

# County Administrator's Digest

October 28, 2013

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## **ALL QUADRANT MEETING REMINDER!**

The All Quadrant Meeting will be held at the Fillmore Complex in the Main Conference Room tomorrow beginning at 2:00 p.m. The meeting will feature brief presentations from County and local unit staff on how we can work together to reduce cost and maintain and improve services. This meeting is a first of its kind and we hope to see as many of our city, township and village partners there as possible!

## **OTTAWA YOUTH HIGHLIGHTED IN MSU EXTENSION DIRECTOR TOM COON'S WEEKLY UPDATE**

MSUE District Coordinator Betty Blase sent a note saying that she "wanted to share with you the article below that was featured this morning in "The Spotlight", MSU Extension Director Tom Coon's weekly update. This article is about Ottawa County 4-H member Mattea Antrup, recently reminded us of how important it is for each of us to find creative, meaningful ways to show others that we care about them. As you can see at the end of Tom's article, this story has been picked up and distributed across the country, a testament to the heartwarming generosity Mattea showed through her gift. "

### **4-H'er realizes dream of giving back**

In a recent Spotlight [article](#), I told you about **Mattea Antrup**, a 10-year-old 4-H'er who sold her hog, which she raised through the [4-H](#) program, to donate money to the [Helen DeVos Children's Hospital](#). Mattea felt compelled to step up with this act of generosity after an accident left her spending 7 weeks in a near full-body cast. Mattea was in and out of the Grand Rapids hospital often and during that time she noticed other young patients – some who never left the hospital. Mattea decided that she would donate the money from one of two hogs she would sell at the Ottawa County Youth Fair. With this decision, Mattea joined the [4-H Revolution of Responsibility](#): a nationwide movement of young people making positive impacts in the community.

On Oct. 7, Mattea's dream was realized when she gave DeVos Children's Hospital a check for \$6654.96. Her donation will go to patient families for gas cards to



attend appointments, food vouchers, a burn patient scholarship camp, grants and other things to make the patients' and families' lives a little easier.

**Katie Gervasi**, editor in [Agriculture and Natural Resources \(ANR\) Communications](#), wrote a [Michigan 4-H Today story](#) about Mattea and traveled out to the hospital to witness Mattea's donation and take a few photos.

Katie heard from **Dawnel Antrup**, Mattea's mom, who was grateful that Katie wrote the story about Mattea's journey through a difficult situation.

Ms. Antrup said, "Thank you for recognizing her passion to give back to others that maybe are struggling more than her. You captured the story beautifully. The Antrup family is very appreciative of your hard work in capturing even the smallest details. Thanks Tons!"

**Michelle Lavra**, ANR Communications manager and Katie's supervisor at the time said, "Katie did a great job on this story. Not only is it a nice example of the [Revolution of Responsibility](#) stories Katie and **Mariah (Montenegro)**, ANR Communications technical writer) routinely write, it is also a nice example of the difference 4-H'ers like Mattea are making in their communities. And it's certainly nice to get a great testimonial like the one Katie received from Mattea's mom."

As we discussed at Fall Extension Conference this week, we have some incredible stories to tell about the work we do. This is one of those stories. And it also illustrates how much our ANR Communications colleagues help us to tell those stories and to get them out to a broader audience. Thanks, Katie!

Read the story Katie wrote about Mattea here: [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/today/4\\_h\\_pig\\_raises\\_more\\_than\\_6000\\_for\\_helen\\_devos\\_childrens\\_hospital](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/today/4_h_pig_raises_more_than_6000_for_helen_devos_childrens_hospital)

The story was picked up by the Associated Press (AP) and distributed across the country from North Carolina to Texas. Read the AP story here:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MI\\_MAGNANIMOUS\\_MATTEA\\_MIOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MI_MAGNANIMOUS_MATTEA_MIOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

## **EMPLOYEE AWARDS BANQUET**

We had 220 in attendance for the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Ottawa County Service Awards Banquet last week at the Pinna-  
cle Center in Hudsonville. The County honored the following service award recipients: 29 retirees; 1 - 35; 2 -  
30; 12 - 25 year; 7 - 20 year; 14 - 15 year; 37 - 10 year; and 30 - 5 year.

I made very brief remarks at the beginning of the banquet and showed a few slides of successful partnerships and then thanked those in attendance for their support of the health care – wellness and Four Cs initiatives which are going great. I'd also like to extend that "thanks" to all employees and officials of the County.

I typically get a call or email from one of our local unit officials asking me how we are able to pay for an employee awards banquet. With the guidance of our auditors, the County included the banquet in our de-minimis

benefits policy and the banquet is one of the benefits County employees receive and this keeps us on the up and up with the IRS. With 33 departments, offices, courts and agencies, the policy also standardized employee recognition paid for by the County.

### **CONGRATS LYNNE DOYLE!**

Congratulations to Lynne Doyle who recently had the "Interim" tag removed from her title and is now the Executive Director of the Ottawa County Mental Health Department per recent action by the Ottawa County CMH Board. All who know Lynne expect the same outstanding service in her new position as she has achieved throughout her career with both the O.C. Public Health Department and the O.C. Mental Health Department.

### **CONGRATS PAT STASKIEWICZ!, NEW PUBLIC UTILITIES DIRECTOR**

Road Commission Executive Director recently named Pat Staskiewicz to replace the retiring Ken Zarzecki as Director of the Public Utilities department when Ken retires in early December. We have worked closely with Pat in his prior role as Public Utilities Engineer over the years and think he will make an excellent successor to Ken Zarzecki who is legendary in State water-sewer circles.

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS/ROAD COMMISSION MEETING (Van Beek)**

Representatives of the Board of Commissioners and Road Commission, including staff, continued their quarterly meetings in October. Items for discussion included:

Status of the memorandum of understanding between the Board of Commissioners and Road Commission - the memorandum has been approved by both bodies and progress on the items included in the memorandum will be reviewed at these meetings. The Road Commission has instituted a change where unclassified new hires are not eligible for retiree health. Openers are included in recent union contracts to deal with both retiree health for new hires and moving new hires from the existing defined benefit (DB) to a defined contribution (DC) pension system. The Road Commission is waiting for financial information from the Michigan Employment Retirement System (MERS) in order to calculate and make decisions regarding the switch from DB to DC. The new Road Commission website has a dashboard that will be further refined to demonstrate easy-to-measure metrics on performance and other data. Disney customer service training continues, with most staff taking classes now in order to avoid conflicts in the winter with snowplowing responsibilities. The County will have purchasing personnel make contact with the Road Commission to look at reverse purchasing options. The Board of Commissioners is also approving a change in the Planning Commission bylaws to allow for a Road Commission representative.

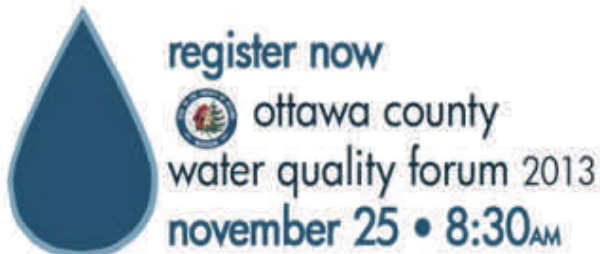
Communication was shared from MDOT staff regarding progress on the M-231 and US-31 projects. The final segment of M-231 from M-45 to Little Robinson Creek is advertised for a November letting, at which point all

segments of M-231 will be under construction. All sections of M-231 are planned to be open to traffic by the end of 2016, and no partial openings are planned prior to the full completion. MDOT is developing a public and agency involvement process for the Grand Haven US-31 project to prepare for construction in 2016. Similar work is being done with Holland area officials for segments of US-31 in Holland. That widening project between Lakewood Blvd. and Quincy Street is planned for 2018.

It was reported that road commission and county staff recently met to review the agreements and be refreshed on the public utility system serving the Fillmore Complex and surrounding townships. This is a matter currently under discussion by Robinson Township. It was also reported that Utilities Director Ken Zarzecki is planning to retire in December.

Managing Director Laughlin reviewed several reports (attached) outlining projects and programs for 2013. He also outlined the plans for securing property for expanded facility needs in both the Hudsonville and Coopersville area.

#### **OTTAWA COUNTY'S EIGHTH ANNUAL WATER QUALITY FORUM**



This year's distinguished speakers will feature the initiatives and research that is being conducted to preserve one of our most valuable resources – **Water.**

View the agenda, register or print a registration form at [www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org). Registration fee is \$12 online or \$10 by mail and is limited to the first 150 participants. Registration must be received by November 20. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Please contact Misty Cunningham at 616-738-4898 or [mcunningham@miottawa.org](mailto:mcunningham@miottawa.org) with questions.



**OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS IN THE NEWS COLORS BY KAYAK** (Shannon Felgner)

<http://fox17online.com/2013/10/22/enjoy-fall-colors-by-kayak/#9lQRkV9a6cuYxwIS.01>

**DETROIT FREE PRESS ARTICLE****Gov lobbies for tax revenue shift**

Lansing —Gov. Rick Snyder's administration is lobbying communities to back a statewide ballot issue that would phase out a billion-dollar tax burden on businesses and change how municipalities fund services.

Michigan voters will decide in August 2014 whether to shift part of the revenue from the state's use tax to communities to make up for the gradual end of the personal property tax, a key source of municipal funding. The use tax, a companion to the sales tax, is paid by businesses and individuals on out-of-state purchases and some other transactions.

Snyder signed legislation last December that phases out the personal property tax. It's a levy on items such as equipment, furniture, tools and computers that business advocates have long complained discourages investment.

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley, Snyder's point man on the issue, has appeared around the state to drum up support for the vote. Calley argues the shift will give communities a more reliable source of money, but he and municipal officials agree it will be a challenge to get voters to go along.

"We are the last Midwestern state — the manufacturing base for the country — that has a personal property tax on industrial equipment," Calley said, adding its elimination will help local communities.

"The payoff is in jobs," Calley said.

But the tax helps fund police, fire protection and other services in many municipalities, which have already suffered state cuts in revenue sharing and drops in property tax revenues.

If voters agree, communities would depend instead on an earmarked portion of the annual revenue from the state's 6-cent use tax. The amount transferred to a special fund for local governments would start at \$41.4 million in the 2015-16 fiscal year and grow to \$362.4 million in fiscal 2022-23.

The use tax applies to the total price of purchases by mail or Internet from out-of-state retailers and also to such other transactions as vehicles, airplanes or watercraft bought from individuals.

The loss of the personal property tax "is going to hit a lot of our locals where it hurts," said Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner. "(And) locals have become skeptical of these Lansing deals."

Personal property tax revenue accounted for 5-20 percent of the operating budgets in most Michigan cities in 2010, according to a 2011 report by the Senate Fiscal Agency.

The personal property tax, which dates to 1893, has been criticized as burdensome and unfair because every business has to fill out a form itemizing each piece of equipment and its age, after which an assessor assigns a value according to depreciation tables, the Citizens Research Council says. It raises \$800 million to \$1.2 billion annually.

Corporate leaders point to this tax as a greater obstacle than the now-defunct Michigan Business Tax ever was, Calley said. As long as it is in effect, he added, Michigan is missing opportunities to capture its full share of the nation's economic recovery.

Onetime foes, including the Michigan Municipal League, have dropped their opposition in favor of a wait-and-see approach on the vote. Its county and township counterparts also are neutral. But opposition remains.

"The personal property tax is seen as pretty onerous and possibly out of step with the tax environment in other states," Meisner said, but lost revenue that forces local communities to cut services also makes them less competitive by harming the quality of life.

Countless hours invested

If Michiganians reject a state use tax shift, countless hours of debate and negotiation to end the tax will go for naught.

Rejection of the change "takes us back to square one," Calley said.

Michael Johnston, legislative affairs vice president for the Michigan Manufacturers Association, expects businesses to step up with financing for an educational campaign.

"I think there'll be support from the small-business community to get this thing done," Johnston said. "This is a good thing for the business community, a good thing for jobs."

The personal property tax phase-out law — also known as the "Calley Plan" — phases out the industrial portion of the tax from 2016 through 2022. Local governments receive replacement revenue equal to 80 percent of what they lose — if the lost revenue comprises at least 2.3 percent of their total property tax revenue.

Local governments also can levy a special assessment on industrial plants to recover all of the remaining lost revenue for essential services: police, fire, ambulance and jail operations. School funding lost by the personal property tax repeal is fully replaced.

But all of the replacement money hinges on voter approval of the redistribution of state funds.

Selling change a challenge

Commercial and utility personal property taxes are mostly unaffected by the changes. But businesses with equipment worth less than \$40,000 in taxable value — to be redefined as \$80,000 in true cash value under pending legislation — also would be exempt from the personal property tax.

Samantha Harkins, the Municipal League's state affairs director, said the organization still is asking for a few changes and lawmakers seem responsive.

"If those issues are worked out the way we think they can be, then it's fairly innocuous," Harkins said. "(But) educating the public on an issue like this is going to be a challenge."

Calley said it's also a challenge to ensure local officials understand how they can benefit.

His selling point: The use tax fund will provide a guaranteed revenue stream that's even more reliable than the personal property tax. If a business or plant closes, for example, the local government loses all of its personal property tax revenue.

Calley is not sure local governments are giving up so much. It is rare to get substantial investment — in a new business or an expansion — without an abatement of the personal property tax, he said. Instead municipalities would get a new source of revenue along with new revenue generated by the demise of the old tax.

"When people have jobs, they're buying homes," Calley said. "And when commercial enterprise is growing, then you're going to see the main part of the tax and revenue system growing."

**From The Detroit News ;[http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20131021/  
POLITICS02/310210023#ixzz2iMZg7nnT](http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20131021/POLITICS02/310210023#ixzz2iMZg7nnT)**

**GVMC WEEKLY UPDATE** (John Weiss)

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



October 24, 2013

**Regional Prosperity  
Resolutions or Letters  
Needed By Tuesday**

The Grand Valley Metro Council has been asked by leaders from our region to submit an application for the new Regional Prosperity Alliance. The GVMC Board of Directors has endorsed our application on behalf of our 13 county region to administer the grant program. We will be submitting an application on behalf of the entire region by November 1st. We need your letter of support by Tuesday if you have not done so already.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. Please email your letter to [McCrathG@gvmc.org](mailto:McCrathG@gvmc.org).

**Resolutions on New  
Members Are Progressing**

We have now received all the resolutions necessary to bring Ada Township onboard as the newest member of GVMC. This will be done at our December meeting, We are also receiving your resolutions to add the Village of Sand Lake to our membership. Our goal is to have all our resolutions in place so that both Ada and Sand Lake can become formal members at our December 5th meeting. Please return the Sand Lake resolutions ASAP.

For your information, Lowell and Belding were the last communities to join GVMC. They both joined in 2007.

**Service Club Presentations**

Throughout the past year, I have had the opportunity to make over 10 presentations to service clubs and business groups in our region.

I recently presented GVMC to Mayor Van Doeselaar's Hudsonville Lion's Club. These meetings are an excellent way to share with your constituents the activities of GVMC. If you would like to schedule a presentation to your service club, feel free to contact me.

***We recently received this note from GVSU President Tom Haas regarding our presentation to their Board of Trustees.***

*Hi John,*

*"The Grand Valley Metro Council plays a critical role in helping west Michigan thrive through its coordination of planning throughout the region. GVSU appreciates the opportunity to assist the Metro Council and our community by being an active member and collaborating in the work of Metro Council."*

*"Thanks for coming John... your work is vitally important!"*

*Tom*

**GVMC Breakfast Meeting Honoring Mayor Jim Buck with  
Special Guest Senator Carl Levin**



**Monday November 4, 2013**

**L. William Seidman Center**

**\$20.00 Per Person**

**8:00-9:30 am**

**Seating will be open at 7:30 am**

**Sign Up online at:**

**[GVMC.org](http://GVMC.org) or Gayle at [McCrathG@gvmc.org](mailto:McCrathG@gvmc.org)**

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