

THE GRAND HOTEL,
MACKINAC COUNTY

MICHIGAN COUNTIES



Michigan county leaders gathered in person for the first time in two years at the 2021 Michigan Counties Annual Conference at the historic Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Sept. 26-28.

Credit: Rod Sanford Photography



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ON THE COVER

GRAND HOTEL,
MACKINAC ISLAND

PHOTO CREDIT:

ROD SANFORD
PHOTOGRAPHY

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MAC
MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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Letter from the Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Currie', written over a light blue background.

STEPHAN W. CURRIE
MAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Deena has, by my rough estimate, participated in more than 20 meetings as the coalition formed and the various funding ideas were fleshed out.”

One of the more challenging situations we confront here at MAC, which I think is similar to what our members face in their communities, is conveying the scope of the work happening every day.

In courthouses and county buildings each day in Michigan, public servants field inquiries, design solutions and solve problems that ensure the proper delivery of public services. Such success, though, is so much embedded into the fabric of community life that the community itself really doesn't notice. Only when something extraordinary occurs does the public's eye take notice – whether for good or ill.

The dynamic is true here, too.

Attention on the legislative process in Lansing usually rises and falls with traditional events (State of the State Address, budget proposals) or crises (budget standoffs, looming government shutdowns). But the actual work of advocacy never really stops in Michigan. And human nature being what it is, the limited stakes of many of these discussions and debates go unnoticed. I know I'm not the first executive director to be asked by a member, “What the heck are you doing down there?”

But the last 18 months have been extraordinary — and difficult — times, with the thought so often being “How can we just get through this?”

Now, though, thanks to months of groundwork and the resolution of many a disagreement, we at MAC — and you in our member counties — are on the brink of an extraordinary success, an exceedingly rare moment of transformational public service.

In mid-October, I and other local government and business leaders in Michigan, stood before the Capitol press corps to unveil the Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan and its MI Prosperity Roadmap. (See more on this in the Legislative Update on page 6.)

This group and this plan, though, started months ago when policy analysts, such as our Deena Bosworth, saw the opportunity in the flood of pandemic aid coming out of Washington, D.C. They knew, of course, that this was spawned by a national emergency. They knew, too, that these were to be “one-time” funds. But they, first individually and then in informal meetings around town, clarified the situation into a collaboration to make historic investments in public services in Michigan.

Deena has, by my rough estimate, participated in more than 20 meetings as the coalition formed and the various funding ideas were fleshed out. She and the rest of our Governmental Affairs Team (Meghann Keit-Corrion and Hannah Sweeney) also have been prepping for a dozen sessions with key legislators in late October and early November.

And just as you know that a county board meeting is not the start and end of work on an issue, these meetings have been preceded by hours and hours of research, analysis and preparation.

The end result could be the historic investment of billions (with a B) of dollars to improve public amenities. But note the word “could.”

As Deena details in her report, much work remains to be done to take a plan and make it into a once-in-a-generation project. We will need your help, both in your communities and here in Lansing, to turn this behind-the-scenes effort into front-page headlines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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83 COUNTIES: MANY MORE STORIES

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Letter from the President



Philip Kuyers

PHIL KUYERS
PRESIDENT, MAC BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

“We have lost much, but we also have learned and gained much as our counties and the people who serve them rose time and again to unprecedented challenges.”

Greetings from Michigan’s West Coast!

It was wonderful to see so many of you on Mackinac Island for last month’s Annual Conference. What a welcome jolt of the familiar, of normalcy, it was to gather as county leaders to learn, to discuss and to share successes and, yes, failures with each other. After 18 months of pandemic, the conference was a nice break.

Unfortunately, it was just a break. We have now returned to our home counties to continue to confront the reality of a changed, and changing, Michigan.

During my inaugural remarks at the conference, I said:

If I am able to accomplish just one thing as your president in the coming year, it will be to raise up MAC as an example of unity, of BI-partisanship, of civility and of common sense.

Passions are high. Emotions are raw. I think we all have seen and heard things in our county board meetings that our 2019 selves would never have believed.

As leaders of our communities, now more than ever, we must be calm, we must be prudent AND we must be unified.

No, this does not mean silencing debate or disregarding the views of our neighbors and friends. It does mean that we must be unified in purpose – and that purpose is to help our communities get past the pandemic and thrive in a changing world.

You are here tonight and at this conference because you believe in the value of MAC. I urge you to lean on this organization like you never have before.

Our comfort zone is gone, another victim of the pandemic. Expectations of county government are rising on new fronts from broadband service to affordable housing.

MAC stands ready to help each of you, and your colleagues who are not here tonight, with navigating these new issues.

But we must work together.

As a commissioner in Ottawa County, I know how lucky I have been. Our board has long made it a focus to work with, not over, our countywide elected officials and appointed staff in pursuit of shared goals. We know all too well how frustrating it can sometimes be to deal with other levels of government, but any disappointments we may have in such situations cannot divert us from the need for more collaboration.

In this, my first letter to you as president of your association, I want to close with a call for every member county, every member commissioner to make more use of MAC in the weeks and months ahead. From my service on the Board of Directors to date, I can assure you that MAC has never been better equipped to help you, from navigating the complexities of health insurance to navigating the halls of power in Lansing.

As you have seen in MAC alerts and will read on page 6 of this magazine, we are part of a huge effort to convert the huge sums pouring into our county accounts and partner with the state and the private sector and make historic investments in public life here. Join me, join your colleagues and join MAC in making a difference. ♦

Counties, add your voice to campaign for MI Prosperity Roadmap

BY DEENA BOSWORTH/MAC GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

“The Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan has developed a comprehensive framework — the MI Prosperity Roadmap — to invest, leverage and amplify ARP resources by providing the state with a \$5.7 billion plan for the allocation of state ARP dollars which, when coupled with local ARP allocations, will truly create transformational change in our communities.”

For nearly a year and a half, Michigan residents, local governments and businesses have faced tremendous challenges dealt to us by COVID-19. Today, though, we are presented with an opportunity.

Through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), state governments have been given the opportunity to not only financially recover from the devastating financial impacts the pandemic ushered in, but also strategically invest in our communities in ways not seen in our lifetimes. In order to maximize the potential investments and truly transform our communities, the Michigan Association of Counties, along with other local government organizations, community and business leaders, utility providers, environmental groups and communications providers have banded together to lay out a road map that takes us from rescue to recovery.

The Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan has developed a comprehensive framework — the MI Prosperity Roadmap — to invest, leverage and amplify ARP resources by providing the state with a \$5.7 billion plan for the allocation of state ARP dollars which, when coupled with local ARP allocations, will truly create transformational change in our communities. This multi-sector partnership focuses on five key areas:

- \$3 billion for Infrastructure: Resilient and Sustainable Water Systems and High-Speed Broadband Access
- \$800 million for Fiscal Health: Smart Investments that Provide Stability for State and Local Government
- \$805 million for Thriving Communities: Attainable Housing and Community Development
- \$910 million for a Strong Economy: Economic Development, Business Assistance, Skilled Workforce and Talent
- \$500 million for Public Health and Safety: Healthy and Safe People, Families and Communities



To learn more about the details of the proposal please go to www.miroadmap.com There you will find a breakdown of the potential grant opportunities, the recommended criteria for qualifying for additional funds, the suggested match percentages and the list of coalition members working on your behalf. Understanding the proposal and your support is essential.

Now that the fiscal 2022 budget has been enacted, the Legislature will begin discussing how to utilize the ARP funds. This comprehensive proposal, which has been delivered to Governor Whitmer's administration and legislative leaders has been well received, but this is just the beginning of the process. MAC anticipates the proposal will be molded and changed in ways that reflect the priorities of the administration and the legislature.

At a launch event on Oct. 14, Executive Director Stephan Currie championed the Fiscal Health portion of the plan. The real work is just beginning, though, and your participation is critical to getting us across the finish line. Communication of this support for the plan by county leaders to

their legislators is what will push this proposal into action by the Legislature.

For many weeks, via our email messages to you, we have encouraged counties to adopt a resolution of support for an ARP matching program. MAC thanks the following counties for taking that action already: Alger, Barry, Chippewa, Delta, Huron, Isabella, Lake, Lapeer, Mecosta and Sanilac. But we need more county voices now. (Contact Hannah Sweeney of MAC at sweeney@micounties.org for a resolution template you can use.)

This is a bold vision to build Michigan's future so that Michigan can be a magnet for talent; revive and strengthen the economy now and into the future; and support thriving communities. It is a chance for the state to partner with local governments, businesses and philanthropy to stretch the dollars that locals are receiving so that we can all advance our joint priorities. Our recovery work has only begun, but together we can, and will, emerge from this stronger. ♦

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Conference draws more than 300 to Mackinac Island; President Kuyers urges unity

More than 300 county leaders from across Michigan converged on Mackinac Island this week for the 2021 Michigan Counties Annual Conference, which culminated with the swearing in of Ottawa Commissioner Phil Kuyers as MAC Board president.

The conference, which was held at the Grand Hotel Sept. 26-28, featured plenary sessions, policy breakouts and the MAC Annual Business Meeting, where commissioners approved policy platforms for the 2021-22 year.

Kuyers, who is starting his third term on the MAC Board, is the 113th person to hold the president's position. In his speech after taking the oath on Monday, Sept. 27, Kuyers pledged to "raise up MAC as an example of unity, of bipartisanship, of civility and of common sense" in a time of controversy and high passions.

Keynote addresses at the event included presentations by Deputy State Budget Director Bethany Wicksall and Dave Lorenz, who leads the highly popular Pure Michigan travel campaign.

Kuyers will lead a board that gained one new member via elections held at the conference: Melissa Daub of Wayne County.

As the conference closed, the MAC Board confirmed officers for the 2021-22 term. Joining Kuyers are Stan Ponstein of Kent County (first vice president) and Eileen

Kowall of Oakland County (second vice president). Veronica Klinefelt of Macomb County moves to the role of immediate past president.

"We were pleased with the attendance at our first in-person conference in two years," said Stephan W. Currie, MAC's executive director. "It speaks to the quality of the policy breakouts and keynote presentations that more than 300 county leaders set aside the time to join us."

County revenue sharing increase highlights FY22 budget

Lawmakers and the governor reached a deal on the FY22 budget this week, just days before the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year. The budget allocates \$10.4 billion in General Fund dollars.

The budget includes a 2 percent increase in the base for county revenue sharing, but retained the language requiring the increase in revenue sharing in counties that have been deemed to be in an underfunded status with their pension system to go toward those pension obligations

Other items of note include:

- \$148.9 million in Michigan Indigent Defense Commission Grants, which includes implementation of standard 5
- \$14.5 million for PFAS Remediation Grants
- \$13 million to fund a Dam Safety Grant Program, with an additional \$6M for the Emergency Dam Safety Action Fund
- \$14.3 million in High Water Infrastructure Grants
- \$16 million in a one-time appropriation to the state 911 fund for NextGen Infrastructure
 - o This appropriation allows the Legislature to eliminate a fee increase in House Bill 5026 for postpaid phones and reduce the fee increase for prepaid
- \$29.1 million to the Raise the Age Fund, which is to cover cost outside of Child Care Fund eligible expenses for 17-year-olds
- EMS Medicaid fee schedule will be set at 100 percent of Medicare, which is an increase of \$54.3 million
- \$51.4 million for essential local public health services, with strings attached depending on local health orders: "If a local health officer has an emergency order under section 2453 of the public health code,

1978 PA 368, MCL 333.2453, in effect as of Oct. 1, 2021, the funds appropriated in part 1 for essential local public health services are unappropriated. This subsection does not apply if a county board of commissioners passes a nonbinding resolution by a record roll call vote to support any emergency orders the local health officer has in effect on October 1 of the current fiscal year.”

Of the \$6.5 billion in American Rescue Plan funds allocated to the state of Michigan, the FY22 budget and supplemental for FY21 utilizes just more than \$770 million, including \$150 million for the Unemployment Trust Fund. The remaining \$5.76 billion will be allocated through a series of supplemental budget bills expected to begin negotiations this fall.

Daub joins MAC Board after regional caucuses; 4 incumbents re-elected

During regional caucuses held at the Michigan Counties Annual Conference Sept. 26-28, MAC members re-elected four incumbents and selected a new at-large director for the **MAC Board of Directors**.

Melissa Daub of Wayne County fills the vacancy created when Kalamazoo Commissioner Julie Rogers was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 2020.

“Upon taking office, I immediately became involved with the Michigan Association of Counties to share ideas with my colleagues across the state, as well as the work we’re doing in Wayne County,” said Daub. “Today, I’m proud to be named an at-large member for the MAC Board of Directors and to be continuing my focus on transportation needs in my home county and across the state, as well as tackling the many other shared issues we see at the county level.”

Daub was first elected to the Wayne County Commission in 2018. She represents District 10, which includes Canton Township, Plymouth Township and the City of Plymouth. A proud graduate of Plymouth-Canton High School, Commissioner Daub holds a bachelor’s degree from Eastern Michigan University.

Incumbent board members were returned to the Board from **MAC’s Regions 1, 2, 3 and 5**.

President Phil Kuyers of Ottawa County will be starting his third term on the board from Region 2 (Southwest Michigan).

Joe Stevens of Dickinson (Region 1 – Upper Peninsula) and Christian Marcus of Antrim (Region 2 – Northwest Michigan) also were elected to third terms. Eileen Kowall of Oakland (Region 5, Southeast Michigan) was elected to her second term and to serve as second vice president of the Board.

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



Currie participates in Mackinac panel on ARP and equity

MAC Executive Director Stephan Currie discussed how county governments can work with the nonprofit sector to propel an equitable recovery with of American Rescue Plan funds at the 2021 Detroit Chamber of Commerce’s Mackinac Policy Conference this week.

Currie was invited to the panel addressing for “Opportunities for Transformative Partnerships to Advance Equitable Recovery” on Wednesday. The session explored the challenges and opportunities this influx of federal funding presents and how collaborative partnerships are critical to effectively leveraging federal funding to best serve communities.

During the panel, Currie also discussed MAC’s engagement with the Council of Michigan Foundations and the state’s community foundations for presentations in MAC’s **2021 Regional Summit series** over the summer.

MAC also hosted CMF’s Kyle Caldwell **on Podcast 83** to discuss how counties and community foundations can work in tandem to boost public amenities and quality of life.

In addition to Caldwell, Currie was joined on the panel by Alize Asberry Payne, racial equity officer for Washtenaw County. ♦

Letter from the Executive Director FROM PAGE 3

On the road again

As the delivery of vaccines and the ongoing heroic efforts of our health care workers have brought some measure of control over COVID-19, we at MAC have been able to do some “normal” stuff, such as travel the state to meet with members and make people aware of the importance of county government.

I lost count on Mackinac Island of the number of times someone at our 2021 Annual Conference in late September (see page 8) told me how great it was that MAC members were again able to gather in person.

Our conference was, in fact, my second visit to the island in one week, as just days before I had the privilege to participate on a panel about diversity, equity and inclusion at the Detroit Chamber of Commerce’s Mackinac Policy Conference. This

opportunity stemmed from our outreach to the Council of Michigan Foundations this summer for our Regional Summit series on how counties can work with the nonprofit sector to improve community life.

County visits are now back on my calendar, too. And I’m not the only MAC staffer hitting the road, as you can see with the resumption of our “MAC in Action” report (page 22) in this edition.

While still being on guard about the threats posed by COVID-19, it’s my hope that you will be seeing more of us in your board rooms, your offices and your communities in the weeks and months ahead.

As always, I want to end by emphasizing that we are a member organization. If you have any ideas, questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call our offices or drop me an email at scurrie@micounties.org. ♦

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AVAILABLE CONTRACTS:

The Covid-19 Relief Consulting Service contracts are hosted by Livingston County; however, available to all counties. They were competitively bid and approved through the county's procurement process and are posted at coproplus.org.

The vendors chosen through this process are prequalified to provide various services to the counties to assist them in managing the Covid-19 Relief funds allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The contracts will offer a means to counties to receive financial accounting, oversight monitoring, auditing, and/or reporting services as required for each individual project.

Four Contracts Were Awarded

Guidehouse

Jeff Bankowski
jbankowski@guidehouse.com
734-644-0595

iParametrics

Michelle Erste
michelle.erste@iparametrics.com
Direct: 770-290-1477
Cell: 770-238-7408

Pierce, Monroe & Associates

Kim Ball
kbball@piercemonroe.com
313-961-8419

Public Sector Consultants

Misty Elliott
melliott@publicsectorconsultants.com
517-371-7434

PROCESS:

The contractor will deploy a team of one or more professionals to the requesting county. The number of staff required will vary with each county and will depend on the individual needs of each county.

The contractor will work at the direction of each county's designated lead to help them determine proper use and distribution of the funds to intended beneficiaries, recordkeeping, compliance for SEFA and dashboard-like reporting to governing boards and other community stakeholders. The county will have access to the full range of the contractor's knowledge and tools will be updated daily on what the contractor learns from its federal expert sources and from experiences/insight from similar projects in other states.

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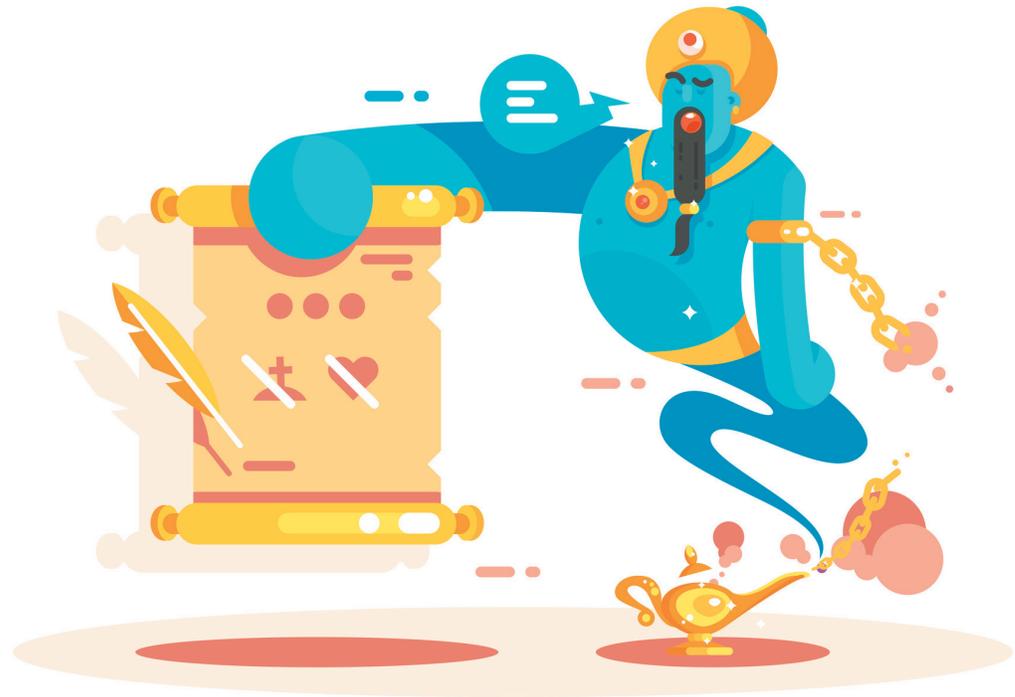
- Inventory finding opportunities along with requirements for obtaining, utilizing, and accounting
- Assist in administering Federal and State grant monies
- Track and manage progress (applications made, receipts, distributions, etc.)
- Provide project reports
- Project auditing
- Project budgeting
- Financial forecasting
- Recommend internal controls
- Schedule and conduct/assist in meetings
- Other activities as deemed beneficial for the outcomes, and as mutually agreed to by the participating county and the Contractor

3 'wishes' for a better Michigan Constitution for counties

BY ERIC LUPHER/PRESIDENT, CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN



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



My friend Stephan Currie at MAC recently appeared in my dreams in the form of the Genie in Disney's *Aladdin* movies.

If my dream was not weird enough already, Genie said he could grant any of my policy wishes, as long as they would make life better for Michigan counties and their constituents. Here's what I told him:

First, I would remove all references to the sales tax from the Michigan Constitution. In provisions you'll not find in other state constitutions, Section 8 of Article 9 in the Michigan Constitution dictates the tax rate, while Sections 10 and 11 dictate use of the revenue for state revenue sharing and for school funding.

Dual problems arise from these provisions. By capping the state sales tax rate, the constitution has effectively precluded policymakers from authorizing local-option sales taxes. Additionally, the constitutional earmarking of the tax revenue has created restrictions on the use of revenues. Even

if local-option sales taxes were allowed, the current earmarking provisions would mean that more than three-quarters of the revenues would go to municipal governments and schools outside of the county.

A local-option sales tax would allow geographically and economically diverse regions to benefit from the economic activity that makes them unique, such as tourism along the lake shores or commerce in our urban areas. Without this municipal financing option, a very heavy burden falls to Michigan's property tax to pay for essential government services. Michigan is one of only 13 states without local-option sales taxes.

My next wish would be to delete the provisions of Article 9, Section 31 related to Headlee tax rate rollbacks. These are "automatic" rate reductions that must take place when the growth of a county's total property tax base exceeds inflation. It became superfluous when the 1994 school finance reform created taxable value to replace state equalized value as the tax base.

In our current system, property tax revenues have three paths to growth: 1) market appreciation; 2) the windfall that occurs when a property is sold and the taxable values “pop up” to state equalized value; and 3) new development (i.e., new subdivisions). Appreciation is limited to the rate of inflation and the pop ups cause tax rate rollbacks for all properties in the jurisdiction. Our recent report shows how this dynamic kept tax revenue growth for some local governments below inflation. The only solutions are to increase tax rates or chase new development. That is not a recipe for sustaining government services, especially for those communities with little to no new land to develop.

Next, my wish would be to take some of the specifics of county organization out of the constitution. State law has evolved since adoption of the 1963 Constitution to permit charter and the optional-unified forms of county government. Those that haven’t gone this route often have empowered county administrators to manage the day-to-day operations of the counties. The constitutional protection of the offices of

sheriff, clerk, treasurer, register of deeds, and prosecuting attorney creates undue friction in management of operations, especially when funding is less than plentiful.

Apart from the constitution, I wish we could remove party affiliation from the nomination and election of county officials. There is not a Republican or Democratic way of providing county services. Clinging to party affiliation puts voters in several counties in a quandary in primary elections (when voting is confined to the candidates of a single party) because likely office holders for local and state/federal offices may be from different parties.

Counties are well-positioned to do more to serve citizens and their constituent local governments effectively and efficiently. However, there are several structural obstacles (some that have outlived their usefulness) created by state law that stand in the way of counties realizing their full potential.

Granting my wishes would remove some of these obstacles and help counties better achieve their missions. ♦

“By capping the state sales tax rate, the constitution has effectively precluded policymakers from authorizing local-option sales taxes.”



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Ottawa responds to ‘tsunami’ with Emerging Leaders Program

BY SARAH ALLEN/OTTAWA COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER



Participants in Ottawa County's Emerging Leaders Program.

“To better identify which specific leadership skills were most needed, Human Resources engaged in a needs assessment process. HR staff surveyed current supervisors to assess the most important skills involved in being an effective manager.”

Several years ago, Ottawa County recognized the organization was soon to be facing high levels of retiree turnover. This “silver tsunami” would leave significant openings at the supervisor and management level.

It was clear that the organization needed to be proactive to empower the next generations of leaders with the skills needed to lead into the future. In response, the Human Resources Department began designing a high-potential development program to enhance the skill sets of future managers.

To better identify which specific leadership skills were most needed, Human Resources engaged in a needs assessment process. HR staff surveyed current supervisors to assess the most important skills involved in being an effective manager. The top responses involved inspiring and motivating others, active listening, promoting teamwork and building relationships. This feedback was integrated into designing the Emerging Leaders Course.

The end result is a year-long, comprehensive course which involves classroom instruction,

peer coaching, job shadowing, career development and networking opportunities. The program is designed to prepare a pool of leaders who aspire to move into supervisory roles in Ottawa County. Through the Emerging Leaders program, participants will:

- Identify strengths and areas for potential growth
- Learn to speak persuasively, foster teamwork, build acceptance and resolve disagreements
- Build upon their professional network by engaging with county leaders
- Explore their department’s mission, vision and values
- Prepare to compete for a supervisory position

The Emerging Leaders Program has two phases. Phase One begins in the spring with a focus on exploring the mission, vision and values of organization. Participants complete a Mission and Values project to make meaningful connections on how their current role helps fulfill the work of the department. The Mission and Values project includes conducting an interview with their

department head to understand how the current leadership and strategies of Ottawa County contribute to the mission. Each participant conducts a presentation to the Emerging Leaders group on the findings of their Mission and Values project.

Additionally, participants complete a Job Shadow project which involves job-shadowing and interviewing a current supervisor to get a real-world perspective on a supervisory position. The interview and job shadow experience allow Emerging Leaders participants the chance to learn more about foundational supervision competencies, enhance their professional network and further assess if supervision is a career path they would like to pursue.

Phase Two of the program focuses on the personal and professional development of the participant. Learners participate in the Crucial Conversations course which builds their skills for communicating when stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong. Participants also have the opportunity to expand their leadership network and spend time with high level County leaders by attending a leadership luncheon and panel session.

The program officially launched in 2018. Departments facing the highest numbers of retiree turnover have been some of the biggest supporters of the program, including the Public Health and Sheriff's departments. Since the launch of the program, 78 employees have participated and 28 percent of program participants have been promoted into supervisor positions. One Emerging Leaders participant stated their experience in Emerging Leaders has "inspired respect for the organization, provided a foundation for leadership and helped prepare me for the future." ♦



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COVID-19: What you need to know

BY BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN

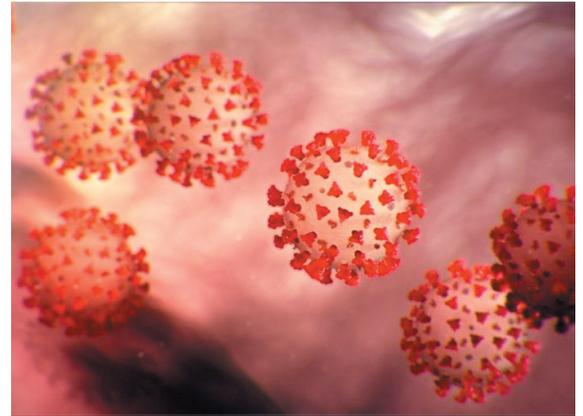
“As of Aug. 23, the Pfizer vaccine has received full approval from the FDA for use in individuals age 16 years old and up.”

Cases of a new coronavirus continue to be identified in Michigan. This is a rapidly developing situation and information is constantly changing and being updated as officials learn more about the virus that causes COVID-19.

- A third “booster” dose of the Pfizer vaccine has emergency use authorization from the FDA for individuals who meet the following criteria:
 - People age 65 and up
 - People age 18 to 64 years old at a high risk for severe COVID-19 illness
 - People age 18 to 64 years old who may be at a high risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to their job
 - A third “booster” dose of the Moderna vaccine has emergency use authorization from the FDA for individuals who are 18 years of age and older and are immunocompromised
- As of Aug. 23, the Pfizer vaccine has received full approval from the FDA for use in individuals age 16 years old and up. The vaccine continues to have emergency use authorization for individuals ages 12 to 15 and for booster doses for the immunocompromised.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network have expanded their insurance coverage in numerous ways to help members confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network will waive all copays, deductibles and coinsurance for COVID-19 vaccines to commercial members.
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network will cover the cost of the third dose of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines for the broad population once it is authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This applies to fully insured commercial plan members. Employer groups subject to the Affordable Care Act are required to cover administration of vaccine doses. Blue Cross will work with employers to guide them through applicable requirements.
- Blue Cross and Blue Care Network are covering all COVID-19 treatment through



September 30, 2021. Member cost sharing is also waived.

- Blue Cross and Blue Care Network are waiving member cost sharing for physician-authorized COVID-19 testing and resulting services as of March 18, 2020, in line with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Testing and associated services must be consistent with CDC guidelines.

Health care leaders are encouraging patients to use telehealth options in order to access virtual care during the coronavirus outbreak. For patients with mild symptoms including headaches, stomachaches and vomiting, painful urination, cold and flu symptoms, eye irritations and mild rashes and injuries, virtual care provides a convenient way to access health care professionals.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network offer two options to access virtual care: the 24-hour Nurse Line and Blue Cross Online Visits.

Additionally, BCBSM is offering a free crisis hotline for emotional support for members and non-members at 833-848-1764, which is staffed by BCBSM’s behavioral health partner New Directions.

Additionally, ask your primary care provider if they are available to you via telemedicine through their own patient portals or other means. ♦

This content has been reviewed and approved by Dr. S. George Kipa, deputy chief medical officer at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Your county phone service is changing. Here's why.

BY DAN AYLWARD/ABILITA

You've learned to "pivot" over the past year, right? Well, here's another thing to throw at you in 2021!

The old phone lines POTS (Plain Old Telephone Lines) and PRIs (capable of 23 simultaneous talk paths) will be decommissioned soon. This is the old technology. POTS are often used for fax, alarms, fire panels, elevators. PRIs connect to phone systems.

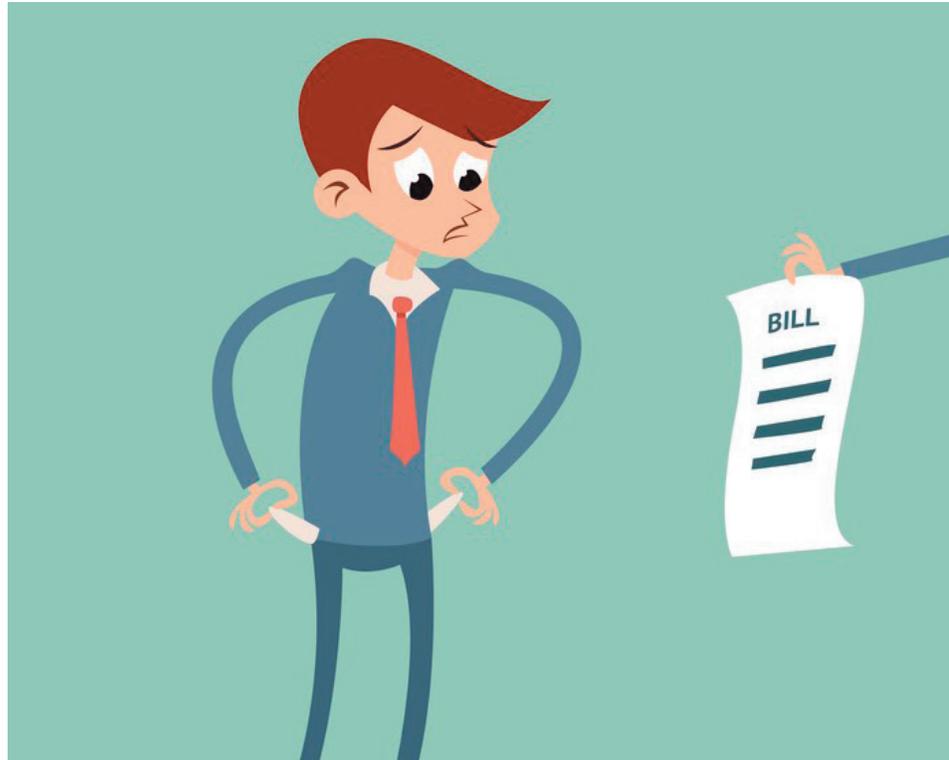
It's not business as usual anymore where one would simply renew the contract or perhaps move to another provider for better rates. This means EVERYONE is going Voice over IP (VoIP) or Cellular. In fact, we are all already making calls over VoIP, since the backbone of our networks have already transitioned.

This started when cell phones replaced home phone lines, and many have already gone to Voice over IP. It simply isn't cost effective for the phone companies to maintain two networks. So, at some point, you're going to need to change to VoIP or Cellular (or you will pay a premium if want to use the old technology).

Don't be surprised if you get a call from your telecom company stating they're more than happy to renew your contract, but ... they will move this to pure VoIP. Here are some questions you'll need to consider:

PRI

- Will there be any hardware upgrades you need to purchase?
- Will this plug into the current phone system without any changes?
- Will a Session Border Controller (SBC) be needed (firewall for voice calls over IP)?
- Will you need more static IP addresses?
- How much bandwidth does each talk path require?
- Will you need to move fax machines off the phone system?
- Is this compliant with E911, Kari's Law and



RAY BAUM Act?

- What if I have Hosted VoIP or the phone service is in the cloud?

POTS

- Is there a cellular alternative without changing equipment?
- Where will the power come from for the phone line?
- If it has a battery how much does it cost and how long does it last?
- Can you get a clear cellular signal where the equipment is?
- Can you use eFax or still need a physical fax machine?
- Do you need to purchase redundant Internet service?

If you are stuck, you should talk with your phone system vendor or an expert in this area to help navigate through this, especially if a contract renewal is expected from your telecom vendor. ♦

Dan Aylward is a senior consultant with Abilita, a MAC-sponsored program.

“The old phone lines POTS (Plain Old Telephone Lines) and PRIs (capable of 23 simultaneous talk paths) will be decommissioned soon.”

Immediate first step to effective cybersecurity is a positive mind-set

BY TIM RAHSCHULTE/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

“As a cybersecurity leader, your success is determined by your ability to improve the security of company assets and stakeholders.”

Cases of a new coronavirus continue to be identified in Michigan. This is a rapidly developing situation and information is constantly changing and being updated as officials learn more about the virus that causes COVID-19.

As a cybersecurity leader, your success is determined by your ability to improve the security of company assets and stakeholders. No doubt this is a challenging endeavor. The landscape is constantly changing, variables are increasingly complex, and threat actors need only to win one attack while you need to successfully defend against every single one. Your success will be dependent upon hardware, software, and people at the perimeter of the company and overall ecosystem, for sure; but the foundation of your success first and foremost is a positive mind-set.

Nothing is ever achieved without first a belief that it can be done. That’s a mind-set. Mind-set is an attitude that colors our view of the world and what’s possible in—and beyond—it. Mind-set is the initiating force behind NASA’s goal (50 years ago) to land humans on the Moon. Similarly, mind-set is the initiating force anyone leverages to build something

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new, reengineer something to be better, or to bring about a change in things. Regardless of whether that change is incremental and evolutionary or transformational and revolutionary, achieving it starts with a positive mind-set. So, too, is the case when it comes to securing your company’s most important assets and stakeholders.

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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Our mind-set initiates a sense of possibility from which our behaviors and actions follow. Therefore, our mind-set serves as the foundation of our results. Those most successful leaders have an unwaveringly positive mind-set about who they are and the impact they'll have on those around them.

While all this may seem rather obvious, there's something else important about our mind-set: it has a multiplying effect on those around us. It scales and reaches beyond oneself. The greatest leaders know the power of mind-set. The late Colin Powell often shared this critical piece of leadership advice: "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." Now, to be sure, the opposite is also true. It's because of this fact that we must keep our mind-set in check; positive amid chaos, uncertainty and, sometimes, fear.

Whether negative or positive, your mind-set multiplies as it affects those around you. It's for this reason that Ashley Ferguson, the global director of strategy, governance, risk and compliance at SecureWorks, coaches her employees

and believes in the need for leaders to "be positive, be open, be truthful, and stay optimistic." She emphasizes this because she knows that attitude is contagious, especially if you're in a leadership role.

If you're wondering if you're a leader, know that we're all leaders some of the time and followers all of the time. So yes, you're a leader and, therefore, your attitude is quite important.

Regardless of role, title or rank, make the choice to be positive. Have an "it can be done" attitude, which just happens to be another piece of leadership advice from Colin Powell. This positivity is necessary because the root cause of your results is attitude, and the foundation of your success is a positive mind-set.

Dr. Tim Rahschulte is the CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo Cybersecurity Leadership Academy program (www.naco.org/cyberskills). ♦

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Joseph Palamara



JOSEPH PALAMARA

Name: Joseph Palamara

County/MAC Region: Wayne / Region 5

Position: Director

County Service: County commissioner, Jan. 1, 1999, to present (currently serving as Vice Chair)

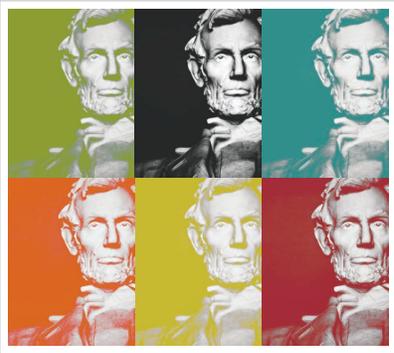
Profession: Attorney and consultant

Previous Public Service: Served seven terms (14 years) as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives (1985-1999)

What part of the job of county commissioner gives you the most pleasure or pride? Why?

Serving as an elected public county official,

in and of itself, gives me enormous sense of pride and community responsibility. The aspect of serving as a county commissioner that gives me the most pleasure and pride — is being able to help a constituent that rarely reaches out to their elected government officials to even ask for help. Several of these instances have transpired over the past 18 months as we have all had to come to grips with living through, and trying to thrive in, a pandemic influenced world. Things that all of us have taken for granted throughout our lifetime (like obtaining a marriage license or going out to eat at a favorite restaurant) have all too frequently become an ordeal to navigate. Life can be tough enough at times, so if I can assist someone in getting answers or expediting something (like a marriage license) they may need from Wayne County to make their life less stressful, then I will have had a successful and rewarding day. ♦



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Rep. David LaGrand

LEGISLATOR
Q&A

What is the most pressing issue facing Michigan now?

The most pressing issue facing Michigan right now is how to fully move forward after our pandemic. Michigan has challenges at every level from our economy to our government to our education system all impacted by the pandemic. Related to that is the fractious and divisive dynamic that has become interjected into our pandemic response. We have to be able to move forward as a civil and cooperative society, with democratic norms and traditions intact.

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

Counties are a key provider of services to our communities of course. I don't say that just because my wife is a Kent County Commissioner.

As vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee and leader of many criminal justice reforms, what are some of your priorities remaining this year and/or term?

I hope to improve sentencing practices in Michigan, to fit sentences better to individual offenders, and to incentivize rehabilitative behavior. I hope to fix our cash bond system, so that we keep people incarcerated based on risk, not on wealth. I also hope to right size the Child Protective Services registry, which keeps far too many good parents on a watch list that can hamper volunteerism, work, and foster parenting. There are a number of other projects I hope to advance, but those are the main ones.

Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Oakland) and Sen. Ed McBroom (R-Dickinson) sponsored legislation which would move county commissioner elections to every four years, rather than two. The legislation is now before the House. Would you support this effort if it is considered by the House?

I support longer terms in office, generally, including longer terms for county commissioners. A large body of academic work has concluded that legislators focus better on the common good and less on their own interests when they serve longer terms.

As more federal guidance becomes available related to the billions of dollars allocated to the State from the American Rescue Plan, what are some of your priorities for use of the funds?

I would strongly support more of that money being diverted to local governments, which are generally underfunded in Michigan. I'd like to see us invest in durable work that will repay investment of tax dollars, such as water systems, best practices in educational discipline, and support for higher education, since advanced degrees are critical to our long-term progress as a state and a nation. I'd also like us to invest in reentry programming to better reintegrate returning citizens and minimize recidivism. ♦



Name: Rep. David LaGrand

District/counties: 175th/Kent

Committees: Judiciary, Minority Vice Chair; Oversight

Term #: 3rd



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- 18** LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS
- 19** EXECUTIVE MEETINGS, WORKGROUPS, ETC.
- 4** MAC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS
- 376** BILLS TRACKED

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SEPT. 15
County Visit
to Eaton

SEPT. 14
County Visit to Bay

SEPT. 21-23
Detroit Chamber
Mackinac Policy
Conference

SEPT. 14
County Visit
to Hillsdale

SEPT. 26-28
Michigan Counties
Annual Conference

SEPT. 15
County Visit
to Iosco

OCT. 19-21
National Council of
County Association
Executives Meeting

OCT. 7
Citizens Research
Council of Michigan
Annual Policy Event

OCT. 22
Branch County Jail
Ribbon-cutting



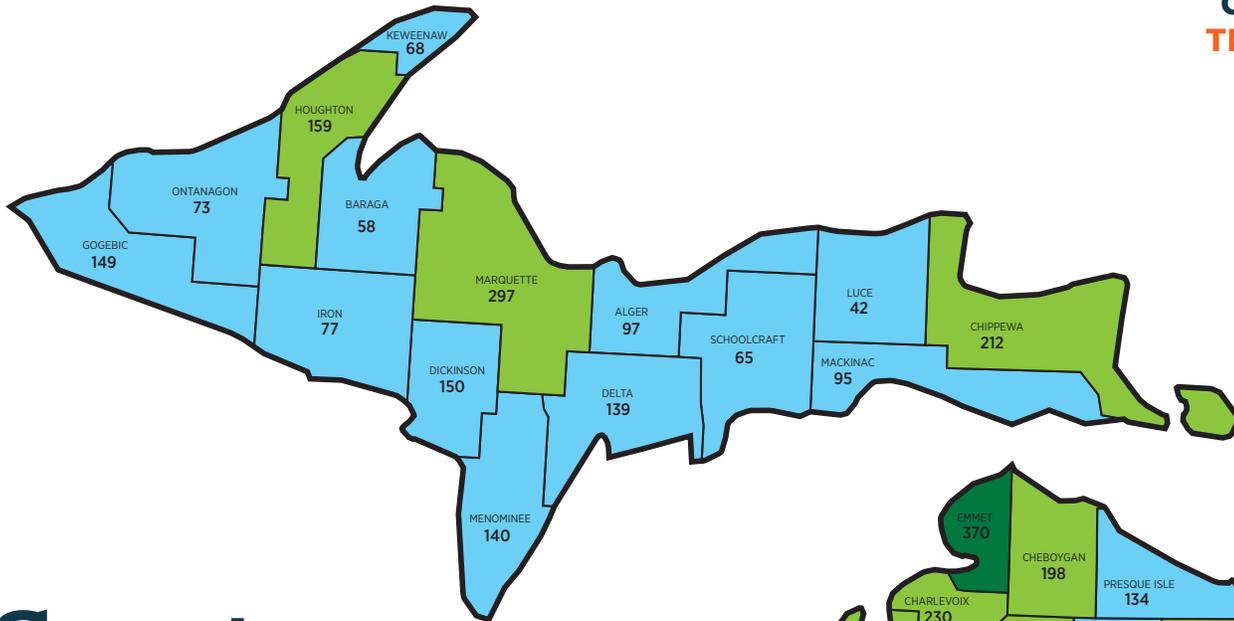
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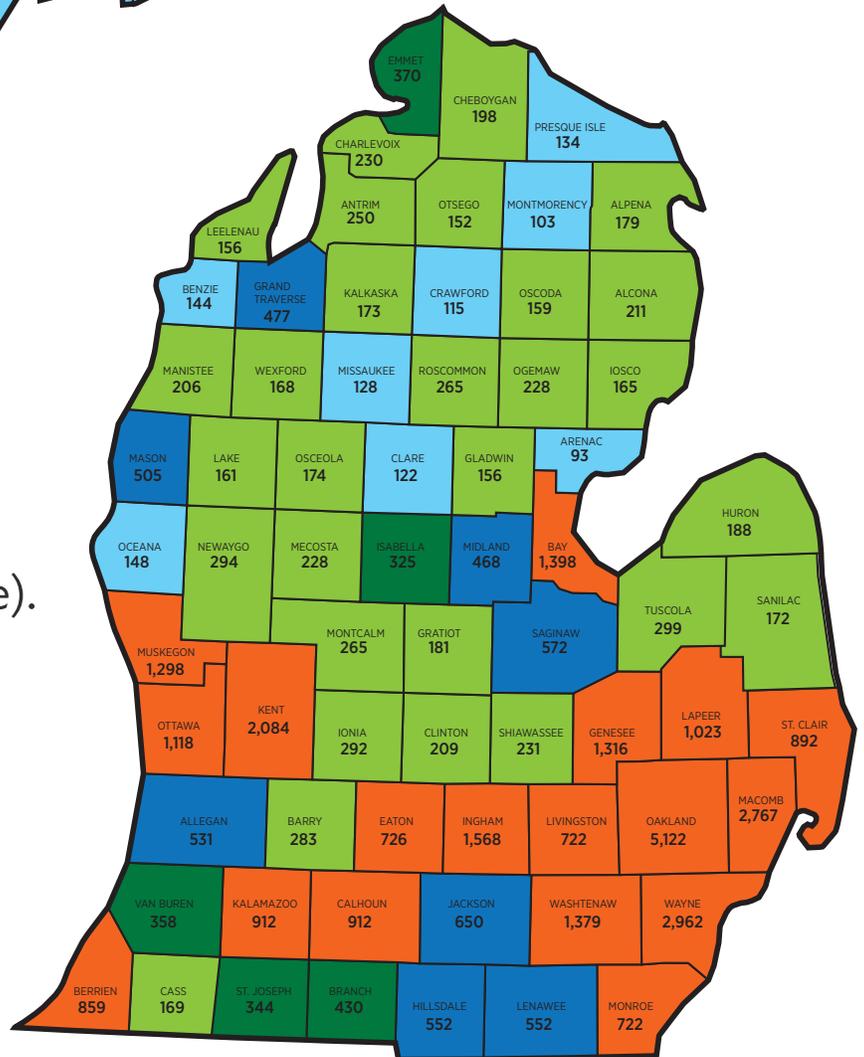
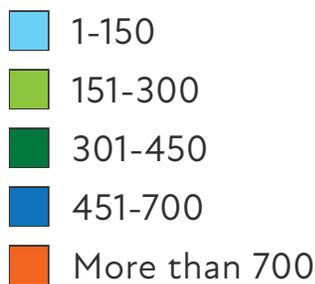
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- Promoting and advancing high ethical standards and values as a foundation of managing Michigan public organizations



County employment in Michigan

In 2020, Michigan's 83 counties employed 42,601 people (full- and part-time).



Source: State of Michigan F65 Reports

MAC will occasionally present data drawn from state and local sources on key factors and activities of county government.

If you have data or suggestions for this feature, contact Communications Director Derek Melot at melot@micounties.org.

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