

# Michigan Township Focus

OCTOBER 2018

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

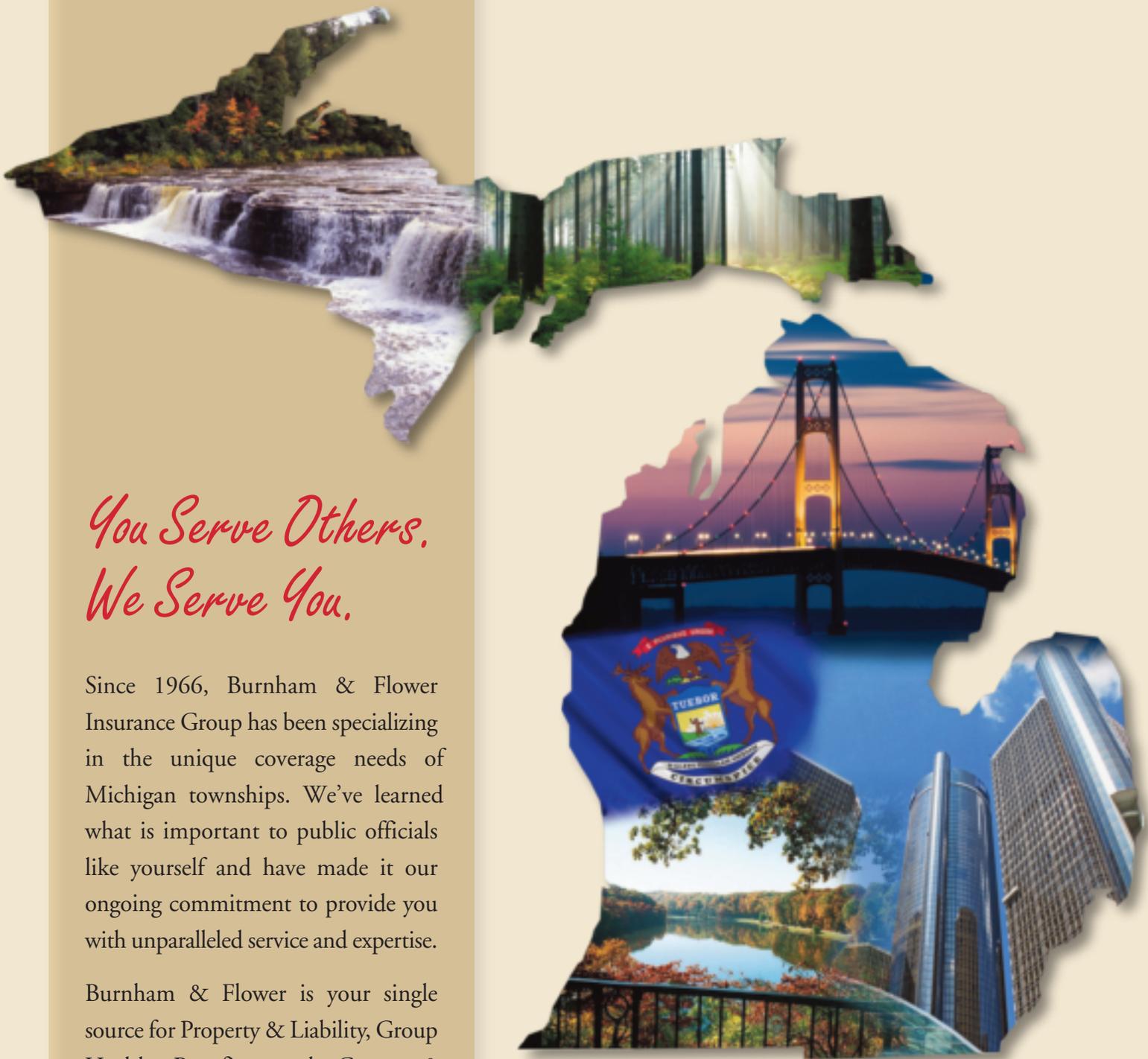
## Inside Election 2018

- Gubernatorial candidates talk reforms impacting locals
- Q&As with attorney general & secretary of state nominees
- Three proposals make the statewide ballot

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'Rock the Mock' inspires students, educates voters  
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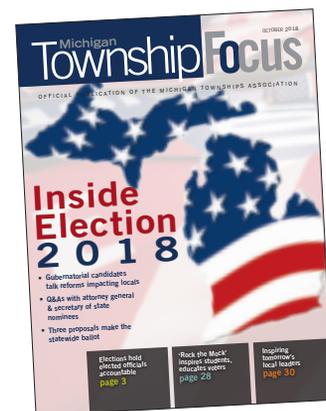
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October 2018 | Volume 6, Number 9



**MTA** Official Publication of  
the Michigan Townships  
Association

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**Printer** Foresight Group, Lansing

## mission statement

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

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# allied service provider index

# Elections hold elected officials accountable

Township board members know full well that the ballot box is where democracy holds elected officials accountable. The upcoming election gives township officials the opportunity to assess their legislators' body of work to determine if they are worthy of continued support and assess first-time candidates as to whether their policies will likely help or hinder township government's capacity and authority to meet the growing needs of residents.



When the University of Michigan's Michigan Public Policy Survey asked local government officials in the spring of 2017 for their assessment of the state Legislature's job performance, township officials responded as follows:

- Excellent, 1%
- Good, 29%
- Fair, 42%
- Poor, 24%
- Don't know, 4%

Not exactly "head of the class" grades to be sure, although township officials were somewhat more charitable in grading the Legislature's performance than did county and city officials. Nonetheless, the Legislature as an institution is often judged more harshly by constituents than individual lawmakers, as incumbents are usually re-elected until term-limited. So while incumbents usually prevail over challengers and party affiliation is the single-most powerful indicator for whom a person is likely to vote, candidates need to know that local government issues are important and can influence their electability.

There are numerous statewide issues impacting townships that lawmakers could take up in the next legislative session or even in the lame-duck session following the Nov. 6 general election. Township officials know that roads remain in poor condition despite recent legislative funding increases. Where does a legislative candidate stand on financing road repairs and maintenance? Both gubernatorial candidates have made fixing roads part of their platforms, but just what solutions are they suggesting? Better roads require more money—but from where and how much? If the answer is to cut less important programs, just what would be on the chopping block? Would revenue sharing, payments in

lieu of taxes or other programs that benefit townships and other local governments be cut to fix roads or address other campaign pledges? And if not, then what would be cut? Or if the answer is borrowing money to fix roads or solve other problems, how much would be raised and how would the debt be serviced? Where would that money come from? And if the answer is, "from growth," then what would happen when state revenues are hit by the next recession?

If candidates are pledging to cut taxes, which programs will be cut to balance the budget? What is the candidate's commitment to continue funding programs that benefit your township? Townships and other local governments rely on the property tax to fund programs and services. Does the candidate advocate making millage elections more difficult by limiting the elections at which they can be requested or imposing additional restrictions on the ability of local governments to explain ballot proposals to voters?

How does the candidate feel about the Legislature creating new property tax exemptions? Should fraternal organizations or other property owners enjoy public services without contributing to their cost? Should lost revenues continue to be borne by local governments or by the state budget?

Many candidates are quick to reassure local officials they stand four-square for "local control," but after assuming office, too many are willing to champion new mandates and preemptions such as proscribing local zoning authority or consolidating well-performing local government programs and services. Does the candidate trust local officials—who are also accountable to their electors—to use their best judgement to act consistent with their communities' values—or will the candidate take positions reflecting the belief that the Legislature knows best on issues that are strictly local in nature?

Time is running out to engage candidates on these and other issues. And don't hesitate to share with others what you learn about candidates' positions. That's how government officials are held accountable by the people they serve.

## GET CONNECTED

### Gov. Snyder unveils plan to provide broadband access throughout Michigan



Michigan ranks 30th in the nation for broadband availability. More than 350,000 households, in mostly rural areas, do not have access to vital high-speed internet service. Another two million households only have access to a single, terrestrial internet service provider. There is approximately \$2.5 billion in potential economic opportunities available for these regions if this gap is closed.

The Snyder Administration is hoping to make in-roads in improving access to broadband. In August, Gov. Rick Snyder unveiled a plan to provide universal access to high-speed internet for every

Michigan resident, business, region and community. The Michigan Broadband Roadmap sets the path for improving access and adoption of broadband throughout the state.

Snyder created the Michigan Consortium of Advanced Networks (MCAN) through Executive Order 2018-2 to solidify a vision for a connected state along with a roadmap to guide the state's goal of ubiquitous broadband access.

The broadband roadmap identifies three main areas for improvement: access to unserved areas, increase broadband adoption and advance Michigan's broadband ecosystem.

Recommendations include a call for greater investment in broadband to improve community and economic development, establishing a single point of contact for within state government, promoting and building awareness for low-cost broadband subscription programs, improving the workforce pool for the telecommunications industry, and promoting digital literacy.

MCAN also proposes creating a long-term commission focused on broadband access and adoption, which would be a multi-year effort requiring investment and partnership between state, regional and local governments, non-profits, and private partners. MCAN also recommended that \$20 million of state funding be placed into a state-run grant program that will support broadband access and adoption efforts that accentuate community investment and economic development. The governor's office is currently working with members of the House and Senate to implement this recommendation.

## SURVEY SAYS

### Rising confidence in Michigan's direction among local leaders, but partisan differences remain

For the second straight year, the percentage of Michigan's local leaders who are optimistic about the state's direction has increased, according to a statewide survey of Michigan's local leaders.

The latest report from the University of Michigan's Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) shows that, statewide, more than half (56 percent) believe Michigan is headed in the right direction, up 9 percentage points from last year and 12 points from a recent low in 2016. Meanwhile, one-third of respondents say the state is off on the wrong track. These views continue to be strongly correlated with political party identification.

Optimism has increased among officials of all partisan affiliations, though wide gaps remain across partisan identification categories. Among self-identified Republican officials, 72 percent say the state is headed in the right direction, up from 64 percent last year. Among Independents, less than half (46 percent) express optimism about the state's direction, yet this is up significantly from 31 percent last year. Meanwhile, Democratic officials' optimism increased to 30 percent, up slightly from 26 percent in 2017.

When looking by jurisdiction population size, the percentage of officials saying Michigan is headed in the right direction increased in communities of all sizes. However, among officials from urban jurisdictions, less than half (43 percent) say the state is headed in the right direction in 2018.

Local leaders' positive job approval ratings for Gov. Rick Snyder have risen for the second year in row, although sharp partisan differences exist here as well. Statewide, a majority (52 percent) rate his performance as either "good" (42 percent) or "excellent" (10 percent), compared with 46 percent who said the same last year, and 41 percent two years ago. Meanwhile, 13 percent rate his performance as "poor," down from 20 percent in 2017 and 26 percent in 2016.

Job evaluations of the Michigan Legislature's performance remain significantly lower than those for the governor, though they have improved slightly since last year. Just over a quarter (28 percent) of the state's local officials say the Legislature's performance is "good" or "excellent," up slightly from 25 percent in 2017.

And, while 29 percent of all local leaders rate the Legislature as "poor," this is the smallest such rating since MPPS tracking started in 2009.

LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

Township happenings

Glen Arbor Township (Leelanau Co.) is home to a new, inclusive park designed for all ages and abilities. Following a recreation survey sent to 800 taxpayers, ideas for the previously tired park helped form a final construction plan. The park, constructed using some local manufacturers, includes state-of-the-art pickleball courts, kids' play structures and basketball courts.

Reading Township (Hillsdale Co.) now puts together a newsletter to keep residents informed about news in their township. The newsletter covers everything from tax collection and board of review meetings to township improvements and contact information.



The Saginaw Charter Township (Saginaw Co.) Fire Department has a new member. Dalmatian puppy Captain is five months old and full of energy. "Cap" enjoys meeting community members and attending events in the township. His favorite toy just happens to be a fire hydrant squeaker made out of fire hose.

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## Change in staff leadership for MTA

MTA Executive Director Larry Merrill announced his decision to retire to the MTA Board of Directors in the fall of 2017.

“Thirty-eight years at the organization—and the last 18 years at the MTA helm—has been a tremendous experience. I look forward to starting my next chapter in life, which will include spending more time with family and even a little consulting,” Merrill said.

“It has been an honor and privilege to be part of the success of townships in Michigan. I look forward to supporting the executive search committee and Board of Directors as they determine the best candidate to lead MTA into its next phase.”

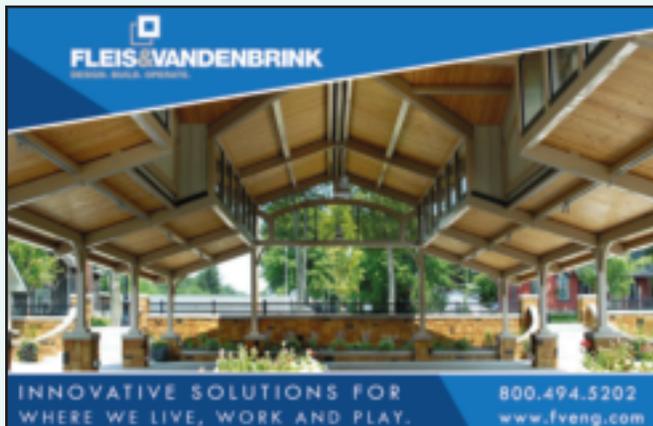
I have the honor of chairing the MTA Executive Succession Committee. We have been preparing since November and are now moving forward to begin the search process. The position will be posted and resumes due in early November. Interviews will be conducted through the winter, with the new executive director announced in the spring and intended to start on July 1, 2019.

“Larry made his decision known about a year ago, and the MTA Board of Directors has been preparing,” said **Ken Gauthier**, 2018 MTA president, and **Sanborn Township** (Alpena Co.) supervisor. “I am proud the Board has been proactive through this process. The Executive Succession Committee will utilize the Michigan Society of Association Executives Search Process. The committee is finalizing its selection criteria and has a timeline in place. We are discussing ways to recognize Larry Merrill for his successful tenure and we will keep members abreast of those ideas.

“I anticipate a smooth transition,” Gauthier added.

Merrill will hold the position until June 30 and the new executive will start July 1.

—By *MTA First Vice President Jeff Sorensen, Cooper Charter Township (Kalamazoo Co.) supervisor, and chair, MTA Executive Succession Committee*



## profile



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Continuing education is critical in our ever-changing world. The Michigan Townships Association serves a vital educational function for Michigan townships. Similarly, Mika Meyers' local government lawyers keep abreast of changes in state and federal law and judicial and administrative decisions that impact townships and their elected officials. Mika Meyers PLC is proud to support the continuing education of its township clients, their elected officials and the members of the Association through its involvement as an Allied Service Provider.

For more information regarding Mika Meyers, visit [www.mikameyers.com](http://www.mikameyers.com), or turn to the Allied Service Provider Index on page 2.

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Advertorial

## mta events | October

2	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Frankenmuth
3	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Gladwin
9	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Houghton
10	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Harris
11	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Brimley
17	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Kalamazoo
18	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Chelsea
22	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Gaylord
23	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Alpena
29	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Thompsonville
30	MTA On The Road regional meeting, Big Rapids



### Got township questions? MTA's got answers!

Member township officials and employees may contact MTA Member Information Services staff with questions Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Inquiries can be submitted via phone at (517) 321-6467, fax at (517) 321-8908, or email to:

- MTA Director of Member Information Services  
Michael Selden: michael@michigantownships.org
- MTA Staff Attorney Catherine Mullhaupt:  
catherine@michigantownships.org
- MTA Member Information Services Liaison  
Cindy Dodge: cindy@michigantownships.org

## Member input sought on 2019 MTA Policy Platform

MTA members play an important role in shaping the Association's legislative policy—both by voting on the MTA Legislative Policy Platform at the MTA Annual Meeting each year and also by providing suggestions and input for consideration by MTA legislative policy committees.

MTA is seeking your input for the 2019 Policy Platform. The deadline for submissions for consideration for MTA's 2019 Legislative Policy Platform by the MTA Legislative Policy and Resolutions Committee is Monday, Nov. 5. Proposed policies are reviewed by MTA committees for word selection and legality, and to ensure they conform with the Association's overall goals and objectives.

The proposed policy platform for 2019 will be presented for membership approval at the 2019 MTA Annual Meeting, to be held Thursday, April 4 in conjunction with the 66th MTA Annual Educational Conference & Expo in Grand Rapids.

View MTA's 2018 Policy Platform on MTA's website, [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org), under the "Advocacy" tab.

Contact the MTA Government Relations Department at (517) 321-6467 or email [legislation@michigantownships.org](mailto:legislation@michigantownships.org) with suggestions or questions.



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## OCTOBER

**By 2** Notice of close of registration for Nov. 6 general election published. (MCL 168.498)

**9** Last day to register for Nov. 6 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))

Townships report to the STC on the status of each exemption granted under the Commercial Redevelopment Act. (MCL 207.666)

Qualified local governmental units report to the STC on the status of each exemption granted under the Commercial Rehabilitation Act. (MCL 207.854)

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

Qualified townships report to the STC on the status of each exemption granted under the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act. (MCL 125.2794)

**22** Deadline for payments to municipalities from the Local Community Stabilization Authority. Local community stabilization share revenue for other millages not levied 100 percent in December for calendar year 2018. (MCL 123.1357(5)(c))

**By 26** Pre-general election campaign statements filed. Books closed Oct. 21.

**26** Write-in candidates file declaration of intent forms for Nov. 6 general election by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.737a)

**By 27** County clerks deliver remainder of ballots and election supplies for Nov. 6 general election to local clerks. (MCL 168.714)

**By 30** Notice of Nov. 6 general election published. One notice required. (MCL 168.653a)

**31** October apportionment session of the county board of commissioners to examine certificates, direct spread of taxes in terms of millage rates to be spread on taxable valuations. (MCL 211.37)

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 the STC. *Note:* Applications for the above exemption programs received on or after Nov. 1

shall be considered by the STC contingent upon staff availability.

## NOVEMBER

**By 1** Public accuracy test must be conducted by local election commission. (R 168.778) Notice of test must be published at least 48 hours before test. (MCL 168.798)

**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 the initial request of a conditional rescission of PRE (Form

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ANSWER ON PAGE 13

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4640) for the winter tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(5))

Deadline for filing a foreclosure entity conditional rescission of a PRE to qualify for the winter tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(5))

**3** Electors who wish to receive an absentee voter ballot for Nov. 6 election by mail submit applications by 2 p.m. (MCL 168.759)

**By 5** Township supervisor shall notify the 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** Electors qualified to obtain an absentee voter ballot for Nov. 6 election may vote in person in clerk's office until 4 p.m. (MCL 168.761)

**6** Emergency absentee voting for election until 4 p.m. (MCL 168.759b)

General election.

**7** Local clerk delivers results of Nov. 6 election to county clerk by 11 a.m. (MCL 168.809)

**15** Form 600/L-4016, Supplemental Special Assessment Report, due to the STC.

**By 20** Boards of county canvassers complete canvass of Nov. 6 general election; county clerks forward results to secretary of state within 24 hours. (MCL 168.822)

**By 26** Board of State Canvassers meet

to canvass Nov. 6 general election. (MCL 168.821)

**By 28** Township treasurer gives county treasurer a bond\* running to the county in the actual amount of the county, state and school taxes. (MCL 211.43(2))

**30** Dec. 1 is a Saturday. On or before Dec. 1, county treasurer

delivers to township supervisor a signed statement of approval of the bond and the township supervisor delivers the tax roll to the township treasurer.

Deadline for foreclosing governmental units to transfer list of unsold 2018 tax foreclosure parcels to the clerk of the city, township or village in which the parcels are located. (MCL 211.78m(6))

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

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## Whose signature is required on a township check?

The township **treasurer's** (or deputy treasurer's) signature is required by law to make a check a negotiable instrument that orders a payment to be made.

Township laws and the Michigan Department of Treasury require the **clerk's** (or deputy clerk's) signature as confirmation that either the board has already authorized payment by voting to approve it or the payment is being issued according to the board's adopted post-audit policy.

The Michigan Department of Treasury's *Accounting Procedures Manual* states that two signatures are required on each check and "Dual signatures are required for all checking accounts (except the separate tax collection checking account\*). The dual signatures **MUST** be the clerk (or deputy clerk) and the treasurer (or deputy treasurer)." As a result, the treasurer and clerk should both sign a check.

*(\*This article deals with township payables, and not the disbursements required to be made by the treasurer from the tax collection disbursement account according to statutory disbursement schedules without board authorization or the clerk's signature.)*

## I've heard some people say we need a "town order," and others say we need a "warrant" to pay a check. What does that mean?

Township law states, "In addition to other business matters that may be acted upon at a regular meeting of the township board, the township board shall approve claims against the township and authorize payment of allowed claims. Accounts approved by the township board shall be filed and preserved by the township clerk. The payments authorized shall be paid by the treasurer, on the order of the township board, signed by the township clerk." (MCL 41.75)

Until the advent of computers and printers, a payment was initiated by the township clerk preparing a "town order," very much like a check, that was brought to the board with accompanying documentation for board approval. Once the board voted to approve it, the clerk signed the order and presented it to the treasurer, who then wrote out the actual check, signed it and disbursed it.

More recently, most townships use a "warrant," also known as a "voucher," which is a form of some kind that includes the check. For example, many townships have used a carbonless two- or three-part form that includes the check. Others use a three-part, perforated sheet with the actual

check on one panel, and the other two panels serving as documentation for the township's payables records and the payee's records. Still others use a two-part form, including the check and a stub for the payee's records, and the township makes a copy for the township's files. Regardless of the format, the clerk prepares the warrant/voucher, and once the board has voted to approve that payment (or if the payment is subject to the township's post-audit policy), the clerk must sign the check portion of the warrant/voucher to show that it is authorized. Then the treasurer must sign the check portion of the warrant/voucher to make it an actual check (negotiable instrument).

## Can the supervisor sign checks?

The supervisor's signature cannot be used to replace the treasurer or the clerk's signatures. A better practice may be to have the supervisor or other person sign or initial the township's recordkeeping panel of the warrant/voucher, to avoid confusion.

## Our bank requires anyone who will sign the checks to be an "authorized signer." Doesn't that give the clerk and deputy clerk improper authority over an account?

The treasurer (or deputy treasurer) opens and maintains all township bank accounts. No one else should have the ability to open, access, change or close a township bank account.

The *Accounting Procedures Manual* states that township checks must be signed by both the clerk and treasurer. But it also states that the treasurer must maintain control of all bank accounts, all bank accounts must be in the name of the township and the treasurer, and bank signature cards should be kept current and the authorized signers limited.

This can create confusion with the bank, because MCL 440.3403, Section 3403 of Michigan's adopted Uniform Commercial Code, states that, "(2) If the signature of more than 1 person is required to constitute the authorized signature of an organization, the signature of the organization is unauthorized if 1 of the required signatures is lacking."

From a bank's perspective, this may require the clerk and deputy clerk to be authorized signers. But the potential authority for an authorized signer to manage the account

is counter to Treasury's limitation of that authority to the treasurer and deputy treasurer.

A bank account has an account owner and may have additional authorized signers. Banks usually require that anyone who will have a signature on a check must sign a "signature card" or "bank card." The authority authorized signers have over an account can be significant, including potentially closing the account. Some banks require or allow the account owner to assign or limit the authority of authorized signers (on the signature card or in a deposit agreement, for example), including assigning different levels of authority on an account. In that case, the authority of any authorized signer other than the treasurer and deputy treasurer should be as limited as possible. For example, the clerk or other township official or employee may receive copies of bank statements, but should have no other authority over an account.

The intent of these procedures is to maintain good internal controls and to not allow any person to have both the ability to deposit to and disburse money from an account, and the ability to record and reconcile transactions for the account. Or, in other words, no one person should handle the money twice.

A township should work closely with its auditor/CPA on maintaining proper segregation of duties, particularly between the office of clerk and the office of treasurer, to ensure the integrity of reconciliation between the clerk and treasurer as an important check and balance of the accounts.

- Bank accounts must be promptly (within the month following the bank statement date) reconciled by an individual not involved in the receipt/bank deposit process. In small units of government when segregation of duties is not possible, a second official must review the reconciliation.
- Adequate security must be provided over unused checks.
- Checks must NOT be signed prior to being completely filled out.
- All functions (i.e., deposit, write checks, issue checks, reconcile account) regarding a checking account should NOT be performed by the same individual.
- Numerically controlled, pre-numbered checks must be used.
- Actual checks must be returned to the local unit (record retention requirement). Under the Records Media Act, electronically stored checks should suffice to meet this requirement.

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.

## Q May bills be paid prior to board meetings?

In certain circumstances, yes, bills may be paid before they are approved by the board. The board may adopt an explicit **post-audit policy** authorizing payments prior to approval to avoid finance or late charges (payroll penalties, hall utilities), and to pay appropriated amounts and payroll (including related payroll taxes and withholdings). This policy must be very limited, and a list of payments made prior to approval must be presented to the township board for approval.

Without such a policy, no claims should be paid prior to board authorization at a board meeting.

## Q Are there other rules regarding township checks?

As stated in the *Accounting Procedures Manual*, the Michigan Department of Treasury requires the following internal controls be in place to prevent fraud and embezzlement:

- Checks should not be returned to the clerk's office for distribution.



**63**

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## Legislature enacts citizen initiatives

When voters head to the polls next month, two citizen initiatives won't appear on their ballots.

In September, the Legislature passed initiatives to phase in a \$12 per hour minimum wage and to allow workers to earn paid sick leave—both of which were previously certified by the State Board of Canvassers to appear on the November ballot. Neither initiative was given immediate effect, meaning they will take effect 90 days after the current legislative session ends. However, Republican leaders have indicated they may amend one or both initiatives later in the session—before the measures take effect.

Once a ballot initiative is certified, the Legislature has 40 days from the time it receives the petition to enact or reject the proposed law or to propose a different measure on the same question. If the Legislature does not enact, the original initiative proposal and any different measure passed by the Legislature is placed on the ballot for voters to decide. If the Legislature chooses to enact a proposal, it becomes law. Lawmakers chose to invoke this option for the two citizen initiatives impacting Michigan workers.

Under the Earned Sick Time Initiative, employers will be required to provide employees an hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, to be paid at the employee's normal hourly wage. This would apply to government entities and virtually any employer that employs at least one person. Generally, employees could not use more than 72 hours of paid sick time in a year—or 40 hours for employees of a small business with no more than nine employees—unless otherwise permitted by their employer.

Employees can use sick time for an illness, injury or condition affecting the employee or his or her family member, as well as for doctor's appointments. If sick time is used more than three days in a row, an employer could require reasonable documentation, such as a doctor's note, but could not hold up sick time on the basis of waiting for documentation. Earned sick time would carry forward from year to year, and other paid time off, such as vacation days or personal days, that is accrued at the same rate may be used for the same purposes.

The Minimum Wage Initiative amends Michigan's current minimum wage of \$9.25 per hour. Once enacted, the minimum wage increases to \$10 per hour on Jan. 1, 2019, \$10.65 per hour in 2020, \$11.35 per hour in 2021 and \$12 per hour in 2022. The minimum wage for employees who are 16 or 17 years old would remain at 85 percent of the general minimum wage.

Currently, the general minimum wage must be adjusted for inflation each year, with a 3.5 percent cap on the increase. The initiative would eliminate the cap. However, as is currently required, no increase could take effect if Michigan's unemployment rate were 8.5 percent or higher for the year preceding the increase.

Another big change under the initiative is the hourly wage for tipped employees, who currently receive 38 percent of the general minimum wage. This percentage would gradually increase until it reached 100 percent by 2024.

It is likely the Legislature will consider amendments before the measures take effect. MTA will keep members updated on the latest developments.

## No straight party voting in November

Citizens won't have the option of voting a straight-party ticket after all when they head to the polls this fall.



After multiple court rulings, judges issued a stay on the recent ruling that struck down the 2015 ban on straight-ticket voting. The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals granted Secretary of State Ruth Johnson's request for a stay and to allow the court more time to consider a full appeal, meaning the option will

not be available in the November election.

The original law, Public Act 268 of 2015, ended Michigan's 100-year history of allowing straight-ticket voting. Instead, voters are required to select a candidate for each office individually. However, this summer, the U.S. District Court ruled that PA 268 was discriminatory and violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. Voting Rights Act.

Johnson then requested a stay on the decision, which was originally denied. However, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals granted the stay, arguing that the original ruling's rationale was weak. The U.S. Supreme Court then rejected an emergency application challenging the ban.

## Fiscal note required for legislation

A measure recently signed by Gov. Rick Snyder will provide lawmakers with more information on the potential fiscal impact of legislation being considered.



Public Act 340 of 2018, sponsored by Rep. Jim Lilly (R-Park Twp.), was supported by MTA as it will provide lawmakers with more information on how local governments could be impacted by the bills before their committee.

Under the new law, effective Dec. 13, the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies will be required to prepare a fiscal note for each bill scheduled for a committee hearing. Each note must include an estimate of the potential impact or the amount by which the bill would increase or decrease governmental revenues and expenses, as well as which funds the bill would affect.

Originally, the measure required that the fiscal note give an accounting of every bill assigned to a standing committee. It also prohibited passage of a bill by either the House or Senate unless the fiscal note was provided to members of that body. However, that language was deleted, with the final bill requiring the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies to provide information they consider necessary to explain the fiscal impact, including, but not limited to, potential impacts to local governments.

## Assessing reform proposal update

The sponsors of the two bills introduced that would fundamentally change Michigan's assessing system say they expect the legislation to be amended before consideration this fall.

House Bill 6049, sponsored by Rep. James Lower (R-Cedar Lake), and Senate Bill 1025, sponsored by Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland Chtr. Twp.), drew immediate response, opposition and concerns when they were introduced earlier this year. To discuss the proposal with stakeholders, Lower, Stamas and the state Department of Treasury held three meetings in August across the state to hear their point of view.

Each meeting drew crowds of more than 100 people, with township officials making up a large percentage of the audience. Some officials drove many hours and attended multiple meetings to make sure townships were represented and that their voices were heard.

Stamas and Lower emphasized that the current drafts of the bills will not be the final version. They stated they plan to take what they heard from local officials and work with MTA and other stakeholder associations to craft revisions and share a revised bill before the legislation is considered. The goal is to improve assessing to best serve residents and address assessing challenges in a way that can earn local support, they said.

MTA greatly appreciates all township officials who attended meetings, submitted comments or contacted their state lawmakers. Your continued grassroots efforts play a crucial role in maintaining local authority and ensuring that township concerns are addressed. MTA will continue to keep members updated on changes and action on the legislation.

### HOW CAN YOU PREDICT THE LEGAL RISKS YOUR COMMUNITY MIGHT FACE?

- A. CRYSTAL BALL
- B. TAROT CARDS
- C. OUIJA BOARD
- D. ROSATI, SCHULTZ, JOPPICH & AMTSBUECHLER

ANSWER: D



ROSATI | SCHULTZ  
JOPPICH | AMTSBUECHLER

*"They were integrally involved with the day-to-day operations of the township. They anticipated what the impacts would be for the township and made recommendations on how to deal with them."*

—Township Supervisor

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## Legislative lowdown

A quick look at critical bills that MTA is following as they move through the legislative process. For a complete list, head to MTA's "Legislative Action Center" on the members portion of [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org), or look to our weekly and monthly newsletters sent to all MTA member officials.

**SB 45: Disabled veterans' property tax exemption**—Expands disabled veterans' property tax exemption to include residential real property or agricultural real property owned by a disabled veteran, decreasing local revenue. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 157 & HB 5723: Water works projects**—Preempts local ordinances restricting or prohibiting the evaluation, comparison or use of certain pipe and piping materials. *MTA opposes.*

**SBs 305-310: Tax increment financing**—Modifies capture of library mills to allow libraries to opt out of tax capture and redefines "obligation" to exempt library millages automatically. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 329 & HB 4503: Land use/zoning preemption**—Limits local zoning regulation of vacation rentals and short-term rentals. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 578: Deed restrictions**—Excludes private deed restrictions from being considered by Michigan Tax Tribunal when highest and best use of property considered subject to an assessment dispute. *MTA supports.*

**SB 637: Small cell**—Creates Small Wireless Communications Facilities Deployment Act that would standardize permits, fees, right-of-way use and other regulation of wireless service providers when utilizing the public right-of-way. *MTA neutral.*

**SB 723 & HB 4362: Disabled veterans' property tax exemption**—Requires reimbursement to local taxing units for property tax revenue loss incurred due to disabled veterans' property tax exemptions. *MTA supports.*

**SB 741: Local preemption**—Prohibits local regulation of dogs based upon breed or perceived breed. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 927: Personal property tax exemption**—Provides exemption for qualified heavy equipment from property taxes. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 1031: Personal property tax exemption**—Provides exemption for qualified utility personal property installed after Dec. 31, 2017. *MTA opposes.*

**SB 1035: Property tax exemption**—Provides exemption for sportsmen club real property if dedicate facilities for charitable purpose for a limited period of time each year. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 4077: Freedom of Information Act**—Prohibits public bodies from commencing civil actions against entities making FOIA requests. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 4162: Special assessments**—Allows townships to create special assessment districts for communications infrastructure including broadband and high-speed internet. *MTA supports.*

**HB 4184: Open Meetings Act**—Clarifies physical presence required for vote, excluding emergency meetings and elected members called for military duty; allows board to waive one meeting for each member for good cause. *MTA neutral.*

**HB 4290 & SB 756: Sewer backup liability**—Amends definition for a sewage disposal system event, clarifies the identification of a design or construction defect in a sewage disposal system, and provides governmental agencies with expanded immunity from system overflow or backup. *MTA supports.*

**HBs 4359, 4370 & 4371: Special assessments**—Allows townships to create special assessment district for private utility services. *MTA supports.*

**HB 4397: Dark stores**—Requires Michigan Tax Tribunal determinations to consider all three methods of appraisal in assessment disputes and prohibits deed restrictions on valuation of property. *MTA supports.*

**HBs 4431-4432: Legislative subpoena**—Expands legislative subpoena authority to include local public bodies. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 4671: Election administration**—Allows local or county clerk to conduct election activities for a local clerk if approved by the governing bodies of both participating entities. *MTA neutral.*

**HBs 4747-4748: Filing fee for township candidates**—Provides option for individuals seeking township offices to pay a filing fee or file signature petitions to be on the ballot. *MTA supports.*

**HBs 4814-4815: Millage election limitation**—Limits all millage ballot questions—including new, increasing and renewal millages—to November general elections after Dec. 31, 2017. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 4766: Open Meetings Act**—Allows additional remedies for noncompliance to include attorney fees and allow a one-year window during which civil actions may be brought. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 4986 & SB 1042: Disabled veterans' property tax exemption/income tax**—Provides an income tax credit for disabled veterans in an amount equal to 100 percent of the individual's property taxes paid or 23 percent of gross rent paid, and repeals the disabled veterans' property tax exemption. *MTA supports.*

**HB 5098: Rights-of-way**—Requires local governments to provide one-year notification, waives permit fees, and prohibits request for any study or survey when requesting relocation of facilities owned by an entity holding a license under the Michigan Telecommunications Act or a franchise under the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 5207: Semi-open primary**—Requires voter to indicate which political party ballot he or she wishes to vote at primary election. *MTA neutral.*

**HBs 5325 & 5720: Economic development**—Revises definition of "assessable property" in Principal Shopping District Act and Business Improvement Zones Act. *MTA supports.*

**HB 5490: Michigan Transportation Fund**—Allows townships to assume jurisdiction of roads under jurisdiction of county road commissions and receive a share in the distribution of MTF revenue that would otherwise go to the county road commission. *MTA supports.*

**HB 5802: Land use**—Requires tax payment certification prior to approval of land division. *MTA supports.*

**HB 5947: Land use/zoning preemption**—Limits local zoning regulation of a barn or other facilities on land zoned for agricultural purposes for commercial venue for weddings or similar events. *MTA opposes.*

**HB 6049 & SB 1025: Assessing**—Provides for the shift of certain assessment functions to county equalization departments. *MTA opposes.*

# Voters to decide three ballot initiatives in November

In November, voters will decide three ballot initiatives: Proposal 1, which asks whether recreational marijuana should be legalized in Michigan; Proposal 2, which seeks to establish an independent redistricting commission; and Proposal 3, a voting rights policy initiative. The MTA Board has not taken a position on any of the ballot proposals. Watch MTA publications for additional analyses on the initiatives. The ballot language for each proposal is as follows:



## Proposal 18-1

### Legalize recreational marijuana

A proposed initiated law to authorize and legalize possession, use and cultivation of marijuana products by individuals who are at least 21 years of age and older, and commercial sales of marijuana through state-licensed retailers.

This proposal would:

- Allow individuals 21 and older to purchase, possess and use marijuana and marijuana-infused edibles, and grow up to 12 marijuana plants for personal consumption.
- Impose a 10-ounce limit for marijuana kept at residences and require amounts over 2.5 ounces to be secured in locked containers.
- Create a state licensing system for marijuana businesses and allow municipalities to ban or restrict them.
- Permit retail sales of marijuana and edibles subject to a 10% excise tax, dedicated to implementation costs, clinical trials, schools, roads, and municipalities where marijuana businesses are located.
- Change several current violations from crimes to civil infractions.

Should this proposal be adopted?

YES

NO



## Proposal 18-2

### Establish an independent citizens redistricting commission

A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a commission of citizens with exclusive authority to adopt district boundaries for the Michigan Senate, Michigan House of Representatives and U.S. Congress, every 10 years.

This proposed constitutional amendment would:

- Create a commission of 13 registered voters randomly selected by the Secretary of State:
  - 4 each who self-identify as affiliated with the 2 major political parties; and
  - 5 who self-identify as unaffiliated with major political parties.
- Prohibit partisan officeholders and candidates, their employees, certain relatives, and lobbyists from serving as commissioners.
- Establish new redistricting criteria including geographically compact and contiguous districts of equal population, reflecting Michigan's diverse population and communities of interest. Districts shall not provide disproportionate advantage to political parties or candidates.
- Require an appropriation of funds for commission operations and commissioner compensation.

Should this proposal be adopted?

YES

NO



## Proposal 18-3

### Voting rights policies

A proposal to authorize automatic and Election Day voter registration, no-reason absentee voting, and straight ticket voting; and add current legal requirements for military and overseas voting and postelection audits to the Michigan Constitution.

This proposed constitutional amendment would allow a United States citizen who is qualified to vote in Michigan to:

- Become automatically registered to vote when applying for, updating or renewing a driver's license or state-issued personal identification card, unless the person declines.
- Simultaneously register to vote with proof of residency and obtain a ballot during the 2-week period prior to an election, up to and including Election Day.
- Obtain an absent voter ballot without providing a reason.
- Cast a straight-ticket vote for all candidates of a particular political party when voting in a partisan general election.

Should this proposal be adopted?

YES

NO

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Each month, *Township Voice* provides comprehensive insights and background on the "what, when, where and why" of emerging issues at the Capitol. This *monthly* e-newsletter goes in-depth on pending legislation—and how it will affect townships.

Let MTA help you stay on top of legislative issues impacting your township!

Both of these Association legislative publications are distributed via email, and are sent to each MTA member with an email address in our Association policy database.

Not receiving *Township Insights* or *Township Voice*? Check your spam or junk mail filter in your email system. If it is in one of those folders, add @michigantownships.org to your "safe sender list." You may also contact michelle@michigantownships.org to be added to the subscription list.

# Schuette, Whitmer discuss **local reforms**

In our July issue of *Township Focus*, we introduced the 2018 gubernatorial primary candidates to our readers in an effort to give Michigan's township officials greater insights into how the candidates felt on a variety of township-related issues. As a follow-up to that article and as part of our larger look at the 2018 November election, we asked gubernatorial nominees Bill Schuette and Gretchen Whitmer to share their thoughts on the following:

**While Michigan has significantly recovered from the economic recession, the effects of that rebound have not trickled down to our state's local governments. If elected, do you intend to seek any reform measures that would impact local government, such as funding, revenue sources or regulatory authority?**

Read on for the candidates' responses, as submitted, along with a closer look at how each came to run for governor of the Great Lakes State.



Bill Schuette is the 53rd attorney general for the State of Michigan. He and his wife Cynthia reside in their hometown of Midland and are the parents of two children, daughter Heidi and son Bill. Schuette was first elected as attorney general in 2010 and was re-elected to a second term in 2014.

From his father, mother and stepfather, Schuette learned the basic values of honesty, hard work, the importance of your word, strength of family and the need to give back to your community.

Cynthia and Bill Schuette created the Michigan Harvest Gathering, a food and fund drive to benefit Michigan's food banks, which has raised more than \$10 million and collected nearly 10 million pounds of food.

Schuette has served as a U.S. congressman, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan state senator and as a Michigan Court of Appeals judge.

In addition, Schuette served as the 2015-16 chair of the Republican Attorneys General Association. He also formed the Michigan Commission on Human Trafficking and engineered the plan to fund the testing of thousands of long-abandoned DNA evidence boxes to provide justice to victims of sexual assault.

## Bill Schuette, Republican candidate for governor

**M**y top priority can be summed up in one word: growth. Michigan needs a growing population and growing paychecks to become a leading state economically. We need more people filling jobs and contributing the growth that lets us invest in better roads and schools.

Airplane loads of people arrive in places like Austin and Nashville daily and it isn't because of the weather. It is because those states have more opportunity. We must make Michigan a more attractive place to live, work, start a business and raise a family!

My economic plan is designed to make us nationally competitive, revitalize all our communities, urban and rural, and give Michigan families a pay raise:

- 1) **Lower auto insurance rates**, which are the highest in the country and keep our kids from moving back. I will leverage the power of the governor's office and build consensus to fight fraud, stop frivolous lawsuits and give consumers more choices.
- 2) **Cut taxes**. Michigan incomes are still below pre-recession levels and \$5,000 below the national average, leaving families less in their wallets than most Americans. I want to lower taxes and help workers keep more of their hard-earned money. As governor, I will eliminate the Granholm-Whitmer income tax hike that has cost Michigan taxpayers \$8 billion.
- 3) **Rebuild our infrastructure**. In a \$57 billion state budget like Michigan has, we should be able to find enough money for better roads. We can't be a first-rate economic power with second-rate roads. This will be one of my top spending priorities as governor.
- 4) **Improve our third grade reading scores and restore vocational education and apprenticeships in our schools**. My GROW plan ("Great Readers On the Way") includes a cabinet-level literacy director and reading coaches in every elementary school. We also need to grade schools A-F, provide scholarships for low-income students to access tutoring, after-school programs and summer reading camps, and give incentive grants to high performing and improving schools. More about my education initiatives, including "GROW" and a "Paycheck Training Plan" for CTE and job training, can be found at [www.BillSchuette.com](http://www.BillSchuette.com).



# Gretchen Whitmer, Democratic candidate for governor

**W**e've got to prioritize revenue sharing in Michigan. When I was in the Legislature, I was the top ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, where I was on the front lines fighting to protect revenue sharing.

Michigan has balanced its own state budget on the backs of local governments, cutting over \$8 billion in revenue sharing. These cuts are forcing Michigan cities to eliminate essential services or make cuts to the local police and fire departments that keep our communities safe. If we want to start getting things done that will actually make a difference in people's lives right now, we've got to have a healthy revenue sharing system in Michigan. As governor, I'll protect revenue sharing and introduce budgets that protect essential funding for local governments.



Local governments are the primary deliverers of service in any state, but our state government won't recognize that when they make decisions about state laws. Our local tax structure, Prop A, is nearly a quarter of a century old and in desperate need of revision. As governor, I will push for revisions that provide opportunities for local governments to diversify their revenue streams, benefit from local economic growth and recover more quickly from a recession, and I'll work to help local governments implement new revenue solutions so they can focus on things like road maintenance, snow plowing and salting, trash and recycling pick-up programs, effective community health systems, municipal policing and fire protection.



Gretchen Whitmer is a lifelong Michigander. She was raised in Grand Rapids and East Lansing. A product of our public schools and graduate of Michigan State University, Whitmer built a life close to home—even moving into a house in the same neighborhood where she grew up. Whitmer says she is running for governor to build a better Michigan so everyone can build a life for themselves right here. In the state that's home to 21 percent of the Earth's fresh water, Whitmer says she will work to protect our Great Lakes and clean up our drinking water.

As Senate Democratic Leader, Whitmer negotiated with Republicans to expand health coverage to more than 680,000 Michiganders through Healthy Michigan. She negotiated a raise in the minimum wage, and because of the work she did, the minimum wage went up for the fourth time this year. Whitmer brought workers, labor unions, and businesses together to fight anti-worker legislation.

In 2016, Whitmer stepped up to serve as Ingham County prosecutor, implementing stronger ethics standards. She established a new Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit to go after abusers, sped up the rehabilitation of non-violent first-time offenders, and asked the Michigan State Police to investigate the integrity of the county's evidence room.

# Secretary of state candidates weigh in

To highlight how the 2018 Michigan secretary of state nominees—Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, and Mary Treder Lang, a Republican—feel on several key election-related issues, *Township Focus* posed a series of questions to each candidate. The following are their responses, as submitted.



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

**BENSON: The “30-minute guarantee”:** An expectation that no one, no matter where they live, should have to wait more than 30 minutes to renew their driver's license, register their vehicle or cast a ballot.

**Ban fee increases:** Advocate against fee increases that have hit Michigan families hard in recent years. When it comes to pocketbook issues, I have a proven track record. As dean of the Wayne State University Law School, I froze tuition and significantly increased scholarship funding to make law school more affordable and accessible to all students.

**Election security:** The security of our elections is critical to the security of our democracy. Michigan's next secretary of state must be prepared on day one, as I am, to ensure our elections are secured against all known and emerging threats. My plan will bring the best practices in election security to Michigan, with an eye toward making it easier to vote and harder to cheat. Voting must remain a sacred right and every legitimate vote must be counted.

**Protecting voting rights:** I will ensure that the voting rights of every citizen are protected. Voters should be able to vote early or by absentee ballot without having to give a reason, just as they do in dozens of other states. As secretary of state, I will ensure voters who want to cast a ballot can do so with ease, and without intimidation.



Democratic secretary of state candidate Jocelyn Benson is the former dean of Wayne State University Law School, is currently CEO and executive director of the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality, and authored the book, *Secretaries of State: Guardians of the Democratic Process*.

**Ethics and transparency:** Among the 50 states, Michigan is dead last in government transparency and accountability. I will champion reforms that will make Michigan one of the best states in the nation, shining a light on the secret money flowing into our election process by requiring instant disclosure of all political and lobbying money.

**TREDER LANG:** My top priorities as Michigan's next secretary of state will be election integrity and improved branch office services.

My election integrity plan, One Citizen, One Vote, will increase elections training for clerks and poll workers, recruit additional poll workers to help with understaffed precincts on Election Day, forge partnerships with secretaries of state nationally to remove voters registered in multiple states, and utilize computer security background to keep voter rolls safe and provide secure elections.

My plan to improve branch offices services, Respect Your Time in Line, will increase online services, introduce an ExpressSOS app for smart phones, expand MI-Time into more branch offices, and provide self-service kiosks in Michigan-based businesses across the state.

## What changes do you propose to voter registration and/or Election Day procedures?

**BENSON:** I believe we need to modernize our election systems with an eye toward making it easier to vote and harder to cheat. We need to ensure no eligible voter is turned away from the polls on Election Day while protecting the security of elections. To that end, I support online voter registration and allowing for pre-registration of eligible 16-year-olds so that as soon as they turn 18, they are registered to vote. I would also join most other states in our country by becoming a part of the Electronic Registration Information Center, a national consortium of data sharing to ensure voter registration list accuracy. On Election Day, we need to improve and standardize poll worker training and recruitment to ensure our poll workers are fully prepared to handle all possibilities and enforce the law effectively, and I would also implement post-election risk-limiting audits to ensure the accuracy of the ballot count.

**TREDER LANG:** Michigan's voter registration rates are among the highest in the nation. As it is, Michigan already has more voters registered than eligible citizens. As such, I would follow current Secretary of State Ruth Johnson's lead and make sure Michigan's voter rolls are maintained and kept up to date with eligible voters only. A clean Qualified Voter File will help to ensure the integrity of Michigan's elections. I oppose any ballot initiative that allows for same-day registration. Michigan's secretary of state and local clerks would not have enough time to detect any suspicious activity or potential cyber-attacks.

As part of my plan, One Citizen, One Vote, my office will partner with service organizations, libraries, colleges and businesses to recruit poll workers with both the computer experience and office-related skills necessary to thrive in their roles. In addition, by working with the Legislature to strengthen and certify training sessions for poll workers, clerks will be held to account for ensuring the integrity of the elections which they oversee.



Republican secretary of state candidate Mary Treder Lang, a certified public accountant, says she is running on a platform of "Security, Optimization, and Stability."

## 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?

**BENSON:** I believe the state has a shared responsibility to ensure elections are managed and funded effectively. I will have an open door policy and work collaboratively with clerks to ensure they have the resources they need to execute their responsibilities, new and existing, and be an ally in advocating for additional funding where needed from the Legislature.

To that end, I have built a track record as a leader and administrator doing more with less. As dean of Wayne State University Law School, I cut my budget by 10 percent and froze tuition for incoming students and was able to effectively cut tuition for all students by 14 percent. At the same time, I expanded our clinics and programming, increased our bar passage rates and moved us up in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings—essentially doing "more with less." I will lean on that experience as well to help our local officials manage any new requirements and find efficiencies to enable them to meet expectations within current resource guidelines.

**TREDER LANG:** In my career, I have always taken a team-oriented approach. As the next secretary of state, I plan on putting together a Legislative Kitchen Cabinet, comprised of current and former state and federal lawmakers, county and municipal clerks, and the SOS staff to work toward finding election reform solutions that best benefit our state. As a certified public accountant, I know how to do more with less, and I will work hard to make sure Michigan's tax dollars are used wisely.

# 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—Rep. Tom Leonard, a Republican, and Dana Nessel, a Democrat—to share insights into their goals for the office. The following are their responses, as submitted.



Please share your top priorities as Michigan’s attorney general.

**LEONARD:** I am running for attorney general because I want to make Michigan safer and stronger. That is why I have a plan in place to prioritize the office to fight violent crime, stop sexual predators, and help those who are suffering from mental illness before they commit crimes.

Michigan is home to three of the 10 most dangerous cities in America. Our local prosecutors are swamped, and they need our help. I want to partner with them on a local level to make sure they have the resources and the manpower they need to get violent criminals off the street and behind bars where they belong.

We can do much more to root out sexual predators by passing tougher laws that crack down on the often-ignored problem with human trafficking and continuing the work we’ve done to eliminate the backlog of sexual assault evidence kits around the state.

And we can prevent crime from happening in many instances by continuing to reform Michigan’s broken mental health system. I have seen first-hand how much good diversionary programs can do in Genesee County, and



**Rep. Tom Leonard, the Republican candidate for Michigan attorney general, currently serves as speaker of the House, and is a former Genesee County prosecutor and assistant attorney general.**

I want to take that success statewide. But we also need to continue pursuing the reforms underway right now in the state Legislature which emphasize early intervention and prevention. Getting ahead on mental health will make our communities safer and make many Michigan families who are struggling with mental illness stronger.

**NESSSEL:** As attorney general, my top priority will be to ensure the office of attorney general is protecting our natural resources, advocating for consumers and fighting for the rights of everyday citizens. On day one, I will move to shut down Enbridge line five because it poses a clear danger to the health and safety of Michigan residents. You can also depend on me to hold drug companies accountable for drug prices and protect Michiganders' access to affordable healthcare.

**Q** 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?

**LEONARD:** When I was a prosecutor in Genesee County, I learned how to work closely with local prosecutors, judges and the police officers who were doing the brave work of keeping our community safe. I wanted them to know that if they had my back in the courtroom, I had their back on the streets. That experience will be critical in working alongside local officials from all across Michigan to promote public safety.

One important way to do that is to expand successful mental health programs that can prevent crimes and keep people out of the criminal justice system. I worked in Michigan's first mental health treatment court in Genesee County, and I saw first-hand how much of an impact it had on the lives of people who passed through and got their lives back on track. That mental health court in Genesee County just celebrated its 10th anniversary and is now a huge success, having helped hundreds of people in need. I have a plan to take that idea statewide and encourage the expansion of these successful diversionary courts to prevent crime before it happens.

I know these programs work, and I know how much heartbreak they can prevent. We have ignored this issue for too long, and it is well past time we made a change. I am going to continue pursuing these important reforms while working closely with our local prosecutors and judges to make Michigan safer and stronger.

**NESSSEL:** One of the biggest challenges for small municipalities can be finding affordable legal representation and dealing with issues of liability. The attorney general can play an important role in defending local municipalities in certain circumstances, as well as weighing in when important legal decisions could negatively impact local communities. Local officials will find that I'm very hands-on and accessible. Any elected official, regardless of party affiliation, will be able to reach out to my office for help and advice on a variety of legal matters, especially when representation is needed for multiple local communities that have banded together on a common cause.



Democratic attorney general candidate Dana Nessel has served as a civil rights attorney and was an assistant Wayne County prosecutor for more than a decade.

**Q** As Michigan's attorney general, you serve as the top lawyer on behalf of the state. Please explain how you would determine when issues are relevant to pursue action on behalf of the state?

**LEONARD:** The safety and well-being of Michigan's citizens is the most basic and important function of our government. Everything else comes from that. As Michigan's next attorney general, I will do everything I can to protect the people of this state from everything from violent criminals, drug dealers and sexual predators to fraud, identity theft and corrupt public officials. Anything that puts Michigan's citizens at risk must be a top priority.

Strong public safety also leads to strong communities and townships. Violent crime is increasing in Michigan faster than in neighboring states, and that takes a toll on our local communities. By partnering with both local and federal law enforcement to clean up the streets, we can create a better environment for anyone looking to raise a family or start and grow a business. That will benefit Michigan townships just as much as the families who live in them.

**NESSSEL:** I took on the toughest cases possible both as a Wayne County assistant prosecutor and as a private attorney. My work ranged from prosecuting child rapists and murderers, to standing up for our civil rights and winning a historic victory in front of the Supreme Court. As your attorney general, I want to make sure we're not just prosecuting bad guys, but also protecting good guys.

While our current and previous attorneys general have focused almost entirely on criminal prosecutions and protecting large corporations, I'd like to have a more balanced office of the attorney general that also focuses on issues like consumer protection, defending the civil rights of senior citizens and minorities, as well as protecting our Great Lakes for generations to come.



## What are the new accounting standards impacting “fiduciary funds” that are required to be implemented in our upcoming fiscal year?

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities, in January 2017. While GASB Statement No. 84 is effective for fiscal years beginning after Dec. 15, 2018, early implementation is encouraged. Statement 84 attempts to eliminate the ambiguity that has existed in defining a fiduciary activity and provides criteria for local governments to use to identify whether an activity is “fiduciary” for reporting purposes.

Statement 84 provides the criteria for three types of activities:

- 1) **Fiduciary component units**
- 2) **Pension and other post-employment benefits (OPEB).** An example of OPEB activity would be assets accumulated for payments of health insurance for retirees.
- 3) **Other fiduciary activities**

While technical guidance is available on [www.gasb.org](http://www.gasb.org), here is a brief overview:

**Fiduciary component units** provided clarity for reporting-related entities that perform fiduciary activities on behalf of the township. If the entity is required to be included as a component unit under GASB Statement No. 14, and if it a pension plan administered through a trust (as described under GASB Statement No. 67), or is an OPEB described in GASB Statement No. 74, then the component unit would be included as a “fiduciary fund” of the township.

**Pension and OPEB arrangements** would follow the same guidance outlined above, though testing under Statement 14 would not be necessary.

For **other fiduciary activities**, if the following tests are met, they are considered “fiduciary”:

- The assets are controlled by the township
- The assets are not derived from the township’s own revenues or from “non-exchange transactions”
- The assets are either administered through a trust (the government is not a beneficiary) or for the benefits of individuals without administrative or financial involvement from the township

The statement also provided that there are four different type of fiduciary funds:

- 1) Pensions and other employee benefit trusts
- 2) Investment trust funds
- 3) Private purpose trust funds
- 4) Custodial funds

All townships have one fiduciary fund—the property tax collection agency fund. The reporting of these funds is fairly straight-forward: only the assets and liabilities of the fund are presented, as all the taxes collected are “owed” to another governmental entity (including the township’s operating fund(s)).

Townships with pension funds and OPEB funds that would likely qualify for treatment as a “fiduciary activity” under the new standard would follow existing GASB standards (Statements No. 67 and 74) for financial reporting.

Townships with “private purpose trusts” (e.g., cemetery perpetual care funds) would have to follow the new reporting standards and present:

- Assets
- Deferred outflows
- Liabilities
- Deferred inflows
- Fiduciary net position
- Additions
- Deductions

Some local units that maintain “external investment funds,” such as a county operating an investment pool for other local governmental units that is accounted for in trust, would also likely be subject to these new reporting standards.

*Special thanks to the Government Finance Officers Association and author Todd Buikema for the use of their materials. Visit [www.gfoa.org](http://www.gfoa.org) for additional information, including an article entitled, “Key Guidance in GASB Statement No. 84.”*

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



# upcoming MTA regional meetings

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Regional meetings bring knowledge, networking

As an MTA member, you belong to the largest community of local government officials in the state. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with that community, and MTA staff, to discuss the latest issues affecting townships at our upcoming *MTA On The Road* regional meetings.

Each event features an **informative general session** on the assessing reform proposal—where things stand, and where they might be headed; an **insightful legislative update**, including what townships can expect during the upcoming lame-duck session; and a **mini-expo with township vendors**, poised to share information about their products and services to help you serve your residents even better.

Afternoon breakout topics include:

#### “SO MOVED!” And Other Foolish Things Knowledgeable Township Officials Should Never Do at a Board Meeting

Wait, we do that all the time! What's wrong with it? Plenty! Learn the most common mistakes made at board meetings that sow confusion, waste time, and are just patently unfair. We'll ask members of the audience to demonstrate their new-found skills in a mock board meeting.

#### Functions and Responsibilities of Your Township Planning & Zoning Team

Learn the structure and function of your township's planning commission, zoning administrator, zoning board of appeals and township board. We'll review the roles and responsibilities for each and discuss who should (and shouldn't!) be doing what.

#### What Do Deputies Do?

Each township clerk and treasurer must have one deputy. A supervisor may have a deputy. But just what does a deputy do? And how is the township board involved? The answers may surprise you! Topics include the deputy appointment process, authority, duties, compensation and employment status.

#### Cooperation is the Key

*Who drives the township's vision for land use—the township board or the planning commission?* Explore the relationships and policy prerogatives among the township board, elected and appointed officials, and the planning commission—as well as where the zoning board of appeals fits in. Learn how they work best together, what happens if they disagree and how to get everyone on the same page.



AGENDA

8:30 a.m.	Check-in, continental breakfast and vendor showcase
9 a.m.	Meeting begins
10:30 to 11 a.m.	Vendor showcase
Noon	Networking lunch
1 p.m.	Breakouts
2:30 p.m.	Breakouts
3:45 p.m.	Meeting adjourns

### Cancellations & Substitutions

Written cancellation requests received by MTA two weeks prior to the event date 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.

## MTA On The Road Registration Form

### Which location will you attend?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 2: Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth            | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 11: Bay Mills Resort, Brimley                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 23: Ramada Inn, Alpena              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 3: Riverwalk Place Resort, Gladwin            | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 17: Fetzer Center at WMU, Kalamazoo            | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 29: Crystal Mountain, Thompsonville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 9: Magnusson Franklin Square Inn, Houghton    | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 18: Comfort Inn Conference Center, Chelsea     | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 30: Holiday Inn, Big Rapids         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 10: Island Resort & Conference Center, Harris | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 22: Treetops Resort Conference Center, Gaylord |   |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR rate*: \$133    | For paid registrations received <b>after</b> Sept. 18. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EARLY-BIRD rate*: \$113 | For paid registrations received <b>by</b> Sept. 18.    |

*Save \$20/person by registering early!  
\*Rates apply to MTA members. Non-members, call for rates.*

Township	County
Telephone	Email Address
Name & Title	

<b># of Persons</b>	<b>Registration Fee</b>	<b>Total</b>
_____	_____	_____
x		=

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

Check enclosed (payable to MTA)

Charge to: (circle one) MasterCard    VISA

Card #	Expires
Print Card Holder's Name	Signature



Send your completed registration form with payment to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax: (517) 321-8908. Or register online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). Questions? Call (517) 321-6467.

# upcoming MTA workshops

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Explore the fundamentals of township finances, land use

MTA can help your board understand the fundamentals of township finances, and offer techniques for making sound land use decisions. Join us at the **Comfort Inn Conference Center** in **Mt. Pleasant** this **November** for one (or both!) of the courses described below:

#### Township Finances (F-103; 6 credits)

**Nov. 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** (Includes continental breakfast and lunch)

Oversight of township finances is a fundamental statutory duty of township boards. Good governance demands that every board exercise effective oversight of all township assets, including human and physical resources. Explore in depth how township boards can achieve a greater degree of control over the township's financial position and ensure that resources are directed to address the township's greatest needs. Takeaways include:

- The board's role in establishing a powerful budgeting process.
- What every board needs to do to protect the township's financial assets.
- How to determine the correct amount of township financial reserves.
- Early warning signs of potential financial problems.
- How great township boards spend their time at meetings.

#### Land Use: Defining Your Township's Future (F-102; 6 credits)

**Nov. 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

(Includes continental breakfast and lunch)

Dig into growth philosophies and learn strategies to galvanize your township to action to define your future. Gain an understanding of a township master plan, including its purpose, process and legal requirements. Explore considerations that must be confronted if your master planning efforts are to be successful. Examine a broad range of day-to-day issues, from nonconforming uses to preserving rural character, managing growth to infrastructure and roads.

Round out the day with discussion on emerging land use issues.



These courses are part of MTA's Township Governance Academy (TGA). They are designed to enhance your leadership skills and motivate you to take on the challenges (and opportunities!) unique to those serving as an elected official. Regardless of your position on the board or amount of experience, TGA will move you to a higher level of performance and make your service more rewarding. Uncertain whether TGA is for you? Try it! You do NOT have to be enrolled in TGA to attend. Credit will be assigned retroactively if you enroll within six months of attending.



**Cancellations & Substitutions:** Written cancellation requests received at the MTA office by Nov. 14 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. Substitutions are not allowed for registrations made using TGA scholarship funds.

## TGA Registration Form

Township \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_  **Finances**  **Land Use**  **Both**

	Regular Rate* After Nov. 14	Early-bird Rate* Before Nov. 14
<b>Finances (F-103)</b>	\$145/attendee	\$125/attendee
<b>Land Use (F-102)</b>	\$145/attendee	\$125/attendee
<b>FULL PROGRAM: Both sessions</b>	\$290/attendee	\$250/attendee

# of Sessions                      Registration Fee                      Total

\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*Rates apply to MTA members. Non-members, call for rates.

<b>NOTE: Payment must accompany form in order to be processed.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed (payable to MTA)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge to: (circle one) MasterCard    VISA	
-       -       -	/
Card # _____	Expires _____
Print Card Holder's Name _____	Signature _____



Send your completed registration form with payment to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax: (517) 321-8908. Or register online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). Questions? Call (517) 321-6467.

# 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.

Join the discussion 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 reviewed. 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.

### Special bonus

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

### Dates and locations:

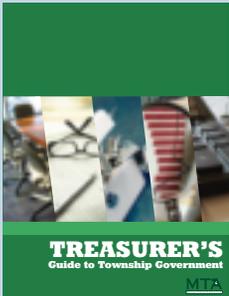
Nov. 13: Okemos Conference Center, Okemos  
Nov. 14: Treetops Resort, Gaylord

The workshop is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

### Continue the learning process

The registration fee\* includes continental breakfast, lunch and all handout materials. Attendees may also purchase MTA's *Treasurer's Guide to Township Government* (2016 edition)—an essential resource for all township treasurers in Michigan—at the discounted rate\* of \$34.50 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 and substitutions:** Written cancellation requests received at the MTA office by Oct. 30 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.



## Tax Collection Registration Form

Which location will you attend?

- Nov. 13: Okemos Conference Center, Okemos       Nov. 14: Treetops Resort, Gaylord

Township \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase guidebook:  Yes  No

REGULAR rate\*: \$133 For paid registrations received after Oct. 30

EARLY-BIRD rate\*: \$113 For paid registrations received by Oct. 30.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of Treasurer's Guides) x (\$34.50/book\*) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

\*Rates apply 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

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Print Card Holder's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Send your completed registration form with payment to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax: (517) 321-8908. Or register online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). Questions? Call (517) 321-6467.

# ‘Rock the Mock’ inspires students, educates voters

The first time **Kathy Funk** voted, it was the stuff of civic nightmares.

She braved the long line that snaked around her voting precinct building for the opportunity to have a say in who was elected the next U.S. president. She already knew who had won her vote and couldn’t wait to cast her ballot.

But when it was finally her turn and she marked her ballot, horror struck her as she realized she’d chosen the wrong candidate. Her head hung in shame as she trudged to the election workers’ table to ask for a new ballot. The worker she approached made no secret of the fact that she was annoyed. Funk’s face turned red as the worker slammed her hand on the table and yelled, “Well, everyone has to stop now because this girl spoiled her ballot!” Funk apologized to everyone around her as she made the walk of shame back to the voting booth.

Now **Flint Charter Township** (Genesee Co.) clerk, Funk doesn’t want anyone’s first voting experience to turn them away from a lifetime of voting.

“I don’t ever want young people to feel intimidated when they vote,” she said. “They’re the future.”

So when the time came for her to think of a final project for MTA’s Township Governance Academy (TGA), she knew exactly what she wanted to do. Earlier this year, she and the rest of her clerk’s office team hauled their voting machines and ballots to the local high school for a mock election.

They printed real ballots, trained high school seniors to act as election workers and announced the results after 385 students cast their ballots. That same day, they registered 94 students to vote for the first time.

Funk is hopeful that when the polls open this November, some of the students she met at the mock election will be there. A few students enjoyed the experiment so much, they even volunteered to work the polls in November.

“It was a great way for us to reach out into the community and make a big push on voter education,” Funk said.

## Continuing education event sparks idea

Funk, a 2018 TGA graduate, first got the idea for her project last year while attending a clerks continuing education event. As she networked with other clerks, she heard someone mention visiting a high school for a mock election during homecoming. As soon as she returned home, Funk took the idea to her staff as well as a board trustee, who’s also a teacher. After getting connected with the right people, she got the go-ahead to run a mock election during the school’s Career Technology Education Fair.

The timing couldn’t have been more perfect—the township had new voting machines and had only used them for one small election. The mock election, which they dubbed “Rock the Mock,” was the perfect opportunity to take the machines out for a test run before the November election.

Funk and her staff decided to create ballots that looked exactly like the ones used on a real Election Day, with a key change. Instead of voting on candidates for office, the election asked students to choose which electives and career pathways they wanted to learn more about, as well as two questions testing their knowledge about the school's dual credit program. After the questions were printed on regular ballot paper, the clerk's office ran one through the new voting machine for a test run. It failed. As did the next ballot, and the next. After calling the county clerk, they discovered the mistake they'd made in programming the machine and were able to get new ballots just in the nick of time.

While finding an error was stressful, Funk was relieved it happened before a mock election instead of the next major township election. "It was very good for us," she said. "I had never experienced ballots failing before."

When the career fair arrived, high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors competed against one another to see which class had the most students voting. Each class was assigned one machine, with a counter ticking each vote. Students came back to the voting machines throughout the day to check the counter and find out who was in the lead.

Funk's staff had trained seniors to work as election inspectors. She also brought in a retired principal and another adult with extensive training to help the students and answer their questions. But it turned out, she didn't really need them. "The kids were so good," she said. "They took to election inspecting like fish to water."

"Rock the Mock" drummed up so much enthusiasm that Funk wanted to capitalize on it. Clerk's office employees also manned a table where students who would turn 18 by the time the next election rolled around could register to vote. Throughout the day, she reminded student election inspectors, "If you like this, you can come back." By the end of the day, she rounded up several students to work in the November election. Kids make great election workers, she said—they're enthusiastic, and they aren't intimidated by technology and use tablets and other equipment without hesitation.

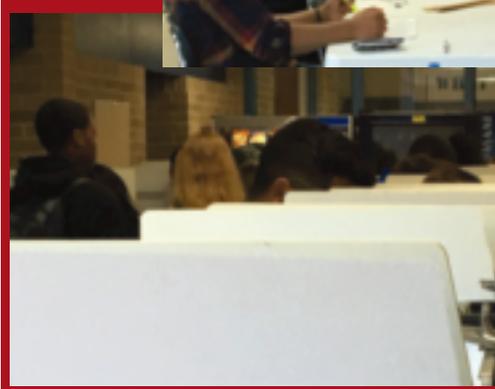
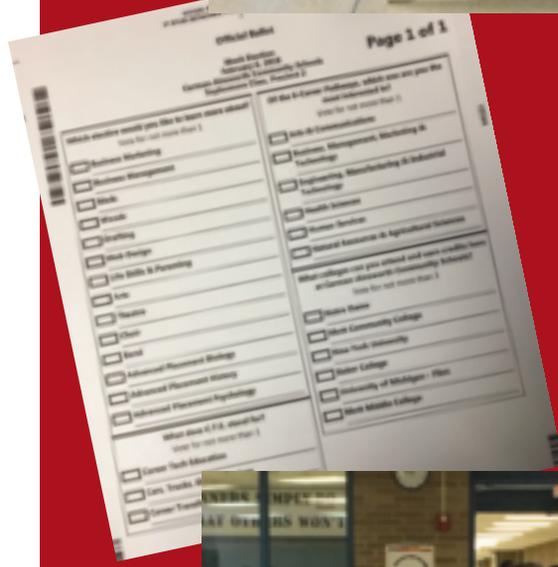
## The perfect project

As a student in MTA's rigorous TGA program, Funk dedicated herself to gaining cutting-edge knowledge and skills that would help her become the best clerk and township board member she could be. In addition to completing 11 courses and earning 18 elective credits, she was also required to complete a final project putting her knowledge into practice. A mock election seemed like the perfect opportunity to put her skills into practice.

Not only did the experience familiarize her office with the new voting machines, but it also pushed them to collaborate with the county and the local school district. The election even recruited future voters and election workers too.

This November, Funk looks forward to working with her young election inspection recruits—and she hopes to see even more in the voting booths.

MTA's Township Governance Academy is designed to enhance your leadership skills and motivate you to take on the challenges (and opportunities!) unique to those serving as an elected official. Are you ready to take the next step in governance? Learn more at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org) or by calling (517) 321-6467.





# Inspiring tomorrow's local leaders

## MTA awards Robinson Scholarship

**B**y day, Kasey Mahony manages a group of state parks in Northern Michigan. By night, she pursues her dream of becoming a local elected official by working toward a Master of Public Administration degree from Central Michigan University.

Now, Mahony is getting a boost toward her goal as the 2018 recipient of the MTA Robert R. Robinson Memorial Scholarship. This one-time scholarship is awarded to a junior, senior or graduate student enrolled at a Michigan college or university who is pursuing a career in local government.

### **Drawn to public service**

The idea of serving the public drew Mahony to the goal of becoming an elected official. Serving in a public office would provide her with the opportunity to make a broader impact on her community and contribute to her fellow citizens on a larger scale.

“Public service embodies my values and strengths for stakeholder collaboration, the budgeting process, seeing through efficient budget management challenges, having a positive influence through authentic staff engagement, and many scales and types of planning and policy work,” Mahony said. “I also have a learning orientation that is well-suited for local government service, as there is always something new to learn in order to lead effectively.”

Mahony jumped into public service when she was hired as a state parks supervisor immediately after she completed her undergraduate degree. Previously supervisor of Traverse City

and Leelanau State Parks, she was recently named Region Manager for the Cadillac District of state parks, where she manages two state park managers and 12 supervisors. While much of her job is natural resource management, public service is an underlying current in everything she does. Township governance, and its focus on service delivery, intrigues her for that reason.

Though seeking public office still lies in the future, Mahony is already all too familiar with one of the biggest concerns facing local government—deteriorating infrastructure. She wrote in her scholarship application essay that a community’s roads and utilities are critical services that don’t just impact convenience, but also public health and safety, prosperity, quality of life, and future business developments.

The problem, however, is a lack of funding to support fixing roads, bridges and water infrastructure. The first plan of attack should not be raising taxes, but rather strategically and creatively reducing costs while maintaining current service levels, she said.

“Community infrastructure improvement work calls for the very best planning and the most effective communication strategies government leadership can achieve,” Mahony wrote in her application essay. “Careful selection of consultants with proven expertise and a customer focus is important, alongside the education and engagement of community members.”

Communication itself is an essential public service, Mahony said. This is especially true when a tax increase or millage becomes necessary in the fight to improve infrastructure. Townships can increase public support by presenting the facts honestly and transparently, with a concerted communication and outreach effort to keep residents and stakeholders informed.

As local governments take steps to repair and rebuild roads and other infrastructure, Mahony recommends they carefully study best practices and new technologies backed by strong research.

### Inspiring future leaders

As MTA’s second executive director, Robert R. Robinson was dedicated to townships and to furthering the form of government closest to the people. Awarding the endowment each year in his name helps to ensure that Michigan’s future local leaders continue to value and protect township government and the Michigan residents it serves.

Learn more about the scholarship on MTA’s website, at [www.michigantownships.org/scholarship.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/scholarship.asp).

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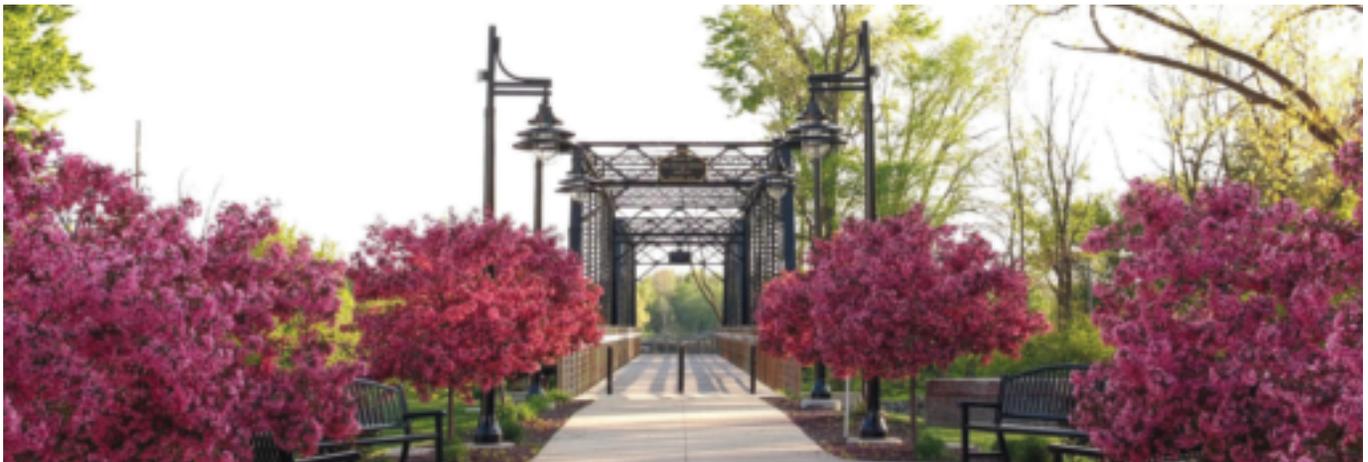
## Bridgeport Charter Township

**B**ridgeport Charter Township (Saginaw Co.) is one of the oldest townships in Michigan, becoming a township in 1848. It is home to nearly 10,500 residents. There is a historical nature about Bridgeport as the community has preserved much of its history.



The township's historical iron bridge is the number one restored iron bridge in the state, with approximately 80 percent of its original parts. It is a feature on the Iron Belle Trail, and soon, there will be a trailhead park near the bridge, which will feature a restroom facility, a pavilion, and a nature overlook of the beautiful Cass River. Recently, with a collaborative effort of the township downtown development authority and the parks and recreation department, two accessible canoe and kayak launches were built to allow for recreational opportunities on the river.

The township is a busy stop on I-75 as exit 144 is well known by visitors to the neighboring community of Frankenmuth. Bridgeport Charter Township collaborates with Frankenmuth on a number of community programs from youth sports to training opportunities with the fire department. Bridgeport has hosted a number of community events such as the annual Great Lakes Rendezvous (an 1800s encampment), car shows, annual youth baseball tournaments, and a Pioneer Christmas celebration. The Great Lakes Bay Miracle League, a baseball league for children with disabilities, calls Bridgeport home, playing at the beautiful Frank N. Andersen Complex. The township has a number of businesses and park areas that truly make it a community living and growing together.



# **GIVE** *thanks*

MTA is grateful for the opportunity to educate Michigan's township officials and decision-makers. To show our appreciation, we are offering a discount on all webcasts this November! It is our way of thanking you for turning to MTA for your professional development.

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- Making Meetings Work More Effectively
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Detailed descriptions of each webcast are available online; visit MTA's eLearning Library at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org) (under the "Training" drop-down menu).



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