



County of Ottawa *Administrator's Office*

Alan G. Vanderberg
County Administrator

12220 Fillmore Street, Room 331, West Olive, Michigan 49460

(616) 738-4068

e-mail: avanderberg@miottawa.org

County Administrator's Weekly Digest March 11, 2011

2011 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

I have received very positive feedback on the 2011 State of the County Address it has been placed on MiOttawa.org and can be found by following this link <http://www.miottawa.org/>.

I mentioned during the State of the County Address that we would be completing an Ottawa County Dashboard containing the same indicators as the Michigan Dashboard. The Ottawa County Dashboard can be found by following this link

http://www.miottawa.org/CoGov/Depts/Planning/pdf/Dashboard_032011.pdf.

The Holland Sentinel will likely do an article on the Ottawa County Dashboard this weekend.

MASTER PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR FORMER GOLF COURSE (John Scholtz)

Ottawa County Parks kicked off a park master planning process last week for the former Holland Country Club site in the City of Holland. A public input meeting was held on March 8 to gather comments on the project from neighbors and other interested citizens. Potential recreational uses of the property include hiking and cross-country ski trails, a paved greenway trail linking parks and preserves along the greenway corridor, nature interpretation, a nature play area, picnic facilities, and disc golf. Based on input received at the meeting, a conceptual plan of proposed improvements for the site will be presented at a second public meeting to be held on April 5, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Ministry Center of the Calvary Reformed Church, 995 E. Eighth Street in Holland. The public is invited to submit comments and suggestions by contacting the parks office prior to that meeting.

Habitat restoration is a key goal for the property which involves Ottawa County Parks, working with partners, to implement best management practices identified in the Macatawa Watershed Implementation Plan including wetland and stream restoration in the lower riverfront areas within the 122 acre park property. Partners include the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) watershed project and the Outdoor Discovery Center/Macatawa Greenway. Plans call for 32 acres of wetland restoration through a \$646,800 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant program. This project will supplement 21 acres of wetland mitigation funded and constructed in late 2010 by Request Foods, a private business that paid Ottawa County Parks \$73,000 for the right to construct a wetland mitigation project on the property. The Request Foods wetlands, which were carefully designed to enhance and restore the site, will replace wetlands that were removed while expanding the company's operations at its Holland Township location at a ratio of 2 new acres for every acre removed. Both the EPA funded grant project and the privately funded mitigation project will create wetlands and stabilize stream banks which will reduce non-point source pollutant loading to Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan and reduce phosphorous levels. The highly visible restoration projects with restored plant and wildlife communities will provide excellent opportunities for watershed education in addition to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Holland Country Club property was acquired by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission in March of 2010 for \$450,000. Funding was provided by the county parks millage plus \$70,000 in donated funds raised by the Outdoor Discovery Center / Macatawa Greenway Partnership. The EPA funded wetland project and first phase of recreational improvements are scheduled to start construction in the fall of 2011.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REVIEWS STRATEGIC PLAN, ESTABLISHES BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2011 (Keith Van Beek)

The Board of Commissioners met on Friday, February 25 at the Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing to conduct their annual Strategic Planning Session. The session, facilitated by County Administration, was very successful and serves a critical purpose in establishing the focus and direction of County efforts in these turbulent economic times. This update will provide a brief description and attachment which provides the ranking of various objectives by the Board. A complete Strategic and Business Plan for 2011 will be finalized and posted to the County website in the coming month.

The Strategic Plan establishes the vision, mission, goals and values for the organization. This document from 2010 can be reviewed at www.miottawa.org, and is used to focus the direction of the activities of the County. The Board reviewed and confirmed the broad focus of the Strategic Plan, updated the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis and then discussed the specific goals and objectives that set the Business Plan for the coming year. This Business Plan will be developed and published in the coming month, and comprises a list of specific objectives that serve as action steps to achieve the Strategic Plan. The Commissioners go through a ranking of the main goals and various objectives discussed. The attachment provides the results of that ranking exercise, and is used to prioritize the work of the County in the coming year.

MLGMA MEA CULPA

In the last Digest I listed many Ottawa County local government managers that attended the conference. An obvious risk when you list people is that you might miss someone and I indeed missed Craig Bessinger, City Manager of Ferrysburg.

REVENUE SHARING UPDATE (Don Stypula)

Picking up word from Lansing last week that the \$200 million in state funds that local governments will compete for by showing they have instituted "best practices" will likely include a request that those units have defined contribution, rather than defined benefit, retirement programs for their employees. As you know, the governor – in his recent budget message to lawmakers -- proposed eliminating statutory revenue sharing and creating the \$200 million pot state funds for locals to compete for if they can demonstrate that they have adopted his "best practices" which he will define in a special message to the House and Senate in Lansing later in March.

State Budget Director John Nixon, speaking this morning in Lansing, said the state will not ask locals do to anything it hasn't already done and he talked about how Michigan already had moved newly-hired state employees to a 401k-style retirement system. A defined contribution system has provided large savings for the state, he said, however he diverted further questions on what the local government reform piece will look like noting Governor Rick Snyder will give a special message on the topic later this month.

PREPARING FOR THE GOVERNOR'S SPECIAL MESSAGE - While we don't at this juncture know the Governor's definition for "best practices," we can certainly anticipate that they will include defined contribution benefit systems for employees and examples of how local units have collaborated and cooperated to form partnerships and develop agreements to share service delivery costs.

Start thinking about the steps that your local unit has taken in that regard. GVMC is finalizing a very simple on-line survey vehicle to ascertain cost-cutting and service sharing activities in the Metro

Council region. We will populate a database with the information you provide in that survey and share that with Governor Snyder and our legislators. I think all of us will be pleasantly surprised at the scope and depth of service sharing and other cost-cutting practices that you have implemented at the local level.

DHS CONSENT DECREE (Gongwer)

Corrigan: D.H.S. Working To Get Out Of Consent Decree

It's the goal of the Department of Human Services to get out from under the consent decree related to the Children's Rights lawsuit by the end of 's first term, Director Maura Corrigan said Tuesday.

"We need to run it and be the governors of our own system," she told the House Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee.

But Ms. Corrigan said once the department accomplishes that goal, the Legislature can't strip funding away from DHS because the state still will need to comply with federal caseload standards.

[Rep. Rashida Tlaib](#) (D-Detroit) expressed concern DHS lost a lot of employees with the retirement package offered last year and has not been quick enough to replace them, which is affecting local offices.

Ms. Corrigan said overall, 1,300 employees left and the department is making a big push to replace people. That includes filling 700 child welfare workers by August, she said, which is being aided by collaborating with five state colleges.

The outreach program with Michigan State University will likely lead to 100 job offers alone, Ms. Corrigan said.

Ray Holman, legislative liaison for UAW Local 6000, said while the unions appreciate the hiring of new workers, some staff still face caseloads of 700 to 1,000. Even more hiring is necessary, he said.

HOLLAND/ZEELAND FUTURE GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE

I served as a member of The Holland-Zeeland Strategic Leadership Forum for the past couple of years. This group was made up primarily of private sector CEO's but also included a public school superintendent, foundation executive director, and college president. The group published a white paper entitled *Holland-Zeeland Model Community Initiatives, A Three-Sector Approach to Economic and Community Revitalization*.

The white paper is attached to the Digest message and focuses recommendations in three areas as follows: 1) Business Growth Through Innovation and Diversified Industry Clusters; 2) World-Class Education and Talent Development; 3) Best Practice Governance for the 21st Century.

The next step in this process was to participate in steering group that is chaired by business leaders Dick Haworth and Tim Penning that is focusing on the third recommendation regarding best practice governance. Other than Jim Brooks and the facilitators, the other participants were local government officials from the Holland-Zeeland region. This group planned the upcoming 2 and a half day 21st Century Governance in the Greater Holland-Zeeland Community conference.

I agreed to do a couple of pre-conference presentations for attendees on the history, form, services, finance and issues of local government in Michigan. The outline for the presentation can be found at: <http://modelcomm.org/>

I presented to 25 people yesterday and the presentation was very well received. The second presentation for conference attendees is scheduled for March 15th at the Howard Miller Community Center.

Holland/Zeeland area Commissioners and some other County officials and department heads will be participating.

LEGISLATIVE FORUM

We received positive reviews regarding last week's last week's Legislative Forum held at the Fillmore Complex. Major issues were brewing at the Lakeshore Coordinating Council Board meeting down in Saugatuck that morning and late the previous meeting after talking to Commissioner Disselkoen I decided that I should support he and Commissioner Karsten, our two board members assigned to LCC.

Our delegation proposal was taken off of the table at the meeting.

We very much thank Sen. Meekhof, Rep. Haveman, Rep. Price, and Rep. Agema for their attendance at the forum and participation in what has been described to me as a robust discussion.

DO YOUR OWN STATE BUDGET

Commissioner Swartout referred us to the Center for Michigan website for a neat program where citizens can balance the state budget. The link follows:

<http://janus.pscinc.com/budgetsim/Default.aspx>