

the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

July/August 2011

**WHY
PORT CITIES
MATTER**

**ALPENA'S MARITIME
MUSEUM**

**PORTLAND'S
RIVERFRONT**
A Second Storefront for
Downtown Businesses

**MICHIGAN'S
WATERFRONT
COMMUNITIES**

// Our goal is to start connecting
our port communities by water. //

—**JOHN KERR,**
Economic Development
Director of the Detroit/
Wayne County Port Authority



**+ 2011
CONVENTION
PREVIEW**

the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

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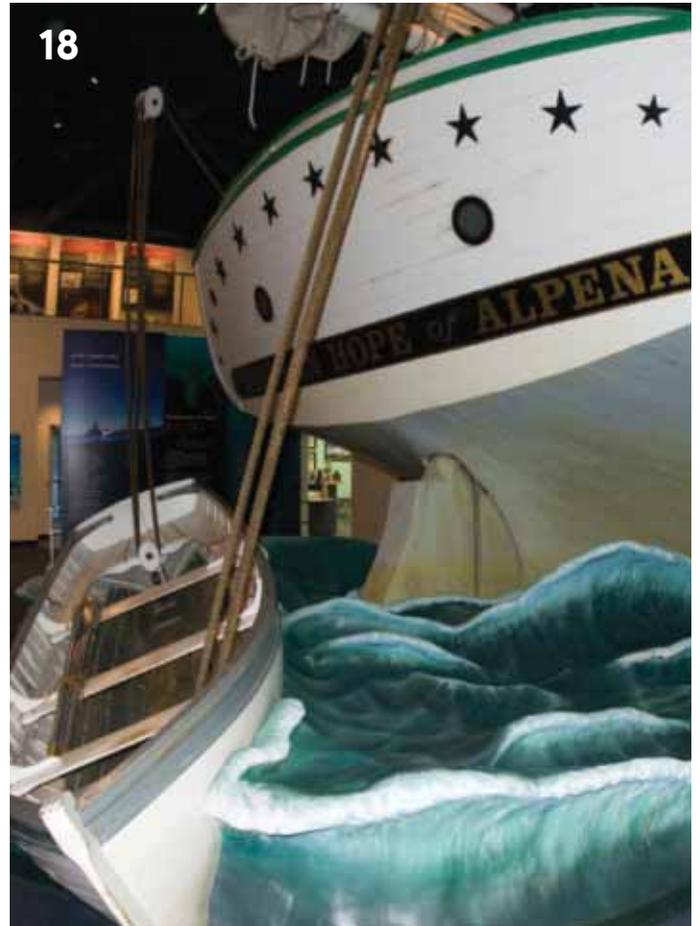
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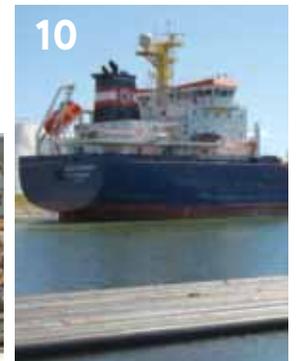


On the Cover:
John Kerr, economic development director of the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, is standing in front of the site of its new economic development project. The Authority is well on its way to developing a 21,000 square foot public dock and terminal on the downtown Detroit riverfront. The facility will be able to accommodate cruise ships, ferries, water taxis, tall ships, dinner boats, and naval frigates.



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the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 84, Number 3

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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Please recycle this magazine

Waterfront Communities Enhance Our State's Economy

Imagine a spaceship full of aliens on a flyover tour of Planet Earth. If an extraterrestrial realtor asked them to point out the best spots to land, I'm betting a lifetime supply of Reese's Pieces that Michigan would rank right near the top of the list.

No, it's not because the bottom half of our state looks like a giant hand waving "hello" from outer space. It's the stuff surrounding that giant mitt: nearly one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water supply and a mind-boggling 90 percent of the entire U.S. supply, according to the Great Lakes Information Network.

But are we really using that asset to its full advantage? All kidding aside now, that is exactly the question we're asking in this issue. We Michiganders often lose sight of the fact that the Great Lakes truly define our state, both in a very real geographic sense and as a fundamental aspect of our history, culture, and economy. Without our lakes, Michigan would quite literally and figuratively cease to be. The trouble is, we're so used to thinking of ourselves as the Great Lakes State that we take the whole concept for granted. It's a classic example of not seeing the forest for the trees.

We can turn that tide around. Right now we are at a key point in history where we are redefining our entire state and its communities. If we're going to thrive in the 21st century, we must reshape our economy, rebuild our communities, repurpose our resources, and rethink our priorities. Michigan's municipalities can play a strategic role in leading the way—and our waterfront communities are one great place to start.

You've heard us say how crucial our urban centers are to revitalizing our state's economy. Our coastal communities should be no less important in shaping what Michigan is and what it has to offer to residents and visitors alike. Michigan's 3,000-plus miles of shoreline are more than any other state in the nation except Alaska. In fact, with more than 11,000 inland lakes, one is never more than six miles from an inland lake or more than 85 miles from a Great Lake. It's time we started riding that wave.

In this issue you'll find great examples of communities using their waterfronts as a valuable tool for economic development and as a unique asset for creating a sense of place and enhancing the quality of life. Whether it's Alpena's maritime museum creating a focus for tourism and local identity, the transformation of St. Joseph's Silver Beach into a popular waterfront destination, or Sault Ste. Marie's strategic role as a gateway for international shipping...it's all about the power of water to play a transformative role in the future of Michigan communities.

But let's not forget it's also an irreplaceable natural resource that we as municipal leaders must work to restore and protect. In our lifetimes, we've seen our fisheries devastated by invasive species, our wetlands threatened by careless encroachment, and our waterways impacted by toxic contaminants and outdated sewage infrastructure. Our municipalities can and should be a powerful force for positive change. Both as an organization and through individual members, the League is involved in a wide array of environmental initiatives—from League President and Alpena

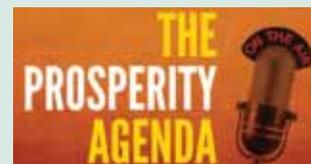
Mayor Carol Shafro's role on the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council to the League's Lansing staff's work in championing legislation that would assist municipalities in brownfield clean-up, sewer infrastructure improvements, and other clean water related projects.

Not in a shoreline community? I'm betting that same supply of Reese's Pieces you'll still find something within these pages that applies, even if it just inspires you to think about the unique assets your own community can use to develop a unique identity and sense of place. So turn the page and jump in. The water's fine.

If you missed the Regional Meetings this year, there were stellar presentations and timely updates on what's coming at us from Lansing. The Regionals set the stage for this year's Community Excellence Awards "Race for the Cup" and we had great participation—see the list of entrants on page 37. 

THE PROSPERITY AGENDA RADIO SHOW

The Michigan Municipal League is taking its message to one of the largest radio stations in the Midwest—News/Talk 760 WJR. Throughout 2011, League Director & CEO Dan Gilmartin will host the "Michigan Prosperity Agenda" radio show that challenges listeners to help make Michigan a better place to live, work, and play by creating vibrant and prosperous local communities.



The show is sponsored by the League and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and is scheduled to air at 7 pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month. We encourage all our members and friends to tune in for each show. For those outside the WJR listening audience, you can hear segments of the show at mml.org by clicking on the Prosperity Agenda logo you see here.

Daniel P. Gilmartin
League executive director and CEO
734-669-6302, dpg@mml.org



THE GREAT LAKES

Vital to Our Nation's Economy and Environment

by Lynn Vaccaro and Jennifer Read

A new analysis of economic data shows that more than 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes, generating \$62 billion in wages.

The Great Lakes have shaped the culture, history, and economy of the eight states that border the freshwater seas. Historically, the lakes formed a water highway that promoted settlement, trade, resource mining, and manufacturing that enabled the region to become the industrial heartland of the nation. The Great Lakes continue to provide a competitive advantage for businesses and support fantastic recreational opportunities that help attract talented workers to the region.

This analysis is based on 2009 employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and represents a conservative estimate of direct employment related to the Great Lakes in the following sectors: manufacturing, tourism and recreation, shipping, agriculture, science and engineering, utilities, and mining.

Manufacturing: 994,879 Jobs

The Great Lakes provide efficient transportation, which sustains manufacturing and steel production, while the clean, abundant water attracts chemical and pharmaceutical companies to the region. Historically, access to the lakes resulted in a concentration of technical skill, transportation, and manufacturing



infrastructure. Today, it continues to drive manufacturing and innovation.

Tourism and Recreation: 217,635 Jobs

Great Lakes beaches, resort communities and natural areas support a vibrant recreation and tourism industry and enhance the quality of life for residents. Over 4 million recreational vessels are registered in the region and people spend nearly \$16 billion annually on boating trips and equipment.¹ Many take advantage of the region's Great Lakes-dependent natural resources, including more than 9.2 million anglers, 4.6 million hunters and 23.2 million bird watchers each year.²

Shipping, Including Freight Transport and Warehousing: 118,550 Jobs

Great Lakes vessels transport an average of 163 million tons of cargo (e.g., iron ore, coal, and grain) each year.³ Lake vessels can ship goods three times more efficiently than rail and 10 times more efficiently than trucks,⁴ which gives mining, manufacturing and agriculture in the region a competitive edge. Many of the transportation routes are multi-modal and involve transfers among lake-bound and international vessels, rail and trucks.

Agriculture, Fishing, and Food Production: 118,430 Jobs

The Great Lakes support a vibrant recreational and commercial fishery. The Lakes also moderate the climate of coastal areas, improving production and creating microclimates that are ideal

What Do These Numbers Include?

The calculations in this summary are based on the most recent annual estimates for county employment from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages and Occupational Employment Statistics programs. For all states, except Michigan, only jobs in specific industries in the counties bordering the Great Lakes were included. In Michigan, nearly all mined materials are transported by lake vessels and so all mining jobs, except those related to oil and gas, are considered connected to the lakes. Michigan's access to the Great Lakes created a concentration of manufacturing infrastructure that continues to drive industry today and therefore most manufacturing jobs are connected to the lakes. For further details, see: www.miseagrant.umich.edu/economy.



for specialty crops such as cherries, asparagus, and wine grapes. The high-value, specialty crops also provide spin-off industries such as culinary festivals and beverage production.

Science and Engineering: 38,085 Jobs

Twenty science, engineering, and conservation-oriented occupations are connected to the Great Lakes. That includes jobs that focus on the natural environment, such as an environmental scientist, and those tied to Great Lakes industries, such as food scientists and nuclear engineers.

Utilities: 10,980 Jobs

Power plants are the largest user of surface water in the region. Nuclear, coal and natural gas power plants are often located on a coast where they have ready access to water for facility cooling. The Great Lakes also enable lucrative hydro-electricity production in Sault Ste. Marie, Niagara Falls, and the Upper St. Lawrence River.

Mining: 10,003 Jobs

Mining operations flourish in the Great Lakes region because there are abundant natural resources, a regional market for the material, and access to inexpensive transportation.

Ensuring a Vibrant Future

Water is a huge draw for people—coastal trails, clean beaches, and waterfront businesses add tremendous value to both metropolitan and semi-rural areas. In this new economic era, growth will be less linked to traditional manufacturing and more focused on quality of life and quality of the region’s natural resources.

Unless we protect and restore our best environmental asset—the Great Lakes—we will not be able to retain and attract strong new businesses and great human resources.

The Lakes are vital not only to the basin states, but are also an integral part of our nation’s economic and environmental health. With 83 million people, the region produced 27 percent of the gross domestic product⁵ and 24 percent of the country’s exports in 2009.⁶ The Great Lakes basin is home to 38 percent of the Fortune 500 companies⁷ and one of the largest concentrations of research universities in the world.⁸ Great Lakes colleges and universities award 32 percent of the nation’s advanced science and engineering degrees,⁹ providing the human capital needed for innovation and entrepreneurship. 

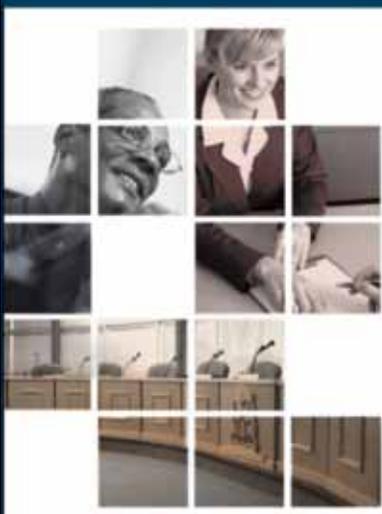
About Michigan Sea Grant
Michigan Sea Grant fosters economic growth and helps protect Michigan’s coastal/Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 32 university-based programs. For more information, visit www.miseagrant.umich.edu.

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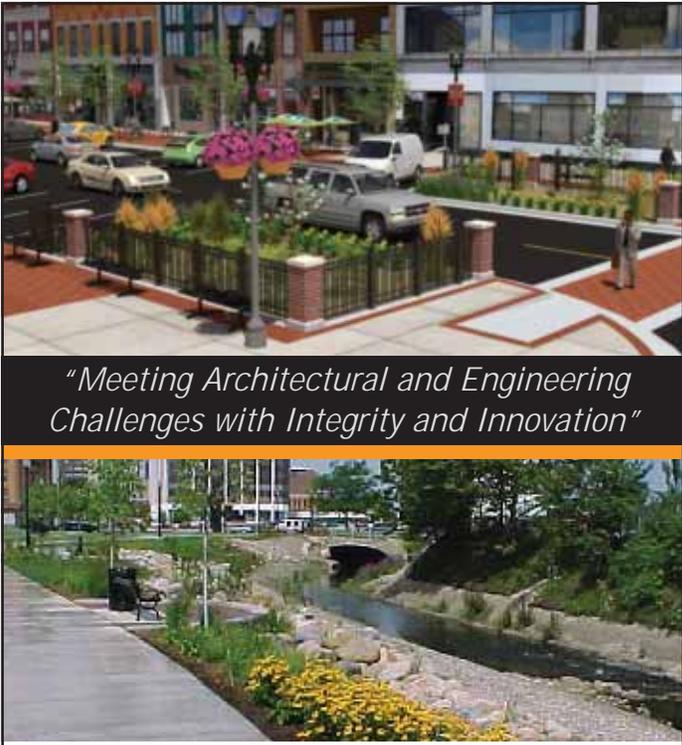
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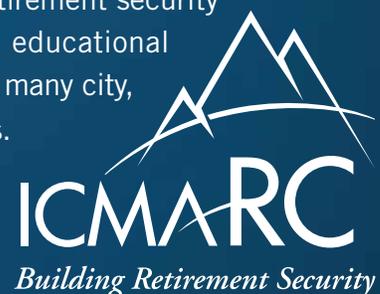
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Statistic Source: The 2010 EBRI/MGA Retirement Confidence Survey

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Michigan's Front Door

Port Collaborative Connects and Protects Michigan's Ports

Mission Statement

The mission of the Michigan Port Collaborative is to elevate the recognition and economic vitality of our port communities while protecting and promoting our Great Lakes and developing our coast as “Michigan’s Front Door.”

Through a statewide grass roots effort, 50 key Michigan ports joined forces to form the Michigan Port Collaborative (MPC), an organization designed to address a variety of issues facing Michigan’s commercial and recreational harbors. The organization is comprised of locally elected municipal officials, convention & visitors bureau officials, tourism advocates, private sector leaders within maritime commerce, ferry operators, marina and harbor operators, museum representatives, lighthouses and underwater preserve leaders, economic development and tribal officials, consultants, and educators representing Michigan’s Great Lakes communities.

What Is a Port City?

Michigan’s coastal communities that host one or more port functions form the core of the Collaborative. Port functions include cargo shipping, ferry services,

recreational harbors funded by the Michigan Waterways Commission, and commercial maritime services, such as charters, commercial fishing, marine vessel construction, maintenance and repair, marine salvage, dredging and towing, as well as the land-based support operations affiliated with these. The following criteria classify a city as a port city:

- commercial activity (historic/modern);
- located on the coast or have a direct coastal connection;
- accessible to deep draft vessels or tall ships; and
- provide waterfront access to the public.

In September 2010, over 200 MPC representatives convened in Muskegon to establish priorities for the organization’s current board of directors whose officers include John Kerr, port of Detroit; Fred Stonehouse, port of Marquette; Lisa Shanley, port of South Haven; and Felicia Fairchild port of Saugatuck-Douglas. As a result of the Muskegon gathering, support for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Act emerged as the top legislative priority for the group, while repositioning Michigan’s national image became the organization’s top economic development priority. Don Gilmet, city of Alpena building official and harbor master, strongly supports both objectives, saying “the MPC acts to elevate the recognition and economic viability of Michigan ports by repositioning Michigan’s coastal image as Michigan’s Front Door.” Kenneth Pott, executive director of The Heritage Museum and Cultural Center in St. Joseph, agrees, “Michigan needs to shed its undeserved



The port cities of Charlevoix, Detroit (inset), and Muskegon, p12

and outdated rust belt image and step into a more appropriate role as the most prominent maritime state in the U.S.”

What Are We Fighting For?

Last year the organization pledged its full support of Senate Bill 3213, the Harbor Maintenance Act of 2010, which was co-sponsored by Michigan Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow. If passed, the bill would have ensured that all revenue collected by the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which currently contains approximately 5.2 billion dollars, would be used for its intended purpose of maintaining and dredging U.S. domestic ports, including Michigan ports and harbors. The bill was not passed in 2010, but is being reintroduced in 2011. According to John Kerr, director of the port of Detroit and chairman of the Michigan Port collaborative, “In recent years, transportation

specialists have been struggling to discern new ways to move people and goods more efficiently. Highways are congested, gasoline prices are volatile,

corridors.” The Harbor Maintenance Tax has served as a disincentive to these short-sea shipping efforts, at the same time, many Michigan ports and channels are not benefiting from the taxes collected. They face severe maintenance issues which have restricted growth in recreational and tourism traffic—particularly in these bad economic times.

Recently, Congressman Pat Tiberi (R-OH) reintroduced legislation from the last Congress which would create an exemption from the Harbor Maintenance Tax for short sea shipping services. The exemption applies to non-bulk shipments between any two U.S. ports and any Canadian or U.S. port on the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Seaway.

On December 8, 2010, statewide representatives of the Collaborative met with legislators in Lansing to discuss the organization’s key initiatives and solicit support from state and federal representatives as well as key state and federal agencies including the U.S. DOT, U.S.

Michigan Port Collaborative Goals

1. Make Michigan a world leader in water-focused learning and education.
2. Utilize cutting-edge technology to promote port cities programs and assets.
3. Preserve the integrity of the Pure Michigan brand by collaborating to establish green tourism in port cities.
4. Summarize and disseminate information related to Great Lakes water resources issues to ensure protection, restoration, and wise use of water resources.
5. Establish a long-term development process to develop new maritime products.
6. Organize existing products for target marketing.
7. Develop transportation systems between and within port cities.
8. Establish a statewide wayfinding system for port cities.

and rail capacity is limited.” He added, “Our network of maritime assets could play a vital role by off-loading cargo onto feeder ships through our maritime



“Michigan needs to shed its undeserved and outdated rust belt image and step into a more appropriate role as the most prominent maritime state in the U.S.”

Kenneth Pott, Executive Director,
The Heritage Museum and Cultural Center

economy and has united port communities in an effort to develop the coastline as Michigan’s Front Door. “The opportunity to speak with one powerful voice on the myriad of issues affecting Michigan’s ports is vital, especially for Marquette with its strong combination of commercial bulk shipping, commercial and sport fishing, and recreational boating,” said Fred Stonehouse, city commissioner from the city of Marquette. The group is dedicated to growing a robust waterfront economy statewide by integrating marine passenger and freight transportation, commercial maritime operations, recreation, tourism, and maritime history while protecting the Great Lakes. 

Customs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and MDOT. The group met again in Sault Ste. Marie in May to expand the organizations objectives for 2011 and explore the maritime assets of the Sault.

Port Cities Speaking With One Voice

The collaborative recognizes that Michigan’s coastal assets are critical to future efforts to revitalize Michigan’s

Felicia Fairchild is the director of the Saugatuck-Douglas Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Michigan Port Collaborative board member. You may contact her at 269-857-1701 or fvfairchild@comcast.net.



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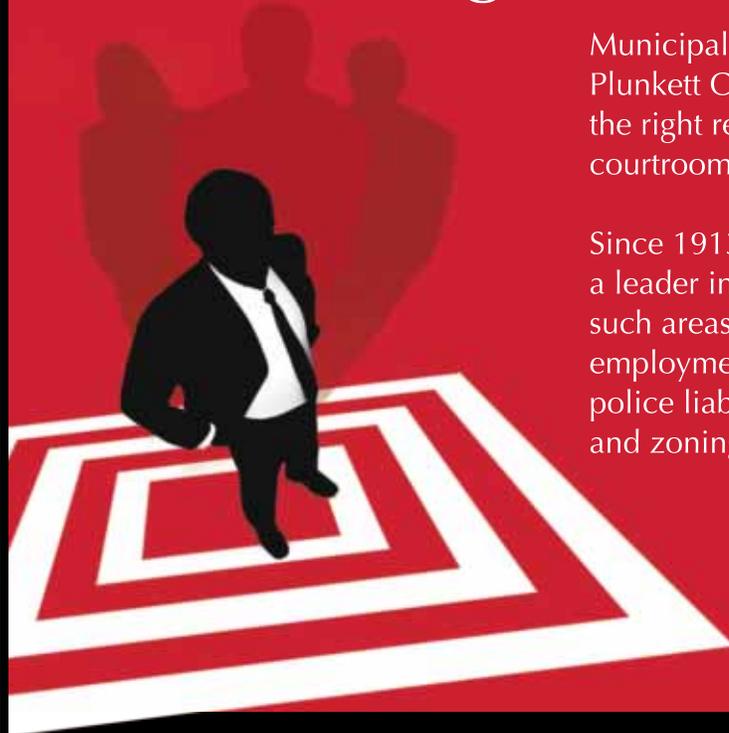
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TWO MEN IN A CANOE

“Two men in a canoe could obtain five thousand pounds of fish in half a day. They dipped them out of the rapids—big, rich whitefish, weighing six to 15 pounds—with a scoop net on a pole. They feasted around their campfires, and for miles the wind carried the savory odor of roasting whitefish.”

From the *Long Ships Passing: The Story of the Great Lakes* by Walter Havighurst (1942)



Brimming with many features of a “21c3” community, the Soo is a university town and features walkability, arts, entertainment, and tourism.

Sault Ste. Marie, known as “the place where Michigan was born,” is the oldest continuously settled place in the Midwest, dating back to a 1650s trading post. It was home to the Ojibwa or Chippewa Indians long before that, as they made their home on Sugar Island—named for the sugar maple trees—and fished the St. Mary’s River rapids which was and remains teeming with whitefish. Sault (pronounced Soo) is French for rapids.

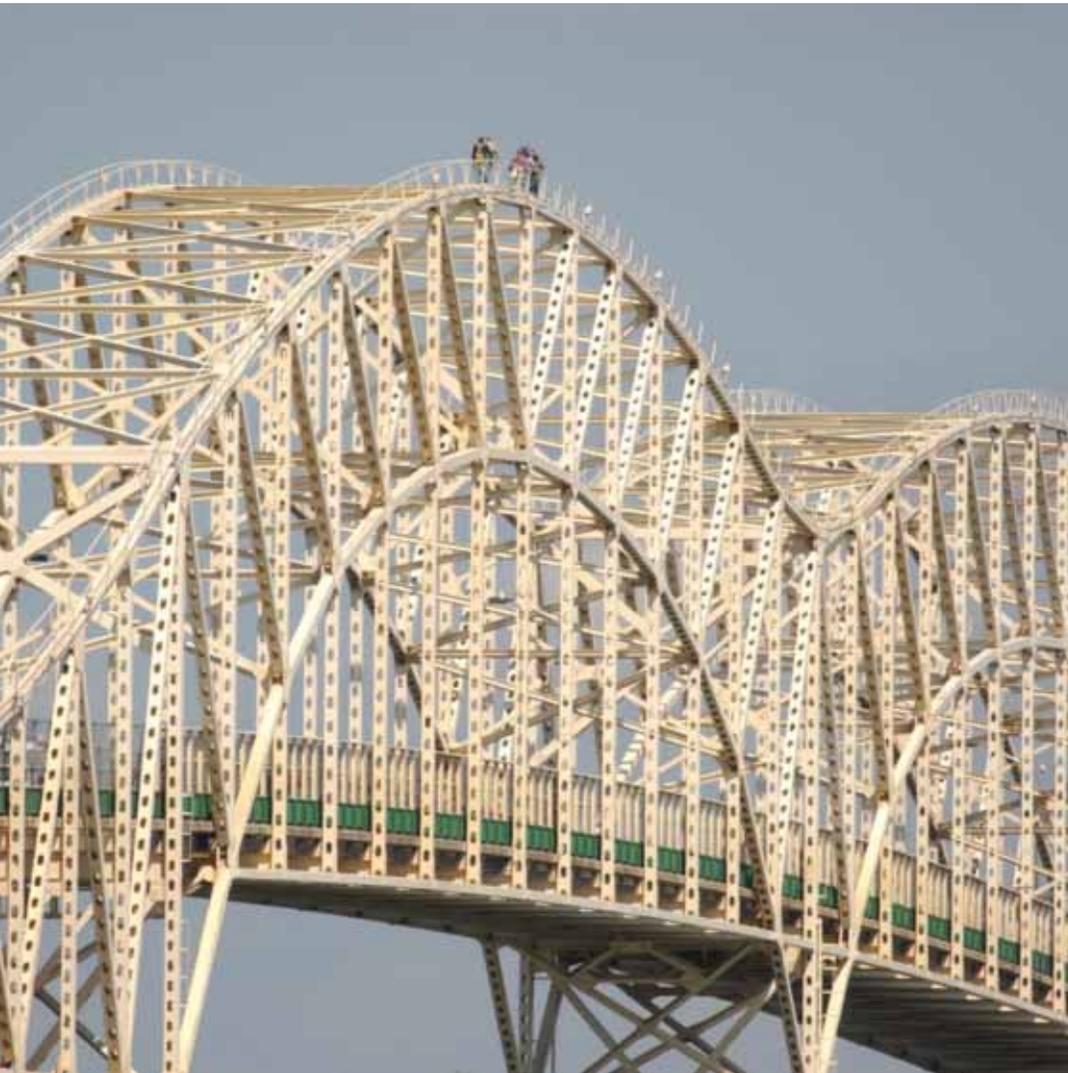
This fascinating waterfront community is blessed with many unique features from its past that are now successfully leveraged to promote the city as a 21st century community. The Sault is an international border community with big sister-city Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario, Canada and, home to an engineering marvel, the awe-inspiring Soo Locks.

The Sault is located on the shores of the St. Mary’s River, connecting Lake Superior to Lake Huron, on through to the lower Great Lakes and out to the Atlantic. A 20-foot drop at this precise location



caused all vessels seeking access from Lake Superior to Huron or vice versa to “portage” around the rapids. Portage means to carry the vessel and/or cargo over land to avoid the river obstacle and today’s Portage Street is that same route.

Valuable northern commodities such as copper, iron ore, and grain were the catalyst for building the locks. Today, a freighter passes through the locks about once every hour-and-a-half during shipping season, or approximately 10,000 times a year, making it the world’s busiest canal in terms of tonnage. Smaller cruising and pleasure boats use the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie Canal. There is also recent renewed interest in using the Great Lakes for short-sea shipping as a more efficient alternative to trucking. Check out the Port Cities Collaborative article, pages 10-12.



5 The international bridge is 2.67 miles long and accommodates, on average, 7,000 vehicles daily.

International Flavor

The International Bridge spanning the St. Mary's River just west of the locks is two miles long with two sets of graceful, soaring arches. I had the glorious opportunity last year to buckle into a harness and ascend the first set of arches on foot. In the first quarter of this year, nearly half a million vehicles crossed the bridge, nearly half of them passenger vehicles. Residents of both Sault cities frequently enjoy each other's communities; the Canadians are drawn to some better-priced commodities and the U.S. to an ethnically varied dining scene. Both offer quality entertainment venues and fabulous hockey. Tourists are easily able to enjoy the many amenities of both.

Bridges and More bridges

Another striking physical feature is the three-mile Cloverland Hydroelectric Canal that creates an island of the city's

downtown, reconnecting it via five bridges. The plant is an impressive quarter-mile-long building where the canal meets the St. Mary's River. On Engineers Weekend, you can tour this impressive historic plant. Lake Superior State University (LSSU) also has an Aquatic Research Lab that boasts a popular Lake Superior Fish Cam, followed by many in the community. The locks, river, canal, many bridges, freighters, and some of the

state's signature sandstone architecture make the city a popular area to walk and to photograph. The city is currently working on physical design to further enhance this walkable experience.

Portage Street

Portage Street today is a bustling tourism area. As the original portage route, it runs parallel with the locks and is the prime place for freighter watching.

This fascinating waterfront community is blessed with many unique features from its past that are now successfully leveraged to promote the city as a 21st century community.



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The popular annual International Bridgewalk started in 1987 (p17). Walkers start in the U.S. and end in Canada. The center of the bridge is marked with a flag from each country. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the event, with a festive atmosphere including music and a contest for patriotic attire (think stars and stripes and maple leaves).

Elevated concrete allows people to stand close enough to touch passing freighters and the park features a lighted fountain and frequent musical performances. Another great place to watch freighters is from the city's Tower of History, offering panoramic 20-mile views.

Park Place City Center

A current project on downtown's Ashmun Street is Park Place City Center—an historic four-story building offering a mix of retail and commercial space with “modern living in historic surroundings.” The “new” apartment homes are in the heart of downtown, across from a museum, minutes from Lake Superior State University and a few blocks from the waterfront, city parks, and of course, freighter watching. How cool is that?

Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3)

The city uses all of its attributes to the best advantage. The local tribe is very active and supportive of the community. The River of History Museum highlights local Native American life and the cultures that followed. A retired freighter, Valley Camp, serves as a museum ship featuring a pilot house, crew quarters, and more than 1,000 displays. Water Street historic block



offers some restored residential homes to complement the city's other architectural landmarks, including the Chippewa County Courthouse, St. Mary's Cathedral, and the St. James Episcopal and Central United Methodist churches.

This city continually works the events angle in every season. Beyond large events such as the 44th Annual I-500 Snowmobile Race, they shake up the mix with new adventures such as this summer's inaugural “Cruise with the Freighters” 47-mile bike ride, July 29-30 (wish me luck). The Sault enjoys great collaborative stakeholder groups who love their town and it shows in their ability to continually think creatively about how each of their unique assets might be enhanced to attract new user groups.

The Soo is also one of the League's 21c3 pilot project communities with the ambitious goal of turning their town-with-a-university into a "university town." So, stay tuned for more exciting news on that in the future. 



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



SHIPWRECKS

NO LONGER LOST TO HISTORY



Alpena's Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

By **Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton**

Seemingly lost to history, hundreds of ships lay at the bottom of Thunder Bay, victims of a lake that too often became a thrashing sea. But those destructive waters have also worked to preserve their prey. Today, shipwrecks spanning from the 1840s to the 1960s are protected as part of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. "It's really like a national park spanning 450 square miles in Lake Huron, where we are working to preserve and protect a spectacular collection of shipwrecks," said Jeff Gray, the superintendent of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The Thunder Bay Sanctuary is one of 14 national marine sanctuaries and the only one in the Great Lakes. "It has a huge impact on Alpena," said Alpena's Mayor Carol Shafto. "It's a unique draw. There is not another sanctuary like it anywhere. It's the only national fresh water sanctuary and it's the only one dedicated to preserving a collection of shipwrecks. It draws visitors from the state, the nation, and even internationally." First established in 2000, the sanctuary and its visitor facility the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, 500 W. Fletcher in Alpena, attract approximately 70,000 visitors a year.

Deb Pardike, executive director of the Alpena Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the sanctuary is at the center of its efforts to promote Alpena as a maritime heritage destination. "We're able to promote the sanctuary and at the same time, promote our lighthouses and our community," Pardike said.





In this life-size Great Lakes schooner, visitors can experience a simulated Great Lakes storm—they can even grab the wheel and pretend to captain the ship.

Shipping is still so critical to a state. It still is playing an important role culturally and commercially and I hope that the sanctuary brings that to people's attention.

Jeff Gray, Superintendent, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



SHIPPING HERITAGE

Thunder Bay boasts a 200-year-old shipping industry, which was often tragic in the days before modern sonar navigation. Ships collided in foggy conditions or were sunk by nasty weather. "Several circumstances came together to cause so many ships to sink," Gray explained. "In the 19th century, ship trade on Lake Huron fueled the whole nation, so there was a lot of traffic, there are also reefs and islands to navigate and two different weather patterns come together in the area."

The area was so prolific in its ability to claim the ships traversing its waters that it became known as "Shipwreck Alley." More than 200 ships are thought to rest at the bottom of the bay, but only a little more than half of those have been located. "We have a unique range of shipwrecks...some are in shallow water and some are very deep," Gray said. "There are ships that are very early and there are more modern craft, well-preserved at the bottom of the lake."

"It's a unique draw. There is not another sanctuary like it anywhere. It's the only national fresh water sanctuary and it's the only one dedicated to preserving a collection of shipwrecks. It draws visitors from the state, the nation, and even internationally."



Because of Lake Huron's cold, fresh water, the shipwrecks found on its floor have escaped the corrosive elements that have eaten away at ships resting in warm and salty waters. Lake Huron's waters also have great visibility, making shipwrecks in shallow depths visible to those in kayaks on the lake's surface.

While avid divers knew of the histori-

mapping the shipwrecks and to study the lake's fisheries and the invasive species affecting Lake Huron. While not everyone can scuba dive to the bottom of the lake to get a first-hand look at the ships, the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center offers landlubbers a taste of life on the water. "Families are pretty surprised when they come to visit because there really is something for everyone," Gray said.

Among the favorites is an exhibit featuring a life-size section of a schooner where people can relive what it would have been like to be tossed on Lake Huron's stormy waves. "It gives people a chance to experience a particular culture," Pardike said. "They can hop on board the schooner and see what is was like to be aboard a ship. A visitor can grab the wheel and pretend to captain the ship through a violent Lake Huron Storm." The experience is quite convincing; Gray said they've even had a few people become sea sick.

"We also have what we call 'dive tubes' that the kids can crawl through, they are clear and they simulate what it is like to dive over a shipwreck," he said. "I say kids, but we had a 93-year-old crawl through them. They are fun for everyone."

In addition, a new glass bottom boat, www.alpenashipwrecktours.com, will begin tours in June. It will give an even wider audience a chance to experience the historical treasures found on the lake floor. "We're very excited about the new glass bottom boat," said Shafto. "Not everyone is a diver—I'm not a diver. This gives visitors one more way to experience the shallow wrecks."

Carol Shafto, Mayor, City of Alpena

cal treasures at the bottom of Thunder Bay, it was less known with the general public. "Getting the area established as a National Marine Sanctuary has really raised awareness across the country and even the world," Gray said. "We've had visitors from all over including Europe and Asia."

ATTRACTIONS FOR EVERYONE

The sanctuary has also been a draw for researchers, including Robert Ballard who is famous for discovering the wreckage of the R.M.S. Titanic, and Jean-Michel Cousteau, son of Jacques Cousteau. Researchers have come to look for wrecks, to perform sonar and

ECONOMIC DRAW

The Great Lakes have long been one of Michigan's greatest resources, but the ships the lakes claimed are growing in their importance too. "The sanctuary has definitely spurred economic growth," Pardike said. "We wouldn't have our new shipwreck tour if it weren't for the existence of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. It's a big attraction unto itself, and it will only draw more visitors and entrepreneurs."

While much of the sanctuary's job is about the past—highlighting and preserving it, Gray sees it playing an important role in Alpena's future, too. "Shipping is still so critical to a state. It still is playing an important role culturally and commercially and I hope that the sanctuary brings that to people's attention." Gray said.

"The Edmund Fitzgerald sinking in 1975 (in Lake Superior) is a reminder that men and women leave dock everyday and just because ships sinking are infrequent today, doesn't lessen the inherent danger there." 

Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton is a freelance writer. You may contact her at 810-444-3827.



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DETROIT'S SHORELINE: A Wealth of Possibilities

By Rene Rosencratz Wheaton

Before Detroit put the world on wheels, the world—more specifically the French—came to its shores and saw a wealth of possibilities. “The water has played an important role in Detroit since it was founded by a French explorer in 1701 and became a port,” said John Kerr, the economic development director at the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority. More than 300 years after Antoine Cadillac founded the city, people are once again looking at the shores of Detroit.

Forecast: Commerce and Tourism

The Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority Public Dock and Terminal, a \$22-million project, is slated to open in June. Hopes are high the project will bring with it new possibilities for commerce and tourism. “Essentially the project includes new public docking which will facilitate better maritime traffic in and out of Detroit,” Kerr said. “We hope it will draw people to the waterfront and draw visitors from other places to Detroit.”

Economic Development Plans

The Detroit River has always played an important role in the economy of the city, the state and—because it’s a segment of the St. Lawrence Seaway—the country. “There are 2,000 trips right past Detroit’s front door, along the river,” Kerr said. “Sure

some of those are headed to other ports, but Detroit’s port is very busy. I’m not sure many people realize just how extensively it is used.”

The Dock and Terminal is sitting on some attractive real estate, located between the Renaissance Center and Hart Plaza. “It’s right in the heart of downtown Detroit, within walking distance of Cobo Hall, so there’s great potential there,” Kerr said. The new facility can accommodate many different types of vessels including cruise ships, ferries, water taxis, tall ships, dinner boats, and naval frigates.

Did You Say “Cruise Ships?”

Among the most promising uses is the facility’s ability to handle cruise ships. “Having an international airport like Detroit Metro nearby, makes it so much easier to get to a Great Lakes Cruise Ship,” said Chris Conlin of the Great Lakes Cruise Company. The Great Lakes Cruise Company, a division of Conlin Travel headquartered in Ann Arbor, brings cruising companies to the Great Lakes and sells cruise trips to travel companies and travelers. “Many people want to cruise the upper Great Lakes, like Lake Superior, and many of those cruises have started in

Detroit
pop. 713,777



MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



CONVENTION

OCT. 4-7, 2011

* GRAND RAPIDS *



BEAT THE DRUM WITH YOUR FELLOW LEAGUE MEMBERS AT THE 2011 CONVENTION IN GRAND RAPIDS AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD. SESSIONS WILL ADDRESS THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES AND HOW WE CAN FIND OUR RHYTHM IN TODAY'S ECONOMY. TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL ROCK THE HOUSE!

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2011  **TOUR**



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Taking it to the Streets * * * * *

ANNUAL CONVENTION • OCTOBER 4-7, 2011 • GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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From comprehensive media coverage to testimony in Lansing, the League has been beating the drum loud and clear to make sure both our legislative leaders and our citizens understand *Why Place Matters*. We can all help build better communities for people—places with unique identities and assets that truly put people first.

But we need YOUR voice if we want to be heard above the background noise. This year we've seen a shift in legislative priorities and attitude that threatens the ability of local leaders to drive the change our communities need to compete on a national scale in the 21st century.

That's why we're Taking It to the Streets at this year's Convention. Our impassioned presenters are bringing a powerful message on how YOU can find your rhythm in today's embattled economy.

It's time for Michigan municipalities to band together and show the world we are the people and places of Michigan.

Inspire. Innovate. Engage. Empower.

Four days in October. That's all it takes to put the power back in your hands.

////////////////// SPEAKERS SCHEDULED TO PRESENT INCLUDE //////////////////////



Sadicka White
President, Sadicka & Associates
Physical Design & Walkability



Ernesto Sirolli, PhD
Founder & CEO, Sirolli Institute
Entrepreneurship



Josh McManus
Co-Founder & Creative
Strategist, CreateHere
Placemaking



Toby Barlow
Co-President & Executive
Creative Director,
JWT Team Detroit
Messaging & Technology

Host City Reception • Taste of ArtPrize

Wednesday, October 5, 6:00 pm
Secchia Lobby, DeVos Place, 200 Monroe Avenue

The cities of the Urban Metro Mayors and Managers (Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Kentwood, Walker, Grandville, and East Grand Rapids) and event sponsors invite you to downtown Grand Rapids for a party in the middle of the ArtPrize District. We promise an experience that cannot be duplicated anywhere in the world. The ArtPrize vibe is electric and you'll be at its center. During the evening, you'll be entertained by members of Grand Rapids' talent-rich local music scene while you relax and mingle with friends.

ArtPrize, local food, your favorite refreshments, an interesting venue, and great musicians will create an unforgettable evening that will introduce you to the full ArtPrize experience.

Pre-Convention Sessions

Tuesday, October 4

The Michigan Medical Marijuana Act (MMMA) Two Years Later

1:00-4:00 pm

The MMMA has been in effect for two years now, yet there are still many unanswered questions. How and where is medical marijuana dispensed? What are the implications for a municipality as an employer? On average, the state Department of Community Health is receiving 70+ medical marijuana patient applications a day. 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, ongoing ACLU cases, zoning, and more.

Meetings R' Us

1:00-4:00 pm

Do your meetings run smoothly? Is your council or board debating issues until late into the night? By using parliamentary procedure, you can gain control and have more productive meetings. This basic guide to fair and orderly meeting procedures will help keep discussions focused and allow you to accomplish the business on the agenda. This session will focus on council meetings and all of the problems and interruptions that can complicate them, including dealing with difficult people.

Festivals – Insurance and Liability Issues

1:00-4:00 pm

Few activities define your hometown more than the festivals, parades, fireworks, and other special events that celebrate your local history, current achievements, or civic pride. Without proper planning, organization and experience, the chances increase that your special event will result in a bodily injury or property damage to your residents or visitors, and a financial loss to your municipality. Join a panel of risk management professionals to learn about how liability exposures can affect your special event and how these exposures can be identified and controlled.

Local Government Finance: Guarding the Public Checkbook

1:00-4:00 pm

NLC Competency: Competent Practitioner – 2 credits

Learn strategies and techniques to increase your proficiency and comfort in dealing with financial oversight responsibilities. Gain knowledge of budget management, financial crisis warning signs, the perils of micro-management, and establishing an adequate fund balance. Participants will also receive the book *Local Government Dollars & Sense: 225 Financial Tips for Guarding the Public Checkbook*.

Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys' (MAMA)

Municipal Law Program

9:00 am-4:30 pm

The MAMA is presenting a full-day workshop designed for attorneys to sharpen their skills in municipal law. The topics will include the Enforcing Charter Violations; Insourcing; Outsourcing; Downsizing and Elimination of Services; Collective Bargaining Issues; Current Issues in Social Media; and Survival Techniques for Local Government Attorneys. The 2011 MAMA Awards Luncheon will be held immediately following the annual meeting. Tickets to attend only the awards luncheon and annual meeting will be available.

AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

/// Tuesday, October 4, 2011 ///

9:00 am-4:30 pm	MAMA Municipal Law Program
1:00-4:00 pm	Pre-Convention Workshops
2:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting

/// Wednesday, October 5, 2011 ///

8:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration Hours
9:00-10:00 am	Governance Committee Meeting
10:00 am	Board of Trustees Meeting
1:00-2:00 pm	Annual Business Meeting
2:00-4:15 pm	Welcoming General Session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parade of Flags• Community Excellence Awards• Keynote Presentation
4:15-4:30 pm	Networking Break
4:30-5:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
6:00 pm	Host City Reception

/// Thursday, October 6, 2011 ///

7:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration Hours
8:30-10:15 am	General Session
10:15-10:45 am	Networking Break
10:15 am-3:00 pm	Silent Auction Bidding
10:45 am-12:00 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:00-12:15 pm	Networking Break
12:15-1:15 pm	Luncheon
1:15-2:45 pm	General Session
2:45-3:15 pm	Networking Break
3:15-4:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
5:30-8:30 pm	Reception & Annual Awards Banquet

/// Friday, October 7, 2011 ///

9:00-11:00 am	Closing Breakfast & General Session
	Community Excellence Award "Race for the Cup" Winner Announced

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Community Excellence Award

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Wednesday, October 5, 2:00 pm

Join us in this good-natured competition and cheer for Michigan's best. See the Community Excellence Award regional finalists unveil their winning presentations.



You are the official judges. Your votes will alone decide which community takes home the Cup. After the general session, cast your vote at the official Community Excellence Award Voting Booth.

Don't miss the Cup Presentation Breakfast on Friday, October 7, where you can enjoy breakfast with new friends and be part of the fifth annual Community Excellence Award Cup Presentation.

League Foundation & Silent Auction

Contribute to the silent auction by bidding or donating an item. This annual event presents a great opportunity to bring home unique gifts representing communities across Michigan, or you can highlight your community, local businesses, and local talent by donating an item. We will again offer the online feature to our auction process. You will have the option to contribute and bid for donated items online prior to the live actual silent auction event. For more information on donating an item, call Deborah Walton-Medley at 734-662-3246.

Funds raised through the League Foundation's auctions help support the League's mission to enhance and develop leadership in local government.

HHHHHH

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Sponsorship Information

Sponsoring the Annual Convention provides you with a unique opportunity for communicating with professionals from local government. Event attendees are typically high-level decision makers representing Michigan municipalities, and many participants are repeat attendees who know each other. This creates a relaxed and informal atmosphere with the right settings for meeting new people.

When becoming our sponsor, we will do our utmost to satisfy your needs for involvement and exposure. Are you looking for networking and relationship building? Presentation opportunities? Company branding? Our sponsor packages offer pre-defined exposure opportunities, but don't hesitate to bring us your personal requests. Contact Terri Murphy at 734-669-6342 or tmurphy@mml.org for more information.

Convention General Information

/// HOW CAN I REGISTER? ///

Online!

In order to reduce the amount of printed paper and increase member privacy, the League will no longer accept credit card payments on printable registration forms for League events. All credit card payments are to be completed online via My League (www.mml.org). My League is your secure, interactive online League account. It's available to all members and nonmembers, with a quick and easy sign-up process.

Via Printable Form

Visit tour.mml.org to download and print a faxable registration form. Complete and fax to 734-669-4223, then mail with check payable to: Michigan Municipal League PO Box 7409 Ann Arbor, MI 48107-7409.

/// HOUSING ///

Host Hotel – Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids
Phone: 800-253-3590 or 616-774-2000

Housing Reservation Process

Housing reservations will only be accepted for those who have registered for Convention. After registering for Convention, a confirmation email will be sent to you within 48 hours. The confirmation email will contain your registration information and your personalized housing registration code. The hotel requires that you provide this code in order to make reservations during the League's Annual Convention.

Housing Rates

\$124 (plus an 8% occupancy tax and 6% state tax)

Parking

\$10 self-parking per day/night
\$20 valet per day/night





Toronto,” said Conlin, “Having a facility like this in Detroit shaves quite a few hours off the trip and is a real win for the community.”

Our Great Lakes—Others' Destination of Choice

Cruise ships also bring in visitors from other states, spending tourism dollars in ports of call along the cruise route.

“The majority of the people come from outside of Michigan and are experienced cruisers,” Conklin said. “We—Michiganders—are around the Great Lakes all the time and tend to take them for granted a little. The Great Lakes are a destination that many people have on their list.” The Great Lakes Cruise Company will begin offering cruises out of The Detroit/Wayne County Port

Authority Public Dock and Terminal in 2012.

Ecotourism

“There are two cruise ships scheduled to make calls on Detroit in July, and tall ships will be making a visit,” Kerr said. “The activities are starting to line up and with the new facilities, the port is more attractive for various uses.” One of those unique uses includes ecotourism. In fact, some ecotours were held as part of a 2008 U.S. EPA Brownfields Conference. Long-term, the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, would like

The Detroit Dock project is an economic renewal project. Cruise ships had nowhere for Detroit visitors to dock. Michigan residents tend to take the lakes for granted, but out of state visitors show strong interest in seeing the sights and experiencing the culture of the Great Lakes area.



to link the new facility to the International Wildlife Refuge, Belle Isle, and other natural assets along the Detroit River, using tour boats.

Transportation: Water Taxis and Ferries

“Our waterfront has largely been used industrially, but there are other uses beyond industry,” Kerr said. “We want to make the waterfront more attractive to people and look to the water as a way of moving people recreationally and for excursions.” The new dock and terminal could be used for water taxis and ferries, too. Such a use could make public transportation a more viable option in metro Detroit, especially when paired with a rail system.

“With the addition of trains, we have the potential to move people and cargo around much more efficiently,” Kerr said. “Our region has been lacking in that and this project paired with the Michigan Rail project have the potential to make transportation much more effective, which is really important given the direction gas prices have taken.”

Things were already looking up for the region’s rail system—more than \$161

“Our waterfront has largely been used industrially, but there are other uses beyond industry. We want to make the waterfront more attractive to people and look to the water as a way of moving people recreationally and for excursions.”

John Kerr, Economic Development Director, Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority



Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System

Since 1959, the St. Lawrence Seaway has provided a link between the world marketplace and the industrial and agricultural heartland of North America. The 2,000-mile long Seaway system is responsible for annual commerce exceeding 200 million net tons. Over 30 million people rely on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway system, either recreationally or commercially.

- ✓ The shipping of foreign goods through Michigan waters translates into \$2 billion to the state's economy
- ✓ Annually, approximately 7 million tons of overseas and Canadian cargo crosses the Port of Detroit docks
- ✓ Foreign shipping accounts for 20 percent of all maritime activity with the State of Michigan

For more information on the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority Public Dock and Terminal, visit www.portdetroit.com.



million for high speed rail and \$40 million for Amtrak stations in Troy, Battle Creek, and Dearborn had been secured—when, in May, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced \$200 million in additional federal transportation funds for the state.

Shipping Cargo Still Important

While the new Dock and Terminal has potential for many new uses, it will continue to play an important role in Michigan's shipping industry. According to the Port Authority's website, ships move more than 80 million tons of cargo annually on the Detroit River. Detroit's docks are busy too, handling more than 7 million tons of overseas and Canadian cargo. "Shipping is a highly effective way to move cargo," Kerr said.

The Port Authority was also successful in securing a grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to better connect the port to the freight rail system, an effort that will help the cogs of commerce turn even more efficiently. While a lot has changed since the days of Antoine Cadillac—industries have thrived and waned—Detroit's shores remain a place of possibilities. 

Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton is a freelance writer. You may contact her at 810-444-3827.

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A TALE OF Two Rivers

By Kendall Beck

(Before)



(After)

The once neglected riverside façades have been completely made over. Now downtown businesses have two storefronts.



The city of Portland has a new boardwalk that has created a second storefront for downtown businesses. Business owners literally have “turned their businesses around” by orienting part of their store or restaurant to overlook the river and the new boardwalk. They have begun to see increased activity due to the draw the riverfront redevelopment has had in the community. It also provided a solution to second story loft development. The boardwalk provided the required secondary access points for lofts.

“I love it. To me, it is by far the crowning jewel of the city of Portland,” said Michelle VanSlambrouck, owner of the Cheeky Monkeys Coffee House. “Especially on Saturdays—I meet people from all over the state who come here to visit, shop, and use the outdoor trail.” An avid runner herself, Michelle testifies to the fact that those grant dollars have been put to good use. “I’ve been out there at every time of day, and never once have I not seen people using the trail.” But people are doing more than merely visiting—many are deciding to stay awhile. “I meet people all the time who are thinking about moving to Portland, and the scenic downtown and trail system are what sells them.” The loft apartments above the riverfront businesses are especially a draw.

Portland City Manager Tom Dempsey was especially pleased with the results. “The project is having an immediate impact,” he said. “Portland is

Portland
pop. 3,883



Portland Creates a Second Storefront for Downtown Businesses



benefiting from this newly discovered treasure with new interest and development in the downtown area. This project has become the focal point of our growing and expanding community and is a tremendous addition to our vibrant and ‘Cool City.’”

Portland—City of Two Rivers

In the early 1830s, pioneers were trickling into a small Michigan village where the Looking Glass River and Grand River met. As more settlers became established, the time came to name this popular area. Since the location proved to be a great landing for all passing boats to stop, the pioneers decided that “Portland” would be a fitting moniker for their new hometown.

Today, that beloved village is the city of Portland, home to a population of about 4,000. However, by the end of the 20th century, the riverfront area that had initially attracted those early settlers was in desperate need of attention. Building façades were beginning to show their age. Trees and brush obscured the river. Portions of the downtown area were inaccessible to the riverfront. Compounding the problem was the fact that the area was very visible when driving down main thoroughfares and it, sadly, was a bit of an eyesore.

With its location halfway between Lansing and Grand Rapids, Portland had all the markings of a great locale for the weekend day-tripper. The city is a charming gathering place

for residents and visitors, a place where entrepreneurs would feel inspired and where urbanites would want to live.

Creating the Vision

Enthusiasm for downtown revitalization grew and Portland was one of the first cities to be recognized as a Michigan “Cool City” and a Michigan Main Street Community. Portland was awarded the Cool Cities Catalyst Grant of \$100,000 in 2004. In addition, the city received a \$625,000 MSHDA Grant for businesses to develop loft apartments above downtown buildings.

The Cool City designation gave a lift to the city and traction for further reinvestment. In the end, the city decided on a multi-phase Downtown Waterfront Development Project with an objective to encourage people to come downtown and enjoy Portland in a new way. The project would provide public access to the scenic beauty surrounding the area. But it was a tall order: The project had to be constructed in



“I meet people all the time who are thinking about moving to Portland, and the scenic downtown and trail system are what sells them.”

Michelle VanSlambrouck, owner of Cheeky Monkeys Coffee House.



Portland's waterfront redevelopment included a system of paved paths, a new pedestrian bridge, a band shell, and landscape improvements.

a way that was cost-effective and safe. Moreover, it had to honor the environment and history of the area.

The city worked with Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering, Inc. to bring this special project to fruition. The company provided site design concepts and grant administration for the waterfront redevelopment, which consisted of a system of paved paths, Grand River Boardwalk Riverfront façade improvements, a new pedestrian bridge, band shell, and landscape improvements. The city of Portland, the Portland Downtown Development Authority, and local business owners provided critical input and

direction. Redevelopment was designed and coordinated to be compatible with the existing neighborhood. Façade replacement included eliminating potential safety hazards, correcting minor structural deficiencies, minimizing water and air infiltration, and upgrading building appearance.

Grand River Boardwalk Riverfront Façade Improvements

Of course, the project did not come without its challenges. No access to the work area made construction especially difficult—the river was too shallow to allow barges. A narrow alleyway south of Bridge Street solved the problem of getting construction equipment to the site. The MDEQ agreed to a cofferdam and a temporary construction road beneath the Bridge Street Bridge. There were also strict state permitting requirements, along with the issue of protecting the historic buildings and their aesthetics. F&V worked with the State Historic Preservation Office to provide a safe environment for visitors and proposed aesthetic changes that still complemented the character of the area, since downtown Portland is listed on the Historic Register. The railing system, for example, was designed to mimic the nearby unique Veterans Bridge while still meeting pedestrian railing codes. It was important to protect the scenic natural resources while constructing the Riverwalk; construction impact on the Grand River was minimized.

Despite these challenges, the improvements were dramatic and beautiful upon the project's completion in 2007. The once-neglected riverside façades have been completely “made over,” enhancing the



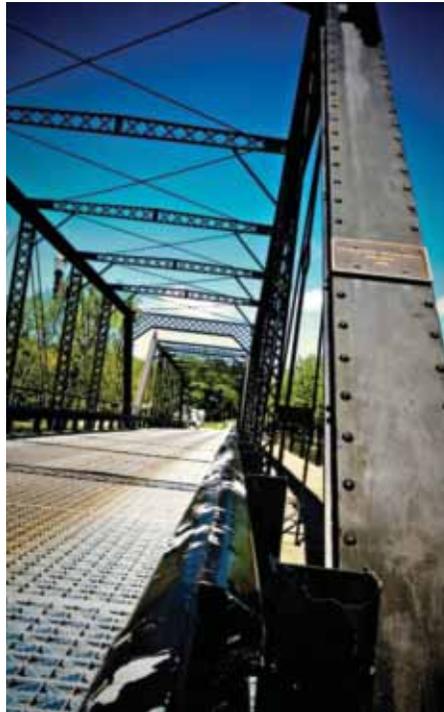
“Portland is benefiting from this newly discovered treasure with new interest and development in the downtown area.”

Tom Dempsey,
Portland City Manager

vitality of the city. The trail system provided a scenic way to get about the city and created more areas for various physical activities and leisure for both residents and day-trippers.

Portland’s Riverfront Development Project is a testament to the city’s commitment to the future of downtown, while simultaneously honoring its past. By guiding the public’s attention back to the city’s unique scenic beauty, this downtown revitalization project truly brought the “river” back to “The City of Two Rivers.” 

Kendall Beck, P.E., is project manager for Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering, Inc. You may reach him at 616-977-1000 or kbeck@fveng.com.



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Tawas City

Transforms
its Waterfront to Mixed-Use
Development And **BOAT/KAYAK
LAUNCH**

Tawas City
pop. 1,827



By Danna White



Tawas City undertook a huge redevelopment project. The finished product boasts a new city hall, a mixed-use retail/condominium building, a canoe/kayak launch, and a 100-foot pedestrian walkout.

district on US 23—the main commercial corridor of the community. First things first—City Councilman Dave Dickman led the council in forming a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and City Manager Mark Moers applied for (and received!) a \$60,000 Waterfront Redevelopment Grant. The city purchased the old gas station from the state of Michigan in a tax foreclosure sale and also purchased the dry cleaner and an abandoned house. The grant provided the funds for the demolition of the buildings and the cleanup of the property. A new paved parking facility was put in, along with decorative lighting. “The DEQ led the way for us to form the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and to apply for a grant that fit our needs,” said Councilman Dickman.

At the river bank, a 100-foot walkway with a pedestrian walkout into the river was installed. The walkway also serves as a kayak/canoe launch. To protect the environment, natural river rock was placed to stabilize the shore and a stormwater collection system was installed. This eliminates the possibility of contaminated surface water runoff into the river.

Tawas City sits on the shoreline of Lake Huron and is symbolic of a small town steeped in the rich history of the state of Michigan. It is surrounded by many natural resources, including Tawas Bay, Tawas River, and Huron National Forest. Tawas City is proud of its many beautiful parks, beaches, and a newly completed fishing pier at Gateway Park—all in all, the city contains nearly 1,500 linear feet of uninterrupted shoreline. There is a variety of motels, unique resort cabins, and nearby camping. In the summer season, the population nearly doubles.

Not everything in the city was idyllic, however. The 500 block area of the old downtown district had four vacant buildings that were deteriorated and the area was considered blighted. There was also an abandoned gas station with contaminated soil from leaking underground storage tanks, as well as contamination from a former dry cleaner. Since there

was no stormwater collection system, the Tawas River, running behind all of these buildings, was receiving runoff whenever it rained.

On January 16, 2007, city officials invited residents to participate in a visioning session to discuss the future plans of Tawas City. The number one goal was to redevelop the downtown

“The project was a total facelift of the city, revitalizing the blighted and contaminated downtown area into something the citizens of Tawas City can be proud of.”

Mark Moers, City Manager, Tawas City

A Veteran’s Memorial Park area was established, and the next stage of the development will include a recognition plaza for all veterans of Iosco County.

The city is very proud of the fact that it tapped talent from its own backyard to transform the waterfront. A local developer, Towne Square LLC, purchased the 500 block across the street and demolished the vacant buildings. A mixed-use development was constructed, consisting of four commercial units on the first floor and eight residential units on the second and third floor. Again using a local contractor—Schaaf and Associates Construction—the city contributed an additional \$1.5 million to purchase a third of an acre in the 500 block to construct a new city hall. Believe it or not, the city council had been meeting in the city’s library, and city hall was conducting business in a former railroad office building. The new facility features traditional architectural design, incorporating a clock tower and observation room that overlooks Tawas Bay. A 100-foot riverwalk trail was built on the bank of the Tawas River behind city hall, which connects to a new 400-foot trail behind the Towne Square development.

The city’s fire station, which sits behind the new city hall, was a very small facility that left only inches between the parked fire trucks and was considered a safety hazard. City Manager Moers knew that there was material for a steel manufactured building that had been purchased years before and never used. The city again had local contractor Schaaf and Associates redesign the building materials and construct a new building connecting it to the existing fire house, nearly doubling its size. Tawas City Fire Chief Steve Masich said, “Now the fire equipment and trucks have space to maneuver and there is room for future growth.” There was even room to bring back an old 1939 International fire truck that had been part of Tawas City’s fire department years ago.



The city has also been able to make major improvements to Gateway Park with a new handicap accessible fishing pier and boat launch. In addition, the park has new sidewalks, lighting, benches, two viewing scopes, and an extended parking area. This was made possible through a \$134,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and \$110,000 from the city. Mayor Duane Walters said “It has been a challenge but a privilege to keep the city moving in a positive direction.”

Demolition of blighted structures, a stormwater collection system, and Tawas River access has been a vast aesthetic and environmental improvement for the city. Construction of a new city hall, Veterans Memorial Park, and the mixed-use development in the downtown area of Tawas City is a focal point for future businesses and has brought a vibrant new beginning to the once dilapidated downtown area.

City Manager Moers noted that “The project was a total facelift of the city, revitalizing the blighted and contaminated downtown area into something the citizens of Tawas City can be proud of. The transformation of the waterfront area for recreational use will have long-term benefits for Tawas City. This merging of public and private investments in our city is a rare opportunity that we have taken full advantage of. The city was proud that it was able to use local companies to work on these redevelopment projects. We felt it was important to our local economy to support local businesses.” 

photos courtesy of Tawas City Councilmembers Kane Kelly, Dave Schantz, and Carl Steinhurst.

Danna White is a councilmember in the city of Tawas City. You may reach her at city hall, 989-362-8688.



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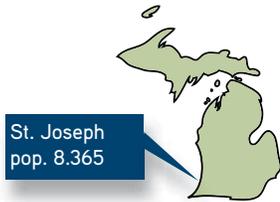
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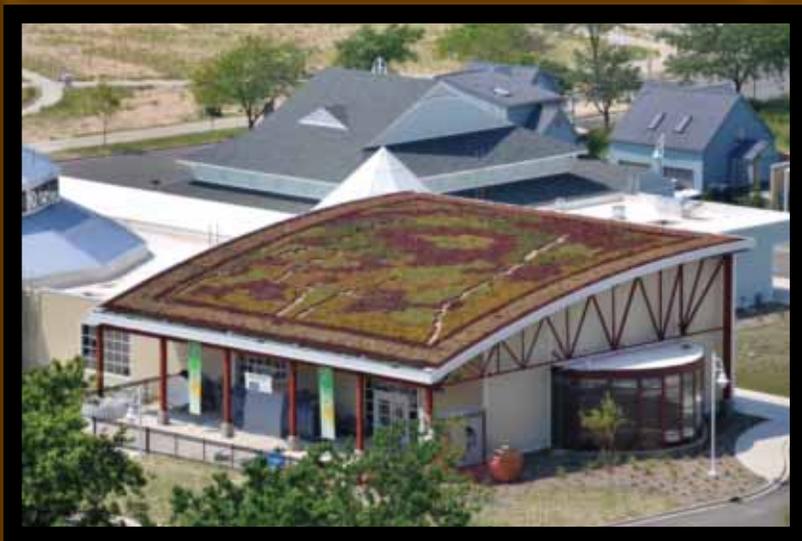
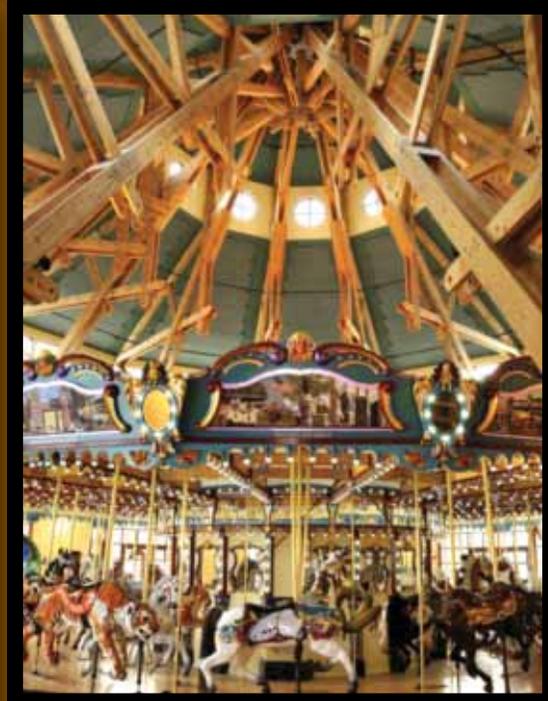
By Tony McGhee

is an Entertainment **SILVER BEACH** Destination



At a time when condominiums were popping up all along Lake Michigan, the city of St. Joseph and its resident stakeholders realized the necessity of developing 6.6 acres of unused property between Silver Beach and the business district on the bluff above it. The goals were to preserve views of the lake from the bluff, increase tourism and revenue, and enhance the lives of community members. When the city received an unprecedented gift of the property from Whirlpool and local philanthropists, it was agreed that the land would be placed in public trust with the agreement that it would be developed in the best interests of all concerned. A 25-member committee composed of representatives from local government, economic development, local non-profits, business owners, and donors agreed that the development should be innovative yet maintain a sense of history from the time when the property was an amusement park.



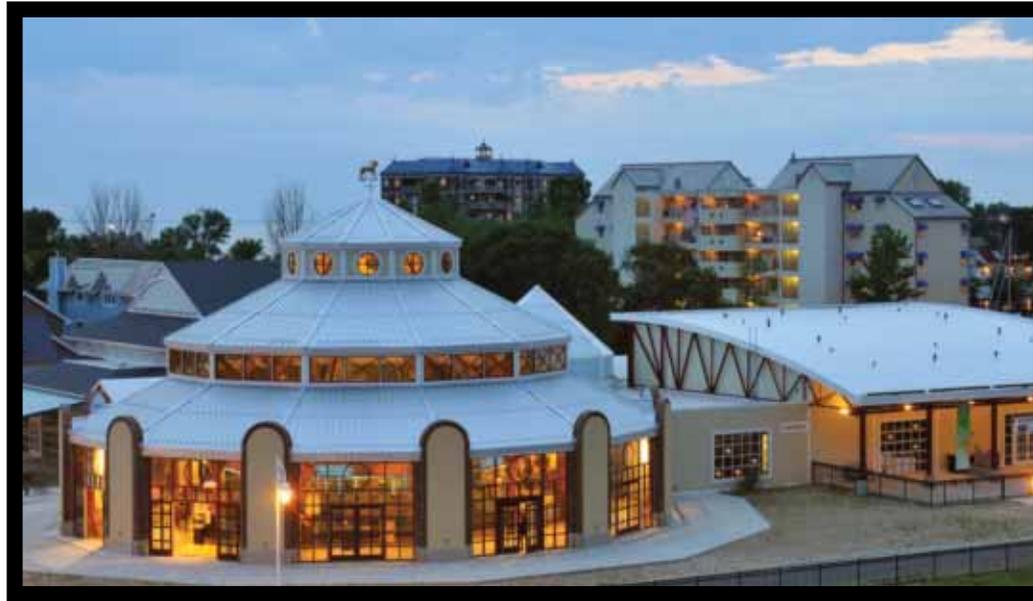


Rich in history, Silver Beach was an amusement park featuring an old-fashioned wooden carousel. The redeveloped property restored many of the historic features and has turned into an economic development tool for the city of St. Joseph.

DESIGNED TO BE A DESTINATION

The Silver Beach Center—one of the newest, year-round entertainment venues in southwestern Michigan—has garnered a great deal of attention. What once was underutilized property near St. Joseph, Michigan’s lakeshore is now a world-class, multi-use recreational venue attracting visitors from throughout the region and nation. The project was designed to be a destination for people of all ages. Families experience a piece of Silver Beach’s history by riding the large wooden carousel, science is disguised as playtime for Curious Kids’ Museum Annex visitors, and party-goers enjoy the ambiance of the Shadowland Ballroom.

Stroll the boardwalk to the Silver Beach Carousel house. As soon as you enter you’ll feel a rush of happiness. Pick your favorite figure or chariot and take a spin...then pick another and another. Make silly faces in the photo booth. Then explore the free Silver Beach Amusement Park Museum. This wonder-filled place graced the shores of Lake Michigan from 1891-1971. It meant something special to every one of its millions of patrons through the years. Walk past the beautifully carved carousel animals and look up into Michigan’s tallest kaleidoscope and watch the beautiful changing patterns.



“This project has been a great economic development tool for us, thousands of people from throughout the region flocked to the area below the bluff after the project was completed. That’s a great thing for area stores and restaurants.”

St. Joseph City Manager Frank Walsh

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The facility also includes the Curious Kids’ Discovery Zone by Curious Kids’ Museum. Kids, ages 2 to 100, will have a blast for an hour or two interacting with 15 water activities, a climbing wall, virtual reality fun, and traveling hands-on educational exhibits.

The warmer months invite visitors to cool off in the 150-foot diameter, interactive fountain with a colorful, compass-themed surface known as the Whirlpool Compass Fountain. From the fountain, it is a short walk to Silver Beach, named one of the top ten family beaches in the U.S. by *Parents Magazine*. Stroll the pier to our historic lighthouse, go fishing or watch an angler reel in a big one.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Many “green” items were included in the plans to provide sustainability, reduce operational costs, and preserve the environment. The park was constructed on a site where development was complicated by environmental contamination, including an area that supported three former

warehouses. The new development eliminates pressure on undeveloped land and has an overall footprint that is significantly less than that of the three former industrial buildings. Some of the sustainable features included a 5,700 square foot living “green roof” and native landscaping, as well as the first stormwater quality unit in the city of Saint Joseph, which traps debris and contaminates from runoff. The majority of landscape on the site is pedestrian-oriented and includes an old fashioned boardwalk. Bicycle racks are readily accessible, encouraging walking and biking. The project is in close proximity to the beach and the Amtrak station and within walking distance of the business district at the top of the bluff.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

As word has spread regarding the park, tourism has increased significantly, bringing much needed income for area hotels and restaurants. Tourists are no longer coming to the city just to visit Silver Beach, but for the enjoyment of all

activities available to them. With the loss of manufacturing jobs in the area, tourism has become a major source of income for full-time residents. The business owners in historic downtown St. Joseph have seen a significant increase in sales since the opening of the park; it serves as a connection between the beach and downtown. In a recent survey, merchants reported a 10-30 percent increase in sales compared to the summer before the park opened. St. Joseph Today, the downtown development organization, reported a 110 percent increase in visitors to their center last summer, with downtown merchants reporting a 35-50 percent increase in out-of-town visitors.

“Our team poured so much passion and creativity into this project,” said Abonmarche President Chris Cook. “Our holistic philosophy inspired us to create a design that not only blends with the natural environment, but most importantly, enhances the quality of life for local residents and visitors to our beautiful lakeshore. We’re very honored to have been a part of it.”

City officials are pleased with the Center’s ability to attract people downtown. “This project has been a great economic development tool for us,” stated St. Joseph City Manager Frank Walsh. “Thousands of people from throughout the region flocked to the area below the bluff after the project was completed. That’s a great thing for area stores and restaurants.” The city is the owner of the facility, providing a long-term lease to the Silver Beach/Shadowland entities. The project could not have been realized if not for a unique public/private partnership. 

Tony McGhee is business development director for Abonmarche. You may reach him at 269-927-2295 or tmcghee@abonmarche.com.



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Who Owns the Riparian Rights to an Inland Lake if a Road Separates the Lots Fronting the Lake From the Water?

Facts:

Beach Drive, the road at issue, runs parallel along the shoreline of Lake Charlevoix and separates the plaintiffs' front lots from the lake. The lots extend to the edge of the road and not the water's edge. In 1911, D. C. Littleton, the original plat proprietor, dedicated the road to the public under the Plat Act of 1887. The dedication included the following language: "The streets and alleys as shown on the plat are hereby dedicated to the use of the public." The Charlevoix County Board of Supervisors accepted the plat and the dedication of the streets. Many lots alongside Michigan's some 11,000 inland lakes were platted during this period of time and are separated from the water by a public road running parallel to the shoreline.

Over the years, plaintiffs exercised so-called riparian rights and have used the lake in front of their lots and have built docks extending into the lake. Riparian rights are generally those rights of a landowner whose property abuts a body of inland water. Allegedly, various back-lot owners then began using the waterfront in front of plaintiffs' homes to maintain docks and store boats. Plaintiffs filed suit against the back-lot owners for trespass. The back-lot owners claimed that they had rights to use the waterfront. Significantly, however, the county also filed suit claiming that the plaintiffs had trespassed on Beach Drive by maintaining encroachments on the road, including docks. The county claimed that the plaintiffs did not possess riparian rights because the public held fee title by virtue of the Littleton's dedication of the road to the county in 1911.

Question:

What type of property interest was conveyed to the county by virtue of the dedication by Littleton in 1911?

Answer According to the Trial Court:

The trial court held that the dedication in question gave all rights (fee title) to the local unit of government (public).

Answer According to the Michigan Court of Appeals:

The court of appeals held that a statutory dedication created under the Plat Act of 1887 gave to the public a fee interest for public uses of the road and that Littleton's dedication did not limit the use by the public in the roads.

Answer According to the Michigan Supreme Court:

The Court reviewed many previous decisions of the Michigan Supreme Court in deciding issues related to dedications and reversed the lower courts' decisions. The Court held that the Plat Act of 1887 limits the type of fee conveyed to the public.

According to the Court, the type of fee conveyed under the statute is held "in trust to and for the uses and purposes therein designated, and for no other use or purpose whatever." This type of fee interest is called a base fee. As such, the Court held that a base fee in a public road running parallel to the water has never been held to divest front-lot property owners of their riparian rights.

Question:

Who owns the riparian rights under the facts of this case?

Answer According to the Trial Court:

The court essentially held that the plaintiffs did not own the riparian rights since the local unit of government was conveyed all rights under the dedication.

Answer According to the Michigan Court of Appeals:

The court agreed with the trial court. The court also held that the dedication did not limit the county in the type of use it could make of the public road.

Answer According to the Michigan Supreme Court:

The Court reversed the court of appeals and held that the plaintiffs own the riparian rights. In keeping with its decision that the county had been conveyed a limited or base fee, the Supreme Court held that under the authority of longstanding caselaw, the plaintiffs have riparian rights, "as similarly situated persons have always had in this state." 

Baum Family Trust v Babel, No. 139617 (Dec. 29, 2010)

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

Sue Jeffers, retired League associate general counsel, now serves as a legal consultant to the League. You may reach her at sjeffers@mml.org.



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Planning Commission Membership and Promoting Ballot Proposals

Q. Does an individual have to be a city resident to serve on the city's planning commission?

A. The required composition of the planning commission is outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act at MCL 125.3815 (legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-125-3815). Briefly, depending on the size of the community, 1, 2, or 3 of the members do not have to be "qualified electors" (i.e. residents of the city over the age of 18). You will want to run this question past your municipal attorney to make certain there is nothing in local ordinances, planning commission bylaws, etc. that would apply in addition to the state law.

Q. Our city is having a millage election for an additional 1.75 mills for police and fire. The council has discussed the state statute that prohibits us from spending public money on "commercials" for residents to vote "yes." We are wondering if this prohibition applies to our regular quarterly newsletter? The newsletter is for residents and includes announcements, deadlines, and discussion on various topics. Can we use it to "encourage" residents to vote for the millage? It will not cost us any more money than is usually spent on the newsletter.

A. Anything the League can do to provide you with the information you need, we are pleased to help with. We know that is an important benefit of your League membership. However, we often have to tell you to check with your municipal attorney. We have to do this for two reasons: First, by statute the League cannot give a legal opinion. Second, even if we could, often the specific answer is based on local ordinances and policies of which we have no knowledge. We can, however, provide background information that we hope you—and the municipal attorney—find useful. And on this you need to check with the attorney. In general, a newsletter can be used strictly to disseminate information to residents on the millage, e.g. what the millage will buy and what will happen if it does not pass. However, the council cannot "encourage" them to vote either for or against any issue, but only "to vote."

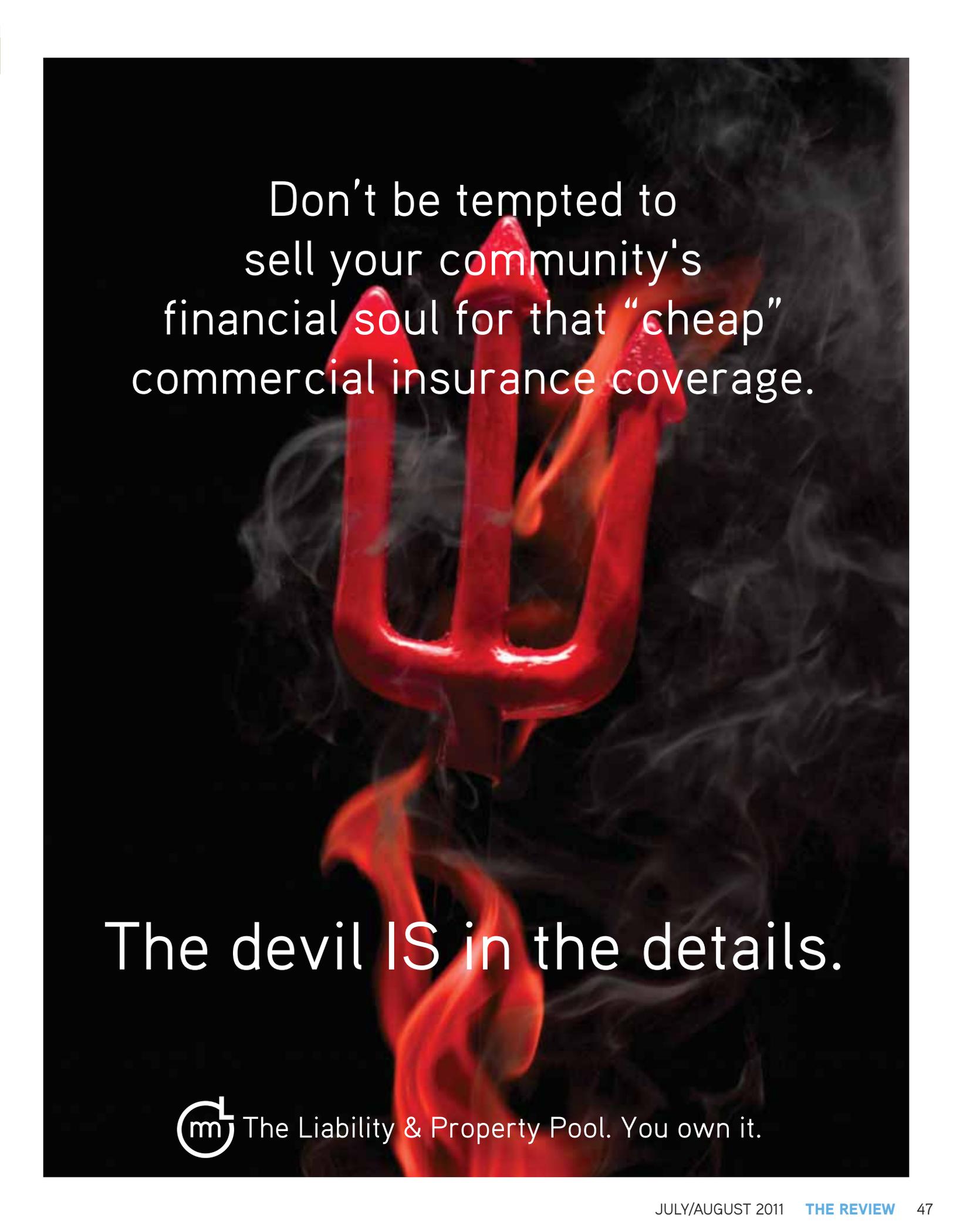
Q. We have to cancel a meeting scheduled for tonight. What does the Open Meetings Act say about cancelling a meeting?

A. Actually the Open Meetings Act (267 PA 1976 <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-267-of-1976>) does not speak to cancellation of a scheduled meeting. Many communities have adopted a policy whereby they post a cancellation notice as soon as possible. They also have found it helpful to have someone be at the place posted at the time of the scheduled meeting to let people who have not seen the notice know that the meeting has been cancelled. And, of course, anyone scheduled to attend the meeting, whether a member of the council or board, or someone scheduled to appear before them, should be notified individually.

Q. What is the difference in the General Law Village Act and the General Law Village Handbook on the League's website?

A. The General Law Village Act (3 PA 1895 <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-3-of-1895>) is a state statute which serves as the charter for the 210 general law villages in the state of Michigan. The Handbook for General Law Village Officials (www.mml.org/resources/publications/ebooks/glv.htm) contains general information and sample documents that elected and appointed officials in a general law village may find useful—however, it is not the law but rather information the League has collected over the years that we hope you will find helpful. There is a similar handbook for officials in home rule villages and cities also on the website, Handbook for Municipal Officials (www.mml.org/resources/publications/ebooks/hmo.htm). 

As one of the oldest League benefits, the Information Service provides member officials with answers to questions on a vast array of municipal topics. Examples of items in our collection are sample ordinances, policies, programs, articles, referrals, charter provisions and regulations. Send your municipal inquiries to info@mml.org, or call our information department at 1-800-653-2483.



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Better Communities. Better Michigan.



Albion

Albion contains history which we live and breathe every day.

Albion is nestled in the south-central region of Michigan's palm, strategically located on I-94 just about equally distant from Chicago as Detroit. Albion is truly one of the most walkable communities. Its location is the basis for one of the city's walking tours—historic places of interest to the infamous Purple Gang which roamed Albion's streets and alleys in the 1920s-1930s, that is, when they weren't running alcohol to Detroit or Chicago.

We jump from that tidbit of history to another touting the recognition of honoring our mothers the second Sunday of each May which began in Albion in 1887. We also recall the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi and The Old Rugged Cross, both favorite songs from the early 1900s which were composed in Albion. To say Albion is steeped in history is to put it mildly, from the Superior Street Commercial Historic District displaying an array of architectural delights to Albion College with many distinguished buildings surrounding the well-manicured campus quadrangle, Albion contains history which we live and breathe every day.

One can stroll along the downtown's renowned red brick street. View the historic Bohm Theatre which still retains much of its original art deco features and today is poised for new life in the form of renovation and restoration, with the end product of reopening to first-run movies and theater productions. Cross the street to experience dining at Cascarelli's, affectionately renamed 'Relli's' by Albion College students and noted for its warm fresh roasted peanuts and cashews. And then saunter back across Superior Street to Kids 'N' Stuff, south central



Michigan's premier children's interactive museum where even the adults become kids again.

The site of Albion's founding is located at the forks of the north and the south branches of the Kalamazoo River, hence the name of the town's most well known annual event, the Festival of the Forks, held the third full weekend of each September. The event, established in 1966, is a musical, food, and fun-filled celebration that exemplifies

the rich, diverse ethnic groups that settled in Albion and make up its population today. 

For more information, visit www.albiondda.org or www.greateralbionchamber.org.

