BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR SESSION

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2013, 7 P.M.

FINAL AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Invocation by Commissioner James Carabelli
5. Adoption of Agenda
6. Approval of Minutes dated 4-25, 5-9 (special) and 5-22 (special), 2013 (previously distributed)
7. Public Participation (five minutes maximum per speaker, or longer at the discretion of the Chairperson related only to issues contained on the agenda)
8. Correspondence from Office of Executive (none)
9. Presentations:
   a) Memorial Proclamation for Bobby Hill (Miller)
   b) Proclamation for Justice David Viviano (Flynn)
   c) Volunteer Award Winners (page 1) (attached)
10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
   a) Infrastructure, May 21 *(no report)*
   b) Finance, May 22 *(page 2)* *(attached)*

11. Board Chair’s Report *(page 5)* *(attached)*

12. New Business

13. Public Participation *(five minutes maximum per speaker or longer at the discretion of the Chairperson)*

14. Roll Call

15. Adjournment
The Macomb County Board of Commissioners is pleased to honor the following outstanding volunteers who have generously donated time and energy for the betterment of our community:

**District 1:** Commissioner Toni Moceri  
Dorothy Milich: St. Stevan Decanski Serbian Orthodox Church  
Angelo Timonte: St. Louise de Marillac Catholic Church

**District 2:** Commissioner Marvin Sauger  
Bob Batistoni: Detroit Institute of Arts  
Fred Bristol: National Alliance on Mental Illness (Macomb)  
Debbie Carter: Hope Center in Macomb  
Kenneth Nowak: Right To Life Warren/Center Line, Inc.  
Kimmie Williams: Wilkerson Elementary School

**District 3:** Commissioner Veronica Klinefelt  
Nell Druzinski: 8 Mile Kelly Homeowners Association  
Daisy Mitchell: McKinley Elementary School

**District 4:** Commissioner David Flynn  
Kathleen Bojcuniak: Immaculate Conception Schools  
Nancy Duffy: Macomb Literacy partners  
Kellye Fazio: Warren Mott High School Booster Club  
Jerry Helfer: Hope Center in Macomb  
Francesca Hillbom: Warren Concert Band, Inc.  
Alanda Pritchard: Harwood Elementary School  
Maggie Prong: The Parade Company

**District 5:** Commissioner Robert Mijac  
Mary Beauchamp: Sterling Heights Public Library  
Mike Butkiewicz: St. Lawrence Church  
Virginia Chadwick: St. Michael Catholic Church  
Frank M. Singer: Sterling Heights Lions Club

**District 6:** Commissioner Jim Carabelli  
Geraldine McIsaac: Henry Ford Macomb Hospital  
Bill Miskokomon: Charter Township of Shelby  
Judy Noonan: Isaac Monfort Elementary School  
John Ribbing: Malow Jr. High Athletic Booster Board & City Mission  
Barbara Blint: Turning Point, Inc.

**District 7:** Commissioner Don Brown  
Susan Koczab: Wyandotte Middle School  
Vi Quinlan: Care House

**District 8:** Commissioner Kathy Vosburg  
Evelyn Kolodziejcza: Chesterfield Twp. Library  
William Kolodziejcza: Chesterfield Twp. Library  
Nancy Kuula: Christ Lutheran Church Board of Social Ministry  
Marilyn Sypolt: Chesterfield Twp. Beautification Committee  
Jason Walker: New Haven Little League  
Karen Wiegand: Living Hope Lutheran Church  
Karen Winter: LOGIA - Love of God in Action

**District 9:** Commissioner Fred Miller  
John Cline: Macomb County Santa Parad (Mt. Clemens)  
Theresa Jarratt: Clinton Township Area Optimist Club  
Thomas Kiernicki: Sheriff's Office - Mountain Bicycle Division  
Pauline Ruszkowski: Clinton Macomb Public Library  
Harvey Swamp: Grace Episcopal Church  
George Westerman: Roseville Church of Christ

**District 10:** Commissioner Mike Boyle  
Robert Bielat: Wigs 4 Kids  
Jack Dick: Masonic Heights Elementary  
Jack Greer: Sheriff's Office - Marine Division  
Johnny Lang: Hope Center in Macomb  
Larry Robbins: Detroit Zoological Society  
Pamela Spinella: Erin Presbyterian Church

**District 11:** Commissioner Kathy Tocco  
Vania Apps: Fraser First Booster Club  
Christy Domenicucci: Thomas Edison Elementary School  
Diane Flickinger: Hope Center in Macomb  
Nancy Garcia: Anton Art Center  
Dennis Houser: Corp. Walter F. Bruce Post VFW 1146  
Winifred Nicholson: Violet Elementary School  
Donelle Peterson: Dort Elementary School

**District 12:** Commissioner Bob Smith  
Lexie Fox: Hope Center in Macomb  
Mickey Pett: RSVP of Macomb  
Bill Rieger: Algonquin Middle School  
Carin Rieger: Algonquin Middle School

**District 13:** Commissioner Joe Sabatini  
Jackie Burke: Dakota High School  
Terance Fiebelkorn: St. Peter Lutheran Church/School  
Renee Tegel: Warren Symphony Society  
Carl Tesner: Zion UCC, Interfaith Caregivers
May 22, 2013

TO: BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FROM: FRED MILLER, CHAIR
FINANCE COMMITTEE

RE: RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 22, 2013

At a meeting of the Finance Committee, held Wednesday, May 22, 2013, the following recommendation was made and is being forwarded to the May 23, 2013 Full Board meeting for approval:

1. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – MOTION (SEE ATTACHED)

A motion was made by Moceri, supported by Vosburg, to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve two lawn service contracts for the Macomb County Community Services Agency’s Senior Chore Program and five food service contracts for the Macomb County Community Services Agency’s Senior Nutrition Program; Further, a copy of this Board of Commissioners’ action is directed to be delivered forthwith to the Office of the County Executive. THE MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION TO ADOPT THE COMMITTEE REPORT WAS MADE BY CHAIR MILLER, SUPPORTED BY VICE-CHAIR MOCERI.
Resolution to:
Approve two lawn service contracts for MCCSA's Senior Chore program.

Introduced By:
Toni Moceri, Chair, Health & Human Services Committee

Additional Background Information (If Needed):
MCCSA provides lawn services to lower income senior citizens in an effort to assist them in the maintenance of their homes.

There is no impact on County General Fund as the contracts are paid with grant dollars from the Area Agency on Aging 1B. Contract amounts are as follows and are based on service estimates:

Bright Horizon Services - $50,625
O'Neal Father & Sons - $39,825

These contracts will allow MCCSA to assist lower income seniors who wish to stay in their homes with lawn services.

*WAIVED TO FINANCE BY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

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<th>Committee</th>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full Board</td>
<td>5-23-13</td>
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Resolution Number: 

Full Board Meeting Date: 

RESOLUTION

Resolution to:

Approve the five food service contracts for MCCSA's Senior Nutrition program.

Introduced By:

Toni Moceri, Chair, Health & Human Services Committee

Additional Background Information (If Needed):

These contracts allow MCCSA to secure vendors that will provide meals to senior citizen participants in the Congregate Dining program and the Meals On Wheels program. Without these contracts, MCCSA would not be able to provide nutritious meals to Macomb County seniors who might be food insecure.

There is no impact on the County's General Fund and all contracts are paid with grant funding from the Area Agency on Aging 1B. The five contracts are as follows and are based on estimates of service:

- Warren Consolidated Schools - $299,293
- Lake Shore Public Schools - $93,557
- Mt. Clemens Community Schools - $204,601
- Fraser Public Schools - $484,989
- Variety Food Services, Inc. - $625,582

These contracts will allow MCCSA to continue services to lower income seniors in Macomb County.

*WAIVED TO FINANCE BY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

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MACOMB COUNTY, MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION TO receive and file report from Board Chair for April, 2013

INTRODUCED BY: Dave Flynn, Full Board

The following is a report on activities within the Board Office which do not usually appear on committee agendas.

Meetings:

Meetings with OCE:
Discussions regarding budget, quarterly report content, contracts, Pension Board, emergency situation.

Other Meetings-Events:
Countywide electeds
DIA meeting with Macomb appointees and MCC – formation of action group
Clerk and OCE regarding space issues – commissioner comments shared, ongoing discussions
Macomb County School Board Assoc.
MTB with SS Board Reps – PA 280 and potential impact/issues
IBEW Legislative Open House (BOC represented by Commissioners Mijac, Moceri, Flynn)
Metro Detroit Transit Workshop (BOC represented by Commissioners Moceri, Flynn)

Office:
- Andrew Kim, Director of Legislative Affairs – Introductory meetings, committee chairs
- Rico Rowe, Summer Intern – Wayne State University
- IT has relocated to the Talmer Bank Building, they expressed appreciation for hospitality and sharing space.

Upcoming Board Events and Activities:
Volunteer Recognition Program
- We are happy to have the opportunity to recognize volunteers at tonight’s Full Board Meeting. We also appreciate the DIA and GCSI for providing some of the items for the gift bags.

Emerging Issues:
Freedom Hill – June 10, 2013 Gov Ops meeting: presentation re: reopening of amphitheater and park use agreement
Budget and Reporting – Regular discussions with OCE concerning budget began in January and continued through May.
Pages following this report include: BOC memo to OCE on content of Quarterly Report, 04-11-13; proposal regarding content in proposed Budget, 05-13-13. OCE denial memo received 05-16-13; Charter excerpts regarding budget reporting.

Region:
RTA Meetings – see SEMCOG website
Upcoming: Mackinac Policy Conference, May 29-31 (BOC represented by Commissioners Carabelli, Flynn)

Media:
See attached articles.

BOC – Independent Counsel: Expenditures for Outside Counsel Professional Services

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COMMITTEE/MEETING DATE
Full Board 04-23-13
Excerpts from Macomb County Charter:

Page 7
Article III - Executive

Section 3.7 Report of County Financial Condition
The Executive shall file a report with the Commission on the financial condition of the County at least quarterly. The report shall include:
(a) A comparison of actual revenues to budgeted revenues for the current fiscal year;
(b) A comparison of actual expenditures to budgeted expenditures for the current fiscal year;
(c) Any revisions to the original revenue estimates and/or expenditure estimates; and
(d) Additional information required by ordinance or law.

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Article VIII – Finance

Section 8.6 Budget Preparation and Transmittal
8.6.1 The Executive shall prepare and administer a comprehensive balanced budget in a manner which assures coordination among Agencies. The Executive shall transmit the comprehensive balanced budget for the next fiscal year to the Commission at least 90 days before the next fiscal year begins. The comprehensive balanced budget prepared and recommended by the Executive shall contain, at a minimum, the budget message, budget document, the proposed appropriations ordinance containing the information required by law, and any information required by the Commission, law, or ordinance.

8.6.2 Not less than once each year the Executive shall submit to the Commission a proposed long-range capital improvement program and capital budget.

Section 8.7 Adoption of Line Item Operating Budget
Before the beginning of each fiscal year of the County, the Commission shall adopt a balanced line item operating budget and an appropriations ordinance in accordance with the requirements of law.
April 11, 2013

TO: Mark Deldin, Deputy County Executive

FROM: Commissioner Fred Miller, Chair, Finance Committee

RE: 04-11-13 Request for Info Inclusion in Budget Reports

The Finance Committee requests the following information be included in the Budget Report:

1. Under Fund Detail by Category, “Expenditures” – include the following line items under “Personnel”
   a. Wages – Permanent Employees
   b. Wages – Temporary Employees
   c. Wages – Overtime
   d. FICA – Employer’s
   e. Retirement Fund Contribution
   f. Health, Life, Dental
   g. Unemployment & Workers Compensation

2. Language indicating that any capital project over $250,000 must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

The Finance Committee requests the following information be included in quarterly budget reports:

1. Budget adjustments should have indication of approval by BOC, or internal line item change
2. Note when departments receive/spend monies, so when quarterly reports are reviewed the BOC can know if the properly-anticipated financial position is reflected.
3. Include a summary page showing a snapshot of income/expense from previous year quarter, current quarter and year-to-date.
4. Similar formats for quarterly reports and the budget, so intent is not lost with the data.
5. Indication of changes in Full Time Employees
6. Include number of vacant positions
7. List of line item transfers per budget resolution
8. Checkbook for quarter in searchable format
9. General Fund (year-end December): Summary of grant revenue/expense neutral adjustments

CC: Board of Commissioners
Peter Provenzano, Finance
May 13, 2013

TO: Mark Deldin, Deputy County Executive; Peter Provenzano, Finance Director

FROM: Dave Flynn, Board Chair; Commissioner Fred Miller, Chair, Finance Committee

RE: 05-13-13 Budget – Line Items

The Finance Committee, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, proposes the following two options for information which is to be included in the Budget:

**Option A:**
1. Under Fund Detail by Category, "Expenditures" – include the following line items under "Personnel"
   a. Wages – Permanent Employees*
   b. Wages – Temporary Employees
   c. Wages – Overtime
   d. FICA – Employer’s*
   e. Retirement Fund Contribution*
   f. Health, Life, Dental*
   g. Unemployment & Workers Compensation*
2. Language indicating that any project over $500,000 in Capital Improvement Fund must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.
3. Increase budget transfers between line items up to $50,000 within a department. Transfers will be included in Quarterly Reports.
4. Remove language for grants that are 100% funded. Instead, grants will be forwarded for Receive and File and included in Quarterly Reports.
5. Donation provision language (still to be provided by Pete Provenzano).
6. The DoR Road Construction and Maintenance line item should be detailed by project in a schedule in the appendix of the Budget.

*Indicates fixed costs

**Option B:**
1. The Commission will propose an Ordinance outlining line items required to be in the Budget.
2. "2 percent or $30,000 dollars whatever is less" provision remains the same.
3. All capital projects over $250,000 in Capital Improvement Fund must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.
4. Grants from both Budgets to be included in Ordinance requiring Commission approval.
5. Donation language included (still to be provided by Pete Provenzano).

In addition, as previously discussed, the following information should be included in the Budget: (1) Departmental Mission Statement; (2) Departmental Organization Chart; (3) Departmental Goals; and (4) 2013-14 Departmental Objectives.

Further, it is agreed upon to work through the committee process with SEMCOG and county departments to move forward with performance based budgeting and identifying performance indicators.

MACOMB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

David J. Flynn – Board Chair
District 4

Kathy Tocco – Vice Chair
District 11

Mike Boyle – Sergeant-At-Arms
District 10

Toni Moceri – District 1

Marvin Sauger – District 2

Veronica Klinefelt – District 3

Robert Mijac - District 5

James Carabelli – District 6

Don Brown – District 7

Kathy Vosburg – District 8

Fred Miller – District 9

Bob Smith – District 12
TO: Dave Flynn, Chair and Members of the Commission
FROM: Mark Hackel
DATE: May 16, 2015
RE: Recent Requests from the Commission

While this correspondence addresses the two most recent requests from the Commission, it will also address an overarching issue that continues to exist regarding roles and responsibilities under the Charter. These recent requests serve as good examples of the fundamental disagreement we have regarding the interpretation of the Charter.

In the first request, you have asked that a dozen of our department heads attend the May 22 Finance Committee meeting in order for the commissioners to have the information necessary for approval of what we understand to be nearly one hundred contracts executed from 2011 to April of this year. This request presumes that Commission approval of those contracts is necessary. It is not. The contracts involved were either previously approved by the Commission or did not require Commission approval at the time they were executed. Certainly the Commission is free to do anything it chooses with those documents, but it makes no sense to ask a dozen department heads to sit through one or more lengthy meetings to provide information about contracts that the Commission doesn’t need to approve. At the same time, if a member of the Commission has a question about one of the documents, we suggest they make an appointment with the director who administers that department to discuss the issue in greater detail.

The second recent request relates to the preparation of the 2014 County budget. Again this year the Commission is attempting to direct the Executive Office as to how the budget should be prepared, what the Chart of Accounts should contain, and how grants, donations, and the capital improvement plan should be approved and administered. By doing this, the Commission is seeking roles that are not granted by the Charter. For example, the Commission is seeking approval for including any project over a certain dollar value in the capital improvement plan. While the Charter requires the Executive to submit a capital plan at least annually, unlike the general fund budget, there is no requirement for Commission approval of that plan.

As mentioned earlier, these are just two recent examples of a much larger issue. Despite having invested countless hours in dialogue among ourselves, and the Commission identifying a dozen authority related issues for our independent counsels to discuss, we have made very little
Dave Flynn, Chair and Members of the Commission
05/16/2013
Page 2

progress in resolving our differences around core issues in the Charter. There is probably little value in restating here why we think one position is right and the other wrong. We have already covered that ground several times. So while there is always value in ongoing dialogue, for now we should simply agree to disagree.

We learned many things from the Court of Appeals decision, not the least of which is that the authority, duties and responsibilities of the Executive and the Commission are defined exclusively by the Charter, not by an ordinance or resolution of the Commission. The Charter, for example, states that the Executive shall prepare the budget. We can find no authority in the Charter, however, for the Commission to dictate how the Executive must prepare that budget. Ideally, we might mutually agree on an approach, but if not, the decision does not default to the Commission.

We are deeply disappointed that we seem unable to find common ground surrounding the Charter, but at the same time we are delighted with the progress being made in County government. We are operating ethically, living within our budgets, adding to our reserves, maintaining the highest bond rating, consolidating our use of resources, improving performance, and catching the attention of individuals and opinion leaders throughout the region and the state. That is what County residents expected when approving the new Charter and that is what they are getting.

As always, we remain available for further conversations about any issues.

CC: Countywide Elected Officials
http://www.macombdaily.com/article/20130426/NEWS01/130429652/court-ruling-may-mean-jail-guards-owe-county-thousands

Court ruling may mean jail guards owe county thousands

By Chad Selweski

In a legal decision that could cost Macomb County Jail guards thousands of dollars, the Michigan Court of Appeals reversed a 2012 court injunction blocking increased out-of-pocket health care costs dictated by a law signed by Gov. Rick Snyder.

The Appeals Court ruled that Macomb County Circuit Judge Edward Servitto was wrong in January 2012 to issue an injunction blocking the county from collecting insurance payments from employees while union negotiations continued.

The impact of the decision is unclear but the corrections officers have avoided paying up to $388 monthly since Servitto issued his injunction. That might mean that the county declares that those officers owe the county more than $6,000.

The result could be back pay in reverse.

“We were correct that the judge had no reason to enjoin us,” said the county’s chief legal counsel, George Brumbaugh. “But we need to analyze this and look at it very carefully.”

The attorneys representing the corrections officers’ union, James R. Andary and his son and law partner, James G. Andary, could not be reached for comment.

The county’s Human Resources director, Eric Herppich, also was unavailable for comment.

At issue in the Circuit Court case was the 2011 state law that required all public employees in Michigan to pay at least 20 percent of their health care premiums. In Macomb County, an accompanying law that placed caps on so-called “Cadillac health plans” was the sticking point.

The caps that took effect Jan. 1, 2012, limit the cost of public employee health insurance policies to $15,000 a year for families, $11,000 for a couple and $5,500 for a single individual. The corrections officers’ benefits at the time were worth more than $20,000 for a
family policy.

The amounts due when the Snyder policies took effect depended on whether a corrections officer signed up for an HMO or PPO insurance policy and whether they fell into the category of single, couple or family.

According to the appellate court ruling by a three-judge panel, the impact on the corrections officers would be: 35 employees will pay $5 or less per month; 28 employees will pay about $44 per month; 11 employees will pay $86 monthly; 64 will pay about $137 monthly; six will pay about $382 monthly; and four will pay $388 monthly.

In the weeks leading up to the effective date of the new state rules, Herppich and other county officials frantically negotiated labor contracts with 23 of the county’s 26 bargaining units. At the time, the warning was to union officials to seal an agreement that is to the benefit of the rank-and-file before the law takes effect.

The corrections officers’ union, the Macomb County Professional Deputy Sheriffs Association, which had already seen its labor pact expire, took a different tact.

It filed an unfair labor practice charge with the state and a union grievance with county officials. One argument presented in those proceedings was that the county intentionally provided faulty information in October 2011 about future paycheck deductions as part of a strategy to present a “take it or leave it” ultimatum at the bargaining table.

When it was initially issued, Servitto’s ruling was seen as having potentially a major impact across the state. The judge’s decision said that new payroll deductions for health care costs could not take place until a new contract with the rank and file is signed. That could have put a major dent in Snyder’s effort to rein in health care costs for state government, school districts and municipalities.

However, the Appeal Court panel ruled that Servitto ignored legal precedent that allows an injunction in labor disputes under rare circumstances, such as the threat of violence or irreparable harm to one of the parties at the bargaining table.

By issuing an injunction anyway, the appellate judges said, Servitto had demonstrated an “abuse of discretion.”
Michigan a great place to start small biz, but retention rate needs improvement, report says

By Chris Gautz
Capital Correspondent

The ninth annual Michigan Entrepreneurship Score Card done by the Small Business Association of Michigan shows the state is improving its standing as a great place to start a business, but more work needs to be done to ensure those companies can survive for the long term.

The score card ranks three main areas — change, vitality and climate — to give a good impression of the condition and direction of the entrepreneurial economy in Michigan.

In terms of entrepreneurial climate, which measures the business climate and financial conditions relative to other states, Michigan is ranked 16th out of the 50 states, said the score card's author, Graham Toft, president of GrowthEconomics Inc.

For entrepreneurial change, which measures growth over the past three years relative to other states, Michigan ranked 31st. For entrepreneurial vitality, which measures the level of small business and entrepreneurial activity compared to other states, Michigan ranked 36th. These rankings were much lower when Toft began putting this scorecard together in the early 2000s, he said.

"It's really encouraging," Toft said. "We've got some momentum going here."

But there is still work to be done, he said, which is part of the message Toft is delivering to lawmakers this week at several committee hearings.

Toft noted that the state's five-year business survival rate is at 46 percent.

While Michigan's ranking nationally in that category has improved, the overall number has not, he said.

The state has been working hard at making Michigan a great place for entrepreneurs to locate their business, but he said lawmakers need to think about ways to assist those businesses so they can keep their doors open.

Toft said the major tax changes the Legislature implemented in the past two years have helped, but unemployment insurance costs are still high compared to other states, as are malpractice costs.

Given the large number of high tech employees and universities in the state, Toft said Michigan's internet speeds and broadband coverage is not as high as other states and is another area that could see improvement.

One area that has stayed consistently high, putting Michigan in the top five, is private lending, he said.
"The capital markets for small business are healthy," he said.

However, the venture capital scene is not as strong, he said.

"The time is now ripe for Michigan to build upon the foundation of entrepreneurship and to initiate a period of sustained accelerated formation and growth of entrepreneurial ventures," SBAM President and CEO Rob Fowler said in a statement. "SBAM will continue using the Score Card for its original purpose – to better understand Michigan's entrepreneurial economy.

"Further, we will use it to measure progress as the state implements economic gardening programs, to better determine what causes economic growth, and consequently, figure out what other knobs the state might turn to foster and accelerate entrepreneurial growth."

The report can be found at www.sbam.org/scorecard2013

Chris Gautz: 1-517-403-4403, cgautz@crain.com, Twitter: @chrisgautz
Macomb County Building to stay closed for 2 years after fire

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 8:24 PM EDT

By Chad Selweski
For The Oakland Press

As computer and phone service was being restored for all county departments, officials learned Wednesday that the old County Building, scene of last week’s electrical fire that knocked out nearly all communications, will remain closed for two years.

In the meantime, officials will pursue an $18 million bond issue to finance improvements at the adjacent county Court Building.

One week after the fire, the phones and computers started to come back to life just as most of the county department heads arrived for a morning meeting with the Board of Commissioners. The IT staff, working around the clock in temporary quarters located in the board office, let out a cheer when the first phones and computers flickered to life.

Departments were being brought back on line throughout the day in phases so that the communications system wouldn't become overloaded.

Several major developments were reported by officials to the commissioners in the wake of the crisis.

The County Building, located on Main Street in downtown Mount Clemens, will remain closed for two years as officials determine how extensive of a renovation of the 13-story structure is needed, beyond the initial repairs required due to smoke, soot and water damage. A bond issue will finance improvements to the facility, which was built in the 1930s. No cost estimates are yet available.

In the interim, an $18 million bond issue will be presented to the board for approval within a month to improve technology at the Court Building, reconfigure the facility and add two courtrooms, and finish the vacant fifth and sixth floors in the county Administration Building.

Macomb County has become the “poster child” for failing to have a computer backup system in place, while also emerging as a model for how to handle an IT disaster. Over the past week, assistance has been provided by Oakland, Wayne and Washtenaw counties, state government and Macomb Community College as the IT staff frantically struggled to get the communications systems at numerous buildings back in operation.
The only cost to the county related to the fire will be a $100,000 insurance deductible. The county's $300 million worth of insurance coverage should pay for all other costs, including three contractors who are conducting repairs, countless hours of overtime put in by county workers, and the replacement of damaged equipment. An insurance consultant has been hired on a full-time basis to ensure that the county receives all the reimbursements it is due under the existing coverage.

"We are now the poster child and the center of attention," said IT Director Sandy Jurek, who took over that position last August. "We have received calls from all kinds of people looking to shore up their DR (disaster recovery) strategy."

Jurek had warned the county board's Infrastructure Committee a few weeks ago that the placement of the county's IT equipment in an old building that lacks a suitable fire suppression sprinkler system — and no backup computer equipment — could be dangerous. County Executive Mark Hackel has said a "lack of leadership" by commissioners in the past resulted in the crisis.

About 150 employees were displaced from the County Building and have been relocated at several facilities, including a warehouse.

Given the 2-year time frame, some will likely work out of vacant, privately-owned office space in downtown Mount Clemens that has been offered to the county.

Deputy County Executive Mark Deldin said that basic repairs to the County Building will take months. That will be followed by architectural plans to modernize the building and bring it up to code. In particular, the facility needs a modern fire-suppression system and it must be made handicapped accessible. A separate bond issue sometime in 2014 or 2015 would finance the project.

In the short run, Deldin hopes the board will quickly approve the $18 million bond issue to reconfigure the courthouse.

That funding would pay for: moving the jury room from the fifth floor to the first floor of the courthouse; constructing two new courtrooms on the fifth floor; moving all county Clerk's Office operations, except those that serve the Circuit Court, out of the first floor; upgrading technology in the six-story building so that all circuit judges go paperless and rely upon e-filing and "cloud" computing; improving security in the basement where jail inmates are transported for court appearances; and completing use of the fifth and sixth floors in the Administration Building, which have stood as steel skeletons — storage space for thousands of boxes of documents — since the nine-story facility was completed in 1998.

Top judges and officials had engaged in a year-long process of planning the courthouse project before the fire hit the adjacent County Building. According to Deldin, the modernization would take place in phases but work could begin before the end of the year.

"When we have a problem, we need data restored in minutes, not days," said Chief Circuit Judge John Foster, one of numerous department heads who addressed the board.

The commissioners received a detailed report about the chaotic, week-long effort to keep county services operating.
In some cases, the displaced workers were “shoved into corners.” Across the county, departments that were “dead in the water” resorted to working on pen and paper while struggling with intermittent phone service.

“Basically, we’ve been winging it,” said Circuit Court Administrator Jennifer Phillips.

Phones were loaned to the court by the Department of Community Mental Health. Temporary phone numbers were established for the entire court staff. Staffers “raided” the local Target and Best Buy stores, purchasing all the computer flash drives available. At one point, a court worker used her personal cell phone to participate in a video arraignment of a criminal suspect.

The “triage mode” continued for an entire week.

All data was saved to tape and, with the approval of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Macomb was provided space and lent computer equipment at the Oakland data center in Pontiac. IT workers from both counties worked in shifts on a 24/7 basis creating a temporary backup system for the county’s computer data.

Over the next three or four weeks, all that data will be migrated to the Macomb Community College data center, which will serve as the permanent backup site. The IT Department will move to a new $14 million communications center in December and state-of-the-art equipment will be installed there and at MCC.

Meanwhile, the Facilities and Operations Department continues to worry about the buckled walls in the southwest stairwell of the County Building, as the damage gradually stretched from the basement to the fourth floor. The Michigan Masonry Institute was brought in after others were stumped. The cause has not been determined but officials have been assured that the exterior, limestone walls of the building are intact and safe.

As electrical, fiber-optic and copper cables were replaced over the weekend, a tense moment came at 5 a.m. on Tuesday when IT staffers, armed with fire extinguishers as a precaution, watched as electricians made their first attempt to restore electricity to the computer “servers” that drive the entire system. They succeeded.

The restoration of communications -- computers, phones, email and Internet -- was accomplished about three days earlier than expected, said Jurek, who has been sleeping a few hours at a time on an air mattress in the makeshift IT work site.

Jurek told the commissioners that her IT staff -- relatively lower level unionized workers -- stepped up with a show of dedication in time of crisis.

“They did everything asked of them, without question, without any pushback, no matter how hard it was, no matter how tired they were,” she said.

http://www.wxyz.com/dpp/news/region/macomb_county/macomb-countys-emergency-declaration-has-been-lifted

Macomb County’s emergency declaration has been lifted following fire
April 25, 2013

Macomb lifts state of emergency after county building fire

By Christina Hall
Detroit Free Press Staff Writer

The Macomb County Executive Office today lifted a state of emergency implemented after an electrical fire in the old county building in Mt. Clemens shuttered the high-rise and crippled the county’s communication system.

Executive Mark Hackel signed the order after the April 17 blaze in the 13-story building at 10 N. Main that displaced nearly 200 workers to temporary locations and shut down IT, Internet and phone service to county offices.

Officials on Wednesday said they hoped the communication system would be operational by the end of the week, with departments slowly coming online. Macomb Circuit Court, which relies heavily on the system, has returned to working computers and its normal phone numbers.

The county also is working on establishing a new data center and a backup data center.

The historic building may be closed for two years to complete needed repairs from smoke and water damage and to bring the building up to code.
MT. CLEMENS (WXYZ) - An emergency declaration, which helped Macomb County operate in a fire’s aftermath, has been lifted.

The phones in the Macomb County courts are back to normal after a fire severely damaged the old county administration building in Mt. Clemens on April 17. They were knocked out more than a week ago by the blaze in the building. A fill-in communications system was recently pieced together.

Flames and smoke broke out in the basement of the building and spread to the ventilation system.

Soot still remains on every floor.

Crews have been boxing up every item inside to be cleaned— including computers, office furniture, and paperwork.

Macomb County went into crisis mode when its server went down after the electricity had to be shut off during the fire.

The county only had one server, causing severe problems. They could have lost everything.

They were able to retrieve all the documents and are backing them up on a temporary server.

“We started thinking about the reality of this long ago,” said Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel. “We prepared for getting a site where we’re going to have a backup. Unfortunately, our worst thoughts did happen, they occurred. We had a fire in a building where our server was at... which contained all of our records and information.”

Officials hope most of the restoration will be paid for by insurance.

The building was not up to fire code. It was old enough to be grandfathered in under the old code.

Architects will go floor-by-floor to see what can be saved and what needs to be repaired. The building will need a new main-frame system, backup system, and fire suppression system.

The interior walls were severely damaged. It will also need new ceilings, ventilation system, sprinkler system, and heating and cooling.
“It’s still worth a tremendous value. Bringing it up to code, yes, there is going to be a cost issue, but to just say we are going to shut it down...well no... there’s still use for it. “It’s a long term issue-- meaning it will take a longer time to put this thing up to code than building a couple floors in the county building,” said Macomb County Executive Hackel. “It’s necessary because nobody is coming back in, what I call, unsafe environment.”

Hackel told 7 Action News it will take a few days to back all the data up onto a temporary server.

It could take a year and a half to two years to fully restore the building.


MT. CLEMENS (WWJ) – The Macomb County Circuit and Probate courts’ normal phone and computer systems are operational, County Executive Mark A. Hackel’s office announced Thursday afternoon.

The Macomb County courts continue to remain open and anyone who has a notice to appear should do so.

The temporary phone numbers distributed on April 22 are no longer in use; the previously listed court numbers should be utilized. Thanks again to Macomb County Community Mental Health for loaning 33 iPhones to the Court, which assisted in keeping the courts up and running.

A fire April 17 in the old county building knocked out phone and data service to the county’s offices.

“Due to the ingenuity and dedication of the entire bench and staff, the courts have remained open with minimal delays during the phone and computer systems outage,” said Chief Judge John Foster. “Thanks to the judges’ and staffs’ hard work and patience over the past week, the Court has maintained operations and continued to serve the public at an exceptional level.”
News

Commissioners recognize schools for 'going green'

Friday, April 26, 2013
By SEAN DELANEY

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners recently recognized 127 schools from across the county for promoting environmentally friendly practices as part of the county's Green Schools Program.

"Green Schools was started by the state of Michigan to make sure kids met a certain amount of criteria for energy efficiency and sustainability, so that they can incorporate it in their everyday lives," said Sterling Heights resident David Flynn, chairman of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

"As leaders, our goal, in many respects, is that kids have the opportunity to have a quality education, that we instill a sense of community with them, but also I think it is important to make sure that students have an ownership in their future. Green Schools incorporates all three of these important principles."

During a breakfast banquet April 16 at the MISD building in Clinton Township, commissioners presented representatives from the 2012-13 Macomb County Green Schools with banners, decals with their designation, and certificates signed by Flynn and their local county commissioner in recognition of their efforts.

"The board is very proud to partner with the Macomb Intermediate School District on this successful hands-on program," Flynn said. "Green Schools not only teaches students how to be responsible stewards of the natural resources in their community, but it also has the potential to lower energy costs for the schools involved."

Now in its fifth academic year, the Macomb County Green Schools Program allows schools to earn different levels of "green" status by implementing environmentally friendly programs and efforts in their buildings. Those levels are green, emerald and evergreen. The more programs they initiate, the higher the level they achieve.

This year, 27 Macomb County schools earned "green" status, including Browning Elementary School, Crissman Elementary School, Schuchard Elementary School and Utica High School in the Utica Community Schools district; as well as Angus Elementary School, Flynn Middle School, Jefferson Elementary School, Siersma Elementary School, Sterling Heights High School and Warren Mott High School in the Warren Consolidated Schools district.

Forty-eight schools achieved "emerald" status, including Bemis Junior High School, Davis Junior High School and Flickinger Elementary School in the UCS district; as well as Carleton Middle School, Fillmore Elementary School, Green Acres Elementary School, Grissom Middle School, Holden Elementary School and Pearl Lean Elementary School in the WCS district.

In addition, 52 schools achieved the highest level of "evergreen" status, including Eisenhower High School and Morgan Elementary School in the UCS district; as well as Beer Middle School, Carter Middle School, Cousino High School, Cromie Elementary School, Harwood Elementary School, Hatherly Elementary School, Susick Elementary School, Wilde Elementary School, Wilkerson Elementary School and Willow Woods Elementary School in the WCS district.
Out of the 127 schools that were honored, St. Mary School in Mount Clemens and Jefferson Middle School in St. Clair Shores tied for the honor of Top Overall School 2012-13, and were chosen by program facilitators for their outstanding level of participation and enthusiasm with a wide range of projects - from going paperless, park clean-up projects and composting (St. Mary), to creating a community garden and solar ovens (Jefferson Middle School).

"I was super-surprised," said Lisa Beckman, a teacher at Jefferson. "We're very, very excited ... We've worked very hard for the past five years. Our students ... are going to be super-excited. They work hard every day."

The title of Top Evergreen School was awarded to Romeo High School, while Top Emerald School honors were given to the Robert G. Lutz School for Work Experience in Clinton Township. The Top Green School honor went to Elmwood Elementary in St. Clair Shores.

According to the county, the Green Schools Program is funded through grants and by donations from sponsors, including Macomb County Prosecuting Attorney Eric Smith, IBEW Local 58-NECA, Automation Alley, Waste Management Inc., Anderson Eckstein and Westrick Inc., and Ray Weigand's Nursery.

For more information about the program, visit www.macombcountymi.gov/macomb_gov/GreenSchools.htm.

Contact Sean Delaney at 586-323-8127 or sean.delaney@advisorsource.com. Follow him on Twitter @sdelaney81 or on Facebook at Sean Delaney.
Macomb County smoking ban approved

County ordinance will prohibit smoking within 100 feet of doors, windows of city buildings

Author: Lisa Ray, Managing Editor, ClickOnDetroit.com, lray@wdtv.com
Published On: Apr 26 2013 07:25:22 AM EDT

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich.-

Smokers in Macomb County will have to think twice before they light up thanks to a new smoking ordinance approved Thursday night by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

Study: Smoking ban doesn't have negative economic impact

The new ordinance prohibits lighting up within 100 feet of entryways in county owned and operated buildings. It also prohibits smoking near windows that can be opened and air intake systems. The ban will apply to cigarettes, cigars and pipes.

Violators would be hit with a $100 fine for a first offense. A second offense would mean a $250 fine and a third offense would be a $500 fine.
The changes won't be implemented immediately.
Panel: Not enough qualified manufacturing workers

By NORB FRANZ
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Saturday, April 27, 2013

Dennis Irwin is looking for a few good men — or women — but is having trouble finding them.

At M & M Turning & Manufacturing in Clinton Township where Irwin directs customer development, he lamented what he called a lack of qualified and experienced job candidates.

The company has 20 employees who make engine components for F-15 and F-16 fighter jets and the Boeing 787 “Dreamliner.” Officials there would like to eventually hire 30 more workers.

The firm will pay entry-level qualified machinists $15 per hour, but that wage could top $20 for a person with the right combination of skills and experience, he said.

“It seems like the high level machinist we need today is just not out there,” Irwin said.

Irwin and a handful of other local manufacturing leaders gathered with county and state economic development officials on Friday in Warren to find ways to boost interest in manufacturing jobs that are going unfilled in Macomb County.

Newly released results of a survey conducted by Macomb Community College show that nearly three-fourths of
residents feel manufacturing remains a “viable” career choice for young people. The 18-24 age group had the highest positive response, with 77 percent saying an industrial job indeed is a career option for the younger job-seekers. Respondents between 45 and 54 years of age were the most pessimistic, with 34 percent saying manufacturing was not a good employment path.

Lack of available jobs and outsourcing were frequently mentioned as reasons why manufacturing is not a viable way to earn a living, according to the MCC survey.

Members of the think tank hosted Friday by Proper Mold Group hope business and government will work closer and better to develop ways to make manufacturing jobs more enticing. Several acknowledged that offering a decent wage may not be enough.

The group believes officials must step up efforts to:

* Reverse the so-called “brain drain” of young, recent Michigan college graduates leaving the state for Chicago and other areas.

* Promote Macomb County’s and Michigan’s amenities and lifestyle offerings more aggressively.

* Recruit job-seekers at job fairs outside Michigan as well.

* Improve public transportation so that workers who rely on buses can get to work easily.

* Reach high school graduates, particularly those who are unlikely to go to college or whose families cannot afford higher education, and conduct machine shop tours.

“We need to get kids fired up and interested in this field,” Irwin said.

“There’s no buses down 11 Mile,” said Mark Rusch, senior vice president and chief financial officer at Proper Group. “It’s just so hard for people to get to work in a particular community.”

In Mexico, bus routes include stops at industrial parks, he said.

At Proper Group, the bulk of the work remains auto related, including tooling for front and rear vehicle lighting systems. Combined with global competition and the brain drain, a lack of qualified workers interested in manufacturing and skilled trades can make growth difficult to achieve, Rusch said.

Amy Cell, senior vice president of talent enhancement for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, said public and business marketing campaigns can provide fruitful results to attract qualified job-seekers.

Cell told the industrial representatives that the MEDC’s Community Ventures program offers wage subsidies of up to $5,000 per worker and $3,000 to help offset the cost of uniforms, day care, transportation and other expenses if manufacturers hire ex-convicts or at-risk youths from Detroit, Flint, Pontiac and Saginaw.

The MichAgain program is aimed at workers in such areas as Silicon Valley and Chicago who were born and raised in Michigan, or attended colleges in the state, to lure them back home.

Cell also said state officials are mulling a $10 million program to provide training in the skilled trades.
Angel Offredi, digital sales and development director at Digital First Media, parent company of The Macomb Daily, suggested that companies with openings should increase efforts to attract passive job-seekers and boost marketing of Macomb County as a place where applicants will want to come.

The informal, roundtable discussion was the second by the think tank focusing on manufacturing employment needs. More meetings are expected to be held.

“This is of critical importance to the county,” Macomb County Assistant County Executive Albert Lorenzo said.

Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development Director Steve Cassin said the department expects to soon add an additional staffer to help Macomb retain businesses.

“We’ve made a concerted effort to help existing companies grow and prosper,” he said.

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Enbridge damage: Utility, road fixes could hit $1 million

8:18 AM, April 29, 2013

By Christopher Behnan

Road and utility damage in Howell Township believed to have been caused by Enbridge Energy LP could reach $1 million, Mike Craine, Livingston County Road Commission managing director, said last week.

Howell Township and county road officials believe Enbridge breached water and sewer lines at the intersection of Burkhart Road and Grand River Avenue while installing new pipeline as part of the company’s Line 6B replacement project. At the time, Enbridge was boring under the roadway while extending the pipeline.

The breached water line released 150,000 gallons of water over 45 minutes, Craine said. The utility-line accident created sinkholes on the roadway, where motorists often travel up to 65 mph to beat a traffic light at the intersection, Craine said.

The damage required about $100,000 in emergency roadwork, which the Road Commission paid for, Craine said.

Craine said it will likely cost a total of $500,000 to $1 million to complete all road and utility-line repairs. He said there will be a meeting with Enbridge to review the damage costs.

He said it’s clear the company’s contractor hit the marked water and sewer lines, causing the damage. The site has multiple additional gas and utility lines, as well as communications lines, under the pavement.

“We’re just trying to fix the problem,” Craine said.
Enbridge, meanwhile, has not confirmed whether it will accept financial responsibility for any of the damage.

For now, the damaged portion of the sewer line has been abandoned and sewage is being hauled from a pump station to the treatment plant. The damaged portion of the water line has been plugged to halt the leaking.

Howell Township Trustee Mike Tipton noted that the township hopes to see nearby land developed that currently has delinquent utility-assessment taxes. Tipton said he hopes for a quick resolution to the damage to keep the area attractive to residential developers. He said the intersection also is a part of a popular route to the nearby outlet mall.

“We need development,” Tipton said at last week’s Road Commission Board meeting.

The line breaks are not impeding water or sewer service, but they will require long-term fixes that Enbridge will most likely pay for, Township Treasurer Jonathan Hohenstein said last week.

Hohenstein said repairing the water line will likely be inexpensive, but that the extent of damage to the sewer line hasn’t been determined.

The township may consider purchasing or leasing property to reroute the water line through to avoid running it underneath the roadway.

Enbridge spokesman Jason Manshum last week said the company hasn’t determined what caused the line breaks or who is responsible to pay for fixing them.

“We are working with the county to identify the cause and solution,” Manshum said.

Enbridge is completing a $286 million, 50-mile crude-oil-and-petroleum pipeline-replacement project on its Line 6B from Stockbridge in Ingham County to Ortonville in northern Oakland County, including through a portion of Livingston County.
The company is in the final stages of the project, and it expects to complete restoration in the county this year, depending on weather.
Sports

Bass Tournament Comes to St. Clair Shores and One of America's Best Bass Lakes

St. Clair Shores will be hosting the Monster Quest VII bass tournament in June which may attract up to 100 boats to compete on Lake St. Clair, which has been named "America's best bass lake."

By Edward Cardenas | Email the author | April 29, 2013

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Related Topics: Lake St. Clair, Monster Quest VII, bass tournament, and nautical mile

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St. Clair Shores will be the host to the city's first major bass tournament this summer when Monster Quest VII arrives June 22 at the 3 Mile boat ramp. Organizers estimate up to 100 boats, with two people per boat who will be joined by their families on shore, are expected to participate in the event.

"We are really excited," said Parks and Recreation Director Greg Ester. "It is going to bring a lot of business to the city and the Nautical Mile."

The tournament is being presented by Terry Melvin and Ken Neeley who launched anglers from Harrison Township for previous events. The boats would then head down to St. Clair Shores to fish.

Now, the anglers will have a shorter trip Melvin said.

"Nine to 14 Mile is where they all are fishing," he said.

With the lower lake levels, launching from St. Clair Shores will allow competitors to launch their boats and reach the prime fishing area without having to worry about running aground.

For information about the tournament, or to register, call at (248) 686-7799. Registration is $200 per team, with the option of paying $10 to enter in the big bass pot.

Best bass lake

When the anglers hit Lake St. Clair, they will be fishing on the best bass lake in America, according to Bassmaster magazine.

The article stated "St. Clair's smallmouth population is legendary, but it is the emergence of its largemouth fishery that solidified its No. 1 ranking."
April 30, 2013
NEW ORDINANCE PROHIBITS SMOKING WITHIN 100 FEET OF COUNTY BUILDINGS
By Jeremy Selweski
C & G Staff Writer

MACOMB COUNTY — It used to be that people weren’t allowed to smoke inside county buildings; soon, they won’t be allowed to smoke anywhere near them.

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners adopted a new ordinance on April 25, prohibiting individuals from smoking within 100 feet of any entrances, exits, windows and air intakes at all county-owned facilities. Anyone who violates the ordinance can be charged with a civil infraction punishable by a fine of $100 for a first offense, $250 for a second offense and $500 for a third or subsequent offense within a 12-month period.

The board approved the smoking ordinance by a 10-3 margin, with commissioners Joe Sabatini, James Carabelli and Bob Smith casting the dissenting votes. It was introduced to the full board via a recommendation from the board’s Health and Human Services Committee.

According to Commissioner Toni Moceri, D-Warren, chair of the committee, the ordinance is primarily a means of limiting individuals’ exposure to unwanted secondhand smoke.

“This is just another way for us to create a health-friendly environment for people when they need to do business with the county,” she said. “We don’t want people to have a negative experience when they visit one of our buildings; we want them to feel like their health is a priority for us.”

Moceri explained that the ordinance came about as a result of too many people congregating near the main doorways of some county buildings to smoke. The board also had been receiving complaints from some employees about cigarette smoke drifting into their work area through open windows and other air intakes.

“This ordinance is a way for us to mitigate those concerns and keep everyone as healthy as possible,” Moceri said. “We’re really trying to move Macomb County buildings more in line with modern standards.”

The smoking ordinance was originally intended to go into effect immediately. However, the board added an amendment to delay its publication for 60 days in order to give the Office of the County Executive time to determine how to best implement it. Moceri pointed out that the amendment was included largely because of problems that arose in the wake of the electrical fire that occurred in the basement of the old Macomb County administration building in downtown Mount Clemens on April 17.

Still, Sabatini and his colleagues were not satisfied with the version of the ordinance that was brought before the full board, arguing that it was vaguely worded and contained numerous holes.

“I think this is a good idea in theory,” Sabatini said, “but I just feel like the ordinance itself is way too broad. There wasn’t a very specific plan in place for how this ordinance is going to work, once it goes into effect. How will it be policed? How will (the prohibited smoking areas) be marked? None of that information was clearly defined within the ordinance. If I’m supporting something, I always want to be completely sure of everything that it involves.”

Sabatini also took issue with the 100-foot restriction of the ordinance, noting the logistical troubles that such a large distance could create, particularly in a crowded urban area like Mount Clemens.

“Obviously, some of the county buildings go almost all the way up to the easement, so 100 feet away would put you right in the middle of the road,” he said. “I think there are going to be a lot of people complaining about this ordinance, especially if they end up getting a ticket for smoking too close (to a county building).”
But according to Moceri, the 100-foot boundary does not apply everywhere, as the ordinance only applies to county-owned property. Therefore, she said, county officials can only mandate its restrictions within those confines and cannot force local municipalities like Mount Clemens to follow suit.

As for the nebulous language of the ordinance, Moceri pointed out that this was a deliberate attempt to allow the Office of the County Executive to better coordinate its efforts with the County Sheriff's and County Prosecutor's offices.

"We wanted to give the county executive as much leeway as possible with implementing this ordinance," she explained. "Maybe they will want to have designated areas outdoors where people can smoke, or maybe they will just have the police respond to major complaints. We're just trying to put an end to this pattern of smokers congregating near the entryways to county buildings, where people are walking in and out all day long."

You can reach C & G Staff Writer Jeremy Selweski at jSelweski@candgnews.com or at (586)218-5004.
Summer car shows promoted

By GORDON WILCZYNSKI
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Tuesday, April 30, 2013

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, standing, and Royal Oak’s Greg Rassel promote their respective cruises on Gratiot and Woodward avenues.

While auto show promoters from southeastern Michigan were encouraging people on Tuesday to come to their car shows and auto races this summer, Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel was trying to convince Oakland County officials to combine with Detroit and Macomb County to hold one large multi-county cruise.

Hackel said a tri-county cruise would be a huge boon to southeastern Michigan. He said Macomb County is part of a rich history that includes cars from as far back as the late 1940s and cruising Gratiot Avenue that dates back to the 1950s.

But Greg Rassel, president of the Woodward Dream Cruise, was non-committal when asked if Oakland County people, especially promoters from Royal Oak, would be interested in extending the cruise from Pontiac to Eight Mile Road, east to Gratiot Avenue and then north to Mount Clemens on Gratiot Avenue.

Hackel, who seemed pleased that Rassel didn’t immediately reject the idea, said the first step would be to get the communities of Eastpointe, Roseville and Clinton Township together and then start a community relations campaign for the good of all interested municipalities.

"It would be a signature event," Hackel said. "We have to get all of the communities together so that we can..."
create something similar to what you see on Woodward.

"This most certainly would not take away from Gratiot or Woodward cruises. What a heck of an event that would be but it will take some time to get our house in order."

Rassel said this year’s Woodward Cruise will be the 19th, running 16 miles from Pontiac on the north to Ferndale on the Wayne County border. He said it attracts more spectators as the years go by.

"The Dream Cruise events are held in nine communities and there are different events in every one of them," Rassel said.

Representatives from other events, including Eastpointe and Clinton Township, were introduced by Chevrolet vice president Jim Campbell on Wednesday at the GM Heritage Center in Sterling Heights.

Summer car activities include:
* Chevrolet Belle Isle Grand Prix, May 31-June 2
* Eastpointe Gratiot Avenue Cruise, June 15
* 400 Nascar Weekend, June 15-16
* Eyes On Design Automotive Design, June 16
* Motor Muster, June 15-16
* Sloan Museum Auto Fair, June 22-23
* Cruisin’ Downriver, June 29
* RM Auctions Vintage Motor Cars, July 27
* Concours D’Elegance of America, July 28
* Clinton Township Gratiot Avenue Cruise, Aug. 4
* Pure Michigan 400 NASCAR weekend, Aug. 17-18
* Woodward Dream Cruise, Aug. 17
* Cruisin’ Hines, Aug. 25
* Old Car Festival, Sept. 7-8
* Orphan Car Show, Sept. 22
Local malls receive StormReady designation

Friday, May 3, 2013 8:09 PM EDT

Four local malls, including two in Oakland County, have received the StormReady designation from the National Weather Service.

Great Lakes Crossing Outlets in Auburn Hills and Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi — both owned by Taubman — have been given the StormReady designation, which indicates that each center has done everything possible to improve emergency first responder and citizen preparedness in the event of a natural disaster.

The Mall at Partridge Creek in Clinton Township and Fairlane Town Center in Dearborn are also StormReady. The Mall at Partridge Creek was the first shopping center in the country to receive StormReady designation, in 2009, and only the second facility in Michigan, after Detroit Metro Airport.

Requirements to become StormReady are: Establishing a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center, having several ways to receive severe weather warnings to alerts to the public, creating a system that monitors local weather conditions, promoting public readiness through seminars in the community and developing a formal weather plan.

— Staff Writer Megan Semeraz

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Roseville
May 03, 2013

Brainstorming the perfect corridor

Roseville nearing step two in Gratiot, Groesbeck corridor plan

By Sara Kandel
C & G Staff Writer

ROSEVILLE — The City of Roseville invited local municipalities and state and local organizations to a presentation on the start of the Gratiot and Groesbeck Corridors Reinvestment Plan April 30.

The reinvestment plan was not revealed at the presentation — it hasn’t been developed yet; rather, the presentation was a means to get the word out on the intended plan and collect information from organizations and municipal stakeholders with similar projects.

“We don’t quite have a plan yet,” said Carlisle-Wortman Planner Dave Scurto, who is heading project plans for the city. “The whole focus of this meeting is to see what type of information we have out there. We are just getting started into the project. Right now, we are on task 1.0 — assessing information and gathering input.”

Scurto kicked off the presentation with a short slide show, highlighting some of the area’s problems and the various aspects the plan will look at — marketing opportunities, economic development, land use, zoning, investment projects and public infrastructure improvements.

“No Gratiot Avenue, we are going to focus on really highly visible properties,” Scurto said. “We’d also like to do some improvements along the entire corridor, such as maintenance projects. We’d like to hear about transportation projects for Gratiot Avenue. We hear about the potential of rapid rail transit on Woodward — are there things like this we can do on Gratiot? Should we look at transit stations?

“Utica Junction is almost like a village within a city. It’s the original heart of Roseville. It has great walkability, but there are some vacant properties. There are some parking issues, but that could become a more walkable environment that ties into the adjacent neighborhoods.”
ATHENA winner Jennifer Morgan ‘leads by example’

By DEBBIE KOMAR
debbie.komar@mccls.com

Jennifer Morgan thanked God, her family and co-workers when her name was announced Friday as the 2013 ATHENA Award winner. “My husband’s strength holds me up and thanks to my mom. Without her, I wouldn’t be the woman I am today,” said Morgan, director/administrator of the Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility. She’s also the executive director of the newly formed Martha T. Berry Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of the elderly residents of Martha T. Berry.

Her husband, Joseph, children Kennedy, 12, and Joseph, 8, and mother Nancy Norwood were among those giving her a standing ovation in the post-lunch event program at Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township (Norwood, who raised four children before being widowed at age 23, once worked as a registered nurse at Martha T. Berry).

In announcing the award, 2011 ATHENA winner Jamie Swiet, who was on the committee to select the recipient, said Morgan “stayed out from the crowd. She leads by example.”

Candidates were evaluated based on professional and personal leadership, and community service. Prior to Morgan’s tenure, the Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility a 24-bed skilled nursing facility in Mt. Clemens, offered financial aid to residents, provided meals, assisted with grooming and activities, and attended social events.

Morgan assumed leadership in 2010 and began an “empowering” approach to the quality of care for all residents. “She doesn’t want anyone to lose their purpose to the elderly,” said Norwood. “I love the way Morgan develops and manages her team.”

The international ATHENA Award honors individuals who actively assist women in realizing their full leadership potential, exemplify excellence and contribute to the community as a whole. This year’s event was presented locally by the Macomb Foundation, with sponsorship from Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals, DuPont, Rehabilitation Masters, Health Alliance Plan, McLaren Macomb Hospital, Macomb Daily General Dynamics Land Systems, Metrostar Ambulance, DTE Energy Foundation, General Motors, Freedom Hill and the Martha T. Berry Foundation.

The Macomb Foundation has presented the award since 1989.

The 2013 nominees included: Sari Abramovich, Harper Oaks Hospital; Jodyne Board, Family Youth Interim; Janet Danna, Macomb Township supervisor; Bernadette M. Gendelak, D.O., McLaren Macomb hospital; and Pamela Khoury, Zona Cafe. Also, Andrea LaPozar of the state representative, District 32; Marilyn Lane, state representative, District 31; Sherry Lawfield, Hazra Bank; Candice Miller, U.S. House of Representatives, Ronde M. Powell, Michigan Office of Services to the Aging; Judith P. Pritchett, Ph.D., Macomb Intermediate School District; Laila Sheihed, D.O., Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals; and Jan Wilson, Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards.

Jennifer Morgan, director/administrator of the Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility in Mt. Clemens, was named the 2013 ATHENA Award winner Friday. On hand to applaud her were daughters Kennedy, 12, and son Joseph, 8, Morgan’s husband, Joseph, and mother, Nancy Norwood, also attended.
"We are looking at investment opportunities. I understand Macomb Mall has someone who is interested in taking down part of the mall, one of the shops and building out from there."

Representatives from Eastpointe, Clinton Township, Macomb County, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) attended the presentation, held in Erin Auditorium, and took part in the workshop session that followed.

Steve Minton, a representative from MDOT, spoke about some of the state’s plans for Gratiot between 11 Mile and 14 Mile roads, which include major construction on the I-94 off-ramp onto Gratiot.

"We are actually doing it in two pieces, from 11 Mile to Common Road and from Common to 14. Right now, as of three days ago, it’s been officially pulled out of the five-year plan, but we are still moving forward and working on the plans," Minton said.

"We are in this weird state right now where we are moving ahead with the plans but we don’t know exactly when we will construct them,” Minton said. “We are looking at everything, including the connector; the idea is to T-in the connector and put a signal in to eliminate the free-flow onto Gratiot and the merging and weaving situation we have there."

Some of the other things MDOT is looking at include: turning the fourth through-lane on Gratiot between Common and 14 Mile roads into a right turn lane; removing street parking south of Common to 11 Mile; and eliminating some of the crossovers, or Michigan turnarounds, south of Common.

Minton assured municipal representatives that, while they are looking at many issues on Gratiot, they understand removing parking and some crossovers is a touchy subject, and it’s something they’d further address at a local level before moving forward.

Eastpointe Mayor Suzanne Pixley spoke about some of her Gratiot transportation concerns, saying higher-speed traffic would be bad for businesses, before sharing her hopes of creating an art district along Gratiot in Eastpointe.

Representatives from SMART said that Gratiot was their busiest route with 75 northbound and 75 southbound trips per day, and they spoke about the possibility of a transit station but said that nothing is in the planning stages yet. A representative from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments spoke about the organization’s work on a redevelopment tool kit for Gratiot.

"We’ve been working for a number of months with a number of people (on the tool kit),” SEMCOG representative Susan Phillips said. “There are some synergies between the two pieces of work, and our time frame is very similar and compatible."

Roseville expects to finalize corridor plans by the end of the year.

"We’d like to have our public input session by the end of May (or) beginning of June, but as a follow-up to this meeting, what we would like to do is gather all the information and then come back at some point and have a work session to formulate a long-term strategy," Scurto said. “We are going to spend June, July, August and September getting recommendations while working with a steering committee. Then we’d like to have our actual plan out by the end of the
year."

There isn’t a date set for the public input session yet, but officials from Roseville said, once a
date is set, key stakeholders along the corridor will be notified, and the meeting date and time
will be advertised to the public.

Although the corridor plans are still in the beginning stages, Roseville officials have embraced
the project. City Controller Bob Cady, Building Director Glenn Sexton, Assessor Brooke
Openshaw, Administrative Assistant Yvette Krellwitz and Mayor John Chirkun all attended the
meeting.

“These gentlemen have some good ideas, and I can’t wait to go forward with them,” Chirkun
said.

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1030.

Bogged down: State funds to dredge harbors may not flow fast enough to help private marinas this season

By Chris Gautz

In late March, Gov. Rick Snyder signed a package of bills and allocated $21 million for emergency dredging projects because of historically low water levels in Michigan lakes.

The goal? Help bolster the state’s economy for shipping and give its recreational boating industry a life preserver after years of below-normal rain and snowfall.

So far, though, the dredging laws haven’t been much help to private marina operators like Eric Foster.

While the state bills include the framework for a low-interest loan program for marinas to participate in dredging, Foster, general partner at Belle Maer Harbor in Harrison Township, said the water levels he is looking at are 10 inches below normal. Even without state-orchestrated financing, he had to begin a dredging project this spring before the boating season really got underway.

"It was nice of the state to try and do that, but I have yet to find a bank that is participating," Foster said.

So instead, he paid for it out of pocket.

It cost him $27,000 just to pay for the state and federal permits to begin his dredging operation.

"It’s not cheap," he said. "So we had that much in before we took out a scoop of dirt."

Slow sailing

State officials say the public dredging projects funded by the $21 million are winding through the approval process as well. Less than a dozen of the 58 sites awarded dredging grants have the green light from the state to begin work, as they wait for permitting and bid-letting.

"There is a risk that some dredging might not get done until July when it needs to get done now," said Chuck May, chairman pro tem of the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition.

Feds’ inaction was a spur to state emergency dredging plan

The state took action on an emergency dredging plan this year, in part because of a lack of action from the federal government.

There have been 56 harbors traditionally maintained by the federal government, said Chuck May, chairman pro tem of the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition, but 51 have been deprioritized because they see less than 1 million tons of freight annually.

The money that pays for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain and dredge those harbors comes from a fee placed on the value of cargo and imports that enter U.S. ports and harbors.

The fee brings in about $2 billion annually, and President Barack Obama’s budget proposes spending one-ninth of that.

"The money is there and has been there," May said. "It’s being spent, but not on its intended purpose."

The Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition, of which the Detroit Regional Chamber is a member, supports passage of a bill in the U.S. Senate that would ensure all funds deposited into the fund be expended for their intended purposes and no longer be used to help balance the budget in other areas.
Harbors Coalition.

May praised the speed with which the Legislature and Snyder moved the bills through the process earlier this year, saying Michigan has never taken on something of this magnitude, nor any state in the Great Lakes or in the nation, in this short of time.

But the harbors that were designated to receive varying amounts of the state funds to complete dredging projects -- which ranged from a few thousand dollars to near $2 million -- are still in various stages of approval and bidding, May said.

Ron Olson, chief of parks and recreation for the Department of Natural Resources, said the dredging funds are in the form of reimbursable grants, so no money has been doled out.

So far, he said, between seven and 10 sites have all the paperwork needed that show they have the proper permit from the state and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and have awarded bids to begin dredging. They also have to complete the agreement with the DNR that shows the scope of the project and amount of dredging to be done.

There are 28 sites that have agreements in place with the DNR. Olson said. The remaining 30 are still working through the process.

"We expect in the next three to four weeks we will have pretty much everyone under agreement," he said. "We're pleased with where we are right now. We have not had any complaints."

He said the state's goal is to have these projects done before the peak of the boating season, which varies around the state, but in most places is in mid-June.

"The sense of urgency is on now, but it will take a little while," he said.

Private marinas

For Belle Maer Harbor, Foster said he had to act quickly because of not only business forces, but forces of Mother Nature.

On the portion of water near the marina, just north of the Clinton River that leads into Anchor Bay for boaters making their way to Lake St. Clair, a natural current goes from west to east and dumps silt on the west edge of the 100-foot-wide channel leading into the marina.

Because the silt has been piling up, some areas along the edge of the channel are only a few feet deep, making about 40 percent of the opening unavailable to boats coming through, Foster said.

The dredging will restore a 6-foot depth to the width of the channel, and he estimates 3,000 cubic yards of silt will be removed in the process.

Once completed, the powerboats that use the vast majority of the more than 800 slips in his marina will be able to again use the full channel. The dredging costs about $50,000, and while Foster said he had the money available to pay for it on his own now, he will need that capital at the end of the summer, so he is still looking for a lender, even though it won't be part of the state program.

He said he didn't really have a choice or the ability to wait for lenders to start taking part in it.

"It's such a time crunch, you can't wait until the end of the season," Foster said.
State response

In addition to public site dredging and low-interest loan framework, the state said it has sped up the permitting process and lowered the permitting fees for projects that plan to dredge at least 10,000 cubic yards of at least 90 percent sand. According to the administration, sand does not carry the same contaminants, so its disposal doesn't carry the same risks.

Sen. Geoff Hansen, R-Hart, chairman of the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Committee, said there is still time to complete these projects, and his goal is to have all of them dredged by June. Another issue is certain areas cannot be dredged while fish are spawning.

Of the $21 million in the law Snyder signed, $11.5 million came from the state’s general fund and $9.5 million comes from the Michigan State Waterways Fund. Communities around the state already had been promised that their projects would be funded with that money, but those had to be put off for at least a year to pay for the emergency dredging at other harbors.

Hansen said the waterways commission explained the situation to all of those communities, and while there was a lot of disappointment, most understood, Hansen said, as some of these projects were for building docks or adding restrooms at marinas.

"It doesn't do a whole lot of good to repair a dock if you can't get to it," he said.

Lending lifeline

David Worthams, policy director for the Michigan Bankers Association, said he is not aware of any lenders that have taken part in the program but that they do not typically keep lists of those that do.

He said the program was modeled after an agricultural disaster loan program created last year to help growers dealing with substantial crop damage.

Worthams said that program started off slowly as well, but eventually several lenders started using it, which triggered competition and more lenders signed on.

"The market will act as the market will act," Worthams said. "I wouldn't be shocked if the same type of trend emerged."

Under the program, the state pays the loan origination fee for administrative costs equal to 5 percent of the principal of the loan, which cannot be extended more than five years.

The interest rate cannot be more than 2.5 percent and the first principal payment cannot be made during the first two years. The law also caps a marina dredging loan at $500,000.

Hansen, who has led much of the discussion on dredging, said lawmakers are continuing to work on dredging issues, including a more stable funding source in the future, so that another round of emergency relief is not needed.

"We have a whole bunch of things in the mix," Hansen said. "We're not done yet."

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Talent, education, culture change on menu of Mackinac conference

By Chris Caultz

Tackling the state’s gap between employer talent needs and the skills of the workforce is bubbling to the top as a priority for discussion at this month’s Mackinac Policy Conference.

The conference this year is focused on three topical pillars: talent, education and culture change. As usual, it is meant to appeal to a statewide audience of decision-makers and legislators.

Joseph Welch, chairman, president and CEO of Novi-based ITC Holdings Corp. and the chairman of this year’s conference on Mackinac Island, said education is a major focus of his and that he will speak on a panel about its role in 21st century jobs.

"The talent gene pool is thin," he said.

For example, Welch said, most schools do not teach about the electrical and power industry anymore, and that has led to an aging workforce nearing retirement, without much talent in the pipeline ready to replace it.

"Most of the people in the power industry look like me, and that's not good," said Welch, 64.

Another issue for Welch is that a large segment of the younger population is not college-bound, and the type of work his employees do requires high levels of mathematics. It’s not enough anymore to just be brave enough to climb up a transmission tower, he said.

Several others are planning to speak at the Mackinac conference on the importance of education and ways to reform the state’s education system. Among them:

- Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush will take the stage after Gov. Rick Snyder opens the conference at 1:30 p.m. May 29. Bush is expected to talk about the reforms he instituted while governor.

- Michelle Rheec, CEO and founder of Washington, D.C.-based lobbying organization StudentsFirst, will also discuss education reform the following day.

Sandy Baruah, president and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber, which presents the conference annually, said last week the three conference pillars are intertwined in many ways.

Immigration policy, which relates to all of them, is expected to be a major focus, with both Bush and Carlos Gutierrez, the former U.S. Commerce secretary and former CEO of Kellogg Co., speaking on the topic.

Baruah said several senior members of Congress are planning to speak as well and will touch on immigration and other issues.

Robert Johnson, the Black Entertainment Television founder described by Baruah as "the Dan Gilbert of Washington, D.C.," will discuss the role the private sector can play in urban redevelopment.

One person vital to that role in Detroit may not be at the conference, Baruah said. Detroit Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr is unlikely to attend, he said, due to his busy schedule.

There will also be a series of panel discussions on manufacturing, particularly on the roles of those in the supply chain, and on infrastructure and financial stability, as well as a discussion of cybersecurity.

And with the absence this year of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Baruah said there will not be a Fab Five panel with the leaders of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties along with Detroit Mayor Dave Bing. Those regional leaders will still have a yet-to-be-determined role.

Baruah said he understands Patterson can't make the Mackinac event because of his ongoing recovery from injuries sustained in an August 2012 automobile accident.

Because the conference is beginning earlier this year, Baruah is encouraging attendees to come up to the island Tuesday night, May 28, rather than leave the Detroit region by 5 a.m. Wednesday in order to make it up on time.

The conference ends on Friday, May 31, with a keynote address from Snyder at 11 a.m. Attendance right now is about 1,300, on par with where it was at this point last year, Baruah said.

At the end of the conference, there will be a to-do list created with actionable items to check off before next year's event.

One of those items from last year was the leading of a delegation of Detroit-area business leaders to Washington, D.C., to learn about the redevelopment there. That trip is scheduled to take place in a few weeks.

For more conference information, visit mpc.detroitchamber.com.

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Special assessments allow businesses to finance energy-saving upgrades
By Christina Hall Detroit Free Press Staff Writer Filed Under Local News Michigan news Ann Arbor Southfield Dearborn May 05
freep.com

A $65,000 energy-saving project at the Kerrytown Market & Shops in downtown Ann Arbor is expected to save tenants anywhere
from $500 to $5,000 a year on their electric bills.

The project is one of four being funded this year though a special assessment district set up by the city that allows businesses to get long-term, lower-cost loans to make energy improvements, including lighting, insulation, heating and cooling systems, reducing water use and adding renewable energy sources, such as solar and geothermal.

Ann Arbor was the first municipality in Michigan to set up a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district under legislation passed in 2010, but the idea is starting to catch on elsewhere.

“It’s a great concept of a way to free up clean energy projects to move forward that are sort of stuck because of the financing,” said Andy Levin, president of Lean & Green Michigan, which is talking with communities about the idea and will work with interested businesses.

Macomb County commissioners are discussing a countywide PACE district, Levin said. Ingham County and Southfield approved districts last year, and a project is in the works in Southfield.

Levin said many cities and counties statewide are in the process of creating a district or talking about one, including Dearborn, Farmington Hills and Wayne County. He said it’s more efficient to create a district at the county level.

The idea is that owners voluntarily take on an assessment to make the improvements. The payback is for a longer period of time at a lower fixed rate, allowing the business

to make the upgrades, pay off the assessment, improve the property’s value and pay less in utility bills.

Participants pay for the program, so there is no cost to taxpayers.

Michigan is one of 28 states and the District of Columbia with PACE legislation, according to PACENow.org.

Macomb County Commissioner David Flynn said the idea “is a way to brand economic development.”

Kerrytown Market & Shops is replacing lighting fixtures, adding occupancy sensors to storage rooms and offices and installing light switches in areas that didn’t have them so lights are not on continuously, manager Karen Ehrheart Farmer said.

She said Kerrytown is investing about $45,000 and the rest will be split among the participating store owners. Besides saving on their electric bills, tenants also will get a rebate from DTE Energy, she said.

“For small businesses, especially, I think this is a great way to lower their energy costs, improve their look of their business and have the capital expense spread out over time,” Farmer said.
In Ann Arbor, PACE is a $560,000 investment that is to result in annual energy savings of more than $50,000 for the local businesses, not to mention the positive environmental impacts the upgrades will have, said Matthew Naud, the city's environmental coordinator.

PACE programs vary, but in Ann Arbor, financing is available through the sale of a bond and repaid by property owners through the annual special assessments. Funds are to be disbursed when the projects are completed and inspected. Property owners will repay assessments annually starting in June 2014. They will have 10 years to repay assessments at 4.75%.

Flynn said businesses would need an energy audit if a project is more than $250,000 and the company doing the work has to guarantee the energy savings.

The program won’t work for everyone, but “it’s a dollars and cents proposition,” said Jennifer Mefford, director of business development for the National Electrical Contractors Association of Southeastern Michigan and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 58.

“The more financing options our customers have, the more likely they are to move along. Financing is absolutely a barrier to those projects moving forward,” she said, adding that trades workers also could benefit from jobs created from the projects.
The Macomb Daily (http://www.macombdaily.com), Serving Macomb County, MI.

News » Local »

Macomb board adds legislative affairs specialist

Macomb Daily staff

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners has hired a legislative affairs director to assist the board in researching and shaping policy, as well as analyzing financial reports.

Andrew D. Kim on Monday will take over the newly created position, which officials called “budget neutral” in a press release.

“The position will enhance the commission’s ability to actively scrutinize the budget and promote public policy,” said board Chairman David Flynn, D-Sterling Heights.

Flynn said Kim brings “valuable private and public sector experience” to the post.

Kim graduated from Cornell University and has a master’s degree in public policy from the University of Michigan. He has worked as a manager at Deloitte Consulting and for Democratic U.S. Representative Hansen Clarke of Detroit and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

URL: http://www.macombdaily.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130507/NEWS01/130509677&template=printart

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Press Release

Sterling Heights Regional Chamber honors Roy C. Rose with the 2013 "Lil" Adams Award

5/7/2013 • Published by Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry, (Sterling Heights, MI)

STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich., May 7, 2013 — The award is a tribute to the legacy of Lil Adams, whose humble and caring spirit was dedicated to the Chamber for more than 30 years. Qualifying nominees are individuals who exemplify “Lil’s” spirit of commitment to the Chamber and the communities they serve.

First awarded in 2009 to Clark Andrews, O'Reilly Rancilio P.C. Attorneys at Law; 2010 to Barbara Rossmann, President & CEO for Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals; 2011 to Ray Lopez, Co-owner, Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors and in 2012 to Steve Messina, owner and President Messina Trucking Company.

Mr. Rose now the 5th recipient is the CEO for Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick, Inc. (AEW) located in Shelby Township. Throughout his more than 30-year career, Roy has dedicated himself to numerous memberships with civil associations, donations to philanthropic groups, and the management of a civil engineering firm that assists more than 25 municipalities and hundreds of private clients across southeast Michigan. His local involvement includes, but is not limited to the Sterling Heights Chamber Public Policy Committee, Board of Regents for Baker College (Clinton Township), Leadership Macomb (President), Utica Community Schools Foundation for Excellence (President), Macomb Community College Civil Technology Advisory Board (Member), Businesses for Better Transportation (Vice Chairman), and most recently, the Regional Transit Authority (Macomb County Representative).

Roy has always contributed and participated when ever called upon stated Wayne Oehmke, Sterling Heights Regional Chamber President and CEO. “His values and caring spirit shows why he is deserving of this honor.”

The 2013 Lil Adams Award will be presented to Roy at the Chamber and City of Sterling Heights sponsored Michigan Week Spring Business Expo and Luncheon on Wednesday, May 22 at the Best Western Plus Sterling Inn in Sterling Heights. Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson will be the featured speaker at the luncheon that also features a host of exhibitors along with a delicious plated lunch. Cost for the luncheon is $25 for chamber members and $40 for “not-yet” members. Reservations accepted via website at www.shrccci.com (http://www.shrccci.com) or call Lori Cline, Guest Services Specialist at 586.731.5400 ext. 11.

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About our Chambers

We are a voluntary partnership of business and professional people working together to build a healthy economy and to improve the quality of life in our community.

Since its founding in 1981, with a name change or two, The Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry has worked to improve the community’s economy and quality of life, keeping these objectives in mind: help businesses prosper and grow; increase job opportunities; encourage an orderly expansion and development of all segments of the community; contribute to the overall economic stability of the community and to encourage and promote the nation’s private enterprise system of competitive marketing. As of April 1st 2010 the SHRCCI signed a “Joint Venture” agreement with ABCC – Anchor Bay Chamber of Commerce that will offer a collaboration as its focal point. Visit our website at www.shrccci.com (http://www.shrccci.com) for additional details.
O'Leary pleads his case to county commissioners

Wednesday, May 8, 2013
By MATTHEW FAHR

When you are not getting the service you are paying for, you want to find out how that problem can be solved. In the case of Washington Township Supervisor Dan O'Leary, he took his case to the county on May 7.

At a meeting of the Justice and Public Safety Committee of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, O'Leary, along with Lenox Township Supervisor Ron Trombley, spoke about the deficiency in police coverage provided under their respective contracts with the Macomb County Sheriff's Department.

Washington and Lenox, as well as other municipalities such as Harrison and Macomb townships, contract with the Sheriff's Office for dedicated police coverage over and above basic coverage provided by the department for communities who do not have their own police force.

Washington recently renewed a three-year contract with Sheriff Anthony Wickersham's department, but brought up an ongoing concern to the committee that he is seeking to have rectified.

Four local municipalities have no dedicated service other than basic emergency coverage by the Sheriff's Office - Ray, Armada, Bruce and Richmond townships.

To cover those areas, estimated to cover 180 square miles, the Sheriff's Office has one roaming deputy for 24-hour service. If an emergency call comes in to the Sheriff's Office, Wickersham, who was present at the meeting, said that Michigan State Police are first contacted. If they are unavailable, a deputy is pulled from the nearest geographical area to provide assistance or mutual aid at the scene.

O'Leary and Trombley both contend that deputies are out of their respective corporate borders providing that assistance 30 to 40 percent of the time, in violation of their contracts. Wickersham later verified that figure.

"It isn't mutual aid; it is a one-way game," O'Leary said referring to the fact that the four townships cannot reciprocate coverage if the same situation were to occur in Washington. "We wind up financing their operation. About a third of the time, my deputies are out of town."

Leadership in all four of the townships lacking coverage have made a concerted effort to try and put a public safety millage together to pay for their own dedicated coverage. In 2012 all four townships got the issue on a ballot and all four voted it down by significant margins.

"I applaud the supervisors of those townships and brought it before their boards," said Wickersham. "Those residents of those four communities spoke on what level of service they want."

Washington currently contracts seven deputies for 24/7/365 coverage at a cost of $968,000 annually and O'Leary would
like to add to his current coverage, but explained to the board why that proposal would fall on deaf ears.

"I can't sell that to my residents or my board if they think that a third of the time the deputies they are already paying for are out of town because there are four other towns that won't pay," he told the six members of the board on hand. "I can't make that pitch."

Wickersham was asked by District 11 Commissioner Kathy Tocco if it was a problem for the county, he responded "no."

It was a reply to which O'Leary begged to differ.

"The county is violating their agreement with me which says that you will have seven deputies within my corporate limits, and you don't," he said responding to Tocco's question. "When you have to violate your agreement with someone who trusted you to sign that agreement and live up to it in order to fulfill your statutory and constitutional obligations, that is unacceptable. You are in violation of your agreement with me."

One solution that had been proposed was dismissed at the meeting.

O'Leary suggested that his township be reimbursed by surrounding townships when his contracted cars are in their areas rather than his.

"If we are going to serve them, we should be billing them for service and giving towns that are paying for it a credit for the loss of deputies," O'Leary said.

That idea was ruled out due to the fact that the coverage given to those without a dedicated police force is statutorily mandated by law and that service cannot be billed.

The other option brought up before the board was adding a second roaming deputy to the one already covering the four communities and eliminating the need to pull in another deputy from a contracted area.

"That would be the optimal solution for this whole thing, but there is a cost associated with that," Wickersham told the commissioners.

When asked what it would cost to add a second deputy to cover the 180-mile zone, Wickersham told the board the cost would be "about $500,000."

"We have to provide some level of police protection to those communities, and that is what we are doing and we do the best with the resources we can afford," said the sheriff.

For former Bruce Township Supervisor Jim Tignanelli, on hand as an "interested participant," it would be money well-spent both fiscally and for officer safety.

"This is a half a million dollars to cover 180 square miles in four townships," he said. "You have a responsibility to that deputy. You are sending one person on a two-person job."

He added, "What they (the four townships) are asking for is for you to provide the constitutional level of service. If you are going to send one person to do a two-person job, I don't think you are doing your part."

Commissioner Don Brown said he would support a budget amendment to the county budget to provide such an addition.

"We've got a responsibility to provide basic, constitutionally required services to those communities and we are not living
up to our level of commitment because we don't have the staff to do it," he said.

He later added his opinion as to why the level of coverage Wickersham is providing in the north end in communities without their own coverage is what it is.

"I think we are intentionally not giving those communities the coverage they need to get them to act, and I don't think that is appropriate," he told the board.

The board made no motions and took no action on the issue on May 7, but Trombley summed up his frustration on the situation to the board.

"One more day is too long for this to go on," he said.

Contact Matthew Fahr at 586-323-8147 or at matt.fahr@advisorsource.com. Follow him on Twitter @FahrOutMan

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News »

Officials: Sewer project to cost less

By FRANK DEFRANK
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Friday, May 10, 2013

A multimillion-project to rehabilitate a four-mile section of a sewer that serves more than 20 communities in Macomb and Oakland counties will cost about $20 million less than estimated initially, officials said Friday.

But the revised $70 million price tag will still take a bite out of budgets and could result in higher fees for residents of the communities served by the sewer.

“We knew it was coming, but we’re not happy about it,” said Robert Cannon, Clinton Township supervisor.

Construction on the next phase of the 21-mile long Oakland-Macomb Interceptor Drain project is scheduled to begin by July 1, said Mike McMahon, assistant engineer for the Water Resources Commission. Work crews will install a nearly 13-foot-diameter sewer some 60 to 100 feet beneath ground from Eight Mile to 15 Mile roads, and then west to Dodge Park Road. The entire project will be ongoing for at least two years, McMahon said.

“It’s large,” he said.
The $70 million cost will be divided among the communities served by the sewer line. The Oakland-Macomb Interceptor Drain District will finance the work through a bond sale. Interest on the bonds will be 2 percent annually for 20 years.

Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Anthony Marrocco, who oversees the county’s sewers and drains, said homeowners and businesses may experience some small rate increases, but less than the hike in charges that were common when the Detroit sewer department controlled the massive bi-county sewer interceptor.

“We now have possession of that interceptor. We don’t put on a surcharge like Detroit. They would slap on an extra 15 percent,” said Marrocco, a Clinton Township Democrat.

The purchase by Oakland and Macomb counties of the giant interceptor pipe also means that routine maintenance will prevent sewer collapses experienced under Detroit’s long tenure of controlling the region’s entire wastewater system, Marrocco said.

In addition, Macomb County’s AAA bond rating means that interest costs over the 20 years of municipal bond payments will be much less than if cash-starved Detroit had maintained ownership of the sewer line and attempted to finance repairs.
Communities were given an option to prepay their obligation to avoid interest charges. As of Friday, Shelby Township was the only community to approve a prepay plan. Township officials estimate they’ll save about $783,000 by paying that community’s entire $4.3 million bill before construction begins. Shelby Township will pay its share by tapping reserve funds in the public works department.

“This is an appropriate use of our fund reserves,” said Rick Stathakis, Shelby Township supervisor.

But most communities are like Clinton Township, which doesn’t have millions in reserve funds. Those communities face 20 years of bond payments, and eventually their residents could see their bills for sewer service rise.

“User fees; that’s the only way to do it (finance repairs),” Cannon said.

Clinton Township’s portion was expected to be a little more than $10 million, the second-highest of Macomb County communities, behind only Sterling Heights at $14.8 million. Those figures could drop after project officials announced the reduced cost.

Macomb and Oakland County officials credited the savings on an “innovative bidding process” that allowed bidders more flexibility to propose what type of products will be used.

Livonia-based Jay Dee Contractors, Inc. was the low bidder and earned the contract.

“For a job of this size and complexity, we had a large number of companies competing for the work,” said Marrocco. “The bids were clustered around the engineer’s estimate of cost and … Jay Dee is a company that I have worked with before. I have faith in their ability to do a good job.”

Macomb Daily Staff Writer Chad Selweski contributed to this story.


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Lenox Township Supervisor Ron Trombley began seeking a solution to the police coverage problem he and other communities who pay for service are experiencing.

At the May 7 meeting of the Justice and Public Safety Committee of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, Trombley, along with Washington Township Supervisor Dan O'Leary, spoke about the deficiency in police coverage provided under their respective contracts with the Macomb County Sheriff's Department.

Washington and Lenox, as well as other municipalities such as Harrison and Miacombs townships, contract with the department for dedicated police coverage. This coverage is supposed to be over and above basic coverage provided by the department for communities who do not have their own police force.

There are four adjacent municipalities without dedicated service — other than basic emergency coverage — by the sheriff's department. These municipalities are Ray, Armada, Bruce and Richmond townships.

To cover those areas, which consist of an estimated 180 square miles, the sheriff's department has one roaming deputy for 24-hour service. If an emergency call comes into the sheriff's department, Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, who was present at the meeting, said Michigan State Police are first contacted. If they are unavailable a deputy is pulled from the nearest geographical area to provide assistance or mutual aid at the scene.

Trombley described that basic coverage of such a large area "absurd" and later said, "One more day is too long for this to go on."

O'Leary and Trombley both contend that deputies are out of their respective corporate borders providing that assistance 30 to 40 percent of the time, in violation of their contracts. Wickersham later verified that figure.

"In any type of service situation, if you are paying a bill, but only receiving 60 to 70 percent of that service you would have a problem with it, you would stop paying," Trombley told the six board members in attendance. "My people's money is being spent in other people's communities."

Leadership in all four of the townships lacking coverage have made a concerted effort to try and put a public safety millage together to pay for their own dedicated coverage. In 2012 all four townships got the issue on a ballot and all four voted it down by significant margins.

"I applaud the supervisors of those townships and brought it before their boards," said Wickersham. "Those residents of those four communities spoke on what level of service they want."
Trombley added, “The four communities, it is not the fault of their leadership, they tried to push a millage through.”

He was later asked by District 11 Commissioner Kathy Tocco if it was a problem for the county, he responded “no.”

It was a reply O’Leary begged to differ with.

“The county is violating their agreement with me which says that you will have seven deputies within my corporate limits and you don’t,” he said responding to Tocco’s question. “When you have to violate your agreement with someone who trusted you to sign that agreement and live up to it in order to fulfill your statutory and constitutional obligations, that is unacceptable. You are in violation of your agreement with me.”

One solution that had been proposed was dismissed at the meeting.

O’Leary suggested townships be reimbursed by surrounding townships when contracted cars are taken from their area and utilized elsewhere.

“If we are going to serve them, we should be billing them for service and giving towns that are paying for it a credit for the loss of deputies,” said the Washington supervisor.

That idea was ruled out due to the fact that the coverage given to those without a dedicated police force is statutorily mandated by law and that service cannot be billed.

Trombley spoke to the board about the cost ramifications to his township.

“We are maxed out at money we can afford to spend on our sheriff coverage,” he said. “We chose to spend a large amount of our budget on coverage and it is important to us.”

The other option brought up before the board was adding a second roaming deputy to the one already covering the four communities and eliminating the need to pull in another deputy from a contracted area.

“That would be the optimal solution for this whole thing, but there is a cost associated with that,” Wickersham told the commissioners.

When asked what it would cost to add a second deputy to cover the 180-mile zone, Wickersham told the board the cost would be “about $500,000.”

“We have to provide some level of police protection to those communities and that is what we are doing and we do the best with the resources we can afford,” said the sheriff.

The board made no motions and took no action on the issue, but Trombley summed up his frustration on the situation to the board.

“This is a problem that is not going to go away and we have to address it,” he said.

Contact Matthew Fahrb (586) 323-8147 or at matt.fahr@advisorsource.com. Follow him on Twitter @FahrOutMan.
Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham has rejected pleas by township officials to add more law enforcement patrols to the north end of the county.

Four townships —— Bruce, Ray, Armada and Richmond — saw the number of patrol cars chopped from five to one four years ago as then-sheriff Mark Hackel coped with budget cuts. Those four townships each put millage proposals on the 2012 election ballots to finance contracts for additional Sheriff's Department services but all four communities voted down the tax proposals.

After investing a lot of time and effort into promoting the virtues of a customized sheriff's contract for each township during the '12 election campaigns, Wickersham is not receptive to calls for additional patrols in those nonpaying communities. A major sticking point is the $500,000 annual cost for one additional sheriff’s deputy car.

"This isn’t my issue. I am not seeking an increase in personnel," Wickersham said.

The request for beefed up law enforcement did not come from any of the four townships. Instead, it was a request from officials in two of the five communities that have pay-for-service contracts with the Sheriff's Department.

Washington Township Supervisor Dan O'Leary explained that his community pays for seven deputies but those officers spend more than 30 percent of their time serving as "back-up" cops on an emergency basis for the one roving patrol car in the nonpaying townships.

"Washington, Lenox, Macomb — they should not be punished for doing the right thing and then only get 70 cents on the dollar. We ... are footing the bill for these other towns," said O’Leary, a second-term Republican supervisor.

Ron Trombley, supervisor of Lenox Township, managed to boost funding so that his community now receives 24/7 protection from the Sheriff's Department. But Trombley, like O'Leary, is frustrated that round-the-clock coverage is routinely disrupted by providing aid to the roving car in neighboring communities when a potentially dangerous situation arises.

The two other communities that have contracted services with the Sheriff's Department, rather than a local police department, are New Haven and Harrison Township.

At a meeting last week of the county Board of Commissioners’ Justice and Public Safety Committee, Commissioner Kathy Vosburg, the Chesterfield Township Republican who chairs the committee, said the decision whether to pursue a second roving patrol car is entirely within Wickersham's authority. O’Leary, Trombley and Wickersham addressed the committee on the subject of sheriff’s deputy patrols.
The county’s chief legal counsel, George Brumbaugh, said the county cannot charge a fee to a nonpaying community for each back-up situation in which a second car is provided from a paying community.

Jim Tignanelli, former Bruce Township supervisor and president of the Police Officers Association of Michigan union, agreed that the sheriff’s constitutional duties are to provide adequate personnel for every potentially dangerous situation, such as a domestic violence situation or a report of gunshots fired.

Since the cutbacks of 2009, residents living in the four nonpaying townships receive no routine service from the roving patrol car if they call 911. Calls about noise, vandalism, a car crash with no injuries or even a home break-in where the burglar has fled will not generate a response from the lone deputy on patrol. Residents in those situations are told to drive to the Sheriff’s Office in Mount Clemens and file a report.

According to Wickersham, the $500,000 price tag for one additional roving patrol car includes salaries and benefits for four deputies who would handle the additional 24/7 service, plus the cost of the car, gasoline, maintenance and police equipment. The money would come out of the county budget.

While his hands are tied by safety issues in back-up situations, Wickersham agrees with O’Leary that the four townships that rejected their own police contract are taking advantage of a situation in which they know that patrol cars from surrounding communities will come to their aid.

“I’m paying for a service and our deputies spend about one-third of their time in towns where people don’t pay for this service,” O’Leary said. “If I was them, if I was getting a service for free, I probably wouldn’t want to pay for it either.”

URL: http://www.theoaklandpress.com/articles/2013/05/11/news/local_news/doc518ec61f3d1ed942942603.prt

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General Motors Unveils $130 Million Technical Data Center In Warren, Michigan

Area Development Online News Desk (05/13/2013)

EDITORS PICKS

- Michigan Basic Business Taxes 2012
- Michigan Direct Financial Incentives 2012

General Motors unveiled its state-of-the-art $130-million enterprise data center in Warren, Michigan, that will serve as the computing backbone for the automaker's vast global operations. GM said the center "is the capstone of its efforts to transform its IT operations to help the company work smarter and faster from the design studio to the factory to the showroom floor."

Located at its Technical Center in this Detroit suburb, the facility is the first of two Information Technology Operations and Command centers that bring-in-house GM's global IT infrastructure and consolidate a network of multiple sites. The two centers will integrate and streamline all aspects of product development, manufacturing, marketing, sales and OnStar applications to speed access to any GM employee anywhere in the world.

The 5,040-square-foot IT Operations and Command Center has 48 workstations and a 955-square-foot video wall composed of 28 configurable screens that monitor data use across operations around the clock.

The modular design of the facility's "white space," where the technology resides, enables future expansion for handling the increasingly complex computer simulations needed by GM teams working on vehicle design, fuel economy, safety, and quality requirements. A server acquisition and installation process that used to take weeks now takes hours. Data mirroring, redundant feeds and shared storage capability minimize downtime and help...
newer vehicle designs and technologies into our customers’ hands quicker and improve the bottom line,” said GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akerson. “It is back home where it should be, and it further drives unnecessary complexity from our businesses while improving our operational efficiency and better supporting our business strategy."

The enterprise data center and a companion data center at the Milford Proving Ground are part of a previously announced plan to transform GM’s global IT footprint from 23 facilities to two by 2015. Construction of the $1.00 million data center expansion in Milford will begin this summer.

GM IT said it is leveraging the Warren and Milford data centers to create a secure, private cloud that allows supercomputer applications, servers and data storage to be efficiently and quickly accessed among multiple users.

“Our data center consolidation is just one of the initiatives driving the transformation of GM’s business,” said Randy Mott, GM vice president and CIO. “It’s part of an overarching strategy to transform not only information technology but also allow GM’s business operations to be more responsive to our customers, quicker to market and deliver on our objectives to shareholders.”

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

27th Annual Corporate Survey & 9th Annual Consultants Survey Results

2012 Top States For Doing Business Survey Results

Leading Locations for 2012: Which MSAs Rank Highest for Economic & Job Growth?

The States Leading the U.S. Manufacturing Resurgence
Students recognized for anti-substance abuse efforts

A dozen students in grades 7-12 throughout Macomb County were recognized Monday by Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith for their efforts to combat illegal substance use among their peers.

They were each given a $50 gift certificate and the organizations they're involved with each received $500 toward their antidual and alcohol programs, in a ceremony at the County Administration Building in Mount Clemens. The $6,600 came from the prosecutor's drunken driving forfeiture fund.

Smith honored the youngsters to reinforce their efforts to combat drug, tobacco and alcohol use, which can be an unpopular stance in school culture.

"It's easy to not be involved and it's easy to go along with the crowd," Smith told the students. "Today we're here to honor kids that didn't just go along, or just didn't go with the crowd. You got involved and stood up for the right message. And we know what that right message is - drugs and alcohol are a dead end.

"You are standing up and doing what you can to make the community a better place."

U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, a Royal Oak Democrat whose district includes most of Macomb County, attended and spoke in support of the students.

The youngsters counsel peers, encourage drug-free activities, facilitate dialogue among students, parents and authorities, and instruct retailers on how to identify underage alcohol buyers. They also help authorities gauge problems.

"They are critical because without their knowledge and without their input, we really wouldn't have a good idea of the problems they are going through," said Jynil Schneider, chairwoman of two of the organizations, the Northwest Macomb and Bay Haven prevention coalitions. "We're trying to get down on the ground level and really help students to understand and make the right decisions. Who better to do that than the student themselves? They take leadership positions and they help make other students make the right decisions."

The nonprofits also involve other organizations, such as churches and the police, in various anti-drug activities, Schneider said.

Rachel Kruk, a junior at Chippewa Valley High School, was honored for her efforts in the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Family, which has grown to 45 students.

Kruk said is among her favorite of many extracurricular activities and accomplishments.

"I just love the fact that I'm pleased by pleasing others and doing all these wonderful things for other people," she said. "A lot of people just like to go with the flow and do what's cool, and what everyone else does.

What we try to do is step out of the boundaries and really take charge of that leadership and (letting people) know what will pay off in the long run."

Also honored was Matthew Dyrvial of the Eastpointe Community Actions Coalition, Katherine Huffman of the Fraser Community Action Team, Tyler Conklin of the L'Anse Creuse Community Action Coalition, Andrew Edwards of the Mount Clemens Community Coalition, Tekya Harris of the Roseville Community Coalition, Dora Geladaris of the Shores Network for Action and Prevention, Nicole Beller of the Utica Community Area Action Team, Emily Chernenko of the Warren-Center Line Prevention Coalition, Justyna Marasco of the Northwest Macomb Prevention Coalition and Brandon Kempf of the Bay Haven Prevention Coalition, and Martina Conley of the Clintondale Make A Difference Community Coalition.
The Macomb Daily (http://www.macombdaily.com), serving Macomb County, MI.

News » Local »

Pipeline will disrupt residential neighborhoods

By FRANK DEFRANK
frank.defrank@macombdaily.com; @fdefrank

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Construction is about to begin on an underground pipeline that will cut a nine-mile swath through Oakland and Macomb counties and ultimately carry a natural gas by-product to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario.

Mariner West is the name of the project commissioned by Sunoco Logistics. The pipeline, which originates in western Pennsylvania, will traverse Rochester Hills and the city of Rochester in Oakland County and Shelby Township in Macomb County. Work is scheduled to get under way this month and is expected to conclude in July.

"We will be using existing pipeline and easements through the majority of the project," Joseph McGinn, senior manager for public affairs for Sunoco. "However, we will be replacing a nine-mile section of the pipe, part of which is located in Shelby Township."

Residents whose properties lay within the pipeline’s easement will see work crews dig up the land for removal of old pipe and installation of the new line. Company officials have vowed to restore damaged land in its entirety, including fences, sod and other repairs.

"The pipeline will be replaced along the route following local, state and federal permitting requirements along the nine-mile stretch," company officials wrote in a fact sheet describing Mariner West. "In all cases, Sunoco Logistics shall take every measure possible to keep work activities limited to the 40-foot right-of-way as defined by the existing easements with property owners."

Although the line travels about 78 miles in Michigan, only the section in Shelby Township will result in new construction, Sunoco officials said.

The route of a separate pipeline under construction by another company, Enbridge, also will take it through northern Macomb County. But that project is largely through rural areas. That’s not the case with Mariner West.

"This one typically goes through residential neighborhoods, next to a lake … it’s more intrusive," said Macomb County Commissioner James Carabelli, R-Shelby Township, one of a trio of elected officials who met with Sunoco representatives.

A segment of the line in Shelby Township runs beneath the Eisenhower High School campus, school officials confirmed.
Don Brown, a Macomb County commissioner from Washington Township, represents much of northern Macomb County. He was among those who met with the company to discuss the work and the inconvenience it will cause.

“We had our concerns,” Brown said. “We wanted to make sure they were communicating with the residents.”

Brown described the meeting with Sunoco officials as positive.

“So far, we feel really good about it,” he said. “They don’t want any trouble. They want everything to go smoothly.”

According to Sunoco, the pipeline runs from a town called Houston in western Pennsylvania, north to Youngstown, Ohio and across the Buckeye state to Toledo.

The pipeline then crosses into Michigan and through Romulus and Inkster before it reaches Oakland and Macomb counties. The pipeline also crosses Washington, Ray and Lenox townships and Richmond on its way into St. Clair County before it reaches the refineries in Canada.

When Mariner West is fully operational, the line will carry up to 50,000 barrels daily of ethane, a natural gas liquid similar to propane, McGinn said. Ethane is used by the petrochemical industry in the manufacture of products like plastics.

Carabelli said Sunoco representatives will appear Tuesday at a public meeting of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners to further discuss the pipeline project.
The Macomb Daily (http://www.macombdaily.com), Serving Macomb County, MI.

News » Local »

County executive sets up Freedom Hill advisory panel

By MITCH HOTTS
mitch.hotts@macombdaily.com; @mhotts

Thursday, May 16, 2013

A new company known as Luna Hillside LLC is now leasing the Freedom Hill amphitheater and will lease the park on some weekends for ethnic and music festivals. (Submitted photo)

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel has formed an advisory committee to address issues raised by homeowners who live near Freedom Hill amphitheater in Sterling Heights once the facility’s concert season is revived next month after a three-year layoff.

The 16-member panel includes county officials, Mayor Richard Notte and residents, and is designed to serve as a sounding board to discuss issues such as noise, traffic and litter.

“I made it clear to them that we want to be good neighbors,” said Deputy County Executive Mark Delkin, who will head the committee. “We want the park to be a quality of life asset for everyone, including the homeowners who feel they have to contend with traffic and noise generated by the park.”

Freedom Hill, which includes a county-owned park and an amphitheater leased to a private firm, was forced to shut down in 2009 due to legal wrangling due to lawsuits associated with the property and county-ordered
budget cuts.

A new company known as Luna Hillside LLC is now leasing the amphitheater and will lease the park on some weekends for ethnic and music festivals.

Hackel, the county executive, said he wanted to create the advisory group to meet with residents and work with them on concerns that may arise once the concerts begin. The first show will be Huey Lewis and the News on June 4.

Hackel said residents have his word the panel will listen to their concerns.

“There’s always going to be traffic and noise issues in a community, whether it’s a parade or fireworks display or you live near an airport, that can create tension and angst,” Hackel said. “This new venue is going to happen. We want to find ways to work together going forward.”

Back in the 2000s, when Hillside Productions was running the facility, a group of anti-Freedom Hill homeowners donning red shirts frequently spoke out at Sterling Heights City Council meetings about the noise and traffic.

Two of the original “red shirt” groups, George Parker and his wife, Frances, are part of the new panel.

They attended the committee’s first meeting and the group agreed to meet in July once some of the concerts have been held.

“In the past, noise was the overriding issue,” said George Parker, an 18-year resident. “There was a lot of traffic too, but that was to be expected. You can’t turn the traffic down, but you can turn the volume down on the sound system. We think that would be good.”

The past management firm added sound-absorbing walls and a roof to the concert venue in an effort to reduce the amount of noise spreading out to the neighborhoods. Parker said that didn’t help.

Committee members said they are pleased Kevin Cassidy is back on board as the venue’s general manager and have been impressed with Tom Celani, a Detroit businessman who is head of Luna Entertainment, part of the new management firm. Members said Cassidy has always listened to their concerns and added Celani has been polite and respectful with them in their dealings so far.

George Parker, a retired engineer, said homeowners are bracing for the return of the noise. “Let’s be honest, would you want this in your backyard,” he said.

The committee was formed after county officials began receiving phone calls from the heads of homeowner associations in the area of Metropolitan Parkway and Schoenherr roads as news of Freedom Hill’s re-opening broke in the spring, according to Deldin. He said it was important to start a dialogue that will be ongoing as the season progresses.

In the past, a county parks and recreation committee oversaw Freedom Hill, but the committee has since been disbanded.

Now, the county executive office is solely responsible for the facility, Hackel said.
“It’s not the city, it’s not the county, I am responsible for the park and its contractual agreements for that facility,” Hackel said.
Support Medicaid expansion

Monday, May 20, 2013

As Macomb County Commissioners working to maintain services that support the well-being of the residents in our community, we would like to urge the Michigan Legislature to expand Medicaid as part of the state’s 2014-15 budget.

Services assisting some of the most vulnerable residents in our community have been sacrificed as state support for Community Mental Health services has been continually reduced in recent years, in turn creating lengthy waiting lists and dramatically limiting access to care for those not currently on Medicaid.

Medicaid expansion will provide health insurance coverage for 450,000 Michigan citizens, including a projected 31,638 uninsured residents in Macomb County. Research indicates that 20 percent, or 90,000 of those 450,000 individuals will experience a mental health or substance use disorder during their adult life. Without health insurance coverage, persons with behavioral health disorders do not seek treatment, or, they end up in emergency room, hospital, or criminal justice settings — which are all more costly and less effective.

In addition, the number of persons with private health insurance coverage in Michigan has fallen during the past several years, and newly created lower wage jobs typically do not provide access to affordable health insurance coverage through employers. Many of the individuals in these jobs will qualify for Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act expansion provisions.

Lastly, Medicaid expansion will also save the state money, stimulate the county economy, and create jobs — all without having to provide matching dollars. Michigan will receive 100 percent federal funding for the expansion population who enrolls in the first three years. Michigan will also gain 18,000 new jobs and $2.1 billion in new economic activity as a result of expansion. In Macomb County, new enrollments will result in an estimated
additional annual spending total of $64 million in 2014 and approximately $163 million by 2020, according to the Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation.

Expansion is clearly the right choice to facilitate the wellness of our residents and local economy.

Macomb County Commissioners David Flynn, Toni Moceri, Fred Miller, Veronica Klinefelt, Marvin Sauger, Bob Smith, Kathy Tocco, Michael Boyle and Robert Mijac.
Crews to begin work on pipeline

Construction is about to begin on an underground pipeline that will cut a nine-mile swath through Oakland and Macomb counties and ultimately carry a natural gas byproduct to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario.

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Carabelli said Sunoco representatives will attend a public meeting of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners Tuesday to further discuss the pipeline project.
Volunteers from Shelby Township to be Honored

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners will recognize volunteers from Shelby Township, and the county, during a meeting Thursday.

By Edward Cardenas  May 21, 2013

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners will honor volunteers from a variety of organizations, groups, schools and more from Shelby Township and beyond during the full Board meeting May 23 in Mount Clemens.

Each person that will be honored donated at least 153 hours to volunteer activities in 2012, according to a release.

"Volunteers play a very important role in our community by generously stepping up to serve their neighbors wherever help is needed without expecting anything in return," said Board of Commissioners Chair David Flynn, in a release. "Each year, I am impressed and inspired by the amount of hard work and dedication that these volunteers put forth for the greater good of their community. The Board and I are thankful for all that they do."

The Board of Commissioners meets at 7 p.m. Thursday on the 9th floor of the Macomb County Administration Building, 1 S. Main, Mount Clemens.

Among the local volunteers to be recognized include:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Community</th>
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<td>300</td>
<td>Shelby Township</td>
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<td>Geraldine Mclaas</td>
<td>Henry Ford Macomb Hospital</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>Shelby Township</td>
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<td>Bill Miskokomon</td>
<td>Charter Township of Shelby</td>
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<td>Judy Noonan</td>
<td>Isaac Montfort Elementary School</td>
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May 21, 2013

Pipeline replacement project planned in Macomb County

By Christina Hall
Detroit Free Press Staff Writer

Macomb County commissioners heard a presentation Tuesday about a pipeline replacement project from Rochester Hills to Shelby Township.

The project by Sunoco Pipeline L.P., a subsidiary of Sunoco Logistics, is to replace existing pipeline sections with thicker walled pipes to improve reliability and safety, according to a company presentation. The pipeline ships liquefied petroleum gas products, such as ethane, as part of a larger system.

The project includes replacing an approximately nine-mile-long section between M-59 and 26 Mile road along an existing 40-foot wide pipeline right-of-way. The area is within Rochester Hills, Rochester and Shelby Township.

Existing eight-inch pipe is to be replaced by new eight-inch pipe and buried at a minimum of three feet. Restoration of land within the pipeline replacement area is to include fences, sod and other needed property repair.

The project is to run from May through July with work being done from 7 a.m.-5 p.m., seven days a week. Crews are expected to be on a property for a week at most. A restoration crew is to follow not more than a week behind the work crew, according to the presentation.
Pipeline will disrupt residential neighborhoods

Tuesday, May 21, 2013
By FRANK DeFRANK

Construction is about to begin on an underground pipeline that will cut a 9-mile swath through Oakland and Macomb counties and ultimately carry a natural gas by-product to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario.

Mariner West is the name of the project commissioned by Sunoco Logistics. The pipeline, which originates in western Pennsylvania, will traverse Rochester Hills and the city of Rochester in Oakland County, and Shelby Township in Macomb County. Work is scheduled to get under way this month and is expected to conclude in July.

"We will be using existing pipeline and easements through the majority of the project," Joseph McGinn, senior manager for public affairs for Sunoco. "However, we will be replacing a 9-mile section of the pipe, part of which is located in Shelby Township."

Residents whose properties lay within the pipeline’s easement will see work crews dig up the land for removal of old pipe and installation of the new line. Company officials have vowed to restore damaged land in its entirety, including fences, sod and other repairs.

"The pipeline will be replaced along the route following local, state and federal permitting requirements along the 9-mile stretch," company officials wrote in a fact sheet describing Mariner West. "In all cases, Sunoco Logistics shall take every measure possible to keep work activities limited to the 40-foot right-of-way as defined by the existing easements with property owners."

Although the line travels approximately 78 miles in Michigan, only the section in Shelby Township will result in new construction, Sunoco officials said.

The route of a separate pipeline under construction by another company, Enbridge, also will take it through northern Macomb County. But that project is largely through rural areas. That’s not the case with Mariner West.

"This one typically goes through residential neighborhoods, next to a lake ... it’s more intrusive," said Macomb County Commissioner James Carabelli, R-Shelby Township, one of a trio of elected officials who met with Sunoco representatives.

A segment of the line in Shelby Township runs beneath the Eisenhower High School campus, school officials confirmed.

Don Brown, a Macomb County commissioner from Washington Township, represents much of northern Macomb County. He was among those who met with the company to discuss the work and the inconvenience it will cause.

"We had our concerns," Brown said. "We wanted to make sure they were communicating with the residents."
Brown described the meeting with Sunoco officials as positive.

"So far, we feel really good about it," he said. "They don't want any trouble. They want everything to go smoothly."

According to Sunoco, the pipeline runs from a town called Houston in western Pennsylvania, north to Youngstown, Ohio and across the Buckeye state to Toledo.

The pipeline then crosses into Michigan and through Romulus and Inkster before it reaches Oakland and Macomb counties. The pipeline also crosses Washington, Ray and Lenox townships, and Richmond on its way into St. Clair County before it reaches the refineries in Canada.

When Mariner West is fully operational, the line will carry up to 50,000 barrels daily of ethane, a natural gas liquid similar to propane, McGinn said. Ethane is used by the petrochemical industry in the manufacture of products like plastics.

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Mark Hackel Advocates a More Regional Focus
Michigan Chronicle, 5/22/13
Written by Patrick Keating/Chronicle Staff

If there is one issue Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel would like to see discussed at the Mackinac Policy Conference, it is regional focus.
"In other words, how do we brand the region?" he asked, saying he deals with the same question at the county level.
Macomb is comprised of 27 varying municipalities. Hackel's job is to figure out how to brand the county — based upon the unique assets of the individual communities within it — so that people get a perspective of what the county is all about.
He believes the same concept should be expanded to the region, because Southeast Michigan is competing with other regions throughout the world for resources, assets and attractions.
"We have some unique things in this region that we don't cross-promote as regional leaders," Hackel said, adding that they need to figure out how to come together to get people to understand the importance of this region.
He also noted that Macomb and the region are ignoring the recreational opportunities and quality of life assets that also are economic opportunities.
"Lake St. Clair and the Clinton River," he said. "It's the mainstream main street."
Hackel's eighth floor office overlooks the Clinton River, which he said ties into Oakland County.
"How do we make that connectivity as regional partners?" he asked.
He said the Clinton River runs through Mt. Clemens, and asked why there isn't a vibrant downtown, with investment from the private sector building on that riverfront.
"How come we don't see canoe rentals?" he asked.
He also said the Clinton River is greater in size than "little creeks" that have been developed by other states.
Hackel said that near the mouth of the Clinton River, there are businesses, such as restaurants, where people on the river can stop.
But these are far fewer than there once were. There used to be a great boating industry, with riverboats coming up and down the Clinton River all the way into Mt. Clemens.
He asked why they don't do that now.
"Did we ignore it? Did we not realize? Did we not capitalize on it?" he said.
He also wonders why the region doesn't play off of the "Pure Michigan" promotions, which he called great branding for the state.
"You've got the Detroit River, you've got the Clinton River, you've got the St. Clair River, you've got Lake St. Clair, which is the busiest freshwater lake in the entire country during the summer months," he said.
He emphasized that Macomb County has 31.5 miles of a coast line and 41 miles of a river running right through the county.
He is, however, playing off the "Pure Michigan" branding in Macomb County.
"And we're making some huge advancements with our Planning Department and our Water Resources Advisory Council, to do just that," he said.
Many towns have riverfronts, but don't have access by boat. On the other hand, they have huge development opportunities.
"Because people just like to locate around water," Hackel said, adding that he's kayaked the Clinton River from Yates Cider Mill on down.
"You're just looking at trees," he said. "You think you're up north somewhere."
Where is there development along this riverfront?
“It’s a tremendous opportunity for them to have that same kind of environment where people are saying, ‘We’re going to grab something to eat’ or ‘We’re going to go to that restaurant.’”

Hackel mentioned that Utica is probably the closest thing Macomb County has to that right now; there are restaurants, bars and trails all along the riverfront. Hackel also said there’s more boating and fishing activity, more marinas and more sporting opportunities on Lake St. Clair than elsewhere.

“In fact, it’s been recognized as the greatest bass fishing lake on the entire planet,” he said, adding that the “Super Bowl” of fishing tournaments — the 2013 Bassmaster Elite Series — is coming to Lake St. Clair.

One of the forums at the Mackinac conference will focus on is the role the private sector plays in urban development. Asked what he’d want conference attendees to know about private sector development in Macomb County, Hackel said a great example of such development is what’s happening in downtown Detroit.

He praised George Jackson and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, calling the DEGC a great example. He’d like to mirror that in Macomb County.

“How do you let the private sector come in and figure out what do we need to do to drive economic development and opportunities within the County?” Hackel asked, pointing out that all the various planning departments have their separate rules about how people get permits.

He mentioned how they “pull it together” to let the private sector have more of a say in helping to make those things happen.

Hackel said that because there’s such a hunger for new development and investment in Detroit, city leaders are accommodating the needs of the private sector developers and investors. He believes Macomb County needs to start looking at doing the same thing.

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano cited municipal finance as the main issue he’d want discussed at Mackinac. Asked if Macomb County is weathering things better than Wayne County in that respect, Hackel said it’s a balance.

He said we’re over-governed to begin with, and asked if we need all these various police departments, different dispatch centers and different school districts.

“The question becomes, is that a reason why a lot of the tax dollars are being dispersed among many entities?” he asked. “Is there a way of capturing those dollars that are out there, to consolidate, and do more with less?”

As an example, he said Macomb is creating a unique dispatch center that can take on every municipality in the county.

Asked if he’d have welcomed the county-wide dispatch center when he was sheriff, Hackel said he’d have welcomed it. It’s something they’ve been talking about for well over 20 years, he said, and that in 10 years of his talking about it as sheriff, nobody would listen.

When he became county executive in 2011, it was one of the first things he worked on. “I pulled people together and said, ‘Let’s do it for our needs, internally,’” he said.

“Because there were separate silos within county government that were doing the same darn thing.”

He said when they created it, it was with the mindset that they weren’t going to force municipalities to do it.

“But when they start realizing money is tight from the revenues and that tax structure, and they’ve got to start giving up certain things, one of those is going to be dispatch.” He added that it’s already happening. Sterling Heights and Clinton Township are on board, and Shelby Township is talking about it.

He also said there will be a far greater level of service from this enhanced facility in dispatching alone.
Hackel was elected Macomb's first county executive in 2010. Mayor Bing attended his first State of the County address in 2011, the first time a regional leader was in attendance at such an event.

"And the reason he came here was because he realized, early on, how much of an impact we’re trying to make in promoting the city of Detroit," he said, adding the major sporting venues and the urban center in Detroit add tremendous value to Macomb county.

"And we want to make sure they understand how we add value to what goes on in the city of Detroit," he said.

Last year, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano joined Bing as attendees.

"Never before have we ever had a regional leader come to State of the County address in Macomb County," Hackel reiterated. "And within two years, we have all of them coming together as we’re cross-promoting one another."

Hackel said he’s not interested in partisan politics, and that he doesn’t care about the bantering going on in Washington or Lansing. His job is to figure out how to succeed as a region, noting that if the region succeeds, so does the state.

But it’s not just him, he pointed out.

"Our staffs, whether it’s IT, finance departments or planning departments, are working together to try to figure out, ‘How do we lift the region up?’ So Macomb is making it regional."

Asked what Macomb County’s best kept secret is, Hackel said they always talk about blue collar and automotive, but unique high tech jobs are being offered in the county.

"The research and development that occurs in Macomb County, particularly in that corridor or cluster that we have in the city of Sterling Heights and in the city of Warren, many people don’t realize and they don’t understand."

He cited the defense industry as an example, saying billions of dollars are invested in the county in defense.

"I would never have guessed that as the sheriff," he said, adding that Macomb County is the defense capital of the Midwest.

He said 600 companies that do defense work in Michigan are located in Macomb county. He also said they sometimes lose sight of the fact that Macomb also has a huge agricultural industry, particularly on the north end.
May 22, 2013

Falcon chicks atop Macomb County building named Wayne, Oakland

By Christina Hall
Detroit Free Press Staff Writer

It’s a boy — times two!

Two approximately 20-day-old white and gray peregrine falcon chicks got their moment in the spotlight today, squawking up a storm as they were banded and named at the old Macomb County building in Mt. Clemens.

Wayne and Oakland — named by Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel in honor of Macomb’s regional county partners — put their best yellow legs forward as they received two bands, one on each leg.

Their parents, Nick and Hathor, which have had successful nests atop the building since 2008, flew around outside as their chicks were carefully handled by wildlife experts on the 11th floor of the high-rise just inside from their outdoor nest. Hackel gently petted the top of Oakland’s head.

Hathor continued to squawk as photographers took pictures of her and her chicks after the babies were returned to the yellow brick and rock nest the couple made on a ledge.

“This is a classic example of success,” said Tim Payne, southeast region supervisor for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The falcons are two of five that hatched in Macomb County. A third hatched at the old county building, but as sometimes happens in nature, it died. Two other chicks that hatched at Campbell Ewald in Warren are to be banded and named June 5, wildlife experts said.

Peregrine falcons are endangered in Michigan.

The Warren nest is one of two new ones in the region. The other is Detroit. Twenty-one chicks have hatched to date.

At 18 days old, a peregrine falcon chick’s legs are fully grown. Then, they can be banded, Payne said. The band on the left leg is a colorful one — in Wayne and Oakland’s cases black over red — with information that can be read over one mile away with special spotting binoculars. The band on the right leg is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife band.

“You can talk, it’s OK,” Payne told a squawking Wayne during the banding process.

The next critical period for all the chicks is when they are learning to fly. If they survive the first year, Payne said, their success rate is high.
Hackel passes on session with county board

Wednesday, May 22, 2013 9:21 PM EDT

By CHAD SELWESKI
For The Oakland Press

The honeymoon might be over between Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel and the county Board of Commissioners as the Hackel administration boycotted a Wednesday board session scheduled to retroactively approve 124 government contracts valued at $82 million.

The 13-member board convened on an emergency basis to scrutinize the contracts solely approved by Hackel over a 1-year period while a nasty court fight ensued over the commissioners' right to review and approve all contracts and purchases of more than $35,000, and all construction projects in excess of $100,000.

The board successfully engaged in an override of a Hackel veto of the contracts/purchasing plan and a court fight initiated by the executive ended with a resounding victory for the board in the state Court of Appeals.

The Wednesday boycott was based on a Hackel administration insistence that the board's after-the-fact effort to review contracts was "much ado about nothing" since some of the contracts had been in place for more than a year without incident.

Commissioner Fred Miller agreed with the board's independent counsel that the disputed contracts had been tossed into a "never-never land" and never received proper public scrutiny.

"If we had not prevailed, these contracts would never have seen the light of day and never would have been available for public scrutiny, albeit belated," said the Mount Clemens Democrat.

"We ... have scored a victory for transparency."

County board Chairman Dave Flynn was adamant that the board had to step in to prevent lawsuits by potential vendors — unsuccessful bidders on contracts — who might claim that they were victimized by a faulty system that did not comply with the appeals court ruling.

"The wrench that was thrown into this was that the Office of the County Executive declined to participate" in the Wednesday session, said Flynn, a Sterling Heights Democrat. "It's unfortunate and disappointing."

Hackel countered that the board was again engaging in "old-school" efforts to maintain the type of control over county government that it enjoyed before voter approval of the county charter.

He said there was no reason to send an entourage of department heads to the board meeting to endure a lengthy session where discussion focused on existing, ongoing contracts that had faced no criticism from anyone and were deemed valid by a team of county lawyers.
“If they decide that they want to increase tensions or demonstrate animosity toward me because of this, if they want this to be punitive, that’s up to them,” said the executive, a Macomb Township Democrat. Assistant Executive Al Lorenzo emphasized that the first step in the judicial process resulted in an injunction blocking the board’s policy issued by Macomb Circuit Judge John Foster. That put the contracts signed by Hackel on solid legal ground, until the appellate court ruled and changed the rules of the game, Lorenzo said.

Flynn and Hackel had pledged a new era of cooperation and a cordial relationship between the executive and legislative branches at the start of the new year. After two years of infighting, with officials and administrators reluctantly adjusted to the new charter/executive form of government that took effect on Jan. 1, 2011, it appeared that the divisions were settled.

But, when asked on Wednesday if the “honeymoon was over,” Flynn could only offer this: “I hope not.”

Many of the contracts in question were routine or were already presented to the board for a brief overview, but others were significant in dollar amounts or subject matter.

The contracts signed by Hackel, while the issue of the approval process was argued in the courts, included:

- Nearly $60 million in agreements with local communities to provide Sheriff’s Department patrols.
- More than $11 million in road projects, with most contracts reached with the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- Two pacts of nearly $1 million total with county Medical Examiner Daniel Spitz, one to operate the county morgue and another to provide additional services as a contractor through his outside business, Spitz Pathology Group.
- Maintenance of the county’s drinking water monitoring equipment.
- Improvements at the Nicholson Nature Center, located along the north branch of the Clinton River in Clinton Township, which included a boardwalk, pavilion, lookout and bridges.
- Several Community Corrections Department programs to provide substance abuse treatment to non-violent criminal offenders, plus ankle-tether services and home-arrest technology.
- Millions of dollars in prisoner food services at the county jail.
- A $295,000 sale of a county-owned former bank building in downtown Mount Clemens that became a failed nightclub and was sold to the Thomas Hospitality Group for a second shot at turning the architecturally significant structure into a successful bar.

Most of the contracts received routine approval or were “received and filed” at Wednesday’s meeting.

The entire process lasted about 45 minutes.

The one exception was the two Spitz contracts, which will likely face intense scrutiny in the coming months.

Lorenzo said the board’s relatively brief dispatch of 124 contracts was telling.

“Just because the board wants to question something,” Lorenzo said, “doesn’t make it right or necessary or practical.