

# County Administrator's Digest

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Time flies and I have not sent out a Digest this year! We will crank up the Digest machine and become regular again!

## **OTTAWA LEADERS ASSUME STATE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

**Tim Smith** - Ottawa County Central Dispatch Authority (OCCDA) Tim Smith has been named Chair of the State 9-1-1 Committee Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Tim has served on the board for many years and was named by his colleagues to the position of Chair for 2015. Congratulations to Tim!!

Follow the link for more information: [http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_47748---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_47748---,00.html)

**Lisa Stefanovsky** – Ottawa County Public Health Officer Lisa Stefanovsky was named President of the Michigan Association of Local Public Health (MALPH) Board of Directors effective January 1, 2015. Congratulations to Lisa!! [Click here](#) for more information.

## **REBECCA RYAN TO SPEAK AT OTTAWA COUNTY** (Shannon McGoran)

Rebecca Ryan, “Manage Like a Futurist” Workshop

Wouldn't it be easier to ensure fiscal stability if we could look into a crystal ball? How will future trends affect the County's ability to provide excellent services? What upcoming storms and issues will affect service provision? Rebecca Ryan, in her “Manage Like a Futurist” workshop shares concepts and tools that professional futurists use to identify and interpret trends and futures. She assists governments with identifying the driving forces, assumptions, evidence or indicators of their possible future scenarios.

Rebecca is one part economist, one part humorist and one part futurist. She was the keynote speaker at the 2013 Transforming Local Governments Annual Conference sponsored by the Alliance for Innovation. In her book, *Regeneration*, she explains her belief that America has progressed through an 80 year cycle of seasons. The era of survival and regeneration, also known as “The Great Recession”



she predicts will last until 2019. She believes the following 20 years will be spring, an era of promise, belonging, "Peace and Prosperity"; followed by summer, an era of euphoria, defiance, "Summer of Love"; followed by fall, an era of separation and anxiety, a "Decline of Institutions". She encourages awareness of these cycles and awareness of technological, societal, environmental and economic trends. By providing the tools and concepts to interpret these factors, organizations can be more agile and responsive to challenges and opportunities of providing services.

She has outlined six steps to help prepare for future planning and provide strategic insight into how a community will function 100 years from now: Frame the issue, Scan, Forecast, Vision, Plan and Act. We are happy to host Rebecca Ryan's workshop at Ottawa County on April 23, 2015, sponsored by the Alliance for Innovation. An email will be sent to departments inquiring about interest to attend the workshop. We have been offered 50 internal spots in the workshop before general offering to other Alliance member organizations. Seats are expected to go quickly as the event will be advertised throughout the greater region (Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, etc.) Please look for the email and respond ASAP if interested.

### **STATE BALLOT PROPOSAL FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

The State recently unveiled its ballot proposal to increase the sales tax to 7% to raise a net \$1.2 billion for road maintenance and repair. The following M-Live Article covers the issue though I'm not sure the headline matches the article well. The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution indicating its support for State transportation reform back in April of 2013 and [click here](#) to read that.

[Sales tax proposal for roads endorsed by Kent, Ottawa governments: 'We need more' money](#)

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Board of Commissioners held its annual strategic planning at the Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The results are being folded into the Business Plan portion of the document and will be brought back to the Board of approval.

### **MICHIGAN CAPITAL NEWS MANDATES ARTICLE**

Circuit Court Administrator Kevin Bowling and I were quoted in a recent article regarding unfunded mandates. The article follows.

[Less state money for mandates makes counties pay](#)

By ELIZABETH FERGUSON

Posted on [January 23, 2015](#) by [CNS](#)

Capital News Service

LANSING — Michigan is requiring Kent County to increase public health counseling with no additional state funding.

Ottawa County has just discovered it must begin reimbursing foster parents' mileage under Department of Human Services requirements.

State funding for Marquette County's senior services has dropped more than 20 percent since 2007, leaving these expenses for the county to cover.

Michigan counties say issues like these are created by unfunded or underfunded mandates — new services the state requires counties to perform without paying its share of the costs.

"This is a sore spot with local government throughout the state," said Alan Vanderberg, Ottawa County administrator. "This is one that deals with the rule of law. Ottawa County hopes the administration will help make this a priority."

The Headlee Amendment, passed in 1978, requires the state to give local governments funding when mandating new programs and prohibits the state from reducing its share of funding. In 2010, the Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates confirmed the three state branches of government have failed to follow this amendment's requirements.

A package of Senate bills designed to prevent more unfunded mandates, was introduced in 2013 but stalled at the end of the session. The lead bill was sponsored by Sen. Tom Casperson, R-Escanaba. The bills would have required legislators to consider the costs of mandates before voting on them. If bills passed without an estimate of county costs included, counties would not have to follow the mandate.

"Counties are the service providing arms of the state," said Scott Erbsch, Marquette County administrator. While counties deliver state services to Michigan's population, counties face underfunding in many forms.

Michigan's Public Health Code requires the state to provide 50 percent of funding for mandated services. Vanderberg said Ottawa County is receiving only 21 percent of its public health costs from the state, forcing the county to fund the extra \$850,000 for state-mandated services from county health clinics to sewage management.

Vanderberg and Ottawa County's court Administrator, Kevin Bowling, are currently looking into a mandate from the Department of Human Services. Vanderberg said DHS has recently requested the county to fund reimbursements for foster parents' mileage. The county was previously unaware of this mandate and isn't sure how much it will cost.

According to the DHS, it has always shared the responsibility of reimbursing foster parents with counties. Bob

Wheaton, DHS manager of communications, said in a voicemail message that the department funds 50 percent of each county's reimbursements. DHS has recently included this in its foster parent agency contract, creating an increase in reimbursement requests for counties, and explaining why counties may think this is a new mandate.

Law also requires the state to fund 50 percent of Essential Local Public Health Services. According to Daryl Delabbio, Kent County administrator and controller, the state funded only 33 percent of the county's costs in 2013. Over the past two years, the state has increased funding to cover 41.5 percent of costs. Kent County is still underfunded this year by 8.5 percent, or \$326,248, Delabbio said.

Kent County is also funding a new public health mandate from the state. Previously, parents opposed to vaccinations needed a waiver from the state before their children could attend school. Now, the state has mandated counties provide these parents a counseling session with a public health nurse before granting them a waiver.

According to Delabbio, the mandate is a public health improvement, but because the state will not reimburse Kent County for the service, it creates another unfunded service for the county.

Casperson said while most mandates have honorable intentions and are popular, they create burdens for counties. For instance, in 2013, lawmakers voted to exempt disabled veterans from paying property taxes. Casperson agreed this exemption was honorable but said the cost to counties — which lose this property tax revenue — should have been assessed.

Several interest groups and lawmakers are working to address unfunded and underfunded mandates. The issue is a top priority for the Michigan Association of Counties, which has been supporting legislative changes since 2010.

The package of bills to address the issue failed in the last session because some lawmakers argued that costing out each mandate would slow the legislative process. Casperson said he "absolutely will reintroduce" the bills and work to overcome those concerns.

## **OTTAWA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES** (Kristina Wieghmink)

Click the links below:

[\*\*Miles of Smiles participates in "Give Kids a Smile!" day\*\*](#)

[\*\*Connecting children and families to survive and thrive services\*\*](#)

## **GVMC WEEKLY UPDATE** (John Weiss)

[\*\*Click here\*\*](#) for the most recent updates.