

The Review

The official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

November/December 2023

Fennville

Inclusive and Welcoming 21

- 06 Office of Rural Development
- 10 Reed City's Crossroads Recreation Connection
- 18 PFAS Settlement



The Review

November/December 2023

Volume 96, Number 6

The official magazine of the
 michigan municipal league

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The League Brand Colors

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The League Primary Colors

DARK BLUE PANTONE 286 C CMYK: 100, 0, 0, 0 RGB: 0, 0, 115 WEB: #000080	LIGHT BLUE PANTONE 287 C CMYK: 100, 0, 0, 0 RGB: 0, 115, 115 WEB: #008080	ORANGE PANTONE 156 C CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100 RGB: 255, 0, 0 WEB: #FF0000
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The League Secondary Colors

GREEN PANTONE 349 C CMYK: 100, 0, 0, 0 RGB: 0, 115, 0 WEB: #008000	YELLOW PANTONE 382 C CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100 RGB: 255, 255, 0 WEB: #FFFF00	PURPLE PANTONE 266 C CMYK: 0, 0, 100, 0 RGB: 0, 0, 255 WEB: #0000FF	RED PANTONE 187 C CMYK: 0, 0, 100, 0 RGB: 255, 0, 0 WEB: #FF0000
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The League Background and Type Colors

WHITE DARK G. 0, 0, 0 CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100 RGB: 255, 255, 255 WEB: #FFFFFF	CREAM DARK G. 0, 0, 0 CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100 RGB: 255, 255, 255 WEB: #FFFFFF	10% BLACK DARK G. 0, 0, 0 CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100 RGB: 0, 0, 0 WEB: #000000
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On The Cover

Over 50 percent of Fennville's residents are Hispanic and over 40 percent speak English as a second language. The district library dedicated this sculpture celebrating the work and sacrifices of the migrant population to give their children a better life. Pictured l-r: Gary Krier (DDA); Kathryn Beemer (city administrator); Dawn Soltysiak (DDA); Jontae Yost (DDA); Claude Rummer (DDA); Tom Pantelleria (DDA Chair); and Teresa Kline (library director).



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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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To Submit Articles

The Review relies on contributions from municipal officials, consultants, legislators, League staff and others to maintain the magazine's high quality editorial content. Please submit proposals by sending a 100-word summary and outline of the article to **Kim Cekola**, kcekola@mml.org.

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Small, Rural, and Unique

Executive Director's Message

We've all heard the catch phrase "small town America." Politicians love to tell us that's where they're from. Stephen King couldn't write a horror novel without one. And it seems like everybody either wants to visit one, raise their kids in one, or retire in one—maybe all three.

But what actually is a "small town"?

Here in Michigan, we have cities, villages, townships, and counties. Technically, towns don't even exist.

But everywhere you look, there's another media poll ranking them, with a different set of criteria.

HGTV's "50 Most Charming Small Towns in America" talks about fascinating histories, fun experiences, and natural beauty. (Houghton made the list for its snowmobile trails, colorful mining history, and Lake Superior sunsets.)

Travel and Leisure's "16 Best Small Towns in America" looked for quaint downtowns and stunning scenery. (Mackinac Island ranked here for its horse-drawn carriages, historic Fort Mackinac, and—of course—fudge.)

U.S. News Real Estate's "25 Popular Small Towns to Live In" included Saugatuck for its Oval Beach and Fenn Valley wine tasting room.

Good Housekeeping's "Top Small Towns in Each State" plucked Petoskey for its indoor waterpark and Castle Farms.

Reader's Digest's "25 Small Towns that are About to Become More Popular" touted Marquette for its outdoor winter sports, craft breweries, and thriving restaurant and art scene.

Traverse City topped *Architectural Digest's "25 Best Small Towns in America"* for its Cherry Festival, City Opera House, and Dennon Museum.

The thing is, many of these lists include places with populations well over 10,000—hardly what most Michiganders would call "small." In the 2020 census of Michigan's 533 municipalities, fewer than 100 had a population that large. Fully half were fewer than 5,000 and nearly 200 had populations that didn't top 1,000.

The lists also include suburban communities that most Michiganders would consider part of an urban metropolitan region, like Novi and Farmington Hills. And they're dotted with posh resort areas like Aspen, Colorado, that have little in common with rural America.

Even the USDA struggles to come up with a single definition to distinguish rural from urban—and they're supposed to be the experts! According to the USDA, more than two dozen rural definitions are currently used by Federal agencies.

And that can have serious consequences for a municipality's eligibility for grants and federal programs.

Here at the League, population is not a criterion for membership. But we're keenly aware that population and proximity to urban areas can play a big role in the social and economic issues a municipality faces. Clearly, one size does NOT fit all.

Case in point: according to the U.S. EPA's *Smart Growth*, remote rural areas are facing declining populations, loss of farms and farmlands, and lack of economic activity—while those bordering cities often face city-size development pressures without the means to balance growth with protecting the rural landscape.

Much of what is considered "big news" comes from our larger cities and metropolitan areas simply because their economies and social issues affect a LOT of people and have a wide ripple effect. But that doesn't mean we aren't paying attention to our smaller brethren. Like most states, "small towns" make up the majority of our municipalities. They are the beating heart of our rural areas, where the local people come for goods, services, community, and non-farm employment. They are essential to our nature-based tourism and recreation industries, and can offer an affordable, high-quality alternative to urban life.

Every community has its own unique identity, history, challenges, and assets. The role of government is to provide, support, and promote that community through its programs and partnerships.

That's why we've devoted this issue to our smaller rural municipalities. We'll talk about Fennville's award-winning bilingual signage project, and Reed City's bike park, another rural award winner.

You'll also read about how Michigan's new Office of Rural Development hopes to bring long-term prosperity to our rural communities.

We've also got all the highlights from the 2023 Convention, with lots of great insights and information for *all* our members.

So, we hope you enjoy our "small town" issue. Michigan may not have any towns, but it's what a lot of us call home.



Dan Gilmartin

League Executive Director and CEO
734-669-6302 | dpg@mml.org

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 michigan municipal league

MICHIGAN OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

—By Sarah Lucas

“Success doesn’t happen by accident, or in isolation—planning, resources, and strategic partnerships are needed for communities to be ready for new opportunities. The ORD is developing and supporting programs and policies that will build a strong foundation for success, by investing in the plans and collaboration that allow rural communities and regions to capitalize on their unique local and regional assets.”

—Sarah Lucas, director, State of Michigan Office of Rural Development

Established by Governor Whitmer in 2022, the Office of Rural Development (ORD) supports rural prosperity by working across sectors to foster strategic and coordinated investments in people and places.

Rural Snapshot

Michigan’s long-term prosperity is intertwined with the success of our rural regions. Urban and rural economies are linked through our markets, natural resources, tourism opportunities, and workforce. Rural Michigan makes up over 95 percent of the state’s geography, is home to unparalleled natural resources, 21 universities, and 20 percent of our population. Its farmland, forests, and mines drive hundreds of millions of dollars in exports, while its scenic beauty and outdoor recreation amenities attract new residents, tourists, and businesses that drive statewide economic growth. What’s more, the state’s workforce pipeline depends on students and workers throughout rural Michigan; and with national trends changing where people live and how we work, rural Michigan is poised to leverage these assets for even greater statewide success.

Yet, rural Michigan faces a complex set of challenges, including declining and aging populations, housing shortages, costly infrastructure improvements, and limited highspeed internet access. While these challenges may be found in both urban and rural communities, they are experienced differently and require tailored solutions. Demographic shifts in rural areas have resulted in limited resources and acute workforce needs for many communities: with aging and declining populations, employers and service providers struggle to fill needed positions, which impacts our communities’ quality of life, access to services, and opportunities for future economic success. Meanwhile, rural areas on average have lower wages and incomes, resulting in greater need and fewer resources with which to address them.

Remote work, growing interest in rural areas as a place to live and do business, and unprecedented public investment nationwide are bringing new opportunities to rural areas. But to take advantage of them, communities must be able to proactively plan for comprehensive solutions and coordinate with partners.



Cadillac



Frankfort



Hart



Gaylord



Marquette

Did you know?



The Rural Partners of Michigan puts on an annual conference for small and rural municipalities. The conference is geared towards those working in, and on behalf of, small or rural communities in Michigan. The 2023 conference featured sessions on housing, broadband connectivity, renewable energy, and more.

The Consumers Energy Foundation sponsors an award program at the conference:

Put Your Town On The Map
Consumers Energy Foundation Pitch Competition

The Consumers Energy Foundation is offering grant opportunities to help put your community on the map. We are seeking innovative ideas that will energize your town and create momentum that builds a stronger sense of community. If you are selected, you will be invited to submit a video or PowerPoint to be presented to a panel of judges during the Small Town & Rural Development Conference. The top three presentations will be awarded one of three grants:

- 🏆 **First Place:** \$25,000
- 🥈 **Second Place:** \$15,000
- 🥉 **Third Place:** \$10,000

See articles on 2023's Put Your Town on the Map first and second place projects on p. 10 and p. 22.

Office of Rural Development Strategies

Recognizing both the challenges and opportunities that rural communities face, the Office of Rural Development fosters strategic and coordinated investments in rural people and places through:

Policy Support & Interagency Coordination

Assess policies, programs, and plans affecting rural communities, and identify opportunities for improved policy outcomes in rural areas.

Capacity and Grant Programming

Build local administrative and financial capacity to address rural needs and access resources.

Rural Engagement & Outreach

Increase engagement within and between rural communities and state agencies.

2023 Highlights to Date

Since January 2023, the ORD has developed new programs, resources, and engagement opportunities to support rural communities:

- Launched two rounds of the Rural Readiness Grant Program to make \$1.75 million available to rural communities for planning, partnership development, and capacity building. These grants will allow communities to advance critical housing, workforce, infrastructure, and economic development initiatives, and position them to leverage competitive investment opportunities. With funding requests totaling nearly six times more than the amount of funds available, ORD is working with all applicants to explore possible opportunities, approaches, and resources for projects that could not be funded through the grant program.
- Conducted a statewide Rural Perspectives and Priorities survey receiving 2,489 responses from individuals living and working in rural communities statewide.



Munising



Manistee



Alma

- Hosted six Rural Leadership Summits across the state. These events showcased best practices and resources, engaging a total of 350 participants.
- Launched a newsletter to provide timely and relevant public and private sector funding opportunities and resources for rural communities, with nearly 2,500 subscribers.
- Established regular engagement with rural communities by participating in more than 200 local and regional conversations.

The Office of Rural Development Newsletter provides timely and relevant resources that support rural communities across Michigan. Visit govdelivery.com to subscribe.

Sarah Lucas is the director of the Office of Rural Development, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. You may contact her at 517-331-7181 or Lucass5@michigan.gov.

What's Next

Office of Rural Development to become Office of Rural Prosperity

Under Executive Order 2023-06, the Office of Rural Development will transfer from Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) on December 1, 2023. The Office will continue its work to advance rural priorities under its new office name—the Office of Rural Prosperity—in partnership with LEO, MDARD, and other state and local agencies.

Roadmap to Rural Prosperity Launch

Expected to be released in 2024, the Rural Roadmap to Prosperity report will include data and analysis on rural demographic and economic trends, feedback from rural communities, and best practices and rural success stories. The report will build a statewide understanding of rural perspectives, needs, and opportunities across Michigan.

Expanding Rural Readiness Efforts

Building upon the success, participation, and interest in the Rural Readiness Grant Program, ORD will continue to work with partners to prepare and support rural communities across Michigan by building strong connections, coordinating programming, and identifying resources and opportunities for rural prosperity. [L](#)



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At Shifman Fournier, we believe that law firms that only provide legal counsel do not necessarily understand the process of resolution of government challenges. It is of great importance to communities. Our philosophy allows us to deliver well-grounded advice and deep knowledge of the factors that go into cases creating strategies to solve complex labor issues. Our expertise includes advising communities, municipalities, and counties throughout Michigan with a wide range of solutions to the challenges they are challenged with.

Our unique, professional experiences have demonstrated this philosophy. From managing a city and its diverse operations to overseeing one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the State. This experience strengthens our understanding of the impact upon employees and residents when making decisions.

Reed City's

Crossroads Recreation Connection

—By Morgan Schwanky



There are great ideas all around us, but Facebook is not where the mind immediately goes when thinking of potential sources. When one shares an idea on social media, having real action or a movement come from it is something that happens once in a blue moon.

The Power of Social Media

When Ellen Finkbeiner posted a question on Facebook in 2021 asking who would help her build a splash pad, she never expected what that one post could accomplish. She got a strong response, moving beyond her friend's list and into the whole of the Reed City community. Fast forward to today, that idea has become something much bigger—and the Reed City Crossroads Recreation Connection (CRC).

"I posted on Facebook about Reed City getting a splash pad and had a lot of interest. So, I mentioned having a meeting for anyone that would be interested and the core group that we have showed up. We are continuing to grow with phenomenal people in a super community," said Finkbeiner.

CRC became an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2022. The staff includes Ellen Finkbeiner as president, Vice President Stephanie Boyce, a secretary, a treasurer, a grant writer, and trustees as well. "None of us knew each other before this, but we came together and created this nonprofit, added to the projects that fit our vision, and grew to where we are currently. A true grassroots effort," said Boyce.

Splash Pad Idea Builds Community Momentum

As their work progressed, they discovered that there was an opportunity to create more than a splash pad. The group attended city council meetings and were able to gather support from not just their municipality, but from the whole community as well.

They are still working on making the splash pad happen. The idea has grown, and the organization plans to create a four-season community gathering space that will include a splashpad, restrooms, a small stage, a fire pit, and more.

They have already completed a disc golf course that opened in August of 2022. The project garnered help from the community and city officials to help clear the path, create the fairways, and construct the basket platforms.

"None of us knew each other before this, but we came together and created this nonprofit, added to the projects that fit our vision, and grew to where we are currently. A true grassroots effort." —Stephanie Boyce, Vice President of CRC



Disc golf



Preparing the bike park

Funding Is Always an Issue

A large component when deciding what projects to prioritize has been funding. “We have a team member who is gifted with grant writing. She looks for grants that fit our goals and writes them for different projects that are a part of our vision,” said Boyce.

Their efforts have proven successful; the organization was granted funds from the 2023 Put Your Town on the Map competition by the Consumers Energy Foundation. They won second place, an award of \$15,000.

“For the Consumers Energy grant, it was decided that based on the budget set for each project that the Bike Park would be the best fit, so the grant was written with that in mind,” said Boyce.

Bike Park

Jonathan Zelinski has been brought in as an architect for the bike park. He had the idea of installing a mountain bike path back in 2020. He presented the idea multiple times to the city council and, with their approval, the CRC began making plans.

“This is a bike park designed to test the skills of riders looking to progress on jumps, drops, rollers, and berms. It’s

a compact bike park without mileage. Meaning, it’s not a drawn-out single track. The idea behind it is to “session” the features you’d like to get better on. One can enjoy them over and over. It’s similar to a snowboard or ski park at a resort. That’s what I grew up doing so it makes sense this turned out to be heavily influenced by such,” said Zelinski.

Zelinski explained how the park is laid out, and how it has cyclists of all skill levels in mind. “Here, at the bike park in Reed City, it’s a safe place for progression. All features are designed to challenge the targeted skill levels, but also the more advanced riders can have just as much fun on the same features. It’s not so cut and dried on who should be riding what. I want it to be fun for everyone,” said Zelinski.

The first portion opened to the public last fall. The funds from the Consumers Energy grant will help fund the second phase of the project, which will expand the trails.

Everyone starts on a raised dirt platform before choosing a color-coded trail that correlates to level of difficulty, with colors that mirror the ski slopes of Zelinski’s youth. Riders can choose the beginner level green section, which blends with portions of a more intermediate blue level. Or they can choose intermediate blue, which includes more challenging black diamond sections. This progressive course is meant to nurture and challenge the skills of all riders.



Volunteers build the bike park

Future Projects

With all the projects that the CRC has already underway, they are still looking for more ways to bring more outdoor reaction activities to the community. A dog park and pickleball courts are two projects potentially on the horizon. Again, a lot of the decision making will depend on funding. “There have been grants written for several of our projects and we are waiting to hear back on several of them,” said Boyce.

One woman’s Facebook post has now turned into a Facebook group with over 400 CRC members, including City Manager Rich Saladin. The utilizes it to share information about upcoming meetings so that community members can attend, as well as other important updates. There are also countless photos shared in the group, including community members enjoying the disc golf course and renderings of future projects.

The story of the Reed City Crossroads Recreation Connection is an inspiration for every community. They have shown no matter the size of your community, the ideas and hard work of anyone can have an incredible impact. [L](#)

Morgan Schwanky is a content developer for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6320 or mschwanky@mml.org.



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Elected Officials Academy

November 30, 2023 - In-Person, Lansing

December 13, 2023 - Virtual

January 25, 2024 - In-Person, Sterling Heights

February 10, 2024 - Virtual

April 6, 2024 - Virtual

Core & Advanced Summits

February 23 & 24, 2024 - Virtual

May 2024 - In-Person

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bridge
builders
microgrants

Meet Our Bridge Builders

The MML Foundation is proud to announce the 2023 Bridge Builders Microgrant recipients. This year's program includes four Main Street Microgrant recipients and eight Neighborhood Microgrant recipients. The projects are located in the following communities: Bessemer, Detroit (two projects), Holland, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marcellus, Muskegon (two projects), North Adams, Rogers City, and Vicksburg. Projects were selected by statewide juries after moving through a community engagement-focused online voting process.

Learn more about this year's projects:

<https://mmlfoundation.org/projects/bridge-builders-microgrants/current-funded-projects/>



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



2023 MML Brand Refresh

—By Morgan Schwanky



2023 Brand Guidelines

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The Michigan Municipal League is debuting updated branding! We are refreshing our brand to create a cohesive voice to communicate more effectively who we are and what we do. We gathered member input and are keeping things you love, such as our tagline and circle logo. Here is a look into the work that we have been doing and what you can expect to see as we roll it out.

A Brief Overview of Our Updated Brand Guidelines

We are introducing:

- an updated color palette
- new fonts
- fun L graphics (representing the League) that will feature throughout our communications
- a sub-branding system of clean and simple type treatments for all programs and services
- updated photography
- new writing guidelines resulting in clearer, more consistent communications

The League Brand Colors

The League Primary Colors

DARK BLUE HEX: #003366 CMYK: 100, 82, 27, 52 RGB: 0, 51, 102 WEB: #003366	LIGHT BLUE HEX: #66B3E0 CMYK: 88, 16, 50, 0 RGB: 102, 179, 224 WEB: #66B3E0	ORANGE HEX: #FF6600 CMYK: 0, 76, 100, 0 RGB: 255, 102, 0 WEB: #FF6600
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The League Secondary Colors

GREEN HEX: #008000 CMYK: 100, 50, 75, 0 RGB: 0, 128, 0 WEB: #008000	YELLOW HEX: #FFCC00 CMYK: 0, 27, 100, 0 RGB: 255, 204, 0 WEB: #FFCC00	PURPLE HEX: #660066 CMYK: 75, 75, 75, 50 RGB: 102, 0, 102 WEB: #660066	RED HEX: #FF0000 CMYK: 0, 75, 100, 0 RGB: 255, 0, 0 WEB: #FF0000
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The League Background and Type Colors

WHITE CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0 HEX: #FFFFFF RGB: 255, 255, 255 WEB: #FFFFFF	CREAM CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 9 HEX: #FFFACD RGB: 255, 255, 230 WEB: #FFFACD	95% BLACK CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 95 HEX: #191919 RGB: 25, 25, 25 WEB: #191919
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The League Brand Photography

Guidelines for Photography

There should be a sense of equality, diversity, and belonging displayed through the photography.

Stock photography should match the tone of the League's image catalog and slow movement and evoke the below qualities:

- Content Disposition/Facial Expressions
- Diverse Michigan Communities (small & large)
- Diversity (age, gender, color, abilities)
- Humble & Authentic (not staged)
- Human Interaction
- Inspirational
- Light Hearted & Soft
- Vibrant Spaces
- Wholesome & Fulfilling Lifestyles (evoking movement)



The League Brand Architecture



All of September 2022

The League Sub-Branding Lock Ups



All of September 2022

The League Brand Assets



All of September 2022

The League Brand Assets

Objects & Graphics

Our supportive objects are simple and dimensional. Ideally they clearly relate to the content they accompany, and are used as a supportive piece to visually represent the message.

Graphics can be a powerful tool within the branding guidelines. Our graphics make complex ideas more accessible, represent our brand personality, voice, and what we do in an efficient and clear way and create an emotional connection between our members and our brand.



All of September 2022

ADA Compliance

We are working to achieve an ADA compliance rating of AA across all our content. AA compliance means content that is usable and understandable for the majority of people, with or without disabilities. Improvements to our accessibility are crucial to our goals and standards for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

This work includes:

- adjusting our brand colors to achieve optimal readability
- reorganizing pages on our website with easier to view layouts
- alt tags (an alternative tag applied to images to provide a text alternative) for images on our website
- reviewing the ADA compliance of all our printed documents, event materials, and website pages

Acceptable Primary Color Combinations

At the League, it is important that everything we do is accessible to everyone. We strive to reach the highest standards for ADA compliance in all our marketing and communication materials.

Shown here are color combinations and point size requirements for typography using the League primary brand colors.

DARK BLUE	LIGHT BLUE	ORANGE
Dark Blue text on White any size	Light Blue text on White ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Orange text on White ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
Dark Blue text on Cream any size	Light Blue text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Orange text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
White text on Dark Blue any size	White text on Light Blue ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	White text on Orange ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
Cream text on Dark Blue any size	Cream text on Light Blue ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Cream text on Orange ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
Yellow text on Dark Blue any size	Dark Blue text on Light Blue ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Blue text on Orange ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
Orange text on Dark Blue ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger		
Light Blue text on Dark Blue ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger		

All of September 2022

Acceptable Secondary Color Combinations

At the League, it is important that everything we do is accessible to everyone. We strive to reach the highest standards for ADA compliance in all our marketing and communication materials.

Shown here are color combinations and point size requirements for typography using the League secondary brand colors.

CREAM	PURPLE	95% BLACK TEXT (used in 'The Review')
Dark Blue text on Cream any size	Purple text on White any size	95% BLACK text on White any size
Purple text on Cream any size	Purple text on Cream any size	95% BLACK text on Cream any size
White text on Cream any size	White text on Purple any size	
Green text on Cream any size	Cream text on Purple any size	
Red text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Yellow text on Purple any size	
Orange text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Orange text on Purple ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	
Light Blue text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Light Blue text on Purple ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	
RED	GREEN	YELLOW (NO yellow text on white or cream background)
Red text on White any size	Green text on White any size	Dark Blue text on Yellow any size
White text on Red any size	Green text on Cream any size	Purple text on Yellow any size
Red text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	White text on Green any size	Green text on Yellow ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger
Cream text on Red ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Cream text on Green any size	
Yellow text on Cream ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	Yellow text on Green ONLY bold and 14 pt or larger	

All of September 2022

Writing Guidelines

We've also created official writing guidelines in which we address:

- our overall writing style: Chicago style, and the use of AP style for media materials to keep in line with industry standards
- terminology for league departments, programs, and partnerships
- grammar, punctuation, capitalization, etc.
- preferred language (e.g., using councilmember rather than councilman)

One voice for our organization with guidelines for changes in tone across our platforms and materials. 

Morgan Schwanky is a content developer for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6320 or mschwanky@mml.org.

Michigan Municipal League Writing Guide & Department Terminology

Overall Styles

Chicago Style: In nearly all documents, we follow Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition, which includes things like the Oxford comma before the and in a series of three or more items. The exception is material for the media/press.

AP Style: We use Associated Press (AP) Style in materials for the media, such as press releases, press statements, news advisories, etc. AP Style does not, for example, use the Oxford comma before the and in a series of three or more items.

League and Foundation Terms

- **Michigan Municipal League**—Spell out on first reference.
 - **Mission Statement:** 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**—On second and subsequent references. We do not use MML on second reference for the most part, unless it's referencing the Michigan Municipal League Foundation on second reference (see below).
- **The League** is run by a Board of Trustees and is led by a Board President and Vice President. The League Board of Trustees members should be referred to as Trustees.

Rev. 02 September 2020

League Departments, Programs, and Partnerships

Affiliates

MAM—Michigan Association of Mayors

- The Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) is the official nonpartisan organization of Michigan's chief elected officials. Representing over 100 Michigan communities, MAM works to assist the chief elected officials of cities, villages, and urban townships; advance the various interests and operations of communities represented by its members and all Michigan communities; promote cooperation among communities statewide; and advocate local interests at the state and federal level.
- Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) has a Board of Directors; board members should be referred to as Directors.
- Their annual meeting (where they elect officers) takes place during Convention.
- Website: <https://michiganmayors.org/>

MAMA—Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys

- The Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys (MAMA) is a specialized organization that provides a variety of services for municipal attorneys practicing in Michigan. Through MAMA's partnership with the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan's communities are strengthened.
- Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys (MAMA) has a Board of Directors.
- Website: <https://mama-online.org/>

Rev. 02 September 2020



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Putting Communities Ahead of Polluters

Alleviating Taxpayers' Burden of Treating PFAS-Contaminated Water

—By Michael DiGiannantonio



Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are found in nearly half of the tap water in the U.S., according to a recent study from the U.S. Geological Survey. Named “forever chemicals” because of their strong chemical bond, PFAS remain in the environment, in humans, and in wildlife for a very long time.

These man-made chemicals have been used in industry and consumer products for decades and can be found in drinking water and in air and food supply, affecting communities and posing a serious threat across rural, suburban, and urban areas.

What Are the Risks?

PFAS have been shown to have serious adverse effects on people’s health, including an increased risk of cancer, thyroid disorders, ulcerative colitis, an increase in liver enzymes, infertility, and pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia.

Due to PFAS widespread production and use, as well as their ability to remain in the environment, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that most people in the U.S. have been exposed to some levels of PFAS. In fact, a study suggests that PFAS chemicals could be found in 98 percent of the U.S. population.

As a result of these risks, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently took a significant step to protect public health by proposing to establish legally enforceable levels for six PFAS compounds known to occur in drinking water, which would introduce the first-ever national standard to address PFAS in drinking water. If finalized, the standard would regulate PFOA and PFOS as individual contaminants, and would regulate four other PFAS—PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and GenX Chemicals—as a mixture. This will require public water systems to monitor for these chemicals. It will also require systems to notify the public and reduce PFAS contamination if levels exceed the proposed regulatory standards.

The Cleanup Costs of PFAS

At the state level, many agencies are taking steps to address PFAS contamination by identifying and disclosing where PFAS are manufactured, where releases to the environment are occurring, and their use in food packaging and other consumer items. However, further actions are needed to ensure environmental protection and public safety, including increased investment in developing laboratory methods to test for PFAS in drinking water, in wastewater, and at contaminated sites; increased investment in research for treatment to remove PFAS in drinking water and at contaminated sites; and further research into associated human health risks.

“Unless the manufacturers responsible for PFAS pollution are held accountable, taxpayers are likely to be the ones to bear the burden of the billions of dollars needed to treat PFAS-contaminated water.”

Early estimates of the cost of removing PFAS from drinking water nationwide are about \$400 billion. These cleanup costs are only expected to rise as the hazards of PFAS become clearer and more regulators set removal requirements.

Unfortunately, the burden to cover the costs of PFAS cleanup, to meet accelerating federal drinking water regulations, and to provide healthcare for impacted individuals falls on state and local governments instead of the manufacturers responsible for PFAS production. For example, the American Water Works Association (AWWA) estimates that it could cost between \$3.2 and \$5.7 billion annually to implement technologies to address the EPA’s standard for PFAS in water.

For states that have already set drinking water limits for PFAS, such as New Jersey, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York, compliance costs are quickly creeping up and starting to affect drinking water rates. Many communities around the country impacted by PFAS are facing bills for billions of dollars for new water treatment technology. According to recent reports, PFAS cleanup has contributed to increasing water utility rates for residents in Westford, Massachusetts (by 22 percent), and it is anticipated to raise water rates in Wausau, Wisconsin, where water bills could increase by almost \$40 a month. Residents of Hawthorne, New Jersey, could see water bill increases of 13 percent in 2023 and 13 percent again in 2024.

Unless the manufacturers responsible for PFAS pollution are held accountable, taxpayers are likely to bear the burden of the billions of dollars needed to treat PFAS-contaminated water.

Holding Polluters Accountable

To shield water customers and taxpayers from the massive cost of PFAS cleanup, state and local governments across the country are taking legal actions against manufacturers of toxic chemicals that are contaminating much of the nation’s drinking water. More than a dozen states, including Michigan, Alaska, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New York, and Colorado, and hundreds of municipalities and water systems have already filed lawsuits against PFAS manufacturers for contamination of drinking water or natural resources, such as lakes and groundwater.

After the EPA MCL takes effect, communities with drinking water that will exceed the regulatory limits will either need to take the contaminated sources out of service and get water from elsewhere or implement treatment solutions,

both of which usually come at a great expense. Thus, it is anticipated that more entities will continue to pursue litigation against the responsible manufacturers in an attempt to recover these response costs.

Litigation Options: What Is an MDL?

As municipalities and water utilities across the U.S. filed lawsuits claiming that their water supplies have been contaminated with PFAS from aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), either alone or in combination with other PFAS-containing products, they have had their cases grouped together before the same court in a multidistrict litigation (MDL).

An MDL is a consolidation of many lawsuits from around the country involving similar claims by different plaintiffs against the same defendants. The purpose of the MDL is to consolidate the beginning stages of litigation while reserving each plaintiff’s right to take their own case to trial, with lawyers of their own choosing. Although MDLs can result in what are called “global settlements” of the claims brought by most or all the plaintiffs, it’s always up to each individual plaintiff whether to enter into a settlement. If the plaintiff is not happy with what’s being offered, it will have the chance to take it to federal court in its home state, and bring the case to trial there.

The AFFF MDL was formed in December 2018 and is being heard in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina. There are four categories of plaintiffs: water providers, property owners, personal injury plaintiffs, and the sovereigns (states, territories, and tribes).

Benefits of an MDL for PFAS?

If early cases in the MDL are resolved in favor of the plaintiffs, it often results in a domino effect of settlements for the remaining cases, which can be resolved without requiring lengthy discovery and pretrial litigation processes.

While the costs for cleaning up PFAS can be high, taking legal action doesn’t have to cost money up front. Some law firms work on a contingency basis—meaning that the firms advance the costs of litigation and are paid only if there is a successful outcome.

Proceedings in the MDL over PFAS have been underway for water providers for three years. Additional plaintiffs can still join the MDL, which is likely one of the faster routes to try to obtain compensation if your community has been impacted by PFAS.

PFAS Class Action Settlements

Recent developments in the ongoing MDL between PFAS manufacturers and water suppliers across the country that seek to hold polluters accountable for cleanup costs include proposed settlements from 3M, agreeing to pay up to \$12.5 billion, and DuPont and its related companies for \$1.1859 billion—an important step forward for communities impacted by PFAS.

If these settlements are approved by the court, all public water systems that are required to test under UCMR5 or have detected PFAS in at least one of their supply sources will be eligible to receive funds. Because the proposed agreements are structured as class action settlements, all eligible water systems will be included unless they opt out, regardless of whether they have filed lawsuits against the companies.

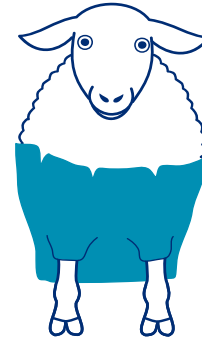
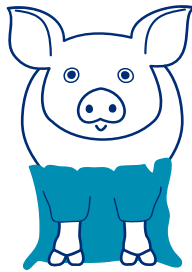
If approved, the proposed PFAS class action settlements may help eligible systems recover clean-up funds, but the process of submitting claims is likely to be complex and depend on a variety of data about each contaminated source. If the settlements are approved by the court, water systems will then only have a short, 60-day timeframe to decide if they should opt out from the settlement, which is expected to begin soon. It is important to note, however, that without the assistance of experienced counsel that are

knowledgeable about the settlements, communities will not know how much they're eligible to receive until after the opt-out period has concluded. This is why eligible municipalities and water systems will benefit from retaining legal counsel whether they plan to participate in the class action settlements or choose to opt out and pursue litigation against 3M and/or DuPont instead.

Michael DiGiannantonio is an attorney at SL Environmental Law Group. You may contact him at mdigiannantonio@slenvironment.com or 773-255-1529.



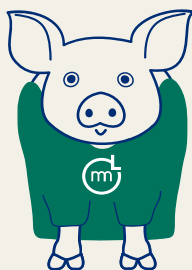
SL Environmental Law Group has over 20 years of experience helping municipalities, water systems, and states hold polluters accountable and is currently focused on helping public entities recover the costs of PFAS contamination. SL already represents more than 100 water providers in the current AFFF MDL and over the past decades has helped over 150 clients, resulting in over \$1.2 billion recovered in settlements and trials, to pay for the cost of contamination clean-up.



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Putting Fennville on the Map: Bilingual Wayfinding Signs

—By Liz Foley



Visitors might notice there's something a little different about finding their way around Fennville these days. With its brand-new bilingual wayfinding signs, the quiet little city on the southwest coast of Lake Michigan is doing more than just marking its territory: it's sending a message loud and clear that diversity is welcome here.

The project was the top award winner in the Consumers Energy Foundation's 2023 Put Your Town on the Map competition for innovative ideas to help Michigan's small towns grow and thrive.

The 37 new signs include four welcome signs at the north and south approaches to town and four kiosks, three in public parking lots and one in the downtown pocket park. The remaining 25 signs provide bilingual directions toward parking, landmarks, public institutions, and the downtown district itself.

The idea originated with DDA member Dawn Soltysiak's observation that out-of-town visitors often told her they didn't realize a city even existed within the region's wineries and orchards. The idea struck a chord. "Downtowns tell the story of who we are, but if people can't find the downtown, it's hard to share that story with others," said City Administrator Kathryn Beemer. "So, we set out to make our city more accessible to visitors, but also to our existing community."



“Fennville has a large, thriving Spanish-speaking community, and while many of these Spanish speakers are able to read English, having signage in their native language fosters a feeling of comfort and acceptance.”

—Teresa Kline, Library Director



“Downtowns tell the story of who we are, but if people can’t find the downtown, it’s hard to share that story with others. So, we set out to make our city more accessible to visitors, but also to our existing community.”

—City Administrator Kathryn Beemer



City Administrator Kathryn Beemer and DDA board member Dawn Soltysiak plot out the city's bilingual wayfinding signs.

The agricultural region has historically been home to a large migrant population, many of whom chose to stay and raise their families here. Over 50 percent of residents are Hispanic and over 40 percent speak English as a second language. “We have been very focused on extending the invitation of participation lately, and this wayfinding is a part of those efforts,” said Beemer. “By breaking down our first physical barrier of access—the language divide—we are giving the opportunity to everyone to participate.” The city’s bilingual initiative includes everything from social media posts to the annual water quality report.

Fennville District Library, which added Spanish language signage in 2018, recently dedicated “Reaching for the Stars,” a sculpture by artist Hector Vega celebrating the work and sacrifices of the migrant population to give their children a better life. It will be paired with video stories from community members about their lived experiences.

“Fennville has a large, thriving Spanish-speaking community, and while many of these Spanish speakers are able to read English, having signage in their native language fosters a feeling of comfort and acceptance,” said Library Director Teresa Kline. “Having leaders from throughout the community, not just city staff, involved in the project to add bilingual signage throughout the City of Fennville shows just how important these new signs are, and how invested everyone is in creating an inclusive, welcoming community.”

Fennville has now partnered with Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP), a Holland-based nonprofit focused on empowering Latinos to help create a better community through advocacy, education, and celebration. LAUP will soon open an office in city hall.

“At first, they will be providing document translation, document interpretation, form assistance, and referral assistance,” said Beemer. “As LAUP’s work strengthens within our community, they will be offering classes, such as English as a Second Language, or citizenship classes.”

Last year the school district’s summer migrant program served 28 kids from K-8th grade and two high school students.

“We go out and recruit our kids to come in and help with their education. If they are behind on something or need just a little more help, we help them,” said Special Programs Secretary Alicia Rodriguez.

The program goes beyond textbooks.

“We give them not only education for the summer but also experiences that they would not be able to do on their own,” said Rodriguez. “For example, we received a grant for swimming lessons, and we had kids that have never been in a pool.”

The city’s embrace of diversity, equality, and inclusion isn’t limited to ethnicity. They work closely with the library, schools, and community organizations to promote programming for people of all ages and backgrounds, including the local LGBTQ+ community.

“As a very diverse community, we resonate with the value and importance of inclusion,” said Beemer.

“That’s why we work tirelessly to ensure that every person who steps foot in Fennville, be they a resident, visitor, or a passerby who has stumbled upon our thriving community, feels genuinely welcomed and supported here.”

One new initiative this year is Fourth Fridays in Fennville, a free event hosted each month by a different community organization with a different theme based on at least one of the city’s core values: Transparency, Respect, Openness, Accountability, Efficiency, Creativity, Compassion, and Inclusivity.

June’s Pride Month celebration, hosted by Campit Outdoor Resort, was Fennville’s first LGBTQ+ programming. “Fennville’s substantial LGBTQ+ population was represented during this event and expressed a deep appreciation and gratitude for being seen, heard, and welcomed for the first time officially,” said Beemer. “However, families of all ages, backgrounds, and orientations attended the event, showed support, participated in activities, and gave thanks for having a safe and celebratory space for the community to gather and enjoy an afternoon of fun and togetherness.”

Mayor Dan Rastall agreed. “Our motto is ‘a place to grow,’ and we mean that. Fennville is a great place to put down roots and we want to show that off,” said Rastall. But there must be buy-in from everyone. “The school, local businesses, various committees, and the city—we all must pull in the same direction to reach our goal of making Fennville a special place to call home,” he said. “If an engine isn’t firing on all cylinders, then it won’t run correctly. One of the things I love the most about Fennville is the spirit of cooperation that exists in our community.” [L](#)

Liz Foley is a freelance writer. You may contact her at 810-287-8549 or lizfoley2@gmail.com.



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MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONVENTION 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

The energy never stopped at this year's Convention in beautiful Traverse City. General session speakers had attendees building real-time word clouds, realizing the positive influence of public art and a few cans of paint, learning about the power of place in industries like agritourism, and appreciating that 'garden hose solutions' to community needs are often within reach and within budget. The spirit of collaboration and engagement rolled right into the Community Excellence Award "Race for the Cup" and celebration of this year's leadership award winners. We're already looking forward to the conversations and aha moments we'll have together on Mackinac Island, September 11-13, 2024.



The Michigan Black Caucus-Local Elected Officials (MBC-LEO) October meeting.



The October meeting of the Michigan Women in Municipal Government. (MWIMG)



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Congratulations to the City of Bridgman, the 2023 Community Excellence Award winner! Their project, The Bridgman Courtyard, transformed an underutilized parking lot into a vibrant community gathering space—complete with artwork from local students! Your hard work has made a difference.

Thank you!

Fabulous Runners-Up



Explore. Learn. Grow: How a Children's Museum Revitalized Downtown Coldwater—City of Coldwater



City of Westland: Mission to Mars Themed Playground—City of Westland



Port Huron's McMorran Place Plaza Revitalization—City of Port Huron

2023 Awards, Welcome Reception, and Educational Tours



Rosalynn Bliss

Honorary Life Membership Award

Honorary Life Membership, first awarded in 1932, is the League's highest honor, reserved for the most active and inspiring leaders dedicated to the League and its mission.



Melanie Piana

Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award

Celebrating a chief elected official who personifies professionalism and leadership, is an active League member, is dedicated to the citizens in their community and advocates on their behalf in Lansing and Washington, DC.

MML President and Sterling Heights Councilmember Barb Ziarko and Ferndale Mayor and past MML President Melanie Piana



Anita Ashford

Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award

Celebrating a person dedicated to public service who has shown passion and commitment to the League, enthusiastically supporting its mission and promoting its purpose.



Port Huron Councilmember Anita Ashford and MML President-elect Bob Clark, mayor of Monroe.



Curtis Holt was awarded the John M. Patriarche Distinguished Service Award.

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Troy Prevails in Billboard Case

–By Bill Mathewson

Regulation of billboards is a contentious issue (see *The Review* January/February 2016).

Billboard company International Outdoor, Inc. sued the City of Troy alleging that its zoning variance process created unconstitutional prior restraint on speech and imposed content-based restrictions in violation of free speech. The company had sought permission to erect billboards, but the city denied its permit application and its request for a variance.

Troy's original ordinance required a permit for any sign unless one of six exceptions applied, such as street signs, small ground signs, and temporary signs. The ordinance also contained specific size, height, and location requirements for "ground signs" including billboards. Variances were permitted if certain conditions were met. The company sought to erect two, two-sided billboards. The permit was denied because the height, size, and setback requirements were not met as was the request for a variance because the variance conditions were not met.

In February 2017, the company sued in federal court claiming, in Count I, the variance procedure was unconstitutional prior restraint because it lacked narrow, objective, and definite standards to guide the Zoning Board of Appeals' decision. It also claimed, in Count II, that because some of the permit exceptions were content based, the entire ordinance was unconstitutional. Troy moved to dismiss both counts. The federal district court denied the city's motion re prior restraint (Count I); it dismissed the company's challenge to the permit exceptions, holding that the ordinance regulates commercial speech and survives *intermediate scrutiny*.

Following a motion by the company for summary judgement, Troy amended its ordinance to limit official discretion re the variance procedure. It also modified the permit exceptions to ensure content neutrality.

The district court ultimately held in favor of Troy on Count I, since under the city's revised ordinance the company's billboards wouldn't qualify for either a permit or variance. While the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals (COA) affirmed re Count I, it reversed the district court's dismissal of Count II "because the original Ordinance's permit exceptions were content-based restrictions, requiring *strict scrutiny* under *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* . . ."

The case was remanded to the district court. The court applied the Supreme Court's decision in *Reed*. It held "that the permit exceptions did not survive strict scrutiny. It reasoned that the Ordinance's purpose—'to reduce the proliferation of signs', which creates traffic hazards, restricts light and air, and diminishes property values—


was not a compelling government interest. Nor was the Ordinance narrowly tailored to further that asserted interest." However, the district court agreed with the city that the invalid exceptions were severable, so the remainder of the ordinance could stand.

The company appealed. The COA analyzed the severability aspects of the ordinance and the contested provisions. ". . . the City amended its Ordinance to redefine the exceptions for 'temporary signs' and flags in valid, content-neutral terms. The amendment ensured that Troy citizens would not need to obtain a permit before erecting garage-sale or other small yard signs, for example. It also demonstrated the utility of a severability clause, which allowed the City to continue to enforce the substantive remainder while it reworked the discrete, unconstitutional provisions."

"The City made clear that it wished to preserve the Ordinance in the face of constitutional challenges to discrete sections, and the sub-subsections at issue were not so entangled with the other provisions so as to make the Ordinance inoperable without them."

The COA agreed with the lower court decision that Troy was correct in this regard. And the COA affirmed the order of the district court in favor of Troy.

Interestingly, a concurring opinion by circuit judge Suhrheinrich even more clearly favored the city's position. "International Outdoor is subject to the size restrictions that bar its signs because of the distinction between ground signs and temporary signs. But that distinction is permissible. It was only the city's use of *content-based examples* to illuminate what was and was not a temporary sign that was questionable . . . the content-based examples alone could be severed from the ordinance. The remaining provisions would still allow temporary signs without a permit and require a permit for ground signs, and International Outdoor's too large and too permanent signs would still be prohibited by the ordinance. (Emphasis added.)

[77 F. 4th 432 \(2023\)](#). 

Bill Mathewson is a legal consultant to the League. You may contact him at wmathewson@mml.org.

This column highlights a recent judicial decision or Michigan Municipal League Legal Defense Fund case that impacts municipalities. The information in this column should not be considered a legal opinion or to constitute legal advice.



CITY OF MACKINAC ISLAND

Receives Certified Local Government Status to Support Historic Preservation Activities



–By Kathleen Achtenberg

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), part of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), announced that the City of Mackinac Island has been accepted to the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, following confirmation from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

“Mackinac Island is a special place, defined, in part, by its connection to the past,” said then State Historic Preservation Officer Mark A. Rodman (he left office on June 15, 2022). “The Island’s cultural and historical significance underlie its stature as a world-class destination and live on today in the efforts of the City of Mackinac Island, Mackinac Island State Park, and others who work to preserve and share the story of the island’s history. We are excited to welcome the city to the CLG program and look forward to working alongside the city in its ongoing preservation journey.”

The Certified Local Government program is a partnership among local, state, and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the local level. The National Park Service administers the program in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office. Certification makes the City of Mackinac Island eligible for specialized technical assistance and programming from the SHPO.

Participation in the CLG program also makes the community eligible for federal grants provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior and administered by the SHPO. These grants may be used for a variety of preservation activities, such as historic resource surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, educational and heritage tourism initiatives, pre-development plans and studies, and rehabilitation of certain historic properties. The CLG program will provide the city of Mackinac Island with funding opportunities and additional tools to meet its preservation goals.

“The City of Mackinac Island wishes to express its appreciation to the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service,” said Mayor Margaret Doud. “The city and its Historic District Commission, as well as the Mackinac Island Foundation, see this is a great opportunity to receive further guidance and support from the SHPO and the National Park Service. The state and the nation are

blessed with this island that has so many historic structures and settings, all of which tell great stories about our heritage.”

Unique among Michigan’s cultural landscapes, Mackinac Island’s natural beauty and historic character remain a strong draw for the renowned destination. Preservation efforts on the island date to 1875, with the federal government’s establishment of Mackinac National Park. This later became Mackinac Island State Park, which covers over 80 percent of the island. In 1960, the entire island was designated as a National Historic Landmark, recognizing the island’s significance to indigenous cultures and its role in the fur trade, defense on the western frontier, and the rise of the summer resort industry after the Civil War.

In 2010, the City of Mackinac Island established its first local historic districts to protect the character of the island’s irreplaceable heritage assets. Two additional districts were established in 2013. Today, the city continues to build on its preservation ethic by working with property owners and documenting additional sites of significance to the community.

“Mackinac Island is one of Michigan’s premier cultural destinations, and it is in large part because of the community’s efforts to maintain the unique history of the community, that so many visitors are drawn to the island year after year,” said Dave Lorenz, vice president of Travel Michigan, part of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “Efforts like the CLG program are extremely important in supporting our tourism industry across the state. We applaud the City of Mackinac Island’s continued commitment to historic preservation.”

Mackinac Island joins a growing network of more than 2,000 Certified Local Governments across the country, including 38 other Michigan communities. There is no cost to participate in the program, but communities must meet certain requirements. Participating communities must have a local historic district ordinance and appoint a historic district commission to review proposed work in locally designated historic districts. CLGs must also encourage public participation in the local historic preservation program and seek ways to identify, protect, and celebrate important historic resources in their community.



MICHIGAN'S CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Allegan | Lansing |
| Ann Arbor | Linden |
| Battle Creek | Livonia |
| Bay City | Mackinac Island |
| Birmingham | Manistee |
| Boyer City | Mason |
| Calumet | Menominee |
| Canton Township | Monroe |
| Charlevoix | Mount Clemens |
| Coldwater | Muskegon |
| Detroit | Niles |
| East Lansing | Northville |
| Escanaba | Northville Township |
| Ewart | Owosso |
| Farmington Hills | Pontiac |
| Franklin | Rochester Hills |
| Grand Rapids | Royal Oak |
| Highland Park | Saginaw |
| Holland | Saline |
| Jackson | Washtenaw County |
| Kalamazoo | Ypsilanti |

Unique among Michigan's cultural landscapes, Mackinac Island's natural beauty and historic character remain a strong draw for the renowned destination.

About the State Historic Preservation Office

Focused on the historic preservation of culturally or archaeologically significant sites throughout the state, Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office's main function is to provide technical assistance to local communities and property owners in their efforts to identify, evaluate, designate, interpret, and protect Michigan's historic above- and below-ground resources. SHPO also administers an incentives program that includes federal tax credits and pass-through grants available to Certified Local Governments.

To learn more about the State Historic Preservation Office and the Certified Local Government program, visit <https://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/>.

About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state's marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan's economy.

For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit www.MichiganBusiness.org. For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at www.michigan.org. Join the conversation on: Facebook Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter). [L](#)

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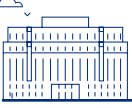
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

–By Rick Haglund

Finnish immigrant Irma Boyd dreamed for years of starting a bakery and cafe in downtown Hancock serving authentic Nordic food, including recipes from her Finnish grandmother. But she couldn't find a bank to finance it. "Our banker was fond of my idea, but he could not get his board to give me a loan because I was a startup," she said. But Northern Initiatives, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), was willing to help.

Northern Initiatives arranged a \$26,000 Small Business Administration microloan and a subsequent \$36,000 loan for unexpected leasehold improvements that allowed Boyd to see her vision become reality. Nisu Bakery and Café (Nisu is an old Finnish word meaning wheat) opened earlier this year, filling a need for people to chat over a cup of coffee and a Finnish cardamom roll in this Upper Peninsula community that has few regularly open gathering spots. "Business has been very good," Boyd said. "This is what we needed in Hancock."

CDFIs are private-sector financial institutions, including banks, credit unions, loan funds, and venture capital providers. They seek to revitalize low-income, underserved communities by providing loans to small businesses, housing developers, and other borrowers who cannot qualify for traditional bank loans. They were authorized by a 1994 federal law, named for former Michigan Sen. Don Riegle, who was chairman of the Senate Banking Committee. There are about 50 CDFIs operating in Michigan, including 25 credit unions, a bank, and 24 nondepository loan funds like Northern Initiatives. Michigan CDFIs have generated 1,700 loans to Michigan businesses, nonprofits, and redevelopment projects totaling \$370 million and creating 7,600 full-time jobs, according to 2020 data from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Michigan CDFIs are working to expand their scope through a new collaboration funded by a \$150,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In January, they formed the Michigan CDFI Coalition, which is working on economic policymaking, fundraising, and raising awareness about CDFIs. Coalition President Elissa Sangalli said the need for greater collaboration among CDFIs became apparent during the COVID pandemic when the federal government rolled out billions of dollars in funding for small businesses through financial institutions, including CDFIs. "A group of us started to look at how we could better share best practices and make it easier for industry and community leaders to find CDFIs," said Sangalli, who also is president of Northern Initiatives.

The coalition is in the process of launching a website, which will include a page on helping small businesses see if they qualify for CDFI funding. "We're excited about the platform," said Jennifer Hayes, senior vice president of operations and policy at Invest Detroit, a CDFI that received the Kellogg Foundation coalition planning grant. Invest Detroit has a variety of real estate and business loan programs designed to promote equity and boost minority business investment in one of the poorest large cities in the country. Invest Detroit financing has supported more than 100 minority entrepreneurs and developers and more than 5,200 new housing units in the city.

Coalition leaders cite their advocacy for the creation of the new Michigan Community Development Financial Institution Fund Program as one their biggest successes so far. The fund was awarded \$75 million from the state budget in the current fiscal year and another \$19 million in the next fiscal year starting in October. Qualifying CDFIs are eligible to receive grants from the fund, which is administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corp.

The cash will be targeted to assist communities like Hancock, a community of about 4,500 residents that has struggled with vacant downtown storefronts and job losses. A particularly painful blow to the city was the closing this year of Finlandia University, which was founded in 1896 and once employed more than 600 people.

Hancock City Manager Mary Babcock described the opening of Nisu Bakery and Café as "a bit of good news for us. It's really important because it's a community-driven business. People go there to socialize and play cards. It fits the narrative we have here" of a community with a rich Finnish heritage. Babcock and Boyd said CDFIs can be an important element in sparking growth in underserved communities like Hancock in partnership with local governments that need to become more aware of CDFIs. Babcock "came in once a week to see what we needed" while the bakery was under construction. "I never had a city be so on top of everything," said Boyd, who has past business startup experience in several countries. Sangalli said financing restaurants, retailers, and other small businesses in downtowns has gotten even more difficult because of the aftereffects of the COVID pandemic. Many downtown workers were forced to work from home and did not return when the pandemic eased. Traditional bank financing has all but dried up for many of those small employers. "Thirty percent of the businesses we fund are

startups,” Sangalli said. “Our loans are at competitive rates. They might be at a higher interest rate than banks would charge because they’re in a riskier sector. But our terms are really flexible.”

Inflation and higher interest rates are suppressing lending, and CDFIs are also feeling the pinch. They borrow much of the money they lend out and are paying more for those funds than they did just a couple of years ago. “Our cost of capital is higher, so we don’t have as much capital to deploy,” Hayes said. But the new CDFI coalition could help by securing more grant funding. One of its goals is to obtain permanent funding for the Michigan CDFI Fund.

And it hopes to boost greater awareness of CDFIs among potential borrowers, and local community and business leaders through its new website and future marketing efforts. “We want it to be easier for people to find us,” Sangalli said. Boyd, the owner of Nisu Bakery and Café, said she’s glad she did. Her CDFI, Northern Initiative, “believed in me and what I had, and I’m happy,” she said. [L](#)

Rick Haglund is a freelance writer. You may contact him at 248-761-4594 or haglund.rick@gmail.com.



With assistance from Northern Initiatives, Finnish immigrant Irma Boyd was able to open Nisu Bakery & Cafe in Hancock, serving authentic Nordic food.




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R. Brent Savidant, planning director, City of Troy



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Handbooks

These handbooks are essential reading material for new and veteran elected and appointed officials in cities, general law, and home-rule villages.

Topics covered include:

- Structure and Function of Local Government in Michigan
- Roles and Responsibilities of Municipal Officials
- How to Select and Work with Consultants
- Running Meetings
- Personnel and Human Resources Issues
- Special Assessments and User Charges
- Planning and Zoning Basics

Numerous appendices include:

- Open Meetings Act
- Freedom of Information Act
- Sample Council Rules of Procedure
- A Glossary
- Frequently Asked Questions
- A Sample Budget Ordinance





Q. I am trying to place an ad for a job opening on the League website and I am unable to do so using my personal login. How do I post a job opening?

A. In order to post an ad for a job on the MML upgraded website, you have to create a separate account. Click on “Classified,” then click on “Post a Job,” and then click on “Sign In or Create an Account.” Or, go to <https://classifieds.mml.org/employer/login/>

Q. We are a general law village, and we can't find seven residents/electors to serve on our village council. What can we do?

A. As a general law village, you are authorized to reduce the number of trustees on council from six to four. This is accomplished by passing an ordinance. The League has a sample ordinance.

Note: The ordinance takes effect 45 days after the date of adoption unless a petition signed by not less than ten percent of the registered electors of the village is filed with the village clerk within the 45-day period in which case the ordinance will take effect upon the approval of an election held on the question. If the ordinance is passed, notice of the delayed effect of the ordinance and the right of petition must be published separately at the same time and in the same manner as the ordinance is published. The League has a sample notice included at the end of the sample ordinance.

Q. Who is responsible for putting items on the agenda for a council meeting?

A. The procedure for placing an item on the agenda is a local rule. The offices typically responsible are the clerk, mayor, president, and the manager. Combinations of these offices are also common.

A typical agenda preparation provision looks like this (City of Fremont):

“The City Manager and City Clerk shall prepare an agenda for each regular or special meeting of the City Council. The deadline for submitting items to the City Manager or City Clerk for inclusion on the Council agenda is 12:00 noon on the Thursday preceding the Monday of the Council meetings. Agenda items from Councilmembers should be submitted in writing by the same deadline. Depending on the complexity of the issue, and the need for any research and preparation, staff will attempt to include requested items on a meeting agenda within two meetings after receipt of the request.”

There are variations, such as in the City of Portage's council rules: “Any Councilmember, Mayor or City Manager may prepare items for consideration on the agenda of Council meetings. The Clerk shall prepare copies of the agenda of the business to be considered at each regular council meeting. No business shall be placed on the agenda by the Clerk unless received not later than 12:00 o'clock noon on the Friday preceding the meeting, except upon the approval of four (4) or more members of the Council.”

And the Village of Berrien Springs' council rules stipulate: “The Village President, the Village Clerk and/or other responsible administrative officers or employees at the Village Hall, shall prepare the agenda or business for regularly scheduled Council meetings. Any other member or representative of committees, boards or commissions desiring to place a matter on the agenda shall notify the Village President, the Village Clerk, and/or other responsible administrative officers or employees at the Village Hall of such items by 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the next meeting. Items that the Village President or the Village Clerk does not receive by the stated deadline shall not be considered by the Council except upon the unanimous consent of the members present.”

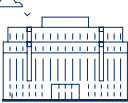
The League has over 80 sample council rules of procedure—we can customize a search and send you samples with specific provisions. We also have sample agenda item request forms.

Q. I have a village email account. Are those emails subject to FOIA? In addition, I also have a village cell phone. Are the contents of the cell phone subject to FOIA also?

A. Under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act, all records created in the performance of an official function are public records, regardless of the method in which they were created (e.g., email, text, paper) or what type of device they are on. They must be managed the same way as those created and received using government computer resources.

For more information, see the League's Fact Sheet: Email and Retention of Records, available at mml.org.

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.



LEAGUE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

–By Margaret Mooney

Inquiry Service

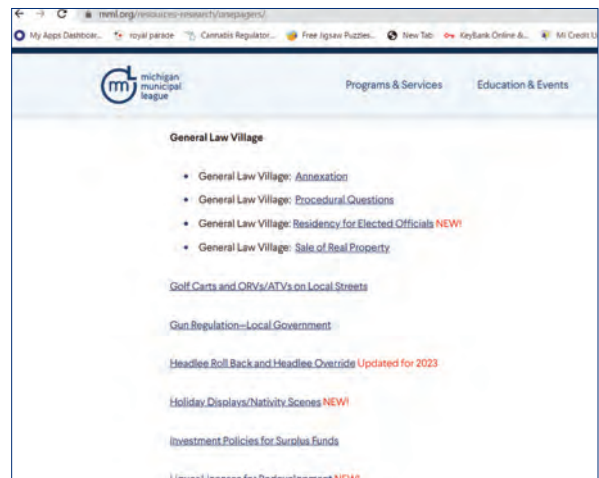
The Michigan Municipal League works hard to stay informed on local government issues so that we may provide quality assistance and resources to our members. We supply critical information on core topics, helping to steer our member municipalities through the complexities of local governance. To do this, we have built an extensive library of sample ordinances, policies, contracts, employee handbooks, and fact sheets on key municipal topics. Any staff member, elected official, or appointed official in a member municipality may contact the League for information. As one of the League’s original services, the Inquiry Service has been used by 100 percent of our members. The most frequently asked questions relate to parliamentary procedure; requests for sample policies and ordinances; charter information; the Open Meetings Act (OMA); and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In addition, we provide custom research on a vast array of other municipal topics upon request.

Publications

The following League local government primers have been created for member use and are part of our steadily growing and routinely revised materials library:

Handbook for Municipal Officials and Handbook for General Law Village Officials

These handbooks are essential reading material for both new and veteran elected and appointed officials. Topics covered include basics of public service, the structure and function of local government in Michigan, roles and responsibilities of officials, writing ordinances, running a meeting, financial operations, personnel and human resources issues, labor relations issues, and risk management. The numerous appendices also cover: the 1998 revisions to the General Law Village Act, a summary of other laws that affect municipal government, municipal Q&As, a sample budget ordinance, sample council rules, and summaries of the OMA and FOIA. Both handbooks have gone through comprehensive updates and are available on our website.



Fact Sheets

Fact sheets are one-page summaries of common local government topics. Over the years, the League has created a catalog of fact sheets on a wide range of topics. Among these, we have the following specifically for General Law Village (GLV) communities:

- Annexation
- Default
- Procedural Questions
- Residency for Elected Officials
- Sale of Real Property

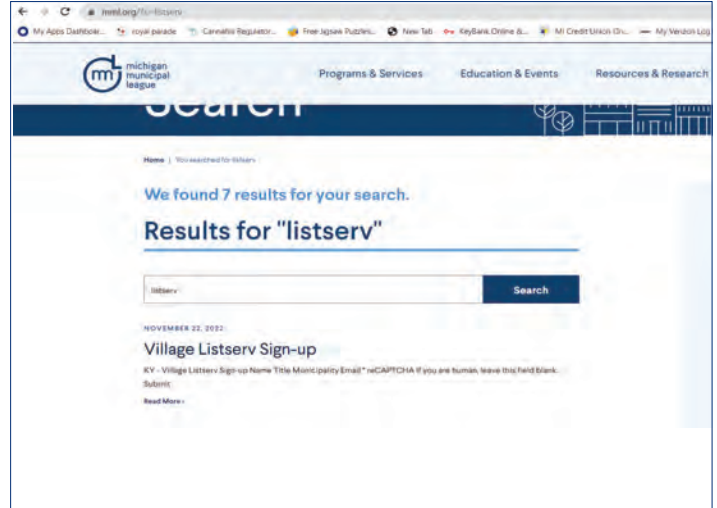
These and all other League fact sheets are available on our website.

Village Listserv

The League developed a listserv for village officials and employees to provide a mechanism for our member villages to address issues of common concern. Anyone who is a member of the listserv can send a message to the listserv email address and it will be received by all other members on the list. When a recipient replies, everyone in the listserv will receive the reply. If the recipient wishes to respond only to the person sending the message or to a specific audience, a separate email should be addressed to those individuals. Participation is limited to current League member village officials and employees. If you're not signed up for this valuable tool, go to mml.org and type "listserv" into the search box in the upper right-hand corner of our site. Click on the first link in the results "Village Listserv Sign Up." After filling in and submitting the template, you should receive access in one to two days.

Records Management

Additionally, the Records Management Handbook for Cities and Villages (Schedule #8) is the records retention schedule written by the State of Michigan's professional archivists. It has been updated on a chapter-by-chapter basis over the last several years and is available online.



The League is proud of the range of resources that we offer our members. However, the one thing we are not permitted to do is give legal advice. You must contact your municipal attorney if you need a legal opinion.. [L](#)

Margaret Mooney is a membership associate for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6324 or mmooney@mml.org.

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