

# County Administrator's Digest

November 12, 2014

Alan G. Vanderberg, County Administrator



County of Ottawa  
Administrator's Office  
12220 Fillmore Street  
West Olive, MI 49460  
(616) 738-4068  
avanderberg@miottawa.org  
www.miottawa.org

## **BOS AWARDED FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Join us in congratulating Mark Bos from the 58th District Court, who has been recognized as Ottawa County's Outstanding Customer Service Award recipient of the third quarter of 2014. Bos has been employed with Ottawa County for eight years. The individuals who nominated Mark wrote:



**“Mark provides excellent customer service by going “above and beyond” on a regular basis. His knowledge of law enforcement is very useful in his position here at the Court and he shares that knowledge willingly. He is so helpful to his co-workers and his willingness to serve is much appreciated. He is thoughtful and patient and is a great example for Ottawa County.”**

**“Mark is always very willing to help out in any way. He takes the initiative to ask coworkers if he can help them. When asked to research an issue, he consistently responds very quickly. If an issue arises, he tries to find a solution. He does this with a positive attitude and a smile.”**

**“Mark is a true team player. He will go above and beyond to help each and every one of his co-workers in the Court. If a question arises and he is unsure of the answer, he will follow through and get back to you. He is flexible to change his schedule to cover in areas where needed. He treats others with great respect and is a true example on how to live out the Golden Rule.”**

Thank you, Mark, for your dedication. [Read more about Mark Bos online.](#) Feel free to give Mark a public “pat on the back” via [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

## **NINTH ANNUAL WATER QUALITY FORUM**

The Ninth Annual Water Quality Forum was well attended with a total of 90 present. Jon Allan, Director of the Office of the Great Lakes, MDEQ was the lead



speaker and did a great presentation on water as a limited resource. John Austin, President, MI State Board of Education, and Education Director at the Michigan Economic Center spoke next on Michigan's Blue Economy and focused in many ways on the economic importance of Michigan's water resources. Many other interesting presentations occurred throughout the day including a presentation on drones by John Koches of the GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute. Dr. Dan O'Keefe gave his usually excellent presentation to wrap the day and this year his presentation was titled *The Grand: Ecology of a Large River*. The Agenda and the presentations are posted on [miOttawa.org](http://miOttawa.org).

Many thanks to the Water Quality Forum committee which includes: John Scholtz, Dan O'Keefe, Addie Hambley, Misty Cunningham, Mark Knudsen, Shannon Felgner, Matt Allen and Wendy Ogilvie.

An online survey was sent out to all participants. Next year will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary forum so we will plan for it to be a special event.

### **BIG BOX STORES DATA COLLECTION UNDERWAY** (Michael Galligan)

The Michigan Association of Counties is in the process of collecting information on how big box stores are currently being assessed. Big box stores include stores like Home Depot, Walmart, and Target. Recent decisions by the Michigan Tax Tribunal have indicated these stores should only be valued as if there were no existing tenant, as if the stores were dark (empty). This has led to substantial reductions in assessments for those big box stores under appeal, creating very inequitable assessments for this type of property. It has also led to substantial losses in property tax revenues.

There has been a loss in taxable value of over \$15,000,000 due to Michigan Tax Tribunal appeals of big box stores here in Ottawa County. This represents a loss in tax dollars to taxing jurisdictions of over \$700,000 per year. The collection of this data will, hopefully, lead to meaningful legislation clarifying the proper method of valuing big box retail properties

### **HUNTING IN THE COUNTY PARK SYSTEM** (John Scholtz)

Hunting is a time-honored tradition for many Ottawa County residents who can find a wide range of opportunities for their sport in the county park system. A recent survey revealed that Ottawa County Parks, with 3,818 of its 6,395 acres open to some form of hunting, is one of the leading county park systems in the state in offering hunting opportunities. Ottawa County offers hunting on 60% of its park lands, compared to 25% statewide in other county park systems.

Much of the land open to hunting in Ottawa County Parks is limited to archery deer hunting i.e. 2,808 acres. 1,010 acres are open to a full range of hunting within DNR rules and regulations. Determining how much hunting to offer and where is a delicate balancing act and the Parks Commission held a special meeting in September to focus on hunting issues. The meeting was partly in response to requests to open the Upper Macatawa

Natural Area to waterfowl hunting. Currently the site is limited to archery deer hunting. After much discussion, the Commission opted not to change hunting rules at the park due to expanding recreational uses at the site including the new paved bike trail, growing use by mountain bikers and local schools, and the increasing popularity of the site with bird watchers in the region.

On the other hand, the Parks Commission recently completed purchase of 46 acres to expand Grand River Open Space, now a 279 acre site open to a full range of hunting and known for good waterfowl hunting. The Parks Commission will also consider opening some of its more remote Grand River open space lands to waterfowl hunting over the next year.

Hunters unable to drive north to state and federal lands face declining hunting opportunities locally as suburban development has reduced lands available to hunters. Ottawa County Parks will strive to expand hunting opportunities when possible as it balances the recreational use of its park and open space lands. A brochure describing hunting opportunities offered by Ottawa County Parks is available from the Parks Office and on the parks website.

### **MOBILE FARMERS MARKET VISITS SPRING LAKE AND HOLLAND**



miOttawa Department of  
**Public Health**



The YMCA Veggie Vans are West Michigan's first and only mobile farmers markets. The vans run year round, making daily stops in urban neighborhoods throughout Ottawa, Kent and Muskegon counties. The purpose of the program is to ensure fruits and vegetables are available to people who otherwise may have limited access to fresh produce. Foods are primarily purchased from local farmers and supplemented by local grocery store partners, to provide customers with quality produce at reduced prices. ([Click here for the program flyer](#))

"The end of summer doesn't mean the end of fresh produce from local farmers," said health educator Lisa Uganski, RD with the Ottawa County Department of Public Health.

#### **Ottawa County**

**Thursdays, 11a.m.-12:15p.m.** - Herman Miller, 18558 171<sup>st</sup>, Spring Lake

**Thursdays, 1:45-3:45p.m.** - Department of Human Services, 12185 James Street, Holland

#### **Grand Rapids and Muskegon**

<http://bit.ly/Zq11Yc>

Cash, credit/debit cards, Bridge cards, Double Up Food Bucks, WIC and Senior Project Fresh/Market FRESH benefits are accepted at the Veggie Van. For a list of food assistance programs, visit <http://bit.ly/Zq11Yc>. The Veggie Van is made possible through the generosity of Blue Cross Blue Shield, Herman Miller Cares and the Muskegon Community Foundation.

**NATURE EDUCATION CENTER** (Shannon Felgner)

Ottawa County's Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing County Park, received fifty new pairs of Eagle Optic binoculars thanks to a collaborative effort from local community organizations. Ottawa County Parks purchased 25 binoculars using the donated funds of \$2,396.00 from the following organizations: Holland Audubon Society, the Grand Haven Owashtanong Islands Audubon Club, Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, Friends of Ottawa County Parks and the Nature Education Center Endowment fund. Eagle Optics matched the purchase with another 25 pair. We appreciate their support helping us to provide high-quality experiences and programs for students, adults and children. These binoculars will certainly enhance personal experiences for students on field trips, kids participating in summer camp programs, and those who attend the variety of public programs throughout the year. These binoculars will always be available to borrow at the Nature Education Center to use in the wildlife den or take out on the trails. Stop by at the visitor services desk to borrow a pair.



**27th ANNUAL COUNTY SERVICE AWARDS BANQUET**

The Annual Employee Award Banquet was held at the Pinnacle Center on October 23rd. The following achievements of our outstanding employees and officials were honored:

<b>5 year recipients:</b>	<b>15 year recipients:</b>	<b>25 year recipients:</b>	<b>35 year recipients:</b>	<b>Retirees:</b>
25	39	18	2	19
<b>10 year recipients:</b>	<b>20 year recipients:</b>	<b>30 year recipients:</b>	<b>40 year recipient:</b>	<b>Customer Service Awards:</b>
31	19	4	1	3

A good time was had by all. Sheriff Rosema received a well-deserved standing ovation that honored his 40-years of service to the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office!

The banquet is made possible by the generosity of the Board of Commissioners. I occasionally get a question by a local unit of government as to how we can legally do the banquet. The banquet is a *de-minimus benefit*

provided to County employees by policy and is reported as such in the employee orientation that all new employees go through.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT - COUNTY COLLABORATION MEETING**

Approximately 50 County and local government officials gathered last week to discuss collaboration and to celebrate successes over the past year and to discuss possible new partnerships for the future.

The following local units were present:

<b><u>Townships</u></b>	<b><u>Cities &amp; Village</u></b>	<b><u>Others</u></b>
Allendale	Coopersville	Ottawa Area ISD
Blendon	Ferrysburg	Ottawa County Road Commission
Chester	Grand Haven	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Georgetown	Spring Lake	WebTecs Inc.
Grand Haven	Zeeland	
Holland		
Robinson		
Spring Lake		
Zeeland		

The agenda and presentation is posted on [miOttawa.org](http://miOttawa.org).

### **OCTOBER OCCDA STATS** (Tim Smith)

The call volume and incident numbers handled through Central Dispatch for October 2014 were:

**Total Incidents** – 9,557 even with October 2013 and even YTD with 2013

**Fire Incidents** – 1,257 up 1.9% over October 2013 and up 3.1% YTD over 2013

**Law Incidents** – 8,300 even with October 2013 and down 1% YTD over 2013

**911 calls** – 8,744 up 1.3% over October 2013 and up 1% YTD over 2013

**911 Hang Up calls** - 912 up 11.2% over October 2013 and down 2.2% YTD over 2013

**Wireless 911 calls** – 89.6% of 911 calls for October 2014 and 90.8% of 911 calls YTD for 2014

**911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less** - 94.3% for October 2014 and 93.8% YTD 2014

**(NENA recommended standard is 90% within 10 seconds)**

### **LOCAL DENTIST VOLUNTEERS MORE THAN 20 YEARS TO CHILDREN**



miOttawa Department of  
**Public Health**

I am acknowledging Dr. James Strikwerda, DDS of Holland, for his work in our community. Dr. Strikwerda has volunteered his services to the Ottawa County Department of Public Health's (OCDPH) *Miles of Smiles* (MOS) mobile dental unit for more than 20 years. His partnership with OCDPH started at the beginning of the MOS program in 1994. He began volunteering his time as a supervisory dentist; overseeing the program, providing his expert knowledge and providing direct patient care. Doc, as we call him, no longer acts as our supervisory dentist. However, he and his wife, Dolly, stay involved with the program through their generous contributions. Their financial donations have helped qualifying low-income, uninsured children receive dental treatment who otherwise may have gone without. Dr. Strikwerda has a heart of gold and greatly helps increase access to dental health care services for Ottawa County children. Thank you so much, Doc!



Sincerely,

Debra Bassett, RDH, BHS  
Oral Health Team Supervisor

*"The Miles of Smiles mobile dental unit goes on-site, during school hours, helping to make dental services more readily available for children."*

*- Debra Bassett, RDH, BHS Oral Health Supervisor; Ottawa County Department of Public Health.*

### ***About Miles of Smiles (MOS)***

The MOS mobile unit provides on-site preventive and restorative dental services for qualifying low-income, uninsured, Medicaid insured, and MICHild participating children. Services are provided at schools, Head Start Centers, Ottawa County Department of Public Health clinics, migrant camps and sites for dentally underserved children. The 40 foot mobile unit is equipped with a waiting area, laboratory, two operatories, digital x-ray and a wheel chair lift.

Funding for the MOS program is provided by state grants and foundations, local foundations, donations and county support. Available dental services for children are made possible by a volunteer network of more than 100 dentists, hygienists and Grand Rapids Community College dental hygiene students. MOS has received several commendations for its innovative approach to address major health problems and increase access to direct patient care for qualifying Ottawa County children. To determine eligibility, please call 1-800-467-5905. To acquire an application, please visit our website at [www.miOttawa.org/dental](http://www.miOttawa.org/dental).



**Suggested Tweet:** Thank you Dr. James Strikwerda for your service! Free dental services for qualifying children @miOCDPH [www.miottawa.org/dental](http://www.miottawa.org/dental)

**Contact:** Debra Bassett, RDH, BHS; Oral Health Team Supervisor; 616-494-5540 or [dbassett@miottawa.org](mailto:dbassett@miottawa.org)

### **OTTAWA COUNTY “LEGEND” INTERVIEWS**

We have been working with the Tri-Cities Historical Society “Dusties” to interview Ottawa County legends, those elected and appointed retirees who have contributed significantly to Ottawa Way during their career. We are also interviewing other individuals who have made significant contributions but who did not work for the County. The initial is provided below. The Dusties are making significant progress and we are ready to fill the pipeline with another 10 interviewees. Please send ideas for interviews to both [Misty Cunningham and I](#). This is part of the Four C’s Culture initiative and we plan to have these interviews available for public consumption on miOttawa.org in the future.

Former Commissioner Denny Swartout is working on this project and is perfect for the role with his knowledge of County history.

<b>Gerald Huizenga</b>	<b>Judge Calvin Bosman</b>
<b>Jack Smant</b>	<b>Nathan Tubergen</b>
<b>Jessie Dahlman</b>	<b>Henry and Louise “Loekie” Boersma</b>
<b>Judge Hannes Meyers</b>	<b>Juke Van Oss</b>
<b>Judge James Townsend</b>	<b>Gil Dykstra</b>

### **HOUSING FOR ALL IN OTTAWA COUNTY** (Bill Raymond)

#### **Introduction**

Ottawa County is a great place to live – for those of us who have the privilege of living here there is no short-

age of great examples of why we live here and the opportunities that are all around us. Over the past few years Ottawa County has received a variety of accolades such as being one of the happiest locations in the US; one of the healthiest places; one of the best places to retire; having one of the lowest crime rates; a strong, diverse and growing economy; low unemployment, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit to mention just a few.

Interwoven throughout all of this positive activity and recognition there is still much to be done to continually improve the quality of life of all Ottawa County residents and one of the opportunities we have in this regard is in the area of quality housing for all.

The need is often referred to as “affordable housing” or “low-income” housing, but the issue goes much beyond those terms. Many people struggle with housing costs – many times it is individuals and families we would not expect to be struggling. The need can be hidden.

There are many organizations throughout Ottawa County that focus on a wide range of housing needs for a variety of populations. Following is a brief synopsis of just a few things that have happened or are happening in the housing arena in Ottawa County.

### **Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly Section 8 Housing Vouchers)**

The voucher system has been in place in Ottawa County for many years and continues to be a strong source of support for a variety of low income individuals and families.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) is a federal, long-term rental assistance program designed to assist low income households with rent. The program is administered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the 350 Ottawa County vouchers are managed by Community Housing Advocates who works closely with housing service providers to locate eligible households. Because Michigan's voucher program has a homeless preference, to be eligible a household must meet the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development definition of homelessness. There are four federally defined categories under which individuals and families may qualify as homeless: 1) literally homeless; 2) imminent risk of homelessness; 3) homeless under other Federal statutes; and 4) fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence. (For more details click [Homeless Definition](#)).

For a number of years, Ottawa County Community Action Agency (OCCAA) administered the Section 8 or Housing Choice Vouchers for Ottawa County. Due to budgetary and other changes by the Michigan State Development Authority and the regionalization of the voucher administrative process, OCCAA had to drop the program at the end of 2012.

### **Countywide Housing Study – 2008**

In 2008 a number of organizations collaborated on a comprehensive housing study for Ottawa County. This study delved into the issue of affordable housing and looked at a variety of gaps in affordable housing throughout the county. The study took a “quadrant” approach, so that resources and needs could be looked at from the perspective of the four quadrants in Ottawa County. A primary focus was on gaps in housing re-

sources for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, families at or near the poverty level and individuals and families who were spending more than 30% of gross income on housing needs. This 30% threshold is commonly used as a benchmark of affordability for housing costs.

Even though this study is a few years old, it is still instructive regarding the scope and types of affordable housing needs in Ottawa County. For a copy of the housing study see the following link: [http://www.miottawa.org/Community/CAA/pdf/Housing\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_March-08.pdf](http://www.miottawa.org/Community/CAA/pdf/Housing_Needs_Assessment_March-08.pdf)

### **Ottawa County Housing Commission**

In the early 2000's a number of housing advocates and organizations, including Ottawa County Community Action Agency, got together to explore forming a public housing authority. Many surrounding communities in West Michigan have housing authorities (sometimes called housing commissions) and there are approximately 132 housing authorities in Michigan (See the following link: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/mi.cfm>).

Two of the main purposes of housing authorities are to manage low-income housing developments, including those for senior citizens and those with disabilities and to administer vouchers that come directly to them from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The purpose of the new housing commission in Ottawa County was to qualify directly for vouchers from HUD, but HUD stopped providing new vouchers around the time the new commission was formed, so the Ottawa County Housing Commission never received any vouchers and is basically inactive at this point.

### **Ottawa Housing Next**

Greater Ottawa County United Way, The Lakeshore Housing Alliance, Ottawa County Human Services Coordinating Council and the Lakeshore Non-Profit Association conducted a month's long process of assessing available resources, analyzing the housing situation and educating the community. The result is *Ottawa Housing Next*, an effort to create a regional, long term, and cross-sector strategy to provide housing for all in Ottawa County. The Design Team is made up of leaders of the business community, non-profit and government sectors and will be using the Collective Impact model of addressing social problems. The Design Team, with input from the community, will create a common agenda, agree on shared measurements, and coordinate activities to move toward the goal and practice open communication with each other, and the community. Greater Ottawa County United Way and its program Lakeshore Housing Alliance will act as the backbone organization by guiding and managing the process.

The process holds much promise for a true collaborative approach and the type of community impact we need in Ottawa County. Data is a key driver of the activity of Housing Next and there is a strong emphasis on gathering voices and input from a broad range of stakeholders – not the least of which is the voice of those living in low quality and overly costly housing.

Ottawa Housing Next could really function as a type of housing authority in Ottawa County and has the potential to garner a much wider range of voices and resources than previously imagined. For more information on affordable housing in Ottawa County see the website of the Lakeshore Housing Alliance at: <http://lakeshorehousingalliance.org/>.

**GVMC WEEKLY UPDATE** (John Weiss)

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



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA VEGGIE VAN

**NEW!**

## Muskegon's Mobile Farmers Market Offering:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Cheese, eggs, and bread

Ottawa County Dept. of Human Services - 12185 James Street, Holland, MI 49424

**Thursdays 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm • Public Welcome!**



Cash • Debit/Credit • WIC • Market Fresh

Brought to you by:



Blue Cross  
Blue Shield  
Blue Care Network  
of Michigan



community foundation

Brought to you by:  
DAVID D. HUNTING YMCA  
475 Lake Michigan Drive NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
616.855.9680

[www.grymca.org/community-programs](http://www.grymca.org/community-programs)

Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees  
of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

**Muskegon County**



**Michigan Association of  
Township Supervisors**

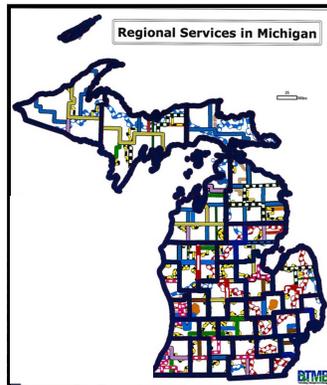
Last week in Holland the Michigan Association of Township Supervisors held their Annual Meeting. I was invited by Alpine Supervisor Alex Arends to speak to the group about Grand Valley Metro Council and our West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance.

The group represented Township Supervisors from throughout Michigan and we focused on our many collaboration and cooperation initiatives and the structure and workings of GVMC. Our organization is unique and we discussed how we collaborate to make West Michigan a better place to work and raise our families.

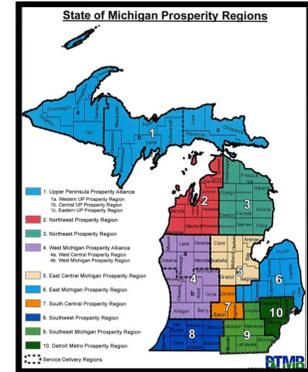
We also discussed our RPI process and the projects that have been selected as "Projects of Regional Economic Significance". Finally, we talked about the great

progress that the State of Michigan has made in restructuring state government service areas. In less than one year, state agencies have been realigned to follow the boundaries of the Michigan Prosperity Regions.

Alex Arends Alpine Township Supervisor stated, "John offered an excellent presentation on a topic that should be relevant to Township Supervisors across Michigan." Paul Keson, Supervisor of



January 2014, Michigan service areas with over 80 boundary lines in our Region



October 2014 Michigan service areas aligned with the Prosperity Regions.

Pere Marquette Township in Mason County added, "The presentation explained the success of collaboration with public, private and nonprofit sectors all working together to achieve a common goal. John explained that our region has great potential and benefit from everyone working with each other toward a shared interest and vision leading us towards economic prosperity."

If you would like me to speak to your group or service club, please feel free to contact me.

**Ottawa County Water Quality  
Forum**

**When: November 7th 8:00-3:30**  
**Where: 12220 Fillmore, West Olive**  
**Registration: Please contact Misty mcunningham@miottawa.org or 616-738-4898**  
**Space is available for 150 participants**

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Due to a scheduling conflict with our regular meeting location our Board Meeting will be:

**Thursday November 6, 2014**

**8:30 am**

**Wyoming City Hall**

**1155-28th Street, Wyoming Michigan**



**Leadership West Michigan**

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak to the 2014 Class of Leadership West Michigan. This is a joint program of the West Michigan Chamber Alliance that includes the Chambers of Commerce of Holland/Zeeland, Grand Haven/Spring Lake, Grand Rapids and Muskegon/Lakeshore.

Also serving on the panel discussion were Muskegon City Manager Frank Peterson and Greg Holcombe of the Riverview Group in Holland. The session was moderated by Dr. Joe Ohren of Eastern Michigan University.

The program for the day focused on the structure and workings of local government.

Other program participants included Al Vanderberg, Ottawa County Administrator and GVMC Chairman and Brian Miller, East Grand Rapids City Commissioner. Keith Van Beek from Ottawa County was host for our session and also taught students a section on taxation and how property taxes are divided among local units of government.



**Regional Prosperity Initiative**

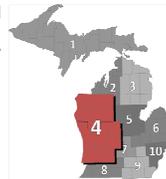
**General Session**

**Presentation Available**

I have received several requests this week for information regarding the projects and presentations at the General Session of the RPI.

Those presentations are available on our website at [www.gvmc.org](http://www.gvmc.org) You can also find them at the RPI website at <http://gvmc.org/wmrpa.shtml>.

Also on the website you will find the results of the voting and a demographic analysis of the participants in the General Ses-



Port of Muskegon Logistics Hub



**[Save the Date– Ottawa County Water Quality Forum](#)**

November 7th 8am-3:30 pm 12220 Fillmore West Olive

Register with Misty at [mcunningham@miottawa.org](mailto:mcunningham@miottawa.org) or 616-738-4898

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Due to a scheduling conflict with our regular meeting location our Board Meeting will be:

**Thursday November 6, 2014**

**8:30 am**

**Wyoming City Hall**

**1155-28th Street, Wyoming Michigan**