



A better way to connect

Last month, MTA launched a new and improved *Community Connection* “2.0”! We debuted our first online networking site (we call it Facebook for township officials) nearly 10 years ago to offer our members a convenient, quick way to connect, learn from and share with one another. Our goal is always to keep improving our offerings for our members, and we were thrilled to ring in the new year by announcing a completely revamped *Community Connection* for you to explore!

If you haven't checked it out already, we know you will be as excited as we are about the new changes and improvements!



The new platform was beta-tested by township officials from across the state, and the feedback was incredibly positive, including that the revamped version is much more user-friendly and intuitive to use. Said beta-tester **Julie Sweet, Hartford Township**

(Van Buren Co.) clerk, “I LOVE the new *Community Connection*. Good job!”

Norman Township (Manistee Co.) Zoning Administrator **Robert Hall** is excited about connecting with thousands of township officials, committee members and employees in the MTA “All Member” Community. “It is 100 percent imperative that all township personnel be able to network and learn from each other,” said Hall, who is also director of the Wexford Joint Planning Commission, serving 11 townships in Wexford County.

The perfect time to explore

Now is the perfect time to explore and see just how valuable this community of your fellow local leaders can be. In fact, MTA members are **already** part of at least one group in *Community Connection*:

- Each individual from an MTA member township with an email address in our database is part of the “MTA ‘All Members’ Community” group, an open forum that includes all elected township officials, as well as board/commission members, deputies and other employees. This is a great place to ask general questions, offer answers and share resources.
- Elected officials are also automatically a member of a group exclusively for each respective elective office—supervisor, clerk, treasurer or trustee. In this private group, you can network and discuss questions and issues specific to your office.

When we kicked off the new platform in early January, members flocked to introduce themselves in the online forum, and the initial feedback and participation was gratifying and exciting.

Vicky Finco, clerk for **Erwin Township** (Gogebic Co.), “the LAST county in the U.P. going west before crossing the border into Wisconsin,” she said, introduced herself on the “All Members” board, noting that she is, “Looking forward to learning from the questions and answers posted here. Thank you!”

Duane Putnam, planning commission vice chair and zoning board of appeal chair for **Eureka Charter Township** (Montcalm Co.), said, “What a cool way to start the year! This site has been a source of good ideas and information over the years.”

After describing his “very pleasant and most often quiet rural farming community,” **Maple Grove Township** (Saginaw Co.) Supervisor **Kevin Krupp** noted to his fellow officials, “I have 13 years in office and can tell you that the learning and challenges never end. I look forward to sharing and gaining knowledge from this site and you—the experts.”

What's new in *Community Connection* '2.0'?

The new *Community Connection* has enhanced features that make navigating and using the platform easier than ever before.

- **Easier to participate in discussions.** With the new system, you'll receive “digest” emails right in your inbox, showing the latest discussions AND allowing you to reply directly from your email, or by following a link right to the discussion thread.
- **One-stop shop for receiving alerts.** Receive your email digest of discussion questions and answers—from all groups in which you are a member—in one easy email.
- **Faster search results.** Within the new platform, you can

search past discussions to find answers more quickly!

- **Enhanced resource library.** We've populated the new Township Resource Library with MTA's most popular toolkits and samples. Officials can post documents to share as well, and you can even add documents to your “favorites” for quick and easy access.

Community Connection can be accessed from the members-only side of www.michigantownships.org. You must log in with your MTA username (your email address on file with MTA) and password. If you do not remember your password, click “Forgot Password” to receive an email to re-set your password, or call MTA at (517) 321-6467 for assistance. A “User Guide” is also available, and was included with our *Community Connection 2.0* email announcement sent to every official with an email address in our database last month. It can also be downloaded at https://www.michigantownships.org/members/downloads/user_guide.pdf. (Or, after logging in to the members side of the site, click on “Community Connection,” under the “My MTA” tab; the User Guide link is in the right-hand column.)

We know that the new *Community Connection* will continually evolve to meet your needs and those of our ever-growing online community, and look forward to your feedback on how we can continue to make this as beneficial as possible for you!

Your online community awaits you. It's time to create a *Community Connection*!

Questions or problems? Please contact Aimee West, MTA Communications Specialist, at aimee@michigantownships.org or (517) 321-6467.