

Michigan Township Focus

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION



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Reflections on my first MTA ‘Super Bowl’

When I first joined MTA last fall, then-President **Harold Koviak** and the MTA staff stressed to me the importance of MTA’s Annual Conference and Expo—the “Super Bowl” of Michigan township government. I have been to many conferences over my career, but it was clear to me that something was different about this event.

As I traveled throughout the state to MTA county chapter meetings in the months leading up to our April 2026 event, I would regularly hear stories about past MTA Conferences and have conversations with officials asking about this year’s event. At one chapter meeting, a few attendees shared that they were eagerly anticipating what educational sessions they could attend this year to help their township—and showed me photos from a Roaring ‘20s-themed event at a recent Conference. I knew that this was going to be something big!

All these Conference conversations and descriptions, however, simply did not do justice to the real thing. Our Annual Conference *truly was* one of the most impressive events I have ever been associated with. The halls of the Grand Traverse Resort were buzzing with activity and filled with conversation, laughter and smiles. MTA’s Board of Directors and other township volunteers helped the event run smoothly. I had never seen this level of board engagement at any previous conference in my life, and it was incredible to see everyone pulling together to serve our membership!

There are so many highlights that stand out to me about my first MTA Conference: the 50-plus educational sessions, excellent keynote speakers, and top-notch entertainment at the sponsored evening events and Annual Banquet. It was an honor to watch **Kevin Beeson** be elected 2026 MTA president and to spend time at the banquet with his family. I even got to catch up with some family members of my own who serve on township boards—**Gary Fahndrich**, **Saginaw Charter Township** (Saginaw Co.) supervisor, and **John Casadei**, trustee in **Oakland Charter Township** (Oakland Co.). The networking opportunities at this conference were eye-opening as well. I was able to see township officials from opposite sides of the state connect, share and develop friendships.

Most of all, I appreciated meeting so many new people from townships all around the state. So many attendees introduced themselves to me, offered words of encouragement, and taught me a little bit about what’s happening in their townships. After this Conference, I am even more convinced that the dedication and care township leaders have for our communities make townships the backbone of democracy in our state.

When you look over the general assembly hall at an MTA Conference, the sheer number of individuals who care about community and have the desire to learn how to help their fellow residents is heartwarming. You are the reason we exist and we are here to serve you! Working together, we have true strength and a bright future ahead.

In this issue, we share a look-back at the township event of the year—from a profile of our 2026 president and insights from our inspiring keynote speaker, to the numerous township leaders who were honored at an awards ceremony during the banquet. It truly was an honor to recognize these individuals, who embody what it means to be a leader in their community and are great examples for other township officials. You can also find our member-approved legislative policy platform that will guide the Association’s legislative efforts in the year ahead. Your participation in our adopted platform and support of Friends of MTA are so important to our work at the Capitol, and we thank you!

I also thank all the dedication, commitment to excellence and professionalism that I witnessed from our MTA staff. They work on this Conference all year long and it pays great dividends when the “Super Bowl” kicks off without a hitch. I must express my appreciation to our many speakers, vendors, sponsors and Allied Service Providers, who help us make this Conference the great event it is. But most of all, I want to thank each and everyone of you who took time to attend. It was great to be with you for those three days and I am already looking forward to seeing you again next year!

After this Conference, I am even more convinced that the dedication and care township leaders have for our communities make townships the backbone of democracy in our state.

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mission statement

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



featured articles

20 **2026 MTA President Kevin Beeson—Moving MTA, and townships, forward**
As 2026 MTA president, **Kevin Beeson** brings with him a philosophy to constantly try new ideas—whether to improve his township, when working with other municipalities, or considering how MTA serves its members. Read more about Beeson, his experiences in public service and his goals leading the Association.




36 **Using benefits to build a strong township workforce**
A strong benefits package helps create a stronger workforce. When thoughtfully designed and clearly communicated, retirement benefits can help township employers attract qualified candidates, encourage long-term careers and support employees as they move confidently toward retirement.



Take a look back at MTA's 2026 Conference & Expo!
Turn to pages 20-33 for complete MTA 2026 coverage, including a keynote address excerpt, photos, adopted legislative policy platform, award winners and program graduates, and more!

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DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

ADA website accessibility requirements deadline extended

All townships have additional time to ensure their website and other digital communications comply with federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.

At the end of April, the federal Department of Justice published an Interim Final Rule extending state and local governments' compliance deadlines. The vast majority of townships now have until 2028 to comply with the requirements, which seek to ensure all individuals can access information on township websites (including documents on the site), mobile apps, social media pages and emails. Under the rule, the newly extended deadlines are:

- **April 26, 2027**, for townships with a population of 50,000 or more
- **April 26, 2028**, for those townships under 50,000

Townships are encouraged to continue to work to ensure their website and other communications will comply with the requirements by the new deadline. The Interim Final Rule also impacts state government; MTA will share any information from state departments as it become available.

Find additional information about the ADA requirements in the February 2026 *Township Focus* cover story (note that the article was published prior to the deadline extension), as well as on MTA's "Website Development" webpage in the "Answer Center" under the "Member" tab on michigantownships.org (*member login is required*).



Retirement

After more than 25 years of service, **Roscommon Township** (Roscommon Co.) Fire Chief **Joe Williams** has been named "fire chief emeritus" by the township board following his retirement. Williams was presented with a "Roscommon Township Certificate of Distinguished Service" at a board meeting in March, where he also received a State of Michigan Special Tribute from Rep. Ken Borton (R-Gaylord). The township certificate read in part, "Through courage, integrity and steadfast commitment, your service has strengthened the department, safeguarded our community and set a standard of excellence for generations of firefighters to come."



COMPLETE COUNT

LUCA program allows townships to help ensure an accurate 2030 Census

Townships can prepare now to participate in the 2030 Census Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) operation—which allows local governments to review and comment on the Census Address List prior to the decennial population count, helping to support a complete count for communities.

A complete and accurate address list is essential to reach every living quarter and associated population to be included in the 2030 Census. A LUCA review starts with local governments reviewing their Address Count Listing File by tabulation block and comparing the totals to their own address list to determine if any discrepancies exist. Townships can provide suggestions to add residential addresses, delete residential addresses that do not exist, or update the geographic location of residential addresses. The Census Address List includes street address or other descriptive information about the location where people live.

While participation in LUCA is not required, townships are encouraged to get involved. Federal funding is distributed annually to local governments, states and other recipients using Census Bureau data. Accurate addresses help ensure an accurate count—and that Michigan and its communities receive appropriate federal funding, program support and representation. Learn more at census.gov (click on "Surveys & Programs," then "2030 Census"). As the 2030 Census nears, MTA will share information about preparations and planning, and how townships can help support a complete count.

LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

Township happenings

Helena Township (Antrim Co.) recently held a dedication for a new veterans memorial in its township cemetery. The event included the raising of the American flag, national anthem, a dedication prayer, 21-gun salute and the playing of Taps by the Kalkaska American Legion. The local Kalkaska Scouts of America helped to unveil the new memorial sign, which includes more than 175 names.



Photo from American Legion Post 480 Kalkaska MI

Montrose Charter Township (Genesee Co.) offers a free, public food pantry outside the township office for anyone in need, with a lobby collection box available for donated canned goods and snacks. Community members can also leave items directly in the pantry to lend a helping hand.

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.



MPSC CHALLENGE

Michigan Court Of Appeals issues opinion in PA 233 renewable energy lawsuit

The Michigan Court of Appeals issued a published opinion in early May in the case *In re Implementing Provisions of Public Act 233 of 2023*, an appeal filed by dozens of local governments challenging certain provisions of an order issued by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) concerning renewable energy legislation and local regulation. MTA Legal Counsel filed a brief in support of townships on behalf of MTA.

The court affirmed some parts of the MPSC’s order and struck down other parts. Public Act 233 of 2023—which largely shifted siting of utility-scale renewable energy facilities to the state commission, unless a township adopted a “compatible renewable energy ordinance” (CREO) with limitations on requirements—remains in effect. A summary of key provisions of the court’s holdings include:

1. **Compatible renewable energy ordinance:** The Court of Appeals held that the MPSC correctly interpreted the statute to limit a CREO to only those provisions contained in Section 226(8) of the act. A CREO may not contain requirements in categories beyond those set forth in 226(8).
2. **Affected local unit:** The court held that the MPSC incorrectly interpreted the statute to limit an “affected local unit” (ALU) to only those municipalities with zoning jurisdiction. Instead, an ALU includes all local units of government where a proposed energy facility will be located, regardless of whether the local unit has zoning jurisdiction.
3. **Hybrid facilities:** The court held that the MPSC correctly interpreted PA 233 to allow for “hybrid” facilities, meaning that the total megawatt (MW) value of multiple renewable technologies can be combined to determine whether the MPSC can assume jurisdiction over a project. For example, a wind project could include solar components, and the MW values of both would be used to calculate the threshold for MPSC jurisdiction.

4. **Meeting timelines:** The Court of Appeals held that the MPSC incorrectly interpreted timing requirements for a meeting within the affected local unit. PA 233 requires that at least 60 days before the mandatory public meeting in a local unit, a renewable developer must offer to meet with the chief elected official of the ALU. Within 30 days of that meeting, the chief elected official must notify the developer whether the local unit has a CREO and is therefore required to file for siting approval with each ALU. The MPSC’s order slightly altered this to say that the chief official must notify within 30 days of the offer to meet, but the statute says within 30 days of the meeting itself.

5. **Administrative Procedures Act:** The court held that the MPSC’s order was not subject to the Administrative Procedures Act because it was merely an interpretive statement and/or establishing application filing requirements, both of which it has the authority to do without engaging in formal rulemaking.

As of *Township Focus* press time, future action regarding the case had not been shared. Township officials can find more information—including PA 233 resources, a link to the Court of Appeal’s ruling and sample CREOs, on MTA’s “Renewable Energy—Utility Scale,” “Wind Energy” and “Solar Energy” webpages (access via the “Answer Center” under the “Member” tab on michigantownships.org; member login is required).



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MTA sample data center moratoriums available

As townships weigh considerations and potential regulations for hyperscale data centers, they may choose to enact a temporary moratorium on the receipt or processing of data center applications. Working with our Legal Counsel, MTA has available two sample moratorium ordinances: a regulatory ordinance and zoning ordinance amendment. The samples, along with additional information and resources, are available on MTA's "Data Centers" webpage (*access via the "Answer Center" under the "Member" tab on michigantownships.org; member login is required*). Consideration and adoption of moratoriums should only be addressed in consultation with your township attorney.



MTA will soon have available a sample data center ordinance. We anticipate the sample ordinance to be available shortly after *Township Focus* press time. Watch MTA's website, *Township Insights* weekly e-newsletter and *Township Focus* for details when available.

mta events | june

- | | |
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| 4 | <i>Election Ready: The Township Toolkit</i> workshop, Kalamazoo |
| 10 | MTA <i>Now You Know</i> lunchtime webinar: Meeting Misconceptions |
| 16 | <i>Election Ready: The Township Toolkit</i> workshop, Marquette |
| 17 | <i>Election Ready: The Township Toolkit</i> workshop, Gaylord |
| 23 | <i>Election Ready: The Township Toolkit</i> workshop, Frankenmuth |
| 25 | <i>Election Ready: The Township Toolkit</i> online webinar |

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All Michigan townships—no matter the size—face increasingly complicated legal requirements and challenges in a rapidly changing world. These days, it is incredibly easy for township boards, officials and employees to unintentionally find themselves in legal hot water, if they're not careful.

Recognizing this, Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbeuchler, PC (RSJA) has assembled a team of 31 municipal law specialists to assist townships and their officials avoid and, if necessary, navigate through any such legal challenges whenever and however they might arise. Every attorney at RSJA has proudly dedicated their career entirely to the cause of serving the public and public officials through the practice of municipal law. And through its Farmington Hills and Lansing offices, RSJA provides attorneys across the state with deep knowledge and experience in essentially every area of municipal law.

As a result, all RSJA municipal clients, large and small, benefit from what amounts to a fully staffed, full-time municipal law department at their disposal. Each RSJA client has a primary attorney of its choosing on call 24/7/365 to help address day-to-day questions, advise the township board and administration, and attend meetings. Should specific legal issues arise in specialized areas or in the unfortunate event of a lawsuit, that lead attorney can immediately tap the considerable legal resources and specialties made available by the over two dozen other seasoned municipal attorneys in the firm, all of whom are here to assist in the defense of your township and resolution of its legal issues, whenever they may be needed.

"They have a wealth of knowledge," said **Green Oak Charter Township** (Livingston Co.) Supervisor **Mark St. Charles**. "It's like one-stop shopping. If I need a labor attorney, they have one. If I need a land use attorney, they have one. If I need someone for the Michigan Supreme Court, they have one. The whole firm is a very balanced, professional and knowledgeable group of attorneys."

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Honoring 2026 TGA grads and inaugural ‘Red Book Ready’ class

Graduates of MTA’s two credentialing programs—the Township Governance Academy (TGA) and Red Book Ready (RBR)—were honored for their commitment to ongoing learning and development at MTA’s Annual Conference in April. The local leaders were recognized on the stage before nearly 1,000 of their township peers during the Opening Session at MTA’s Annual Conference in April.

Two officials from **Hayes Township** (Clare Co.) comprised the TGA graduating class of 2026: Clerk **Debra Hoyt** and Deputy Treasurer **Erin Cottrell** (pictured at right, left to right). They join Treasurer **Savannah Cavanaugh**, who completed the program in 2024, as well as former Treasurer **Maye Rood**, who also graduated from the Academy—making Hayes Township the township with the highest number of Academy graduates of any Michigan township, according to MTA records!

“TGA offered me the opportunity to understand all the aspects of township government to better serve my community,” said Hoyt, who called crossing the stage with Cottrell during the graduation ceremony “incredibly rewarding.” She added, “Along with the knowledge, I also gained a new respect for each township official’s roles.”



Hoyt was also a member of the inaugural class to complete MTA’s “Red Book Ready” program, a self-paced curriculum based on the widely used MTA guide *Authorities & Responsibilities of Michigan Townships*. Also part of the 2026 RBR cohort were **Atlas Township** (Genesee Co.) Supervisor **Jim Busch** and Trustee **Tracy Butcher** (pictured from left), and **Andi Knapp** (far right), **Maple Valley Township** (Montcalm Co.) clerk and MTA District 16 director.



“Red Book Ready” is a series of classes that take participants beyond the page, pairing practical guidance with real-world scenarios that help officials apply what they learn directly to their communities.

“With the Red Book Ready program, we wanted to encourage township officials to challenge themselves to a ‘deep dive’ into the scope of township functions covered in the book—not just their individual duties,” said MTA Staff Attorney Catherine Mullhaupt, who authored the *Authorities & Responsibilities* book, helped create the program and was part of the Opening Session ceremony honoring the 2026 class. “This took dedication, curiosity and a real desire to understand what a township is—and can be.”

Learn more about these two valuable educational programs—and how they can help improve your service to your community—at michigantownships.org (click on “Credentialing Programs” under the “Learning” tab).

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The firm also provides its municipal clients, without charge, a printed or electronic newsletter every other month on current matters involving local government law and cases. Newsletter articles are available mikameyers.com. To sign up to receive these newsletters, visit mikameyers.com/newsletter-sign-up/.

Mika Meyers PLC is proud to support the continuing education of its township clients, their elected officials and the members of the Association through its involvement as an Allied Service Provider. For more information, visit mikameyers.com.

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Advertorial

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 **Wednesday, June 10 from noon to 1 p.m.**

Meeting Misconceptions  

Township board meetings, annual meetings, special meetings, public hearings, workshops, joint meetings . . . the list goes on. Do you know the differences—and when each applies? If the variety of meetings has you second-guessing the rules, you're not alone. Join MTA Member Information Services Director Michael Selden for a clear, practical breakdown of meeting types and requirements. He'll share strategies for managing public comment, techniques for handling complaints and other board etiquette tips, all in just one hour. You can join us live, watch a recorded version later, or both!

Register online at bit.ly/NYKmta for just \$25 per session! Townships with an MTA Online subscription at the Premium level have **FREE** access to **EVERY** session for their entire township team! To see a listing of past episodes available on demand, visit learn.michigantownships.org/nyk.



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JUNE

1 Deadline for filing Form 2368, *Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) Affidavit* for exemption from the 18-mill school operating tax to qualify for a PRE for the summer tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(2))

Deadline for filing initial request of a *Conditional Rescission of Principal Residence Exemption* (Form 4640) for the summer tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(5))

Deadline for filing Form 4983, *Foreclosure Entity Conditional Rescission of a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)* to qualify for the summer tax levy. MCL 211.7cc(5)

Assessment roll due to county treasurer if local unit is not collecting summer taxes. (MCL 211.905b(6)(a))

By first Monday in June. Deadline for notifying protesting taxpayers in writing of board of review action. (MCL 211.30(4))

Not later than June 1. Requests are due from a tax increment finance, local development financing or downtown development authority for state reimbursements of tax increment revenue decreases as a result of the Michigan Business Tax reduction in personal property taxes. (Form 4650; MCLs 125.4312b(2), 125.4411b(2) and 125.4213c(2))

5 Deadline for assessors to report the 2025 and 2026 taxable values for each renaissance zone on *2026 Renaissance Zone Tax Reimbursement Data* (Form 3369). (MCL 125.2692)

Final day for townships to establish, move or abolish a polling place for Aug. 4 election. Beginning of period during which township board 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 absent voter (AV) counting board for Aug. 4 election has been authorized by local board of election commissioners. (MCL 168.764d)

Location of each early voting site for Aug. 4 election must be finalized. (MCL 168.720i)

8 *Not later than the second Monday in June.* Allocation board must issue final order. (MCL 211.216)

Last day township can withdraw from an early voting agreement. (MCLs 168.720f and 168.720g)

15 Deadline for foreclosing governmental units to file petition for tax foreclosure with circuit court clerk for March 1, 2026, forfeitures. (MCL 211.78h(1))

Qualified local governmental units report to the State Tax Commission (STC) on the status of each exemption granted under the Attainable Housing Facilities Act (MCL 207.914), Residential Housing Facilities Act (MCL 207.964) and Solar Energy Facilities Taxation Act (MCL 211.1162).

Deadline for submission of Water Pollution Control PA 451 of 1994 Part 37 (MCL 324.3702 and R 209.76) and Air Pollution Control PA 451 of 1994 Part 59 (MCL 324.5902 and R 209.81) tax exemption applications to STC. Applications received on or after June 16 shall be considered by the commission contingent upon staff availability.

Deadline for assessor's report to STC on the status of each neighborhood "homestead"

exemption granted under the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Act. (MCL 207.786(2))

Not later than June 15. Requests due from a brownfield redevelopment authority for state reimbursements of tax increment revenue decreases as a result of the Michigan Business Tax reduction in personal property taxes. (Form 4650; PA 154 of 2008, MCL 125.2665a(2))

Deadline for tax increment finance (TIF) authorities to file TIF loss reimbursement claims—Form 5176, *Request for State Reimbursement of Tax Increment Finance Authority Personal Property TIF Loss for NON-Brownfield Authorities*, Form 5176BR, *Request for State Reimbursement of Tax Increment Finance Authority Personal Property TIF Loss for Brownfield Authorities*, or Form 5176ICV, *Tax Increment Financing Personal Property Loss Reimbursement for Authorities with Increased Captured Value Loss*. (MCL 123.1356a(3))

20 Beginning of period during which clerk must make reasonable effort to verify or reject AV ballot application or AV ballot return envelope by the end of the business day after the application or envelope is received for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.766b)

County clerk must provide each township clerk or early voting coordinator with programming for electronic voting equipment and ballots used for testing at early voting site for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.720j)

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

Deadline for county clerks to deliver AV ballots for Aug. 4 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)

25 AV ballots must be available for issuance to voters for Aug. 4 election. (Mich. Const., Art. II, Sec. 4)

AV ballot drop boxes must be accessible to voters 24 hours a day beginning this day. (Mich. Const., Art. II, Sec. 4)

30 *Before June 30.* Supervisor shall prepare and furnish the summer tax roll to township treasurer with supervisor's collection warrant attached if summer school taxes are to be collected. (MCL 380.1612(1))

Beginning of period of required daily collection of Aug. 4 election materials from AV drop boxes on each day clerk's office is open. (MCL 168.761d)

JULY

1 Taxes due and payable in those jurisdictions authorized to levy a summer tax. (MCL 211.44a(3) and (4))

First Tuesday in July. Deadline for governmental agencies to exercise the right of refusal for 2026 tax foreclosure parcels. (MCL 211.78m(1))

6 Deadline for notice of early voting site for Aug. 4 election to be provided when temporary changes needed to early voting site. (If starting early voting before required date, deadline is 21 days before start of early voting.) (MCL 168.662)

Optional early voting may begin. (MCL 168.720e)

Deadline for notice of days and hours for voter registration for Aug. 4 election at clerk's office to be published in the newspaper. If considered advisable by the township clerk, notice may also be posted in at least two conspicuous places in each precinct. Notice must include offices and proposals that will be on the ballot. (MCL 168.498)

Deadline for clerk to post and enter into Qualified Voter File (QVF) the hours the clerk's office will be open on the Saturday or Sunday or both immediately before Aug. 4 election, and any additional locations and hours if applicable, to issue and receive AV ballots. (MCL 168.761b)

7 Clerks intending to process or tabulate AV ballots before Aug. 4 Election Day must submit written notice to the Secretary of State (if notice is not submitted by this date, tabulation before Aug. 4 Election Day is not permitted). (MCL 168.765a)

14 Deadline for precinct inspectors for Aug. 4 election to be appointed by local election commission. (MCL 168.674)

Deadline for notice of polling place to be provided when temporary changes needed to Aug. 4 Election Day polling place. (MCL 168.662)

16 Deadline for candidates without political party affiliation seeking partisan offices to file qualifying petitions and Affidavit of Identity for Nov. 3 election. Withdrawal deadline elapses at 4 p.m. on July 20. (MCL 168.590c)

17 Deadline to post notice on township website (if available) and in clerk's office of the location, dates, hours and number of election inspectors for

AV counting place if processing and tabulating AV ballots before Aug. 4 Election Day. (MCL 168.765a)

20 Deadline for public logic and accuracy test of early voting equipment to be conducted for Aug. 4 election by applicable election commission. (If starting early voting before required date, deadline is five days before start of early voting.) Notice of accuracy test must be published at least 48 hours before test. (MCL 168.720j; R 168.778; 168.798)

Deadline to register by mail or online and be eligible to vote in Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.497)

21 *Tuesday after the third Monday in July.* July board of review may be convened. (MCL 211.53b) Township board may authorize, by adoption of an ordinance or resolution, an alternative meeting date during the week of the third Monday in July. (MCL 211.53b(9)(b))

Registration for Aug. 4 election must be done in person with local clerk with proof of residency between this date and Election Day. (MCL 168.497)

Candidates for local school board and community college trustee have until 4 p.m. to file an Affidavit of Identity and a nonpartisan nominating petition. (A \$100 nonrefundable fee may be filed in lieu of a petition.) Withdrawal deadline elapses at 4 p.m. on July 24. (MCL 168.303)

23 Deadline for challenges against qualifying petitions or Affidavits of Identity filed by candidates without political party affiliation to be submitted to filing official. (MCL 168.552)

24 Deadline for clerks processing and tabulating AV ballots before Election Day to post revised notice of location,

dates, hours or number of election inspectors if needed. (MCL 168.765a)

Write-in candidates' declaration of intent form for Aug. 4 election due to respective filing official by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.737a)

Until 5 p.m. Deadline for electors to submit written request to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot for Aug. 4 election by mail. (MCL 168.765b(1))

Until 5 p.m. Deadline for electors who have returned their AV ballot for Aug. 4 election to submit a written request in person to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot in the clerk's office. (MCL 168.765b(3))

25 Deadline for county clerks to deliver remainder of ballots and election supplies for Aug. 4 election to local clerks. (MCL 168.714)

First day of mandatory early voting for Aug. 4 election. (Mich. Const., Art. II, Sec. 4)

27 Townships with a population of at least 5,000 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)

28 Deadline to publish notice of Aug. 4 election. One notice required. (MCL 168.653a)

By 4 p.m. Deadline for petitions to place county or local question on Nov. 3 ballot to be filed with the applicable local or county clerk. (MCL 168.646a)

30 Deadline for public accuracy test to be conducted by local election commission for Aug. 4 election. Notice of accuracy test must be published at least 48 hours before test. (MCL 168.798) (R 168.778)

Beginning of period when clerk must verify or reject AV ballot application or AV ballot return envelope by the end of the calendar day the application or envelope is received for Aug. 4 election. (MCL 168.766b)

By 31 Form 170-CFT, *Commercial Facilities Tax Report*, Form 170-CRA, *Commercial Rehabilitation Act Tax Report*, Form 170-OPRA, *Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act Tax Report* and Form 170-IFT, *Industrial Facilities Tax Report* must be filed with Michigan Department of Treasury Property Services Division on or before July 31 of the year following the tax year involved.

Clerk must post on website (if applicable) the location where precinct canvass of early votes for the township will take place for Aug. 4 election and time precinct canvass will begin. (Canvass cannot begin before 8 p.m. on Election Day.) (MCL 168.720j)

Eligible township that establishes Election Day vote center for Aug. 4 election must post notice of establishment and location of vote center on website (if applicable) and in clerk's office. (MCL 168.523b)

Until 4 p.m. Deadline for applicant to cure a signature deficiency on the application to receive an AV ballot by first-class mail. (MCL 168.761)

Until 5 p.m. Deadline for clerks to send AV ballot via first-class mail. (MCL 168.761)

Until 5 p.m. Deadline for electors who have lost their AV ballot for Aug. 4 election or not yet received their ballot in the mail to submit a written request to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot in the clerk's office or by mail. (MCL 168.765b(5))



I have heard that there are important amendments to the Land Division Act—but I am uncertain what the Land Division Act does. Can you explain?

The Land Division Act (LDA) is the latest iteration of legislation affecting the division of land and platting requirements sufficient to establish and transfer title. The earliest legislation was enacted in 1821 as part of the Territorial Laws (1 Terr. Laws 816). In the case of *Martin v Beldean*, the Michigan Supreme Court addressed some of this early history by indicating that:

“In the earliest days of this state, indeed, even before statehood, in order to allow townships to be subdivided into discrete areas containing, for example, residential lots, dedicated streets, alleys, parks, etc., plat legislation was enacted. After Michigan became a state in 1837 there were numerous statutes amending and revising the requirements for recording and changing plats over the years. Further, in 1873 Michigan began centrally maintaining a file of all plats with the State Treasurer so that interested individuals could inspect them and ascertain the rights and limitations of a given plat. ...” (469 Mich 541, 543-544, citations omitted)

The more recent roots of the LDA stem from the Michigan Plat Act (Public Act 172 of 1929) and then the Michigan Subdivision Control Act (PA 288 of 1967). The Subdivision Control Act was later amended and renamed the Land Division Act (PA 591 of 1996). Although various applications of the LDA can be complex, it essentially addresses the number of divisions that can be made of unplatted property before the property is required to be platted. It then provides the regulations for the platting process. The regulated land division is for the purpose of sale, or lease exceeding one year, or of building development.

The platting process is complex, expensive and time consuming, therefore, many developers try to avoid platting though developing divisions at a number below the threshold for platting (four or less parcels for the first 10 acres or fraction thereof; more divisions and bonus divisions are allowed for larger parcels) or by proceeding with development as a site condominium. Both of these work-arounds present their own issues. Four or less divisions for the first 10 acres may not allow enough homes to be built and site condominium development is still complex and expensive. As will be discussed, recent amendments to the LDA increase the number of development parcels that can be created before having to use the platting process. This makes many residential developers excited that they will be able to divide

and develop more properties without having to create a plat. The question will be whether local municipalities are ready for this change in the law and the new development concepts that will emerge. Your zoning ordinance and land division ordinance will need to be ready for these changes.

Lastly, it is important to understand that this system regulating the division of land started well before township zoning control over land that began in 1943 with enactment of the Township Rural Zoning Act (PA 184 of 1943) and the current version of township zoning under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006). With zoning controlling the development of land now, some have considered the LDA antiquated. For example, zoning will control a buildable lot size depending on the zoning district or use. The number of buildable divisions will still be controlled by the zoning ordinance. Unzoned townships will face the dilemma of more buildable parcels being created.

Another feature of the new LDA amendment is that townships can choose to allow even more divisions than allowed in the LDA before the platting requirement kicks in. Under the new amendment, a township could allow unlimited divisions, thereby bypassing the platting requirement entirely. How a municipality regulates these developments will become even more important moving forward.



What are the new amendments to the Land Division Act that I have been hearing about?

On Dec. 23, 2025, Gov. Whitmer signed into law PA 58, which amends MCL 560.108 of the LDA and made two important revisions. The first amendment changes the number of divisions that can be made from the first 10 acres of an unplatted parcel. For almost 100 years, a property owner could make four divisions from the first 10 acres or fraction thereof; now PA 58 allows for up to 10 divisions for the first 10 acres or fraction thereof. Practically, this will allow for more dwelling parcels to be created without having to create a plat. This increase in the number of allowed divisions goes into effect on March 24, 2027. (MCL 560.108(2)) Until going into effect, the number of such divisions remains at four. Municipalities now have a short window to review and revise their ordinances accordingly to handle this increase in the number of potential divisions.

The second revision is truly groundbreaking as it authorizes, for the first time, a local ordinance to allow a greater number of splits than the restrictions contained in the LDA. This new provision states that, “Beginning on the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subsection, a parcel or tract may be partitioned or split at any time into a greater number of parcels or tracts than otherwise

authorized by this section if the partitioning or splitting is authorized by and complies with standards set forth in an ordinance of the municipality or county having authority to approve or disapprove a division under section 109(1).” (MCL 560.108(6))

This section took effect on March 24, 2026. It allows a township or a county, if the township has transferred land division approval to the county, to adopt ordinance standards allowing for more divisions than otherwise allowed in MCL 560.108. An ordinance could be enacted to put in the 10 splits before the March 24, 2027, effective date or to allow for even more splits. The ordinance could authorize a greater number of splits to the point where platting will no longer be a requirement but rather just another option.

The LDA has a provision that allows a township with a population of 2,500 or less to enter into an agreement with a county to transfer to the county authority to approve or disapprove a land division. Under this circumstance, the county can exercise this new authorization to adopt ordinance provisions that allow for more divisions. If your township has transferred this authority to the county, you should have discussion with the county as to whether it intends to allow more splits and consider if your township wants to take back this authority to approve or disapprove land divisions.

What should our township be doing to get ready for the PA 58 LDA amendments?





Townships, should be considering the following:

1. Every township should be reviewing its land division ordinance and zoning ordinance to make sure it will not be in conflict with the 10 divisions that will be allowed for the first 10 acres or fraction thereof. Many ordinances will explicitly only allow the four divisions; this will need to be revised. With that said, just because a developer can create 10 splits from 10 acres does not mean that zoning cannot or does not further address lot size. If the zoning ordinance requires two-acre residential lots in its agricultural district, a developer would still only be able to build potentially five dwellings on the 10 acres.
2. If a township is unzoned, it may need to decide whether the potential for greater development with more divisions is a reason to implement a zoning ordinance.
3. Is your current process for tracking land divisions sufficient, as it will need to be able to track many more divisions that may be created over a long period of time.
4. Whether the township should develop new ordinance provisions, as now allowed under the LDA, providing for an even greater number of splits than permitted in the LDA before platting is required. This would create a new form of unplatted development that would need

local zoning and development regulations. It could render platting an outdated option.

5. Are your current zoning ordinance provisions sufficient to regulate such items as minimum parcel area, minimum width, accessibility of the parcels, required utilities such as sewer and water, road frontage rather than driveway access, road maintenance, allowance of public or private road frontage, development process, and triggers for more intensive zoning and site development requirements?
6. Townships that have transferred their land division approval or disapproval authority to a county may want to consider taking this authority back to help assure better local control. At a minimum, discussion with the county should ensue to determine if it intends to allow more splits for parcels under the new amendment to the LDA.
7. Townships should be working with their attorney, planner and assessor regarding proper implementation of these new amendments. If the township also has a planning commission, it should work with them regarding the land use plan and zoning ordinance regarding these new development options created by the PA 58 amendments.

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.



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A busy time in Lansing

Revenue Sharing Trust Fund, housing preemption and property tax reform at the legislative forefront

June will be especially busy for the Legislature as it works to finalize the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, along with several key issues impacting local governments. We need officials to engage with lawmakers as efforts affecting Michigan townships move through the legislative process.

Revenue Sharing Trust Fund passes Senate

One of MTA's top priorities is establishing a dedicated Revenue Sharing Trust Fund, earmarking a portion of the state's sales tax to the fund to ensure a stable and reliable funding stream for local governments.

MTA is pleased to share that legislation to make this priority a reality—Senate Bills 559, 561 and 912, sponsored by Sens. Jeremy Moss (D-Bloomfield Twp.), John Cherry (D-Flint) and Veronica Klinefelt (D-Eastpointe)—received unanimous approval by the Senate in late April. MTA Director of Government Relations Judy Allen testified in support of the bills, bringing with her more than 500 cards



of support submitted by township officials. We thank all members who signed a card of support and/or contacted their state senator in favor of the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund bills.

“This legislation is very important to our members,” Allen told the Senate committee, noting that the support cards were signed by townships across the state in just two days. “Townships have faced significant reductions in revenue sharing over the past two decades, and a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund would provide sustainable funding to support infrastructure investments and ensure local governments can continue delivering essential services to their communities.”

The Association also appreciates the unanimous support of all 37 senators on this vital legislation to provide dedicated and predictable resources to local governments. The bills are now in the House, and MTA encourages our members to reach out to your state representative to support this package—ensuring stable, sustainable funding to invest in communities, strengthen quality public safety, maintain infrastructure, plan effectively and create vibrant quality of life where residents want to live and local economies can thrive.

House passes property tax reform

After several months of discussion, nine bills were introduced—with eight of the bills being passed by mainly House Republicans in late May—to provide broad property tax reform and make major changes to Michigan’s tax structure, including a reduction in property taxes. The eight bills would eliminate the “pop-up” (uncapping) for all property when sold, eliminate the State Education Tax (6 mills), eliminate the state real estate transfer tax, eliminate all personal property taxes (including utility personal property taxes)—reducing funding to local governments and schools, and require utilities provide a reduction in residential utility rates.

The ninth bill in the package as introduced is a revenue replacement mechanism (HB 5880) for schools and local governments, creating a new tax on services. However, HB 5880 was not considered and remains in committee. While schools would be held harmless under HB 5880 and remaining revenue generated would go to local units of government, the bill does not provide guaranteed replacement funding for local governments; it states local governments would receive any remaining revenue after schools were held harmless—and if insufficient revenue, the amount would be prorated for local governments.

A constitutional amendment was also introduced to eliminate the pop-up tax on the sale of all property. It also was not considered and remains in committee.

The bill package includes:

- HB 5872 would eliminate the uncapping or “pop-up” tax when the property is sold. Currently, when a property is sold, its taxable value resets to match the current market value.
- HB 5873 would eliminate the six-mill State Education Tax.
- HB 5874 would repeal the state real estate transfer tax.
- HBs 5875–5877 would amend statutes to reflect the repeal of the state real estate transfer tax.
- HB 5878 would eliminate ALL personal property taxes, including utility personal property taxes.
- HB 5879 would require public utilities to provide a correlating reduction in residential rates.
- HB 5880 would create a 6% sales tax on “luxury” services to be deposited in a dedicated fund with distribution to the state’s School Aid Fund and remaining funds allocated to local units of government.
- House Joint Resolution T, a constitutional amendment, would eliminate the uncapping (pop-up tax) for all property when sold.

Fiscal estimates for the eight bills that passed project a \$4.9 billion reduction in total tax revenue for the state, local governments and schools.

MTA submitted a letter of opposition outlining fiscal concerns with the funding reductions in HBs 5872 and 5878 (eliminating the uncapping and eliminating personal property taxes, respectively) due to the substantial long-term financial impacts they impose on local units of government. Any revenue proposal needs to include full reimbursement, along with a growth component to maintain critical services for communities long term. MTA remains committed to collaboration with the Legislature and the governor on

property tax reform solutions that strengthen the long-term sustainability and reliability of the reimbursement structure for local governments.

Housing preemption bills ‘undermine local governance without a guarantee of success’

In mid-May, housing preemption legislation—HBs 5529-5531 and 5581-5585—were before the House Government Operations Committee. No vote was taken and the fight to retain local decision-making and stop these preemption efforts continues. MTA thanks all the township leaders who came to Lansing for the committee hearing, and we also thank those officials who have reached out to their lawmakers to ask them to stand with local voices and with Michigan communities and oppose these bills. Please continue to talk with your state representative and encourage your residents and community members to do the same.

The legislation would significantly restrict local authority by preempting community-based decision-making on key zoning issues, including minimum setbacks, lot sizes, dwelling unit sizes, duplexes and accessory dwelling units. While MTA and township leaders were prepared to testify at the May committee hearing, we were unable to do so. Written testimony was submitted, however, along with more than 2,400 signatures gathered in our joint letter of opposition (visit michigantownships.org/housing-preemption to sign your name if you have not already done so). Township leaders also joined fellow municipal officials in voicing their opposition to the legislation at a press conference (*pictured at right*) held with the Michigan Municipal League and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments after the hearing.

Flanked by a chorus of local officials, as well as Reps. Samantha Steckloff (D-Farmington Hills) and Jaime Green (R-Richmond), and Sen. Sue Shink (D-Ann Arbor), township officials shared their front-line perspectives on the harmful impact the legislation will have on local communities, while doing nothing to guarantee more affordable housing.

Muskegon Charter Township (Muskegon Co.) Supervisor **Jennifer Hodges**, who also serves as MTA District 15 director, shared her unique insights as both a township official and in her work as county housing coordinator. “In my role as the Muskegon County housing coordinator, I know firsthand the housing challenges this state faces,” Hodges said. “As a township supervisor, I know the importance of listening and responding to the concerns of our residents. Michigan is not a one-size-fits-all state. We have urban, suburban and rural communities, all with different infrastructure capacity, housing markets and growth patterns. Many factors driving housing shortages and affordability challenges are far bigger than local zoning. Overriding local zoning does not build new homes or improve affordability—it undermines local governance without a guarantee of success.”



Clinton Charter Township (Macomb Co.) Supervisor **Paul Gielegem** emphasized the role of local zoning and planning, guided by resident input and local insights and expertise about how communities want to grow and evolve. "Local leaders balance housing needs, economic development, environmental protection, infrastructure capacity and neighborhood character," he said. "Removing local flexibility risks undermining years of thoughtful work and community consensus. We are here to say clearly: local voices matter. Local accountability matters. And community-led decision-making must remain at the center of Michigan's future."

Several other township leaders, including **Canton Charter Township** (Wayne Co.) Supervisor **Anne Marie Hudak-Graham**, **Macomb Township** (Macomb Co.) Supervisor **Frank Vivanio**, **Chesterfield Charter Township** (Macomb Co.) Supervisor **Brad Kersten**, and **Allendale Charter Township** (Ottawa Co.) Supervisor **Adam Elenbaas** were in attendance, spoke at the press conference, were prepared to testify and/or met with legislators on the negative impact these bills will have on all communities in the state.

Please keep reaching out to your lawmakers and sharing your opposition on this harmful preemption effort.

Treasury temporarily suspends Fire Equipment Grant Program applications

At time of *Township Focus* press, the application process for the state Fire Equipment Grant Program remained temporarily suspended to allow for modifications to the eligibility requirements. The grant program, funded by a one-time \$8 million appropriations in the FY 26 state budget, allows townships to apply for a grant for the purchase of fire equipment or fire gear for on-call, part-time or volunteer firefighters. The competitive Fire Equipment Grant Program requires a minimum of \$4 million to be distributed to local units of government with predominately on-call, part-time or volunteer fire departments. 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.

Once the application is reopened, your township can apply by submitting the *Fire Equipment Grant Program Application* (Form 5874), along with a proposed grant budget detailing how



funds will be used to purchase fire equipment and fire gear for firefighters who are on-call, part-time, or volunteer. Townships can request an application when reopened via the state's eSignature Solution system. Applications must be submitted electronically using eSignature.

Once updated eligibility requirements are available, the state Department of Treasury will reopen the application process. MTA will also notify members when the application process is open and available. It is anticipated that the original June 19 deadline will also be extended.

More information, including an online application guide, can be found by visiting the state's Fire Equipment Grant Program webpage at michigan.gov/treasury (click on "Local Government," then "Revenue Sharing" and "Fire Equipment Grant"). Questions? Call (517) 335-7484 or email Treas-FireGrant@michigan.gov.

Public Safety Revenue Sharing grants distributed

Townships received Public Safety Revenue Sharing (PSRS) grants in early May. This one-time grant payment for FY 2026 was approved in the state budget last fall, to each local unit based on their violent crime counts, reported to the Michigan State Police for calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024. If townships did not report any violent crimes for this time frame, they would not have received a payment. Payments were issued through the state SIGMA system and were available on May 7. No application or reporting is required for the PSRS grant.

All township expenses using these funds must be for operational or capital expenses related to public safety and designed to reduce identified risks to public safety and cannot include unproven intervention solutions to community violence. At least 75% of the distribution must be used to fund a law enforcement agency or law enforcement officers, while up to 25% can be to fund other non-law enforcement-related public safety purposes. Learn more at michigan.gov/treasury (click on "Local Government," then "Revenue Sharing" and "Public Safety Revenue Sharing"). Contact (517) 335-7484 or at TreasRevenueSharing@michigan.gov with questions.

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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 81 & HB 4070: Indigent Defense Commission—Expands Michigan Indigent Defense Commission Act to include youth. *MTA monitoring.*

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 240 & HB 4699: Term of office—Modifies term of office start date for township officials to Dec. 1. *MTA neutral.*

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 423: Property taxes—Modifies sunset on certain delinquent tax payment reduction and foreclosure avoidance programs. *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.*

SB 581: Tax increment financing—Modifies definition of downtown district to include separate and distinct geographic areas in a business district if the municipality is located on the mainland and one or more islands and a body of water is between the two separate and distinct geographic areas. *MTA supports.*

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 721-722 & HBs 5305-5306: Economic development—Extends sunset for Commercial Redevelopment Act and Commercial Rehabilitation Act. *MTA supports.*

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 assessments 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.*

SB 900 & HB 4644: Traffic regulation—Allows operation of golf carts on streets and county roads in municipalities with population under 65,000. *MTA neutral/ 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.*

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 deferral 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 and 912: 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.*

HBs 5233: Labor—Requires up to 26 days of annual paid military leave for certain members of a fire department or law enforcement agency. *MTA opposes.*

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.*

HB 5506: Public employees and officers—Prohibits local officials from acting as lobbyists for compensation outside of the course and scope of the official's office. *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 5570-5571: Construction code—Allows certain multiple-family dwellings to have a single interior exit stairway if specific conditions are met. *MTA supports.*

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 tax—Excludes property used to cultivate marijuana from personal property tax exemption and revises 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.*

HBs 5805-5807: Tax credit—Provide a housing opportunity tax credit program for qualified projects that are eligible for the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit. *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.*

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

2026 MTA President Kevin Beeson

Moving MTA, and townships, forward

In more than four decades working in local government, **Kevin Beeson** has seen local services, programs, technologies and more change and evolve. A key lesson that he has learned—and one that he brings to his role leading MTA as its 2026 president—is to never quit trying to improve.



It's a mindset that guides how he serves his community, as supervisor of **Pine River Township** (Gratiot Co.), the vision he offers to his colleagues on the MTA Board of Directors, and the message he shares with Association members. "That's part of me," he said. "I've never quit trying. I don't always know how we get there, but I don't want to stop trying new things."

Beeson—who was elected president at the Annual Meeting on April 23 during the Association's Annual Conference & Expo—has lived by that philosophy throughout his career in public service. When he first started working for Midland County in 1984, he ran the county's federal Housing and Urban Development program. He was later named facilities manager, a role he still holds today.

His entry into township government came in 1994, when he was asked to join the Pine River Township Planning Commission. He served on the commission for nearly 10 years, including as chair. After a short stint as trustee in 2003, Beeson was appointed supervisor in 2004 and has held the position ever since. Beeson first joined the MTA Board in 2014, serving as director of MTA District 16, which encompasses Gratiot, Ionia and Montcalm Counties, until he was named interim 2025 MTA president last fall following the unexpected passing of **Harold Koviak**.

'We make a difference'

Collaborating with neighboring communities, helping to provide improved services for lower costs, has been among Beeson's most rewarding experiences in local government.

That collaboration began shortly after he became supervisor, when he led the charge to work with two neighboring cities to avoid duplication of services. "We were all trying to do the same things and trying to do them separately," he said. "We would get further if we were collaborating and did things smart."

Beeson worked with his city counterparts to negotiate water service agreements. The intergovernmental cooperation continued with equipment sharing, infrastructure planning, regional fire service, staffing considerations and more. "All of those things were better for the community, because it saved money," he said. "Everybody gets the same service—just maybe a little less power. We work at it. Are we making it more affordable, are we making services better? Are we serving the needs of our residents?"

These efforts to move his community forward are a large part of what keeps Beeson committed to his township and to township government. "We make a difference," he said.

'My goal is that we all succeed'

Beeson brings the same outlook of innovation when he considers how to ensure MTA continues to provide exceptional member service and value.

"MTA provides knowledge and guidance to every township, whether you represent 100,000 people, 1,000 or 100," Beeson said. "That's why we're here. Our members get the same information, because it applies across the state. Decisions made



(From above, clockwise) Beeson talked with fellow officials and welcomed attendees and guests at the Annual Conference's Opening Session. He was joined by his family at the MTA Banquet, where he helped present MTA awards, and received the MTA president pin from Immediate Past President Connie Cargill at the Annual Meeting.

in Lansing—whether it's nine-day early voting, elimination of personal property tax—impact all our townships. And that's what MTA does—it represents all townships and provides factual information to make decisions with.”

Whether a member is brand-new to township government or has served for years, they can turn to MTA for guidance and advice. “After 23 years of being supervisor, 10 years of planning and working in government for 41 years, I still call Mike Selden [in MTA’s Member Information Services Department],” Beeson said. “If it’s township related, call MTA. It can be anything from cemeteries to roads, to police protection, to fire contracts ... you name it. All of those things are answered. That’s what MTA does.”

The way in which MTA provides that guidance and information has certainly changed over the years, with instant-access, searchable online information and webinars for example, in addition to our traditional resources and services. And Beeson aims to ensure the Association continues adapt to meet our members’ needs.

“About the time you think you’ve got it covered, there’s a new way to reach people,” he said. “We can constantly challenge ourselves to continually try to improve. The goal is to never think we’ve got everything answered, because there’s just too much going on. It’s ever-changing. Not only with the data, but the way that data is consumed.”

Assuring MTA is offering and providing its information and services in a way that reaches its members is a key question for Beeson. “It hurts me when I see townships get in

trouble and make headlines over stuff that I know is wrong—infighting, bad decisions, didn’t do things according to the law, election issues,” he said. “That reflects on all of us. What can MTA do to reach them? How do we draw them in? My goal is that we all succeed.”

‘Leave this world a better place’

Beeson knows that townships are a key to this state’s success—and urged officials to take an active role in considering how to best represent and improve their communities, whether it’s improving access to broadband, bringing in a new tax base to help spread the cost of services, helping businesses grow and thrive, among so much more.

“We have a lot of impact on who comes to Michigan,” he said. “It all takes a concerted effort, too. If you get elected and you catch the bug, like I did, you get the challenge that you want to make it better. Good government isn’t just happening. It’s by the decisions that we make. We’re trying to leave this world a better place than where we started.

“You can’t leave things to chance,” he stressed. “Make a decision and move your community forward. It takes leadership and community thought leaders to come together, to be vocal, to work with their township and with neighboring townships. You won’t always be right, but it’s all right. Try it a different way next time. Success is, is it better today than it was last year? We’re the ones who are closest to the people. You represent those people—and take it as an honor that they’ve asked you to do it. With MTA, we can be part of that voice that brings success to communities around the state.”

‘You are making an impact’

Conference keynoter inspires attendees to come together for a better future

MTA’s 2026 Conference Keynoter Greg Bennick—a motivator and author who says “his whole life is up in the air” as he uses juggling to illustrate his message—shared with attendees a vital message on how to regain our focus and build a better now—and a better future—for our communities. Here’s a bit of what Bennick had to say.

After you forget everything else that happens today—the stories that I tell you, the cool and amazing tricks I perform for you—I want you to remember one thing. You have the potential to make an impact on people. You *are* making an impact on people. In fact, you’re making an impact on people who you don’t even know, who you might not even see. You might not ever realize the impact you’re making.

It’s important to believe that. And it’s critically important to *know* that the work you do matters. I say that as somebody who comes from a small town where I know my neighbors, from the perspective of learning about what you do—the work you do matters.

Finding—and providing—meaning

It’s getting more and more difficult to find meaning in the work that we do. In the work that [township officials] do, it must be harder and harder. The people who are doing the work on the ground—fulfilling the needs of the people and by the people and with people—are continually being asked to do more with less.

That’s a challenging position to be in—to know that you’re doing your very best, and maybe it’s not quite yet

enough. It’s also challenging to get young people inspired to work in municipal government and public service. It’s hard because distractions are everywhere.

We all need to be thinking about the next generation who’s going to be coming up and doing this important work that we do in support of communities, the important work that we appreciate and where we find meaning.

As I got into my career and became a performer and later a speaker, I started realizing that, wherever I went, I could make solid connections with people and help provide meaning for people, too. The work we do transforms people in moments, and develops and builds relationships in ways that we might not realize and might not see the effects of.

For the last 30 years, I’ve been thinking about what makes people feel empowered, what brings teams together, what helps us feel that the work we do is meaningful? What can we do to stay inspired and stay motivated in a genuine sense? Ultimately, the answer is we need to matter. We need to know that we are part of something meaningful. We need to know that coming together, whether it’s your team from your township, whether it’s the group [of all 1,240 townships] overall, when we come together, amazing things can happen.



It's deeply important for us to come together and work together as a team. Being connected to other people genuinely matters. One of the most important things a human can do is to feel that they're a part of something meaningful. It's essential to have something we believe in and to see our work as meaningful. It gives us a sense of meaning. It keeps us going, and it impacts the people around us in positive and encouraging ways.

Coming together for a better future

We've come together because we can imagine a better future for our townships. We can imagine a better now for the people that we serve. We can imagine a better eventuality, and can build toward that through the connections we make and through the work that we do.

When we build amongst ourselves a sense that we have value and are part of something bigger than ourselves, that's really important. We can envision it, we can build toward that—and we can do it together. That's pretty awesome. We derive our self-worth from the work that we do and from building that future together.

We can all come together. We just have to make a choice to do that. Sometimes that's a perspective shift. A perspective shift can make all the difference in the world. Here's an example. If we start thinking in terms of kindness, being kind to the people around us, it can make a huge impact.

It's so easy in the era of social media to become selfish, to become so self-absorbed that we forget about other people. We forget about the fact that our influence can really inspire

other people. Even a perspective shift toward being kind can be a huge differentiator in how we go about our days and the impact our days have. It can be a huge moment of impact when we shift our perspective towards kindness. Challenging yourself in that way is oftentimes really inspiring.

You don't need permission to provide meaning for yourself and for your team. You don't need permission to work together as a team. Assuming that you do oftentimes is holding you back. Self-doubt is your adversary—so is hesitation and so is apprehension.

A tiny perspective shift can go a long way, can do amazing things for your life and the lives of people around you and people you might not ever know or meet. It's pretty remarkable.

I want you to think about consistency. Show up with that perspective shift, show up thinking positively about the team around you—about the potential impact that you will make on people, sometimes people you don't yet know or that you might never know. Show up with consistency, excitement and hope—knowing that the work you do has meaning. Show up consistently each day with that. It's going to go a long way.

I mentioned it before: kindness. And I don't take it lightly. It is so important. It's essential to the way we interact with one another. When we're kind, we feel better about ourselves and it's better for the people around us. Kindness is essential if we believe in the possibility of kindness. We create possibilities every single day.

Let's also approach our work each day with a degree of creativity. When we approach our work each day just like we did the day before, there's no vibrancy, no innovation. We reduce the potential for us to have a vibrantly new day. When we approach our day creatively and say, what can we create today? What can we do? What can we fashion? What can we, as a team, create? We have a lot more potential.

I've been talking about teamwork. I've been talking about bringing people together. When we focus ourselves on the work that we do and remember that what we do is so important, it has incredible results.

We also talked about how a shift in perspective can go a long way. And if we shift our perspective even with our coworkers and start thinking about the possibility of kindness, we build much stronger connections. We build stronger connections in the community of our workspace and in the communities in which we live.

It is essential, my friends, that we work together as a team. We work together to build off one another, to strengthen our team from within. When you're building a stronger team, you will be a better teammate. Work together as a team more effectively by listening, by thinking, by being present, by remembering that the work you do matters and that it impacts people far beyond the immediate people nearby you.

[The Michigan Townships Association] exists to amplify this fact—1,240 separate governments as a unified group, a unified team. When we think about that, then we'll remember the potential that we have to impact other people.

PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

MTA ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXPO

MTA'S 2026 ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXPO

brought together township leaders from across the state to celebrate townships' **PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE**—and the dedicated individuals who help shape it. Nearly 2,000 elected and appointed township officials and employees, as well as exhibitors, speakers and guests, came together at this year's event to build a stronger future for townships through collaboration, cooperation and shared learning. Attendees explored the needs and opportunities facing townships today while charting a path forward to collective success.

Held April 20-23 at the Grand Traverse Resort in **Acme Township** (Grand Traverse Co.), attendees participated in more than 50 educational sessions, connected with over 100 vendors, attended inspiring general sessions, and enjoyed networking events throughout the week.

Our Annual Conference is THE township event of the year—and we look forward to continuing the journey with you April 19-22, 2027, back at the Grand Traverse Resort!





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Photos by David Trumpie, Trumpie Photography. See all the photos from the MTA Conference and download for FREE at michigantownships.org/conference

2026 MTA Executive Committee

Kevin Beeson, President

Supervisor, Pine River Township (Griiot Co.)

"I am grateful for this opportunity, and thank our members, staff and dedicated MTA Board of Directors for their continued support. MTA offers Michigan townships, and their leaders, essential support and resources through its education, best practices and advocacy. I'm looking forward to leading us forward to the future."



Malinda Cole-Crocker, First Vice President

Supervisor, Buchanan Chtr. Township (Berrien Co.)

"I will confidently accept challenges presented to townships, help provide the knowledge to deal with those challenges, and ensure that MTA continues to be the best resource for all things townships."



Marvin Rattke Jr., Second Vice President

Supervisor, Green Lake Township (Grand Traverse Co.)

"My involvement in local government and with MTA is not just about governance, but about listening, responding and acting in the best interests of everyone who calls this place home."



Glenn Rowley, Treasurer

Supervisor, Bangor Chtr. Township (Bay Co.)

"I am, and will continue to be, a leader for all of the people. I want to inspire other elected leaders to focus on being a public servant—instead of a politician."



Matthew Beattie, Secretary

Supervisor, Boon Township (Wexford Co.)

"I would like to expand the networking abilities not only among neighboring townships, but also neighboring counties to reach common goals."



Jennifer Hodges, Member-at-Large

Supervisor, Muskegon Chtr. Township (Muskegon Co.)

"I want to help ensure all residents are represented, townships are empowered to lead locally, and every community—no matter its size—has the support it needs to thrive."



Connie Cargill, Immediate Past President

Treasurer, Golden Township (Oceana Co.)

"I am happy to continue serving on the executive committee and helping to guide the future of this great organization."



Kleiman is MTA's newest life member

Harris Township (Menominee Co.)

Supervisor **Peter Kleiman** has been honored by MTA as the Association's newest life member. He was presented with the "MTA Life Member Award" at an awards ceremony at the Conference's banquet. Kleiman, who was 2021 MTA president, has been supervisor since 1988 and was first elected to the MTA Board in 2011.



"When I was a new township supervisor, my colleague told me to contact MTA when I had questions," Kleiman said. "The Association has always helped me as I serve my township, just as it has helped and continues to help so many other Michigan township leaders. I am grateful for this award honoring my time on the MTA Board, and thank those with whom I have worked at MTA and around the state."

Kleiman has served on many local, state and national boards and commissions during his decades of public service, including representing Upper Peninsula farmers on the Michigan Farm Bureau Board of Directors, on the executive committee of the Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission and on the Equity Cooperative Livestock Corporation Board of Directors.

Young is MTA's first 'Volunteer of the Year'

Kevin Young, Pokagon Township

(Cass Co.) treasurer, was honored for his years of service to his peers at the MTA Conference with the Association's inaugural "Volunteer of the Year" award.

More than 40 township attendees from across the state volunteer each year at the MTA event, helping to ensure the state's largest municipal conference & expo runs smoothly. Young, who has been treasurer since 2004, has volunteered at every MTA Annual Conference he has attended, more than 20 in all.

"Thank you to MTA for recognizing me as the first 'Volunteer of the Year' honoree and to my township board for their support," said Young, who also serves on the township planning commission. "There are always opportunities to volunteer, whether it is at the MTA Conference, in your own township or in your area or broader community."

In addition to serving at the Annual Conference, Young also volunteers for his church, Morris Chapel United Methodist, and the Berrien County Youth Fair. He is active in the Grange, including as treasurer and fundraising director of the Michigan State Grange, treasurer of the Cass County Grange, and president at the local level.



Honoring Harold Koviak throughout the week

ate 2025 MTA President **Harold Koviak** was honored and remembered throughout the Conference week.

It was Koviak who selected the 2026 Conference theme, “Pathway to the Future,” which reflected his belief that townships are key to our state’s future and that every township official plays a role in helping to build that future, by encouraging new individuals to step up to serve their community—and helping to guide and support them when they do.

“That’s who Harold was,” said **Kevin Beeson**, who assumed the MTA presidency after Koviak passed away in October. “It’s how he was raised, how he led his township and how he led this organization.”

A moving memorial to our president

Beeson began the Conference’s Opening Session with a memorial to Koviak (*pictured above, right*), reflecting on the leader and friend who helped guide the Association. Koviak’s daughters, Missy and Jeni, were able to join the morning tribute to their father (*pictured above, left*).

“We say that MTA is a family, and those aren’t just words,” Beeson said. “We really mean it. [Harold and I] worked very closely together, and with the executive committee, about our vision for the future of MTA. We talked every day. I miss that, and I miss him. Working so closely with Harold, I tell you, he really set the gold standard for service—to others, to his township, and to MTA.”

‘Future of MTA’ memorial scholarship announced

During the tribute, Beeson announced the creation of the new “Harold Koviak ‘Future of MTA’ Memorial Award and Scholarship,” established by the Association and its Board of Directors to recognize Koviak’s passion for recruiting and mentoring future generations of township leaders.

The annual award will be available to those who are new to township government and will include a scholarship to attend the MTA Annual Conference to allow them to receive the education and make connections that are essential to serving as a township leader. The first “Future of MTA” recipient will be announced at next year’s Conference. Applications will open in the fall; watch upcoming MTA publications and website for further details and application requirements.

A fitting president’s resolution

During the Opening Session, Beeson shared that a president’s resolution honoring Koviak would be read into the Association’s official records during the Annual Meeting on the final day of the event. Koviak’s daughters were each presented with framed copies of the resolution, which read:

LET IT BE KNOWN that it is an honor for the Michigan Townships Association to acknowledge with admiration, respect and appreciation the leadership and dedication of Harold Koviak, as our 2025 Association president, and as a friend and mentor. His passing was a shocking and devastating loss to his family, friends, community and the Association, and his commitment and impact on MTA and Michigan’s townships will reverberate for years to come.



Harold was immensely dedicated to his community and to township government. He served his hometown of **Burt Township** (Cheboygan Co.) for nearly 30 years, starting as zoning administrator and later trustee. He became supervisor in 2002, a role he held for 23 years. This commitment to local government was modeled for Harold by his parents, both of whom were local elected officials. In fact, his mother served as clerk of Burt Township for more than three decades.

Harold exemplified this love of public service, not only to his own community and area, but also to all townships. He served on the MTA Board of Directors for a dozen years, starting in 2013 and bringing with him a dedication to recruiting and mentoring the next generation of township officials.

He often said that “Public service is a gift,” and made it his mission to encourage new and future local leaders—whether they be “young or young at heart.” He continued to share this message, with his good humor and warm personality, throughout his time as MTA president, during one-on-one conversations, and when meeting with fellow officials at MTA county chapter meetings and educational events.

A tireless advocate for township government, he took immense pride in the relationships he fostered with state legislators, and took the local government message to Washington, DC numerous times to connect with federal decision-makers. Harold had a vision for the Association of continued exemplary member service, influence, information and education, and worked with his fellow MTA Board members and MTA staff toward ensuring that vision remains a reality.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Michigan Townships Association offers its sincere gratitude to Harold Koviak for his tireless efforts to advance the Association’s goals and mission during his time of service. His presence and hard work have left a lasting impression on the Association and the MTA family, and he will always remain in our thoughts and memories.

‘Gone, but never forgotten’

Beeson closed the moving tribute to Koviak reflecting on his enduring impact on those around him. “Harold was an incredible father, grandfather, friend and public servant, and we are grateful for his time serving MTA and for his leadership and friendship,” Beeson said. “He is gone, but he will never be forgotten. Thank you, Harold, and see you later, my friend.”

Well-deserved recognition

Dedicated officials honored at MTA Conference with ‘Spirit of MTA’ awards

A clerk heralded for her “above and beyond” efforts, a supervisor nominated by her fellow board members, and a leader whose dedication ensures this township continues to thrive. These are the three township officials honored with “Spirit of MTA” awards at this year’s Annual Conference.

Sue Hartman, Courtland Township (Kent Co.) clerk, **Sebastian “Sam” Previti, Charter Township of Washington** (Macomb Co.) supervisor, and **Lisa Radtke**, supervisor of **Fife Lake Township** (Grand Traverse Co.) were recognized during an awards ceremony before nearly 1,000 of their township peers at the Annual Banquet held the final night of the Conference. The award was created to highlight and recognize the exemplary efforts of elected local leaders in serving and advancing their township—as the Association has done for more than 70 years.

Following a statewide call for nominations, MTA received nominations for dozens of elected officials from across the state—each of whom demonstrates dedication and inspiring efforts on behalf of their community (*turn to page 31 for a listing of all—and equally deserving—nominated leaders*). Nominations were asked to convey how the official’s leadership style aligns with the 2026 MTA Conference theme of “Pathway to the Future” and townships’ essential role in leading communities and our state to success.

“The ‘Spirit of MTA’ award recognizes those elected leaders who have inspired others, and who are leading their townships into the future,” said MTA President **Kevin**

Beeson, supervisor of **Pine River Township** (Gratiot Co.), who helped present the awards with Awards Committee Chair **Joanne Boehler, James Township** (Saginaw Co.) treasurer. “On behalf of MTA and our Board of Directors, we congratulate this year’s recipients for receiving this honor and thank them for their efforts in their own community and region, and thank all local officials for their service to Michigan’s townships.”

‘Helped position her township to succeed today—and well into the future’

Hartman, the first clerk to receive a “Spirit of MTA” award, received not one, not two, but three separate nominations—each extolling her dedication and commitment to not only her role as township clerk, but to serving her colleagues, residents and entire community. Read one nomination: “Every day, township leaders across Michigan quietly shape the future of their communities through integrity, innovation and steadfast public service. Sue exemplifies the very spirit of the Michigan Townships Association and is a true embodiment of this year’s Conference theme, ‘Pathway to



Sue Hartman



Sebastian "Sam" Previti



Lisa Radtke

the Future.' Through her unwavering commitment to lawful governance, transparent elections, continuous education and forward-thinking township planning, Sue has helped position her township not only to succeed today—but to thrive well into the future."

A key part of her efforts and success is working with others. "I am overwhelmed that I am appreciated and recognized by my teammates, my fellow clerks and my community," said Hartman of receiving the award. "I am a team person. I love to include everyone in any project. Listening to their ideas, suggestions and questions just make for a better outcome. I get the biggest kick out of seeing others grow in their abilities. Watching their pride in their contributions is heartwarming."

Hartman, who has been clerk since 2019, credited her township team with ensuring the township's excellence in service to residents and the community, including her deputy clerk **Nyha Merritt** and fellow township board members. In their nominations, those team members shared their praise and admiration for Hartman.

Said Trustee **Rachel Crowther**, "Sue is our biggest cheerleader. She wants everyone to succeed." Echoed Merritt, "She does this job with grace, grit, and a tremendous amount of time and effort. She may fall for a minute, but she gets right back up with determination."

Hartman is extraordinarily dedicated to the role of clerk, and to ensuring local elections are conducted meticulously, securely and with integrity. She has transformed the township's election recruitment, training and preparedness. She meets one-on-one with voters to explain election processes and answer questions—resulting in increased transparency, improved public understanding and stronger civic engagement.

Far beyond elections and the clerk's statutory duties, she is a strong proponent of continuing education for herself and her township peers. She has helped modernize township operations, including implementing automated clearinghouse payments to vendors, overseeing credit card payment systems, strengthening the township website, and managing transparent communication through social media. She is deeply involved in the township's parks committee, cemetery committee (which she helped form,) cleanup initiatives, and community improvement projects. Her leadership has contributed to the development of multiple township parks, including a fully accessible playground, and preservation of natural land in the township.

In her acceptance remarks, Hartman also shared the importance of outreach to get individuals involved in their community. "I reach out to members of our community to ask for help," she said. "It helps our community and helps ensure involvement. By getting involved in township government, you can make a big difference."

Seeing the impacts of involvement in her community is a large part of what keeps Hartman committed to her role and to serving her community, while acknowledging that there are times when the demands can become overwhelming. "But then I come back to reality and see the beautiful changes we've made to our township," she said. "Our elections are safe, secure and free. Our election workers are top-notch. Our residents and visitors get to spend time outdoors on our walking trails, on our universally accessible playground, on our adult exercise equipment, playing on the soccer fields, volleyball court, baseball diamond, pickleball courts, 18-hole disc golf course, nature preserve park ... I can go on and on about our great community. I am honored to be the Courtland Township clerk."

'Focused on creating pathways to ensure a more vibrant future'

In his three separation nominations for the “Spirit of MTA” award, Previti was described as a leader who truly paves the “Pathway to the Future” for his township. His forward-thinking approach, fiscal responsibility and commitment to community growth have positioned the Charter Township of Washington as a model for effective local government.

“I am truly honored to receive this award,” said Previti, who was first elected supervisor in 2020. “This recognition reflects the work we’ve accomplished together in The Charter Township of Washington. As supervisor, my focus has always been simple: to serve our residents while we work to keep strong, balanced budgets, invest in our roads, parks and public safety, and foster responsible development while preserving our rural character.

“None of this happens alone. I want to thank my fellow board members, our township employees, our first responders, our community partners and our residents. Thank you for your trust and this great honor. I’m proud of what we’ve done together and I’m excited for what’s ahead.”

Under Previti’s leadership, the Charter Township of Washington “has focused on creating connected pathways—both literal and figurative—that ensure a stronger, safer, and more vibrant future for residents of all ages,” one nomination stated.

Included in those efforts are the development and expansion of nonmotorized pathways, securing grants and advancing sidewalk connections that link neighborhoods, schools, parks and community destinations. A steadfast leader in historic preservation, Previti is president of the Greater Washington Historical Society and has helped preserve the township’s heritage, including the protection of an 1840 one-room schoolhouse.

Recognizing the importance of environmental stewardship, he led efforts to preserve more than 30 acres of green space, including a working farm—balancing growth with conservation and protecting open land for future residents. In addition, public safety has been a defining priority of his tenure, overseeing improvement of over 10,000 feet of water lines and fire hydrants to enhance fire protection, construction of two new fire stations, including a live burn training center serving both the township as well as surrounding departments, and the purchase of two new fire engines and two new ambulances. In partnership with Macomb County, he also worked to improve roads and intersections.

Receiving the award before his township peers and at the largest municipal gathering of township leaders in that state made the honor even more meaningful, Previti said. “It was a privilege to attend this year’s Annual Conference with over 1,000 officials from communities from across

Michigan coming together to learn, collaborate and share ideas,” he shared. “I was especially proud to participate in the Parade of Flags, representing Washington Township by carrying our township flag. This conference continues to be an outstanding experience—not only for the valuable educational sessions on a wide range of topics, but also for the opportunity to connect and network with fellow elected officials who are all working toward strengthening our communities.

“Receiving this award during such a meaningful event makes it even more special. I’m grateful to be part of such a dedicated group of public servants. Thank you to MTA for this high honor and recognition.”

'A deep commitment to service, integrity and innovation'

When her fellow township board members nominated Radtke for this year’s “Spirit of MTA” award, their unified message shared their belief that, “Every day, dedicated public servants across Michigan work tirelessly to shape the future of their communities. Few few embody the ‘Pathway to the Future’ theme more fully than Lisa Radtke, whose innovation, collaboration and visionary leadership have set a remarkable standard for township governance, economic development and community empowerment.”

“Her career reflects a deep commitment to service, integrity and innovation—building bridges between townships, state agencies and the private sector to expand opportunity for rural communities. Through thoughtful planning, transparent governance and steadfast belief in local leadership, Lisa Radtke has made a lasting impact,” her fellow board members stated.

At the awards ceremony, Radtke mirrored praise back to her colleagues. She said, “Our township team is small, but mighty—and they are absolutely fearless, and have jumped into improvements for our community, financial efficiencies, and community engagement and getting more people involved.”

“Receiving the Spirit of MTA award is a profound honor that reaffirms my passion and dedication to township government,” she said. “It represents recognition from peers and the MTA community for embodying the values of service, integrity and commitment that the Michigan Townships Association stands for. This award is not just a personal achievement—it is a testament to the collective efforts of everyone I work alongside to make a meaningful difference in our township and greater community.”

Among the improvements she has helped lead in her township are helping to strengthen the township’s financial health, modernizing its operations with technology updates and cybersecurity improvements, championing inclusive

government and profession development, and serving as a mentor and educator for township officials—and others—statewide.

Just as she has helped and inspired others, she finds inspiration from those with whom she has worked and served. “Every local leader is inspiring to someone—and many, many have been inspiring to me,” said Radtke, who has been supervisor since 2023. “I am so grateful for this leadership, and the generosity of time that others have given to me or to other leaders in the community to help us shine.”

Radtke holds a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership and a Master of Arts in Education in Community Engagement, as well as a Zoning Administrator Certificate and completed the Master Citizen Planner Program from Michigan State University Extension.

Radtke has had broad impacts reaching beyond her own township. She has extensive experience in economic and community development, as well as zoning and land use matters. She spent her career focusing on helping communities and small businesses grow and thrive. Her significant contributions at the regional, statewide and even national level include serving as executive director of the Builders Exchange of Northwest Michigan, a networking organization and bidding clearinghouse for commercial construction projects that serves 55 counties. She is former executive director of the Alliance for Economic Success, is a founding member and president of Northern Michigan Broadband Cooperative, and serves on numerous key regional and state boards, including Networks Northwest and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Economic Development Committee.

“The opportunity to positively impact the lives of residents every day” is part of what keep Radtke continually committed to serving her township, region and state. “I am inspired by the trust that our community places in us, and I find purpose in working collaboratively to address challenges, improve services and help shape a better future for everyone. The connections I’ve built, the progress I’ve witnessed and the ongoing potential to contribute to our township’s success continuously fuel my dedication to public service.”



Congratulations to all ‘Spirit of MTA’ nominees

This year, MTA received the largest number of nominations yet for our “Spirit of MTA” award—nearly 40 in all. As MTA Awards Committee Chair **Joanne Boehler** noted at the awards ceremony during the MTA Annual Banquet, “This is our third year to present the ‘Spirit of MTA’ award, and each year, it just gets better and better. Every person nominated is deserving of this award.” Our congratulations to each of the following nominees, and thank you for your service to your community!

- **Lisa Carlson**, Supervisor, **Baldwin Township** (Delta Co.)
- **Martin Brook**, Clerk, **Bloomfield Charter Township** (Oakland Co.)
- **Lori McShane**, Clerk, **Burt Township** (Alger Co.)
- **Keith Carter**, Trustee, **Calvin Township** (Cass Co.)
- **David Bunte**, Supervisor, **Chikaming Township** (Berrien Co.)
- **Max Engle**, Clerk, **Chocolay Charter Township** (Marquette Co.)
- **Jim Leffew**, Supervisor, **Clearwater Township** (Kalkaska Co.)
- **Karen Nolte**, Trustee, **Dexter Township** (Washtenaw Co.)
- **Jeff Mather**, Supervisor, **Elk Township** (Lake Co.)
- **Vince Lorraine**, Supervisor, **Fenton Charter Township** (Genesee Co.)
- **Terry Smith**, Supervisor, **Forest Home Township** (Antrim Co.)
- **Karen Snyder**, Treasurer, **Garfield Township** (Bay Co.)
- **Brian Hill**, Supervisor, **Gerrish Township** (Roscommon Co.)
- **Cheryl Ochodnicki**, Clerk, **Grant Township** (Keweenaw Co.)
- **Jenell Keller**, Clerk, **Groveland Township** (Oakland Co.)
- **Anthony Reeder**, Supervisor, **Lenox Township** (Macomb Co.)
- **Carrie Gilley**, Clerk, **Kingston Township** (Tuscola Co.)
- **Frank Viviano**, Supervisor, **Macomb Township** (Macomb Co.)
- **Donna Kenney**, Clerk, **Marenisco Township** (Gogebic Co.)
- **Bruce Beach**, Supervisor, **Mills Township** (Ogemaw Co.)
- **Lisa Zinkil**, Treasurer, **Paw Paw Township** (Van Buren Co.)
- **Brandon Scholie**, Supervisor, **Portage Charter Township** (Houghton Co.)
- **Valerie Niemiec**, Clerk, **Putnam Township** (Livingston Co.)
- **Eric Crump**, Supervisor, **Ray Township** (Macomb Co.)
- **Diane Randall**, Supervisor, **Roscommon Township** (Roscommon Co.)
- **Jessica Flintoft**, Clerk, **Scio Township** (Washtenaw Co.)
- **Kern Slucter**, Trustee, **Windsor Charter Township** (Eaton Co.)
- **Michelle Hicks**, Clerk, **Tuscola Township** (Tuscola Co.)
- **Sue Meredith**, Trustee, **Weldon Township** (Benzie Co.)
- **Tom Oonk**, Supervisor, **Zeeland Charter Township** (Ottawa Co.)

2026-2027 MTA legislative **policy platform**

As adopted by delegates at the Annual Meeting, held April 23 during MTA's Annual Conference & Expo at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme Township (Grand Traverse Co.), these policies are the platform from which legislation will be sought in the coming year.

Vision Statement

The Michigan Townships Association envisions local governance where:

- Townships have statutory authority and state financial support sufficient to provide fiscal stability, high-quality services and infrastructure consistent with community needs and expectations, and to enable full compliance with mandates without cutting local spending priorities
- Elections are accurate, secure and fair, and a high percentage of registered voters participate
- Local control is respected by state lawmakers as townships work to solve local and regional challenges through collaboration, strategic foresight and ethical leadership
- Natural resources are utilized in a manner consistent with township regulations that ensure sustainability and leverage value as public assets
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities for township officials essential for efficient and effective services to the public
- Townships retain authority to protect and regulate the public rights-of-way and other land uses in the interest of the public
- State laws affirm that township officials are elected by and accountable to their residents for the township's governance, finances, programs and services consistent with community values

Assessment and Taxation

The Michigan Townships Association supports local control over property assessment, advocates for state reimbursement for tax exemptions, and works to ensure townships have the resources for sound valuation and resilient, fiscally healthy communities.

As lawmakers and regulators enact changes to current tax laws and local government requirements, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Require large retail properties (big box stores) to be valued using the same methods as all other commercial properties and prohibit the use of deed restrictions or covenants intended to artificially reduce property value or limit market competition
- Require the state to administer and fund the disabled veterans' property tax exemption
- Oppose new or expanded property tax exemptions without replacement of lost local revenue
- Limit property tax exemption eligibility for nonprofit charitable purposes
- Allow townships to create special assessment districts for infrastructure needs

- Raise the current charter township 10-mill tax limitation to allow charter townships, with voter approval, to address legacy costs, meet demands for expanding services and offset millage rollback requirements
- Clarify in statute that assessors are accountable to the township board when the supervisor is not certified to perform assessing functions
- Increase the specific tax on mobile homes located in licensed parks and levy on park owners rather than individual occupied dwelling owners
- Exempt minimal personal property tax obligations resulting from minor property improvements on mobile home lots such as small decks, stairs and porches
- Allow option for a local excise tax for the purpose of providing public recreational facilities and/or public safety expenses related to increased tourism

Elections

The Michigan Townships Association advocates for fair, transparent, efficient and secure elections administered by township officials that encourage high voter participation.

As lawmakers and regulators enact changes to current election laws, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Preserve the authority of townships to convey information on ballot proposals to their residents
- Preserve the authority of townships to place millage and bond proposals before voters at any election
- Allow the township board and their electors to approve nonpartisan elective township offices
- Require state funding for the statewide replacement of voting equipment
- Require continued funding for the operations of state election requirements
- Require election challenger training

Environment and Land Use

The Michigan Townships Association supports state laws that empower townships to efficiently and effectively plan for land uses and adopt zoning ordinances to protect the public health, safety and general welfare. State and federal regulations should promote and reinforce local growth and development policies and objectives. Local authority is a fundamental component of land use decisions that must be protected. The Michigan Townships Association will work to minimize preemption of local decision-making and retain local authority as an essential part of land use decisions.

As lawmakers and regulatory agencies enact changes to laws addressing township land use and environment, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Preserve local authority on zoning issues that are local in nature to ensure protection of public health and safety and property values
- Ensure any statewide sanitary code requirements adopted reduce septic system failures that create public health threats and expose townships to liability for costly public sewer systems
- Preserve landfill capacities by directing appropriate materials to waste utilization facilities and support a state tipping fee competitive with nearby states while preserving a local tipping fee option
- Increase state funding and support for environmental programs to address issues such as water quality, brownfield redevelopment, contamination and invasive species
- Ensure that any heightened review of environmental permits for communities overly impacted by environmental degradation protects public health and allows for local development goals to be met in a timely manner
- Ensure that the state retains the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-delegated authority to issue wetlands and other water permits
- Ensure that the definition of Waters of the United States, subject to permitting processes of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, is not extended to non-navigable waters such as roadside ditches and culvert installation and maintenance

Intergovernmental Relations

The Michigan Townships Association supports township officials having the discretion to resolve policy issues that are manifestly local in nature. MTA also supports state laws that encourage intergovernmental collaboration to promote economic prosperity and to deliver programs and services efficiently and effectively. State laws should allow creativity and flexibility, and incentivize fair and equitable cost-sharing benefits and governance in interlocal agreements. State laws authorizing economic development tools and other powers should be based on community characteristics relative to policy objectives. State taxation and spending policies should mitigate adverse revenue impacts on townships.

As lawmakers and regulatory agencies consider altering the fiscal relationship of the state to local governments as well as powers and authorities of local governments, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Guarantee statutory revenue sharing for all townships through a dedicated state revenue source
- Restore revenue sharing funds lost due to the removal of sales tax at the pump
- Ensure state laws allow township officials to solve local issues in a manner consistent with local values, priorities and needs rather than impose a one-size-fits-all approach
- Guarantee full funding to townships for payments in lieu of taxes for state-purchased lands, commercial forest lands and swamp tax/tax-reverted properties
- Ensure a local government consolidation process continues to require voter approval

Township Operations

The Michigan Townships Association supports state and federal governments granting townships broad discretion and autonomy to govern the funding and delivery of programs and services. MTA also supports state reimbursement to townships for increased costs resulting from new mandated services and state regulations.

The Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Permit members of a public body to participate in a public meeting remotely
- Allow public notice requirements to be met by posting the required notice on the website of the public body
- Clarify and strengthen the governance role of township boards to establish policy direction and manage operations for their community
- Enact appropriate, cost-effective training requirements for township planning commissioners and zoning board of appeal members to reduce costly lawsuits and improve township decision-making by key appointed boards
- Grant township supervisors permissive authority to perform marriages

Transportation and Infrastructure

The Michigan Townships Association advocates for state funding to ensure that county primary and local roads are safe and convenient for travel. As townships are major financial contributors to infrastructure needs, the Michigan Townships Association supports planning, funding and delivering infrastructure needed for every community to be economically viable and to protect the health, safety and general welfare of residents. The Michigan Townships Association supports a strong partnership between local, state and federal officials to establish long-term reliable funding necessary to create and maintain infrastructure and improvements.

As lawmakers and regulators address pressures to better address Michigan's infrastructure, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Modernize and increase funding for local roads and increase state funding for water, sewer and communications infrastructure
- Allow a county road agency in conjunction with a requesting township to lower the speed to a level deemed necessary for motorist or pedestrian safety on a gravel or unimproved surface road
- Urge state and county road funding agencies to provide funds for local road construction and utilize allocated funds for maintenance projects
- Ensure that any alternative funding proposals to the gas tax to help fund transportation infrastructure incorporate the practicalities for all communities
- Expand engineering and safety data to include pedestrian-vehicle impact data and multiple modes of transportation to properly manage speed limits

A day for learning, and action

Leaders convene for MTA Capital Conference to ensure township voice is heard in Lansing

Nearly 200 township officials from across the state convened on March 17 for MTA’s 2026 Capital Conference to gather insights and information on key township issues at the forefront in Lansing, including housing preemption legislation and the critical need for preservation of local decision-making, protection of revenue sharing, and adequate funding and investments in Michigan’s communities.

“This day is an opportunity to help shape the legislative and state policies that impact the future of our townships and our state,” MTA President **Kevin Beeson** told attendees as he welcomed them to the event. “MTA fights every day on our behalf, but they can’t do it alone. They need our voices—all of our voices, and the voices of 1,240 townships and the thousands of officials who serve them—to help make a difference in Lansing.”

A day for education and advocacy

As Beeson, who is supervisor for **Pine River Township** (Gratiot Co.), shared with attendees, the one-day event is an important opportunity “to listen and learn from the experts about what discussions and proposals are happening that are impacting us and our communities. And let me tell you, there is a lot.

“But today is not just about learning,” he continued. “It is also about action. I ask each of you to take what you learn and talk with your lawmakers—tell them how legislation

will impact your township and your residents. Ask them to stand with township government and the ability to make the decisions that impact our communities.”

The day was filled with updates and insights on critical issues affecting township government, beginning with a comprehensive legislative update from MTA Government Relations staff, who discussed the executive state budget proposal, detailed housing preemption legislation that overrides community decision-making on key zoning decisions, shared MTA efforts to support creation of a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund to provide stable, consistent funding for Michigan’s communities, and discussed efforts to enact property tax reforms in the state (*see page 14 for updates on several of these issues*), among other initiatives. “If there was ever a time to advocate with your lawmakers, now is the time,” MTA Director of Government Relations Judy Allen emphasized to attendees. “These issues will impact your communities for years to come.”

Additional morning general sessions explored the 2030 Census, data centers, siting and renewable energy, and an outlook on state revenues. Attendees also heard from a panel of Capitol press corps members who offered insights into the dynamics of the 103rd legislative session.

During a networking lunch, attendees gathered with state lawmakers and legislative staff—an opportunity establish or strengthen connections and relationships with state decision-makers and for officials to share their local government experiences and perspectives on issues being debated in the Legislature. An expo featuring state and federal departments and agencies provided further time for connections and information on beneficial programs for townships.

The scores of attendees also heard firsthand from state officials and experts on timely topics, including grant opportunities, financing tools to support housing development, digital accessibility and election updates.

MTA Executive Director Tom Hickson noted the importance of the day—and of officials’ voices uniting to advocate on behalf of township government. “MTA’s Capital Conference allows township officials to bring a united voice to Lansing, to demonstrate the tremendous value—and pride—of townships in providing essential services, programs and quality of life to Michiganders,” he said. “The number of legislative initiatives affecting our 1,240 townships is immense. Our Capital Conference is an opportunity for local leaders to receive updates on these key issues, and to work with lawmakers to share their insights and experiences on how legislation impacts their communities.”



MTA President Kevin Beeson (left) welcomed attendees to a day of education and advocacy at MTA’s 2026 Capital Conference (below).



A networking lunch connected officials with legislative staff and lawmakers, including (above, far right) Rep. Nancy DeBoer (R-Holland), (at right, far right) Sen. Roger Hauck (R-Mt. Pleasant), and (below, at left) Rep. Pat Outman (R-Six Lakes).



Attendees heard from experts during several educational sessions (below, left) and met with state and federal departments during an afternoon expo (below).



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Attract. Retain. Retire.

Using benefits to build a strong township workforce

Across Michigan, townships are facing a challenge that many public-sector organizations know all too well: finding and keeping the right employees. The labor market remains competitive, experienced employees are retiring in large numbers, and public-sector employers are competing with private industry for many of the same skilled professionals.

These trends are not unique to one community or one job category; they are happening everywhere. But they are being felt particularly strongly in local government and public safety roles, where attracting and retaining talent has become increasingly difficult.

Recent feedback from MERS customers confirms what many township leaders are already experiencing firsthand. Nearly half of surveyed employers report difficulty recruiting and retaining employees, with police departments feeling the pressure most acutely.

Despite these challenges, there is encouraging news. Research consistently shows that retirement benefits remain one of the most influential factors in an employee's decision to accept a job and remain with an employer. In fact, about 80% of employees say retirement benefits play a significant role in whether they take a position or stay where they are.

That statistic tells us something important: benefits are not simply a line item in a budget. They are a powerful strategic tool. When thoughtfully designed and clearly communicated, retirement benefits can help employers attract qualified candidates, encourage long-term careers and support employees as they move confidently toward retirement. In short, a strong benefits package helps create a stronger workforce.

The workforce challenge facing townships

Local governments across the country are navigating a period of significant workforce change. Many long-tenured public servants are retiring, while younger generations entering the workforce often have different expectations about careers and financial security. At the same time, municipalities must compete with private-sector employers that can often offer higher salaries or more flexible working arrangements.

For township leaders, this reality creates a delicate balancing act. Communities must continue delivering high-quality services while managing budgets responsibly and maintaining competitive employment opportunities.

When positions remain vacant or turnover increases, the effects ripple through an organization. Service delivery can slow, overtime costs may increase and valuable institutional knowledge can be lost. Recruiting and training new employees also requires significant time and resources. That's why more employers are recognizing that competitive benefits, especially retirement benefits, can play a key role in stabilizing their workforce.

Why retirement benefits matter more than ever

For many public-sector employees, retirement security is one of the most compelling reasons to pursue and remain in local government careers.



While salaries may sometimes lag behind the private sector, a well-designed retirement package provides something incredibly valuable: confidence about the future. Employees want to know that years of service will translate into financial stability later in life. When employers can offer that sense of security, they create a powerful incentive for employees to build long-term careers within their organizations.

From an employer's perspective, retirement benefits can deliver several important advantages:

- Encouraging longer employee tenure
- Reducing costly turnover
- Supporting predictable workforce transitions
- Strengthening the organization's reputation as an employer of choice

In other words, retirement benefits support both employee wellbeing and organizational stability.

Moving toward a holistic retirement package

Today's workforce is diverse, and employee needs vary widely depending on age, career stage and financial goals. Because of this, many employers are moving beyond a single retirement plan and toward what is often described as a holistic retirement package.

A holistic approach recognizes that retirement readiness rarely comes from one plan alone. Instead, it integrates multiple components that work together to support long-term financial security. This may include:

- Defined benefit pension plans
- Defined contribution savings plans

- Supplemental retirement savings opportunities
- Health care savings programs
- Ongoing financial education and planning resources

The goal is not simply offering a plan—it is helping employees realistically prepare for retirement. Industry standards often suggest that retirees will need roughly 70 to 80% of their pre-retirement income to maintain their standard of living. A holistic retirement package helps employees reach that goal through a combination of employer-provided benefits and personal savings.

Balancing employer goals and employee needs

Designing retirement benefits requires balancing several important priorities. Employers want plans that help attract and retain employees while remaining fiscally responsible. Predictable costs, sustainable funding and long-term stability are critical considerations for public-sector organizations accountable to taxpayers.

Employees, meanwhile, want benefits that are easy to understand, flexible enough to fit their circumstances and capable of supporting a secure retirement.

A thoughtful retirement strategy aligns these interests. It provides meaningful benefits while also supporting sound financial management and workforce planning.

For example, retirement plans can influence when employees choose to retire. If benefits are structured well, they can support smooth transitions and allow organizations to plan for leadership changes and staffing needs in advance.

The importance of benchmarking

One helpful tool for employers reviewing their benefits strategy is benchmarking. Benchmarking allows organizations to compare their retirement offerings with those of similar employers. This process may examine factors such as contribution levels, benefit formulas, and access to supplemental savings programs.

The goal is not to copy another organization's plan. Rather, benchmarking helps ensure that benefits remain competitive while identifying opportunities for improvement. It also allows employers to evaluate whether their benefits package is likely to help employees reach meaningful retirement income goals.

Bridging gaps through supplemental savings

Even strong primary retirement plans may not fully meet every employee's needs. Supplemental savings opportunities can help employees take additional steps toward retirement readiness. Many public-sector employers offer deferred compensation programs, such as 457 plans, that allow employees to save additional funds on a tax-advantaged basis.

These plans can provide valuable flexibility, including pre-tax and Roth contribution options, and the ability to access funds after separation from service.

By encouraging voluntary savings alongside employer-provided benefits, organizations can help employees build a more complete financial foundation for retirement.

Supporting participation through smart plan design

Plan design also plays an important role in helping employees succeed. Features such as automatic enrollment can significantly increase participation rates, particularly among younger employees who may not initially prioritize retirement savings.

Automatic contribution escalation—gradually increasing contribution rates over time—can help employees boost savings without placing immediate pressure on household budgets. These types of design features remove barriers and make saving for retirement easier.

Addressing health care costs in retirement

One of the largest financial uncertainties retirees face is the cost of health care. Health care expenses can be significant, particularly during the years between retirement and eligibility for Medicare. Because of this, some employers are incorporating health care savings programs into their overall retirement strategy.

These programs allow employees to set aside funds specifically for medical expenses in retirement. In many cases, contributions, investment growth and qualified withdrawals can all receive favorable tax treatment.

By planning for health care costs in advance, employees can reduce financial stress and maintain greater flexibility during retirement.

Communicating the value of benefits

Even the most well-designed benefits package will have limited impact if employees do not understand it. Benefits often represent a substantial portion of total compensation, but many employees underestimate their value simply because they are not visible in a paycheck. Clear and consistent communication is essential. Employers can help employees better understand their benefits through tools such as annual total compensation statements, which outline the full value of salary and benefits combined.

Education and support make a difference

Education should begin early—ideally before an employee's first day—and continue throughout their career. Providing accessible information and opportunities for questions can significantly increase engagement. Employees often want answers to practical questions such as:

- How much income will I have in retirement?
- How does Social Security fit into my plan?
- How much should I be saving now?
- When can I realistically retire?

Providing clear guidance and educational resources helps employees feel more confident about their financial future. Beyond written materials, many organizations find that in-person or virtual education sessions can be particularly effective. Group presentations and one-on-one consultations give employees the opportunity to ask questions and receive personalized guidance.

When employees feel supported and informed, they are more likely to engage with their benefits and take proactive steps toward retirement readiness.


A strategic investment in the future

Ultimately, retirement benefits are about more than financial planning—they are about people. They demonstrate an organization's commitment to the individuals who dedicate their careers to public service. They provide employees with confidence that their work today will support a secure future tomorrow. For employers, a well-designed retirement package strengthens recruitment, encourages retention and supports stable workforce transitions. In today's competitive labor environment, that kind of stability is invaluable.



Kerrie Vanden Bosch, CEO, Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan

For more information, contact kvandenbosch@mersofmich.com or (800) 767-6377, or visit mersofmich.com.

Michigan Employees' Retirement System of Michigan is an MTA Allied Service Provider at the President's Round Table level. See page 2 for more on our Allied Service Providers. 



Internal controls, fraud risks and action steps for townships using EFT transactions

Electronic funds transfer (EFT) and automated clearing house (ACH) transactions are now standard tools for Michigan townships to process payroll, vendor payments, tax distributions and benefit disbursements. For the purposes of this article, EFT is used as the umbrella term for electronic movement of funds, while ACH refers specifically to EFT payments processed through the ACH network (such as direct deposit and ACH credits/debits). While EFTs improve efficiency and reduce paper handling, they also introduce unique fraud and internal control risks that must be actively managed. Michigan law permits and regulates these transactions through the Electronic Transactions of Public Funds Act (Public Act 738 of 2002), which requires governing bodies to adopt a written ACH/EFT policy supported by documented internal controls.

At a minimum, PA 738 requires the township board to adopt an electronic transactions policy before public funds may be transferred electronically. The policy should identify who is authorized to initiate, approve and release electronic payments; establish dollar limits and transaction types permitted; require supporting documentation (such as approved invoices, payroll registers or other proof of obligation) before funds are transmitted; and define security and oversight measures such as segregation of duties, user access controls, and independent review and reconciliation of bank activity to the accounting records. The policy should also require periodic review and updates, so the written procedures remain aligned with current systems, staffing and fraud risks.

Internal control considerations

Effective EFT internal controls should be consistent with both state law and recognized public sector control frameworks. While PA 738 establishes baseline compliance expectations for electronic disbursements, townships should translate those requirements into day-to-day control activities that are documented, consistently followed and independently verified. Best practices recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association emphasize limiting EFT initiation privileges, maintaining an approved and regularly reviewed vendor master file, and ensuring that no single official or employee controls setup, approval and release of electronic payments. Documented approval processes should also be put in place that are ideally very similar to those being used for disbursements by check.

Common EFT-related fraud risks

Townships face several common EFT-related fraud risks, including unauthorized changes to vendor banking information, fictitious vendors added to the master file,

compromised user credentials, and lack of independent review of ACH batches before release. Because EFT transactions settle quickly and may not allow for recovery once transmitted, control failures can result in immediate financial loss. Audit and enforcement actions under PA 738 also permit temporary suspension of a local unit's EFT authority if noncompliance is identified, increasing both financial and operational risk.

Recommended action steps

To mitigate risks, townships should take several concrete action steps, including adopting and regularly updating a written EFT/ACH policy that explicitly meets PA 738 requirements and reflects current operational practices. The board should also implement strong segregation of duties by separating vendor setup, payment authorization and EFT transmission responsibilities, so that no one person is in control of this process. Third, townships should implement controls over changes to vendor banking information to ensure that only legitimate requests for changes are accepted. This is especially important given that so much information (bids, contracts, board approval) is available in the public domain, which allows bad actors the opportunity to defraud the township or its vendors.

Finally, ongoing training for finance staff and clear reporting channels for suspected irregularities help reinforce the environment that these controls operate in. When combined with documented policies, system controls and active oversight, these steps allow Michigan townships to realize the efficiency benefits of EFT transactions while maintaining strong financial integrity and regulatory compliance.

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.



upcoming MTA workshop

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Is Your Township Election Ready?!

Township clerks and deputies have plenty of hurdles to navigate when it comes to running elections. MTA can help! Spend an afternoon with us this June as we take a deep dive into election requirements and explore practical ways to manage your upcoming elections.

We'll review who can do what when it comes to election duties and offer tips to "lighten your load." So, grab your deputy and join MTA's election experts and former township clerks Cindy Dodge and Judy Bigney as we explore the latest in elections including:

- **Who does what—and where can clerks get help:** Explore the roles of deputies, election assistants and inspectors, and discuss strategies for managing the interoffice dynamics and where to turn for support.
- **How election changes affect compensation:** Understand how increased hours from early voting and election administration affect your election workers' compensation, and learn how Social Security exemptions and other income taxes come into play.
- **Navigating early voting agreements:** Join the discussion on challenges you may encounter and learn what's working in the real world.

You'll walk away with insights into noticing, record keeping, what's new, what works (and doesn't) as well as tried-and-true checklists and time management tips. Lunch is included at in-person events and begins at noon. Class is held from 1 to 5 p.m. on:

June 4: Fetzner Center at WMU,
Kalamazoo

June 16: Northern Center at NMU, Marquette

June 17: Treetops Resort Conference Center,
Gaylord

June 23: Bavarian Inn Lodge Conference Center,
Frankenmuth

June 25: Online Option (Zoom login information
will be sent to online registrants by June 22)



Election Ready Registration Form

Township and County

Name and Title

Email

Name and Title

Email

Payment options

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

Card # CSV (3-digit code) Expires

Print Card Holder's Name Signature

When will you join us?

- June 4:** Kalamazoo
 June 16: Marquette
 June 17: Gaylord
 June 23: Frankenmuth
 June 25: Online Option (via Zoom)

Early-bird Rate*: \$100/person
Expires three weeks prior to event date

Late Rate*: \$150/person
Applies three weeks prior to event date and on-site

**Non-members, call MTA for rates.*

*Confirmations, online access and "Know Before You Go" communications will be sent via email.
Need to update your email?
Email database@michigantownships.org*



Send completed registration form to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078, fax to: (517) 321-8908 or email rebecca@michigantownships.org Need event registration assistance? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226. For other event-related questions, call (517) 321-6467, ext. 234 or email education@michigantownships.org

upcoming MTA workshops

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Three timely topics over two days in one great location

MTA can help you identify what's **important to the residents you serve**, insights into **enhancing transparency and credibility** and techniques for exploring **elements of strategic planning**. Join us at **Bay Valley Resort in Bay City** this **July** for one (or all!) of the courses described below:

Creating a Vision for Your Township

July 14 from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Includes continental breakfast)

Identifying core community values and expectations is a critical component in serving your community. Learn strategies for evaluating township programs and services, and explore the need for innovation and change. By examining both adversity and opportunities, you can identify how to balance short-term issues with a long-term vision. Rekindle your township's mission by examining your past, present and future. *TGA course B-103; 4 credits*

Linking with the Community

July 14 from 1:30 to 4:45 p.m. (Includes lunch served at 12:30 p.m.)

Enhancing credibility in the public eye begins with your board. Examine ways of being more transparent to your community—a great exercise to increase trust at the local level. Explore techniques for determining what your constituents want and how to keep them informed about your township's activities. Includes discussion on cultivating emerging leaders in your community. *TGA course B-106; 4 credits*

Strategic Planning for Townships

July 15 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Includes breakfast)

Strategic planning is critical to achieving real results in your township. Yet creating (and maintaining) a strategic plan may be a delicate matter in a politically charged environment. Review what strategic exploration entails, as well as the voices that must be heard, in order to develop a solid plan that aligns the township's resources and creates favorable outcomes. *TGA course B-104; 4 credits*



Excellence in Governance

All are welcome to attend these courses, which are part of MTA's Township Governance Academy (TGA) curriculum. You don't have to be enrolled in TGA to attend. If you enroll within six months of class, credit will be applied retroactively.



What's TGA? These confidence-building courses enhance your leadership skills and motivate you to take on the challenges unique to those serving as a local leader. Regardless of your position in the township or amount of experience, TGA will move you to a higher level of performance and make your service to your community more effective—and more rewarding. Learn more about TGA at <https://bit.ly/MTA-TGA>

Summer Academy Registration Form

_____ Township	_____ County
_____ Name	_____ Title
_____ Email	
Which class(es) will you attend: <input type="checkbox"/> Vision <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic	

Early-bird Rate*
Ends June 30

Late Rate*
Begins July 1

Individual course rates

Creating a Vision	\$100/attendee	\$150/attendee
Linking with the Community	\$100/attendee	\$150/attendee
Strategic Planning	\$100/attendee	\$150/attendee

*Rate applies to MTA members. Non-members, call for rates.

Package discounts—Apply only if same registrant attends multiple courses
Save \$50 when registering for **two courses**; **save \$75** when registering for **all three courses**

Payment worksheet

\$ _____ (Rate*) **Creating a Vision**

\$ _____ (Rate*) **Linking with the Community**

\$ _____ (Rate*) **Strategic Planning**

\$ - _____ **Subtract package discount (if applicable)**

\$ _____ Total amount due

Visit <https://bit.ly/MTA-TGA> to book hotel rooms at the discounted MTA group rate.

Payment options	
<input type="checkbox"/> Invoice my township (members only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed (payable to MTA)
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge to: (circle one)	MasterCard VISA
Card #	Expiration Date
Print Card Holder's Name	CSV (3-digit code)
Signature	



Send completed registration form to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078, fax to: (517) 321-8908 or email rebecca@michigantownships.org Need event registration assistance? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226. For other event-related questions, call (517) 321-6467, ext. 234 or email education@michigantownships.org



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