

# REPORT

Volume 2, Issue 1

## WINTER BRINGS A WEALTH OF LAND PRESERVATION

Property owners partnered with the Township and the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space to add their land to the Hopewell Township inventory of preserved land this winter. Before the end of 2002, 299 acres were preserved. This brought the total preserved with Township Open Space dollars, to 1,803 acres.

The properties involved were:

- One hundred twenty-nine acres on the Kuser parcel located between Washington Crossing State Park and Bald Pate Mountain
- Six and fourteen acre parcels known as the Albahary and Lawrence properties near Hopewell Borough
- Forty-three acres on the Rappaport property along Hopewell Rocky Hill Road
- Fifty-eight acre Gomez farm on Harbourton-Rocktown Road
- Six acre Vales tract adjacent to Trap Rock fronting on Route 31
- Forty-three acre Bellando parcel located on Church Road.

## THE "TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL REPORT" IS ONE YEAR OLD

At the beginning of last year, a survey of interest in a Township newsletter was distributed in the 2002 Township Calendar. The majority of responses received from residents strongly favored the publication of a quarterly newsletter. Township Committee provided funding for the newsletter and a spring, summer and fall issue of the "Township of Hopewell Report" were published.

The newsletter is still an item the Committee would like to provide during 2003, but in a more cost effective way. For the many residents who have access to computers, the newsletter will be published on-line at the Township web-site:

"HopewellTwp.org".

For those residents that don't have access to computers, or who prefer to receive a paper copy by mail, a subscription form is included in this newsletter. Simply fill out the form on page 9 with your name and mailing address and return it to the Administration Office at the Township.

Enjoy this issue and have a wonderful spring!

Fran Bartlett, Mayor  
Marylou Ferrara, Deputy Mayor  
Jon Edwards, Committee Member  
Arlene Kemp, Committee Member  
Vanessa Sandom, Committee Member

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## SPRING SERVICES

The Public Works Department is collecting brush and bulk. To request a bulk pickup, call 737-0799 Ext. 650 or Ext. 688 Monday thru Friday 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or leave a detailed message on voicemail, prior to scheduled pickup. The call will be returned and confirmed.

For brush pickup, no phone call is required. The brush must be placed curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Monday of the scheduled pickup week, and it will be removed sometime during that week. The pickups are as follows:

- Zone 1** - May 5, 2003 June 2, 2003
- Zone 2** - May 12, 2003 June 9, 2003
- Zone 3** - May 19, 2003 June 16, 2003

Don't know what zone you are in? Just call or go to:

[www.HopewellTwp.org](http://www.HopewellTwp.org).

**THERE WILL BE NO BRUSH OR BULK PICKUPS IN THE MONTHS OF JULY AND AUGUST.**

## Freon Appliance Pickup

Appliances with freon are collected on the last Thursday of the month. The cost is \$20.00 per appliance. This is a non-refundable fee. The collection dates are as follows:

- May 29, 2003
- June 26, 2003
- July 31, 2003
- August 28, 2003
- September 25, 2003

## “Septic Smart” Managing Your Septic System

**Tuesday, May 13, 7 - 9 pm  
Municipal Auditorium**

Sponsored by the Hopewell Regional  
Health Department

## FREE MULCH AND COMPOST AVAILABLE

Free mulch chips and limited amounts of leaf compost are available near the shooting range at the Hopewell Township municipal complex.

## FREE TIRE COLLECTION

The collections will take place Friday, May 2, 2003 and Friday, June 6, 2003. Anyone interested in this service, call: 609-737-0799 Ext. 650 or 668, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. After working hours, leave a detailed message. The pick up will be confirmed by phone. The maximum tire size accepted is 19” in diameter. No tires on rims will be collected.

Tires that are associated with commercial use will not be accepted.

## FREE RABIES CLINIC FOR PETS

Saturday, May 3, 2003  
10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m.  
Township  
Public Works Building  
203 Washington Crossing -  
Pennington Road

**TOWNSHIP ACQUIRES FAILLE FARM DEVELOPMENT EASEMENTS WITH MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE TAX**

The Township recently purchased development easements on the forty acre Faille Farm located on Van Dyke Road. Owned and farmed by Mark and Karen Faille, “Simply Grazin’ Organic Farm” brings to the local market organic beef, pork, chicken and eggs without hormones, antibiotics or steroids.

The Township paid \$9,500 an acre for the development easements. The State Agricultural Development Committee also agreed to participate and has reimbursed the Township \$4,500 an acre as their share of this preservation project.

The Township is very pleased with this latest addition to the Township’s preservation stock. Lucia Huebner, chair of the Township Agricultural Committee commented, “The Faille family are pioneers in a new era of agriculture in Hopewell. What a joy to be able to buy locally raised meat from people who treat their animals humanely and are genuine stewards of their land. The Failles have forged a path which has taken tremendous courage and my hat is off to them.”

**WHAT TO DO ABOUT CABLE TELEVISION PROBLEMS**

When experiencing problems with your cable television service, first call COMCAST, the cable television provider at 1-800-266-2278.

If your problem is not resolved, then contact the Office of Cable Television at 1-800-624-0331 or by mail at the NJ Board of Public Utilities, 2 Gateway Center, 8th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102 or by emailing the BPU Investigations Unit at: karenmarlowe@bpu.st.nj.us. Copy the Township on your letter or email using the addresses on the back of the newsletter so that we can keep a record of your problem.

**RECENTLY ENACTED ....**

**OPEN SPACE TAX USE AMENDMENT**

At the November, 2002 election, Hopewell Township voters supported a one cent increase in the municipal open space tax as well as an amendment about historic preservation. The Township Committee adopted an ordinance which updates the Township Code noting that the Open Space Tax can now be used to acquire historic lands and structures. Prior to the 2002 referendum, the open space tax could only be used for acquiring lands and easements for open space, agricultural preservation and public recreation.

**YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD**

The Township Committee has established a Youth Advisory Board to the Township Committee. The Board will be composed of seven students appointed by the Township Committee. The board will:

- ◆ Advise the Township Committee on issues of concern to youth in the community.
- ◆ Work with Township officials and department heads to provide service and leadership opportunities.
- ◆ Inform and educate youth on issues facing the Township and opportunities for youth involvement in city and community affairs.
- ◆ Promote community pride.

**SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE RULES FOR SNOW AND ICE UNDER REVIEW**

During the winter, some school children were forced to walk in the streets because certain sidewalks were not passable. An amendment to the streets and sidewalks chapter of the Township Code has been introduced by the Township Committee. The amendment requires tenants and property owners to remove ice or snow from sidewalks on public streets within twenty-four hours of such an event. This amendment also applies to owners and homeowner/property owner associations with sidewalks along private streets.

# EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Hopewell Township Police Department now has the ability to place a phone call to all residents of Hopewell Valley in the event of a public emergency. This emergency notification system is similar to that used for the western portion of Hopewell Township in the event of an escape from the Mercer County Correction Center. The system is known as the Community Alert Network or "CAN".

The CAN automatically dials specified phone numbers and plays a recorded message giving details of emergencies. The police department now has the technology so that when there is an emergency in a specific area, that area can be instantly mapped out and those residents contacted.

In the event of a large-scale emergency affecting the Valley, such as an approaching severe weather system, the department may decide to activate the system to give the entire Valley a warning message. However, if there were a smaller scale incident, a lost child for example, officers can pinpoint the area to be called with emergency alerts or instructions.

The system only calls listed phone numbers. If your phone number is listed you have been automatically added to the list. If you have an unlisted number or if you have recently moved to the Valley and would like your number added to the list, contact the police department at 737-3100. When you call the police department press "0" for the dispatcher. When the recording comes on, ask to be added to the Community Alert Network list. You will need to provide your name, address and phone number.

This system is for emergency use only and all phone numbers are kept confidential.

Unfortunately, telephone devices designed to block incoming recorded phone calls will also intercept the CAN's recorded messages. The best thing people with these devices can do is ask their neighbors to call them in the event of a CAN notification.

Anyone who wishes to have their phone numbers removed from the list should forward a written request to the police department. It is necessary to include the name that the phone is listed under, full address and the phone number so that the listing can be removed.

If you have questions concerning this system please contact Captain George Meyer at 737-3100, Extension 518.

## Tax Deductions and Exemptions

There are property tax deductions and/or tax exemptions which are allowed for the following citizens by State law:

- 1) Seniors fulfilling specific eligibility requirements
- 2) Veterans who are 100% disabled or their surviving spouses

If you think that you might qualify for either of these deductions, contact the Tax Assessor's office at 737-0605 and you will be given the proper forms to complete and file.

## FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD — MINNIETOWN

One of the more poorly understood chapters of Hopewell Township's history concerns the African-American communities, which sprung up, in remote areas of the township in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Little has been documented about these tiny villages, but the now-vanished community known as Minnietown was once a vibrant settlement of some 25 black households tucked in the forests on the east side of the Sourland Mountain in the late 1800s.

They were mostly craftspeople, natives of South Jersey hired to weave peach baskets for the Wyckoff orchards at nearby Buttonwood Corners. And while Minnietown, believed to have been named for the native Minnepenason tribe, never had its own church or other meeting place, its residents likely enjoyed the community life of nearby Rileyville, a settlement of black Belgian Block stonecutters located just over the township line in East Amwell.

Just a scant mile north, at the junction of Hopewell-Wertsville Road and Mountain Church Road, Rileyville had more of the makings of a traditional rural community – a house of worship, a school, a general store, a blacksmith shop and, especially in rural New Jersey, an applejack distillery.

Like many black communities that emerged in the post-slavery era, Minnietown cropped up alongside a border. Whether the appeal was the region's remoteness, the availability of cheap land or the anonymity of mountain life, Minnietown's residents were nonetheless important to the local peach-growing economy and may have even worked in the tile and pottery works known to have operated on the mountain. A peach blight in the 1890s, combined with a region-wide decline in peach production, forced Minnietown's residents to move off the mountain around the turn of the century.

All that remains of Minnietown today is a smattering of houses and numerous foundations deep in the oak and hickory stands off Hopewell-Wertsville Road. The Minnietown name lives on in the form of a road marker for Minnietown Lane, which dead-ends into the peace of the nearby woods.



# DOES YOUR HOME NEED REPAIRS?

You are invited to participate in the  
**Hopewell Township  
Housing Rehabilitation  
Program**



The Hopewell Township Housing Rehabilitation Program provides forgivable loans of up to \$35,000 to repair the homes of eligible Township residents. Examples of eligible work include septic, well, foundation, plumbing, heating, electrical, roof, energy conservation measures, and accessibility improvements for residents with disabilities. The amount of funding available is limited so please do not delay if you feel you may be interested in participating in this program.

In order to qualify for the program, your household must meet basic requirements. The most important one relates your household's income. To meet this requirement, your total household income must be less than the limit set for your household size. The following table lists the total household income limit for each family size. For instance, if there are 3 people in your household, your total household income must be less than \$51,019 in order to participate in the Program. In return for receiving funds, homeowners must sign an agreement that they intend to continue living in the home for six (6) to ten (10) more years – depending on the amount of funding required to repair the home. At the end of this period, the funding provided by the Program is fully forgiven. If a homeowner sells or moves from the property prior to this time, a portion of the funding that homeowner received must be repaid to the Program at 0% interest. Funding is also available to repair rental housing. If you are the owner of rental housing in Hopewell Township, please call the number listed below to learn more about the terms and policies for rental housing.

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Maximum Household Income	\$39,682	\$45,350	\$51,019	\$56,688	\$61,223	\$65,758	\$70,293	\$74,828

Source: N.J. Council on Affordable Housing -April 3, 2002

Please do not confuse this program with flyers you may have received regarding special "government funding programs" for home improvements. Hopewell Township's Housing Rehabilitation Program is a municipally-run program fully endorsed by the Township Committee and the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing. If you would like to sign up or learn more about the program, we strongly urge you to contact the Township's housing consultants, Housing Services, Inc. at 1-800-553-2560. All inquiries and participant information will be kept strictly confidential.

**The Hopewell Township Affordable Housing Committee**

# 2003 ROAD PROGRAM

After confirming that the conditions of the roads still merit these improvements, the following roads will be restored as part of the 2003 Road Program noted below:

## ^^^CHIP SEAL^^CHIP SEAL^^CHIP SEAL^^

- ◆ Barry Road
- ◆ Hansons Corner
- ◆ Crusher Road
- ◆ Dublin Road
- ◆ Featherbed Lane
- ◆ Grand View Road
- ◆ Moore's Mill Mt. Rose Road
- ◆ New Road
- ◆ Old Mill Road

- ◆ Pennington Titusville Road
- ◆ Pleasant Valley Road
- ◆ Poor Farm Road
- ◆ Province Line Road
- ◆ Reservoir Road
- ◆ Wargo Road
- ◆ Woosamonsa Road
- ◆ Yard Road

### OVERLAY

- ◆ Beech Street
- ◆ Crest Avenue
- ◆ Orchard Avenue
- ◆ Plymouth Street
- ◆ Portion of Michael Way

### CURB RECONSTRUCTION

- ◆ Ethan Lane
- ◆ Darrow Drive
- ◆ Drummond Drive
- ◆ Westcott Boulevard
- ◆ Weldon Way
- ◆ Western Pine Street
- ◆ West Shore Drive
- ◆ Hessian Hill Drive
- ◆ Jamieson Drive

### STATE ROAD AID PROJECTS

The Township will receive \$209,000 for the resurfacing of Blackwell Road as part of the 2003 NJ Transportation Trust Fund Program. The state awards funding for municipal roads which experience substantial amounts of regional traffic.

The 2003 road program will be underway soon. Temporary inconveniences may be experienced as the public works department and contractors work on these roads. Your patience is appreciated.

## INTRODUCING THE 2003 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

The Township Committee introduced the 2003 Municipal Budget on April 10, 2003. The proposed budget totals \$15,046,182 which is 9.8% or \$1,344,811 more than the \$13,701,371, 2002 budget. The major policies upon which this budget is based are:

- § **Minimizing tax impacts while planning for the future**
- § **Maintaining township services**
- § **Keeping the affected budget below the 5% CAP**
- § **Reducing the use of Surplus**
- § **Providing Funds for a limited 2003 Capital Program**

Municipal Appropriations	2001 Budget	2002 Budget	2001-02 % Inc/Dec	2003 Budget	2002-03 % Inc/Dec
General Government	\$2,418,725	\$2,531,606	4.67%	2,499,962	-1.25%
Roads & Capital	1,422,559	1,561,096	9.74%	1,397,604	-16.32%
Public Safety	2,214,576	2,488,212	12.36%	2,743,010	10.34%
Health and Welfare	251,472	258,150	2.66%	248,140	-3.88%
Benefits	1,249,498	1,492,213	19.43%	1,673,000	12.12%
Legal & Engineering	251,413	337,740	34.34%	416,664	23.37%
Debt Service	2,535,050	2,031,176	-19.88%	2,398,959	18.11%
Uncollected Tax Reserve	1,554,799	1,139,974	-26.68%	1,337,169	17.30%
Other	2,354,258	1,861,204	21.94%	2,331,674	25.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,252,350</b>	<b>\$13,701,371</b>	<b>-3.87%</b>	<b>\$15,046,182</b>	<b>9.82%</b>

Municipal Revenues	2001 Budget	2002 Budget	2001-02 % Inc/Dec	2003 Budget	2002-03 % Inc/Dec
Municipal Taxes	\$4,570,727	\$5,319,059	16.37%	\$ 6,750,910	26.91%
Municipal Operations	1,410,434	716,753	-49.18%	713,326	00.00%
State Aid	2,201,626	2,214,060	00.56%	2,250,643	0.16%
Surplus	3,785,049	3,383,132	-10.62%	3,234,324	4.40%
Delinquent Taxes	685,000	775,000	13.14%	755,000	2.58%
Interest	855,224	617,000	-27.86%	350,000	-43.27%
Interlocal Services	355,348	365,025	2.72%	375,688	3.00%
Grants	388,941	311,342	-19.95%	616,291	97.94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,252,350</b>	<b>\$13,701,371</b>	<b>-3.87%</b>	<b>\$ 15,046,182</b>	<b>9.82%</b>

The 2003 budget is \$295,611 under the 5% CAP. The use of Surplus is \$3,234,324 which is \$148,808 less than 2002. The appropriations and revenues have increased since 2002. The decline in interest rates as well as the decision to use less surplus have affected the 2003 revenues. The intent is to preserve surplus so that it will be available for budgets in future years. Thus, the amount of revenue from taxes must be increased to balance the budget. The municipal tax rate is proposed to increase by 5 cents, bringing the total municipal rate to 30 cents. For a home assessed at \$250,000 this means an increase in the 2003 municipal tax bill of \$125.

The public hearing on the 2003 budget is scheduled for the Township Committee meeting of May 15, 2003. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome to come, ask questions and comment on the 2003 proposed budget at this meeting. Contact Chris Smeltzer, Township Administrator with questions or comments about the 2003 Municipal Budget at 737-0605 or [mail@HopewellTwp.org](mailto:mail@HopewellTwp.org).

## Hopewell Township Continues to Grow

The Township Tax Assessor, Toni Sost notes that, "Growth in Hopewell Township during the past five years has increased the total assessed valuation 36%." During the last eight years, 1995 to 2003, the assessed values increased 54%.

1995-2003 Assessed Value Change	1995	1999	1995- 1999 % Change	2003	1999- 2003 % Change	1995- 2003 % Change	1995-2003 \$ Change
	1,460,905 (\$000's)	1,651,546 (\$000's)	13%	2,251,214 (\$000's)	36%	54%	790,309 (\$000's)

1990-2000 Population	1990	2000	1990-2000 % Change	1990-2000 # Change
	11,590	16,105	39%	4,515

**PLEASE NOTE!!**  
**TO RECEIVE FUTURE ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER BY MAIL YOU MUST**  
**COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM BELOW.**  
**OTHERWISE THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT:**  
[www.HopewellTwp.org](http://www.HopewellTwp.org)

## TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL REPORT SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To continue to receive a Township of Hopewell Report newsletter by mail provide your mailing information below and return this form to: Hopewell Township Administration Office, 201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Township of Hopewell Report** is a newsletter issued by the Township of Hopewell , 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08650. The newsletter is available on-line at the Township's Web Site:

[www.HopewellTwp.org](http://www.HopewellTwp.org).

Any resident who would like to receive a copy by mail should complete the subscription form on page 9 and return it to Township at the mailing address below.

**Hopewell Township Report Contributors:** Our thanks goes out to the following individuals who contributed the articles, comments and information inside: Gary Guarino, Lucia Stout Huebner, Mark Leckington, George Meyer, JoAnn Meyer, Victor Silvestrov and Toni Sost.

**Editor:** Christine Smeltzer, Township Administrator

**Township Committee Liaison:** Vanessa Sandom

**Comments, corrections, questions, stories or reports?**

Volunteer **Reporters** are welcome. Contact Chris Smeltzer at 737-0605 or by mail:  
201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560

**or by email: [mail@HopewellTwp.org](mailto:mail@HopewellTwp.org)**



201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road  
Titusville, NJ 08560

**2003 Township Committee**

Fran Bartlett, Mayor

Marylou Ferrara, Deputy Mayor

Jon Edwards, Committee Member

Arlene Kemp, Committee Member

Vanessa Sandom, Committee Member