



County of Ottawa

Administrator's Office

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County Administrator's Weekly Digest April 30, 2010

MOODY'S RATINGS – Aaa

The County achieved a true milestone this week when Moody's Ratings gave Ottawa County their highest rating, Aaa. June and I had an hour-and-a half phone interview with Moody's last week and thought it went well but the result exceeded our expectations. We have been working on this for almost seven years and staff for many years before that had the same goal. We have felt fortunate to maintain our ratings and have been continually informed by ratings analysts that we should be glad to maintain our status because of Michigan's economy. We now have the highest rating of both Moody's Ratings and Fitch Ratings. We maintained recently with Standard & Poor's and will now set our sights on achieving a Triple-Triple, or triple A ratings from each of the three rating agencies. We accomplished this at Kent County when I worked there.

I put the Moody's analysis at the end of the Digest for the diehards that like to read this type of information.

OTTAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE GRAND OPENING & DEDICATION

HDR was one of the two primary architects along with FTC&H for the Ottawa County Courthouse project. HDR produced the attached brochure, which we will use both for grand opening purposes and for Courthouse visitors in the future. I've attached the brochure to the Digest.

OTTAWA COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY BOARD (Brad Slagh)

The Ottawa County Land Bank Authority (LBA) has been formed by an intergovernmental agreement between the County and the State Land Bank Fast Track Authority. We now need to assemble a nine (9) member Board of Directors to provide on-going direction for the LBA. The application form and identification of the open slots on this Board is available on the County web site at:

<http://www.miottawa.org/CoGov/Clerk/appointments.htm> .

For those of you who may not be as familiar with the LBA I have provided synopsis of what the Land Bank is and the definitions of the Board member positions that are available. Please consider applying for a Board position or notifying others that you believe would make outstanding Board Members to apply. If you have questions on the LBA, please contact Brad Slagh @ 616-994-4505.

Overview:

The laws of the State of Michigan establishing Land Bank Authorities provide a set of tools to allow a Land Bank to acquire, hold, improve and return to the tax rolls, land within its jurisdiction. Property can come to a Land Bank from tax-foreclosed property, purchases from HUD, gifts from people, an agreement with a developer, and more. The goal of the Land Bank is to take acquired property and do something with it that results in the community being enhanced. The Land Bank Board's responsibilities consist of directing all decisions regarding the Authority including property, finances and staffing.

The County Land Bank Authority Board, all of whom shall be residents, shall consist of the following members:

- (a) The County Treasurer.
- (b) One member of the County Board, appointed by the County Board.
- (c) One member representing the Ottawa County Economic Development Corporation appointed by the County Board.
- (d) Two members representing townships in the County of Ottawa, appointed by the County Board.
- (e) Two members representing cities/village in the County of Ottawa, appointed by the County Board.
- (f) One member representing citizens in the County of Ottawa, appointed by the County Board.
- (g) One member being the Ottawa County Administrator or their designate, appointed by the County Board.

LAKELAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Keith Van Beek and I facilitated the Lakeland Library Cooperative (LLC) strategic planning session yesterday. It was pretty interesting and challenging session. There are 42 libraries that make up the LLC and a significantly different attitude toward services depending whether a library is large, small, from a wealthy community or more strapped for funding. The governance model needs updating and the revenue model is also very complex and creates different incentives and disincentives for cooperation.

I think we all felt that the time was well spent by the end of the session and the LLC has focus areas for necessary short term budget cuts and a plan to attack the governance model issue as well.

Since I have been at Ottawa we offer strategic planning assistance gratis for local units of government or for other governmental authorities/agencies that our local unit governments are members of.

MSU EXTENSION STRATEGIC PLANNING

Phil Kuyers, Matt Hehl and I participated in a strategic planning session led by MSU Cooperative Extension. The State Extension is seeking input from the regions as to where services should be focused. The direction from our group was to focus on the core agricultural services instead of the human services added later in time.

MAC MANDATES

Tom Hickson sent the following message out this week. The Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) is trying to pack the room with county commissioners when the House Judiciary Committee could act on implementation of the statutory mandate report on Wednesday next week. Vice-Chair Holtrop might be available and others are considering attending.

Dear MAC Committee Members:

Please be aware that next Wednesday is scheduled to be the committee meeting on statutory mandates. The vote could be held then, and we are looking for a strong showing of support from county commissioners. If you are able to attend, please let me know. I will be working on talking points, but most of all we just need to have commissioners in the committee room to submit cards of support for the legislative package.

Thanks,

Tom

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR VOTE ON MANDATES LEGISLATION MAY 5TH

MAC has learned that it is very likely that the House Judiciary Committee could be acting on legislation to implement the entire mandates commission report as soon as May 5th. We have been asked to demonstrate a show of support by bringing county commissioners in for the vote that day to testify or enter cards of support for the legislation.

This State Mandates legislation is important to Michigan counties and requires as much support as we can gather. Mandates often go unfunded in the state of Michigan and require the counties to pay for mandated changes that the state is legally supposed to fund under the Headlee amendment.

Thus far, the package includes House Bills 5766, 5797-5802, which are sponsored in a bi-partisan fashion. Essentially the bills would make future mandates optional if no funding were attached, streamline the process for Headlee challenges and require all bill analyses to attach a fiscal note which details the cost of proposed legislation to local units of government.

Please contact Tom Hickson at MAC to let us know if you are able to make this hearing, which is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on May 5th at the House Office Building, room 521. Tom can be reached at (517) 372-5374 or hickson@micounties.org.

It is also likely that the House will be taking up legislation granting local units of government flexibility when posting legal notices, including county boards of commissioners. This legislation will likely be up on May 12th, and as soon as MAC has more details on this, we will pass that along, and also ask for commissioners to attend as well.

For more information on Statutory Mandates, please read the final report.

For more information on the legislation, check out HB 5766, HB5797, HB4798, HB 5799, HB 5800, HB 5801, and HB 5802.

PRESCRIBED BURN AT GRAND RIVER PARK (John Scholtz)

Ottawa County Parks conducted a **prescribed ecological burn** on Friday, April 23 on 24 acres of native grassland fields at Grand River Park located on 28th Avenue in Georgetown Township. Careful attention was given to conducting the burn in a safe and carefully controlled manner by trained personnel. The firm that was contracted to conduct this burn is JF New, an ecological services firm located in West Olive, MI.

Why burn? Fire used to be a regular and frequent component of our landscape in Michigan. Many of our local ecosystems such as prairies, dry oak-hickory woodlands, and certain wetlands burned frequently. The fire stimulated many of the plant species to grow more vigorously and discouraged others that were not adapted to fire's heat.

In 2000, Ottawa County Parks planted several species of native warm-season grasses and a variety



area burned.

of native wildflower species in two former farm fields within Grand River Park. One field is about 9 acres and the other field is about 15 acres. Periodic burning of these native grassland fields is a necessary management tool that eliminates non-native, invasive plant species and gives the competitive advantage back to the native species. These fields were successfully burned in 2006 and required burning again to maintain the grassland diversity.

The picture shows the fire in progress during late morning with approximately one-third of the field

The prescribed burn is safe. The burn was done with the cooperation and permit approval of the Georgetown Township Fire Department. JF New outlined the weather conditions, personnel, equipment, and other parameters needed for the burn to be conducted safely and presented this information to the Fire Department. Prior to burning, “burn breaks” were created around the area to be burned to help control the fire. The burn was done in a slow and deliberate manner, with safety equipment on hand to monitor and control its spread. The burn was conducted in such a manner as to minimize the amount of smoke produced and to direct smoke away from smoke-sensitive areas as much as possible.

NATURE CENTER OPENING WELL ATTENDED (John Scholtz)

I was in Lansing on Saturday at noon speaking on professional development to a group of younger city/county management professionals that are part of the Michigan Local Government Management Association NextGen group and was disappointed to miss the Grand Opening of the Nature Center. It was an outstanding event.

The Grand Opening of the new Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing attracted over 700 people to the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. event this past Saturday. Many people expressed their strong support for a new facility to focus on nature interpretation in the heart of Ottawa County, while others appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the entire county park system.

Visitors viewed the new displays, participated in children’s nature activities, toured the building and enjoyed refreshments provided by Friends of Ottawa County Parks. A 1:00 p.m. dedication ceremony featured comments by Bobbi Sabine, Parks Commission Vice-President; Phil Kuyers, Board Chairperson; Dave Seibold, co-chair of the fund-raising committee; Chip Francke, Coordinator of Interpretive and Information Services for Ottawa County Parks; and Mark Oppenhuizen, past Parks Commissioner and architect who donated his services to design the building.



Viewing one of 8 exhibits.



Viewing donor tree.

MOODY’S RATING OTTAWA COUNTY WRITE-UP

MOODY’S ASSIGNS Aaa RATING TO OTTAWA COUNTY’S (MI) \$805,000 MUNICIPAL DRAINAGE DISTRICT BONDS, SERIES 2010

Aaa RATING APPLIES TO \$132.4 MILLION OF GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT, INCLUDING CURRENT OFFERING

Ottawa (County of) MI
County
Michigan

Moody’s Rating

Issue	Rating
Municipal Drainage Bonds, Series 2010	Aaa
Sale Amount	\$805,000
Expected Sale Date	05/04/10
Rating Description	General Obligation Unlimited Tax

NEW YORK, April 30, 2010 -- Moody's Investors Service has assigned a Aaa rating to Ottawa County's (MI) \$805,000 Municipal Drainage District Bonds, Series 2010. Concurrently, Moody's has affirmed the Aaa rating on the county's outstanding general obligation limited tax debt. Ottawa County has \$30 million of outstanding general obligation debt, including the current offering. The Series 2010 bonds are payable from contract payments from the City of Hudsonville and are ultimately secured by the county's general obligation limited tax pledge, which forms the basis of this rating. Proceeds of the bonds will be used to finance storm sewer improvements in the City of Hudsonville. Assignment and affirmation of the Aaa rating reflect the county's substantial, relatively diverse taxbase with recent declines in valuations; well managed financial operations that are supported by ample reserves; and debt levels that are expected to remain affordable.

SUBSTANTIAL, RELATIVELY DIVERSE TAXBASE; RECENT DECLINES IN VALUATIONS

Located west of Grand Rapids (GOLT rated Aa2/stable outlook) along Lake Michigan, Ottawa County's large \$23.4 billion taxbase had previously grown at a steady pace. Between 2004 and 2008, full value increased at an average rate of 5.6% per year. The county's accessibility to Grand Rapids and other employment centers in western Michigan had made it an attractive area for residential development resulting in a population increase by a significant 26.9% between 1990 and 2000. Growth has somewhat slowed down in recent years as the current estimated population of 259,206 increased by a lesser 8.8% from the 2000 census population. In addition, mirroring national trends, the county's full valuation declined by 3.2% between 2008 and 2009. Further declines in valuations are expected due to declining residential values. Officials expect full valuation to decline by 6.1% in 2010 and taxable valuation to decline by 4%. Moody's expects the county's valuations to continue to decline in the near term.

The county's taxbase is relatively diverse, with the top ten taxpayers comprising just 6% of total assessed valuation. The county is somewhat dependent on manufacturing; Moody's notes some risk associated as there have been significant job losses in recent years. Delphi Automotive, the county's tenth largest taxpayer in 2007 filed for bankruptcy in October 2005 and closed its Ottawa County plant in 2007. Gentex, the county's third largest employer, and Mead Johnson, the county's second largest taxpayer, also laid off an estimated combined 1,000 positions in 2009. Although there were contractions in operations of existing employers and taxpayers in 2009, officials note that economic activity in 2010 has resulted in restoration of some jobs. The hospitals in the cities of Holland (GOLT rated Aa2) and Zeeland (GOULT rated Aa2) recently completed expansions. Michigan State University opened a Bioeconomy Institute in March 2009 in a former Pfizer laboratory site. Both Sara Lee Corporation (senior unsecured rated Baa1/stable outlook) and Boar's Head recently expanded plant operations. Additionally, a new dairy processing company is expected to complete construction in the former Delphi Automotive

site. The county's unemployment rate of 13.7% was higher than the nation's rate of 10.4% but slightly lower than the state's rate of 14.6% for February 2010. Wealth indices are slightly above state medians with per capita and median family income levels at 97.8% and 112.0% of the state levels, respectively. Despite the weakened economy, Moody's expects the county's taxbase will begin to stabilize in the medium to long term given recent commercial development and ample land available for future development.

WELL MANAGED FINANCIAL OPERATIONS SUPPORTED BY AMPLE RESERVES

Moody's expects the county's financial operations to remain healthy, supported by conservative budgeting and ample reserves. The county has a long history of maintaining healthy General Fund reserves well above the county's policy of keeping undesignated reserves equal to 15% of General Fund revenues. The General Fund has grown from \$14.6 million in fiscal 2003 (25.9% of revenues) to a healthy \$22.1 million in fiscal 2007 (36.2% of revenues). In addition, as a policy, the county budgets 1-2% of General Fund expenditures for contingencies. As a result, despite declining property tax and other revenues, fiscal 2008 closed with essentially balanced operations with a General Fund balance equal to \$22.1 million, or 36.1% of revenues. Officials expect to close fiscal 2009 with a modest General Fund operating surplus and anticipate balanced operations for fiscal 2010. The county enjoys additional liquidity in its Stabilization and Delinquent Tax Revolving Funds. The Stabilization Fund had a balance of \$8.2 million and the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund had an unrestricted net asset position of \$24.5 million at the close of fiscal 2008. Notably, going forward, officials plan to maintain reserves in these funds and do not cite needs to transfer funds to support operations. In addition to sizeable reserves, the county consistently remains below the operating millage rate under the Headlee limit. The current tax rate of 3.6 mills is lower than the maximum allowable rate under the Headlee limit of 4.265 mills, translating into a margin of approximately \$6.8 million of property tax revenue annually available for operations.

Effective October 1, 2004, the State of Michigan temporarily ended revenue sharing payments to counties, while at the same time, to offset the impact of the loss of this revenue stream, called for the county's property tax levy to be moved in phases from December to July over three years. The schedule called for the establishment of a Revenue Sharing Reserve Fund, where certain portions of the levy will be deposited and managed by the county, which can access this fund in an amount equal to what it would have received in 2004 plus an inflationary adjustment. At this time, the county anticipates this fund will be depleted in 2011. Although it is uncertain whether the State will reinstate revenue sharing, management has proactively identified potential expenditure reductions to help offset the impact of the potential elimination of state revenue share payments. Moody's believes that the county's practice of maintaining healthy reserves with alternate liquidity, operating margin, and conservative budgeting practices provides significant cushion against potential significant cuts from the state and other unforeseen budgetary fluctuations.

DEBT LEVELS EXPECTED TO REMAIN AFFORDABLE

Moody's believes the county's debt levels will remain manageable given modest future borrowing plans. At 0.1% and 1.7%, respectively, the county's direct debt position and overall debt burden both approximate state medians. Typical

of Michigan counties, Ottawa is a frequent issuer of debt on behalf of underlying municipalities. The low 0.1% direct debt figure accounts for the fact that 86.3% of the county's direct debt is supported by contractual payments from benefited municipalities. The county's 3.6% overall debt burden is predominately the result of borrowing by overlapping jurisdictions, particularly school districts. The principal amortization rate of all county debt, including debt issued on behalf of underlying municipalities is average with 52.8% of the debt paid in ten years. The county will continue to issue debt for water and sewer improvements and expansions for its underlying entities with the next expected issuance in July 2010

KEY STATISTICS

2000 Census population: 238,314 (26.9% increase from 1990)

2008 Estimated population: 260,364 (9.3% increase from 2000)

2009 Full value: \$23.4 billion

2009 Full value per capita: \$89,923

2000 Per capita income: \$21,676 (97.8% of state)

2000 Median family income: \$59,896 (112.0% of state)

Ottawa County unemployment rate: 13.7% (February 2010)

Fiscal 2008 General Fund balance: \$22.1 million (36.1% of General Fund revenues)

Fiscal 2008 Undesignated General Fund balance: \$9.2 million (15% of General Fund revenues)

Direct debt burden: 0.1%

Overall debt burden: 3.6%

Principal amortization (10 years): 52.8% (includes debt issued by county on behalf of underlying municipalities)

Post-sale general obligation debt outstanding: \$132.4 million

The rating assigned to the Municipal Drainage District Bonds to be issued by Ottawa County was issued on Moody's global rating scale. Market participants should not view the recalibration of municipal ratings as rating upgrades, but rather as a recalibration of the ratings to a different rating scale. This recalibration does not reflect an improvement in credit quality or a change in our credit opinion for rated municipal debt issuers. For further details regarding the recalibration of Moody's U.S. municipal ratings to its global scale please visit www.moody.com/gsr.

The principal methodology used in rating the current issue was Moody's "General Obligation Bonds Issued by U.S. Local Governments," published in October 2009 and available on www.moody.com in the Rating Methodologies sub-directory under the Research & Ratings tab. Other methodologies and

factors that may have been considered in the process of rating this issuer can also be found in the Rating Methodologies sub-directory on Moody's website.

The last rating action with respect to Ottawa County was on June 15, 2009, when a rating of Aa1 was affirmed.

ANALYSTS:

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Ottawa County Courthouse

Grand Haven, Michigan



2010

Project Background

In the final decades of the 20th century, County population and public service demands experienced rapid growth which resulted in a space shortage in the existing County Building. Renovating the existing building was considered, but due to aged mechanical systems, secure circulation limitations, and the expense of adding to an over 40-year-old building, the County opted for a new facility. The County Board of Commissioners decided in 2006 to develop a new County Courthouse on historic Courthouse Square in Grand Haven. The new facility is the largest-ever building construction project in County history and represents the fifth in a long line of Courthouses to serve the County.

A key element of the design was the development of three levels of circulation, per courthouse planning best practices, separating public, restricted and secure circulation. In addition to a primary north-south circulation access with a central elevator and stairs at each end, the building has an open and inviting central stairway that connects all four levels of the building. Additional requirements for access are provided using an elevator adjacent to the main public entry.

Security is provided by the Sheriff's Office, with a centralized detainee holding and transport area on the lower level, and secure holding areas on each floor. Controlled after-hours and weekend access is also provided for public and staff. All security devices and systems including the public entry control and monitoring equipment was designed in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office to provide the highest degree of security.

Ottawa County Board of Commissioners

Philip D. Kuyers, Chair	Joyce E. Kortman
James C. Holtrop, Vice Chair	Jane M. Ruiters
Donald G. Disselkoe	Roger G. Rycenga
Matthew M. Hehl	Gordon D. Schrottenboer
James H. Holtvluwer	Dennis W. Swartout
Robert W. Karsten	

Ottawa County Building Authority

Jack R. Smant, Chair
Marvin D. Allen
Leroy R. Dell

Project Details

- August 15, 2007 - Groundbreaking for new Ottawa County Courthouse
- November 14, 2007 - First steel beam set
- June 22, 2009 - County occupies new courthouse
- November 1, 2009 - Parking lots and project complete
- 26 ½ months, start to finish
- Construction cost including demolition, construction related fees, and architectural/engineering fees - \$21,400,000

Cooling system capacity - 350 tons

Heating system capacity - 5,100,000 tons

Humidification capacity - 750 lbs per hour

Yards of concrete used - 8,400

Tons of steel used - 953

Number of bricks used - 126,138

Sheets of drywall used - 12,000

Pieces of cast stone used - 4,000

Dimensions of rooftop cupola - 26x36 feet

Height of building - 120 feet

Number of windows - 180

Public Service Area - 2,490 square feet

Circuit Court offices - 7,365 square feet

Friend of Court - 6,934 square feet

Court Records - 6,462 square feet



District Court - 8,040 square feet

District Ct probation - 2,907 square feet

Circuit Ct probation - 3,794 square feet

County Prosecutor - 6,773 square feet

Number of elevators - 4

District courtrooms (includes Magistrate courtroom) - 2

Circuit courtrooms - 4

Total Square Feet - 117,710



Sustainable Design Highlights

In recognition of the County's commitment to sustainability and conservation, the building was constructed to and has met LEED certified standards. Many of the materials used in the building and its mechanical and electrical systems are either recycled or include sustainable features that reduce energy consumption and waste. In addition, more than 90 percent of construction debris was recycled and the majority of new construction materials were supplied locally.

Sustainable features include:

- Preferred parking spaces for carpoolers and alternative energy vehicles.

- Bicycle storage areas and changing rooms.
- Low-flow plumbing fixtures that use 25 percent less water than standard fixtures.
- Landscaping and plant materials that require minimal irrigation.
- Low-E insulated glass and window blinds.
- Recycling storage stations for plastic, paper and other materials throughout the building.
- A Green Housekeeping Plan that uses only low-VOC cleaning products.
- Recycled materials or rapidly renewable materials used in shingles, carpet tile, wall coverings and countertops.
- High-efficiency light fixtures and

- controls that turn off the lights in unoccupied rooms.
- A mechanical system that includes:
 - Controls that delay the startup of equipment as late as possible.
 - Thermostats that automatically adjust the temperature during unoccupied hours.
 - Variable speed fans that match the temperature needs of the building.
 - Outside air for cooling the building as temperatures allow.
 - Sensors that adjust the amount of fresh air to maintain good air quality.
 - An enhanced refrigerant management system that does not require CFCs to cool the building.



Inspiration

The overall courthouse design was the result of design sessions among County and Court representatives seeking to create a roomy and functional setting for the courts and the public.

The exterior design is inspired by the County's third courthouse, one that was built in 1894 and later demolished in 1965. The exterior reflects many of the design elements found on the 71-year-old courthouse, including a block foundation, red bricking, cast stone trim, a faux slate roof, and a cupola which tops off the building at 120 feet. The cupola is a decorative element that is internally lit and is visible from Spring Lake. The courthouse also features a two-story clock tower, arched window tops with stone eyebrows, and traditional grand front steps.

The interiors offer 75 percent more space than the previous courthouse. The majestic interiors feature dark woodwork, custom-designed lighting, and precast stone trim on counters and windowsills.



1838



1857

The History of the Ottawa County Courthouse

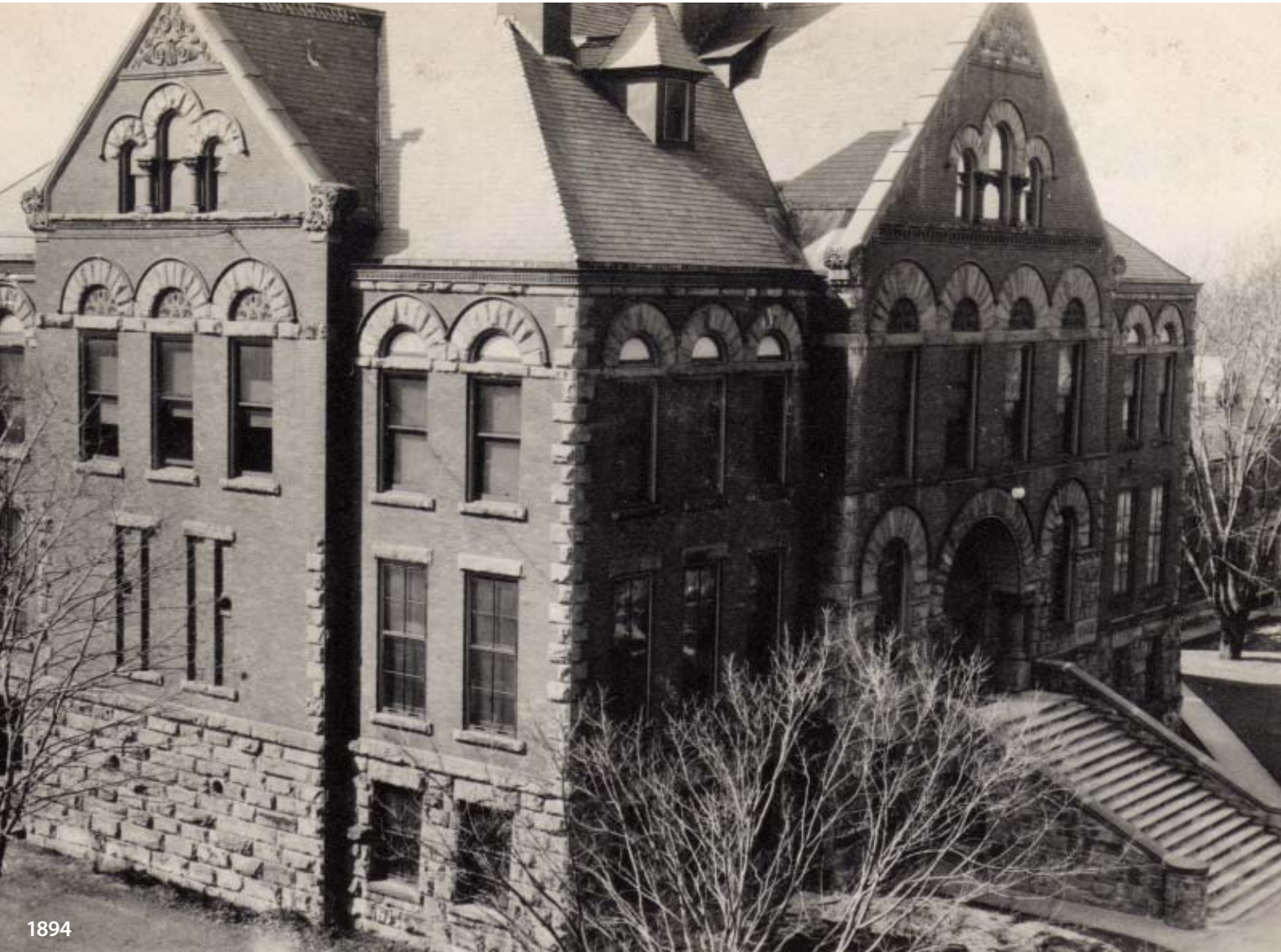
1838: The Rev. William Ferry erected the first frame building on South Second Street in Grand Haven at a cost of \$650. The one-story building was built for use as a school and also served as a general meeting hall and county courthouse for over 20 years.

1857: The first County Building was erected on Courthouse Square, bounded by Washington, Fourth, Fifth, and Franklin Streets in Grand Haven.

1894: A majestic four-story Courthouse was dedicated.

1965: The new Ottawa County Building was dedicated.

2010: The new Ottawa Courthouse was dedicated on May 6th, the new courthouse design successfully wove the historical features of the 1894 Courthouse into the design.



1894



1965



Project Team

HDR Architecture, Inc.

Court Programming and Design
Planning & Security
Detention Design

Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc.

Architecture
M/E/P
Civil
Landscape
Fire Protection
LEED Services

Owen-Ames-Kimball Company Construction Management

Materials Testing Consultants, Inc Geotechnical

Court Contact Information

www.miottawa.org

Ground Floor

58th District Court – Probation/Court Services (616) 846-8139
Michigan Department of Corrections – Adult
Probation & Parole (616) 846-8217

First Floor

58th District Court (616) 846-8280
County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (616) 846-8215
County Public Service Center
Drain Commissioner (616) 994-4530
Register of Deeds (616) 846-8295, ext. 4510
Sheriff's Office (616) 846-8039
Treasurer (616) 846-8329

Second Floor

20th Circuit Court – Family Division (616) 846-8320
20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court (616) 846-8210
Legal Self Help Center
Public Law Library

Third Floor

20th Circuit Court – Trial Division (616) 846-8320
County Clerk – Circuit Court Records (616) 846-8315