

# the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

September/October 2010

“ IN 12 YEARS WE WILL  
HAVE PAID FOR THE INSTALLATION  
AND WILL HAVE 13 YEARS OF FREE  
ELECTRICITY THEREAFTER.”

-George Bosanic  
Greenville City Manager

**DETROIT'S  
Visionaries**

Shop Local in  
**EVART**

**2010 League  
CONVENTION  
Lineup**

**Port Austin's  
Farmers Market**

**Becoming  
Green'ER'ville**

*West Michigan City Going Solar*

# the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

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# the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 83, Number 5

## Better Communities. Better Michigan.

The Michigan Municipal League is the one clear voice for Michigan communities. Our goals are to aid them in creating desirable and unique places through legislative and judicial advocacy; to provide educational opportunities for elected and appointed officials; and to assist municipal leaders in administering community services. Our mission is that of a non-profit, but we act with the fervor of entrepreneurs to passionately push change for better communities and a better Michigan.

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*The Review* relies on contributions from municipal officials, consultants, legislators, League staff and others to maintain the magazine's high quality editorial content. Please contact the editor at 734-662-3246 for an editorial calendar and writer's guidelines. Information is also available at: [www.mml.org/marketingkit/](http://www.mml.org/marketingkit/).

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## The Buzz Around “Green”

Here at the Michigan Municipal League, we're out to show you that it is possible to be “green”—when you've got the guidance and resources you need to grow green industries, implement sustainable practices, and get on the cutting edge of current trends.

Sure, we all know “green” is a big buzz word these days. But this isn't about being trendy. The League understands that the way we use energy and natural resources impacts our quality of life and our financial bottom line. It's why the Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) includes Green Initiatives among the eight assets of a viable community. It's why the League's Environmental Affairs Service is available fulltime to assist League members with environmental protection and natural resource management issues at the state and federal levels. It's why 21c3's Technical Services and Solutions are available to help you find the tools and funding you need to make it all happen.

And it's why our Lansing staff is promoting legislation that protects our natural resources, supports clean and renewable energy, and promotes sustainability.

Right now, the League is working with the Senate, the MEDC, and developers in several of our communities, including Lansing and Grand Rapids, to create legislation that will allow communities to offer incentives for builders to build “green” buildings.

The bills, SB 1111 and SB 1114, will add a new provision to the Commercial Redevelopment Act that would allow a commercial facilities tax exemption for a LEED-certified facility (or facility with a comparable certification) in a municipality of 20,000 or more residents. Commercial facilities would receive up to half of the real property taxes and be excluded from the State Education Tax (SET).

There is also a component that adds LEED or comparable properties as eligible brownfield activities if they utilize renewable energy and other green improvements to buildings. While some builders are already doing green projects, this legislation is a local option that would allow communities to provide an incentive for further green builds.

On the federal level, the League has been supportive of funding for local communities through the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, and our own “Green Communities Challenge” has received recognition as one of the pre-eminent programs for local governments seeking ways to go green.

At the same time, we never lose sight of the fact that some of the most important societal changes occur at the grassroots level. At this year's Convention in Dearborn, Sept. 21-24, Wednesday's keynote speakers are Jacky and Dora King, whose karate school and urban farm are literally feeding the hearts, minds, and bodies of youth in one of

Flint's most impoverished neighborhoods. The Kings, along with the Ruth Mott Foundation's Erin Caudell, will also offer an in-depth presentation on urban agriculture.

So don't stop here. As you flip through *The Review*, you'll find stories that can inform, inspire, and enlighten us all on the possibilities and promise of going green—from Grand Rapids' sustainability legacy to the solar revolution taking place in Greenville. I hope you'll enjoy it, and I look forward to seeing all of you in Dearborn in September!



### Not Your Typical Convention! New Concepts...

League Convention programming is centered on the eight critical assets for vibrant communities as identified by our Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3). The assets are: physical design & walkability; green initiatives; cultural economic development; entrepreneurship; multiculturalism; messaging & technology; transit; and education.

These eight assets will drive the change we need to achieve “Better Communities. Better Michigan.” and they guide the League in everything we do—from the issues we tackle in Lansing to the seminars and workshops we bring to your doorstep.

This year we're bringing in high-energy, passionate presenters to create a fast-paced, intense and exciting experience based around the eight assets. We'll combine the best that national experts offer with our own local success stories from around the state to deliver dynamic, to-the-point presentations followed by break-out discussions.

Be a part of the transformation and join us in Dearborn September 21-24 for a Convention you won't forget!

**Details:**  
[convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)



Daniel P. Gilmartin  
League executive director and CEO  
734-669-6302, [dpg@mml.org](mailto:dpg@mml.org)



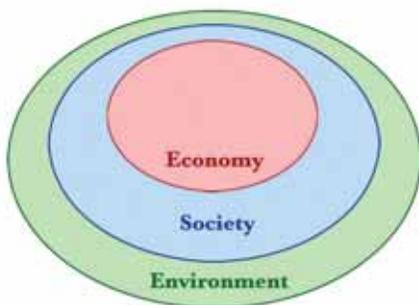
# SO WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY

| By Saulius Mikalonis |

**S**ustainability is changing the way corporations and governments work. William Clay Ford, Jr., executive chairman and chairman of the board of Ford Motor Company, had this to say about sustainability: “Our economic and environmental goals are aligned. In fact, we believe that the best way for us to be more profitable is to make our business and products more sustainable.” These words from one of Michigan’s top business leaders show a paradigm shift in how corporate institutions are reevaluating business models and operational goals. The state of Michigan has had a sustainability agenda since 2002. Even the federal government, through legislation, regulation, and executive orders, now requires sustainability in its assessment of day-to-day operations.

## THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

So what is sustainability? Sustainability has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a balance between three objectives: environmental, economic, and social outcomes. Known as the “triple bottom line,” each of these goals must be met for an organization to become sustainable. Success is measured not just by financial gain, but also by environmental impact and the society to which it contributes.



*The triple bottom line concept of sustainability balances three objectives: environmental, societal, and economic.*

What drives sustainability? It is the recognition that all the issues faced by municipalities are linked together. One simply cannot act on one issue without having an impact on others. Sustainability requires long-term planning, coupled with stakeholder involvement, to drive policy decisions. Mayor Bloomberg of New York City describes the ideology shift perfectly:

“When our Office of Long Term Planning began its work more than a year ago, the goal was to create a strategic land use plan. But we soon realized that you can’t formulate a land use plan without thinking about transportation and you can’t think about transportation without thinking about air quality. You can’t think about air quality without thinking about energy and you certainly can’t think about energy—or any of this—without thinking about global warming.”

—Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, New York City

The lessons learned in New York, as well as in the private sector, are easily transferrable to any size municipality. The difference in scale and priorities do not change the fact that sustainable communities identify the links between all



municipal and private services. A path towards achieving sustainability exists for any organization that desires to achieve it.

As policymakers, municipal leaders hold a unique position to direct social change. Almost all sustainability initiatives require significant stakeholder and constituent participation, which ensures that a municipality does not outpace what the community wants. But with the right community outreach and tools in place to consider and implement community needs and wants, there is a way to achieve a wider sustainable model.

### ASSESS YOUR CHALLENGES

How does a municipality move from here to there? First, it needs to assess what challenges it faces. As every municipality and populace living within it is different than others, the challenges are also different. Common elements include water, sewer, air quality, transportation, land use planning, open space, recreation, solid waste, and recycling. Once those challenges are identified, the next phase requires determining which are the most serious, what ordinances and regulations currently apply, which regulations and ordinances can reasonably be developed, how easy or difficult will it be to meet the challenge, to what extent working on one issue affect another synergistically, and what stakeholder groups are working on a particular issue or available to work on the issue.

### ADDRESS YOUR PRIORITIES

Once priorities are set, identify the legal and practical impairments and opportunities. Next, set appropriate goals and objectives. Some of these goals and objectives should be measurable, so that a later assessment can identify whether the goals have been met or whether the plan needs adjustment. Once the plan is put into place, it must become a priority to see it incorporated and implemented. Periodic monitoring and auditing through metrics and community evaluation ensure that successes and failures are identified, choke points determined, and any needed adjustments implemented. Finally, once progress is documented, the planning process begins anew to implement improvements to the plan and tackle other priorities not part of the initial plan.

### PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Reaching a level of sustainability is not as difficult a road as it may seem. A thorough review of operations provides a roadmap to identifying inefficiencies and waste. There is “low hanging fruit” in terms of energy and resource use that can have immediate impacts with relatively little investment. Numerous private companies and public organizations can conduct an audit and generate ideas for improved operation, which will result in savings economically, but will also result in reduced use of natural resources and reductions in a municipal operation’s “carbon footprint.” Because most of the energy in Michigan is produced using fossil fuels, and predominantly coal, lower energy use equals a reduction in



#### **From top to bottom:**

*A rain garden is a bowl or saucer-shaped garden, planted with perennial native plants, designed to absorb stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots. Pictured is the rain garden at Hastings Public Library, the only LEED gold certified library in Michigan.*

*The Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising has three photovoltaic systems, providing power for the lighthouse and associated exhibit; some utilities for seasonal resident workers; water well and fire suppression pumps; and fans reducing winter freeze-thaw damage.*

*The Clam River Greenway in Cadillac is 1,600 feet of boardwalk, connecting people, neighborhoods, and resources. Most sections of the greenway are completely insulated from city streets, reducing conflict with vehicular traffic and making the path a safe alternative for non-motorized users.*



The Coldwater municipal building uses a geexchange system for heating and cooling.

the amount of coal burned, which in turn leads to fewer greenhouse gases being emitted. In fact, it is easy to track how much carbon is not released and reported annually to your constituents. Plus, where fewer dollars are spent heating and lighting municipal buildings or running idling emergency and police vehicles, the more there is for other municipal priorities.

Sustainability is changing the way corporations and governments work. In addition to providing real benefits to the environment and local communities, a properly designed sustainability program will result in improvements in financial position for any organization, public or private. Sustainability is central to placemaking and creating viable, attractive, and healthy communities.

Sustainable living is blind to size and demographics. It is at the core of what it means to be successful in the 21st century. 

Saulius Mikalonis as an attorney with the law firm of Plunkett & Cooney. You may reach him at 248-901-4022 or [smikalonis@plunkettcooney.com](mailto:smikalonis@plunkettcooney.com).

### CONVENTION SPEAKER



**James Howard Kunstler**  
Physical Design & Walkability

Nationally known author, social critic, urban



planning expert and journalist James Howard Kunstler will talk about his vision for a future beyond fossil fuels. Kunstler has long been recognized as a fierce critic of suburban sprawl and the high costs associated with an automobile-centric culture. He has lectured extensively about urban design, energy issues.

Details: [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)

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# what happened to Port Austin?

By Judy Binkley

*John and Lisa Pridnia, that's what. Retired State Senator John Pridnia and his wife Lisa settled in Port Austin, attracted by its natural beauty, breathtaking shore line, small town atmosphere, and friendly folks. But something was missing. After much soul searching, they realized that right in the heart of farm country, there was no designated place to purchase fresh home grown produce. Port Austin should have a farmers market!*



Of course, you have to know John and Lisa; what a team! Every community has a few people like them, and if they don't they sure wish they did...the self-motivated, highly driven individuals that make "stuff" happen.

John began by picking a suitable location. There was a lot of thought behind that decision. It had to be highly visible and in the downtown area. He wanted "The Market" to be within walking distance of local stores and restaurants. It would be a win-win situation for everyone—people would come downtown, visit the market, walk to the other stores in the community, stop, shop, and have breakfast or lunch.

Guess what? That is exactly what happened! The market gives the local farmers a place to offer their products, consumers a place to purchase them, and at the same time provides economic growth to local business.

Six years ago John hit the pavement and went door to door to each business and farmer within a 20-mile radius and sometimes beyond...convincing anyone and everyone from jam-making grandmas to people selling kites, fish, or yard swings that it would be worth their while to join the market. One of John's goals was to offer a great variety of items and make the market a fun place with something that would appeal to everyone.

With a lot of determination and hard work, the Pridnia's vision became reality, and a tremendous success for the community. Currently the market has a huge array of flowers, fish (smoked and fresh), vegetables, baked goods, jewelry, purses, yard furniture and ornaments, dried and



*Port Austin's farmers market was ranked in the top 10 in the state by Travel Michigan magazine.*

fresh flower arrangements, puppies, rabbits, you name it. Many local artists display their wares: jewelry, paintings, wood displays. It gives local entrepreneurs a venue to test their products.

The market has grown from 65 vendors to a list of 700. Some vendors are seasonal and not available every weekend. On average, each Saturday there are anywhere from 150 to 250 vendors on site. There is something for everyone.

The market has not only become a place to buy and sell, but it is "the place" to be. It is a social event for everyone— young, old, local resident, or tourist. It is a place to catch up on local events, visit with neighbors, reunite with old friends,



Vendors at the farmers market quickly grew from 65 to over 700. It has turned into "the place to be."

make new ones, and maybe even get some good gossip. It's where you find everyone on Saturday morning from May to October.

John and Lisa's ideas are endless and only exceeded by their energy. One Saturday is totally dedicated to children in the form of the Annual "Kids Day" including: face painting, hair braiding, petting zoo, dance instructions, and a local fire truck just to mention a few items. Another week is dedicated to antique farm equipment.

The market is run like a well-oiled machine. John and Lisa are at the market location bright and early every Saturday morning, 5:30 am to be exact. They set up tables, trash receptacles, direct vendors where to unload, where to park their vehicle, and do whatever else needs to be done. The Pridnias, however, will be the first to tell you that this tremendous undertaking could not be possible without many volunteers. Every week there are usually six people who give of their time to make the

"The farmers market brings people into the area that wouldn't normally visit Port Austin. It has become one of our main show pieces. It brings thousands of people to Port Austin (tens of thousands on large weekends). Local businesses have seen tremendous increases from the added flow of people."

—Port Austin Village Trustee Casey Bruce

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*Port Austin's farmers market strives to offer a great variety of items and also a fun experience.*

market run, and, more important, their Saturday morning sleep-in. On holiday weekends there are even more—often fifteen or more dedicated people show up to do whatever is necessary to make the market work. At the close of the market at 1:00 pm another group of volunteers appear to clean up. At 2:00 pm you would never know anything took place on that spot. It's like magic. The only tip-off is the location looks better than when it all started early that morning.

Each year John strives to improve the market. This year some of the gravel areas will be paved, allowing for additional handicap accessibility.

The only food concession is supplied by a Christian Youth Group. Under adult supervision, the youth prepare hot dogs, nachos, coffee, and other delicacies. The profits help send the children on trips and other activities. Every weekend the local riding stable provides free horse-drawn wagon rides throughout the village. To keep things lively, music to suit just about everyone's taste is piped throughout the market, and whenever possible live entertainment is provided.

## Farmers Markets

The number of farmers markets in the U.S. has increased 170 percent over the last decade, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 2009, farmers markets around the country totaled over \$1.2 billion in sales for the year.

**Supporting the Community.** Shopping at your local farmers market helps to support your local farmers. It also provides a sense of community, and keeps money in your community.

**Going Green.** Shopping at your local farmers market is environmentally friendly—the produce avoids a transport process that can often involve taking food thousands of miles to reach its destination. The fuel savings is better for the planet and keeps additional shipping costs out of food prices.

**Eating Fresh.** When foods are shipped over state or even just county lines, the time involved begins to break down the food's nutritive value. By the time it reaches a store's produce department, food may have been picked days or even a week prior. At the farmers market, everything has been freshly picked, so you know you are getting fresher, more nutritious food.

Farmers Market Coalition "Farmers Markets Report" [www.ams.usda.gov](http://www.ams.usda.gov). To find a farmers market in your community, log on to [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) and enter your zip code.

It is truly amazing what a couple of dedicated people with a vision can do for a community. The market has grown to overflowing capacity and is a tremendous asset to the community. Port Austin is alive again. What a great success story. Oh, and guess what? This little farmers market has been named one of the top 10 in the state by *Travel Michigan* magazine.

**"The farmers market has been wonderful not only for the village, but for my business as well. It brings many new faces to my door, some of who are now dear friends, creating an atmosphere that is easy to return to, time and again. It is increasing revenue for my company and the entire village—not just seasonally, but year round."**

*—Carol Budry, owner/proprietor of the Lighthouse Café*

Thanks John, Lisa, and your band of volunteers for giving everyone another reason to love Port Austin. If you don't live there, you surely will want to visit often.

The opening of "The Market" each year is as anticipated as seeing that first robin in spring. Port Austin just can't wait. 

*Judy Binkley is the retired Port Austin Village Clerk. You may contact her at [jbinkley08@centurytel.net](mailto:jbinkley08@centurytel.net).*

## CONVENTION SPEAKER



**Brian Balasia**  
Entrepreneurism

Brian Balasia was a sophomore at the University of Michigan



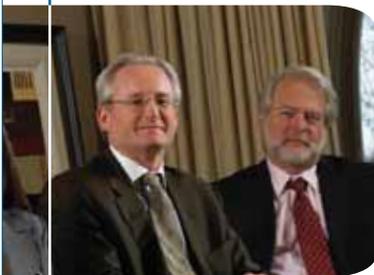
when he and classmate Joe Klecha co-founded Digerati Inc., a company that develops individually tailored electronic records systems for medical practices and institutions. Today, the thriving company with a growing staff is based in downtown Detroit, where Balasia has been on the board of directors of the Detroit Regional Chamber since 2005.

Details: [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)



*People throughout the county, who wouldn't normally come to Port Austin, make the farmers market their Saturday morning destination.*

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# the evolution of a sustainable city

grand rapids, michigan

— By Norman Christopher



Grand Rapids  
pop. 197,800

What is sustainable development, and how has it evolved in Grand Rapids?

The historical roots of sustainability go back seven generations to the Iroquois Confederacy, who stated that “we do not inherit the earth from our fathers; we borrow it from our children.” Sustainability has also been defined as “meeting the needs of today without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). In his 1998 book, *Cannibals with Forks*, John Elkington added a “triple bottom line” (TBL) perspective of sustainability as “economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social justice.” Hence, the three E’s (equity, ecology, and economy) and the three P’s (people, planet, and profits) became an integral part of the sustainability lens. In essence, by using the triple bottom lens of sustainable development and evaluating our social, environmental, and economic impacts, we are able to make better decisions for the future.

Why has so much progress in sustainable development taken place in such a short period of time? Grand Rapids has good roots in sustainability. The furniture industry, with leaders such as Haworth, Herman Miller, and Steelcase, has been environmentally conscious and exhibited leadership in corporate environmental stewardship dating back to

the 1970s. West Michigan is also home to many family-owned businesses whose leaders are philanthropists willing to give back to the community and help reinvent Grand Rapids. West Michigan also has great tenacity, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a strong work ethic. Moreover, other organizations have acknowledged that our region is known for its public-private partnerships and ability to build trustful working relationships.

The city of Grand Rapids adopted the triple bottom line guiding principles of sustainable development in 2005, and has been on a sustainability journey ever since. For the greater Grand Rapids community, this journey has included awareness, understanding, application, progress, and change regarding the implementation of sustainable development best practices.



*In Grand Rapids, the three E’s (equity, ecology, and economy) and the three P’s (people, planet, and profits) are an integral part of its sustainability plan.*

## Grand Rapids Community Sustainability Partnership

In 2005, the city of Grand Rapids, along with Aquinas College, Grand Rapids Community College, the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and Grand Valley State University, formed the greater Grand Rapids Community Sustainability Partnership (CSP) ([www.grpartners.org](http://www.grpartners.org)). The CSP is a collaboration and network of community stakeholders from all sectors that embrace and support sustainable development guiding principles in their planning, operations, and reporting on a best efforts basis, and are striving to make a positive impact in our community. The purpose of the CSP is to transform the Grand Rapids area through the development of sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

Today, the Grand Rapids CSP has over 190 community stakeholder partner organizations who are working together in a number of sustainable development areas. Some of the Triple Bottom Line applications of sustainable development include: green and LEED building design and construction; brownfield redevelopment; energy efficiency; renewable energy; literacy; health and wellness; water quality and conservation; waste minimization; land use; alternative fuels; and urban transit.

### City Initiatives

Grand Rapids has achieved its leadership within the CSP by completing a sustainability plan and triple bottom line community indicator report. The newly adopted Sustainability Plan version 2.0 contains environmental, economic, and social Triple Bottom Line sustainability outcomes and specific targets and goals for all city departments. These targets have performance measurements that are both quantified and qualified.

## Grand Rapids Named Most Sustainable Community

The city of Grand Rapids was presented the Siemens Sustainable Community Award for mid-size communities by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) and Siemens Corporation on May 13, 2010. The winning communities were praised for improvements to the quality of life for residents by achieving vital economic, environmental, and social goals. Mayor Heartwell accepted the award at the ceremony in Houston, Texas on May 13, and stated that this award is "a strong affirmation of the collaborative work that we have been doing in Grand Rapids. Once again Grand Rapids has been brought to the forefront as a leader in sustainability."

*City of Grand Rapids' Press Release, May 14, 2010.*  
[www.uschamber.com/bclc/sustainablecommunity\\_grandrapids.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/bclc/sustainablecommunity_grandrapids.htm)

Examples of sustainability plan indicators include:

### ECONOMIC

1. A strong economy
2. Diverse supplier base
3. Employment and workforce training
4. Financial management/sustainability
5. Enhanced customer service (internal and external)
6. Vital business districts

### ENVIRONMENTAL

1. Energy and climate protection
2. Environmental quality and natural systems
3. Land use and development

### SOCIAL

1. Great neighborhoods
2. Strong education, arts and community
3. Civic engagement
4. Healthy lifestyles and healthy environments
5. Public safety

The city budget, departmental plans, and employee personal performance plans are all tied to the Sustainability 2.0 Plan. The city has also completed a Green Grand Rapids plan that focuses on parks, recreation, and landscape options. In June of 2009, the city opted to re-direct its sustainability efforts to a new Office of Energy and Sustainability ([sustainablegr.com](http://sustainablegr.com)) to focus more on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and conservation projects. The office is now the focal point for future application and work in community sustainability.

### LEED Buildings

Grand Rapids ranks fourth in the nation in the number of certified and registered LEED projects and has more LEED buildings per capita than any community in the country. Tapping into this movement, the city has mandated that all new municipal construction and major renovation meet LEED Certified standards. The city's water department building was the first LEED-certified municipal building in Michigan.

### Renewable Energy

In 2005, Mayor George Heartwell pledged that more than 20 percent of the city's power would come from renewable sources by 2008. However, having hit that target before 2008, the city is now committed to the target of 100 percent renewable by 2020. The municipal government has reduced energy consumption by more than 10 percent through the implementation of energy efficiency projects and conservation. The city is seeking innovative ways to meet its 100 percent renewable energy target and has recently adopted an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy with the completion of a community-wide and municipal Green



House Gas Emission inventory. Grand Rapids was inducted into the Green Power Partnership program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

### Future Cities

The real glue to successful sustainable development is in its embedded values—integrity of transparency, service, ethical behavior, lifelong learning, and mutual accountability.

As Grand Rapids looks to the future, many systemic challenges still lie ahead including fiscal sustainability and neighborhood revitalization. The city is balancing the general fund budget, and a new sustainable neighborhood development initiative known as Seeds of Promise has been undertaken. Using sustainable development best practices in the future will require courage, leadership and vision.

Much success lies ahead for those who are willing to undertake the sustainability journey.

For more information on Grand Rapids sustainability efforts, contact Haris Alibašić, Office of Energy and Sustainability Director at [halibasi@grcity.us](mailto:halibasi@grcity.us) or visit the Office of Energy and Sustainability on the city's website: [grcity.us](http://grcity.us) or [sustainablegr.com](http://sustainablegr.com).

The following documents can be viewed on the city's website: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (2009); Fiscal Year 2011-2015 Sustainability Plan (2010); State of the City Address (2005); Renewable Energy; Press Release: Grand Rapids Named Most Sustainable Mid-Size Community in the U.S. (2010). 

*Norman Christopher is the executive director of the Sustainable Community Development Initiative at Grand Valley State University. You may contact him at 616-331-7461 or [chrisfn@gvsu.edu](mailto:chrisfn@gvsu.edu).*

**Clockwise from left:**  
 Grand Rapids' water department building was the first LEED-certified municipal building in Michigan.  
 Grand Rapids' transportation system, the Rapids, is a recognized leader in the sustainable transportation. The Rapids Central Station was the first LEED-certified transit facility in the country.  
 The YMCA building is also LEED-certified.

### CONVENTION SPEAKER



**Alan Mulally**  
 Opening General Session

Alan Mulally is president and chief executive officer of Ford Motor

Company. On July 7, President Barack Obama announced that Mulally will serve on the President's Export Council (PEC), advising the President on export enhancement and ways to encourage companies to increase exports and enter new markets. Ford believes that an export-driven strategy is critical to achieving economic growth, job creation, and a sustainable future.

**Details: [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)**





## Along the Way to Planning a **NEW VISION FOR DETROIT**



Urban planner Toni Griffin and the city of Detroit's Marja Winters are considering many ways to reshape Detroit's future.

What will happen to Detroit in the 21st century? As the city comes to terms with its history of dramatic population loss, neighborhood deterioration, and unemployment, plans to make over Detroit's vision of its future have left people curious about what the city is going to look like and what a more stable, prosperous Detroit might be.

A major planning process is underway that is being called the Detroit Strategic Framework Planning Process, a working title for Mayor Dave Bing's 12 to 18 month-long assignment to envision a new future for Detroit. Co-leaders of the planning team are Marja Winters, the deputy director of Detroit's planning and development department, and Toni Griffin, a famous urban planner and adjunct professor at Harvard's design school. In developing recommendations, they will work with a team of advisors, an inter-agency working group, and listen to public feedback.

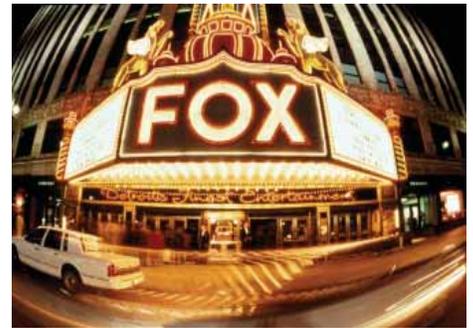
The planning process is in its early stages, but before all is said and done, Griffin and Winters will co-lead the development of recommendations for how to create more stable neighborhoods in Detroit, better utilize the city's land, and take advantage of Detroit's economic and social assets.



*Renowned urban planner Toni Griffin (left) and Detroit deputy director of planning Marja Winters (right) are coleading an initiative to reshape Detroit's future. The Detroit Strategic Framework Planning Process will be shaped by community input with a series of public meetings. The city is determined to incorporate the citizens' thoughts, hopes, and dreams into its plans.*



*Detroit has solid assets to start its revitalization—walkable neighborhoods, public transportation, arts and culture, and public gathering space.*



“A project milestone,” according to Winters, is the public launch they have planned for September of 2010. “It will be our first series of meetings to introduce the concept on a larger scale to the community and to start soliciting their input and feedback about their thoughts, hopes, and dreams for what Detroit’s future looks like,” she says.

### **Not “Downsizing”—Revitalizing**

Griffin was brought onboard in March of 2010 with a salary paid for by the Kresge Foundation, but even before they got started anticipation and speculation was building over Detroit’s future. Frequently, the mayor’s push to re-envision Detroit is characterized as a land use strategy that will “shrink” or “downsize” the city. This is usually described in terms of creating greater density in certain areas, as well as doing things like consolidating neighborhoods and city services, while finding alternative uses for underutilized or blighted areas of a city. The city is already in the process of demolishing 3,000 dangerous abandoned buildings this year, with plans to tear down thousands more, as a neighborhood revitalizing strategy.

### **Land Use**

However, terminology has gotten quite tricky. Griffin and Waters agree that terms like “shrinking” and “downsizing” can be problematic or confusing, especially because there is no plan to change the political boundaries of Detroit. However, it sounds like they will seriously consider things like creating density and exploring different land use alternatives.



*A stable, vibrant Detroit has the power to make the entire region a more attractive, prosperous place to live and work.*

The city is in the process of demolishing **3,000** dangerous abandoned buildings, with plans to tear down thousands more, as a **NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZING STRATEGY**.



<p><b>Property-Based Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing</li> <li>Tax Assessment</li> <li>Delinquent Personal Property</li> <li>Special Assessments</li> <li>P.R.E. Audit</li> <li>Building Department</li> </ul> <p><b>Fund Accounting Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Ledger/Budgeting</li> <li>Accounts Payable</li> <li>Cash Receipting</li> <li>Miscellaneous Receivables</li> <li>Fixed Assets</li> <li>Purchase Orders</li> <li>Payroll</li> <li>Timesheets</li> <li>Human Resources</li> <li>Utility Billing</li> </ul> <p><b>Companion Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal Licensing</li> <li>Cemetery Management</li> <li>Business Licensing</li> <li>Complaint Tracking</li> <li>Internet Services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Software &amp; Service &amp; Support</b></p> <p>BS&amp;A continues to be the leader in municipal software development across the state of Michigan. With advancing technology, we strive to keep our customers on the leading edge. Our newest version, Equalizer .Net, is proving to do just that.</p> <p>Check out our online demos at <a href="http://demo.bsasoftware.com">http://demo.bsasoftware.com</a></p> <p>Contact us for more details.</p>  <p><a href="http://www.bsasoftware.com">www.bsasoftware.com</a></p>
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“Those kind of ideas are absolutely on the table for discussion, to the extent that there is some benefit to thinking about how certain areas of a city become more densely populated and how the actual physical form of those neighborhoods could have a denser ecology than currently exists,” Griffin says.

However, this represents only one type of approach the pair is considering among many other kinds of issues and strategies.

Winters clarifies that their recommendations will be “in a lot of ways tied to land use, but not specific to land use only. We’ll look at ways that land use ties to the economy, jobs, and a whole bunch of other things in the region.”

Griffin agrees, “This is not only about land use. Land use is an enabler to the vision that different people see for their city. This is really more of a plan to create a vision for the city to the extent to which land can be viewed as an asset to help move the city to a place it wants to be.”

Griffin lists a number of strategies and policy objectives, which could possibly be included amongst their recommendations. Such considerations include thinking about public transportation options, looking for ways to create more housing choices and opportunity for business development, dealing with environmental issues, and exploring historical and cultural preservation.

**Misperceptions**

There has been concern about whether Detroit’s re-envisioning process will lead to the relocation of

## Detroit's Green Task Force Looks for a Green Future

Detroit City Councilman Ken Cockrel, Jr. is chair of Detroit's Green Task Force, which leads efforts to make Detroit attractive to green businesses and industry and to make the city government's practices greener. He thinks green initiatives "need to be a critical component of the ongoing efforts to revitalize the city of Detroit."

The Green Task Force has been "instrumental" in both pushing forward and "resurrecting" a number of green policies and efforts, including the city's recently adopted Non-Motorized Network Plan, Cockrel reports. A green purchasing ordinance was formally introduced to city council in July, which "requires that when [the city] is bidding on products or services, if certain products are more environmentally friendly and equal in price, then we would purchase those products," he breaks it down. A public hearing on the ordinance amendment is scheduled for September 8.

City council's new green building subcommittee met for the first time in June. "A policy initiative that has come out of that meeting is that we have asked the planning commission to undertake a comparative analysis of green building policies in other parts of the country," Cockrel reports. They already worked to secure approvals for developers, The Power of Green Housing, to build west of mid-town on Rosa Parks, using energy efficient intermodal freight containers.

One major reason to go green, according to Cockrel, is that "although auto manufacturing will continue to have a place in Detroit, I don't believe it is going to be the linchpin of our economy moving forward. I think it's going to be critical for Detroit's survival to diversify its economy and start putting eggs in different baskets," he says. Green is a good basket, because "we have an abundance of land; we have an abundance of facilities that are now sitting vacant. Let's try to be creative and see if we can bring in new industries," he surmises.



Ken Cockrel, Jr.

residents—especially those living in extremely low-population density areas in homes mostly surrounded by abandoned properties and empty lots. They report, "This is not a relocation plan," regardless whether this question gets raised in the future.

Another speculation circling is that areas of the city that have experienced drastic population decline and physical deterioration will be converted to urban agriculture. "We'll explore what some alternative land uses are, and it might include urban agriculture, but some of the media perceptions are that we are going to turn whole swaths of Detroit into a big urban farm," which Winters says is not their plan. "We haven't seen the business case for it yet," she says.

When it comes down to it, they want to keep the city's "fiscal challenges" in mind throughout the planning process and determine uses for the land that "generate tax revenue and income, help raise the unemployment rate," whether the answer is urban farming or something else, Griffin explains.

### Identifying Neighborhood "Anchors"

For example, Griffin thinks it is important to identify different types of "anchors" that encourage sustainability and growth in neighborhoods. An often cited example of one such anchor strategy for economic development is "transit oriented development," Griffin says. She adds that they are also working to "identify other types of anchors that exist—like schools."

Griffin also stresses the importance of giving residents a more diverse range of housing options, reporting how most housing in Detroit is single family homes. "We want to build a strategy that gives current residents a broader range of

housing type choices, as well as strategies that are trying to attract and retain different types of people," she explains.

Griffin makes the distinction that this is not a master plan for the city, which would be more "prescriptive and specific" than what they are doing. Rather, she likes the idea of creating a "framework" in order to "put forward a set of policy directives for the type of city we want to be in a manner that allows not just government but the private sector, the philanthropic sector, and the non-profit sector to all continue to implement in the ways that they already do, but all towards a common objective. Ultimately, all of these implementation capacities and groups not only have a role in shaping what the vision is, but also making it happen," she says.

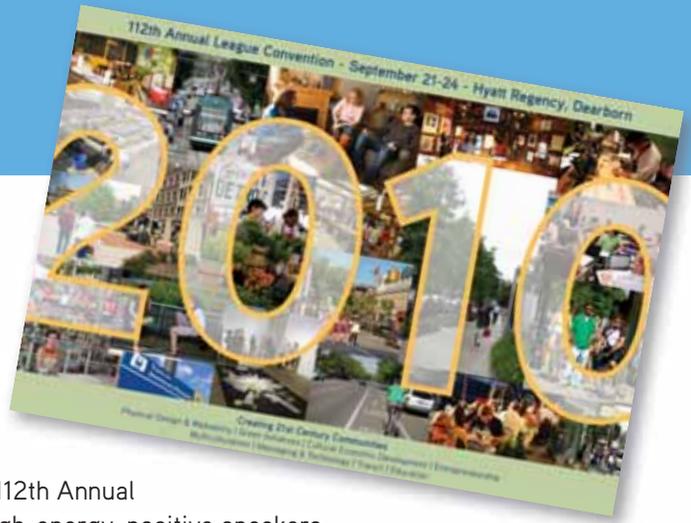
The recommendations that will come out of Detroit's Strategic Framework Planning Process could potentially have a great impact on not only Detroit but the entire region. Just as a healthy, sustainable downtown brings stability to whole cities—a stable, vibrant urban center has the power to make the entire region a more attractive, prosperous place to live and work. Griffin, Winters, and Detroit's city government have taken on an enormous task that both advocates and skeptics will surely continue to scrutinize for some time to come. As the planning process continues, Michigan continues to anticipate what Detroit's vision for the future will look like. 

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*Jennifer Eberbach is a freelance journalist and professional copywriter. You may contact her at 734-929-2964 or visit her online at [www.jenthewriter.info](http://www.jenthewriter.info).*

# Not Your Typical Convention

112<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Municipal League Convention  
September 21-24, 2010 – Dearborn, Michigan



Hear first-hand from Ford CEO Alan Mulally about the recent success of the auto company and how you can apply the lessons learned to your community. Listen to an inspirational story from a Flint-area couple who turned vacant city lots into an urban garden operated by inner-city youth. Get motivated by author and social critic James Howard Kunstler and former legislator Steve Tobocman. These are just a few of the presenters planned for the Michigan Municipal League Convention taking place Sept. 21-24 in Dearborn. Go online to [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org) to register and for details. This is the League's 112th Annual Convention, but it promises to be unlike any other. It's packed full of high-energy, positive speakers giving relevant, meaningful messages that you can use in your communities. In the next few pages of *The Review* we take a more detailed look at what you can expect at this year's Convention.

## Driving forces in urban agriculture



### Jacky and Dora King

Jacky and Dora King operate King Karate in Flint and the Youth Karate-Ka Association, which provides a place for at-risk youth to be trained in martial arts. The couple is also among the founders and driving forces of the Flint area's urban agriculture movement. The Kings founded Harvesting Earth Educational Farm in Beecher, just north of Flint in Genesee and Mt. Morris townships. Students from their karate school work on the urban farm to learn life-lessons, the importance of healthy eating, and giving back to their community.

## Fierce critic of suburban sprawl



### James Howard Kunstler

Nationally known author, social critic, urban planning expert, and journalist James Howard Kunstler will talk about his vision of more livable communities at Convention. The author of *The Geography of Nowhere* and *Home from Nowhere*, Kunstler has long been recognized as a fierce critic of suburban sprawl and the high costs associated with an automobile-centric culture.

## Rub elbows with an industry leader



### Alan Mulally

Alan Mulally is president and chief executive officer of Ford Motor Company. Ford believes that an export-driven strategy is critical to achieving economic growth, job creation, and a sustainable future. A new survey shows the Detroit Three outscoring foreign makers for first time in 13 years. Mulally will speak Tuesday afternoon at Convention—this is a rare opportunity to rub elbows with an industry leader helping to shape the future economy of Michigan.

## A dynamic force for change



### Steve Tobocman

Former House of Representatives Floor Leader Steve Tobocman will speak on multiculturalism as a dynamic force for change. Tobocman is managing partner at New Solutions Group, LLC and is spearheading the Global Detroit study for the New Economy Initiative and Detroit Regional Chamber, looking at how southeastern Michigan can utilize foreign-born talent and global connections to expand the economy.

## We've Got You Covered

We planned our Convention this year to be bold and different, but we continue to stress the importance of local government education.

We are offering six pre-Convention education seminars on the topics you use all the time—such as the Open Meetings Act—and what may come your way that you need to be prepared for, i.e. the Medical Marihuana Act. Here are some of the highlights:

### Everything Meetings—Guide to Parliamentary Procedure & the Open Meetings Act

The basic tool that moves local government business is the meeting. Local governments conduct official business and take official action at meetings. These meetings are governed by very strict rules



in the form of a law known as the Open Meetings Act. What happens at your meetings may not always be covered in the Act, which is why local governments need to adopt their own council rules and procedures and learn the proper parliamentary procedure techniques.

The importance of the Act should not be underestimated. This pre-Convention training will help public bodies conduct smooth, well-run, legal meetings and intertwine the rules of parliamentary procedure and the legal aspects of the Open Meetings Act.

### The Medical Marihuana Act and Your Community

In November 2008, Michigan voters passed a referendum to enable certain specified persons to legally obtain, possess, cultivate/grow, use, and distribute marijuana. The "Medical Marihuana Act" has been in effect for over a year, yet there are still many unanswered questions. How and where is medical marijuana dispensed? If an employee has a medical marihuana patient card, what are the implications for a municipality as an employer?

Attend this session and discover the likely impacts of the Act on local units of government. There will be discussion on issues surrounding the right to farm, dispensaries, and zoning.

## Pre-Convention Workshops

**Tuesday, September 21, 2010**

**Everything Meetings—Guide to Parliamentary Procedure & the Open Meetings Act**  
9:00 am-12:00 pm

**The Medical Marihuana Act and Your Community**  
9:00 am-12:00 pm

**NLC Institute—Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures: Building Community in Today's Economy**  
9:00 am-12:00 pm

**The League & DTE: Energy Efficiency Options**  
9:00 am-12:00 pm

**Michigan Mayoral Summit: Helping Our Youth Succeed in the Workforce**  
10:00 am-12:00 pm

**Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys' Municipal Law Program**  
9:00 am-4:00 pm

Sign up now at [convention.mml.org/!](http://convention.mml.org/)

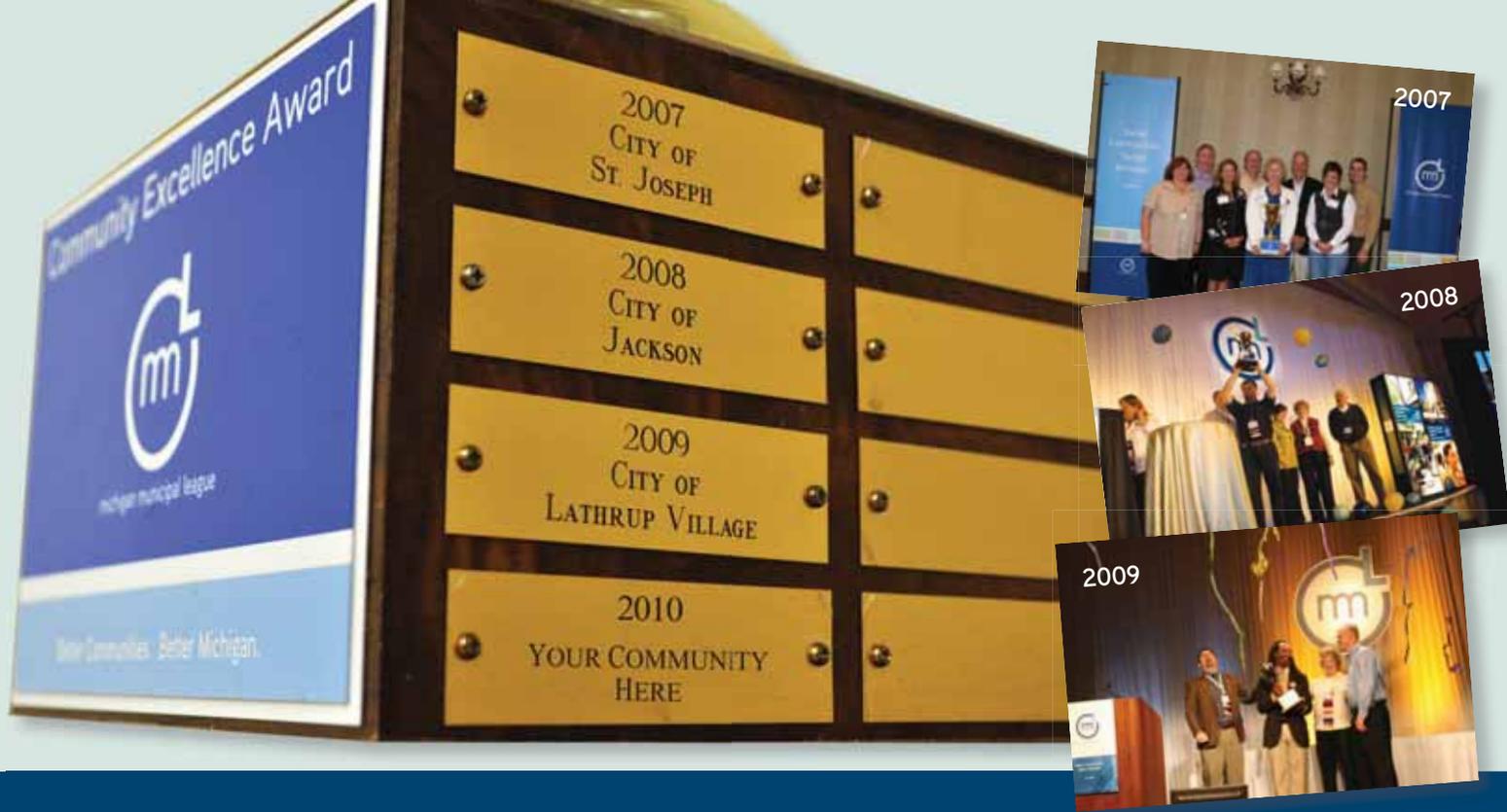


*Melanie Brim, Bureau of Health Professions Director for the state Department of Community Health, educates local officials on the specifics of the citizen-initiated "Michigan Medical Marihuana Act."*

**Don't Miss Out—Register Today**



**[convention.mml.org/!](http://convention.mml.org/)**



## Race for the Cup 2010

**What do these things have in common:** An historic battlefield from the War of 1812...a state-of-the-art library built without tax funding...and a popular maritime festival?

**Answer:** They're all nominees for the Michigan Municipal League's 2010 Community Excellence Award, the annual statewide competition which recognizes outstanding community services, projects, and programs. **AND YOU** get to pick your favorite during the League's 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Sept. 21-24 in Dearborn.

Seven finalists—one from each of the League's seven regions—have been chosen as inspiring examples of what Michigan communities can accomplish through dynamic leadership, creative vision, and collaborative effort. Each regional winner will present their project at Convention and the statewide Community Excellence Award winner will be selected by popular vote by members attending Convention. The seven finalists will show how:

- The lakefront city of **Harbor Beach** rebranded itself with an annual Maritime Festival that draws thousands of people to Michigan's thumb each summer.
- **Monroe** turned a deserted industrial site into a new national park that now serves as a prominent city entryway.
- **Saginaw** implemented a recycling program that dramatically reduced landfill waste in just two months.

- The village of **Kingsley** built a state-of-the-art \$1.3 million library and municipal center without raising local taxes.
- **Grand Haven** uses creative methods to communicate its goals and vision to residents and visitors.
- **East Lansing's** Technology Innovation Center has become an incubator for technology-based businesses by offering space and resources for technology start-ups.
- **St. Ignace** forged a unique partnership of private, state, and federal entities, to develop a new bus station for a public transit network linking the region to the entire state.

Other regional nominees: Howell's street and walkway improvements; Garden City's regional fire service; Eastpointe's police and community multicultural program; DeWitt's open access playground; Kentwood's district library; Evart's "Shop Local" campaign; Rothbury's ethics policy; Marshall's after-school arts apprenticeship program; Sturgis' Helping Hand program; Baraga's "Super Supplier Network" of local businesses; and L'Anse's MEDC/MDOT collaboration.

Remember, the only way to support your regional finalist is by casting a vote in person at the Convention. Register at [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org) TODAY!





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# \$\$\$ FROM EECBG— ITS EFFECT ON MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES

By Sue Jeffers

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) fund projects in more than 170 Michigan communities helping them save energy, save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create jobs. Nearly \$77 million has been allocated to the state of Michigan and Michigan communities through the EECBG program. This past summer, projects began to take shape—from implementation of pilot single-stream recycling projects to the building of a non-motorized pathway.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, which was first enacted as part of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, was funded for the first time by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) in 2009. The EECBG program represents a federal funding resource for local units of government to leverage efforts to improve energy efficiency, lower energy usage, and reduce fossil fuel emissions.

As noted by Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, “The block grants are a major investment in energy solutions that will strengthen America’s economy and create jobs at the local level. The funding will be used for the cheapest, cleanest, and most reliable energy technologies we have—energy efficiency and conservation—which can be deployed immediately. The grants also empower local communities to make strategic investments to meet the nation’s long-term clean energy and climate goals.”

Nearly \$3.2 billion was made available for grants through the EECBG program. Of that amount, approximately \$2.7 billion was allocated for distribution through *formula grants* awarded to “entitlement” communities and \$454 million allocated on a competitive basis to state energy offices for distribution of at least 60 percent to be passed on to communities not eligible for the formula grants, i.e., the so-called “non-entitlement” communities.

Energy efficiency and conservation projects eligible for awards include the development of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy, energy efficiency audits and retrofits, transportation programs, the creation of financial incentive programs for energy efficiency improvements, the development and implementation of advanced building codes and inspections, and installation of renewable energy technologies on municipal buildings. The awards have been intended to quickly create new jobs and stimulate local economies.

In 2009, approximately \$57.6 million was allocated to Michigan communities and tribal governments on a formula basis. The biggest winners in the city/township category, based on the formula, were Detroit, Grand Rapids, Warren, Ann Arbor, Flint, Lansing, and Sterling Heights. Michigan cities and townships with populations of 35,000 or more were eligible for receipt of an award. Ten Michigan counties also received funding.

In September 2009, Michigan was awarded nearly \$20 million to substantially improve energy efficiency, which is a center piece of the state’s plan to transform its economy: “Jobs Today, Jobs Tomorrow.” Specifically, the funding is being used to support programs that contribute to meeting Michigan’s goal to reduce fossil fuel generated electricity by 45 percent by 2012. Nearly \$17.4 million has been allocated to local units on a competitive basis. Local units of government who applied for the funds were encouraged to partner together and to leverage other public and private resources. A brief synopsis of all projects awarded grants through the competitive grant program can be found at [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov). 

*Sue Jeffers is associate general counsel for the League. You may reach her at 734-669-6306 or [sjeffers@mml.org](mailto:sjeffers@mml.org).*

## SELECTED MICHIGAN EECBG COMPETITIVE GRANT PROJECTS

Grantee	Amount Funded	Project Description
Alma	\$190,000	Implement energy audits, grants to small business, and energy demonstrations.
Antrim County	\$374,188	Establish a four-county regional energy office to provide resources for energy audits and upgrades and secure funding for local government energy efficient retrofits.
Auburn Hills	\$97,553	Install an energy management system in 10 city facilities. Upgrade lighting fixtures in 6 city buildings to fluorescent lights. Install electric meters in 6 facilities.
Bellaire	\$50,000	Upgrade street lighting, install new equipment at the wastewater treatment plant, and upgrade lighting in municipal buildings.
Hancock	\$47,450	Complete a feasibility study for the implementation of a district heating system, electrical conservation, and winterization for city buildings and the central business district.
Dundee	\$50,000	Construct 8-foot wide, 1,540 linear foot multi-use pathway on M-50. Develop zoning regulations to promote energy efficiency.
Emmet County	\$153,672	Implement energy efficient upgrades to the Recycle Facility Expansion to facilitate processing of hard-to-recycle plastics.
Grand Haven	\$66,680	Evaluate and purchase vegetable oil-derived sources of diesel-alternative fuel for consumption at its 20 MW electricity generating diesel facility.
Huntington Woods	\$104,000	Implement two pilot single-stream recycling projects. Complete pilot curbside recycling education project for businesses.
Independence Township	\$221,377	Create energy efficiency demonstration area (the Green Triangle) for northwest Oakland County, including energy audits, energy efficiency retrofits, and energy efficiency education for the public.
Midland County	\$189,182	Install the county's first renewable energy project: 20kW of made-in-MI solar energy installations on the roof of the Pinecrest Residential Facility.
Mt. Pleasant	\$114,261	Construct a non-motorized pathway from Central Michigan University (CMU) to downtown Mt. Pleasant. Install sidewalks, bike lanes, and LED pedestrian lights.
Muskegon County	\$537,945	Enter into a performance contract to upgrade and replace lighting, water fixtures, building envelope controls, mechanical systems, windows, and traffic signals.
Newaygo County	\$216,369	Purchase technology for the Stream, a 13,000 SF satellite work center and business center aimed at reducing commutes to work and education.
Riverview	\$558,401	For 9 communities, 1) complete energy efficient retrofits of government buildings; 2) create an energy auditing program to encourage energy efficient retrofits within the coalition of communities; and 3) develop a regional energy efficiency strategy.
Saginaw County	\$434,433	Conduct energy audits on 8-10 county facilities and up to 10 facilities of partner cities and townships within the county; create revolving loan fund for upgrades.
Sault Ste. Marie	\$163,609	Replace boiler systems in the city/county building and in the new city hall.
Sturgis	\$67,892	Develop a comprehensive program to increase energy efficiency and implement energy efficiency measures in the city's buildings as part of an energy performance contract.
Troy	\$250,000	Build a LEED-Silver certified transit center, to include extensive use of LED lighting. Interpretive educational displays on LED lighting both inside and outside the center.
Williamstown Township	\$75,384	Obtain energy audits and retrofits for township building and demonstrate LED and solar lighting. Amend master plan and zoning ordinance to increase non-motorized and public transport and LEED new construction.

“ It’s an INTERESTING TWIST OF FATE that this alternative energy is coming about and our name is Green-ville. We truly want to make it that. This is likely going to be the LARGEST SOLAR INSTALLATION IN THE STATE. IT’S PRETTY EXCITING. ” Greenville City Manager George Bosanic



*Tim Kelley, plant manager at Uni-Solar, and Greenville Mayor Ken Snow talk on the roof of the Uni-Solar building amidst rows of solar panels manufactured by the company.*

# GOING GREEN IN 'GREENERVILLE'



Greenville  
pop. 7,935

An effort to use solar power to operate municipal and school buildings is turning Greenville into “GreenERville” and quickly making the West Michigan community a leader in alternative energy.

The saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining and in Greenville’s case, that couldn’t be more fitting. About six years ago the city experienced international media attention when its largest employer—Electrolux—packed up and left for Mexico and other plants in the U.S. It was a gloomy period as the city of 8,000 people lost an estimated 4,000 jobs. But soon the grey skies were replaced quite literally by the sun when city leaders successfully wooed a new manufacturer—United Solar Ovonic (Uni-Solar)—a manufacturer of solar materials that harness the sun’s energy. Today, Uni-Solar employs more than 300 workers and hopes to grow to 800 employees. Greenville officials not only liked the new jobs created, but were also so impressed with the product that they’ve teamed with Uni-Solar and the Greenville Public Schools to install solar systems at municipal and school buildings throughout the city.



*Greenville City Manager  
George Bosanic*

“I don’t know of a community anywhere in the country where the school system and the municipality have partnered in this way to completely convert the energy load to alternative energy,” says Greenville City Manager George Bosanic. “We were able to sway them to come to Greenville, and when we did that they invested almost a half billion dollars in facilities and have created almost 400 jobs, on pace to create 800 jobs here in our community that desperately needs it. They are wonderful people and have a wonderful product and we said let’s make our facilities a flagship demonstration for you so people can come in and see for themselves that it works. The fact is it does work, and it works really well, but a lot of people don’t know that.”

To date, the city and school system are paying for a number of solar panel systems with state and federal funds, low-interest bonds, and renewable energy incentives from Consumers Energy. Greenville, for example, was the first city in the state to participate in Consumers Energy’s Experimental Advanced



Greenville Mayor Ken Snow and City Manager George Bosanic, in front of solar panels installed on the roof of the airport terminal.

Renewable Program (EARP). This renewable energy incentive program buys back solar power at 37.5 cents per kilowatt hour. Bosanic explained the city will use the revenue to pay off the bonds over the next 12 years, and will eventually have free power. Yes, that's right, "FREE."

"By the end of the fall we will have installed

nearly 600 kilowatts of solar panels on municipal and school facilities," Bosanic said. "In 12 years we will have paid for the installation and we will have 13 years of free electricity thereafter as the product has a warranty of 25 years."

Using the city's name, city and school leaders call it the "GreenERville" initiative and are embarking on the most ambitious demonstration of converting a city to renewable solar energy-powered systems that Michigan has ever seen.

Using the funds they have been able to secure so far, solar panels will power Greenville's city hall, community center, waste water treatment plant, municipal water supply, airport, and two school buildings.

"We played off the name—Greenville," Bosanic said. "It's an interesting twist of fate that this alternative energy is coming about and our name is Greenville. We truly want to make it that. This is likely going to be the largest solar installation in the state. It's pretty exciting."

The solar panels to be installed on the city and school buildings are expected to produce 15 to 20 percent of their energy needs. This will result in a large savings to the city and school district's energy costs. Eventually they hope to go totally solar. Greenville Mayor Ken Snow attributes much of the city's recent solar success to the tenacity of its city manager and Bosanic's constant desire to partner with businesses and organizations, such as Greenville Public Schools Superintendent Peter Haines.

"After Electrolux left, we had to rejuvenate the city," Snow said. "There was a lot of bad press. It has hurt our economy—but none of us were going to roll over and say this is the end of our community. We weren't going to roll up our sidewalks and walk away. The object was to take the challenge. George, our city manager, loves a challenge and this was a big one. It was probably the biggest one he'll ever face in his life and he was undeterred. He just kept going at it no matter what."



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## WHO ELSE HAS SOLAR?

This past spring, 12 solar panels installed last year atop the Ypsilanti City Hall were wired to the building and began generating electricity. According to AnnArbor.com, the solar panels on city hall generate about 9.8 kilowatt hours of electricity per day—a fraction of city hall's weekday use, but almost half of its weekend use.

The city of Traverse City is putting solar panels on a parking deck and plans to sell the excess power; the project also includes plug-ins for electric vehicles.

officials and city leaders and the skilled work force that was here," Kelley said. "It's been an outstanding relationship. We are developing solar projects with the city, and city officials were integral in making this GreenERville vision a reality." Among the buildings getting the solar panels is city hall. It will soon sport a 45-kilowatt solar panel system on its roof. A total of about 136 kilowatts worth of solar panels will be installed on two airplane hangars at Greenville Municipal Airport, joining a 15-kilowatt system installed at the airport's terminal building a few years ago, which was funded by the Bureau of Aeronautics. The municipal water supply facility will receive 17 kilowatts funded by the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund and the Wastewater Treatment Plant received a 75-kilowatt ground mount system funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Greenville High School and Lincoln Heights Elementary School will split 202 kilowatts, partially funded by Energy Works Michigan.

The city of Greenville also recently received an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) awarded by the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth. This funding was allocated by the U.S. Department of Energy as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The grant money will equip Greenville's community center with a 17-kilowatt system of solar panels.

EECBG is a program that the Michigan Municipal League supported by creating the "Michigan Green Communities Challenge," which is an energy efficiency and conservation strategy. This Green Challenge was designed to ready communities who applied for EECBG funds, and the League continues to support recipient communities with promotional services.

The tri-angular project between the city, schools, and company also has got the attention of the media, such as a recent in-depth article by rapidgrowthmedia.com, and state officials, including Governor Jennifer Granholm.

A number of elected officials from other communities have told Bosanic, "We want to see you do this, so that we can see how it works, and then maybe we can be next."

Tim Kelley, plant manager at Uni-Solar, explained the company has hired many former Electrolux workers and has been impressed with the open-arms attitude of community leaders. The company now has two 280,000-square-foot facilities in the city's industrial park—one opened in 2007, and the other in 2008.

"We moved to Greenville as a result of the collaboration between government

Greenville's transition to solar power is meant to be "very transparent," and "we are going to demonstrate how it works and how it is working for us. Hopefully other communities can emulate what we are doing," Bosanic said.

But it hasn't always been easy. In the process, Bosanic encountered legislative limitations which he said are keeping Greenville from advancing the most efficient strategy. For example, the prohibition of off-site net-metering "prohibits us from reaching our full potential for success," because "whatever power you generate has to be used on-site, and you can't off-set it somewhere else," he said. Further, "airport hangars have large roofs, which could be utilized to generate power for other locations—however, right now, that is not allowed."

Blazing a fresh path is revealing what works, but Bosanic says it is also helping to identify the stumbling blocks along the way. In the future, he said, "the Legislature and utilities might loosen up and say, we need to move in this direction."

Grasping a hold of the power of the sun has required that Greenville reach out toward an unfamiliar horizon. Their solar power demonstration is plotting a course that Bosanic hopes will make it easier for other municipalities to follow suit. For now, there are a lot of eyes on Greenville's attempt to go completely "dependant on alternative energy." 

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*Jennifer Eberbach is a freelance journalist and professional copywriter. You may contact her at 734-929-2964 or visit her online at [www.jenthewriter.info](http://www.jenthewriter.info).*

*Matt Bach is director of communications for the Michigan Municipal League. He can be reached at [mbach@mml.org](mailto:mbach@mml.org) or 734-669-6317.*

## CONVENTION SPEAKER



**Peter Kageyama**  
Messaging & Technology

Peter Kageyama is a partner with Creative Cities Productions and the founder of the Creative Cities Summit, a multi-disciplinary conference on the issues cities face in the 21st century. His consulting and development services for the Creative Economy focus on entrepreneurs, cities, arts and cultural organizations, and technologies that impact the quality of life. Peter works internationally on projects that have positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes.



**Details:** [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)

## Northwest Michigan Regional Energy Office

Four northern Michigan counties—Antrim, Benzie, Kalkaska and Wexford recently received a grant of approximately \$375,000 to establish a Regional Energy Office, creating economic value with energy and environmental stewardship through effective regional partnership. The grant is one of more than 125 awarded to local units of government on a competitive basis by the state of Michigan with funds from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program (see article on p 24).

There is no physical address for the Regional Energy Office—it exists as a virtual network. From an organizational perspective, the Regional Energy Office provides the framework for the participants to partner and advance energy efficiency and conservation practices and improvements, to foster and market collectively the image of the regional green economy, and to build capacity of local governments to collaborate and be exemplary stewards of taxpayer dollars and the environment. It is an innovative way of providing small communities with the capacity to plan and implement energy conservation and efficiency strategies and investments.

The goals of the Regional Energy Office are directly in line with current best practices in developing sustainable communities:

- Improve energy efficiency in building and transportation sectors
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduce total energy use
- Stimulate the economy through purchase of Michigan-made products and services
- Leverage public and private resources
- Advance intergovernmental cooperation
- Relieve fiscal burdens on local governments
- Generate community-wide awareness of energy efficiency and conservation strategies.

The nonprofit partners of the Regional Energy Office are the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG), SEEDS, and Northwestern Michigan College (NMC).

### How Does the Office Work?

A project management team is comprised of county officials and staff of the three nonprofit partners. Within the project management team is an advisory board and a technical team. Overall, the four counties have contracted with NWMCOG as its coordinating partner. NWMCOG, which serves 10 counties, also assisted with the grant application of the four-county energy office proposal. Jaclyn Miel-Uken, NWMCOG Regional Planner explains, “Our role is to manage the relationship of the three nonprofit partners and to serve as the direct point of contact for municipalities entering this program.”



*Wexford County Courthouse*

Peter Garwood, Antrim County coordinator/planner explains that Antrim County’s role in the Regional Energy Office is that of fiduciary. He says, however, that “beyond our fiduciary role in the regional office, Antrim County has its own energy goals, which are three-pronged. We aim to save money, use less energy and in doing so become less energy dependant, assisting the energy grid.”

Garwood says Antrim County is seeking baseline gas and electric data through an audit already performed through a previous grant received by NWMCOG from the Michigan Public Service Commission. With the audit complete, the county eagerly awaits the data and recommendations due in August.

Northwestern Michigan College is the educational partner in the project. The director of campus services, Edward Bailey says, “Our role in the regional office project is to do what NMC does best—educate. We will provide education to the public and grant recipients with a series of workshops targeted toward local government officials.”

NMC already has renewable energy programs and an Energy Demonstration Center. It recently purchased an additional building at the Aero Park Campus to renovate as the future home for Construction Technology and Renewable Energy programs. It is in the process of moving training equipment to the new building and partnering with businesses to bring new equipment and technology to students for demonstration and learning.



*LED streetlight installation in Elk Rapids.*



Mesick Village Hall

## Kalkaska Seeks Energy Audit

Kalkaska Village Manager and Michigan Municipal League Trustee Penny Hill says that the audit is step one in Kalkaska’s pursuit of the competitive implementation grant in October. “We are in the beginning stages of amending our master plan, one element of which is to include green energy, so the timing is perfect,” stated Hill. “Projects identified in the audit that can be immediately addressed outside of the implementation grant will provide impetus.”



Penny Hill

### What Is the Office Doing?

The Regional Energy Office initially will conduct comprehensive baseline assessments of the Antrim, Benzie, Kalkaska, and Wexford county buildings and transportation energy usage, waste and emissions, if not already performed. Once that information has been gathered and assessed, projects and services will be developed to meet the goals of the office.

As part of that assessment, Miel-Uken explains that through the network program, the four counties receive specific services including a comprehensive greenhouse gas assessment conducted by SEEDS, a nonprofit technical assistance partner. They also receive access to ICLE (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives—Local Governments for Sustainability) member benefits such as the clean air climate protection software. The counties will receive grantwriting services so that as they utilize the baseline data to develop goals and strategies for reducing energy and greenhouse gas emissions, they can rely on the technical team to help them access financing for implementation. Additionally, each receives a renewable energy site evaluation to be conducted by NMC to determine site viability of energy generation, such as wind or solar.

In addition, the office will procure energy audits for six local units of governments within the four county regions. Approved for audits include the villages of Beulah, Elk Rapids, Kalkaska, and Mesick, as well as the townships of Kalkaska and Homestead.

Miel-Uken says one of the best benefits of coordinating the Regional Energy Offices is that it is able to mesh the EECEBG program with other grants. For example, in October, \$40,000 from the Michigan Public Service Commission is available on a competitive grant basis to one local unit in each of the four counties for energy efficiency implementation. It is anticipated that those grant dollars will be used for a project resulting from the audits performed under the EECEBG program.

Elk Rapids Village Manager Bob Peterson says, “We’re looking forward to the audit to realize energy savings at infrastructure facilities.” Elk Rapids already enjoys 60 percent annual electrical savings via LED street lights, plus greatly reduced maintenance as the life of LED bulbs is 50,000 hours as opposed to the former 10,000-hour bulbs. LED lights were also installed in the governmental center—the shared village/township hall.

Mesick Village President Bruce Howell concurs. “Our obvious goal is to improve our use of energy at the village. We want to be progressive. The audit will provide the data necessary to best direct our efforts on a priority basis.”

It is clear that the counties and the local units of government within those counties are making “the right moves” as they work toward their energy efficiency goals. 

Caroline Weber Kennedy is manager of field operations for the League. You may reach her at 906-428-0100 or [ckennedy@mml.org](mailto:ckennedy@mml.org).



# EVART SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN

By Darcy S. Salinas



The city of Evert is a small city with “small town charm” but a progressive outlook. As an enthusiastic and active participant in the area’s economic development function, the Evert DDA started a Shop Local Campaign about a year ago. The campaign committee

wants to educate consumers about the items and services available right here in their community. The main goal is to get people into local businesses to see what those businesses offer before they decide to run off to a larger city with a box store that is a half-hour away. Of course, the challenge to this is always how.

## EVERYBODY LOVES STREET FAIRS

The committee “officially” kicked off the campaign with a Fall Festival street fair. Invitations were sent to all 200+ businesses in the Evert area describing the campaign and the kick-off event and asking for their involvement. They were asked to fill out postcards listing three items or services they carried or provided but felt people did not know enough about. Based on the postcard responses, three businesses were highlighted in the Shop Local section of the *Evert Journal*, a monthly local news magazine.

The festival was held on Saturday, October 10, 2009. The committee hung large posters with the Evert Shop Local logo around town and distributed Shop Local logo stickers. Downtown businesses were encouraged to be open and/or extend their normal operating hours and “uptown” and home-based businesses were welcome to setup business booths along the street. Many businesses offered “extra” incentives such as sales, free popcorn and beverages, and coupons. Despite the blustery day, approximately 300 people enjoyed a closed-down Main Street lined with carnival games, fire

trucks, a bounce-house, line dancers, and business booths, while a local band, an area juggler, and a Hannah Montana impersonator entertained the crowds.

## GET FEEDBACK

After the event, the committee sent feedback questionnaires to all participating businesses. Most responses were positive, with businesses generally noting more store traffic. One store owner commented that sales generated that day were the same as an entire month!

Due to the success of the fall festival, the campaign committee is planning another one for September 25, 2010, with the same format and type of entertainment as the 2009 festival; however, the campaign committee wants to incorporate the newly established Evert Area Farmers Market into the event as well as more uptown and home-based businesses.



*Darcy Salinas, Evert DDA Director, presented the “Evert Shop Local” at the Region 3 Community Excellence Award competition in Montague.*

A locally owned, independent business returns approximately **80 PERCENT** of each dollar spent back to the community.

## GOOD REASONS TO SHOP LOCALLY

A locally owned, independent business:

- returns approximately 80 percent of each dollar spent back to the community;
- assists the community through a “multiplier effect:” one dollar spent at a locally owned business will return five times that amount within the community through taxes, employee wages, and purchase of materials and supplies; and
- returns dollars to the community through school funding, social services, and contributions to local nonprofit organizations.

Chains and franchises:

- contribute roughly 40 percent (and at times as little as 20 percent) of the store’s sales back into the community through wages, sales taxes, and property taxes; and
- are frequently owned by larger, non-local companies, and the business is given tax breaks by the municipality in order for shareholder profits to remain high.



### KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

The committee is keeping the campaign going with monthly drawings. The drawing containers had the Evert Shop Local logo on them and were set up throughout town. The entry slips had a check box for those interested in learning more about the Shop Local Campaign (a database is kept of interested individuals and they receive email updates). The initial drawing was held at Evert’s annual Christmas in a Small Town event; in addition, a list of sample Christmas presents that could be bought in Evert was given to every parent who brought their child to see Santa Claus.

Buy local, it's the way to be.

Buy local, **IT'S UP TO YOU AND ME.**

Buy local, it's the only way to be free.

Monthly Shop Local drawings, with prizes, mostly gift certificates, donated by local businesses, have occurred regularly since Christmas in a Small Town. Winners and the prize for next month are announced in the *Evert Journal*. While it took a few months, people are no longer wondering what the containers are for, or giving a suspicious look whenever the drawing slips are emptied. Recently, loose change has even made its way into the containers (guess word has gotten out about how hard-up the city is!). All of this discussion is good because it means people are starting to think, talk, and hopefully act on shopping locally.

The Evert Shop Local Campaign is continually evolving. The campaign committee’s newest course of action is the issuance of “Evert Bucks,” which can be spent like regular money. After business owners collect a particular amount of Evert Bucks, they can be redeemed for real dollars, or the business owners can simply choose to “pass the buck” by purchasing items from a different business to “redeem” their

dollar. Evert Bucks will be the new prize for the Shop Local monthly drawings and will also be awarded as prizes at the summer music series and other events.

Starting a shop local campaign in your community is as easy as 1) assessing what your businesses have to offer, 2) promoting and educating consumers, and 3) coming up with creative and inventive ways to convince people why they should shop locally. R.H. “Bear” Berends of the Blue Water Ramblers (a favorite of the Evert summer music series) wrote a song about shopping locally, so in closing, here is the chorus, “Buy local, it’s the way to be. Buy local, it’s up to you and me. Buy local it’s the only way to be free.” 

*Darcy A. Salinas is the downtown development authority director for the city of Evert. You may reach her at 231-679-4856 or [dsalinas@evart.org](mailto:dsalinas@evart.org).*

### CONVENTION SPEAKER



**Steve Tobocman**  
Multiculturalism

Former House of Representatives Floor Leader Steve Tobocman will speak

on multiculturalism as a dynamic force for change. Steve is spearheading the Global Detroit study for the New Economy Initiative and Detroit Regional Chamber, looking at how southeastern Michigan can utilize foreign-born talent and global connections to expand the economy.

**Details:** [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)



# Facing a Retail Obesity Crisis

| By Carmine Avantini and Valdis Lazdins

## Introduction

Conventional wisdom has always assumed that continued commercial development was as predictable as rising home values...a sure thing, inevitable, and desirable. In fact, most municipal master plans were prepared during a period of rapid and escalating growth, a pattern projected well into the future. New economic realities, however, are now upon us and the brakes have been firmly applied to the belief that an inexhaustible supply of new business would continue to line freshly minted and ever-expanding corridors and highways.

With slowed or declining population growth, hemorrhaging job losses, and retailers adopting new business models, most communities now have far more land planned and zoned for commercial development than can ever be supported. This oversupply is wreaking havoc on land values, rents, and the potential for redevelopment. It is further pitting one community against another, where existing but aging commercial corridors are being sacrificed for suburban greenfield development.

## What Will Impact Retailing for the Foreseeable Future?

Many factors are coming into play to create a "perfect storm" leading to a reversal of the commercial development patterns that have been the norm for decades:

### Burden of Debt

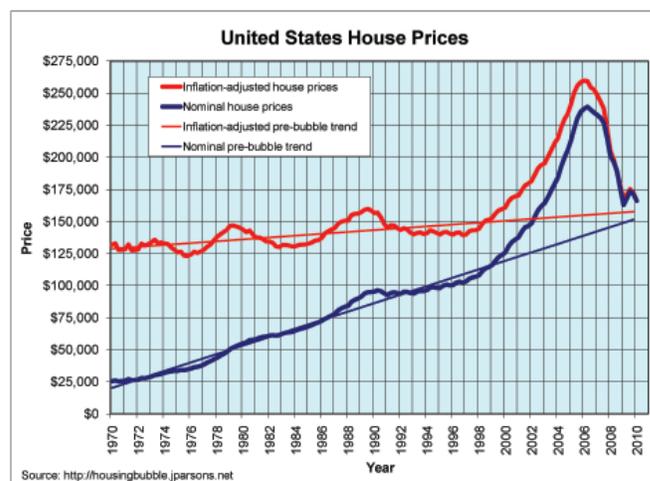
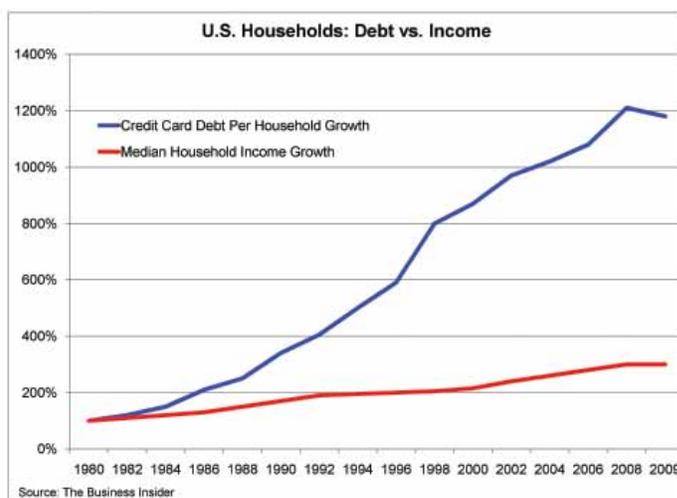
America spent its way to prosperity over the last three decades relying on credit. According to the Federal Reserve, total U.S. consumer debt (credit card debt, auto loans, and personal loans) is currently \$2.45 trillion, about \$23,600 per household. Approximately one billion credit and debit cards are in circulation, and the average household carries nearly \$15,700 of credit card debt.

### Continued Home Price Depreciation

From 2002 to 2008, Americans used their homes as piggy banks, sucking out over \$3 trillion of equity to be spent on consumer goods and other purchases. After the greatest housing boom in history, many Americans are now left with less than 50 percent equity in their homes versus 68 percent in 1985. Home prices may well continue to decline with more and more homeowners facing negative equity, a situation that was unimaginable just five years ago. In Michigan, almost 40 percent of home mortgages are currently underwater.

### Lack of Savings

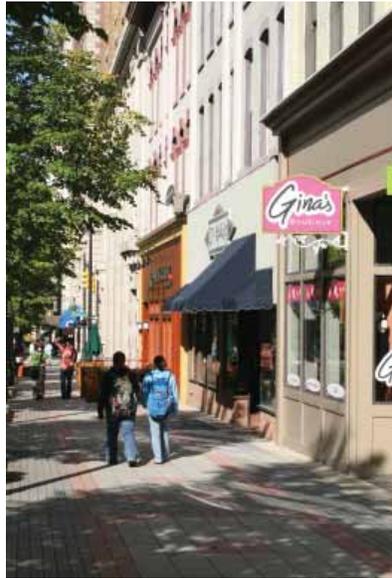
It will take years to break even on portfolio losses investors have experienced in the last two years. Many recent retirees or those planning to retire in the next five years are faced with the prospect of altering their plans. Going back to work or working longer, assuming they can find a job, are now very real considerations.



### Aging of America

While seniors may have disposable income, they tend to spend less because they already own most of what they need. Consequently, income and sales tax revenues are likely to decline, and a higher percentage of household income will be directed to health care. At the local level, aging is likely to result in reduced property tax revenues, due to smaller homes or declining home values. The most impacted states are likely to have slow growth, a decline in working age population, and disproportionate growth of the aged—a profile that seems ominous for Michigan.

Most municipal master plans were prepared during times of rapid growth, anticipating the continuing need for commercial development. As a result, retail space has grown three times faster than our population, and most retailers will not be in business five years from now.



### Oversupply of Retail

Retail space has been growing three times faster than our population for the past 10 years and, on average, per square foot retail sales have not increased in 10 years. There are approximately 20 square feet of retail space for every person in the U.S., compared with Europe where that number is about 2 square feet. Many retailers will not be in business five years from now; others will need to downsize just to survive.

### So What Does This All Mean?

*Time Magazine's* "Ten Ideas Changing the World Right Now" has "Recycling the Suburbs" as number two on its list. Dead malls, big box stores, and suburban commercial will be recycled. Nationwide, 140 existing regional malls are already dying and obsolete, while another 250 are headed in that direction. Many malls sprawl across large parcels in well-populated suburbs where developable land is now scarce and expensive. They have existing infrastructure—like roads and utilities—and few neighbors. Redevelopment of these once prime locations is becoming a high priority for many communities.

To accommodate redevelopment, zoning regulations need to be retooled to provide more flexible development options supportive of mixed land uses and responsive to market conditions. This will require "big picture" thinking, so communities do not just settle for disposable, low-quality design and architecture. However, development that focuses on high-design concepts is foreign and threatening to many suburban communities. The reality is that many communities are focused entirely on single-use zoning and are nervous about accepting mixed land uses and more urban patterns of growth. To survive and prosper in this new economic environment, communities will need to overcome this resistance.

### Steps Communities Can Take

To effectively deal with the over-supply of commercial space, communities have to be creative and proactive. By reevaluating their master plans and zoning ordinances, they can look for ways to more realistically address commercial development. This should include a much broader look at the market through an analysis, as not every community can be a retail mecca. Careful consideration must be given to "triage" commercial properties and focus public investments where

growth and development are desirable and can be sustained over the long haul. Two excellent examples of such efforts by Michigan suburban communities to proactively deal with vacant, underutilized properties are spotlighted on the following pages.

### Case Study: City of Westland Central City Parkway

The city of Westland was faced with two vacant big box buildings sitting side-by-side on Central City Parkway, opposite the Westland Mall. One, previously occupied by a Sam's Club, closed completely; the other, a Best Buy, was vacated when the retailer moved down the street. These properties, along with other nearby buildings were viewed by retailers as being on the less desirable back side of the mall. Their solution was to abandon the location in favor of more visible property, while leaving the city with a depressed area.

While neither of these sites was owned by the city or the Economic Development Commission (EDC), the EDC set out to eliminate obstacles to redevelopment, identify potential new uses, and show opportunities for new development on the sites. Without such a proactive effort, it was feared that the buildings would remain vacant and deteriorate or be occupied by marginal uses that would detract from higher quality development nearby.

The EDC retained a consulting team to identify the market potential, prepare land use concepts, formulate a preferred reuse plan, and package the results (including a virtual 3-D model) in a format that would double as a marketing tool. The result is a mixed-use project that blends office, retail, and



restaurant uses with a public gathering space. City officials have used the study as a tool to illustrate the site's potential to developers and continue to search for redevelopment opportunities.

### Case Study: City of Wixom Village Center

Known for its industrial and commercial successes, Wixom city officials recognized that the city lacked a central identity. An ambitious plan was devised to create a walkable, mixed-use downtown, capitalizing in part on the current city complex and surrounding residential areas. However, initial efforts to create the Wixom Village Center (VCA) were unsuccessful due to overreliance upon a single developer to purchase the necessary land. Learning from this experience, the city initiated the purchase of key properties as they became available. While this took several years, the city's patience and perseverance were rewarded. With key parcels assembled, the city attracted a team of developers and entered into a partnership using tax increment financing to fund needed public improvements.

After crafting an intricate development agreement between the city and developer team, the Tribute project, along with related public improvements, was commenced. Much of the planned 80,000 square feet of retail and office space, 456 townhomes and flats, 115 single family lots, and impressive public gathering spaces (a gazebo and reflecting

pond that converts to a winter skating rink) have been completed. Additional public improvements are planned to coincide with future development phases.

One factor that contributed significantly to the implementation of this project was a streamlined development review process. City regulations were revised to eliminate duplication, unnecessary reviews, and wasteful delays in the planning and building review procedures. Yet the quality of design and the overall project vision were not sacrificed. This retooled process allowed the developer to achieve flexibility in building configuration, signage, and streetscape design, and it allowed the city to achieve its goal of a true community center. 

*Carmine Avantini is a partner with LSL Planning. You may reach him at 248-586-0505 or [avantini@lslplanning.com](mailto:avantini@lslplanning.com).*

*Valdis Lazdins, is a principal planner with LSL Planning. You may reach him at 616-336-7750 or [lazdins@lslplanning.com](mailto:lazdins@lslplanning.com).*

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# Sustainability And Transportation Infrastructure: A GOLDEN AGE

We might be tempted to think that roads haven't changed because many look much the same; but closer inspection reveals that tremendous changes have occurred in transportation networks. Roadway design, construction, and operations can have a big impact on water and air quality, and on the prudent use of natural resources and consumption of fossil fuels.

In the growing list of issues facing today's community leaders, maintaining (let alone improving) transportation infrastructure is a significant challenge. The deficit between transportation investment needs and available funding has increased significantly. This situation is stressed further because the ability to move people and goods over local transportation networks is a fundamental building block for economic recovery and reinvestment in our communities. Simply creating transportation linkages with adequate capacity is no longer sufficient. Municipal officials are also required to balance the demand for increasing personal mobility and economic growth with the need to respect the environment and provide an acceptable quality of life for all citizens.

The efforts to formulate a process (such as Michigan Department of Transportation's context sensitive design) to emphasize responsible design and shift the paradigm from a purely functional perspective to one that respects cultural and environmental goals has already occurred—without much fanfare. Green transportation projects are quickly, but quietly, becoming the norm rather than the exception.

Examples include:

- **Intelligent Transportation Systems, or ITS**, which optimizes traffic flow through an intersection and reduces stop and go traffic, congestion, wait times, idling vehicle pollution, and improves fuel efficiency and motorist safety. Bill Huotari, traffic engineer for the city of Troy, finds that his real-time traffic



*Roundabouts are a sustainable transportation technique—they are safer and more efficient than conventional intersections. Drivers are not required to stop, so there are fewer vehicle emissions.*

adaptive traffic signal system “reduces motorist delay during both peak and off-peak periods.” It has also reduced the frequency of traffic crashes.

- **IntelliDrive technologies**, a subset of Intelligent Transportation Systems, allow communications between vehicles and infrastructure, enabling traffic signal timing and phasing to be displayed in vehicles. It can be used to reduce delays and prevent traffic crashes.
- Research indicates that **well-designed roundabouts** can be safer and more efficient than conventional intersections. Roundabouts have fewer injury accidents per year than signalized intersections. Roundabouts do not require drivers to stop, so there are fewer vehicle emissions.



*Improving or increasing green transportation, such as adding bike lanes and trails, will take a concerted effort to balance environmentally sound design and construction practices, cultural impacts, mobility, and public safety, while recognizing scarce financial resources.*

- **Fuel consumption** can be reduced by designing roadways for all users, encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel. Shared right-of-way space for sidewalks, paths or trails provide for non-vehicular transportation opportunities and healthy recreational activities.
- **Efficient operations** come from a design that is sensitive to future operations and maintenance issues. Replacing incandescent bulbs in traffic signal heads with light-emitting diodes (LED) lowers energy consumption and extends service life, thus requiring less frequent replacement.
- **Innovative stormwater management** using best management practices to capture, treat, and discharge runoff from the roadway system to our valuable water resources is now a common element of roadway design.

Reducing congestion-related pollution, improving fuel efficiency, reducing reliance on the automobile, enhancing water quality, and reducing materials needed for transportation projects are noticeable green transportation endeavors. But underneath the pavement, unseen design and construction practices are some of the most fascinating innovations in sustainability.

Examples include:

- The use of recycled materials. Crushed old concrete and recycled asphalt products are used in many road sections, dramatically reducing the use of virgin materials.

- New products that have been introduced to lengthen the life expectancy of roads, many made with post-consumer recycled materials.
- Construction specifications that have changed dramatically over the past 10 years to include requirements for contractor operations to limit disruption, reduce construction runoff to adjacent watercourses, and to provide temporary stabilization of soils to prevent erosion and downstream sedimentation.
- Local communities and county and state agencies that are using a community-oriented approach to roadway planning and design to encourage stakeholder participation, project support, and to obtain thorough knowledge of the community. The city of Howell recently embarked on a multi-year, multi-mile residential road and infrastructure improvement program. This program includes a stormwater management plan that re-establishes the “green belt” between the road and sidewalk that has been used predominantly as off-street parking. Howell’s goal is to retain water closer to the source, thus reducing peak flows from reaching the outlets. This plan is better for the environment and can be built at a fraction of the cost of a typical stormwater conveyance system.

The future of improving or increasing green transportation projects will take a concerted effort to balance environmentally sound design and construction practices, cultural impacts, mobility, and public safety, while still recognizing the scarce financial resources.

Some potential areas for improvement and expanded sustainable transportation facilities include:

- Sharing transportation corridors with non-motorized transportation, and providing connections to various transportation modes. The city of East Lansing Abbott Road improvements shared right of way for non-motorized trails that link parks, residential areas, shopping, restaurants, and the city's Aquatic Center, and provided access to mass transit.
- Increasing the use of available space for stormwater enhancing features and integrating stormwater management into the design from the earliest stages of a project. The Abbott Road improvements also utilized a narrow median to reduce the area of construction and avoid wetland areas, constructed wetlands for storm water volume management and water quality enhancement, and became part of the city's passive recreational and environmental area.
- Greater use of asset management systems to more actively maintain roadways in a structured and prioritized basis can extend the service life of infrastructure improvements. Educating citizens on the benefits and consequences of improving the environment through infrastructure projects. For example, biking or ride sharing may be inconvenient but better for the environment and more cost efficient; and roundabouts use less fuel and take less time for the driver than traditional signalized intersections even though some drivers find them difficult to navigate.

Much has been done to build sustainability into our transportation networks, and the bar is constantly being raised. The greatest challenge we face in an era of slower growth is how to fund what we need. We will need to apply the same ingenuity that produced this golden age in transportation networks to this new challenge. 



*Fuel consumption can be reduced by designing roadways for all users, encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel, providing non-vehicular transportation opportunities and healthy recreational activities.*

## CONVENTION SPEAKER



**Robert Bobb**  
Education

Robert Bobb is the former Kalamazoo city manager and now the emer-

gency financial manager of Detroit Public Schools. Bobb's team is creating a Master Education Plan for 21st Century Teaching and Learning even as they work to turn around the district's legacy deficit of more than \$300 million. You won't want to miss his presentation on education.



Details: [convention.mml.org](http://convention.mml.org)

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*James Burton, P.E., LEED AP, CFM, is an associate at Hubbell, Roth, & Clark, Inc. You may reach him at 248-454-6300 or [jburtun@hrc-engr.com](mailto:jburtun@hrc-engr.com).*

*Nancy Faught, P.E., is an associate at Hubbell, Roth, & Clark, Inc. You may reach her at 248-454-6300 or [nfaught@hrc-engr.com](mailto:nfaught@hrc-engr.com).*

*Richard Beaubien, P.E., PTOE, is an associate at Hubbell, Roth, & Clark, Inc. You may reach him at 248-454-6300 or [rbeaubien@hrc-engr.com](mailto:rbeaubien@hrc-engr.com).*

## Backing into Federalism: Medical Marihuana's Commercial Uses

By Michael G. Woodworth and Eric W. Misterovich

*Editors Note: This month's Legal Spotlight column is guest-authored by The Hubbard Law Firm.*

Federalism is the distribution of governmental power between a central authority and its constituent units. The term "federalism" most commonly arises in discussions addressing relations between sovereign states on the one hand and a centralized national government on the other. But federalism is taking on a new application in Michigan.

The Michigan Medical Marihuana Act (MMMA), widely criticized as confusing, contradictory, and vague, contains no state-wide regulatory measures, offers local governments zero enforcement or zoning guidance, and fails to address the legality of related commercial activities. As a result, constituent units of state government—villages, townships, and cities—are now called upon to balance a state law that provides the sick with an avenue of relief independent of conventional pharmaceuticals while simultaneously increasing the presence of a potentially illicit drug in their communities.

The treatment of marijuana related businesses varies considerably at the local level. Some Michigan communities have passed ordinances prohibiting "all uses inconsistent with federal law," eliminating such businesses by implication. Others rely on the Act's silence to declare businesses illegal, while some welcome entrepreneurial interests and zone specifically for marijuana businesses.

### The Emergence of Cannibusiness

Despite conflicting opinions on the legality of marijuana businesses, commercial entities are forming. The terms "compassion clubs," "dispensaries," and "social clubs" are often used to describe varying types of these entities. However, labels alone are irrelevant. The appropriate inquiry is whether the individuals involved are legally authorized to engage in the specific activities at issue.

### Nurseries

Cultivation of marijuana is redefining the traditional concept of a nursery. Often permitted by right in zoning ordinances, a nursery may now encompass a collaborative grow operation between marijuana caregivers. Pursuant to the MMMA, marijuana must be grown in an "enclosed locked facility." Such a facility is defined as "a closet, room, or other enclosed area equipped with locks or other security devices" that permits access only by a caregiver or patient. Some entrepreneurs are relying upon this definition to subdivide warehouses into smaller, individual grow rooms.



*Michael Woodworth, president of The Hubbard Law Firm and presenter at the League's Medical Marihuana seminar in Lansing, talks to the press.*

A central grow facility may help municipalities alleviate concerns relating to multiple marijuana cultivations in residential areas. Of course, these facilities present their own public safety and land use issues. And, the larger they become the more they risk federal government intervention. Despite these concerns, commercial grow operations are being pursued, with or without governmental sanction, even in rural municipalities.

### Patient-to-Patient Transfers

Patients may cultivate their own marijuana or designate a caregiver to cultivate on their behalf. A patient's caregiver designation changes two important legal rights. First, the designating patient may no longer cultivate marijuana—he or she has assigned that right. Second, the assigned caregiver receives protections for assisting a patient to whom that caregiver is connected through the state's registration process.

The designation of a caregiver does not remove all of the designating patient's rights. Patients, with or without a caregiver, may acquire, transfer and deliver marijuana. These rights have given rise to businesses featuring patient-to-patient transfers. Patient-to-patient transfers, with individuals on each side of the transaction permitted to acquire, transfer and deliver marijuana, absent any other nexus between them, has sparked heated debates.

Many contend these transactions are illegal because the Act does not expressly permit patient-to-patient sales or because they run afoul of the Act's intent. Others argue this type of transaction is not only permitted, but necessary to

provide patients continued availability of their medicine. They point out that, if a patient can only acquire marijuana from an assigned caregiver, that patient will be forced to forego medicine while waiting for the caregiver's plants to mature.

### **Edibles**

As an alternative to inhaling harmful smoke, many patients choose to ingest marijuana-infused products. Accordingly, businesses are forming to sell food products produced with marijuana oils and butters.

The MMMA places no regulations on ingestible marijuana businesses, leaving local governments to sort out the issues. In response, municipalities may consider requiring such operations to have commercial kitchens, undergo sanitary safety and health inspections, or impose labeling requirements that call for the disclosure of the product's ingredients, the amount of marijuana used, and the level of its potency.

### **Local Government's Responsibility**

Local governments, challenged to maintain public services in the face of record deficits, may be frustrated by the need to also address marijuana policy. But municipalities can't depend upon clarification from Lansing. This is true, in part, because Michigan's Constitution requires a super-majority vote to amend citizen-initiated laws. Without another vote of the people, a 3/4 vote of each house of the Michigan Legislature is required for an amendment to the MMMA.

As a result, the constituent units of Michigan's central government are being asked to fill in the MMMA's gaps. Villages, cities, and townships have responded by creating a patchwork of local regulations, the inconsistency of which may undermine the effectiveness of any individual ordinance.

Communication between municipalities is recommended to resolve medical marijuana issues and foster a regional approach to reduce patchwork regulation, maximize medical marijuana's benefit and limit its adverse effects. Local officials should collaboratively voice their concerns and cooperate to determine the most prudent methods to resolve the identified risks.

The lack of experience regulating marijuana makes forming effective answers difficult, but not impossible. With education, communication, and proper guidance, municipalities can enact practical and effective ordinances.

Like it or not, Michigan must now clarify how to regulate medical marijuana. Our governmental structure allows local solutions to serve as a prototype for statewide answers. Municipal officials, with input from their citizens, will ultimately step up and solve the issues presented on a local level. In this fashion, our federalist system will rely on its smallest constituent unit: local government. 

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Michael G. Woodworth is president of The Hubbard Law Firm. He can be reached at 517-886-7176 or [mwoodworth@hubbardlaw.com](mailto:mwoodworth@hubbardlaw.com).

Eric W. Misterovich is an attorney with The Hubbard Law Firm. He can be reached at 517-886-7100 or [emisterovich@hubbardlaw.com](mailto:emisterovich@hubbardlaw.com).



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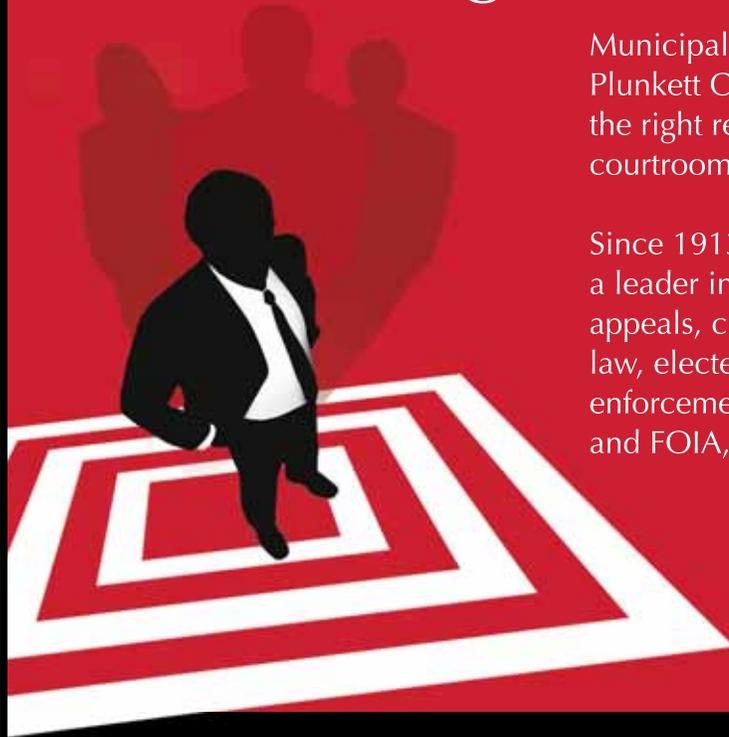
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## League Answers Questions on Foreclosures, Fourth-Class Cities and More

**Q.** Can one person hold the offices of clerk and treasurer of a general law village without violating state law? How does appointment versus election of these officials change the system of checks and balances?

**A.** According to state law (MCL 15.181(2)) a public officer or public employee is prohibited from holding two or more “incompatible offices” at the same time. “Incompatible offices” means public offices held by a public official which, when the official is performing the duties of any of the public offices held by the official, results in one office being subordinate to the other, one office supervising the other, or a breach of duty of public office.

In general law villages (and also in certain home rule villages and cities), the treasurer makes reports to the clerk regarding the finances of the village/city; if these positions are combined, then the same person is giving and receiving the report. The combination of offices makes the system of checks and balances meaningless. It also creates an incompatible office under the statute. Unless the village has changed the reporting requirements of the treasurer, by ordinance or by amendment to the General Law Village Act, the statute would apply.

**Q.** Due to the increase in foreclosure sales in our community, we are seeing an increased number of rental properties. Unfortunately, these properties are not being maintained. Do you have a sample ordinance for capping the number of rentals?

**A.** We do not have a sample ordinance capping the number of rentals—and indeed have a concern about the enforceability of such an ordinance. This is a legal question you will need to discuss with your municipal attorney.

What we do have are sample rental inspection ordinances on the League’s website at [www.mml.org/resources/sample\\_docs/ordinances/rental\\_housing.html](http://www.mml.org/resources/sample_docs/ordinances/rental_housing.html). Many communities are finding these to be useful tools in maintaining the quality of their housing stock.

**Q.** In our general law village, both the clerk and treasurer had to resign due to ill health. Who swears in the new officials?

**A.** Either the county clerk, township clerk, or any notary may swear in the new clerk. The newly sworn in clerk can then swear in the remaining officials. This is also true for home rule villages and cities.

**Q:** What is a fourth class city?

**A:** In essence, a fourth class city is a city that is governed by a state act instead of a charter. A long time ago, in 1895, the Michigan Legislature enacted the Fourth Class City Act, which created two types of cities: 1) fourth class cities (3,000 to 10,000 population), and 2) “special charter” cities (all cities not falling in the 3,000-10,000 population range). Over the course of a century, all but one of the “special charter” cities (Mackinac Island) reincorporated as a home rule city. As for fourth class cities, the Michigan Legislature altered the fourth class cities by enacting 1976 PA 334 (see also OAG 5525, 7/13/1979) which designated all fourth class cities as home rule cities. However, today’s fourth class cities are governed by the Fourth Class City Act, not a tailor-made charter written by an elected charter commission (as in Michigan’s 276 non-fourth class cities). Currently, five cities continue to be governed by the Fourth Class City Act: Harrisville (pop. 514), Omer (pop. 337), Sandusky (pop. 2,745), Whittemore (pop. 476), and Yale (pop. 2,063). There is one Special Charter City in Michigan—Mackinac Island (pop. 523). 

Mary Charles is a research analyst for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6322 or [mcharles@mml.org](mailto:mcharles@mml.org).



### CONVENTION SPEAKER



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Cultural Economic Development

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## It's Jazz..... By George!



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Each year the summer comes alive in downtown Monroe as the sounds of smooth jazz drift out of the local restaurants and cafes, building toward the annual weekend event in August

that has made the city the center of smooth jazz in southeast Michigan.

Monroe hosts the largest free festival in southeastern Michigan, and the “coolest” place to be in August. The River Raisin Jazz Festival received rave reviews again this year. So, if you weren’t able to be here, make your plans now for next August. The festival is held on the banks of the historic River Raisin, just a stone’s throw from the General George A. Custer Equestrian Monument—which, by the way, recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Monroe is one of the oldest communities in the state of Michigan, boasting a long and illustrious history and strong ties to the area’s original French inhabitants. Monroe was also the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the War of 1812—the significance of which has been recognized with the River Raisin Battlefield’s designation as the newest unit of the National Park Service.

Quaint shops, restaurants and cafes, historic neighborhoods, and an eclectic mix of architecture are only part of Monroe’s unique charm. The city, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and

community partners recently christened the River Raisin Heritage Trail connecting the [William C.] Sterling State Park to the River Raisin Battlefield National Park—unique to say the least.

The city of Monroe, named one of the top 100 “walkable cities,” boasts 150 miles of sidewalks and trails connecting neighborhoods and attractions throughout the community. The city’s historic downtown, with its 43 parks and recreational areas, and now the River Raisin Battlefield National Park, Ford Marsh (part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge), and Sterling State Park are all connected and pedestrian accessible.

Monroe is also about business. The home of La-Z-Boy Chair Company is also today home to one of the most anticipated new green industries in the state—Ventower LLC, which will produce masts for wind turbines.

So, whether your interests are architecture, history, restaurants, or simply browsing around a quaint downtown, Monroe is for you. And don’t forget, if you like great music—*Remember the Raisin...by George!* 

