

the review

September / October 2018

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

Save



City

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The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

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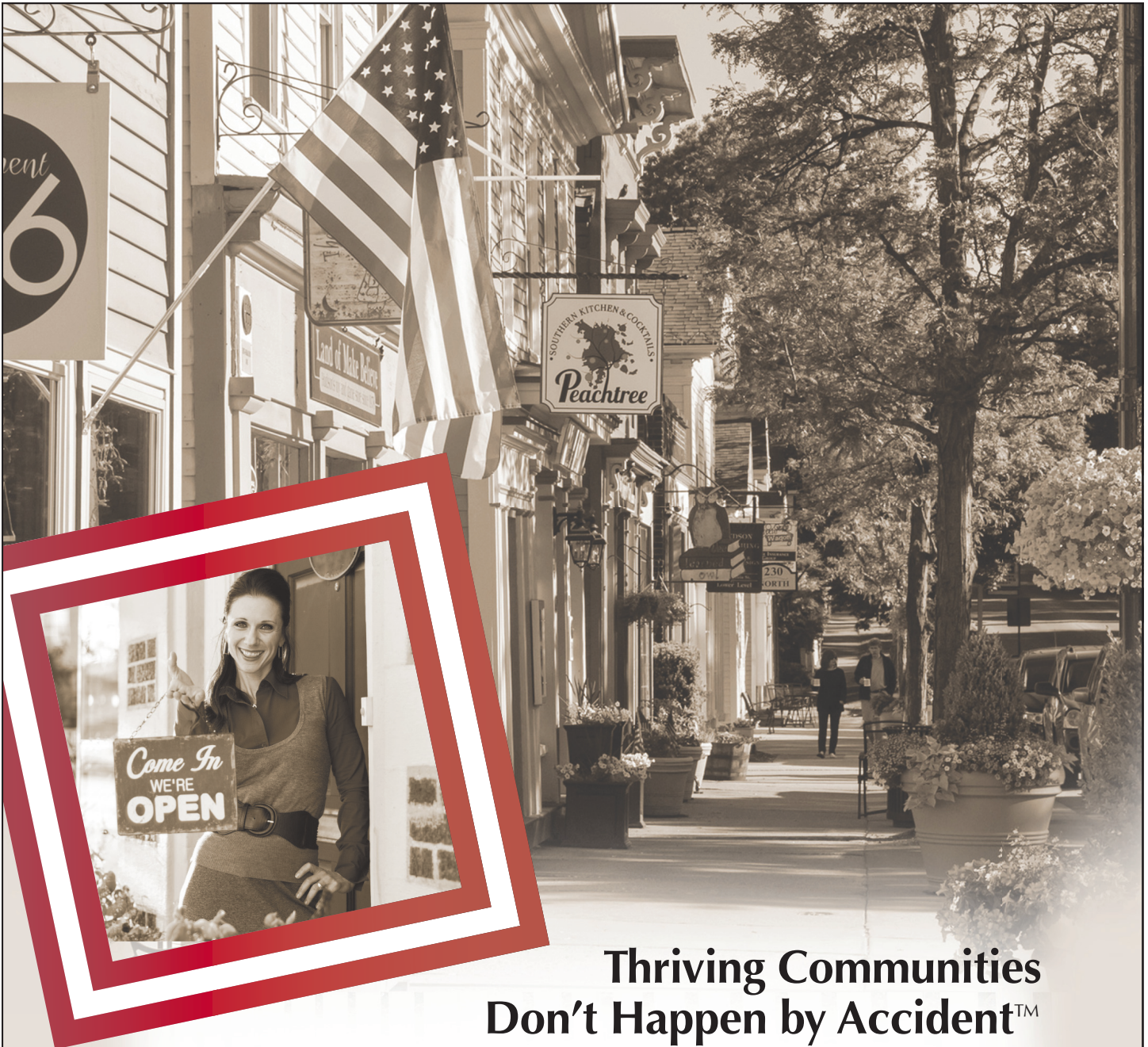
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COVER SaveMI City

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the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 91, Number 5

We love where you live.

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.

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Please recycle this magazine

State, State, and Restate

Remember the movie *Groundhog Day* back in the early '90s? If so, while reading my column on our SaveMICity initiative you might feel a bit like Bill Murray, who played the weatherman—you're experiencing an endless loop of the same information. However, be forewarned: We are in this for the long haul. A notable amount of the League's focus and efforts have been going into this advocacy effort, and we will continue to do so until we see some significant reform in our municipal finance structure.

Unfortunately, partisan politics often take over, which deter meaningful discussions and compromises and lead to partial fixes without any real structural change. I've said it a hundred times, and I'm going to say it a hundred more: We have an outdated 20th century finance system that does not meet the needs of the 21st century. The past couple years we've made some progress, but we have a considerable way to go before we can declare a major victory.

How can our communities build sustainable economies when over \$8.1 billion have been diverted from local government to fund state bureaucracy? Surveys show that 86 percent of residents prefer that their taxes be spent locally to solve local problems. They are willing to spend money when it is invested in their own communities. What we need are state policies that allow local units of government the power to raise local or regional taxes to fund targeted projects.

It all goes back to investing in our communities and talent. Michigan continues to lose college grads at alarming rates—almost 40 percent move to other states. If businesses are considering locating in Michigan, they need the talent. But it doesn't take long driving over our roads and bridges to see the state's disinvestment. In fact, Michigan is dead last in spending for infrastructure and crucial services. This is not a "Welcome to Doing Business in Michigan" message.

Sure, we experienced another summer of endless construction zones, detours, and delays, but in The Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC)'s 2017 Michigan Roads and Bridges Annual Report, the news isn't encouraging. Seventeen thousand lane miles

(out of 165,000) were submitted by road agencies. Almost 50 percent of these roads were found to be in poor condition. Although it is not known if the roads that were rated represent a valid statistical sample, the report goes on to say that it is probably safe to assume that, as a class, non-federal-aid roads are in worse condition than federal-aid roads.

To intensify our efforts, in May we launched a newly expanded SaveMICity at the Mackinac Policy Conference on Mackinac Island. We're calling it SaveMICity 2.0. Matt Bach, director of communications for the League, provides a preview of what that all means. It's vitally important that we engage not only our members, but residents and the business community, as well. We are broadening our social media reach through SaveMICity, Facebook, and Twitter pages, and we encourage you to join in this important conversation.

Despite the financial challenges and obstacles, communities around the state are demonstrating tremendous initiative and innovation. Grand Rapids has clearly shown that it can drive business growth through investing in place. The city has created an entrepreneurial business climate that has received national recognition as the second-best city in the country for new small businesses. Mt. Pleasant is finding innovative ways to connect business owners with potential customers, and Northern Michigan University has created a collaborative "Idea Incubator" to help people launch products or business concepts. Check out these stories and be inspired!

Lastly, our annual Convention is almost here. We look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids. You'll have a great chance to get an on-the-ground look at why the city is receiving national recognition. And for the first time, the League and the Michigan Association of Planning are joining forces to hold their conventions together. It will be a powerful learning experience and networking opportunity. Don't miss out!

Daniel P. Gilmartin

Daniel P. Gilmartin
League executive director and CEO
734.669.6302; dpg@mml.org



An aerial photograph of a city at dusk. In the foreground, a wide river flows through the center, with two large, multi-arched concrete bridges crossing it. The bridges are crowded with people, and cars are visible on the upper bridge. To the left, a modern glass skyscraper stands prominently, reflecting the sky. Other buildings of various architectural styles line the riverbanks. In the background, a blue truss bridge spans the river, and the city extends into a hilly landscape under a twilight sky.

INVESTING IN PLACE

The Power of Place in Economic Development

By Tim Mroz

“Over the past decade, the value of place and quality of life criteria rose to one of the top 10 factors for CEOs and site selectors when evaluating communities.”



Placemaking. Vibrancy. Quality of life. Call it what you will, but creating an attractive, inclusive community rich in talent and ideas is becoming a vital part of any successful economic development strategy.

Over the past decade, the value of place and quality of life criteria rose to one of the top 10 factors for CEOs and site selectors when evaluating communities. Companies are looking to locate and expand in communities that provide a quality place to complement quality careers.

Today, making a strong business case for a company to expand or locate in West Michigan is only part of the total package. Every economic development project starts with a solid business case, but it often ends with the quality of the community and its ability to attract and retain talent for growing businesses.

A powerful example of the balance between business case and quality of life is the recent attraction of Las Vegas-based Switch to Gaines Charter Township in southeast Kent County.

Switch Comes to West Michigan

In the fall of 2015, executive leadership from Switch quietly traveled to Grand Rapids to evaluate a possible site for the company's next \$5 billion data center. When the leadership team confidentially met with the real estate partner involved in the project, no other hosts were there to represent the community.

Before the visit, the company's founder, Rob Roy, wondered how in a "small" city like Grand Rapids, seemingly every hotel was fully booked. When the Switch team arrived, it became instantly clear.

Their visit happened to coincide with the annual ArtPrize event in Grand Rapids.

The downtown sidewalks were filled with people experiencing ArtPrize. Boom! Just like that, the international art competition, which attracts over 500,000 people to the downtown area for 19 days each year, captured the attention of Switch leadership in a way that no other business case could.

The experience made an impression. The team immediately saw that Grand Rapids is not your typical Midwestern "flyover" city.

The result? Representatives from Switch expressed that their visit impacted the company's decision to locate in West Michigan. The vibrancy of the city, the spectacle of ArtPrize, and the community's collaborative spirit played a key role in what would become a game-changing economic development project for the entire region.

Fast forward to the next year. Switch became a corporate sponsor of ArtPrize, working with the organization to create the ArtPrize STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) Village. The STEAM Village transforms the ArtPrize HUB soundstage into a learning lab, with experiential stations featuring Switch-funded Planet3 and Code.org software demonstrations, a virtual reality painting experience, and tinkering stations.

"The partnership of Switch and ArtPrize creates the perfect environment for bringing our passion around STEAM educational opportunities to life through hands-on immersive experiences and truly capturing the blend of technology with the creativity of art," said Switch executive vice president of strategy, Adam Kramer. "ArtPrize's investment in the development of educational programs like the STEAM Village powered by Switch are an outstanding addition to the local community and the type of economic development partnership that we are proud to support."

Talent and Placemaking

It's not a coincidence that Switch's first major community investment since locating in West Michigan focuses on talent. Talent is the new currency of economic development, and communities with the most talent currency are winning the global battle for jobs and investment. Today's in-demand talent is drawn to communities that offer a vibrant quality of life and attractive public spaces.

The equation is simple. Talent is drawn to vibrant places and growing businesses are clamoring for that talent. A community that invests in vibrant, inclusive places and quality of life is well positioned to attract both growing businesses and the talent those businesses desperately seek.

This equation is working in Grand Rapids and West Michigan. Today, we are one of Michigan's fastest growing communities. We've built a 21st century city that thinks big, works hard, and offers an exceptionally high quality of life. The diversity of our residents, investments in neighborhoods, and unique neighborhood business districts create a distinctive experience for Grand Rapidsians that is unlike anywhere else in Michigan.

As our community vision is translated into reality over the next five to 10 years, few places in America will offer such a dynamic quality of place experience in the heart of a thriving, safe, and stable major urban community.



Our collaborative work in placemaking is leading to national recognition:


- #10 Best Cities to Start a Career, by WalletHub
- #1 place that Millennials are flocking to in the U.S. to get a job, buy a home, and start a life, by *Business Insider*
- #2 out of 25 U.S. Cities That Millennials Can Afford—and Actually Want to Live in, by *The Penny Hoarder*
- *Outside Magazine* named Grand Rapids “Best River Town” in The 25 Best Towns of 2017 list
- #2 Best Place to be a Millennial, by Trulia.com
- #3 Leading Locations in the U.S., by *Area Development Magazine*

The investments we are making as a community in our river, public spaces, and area attractions will continue to pay economic dividends for decades to come. This is why The Right Place engages in a range of regional initiatives—promoting diversity and inclusion, improving public schools, developing affordable living options, and inspiring a world-class arts and culture scene.

Bringing it all together is our spirit of collaboration. Grand Rapids is a city that works together—both private and public sectors—to solve problems and invest in growth. Private-public partnerships like The Right Place, Inc. and Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. are examples of how business and community leaders are coming together to drive Grand Rapids forward. Over the past several decades, business and community leaders of Grand Rapids have redefined collaboration and its impact on our placemaking vision. Today, the city and its businesses are a model of collaboration that attracts international attention and inquiry.

In Grand Rapids, we see the value and importance place has on long-term economic growth. It’s all around us—from arts and culture, to local food, craft beverages, sports, leisure, and access to lakes and rivers. Throughout West Michigan, communities are working together, creating a place experience that grows and inspires the talent our businesses need to drive economic prosperity.

About The Right Place

The Right Place, Inc. is a regional nonprofit economic development organization supported through investments from the private and public sector. Our mission is to drive current and long-term economic prosperity in West Michigan. For more information visit: www.rightplace.org. 

Tim Mroz is the vice president, marketing and communications, for The Right Place, Inc. You may reach him at 616.301.6791 or MrozT@rightplace.org.

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**HOW CAN YOU PREDICT
THE LEGAL RISKS YOUR
COMMUNITY MIGHT FACE?**

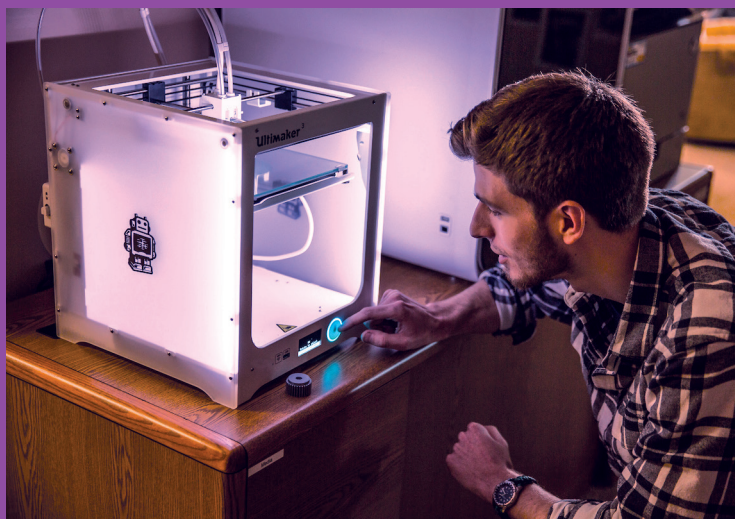
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ANSWER ON PAGE 37

“... came up with a clear goal: to be able to accommodate any idea, whether it be high tech, low tech. or no tech, all in one place.”

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER OF MAKERSPACES

By Kristen Alden & BJ Alden



Invent@NMU is an idea incubator powered by students and led by professionals. The City of Marquette, Northern Michigan University, Innovate Marquette SmartZone (IMQT), and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) have all pulled together to create a makerspace to foster entrepreneurship and empower people to turn their one big idea into a reality.

It is a space for community members to bring their ideas and receive step-by-step support to carefully develop a concept or invention into a new product or business and, when appropriate, launch it; a valuable community capability that directly leads to more jobs.

Four years ago, Invent@NMU's founding director and serial entrepreneur, David Ollila, noticed there were many people in the U.P. with good ideas, but nowhere to go to see them realized. He saw an opportunity through Northern Michigan University to give the community a central place and process to bring their ideas, as well as diversify and expand the economy of a rural area whose driving forces of growth were historically tied to mining, forestry, and defense.

Ollila defines U.P. ingenuity as “figuring out how to do something when you're in a somewhat disconnected area geographically.” Invent's current executive director, Ray Johnson, says, “U.P. ideas are practical and solve real problems. It seemed like the right idea for the right demographic.”

A Supportive Process

Since its inception in 2014, Invent@NMU has seen more than 360 ideas come through its doors. That's a new idea every three business days.

While that steady stream of activity is a win in itself, not every idea is viable to become a product or launch a business. Is it a product that has an advantage in the marketplace? Invent helps the entrepreneur vet their idea and determine if it's capable of succeeding. This vetting is a fee-based process, but is kept affordable to encourage community members to participate.

The Invent@NMU team believes every idea is worth exploring and about half, on average, are worth advancing through their innovative five-step process. The pace is very much up to the inventor and how fast they want to move.

Invent@NMU's process starts with a complimentary Quick Explore meeting that determines if there is immediate competition already in the market. From there, the team moves into their Validation step where they search for patents, solicit feedback from their professional advisory panel; involve design students to mock-up the idea; and round out a competitive landscape for the client. Operations and finance administrator Paulette Perttunen reminds us that, “Everyone wants to strive for great, but they don't want great to defeat good.” So, they initially strive for a minimally viable product.

Once everyone is confident in moving forward, the team begins the Ideation phase where they define and refine the product. Project management lead Jason Schaen said this is his favorite phase where “creative minds begin to get really active.” Early prototyping and testing are crucial to this step as they move toward commercialization and prepare the product for manufacturing and the market. Invent@NMU will continue to see the idea through production—with an initial manufacturing run and marketing collateral—all the way through operations, which involves ongoing support of marketing, distribution, and service.

The Invent@NMU doctrine that “all ideas are worth exploring” invites people from all walks of life. “You don’t have to be faculty or a research scientist to launch an idea,” Johnson says. “Perhaps you have an idea you’re unsure of. Here you are encouraged to come forward with it because the team will help you research the market and competitive landscape and take it to the next step under full confidentiality.” It’s this trademark Yooper quality of support for the everyman that truly makes this place unique among makerspaces, accelerators, and incubators.

Finding Success

Johnson defines innovation as “an idea—whether it’s a product or service—that solves a problem in the marketplace that isn’t being addressed. It becomes obvious to the inventor or the entrepreneur.” He gives two extreme examples of innovation with commercial viability representing both high

and low tech out of Michigan’s U.P., and both on their way to market.

One is a cost-effective rocket thruster for satellites invented by a rocket scientist and faculty member at Michigan Tech. Another is a small, simple tool that aids in faster installation of HVAC systems, with less physical burden on the installer. Its inventor, Ron Aho, a sheet metal worker from Marquette, said “Invent@NMU assisted me every step of the way, from designing and fabricating my Tinknocker Tool, to the patent process and marketing. They are knowledgeable in all areas of the process and provide support above and beyond what we ever could’ve expected.”

A Collaborative Team

NMU students get real-world experience—working on current projects with actual clients under real conditions—and building a competitive skill set that does not happen in the classroom. Combining experiential learning with workforce development is a chance for students to put their education to work.

NMU president Dr. Fritz Erickson envisioned a one-stop shop, where you could have the SmartZone and the array of services it provides for technology-based business ideas and entrepreneurs, coupled with this accelerator/incubator for new product and business ideas. He and Ollila came up with a clear goal: to be able to accommodate any idea, whether it be high tech, low tech, or no tech, all in one place.



NMU solely funded the crucial first three years of operation while the program found its legs and proved its value. Gov. Rick Snyder said after a visit to Invent@NMU, "This is about students helping inventors. The inventors walk in with ideas, and the students talk to those inventors about what can be made into real products. It's happening in Marquette today. This is a program that should be throughout Michigan. It's exciting."


In June 2017, NMU received a \$1.15 million grant from the MEDC to put a collaborative operating agreement in place that brought Invent@NMU and Innovate Marquette SmartZone together. Johnson said, "Now we have a team powered by students, led by professionals. The leadership team has many collective years of helping launch businesses over the course of their careers. The students bring a multi-disciplined capability around design, engineering, marketing, and all of the things needed to move an idea forward."

Next Steps

The effort to expand throughout the U.P. is a priority for Invent@NMU. They are in the final stages of design and

development on a kiosk concept—a stand-alone station for libraries or public spaces that encourages people in even more remote areas to submit their ideas. Program manager Rachel Barra said, "Part of the goal of this effort is to find towns that might be interested in having other locations of Invent@NMU, or their own version of helping their community directly with economic development."

City managers from around the northern part of the state have expressed interest in helping their citizens and students access these resources to help launch businesses and innovation.

"We love to see our inventors and entrepreneurs become successful," says Johnson. "That's what drives us." 

Kristen Alden is content strategist and graphic designer at North Coast Post. You may contact her at kristen@northcoastpostmedia.com.

BJ Alden is digital media producer and creative catalyst at North Coast Post. You may contact him at bj@northcoastpostmedia.com.



Attorneys are not created to fit every need

For 20 years we have been assisting local governments with labor relations and employment issues. During this time founder Howard L. Shifman, has represented many cities, counties and townships. He has been involved in legislative initiatives including the drafting of Act 312 and other legislative reference, as well as being recognized by the Michigan Municipal League with a Special Award of Merit for his dedication to the cause of local government.

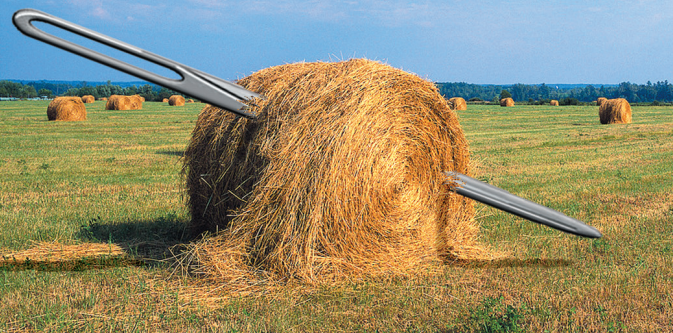
Mr. Shifman is aided by Brandon Fournier who has extensive experience in municipal operations, including both public safety and general municipal operations. Prior to joining the firm, Brandon served as the City Administrator for the City of Southgate.

Also with the firm is Attorney Robert J. Nyovich with over 30 years of experience in public sector labor and employment law. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Nyovich also served previously as a public safety officer and as the Oakland County Undersheriff.

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Where Michigan Governor Candidates Stand on Local Government Issues

The Michigan Municipal League asked the governor candidates to respond to a series of questions related to Michigan communities and here are their responses.



BILL SHUETTE

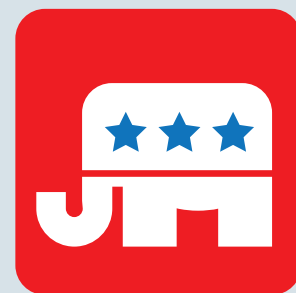
Republican Nominee
for Michigan Governor

My wife, Cynthia,
and I live in Midland,
and are parents to two
children, Heidi and Bill.

From my father, mother
and stepfather, I learned the basic
values of honesty, hard work, the importance of
your word, strength of family, and the need to
give back to your community. Together, Cynthia
and I started the Michigan Harvest Gathering,
a food/fund drive to benefit Michigan's food
banks. Since 1991, the drive has raised more
than \$10 million and collected nearly 10 million
pounds of food.

Before becoming Michigan's 53rd attorney
general in 2010, I served as a judge on the
Michigan Court of Appeals, a state senator
representing the 53rd District, director of
the Michigan Department of Agriculture
and as a United States Congressman.

My experience in state and federal
government means I know how to work with
the Legislature, local leaders and other partners
on needed reforms to advance Michigan.





1. Across America, the strongest economies are aligned with the best places, but in Michigan our fiscal policies have not always reflected that sentiment. Given what we know about the importance of skilled workers being a critical driver of our economy, what community investments would you prioritize to build upon, or change, the state's current effort to attract talent, and job providers, back to Michigan?

Skilled workers are critical to Michigan's economic growth, and I have a plan to address the current shortage. My "Paycheck Training Plan" will restore a healthy balance between career and college preparation in our schools by focusing on apprenticeship programs, parent- and student-led decisions, personalized instruction and regional community partnerships. I will bring together educators, businesses, labor leaders and philanthropists to spark a broad cultural change that makes high-quality career training central to Michigan K-12 education and workforce development.

To incentivize development and attract job providers, we must sharpen every tool in the economic tool box, so Michigan can compete and win again with more jobs and bigger paychecks. Everywhere I go across this state, business owners express the same needs:

- 1.) fewer rules and less regulation, 2.) lower taxes, 3.) quicker turnaround times for permits, and 4) more people to fill jobs. These will be my objectives as governor.



2. Michigan's primary funding mechanism for local government is a state property tax system, but as currently constructed, it does not always mirror regular cycles of economic growth and contraction. As governor, how would your administration work toward building a system in concert with local governments and municipalities that solves this challenge?

Proposal A has protected taxpayers in Michigan and provided relief to many residents who were literally being taxed out of their homes. It has worked as intended.

Changes to Michigan's constitution are very difficult to achieve and must be fully vetted to make sure they are wise. There is a mechanism in place, a Headlee override, which can be used if capped taxable value increases become problematic for local governments.

Lansing can play a helpful role by curbing the number of unfunded mandates imposed on local governments.

3. Over the past two decades, Michigan has diverted more than \$8 billion in revenue sharing from Michigan communities, causing communities to make drastic cuts at the local level in everything from road repairs to police and fire protection. As governor, what would you do to invest in our local communities to help provide the level of services their residents and job providers expect from them?

There isn't a problem facing Michigan today that couldn't be made better if we had more people living and working in Michigan. We need more people filling jobs and contributing the growth that will allow us to invest in better roads and improved infrastructure. We need more boots on the ground and more cranes in the sky in Michigan. Airplane loads of people arrive in places like Austin and Nashville daily and it isn't because of the weather. It is because those states have better economic environments and more opportunity. As governor, I will implement growth-friendly policies that help Michigan compete nationally and rebuild our population. I will cut taxes, lower auto insurance rates, and improve our third grade reading scores to make our state a more attractive place to live, work, start a business and raise a family.



4. Infrastructure for local communities continues to be top of mind for Michigan citizens. How do you define local community infrastructure needs and how would you prioritize the repair of our crumbling infrastructure to promote healthy local economies and vibrant communities?

Few people travel our two peninsulas and 83 counties more than I. We've got too many potholes, and it hits drivers right in the wallet for car repairs. I understand the dire need for better roads. We can't have a first-world economy with third-world roads. More than anything, we need to grow our economy to increase state revenue, but my plan to rebuild Michigan's infrastructure also includes:

- Top-to-bottom audit of the transportation department (MDOT) to make sure we get more "miles paved per gallon."
- Stronger, enforced guarantees and warranties on roads and bridges.
- Making sure Michigan gets its fair share of funds from Washington, DC.
- Using the savings from the repealed prevailing wage law to fund roads.
- Finally, we have a \$57 billion state budget! We need to re-prioritize how we spend this money, and roads will be one of my top priorities.



5. Legacy costs continue to stress municipal budgets, but contrary to popular opinion, local governments have very few tools at their disposal to address the problem. What steps would you propose to address this daunting challenge so our communities can meet and fund these obligations without jeopardizing existing services?

The solvency of our municipalities is best improved by growing our population and our economy. With more people living, working, and paying taxes in Michigan we will have more resources to solve this problem, and many others.





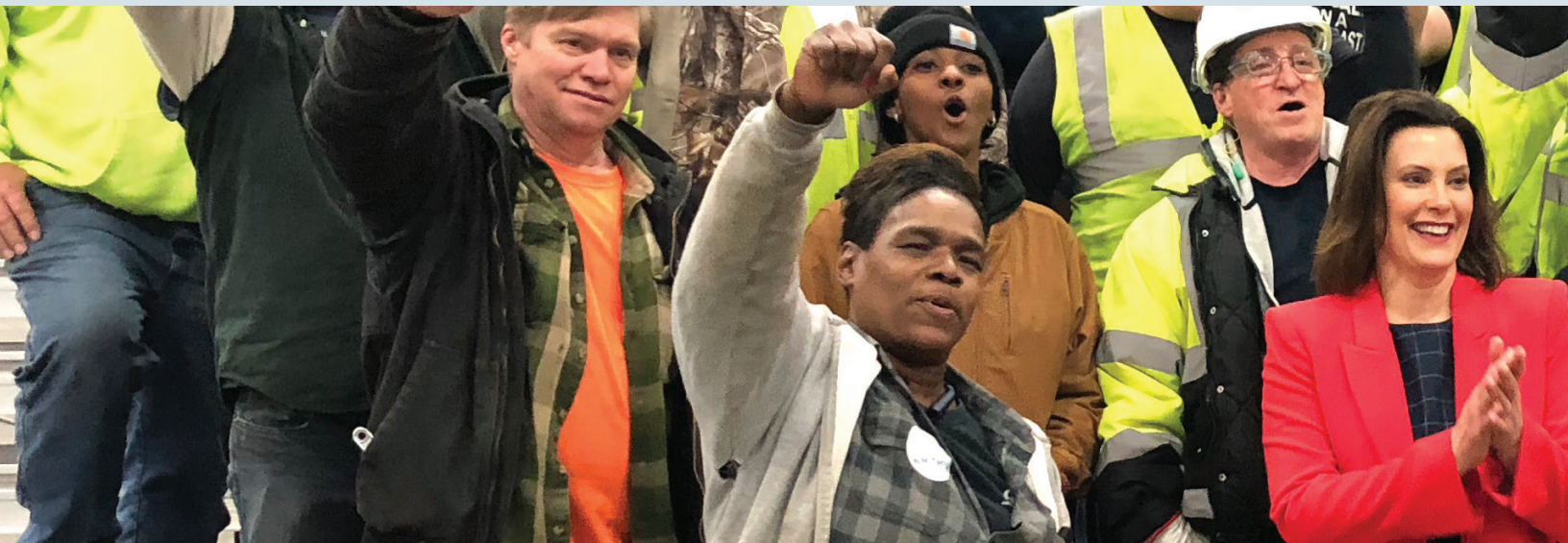
GRETCHEN WHITMER

Democratic Nominee
for Michigan Governor

I love Michigan. I'm a proud lifelong Michigander, but when I look around at the Michigan my kids are growing up in, it hardly resembles the state I think of when I talk about my Michigan pride. Michigan needs a governor who knows how to solve the problems Michiganders are facing right now.



I'm no stranger to tough fights. As Senate Democratic Leader, I negotiated with Republicans to expand health care to more than 680,000 Michiganders through Healthy Michigan. As governor, I'm going to focus on getting things done that will actually make a difference in people's lives right now, like fixing our roads, raising household incomes, and making sure every community has clean, safe drinking water.



1. Across America, the strongest economies are aligned with the best places, but in Michigan our fiscal policies have not always reflected that sentiment. Given what we know about the importance of skilled workers being a critical driver of our economy, what community investments would you prioritize to build upon, or change, the state's current effort to attract talent, and job providers, back to Michigan?

- In year one, I will unleash the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and pursue a 52-week Jobs Blitz. We will adopt a forward-thinking MEDC philosophy with a real plan to help Michigan compete in future economies. My administration will take a proactive and holistic approach to economic development to establish an environment where entrepreneurs can create more good-paying jobs.
- My administration will invest in placemaking to create more vibrant communities that can attract the kind of talented workforce our businesses need to grow and create jobs. Strategically placing parks where residents can enjoy them measurably increases productivity in the local economy, lowers crime rates, and improves public health.
- Additionally, my jobs plan includes a two-year talent investment in our workforce, more pathways to skilled trades training, and a reconnect program for adults. The better our talent pipeline is, the more employers will want to come to Michigan.

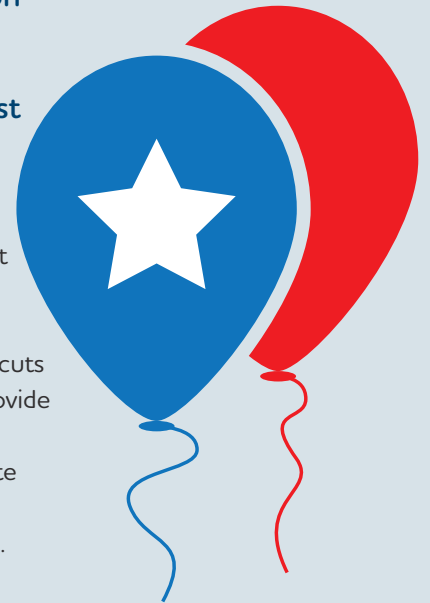
2. Michigan's primary funding mechanism for local government is a state property tax system, but as currently constructed, it does not always mirror regular cycles of economic growth and contraction. As governor, how would your administration work toward building a system in concert with local governments and municipalities that solves this challenge?

Our current system is antiquated and ineffective. The caps in the current law prevent local governments from benefiting from economic growth and slows their rebound by limiting the growth of public services. As governor, I will push for revisions that provide opportunities for local governments to diversify their revenue streams, benefit from local economic growth, and recover more quickly from a recession. My administration will work to permit local governments to implement new revenue solutions, like a lost potential assessment on undeveloped or vacant property. This would incentivize land speculators to make use of their assets, or sell them to someone who will. We must give our cities fiscally responsible options to address blight and the lack of affordable housing.



3. Over the past two decades, Michigan has diverted more than \$8 billion in revenue sharing from Michigan communities, causing communities to make drastic cuts at the local level in everything from road repairs to police and fire protection. As governor, what would you do to invest in our local communities to help provide the level of services their residents and job providers expect from them?

The cuts to local governments have cost Michigan dearly and cost us population and tax base. During my time in the Legislature I stood up for local governments and fought budgets from Gov. Snyder and legislative Republicans that divested in municipalities. Michigan needs to invest in local government again. And not just with dollars, but with local control as well. As governor, I would introduce budgets that reverse the trend of cuts to revenue sharing because we must adequately fund local governments since they provide 90 percent of day-to-day public services to the residents of this state. Additionally, I would stop the infringement upon local control that has been happening through state preemption. If a community wishes to implement ordinances on local hiring practices or regulate canine patronage of food establishments, then they have the right to do so.



4. Infrastructure for local communities continues to be top of mind for Michigan citizens. How do you define local community infrastructure needs and how would you prioritize the repair of our crumbling infrastructure to promote healthy local economies and vibrant communities?

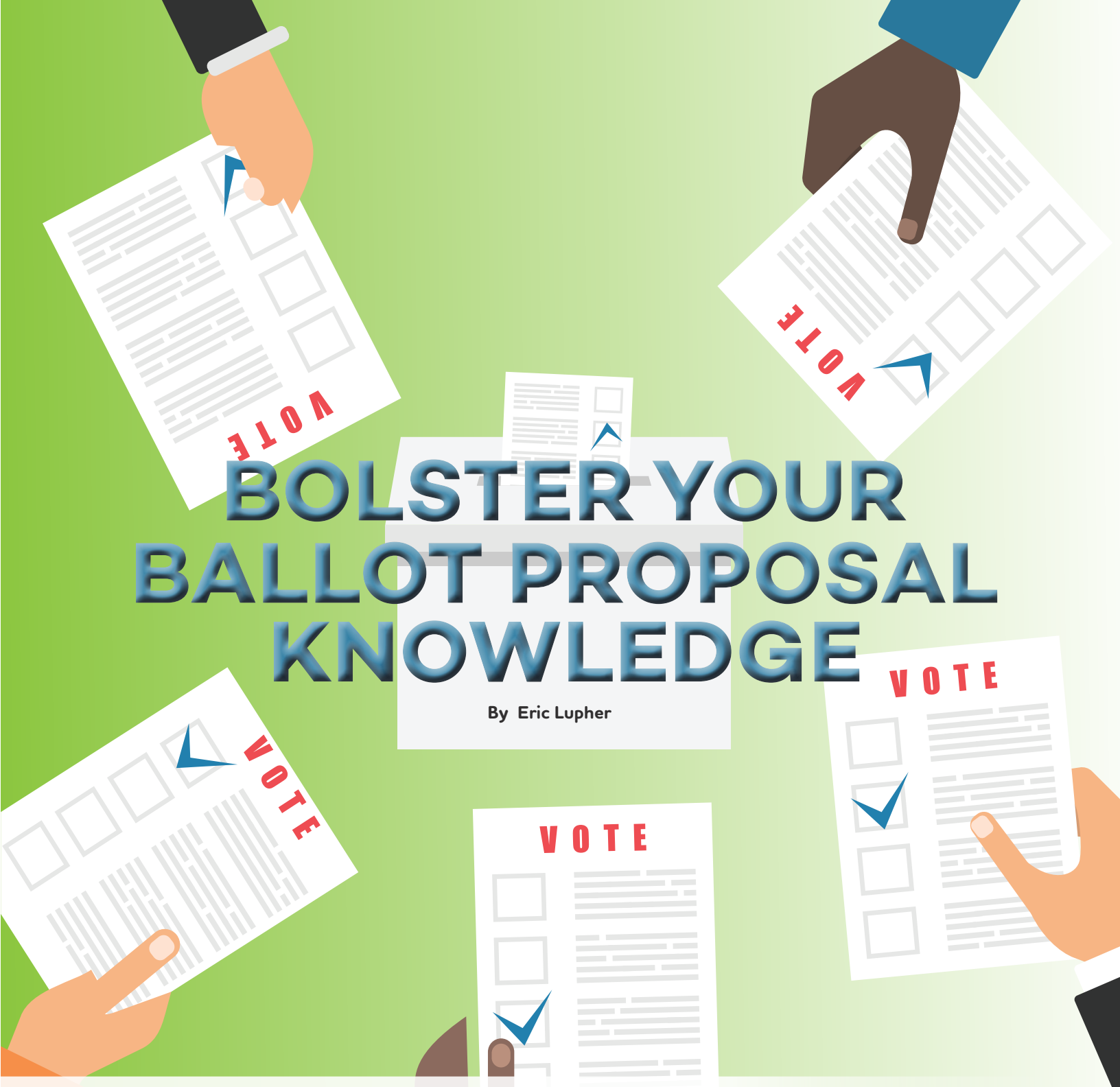
Infrastructure all across Michigan is in a state of disrepair. Our roads and bridges need to be stripped down to the ground and rebuilt using high-quality mix and materials. Lead service lines need to be replaced. Sewers and drains need to be improved and maintained. Internet access needs to be expanded to the 450,000 Michiganders who can't reach the internet in their homes. Our electric and heating grids need to be upgraded and secured. It's a lot of work to do, but it must be done if we ever expect to build Michigan's comeback on solid ground. My administration will work with community leaders and the Legislature to expand municipal financing opportunities for infrastructure investment. Revenues from which could be used in conjunction with the Rebuild Michigan Bank that will be created under my administration, and together we will put an additional \$3 billion more into infrastructure annually.



5. Legacy costs continue to stress municipal budgets, but contrary to popular opinion, local governments have very few tools at their disposal to address the problem. What steps would you propose to address this daunting challenge so our communities can meet and fund these obligations without jeopardizing existing services?

Unfunded liabilities not only stress current municipal budgets but put a strain on local governments' ability to attract and retain talent. And while cuts to revenue sharing have been a huge blow to municipal budgets, we have to do more than just throw money at this problem. Permitting increased flexibility in municipal legacy healthcare programs will allow retirees to continue receiving quality retirement health benefits while also helping prevent complete collapse of these systems that will hurt current and future retirees. As governor, my administration will work with local communities as a partner to solve these challenges proactively—before they become a full-blown crisis—to improve the retirement landscape for everyone.





BOLSTER YOUR BALLOT PROPOSAL KNOWLEDGE

By Eric Luper

As of this writing, Michigan voters can expect to be confronted with five questions on the November 6 statewide ballot. Two propose to amend the state Constitution and three seek approval of initiated statutes.

These questions ask voters to:

1. Permit the use of marijuana for non-medical purposes
2. Recreate a commission for redistricting congressional and legislative boundaries
3. Increase the minimum wage
4. Require employers to provide sick time to their employees, and
5. Institutionalize a number of election-related policies that would make it easier to register and vote.

Petitions were circulated for other proposals. Notable among them: the part-time Legislature proposal fizzled for lack of signatures, and an effort to increase the use of renewable energy gathered the requisite number of signatures (not certified by the Board of State Canvassers), but the petitions were not submitted because utilities agreed to voluntarily increase their use of renewable energy sources.

Below is a summary of a few of the proposals.

Marijuana Legalization

The Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol has introduced a proposed statute to legalize marijuana. Although Michigan has permitted the sale and use of medical marijuana since 2008, this proposal does not suggest mending the state Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act. Instead, it would enact a new law that would be consistent with various aspects of the existing law, and in conflict with others.



Like the medical marijuana law, this one would require people in the marijuana business and those wishing to use the drug to be at least 21; prohibit operating a motor vehicle while under the influence; prohibit open consumption; and restrict the amounts a person may possess.

The proposal would impose a 10-percent excise tax on the purchase of marijuana in addition to the 6 percent state sales tax. Revenues would be deposited into the marijuana regulation fund that is to be used for the implementation, administration, and enforcement of the act. During the first two years, \$20 million per year would also be dedicated to research on the efficacy of marijuana in treating medical conditions of military veterans. Remaining funds would be

allocated to municipalities and counties that host marijuana stores or businesses (15 percent each), schools (35 percent), and roads (35 percent).

Similar to the medical marijuana law, municipalities would be authorized to prohibit or limit the number of establishments authorized to distribute it under this law. The law would enable municipalities to regulate the location of dispensaries and adopt zoning ordinances related to the operation of those establishments.

The act would not require employers to allow or accommodate the use of marijuana by employees. Marijuana remains a Schedule 1 drug, illegal under federal law, and employers can continue to require their employees to pass drug tests.

These proposed changes come in the context of a national movement to decriminalize marijuana. Medical marijuana is legal in 31 states (plus Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam), and nine of those states (plus DC) have also legalized marijuana for non-medical uses. Fifteen other states allow limited use of cannabidiol (CBD) products with low levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the principal psychoactive component of cannabis. Four states—Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota have not enacted any of these laws.

Redistricting Commission

Voters Not Politicians has introduced a proposed constitutional amendment that would recreate an independent commission that has the authority to draw congressional and legislative district boundaries. The 1963 Michigan Constitution gave this responsibility to an independent commission. But the commission proved unsuccessful because the equal representation from each political party always stalemated. When other aspects of the constitutional provisions for redistricting were ruled in violation of the U.S. Constitution, the commission was eliminated and responsibility given to the Legislature.

Following the example of redistricting reforms that have had some success in Arizona and California, this proposal would create a 13-member citizen commission. It lays out the responsibilities of the Secretary of State in selecting commissioners and facilitating the commission's work; creates a funding stream for operations and commissioners' compensation; defines criteria to be incorporated in designing maps; and establishes procedures by which the commission will receive citizen input, share its work product, and, ultimately, adopt congressional and legislative maps.

Because of the length and implications of various aspects of the proposal, opponents have attempted to disqualify this proposal from the ballot (at the time of this writing, the proposal is on the ballot).


Paid Sick Time

The MI Time to Care petition would amend Michigan statutes to provide workers with the right to paid sick time for personal or family health needs (including time off needed because of domestic violence or sexual assault), and school meetings related to a child's disability, health, or issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

The proposed law would require employers to accrue one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked by each employee with a cap at 72 hours each year. Employees of small companies (fewer than 10 employees) could accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick time and 32 hours of unpaid sick time each year. Employees using paid sick time are to be paid at the normal hourly wage for that

employee or the state minimum wage, whichever is greater. Employers are able to require documentation if the employees are using three or more consecutive paid sick days.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 10 states and Washington, D.C., have laws requiring paid sick time.

The Research Council analyzes ballot issues for voter information. These will be available on our website (crcmich.org). 

Eric Lupher is president of the Citizens Research Council of Michigan. You may contact him at 734.542.8001 ext. 13, or elupher@crcmich.org



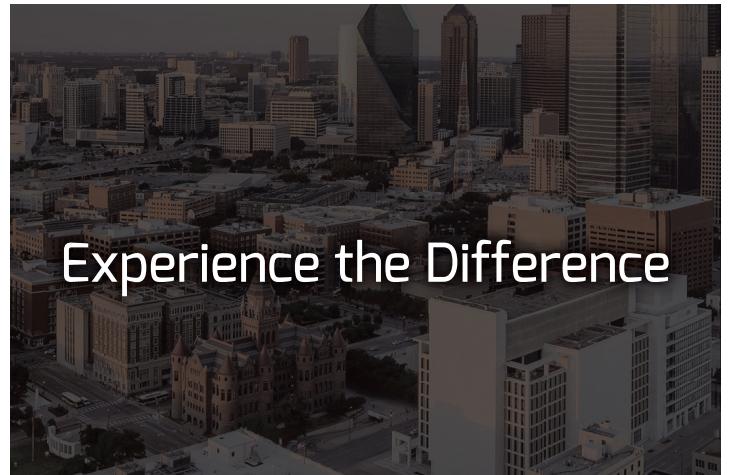
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CREATING RACIAL EQUITY

By Deborah Walton-Medley

By 2050, more than half of U.S. workers and consumers will be people of color. Our country stands to realize an \$8 trillion gain in gross domestic product (GDP) by closing the U.S. racial equity gap, according to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

“Closing the gap” means lessening, and ultimately eliminating, disparities and opportunity differentials that limit the human potential and economic contributions of people of color. For example, in consumer spending alone, closing the racial equity gap in the U.S. would generate an additional \$191 billion spent on food, \$500 billion on housing, \$52 billion on apparel, \$259 billion on transportation, and \$77 billion on entertainment each year.

As America confronts human capital constraints on our workforce, we must look to the potential of all and take deliberate, realistic, and proven measures to enable the full participation of all. Every organization and community must recognize the potential economic and social gains derived from closing the gap.

For example, the Holland/Zeeland Model Community Initiatives recognizes that to compete on a global scale, their business, government, education, and community organizations must place a high priority on attracting and retaining talent, and embracing diversity and inclusion.

They strongly support the Ottawa County Cultural Intelligence Initiative, which promotes an environment where all employees, residents, and visitors are valued and welcomed. In fact, the Ottawa County vision was changed to “Where You Belong” a few years ago and this has already attracted individuals to county employment. “Inclusion drives innovation and enhances growth by valuing all individuals, their backgrounds, experiences, and the ideas they contribute,” said Al Vanderberg, Ottawa County administrator.



The ideas of cultural inclusion and equity are not unfamiliar concepts to companies and communities. Thirty years ago, organizations, large companies, municipal jurisdictions, and state and federal agencies focused on diversifying the workforce. But diversity alone does not drive inclusion. Facilitating inclusiveness brings about empowered employees and citizens who openly share diverse perspectives, and these perspectives open the door to powerful solutions for businesses and communities.

Changing Individual Biases

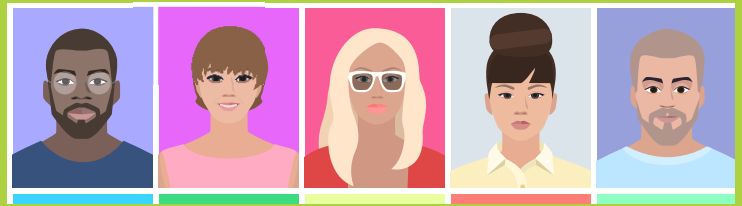
The lack of inclusion in many organizations stems from cultural biases many individuals, knowingly or unknowingly, possess. These biases hinder the empowerment and effectiveness of people, ultimately stunting the overall progress of organizations and communities. To develop a pathway towards stronger businesses and communities, we must work to overcome our personal biases. This requires an individual as well as a collective effort.

Here are steps that can be taken to overcome pre-existing biases:

1. Recognize implicit bias as a habit of mind: Assess your personal bias and determine how it was developed. Understand that unintended thoughts can contradict personal values and beliefs.
2. Identify and label common forms of bias: Understand the processes that lead to the perpetuation of biases and create bias literacy.
3. Implement strategies to reduce bias:
 - Detect the influence of stereotypes and biases. Reflect on the source of the stereotype and its effects on people. Reject the stereotypical portrayal or thought and replace it with one that is not-stereotypical, less biased, and more truthful.
 - Consider situational explanations. Think about how the situation may have influenced a behavior more than a personal characteristic. Actively consider things outside of the person as possible explanations for behavior. Some people's natural tendency is to give the benefit of the doubt to people like themselves.
 - Commit to credentials. Ensure that you give all candidates an equal opportunity.
 - Seek first-hand information. If we lack the knowledge of people, we fill in the gap by stereotyping. Collect more information on specific qualifications, past experiences, etc. before making any kind of decision.
 - Modify your environment. Increase representation of underrepresented groups. Change images in your environment that reinforce stereotypes. Evaluate what messages are in the environment about who belongs and/or succeeds.
 - Increase opportunities for contact. Engage with people who are different from yourself. Seek opportunities for greater exposure to movies, books, and other media from members of other groups.
 - Practice empathy. Imagine what it would feel like to be in another person's situation.
4. Recognize that these strategies must be adopted as a way of being, a way of life that requires constant practice and accountability.



Every organization and community must recognize the potential economic and social gains derived from closing the gap.



Transforming Organizational Biases

These individual approaches should be accompanied by collective efforts. It is important for organizational leaders to drive discussions tackling the bias issue. The vital and difficult question organizational leaders need to ask is, “Where is unconscious bias in my organization and what is its impact?”

The National League of Cities’ Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) initiative has compiled six steps local leaders can follow to begin improving equity throughout their cities and creating better outcomes for everyone in the community:


1. Set an example and strike the right tone by having conversations on race.
2. Observe and listen to people who are currently speaking about and promoting racial equity within your community.
3. Declare publicly the commitment to racial equity through resolutions, guiding statements, and webpages.
4. Dedicate infrastructure to action by aligning resources to create a system capable of bringing about change.
5. Commit to policy and system changes by addressing the root of disparities and ensuring that outcomes are racially equitable.
6. Create a racial equity plan that outlines the goals and specific strategies and action plans to improve racial equity.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has developed tools to facilitate the process of racial healing. They believe that the racism and biases within our society result from people’s belief in a “hierarchy of human value”—having a perception of inferiority or superiority based on race, physical characteristics, or place of origin.

Through its Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) initiative, Kellogg has taken the valuable work that has been done in the area of diversity and inclusion, and created community-specific solution strategies. The TRHT framework consists of five pillars: 1) Narrative Change 2) Racial Healing and Relationship Building 3) Separation 4) Law, and 5) Economy. There are 14 communities across the country that have volunteered to tackle these strategies; four communities are in Michigan, including Battle Creek, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Lansing.

According to Oronde Miller, Kellogg program officer, most of the communities so far have focused their earlier attention on narrative change and racial healing and relationship building. They have been hosting events, town hall meetings, community forums, and collaborative meetings where individuals representing these different sectors or stakeholder groups begin to talk about the way they understand and experience race relations in their respective communities.

Join us at the 2018 League Convention THRT workshop, where the Kellogg Foundation and others will explain more about these five pillars and how they help to create a racially equitable community.

As we learn how to break down our own biases that lead to racism, we can influence the attitudes and actions of others and “close the gap,” which will lead to the creation of a racially equitable society. 

Deborah Walton-Medley is director of financial operations for the League. You may contact her at 734.669.6370 or dmedley@mml.org.



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Save



“We have to think differently about the strategic importance of investing in our communities as a way forward.”

SaveMICity 2.0

Michigan's municipal finance system is broken. The problem is everywhere you go. Just look around.

You can see the broken municipal finance system on the forlorn face of Vassar City Manager Brian Chapman as he stands outside one of the city's many abandoned buildings and blighted homes. He hopes no children get hurt in the vacated properties. City leaders don't have the funds to adequately address the growing blight problem.

You can see it in the 600-pound chunk of the historic Battle Creek City Hall that crashed on the sidewalk below more than a year ago. A "short-term fix" of scaffolding and reinforcements has remained for over a year now as a constant reminder of the city's financial challenges.

You can see the problem in the pothole-laden streets in Bronson where 86 percent of its roads are rated in poor or fair condition.

You can see it in the nearly 20-year-old vehicles in the City of Cadillac's municipal fleet; the buckets collecting water from leaky ceilings in Sterling Heights municipal buildings; the fewer number of firefighters on staff to battle blazes in Port Huron; and the tax bills in Fraser, which were recently increased by 50 percent just to maintain the most basic level of services.

The list goes on and on. The stories are real and the problem is serious.



City

But sadly, most people outside of city hall don't know about it. The Michigan Municipal League's SaveMICity campaign aims to tell this story and fix the broken system.

The truth is, in the last 17 years the state has diverted upward of \$8.6 billion in revenue sharing away from our cities, villages, townships, and counties. Out of all 50 states, Michigan is dead last in the way in which it funds its local communities, and the consequences are evident.

"Our streets are crumbling, communities are being forced to cut fire and police protection, and there's an ongoing struggle to pay for other crucial local services," said Dan Gilmartin, Michigan Municipal League executive director and CEO. "In order for Michigan to thrive, we need to reform municipal finance."



Vassar City Manager Brian Chapman is disheartened over his city's lack of resources to deal with blighted buildings.

Originally launched by the League in 2016, the SaveMICity initiative was designed to educate the public, elected officials, business leaders, and the media about Michigan's broken municipal finance system while working with these groups to find a solution.

Now, thanks to support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the League has been able to advance its SaveMICity campaign and improve ongoing messaging and educational awareness efforts.

Strengthening Efforts

An expanded SaveMICity initiative was first announced at the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference at a session titled, "Not Open for Business: Why Disinvestment in Michigan Cities Is Hampering Economic Opportunity."

The conference session, moderated by Doug Rothwell, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan, included panel members Chris Coleman, former mayor of St. Paul, Minn., Gordon Krater, partner at Plante Moran, and Anthony Minghine, chief operating officer and deputy executive director of the League. They shared that more than 100 Michigan communities were in economic distress and the state was not doing enough to combat the problem. From 2002 to 2012, Michigan's revenue grew by 29 percent; however, during that same time period, revenue sharing to municipalities decreased by 56 percent.

"We have to think differently about the strategic importance of investing in our communities as a way forward," Minghine said. "At the end of the day, we need to create strong places. If we don't do that, to attract and retain talent Michigan is going to continue to struggle as a state."

During the panel, Congressman Dan Kildee emphasized the state's need to reinvest in communities. He spoke of the water issues in Flint and cautioned the audience of the true costs of disinvestment. Flint is not an anomaly—it's a warning, Kildee said. Many political leaders have stood and continue to stand behind SaveMICity's message. Data gathered by the initiative has already been cited in multiple city budgets and resource allocation plans. Additionally, various political candidates have used the information to shape policy plans for the communities they are hoping to serve.

Although this event on Mackinac Island was a success among elected officials, candidates, members of the media, and business leaders, a major part of SaveMICity's efforts is informing the general public about these issues. The League is planning to take its message directly to Michigan residents through renewed digital efforts.

We're hoping to reach new people and audiences in new ways. One way we're doing this is by enhancing our online presence. We want to utilize our website and social media accounts to help keep information flowing in a way that anyone can understand.

The SaveMICity.org website and social media platforms have undergone massive updates to highlight fresh content and make information easy to find and understand. A three-minute animated video has also been shared across all platforms to creatively explain why and how Michigan's system for funding its municipalities is broken.

Making Citizen Voices Heard

SaveMICity's messaging continues to resonate with Michigan residents, but how much does the public know about the state's municipal finance system?

In order to gauge initial awareness, the League commissioned two EPIC-MRA polls in recent years. The results showed that more than one-third of respondents believed their communities did not have the resources necessary to provide quality local services. Additionally, the vast majority of those polled—86 percent—answered that they would rather see their tax money go to local government to fund local services than have their tax money spent at the state level.

Although Michigan residents know they want their taxes spent locally, many do not realize the extent the state has disinvested in their communities.

"The state has kept more than \$8 billion that should have flowed down to local governments in the form of revenue sharing; that's about \$600 million each year," Minghine said. "These are dollars that would provide local services which creates stronger places that ultimately make our communities economically stronger."

Through expansive media coverage, paid media, and extensive educational efforts, SaveMICity is working to help the public and decision makers understand how the local programs they value are funded and what steps need to be taken to fix the current issues caused by the state's broken municipal finance system.

It's important to tell the stories of the broken system, like in Vassar where the decline of revenue sharing totaling \$1.5 million since 2002 and a reduction of property values due to the housing crisis served as a one-two punch to the 2,700-member community just north of Frankenmuth. To stay financially solvent, the city cut the number of employees in half, including its police force.

"Our ability to effectively police has been diminished," said Chapman, the Vassar city manager. "Our biggest problem is the lack of time to adequately address small issues which add up over time, such as blight and code enforcement. This has created a culture in the community of 'this is OK'. People think, 'I'll just leave this big mess in my yard because the city won't do anything about it' or 'my neighbor's yard is worse than mine, so it's OK.'"

Chapman said the city is now trying to curtail the growing blight problem through limited funds and personnel.

In Battle Creek, City Manager Rebecca Fleury explains they need to make upward of \$500,000 in repairs to the city hall in order to remove the scaffolding and the city doesn't have the money to do that as well as a plethora of other projects that are needed.

"The building issue at city hall is only the tip of the iceberg for us," said Fleury, whose community has lost nearly \$26 million in revenue sharing alone since 2002. "We also have several parks with playground equipment in excess of 20 years old. We have two active fire stations over 100 years old with the original hay lofts still used to house firefighters. When funds are tight, capital projects and maintenance are the first to be deferred. On the operational side, we have 11 fewer snow plow drivers, 5 fewer positions in the police


department, and 30 fewer people in the fire department than we had 10 years ago. While we do our best with what we have, all these things impact the level of service we can provide our residents."

SaveMICity's message has been extremely well received, with more than 200 news articles, op-eds, and columns featuring the League's municipal finance work. This includes editorials featured in the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* as well as a seven-part series in *Bridge Magazine*.

The League has also focused its efforts on sharing the SaveMICity message with Michigan residents face-to-face. Individuals representing the League continue to travel across the state to speak with local groups, including partner and member organizations. These presentations are personalized to fit community needs and inform citizens of exactly how much their cities are losing.

In order to ensure messaging that resonates, the League has enlisted two Lansing-based firms—Vanguard Public Affairs and Resch Strategies. The groups are responsible for conducting focus groups in a bipartisan way, developing communication strategies, and coordinating social media efforts. Each firm brings views from both sides of the aisle, which the League believes will keep messaging balanced.

The newly expanded SaveMICity initiative will officially launch in early September with a series of press conferences throughout the state. The timing of the launch is meant to engage gubernatorial candidates and get them talking about the state's broken municipal finance system prior to the November elections.

"Municipal finance reform is expected to be a major issue in the upcoming election, and we need people to know where their candidates stand," Gilmartin said. "We want those running to acknowledge that the system is broken and offer up real solutions on how they're planning to fix it." 

Matt Bach is the communications director for the League. You may reach him at 734.669.6317 or mbach@mml.org.



How Will Your Community Recover from Disaster?

By Chad Veaser



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made four disaster declarations in Michigan during the past five years, and the State of Michigan has supported many more additional disasters or emergencies during that time. These included floods, fire, wind storms, tornados and man-made disasters that exceed the ability of communities to address the crisis on their own and required a coordinated and comprehensive response.

Collaboration in Recovery

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many communities capitalized on federal funds to help plan for emergencies and disaster. These plans put in place systems to identify coordinated rescue and medical care resources and developed communications plans. While these plans have led to marked improvement in coordinated response, more has been learned about the disaster and recovery process. Many plans stopped short of addressing critical long-term issues that support communities in emerging strong and confident in the wake

“Many plans stopped short of addressing critical long-term issues that support communities in emerging strong and confident in the wake of a disaster.”

of a disaster. These resiliency factors address assisting individuals who are permanently displaced or are unable to rebuild, identify long-term resources when volunteerism is exhausted, and supporting community members that have experienced significant economic and/or emotional trauma.

Fortunately, there are resources in place to help communities plan for and deploy resiliency tools. Through a joint initiative of the Michigan Community Service Commission and Michigan 2-1-1 (MI 211), communities are encouraged to begin planning for both disaster and resiliency to ensure that assets are deployed for both immediate and long-term community needs. The partnership capitalizes on Michigan 2-1-1's statewide network of regional contact centers. Also, through the abbreviated 2-1-1 dialing code and website, communities can disseminate consistent and reliable emergency management information, capture community needs and unmet needs, and facilitate volunteer deployment.

Connecting People with Information and Resources

“The 2-1-1 network provides consistent, reliable and quality information for communities statewide,” said Michigan 2-1-1 Director Tom Page. “Our strong relationships built on our day-to-day work with local agencies and service providers allows us to facilitate rapid mobilization of resources and ensure people get help when they need it most.”

The Michigan 2-1-1 system of regional contact centers provides coverage throughout the state. By contacting 2-1-1 by phone, text, or web, individuals are provided with accurate and reliable information about the availability of critical needs like shelter, fresh water, and food. The 2-1-1 system monitors the volume of calls to help communities assess impact and tracks needs that cannot be addressed. These “unmet needs” are critical in identifying both short-term and long-term recovery factors, such as the inability to exit a home due to debris, lack of electricity, shelter capacity, financial resources, and material shortages.

Leading Service and Volunteerism

The Michigan Community Service Commission, the state's lead agency on volunteerism, utilizes service as a strategy to address the state's most pressing issues and empowers volunteers to strengthen communities. In 2017-2018, the agency is granting more than \$11 million in federal funds to local communities for volunteer programs and activities. In addition to supporting volunteerism, the Michigan Community Service Commission administers a \$23 million investment in the state's 28 AmeriCorps programs, engaging more than 1,000 residents in intensive service each year at unique sites including nonprofits, schools, and community and faith-based groups.

The Michigan Community Service Commission, along with Michigan 2-1-1, promotes volunteer coordination and deployment through Michigan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (MI VOAD), consisting of more than 50 organizations nationally, including the Red Cross, Team Rubicon, the Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Disaster Response, Mennonite Disaster Services, and many more. Additionally, the commission also partners with the Corporation for National and Community Service, a U.S. federal government agency that engages more than five million Americans in service, to engage teams to serve in aiding disaster recovery in communities. These teams, called the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), have been deployed to Detroit, Flint, and the recent flood recovery in the Houghton area of the Upper Peninsula. The agency also participates in the September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, providing support to communities and organizations for volunteer projects that address disaster preparedness.

“Volunteerism and service play such a crucial role in disaster recovery,” said Michigan Community Service Commission Executive Director Ginna Holmes. “We are proud to assist in deploying individuals and teams to be boots on the ground and helping to meet community needs.”



Using a coordinated response model and various volunteer groups and registries, Michigan 2-1-1 and the Michigan Community Service Commission help communities monitor the volume and types of community needs and use geo-mapping to organize and deploy volunteer groups. This system assisted communities in coordinating volunteers to clean debris and mud from properties, gut flood damaged materials, rebuild homes, and deliver water during the Detroit flooding of 2014, Flint water crisis and recovery, Mid-Michigan flooding of 2017, and the Capital-area and Houghton floods of 2018.

Disaster Recovery Ahead

A final consideration in community disaster recovery and resiliency is reaching a 'new normal' through a long-term recovery committee. The Michigan Community Service Commission, Michigan 2-1-1, and other state partners have supported this effort in communities throughout the state. This effort helps to convene community members and leaders, facilitate conversations, identify funding opportunities, and work with volunteer organizations to provide long-term support.

So, as a community leader, what is YOUR plan for resiliency? Do you have a plan to coordinate your community's needs and unmet needs throughout recovery? Do you know how to access short and long-term volunteer resources?

Do you understand the long-term effects of economic and emotional trauma on your community?

While the Michigan State Police's Emergency Management and Homeland Security Department and some key nonprofits provide many resources that are significant in helping communities prepare for and recover from disasters, we now know of additional tools to support these efforts. Through Michigan 2-1-1 and the Michigan Community Service Commission, you can:

- Access dedicated call centers that address community needs
- Support delivering accurate messaging and information
- Engage more volunteer and service resources
- Develop the knowledge and connections necessary for a robust recovery

Start planning before a disaster strikes. Begin by contacting the Michigan Community Service Commission and Michigan 2-1-1 Disaster Specialist. [@mi](#)

Chad Veaser is the disaster response coordinator for MI 211 / Michigan Community Service Commission. You may contact him at 517.335.4295 or veaserc@michigan.gov.



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Guido and Sinclair AWARDS

The Guido and Sinclair Awards are two of the top honors given to individuals by the Michigan Municipal League. The deadline to submit nominees for the 2018 awards is October 26, 2018. The winners will be recognized during the Michigan Municipal League's Capital Conference March 19-20, 2019 in Lansing.

AWARD DETAILS

THE MICHAEL A. GUIDO LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Honors a chief elected official from a Michigan community who has demonstrated excellence in leadership.

THE JIM SINCLAIR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD

Honors a municipal official, municipal staff, League staff member, or active participant in the League's mission who has been active in furthering the cause of educating elected officials.

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Sue Jeffers is a legal consultant to the League. You may contact her at sjeffers@mml.org.

Is a Search of a Vehicle Parked Within the Curtilage of a Home Constitutional?

FACTS:

Officers McCall and Rhodes of the Albemarle County, Virginia, Police Department, in separate incidents, saw, but were unable to apprehend, the driver of an orange and black motorcycle who committed traffic infractions. The officers learned that the motorcycle was likely stolen and in the possession of Ryan Collins. Collins posted photos of the motorcycle on his Facebook profile showing the motorcycle parked at the top of the driveway of a house. Rhodes tracked down the address and saw what appeared to be a motorcycle covered with a tarp parked in a partially enclosed top portion of the driveway that abutted the house. Rhodes walked onto the property, lifted the tarp, took pictures, ran a vehicle search, and confirmed that the motorcycle was stolen. Collins was subsequently arrested for receiving stolen property. He filed a motion to suppress the evidence on the basis that Rhodes had conducted a warrantless search of the motorcycle by trespassing on the curtilage of the house in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Albemarle County argued that it did not need a warrant in light of the so-called automobile exception to the Fourth Amendment which justifies warrantless searches of motor vehicles.

QUESTION:

Does the automobile exception to the Fourth Amendment apply to a warrantless search of a motorcycle parked on the curtilage of a house in violation of the Fourth Amendment which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures?

ANSWER:

ACCORDING TO VIRGINIA STATE COURTS: YES.
The Virginia state courts all found that the warrantless search was justified on various grounds.

ANSWER ACCORDING TO THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT: NO.

The US Supreme Court found that the warrantless search violated Collins' Fourth Amendment right to be free from an unreasonable search of his home. The Court traced a long line of cases that has expanded that right to "the area 'immediately surrounding and associated with the home.'" The Court stated that when a law enforcement officer physically intrudes on the curtilage to gather evidence, a search within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment has occurred. The area in question sat behind the front perimeter of the house and was enclosed on two sides by a brick wall and by the house on a third side. The Court found that the automobile exception, based on the recognition that automobiles have "ready mobility" and are subject to pervasive regulation, does not apply to the facts of the case.

Collins v Virginia, 584 US (2018).

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Suburbs Not Immune to Financial Crisis

By Rick Haglund

Many of Michigan's large industrial cities struggled to survive during the "lost decade" between 2000 and 2010. Benton Harbor, Flint, and Pontiac spent years being run by state-appointed emergency managers. In 2013, Detroit became the largest American city ever to file for bankruptcy.

An improving state economy, driven by the resurgence of Detroit's automakers, has helped those cities and others stabilize. For the first time in 18 years, no Michigan city or school district is under the control of an emergency manager, state Treasurer Nick Khouri announced in June.

But some say another municipal finance crisis is brewing in the suburbs, particularly older communities that ring Detroit, Grand Rapids, and other cities. "With Detroit coming back and economic development moving toward the cities, the suburbs are at risk," said Westland Mayor William Wild.

A variety of factors are challenging older suburbs, said Eric Scorsone, director of Michigan State University's Center for Local Government Finance. Among them are aging infrastructure, loss of tax revenue from failing suburban shopping malls and big box retailers, growing pension and other legacy costs, and increasing poverty.

"The problems of the cities are migrating to the suburbs," he said. "Poverty is moving to the suburbs. We're seeing that more in places we didn't see so much in the past." In addition, older suburbs are losing population as younger people, many of them single or without children, move to bigger cities like Detroit and Grand Rapids, while families are moving farther out into the exurbs, Scorsone said. "Older, inner-ring suburbs are getting squeezed," he said.

In May, the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority listed 139 cities as being economically distressed and eligible for various MSHDA programs. A municipality is considered distressed by MSHDA if it has at least one of these conditions: loss of population between 1970 and 2010; property values that have grown less than the state average since 1972; a poverty rate higher than the statewide average; and an unemployment rate higher than the state average in three of the past five years. Twenty-five of those cities are in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties.

“Poverty is moving to the suburbs. We’re seeing that more in places we didn’t see so much in the past.”

Reversal of Fortune

For decades, metro Detroit suburbs grew largely at the expense of Detroit. But a reversal is underway. Pete Saunders, a Chicago urban planner who grew up in Detroit, said in a recent blog that “because metro Detroit’s population growth has been flat for a more than a generation, there’s very nearly a zero-sum cause and effect here. The city’s loss decades ago was the suburbs’ gain. Today the city’s gain is coming at the expense of the suburbs.”

Kurt Metzger, a longtime demographer and mayor of Pleasant Ridge, one of those inner-ring Detroit suburbs, said the economic threat to the suburbs is real. But there will be winners and losers, he said. Those communities that have good schools and housing, a strong tax base, and are walkable will do well. Those that lack those attributes will struggle.

Metzger said he continues to believe the revitalization of Detroit will ultimately provide positive economic spinoff effects for the nearby suburbs. “The region will only be as strong as the central city,” he said.

Municipal Finance Challenges

A broader problem for all cities—suburban or not—is the state’s troubled municipal finance system. Municipalities have been shorted billions of dollars in state revenue sharing. And many are struggling with state-imposed revenue caps imposed by the Headlee Amendment to the state constitution and the Proposal A school tax overhaul in 1994.

Even communities that look vibrant, including Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Traverse City, are on MSHDA’s economically distressed community list.

Part of the problem is that the state is not generating enough tax revenue to adequately support its cities. Some of that is due to the state’s lack of economic growth. But lawmakers also have intentionally limited revenue growth through tax cuts and exclusions from the tax code, known as tax expenditures.


While total state tax revenue for the 50 states rose an inflation-adjusted 9.1 percent between the previous peak in the third quarter of 2008 to the end of last year, Michigan’s state tax revenue fell 4.2 percent from its previous peak in the second quarter of 2006 to the end of 2017, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Scorsone, who recently returned to MSU after being on loan to the state Treasury Department, where he oversaw local government finances, said the state needs to examine unfunded mandates and state-imposed revenue caps on cities. “I think it’s true in general that the municipal finance system needs to be addressed,” he said. “We need to think about an early warning system. Where do we go from here? I pushed the Treasury staff on the suburbs’ issue. We don’t want to fight that last war (with the industrial cities) again.”

The state needs to think more holistically about working with troubled communities and those that are facing potential fiscal problems, Scorsone said. He has proposed that mid-level managers from a variety of state departments, including Treasury, Transportation, MSHDA and the Michigan Economic Development Corp. collaborate more closely in determining the best way to deploy state resources.

But today’s strong economy and generally improving municipal finances might be lulling policymakers into complacency. “The hardest time to address these issues is when there is no crisis,” Scorsone said.

Wild said many of the district’s suburban communities are troubled. The district is the third poorest in the country, based on median income, according to Bloomberg Government.

He said he’s “disappointed” that none of Michigan’s candidates for governor this year are talking much about the state’s municipal finance problems. “We’re all going to inherit this issue,” Wild said. 

Rick Haglund is a freelance writer. You may contact him at 248.761.4594 or haglund.rick@gmail.com.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS CULTIVATE DOWNTOWN MT. PLEASANT BUSINESSES

By Molli Ferency

With lawn chairs in tow, community members leisurely wander downtown Mt. Pleasant before taking a seat in the middle of Broadway Street to soak up the sounds of both local and traveling musicians. In its 10th year, the Max & Emily's Summer Concert Series has become a summertime staple of the Mt. Pleasant community, bringing thousands of people downtown throughout the months of June, July, and August. With three city blocks closed to traffic, the stretch of street becomes an open space for folks from all walks of life to share.

This quintessential summer night in Mt. Pleasant illustrates one of the ways the city uses special events throughout the year to draw people downtown to experience its charm, variety of restaurants and bars, and selection of stores.

The Max & Emily's Summer Concert Series originated in 2008. Through the efforts of Chris "Elmo" Walton and the late Tim Brockman, owners of Max & Emily's Eatery in downtown Mt. Pleasant, several area entities partnered to make the outdoor music event series possible. Funding partners include Central Michigan University, City of Mt. Pleasant, Isabella Bank, and Max & Emily's Eatery.

"This event was created to offer community members great entertainment and encourage families and friends to make downtown their destination for an entire evening," said Downtown Development Director Michelle Sponseller. "We hope they'll grab dinner at a local eatery, or shop at one of the downtown businesses before the concert begins, and then enjoy a nightcap or snack at their favorite restaurant or bar after the show."

Come Home to Downtown Mt. Pleasant

The city also sponsors many other activities throughout the year to promote the downtown and prompt customers to choose to dine and shop locally.

"The city understands its downtown serves as both a social hub and an economic center," said Mt. Pleasant City Manager Nancy Ridley. "The events sponsored downtown provide social occasions for the community while also increasing the visibility of the businesses that choose to locate here."

Each fall, the Come Home to Downtown Mt. Pleasant open house offers sales and specials over a two-day span in September to generate business in the principal shopping district. "Come home to Downtown Mt. Pleasant gives business owners the chance to coordinate a variety of promotions to give frequent customers another reason to shop local, while hopefully attracting new customers as well," said Sponseller.

Art Reach of Mid Michigan Director Amy Powell said the fall open house is a valuable chance to be collaborative with fellow downtown businesses. "Being a small nonprofit in the area, we like to use every opportunity we can to partner and be involved with events that are happening," she said. "We always try to pursue opportunities that benefit our organization, as well as the organization leading the event. Come Home to Downtown Mt. Pleasant does just that."

Ladies' Night Out

To kick off the holiday shopping season, Ladies' Night Out is scheduled on a Saturday in November and features fantastic shopping opportunities and giveaways for women, with donations benefiting two local women's organizations: Women's Initiative and Women's Aid Service.

The event begins in the late afternoon at the Broadway Theatre downtown. With a \$5 donation at the door, ladies enter the theatre for an exciting raffle for fun and tasty prizes provided by local businesses. Once the giveaways are gone, ladies visit downtown businesses to take part in countless in-store giveaways, promotions, and specials.

"Ladies' Night Out is an event that always comes with a lot of buzz and excitement," said Melinda Salchert, special events coordinator for the City of Mt. Pleasant. "In recent years,



a number of area businesses have expanded on the event, offering deals and discounts known as ‘Early Girl Specials’ throughout the entire day.”

Over the last 13 years, Ladies’ Night Out has raised more than \$22,800 for the Women’s Initiative and Women’s Aid Service. “Ladies’ Night Out supports our local businesses while supporting the women of the community who need it most. It’s really a win-win,” said Salchert.

Mt. Pleasant Christmas Celebration

The pillar event of the year is the annual Mt. Pleasant Christmas Celebration. For three days in early December, families fill the streets and businesses of downtown to view the lighting of the Christmas tree, visit with Santa, share a meal, and engage in a variety of activities that spark the holiday spirit. Downtown stores stay open late, acting as warming stations and showcasing the talents of local singers and musicians.


According to Sponseller, the highlight of the weekend is the Lighted Christmas Parade. “More than 60 businesses and community organizations participate in the parade with floats and vehicles covered in lights and Christmas décor,” she said. “It’s a fantastic way for area organizations to gain exposure and for the community as a whole to celebrate the holiday season together.” The 2018 Christmas Celebration will mark the event’s 25th anniversary.

Make Downtown Your Destination

Sponseller says having a vibrant commercial district benefits the local economy and builds a sense of community, making efforts to support downtown businesses and their owners that much more valuable. “It is our mission to attract consumers and remind them that choosing to conduct business locally makes a difference and influences the overall success of a community,” she said. “Small, locally owned businesses are powerful job creators that support fellow local businesses and the community members who work at them.”

Additional Annual Events in Downtown Mt. Pleasant Include:

- **Home Builders’ Association Classic Car and Motorcycle Show**—Downtown Mt. Pleasant joins the Home Builders Association of Central Michigan to host its annual Classic Car & Motorcycle Show each July. Participants and attendees admire automobiles while enjoying the offerings of beautiful downtown Mt. Pleasant.
- **Small Business Saturday**—Launched in 2010, this annual national event encourages people to celebrate and support small, neighborhood businesses and all they do for their communities. The city works with downtown Mt. Pleasant businesses to coordinate sales and offer freebies.
- **Thrilling Thursdays**—A weekly summer event series in downtown Mt. Pleasant that partners with local businesses and organizations to offer an original assortment of family-friendly activities.
- **Movies by Moonlight**—Founded by the City of Mt. Pleasant, Central Michigan University, Isabella Bank, and Max & Emily’s Eatery, the annual outdoor movie series encourages the community to bring chairs, blankets, and snacks and settle in on the city hall lawn. Showings are sponsored by local businesses.
- **Pumpkin Promenade**—Participating businesses open their doors on Halloween for trick-or-treating ghosts, monsters, and the like!

To learn more about Downtown Mt. Pleasant and its events year-round, visit www.mt-pleasant.org or www.facebook.com/downtownmp. 

Molli Ferency is the former public relations coordinator for the City of Mt. Pleasant. You may contact her at 989.948.8328 or mmtemplin@gmail.com.

THE LAB REPORT

Ideas, initiatives, and activities from the League's Civic Innovation Labs

Rewind. Replay. Reinvent.

Greatest Hits of the Spring Conference Playlists

By Melissa Milton-Pung

The League's Civic Innovation Labs staff has been keeping the conference circuit hot. While participating in national dialogues about strategies for making our cities greater places to live, we observed how many of the national Top 40 Hits are already being played out here at home. From increasing walkability and enhancing our unique downtowns to supporting local entrepreneurship and transforming our manufacturing sites with imaginative new retail and housing solutions, Michigan continues to reinvent itself. It's our jam!

We've also been celebrating our own hit track: The League's ongoing partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). We presented conference sessions on the MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities® program, where we are engaged in supporting more than 230 League members across Michigan in rocking out some serious local private investment.

As our refrain goes, we at the League love where you (and we) live. We love how Michigan's cities continue to grow, renew, and reinvent themselves. We aren't content with being just a cover band, and are keeping our ears to the ground for current and emerging tunes relevant to making Michigan even better. Who knows where inspiration will strike and create our next platinum album?

Here's a sampling of the greatest hits from 2018 spring conferences.

Start Sooner and Plan for Success

Smart Growth America's LOCUS Leadership Summit, Washington, DC, April 22-24, 2018

Communities large and small are facing shortages of desirable housing, especially within reach for working class households. Harriet Tregoning, former planning director for Washington, D.C., and Christopher Zimmerman, vice president of Smart Growth America, advised cities to ask themselves tough questions, such as: If your major employer suddenly announced a big expansion, where would the new employees live?

Once the development ball gets rolling in a neighborhood or town, it's too late to control for affordability. The higher end housing market changes quickly, but replacing supply at the middle and lower points on the cost spectrum takes years. Basic data crunching is useful in motivating decision-makers. Tregoning compared population growth to potential development allowed by zoning ordinance. Zimmerman discussed Columbia Pike in Arlington, Virginia, where a subset of non-subsidized, yet affordably priced, housing units were important to preserve (or replace if they disappeared). This calculation became the measuring rod for subsequent development decisions.

Michigan communities have been investing in quality of place, walkability, and sustainability for over a decade. Some are already seeing the fruits and realizing their city is not fully prepared for an influx of interest. As Tregoning concluded, "The cost of being wrong and overprepared is minimal, but you can never recover from being underprepared."

For more information, visit cnu.org.

Layer Housing Strategies for Stable Homes and Neighborhoods

Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference, Milwaukee, WI, May 15-17, 2018

In the hard-hit neighborhoods west of downtown Milwaukee, an informal coalition is tackling the problem of abandoned and foreclosed homes with a multi-layered strategy. Nonprofit ACTS Housing pursues "empowerment through homeownership" by supporting lower-income residents in buying tax-foreclosed fixer-uppers, low-interest rehab loans up to \$25,000, homebuyer counseling, and DIY trainings.

For-profit Strong Blocks buys and rehabs foreclosures needing more intensive work, offering them to residents on 21-month rent-to-own contracts with target sale prices at \$65,000-\$75,000. Their efforts are complemented by new and rehabbed rental properties owned by the city's housing commission, private low-income housing developers,



Engaging the community in a Choice Neighborhood plan for the city of Brownsville, Texas. Photos courtesy of Adam Rosa, Camiros, Ltd.

and the city's Land Bank. These organizations said combined efforts allowed them each to work with their niche markets, while having confidence that nearby properties were also receiving assistance.

For more information, visit <https://actshousing.org/> and <https://www.strongblocks.com/>.

The Community as Corporation

Smart Growth America's LOCUS Leadership Summit, Washington, DC, April 22-24, 2018

South Bronx native, entrepreneur, and developer Majora Carter challenges traditional community development investments as reinforcing perceptions of neighborhood failure. She asks what if communities acted, in some ways, like corporations by marketing and selling their assets to aggressively retain their own talent?

Carter asserts that if poor communities only receive investment targeted at "poverty maintenance," like low-income housing and free health clinics, residents will believe success and wealth creation is not possible and those with means or aspirations leave. She says residents in these communities want the same place amenities that middle-class communities do: beautiful waterfront parks, hip cafes, and homeownership opportunities. Regarding gentrification, Carter believes if these amenities are created by and for community members rather than outsiders, they support community success over displacement.

For more information, visit <http://tiny.cc/CommAsCorp> and <http://startupbox.nyc/>.

Strategies for Getting the Development You Want

26th Congress for the New Urbanism, Savannah, GA, May 16-19, 2018

For many cities, transformative projects with big impacts and even bigger budgets are the best way to attract and leverage private investment. For others, this strategy is a poor fit for local scale. Small and steady changes over time can maximize limited budgets to effect cumulative impacts rivaling those of major catalytic projects.

Approaches such as slowly unfurling form-based code compliance, planning year-by-year expansions, and thoughtful fix-not-overhaul tactics are the hallmarks of the Incremental Development Alliance. This nonprofit network of practitioners trains small developers, help citizens strengthen their own neighborhoods, and empowers city champions. The IDA's portfolio of case studies includes Michigan's Kalamazoo and Hamtramck, which have taken a hard look at target neighborhoods and begun to make small-yet-mighty development the default path forward.


For more information, visit <http://www.incrementaldevelopment.org/>.

Engaging the Unlikely

26th Congress for the New Urbanism, Savannah, GA, May 16-19, 2018

Redevelopment projects taking place within the heart of existing communities have direct impacts on just how successfully we can deliver affordable, diverse, and resilient places for people to flourish in community life. Exactly who participates in the decision-making process? Is it substantive, or superficial? These were the hard questions asked by Adam Rosa of Camiros, Ltd., in his recent work on a Choice Neighborhood plan for the city of Brownsville, Texas. Rosa provided practical ideas to engage members from a broad cross-section of the Buena Vida neighborhood. By utilizing a small grant, his team compensated respected residents for their time and meaningful participation in planning charrettes and focus groups. They also provided meals and childcare, and often conducted bilingual conversations. This planning approach empowered community members to carry out peer polling with fellow residents, and to more fully understand the multi-faceted needs of their community. The result? A neighborhood plan which truly reflects all residents.

For more information, visit <http://www.camiros.com/>.

Stay tuned. We'll keep scanning the dial for the next platinum hit! 

Melissa Milton-Pung is a civic innovations program coordinator for the League. You may contact her at 734.669.6328 or mmiltonpung@mml.org.

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Convention—Always a Grand Experience!!



By Kelly Warren

We love to talk about our programs and services, and new initiatives that we're bringing to the members of our great association. Now, let's take a moment to celebrate a traditional mainstay of League membership—our annual Convention. It's the most visible benefit that brings together members of the League family each year. It's where officials come together to learn from experts in municipal government, to network and bounce ideas off each other, to brag about cool things happening in their communities, and to forge friendships for life.

We have an annual Convention not only to conduct the business of the organization, but to provide information to help our members do their jobs better, and create fascinating places where people want to live, work, and play.

The League's first Convention took place in September 1899 in the great city of Grand Rapids. Newspapers reported that 110 municipal officials from 22 municipalities were present. We've held Conventions in Grand Rapids many times since then, but this year will be different because it's the first time we're partnering with the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) for the event. We're hopeful that we'll see over 1,000 people in attendance. This collaborative event will purposely take place during ArtPrize, the city's world-renowned international art competition. Not only can attendees check out some of

the installations in their downtime, but the hope is that by being amid this contemporary arts experience, creative juices will flow as we come together to discuss ways to make our communities better places.

It will be exciting to see the planners and community decision makers interact, share ideas, and gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the role each of them

play in creating a community vision. Planners need to be future-oriented and anticipate what is on the horizon to help guide the community. The same is true of elected and appointed officials. They want to bring about the best future for their community so they want to be looking forward and focusing on what's ahead.

We promise you a ton of energy and excitement with over a dozen mobile workshops, and twice the usual number of breakout sessions. There are great keynote speakers lined up, including Bruce Katz, author and co-founder of New Localism Advisors; and

Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Indiana, and 1st vice president of the National League of Cities. As always, attendees will walk away with tools to help create dynamic, walkable, sustainable communities.


Get More Involved

Once you've attended Convention and you're back in your communities reflecting on everything you've learned and all the people you met, think about your future with

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.

the League. Are there any projects you'd like to enter in the Community Excellence Awards next year? Are there any boards or committees that you'd like to join to become more involved with the League?

Think about the people doing amazing work in your community. Is there anyone you'd like to nominate for an award? Capital Conference will be here before we know it—March 19-20—and that is the time where we recognize members for the magnificent work that they're doing. Now is the time to start thinking about nominating someone for the Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award, or the Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service award. The deadline to submit nominations is October 26. You'll find information and nomination forms under awards, on the Resources page of our website, and in the November/December issue of *The Review* magazine.

At the League, we are very passionate about our mission. Every day, we strive to provide you with the advocacy, information, and inspiration you need to make your community strong and vibrant. Let's work together to make Michigan communities awesome! 

Kelly Warren is the director of membership and affiliate engagement for the League. You may contact her at 734.669.6310 or kwarren@mml.org.



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Campaigning by Public Officials
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Water and Sewer Liens

Q: We are a general law village and one of our trustees resigned, leaving us with a vacancy on our council. How do we fill a vacancy, and is there a time limit for when it needs to be done?

A: When there is a vacant trustee position in a general law village, the vacancy is filled by council appointment. MCL 62.13 is the section of the General Law Village Act to consult. It does not give a timeframe for when appointments to fill vacancies must be made.

Home rule cities and villages need to consult their charter for vacancy provisions, as these will be different than the General Law Village Act. Most charters give a 30 or 60-day window for the appointment to fill a vacancy process.

The League has sample council interview questions. Email a request to info@mml.org

Municipal News

In May, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission added sexual orientation/identity to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, making it the first state commission to find that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is a form of sex discrimination. On July 20th, Attorney General Schuette opined that the Commission's interpretation is invalid because it conflicts with the original intent of the Legislature (the Act does not define discrimination based on sex to include sexual orientation or gender identity) and as interpreted by Michigan's courts. The power to change Michigan law lies with the Legislature or the people through initiative—not with agencies. OAG #7305

Q: Can we send mailings to our residents asking them to vote “yes” on an upcoming road millage?

A: The League has a Fact Sheet on Campaigning Dos and Don'ts by Public Officials. You can download it at www.mml.org or email info@mml.org to request a copy.

Don't use city or village funds, municipal-owned office space, or other property to expressly advocate a vote for or against a candidate or ballot question. “Expressly advocate” means to state support for the passage or defeat of a ballot question or the election or defeat of a candidate—in other words, to say “vote yes for” (or no) or “support” (or defeat) a candidate or ballot question.

Generally, public officials can issue communications to voters using public dollars if the communications contain factual information regarding the election, the proposal, and what impact either its passage or defeat will have on the public body. Moreover, the prohibition on using public monies to support or defeat a ballot proposal does not prevent certain high level officers and employees from expressing their opinions. For example, nothing prevents a municipal official from standing up at a public meeting and telling the gathering that, in his or her opinion, the municipality needs to ask for a millage increase and the voters need to support it.

2018/2019 Wage & Salary Survey Results In

The Michigan Municipal League's Wage and Salary survey of 143 titles is available to full member communities who participated in the survey, with automatic access provided to managers, department heads, and elected officials.

The League conducts this wage and salary survey for the benefit of our member communities, and it is intended to be used by management employees, their designees, or elected officials working on behalf of member communities for official city/village/township business. The searchable database allows users to search by position, population, location, and perform side-by-side comparisons of results from selected municipalities.

The League's Information Service provides member officials with answers to questions on a vast array of municipal topics. Call 1.800.653.2483 or email info@mml.org or inquiry@mml.org.



You're invited to the Michigan Municipal League's Inaugural

COMMUNITY EXPO & SEMINAR!

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

ATTENDEES

We are inviting you, the top decision-makers from communities all over Michigan to come together to explore the products and services that help their municipality run smoothly.

VENDOR-LED SESSION

Six vendor-led sessions on topics that provide solutions to issues in their community. Do you have a topic you'd like covered? You can send topic ideas to Allison Gotelaere, contact information below.

NETWORKING

Close out your day at the Vendor Reception and enjoy drinks and appetizers while networking with fellow municipal colleagues. Discuss challenges facing your community and hear how other communities have solved them!

**This Expo is all
about solutions!**

VENDORS

City managers, fire and police chiefs, public safety directors, public works staff and more will be touring the displays and engaging in the educational sessions.

VENDORS WILL ENJOY

- Long show hours
- Networking opportunities during breaks and lunch
- Six vendor-led sessions available exclusively to our Business Alliance Program participants
- Vendor Reception at the end of the day offers a chance to mingle with attendees

MOUNT PLEASANT COMFORT INN

2424 S Mission St,
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858

EXPO HOURS

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

VENDOR RECEPTION

4:30 – 5:30 pm

CONTACT

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Ann Arbor, MI 48105



2017 CEA FINALIST

COMMUNITY
Excellence Awards

Bicycling Means Business and Friendship in Wayne



Established in 2016, the Wayne Bicycle Club has become a popular activity with residents. Founder Brian Ewanciw is a local business owner who wanted to find ways to get his neighbors more involved in their community. He approached the City of Wayne and asked if a Bicycle Club would be an activity the city could get behind. The city said “Of course!” Many cities across Michigan and the U.S. have bicycle groups. But what is unique about the Wayne Bicycle Club is that when the city reached a point where it had to start eliminating many historical events due to the lack of staffing and funding, Brian stepped up and decided he was not going to give up on his community. What started off as a small group of bicycling aficionados has turned into a favorite pastime.

Easy to Replicate

The project is replicable and scalable. It could be reproduced in a small community just as easily as in a large community. All that’s needed are volunteers willing to plan weekly bicycle routes and publicize the efforts. Social media and word-of-mouth promotions are key.

The benefits—increased community pride, civic volunteerism, physical fitness, and commercial activity—would transfer to other communities undertaking such an effort.

Creativity and Originality

The club travels all over Southeast Michigan for two-hour rides. Thursdays are dedicated to Wayne, where rides focus on historic home tours and, more recently, the Detroit Institute of Arts Inside/Out Program. The club has also created t-shirts and sweatshirts that are worn to show the pride for the group and the city. The Wayne Bicycle Club is free and open to the public, and has grown to more than 70 members.

The City of Wayne helps promote the rides through Facebook and other social media avenues. To learn more about the Wayne Bicycle Club, please visit facebook.com/waynebicycleclub.

Impact

Community involvement! The Wayne Bicycle Club has created a sense of pride within the community and promotes community involvement. It also encourages participants to explore the region during organized rides to places like Huron Clinton Metroparks, Open Streets Detroit, and Belle Isle.

This sense of community and community investment has led to an increase in volunteerism among the members of the community as well as boosting the physical fitness of participants. It has also led to an increase in business activity along the route, as riders will pause to buy a beverage, snack, or shop. The Wayne Bicycle Club’s activity has received the attention of bicycle shops across the region. They are closely watching the city and looking for an opportunity to make Wayne a potential destination for their next business location.

It is also important to note that city employees and members of the City Council have also become members of the Wayne Bicycle Club. Both groups have stated that this experience has provided them with a tremendous opportunity to become more involved in the community and has opened another avenue to communicate with other members who they represent in the city, creating an important personal connection. The Wayne Bicycle Club has shown that even when a community is lacking in funding, there are ways to engage the citizens without spending a single penny. But more importantly, this club is bringing back a sense of pride that has not existed for some time.