



Administrator/Controller Report

May 2013

Jail

- The jail has been at or near capacity for the past two weeks, and courts and the county are actively managing the jail population to minimize the need to board inmates in other county jails.

Boardman River Dams

- Sent letter of intent to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that Grand Traverse County (County) concurs with the recently completed 2013 Detailed Project Report (DPR) and Environmental Assessment (EA) as prepared by the USACE, regarding fish passage at Sabin and Boardman dams on the Boardman River. The letter only obligates the county to review the Project Partnership Agreement when it is prepared and indicates that the county will execute the agreement if it finds the agreement to be satisfactory. It is not clear whether the Implementation Team (IT) will actually be utilizing the USACE for the dam removal at this time, but the letter is necessary to keep that option open.
- Sent letter of support for a grant request submitted by the IT to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the FY 2013 Sustain Our Great Lakes program.
- Met with the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) and members of the IT to discuss the process for selection of a design and engineering firm and method of delivery for the removal of the Boardman and Sabin Dams. Questions have been distributed to the top two qualified firms and the IT has scheduled interviews at its May 30th meeting.

Central Dispatch

- **Staffing:** We are advertising again for dispatch positions. The posting was rewritten to better communicate the job requirements. Once this posting is completed, we will be going to a continuous posting to help streamline the hiring process. With a continuous posting, we can evaluate candidates as they apply and testing can be ongoing instead of attempting to process large groups at one time.
- **National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week:** April 14-20 was a week of recognizing and appreciating our 911 professionals. Jeans were approved for the week, and many of our staff went above and beyond in showing their co-workers that they ARE appreciated. Coupons for a free Slurpee were found in everyone's mailboxes, balloons decorated the Center, small tokens of appreciation often appeared anonymously, and gift baskets were graciously delivered by some of our responders. We even had a chiropractor come in to do a few "adjustments". At the end of the week, names were drawn for prizes that had been donated. Everyone received something, and prizes included local gift certificates, a grill package, prints donated by a local artist, and a hand-made level.

- **Smart911:** We are working on the official launch, and also attempting to engage Smart911 in participating with the County's Cherry Festival activities. Rave Mobility is located just outside of Boston, so the recent events there have caused some scheduling disruptions. The Smart911 marketing team is reviewing our information, and we will be meeting to discuss their role at Cherry Festival.

The Smart911 profile information now appears on our CAD screen and is ready for use. The first call we received had an extensive profile including pictures of the elderly couple, their medical information, emergency contact information, directions to their home, a picture of the home, plus a lot of other information that could be useful in an emergency.

- **Central Tower:** We are working with DTE to get access to our Central Tower from the SouthCreek subdivision.

Commission on Aging

- **May is Older Americans Month:** The Board of Commissioners adopted a proclamation at the PH&S meeting on May 1st recognizing May as Older Americans month. The theme for 2013 is "Unleash the Power of Age!"
- **Volunteer Tax Preparation:** AARP volunteers prepared taxes for 305 senior citizens at the Commission on Aging office in 2013. GTCOA staff scheduled the appointments and coordinated some activities. Taxes are prepared by trained AARP volunteers at no charge to the senior citizens. All volunteer preparers have been invited to the GTCOA Volunteer luncheon.
- **Emergency Contact Magnets:** The COA is distributing refrigerator magnets that identify where to obtain emergency alert/severe weather information to staff, clients, Senior Centers, and at the Senior Expo in May. WTCM sponsored the magnets and Lawton Gallagher Group (Gregg Smith) identified the sponsor for us.
- **COA Visiting Local Units:** The Commission on Aging board (and some staff members) will be making visits to each city, village and township to present information about the GTCOA including services available, number of residents served, senior center network update, etc. Visits will be made in summer and fall of 2013.

Facilities

- **Governmental Center:** Invitations to bid on the replacement of the chiller (a/c) and controls were provided to area contractors, posted on the County website, and will be advertised in the Record Eagle this weekend. Bids are due on May 20.
- **Governmental Center:** New display boards for agendas, meeting schedules, etc, will be installed in the foyer.
- **Civic Center:** Staff are preparing for a busy summer season – including installation of ball field fencing for the American Legion and YMCA leagues, preparation of fields, and other daily maintenance.

Finance

- The audit exit interview was held on April 5, 2013. The audit findings will be further explained to the Board in a separate communication.
- Participated in the Board of Public Works meeting on April 11 to discuss the Septage Bonds and potential call of the 2004 Series. We briefly reviewed the financing plan that was initiated last fall and discussed some of the possible issues. We are working with bond counsel on potential options regarding the call or refunding of the remaining bonds.
- Provided the auditors with a possible solution to avoid a deficit in restricted net assets in our Department of Public Works Component Unit due to a change in accounting for bond issuance costs. (GASB Statement #62)
- We are also working with East Bay Township officials and bond counsel on a potential borrowing to finance the construction of a water tower.

Equalization

- The county equalized values were presented to the Board of Commissioners on April 9th. All the local units were equalized at between 49% and 50% of true cash value, and all county equalization factors presented to the board for approval were 1.0000. This means that the county equalized values are the same as the assessed values as received from the local units. In the month of May the state will approve final equalized values. There are no known issues that would cause the state to equalize at any other level than the county equalized values.
- The equalization report, which is posted on our website, shows a 1.65% increase in the assessed value, and a 2.578% increase in the taxable value over last year. This is the first overall increase in assessed value since the 2008 year.
- There have been more field visits to gas and oil well sites. For the most part the gas and oil companies are reporting more correctly. The field visits will discover any that may not be completely on board with the new State Tax Commission reporting guidelines.
- East Bay appraisers are laying out a plan to field review 20% of the East Bay parcel database. This review will ensure that the historical reappraisal work is properly maintained. This also fulfills requirements of the AMAR (audit of minimum assessing requirements) reviews that are randomly selected by the State Tax Commission.

GIS

- We have begun the annual parcel layer/assessment roll reconciliation procedure. Last year I created an application which improved this normally, arduous process. I was pleased to discover that it was easily modified to work with the 2013 Equalization database, so I do not expect any significant issues with this year's reconciliation.

Construction Code/Soil Erosion

- The Construction Code and Soil Erosion departments are seeing a healthy increase in new residential building activity within the county. Permits are up 17% over 2012. Commercial building remains steady with the majority of the work being in the City of Traverse City

Health Department & Emergency Management

- **Administration and Finance:** Two auditors from the Michigan Department of Community Health were onsite the last week of March to perform audits/sub recipient federal fund monitoring of the Family Planning and WIC programs. These program audits typically take place every two years and there were no compliance issues noted in the course of this review. The auditors indicated in their exit interview that our agency was meeting financial and program compliance measures in these programs.
- **Environmental Health & Animal Control Division:** The contract with Cherryland Humane Society to provide sheltering services for dogs impounded by Animal Control and more convenient access for the general public with six day per week access and expanded hours was approved by the Board of Commissioners. June 1st is the tentative transition date to move the animals, staff, and equipment and to secure the current animal control building.
- **Emergency Management & Preparedness Division:** Health Department staff held a regional pandemic flu with civil unrest exercise on April 25th. The county EOC (emergency operations center) was activated in order to coordinate the response from multiple agencies and disciplines involved in the event. The exercise yielded much information about the county's ability to respond in an emergency and its equipment needs in the new EOC.
- **Community Health Division:** Transitioning continues in the Maternal and Child Health programs. Kit Mikovitz, Director of Maternal and Child Health Programs, is retiring in May after 25 years of service.
- **Fungal Meningitis Update-** As of April 15, 2013, Michigan's case count associated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention multi-state meningitis investigation is 259 total cases, including 16 deaths. A breakdown of type of cases includes:
 - 22 meningitis with no other infection noted
 - 43 meningitis plus epidural abscess
 - 2 strokes without LP
 - 165 epidural abscesses
 - 2 epidural abscess plus peripheral joint
 - 25 peripheral joints
 - Among the 16 deaths (Two deaths associated with stroke, four associated with an epidural abscess, and 10 among patients counted as meningitis cases.)

GT County has 24 reported cases and there have been 50 cases associated with the Neuromuscular and Rehabilitation Clinic in TC (cases that were exposed at that clinic to the contaminated shots but could be from anywhere in Michigan). Among the 50 cases associated with the TC clinic, there have been:

- 7 cases of meningitis with or without a spinal/paraspinal infection
- 2 strokes with no LP performed (both patients died)
- 28 spinal/paraspinal infections (one patient died, 9 patients are laboratory-confirmed)
- 13 peripheral joint infections with or without a spinal/paraspinal infection (8 patients are laboratory-confirmed)

Human Resources

- Currently recruiting for 8 positions County-wide.
- The Health Assessment Questionnaire is published to the web and announced in the Communicator April 12th. Announcements continue until the deadline of October 31, 2013. Failure to complete assesses a higher premium for employee. (6% to 8%)
- We are looking into modifying the Safety Training schedule to include some on-site training with a MIOSHA trainer and we are collaborating with the Pavilions to have them join our safety meetings.
- The Wellness Team's Passport to Wellness rolled out April 1st and continues through June 30th. Flyers were posted and placed in department mailboxes as well as in the Communicator. The team is beginning to organize the Wellness Expo, with contacts being made for luncheon ideas and vendors.
- The Relay for Life Team is gathering more teammates and the fundraising is gearing up. The team is looking to reach the goal of \$3,500 by June 8th.
- ❖ Members of the Website Committee want to recognize Sarah Adams for her efforts in leading the training on the Website editing. This is invaluable training to keep our employees educated on the use and capabilities of our website, which in turn keeps our customers informed. Sarah is doing a great job facilitating this committee and everyone agrees her effort is really making a difference!

MSU Extension

- This month Grand Traverse County MSUE said farewell to our Office Manager, Suzanne Rinckey. Suzanne and her husband, Russ, have moved to sunny Arizona to be closer to their boys. Suzanne was a valued member of our team and will be greatly missed, but we wish her well in her new adventures!
- Jenny McKellar will be assuming the role of Office Manager and will begin her new assignment on May 1, 2013. Jenny has seven (7) years of experience as an Office Specialist at the Grand Traverse MSUE office and prior to that had experience with the Kent County District Library and Western Michigan University. She has her Bachelor's Degree from Western Michigan University and has served on area non-profit boards.

Parks & Recreation

- **2012-2015 Strategic Plan Update**

Develop program plans for adults, youth, day camp, and special events

- A Planning Grant has been submitted to Rotary for further evaluation of the programmatic and space needs of the community.

Assess feasibility of a Joint Parks and Rec Authority and potential millage

- LIAA is preparing a statement of work to explore the feasibility of stronger collaboration.

Parks and Recreation Network

- The Parks and Recreation Network Expo was held on Sunday, April 28, 2013 at Howe Arena. The PRN has received a \$5,000 sponsorship from Blue Cross/Blue Shield for the event.
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield Community Challenge: MI Big Green Gym. Our community, "Team Grand Traverse," will be competing with Team Kalamazoo and Team Marquette to get our community more physically active. Each team will receive a cash prize to invest in a project to keep people active and healthy within parks, first place is \$10,000, second place is \$8,000, and third place is \$6,000. The project kicked off at the Parks and Recreation Expo, and continues through June 22. Activity can be logged at www.walkingworks.com. The Parks and Recreation Network has agreed to promote the competition.

SORP/IUFRO Conference

- Our community is hosting the joint conference of Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals and the International Union of Forest Research Organization at the Park Place Hotel.
- This **international** conference will be held May 20 through 24, and has over 20 countries represented in speakers alone.
- Our department has been asked to help organize educational excursions for the attendees, including:
 - a. Old Mission Peninsula, a national coordinated land-use success story! (Led by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy)
 - b. A River Reborn: Building a Prosperous Community through Dam Removal and Ecological Restoration. (Led by the Grand Traverse Conservation District)
 - c. Tour of the TART Trail: Connecting prosperity and communities via a regional trail system. (Led by TART Trails)
 - d. We also are working on a partial-day workshop during the conference for all local elected and appointed parks, recreation, and community leaders related to the role of parks in place-making. More information about this will be available at a later date.

Skate Park Night

- On Wednesday, May 1, at 7 p.m., our department hosted "Skate Park Night," an informative open house to welcome Skate Park users and their parents and others interested to hear presentations and discussions

related to the Skate Park. The event was sponsored by Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches, Lifer Skateboard Shop, and Brick Wheels. In addition to free food, "swag", and a raffle, topics of discussion included skate park history, etiquette, and helmet safety.

Planning

- The County Planning Commission will unveil the draft Master Plan for Grand Traverse County at a Planning Summit on Thursday, May 23, from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m., in the Second Floor Training Room at the Governmental Center. In addition, County Planning has arranged for presentation of the Michigan Association of Planners program, "Making Bullet Proof Decisions." Essential for elected officials and planning commissioners, topics include identifying a conflict of interest, applying discretionary standards during special land use reviews, reasonable expectations of a developer and how a master plan can minimize risk.
- Housing Initiatives has recently finished two Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) grants: (1) the 2010-2012 Home Rehabilitation Loan Program (\$300,000) assisted 12 homeowners with repairs which were primarily roofs, windows, doors, and siding; and (2) the 2008-2012 Homebuyer Purchase Repair Program (\$190,000) assisted 6 homebuyers with ten year forgivable loans for down payment assistance and home repairs within the City of Traverse City.
- With recent approval from MSHDA, the County will utilize housing program income to demolish three tax foreclosed properties. Clearing the blighted properties will increase opportunities for redevelopment and getting the properties back on the tax rolls. The properties are located in Garfield, Green Lake and Long Lake Townships.
- Worked with the Land Bank Authority and Habitat for Humanity to bring affordable housing to the depot property.

Prosecuting Attorney

- Assisting Administration in negotiations with Traverse City of the shared use and ownership of Woodmere Law Enforcement Center and of West Front Street properties.
- Prepared and filed a Statement of Reasons with the Bureau of Indian Affairs appealing the decision to place the property known as Parcel 80 in trust for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

Resource Recovery

- The 2nd Household Hazardous Waste collection event will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2013 at the DPW garage located at 361 Welch Ct., Traverse City, MI. The event will start at 1 p.m. and go until 7 p.m. Appointments are required. Appointments can be made by going to the RecycleSmart website www.recyclesmart.info or by calling the Resource Recovery Department at 941-5555. Latex paint will be accepted at this event.

- Approximately 110 cubic yards of compost, courtesy of the City of Traverse City and the Resource Recovery Department, was given out on April 20, 2013 at the Sara Hardy Farmers Market parking lot. The event was organized and supported by staff from the Resource Recovery Department.
- Downtown businesses took advantage of “Clean Out Your Files Week” held between April 15 and April 21, 2013 to recycle old newspapers, magazines, old files, office paper, and unwanted mail. The paper was collected in a container donated by American Waste.
- The Resource Recovery Department received a Public Space Grant from the Coca-Cola Keep American Beautiful bin grant program to receive beverage recycling containers. The containers will be used at special events and will be available on a loan/return basis to community groups, schools and environmental organizations.
- Staff met with the City of Traverse City, Bay Area Recycling for Charities, Goodwill and American Waste to continue discussions on a pilot program for a food waste composting project at the Keystone Bush site. Infrastructure requirements, operations and cost have been discussed. Bay Area Recycling for Charities will be contacting the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to setup a meeting to discuss any food composting requirements required by the State.
- A story on the 2012 “Take It Back” Recycling Program Recycler of the Year award was featured in the American Recycler and the Waste & Recycling News. Both publications have national recognition with a large subscriber base.
- The deadline to submit recycling data to calculate the 2012 County recycling rate ended April 1, 2013. Over 17 businesses submitted recycling data by the due date. Staff is in the process of verifying data and contacting businesses who did not submit data.

Veteran Affairs

- **Benzie County Up and Running:** Starting on March 1st the office began providing services to Benzie County residents via inter-governmental service agreement. We are staffing an office in Beulah once weekly and Benzie County residents are now cleared to report to the Traverse City office five days per week. These first few months in implementing the service have been challenging as the influx of Benzie residents has been much higher than anticipated. This is expected to be temporary and operations demand should level out over the course of the year.
- **Certain Veterans to Fish and Hunt for Free:** Also effective March 1st, the State of Michigan implemented regulations to allow certain disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses for free upon presentation of their eligibility status to the DNR. We have had a number of requests for certification for this benefit, and disabled vets are encouraged to call the Veteran Affairs to see if they are eligible.

Legislative Report

Revenue Sharing Cuts Still Not Restored in FY 2014 Budget

In the governor's recommendation for the FY 2014 budget, counties are scheduled to get a 22.9% cut from what they are projected to receive based on the deal struck in 2004/2005. The governor is recommending an appropriation of \$140.6 million, \$41.7 million less than statutorily required. Grand Traverse County's tax dollars are still being used to pay state revenue sharing amount through 2014.

According to the Glenn Steil State Revenue Sharing Act, 21.3% of 4% of state sales tax is supposed to go to statutory revenue sharing. That amounts to over \$1 billion. The Governor's proposal only allocates 35% of this collection to revenue sharing, while the rest is being used to prop up the State's General Fund budget.

The House has proposed no increase over last year's level, but the Senate has proposed a 4.8% increase over last year's funding level. This 4.8% increase is still more than 20% below the full funding promised to counties in the deal made in 2004/2005. We've already sent a resolution demanding that the state honor its part of the 2004/2005 bargain and fully fund county revenue sharing. Now we need direct personal contact with our legislators to urge them to honor their commitment to counties.

Indigent Defense Bills

The House Criminal Justice Committee, Chaired by Rep. Kurt Heise (R-Wayne County), took up the House version of the indigent defense bills on Wednesday, May 1. The bills, sponsored by Rep. Tom McMillin (R-Oakland County), are the result of a workgroup process held jointly this year by Sen. Bruce Caswell (R-Hillsdale County) and Rep. McMillin.

These bills establish a Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC). The MIDC would have the authority to oversee local indigent defense systems and establish minimum service standards statewide. These service levels would be the responsibility of the local governmental unit and the local court together. The bills require local units of government to continue to put in the amount of money they have put in on average over the last three years, but the grants are supposed to pay any new costs incurred going forward. Although the bill authorizes the MIDC to provide grants to locals to pay for any new mandates over and above what the local unit is paying today for indigent defense, the potential for funding disputes is virtually unavoidable.

Although the bills are much improved over last year, MAC has four areas of concern with the package and is opposed at this time:

1. The dispute resolution process written to address likely situations where the MIDC does not agree with the proposed plan to implement or budget to pay for the new mandates is slanted in favor of the MIDC to the detriment of the local units responsible for implementing the mandates.
2. Section 15 allows the state to take over indigent defense at the local level and charge back to the county an amount in excess of what their current service level is. This component of the dispute resolution process again is slanted against the locals

because it would benefit the state financially to take over the local program and charge back additional funding to the local unit.

3. The third issue has to do with process; and that is establishing a date certain by which the locals submit their plan/budget for the following year, instead of submitting one each time a recommendation comes out. This will achieve certainty and efficiency at both the state and local level.
4. Finally, there is no provision for a local unit of government that can meet the MIDC requirements for less than its local share to pay less than its local share even if the MIDC agrees with the local unit.

MAC has suggested amendments to rectify these issues, which would move the organization from opposition to the bills to support of the bills. Please contact your state legislators and tell them to adopt the MAC amendments to the introduced versions of HB 4529 and HB 4530, and SB 300 and SB 301.

Tax Capture District Reform Heats Up

The House committee on Local Government, chaired by Rep. Price (R- Ottawa) held an informational hearing this week on tax capture districts. This follows the movement of legislation in the House Tax Policy committee on the passage of bills forbidding tax capture districts from collecting on the special millages passed by voters for the Detroit Zoo and the Detroit Institute of Arts. MAC testified in both the Tax Policy Committee and in the Local Government committee that these downtown development authorities and other tax capture districts are capable of doing good things, but counties should, at a minimum, have a seat on the board, should not have their special millages captured and should be able to opt out of these perpetual entities created before the law allowed us an "opt out" in 1994.

There is also a legal question that will not be settled if the Zoo/DIA bills pass: The AG has said that millages adopted after a TIF District is created are not subject to capture.

Municipal Bond Financing for Local Government Infrastructure in Jeopardy

The President, Congress and Senate are all considering reforms to the long held status of exempting municipal bond interest income from taxation. According to the National Association of Counties, in the last 10 years alone, municipal bonds have financed more than \$1.65 trillion of infrastructure investment. Tax exempt municipal bonds are the country's most important source of financing local infrastructure projects and this tax exempt status allows local units of government to market their bonds to investors at a lower interest rate than others. Any modification to this century-long benefit would result in much higher infrastructure financing projects.

The proposals in Washington range from complete elimination of the tax-exempt status, to capping the benefit of the exemption. Local units of government have already been stretched to the limit with their finances and cannot afford to lose this attractive financing method now. In addition, this tax-exempt status represents a fair allocation of the costs for our country's infrastructure needs. The federal government should bear some of the cost of the infrastructure projects we finance at the local level.

It is important that we contact members of Congress and ask them to oppose any changes to the tax exempt status of municipal bonds.