

# PETOSKEY News-Review

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Online edition: For local news you can't get anywhere else...wherever you are

updated Thursday, November 30, 2006



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Wednesday, November 29, 2006 12:04 PM EST

HOME

Should the government start charging certain people who get in car accidents?

NEWS

There is a move afoot to do that.

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It is a money grab by local agencies too cash-strapped from rising wages and shrinking revenues, mismanaged bureaucracies and broken state promises rather than an idea based on sound public policy or what's just plain good and decent.

According to the Associated Press, insurers and municipalities in Michigan are squaring off over who should pay for rescue and cleanup crews and heavy equipment used in certain car crashes, and the result could be higher insurance rates for motorists.

SPORTS

The dispute centers over whether drivers who get into car accidents outside of their hometowns should have to pay more for the public services they receive.

- Local/Regional
- National

FEATURES

At least two dozen communities in Michigan now charge extra for police and fire services used by nonresidents, and the numbers may grow as cities become more strapped for cash.

- Outdoor
- Religion

CLASSIFIEDS

Utica and St. Clair Shores have both passed ordinances recently that would bill insurance companies of nonresidents an average of \$400 to \$800 when they have to send out firefighters or use heavy equipment such as the Jaws of Life.

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## INFORMATION

## SPECIAL LINKS

Imagine being downstate and having the misfortune of getting in a wreck — your fault or the other guy's. Let's say someone dies in the wreck. Then to add insult to injury, you get a bill from a rescue crew for efforts to cut your lifeless spouse out of your crushed vehicle.

Can you even imagine how you'd feel?

Perhaps firefighters and EMTs should stop and ask a pinned motorist if he or she wants to be saved, for a price?

Maybe different agencies could respond to every accident and offer their services on a competitive bidding basis.

Here's an idea: We should refuse to help out-of-towners who get into car accidents, thereby saving taxpayers the money.

This is a horrible proposal which every citizen should find appalling.

At some point, as human beings, we have to decide that saving someone from a fiery wreck isn't about a town's bottom line, but is the right thing to do regardless of the costs it takes to accomplish, no matter who they are or where they call home.

Emergency services are part of what makes our community civilized. That tax we pay to support them are simply the price we pay to belong to that civilization, a club we call humanity. We have every right to expect and demand that government respect that covenant, no matter where we come from.

Instead we are faced with governments looking to balance their budgets on the backs of innocent car crash victims?

As far as billing insurance companies — that is just passing the buck of moral responsibility. In the end we still pay.

This is one money-raising idea that deserves elimination.

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