

# County Administrator's Digest

December 14, 2012

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## OUT AND ABOUT

**Brown Bag Lunches** We finished the latest round of brown bag lunches in November. Overall, lunches were well attended and very good discussions occurred.

**Rotary Club Speeches** I spoke at the Grand Haven Rotary Club – morning and lunch clubs a couple of weeks ago.

**Kent County Cultural Insight Council Presentation on Dutch Culture** The Kent County Cultural Insight Council was formed ten years ago and each month has a brown bag lunch and speaker on diversity. I gave a presentation on Dutch culture about 10 years ago and they invited me back to make the presentation again. I used a PowerPoint this time and updated the presentation and was a fun way to spend the lunch hour!

**Fox TV Morning Show** I was invited to appear briefly with Sara Brodhead and Mike Avery to talk to them about innovation in local government in this difficult economy. A link to the clip follows: The West Michigan group that has been meeting with the Lt. Governor and his staff on Personal Property Tax reform met with him to discuss his initial rollout of the reform and changes the group believes are necessary.

**Michigan Townships Association Christmas Dinner** I was a late fill in speaker for MDOT which had to cancel. I put together a brief talk on the early formation of Ottawa County and it was received well by the group.

**MAC Newsletter Article** Each month County Administrator's contribute and article to the MAC Newsletter, this month was my turn. The article is included in the digest. [\(click here\)](#)

**Georgetown Journal** Gill hosted a panel discussion consisting of myself, Grandville Mayor Jim Buck, Holland Township Manager Don Komejan, Georgetown Township Supervisor Dr. Dale Mohr. The panel discussed transportation, the budget, the economy, and other items.



### **DISNEY WAY (4C'S UPDATE)**

Ninety County leaders from 33 departments, courts, and agencies met with Bill Capodagli, co-author of The Disney Way and co-owner of Capodogali-Jackson Consulting for 2 and ½ days a couple of weeks ago to work on developing a County-wide vision for Customer Service. The group reviewed the “values” and “story” developed by a steering committee of 22 County leaders that worked with Capodagli for a couple of ½ day sessions previously. The group developed draft “Codes of Conduct” and identified barriers to excellent customer service.

Misty and I met with Bill Capodagli earlier this week and discussed next steps including training for all County employees and inclusion of this training for new hires.

A Four C's Steering Committee consisting of Management Group members or their designees will meet once per month immediately after the management meeting to hear progress and give input on the Four C's initiative.

### **COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION**

New County Commissioners Roger Bergman; Al Dannenberg; Matt Fenske; and Dennis Van Dyke have completed what is undoubtedly the most thorough new commissioner orientation that we have done at Ottawa County. We used a template that I had helped develop at Kent County many years ago to create a 300 page book that outlines Ottawa County structure, services, finance, issues, etc. Keith did a magnificent job of organizing the book and Misty a magnificent job of producing the book under the pressure of Disney Way and a lot other things going on so they have my “thanks for job well done.” Chair Phil Kuyers and the three Commissioners who were elected two years ago, Stu Visser; Joe Bauman, and Greg De Jong also participated in this portion of the orientation and said it was valuable for them as well.

I traveled up to Big Rapids to attend the new commissioner training put on by MSU Extension and that was excellent. We also completed a tour of some of the larger County facilities during the afternoon of the second day of orientation.

We were also fortunate to have three current and three new Commissioners attend the 2.5 day Disney Way session.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX REFORM**

**Ottawa County has been at the forefront of this issue and has participated on a West Michigan PPT work group that has met with the Lt. Governor and his staff over the past six months. The product we completed changed significantly about a month ago and it has been a challenge to keep up with the myriad of proposed changes and amendments since that time. Last night, the Legislature ended up adopting the Lt. Governor's package along with some changes that we spent up all day and into the evening negotiating.**

We were able to avoid the “nuclear option”, a new bill that was dropped into the debate on the last day of session yesterday. A book could be written on this but I really at this point want to say that I appreciate the efforts the West Michigan work team that had representatives from the GVMC, City of GR, Wyoming, Ottawa and Kent counties. Mayor Kurt Dykstra also played a major role in getting this done yesterday. The GONGWER summary follows and the links to each bill are below.

Senate Bill 1068

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(3ve3d445ouuqo0bloqqkhunm\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectname=2012-SB-1068](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(3ve3d445ouuqo0bloqqkhunm))/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectname=2012-SB-1068)

Senate Bill 1067

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/Senate/pdf/2012-SCB-1067.pdf>

Senate Bill 1066

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/Senate/pdf/2012-SCB-1066.pdf>

Senate Bill 1065

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/Senate/pdf/2012-SCB-1065.pdf>

House Bill 6022

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billengrossed/House/pdf/2012-HEBS-6022.pdf>

House Bill 6023

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/House/pdf/2012-HCB-6023.pdf>

House Bill 6024

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billengrossed/House/pdf/2012-HEBS-6024.pdf>

House Bill 6025

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/House/pdf/2012-HCB-6025.pdf>

House Bill 6026

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billconcurrent/House/pdf/2012-HCB-6026.pdf>

**I had the most contact with two of our Legislators, Rep. Amanda Price and Rep. Joe Haveman. They were under intense pressure and represented our area well.**

Thursday, December 13, 2012, 10:36 PM

House OKs Calley Plan On P.P.T.

A frantic effort to wrangle enough votes in the House to phase out the industrial portion of the personal property tax and set up a mechanism to reimburse local governments for the revenue they would lose paid off tonight as the House passed the legislation.

As was first reported by Gongwer News Service earlier today, the personal property tax plan designed in large measure by Lt. Governor Brian Calley came close to collapse as House members balked at its complexity and lack of full reimbursement to local governments. A new plan was backed by some business groups, namely the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and Michigan Manufacturers Association.

The Calley plan would phase out the industrial portion of the tax from 2016-22 and reimburse local governments 80 percent of their revenue loss from the end of the PPT if their revenue loss was at least equal to 2.5 percent of their total property tax revenues. The revenue to reimburse local governments would come from diverting a portion of use tax revenue away from the general fund to a new authority that would then disburse the funding to local governments.

The alternate plan would have simply exempted all industrial personal property purchased January 1, 2013, and afterward from the tax. That would have created an informal phaseout where, eventually, as equipment purchased before that date depreciates or is taken out of use, the tax on industrial personal property disappears. It was unclear what, if any, replacement revenue would have been involved, but business groups said that was not their priority. House Republican spokesperson Ari Adler said earlier in the day that any PPT plan would involve replacement revenue for local governments.

About 6:30 p.m., local government groups and business groups agreed to try to get the votes for the Calley plan with the local government groups going neutral on it. They were given an hour, but it took more than three to assemble enough support. An intense effort to round up the necessary 56 votes kicked off and succeeded a few hours later with passage of HB 6022 (passed 57-52), HB 6024 (57-52), HB 6025 (56-53) and HB 6026 (56-53). Those are the bills to set up the replacement mechanism. The voting board had to be held open for several minutes to get to the minimum 56 votes.

The bills to phase out the PPT (SB 1065, SB 1066, SB 1067, SB 1068, SB 1069, SB 1070, SB 1071 and SB 1072) are expected to be an easier lift when they come up later tonight.

Gongwer News Service will have more on this story in today's Michigan Report.

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### **Comprehensive Water Resources Study** (Mark Knudsen)

The MSU Institute for Water Research (IWR) has unveiled the initial findings of a Comprehensive Water Resources Study that is being conducted on behalf of the Ottawa County Planning Commission. The findings identified a number of potentially challenging issues related to groundwater quantity and quality in the County and also highlighted the need for further study.

As you may remember, the Water Resource Study was commissioned in 2010 in response to emerging issues associated with groundwater quantity and quality. These include, but are not limited to, reports of diminishing capacity in some water wells; the presence of elevated levels of sodium chloride and nitrates in some water wells; and isolated clusters of basement flooding during 100-year to 500-year storm events.

The initial results of the MSU Study indicate that more water is being withdrawn from the County's groundwater aquifers than can be replenished. In other words, they are being mined. The Study results also indicate a correlation between the decline in groundwater capacity and elevated levels of sodium chloride which are appearing in a number of water wells...some at levels that are above drinking standards and levels that burn crops. It appears the withdrawals may be pulling the saline-rich water from deeper depths of groundwater since the upper levels of the aquifers are being reduced. In order to determine a more precise timetable regarding the future sustainability of the aquifer based on current and future withdrawal rates, a second more detailed study must be conducted. Because of the implications for agriculture, industry, and residents, the County will be contacting local units of government and other organizations with an interest in this issue to involve them in helping develop a solution to this emerging problem and to request their partnership in funding the next study.

Additionally, since there has been so much interest generated by these findings, the Planning Commission will host two more public presentations by MSU IWR. The presentations will be held on Nov 15<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm and Nov 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Main Conference Room of the Fillmore Street Complex. For more information about the Study or upcoming meetings, please contact Aaron Bodby-Mast at [abodbyl-mast@miottawa.org](mailto:abodbyl-mast@miottawa.org) or 738-4689.

### **SOUTHWEST OTTAWA LANDFILL UPDATE**

**Drain Commissioner Paul Geerlings heard some information that he shared with the Management Group at its normal Monday meeting that indicated that the Southwest Ottawa Landfill is basically clean and we do not need to be spending the large annual amount as we currently do to purge the groundwater. I didn't believe this to be the case and contacted Prein & Newhoff, engineer for the landfill for 30 some years and confirmed my belief. Their response follows below:**

Al:

Last week you asked me to respond to some of the comments that have been circulating in the press regarding the groundwater contamination in the area of the Southwest Ottawa Landfill and the proposed Park West Drain. Apparently some statements have been made that the groundwater is clean enough that it meets NPDES discharge permit requirements. You, in turn, have been questioned as to why there is continued treatment at the site.

I believe that some statements made in the 2011 Annual Monitoring Report prepared by us and submitted to the MDEQ were taken out of context. We do say on page 19: "Prior to any treatment, the water being extracted at all of the downgradient purge wells met all NPDES discharge permit limits for VOCs in 2011."

There are actually 12 purge wells at the site, and while all are downgradient of the landfill, we actually refer to them in two groups. Four of the purge wells are adjacent to the landfill and are capturing the most contaminated groundwater. We refer to these as the "Landfill Purge Wells." The other eight are 2,500 to 4,500 feet further downgradient of the landfill, along James Street and west of 168<sup>th</sup> Street. We refer to this group as the "Downgradient Purge Wells." This is the group the quoted statement above referred to.

While these do meet the NPDES permit requirements before treatment, the current agreement with the State does not allow turning off the purge wells until monitoring wells around the purge wells meet background or non-detectable concentrations of several parameters. This condition is not currently being met.

We have brought this up several times with the MDEQ and will continue to do so because we do feel that there is very little benefit to continuing to treat the water from this "downgradient" set of purge wells. The new purge wells next to the landfill have only been in and operating for just under four years now. As we gain enough evidence to show that these are capturing the contaminated groundwater at the landfill, we will continue to press the MDEQ on turning off the "downgradient" set.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me.

Barbara E. Marczak, P.E.  
Prein&Newhof

#### **OCCDA DISPATCH STATISTICS FOR NOVEMBER** (Tim Smith)

The numbers handled through Central Dispatch for November 2012 were:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Total Incidents –</b> | 8,857 even with November 2011 and up 3.2% YTD over 2011    |
| <b>Fire Incidents –</b>  | 1,100 up 5.8% over November 2011 and up 3.3% YTD over 2011 |
| <b>Law Incidents –</b>   | 7,757 even with November 2011 and up 3.3% YTD over 2011    |

- 911 Calls –** 7,922 down 9.3% over November 2011 and up 1% YTD over 2011
- 911 Hang Up calls -** 866 down 28.2% over November 2011 and down 7% YTD over 2011
- Wireless 911 calls –** 85.0% of 911 calls for November and 86.3% of 911 calls YTD
- 911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less -** 93.6% for November and 93.8% YTD 2012
- (NENA recommended standard is 90% within 10 seconds)**

(NENA recommended standard is 90% within 10 seconds)

### **PURCHASING CARDS (P-CARDS)** (Bob Spaman)

Approximately one year ago, the County implemented a Purchasing Card (P-Card) system to purchase goods under \$1,000 with four departments participating in a pilot program. The departments included Administration, Parks, IT and Fiscal Services. Right after the processing of the first monthly statements we discovered that importing information from Chase Bank did not work correctly due to the account structure in our old New World system. It was then decided to continue with P-cards for the pilot departments only until our new financial system, MUNIS Systems, implemented their P-card software.

The software has been implemented, the account structure has been corrected and we are ready to move to the next phase of the implementation with five more departments. Those departments are Human Resources, Treasurer, Clerk, Facilities, and Equalization. The effective date for their orientation is the week of November 5. We will begin rolling out the P-card program to more departments in December and the beginning of 2013.

The P-card has been around for many years as a purchasing device. It is basically a debit card, the vendor is paid within a day or two instead of waiting a month or more for his payment. The county does not pay Chase Bank until possibly 50 days or more after purchases are made. The data from the bank is imported into the MUNIS software and pushed out to the people who made any purchases during the prior billing cycle. The card holder will have the ability in the Munis system to select their transactions and code them to the correct account or accounts as necessary. Once the transactions are approved by Purchasing, Chase Bank will be paid and transactions will be converted to AP invoices. This will allow departments the ability to view transaction through vendor inquiry.

The card has no liability to the cardholder unless it is misused. There are strict security measures that will not allow the card holder to buy certain items or use certain stores. The card also has purchase limits on single purchases and daily limits based on the cardholder and department's needs.

The savings to the County includes a large decrease in accounts payable checks and a reduction in time spent processing invoices for payment. The County receives a rebate based on its annual spend. This past year we received \$6500 in rebates.

### **CENTRALIZED PURCHASING** (Bob Spaman)

Ottawa County will begin consolidating the purchasing function in one central location over the upcoming months. Centralized purchasing is considered a best practice and is recommended by Munis, the County's new ERP software vendor. Currently departments purchase many of the same goods and services. Consolidation of like purchases will eliminate duplication of effort. It will also allow departments to focus on their core business which will result in better pricing, greater discounts, and agreeable terms.

A professionally trained procurement staff will manage the procurement function resulting in a consistent RFP process through one source. The purchasing staff will assure compliance with the County's Purchasing Policy and federal and grant requirement. Centralized purchasing will manage contracts for goods and services, oversee the RFP process, utilize cooperative purchasing agreements, Reverse Auction and track expiring contracts. Response to bid openings will be centrally located and easier for vendors to understand. All purchases will be open to public scrutiny which will result in objectivity and lessen the potential problems that can come from use of "preferred vendors".

Purchasing will be the single area for vendor registration and contact. Purchasing will also play the bad guy and be responsible for pricing discrepancies. In addition Purchasing will monitor and document vendor performance such as failure to honor bid, substitution of items without County's prior approval, and lack of compliance with terms of procurement contract.

This transition will not be an overnight process and will take 2 – 3 years to fully implement. Beginning after the first of the year Purchasing will be meeting with departments at their location to review this change and any upcoming bids the department may have. Purchasing will also review potential surplus materials, the Reverse Auction, and any vendor performance issues departments may currently have.

### **OCCDA HIRES NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Tom Valdez has an extensive dispatch background. He served as the civilian Dispatch Director of the Rockford Regional Communications Center for the Michigan State Police, was the former Clare County E911 Director, Commander of the State Police's Gaylord Regional Dispatch Center, and was the Chairman of the Technical Board of Roscommon Counties E911 center when it was created. Tom Valdez retired as a lieutenant from the Michigan State Police and is also retired from the US Naval Reserves. He currently resides with his wife Ellen Valdez in Fruitport Mi.



## **MICHIGAN WORKS CONVERSION TO DIRECT SERVICE MODEL** (Bill Raymond)

Beginning in November of 2011, Ottawa County Michigan Works (OCMWA) began looking at the possibility of changing how we provided services. Due to a policy change in November 2011 at the Workforce Development Agency/State of Michigan, local Michigan Works areas could exercise the option of providing services internally rather than being required to subcontract for those services.

OCMWA administrative staff began working with the workforce development board and Ottawa County Administration on a proposal to bring the frontline services in-house and was able to do so in two phases. The working title for this process/project was the "Direct Service Model" and much of the transition was made by July 1, 2012 and the project was completed by October 1, 2012. The project was separated into two phases due to different contract and program years for OCMWA and having two phases made the process more manageable.

Also, a big thank you needs to go the Ottawa County Human Resources department, especially Jennifer Orme, who worked diligently with us in bringing staff on board. We had about 900 total applicants (over 500 unique individuals) for 21 positions. HR didn't skip a beat and the hiring process was smooth and efficient (and we got a lot of great new talent in Ottawa County)

From the perspective of OCMWA administration the transition has been very successful and the list below reflects some of the results we have seen as a result of the transition.

**Contract Reductions:** Under the former contractor model, OCMWA administered over 80 separate contracts.

The staff time and work involved to administer these contracts has been greatly diminished by eliminating the majority of the contracts through the direct service model. NOTE: Some contracts with training providers and select others remain, which still require some administration. In those areas where it makes sense to subcontract out services or processes, we will continue to do so.

**Flexibility in Staffing:** By having all service workers employed by a single entity, we have seen a major reduction in the barriers that in the past have prevented cross-training and sharing of staff and responsibilities.

**Staffing Stability:** Under the subcontract model there was always an inherent sense of anxiety every time the contracts came up for bid. By taking the staff in-house we have seen a lessening of this anxiety. In addition, historically, OCMWA has had a lower turnover rate than that of subcontractors and we anticipate this lower turnover factor to continue to be the norm.

**Streamlined Supervision:** The direct service mode has streamlined supervisory positions, which in many cases under the subcontract model were seen to be redundant and conflicting. There were times, under the subcontract model, when various subcontractors were unnecessarily competing with one another, which led to less effective and efficient services being provided.

**Conflict Resolution:** By eliminating redundant supervisory layers, it would be expected that performance is-

sues and conflict could be resolved more quickly and efficiently.

**Streamlined Staffing:** By converting to the direct service model, we were able to reduce the number of total staff by about 5 FTE's, thus saving some funds and increasing the amount of funding that could go toward job training for unemployed individuals.

**Staff Alignment & Cohesiveness:** We have noticed a marked increase in staff morale and connectedness, as well as alignment with OCMWA administration and the strategic plan of the Ottawa County Workforce Board. One of our goals was to achieve this type of staff alignment and to really involve frontline staff in decision making and program implementation by fully utilizing the talent they bring to the process. This seems to be happening.

**Staff Camaraderie:** One of my values for any workplace is to have it be a place where people can use their talent, decision making skills and insights to make a difference in the lives of people they serve and work with. Another value is to have a place of work that people enjoy coming to and that knows how to have fun while accomplishing great things. I think we are really on track with this piece and we continue to try to set a tone of engaging in meaningful, visionary work and having fun at the same time. Staff pot luck's and luncheons, holiday parties and simply celebrating achievements can go a long way in building morale.

**Ottawa County 4 C Initiative:** I think what we are achieving really fits into the county 4 C initiative – we are working on building communication, customer service, continuous improvement and cultural competence and we look forward to being part of this process as the county moves forward.

We're excited about the changes that are taking place at Michigan Works. There are many challenges facing workforce development, both statewide and nationally, but we think we have one of the premier workforce development agencies in the state and beyond. If you haven't had a chance to visit of our service center, please give me a call and we can arrange a tour of the one of the centers. They are located at 121 Clover Street in Holland and 1836 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Grand Haven.

Bill Raymond

Executive Director

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### **GRANT AWARDS ANNOUNCED** (John Scholtz)

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund announced grant awards on Wednesday last week and Ottawa County Parks was pleased to receive two grants. One grant will help expand the Grand River Open Space in Tallmadge Township while the other will assist in funding two additional universally accessible kayak launches

on the Grand River. Four other Ottawa County communities were also awarded Trust Fund grants. All grants still need to be authorized through an appropriation bill through the state's legislative process with final approval expected in mid-2013.

**Grand River Open Space Expansion:** Pending successful negotiations with the landowner, the acquisition grant will provide \$130,000 toward expansion of the county's Grand River Open Space through the purchase of 57 acres of natural land including 1,800 feet on the Grand River. The acquisition would expand Grand River Open Space to 290 acres with 8,256 feet (1.56 miles) of riverfront.

The land proposed for acquisition features a high forested riverbank bordered by wooded wetlands. Proposed uses of the site include trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, bird watching and nature study, plus hunting and fishing. The site would be open to hunting and fishing in accordance with DNR rules and regulations with no special permits required. The property is within the view shed of Ottawa County's Grand River Ravines property (located on a bluff directly across the river) and acquisition will ensure that the natural qualities of the view are preserved. This preserved natural corridor will also protect habitat for an active eagle's nest located on the Grand River Ravines site.

**Universally Accessible Kayak Launches:** Ottawa County was awarded \$47,500 in grant funds to help fund two barrier-free kayak launch docks to be located at strategic park locations along the Grand River. These launches are unique in that they provide a stable platform to enter and exit canoes or kayaks for novice and/or physically disabled users and assist them in a smooth transition into the water.

The two new launches will be located at Grand River County Park in Georgetown Township and Connor Bayou County Park in Robinson Township and will complement an existing similar launch installed at the Eastmanville Bayou County Park site in 2011. Together these three sites will provide an excellent network of accessible locations along the length of the Grand River in Ottawa County for people of various skill levels and physical abilities. The project also complements the recently implemented Grand River Heritage Water Trail and website.

**Other Grant Awards for Ottawa County Communities:** In addition to the county park projects, congratulations to four other communities in Ottawa County for also being recommended for grant awards through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund:

- **Crockery Township** - \$120,000 for North Bank Trail Acquisition
- **Village of Spring Lake** - \$93,000 for Mill Point Park Expansion

**Spring Lake Township** - \$46,500 for Rycenga Park Picnic Shelter Improvements

**City of Hudsonville** - \$238,900 for Village Green Property Acquisition

### **ISD 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MATERIAL**

Please [click here](#) to see the attachment.

**GMVC WEEKLY UPDATE – JOHN WEISS**

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

## OTTAWA COUNTY MOVES FORWARD WITH 4 C's INITIATIVE

By, Al Vanderberg, County Administrator

We reached a point last summer where a number of Ottawa County initiatives had been accomplished. An overhaul of our employee health benefit put a robust health management plan in place, taking a meat axe to future claims expenses. Ottawa County also implemented a MERS Defined Contribution Retirement Plan for all new hires. In recent years we capped a 15-year building program with the completion of the Ottawa County Courthouse. Lastly, several new Information Technology systems, with the largest being the comprehensive justice imaging system, had been fulfilled. As the Board of Commissioners and Administration evaluated where we were as an organization and where we would like to be, the Four C's Strategic Initiative emerged: Communication, Customer Service, Continuous Improvement, and Cultural Intelligence. Each "C" was carefully chosen to catapult the County culture to the next level in these critically important areas.

### **Customer Service**

A challenge of county management in Michigan is the multitude of power bases that exist, instead of the streamlined structures found in other forms of local government. Daryl Delabbio, Kent County Administrator/Controller, likens county government to a "tapestry of governments" instead of a single hierarchical organization. This type of architecture has some positive benefit but also some negative impacts. One of the negative effects is the lack of a cohesive customer service strategy. Most citizens, quite rightly, do not distinguish between courts, administrative departments, and elective offices. They see the county as one entity. And, for better or worse, they enter the road commission into that equation as well.

The County Board contracted with Capodagli-Jackson consulting to move the customer service initiative forward. Bill Capodagli and Lynn Jackson are the co-authors of the bestselling management tome, "The Disney Way". They are also a husband and wife team who does international organizational consulting from their home in Ottawa County. Twenty-two County leaders spent two half-day sessions last week working with Capodagli compiling a rough framework for a countywide customer service vision and the County "story". Next, eighty-nine County leaders will work with Capodagli over a two and a half day timeframe to polish the vision and story. Next, the consultants will work with Administration and HR appraising hiring practice, new employee orientation and performance evaluation so the customer service initiative becomes completely systemized. Finally, they will deliver an all employee training program.

### **Communication**

Over the years, the success that Ottawa County has had communicating with the media has been inconsistent. A Communication Plan was developed by the Board of Commissioners, however its implementation was left largely on those with more pressing responsibilities. At the same time, earned media has become far more evasive. In cost cutting efforts, media companies have consolidated, reduced their journalistic staff, decreased distribution schedules, and opted to publish online in real time. As a result, it is more important than ever to be accessible, receptive, and timely. Reporters race

to be first to get a story online, in many cases before full fact checking has occurred. In one case, we documented four incorrect stories published on the same issue on the same afternoon by the same media outlet before the reporters call was returned and the story corrected.

Along with being responsive, we plan to push news out more by writing the stories on important Board actions and other business complete with photos and quotes and delivering them ready made for publication.

To carry out these duties, we are creating a new Countywide Marketing and Communications Manager position in the County Administrator's Office. Other duties include establishing and marketing an Ottawa County Speaker's Bureau, enhancing social media efforts, and supporting internal communication. Eventually, communications services will be available to County departments and offices through the Administrator's Office both for emergent situations and ongoing training and support to help build communications capability throughout the County.

### **Continuous Improvement**

The County has accomplished many initiatives that have improved business work processes through departmental reviews, program evaluations, and implementation of new information technology systems that have saved substantial dollars over the past eight years. However, these are point in time improvements and leader motivated. We plan to implement LEAN principles and educate and motivate each employee to participate daily in reviewing work processes and procedures to identify better, faster, and more effective ways to do things. See the March MAC Newsletter where I wrote about this more extensively in an article titled "Conquering the Lizard Brain".

### **Cultural Intelligence**

Another new initiative for 2013 will be the launch of an in-house cultural intelligence effort to complement efforts by major private and non-profit sector organizations in the County.

Ottawa County participates in the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance (LEDA) and on its CEO Advisory Council. Major employers have made it clear that their lifeline to future prosperity is critically linked to the ability to attract and retain diverse creative talent on a global scale.

As a County, we need to make sure we are doing everything we can to understand and have a positive impact on our overall culture by embracing diversity. While the County government is not competing for talent worldwide our major employers are. LEDA has completed a business case analysis with testimony from major employers and will be delivering an educational program tailored to the specific needs of each functional area, i.e. courts, law enforcement, health, etc. We plan to have all employees trained beginning next year so that we all understand the critical importance of diversity to the economic prosperity of Ottawa County in the future. Thus, we can be having the right conversations in the community and be a positive agent for change.

All of the Four C's are ultimately dependent on a workforce that has a great and progressive attitude. We are blessed with employees who have a seemingly endless desire to learn and improve and help push the County to the next level through the structure of the Four C's initiative.



OTTAWA AREA INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BUILDING**

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November 21, 2012

Mr. Alan Vanderberg  
Ottawa County  
1220 Fillmore Street  
Room 210  
West Olive, MI 49460

Dear Mr. Vanderberg,

As our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration continues, it's our pleasure to continue to provide you with information about the O AISD's programs and initiatives.

So far, we've highlighted Thompson M-TEC's new high-demand FANUC robotics training and an overview of one of the most successful and respected high school career/technical training centers in the state: the Careerline Tech Center.

In this mailing, we're highlighting one of our newest entrepreneurial initiatives: Delta Math.

Never before has there been so much pressure to insure our students are meeting state standards, particularly in reading and math. Consequently, the OAISD employs a team of instructional experts in every core academic area, including reading, math, science, health, social studies, and the arts. These experts work with teachers in our service area (all schools in Ottawa County and Hamilton and Saugatuck in Allegan County) to improve teaching and learning.

**If you're like me, you might have grown up thinking you weren't very good at math.** Chances are, however, there was just a place where you got "stuck." Because math skills are sequential (addition before subtraction, etc.) getting "stuck" can really limit a student's confidence and future success in math.

Teachers, hungry for a way to identify early which specific math skills were causing their students to struggle, turned to the OAISD for answers. Enclosed is the rest of the story... the amazing story of Delta Math!

As always, do not hesitate to contact me if you'd like to learn more.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen'.

Karen McPhee  
Superintendent

*Mission Statement:  
We provide and enrich  
educational opportunities  
for students, schools,  
and communities.*





## Educators Weigh in on Delta Math:

*"Delta Math data is providing a wealth of information. Where large numbers of students fall short on a standard, it has opened up great conversations between grade level teachers. It has also spurred the re-evaluation of lessons, and teachers can constantly monitor each student's progress in order to best meet that student's specific needs."*

*"The Delta Math program has been the greatest gift for our teachers, and in turn benefits all students in daily and weekly instruction. The program provides immediate data and feedback so that teachers can make instructional adjustments and students can understand which areas they need more instruction on to gain a deeper understanding. Teachers are then following through with intervention groups to help students right away."*

*"We have seen Delta Math do great things in our middle school in just the first year. I am looking forward to see what we are able to do next year, now that I feel like I have an even better grasp of the program. Please let me know if there are any opportunities to get more involved with your Delta Math program."*

# We All Can Be Good At Math... No, Really!!

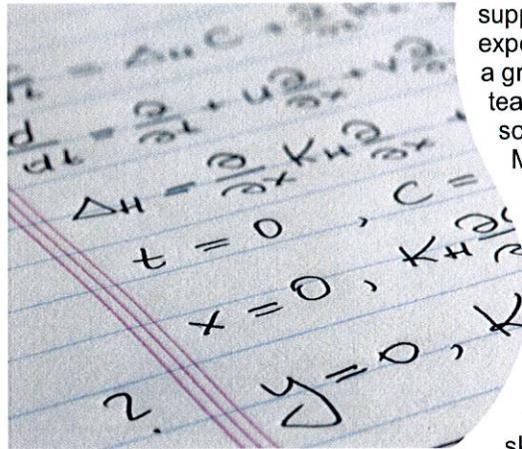
Many early academic skills, particularly in reading and math, are learned in sequential order...sounding out words before reading them, addition before subtraction, etc.

So imagine how powerful it is when a teacher can quickly assess if a student hasn't mastered a fundamental skill and then reteach that skill before the student moves on to a more difficult skill and struggles. This early intervention is now considered key in improving student achievement. Think of it as "an ounce of prevention" vs. "a pound of cure."

Teachers have had ample tools to assess reading skills for years. Math, however, had no practical tool that a teacher could use to assess a student's mastery of specific fundamental skills. Until now.



Five years ago, elementary principals in the area school districts approached OAISD Math Consultant Mike Klavon and asked him to research math skill screening tools for their students. He could not find any that supported the new Michigan grade level expectations. Therefore, he decided to lead a group of local math consultants, coaches, teachers, and psychologists to develop screening tools that eventually became Delta Math.



Delta Math is a web-based screening system that has changed the way teachers teach math. Students are assessed three times a year; student-specific reports are returned to the teacher within hours; remediation can begin the next day. Students catch up quickly and are ready to master the next skill. In addition to the on-line screeners, reports and progress monitoring resources, teachers are provided with guidance to determine the instructional needs of each student based on formative assessment data. Screeners are available for first grade through Algebra 1 students. The development of Geometry screeners are under consideration for the near future. The result: math achievement scores are on the rise in the OAISD!

Delta Math is provided free of charge to schools in the OAISD. But news of the program's value and success in improving student math achievement has spread quickly. The OAISD now sells the program to over 100 school districts in two states and the demand is growing.

Delta Math is making it possible for teachers to approach math the same way we have always approached reading: every student can and will succeed!

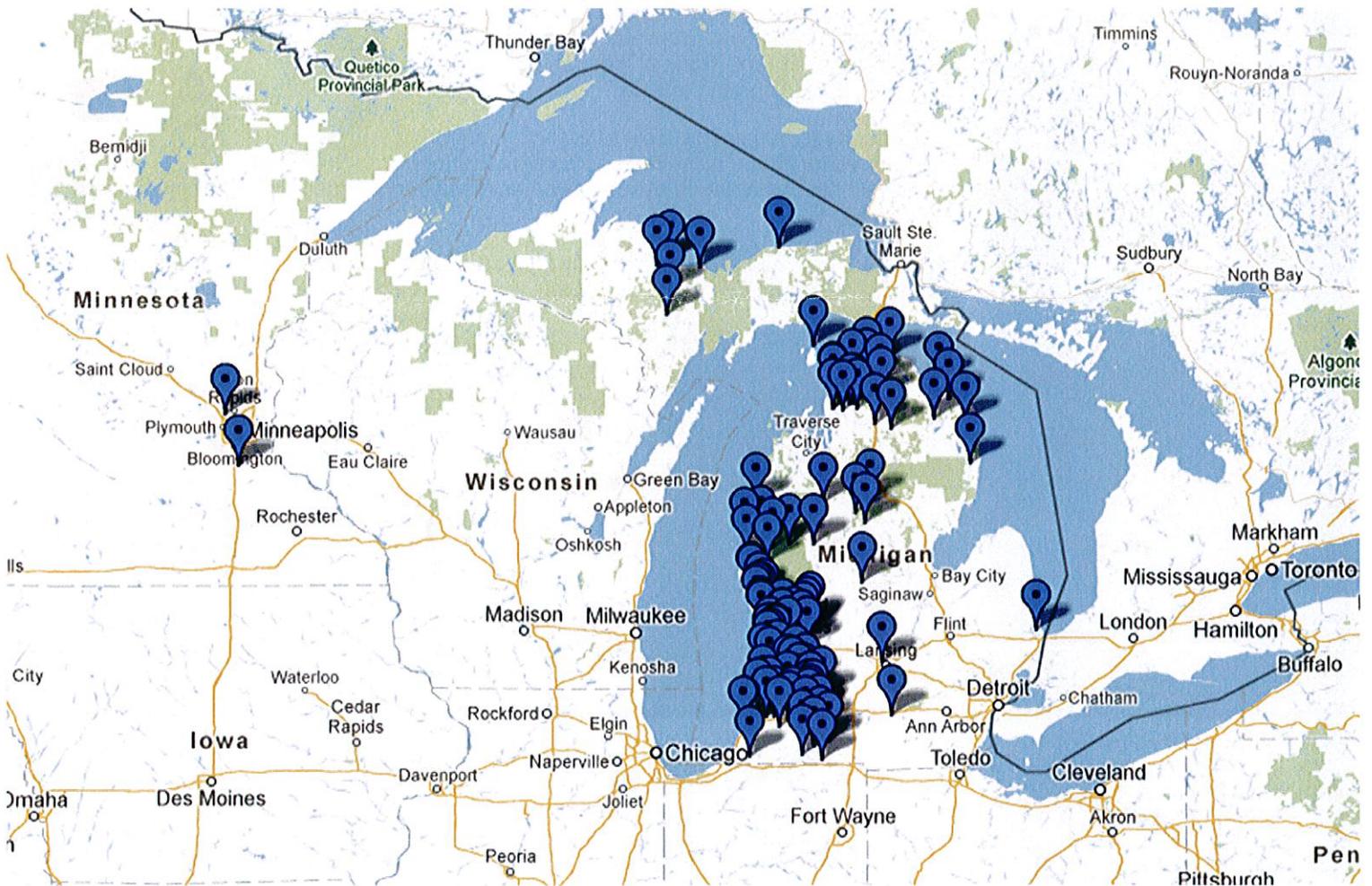
deltamath.org

Turn the page to see how far the OAISD's Delta Math system has grown...



**75,000+ students**  
**250+ schools**  
**100+ school districts**  
**2 states**

**= Delta Math**



For more information about the DELTA MATH RtI Program, please visit our Program Overview page or contact us via e-mail at [deltamath@oaisd.org](mailto:deltamath@oaisd.org).



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www.oaisd.org

October 25, 2012

Mr. Alan Vanderberg  
Ottawa County  
1220 Fillmore Street  
Room 210  
West Olive, MI 49460

Dear Mr. Vanderberg,

Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration continues at the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District as does our initiative to inform our communities' leaders about the important work we do every day on behalf of the 55,000 students we serve.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> mailing, we shared a *MiBiz* story about our investment in robotics training for adult students at Thompson M-TEC. This time we're focusing on one of our most well-known and visible programs...the Careerline Tech Center.

**Since its opening on the corner of US-31 and Port Sheldon in 1976, the Tech Center has helped prepare tens of thousands of area high school students for well-paying jobs in marketable careers. Did you know...**

- *many of our students also earn college credit while attending the Tech Center?*
- *our programs evolve continuously to reflect current labor needs?*
- *each program is guided by an advisory council of professionals working locally in that field?*

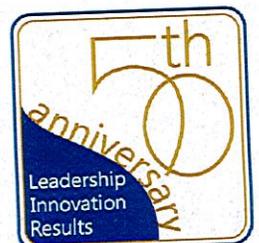
I hope you'll enjoy the brief Tech Center overview and student success story enclosed. As a community, we can be proud of this tremendous asset right in our own backyard. As an intermediate school district, it has been our privilege to provide this exceptional educational opportunity for area high school students for over 35 years.

If you haven't been to the Tech Center in a while and would like to see how we've grown, please do not hesitate to contact me. The students, teachers, and I would be happy to give you a guided tour. It's impressive!

Best,

Karen McPhee  
Superintendent

*Mission Statement:  
We provide and enrich  
educational opportunities  
for students, schools,  
and communities.*





# OAISD's Careerline Tech Center: A Formula for Success

## CTC Course Offerings:

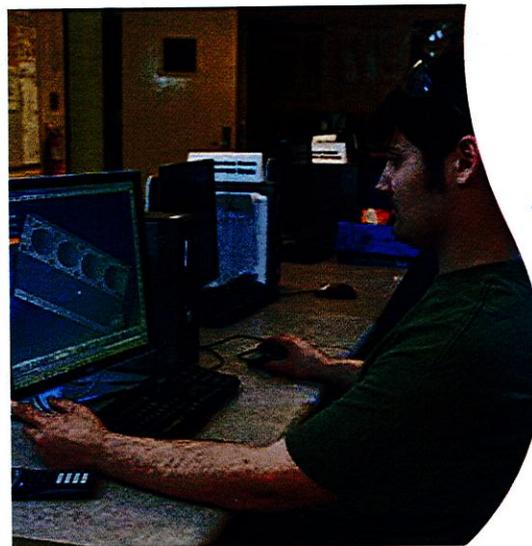
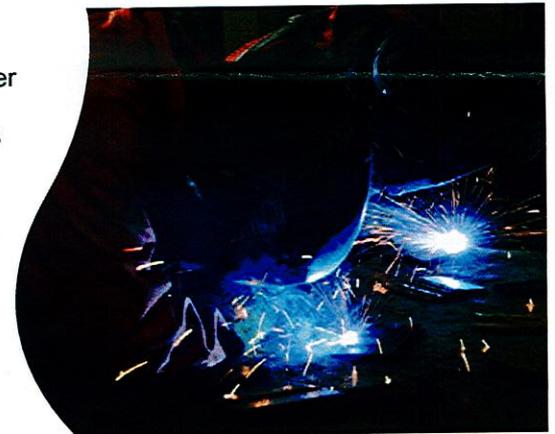
- Media Production
- Printing/Graphic Arts
- Visual Communication
- Culinary & Pastry Arts
- Finance/Business
- PC/Network Technologies
- Web Tech/Game Design
- Marketing & Entrepreneurship
- Auto Body Repair
- Auto Mechanics
- Building Tech/Construction Management
- Diesel/Heavy Equipment Mechanics
- Electrical/Alternative Energy
- Engineering Design & Machine Technologies
- Water Conservation/Plumbing Systems
- Welding
- Environmental & Agricultural Sciences
- Advanced Healthcare
- Dental Careers
- Emergency Medical Services
- Healthcare Foundations
- Cosmetology
- Early Childhood Education
- Public Safety & Security Services



Every day, over 1,300 students make a choice to leave the familiarity of their high school and engage in hands-on, mind-challenging, career-focused, college-approved, and real-world inspired education at the Careerline Tech Center.

Choosing among 24 programs, the students pursue their passion and their purpose. They earn college credit at affordable rates. They earn regional, state, and national recognition for their knowledge and skill. Last year, they earned nearly \$2 million in scholarships.

For over 35 years, The Careerline Tech Center has insured that students acquire both the academic and career-related skills employers demand. Every program's curriculum is reviewed by industry experts to guarantee real-world relevance. Our classrooms extend into businesses, competitions, and trade events across the country, where our students interact with experts in the field.



## Look what our CTC graduates are saying:

*"Just started class at Kettering on my way to becoming a mechanical engineer. I went to an SAE Formula meeting today and will likely be helping with the steering and suspension part. Thanks to your teaching, I could talk fluently with the person in charge and ask questions, understanding the technical language. It was really pretty cool! I cannot thank you enough for all the knowledge you have given me."*

~Jonah Heemstra

oaisd.org/ctc  

Turn the page for one student's amazing story 

Introducing:

# JUSTIN RAHA

Owner of Grand Finale Desserts & Pastries;  
Culinary Arts Instructor at Baker College

*Culinary & Pastry Arts program 2002-2004*

Justin Raha credits Careerline Tech Center for helping him to live out his dream of becoming a pastry chef, and inspiring him to teach others how to achieve their dreams too.

At 26, Pastry Chef Justin Raha is the owner of Grand Finale Desserts & Pastries in Grand Haven, a wholesale bakery that provides breakfast pastries, baked goods, and desserts to local coffee shops and markets. It appears that's not enough to fulfill his passion for the industry as Justin also commits time and talent to teaching college students at the Culinary Institute of Michigan at Baker College.

Although he always had an appetite for the food industry, his "aha" moment – the moment he knew exactly what he wanted to do for a career - happened after enrolling in the Careerline Tech Center's Culinary & Pastry Arts program during his junior year of high school.

"I've always enjoyed baking and tweaking recipes to make them my own," Justin says. "My instructors at Careerline Tech saw potential in me, and challenged me to try new things that would stretch my limits."

That challenge led Justin to enroll in Baker College where he earned an



associate's degree in Business with an emphasis on Culinary Arts along with a Baking and Pastry Certificate. In 2006, he opened Grand Finale Desserts & Pastries. In case you are wondering, his specialty is creating unique and delicious wedding cakes crafted from layers of chiffon cake and Italian butter cream.



"It's not surprising Justin has accomplished so much," Joe Carmolli, Culinary & Pastry Arts Instructor for CTC, says. "He worked hard for his grades and was always up for the challenges we provided to him."

Teaching classes of his own now, Justin finds himself encouraging, challenging, and holding his students to high standards, much as he once was at CTC. "I had good mentors at the Tech Center," Justin says. "I really credit my instructors



for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and for reinforcing my passion to give back to the community."

Jill Landman, a paraprofessional in CTC's Culinary & Pastry Arts program, says along with the general curriculum, CTC instructors also stress the importance of giving back to the community. Justin took that lesson to heart and frequently donates his time and baked goods to senior living centers, United Way and other community organizations.

Today, as an entrepreneur and teacher, Justin Raha reflects on his time at Careerline Tech Center as one of the most rewarding experiences he has ever had.

"I am living out my passion and my dream," Justin says. "And, Careerline Tech Center gave me the knowledge and support I needed to succeed."

**GRAND  
FINALE**  
Desserts & Pastries

[www.grandfinale-desserts.com](http://www.grandfinale-desserts.com)





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www.oaisd.org

October 2, 2012

Mr. Alan Vanderberg  
Ottawa County  
1220 Fillmore Street  
Room 210  
West Olive, MI 49460

**RECEIVED**

OCT 04 2012

OTTAWA COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATORS OFFICE

Dear Mr. Vanderberg,

Time really does seem to fly and still there is more to do! This year, Michigan's Intermediate School Districts celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and yet remain one of the best kept educational secrets.

When Michigan legislators created ISDs in 1962, they knew that "economies of scale" and regional collaboration would be critical to insuring equity and quality for all Michigan students. ISDs have delivered on that vision and promise for five decades.

As a leader in our community, you have a right to understand how ISDs enrich the educational fabric in your own backyard. For the next twelve months, I will send you stories that illustrate the OAISD's exceptional contribution to the communities, schools, and students we serve.

My hope is that after this year, our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, you will have a much better understanding of who we are and what we do. To that end, I hope you enjoy the attached story recently published in **MiBiz**:

**By investing in robotics training equipment, the OAISD is saving local businesses up to 80% of their robotics training expense and insuring we have skilled workers to fill the growing demand for this technical skill. Our businesses spoke; we listened; we acted.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about this story or any other program or service we offer.

Best,

Karen McPhee  
Superintendent

Copy: OAISD Board of Education

*Mission Statement:*  
We provide and enrich  
educational opportunities  
for students, schools,  
and communities.



# Ottawa ISD to offer robotics training for manufacturers

By **Elijah Brumback** | MiBiz  
 ebrumback@mibiz.com

**HOLLAND** — Rather than send workers from West Michigan to the east side of the state or to out-of-state training centers, one local program aims to offer those opportunities closer to home.

In the past, advanced manufacturing workers in West Michigan that wanted to get certified in specialized training for robotics programming had to travel to Rochester Hills, Chicago or Ohio. For employers, that equated to an expensive proposition.

Officials at the **Ottawa County Intermediate School District** saw a chance to help out local manufacturers that have been struggling to find talent, so the ISD partnered with FANUC Robotics of America to offer the company's certified robotic training program in West Michigan.

"Last fall I realized there has been not only a skills gap in the employees, but also a training gap in the local area for the industries," said Doug Bagley, business development Coordinator for Thompson M-TEC, the adult training and certification arm of the ISD.

Through interviews with company owners, plant managers and HR Directors at companies

including Gentex, Haworth and Herman Miller, Bagley found that the majority of the employees were being sent out of the region for training.

"The potential savings to the industries in West Michigan can be in the thousands of dollars per employee by eliminating employee downtime, travel expenses, and higher tuition expenses associated with the other classes available," he said.

North American robotics companies sold more industrial robots in the second quarter of 2012 than any previous quarter in history, according to a report from the Robotic Industries Association (RIA), the industry's trade group.

A total of 5,556 robots valued at \$403.1 million were sold to North American companies, a jump of 14 percent in units and 28 percent in dollars over the same quarter in 2011, a recent report stated. Orders in the first half of 2012 totaled 10,652 robots valued at \$747 million, increases of 20 percent in units and 29 percent in dollars over the same period last year, the report continued.



Bagley



*With local manufacturers struggling to find talent skilled in robotics, Ottawa County Intermediate School District partnered with FANUC Robotics of America to offer the company's certified robotic training program in West Michigan. COURTESY PHOTO*

RIA estimates that some 220,000 robots are now used in the United States, placing the U.S. second only to Japan in robot use.

Bagley said companies could spend more than \$3,000 sending a single worker for training on the east side of the state or elsewhere. In contrast, tuition costs just \$600 for the training program in Holland. Not only is the new program a cost-saver for companies, there is a convenience factor for trainees to stay close to home, Bagley added.

The program is also condensed to 15 weeks, allowing those who can't commit to an 18-month career-training academy at a community college to have the opportunity get the training they need.

In May 2012, the ISD's board approved the initiative to partner with FANUC Robotics to help bridge the training gap for employers in advanced manufacturing sectors who were looking for qualified talent. The first cohort of 10 workers starts Sept. 10.

Prior to implementing the program, Bagley and five other instructors spent time at Ferris State University learning how to put a curriculum together and identifying the resources it would take to maintain the program.

"With M-TEC we were able to put the program together more quickly and didn't have to jump through many of the same hoops that high schools and colleges have to," Bagley said. "At that level, there are more regulations, funding issues and accreditation boards to go through."

Individuals completing the training should have a leg up in landing jobs in advanced manufacturing involving robotic automation, he said. Ideally, they'd also stay in Michigan where there is a need for workers with those skills, he added.

Through integrated classroom instruction, student projects, and RoboGuide simulation software, students are able to apply science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills while utilizing the latest automation technology, he said.

Classes start with robotic operation, programming and handling tool training. The program takes place on Monday evenings from 4-7 p.m. for 15 weeks. Students receive a Thompson M-TEC certificate of completion with a FANUC Certified Robot Programmer endorsement upon completion.

"This program fills a need here in West Michigan," Bagley said. "Part of the hope is that this bumps up the recognition of the region in high-skill, high-wage job education." **MIBIZ**



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December 14, 2012

### Lame Duck is Over!

The Lame Duck session of the legislature ended this morning at 4:30 am. It was a 20 hour day for the legislators and a historical week for the people of the State of Michigan.

Right to Work legislation passed on Tuesday and received a great deal of publicity and national media attention. It was passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor later that day.

By Wednesday and Thursday the protesters had gone home and the legislators had the time to bring up other issues including education, wolf hunting, a new facility for the Red Wings, new regulations for recall of elected officials, regulating abortion clinics, medical marijuana, and of course Personal Property Tax Reform.

GVMC has been part of a West Michigan Work Group that has been quietly working on the details of Personal Property Tax Reform for many months. The group has been providing analysis, information, specific implementation detail and costs, impact analysis and feedback.

Few people could deny the inevitability of PPT reform occurring either in the lame duck session or the early part of next year. PPT reform was going to happen in some form. Our goal was to insure replacement and long-term

consistency of funding for local government.

Several months ago, the Michigan Senate passed a series of bills that reformed the personal property tax. Those bills while passed by the Senate were not taken up by the House until the final days of the legislative session. Implementation of the Senate bills would have had a huge negative impact on local government.

Yesterday, was a very busy day for our work group, our legislators and our partner organizations. Lt. Governor Calley had developed a plan which phased out the industrial portion of the PPT and had a mechanism to reimburse local government.

The Calley Plan would include replacement of 80 percent of the PPT general fund losses for those local governments that would lose at least 2.3% of their property tax revenue. Funding for the replacement would come by diverting a portion of the state use tax from their general fund to a new authority that would pass the funds on to local government. It also has provisions for local governments to collect up to 100% of PPT losses through special assessment for "essential services" like police, fire, ambulance and jails. Finally it has provisions to insure local bond debt obligations are met.

During the day, the plan developed by the Lt. Governor came close to failing as legislators questioned the complexity of the plan and lack of full reimbursement.

In the early afternoon, a new plan was being discussed and began to gain support. This plan exempted from PPT all new industrial property purchased after January 1, 2013. It would have created a phase out of PPT as new industrial property is eventually taken out of service or is depreciated. There were NO provisions for replacement. .

About 6:30, last evening, local government including MML, MTA and our Work Group, along business groups were given one hour to gain support for the Calley plan or face approval of the no reimbursement alternative. It took 3 hours to gather the votes to pass PPT reform including partial replacement of lost revenues. At 10:30 last night, the House approved the Calley plan assuring opportunity for partial reimbursement. Al Vanderberg, of Ottawa County and a member of our Work Group, stated, "The West Michigan Team worked continuously through the process to the point where we have helped make significant improvement to the legislation. We will stay involved as final technical issues are resolved."



December 7, 2012

### **GVMC/MDOT MEETING**

Members of our Legislative Committee and our Task Force on Transportation Funding had a productive meeting recently with representatives of MDOT. Twenty-five people attended the meeting to discuss the future of transportation funding.

We heard from MDOT and the Governor's Office that the upcoming State of the State Address will include the issue of long-term transportation issues and the need for a permanent solution to stop the continued deterioration of our roads and bridges.

The need for permanent funding for our roads and bridges has been a priority for GVMC and its members for many years. This meeting communicated to MDOT that we are willing to assist in the process of finding a solution.

MDOT representatives from both Lansing and the Grand Region attended the meeting, as well as, a representative of the Governor's Office. GVMC members pledged to assist in researching, analyzing and developing permanent solutions to the infrastructure problem. We also offered to provide MDOT and members of the Legislature with our specific plans and priorities for construction and repair projects in our region.

This meeting was part of our con-

tinued efforts to help find a collaborative and cooperative approach to meeting the needs of Michigan's infrastructure.

### **PPT Update**

As you know, changes to PPT are again being addressed by the legislature. Representatives of GVMC continue to analyze the legislation and are providing much needed feedback on the proposed legislation and issues involved in the implementation of the new program. Like our partner organizations we are doing what we can to insure that Lansing understands the impact PPT reform on all our local governments.

### **At Large Vacancy**

We have one vacancy on our Board of Directors to fill an at-large position. If you know of someone that might be interested, please have them contact me.

### **Thank You Mayor Rob**

We want to express our appreciation to Walker Mayor Rob VerHulen for his years of service to GVMC as a member of our Board of Directors and Executive Committee. We look forward to working with Rob as he begins his new duties as a member of the Michigan Legislature and wish him the very best.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

#### **New Board Member Information**

On November 20th many new Township Board members will be joining the communities served by GVMC. In order to keep them updated on regional activities and insure that they get a copy of the Weekly Update we need your help.

Please send copies of the email addresses for all your township and city elected and appointed officials. This will give us the opportunity to review our membership lists and make sure we have everyone's emails correct.

Our Weekly Update has a current circulation of approximately 350 per week. We are happy to send it to anyone you would like including elected officials, staff, members of boards and commissions, etc. You just have to let us know who you want it sent to.

Please send your updated email information to Gayle McGrath. Her email address is [mccrathg@gvmc.org](mailto:mccrathg@gvmc.org)

*Thank you for your assistance  
with this important task!*

Please Email Your Community's  
Programs and Ideas for  
Cooperation!



**November 30, 2012**

### **December Board Meeting**

Our next Board of Directors Meeting will be on Thursday, December 6th at 8:30 am. We will again be meeting in the County Commission Chambers on the third floor of the Kent County Building.

The primary presentation item on the agenda is the emerging issue of restoring the rapids along the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids. In the coming months we will hear a great deal in the media about this project and it is my desire to give the GVMC Board direct information early in the process and also give you the opportunity to provide your thoughts.

This extensive project will bring major changes to the Grand River and surrounding property as it flows through the city. I look forward to the presentation.

We will also be swearing in Jay Spencer the new Supervisor of Plainfield Township as a member of our Board of Directors.

This meeting will also be the final GVMC Board Meeting for Walker Mayor Rob VerHuelen. He leaves us to become a new member of the Michigan House

of Representatives and we all wish him well and look forward to working with him in the future.

East Grand Rapids City Manager and LGROW Chairman Brian Donovan will be nominated to serve as a member of the Executive Committee replacing Rob .

If you have any questions about our agenda or GVMC in general, do not hesitate to contact me personally.

### **Personal Property Tax**

As we all know, for almost a year the legislature and administration have been working on PPT reform. That effort continues. Months ago, the Michigan Senate passed legislation to eliminate the PPT but no action was taken in the House of Representatives.

A small group of representatives of GVMC have been working on a variety of proposals and also analysis of various options for replacement of the PPT revenue. Our work continues and we hope to have the ability to influence the final outcome of the reforms.

We are currently waiting to

see copies of the multiple Bills involved in this matter. Our partner organizations like MML, MTA and others will be providing further information about the changes to PPT. As soon as the Bills are made public we will also begin our own analysis of the legislation.

All I can say at this time is that we remain hopeful that changes to the PPT program can be accomplished which will continue to promote economic growth in Michigan while also insuring that local governments have the resources to maintain the quality of life for our residents. Stay tuned, this is very much a moving target.

### **Kent County MTA**

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak to the Kent County Chapter of the Michigan Townships Association. There were about 30 people in attendance including many newly elected Township leaders.

If your group or organization would like more information about GVMC or like me to discuss our organization, please feel free to contact me. I really enjoy the opportunity to meet with our members and discuss the many activities of GVMC.



## **Transportation Funding Presentation**

On Thursday November 27th from 10:00-noon, representatives of MDOT and Governor Snyder's Office will meet with GVMC to discuss ideas for long term funding for transportation. The meeting will be held at the Grand Rapids Township Hall.

Last year, a bi-partisan committee of the legislature studied the needs for transportation infrastructure in our state. At that time, it was determined that just to fix existing problems with Michigan's roads and bridges would take an investment of \$1.4 billion. That figure has grown since the study by an estimated \$200 million and now is approximately \$1.6 billion.

Of Michigan's 10,928 bridges, 1,437 of them are judged to be structurally deficient. These numbers will continue to increase unless a long-term sustainable solution is found to the finance needed

repairs and improvements. GVMC through our Legislative Committee and a special Task Force on Transportation Funding has been meeting to discuss this critical need for our future.

The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Right Place, and West Michigan Policy Forum have all identified sustainable long-term transportation funding as a top priority for the economic growth and vitality of our region.

I hope you can join us for this meeting. If you would like to bring others from your communities, please feel free to do so. This is a high priority item for GVMC and our region and we encourage local government and business leaders to attend this meeting to discuss ideas about the future of our transportation infrastructure system.

## **Board Meeting Highlights**

At our November Board of Directors Meeting we welcomed guests that informed us of two significant emerging issues for our state and region.

Jared Rodrigues, President of the West Michigan Policy Forum informed us about the 2012 conference. Over 600 governmental and business leaders attended the event which was held in September.

On Monday, Governor Snyder

attended a luncheon in Grand Rapids that was sponsored by the WMPF, Grand Rapids Chamber and the Economics Club of Grand Rapids. His focus was on the ballot issues.

Also, at our meeting, Ericka Rosebrook from the Governor's Office reported on the state-wide effort to develop an urban agenda for Michigan. This community based effort is being conducted in several of Michigan's largest cities with the goal of combining the efforts from across Michigan into one state-wide strategy.

The Urban Strategy will be used in the future to develop legislation and other initiatives which impact Michigan's urban areas.

## **Good Luck Clerks**

I have had the opportunity to talk to many city and township clerks in recent weeks about their absentee voter turnout and predictions for the next week's general election. All of them are predicting record voter participation.

As a former city clerk, I understand the stress that occurs on a presidential election day and just wanted to wish all our clerks good luck during this busiest of days for them and their election workers. Good Luck Everyone!!!

**Please Email Your Community's  
Programs and Ideas for  
Cooperation!**

