



Meridian Monitor

Winter 2005-06

Police Department Using New In-Car Video Equipment



Officer Christina Scaccia adjusts the in-car camera in her patrol car.

Digital video technology, which had been piloted by members of the Meridian Police Department since last December, is now a mainstay of township police cars.

The cameras were purchased through the township's computer technology budget. In addition, a server to which the cameras are linked was obtained through a 25 percent matching law enforcement block grant offered

by the U.S. Department of Justice. Meridian Township is one of just a few communities nationwide using this new technology.

The system delivers better and more reliable video footage of traffic stops and other interactions with the public. It replaces VHS tape with a digital flashcard that is easily uploaded to the department's databank.

Digital technology enhances both audio and video capabilities, has longer range, and is not subject to the wear and environmental sensitivity that can plague VHS tape. The new system enables police to capture images 30 seconds prior to activation.

For example, if a speeding vehicle is spotted by an officer, that image will be recorded 30 seconds before the officer turns the camera on.

"This helps our officers who are out on the road to get the job done more effectively," says Meridian Township Police Chief Dave Hall.

Once stored in the department's databank, video streams can be easily accessed from desk computers connected to the server. Because its image and sound is sharper and more reliable, the digital flashcard records better evidence for court proceedings.

A New "Read" on Water Meters

Most commercial buildings in Meridian Township are now equipped with new radio-read water meters, enabling utility workers to collect meter information by a remote device from their vehicles. This system is expected to be phased in at area residences over the next two years.

"This upgraded system will vastly improve both the efficiency and safety of our utility workers in the meter-reading process," says Meridian Township Finance Director Diana Hasse.

The new system reduces the amount of time utility workers need to read water meters. The system's software links to individual utility accounts and provides the township water department with better information to analyze potential problem areas.

The transition to the new system is expected to go smoothly for area residents, who will be notified by postcard when their upgrades are slated to begin. Most rewiring will take place on the outside of the home. The township has contracted with SLC Meter Service, Inc., for the installations. An SLC staff member will contact individual homeowners to make appointments if a replacement involves older wiring or meters. The residential meter replacement is free of cost to homeowners. For more information, contact the Utility Department's billing office at 853-4120.



Lead worker Paul Peterson reviews scanned water meter data read by his mobile device.

Meanwhile ... Please Clear a Path for Meter Readers

In order to issue accurate utility bills, Meridian water meter readers must be able to gain access to home meters. Township officials ask that residents trim back shrubs, and clear away snow, rocks, or other obstacles that may interfere with a reader's access to a meter. For information about the location of your meter or the meter reading schedule, contact the Utility Department's billing office at 853-4120.

Get Involved ... Share Ideas ... Save Money

• Looking to Get Involved in Your Community?

Would you like to be involved in an organization that makes a difference? You can discover more about different charitable or volunteer groups that are active right here in our community by visiting www.meridianvolunteercouncil.org. The goal of the Meridian Volunteer Council is to identify individual and community needs in order to maximize the effectiveness of volunteer efforts by residents and organizations.

• Help Boost Recycling

Your ideas and suggestions to help increase residential recycling in Meridian Township are welcome. To take part in a roundtable discussion on this topic, just contact the township manager's office at 853-4258.

• Tips on Cutting Home Heating Costs

With natural gas prices skyrocketing this winter, people are seeking ways to reduce their home heating bills. Check out these online resources that can provide you with valuable information:

- The U.S Department of Energy at www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips offers tips on saving energy—and money—at home.
- The State of Michigan's "Winterwise Program" at www.michigan.gov/documents/bewinterwise_138994_7.htm offers energy-saving tips, information for senior citizens and low-income households who may need assistance, as well as links to a wide range of consumer resources.
- Consumers Energy at www.consumersenergy.com lists 100 ways to reduce your energy use.

Who to Call in an Emergency

While Michigan winters are beautiful and full of outdoor fun, severe weather can at times wreak havoc on people and utilities. Snow shovelers have heart attacks. Pipes freeze. Power lines snap. Here are key numbers to call for help and information in an emergency:

• Medical emergency	911
• Consumers Energy (electric and gas)	800-477-5050
• Meridian Township (water and sewer)	349-0100
• Board of Water and Light (electric)	877-295-5001

Solid Waste Transfer Station Switches to Winter Hours

Winter hours are in effect at the Meridian Township Transfer Station until March 31, 2006. The transfer station is open Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** (new time).

Located at 5976 E. Lake Drive in Haslett, the transfer station offers free recycling of magazines, newspapers, mixed residential mail, corrugated cardboard, No. 2 plastic milk jugs and detergent bottles, aluminum, tin cans, clear and brown glass bottles (however, green bottles are not accepted). For a fee, lawn and garden waste, as well as household goods—including large items such as appliances, carpeting, and scrap building materials—are also accepted. For more information, call 853-4626.

Christmas Tree Disposal Sites

Four locations are available for Meridian Township residents to dispose of their Christmas trees after the holiday season. They are: Wonch Park, South Okemos Road; the Meridian Service Center, Gaylord C. Smith Court; the Solid Waste Transfer Station, East Lake Drive; and Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Porter Avenue. Disposal at these sites will be available from Dec. 26 to Jan. 31. Trees should be free of wire, nails, and metal bracings, and should not be in plastic bags. For more information, contact the Meridian Township Service Center at 853-4620, weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Winter Safety for Sidewalks and Pathways

Since public sidewalks and pathways in Meridian Township are for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors, it's important to keep them clear of snow and ice. Home and business owners are responsible for removing snow—in a timely manner—on the five-foot sidewalks which abut their property. Salt or sand should also be applied to icy areas. When removing snow, property owners should take care not to pile it up where it could obstruct the view of pedestrians or vehicles. **When plowing parking lots, do not leave snow on sidewalks or pathways.**

Township staff members plow all of the seven-foot-wide pathways whenever there is a snowfall of more than two inches. Assistance with clean-up after Ingham County road crews and Meridian Township pathway plows have gone by is greatly appreciated. If you would like more information on proper snow removal, call 853-4440.

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 Recycled Paper

Public Works Dept. Tests New De-icer

A new fluid additive—made from sugar beets—is being used by the Meridian Public Works and Engineering Department this winter in its snow removal program.

Because it melts ice and snow at lower temperatures than salt, the additive—which coats the salt normally used—can provide better road protection. It works by bonding with the road surface, preventing ice and snow from sticking and allowing for easier snow removal. Another benefit is that it keeps salt from freezing and clumping in spreaders.

The all-natural additive could reduce salt use by up to 50 percent, as well as protect roads at lower temperatures. As a Michigan-



The de-icing liquid is shown being mixed in with the road salt.

grown agricultural product made from renewable resources, it's also considered environmentally friendly and reduces corrosion associated with road salt.

Township officials anticipate a savings in the annual snow removal budget because the additive increases the effectiveness of the salt and decreases the amount of salt bouncing off the road surface during application.

“Our goal is to both cut costs and lessen the environmental impact,” says Raymond O. Severy, Meridian’s director of public works and engineering. “We’ll be evaluating the effectiveness of using this additive in future years.”

Inkless Fingerprinting New to Police Department

A new electronic fingerprinting and mug shot system was phased in at the Meridian Township Police Department in June.

The new inkless and paperless system is less time-consuming and greatly enhances the department’s ability to identify criminals and share information with other police departments throughout the state.

With the new technology, high-quality fingerprint images can be

captured electronically, then used to immediately check identification with the Michigan State Police database, including the download of a full history and photograph. The system is also capable of sorting information by name, description, and identifying marks such as tattoos.

“With this new system, we quickly know who we are dealing with and can share the information with other jurisdictions,” says Meridian Township Police Chief Dave Hall.

Notice of Wetland Inventory Map

Under the provisions of Part 303 of Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, the Charter Township of Meridian is required to notify each recorded owner of property on the property tax roll that the Township has an ordinance regulating wetlands and there have been amendments to the wetland inventory map. Part 303 of Act 451 also requires the Township to advise all owners of property in the Township that their property may be designated as a wetland on the inventory map, and that the inventory map does not necessarily include all of the wetlands within the Township that may be subject to the Wetland Ordinance. Finally, please be advised that the wetland map does not create any legally enforceable presumptions regarding whether property that is or is not included on the inventory map is or is not in fact a wetland. The Wetland Inventory Map is available for inspection during regular business hours in the Department of Community Planning and Development located at the Meridian Municipal Building, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864. For more information, please call (517) 853-4568.

Stay Alert for Traffic Signal “White Lights”

If you’ve noticed small boxes featuring spotlights adjacent to area traffic lights, then you’ve seen the latest in life-saving technology used by the Meridian Township Fire Department.

The boxes are designed to reduce the risk of traffic collisions when emergency vehicles respond to calls. Equally important, they help reduce the response times in fire and medical emergencies.

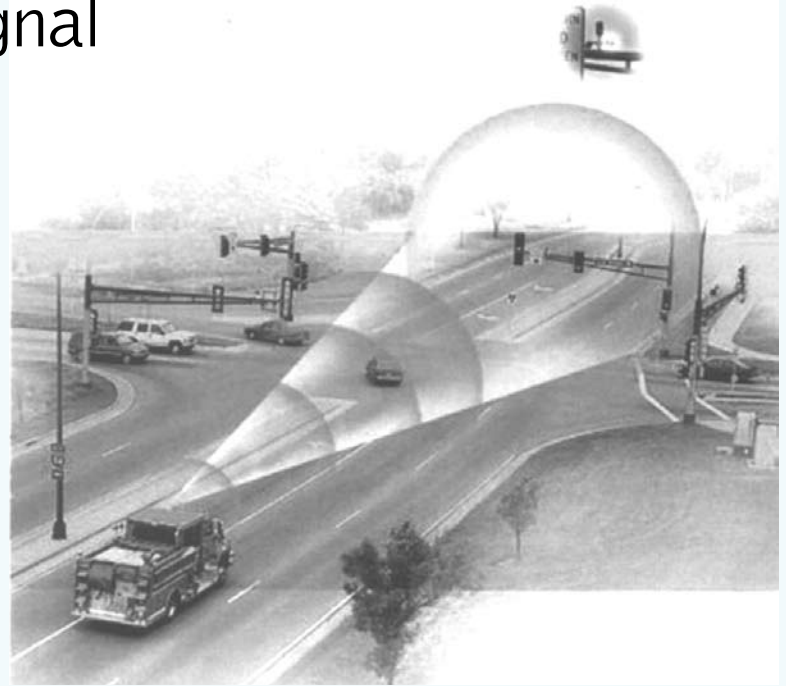
The traffic signal lights’ preemptive system—in use since November—allows ambulances and fire trucks responding to an emergency to “capture” the traffic light as they approach an intersection, and gain the right of way.



One of the many signal spotlight devices hung in Meridian Township.



EMS Coordinator Greg Hammond points to the infrared sender unit mounted near the top of the ambulance.



Artist rendering of the signal sent by a fire truck when approaching an intersection.

It works through an infrared beam that’s sent by an approaching emergency vehicle to illuminate the spotlight and change the traffic signal to green.

Statistically, intersections pose the greatest risk for traffic collisions with emergency vehicles. That risk can be significantly reduced with this new technology, which enables emergency vehicles to emit a signal from as far away as half a mile. That gives drivers ample time to respond to traffic signal changes and make way for emergency vehicles to pass.

“Our residents should be aware of this new technology and its significance in creating safer and faster response times for our vehicles during emergencies,” notes Meridian Township Fire Chief Fred Cowper.

Drivers should pay attention and anticipate a change in a traffic signal when the white spotlight is lit. When it blinks, the traffic signal is about to change to red. But if the white light remains steady, the traffic signal will change to, or remain, green, allowing free flow of emergency vehicles.

Drivers who have the green light must move through the intersection, then pull over to the right to allow emergency vehicles to pass. Even when sirens and flashing lights are not used, an emergency vehicle may be responding to a situation and activate the system.

Obtained through a federal grant received by the City of Lansing, the equipment has been shared with surrounding communities, greatly enhancing the region’s mutual aid capacity by permitting other towns’ emergency vehicles to capture traffic lights.

With the exception of Grand River Avenue and Saginaw Street, all traffic lights in Meridian Township are part of the new system. Grand River Avenue and Saginaw Street—or Business Loop 69—are expected to be equipped with the new system by the end of 2006.



HOM-TV Original Programs Schedule*

Meridian Magazine

Weekly newsmagazine featuring Township news & local sports. Daily at 11:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m. & 11:30 p.m.

Community Connection

Monthly program featuring Township events & areas of interest to the community. Daily at 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Beyond the Badge

Monthly program exploring safety topics and the activities of Meridian Township's police and fire departments. Daily at 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Inner View

Current Topic: Energy Costs
Interviews of importance to the public, such as environmental and volunteer efforts.
Sunday, Wednesday & Friday at 9 a.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 6:30 p.m.

On the Agenda

Current Topic: Connecting Pathways
In-depth interviews on Township Meeting issues.
Sunday, Wednesday & Friday at 6:30 p.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday at 9 a.m.

Healthy Lifestyles

Current Topic: Winter Health
Explores health topics for Meridian residents.
Sunday, Wednesday & Friday at 4:30 p.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

25th Anniversary Programming

Various Topics
Daily at 10 a.m. & 11:10 p.m.
Sunday, Friday & Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

Special Feature

Current Topic: Okemos Education Foundation
Daily at 8:30 a.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday at 4:30 p.m.

Meridian Township Meetings Schedule*

Planning Commission

(LIVE 2nd and 4th Monday of the month)
Sun. 5:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Mon. 12:00 a.m., 7 p.m. LIVE or REPLAY
Tues. 12:00 a.m., 5:30 a.m., & 12:00 p.m.
Fri. 5:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Sat. 12:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.

Township Board

(LIVE 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month)
Sun. 12:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Tues. 6:00 p.m. LIVE or 7 p.m. REPLAY
Wed. 12:00 a.m., 5:30 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Thurs. 5:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Fri. 12:00 a.m.
Sat. 5:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals

(LIVE 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month)
Mon. 5:30 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Wed. 6:30 p.m. LIVE or 7 p.m. REPLAY
Thurs. 12:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.

Park Commission

(LIVE 2nd Tuesday of the month)
Tues. 7 p.m. LIVE or REPLAY
Wed. 12:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Fri. 12:00pm

Environmental Commission

(LIVE 3rd Wednesday of the month)
Wed. 7 p.m. LIVE or REPLAY
Thurs. 12:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Fri. 1:30 p.m. when available

*Program dates and times are subject to change.

www.twp.meridian.mi.us/homtvs



Video Streaming Under Review

Residents may soon be able to view township meetings or HOM-TV productions from the convenience of their computers via video streaming over the Internet.

The potential use of this technology is being studied by Meridian Township's Cable Division and Cable Commission in an effort to help make township meetings and programs more accessible to residents.

"This is exciting," says Lynn Meikle, Meridian's cable coordinator. "Video streaming can get more information out to our residents in a manner that may be more convenient for them."

Meikle added that discussions are taking place with a vendor in an effort to make video streaming a reality for residents by August. Users will need a high-speed Internet connection to access the new technology.

The township's cable department is completely self-funded through franchise fees paid by cable subscribers. To keep current with technological changes, the cable division also recently purchased new cameras and editing systems.

2005 Winter Tax Payment Reminder

All residential and business property owners should have received a winter tax bill by December 9. If you did not receive your bill by that date, please call 853-4140 for a duplicate bill. Your mortgage/escrow company (if you have one listed on your bill) will receive a copy of your bill.

Please remember that payment must arrive in the Meridian Township Treasurer's office by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2006, in order to avoid a 1 percent interest charge. On March 1, additional charges will apply. Taxpayers who plan to mail payment must allow sufficient time for delivery, as postmarks are not accepted. A white, curbside drop box is also available outside of Meridian Township Hall for the convenience of township residents. Tax payments may be placed in the box 24 hours a day.

Parks & Recreation Calendar of Events

- Jan. 3** - Fit Yoga with Amy Larson *** (new day: Tues.)
- Jan. 7** - Cross-Country Skiing Class
- Jan. 7** - Snowshoeing 101
- Jan. 7** - First Class Dog Training – Basic Obedience *** (new days: Sat.& Sun. 2-3 p.m.)
- Jan. 13** - Howl at the Moon Hike
- Jan. 16** - School's Out Day Trip/Whirlyball and the Fridge
- Jan. 21** - Cub Scout "Geology" Academics Pin
- Jan. 21** - Cross-Country Skiing Class
- Jan. 21** - Snowshoeing 101
- Jan. 22** - Trees and Tree Dwellers Slide Show
- Jan. 23** - My Cub and I: Nature for Toddlers
- Jan. 24** - Forest Scribblers: Discovering Art in Nature
- Jan. 26 & 27** - Curiosity Club: Nature for Preschoolers
- Jan. 28** - Free Family Winter Sports Day with Winter Wonderland at Harris Nature Center, Dick's Sporting Goods Sledding Contest, Meridian Skates, Meridian Bowls and Meridian Historical Village
- Jan. 28** - Knitting at the Village
- Feb. 1** - Photography Class with Ron St. Germain
- Feb. 2** - Trees and Tree Dwellers Slide Show
- Feb. 4** - Girl Scout "Frosty Fun" Badge
- Feb. 4** - First Class Dog Training – Basic Obedience *** (new days: Sat. & Sun. 2-3 p.m.)

- Feb. 5** - Meridian Skates
- Feb. 10** - OAKS Spring Soccer 1st-8th grade deadline
- Feb. 11** - Brownies "Science Wonders" Try-it
- Feb. 12** - Sweethearts Stroll
- Feb. 14** - Fit Yoga with Amy Larson *** (new day: Tues.)
- Feb. 18** - What a Hoot!
- Feb. 18** - Intermediate Knitting at the Village
- Feb. 20** - School's Out Day Trip/Ski Trip to Cannonsburg in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 25** - Webelos "Geologist" Badge
- March 5** - More Walk than Talk Hike
- March 10** - Howl at the Moon Hike
- March 11** - Cub Scouts "Wildlife Conservation" Academics Pin
- March 17** - HYRA T-ball, Softball, Baseball registration deadline
- March 18** - Girl Scout "Earth Connections" Badge
- March 24** - Okemos Youth Baseball Club registration deadline
- March 24** - Haslett Youth Baseball Club registration deadline
- March 25** - Brownie "Watching Wildlife" Try-it
- March 26** - Bluebird Nest Box Workshop
- March 31** - School's Out Day Trip/Craig's Cruisers, Grand Rapids
- April 11** - Fit Yoga with Amy Larson *** (new day: Tues.)

For more information about Meridian Parks & Recreation activities, call 853-4600 or visit online at www.twp.meridian.mi.us

 ECRWSS
 POSTAL CUSTOMER

In This Issue:

- 2 Get Involved, Share Ideas
- 3 New Beet Juice De-icer
- 3 Inkless Fingerprinting
- 4 Heads Up for White Lights
- 5 Video Streaming
- 5 Winter Tax Reminder
- 5 HOM-TV Program Schedule

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