Michigan Township INSIGHTS

Aug. 28, 2026

MTA sample data center ordinance now available



Many townships have adopted moratorium ordinances while evaluating community considerations related to the potential siting of data centers. As data centers can present a new planning challenge for local governments, local officials are asking important questions. To assist our members in navigating this process while accounting for the unique needs of each community, MTA worked with its legal counsel to develop and provide members with a sample data center zoning ordinance now available on MTA's "Data Centers" webpage (MTA-member login required). ***The sample for your township to review and use in making policy decisions in determining the impact on land uses and neighboring properties in your community and is not intended to be legal advice. Please consult your own legal counsel.*** The provisions in the sample ordinance may not fully address the characteristics of your township and may impose regulations that are either too restrictive or insufficient for your community. This week, MTA held a free MTA member-only Q&A webinar with our legal counsel outlining the sample ordinance. A recording of the webinar will be available for members; watch *Township Insights* and MTA's website for availability and how to access.

New MTA fact sheet explores check registers when approving township payments

A new MTA fact sheet—available to our members for free to download—explores "Approving Township Payments: The Check Registers." The fact sheet takes a deep dive into the requirement for the township board to see a check register for all payments—both payables *and* payroll—before voting to approve their payment. Also included is a sample check disbursement approval report and sample post-audit policy language. To further help boards stay on top of their fiduciary responsibilities, MTA also has an updated "Township Financial Reports Samples" packet, with examples of reports all township boards should receive and review. Download these, and other MTA fact sheets, from the "Resource Toolkits" page and our "Finances" page on michigantownships.org (member login is required).





UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

Sept. 9: Emerging Issues in EMS Services workshop, Frankenmuth

Sept. 16: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Poll Position: Practical Primer for Election Season

September & October Regional Meetings & UP North Summit:
- **Sept. 22**, Bay City
- **Sept. 23**, Jackson
- **Sept. 29-30**, Harris
- **Oct. 7**, Thompsonville
- **Oct. 8**, Spring Lake
- **Oct. 13**, Gaylord





MTA seeks member review and input for 2027 legislative issues



MTA-member township officials can review and provide input on the MTA legislative policy platform. The legislative policy objectives—reviewed, updated and approved annually—guide the Association's government relations efforts and reflect emerging issues and goals. MTA members are encouraged to review the current 2026-2027 Policy Platform and share any proposed additions and revisions by Monday, Nov. 23. Member-proposed policy changes will be reviewed by MTA policy committees and will be presented at the 2027 MTA Annual Meeting in conjunction with our 2027 Annual Educational Conference in April. Contact legislation@michigantownships.org with questions, comments or suggestions.

House approves extension on current trial court funding

The House has voted to preserve the current trial court funding model for two more years under House Bill 5452, sponsored by Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Tomkins Twp.). The legislation would allow courts to continue to impose costs on defendants who are entering a guilty or no contest plea to cover any reasonably related costs the trial court incurred. In 2014, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in *People v Cunningham* that trial courts lacked the authority to impose these costs under existing law, and the Legislature enacted a measure to allow the practice to continue while an alternate funding solution was explored. The statute authorizing courts to impose these costs is set to expire or "sunset" at the end of 2026, and HB 5452 extends the sunset date to Dec. 31, 2028. The bill moves to the Senate for further discussion.

House passes bill to modify large investor-owned housing prohibition

Earlier this summer, a new law was enacted to limit large institutional investors' ability to own single-family homes in Michigan to make more housing available. The new law bars investors from owning more than a limited number of homes, but unintentionally created a legal situation as it failed to address the ability for such investors to sell homes they already possess. House Bill 6243, sponsored by Rep. Bryan Posthumus (R-Oakfield Twp.), addresses this issue and clarifies that sales of homes owned by a large institutional

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investor prior to the new law are permitted. Additionally, the proposed legislation clarifies how certain homes apply to the limit that may be owned by a large institutional investor and the parameters of build-to-rent developments. HB 6243 now moves to the Senate for further consideration.



Rural prosperity summit in southwest Michigan

Township officials and staff in southwest Michigan can attend a free Regional Prosperity Summit on Sept. 9 in Cassopolis hosted by the Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP). The event will convene regional partners, including state department offices, economic development and employment agencies, local governments, foundations and more for collaborative conversations and resource sharing opportunities. ORP staff will also be onsite to answer grant-related questions and provide additional guidance. The free summit requires advanced registration, as space is limited.

Resources for septic owners

Increasing awareness around septic systems and their required maintenance can help keep your township clean and safe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is sponsoring a nationwide initiative on responsible septic care called SepticSmart Week from Sept. 14-18. The agency has assembled resources on the SepticSmart webpage for homeowners and local government leaders. The materials offer public education ideas on proper care and use of a septic system, simple maintenance projects that can save homeowners money and protect property values, and the impact well-maintained septic systems can have on the health and safety of a community.



Reminders for clerks

- **Early voting site or polling place deadline**—Sept. 4 is the deadline for clerks to establish, move or abolish an early voting site or polling location for the November election.
- **MiBallot portal**—All ballots need to be proofed by local clerks before printing. The MiBallot portal is

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available to upload proofs for the November election. Clerks can review instructions for using the portal via the MiBallot portal user guide.

- **Robust Test Deck**—Clerks may also access a free Robust Test Deck via the MiBallot portal to complete logic and accuracy testing for the November election.
- **Risk-limiting audits**—In addition to the procedural post-election audits following the November election, clerks must complete risk-limiting audits using Arlo.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

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