

Michigan Township Focus

AUGUST 2026

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

The leadership ripple



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MTA Board urges ‘no’ vote on Con-Con on November ballot

Our great state, much like our federal government, is governed by a constitution. The Michigan Constitution is the state’s supreme law, providing the framework of our entire system of government and laws. It establishes fundamental principles governing the Legislature, taxation, local government and many other aspects of state governance. Our Michigan Constitution defines the relationship between state government, its citizens and local governments by establishing the broad principles that guide policymaking. As a result, constitutional provisions are often written broadly, requiring the Legislature to adopt additional laws that implement and clarify those constitutional principles.

Our constitution is very difficult to amend—and for good reason. Parts of our constitution outline fundamental rights or protect our citizens from excessive taxation. Besides having a portion of our constitution dismissed by a federal court ruling, there are only three ways to amend it. First, the Michigan Legislature may, by two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate, place a constitutional amendment on the ballot for voters to decide. If the voters approve this measure, then the constitution is amended.

Similarly, voters—with the assistance of a ballot committee—may amend the constitution by gathering sufficient valid signatures and placing a proposal on the ballot. A proposal must have signatures equal to 10% of the votes cast for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election—for 2026, this equates to 446,198 signatures.

The last way our constitution can be amended is by a constitutional convention. Michigan’s last constitutional convention, held in 1961-1962 resulted in the Michigan Constitution we live with today, which was established in 1963. Under the 1963 constitution, every 16 years, beginning in 1978, the question of opening a new “Con-Con” automatically appears on the statewide ballot. This issue will be on the ballot this November. If approved, an election would be held within 90 days to select delegates to the convention; one delegate for each of Michigan’s House and Senate districts. The delegates would then elect their own leadership and begin the convention process. At this point, every item in the Michigan Constitution would be open for discussion, change or elimination.

At its April meeting, the MTA Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose the 2026 constitutional convention ballot issue. A quick look back in history shows that MTA also opposed this issue back in 2010, joining a myriad of local government and business associations, unions and others in opposition. Currently, a diverse groups of organizations have lined up in opposition to the 2026 ballot proposal, ranging from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce on the right to the AFL-CIO on the left, along with many more statewide associations, like MTA, joining the “vote no” side.

For those of us too young to remember the 1960s Con-Con, a look back at the minutes of those proceedings gives MTA a great reason to encourage a “no” vote from our membership. During that Con-Con, townships were under great scrutiny and debate. In fact, a vote was held on the dissolution of township government in Michigan. Thankfully, the amendment was defeated by a 2-1 margin! With that said, holding a constitutional convention would allow anything that is currently constitutionally protected to potentially be eliminated—including township government—or to provide the Michigan Legislature with the tools to do so.

Protecting townships and their ability to govern, and serving our members is the reason MTA exists. If something threatens townships, we will stand up to fight. A constitutional convention opens townships to unnecessary risk, not only existentially but also through possible tax reforms and other unforeseen mechanisms that impact our state and local governments. It is for these reasons that the MTA Board of Directors, and I, urge you to vote “no” on this ballot proposal in November.

Protecting townships and serving our members is the reason MTA exists. If something threatens townships, we will stand up to fight. A constitutional convention opens townships to unnecessary risk.

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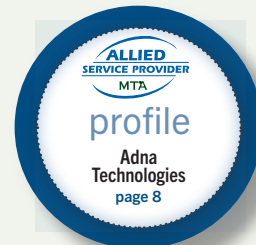
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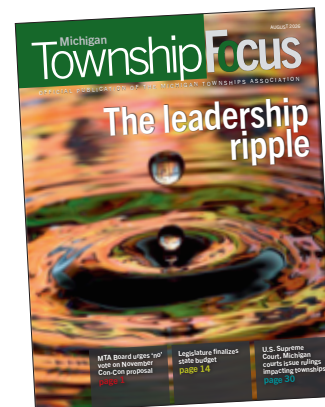
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The Michigan Townships Association advances local democracy by fostering township leadership and public policy essential for a strong and vibrant Michigan.

Special insert!

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featured articles

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The leadership ripple: Small stones, big waves



Leadership in township rarely comes with fanfare. There are no headlines for late-night calls returned to residents, no awards for board meetings that stretch toward midnight, and no public recognition for the countless decisions made each and every day. When practiced with intention, however, even the smallest acts of leadership can ripple outward, shaping communities in ways far greater than their size.

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Legal review: U.S. Supreme Court and Michigan courts issue recent rulings impacting townships

Recent court rulings at both the federal and state levels impact Michigan's townships—including two involving absent voter ballots, along with surplus funds from sales of foreclosed property, and more.



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ALL THINGS ARPA

Treasury shares ARPA wrap-up reminders

As the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) program enters its final stage, all townships that accepted ARPA funds are reminded of remaining requirements. The majority of Michigan's townships accepted State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) through ARPA, which were allocated by the U.S. government in 2021 to support response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent state Department of Treasury memo shared details on program requirements and deadlines, including:

- All ARPA funds must be fully expended by **Dec. 31, 2026**. Funds not fully spent or those townships that did not complete their reporting requirements may see their funds recouped by the U.S. Department of Treasury (even if they are already spent).
- A "Project and Expenditure Report" is due **April 30, 2027**, covering April 1, 2026, through Dec. 31, 2026, where spending may be occurring. No expenses should occur after Dec. 31, 2026. Recipients must continue submitting Project and Expenditure Reports until U.S. Treasury formally issues a closeout invitation and confirmation.
- U.S. Treasury began inviting recipients to close out their award on a rolling basis in fall 2025. More **close-out invitations** are expected during the 2026 reporting cycle. For recipients who initiate and complete the closeout process, reporting ends upon receipt of U.S. Treasury's final confirmation.
- Townships should **retain all ARPA/SLFRF records for a minimum of five years** after the final expenditure or after funds are returned. This includes supporting documentation, such as financial records, contracts, payroll, procurement, programmatic files, subrecipient oversight, etc. Please note that ARPA records must also comply with other record retention schedules.
- The Office of Inspector General may **audit ARPA awards**. Common focus areas include procurement, allowable expenses, subrecipient monitoring and accurate reporting. Recipients may be subject to a single audit, depending on the total amount of federal funds spent (more than \$750,000 for fiscal years ending after Sept. 30, 2025, or more than \$1 million for fiscal years ending after Sept. 30, 2025). If a recipient is subject to a single audit due solely to SLFRF, they may be eligible for "alternative compliance examination engagement."

Much of this information had previously been shared with townships in *Township Focus*, on MTA's website and other communications. Find more on MTA's ARPA webpage, under the "Advocacy" tab on michigantownships.org.

LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

Township happenings

The historic hall in **Bates Township** (Iron Co.) will be restored and revitalized, assisted by a \$250,000 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Community Facilities program. The township hall, which was built in 1907 and continues to serve as a hub for the township and as an election polling location, will receive a new concrete basement foundation, as well as facility layout improvements and a new porch. "Local government is the cornerstone of local control and community-based decisions," said Dom Restuccia, Michigan state director for USDA Rural Development. "We are proud to play a small part in supporting the people and local government of Bates Township." *Township leaders can learn more about USDA programs to help rural communities at MTA's Regional Meetings and UP North Summit—turn to page 36 for details.*

A ribbon-cutting at Flesher Field Park for a 2.5-mile stretch of the Fruit Belt Rail Trail in **Oshtemo Charter Township** (Kalamazoo Co.) in July brought together local officials and community members, who also enjoyed a free concert and cool summer treats. A larger celebration is scheduled for next April. The Fruit Belt Rail Line ran from Kalamazoo to South Haven from 1852 and 1924, swinging south through area fruit-producing communities. Today, 14 miles of the original corridor are enjoyed as the state Van Buren Trail, and communities along the remainder of the line are working to create a continuous trail across the whole corridor. The Oshtemo segment is the first section to be built in Kalamazoo County. When the entire Fruit Belt Trail is complete and connects with the existing Kal-Haven Trail, the two will form a unique, 70-mile loop of regional and statewide significance.



We want to know YOUR township's story! Send articles, updates, pictures and details of what's happening in your township to jenn@michigantownships.org.

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A REVOLUTIONARY EVENT

America250 event designed 'to bring together all the parts of our community'

From Founding Father reenactors to individuals milling about in colonial clothing, popular '70s fare (1770s, that is) to the sounds of a fife and drum band filling the air, the Colonial Social Gathering, hosted by the Remus Area Historical Society to celebrate America's 250th birthday, was a sight to behold and an event to remember.

The gathering, held June 20 in **Morton Township** (Mecosta Co.), drew nearly 150 attendees from communities throughout the county and beyond, all who came to experience a 1776-style formal social affair—complete with activities similar to those of the era. In addition to an opening flag and historical ceremony, the three-hour event included live music, a colonial “high tea” and Boston Tea Party program, Revolutionary War encampment display, and reenactor presentations, with familiar faces sharing stories of the time—including Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Betsy Ross. Colonial food included several venison dishes, corn chowder, lightly sweetened desserts, and more.

While the historical society—which represents the entire area encompassing **Broomfield** and **Rolland Townships** (Isabella Co.), and **Colfax, Millbrook, Morton, Sheridan, Hinton, Martiny** and **Wheatland Townships** (Mecosta Co.)—had scheduled events in honor of America's 250th, a grander plan was put into effect after it applied for and received an America250MI History Grant.

The grant application included both a community component and a historical component, in addition to signing a proclamation to be an America250 community. The community component culminated in the colonial gathering. “We already had the idea of this event, no matter what,” said Linda Howard, president of the historical society. “But this really allowed for us to do an A-1 event. We knew our communities had local festivals and July Fourth events already in the hopper, and we were just going to jump onto that. But this really allowed us to have a bigger event that highlighted the Revolutionary War. It all just kind of fell together wonderfully that we needed to do this.”



*Photos courtesy of Julie Norwood/
Pioneer Newspapers*

The historical component of the grant is also helping preserve and share a unique and important part of the area's past. A portion of the funds will be used to replace the windows in the one-room Little River Schoolhouse, originally built in 1905. The school itself was first formed in 1877, under the direction of Isaac and Lucy Berry, an escaped enslaved man and his wife, who moved to the area with other black and multi-racial families that year. The schoolhouse served the area's multi-racial children for several decades. According to the Berry's great-great grandson, Isaac Berry was “interested in helping children grow to be upright citizens,” and the integrated community functioned as “a nation within itself.” The America250MI grant, with assistance from other donors and volunteers, will help the historical society further share the school's story, which reflects “enduring lessons about the struggle for freedom, and the opportunities created through perseverance and community,” as stated in its promotional materials.

The historical celebrations and remembrances that teach of the area's melting pot story will continue as part of a “Nation Unto Itself” program throughout the upcoming months. The historical society, on behalf of a collaboration of area organizations called the Remus-Mecosta Area America250MI Committee, is leading the community-wide efforts, including docent-led tours of the Little River Schoolhouse, a history of Mecosta County presentation during the Remus Heritage Days Festival, a Declaration of Independence Celebration in the Wheatland Township Library, and an Old Settler's Reunion, the 93rd annual gathering of descendants of early settlers. An open house celebrating the schoolhouse renovation is slated for mid-September.

“We've had a lot of fun with this,” said Howard, quipping that several members of the historical society recalled celebrating the nation's bicentennial in 1976 and were excited to help plan the semiquincentennial. “These events are geared toward being educational, informative and to bring together all the parts of our community.”

Retirement

After more than 40 years of service to **Green Oak Charter Township** (Livingston Co.), Clerk **Michael Sedlak** retired at the end of June.

Sedlak has been clerk for 25 years and served the township fire department for decades. “It has been an honor to be part of this organization,” Sedlak wrote in his retirement letter. “We have accomplished so much for the good of the township. I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in me, the opportunities to grow professionally, and the friendships I have built. Working alongside such a dedicated group of coworkers has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.” Rep. Ann Bollin (R-Brighton Chtr. Twp.), pictured, and County Clerk Elizabeth Hundley also honored Sedlak for his years of service.



RENEWABLES READY

Changes to the RRCA program

Numerous townships have received funding through the state's Renewables Ready Communities Award (RRCA) grant program, for municipalities involved in large-scale renewable energy projects approved through local permitting after Sept. 1, 2023. A local unit of government involved in hosting and/or permitting any portion of an eligible project may apply, once permitted, to receive up to \$5,000 per megawatt (MW) from the program. Recent program changes now require the project to meet a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) requirement. If it does not, the local unit's final payment will be 80% of the maximum—\$4,000 per MW. The award may be increased by 20% if the project developer establishes a satisfactory PLA for project construction. If the host and permitter are separate (e.g., with county zoning), each local unit receives half of the award (\$2,000 per MW.)

This one-time award payment is made in full when construction begins on the project. There are no requirements on how the RRCA dollars can be spent and no further reporting is required. (Follow-up surveys on award use will be conducted by the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.) Visit michigan.gov/egle (search for "Renewables Ready") to learn more.

MTA's lunchtime learning series, *Now You Know*, offers timely updates, insights from our experts and a chance to get your questions answered—all in just one hour!

Don't miss our next episode held

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Tim Shaw appointed MTA District 24 director

Somerset Township (Hillsdale Co.) Supervisor **Tim Shaw** has been appointed to the MTA Board of Directors, as director of MTA District 24, which encompasses Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties.

The MTA Board plays a pivotal role in helping to guide the Association in serving, safeguarding and strengthening Michigan township government, and Shaw looks forward to “keeping townships’ interests moving forward,” he said of his new leadership role. “Local control is vital to protect. I believe in what MTA stands for, and the accomplishments that I have seen in recent years.”

Shaw has been township supervisor for a decade. He served as chief of Addison Fire & EMS, in **Addison Township** (Oakland Co.) for 30 years, and was also a school board member for 10 years. Those experiences will assist in Shaw’s contributions to the statewide organization. “Schools and public safety are two of the most important parts of our lives,” he said. “With my background in public service, I will be able to share insights on key topics in this area.”



Shaw

MTA Legal Defense Fund supports PA 233 renewable energy lawsuit appeal to state Supreme Court

The MTA Legal Defense Fund Committee approved the Association’s filing of an *amicus curiae* brief in support of an application for leave to appeal in the Michigan Supreme Court to reverse the Michigan Public Service Commission’s (MPSC) Implementation Order of Public Act 233 of 2023.

In May, the state Court of Appeals affirmed parts of the MPSC’s order and struck down other parts. PA 233—which largely shifted siting of utility-scale renewable energy facilities to the state commission, unless a township adopted a “compatible renewable energy ordinance” with limitations on requirements—remains in effect. The application for leave to appeal seeks to reverse the Michigan Court of Appeals opinion, continuing the efforts of dozens of local governments challenging certain provisions of the MPSC order. As of press time, the Supreme Court had not indicated if it would hear the appeal. Watch for updates as they become available.



MTA Board opposes November Con-Con proposal

As shared in greater detail in MTA Executive Director Tom Hickson’s “Township Times” on page 1, the MTA Board of Directors has voted to oppose a proposal on the November 2026 ballot asking residents if the state should hold a constitutional convention. Every 16 years, the Michigan Constitution requires that voters decide if a “Con-Con” should be held. Michigan voters resoundingly defeated the proposal in 2010, when 67% voted against holding a constitutional convention.

The last constitution convention was held from 1961-1962, and resulted in the state’s current constitution. During that Con-Con, a vote was held on the dissolution of Michigan’s townships. MTA and township leaders lobbied exhaustively and effectively, and Con-Con delegates voted to affirm—and strengthen—township government in the new constitution.

Watch MTA communications for additional information, including any coalition efforts against the 2026 proposal.

Potential new phishing scam mimics township communications

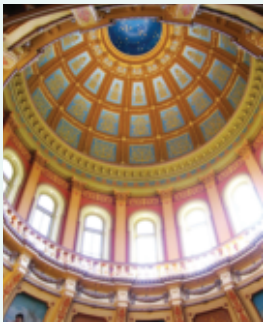
MTA has learned of a new email scam that may be targeting townships. The sophisticated scam was sent to a developer referencing a “pending application,” appearing to be from a township and using language directly from the township’s website. It urged “immediate attention,” asking the developer to share banking information, and stated that all correspondence must be “conducted via email only.” Townships may wish to share information with their community about the potential scam, urging caution, providing details on official township communications channels, and asking to be notified if a fraudulent email is received purporting to be from the township.

Townships can also be victims of scam emails. To help ensure you do not fall victim to a phishing scheme or cybersecurity threat, it is important to take note of the full email address from which the email was sent (a fake address may look suspicious or even be as simple as having one incorrect letter separating it from a legitimate sender. For example, a hacker posing as a government official might have an address ending with “michigann.gov” instead of “michigan.gov.”). Do not click on any links or attachments in suspicious emails. We also recommend that you block the sender, report the message or mark as “junk,” and share with your township’s IT support.



Seeking member review and input for MTA's 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 (look under the “Advocacy” tab on michigantownships.org) 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.



Please join MTA in welcoming **Memtech Acoustics** to our Allied Service Provider program at the Keystone Club level! **Memtech Acoustics** helps townships address community noise concerns and enforce noise/zoning ordinances by way of environmental noise studies, ordinance review, site-plan acoustic review for industrial and energy development, and engineered noise control. The Michigan-based engineering firm converts subjective complaints into objective, ordinance-aligned findings that protect residents and support fair enforcement for municipalities. Learn more at memtechacoustics.com. For more on Memtech Acoustics and other Allied Service Providers, turn to page 2 or check out the Allied Service Provider Directory on michigantownships.org (under “Vendor Directories”).



mta events august	
12	MTA <i>Now You Know</i> lunchtime webinar: Sticky Situations: Ethics in Everyday Decisions
18	<i>Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning</i> workshop, Frankenmuth
26	<i>Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning</i> workshop, Gaylord
31	<i>Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning</i> workshop, Lawrence

profile



Adna Technologies

Supporting the neighbors who serve our communities

Michigan townships and other municipalities face real IT challenges—ransomware threats, compliance requirements, budget constraints, and the constant pressure to do more with less. But here’s what Adna says makes them different: They are not a distant vendor checking boxes. They’re your neighbors. Says the firm, “At Adna Technologies, we live here, we work here, we protect what matters.”



Family-owned and based in Lansing since 2003, Adna Technologies has built two decades of expertise in managed IT services, cybersecurity, cloud solutions, network infrastructure, helpdesk support and compliance. Adna’s all-in-house, W2ed team lives and works in the communities they serve. When Adna helps your township stay secure and operational, they are protecting the same neighborhoods where their employees live, raise families, and send their kids to school.

Why that matters

A ransomware attack doesn’t just disrupt your operations; it affects the residents who depend on your services. That’s why they respond to issues in hours, not days. Why they stay current on cybersecurity best practices that prevent attacks before they happen. Why they help you maintain cyber insurance eligibility and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliance. Why they work with you on smart IT planning, so your budget stretches further.

This isn’t transactional support. It is partnership rooted in the belief that safer, more resilient municipalities make better communities for all of us.

Let’s talk

If you’d like to explore how Adna can support your township’s IT goals, they welcome the conversation. No pressure, no lengthy sales pitch, just a straightforward discussion about your challenges and how they might help. Contact Adna Technologies at (517) 679-3300 x4 or visit teamadna.com/mta.

Opinions expressed within do not represent the views of MTA, its Board or members. Participation in the Allied Service Provider program does not constitute or imply MTA’s endorsement of the company or its products/services. To learn more about Allied Service Providers, turn to page 2 or visit the Allied Service Provider Directory and program webpages at michigantownships.org.

Advertorial



Knowing what's coming: Capital improvement plans and township financial credibility

A capital improvement plan (CIP) is one of the most important planning and financial tools available to a township. While many communities view a CIP as simply a list of future projects, it is actually a long-term strategy document that connects infrastructure, budgeting and financial sustainability. At its core, a CIP answers a simple question: what major costs are coming and how will we pay for them?

The legal landscape

Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3865 requires the planning commission to prepare a CIP identifying public structures and improvements needed over the next six years. For townships, this requirement is mandatory if the community owns or operates a water or sewer system, either alone or jointly with another local government. The CIP is intended to support the implementation of the master plan by ensuring roads, parks, utilities, and buildings are developed in a coordinated manner. The act also requires the planning commission to approve the CIP and update it annually.

Budgeting without blind spots

Regardless of the legal requirement, every township should maintain a CIP. A township cannot responsibly prepare an annual budget without understanding its future obligations. Roads, buildings, vehicles, technology and major planning efforts are predictable costs. Without a CIP, a township is budgeting with blind spots.

Outside of wages and benefits, capital projects are often the largest and most volatile costs facing a township. Without long-term planning, budgets become reactive instead of intentional. Projects are delayed until failure occurs, emergency borrowing becomes more likely, and leadership loses the ability to prioritize effectively. Furthermore, good planning lowers the long-term cost of ownership; it is almost always cheaper to maintain infrastructure than to allow it to deteriorate and later pay for full replacement.

Explaining the 'why' to residents

A CIP also serves as a vital communication tool. It helps explain large fund balances and reserves that might otherwise be misunderstood. What may appear to be "excess cash" to a resident is often already committed to planned road work, equipment replacement or facility upgrades. Documenting these obligations supports reserve policies and rate discussions while helping the public understand why funds are being accumulated.

Best practices for implementation

The value of a CIP depends as much on timing as content. It should be reviewed early in the budget process, serving as an input rather than a byproduct. Best practice is for the governing board to formally adopt the updated CIP alongside the annual budget so financial decisions are made with full awareness of future obligations.

While the law references a six-year period, many townships benefit from planning 10, 15 or even 20 years into the future. An effective, plain-language CIP should include:

- Project descriptions and rankings.
- Estimated timing and costs
- Proposed funding sources
- Future operating impacts
- Non-recurring costs, such as vehicles, technology, and master plan updates

Because needs almost always exceed available resources, project ranking is essential. It forces trade-offs into the open and helps leadership make disciplined decisions rather than simply reacting to the most urgent crisis.

Ultimately, the CIP is not about projects. It is about credibility. It aligns strategy with dollars, reduces surprises, and builds trust with residents and stakeholders. Township boards and planning commissions should treat the CIP as a core leadership responsibility, review it annually and ensure it actively drives budget decisions. A township that plans its capital investments is not just managing its infrastructure. It is also managing its future.

Information provided in *Financial Forum* should not be considered legal advice, and readers are encouraged to contact their township auditor and/or attorney for advice specific to their situation.



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AUGUST

By 1 Deadline for township or local authority to file Form 5608, *Portion of 2025 Essential Services Millage Rate Dedicated for the Cost of Essential Services*. (MCL 123.1353(7))

Deadline for a municipality to file Form 5613, *Millage Rate Correction for the 2026 Personal Property Tax Reimbursement Calculations*. (MCL 123.1358(4))

1 By 2 p.m. Deadline for military or overseas voter (MOVE) to submit absent voter (AV) ballot application for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.759a(10))

2 Last day of mandatory early voting period. (Early voting may be held on the Monday before Election Day until 4 p.m.) (Mich. Const., Art. II, Sec. 4)

3 Townships with an established AV counting board, which have provided timely notice that they will preprocess and tabulate AV ballots, may begin processing and tabulating AV ballots. (MCL 168.765a)

Electors who have lost their AV ballot or not yet received their ballot in the mail have until 4 p.m. to submit a written request to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot

in the clerk's office for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.765b(7))

Registered voter may apply for AV ballot in person at the clerk's office for Aug. 4 election until 4 p.m. (MCL 168.759)

4 Election. (MCL 168.641)

Election Day registrants may obtain and vote an AV ballot in person in clerk's office or vote in person in the proper precinct. (MCL 168.761)

Emergency absentee voting ends at 4 p.m. (Begins Friday, July 31 at 5 p.m.) (MCL 168.759b)

5 Early voting configuration sets for tabulators for Nov. 3 election must be selected. (MCL 168.720j)

Township that establishes an Election Day vote center for November election must inform applicable county clerk. (MCL 168.523b)

6 Boards of county canvassers meet to canvass Aug. 4 election by 9 a.m. (MCL 168.821)

7 By 5 p.m. Voter must cure signature on AV ballot return envelope, allowing an otherwise valid ballot to be accepted for tabulation for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.766)

10 Deadline for a ballot submitted by a MOVE voter and postmarked on or before Aug. 4 to be deemed timely received and counted. (Mich. Const., Art. II, Sec. 4)

11 Deadline for clerk to deliver MOVE ballots received within six days of Election Day to the county clerk. (MCL 168.759a)

Ballot wording of proposals qualified to appear on November ballot certified to local or county clerks by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.646a)

13 Local clerks receiving ballot wording for Nov. 3 election must forward to county clerk. (MCL 168.646a)

14 Aug. 15 is a Saturday. Deadline to certify 2026 essential services assessment statement

and electronically submit essential services assessment in full to the state Department of Treasury without late payment penalty. (MCL 211.1057(3))

18 Deadline for boards of county canvassers to complete canvass of Aug. 4 election; county clerks forward results to Secretary of State within 24 hours. (MCL 168.822)

20 Beginning of period for regular inspection of AV drop boxes to ensure compliance with requirements for Nov. 3 election. (MCL 168.761d)

Beginning of period for required video monitoring of AV drop boxes (applies to all drop boxes, regardless of when they were purchased or installed). (MCL 168.761d)



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SEPTEMBER

4 Deadline for townships to establish, move or abolish a polling place for Nov. 3 election. Beginning of period during which township board or board of county election commissioners may not establish, move or abolish a polling place, early voting site or central polling place, unless damaged, destroyed or rendered inaccessible or unusable. (MCL 168.662)

Clerk must inform applicable county clerk that an AV counting board has been authorized by local board of election commissioners. (MCL 168.764d)

Location of each early voting site for Nov. 3 election must be finalized. (MCL 168.720i)

14 Summer taxes due. (MCL 211.107) Township treasurer, or their designee, must be in his or her office to receive tax payments. (MCL 211.44a(5))

15 Last day for qualified taxpayers to file intent for 2026 summer tax deferral. (MCL 211.51(7))

Deadline to amend a previously certified 2026 essential services assessment statement. (MCL 211.2057(4))

Interest of 1% per month will accrue if the payment is late for the State Education Tax and county taxes that are part of the summer tax collection. (MCLs 211.905b(9) and 211.44a(6))

19 Beginning of period during which the clerk must make reasonable effort to verify or reject AV ballot application or AV ballot return envelope for Nov. 3 election by the end of the business day after the application or envelope is received. (MCL 168.766b)

County clerk must provide each municipal clerk or early voting site coordinator with programming for electronic voting equipment to be used

at early voting site for Nov. 3 election. (MCL 168.720j)

Deadline for clerks to electronically transmit or mail (as requested) an AV ballot for Nov. 3 election to each absent uniformed services or overseas voter who applied for an AV ballot 45 days or more before the election. (MCL 168.759a; Mich. Const., Art. 2, Sec. 4)

Deadline for county clerks to deliver AV ballots for Nov. 3 election to local clerks. (MCL 168.714)

Notice of polling place or early voting site must be provided for sites newly established or changed by 60 days before Election Day. (MCL 168.662)

24 AV ballots for Nov. 3 election must be available for issuance to voters. (Mich. Const., Art. 2, Sec. 4)

Beginning of period that secure drop boxes must be accessible 24 hours each day (until 8 p.m. on Election Day). (Mich. Const., Art. 2, Sec. 4)

29 Beginning of period of required daily collection of election materials from AV drop boxes on each day clerk's office is open. (MCL 168.761d)

30 Township clerk delivers to supervisor and county clerk a certified copy of all statements, certificates and records of vote directing monies to be raised by taxation of property. (MCL 211.36(1))

Financial officer of each township computes tax rates in accordance with MCLs 211.34d and 211.34 and governing body certifies that rates comply with Section 31, Article 9, of 1963 Constitution and MCL 211.24e, Truth in Taxation, on STC Form L-4029 on or before Sept. 30. (MCL 211.36)



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May campaign stickers or other materials be posted in the hallway of a polling place on early voting days or Election Day?

The short answer is no, but that really is too simple an answer, because it doesn't cover all the aspects of an election process that now covers many more days (and possible places) than it did in the past. Gone are the days when it was a "simple" matter of picking up stickers left in the hallway on the way to the voting booths.

So here is a general breakdown of how campaigning activities are regulated during the absent voter (AV) ballot period and on early voting days and Election Day. *(Note: Clerks may have more specific directions provided by the Michigan Secretary of State Bureau of Elections, which supersede any general information here.)*

The sections of the Election Law that prohibit certain "campaign" activities in and around polling places are:

MCL 168.744 Prohibited acts; violation as misdemeanor. Sec. 744.

(1) An election inspector or any other person in a polling room, in a compartment connected to a polling room, or within 100 feet from any entrance to a building in which a polling place is located shall not persuade or endeavor to persuade a person to vote for or against any particular candidate or party ticket or for or against any ballot question that is being voted on at the election. A person shall not place or distribute stickers, other than stickers provided by the election officials pursuant to law, in a polling room, in a compartment connected to a polling room, or within 100 feet from any entrance to a building in which a polling place is located.

(2) A person shall not solicit donations, gifts, contributions, purchase of tickets, or similar demands, or request or obtain signatures on petitions in a polling room, in a compartment connected to a polling room, or within 100 feet from any entrance to a building in which a polling place is located.

(3) On election day, a person shall not post, display, or distribute in a polling place, in any hallway used by voters to enter or exit a polling place, or within 100 feet of an entrance to a building in which a polling place is located any material that directly or indirectly makes reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question. Except as otherwise provided in section 744a, this subsection does not apply to official material that is required by law to be posted, displayed, or distributed in a polling place on election day.

(4) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

MCL 168.744a Appearance of name of elected or appointed official in polling place or room prohibited; violation; fine.

Sec. 744a.

(1) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the name of an elected or appointed official of this state or a political subdivision of this state shall not appear on any material that is temporarily posted, displayed, or distributed in a polling place or polling room on election day.

(2) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than \$100.00 for a first offense and is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than \$250.00 for a second or subsequent offense.



The township hall is one of our polling places, and a board member and an employee are candidates. Do they have to stay away from the hall on early voting days or Election Day?

No, as long as they do not violate MCLs 168.744 or 168.744a (including not wearing campaign buttons or using or offering pens/pencils with their name, etc.).

Under MCL 168.744a, the name of any elected or appointed official of the state, township or any political subdivision cannot appear on any material that is temporarily posted, displayed or distributed in a polling place or polling room on Election Day, including name plates, name tags or honorary plaques. A person who violates MCL 168.744a is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Based on MCLs 168.744 and 168.744a, MTA recommends that when township officials or employees are candidates, township office name plates, name tags or honorary plaques that show their names, for example, be covered or removed.

However, there still may be other things to look out for. For example, a township newsletter article posted on a hallway bulletin board on what a proposed fire millage question would enable the fire department to purchase if it passes should be removed before early voting days and Election Day. All materials displaying "pro and con" information on any proposals appearing on the ballot are prohibited.



When and where are those restrictions imposed?

1) During the 40-day AV ballot period in the clerk's office or satellite office:

Under MCL 168.759, absent voter ballots can be received, voted and returned by mail or to the clerk's office during the 40-day period before an election, or on Election Day under certain circumstances.

According to the Michigan Department of State document, *Campaigning in Clerk's Offices During Absent Voter Ballot Issuance*:

"Campaigning activities are prohibited in areas where individuals are voting. During the 40 days prior to an Election, voters have a right to obtain and return in person an absent voter ballot. Inside clerks' offices and satellite offices at which voters may receive, complete, and return absent voter ballots, directly or indirectly making reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question is prohibited. This includes any solicitation of voters at the polling place, including, but not limited to petition signature gathering or sales of any kind.

"The following activities are included under this restriction:

- Displaying 'pro and con' information on the proposals appearing on the ballot.
- Approaching voters to encourage them to vote for or against a candidate or ballot question.
- Distributing any type of campaign literature or write-in stickers.
- Displaying signs, posters, or bumper stickers.
- Attempting to collect petition signatures.
- Requesting donations, selling tickets or engaging in similar activities."

Clerks may post that direction or a shorter notice: "Campaigning activities are prohibited in clerk offices and during the 40-day period prior to an election when voters are receiving and returning absent voter ballots. This prohibition includes directly or indirectly making reference to an election, a candidate or a ballot question."

2) On early voting days or Election Day at polling places INSIDE the 100-foot line:

No campaign materials for candidates or proposals—including petitions or circulating petitions—regardless of who is holding or leaving, are allowed **inside** the 100-foot line from the entrances to the polling place building. Campaigning and campaign materials cannot be closer than 100 feet from the entrance of a polling place building.

This also includes prohibiting vehicles with campaign signs or bumper stickers from parking **within 100 feet** of any entrance to the building, except for those parked only while a person is voting.

The Bureau of Elections states in the *Managing Your Election Day Polling Place: Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual* (October 2024): "Election inspectors must direct voters entering the polls to remove or cover up campaign buttons, hats, or clothing that refers to a candidate, campaign slogan, or political party or interest group on this election's

ballot. Instruct voters to conceal campaign literature or other campaign materials brought into the polling room. A voter may discreetly refer to their own personal notes, campaign literature or 'slate cards' when voting, but the materials must not be left behind in the voting station. Election inspectors must periodically check each voting station for campaign literature or materials left by voters and discard any that is found."

Exit pollsters can be 20 feet away from the exit (may be the same door as entering) to the polling place, but then may speak only to **people who exit**, not those who are entering.

3) On early voting days or Election Day at polling places OUTSIDE the 100-foot line on township property:

A township may also regulate campaign materials and activities on early voting days or Election Day **on township property** outside the 100-foot limit. Note: If the 100-foot line crosses into **private property**, a private property owner may allow campaign materials on their private property as political free speech outside the 100-foot line, but **NOT** within the 100-foot line.

Per MTA Legal Counsel and the Bureau of Elections, a written board-adopted policy or ordinance could be used to regulate campaign materials and activities on township property **outside** the 100-foot limit.

As long as the policy is equally and consistently applied, regardless of the candidate or ballot question, a township board may adopt a policy that it will remove **unattended** campaign signs or other materials **from township property outside of the 100-foot limit** on an early voting or Election Day. Note: If a person is handing out materials or holding a sign, that may be a protected exercise of political free speech.

A township may also regulate the use of its parking lots **outside** the 100-foot limit. A voter has a right to park his or her vehicle in a township property parking lot for the period of time it takes for that person to vote, even if the vehicle has campaign signs on it, and the Bureau of Elections does not require any action to be taken. But no one has a right to simply park a vehicle, with or without campaign signs on it, for any longer than the person needs to be on the property to vote or to do township business.

Hello, MTA ... ? provides general information on typical questions asked by township officials. Readers are encouraged to contact an attorney when specific legal guidance is needed. Member township officials and personnel may contact MTA Member Information Services with questions or requests from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays, at (517) 321-6467 (press 1) or fax (517) 321-8908.





Legislature finalizes state budget

After weeks of negotiations and a marathon session on July 2–3, the Legislature finalized the state's Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget. Although lawmakers missed the statutory July 1 deadline, they approved the budget before the Independence Day holiday. The budget totals \$75.2 billion in state spending—approximately \$750 million less than the current year, with the General Fund remaining flat at \$14.1 billion. Including an estimated \$1.4 billion in federal funding, total spending will be about \$200 million higher. The budget reflects flat state revenues and reduced federal support while avoiding tax increases or withdrawals from the state's Budget Stabilization (“rainy day”) Fund.

Revenue sharing. The budget includes \$333 million for statutory revenue sharing for townships, cities and villages (CVTs). This maintains the current year's appropriation level. Constitutional revenue sharing, which is determined by actual sales tax revenue collections, is projected to decrease by 2.3% (\$25 million) based on the most recent (May 2026) state revenue estimates. This continues to reflect the loss of sales tax revenue due to the 2025 state transportation funding proposal.

Public Safety Revenue Sharing (PSRS) grants. PSRS funding is included for a second year and will be funded at \$50 million, of which \$35.1 million is distributed to

townships, cities and villages based on their violent crime statistics. In the current year, \$50 million was appropriated, with additional one-time funding of \$20 million. CVTs received a total of \$42.5 million this fiscal year. This budget, which begins on Oct. 1, contains the \$50 million—thus, local units will see a slight decrease in the PSRS grants.

Estimates from the Senate Fiscal Agency for your township's statutory and constitutional revenue sharing, as well as projected PSRS grants, can be viewed on michigantownships.org (click on “MTA On the Issues,” then “Revenue Sharing” under the “Advocacy” tab). We will share updated estimates on our website and in *Township Insights* from the state Department of Treasury when available.

The FY 2026–2027 budget agreement also included 135 legislatively directed spending items totaling \$125.3 million. Of those items, 24 of the spending items will benefit townships, worth a total of \$26.4 million.

In addition to the budget, the Legislature approved 70 policy bills, 66 of which were part of the budget agreement (those impacting townships are shared below) that were pending signature by the governor at time of press. Although the Senate unanimously approved the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund earlier this year, it was not included in the final budget agreement. MTA and other local government organizations will continue advocating for the proposal.

Foreclosure avoidance sunset removed—Legislation to eliminate sunset (expiration) dates for certain programs to help residents avoid foreclosure due to delinquent property taxes was approved. Senate Bill 423, sponsored by Sen. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit), deletes the sunset dates on these provisions. Under current law, property that has been delinquent for at least 12 months is forfeited to the county treasurer. Local governments may intervene in cases of substantial financial hardship by reducing delinquent taxes, establishing installment payment plans, entering foreclosure avoidance agreements, or combining these options. They may also forgive certain service charges, interest, penalties and fees. These provisions expired July 1, 2025. SB 423 permanently removes the sunset, allowing the programs to continue.

Paid military leave required—Townships with full-time firefighters and law enforcement officers will be required to provide at least 26 days of paid military leave for these personnel under a bill approved in early July. House Bill 5233, sponsored by Rep. Ron Robinson (R-Utica), establishes a state requirement without funding that law enforcement agencies and organized fire departments provide a minimum of 26 days of paid military leave at the beginning of each year for full-time employees who are enlisted in

the Army, Air National Guard or the reserves (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard). The leave may be used for military training, active duty or pre-induction physicals. Unused leave will not carry over from year to year. An employee seeking use of paid military leave will be paid at their regular rate of pay and, if covered by a collective bargaining agreement, provided all contractually required benefits and accruals.

While MTA opposed the state requirement, we were successful in obtaining two clarifying amendments to HB 5233: it is applicable to only full-time employees and there is no payout of the military leave upon separation of employment.

Commercial rehabilitation and redevelopment sunsets extended—Extension of commercial facilities and rehabilitation tax exemptions, utilized by local governments to address blighted properties, was also approved in early July. SBs 721 and 722, sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Bloomfield Twp.) and supported by MTA, extend the Commercial Redevelopment and Commercial Rehabilitation Acts through Dec. 31, 2035. The legislation restores programs that expired Dec. 31, 2025, and extends the maximum duration of commercial rehabilitation certificates to better align with similar redevelopment tools, including the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act.

New low-income housing tax credit—A three-bill package—HBs 5806 and 5807, and SB 966—creates the Michigan Housing Opportunity Tax Credit to encourage affordable housing development. Supported by MTA, the legislation allows eligible developers, investors and insurers to claim tax credits against individual income, corporate income or flow-through entity taxes. At least 30% of annual tax credit awards are reserved for rural communities, provided qualifying applications are available.

Single stairways approved for certain multi-family buildings—MTA-supported legislation amending the state building code to allow certain apartment buildings with up to four above-ground stories to include a single interior exit stairway—provided they meet specified accessibility and fire suppression standards—will soon become law. HBs 5770 and 5771, sponsored by Reps. Parker Fairbairn (R-Harbor Springs) and Stephen Wooden (D-Grand Rapids), is intended to support construction of smaller-footprint multi-family housing while maintaining fire safety requirements.

Transformational brownfield program expanded—Michigan's transformation brownfield program supports challenging redevelopment projects by leveraging tax revenue generated after the completion of the project to reimburse the developer for remediation and development costs. SB 723, sponsored by Sen. Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) makes significant changes to the state's transformational brownfield program. The legislation revises project eligibility, expands reporting and oversight requirements, modifies tax capture provisions, eliminates the

Dec. 31, 2027, sunset on new project approvals and increases statewide tax capture authorization from \$1.6 billion to \$3.2 billion. The legislation also adds affordable housing requirements and transparency measures intended to prevent misuse of redevelopment incentives.

Golf cart access on streets expanded—A bill to expand the number of communities eligible to authorize the use of golf carts on local streets received final approval on July 3. HB 4644, sponsored by Rep. Alicia St. Germaine (R-Harrison Chtr. Twp.), increases the population threshold for eligible communities from fewer than 30,000 to fewer than 65,000. Existing authority allowing county boards of commissioners to prohibit golf cart use on township roads remain unchanged.

Amber alert flexibility expanded—Legislation sponsored by Reps. Jerry Neyer (R-Lincoln Twp.) and Angela Rigas (D-Caledonia Twp.) updating Michigan's Amber Alert Act received nearly unanimous bipartisan approval.

HBs 4517 and 4518 expand the circumstances under which the Michigan State Police (MSP) may issue alerts. Current law limits Amber Alerts to cases involving an abduction, imminent danger and sufficient information for the public to assist in finding the child. In addition to child abduction cases, the bills authorize alerts for missing children with special needs and for any missing child believed to be in danger following a preliminary investigation.

Large corporate home purchases limited—Legislation to limit the number of single-family homes large corporations can buy in the state received final approval. HB 6074, sponsored by Rep. Karl Bohnak (R-Negaunee), will prohibit corporations that already own more than 100 single-family homes in Michigan from purchasing additional single-family homes. The legislation aims to improve housing affordability by limiting large corporate ownership of residential properties. Violations are subject to civil fines of up to \$25,000 per occurrence.

Medical alert system required for missing seniors and vulnerable adults—Currently, upon being notified of a missing senior or vulnerable adult, local law enforcement agencies must develop a report that includes characteristics of the missing individual and preliminary investigative findings. This information is only distributed to police officers or broadly to the public through media sources. SB 456, sponsored by Sen. Mallory McMorro (D-Royal Oak), requires MSP to establish a statewide alert system for missing seniors and vulnerable adults. Under the measure, local law enforcement agencies may request an emergency alert after submitting a missing person report, allowing information to be rapidly distributed to mobile devices in a manner like Amber Alerts.

State Fire Equipment Grant program reopens

Local governments can once again apply to the state's competitive Fire Equipment Grant program for the purchase of fire equipment or fire gear. The application process had been suspended by the Michigan Department of Treasury in May to modify eligibility requirements.

Grant awards cannot exceed \$50,000 for a single local government and grant expenditures must be incurred between Oct. 1, 2025, and Sept. 30, 2030. Awards are contingent on available funding and may be lower than requested. In addition to township fire departments, fire authorities or commissions established by a municipal resolution, motion or charter are also eligible.

To apply, a completed *Fire Equipment Grant Program Application* (Form 5874) must be submitted, along with a proposed budget detailing how funds will be used to purchase fire equipment for all firefighters and/or fire gear for firefighters who are on-call, part-time or volunteer. Applications must be submitted electronically by Sept. 30, using the state's eSignature Solution system. More information, including an online application guide and application instructions, can be found at michigan.gov/treasury (click on "Local government," then "Revenue Sharing"). Call (517) 335-7484 or email Treas-FireGrant@michigan.gov with questions.

Governor vetoes long-litigated nine bills from last session

Following a Michigan Supreme Court order, nine bills passed during the previous legislation session (2023-2024) were presented to the governor in July and subsequently vetoed. (The legislation was not presented for signature prior to the end of the 2023-2024 session). Among the measures was legislation opposed by MTA that would have increased required public employer contributions toward employee health care by eliminating the existing contribution cap. Rather than capping the maximum contribution at 80%, the legislation would have required a minimum public employer contribution of 80%.

Other vetoed bills addressed Detroit-area museums, corrections officer pensions and debt collection efforts.

In explaining the vetoes, the governor cited the bills' 2025 effective dates, stating that implementing them retroactively would create "an insurmountable administrative burden on the state and all Michiganders affected."

Several of the vetoed measures, including the public employer health care contribution bill, are expected to be reintroduced.

Across the state, townships are being asked to consider a wide range of energy development proposals.

Do you have all the resources you need?



If your community has a Planning Commission, watch for a mailer that provides up-to-date resources, guidebooks, and tools on planning and zoning for renewable energy.

Materials developed by the Renewable Energy Academy (REA), a partnership between Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Association of Planning, 5Lakes Energy, and the University of Michigan Center for EmPowering Communities.



2026

MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

VENDOR DIRECTORY

Looking for product or service for your township?

Pull out this Vendor Directory and place it somewhere convenient. When your township is looking for a company that provides the services to support your township operations, this listing will help you find a good fit! An online vendor listing, including description of services and links to company websites, is also available at michigantownships.org/vendor-directories.



Companies that are part of MTA's Allied Service Provider program are listed in **green**. We thank these companies for their participation in the program, and their dedication to serving township government.

2026 Township Vendor Directory

Architects & Engineers

Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick
51301 Schoenherr Rd.
Shelby Township, MI 48315-2733
586-719-8716 | aewinc.com



Gourdie Fraser, Inc.
1820 Oak Hollow Dr.
Traverse City, MI 49686-5918
231-946-5874 | gfa.tc



Memtech Acoustics
2175 Avon Industrial Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3611
248-289-1123 | memtechacoustics.com



Prein & Newhof
3355 Evergreen Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525-9756
616-364-8491 | preinnewhof.com



Spalding, DeDecker & Associates
905 South Blvd. E
Rochester Hills, MI 48307-5358
248-844-5400 | sda-eng.com



Testing Engineers & Consultants, Inc.
1343 Rochester Rd.
Troy, MI 48083-6015
248-588-6200 | testingengineers.com



Wade Trim, Inc.
500 Griswold St., Ste. 2500
Detroit, MI 48226-4481
800-482-2864 | wadetrिम.com



Wightman
2303 Pipestone Rd.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022-2427
269-449-3994 | gowightman.com



Cemetery Products & Services

Nelson Granite
PO Box 178
Vermilion Bay, ON P0V 2V0
519-807-9198 | nelsongranite.com



Patten Monument Group
3980 W. River Dr. NE
Comstock Park, MI 49321-9080
231-728-2211 | pattenmonument.com



TriMedia Environmental & Engineering
830 W. Washington St.
Marquette, MI 49855-4140
906-228-5125 | trimediaee.com



Construction/General Contractor

Journey Construction Group
750 Chicago Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428-9195
616-690-8335 | journeycg.com



CPA Services

Boge, Wybenga & Bradley, PC
215 N. Main St.
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858-2306
989-772-1730 | bwbpc.com



Rehmann
1500 W. Big Beaver Rd.
Troy, MI 48084-3522
517-841-4235 | rehmann.com



Emergency Services & Ambulance

Emergency Vehicles Plus
670 E. 16th St.
Holland, MI 49423-3738
800-320-9749 | emergencyvehiclesplus.com



Employee Safety & Wellness

Pine Rest Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
300 68th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49548-6927
800-442-0809 | pinerest.org/eap



Financial Services, Advisors & Retirement Consultants

Empower
8515 E. Orchard Rd.
Greenwood Village, CO 80111-5002
817-888-2623 | empower.com



Mercantile Bank
1700 W. Big Beaver Rd., Ste. 100
Troy, MI 48084-3523
248-434-5929 | mercbank.com/government-banking/deposit-options



MERS of Michigan
1134 Municipal Way
Lansing, MI 48917-7886
517-703-9030 | mersofmich.com



Michigan CLASS
13623 Acacia Ln.
Dewitt, MI 48820-7880
855-382-0496 | michiganclass.org



Furniture Supplier

Polly Products
12 Charlotte St.
Mulliken, MI 48861-9701
517-649-2284 | pollyproducts.com



Insurance & Risk Management

Acrisure

315 S. Kalamazoo Mall
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-4806
800-748-0554 | Acrisure.com/GreatLakes



David Chapman Agency

5700 W. Mount Hope Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917-8590
517-214-7837 | davidchapmanagency.com



Decker Agency, LLC

2255 W. Centre Ave.
Portage, MI 49024-4819
269-327-2700 | DKRagency.com



Hartleb Agency, An EMC Insurance Company

5840 King Hwy.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048-5930
269-385-5911 | hartlebagency.com



Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority

14001 Merriman Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154-4262
731-513-0300 | mmrma.org



Michigan Township Participating Plan

1441 W. Long Lake Rd., Ste. 150
Troy, MI 48098-4403
248-318-0596 | theparplan.com



Nickel & Saph, Inc.

PO Box 46907
Mount Clemens, MI 48046-6907
586-463-4573 | nickelsaph.com



IT & Software Consultants

ACD.net

1800 N. Grand River Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906-6200
517-999-3266 | acd.net



Adna Technologies

2405 E. Mount Hope Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910-1906
517-679-3300 | teamadna.com



Black Rock Technologies

6175 Jackson Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-9140
731-338-8658 | black-rock.tech



Sehi Computer Products, Inc.

2930 Bond St.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3516
586-299-1580 | buysehi.com



VC3

5815 Clark Rd.
Bath, MI 48808-8789
855-487-4448 | vc3.com



Legal Services

Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC

470 W. Centre Ave., Ste. A
Portage, MI 49024-5362
269-382-4500 | michigantownshiaw.com



Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

4151 Okemos Rd.
Okemos, MI 48864-6202
517-381-0100 | fsblaw.com



Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC

313 S. Washington Sq.
Lansing, MI 48933-2114
517-371-8100 | fosterswift.com



Mika Meyers PLC

900 Monroe Ave. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-1423
616-632-8000 | mikameyers.com



Miller Canfield

150 W. Jefferson Ave., Ste. 2500
Detroit, MI 48226-4415
313-963-6420 | millercanfield.com



Rosati Schultz Joppich & Amtsbuechler, PC

27555 Executive Dr., Ste. 250
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3550
248-489-4100 | rsjalaw.com



Planning & Zoning Consultants

Carlisle Wortman Associates

117 N. First St., Ste. 70
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1354
734-662-2200 | cwaplan.com



McKenna

235 E. Main St., Ste. 105
Northville, MI 48167-2494
248-596-0920 | mcka.com



Print & Mail Services

Sage Direct, Inc

3400 Raleigh Dr. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512-2042
616-940-8311 | sagedirect.com



Recreation Equipment Supplier

Great Lakes Recreation

39 Veterans Dr., Ste. 310
Holland, MI 49423-7830
616-292-1478 | glrec.com



Sinclair Recreation, LLC

176 E. Lakewood Blvd., Ste. 40
Holland, MI 49424-2020
616-392-7441 | sinclair-rec.com



For details on vendors listed in the 2026 Vendor Directory visit michigantownships.org/vendor-directories.

Rural Economic Development

USDA Rural Development

3001 Coolidge Rd., Ste. 200
East Lansing, MI 48823-6350
989-673-8173 | rd.usda.gov



Sign Design & Fabrication

Postema Signs

7475 Division Ave. S
Grand Rapids, MI 49548-7137
616-455-0260 | postemasign.com



Utility Provider

Consumers Energy

1 Energy Plaza Dr.
Jackson, MI 49201-2357
517-788-1215 | consumersenergy.com



DTE Energy

1 Energy Plaza Dr.
Detroit, MI 48226-1221
800-477-4747 | dteenergy.com



ITC Holdings Corp.

27175 Energy Way
Novi, MI 48377-3639
877-482-4829 | itc-holdings.com



Water & Wastewater

Gosling Czubak Engineering Sciences, Inc.

1280 Business Park Dr.
Traverse City, MI 49686-8607
231-946-9191 | goslingczubak.com



Mead & Hunt, Inc.

6301 M-68 Hwy., Ste. B
Indian River, MI 49749-9366
231-333-6874 | meadhunt.com



Web Design

AccuNet Website Services

2414 S. Hickory Ridge Rd.
Milford, MI 48380-1924
248-684-8715 | civicclarity.com



Munibit

112 S. Main St., Ste. 2F
Saint Charles, MO 63301-2803
314-301-8990 | munibit.com



Revize

150 Kirts Blvd., Ste. B
Troy, MI 48084-5312
248-269-9263, ext. 16 | revize.com



Shumaker Technology Group

3721 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 103
Lansing, MI 48917-3600
517-325-3121 | stmunicipal.com



BEYOND THE VENDOR DIRECTORY

MTA provides many ways to connect you with companies supporting Michigan townships.



More information, including company descriptions and links to company websites, can be found on MTA's website michigantownships.org/vendor-directories. Companies can be added throughout the year, so check back often!



Ask for peer recommendations on MTA's *Community Connection* via michigantownships.org. Use your email address on file with MTA to log in and ask questions in the "All Members" community and receive feedback from your fellow township officials.



Meet some of the vendors listed in this directory, as well as others, at our *Regional Meetings & UP North Summit* held this fall at locations throughout the state and at MTA's 2027 Educational Conference & Expo in April at the Grand Traverse Resort in **Acme Township**. These events are great ways to connect with numerous vendors in a short period of time.



Legislative lowdown

A look at critical bills MTA is following as they move through the legislative process. Watch for updates in MTA's weekly newsletter, *Township Insights*.

SBs 6 & 7: Employment practices—Provides employer requirements for payment of wages and fringe benefits, and provides penalties for violations. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 16: Farmland—Allows relinquishment of portion of farmland from agreement or easement to make boundaries more regular. *MTA neutral.*

SB 46: Water supply—Regulates mobile home park water delivery systems. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 80 & HB 4084: Transportation—Provides criteria and funding, including grants or loans to local road authorities, for noise abatement measures. *MTA supports.*

SB 82: Public records—Creates a new act to allow judges to request a public body not publicly post or release certain information concerning the judge or judge's family members. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 86: Social services boards—Allows elected officials to serve on a county social services board. *MTA neutral.*

SB 110: Property tax exemptions—Provides for a homestead property tax exemption for the surviving spouse of an emergency first responder killed in the line of duty. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 120: Elections—Modifies process for voting without identification for election purposes to include proof of identity and proof of state residency. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 129: Open Meetings Act—Provides for remote meeting participation of certain non-elected public body members with disabilities. *MTA neutral.*

SB 145: Employment—Prohibits an employer from seeking or asking certain information about a job applicant's compensation history and credit history. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 161: Workers' compensation—Extends the presumption of causation of heart and respiratory diseases to certain members of police, fire and public safety departments. *MTA opposes.*

SB 192: Property taxes—Provides for the freeze of taxable value for primary residences of certain senior citizens. *MTA opposes.*

SB 246 & HB 4393: Landfills—Increases fees and surcharges for the disposal of solid waste, hazardous waste and naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM), and limits certain disposal wells and TENORM disposal. *MTA supports.*

SB 247 & HB 4389: Hazardous waste—Provides for injection well disposal fee. *MTA supports.*

SBs 248-256: Water utilities—Creates water rate affordability program and shutoff protections. *MTA opposes.*

SB 271: Open Meetings Act—Revises provisions of Open Meetings Act relating to virtual attendance and participation of members of public bodies at public meetings. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 278 & HBs 4539-4540: Housing—Modifies and expands the Housing and Community Development Fund to make financing available to middle-income households. *MTA supports.*

SBs 280-281: Recreation Passport—Makes state Recreation Passport fee mandatory for all vehicles, and modifies park passes for Recreation Passport and nonresident motor vehicle. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 285: Marriage—Modifies persons authorized to solemnize marriage to include township supervisors. *MTA supports.*

SB 288: Open Meetings Act—Modifies grounds for going into closed session when a public body consults with its attorney. *MTA supports.*

SB 292: Property taxes—Provides property tax exemption for principal residence of individuals 70 years of age and older. *MTA opposes.*

SB 319 & HB 5290: Collective bargaining—Requires minimum staffing levels within a bargaining unit

to be a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. *MTA opposes.*

SBs 416-417: Bottle deposit law—Provides for a referendum to expand the bottle deposit law, earmarks funds and provides for the revenue distribution. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 427: Open Meetings Act—Modifies remedies for civil actions against a public body, including court costs and attorney fees. *MTA opposes.*

SB 441: Stormwater utilities—Creates a new act that provides for municipal stormwater utilities. *MTA supports.*

SB 442: Property taxes—Modifies property tax exemption for certain nonprofit housing property. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 468: Elections—Prohibits use of electronic voting systems that contain certain parts or equipment. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 484-485: Property taxes—Amends existing authority for land bank funding to increase property tax exemption period from five to eight years and add all parcels foreclosed and sold at auction or claimed under the right of first refusal. *MTA opposes.*

SBs 597-598: Marijuana—Places limit on number of marijuana retailer and medical marijuana provisioning center licenses. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 621: Elections—Clarifies the definition of identification for election purposes to exclude mobile licenses. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 624: Liquor licenses—Requires local legislative body approval for a specially designated merchant license or specially designated distributor license. *MTA supports.*

SB 691: Elections—Moves statewide primary election to May, eliminates August election date and adds February election date. *MTA neutral.*

SBs 761-763: Data centers—Amends limits on water withdrawals and provides for energy and water usage report requirements for data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 771: Environmental protection—Regulates onsite wastewater treatment systems and provides for assessment and regulations. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 792: Economic development—Modifies Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act and extends sunset. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 793: Economic development—Modifies the industrial facility tax for plant rehabilitation. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 796: Appropriations—Provides funding for PFAS mitigation and water safety. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 817: Environmental contamination—Provides location guidelines for wastewater discharge. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 818: Environmental protection—Provides for guidelines on location of landfills. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 820: Elections—Allows consolidated precincts for certain local elections. *MTA supports.*

SB 829: Natural Resources Trust Fund—Provides funding for natural resources trust fund capital outlay projects. *MTA supports.*

SBs 898-899: Economic development—Modifies environmental brownfield redevelopment program. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 934-939: Mobile homes—Modernizes and strengthens regulation of mobile home parks, revises licensing and enforcement and provides for resident protections. *MTA neutral.*

SBs 950-951: Water—Provides for the Michigan Water Trust Fund and requires permit and license for water withdrawal for water bottling. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 960: Local government—Provides process to vacate certain deed restrictions. *MTA supports.*

SB 961 & HB 5969: Elections—Creates State Voting Rights Act. *MTA opposes.*

SB 962 & HB 5970: Elections—Creates Voting and Elections Database and Institute Act. *MTA supports.*

SB 963 & HB 5971: Elections—Creates Language Assistance for Elections Act. *MTA neutral.*

SB 964 & HB 5972: Elections—Provides for voter access and assistance provisions. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 971: Land sales—Regulates the purchase of residential homes by investors. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 983: Taxation—Allows local units to levy excise tax on rentals of accommodations if approved by electors. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 985: Land use—Prohibits a local unit from adopting or enforcing a zoning ordinance that regulates land development for residential use. *MTA opposes.*

SB 988: Property tax—Increases the number of days from 30 to 35 days to appeal a claim for a poverty exemption to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 1018-1019: Data centers—Provides for statewide moratorium on certain approvals for and the operation of any new data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 1046-1051: Data centers—Requires water and use permitting, energy contracts and ratepayer protection, labor standards for construction of data centers, prohibits nondisclosure agreements for public officials, requires community input processes and requires Michigan Public Service Commission to track and energy use by data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 1053: Neighborhood Enterprise Zones—Increases percentage, from 15% of a local government's total acreage to 20%, for the maximum acreage allowed of neighborhood enterprise zones (NEZ) containing only new or rehabilitated facilities and NEZs containing only homestead facilities. *MTA supports.*

HB 4006: Land use—Prohibits exclusion of commercial wedding or similar events in agricultural zones. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4014: Property tax assessments—Exempts transfer of ownership of certain real property to certain individuals from

uncapping of taxable value upon transfer. *MTA neutral.*

HBs 4027-4028: Land use—Eliminates zoning exemptions for large-scale renewable energy facilities and repeals PA 233 of 2023. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4049-4050: Chickens—Allows and requires Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices be developed for rearing of egg-laying chickens in residential areas. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 4079-4080: Special assessments—Reinstates and expands special assessment deferment program and modifies the income eligibility cap. *MTA supports.*

HB 4085: Land use—Preempts local zoning for mining cryptocurrency. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4118: Drains—Provides special assessments for levy against state Department of Natural Resources lands. *MTA supports.*

HB 4137: Speed limits—Modifies determination in accordance with traffic engineering practices. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4311-4312 & SBs 559-561: Revenue Sharing Trust Fund—Establishes a "Revenue Sharing Trust Fund" and dedicates a portion of general sales tax revenue to the fund for the purpose of distributing to townships, cities, villages and counties. *MTA supports.*

HB 4328: Appropriations—Provides supplemental appropriations for emergency response funding. *MTA supports.*

HB 4338: Local government—Creates Sanctuary Policy Prohibition Act. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4342: Revenue sharing—Provides for withholding of revenue sharing payments to townships, cities and villages for enactment and enforcement of certain sanctuary policies. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4397: Public records—Creates a new act to allow legislators, current or former governors, and current lieutenant governor, attorney general and secretary of state to request a public body not publicly post or release certain

information concerning themselves or their family members. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4411: Environmental protection cleanup—Provides cost recovery for removal of damaged vehicles and debris. *MTA supports.*

HB 4433: Labor—Protects adverse employment action for emergency responder when absence from work is due to response to an emergency. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 4443-4444: Property tax exemption—Exempts disabled veterans from property tax and creates specific tax exemption based on percentage of disability, without local reimbursement. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4583: Property tax/elections—Limits all millage elections to November ballot. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4707: Elections—Prohibits ranked choice voting procedures. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4731: Fireworks—Allows local ordinances regarding fireworks in certain circumstances. *MTA supports.*

HB 4757: Local government financing—Modifies financing requirements for investment of surplus funds of political subdivisions. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4763: Public employees—Modifies definition of “public safety officer” in Public Safety Officers Benefit Act to include certain medical examiners and part-time firefighters. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 4787-4788: Personal property taxes—Provides a personal property tax exemption for certain utility personal property and creates a specific tax on said personal property. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4799: Property taxes—Requires the postmark date to be determining date when property taxes are paid and other communications and notifications are provided by taxpayer. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4801: Property taxes—Exempts a qualified residential child day care from collection of property taxes. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4949: Shooting ranges—Expands liability exemptions for sport shooting ranges. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5057: Housing—Mandates director of the state Construction Code Commission to discuss and recommend

modifications to construction code to allow for triplexes, quadplexes, five-plexes or six-plexes in certain residential structures. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5079-5080: Crimes—Increases penalties and provides sentencing guidelines for disarming a law enforcement officer of a firearm if accomplished by force or if law enforcement officer is injured. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5103: Natural resources—Authorizes temporary erosion control structures without permit during high water levels. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5123 & SB 719: Franchise fees—Modifies definition of video service. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5192: Local government—Prohibits local government use of funds to hire certain lobbyists. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5225: Property taxes—Modifies eligibility level for a summer property tax deferment. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5246: Property tax—Requires parcels used to cultivate marijuana to be classified as commercial real property under the General Property Tax Act. *MTA supports.*

HBs 5319-5332: Drones—Regulates or prohibits use of drones in certain areas, prohibits purchase or use of certain drones by the state and public agencies, requires cybersecurity and data protection for drones, creates database of restricted zones and flight paths for unmanned vehicles, and provides penalties for using unmanned vehicles in a restricted zone or flight path. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5333: Landfills—Increases civil, administrative and criminal fines on the owners and operators of a landfill who violate state statute. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5396-5398: Sales and use taxes—Eliminates sales and use tax exemptions for data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5399: Public employees and officers—Prohibits local officials from signing nondisclosure agreements related to the construction of data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5450: Food trucks—Prohibits a county, city, village or township from adopting a rule, regulation, code or ordinance that imposes or collects a fee, tax or assessment for the operation

of a mobile food establishment. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5451: Food trucks—Provides for annual fire inspections for food trucks. *MTA neutral.*

HB 5452: Criminal procedure—Modifies sunset on certain costs that may be imposed upon criminal conviction. *MTA supports.*

HB 5467: Elections—Provides deadline for putting replacement candidate on ballot to fill certain candidate vacancies due to death, withdrawal or disqualification. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5468: Elections—Amends information required on nominating petitions and qualifying petitions to no longer require a candidate’s street address. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5488-5489: Emergency medical services personnel—Allows licensure of medical first responders and emergency medical technicians at 17 years of age. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5529-5530: Land use—Prohibits local ordinances from requiring a minimum parcel or lot size greater than 1,500 square feet for single-family residence. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5531: Land use—Limits required studies and documents for site plan approval and establishes a 60-day decision clock after receipt of an application. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5536: Natural resources—Amends the definition of wetlands. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5572-5573: Property tax—Modifies exemption for real and personal property owned by a nonprofit corporation to include continuing care community. *MTA opposes.*

HBs 5574-5575: Crimes—Prohibits and provides penalties for intimidating or harassing an individual based on actual or perceived employment as a first responder. *MTA supports.*

HB 5581: Land use—Prohibits minimum area requirement greater than 500 square feet for a dwelling. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5582: Land use—Mandates parking requirements at no more than one space per dwelling unit for multi-family residential use of property and

allows mobile homes in any residential zone. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5583: Land use—Mandates setback requirements at 15 feet or less from the front property line and five feet from the sides and rear for dwellings or outbuildings if the local unit of government is located in whole or part within a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or is located adjacent to an MSA area. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5584: Land use—Creates a statewide definition of “duplex” and mandates duplexes are a permitted use in any district where single-family residences are allowed. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5585: Land use—Creates a statewide definition of “accessory dwelling unit” (ADU), mandates ADUs be permitted by right in residential zoning districts and not subject to a public hearing, and requires mobile homes be allowed in any residential zone. *MTA opposes.*

HBs 5594-5595: Data centers—Provides for moratorium on certain

approvals for and operation of any new data centers. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5647: Property tax—Allows for county equalization department staff to perform township assessments. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 5660-5661: Housing—Creates the MI Home program and allows the Michigan State Housing Development Authority administration and operation of the MI home program and funds under the act. *MTA supports.*

HBs 5696 & 5945: Property taxes—Excludes property used to cultivate marihuana from personal property tax exemption and revised definition of qualified agricultural property. *MTA supports.*

HB 5717: Elections—Allows township to contract with an accredited individual to perform election law duties in the absence of township clerk. *MTA supports.*

HB 5872: Property tax—Eliminates uncapping of taxable value for transfers of property. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5878: Property tax—Eliminates all personal property tax. *MTA opposes.*

HBs 5928-5929: Land sales—Prohibits use of residential property by certain businesses and modifies definition of a crime. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 6026-6027: Short-term rentals—Establishes short-term rental registry and clarifies prohibition on ban on short-term rentals. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 6161: Charter townships—Amends conflict of interest policy for charter township officials. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 6221: Charter townships—Revises procedures to exempt certain charter townships from annexation. *MTA supports.*

HJR A: Property tax—Eliminates uncapping of taxable value for transfers of property. *MTA opposes.*



Michigan Township Participating Plan



The Par Plan has been providing specialized property and casualty insurance for Michigan public entities since 1985.

In addition to customized insurance solutions, the Par Plan provides members with a wide variety of risk control resources. These include the opportunity to apply twice a year for a risk reduction grant.

The Fall 2026 Risk Reduction Grant Cycle is now open. Qualified Par Plan members can apply for a risk reduction grant of up to \$5,000 until September 15, 2026.

To apply for a grant and details about membership in the Par Plan, visit theparplan.com.



The leadership ripple

Small stones, big waves

Leadership in townships rarely comes with fanfare. There are no headlines for late-night calls returned to residents, no awards for board meetings that stretch toward midnight, and no public recognition for the countless decisions made each and every day.

Yet in this quiet world of local government, leadership is less about titles, position or authority, and more about presence, consistency and care. When practiced with intention, even the smallest acts can ripple outward, shaping communities in ways far greater than their size.

Leadership is a practice—not a title

Many people think of leadership as a position, something one holds because of an election or appointment. However, in truth, leadership is a practice. It's demonstrated in the way one shows up, listens, decides and treats others when nobody is watching. Township leadership, in particular, offers a daily proving ground for this kind of intentional

This continuing education article and accompanying self-assessment (see page 29) are worth 2 elective credits in MTA's Township Governance Academy.



OBJECTIVES

- To share the importance of intentional leadership actions to inspire greater cultural cohesion, trust and transparency among township colleagues and the broader community
- To underscore the importance—and impact—that small actions can have in every community
- To inspire efforts to communicate effectively, listen attentively and work collaboratively to achieve desired outcomes

Visit michigantownships.org/learning/tga to learn more about the Academy, including online enrollment and course details.



In local government, big decisions like budgets, strategic plans and infrastructure projects naturally draw attention. But it is often the small, consistent acts of leadership that send the most significant ripples through a community.

practice. Resources are limited, challenges are frequent, and expectations run high. In such environments, the way a leader conducts themselves, often quietly, matters more than any ceremonial gesture or public recognition.

Leadership is about being present. It's about building trust through transparency, honesty and consistency. It's about acknowledging that you do not have all the answers, and that admitting uncertainty can be a profound act of courage. Saying "I don't know, but I'll find out" is not a weakness; it is a powerful tool for fostering trust, demonstrating accountability, and modeling the curiosity and diligence we hope to see in others.

A longtime township supervisor says it like this: *"I don't have to make a splash to make a difference. It's the small, thoughtful decisions every day—the phone call to a worried resident, the quick check-in with a staff member—that ripple through the community in ways you don't always see."*

The leadership ripple

Imagine a simple image: a still pond. Now drop a small stone into it. The ripples spread far and wide—much farther than the stone's size would suggest. Leadership works in the same way. In local government, big decisions like budgets, strategic plans and infrastructure projects naturally draw attention. But it is often the small, consistent acts of leadership that send the most significant ripples through a community.

These "stones" can take many forms: a positive interaction with a resident, a small policy adjustment or a listening

session with a community group. While each act may feel minor at the moment, its effects reverberate outward, influencing morale, trust, engagement and, ultimately, the wellbeing of the entire community.

As one township manager noted: *"It's easy to get caught up in meetings and reports, but one resident interaction can change the tone of an entire neighborhood. That's the ripple effect in action."*

Why small acts matter

The proximity of municipal leaders to their communities makes their actions highly visible. Unlike federal or state governments, township officials are often the first point of contact in crises or moments of change. Their words and decisions carry weight not only in official capacity but also in how people feel about the community they live in. A resident whose concern is acknowledged feels seen; a trail pathway safely repaired fosters confidence in leadership; a transparent decision-making process creates trust. These may seem like small moments, but collectively they form the foundation of resilient, thriving communities.

The impact of leadership at the local level is exponential. A township leader who regularly walks neighborhoods to connect with residents may not immediately change policy, but the personal connections create trust. Staff morale improves because employees see leadership in action, not just in memos or in empty words. Other community members begin to participate, inspired by the example. The ripple extends beyond the initial stone. Small gestures have large consequences.

Real-life ripples

Examples of small leadership actions that create lasting impact:

- **A supervisor's weekly walks:** One township supervisor takes a simple approach: walking through neighborhoods weekly to meet and listen to residents. It's not about being seen, he says. It's about hearing their stories and their concerns, and celebrating what's going well. These walks have increased trust, strengthened relationships between residents and staff, and boosted morale.
- **Lunches in the community.** A township manager makes it a point to regularly have lunch out in the community, enjoying different restaurants while also having conversations with the owner and their staff, as well as the local patrons. She often invites a township colleague to join her, broadening the township outreach in the conversations with residents and members of the business community. She intentionally selects various restaurants that represent her residents, including those reflecting a multicultural segment of the township. By doing this once or twice a month, she's met and listened to a lot of business owners and staff members—connecting with and gathering reflections from those within the community, fostering a deeper understanding of local needs.

According to the manager, lunching with a different official or staff member also builds stronger connections, trust and a deeper understanding of who they are.

- **Welcoming language policy:** A township board implemented a policy ensuring all township signage and communication are accessible and multilingual. It wasn't a huge policy change, just attention to detail, but it made people feel included. Residents now feel the township is for everyone. Engagement and participation in community meetings rose noticeably after this initiative.
- **Public recognition in public works:** A public works department supervisor began highlighting team achievements on social media and during township board meetings. It costs nothing to say "thank you," he noted—but it means everything to the staff. Employee morale improved, turnover decreased and other departments adopted similar practices, multiplying the ripple effect.
- **Senior assistance program:** A township deputy clerk started a weekly check-in program for seniors living alone. Just a phone call or quick visit, she says. It helps them feel seen and cared for. The ripple extended to families, neighbors and volunteers who now feel more connected to their township community.
- **Youth leadership engagement:** A board member began inviting high school students in her township to attend certain board meetings and to participate in advisory sessions. It's amazing to see the enthusiasm and new ideas they bring. These young voices help shape policies today and cultivate future leaders for tomorrow.

These examples demonstrate that leadership does not always need grand gestures or dramatic interventions. Often, it is the steady, thoughtful and consistent acts—those small stones—that generate waves of positive change.

The exponential power of ripples

The ripple effect of small acts is not linear; it is exponential. One thoughtful action can influence multiple areas:

- It strengthens staff culture by modeling respect, empathy and integrity.
- It builds citizen trust, as residents see their concerns acknowledged and addressed.
- It encourages collaboration across departments, creating a more cohesive and innovative organization.
- It models behavior for the next generation of leaders, inspiring others to follow suit.

Yet the opposite is also true. Neglect or inconsistency can send negative ripples, eroding morale, creating mistrust and stalling innovation. Underestimating the importance of small actions, whether intentional or unintentional, can have consequences just as far-reaching as the positive ripples we seek to create.

Begin with five stones

Leadership in townships begins with small, intentional acts. Here are five stones every municipal leader can drop to create meaningful ripples:

More small stones and their ripple effects

Leadership doesn't always require big initiatives. Sometimes, the smallest acts create the biggest waves. Here are additional examples from township and other municipal leaders across the country:



1. Morning catch-up with staff

Stone: A township manager spends 10 minutes each morning chatting with employees around the office.

Ripple: Staff feel valued and heard; cross-department collaboration improves.

2. Follow-up notes to residents

Stone: Sending a brief email or note to a resident after a concern is raised.

Ripple: Builds trust and shows accountability, creating a reputation for responsiveness.

3. Neighborhood clean-up support

Stone: Attending a local volunteer clean-up event.

Ripple: Boosts civic engagement, encourages volunteerism and strengthens community pride.

4. Staff mentorship program

Stone: A senior staff member mentors a junior employee weekly.

Ripple: Skills develop faster, retention improves and a culture of learning emerges.

5. Promptly fixing a damaged park bench

Stone: Addressing a minor repair as quickly as possible.

Ripple: Residents notice attention to detail, increasing confidence in municipal operations.

6. Hosting youth councils

Stone: Inviting students to participate in planning sessions.

Ripple: Inspires civic involvement in young people and brings fresh perspectives to leadership.

7. Personalized thank-you calls

Stone: Calling volunteers, first responders or staff after a major community event.

Ripple: Morale skyrockets; people are more willing to contribute in the future.

8. Transparent budget prep meetings

Stone: Making complex budget details accessible and understandable.

Ripple: Builds trust and reduces skepticism; residents feel informed and empowered.

9. Celebrating small wins publicly

Stone: Highlighting small successes, like a safely completed project or efficient service delivery.

Ripple: Encourages a culture of recognition and continuous improvement, motivating both staff and residents.

Each of these stones is small in isolation, yet collectively they create waves of trust, engagement and resilience that shape the community over time. Township leadership thrives on these ripples. They are quiet, consistent and transformative.

cover story

1. **Be present:** Show up physically and mentally. People feel the difference when a leader is truly listening.
2. **Recognize others publicly:** Catch people doing good work and name it. Public recognition validates effort and fosters morale.
3. **Communicate transparently:** Especially when it is difficult. Honest communication builds trust, even in uncertainty.
4. **Ask questions before giving answers:** Leaders do not need to speak first. Listening often uncovers insights and solutions that might otherwise be missed.
5. **Align small actions with big values:** Values like integrity, equity, inclusivity and service must be reflected in daily decisions, not just strategic plans.

The quiet courage of local leadership

In an era when trust in government is fragile, township officials have a unique opportunity to rebuild it, one act at a time. Leadership is tangible and immediate. It is felt when a senior receives the help they need, when a sidewalk is safely repaired, or when a resident feels heard. These are not headline-making achievements, but they are the victories that sustain communities.

Every decision, meeting and conversation contributes to the ripples that shape the community's future. Leaders may not always see the effects of their actions immediately, but the influence is there, spreading quietly and powerfully. The ripple does not require recognition; it requires presence, intention and care.

So, remember . . .

If you ever wonder whether your leadership matters, let this be your reminder: it matters beyond words. Every decision you make, every time you listen with empathy, and every small act of courage lays a stone that sends waves across your community. Leadership in townships is not defined by grand gestures or headlines; it is defined by steady hands, clear vision and quiet courage.

As one official says: *"Even the smallest stone can create waves. It's the quiet acts, done consistently, that change the shoreline of our communities for the better."*

Lead with integrity. Lead with heart. Lead with intention. Trust that your ripples are building something lasting. Because they are. And while you may never fully see how far your influence reaches, know this: the shoreline of your community is being shaped, one small stone at a time.



Marilynn Semonick, Chief Exploration Officer,
The Success Studio

Learn more at successstudio.com or email marilynn@thesuccessstudio.com

See page 29 for a continuing education self-assessment, worth 2 elective credits in MTA's Township Governance Academy.



MTA's **Township Governance Academy (TGA)** was developed to help you to be a stronger leader in your community.

TGA goes beyond board meetings and budgets, enhancing your leadership skills and motivating you to take on the challenges and opportunities unique to those serving as an elected local official. The Academy offers an in-depth understanding of the governance process, the role of the township and how to lead for success.

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Continuing Education Self-Assessment

Those enrolled in the Township Governance Academy (TGA), MTA's credentialing program, may obtain 2 elective credits for successful completion of this quiz. To obtain credit, participants must answer the following questions and receive a minimum passing score of 70%. The questions are based on content from the article, "The Leadership Ripple: Small stones, big waves," beginning on page 25. There is no charge for MTA members to take the quiz or to obtain TGA credit.

Completed quizzes should be emailed to tga@michigantownships.org, faxed to (517) 321-8908 or mailed to MTA, PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078. MTA will notify you of your results within two weeks after receiving your quiz. **IMPORTANT:** Please keep a copy of your completed quiz in your TGA binder. Interested in learning more about TGA? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 234, email tga@michigantownships.org, or visit michigantownships.org/learning/tga.

TGA Continuing Education—August 2026 The Leadership Ripple: Small stones, big waves

NAME: _____ TOWNSHIP & COUNTY: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. **According to the article, leadership is:**
 - a. The title one possesses
 - b. The position one holds
 - c. The presence, consistency and care for your community
 - d. The authority aligned with an elected position
2. **Which of the following is not a "stone" municipal leaders should drop to create meaningful ripples:**
 - a. Ask questions before giving answers
 - b. Ensure you are always prepared and have all the answers
 - c. Communicate transparently
 - d. Be present, physically and mentally
3. **Which of the following best describes the impact of why small acts matter when it comes to the words and behaviors of local leaders:**
 - a. Creates a culture that permeates through the community
 - b. Sets the tone for how people feel about the community
 - c. Transparent decision-making creates trust
 - d. All of the above
4. **The ripple effect of small acts is not linear; it is exponential. Which of the following might result from one non-productive, inconsistent action?**
 - a. Stronger staff culture
 - b. Mistrust and eroding morale
 - c. Enhanced resident trust
 - d. Collaboration and innovation
5. **What behavior might weaken community confidence and trust?**
 - a. Publicly expressing disagreements with fellow leaders
 - b. Intentionally working to collaborate and understand diverse opinions
 - c. Policy changes resulting from public input
 - d. Listening sessions with community groups
6. **List two small "stones" you've experienced in your community that began a ripple:**
 1. _____

 2. _____

7. **List three small "stones" you could toss to create a positive ripple in your community:**
 1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____



Both the U.S. Supreme Court and Michigan courts have issued recent rulings impacting Michigan’s townships.



SCOTUS: AV ballot postmarked by, but received after, Election Day can be counted

Watson v. Republican Nat’l Comm., 609 U.S. ____ (June 29, 2026)—This U.S. Supreme Court opinion dealt with a Mississippi statute similar to Michigan’s Election Law, that allows absentee ballots to be counted after Election Day if they are postmarked by Election Day, even if they are received after Election Day.

In a reversal of a Court of Claims ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision affirmed the authority of a state to authorize the counting of mail-in ballots postmarked by Election Day but received afterward.

According to the Opinion Syllabus: “The federal election-day statutes set the day for the ‘election’ of Representatives, Senators, and the President on a Tuesday in November. Mississippi permits certain residents, such as college students

away from home and senior citizens, to vote in federal elections by absentee ballot. Mississippi is one of roughly 30 States that count at least some absentee ballots mailed by election day but received afterward. Absentee voters in Mississippi may dispatch their ballots by mail or common carrier, and all absentee ballots must be ‘postmarked on or before the date of the election and received by the registrar no more than five (5) business days after the election.’

“In 2024, the Republican National Committee, the Mississippi Republican Party, and various individuals sued the Mississippi secretary of state and several election officials, contending that federal law prevents Mississippi from counting absentee ballots received after election day. According to plaintiffs, the election-day statutes use the word ‘election’ to refer to two acts—ballot casting and ballot receipt—so by setting the day for the ‘election,’ these statutes set the deadline for both. The Libertarian Party of Mississippi filed a similar suit, and the District Court consolidated the cases, and then granted summary judgment to Mississippi. The Fifth Circuit reversed, holding that Mississippi’s statute is preempted because the federal election-day statutes require ballots to be received by election day.”

The Supreme Court held that federal election-day statutes did not require ballots to be received by Election Day and thus did not preempt Mississippi statute providing that absentee ballots must be received by the registrar no more than five business days after the election.

In so ruling, the Court held that “the federal election-day statutes do not preempt Mississippi’s law because the defining element of an ‘election’ has always been the electorate’s choice of candidate. And a related federal statute—the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act—confirms that while federal law dictates when ballots must be cast, state law governs when they must be received.”

“The electorate’s choice is made when voting is complete, not when ballots are received. The most recent amendment to the Presidential election-day statute bears this out. While inserting the phrase ‘election day’ into the statute and marking that date as a specific Tuesday, Congress also provided that when States ‘modif[y] the period of voting’ in response to certain force majeure events, the term ‘election day’ shall ‘include the modified period of voting.’ That Congress defined ‘election day’ with reference to ‘voting’ indicates that ‘voting’ is the act governed by the statute. UOCAVA—which requires States to permit absent military and overseas voters to cast absentee ballots in federal elections and, as a backup, establishes a federal absentee voting system—reinforces the point. In detailing this system, UOCAVA repeatedly presupposes ballot receipt is a matter of state law. For example, to avoid any double counting, UOCAVA provides that federal absentee ballots ‘shall not be counted’ if a State receives the voter’s state absentee ballot by ‘the deadline for receipt of [that] ballot under State law.’ If the election-day statutes established a nationwide ballot-receipt deadline, UOCAVA’s references to state ballot-receipt deadlines would make little sense.

“Finally, this interpretation is consistent with the Constitution’s requirements for the electoral college. The Constitution requires the ‘Day on which [the electors] shall give their Votes’ to be ‘the same throughout the United States,’ Art. II, § 1, cl. 4, but says nothing about the day for receipt. The Constitution thus envisions a system in which receipt of votes is necessarily divorced from voting. And it sets the crucial, uniform day as the day of voting while leaving receipt to happen later. The federal election-day statutes follow the same pattern.”



COA: AV ballots with missing stub or mismatched stub number can be tabulated

Republican Nat’l Comm. v. Sec’y of State, ___ Mich. App. ___ (June 26, 2026)—This Michigan Court of Appeals case “concerns absent-voter ballots returned with a missing stub or with a stub number that did not match the number printed on the face of the absent-voter ballot return envelope.

The Secretary of State’s 2024 guidance instructed election inspectors to process those ballots as challenged ballots if the discrepancy could not be explained. The guidance also instructed inspectors to consult the qualified-voter-file absent-voter list as part of that review. If a ballot was missing its stub, the election inspector was to check whether the detached stub was inside the absent-voter ballot envelope. If it was not, the ballot was also to be processed as a challenged ballot.

“Plaintiffs filed this action in September 2024, challenging defendants’ guidance as inconsistent with MCL 168.768 of the Michigan Election Law and Article 2, § 4(1)(h), of Michigan’s 1963 Constitution. The complaint did not challenge the handling of a particular ballot. Rather, plaintiffs challenged defendants’ general statewide guidance permitting absent-voter ballots with missing or mismatched stubs to be tabulated as challenged ballots.”

“In an October 2024 opinion and order, the Court of Claims ... required defendants to revise the election manual to make clear that election inspectors must compare the ballot-stub number to the number on the face of the absent-voter return envelope, while also allowing defendants to continue the existing practice of comparing the ballot-stub number with the number recorded in the qualified-voter-file absent-voter list as an additional step.”

“On December 29, 2025, the Court of Claims entered plaintiffs’ proposed order verbatim as its final order and judgment. The order declared that MCL 168.768 requires the board of election inspectors to compare the ballot number on the ballot stub with the number on the face of the return envelope and to tabulate the ballot only if those numbers match. The order further declared that the board of election inspectors has no statutory authority to tabulate an absent-voter ballot with a missing or mismatched stub, whether as a challenged ballot or otherwise. The court then entered a permanent injunction requiring defendants to adopt plaintiffs’ 10-step cure procedure unless and until defendants promulgated a new rule creating an alternative cure procedure. The appeal followed.”

The Court examined in detail the process provided in the Election Law: “When a clerk receives an absent-voter ballot in a return envelope, the clerk must first determine whether the elector is registered in the jurisdiction and whether the signature on the return envelope agrees sufficiently with the signature on file (MCL 168.766(1)). Once a ballot is approved for tabulation, it is delivered to the entity responsible for processing and tabulating it (MCL 168.765(1), (4) and (5)).

“For election-day precinct processing, MCL 168.768 provides: The board of election inspectors shall verify that there is an elector’s signature on the absent voter ballot return envelope and that the statement on the absent voter ballot return envelope that the ballot is approved for tabulation is complete. If the elector’s signature is missing or the statement that the absent voter ballot is approved for tabulation is incomplete, the board of election inspectors must immediately contact the city or township clerk. If the

elector's signature is present and the statement that the absent voter ballot is approved for tabulation is complete, the board of election inspectors shall open the absent voter ballot return envelope, take out the ballot, and, without unfolding the ballot, compare the ballot number on the ballot stub with the ballot number on the face of the absent voter ballot return envelope. If the ballot numbers match, the board of election inspectors shall detach the perforated numbered stub and prepare the ballot for tabulation, as directed by the secretary of state. Each ballot must be inserted into the tabulator. One of the election inspectors shall enter the elector in the poll book as having cast an absent voter ballot.

"When an absent-voter counting board processes ballots, it must process the ballots and returns in as nearly as possible the same manner as ballots are processed in election-day precincts (MCL 168.765a(6)). Absent-voter ballots processed before election day must be processed and tabulated in the same manner and under the same requirements as absent-voter ballots processed and tabulated on election day (MCL 168.765a(13)). The Legislature also requires clerks and election inspectors to follow the Secretary's instructions and procedures regarding the processing and tabulation of absent-voter ballots, and it specifically directs the Secretary to issue binding instructions for absent-voter counting boards (MCL 168.765a(13) and (17)).

"In contrast, MCL 168.797a(2) governs the processing of ballots cast by in-person voters. The statute requires an election inspector to compare the ballot-stub number with the number recorded on the poll list. It then states that, with exceptions not relevant here, if those numbers do not agree, the ballot must be marked as 'rejected', and the elector must not be allowed to vote" (MCL 168.797a(2)). That express rejection language does not appear in MCL 168.768.

"The Court of Claims treated the phrase '[i]f the ballot numbers match,' MCL 168.768, as though it said 'only if the ballot numbers match.' But MCL 168.768 does not contain that limiting language. Considered in isolation, the conditional phrase could support plaintiffs' interpretation. It directs election inspectors what to do when the numbers match: detach the perforated numbered stub and prepare the ballot for tabulation as directed by the Secretary. The following sentence, however, states that '[e]ach ballot must be inserted into the tabulator.' MCL 168.768. Read together, those sentences support defendants' interpretation that a ballot may still be tabulated when the stub is missing or mismatched. MCL 168.768 does not state what must happen when the numbers do not match. Nor does it mention the situation in which a voter returns an otherwise approved absent-voter ballot without the stub attached. Because the provision is capable of more than one reasonable interpretation when applied to missing or mismatched stubs, it is ambiguous and must be construed in the context of the Michigan Election Law as a whole.

"The Legislature's treatment of in-person ballots resolves the ambiguity. In MCL 168.797a(2), the Legislature provided that an in-person ballot with a mismatched ballot-stub number must be marked rejected and the elector must not be allowed use that ballot to vote. MCL 168.768 and MCL 168.797a(2) both address ballot-stub comparisons during the processing of ballots. Both provisions are part of the Michigan Election Law, and both were included in the same recent amendments to that statutory scheme. They must therefore be read together.

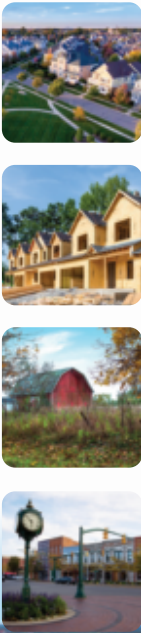
"When the Legislature intended a ballot-stub mismatch to require rejection, it said so expressly. It did not include comparable language in MCL 168.768. Had the Legislature intended to impose the same mandatory-rejection rule on absent-voter ballots, it could have amended MCL 168.768 to say so. It did not. Reading the provisions together, the difference in wording indicates that the Legislature did not prohibit election inspectors from tabulating absent-voter ballots with missing or mismatched stubs. That distinction also makes practical sense. When a stub mismatch is discovered while an elector is present at the polls, the ballot may be spoiled in the elector's presence, and the elector may be issued a replacement ballot. But once an absent-voter ballot has been returned and separated from the voter,



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that same corrective process is no longer available. The Legislature's decision not to impose mandatory rejection in that circumstance is therefore consistent with the different procedures governing absent-voter ballots.

"MCL 168.768 requires election inspectors to compare the number on an absent-voter ballot stub with the number on the face of the absent-voter ballot return envelope. Read in context and together with MCL 168.797a(2), it does not prohibit tabulation when a stub is missing or mismatched, and it does not require the rejection of an absent-voter ballot in those circumstances. The Secretary's guidance allowing those ballots to be processed as challenged ballots likewise does not conflict with MCL 168.768. The Court of Claims therefore erred by granting summary disposition to plaintiffs and by declaring the Secretary's guidance contrary to law. The Court of Claims also abused its discretion by imposing permanent injunctive relief without finding a real and imminent danger of irreparable injury."



MTA LDF win: States not required to pay 'fair market value' to owners for foreclosed property

Pung v. Isabella Cnty., Michigan, 609 U.S. ___, (June 23, 2026)—In a unanimous decision in an MTA Legal Defense Fund case, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that the U.S. Constitution does not require states to compensate former property owners based on the fair market value of property sold through a tax foreclosure. The court held that the proper measure of "just compensation" under the Fifth Amendment is the amount realized through a fairly conducted tax foreclosure sale—not a property's hypothetical fair market value—and rejected claims that the process violated the Eighth Amendment's Excessive Fines Clause.

Per the Dykema law firm, which represented the Michigan Townships Association, Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Association of County Treasurers as *amici curiae* in support of Isabella County, Michigan, "the Court unanimously held that the proper measure of 'just compensation' under the Fifth Amendment is the amount realized through a fairly conducted tax foreclosure sale—not a property's hypothetical fair market value—and rejected claims that the process violated the Eighth Amendment's Excessive Fines Clause. The Court found that in a situation like *Pung*, where the

property owner had years to take steps and avoid foreclosure, the auction sale price is 'just' compensation under the Constitution. This ruling allows state and local governments to continue the established and fair practice of returning to former property interest holders any sales proceeds in excess of taxes owed."

Per MTA Legal Counsel, although counties are largely responsible for foreclosure proceedings, this case still presented issues for Michigan townships. Most relevantly, the foreclosure process involves a so-called "right of first refusal," which gives the township "first dibs" on any foreclosed property before it is sent to an auction.

An adverse ruling would have significantly impacted a township's ability to purchase foreclosed property. Many townships have purchased valuable property in foreclosure, which has provided them with a cost-effective way to build and maintain public spaces like parks, community centers, fire stations and township halls.

COA: Owners of foreclosed property must follow statutory claims process before pursuing lawsuit

Armour v. Kalamazoo County, ___ Mich. App. ___, July 15, 2026—In a published opinion, a Michigan Court of Appeals panel held that owners of foreclosed property cannot bypass the statutory process the Legislature created in MCL 211.78t to claim an interest in any applicable remaining proceeds from the transfer or sale of foreclosed property: "Section 78t 'is the exclusive mechanism for a claimant to claim and receive any applicable remaining proceeds under the laws of this state.'"

MTA LDF win: Locals can't be sued under MISS DIG Act, affirms notice requirements for sewer damages

Zezula v. Brown, ___ Mich. ___, Docket No. 168483 (June 16, 2026)—In another MTA Legal Defense Fund case, per MTA Legal Counsel, DTE Energy and its contractor damaged a sewer line while performing electrical work, causing sewage to flow into the plaintiff's home. The plaintiff sued several parties involved, including **Independence Charter Township** (Oakland Co.), which owns and operates the sewer system in the area around the plaintiff home. The plaintiff argued that Independence Charter Township failed to mark sewer lines as required by the MISS DIG Act, and that by failing to do so, the township was legally responsible for all monetary damage caused by DTE and its contractor.

After thorough briefing, including the *amicus curiae* brief filed by MTA and the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in favor of the township.

The Court held that the MISS DIG Act does not authorize a plaintiff to sue a township for failure to properly mark sewer lines, and instead the plaintiff can only seek remedy under MISS DIG through a complaint process at the Michigan Public Service Commission. The Court also affirmed that sewage disposal system events, which can lead to governmental liability in certain cases, are subject to strict notice requirements.

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The **short-term rental** debate isn't cooling off anytime soon. Across townships, tensions are rising, meetings are becoming more volatile and legal challenges loom. Explore what your township *can* regulate, where legal vulnerabilities exist, and gain insight into enforcement limitations and restrictions that strengthen defensibility while helping your community strike a workable balance.

Enforcing ordinances is an important but challenging task. When regulations are tested, challenged or ignored, strong processes matter. From documentation to notices, hearings to appeals and penalties, we'll unpack what it takes to support effective enforcement. Explore the risks of inconsistency, where townships get tripped up and see how unclear ordinance language weaken your legal footing.

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Aug. 26: Treetops Resort Conference Center in Gaylord

Aug. 31: Conference Center at Van Buren Intermediate School District in Lawrence

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Send your completed registration form to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078;
fax to (517) 321-8908, email rebecca@michigantownships.org or register online at <https://bit.ly/twptraining>.
Need event registration assistance? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226. For other event-related questions, use ext. 234

upcoming MTA workshop

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Emerging Issues in Emergency Services

MTA's annual full-day event bringing timely updates, practical insights and strategies for addressing today's challenges.

Preparing for tomorrow starts today. Providing emergency and fire protection services is complex—and constantly evolving. MTA can help you stay ahead of the issues shaping today's township fire departments. This event—held September 9 at the Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth—brings the heat with updates from the state's leading experts.

Township board members, fire officials and anyone serving on your emergency services team will benefit from these important updates on this critical local service, and are encouraged to attend. Because when the pressure's on, preparation makes all the difference—and it all starts here.

Discussion includes:

- An **Update from the Bureau of Fire Services**, led by State Fire Marshal Thomas Hughes, Jr.
- **Insights from the Bureau of Emergency Preparedness, EMS and Systems of Care**, led by Division Director of EMS and Systems of Care Emily Berquist
- The fundamentals of **Peer Support and Helping Your Helpers** led by Gregg Ginebaugh, former Fire Chief and Emergency Manager (Ret.)
- **How Risk Hides in Plain Sight in Operations** led by former Fire Chief Patrick Nelson, Risk Control Representative for Michigan Township Participating Plan
- **Staffing the Station: Employment Law for Paid-on-Call** led by Attorneys Chad Karsten and Tom Forgione from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

Whether you're making decisions at the board level, serving on the front lines or just passionate about public safety, this event is sure to spark ideas, fuel better decision-making, offer solutions, provide valuable connections, and help your township stay safe and responsive.



Event Details

When:

Wednesday, Sept. 9
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Registration check-in and continental breakfast begin at 8 a.m.

Lunch served at noon.

Where:

Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

Emerging Issues in EMS Registration Form — —

Township and County

Name and Title

Name and Title

Name and Title

Confirmations will be sent via email to individual registrants. To add or update an email, contact MTA (517) 321-6467, ext. 253 or email database@michigantownships.org.

**Save time, register online
at <https://bit.ly/twptraining>**

**Held Sept. 9 at the
Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth**

☐ **Early-bird Rate*:** \$125/person
Expires August. 26

☐ **Late Rate*:** \$175/person
Applies beginning August 27 and on-site

_____ (# registered) x \$ _____ (rate*) = \$ _____

**Rates apply to MTA-member townships. All others, call for rates.*

Payment options:

- ☐ Check enclosed (payable to MTA) ☐ Invoice my township (members only)
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MTA's Regional Meetings return this fall

As an MTA member, you belong to the largest community of local government officials in the state. MTA's **Regional Meetings** are a great opportunity to connect with that community and other municipal experts to discuss the latest issues impacting townships. This full-day event offers sessions thoughtfully designed to cut through complexity and bring clarity to what matters most—from navigating legal pitfalls to financial fundamentals and staying ahead of legislative changes.

Engaging, relevant and grounded in everyday township challenges, every session is built to help you ask better questions, spot risks sooner and make more informed decisions for your community. Whether you're strengthening your foundation or fine-tuning your approach, MTA's **Regional Meetings** are your one-stop event for sharper thinking, stronger oversight and smarter governance.

Legislative Lowdown: Gain insights into the new fiscal year's state budget and the latest laws impacting your township. Hear about the legislative priorities shaping the 103rd legislative session, what lies ahead for the remainder of the session, and how your involvement can help make a difference. *Led by MTA's Government Relations Team*

Financial Forum: A practical look at fiscal best practices, preparing for potential downturns and recognizing financial stress. Learn proactive strategies to maintain stability, respond to red flags and understand the steps to take if your township is already facing financial trouble. *Led by Michigan Department of Treasury's Local Audit & Finance Division*

Municipal Missteps: Sometimes the biggest lessons come from the biggest mistakes. Review legal landmines, unintended consequences and "wait ... can we do that?" moments that trip up townships. From well-intentioned decisions to costly oversights, we'll help you spot trouble early and avoid common pitfalls. *Led by Michael Bila, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC*

Back to Basics Boot Camp, Where There Are No Silly Questions: Special meeting notices, Freedom of Information Act deadlines, meeting procedures—some questions come up again and again. Join us as we tackle the most frequently asked township questions. You'll get practical answers, useful reminders and a chance to have your own questions addressed by MTA experts. *Led by MTA's Member Information Services Team*

Turning Your Audit into Insights: An audit presentation should be more than flipping through financial statements and nodding along. Get an insider's take on the audit process to learn what questions you should be asking and what details deserve a closer look. Unpack who should be talking to whom and when, and turn your audit into a powerful tool for oversight. *Led by Rehmann Public Sector financial experts*

Reviving Rural Infrastructure: Looking for affordable financing for your infrastructure project? Learn how townships can access low-interest loan financing to support infrastructure, public facilities, and essential services. Current program focus is on core projects like water, sewer, housing, public safety, fire and rescue, telecommunications, libraries and more. *Led by Dom Restuccia, State Director of Michigan, USDA Rural Development*

Regional Meeting Registration Form

Township and County

Name and Title

Name and Title

Name and Title

Name and Title

Payment options:

- ☐ Check enclosed (payable to MTA) ☐ Invoice my township (members only)
☐ Charge to: MasterCard or VISA

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Which location will you attend?

- ☐ **Sept. 22:** Bay Valley Resort, Bay City
☐ **Sept. 23:** American 1 Event Center, Jackson
☐ **Oct. 7:** Crystal Center at Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville
☐ **Oct. 8:** Holiday Inn Grand Haven-Muskegon by IHG, Spring Lake
☐ **Oct. 13:** Treetops Resort Conference Center, Gaylord
- **Early-bird Rate*:** *Expires three weeks prior to event*
\$125/person
- **Late Rate*:** *Applies three weeks prior to event*
\$175/person

of Persons

Registration Fee

Total

x

=

**Rates apply to MTA-member townships. All others, call for rates.*

Send your completed registration form to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax to (517) 321-8908, email rebecca@michigantownships.org or register online at <http://bit.ly/MTARregionals>

Regional Meetings become our UP North Summit

When MTA's *Regional Meetings* series reaches the U.P. Sept. 29-30, it expands into **two days** of education, networking and fun! The return of our popular **UP North Summit** offers ample time to connect and explore the issues, bringing more sessions and even more value. *Summit* registrants get the same education (and networking) featured at the downstate regional events described at left, PLUS the educational sessions described below AND evening activities.

Plot Twists in Planning & Zoning: Explore timely (and complex!) land use issues like renewable energy, data centers and short-term rentals, while gaining practical insight into defensible enforcement. *Led by Michael Bila, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC*

Taxing Matters: A Treasurer's Lightning Round: Packed with practical tax collection tips you can put to work right away. From deadlines and delinquent taxes to legal requirements, common pitfalls and everyday best practices, get insights you need to stay organized, informed and ahead of the game. *Led by Cindy Dodge, Owner, LOR Consulting*

Meetings, Minutes & More with Mike: Meetings don't have to be painful, minutes don't have to be mysterious and the Open Meetings Act doesn't have to keep you up at night. Expect practical guidance, real-world examples and—knowing Mike—probably a story or two along the way. *Led by Michael Selden, MTA's Member Information Services Director*

Firehouse Focus: Designed to spark ideas and fuel better decision-making—get an update from the state Bureau of Fire Services on the hottest issues facing township fire departments. *Led by State Fire Marshal Thomas Hughes Jr.*

The Future You Fund: Whether intentional or not, every decision tells a story. So what story is your township telling? Move beyond “the way we’ve always done it” by rethinking whether your resources are reflecting the image you want for your community's future. Get practical strategies for spending with purpose. *Led by Cindy Dodge, Owner, LOR Consulting*

Evening event: Game on! Keep your eyes on the prize as each activity brings you closer to victory and the chance to walk away a winner. Opportunities abound to earn tickets for our prize drawings. So, grab your lucky charm and join us for an evening of fun, laughter and competition.

2026 **UP North Summit** sponsors



UP North Summit Registration Form

Township and County _____

Name and Title ☐ Full program ☐ Day 1 only ☐ Day 2 only

Name and Title ☐ Full program ☐ Day 1 only ☐ Day 2 only

Name and Title ☐ Full program ☐ Day 1 only ☐ Day 2 only

Name and Title ☐ Full program ☐ Day 1 only ☐ Day 2 only

Payment options:

- ☐ Check enclosed (payable to MTA) ☐ Invoice my township (members only)
☐ Charge to: MasterCard or VISA

Card # _____ CSV 3-digit code _____ Expires _____

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Sept. 29-30 Island Resort Conference Center, Harris

Register today! Availability after September 8 is not guaranteed.

Full-program rates: Include 10 hours of education, all meals, refreshment breaks and evening activity.

☐ Early-bird rate through August 25: \$220/person

☐ Late rate August 26 through September 8: \$250/person

Single-day rates: Include that day's sessions, meals and activities.

☐ Early-bird rate through August 25: \$135/person

☐ Late rate August 26 through September 8: \$165/person

Guest dinner and evening activity only:

Register your guest by September 3.

☐ \$45/person Reg. 1 Guest Name: _____

☐ \$45/person Reg. 2 Guest Name: _____

Total amount due: \$ _____

**Rates apply to MTA-member townships. All others, call for rates.*

Need event registration assistance? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226.
For other event-related questions, use ext. 234





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