

# County Administrator's Digest

January 11, 2013

Alan G. Vanderberg, County Administrator

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## Happy New Year!

It has been a few weeks since I sent out the last Digest message. I used vacation time between Christmas and New Years and had a fun and relaxing time at home. This Digest will catch readers up on a few topics and also discuss some current events.

## WELCOME TO NEW COMMISSIONERS AND OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS

We honored the service of retiring County Commissioners Bob Karsten, Roger Rycenga, Jane Ruiten, and Denny Swartout at the end of 2012. Each had many distinguished years of service and left their mark on Ottawa County government. Drain Commissioner Paul Geerlings and District Judge Richard Kloote also retired after many years of distinguished service.

We are pleased to welcome our four new County Commissioners: Roger Bergman, Al Dannenberg, Matt Fenske, and Dennis Van Dam to County service. All four new Commissioners have spent a lot of time acclimating themselves to their new roles; which they were sworn into on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and are looking forward to their service. We also congratulate new District Judge Craig Bunce, who was invested in his new office in late December and also our new Water Resources Commissioner Joe Bush, who was sworn into office in late December, both have hit the ground running. The Drain Commission title was changed to Water Resources Commissioner by the Board of Commissioners in December per the request of Mr. Bush and as allowed per Michigan law.

## ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION UPDATE (Shannon McGoran)

As you know, Ottawa County is known around the State for innovative problem solving and service delivery. The County's membership in the Alliance for Innovation offers another "tool in the toolbox" to enhance future innovation and to serve as an aid in continuous improvement. As part of the 4 C's Strategic Initiative, the Alliance will assist Ottawa County in fostering innovation as we strive for increased efficiency and cost savings.



According to Tim Hurson in his book *Think Better*, it's important to keep creative thinking and critical thinking separate. Creative thinking is generative, nonjudgmental and expansive. Critical thinking is analytic, judgmental and selective. Productive thinking allows you to alternate between the two. Hurson differentiates knowledge as openness which sees challenge as an opportunity and knowingness as closed which sees challenge as a threat. Productive thinking requires us to hang back and keep questioning even when answers seem obvious. Consciously or not, humans will do anything to avoid the ambiguity of not knowing. He writes that the mind is a treasure box of ideas and inspirations and insights ricocheting through billions of neural connections. You just have to wait for them to come into view.

On January 28, 1:30 pm – 4 pm, in the main conference room, Greg Stopka, the Central Regional Director of the Alliance for Innovation, will conduct a live workshop and discuss the following:

- Briefly re-present the 6 qualities as a refresher and for new members.
- Specific innovative challenges facing Ottawa County including ideas to improve, implementation of and measurements of innovation.
- Innovational and Culture Survey results.
- Share Alliance tools and benefits.
- Greg will also demonstrate use of the Alliance website.

If your department has not yet done so and is interested in activating Alliance membership accounts, please provide your name, title, email, phone number and address to me prior to the meeting.

Following the January meeting, I would like to attend department meetings to present the Alliance program to all staff who have not previously attended the Alliance sessions. More staff will be invited to join as we progress. We continue to have open registration for the activation of accounts as there is no deadline. Feel free to call with any questions at ext. 4067 or email me at [smcgoran@miottawa.org](mailto:smcgoran@miottawa.org).

## **OUT AND ABOUT**

I spoke at the Zeeland Rotary Club on December 18.

I presented on County government at the Ottawa County Patriots (Holland-Zeeland Tea Party) meeting earlier this week. The group was very interested to learn about County government and very appreciative of the presentation. They had great questions at the end as well. My PowerPoint presentation can be found by clicking on this link: <http://www.miottawa.org/Departments/Admin/>

We are ready to kick-off the 2013 Brown Bag Lunch schedule, which follows here:

**2013 Brown Bag Lunch Schedule**

<b><u>Day</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Room</u></b>
Friday	January 18, 2013	Holland District Court	Training Room
Wednesday	April 10, 2013	Holland District Court	Training Room
Wednesday	July 17, 2013	Holland District Court	Training Room
Tuesday	October 1, 2013	Holland District Court	Training Room
-			-
Thursday	January 24, 2013	Grand Haven County Building	Jury Assembly Room
Friday	April 12, 2013	Grand Haven County Building	Jury Assembly Room
Wednesday	July 10, 2013	Grand Haven County Building	Jury Assembly Room
Thursday	October 3, 2013	Grand Haven County Building	Jury Assembly Room
Friday	January 25, 2013	Community Mental Health	CMH Board Room
Monday	April 15, 2013	Community Mental Health	CMH Board Room
Friday	July 12, 2013	Community Mental Health	CMH Board Room
Wednesday	October 9, 2013	Community Mental Health	CMH Board Room
Monday	February 4, 2013	Sheriff's Office	EOC Training Room
Friday	April 19, 2013	Sheriff's Office	EOC Training Room
Tuesday	July 16, 2013	Sheriff's Office	EOC Training Room
Friday	October 11, 2013	Sheriff's Office	EOC Training Room
Tuesday	February 5, 2013	Juvenile Services	Juvenile Services Classroom
Friday	April 26, 2013	Juvenile Services	Juvenile Services Classroom
Friday	July 19, 2013	Juvenile Services	Juvenile Services Classroom
Tuesday	October 15, 2013	Juvenile Services	Juvenile Services Classroom
Wednesday	February 6, 2013	Fillmore Administration Complex	Downstairs Lunch Room
Monday	April 22, 2013	Fillmore Administration Complex	Downstairs Lunch Room
Monday	July 22, 2013	Fillmore Administration Complex	Downstairs Lunch Room
Friday	October 18, 2013	Fillmore Administration Complex	Downstairs Lunch Room
Friday	February 22, 2013	Public Health Department	Main Conference Room
Monday	April 29, 2013	Public Health Department	Main Conference Room
Monday	July 29, 2013	Public Health Department	Main Conference Room
Friday	October 25, 2013	Public Health Department	Main Conference Room
Friday	February 15, 2013	Hudsonville Human Services	Court Conference Room
Tuesday	April 30, 2013	Hudsonville Human Services	Court Conference Room
Wednesday	July 31, 2013	Hudsonville Human Services	Court Conference Room
Monday	October 28, 2013	Hudsonville Human Services	Court Conference Room

## **COMMUNICATION**

One of the “C’s” in the Four C’s Strategic Initiative is “communication.” Shannon Felgner is located full-time in the County Administrator’s Office though she is splitting her time between Parks and Administration for the next year. Both Keith and I did interviews on Channel 13 News this week, I spoke about the new campus smoking ban which went into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> and Keith spoke on the ground water issue that we learned about when MSU gave their study results at the Water Quality Forum. Links to both stories can be found below:

Smoking: [http://www.wzzm13.com/rss/article/237995/14/Ottawa-County-campuses-become-smoke-free?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.wzzm13.com/rss/article/237995/14/Ottawa-County-campuses-become-smoke-free?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

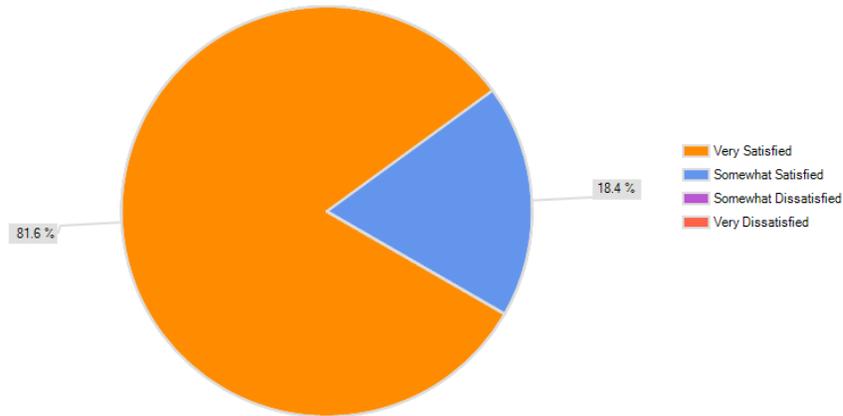
Ground water: <http://www.wzzm13.com/news/regional/238401/5/Ground-water-levels-dropping-Ottawa-County>

## **WATER QUALITY FORUM SURVEY RESULTS**

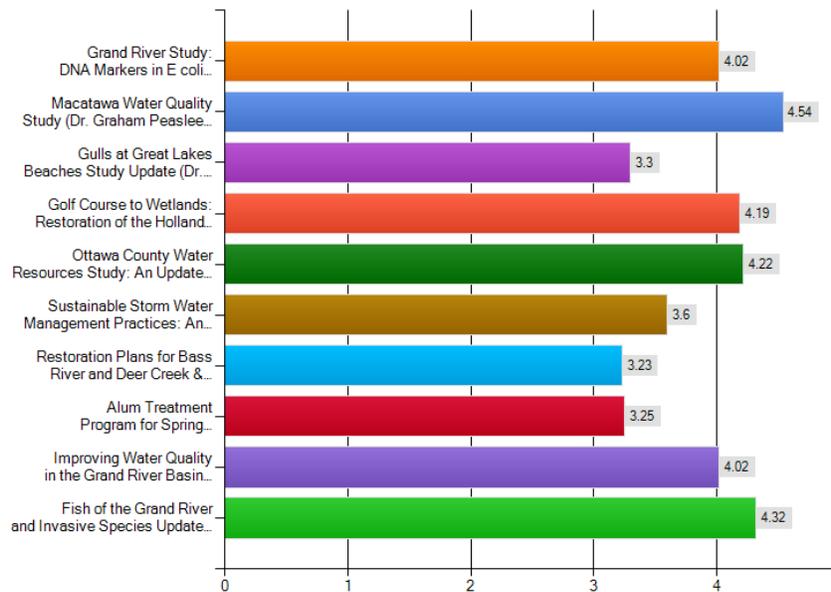
Many participants as well as committee members who work on the annual Water Quality Forum, consider the 2012 event to be the best yet. The County reached a long-term goal when Dr. Vijay Kannappan, Environmental Health Specialist with the Ottawa County Health Department, reported on the *E. coli* content of water samples taken from the Grand River. Samples were tested for cattle, swine, and human markers; avian markers will be tested in the future. Dr. Graham Peaslee and Dr. Michael Pikaart, both from Hope College, reported on the groundbreaking, mostly privately funded work on Lake Macatawa, long considered the nations most polluted lake. Major strides are being made and with a major infusion of private cash, Macatawa will be much cleaner over a ten year period. Dr. Elizabeth Wheeler Alm, of Central Michigan University reported on the Gulls at Great Lakes Beaches Study in which a border collie was used during beach hours to keep gulls away. More work is anticipated for 2013. John Scholtz and Amy Berry reported on the restoration of the former Holland Country Club to wetlands. The City of Grand Rapids reported on investments they have made in the sewer system that have greatly reduced discharges into the Grand River. Spring Lake Township Supervisor, John Nash reported on Alum treatment in Spring Lake. Becky Huttenga, Executive Director of the Ottawa Conservation District, gave an update on restoration plans for Bass Creek. Several other excellent presentations were given with perhaps the most impacting presentation of the day being the Michigan State University groundwater study report that indicated that Ottawa County is running out of groundwater. Several presentations by MSU have been done in the County since that time and work is currently being done to outline the next level of study necessary to better identify the problem and time frame for action to remediate the problem.

Each year forum participants complete a survey regarding the forum experience, the results follow:

How satisfied were you with the content of the entire event?



Please rank each presentation 1-5, with 5 being high and 1 being low.



**OAISD 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY INFORMATION SERIES**

As mentioned in my last Digest, the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District is celebrating 50 years of existence and is providing a monthly informational series to educate the public on their programs and services. The latest installment on Skills4Success is included with the digest ([click here](#)).

**2012 DECEMBER AND YEAR END CENTRAL DISPATCH MEASURES** (Tim Smith)

The call volume and incident numbers handled through Central Dispatch for December 2012 were:

- Total Incidents –** 8,831 up 4.0% over December 2011 and up 3.3% YTD over 2011
- Fire Incidents –** 1,148 up 12.5% over December 2011 and up 4.0% YTD over 2011
- Law Incidents –** 7,683 up 2.8% over December 2011 and up 3.3% YTD over 2011
- 911 Calls –** 8,013 even with December 2011 and even YTD over 2011
- 911 Hang Up calls -** 777 down 25% over December 2011 and down 8.3% YTD over 2011
- Wireless 911 calls –** 85.8% of 911 calls for December and 86.3% of 911 calls YTD
- 911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less -** 93.7% for December and 93.8% YTD 2012
- (NENA recommended standard is 90% within 10 seconds)**

### **SHOPPING WITH THE SHERIFF** (Gary Rosema)

The Sheriff's Office was featured twice in December in the local news and the articles follow:

Sixty local youth paired up with Sheriff's Department staff to do some Christmas shopping for their families and themselves this week.

Becky Vargo

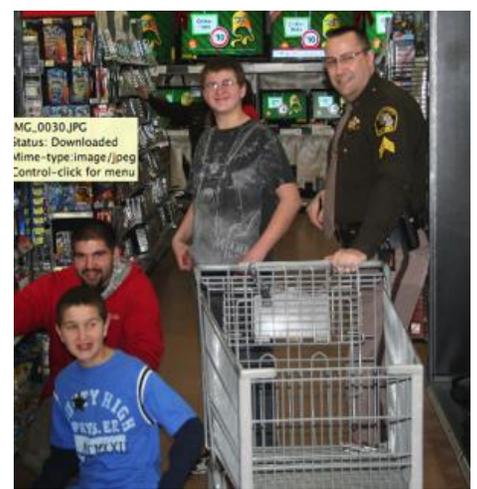
Grand Haven Township

Dec 14, 2012

That's nearly double the number children helped last year, said Lt. Lee Hoeksema of the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department.

"Even though the economy is improving, there's still a lot of people with need," he said.

Hoeksema said the Sheriff's Department was also able to help more kids because of donations from the host store, Wal-Mart — along with the Deputy Sheriffs



Association, the Command Officers Association and some citizens.

The children, ranging in age from preschool through high school, were each given \$75 and paired up with volunteers. The volunteers included Sheriff's Department office staff, and corrections and road patrol officers.

"We had 31 people show up (to volunteer) for the event," Hoeksema said. "Every one of them was walking around with a big smile on their face."

Hoeksema, who spent the afternoon playing photographer, said all of the kids came prepared.

"These kids all came with a list — for Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters," he said. "If they had enough, then they spent some on themselves."

When a few of the kids went over their limit by a few dollars, Hoeksema said he saw some of the officers dig into their own pockets to cover the shortfall.

### **Careerline Tech Center students organize campaign to improve teen driving habits**

Click the following link to view the Holland Sentinel Article online.

<http://www.hollandsentinel.com/news/x1665850739/Careerline-Tech-Center-students-organize-campaign-to-improve-teen-driving-habits>



## **COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NEWS**

**The CMH Department was featured three times in the news recently and the stories follow below:**

### **Addressing mental health**

**About 15 million Americans suffer from a severe mental illness.**

Krystle Wagner

Ottawa County

Dec 24, 2012



Dr. Michael Brashears, executive director of Community Mental Health of Ottawa County, said they serve more than 200 individuals with severe mental illnesses. But there are many more who go without treatment, he said.

Although Brashears said there are many mental illnesses, 10 or 11 are prominent locally — including major depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

“We have folks in our county that can’t get mental health treatment because they’re not eligible for Medicaid,” he said. “It’s very difficult to get treatment because funding isn’t there.”

Brashears said 90 percent of mental health funding in the community comes from the state Medicaid program, leaving 10 percent of the local budget to fund treatment of people without insurance.

When people go without treatment, Brashears said it becomes increasingly difficult to attend to basic needs or functions, such as sleeping and holding down a job. Some people may have altering thoughts — hear, see or feel things that aren’t real — or have extreme beliefs and thoughts about the world.

The cost, lack of access to services and the inability to admit they have a problem are some of the reasons people with mental health issues might not seek treatment, Brashears said.

Sarah Lewakowski, executive director of Tri-Cities Ministries in Grand Haven, expressed the importance of reaching out and not becoming isolated from the community. She's had many clients tell her they've been considering asking for help for a year or longer.

"It is hard to make that decision," Lewakowski said.

Some of the ways Community Mental Health in Ottawa County helps people is by providing therapy, prescribing medications, employment assistance, and helping them remain active and part of the community.

Brashears encourages people to make the attempt in getting the help they need.

"You have nothing to lose when you're trying to improve your life," he said.

#### *Assistance:*

For information about mental health services, call Community Mental Health of Ottawa County Customer Services at 616-494-5545, or e-mail [cmhcustomerservices@miottawa.org](mailto:cmhcustomerservices@miottawa.org).

The county mental health agency's Help Line is available 24/7 at 866-512-4357.

(2<sup>ND</sup> Article follows)

## **Winter blues**

**Many West Michigan residents say their moods dip in response to the lack of sunshine this time of year.**

Krystle Wagner

Northwest Ottawa County

Dec 20, 2012



Experts say the months with lower natural light triggers a seasonal pattern depression, commonly known as seasonal affective disorder, or winter blues.

Jane Longstreet, the mental health program supervisor for Community Mental Health of Ottawa County, said winter blues is actually a less severe form of seasonal pattern depression. Symptoms of the so-called blues are milder and the person's functioning might not be impaired.

"So it may be that people find it's harder to get up and get going in the morning, or they have the urge to eat more, or feel a bit 'down' and sluggish," Longstreet explained the winter blues. "But they are still able to perform their normal duties and responsibilities."

The more serious S.A.D. is a "seasonal pattern specifier" that is diagnosed with depression and bipolar disorders, Longstreet said.

Although the winter months lay ahead, Longstreet said people don't have to suffer.

"It is treatable," she assured.

One way people can brighten those dreary "cabin-fever" days is through phototherapy, which uses a special lamp that mimics outdoor daylight.

Such lights can be purchased locally at the North Ottawa In-Home Care Equipment store, 1310 Wisconsin Ave. in Grand Haven. Although the location carries one style, the store's manager, Susan Roberts, said there are more on the market that can be ordered and shipped.

The lights look like ordinary lamps and are helpful just by sitting near one — as long as the light is registered in the person's eyes for 20-30 minutes a day.

"They do help people who have winter blues," Roberts said.

Roberts said they only sell about 10 lamps each year, with the biggest demand coming in February. She encourages residents to check with their health insurance carrier to see if they cover the expense.

Longstreet also recommends people take care of themselves and exercise to beat the blues.

"Get out there and be active," she encouraged. "Use friendship and family support networks to reach out to. It's good to have people watching out for you if you're prone to the disorder."

When the blues turn to depression and thoughts of suicide, Longstreet encourages people to seek help. Residents can call the 24/7 Community Mental Health of Ottawa County helpline at 866-512-4357. If it's an immediate emergency, call 911.

"There are many excellent therapists and doctors in Ottawa County that can help," Longstreet said. "Don't suffer needlessly,"

*Tips for handling seasonal affective disorder or winter blues:*

- Get enough sleep, but not too much
- Use light therapy for seasonal pattern depression
- Eat well
- Limit or avoid alcohol
- Stay busy, both physically and mentally

Source: *Community Mental Health of Ottawa County*

**(3<sup>rd</sup> Article) –****MY TAKE — A call to fund mental health treatment, By Michael Brashears, Guest Writer**

Holland Township — Like many of those reading this, I don't think I will ever forget where I was when I first heard the news related to the tragic event that occurred in Newtown, Conn.

I was driving on the Ohio Turnpike on my way to pick up my 4-year-old daughter, who had been visiting her grandparents in Pittsburgh. I was so disturbed by the news that I had to pull the car over and compose myself before I could continue driving. All I could think was "How could this happen?" and "Who is responsible for this?"

As the executive director of Community Mental Health of Ottawa County, I wondered if the individual responsible for this unspeakable tragedy would be found to have been recovering from a mental illness. I then reminded myself of a simple truth: Individuals who are in active recovery and treatment for a mental illness are not more likely to commit violent crimes than anyone else.

As we've learned more about the individual who committed this horrible tragedy, it is still unclear if he was indeed coping with a mental illness. What is clear is that he was not engaged in active mental health treatment. This fact reminded me of a second simple truth: Having a mental illness does not add an additional predictor of violence unless the individual coping from a mental illness is not engaged in treatment. In fact many researchers agree that there are two major predictors of who will commit a violent crime: a past history of violence and/or current drug or alcohol abuse. While untreated mental illness can be associated with violent crime, it is not a major predictor.

Ensuring access to adequate treatment options for those who suffer from a mental illness and/or a substance use disorder will lead to healthier communities. Treatment however does come with a cost. Currently 90 percent of mental health funding in our community comes from the state Medicaid program. This leaves 10 percent of the current revenue to fund the treatment of uninsured individuals. Funding for mental health and substance use disorder treatment for non-Medicaid Ottawa County residents simply needs to increase.

Community Mental Health of Ottawa County currently has several individuals who have been diagnosed with a mental illness but have not been found eligible for Medicaid benefits. Those individuals have been placed on a waiting list for services. Without increased financial support from our local community the number of untreated individuals will only continue to grow.

**GMVC WEEKLY UPDATE – JOHN WEISS**

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



OTTAWA AREA INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

**EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
BUILDING**

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December 27, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Vanderberg,

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were both relaxing and fulfilling.

At the OAISD, our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration continues and I will be sending additional highlights about our programs and services till the end of the school year.

In this mailing, I feature one of our newest initiatives...Skills4Success. **Identified by business, community and educational leaders**, this set of seven core career and life skills reflects essential learning for all of our students...**so essential that every local school district board of education in the OAISD has formally endorsed their adoption.**

Skills4Success is one part of a major regional initiative we call futurePrep...a collection of programs, partnerships, resources, and opportunities that will help all of our students achieve success after high school regardless of their career choices or continuing education plans. The impetus for this initiative came from a series of community-wide forums at which local leaders told us we must find new ways to engage and connect students with their future career goals.

We'll feature additional futurePrep programs in the coming months, but if you'd like more information about the initiative now, please check out: [oaisd.org/futureprep](http://oaisd.org/futureprep)

As always, if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Best in the New Year,

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

Karen McPhee  
Superintendent



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



# Skills4Success Reflect “Must Have” Skills for Area Students & Employees

## futurePREP Programs:

- Ladders2Success
- Unite4Insight
- IChallengeU
- Mentor Momentum
- Summer Immersion
- Make Lab
- Early College
- Northern Ottawa County Early College Consortium
- WhoAml

*“We at Media1 are proud to participate in programs such as Unite4Insight through the OAISD futurePREP program. These programs connect teachers and therefore students with real-world skills and experiences they need to be successful in the working world after high school.”*

Chris Willis  
Media 1 CEO

There’s been a lot of talk about “21st Century Skills” in recent years. Employers describe these skills as essential to an employee’s success. Sometimes referred to as “soft skills,” these capabilities involve how employees interact with each other, with their customers, their organization and, in many cases, with a global economy.



Schools, however, have found it challenging to insure that students master these skills. Until now.

Working with over 100 business and educational leaders from throughout the Ottawa area, the OAISD developed a set of 21st Century Skills reflecting the specific needs and interests of employers in the region. With their distinct West Michigan flavor, these “Skills4Success” were enthusiastically endorsed by every local school district board of education as essential learning for all students.

Teams of teachers working in tandem with business experts are now developing curriculum and opportunities to insure that Ottawa area students develop these skills throughout their K-12 education. Essentially, students will develop a “second transcript” that identifies where, when, and how these skills were introduced and learned.

Area businesses were so excited about the quality of the Skills4Success instruction, they asked the OAISD to develop classes for their current employees through our worker retraining outreach at Thompson M-TEC. The first session was launched this month and was enthusiastically endorsed.

In a highly competitive global economy, how workers interact with the world can no longer be left to chance. Workers without these skills will not advance in their companies or be attractive to employers. In the OAISD, we are working to insure that every student acquires the Skills4Success!



[oaisd.org/futureprep](http://oaisd.org/futureprep)



Turn the page for futurePREP Skills4Success framework

## 1 Technology Literacy

The ability to understand, use, and adapt to new technology concepts, systems and operations in an innovative, ethical, responsible and professional manner to create meaning.

### Components:

Technology, Technology Etiquette

## 2 Collaboration & Global Thinking

The ability to effectively collaborate and work as a member of a diverse team in order to achieve a common goal. This involves knowing 1) how and when to demonstrate leadership within the team (e.g. – knowing your role on a team), 2) how to think globally (e.g. – both “broadly” and “taking a world prospective”) about an issue/problem, and 3) how to effectively resolve conflict.

### Components:

Collaboration, Global Thinking, Diversity, Teamwork, Leadership, Conflict Resolution

## 3 Communication

The ability to effectively communicate a message or an idea to someone else through verbal and non-verbal means. Included within this is the ability to know how and when to listen to others' communication and to use communication to build interpersonal relationships with others.

### Components:

Written Communication, Verbal Communication, Listening, Interpersonal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication

## 4 Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

The courage and curiosity to generate innovative and creative solutions to issues of interest through the gathering, analysis and evaluation of relevant information. This includes thinking through 1) how possible solutions fit into and affect a larger system, 2) the validity of information and claims that others present, and 3) the potential consequences of proposed solutions.

### Components:

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Innovation, Creativity, Analysis, Systems Thinking, Evaluate, Information Gathering, Curious

## 5 Flexibility & Adaptability

The confidence, ability, and self-motivation to continuously learn throughout one's lifetime in order to respond to and cope with changes within society and the world at large. Included within this is 1) being aware of and developing one's own core values, 2) being open-minded to different viewpoints and ways of doing things, 3) self-reflection, 4) the ability to take risks.

### Components:

Flexibility, Adaptability, Life-Long Learning, Self-Awareness, Initiating, Open-Minded, Motivation, Reflection

## 6 Ethical Citizenship

The ability to act in a caring and principled manner (e.g. - with integrity, honesty, respect, and discernment) in order to promote the common good of one's community. Included within this is finding balance between attending to one's own needs (e.g. – spiritual, health, work, etc.) and the needs of others (e.g. – showing empathy and generosity).

### Components:

Ethics, Citizenship, Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, Discernment, Balance, Honesty, Understanding, Caring, Principled, Wellness, Common Good, Core Values

## 7 Personal Accountability

The ability to productively work toward a goal with a positive attitude. Included within this is being reliable and dependable (e.g. – being present and punctual) and having the confidence to take risks and hold oneself and others accountable for their work.

### Components:

Work Ethic, Accountability, Goal-Oriented, Attendance, Reliable, Dependable, Productive, Punctual, Attitude



## Congressman Bill Huizenga March Luncheon Speaker

Our next GVMC Quarterly Luncheon will be held on March 11th at the Calvin College Prince Center. U.S. Congressman Bill Huizenga will be our featured speaker. The event is being sponsored in part by Lake Michigan Credit Union.

Bill serves on the powerful House Financial Services Committee that regulates the Federal Reserve, the banking industry, federal monetary policy, the FDIC and Securities and Exchange Commission and the Treasury. He also serves on three critical sub-committees dealing with our national economy.

Bill got his start in both business and politics as a child at the dinner table, where the family was encouraged to discuss both - even if they didn't always agree. He attended Holland Christian High School, and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Calvin College.

A true advocate for our region, Congressman Huizenga will bring us an inside view of Congress and the "behind the scenes" viewpoint of the critical issues making the news.

Please register as soon as possible for this exciting event. Reserve your tickets or table by contacting Gayle McCrath at [mccrathg@gvmc.org](mailto:mccrathg@gvmc.org)

### GVMC TO HOST FREE COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR

As part of our Strategic Initiatives, GVMC will be host a free Educational Seminar on Communications on March 14th. The topic will be **Strategic and Crisis Communications**. This seminar is open to GVMC members who are elected or appointed officials or other staff (police, fire, DPW) that may be required to communicate with the media and the public.

This highly entertaining and real-world workshop will provide attendees with practical tips, tools and tactics for strategic communication planning and implementation. Designed to maximize understanding, awareness and ability to generate positive media coverage

AND maximize confidence and commitment when responding quickly and positively in less-than-ideal situations like crisis communications.

#### **Topics will include:**

**Strategic Communications**—including message and messenger credibility; developing and delivering key messages; recognizing the role of semantics in messaging.

**Media Relations**- the tools and tactics needed to deliver the message, including: recognizing the value of earned vs. paid media; proactive vs reactive media and strategies for impacting and influencing both; identifying and understanding the value of and differences between all media tools including digital media.

**Crisis Communication Strategies**—understanding, embracing and utilizing strategies to minimize the long-term impact of crisis situations.

The Seminar will be conducted by Kelly Rossman-McKinney of the communications firm Truscott-Rossman. The firm is considered the premier bi-partisan strategic communications firm in Michigan. The firm was founded by Kelly Rossman and Governor Engler's former Press Secretary John Truscott.

The Seminar will be held from 10:00-1:30 on March 14th at the East Grand Rapids City Hall. Lunch will be provided. Please reserve your seat by contacting Gayle at [mccrathg@gvmc.org](mailto:mccrathg@gvmc.org)  
**Reserve Soon Space is Limited!**



## January 10th Board Meeting

Our next Board of Directors Meeting will be on Thursday, January 10th at 8:30 am in the Kent County Commission Chambers. Like always, free parking is provided by Kent County.

Two new members will be sworn in at the meeting. Thad Taylor, the new City Manager of Cedar Springs will join us as the representative of his community. Also, the Board will be asked to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to appoint Mark Lemoine, of Spectrum Health, for a three year position as a Member at Large.

While Thad is new to the area, Mark has worked with GVMC in the past. Prior to joining Spectrum Health in their governmental affairs department he worked at both Meijer and the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce in similar positions. In those roles he served on several GVMC committees and also attended our meetings. We welcome Thad and Mark to our Board of Directors.

We also will be asking for formal approval to pay the long-awaited MDOT audit invoice. As you will recall, there were three issues that arose out of two MDOT Audits that were conducted a few years ago. The audits covered the time period from 1995-2009. This invoice is for \$364,922 and covers our

GVMC transportation and planning activities between 1995-2004. A second invoice which includes a \$159,000 settlement has not yet been received. Both of these settlements are in our budget and funds are available for payment. Finally, as you know, in early 2012, the REGIS audit of \$165,000 going back to 1999-2001 was settled at no cost and put behind us. Hopefully, in early 2013 the last remaining issue of these audits will be resolved.

Also on our agenda, Jim Miller of GCSI will provide us with an "insider" view of the last days of the legislative session. In the final hours of the lame duck session hundreds of bills were approved. Those bills included major items we have all heard about like Right To Work and Personal Property Tax Reform, as well as, many others. It was truly a historical session and those involved say it is one that will be remembered for a very long time.

Jim was in the Capitol throughout the marathon final session and he will bring insight as to how the process worked, the role our region played in the final hours and what to expect when the new legislature begins working in 2013. I have asked Jim to leave plenty of time for questions and discussion from our members.

## GVMC Presentations

I have now presented GVMC updates to over 20 of our member communities and many service clubs. If you would like me to speak at your board meeting, service club or professional association, do not hesitate to contact me. I am pleased to join you in sharing the GVMC story!

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

### Please Send Us Your Email Addresses!

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 McCrath. Her email address is [mccrathg@gvmc.org](mailto:mccrathg@gvmc.org)

*Thank you for your assistance*