



# County of Ottawa

Administrator's Office

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## County Administrator's Weekly Digest February 12, 2010

### **M-231 BYPASS PROJECT STATUS UPDATE** (Mark Knudsen)

It was recently reported in the Grand Haven Tribune that the M-231 Bypass project had been "scratched" from the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Five Year Transportation Plan. This is not the case. Completion of the Bypass may be delayed due to funding uncertainties, but it is still included in the Plan.

Last week, the Federal Highway Administration approved the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the M-231 Bypass Project. MDOT is currently awaiting the official Record of Decision (ROD). Once the ROD is issued MDOT will resume design work and property acquisitions for the project.

Due to funding constraints the initial construction of the Bypass will be limited to the bridge over the Grand River. MDOT officials have indicated that pre-construction activities (i.e. brush clearing, ground leveling), and possibly even initial phases of construction on the bridge may begin as early as this year. The construction schedule for the rest of the project is uncertain because at this time it is unclear when funding will be available.

Though funding uncertainties will delay the project, MDOT remains committed to completing the M-231 Bypass.

### **M-231 BYPASS EIS STATEMENT APPROVED** (Dennis Kent, MDOT)

Al:

The US-31 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been signed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It will be published in the Federal Register either on 2/19 or 2/26, unfortunately depending on the weather in Washington DC. That will start the 30 day "waiting" or comment period. After the comments received are addressed by MDOT, FHWA will issue a Record of Decision, probably in early April.

Ottawa County is listed as one of the sites for the Final EIS to be available for public review. MDOT will deliver the document to you next week. I will notify you when it is actually published in the Federal Register.

Please call if you have any questions. Thanks - Dennis (616/451-4994 or 299-7812/cell)

### **GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET** (GCSI)

The Governor released her Executive Budget earlier today. We have not had a chance to analyze it yet but it is attached to the Digest submittal email message for those who would like to review. A VERY CURSORY glance at the document suggests that the governor plans to fund statutory revenue sharing but we are not sure at what levels.

## **MANDATES RESOLUTION**

The Planning & Policy Committee approved a resolution on Thursday urging the State to implement the recommendations of its Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates and recommended the same to the Board of Commissioners.

Following is a note sent out to County Administrators by Bob Daddow, Deputy Executive of Oakland County, who served on the above referenced commission.

Folks – I was the co-chair of the Commission and our findings were pretty tough: the State has failed to comply with the Headlee Amendment for the past 30 years. We were asked to quantify the top ten mandates for various associations (MAC, MML, MTA, schools, etc.) with the cost of the mandates – on an annual basis – being over \$2.2 billion annually. And these just represented the top ten mandates.

We have proposed both preventative and curative measures to address future mandates, with only a few cited below –

- Preventative – involve the associations (MAC, MML, etc.) in the development and assembly of cost in the event of legislation impacting the local units.
- Preventative – a fiscal note with its impact must accompany the legislation, absence of which with a passage of the legislation means it isn't effective until such time as the fiscal note (tie-barred to an appropriation) is passed.
- Curative – a standing special master would exist to review claims in the Court of Appeals. The standing special master would determine if the claim is a mandate and if so, is it underfunded.
- Curative – if the item is a mandate and underfunded and not cured within 6 months or the special master does not even address the matter in the time frame, the local units of government no longer have to comply with the mandate. This moves the leverage away from the inactions of the State to the local units.

A press conference has been scheduled with Sen. Bishop and Speaker Dillon – who both support the recommendations – on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 somewhere in the Capitol Building.

Rep. Kowall has introduced the legislation that was incorporated in the final report above. The Legislative Services Bureau has evaluated the legislation and has many objections to it. It was drafted by a couple of professionals who have been very active in Headlee Amendment – Dennis Pollard (lead attorney on the Durant litigation and Adair now presently in front of the Supreme Court) and Amanda Van Dusen, partner, Miller Canfield. We believe that the LSB's assertions are unfounded and a work group meeting is being scheduled.

It is critical for you to take action in two ways – secure a resolution from the county commissioners. But as important as that, talk to your local senators and representatives and secure the support necessary to pass the above legislation. We have a chance to resolve this issue once and for all. I can tell you the ground swell is growing. Don't sit idly by and do nothing as it gives the State the power to continue to impose mandates on local units of government by inaction. ACT PLEASE. Have the voice of the people who passed the Amendment in 1978 finally be honored. RJD

## **HOEKSTRA OPPOSES CLOSING MUSKEGON AIR STATION**

MUSKEGON — U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Holland, announced Thursday his opposition to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security proposal to close the Coast Guard helicopter station at the Muskegon County Airport.

The plan to shutter the facility after 2010 was included in the president's 2011 budget. The crew operating in the summer would be relocated to Air Station Traverse City.

"The community, the Coast Guard and I have worked for years on building a new hangar and signing a lease for the Coast Guard to operate from it," Hoekstra said. "Shuttering the facility would undo countless hours of time and labor expended to keep it open, and I intend to continue working to keep it open."

The Muskegon facility currently operates from Memorial Day through Labor Day, using a rescue helicopter to respond to emergencies and homeland security situations around the clock.

"Muskegon County is the ideal location for a Coast Guard search-and-rescue helicopter crew," Hoekstra said. "It has for several years quickly responded to emergencies along the Lake Michigan shoreline. With the large number of recreational boaters on Lake Michigan, moving the operation to Traverse City will increase the response time and potentially put lives at risk."

The Coast Guard has based a search-and-rescue helicopter, used to cover southern Lake Michigan during the summer months, in a rented hangar at the Muskegon County Airport since 1997. A dedicated hangar was built at the airport in 2005.

### **2010 MLGMA CONFERENCE**

Keith VanBeek and I attended the Michigan Local Government Management Association (MLGMA) Conference in Grand Rapids last week. It was great to have the conference in Grand Rapids so we could commute and keep cost down. The MLGMA was first known as the Michigan City Management Association (MCMA) and changed its name in 1991 to reflect growing membership and membership transfers between city, county and township government.

Keith was on the planning committee and it was an excellent event. The conference was titled Economy, Energy & Entrepreneurship. Sessions focused on manager/council relations, entrepreneurship – creative ways that local government can work with business to create wealth in the community, improving hiring practices, improving sustainability in local government, the role of managers in times of crisis and other interesting sessions.

I was honored to take the reins of President of MLGMA (press release attached to Digest submittal email message). I'm the second County Administrator to serve as President. Daryl Delabbio, County Administrator of Kent County was the first about ten years ago.

A number of professional managers from Ottawa County were in attendance, including the following:

Pat McGinnis, Grand Haven City Manager  
Ryan Cotton, Spring Lake Village Manager  
Gordon Gallagher, Spring Lake Township Manager  
Craig Bessinger, Ferrysburg City Manager  
Steve Patrick, Coopersville City Manager  
Dan Carlton, Georgetown Township Manager  
Tim Klunder, Zeeland City Manager  
Karen Doyle, Zeeland Assistant City Manager  
Soren Wolff, Holland City Manager