

# OPINION



## EDITORIAL

### Speak now or forever hold your peace

**M**etamora Township legal counsel Mike Nolan hopes to demonstrate there is not sufficient need by the Levy Company to mine gravel from a 500-acre section of the sprawling D-Bar-A Boy Scout Ranch in the township.

Or that the daily rumble of upwards of 60 gravel haulers along Dryden Road (High Street) for the next 30 years through historic downtown Metamora will have a detrimental effect on the buildings — literally shaking the structures apart.

The Levy Company, with aggregate affiliates in countries around the world, and the Boy Scouts of America have submitted a conditional rezoning and special land use application to Metamora Township in its bid to win approval for a mining and reclamation plan. The company, and one of its regional subsidiaries — American Aggregates — cite recent state legislation approval of a road funding proposal that will create a huge demand for road-building materials as the need for it to acquire the underground resources found on the Boy Scout property.

The proposed haul route for the project would potentially disperse dozens of double-bottom gravel trains per day onto Dryden Road to M-24 to the west or through the heart of Dryden to M-53 to the east.

On Dec. 14 the Metamora Township Board approved a four-month moratorium on new gravel mining in the township to give Nolan and Michigan zoning legal expert Gerry Fisher added time to mount a challenge to prevent the charm of Metamora and Dryden from being subjected to a constant parade of slow-moving, dusty gravel haulers through their communities.

A special joint meeting of the Metamora Township Board and its planning commission will be held Monday (Jan. 11) at 7 p.m. at which time the attorneys will hold an informational session to bring local officials and the public up to speed about what they've learned and possible strategy to battle two huge organizations — the Levy Company and the Boy Scouts of America. The meeting is open to the public and allows for a public comment time in the agenda.

It's the contention by the Levy Company, says Nolan, that state law grants them permission for their gravel mine application and they don't really need local approval.

The Metamora Village Council approved a resolution to support Metamora Township's four-month moratorium. While concerned, Metamora village officials contend there is little they can do since the gravel mine location is in the township.

The gravel mine application has stirred emotions in Dryden as well. The Dryden Township Board will meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 12 (the day after the Metamora Township meeting) at which time officials are likely to take up a resolution like that passed by their Dryden Road neighbors to the west in Metamora Township last month.

Legal and media relations representatives for the Levy Company are also expected to be on hand to defend their project as a worthy and necessary project for the betterment of society that has for years demanded better roads.

Metamora Township legal counsel is firm that while the gravel and paving companies may claim there is a need to strip away hundreds of acres of trees and rolling countryside to get to the valuable gravel that lies below, the same gravel can be found throughout the region. And it can be found in locations where streams of gravel trains won't destroy the normally quiet rural setting that has made Metamora and Dryden Townships the desired homesteads for hundreds and thousands of area residents.

We encourage residents to attend the meetings next week in Metamora and Dryden townships if they can (get there early as space will be limited) and