



County of Ottawa *Administrator's Office*

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County Administrator's Weekly Digest January 31, 2011

WMSA

Please click [here](#) to see the recently updated Fact Sheet for the West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA). The group was founded over ten-years ago by Holland businessman and philanthropist Jim Brooks. Where a lot of groups engage in empire building, WMSA tries to identify a need, begin a process to address the need, and once an organization has been created or identified to do the necessary work, WMSA ends its involvement and moves on to the next initiative. I am in my second year as Chair of the Board of Directors of WMSA. I am the third Chair and succeeded Steve Heacock when he stepped down after deciding to run for Congress and Jim Brooks who was the founding chair.

The Fact Sheet shows many areas that WMSA is making a major difference in the region.

RATINGS CALL

Bob Spaman, Kathy Lambrix (our PNC financial consultant), and I met with a Moody's credit analyst over the phone today to discuss the County financial status and area economic condition as Moody's prepares to issue a rating for the Holland Sewage Disposal System Funding – refunding bond. The Board of Commissioners also approved the 2002 Water System Supply Bonds and this issue will not be moving forward as the interest rates do not provide a favorable enough benefit to make this one work.

The Moody's analyst said it was refreshing to talk to a government that was not in bad shape.

GOVERNOR SNYDER SPEECH ON PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION (Jim Miller, GCSI)

Mark and Al- MIRS is reporting-

Monday, January 31, 2011

A report Gov. Rick **SNYDER** is preparing to release at 3 p.m. today uses data showing the average compensation of state employees is twice that of private sector workers and the disparity has been growing over the last 10 years.

Using state, national and Anderson Economic Group (AEG) numbers, Snyder's 22-page "Citizen's Guide" shows that the total average salary and benefits package for a state employee was \$85,076 in 2009 while the average private sector employee's was \$39,986.

The average teacher had a compensation package worth \$75,137 a year and the average local government employee's was \$57,333 a year. The report also reads that the public sector's compensation package was 55 percent higher than that of a private sector worker in 2000. In 2009, state classified employee compensation was, on average, 113 percent higher than that of the private sector.

The analysis did not compare private and public sector employees with similar jobs, years of experience

or education.

Public employee unions are concerned Snyder will use this raw data as a way to defend a potential future attempt to scale back their benefits. They argue that these types of comparisons are not fair because the average state employee has more schooling and training than the average private sector worker.

We will send links to data with the next Digest. I believe that the report(s) will be or are available at the [Business Leaders for Michigan website](#).

DETROIT FREE PRESS ARTICLE ON GOVERNOR' REPORT

**Snyder in financial
report: State
workers make twice
as much as those in
private sector**

<http://ezurl.co/586801>

By **RON DZWONKOWSKI**

FREE PRESS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Public employee pay is out of whack with the private sector in Michigan, Gov. Rick Snyder said today in a report on the state's fiscal situation.

In a document that may be sending a signal about one way the new governor expects to address a \$1.8-billion budget shortfall, he said the overall compensation of the average private sector workers fell 13% from 2000-09 while rising 19% for state employees and 13% for local government workers. For state workers, the average annual compensation -- \$53,453 in salary, \$31,623 in fringes and \$13,000 for insurance-- was more than twice that of the private sector, the report said.

In the "Citizen's Guide to Michigan's Financial Health," Snyder also says government at every level in Michigan has been routinely overspending its income. "State and local governments (including public schools) received \$82.5 billion in

revenue and spent \$84.8 billion in fiscal year 2010 resulting in a shortfall of \$2.3 billion," the report says.

Snyder was to unveil the report this afternoon at a conference on state finances

sponsored by Business Leaders for Michigan that attracted an overflow crowd of more than 400 people to a downtown Lansing hotel.

“Public agencies in Michigan borrow extensively and have accumulated unfunded pension and retiree health care liabilities,” the Snyder report warns. “The state has borrowed money at a faster rate than personal incomes have grown over the past 20 years. The level of state debt per person has increased from \$724 per person in 1979 to over \$2,430 per Michigan resident in 2009. Local and school debt makes that number even higher.”

Appearing at the meeting late in the afternoon, Snyder said, "I'd be careful about over generalizing on this data but it does show an important trend that needs to be addressed."

Come back to freep.com for more on this



MLGMA CONFERENCE

Keith and I will be attending the Michigan Local Government Management Association Conference in Detroit for the rest of the week. I will be available by Blackberry while there. Sending me an email is best as I check the device frequently during the day. Also, feel free to contact Bob Spaman in our absence. I realize that there is a winter storm on the way and Sheriff Rosema and I will be in contact 5:00 a.m. on Wednesday. It is highly unlikely that the County would close.

MILES OF SMILES PRESS RELEASE (Lois Haverman)

**Ottawa County Health Department
“Miles of Smiles” Mobile Dental Unit
to Provide Free Dental Services for Children
at Glerum School in Holland**

On February 4, 2011, Dr. Tyler Wolf will be taking part in the eighth annual American Dental Association’s “Give Kids a Smile!” day. Dr. Wolfe will volunteer his day on Ottawa County Health Department’s “Miles of Smiles” Mobile Dental Unit to provide comprehensive dental care for Medicaid-insured and financially-qualifying uninsured children at Glerum School in Holland. In addition, every child at Glerum School will receive an Oral Health gift bag complete with toothbrush, toothpaste and oral health information for parents.

Although “Miles of Smiles” (MOS) operates year-round to provide free dental services, “Give Kids a Smile!” day provides MOS an opportunity to participate in a nationwide event. Dental professionals in dental offices, dental clinics and dental schools in all 50 states will open their doors on this day to provide free dental care to dentally-underserved children. The event also raises awareness about the number of children with unmet dental needs and the obstacles they face when seeking dental care.

In Ottawa County, there are: 15,531 children qualifying for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program; 4,987 uninsured children (less than 18 years of age); and 7,934 children (0 to 17 years of age) in poverty. In the 2009/2010 school year, 335 initial dental exams on “Miles of Smiles” (MOS) school children documented 566 teeth with decay (1.69 cavities per child). However, the great news is that since 1999, an average 43% reduction in tooth decay has been documented on MOS patients! A network of over 100 volunteer dentists and hygienists, grant allocations, and county support has facilitated over 26,000 client appointments on “Miles of Smiles”.

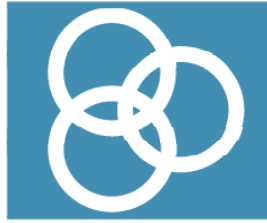
“Pain from untreated dental disease makes it difficult for children to eat, sleep and pay attention in school. Poor oral health also affects their self-esteem,” said Lois Havermans, RDH, CHES, Dental Team Supervisor for Ottawa County Health Department. “Our ‘Miles of Smiles’ initiative is the best example of a community collaborative effort that I could ever envision—dental society involvement, dentist and hygienist volunteerism, school administration dedication, community support, funders generosity, Ottawa County administration support, and Ottawa County Health Department’s commitment to helping improve the health of children in our community.

If your child is Medicaid-insured or without dental insurance and in need of dental care, please call (393-5694) to see if your child qualifies for “Miles of Smiles” dental services.

[Click here for the “A Give Kids a Smile Day invitation”](#)

TRICK FARM

[Click here for a news article regarding the Trick Farm that may be of interest.](#)



WEST MICHIGAN STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

Fact Sheet

Who we are: The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) is thousands of people representing businesses, institutions and governmental units who have a stake in the future of the region. WMSA focuses on eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa.

When we started: WMSA was formed in 2000 when 250 volunteers were convened to discuss critical factors affecting the region.

What we do: We facilitate conversation, cooperation and collaboration. The **vision** of the WMSA is “for West Michigan to be a best place in the Midwest to live, learn, work and play.” The **mission** of the WMSA is “to be a catalyst for regional collaboration.”

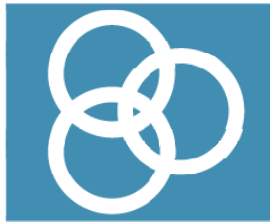
Our priorities: Regional input sessions determined these six Priorities for Regional Collaboration are essential in preserving the health of and fostering growth in West Michigan:

- Create a Regional Mindset
- Ensure a Sustainable Environment
- Revitalize our Urban Centers
- Strengthening Community through Diversity
- Foster a Prosperous Economy
- Develop a Tri-Plex Growth Strategy

Current Initiatives:

- Literacy to Work – an effort to expand the Making College Accessible pilot underway in Kent County. The LTW program is intended to help individuals who lack the basic literacy credentials to obtain a living wage job and access additional funding to further their education and skills under Michigan’s mainstream No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) program.
- Internships – To improve the region’s educational attainment, WMSA has launched an initiative to create an additional 3,000 internships for current university and college students;
- Green Infrastructure—an effort to identify, protect and connect the interconnected network of green space and other environmental assets in West Michigan that support the functions of natural ecosystems and provide benefits to people.
- Regional Indicators—a process to establish measurement of the quality of life in the region;
- WIRED (Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development)—a U.S. Department of Labor funded program to increase workforce and economic development innovation in the regional economy.
- Regional Diversity Strategy – Helping to build stronger communities by looking at those issues centered on race and ethnic intolerances and its’ impact on our region. Creating a regional diversity mindset that encourages the acceptance of multiculturalism here in West Michigan.

Current information about our priorities, initiatives and progress can be found on our Web site: www.wm-alliance.org.



WEST MICHIGAN STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

“WMSA is a national model for regional leadership.”
– Sam Liekens, Council on Competitiveness, Washington DC, 2010

BEST MEASURABLE RESULTS

- The *West Michigan Vital Signs* provides our region with quantifiable data of measureable performance against 26 peer regions nationally. In 2010 West Michigan ranked 9th overall.
- In partnership with Kent County, WMSA launched an online reverse auction purchasing program, which will be offered to all 224 units of government in West Michigan. Potential savings could easily exceed \$3 million annually.
- As a result of WMSA/WIRED, TALENT 2025, consisting of 49 of the region’s top leaders, has set a goal to increase the Educational Attainment of the workforce in the West Michigan region (the percent of people in the West Michigan workforce, ages 25 + with a post secondary credential) by the year 2025.
- In 2009, West Michigan issued the highest number of National Career Readiness Certificates per capita in the nation. This strategy is being adopted by TALENT 2025 to ensure sustainability.
- The West Michigan Internship Initiative assisted in the creation of over 1,000 new internships in the region since its launch in 2009. TALENT 2025 is encouraging peers to set targets for their companies and suppliers.
- During the first 3-months of the Literacy to Work Initiative, more than 80 students have enrolled in adult education classes - 28 have earned GEDs, 8 have earned National Career Readiness Certificates, and 15 have secured new employment.
- Identified as a critical natural asset in the region in 2002, the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area was protected in 2009 through a regional public/private partnership.
- WMSA’s Green Infrastructure Initiative has partnered in the development and creation of the *Natural Connections Map*, West Michigan Toolkit for Local Green Inventories, INVEST, the West Michigan Agricultural report, and the online Green Infrastructure Toolshed.

WMSA BENEFITS

BUSINESS

- Regional visibility in the global market, opens new and varied opportunities
- Quality of life aids recruitment and retention of intellectual capital

INSTITUTIONS

- WMSA is a connector, encouraging a regional perspective among government, business and nonprofits
- Connections help avoid duplication to maximize resources

GOVERNMENT

- WMSA brings local units together- sharing best practices
- As a region, West Michigan has a stronger voice in Lansing
- Collaboration improves efficiency by cutting ‘red tape’ while reducing costs and enhancing service delivery



OTTAWA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
“MILES OF SMILES”
MOBILE DENTAL UNIT
INVITES YOU TO JOIN THEM
IN CELEBRATION OF
“GIVE KIDS A SMILE” DAY

(A national event designed to provide
free dental care to dentally-underserved children)

WHEN: Friday , February 4, 2011
9:30 AM—2:30 PM

WHO: Dr. Tyler Wolf will be joining the Ottawa County Health Department Dental Team to provide on-site, comprehensive dental services for Medicaid-insured and financially qualifying uninsured school children. Oral Health gift bags will also be distributed to all Glerum school children in observation of “National Children's Dental Health Month” and “Give Kids A Smile” Day.

WHERE: GLERUM Elementary School
342 W. Lakewood in Holland
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!





Kent County leaders side with Ottawa County farm's fight against planned trail

Published: Friday, January 28, 2011, 9:00 AM Updated: Friday, January 28, 2011, 9:39 AM



By **Rick Wilson** | **The Grand Rapids Press**

GRAND RAPIDS — Kent County commissioners at least for now are siding with an Ottawa County farm family which wants plans for a non-motorized pathway diverted from its route through the center of their property.

Kent County officials became involved in the Ottawa County dispute Thursday when they were asked to formally accept an additional \$150,000 state grant to pay for designing a pathway connecting the Fred Meijer White Pine and Musketawa trails.

After hearing concerns from members of the John Triick family, which owns a 40-acre beef cattle farm along the proposed connector route in Wright Township, Kent County officials voted 12-6 to table indefinitely acceptance of the added grant money.

Kent County officials are involved because their park's department has already received a \$1.9 million federal road grant for the project, which must be overseen by a local road agency. Kent County road officials were charged with designing the nearly \$2.4 million project for which it has already approved other funds because the majority of the project is in Kent County.

Kent County Commissioner Stan Ponstein, R-Grandville, asked for the delay, citing an Ottawa County planning report alleging the trail connector would cause irreparable harm to the Triicks' cattle feeding operation. He noted the Ottawa County Commission on Tuesday, after hearing from about 30 farmers, voted to urge state officials to reconsider the trail connector's location because of concerns it may put the Triicks out of business.

"Here, we're using county, state and federal tax dollars to put a farm out of business," Ponstein said. "The Ottawa County Commission, their parks department and planning department are all against this. The only ones who seem to be for it is our road commission."

Ottawa County Planning Director Mark Knudsen said his department, after seeking guidance from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and out-of-state animal behaviorists, believes a trail so close to a working feed operation would disrupt cattle, which are supposed to feed almost constantly. It also could present liability for the Triicks, who cross the proposed pathway up to 100 times daily during harvest.

"After conducting several site visits and going out of state to talk to people who are expert animal behaviorists, people who have no interest in this other than to give us their honest opinion, I know this is not a case of 'not in my back yard,'" Knudsen said.

"There's a public safety issue and potential liability," he added. "The last thing farmers need to be worried about while working with heavy equipment is a child crossing the trail and not seeing them.

"We firmly believe this may drive the farmer out of business. That's how serious it is."

Knudsen believes there are safe alternatives, but the state Department of Natural Resources told The Press this week that all viable alternatives have been investigated and ruled out. Kent County officials note the Triicks bought their farm from a railroad company in 1932 and have long known it was bisected by an easement which the state bought from the Central Railroad in 1993.

Tom Byl, assistant director of engineering for the Kent County Road Commission which has been charged with designing the trail connection, said he agrees with the state and notes several of the alternatives are less safe, as they cross more highways and driveways.

"It's the safest, most economical route," Byl said of the path through the farm. "My concern about one of the alternate routes is that they'd put it about 20 feet from their neighbor's house."

Byl also took issue with the assertion that Kent County road officials back the project.

"We're doing what the DNR has asked us to do," Byl said. "We're designing a trail in an easement that's been provided to us by the DNR."

The nearly nine-mile connector would link the 24.5 mile Musketawa Trail with some 245 miles of state rail trails, including the 92-mile White Pine Trail.

Knudsen hopes to set up a meeting with incoming DNR Director Rodney Stokes to see if a compromise can be reached.

E-mail the author of this story: localnews@grpress.com

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