

MICHIGAN COUNTIES



Cover Story: Six MAC Board presidents were on hand Feb. 1 to help the association celebrate its 125th Anniversary at the Michigan State Capitol: (front, l-r) Jon Campbell of Allegan (2014-15), Sen. Veronica Klinefelt of Macomb (2019-21) and Stan Ponstein of Kent (2022-23); and (back, l-r) Phil Kuyers of Ottawa (2021-22), Rep. Ken Borton of Otsego (2018-19) and Rep. Matthew Bierlein of Tuscola (2017-18). Photo: Rod Sanford Photography



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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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Tammi Connell, Director of Member Events
Amanda Despins, Governmental Affairs Assistant
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MAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Following seats are vacant and will be filled at the 2023 Legislative Conference:

- Region II, Seat A
- Region III, Seat A
- Region IV, Seat B
- Region V, Seat B
- Region VI, Seat B

Letter from the Executive Director



STEPHAN W. CURRIE
MAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Your staff is using the latest technology to amplify the county voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C., while making it easier for members to participate in our work.”

Our 125th Anniversary year is off to a rousing start.

It’s not often that you can put six MAC Board presidents in the same room at the same time, but we did on Feb. 1 at the Michigan State Capitol. And they were joined by MAC Board directors, at least a couple of dozen state legislators and other dignitaries and special guests in the Capitol’s gleaming new Heritage Hall complex. (See more about the event on pages 14-17.)

As I noted in my remarks that day, MAC’s geographical history serves as a metaphor for the association’s ability to adapt and succeed on behalf of our members.

In the 1940s and ’50s, MAC didn’t even call the state capital home. We were based in East Lansing for years, some of which we spent in Quonset 31 on the Michigan State University campus! Humble times indeed.

On Feb. 1, by contrast, I was able to walk Board members and guests to the State Capitol from our modern facilities at 110 W. Michigan Ave. to fulfill its mission to advance “education, communication and cooperation among county government officials in Michigan.” These offices house a diverse and qualified staff who work tirelessly on your behalf, whether standing on the tiles of Capitol floor advocating or creating and executing valuable education opportunities at our conferences.

Your staff is using the latest technology to amplify the county voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C., while making it easier for members to participate in our work. Newly installed members of our six policy committees will see some of that in coming weeks as they connect to meetings with our new Owl video system.

In this one small way, and so many others, I believe MAC has adapted over time to be the organization that you, county leaders, need us to be.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the 2023 Legislative Conference, April 24-26 in Lansing, as we continue to commemorate our special year. ♦



IN THE LATE 1950S, WHAT WAS THEN THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS CALLED A QUONSET HUT LIKE THIS ONE AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY (TOP) HOME. SINCE SEPTEMBER 2017, MAC HAS BEEN BASED IN MODERN OFFICES JUST STEPS FROM THE STATE CAPITOL. PHOTOS: MSU ARCHIVES, ROD SANFORD PHOTOGRAPHY



83 COUNTIES MANY MORE STORIES

Michigan Counties is your gateway to all things related to county government in the Great Lakes State. For an annual fee of \$15, you will receive all six printed editions of the magazine (February, April, June, August, October and December).

To subscribe, send your name and mailing address to melot@micounties.org with the email header of “MI Counties Subscription.” To pay, visit MAC’s digital payment center at micounties.org/macsc.



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For more information on plans available to MAC members, please call MAC Service Corporation at 1-800-258-1152, contact a Blues contracted agent, or visit us at [bcbsm.com/employers](https://www.bcbsm.com/employers).

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Letter from the President



STAN PONSTEIN
PRESIDENT, MAC BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

“I want to extend my thanks to all who put in applications to serve on the MAC policy committees for the coming year. If we are going to remain a strong, bipartisan voice in Lansing, we need commissioners representing all 83 counties.”

Winter came and went out over the holiday season but it’s sure back now! While the brisk temperatures leave many of us thinking about warmer climates and sandy beaches, we have great opportunities in our “Water Winter Wonderland” that we call home.

We should celebrate the numerous festivals and activities throughout our Michigan counties, such as Tip Up Town USA at Houghton Lake, the Michigan Tech Winter Carnival in Houghton, the Winter Blast in Royal Oak or any of our beautiful county, state and national parks. Take some time and enjoy what this great state has to offer.

I want to extend my thanks to all who put in applications to serve on the MAC policy committees for the coming year. If we are going to remain a strong, bipartisan voice in Lansing, we need commissioners representing all 83 counties.

Our governmental affairs staff will work with the committees to help establish our platforms so we can effectively deliver our message of partnership with the state.

Just as MAC represents Michigan’s 83 counties in Lansing, the National Association of Counties (NACo) represents all 3,069 U.S. counties at the nation’s capital. Through the engagement of NACo, members and partnerships with MAC and other state associations, we achieved significant wins through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). A few highlights of NACo’s priorities in 2023 include:

- Ensure county priorities are included in the 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization;
- promote health reforms by addressing the Medical Inmate Exclusion Policy and the passage of mental health, substance use and criminal justice reform legislation;
- boost advanced broadband deployment and accessibility while preserving local decision-making;
- maintain election integrity and strengthen election worker safety; and
- promote county priorities and local decision making in future U.S. Environmental Protection Agency projects and other federal rulemaking.

Harnessing the collective voice of Michigan’s counties will enhance the lives of our residents, but it is only possible through participation and partnership.

How do Michigan counties have a seat at the table through NACo? There are three major ways we can make a difference:

- 1. GET INVOLVED** - NACo has more than 30 committees, caucuses and task forces that address challenges and opportunities we face as county leaders. Learn more and get involved by visiting NACo.org/GetInvolved.
- 2. SHOW UP** - NACo’s legislative and annual conferences are great ways to ensure our needs are being addressed, and to learn from our colleagues across the nation. Learn more about NACo’s in-person and virtual events at NACo.org/Events.
- 3. HARNESS THE BENEFITS** - Membership in NACo gives us access to advocates, experts, innovative programs, savings for counties and residents, and data to help us get the job done. Learn more and take advantage of NACo membership by visiting NACo.org/Membership.

Michigan’s voice at the national level is only as strong as the engagement of our counties in NACo. When we work together to build stronger counties, we build a stronger Michigan and a stronger America. ♦



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For more information about Enbridge in Michigan, visit enbridge.com/Michigan.



Enbridge is proud to support Michigan's county government personnel and the Michigan Association of Counties.

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Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan
 CCE Central Dispatch Authority
 Center for Change
 Community Mental Health Association of Michigan
 County Road Association of Michigan
 Eastern UP Regional Planning & Development Commission
 Michigan Association for Local Public Health
 Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers
 Michigan Association of County Clerks
 Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners
 Michigan Association of County Treasurers
 Michigan Association of County Veterans Counselors
 Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds
 Michigan Communication Directors Association
 Michigan County Medical Care Facilities Council
 MISS DIG 811
 Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan
 Nurse-Family Partnership
 Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan
 UPCAP Services
 Upward Talent Council

CORPORATE MEMBERS

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 Cohl, Stoker & Toskey, P.C.
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 Lean and Green Michigan
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 Maximus
 Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority
 Miller Canfield
 Multi-Bank Securities, Inc.
 Peninsula Fiber Network
 Rehmann
 TowerPinkster

MACPAC 2023 Members

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THANK YOU TO ALL MACPAC MEMBERS. TO SUPPORT MACPAC, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE, MICOOUNTIES.ORG.

PLATINUM

Jack Shattuck Ionia County

GOLD

Stan Ponstein Kent County

Joe Bonovetz Gogebic County

Tom Matthew Branch County

Douglas Johnson Otsego County

James Maike Newaygo County

SILVER

Jim Storey Allegan County

Jack Tany Saginaw County

Emily Post Brieve Kent County

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Roseann Marchetti Cass County

Carolyn Brummund Alcona County

Mary Ellen Babcock Huron County

Carol Hennessy Kent County

William Sarkella Sanilac County

Donald Arquette Lake County

Steve Frisbie Calhoun County

Raymond Steinke Mecosta County

Nancy Morrison Luce County

Note: Contributions are from 12/14/2022 to 2/6/2023



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Grant Identification and Writing Services

CoPro+ is a program that provides public entities with the opportunity to collaboratively procure valuable goods and services at competitive prices, while receiving a dividend reward for being a shareholder in the program.

Contracts have been approved for Grant Identification and Writing Services. The contracts are hosted by Livingston County; however, available to **all counties**. They were competitively bid and approved through the county's procurement process.

The vendors chosen through this process are pre-qualified to provide various services to the counties to assist them in identifying available grant opportunities and guide them through the grant application process. The contracts will offer a means for counties to receive grant writing assistance, coordination and planning of grant applications, compliance with grant guidelines and directives, and cradle to grave responsibility for awarded grants.

TWO CONTRACTS WERE AWARDED

★ Innovative Funding Partners

Brian Kelley

brian.kelley@innovativefundingpartners.com

★ JetCo Solutions

Jon Tellier

jtellier@jetcosolutions.com

Process

For each grant writing project, the contractor will determine the team that is best fit for the specific grant opportunity. The number of staff required will be dependent on the needs of each county.

The contractor will work at the direction of each county's designated lead to help them assess current funding priority areas, determine new priority areas for possible funding, and review current grant seeking efforts, programs and processes. Contractors will assist in determining key steps necessary to maximize organizational capabilities and identify the grant opportunities best suited for each organization.

CoPro+ is a time and cost savings program. It offers strong collaboration between the private and public sector, allowing the program to save your organization valuable dollars. The collaborative procurement program provides your organization assistance in every phase of the supply chain, ensuring quality products and services brought to you in the most efficient, cost effective manner.

Tasks

- Research grants that meet the county's criteria
- Obtain data needed to support proposals and write all sections of grant applications
- Review grant applications that are prepared by county personnel and offer suggestions for improvement
- Ensure all required certifications, documentation, and letters of support are submitted
- Submit grant applications in proper format and within established timelines
- Provide strategy consultation to secure competitive funding opportunities
- Assist with grant presentations
- Oversee compliance with grant guidelines and directives

Benefits of CoPro+

- **Reduced workload for your staff**
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HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



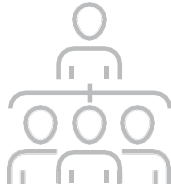
Counties affect the lives of residents every day. When our frontline staff are empowered as leaders, we deliver services more effectively. **The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a resource that connects your staff with practical leadership training.** HPLA uses an innovative, interactive online learning platform that combines real-time webinars, recorded sessions, and small group discussions to deliver effective training without traveling away from the county – saving money and maximizing time.

THE ACADEMY FOCUSES ON FIVE ESSENTIAL SKILLS:



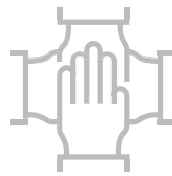
LEAD:

Engage teams and stakeholders to foster positive climates and exceed common expectations



ORGANIZE:

Plan, lead and execute organizational change more effectively and consistently



COLLABORATE:

Establish alignment and strong partnerships through building stronger relationships



DELIVER:

Measure projects and processes to deliver results aligned with county and community priorities



COMMUNICATE:

Create clarity, confidence, and community

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy empowers frontline county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.

The Academy enrollment fee is \$2,495 per participant. Enrollees from each Michigan County will receive a NACo scholarship of \$850, reducing the fee to \$1,645.

With a curriculum developed by the late *General Colin Powell* and public and private sector leaders, NACo High Performance Leadership Academy gives students the opportunity to learn from world-class faculty. All content is guided by an expert facilitator.



Find out more at NACo.org/Skills

In 2023, MAC will take offensive on OMA, revenue sharing reforms

BY DEENA BOSWORTH/DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

“MAC is working on legislation to create a Trial Court Fund to distribute funding to trial courts based on operational requirements, while maintaining local discretion over trial court operational decisions.”

A new year, new leadership in Lansing and a new legislative session brings with it new priorities, new budget requests and new momentum on unfinished business.

Fortunately for MAC, we have three former MAC presidents in the Legislature and another former board member in the House. These four are part of the 24 former county commissioners serving in the 102nd Legislature, several of whom already have offered to lead the charge on our 2023 legislative priorities.

Topping the list of those priorities is to bring back, at a minimum, the pre-pandemic flexibility of attending and voting in meetings from a remote location.

Prior to the changes made to the Open Meetings Act in 2020, members of a public body could attend, participate and vote remotely at county board sessions, so long as a quorum of the public body was physically present at the meeting location. The statutory change to allow for full board meetings to be held remotely due to the pandemic expired Dec. 31, 2021, and the expiration impacted the pre-pandemic rules by now barring remote participants from voting, even if a quorum is physically present. MAC wants, at minimum, the pre-pandemic meeting options for county boards.

Court funding continues as a priority in 2023. Courts cost \$1.4 billion per year to operate – and our members are on the hook for hundreds of millions of that figure, the largest unfunded mandate counties face.

In 2019, the Trial Court Funding Commission noted that contributions from the state’s General Fund to local courts make up just over 2 percent of the entire cost. The need to rebalance funding between state and local governments is obvious.



To do so, MAC is working on legislation to create a Trial Court Fund to distribute funding to trial courts based on operational requirements, while maintaining local discretion over trial court operational decisions. We are also working on bills to establish uniform assessments and centralized collections for all trial courts through the State Court Administrator’s Office.

MAC also will focus in 2023 on creating more resources to help those in the juvenile justice system. Counties are struggling to find beds, mental health providers and foster parents to help care for juveniles. We would like the funds for staff recruitment, retention and training, additional facilities and an increase in the per diem rate for foster care parents.

Equitable revenue sharing for counties is a perennial priority, for which we have some optimism in 2023.

Last year, MAC backed a package of bills to create a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund (RSTF) through a statutory earmark of the state sales tax. The legislation’s method of carving out a percentage of the sales tax for the fund is what revenue sharing was originally designed to do — share in the state’s revenue. If sales tax revenue goes up, local allocations go up, if sales tax revenue falls, so do allocations, just

like it does for constitutional revenue sharing for cities, villages and townships.

The money deposited into the fund would stay in the fund for distribution to counties, cities, villages and townships and not lapse to the state General Fund at the end of each fiscal year.

We return in 2023 with the same concept – and are seeking a substantial increase in the fund with an equitable split between counties and the municipalities within our borders. This distribution could potentially increase county revenue sharing in the first year by more than 40 percent.

Two tax reimbursement issues round out our priorities this year.

Once again, MAC is seeking reimbursement for the local revenue losses associated with the disabled veterans property tax exemption created in 2013. Each year,

exemptions grow by 14 percent. And what was originally thought to be only a \$17 million hit to local budgets is now close to \$100 million.

Reform legislation failed at the last-minute last year, but MAC will return to it this session.

MAC also is seeking another statutory mechanism to replace the lost revenue our counties will realize from the expansion of the small business personal property tax (PPT) exemption created by the state in December 2021. Although money has been set aside to reimburse locals, we need the statutory language adopted to actually get the money.

The 102nd Legislature has swept in a new era of Democratic control of the House, Senate and Governor's Office that Michigan has not seen in almost 40 years. With strong county advocates in key positions, MAC will be right beside them to provide our counties with the resources and tools they need to succeed into the future. ♦

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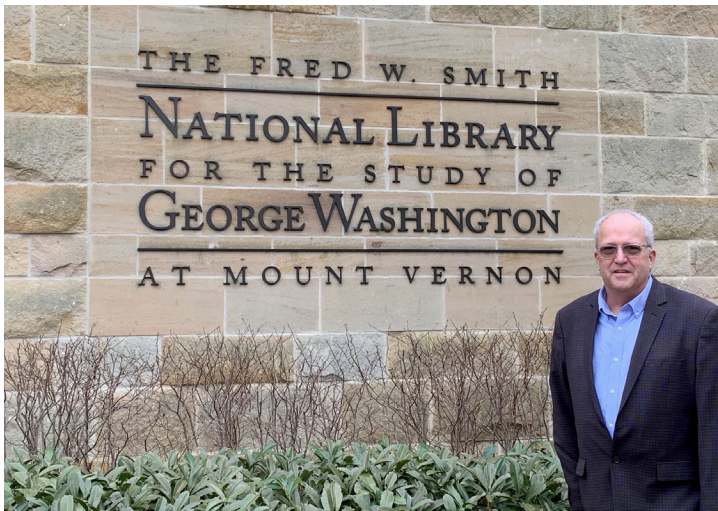
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MAC PRESIDENT STAN PONSTEIN ATTENDED A LECTURE ON LEADERSHIP QUALIFIES AND TOURED MOUNT VERNON, GEORGE WASHINGTON'S HOME, DURING A JANUARY GATHERING OF STATE ASSOCIATION LEADERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAC bolsters events, advocacy resources

MAC began 2023 by filling key positions to enhance association events and advocacy work.

At the turn of the year, Tammi Connell, CMP, joined MAC in the new role of director of member events. Connell will focus on planning MAC's two major conferences this year, plus special events, such as this year's 125th Anniversary schedule.

Her previous experience includes conference services manager with the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing and sales manager with the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau. She also founded Keystone Management Concepts – an association management company that has served nonprofit associations, including MAC from 2014 to 2020. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Cornerstone University.

At the end of January, MAC filled out its Governmental Affairs staff by adding Amanda Despkins as governmental affairs assistant.



CONNELL



DESPINS

Prior to joining MAC, Despkins served as a constituent relations liaison and legislative director in the Michigan House of Representatives for Rep. Ken Borton, a former MAC Board president. She holds a bachelor's degree in international studies from the University of Michigan.

The governmental affairs assistant focuses on staff support for MAC's internal policy committees and scheduling for Bosworth and the governmental affairs associates.

Check out MAC's 2023 Member Directory

The 2023 edition of the Michigan Association of Counties Membership Directory is now online and available to all MAC members.

The directory is the only document that includes complete contact information for all 619 county commissioners and countywide elected officials in our 83 counties.

Also included in the directory are:

- Contact information for all county board and administrator offices
- Details on MAC services and events
- Listings of Michigan legislators and their committee assignments

To access the directory, go to MAC's homepage at www.micounties.org or use the direct link below.

Direct link: <https://emflipbooks.com/flipbooks/MAC/Directory/2023>

If you see incorrect information for your county, we can correct it on this digital version, with the first update occurring at the end of March. To correct an error, just send an email to Derek Melot at melot@micounties.org with the correct information. Quarterly updates to the



digital directory will be made in March, June and September.

For those who prefer the printed page, the hard copy version of the directory is being mailed to the following groups, free of charge:

- All county commissioners
- All county administrators
- All county board offices

The printed directory also provides the digital password, which can be found on the table of contents page.

If you are eligible to receive a hard copy and have NOT received it by Feb. 25, please contact Derek Melot at melot@micounties.org to arrange a special delivery.

Iron Co. project featured in Michigan History



Iron County's \$1 million project to upgrade the facilities and protect the historic character of its 1890 courthouse are featured in the March/April edition of Michigan History, the magazine of the Historical Society of Michigan.

Much of the work centered on repair on such items as the boiler, the roof and new windows. Care was taken, though, to protect the architectural legacy of the "Richardsonian Romanesque" structure that has been designated a Michigan State Historic Site and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. ♦

Saving feels better.



The National Association of Counties (NACo) has enhanced the Live Healthy Discount Program to deliver greater healthcare savings to county residents at NO COST to the county.

No-cost Prescription Discount Program.

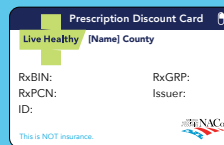
- Save up to **80%*** on generics and up to **40%*** on brand-name prescription medications at more than at more than 65,000 pharmacies across the country

Low-fee health discounts nationwide.

- Provides 24/7 telemedicine service and save **15% to 75%** on vision services, hearing aids and screenings, diabetes supplies, prepaid lab work and more

Low-fee dental discounts nationwide.

- Save **15% to 50%** on check-ups, cleanings, fillings, crowns, x-rays, root canals and more at over 110,000 participating providers



To learn more and enroll your county, visit NACo.org/Health

*This is not insurance. Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy. The Prescription Discount Card is operated by CVS Caremark®. The Discount Medical Organization for NACo Health and Dental Discounts is Alliance HealthCard of Florida, Inc. All rights reserved. ©2022 CVS Caremark



MAC launches 125th Anniversary year with Capitol kickoff event

“We could not be more pleased with turnout for the events. By my rough count, we had at least a couple of dozen legislators stop by, giving staff and Board members the opportunity to build or strengthen relationships with them and discuss how the state and counties can work in tandem to improve Michigan’s quality of life.”

The Michigan Association of Counties launched its 125th Anniversary on Feb. 1 with a State Capitol event featuring remarks from state and county leaders.

“On this date, 125 years ago, in the Senate chamber just steps away, representatives from 16 counties gathered to form this association,” said Stan Ponstein of Kent County, president of the Michigan Association of Counties’ Board of Directors. Ponstein noted that while Kent was not among the original 16, it has produced the largest number of MAC presidents — 11 and counting.

Originally formed as the State Association of Supervisors of Michigan, the association was formally renamed the Michigan Association of Counties in 1969 as the state shifted to county boards staffed by commissioners directly elected from geographic districts.

“In addition to those who have helped lead us this organization to where it is today, are those whose current commitment helps us achieve our long-standing role to educate and advocate for all 83 counties,” said Executive Director Stephan Currie in his remarks “We have an incredibly diverse and qualified staff who work tirelessly on behalf of every county in the state. ... Our team is honored to be supported by the MAC Board of Directors who are elected by their fellow commissioners to represent the broad needs of our state’s 83 counties. These board members are the engine of our association.”

Also speaking at the event in the State Capitol’s new Heritage Hall were:



MAC PRESIDENT STAN PONSTEIN (CENTER) HOLDS THE LEGISLATIVE TRIBUTE FOR MAC’S 125TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORED BY FOUR FORMER MAC BOARD MEMBERS NOW SERVING IN THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE: (L-R) SEN. VERONICA KLINEFELT, REP. KEN BORTON, REP. JULIE ROGERS AND REP. MATTHEW BIERLEIN. THEY ARE JOINED BY MAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEPHAN CURRIE (FAR RIGHT).

PHOTO: ROD SANFORD PHOTOGRAPHY

- State Sen. Veronica Klinefelt of Macomb County
- State Rep. Julie Rogers of Kalamazoo County
- State Rep. Ken Borton of Otsego County
- State Rep. Matthew Bierlein of Tuscola County

Klinefelt, Borton and Bierlein, all former MAC Board presidents, presented a personal legislative tribute to MAC to mark the anniversary.

“We could not be more pleased with turnout for the events,” said Currie. “By my rough count, we had at least a couple of dozen legislators stop by, giving staff and Board members the opportunity to build or strengthen relationships with them and discuss how the state and counties can work in tandem to improve Michigan’s quality of life.”

The year will include a variety of events culminating in an Anniversary Gala for members at the association’s 2023 Annual Conference in Kalamazoo County in October.

To keep track of all the anniversary activities and resources, visit 125th Anniversary Page at www.micounties.org. ♦



Images from the 125th Anniversary Event

PHOTOS: ROD SANFORD PHOTOGRAPHY



Helping the state to keep earlier promises on revenue sharing

BY ERIC LUPHER/PRESIDENT, CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN



MAC strongly supports the work of the **Citizens Research Council of Michigan**, a nonpartisan, independent public policy research organization. MAC Executive Director Stephan Currie currently sits on the CRC Board.

“Initial distributions were made on a per capita basis. In the early 1970s, the state began distributing revenue sharing to cities, villages, and townships using a formula that recognized disparities in fiscal capacity.”

Among the Michigan Association of Counties’ many legislative priorities for 2023 is the creation of a state revenue sharing trust fund to prevent future diversions of state funding statutorily earmarked for local governments. Let me help with some of the back story for this policy initiative.

Unrestricted state revenue sharing for cities, villages and townships dates to the 1930s, when state law replaced local taxation of intangible property with a state tax. The law required some of the revenue to be shared with local governments.

The state increased revenue sharing with a 1946 constitutional amendment earmarking part of sales tax revenues for local governments, the 1967 state income tax act that shared revenues with local governments and in the 1975 Single Business Tax act that reimbursed local governments for the exemption of intangible property and earmarked for revenue to be shared with local governments.

A different form of revenue sharing was initiated in 2014 to reimburse local governments for the exemption of many elements of personal property from taxation.

It was only with the enactment of the state income tax, though, that county governments have benefited from state revenue sharing. Half of tax collections were sent to counties and half went to cities, villages and townships.

Since the late 1990s, however, all funding for state revenue sharing, except PPT reimbursement, comes from the state sales tax.

Distribution of revenue sharing has long been an issue. Initial distributions were made on a per capita basis. In the early 1970s, the state began distributing revenue sharing to cities, villages, and townships using a formula that recognized disparities in fiscal capacity. This formula was not applied to county revenue sharing that continues to distribute revenue sharing according on a per capita basis. This has been and still is an inefficient distribution



method.

State revenue sharing is not state aid. Unlike the state School Aid Fund, which was equalizes the school funding based on the number of students, revenue sharing was created and expanded to compensate local governments for the state preemption of local taxing authority (except for the sales tax constitutional amendment).

Local governments can only rely with certainty on receiving constitutional revenue sharing. What now constitutes statutory revenue sharing, including county revenue sharing, came a “pinky swear” that the state would keep local governments whole by sharing revenues.

Past promises were short lived. The state has diverted funding from state revenue sharing just about every time there has been an economic contraction.

The last 20 years have been the most egregious. Millions of dollars that would otherwise be appropriated for state revenue sharing have been diverted to fund other state services and keep the state budget balanced. This came at the expense of local governments that also were hamstrung by property tax limitations restricting growth in their primary revenue sources.

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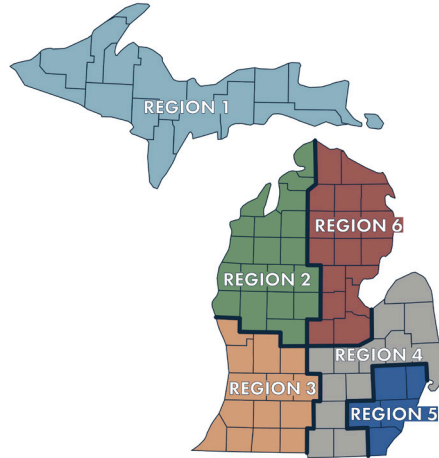
Filing period opens for special MAC Board elections at 2023 Legislative Conference

County commissioners interested in serving on the MAC Board of Directors have until March 24, 2023, to file for special elections to fill five seats on the Board at the 2023 Michigan Counties Legislative Conference.

- **Region IV, Seat B** (would serve term to Annual conference of 2026)
- **Region V, Seat B** (would serve term to Annual Conference of 2024*)
- **Region VI, Seat B** (would serve term to Annual Conference of 2025)

Candidates who file are also encouraged to submit a statement of up to 400 words on why members should support them. These statements will be posted to the MAC website in early April.

These special elections will be for partial terms and held on April 25 at the conference in Lansing. To be an official candidate, commissioners must file official notice of their intent to run, using an application form they can download at www.micounties.org. **Applications are due by 4 p.m. on March 24, 2023.**



No director shall serve more than three full three-year terms, except in certain situations where a director is filling a vacancy in an unexpired term. If the elected replacement shall serve more than half of the unexpired term, it shall be considered as if such person has served one full term for purposes of term limits. If the person filling the vacancy shall serve less than half of the unexpired term, that person shall be permitted

All five seats available represent regions, so will be decided by a vote in regional caucuses.

These seats are vacant and will be filled at the 2023 Legislative Conference:

to serve up to three additional full 3-year terms. ***Denotes a period of less than half of a term.**

- **Region II, Seat A** (would serve term to Annual Conference of 2024*)
- **Region III, Seat A** (would serve term to Annual Conference of 2024*)

If you have any questions about Board duties, please contact Executive Director Stephan W. Currie at 517-372-5374 or scurrie@micounties.org.



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micounties.org/macao-michigan-association-of-county-administrative-officers

For six decades, the Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers (MACAO) has been a trusted resource to county administrative officers as they continuously improve their abilities in serving county boards of commissioners by:

- Providing forums for information exchange and experiences while delivering solutions to common challenges
- Offering guidance and best practices from educational, governmental and professional organizations to members searching for leading edge practices in public administration
- Promoting and advancing high ethical standards and values as a foundation of managing Michigan public organizations

Tips for de-escalating tense public situations

BY CINDY C. KING/MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Cindy C. King is director of membership services and human resources for the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority (MMRMA). Learn more about MMRMA at www.mmrma.org.



“What causes people to become so angry that they act out in ways that are, at minimum, rude disruptive, or cross the line into being hostile or threatening.”

Monthly meetings of a county health agency are disrupted by a crowd of protestors. A Board of Commissioners approves a policy change to curtail hate speech and inappropriate conduct at its meetings. Disgruntled citizens follow school board members to their cars to confront them after the meeting adjourns. Citizens enter county offices and use smartphones to take videos of employees going about their jobs.

While recent incidents stem from the COVID-19 pandemic, any number of other issues have galvanized people to show up and express their opposition. For some public officials, it feels like the frequency of these protests and the level of anger involved is on the rise.

We all can relate to an experience dealing with an angry individual or group. What causes people to become so angry that they act out in ways that are, at minimum, rude or disruptive, or cross the line into being hostile or threatening? Doug Noll’s article titled *3 Powerful New De-Escalation Techniques That Work*, identifies common reasons people may become angry in public situations:

- Power struggle
- Overreaction to threats, posturing, or emotional displays

- Not feeling heard or listened to
- Feeling disrespected
- Feeling threatened

Noll’s related article suggests that angry people have needs they want met, including:

- Vengeance
- Vindication
- Validation
- The need to create meaning
- The need for safety

What do you do when faced with someone who is upset, angry or threatening, or when a camera or microphone is waved in your face and you are accused of doing something wrong or illegal, or because you are simply trying to do your job? One best practice is to deploy de-escalation techniques to temper or defuse the situation.

De-escalation is defined as:

- 1) A variety of psychosocial techniques aimed at reducing violent and/or disruptive behavior.
- 2) Skills used to reduce/eliminate the risk of violence during an escalation phase through verbal and non-verbal communications.
- 3) A less authoritative, less controlling, less confrontational approach to gain more control.

According to Security magazine, “The point of de-escalation is to minimize risk – to turn down the heat before a situation can boil over;” continuing that “de-escalation is fundamentally an interpersonal skill: It’s all about finding common ground with the person in distress.”

Matthew Doherty, a threat and violence risk management expert with Jensen Hughes, a global safety, security and risk-based engineering and consulting firm, notes “You need to listen to the person, find out the reasons why they’re so upset, or at least give them some empathy and respect. You’re not condoning the disruptive behavior, but you do have to have some empathy, some listening skills.”

Another security expert, Eric Sean Clay, writes in Security, “When we de-escalate ... we’re actively listening to what that person is saying. We’re watching for those verbal cues that may indicate what they’re thinking. Sometimes we just allow them to vent. It helps them feel validated, that somebody is actually listening to what they have to say.”

The Michigan State Police in De-Escalation Techniques for Teachers suggest these techniques:

- Speak slowly
- Lower your voice
- Avoid staring
- Avoid arguing or being confrontational
- Show concern through your responses
- Be prepared to react

As with any risk mitigation endeavor, the objective is to not make a situation worse. The ability to effectively utilize de-escalation techniques takes practice but honing these skills can serve to defuse the situation and communicate with the angry person in a way that conveys respect. These techniques can be effective at maintaining calm and lead to an improved atmosphere for resolving issues. ♦

A version of this article originally appeared in the April 2022 edition of the MMRMA Risk Journal.



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MAC releases toolkit to aid counties with opioid settlement funds

BY AMY DOLINKY/ TECHNICAL ADVISER, OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

“As counties work to determine the more pressing strategies to address the opioid and drug overdose crisis, this resource provides an overview of the opioid settlements, current and future, data on the scope of the overdose crisis and information on accessing county-level data.”

On Jan. 31, 2023, counties began receiving opioid settlement funds and MAC released the *Michigan Opioid Settlement Toolkit: A Guide for Local Spending*, created in partnership with Vital Strategies. The Michigan Opioid Settlement Funds Toolkit: A Guide for Local Spending is a roadmap for local governments to assist with planning for, and utilization of, opioid settlement funds. The document is intended to be a tool and provide direction on process and linkage to existing resources provided by local and national entities.

As counties work to determine the more pressing strategies to address the opioid and drug overdose crisis, this resource provides an overview of the opioid settlements, current and future, data on the scope of the overdose crisis and information on accessing county-level data. It discusses principles for spending, allowable abatement strategies to fund and recommended steps for spending. The recommended steps for spending include considerations for stakeholder engagement, sources for gathering data and local information, a process for determining where planning is currently at and the possible next steps moving forward as well as considerations for monitoring and accountability with an understanding of the differences between settlements and expectations around transparency from the public.

The toolkit focuses on centralizing existing resources for ease of access, emphasizes the importance of an equity lens and inclusion of those with substance use disorders and people who use drugs, the need for collaboration and long-term planning to address this crisis. While opioids are at the forefront of the discussion, consideration of polysubstance use and changes in the dominant substance over time point to a need for sustainable and transferrable strategy determinations in order to assist in the creating healthier and safer communities. Local governments and stakeholders know the needs of their specific environment and the toolkit focuses on utilization of data, resources and processes to allow those local needs to be highlighted and addressed.



While the guide for local spending is one tool, there are numerous other reports and resources that are anticipated to emerge as settlements processes continue. As new information becomes available, it will be shared, and additional supports will continue to be offered. Expected resources include information on requirements of future settlements, recommendations for spending, featured evidence-based and promising practices as well as tools for reporting metrics and monitoring. Ensuring readiness for spending requires an understanding of the local landscape and a strategic approach to addressing different aspects of the environment through different years of funding.

This toolkit is intended to be used in connection with the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) Opioid Settlement Resource Center website and MAC Opioid Settlement Resource Library (<https://micounties.org/opioid-settlement-resource-center/> and <https://micounties.org/opioid-settlement-resource-library/>). Technical assistance is also available through MAC and external organizations at no cost, including Michigan research universities, the Overdose Response Network funded nationally through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and local organizations throughout the state (<https://micounties.org/opioid-settlement-assistance-request-form/>). For a list of technical assistance providers, visit the MAC Opioid Settlement Resource Library, or for connection to the appropriate provider or other support, contact Amy Dolinky at dolinky@micounties.org. ♦



Rep. Matthew Bierlein

LEGISLATOR
Q&A

What is the most pressing issue facing Michigan now?

Michigan communities are still struggling to recover from the effects of covid. While we are all working to move forward as a state, it is important that we continue to make decisions that are good for the entire state, continuing the work that has been done over the last decade to make Michigan an environment where it is great to work and live.

Based on your experience, how important are counties to the effective delivery of public services?

Delivering services at the local level through the oversight of county government is a tried and tested system that is working. Having the board, who are much more accessible to the community than state agencies, is a benefit to everyone.

How do you feel your experience as a county commissioner will impact your policy decisions in the Legislature?

I'm familiar with legislative process through my experience as a county commissioner and the work I did with MAC through both the board and through the steering committees. Additionally, the many other hats that you wear in that role throughout the community help to understand your district and its people on both their best and worst days. This experience will be greatly beneficial while drafting and debating policies that work to better the state of Michigan.

As a former commissioner, what importance do you place on participating in county board meetings, either in person or remotely?

It's important to be able to keep in contact with your district, hearing the needs of the community from the commissioners directly really helps to keep your focus local. Regular meeting attendance when available is key to keeping that connection.

County courts and the juvenile justice system have been significantly impacted by "Raise the Age" legislation, the COVID-19 pandemic and critical staffing shortages, which have led to a bed shortage crisis. What are some ways in which the Legislature can alleviate some of the strain on our juvenile justice system?

We are continuing to monitor the implementation of all the changes that were made over the past few years. We understand that finding employees is a huge issue right now across all industries and these types of jobs are no exception. I do not believe there will be a one size fits all solution to the issues facing the juvenile justice system, and we will have to look to be partners with counties on the solutions that fit there needs, whether it is more bed space, employment incentives, or even changes to fostercare. ♦



Name:
Rep. Matthew Bierlein

District/counties:
District 97/ Bay, Genesee, Saginaw and Tuscola

Committees:
Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, minority vice chair; Agriculture Committee, member; Regulatory Reform Committee, member

Term:
First

Previous public service:
Tuscola County commissioner, 2013 to 2019

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The funding diversions were bad policy that had consequences. As the Citizens Research Council of Michigan documented last year, property tax rate increases by a majority of local governments of all types in all corners of the state have been a clear policy response to being denied the state revenue sharing that was dedicated to local governments and the property tax limitations.

The challenge for MAC, its partners and policymakers

with whom they are working is to devise a mechanism that protects revenue sharing funding from future statutory diversions.

History will bear out that such a policy would fulfill promises made by earlier generations. Those promises have meant little in the era of term limits. Will a statutorily enacted "trust fund" be enough to protect the funding from future generations? ♦

A photograph of a beagle dog lying in a bed, wearing a red ice pack on its head. The dog is looking towards the camera with a slightly sad expression. The background consists of white horizontal blinds.

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Increase your impact via convening role

BY AL VANDERBERG/KENT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR-CONTROLLER

There are three general eras of historical development for Michigan counties.

The first carved counties out of the wilderness per adoption of the Northwest Ordinances and the establishment of Michigan statehood in 1837. This development phase created the constitutional framework of our law and justice system with the creation of the circuit court, jail and sheriff functions, followed by probate court and the countywide elected officer functions — except for drain commissioner, which was established by statute after early settlers contracted malaria from the swampy land conditions.

The Great Depression ignited the second era. FDR’s New Deal and, later, LBJ’s Great Society created mandates for county government to serve as the social safety net in which health, mental health and social services became boots-on-the-ground deliverable services of county government to its residents. New federal laws ranging from environment, education, and civil rights impacted county government.

At the state level, legislation such as the 1968 Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, Mental Health Code of 1974, and Public Health Code of 1978 added hefty mandates and much greater responsibility onto the shoulders of county government. During this era, the Michigan Legislature also adopted laws allowing counties to create discretionary services, such as parks systems, and to collaborate with other governments in delivering services.

The third — and current — era features county government as a leader to resolve wicked challenges countywide and regionally.

The speed and complexity of public life has created an increased need for county government to not only have a seat at the table but to take a leadership role in matters such as economic development, affordable housing, homelessness and an array of services not typically found within the menu of county responsibilities. In this environment, I have noticed counties are



“In similar fashion, Kent County co-convened the Kent County Population Health Consortium to better address mental health needs.”

increasingly utilizing the convening role to attack difficult issues that involve what I call the “trifactor”: private, public, nonprofit.

For example, when a Michigan State University study indicated groundwater in Ottawa County was not recharging as fast as it was being removed from the ground, the County convened local governments, scientists, well drillers, higher education and many others to define the problem and develop a plan to address it.

In similar fashion, Kent County co-convened the Kent County Population Health Consortium to better address mental health needs. Soon, Kent will convene a mobility task force to define transportation gaps and develop potential solutions for all residents to have more affordable options.

The role of convening is much more important now than in any prior time. In many ways, this development recognizes that county government is the one consistent organization that covers the entire geography of the county and is often viewed as “Switzerland” by other trifactor organizations.

Convening a group does not necessarily mean that the county will pay for or even be part of a solution. Rather, it recognizes the vital role of counties in getting leaders and organizations together to effectively address wicked problems. ♦

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