Michigan Township INSIGHTS

June 5, 2026

Precinct consolidation proposal advances in the Senate



Local election commissions may currently consolidate precincts by resolution for elections other than a November general election, its associated primary, or another statewide or federal election. To expand those opportunities, Senate Bill 820, sponsored by Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren), would increase the population limit for a consolidated precinct from 5,000 to 15,000 active registered electors. To do so, election commissions would be required to consider the distance between polling locations and access to public transportation when evaluating precinct consolidation. The Senate Elections and Ethics Committee unanimously approved SB 820, which now advances to the full Senate for consideration.

Legislation to exempt video streaming services from local franchise fees moves to House

A measure to exempt certain companies from paying local franchise fees for video streaming services was approved by a House committee this week. Opposed by MTA, House Bill 5123 would specifically exempt streaming and satellite services (i.e., Disney+, Hulu, Netflix, YouTube TV and others) from sharing the cost of maintaining local rights-of-way (ROW), the very location of the infrastructure that these services use to distribute video content. Local governments maintain the ROW and all utilities that operate in the ROW are responsible for sharing that cost. By exempting some ROW users, HB 5123 will create an unlevel playing field, leaving traditional cable providers to pay the franchise fee to cover the costs of public access TV stations. The bill moves to the full House for a vote.

House approves expansion of ordinances for golf carts on streets

The House approved House Bill 4644 this week with broad bipartisan support. Sponsored by Rep. Alicia St. Germaine (R-Harrison Chtr. Twp.), the bill would expand the number of townships, cities and villages eligible to authorize golf cart operation on local streets. Specifically, HB 4644 would raise the population threshold for eligible communities from a population of fewer than 30,000 to fewer 65,000. The bill





UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

June Election Ready afternoon workshops:
- **June 16** – Marquette, NMU
- **June 17** – Gaylord, Treetops Resort
- **June 23** – Frankenmuth, Bavarian Inn Lodge
- **June 25** – Online, 1-5 p.m.

June 10: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Meeting Misconceptions

July 14-15: Summer Academy, Bay Valley Resort in Bay City:
- Creating a Vision
- Linking with the Community
- Strategic Planning

July 15: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Summer Update: Legislative News from the Capitol

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would not change existing provisions that allow the county board of commissioners to disapprove golf cart operation on roads within a township. The House has transmitted HB 4644 to the Senate, where it has been referred to the Local Government Committee for further consideration. The Senate version, Senate Bill 900, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores), is before the full Senate for action.



Statewide sanitary code legislation advances from committee

Legislation establishing a statewide sanitary code was reported by the Senate Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee this week. Senate Bill 771, sponsored by Sen. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), would create statewide standards for the management of onsite wastewater treatment systems to be regularly evaluated for the protection of public safety. The revisions approved this week would require systems that are at least 20 years old to be inspected every 10 years (once rules are approved) and address requirements for systems near surface water or high-risk erosion areas. Under the bill, current point of sale (POS) ordinances will remain in place. Once rules are promulgated (within three years of the bill being enacted) and if the local POS ordinance meets the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's minimum standards following rule promulgation, they will be able to continue with their current ordinance. Local jurisdictions with POS ordinances that are less stringent than the proposed statewide code would need to adjust to the new standards. Currently, Michigan is the only state that does not have a uniform standard for onsite wastewater treatment systems. It is estimated there are 1.3 million septic systems across the state that lack consistent inspection, and approximately 20-30% of those systems could result in some level of septic failure. SB 771 will next be considered by the full Senate.

Bills criminalize harassing, threatening, impeding first responders

A package of bills approved by the House Judiciary Committee this week would create new criminal penalties for certain interactions with first responders after being issued a verbal warning. House Bill 5574, sponsored by Rep. Alicia St. Germaine (R-Harrison Chtr. Twp.), would create a misdemeanor for knowingly and willfully violating a warning issued by a first responder in the course of the legal duties by remaining within 25 feet of the first responder with the intent to interfere with the first responder's ability to do their duty, threaten them with physical harm, or harass them. The offense rises to a felony if it causes injury or death of the first

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responder. HB 5575, sponsored by Rep. Mike Harris (R-Clarkston), would clarify that "first responder" includes law enforcement officers, corrections officers, firefighters and emergency medical service personnel. It also defines “harass” to mean conduct that intentionally causes substantial emotional distress in the first responder and serves no legitimate purpose. The final bill, HB 5576, sponsored by Rep. Jay DeBoyer (R-Clay Twp.), would provide a maximum sentence of two years for coming within 25 feet and causing injury of a first responder after a warning and 15 years for causing death. The bills move to the House floor for further debate.



DNR warns of elevated fire danger in UP, northern Lower Peninsula

Fire danger levels have registered as extreme across the majority of the Upper Peninsula this week, suspending burn permits until rain decreases the threat. In the northern Lower Peninsula, downed trees from the March 2025 ice storm and dry, windy conditions classify the region as very high danger for wildfire. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages communities to share its fire safety practices and remind residents to consult the burn permit status page for any changes in burning permissions.

Battery collection report covers best practices, tools for local governments

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released a report covering battery collection best practices, with information on diverting batteries from disposal, raising recycling rates, recovering valuable metals, and reducing fires at waste and recycling facilities. Along with the report, the EPA also published a best practices toolkit, which includes educational materials and infographics for resident education, technical standards and guides for battery collection sites, webinars and case studies covering various successful programs across the country and more resources for communities to safely and efficiently manage this complex waste.

STC updates: August MCAT courses, deadline reminders

MCAT courses: The State Tax Commission (STC) is accepting applications for two August Michigan Certified Assessing Technician (MCAT) programs: 1) Aug. 6-7 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Genoa Charter Township (Livingston Co.) with the exam on Aug. 10 from 9 to 11 a.m. Applications must be received by July 17. 2) Aug. 27 to 28 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

in Negaunee Township (Marquette Co.), with the exam on Aug. 31 from 9 to 11 a.m. Applications must be received by Aug. 7. Contact GastW@michigan.gov with questions.

2026 deadlines: To ensure processing and certification for the following tax year, local units are reminded of the 2026 property tax exemption application deadlines, and deadlines for various assessing officer reports:

- **June 15:** *Assessing officer reports:* Attainable Housing, Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Homestead Facilities, Residential Housing, and Solar Energy Facilities—submit to pte@michigan.gov; and *Exemption applications:* Air Pollution Control and Water Pollution Control—to pte@michigan.gov or Property Tax Exemption Section, P.O. Box 30760, Lansing, MI, 48909
- **Oct. 15:** *Assessing officer reports:* Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption, Commercial Facilities and Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption—to pte@michigan.gov, and Industrial Facilities Exemption to Treas-StateSharePropTaxes@michigan.gov
- **Nov. 2** *(Oct. 31 is a Saturday): Exemption applications*: Industrial Facilities, Neighborhood Enterprise Zones, Obsolete Property Rehabilitation, New Personal Property, Charitable Nonprofit Housing, Attainable Housing, Residential Housing and Solar Energy Facilities—to pte@michigan.gov or Property Tax Exemption Section, P.O. Box 30760, Lansing, MI, 48909

For more information or questions, visit the STC's "Property Tax Exemptions" webpage or pte@michigan.gov.



Guidance for law enforcement agencies for upcoming elections

Every eligible voter in Michigan has a right to cast their vote and have it counted, free from intimidation, harassment and other unlawful conduct by poll observers. The Michigan Department of Attorney General has issued a guidance document for law enforcement agencies to review ahead of the primary election on Aug. 4, general election on Nov. 3 and early voting periods. The guidance outlines scenarios law enforcement may encounter at the polls and reviews Michigan election law, highlighting recent changes.

EGLE webinars: State permitting for construction sites; new requirements for certain wastewater system operators

- Understanding environmental regulations and state permitting on brownfield and greenfield sites in your

township can make the siting process easier for proposed manufacturing operations. On June 24 at 10 a.m., the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) will host its next Local Leaders webinar to educate township officials on state environmental permitting requirements, enabling them to keep residents informed on what to expect when a developer proposes a construction site.

- A recent change in administrative rules now requires certification for sewer system operators who oversee collection systems or retention treatment basin (RTB) facilities, who were previously exempt from certification requirements if they did not oversee a wastewater treatment facility. A recording of EGLE's June 4 webinar discussing implementation timelines and certification requirements including exams is now available. Currently, the earliest anticipated timeline for initial system classifications and exam offerings is mid- to late 2028. EGLE will continue to update the "Collection System and RTB Certs" webpage with guidance and other supporting materials.

Webinar explores organizational strategies for a healthier workplace

The third and final installment in the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Healthy Workplaces webinar series will discuss policies, programs and leadership practices that integrate safety and health into the fabric of the workplace. Join the webinar at 2 p.m. on June 25 to explore your role in advancing worker well-being.

Read the June issue of *Township Focus*—online now!



Your June issue of *Township Focus* is here! In this month's cover story, "2026 MTA President Kevin Beeson: Moving MTA, and townships, forward," read about Beeson and his experiences serving local government and his goals for MTA. You can also read an excerpt from Greg Bennick's 2026 Conference keynote address, review MTA's adopted legislative policy platform, learn more about MTA award winners, and see photos from the township event of the year. A Business Solutions article from MTA Allied Service Provider MERS of Michigan details how thoughtfully designed and communicated retirements benefits can help your township attract candidates and support employees. In "Hello, MTA …?", MTA Legal Counsel explores recent changes to the Land Division Act and what actions townships should consider. Learn about internal controls and fraud risks for townships using electronic transactions in "Financial Forum."

Public comment sought for corrective action plan changes

Townships can review and submit comment to the Michigan Department of Treasury on the best practices and strategies for underfunded local governments to develop a corrective action plan. Notable revisions include evaluating the use of pension funds maintained in surplus divisions, changes to final average compensation and benefit vesting for defined benefit plans, and providing links to supplemental resources. Review the draft document and submit comments to LocalRetirementReporting@michigan.gov with the subject line entitled, “Best Practices Revisions Draft" by June 28.

DNR annual 'Three Free' weekend scheduled for June 13-14

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) annual "Three Free" weekend is June 13-14, allowing residents and visitors to explore and enjoy Michigan’s outdoor recreation opportunities free of charge, including:

- Ride 4,000 miles of state routes and trails without purchasing an ORV license.
- Fish for all in-season species without a license (all other regulations still apply).
- Entry to Michigan’s 103 state parks and more than 1,000 boating access sites without a recreation passport.

The DNR reminds participants to ride ORV trails safely, exercise appropriate trail etiquette and help prevent the spread of invasive species on the trail and in the water. Visit the DNR’s "Education and Safety" webpage for more outdoor recreation safety tips.

Engage your community more effectively through MTA's *Summer Academy*

Our experts are coming to Bay Valley Resort in Bay City July 14-15 to deliver key techniques for strengthening your community connections. This year's Summer Academy sessions include:

- **July 14 (a.m.): *Creating a Vision for Your Township.*** Dial in on resident priorities as you help plan the future.
- **July 14 (p.m.): *Linking with the Community***. Build trust with constituents through transparency and credibility.
- **July 15: *Strategic Planning for Townships***. Explore techniques for crafting a solid plan tailored to your community while keeping constituents informed.

Register for two or more classes and get a discounted rate! Don’t wait—learn more here or register online now**.**

Federal updates for week of June 1

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships Weekly Legislative Update for the latest on federal actions impacting townships.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

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