

County Administrator's Digest

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WEST MICHIGAN ISSUES AND IMPACTS

I hosted Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof on [West Michigan Issues and Impacts](#) on Friday, October 16th. Click the link above to see this informative interview.

SHERIFF ROSEMA NEWS

Sheriff Gary Rosema recently announced that he will not be running for reelection. We thought you might enjoy these two articles regarding Gary's decision.

<http://www.hollandsentinel.com/article/20151029/NEWS/151029033>

<http://www.grandhaventribune.com/article/policefire/2304691>

DEPUTY BENNETT AWARDED FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Ottawa County extends its congratulations to Deputy Brad Bennett who was selected to receive the Outstanding Customer Service Award for the third quarter of 2015. Deputy Bennett has worked four years with Ottawa County as a Sheriff's Cadet and three years as a Sheriff's Deputy.

"We thank Deputy Bennett for his commitment to customer service. The Sheriff's Office commits itself to a high level of service for the community it serves. Deputy Bennett's actions are a fine example of his commitment to community," said Captain Valerie Weiss. The individual who nominated Deputy Bennett wrote:

"On 7/21/2015 my father, my mother and myself were on our way home from Ann Arbor where my father was getting a biopsy done because we



recently found out he has cancer. Needless to say, it's been rough lately. When we were driving through Coopersville our car broke down on the side of the highway. Officer Bennett pulled over and was extremely kind and helpful. He took my dad to get gas and he then filled the car for us, he stayed while we tried to start it but unfortunately it wouldn't start. He gave us a ride to the gas station where the car was being towed to. He had to leave after that but we did end up getting the car started. With all the negative attention police officers are getting lately I think the positive needs to be talked about too! He gave me a great memory with my dad that I will never forget! If this somehow reaches you Officer Bennett, Thank you so much for your service. You are a wonderful person and a great role model!! Thank you for making our day!"

Meet Deputy Bennett at <http://bit.ly/cs-award>.

COURTHOUSE STAIR REPLACEMENT

Work has begun on replacing the steps at the Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven. The scene pictured below shows how the front of the Court House looked after the steps were removed last Saturday.



CUSTOMER SERVICE PRESENTATION

Misty Cunningham, Capt. John Wolffis and I presented on customer service at the [Allegan County Leadership Forum](#). While we did not have a chance to stay for the balance of the event, it was an impressive agenda that featured Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and others. You can review our presentation by clicking on the ink above.

OTTAWA SHERIFF'S DEPUTY NAMED DEPUTY OF THE YEAR (Sheriff Rosema)

I am pleased to announce that recently at the Michigan Sheriffs' Association Fall Conference in Traverse City, Deputy Pete Feliciano was recognized as the Secondary Road Patrol, 416 Deputy of the Year for 2015. Presented annually, this recognition and award recognizes a SRP 416 Deputy who excels on the job while also giving back and engaging with the community.

Nominees are evaluated in the four service areas of the program:

- Patrolling and monitoring traffic violations
- Enforcing the law
- Investigating motor vehicle crashes

- Providing emergency assistance to persons on or near the road

Deputy Feliciano, with nearly 20 years on the department and the last 10 years dedicated to our SRP 416 Program, has had well over 25,000 traffic contacts and policed many personal injury and property damage traffic crashes on our county roadways. Deputy Feliciano is known for being very professional during these contacts and the assistance he affords the general public. Pete strives to explain the law and educate the public both in his road patrol assignment and in his community contacts at various events.

As a member of our Traffic Services Unit, Deputy Feliciano is commended for his traffic safety focus and the positive impact he has in Ottawa County. Along with being recognized as the 2015 SRP 416 Deputy of the Year for the State of Michigan, Pete was presented with a special badge denoting this accomplishment.

Congratulations Pete!!

[REGISTER NOW FOR OTTAWA COUNTY'S TENTH ANNUAL WATER QUALITY FORUM](#)



November 13 • 8AM - 4PM
12220 Fillmore, West Olive. Main Conference Room

Featuring initiatives and research conducted to preserve and protect one of our most valuable resources: *Water*

View the agenda, register or print a registration form at 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 6. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Please contact Misty Cunningham at 616-738-4898 or mcunningham@miottawa.org with questions.

register now

PLANT PATHWAY DEDICATION CEREMONY (Aaron Bodbyl-Mast

On Friday morning October 16, 2015, several people gathered for a dedication ceremony held to commemorate the naming of the M-231 Grand River Bridge Pathway in honor of Sgt. Henry E. Plant. The ceremony was held at the north end of the M-231 Bridge in Crockery Township.

This ceremony was the culmination of a multi-year collaborative effort by the local veteran and service organizations of Grand Haven, the Ottawa County Planning & Performance Improvement Department (PPID), Representative Amanda Price, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to pay homage to Sgt. Plant, the first person from Ottawa County to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.



Photo Credit: Grand Haven Tribune



The local veteran and service organizations (including Henry E. Plant Camp 3, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, VFW Post 2326, American Legion Post 28, Order of Elks 1200, Grand Haven FOE 925 and Knights of Columbus 2975) had been seeking a fitting tribute to the memory of Sgt. Plant, who was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1896 for his valor at the Battle at Bentonville during the Civil War. Since the Bridge Pathway had not been officially named, these organizations recognized an opportunity to honor this local historical figure. This tribute was thought to be especially meaningful because Sgt. Plant's former farm is located on the M-231 route in Crockery Township.

At the behest of the local veterans and service organizations, Rep. Price introduced a bill to the State Legislature to name the Bridge Pathway after Sgt. Plant (the bill was also sponsored by Rep. Victory and Rep. Haveman). In January 2015, Governor Snyder signed the bill and the Bridge Pathway was officially designated the Sgt. Henry E. Plant Memorial Grand River Bridge Non-Motorized Pathway.

To further pay homage to Sgt. Plant and provide a permanent marker on the Pathway, the veteran and service organizations raised funds to pay for the fabrication and installation of a plaque detailing his life. This plaque will soon be installed at a Grand River overlook at the center of the Pathway. The unveiling of the plaque was one of the high points of the Dedication Ceremony. The solemn

military-style Ceremony also featured the story of Sgt. Plant and a rifle salute by an Honor Guard.

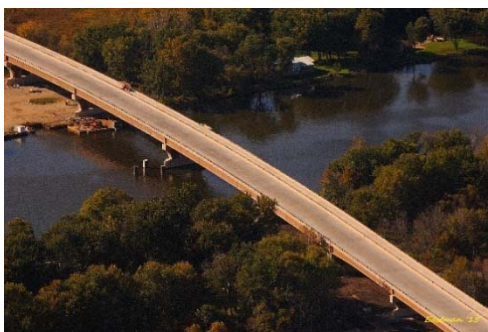
The Sgt. Plant Pathway will officially open to the public following the completion of Phase I of the Spoonville Trail and Phase I of the Grand River Greenway Trail in 2016. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Plant Pathway will be held at that time.

The Plant Pathway was made possible with funding by the MDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). Phase I of the Spoonville Trail is being funded by the MDOT TAP as well as by contributions from the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission, Crockery Township, the Spoonville Gun Club, Jack & Vicki Fisher, Jacquelyn Fisher, the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, the Loutit Foundation, Shape Corporation, the DALMAC Fund, Scholten Fant, Charter Communications, Rycenga Building Center, and the Quiet Water Symposium. Phase I of the Grand River Greenway Trail is being funded by the MDOT TAP, the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission, and Robinson Township.



M-231 DEDICATION

M-231 was dedicated last Friday in a memorable ceremony.



Speakers included Roger Safford, Region Engineer, Michigan Department of Transportation; Jennifer Owens, President, Lakeshore Advantage; Tracy Mulligan, Supervisor, Robinson Township; Al Vanderberg, Administrator, Ottawa County; Amanda Price, State Representative; Ted Burch, Assistant Michigan Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration; Pete Hoekstra, former U.S. Congressman and Kirk Steudle, Director, Michigan Department of Transportation.

Many of the speaker's remarks centered around the 23 years and many, many people from state, county, and local public and private sector organizations that worked to make this happen.

The Dedication was the third of three events celebrating the opening of M-231. The M-231 Run was held on Saturday, October 3rd and 300 runners braved the cold, windy weather to run the 23.1 k race that was billed as a marathon warm-up race. The second event occurred on Friday, October 17th when the non-motorized trail that traverses Michigan's 6th longest bridge was dedicated as the Henry E. Plant Memorial Non-Motorized Pathway. Sgt. Henry Plant was the first of 6 Ottawa County Medal of Honor winners for his heroics in battle during the Civil War.

After the ceremony, I personally thanked MDOT Director Kirk Steudle for upholding the word of the Director who preceded him. Back around 2005 we met with the then MDOT Director who pledged to have a shovel in the ground on the M-231 Bypass by 2010. Our jaws hit our chest and we did not think this commitment would be kept but Director Steudle, the Transportation Commission and all of the other MDOT staff that made this major improvement happen backed the MDOT word and made it happen.

DATA SUPPORTS CHANGES TO VETERANS AFFAIRS IN OTTAWA (Keith Van Beek)

In 2011 Ottawa County changed the system and staffing that was used to support veterans in our County. Prior to that time, dedicated volunteers administered all County programming for veterans. Beginning in 2011, a contractual agreement and County funding provided twenty (20) hours of dedicated hours per week to both provide consistent customer service and to analyze and improve services. Overseen by the Veterans Affairs Committee appointed by the Board of Commissioners, this new Department of Veterans Affairs has continued providing a veteran burial allowance for qualified veterans (and spouses), emergency assistance for qualified wartime era veterans, and other coordination and referrals for assistance. More importantly, the new Department of Veterans Affairs embarked on new relationships to streamline and improve connections with state and federal resources. Now county veterans can also apply for emergency assistance through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund through the County Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, the county office has become the point of contact to schedule appointments with certified Veterans Service Officers to apply for federal Veterans Affairs benefits.

Key data from county and federal data at the end of 2014 demonstrate the success of the new initiative, showing our veterans are being connected to and receiving the support they have earned and deserve:

Assistance to Veterans through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund:

-2010 \$29,711

-2014 \$76,291

Total Contacts (personal and phone) with Veterans:

-2012 1,013

-2014 2,088

Number of Appointments with a Veterans Service Officer

-2013 273

-2014 716

Total Federal Assistance by County Data

-2009 16,583 veteran population

\$1,797 federal benefit per veteran

Ranked 83 of 83 counties

-2012 15,393 veteran population

\$2,636 federal benefit per veteran

47% increase in benefits from 2009 compared to 32% increase statewide

Ranked 82 of 83 counties

-2014 15,269 veteran population

\$3,972 federal benefit per veteran

121% increase in benefits from 2009 compared to 85% increase statewide

Ranked 80 of 83 counties

CELEBRATING BILLS REMOVING OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE FROM LAW (Kristina Wieghmink)

Janine Chittenden, Child Health Team Supervisor of CSHCS for the Ottawa Department of Public Health; Chris Buczek, Public Health Program Supervisor for CSHCS with the Kent County Health Department; and MCMCH Executive Director Amy Zaagman attended the ceremonial bill signing this week with Governor Rick Snyder to celebrate the passage of bills to update language in a number of Michigan statutes by removing references to "crippled children."

The House Bills 4203, 4204, 4205 and Senate Bills 112, 113 and 114, sponsored by State Representatives Mike Callton, Joe Graves and Andy Schor and State Senators Curtis Hertel, Jim Marleau and Margaret O'Brien, respectively, removed all offensive references to "crippled children" from state law. The references in law will now be described as "children or youth with special health care needs"

The bills are now Public Acts 89-94 of 2015.

One of the bills, HB 4205 sponsored by Representative Schor (D-Lansing), also modernizes the section of the Public Health Code that recognizes the Children's Special Health Care Services Program.

"It truly was an honor to update the Public Health Code statutes language and special to witness Governor Rick Snyder signing the bills," said Janine Chittenden, Child Health Team Supervisor of CSHCS for the Ottawa Department of Public Health.



Chittenden, Buczek, and Zaagman (from left to right in picture) serve as members of the CSHCS Advisory Committee.

GVMC WEEKLY UPDATE (John Weiss)

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