

**Gratiot County Herald-2**

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## Garr Tool Expanding

*April 26, 2007*

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By [Erica Goff](#)

Managing Editor, Gratiot County Herald

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While many companies across the state are closing, downsizing or merely struggling to maintain, Garr Tool in Pine River Township is expanding, having received approval on a “win, win, win” agreement with the municipal board.

“This is a great opportunity for us and the township and advances the economic activity in the area,” said Ray Wilcox, a Certified Public Accountant and controller at Garr Tool.

That opportunity took a step forward last week when members of the Pine River Township approved an application for Industrial Facilities Tax Abatement, which will provide a \$1,733,000 tax abatement over a 12 year period. Wilcox said the abatement request was presented so the company could move ahead with a 12,500 square-foot addition to the back of its facility.

“Most of that cost is for machinery and equipment for tool preparation operations,” Wilcox said, adding around \$900,000 worth of personal property – machinery and equipment used to conduct washing, tubing and other preparation operations – will be funded through that abatement savings. About \$800,000 worth is real property, he said.

Garr Tool officials presented an application for the abatement, or IFT request, to township officials last month. As law states, officials considered the application and held a public hearing last week to allow any concerned parties to voice support or opposition. No concerns were raised and the township board approved the request unanimously.

“Garr Tool is clearly one of the bright spots in Gratiot County and we’re very excited to have them continue expanding,” said Kevin Beeson, Pine River Township supervisor.

Garr Tool is by far the largest tax payer in the county, Beeson said, and has approached the Township a number of times with similar requests, Beeson said. They have “done what they said they were going to do every time,” he added, and has remained competitive in their market. In addition to their financial success, Beeson said the company itself is morally beneficial to the community

as well.

“They don’t just hire people but bring them into the family. It is really a refreshing way to see business ran. They are great people o have in the area,” he said.

Wilcox described the expansion project, expected to be complete and functioning by June 1, as a triple-win for the company, employees and the community. The company benefits through the opportunity to continue expanding and remain competitive in the industry. The expansion will allow Garr Tool to continue to seek out new machinery and equipment and “stay ahead” in an industry that continues to move forward, Wilcox said.

The company is and always has been an important employment opportunity and Wilcox plans to continue. Garr currently employs 124 individuals, the company provides stable employment and hopes to be able to expand that number in the future.

“We continue to provide and maintain healthy employment and career opportunities. The men and women here are fortunate, as I am, to work for a company as fine as Garr Tool,” Wilcox said. “It is a tremendous benefit and a good working environment.”

In the last 2 years, Garr has hired 12 new employees and hopes this expansion will lead to further employment expansion as well.

The third win is for the Pine River Township community. As the company continues to grow, it increases the tax revenue for the township. More equipment purchased means more tax dollars, Wilcox said, as it is all taxed. The manufacturer is “very blessed to stand in the niche in a global market,” that has seen success, Wilcox said, especially considering other manufacturers in Michigan “are getting beaten up.” The company’s diverse consumers – aerospace technologies, government, automotive, tool and die shops and others – have helped them remain on top.