

**Directors and Chapter Officers:** This newsletter is mailed to chapter presidents and secretaries.

Please feel free to copy and distribute this newsletter to other chapter members.

To update chapter officers, contact MTA MIS Aide Tammie Underhill at [tammie@michigantownships.org](mailto:tammie@michigantownships.org) or (517) 321-6467, ext. 244.

# MTA County Chapter Update

News for and from Michigan Townships Association County Chapters June 2008

## EMPLOYMENT TESTING & BACKGROUND CHECKS

### Sample Policies and Forms

The MTA Member Information Department has added another "toolkit" to MTA's growing list of resources available online at [www.michigantownships.org/resourcekits.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/resourcekits.asp), or by calling (517) 321-6467.

**A great way to stay informed on the federal level and help strengthen small town government!**



## America's Town Meeting

2008 Legislative Conference

September 30 - October 1

Washington, D.C.

Consider sponsoring a member of your chapter to join other town and township officials from across the country at this once-a-year opportunity to advance small community interests and visit your congressman.

Registrations for this event have been mailed. If you have questions regarding the conference, contact MTA Administrative Assistant Debbie Shue at [debbie@michigantownships.org](mailto:debbie@michigantownships.org) or (517) 321-6467, ext. 243. She will gladly help you with registration and hotel reservations.



## The 2009 Annual Educational Conference is January 27-30 in Detroit

The 2009 conference follows an election year. We urge veteran township officials and newly elected officials to attend. There is always a new learning opportunity when you attend this spectacular event. Watch for details in the *Michigan Township News*!

## Plan to Attend Upcoming MTA Educational Programs!

As economic times get harder on the budget, MTA is trying new options to help save time and fuel by offering a convenient afternoon and evening workshop in one day at one location. Plan to participate in the full program to get the best value for your money.

### Workshops

#### Special Assessment Procedures

1 - 4:15 p.m. (Includes networking lunch, which begins at noon)

#### Ordinance Enforcement Strategies

5:30 - 8:45 p.m. (Includes networking dinner, which begins at 4:30 p.m.)

#### Early-bird Rates:

Full Program \$105/Single Session \$70

### Dates & Locations

**July 17:** Treetops Resort, Gaylord

**July 22:** Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

**July 23:** Heirman Center at Bay College, Escanaba

**Aug. 12:** Fetzer Center at WMU, Kalamazoo

**Aug. 19:** Holiday Inn, Ann Arbor

**Aug. 21:** Holiday Inn, Big Rapids

## MTA Fall District Meeting Tour

Coming in September for MTA districts 14-25.

The schedule is as follows:

**Districts 14 & 17:** Sept. 9, Frankenmuth

**District 15:** Sept. 19, Spring Lake

**Districts 16 & 20:** Sept. 25, Lansing

**Districts 18 & 21:** Sept. 22, Port Huron

**Districts 19 & 23:** Sept. 17, Kalamazoo

**District 22:** Sept. 18, Benton Harbor

**Districts 24 & 25:** Sept. 10, Ann Arbor

Look for more details in the July issue of *Michigan Township News*, and register early!

### ***Is Your Township a 'Township of Excellence'?***

Your township can now apply to be a Township of Excellence.

A Township of Excellence is defined as a strong, vibrant community governed by a township board, which adheres to best practices to deliver quality programs and services to accomplish community-driven goals.

The goals of the Township of Excellence program are to:

- Recognize and reward truly exemplary township governments, specifically where excellence is achieved in a broad array of township functions and operations.
- Enable township residents to appreciate that they live in a township which has achieved a high level of excellence as identified by objective benchmarks.
- Encourage townships to achieve objective benchmarks of excellence.
- Continue MTA's tradition of leading its members to achieve higher levels of quality constituent services.

Contact Jennifer Hoff for application information: [jennifer@michigantownships.org](mailto:jennifer@michigantownships.org).

### ***New Web Pages on Hot Topics!***

MTA has added new pages to its Web site on:

#### ***Michigan Planning Enabling Act***

Public Act 33 of 2008, the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), consolidates the three original planning acts—the Township Planning Act, County Planning Act and Municipal Planning Act—into a single law governing municipal planning, which takes effect Sept. 1, 2008.

Visit [www.michigantownships.org/mpea.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/mpea.asp) for MTA's new Web page devoted to PA 33.

#### ***Foreclosure***

Real estate foreclosures have been in the news lately as Michigan homeowners have experienced high foreclosure rates. Although townships do not have the same authority to assist homeowners as federal or state government entities—or private organizations—townships can provide an extra bit of customer service to make information available regarding deferments, exemptions, tax credits and human services resources to help prevent mortgage or tax foreclosures.

Visit [www.michigantownships.org/foreclosure.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/foreclosure.asp), which offers township officials a variety of foreclosure resources to assist residents in need.

### ***NEW Municipal Civil Infraction Book Debuts in July***

MTA is debuting a new publication, *Municipal Civil Infractions—The Process*, at its July and August workshops. This comprehensive guide provides an overview of the municipal civil infractions process, from issuing tickets to working your way through court proceedings. Let MTA help your township maneuver the sometimes tricky municipal civil infraction process. Watch the MTA Web site and *Michigan Township News* for availability.

### ***Headlines and Hot Topics***

Visit the MTA Home page, [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org), regularly to view ***Headlines and Hot Topics***. Currently:

- How townships can assist homeowners facing foreclosure.
- A new law that allows options for board of review meeting dates in July and December.
- MTA's 2008 Guide to Summer Tax Collections. New treasurer's hours are on page 4 of the "toolkit."

***Thank you,*** clerks, for participating in MTA's 2008 Annual Salary Survey for fiscal years beginning January and April. If you haven't responded yet, please do so today. Township clerks with a July fiscal year will receive the survey in July.

***Thank you,*** supervisors, for participating in MTA's Web Mapping Data survey. If you haven't responded, we still need to hear from you.

### ***Reserve Your County Chapter Hospitality Suite by September 5!***

A limited number of suites are available to rent during the MTA Annual Educational Conference & Expo, Jan. 27–30, 2009 in Detroit. Unused suites will be made available to sponsors and exhibitors after September 5. Act now!

Suites are available at the host hotel, Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center, at discounted rates of \$279 plus tax, per night for a junior suite and \$319 plus tax, per night for a deluxe suite, so reserve your suite early.

***NOTE:*** All suite reservations must be made through MTA. Do not contact the Detroit Marriott directly, the hotel staff will be unable to assist you. For additional information or to make reservations, Contact MTA Education Coordinator Kristin Kratky at (517) 321-6467, ext. 230, or [kristin@michigantownships.org](mailto:kristin@michigantownships.org).

# County Chapter Meeting Notes

Please send your county chapter minutes, along with any stories or photos (prints or digital), to:  
Tammie Underhill, MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078,  
fax: (517) 321-6467 or tammie@michigantownships.org.

## Alpena County

**April 21:** MTA District 7 Director Ken Gauthier gave a legislative update and spoke on upcoming MTA workshops and district meetings. County Road Commissioner Bill Domke, and County Commissioners Gerald Fournier and Cam Habermehl gave updates on their departments. Lee Shirey, Target Alpena economic development director, discussed the strategic plan and gave a financial status update. The chapter's by-laws were discussed.

## Antrim County

**April 29:** A meeting regarding allowed earth changes on lake front properties was announced. Carl Goeman, Antrim County emergency management director, explained the Michigan Emergency Management Assistance Compact (MEMAC).

## Charlevoix County

**February 25:** The chapter held a dinner party, prepared by Boyne City culinary arts students. Rep. Kevin Elsenheimer (R-Custer Twp.), gave a legislative update and expressed his concerns on budgetary issues.

**March 31:** Mary Lou Tanton of Scenic Michigan, gave a presentation on the "dark sky initiative." Grenetta Thomassey, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council policy director, and Marc Seelye, Charlevoix County Soil Erosion control officer, gave presentations.

## Cheboygan County

**January 31:** MTA District 6 Director Charlie Veneros gave a legislative update. Tim Maylone, manager of Cherry Capital Connection, gave a presentation on county-wide wireless internet service. County IT Director Matt Hellens discussed a multi-county co-op to provide broadband and wireless to all residents. County Recycling Coordinator Dan O'Henley answered questions on recycling. Chapter elections were held: Allen Barr, president; Charles Beckwith, vice president; and Barb Hall, secretary/treasurer.

**February 28:** MTA District 5 Director Charlie Veneros discussed the Robert R. Robinson Scholarship Fund and provided a legislative update. Discussions were held on County-wide broadband, zoning, and going from three to five road commissioners.

## Chippewa County

**March 20:** MTA Member Information Specialist Cindy Davis gave a presentation on the budgeting process and board member salaries. Register of Deeds and Equalization Director Sharon Kennedy gave an update on boards of review. The board of commissioners announced the hiring of a new county administrator.

## Delta County

**February 28:** Rob VanEffen, Delta County Road Commission public works representative, discussed the effects of this winter on county and township budgets. Risk control for fire departments was discussed.

**March 27:** Captain Bob Berbohm, emergency management coordinator, discussed a 9-1-1 engineering study, revenues from phone bills, and tower upgrades.

**April 24:** Don Shirley and Bob Zinn with the Drain Commission discussed proposed changes to the Sanitary Code. Rory Mattson, executive director of the Delta Conservation District, discussed present projects.

## Eaton County

**March 24:** MTA District 20 Director Linda Towsley gave a Conference 2009 update. Sheriff Mike Raines spoke on construction at the jail, and Chief Deputy Brian Peacock reported on emergency service calls this year versus last year. April Heinze, Eaton County Central Dispatch assistant director, explained 9-1-1 surcharges on phone bills and the millage renewal on the November ballot.

**April 28:** MTA District 20 Director Linda Towsley reminded the chapter to look for the MTA PAC's candidate questionnaire in May. MTA Director of Operations Penny Haney discussed internal controls. Chief Deputy Brian Peacock spoke on construction at the jail.

## Genesee County

**May 19:** At the chapter's legislative breakfast, MTA Legislative Liaison Tom Frazier provided a legislative update.

## Grand Traverse County

**April 3:** MTA Legislative Liaison Bill Anderson provided a legislative update.

## Ingham County

**January 23:** County Road Commission Chair Larry Smith and Director William Conklin spoke on cost sharing for paving roads and weight loads on bridges. County Commissioners Randy Schafer and Steve Dougan led a discussion on eliminating road patrol by the sheriff's department, stressing public safety as a basic service. The road commission was complimented on the tornado clean-up.

**April 23:** MTA District 20 Director Linda Towsley provided an update on MTA activities and district meetings. Sen. Valde Garcia (R-Marion Twp.) provided a legislative update. MTA Member Information Specialist Cindy Davis discussed changes to the township record retention schedule. Ingham County Treasurer Eric Schertzing spoke on establishing a county advisory tax limitation committee.

## Iron County

**December 4:** Bob Black, Iron County Commissioner, discussed the health department millage and MTA fire department training workshop. Wayne Wales, Road Commission chairperson, discussed local road issues.

## Isabella County

**April 16:** MTA Member Information Liaison Catherine Mullhaupt spoke on cemeteries and fielded questions on legal issues.

## Kalamazoo County

**May 28:** MTA District 19 Director Jeff Sorenson discussed MTA board of directors activities, including focus on increasing member participation and formulating goals for the future of townships, and the MTA-PAC

candidates survey. Rep. Jack Hoogendyke (R-Texas Charter Twp.) updated the group on the budget shortfall and maintaining revenue sharing levels. 9-1-1 dispatch, sheriff patrols, industrial zoning, clerk and treasurer joint meetings, the chapter's quarterly meeting progress, and intensive farm operations waste hauling were discussed. County Treasurer Mary Balkema reported on foreclosures in the county. A tour of Avalon Farms followed the meeting.

### Kalkaska County

**April 21:** The annual potluck supper was held. Big Fish Environmental representatives gave a presentation on a proposed aerobic septage processing facility.

### Kent County

**February 28:** MTA District 15 Director Jim Stover discussed the MTA Capitol Conference, promoting Michigan's prosperity, and a task force to review township mandates. Road Commissioner Jon Rice reported on budget constraints due to excessive snow removal. Kent County Elections Director Sue deSteiguer gave a presentation on campaign finance disclosure for candidates.

### Lapeer County

**February 19:** MTA District 21 Director Colleen Schwartz discussed legislation, the MTA Capitol Conference, and the MTA-PAC candidate survey. County Commissioner Dyle Henning addressed the group on water and land preservation. Mark Opra, with the Thumb Narcotics Unit, gave an annual report. Road Commissioner Rick Pearson spoke about MDOT's "Keeping Good Roads Good" preventive maintenance program.

### Manistee County

**February 27:** Sheriff Dale Kowalkowski introduced a new program called Get "Stopped" (Sheriffs Telling Our Parents & Promoting Educated Drivers), and spoke on jail housing and snowmobile officer activities. County Commissioner Glenn Lottie announced the commission is going green to save money and provided a county activities report. Jim Espivik, 9-1-1 director, spoke on the 9-1-1 millage and digital photos for mapping a 9-1-1 grid.

**March 26:** County Commissioner Glenn Lottie gave an update on the milfoil project and Manistee Blacker airport. Tim Ervin and Betsy Keson, with Alliance for Economic Success, reported on community meetings on recycling. Laura Heitzelman, executive director of Manistee County Community Foundation, spoke on a citizen planner grant and access to county waterways for disabled persons.

**April 23:** County Commissioner Glenn Lottie gave an update on the recycling study, the upcoming countywide summit, the statewide energy fair and the library millage renewal. MSU Extension Director Elaine Bush discussed ideas on smart growth and the household hazardous waste day held in September. The dedication for Cleon Township's fire department building was announced.

**May 28:** The chapter held its annual dinner. MTA Member Information Liaison Catherine Mullhaupt attended.

### Oceana County

**February 28:** MTA District 11 Director Gene Jorissen discussed annexation. Chapter President Walter Wheeler reported on the board of review training. Chief Judge Brad Lambrix, of the Oceana County Probate Court, reported on the child care fund budget and a new security system at the county building. Lynn Russell, Delta County United Way executive director, explained the newly implemented



*Manistee County Chapter of the Michigan Townships Association held its annual dinner party on May 28.*

2-1-1 program. Oil drilling and household hazardous waste were discussed.

### Ottawa County

**March 31:** Rep. Arlan Meekoff (R-Olive Twp.) provided a legislative update. MTA Member Information Liaison Evelyn David discussed campaign deadlines. County Clerk Dan Kruger gave an overview of the county allocation board.

### Presque Isle County

**April 1:** MTA District 7 Director Ken Gauthier reported on legislative activities, the study of unfunded mandates by the state, and upcoming MTA educational workshops, including district meetings. Cathy Idalski, register of deeds, commented on mortgage sales and property purchases. County Commissioner Carl Altman reported on the purchase of three new patrol cars, and building a regional jail. Drain Commissioner Charles Lyon reported on stormwater management rules.

### Shiawassee County

**April 1:** MTA Legislative Liaison Bill Anderson gave a legislative update.

**May 13:** MTA Legislative Liaison David Bertram provided a legislative update.

### Tuscola County

**April 17:** The chapter held its annual chicken dinner. MTA Legislative Liaison Tom Frazier provided a legislative update.

### *Did you know townships are responsible for issuing fireworks permits?*

MTA's fireworks packet contains an original application and permit forms, the fact sheet "What township officials need to know about Michigan and Federal Fireworks Regulations," and a copy of the Michigan Fireworks Law. Contact MTA Member Information Services Aide Tammie Underhill at [tammie@michigantownships.org](mailto:tammie@michigantownships.org) or (517) 321-6467, ext. 244 to request a copy.