

MICHIGAN COUNTIES

Official Voice of the Michigan Association of Counties | August 2020



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MAC

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The recent end of our **2020 Virtual Annual Conference** is yet another reminder of what an unusual, and challenging, year 2020 has been. And with us unable to gather in person in the near future, I think it's important to note the enduring value of MAC to our 83 members.

About six weeks ago, we issued our dues statements to county members. We included in that statement a document which I also provide to board chairs when I make my visits around the state. We call it a "County Visit" or "CV" report. It shows what the county pays in MAC dues and what the county receives in services and opportunities through MAC.

What may spring immediately to mind are the advocacy services we provide to protect and enhance the resources of your county government to do your job: everything from highlights on revenue issues to threats to local control to new opportunities to serve citizens.

The CV report also shows what your county uses from our suite of **MAC Service Corp. opportunities:**

- **Abilita program** — Telecommunication consulting services, with average savings of 29 percent
- **AllState Voluntary Benefits** — Voluntary benefits on accident and critical illness coverages
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield Administrative program** — Health insurance with one-stop customer service
- **COBRA Administration program** — Free administration and compliance with all COBRA regulations
- **CoPro+ program** — Collaborative purchasing with bulk pricing and shareholder rewards
- **Grant Services program** — Since 2005, this program has helped counties gain almost \$6 million in grant money
- **Lincoln Financial program** — 10 percent discount on current life and disability insurance rates as a MAC member
- **Nationwide 457 program** — State-of-the-art retirement planning with more than \$1 billion of Michigan public funds under management
- **Michigan Counties Workers' Compensation Fund** — Nonprofit pool that offers members an average 35 percent dividend on their premium payments

It's a long list — and getting longer. This year, we are working in partnership with the data firm of **Munetrix** to create a salary survey tool that members can use during their negotiations with sheriff deputies. In time, we expect to expand this database to all categories of county jobs.

Also, our successful **CoPro+ unit** has created a PPE purchasing program so counties and their affiliates can quickly and easily acquire protective gear under pre-negotiated contracts that comply with Michigan law.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS

- Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan
- C.C.E. Central Dispatch Authority
- Community Economic Development Association of Michigan
- Community Mental Health Association of Michigan
- County Road Association of Michigan
- Friend of the Court Association of the State of Michigan
- Health Care Association of Michigan
- Lean and Green Michigan
- 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 Parks & Recreation Officials
- Michigan Association of County Treasurers
- Michigan Association of County Veterans Counselors
- Michigan Association of Equalization Directors
- Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds
- Michigan County Medical Care Facilities Council
- Michigan County Social Services Association
- Michigan Emergency Management Association
- Michigan Judges Association
- Michigan Works!
- Mid-Michigan District Health Department
- Municipal Employees Retirement System of Michigan
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan
- UPCAP Services Inc.
- UPWARD Talent Council - Michigan Works
- USDA Rural Development Office

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- Berends, Hendricks & Stuit
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- Enterprise Fleet Management
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- Granger Construction
- Granite Telecommunications
- ITC Holdings Corp, a Fortis Co.
- Kofile Technologies, Inc.
- Maner Costerisan PC
- Maximus
- Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC
- Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority
- Multi-Bank Securities, Inc.
- Munetrix
- Nationwide Retirement Solutions
- PFM Asset Management, LLC
- SBS Portals/Information & Records Associates, Inc.
- TowerPinkster

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

With the turmoil thrown at all of us in county service since February – wow, has it been just six months – I thought it might be helpful to share some experiences from my home county (Macomb):



We were fortunate. The process of changing over from physical county board meetings to virtual ones was, at least from my viewpoint, seamless.

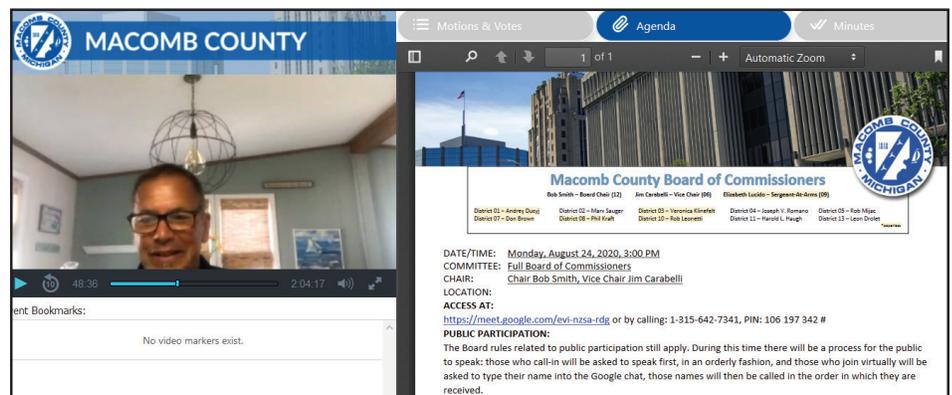
Our county, in 2017, had changed to using an agenda management system from the old, traditional process of taking voice votes at the table, so all we needed to do in 2020 was add a video component to our public sessions. Commissioners were already trained in casting votes via iPad in the board room. The process to join from home is exactly the same as if we were going on the system at the table. Any internet-capable device can be used, I am told.

We have 13 commissioners in Macomb. The agenda management system allows us to press a button to request to speak, so the chair always knows who to call on next. It also allows all commissioners to see where they are on the list of speakers, removing the chaos of commissioners trying to speak at the same time.

All documents are put into the system from administrators who are seeking approval from the board on agenda items. Members of the public can view the documents any time before and during the meeting. Members of the public can also go back to previous meetings to see actions taken and in some cases, view a video of the meeting. Our system takes the commissioners to each agenda item as it comes up, and the documents are easily accessed by a click of the button.

Another benefit of the management system is it generates the minutes for the board. In smaller counties, the county board may have a small staff or maybe just a single staffer assigned to assist them. Having a tech system that creates the minutes frees up valuable time that your employees can use on other pressing matters. It also removes any possible bias in the minutes

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Macomb County Board Chair Bob Smith leads the board through a recent meeting using the county's enhanced agenda/meeting management system.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT from page 3

because the focus is simply on who spoke, what motions were taken and the outcome of those votes. The agenda management system increases efficiency by changing us from a paper-based system to a cloud-based system. In Macomb County, the Board of Commissioners is now more organized and our process is modernized.

Additional advantages from this technology include:

- The ability for the board chair and committee chairs to review and approve items to be placed on their agendas from home.
- The ability for commissioners to see the documents well in advance of the meeting.
- The ability for commissioners to forward any questions or requests for documents to the proper department head in a timely manner.

Like the rest of you, I suspect, we do not know how long we will be meeting virtually, or, if we will have to do this again in the future. An agenda management

system removes the awkward process of everyone voting verbally at the same time in a virtual meeting.

The board staff in Macomb County is hoping to bring the concept to all of you at a future MAC conference, be it virtual or physical, so you can see all the benefits for yourself.

Speaking of conferences, I wish to thank everyone who attended our 2020 Virtual Annual Conference. The MAC Board was pleased with how well the event was managed - another example of how MAC has risen to the challenge to aid members in these difficult times.



Veronica Klinefelt
President, MAC Board of Directors

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MACPAC 2020 MEMBERS

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Brian Cote
Kenneth Borton

Wexford County
Otsego County

Gold Level

Douglas Johnson
Joseph Garcia
Stan Ponstein

Otsego County
Eaton County
Kent County

Silver Level

Stephen Adamini
Tom Matthew
Randall Peat
Howard Heidemann
Vaughn Begick

Marquette County
Branch County
Van Buren County
St. Clair County
Bay County

Joseph Bonovetz
David Pohl
Donald McLean
Jim Storey
Jim Talen
Carol Griffith
Kam Washburn
Robert Showers
David Rivard

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Eileen Kowall
Karen Alholm
Raymond Steinke
Rillastine Wilkins

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Clinton County
Chippewa County
Allegan County
Kent County
Livingston County
Clinton County
Clinton County
Delta County

Oakland County
Oakland County
Marquette County
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Bruce Caswell
Ernie Krygier
Nancy Morrison
Robert Ricksgers
Theresa Nelson
Nancy Jenkins-Arno
Barbara Kramer
Paul Schincariol
Donald Arquette
Art Jeannot
Dean Kapenga
Kenneth Nysson
Daniel Robilliard
Roseann Marchetti

Van Buren County
Hillsdale County
Bay County
Luce County
Antrim County
Delta County
Lenawee County
Dickinson County
Van Buren County
Lake County
Benzie County
Allegan County
Kent County
Baraga County
Cass County

Thank you to all MACPAC members. To support MACPAC, please visit our website, micounties.org.

MAC EVENTS CALENDAR

SEPT. 11
Environmental and
Natural Resources
Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

SEPT. 18
Finance and General
Government Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

SEPT. 25
Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

SEPT. 28
Health and Human
Services Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

Judiciary and Public
Safety Committee
2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Virtual

OCT. 2
Finance and General
Government Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

OCT. 9
Environmental and
Natural Resources
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

OCT. 16
Agriculture and Tourism
Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

OCT. 26
Health and Human
Services Committee
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Virtual

Judiciary and Public
Safety Committee
2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Virtual

OCT. 30
Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Virtual

For latest event listings, [click here.](#)



Take good care of the company you keep.

For more information on Blue Cross plans available to Michigan Association of Counties members, please contact the MAC Service Corporation at 800-336-2018 or contact a Blue Cross contracted agent.

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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

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POLICYCORNER

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE MICHIGAN'S MUNICIPAL FINANCE SYSTEM: BROKEN

By Dan Papineau, Director of Tax Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Michigan Chamber of Commerce

Perhaps it was the recent remark I made about Michigan's broken municipal finance system while testifying in front of a state legislative committee that prompted the invitation to contribute to this publication.

I agree with the nonpartisan Tax Foundation that all tax policy should be based on four cornerstone principles: simplicity, transparency, neutrality and stability. The revenue side of our municipal finance system fails in all four of these categories. This is not hard to believe since local government revenues are overwhelmingly made up of property taxes. County governments depend on property taxes for 60 percent of their revenues. The crux of the problem behind our state's municipal finance system is the overreliance on property taxes. When we think about property taxes through the lens of the four principles of sound tax policy, we see why.

Simplicity

Since 1893, Michigan has had an ad valorem property tax system that relies on the current value of a subject property. Assessing a value to every piece of real property and all nonresidential personal property is no easy (or simple) task.

While the practice of assessment and appraisal has evolved into a complex science over the last 127 years, it is still a relatively subjective process. This subjectivity erodes simplicity. Both taxpayers and local units of government see this problem play out far too frequently in the form of property tax disputes that end up in court wasting the time and resources of everyone involved.

Property taxes can be looked at as a fair way to spread the cost of local government services across varying portions of the population but, our system has become so complicated and hamstrung by a plethora of minor tweaks and/or major deviations that our property tax system is caving in on itself. The mechanism that brings in the most significant portion of revenues county governments need is about as simple as the internal workings of the human brain.

Transparency

With increased accessibility to BS&A and other



technologies, the principle of transparency has been greatly bolstered but, the process of assessment to state equalization is anything but transparent.

While summary appraisal record cards are available online either through free access or paid access, the level of detail made available lacks full transparency. For example, the building valuation work up, land value tables, economic condition factor tables and supporting studies are not available unless a Freedom of Information Act request is filed. Even the body that audits the entire property tax system, the State Tax Commission, does not share the results of their audits with the public.

Neutrality

The principle of tax neutrality is summarized as follows: "Taxes should neither encourage nor discourage personal or business decisions". The fact is the property tax system Michigan imposes today does the exact opposite. The property tax system is actually designed to influence the decisions businesses make and to a lesser degree, the ones individuals make.

Property taxes have been used to compete for investment across local units of government and between states. Much of the policy that promotes this behavior is not within the control of the governing body of the local unit.

Policy-makers at all levels use the property tax system to encourage or discourage different behaviors. Michigan has a few parameters to promote neutrality, but they are so ineffective they are practically nonexistent.

Continued on page 7

POLICYCORNER

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE MICHIGAN'S MUNICIPAL FINANCE SYSTEM: BROKEN from page 6

Stability

By nature of its design, the property tax is unstable.

First, the personal property tax is based on depreciating value. It is literally designed to go down and therefore be anything but stable. Real property tax revenues or the values of which they are based on, while not as heavily affected by depreciation, are constitutionally prohibited from increasing beyond a certain level after being allowed to decline without restriction. Stable on the way back up but not down.

Second, value itself is not stable. A property worth a certain amount one day could be worth half the next. Our economic cycle contains peaks and valleys not a flat line of prosperity.

Third, policy-makers are constantly rearranging the property tax system to address its numerous faults; however, the never-ending alterations result in

instability and effect budgets of police departments, public works departments and general fund spending of county governments everywhere.

Fixing the revenue side of our municipal finance system is extremely difficult while decrying its faults is easy. I respect those who dedicate their careers to finding ways to improve the system we have. We really must look at local government revenue from a completely new perspective. I believe this starts with revamping the complete service delivery method our state is currently straddled with. My friends at MAC hear me say often that county government is the best form of government. Counties should be the ones administering practically all of the services a citizenry relies on. To transfer to this type of service delivery model we must also permanently address the compounding debt burden facing counties across Michigan. Lastly, we can discuss opportunities to reinvent the property tax system (or scrap it) and create a more diverse revenue stream for local units of government to depend on.



Rural Development

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MACNEWS

IZZO INSPIRES, CHARMS IN KEYNOTE OF 2020 VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“All of us are role models,” Michigan State University basketball coach Tom Izzo told county leaders gathered for a special session Thursday of MAC’s 2020 Virtual Annual Conference. “You gotta give back some things. I look back and I see I have a responsibility, which is a privilege, not a burden.”

Izzo’s keynote remarks were the highlight of week 1 of the virtual conference, which ran Aug. 18-27 on MAC’s virtual platforms.

The Hall of Fame coach and national championship winner (2000) expanded on the leadership theme by saying, “Greatest feeling – being a difference-maker in someone’s life.”

During a wide-ranging Q&A after his remarks, led by MAC Executive Director Stephan Currie, Izzo fielded queries on everything from the “side” of Iron Mountain he grew up on to how to bring cohesion to a group of wildly different people to the recent trend in changing team mascots. At one point, the coach seemed to be wistful as he related how, in his young adult days in the Upper Peninsula, his first big investments were trailers, culminating in a “double-wide” unit.

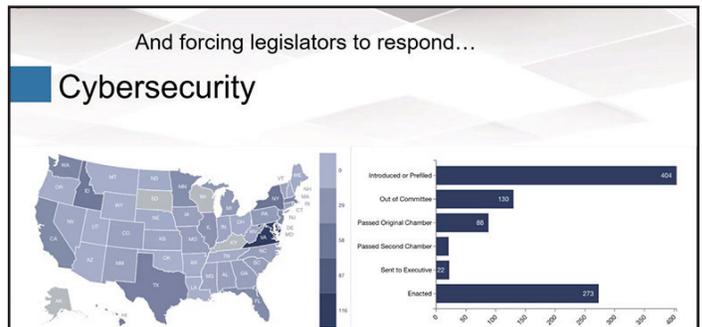
Izzo also engaged in some good-natured ribbing with Currie over the high expectations Spartan fans have for him and his team each year.

“Coach never fails to deliver,” Currie said after the session. “We at MAC are so appreciative of coach Izzo’s time and the kind words he had for the work of county leaders in Michigan.”

While the conference headquarters operated in MAC’s Lansing conference room, speakers joined from across Michigan and beyond by Zoom links to brief county leaders on:

- **Adapting facilities to the demands of COVID-19**
- Claiming funds for emergency management from the **federal** and **state** governments during the pandemic
- **Charitable loopholes on local property taxes**
- **Transportation funding**
- **Cybersecurity preparation and threats**
- **Boosting quality of life for veterans**
- **What Michigan can expect out of the federal Family First Act**

In addition to Izzo’s keynote remarks, the conference main sessions included remarks from MAC Board President Veronica Klinefelt of Macomb County, Executive Director Stephan Currie on the **“State of MAC”** and Governmental Affairs Director Deena Bosworth with a **“Legislative Update.”**



All of the conference sessions were recorded. MAC will be placing video files on the micounties.org website at some point in September. Watch for alerts in MAC’s weekly Legislative Update emails for details on this.

MAC NEWS

INGHAM'S CRENSHAW IS NEWEST MEMBER OF MAC BOARD; FIVE INCUMBENTS RE-ELECTED

During regional caucuses held at the Virtual Annual Conference in August, MAC members re-elected five incumbents and selected a new face as one of two Board members from Region 4.

Bryan Crenshaw of Ingham County fills the vacancy created by Donald Parker's resignation last winter from Region 4, which covers parts of mid-Michigan and the Thumb.

"I look forward to working with the MAC board members as we continue to fight for adequate funding from the Michigan Legislature and Congress," Crenshaw said. "The COVID-19 pandemic has hit county budgets hard and we must voice our need for revenue sharing and ensure funding for other mandated programs continues. We must voice our support for legislation that will benefit counties and share our reasons why legislation may be detrimental to constituents."

Crenshaw, of Lansing, has been a member of MAC's Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. He has served on the Ingham County Board of Commissioners since September 2013 and been chair of the board since January 2019.

He previously served in Gov. Jennifer Granholm's office and was a member of the Lansing Board of Education.

Unopposed incumbents also were returned to the board from Regions 1, 2, 3 and 5 and at-large.

President Veronica Klinefelt of Macomb will be starting her third term on the board from Region 5 (Metro Detroit area).

Joe Bonovetz of Gogebic (Region 1), Richard Schmidt of Manistee (Region 2), Jim Storey of Allegan (Region 3) and Stan Ponstein of Kent (At-large) all will be starting their second term on the Board.

Board members can serve a maximum of three 3-year terms.



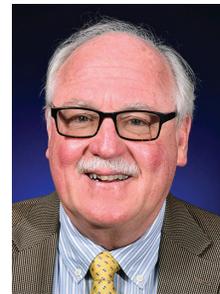
Crenshaw



Bonovetz



Schmidt



Storey



Klinefelt



Ponstein

On the same day, MAC members convened in virtual session to provide final approval to the association's policy platforms for 2020-21.

The Board approved the draft platforms, which are developed by MAC's policy committees, during a meeting in June. Those drafts were then posted to the MAC website for member review in advance of the Aug. 26 vote. Due to the virtual nature of this year's conference, the Board of Directors voted to require that all member amendments for the platforms be submitted in writing to MAC by 5 p.m. on Aug. 7. No amendments were received by that deadline.

Using Zoom's polling feature, members quickly approved the policy outlines that will guide MAC's advocacy work for the coming year.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

from page 2

On the educational front, we expect to announce this fall the first "class" of our **County Commissioner Academy** - commissioners who have earned enough credits through attending our conferences and webinars to be "certified" commissioners.

Just as you and your staffs are delivering public services in trying times, MAC continues to deliver

to you the products and expertise you need every day.

Stephan W. Currie
MAC Executive Director

MACNEWS

MAC HELPS CREATE DIGITAL TOOL TO AID COUNTIES ON SALARIES

Nearly 25 percent of Michigan counties already have signed up for a new MAC service to aid them with a long-running challenge: determining fair pay and benefits for employees.

MAC's Salary Database Tool, a joint project with the Michigan data firm of Munetrix, has been conducting training sessions with county HR professionals and collecting pay and benefits data for members to utilize.

Sharp-eyed MAC members may recall the training alerts from last winter. COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns slowed the rollout of the database, but momentum is building again, with more than 20 counties now at least in the initial stages of participation.

"This survey tool is part of MAC's ongoing efforts to leverage digital resources and crowdsourcing to aid members in day-to-day challenges," said Stephan Currie, MAC's executive director. "We've had great success with our CoPro+ purchasing program, then we expanded into procurement services to aid members with limited staffs. Just a few years ago, our salary data work was based on simple spreadsheets; today, we can arm members with timely figures that can be instantly analyzed for any specific need."

The first phase of this tool will focus solely on sheriff deputies and their pay and benefits. This tool is designed in response to our members voicing their concern about the increasing cost of salary surveys, Currie explained.

"Retaining and attracting employees in the highly competitive local government market is getting tougher," said Bob Kittle, president and CEO of Munetrix. "With retirements accelerating, poaching increasing and a short supply of available talent in general, it is critical to know how your compensation and benefits stack up to market competition. The Wage and Benefit Comparer, developed in a partnership with the MAC, is a great first step to understanding potential disparities so administrators can act proactively rather than reactively."

"This is our first step in providing a more robust salary survey tool that covers all departments and will be consistently updated," Currie added. "The strength of this project is in building the largest possible database so counties can see what the situation on the ground is. That's why our motto for the work is '#ParticipationIsPower.'"

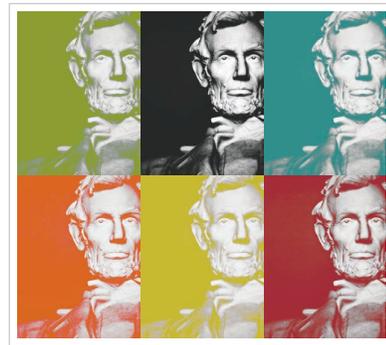
Peggy Cantu of MAC's Service Corp. stands ready to answer questions and assist counties interested in the



database tool. Peggy can be reached at cantu@micounties.org or 616-318-2216.

To register for the database, go to this link: <https://secure.munetrix.com/n/register>

You can watch the training video at <https://vimeo.com/munetrix/municipal-webinar-recordings/video/395958627>



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AFFILIATE CORNER

SHERIFFS SUPPORT REFORM FOR BETTER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

By Matt Saxton, Executive Director/CEO, Michigan Sheriffs' Association

As public officials, we must lead in times of difficulty and 2020 has challenged us to re-examine our communities, our service and ourselves. The Michigan Sheriffs' Association (MSA) believes that law enforcement must lead the way in improving relationships and interactions between our officers and the communities we serve. MSA pledges to work in concert with all stakeholders

toward the attainment of this goal. MSA supports the following reforms as positive steps toward improving police/community relationships by improving training, trust in the communities we serve, recruitment, discipline, policing standards, and transparency. Through these reforms, Sheriffs wish to open a dialogue with the public and call out to all who seek to bring about positive change to a profession that so many should trust and rely on in their time of need.

Training

MSA supports **House Bill 5837**, by Rep. Ronnie Peterson (D-Washtenaw), which focuses training on de-escalation, implicit bias, procedural justice and finally mental health resources for officers. It further empowers MCOLES (our licensing and education board) to enforce licensing sanctions and revocations. MSA supports the Governor's additional appointments to the MCOLES Board from the Department of Civil Rights and two members of the community. Finally, MSA supports additional funding for training and filling shifts for training so that Michigan's law enforcement community can be the best trained and continue to be the most professional in the nation.

Community

MSA encourages law enforcement agencies to put on positive community programming with the goal of improving community relations, earning trust, and breaking down barriers. These programs range from community policing initiatives, including school resource officers, to "know your rights" campaigns, to school visits and community picnics with officers. Building trust in our communities requires time spent building relationships together.



Recruitment

MSA believes that being a police officer is a calling. The reality is that not many people want to be police officers in today's complicated world. In addition, the job is difficult and stressful. This results in job openings going unfilled in nearly every community and the number of officers in Michigan remains lower than it did

during the 2001 terrorist attacks — nearly 20 years ago. Job openings that used to draw hundreds of applicants now draw a half dozen — many of those are often unqualified, and few, if any are from communities of color. MSA supports a full-scale recruitment effort to find and retain top talent to our ranks. Further, MSA supports codifying MCOLES' best practices for background investigations as a minimum standard for hiring new officers and encourages agencies to go above and beyond that standard if they are able.

Discipline

A law enforcement agency is only as good as its last interaction with the community it serves. As such, MSA believes in changes to make sure officers who abuse the public trust are appropriately disciplined, and if necessary, removed from the ranks. In addition to the changes for MCOLES licensing investigations in HB 5837, MSA supports codifying the use of the preponderance of the evidence standard, the same standard employed by civil courts, as the standard of proof required to sustain disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, taken against a police officer for misconduct in office. Our current patchwork evidence standards lead to inconsistent outcomes, sometimes putting a bad officer back on the street.

Policing standards

MSA supports modernizing and, in most cases, simply clarifying existing law regarding common sense policing. To this end, MSA supports banning chokeholds, except as a last resort (they are not taught by MCOLES approved curriculum), banning no-knock warrants outright (our statute requires a "knock and announce" currently), requiring law enforcement agencies to publish a "duty to intervene" policy to protect the civil rights of any person and preserving the current use

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AFFILIATE CORNER SHERIFFS SUPPORT REFORM FOR BETTER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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of force standard as clarified by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989).

Transparency

The use of relevant data to bring about an increased understanding of issues that affect policing in the U.S. is a key effort. In an effort to establish accurate and discoverable metrics concerning the use of fatal force/major injury force, MSA was pleased to participate in Sen. Stephanie Chang's (D-Wayne) Law Enforcement Transparency Coalition (LETC) Program, in which law enforcement is providing data on these incidents to the FBI's National Use of Force Data Collection Project, which is then used to produce an annual report published and made available to the public through the Michigan State Police. This data will provide much needed insight on these events in Michigan.

MSA is proud to report that Michigan's sheriffs are the first in the nation to have a 100 percent voluntary participation rate in this program.



Podcast 83 is MAC's audio review of news and events in Michigan's 83 counties, from Berrien to Chippewa, Iron to Monroe.

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EXPERT CORNER

WHAT DOES COVID MEAN FOR COUNTY BUILDINGS IN MICHIGAN?

By Adam Doublestein, PE, Principal, TowerPinkster

At TowerPinkster, our staff of nearly 150 architects, engineers and interior designers has been leading our industry in developing strategies to create an indoor environment that supports social distancing and healthy workspaces. Public buildings are now faced with a “new normal” as they manage staff, workspace, and providing services to the community. COVID-19 has forever changed building design, and our team is looking toward the future of building design. New buildings, additions, and renovations will need to incorporate flexibility for spatial and environmental changes as well as indoor air quality (IAQ) measures to mitigate the spread of infectious diseases. These strategies, backed by research from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Society for Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), are focused on the wellbeing of your building occupants and community residents you serve.

Modified floor plans

Floorplans need to be flexible to consider staff workspace as well as the customer experience. While programming each department’s function, workspace design may re-imagine traditional densities to create distance between occupants. It is also essential to review flexibility in capacities for waiting areas, courtrooms, detention, walk-up counters, conference rooms, and gathering areas. Advanced planning in these areas will reduce unintended overcrowding. Furniture also needs to be taken into consideration when looking at capacity to incorporate more open spaces and workstation separations to increase physical distancing.

Furniture modification + adaptations

Balancing a safe distance and an efficient environment can often be supported by furniture solutions. In workspaces, stations may need to be more widely spaced. Existing workstations may consider simple modifications and adaptations to keep employees separated while working together. In public spaces, dividers are already proving useful. Using furniture to design public areas with proper traffic flow and to separate visitors will support best practices.

Indoor air quality

Indoor air quality considerations include increased ventilation, enhanced filtration, humidity control, bio-polar ionization, and UVGI treatment. Implementing IAQ strategies will promote the safety of your building occupants and be dependent on the capabilities of your system(s). We recommend an HVAC assessment to identify strategies specific for your buildings.

IAQ solutions can be retrofitted to existing systems or



planned for long-term solutions for new projects or system replacements. Retrofit solutions include disabling demand-controlled ventilation, a common energy conservation strategy, to provide increased ventilation rates to dilute contaminants. Filtration solutions include the installation of MERV 13-rated or higher as a minimum, up to HEPA filtration as an effective method to reduce airborne transmission. Installation of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation or UVGI is a very effective strategy for airborne infection control. There are multiple methods to implement a UVGI solution.

Fresh air (ventilation) and sunlight (UV) are proven to dilute indoor air contaminate and reduce the presence of viruses. Encouraging operable windows and blinds can be a simple but effective improvement.

Interior finishes

Interior design strategies are evolving as we implement solutions for public buildings that enable thorough disinfection. Flooring and furniture surfaces should be solid services that can be frequently sanitized. Existing carpeted spaces can harbor biological contaminants and pollutants and may be appropriate to replace with solid flooring. Flooring in public areas needs to hold up against heavy cleaning agents.

Technology + security solutions

Implementing new security measures and utilizing technology to limit touchpoints is a pivotal way to restrict contagions. There are new and developing low- or no-touch security solutions that can limit surface contact and building access. Implementing mobile credentials to use your phone to unlock doors from a distance, incorporating door operators, and expanding the use of sliding glass doors are only a few of the measures that can be implemented.

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EXPERT CORNER

WHAT DOES COVID MEAN FOR COUNTY BUILDINGS IN MICHIGAN? from page 13

Antimicrobial treatment

Several chemical companies are developing antimicrobial solutions to be applied within buildings. The newest technologies being reported indicate a high level of success in sanitizing surfaces for an extended period. The antimicrobial solution is sprayed on surfaces within a building, leaving an invisible layer of protection that kills bacteria, viruses, and microbes on contact. Some treatments are reporting positive results 30+ days after treatment.

For additional information, contact me at adoublestein@towerpinkster.com.

TowerPinkster (towerpinkster.com) is an architecture, engineering and interior design firm with offices in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. Recent work includes projects for Gerald R. Ford International Airport, Kalamazoo County, Livingston County, Kent County and the State of Michigan.

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Please send a brief description and contact information for the point person of your "Best Practice" to Derek Melot, melot@micounties.org.

For questions, call Melot at 517-372-5374.



HOW COUNTIES ARE TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

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MEET YOUR MAC BOARD

PHILIP KUYERS AND JOSEPH PALAMARA



Name: Philip Kuyers
County/MAC Region: Ottawa/Region 3
Position: First Vice President
County Service: 20 years as county commissioner, with three years as board chair
Profession: Retired farmer

Previous Public Service: 20 years as a parks commissioner; president and board member of Ottawa County Farm Bureau

Describe a recent event that illustrated the importance of county government in your community:

“Ottawa County Commissioner Phil Kuyers, the longest-serving member of the Board, played an instrumental leadership role in positioning Ottawa County to be a lead government in addressing racial inequities through establishing the state’s first county DEI office,” said Ottawa County Administrator Al Vanderberg. “In June of 2019, Robyn Afrik was hired as the **first DEI Director for Ottawa County**. In November, the DEI Office partnered with the city of Holland to bring the **4th Annual Diversity Forum** for over 300 participants. The DEI Office completed the Racial Equity Worksheet (REW), **one of five goals** for the department in early December of 2019. This worksheet will act as a toolkit to help departments and leaders rethink their current practices and identify implicit bias.”



Name: Joseph Palamara
County/MAC Region: Wayne/Region 5
Position: Director
County Service: County Commissioner, Jan. 1, 1999, to present
Profession: Attorney and consultant

Previous Public Service: Served seven (7) terms as member of Michigan House of Representatives (January 1985- January 1999)

Describe a recent event that illustrated the importance of county government in your community:

County government has rarely been more important than it has been these last several months, as our nation has been gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded by federal CARES Act money, Wayne County, through its Economic Development Department, is in the midst of awarding up to \$50 million in grants to qualifying small businesses throughout the county. In the downriver area alone, over \$5 million has already been awarded, with more grant announcements set to take place later in September 2020. A working partnership between the County Executive’s office and the County Commission has established the criteria by which small businesses may apply for these grant dollars. Once again, these are federally funded grants, not loans, and the county is the agency that processes these grants for distribution to the businesses that badly need the financial help — and in many instances — to even help them keep their doors open as a business. Thousands of small businesses in Wayne County have been helped by this grant program, with most grants being in the neighborhood of \$15,000 to \$20,000 per grant. This has resulted in thousands of people and families being able to survive in these unprecedented times. It’s times like these, that county government has very publicly stepped up to help the very people it serves.

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MEET THE STAFF

MEGHANN KEIT AND DEREK MELOT



Keit

Staffer: Meghann Keit, Governmental Affairs Associate

Joined MAC: September 2017

Briefly describe your daily duties at MAC:

I am part of MAC's government affairs team and cover Judiciary and Public Safety and Health and Human Services issues. In that role, I work with various legislators and leaders within state government to improve county governed services in those areas.

Issues range from mental health funding, indigent defense services to veterans affairs.

What do you find most interesting/rewarding about working at MAC? Every day is an opportunity to learn something new or meet someone interesting. Good policy happens with all voices at the table, with different viewpoints. It is great to be part of a collaborative group that represents diverse county issues and works to find solutions to benefit everyone.



Melot

Staffer: Derek Melot, Director of Communications and Marketing

Joined MAC: July 2014

Briefly describe your daily duties at MAC:

MAC communications with external (media, general public) and internal (members, affiliate groups) audiences constitute the central part of my duties. In addition, I'm the lead staffer on MAC event planning, on membership education and services,

on marketing with our corporate partners and on website updates and maintenance. Unofficially, I serve as the office's "human Post-it Note" to remind colleagues on deadlines and member communications.

What do you find most interesting/rewarding about working at MAC? MAC is a lean, results-oriented operation, which means every day brings a twist or new challenge. In my role, I get to interact with members each day — members who are volunteering to make their communities a better place to live. Counties matter, and I'm privileged to help my colleagues and our members convey that message across Lansing and all the way to Washington, D.C.

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LEGISLATOR Q&A

REPRESENTATIVE MARK HUIZENGA



Huizenga

Name: Mark Huizenga

District/counties: 74th/Kent County

Committees: House Committee on Appropriations; Appropriations Subcommittees on General Government (Chair), Higher Education, School Aid/Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services

Term #: 1st

Previous public service: Walker Planning Commission, Walker City Commission, mayor of Walker

Given your local government background, what have you found to be the biggest difference between serving your constituents at the local level vs. the state level?

The basic principles of public service remain. You are elected to represent your constituency to the best of your ability. The main difference is simply the size of the organization that you are part of. Budgets are larger and the pool of people you must work with to accomplish the goals you have for your area is larger as well. Aside from working with a larger amount of revenue and a larger pool of colleagues there is no real difference to how I approach my service to my constituents.

As chair of the general government budget in the House, you are responsible for making significant decisions on the allocation of General Fund dollars for revenue sharing. Do you think the current formula and allocation of statutory revenue sharing, which appropriates less to counties than to cities, villages and townships collectively, is appropriate? Should the absence of constitutional revenue sharing for counties be addressed in some way?

Before the arrival of COVID-19 I was selected to co-chair a work group to investigate this very question. Unfortunately, the work of that group was severely impacted by COVID-19 and we are just beginning to pick up where we left off. The state has debated this question since the current formula was implemented. I believe the current formula works in some regard, but we certainly need to explore options that provide for stable funding to counties, cities, and townships. Given the difficult budgetary circumstances Michigan finds itself in we must work to fund the bedrock institutions in our communities. I would argue that, along with school systems, governmental entities are bedrock institutions that communities rely on for services that make daily life possible and enhance residents' quality of life.

In your opinion, what is one area of local government where you believe counties and municipalities can improve their cooperation in the delivery of services?

I believe that we can all improve the outcomes for our residents by working together between local, county and state government. I can only share my experiences in local government. I believe that the forums that I was able to participate in as mayor only enhanced our cooperation and most importantly our communication. Organizations like the Grand Valley Metro Council enhanced our communications. One of the outcomes of that forum was the pilot study on infrastructure that resulted in the creation of the 21st century infrastructure commission.

Given the restrictions placed on all levels of government and businesses due to the global pandemic, what is the one change in delivery of services that you would like to see totally reinstated and what would you like to see continue?

While we can all agree that COVID-19 presents a serious threat to public health and must be taken seriously we must also recognize that we are able to live and work safely during this time while moving towards normal operations. Governmental entities, especially at the local and county level, are often first points of contact for residents seeking services during this difficult time. I would look to county and local leaders to continue their interactions with residents through safe means and to, quite frankly, be a source of hope for residents that are struggling with the impacts of COVID-19. I have seen a great capacity for service throughout this time from the administration partners in Kent County where I live. People need to be able to rely on those that serve them at the local level. We all need to rise to the challenges before us to show our capacity for service.



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CoPro+, MAC's cooperative purchasing program especially designed for counties and other public entities, has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by creating a robust new program to give public entities the best possible prices and services on Personal Protective Equipment.

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