

the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

November/December 2010

EDUCATION: A 21st Century Asset

“To me, the only way to see
a **BETTER LIFE** was education.”

Carol Shafto, Mayor of Alpena
and new League President

PLUS

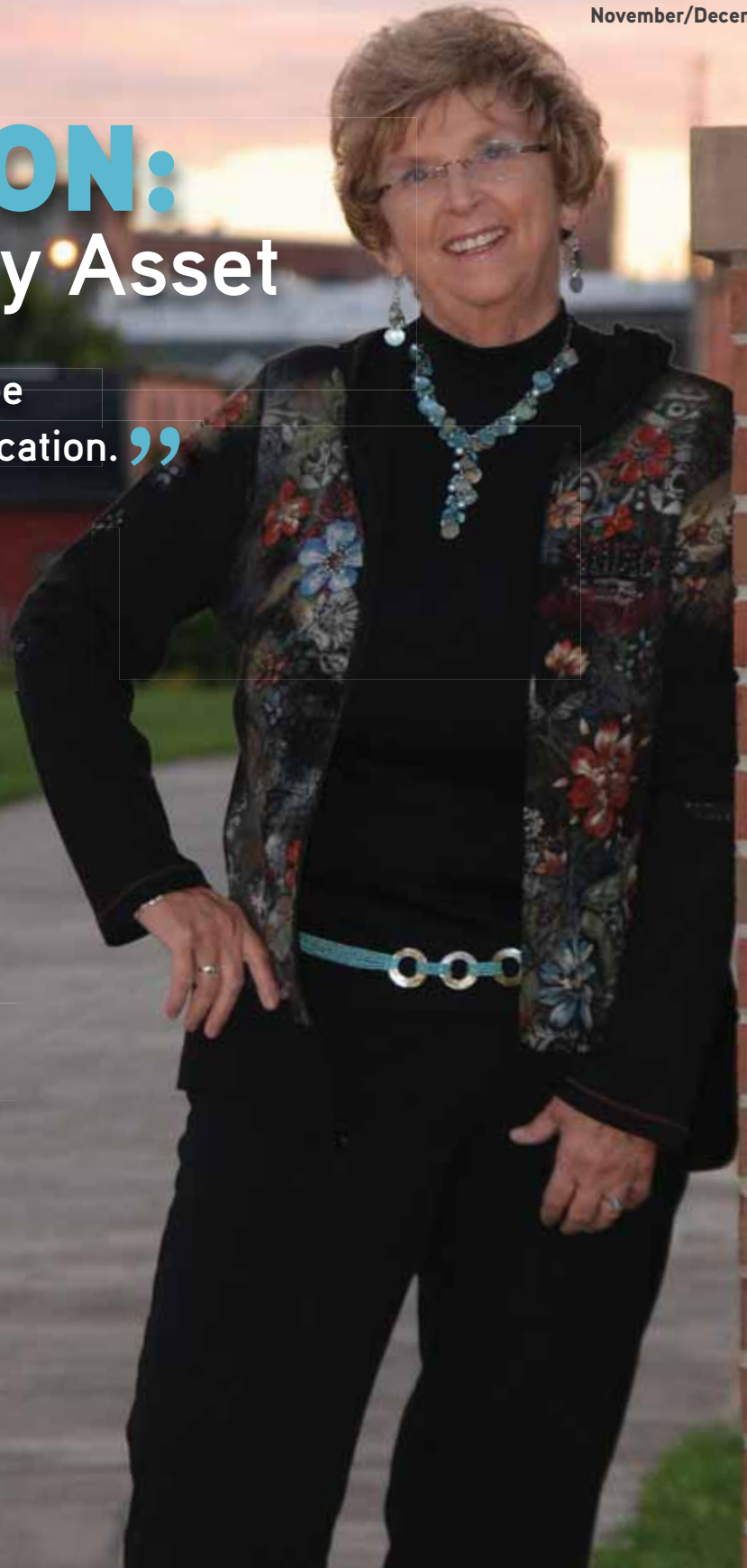
2010 Convention

The **KNOWLEDGE** Economy

Saving **ESCANABA'S**
Neighborhood School

ADRIAN'S Youth Council

Teaching High School
STUDENTS TO VOTE



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Features

6
**A 21st Century Asset:
Education**
By Colby Spencer

10
**The Knowledge
Economy**
By Lou Glazer

13
**If You Teach Me
How to Fish**
By Jennifer Eberbach

16
**Wyoming Community
Comes Together to Help
Students**
By Jennifer Eberbach

19
**Adrian Mayor Gary
McDowell Talks Youth
Engagement**

22
**Eaton Rapids Uses
Homecoming to Teach
High School Students
About Elections**
By Kristy Reinecke

24 COVER STORY
**If Detroit Thrives,
Alpena Thrives**
By Matt Bach

27
**New League Board
of Trustees, Convention
Recap**



Columns

- 5 **Executive Director's Message**
- 38 **Northern Field Report**
- 40 **Legal Spotlight**
- 46 **Municipal Q&A**



On the Cover: Carol Shafto, mayor of Alpena, will serve as the League's new president. Cover photo by Carol Dodge Grochowski of Dodge Photographic Art, Alpena.



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The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 83, Number 6

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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Educating Our Future Is Key For Communities

As the year winds down, it's a great time to reflect on what we've harvested thus far here in Michigan. We all know a garden is only as good as the seeds we plant and the soil in which we plant them. We've got the right seeds: a diverse population of bright young people and a solid cadre of hard-working citizens who weathered the worst the economy could throw at them, and still came up standing.

But are we giving them everything they need to thrive in the 21st century? Quality education is the key to growing a new knowledge-based economy. It's one of the vital assets required for making our communities vibrant and prosperous in the years to come.

It's not just the League that's saying it. Back in June, Ann Arbor-based think tank Michigan Futures Inc. released its third annual progress report on Michigan's transition to a knowledge-based economy. It showed how many of Michigan's high-wage manufacturing jobs with low educational requirements are gone forever—proof positive that we need to act now before we lose an entire generation of future stakeholders to greener economic pastures elsewhere.

Our legislative team has been working hard to keep education a top priority for Michigan's future. In July, the state House of Representatives passed HB 6243. The so-called "town gown" bill was a key piece of legislation advocated by the League as part of our Prosperity Agenda. The bill helps foster economic development partnerships through the creation of Educational Opportunity Districts in communities with colleges or universities. The districts will operate much like the Downtown Development Districts that have proven so successful over the years, capturing funds for all kinds of innovative, knowledge-based uses.

The League is also pushing for legislation that would establish a new state commission to move Michigan toward a revitalized economy, based on innovation, knowledge, and entrepreneurship. This centralized think tank would be charged with developing the strategies needed to reinvent the state's economy through such means as research, legislative reform, and departmental changes.

The League's Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) is also working to provide technical services and solutions to communities seeking to collaborate with educational institutions on making these goals a reality.

A pilot program launched in late fall of 2009 is working with six communities to develop a program of technical services that can assist all our member communities in implementing projects and programs related to the 21c3 assets, including education. As a result, our members are accomplishing everything from shared ballparks and community gardens to neighborhood art centers.

There's always something we can learn from each other, too. Inside this issue of *The Review*, you'll find amazing examples of how our member communities are putting a new focus on education. Community-based education, youth councils, afterschool programming, and a program that brings voting to the schools are some of the stories we are featuring.

The eight assets of 21c3 are so integral to our mission that we focused our 112th Annual Convention around them. Held in Dearborn, it was probably our most exciting and successful Convention to date. Please see Convention photos and news on pages 28-33.

We hope the new year brings even more promising developments on the local, state, and federal level—but the League won't sit on its hands, waiting for someone else to make it happen. It's up to all of us to be part of the solution.

When the future arrives, we hope to see you there. 

THE PROSPERITY AGENDA RADIO SHOW

Program Promotes League's Mission

The Michigan Municipal League is taking its message to one of the largest radio stations in the Midwest—News/Talk 760 WJR. Throughout this year, 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 in 2010. We encourage all our members and friends to tune in for each show. For those outside of the WJR listening audience, you can hear segments of the show at mml.org by clicking on the Prosperity Agenda logo you see here.



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





University of Michigan Diag



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Hillsdale College

a 21st century EDUC

Education has become known as the great equalizer in our nation. We consider a “free and appropriate education” for all citizens a right, not a privilege. In a place like Michigan, where hard work is valued above all, education may be the single most important aspect of each person’s future. Hard work will get you far, but hard work and education will get you further. There is a near-universal acceptance that a high school education is a minimum credential for the modern workforce; however, college is increasingly more important for income growth. For these reasons it is the responsibility of each community to foster an environment which values education. Community-education partnerships can encompass elementary all the way through higher education. It is these partnerships that have made a difference all around the country and helped everyday citizens to succeed and add wealth and prosperity to their hometowns.

The ways in which education adds value to each citizen and society are endless. Education provides each person with valuable human capital. “[S]kills, knowledge, abilities, experience, aptitude, and training are human capital that, like physical capital, accrues a stream of future benefits when developed . . . when invested in, [an] education is a form of human capital that affects benefits over a lifetime . . . Education increases the productivity of labor, through technological innovation . . . as an engine of economic growth, education enhances both private and public benefits that are ultimately reflected in measures such as per capita income.” (*Review of the Statistical Measurement of Human Capital* by Adolf Stroombergen, Dennis Rose, and Ganesh Nana, November 2002). All of this is confirmation that education matters, not only to each individual but to society as a whole.

Education is also a draw for a highly qualified workforce, “high quality labor is attracted to states with superior public schools, and more highly educated individuals are better consumers because of their higher wages.” Michigan’s “Smart Zones” in and

Every asset: EDUCATION

By Colby Spencer

near universities are evidence that highly qualified workers gravitate to locales for educational and work opportunities. The number of students entering Michigan's universities due to family legacy is also a great indicator. But what can be done in public schools? How can smaller communities leverage their community college resources better?

Numerous examples exist for public education-community partnerships. Littleton, New Hampshire, a town of 5,845 residents, has created a downtown river-walk museum in which different grades in the public schools are responsible for various exhibits. They have also created a marketing and workforce collaboration between the high school's vocational

center and a downtown shopping district to assist with and learn about advertising, marketing, internet sales, and rehabilitation of the downtown area. This program is less costly for the district than building an addition to the high school and hiring new teachers for marketing and advertising. This community has been able to revitalize their downtown, focus on economic development, reach state standards for their high school students, and give them an opportunity for on the job training before high school ends. The Littleton, New Hampshire example is just one of many that show how education and community function better as a partnership. The costs are fewer and the benefits are infinite.

CENTER FOR 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITIES

The League identified eight essential assets that make communities vibrant places in the 21st century. Research continues to show that “place-making” matters more than ever, as an increasingly mobile workforce seeks out neighborhoods before finding jobs and opening up businesses. Our purpose is to help local officials identify, develop, and implement strategies that will grow and strengthen Michigan's communities in the coming decades.

Physical Design & Walkability

Whether your community is big or small, it is important to create a physical fabric that promotes social connections where people can live, work, shop, and play.

Green Initiatives

“Thinking green” is a critical asset of any viable community. It impacts natural resources, quality of life, and the financial bottom line.

Cultural Economic Development (CED)

Arts and culture should be a part of any long-term economic development strategy for sustainability. CED plays a big role in developing and preserving a community's identity and uniqueness.

Entrepreneurship

In the new economy, we need to focus on growing jobs in our communities by ones and twos for long-term sustainability.

Multiculturalism

Our global economy is fueled by the talent and ingenuity of people from around the world. Welcoming those from different backgrounds and disciplines can result in a whole new level of innovation.

Messaging & Technology

Technology allows people to connect and collaborate like never before. Communities have a powerful opportunity to connect and engage with their citizenry and beyond.

Transit

People are choosing where they want to live, play and work in communities that embrace all modes of transportation—walking, biking, and public transit.

Education (K-16)

Our educational institutions are key to growing a knowledge-based state. Leveraging these institutional resources is critical.



LEAGUE PUSHES TOWN-GOWN AND STATE NEW ECONOMY LEGISLATION

The House New Economy Committee passed HB 6243, a key piece of legislation being advocated by the League as part of our Prosperity Agenda. The bill reflects the education asset of the Prosperity Agenda and the Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) initiative by providing a mechanism to help foster “town-gown” economic development partnerships. Attracting talent and jobs in the new economy is important, and both the statewide council and local town-gown councils in college communities played important roles in the process of getting this legislation passed.

Specifically, the bill allows for Educational Opportunity Districts to be created in communities that have colleges or universities. These districts are essentially Downtown Development Authorities that have representation from the municipality, the college, and local businesses.

Discussion in committee centered on the economic development impacts of higher education working with communities. Research continues to show the positive economic relationship that occurs when communities partner with higher education. This includes business opportunities such as incubators, entrepreneurs, retail and other economic development benefits. League Trustee David Lossing (mayor of Linden and legislative director for the University of Michigan, Flint) previously testified on the importance of these partnerships and this legislation. Amendments were added to the bill in committee that allow private schools to utilize this tool with communities, and that prohibit public dollars from being spent on college/university buildings. The League supported these amendments. The bill passed in the House and is now on the Senate floor for consideration. The League thanks Chair Ed Clemente (D-Lincoln Park) for his tireless work on this bill. The League bestowed its Legislator of the Year award to Rep. Clemente for his work on behalf of issues that are vital to Michigan’s municipalities. Also to be commended is Rep. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) for his hard work and interest in this legislation.

Another example is Gaylord Community School in Gaylord, Michigan. In the early 1990s, the school board had gone to residents twice to gain support for a new school building, only to be defeated both times. In response, the board initiated an extensive outreach to the community, including senior citizens (who had helped to defeat the two bond referendums). Senior citizens were especially eager to have a performing arts center, something the city lacked. So, school and community leaders began a community planning process that for the first time included senior citizens. The school board adopted the community-school concept and developed a new school proposal that included day care, health care facilities, and a 600-seat performing arts center. The \$25 million bond proposal subsequently gained the community's support. The decision by school officials to incorporate a performing arts center into the new school was a key factor in winning the public support to pass the bond the third time it was presented.

(Source: www.edfacilities.org)

Partnerships in public education are essential—higher education is no exception. Community colleges and adult education programs are an enormous contributor to workforce development. Whether they create a pathway to a degree or allow a person to acquire a new skill, their role in a community is invaluable. Every community struggles with a population that has been overlooked by the mainstream education system. High school drop-outs, recent immigrants, formerly incarcerated citizens, and low-wage earners are all perfect candidates to take advantage of community-based education such as noncredit courses, non-degree bridging programs, and workforce development.

Researchers at the American Academy of Political and Social Science have looked specifically at community college based non-degree and noncredit programs that allow otherwise disadvantaged populations to succeed. “Noncredit programs constitute a precollege or bridging mechanism; helping individuals who might not otherwise gain access to community colleges make the transition into mainstream education. These programs are more flexible, less impersonal and bureaucratic than the credit divisions of community colleges, and more likely to be in community-based facilities, closer to where low-income students live.” Programs such as this allow students to connect to their community and acquire valuable skills, especially those who need language training or high school equivalency. These citizens can then find a better job, earn a higher wage, and contribute more to their community.

Michigan made strides in higher education when Governor Granholm launched No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) in August of 2007. The intent of the initiative was for Michigan residents to attend a community college or university tuition-free for two years to upgrade their skills so they can move into good-paying jobs in high-demand fields. As of July 10, 2010, some results of the program were:



- Enrollment in community colleges has outpaced proprietary school enrollment since May 2009
- Four-year institution enrollment has nearly tripled since the start of NWLB
- Job retention training helped 27,191 workers gain new skills they needed to keep jobs otherwise at risk or advance to new ones

Unfortunately, there has been a reduction in federal funding for this program. The state expects to train at least 60,000 workers in the new cycle, about the same as last year (which broke all records).

Investing in education is a must and is the leading factor for prosperity. A community that shows how much it values education will be leaps and bounds ahead of the game. The ability for a community to make economic strides is contingent upon its investment in its citizens, specifically in education. If Michigan is to be competitive in a 21st century economy, education must be a priority for every city, village, and township resident.



Colby Spencer is a graduate student at Columbia University and an intern at the Michigan Municipal League. You may reach her at cspencer@mml.org.

SCHOOLS ARE CENTER

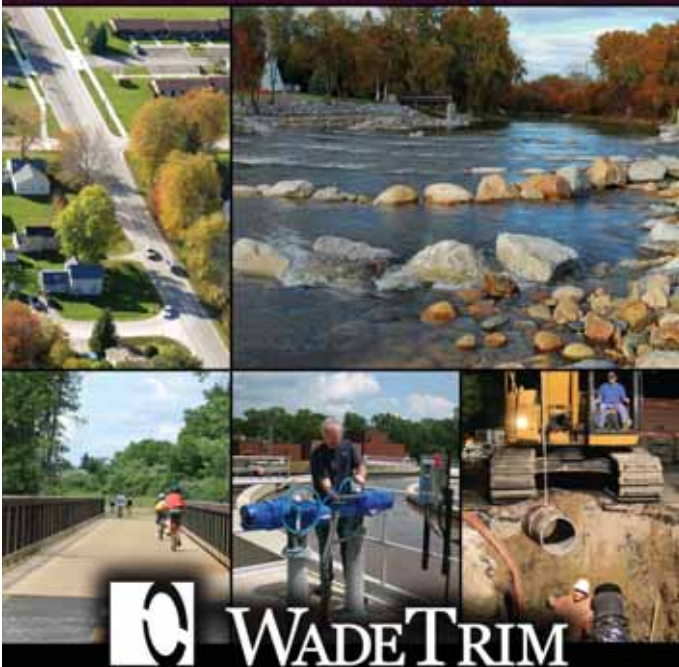
Schools are both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone—all day, every day, evenings and weekends.

"Today's educational facilities should be designed to sustain the integral relationship between a school and its community. They should be places where creative configurations of space expand their use to encompass early learning and adult education, where learning occurs 'after hours,' late at night, on weekends, where school-to-school partnerships, links with business and collaboration with higher education are encouraged and supported. They should enable learners of all ages and serve as centers for lifelong learning."

—U.S. Department of Education

(Source: www.ccspartnership.org)

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The Knowledge Economy

By Lou Glazer



For two decades—whether the nation’s economy is expanding or contracting—Michigan’s economy has been going through a profound structural transformation from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy. How well Michigan transitions to this new economy will, in large part, determine whether we get more prosperous or poorer. As detailed in the Michigan Future report *A New Agenda for a New Michigan*, making this transition is now the most reliable path to prosperity (view the complete report at michiganfuture.org).

From January 1990 (also a recession year) to February 2010, low-education attainment industries employment rose 5 percent compared to 39 percent in the high-education attainment industries. When the current severe downturn ends, knowledge-based industries will continue to be where job growth is the strongest and average wages are the highest.

There are some hard truths that Michiganians need to confront: Michigan’s prosperity last century was built primarily on good-paying, low-skill jobs. Those jobs are gone forever. The auto industry will never again be the major engine of prosperity in Michigan. Even if the domestic auto industry survives the current downturn, it

will be substantially smaller, employ far fewer, and will pay its workers less with fewer benefits. Manufacturing makes up about 10 percent of the American workforce today and is declining. It is no longer a sustainable source of high-paid jobs—nor is it a source of future job growth. So whether it’s traditional Michigan industries like autos and furniture, or new industries like alternative energy, factory jobs will not be a source of new high-paid jobs for Michiganians.

To us, the message from the data is that
THE KEY TO ECONOMIC GROWTH IS TALENT.

Quite simply, in a flattening world, economic development priority one is to prepare, retain, and attract talent.

To be clear, Michigan Future is not advocating that Michigan abandon these industries—they are and will be important parts of the Michigan economy. But they are not a path to high prosperity or a broad middle class. The world has

changed fundamentally. We either adjust to the changes or we will continue to get poorer compared to the nation.

Our state is at the bottom of the national rankings in both employment and per capita income growth. Michigan Future is focusing on identifying a path to better position Michigan to succeed in the flattening world economy of the future—a path that will return Michigan to high prosperity, measured by per capita income consistently above the national average in both national economic expansions and contractions.

After collecting data for states and the 55 metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more plus Lansing and Madison, WI, we found that almost all states with the highest per capita income:

- Are over-concentrated compared to the nation in the proportion of wages coming from knowledge-based industries;
- Have a high proportion of adults with a four-year degree or more;
- Have a big metropolitan area with even higher per capita income than the state;
- And, in that big metropolitan area, the largest city has a high proportion of its residents with a four-year degree or more.

More specifically, we found:

- The larger the metropolitan area, the higher the per capita income and the greater the concentration in both knowledge-based industries and college-educated adults.
- It is the broad-based knowledge economy where most of the good paying job growth is occurring in the American economy. High-education attainment industries in 2008 were 44 percent of national employment and 58 percent of the wages earned by American workers. The average wage in these industries is nearly \$60,000 as compared to nearly \$34,000 in all other industries. Most importantly, high-education attainment industries accounted for 82 percent of the job growth in America from 2001-2008.
- Metropolitan Detroit and metropolitan Grand Rapids and, to a far lesser degree, metropolitan Lansing are the main drivers of a prosperous Michigan. In fact, it is hard to imagine a high-prosperity Michigan without an even higher-prosperity metropolitan Detroit.

Employment nationally in the high-education attainment industries is highly diversified across the economy. These industries are not narrowly focused in industries



Above: High Education attainment industries accounted for 82 percent of job growth in the U.S. from 2001-2008.

Opposite: Michigan needs to place a much higher value on education and an entrepreneurial spirit.

KEY TERMS

Flat world: a metaphor for viewing the world as a level playing field in terms of commerce, where all competitors have an equal opportunity.

Knowledge-based economy: the use of knowledge technologies to produce economic benefits as well as job creation.

commercializing new technologies. They are concentrated in, but not limited to, five broad sectors of the economy:

- information,
- finance and insurance,
- professional and technical services (including management of companies),
- health care and
- education.

In fact, health care and education, which dominated job growth from 2001 to 2008, account for about 40 percent of the employment in high-education attainment industries.

Michigan and its largest metropolitan areas are lagging in the transition to a knowledge-based economy. In 2008, Michigan ranked 36 in per capita income, an unprecedented drop of 18 places in a relatively short eight-year period. It ranked 32nd in the share of wages from knowledge-based industries and 34th in proportion of adults with a bachelor's degree or more.

In 2008, metro Detroit ranked 36th in per capita income of the 55 metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more. It ranked 33rd in knowledge-based industries concentration and 37th in college attainment. Metro Grand



Create places where talent—particularly mobile young talent—want to live.

Rapids lagged even further. It ranked 53rd in per capita income, 54th in knowledge-based industries concentration and 45th in college attainment. The story is basically the same for the Lansing region, which substantially trails metropolitan Madison, Wisconsin on most of our metrics.

We concluded that what distinguishes successful areas from Michigan is their concentrations of talent,

where talent is defined as a combination of knowledge, creativity and entrepreneurship.


Our best guess is that unless we substantially increase the proportion of college-educated adults—particularly in our biggest metropolitan areas—Michigan will continue to trend downward in the per capita income rankings towards the bottom 10.

There are no quick fixes. The Michigan economy is going to continue to lag behind the nation for the foreseeable future. But there is a path back to high prosperity. As laid out in the report *A New Agenda for a New Michigan*, our framework for action is:

- Building a culture aligned with (rather than resisting) the realities of a flattening world. We need to place a much higher value on learning, an entrepreneurial spirit, and being welcoming to all.

The inescapable conclusion is that what made Michigan prosperous in the past won't in the future. The knowledge-based economy is now
THE PATH TO PROSPERITY FOR MICHIGAN.

- Creating places where talent—particularly mobile young talent—wants to live. This means expanded public investments in quality of place with an emphasis on vibrant central city neighborhoods.
- Ensuring the long-term success of a vibrant and agile higher-education system. This requires expanded public investments in higher education—particularly the major research universities.
- Transforming teaching and learning so that it is aligned with the realities of a flattening world.
- Developing new private and public sector leadership that has moved beyond both a desire to recreate the old economy as well as the old fights.

Michigan needs leadership that is clearly focused, at both the state and regional level, on preparing, retaining, and attracting talent. 

Lou Glazer is president and co-founder of Michigan Future, Inc., a non-partisan, non-profit organization. Michigan Future's mission is to be a source of new ideas on how Michigan can succeed as a world-class community in a knowledge-driven economy. Its work is funded by Michigan foundations. You may reach Lou at 734-747-8120 or lou@michiganfuture.org.



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IF YOU TEACH ME HOW TO FISH:

'Place-based' education brings up the next generation of environmental stewards

By Jennifer Eberbach

Think back to when you were in school. "You probably never saw a textbook that mentioned your home town. But a lot of the concepts and ideas in textbooks are out there for you to learn about in your own community," says Mary Whitmore, program coordinator of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI), which funds eight regional hubs for 'place-based education' in Michigan.

The GLSI's hubs facilitate community-based environmental stewardship projects and other educational activities that provide K-12 students with opportunities for hands-on, real world learning experiences during the school day. The hubs work directly with K-12 teachers and representatives of local service groups, institutions of higher education, government entities, and other types of organizations, all of whom have ponied up to the GLSI's ever-growing stable of community partners.

PLACE-BASED EDUCATION immerses students in what is local—the environment, culture, heritage and art of a specific place—and uses those unique characteristics of a community as the basis for the study of language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, and art.

Teachers and students work on so many different types of stewardship issues that it is "hard to summarize them all in a single sound byte," notes Whitmore. Each GLSI hub "addresses the environmental stewardship needs of the local communities it serves," she explains. The specific nature of the work differs from place to place, which ends up fulfilling the inherent meaning of the term 'place-based education.'



As part of a study on native and invasive species, students plant native grass to stabilize a beach along Lake Michigan.

However, it is possible to list a few of the topics that students have addressed in the three years that the GLSI has been at bat. These young citizens have learned about water quality and watershed protection, food systems and gardening, health and nutrition, land use issues, local wildlife and invasive species, and cleanup and restoration methods. Sometimes their projects are strongly rooted in science, and other times they cut across several subject areas, including mathematics, language arts, social studies, and the fine arts. Students have worked with a wide range of community partners, from local nature preserves, farms and museums, to conservancy groups, community foundations, municipalities and government agencies, and beyond.

Depending on where they live, students do different community-based stewardship projects. For example, Whitehall Middle School students residing at the shore of Lake Michigan protected nearby Bush Creek from pollution by building a rain garden (facilitated by the West

Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, the GLSI hub in Muskegon). On the other side of the state, urban-dwelling middle school students at Hope of Detroit Academy learned what it takes to recycle tires into doormats by working with the Department of Public Works and Cass Community Social Services (facilitated by another GLSI hub, the Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition).

One large piece of the puzzle that GLSI hubs snap into place is “sustained professional development for teachers,” with an emphasis on the word sustained, according to Whitmore. Most of the hubs offer educators summer institutes, follow-up meetings during the school year, and individual consultations.

What all of the hubs have in common is that they promote and support the GLSI’s definition of place-based education in schools and communities. “The point of place-based education is not simply to refer to the local environment or the local community: you could do that by simply showing kids some pictures of their town during class and leave it at that,” Whitmore explains. “Just showing them pictures doesn’t get the kids out into the community, where they can explore and ask questions about it,” she says. Instead, Whitmore thinks that the GLSI’s “hands-on, student-powered” projects engage kids in real world activities and let the younger generation know what it feels like to take ownership of the work they do and make a positive contribution to community life.

Since forming in 2007, the GLSI has designated eight previously existing organizations as GLSI hubs and plans to add more in the future. “We’ve tried to award grants to organizations that are already doing some kind of environmental education, so that we’re not starting from square one. We want to build on the capacity and the relationships that those organizations already have, help community partners build their capacity for community

outreach, and in these ways make the best use of our funds,” Whitmore says.

Although GLSI hubs do not literally teach students how to fish, the old saying still rings true. Firstly, the GLSI’s origin story certainly involves fish. In 2007, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust launched and funded the GLSI to help fulfill the trust’s intended purpose—to make up for fish losses and people’s loss of access to Lake Michigan due to the operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant. The trust was established in 1996, as part of a settlement with Consumers Energy and Detroit Edison, which, in a sense,

has turned lemons into a lemonade stand that doles out funds that mitigate and compensate for these losses. The GLSI is funded primarily by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, with additional funding from the Wege Foundation, the Frey Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, and several community foundations.

Secondly, it all comes back to fish because “a lot of the basic principles and problem-solving skills that our GLSI students are learning apply to many areas of the environment,” according to Whitmore. Ultimately, GLSI programs “give students the knowledge and

problem-solving skills they need to become active stewards of the environment,” regardless of what particular area of study interests them the most. “Some students may pursue careers in natural resources or science, mathematics, or technology because of the positive experiences they’ve had through the GLSI,” she explains.

Rather than literally teaching kids how to catch fish, the GLSI is giving them opportunities to fish for solutions to real world environmental problems. “We help students gain the skills and knowledge that their generation is going to need to help protect and conserve natural resources,” Whitmore says.


GLSI’s three-year progress report is due to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust this November. As the GLSI wraps up

GLSI Regional Hubs

DISCOVERING PLACE (University of Michigan-Flint)	NORTHEAST MICHIGAN GREAT LAKES STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE (Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan)
GRAND LEARNING NETWORK (Michigan State University)	SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN STEWARDSHIP COALITION (Eastern Michigan University)
GRAND TRAVERSE STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE (Grand Traverse Conservation District)	WEST MICHIGAN GREAT LAKES STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE (Muskegon Area Intermediate School District)
GROUNDSWELL (Grand Valley State University)	
LAKE SUPERIOR STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE (Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education)	



Students and their teacher discuss water conservation and water quality standards with an employee of Martin Marietta's magnesia chemicals plant in Manistee.

its first phase of work, Whitmore is confident that the trust will renew funding for the GLSI for another round. That would involve adding more regional hubs and extending the impact of existing hubs and the GLSI as a whole. Whitmore sees a bright future ahead for the GLSI. "As the initiative and its regional hubs mature," she says, "the GLSI can play a pivotal role in the state and in the Great Lakes basin to advance place-based education that leads to environmental stewardship." 

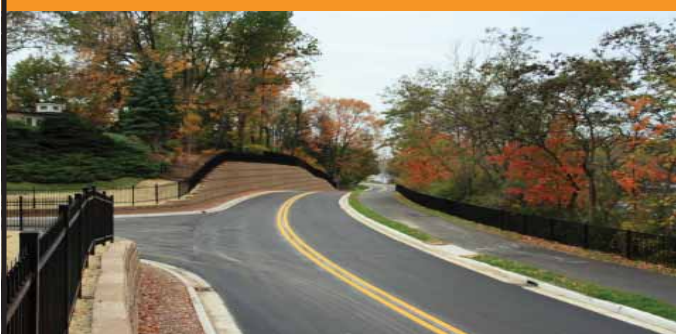
Jennifer Eberbach is a freelance journalist and professional copywriter. You may contact her at 734-929-2964 or visit her online at www.jenthewriter.info.

MORE!

For more information on the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative or to become involved in the effort, visit www.glstewardship.org.



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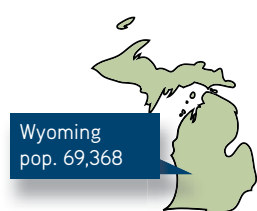
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Wyoming Community **Comes Together** to Help Students

By Jennifer Eberbach



Wyoming's T.E.A.M. 21 after school programs flourish under a partnership between the city, schools, non-profits,

and the community. Despite budget and curriculum cuts, elementary and middle school students enrolled in T.E.A.M. 21 after school and summer school programs are having educational experiences that go beyond the basics. The city's parks and recreation department has teamed up with Wyoming's four public school districts to make it happen, with the

help of educators, non-profits, local churches, and others from across the community.

T.E.A.M. 21 was initially launched at three elementary schools, after associate superintendent Tom Reeder successfully wrote for federal dollars, which were granted by the Michigan Department of Education's "21st Century Communities Learning Centers." Since, they have received additional funds through the grant, which has allowed seven more elementary and middle schools to be added to the program—Godfrey Lee, Godwin Heights, Kelloggsville, and Wyoming public school systems. Aside from one elementary school that has since closed,

nine elementary and middle schools currently offer T.E.A.M. 21 after school programming to 500 students at any given time.

Meanwhile, over at the city's parks and recreation department, "As a municipality, we were looking at how we could work with our schools, in particular with after school programming. We were looking at some initiatives related to gang violence, social engagement, children, and families," according to Rebecca Rynbrandt, director of community services.

"We target students who need the program the most. We came up with a rubric that everyone can use across the



Wyoming's city-school partnership offers afterschool and summer school programming to those most in need, with academic classes augmented with social engagement, such as character building classes.

school districts, which weighs academic and social-emotional needs of students," Wyoming recreation programmer Scott Bloem reports. "A good problem we have is being constantly at capacity; we have wait lists. One of them was up to 75 students at one point in the year," he explains. Factors in this need-based rubric include: whether students qualify for reduced-price school lunches; how they are doing academically, emotionally, and socially; and recommendations from teachers and principals.

Reeder reports that the main goals of T.E.A.M. 21 are to "increase student learning and achievement in both academic and non-academic areas; increase students' physical and emotional health in a safe environment; provide a good educational workplace

for cultural community-based activities, and encourage family and community involvement."

During the school year, T.E.A.M. 21 is led by site coordinators, group leaders, and contracted instructors from the community. Adults involved in the program possess a vast array of skill sets and offer tons of different activities—from tutoring help in core academics, to field trips, physical fitness and health, character building, art and music, gardening, and special events, and the list goes on. During the summer, public school teachers run a traditional summer school in the morning and T.E.A.M. 21 runs programming in the afternoon.

"Our staff works to find a lot of activities that students might not otherwise have opportunities to do,"

Wyoming recreation programmer Jessica Hughes says.

"Science is something that has been cut back or dropped from the elementary public school curriculums. I've seen it eliminated in one major district in the area. That's an area where after school programs like T.E.A.M. 21 can really take off," according to Bloem. T.E.A.M. 21 activities cover "S.T.E.M.": science, technology, engineering, and math—and on one occasion students designed and built a playable mini-golf hole.

"A number of our enrichment offerings are really unique, like Capoeira—a Brazilian martial arts and dance form—with local instructors. This summer a music instructor taught flutophone, glockenspiel, and ukulele,

"SCIENCE is something that has been CUT BACK OR DROPPED from elementary public school curriculums. I've seen it eliminated in one major district in the area. That's an area where after school programs like T.E.A.M. 21 CAN REALLY TAKE OFF."

—Scott Bloem, city of Wyoming recreation programmer



T.E.A.M. 21 fills the gap in science education, with hands-on learning.

and some of the students learned how to read music that way,” Hughes says.

The biggest area where T.E.A.M. 21 has partnered with non-profit organizations “is in the character education portion of the program. We’ve worked with a lot of outside organizations who come in and deliver character education pieces to students—like anger management, life skills, and different issues of character,” Hughes adds. Another example is the youth substance abuse prevention group Project Charlie.

The first “21st Century Communities Learning Center” grant allowed them to “raise gardens at all three of [that first set of] elementary schools,” according to Wyoming recreation supervisor Eric Tomkins. We’ve also incorporated nutrition and health into our lesson planning. The food some of these kids are getting is from the local convenience stores, not even grocery stores. Some are going to gas stations and minimarts,” he says. The team stresses that they try to include practical life skills like healthy cooking that the kids can use in their everyday life.

T.E.A.M. 21 also seeks to engage the whole family. Collaborations with local churches, Wyoming Park and Wesley

Park United Methodist, have included English as a Second Language (ESL) training for adults, as well as computer education and access. Rynbrandt thinks computer education is important for the whole family. “The children are better versed than their parents a lot of the time. So, if the parents want to help their children with homework, they really need to understand computers, as well,” she says.


They recently partnered with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) to offer two language arts classes for the first time this spring, in which college students interested in becoming teachers mentor T.E.A.M. 21 students twice a week during the school year. “GVSU students get exposed to a demographic that they are perhaps interested in serving in the public school setting once they graduate. At the same time, we get the benefit of up and coming professional teachers working at a ratio that is very beneficial—one adult to a couple of students,” Bloem says.

According to Reeder, the benefits of having T.E.A.M. 21 around extend beyond the students and their families. “T.E.A.M. 21 employs around 100 people at a time, with \$1.5 million going to the

community through employment. A thousand kids are going through the programming year round, during tough economic times,” he says.

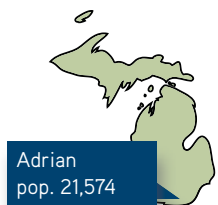
In return, parents and the Wyoming community have shown support by volunteering thousands of hours of their time, and T.E.A.M. 21 has received nearly \$9,000 in in-kind donations and contributions—services and materials—in fiscal year 2010. In addition to funding received through the Michigan Department of Education, the program has received funds from Lowes for their gardening projects.

Further successes have come in the way of awards and accolades. T.E.A.M. 21 was the Region 3 finalist for the League’s 2009 “Community Excellence Awards.” The same year, it was the first winner of the “Connecting with Community Award” from WOOD TV8 in partnership with Grand Rapids Community College, Huntington Bank, and Metro Health. This year, the Michigan Association of School Boards honored T.E.A.M. 21 with a “2010 Educational Excellence Award” in the category of before and after school programs.

Reeder thinks without the schools’ collaboration with the city, T.E.A.M. 21 wouldn’t be what it is today or even possible in the first place. “We only have so much time and expertise in our setting and instead of trying to do everything, we thought: ‘the city does some things very well.’ They have been able to provide people and resources that we couldn’t. We’ve been able to reciprocate. If they wanted to run the program themselves, they would still need our schools, our facilities,” he thinks. Reeder concludes, “It’s been a mutually beneficial collaboration.” 

Jennifer Eberbach is a freelance journalist and professional copywriter. You may contact her at 734-929-2964 or visit her online at www.jenthewriter.info.

Q&A: Adrian Mayor Gary McDowell Talks Youth Engagement



Adrian
pop. 21,574

Mayor McDowell, president of the Michigan Association of Mayors, sat down with Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) to discuss youth engagement, the importance of youth councils, and his advice for municipal leaders looking to start their own youth councils. Mayor McDowell played an integral role in the creation of Adrian's Mayor's Youth Council and assisted the group in the planning and hosting of the 2009 Michigan Youth Symposium held at Siena Heights University in Adrian.



Read on for excerpts of the interview, and visit mrpaonline.org to view an extended video of the interview.

Q: MRPA: Why do you think it is important for municipalities to have youth or teen councils?

A: Mayor Gary McDowell: I think that the youth of today are an instrumental part of how we work our way out of the problems that we have in our society, particularly the economic problems. They have such refreshing ideas about what needs to be done, they are very creative, they think out of the box, and it's an inspiration to come to a youth council meeting and sit and listen to them deal with the issues that are before them. I am inspired by that and I try to encourage it in any way that I can.

Youth councils are organizations through which teens can play an active role in local government, community building and volunteerism.

Q: What benefits do you believe the Mayor's Youth Council provides to the Adrian community?

A: Our current youth council has done a number of things to benefit our greater community. Last fall, they took on the project of going to third and fifth grade classes, providing workbooks and talking about the election, to make sure that these young kids understood that we had a very significant event taking place in our country. They had tremendous dialogue with the young kids about the entire process. It was a great contribution to our school system here in Adrian.

The youth council has been working very hard on the Youth Symposium, while at the same time developing an art contest for area youth. It was an effort that dealt with photography, drawings, paintings and 3D art. The council sponsored the art contest, and the top three would earn an award, but the piece of art had to be auctioned off, with the money raised to go to homeless kids, boys and girls clubs, and

the teen centers in the local library. So I would certainly say that they have also contributed financially to the community, and they have been very much involved.

Q: How do you as a mayor and community leader promote involvement with the youth council?

A: We try to work very, very closely with the media in our city about our activities. Many of our members have been on numerous radio programs talking about the activities of the Mayor's Youth Council. They have covered many of our activities in the local newspaper and we are very much in tune with promotion. We understand that the youth have much to say about where we are [as a community] and it's a significant conversation that we have with them about our situation. In this crucial time in our country, with the



Mayor Gary McDowell and his wife networking with Jeff Jenks, mayor pro tem of Huntington Woods and immediate past president of the League.



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economy being what it is, it's amazing how they play an important role in figuring out what we can do about it, and ways that we can help alleviate this problem.

Q: What advice would you give to community leaders who are interested in starting a youth or teen council in their area?

A: I would encourage them with a lot of gusto, because as I've said, the youth council is a very integral part of what we're doing, and we are certainly seeing the benefits of incorporating youth into our decision-making process. Our city commission is very supportive and has given money to the budget so that we can conduct this youth council, and allow them to play these roles in our community and help give a youth perspective. After all, it is the youth in our community that we want to keep in our community after they are done with school; it's the youth that are going to be the leaders in our communities at some point in the future, and to not integrate them at this point is a mistake in my view. I would encourage other communities to recognize the importance of incorporating the youth into much of the planning that they do in the city government side. 

Mayor McDowell's interview and the "Youth Symposium Gives Voice to Michigan's Teen Leaders" excerpts were published with permission from MRPA PROfessional • Summer 2009.

Youth Symposium Gives Voice to Michigan's Teen Leaders 2009 Symposium Held in Adrian

The Adrian Mayor's Youth Council came up with the 2009 symposium's theme, "The Power of Community." The symposium "is an opportunity for youth to experience a leadership role," said Mayor McDowell. "It's very rewarding to see kids who are at first reluctant to speak up transform into leaders that have the confidence to share their great ideas."

The first Youth Symposium, in 2002, was a one-day event that brought together city managers, mayors, park professionals, and youth councils to help municipalities start councils of their own.

The benefits of youth councils extend not only to the teen participants but to the surrounding community as well.

The organizations provide a venue for team building, civic engagement and leadership development for participants and also contribute greatly to municipalities. For example, teen councils host fundraising events and activities for local teens. In addition, councils frequently volunteer their time to facilitate activities run through municipalities and community organizations.



Throughout Michigan, there are youth and teen groups working to make a difference in local communities and municipal governments. Often, these groups take the form of youth councils, which serve as a forum for teen leaders who aim to make their community a better place. Youth councils are organizations through which teens can play an active role in local government, community building and volunteerism. Many youth councils are run through municipal park and recreation departments. (MRPA Professional, Summer 2009)

Dearborn Youth Commission

Youth Affairs Commissioners share a passion for using their leadership skills and creativity to make Dearborn a better place to live. Students who serve on the commission are selected by school administrators and counselors at each high school in Dearborn based on their leadership abilities and demonstrated passion to give back to the Dearborn community

Farmington/Farmington Hills Mayor's Youth Council (MYC)

This is civic training at its best, giving kids the outlets and tools they need to increase their understanding of how to run a municipal body and make a difference. The council was established in 1999, the first youth council in Michigan to be developed by ordinance, which made it a permanent organization in the community. Any youth (not just MYC) can be appointed to boards and commissions in both cities.

Grand Rapids Mayor's Youth Council

Community's Children evaluates public policy and promotes caring partnerships to ensure our children, youth and families thrive within the Grand Rapids community and hold promising futures. Community's Children is a public/private partnership of the city, the Grand Rapids public schools, and the community.

Holland Youth Advisory Board

In partnership with other community leaders, the Holland Youth Advisory Council develops leadership skills; provides advice regarding youth issues; serves its community; and promotes youth participation and civic involvement.

Novi Youth Council

In summer 2005, the Novi city council adopted a policy resolution encouraging Novi youth to become civically active within the community as members of the Novi Youth Council.

Plymouth Youth Advisory Committee

The Plymouth Community Youth Advisory Commission consists of 11 youth residents who act in an advisory capacity to the city and charter township of Plymouth on issues pertaining to youth. The commission members must be youth in grades 7 to 11.

Rochester Hills Youth Council

City council established the Rochester Hills Government Youth Council (RHGYC) to promote youth involvement in local government through active participation and the mutual

exchange of ideas and experience. In addition to service on the Youth Council, the city council established youth representative positions on each of the following committees:

- Cemetery Citizen Advisory Committee
- Deer Management Advisory Committee
- Green Space Advisory Board
- Human Resources Technical Review Committee
- MR-42E Noise Barrier/Sound Wall Committee
- Museum Advisory Board
- Police and Road Funding Technical Review Committee
- Water & Sewer

Saline Youth Council

The Saline Youth Council (SYC) is a regular city commission comprised of 13 high school students and two 8th grade liaisons whose mission is to make Saline a better place for teens and serve as a conduit between city government and youth. SYC discusses community issues, plans events, fulfills volunteer commitments in the community, and does fundraising projects. Established in 2002, SYC is proving to be a major force in the community. Many organizations request SYC volunteer assistance; others request to have an SYC member on their board or to act as a contributing voice in their group.

Troy Youth Council

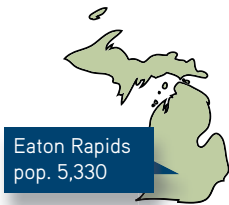
Formed by city council resolution in 2002, the Troy Youth Council (TYC) is the newest addition to the 26 advisory boards and commissions currently active in Troy. TYC members are appointed by city council for one-year terms and advise council on matters specifically related to the youth in Troy. The goal of TYC is to:

- Address community issues through discussion and recommendations
- Encourage and promote the education of youth regarding city government and citizen participation
- Advise city council on issues pertaining to youth
- Serve as youth ambassadors for the city

EATON RAPIDS

Homecoming Teaches High School Students About Elections

By Kristy Reinecke



The city of Eaton Rapids found itself in a unique situation. Students in the High School came to city council meetings demanding a recount on the student council election for Homecoming King and Queen. Unfortunately, the student council tabulated the ballots at a student's home, and the ballots

mysteriously came up missing, ensuring that a recount could not be conducted. The students were livid, and the message that was being sent to our next voting generation was that elections are rigged, and an individual vote does not count.

City council decided to take a proactive step to change this message, and began formulating a plan for "Voting 101" in the high school. With our future voting generation living in the era of 'hanging chads,' scandalous politicians, and dubious elections, council desired to change the students' perceptions and present a more positive electoral image. It was the perfect opportunity to integrate municipal elections into the high school. The mayor, city clerk, high school principal, school superintendent, student council president, and government teachers coordinated their efforts and formulated a plan to aid future student body elections so that they were run fairly, would educate students about the importance of voting, and at the same time, give them confidence the first time they actually entered a polling facility to cast a vote in their city, school, or national election. The lesson impacted the students all the more, considering it related to their fellow students; they had a significant stake in the process and outcome.

TAKING IT TO THE SCHOOL

The city clerk and student council advisor met on a weekly basis to formulate a plan for the upcoming "Winterfest" election that nominated King and Queen of the Winterfest court. The student council had the responsibility of



After a botched Homecoming King and Queen election, Eaton Rapids High School students wanted "fair" elections. The city and school got together and created "Voting 101."

running the election that would nominate the Winterfest Court, but the city helped out with the voting. "Voting 101" allowed the student council, along with government students, to get involved in the entire election process. Under the direction of the city clerk, they learned how to organize an actual election from start to finish. The student council and government classes were responsible for obtaining accurate class lists

Often our seniors turn 18 during the school year. We have found that the **OPPORTUNITY** to learn and practice the procedures that would be expected of them in a "real" election gives them the **CONFIDENCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT** to vote in our general elections.

—Dave Johnson, Eaton Rapids High School Principal

and getting the information to the city clerk, who acted as the official election publishing company. The clerk printed sample ballots and sent them back to the students for their approval on spelling and correct "class" status. Then the students took the proofed ballot back to the city clerk, who then printed up over 1,200 ballots for the election. Student council and government students had to "advertise" the election (as in real election law) via posters and daily announcements over the P.A. system so that all students were notified of the date and time of the vote well in advance.


On the day of the election, city voting booths and machines were moved to the high school. Under the direction of the clerk, the students had the responsibility of setting up a "polling" place, as well as being responsible for election workers. Election workers were administered the Oath of Office and assigned classes for which they were responsible. When students came to vote, they checked in with the correct poll worker, were verified by that election worker they were a student in the high school, were given a numbered ballot to fill out, and were then shown into a voting booth where they were instructed on how to properly mark their ballot. After voting, their ballot was placed in the voting container, monitored by the city clerk. The clerk in turn placed an "I voted" sticker on the students.

When the polls officially closed, the election workers were responsible for tearing down the polling facility, ensuring that the ballot containers were sealed with official tags, and the results were brought back to city hall, where the clerk's staff hand tabulated the ballots.

RESULTS

The "Winterfest" crowning occurred at the last home basketball game—the results were sealed with the city's seal in an official envelope and announced by the student council president at halftime. The result has been an incredible success. The students feel educated about the election process and comfortable about voting in real elections when they turn eighteen. The students felt confident that every measure of security was undertaken to ensure that this election was official and honest. The city and school received numerous accolades in the local newspaper. This was a life lesson for both students and adults on how individual actions can impact our lives.

The first year, the city clerk registered 23 students to vote in regular elections. The city has been approached to run future "Voting 101" classes at next year's school elections for Homecoming King and Queen as well as Winterfest King and Queen. The word has spread, and neighboring school districts are interested in using the "Voting 101" model developed by Eaton Rapids.

The costs of the program were minimal, but the looks on students' faces the day of the election were priceless. 

Kristy Reinecke is the clerk for the city of Eaton Rapids. She can be reached at 517-663-8118 or kreinecke@ci.eaton-rapids.mi.us.

Dave Johnson, Eaton Rapids High School Principal made this statement about "Voting 101":

I am always pleased when we find ways to collaborate with other organizations for the educational benefit of our students. I want you to know how much we have appreciated, and how much our students have benefited, from your involvement in the administration of our school elections. Aside from knowing that our election results are secure and accurate, one of the biggest benefits for us is that our students get the opportunity to participate in the actual voting process while still in high school.

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If Detroit Thrives, **Alpena Thrives**

There are eight assets in the League's Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) program, and while they're all important to new League President Carol Shafto, one of those assets stands out—education.

BY MATT BACH



Carol taking on the helm of League president.

Carol Shafto was raised with seven siblings in the remote Northern Michigan community of Onaway. To say they lived in poverty would be an understatement. They had a potbellied woodstove for heating, no indoor plumbing, no water, and no electricity. The bathroom was an outhouse in back. When they wanted water they went to the pump in the yard.

"My Mom would wash the cleanest kid first because we all shared the water," Shafto said laughing; admitting that at the time it wasn't funny at all. "To me the only way to see a better way of life was education. I wanted more. I wanted to see the world."

For Shafto, education was her ticket out of poverty. At age 17, fresh out of high school and her graduating class of 60 people, she enrolled at Alpena Community College, an hour and a half from her hometown. For Shafto, Alpena was the 'big city' where the family went on its annual shopping trip. It was a major adjustment and a major risk. She went to Alpena initially to earn her two-year associates degree, but has made it her home for 40 years and counting, leaving only for service in the U.S. Air Force and for additional college degrees. She passed the education gene to her sons who both graduated from ACC and have gone on to earn college degrees.

Shafto explains education was that pivotal decision that changed her life and brought her to where she is today—mayor, League president, community volunteer, youth mentor, professional planner, mother, and soon to be grandmother. It's fitting that Shafto is on the cover of this month's *Review*, which focuses on 21c3's education asset.

"Alpena Community College's motto is, 'It's a great place to start.' And it really is. If it were not for going to ACC I would not be mayor, I would not be with the League, I would not have a professional career. College is a lifeline, a key to the future, particularly for those from a low income background."

It's also education that made Shafto want to give back to her community and her state by joining the League and other organizations. Her involvement with the League started with its educational wing, the Elected Officials Academy. During her opening speech as the League's new president, she explained her desire to educate others about the importance of bridging the gap between Michigan's urban centers and rural communities. She truly believes in the League's motto—Better Communities. Better Michigan. But she takes it a step further.



Clockwise: Carol enjoys her time with her Lunch Buddy Angelo Burns, whom she has been mentoring for four years. As mayor, Carol was in the unique position of being able to officiate at the marriage of her son, Shawn Shafto, to Sasha Walker.

“ ‘Better Communities. Better Michigan’ has a flip side—Failed Communities, Failed Michigan. And the converse, **WHEN WE THRIVE, WE THRIVE TOGETHER.** ”

“‘Better Communities. Better Michigan’ has a flip side—Failed Communities, Failed Michigan. And the converse, when we THRIVE, we THRIVE together.”

Shafto said she was taught early in life to resent cities—especially Detroit—because rural areas cannot successfully compete for resources usually allocated on population. She has seen firsthand the urban-rural divide and how “downstate” means anything “south of me.” But her view changed after participating in a League/MSHDA sponsored public policy forum series a couple years ago.

“I specifically remember it was at the session at the Detroit Institute of the Arts,” she stated in her speech to 400-plus Michigan community leaders. “That morning I had a personal revelation—a very simple concept that probably all of you know—but I integrated it into my awareness for the first time. ‘If Detroit Fails, Alpena fails.’ If our largest cities fail, our smallest cities fail. If urban fails, rural fails . . . we are all inextricably linked.”

Shafto is a firm supporter of creating desirable places in Michigan where people want to work, live, and play. But it’s impossible to talk about building desirable places without talking about the funding. For cities and villages, that funding source is revenue sharing. She said any further cuts to revenue sharing jeopardizes not only each community individually but all communities as a whole.

“You cannot balance the state’s budget on the backs of the very units that assure Michigan’s success,” Shafto said. “Michigan fails when Michigan’s cities fail. You cannot have a strong state without strong cities and villages.”

Shafto is the first League board president from Northern Michigan since Jim Sinclair, Rogers City councilmember, who retired “up north” from the Plymouth area. Sinclair, who died in 2007, was League president in 2003-04. He was not only a fellow elected official, but also a mentor and cheerleader-in-chief for Shafto. Sinclair is recognized as one of the League’s outstanding board presidents and the League’s Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award is named in his honor.

Shafto realized that as League president she would be able to shine a light on her community and showcase the city of 11,000 to the rest of the state. “Alpena is geographically isolated,” she said. “People don’t just stumble into Alpena. It’s not on your way to anything else. So we have to work extra hard getting people here by having attractions they want to see and lifestyle amenities that make them want to stay.”

“During Convention, we thanked the six members who were leaving the board and I was particularly struck with how the League, as an association, is a true integrator. As Ken Cockrel Jr., councilmember of Detroit, shook hands and said goodbye to Dave Post, village manager of Hillman—population

Carol's *Personal Side*

When she isn't working as a professional planner, mayor, or on League business, new League President Carol Shafto pursues other interests—mentoring and staying in shape.

For the past four years, she's been a volunteer in the Boys and Girls Club of Alpena's *Lunch Buddy* program. During that time she meets regularly with Angelo Burns, 11. Angelo was having trouble in school but has turned his life around, in part, due to Shafto's influence.

"When Angelo is with her, he's so much happier," said Angelo's mother, Ja'nae Marotta. "Before he started the program, he was emotional and would have outbursts. Now he's able to handle things better. I appreciate her very much. I couldn't get through to him—it had to be Carol."

But juggling her many hats isn't easy. About two years ago, Shafto realized she needed to start leading a healthier life. She began exercising regularly, eating better, and had gastric lap-band surgery. In December 2009 a follow-up elective abdominal surgery resulted in life-threatening post-op complications. A blood clot went to Shafto's lung and she was airlifted to Munson Medical Center in Traverse City where she remained in cardiac intensive care for 21 days. While there she underwent two additional surgeries, developed an infection, and then got pneumonia.

"I didn't realize it was touch and go for many days," Shafto said. "It was a very difficult time for me and my family. I was scheduled to be home for three weeks and, instead, was away from work for nearly four months." Showing her true commitment to the League, Shafto's first major excursion after being discharged from the hospital was traveling to Lansing for the League's February 2010 board meeting. She has since returned to full strength and health again.

Shafto is very proud to report that she's lost 100 pounds and is feeling better than ever. "Before, I was the ultimate couch potato," Shafto said. "But I decided I wanted to live long and prosper, like Spock. Now I work out every day for 75 minutes. I ride my bike every chance I get with a goal of 500 miles per season. It's a whole different life now."



A personal triumph was her recent weight loss of more than a 100 pounds.


685, I saw again how the League really values the diversity of its membership and leadership. This is the outlook and attitude that will make it work for Michigan. As the Mighty Mac unites our upper and lower peninsulas, I hope to use my year as president to help be a bridge between the urban and rural, big and little." 

Photo of wedding ceremony on page 25 by Joseph Veselenak.

Matt Bach is director of communications for the Michigan Municipal League. He can be reached at mbach@mml.org or 734-669-6317.

2010 Convention



Amos O'Neal, Suzanne Pixley, Jacqueline K. Noonan, William Filber

NEW LEAGUE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board is responsible for developing and guiding the organization's strategic public policy initiatives, legislative agenda, and internal workings, all leading to Better Communities. Better Michigan.

Completing our 19-member Board of Trustees, the following new members will serve three-year terms, effective September 22, 2010:

William Filber, Village President, Spring Lake
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Karen Majewski, Mayor, Hamtramck, League V.P. Elect
Lynn Markland, City Manager, Fenton



Not pictured above: Charles Pugh, city council president, Detroit; and Jeffery Lawson, village manager, Mackinaw City

For more information on the League's Board of Trustees, visit <http://www.mml.org/about/mmlboard.htm>.





Above: Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly.



NOT YOUR TYPICAL CONVENTION!

Our Convention centered on the eight critical assets for vibrant communities as identified by our Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3). These eight assets will drive the change we need to achieve "Better Communities. Better Michigan."

Make sure to visit convention.mml.org for all your 2010 Convention resources, recaps, PowerPoint presentations, media coverage, and more!

Right: Musical entertainment at the host city reception.



The League's 112th AN



*Community Design & Walkability
James Howard Kuntsler*



*Green Initiatives
Jacky and Dora King*



*Cultural Economic Development
Jack Hess*



*Entrepreneurship
Brian Balasia*

21c3 Innovators

Our new Convention format used the TED system—Technology, Entertainment, and Design. Each TED speaker delivered dynamic, to-the-point presentations on each of the League's eight assets for 21st Century Communities:



*League Executive Director & CEO Dan Gilbride
innovators*



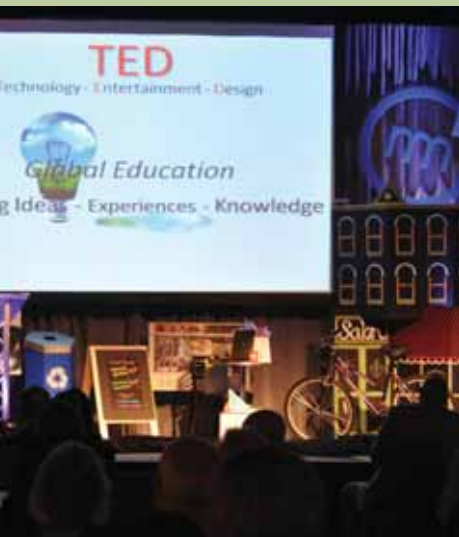
Top Left: Mobile Workshop—Lessons Learned in the Rouge River Pollution Prevention Project.

Right: The Arab American Museum in Dearborn—the first museum in the world devoted to Arab-American history and culture.

Bottom left: Featured speaker Alan Mulally, President and CEO, Ford Motor Company.

ANNUAL CONVENTION

- Community Design & Walkability
- Green Initiatives
- Cultural Economic Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Multiculturalism
- Messaging & Technology
- Transit
- Education



martin setting the stage for the 21c3



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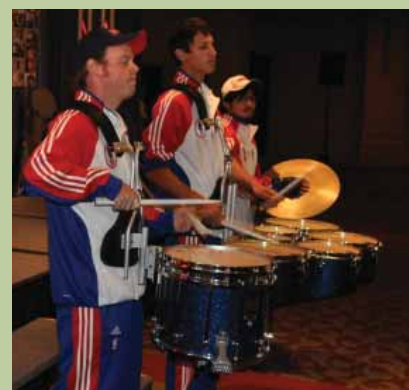
For all the photos from this year's Convention & other League events, go to mml.org/flickr.



From layout to décor, we changed the face of our Fall Expo. As they walked through the door, attendees saw a typical "Main Street" in Michigan, lined with vendors providing similar services to those identified in the eight assets for 21st century communities.



The League's 112th ANNUAL CONVENTION



Networking is crucial during Convention, as attendees benefit from sharing their challenges and success stories. Attendees were also given the opportunity to hear from both gubernatorial candidates Virg Bernero and Rick Snyder.



THE COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS CUP

Grand Haven Wins the League's Most Prestigious Community Award

Convention attendees voted for one of seven community projects to win the Cup. When the votes were tallied, Grand Haven came out on top with its "Vivid and Lively Goals" presentation. The entry emphasized the importance of effective communication of the city council's goals to city staff and the community. "The goals are in front of our residents all year long," said Grand Haven Mayor Roger Bergman. "They are in our city offices and on our website. It's in city employees' workplaces and before them all day long." What started in May at the Region 3 meeting in Montague culminated in a dramatic finale to the League's 2010 Annual Convention.



The Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award

Celebrating a chief elected official who personifies professionalism and leadership, is dedicated to the citizens in his community and advocates on their behalf in Lansing and Washington, DC. The 2010 recipient was Tony Bosbous, Mayor, City of Sault Ste. Marie.



The Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award

Celebrating a person dedicated to public service who has shown passion and commitment to the League, enthusiastically supporting its mission and promoting its purpose. The 2010 recipient was Bob May, Mayor, City of Hastings.



Honorary Life Membership Award

The League's highest honor reserved for the most active and inspiring leaders dedicated to the League. The 2010 honorary life member was Michael Matheny, Mayor, City of Grand Blanc.



Special Awards of Merit

Ken Cockrel, Jr., Councilmember, City of Detroit; Clara Shepherd, Commissioner, City of Muskegon; Gary Heidel, Interim Executive Director, MSHDA.



Legislator of the Year Awards

Representative Ed Clemente (D-Lincoln Park); Representative Doug Geiss (D-Taylor); Representative Joe Haveman (R-Holland)

MORE!

Want to know how you can enter the Race for the Cup? Visit mml.org/awards/cea.html.
For more on these and other Convention award winners, visit convention.mml.org/awards.html.

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GOVERNANCE TRAINING FOR NEW OFFICIALS

Just Elected? We've Got Training For You!

As local government officials and community leaders, it is imperative to understand your new roles and responsibilities and the laws and duties you are obligated to follow. The challenges of diminished revenue and increased costs, coupled with citizen demands and the need to adapt and change, make it vital that elected leaders employ model governance practices.

To ensure you get the governance training you need, sign up now for the Michigan Municipal League's Elected Officials Academy (EOA) workshops for newly elected and seasoned officials. The EOA provides elected officials an opportunity to learn best practices and strategies of successful councils.

The newly elected officials' workshop consists of core topics that first-timers should be aware of. Topics include:

- An introduction to the League,
- Overview of basic local government,
- Roles and responsibilities,
- Open Meetings Act,
- Freedom of Information Act, and
- Lobbying 101.

In addition, officials will learn about an exciting new initiative that the League is implementing—the Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3)—with programs and resources designed to assist communities in creating unique and sustainable places. And to top it off, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and benefit from the experience and insight of a panel of seasoned elected officials.

These workshops will begin immediately after November's election. Registration is open at www.mml.org.

This workshop is being offered at the low cost of \$25 per person. Each session will start with a light dinner at 5:30 pm, and will run from 6:00-9:00 pm. The dates and locations are as follows:

November 4 – Midland

November 8 – Alpena

November 10 – Inkster

November 11 – Port Huron

November 15 – Battle Creek

November 16 – Wyoming



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The Escanaba junior high school is a stunning example of Renaissance Revival architecture. In a bold move, the school board decided to renovate the building, which is located in a city neighborhood, rather than build a new school.

1500 Ludington: Lessons Out of School

Escanaba
pop. 13,140



A neighborhood school closure is akin to ripping out the very heart of a community. Families literally grow up around neighborhood schools, and nearby businesses enjoy the support of after-school activities and traffic. Some years ago, residents, business

owners, and local officials in Escanaba watched uneasily as the Escanaba School Board contemplated the fate of what was historically known as the junior high; a 70-year-old, Renaissance Revival behemoth building, sprawling the span of an entire block at 1500 Ludington Street. The school either needed to be upgraded and renovated or a new school would need to be built.

As the saying goes, hindsight is 20/20. And when Principal Steve Martin showed me around the school, things were not only clear in retrospect, but clearly awesome. Some risks were taken and wise decisions made, and Escanaba hopes other communities may benefit from the lessons of this modern-day, lovely phoenix.

No Guts, No Glory

Typically, when a school board sends out an RFP for a renovation feasibility study, architectural and construction firms respond with the offer of a free evaluation, if provided the design contract. As stewards of the public's money, that's a tempting offer that many public officials accept. Right off the bat, the Escanaba School Board made a gutsy move—opting instead to pay for a no-strings-attached, free-standing study.

There are complications associated with renovation feasibility. Structural, electrical, mechanical and environmental issues all have to be examined. To ensure coverage of both the time invested and contingencies, firms tend to estimate for the worst case scenario, especially if they're covering their own costs. With new construction being a much more predictable game, the comparison quotes often weigh in favor of the new versus the old. By paying for the study separately, Escanaba was able to attain a more complete and accurate picture of what lay in store.

The Telling Question

There was much community support in favor of keeping the existing school—not only for the pleasing Renaissance Revival exterior, but for its interior grandeur as well. It has



The renovated school is a blend of historical value and modern technology, appreciated by faculty and respected by students.

assets we don't see in modern schools, such as a two-story, 750-seat auditorium that frequently serves as a public venue. It's gorgeous: marble stairs, substantial wrought iron and polished wood balustrades, architectural details and painted accents. Restoration seemed overwhelming. Did it make practical sense? What if the costs came in comparable to a new build?

The asking of one question provided the answer. "What would it cost to replicate this building, not just build a new one?" The answer: \$12 million to build the same school, meaning *the renovated school was valued at \$5 million more than a new school* built elsewhere.

Renovation Road


The renovation and addition were accomplished in 2003-04. The two-story school now houses 570 students, grades 5-7, and in fire drills can be cleared in one minute, 30 seconds. Principal Steve Martin, who's new to the school, says the only thing they seek to do differently is plan for bussing to be farther removed from the street—a factor that wasn't as much of a concern when the school housed seventh and eighth graders.

Martin provided a long list of things done right. The new construction matched the brick, and blends with the 1930s architectural style. Floating suspended ceilings allow for the original grandeur of high ceilings to remain, while lowering them enough to realize cost efficiencies. Along with updated water, heating, and windows, the interior upgrades include modern technology, with digital projectors, security cameras and hidden multimedia connections. It's a masterful blend of historical value and modern technology, appreciated by faculty and respected by students.



The school interior boasts classical design elements such as crown molding, columns, and wrought iron railings.

Community

Most importantly, Vickie Micheau, executive director, Delta Chamber of Commerce, conveys that "Escanaba was able to retain for the downtown, the physical presence and economic activity that every school generates. The surrounding neighborhood families and businesses appreciate the school's presence and proximity." It's not only a valued historical landmark for the community, but is once again its strong and steady heart. 

Smart Tips

1. Pay for an independent study vs opting for a freebie.
2. Ask the question: What will it cost to rebuild what we have?
3. School use as a public venue garners community support.

Special thanks to Mac McClelland, policy specialist and Keith Schneider, deputy director, authors of the Michigan Land Use Institute's special report "Hard Lessons: Causes and Consequences of Michigan's School Construction Boom" for their initial attention and information on this story.

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



Equal Protection Challenge by Parochial School

Facts:

The property at issue is zoned as an office park (OP) district pursuant to the Ann Arbor Township zoning ordinance. The property is located in the Domino's Farms office complex. Among the uses permitted in the township's OP zoning district are daycare facilities for use by children of office park employees.

Rainbow Rascals, a former tenant, had operated a 100-child capacity secular preschool daycare facility in the office park limited to children of office park employees. In 1991, a variance was granted by the township to allow children whose parents did not work at Domino's Farms to attend the daycare.

In 1998, Shepherd Montessori opened a Catholic preschool daycare facility limited to children of the employees of the same office park. It subsequently requested and was granted a variance identical to the one granted to Rainbow Rascals to allow children whose parents did not work at the office complex.

In 2000, Rainbow Rascals moved out of the office park and Shepherd Montessori proposed to move into the vacated space and operate a K-3 primary school program. Shepherd Montessori sent a letter to the township's zoning administrator describing the proposal. The zoning administrator denied the proposed use, explaining that the operation was not a permitted use within the OP district. Shepherd Montessori filed a petition appealing the decision.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) ruled that it agreed with the zoning administrator that a primary school is not a permitted use within an OP district. It also ruled that the proposed nonconforming primary school use could not be substituted for Rainbow Rascals' use of the property because the daycare was a permitted use. Finally the ZBA denied the request for a use variance since Shepherd Montessori did not prove that, without the variance, there could be no other viable economic use of the property.

Shepherd Montessori sued the township—alleging, among other things, that its equal protection rights were violated by the township's denial of the variance request. The plaintiff's claim was that the township had treated “a secular entity more favorably than plaintiff, a religious entity and that the township offered no evidence to show that the denial of plaintiff's variance achieved a compelling governmental interest.”

Question:

Did the denial of plaintiff's variance request violate equal protection principles?

Answer according to the trial court: No.

Answer according to the court of appeals: Yes.

Answer according to the Michigan Supreme Court:
No.

The equal protection clauses of the Michigan and U.S. constitutions provide that no person shall be denied equal protection of the law. The equal protection clause requires that persons similarly situated be treated alike under the law. Generally, legislation that treats similarly situated groups disparately is presumed valid if the classification drawn by the legislation is rationally related to a legitimate state interest. However, legislation that treats similarly situated groups disparately on the basis of a suspect classification (which in this case is the free exercise of religion) will be sustained only if the government can show that the classification is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling governmental interest.

In determining whether plaintiff and Rainbow Rascals are similarly situated entities, the court examined their respective variance requests. The court noted that plaintiff's current request is for a variance to operate a K-3 primary school, i.e. a use not permitted within an OP. The previous requests by both Rainbow Rascals and the plaintiff—to include children whose parents did not work in the office park—were treated similarly. The court reasoned that the current request—to operate a primary school—had never been requested by Rainbow Rascals. “The township's consideration of a different request does not constitute different treatment of similarly situated entities.”

The court further found that plaintiff was not seeking similar treatment; rather plaintiff was asserting religion in an effort to obtain preferential treatment. As a result, the court found that the plaintiff had failed to demonstrate that it was treated differently from similarly situated entities.

The court finally addressed whether the facially neutral zoning ordinance was applied in a discriminatory manner against the plaintiff because of its religious affiliation. The court found that no evidence had been presented to support such a claim.

[Editor's note: Prior proceedings had determined that the actions of the township did not violate plaintiff's rights under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.]

Shepherd Montessori Center Milan v Ann Arbor Charter Township, No. 137443, June 18, 2010. 

Sue Jeffers is associate general counsel for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6306 or sjeffers@mml.org.

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



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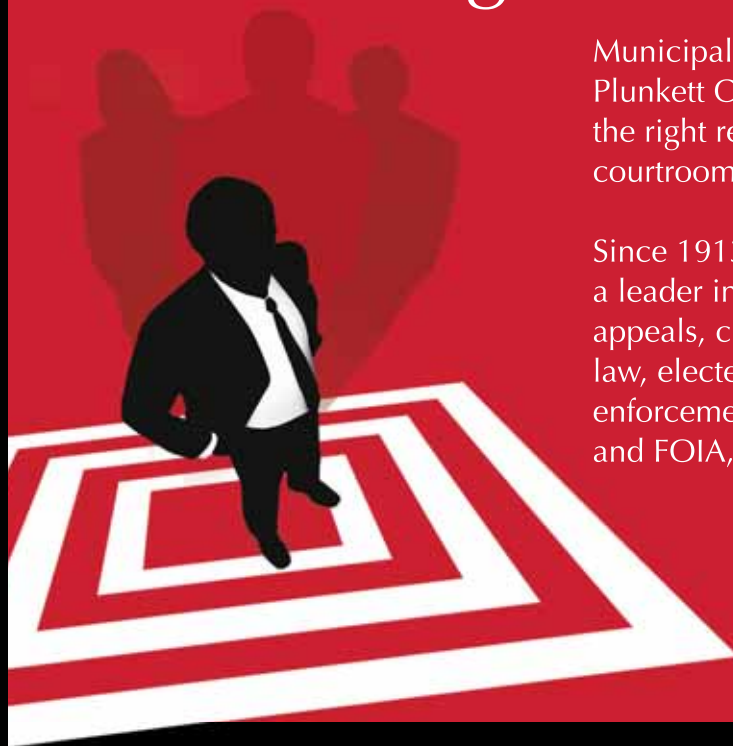
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TIFs, FOIA, and FACTA, Oh My!

Q. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) amount for our Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is usually calculated on “real” and “personal” properties within an approved DDA district. For real property, since valuations generally increase with time, and base values are fixed, the TIF amounts are generally “positive” on a property by property basis. In some cases, say due to building damage, the valuation falls below the base value; i.e. the TIF becomes “negative.” Is the total TIF calculated on a rolling sum, or are the negative TIF amounts excluded as not contributing to the total?

For personal property this is more important as personal valuations do not necessarily increase with time and more properties are “negative.” Are personal properties also calculated on a rolling total—i.e. all the negatives reducing the total personal TIF?

A. Values for the TIF/DDA are calculated in total for the entire district taking into account the ups and downs of any given parcel. If a DDA captures personal property then it is subject to the depreciation associated with those items on the tax roll. Likewise, if real property is declining, the DDAs will see less revenue coming in and it could in fact fall to the point of no capture. The good news is that if it goes negative, the DDAs don’t have to write a check to the taxing entities.

Q. Has the FACTA Red Flag deadline been extended again?

A. Yes, the deadline has been extended again until December 31, 2010. There is information available on the extension as well as the requirements at www.ftc.gov/redflagrule or you can find this link and other information on the League’s website at www.mml.org/advocacy/federal/facta_redflag.htm.

Q. Do we have to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request from an individual who lives outside our city limits?

A. Yes, unless they are currently incarcerated in a county, state, or federal correctional facility (MCL 15.232).

E-Book: The Civil Marriage Ceremony Handbook for Mayors

Mayors have had the authority to solemnize marriages in Michigan since 1972. Some consider it “the best part of the job,” while others see it as part of the public service they are charged to provide as mayor. Whatever the outlook, this publication offers information, checklists, and sample ceremonies to assist mayors in this optional duty.




Available at mml.org.

Q. The president of our village has been asked to perform a marriage ceremony. Can she do that?

A. No. 1972 PA 211 provides only that the mayors of cities may do so and then only within the county where the city is located.

Q. Following the recent election, there are a number of political signs in our village which have not been taken down. Can we regulate these signs?

A. Yes, although carefully. Treating a political sign differently than any other temporary sign may be a violation of the constitutional guarantee of free speech. The sign ordinance for the city of Troy (available on our website at www.mml.org/pdf/ords/signs_troy.pdf) requires that all temporary signs (including political signs) be taken down within 60 days of placement. 

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





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Geographic isolation may be thought of as a curse, but it has been a major reason why Alpena has a lifestyle and amenities usually

associated with a much larger community.

Alpena, 75 miles from the nearest freeway access point, is definitely off the beaten path, but is the hub of social, cultural, economic, and recreational activity in northeast Michigan. The city is home to Alpena Community College, Alpena Regional Medical Center, two live theaters, two museums, and a first-class art gallery. Northern Lights Arena with two full-sized sheets of ice is the pride of this hockey town with its own Junior A team. Bountiful natural assets highlight this beautiful community located on Lake Huron 250 miles north of Detroit. The city has 20 parks—15 that are located on the water. Within the city limits, discover an entire 2.5 acre island with 1,200 feet of Thunder Bay shoreline surrounded by a waterfowl sanctuary accessible only to foot traffic. Eighteen miles of bike paths lead residents and visitors through the community, winding along the

waterfront and connecting parks and recreational venues.

On a summer evening you can sit on the shores of Lake Huron and listen to a rock concert, classical offerings from the Alpena Symphony Orchestra, or tap your toes to the marches of the Alpena City Band—all coming from the Fine Arts Bandshell.

Alpena is also home to the only freshwater National Marine Sanctuary in the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's system of 14 "underwater national parks." Famous researchers such as Titanic discoverer Bob Ballard have searched Thunder Bay to help document over 100 shipwrecks pristinely preserved in the cold waters of the bay known as Shipwreck Alley. Divers from around the world are exploring the depths of the Bay while the Thunder Bay Marine Heritage Center provides landlubbers access to this unique history.

Whether you kayak the Thunder Bay River or walk along the 1,650 foot breakwall at the City Marina on Lake Huron, you will be awestruck by natural beauty. Historic City Hall, built in 1904, is located in the downtown and welcomes you to this "Warm and Friendly Port."

Find us on the web at alpena.mi.us or visit thunderbay.noaa.gov.

