

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

March 15, 2024

## Township engagement critical in BEAD State Challenge Process



Townships have a critical role in the process in which the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) will determine the unserved, underserved and served high-speed internet status of every home, business and community anchor institution (such as schools, libraries and other similar organizations.) in the state. Michigan's State Challenge Process launches on **March 25** and runs through **April 23**. This is the period for townships to view the [Michigan broadband mapping](#) for served, unserved or underserved locations within their communities. The challenge process allows you to confirm whether the areas in your township are served to improve access in your community. View MIHI's [Eligible Challenger webinar](#) to learn what types of challenges will be accepted, what type of evidence will be required, and how to use the State Challenge Portal to submit challenges and evidence. For additional information on the challenge process, visit MIHI's [Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) webpage.

## MPSC second hearing on new siting authority law for renewable energy projects: March 19

The second of two sessions hosted by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) on the implementation of [Public Act 233 of 2023](#)—which shifts siting authority over large-scale renewable energy facilities to the commission—will be held on Tuesday, **March 19 at 1:30 p.m.** via Microsoft Teams. This session will feature renewable energy representatives. MTA and MTA Legal Counsel participated in the [first session on March 7](#) and presented issues for consideration by the MPSC. Additional information can

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### Upcoming MTA Training & Events

March 22 *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar: [Legislative Insights](#)

April 10 *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar: [Public Use of Township Property and Facilities](#)

April 22-25: [Annual Educational Conference & Expo](#)

April 22 [Pre-Conference sessions:](#)

\*\*Assessor's Renewal: [March Madness](#)  
\*\*[Understanding Assessing Basics](#)

also be found on MPSC's [PA 233 implementation webpage](#), which will be updated regularly throughout the engagement process and includes PA 233 background information, links to relevant materials and answers to frequent questions. It will also include links to commission orders and actions, upcoming meetings and other information.

## NEW MTA fact sheet shares 'Who Can Do What ... for Clerk and Election Duties'

While clerks' statutory duties have expanded over the years with new laws and requirements impacting even the smallest townships, recent Election Law changes have radically changed the office of clerk in a way not experienced before.

### ["Who Can Do What ... for Clerk and Election Duties,"](#)

a new fact sheet from MTA, explores how the township board can help current and new clerks—and the township itself—succeed and help to lighten the load for this important elected office. From what does "statutory duty" mean, to spreading the clerk's elections duties, and discussing township clerk compensation, this important 19-page document answers questions and explores options for working with what resources the township can provide for a person willing to hold the clerk's office.



[\\*\\*Defining Your Township's Land Use Future](#)

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MICHIGAN'S EXPERTS IN WEB DEVELOPMENT

## Recently enacted legislation

- [Public Act 12 of 2024](#) allows a county to opt out of the requirement to have a designated assessor and permits the State Tax Commission to appoint an

\* [Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman & Koches PC](#)

\* [Consumers Energy](#)

individual to serve as a designated assessor. The change took effect March 12, 2024.

- PAs [16](#) and [17](#) require disclosure of environmental violations for public contracts for asbestos abatement projects and modify civil penalties for repeated violations and asbestos-related violations. Effective 91 days after the Legislature adjourns at the end of the year.
- [PA 13 of 2024](#) prohibits local units of government from considering milkweed as a noxious weed under the statute that regulates the control and removal of certain noxious weeds by a city, village or township. Effective 91 days after the Legislature adjourns at the end of the year.

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## Sunset for Marketable Record Title Act soon to be law

The sunset for preserving existing mineral interest or other interests in a marketable title will soon be extended. [Senate Bill 721](#), sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), extends the sunset date from March 29, 2024, to Sept. 29, 2025, while stakeholders work to make changes to the act. If the sunset were to expire, real property interests including easements, restrictions, and agreements to maintain roads or storm drains may be lost. The bill received final passage this week and now goes to the governor for signature.

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## Applications accepted for MCAO program

Applications are being accepted for a nine-month [Michigan Certified Assessing Officer \(MCAO\) program](#) starting in June. Sessions will cover 10 chapters with weekly virtual classroom sessions, and be held on Monday or Tuesday evenings, with breaks scheduled into the program. Specific classroom dates will be given after acceptance to the program. [Applications](#) must be received—not postmarked—by the State Tax Commission no later than **May 3**.

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\* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

\* [Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

\* [Hartleb Agency](#)

\* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

\* [Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.](#)

\* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)





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## FY23 SAFER grant program now open

Townships can now apply for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's [Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response \(SAFER\) grant program](#), which provides funding to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations. The program helps departments increase or maintain the number of trained, front line firefighters available in their communities and enhance local departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards. Applications are due by 5 p.m. April 12. Guidance information can be found in the [2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Upcoming informational webinars will allow participants to ask questions and provide a program and application process overview, as well as tips for preparing to apply.



- [March 19, 2 to 3:30 p.m.](#): 2023 SAFER Application Development Workshop—Hiring Activity (Also held [March 27, 2 to 3:30 p.m.](#))
- [March 21, 2 to 3:30 p.m.](#): 2023 SAFER Application Development Workshop—Recruitment and Retention Activity (Also held [April 3, 2 to 3:30 p.m.](#))

## Community Facilities direct loans and grants available

Townships can seek funding from the USDA's [Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program](#) to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An "essential community facility" provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Local units can apply for low-interest direct loans, grants and a combination of a loan and grant, as well as a loan guarantee

program (see the program [fact sheet](#) for details). These may be combined with commercial financing to finance a project if eligibility and feasibility requirements are met. Funding priorities are based on population, median household income, in communities with a population of 5,500 or less. Applications are accepted year-round; contact your [local Rural Development office](#) with questions or to get started.

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APRIL 22 - 25, 2024  
**MTA EDUCATIONAL  
CONFERENCE & EXPO**  
REGISTER BEFORE MARCH 25 TO SAVE!  
**CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

One Team logo and Michigan Townships Association logo are also present in the banner.

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### **Share with MSP interest in low-interest hazard mitigation loans**

Townships can [share their interest](#) in applying for low-interest loans to complete hazard mitigation projects. For the second year, Michigan is developing a grant application for federal funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the [Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program](#). An informational bulletin from Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division shares program details and instructions for completing [an online form](#) by **April 12**, if interested in potentially applying for a future loan. Please note that the form is not a loan application; the data gathered will be used to populate Michigan's potential project list that will become part of the state's grant application.

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### **U.S. Department of Energy grants available**

Townships and other local governments can access two U.S. Department of Energy grant programs for technical assistance to improve energy programs:

- [Clean Energy to Communities Program: Expert Match](#), which will accelerate the speed and scale of commitments, plans and actions to increase clean energy, create jobs, build resiliency and

advance environmental justice by providing direct support to local communities to achieve their own goals. There is **no deadline** as this program has a rolling application.

- [Waste-to-Energy Technical Assistance for State, Local, and Tribal Governments](#) program, which enables organic waste energy and/or resource recovery by leveraging technical expertise and relevant data to address specific and unique issues each municipality encounters with its waste streams. The deadline to apply is **April 15**.

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## Reminders for clerks

### **April 15 deadline to enter or create early voting agreements.**

Jurisdictions that conducted early voting on their own for the presidential primary have until **April 15** to enter a municipal or county agreement to conduct early voting for all state and federal elections in 2024 and 2025.

**Combined precincts for May election.** Jurisdictions that plan to operate a combined precinct per their county's school plan must go to the Qualified Voter File's Election Geography module to create the combined precinct prior to **Sunday, April 7**.

**Early voting laptop warranty.** Clerks who received a state-purchased early voting laptop can transfer the warranty to themselves, which allows for faster technology support. See BOE e-newsletter for guidance.

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## Still time to get discounted registration for MTA's 2024 Conference & Expo

Get the best rate for MTA's [Annual Conference & Expo](#) when you register by March 25. This one-of-a-kind event returns to the Grand Traverse Resort on April 22-25, offering premier education on [50 timely township topics](#), unique [networking opportunities](#), plus an [expo featuring nearly 100 municipal vendors](#) offering services that can help you improve your community. With workshops on a wide variety of key township topics, you're sure to find something for everyone on



your township team! Get all the details on [MTA's Conference webpage](#) or [click here to register now](#).

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### **Mental Health in the Workplace webinar**

A free webinar will be hosted by the state Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity on March 21, at 2 p.m, with a focus on the impact of organizational structure on workplace behavior and how system changes can foster improved workplace mental health. The webinar will be on [Microsoft Teams](#).

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### **Federal update for week of March 11**

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.