



County of Ottawa

Administrator's Office

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County Administrator's Weekly Digest April 8, 2010

O.C. COURTHOUSE GRAND OPENING PRESS RELEASE (Keith Van Beek) **Save the Date**

WEST OLIVE, MI, APRIL 8, 2010: The public is invited to join in a community celebration of the dedication of the new Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven. The Grand Opening and Dedication will be held on May 6, 2010. The Dedication Ceremony will begin at 3:30 PM. Guided Tours, starting on the half hour, will be held from 1:00-2:30 PM & 4:30-5:00 PM. Refreshments will be served at 4:00 PM. The facility is located at 414 Washington Avenue in Grand Haven, Michigan.

COURTHOUSE FACTS:

Architect: Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc.

Courthouse Consulting Architect: HDR

Construction Manager: Owen - Ames - Kimball, Co.

August 15, 2007	Courthouse project broke ground
November 14, 2007	First steel set
June 22, 2009	Moved into new Courthouse
\$21,400,000	Construction cost including demolition, construction related fees and architectural/engineering fees
117,710	Total square feet (29,555 sq ft ground floor, 29,555 sq ft 1 st floor, 29,300 sq ft 2 nd floor, 29,300sq ft 3 rd floor)
2	District courtrooms (includes Magistrate courtroom)
4	Circuit courtrooms
4	Circuit court hearing rooms
26X36 feet	Dimensions of roof top cupola
120 feet	Height of building (bottom of front steps to top of cupola)

The new Courthouse offers 75% more space than the existing 45-year old County Building. The building exterior was designed to resemble the original Courthouse on this site with the historical courthouse roof lines, rounded window tops with stone eyebrows and the traditional grand front steps. The building interior features state of the art technology, a secure system for holding and moving inmates throughout the facility and an accommodating and safe design for the movement of staff and the general public. The interior also features materials and finishes that resemble what you may expect to find in a traditional Michigan Courthouse.

In recognition of the County's commitment to sustainability and conservation, the building was constructed and has met LEED certified standards. Many of the materials used in the building and its

mechanical and electrical systems are either recycled or include other sustainable features that reduce energy consumption and waste. In addition, over 90% of the construction debris was recycled and the majority of the new materials were supplied locally.

Floor and wall coverings along with counter tops are made from recycled or sustainable products including the roof shingles that are made from recycled rubber tires. Low-flow plumbing fixtures will use 25% less water than the standard fixture, low-e insulated glass and blinds will reduce heat gain by 50% and high efficiency light fixtures and controls will reduce lighting costs by 10% over the standard lighting system. Building air quality is improved with the use of low-VOC (volatile organic compounds). The mechanical system uses delay start equipment controls, auto-adjust thermostats, variable speed fans, fresh air sensors and will use outside air to cool when appropriate to achieve an overall 10% reduction in HVAC related energy costs.

The Courthouse includes a fitness facility, jury assembly room, Public Service area (Register of Deeds, Treasurer, Sheriff and Drain Commissioner space) along with ample space for the Circuit court, Friend of Court, Circuit Court records (County Clerk), Family Court, Circuit Court probation, District Court, District Court probation and the County Prosecutor.

-End-

MARCH EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

The latest edition of the County Connections newsletter is attached to the Digest email message.

WMSA GOVERNMENT COOPERATION EFFORT

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) is hosting quarterly meetings of the eight county administrators from the eight counties that make up WMSA geographically. I attached an agenda to the Digest submittal email message so you can see the types of items that we are discussing. I've also attached a summary of meetings held with cities and townships as well.

TREE TRIMMING ON STANTON ST.

We received a couple of citizen complaints regarding tree trimming on Stanton St. We followed up with Kent Rubley and learned that most of the wood cut was dead wood that needed to be trimmed.

WMSA STATE OF THE REGION

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance State of the Region meeting will be held on April 27, 2010

LAKESHORE ETHNIC DIVERSITY ALLIANCE

The Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance is hosting the Lakeshore Region Summit on Racism, Seventh Summit for Change on May 20, 2010, at Hope College. This should be an excellent program as usual. Improving diversity and cultural competency in West Michigan is a significant goal of many of our leaders of major corporations in the County.

HEALTHCARE REFORM (Lisa Stefanovsky)

As you all know, Health Care Reform is now a reality however, there is still very little unbiased information about what it means for the average person. To help people understand things better, I have attached several sources of information including:

- a recent New York Times Article, which, I wouldn't consider unbiased however, I thought it was interesting.
- a link to the NACCHO web site which lists the areas of reform that are relevant to Public Health.
- a link to the Kaiser Family Foundation which is a non partisan source of facts and information related to healthcare. I have found this to be the best and most informative site. It really gets into all aspects of Health Care Reform.

- a brief list of the reform "basics" that was put together by our Health Planner/Health Educator, Marcia Knol.

Health Reform Basics

Changes coming soon:

- Insurers cannot place lifetime \$\$ limits on policies, deny coverage to children because of pre-existing illness, or cancel policies because someone gets sick.
- Parents would be able to keep older children on their policies (up to age 26).
- Until 2014, a new high-risk pool would offer coverage to uninsured persons with medical problems.
- Beginning in 2011, slowly close the gap in Medicare prescription coverage ("donut hole").

Changes in 2014:

- Coverage expansion takes effect.
- Insurers cannot deny coverage or charge more to any person because of pre-existing illness.
- Insurers cannot charge women more.
- Expand Medicaid eligibility for all adults earning up to 133% FPL (including childless adults).
- The federal gov't will pay costs for newly covered individuals until 2016.
- Establish state-based insurance exchanges for small businesses and individuals to purchase insurance.
- Increase Medicaid payments to primary care providers.
- \$2,000 fine for employers with 50+ employees if any employees are receiving federal subsidy for insurance (small employers would be exempt).

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36013261/ns/politics-the_new_york_times

<http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/washington/nfwmar10.cfm>

<http://healthreform.kff.org/>

HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE (Lighthouse)

March 25, 2010

Lighthouse is the County benefit insurance broker (ASR is the third-party administrator for our self-funded plan) and they sent the following Health Care Reform Update.

Attached is the latest update on the complex health care reform legislation. Things are still very fluid as Congress debates the Reconciliation Act and a number of states have filed lawsuits regarding the Constitutionality of the reform legislation.

This update will provide you with some of the key components of the current legislation along with some important dates to be aware of.

We will continue to send updates as things unfold in Washington D.C. and as the carriers we work with identify how they will handle the requirements of the legislation.

We will be in touch to discuss how the new legislation will impact your plan specifically.

Please feel free to call with any comments, questions or concerns.

As you are aware, this past Sunday the House of Representatives passed the Senate's version of health care reform by a vote of 219 to 212. This is the largest piece of reform and entitlement legislation since Medicare in 1965. The bill is known as the Patient Protection Act and was signed into law Tuesday by President Obama.

While the initial version of the Senate bill has been signed into law the House also passed a reconciliation bill which is formally known as Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010.

This Act has a number of proposed “fixes” to the original Senate bill. As of this morning the Reconciliation Act is being passed from the Senate back to the House to address some conflicts with the formal reconciliation language. Once these are addressed, the Senate can pass the House reconciliation bill “as is” or propose changes through the amendment process. If changed, the bill would be sent back to the House for their review, debate and eventual vote. This package of modifications could eventually pass, which would make changes to the signed Senate bill; or, it could be dropped altogether which would leave the signed Senate bill (the Patient Protection Act referenced above) as final law.

In addition to the reconciliation bill still being debated, a number of states have filed lawsuits declaring the new law unconstitutional as it violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The main point of issue is the individual coverage mandate which would force all Americans to purchase health insurance under penalty of law. The eventual outcomes of the pending legal challenges or the reconciliation bill will determine if any changes will affect the newly signed health care reform legislation.

What we do know is this new law is extremely complex and touches almost every aspect of the individual and group health insurance system. We know this is raising a lot of questions regarding the consequences for your current coverage’s and what needs to be done going forward. While we don’t have all of the answers right now, we are working with the insurance carriers and benefits attorneys to analyze the new legislation. We are also trying to identify how it specifically impacts each of your benefit plans so we can assist in providing you guidance as this new law is implemented.

In the coming weeks we will continue to evaluate the new law and identify any impacts to your plan specifically. There are varying effective dates for the components of this law which not only provides the insurance carriers and employers time to reach compliance with the new guidelines, but allows time to position your business for post-reform success.

Anticipated changes within the next six months due to the legislation (assuming the existing legislation remains unchanged) are:

- Elimination of any lifetime limits on plan coverage
- Extension of coverage for dependents to age 26
- Elimination of pre-existing condition limitations for children
- Mandated coverage for specific preventive services without cost sharing
- Establishment of temporary national high-risk pool to provide health coverage to individuals with preexisting conditions (takes effect within 90 days and continues through January 1, 2014)

All of the other major requirements of the legislation would phase in over the coming years, with the majority of them beginning in 2011 and 2014. Highlights of what will be addressed in the coming years are:

During calendar year 2010

- Available tax credits for certain small employers who purchase coverage for their employees. These credits only apply to employers with less than 25 employees and average annual wages of less than \$50,000.

January 1, 2011

- Limiting FSA medical expenses to \$2,500
- Prohibiting over-the-counter drugs as eligible expenses in HSA, HRA and FSA plans

- Imposing annual fees on private health insurers, medical device and pharmaceutical manufacturers
- Implementing minimum medical loss ratios for insurance carriers

January 1, 2014

- Elimination of pre-existing condition limitations for individual, Exchange and small group markets
- Premium subsidies (varies based upon individual vs. group, group size and income levels of individuals)
- Tax / Financial penalties for individuals not taking mandated coverage (increased penalties phased in beginning January 1, 2014)
- Tax / Financial penalties for employers with 50 or more employees that don't offer qualified medical coverage
- Employers with less than 50 employees that offer a group plan, must provide free choice vouchers to employees that wish to enroll in an Exchange plan instead of the group plan. These vouchers, which are intended to offset premium costs, are only required for employees who earn under certain income levels.
- HIPAA guarantee renewability and guarantee issue requirements
- Modified community rating by insurance carriers
- Definition of small group health coverage as 1 to 100 employees
- Creation of Insurance Exchanges for individual and small group coverage with five defined plans being offered
- Establish standards for qualified coverage, including mandated benefits, cost-sharing requirements, out-of-pocket limits and minimum actuarial values.
- Creation of a sliding scale premium assistance tax credit for non-Medicaid eligible individuals with incomes up to 400% of the Federal poverty level to buy coverage through the Exchange
- Medicaid eligibility is increased to 150% of the federal poverty level
- Implementation of plan reporting and documentation requirements to both covered individuals and the IRS
- Requirements for employers with 200 or more employees to auto-enroll all new employees into the employer sponsored health plan – employees may opt out if they have another source of coverage
- Creation of a new public long term care program which requires all employers to enroll employees, unless the employee elects to opt out

These are some of the major issues that need to be further defined and addressed for implementation by the insurance industry and employers. As they develop, we will be providing you with updates so you will know the impact to your business and your benefits package.

For additional information please visit our website at www.lighthousegroup.net and click on the "Health Care Reform" icon for links and more detailed reference information.

While the coming years will pose some significant changes and challenges to the health insurance marketplace, we look forward to being your partner in providing you timely, accurate and meaningful information as new developments occur.



COUNTY CONNECTIONS

Take Control of Your Email (before it takes control of you!)

(By Tina McConnell)

Do you spend tons of time searching for messages? Do you have hundreds or thousands of messages in your inbox? Do you frequently get a message that your mailbox has exceeded its space limitations? Do you open messages to read them, close them, and then forget to take a requested action? If the answers to any of these questions is "Yes", then your email is controlling you and you need to take control back.

Developing a new approach to processing your incoming mail will help

you gain control, improve your response time, and keep up with critical actions and due dates. This article will discuss four methods to help you process your email more effectively.

Before we begin, first you must understand the difference between reference information and action information.

- **Reference information** is information that is **not** required to complete an action. It is information that you want to keep to refer to later. Most people receive a lot of reference information



through email. On average, as much as one-third of email is reference information. In order to deal effectively with reference information, you will need to have a system in place that makes it easy to transfer messages from your inbox to your email reference system. Step 1 in this article discusses how to setup and use an email reference system.

Continued on page 5



Getting to Know: Judge Bradley Knoll

(By Penni A. DeWitt)

Bradley Knoll was recently named Chief Judge of the 58th District Court by the Michigan Supreme

Court. He was appointed chief judge for a two year term beginning 1/1/10. He is one of four district judges in Ottawa County, serving with Judge Susan Jonas at the court location in Holland.

Judge Knoll is a lifelong resident of Ottawa county, receiving his diploma from Holland High School in 1970. He completed his education with a BA with Distinction in political science from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor Cum Laude from the Detroit College of Law. Judge Knoll practiced law in Michigan State and Federal courts for 25 years,

and also served as an Ottawa County Family Court Referee and State and Federal public defender. As a public defender, he handled the whole spectrum of criminal cases from misdemeanors to serious felonies. He was elected to the bench in 2002 following the retirement of Judge Meyers and was re-elected in 2008.

Judge Knoll lives with his wife Shawn and their two daughters Emily and Ellie in Holland. He also has three grown daughters and two grandsons living in Chicago and Los Angeles. Brad and Shawn enjoy sailing, reading, the symphony and travel as well as their golden retriever, German shepherd and cat. Judge Knoll also teaches courses in American Government in the criminal justice program at ITT Technical Institute and has served as an

instructor for the Michigan Judicial Institute. He is a member of the Michigan High School Athletic Association where he officiates varsity football contests. In addition, he is a member of the Michigan District Judges Association, the Holland Alano Association, and he is on the board of directors of 70 x 7 Life Recovery. He is also a member of the Second Reformed Church in Zeeland.

Judge Knoll looks forward to the challenge of working within the court system as well as with the other branches of state and local government to continue to provide fair treatment and equal access to the courts while providing a level of security and cost effectiveness to all the citizens of Ottawa County. ■

Thank you for your continued suggestions for the newsletter. We encourage you to continue submitting them to any Newsletter Board member. Please know that even if you do not see your idea appear in a newsletter, every idea is considered by the group. The Newsletter Board reserves the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter Editorial Board

Sherry Costello Penni DeWitt
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More!

“Biggest Loser” Team Building Activity

(By Karen Otto)

Studies show that having a partner when beginning a weight loss/exercise program increases your chance of success. How about having your choice of 74 partners? That’s the number of employees from the 20th Circuit Court’s Juvenile Services, Juvenile Detention, Treatment, OAISD staff, Ottawa County Probate Court, and clerks that have been involved in a ‘Biggest Loser’ Challenge since the beginning of January 2010.

This is actually a multi-departmental team building exercise that has taken on a competitive edge and has the additional positive outcome of healthier staff. Eighty percent of the employees from these departments have committed to this twelve week challenge. The group was split into eight teams and asked to identify their team with a ‘fitting’ name. Some of the creative identifiers are Scales of Justice, Afflicted Abs, South Side Losers, Wii NOT Fit, and Building Buff Supervisors. Team pictures were also taken and posted on weekly stat boards. The pictures have also served as a means to familiarize employees with one another.

Although there are different teams, the support crosses team lines with work-out partners being on opposite teams and hints for healthy eating, recipes, and words of encouragement shared by all. Team members will also help their team mates who might not be eating the most nutritional lunch items by bringing in a healthy treat or meal to share. Some employees



Wii NOT Fit Team

have gone the extra mile to make this endeavor a success. Dan Zimmerman has been instrumental in enlisting support from the community by obtaining discounts from ‘Subway’, discounted massages, and connections to community fundraiser fitness opportunities to name a few. To take the negative anticipation off our weekly weigh-ins the Detention gym instructor, Melanie Sportell, conducts free ‘Last Chance’ Work-out sessions at the Powerhouse Gym in Grand Haven.



Deb Connell and Sarah Vander Ploeg from the Scales of Justice Team working out at the Fillmore Complex gym

Powerhouse has also donated free gym time to this group. Although there is a great deal of team support, team members have not lost sight of the fact that this is a COMPETITION with a cash prize (donated by Biggest Loser members). They are working hard to obtain their personal and team goals but have found ways to have some friendly fun with other teams by anonymously leaving chocolate candy bars or a small bag of Fritos to tempt them.

After all the hard work and fun, not only has the team building exceeded our expectations, but after seven weeks we have lost a total of 554 pounds! ■

Ottawa County “Shadow Towns” of the Railroad Era (1850’s-1950’s)

(By Kim Hewitt)

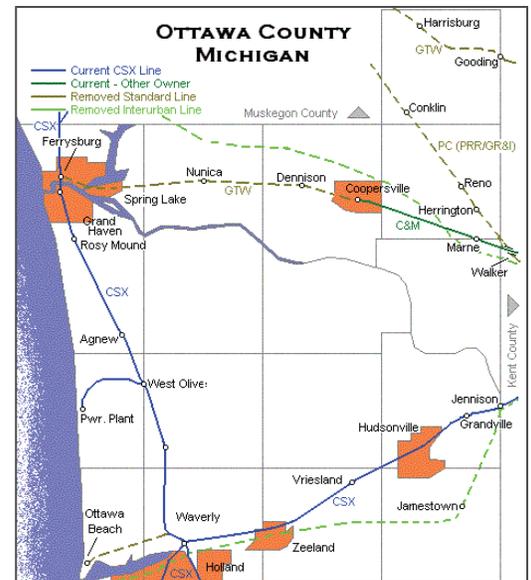
Have you ever wondered about some of the road signs in Ottawa County that indicate, for the most part, an unoccupied area? These road signs include places, such as Agnew, Ottawa Station, Harrisburg, Herrington, and Reno. What these areas have in common is that they were all stations on railroad lines that crisscrossed throughout the county and provided the residents with transportation. The railroad stations are what kept these places alive and currently without them, they became “Shadow Towns”.

“Shadow Towns” is a term coined by Gene Scott, who published a book in 2005, called Michigan Shadow Towns. According to the author, “They’re towns that are merely shadows of their former selves. They’re towns that once had a lively history, but have shrunk significantly as the economy has changed.” For example, Olive Center was a hub of activity before the turn of the century. At one time, there were two general stores, two blacksmiths, two sawmills, a post office, a railroad station, a doctor’s office, and Olive Center School Number II. The event that changed the economy for the railroads was the production of cars. Once people had cars, the essential need for trains was not as great. In 1871, two railroads served Olive Township: the Chi-

cago Michigan Lake Shore Railroad and the Michigan Lake Shore Railroad.

In addition to the train lines shown on the map insert, there was the Chicago and Michigan Lake Shore railroad line, and others. The C & MLS came in from Fruitport to Nunica and then crossed the Grand River at the Spoonville Station, through Robinson Township to Ottawa Station, Olive Station, Blendon Station, New Holland Station, and then Holland.

Michigan’s Internet Railroad History Museum lists a total of 51 train stations in Ottawa County. ■



Some of the Current and Extinct Railroad Lines, including the Interurban Line

Property Fraud Alert

(By Gary Scholten)

I am pleased to extend an invitation to county employees, owning a home or property in Ottawa County, to sign up for a FREE on-line subscription service to aid in fighting property, lien and mortgage fraud. Property Fraud Alert will provide you with the ability to have up to four names monitored in order to track recording activity. You are notified (by e-mail or phone) only when the name that you have submitted is used.

Protecting consumers' information and real property are top priorities. This requires more education and vigilance than at any time in the past. Instances of fraud and identity theft continue to rise. The FBI has stated that property fraud (illegally using another's property for financial gain) is the fastest growing white-collar crime in the nation. While Property Fraud Alert does not prevent fraud from happening, it will provide an early warn-

ing system (similar to what a smoke detector is) that will allow you to take action if you deem inappropriate activity may have occurred.

When submitting your name, using fewer letters will yield broader notification results if something is recorded.

For example: * **Name:** Doe, John

* **Enter it as:** Doe, J

The shorter version will cover different name variations such as John, Jon, or Jonathan.

I hope you take advantage of this service! Property Fraud Alert is now available by subscription on the web (<http://www.miottawa.org/CoGov/ROD/>) or by calling our vendor at 1-800-728-3858. ☐



IT Training Classes Get Makeover

(By Tina McConnell)

Ottawa County's computer training classes are getting a big makeover. The reference materials provided to students, the variety of classes and the format of the classes will all be changing in the next couple of months.

Beginning this year, IT will be using newly purchased training manuals for the majority of classes. The manuals will be used throughout the classes for instruction and more hands-on practice. They will also make excellent reference materials for students after the class is completed. In addition, quick reference guides will continue to be handed out in class.

The new manuals are much more comprehensive than the former IT training manuals, which were created by each instructor. Due to time constraints in developing materials, the amount of information that could be included and the variety of classes that could be offered was limited in the past. In the new materials, most applications have three levels: Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced. Each level has its own manual with approximately 6-8 hours of material in each. The applications included are: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Publisher, Project, and Adobe Acrobat. These manuals will allow IT to



expand their training offerings to include multiple levels in all of the above applications.

Finally, the biggest part of the makeover will be the format of the classes. Due to the large amount of information that the classes contain, the format of many of the classes will be changed to multiple day sessions. For example, the Word Intro class will consist of (2) two hour sessions one week apart. When a student signs up for the Word Intro class, they would sign up for and attend both sessions. This new format allows more of the expanded curriculum to be taught and allows the student to practice what they learn in the first session and then come back to the second session with questions. We anticipate this new format will improve both employee skill levels and retention, much like the success we've seen with other multi-session classes, such as Spanish and leadership classes.

The makeover of IT classes was not complete at the time that the Spring 2010 Employee Training brochure was published, so keep your eyes open for announcements regarding the new schedule. Detailed information will be on the Employee Training link on the FrontPage soon! ☐

On the Job at Ottawa County with...

(By Kim Hewitt)

We want to hear about **your** job! There are many great employees working here at Ottawa County who feel passionate about their jobs and who want to do what they can to make a difference. We want to hear about what you do. The *County Connections* newsletter editorial group is beginning a new article series, starting with our next issue. It is called, "*On the Job at Ottawa County with...*" The name and the job will change each month. The editorial team is going to put all Ottawa County employees' names in a hat and we're going to draw a different

name each month. If your name is drawn, you will have an opportunity to tell us about your job. Your story will then be published (hopefully with your picture) in *County Connections* in the following issue. If your name is drawn and you feel as though you don't want to talk about your job, that's okay too. The editorial team will just move on to the next name that we draw. We look forward to hearing your stories.

County Connections Editorial Team

Kounty Kudos

Births:

- ❖ Ailyn Citlalli Garcia was born in Mexico on January 14 to Ezequiel Garcia (Juvenile Detention) and his wife. Ailyn weighed 7 pounds and 9 ounces.
- ❖ Bobby Alonzo (Juvenile Detention) and his wife welcomed home their second child, Emiliano Alonzo. Emiliano arrived on January 8 and weighed 8 pounds and 12 ounces.
- ❖ Allison Anderson (Sheriff's/Juvenile Court) and her husband added another little boy to their family. Brenden Alan was 8 pounds and 12 ounces when he was born on January 19.

Marriages:

- ❖ Karen Woodford (Juvenile Detention) married Obed Otto Jr. on January 13. Congratulations!

Professional Milestones:

- ❖ Kathy Tripp (Health Department) has decided to retire from the Nurse Practitioner position in Family Planning effective May 1. Kathy is thanked for her dedication and commitment to the Family Planning program. We wish her the best as she pursues other interests!
- ❖ MaryAnn Quellos and Neung Chau (Information Technology Department) have both been awarded the Help Desk Institute's professional certification for "Support Center Analyst." This certification reflects successful completion of training and testing in strategies for effective customer care and problem resolution, as well as the fundamentals for help desk, support center, and customer support processes. Congratulations MaryAnn and Neung!
- ❖ Heather Alberta (Health Department) has been asked to serve on a social media panel at the annual Michigan Family Planning conference which will be held in September. The panel will be educating conference participants on what types of social media are available, how to get involved, and how social media could impact the family planning mission for the State of Michigan. Kudos, Heather!



Awards:

20th Circuit Court's Juvenile Detention Center was presented with the American Correctional Association's (ACA) accreditation award on January 25 in Tampa, Florida. Lily Marx, Juvenile Detention Superintendent, was there to accept the award at the 2010 Winter Conference.

The accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the Association in 1870. ACA standards address services, programs, and operations essential to effective correctional management. Through accreditation, an agency is able to maintain a balance between protecting the public and providing an environment that safeguards the life, health, and safety of staff and offenders.

In presenting the award, Lannette Linthicum, Chairperson of the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections and Harold Clarke, President of ACA complimented the facility on their professional level of operation and their success in completing the accreditation process. During the three-year award period, the 20th Circuit Court Juvenile Detention Center will work to improve any deficiencies identified during the audit and maintain continuous compliance with the standards.

Send submissions for this column to Shannon Felgner. ☐



Ingredients:

5 medium sized potatoes, chopped
5 carrots, chopped
2 stalks of celery, chopped
1/2 of a medium sized onion, diced
Venison Meat

Venison Stew

By Kevin & Jennifer Anderson of Sartell, MN

(Kevin is a avid hunter of wild game and makes many delicious meals!)

1 can Campbell's Golden Mushroom Soup
1/2 can water
1/2 packet dried French Onion Soup Mix
(optional)

Directions:

Brown stew meat and put in crock pot along with other listed ingredients. Cook on low for 8 - 10 hours.

- **Action information** is information you **must have** in order to complete a task or action. Steps 2-4 discuss how to handle action information that you receive through email.

Step 1. Setup a Simple Email Reference System

An Email Reference System is simply a set of folders that can be used to logically organize your email that contains reference information. You should build your reference system folder structure around your objectives and projects. If an email doesn't fit into one of your folders, you will be reminded to ask yourself if you really need to save it.

Once you establish a good folder structure, it would be a good idea to establish the same folder structure in your my Documents folder. By doing this, you can easily find and file information without needing to rethink from one system to another. For example, if the email doesn't contain important information, but does contain an attachment that needs to be saved, the attachment can be saved to the related folder in your My Documents. Then you can delete the email. If the email is also important, you can save the attachment to My Documents, delete the attachment from the email, and then save the email to the same folder in Lotus Notes.

Step 2. Schedule uninterrupted time to process and organize email

As we all try to do more each day, there is a constant barrage of phone calls, meetings, people stopping by your office, instant messages, and other interruptions in your day. These interruptions can make it difficult to even read all your email, let alone organize it. If you want to take control of your email, it is important to set aside uninterrupted time each day to process and organize your email.

Schedule a recurring appointment every day for yourself for an hour to process email. Mark your time as "busy" on your calendar and don't answer your phone or take interruptions during this time. Work only on processing your inbox.

Step 3. Process one item at a time, starting at the top

When you sit down to process your email, the first step is to decide what order you want to process the messages. You can sort your messages for date, sender, or subject. Don't step around in your mailbox processing messages randomly. Pick a sort order and then start at the top and work your way down, only moving to the next message, after you have process the current one.

Step 4: Use the "Four D's for Decision Making" model

The "Four D's for Decision Making" model (4 D's) is a valuable tool for processing email. It will help you quickly decide what action to take with each item and how to remove it from your inbox.

How many times have you opened an email, only to close it after deciding to deal with it later? It is time consuming to handle each email message more than once, so the decision needs to be made the first time you look at a message. You have to make a decision as to what to do with it, and where to put it.

Under the 4 D's model, you have four choices:

1. DELETE IT

Here are some questions to ask yourself to help you decide what to delete:

- Does the information relate to one of your objectives or projects? If not, DELETE IT.
- Can you find the information somewhere else? If so, DELETE IT.
- Are you likely to refer to the information in the next six months? If not, DELETE IT.
- Do you have to keep the information because it is legal or human resources information? If not, DELETE IT.

2. DO IT (in less than 2 minutes)

If you can't DELETE IT, then decide "What specific action do I need to take?" and "Can I do it in less than 2 minutes?" If you can, just DO IT. There is no point in filing or closing an email if you can complete it in less than 2 minutes. You could respond to the email, make a phone call, or take an action, and then DELETE IT.

3. DELEGATE IT

If you can't DELETE IT or DO IT in 2 minutes or less, can you DELEGATE IT? If you can, do it right away. You can compose and send a delegating message in about 2 minutes. Once you delegate the action, delete the message or move it to your email reference system.

4. DEFER IT

If you can't DELETE IT, DO IT in 2 minutes or less, or DELEGATE IT, then the action required is something that only you can accomplish and it will take longer than 2 minutes, therefore you need to DEFER IT. Deal with it after you complete your email processing time. One of the easiest ways to defer an email with an action is to turn it into a To Do. This can be done easily in Lotus Notes by right-clicking on the message in your inbox, and selecting Copy Into New > To Do.

It doesn't matter if your email has already taken control of you or not... you can take control back by following the steps above on a daily basis. Taking the time to this now, and making it a habit, will make your more productive and organized in the future.

Do you need help setting up folders or figuring out how to better manage your email? Contact the IT Help Desk for support or sign up for a Lotus Notes training class. ☐

Nature Education Center Grand Opening Set

The grand opening and dedication of the new Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center, located at Hemlock Crossing in Port Sheldon Township, is set for Saturday, April 24, 2010. Plan to join this celebration that will include tours of the new center, special programs, live music with the Blue Water Ramblers and refreshments. Check the parks web site or call the parks office for times and more details. The center will not be open to the public prior to the grand opening.

The center features a unique Wildlife Den, large aquarium, wildlife viewing area, eight exhibits that focus on the natural features of the area, a large multi-purpose room, classroom, fireplace, gift shop, book nook, veranda, staff offices and restrooms. The building is designed to meet LEED

(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification at the gold level. A

geothermal heating and cooling system is just one of many features that make this a "green" building.

Local architect and former Parks Commission president Mark Oppenhuizen donated his services to design the over 8,000 square-foot center that is tucked into the woods near the Pigeon River. In addition to serving as a Nature Education Center, the new facility will also function as an information center for the growing parks system. ■



Vaccines: Not Just for Children

Spread the word that the Ottawa County Health Department is now offering many low cost adult vaccines. Adults who have no health

insurance or have health insurance that does not include any reimbursement for the cost of the vaccine may be eligible. Most people associate immunizations with infants and children, but

many adults need vaccines too! Some vaccines protect for a short time, like tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis vaccines. As people get older, their immune systems weaken and it becomes easier to get diseases like shingles and pneumococcus. To see a complete list of immunizations included in this program and who qualifies, go to <http://www.miottawa.org/HealthComm/Health/Imms.htm#adult> or call 616-396-5266. ■

Then and Now... All Aboard!!!

(By Victoria Hutchins)



Monday, July 4, 1898 the first Interurban Electric railroad car carrying passengers arrived in Holland on Eighth Street, east of River Avenue. More than 100 men and 17 teams of horses constructed the line. The weekly payroll for construction workers was \$1,000. The service ended on Friday, Nov. 19, 1926.

With the resort business booming, people would ride from Grand Rapids to Macatawa Park and Jenison Park. Some took the ferry across Black Lake to Waukazoo or Ottawa Beach. The amusements at Jenison Park were developed in conjunction with the Interurban. An estimated 12,000 people attended the Farmers' Picnic in 1904. Another Interurban line traveled to Saugatuck.



The "Louis & Helen Padnos Transportation Center" currently houses the Amtrak, a regional bus line ticket office and waiting room. The depot building is a renovated 1926 structure, built by the Pere Marquette Railroad under the direction of local station agent, Edward Belden Rich, who lobbied the line for a new structure since his arrival in Holland in 1909. Rich served the Pere Marquette Line in Holland from 1909 until his retirement in 1936. Renovations were completed in 1991. ■



Administrator's Corner: *Parks Funding - Do We Have our Priorities Straight?*

(By Al Vanderberg)

One of the most common misconceptions that employees and residents have regarding the budget in Ottawa County is that the County is spending money on purchasing land for parks when that money could and should be used to reduce the number of layoffs and other cuts resulting from the economic crisis that our nation, state and region is in.

The Ottawa Parks system was under the management of the Ottawa County Road Commission until 1987, when the Parks and Recreation Commission organization was approved by the County Board of Commissioners. A 1913 State law gave counties the authority to construct, operate and maintain county parks. County road commissions doubled as park trustees perhaps because they were the only county agency to use the type of equipment to maintain roads that was also useful to maintain parks. In addition, in some counties, early parks served as a resting place for road weary motorists who were driving slower cars on rougher roads. The comprehensive statute for county parks was adopted by the Michigan legislature in 1965.

There are three methods to organize parks today: 1) per the 1913 statute, road commissions maintain county parks; 2) per the 1965 statute, a parks and recreation commission is established; 3) parks can be organized under the county board of commissioners. The long-term trend has been for counties to move away from road commission maintenance of parks as greater amounts of land have been added to parks systems that have required significantly greater dollars for development, operations and maintenance. County boards of commissioners funded parks under the road commissioner method by allocating a line-item transfer from the county general fund to the road commission. A need for greater decision making and accountability accompanied higher cash outlays for parks in many counties leaving only a handful today that still utilize the road commission method for park op-

eration and maintenance.

In 1987, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners approved the creation of a Parks and Recreation Commission. In 1996, Ottawa County residents approved a special millage for parks of .33 (one-third of one-mill). Per Michigan law, a special millage can only be used for the purpose(s) for which voters approved the millage and proceeds of a special millage must be accounted for in a separate fund. The millage was recently renewed for a second ten-year period from 2008 to 2017 and is projected to result in over \$3.1 million in revenue for 2010. The percentage of residents voting in favor of the parks millage increased from 53.5 percent to 67 percent. The ballot language stated that taxes raised from the millage would be used "**...for the purpose of acquiring, improving, operating and maintaining parks and open space areas in Ottawa County.**" Tax dollars collected from the special parks millage can only be used to purchase property for parks, develop parks, operate parks, and maintain the parks system and open space areas.

The County General Fund, along with park fee revenues, paid for virtually all park expenses prior to the approval of the parks millage. In 1998, when the parks millage went into effect, the General Fund contribution to the Parks and Recreation Department was capped at its then-current amount, or \$530,000. This amount was reduced by \$230,000 during the FY 2009 budget process and the remaining \$300,000 allocation was cut during the FY 2010 budget process. Thus, there are no General Fund dollars going into the Parks and Recreation Department budget at this time.

Parks funding is one of the most commonly misunderstood aspects of the County budget. Now that you have the facts, please forward this article to other employees or residents who may benefit from learning more about this topic. ■

Smoke-Free Air is Coming May 1

(By Amy Oosterink)

On May 1, 2010, virtually all public places in Michigan will be smoke-free! Thanks to all who have worked so hard to reach this milestone. Michigan's Smoke-Free Law recognizes an individual's right to breathe clean air in worksites including bars and restaurants.

Michigan is the 38th state to pass a clean indoor air law. Ottawa County's Smoke-Free Indoor Air Regulation, implemented on January 1, 2008, prohibits smoking in worksites and public places. The new smoke-free law expands that coverage to include 100% of bars and restaurants in the state. The Ottawa County Health Department and the Smoke-Free Ottawa Coalition are excited to see legislation that will protect the health of so many of our residents.

Many studies confirm the immediate benefits for our county, including:

- A decrease in heart disease and stroke

- Improved lung function
- Reduction in asthma
- Decreased absenteeism
- An increase in smoking cessation



Several studies have indicated that communities with smoking bans have an average decrease of 26% in heart attack rates in the years following the law's enactment when compared to communities without smoking bans. Two such studies have been published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* and *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Numerous other studies have documented decreased levels of carcinogens in the lungs and bodies of hospitality workers after their workplace becomes smoke-free.

Smoking cessation resources are available by visiting smokefreeottawa.org. ■



WEST MICHIGAN STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

Government Collaboration - Counties

AGENDA

Friday, March 19, 2010

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

WMSA Office, 951 Wealthy Street SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan



9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

9:15 a.m.

Insurance Options – Disability insurance, a first step into a complex subject, but one that offers significant savings potential.

Presenters:

Greg Rhodes, Mercer

Margo Johnson, Mercer

10:00 a.m.

Reverse Auctions – Description, rollout and participation.

Presenter:

Daryl Delabbio, Kent County

10:30 a.m.

Other Collaboration Action Options

11:00 a.m.

Adjournment



**Meetings of West Michigan Local Units of Government
Summary
12/18/09**

9 meetings took place between: October 6 – December 18, 2009, with 31 different local units of government participating.

Summary

- Local government is in the business of providing services. As resources go down, demand goes up.
- People don't understand the function of the various levels of government and don't pay attention until a service is eliminated.
- There are "best practices" underway that can be shared.
- There is value to being intentional about how we work together.
- There is benefit to collaborating. Money isn't always the driver. It's about improving services.
- Geographic proximity is a component of collaboration. It's easier to collaborate with your neighbor.
- The good work could be better communicated.
- The effects of this financial crisis are impacting our larger municipalities like the canary in the coal mine. The problem will affect for all local units soon.
- Incremental change won't solve the problem. Government needs to be restructured at all levels.
- We can't look to Lansing for the answers.

About collaborating

- Trust is required for all collaborations.
- It's about being intentional about how we work together to do more with less.
- Personal relationships are essential.
- A contract or MOU is essential.
- It's best to start a collaborative relationship with a smaller, more easily achievable goal.
- All collaborations are a work in progress. It's a partnership, best looked at over the long term. Sometimes there ARE winners and losers. Everyone has to give a little, without feeling like you are losing.

Some of the More Unique Existing Collaborations

- Supporting localized ambulance service
- Construct a jointly owned fire hall
- Grand River Dredging mixed with leaves and sold for compost, public/private collaboration
- Cooperative fueling arrangement with the schools
- Recreation programs in collaboration with the schools
- Reducing redundancies - such as waste hauler agreements
- Cemetery tending by those on community service
- Insurance with MML/MMRA
- Forums to foster collaborations like MTA meetings or MML meeting or Urban Mayor/Managers gatherings with the County,
- Joint planning commission



**Meetings of West Michigan Local Units of Government
Summary
12/18/09**

Collaborative opportunities

- Fire authorities could expand
- Contracting with other units to use assets and services where capacity is available
- Use attrition to identify shared personnel opportunities
- Greening of government facilities
- Buying power for health insurance and other commodities
- Wireless infrastructure
- Water/green infrastructure issues and natural systems that cross boundaries
- Planning and zoning – consider county-wide plans
- Cross training for emergency and law enforcement positions
- Linking transit systems from Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa Counties
- One standard GIS system for the region
- Tourism promotion around natural features like rivers.
- Participation in the constitutional convention

(among counties)

- Animal Shelter Services/capacity
- Assessing
- Equalization
- Inspectors
- Insurance
- Legal Services
- Medical Examiner
- Permits
- Planning Commission
- Senior Meals
- Transit
- Wage and benefit buying power

Quantifying

- It's not always about the cost savings. Improving services is often the goal.
- Not much has been quantified in terms of cost savings or service improvement.
- The units have no time, no resources, and no people to do this.

Barriers

- Lack of knowledge among citizenry about the role and scope of units of government.
- Negativity brought about by customers losing services, tax payers paying more, and staff cuts. This is what gets the attention due to the media's need for controversy.
- Michigan's government needs to be restructured at all levels to take a fresh look at what services are essential and at which level of government are they provided.



**Meetings of West Michigan Local Units of Government
Summary
12/18/09**

- The boundaries (real and perceived) that define one unit from another.
- Rising costs for everyone. To survive now and in the future local units must do both: raise revenues and lower services.
- Not enough time to spend on this.
- Not knowing what “best practices” are out there as options.
- Communication issues—in some rural townships 75% to 80% of residents do not have access to the internet.
- The speed at which the units can react. The more groups working together the slower it goes.
- Not progressing in a collaboration – too much time conducting studies, not enough action.
- Urban Cooperation Act of 1967 – Act 7
- State Statutes such as Act 312.
- Act 226 Planning Authority that takes away decision making power.
- Perceptions of inequities in power or resources among units of government.
- Baggage that comes from less-than-successful attempts at collaborating such as shifting the assessing function to the counties or providing fire services jointly with neighboring units.
- Having no money isn’t a barrier, residents can use the ballot to levy dollars to support services if they decide those services are that important. Not many residents follow through and seek public support of their ideas.

What can WMSA do to help?

- Spread the good word about the good work going on in local government and the realities of the fiscal crisis they are facing.
- Much like the Little Red Hen and her bread, all the units would like to benefit from collaborative opportunities, but no one has the time to harvest the wheat or grind the flour. WMSA could help with some due diligence work and research to explore ideas like collaborative purchasing for commodities or insurance.
- Bring the business community to the table. Get them to answer some questions: What is business’ responsibility to support government services? What would they support as a workable scenario for balancing service cuts and revenue increases?
- Help local government in West Michigan get one stronger voice on certain issues.
- Promote targeted legislative agenda.
- Help educate the populous on local government function and responsibilities



**Meetings of West Michigan Local Units of Government
Summary
12/18/09**

Potential Actions to Advance Intentional Collaboration among Local Units

Actions:

WMSA compiles a searchable data base of current collaborations/best practices

WMSA conducts case studies (candidates include)

- Laketon Township's cost savings through restructured insurance purchasing
- City of Coopersville and Polkton Township – how are they working together
- Bridgeton Township river patrol
- Urban Mayors and Managers proposed legislation

Pilot Collaboration Matrix

WMSA is proposing 2 types of pilot projects.

1. Collaborating across counties.
 - The Counties have identified the possibility of sharing a Medical Examiner.
2. Collaborating across county, city, township, villages 3 pilot potential projects involving multiple types of units include:
 - Purchasing power for insurance and commodities like paper
 - Equipment sharing/rental
 - Green Infrastructure issues relating to natural systems that cross multiple boundaries.

Pilots require participation of county, city and townships on a taskforce. The taskforce's responsibilities will include:

- 1) Recruiting participants
- 2) Investigating current practices
- 3) Developing a concept proposal
- 4) Implementing the project
- 5) Evaluating results

Note: Much of the staff work for these taskforces could be accomplished by interns.

**Meetings of West Michigan Local Units of Government
Summary
12/18/09**

Potential Actions to Advance Intentional Collaboration among Local Units

	County 1	County 2			All counties participate in one project such as a shared Medical Examiner
	Purchasing	Insurance -Individual option -Buying consortium -Co-administration	Equip sharing	Natural systems	
Twp I					
City I					
Village I					



HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE

March 25, 2010

As you are aware, this past Sunday the House of Representatives passed the Senate's version of health care reform by a vote of 219 to 212. This is the largest piece of reform and entitlement legislation since Medicare in 1965. The bill is known as the Patient Protection Act and was signed into law Tuesday by President Obama.

While the initial version of the Senate bill has been signed into law the House also passed a reconciliation bill which is formally known as Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010. This Act has a number of proposed "fixes" to the original Senate bill. As of this morning the Reconciliation Act is being passed from the Senate back to the House to address some conflicts with the formal reconciliation language. Once these are addressed, the Senate can pass the House reconciliation bill "as is" or propose changes through the amendment process. If changed, the bill would be sent back to the House for their review, debate and eventual vote. This package of modifications could eventually pass, which would make changes to the signed Senate bill; or, it could be dropped altogether which would leave the signed Senate bill (the Patient Protection Act referenced above) as final law.

In addition to the reconciliation bill still being debated, a number of states have filed lawsuits declaring the new law unconstitutional as it violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The main point of issue is the individual coverage mandate which would force all Americans to purchase health insurance under penalty of law. The eventual outcomes of the pending legal challenges or the reconciliation bill will determine if any changes will affect the newly signed health care reform legislation.

What we do know is this new law is extremely complex and touches almost every aspect of the individual and group health insurance system. We know this is raising a lot of questions regarding the consequences for your current coverages and what needs to be done going forward. While we don't have all of the answers right now, we are working with the insurance carriers and benefits attorneys to analyze the new legislation. We are also trying to identify how it specifically impacts each of your benefit plans so we can assist in providing you guidance as this new law is implemented.

In the coming weeks we will continue to evaluate the new law and identify any impacts to your plan specifically. There are varying effective dates for the components of this law which not only provides the insurance carriers and employers time to reach compliance with the new guidelines, but allows time to position your business for post-reform success.

Anticipated changes within the next six months due to the legislation (assuming the existing legislation remains unchanged) are:

- Elimination of any lifetime limits on plan coverage
- Extension of coverage for dependents to age 26
- Elimination of pre-existing condition limitations for children
- Mandated coverage for specific preventive services without cost sharing
- Establishment of temporary national high-risk pool to provide health coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions (takes effect within 90 days and continues through January 1, 2014)

All of the other major requirements of the legislation would phase in over the coming years, with the majority of them beginning in 2011 and 2014. Highlights of what will be addressed in the coming years are:

During calendar year 2010

- Available tax credits for certain small employers who purchase coverage for their employees. These credits only apply to employers with less than 25 employees and average annual wages of less than \$50,000.

January 1, 2011

- Limiting FSA medical expenses to \$2,500
- Prohibiting over-the-counter drugs as eligible expenses in HSA, HRA and FSA plans
- Imposing annual fees on private health insurers, medical device and pharmaceutical manufacturers
- Implementing minimum medical loss ratios for insurance carriers

January 1, 2014

- Elimination of pre-existing condition limitations for individual, Exchange and small group markets
- Premium subsidies (*varies based upon individual vs. group, group size and income levels of individuals*)
- Tax / Financial penalties for individuals not taking mandated coverage (*increased penalties phased in beginning January 1, 2014*)
- Tax / Financial penalties for employers with 50 or more employees that don't offer qualified medical coverage
- Employers with less than 50 employees that offer a group plan, must provide free choice vouchers to employees that wish to enroll in an Exchange plan instead of the group plan. These vouchers, which are intended to offset premium costs, are only required for employees who earn under certain income levels.
- HIPAA guarantee renewability and guarantee issue requirements
- Modified community rating by insurance carriers
- Definition of small group health coverage as 1 to 100 employees
- Creation of Insurance Exchanges for individual and small group coverage with five defined plans being offered
- Establish standards for qualified coverage, including mandated benefits, cost-sharing requirements, out-of-pocket limits and minimum actuarial values.
- Creation of a sliding scale premium assistance tax credit for non-Medicaid eligible individuals with incomes up to 400% of the Federal poverty level to buy coverage through the Exchange
- Medicaid eligibility is increased to 150% of the federal poverty level
- Implementation of plan reporting and documentation requirements to both covered individuals and the IRS
- Requirements for employers with 200 or more employees to auto-enroll all new employees into the employer sponsored health plan – employees may opt out if they have another source of coverage
- Creation of a new public long term care program which requires all employers to enroll employees, unless the employee elects to opt out

These are some of the major issues that need to be further defined and addressed for implementation by the insurance industry and employers.

As they develop, we will be providing you with updates so you will know the impact to your business and your benefits package.

For additional information please visit our website at www.lighthousegroup.net and click on the “Health Care Reform” icon for links and more detailed reference information.

While the coming years will pose some significant changes and challenges to the health insurance marketplace, we look forward to being your partner in providing you timely, accurate and meaningful information as new developments occur.