

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MACOMB COUNTY CLERK PROPOSES FREE BUS RIDE FOR JURORS
AT NO EXPENSE TO TAXPAYERS**

Macomb County Clerk – Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh today proposed providing a free bus ticket to jurors summoned for county jury duty under a program that would cost taxpayers nothing. If approved by the county Board of Commissioners, every person summoned for Macomb County circuit court jury duty would get a free bus ticket if they want it. Jurors would also get a “Transportation Hotline” telephone number they could call to help them find out where to get on the correct bus. Some Macomb County residents would even get door-to-door service under the proposal.

“One of the most fundamental rights is the right to a trial by a jury of your peers,” said Sabaugh. “No one should be denied the opportunity to serve on a jury just because they don’t have a ride to the courthouse.”

“The most common reason given by jurors who request an excuse is that they do not have transportation,” said William Froberg, Macomb County Jury Commissioner. “I am very impressed with Carmella Sabaugh’s proposal, which could solve a problem for many jurors at no cost to the taxpayers.”

“We welcome anything that makes it easier for jurors to visit our city,” said Mount Clemens Mayor Quinnie Cody. “Carmella Sabaugh’s proposal for getting jurors a bus ride to the courthouse may make parking easier, help people feel more comfortable and might encourage people to visit at other times.”

“I appreciate Carmella Sabaugh’s efforts in respecting homeowners and taxpayers by making sure this is a fair system for everyone,” said Macomb County Commissioner Ed Szczepanski who chairs the committee that will consider Sabaugh’s proposal. “I believe this would be the first use of public transportation for jurors in Michigan. I’m happy that Sabaugh has secured 500 free rides from SMART to jump start the program and make sure no taxpayer dollars are used.”

Under Sabaugh’s proposal, the county would partner with the Suburban Mobile Authority for Regional Transportation (“SMART”) to provide transportation service to jurors. The program would be funded by requiring jurors who participate to donate the mileage reimbursement of 10 cents per mile that the juror would receive. The program would also be funded by voluntary contributions from other jurors who would be asked to donate their first day’s juror compensation to help fellow Macomb County jurors get a bus ride to the courthouse. To jumpstart the program, SMART agreed to donate the first 500 tickets.

“We are pleased that more people will be introduced to the public transportation services available throughout Macomb County,” said Dan Dirks, General Manager of SMART. “Many people don’t realize how to use Macomb County public transportation or that some can even get door-to-door service. We believe Carmella Sabaugh’s proposal will help the entire county by helping jurors and by promoting public transportation. If it works, it may be something we can build on in other counties.”

"I did not have transportation at the time I served on jury duty and had this program been available, I would have definitely used it," said Kenneth Blackwell who served on Macomb County jury duty in October. "It saves you having to call in for an excuse or be late. Carmella Sabaugh made us feel comfortable and this program is worth trying."

Sabaugh said there are several good reasons to give her proposal a try:

- The jury system is a foundation of our legal system and helping make jury service easier is a benefit to everyone. Jurors won’t have to worry about parking or driving in bad weather.
- For every person using the system it frees up a parking space in Mount Clemens.
- Businesses would benefit if people without transportation are introduced to the public transit system because more people could go to businesses to use services and/or make purchases.
- This could lead to fewer juror excusals or fewer requests for rescheduling.
- This proposal is environmentally friendly because if more people use public transit there will be fewer cars on the road.
- This is a limited pilot program to allow actual data to be gathered so that the Board of Commissioners may conduct a complete review of the merits towards the end of the year.
- Citizens in every commissioner’s district would benefit because jurors are randomly chosen from a countywide pool of people.

The program costs the county taxpayers nothing. If it doesn’t work, if no one takes advantage of the service or if no jurors voluntarily contribute their first day’s jury duty pay to fund it, then the program will end and no cost to or commitment from the county.

Sabaugh’s proposal will be considered on March 10, 2004 by the Legislative and Administrative Services Committee of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

This is not the only time Carmella Sabaugh was first to make an improvement. As Clerk / Register of Deeds, Sabaugh:

- Is the only Michigan clerk to offer evening hours, making it possible for people with full-time jobs to get personal service.
- Allows instant access to copies of real estate deeds and mortgages by putting all county public real estate records on the Internet. This reduces trips to the office.
- Put Macomb County Circuit Court case names, numbers and judges on the Internet making it easy to look up whether or not cases were filed against someone and to find a case number.
- Was the first county clerk in Michigan to use computerized scanning and indexing for a register of deeds office.
- Was the first county clerk in Michigan to launch a toll-free 24-hour fax-on-demand system for forms and information. It even works on nights and weekends when the office is closed.
- Was the first county clerk in Michigan to provide overnight delivery service for birth certificate requests and other vital records. You can now get your records in a hurry.
- Was the first county clerk in Michigan to provide assumed name business registrations and death records on the Internet.
- Enabled the public to initiate an automatic phone call from the clerk's web site.
- Enlisted local amateur radio operators as emergency backup to relay election results on election night.
- Ended potential favoritism by making sure all titles companies pay the same fees as the public for real estate records.
- Was the first county clerk in Michigan to make paying easier by accepting credit cards.
- Ended potential "judge shopping" by computerizing random judge selection when lawsuits are filed.
- Stopped cash payments from being made in courtrooms by requiring all payments to be made and logged through the clerk's cashier window.

- Protected Macomb County residents' privacy by defending against a lawsuit that would have forced disclosure of citizens' complete birth dates.
- Started a Personal Protection Order Assistance Center to help victims of abuse.

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