdoor Fun

By: Kit Rich

Snowflakes are falling, yet the sun is shining and the world has transformed into a shimmering white wonderland. Aww... winter in Michigan! Your Meridian Township parks can offer you many opportunities to enjoy the winter season.

A good place to start is with a walk. The trees may be dormant, but look closely at the different buds and imagine the spring leaves held within. In the meadows the flowers have died, but the snow and ice lining their seed pods and stems create a beautiful landscape. Look down occasionally as you walk to discover signs of the animals that have passed this way before you: cottontail rabbits, deer mice, squirrels, fox, and deer are the most common. And listen for the birds singing. They're easy to spot in the leafless trees.

Try visiting the parks in a new way, such as snowshoeing or cross country skiing. Meridian Riverfront Park, Central Park, Ted Black Woods, and North Meridian Road Park have great trails for these activities. The Harris Nature Center has equipment available to rent during their regular building hours. Contact them at 349-3866 or hnc@meridian.mi.us.

Everyone enjoys the parks in their own way and there are a couple of things that we can do when in the parks in order to be respectful of the next visitor. Try not to walk on ski trails. Ski trails get smoother the more they are used, but foot prints rough them up. Dogs love to take a walk on the snowy trails, so bring them along on your walk, but please continue to pick up after them. Nothing degrades in the winter and when the snow melts...well it can be quite an ugly sight!

You love the Meridian Township parks in the summer time; don't forget them when the snows begin to fall! ●



SAVE THE DATE Spring Recycling Event April 25th, 2015

recycle.meridian.mi.us



Safe Driving Initiative: Meridian Township Police Take on Distracted Driving

By: Aaron Jordan

In 2012, more than 3,000 people were killed in the United States in accidents involving a distracted driver. In 2013, a total of 689 crashes occurred in Michigan where a driver, pedestrian, or bicyclist was using a cell phone. In an effort to reduce these numbers, the Meridian Township Police Department began a new initiative. They are patrolling streets in plain clothes and unmarked vehicles looking for distracted drivers.

“The purpose of this initiative is not to write tickets, it is to encourage drivers to stop doing the things that are distracting behind the wheel,” said Meridian Lieutenant Ken Plaga. “You never know who’s driving next to you, it could be an officer.”

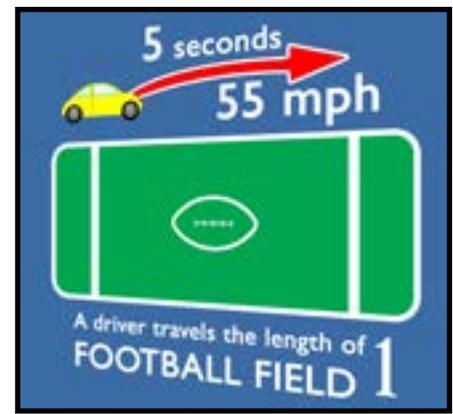
The unmarked vehicle with an officer dressed in civilian clothes is known as the “spotter.” When the spotter observes a violation, a uniform officer in a patrol car is called to make the traffic stop.

According to Distraction.gov, at any given time during the day, 660,000 drivers are using their cell phone or some other electronic device while driving. This approach is being taken

to encourage drivers to think twice before doing any activity that could be distracting for fear that an officer may be in the car next to them.

“This is a widespread problem, distracted driving is an increasing cause of traffic accidents,” said Plaga. “Everyone I’ve talked to, has a story about witnessing a distracted driver, we have all seen it.”

According to Distraction.gov, a driver’s eyes are off the road for an average of five seconds when sending a text. In those five seconds, at a speed of 55 miles per hour, the driver would travel the length of a football field. The Police Department will continue enforcement to educate the public. ●



 [Check out the Meridian Township Police Blog meridiantwppolice.blogspot.com](http://meridiantwppolice.blogspot.com)

PUT UNWANTED MEDICATIONS IN THEIR PLACE.
YELLOW JUG OLD DRUGS®
TO KEEP OUR WATER SAFE.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. Do Not Flush Drugs or Pour Down Drain
2. Bring unwanted drugs to a participating pharmacy.
3. Share this information!
4. Go to www.greatlakescleanwater.org for complete information to help support this program in your community or phone 989-736-8179.



Emergency Fund for Those in Need

Due to a brutal winter combined with recent changes in state utility assistance, the demand for emergency financial assistance has risen dramatically, and the Community Resources Commission (CRC) Emergency Needs Fund is quite low. This fund helps ensure that people in Meridian Township facing financial crises can get the assistance they need to get through the issue and prevent further hardship, such as hunger or homelessness. The vast majority of those who request assistance are either elderly or underemployed, and are temporarily unable to make ends meet due to a crisis such as a family emergency or unexpected medical bill.

“We have helped 43 households this year with utility assistance, which is about twice as many as usual,” stated Suzanne Brouse, Chair of the Community Resources Commission. “At the rate residents are requesting assistance, we will run out of funds by the end of the year”. The Community Resources Program (CRP) works with many other human service agencies in the Lansing area to address the needs of Meridian Township residents and to maximize use of limited funds. In 2013, other community agencies matched CRP funding more than 2 to 1.

None of the Community Resources Program funds are used for administrative costs. The fund is under the supervision of the Community Resources Commission, which is comprised of volunteers from Meridian Township and appointed by the Township Board. The Township provides support for the administration of the funds, but does not provide any money for the fund. ●

During this season of giving, residents considering making a tax-deductible contribution to help those in need in our community can send a donation to the following:

Meridian CRC Needs Fund
5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos, MI 48864

Permit Required for Work in the Floodplain

Many homes in Meridian Township are in or near a floodplain. Work in the floodplain must comply with federal, state, and Township requirements. If you are planning any work in or near a floodplain, please contact the Township first. We will assist you in determining whether a permit is required, and with the permit process. Also, contact us for assistance in determining whether your home or property is in a floodplain. You can contact either the Department of Public Works & Engineering, 517-853-4440, or the Department of Community Planning & Development, 517-853-4508. ●

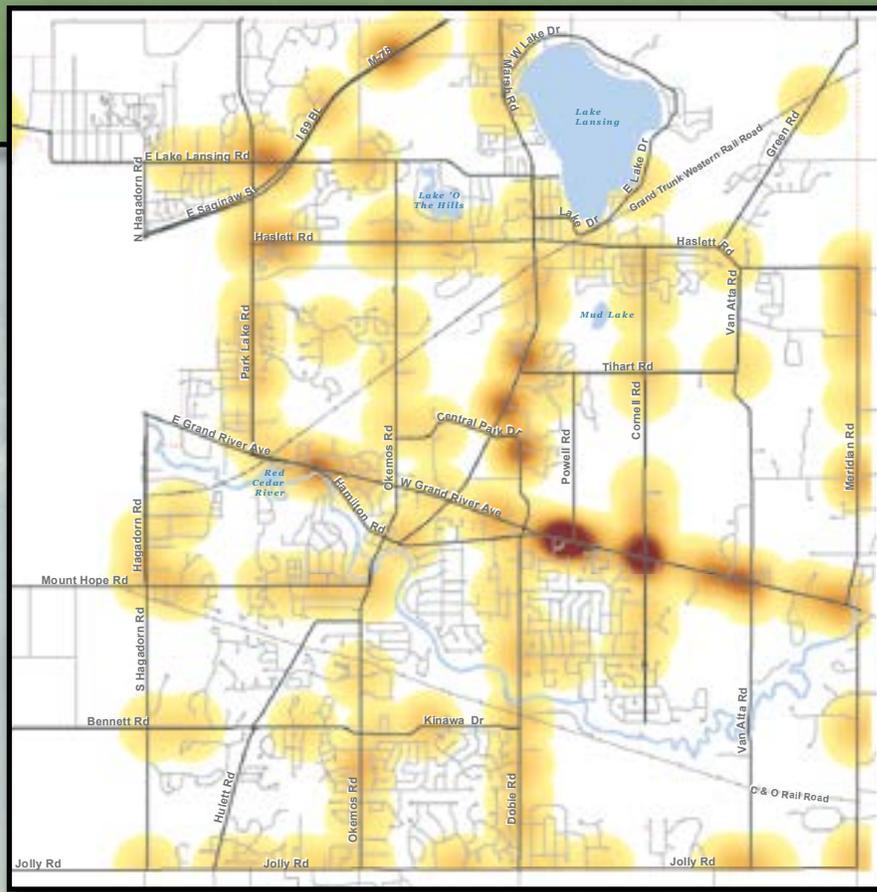
HOMTV is Meridian Township’s award-winning government channel housed inside the Meridian Township Municipal Building.



HOMTV broadcasts exclusive gavel to gavel coverage of township meetings and community news on Comcast analog Cable Channel 21 and Comcast digital Channel 915. Programs are also streamed LIVE and archived online.
www.homtv.net

A DEERWISE COMMUNITY

A car-deer collision can occur anywhere, but pay special attention to these high density car-deer collision areas:



Keep Our Wildlife *Wild...*

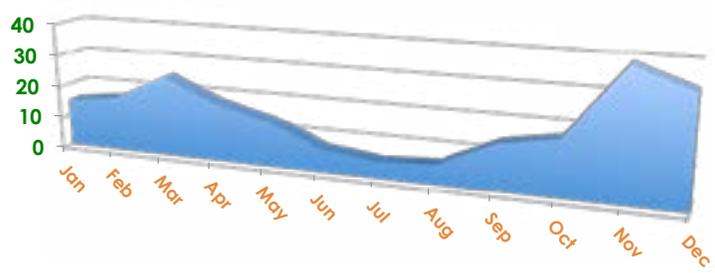
The feed typically put out for these animals does not contain the nutrients that come from their natural diet in the wild. Supplemental feeding and landscapes with deer preferred plants encourage deer herds to settle within residential areas, causing conflicts and increasing car-deer collisions.



On the Road

- Always wear a seatbelt
- Limit distractions
- Be alert, especially at dawn and dusk
- Watch for movement and reflective eyes
- Slow down, especially when you notice a deer
- Always expect more than one deer to cross the road
- Use your high beams when possible
- Pay attention to other drivers in front of you, their behavior could indicate a hazard

2013 Car/Deer Collisions



Deer Harvest Program Results



The 2014 deer harvest is currently taking place through January 2015.



Meridian Township
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864
(517) 853-4000

**ECRWSS
CAR-SORT POSTAL CUSTOMER**



Fall/Winter 2014

MERIDIAN WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

SATURDAYS
DECEMBER 6 & 20
JANUARY 3 & 17
FEBRUARY 7 & 21
MARCH 7 & 21
APRIL 4 & 18

10 AM TO 2 PM

For more information, call Meridian Township Parks & Recreation 517-853-4000

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SCAN THIS WITH YOUR SMART PHONE

LOCATION: JCPENNEY CORRIDOR (INDOORS)

MICHIGAN STATE

IMPORTANT DATES:

WED NOV 26 Meridian Farmers' Thanksgiving Market

10 am to 2 pm, Central Park Pavillion

SAT DEC 6 Winter Farmers' Market Opening Day
10 am to 2 pm
Meridian Mall, J C Penney Corridor

MON DEC 1 Winter Taxes
Payable December 1 to February 14
Cash, check by mail, in person of 24 hour drop box.
ONLINE by credit card or debit card.

SAT DEC 13 Drive Thru Santa

5 pm to 8 pm, Meridian Township Service Center

SUN DEC 14 Christmas in the Village

2 pm to 4 pm, Meridian Historical Village

JAN FEB Family Winter Sports Weekends

JAN 9 Howl at the Moon at Harris Nature Center
JAN 11 Family Special: Crafternoon at Harris Nature Center
JAN 17 Cross Country Ski Class at Harris Nature Center
Snowshoe Class at Harris Nature Center
Moonlight Ski & Shoe at Harris Nature Center
JAN 18 Meridian Swims at Goldfish Swimming School
JAN 24 Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park
JAN 25 Polar Bear 5K Run / Walk, Central Park/Nancy Moore Park
Meridian Bowls at City Limits East Bowling Center
JAN 31 Winter Wonderland at Harris Nature Center
FEB 6 Howl at the Moon at Harris Nature Center
FEB 7 Cross Country Ski Class at Harris Nature Center
Snowshoe Class at Harris Nature Center
Moonlight Ski & Shoe at Harris Nature Center
Winter Kickball Tournament at Nancy Moore Park
Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park
FEB 8 Meridian Swims at the Michigan Athletic Club
FEB 20 Demmer Center Archery, Air Pistol and .22 Rifle Target Practice
FEB 21 Demmer Center Archery, Air Pistol and .22 Rifle Target Practice
Wildlife Identification Reptiles at Harris Nature Center
FEB 28 Moonlight Ski & Shoe at Harris Nature Center

Join us on facebook
www.facebook.com/MeridianTwpParksRec

FEB-APRIL Youth Citizens' Academy
Public Safety Building, Meridian Police Dept.

This program focuses on Crime Scene Investigation, Canine, Traffic Laws, Alcohol Laws, Use of Force and Weapons, and finally at graduation week, the Firearms Training Simulator (FATS) where students use interactive video to experience shoot/don't shoot situations encountered by police officers. Call Sgt. Scott Dawson for more information 517-854-4800.