

# MICHIGAN COUNTIES

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— [downtownholland.com](http://downtownholland.com)



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**MAC**  
MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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# Letter from the Executive Director



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Currie'.

**STEPHAN W. CURRIE**  
MAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**“For many years, our bimonthly magazine was printed and mailed to county leaders across our state. About a decade ago, we halted printing as one of many cost-saving measures taken at MAC to allow us to keep member dues frozen during the depths of the Great Recession.”**

Welcome to the new *Michigan Counties* — or really welcome back.

For many years, our bimonthly magazine was printed and mailed to county leaders across our state. About a decade ago, we halted printing as one of many cost-saving measures taken at MAC to allow us to keep member dues frozen during the depths of the Great Recession.

Thanks to our continuing efforts to diversify our revenue streams, and the improving nature of Michigan’s economy, we made the decision this year to return *Michigan Counties* to print. Complimentary copies will be mailed to the commissioners, administrators and board offices of all MAC member counties. Our state legislators also will receive copies, so keep an eye out for it the next time you visit your representative and senator in their Lansing offices.

As you are receiving this edition of *Michigan Counties*, we are just finishing up our two-day Legislative Conference, held virtually.

While I am proud of all we have done on what has become three consecutive major virtual events since April 2020, I look forward to a return to some normalcy — which, of course, means in-person gatherings of county leaders at MAC events.

So, let me sketch out for you what our current plans are for the rest of the year event-wise at your association:

The MAC Board of Directors will meet in June at a location still to be determined by the Executive Committee of President Veronica Klinefelt, First Vice President Phil Kuyers and Second Vice President Stan Ponstein. At that session, the board, per usual, will review the policy platform drafts advanced to them by our policy committees, which have been meeting virtually to update our position statements.

In late July, our Regional Summits will return for in-person sessions at four locations scattered across Michigan. These one-day “mini” conferences are designed for ultra-busy county leaders and are packed with briefings on policy issues and best practices for county operations. Look for registration for these sessions to open in early June.

Next, and probably most eagerly awaited, is our 2021 Michigan Counties Annual Conference, set for Sept. 26-28 at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. All our planning right now is for an in-person event with all the usual activities, including elections for the Board of Directors and approval of platforms for the coming year. Look for conference registration to open in late July. And since this will be our first in-person gathering in two years, be sure to register early, since we expect a big crowd.

As attendees of the Legislative Conference know well, the climate at the State Capitol is less than congenial. Republican leaders in the Legislature and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer remain disagreed on almost every policy front, from public health requirements to spending federal COVID aid.

Our Government Affairs team, however, is working relentlessly to identify points of common cause across the partisan lines, exemplified by the bipartisan sponsorship this year of legislation to enact four-year terms for county commissioners, long a top goal of MAC members.

To help our team at the State Capitol, we launched our “\$21 in ‘21” fundraising campaign for MACPAC in late March. While the pandemic has changed many things in daily life in Lansing,

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## AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan  
 CCE Central Dispatch  
 Community Economic Development Association of Michigan  
 Community Mental Health Association of Michigan  
 County Road Association of Michigan  
 Health Care Association of Michigan  
 Lean & Green Michigan  
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 Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers  
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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THANK YOU TO ALL MACPAC MEMBERS. TO SUPPORT MACPAC, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE, [MICOUNTIES.ORG](http://MICOUNTIES.ORG).

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# Letter from the President



*Veronica Klinefelt*

**VERONICA KLINEFELT**  
PRESIDENT, MAC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

**“We have been apart for so long that there are bound to be plenty of new commissioners to meet.”**

## Looking forward to ‘seeing’ you

As I write this, the Michigan Counties Legislative Conference is just around the corner; our staff has lined up a well-rounded group of speakers for our general and breakout sessions. As usual, we will be getting detailed reports from the MAC team on current and upcoming legislation and how counties will be affected.

This year’s Legislative Conference will again be conducted virtually due to continuing concerns about the COVID pandemic.

Our staff has executed virtual conferences for a year now. While we are very grateful to them for all their hard work, it is important to get back to the days when we can meet commissioners from other counties in person. We have a lot to share with each other! We have been apart for so long that there are bound to be plenty of new commissioners to meet. My county alone welcomed eight new members to its 13-member board after the 2020 elections.

To that end, MAC is planning on holding the Annual Conference, Sept. 26-28, in person on Mackinac Island. Building relationships through personal interaction is vital to our overall communication throughout the year. I am looking forward to hearing how your counties have been affected by the pandemic, and what innovative steps administrators in other counties have come up with to deal with unforeseen circumstances. This is a situation where every county has had problems unique to local areas, yet we are dealing with several similar problems as well.

One of the most significant benefits to having our conferences in person is the ability to converse with our speakers and sponsors. I enjoy the challenging questions commissioners pose, and I think our overall learning experience is enhanced. And, quite frankly, I’m just ready to see people who are not directly related to me; I miss you guys!

So let’s break some attendance records this year. If you have new commissioners on board, tell them about MAC and all the benefits the association brings to counties. Invite them to join you and me and other commissioners, in September, for a few days of policy discussion, knowledge building, beautiful views, good food and a little bit of fun! ♦



## 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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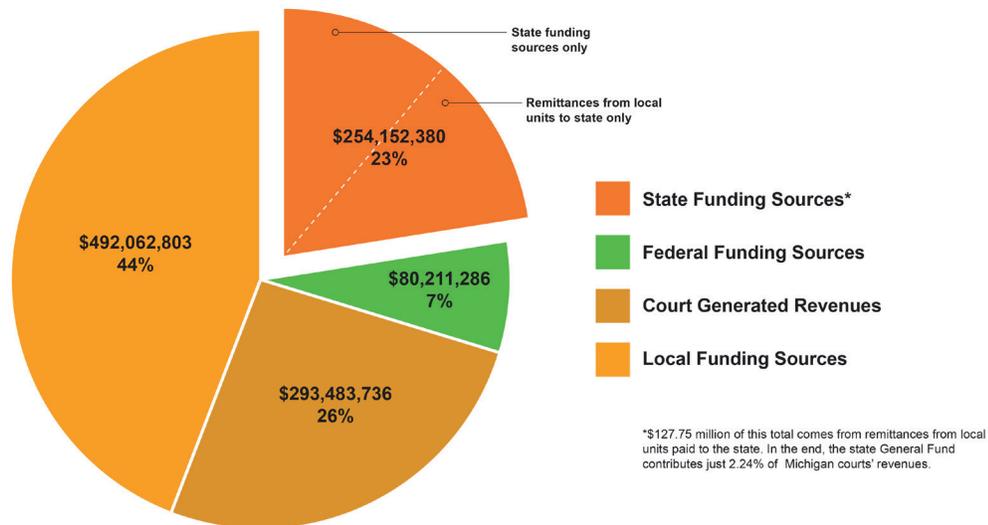
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# MAC calls for end to temporary fixes; sets priority of permanent court funding reform

BY MEGHANN KEIT/GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS ASSOCIATE

“The state must accept responsibility and act to ensure adequate funding for trial courts with local government continuing to play a role in providing funding and support of the judiciary.”

CALCULATION OF TOTAL REVENUES PROVIDED TO COURTS BY UNITS OF GOVERNMENT



The way in which Michigan funds its trial courts has been under heavy scrutiny and court challenges for years.

In 2014, the Michigan Supreme Court, in *Cunningham*, ruled courts could apply costs to those found guilty of a crime only if the costs were expressly authorized by the Legislature. That decision threw the entire judicial branch into turmoil. Within four months, a coalition led by MAC convinced the Legislature to amend state law (**Public Act 352 of 2014**) to allow courts to impose costs that are “reasonably related” to certain costs of prosecution. In 2017, the Legislature **extended this authority** through Oct. 17, 2020, and created the Trial Court Funding Commission to recommend a sustainable funding model for courts.

In 2018, the Michigan Supreme Court reviewed another case regarding the long-debated issue of imposing court costs on defendants, *People v. Shawn Loveto Cameron, Jr.* The *Cameron* case challenged the constitutionality of allowing

courts to retroactively impose costs that were not expressly authorized by the Legislature — essentially costs pre-Cunningham.

While Supreme Court allowed to stand a lower court decision rejecting Cameron’s challenges, the chief justice’s opinion warned the Cameron decision is limited to these specific challenges — and that Michigan’s entire trial court funding system may be constitutionally flawed.

In September 2019, the state commission **released recommendations** that identified five major areas of reform to be phased in to address our inequitable court funding system. Early in 2020, discussion started within the Legislature to act on the recommendations, however COVID-19 brought many conversations to a halt, even with the October 2020 sunset looming on the horizon.

Fortunately, MAC was able to extend the sunset to Oct. 1, 2022, through legislation championed by Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Jackson).

But the time for temporizing is over. Real, long-term reforms are needed.

Conversations have ramped up with our legislative champions and the State Court Administrative Office to bring implementation of the funding commission's recommendations, no small task.

To that end, MAC named court funding as one of its top legislative priorities for 2021.

So, what do we want from the Legislature?

1. MAC supports the creation of a uniform system case management system — run by the state and including hardware, software, infrastructure, training and ongoing technology support — to alleviate burden on court-funding units.

Legislators, advocacy groups and the public have requested court data that is not easily accessible, requests that increase staff and document reproduction costs. The state must begin investing in technology and adapt to our data-driven world.

2. MAC supports a state-led analysis of staffing levels in our trial courts and a formulation of necessary

resources to ensure equitable funding for court operations.

Once this is determined and uniform assessments and collection processes are applied, the ultimate goal is to streamline court costs to a single fund that will provide an equitable distribution. Michigan must get our courts and judges out of being revenue generators, and provide for a predictable, sustainable and fair system.

The Trial Court Funding Recommendation Report says it best: “The state must accept responsibility and act to ensure adequate funding for trial courts with local government continuing to play a role in providing funding and support of the judiciary.”

Our courts should not serve as collection agencies or provide revenue for other programs that do not support court operations. Furthermore, as the chief justice herself has indicated, the state's current system may not be constitutional.

Just because Cunningham and Cameron did not do it, the next court case could throw the administration of justice into chaos. MAC is ready to work with all of its partners to help find a legislative solution that protects our state from that nightmare. ♦

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NRM-12870M5 (01/15)

# Materials management legislation would bring sweeping reforms

BY DEENA BOSWORTH/MAC DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



**“Not everyone is happy with the entire package, and there are a few issues that still need to be ironed out ...”**

**A**n eight-bill, bipartisan package rewriting the section of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act that governs solid waste planning is now advancing through the Legislature.

Not everyone is happy with the entire package, and there are a few issues that still need to be ironed out, but the package is a modernization of the statute which reflects an emphasis on materials management, sustainable disposal of waste and additional environmental protections.

**MAC supports HB 4454-4461 in concept with just a few, but significant, reservations.**

The reservations MAC has is not so much about the goals, the protections or the regulations, but with the challenges the planning agencies will face with regard to the process for writing and adopting the materials management

plan. The three-year process includes a significant level of outreach, communication, coordination, research, negotiation, scientific expertise, approvals, amendments and eventually implementation.

More specifically, the bills do the following:

**House Bills 4454 and 4455** modify and add definitions for terms employed in the other bills of the package or elsewhere in Part 115. Notably, HB 4455 would amend the section describing the purpose of Part 115 to include the promotion of recycling and reusing materials, with an ultimate goal of achieving a 45 percent municipal solid waste recycling rate, with a 30 percent rate by 2029, through benchmark recycling standards that provide goals and time frames for recycling in certain geographic areas of the state. The bill would also add provisions requiring a materials management plan (MMP), which would replace current requirements for solid waste management plans.

**House Bill 4456** amends the regulations for solid waste disposal areas and waste diversion centers by separating the different kinds of facilities and reorganizing current provisions.

**House Bill 4457** enhances the financial assurance provisions by:

- Increasing the available total financial assurance bond amount to \$2 million
- Mandating a \$20,000 bond for licensed solid waste processing and transfer facilities or incinerators
- Increasing the listed standard closure and post closure cost estimates.

**House Bill 4458** amends and reorganizes the sections dealing with solid waste haulers and transporting units, prohibits the open burning of yard waste in any municipality with a population of 7,500 or more (unless the municipality allows it through a local ordinance) and providing penalties for violations, and provides for fines for general violations.

**House Bill 4459** deals with the different funds and grants by expanding the list of purposes money from the fund could be used for (such as education and outreach and a

full-time equivalent employee for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to address recycled materials market development), as well as requiring EGLE to provide grants for new programs (such as the recycling markets program, recycling innovation program, and recycling access and voluntary participation program).

**House Bill 4460** regulates compostable materials, including household, commercial, and farming composting activities, as well as anaerobic digesters and innovative technology facilities.

**House Bill 4461** adds Subpart 11 (Materials Management Plans) to further regulate MMPs in place of current solid waste management plans and require EGLE to ensure each county in Michigan has an approved MMP, which could include two or more counties under the same MMP, as well as outline the procedures for county-approved agencies (CAA) to create, submit, review, monitor, enforce, amend, and fund an MMP. Additionally, EGLE would have to create a Materials Management Planning Grant Program to provide grants to county boards of commissioners or CAAs or, in the absence of either, EGLE, for MMP preparations, implementations and maintenance. ♦

## MAC Calendar

### MAY 7

Finance and General Government Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### MAY 14

Environmental and Natural Resources Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### MAY 21

Agriculture and Tourism Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### MAY 24

Health and Human Services Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

Judiciary and Public Safety Committee  
2 - 4 p.m. / Virtual

### MAY 28

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### JUNE: DATE TBD

MAC Board of Directors Meeting  
Location TBD

### JUNE 4

Finance and General Government Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### JUNE 11

Environmental and Natural Resources Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### JUNE 25

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

### JUNE 28

Health and Human Services Committee  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Virtual

Judiciary and Public Safety Committee  
2 - 4 p.m. / Virtual

### MAY 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

### JUNE 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS, VISIT  
[MICOUNTIES.ORG/CALENDAR](https://micounties.org/calendar)

## MI counties get \$1.95 billion in aid plan

On March 11, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion COVID relief package that will translate into \$1.95 billion in direct federal aid to Michigan's 83 counties.

Michigan's amount is part of \$65 billion in direct federal aid to counties across the nation. To see county-by-county estimates for aid in Michigan and an economic analysis by the MSU Center for Local Government Finance & Policy, visit [micounties.org/resources-for-coronavirus-response](http://micounties.org/resources-for-coronavirus-response).

"This is fantastic news for our members," said Stephan Currie, executive director of MAC. "There's a great deal still to learn about the specifics of how the money is best used, but we are working with the National Association of Counties, which is working with the U.S. Treasury, to get such information assembled and out to members as quickly as possible."

Since the signing, MAC and the National Association of Counties (NACo) have been funneling questions on eligible spending and reporting to the U.S. Treasury Department. Visit MAC's website or check our weekly "Legislative Update" email blasts for the latest news. ♦

## MACPAC launches '\$21 in '21' campaign

This is a big year for county government issues at the State Capitol, headlined by MAC's renewed push to enact four-year terms for county commissioners and bring reforms to local government finance.

But big issues require big coalitions. So, in 2021, we are asking each commissioner to give \$21 to MACPAC, which was created to help legislators who are allies of county government. And in the lingo of Lansing, "help" means "money."

While our "County Caucus" in the Legislature grows with each election cycle, we still need allies who have not served at the county level to build legislative majorities for our issues.

Just a few dollars from you can make a major difference in those efforts.

A \$21 donation from each of you would mean \$13,000 for MACPAC!

Please consider a donation today!

### How to donate

- Go to [www.micounties.org](http://www.micounties.org) and click on the "DONATE" button.
- Write a check and mail it to 110 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 200, Lansing, MI 48933.
- Note: State law prohibits cash contributions in excess of \$20.
- **Note:** Dues your county pays as a MAC member CANNOT be used for political donations. MACPAC is MAC's ONLY way to support allies in the Michigan Legislature. ♦

## NACO, MAC partner to deliver flag retirement boxes

BY JOHN LOSH/NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and MAC are partnering to provide all Michigan counties with a free flag retirement box for county residents to deposit flags that are no longer in good condition. The program was formally announced during a Plenary session of MAC's 2021 Legislative Conference.

The custom boxes will begin shipping to counties in the next few weeks.

When American flags become worn out or torn, the U.S. Flag Code outlines the proper etiquette for respectfully retiring them. "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning," says Section K of the U.S. Flag Code.

Counties can work with community partners such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, veterans groups, librarians and sheriffs' departments to collect the flags and conduct retirement ceremonies in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code.

"We are pleased to provide these flag retirement boxes. Helping residents properly dispose of worn U.S. flags is consistent with our commitment to public service and community engagement," said NACo President Judge/Executive Gary Moore.

The U.S. Flag Retirement Program is just one of the many ways NACo and MAC help to build stronger counties and



a stronger America. To learn about making the most of NACo membership, please contact [membership@naco.org](mailto:membership@naco.org) or visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). ♦



## House declares April as 'National County Government Month'

A bipartisan group of state representatives, led by Rep. Ken Borton, a former president of the MAC Board of Directors, secured adoption on April 13 of a resolution declaring April National County Government Month in Michigan.

Joining Borton (R-Otsego) in sponsoring the resolution were: Rep. Abraham Aiyash (D-Wayne); Rep. Julie Alexander (R-Jackson); Rep. Sue Allor (R-Cheboygan); Rep. Sarah Anthony (D-Ingham); Rep. Robert Bezotte (R-Livingston); Rep. Felicia Brabec (D-Washtenaw); Rep. Kelly Breen (D-Oakland); Rep. Julie Calley (R-Ionia); Rep. John Cherry (D-Genesee); Rep. Alex Garza (D-Wayne); Rep. Beth Griffin (R-Van Buren); Rep. Jim Haadsma (D-Calhoun); Rep. Kara Hope (D-Ingham); Rep. Tullio Liberati (D-Wayne); Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Jackson); Rep. Steve Marino (R-Macomb); Rep. Gregory Markkanen (R-Houghton); Rep. David Martin (R-Genesee); Rep. Christine Morse (D-Kalamazoo); Rep. Amos O'Neal (D-Saginaw); Rep. Ronnie Peterson (D-Washtenaw); Rep. Yousef Rabhi (D-Washtenaw); Rep. Julie Rogers (D-Kalamazoo); Rep. Terry Sabo (D-Muskegon); Rep. Tim Sneller (D-Genesee); Rep. William Sowerby (D-Macomb); and Rep. Regina Weiss (D-Oakland). ♦

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**Prescription Discounts** at more than 68,000 pharmacies nationwide. Free to residents – they can save an average of 24%\* off retail prices.

**Dental and Health Discounts** at a national network of providers. Low-fee programs save residents 15% to 50% on dental and health costs.

**The Live Healthy program also includes marketing materials to reach your residents.**

**Become a Live Healthy county – it's free! Visit [www.naco.org/health](http://www.naco.org/health) or call toll-free 1-888-407-6226.**

The Live Healthy discount program is NOT insurance.



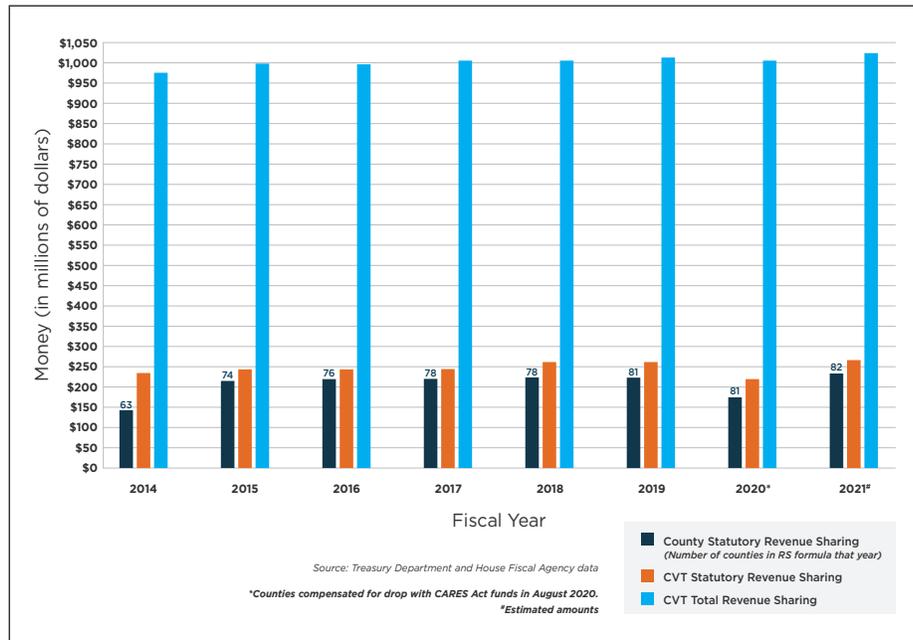
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# Building a better county tax system

BY ERIC LUPHER/PRESIDENT, CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN

**“Property taxes provide a stable revenue source, but they are insufficient to fund county services.”**



## A LEGACY OF DISPARITY

Michigan’s unusual arrangement of state support for local government, with counties receiving only statutory support and locals receiving statutory and constitutional, has perpetuated a massive imbalance in aid to counties vs. cities, villages and townships (CVTs).

If we were creating county government today, we would likely design governance, revenue and service structures different from what Michigan now has. We would certainly design a tax structure that reflects the economies in which they operate.

Which means we would NOT rely so heavily on the property tax.

Collectively, counties have more tax options than any city or township not named Detroit, but the real estate transfer, hotel/motel and Wayne County car rental taxes are so minor as to be insignificant, which doesn’t leave a lot of options.

An ideal tax structure produces revenue sufficient to provide services, with components that respond to economic growth and components that are stable through the economic fluctuations. It does not create administrative burdens and does not disrupt economic choices.

Property taxes provide a stable revenue source, but they are insufficient to fund county services. They are burdensome because they are the primary revenue source for all types of local governments, and they are restrained from responding to economic growth by Michigan’s tax limitations.

A tax structure with options to add sales and income taxes would better achieve the ideal. Each of these levies is capable of raising significant revenues on its own. Diversity would allow for growth and stability.

Sales (and use) taxes capture the economic activity that defines many regions. Northern counties, for example, would benefit from tourism activity, while urban counties would gain from the retail trade.

Income taxes capture the economic strength of each county. It rewards successful business attraction and community development.

The peril of a diversified tax structure is that the smaller the taxing jurisdiction, the greater the economic competition. No county would want to be the first to levy a sales or income tax lest it cause an exodus of business and/or cause changes in purchasing habits. Michigan’s constitutional requirements for voter approval of new taxes make this a gambit few elected officials are eager to try and precludes the state from mandating a tax be levied by all counties.

Nonetheless, the state government can play a key role by levying taxes on behalf of counties. This creates a uniform rate and creates economies of scale in the administration of the tax.



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.

Michigan had such a system for many years. Sales, income, business and intangible property taxes were levied on behalf of local governments until 1998, when tax revenue sharing was consolidated into the sales tax. Since this consolidation, economic hardship and the short-term memory created by term limits led statutory revenue sharing (the only kind that counties get) to be cut drastically. Too often, revenue sharing is viewed by state policymakers as revenue that can be appropriated to local governments or used to fill state budget holes.

The current system can be improved. State policymakers must recognize the benefits of levying taxes on behalf of local governments and commit to it. And the revenue should be distributed in a manner that either reflects the economic activity (point of sale for the sales tax or place of employment for the income tax) or achieves a state purpose. Per capita distributions achieve neither.

The state's purpose is to ensure that counties, as administrative arms of the state, have the fiscal capacity to provide a minimum level of services. A distribution system that addresses fiscal capacity will reflect both counties' revenue-raising ability and their cost drivers. The clerk's or treasurer's responsibilities do not vary significantly among counties. On the other hand, workloads of the courts, prosecuting attorneys, sheriffs, register of deeds and drain commissions may vary in relation to places served.

Michigan's local government revenue structure could be improved in many ways. It cannot be done without state action: either to authorize new taxes or to fund and improve state revenue sharing. ♦

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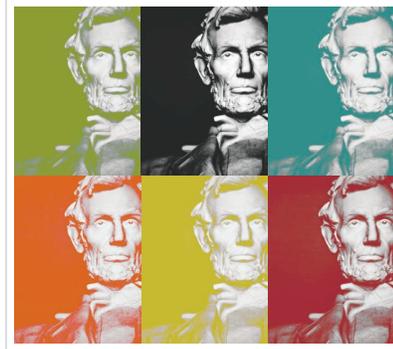
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# ‘Francesca’ takes center stage at Ottawa

BY AL VANDERBERG/OTTAWA COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

“... we put together a team that was tasked with looking at alternatives to humans performing the reception function in the lobby.”

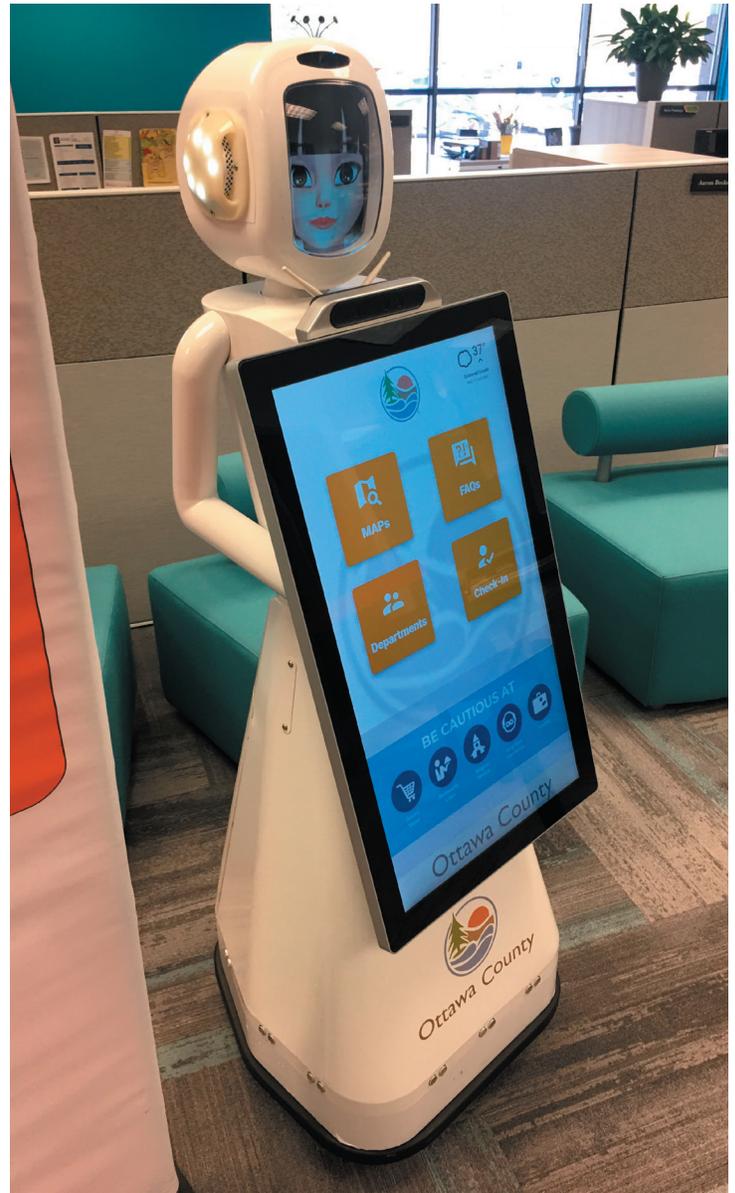
The Ottawa County Fillmore Administrative Building was completed in 1998 and included a lobby at the main entrance intended to feature reception staff to greet and direct customers via three hallways that branch off through the building.

The county, however, never did utilize this area for its intended purpose. Daily, staff would observe customers struggling to find their way to where they needed to be.

Over the years, this led to multiple new sign schemes, an electronic message board and a plethora of movable sign pedestals. Even so, customers would walk to the middle of the lobby, look down the hallways (each clearly marked with directional signage) and stand there confused until a staffer noticed and rescued them.

In 2019, the Customer Service Team, part of the Ottawa-Disney Way Customer Service Initiative, suggested the County add staff and develop this space as a reception area, as was originally intended. The total cost for 1.5 positions had a first-year price tag of \$85,000. This did not include the cost of physical improvements to the building.

We had been considering the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning to County operations and service delivery, so we put together a team that was tasked with looking at alternatives to humans performing the reception function in the lobby. Advanced Robotics Solutions (ARS) developed Francesca, a wayfinding robot to help visitors navigate the Fillmore Complex. Francesca is a work in progress and thus far answers questions, displays wayfinding directions, and messages departments to let them know a customer is on their way. She is outfitted with a camera which allows developers from ARS



in Connecticut to view customer interactions real time and immediately make changes to improve service for the next customer.

The pilot was successful. Approximately 65 percent of those who entered the building engaged Francesca and 35 percent did not engage, similar to the percentage of people who interacted with the McDonald’s self-service kiosk when it was deployed a few years ago.

The net cost to build and deploy Francesca was \$56,000 and annual maintenance is \$9,600. We temporarily removed Francesca from service after COVID-19 hit. She has

been retrofitted to interact solely by voice and with facial recognition and will be redeployed on Friday, April 9th. She will be able to serve customers in Spanish later this year.

I was expecting negative public opinion claiming that Francesca represented a waste of public tax dollars even though we paid for her with cell tower revenue. There was indeed significant negative commentary, but it was not focused on tax dollars but on the long-standing fear of robots replacing human jobs.

We are currently working with ARS on a Clerk Assistant Kiosk - a smart kiosk project for the Clerk-Register operation that will allow customers to access touchless services and transaction completion in County facilities or anywhere the Clerk-Register would like to place the kiosks in the community. The units will be linked to and loaded with much the same programming as Francesca. Since the post-COVID world will need to be increasingly touchless, we plan to reimburse the expense of this project with COVID funds.

Ottawa County tries to keep part of our brain focused on what is coming down the pike in the future. We like to be on the cutting edge (but not the bleeding edge). Artificial Intelligence is present and will ultimately be woven throughout our service provision. Francesca and the Clerk Assistant Kiosk represent our brave step into this future. ♦



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- Promoting and advancing high ethical standards and values as a foundation of managing Michigan public organizations

# Disinfection equipment during a pandemic – and beyond

BY CINDY C. KING AND TOM CREMONTE/MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

*A version of this article appeared in the December 2020 issue of the MMRMA's Risk Journal newsletter.*

*Cindy C. King is director of membership services and human resources for MMRMA. Tom Cremonte is a senior risk control consultant for MMRMA.*



**“For peace of mind and added safety, some Michigan public entities now use UVC radiation devices in offices, jails and even transit vehicles.”**

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently revised its guidance on cleaning of facilities, particularly as it applies to public buildings not intended for health care or facilities for which specific regulations and practices for cleaning and disinfection are required. The CDC’s updated guidance notes: “Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and may also weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces. When no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility.”

However, many entities will continue to require the ongoing or periodic use of disinfection equipment. For those that will, last year, some public entities used federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to purchase disinfection robots and other tools to enhance cleanliness and remove airborne droplets of the virus that can cause COVID-19.

## Ultraviolet (UV) radiation

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), “UVC radiation has been shown to destroy the outer protein coating of the SARS-Coronavirus ... [which] ultimately leads to inactivation of the virus. UVC radiation may also be effective in inactivating” the virus that causes COVID-19. (UVC is a specific wavelength of UV light, as are UVA and UVB.)

For peace of mind and added safety, some Michigan public entities now use UVC radiation devices in offices, jails and even transit vehicles.

For UVC radiation to be effective, “the virus [must be] directly exposed to the radiation.” The FDA says: “Inactivation of viruses on surfaces may not be effective due to blocking of the UV radiation by soil, such as dust, or other contaminants such as bodily fluids.” It is important for surfaces to be clean and free of such debris before deploying UV disinfection equipment.

The FDA also notes: “UVB and UVA radiation are expected to be less effective than UVC radiation.”

## Robots disinfect, track usage

Some Michigan counties have turned to disinfection robots for use in jails. Many such devices allow users to enter room information and other data about a facility and track how many times each room has been disinfected.

“The use of automated disinfection equipment not only reduces human exposure to the virus but is also proving to be more rigorous and effective in decontaminating spaces,” wrote Abigail Saltmarsh in Medical Expo eMag.

Skytron, a Grand Rapids-based manufacturer, says UVC disinfection can be part of a “circle of infection prevention solutions” in hospitals and medical care facilities that include sterilizers and other disinfecting equipment. ([www.skytron.com](http://www.skytron.com)) At least one Michigan sheriff’s office is using a Skytron robot in its jail.

## Foggers and sprays can also help

AeroClave manufactures a fogger that deploys electrostatic disinfection through a registered product called “Vital

Oxide,” an aerosolized, hospital-grade solution, approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that eliminates many infectious agents, including Ebola, norovirus and other pathogens.

AeroClave states its disinfectant solution will not harm electronic or medical equipment; is safe for application by response personnel; and meets Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) decontamination specifications. According to AeroClave and the EPA, “the solution ... is combined with air and atomized by an electrode inside the sprayer... [The] spray contains positively charged particles that ... aggressively adhere to surfaces and objects ... to disinfect the covered surfaces.”

Ongoing, effective disinfection is responsible risk management. In addition to social distancing, frequent hand washing, hand sanitizer and PPE, disinfection equipment can assist counties in fighting against COVID-19. It can also protect against other pathogens, thereby benefiting the health and safety of employees and the public post-pandemic, as well. ♦



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# Ingham sees great promise in broader training for supervisors

BY GREGG TODD/INGHAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

“Here in Ingham County, with our 1,200 FTEs, we decided it was important to provide immersive supervisor training in all things Ingham.”

Supervisor training is critical to an organization’s operations, yet it is all too often left to chance.

Many times, those of us in government promote from within and rationalize that the new supervisor has the experience and skills required to perform the job being supervised so see no need to provide additional training. What we often forget, though, is that the mechanics of being a good supervisor require a great deal more than knowledge about the tasks or functions the position(s) he or she is supervising perform.

Supervisors, especially in government, deal with myriad other issues, including human resources, budgeting, legal issues, elected officials, union interactions and purchasing.

Here in Ingham County, with our 1,200 FTEs, we decided it was important to provide immersive supervisor training in all things Ingham. Over a course of two half-days, we provided supervisors with Ingham County specific presentations from department heads and officials that included:

- **Human resources** – discipline, the grievance process, FMLA, ADA and workers’ compensation
- **Budget & finance** – processes, timelines and financial reporting
- **Resolutions** – formats, submittal deadlines and processes
- **County ethics**
- **Procurement** – local purchasing preference policy and prevailing wage policy
- **Legal** – purpose and procedures for legal opinions, FOIA requirements and exemptions, litigation procedure and sources of county authority
- **Elected officials** – overview of the Board of Commissioners, legislative authority, board committees and other elected public officials
- **Union relations** – Public Employee Relations Act, bargaining/negotiating process and union contracts



- **County contracts** – contract formats, legal review requirements, signatures and filing requirements
- **Public meetings** – when to attend, how to address public officials and meeting etiquette

Our first training in March included more than 70 participants, and we plan on providing it twice a year. The first training was via Zoom, given the continuing COVID concerns, but we would like future trainings to be in person.

A post-training survey showed positive feedback, with requests for more human resources topics and adding an information technology component. There were also many attendees who expressed thanks for simply providing a forum to learn about and discuss supervisory issues.

An additional benefit, which was reflected in some of the survey responses, was the value of showing the county leadership’s investment in the supervisor training. Ingham County Board Chair Bryan Crenshaw (a MAC Board director) not only presented but also attended all the sessions — a fact that was not lost on the supervisors.

It is important for our supervisors to know that there is a support system in place and that their success is critical to the success of our organization.

If you have any questions about our training program, contact me at [gtodd@ingham.org](mailto:gtodd@ingham.org). ♦

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



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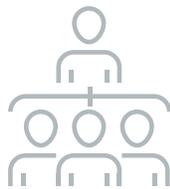
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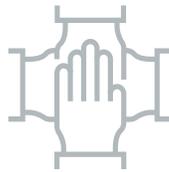
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### COLLABORATE:

Establish alignment and strong partnerships through building stronger relationships



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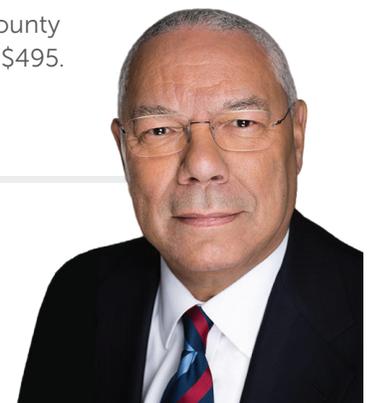
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# County clerks back plan for a June primary date

BY JUSTIN ROEBUCK/OTTAWA COUNTY CLERK



*Justin Roebuck is co-chair of the Michigan Association of County Clerks' Legislative Committee.*

In the wake of the 2020 election cycle, there has been, and will likely continue to be, much proposed legislation regarding Michigan elections. County clerks are engaged in discussions with the Legislature on many of these issues, and we strongly support improvements to our elections that protect voters,

secure the integrity of the process and build transparency into our system.

Public confidence is critical in so many areas of government, but particularly necessary in the process by which we choose our elected leaders. To build confidence and trust in our system, we must have a system that promotes accuracy and transparency in our elections.

One concept that would represent a significant change for election administrators, candidates and voters is the proposal to move Michigan's state primary from August to June via Senate Bills 130-133 (Sen. Aric Nesbitt) and House Bills 4530-4533 (Rep. Julie Calley).

These bills represent a bold and bipartisan move that would save taxpayer dollars, and significantly improve the accuracy and transparency in our elections. The Michigan Association of County Clerks supports the concept for reasons explained below.

There are now 31 states with a primary in June (or earlier) in the calendar year. Michigan joins 14 other states with an August primary, while a handful of smaller, East Coast states hold primaries later than August.

There is a high likelihood that this move in the primary election date would not occur until after the upcoming 2022 election cycle, due to the redistricting challenges brought about by delayed census results.

However, when the change occurs, it would move the candidate filing deadline from the typical late April date to a date in late February. The filing deadline for candidates (other than political

party precinct delegate candidates) is currently 15 weeks prior to the date of the election.

Our existing August primary to November general election timeline is narrow and leads to some significant challenges for election officials and voters. County clerks, who are charged with programming the election data and printing ballots for distribution to local clerks, have a limited number of days following the August election results to program, proof, print and distribute ballots in order to meet statutory deadlines for ballots to be on hand a minimum of 45 days prior to the November General Election.

This preparation process must occur almost simultaneously with the canvass and certification of August election results by Boards of Canvassers at the county and state levels, post-election audits and potential recounts.

All these challenges converge to place a significant strain on ensuring that everything is properly executed for the largest turnout election of the cycle in November. While every election official strives for a completely error-free process, we clerks know the reality of those time constraints can lead to potential errors in programming or on ballots, which only undermines the public trust in our process.

We also recognize that transparency in our process is key to trust. Post-Election audits have been a statutory requirement in Michigan elections since 2014, and since Proposal 18-3 amended our state constitution, they are now a constitutional mandate proceeding every state election. The timeline for post-election audits following the August state primary, however, is so narrow that it does not allow for a full audit process to be conducted.

Since the legislation implementing post-election audits was enacted, full procedural audits of the August primary elections have not occurred, simply because of the time constraints on the County clerks charged with conducting the audits.

In light of these constraints and challenges, a shift to a June primary is a better policy for Michigan elections. ♦

# Christian Marcus and Jim Storey

**MEET YOUR  
MAC BOARD**



**CHRISTIAN MARCUS**

**Name:** Christian Marcus

**County/MAC Region:** Antrim/Region II

**Position:** Director

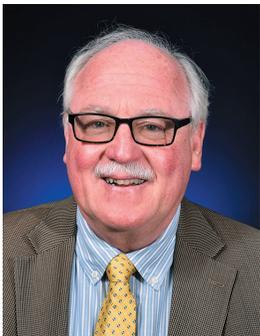
**County Service:** Antrim Board of Commissioners, 2012-present; North Country Community Mental Health Board; Northern Michigan Regional Entity Board

**Profession:** President of Northern Bear Development LLC

**Previous Public Service:** Star Township, trustee

## What are your county's most pressing needs/projects as you emerge from the COVID pandemic?

Antrim County, as is true with thousands of other counties across the country, is struggling to provide broadband services to rural areas and reliable workforce readiness across the county. We need opportunities in education and a shortened, sustainable approach to access to training for ALL ages in the county. ♦



**JIM STOREY**

**Name:** James M. (Jim) Storey

**County/MAC Region:** Allegan/Region III

**Position:** Director

**County Service:** Allegan County Board of Commissioners, 2013-present

**Profession:** Liquor licensing consultant; campaign management

**Previous Public Service:** Liquor control commissioner, 1999-2007

## What are your county's most pressing needs/projects as you emerge from the COVID pandemic?

First, to vaccinate as many county residents as can be physically accomplished with as much alacrity as possible to further resumption of

“normal life” as much as can be achieved.

Second, put together the necessary resources to expand broadband to underserved or unserved areas in our rural county utilizing private providers. In the post-COVID economy, those residents who cannot access broadband based internet will be confined to a lesser economic future and distinctly second class health care.

Third, investigate the means to help shoreline residents and local governments and our own county facilities build back from the damage caused by erosion along the Lake Michigan coast in 2019-2020.

Fourth, expand the public safety presence in the county as the drug epidemic throttles upwards.

Fifth, continue to provide transparency and access to county decision-making, while ensuring safety inside county facilities. ♦



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# Sen. Jon Bumstead



**Name:** Sen. Jon Bumstead

**District:** 34th/  
Muskegon, Newaygo  
and Oceana counties

**Committees:**  
Appropriations,  
Vice Chair; Joint  
Committee on  
Administrative Rules,  
Chair; Advice and  
Consent, Vice Chair;  
Natural Resources,  
Vice Chair; Energy &  
Technology, member;  
Finance, member;  
Appropriations  
Subcommittee on  
Natural Resources &  
Environment, Great  
Lakes & Energy, Vice  
Chair; Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
on General  
Government, Vice  
Chair; Appropriations  
Subcommittee on  
K-12 Education,  
member

**Term:** 1st

**Previous Public  
Service:** Three terms,  
Michigan House of  
Representatives

## What is the most pressing issue facing Michigan now?

I believe ensuring the state can safely recover from the COVID-19 pandemic is the most pressing issue.

We need to continue working to keep Michiganders safe, but also focus on strengthening the state's economy and helping workers and businesses that are struggling get back on track. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the economy of our state and has put our small businesses in jeopardy of failure.

I am focused on protecting Michiganders from COVID-19; protecting the livelihoods of Michigan families; supporting targeted relief for businesses trying to get back on their feet; and restoring balance to state government to give people confidence that they have a voice in Lansing.

On March 3, 2021, the Legislature passed an additional supplemental bill to appropriate federal funds allocated to the states. This supplemental prioritized vaccine distribution, additional testing and funding to help students safely return to the classroom.

I also recently introduced Senate Bill 250 to implement a data-driven plan to safely open the doors of Michigan's struggling restaurant and hospitality businesses. This bill utilizes data to drive decision making for restaurants and the lodging industry. SB 250 will give certainty to business owners and employees by using clear metrics based off test positivity rates and hospital bed use for COVID patients in the state.

The goal was to provide a clear-cut pathway for businesses moving forward. This legislation doesn't ask for preferential treatment for this industry. SB 250 simply gives business owners much needed certainty moving forward as they safely open their doors.

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

I have always been a strong advocate for local control, and I believe counties have an extremely important role in the delivery of public services. As

the legislative branch of county government, the county boards of commissioners are responsible for setting annual budgets and other countywide policies. County commissioners are often one of the most direct links to our representative form of government, and I rely on the feedback of my local county commissioners whenever I vote on legislative issues that could impact local control.

## How do you think the state and counties can partner to ensure every home and resident has access to broadband?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many internet service providers are stepping up to ensure that their customers have access to their services by expanding data caps, signing up new customers, and improving wifi access. Even with these efforts, many of our residents are still without reliable broadband internet access.

Filling in the gaps for unserved or underserved areas of our state will require significant federal, state and local resources to be committed to broadband expansion. The Michigan Legislature has made multiple attempts in recent years at expanding broadband access to areas where broadband service is not currently available.

In 2018, the Legislature approved the Connecting Michigan Communities (CMIC) Grant Program to award grants to applicants for projects that exclusively extend broadband service into unserved areas in Michigan. Grant awards for approved CMIC projects were announced in October 2020. A second round of CMIC grants were approved, and grant awards will be announced in June 2021.

One-time grant funding will help unserved communities, but additional steps must be taken to bridge the divide. The Michigan Senate recently voted to approve Senate Bill 46 to exempt new installations of eligible broadband equipment from taxation for 10 years if that equipment resolves a lack of broadband services.

Broadband infrastructure is expensive and time-consuming to build. It is necessary to eliminate as much of the tax and regulatory burden as possible to allow providers to commit their resources to infrastructure investments that serve Michigan residents. ♦



**Name:** Rep. Graham Filler

**District/counties:** 93rd/Clinton and Gratiot counties

**Committees:** Judiciary Committee, Chair; Health Policy, member; Elections and Ethics, member; Agriculture, member

**Term #:** 2nd

**Previous Public Service:** Assistant attorney general

## What is the most pressing issue facing Michigan now?

Getting folks vaccinated, the state reopened and people back to work.

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

Historically, counties have borne a large portion of responsibility when it comes to the delivery of public services. So, in a word: vital. It should be everyone's hope that state, county and local governments continue to partner to ensure delivery of public services and resources to every corner of the state are carried out efficiently.

## The House Judiciary Committee, which you chair, has passed numerous bipartisan bills related to criminal justice reform. What are some of your judiciary priorities for the 2021-22 term?

Guardianship: We need to make some long overdue changes to Michigan's system to ensure that some of our most vulnerable citizens are not abused or defrauded. We have been working with the Attorney General's Office for some time on crafting and drafting legislation that I believe would do just that.

Restitution for Crime Victims: Our restitution system in Michigan is a bit like the wild-wild-west, where the rules aren't clear, and no one quite knows what is going on. We would like to see some changes that shore the system up a bit to make sure that victims receive the money they are owed.

How do you think the state and counties can partner to ensure every home and resident has access to broadband?

That's a great question. There are portions of almost every county in Michigan that have no reliable internet available. Many people have had to rely on their local libraries to connect to WIFI, by sitting in their cars in the parking lot. That's not really a tenable situation. Especially with remote learning still going on, we need to do a better job of getting reliable internet to underserved areas. The first step is in identifying the areas with the highest need and finding a way to incentivize service in that area. In fact, there are multiple pieces of legislation moving through both chambers (Senate Bill 46 and House Bill 4210), for example, that would offer support for broadband equipment, if equipment were used to provide high-speed internet access to areas that currently do not have it. ♦

## Letter From the Executive Director FROM PAGE 3

the importance of campaign donations for state legislators is NOT one of them. Your support for MACPAC is translated into support for incumbent legislators who have shown themselves to be consistent allies of county government. And if each of our 622 county commissioners donated the suggested \$21 this year, we would raise \$13,062 – and put us almost to our informal goal of raising \$15,000 this year.

Even as important as MACPAC and our Government Affairs work are, the key to our strength this year, and always, is the participation of you, locally elected officials, in the legislative process. Your voices carry weight.

Please stay current with all of our current email advocacy campaigns by visiting our Advocacy Center at [www.micounties.org/advocacy-center](http://www.micounties.org/advocacy-center).

And, as always, please send along any idea or feedback you have to improve the work of MAC, your association. I'm always reachable at [scurrie@micounties.org](mailto:scurrie@micounties.org). Let us know how we are doing! ♦

[micounties.org](http://micounties.org)

110 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 200  
Lansing, MI 48933

# MAC

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