

# Michigan Township Focus

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

## Inside Election 2014

- Gubernatorial candidates talk township issues
- Q&As with attorney general & secretary of state nominees
- MTA-PAC's general election endorsements

Mastering competencies to solve contemporary challenges  
**page 3**

MTA's 2014 *Summit* provides an U.P.-lifting experience  
**page 24**

Township lighthouse mystery draws visitors, questions  
**page 26**





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# contents

October 2014 | Volume 2, Number 9



## featured articles

**12**

### Inside Election 2014

Gubernatorial, attorney general and secretary of state candidates weigh in on issues of importance to townships. MTA-PAC also makes endorsements for the November general election.

**24**

### An U.P.-lifting experience

Nearly 100 township officials gathered in Marquette for two days of education and networking at MTA's 2014 *U.P. Summit*.

**26**

### Who left the light on?

### Townships that go bump in the night

A mysterious lighthouse beacon draws visitors—and even ghost hunters—to one lakeside Michigan township.

**Special insert: 2015 MTA Annual Conference brochure**

## in this issue

- 3** Local View
- 4** News & Notes
- 8** Hello, MTA ... ?
- 10** Financial Forum

- 11** Inside Lansing
- 22** Knowledge Center
- 28** Township Talk



**MTA**  
MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

Official Publication of  
the Michigan Townships  
Association

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### mission statement

The Michigan Townships Association promotes the interests of township government by fostering strong, vibrant communities; advocating legislation to meet 21st century challenges; developing knowledgeable township officials and enthusiastic supporters of township government; and encouraging ethical practices of elected officials who uphold the traditions and unique characteristics of township government and the values of the people of Michigan.



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## allied service provider index



### president's round table

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# 'The Will to Lead' requires mastering competencies to solve contemporary challenges

The annual discussion leading to the selection of the Association's Annual Educational Conference theme often reveals what the Michigan Townships Association's elected leaders recognize as emerging important issues for MTA to address. The dialogue and ultimate choice of the 2015 Conference theme, "The Will to Lead,"

prompted a fresh perspective on MTA's role in developing member leadership skills.

To the MTA Conference Committee, in a world of uncertainty and chaos, Americans need and expect elected officials at all levels to instill trust, make sense out of complexity, find creative solutions to emerging problems and issues, and inspire collective action. The public expects township

officials to competently and confidently confront community problems and regional issues. These challenges will not be solved by mastering facts and figures.

The MTA Board of Directors and staff are excited at the prospect of delivering to members learning opportunities to build contemporary leadership skills essential to governing effectively and successfully solving contemporary challenges.

Township officials with "The Will to Lead" can enthusiastically elevate their leadership skills into the rare atmosphere where amazing accomplishments can happen. Seldom are the leadership skills one brings to township office sufficient, so Michigan township officials need to expand and improve leadership competencies exemplified in their behavior, intellect, emotions and collaboration.

Many years ago, we sensed a reticence among our members to attend classes on leadership skills. "Leaders are born, not made," they explained. "Either you have it or you don't."

MTA's current Board members reject that notion. In the past two elections, there has been a "changing of the guard" in townships that has altered the effectiveness of traditional leadership competencies. Township board leadership has transitioned from the "G.I. Generation" to the "Baby Boomers" and "Gen Xers." Research suggests that each generation, with their unique shared experiences, develop their own traditions, cultures and preferences. Among those generational preferences are different perspectives of leadership and expectations of public officials.



This transition was very evident a couple of months ago when the MTA Executive Committee developed a list of leadership competencies desired of MTA directors when leadership positions on the MTA Board are filled. The resulting leadership competencies mirror the leadership skills that townships need of their board members, and also illustrate how leadership competencies have changed.

Americans used to describe admired leaders as strong, unbending, stoic and intimidating. Leaders were expected to have "swagger." Public officials elected from the generation that survived the Great Depression and world wars were expected to emulate the public personas of Roosevelt (Teddy or Franklin) or military giants Pershing, Patton and MacArthur, who were celebrated as audacious, tenacious, intimidating and inspiring public confidence in the face of change and fear. Leaders in the last century promised stability and security, and returning America to a bygone era by turning back the forces of change.

The generation now running the country grew up fighting for change and defying authority. Leadership is no longer exemplified by a dominating personality intent on conquering challengers and keeping followers in their places. Effective leadership is now built on competencies such as earning trust, subject expertise, self-awareness, empathy and authenticity. Today's leaders manage change rather than railing at the inevitable.

While these new leadership competencies may come to some people easier than to others, they can be developed. Extraordinary leadership cannot be learned in a single 75-minute Conference workshop, but is instead a lifetime journey. The MTA Board of Directors has recognized that the changing expectations of government require township officials to add "The Will to Lead" to the long list of skills they are expected to master. The 2015 MTA Annual Educational Conference can be a great place to either start the journey toward "The Will to Lead," or a turbo-boost for those township officials already well on the way.

*The 2015 MTA Annual Conference & Expo registration brochure is included in THIS issue of Township Focus.*

# news&notes

a compendium of noteworthy items

## LOCALS GIVE LOW MARKS

### Local leaders evaluate state agencies in statewide survey

Local government leaders in Michigan spared their praise when evaluating the performance of 14 state departments and agencies.

Just two received good or excellent ratings from a majority of local officials statewide—the Michigan State Police (58 percent positive) and the Secretary of State (54 percent positive)—according to a recent University of Michigan (U-M) survey.

By contrast, local officials' net ratings for nine other departments were less than positive. The departments of Environmental Quality and Transportation received the lowest net scores overall, as a majority of local leaders rated their performance fair or poor (53 percent and 55 percent, respectively), according to the survey by U-M's Ford School of Public Policy.

The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) also asked local leaders for their views on whether Michigan is headed in the right direction, and if Gov. Rick Snyder and the state Legislature were doing a good job.

The survey, conducted by the U-M Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, reports that:

- Local leaders express largely similar views compared to last year, with 55 percent saying Michigan is going in the right direction.
- Overall, 52 percent believe Snyder has done a good or excellent job in 2014, compared to 51 percent who felt this way in 2013. The percentage of respondents who rate his performance as poor is down to 15 percent from 19 percent last year.
- Less than a third—28 percent—of local officials rate the state Legislature's performance as either good or excellent, while 32 percent rank it as poor.

MTA is among the partners on the MPPS, the only ongoing survey in the country targeted at every unit of general purpose local government across an entire state. Township supervisors, clerks and managers are among those surveyed.



## CELEBRATING A PIONEERING SPIRIT

### Township library honors local innovator

Merze Tate might not be a familiar name to a great many people. But whenever patrons pass through the doors of the newly dedicated Tate Memorial Library, in **Rolland Township** (Isabella Co.), they will be helping to honor the trailblazing African-American woman, who was born and raised in the township.

When renovations were completed this summer on the Rolland Township Library, the branch of the Chippewa River District Library received a name change as well—honoring a local woman who made her mark around the globe.

The idea was sparked by township supervisor **Dan Shaw**, a local history buff and history teacher for Montabella Schools. Shaw felt it was important to keep the area's heritage alive.

"We thought it would be a great idea to honor Dr. Tate by dedicating the library in her hometown after her," Shaw said, noting that the community was enthusiastic about the idea.

Born in the township in 1905, Tate was a pioneer for her time, shattering numerous barriers during her lifetime. The grandchild of the first African-American settlers in Mecosta County, she was the youngest and only African-American graduate in her high school class and was selected class valedictorian. She was the first African-American to graduate from Western Michigan Teachers College (now Western Michigan University).

She went on to become the first African-American to graduate from Oxford University, as well as the first African-American woman to earn a Ph.D from Harvard. She was an advisor to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as well as a college professor and dean. She traveled the world twice and was a filmmaker for the U.S. State Department.

Tate died at the age of 91 in 1996, and was buried in Rolland Township's Pine River Cemetery. Shaw—who has long been an advocate for preserving Tate's legacy—was instrumental in efforts to place a headstone on Tate's grave, which had been previously unmarked for seven years.

The library was officially dedicated on Sept. 11. Tate's biographer, Sonja Bernard-Hollins, was among the attendees at the ceremony honoring the life and spirit of Merze Tate.

Shaw hopes that the newly renamed library will serve as an inspiration for area youth. He said, "My hope is that the local kids who go to the library will see her name and photo, and realize that they too can reach great heights if they give their best effort."



Merze Tate

## LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

### Township happenings

A recent study from the University of Michigan showed that Michigan International Speedway, located in **Cambridge Township** (Lenawee Co.), generates \$414 million annually, with \$173 million affecting Michigan directly. The track, which produces more than 5,400 jobs, hosts two NASCAR Sprint Cup races each summer as well as events throughout the year.

Township residents and visitors alike can enjoy new additions to the River Oaks County Park, located in **Comstock Charter Township** (Kalamazoo Co.). A new dog park, splash pad and playground opened at the park in mid-August. The dog park offers nearly five acres of fenced areas for dogs to exercise and socialize off-leash. The splash pad features in- and above-ground water spray elements, with the new playground nearby. An official grand opening celebration will be held in summer 2015.

Michigan's "Solar Valley" will expand further, with the addition of a new facility in **Saginaw Charter Township** (Saginaw Co.). A Georgia-based manufacturer of high-efficiency solar cells and modules will add hundreds of jobs to the area over the next three years.

Email YOUR Township Happenings to [jenn@michigantownships.org](mailto:jenn@michigantownships.org). Add MTA to your newsletter mailing list! Mail to MTA, Attn. Jenn Fiedler, PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078, or email to [jenn@michigantownships.org](mailto:jenn@michigantownships.org).



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# profile



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## Keeping officials' information up-to-date in MTA's database

Just after the Nov. 4 general election, MTA will be seeking updated information on all new and veteran officials in your township to update our database. A mailing will be sent following the election, asking clerks to confirm the names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of all current officials, and to provide this information for any new officials elected in the Nov. 4 election.

It is critical to review the information, make corrections as needed and provide changes to MTA as quickly as possible so that all newly elected officials in your township receive correspondence from MTA following the election. Updated information (or an "OK as is") can also be emailed to [nicole@michigantownships.org](mailto:nicole@michigantownships.org).



The township clerk can also make adjustments to officials' online profile information—including adding a new official or marking a former official for removal from the database. *(When adding a new official, be sure not to overwrite the former official's information with the new official's name and information. Contact MTA with questions.)* These efforts will help

ensure that the right information goes to the right person.

Officials can also update their contact information online at any time. Simply log in to the members-only portion of [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org) using your email address on file with MTA and password. After logging in, select "My Profile" under the "My MTA" tab to get started. *(Not sure of your password? Select the "Forgot Your Password?" link on the log-in page. Enter your email address on file with MTA, and you will be sent a link to create a new password. Contact [nicole@michigantownships.org](mailto:nicole@michigantownships.org) for assistance.)*

Keeping up-to-date information—including email addresses—on file with MTA is critical to ensure all officials are getting the most out of their Association membership. If we have the incorrect email address, officials are missing out on valuable legislative updates and additional information found in our weekly and monthly electronic newsletters, *Township Insights* and *Township Voice*, as well as notices about educational seminars and other opportunities for today's township officials.

Questions? Contact MTA at (517) 321-6467.



## THE WILL TO LEAD ...

Look for the 2015 MTA Annual Conference & Expo registration brochure inside the center of THIS issue of *Township Focus*.

## Letter to the editor

### Recent 'Local View' column inspires 'epiphany of sorts'

I have never commented before, but the July 2014 *Local View* column, ["To townships, people are not just customers," by MTA Executive Director Larry Merrill] so struck home. Our board tried so hard when we first took office 14 years ago to reach that customer satisfaction level we all seek. We have accomplished that and our citizens—our "customers"—regularly reward us with their trust.

Now we want to move to the next level, which you have brought into focus for me. We always joke around that when nobody comes to the meeting, we must be doing things right. I see that as a flaw now. I want people to come, I want the input and ideas they can provide from outside my/our regular circle of information. It's the satisfaction of participation I now want to encourage. It is preparing the next set of leaders for when I decide to move on.

Thank you—your article has caused an epiphany of sorts.

—Michael H. Sedlak, CMC  
Clerk, Green Oak Charter Township  
(Livingston Co.)

## mta events | october

**14** Emerging Issues for EMS and Fire Departments workshop, Frankenmuth

**21** Registration and housing open for MTA's 2015 Annual Educational Conference & Expo, held Jan. 27-30, at the Amway Grand Plaza & DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. *Registration materials appear in this issue of Township Focus.*

**27** Township Finances workshop, Lansing

**28** At Your Service: Meeting Township Needs workshop, Lansing



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# calendar

Dates and deadlines  
for townships

## OCTOBER

**6** Last day to register for Nov. 4 general election. (MCL 168.497)

**15** The assessor reports the status of real and personal Industrial Facility Tax property to the State Tax Commission (STC). (MCL 207.567(2))

Qualified local governmental units report to STC on the status of each exemption granted under the Commercial Redevelopment Act, Commercial Rehabilitation Act and Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act. (MCLs 207.666, 207.854 and 125.2794)

The assessor sends annual report of the determination made under MCL 207.783(1) to each taxing unit that levies taxes upon property in the local governmental unit in which a new facility or rehabilitated facility is located and to each holder of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone certificate. (MCL 207.783(2))

**By 24** Pre-election campaign statements filed. Books closed Oct. 19.

Write-in candidates file Declaration of Intent forms for Nov. 4 election by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.737a)

**By 25** County clerks deliver remainder of ballots and election supplies for Nov. 4 general election to local clerks. (MCL 168.714)

**By 28** Notice of Nov. 4 general election published. (MCL 168.653a)

## By 30

Public accuracy test must be conducted for Nov. 4 general election. (R 168.778) Notice of test must be published at least 48 hours before test. (MCL 168.798)

## 31

Deadline for submission of New Personal Property (PA 328 of 1998), Obsolete Property (PA 146 of 2000), Commercial Rehabilitation (PA 210 of 2005), Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (PA 147 of 1992), Commercial Facilities (PA 255 of 1978) and Industrial Facilities (PA 198 of 1974) tax exemption applications to STC.

## NOVEMBER

### 1

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

Deadline for filing for Foreclosure Entity Conditional Rescission of a Principal Residence Exemption to qualify for the winter tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(5))

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

Electors who wish to receive an absentee voter ballot for the Nov. 4 general election by mail submit absentee voter ballot applications by 2 p.m. (MCL 168.759)

### 3

Electors qualified to obtain an absentee voter ballot for Nov. 4 general election may vote in person in the

clerk's office until 4 p.m. (MCL 168.761)

### 4

General election. Emergency absentee voting until 4 p.m. (MCL 168.759b)

## By 5

Supervisor notifies treasurer of the amount of county, state and school taxes apportioned in township to enable treasurer to obtain necessary bond\* for collection of taxes. (MCL 211.43(1))

### 5

Boards of county canvassers meet to canvass Nov. 4 general election. (MCL 168.821)

## By 18

Boards of county canvassers complete

canvass of Nov. 4 general election; county clerks forward results to secretary of state within 24 hours. (MCLs 168.822 and 168.828)

## By 24

Board of State Canvassers meet to canvass Nov. 4 general election. (MCL 168.842)

## By 28

Treasurer gives county treasurer a bond\* running to the county in the actual amount of county, state and school taxes. (MCL 211.43(2))

\*May be handled by the county treasurer. See MCL 211.43(2) for additional information, or call MTA at (517) 321-6467 for further guidance.

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## Q May a township lawfully provide food and beverages to election workers on Election Day?

It is possible under certain circumstances, but there may be better options. According to the Michigan Department of Treasury's *Bulletin for Audits of Local Units of Government, Appendix H*: "The purchase of coffee, donuts and sandwiches must be for a public, not an individual or private group or purpose. These expenditures for use at a regular or special meeting, for firefighters, volunteer or full-time employees, when working an extended period of time or when dedicating public buildings are normally considered expenditures for a public purpose."

"Coffee and donuts for employees' use during normal working hours is considered personal, not for a public purpose, and improper unless specifically provided for in a collective bargaining agreement or duly adopted employment policy of the governmental unit (fringe benefit)."

Under normal conditions, it is probably best if the township does not provide meals. Just as with other township employees, election workers may bring their own lunches or go out for lunch. In some townships, election staffers volunteer to bring dishes to pass—which gets my vote because few things beat a Michigan potluck!

There is a belief in some communities that once election workers arrive for work on Election Day, they cannot leave the building, even for meals. This has prompted some townships to provide meals on-site. We are not aware of any requirement in the Michigan Election Law or Bureau of Elections procedures that election workers must remain on-site throughout the day. Just as with other hourly employees, break times must be available. If a township requires election workers to remain on-site even through lunch, it must pay them for that time.

In a particularly busy election or where the election workers are short-staffed due to illness or emergency, however, it may be necessary for the proper administration of the election for election workers to work through breaks or for extended hours. In those circumstances, a township may choose to provide food or beverages for election workers.

## Q When should a person elected to a township office at the November election take the oath of office?

Any person elected in November to fill a township board vacancy must take the oath of office before assuming the office, including a person who already took the oath after

being appointed to fill a vacancy. Because this is a mid-term election, the oath may be taken as soon as the county board of canvassers certifies the election; the new official does not have to wait until Nov. 20.

However, if an official does not take the oath before Jan. 1, 2015, the position is vacant on Jan. 1, and the board has 45 calendar days to appoint to fill the vacancy. The board may choose to appoint the person who was elected but failed to take the oath in time. A person appointed to fill a vacancy created by failure to take the oath serves the remainder of the term.

## Q What can a township do to ensure a smooth transition if any new board members are elected in November?

Depending on which official is new, the following steps should be taken:

- An outgoing official must, by law, turn over to his or her successor all of the files, computer passwords, keys, equipment and other materials related to the office. This should be done after the county board of canvassers certifies the election and notifies the candidates. Note: All documents, records or files created while in office are township property, and the willful withholding or destruction of township books, papers or records is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to two years in prison or a fine of up to \$1,000. (MCL 750.491)
- New clerks and treasurers should notify each banking institution that does business with the township that the previous clerk or treasurer's signature is no longer valid. Establish the new official's signature as the one of record. The same applies to a new deputy clerk or deputy treasurer.
- The clerk and treasurer are each required by law to appoint a deputy as soon as possible after taking the

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oath of office. The supervisor has the option to appoint a deputy. A deputy must also take the oath of office.

- A treasurer, deputy treasurer, clerk, deputy clerk or constable must be bonded before taking the oath of office. Contact the township's bond insurance representative immediately after the election is certified to add new names to the bond. Some companies offer a "blanket" bond that covers all township employees who handle funds.
  - An "exit" audit of township finances is not required simply because township offices have changed hands. A township board may choose at any time to contract to have an audit done if there are concerns about financial irregularities, but it will be in addition to any regularly scheduled audit and will have an additional cost.
  - Notify MTA so we can ensure that new officials have access to the MTA Members Website, and receive *Township Focus* and other MTA publications, workshop brochures and other appropriate information.
- Clerks:** MTA will send a form to all clerks in November to update MTA's database and directory.
- If township mail is received at an official's home, fill out a change of address card for the post office to ensure that mail will be forwarded to the appropriate new official.
  - Give new officials copies of any policy manuals or documents explaining township procedures. (The MTA Bookstore has township official guides available for purchase. Contact MTA at (517) 321-6467, or order online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org).)
  - Most importantly, welcome a new board member to the township "team" as a colleague and an equal on the board, regardless of political differences or experience. The new person may look at the job with an entirely new perspective. Sitting board members may be comfortable with each other and may have developed an understanding of how they work together, but adding a new member can be a positive opportunity to explore why you do what you do.



Do we have to reappoint current board of review (BOR) members if we want them to continue in the new BOR term?

Yes. All current appointments to boards of review will expire on Dec. 31, 2014. Every township board must appoint a new BOR for the new two-year term that begins Jan. 1, 2015. Both new and previously appointed BOR members must be appointed and take the oath of office within 10 days after appointment.

Under MCL 211.28, a member of the township board may not serve on the BOR or fill any vacancy.

A spouse, mother, father, sister, brother, son or daughter, including an adopted child, of the assessor is not eligible to

serve on the board or fill any vacancy. MTA Legal Counsel recommends that a board be prudent and use a similar prohibition on appointing the same relatives of the supervisor.

At least two-thirds of the BOR members must be property taxpayers of the township. (Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.342) requires all members to be taxpayers, however, the State Tax Commission has stated that is not necessary. MTA Legal Counsel suggests taking a prudent approach.)

*Alternate members may be appointed:* MCL 211.28 authorizes a township board to appoint not more than two alternate members for the same term as regular members of the BOR. An alternate member may be called to perform the duties of a regular member of the BOR in the absence of a regular member. An alternate member may also be called to perform the duties of a regular member of the BOR for the purpose of reaching a decision in issues protested in which a regular member has abstained due to conflict of interest.

*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 or fax (517) 321-8908.

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**Q**Last month's *Financial Forum* column discussed internal controls for cash receipts and disbursements in the tax collection process. How can a larger township build on the internal controls basics?

Larger townships may consider more technology-based solutions, such as:

- **Lock box services.** This is a post office box used for mail payments of customer remittances. A bank opens mail, captures and stores data through character recognition on checks, such as magnetic ink character recognition (MICR), and transmits details to township. Typically, a bank will work with your software vendor and update tax or utility billing records
- **Use positive pay.** The township provides its disbursement bank with an electronic check register as often as checks are issued. Whenever a check is presented for payment but there is no record of it being issued, the bank refers the check to its customer client for a pay/no pay decision. The bank delivers MICR line information describing exception items, and banks can also deliver images of those items to clients.
- **Controls over decentralized locations.** Use of cash registers and maintaining control of register close-outs, assignment of pre-numbered documents or receipts, or computerized points of sale registers, can help assure completeness of the accounting records.
- **Electronic payments.** These can present different challenges. Electronic fund transfers are generally initiated by the clerk, and accomplished by the treasurer.
- **Imprest accounts.** Use separate imprest bank accounts—accounts with a small, consistent balance—for electronic fund transfers.
- **ACH filters.** The Automated Clearing House (ACH) Network is a nationwide batch-oriented electronic funds transfer system that provides for interbank clearing of electronic payments for participating depository financial institutions. Townships can ask their banks to set up ACH filters, which will only allow drafting from authorized sources.
- **Disbursement accounts.** Such accounts could include an accounts payable account, designed to limit individual transactions to a specific dollar amount, and an accounts payable account for larger transactions, which would highlight larger dollar amounts and help protect from fraud.



Our clerk would like to use a third-party payroll processing service to help with some of the workload in the office.

While the cost seems reasonable, will it really save that much effort?

Many private sector businesses and larger governmental units have used third-party payroll for years. While staff time reduction is often the motivation for using such services, there are other benefits, such as:

- **Tax filing service.** Third-party payroll services file all tax returns, 941, W-2/W-3 and unemployment forms, as well as make tax payments at the appropriate time.
- **Direct deposit.** These services offer direct deposit options for employee net pay.
- **Staff training.** It is generally easier to cross-train other employees in case of absence of the individual responsible for payroll processing.
- **Improvement opportunities for internal controls.** A township can generally separate key functions involving payroll, such as adding/deleting employees, changing pay rates, entering time, etc. This can be more difficult to accomplish in a small township using "off-the-shelf" products such as QuickBooks. Third parties can also directly mail payroll reports to another township employee, such as the treasurer.

While townships with integrated software packages enjoy the ability of the payroll modules to post directly to the general ledger, many payroll third-party processors can also create electronic postings to the general ledger in some applications.

Interested townships should do a cost-benefit analysis of the incremental cost of third-party payroll, measured against time savings and other potential benefits and services.

Just like financial institutions, payroll services are not all alike. There has been a recent rash of criminal activity in this area involving tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer and employee funds collected by payroll services, but not paid to the IRS or other tax authorities. Townships should consider only those firms that have long-term track record, meet IRS requirements on software development and have strong financial controls in place.

Such services should also be able to provide the township with internal control (SOC-1) reports, which are required by township auditors, and should provide you with some assurance that the township's fiduciary responsibilities to file and remit taxes are being fulfilled. Involve your CPA and local bank before entering into these relationships. For more information, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov); search for "outsourcing payroll."

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.

## Law fixes costly tax loophole

Swift legislation fixed a tax loophole, preventing the state from paying more than \$1 billion in business tax refunds to out-of-state companies.

Gov. Rick Snyder signed Senate Bill 156, sponsored by Sen. Jack Brandenburg (R-Harrison Chtr. Twp.), into law after it was overwhelmingly approved by both chambers of the Legislature. Now Public Act 282 of 2014, it has immediate effect and applies retroactively to tax years since Jan. 1, 2010.

PA 282 was written in response to a Michigan Supreme Court decision that opened the door to potential litigation from out-of-state businesses. Earlier this year, IBM was awarded a \$6.3 million tax refund from 2008 and 2009 after it successfully argued that businesses could still use the Multistate Tax Compact to figure their taxes.

Legislators believed the compact was repealed when they approved changes to the Michigan Business Tax (MBT) in 2011. However, the state Supreme Court ruled that this was not the case, and businesses were not required to apportion their income using the sales-factor formula in the MBT act.

The newly signed act addresses this issue by retroactively repealing the state's enactment of the Multistate Tax Compact. This means that businesses currently seeking

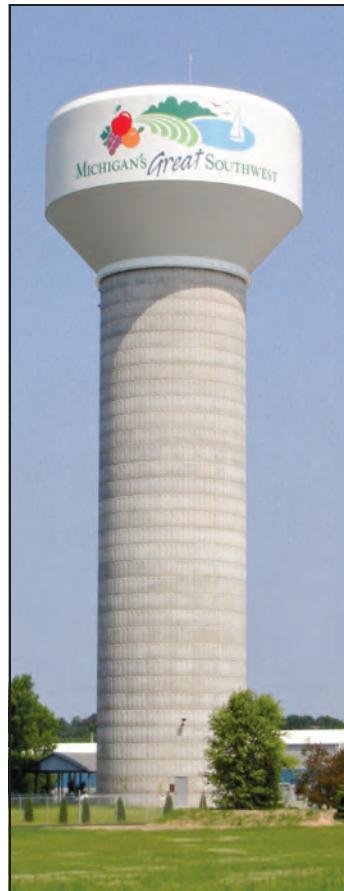
to use the compact would no longer be able to do so. The change prevents a negative supplemental that would have hit the state on Oct. 1 if the Legislature had not addressed the problem.

## Driver responsibility fee bill signed into law

Michigan drivers will soon have the option to perform community service instead of paying driver responsibility fees.

Senate Bill 633, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Caswell (R-Adams Twp.), was signed into law by Gov. Rick Snyder and takes effect Dec. 31, 2014. Public Act 250 of 2014, sponsored by Rep. Joe Haveman (R-Holland), takes effect simultaneously as the two are tie-barred to one another.

SB 633 allows those who are assessed a driver responsibility fee for certain offenses to engage in 10 hours of community service instead of paying the fee. While this will impact state revenue, PA 250 will have an even larger fiscal impact. PA 250 eventually eliminates the driver responsibility fees for moving violations by 2019. A portion of those fees currently goes to the Fire Protection Fund, which helps fund fire protection grants. While the new law states it is the Legislature's intent to appropriate \$8.5 million into the Fire Protection fund each year, this is not guaranteed.



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# Snyder, Schauer talk state, local issues

To introduce its members to the 2014 gubernatorial candidates, and to give township officials better insight into how those candidates feel on a variety of township-related issues, *Township Focus* asked Republican Gov. Rick Snyder and his challenger, Democrat Mark Schauer, a series of questions on issues of importance to local government. Their responses, published as submitted, give a glimpse into how Michigan's next governor views the important relationship between state and local government.



Snyder



Schauer

## 1. What makes you the best qualified person to be Michigan's next governor?

**SNYDER:** My wife, Sue, and I were out to dinner one evening back in 2009. Like most Michiganders, I was growing increasingly frustrated with the direction in which Michigan was going. Our unemployment rate was among the highest in the country, our kids were moving to other states to find jobs, and our favorite businesses were closing their doors. Too many of us thought that our best days were behind us. So, Sue said to me, "Rick, why don't you run for governor?"

When I first ran in 2010, the other candidates were hard-working and good people, but they were all career politicians who kept talking about "fixing" Michigan. "Fixing" Michigan wouldn't cut it. We needed to reinvent Michigan, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Michigan is on the road to recovery. We've put people over politics, focused on solutions, and solved the tough problems.

In my first term, we've created nearly 300,000 new private sector jobs. We have balanced our budgets and erased our \$1.5 billion deficit. We repealed the job-killing Michigan Business Tax, lowered the income tax rate, and reformed the personal property tax on small business. And we have invested in our schools, so much so in fact, that funding for K-12 education is higher than at any point in state history.

Detroit is coming back, agriculture is thriving, and tourism is reaching new heights. Overall quality of life is getting better. We're taking care of our kids and our families. Together, we have put Michigan on a solid foundation that ensures this recovery will last for generations.

**Michigan is on the road to recovery. We've put people over politics, focused on solutions, and solved the tough problems. ... But there's more to do, and I know that the job's not finished. That's why I'm running for re-election.**

**—Gov. Rick Snyder**

But there's more to do, and I know that the job's not finished. That's why I'm running for re-election.

Let's close the skills gap in Michigan. Let's continue to create more and better jobs. Let's invest even more in education and ensure that our kids are prepared for the new opportunities they'll have as Michigan's economy continues to grow. These should be our new goals as we work together for a brighter future—for everyone—right here in Michigan.

Now's not the time to slow down. I'm proud of my record as governor, and with your support, Michigan will accelerate down the road to recovery.



While his 2010 gubernatorial opponents called for "fixing Michigan," now-Gov. Rick Snyder aimed to "reinvent Michigan, and that's exactly what we're doing," he said.

**SCHAUER:** Throughout my lifetime of public service, I have served on the Battle Creek City Commission, in both the state House and Senate, and the U.S. Congress. I've always fought for regular people to ensure they have a voice, and that's why I'm running for governor. We need a governor who will make education a top economic priority, because good jobs come from a good education. I believe a strong economy is built on a strong middle class that has the economic security to afford a safe home, reliable car, a kid's college fund, and an occasional family vacation. As Michigan's next governor, I'll wake up every day fighting to build an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy.

## 2. How has the recent tax restructuring impacted Michigan's economy? Over the next four years, what would you do to encourage Michigan's economic recovery?

**SNYDER:** Michigan had a bad reputation for having an uncompetitive and overly complicated tax code. The tax foundation ranked us among the worst in the nation. Additionally, the nature of our credits and exemptions put an increasingly disproportionate burden on younger families.

The tax reform efforts of 2011 created a simple, fair and efficient tax code that is among the most competitive in America. It eliminated the unfair double taxation of small businesses, simplified the forms and lowered the overall burden.

These reforms contributed to an environment where nearly 300,000 private sector jobs have been created. Last year, per capita income in our state rose at a top 10 rate and our unemployment has fallen from 11.3 percent to 7.7 percent.

# COVER STORY

Michigan's recovery is gaining momentum. Now is the time to accelerate that momentum by giving kids and parents more and better options to gain skills needed to fill the thousands of jobs available in Michigan right now, including or especially those in skilled trades areas. Additionally, Michigan needs to build on the \$470 million in increased transportation funding allocated in recent years for our roads and bridges, and establish a comprehensive structurally sound transportation package.

**SCHAUER:** There has been a broader tax shift onto families and individuals. We should grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out, not the top down. I will work to repeal the Snyder retirement tax, increase both the earned income tax credit and the homestead property tax credit, and restore the child tax credit, which will put more money in people's pockets to spend at local businesses. We should give companies tax incentives to come to Michigan, but hold them accountable for creating jobs here. I will work to provide small businesses with tax credits, grants and loans to create good jobs in high-tech industries like automotive research and development, life sciences, and renewable energy.

**We need to have a partnership between the state and all local units of government. ... My job will be to listen to local community leaders, including township officials.**

—Mark Schauer,  
2014 gubernatorial candidate

3. Numerous laws and reforms have been enacted impacting local units of government. What reforms, if any, do you propose that would further restructure local governments? Please explain.

**SNYDER:** A good example of collaboration is what we did with the personal property tax reforms. We recognize and support the essential services local communities provide. Currently, municipalities depend on the personal property tax to help fund vital services, but the revenue is unreliable and subject to change. Proposal 1 guaranteed that 100 percent of the revenue lost will be replaced, and creates a more stable and secure funding system for local services like police, fire, schools and parks. It is this kind of innovative and forward-thinking, problem-solving strategies that we will continue to use to reinvent Michigan in my second term.



A former city commissioner, state legislator and U.S. congressman, gubernatorial candidate Mark Schauer "has always fought for regular people to ensure they have a voice, and that's why I'm running for governor," he said.

Another example is a comprehensive road funding and infrastructure strategy for our state. For too long, our state has failed to properly invest and maintain our infrastructure. Modern roads, clean water and broadband access are among the building blocks of Michigan's prosperity; therefore, I am focusing on four primary needs:

- A modern transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently, reliably and safely.
- A multimodal system serving the movements of a new generation of Michiganders that is more active, urban-based and tech-savvy.
- Water and sewer systems that support and protect Michigan's rich environment.
- Integrating the broadband telecommunications network, connecting every business and household to the Internet.

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**SCHAUER:** I support local revenue sharing as it is used to support police and fire protection across the state. As governor, I'll support common-sense policies to streamline local government and ensure tax dollars are invested efficiently while respecting local control.

#### 4. What do you view the relationship to be between state government and Michigan's 1,240 townships?

**SNYDER:** Put simply, a partnership. My vision for reinventing Michigan is creating more and better jobs, revitalizing the educational system, and revamping government to focus on providing excellent service to its customers, our state's 10 million people. I believe that to provide the best possible customer service, we must work together and form partnerships amongst every unit of government. Michigan is on the road to recovery, and with everyone working together, we will ensure our best days are ahead.

**SCHAUER:** We need to have a partnership between the state and all local units of government. We should reverse cuts to local revenue sharing to ensure townships have the resources they need. My job will be to listen to local community leaders, including township officials.

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# Secretary of state candidates weigh in

To highlight how the 2014 secretary of state nominees—incumbent Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, a Republican, and Detroit attorney Godfrey Dillard, a Democrat—feel on several key election-related issues, *Township Focus* posed a series of questions to each candidate. The following are their responses, as submitted.

## 1. Please share your top priorities as Michigan's secretary of state.

**JOHNSON:** My priorities as Michigan's secretary of state have and continue to be increasing access to the ballot box while securing Michigan elections, fighting fraud, and delivering better, faster and smarter customer service. And we're doing all of this despite millions in budget cuts and having 25 percent less staff than the office had just 10 years ago.

In the past four years, I've led the charge to:

- Increase organ donation. Today, nearly half of all eligible adults have signed up on Michigan's Organ Donor Registry, compared to just 27 percent in 2011.
- Toughen campaign contribution reporting rules with things like robo-call disclosure, expanded electronic reporting and felony charges for the worst offenders.
- Ensure election integrity with Michigan's first-ever post-election audits and online training for poll workers.
- Help our veterans get the benefits they've earned and deserve and making it easier for troops overseas to vote as part of OPERATION: OUR TROOPS COUNT.
- Shorten branch office lines by putting the most popular Secretary of State services online at ExpressSOS.com. Launched in 2011, the website has handled 5.5 million transactions.
- Allow customers in our 10 busiest branches to take a number electronically, so they can run errands while they wait.
- Work with police and prosecutors to fight insurance fraud and protect consumers.



Ruth Johnson was first elected secretary of state in 2010.

## DILLARD:

My top priorities are:

- Protecting the fundamental right to vote.
- Transparency and enforcement in administration of elections and auditing of campaign financing.
- Increasing access to the ballot box
- Privacy protection of citizen's data.
- A consumer advocate for improved quality of services and reduction of costs associated with those services.

## 2. What is your position on early voting? If you support the concept, how would you propose to accommodate communities with clerks who do not maintain full-time business hours?

**JOHNSON:** As a home-rule state, Michigan is fortunate to have 1,700 hardworking clerks across the state oversee and

administer elections. Our 34 staff members in the Bureau of Elections support them with efforts like Michigan's first-ever online training for poll workers and the first-ever post-election audits, which helps clerks identify areas where training is needed for election workers. In fact, earlier this year, Michigan was named as the sixth best state in the nation in elections administration by the Pew Charitable Trust.

As a township resident myself, I very much support this local control. Our clerks know their communities, they know their residents. They have a high level of direct accountability. More than half of them work part-time or out of their homes.

Given those variables, early voting could not be offered equitably or consistently throughout the state. Instead, I support no-reason absentee voting, paired with safeguards to protect the integrity of the vote. In addition to maintaining that critical local control, no-reason absentee voting would offer the same voting opportunities for all voters, whether they live in urban or more rural communities as well as convenience and integrity in our system of elections.

**DILLARD:** I support wholeheartedly early voting. We should not limit ourselves to "one day" on such an important element of democracy. The concept of early voting does not necessarily restrict itself to a physical clerk being present. For example, absentee ballots are a form of early voting. New technologies with appropriate authenticity and security modules also provide innovative solutions; i.e., online voting, voting kiosks.

### 3. Do you support allowing people to register to vote on Election Day? Why or why not?

**JOHNSON:** Under Michigan's current system of elections, there are several layers of safeguards in place to ensure a voter's eligibility. Given current technology, and because of home rule and state law, there must be adequate time to process voter registrations. That said, I do support reducing the time between voter registration and eligibility to vote, which is currently 30 days, provided that the technology is available to do so.

Currently, 7.4 million or 98 percent of Michigan's eligible adults are registered to vote. In fact, Michigan was No. 1 in the country in terms of registering voters through the Secretary of State's office in a recent *USA Today* story.

Registering eligible voters continues to be a top priority for me and our office. Under policies we implemented, every voter who changes their address within the state also has their voter registration automatically updated.

We send every 18-year-old a birthday reminder to register to vote. We are currently on our second 3,000-mile, 20-stop college voter registration tour that will hit every public university in the state. Additionally, we register new citizens after naturalization ceremonies and ask eligible customers at our branch offices if they would like to register to vote.

**DILLARD:** Absolutely, I support same-day registration. One of my major priorities is increasing access to the ballot. The larger the number of registered voters enhances the numbers of actual voters. The problem is that it would require legislative approval to implement. However, I would jawbone vigorously for its passage.



Secretary of state candidate Godfrey Dillard supports both early voting and same-day registration.

4. Local units of government are continually expected to do more with less. As secretary of state, what would you do to help ensure that election reforms initiated by either the federal or state government not place an undue financial or procedural burden on local communities?

**JOHNSON:** Local units of government and their leaders are so often called upon to help and they answer that call. They work long hours. They are dedicated to doing their very best for their communities and they do, under Michigan's home-rule system, oversee our critical and sometimes complicated system of elections. They make democracy work in the state of Michigan.

Our Bureau of Elections works very hard to support their work in terms of training, providing critical resources, communication, and machine and programming support. I pledge to continue to do what we can to support those local communities. Local clerks, for example, have begun the long-term process of looking at potential voting equipment to replace equipment that is worn out or obsolete. My office has saved and set aside millions of dollars awarded to Michigan through the Help America Vote Act so we can assist local elections officials secure this important equipment.

**DILLARD:** Doing more with less does not necessarily mean more financial and procedural burdens on citizens. It means making better uses of the financial resources we already have. I support the establishment of "Secretary of State Super Centers." This approach would allow us to consolidate large number of lines, services and employees at a single location with free parking, improved quality of service and lower wait times. The purchasing and construction of low-cost land and buildings would also support urgently needed economic development and jobs. We would reduce even further the number of branch offices. Other states have taken this approach. With the savings, I would anticipate reducing fees for a variety of services.

# Putting the AG race into *Focus*

The office of state attorney general acts as official legal representation for the state of Michigan and also as the “people’s lawyer” for all citizens.

The attorney general also offers opinions and interpretations of Michigan statute, based on inquiry from legislators and state departments, which often impact townships. *Township Focus* reached out to the two attorney general candidates—incumbent Bill Schuette, a Republican, and attorney and law professor Mark Totten, a Democrat—to share insights into their goals for the office. The following are their responses, as submitted.



Schuette

Totten

## 1. Please share your top priorities as Michigan's attorney general.

**SCHUETTE:** As attorney general, I strive to serve as a voice for Michigan citizens. I am a voice for the victims of crime. For example, I have made it a priority to end the horror of human trafficking, in which young runaways are forced into the sex trade. We created the first state-level task force on human trafficking and have helped pass legislation with the goals of putting the pimps behind bars and treating the young survivors as victims, not criminals. And, I worked to secure funding to test thousands of rape DNA evidence kits that were left abandoned in a warehouse for years. That means the women who have been raped have been victimized twice — once by a brutal assault and a second time because the crime was never solved. That is changing on my watch.

**TOTTEN:** My top priority as Michigan's attorney general will be to return that office to fulfilling its role as the people's lawyer. Too often, the current attorney general has politicized his office, siding against Michigan's people in favor of the well-connected and politically influenced. The average cost of an attorney in Michigan is \$233 per hour and without the

money to hire an attorney, it is incredibly difficult to receive real justice. Michigan's attorney general is hired by the people to act as the people's lawyer, and I will stand up for Michigan's citizens and their families before all else.

Michigan has the weakest consumer protection law in the nation, and restoring it will be my number one legislative priority. Our state was rocked by financial crisis, and Michigan's attorney general should be on the frontlines of holding Wall Street and other wrong-doers accountable. I will prioritize that as attorney general.

Michigan's vast and unparalleled natural resources also need a fierce advocate for the sake of future generations. I will stand up against polluters and make it clear that there is a high price to pay for violating Michigan law.

And I will stand up for some of Michigan's most vulnerable citizens. As a federal prosecutor, I put sexual predators preying on children behind bars and strengthened laws to protect children. I also have kept families safe from violent drug dealers and secured convictions for domestic abusers. The attorney general keeps people safe, and I will be tireless in making sure that wrong-doers are held responsible for their actions.

2. As Michigan's attorney general, you serve as the top lawyer for the state of Michigan. How would you determine when issues are relevant to pursue action on behalf of the state?

**SCHUETTE:** As I described earlier, as Michigan's attorney general, I am a voice for the victims of crime. And, I am a voice for our constitution. For Michigan to continue down the road to economic recovery, we must protect the victims of crime. And we must enforce the constitution, which I took an oath to defend when I took office on that cold January day in 2011.

**TOTTEN:** The office of attorney general represents the state in many matters. My office will take great care in reviewing each issue brought before it to determine whether the attorney general's office should play a role. Acting within the bounds of the Michigan and federal constitutions, I will make decisions based on an informed reading of the law—seeking justice for Michigan's citizens and their families. I will weigh many legal sides to an issue, giving due consideration to competing interpretations and potential outcomes.

I will not advocate for fringe positions based on weak legal pretense or engage in political grandstanding for the praise of special interests. I will act according to my constitutional duty to uphold justice.

3. What is the relationship between the attorney general and Michigan's local officials? As attorney general, how do you plan to work with local officials?

**SCHUETTE:** No community can successfully create an environment for families to thrive, children to learn or folks to find a job unless it makes public safety the priority. As Michigan's chief law enforcement officer, it is my duty to work with local law enforcement agencies to make Michigan a safer place, helping set the stage for Michigan's recovery to continue moving forward. I work daily to keep the lines of communication open and to listen to local governments because they serve on the front lines of keeping Michigan families safe.

**TOTTEN:** Michigan's local officials make up the most vital layers of public service. Charged with the responsible stewardship of efficient and effective local governments, they act as significant agents of local economic development, while providing citizens with a responsive neighbor to turn to for help. Having served on the Kalamazoo School Board and worked with other local officials, I have a deep respect for the work that local officials do to strengthen and improve their communities.

My top priority will be ensuring that Michigan's citizens and their families have a strong ally in the attorney general's office. My door will always be open to local officials who seek legal clarification of state law and, when appropriate, local officials will have a strong partner that will stand up on their behalf. My office will be a tireless advocate for Michigan's families and the communities that they call home.



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# cover story



## MTA-PAC Committee makes November general election endorsements

The MTA-PAC Committee has made the following endorsements for the Nov. 4 general election. It is the belief of committee members that these candidates will best benefit MTA and township officials in gaining positive legislation on behalf of townships.

*Endorsements were made based on candidates' responses to an MTA questionnaire on issues of importance to MTA and local government, as well as input from MTA-member officials. Township officials are encouraged to assist endorsed candidates in their areas as much as possible. All political activities must take place outside of public office and may not involve public funds in any manner.*

### Michigan Senate

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
1	D-Coleman Young	11	D-Vincent Gregory	21	R-John Proos
2	D-Bert Johnson	12	R-Jim Marleau	22	R-Joe Hune
3	D-Morris Hood	13	R-Marty Knollenberg	23	D-Curtis Hertel Jr.
4	D-Virgil Smith	14	R-David Robertson	24	R-Rick Jones
5	D-David Knezek	15	R-Mike Kowall	25	R-Phil Pavlov
6	D-Hoon-Yung Hopgood	16	R-Mike Shirkey	26	R-Tonya Schuitmaker
7	R-Patrick Colbeck	17	R-Dale Zorn	27	D-Jim Ananich
8	R-Jack Brandenburg	18	D-Rebekah Warren	28	R-Peter MacGregor
9	D-Steve Bieda	19	R-Mike Nofs	29	R-Dave Hildenbrand
10	R-Tory Rocca	20	R-Margaret O'Brien	30	R-Arlan Meekhof

<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
31	R-Mike Green	40	R-Michael McCready	76	D-Winnie Brinks
32	R-Ken Horn	41	R-Martin Howrylak	77	R-Tom Hooker
33	R-Judy Emmons	42	R-Lana Theis	78	R-Dave Pagel
34	R-Goeff Hansen	43	R-Jim Tedder	79	R-Al Pscholka
35	R-Darwin Booher	44	R-Jim Runestad	80	R-Cindy Gamrat
36	R-Jim Stamas	45	R-Michael Webber	81	R-Dan Lauwers
37	R-Wayne Schmidt	46	R-Bradford Jacobsen	82	R-Tom Courser
38	R-Tom Casperson	47	R-Henry Vaupel	83	R-Paul Muxlow
<b>Michigan House of Representatives</b>					
<u>District</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	48	D-Pam Faris	84	R-Edward Canfield
1	D-Brian Banks	49	D-Phil Phelps	85	R-Ben Glardon
2	D-Alberta Tinsley Talabi	50	D-Charles Smiley	86	R-Lisa Posthumus Lyons
5	D-Fred Durhal	51	R-Joseph Graves	87	R-Mike Callton
6	D-Stephanie Chang	52	D-Gretchen Driskell	88	R-Roger Victory
9	D-Harvey Santana	53	D-Jeff Irwin	89	R-Amanda Price
10	D-Leslie Love	54	D-David Rutledge	90	R-Daniela Garcia
12	D-Erika Geiss	55	D-Adam Zemke	92	D-Marcia Hovey-Wright
13	D-Frank Liberati	56	R-Jason Sheppard	93	R-Tom Leonard
14	D-Paul Clemente	57	R-Nancy Jenkins	94	R-Tim Kelly
15	D-George Darany	58	R-Eric Leutheuser	95	D-Vanessa Guerra
16	D-Robert Kosowski	59	R-Aaron Miller	96	D-Charles Brunner
17	D-Bill LaVoy	60	D-Jon Hoadley	97	R-Joel Johnson
18	D-Sarah Roberts	61	R-Brandt Iden	98	R-Gary Glenn
19	R-Laura Cox	62	D-Andy Helmboldt	99	R-Kevin Cotter
20	R-Kurt Heise	63	R-David Maturen	100	R-Jon Bumstead
21	R-Carol Ann Fausone	64	R-Earl Poleski	101	R-Ray Franz
22	D-John Chirkun	65	R-Brett Roberts	102	R-Phil Potvin
23	R-Pat Somerville	66	R-Aric Nesbitt	103	R-Bruce Rendon
24	R-Anthony Forlini	67	D-Tom Cochran	104	R-Larry Inman
25	D-Henry Yanez	68	D-Andy Schor	105	R-Triston Cole
26	D-Jim Townsend	69	D-Sam Singh	106	R-Peter Pettalia
27	D-Robert Wittenberg	70	R-Rick Outman	107	R-Lee Chatfield
28	D-Derek Miller	71	D-Theresa Abed	108	R-Ed McBroom
29	D-Tim Greimel	72	R-Ken Yonker	109	D-John Kivela
30	R-Jeff Farrington	73	R-Chris Afendoulis	110	D-Scott Dianda
31	D-Marilyn Lane	74	R-Rob VerHeulen		
32	R-Andrea LaFontaine	75	D-Brandon Dillon		
33	R-Ken Goike				
34	D-Sheldon Neeley				
35	D-Jeremy Moss				
36	R-Peter Lucido				
37	D-Christine Greig				
38	R-Kathy Crawford				
39	R-Klint Kesto				

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# knowledge center

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## October workshop examines emerging issues in emergency services

Providing emergency and fire protection services may be one of the more complicated—and most important—services your township provides. Residents demand comprehensive protection, and state and federal mandates set high standards for training and safety requirements. MTA can help you gain a better understanding of the myriad of hot issues facing your fire department and emergency services personnel.

Join us Oct. 14 at the **Bavarian Inn Lodge** in **Frankenmuth** for a full-day event that examines *Emerging Issues for EMS and Fire Departments*. Delve into cost recovery options and hurdles. Explore the intricacies of mutual aid, the challenges of recruitment and retention (particularly among smaller communities), and join the discussion on licensing requirements.

Learn more about the Federal Excess and Firefighter Property Programs, which provide quality surplus equipment to help support local emergency services agencies. Tap into the “top five” things the township board can do to help their fire departments be successful. Get the inside scoop on establishing expectations for fire chiefs and personnel to maintain strong relationships and a supportive environment.

Registration, along with continental breakfast, begins at 8:30 a.m. Class is held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and includes lunch served at noon.

Download the registration form or register online now at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org).

### Continue the learning with MTA's *On-Call Fire Departments*:

*The Township Board's Responsibilities*. This guidebook discusses the township board's responsibilities for fire protection and evaluating your township's fire services, and also covers emergency planning, state and federal laws impacting fire service and fire department liability, motivating and retaining personnel, and more. Member price is \$25; \$36 for non-members. Order online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org) or call (517) 321-6467.

## Explore township finances and services at October double-header

MTA can help your township navigate the maze of funding and providing services for your community. Learn to identify what services are most important to the residents you serve, manage the risk inherent with those services, and explore various types of revenue sources available for programs and services.

Join us in Lansing at the **Comfort Inn West** in October for **Township Finances** (*held Oct. 27, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*), presented by MTA Executive Director Larry Merrill, or **At Your Service: Meeting Township Needs** (*held*

*Oct. 28 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.*), presented by Steve Mann, Attorney, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC, and Susan Radwan, Owner, Leading Edge Mentoring. Single- or two-day registration options are available.

A registration form appeared in the September *Township Focus*. For full session descriptions, to download a registration form or to register online, visit [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org).



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# upcoming MTA workshop

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Treasurers' Guide to Tax Collection

Whether you are a seasoned treasurer, newly elected or anything in between, this full-day workshop is a must! Collecting property taxes is a highly visible function of the township treasurer's office. It comes with significant responsibility not only for the large amount of money collected but also for compliance with the General Property Tax Act. The day will include discussions on:

- Getting started
- Preparation of the tax bill
- Summer taxes
- Winter taxes
- Accounting for and disbursement of collections
- Settlement
- Delinquent personal property tax

In addition to discussion on applicable laws, "best practices" will also be discussed. Opportunities to ask questions will occur throughout the day. This workshop is also appropriate for deputy treasurers and any employee who has some responsibility in the property tax collection process.



8:30 a.m.	Registration check-in
9 a.m.	Meeting begins
Noon	Networking Lunch
4 p.m.	Meeting adjourns

### Special bonus

Participants will receive the *Treasurer's Record Retention Schedule #29* and *Accounting Procedures Manual*.

### Continue the learning

The registration fee\* includes lunch and all handout materials. Attendees may also purchase MTA's *Treasurer's Guide to Township Government*—a 185-page essential resource for all township treasurers in Michigan—at the discounted rate\* of \$31.50 when registering for the class. The books will be distributed at check-in and will also be available for sale on-site while supplies last.

### Cancellations & substitutions

Written cancellation requests received at the MTA office by Nov. 6 will receive a full refund. No refunds will be issued thereafter. You may substitute another individual from your township for your registration at any time without incurring a charge; please notify MTA of the change.

## Registration Form

### Which Tax Collection workshop location will you attend?

- Nov. 13: Otsego Club & Resort**  
696 M-32 East, Gaylord
- Nov. 18: Ramada Inn**  
7501 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing

**REGULAR** rate\*: \$119 For paid registrations received after Nov. 6.

**DISCOUNTED** rate\*: \$99 For paid registrations received by Nov. 6.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of Treasurer's Guides) x (\$31.50/book\*) = \$\_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

**NOTE: Payment must accompany form in order to be processed.**

- Check enclosed (payable to MTA)  
 Charge to: (circle one) MasterCard VISA

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fax: (517) 321-8908. Or register online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). Questions? Call (517) 321-6467.

# An U.P.-lifting experience

A gorgeous evening, with an amazing sunset over Lake Superior, coupled with the camaraderie of nearly 100 township officials at Marquette's Presque Isle Park, marked just one of the highlights at MTA's 2014 *U.P. Summit*.

For the third biennial event, scores of officials—from all corners of the state—headed to Marquette for the two-day summit, held Aug. 27-28. Along with a picturesque location and warm U.P. hospitality, the conference offered ample educational and networking opportunities.

"Awesome!" "Great networking among groups!" "I wish every township board had a chance to experience it! Top-notch!"

Those were just a few of the ringing endorsements from attendees following the event.

Preceding the *Summit* was "How Boards Make Decisions," a half-day course that is part of MTA's

Township Governance Academy, presented by MTA Executive Director Larry Merrill on Aug. 26. The following morning, Merrill opened the *Summit* at the general session, which addressed key issues that township officials face in the year ahead. Attendees then visited with vendors who were part of the "Northern Marketplace" and later, took advantage of concurrent breakout educational sessions.

## 2014 *Summit* Sponsors



An evening picnic was postcard-perfect for attendees, who enjoyed a catered dinner, a local band, networking among colleagues and an amazing view at Marquette's Presque Isle park.

The day rounded out with a general session, "Ask the Experts," where Merrill, MTA Government Affairs Director Judy Allen, Jim Beelen and Cindy Davis, from MTA's Member Information Services Department, along with two township attorneys, fielded far-ranging questions on all aspects of township governance from attendees. Wednesday concluded with an opportunity to discuss the day's topics over a memorable BBQ picnic at Presque Isle Park, a gem among Marquette's parks system, located on the shores of Lake Superior.

The final day began with a "legislative lowdown," featuring a panel of U.P. and northern Michigan legislators, including Reps. Scott Dianda, Ed McBroom and John Kivela, and Sens. Tom Casperson and Howard Walker. Moderated by Allen, the nearly two-hour discussion covered topics including transportation reform, property tax assessments, and the state land cap. Attendees appreciated the legislators' participation, calling the panel discussion "much appreciated" and noting with gratitude the information that was shared. Several concurrent breakout educational sessions followed, providing attendees with the chance to learn more about planning and zoning, the makings of a great board member, mining issues, the clerk and treasurer working relationship, insights from the state Department of Natural Resources and more.



*U.P. Summit* attendees were able to choose from 10 break-out sessions, as well as three general sessions, over the course of two days.

The sentiments of **Allouez Township** (Keweenaw Co.) Clerk **Renee Pinsonneault** summed up many officials' thoughts on the event. "The entire conference was great," she said. "The programs were all very well-planned. I'm glad I attended, and thank MTA for once again bringing its training to the Upper Peninsula. I truly appreciate the wonderful in-person training—and all [MTA's] help throughout the year."

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# Who left the light on?

## Townships that go bump in the night

**O**n dark nights, a beam of light sometimes shines from what's known as the Old Lighthouse in **Presque Isle Township** (Presque Isle Co.).

Township residents have seen it as they walk along the coast of Lake Huron, or drive inland from a day on the beach. Boaters sailing on stormy nights even say the light has led them safely to shore.

But the famous light is supposed to be dark. The wiring to light the 1840s structure was dismantled decades ago. Not even the U.S. Coast Guard can come up with a logical explanation for how the township landmark still illuminates the Great Lake waters.

Township residents say the answer isn't found in science or logic. Many believe that the ghost of former lighthouse caretaker George Parris is responsible for the beams of light shining from the old tower. Some have even claimed to see him in the lantern room, years after his death.

**Jeni Matuszak**, historian and artifacts chair of the Presque Isle Township Museum Society, said the local mystery isn't frightening to most residents. It's just part of the lore behind the township's storied history that makes it so attractive to residents and visitors alike.

"The light adds to the mystique, and everybody hopes to see it," Matuszak said. "Nobody feels badly about it. They're kind of excited when it happens, and it's neat to see it lit."

### A piece of township history

The Old Lighthouse stands as a Presque Isle Township landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After having several owners, it was purchased by the township in 1995, thanks to money from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and several private donors. Today, it's one of the oldest surviving lights on the Great Lakes. It's also the oldest building in Presque Isle Township, due to a 1911 fire that wiped out other historic buildings. The lighthouse is used as a park and museum, operated by the township museum society.

Constructed in 1840, it was built in response to increased ship traffic on Lake Huron. Congress provided funding for the lighthouse in 1838, and it was finished two years later.

What's known was the New Lighthouse was built in 1870 when surrounding trees grew so tall that they blocked the light from the Old Lighthouse. Ship traffic also expanded from small fur traders to larger vessels, and a taller, more visible light was needed for the ships that sailed as far as 24 miles out. When the new light was lit, the Old Lighthouse sat unused for years until it was eventually refurbished and opened for tours.



## { What is the **most challenging** part of being a township official? }



**Helping constituents to better understand** the functions and limitations of local government. Residents are sometimes misinformed as to how their tax money is spent. They may also lack sufficient knowledge as to the scope of service municipalities can provide based on resources and limited legal authority.

—Ellen Ryder-Petre, Trustee  
Thomas Township  
(Saginaw Co.)



**Continuing to provide more with less.** As we see our residents suffer with the continuing economic times, we want to provide the best service that we can for them—with the cost-cutting and unfunded mandates that we continue to endure as township government.

—Jim Pitsch, Supervisor  
Salem Township (Allegan Co.)



**Trying to please everyone.** It seems like you're doing the right thing when you accommodate some people, but then you are offending or impeding someone else's rights. There never seems to be a happy medium. After almost 18 years as clerk, I still don't know the answer!

—Deb Spicer, Clerk  
Somerset Township (Hillsdale Co.)

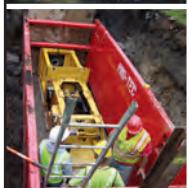
Want to take part in MTA's Township Talk panel? It's easy! Email your interest to [jenn@michigantownships.org](mailto:jenn@michigantownships.org), or call MTA Knowledge Center Communications Director Jenn Fiedler at (517) 321-6467 to get signed up. Participants will be asked Township Talk questions, via email, one to two times per year.

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# GIVE thanks

## Check out MTA's Online Learning Portal!

MTA is grateful for the opportunity to educate Michigan's township officials and decision-makers. To show our appreciation, MTA is offering a discount on all webcasts this November! This is just MTA's way of thanking township officials for their dedication to professional development.

Online learning delivers MTA training over the Internet—straight to your township hall, office, local library, or even at home. Eliminate travel costs and schedule conflicts with this convenient, affordable option that delivers education directly to your desktop.

### Get 50% off ALL MTA webcasts in November!

Promo code: thanks



**MTA**

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##### Assessing

- Assessing Oversight: The Process
- Board of Review Training

##### Board Essentials

- Anatomy of a Township
- Effectively Exercising Board Authority
- Meeting Misconceptions
- Secrets Behind Great Board Meetings

##### Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Urban Cooperation Strategies

##### Township Governance Academy

- At Your Service: Meeting Township Needs
- How Boards Make Decisions
- Land Use: Defining Your Township's Future
- Making Meetings Work More Effectively

##### Financial

- Exploring Revenue Sources
- Introduction to Millage Questions
- Special Assessment Procedures
- Spending Public Money
- Who Gets Paid What ... and How?

##### Public Safety

- Governing an Accountable Fire Department

##### Planning & Zoning

- Introduction to Planning & Zoning
- Roles & Functions of the ZBA
- Writing, Adopting & Enforcing Ordinances

##### New Officials Training

- Tools for Getting Started Right
- Sessions for each office

##### Taxation

- Treasurer's Guide to Tax Collecting
- Taxation Trouble Spots

Detailed descriptions of each webcast are available online; visit MTA's Online Learning Portal at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org) (under the "MTA Products & Training" drop-down menu).

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