



# County of Ottawa

## *Board of Commissioners*

**Philip D. Kuyers**  
*Chairperson*

**James C. Holtrop**  
*Vice-Chairperson*

12220 Fillmore Street, Room 310, West Olive, Michigan 49460

West Olive (616) 738-4898

Fax (616) 738-4888

Grand Haven (616) 846-8295

Grand Rapids (616) 662-3100

Website: [www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org)

May 7, 2010

To All Ottawa County Commissioners:

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners will meet on **Tuesday, May 11, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.**, for the regular **May** meeting of the Board at the Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex in West Olive, Michigan.

The Agenda is as follows:

1. Call to Order by the Chairperson
2. Invocation – Commissioner Karsten
3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
4. Roll Call
5. Presentation of Petitions and Communications
  - A. GIS in Government Innovation Award, Dave Hulst, Information Technology Director
6. Public Comments and Communications from County Staff
7. Approval of Agenda
8. Actions and Reports
  - A. Consent Resolutions:

### From the County Clerk

1. Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes  
Suggested Motion:  
To approve the Minutes of the April 27, 2010 Board of Commissioners.
2. Correspondence Log 403  
Suggested Motion:

Joyce E. Kortman      Dennis W. Swartout      Jane M. Ruiter      Matthew M. Hehl      Roger G. Rycenga  
Gordon D. Schrottenboer      Robert W. Karsten      James H. Holtvluwer      Donald G. Disselkoen

To receive for information the Correspondence Log.

3. Payroll

Suggested Motion:

To authorize the payroll of May 11, 2010 in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

From the Finance and Administration Committee

4. Monthly Accounts Payable for April 19, 2010 through April 30, 2010

Suggested Motion:

To approve the general claims in the amount of \$3,889,619.34 as presented by the summary report for April 19, 2010 through April 30, 2010.

From Administration

5. Ottawa County MSU Extension 2009 Annual Report

Suggested Motion:

To receive for information the Ottawa County MSU Extension 2009 Annual Report.

B. Action Items:

From Administration

6. Final Results of the 2010 Citizen Survey (Presentation by: Epic MRA)

Suggested Motion:

To receive the Final Results of the 2010 Citizen Survey.

C. Appointments: None

D. Discussion Items:

From Administration

7. Ottawa County MSU Extension 2009 Annual Report

(Presented by: Dr. Adam Kantrovich, County Extension Director)

9. Report of the County Administrator

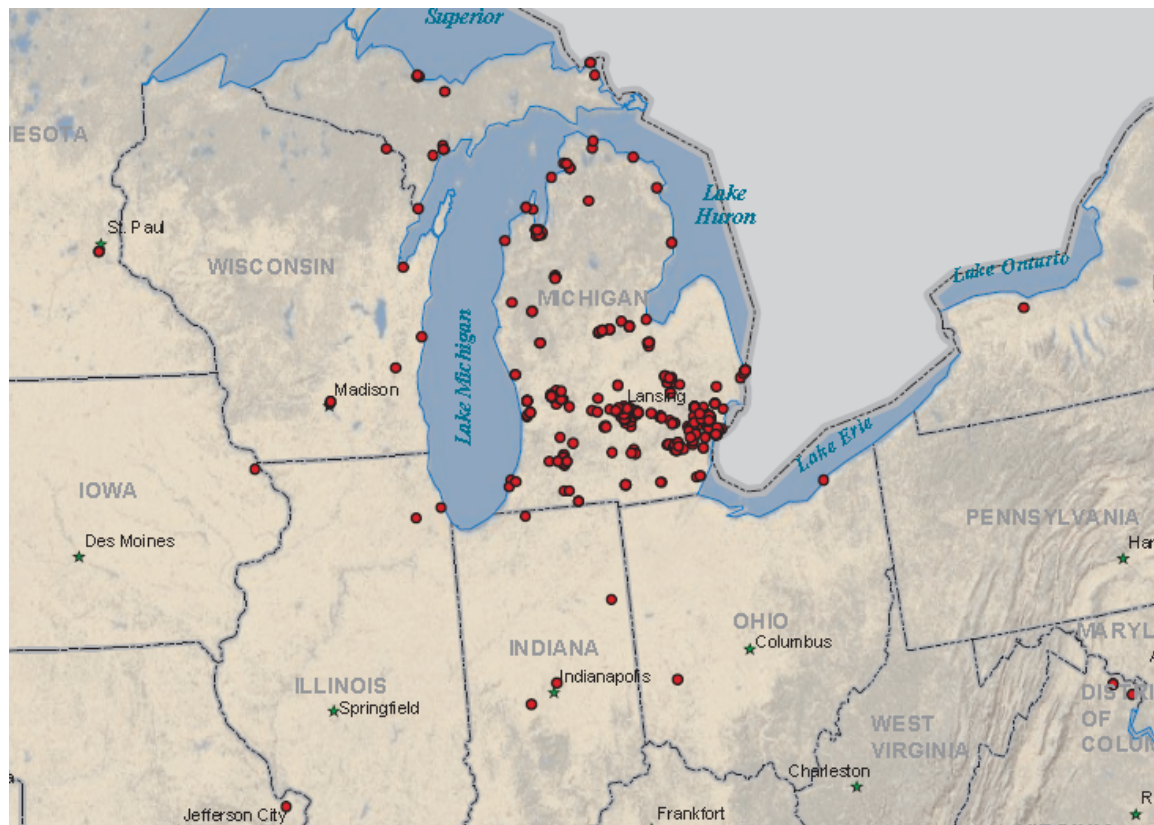
10. General Information, Comments, and Meetings Attended

11. Public Comments

12. Adjournment

## IMAGIN Conference

IMAGIN is a network of individuals and organizations interested in the use and application of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology in Michigan. Members of this professional organization are committed to continually improving the quality and availability of digital geospatial data necessary for effective use of GIS.



## GIS in Government Innovation Award

This past week, Ottawa County GIS was recognized for its work with Holland Township in developing the **Comprehensive Addressing Project**. This is one of two GIS project awards presented at the conference to recognize a government organization that finds innovative ways to use geospatial solutions to enhance workflow processes. Candidates for this award have successfully implemented a geospatial technology, service, or application that is new and innovative to their organization. Applicants are judged on collaborative efforts, contribution to the workflow, and original ideas. Aaron Bodbyl-Mast attended the luncheon to receive the award on behalf of Ottawa County.

## Law Enforcement Applications in GIS

During the IMAGIN Conference, Patrick Lowman (IT/GIS) and Steve Kraai (Sheriff's Department) gave a presentation of the GIS applications developed to support Ottawa County Sheriff operations. Pat and Steve provided both technical and operational information on the three applications: Incident Mapping, Sex Offender Locator and School Safety Zones. The audience received the presentation enthusiastically and we have already been contacted by attendees interested in developing similar capabilities.

**PROPOSED  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE OTTAWA COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
APRIL SESSION – SECOND DAY**

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Chair.

Mr. Swartout pronounced the invocation.

The Ottawa County Honor Guard led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present at roll call: Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Kuyers, Swartout, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Hehl, Rycenga, Schrottenboer, Disselkoen, Karsten, Holtrop, Holtvluwer. (11)

Presentation of Petitions and Communications

A. Government Finance Officers Association Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting – June Hagan, Fiscal Services Director, presented Connie VanderSchaaf, Budget/Audit Manager, with the Award of Financial Reporting Achievement. June also wanted to acknowledge Don Brookhouse, Mary Crafmeyer, Elizabeth Lyyski, Suzanne Kamphuis and Shannon McGoran.

B/C 10-090 Mr. Schrottenboer moved to approve the agenda of today as presented and amended adding “Chad G. Klaver” to Action Item #14. The motion passed.

B/C 10-091 Mr. Holtrop moved to approve the following Consent Resolutions:

1. To approve the Minutes of the April 13, 2010, Board of Commissioners Meeting and April 13, 2010 Board of Commissioners Work Session.
2. To authorize the payroll of April 27, 2010 in the amount of \$578.00.
3. To approve the general claims in the amount of \$13,882,836.51 as presented by the summary report for April 1, 2010 through April 16, 2010.
4. To approve the appropriation changes greater than \$50,000 and those approved by the Administrator and Fiscal Services Director for \$50,000 or less which changed the total appropriation from the amended budget for the month of March 2010.

5. To receive for information the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office 2009 Annual Report.
6. To receive for information the Ottawa County Prosecuting Attorney's 2009 Annual Report.

The motion passed as shown by the following by the following votes:  
Yeas: Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Holtvluwer, Disselkoen, Holtrop, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Karsten, Hehl, Rycenga, Swartout, Schrotenboer, Kuyers. (11)

- B/C 10-092 Mr. Rycenga moved to approve the following proposed policies for review: General Policies: 001- Administrator's Evaluation, 002 – Identify Theft Prevention; Fiscal Policies: 024 – Sale or Disposal of Used Equipment & Personal Property Policy, 025 – Travel and Meals Policy; Facilities Policies: 001 – Facilities Use Policy, 002 – Wellness Center Policy (Second Reading). The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Mrs. Ruiter, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Hehl, Karsten, Swartout, Holtvluwer, Rycenga, Holtrop, Disselkoen, Schrotenboer, Kuyers. (11)
- B/C 10-093 Mr. Swartout moved to approve the 2010 Equalization Report and to appoint the Equalization Director to represent Ottawa County at State Equalization hearings. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Hehl, Rycenga, Schrotenboer, Disselkoen, Holtvluwer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Holtrop, Swartout, Karsten, Mrs. Ruiter, Mr. Kuyers. (11)
- B/C 10-094 Mr. Swartout moved to approve and authorize the Board Chair and Clerk to sign the Resolution to authorize Certification of a "Qualifying Statements" for bonding purposes. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Swartout, Holtvluwer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Holtrop, Karsten, Disselkoen, Schrotenboer, Rycenga, Hehl, Mrs. Ruiter, Mr. Kuyers. (11)
- B/C 10-095 Mr. Swartout moved to designate the Fiscal Services Director and the Fiscal Services Department Senior Accountant as witnesses for the cremation or disintegration by the County Treasurer of certain public bond documents and corresponding interest coupons, as provided for by the Bond Cremation Act, Act 56 of the Public Acts of 1962, MCL 129.122 et seq. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Mr. Holtvluwer, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Holtrop, Rycenga, Disselkoen, Schrotenboer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Karsten, Hehl, Swartout, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-096 Mr. Swartout moved to receive the Maximus Cost of Services Analysis Report for Ottawa County. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Rycenga, Hehl, Karsten, Mrs. Ruiter, Mr. Schrotenboer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Swartout, Holtvluwer, Disselkoen, Holtrop, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-097 Mr. Swartout moved to receive the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the County of Ottawa's December 31, 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Holtrop, Holtvluwer, Swartout, Schrotenboer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Disselkoen, Karsten, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Rycenga, Hehl, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-098 Mr. Swartout moved to approve and designate \$464,096 of the 2009 General Fund unreserved undesignated fund balance for the 2010 budget. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Karsten, Disselkoen, Holtrop, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Holtvluwer, Schrotenboer, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Swartout, Rycenga, Hehl, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-099 Mr. Swartout moved to approve the purchase of one (1) year of MERS generic service credit for \$11,973 (total cost to be paid by Chad G. Klaver).

Total Cost:	\$11,973
Employer Cost:	\$0
Employee Cost:	\$11,973

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Disselkoen, Hehl, Holtrop, Mrs. Kortman, Mr. Swartout, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Rycenga, Holtvluwer, Schrotenboer, Kuyers. (10)

Nays: Mr. Karsten. (1)

B/C 10-100 Mr. Swartout moved to approve and authorize the Board Chair and Clerk to sign the proposal from MiWorks! to create three positions (two (2) Business Service Representatives and one (1) Workforce Intelligence Analyst) and increase the hours of a current position (Procurement Contract Coordinator) as listed below at a cost of \$205,649. All three positions will sunset as of June 30, 2011. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Mr. Schrotenboer, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Swartout, Holtvluwer, Mrs. Ruiter, Messrs. Disselkoen, Hehl, Holtrop, Karsten, Rycenga, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-101 Mr. Swartout moved to approve and authorize the Board Chair and Clerk to sign the Resolution authorizing the County Road Commission to issue Act 342 Refunding Bonds, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$2,350,000 to refinance the Holland Township 1998 Water & Refunding Bonds. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Holtvluwer, Disselkoen, Holtrop, Mrs. Ruiten, Messrs. Karsten, Hehl, Rycenga, Swartout, Schrottenboer, Kuyers. (11)

B/C 10-102 Mrs. Ruiten moved to approve the name(s) of (\* indicates recommendation of the Interview Subcommittee [third posting]):

\*Jon Overway

To fill one (1) of two (2) Private Sector Representative vacancies on the Technology Committee beginning January 1, 2010, and ending December 31, 2011 (two year term).

\*Valorie Putnam

To fill one (1) Education Sector vacancy on the Ottawa County Workforce Development Board beginning January 1, 2010, and ending December 31, 2012 (three year term).

\*Randall S. Boss

To fill one (1) unexpired Business Sector vacancy on the Ottawa County Workforce Development Board beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2011.

\* Marjorie DeBlaay

To fill one (1) unexpired Member vacancy on the Housing Commission beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2011.

\* Edward Sowards

\* Marjorie DeBlaay

To fill two (2) Private Sector vacancies on the Community Action Agency Advisory Board beginning immediately and ending September 30, 2011.

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Mrs. Ruiten, Mrs. Kortman, Messrs. Hehl, Karsten, Swartout, Holtvluwer, Rycenga, Holtrop, Disselkoen, Schrottenboer, Kuyers. (11)

Discussion Items:

1. Ottawa County Sheriff's Office 2009 Annual Report – The 2009 Ottawa County Sheriff's Office Annual Report was presented by Gary Rosema, Sheriff.

2. Ottawa County Prosecuting Attorney's 2009 Annual Report – The 2009 Prosecuting Attorney's Annual Report was presented by Ronald Frantz, Prosecuting Attorney.

The Administrator's Report was presented.

Several Commissioners commented on meetings attended and future meetings to be held.

B/C 10-103 Mr. Hehl moved to adjourn at 2:40 p.m. subject to the call of the Chair.  
The motion passed.

DANIEL C. KRUEGER, Clerk  
Of the Board of Commissioners

PHILIP, KUYERS, Chairman  
Of the Board of Commissioners



# Action Request



**Committee:** Board of Commissioners

**Meeting Date:** 5/11/2010

**Requesting Department:** County Clerk

**Submitted By:** Keith Van Beek

**Agenda Item:** Correspondence Log 403

**SUGGESTED MOTION:**

To receive for information the Correspondence Log.

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Total Cost: \$0.00 | County Cost: \$0.00 | Included in Budget:  Yes |  No

If not included in budget, recommended funding source:

**ACTION IS RELATED TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:**

Mandated |  Non-Mandated |  New Activity

**ACTION IS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Goal:

Objective:

**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**  Recommended |  Not Recommended

County Administrator: **Alan G. Vanderberg**

Digitally signed by Alan G. Vanderberg  
DN: cn=Alan G. Vanderberg, c=US, o=County of Ottawa, ou=Administrator's Office, email=avanderberg@mottawa.org  
Reason: I am approving this document  
Date: 2010.05.05 16:36:51 -0400

Committee/Governing/Advisory Board Approval Date:

## CORRESPONDENCE LOG

\*e-mailed

DATE	CORRESPONDENT	CONTENT	REFERRED TO
04-09-10	Timothy McGuire, MAC	Ltr: "Take Me to Fibertown" Resolution	Administrator, Commissioners
04-13-10	Michael Dalman, Hol Twp Clerk	Public Hearing Notice	Administrator, Kuyers, Schrottenboer, Karsten
04-23-10	St. Joseph Co. Bd of Commissioners	Resolution: Stop Asian Carp Species from Entering Lake MI	Administrator & Commissioners *
04-23-10	Midland Co. Bd of Commissioners	Resolution: Support of the final report of the Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates	Administrator & Commissioners
04-27-10	Oceana Co. Bd of Commissioners	Resolution: Support of efforts to stop the migration of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes	Administrator & Commissioners
04-27-10	Robinson Twp Board	Resolution: To leave the offices of the County Clerk & Register of Deeds separate	Administrator & Commissioners

# Action Request



**Committee:** Board of Commissioners

**Meeting Date:** 5/11/2010

**Requesting Department:** County Clerk

**Submitted By:** June Hagan

**Agenda Item:** Payroll

## SUGGESTED MOTION:

To authorize the payroll of May 11, 2010 in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

## SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

To pay the current payroll of the members of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. Pursuant to MCL 46.11, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to provide for and manage the ongoing business affairs of the County.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Total Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ County Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Included in Budget:  Yes  No

If not included in budget, recommended funding source:

## ACTION IS RELATED TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:

Mandated  Non-Mandated  New Activity

## ACTION IS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal: #1-4

Objective:

**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**  Recommended  Not Recommended

County Administrator: **Alan G. Vanderberg**

Digitally signed by Alan G. Vanderberg  
DN: cn=Alan G. Vanderberg, c=US, o=County of Ottawa, ou=Administrator's Office, email=avanderberg@miottawa.org  
Reason: I am approving this document  
Date: 2010.05.05 16:40:16 -0400

Committee/Governing/Advisory Board Approval Date:

# Action Request



**Committee:** Board of Commissioners

**Meeting Date:** 5/11/2010

**Requesting Department:** Fiscal Services

**Submitted By:** June Hagan

**Agenda Item:** Monthly Accounts Payable for April 19, 2010 through April 30, 2010

## SUGGESTED MOTION:

To approve the general claims in the amount of \$3,889,619.34 as presented by the summary report for April 19, 2010 through April 30, 2010.

## SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Approve vendor payments in accordance with the Ottawa County Purchasing Policy.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Total Cost: \$3,889,619.34 | County Cost: \$3,889,619.34 | Included in Budget:  Yes |  No

If not included in budget, recommended funding source:

## ACTION IS RELATED TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:

Mandated |  Non-Mandated |  New Activity

## ACTION IS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal: # 1

Objective: #1-6

## ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Recommended

Not Recommended

County Administrator: **Alan G. Vanderberg**

Digitally signed by Alan G. Vanderberg  
DN: cn=Alan G. Vanderberg, c=US, ou=County of Ottawa, ou=Administrator's Office, email=avanderberg@mottawa.org  
Reason: I am approving this document  
Date: 2010.05.05 16:41:55 -0400

Committee/Governing/Advisory Board Approval Date:



# County of Ottawa

## *Fiscal Services Department*

**June A. Hagan**  
*Director*

12220 Fillmore Street, Room 331, West Olive, Michigan 49460

West Olive (616) 738-4849  
Fax (616) 738-4098  
Grand Haven (616) 846-8295  
Grand Rapids (616) 662-3100  
e-mail: [jhagan@co.ottawa.mi.us](mailto:jhagan@co.ottawa.mi.us)

To: Board of Commissioners

From: June Hagan, Fiscal Services Director

Subject: Accounts Payable Listing – April 19, 2010 to April 30, 2010

Date: April 30, 2010

I have reviewed the Accounts Payable Listing for April 19 through April 30, 2010. The expenditures are general payments that are routine to Ottawa County.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Total Checks 04/19/2010 through 04/30/2010

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the List of Audit Claims, a summary of which is attached, constitutes all claims received and audited for payment. The List of Claims shows the name of claimant, amount of claim, check number, and check date. The net amount of checks written during the period was \$3,887,932.44. The amount of claims to be approved totals \$3,889,619.34.

\*Adjustments are voided checks.

June Hagan  
June Hagan, Fiscal Services Director

April 30, 2010  
Date

We hereby certify that the Board of Commissioners has approved the claims on this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip Kuyers, Chairperson  
Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Krueger, Clerk

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CHECKS 04/19/2010 THROUGH 04/30/2010

<u>FUND NUMBER</u>	<u>FUND NAME</u>	<u>CLAIMS TO BE APPROVED</u>	<u>ADJUSTMENTS*</u>	<u>NET CHECK TOTALS</u>
1010	GENERAL FUND	458,643.91	(1,395.90)	457,248.01
1500	CEMETERY TRUST	0.00	0.00	0.00
2081	PARKS & RECREATION	32,364.90	0.00	32,364.90
2082	PARK 12	0.00	0.00	0.00
2160	FRIEND OF COURT	1,562.03	0.00	1,562.03
2170	9/30 JUDICIAL GRANTS	482.33	0.00	482.33
2210	HEALTH	47,916.10	0.00	47,916.10
2220	MENTAL HEALTH	584,739.02	0.00	584,739.02
2271	SOLID WASTE CLEAN-UP	17,932.42	0.00	17,932.42
2272	LANDFILL TIPPING FEES	1,699.80	0.00	1,699.80
2320	TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM	0.00	0.00	0.00
2420	PLANNING COMMISSION	0.00	0.00	0.00
2444	INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	0.00	0.00	0.00
2450	PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00
2550	HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX	0.00	0.00	0.00
2560	REGISTER OF DEEDS AUTOMATION FUND	2,607.86	0.00	2,607.86
2590	LIPPERT GRANT	0.00	0.00	0.00
2601	PROSECUTING ATTORNEY GRANTS	0.00	0.00	0.00
2602	WEMET	17,350.52	(75.00)	17,275.52
2603	WEED AND SEED	0.00	0.00	0.00
2605	COPS-AHEAD-GEORGETOWN	0.00	0.00	0.00
2606	COPS-FAST-GEORGETOWN	0.00	0.00	0.00
2608	COPS-FAST-ALLENDALE	0.00	0.00	0.00
2609	SHERIFF GRANT PROGRAMS	129.72	0.00	129.72

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CHECKS 04/19/2010 THROUGH 04/30/2010

<u>FUND NUMBER</u>	<u>FUND NAME</u>	<u>CLAIMS TO BE APPROVED</u>	<u>ADJUSTMENTS*</u>	<u>NET CHECK TOTALS</u>
2610	COPS-UNIVERSAL	21,132.66	0.00	21,132.66
2640	EMT HOLLAND-PARK	0.00	0.00	0.00
2650	EMT GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP	0.00	0.00	0.00
2661	SHERIFF ROAD PATROL	538.59	0.00	538.59
2690	LAW LIBRARY	0.00	0.00	0.00
2740	WIA-ADMIN. COST POOL	8,572.39	0.00	8,572.39
2741	WIA-YOUTH	57,902.48	0.00	57,902.48
2742	WIA-ADULT	36,789.40	0.00	36,789.40
2743	WIA-6/30 GRANT PROGRAMS	62,445.58	0.00	62,445.58
2744	WIA-12/31 GRANT PROGRAMS	13,594.49	0.00	13,594.49
2747	WIA-WORK FIRST YOUTH	0.00	0.00	0.00
2748	WIA-9/30 GRANT PROGRAMS	24,011.37	0.00	24,011.37
2749	WIA-3/31 GRANT PROGRAMS	0.00	0.00	0.00
2750	GRANT PROGRAMS-PASS THRU	233,579.11	0.00	233,579.11
2800	EMERGENCY FEEDING	797.47	0.00	797.47
2810	FEMA	0.00	0.00	0.00
2850	COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROG. GRANT	2,554.47	0.00	2,554.47
2870	COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY (CAA)	25,137.10	0.00	25,137.10
2890	WEATHERIZATION	68,015.15	0.00	68,015.15
2900	DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES	0.00	0.00	0.00
2901	DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES	5,641.00	0.00	5,641.00
2920	CHILD CARE - PROBATE	31,317.77	0.00	31,317.77
2921	CHILD CARE - SOCIAL SERVICES	0.00	0.00	0.00
2930	SOLDIER & SAILORS RELIEF	0.00	0.00	0.00



ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CHECKS 04/19/2010 THROUGH 04/30/2010

<u>FUND NUMBER</u>	<u>FUND NAME</u>	<u>CLAIMS TO BE APPROVED</u>	<u>ADJUSTMENTS*</u>	<u>NET CHECK TOTALS</u>
2940	VETERANS TRUST	0.00	0.00	0.00
2941	VETERANS TRUST	0.00	0.00	0.00
5160	DELINQUENT TAXES	7,956.48	0.00	7,956.48
6360	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	6,308.45	0.00	6,308.45
6410	WATER & SEWER REVOLVING	0.00	0.00	0.00
6450	DUPLICATING	1,381.05	0.00	1,381.05
6550	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	9,251.97	0.00	9,251.97
6641	EQUIPMENT POOL	0.00	0.00	0.00
6770	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED INSURANCE	0.00	0.00	0.00
6771	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED HEALTH INS.	80,162.21	0.00	80,162.21
6772	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED UNEMPL INS.	500.00	0.00	500.00
6775	LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE	12,993.12	0.00	12,993.12
6776	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED DENTAL INS.	0.00	0.00	0.00
6777	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED VISION	0.00	0.00	0.00
6782	PROTECTED SELF-FUNDED INS PROG M.H.	0.00	0.00	0.00
7010	AGENCY	1,990,280.06	(216.00)	1,990,064.06
7040	IMPREST PAYROLL	23,328.36	0.00	23,328.36
7210	LIBRARY PENAL FINE	0.00	0.00	0.00
7300	EMPLOYEE SICK PAY BANK	0.00	0.00	0.00
		<u>\$3,889,619.34</u>	<u>(\$1,686.90)</u>	<u>\$3,887,932.44</u>

# Action Request



**Committee:** Board of Commissioners

**Meeting Date:** 5/11/2010

**Requesting Department:** MSU Extension

**Submitted By:** Keith Van Beek

**Agenda Item:** Ottawa County MSU Extension's 2009 Annual Report

## SUGGESTED MOTION:

To receive for information the Ottawa County MSU Extension's 2009 Annual Report.

## SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

In accordance with 2010 Rules of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners:

Section 4.6 - Annual Reports From Departments of County Government - It is the policy of the Board of Commissioners to receive annual, written and oral Reports from all Departments of County government. Written reports shall be in a form approved by the County Administrator and shall, in the ordinary course, be submitted directly to the Board of Commissioners through the County Administrator's Office.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Total Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ County Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Included in Budget:  Yes  No

If not included in budget, recommended funding source:

## ACTION IS RELATED TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:

Mandated  Non-Mandated  New Activity

## ACTION IS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal: #2

Objective: #4

## ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Recommended

Not Recommended

County Administrator: **Alan G. Vanderberg**

Digitally signed by Alan G. Vanderberg  
DN: cn=Alan G. Vanderberg, c=US, o=County of Ottawa, ou=Administrator's Office, email=avanderberg@miottawa.org  
Reason: I am approving this document  
Date: 2010.05.05 16:44:51 -0400

Committee/Governing/Advisory Board Approval Date:

# Ottawa County MSU Extension



Program Year 2009



*Bringing Knowledge to Life!*

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Developing Entrepreneurs



Promoting Healthy Lifestyles



Preparing for the Expanding Bioeconomy



Educating and Supporting Decision Makers



Building Leaders for Today and Tomorrow



**Bringing Knowledge to Life!**

## Ottawa County MSU Extension

### *Mission Statement*

*Helping the citizens of Ottawa County improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical needs and opportunities.*

*Following a statewide issues identification process in 2006, MSU Extension identified five strategic priorities aimed to help strengthen Michigan's economy:*

- **Developing entrepreneurs**
- **Promoting healthy lifestyles**
- **Preparing for the expanding bio-economy**
- **Educating and supporting decision makers**
- **Building leaders for today and tomorrow**

*Throughout 2009, we continued to incorporate the identified priorities in our programming efforts along with the following issues that were identified as priorities by our local focus groups:*

1. **Healthy Families/Successful Youth**
2. **Insuring a Diverse Economy**
3. **Balanced Growth**
4. **Surface Water Quality**
5. **Nutrition Education**
6. **The Obesity Epidemic**
7. **Labor/Immigration Issues**
8. **Preparing Youth to Enter the Workforce**
9. **Alternative Energy Development**
10. **Agriculture and Its Role as an Environmental Steward**
11. **Nurturing Small Business**
12. **Health Insurance/Uninsured Citizens**

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## Ottawa County MSU Extension

12220 Fillmore Street Suite 122

West Olive, Michigan 49460

E-mail Address: [msue.ottawa@county.msu.edu](mailto:msue.ottawa@county.msu.edu)

Web Site: [www.msue.msu.edu/ottawa](http://www.msue.msu.edu/ottawa)

Phone: (616) 994-4580

Toll Free Number: 1-888-MSUE-4MI, then key O-T-T-A-W

Fax: (616) 846-0655

### ***Educators:***

<b>Adam Kantrovich-County Extension Director</b>	<a href="mailto:akantrov@msu.edu">akantrov@msu.edu</a>
<b>Thomas A. Dudek</b> -District Extension Horticulture & Marketing Educator	<a href="mailto:dudek@msu.edu">dudek@msu.edu</a>
<b>Carlos Garcia Salazar</b> -Small Fruit Extension Educador	<a href="mailto:garcias4@msu.edu">garcias4@msu.edu</a>
<b>M. Charles Gould</b> -Nutrient Management Extension Educator	<a href="mailto:gouldm@msu.edu">gouldm@msu.edu</a>
<b>Daniel M. O'Keefe</b> -District Extension Sea Grant Agent	<a href="mailto:okeefed@msu.edu">okeefed@msu.edu</a>
<b>G. William "Bill" Robb</b> -District Dairy Extension Educator	<a href="mailto:robbg@msu.edu">robbg@msu.edu</a>
<b>Elizabeth C. Wells</b> -4-H Youth Extension Educator	<a href="mailto:wellselz@msu.edu">wellselz@msu.edu</a>

### ***Program Associates:***

<b>Harold McDermed</b> -4-H Youth Mentoring AIM Case Manager	<a href="mailto:haroldvista1@yahoo.com">haroldvista1@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Brenda Raterink</b> -Ag in the Classroom, Program Associate	<a href="mailto:raterin3@msu.edu">raterin3@msu.edu</a>
<b>Laura Schleede</b> -4-H Youth Mentoring Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:nordheim@msu.edu">nordheim@msu.edu</a>
<b>Greg Stepien</b> -Firewise Field Assistant	<a href="mailto:stepien@msu.edu">stepien@msu.edu</a>
<b>Shane VanOosterhout</b> -Master Gardener Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:vanoost4@msu.edu">vanoost4@msu.edu</a>

### ***Americorps/VISTA:***

<b>Barb Brow</b> -Ottawa County Mentoring Collaborative AmeriCorps	<a href="mailto:browb@msu.edu">browb@msu.edu</a>
<b>Betsy Knoll</b> -Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring: AIM AmeriCorps	<a href="mailto:knolle@msu.edu">knolle@msu.edu</a>
<b>Jeff Walker</b> -Men in Mentoring AmeriCorps	<a href="mailto:walke464@msu.edu">walke464@msu.edu</a>

### ***Support Staff:***

<b>Joan Biesecker</b> -4-H & 4-H Youth Mentoring, Agriculture Programs	<a href="mailto:bieseck1@msu.edu">bieseck1@msu.edu</a>
<b>Mary Frein</b> -Administrative Support	<a href="mailto:frein@msu.edu">frein@msu.edu</a>
<b>Judy Hanson</b> -Horticulture, Small Fruit & Master Gardener Programs	<a href="mailto:hanson26@msu.edu">hanson26@msu.edu</a>

### ***Other District Educators Serving Ottawa County***

<b>Roger Betz</b> -Farm Management/Financial	<a href="mailto:betz@msu.edu">betz@msu.edu</a>
<b>Amy Irish-Brown</b> - Tree Fruit	<a href="mailto:irisha@msu.edu">irisha@msu.edu</a>
<b>Christina Currell</b> -Water Quality	<a href="mailto:curellc@msu.edu">curellc@msu.edu</a>
<b>Beth Franz</b> -Swine	<a href="mailto:franzeli@msu.edu">franzeli@msu.edu</a>
<b>Kevin Gould</b> -Beef/Livestock	<a href="mailto:gouldk@msu.edu">gouldk@msu.edu</a>
<b>Amy Irish-Brown</b> - Tree Fruit	<a href="mailto:irisha@msu.edu">irisha@msu.edu</a>
<b>Jill O'Donnell</b> -Christmas Trees	<a href="mailto:odonne10@msu.edu">odonne10@msu.edu</a>
<b>Bill Steenwyk</b> -Vegetables	<a href="mailto:steenwyk@msu.edu">steenwyk@msu.edu</a>
<b>Phil Schwallier</b> -Tree Fruit	<a href="mailto:schwalli@msu.edu">schwalli@msu.edu</a>

## A Word From the Director

Through a collaborative relationship in programming and funding, Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) brings educational programs and information to county residents and local communities. Some educational programs may be standards that are provided year after year while others are time sensitive to meet very specific needs. We continued this mission in 2009 and are presently going through a statewide restructuring effort to be able to better serve communities across our state and here in Ottawa County.

The MSUE Children Youth Families and Community Educator that has provided programs to meet the needs of Ottawa County youth, families and communities during these challenging times provided her last local educational efforts at the close of 2009 due to county budget cuts. During this last year's programming effort, we provided education to over 300 individuals representing a variety of agencies and walks of life through such programs that included: Budgeting, Living within Your Means, Meal Planning on a Budget, and Financial Counseling 10. In addition, she provided more than 700 income eligible seniors with nutritional education through our Senior Project FRESH Program.

2009 also brought changes to our agricultural industry with continued market fluctuation, changing global demand, new regulatory measures, and changes to the national Farm Bill. MSUE Educators housed in Ottawa County and elsewhere offered the Ottawa County agricultural industry informational programs in topics that ranged from farm labor and the Farm Bill to poultry production and nutrition to pesticide application trainings. Other programs provided producers and agricultural businesses with methods to decrease expenses, increase yields, and financial management to increase the profitability of those businesses. These include Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs for our horticultural, nursery, and fruit industries to programs specific for our livestock industry. The MSUE TelFarm recordkeeping program continues to work with local producers to help them utilize appropriate financial and tax management practices allowing them to be better prepared to make sound business and management decisions in the future. Through these programs we have been able to reach over 2,000 farms, producers, and or agricultural businesses. An evaluation from our IPM program indicated participating blueberry growers estimated their pesticide cost savings at \$95 per acre because of the program.



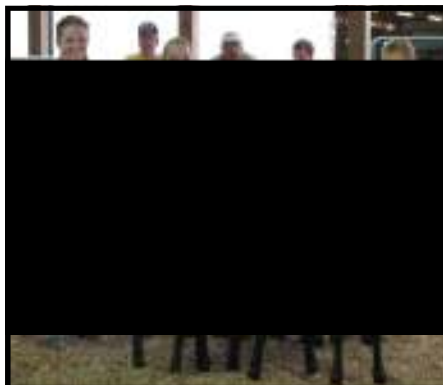
According to the most recent agricultural census, Ottawa County farms produced over \$391 million in farm cash receipts ranking Ottawa second in the state. Michigan State University Extension is a resource to this industry through our research, educational and informational programs. It is important that we continue to educate the next generation of agricultural producers and business leaders. Through collaboration with the Ottawa County Farm Bureau we offer the Ag-in-the-Classroom program, which visited 178 classes teaching 4,106 students about agriculture in 2009. We also provided assistance to the Careerline Tech Center in Holland to reinvigorate their Agricultural Education Program. The change in the program has had a positive affect with a new instructor and an enrollment for the 2010-2011 school year that is already at capacity.



There have been a number of land-use issues that have arisen here in Ottawa County. We have been committed to providing assistance through education and information to protect the landowner from being taken advantage of by agencies and commercial entities. We also continue to play an economic development role in working with interested property owners, commercial business and the food and fiber industry to develop new revenue generating opportunities.

## A Word From the Director

In 2009, 6,906 children in Ottawa County between the ages of 5 and 18 were served through Extension programs. Our 4-H program continues to excel by providing opportunities to our county's children to gain additional knowledge and skills in science education, leadership development, and civic responsibility. In 2009 we had 89 active clubs, 1,193 active club members, and 582 adult volunteers that provided volunteer hours valued at \$1,073,250.



The Great Lakes, water quality, our local fisheries and water related recreational opportunities are of great economic importance and are valued by our residents. Our Sea Grant educator has continued to work with our local charter boat fishing industry, local stakeholders, and school systems to offer educational programs and information. Included in this annual report are data that Dr. Dan O'Keefe has compiled that summarize the economics of Ottawa County marinas and the Grand Haven charter boat industry. It was estimated that marina patrons infused \$38 million in sales for Ottawa county businesses creating 553 jobs. Throughout 2009 Dr. O'Keefe worked on a large scale study on the economic impact that fishing has on coastal communities. The results of this study will be available mid-2010 but are expected to demonstrate the continued positive economic impact of the fishing industry in Ottawa County and throughout the state.

The MSUE Ottawa County Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring Program continues to provide leadership to the Ottawa County Mentoring Collaborative offering educational programs, mentor training and activities to member programs. Through our collaboration with the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court, Family Division/Juvenile Services we continue to offer a nationally recognized mentoring program working with adjudicated youth.

Over the past year we have continued collaborative efforts with other county departments and state agencies to provide programs, material, and information to local leaders. We have continued to work with land owners, local municipalities and others in the area of land-use, renewable energy, and have provided training of local leaders.

We expect 2010 and 2011 will continue to bring challenges to Ottawa County residents. Michigan State University Extension will continue be an educational resource to enhance the lives of those that participate in our programs.

In the following pages you will find highlights and summaries of some of the programs, services, and opportunities offered over the past year. If you would like to know more about any of our programs, please contact the office at 616-994-4580. Our staff will be happy to answer your questions.

County Extension Director



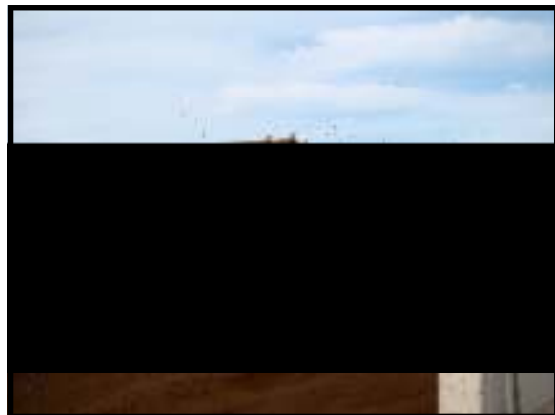
## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Maximizing the Value of Manure

In February of 2009, a program entitled *Manure Sense: Making the Most with your Manure* was held in Zeeland to help farmers identify multiple ways to get more value from manure. The program was facilitated by Nutrient Management and BioEnergy Materials Extension Educator Charles Gould. Topics that were discussed included composting, making energy on the farm, future opportunities in the carbon market, conserving nutrients in livestock diets, conserving manure nutrients during storage, and optimizing fertilizer and manure applications. The program highlighted ways in which crop farmers and livestock producers could work together to make the most of the nutrient resources from animal manure.

A survey was conducted immediately following the seminar to determine any changes participants anticipated making as a result of attending the seminar. Another survey was conducted after harvest to determine what changes were actually made. Some of the results include:

- In an effort to preserve nutrients and reduce odors from manure storage, 20% of the participants added a cover to a storage system and 20% scraped manure more frequently.
- Forty percent of the participants indicated they planted a cover crop last year.
- Participants made the following adjustments to manure handling/hauling or field applications since last February:
  - ◇ Adjusted manure application rate
    - ◇ Based on the Michigan State University Nutrient Management recommendations
  - ◇ Matched manure values more closely to soil test results
  - ◇ Incorporated or injected more manure than in previous years
    - ◇ Changed manure application equipment through the use of auto steer and variable rate equipment.
  - ◇ Adjusted manure application timing
  - ◇ Adjusted manure application rate
  - ◇ Entered into new agreements with crop producers to take/purchase manure



### Citizen Planner—Educating and Supporting Decision Makers

Michigan Citizen Planner, an MSU Extension program within the Michigan State University (MSU) Land Policy Institute ([www.landpolicy.msu.edu/](http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/)), has fostered a greater awareness of land use decision makers' roles and responsibilities, which has resulted in more livable communities, the protection and conservation of natural resources, and better overall land use decisions throughout Michigan.



The 2009 Ottawa County Citizen Planner class with their certificates of completion.

During the fall of 2009 Ottawa County MSUE offered a successful course series of Michigan Citizen Planner. Through the Citizen Planner program, MSU offers land use education and training to locally appointed and elected planning officials. The seven-session Fundamentals of Planning and Zoning presented participants with effective tools needed to perform their duties. Topics included Smart Growth, ethics, planning resources, the process of creating a Master Plan, causes of sprawl, conservation design, effective meetings and managing conflict. Citizen Planner is a non-credit course series leading to a certificate of completion awarded by MSU Extension. Advanced training to earn the Master Citizen Planner (MCP) credential is available to those that complete the seven week core series. The program was offered here in a classroom setting but it is also available as an online course. Along with the core series, Michigan Citizen Planner also provides education and training opportunities through specialty workshops throughout the state.



## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### MSU Senior District Horticulture and Marketing Educator Works to Assist Hortech Nursery to Become MAEAP Verified.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), Michigan State University (MSU), and the Ottawa Conservation District recognized the staff of Hortech Nursery for taking the lead in environmental responsibility by becoming Ottawa County's largest nursery operation to become verified by the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) in 2009. The program assists farmers in complying with state and federal environmental regulations as well as right-to-farm practices.

Hortech Nursery is an innovative ornamental plant business specializing in ground covers, ornamental grasses, ferns and vines. Live Roof LLC is a subsidiary business, which focuses on pre-vegetated green roof modules and is a leader in the industry in this technology.

A certificate presentation took place on Wednesday July 1, 2009 at Hortech Nursery, 14109 Cleveland St. Spring Lake, Michigan. Jan Wilford MAEAP Program Manager from the Michigan Department of Agriculture provided a plaque recognizing Hortech for their accomplishments, which was accepted by Chris Howe and Bill Holmes. Senator Wayne Kuipers (30<sup>th</sup> District) and Representative Arlan Meekhof (89<sup>th</sup> District) presented Hortech with a state resolution commending them for their efforts in becoming MAEAP verified.



Senator Kuipers and Representative Meekhof present Hortech staff Chris Howe and Bill Holmes with a state resolution.

Project GREEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs), Michigan's plant agriculture initiative housed at Michigan State University, funded the development and promotion of the Nursery\*A\*Syst risk assessment tool. Technical assistance locally was provided by Rob Stein of the Ottawa Conservation District in partnership with Thomas Dudek, MSU Extension (MSUE) Senior District Extension Horticulture and Marketing Educator.

To become MAEAP-verified, farmers must complete three comprehensive steps: educational seminars, a thorough on-farm risk assessment, and development and implementation of an action plan addressing potential environmental risks. The MDA conducts an on-farm inspection to verify program requirements related to applicable state and federal environmental regulations, Michigan Right-to-Farm Act guidelines and adherence to an action plan. When the inspection is completed, the producer receives a certificate of environmental assurance. To retain MAEAP verification, a farm must be inspected every three years and implement any required changes.

MAEAP is a multiyear program that allows producers to meet personal objectives while managing time and resources effectively. The program encompasses three systems-livestock, farmstead and cropping- to help producers evaluate the environmental risks of their operation. Verified nurseries meet all requirements in both the farmstead and cropping systems.

### Renewable Energy—Preparing for the Expanding Bio-Economy

Due to a number of variables, alternative energy and fuel production has gained a significant interest by our local community and by outside entities interested in the commercial production of alternative energy here in West Michigan. This brings a new set of challenges and requires the distribution of information and additional educational programming. This requires appropriate zoning, ordinances, and codes to be developed by local municipalities to make sure that growth occurs in an appropriate manner that protects the health, safety and well being of our communities. It is difficult to make appropriate decisions without having personal understanding and knowledge of alternative energy and fuel production methods. With the collaboration and sponsorship of Michigan Corn Growers, educators Charles Gould and Adam Kantrovich offered education on renewable energy systems to local appointed and elected officials, planners, and others where they were able to receive first hand access to the sights, sounds, and any odors that may exist with renewable energy systems.



Local officials visit an anaerobic digester facility that uses manure to create energy.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources



### Grand Haven Salmon Festival is More Than Family Fun

Michigan Sea Grant Extension Southwest District Educator Dr. Dan O'Keefe has been a part of Grand Haven's annual Salmon Festival for the past three years. The festival celebrates the annual return of Chinook salmon to the Grand River in mid-September with a Big King Fishing Contest, Nature Themed Art Fair, Gourmet Salmon Cook-off, Fresh Catch Fish Boil, and other seasonal activities. Dan serves annually as a member of the planning committee and contributor to Kid's Zone educational activities including filleting demonstrations and invasive species education.

In 2009, the Grand Haven Salmon Festival was included in a survey of economic impacts of fishing tournaments being conducted by Dr. Dan O'Keefe of MSUE & Michigan Sea Grant, and Dr. Steve Miller of MSU's Center for Economic Analysis. Festival attendees participated in an online survey and entered for a chance to win a free charter-fishing trip courtesy of Thunderduck Charters, Michigan Charter Boat Association, and Grand Haven Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The survey revealed that over 80% of attendees came to Grand Haven primarily for the festival, and 96% rated their experience as "Good" or "Excellent." Festival participants also weighed in with ideas on how to improve next year's festival, and provided some positive feedback. Comments included: "this is an excellent activity for Grand Haven to spotlight the sports fishing industry" and "It was great, we had a fantastic time for the whole family!" The 2009 Salmon Festival was a big hit, not least of all because of the perfect timing. Salmon could be seen rolling in the river all morning on Saturday during the Big King Contest, and one captain reported that his boat hooked over 50 fish within sight of the lighthouse!



Salmon Festival participants gather and watch intently as Dan O'Keefe demonstrates the art of filleting a large fish.



Events like the Grand Haven Salmon Festival, Grand Haven Offshore Classic, and Holland's Big Red Classic showcase Ottawa County's fantastic fishing.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Sea Grant Shows Economic Impact of Marina and Charter Boat Industry

The Great Lakes have always been an integral part of the economic vitality of Michigan. The Lakes continue to support many of our most important industries including recreation and tourism. This is especially true for a coastal county such as Ottawa. Our shoreline, water quality, and fisheries provide a substantial economic impact to Ottawa County. To demonstrate this impact, Dr. Dan O'Keefe has compiled the following data specific to the Grand Haven area.

#### 2008-2009 Ottawa County Marina & Grand Haven Charter Boat Industry Economics

In 2009 there were an estimated **4,982 boats** that docked at Great Lakes waterfront marinas in Ottawa County during the **2009** season.<sup>1,2</sup> Marina patrons generated **\$38.7 million** in sales for Ottawa County businesses creating **553 Ottawa County jobs** providing **\$13.1 million** in labor income.<sup>3</sup> This includes **187 jobs** in marina services, **92 jobs** in restaurants, **19 jobs** in gas service, and **59 jobs** in other retail trade.<sup>3</sup>

During the 2008 Grand Haven fishing season **1,613 fishing charters** took place. The Charter boats took **7,189 anglers** fishing and caught **37,559 fish**, most of which were salmon or trout.<sup>5</sup> The Grand Haven charter boats generated over **\$750,000** in revenue for charter fees in 2008.<sup>6,7</sup>

It is estimated that charter anglers and their families spent an average of an additional **\$183.31/person**<sup>8,9</sup> or a total of **\$1.32 million** in the Grand Haven area. These dollars were spent primarily on **lodging, restaurants, groceries, auto gas, shopping and entertainment**.

<sup>1</sup>Stynes, D. J., T. C. Wu, and E. M. Mahoney. 1998. 1994 Michigan Boating Survey. Clean Vessel Act/Michigan Boating Study, 1994-95: Report 2. Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station. East Lansing, MI. Research Report 549.

<sup>2</sup> Great Lakes boater registrations in all states rose 1.3% from 1999-2003, with a slight decline in Michigan according to a 2008 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) report entitled "Great Lakes Recreational Boating." Based on this, we assumed that the number of boats docked in Ottawa County marinas in 2009 was equal to the number recorded in the 1994 survey cited above.

<sup>3</sup> Economic impact figures were generated using an online calculator developed by the Recreational Marine Research Center (RMRC), accessed 2-15-10 at [http://www.marinaeconomics.com/choose\\_model.asp](http://www.marinaeconomics.com/choose_model.asp). The "Marina" calculator was used, which required input of sailboats and power boats in two size categories (<40' and 40'+). These numbers were generated using the overall number of Great Lakes waterfront boats docked in Ottawa County marinas according to the 1994 study cited above (4,982 boats), and two assumptions. First, that 6% of all Ottawa County vessels are sailboats, based on the proportion of sailboats in the Great Lakes at large according to the 1994 study cited above. Second, that 6% of all vessels in Ottawa County marinas are longer than 40' based on the percentage of occupied marina slips at least 40' in length.<sup>4</sup> Spending profiles were generated by the online calculator, using generalized profiles for small urban areas with medium spending levels.

<sup>4</sup> Stynes, D. J., T. C. Wu, and E. M. Mahoney. 1998. 1994 Michigan Boating Survey. Clean Vessel Act/Michigan Boating Study, 1994-95: Report 1. Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station. East Lansing, MI. Research Report 548.

<sup>5</sup>Wesander, D., 2009 Great Lakes Charterfishing Statistics, MDNR Fisheries Division, Great Lakes Fishery Research Station [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364\\_52261\\_47568-91516--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364_52261_47568-91516--,00.html)

<sup>6</sup> Assumes an average charter fee of \$450 per half day and \$550 for full day charters.

<sup>7</sup> A survey of 543 Michigan captains in 2002 indicated that charter operations run 71.6% half day charters and 28.4% full day charters.

Pistis, C. and Lichtkoppler, Michigan Great Lakes Charter Fishing Industry in 2002, Michigan and Ohio Sea Grant.

<sup>8</sup> In 1985 it was estimated that each charter angler spent \$92.80 within 10 miles of their fishing port.

Mahoney, E., Brunke, M and Pistis, C, 1985, Michigan Charter Fishing Study, Michigan State University, Michigan Sea Grant

<sup>9</sup> 1985 dollars are converted to 2008 dollars using an inflation calculator based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### MSUE Small Fruit Program Brings GAP Training to Blueberry Producers

In 2009 with support from Ottawa County, the USDA Risk Management Agency and the MSU Trevor Nichol Research complex, the small fruit program was able to provide the Ottawa County blueberry industry with tools and knowledge to maintain this industry as one of the economic pillars of the county. Among the services provided we highlight the educational program on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for food safety in blueberry production. In 2009, food safety (FS) became a major concern for buyers and shippers of fresh produce all over the United States and internationally. The USDA National School Lunch Program, Gerber, Wal-Mart and Spartan Stores now demand that fresh produce providers be GAP certified. Therefore, food safety is a high priority for Michigan's blueberry industry because an incident of fruit contamination such as the one experienced by the spinach industry in 2006 would be devastating, especially for small producers including minorities (women, Latino and African American) producers.



GAP classroom training

A survey conducted among 208 fruit producers regarding the importance of GAP for Food Safety in fruit production, showed that most of them are unfamiliar with its concepts and how to apply them (2008 Great Lakes Fruit EXPO). The GAP certification process is costly, growers are required to develop an individual food safety manual, then, conduct a food safety risk assessment, make the recommended improvements and pay for an hourly audit. Large fruit producers can more easily afford to hire a consultant to develop their food safety manual and pay for third party audits to be certified. However, small producers cannot afford these expenses and require an objective third party. MSU Extension has been able to provide information and education to local producers about GAP for Food Safety concepts and developing their food safety manuals for preparation of third party audit and certification.

In support of the Ottawa County blueberry industry we completed a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) manual for blueberry production, and conducted five training sessions with growers, farm workers and workers involved in processing blueberries in a local blueberry co-op. We provided 16 hours of face to face training to 37 blueberry growers, 60% of them Ottawa County residents or with blueberry operations in the county. The training included their participation in a mock audit at two blueberry farms. This exercise was conducted with the support of the USDA GAP auditors. In addition 75 workers of the West Michigan Processing Co-Op located in Holland received six hours of face to face training on food safety to improve the food safety standards of this local blueberry processing plant. The manual created for the program "Good Agricultural Practices for Food Safety in Blueberry Production: Basic Principles" has been adopted by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) as a platform to develop its own food safety manual. This manual will be the official manual for the entire U.S. blueberry industry.



Participants take notes at the GAP hands-on field training

Growers receiving training under this program may obtain up to \$300 each in savings by reducing consulting time and audit fees. Under the USDA Audit program the standard fee for the third party audit is \$95 per hour. However, the most important benefit will be their unrestricted access to markets that require the producer to be GAP Certified.

# Agriculture and Natural Resources

## Consumer Horticulture and the Master Gardener Program

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program (MGVP) had a very busy year in 2009. Along with the annual offering of the MGVP 12 week training program numerous continuing education classes were offered to trained Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) and to the public. These classes included topics such as pruning, dahlias, perennials, backyard habitat and small woody ornamentals. Work continued on the Grand Haven Educational Garden and on new projects. Projects are supported by fundraising efforts such as the annual plant sale held at the educational garden and ongoing garden tool sales. Highlights include:

- Ottawa County MGVP is excited to announce the launch of a new pilot program, the Youth Education Program (YEP)! This program is made possible in part by a \$3,500.00 grant from the Youth Fund of the Grand Haven Community Foundation. The funds were awarded in December 2009. Adult MGVs will teach the program to 15 youth during the summer and fall of 2010. The MGVP Education Garden in Grand Haven will serve as an outdoor classroom. Participants will learn the basics of plant science, beneficial insects, vegetable gardening, composting and more. The goal is to impress upon the students the holistic connection between gardening and the earth's ecological systems.
- The beautification of North Ottawa Community Health System's Heartwood (Hospice) Lodge continues as MGVs lend their talents. MGVs designed and planted new flower beds and installed a waterfall feature. A second waterfall and additional flower beds were begun in the fall. MGVs contributed landscape designs to be implemented during 2010. The goal is to provide a richly planted landscape that will allow residents and visitors to interact with nature.
- The Hudsonville Farmer's Market was added to our list of venues (Holland and Grand Haven) where MGVs are available to answer plant and garden questions and provide MSUE bulletins to homeowners. This continues to be one of our most visible and popular volunteer activities and is a welcomed outreach service to the public. Many applicants for the annual training program report that they found out about the MSUE MGVP while visiting their local farmers market and meeting MGVs.

### Master Gardener Volunteer Hours

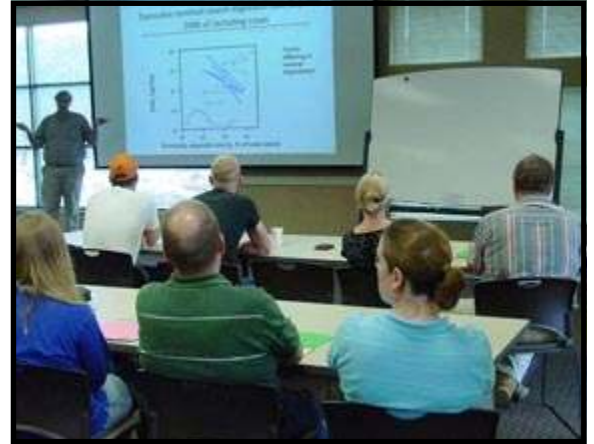
<u>Group</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Number Served</u>
Churches	355	1,293
Community Gardens	744	2,396
Conservation/Ecology/ Restoration	342	1,227
Grand Haven Education Garden	469	2,015
Farmer's Market	684	4,136
Firewise	31	784
Friends/Families/Neighbors	714	1,126
Libraries	74	192
MG Helpline	70	88
MGVP Administration Assistance	155	1,085
Ask-A-Master Gardener	43	419
Teaching/Instructing	82	793
Schools/Gardening with Kids	100	602
Parks/Nature Centers/Cities	30	155
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living	163	1,212
Garden Clubs	133	3,003
Nursery & Landscape Associations	46	73
Non Profits/Other	330	5,510
Soil Testing	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,569</b>	<b>26,124</b>
<b>Value of volunteer time per hour:</b>		<b>\$20.25</b>
<b>\$ Value of Volunteer Hours:</b>		<b>\$92,522.25</b>



## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Extension Responds to Dairy Financial Crisis

The rise in grain and commodity feed prices during 2008 and then falling farm milk pay prices during 2009 resulted in the largest loss of equity the dairy industry has ever seen. In response to the crisis, MSU Extension dairy education programs included a Group Feeding Dairy Cattle meeting with Dr. Mike Allen, MSU, and his presentation on Hepatic Oxidation Theory (HOT). The meeting was held in Ottawa County and was hosted by Senior District Dairy Extension Educator Bill Robb. The audience of 44 included 27 farmers, 10 nutritionists, 5 veterinarians and 2 agribusiness representatives. They represented the counties of Ottawa (12) Kent (2) Ionia (2) Newaygo (6) and Isabella (1). These farms milk over 3,000 cows. Results of the post meeting evaluations rated the overall program high with at least half those that responded indicating that they gained a higher level of knowledge on the HOT.



Dr. Allen explains the benefits of group feeding dairy cattle.



Blain Becktold, Ottawa Farm Service Agency and Jim Hilken, MSU relate how the Farm Bill will impact Ottawa County farmers.

Robb's response to the dairy financial crisis also included a variety of other programs, presentations and on-site farm visits. This included Telfarm year-end tax Check-in consultations and conducting business analysis for individual farms which included a whole farm cost of production analysis completed on Excel spreadsheet. In addition, Robb conducted two dairy finances discussions which reached 18 farmers. Robb discussed economics and records at the four Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) banquets attended by 314 people and attended local sessions of Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) milk marketing cooperatives contacting 420 people in west Michigan. In early 2009, meetings regarding the new 2008 Farm Bill were conducted in Ottawa and Newaygo counties that attracted 55 farmers. Robb presented the dairy section of the farm bill. This presentation with audio recording was loaded on the web and can be found at <https://www.msu.edu/~betz/>.

### Artisan Cheese Workshops-Developing Entrepreneurs

Two Artisan Cheese workshops were conducted in 2009 at the MSU Dairy Plant that attracted 38 students. Ten participants were from west Michigan and two were Ottawa county residents. Evaluations indicate several class participants will start up a new enterprise on their farm or a new cheese business. The class which is both lecture and hands on cheese making was rated "great" by 32 of the 38 participants.

Only one of the 38 class participants had previously made cheese as a business and 21 reported their only prior cheese making experience in the kitchen as a hobby cheese maker. Eight are planning to make and sell cheese, and even though many of the plans are in infant stages, may potentially represent over 67,500 pounds of cheese annually. This may represent over \$810,000 or more of new farm income. It is hoped that these workshops will be conducted each year and help jump start the artisan cheese industry in Ottawa County and throughout West Michigan as local foods become more important to consumers.



Bill Robb examines a block of cheese produced at the Artisan Cheese workshop.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### MSU Extension Holds Farmers Market Managers Workshop to Enhance Local Farmers Markets

In February 2009, the Ottawa County Fillmore Administration Building was the site of a day long educational program targeted to farmers market managers. Senior Extension District Horticulture and Marketing Educator Thomas Dudek developed the program with input from area market masters.

In five west Michigan counties we have 26 local farmers markets which provide fresh locally grown fruits, vegetables, plants and homemade food products to local communities. These markets are a vital part of our communities and serve as a great link from the farmers to the consumer. Market masters from Grand Haven, Coopersville, Holland, Spring Lake, Hudsonville, Grand Valley State University and Allendale markets in Ottawa County attended.



Presenters provided detailed information on farmers market food safety guidelines, techniques to improve advertising of markets to consumers, methods used by markets to verify products are “farmer grown” and a roundtable discussion on ways to assess economic impacts to local communities which host farmers markets.

As a result of the meeting, a web page has been created on the Ottawa County MSU Extension portal. The web page contains resources and information on farmers markets for both market masters and the vendors that sell at the markets. The web page can be accessed by going to [www.msue.msu.edu/ottawa](http://www.msue.msu.edu/ottawa) and clicking on the “Farmers Markets” link on the left side of the screen under “Local Information.” Feedback from the 2009 program was very positive and the 17 participants requested a follow-up meeting in early 2010.

### Popular Program Continues to Grow

The “Ag in the Classroom” program continued to be a popular addition to classroom curriculum in Ottawa County elementary schools throughout 2009. The program is a result of a partnership between Ottawa County MSU Extension and the Ottawa County Farm Bureau. The main purpose of the program is to help children learn where the food that they eat comes from and how that food gets to their tables. MSU Extension Program Associate Brenda Raterink reported that teachers really have begun to realize that there are many connections between the lessons she presents on agriculture and the curriculum changes occurring in Michigan schools. Teachers have commented that they find the Ag in the Classroom lessons support their school curriculum in social studies, science and math.

#### Ag in the Classroom Program Summary

Schools visited in Ottawa County	46
Classrooms visited	178
Students reached	4106



Along with her classroom presentations, Raterink offers field trips to her family’s working dairy farm. There the students see first hand the operations of a modern farming facility and they come away with a better understanding of the origin of the food they eat. A third grade classroom from New Groningen School in the Zeeland School District was one of the classes to visit the farm and Raterink visited the classroom twice to present two lessons. All of this exposure to agriculture must have left a lasting impression on at least one student from the classroom. Student Audra Joy Durden created a poster and entered it in the seventh annual MSU Ag Week poster contest sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau. The theme of the contest was “I Spy a Caring Farmer.” Audra’s poster was chosen as the Ottawa County winner and then went on to place third in the state competition where she won a \$50 savings bond.

Third grade student Audra Joy Durden of New Groningen Elementary School won third place with this poster in the statewide Ag Week poster contest.

# Children, Youth, Families & Communities



## 4-H Youth Development in Ottawa County

Ottawa County is blessed with hundreds of dedicated volunteers who work together to bring one of the finest 4-H programs in the nation to thousands of youth between the ages of 5 and 19. In 2009 there were 89 active 4-H clubs in our county. The volunteers work with those clubs weekly throughout most of the year bringing educational programs to the youth through hands-on activities.

The 4-H clubs work together to support the youth in learning science through participation in quiz bowl and judging contests at MSU each year. Ottawa County 4-H teams consistently rank in the top five in the state. One individual Rob Ferwerda won \$1,000 as the top all round individual in dairy science in Michigan.

At the end of 2009 we were awarded a grant to expand our competitive judging program to include horses and hippology (the study of horses). We will have four new teams competing in these venues at MSU in 2010.

Active 4-H clubs	89
Traditional 4-H club members	1,193
Adult volunteers	582
\$ Value of volunteer hours	\$1,073,250



The tack sale event raised funds to help support the 4-H horse program.

In 2009 our volunteers held the largest tack sale in West Michigan to raise funds to support the horse program. The 4-H Council and Teen Club worked together to organize a regional workshop on showing and fitting ten species which was attended by several hundred youth and adult volunteers from across Michigan. Our annual Spring Achievement program featured the sewing expertise and garment modeling of 68 youth. Over 600 arts and crafts projects were exhibited as well.

The three fairs of Ottawa County continue to support our educational efforts by providing an excellent venue for members to display their experience and knowledge through competition. Each fair provided competition and display of thousands of 4-H projects. In addition the market livestock auctions brought in hundreds of area businesses as buyers of 4-H projects resulting in sales of over \$750,000 for our youth.





## Children, Youth, Families & Communities

### Building Leaders for Today and Tomorrow

*Here is what some of our young leaders have to say about their experience in 4-H*



"I have never felt that I'm good at leadership, but through 4-H I have gained a better understanding of what a leader needs to do. Being a leader is not just telling other people what to do, but to show them and to help them do it so they can learn from it. 4-H has given me the confidence to pursue leadership roles. I am excited for the upcoming elections in my clubs as I have been nominated for an officer position. Since joining 4-H, I have expanded my community service, and have realized how rewarding it is and for that, I am thankful."

*Megan Troupe, Age 13*



"Through my participation in 4-H I have become more confident and have learned how to be more patient. I have learned that no matter what your situation you should have a positive attitude and the importance of good sportsmanship. I am learning how to handle disappointments as well as victories. 4-H has also given me the opportunity to experience other options for my future. I realize that I can find something I love to do and make a career out of it. I hope to get more of my pictures published in magazines, and someday make my own animal calendars. Whatever career I choose, I know it will be with animals. I do know that I am learning more and more every year that will help me make those decisions."

*Hannah Troupe, Age 15*



"My participation in 4-H has been life changing. When 4-H came into my life, it began shifting my world for the better. Through the help of my leaders and advisors, I have learned to take pride in my work and not accept anything less than my personal best. 4-H has steered me towards my future profession; I will be forever thankful that I have had the opportunity to acknowledge my deep passion for horses and animals early on in life, so I can be forever content in my future career as a veterinary specialist. The morals that I live by today have been heavily influenced by those who I respect most, and the majority of those people are my 4-H leaders, advisors and fellow members. 4-H has given me so much more than what I originally thought it would seven years ago. 4-H is my life now"

*Tiffany Bystra, Age 16*



"Being involved in the Ottawa County 4-H Teen Club has given me business appropriate skills, learned in a safe haven where anyone is able to try their hand at leadership without inappropriate criticism and with positive role models. Being in the teen club lead me to feel confident enough to try out being vice-president of my horse club and to also try my skills out in school where I have been elected both class president and student congress president. Without 4-H in my life I would not have possessed the confidence in myself to be able to succeed. Ottawa County 4-H has given me the necessary skills to survive and thrive in the harsh environment of today's economy."

*Erica Slagter, Age 17*



"Our 4-H pledge "to make the best better" is the reason why we work so hard to achieve our goals. I will take all that I have learned through 4-H with me on my journey into the world. I know that everything I will have learned will help me grow to be a responsible adult and help me to be successful."

*Camille Brillinger, Age 17*

# Children, Youth, Families & Communities



## 4-H Youth Mentoring in Ottawa County

2009 was a busy and exciting year for Ottawa County MSU Extension 4-H Youth Mentoring. The 4-H Youth Mentoring team, Laura Schleede, 4-H Mentoring Program Coordinator, Harold McDermid, Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring Program Associate, Jennifer Morse, Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring Program Associate, and AmeriCorps members Betsy Knoll, Barb Brow and Jeff Walker continued to share their passion and dedication for mentoring, volunteers and youth.

### Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring

Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring continues in its efforts to reduce the frequency and severity of offenses committed by delinquent youth, ages 8-17, in Ottawa County. It is a collaborative effort between Michigan State University Extension and the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court, Family Division/ Juvenile Services. The program serves youth who are on probation or at risk of future involvement with the court by giving them an opportunity to have a mentor. A mentor helps to empower youth to increase self-esteem, gain life skills and engage in pro-social activities. In 2009 Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring engaged 39 youth and 36 volunteers in mentoring efforts.

In 2009:

- 83% of mentored youth decreased the frequency of offenses during their match.
- 75% of mentored youth decreased the severity of offenses during their match.
- 46% of mentored youth did not commit any offenses during their match.
- 81% of matches lasted beyond their initial 12-month commitment with matches meeting an average of 2-6 hours per week

As a result of having a relationship with a mentor:

- 100% feel that there are people who will help them if they need it
- 91% feel that they have more options for their future
- 100% have higher expectations of themselves
- 91% are more honest
- 64% are better able to resist using drugs or alcohol
- 91% have more interests or hobbies
- 82% feel they are better leaders
- 91% feel more confident in themselves

Quotes from Journey 4-H Youth:

*The best thing about having a mentor is having someone else to talk to about my problems. It helps to have that male point of view. –Journey 4-H Youth*

*The best thing about having a mentor is having someone older to talk to and to ask for advice. My mentor helps me feel good about myself. I have become more comfortable with the way I am since I've been matched with her. – Journey 4-H Youth*

*Having a mentor gives me something to look forward to. My mentor has helped me become more responsible and has taught me how to handle bad or good situations. I feel more positive and don't find life such a drag. –Journey 4-H Youth*

This year Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring began offering outdoor activities to mentors and mentored youth. These structured activities provide matches with opportunities to strengthen their relationships, gain exposure to new activities, build new skills and ease any anxiety or apprehension that some may feel in building a mentoring relationship. Journey 4-H received grants from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of the Holland/ Zeeland Area and a 4-H Participation Fee grant to support these activities.

Throughout the year, mentoring matches participated in new activities such as rock climbing, biking, canoeing, hiking, fishing, camping skills, outdoor safety and geocaching. These experiences have helped matches learn and strengthen their leadership, teamwork, communication, goal setting and problem solving skills.



*The MSU Extension Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring Program of Ottawa County is the proud recipient of the 2009 Governor's Service Award for Outstanding Mentoring Program. The Outstanding Mentoring Program Award goes to an exceptional mentoring program that has systems in place for recruitment, retention, background checks, ongoing support and evaluation and is responsible for developing and maintaining high-quality experiences for both the mentor and mentee. The award was presented at An Evening with the Stars, a celebration hosted by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern held Thursday, June 18, 2009.*

*Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring was also honored to have one of its mentors, Michelle Ripka, be one of five finalists for the Outstanding Mentor of the Year Award. Michelle has been a volunteer since 2001 and has been matched with three young women throughout her time with the program.*

## Children, Youth, Families & Communities

### Ottawa County Mentoring Collaborative

The Ottawa County Mentoring Collaborative (OCMC) continued to make significant strides throughout 2009. The OCMC grew from twelve to thirteen mentoring programs within Ottawa County who work together to provide quality activities and events to mentors and mentored youth, strengthen collaborative partnerships, and build strong connections within this community. The OCMC hosted 22 free activities with 346 mentors and mentored youth participating in 2009. These activities have been updated to include service opportunities, outdoor experiences and skill building activities.



This year the OCMC visited the Holland Rescue Mission Auto Center, where youth and mentors participated in hands-on instruction regarding auto maintenance and simple repairs. Other activities included visits to the Critter Barn, Frederik Meijer Gardens, Tiger Stadium, ice skating at the Edge and sheep sheering at Shady Side Farm. The OCMC is very fortunate to have many businesses and organizations offer mentoring matches a variety of free or discounted activities. Mentors have the option to visit over 65 area businesses with their mentee and enjoy special discounts on their products and services through the OCMC Mentor Card program, helping defray the cost to mentors of treating their youth when they are together.

The OCMC held two major events in 2009 that attracted over 225 mentors, youth and community members. The fourth annual Miles for Mentoring 5K Walk/Run was held on September 12<sup>th</sup> in Zeeland, Michigan. The race is a way for the OCMC to provide a healthy choice activity for matches while inviting community members to join the race to raise money and awareness of the need for caring adults to mentor. The OCMC gained a wonderful new community partner in the City on a Hill Ministries who donated their facility as a new home to stage the race this year. The OCMC worked closely with the Zeeland Police to provide a safe, neighborhood race route for participants and those driving the roads. These elements combined to provide a fun, successful day for everyone.



Walkers and runners prepare for the Miles for Mentoring 5K in Zeeland.



Nick Suravaram, the Cal Steele Spirit of Mentoring Award 2009 winner and his wife Anu pose with Cal, his wife Marilyn, 2008 winner Bill Miller and MSUE's Lisa Bottomley

The Magic of Mentoring Celebration was the other event held this year. The Collaborative came together on January 6, 2009 to celebrate and honor the mentors and mentees representing OCMC programs. Mentoring programs pooled their talents and resources to host an evening of entertainment and recognition for the mentors, mentees, parents and guests at the Third Annual Magic of Mentoring Celebration. 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Judge Ed Post emceed the Celebration and several members of the Men in Mentoring Task Force presented awards throughout the evening. A silent auction held at the event raised \$472 for the collaborative to use toward the monthly activities.

Thirteen year old Big Brothers Big Sisters mentee, Katelyn McFarland, spoke to the audience with her mentor, Betsy Knoll, by her side so she would have the courage to speak before the audience. Katelyn said:

*"I really like spending time with Betsy because she is a lot of fun. I like hanging out with her at her house because her family is so nice to me... Betsy has helped me in many ways, but most of all she is a great friend. I can talk to her about anything and she will listen. I like that she will suggest ways to help me but never says, 'You need to do this'. She encourages me to think for myself and teaches me to stand up for my beliefs...I feel that she really cares for me and lets me call her when I need her. She is a great friend and mentor."*

This testimony and others like it remind us all how something so simple can be so profound. The Magic of Mentoring Celebration renews the spirit of mentoring and serves as a rededication to continue the support programs provided through the Ottawa County Mentoring Collaborative. Together we can make a difference.



Mentee Katelyn and Mentor Betsy pose for the camera after their speech.

## Children, Youth, Families & Communities

### Family and Consumer Science Programs

In 2009, the Children, Youth, Families, and Communities (CYFC) Extension Educator provided family and consumer science programming in a number of areas that included Elder Friendly Communities, financial literacy/home budgeting, family resource management, child ecology, nutrition, food safety, and human development. Due to the elimination of county funding for these local programs, 2009 was the last year these programs were offered. Here are some program highlights:

- ◇ 723 income eligible adults and seniors were provided nutrition education instruction through the following programs and locations: Senior Project FRESH, Elder Friendly Communities, Project FRESH, Head Start, Harbor House, and Kandu Industries. The most requested topic of the year as part of our nutrition education program was “Meal Planning on a Budget”.
- ◇ Through mass media and newsletters, a variety of valuable programming was provided including a monthly Family Nutrition Program Newsletter provided to the Grand Haven WIC office, local food pantries, and the Ottawa County Commodity Supplemental Food Program that serves 452 seniors January through September; two budgeting programs on the Lakeshore Living television program that targets 6000 cable viewers between the ages of 50-70 were recorded; 39 radio spots through a weekly radio show on WGHN (Grand Haven) and a bi-weekly show on WHTC (Holland) with a potential audience of 40,000+ constituents being reached. Program topics included food safety, food preservation, budgeting, parenting, child development, energy efficiency and more.
- ◇ 108 adults were provided budgeting programs at libraries, a church group, Zeeland Community Hospital, the NuUnion Credit Union and the Fillmore Complex.
- ◇ 242 adults and 11 youth attended miscellaneous educational programs that included Living Within Your Means, Financial Counseling 101, Mini College Day, Holiday Sampler, Working with Picky Eaters and Ladies Day at the Fair,
- ◇ As a Steering Committee participant of “Blueprint for Action-Preparing for Aging in Holland,” the CYFC Extension Educator assisted with the development of a Community for a Lifetime assessment tool and process and co-facilitated a community focus group during this process. The assessment reviewed the community’s health, housing, community engagement, active aging and public infrastructure.
- ◇ 32 local social service agency staff attended a half-day “Financial Counseling 101” program which provided participants with an MSU Extension on-line financial tool kit that contained a variety of resources that could be utilized with agency clientele.
- ◇ Responses were given to 258 community inquiries on topics that included food nutrition program referrals, Project FRESH, Better Kid Care Lending Library, budget information, food safety, preservation, and food preparation.

### Senior Project FRESH 2009—Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

The Ottawa County MSU Extension Educator for Children, Youth, Families and Communities, Jennifer Ortquist, implemented the Senior Project FRESH (SPF) 2009 Program in July and August. This program year served the largest number of SPF participants with 452 income eligible seniors receiving free coupons to purchase locally grown produce at participating Farmers Markets. MSU Extension received \$24,000 in grants and donations to purchase SPF coupons and received a \$3,775 grant for SPF program implementation costs.

A survey was sent to evaluate the effectiveness of the program to each of the participants in November. Survey results indicate that 93% of respondents ate more fresh fruits and vegetables as a result of receiving the SPF coupons, 92% spent all of their coupons by their expiration date, 58% planned to continue to eat the same amount of fruits and vegetables in the winter months as they did during the SPF program and 99% stated that they would participate in the Senior Project FRESH program if offered again. Unfortunately due to reductions in funding, the Senior Project FRESH Program will be significantly reduced in 2010.

Funds for SPF 2009 were received from the Ottawa County Farm Bureau, Michigan Office of Services to the Aging through a US Department of Agriculture grant, the North Ottawa County Council on Aging and the Ottawa County Wellness Coalition through Michigan Department of Community Health and Food Stamp Nutrition Education grants. Senior Project FRESH is a collaborative effort between the Ottawa County MSU Extension and Ottawa County Community Action Agency and involves the participation of local farmers.



*Thank you to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners  
for their continued support of the educational and  
outreach programs of Ottawa County MSU Extension.*

Joyce Kortman, District 1

Phil Kuyers, District 2

Dennis W. Swartout, District 3

Jane Ruiten, District 4

Matthew Hehl, District 5

Roger Rycenga, District 6

Gordon Schrottenboer, District 7

Donald Disslekoen, District 8

Robert W. Karsten, District 9

James C. Holtrop, District 10

James Holtvluwer, District 11

# Action Request



**Committee:** Board of Commissioners

**Meeting Date:** 5/11/2010

**Requesting Department:** Administrator's Office

**Submitted By:** Keith Van Beek

**Agenda Item:** Final Results of the 2010 Citizen Survey

## SUGGESTED MOTION:

To receive the Final Results of the 2010 Citizen Survey.

## SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Board of Commissioners has authorized a citizens survey at a cost of \$18,820.00 to be conducted every other year as a part of their effort to gather input from citizens on the services provided by the County. EPIC – MRA is a respected firm that specializes in providing these services and conducted similar surveys for the County in 2006 and 2008.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Total Cost: \$0.00 | County Cost: \$0.00 | Included in Budget:  Yes |  No

If not included in budget, recommended funding source:

## ACTION IS RELATED TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:

Mandated |  Non-Mandated |  New Activity

## ACTION IS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal: #2

Objective: #1 & #2

## ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Recommended

Not Recommended

County Administrator: **Alan G. Vanderberg**

Digitally signed by Alan G. Vanderberg  
DN: cn=Alan G. Vanderberg, o=US, ou=County of Ottawa, ou=Administrator's Office, email=avanderberg@miottawa.org  
Reason: I am approving this document  
Date: 2010.05.07 11:22:02 -0400

Committee/Governing/Advisory Board Approval Date:

**Ottawa County Citizen Survey**  
**April 2010**

Presented by:

**EPIC ■ MRA**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

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## METHODOLOGY

**EPIC ▪ MRA** administered interviews with 400 registered voters residing in Ottawa County, Michigan, from March 10 - 13, 2010. Respondents were selected utilizing an interval method of randomly selecting records of published residential telephone numbers. The sample was stratified so that every area of the county is represented in the sample according to its contribution to general election turnout. Interviews were terminated if the respondent indicated that he or she had not voted in at least one of the two most recent November general elections.

In interpreting survey results, all surveys are subject to error; that is, the results of the survey may differ from those that would have been obtained if the entire populations were interviewed. This “margin of error” quantifies the degree to which random sampling will differ from a survey of the entire population, taking into account, among other things, the disposition of individuals who do not complete the interview. Put another way, the opinions of those who are not randomly selected or who decline to be interviewed, are no more or less likely to be different – within the margin of error – than the opinions of those who complete an interview and are included in the sample. The size of sampling error depends on the total number of respondents to the particular question.

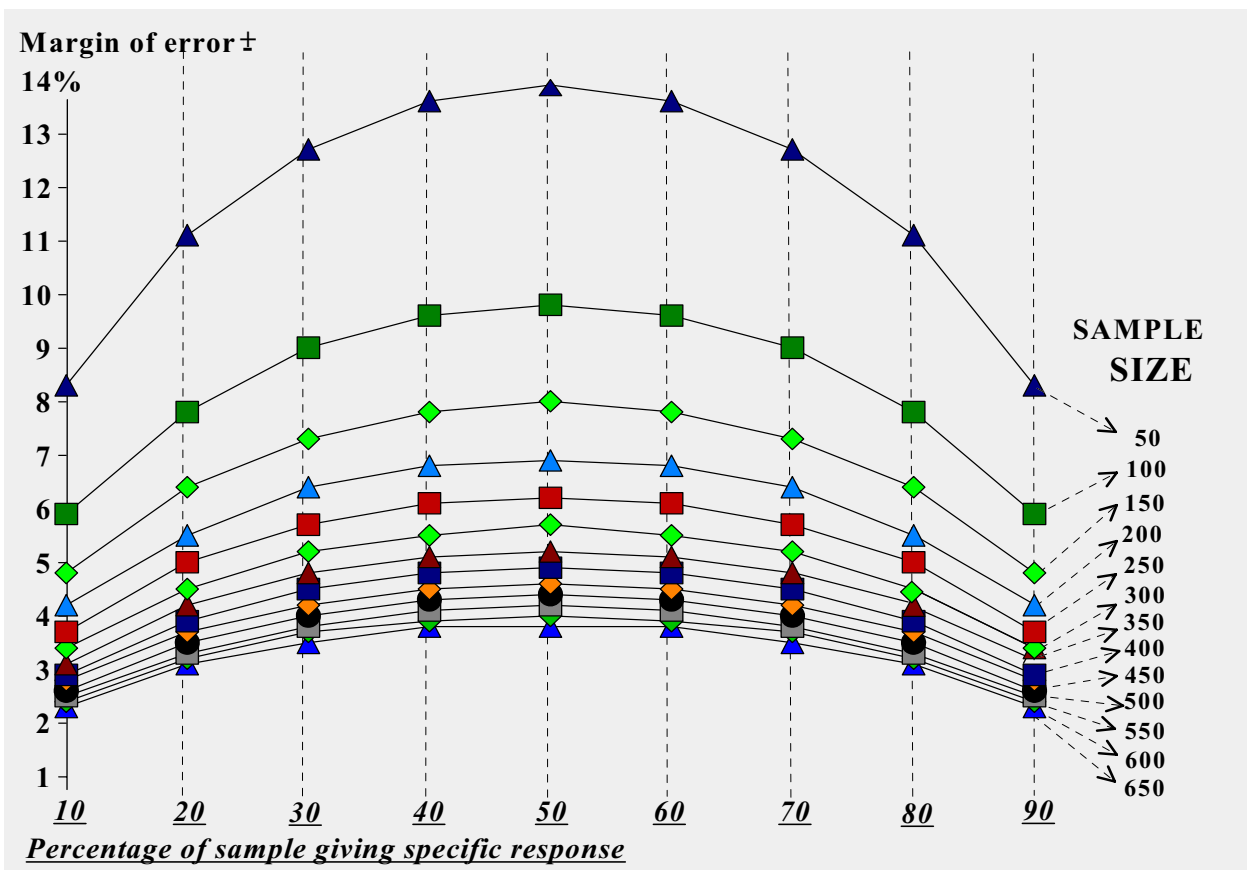
For example, 50 percent of all 400 respondents indicated they thought it was important “To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees and other stakeholders” (Question # 07). As indicated in the chart below, this percentage would have a sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 percent. This means that with repeated sampling, it is very likely (95 times out of every 100), the percentage for the entire population would fall between 45.1 percent and 54.9 percent, hence 50 percent  $\pm$ 4.9 percent. The table on the next page represents the estimated sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses based on sample size.

County geography was broken down into five regions. Region 1 included: Holland City and Township, Park Township, and Zeeland City and Township. Region 2 included: Georgetown Township, Hudsonville City, and Jamestown Township. Region 3 included: Ferrysburg City, Grand Haven City and Township, and Spring Lake Township. Region 4 included: Allendale Township, Blendon Township and Olive Township. And Region 5 included: Chester Township, Coopersville City, Crockery Township, Polkton Township, Tallmadge Township and Wright Township.

EPIC ▪ MRA SAMPLING ERROR BY PERCENTAGE (AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)

Percentage of sample giving specific response

SAMPLE SIZE	<u>% margin of error ±</u>								
	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>90</u>
650	2.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.1	2.3
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
550	2.5	3.3	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.3	2.5
500	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6
450	2.8	3.7	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.7	2.8
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
350	3.1	4.2	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.2	3.1
300	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
250	3.7	5.0	5.7	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.0	3.7
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
150	4.8	6.4	7.3	7.8	8.0	7.8	7.3	6.4	4.8
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9
50	8.3	11.1	12.7	13.6	13.9	13.6	12.7	11.1	8.3



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EPIC ▪ MRA was commissioned in 2010 by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners to measure public opinion about county government operations in a “customer satisfaction” survey. In addition, there was interest in measuring voter sentiment toward a possible ballot proposal to approve a 0.1 mill increase in property tax assessments to fund a “Purchase of Development Rights” program that would be designed to preserve existing farmland.

There was also an interest in testing voter support for the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners taking action to increase property taxes by one-half mill to make up for revenue sharing cuts imposed by State government, and also to test support for increasing taxes by 0.1 mill to fund the startup cost of implementing a less expensive defined contribution pension program instead of the current defined benefit plan.

Similar studies were conducted on behalf of the county in 2008 and in 2006, with most of the questions replicated in the 2010 survey. Throughout the following analysis, differences in outcomes between the 2010 and 2008 surveys are discussed, where appropriate.

### -- **Questionnaire Frame**

An obvious starting point for gauging “customer satisfaction” is to inquire about attitudes toward county services in general and to determine if voters perceive, in a broad sense, whether or not things are going well in the county. In addition, measurements of what respondents believe is the biggest problem facing county government and questions about the perceptions of specific county agencies, departments, and programs are instructive. In order to accurately assess public opinion regarding possible tax options, it is necessary to probe attitudes regarding relative tax burden, and to investigate top-of-mind responses to general likes, dislikes, and preferences.

### -- **General Observations**

Given the continued rate of high unemployment in Michigan, it is not surprising that uncertainty over the economy colors the responses to survey questions to a much greater extent in the current 2010 survey than was discovered in the 2008 or the 2006 surveys. This driving force behind voter opinion is manifest in several areas of the survey, beginning with the responses to an open-ended question about “Biggest Problem” and the responses in a question with prompted response options for biggest “Issue concern”.

In the survey of 2006, “Jobs” shared the largest portion of open-ended responses together with “Schools” – both at thirteen percent. This was followed closely by “Growth/Sprawl” at 12 percent, rounding out the very diverse top three response categories for a combined 38 percent of responses. In 2008, the top problem cited was “Unemployment”, cited by 27 percent, which is more than twice the percentage as the top problem of “Jobs” cited in 2006. In 2010, “Unemployment” was cited in an open ended response by 32 percent.

Likewise, when survey respondents were read a list of 10 issues and asked which one concerned them the most, “Providing economic development and jobs” was cited in 2010 by nearly half of all respondents, 45 percent, which is a significant increase from the 37 percent offering the same response in 2008, or the 32 percent expressing the same view in 2006.

In the current 2010 survey, “Education” and “Taxes” were the next highest areas of concern with 13 percent citing “Improving the quality of area schools” and 12 percent citing “Keeping local taxes and fees low”. In 2008, “Protecting the public from crime and drugs” was the second highest issue concern at 14 percent, followed by “Keeping local taxes and fees low” at 9 percent.

In 2006, issues surrounding growth dominated opinion following the top concern about the economy. The top secondary issue concern was “Controlling traffic congestion”, cited by 12 percent, with “Controlling unplanned development and sprawl” cited by 11 percent. Also in 2006, “Improving the quality of area schools” and “Keeping local taxes and fees low” were each cited by 10 percent as their top concern. In the current 2010 survey, “Controlling unplanned development and sprawl” was only cited by 5 percent, and “Controlling traffic congestion” was only mentioned by 1 percent.

The 2010 results clearly show a significant decline in the level of concern about taxes in Ottawa County. There was a nine point drop from 2008 (39 to 30 percent) in the overall percentage of respondents who said that “Taxes [are] too high” in return for what they received in county services. There was also a 10 point drop in the percentage of respondents who said that taxes were “Much too high” (19 to 9 percent). In 2006, only 27 percent overall said that taxes were too high, and only 6 percent said taxes were much too high.

Normally, a decline in the percentage saying that taxes are too high could mean that voters may be more receptive to tax increase proposals. However, voter response to other questions suggests that is not necessarily the case.

The lack of support among voters for higher taxes can be seen in the percentage of voters who chose one of two options that were offered for how the county could address a revenue shortfall. Respondents were presented with two statements – “Keeping taxes low even if it means a cut in services”, or “Maintaining services even if it means a tax increase”, and asked to select which of these two statements more closely reflects the way they feel. In the current 2010 survey, a 58 percent majority of Ottawa County voters said they would prefer a “Cut in services” rather than an “Increase in taxes”. This is the highest percentage opting for budget cuts of any of the three surveys conducted. In 2006, a narrow plurality of respondents (49 percent to 44 percent) opted for the “Cut in services” statement, and in 2008, a 53 percent majority selected the same option.

In the three biennial surveys taken to date, respondents were presented with the reality that state revenue sharing dollars coming back to the county were decreasing precipitously and they were also informed that a ½ mill increase would serve to replace the loss. In the 2006 and 2008 surveys the method for increasing property taxes was presented in two ways. The first would be through a popular vote at the ballot, and another, presented subsequent to the ballot method question, would be by the Board of Commissioners, unilaterally acting to increase the assessment against property via resolution. For the 2010 survey, the Board action method of increasing the millage for the purpose of replacing lost revenue sharing was kept but the ballot question avenue of increasing the millage for this purpose was not presented.

When the two methods of a prospective ballot proposal, and unilateral action by the Board of Commissioners to increase taxes without a public vote, were tested in the first two surveys, unilateral action by the Board was solidly opposed in 2006, while voters expressed a willingness to support a ballot proposal by a respectable majority. In 2008, voters were fairly evenly split on a ballot proposal, but still opposed to unilateral Board action, albeit by less of a majority than in 2006.

The 2010 survey, in which the ballot question option was not presented to respondents, there is far greater receptivity of the Board acting to raise taxes without a popular vote than in the previous years. Indeed, expressed opposition to such action just reaches the 50 percent mark. Whether or not this sentiment about relinquishing the decision about a tax increase to the Board is a function of an alternative ballot question option not being presented to respondents in the 2010 survey (voters tend to prefer having the opportunity to vote on tax issues over having

elected officials decide the question – especially if they are reminded of it in a telephone interview) is open to question. It is also possible that the result is a culmination of the trend over the last three surveys showing decreased vehemence against the Board acting unilaterally on the question, notwithstanding other data in the survey indicating voters expressing a preference for cuts in services over increases in taxes. The chart below illustrates the results from the past three surveys on this question:

<b>Proposal to Replace Lost Revenue Sharing Dollars with a One-half mill Property Tax Increase</b>			
	Increase Rate via Ballot Question		
	2006	2008	2010
Yes	55%	42%	
No	39%	38%	NOT ASKED
Undecided	6%	20%	
Increase Rate via Board Resolution			
Support	26%	22%	42%
Oppose	66%	59%	50%
Undecided	8%	19%	8%

In a new question asked in the current 2010 survey, voters said that they would vote “No” on a ballot proposal which if approved, would establish a fund with a 0.1 mill tax increase to purchase the development rights of farmland and would cost the average homeowner \$5 per year in additional taxes. Respondents were informed that currently, private donations and grants are used to pay landowners to place deed restrictions on their property to preserve their use as farmland.

Notwithstanding the low cost of the proposed tax increase, a 50 percent bare majority, including 44 percent who would directly vote “No” and 6 percent who lean toward “No”, said they would vote to reject the proposal, 42 percent would vote “Yes”, and 8 percent were “Undecided”.

Survey respondents were also asked if they would favor or oppose a 0.1 mill property tax increase for up to 13 years to provide the short term start-up costs of \$8 million to convert the

current pension program for county employees from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution, 401K type of pension program, which could save the County a projected \$30 million over 30 years. Respondents were also informed that, as with other tax related proposals tested in the 2010 survey, the County Board of Commissioners could increase the tax rate without a public vote because Ottawa County does not currently levy the maximum amount allowed by law.

Voters favor the proposal by a 49 to 41 percent plurality, including 17 percent who very much favored the plan and 26 percent who very much opposed it. Another 8 percent were “Undecided” and 2 percent said it “Wouldn’t matter”. This is the only tax increase proposal that voters favored in the current 2010 survey.

On the whole, survey respondents say that Ottawa County is headed in the “Right direction”, but not by quite as high a percentage as expressed in the 2008 survey, and much less than in the 2006 survey. In 2010, a narrow majority of 52 to 30 percent said that Ottawa County was headed in the “Right direction”. This is down from the 2008 survey when a 54 to 36 percent majority offered the same opinion, and much lower than the 71 to 16 percent solid majority who offered the same opinion in 2006.

Two-thirds offered the same opinion about their city, township or village government. Specifically, a 67 percent majority said their city or township was headed in the right direction, with 22 percent saying they were, “Off on the wrong track”. These results are almost identical to the 2008 results when a 68 to 24 percent majority said their city, village or township was headed in the, “Right direction”. However, these results are much lower than the 76 percent majority who said their city, township or village government was headed in the right direction in 2006.

When current survey respondents were asked to offer a “Positive” or “Negative” rating for the job being done by their local, city, township or village in the delivery of basic services, the very high overall positive rating of 75 percent remained unchanged from the figures recorded in 2008, and indeed, the intensity of this sentiment was slightly higher in 2010. In 2006, an 85 to 14 percent majority offered a positive rating for the job their city, township or village did in providing basic services.

When making this same assessment in regard to the delivery of services by the county government, the overall positive ratings increased over the 2008 figure by three points to seventy-three percent, and getting a slightly better rating than in 2008 for the delivery of basic

services or handling county finances. Just as was the case for the local municipal governments, the overall 2010 positive rating for the county lagged behind those that which were issued in 2006, but at only 6 points lower, the county did not see as large a decline.

In 2008, the top reasons cited for offering a negative rating was “Unemployment”, cited by 11 percent, with “Wasteful spending” and, “No improvements being made” cited by 8 percent each. In 2010, the top reasons cited for offering a negative rating included “Roads are poor”, cited by 12 percent and, “High taxes”, cited by 8 percent. However, given the small numbers of respondents who issued a negative rating (19 percent of the total or, 76 individuals) not a great deal of stock should be placed in the specific categories of reasons for a negative rating.

When specifically asked to rate the job that Ottawa County does in managing county finances, a 55 to 20 percent majority offered a positive rating in the current 2010 survey, which is up by two points from the 2008 survey when a 53 to 16 percent majority offered the same rating. The rating is somewhat lower than the 60 to 15 percent margin offering a “Positive” rating in 2006, but nevertheless, a rating with which to be pleased.

When viewed in their totality, the three-survey data trend on the question of rating the delivery of basic municipal and county services has remained relatively static. It can be concluded therefore, that when respondents take the time to critically assess the job being done by their local governmental entities, they remain satisfied, despite increasing anxiety over economic conditions.

As in previous surveys, 2010 survey respondents were read a list of 15 activities and services in which county government involves itself, and asked for each one whether Ottawa County is doing “Too much”, in that area, if “Enough”, is being done or, if “More”, should be done. There was only one activity in 2010 where a majority of 50 percent or more said “More”, should be done. Exactly 50 percent said “More” should be done in, “Providing effective economic development” (19 percent said much more should be done). In 2008, a somewhat lower 42 percent said more should be done on “Economic development”, but in 2006, a 51 percent majority, about the same as in 2010, said “Economic development” needed more effort.

The second highest 2010 priority was, “Keeping county residents informed”, which was cited by 41 percent saying more should be done. This is unchanged from 2008 or 2006 when 42 percent in each year said more should be done.



In 2006, a 52 percent majority said more should be done to “Protect prime farmland and open space” from development. This activity declined as a priority in 2008 when 31 percent said more should be done and remained unchanged in 2010 when 32 percent said more effort was needed.

In 2010, an open-ended question asked what respondents “Like” the most about living in Ottawa County. The top response at 16 percent was “Close to Lake Michigan”, followed by “Rural – open space”, at 10 percent, with “Friendly people” and “Safe – low crime”, cited by 8 percent each, and “Great place to live” and “Small town feel” mentioned by 7 percent each.

In 2008, the responses were similar with “Proximity to Lake Michigan” cited by 19 percent, “Rural – open space,” cited by 10 percent, “Friendly people” cited by 9 percent, “Great place to live” cited by 7 percent, and “Quiet” mentioned by 6 percent. In 2006, the top response was “Green space” at 17 percent, “Close to Lake Michigan” at 15 percent and “Convenient location” mentioned by 14 percent.

The similarity of responses to this question over the course of three surveys bespeaks a deep-seated appreciation for the perceived semi-rural character of the county and its proximity to the shore. This appreciation notwithstanding, it is noted that, as discussed above, fewer respondents in the 2010 survey than in prior years cited a need for more county activity to “Protect farmland and open space”. Likewise, there is not a majority of support for even a very modest tax increase for the purchase of development rights.

In 2008 and again in 2010, survey respondents were asked about their personal safety. In 2010, a 78 percent majority said they felt, “Very safe” in their neighborhood, with another 22 percent saying they felt “Mostly safe”. In 2008, a 71 percent majority said, “Very safe” with 28 percent saying “Mostly safe”. This expressed sentiment is consistent with, “Police” being the top response to an open-ended question asking what service Ottawa County does the best job providing. It was cited by 18 percent in 2010, up 4 points from the 14 percent offering the same response in 2008. Other services cited in 2010 as the services that Ottawa County does the best job providing included, “Snow removal” (17 percent), and, “Parks and recreation” and “Road commission” (12 percent each).

While the “Road commission” was cited as a top service Ottawa County does the best job providing, a much higher percentage cited the “Road commission” as the service needing the most improvement (cited by 37 percent in 2010, up four points from the 33 percent offering the

same response in 2008). This conflicting result is, of course, a continuing source of frustration for Boards of Commissioners across the state but, absent a disproportionately large effort at public education on the subject, it is likely to remain the reality.

When asked which programs should be cut in the future to balance the county budget, 12 percent cited “Parks and recreation” programs in the 2010 survey, which is much lower than the percentage offering the same response in 2008 (28 percent). No other program was cited by double digits.

In another question first asked in 2010, respondents were asked whether they believe economic development efforts should be led by local jurisdictions for the primary benefit of local communities, or, if those efforts should take a more wide-ranging approach based on a regional basis. A solid 59 percent majority said economic development efforts should be based on a local focus in local communities, with 30 percent saying these efforts should be on a county or regional basis. This finding is consistent with other findings which tend to show a higher degree of confidence and appreciation for governmental units that are closer to “Home”.

In another question also only asked of 2010 respondents, over two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) said they were aware of the action by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners to ban the use of fertilizer containing phosphorus (43 percent very aware), with 31 percent saying they are unaware of the new law.

Between 2008 and 2010, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of respondents who said they were aware of county activities. A 66 percent majority in 2010 said they were aware of Ottawa County activities (9 percent “Very aware”), with 34 percent saying they are “Unaware” of county activities. This represents a 12 point increase in awareness since 2008 when a 54 percent majority said they were aware of county activities, with 42 percent saying they are “Unaware” of county activities.

A bare 50 percent majority of 2010 survey respondents said they would be interested in attending citizen academy sessions to learn more about Ottawa County government, including 11 percent who said they were “Very” interested in attending such sessions. Forty-seven percent said they would not be interested, including 26 percent who said they would be “Very” uninterested in attending such sessions. In 2008, respondents were evenly split with 46 percent saying they were interested and 45 percent saying they were not interested in attending such sessions.

There was somewhat of a change in the stated source of information about the activities of Ottawa County government from 2008 to 2010. In 2010, “Television coverage” was cited as the top source by 15 percent, followed by the “Grand Rapids Press” at 14 percent, “Newsletters from the county” and the “Holland Sentinel” cited by 12 percent each. In 2008, the “Grand Rapids Press” was cited by 17 percent, followed by the “Holland Sentinel” at 13 percent, with “Television news coverage” cited by 12 percent.

In a new question in 2010, respondents were asked to name the two or three methods they would prefer to receive information about the county. “Newspapers” were mentioned as the top choice at 35 percent, followed by “Direct mail” and “The Internet” at 14 percent each, with “Television news reports” mentioned by 13 percent.

An 82 percent majority in 2010 reported logging on to the Internet at least once or twice a week (75 percent every day), which is unchanged from the 2008 response. There was a five point increase (70 to 75 percent) in the percentage who reported using the Internet every day.

While almost everyone logs on to the Internet, a 54 percent majority still reports not having visited the Ottawa County website. There was a five point increase in the percentage saying they do visit the site (40 to 45 percent). Among those who visit the site, nearly 8-in-10 respondents (77 percent) offered a positive rating for the quality of the website, which is unchanged from 2008. There was an increase however, in the percentage offering a negative rating for the quality of the site between 2008 and 2010 (11 to 20 percent).

In a new question asked of respondents in the 2010 survey, 30 percent said they use social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook or MySpace at least a few times a week, and among those who use such sites, more than 9-in-10 (92 percent) said they specifically use Facebook. If there is an interest in improving the “Quality of the website” figure above, then social network sites might be a means through which to address the issue.

Just under a third of respondents said that they or a member of their household had contacted a county office in the past year, which is only two points below the 32 percent of households reported in 2008, and six points lower than the 36 percent reporting contact with a county office in 2006; well within the study’s margin of error.

As in the past, a majority (53 percent) said they made a call and more than 8-in-10 report being either “Very” (60 percent) or at least “Somewhat” (23 percent) satisfied with the response to their contact. The top contact in 2010, cited by 17 percent, was the Sheriff’s Department,

followed by the Road Commission (11 percent), the Health Department and Human Services (8 percent each).

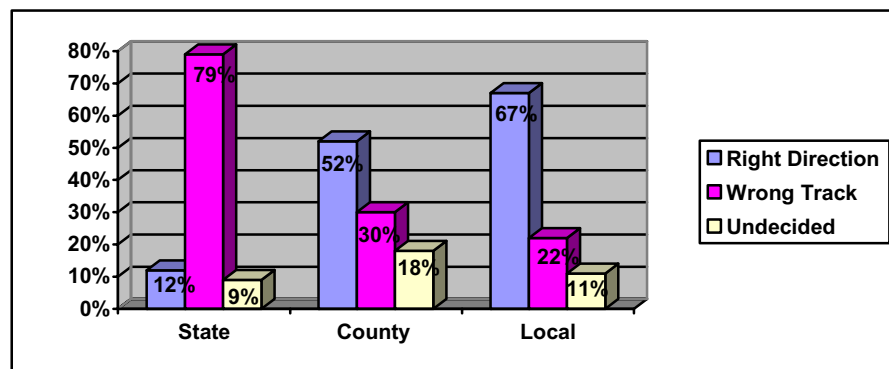
Finally, 2010 survey respondents were asked if they would use the Ottawa County website more often if they could access county services by way of the Internet instead of making a trip to the county office complex. A 72 percent majority said they would use the website more often (33 percent “A lot more” often) if they could access county services. However, nearly two-thirds of respondents (65 percent) said that they would NOT be willing to pay a minimal fee for the convenience of accessing county services by way of the Internet instead of driving to the county administrative complex.

## QUESTION-BY-QUESTION RESULTS

### -- Right Direction or Wrong Track?

In a question that is commonly used in national and statewide polls, this survey measured county residents' sentiment regarding their state, their county, and their local jurisdiction by asking: "Overall, do you think that *[jurisdiction name]* is headed in the right direction, or, do you think that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?" As for the state, Ottawa County residents' attitudes on this question mirror the statewide survey numbers in that an overwhelming majority, 79 percent believe things are "Off on the wrong track".

In keeping with similar surveys elsewhere in Michigan, this dismal attitude brightens considerably when respondents answer the same question about "Ottawa County" and moves even further into positive territory when asked about their local city or township. The chart below illustrates the results:



In 2008, a somewhat lower 70 percent said the State of Michigan was "Off on the wrong track". In 2008, a slightly higher 54 percent said the county was headed in the "Right direction", with 36 percent saying "Off on the wrong track". Also in 2008, a 67 percent majority said their local city or township was headed in the "Right direction". This shows that there was little change between 2008 and 2010, except in the view about the direction of the State.

When the same questions about the direction of the county and local city and township were posed in the 2006 survey, the Ottawa County "Right direction" numbers were considerably higher at 71 percent, and the local government figures numbers that were also much higher than in subsequent years, with 76 percent saying "Right direction" in that survey for their local government.

## -- County's Strategic Goals

In a battery of questions that were first posed in 2008, respondents were informed that the Board of Commissioners had a strategic plan that included four major goals. These goals were recited to the respondents who were then asked to indicate if they believed the individual goal was a “Top priority”, “Important but not a top priority”, “Slightly important” or, “Not important at all”. As evidenced by the relative positioning of the several goals in the table below, each goal is viewed by county residents as being at least “Important”. Clearly, however, maintenance of the county’s strong financial position is viewed by county residents as the goal of highest importance. The ability of the Board to demonstrate that it continues to pursue this goal will be key in maintaining the generally high ratings it currently enjoys.

The table below shows the results for 2010 and 2008 on these stated goals.

Survey Year	County Goal	Top Priority	Important -- not Top Priority	TOTAL Top/Important
<b>2010</b>	<b>Maintain and improve the strong financial position of the county.</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>91%</b>
2008	<i>Maintain and improve the strong financial position of the county.</i>	60%	34%	94%
<b>2010</b>	<b>Contribute to a healthy physical, economic and community environment.</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>82%</b>
2008	<i>Contribute to a healthy physical, economic and community environment.</i>	54%	33%	87%
<b>2010</b>	<b>Maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees and other stakeholders.</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>79%</b>
2008	<i>Maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees and other stakeholders.</i>	45%	42%	87%
<b>2010</b>	<b>Continually improve the county's organization and services.</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>82%</b>
2008	<i>Continually improve the county's organization and services.</i>	48%	37%	85%

There was some slippage in the overall numbers from 2008 to 2010, ranging from eight points for “Maintaining communications” (87 to 79 percent); five points for “Contributing to a healthy physical, economic and community environment” (87 to 82 percent); three points for “Maintaining and improving the financial position of the county” (94 to 91 percent); and three points for “Continually improving the county’s organization and services” (85 to 82 percent).

The drop between 2008 and 2010 in the percentage saying they believe these goals should be a top priority was much more dramatic than the slippage in the overall percentages. It ranged from 21 points for “Continually improving the county’s organization and services” (48 to 27 percent); to 19 points for “Contributing to a healthy physical, economic and community environment” (54 to 35 percent); to 16 points for “Maintaining and enhancing communication” (45 to 29 percent); to 12 points for “Maintaining and improving the strong financial position of the county” (60 to 48 percent). What is suggested by the fact that the overall “Importance” figures changed very little between 2008 and 2010, while the “Top priority” portion of those overall numbers has dropped significantly, is a county constituency that recognizes the value of the stated goals but has far greater concerns about immediate economic prospects.

#### **-- Biggest “Top of Mind” Problem**

Respondents were next asked in an open-ended question to identify the single biggest problem facing the residents of their community that their local or county government must address. In 2010, “Unemployment” was the top problem, cited at 32 percent, which is up by five points from 2008 when 27 percent cited the same issue. “Roads” was next at 10 percent, up three points from the 2008 survey, and taxes was third at 8 percent, unchanged from 2008. In all, the relative positions of the top concerns have not changed, although in keeping with other findings, the intensity of feeling for the top few concerns has increased.

#### **-- Biggest “Prompted” Problem**

In a test similar to the top-of-mind “Biggest problem” question, respondents were read a list of ten “. . . problems and issues residents of Ottawa County say they are concerned about.” They were then asked to identify the single biggest issue that personally concerned them the most. The top issue concern, at 45 percent in 2010, was “Providing economic development and jobs.” Concern about the issue has increased by eight points since 2008, from 37 to 45 percent. This was the single most important issue identified, which is consistent with data coming from a series of statewide surveys.

Cited as the second concern, mentioned by 13 percent, was “Improving the quality of area schools”. This issue more than doubled as a concern since 2008 when just 6 percent cited it. Again, this is consistent with statewide data over time and illustrates the seemingly incongruous result throughout the survey that is manifest in the 2010 study much more than in the past.

The third top concern, cited by 12 percent, was “Keeping local taxes and fees low.” Taxes increased as a concern since 2008 by three percent (9 to 12 percent).

“Maintaining and improving area roads” was next at 8 percent (up a point since 2008).

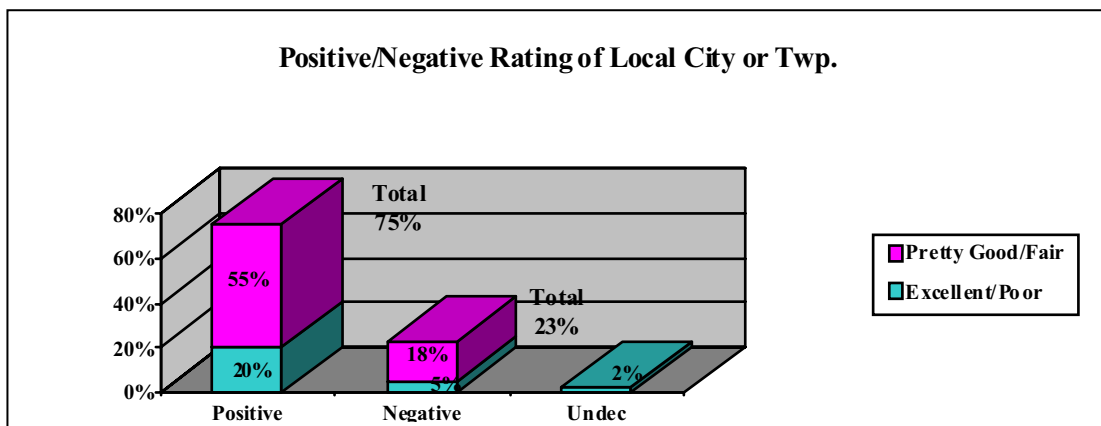
An issue that dropped as a concern from 2008 to 2010 is “Protecting the public from crime and drugs”. It was cited by 14 percent in 2008, but in 2010, it was only mentioned by 6 percent.

The table below illustrates the survey responses in both 2010 and 2008:

2010 Ranking		2008 Ranking
45%	Providing economic development and jobs	37% (1)
13%	Improving the quality of area schools	6% (5)
12%	Keeping local taxes and fees low	9% (3)
8%	Maintaining and improving area roads	7% (4)
6%	Protecting the public from crime and drugs	14% (2)
5%	Controlling unplanned development and sprawl	5% (7)
3%	Preserving prime farmland and open space	4% (8)
3%	Protecting the environment in the area	6% (6)
3%	Providing quality basic city, township or county services	3% (9)
1%	Controlling traffic congestion	3% (10)
---	More than one [ASK] "But which problem concerns you most?"	--
1%	Undecided	3%

**-- Rate your Local (City/Township/Village) Government**

In 2010, a 75 percent majority offered a “Positive” rating for the job being done by their local city or township government. This rating is unchanged from the results in 2008. However, there was a four point increase in the percentage offering an “Excellent” rating from 2008 to 2010 (16 to 20 percent). Also, the percentage offering an overall “Negative” rating increased by four points as well, going from 19 to 23 percent; demonstrating a solidifying of opinion on both ends of the spectrum.





Subgroups issuing a “Negative” rating in percentages significantly higher than the survey average of 23 percent included:

**-- Reasons for the rating**

As a follow up to the Positive/Negative rating question, respondents were asked to give their reason for issuing the rating that they did. The following table illustrates the reasons why respondents offered a positive rating, compared to the reasons stated in 2008:

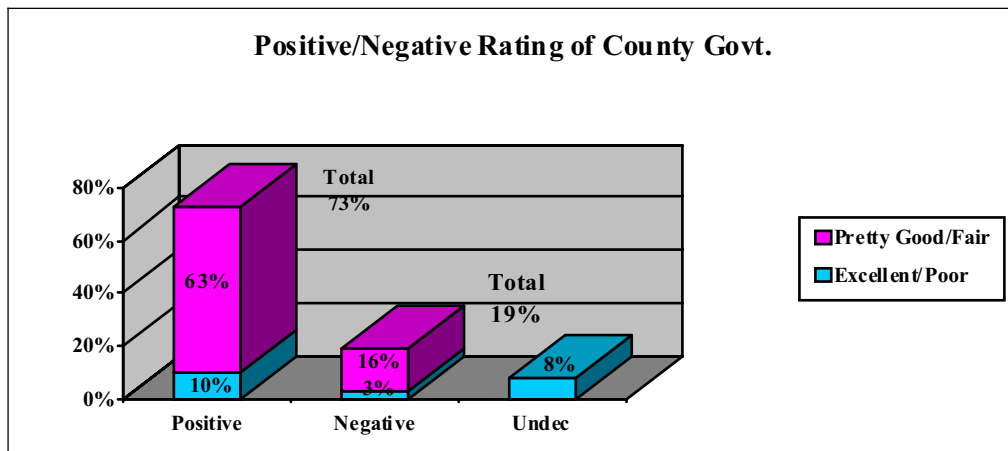
<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
13%	6%	Fiscally Responsible	3%	---	Snow Removal Timely
11%	16%	Good Job – Overall	2%	4%	Road Maintenance
9%	8%	Quality of Services	2%	---	Well Organized
8%	---	Citizens Best Interests in Mind	1%	4%	Economic Development
6%	14%	Have No Problems	1%	3%	Taxes are Reasonable
5%	7%	Communication	1%	1%	Control Growth - Sprawl
4%					Parks and Rec Programs
4%	2%	High Quality of Life	1%	---	Good Schools
4%	2%	They Try to Improve	1%	---	Good Water Quality
3%	4%	Active – Hard Working	1%	---	Honest – Trustworthy
3%	1%	Fast Response Time	---	2%	Beautiful City
3%	---	Infrastructure is Maintained	2%	1%	Other
3%	---	Our Needs are Met	8%	16%	Undecided/Refused

The following table illustrates the reasons why respondents offered a negative rating, compared to the reasons stated in 2008:

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
13%	6%	Communication	1%	---	Drain Issues
11%	3%	Wasteful Spending	1%	---	Lack Cooperation
8%	8%	No Citizen Interests in Mind	1%	---	Lack of Senior Programs
8%	4%	Unemployment	1%	---	Public Assistance Programs
4%	12%	No Improvements Being Made	1%	---	No Public Transportation
4%	6%	Don't Do Anything - Lazy	1%	---	Poor Planning
4%	4%	Roads are Poor	1%	---	Services Hard to Get
3%	5%	High Taxes	1%	---	Snow Removal Slow
3%	---	Cut Needed Services	1%	---	They are Inconsistent
3%	---	The Economy	---	10%	Just Negative
2%	5%	All Politics	---	4%	Poor Schools
2%	---	Not Trustworthy	---	3%	Poor Planning
2%					Underfunded
2%	---	Slow to Act	---	2%	Disagree with Them
2%	---	The Family Fair Ordeal	---	2%	Need More Services
2%	---	Zoning Issues	---	1%	Health Services
1%					Other
1%	2%	Focus on Bigger Cities	10%	17%	Undecided/Refused
1%	---	Disparity in Services Received			

**-- Rate your County Government**

In 2010, the survey showed a slight improvement in the rating of the job being done by Ottawa County providing basic services. A 73 percent majority offered a positive rating, including 10 percent offering an excellent rating, while 19 percent offered a negative rating, including only 3 percent who offered a poor rating. The “Positive” rating is up 3 points from the 70 percent offering in 2008, and down 1 point from the 20 percent offering a negative rating. Both 2010 and 2008 are down significantly from the 79 percent offering a positive rating in 2006. The chart graph below illustrates the results for 2010:



**-- Reasons for the County Rating**

The following table illustrates the reasons why respondents offered a positive rating for the job done by Ottawa County, compared to the reasons offered in 2008:

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
15%	17%	Good Job – Overall	1%	2%	High Quality of Life
10%	6%	Police and Fire Dept.	1%	1%	Honest – Trustworthy
10%	5%	Quality of Services	1%	---	Care About Senior Citizens
8%	21%	Have No Problems	1%	---	Infrastructure is Maintained
7%	2%	Roads are Good	1%	---	Well Organized
6%	3%	Fiscally Responsible	---	1%	Active – Hard Working
5%	---	Snow Removal Timely	---	1%	Beautiful City
4%	2%	They Try to Improve	---	1%	Community Pride
3%	2%	Communication	---	1%	Health Care
3%	2%	Fast Response Time	---	1%	Taxes are Reasonable
3%	---	Citizens Best Interests in Mind	3%	1%	Other
2%	7%	Economic Development	14%	23%	Undecided/Refused
2%	1%	Parks and Rec Programs			

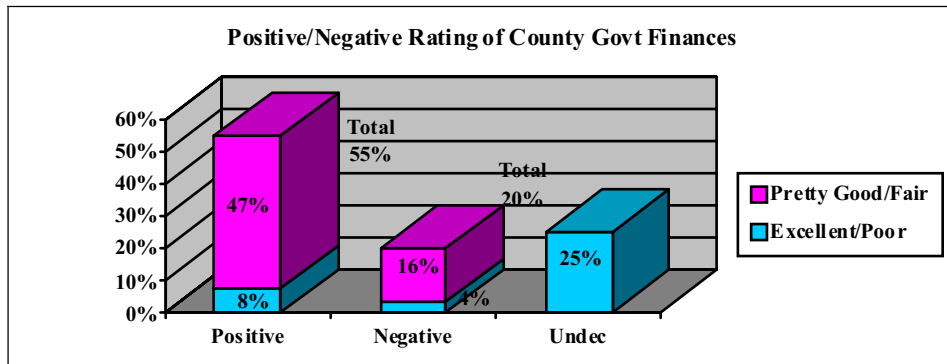
Among the 19 percent of respondents who issued a “Negative” job rating for the county, the following table illustrates the reasons offered in 2010 compared to 2008 – note that in both years, it is evident from the distribution of responses that there is no central focus of discontent.

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
12%	7%	Roads are Poor	1%	---	County DHS is Poor
8%	3%	High Taxes	1%	---	Lack Cooperation
7%	11%	Unemployment	1%	---	Never See the Sheriff Patrol
7%	4%	No Citizen Interests in Mind	1%	---	Not Trustworthy
7%	---	Snow Removal Slow	1%	---	Poor Public Relations
5%	8%	Wasteful Spending	1%	---	Uncontrolled Growth – Sprawl
5%					Wage Cuts for Co. Employees
5%	2%	Don't Do Anything - Lazy	---	7%	Just Negative
4%	8%	No Improvements Being Made	---	4%	Need More Services
4%	---	Cut Needed Services	---	3%	Bad Water System
3%	1%	All Politics	---	3%	Foreclosures
3%	1%	Lack of County Health Care	---	3%	Underfunded
3%	---	Focus on Bigger Cities	---	2%	Need More Police
3%	---	Public Assistance Programs	---	1%	Poor Planning
3%	---	Police are Rude	3%	---	Other
1%	2%	The Economy	10%	25%	Undecided/Refused

**-- Rate the County’s Handling of Finances**

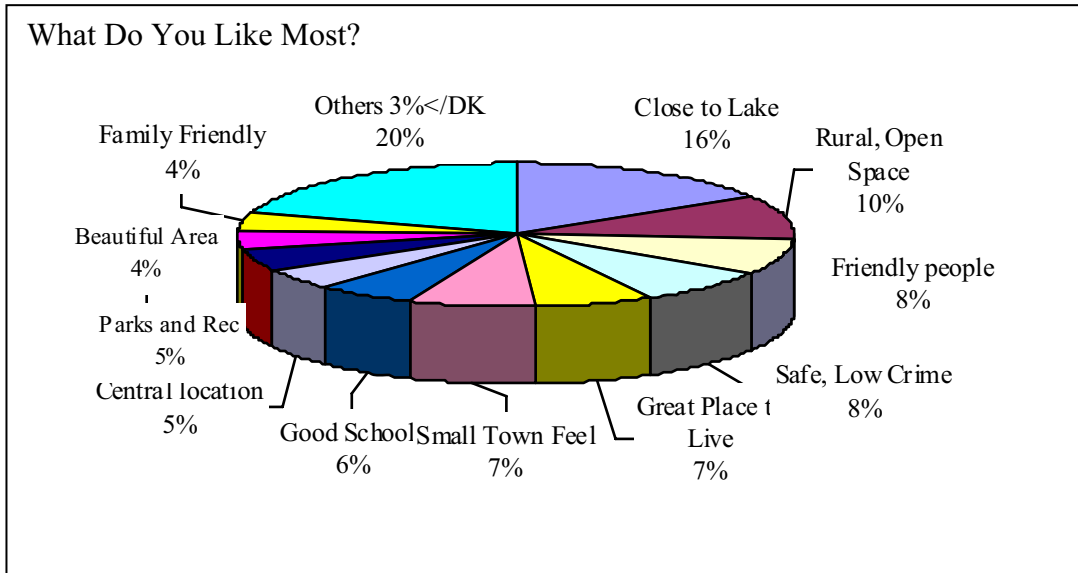
Respondents were asked to offer a “Positive” or “Negative” rating for the job Ottawa County does in managing county finances. In 2010, this rating improved slightly by two points from 2008, increasing from a 53 percent positive rating to 55 percent, but also increasing from 16 percent to 20 percent on the negative side.

In 2006, a significantly higher 60 percent offered a positive rating, meaning that the positive rating in 2008 slipped by 7 points, but then improved by 2 points in 2010 to the 55 to 20 percent positive rating, as illustrated in the following chart:



**-- What is liked the most about living in Ottawa County**

In an open-ended question in 2010, respondents were asked what they liked the most about living in Ottawa County. Unlike most other open-ended questions, “Undecided” only made two percent, which is much lower than the 8 percent registered in 2008. The pie chart below, illustrates the major categories of responses in 2010.

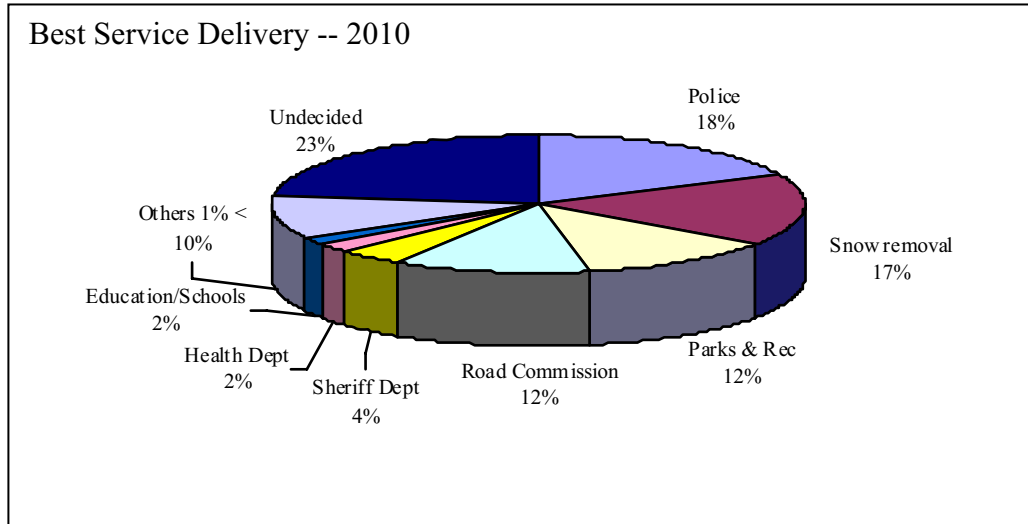


The 2008 survey had “Close to the Lake” as the top response at 19 percent, followed by “Rural – open space” at 10 percent, “Friendly people” at 9 percent, with “Great place to live” at 7 percent. These results are virtually unchanged from those of the most recent survey in 2008.

**-- Ottawa County does the best job at providing . . . ?**

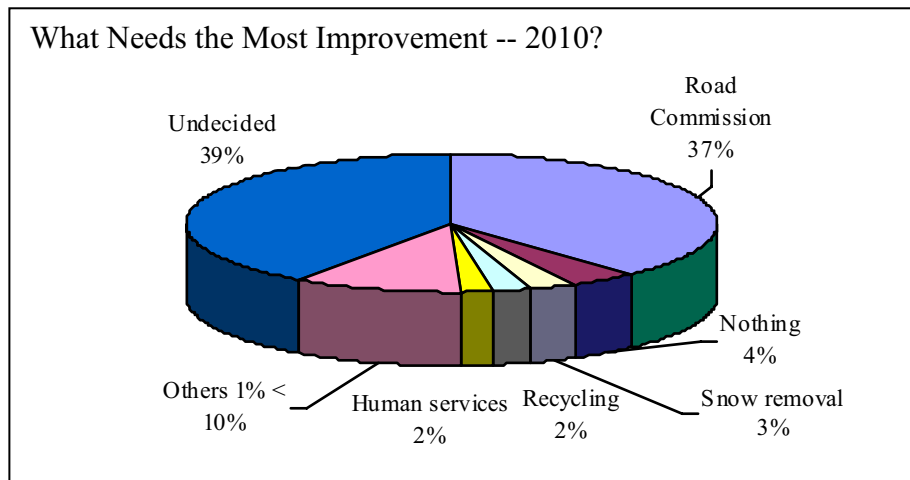
Respondents were next asked to name which specific county service they believed the county does the best job in delivering. Just under a quarter of all respondents were unable to name a specific service, which is down 7 points from the 30 percent undecided response in 2008, and 34 percent in 2006. Each survey shows fewer people who are unable to name a service that they feel the County does the best job providing.

“Police” at 18 percent (up 4 points since 2008), “Snow removal” at 17 percent (up 11 points), “Parks and recreation” at 12 percent (down 1 point), and “Road commission” were the top services that residents say Ottawa County does the best job providing. The chart on the next page shows the distribution of services with the percentages citing each service:



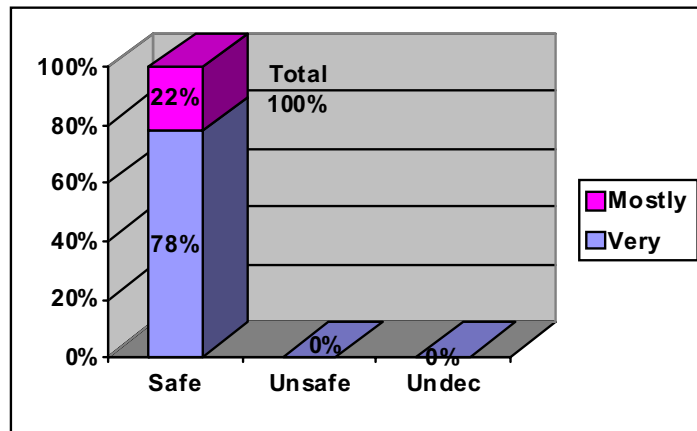
**-- What County Service Needs the Most Improvement?**

Four-in-ten respondents (39 percent) were unable to identify a single specific service area in need of improvement and said they were “Undecided,” which is up 7 points from 2008 (32 percent). The “Road commission” was cited as the county service most in need of improvement at 37 percent, which is up 4 points from the 33 percent offering the same response in 2008. Next was “Nothing” at 4 percent (down 4 points from 2008), followed by “Snow removal” at 3 percent, “Others” at 3 percent, and “Recycling” at 2 percent. There were 10 other services mentioned by 1 percent. The chart below illustrates the responses:



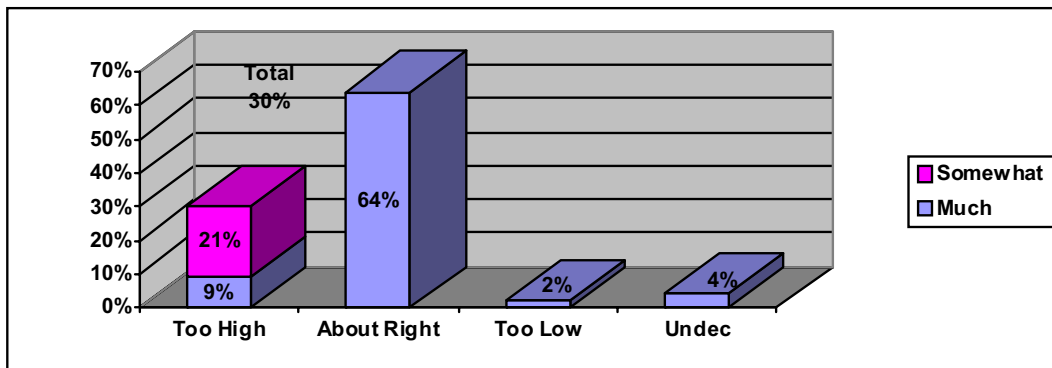
**-- Perception of Personal Safety**

In a new question for 2008 and repeated in 2010, respondents were asked, “How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?”. In the 2010 survey, 100 percent said they felt safe, including 78 percent who said they felt “Very safe,” unchanged from the 99 percent who said they felt safe in 2008, with a somewhat lower 71 percent saying they felt “Very safe”. This response in two years of surveys should be a source of great pride for those in law enforcement and for the Board. The chart below illustrates the 2010 results:



**-- Perception of tax burden**

A good harbinger for the chances of passing a ballot proposal to raise property taxes lies in a community’s perception of its current tax burden. Respondents were asked if county property taxes and other fees were “Too high, Too low, or About right”, given the amount and quality of county government services they receive in return. If respondents said “Too high”, a follow-up question asked them if the taxes are “Much” or “Somewhat” too high. The results were as follows:



The 2010 figures shown above are much closer to the results in the 2006 survey than those in 2008. A 64 percent majority said that taxes and fees are “About right,” compared to 67 percent in 2006 and a much lower 55 percent in 2008. Now, 30 percent of respondents said that taxes and fees were “Too high,” including only 9 percent who said “Much too high.” In 2008, 39 percent overall said that taxes and fees were “Too high,” including 19 percent who said taxes were “much too high.”

As an overall figure, a 30 percent “Too high” response is certainly not as problematic as the 39 percent response in 2008 to the same question. At the time of the 39 percent response, many governmental entities were showing higher than usual “Too high” reactions to this critical question about the perception of the level of tax burden. This persistent finding then correlated very strongly with the sentiments expressed about the economy as a top concern, and while the “Economy and jobs” is an even stronger concern now than in 2008, there is a noticeable decline in the level of concern about taxes and fees. This is likely attributable to the growing percentage of the electorate in Michigan and in many local communities reporting that they and/or their families have felt the impact of state and local budget cuts in the form of lost services and important programs. In response, voters statewide, as well as in many local communities, are indicating that they are more receptive to higher taxes and fees as a solution to budget deficits in general and also for specific uses even though responses to other questions in the current survey suggest somewhat mixed readings on the questions of higher taxes.

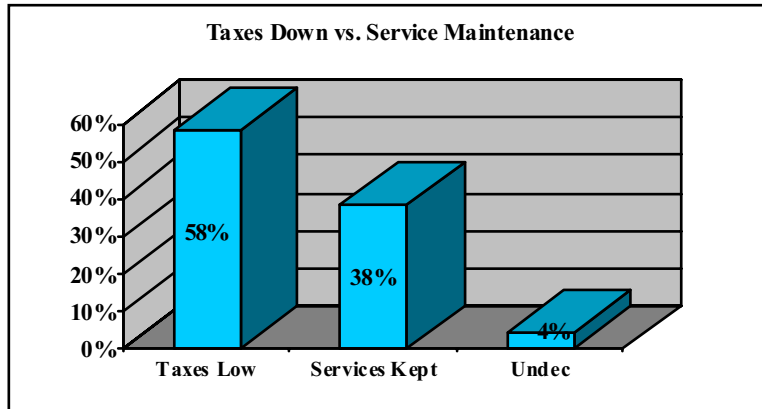
#### **-- Taxes vs. Service Levels**

Another indicator of the environment in which governments must discharge their obligations, is the answer to a hypothetical question pitting maintenance of current services against an increase in taxes. Respondents were presented with two statements which offered two possible approaches by county government in the face of the current budget situation, and were asked to select which of the two came closest to their view:

“Keep taxes and fees as low as possible – even if this means a cut in services; or,  
Maintain existing services – even if this means a tax increase.”

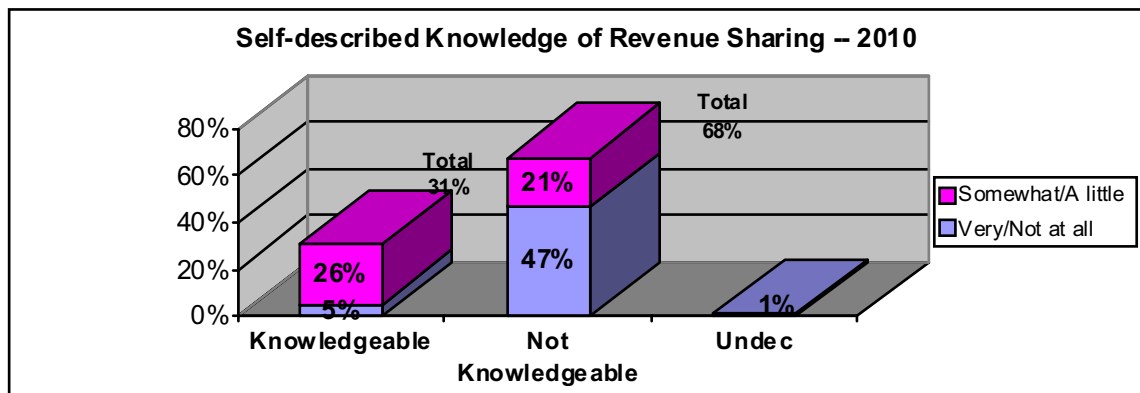
In 2010, a 58 percent solid majority said that they would opt to “Keep taxes and fees low,” with 38 percent saying they would rather “Maintain existing services” statement. This represents a 5 point increase from the 53 percent who preferred keeping taxes and fees low in 2008, and a 9 point increase in the percentage choosing the same option in 2006. Ottawa County survey

respondents have consistently increased in the percentage saying as a general rule that they would rather see Ottawa County take the approach of “Keeping taxes low” instead of “Maintaining existing services.” This is the preference of county voters, notwithstanding an indication in the previous question about tax burden which shows that a lower percentage of Ottawa County voters say that taxes are “Too high.”



**-- Knowledge of Revenue Sharing – Contact with Legislator**

In a new question for 2008, which was repeated in 2010, respondents were asked how knowledgeable they considered themselves to be about state revenue sharing and its impact on Ottawa County. The respondents were offered options of “Very”, “Somewhat”, “Only a little” or “Not at all” knowledgeable about revenue sharing. In the 2010 survey, 31 percent considered themselves at least somewhat knowledgeable, with only five percent saying they are “Very knowledgeable”. This represents an 8 point increase in the percentage of respondents between 2008 and 2010 who describe themselves as knowledgeable overall. The chart below clearly shows that more can be done to communicate with voters about cuts in revenue sharing and how those cuts have impacted Ottawa County government and its ability to maintain services.





To enable communication efforts to reach residents who say they are the least knowledgeable about revenue sharing, the following demographic groups indicated by the lowest percentages (below the county-wide results of 31 percent) that they considered themselves at least somewhat knowledgeable about revenue sharing:

- 27% *says taxes are too high;*  
*has children;*  
*women age 50 and over;*  
*college educated women;*  
*young college educated;*
- 26% *all women;*  
*votes in elections half the time;*  
*incomes of \$25K to \$50K;*  
*under age 50;*
- 25% *Region 2;*  
*lived in Ottawa County 16 to 25 years;*  
*men and women without college;*
- 24% *younger and older voters without college;*
- 22% *taxes top concern;*  
*schools top concern;*  
*women under age 50;*
- 21% *high school or less education;*  
*under \$25K income;*
- 9% *seldom/never votes in elections.*

Consistent with this lack of knowledge about revenue sharing, a follow-up question was asked of survey respondents - if they had contacted their state legislator about the topic. An 88 percent solid majority in 2010 respondents said no, which is unchanged from the 89 percent offering the same response in 2008.

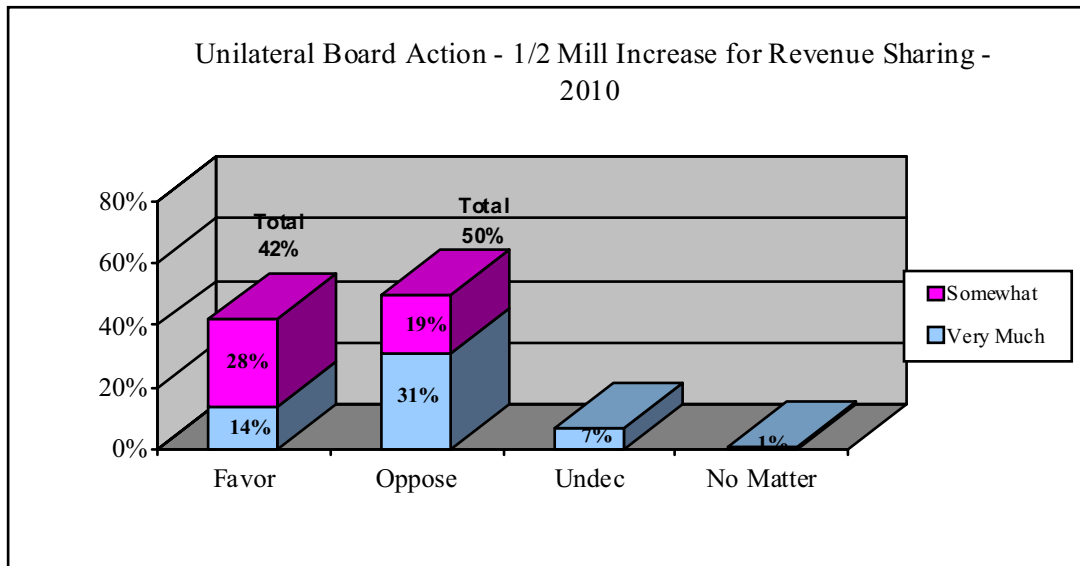
**-- Board action to recoup revenue sharing funding lost from the state**

In 2010, survey respondents were asked if they favor or oppose action to recoup lost revenue funds by increasing property taxes in Ottawa County. Respondents were asked:

“If the State of Michigan does NOT fully fund revenue sharing in 2011, the County will face a revenue cut of over \$4.7 million. Some people have suggested that local governments replace this lost state money through a local tax. In Ottawa County, replacing \$4.7 million in lost state revenue would require a ½ mill increase in the property tax assessment. For every \$100,000 in market value of a home and \$50,000 in taxable value, a one half mill property tax increase would cost homeowners in Ottawa County \$25 per year in additional property taxes. Because Ottawa County does not currently levy the maximum amount of property tax allowed under law, it is possible that the Board of Commissioners could act on their own and, at one of their regular meetings, pass a resolution to increase the property tax levy by ½ mill to make up for the lost state revenue sharing dollars. If the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners acted to increase property tax assessments by ½ mill to make up for lost revenue sharing money from the state, would you favor or oppose such action?”

The response was:

- 14% Very Much Favor
- 42% TOTAL FAVOR**
- 50% TOTAL OPPOSE**
- 31% Very Much Oppose
- 1% Wouldn't Matter (**volunteered**)
- 7% Undecided/Don't know/Refused



Key demographic groups indicating by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide 42 percent) that they **FAVOR** the proposal included:

- 71% *Maintain services;*
- 56% *concerned about roads;*
- 54% *incomes of \$75K to \$100K;*  
*concerned about schools;*
- 53% *older college educated;*
- 52% *lived in Ottawa County Ottawa County 11 to 15 years;*
- 51% *headed in right direction;*  
*taxes about right;*  
*lives in urban area;*  
*college educated men;*
- 50% *positive rating on county finances;*  
*other races;*  
*men age 50 and over;*
- 49% *age 50 to 55 (49%);*
- 48% *Very/Somewhat knowledgeable about revenue sharing;*  
*lived in Ottawa County 6 to 10 years;*  
*college educated;*  
*incomes of \$50K to \$75K;*
- 47% *Region 1;*  
*lived in Ottawa County 16 to 25 years;*  
*age 56 to 64;*  
*incomes over \$100K;*

Key demographic groups indicating by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide 50 percent) that they **OPPOSE** the proposal included:

- 69% *Taxes too high;*  
*wants to keep taxes low;*
- 68% *negative rating;*
- 65% *age 36 to 40;*
- 62% *incomes under \$25K;*  
*younger without college;*
- 60% *Region 4;*
- 59% *Region 5;*  
*undecided about direction of Ottawa County;*
- 58% *men under age 50;*
- 57% *Ottawa County headed in wrong direction;*  
*negative job rating on county services;*  
*high school or less education;*  
*incomes of \$25K to \$50K;*  
*under age 50;*  
*men without college;*
- 56% *those who feel mostly safe;*  
*age 41 to 49;*  
*women under age 50.*

In 2008, voters were first asked about a possible ballot proposal where voters would be able to vote on the question of a ½ mill increase to recoup revenue sharing funds. A 42 percent plurality said they would vote “No” on a ½ mill property tax increase, 38 percent said they would vote “Yes,” and 20 percent were “Undecided” of how they would vote. These results were much different than the results in 2006 when a 55 percent majority said they would vote “Yes,” 39 percent said they would vote “No,” and 6 percent were “Undecided”. Voters were much more receptive to a tax increase at the ballot in 2006 than in 2008, when voters became much more sensitive to their tax burden.

In 2006 and 2008, survey respondents were also informed that because the county does not currently levy the maximum amount of property taxes allowed by law, the Board could act unilaterally to increase assessments against property in order to make up for any shortfall in state aid. They were then asked if they would favor or oppose such Board action without putting the question to a popular vote.

In both those tests, solid majorities opposed unilateral Board action to raise taxes. In 2008, a 59 percent majority opposed Board action, including 46 percent who strongly opposed it, and in 2006, a 66 percent majority opposed Board action including 46 percent who strongly opposed such action.

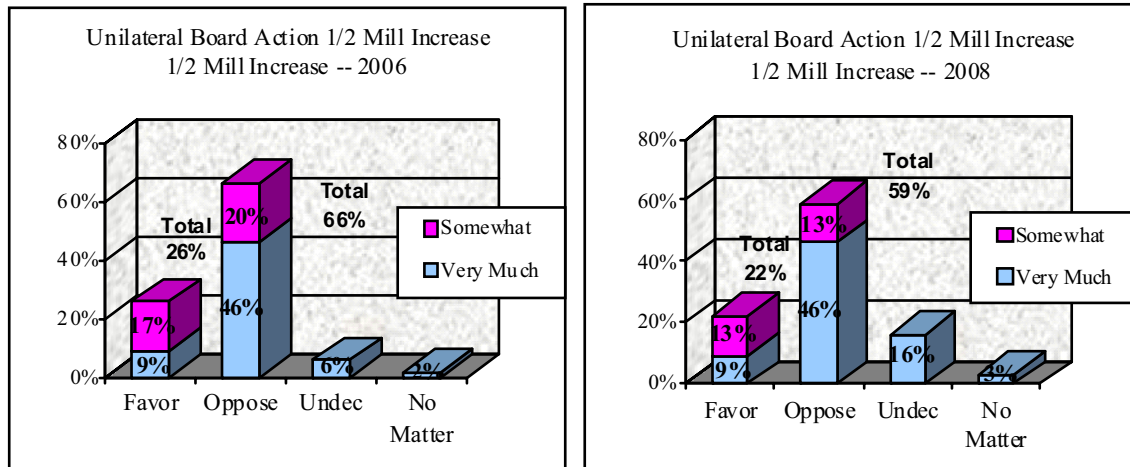
Why was there such a difference in opinion from 2006 and 2008 when solid majorities opposed Board action to raise taxes (when the question followed voter response to a question about a prospective ballot proposal), compared to a bare majority of 50 to 42 percent who opposed unilateral Board action when there was no previous question about voter approval of a ballot proposal? The sentiment at the time regarding taxes and the economy certainly influenced opinion on tax questions, but another influence could well have been the mere fact that voters were being asked their opinion about Board action after being asked about a ballot proposal. While it is always better to measure voter opinion about ballot proposals before testing public opinion about Board action, because it could bias and potentially inflate the results of a ballot proposal if the ballot proposal was asked second, it is logical to assume that the reverse can also be true.

EPIC ▪ MRA surveys for other clients have shown that voters generally prefer having the opportunity to vote on issues themselves, especially when it involves tax increases. Therefore, it is probably safe to assume that when voters are asked about actions taken by their elected

representatives when offered the option of making the decision themselves, they will show more opposition to action by their government just because they would prefer to make the decision themselves, at the polls.

When the question about Board action is asked in the absence of any questions about voter response to a ballot proposal, as was the case in the current 2010 survey, voter response can provide a more accurate measurement on the substance of the question tested. Hence, voters were much more receptive and supportive of Board action when tested by itself in 2010 than when coupled with ballot proposals in 2008 and in 2006.

In the future, it may make sense to separately test ballot proposed action compared to a Board decision when the action would be identical by using a split sample test. Half of the sample would be asked about a ballot proposal and the other half of the sample would be asked about support or opposition to unilateral Board action. The following charts illustrate the comparative voter sentiment on the question concerning Board action between 2006 and 2008.

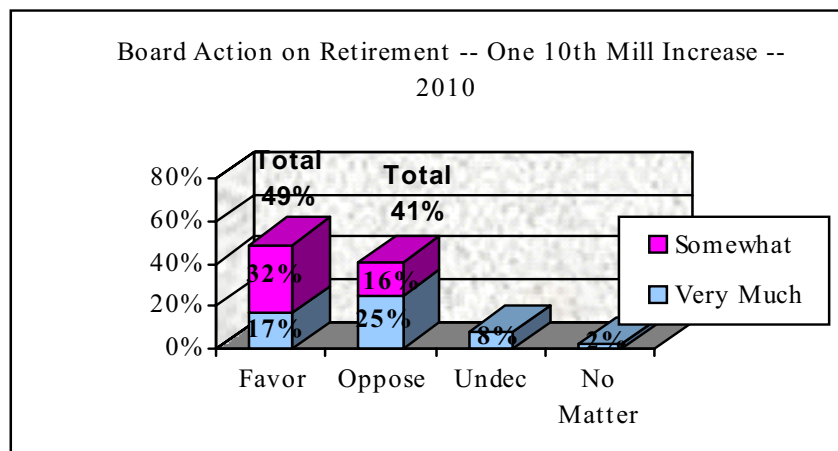


**-- Defined Benefit to Defined Contribution Retirement Plan -- Plurality Supports**

For the first time in an Ottawa County survey, 2010 survey respondents were asked the following question about a proposed action by the Board to change the county employee retirement system from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution system:

“Currently, county employees are in what is known as a defined benefit pension program. A recent analysis indicated that the County could save a projected \$30 million over the next 30 years if the pension program for all new hires was switched to a defined contribution, 401k –type of pension program. However, to put the money-saving defined contribution plan into effect for new hires, there would be short term start-up expenses of approximately \$8,000,000. In Ottawa County, raising \$8,000,000 would require a 0.1 mill increase in the property tax assessment for up to thirteen years. For every \$100,000 in market value of a home and \$50,000 in taxable value, a one-tenth of a mill property tax increase would cost homeowners in Ottawa County \$5 per year in additional property taxes. Because Ottawa County does not currently levy the maximum amount of property tax allowed under law, it is possible that the Board of Commissioners could act on their own and, at one of their regular meetings, pass a resolution to increase the property tax levy by one tenth of a mill to pay for the cost of switching to a different retirement system for new employees. If the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners acted to increase property taxes by one-tenth of one mill to realize a long-term savings by switching to a new pension program for new hires, would you favor or oppose such action?”

- 17% Very Much Favor
- 32% Somewhat Favor
- 49% TOTAL FAVOR**
- 41% TOTAL OPPOSE**
- 16% Somewhat Oppose
- 25% Very Much Oppose
- 2% Wouldn't Matter (volunteered)
- 8% Undecided/Don't know/Refused



While a 49 to 41 percent plurality overall favors the proposal, opposition is more intense than support, with 25 percent saying they strongly oppose the proposal with 17 percent strongly favoring it.

Key demographic groups indicating by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide 49 percent) that they **FAVOR** the proposal included:

- 62% *College educated women;*
- 61% *maintain county services;*
- 60% *women under age 50;*
- 56% *Ottawa County headed in right direction;*  
*college educated;*  
*older college educated;*
- 55% *taxes about right;*  
*age 50 to 55;*  
*young college educated;*
- 53% *lived in Ottawa County 16 to 25 years;*  
*age 41 to 49;*  
*incomes of \$50K to \$75K.*

Key demographic groups indicating by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide 41 percent) that they **OPPOSE** the proposal included:

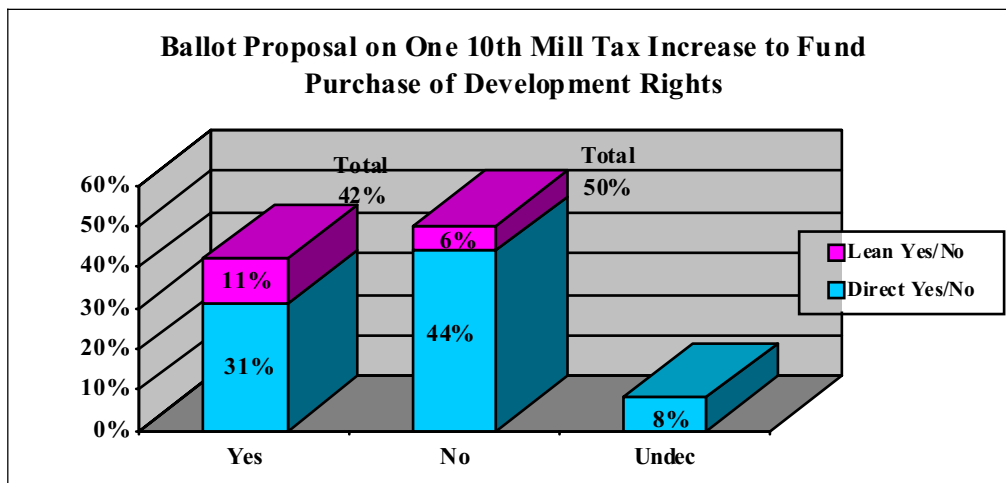
- 57% *Taxes too high;*
- 55% *Region 4;*
- 53% *men without college;*
- 52% *high school or less education;*
- 51% *Ottawa County headed in wrong direction;*  
*keep taxes low;*
- 49% *negative job rating on county services;*  
*men under age 50;*  
*older without college;*
- 47% *all men;*
- 46% *younger without college.*

**-- Funding Purchase of Development Rights Program with Tax Increase Opposed**

Also for the first time, 2010 survey respondents were asked the following question about a proposed tax increase of one 10<sup>th</sup> of a mill to fund the Purchase of Development Rights Program. Survey respondents were asked the following question about a ballot proposal:

“The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners has adopted what is known as a “Purchase of Development Rights” program. This program is designed to preserve existing farmland by allowing the county to purchase the development rights to farmland, from the farm owner, so that the land can only be used for farming into the future. Currently, private donations and grants are used to pay landowners to place these deed restrictions on their property to preserve their use as farmland. Some people have suggested that a property tax of 0.1 mill be dedicated for this purpose in order to increase and stabilize the revenue source. For every \$100,000 in market value of a home and \$50,000 in taxable value, a one-tenth of a mill property tax increase would cost homeowners in Ottawa County \$5 per year in additional property taxes. If the County placed a proposal on a future election ballot to indefinitely increase property taxes by one-tenth of one mill to purchase the development rights of area farmland, would you vote Yes in favor of the proposal or No to oppose it?”

- 31% Yes
- 11% Lean toward Yes
- 42% TOTAL YES**
- 50% TOTAL NO**
- 44% No
- 6% Lean toward No
- 8% Undecided/Don't know/Refused



Voters would oppose a one 10<sup>th</sup> of a mill property tax increase proposal by a bare 50 percent majority, including 44 percent who would directly vote “No,” 6 percent who lean toward



voting “No,” with 42 percent voting “Yes,” including 31 percent who would directly vote “Yes” and 11 percent who lean toward voting “Yes,” leaving 8 percent “Undecided”.

Key demographic groups that would vote “yes” by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide results of 42 percent), included:

- 61% *concerned about schools;*
- 55% *lives in an urban area;*
- 54% *favors maintaining services;*
- 52% *income under \$25K;*
- 50% *concerned about roads;*  
*age 30 to 35;*  
*age 36 to 40;*
- 49% *college educated women;*
- 48% *feels mostly safe;*  
*lived in county 11 to 15 years;*
- 47% *unsure about county services;*  
*positive rating on county services;*  
*age 56 to 64;*  
*women age 50 +;*
- 46% *all women;*  
*taxes about right;*  
*lived in county over 25 years or, “lifetime”.*

Key demographic groups that would vote “no” by the highest percentages (significantly above the county-wide results of 50 percent), included:

- 78% *concerned about taxes;*
- 61% *taxes too high;*
- 59% *negative rating on county finances;*  
*men age 50 or older;*
- 58% *lived in county 5 years or under;*  
*age 18 to 29;*  
*age 41 to 49;*  
*men without college;*  
*younger without college;*
- 57% *Region 5;*  
*keep taxes low;*  
*lived in county 6 to 10 years;*
- 56% *all men;*  
*concerned about the economy and jobs;*  
*incomes of \$50K to \$75K;*
- 55% *negative rating for county services;*  
*post high school education;*  
*college educated men;*
- 54% *votes in local elections half the time;*  
*Ottawa County headed in wrong direction;*  
*lives in suburban area;*  
*men under age 50.*

**-- Contact With a County Department**

Three-in-ten respondents (30 percent – 32 percent in 2008) indicated that either they or someone else in their household had contacted a department or office in county government in the past year. Nearly seven-in-ten (69 percent - 63 percent in 2006) responded “No” to the question, and one percent were undecided. In the 2006 survey, 37 percent said that they or someone else in their household contacted a county department or office. Each year, fewer households report contacting the county.

<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	
20%	21%	Yes, respondent
3%	8%	Yes, someone else
7%	3%	Yes, more than one
<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>TOTAL CONTACTED</b>
69%	63%	No one contacted office/department of Ottawa County
1%	5%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused

Among those who responded “Yes,” that they or someone else in their household had contacted a county office, the top agencies contacted in 2010 and 2008 were:

<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>		<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	
17%	8%	Sheriff Department	1%	1%	Natural Resources
11%	15%	Road Commission	1%	1%	Waste Management
8%	11%	Health Department	1%	---	Community Action
8%	---	Human Services	1%	---	Council on Aging
7%	7%	Clerk	1%	---	Probate Court
6%	5%	Treasurer	1%	---	Unemployment
5%	4%	Parks and Recreation	---	6%	City – Twp Office
5%	2%	Admin – Brd of Commissioners	---	4%	State Representative
3%	1%	District Court	---	3%	Senate
3%	1%	Register of Deeds	---	1%	City Manager
3%	---	Animal Control	---	1%	County Commissioner
3%	---	Drain Commissioner	---	1%	Emergency Services
2%	2%	Planning – Zoning	---	1%	Fire Department
2%	---	Assessor	---	1%	Governor
2%	---	Department of Agriculture	---	1%	Grants
2%	---	Friend of the Court	---	1%	Land Development
2%	---	Mental Health	---	1%	Land Management
1%	6%	Police	---	1%	Mayor
1%	1%	Building Department	3%	12%	Undecided/Refused

Almost all of these respondents either called the named department on the phone (53 percent), or paid a personal visit (37 percent). The remaining 10 percent either wrote a letter or

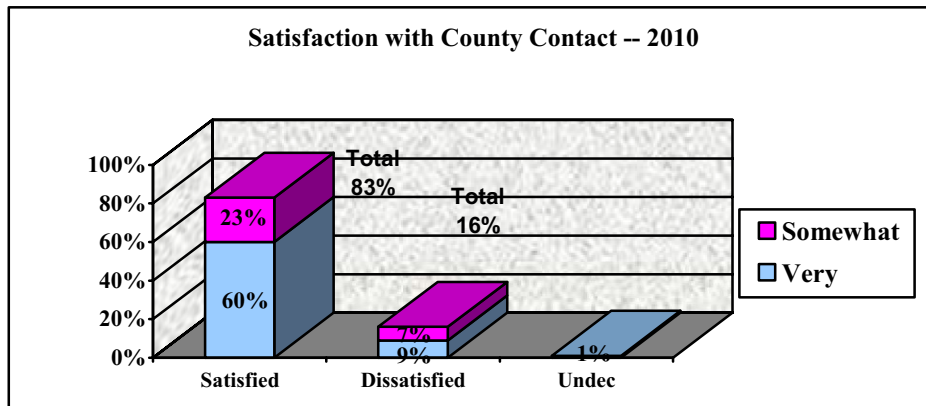
sent an e-mail. In the 2008 survey, 57 percent called, 27 percent personally visited a department or office, and 16 percent wrote or e-mailed an office.

**-- Satisfaction With Job Performance**

The overwhelming majority of the residents who said their household contacted a county office indicated that they were satisfied with the response they received. The total overall satisfaction numbers are higher in 2010 than in either the 2008 or 2006 surveys. An 83 percent majority said they were satisfied with the response (60 percent very satisfied), while 16 percent were dissatisfied (7 percent very dissatisfied), In 2006, an 80 percent majority said they were satisfied (55 percent very satisfied),

The table below, shows the specific 2010 and 2008 results, and the chart illustrates the 2010 findings.

<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	
60%	59%	Very satisfied
23%	19%	Somewhat satisfied
<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>TOTAL SATISFIED</b>
<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSATISFIED</b>
7%	11%	Somewhat dissatisfied
9%	8%	Very dissatisfied
1%	3%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused



**-- More, Enough, or Too Much?**

After the rating offered for the services provided when residents contacted the county, respondents were asked to give their opinion as to whether or not the county is currently doing – Enough, Too Much, or if More needed to be done – in fifteen separate service delivery areas. In an effort to measure the level to which there is a belief that more needs to be done, respondents

answering “More” were asked if they meant that “Much More” or “Somewhat More” was necessary to address their concern. As an indication of the effectiveness of the delivery of services, only one service, providing an effective economic development plan, got a response from a majority of survey participants saying that more needed to be done.

<b>Response based on 2010 &amp; 2008 surveys</b>		<b><u>Much More</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL More</u></b>	<b><u>Enough</u></b>	<b><u>Too Much</u></b>	<b><u>Und/ DK</u></b>	
33.	Providing effective county road patrol service by the Sheriff's Department	<b>2010</b>	3%	<b>14%</b>	80%	3%	3%
		<b>2008</b>	8%	<b>25%</b>	66%	2%	7%
34.	Safely operating the county jail, protecting the public, and avoiding prison overcrowding	<b>2010</b>	1%	<b>9%</b>	67%	3%	21%
		<b>2008</b>	4%	<b>16%</b>	61%	2%	21%
35.	Providing public health services, such as immunizations and restaurant inspections	<b>2010</b>	4%	<b>16%</b>	67%	6%	11%
		<b>2008</b>	6%	<b>16%</b>	65%	2%	17%
36.	Providing effective economic development programs to attract business and industry	<b>2010</b>	19%	<b>50%</b>	35%	3%	12%
		<b>2008</b>	14%	<b>42%</b>	35%	2%	21%
37.	Providing health care for uninsured and underinsured residents of the county	<b>2010</b>	14%	<b>32%</b>	35%	8%	25%
		<b>2008</b>	10%	<b>26%</b>	32%	3%	36%
38.	Providing substance abuse prevention and treatment services	<b>2010</b>	5%	<b>19%</b>	46%	5%	30%
		<b>2008</b>	6%	<b>22%</b>	46%	4%	28%
39.	Providing mental health services	<b>2010</b>	7%	<b>22%</b>	50%	2%	26%
		<b>2008</b>	6%	<b>21%</b>	49%	2%	28%
40.	Working with local communities to control crime and drugs	<b>2010</b>	4%	<b>24%</b>	64%	2%	10%
		<b>2008</b>	8%	<b>24%</b>	60%	2%	14%
41.	Providing programs for juvenile offenders separate from adult prison programs	<b>2010</b>	5%	<b>23%</b>	41%	1%	35%
		<b>2008</b>	6%	<b>22%</b>	45%	2%	31%
42.	Protecting prime farmland and open space from commercial and residential development	<b>2010</b>	7%	<b>32%</b>	49%	8%	11%
		<b>2008</b>	12%	<b>31%</b>	46%	4%	19%
43.	Providing an effective communications system for public safety officials so they can best protect the public	<b>2010</b>	3%	<b>12%</b>	73%	3%	12%
		<b>2008</b>	7%	<b>23%</b>	56%	2%	19%

<b>Response based on 2010 &amp; 2008 surveys</b>		<b><u>Much More</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL More</u></b>	<b><u>Enough</u></b>	<b><u>Too Much</u></b>	<b><u>Und/ DK</u></b>	
44.	Providing a quick emergency response to accidents on county roads	<b>2010</b>	2%	<b>9%</b>	85%	---	6%
		<b>2008</b>	7%	<b>22%</b>	64%	1%	13%
45.	Working with local governments to offer the best plan for commercial and residential development so excessive growth and sprawl can be avoided	<b>2010</b>	5%	<b>29%</b>	49%	5%	17%
		<b>2008</b>	9%	<b>32%</b>	47%	3%	18%
46.	Keeping county residents informed about county programs and services	<b>2010</b>	12%	<b>41%</b>	54%	1%	4%
		<b>2008</b>	15%	<b>42%</b>	49%	---	9%
47.	Maintaining <u>County</u> parks and recreational facilities	<b>2010</b>	2%	<b>11%</b>	83%	5%	1%
		<b>2008</b>	4%	<b>18%</b>	72%	4%	6%

<b>Responses ranked based on “Total More” in 2010</b>	<b><u>Much More</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL More</u></b>	<b><u>Enough</u></b>	<b><u>Too Much</u></b>	<b><u>Und/ DK</u></b>
Providing effective economic development programs to attract business and industry	19%	<b>50%</b>	35%	3%	12%
Keeping county residents informed about county programs and services	12%	<b>41%</b>	54%	1%	4%
Providing health care for uninsured and underinsured residents of the county	14%	<b>32%</b>	35%	8%	25%
Protecting prime farmland and open space from commercial and residential development	7%	<b>32%</b>	49%	8%	11%
Working with local governments to offer the best plan for commercial and residential development so excessive growth and sprawl can be avoided	5%	<b>29%</b>	49%	5%	17%
Working with local communities to control crime & drugs	4%	<b>24%</b>	64%	2%	10%
Providing programs for juvenile offenders separate from adult prison programs	5%	<b>23%</b>	41%	1%	35%
Providing mental health services	7%	<b>22%</b>	50%	2%	26%
Providing substance abuse prevention and treatment services	5%	<b>19%</b>	46%	5%	30%
Providing public health services, such as immunizations and restaurant inspections	4%	<b>16%</b>	67%	6%	11%
Providing effective county road patrol service by the Sheriff’s Department	3%	<b>14%</b>	80%	3%	3%
Providing an effective communications system for public safety officials so they can best protect the public	3%	<b>12%</b>	73%	3%	12%
Maintaining <u>County</u> parks and recreational facilities	2%	<b>11%</b>	83%	5%	1%
Safely operating the county jail, protecting the public, and avoiding prison overcrowding	1%	<b>9%</b>	67%	3%	21%
Providing a quick emergency response to accidents on county roads	2%	<b>9%</b>	85%	---	6%

The biggest changes between the 2008 and 2010 surveys saying more should be done on a service included:

- An 8 point increase (42 to 50 percent) in the percentage “providing effective economic development programs to attract business and industry.”
- A 6 point increase (26 to 32 percent) in “providing health care for uninsured and underinsured residents of the county.”
- A 13 point drop (22 to 9 percent) in “providing a quick emergency response to accidents on county roads.”
- An 11 point drop (23 to 12 percent) in “providing an effective communication system for public safety officials so they can best protect the public.”
- An 11 point drop (25 to 14 percent) in “providing effective county road patrol service by the Sheriff’s Department.”
- A 7 point drop (16 to 9 percent) in “safely operating the county jail, protecting the public, and avoiding prison overcrowding.”

In 2006, two of the categories – “Protecting prime farmland” and “Providing economic development programs” – both had more than 50 percent of respondents indicating that “More” should be done.

**-- Where to Cut if Needed?**

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to name, “. . . what one, two or three county programs or services do you think should be cut . . .” [if the Commission had to cut programs to balance the budget? The following table shows the results of both the 2010 and 2008 surveys:

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
12%	28%	Parks and Recreation	1%	1%	Planning – Zoning
8%					Animal Control
4%	---	Farmland Preservation	1%	---	Human Services
3%	4%	Road Commission	---	3%	New Construction
3%	1%	Admin – Brd of Commissioners	---	2%	Illegal Immigrant Programs
2%	7%	County Employees Wages - Benefits	---	2%	Landscaping
2%	3%	Police	---	2%	Personnel
2%	---	Health Department	---	2%	Welfare
2%	---	Sheriff Department	---	1%	After-school Programs
2%	---	Substance Abuse Prevention	---	1%	Federal Mandates
1%	2%	Mental Health	---	1%	Fire Department
1%	2%	Social Health Care	---	1%	Marketing Committee
1%	2%	Social Services	2%	2%	Other
1%					Undecided/Refused
1%	1%	Economic Development			

**-- Should economic development efforts have a local or regional focus?**

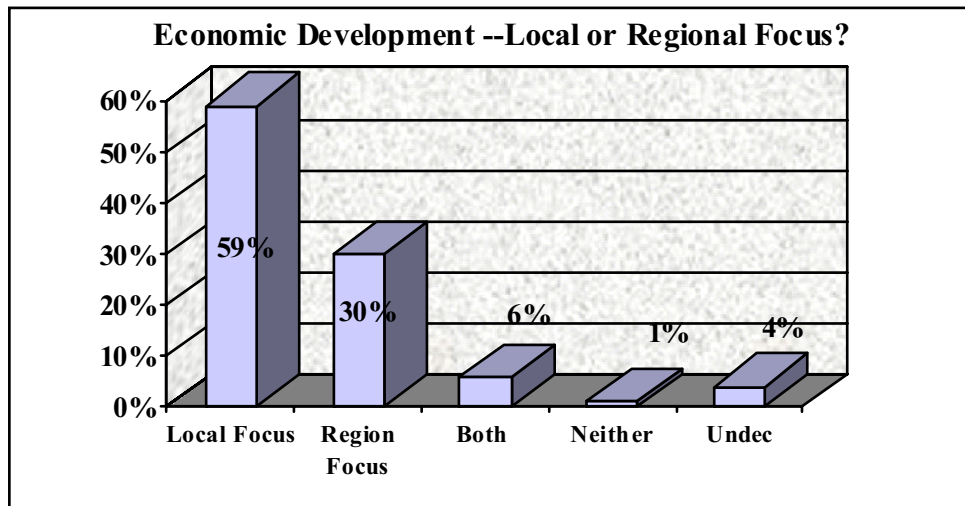
In a question asked for the first time in the 2010 survey, respondents were asked the following question:

“Historically in Ottawa County, various non-profit organizations with local government membership have taken the lead role in economic development efforts, working to spur economic activity within portions of the county. In some other areas of the state, it is the county government, and even coalitions of county governments, that are the primary source of economic development efforts, which aim at promoting economic activity on a county-wide, or even region-wide, basis. Which of the two types of economic development approaches I just described, do you prefer . . . The type of efforts that are ... **[ROTATE STATEMENTS]**

led by smaller local jurisdictions for the primary benefit of local communities;  
 or,  
 efforts that take a more wide-ranging approach and promote economic development on a regional basis?”

The responses were:

- 59% Local focus only
- 30% Regional approach
- 6% A little bit of both (*volunteered*)
- 1% Neither – shouldn’t be involved in economic development (*volunteered*)
- 4% Undecided/Don’t know/Refused





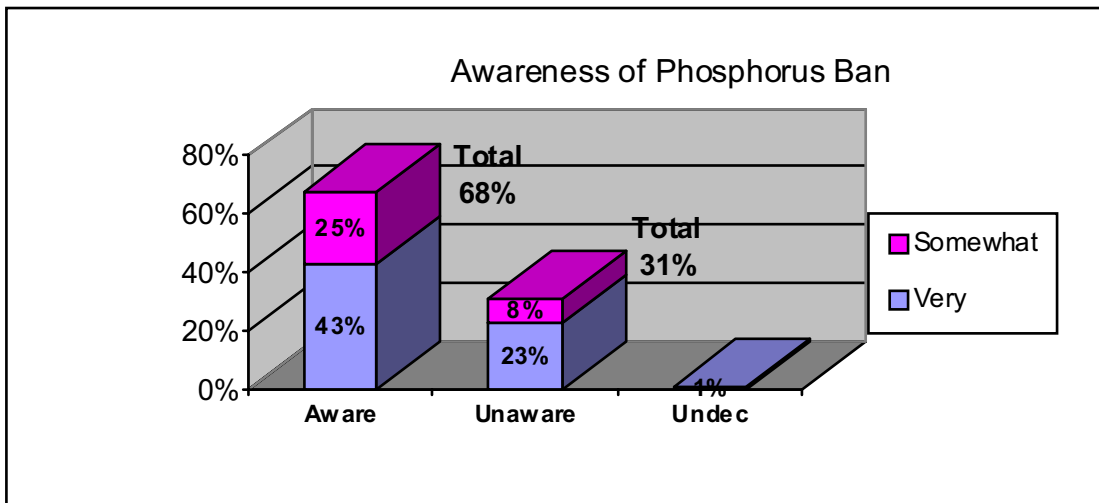
**-- Awareness of Phosphorus Ban – More than Two-Thirds Aware**

In a question that was asked for the first time in 2010, respondents were asked:

“A few years ago, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners voted to ban the use of fertilizer containing phosphorus. The ban, which went into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008, prohibits the use of fertilizer containing phosphorus, as well as prohibiting the application of any type of fertilizer on frozen ground or on solid surfaces such as parking lots and roadways. Before I just described the ban on the use of fertilizer containing phosphorus, how aware would you say you were about this action by the Board of County Commissioners?”

The responses were:

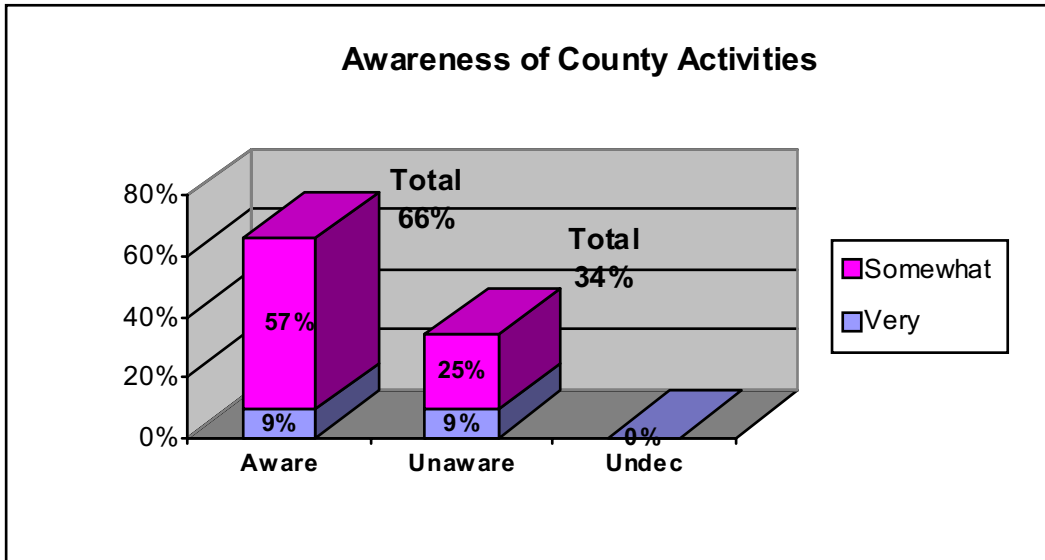
- 43% Very aware
- 25% Somewhat aware
- 68% TOTAL AWARE**
- 31% TOTAL UNAWARE**
- 8% Somewhat unaware
- 23% Very unaware
- 1% Undecided/Don't know/Refused



**-- Awareness of County Activities in general**

In a question asked first in 2008 and repeated in 2010, respondents were asked to assess how aware they felt they were about county activities. The responses in both years were:

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
9%	6%	Very aware
57%	48%	Somewhat aware
<b>66%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>TOTAL AWARE</b>
<b>34%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>TOTAL UNAWARE</b>
25%	24%	Somewhat unaware
9%	18%	Very unaware
---	6%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused



**-- Information Sources**

In an effort to guide the county in the best means of communicating with its constituents, a question was posed to respondents asking them where they got most of their information concerning county government. The responses in 2010 and in 2008 were:

<u>2010</u>	<u>2008</u>	
15%	12%	Television coverage of the county
14%	17%	Grand Rapids Press
12%	11%	Newsletters from the county
12%	13%	The Holland Sentinel
11%	3%	Grand Valley Advance
10%	8%	Comments from friends/word of mouth
9%	7%	Grand Haven Tribune
5%	3%	Radio coverage of the county
4%	3%	The County Website – <a href="http://www.miOttawa.org">www.miOttawa.org</a>
2%	1%	Muskegon Chronicle
1%	---	Commission meetings on cable
---	1%	Library
5%	---	Other/Undecided/Refused

Nearly half of all 2010 respondents, 48 percent, named a newspaper as their top source of information. This is down from the 68 percent citing newspapers in 2006, but 7 points more than the 41 percent citing newspapers in 2008. The 2010 survey is the first time that television coverage of the county ranked as the top source of information.

**-- Preferences for receiving information**

Respondents in 2010 were asked for the first time how that would prefer to receive information from Ottawa County.

“Which two or three of the following sources would you prefer to receive information from about Ottawa County government?”

The responses were:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Newspapers	51%	21%	15%
Radio news and programs	5%	18%	9%
Television news reports	8%	15%	25%
Cable TV	4%	4%	1%
Billboards	---	3%	5%
The Internet	11%	17%	13%
Social Network sites such as Facebook	2%	1%	6%
Magazines	14%	---	2%
Direct mail	4%	14%	15%
Friends, family or relatives	---	7%	9%
Undecided/Don't know/Refused	1%	---	---

**COMBINED 2010 RESULTS:**

35%	Newspapers	6%	Friends, family or relatives
14%	Direct mail	3%	Cable TV
14%	The Internet	2%	Billboards
13%	Television news reports	2%	Social Network sites such as Facebook
10%	Radio news and programs	1%	Other/Undecided/Refused

**-- More than 6-in-10 do not use social media sites**

Respondents were asked how often they visit social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook or MySpace. A 61 percent majority said they never use social media sites, while 30 percent use them at least a few times a week.

18%	Every day
6%	Most days
6%	A few times a week
1%	Several times a month
8%	Seldom
61%	Or Never

**-- Facebook the overwhelming social media favorite**

Respondents who said they visit social media websites were asked: “Which social media site do you most often use?” “Facebook” was the overwhelming response of a 92 percent nearly unanimous majority.

92%	Facebook
2%	MySpace
4%	Twitter
1%	Craigslist
1%	Undecided/Don’t know/Refused

**-- More than 8-in-10 connect to the Internet once a week or more**

All respondents were asked how often they connect to the Internet. An 82 percent majority connects to the Internet at least once or twice a week, with 75 percent connecting every day, which is up 5 points since 2008 – as indicated in the following table:

<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	
75%	70%	Every day
5%	9%	A few times a week
2%	3%	Once or twice a week
1%	1%	A few times a month
---	---	A few times a year
---	1%	Seldom
14%	11%	Never
2%	2%	Doesn’t have a computer ( <i>volunteered</i> )
1%	3%	Undecided/Don’t know/Refused

**-- More visit Ottawa County website than in 2008**

Among respondents who said they connect to the Internet, they were asked how often they visit the Ottawa County website. Forty-five percent (up 5 points since 2008) said they visit the website ([www.miottawa.org](http://www.miottawa.org)), with 17 (down 3 points) saying they visit the site “A lot” or “Some.” There was an increase in the percentage saying they visit the site “Only a little” – 28 percent in 2010 -- up from 19 percent in 2008, as indicated in the following table:

<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	
3%	3%	A lot
14%	18%	Some
28%	19%	Only a little
<b>45%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>TOTAL VISIT</b>
54%	57%	Not at all
1%	3%	Undecided/Don’t know/Refused

**-- Nearly 8-in-10 offers a positive rating for County website**

All respondents who said they visit the Ottawa County website were asked how they would rate the quality of the website by asking if they would give it a “positive rating of excellent or pretty good, or a negative rating of only fair or poor?” The positive rating was unchanged with 77 percent offering a positive rating (down 1 point since 2008), while the negative rating did increase from 11 to 20 percent, nearly double. There was also a drop in the percentage offering an excellent rating from 15 to 10 percent. The table below shows the two year results:

<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	
10%	15%	Excellent
67%	63%	Pretty good
<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>
<b>20%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>
15%	10%	Only fair
5%	1%	Poor
3%	11%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused

**-- More than 7-in-10 would visit website more if they could access services**

Respondents were asked if they would use the Ottawa County website more often if they could access county services by way of the Internet instead of making a trip to the county office complex. A 72 percent majority said they would visit the site more often, including 33 percent who said they would visit the site a “Lot more often,” as indicated below:

33%	Yes – a lot more often
39%	Yes – only a little more often
<b>72%</b>	<b>TOTAL MORE OFTEN</b>
18%	No
8%	Depends ( <i>volunteered</i> )
2%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused

**-- Less than 1-in-4 willing to pay a fee to access services via website**

Respondents who said they would visit the website more often were asked if they would be willing to “pay a minimal fee for the convenience of accessing county services by way of the Internet, instead of driving to the county administrative complex?” Twenty-three percent said they would be willing to pay a minimal fee, while 65 percent said they would NOT be willing to do so, as indicated below.

- 23% Yes
- 65% No
- 11% Depends (*volunteered*)
- 1% Undecided/Don't know/Refused

**-- Half report interest in attending a citizens academy**

All respondents were told that:

“Ottawa County is considering different ways to help inform citizens about its operations and activities. One way would be to hold a citizens academy, offering sessions that provide information about a specific area of county government, like property taxes and budgeting, the Sheriff’s Department, and the court system.”

They were then asked:

“How interested would you be in learning about Ottawa County’s government by attending these types of sessions?”

A bare 50 percent majority said they would be interested, which is up 4 points from the 2008 survey, although there was a 3 point drop in the percentage saying they would be “Very interested” in attending (14 to 11 percent).

<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	
11%	14%	Very interested
39%	32%	Somewhat interested
<b>50%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>TOTAL INTERESTED</b>
<b>47%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>TOTAL UNINTERESTED</b>
21%	12%	Somewhat uninterested
26%	33%	Very uninterested
3%	9%	Undecided/Don't know/Refused

**-- SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS**

A 74 percent majority of survey respondents said they have called Ottawa County their home for more than 15 years (up from 66 percent in 2008), with 59 percent claiming a county tenure of over 25 years. As is typical of most areas in the state, well over half (63 percent) report having no school age children in their home (up 5 points since 2008). A bare majority (50 percent) describes their community as “Suburban” (down 3 points), followed by “Rural” at 34 percent (up 6 points), and “Urban” at 14 percent (down 1 point).

The predominantly white cohort of respondents (94 percent), exhibit a fairly high level of formal education, with 31 percent attaining a bachelor’s degree, and 65 percent reporting some form of post-secondary education.

More than nine-in-ten respondents (93 percent) report being homeowners, with the balance reporting either leasing, renting or refusing to offer a response. Approximately half of the respondents (45 percent) report a household income of \$75,000 or less, with 33 percent reporting a household income of \$75,000 or higher. Twenty one percent of respondents did not respond to the question asking them to reveal their household income.

As in all of its surveys of this nature, EPIC ▪ MRA attempts to stratify the male/female ratio in a manner that reflects conventional voter turnout based on gender. This produced a female/male ratio of 53-to-47 percent.

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