

# the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

March/April 2011

Past Presidents  
go to

# Lansing

GRAND HAVEN'S  
VIVID GOALS

MAYORS TALK  
LEADERSHIP



p. 8

LEARNING THE  
LANSING LINGO

“Having such a strong municipal presentation gives us a persuasive & strong voice.”

—STATE REP. CHARLES SMILEY,  
D-Burton



# 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 84, Number 2

## 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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## Lobbying and Leadership

The new year blew in on big winds of change here in Michigan—and no one is more hopeful than the League that the tidal shift in state leadership will indeed bring with it the bright and prosperous future that's been promised.

Even before his inauguration as our state's 48<sup>th</sup> governor, Rick Snyder pledged to fulfill his vision for revitalizing Michigan's urban centers into places of prosperity. We applauded his recognition of the importance of local government and entrepreneurial growth.

Now it's time to turn words into action and promises into reality—and no one does that better than the League's lobbying staff.

During each two-year legislative session, the staff rigorously analyzes and monitors various bills for their impact on our members. The legislative agenda is developed prior to each new two-year cycle, containing all the federal and state legislation the League would like to work on. After the agenda is finalized by the Legislative Governance Committee, it's presented to the League Board of Trustees for formal approval.

The League Issue Committees—made up of managers, mayors, councilmembers, and other community representatives—play a crucial role in deciding which positions to take on every piece of legislation. Committee members provide our lobbyists with the examples and evidence they need to explain our position to legislators and to help convince them it's the right stance to take.

The lobbying staff follows all that up with a strategic barrage of face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and correspondence with legislators and legislative staff, making sure the position of our municipalities is heard on every important issue. Did I mention that they're often doing the same with the local and national media? Through interviews, guest editorials, and public appearances, they help make sure the public clearly understands our mission.

Their efforts paid off with big rewards in the final lame duck session of 2010, pushing through many of our priorities in those brief six days. One package of bills should provide much-needed brownfield reform and millions in sewer bonds. They scored major victories in transit-oriented development and were instrumental in the drafting and passage of a new infrastructure financing tool. They also worked with the city of Livonia on a last-minute technical fix of the zoning law.

A big win that was in the works for a couple of years was the passage of a municipal bond debt refinancing package that will help many of our communities ride out the remaining wave of the economic downturn. And of course, they'll continue to push for real reform to PA 312 as one of the League's top priorities for 2011.

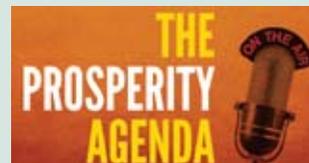
At the federal level, we have worked to secure funding for transportation and energy projects, while partnering with national organizations to prevent federal interference into the affairs of local governments and their employees. With changes in leadership at the federal level, we'll continue to work with our national partners and congressional members to help shape policies and programs that will benefit Michigan communities.

In addition to covering the legislative arena, this issue of *The Review* includes articles on: what local leaders think about leadership and challenges ahead; our 2010 Community Excellence Cup winner Grand Haven, and some basics on the structure of Michigan's local government.

So that's what's going on *Inside 208 N. Capitol Avenue* in Lansing. Want to learn more? Their online door is always open—just click on the link on the League's homepage at [www.mml.org](http://www.mml.org). 

### 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](http://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](mailto:dpg@mml.org)



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# HEALTH

# &

# TAXES

(And Other Headlines to Watch for in 2011)

◆ BY ROGER MARTIN ◆

As in life, the only two certainties in politics are taxes and death. The big stories in Lansing and Washington in 2011 will focus squarely on both.

Broadly speaking, we will watch as our state and federal elected leaders seek to solve massive budget crises largely by cutting taxes and spending. And we will watch as Republicans, who achieved sizable political gains in the 2010 elections in Lansing, Washington, and many states, try not to undercut their newfound political power position. Multiple times since the early 1980s, Democrats and Republicans have gained clout in presidential mid-term election years only to fumble it away two years later.

Looking into the political crystal ball, here are the big headlines to expect in 2011.

## Cuts To Education, Local Governments, Health Care, And Public Employees

The state's FY 2012 budget, which takes affect October 1, is projected to be \$1.8 billion in the red. New Governor Rick Snyder has pledged not to raise taxes to address the problem, and Republicans who now control both the state House and Senate have vowed to balance the budget with cuts only. In addition, Governor Snyder has proposed cutting business taxes

by up to \$1.5 billion. If cuts of up to \$3.3 billion are on the way, no government program will escape the ax, even essential services such as K-12 and higher education, revenue sharing, public safety, and health care for children, the elderly and the disabled. Lansing will also try to cut the pay and benefits of public employees at all levels by falsely claiming that public employee compensation is "out of line" compared to workers in the private sector.

## State Budget Cuts Causing Human and Fiscal Disasters

Yes, big cuts are coming this year, and they are coming on the heels of a decade in which state government spending was already reduced drastically in Michigan. If the governor and Legislature make significant cuts to revenue sharing and other essential services such as police and fire protection and health care services, it will eventually trigger a fiscal and/or human disaster at the local levels. Some Michigan cities already teetering on financial insolvency will plummet off the cliff into state receivership or possibly even bankruptcy. In addition, eventually human harm resulting from reduced access to police and fire services or health care services will occur. Most interesting will be the subsequent debate on who is blamed.

## Republican Governor Snyder at Odds with Republican Legislature

All Lansing-watchers are wondering how and if a moderate like Governor Snyder will be able to govern given the decided shift to the political right that occurred in the state Legislature during the November elections. At some point, their ideological heads will butt, and the media will pounce on the story.

## Michigan's Economy Continues to Improve

Yes, finally. The state's unemployment rate will continue to drop as the auto industry continues its rebound and many people simply stop looking for jobs. Whether Michigan ever becomes a prosperous state (defined as a state with high per-capita income and low unemployment) again is another question. That depends on how willing Michigan elected leaders are to enact policies that will create the types of urban places where young, college-educated, talented, creative, and entrepreneurial people want to live. The evidence is clear: states with cities that attract the young, talented, and educated are prospering in the new economy.

## Political Tide Turning Away from the GOP

Mid-term elections, like those held last November, are generally brutal on the party not in power in the White House. Two of the most popular and, arguably, effective presidents in recent history—Republican Ronald Reagan and Democrat Bill Clinton—know what it's like to have their party's clocks cleaned during their first-term, mid-term elections. In 1982, the Democrats seized power by capitalizing on Reagan's sinking popularity. In 1994, Republicans routed the Democrats and took control of the Congress in the wake of President Clinton's fall from favor. The same thing pretty much happened to President Obama last year, when Republicans grabbed the gavel of the U.S. House of Representatives and took both legislative chambers in Lansing. What happened to Reagan and Clinton when they ran for re-election two years later? They won in landslides. The lesson here is the political pendulum always swings back. In politics, waves of partisan popularity are as fleeting as waves in the ocean, and throughout history both Republicans and Democrats have proven entirely capable of severely undermining themselves politically. It's now the Republicans' turn.

## Coalition Moves to Put Term Limits Reform Proposal on 2012 Ballot

The vast majority of Republicans and Democrats, the business community, organized labor, nearly every editorial page in the state, and a growing number of associations and organizations, all agree Michigan's term limits constitutional amendment must be changed. Passed overwhelmingly by Michigan voters in 1992, the term limits amendment caps service in the state House at no more than six years (three full terms) and in the state Senate at no more than eight years (two full terms). Though most people who truly understand state government

Stay informed of state and federal issues through the **League's Legislative LINK** e-newsletter. View the LINK on our website at [mml.org](http://mml.org) and while you're there, visit the League's legislative blog, "**Inside 208**," to get the scoop on daily happenings.

strongly favor lengthening the terms in the House and Senate, every effort to try to put the question back on the ballot has failed to get organized. Hopefully that changes in 2011. 

*Roger Martin, APR, is a former award-winning political and investigative reporter and now a partner at Martin Waymire Advocacy Communications, a Lansing-based public relations issue management firm that represents the Michigan Municipal League, local governments, public universities, hospitals, private corporations, coalitions, and other clients. Visit [www.mwadvocacy.com](http://www.mwadvocacy.com) for more information.*



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# LEARNING THE LANSING LINGO

## THE LEAGUE'S SUMMER MINNICK GIVES TIPS ON WORKING WITH LANSING LAWMAKERS

Working with legislators, governors, and officials appointed to high office in a term-limited environment can be challenging. I sympathize with members who have experienced frustration when re-educating a whole new group of people on complicated municipal issues—especially after you may have just gotten to a comfortable point with the prior Representative or Senator. And poof! They're history.

But it is also an amazing opportunity! There's a new group of leaders in Lansing and there are significant possibilities for positive changes for local communities. So, whether you've been involved in the League's legislative efforts for decades... or you're a brand new local official seeking to dip your toes in the advocacy waters for the first time, now is a perfect time to gear up and engage for the betterment of your community.

Here are some basics of legislative advocacy to get you inspired to join (or re-join) the effort:

**ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP.** I can't overstate the critical nature of this point. The first time you contact your state legislator should not be when you are making "an ask." These people are human—and trust is a huge factor. As soon as you have the chance, call and congratulate them on the start of their service, introduce yourself, and try to find out a bit about their background. And I don't mean if they are a Republican or Democrat. What is their personal story? What shapes their viewpoint? Knowing something about your legislators helps determine the

best way to approach them. And, it helps you avoid sticking your foot in your mouth with off-hand comments about different topics (not that I have any personal experience here).

**BE RESPECTFUL.** I know this seems like common sense, but small things make a big difference in building relationships. Unless you have a long standing relationship that allows you to call your legislator by his/her first name, use the title. Legislators may subsequently urge you to call them by their first name—but I usually refer to them as "Representative" or "Senator" a few times, even if they insist initially—just so they know I recognize their position. In conversations with them, recognize their viewpoint, even if you disagree. And always thank them for taking time to speak with you and work on your issues.

**KNOW THE FACTS.** When working on an issue—be prepared to give examples and statistics so your advocacy effort comes across legitimately and not like a series of complaints. For example, when talking about revenue sharing, state the amount of funding your community has lost, the impact it has had locally, and relate it to the added complications of your budget due to property reductions. You would NOT want to call and merely say that you can't get cut anymore, the state has broken its promise because of rotten legislators, etc.

**BE OPEN AND TRUTHFUL—ALWAYS.** If a legislator asks you for examples or wants to know a specific situation so he/she can understand an issue, be as open as possible. Encourage legislators to get to know what you have undertaken in your community, such as shared services, cost cutting, quality of life improvements, etc. Never answer their questions with a “guess.” An opposing side may accuse you of intentionally lying, which could hurt your credibility. So, if a legislator asks you a question you don’t know the answer to, tell him/her you don’t know the answer and will get back to him/her. And always get back to them.

**MAKE “THE ASK.”** I see it so many times...well intentioned people who talk to legislators passionately about an issue. Legislators nod their heads to indicate they understand what their viewpoint is...and the conversation ends without the person telling the legislator what they actually want them to do about it. Don’t just call legislators to explain problems or ideas. Tell them exactly what you want them to do with that problem or idea. Whether you want them to introduce a bill, vote yes or no, etc. Remember, if they are new...they may not know how to help you.

**FIND ALLIES.** Working on complicated or controversial issues can be tough going. It helps to enlist support. Whether it’s a group of concerned citizens, or local service organizations, or small businesses—recruit allies to help make the case on your issue.

**UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE OF BEING HEARD AND BEING AGREED WITH.** When legislators nod their heads when you are talking it does not mean they will push the green button when a bill comes up. Be aware of phrases like “I will look into it” or “we’ll check into that” because they don’t necessarily mean “I support your position.” Clarify specifically if your legislator agrees with you and will support or oppose the issue.

**BE AGGRESSIVE.** There may be times when you have to educate a legislator on an issue in depth. One short conversation may not be enough. Stay respectful and stick with it. Sometimes it takes time.

**FOLLOW UP.** Always let legislators know you appreciate the time that they’ve taken on an issue. If you need to send supportive information or there are additional editorials on a subject—send them on to your legislator as a reminder of the topic.

As a grassroots organization, we rely heavily on the legislative involvement of our members. Our successes in recent years are due to the expertise which community leaders have lent to our various causes. Whether it’s serving on one of the League’s legislative committees, testifying in Lansing, sending emails and/or making phone calls on critical issues...your involvement makes the difference in our efforts. So as we embark on a brand new session with lots of new faces, I hope you’ll be as excited as we are to jump right in and start fighting for thriving communities in our state. 

*Summer Minnick is the director of state & federal affairs for the League. You may reach her at 517-908-0301 or sminnick@mml.org.*

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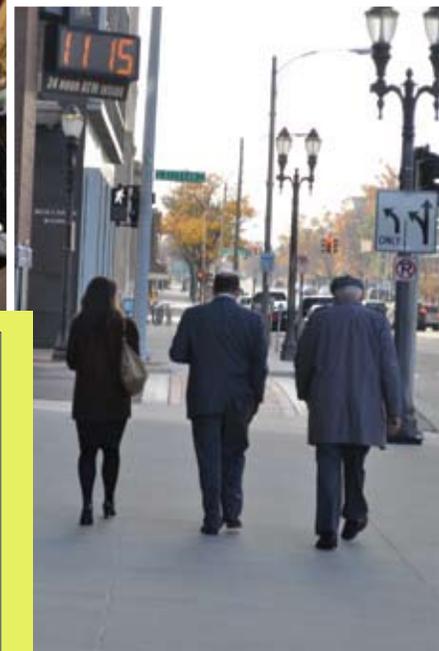
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### Municipal Voices in Lansing

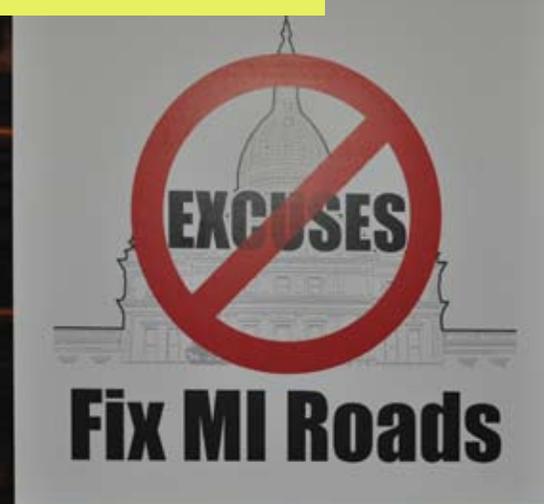
Our members have been active in getting the municipal perspective heard on such issues as PA 312, revenue sharing cuts, online legal publishing, municipal bond refinancing, and transportation funding.





### The League's Lansing Staff

We monitor and analyze bills for their impact on our members and make sure the municipal position is heard on every issue. Top right photo, clockwise: Samantha Harkins, Andy Schor, Arnold Weinfeld, Summer Minnick & Nikki Brown.



# There's a New Legislature in Town – Are You Ready?



Renaissance Zones...Brownfield Credits...Complete Streets...Transit-Oriented Development...Bond Refinancing...Aerotropolis...

The League had some big wins in 2010.

But the political landscape has changed dramatically this year. We expect new victories, but some past gains could be at risk.

The future is just as uncertain for ongoing issues like PA 312 reform, revenue sharing, and urban revitalization.

Which legislative battles are crucial this year? How will the budget deficit impact local governments?

What economic development tools could be on the chopping block in 2011?

Which new faces in Lansing are familiar friends—and which are crucial connections to forge?

Come find out April 5-6 at the Lansing Center.

Capital Conference 2011 - April 5-6 - Lansing Center - [cc.mml.org](http://cc.mml.org)

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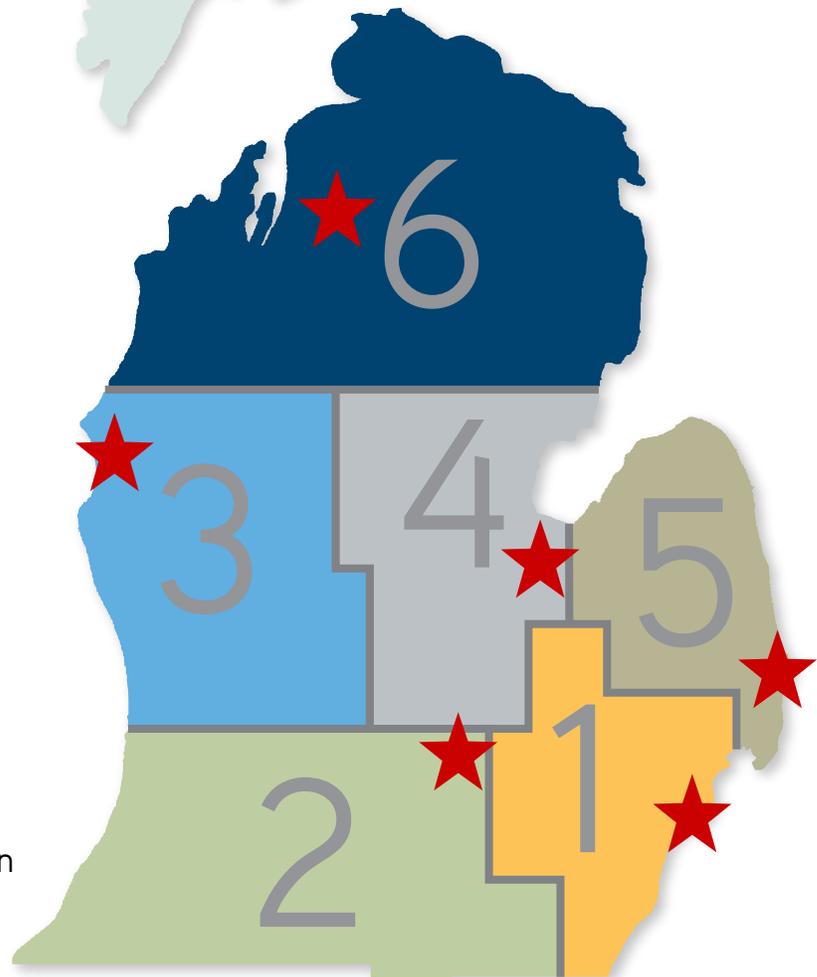
*Enter the Community Excellence Award "Race for the Cup" by making a presentation at your regional seminar. The seven regional winners go on to compete at the League's Annual Convention!*



On April 5, 2011, the League is providing a free opportunity to get together with other members from your region at your Regional Roundtables. This session will take place immediately prior to the Welcoming General Session at Capital Conference, from 3:30-4:30 pm, in Lansing. Don't miss this chance to participate in community updates, hear a hot topic speaker, and more!

## 2011 Regional Seminars

- Region 1 - **May 6**, Hamtramck
- Region 2 - **May 20**, East Lansing
- Region 3 - **May 11**, Ludington
- Region 4 - **June 1**, Saginaw
- Region 5 - **May 18**, Marine City
- Region 6 - **May 4**, Kalkaska
- Region 7 - **May 25-27**, Houghton





# WASHINGTON'S WHIRLWIND

CHANGES IN WASHINGTON & MICHIGAN COULD SPELL OPPORTUNITY

BY ARNOLD WEINFELD

**T**he November 2010 election will certainly go down as a historic one. A political tsunami swept out Democratic control in many state houses, governors' chairs, and in the halls of Congress as well. Michigan

was no different. A congressional delegation that was 8-7 Democratic is now 9-6 Republican with five new congressional members (although Tim Walberg of the 7<sup>th</sup> district is a returning member).

That all-American tradition, the ballot box, allowed voters to voice their concerns on such issues as government spending and the ever-growing federal budget deficit. In response, members of Congress will need to tackle these thorny issues. We will see if the public at large is ready for the large dose of medicine needed to cure what ails us.

On the federal level, President Obama will present a very austere budget to Congress. As of early January, there are reports that he will offer a cut of 25 percent to the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). This would be a big blow—CDBG funds have added economic value, jobs, and quality of life for most communities in Michigan. Yet this and other discretionary funding programs will be in jeopardy of massive cuts if the medicine that has been asked for is delivered.

Prior to the end of 2010, two national commissions released reports chock full of recommendations on how to address the federal deficit. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, as well as the Bipartisan Policy Center's "Restoring America's Future" report have some similar ideas, especially when it comes to items such as Medicare, Social Security and defense spending. But they also contain recommendations that would directly impact local communities—touching everything from transportation funding to rural development programs. And one of the recommendations from the Obama commission would even make bonds issued by state and local governments fully taxable.

The bottom line is, depending on how the President and Congress react, any changes will have implications for our entire country, including local governments.

### MICHIGAN HAS POWER IN THE HOUSE

As the session gets going, Michigan will actually have some clout. In the Republican-led House, Congressman Dave Camp, (Midland) has been named chair of the Ways and Means Committee, a spot formerly held by Michigan Congressman Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak). Levin will not be leaving the committee—instead he will become the ranking Democratic member. Exercising jurisdiction over all tax and revenue related legislation, the Ways and Means Committee is one of the most powerful committees in the House. Michigan now holds the top two spots on this important committee.

Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) will chair the Energy and Commerce Committee, a post held for years by Congressman John Dingell. The Energy and Commerce Committee has jurisdiction over issues such as energy, telecommunications, and health care. Also in the House, Congressman Mike Rogers (R-Brighton) will chair the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. While a third of Michigan's congressional delegation is new, it is certain that Michigan's congressional members will be playing key roles no matter what issues are discussed and debated over the next two years in Washington.

### SENATE STANDINGS

In the Senate, where Democrats still control, Debbie Stabenow has been named to lead the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Democrat Carl Levin will retain his chairmanship of the Senate Armed Services panel.

### THE 2010 CENSUS FALLOUT

According to Census figures, Michigan was the only state in the country to decrease in population over the last decade. We will lose one congressional seat when redistricting occurs later this year. Losing population also means that Michigan will receive less federal funds for programs impacting both the state and local government. Over 140 federal programs use census data to distribute funds. For example, in 2007-08 Michigan received \$16 billion in federal funding, most of it for Medicaid. Some estimates indicate that the population decline will cost Michigan about \$1,000 in federal aid per year per resident lost for each of the next 10 years—about \$548 million. A real hit will be the decrease in federal transportation dollars both for repairing our local streets and roads as well as creating the kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century multi-modal infrastructure that will help to make our communities vibrant places that people look to live, work and play in.

### TRANSPORTATION

Although committee chairs were yet to be announced as of the writing of this article, it is widely expected that Florida Congressman James Mica will be named the new chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Early analysis of Mr. Mica's philosophy shows him to be a supporter of high-speed rail and other alternative mobility solutions. In regard to funding, Congressman Mica has stated that increases in the gas tax is a non-starter and that he'd like to see greater private spending. His comments over time indicate he'd like to see a rail system that is self-supporting, a hard thing to come by for sure and in conflict with the policies of the President and the current administration.

Of course, Mr. Mica will not be operating in a vacuum—the Senate and White House are still in Democratic control. Given the fact that the transportation funding bill expired over a year ago, development of transportation policy will clearly be a good test of whether or not the Congress and the President can agree to compromise. Michigan does have long-time Congresswoman Candice Miller on this committee, which will provide us with some avenues of hope moving forward.



*U.S. Senator Carl Levin and Jackson Mayor Karen Dunigan at a press conference celebrating the \$160 million in federal funds awarded to Michigan for high-speed rail investment.*



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The League will continue to work with our congressional delegation and national partners such as the National League of Cities (NLC) on issues of importance to our communities. We'll have an opportunity this spring as key League staff and local officials from across the state visit D.C. in mid-March for the NLC Congressional Cities Conference. 

*Arnold Weinfeld is director of strategic initiatives and federal affairs for the League. You may reach him at 517-908-0304 or [aweinfeld@mml.org](mailto:aweinfeld@mml.org).*

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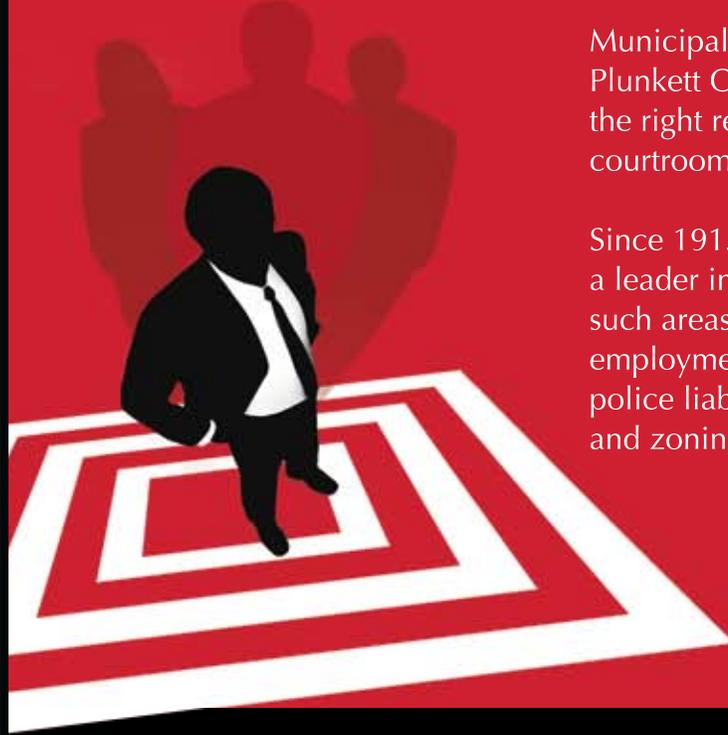
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# LEADING THE WAY

## »» MICHIGAN MAYORS TALK ABOUT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY JOE VANDERMEULEN, PH.D.

The times are hard and everyone's taking hits in Michigan: unemployment is over 12 percent and poverty rates have climbed to over 16 percent. Real estate values are down and cities are struggling to balance their budgets, making deep cuts everywhere. We might forgive some mayors for feeling overwhelmed or downright frustrated with their jobs. But that's not what I found.

With research support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, I recently completed leadership interviews with dozens of mayors and city managers across Michigan and the Midwest. What I found was a diverse collection of very scrappy and undeterred community leaders. Michigan's mayors displayed a spirited drive and focused optimism, confident that their cities would prevail as vibrant, high-quality places. Consistent with the recent research on adaptive leadership, these elected officials have chosen to face the difficult times directly, embrace a long-term positive vision, engage and empower citizens and staff, and change the process through experimentation while seeking a new path. »



Flint's Mayor Dayne Walling admits that the negotiations for pay reductions and staff cuts have been painful, personally and professionally. But, he says these troubles had to be tackled head-on while believing with certainty that the future is brighter. Though the changes are wrenching, Mayor Walling believes that the city will reach stability and sustainability by the *two upward pressures of economic development and citizen engagement*. "We can't think that there's a way to shrink our way out of this problem," he said. "We will find a way to make investments in the future at the same time that we continue to provide a level of service that's acceptable."

Mayor George K. Heartwell of Grand Rapids has had to struggle through budget cutting sessions too, including an accumulated reduction in the city's workforce of about 27 percent. But his job includes articulating a vision for the city that can be embraced by others. He sees a progressive city that cares for its children, uses renewable energy, offers public transit, and protects the environment. So, there must be both cuts now and investments in the future. Mayor Heartwell says that the city faces real challenges and "it means some transformation, it means doing some things differently, but once we get through it, I think we are in a better position than most other cities to really take off."

More than other leadership roles, mayors depend on relationships and a commitment to empower citizens. Battle Creek's Mayor Susan Baldwin says listening is never passive; it's about learning and understanding. "I make sure that I go to the neighborhood meetings and I participate in them," she says. "When a group pulls together an initiative, I go find out. It may not be something I stay with, but I find out so that I can understand the various interests." »



Over the last two decades, the public fascination with leaders and leadership has grown tremendously. Amazon.com lists over 50,000 publications related to leadership. Dozens of centers and thousands of experts across the country provide corporate, educational, nonprofit or governmental leadership training. Universities offer courses and graduate degrees in leadership and most major cities offer some form of community leader training.

Though once considered a function of command and control, leadership today is described as a process in which the leader influences the actions of others to achieve a common goal. According to the authors of the *Leadership Challenge*, one of the most popular leader training books, there are five key practices of leadership:

- Model the way (e.g., exemplary behavior);
- Inspire a shared vision (e.g., identify exciting possibilities),



- Challenge the process (e.g., experimentation);
- Enable others to act (e.g., foster collaboration); and
- Encourage the heart (e.g., celebrate and appreciate).

Given the turbulent and competitive world economy and the political, environmental and social challenges most communities face, it is not surprising to find that *adaptive leadership* has gained prominence lately. Adaptive leadership is about mobilizing people to take on challenges and thrive. According to *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* successful adaptation builds on the past, but discards what is not useful, engages an experimental mind-set and improvisation, and relies on diversity or *distributed intelligence*.



The best thing you can do as a mayor, according to John Hieftje of Ann Arbor, is to keep the lines of communication wide open, first with citizens and then the city council—as a close second. “You can’t get anything done alone, so you have to be able to convince people of the worthiness of the idea.” It really is about relationships, he says. “Without the ability to work well with others, you won’t go very far—or long.”

Mayor Hieftje also continually encourages citizens to take an active role in the community, facilitating that involvement. “I am a big believer in citizen responsibility,” he said. So, if someone has a complaint, he looks for a way to engage that person in finding solutions, maybe on a committee or working directly on the problem. A good example is the Nature Area Preservation Group, he says. Their efforts “leverage the work of hundreds of volunteers every year to remove invasive species, do plantings, and keep the parks up. We no longer have to mow them.”

Sometimes leadership involves acting outside of familiar authority and breaking with the common wisdom. In Ludington, the city council opposed Mayor John Henderson’s suggestion of developing a skate park along the waterfront. People worried about vandalism and youth gangs. But Mayor Henderson was convinced that a skate park would add value and a popular focus to the city’s waterfront park, as well as offering a place for young people to hang out. In this instance, he decided to respond as a citizen by raising the money and support from local civic groups and private donors. He recruited a friend, the police chief, to join him in making the rounds. “You know,” Mayor Henderson said, “sometimes, you have to lead by example.”

Leadership is said to be the process of influencing others to achieve a set of common goals. According to the mayors I spoke with, that influence derives from service to others and the community as a whole. Alpena Mayor and Michigan Municipal League President Carol Shafto says the work combines a love of place and a practical, long-term view. “I’m the cheerleader-in-chief,” she said, “I just passionately love this town.” She believes the aesthetic and cultural amenities that make Alpena a special place offer hope for future growth. “We have to be in this for the long haul,” she said. “We have to look at what we want 20 years from now and plan to get it.” 

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“WE HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT WE WANT 20 YEARS FROM NOW AND PLAN TO GET IT.”

—CAROL SHAFTO, ALPENA MAYOR & LEAGUE PRESIDENT

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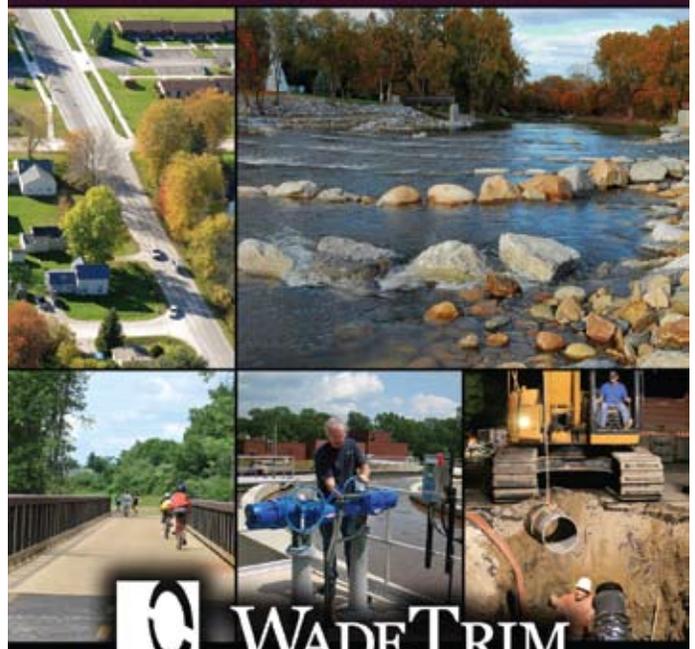
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COVER STORY

# MAKING HISTORY



## Former League Presidents & Local Leaders Go To Lansing

By Andy Schor and Samantha Harkins

*ANDY SCHOR is assistant director of state affairs for the League. You may reach him at 517-908-0300 or [aschor@mml.org](mailto:aschor@mml.org). SAMANTHA HARKINS is a legislative associate for the League. You may reach her at 517-908-0306 or [sharkins@mml.org](mailto:sharkins@mml.org).*

**State Reps. Woodrow Stanley, Charles Smiley, and Vicki Barnett** stood outside of the state Capitol on a brisk January morning, smiling despite the frigid temperature and gusting wind. They were smiling not only because this day (January 12, 2011) marked the first day for Michigan’s new Legislature, but because that afternoon when they placed their hands on a Bible to take the oath of office, they would be making a bit of history.

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It marked the first time in modern memory that three former Michigan Municipal League Presidents were serving at the same time in the Michigan Legislature. Stanley, D-Flint, was League president in 1990-91, Smiley, D-Burton, was the president in 2000-01; and Barnett, D-Farmington Hills, served as president in 2006-07. The three past presidents are among 30 former League members serving in the 148-person 96<sup>th</sup> Michigan Legislature.

Only time will tell what this strong representation means for Michigan’s cities, villages, and urban townships. The significance isn’t lost on the three former mayors of Flint (Stanley), Burton (Smiley) and Farmington Hills (Barnett).

“It’s not just a matter of symbolism, which is very significant—I don’t remember there ever being three former presidents of the League serving in the Legislature at the same time,” Stanley explained. “So, symbolically it sends a pretty powerful message. But from a more substantive viewpoint it says that over the course of time, the League has been a great proving ground for nurturing leadership and

that Vicki, Charlie, and I, understand the issues that are important to local governments. Those local municipal issues are close to our hearts, and when we go to the floor every day we think about them.”

“I’m certainly cautiously optimistic,” Stanley continued, “that there are going to be opportunities even in the tremendous challenges that we’ll face as a state. I’m hopeful the leadership in the House and the Senate, as well as the governor, will join ranks with those of us who have served in local government in a kind of solidarity to find formulas that are a matter of common ground, as opposed to pitting cities against suburbs and the like. I’m cautiously hopeful.”

Term limits have produced interesting results in Lansing. They have resulted in new people serving in the Legislature, bringing enthusiasm and fresh outlooks and ideas. But on the flip side, there are more legislators with little to no experience. The slew of new members since the 1992 term limits were enacted have been blamed (whether rightly or wrongly) for the budget debacles and other problems

“**We have to stand up. We have a great opportunity as local elected officials, as former presidents of the League, to persuade our colleagues how crucial those votes will be to maintain full revenue sharing for our local communities.**”

in the Legislature. Whether or not you believe term limits are to blame for all the ills of state government, one thing is for sure—League members have stepped up and are taking their local government experience to the Capitol. The list includes at least 11 former mayors and village presidents, and well over a dozen city and village councilmembers.

“Having such strong municipal representation gives us a very persuasive and strong voice to the concept of local communities getting their full share of revenue sharing dollars,” Barnett said. “We have to stand up. We have a great opportunity as local elected officials, as former presidents of the League, to persuade our colleagues how crucial those votes will be to maintain full revenue sharing for our local communities. But there are a lot of other things that cities need. We need to make sure we can maintain sewer and water systems. And we need to make sure that there’s money to keep our roads in good repair.”

The League has been successful on many fronts in the last few years—including preserving revenue sharing, creating and fine-tuning valuable economic development tools for locals, and passing necessary 21st century laws like Complete Streets. But much work still needs to be done. Revenue sharing, for example, while not cut in the last two years, has repeatedly taken a hit since 2000 to the tune of \$4 billion lost to Michigan municipalities.

The knowledge and expertise of local leaders who have transitioned into state government is critical in advancing local government priorities in the Legislature and with the Administration. Rep. Deb Shaughnessy (R-Charlotte) was on the Charlotte city council for four years and then served as mayor for four years. She was an active member of the League’s legislative policy committees. Rep. Shaughnessy sees her time as mayor as a critical part of her new job: “My experience as mayor of Charlotte has prepared me for the

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE



### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

3rd – D – Alberta Tinsley Talabi  
(former Detroit City Councilmember)

13th – D – Andrew Kandrevas  
(former Southgate Council President)

15th – D – George Darany  
(former Dearborn City Councilmember)

18th – D – Richard LeBlanc  
(former Westland City Councilman)

19th – R – John Walsh  
(former Livonia City Councilman)

22nd – D – Douglas Geiss  
(former Taylor City Councilman)

31st – D – Marilyn Lane  
(former Mayor of Fraser)

34th – D – Woodrow Stanley  
(former Mayor of Flint)

37th – D – Vicki Barnett  
(former Mayor of Farmington Hills)

38th – R – Hugh Crawford  
(former Novi Councilmember)

40th – R – Chuck Moss  
(former Mayor of Birmingham)

42nd – D – Harold Haugh  
(former Mayor of Roseville)

43rd – R – Gail Haines  
(former Lake Angelus Councilwoman)

45th – R – Tom McMillin  
(former Mayor of Auburn Hills)

49th – D – Jim Ananich  
(former Flint City Councilmember)

50th – D – Charles Smiley  
(former Mayor of Burton)

issues and challenges I will face in the Michigan Legislature. Much of the legislation passed in Lansing has an impact on local government, and it is critical my colleagues understand that. During these difficult economic times when our resources are dwindling, it is not easy to serve in local government. I had to make some very difficult decisions and the skills I learned while serving as mayor will assist me in being an effective legislative leader."

Smiley, mayor of Burton for nearly two decades, said he is now active in working on issues for his community in the House. "As Mayor, I have worked first-hand on the important issues of my community. I have been on the front lines, working on tight budgets and providing services in times of decreasing property values and cuts from the state. I am excited to take this experience to Lansing and make a difference immediately!"

Smiley added he fully embraces the League's motto "Better Communities. Better Michigan."

"Cities and villages are the heart of our state," Smiley said. "I really believe strongly that local municipalities have to excel. They have to be able to have the tools they need to deliver the services that our residents expect and deserve. I'll do everything I can for our local governments." 

“...from a more substantive viewpoint it says that over the course of time, the League has been a great proving ground for nurturing leadership...”



52 – R – Mark Ouimet  
(former Ann Arbor City Councilman)

60th – D – Sean McCann  
(former Kalamazoo City Commissioner)

61st – R – Margaret O'Brien  
(former Portage City Councilmember)

68th – D – Joan Bauer  
(former Lansing City Councilwoman)

69th – D – Mark Meadows  
(former Mayor of East Lansing)

71st – R – Deb Shaughnessy  
(former Mayor of Charlotte)

76th – D – Roy Schmidt  
(former Grand Rapids City Councilman)

87th – R – Mike Callton  
(former Nashville Village Trustee)

90th – R – Joe Haveman  
(former Holland City Councilman)

93rd – R – Paul Opsommer  
(former Mayor of DeWitt)

96th – D – Charles Brunner  
(former Mayor of Bay City)

101st – R – Ray Franz  
(former Onkama Village President)

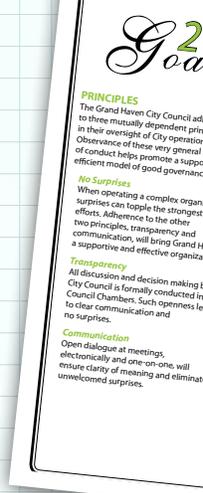
**SENATE**

6th – D – Glenn Anderson  
(former Westland Councilmember)

36th – R – John Moolenaar  
(former Midland Councilmember)



The city of Grand Haven was the 2010 winner of the Community Excellence Award. The city will keep the cup for a year then pass it on to the 2011 winner at the League's Annual Convention in Grand Rapids.



# GRAND PLANNING

## GRAND HAVEN TURNS GOAL SETTING INTO AN ART FORM

By Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton

**W**e all do it. We start off our year by making resolutions, setting goals, and then through the course of the year, many of us forget them.

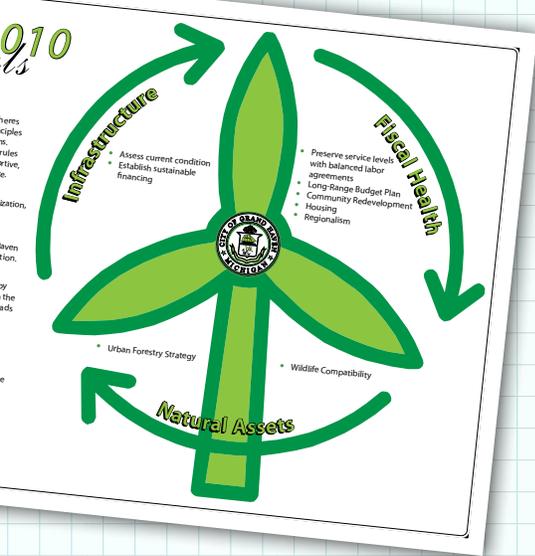
It's no different for municipalities. In council chambers across the state, elected officials are drafting goals that they hope will direct their decision making, but too often, like our own personal resolutions, those goals are forgotten.

But not in Grand Haven, where the council has left behind the simple list, trading it in for goals that

are presented in a visually appealing and memorable way. The project won the League's 2010 Community Excellence Award.

"So often goals get written in report form and everybody forgets they exist," said Grand Haven City Manager Pat McGinnis. "We decided to put our goals into a graphic format and have them hanging in all our departments."

**IT'S A MOVE THAT HAS ELEVATED THE ART OF GOAL SETTING.**



## City Council KEYS TO SUCCESS

### 2009 Goals

**Rental Inspection/Property Maintenance**  
Maintain focus on the condition and use of properties comprising Grand Haven's housing stock. Neighborhood preservation begins with well-maintained single family homes used primarily for year-round residential purposes.

**Use Current Resources**  
To Leverage Infrastructure Investment  
City voters approved a \$9.4 million infrastructure renovation bond in 2007. Invest those dollars in Grand Haven's infrastructure to the greatest advantage possible without significant increases in utility rates.

**Research & Development/Innovations Institute**  
Economic development for our future may include models not yet presented in Grand Haven. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and others to lead City support to innovative measures to promote our economic future.

**Partnership with Board of Light & Power (BLP) For Integrated Metering**  
Great efficiency lies in working with the BLP to streamline utility services.

**Maintain Deer Management Program**  
Deer herd control is now a primary issue for Grand Haven; continue to work cooperatively with residents, neighboring jurisdictions and professional advisers to better understand and control negative influence of deer herds in Grand Haven.

**Expand Harbor Transit Services Locally and Regionally**  
Tough economic times and ongoing emphasis of sustainable practices demand that we improve and expand mass transit options for Grand Haven; work locally and regionally to improve the public service.

## City Council 2008 Goals

Follow-Up 2007/2008

New Goals

Ongoing Expectations

**Ongoing Expectations:**

- Advance preparation and immediate repair of winter-time damage to streets
- Check up on rental inspections and educate public about available programs
- Support public art/facts fund
- Maintain all alleyways
- Attention to North Shore Drive

**Follow-Up 2007/2008:**

- Improve access to Community Center
- Seek grant for deck
- Endorse MSDGA interest in Covenant Life Farm Program
- Continue developing Urban Deer Task Force
- Improve access to municipal marina while management component is 2009
- Park improvements to Bicentennial of demolition plans for fall 2008
- Continue boardwalk improvement plans for the City's 175th birthday in 2009
- Improve Right-of-Way Ordinance
- Re-engage Central Park Players at Community Center

**New Goals:**

- Attract research & development industry
- Fast site planning; Specific Master Plan and Shoreline Street Enhancements
- Inter-governmental cooperation; greater regional efforts
- Establish renewable energy partnership with BLP
- Initiate healthy walking tour
- US-31 signage emphasizing commercial destinations
- Promote sustainable Grand Haven

"It just makes sense," McGinnis said. "I mean the city council gets its direction from its constituents and spends time and effort working to put its goals together to reflect that, why not spend a little extra time and effort to make them more memorable."

Grand Haven started making its goals more visually appealing in 2006, when Mary Snedeker, an administrative assistant in the clerk's office, got involved.

"When I came here in 2003, I started using different publisher programs on the goals, but it was when Mary got involved it really took off," said McGinnis. "We've been throwing ideas at her ever since."

A solitary theme is selected and the graphic is built around that. For example, the graphic for 2011 was a windmill, emphasizing one of Grand Haven's goals of focusing on its natural assets.

Snedeker's first goal-makeover remains one of her favorites. Goals were placed on a bull's eye with the most important goals at the center. Among her most challenging was a beach theme, a big part of Grand Haven's image, where goals were placed on buckets at lakeside.

Other themes have included the goals portrayed as the keys to Grand Haven's success, and yet another year featured a baseball diamond, with a different goal at each base.

It's been a challenge, but one that Snedeker enjoys.

"I've always had an interest in graphic design and took some classes," Snedeker said. "I've enjoyed the challenge of putting words with a graphic to represent the city. It's also neat to see the goals hanging in people's offices."

McGinnis said, "Putting the goals on display is a key part of the project."

"If you're having a meeting with someone, it is helpful to have those goals on display," McGinnis said. "You can point to them and say, 'This fits in with our goals.'"

The graphic goals are also distributed to citizens with the city calendar each year.

## 2007 Council Goals

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

- Grand Landing
- Recreation
- Preservation of Water Quality
- Restoration of Bicentennial Park
- Restoration/Deck Shop

MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

- Parade Surface Improvements
- Property Maintenance
- sidewalk Sidewalk Restoration
- Alley Repair
- Bill Post Maintenance
- Internal Audit Verification Process
- Support Public Lecture Series
- Sewer Pipe Updates

PROJECTS TO BE REFINED

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Light Rail/Bus/Street Planning

NEW PROJECT GOALS

- Fast Track Main Street Downtown Development Authority
- Fast Track East End Grand River Park
- Boardwalk Restoration Plan
- Regional Recreation
- Acquire East End Waterfront Property
- Covenant Life Church Parking Lot Purchase
- Outdoor Bill Payment
- Canadian River Recreation Utilization of Harbor Island Open Space

**Projects Underway** describes those projects that are either substantially completed or are well on their way to being completed. Council will see the Grand Landing development through to its completion and will continue assisting MSOVA in meeting their redevelopment goals.

**Maintenance Projects** are regular municipal efforts that need additional focus in Grand Haven. We can (and will) give these activities elevated status in 2007/2008.

**Projects to be Refined** describes those projects that are in an uncertain or "in-between" half-made, half-not-made status. Some of these projects will be addressed. Infrastructure needs will be key at the forefront, collecting citizen input and reviewing payment options for recreation projects. Payment methods will be applied to understand the needs and desires of East Side neighborhood interests.

**New Project Goals** describes new initiatives that will deliver value to the citizens of Grand Haven. These items will be prioritized by City Council.

## 2006 Goals

Grand Haven City Council

Goals are arranged in different colored target areas. The closer to the bull's eye, the higher the goal priority.

- Top Five
- 2nd Priority
- 3rd Priority
- 4th Priority

**Explanation of prioritized goals:**

**Grand Landing:** This is the epic north end development. The purchase agreement was signed on September 19, 2006. Our goal is closing and ground-breaking in 2006.

**SWWS:** Sewer, Water, Infrastructure, Streets, Sidewalk.

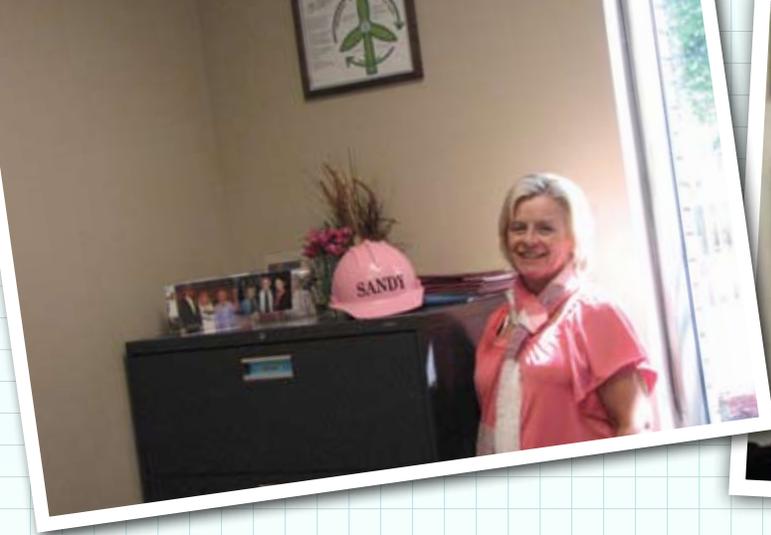
**Downtown:** The downtown project is underway in 2006. Our goal is to keep it quick and clean.

**Community Center:** We should mobilize on this project this year again, quickly and clean.

**Housing:** The Human Relations Commission and Ottawa County Housing Coalition urged City Council to promote safe single family housing opportunity.

The rest of the goals, in order, include:

- Continued investment in routine **parking maintenance programs** (on-bus since the mid 1990s).
- Create a permanent endowment to care for the **USAF Jet Plane, 1227 Train Engine and Coast Guard Boat**.
- Apply on-going **25 year anniversary of 1203 Erie Engine**.
- Plan **Beach Street improvements** with emphasis on seamless access for all businesses.
- Update long-range **mainline plan**.
- Elevate **bike path maintenance**.
- Improve **East Grand River Park**.
- Provide greater **property maintenance enforcement**.
- Continued **residential infill** especially downtown.
- Clean up **Fisherman's Park**.
- Redesign and renovate **Riverwalk** (to include fully accessible restrooms).
- Work on a **regional approach to recreation**.
- Create **east side waterfront plan** (a course to acquire all waterfront property from city limit to US-31).
- Address **policy on alleys** (either abandon or accept responsibility).
- Promote solution to **Grand River pollution**.
- Find ways to **extend Harbor Transit service to the Grand Haven High School**.



“SO OFTEN GOALS GET WRITTEN IN REPORT FORM & **EVERYBODY FORGETS** THEY EXIST. **WE DECIDED TO PUT OUR GOALS** INTO A GRAPHIC FORMAT AND HAVE THEM HANGING IN ALL OUR DEPARTMENTS.”

As an elected official, Mayor Roger Bergman said it is helpful to have the council goals always in the forefront.

“It is a continual reminder of the goals that we set for ourselves,” Bergman said. “There are times when a good idea might come up, but if it doesn’t fit within our goals it hasn’t been budgeted for—so we know we have to consider that next year. It’s a helpful tool for living within our budget.”

Governing can often come with an element of rancor, but McGinnis said the continual focus on goals has helped cut down the contentiousness.

“It helps keep the staff and the council on the same page,” McGinnis said. “Contentiousness has largely gone away because

the staff can say, ‘I’m following your direction, and this is consistent with the goals you set.’ Having the goals laid out clearly and constantly reiterated is a great consensus builder.”

Grand Haven has no plans to go back to the old way of list-making.

“I think the graphics make the goals more appealing and eye-catching,” Bergman said. “It’s certainly nicer than having a list. It’s a pleasing reminder of what we are working towards as a council and as a city.”

Bergman was pleased that the League honored Grand Haven with its Community Excellence Award because the project is simple to implement, but with big payoffs. “I’ve gotten

## Highlight

Grand Haven was the overall winner in the 2010 Community Excellence Award “Race for the Cup.” The CEAs are the League’s most prestigious community awards. They are decided upon by peers both at the regional level and at the Convention, where one of seven regional finalists is selected as the Cup winner.

To find out more about the CEAs, go to [mml.org/awards/cea.html](http://mml.org/awards/cea.html).



*Grand Haven City Manager Pat McGinnis and Mayor Roger Bergman.*



Grand Haven reinforces its council goals by posting them in each department. The continued focus on goals cuts down on contentiousness and helps the city to live within its budget.

emails from people in other communities that have said they want to do this in their city," Bergman said. "You see a lot of innovative ideas coming out of this competition, but many of them can't work in every community, but this idea can work everywhere. This is something everyone can do."

The hardest part of the project is finding a person with the skills to help implement it.

"Every city will have a creative person on staff that can help come up with a graphic," Bergman said. "We were very lucky to have found Mary and she's doing a great job."

The Grand Haven City Council has already drafted their goals for the 2011 fiscal year and is eagerly waiting to see what Snedeker will do with them. 

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



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# CITIES, VILLAGES, & TOWNSHIPS, OH MY!

## Breaking down the forms of government in Michigan

Information & Policy Research Department, the League

**W**hat is the origin of local government in Michigan? What are its powers? What are its functions? The current status of cities and villages in Michigan is the result of historical tradition, home rule, and the initiative of individual communities. In the early 1800s, the territory of Michigan was surveyed and laid out in a system of 6 x 6 square mile grids called townships (legend has it this is as long as a man could travel on a horse to and from the county courthouse in one day).

Michigan became a state in 1837; when people started settling here in greater numbers, the Legislature recognized the need to incorporate these densely settled areas. These fledgling governments could now regulate the health, safety, and welfare of the people within the community. On a regulatory level, local governments were authorized to establish ordinances and to provide local services such as fire and police protection, public works, and utilities; there were also mandatory statutory duties: assessing property; collecting taxes for counties and school districts; and administering county, state and national elections.

### HOME RULE

During the late 1800s, for a city to be incorporated, the Legislature had to adopt local or special acts for each community. This was cumbersome and inefficient—in 1907, more than 400 such acts were written! With the adoption of the

1908 constitution, Michigan became the eighth home rule state. Home rule generally refers to the authority of a city or village to draft and adopt a charter for its own government. This contrasts with legislative establishment of local charters by special act. Home rule frees cities and villages to devise forms of government and exercise powers of local self-government, adopted by local referendum.

### HOW DO VILLAGES AND CITIES DIFFER?

The basic difference between cities and villages is that villages are part of townships and cities are not. Village residents participate in township government and pay township taxes, in addition to having their own village government. Incorporation as a city, however, removes an area from township government.

Cities and townships are considered primary forms of government. Villages are secondary forms of government—the mandatory state duties of assessing property, collecting county and school taxes, and administering county, state, and national elections are done by the township in which the village is located.

Most villages (210 of 256) are governed under the General Law Village Act, PA 3 of 1895. Home rule charters for villages are the exception; though any village may adopt a home rule document under the Home Rule Village Act of 1909.

A city, being withdrawn from the township, must perform the basic, state-required duties as well as provide its own

services. In addition to being responsible for assessing property and collecting taxes for county and school purposes, the city also becomes solely responsible for registration of voters and conduct of all elections within its boundaries. The greater independence of the city, in maintaining local regulations and functions and state-imposed duties in one integrated unit, accounts for the creation of many small cities in Michigan during recent decades. The trend has also developed in villages to seek incorporation as cities whereby they achieve a separation of jurisdiction from the township.

### TYPES OF CITIES

The adoption of the Fourth Class City Act in 1895 created two types of cities: those 3,000 to 10,000 in population, which became fourth class cities, and all others, which remained “special charter” cities. All but one of the “special charter” cities (Mackinac Island) subsequently reincorporated as home rule cities. In an awkward to describe technical act, all fourth class cities became home rule cities in 1976 (PA 334 of 1976), which continued the Fourth Class City Act as the charter for each former fourth class city until it elects to revise its charter. As of January 2011, five cities continue to be governed by the Fourth Class City Act.

### FORM OF GOVERNMENT: CITIES

#### Council-Manager Form

In the council manager form of government, the elected council appoints a professionally trained and experienced manager to administer the day-to-day operations of the city, and to make recommendations to the city council. The council makes all policy decisions, including review, revision and final approval of the proposed annual budget.

#### Mayor-Council Plan

Two forms of the mayor-council plan are used by a number of Michigan home rule cities: the “strong” mayor and “weak” mayor form. The strong mayor is most often found in larger cities where the directly elected mayor, who is not a member of the governing body, appoints and removes the key administrative officials (those who, by charter, report directly to and assist the mayor); often has variations of veto power over council decisions; is usually salaried; and is expected to devote full-time to mayoral duties.

The weak mayor form is found generally in smaller cities and villages. The mayor or president is a member of the governing body, chairs council meetings, and normally is the municipality’s chief policy and ceremonial official by virtue of the position of mayor rather than through any specific authority extending beyond that of the councilmembers. The mayor also serves as chief administrative official, although department heads often operate more or less independently with only general coordination.

Under the weak mayor form there is no central administrator by formal title such as city manager. Some smaller cities are fortunate to have key long-serving staff who sense the overall cooperation needed to accomplish the city’s programs, and informally proceed for the city’s betterment.

### FORM OF GOVERNMENT: VILLAGES

Of the 256 villages in Michigan, 46 have home rule charters, and 210 are governed by the General Law Village Act (1895 PA 3). The general law village, the most common by far, has the typical weak mayor council form of government. Village presidents are elected at-large. The statewide act governing general law villages, Act 3 of 1895, has been amended by the Legislature many times since its enactment. Significant amend-

**AS OF JANUARY 2011, 272 CITIES AND 46 VILLAGES HAD ADOPTED HOME RULE CHARTERS. THE TOTAL OF 318 CHARTERS MAKES MICHIGAN ONE OF THE LEADING HOME RULE STATES IN THE NATION.**

ments include: making the president a full voting member of the village council; the option to reduce council from seven to five members; the ability to change the clerk and treasurer from elected to appointed positions, and allowing villages to either run their own elections or opt for them to be run by the township.

The Home Rule Village Act requires that every village so incorporated provide for the election of a president, clerk and legislative body, and for the election or appointment of such other officers and boards as may be essential. However, the president need not be directly elected by the people but may be elected by the village council. Of the 46 home rule villages only 19 have a village manager position. The home rule village form of government offers flexibility that is not found in the General Law Village Act. Home rule village charters in Michigan are as diverse as the communities that adopt them.

### INTERESTING MUNICIPAL FACTS

#### Who’s The Oldest? Who’s The Newest?

- ◇ Sault Ste. Marie is the oldest community, founded in 1641. However, Detroit was the first incorporated “town” in 1802, and then as a city in 1815; followed by Monroe in 1837, and Grand Rapids in 1850.
- ◇ Grosse Pointe Farms is the only municipality incorporated from a detached territory (from Grosse Pointe Village in 1893).
- ◇ The village of Lake Isabella is the most recent incorporation from an unincorporated area, in 1998.
- ◇ The most recent incorporations of cities were the general law village of Caro, in 2009, and the home rule village of Caseville, in 2010.
- ◇ Rose City changed from a Fourth Class City to a Home Rule City in 2004.
- ◇ Mackinac Island is the only remaining special charter city.

### Remaining Fourth Class Cities (Population)

- ◇ Harrisville (514)
- ◇ Omer (337)
- ◇ Sandusky (2,745)
- ◇ Whittemore (476)
- ◇ Yale (2,063)
- ◇ The only city/city/village consolidation in Michigan occurred in 2000 when the cities of Iron River and Stambaugh and the village of Mineral Hills merged.

### The Following Cities Incorporated From Townships

- ◇ Auburn Hills, 1983
- ◇ Burton, 1971
- ◇ Farmington Hills, 1972 (also included the villages of Quakertown and Woodcreek Farms)
- ◇ Livonia, 1950
- ◇ Norton Shores, 1967
- ◇ Portage, 1963
- ◇ Rochester Hills, 1984
- ◇ Romulus, 1968
- ◇ Southgate, 1958
- ◇ Sterling Heights, 1966
- ◇ Taylor, 1966
- ◇ Warren, 1955 (was a village plus incorporated Warren Township when it became a city)
- ◇ Westland, 1964

### Michigan Population

- ◇ 1820: 8,767 (in the Michigan Territory, which included much of Ohio and Indiana)
- ◇ 1837: Michigan admitted to the Union as 26th state
- ◇ 1840: 212,267
- ◇ 2000: 9,938,444

### Michigan Has

- ◇ 83 Counties
- ◇ 1,242 townships
- ◇ 277 cities
- ◇ 256 villages

### Most & Least...

- ◇ Tuscola County has the most villages with 10
- ◇ Wayne County has the most cities with 33
- ◇ Oakland County has the most cities and villages with 39
- ◇ Keweenaw, Luce, Montmorency, Ontonagon, and Roscommon Counties each have one incorporated area, a village.

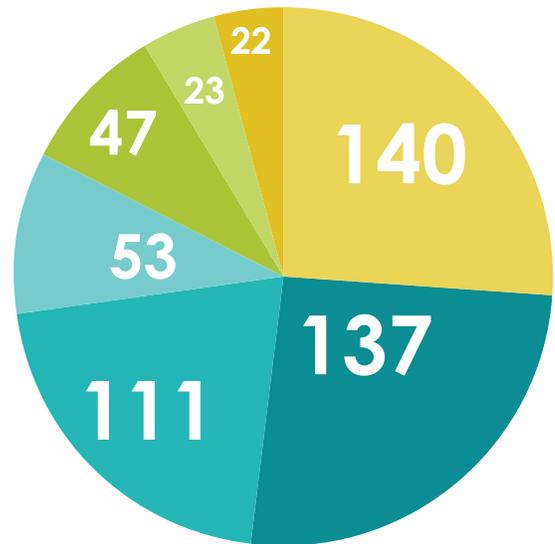
◇ Crawford, Schoolcraft, and Alpena counties each have one incorporated area, a city.

### Population Stats

Forestville (Sanilac County) is the smallest village in the state, with 127 residents, whereas Beverly Hills (Oakland County) is the largest, with 10,437 residents.

Lake Angelus (Oakland County) has 326 residents and is the smallest city in the state. Detroit (Wayne County) is the largest with 951,270 residents.

Population Breakdown by Municipal Type



- Over 50,000 = 23 HRCs
- 25,000-50,000 = 22 HRCs
- 10,000-24,999 = 46 HRCs, 1 HRV (Milford)
- 5,000-9,999 = 51 HRCs, 2 HRVs
- 2,000-4,999 = 78 HRCs, 8 HRVs, 23 GLVs, and 2 FCCs
- 750-1,999 = 46 HRCs, 10 HRVs, and 84 GLVs
- Under 750 = 5 HRCs, 25 HRVs, 103 GLVs, 3 FCCs, and 1 SCC

Home Rule City (HRC)                      Fourth Class City (FCC)  
 Home Rule Village (HRV)                Special Charter City (SCC)  
 General Law Village (GLV)

Did you know that there's only one city in the state of Michigan that is Special Charter? Or that out of the 256 villages in the state, 46 are Home Rule while the rest are General Law?

\*Population information based on 2000 Census figures. At publication, 2010 Census figures were not yet available. 

The Information & Policy Research Department is comprised of many different services of the League, including publications and information services.

# Take Me to Your Leader

## *League's Executive Search Service Helps Communities*

### Seeking Professional Help?

No, we don't have a crisis hotline, but the League is an excellent resource to address your executive personnel needs. The League's executive search service experienced a significant upswing in both inquiries and services rendered in 2010. Perhaps this is due to retiring boomers, or the increased turnover that naturally occurs during turbulent times. Now more than ever, professional assistance in filling an executive level opening is a wise investment.

### Key Personnel Inventory

It's helpful to examine your retiring boomer slate. It's smart to do a personnel inventory of your chief executive officer and department heads. Who's retiring in the next five years and how will you replace them with qualified individuals? (See "Boomerang" Field Report, *The Review*, July/August 2007) Not many post-boomers chose public service as a career path. This presents a significant challenge. It's also important to plan from a budget perspective. Additional training, certifications, and recruitment costs are likely involved.

### How Hard Can it Be?

Selecting effective leadership, whether a manager or department head, is one of the most important activities of a governing body. If done correctly, the search is a time-intensive undertaking, requiring considerable knowledge of the intricacies of public sector employment practice, the ability to handle confidentiality within the parameters of state law, specialized knowledge of the requirements and qualifications for the position, future projects, goals and challenges of the job, and expertise in executing a selection process that reveals which candidates fit the bill. Most importantly, successful searches begin with a consensus building process that ensures the elected body has a shared understanding of the priorities for the position and the professional skill sets needed to succeed in the job.

### Why Use the League?

There are other good search firms available, but their for-profit nature often makes them a less affordable option for municipalities. Further, executive search in the public sector is a unique undertaking. Firms without an experienced public sector principal won't be as attuned to the nuances and potential liabilities of public sector hiring—such as ensuring compliance with the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts, and advisable interview practices in public employment.

(The League might even be your insurance carrier, so we have a vested interest in that regard).

### Our Experience

We have a team of skilled search facilitators, each with decades of municipal management experience and distinguished careers. They customize each search process by working closely with you to define your community's needs and to compile the best possible candidate pool. Their expertise, paired with a highly personal and tailored process, creates a track record of success.

We have completed an unparalleled 180-plus Michigan municipal and public sector executive searches since 1998. Our ability to directly network our executive search opportunities is unmatched; our website classifieds are "hit" over 4,000 times per week, and our exclusive database means we can provide targeted outreach and networking to hundreds of municipal professionals. Further, our search facilitators have extensive personal networks providing access to "passive candidates" and enabling them to learn more about candidates both in Michigan and in other states, than other reference methods will reveal.

### We Love You, Man

Perhaps even more important than our experience is this: we have a relationship. Your community is already a member, and we've been your association for more than a century. Our mission is to provide the resources and assistance our communities need to be the best they can be. We don't provide a service and walk away. We're committed to a relationship that will continue long after the search. For this reason, you can be assured, we always have your best interests at heart.

For detailed information on the League's Executive Search process, contact Caroline Kennedy, manager of field operations at 800-653-2483 (toll-free), 906-428-0100 (direct), or [ckennedy@mml.org](mailto:ckennedy@mml.org) 

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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).





# FLEXIBLE MANAGEMENT

## Council-Manager Government Is Model of Strength, Professionalism

**By Darnell Earley,  
ICMA-CM, MPA**

**L**ocal governments across the country are struggling to deal with declining resources and the rising cost of service provision. Add to that the 7-to-10-digit budget deficits in which many states currently find themselves mired, and it is no wonder that these tough economic times are unrivaled by any other in U.S. history since the Great Depression. During the course of many discussions about these issues, an ongoing debate over form of government has been thrust front and center. In Detroit, for example, voters have impaneled a city charter review commission to examine, among other things, whether to maintain the city's current strong mayor system or to consider adopting the council-manager form of government. I have met with commission members on two occasions to discuss the pros and cons of both forms.

Under the council-manager form of government, councilmembers and often the mayor are elected directly by the voters. If not directly elected, the mayor is selected by and from among the council. Together, these individuals hire a professionally trained, experienced city manager to oversee the day-to-day management activities of the municipality. As in the private sector model, the manager is the chief executive officer of the municipality and reports directly to the entire governing body, which serves as a policy making board of directors.



*Darnell Earley networking at the League's 2010 Convention in Dearborn.*

Under the strong mayor form, a popularly elected mayor becomes the chief executive officer, and that individual personally chooses key administration officials. It is unlikely that mayors are elected for their education and management skills, or for their experience in administering budgets, managing people, and assessing organizational service delivery. Instead, a mayor's effectiveness generally depends upon the ability of the people working in the mayor's office to carry out those functions.

Compare an inexperienced, politically appointed administrator to a professional manager who possesses the training, education, and experience required to oversee critical

municipal functions. Couple that experience with accountability to an elected body that represents the entire municipality, and you have an opportunity to effect real change in the movement toward better governance.

Among Michigan's 533 cities and villages, 240 (45 percent) are chartered under the council-manager form of government. The structure originated back in the early 1900s as an alternative to the political issues of the times (such as corruption) that were inherent in strong mayor form of government at the turn of the 20th century. Under council-manager government, the manager hires most of the municipality's top level employees and prepares and submits the annual budget to the mayor and council.

It is interesting to note that in 2007, the city of Saginaw impaneled a charter commission to review its 76-year-old governing document. One of the measures recommended by that commission was to abandon the council-manager form of government in favor of the strong mayor form. The measure was rejected by voters by a 4-to-1 margin. Today, Saginaw continues to hold its own, as evidenced by accurate and timely financial reporting, transparency, and sound budgeting practices that have resulted in consistently balanced budgets, while grappling with the same challenges as other municipalities during the current fiscal crisis.

While there are variations within the structure, the council-manager form places the critical operations and financial matters in the hands of a professional manager who is trained to run a multi-million dollar operation. The manager recommends actions to the entire governing body for final approval. Although council-manager cities are not without governance challenges and obstacles, the decisions that managers make are generally devoid of political influence. City managers who are members of ICMA also adhere to a professional code of ethics that is vigorously enforced by the organization.

It is important to note that the council-manager form of government is flexible enough to meet the needs of just about every community; there is no "one size fits all" scenario. To address the need for increased political leadership, for example, today 67 percent of cities chartered under the council-manager form (Grand Rapids is one example) directly elect their mayor. The difference is that the mayor and council together recruit, select, and appoint a competent chief executive officer and empower that person to recommend the actions the local government should implement on a day-to-day basis. The value of empowering an individual with the requisite training and experience to oversee these critical management operations goes without saying.

At the same time, the council-manager system also enables elected officials to focus on what they do best—developing a community-wide vision for the municipality and establishing the policies required to realize that vision. Taken together, the responsibilities and authorities of the elected officials and those of the appointed manager complement one another and blend the components of a well-managed, professionally run municipality.

To summarize, while a community's financial health and well-being may not rest solely on its form of government, by its nature, the council-manager form is the best structure for

ensuring the appointment of a management professional who possesses the training and experience required to oversee the day-to-day operations of a municipality.

In my professional opinion, the municipalities in Michigan (and elsewhere) that operate under this form are more likely not only to survive the current economic crisis, but to emerge stronger and more efficient than those that do not. Municipal leaders may well want to take note, and consider this as a viable option. 

*Darnell Earley is immediate past-president of ICMA, the International City/County Management Association. A Michigan public administrator for more than 30 years, he is currently the city manager of Saginaw. Previously, he served as city administrator of Flint, as interim mayor of Flint, as deputy controller/budget director for Ingham County, and as township manager in Buena Vista Charter Township.*



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# Mayors Have a DIRECT LINK

## to Voters

Putting Your Trust in the Head Elected Official

“...each municipality is the best judge of its local needs and the best able to provide for its local necessities.” This concept of home rule is what drives Michigan’s communities and makes them unique. Empowered by our state Constitution, the electors of each city and village were given the ability to frame and adopt a charter and “pass all laws and ordinances relating to its municipal concerns, subject to the constitution and general laws of this state.” (1908 Constitution, Article VIII, Section 21).

Michigan operates under three types of local government structures: council-manager, strong mayor, and weak mayor. Under home rule, all systems are viable—they were formed by the will and vote of the citizens of the community, who were given the power to judge their own needs.

### MAYOR-COUNCIL PLANS

The key components of the “strong” mayor form include a directly elected mayor who is not a member of the governing body, who appoints and removes the key administrative officials (those who, by charter, report directly to and assist the mayor); often has

variations of veto power over council decisions; is usually salaried; and is expected to devote full-time to mayoral duties.

In the “weak” mayor form, the mayor or president is a member of the governing body, chairs council meetings, and normally is the municipality’s chief policy and ceremonial official by virtue of the position rather than through any specific authority extending beyond that of the councilmembers.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The duties of the mayor in any form of government are found in the charter. Both the Home Rule City Act and Home Rule Village Act provide for the election of an “executive head.” The role and duties of this individual, known as a president in a village and as a mayor in a city, vary greatly and are established by local charter. It should be noted the term “executive head” is not defined in either Act. In a general law village, the president is the chief executive officer and exercises supervision over the affairs of the village—but supervisory duties can be transferred to a manager by ordinance.

The city of Rochester Hills has a strong mayor form of government. The duties and responsibilities of the mayor are detailed in the city charter. The mayor is the administrative and executive head of the city. “The strong mayor form of government works well in Rochester Hills. Our citizens had the chance 35 years ago to change the form of government, and they voted 3-1 to keep the existing form intact. Citizens like having a direct link to the top decision-maker in the city. In turn, the mayor is directly accountable to them,” states Mayor Bryan Barnett.

In addition to the typical role of spokesperson for the city, the Rochester Hills city charter charges the mayor with these key powers and duties:

- Maintain an office during normal business hours;
- Enforce all laws and city ordinances and regulations;
- Appoint and remove for cause directors and employees of the city;
- Prepare and administer the annual budget and keep the council and public advised of the city’s financial condition and needs;
- Annually present a complete report of the finances and administrative activities of the city for the prior fiscal year;
- Make recommendations to the council for measures the mayor deems to be expedient or necessary;



Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett

- Be responsible for the efficient administration of all departments of the city;
- Approval administrative rules and regulations of all city departments, boards, and commissions before such rules and regulations take effect;
- Perform all administrative functions of the city not imposed by law or ordinance on another city officer or agency;
- Provide periodic reports to the council regarding the work of the city administration;
- Exercise a veto of any ordinance or resolution by the council (except those resolutions that fill a vacancy on the council, set the mayor's salary, or appoint members of the Elections Commission);
- Recommend personnel policies and procedures for the city; and
- Appoint boards and commissions as provided by law.

Mayors have strong feelings when it comes to governing their communities. In the following essay, Mayor Richard Root reflects on the mayor's role in the city of Kentwood, where he has served as mayor for eight years and in varying roles in the city government since 1979:

"Any statement claiming a particular city has the best model for representing its citizens would be naive. The governance of each community (township, village, or city) is determined by its charter. A charter must conform to the laws provided for within the U.S. Constitution and the state of Michigan. Each municipality within this state has its own modified form of governance.

It becomes difficult to determine if a strong mayoral form of government is more effective or appropriate than a city manager-council format.

What I can share with you is: a city with a strong mayor is not necessarily void of traditionally trained public administrators. In the Executive Department here in Kentwood, I have a well-educated and experienced deputy administrator to assist in vetting policy and sorting out daily routine items. All of the city's department heads are degreed within their specialties, as well.

What I feel the full-time mayor/CEO brings to this environment is an ability to mold the practice of public administration to the political climate of the community early in the process of design, delivery of service and policy. When a mayor is not a part of policy from its inception, the city manager becomes more politically entrenched, as the manager has to "sell" the policy to the council.

This process can be counterproductive, as time can be spent crafting policy that substantially deviates from the political will of the community. A mayor is typically more vested in the community as a resident (a manager may or may not reside in the community he serves) and is directly employed by his constituents.



*Kentwood Mayor Richard Root*

Managers serve at the will of the council and, as an employee of the council, must submit to the majority will of this body.

It is important to understand that as the author of these comments and holder of a full-time mayor position, I (along with the past two mayors here) have had serious concerns regarding who will one day fill this leadership role. Our citizens have had several opportunities to vote on a new charter that would have installed a manager form of government. On both occasions, the proposed charter was overwhelmingly defeated.

I do fear that, one day in the future, someone with ample resources and a narrow agenda (the one-trick pony) may be successful in selling himself into this very complex environment. The choice of "who" will be the next leader in this city is up to the voters. If they get it wrong, the cost to a well-run community can be extraordinary." (*Lansing State Journal* online August 29, 2010)

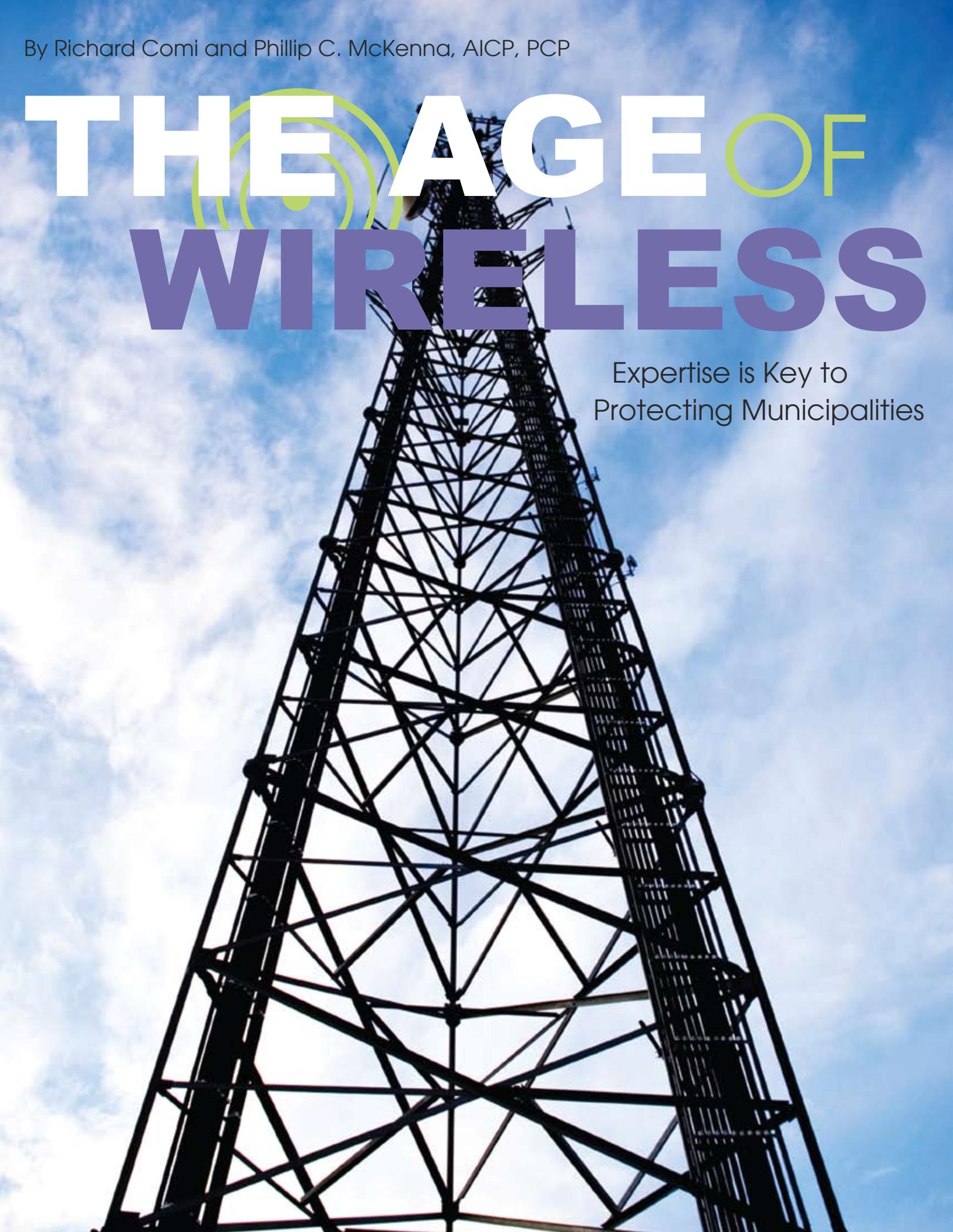
The mayor in a strong mayor city is akin to a manager in a council-manager city. In the weak mayor form, the responsibility of running the municipality is divided between the mayor/president and the council. The people of Michigan have a voice—they get to choose the type of government they want for the communities they live in. That is the beauty of our system of home rule. Let's preserve it.

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*Kim Cekola is research specialist and publications editor for the League. You may contact her at [kcekola@mml.org](mailto:kcekola@mml.org) or 734-669-6321.*

By Richard Comi and Phillip C. McKenna, AICP, PCP

# THE AGE OF WIRELESS



Expertise is Key to  
Protecting Municipalities

Count the people you know who aren't texting, tweeting, or using wireless devices at some point during the day, and it's obvious why wireless is on the short list of industries thriving in Michigan. Bucking the effects of the national recession, the wireless industry has exploded in recent years, and that's nothing compared to what's in store.

The industry itself predicts that in the next several years its national inventory of wireless

sites will more than triple from 300,000 to a staggering one million. Over the coming decade, whether communities benefit from or fall victim to this massive wave of wireless development will depend on how shrewdly they position themselves today.

The key will be putting in place an ordinance that requires wireless applicants to secure proper review of all new or updated wireless equipment and requires the wireless applicant to pay the cost of the review—just as other developers have for years.

### High Stakes for Communities

Understandably, many municipal leaders would rather avoid the wireless issue. Their time is limited and even a cursory understanding of the topic requires a time-consuming, complicated, highly technical review of ever-changing data. But when municipal leaders consider wireless applications without fully understanding the technical issues involved, they leave their communities at risk. In some instances they end up with unnecessary, duplicative, and unsightly towers that undermine the character of neighborhoods. In the worst cases, they've seen disastrous accidents—involving fires, explosions, and even the collapse of towers.

### Carriers' Advantage To-Date

Yet, despite the high stakes, many communities and their planners issue permits for wireless equipment based almost entirely on the carrier's own claims of what is necessary, safe, and financially fair. Most of these municipalities would never take such a passive approach to other applications. (For example, few communities take at face value a commercial developer's claim of a need to build on wetlands.) One result of this practice is that almost universally, communities

have set review and inspection fees far below what the wireless carriers should and would pay. As a result, communities are denying themselves the financial resources they need and deserve to pay for the quality expert advice they need to make sound decisions on wireless issues.

### Importance of Reviewing Everything Wireless

Because of nearly non-stop capacity, coverage, competition, and technology changes, the wireless carriers are constantly updating facilities. In many cases, these frequent changes leave municipalities uncertain about what exactly the existing inventory of wireless equipment within their boundaries includes. In addition to creating tax assessment issues, this makes it nearly impossible to determine the validity of future claims of need for additional wireless sites and facilities.

For this reason, city and village officials should require local review and approval of ALL changes to wireless equipment to maintain control of wireless within their realm. The ordinance should make clear that the community should be made aware of and have opportunity to review any addition of new equipment or update or modification of existing facilities.

### Checklist for a Sound Wireless Ordinance

A well-crafted wireless ordinance should do the following:

#### **Give Community Control**

Place the community in control of all matters related to the siting and construction, of any substantive modification of the tower or (co-located) wireless facility.

#### **Give Precedence to Community's Needs**

Recognize the community's needs first and as superior to those of the carrier, because without the community's need for service the carrier has no "need" to provide service.

#### **Limit "Standing" to Wireless Carriers**

Wireless carriers should have a seat at the table. But good ordinances should not give the same status to tower companies or others who merely provide a location on which to locate equipment.

#### **Require Co-Location**

Require new facilities to be co-located on existing equipment unless it can be proven not to work via alternatives backed by modeling information used for preparation maps.

#### **Have Carriers Pay the Tab**

Require applicants to place in escrow a deposit for the hiring of an expert who brings the technical capability necessary to review any wireless application. Because the carrier benefits from the permit, it should bear this cost, not taxpayers.

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## The Key to Smart Leases, Tax Assessment, Buyouts

An accurate inventory of wireless equipment housed within the community is essential for informed interface with the industry on a number of levels, including: wireless leases of city property; tax assessment of wireless equipment; and the evaluation of buyouts of the community's wireless leases. The municipality cannot wisely negotiate a lease, buyout, or assessment without reasonable knowledge of its inventory, and it cannot have reasonable knowledge of the inventory without monitoring and requiring permits for changes, additions, etc.

### Reasons to Work With the Industry

Though managing the wireless issue poses complications, of course the wireless industry also offers many opportunities, including services highly desirable to citizens, an environment attractive to other businesses, and a potential source of non-tax revenue. But even those communities that prefer no wireless development cannot patently refuse to work with the industry.

Federal law supports wireless carriers (though not independent tower companies—an important distinction) as part of the nation's communication infrastructure. The law compels communities to approve permits for a new facility (and substantial modifications), but only when the carrier can prove a need—that a “substantial gap in coverage” exists. When municipalities lack the expertise to decipher the technical charts and graphs to determine if this standard is truly met (as most do) it is prudent to hire a qualified wireless consultant who can provide this expertise.

### The Solution: Wireless Expertise Paid for by the Wireless Applicant

The key is to put in place now regulations that meet the federal requirements while protecting the community and positioning it to share in the industry's success. The best and most efficient way to do this is for communities to update their current tower and wireless

ordinances with two key objectives in mind: retaining the right to review and monitor all additions or updates to the wireless inventory and requiring the applicant to pay the full cost of review (including the hiring of outside expertise) by making a deposit to an escrow account upon filing an application.

With a sound wireless ordinance that reflects these updates, communities can prepare for and share in the prosperity of the wireless age. The good news—especially for communities wrestling with wireless issues—is that if handled correctly, this can all be achieved at no cost to the community. Communities can customize new or even revise old wireless regulations with the industry fronting all costs, as it should. 

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*Richard Comi is the co-founder of the Center for Municipal Solutions, a national consulting firm exclusively serving local governments. He is a regular speaker to local governmental organizations on the state and local levels and has been published in various local government organizations' publications. Visit the Center's website at [www.telecomsol.com](http://www.telecomsol.com).*

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## You're Elected, Now What?

### *League Answers Questions About Protocol, Residency, Secret Ballots*

**Q.** I'm a newly elected councilmember and a bit overwhelmed by all the new things I need to learn and issues I need to handle. Can you tell me where to start?

**A.** First and foremost, if you have not already, you need to become thoroughly familiar with your local charter and your local council rules, including basic parliamentary procedure. Many communities provide an orientation for councilmembers.

The quickest and most comprehensive information dealing with municipal issues in Michigan can be found on our website at [mml.org](http://mml.org). There you will find a collection of publications, including a *Handbook for Municipal Officials* (with a separate book for General Law Village Officials) and a series of fact sheets called *One Pagers Plus* (OPP) giving you a quick overview of a variety of issues, including budgeting, the Open Meetings Act, and the Freedom of Information Act.

If you have not already, you will certainly want to sign up for your own "account" with the League ([mml.org/member\\_account.aspx](http://mml.org/member_account.aspx)) so you will be assured of receiving the various League communications in a timely fashion. Not only can you expect *The Review* in the mail every other month, but the *Legislative Link* and the *Loop* will arrive in your email to keep you up to date on current issues and let you know where and when our education seminars are being held.

Last but not least, remember you can always "Ask the League" either by an email ([info@mml.org](mailto:info@mml.org)) or you can call the League office (800-653-2483) and ask for the Inquiry Service.

**Q.** Members of council ask staff for information directly rather than making the request through the manager. This sometimes results in information being available to one councilmember that is not available to others. Do you have some sample policies dealing with this issue?

**A.** Many municipalities encourage councilmembers to work through their managers to secure information, both to assure that all members of the council have the same information and to assure that several employees are not working on duplicate inquiries from different members of council. Direction on appropriate council action with respect

to municipal employees can often be found in the charter, council rules, or ethics policies. Lake Isabella has a section of the charter devoted to the procedure to be followed by trustees in dealing with village staff. Manistee covers the issue in their council rules. Both examples are available on our website.

**Q.** In order to support our local businesses, we would like to require our manager and department heads to live in our community. Do you have a sample ordinance or policy we could use?

**A.** We do not, for a very good reason. PA 212 of 1999, known as The Residency Act, prohibits local units of government from requiring employees to live in the municipality. The closest you can require employees to live is within 20 miles of your boundary. The League wrote a one-page fact sheet which gives the key provisions on this state law. It is available on the League website ([mml.org/resources/publications/one\\_pagers/act.pdf](http://mml.org/resources/publications/one_pagers/act.pdf)). However, you can ask—and some municipalities have offered incentives for managers who do agree to live in their community.

**Q.** Can our council vote by secret ballot?

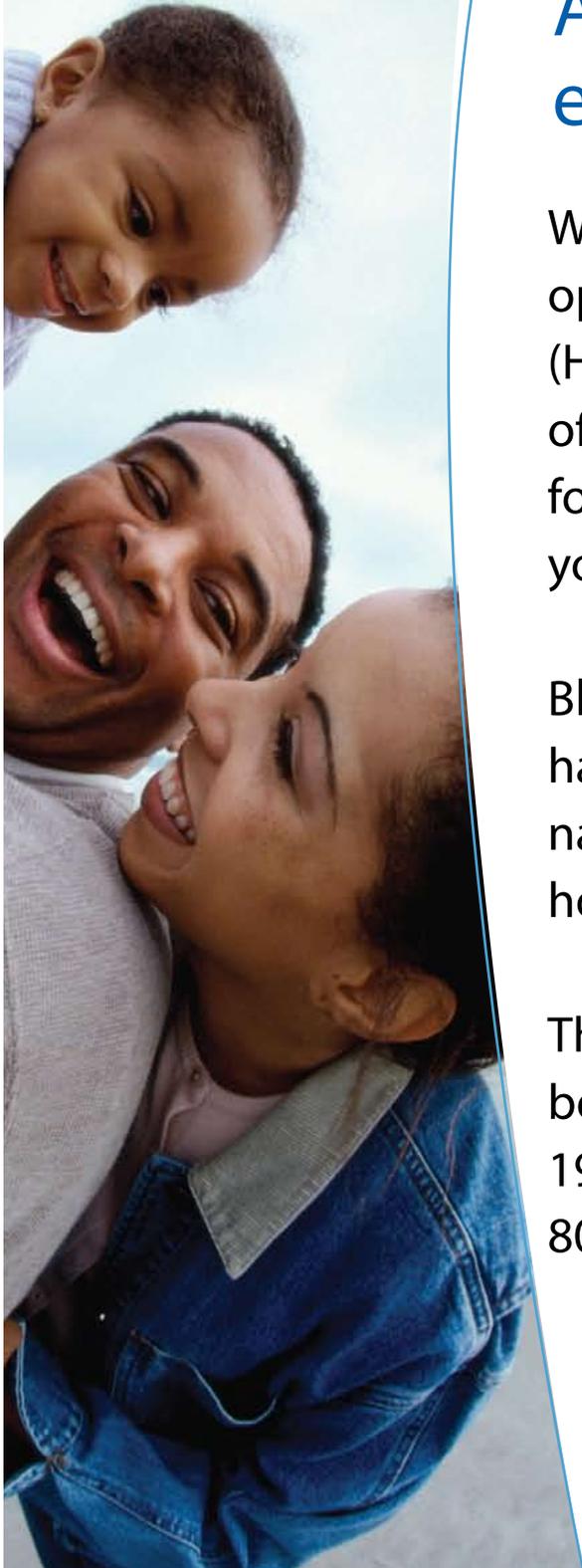
**A.** No, No, No, No, No! No local public body can ever vote by secret ballot on any matter—ever! The public's business must be conducted in public.

The Open Meetings Act ([legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-267-of-1976](http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-267-of-1976)) provides that any public official who knowingly violates the Act can be fined up to \$1,000 for the first offense and up to \$2,000 and a year in jail for the second offense (MCL 15.272). 

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





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## City Of Sturgis: Lighting The Way

Just north of the Indiana border in St. Joseph County, the city of Sturgis is a thriving community surrounded by rich agricultural land, lakes, and rivers. A full-service municipality, Sturgis combines the conveniences of larger cities with a small-town atmosphere.

Established in 1896, Sturgis has long been recognized for one of its more unique and enduring services—electricity. In 2011, the city's hydro-electric dam, located on the St. Joseph River, will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The dam, still in operation, provides the city with a green energy source that is responsible for generating a portion of the electricity sold by the city's municipal electric utility to residents of Sturgis and the surrounding area.

The city is also able to offer residents unique cultural and recreation amenities. The Sturges-Young Civic Center and Auditorium, home to the final performance of jazz legend Duke Ellington, plays host to performing arts events from both nationally known and local artists as well as providing a location for community meetings and gatherings. The city's Doyle Community Center offers year-round access to fitness and other recreation opportunities such as multi-use court space, an indoor track, exercise equipment, and a host of leagues and fitness classes.

Sturgis is proud to be home to several major manufacturers as well as a number of local entrepreneurs. The Sturgis

community's long-held entrepreneurial mindset is supported by city efforts such as the Business Development Team and participation in Michigan State University's Creating Entrepreneurial

Communities (CEC) Project. Development efforts are complemented by plentiful infrastructure, including access to major roads, close proximity to Interstate 80-90, and several ready-to-build industrial park properties.

Proud of its heritage, the city of Sturgis is also a forward-looking community. The city's recent downtown streetscape project has given the central business district a fresh look and improved walkability in this vital economic area. The city has also worked collaboratively with area local governments in Michigan and Indiana to market and develop the interstate corridor along SR-9/M-66 as Fawn River Crossing.

A community with a bright past, present, and future, everyone is welcome to come experience Sturgis—a city where lighting the way is a tradition. 



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