

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS



Imagine a future where communities thrive, the environment is healthy, traditions matter, and green economies help provide prosperity. We all have a stake in this future. Your success will ultimately depend on the way you recognize your township's needs and how the township board can adapt to change to meet those needs. The educational sessions described below are designed to provide knowledge, enhance your skills and inspire you to become a truly effective leader. Topics are designed for elected officials at every level and, in addition to statutory duties, address a variety of concepts, trends and current issues in township government.

You'll find two types of classes being offered this year: (1) **"traditional"** classes, which address statutory roles and responsibilities, legal issues and a myriad of other matters that townships tackle; and (2) classes with titles that appear in **orange** supplement our traditional programming by embracing more **"innovative"** topics, such as the emerging bioenergy industry and dealing with foreclosed properties.

Please note that speakers, topics and times are subject to change. Consult your program booklet on-site for the final schedule.

Continuing Education Credits Available



Candidates enrolled in MTA's Township Governance Academy (TGA) can earn up to 16 credits through participation at Conference (eight elective credits) and by taking the TGA courses (four credits each) offered during the two-part pre-Conference program on Tuesday (see page 16 for details).



Attendance at MTA's TGA workshops can earn township clerks Experience Points toward their Certified Municipal Clerk designation awarded by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.



Several workshops qualify for credit in Michigan State University's Master Citizen Planner (MCP) program. Check the on-site program booklet for more information.

Wednesday, January 27

New Member/First-time Attendee Orientation 7:45 to 8:15 a.m.

Get the most for your MTA membership and take away tips on navigating Conference—all in one quick session! New officials and first-time Conference attendees are invited to attend this informative session, which provides an overview of MTA products, services and resources. We'll also highlight ways to get the most out of Conference—from education to the Expo. Stop by on your way to the Opening Session!

Speakers: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison, Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist, Catherine Mullhaupt, Director of MTA Member Information Services, and Tammie Underhill, MTA Member Information Services Coordinator

Coffee service sponsored by



1:30 to 2:45 p.m.

Competitive Bidding Requirements: Fact or Fiction?

Examine bidding requirements for public work projects and best practices for purchasing equipment and supplies. Delve into the bidding process as well as what should be included in an advertisement for bids. Learn the components of a bidding and purchasing policy for township

supplies, equipment and services. Walk away with tips on the disposal of township equipment or property no longer needed.
Speaker: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison

Crisis Communications—Dealing with the Media

In these days of instant news and "citizen" journalists, every minute counts. How your township responds to media requests during a crisis is critical to your public image and reputation. Learn crucial steps to help you prepare before the TV cameras are camped out. See real-life examples of response failures and successes during a crisis.

Speaker: Donna Halinski, Account Director, Marketing Resource Group, Lansing

Federal Funding for Michigan Townships

The federal government is now providing substantial resources to local governments for infrastructure, economic development, community revitalization, fire and police protection, education, social services, and environmental protection. How can townships be competitive and successful for these grants, low-cost loans, bond instruments and other resources? Come hear practical how-to tips for obtaining federal funding.

Speaker: Matt Ward, NATaT Policy Director and Government Affairs Specialist, Principal, The Ferguson Group, Washington D.C.

Green Initiatives for the Built Environment

Healthy, sustainable, high performance and resource efficient—green buildings are all this and more! Learn the benefits of green building, hear more about projects that implement the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and see how your fellow officials are applying these concepts in townships across the state.

Speaker: Linda Frey, LEED AP, Executive Director, West Michigan Chapter, U.S. Green Building Council, Grand Rapids

BONUS! BREAKOUT SESSION Leadership Made Simple

Many words have been used to describe leadership—words such as bold, courageous, and visionary, as well as servant. One of the best descriptors is **influence**. Without influence, *nothing*



happens. During this presentation, which builds on the Conference's keynote address, Davis shares the importance of influence as the epitome of leadership!
Speaker: Aaron Davis, MTA's 2010 Keynote

MTA Policy Review

The MTA Policy Committee Forum gives Conference delegates the opportunity to review and comment on the Association's proposed policy platform, which will be formally presented at the MTA Annual Meeting on Friday, Jan. 29. This forum consists of a panel of MTA directors who serve on the MTA Legislative Conference and Resolutions Committee and as chairs of six other individual MTA policy committees that are responsible for policy content. The panel will thoroughly explain new proposed resolutions, and will take questions and comments from the audience about the proposals. By dedicating time to discuss the new proposed resolutions prior to the Annual Meeting, delegates have the opportunity to better understand the MTA Board's position as well as address any concerns.
Speakers: MTA Legislative Liaisons and members of the MTA Board of Directors

Park Commissions—What You Need to Know

Elected park commissions have been created in some townships, with powers specified by law. Learn about the creation and dissolution of park commissions, the commission's powers and duties regarding parks, and necessary interactions between the commission's role and the township board's responsibilities.

Speaker: William Fahey, Attorney, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, Okemos

Roles and Responsibilities of Deputy Officials

This informative session explores the roles of the supervisor, clerk and treasurer, and the township board, with respect to deputy officials. Delve into the selection, assignment of responsibilities and compensation of deputy officials.

Speaker: Kenneth Sparks, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Small Township, Big Ideas

This session repeats from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. With shrinking revenues and increasing costs, how can your township move forward with services and projects? From scenic roads to historic restoration and bike trails to water-related issues, hear how a small township can find creative ways to get things done. We'll review grant opportunities for larger projects and show you how to take advantage of free services for the smaller ones.

Speaker: Barbara Van Gelderen, CMAE3, Supervisor/Assessor, Manlius Township (Allegan Co.)

The Human Side of Change—Working with Diverse Styles and Still Getting Results

Working through change is invigorating yet challenging—especially when it involves others! Regardless of how difficult people can be or how they behave, we're still responsible for getting results. Gain an understanding of diverse responses to change and explore how to help others work through the change process so you can maintain sanity and sustain momentum toward your desired outcomes.

Speaker: Marilyn Semonick, CEO, The Success Studio, Highland

Understanding Millage Questions

As townships grow and revenue sources become tighter, an understanding of voted millages can help township officials make the best use of this significant tool for financing much-needed programs and services. Learn the statutory limits on property taxes, mandated elements of a millage ballot question and tips for scheduling millage questions. How far a township board can go to promote a ballot question will also be discussed.

Speaker: Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services

When Disaster Strikes

Emergency preparedness involves preventing what we cannot control and mitigating what we cannot predict. Though emergencies are unpredictable, when you have a plan in place you can adapt, recover and stay in control. This informative session will help you understand the realities of a crisis and prepare for the variables that matter.

Speaker: Ann Nieuwenhuis, Emergency Planning Specialist, Michigan State University Extension, Kalamazoo

3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Ask the Experts: Township Question-and-Answer Forum

Do you have a specific question or area of concern that you're hoping to have addressed at the Conference? The floor is open and our knowledgeable panel is fired up and ready to field your toughest questions.

Speakers: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison; David Bertram, MTA Legislative Liaison—Team Leader; Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist; Larry Merrill, MTA Executive Director; Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services, and Kenneth Sparks, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Elections Update

This session gives township clerks and deputy clerks an opportunity to hear directly from the state's top election officials on the hot topics in election law. Bring your questions, and find out

what changes lie ahead following lessons learned from the 2009 election cycle.

Speakers: Christopher M. Thomas, Director, and Bradley S. Wittman, Elections Liaison Division Director, Bureau of Elections, Michigan Department of State, Lansing

EMS Agency Licensure Requirements

Examine the different levels and types of agency licensure—from basic life support (BLS) to advanced life support (ALS). Explore the requirements to meet licensure and the difference in care that can be provided by each level. Learn what it takes to provide coverage for your township, and the different options available to provide higher levels of care that are not 24/7. Public perception, expectation and consolidation of services will also be discussed.

Speaker: Robin Shively, Manager, EMS & Trauma Systems Section, Michigan Department of Community Health, Lansing

Form-based Code— It's Not Just for Cities Anymore

Did you know that form-based codes can advance your township's goals to protect local character and result in special and dynamic places? The use of hybrid zoning codes often provides a middle ground—they do not require the same commitment as full form-based codes, yet still include critical components needed to transform or preserve a district or neighborhood. Learn how the application of a form-based code has worked in other townships and determine whether it can work for your township.

Speaker: Val Lazdins, FBCI, CNU, Principal Planner, LSL Planning, Inc., Grand Rapids

GASB 54 Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions

This recently released standard will impact *all* townships. Examine the five new classifications related to fund balance and discover how the redefinition of Special Revenue Funds may eliminate some long-standing funds. Learn why township officials will need to shift their way of thinking in this must-attend session.

Speaker: David Helisek, CPA, Partner, Plante & Moran, PLLC, Ann Arbor

Green Energy Applications in Local Government

Using renewable energy technologies contributes to a clean, secure energy future for our nation and the world. Not only can you save money using energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies, you also create a healthier environment for your residents. Learn more about solar, small wind and biofuel options for township operations. Green chemicals, light bulbs and recycling programs will also be discussed.

Speaker: John Sarver, Consumer Education Programs Supervisor, Bureau of Energy Systems, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth, Lansing

Keeping Your Township Special

There's a whole lot more to Michigan than economic woes. We have miles of freshwater coastline, acres of forests and parks, historic landmarks and thriving farms. Communities that share distinctive assets can work together to establish an area where residents want to live, work and play. Renovate your image, revisit your attraction strategies and perfect the art of placemaking!

Speaker: Wayne Beyea, JD, AICP, Associate Director of Citizen Education, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Making and Defending Zoning Decisions

Explore the fundamentals of making a sound zoning decision from the standpoint of statutory compliance and ordinance framework. Examine findings of fact, the delivery of the decision, the timing for an appeal and what a court will look for if it is going to be reviewing your township's zoning decisions.

Speaker: Roxanne Seeber, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Negotiating Employee Compensation and Fringe Benefit Concessions

Challenging times have forced townships to re-examine how they pay their employees. Townships are also faced with changing approaches to setting and buying benefits for their employees. Explore differing approaches to setting



compensation and benefits for both current and future employees.

Speaker: Stephen Schultz, Attorney, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, Okemos

TeamWorks: Working Through the Changing Stages of Team Development

How people work together determines success or failure in many things. Many people boast of working as a team, however, all too often struggle through every phase of progress. Experience the stages of team development and learn to confront the challenges that come with working together.

Speaker: Marilyn Semonick, CEO, The Success Studio, Highland

The Baby Boomer Generation and Community Living

An unprecedented demographic—the aging of our population—has emerged and become a driving, transformational force in our state and nation. The time is rich in opportunity for re-shaping each community's vision, public policies and practices so that older citizens' needs and desires are realized—from housing, and transportation, to wellness and health care, education and enrichment, to voluntarism and social services.

Speaker: Sharon Gire, Director, Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, Lansing

Wednesday, January 27 4:45 to 5:30 p.m.

Becoming a ‘Township of Excellence’

Though tough to achieve, any township can aspire to this rigorous self-assessment of an individual township’s commitment to best practices and the highest levels of constituent services. And the “journey” may be more rewarding than the destination to applicants who must develop superior processes and outcomes in governance and services. This session offers an overview of the application process for MTA’s township recognition program, which is open to all townships.

Speaker: Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services

MTA County Chapter Session

Join the MTA Member Information Services staff to learn about a new social networking opportunity for MTA county chapters. We will also be highlighting some new MTA Web site updates and sharing tips for useful chapter meetings. Bring your ideas and share your chapter success stories.

Speakers: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison, and Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist

Thursday, January 28 8:30 to 9:45 a.m.

A New Michigan Constitution?

This session will examine Proposal 1 on the November 2010 ballot, which will ask voters to consider whether Michigan should convene a new constitutional convention. Learn why this question is on the ballot and hear insights about who is supporting it. Find out what issues would likely get attention at a constitutional convention—and what it could mean for township government.

Speaker: David Bertram, MTA Legislative Liaison—Team Leader

Asbestos Removal Requirements

Airborne contamination from asbestos in buildings continues to be a significant environmental problem. Laws have been enacted to prevent exposure, and it’s important to follow the proper removal

and remediation procedures or your township could face serious fines. Learn what must be considered when issuing demolition permits and ensure your township meets all state regulations.
Speaker: Robert Christmas, Senior NESAP Asbestos Inspector, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Lansing

Budgeting in Tough Economic Times

Budget preparation is one of the board’s most important tasks. In today’s economy, budgetary pressures are compounded by rising costs, increasing resident expectations and legislative scrutiny. Learn strategies for anticipating trends and monitoring your fund balance. Identify alternative revenue sources and discover tips for creative expenditure reduction.

Speaker: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison

Can You Effect Change to the Wet Carpet Experience?

Adopting and enforcing floodplain management ordinances is an important element in making flood insurance available to home and business owners. This session offers an introduction to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with discussion about community participation and obligations. Learn about flood map modernization, which has brought the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s maps and mapping process into the 21st century.

Speaker: Les Thomas, State NFIP Coordinator, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Lansing

Census 2010: It’s in Your Hands

2010 Census data will be used to draw new state and federal voting districts, and allocate more than \$4 trillion in federal funds over the next decade. Explore strategies to encourage your community to be counted and get its fair share of the power and money pie! Enumeration of snowbirds, migrant and transient populations, as well as special place enumerations and census workforce opportunities will also be discussed.

Speakers: Norma Rivas Ricci, Senior Partnership Specialist, and Patricia MacDonell, Partnership Specialist, Detroit Regional Census Center

Creative Financing Ideas for Township Officials

This session repeats from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. An insider’s guide to imaginative financing for municipal projects, this session will help you identify creative financing for infrastructure projects, including out-of-the-ordinary sources most people never think of. Get tips on where to look for grants, along with writing and presentation of proposals, including examples of successful projects and “war stories” about how those grants were awarded.

Speaker: James Hegarty, PE, Prein&Newhof, Grand Rapids

Hot Green Topics in Local Regulation

This session covers six environmental topics in 75 minutes. Delve into regulation of outdoor furnaces, green burials and composting. Examine ways to protect the waterfront and local water withdrawal regulations. Wind towers for both large and small on-site electricity generation will also be part of the discussion.

Speaker: Clifford Bloom, Attorney, Law Weathers, Grand Rapids

Making Joint Service Contracts Work for Your Township

Cooperation with other local units is now essential to the delivery of services, such as fire, ambulance, police, water, sewer, planning and building inspection. Learn how contracting methods work, including how to negotiate contracts, set rates and allocate costs. Find out more about terms that should be included in intermunicipal contracts.

Speaker: William Fahey, Attorney, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, Okemos

Optimizing Your Open Meetings Act IQ

The Open Meetings Act (OMA) is arguably the law that most impacts a township board as a whole. Every board member is subject to the OMA every time the board meets—and before and after it meets. Explore the basic points of the OMA’s requirements for meeting notice, meeting conduct, decision-making and minutes. How township law impacts board meetings will also be discussed.

Speaker: Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services

Organizing Personnel Files

Personnel files are the easiest means of keeping track of employee information to comply with record retention schedules, and confidentiality and privacy laws. Organized personnel files can also provide evidence in the event that an employer wrong-doing lawsuit is brought against the township. Review record-keeping issues involving personnel files, such as what to include in the typical employee file, when separate files should be maintained, and how long to retain the different types of information in personnel files.
Speaker: Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist

Small Township Guide to QuickBooks

Explore strengths and weakness of using QuickBooks and other “off-the-shelf” software, and learn to recognize signs you need to migrate to more sophisticated methods. Participants will walk away with tips and best practices for putting QuickBooks to work for you!
Speaker: David Williamson, CPA, Post, Smythe, Lutz & Ziel of Plymouth, LLP, Plymouth

Take Back Your Neighborhoods—Turning Foreclosures Around

Since the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced its \$4 billion Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to help reverse the foreclosure crisis, communities have found creative ways to take back control of their neighborhoods. From helping homebuyers with down payments, to buying and rehabbing neglected homes, to bulldozing blight—this session explores what’s working and what’s not as communities and the federal government try to restore confidence in neighborhoods.
Speaker: Phillip McKenna, AICP, PCP, President, and Sarah Traxler, Principal Planner, McKenna Associates, Northville

Thursday, January 28

10:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

All Atwitter: Activate Your Community Through Social Networking

What’s your Web 2.0 IQ? If you’re like most of us, you have a lot of questions about the biggest development in two-

way communication since the telephone! Discover what the buzz is all about—from the basic terminology to potential applications in your life and that of your township. We’ll discuss the pros and cons of social networking for public officials, as well as demonstrate how an online community can work, using MTA’s “Community Connection” as an example. See how communities are using Web 2.0 to benefit their residents and drive business to their area.
Speaker: Debra McGuire, CAE, IOM, MTA Director of Communications and Education

Collective Bargaining Strategies in Tough Economic Times

Tight budgets have forced townships to reassess employment costs and employee benefits. Negotiations with represented employees require a different approach than in years past. Learn the best approach to bargaining with your employees in this interactive session that explores alternative approaches to wage scales and benefits, as well as hours and other conditions of work.
Speaker: Stephen Schultz, Attorney, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, Okemos

Educating the Public Prior to Board of Review

“My taxes are too high!” “Why are my property taxes going up when the property value is going down?” Concerns and frustrations over rising property tax bills are directed toward those on the board of review. Learn how to help taxpayers understand the difference between assessed values, taxable values and tax rates. Explore some new (and not so new) ideas your assessor can use to defuse hostility, and learn to use valuation maps, photos of sales, economic condition factor maps and more to show taxpayers that they are being assessed fairly and equitably.
Speaker: Julie Pulling, Assessor, Spring Arbor Township (Jackson Co.)

Energy Cost Savings

Michigan Saves is an innovative program that will make energy efficiency upgrades and installing renewable energy systems more affordable for Michigan energy consumers, including local governments. *Michigan Saves* will finance the installation of energy measures with no upfront cost

to utility customers. Learn how your township can participate in this program and help your community save energy and money. *Speaker:* Sally Talberg, Michigan Saves Representative, Lansing

Farm Fresh Thinking: What Agriculture Needs from Township Government

With today’s growing fuel and food prices, as well as the economic struggles facing our state, townships that work with—and encourage—agricultural operations can reap the rewards of a new crop of agricultural endeavors. Learn how to help your community—and the entire state—cultivate the seeds of success in this thriving industry.
Speaker: Michigan Farm Bureau representatives, Lansing

FOIA: Fast Track to Compliance

Over 30 years after the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was adopted, transparency and public access to public records are as important to public policy as ever. The FOIA is now one of the basic governmental functions that every township should be prepared to provide. The good news is that even the smallest township can organize its records in a way designed to support FOIA compliance. This session will discuss practical approaches to FOIA fees, requests and public access to township records.
Speaker: Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services

Internal Controls: How Vulnerable is Your Township?

Fraud can happen in any township—regardless of population. Identify potential internal control weaknesses in your township and learn procedures you can implement immediately to reduce your risk. Discover steps to prevent financial disasters.
Speaker: David Williamson, CPA, Post, Smythe, Lutz & Ziel of Plymouth, LLP, Plymouth

Planning for Wind

Ensure your township is prepared to address requests from residents and businesses that want to harness nature’s power and build private wind turbines on their property. This session will help you plan for a renewable energy future, and to develop a wind turbine ordinance designed

to ensure private wind turbines are safe and quiet, and meet the aesthetic, height, and other requirements and restrictions.
Speaker: Rodney Nanney, AICP, Building Place, Ypsilanti

Policies Every Township Board Needs

State law gives township boards broad latitude in governing their townships. However, there are distinct policies and practices that separate successful townships from those that merely “get by” or are even dysfunctional. Learn best practices for township boards to ensure your board focuses on what matters.
Speaker: Larry Merrill, MTA Executive Director

Understanding the Tax Cycle

Learn the mechanics that turn the gears in the tax cycle. This session will help you gain a better understanding of equalization, sales studies and mass appraisal, and will identify how it’s all transformed into tax dollars collected. Participants will review Proposal A and its effects on assessments and taxes in varying markets.
Speaker: Barbara Van Gelderen, CMAE3, Supervisor/Assessor, Manlius Township (Allegan Co.)

Using Eminent Domain to Spur Redevelopment

Get an overview of the ground-breaking case of one township’s fight to seize and rehabilitate a blighted and abandoned mall through eminent domain. Walk away with a checklist for eminent domain action and explore other practical strategies for redevelopment in a difficult economy.
Speakers: Phillip McKenna, AICP, PCP, President, and Sarah Traxler, Principal Planner, McKenna Associates, Northville, and Thomas McCarthy, Partner, Monaghan PC, Bloomfield Hills

Thursday, January 28 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.

Are You in Control of Your Meeting?

Do your board meetings run late? Is debate disorganized and unproductive? Does your board work as a well-oiled machine or are the wheels squeaking? Learn how to disagree agreeably and



Thursday, January 28 Noon to 1 p.m.

Make the most of your long lunch break as these sessions, presented by MTA Allied Service Providers, provide information about various aspects of products and services available to assist townships.

.Net Facts & Features

Join BS&A Software for a demonstration and question-and-answer session on the new *Equalizer Assessing.Net*, *Tax.Net* and *Fund Accounting.Net* applications. Ask questions about the new version and see the added features first-hand.
Speakers: Bill Garner and Kelly Garner, Marketing & Training Representatives, BS&A Software, Bath



Health Care—Options and Administration

The landscape of health care is changing. Learn more about the many types of employee benefits available to governmental employers. This session provides a framework for evaluating and selecting benefits for your township.
Speakers: Burnham & Flower Insurance Group Benefits Representatives, Kalamazoo



Trees and Electric Transmission Lines: The Challenge

ITC’s vegetation management line clearance program ensures that the high voltage electric transmission grid operates safely and reliably in your community. This class will educate government leaders on the importance of the reliability of the transmission grid, the impact vegetation can have on transmission lines, and how leaders can answer resident questions on utility vegetation management.
Speaker: Cynthia Stump, Local Government and Community Affairs, ITC Holdings, Novi



Making the Most of Pooled Cash Management Options—How Michigan CLASS® Can Help Your Township

Public Act 20 allows for a host of investment options—are you using the right ones for your township? Explore PA 20 and the laws pertaining to joint investment of public sector funds, liquid cash investment options and how Michigan CLASS® can add extra value to your township’s portfolio.
Speaker: Rich Garay, Regional Director, Michigan CLASS® Investment Pool, Ann Arbor



Public Entity Risk Management

Elected officials are in the risk management business, whether they realize it or not. Providing for the safety and welfare of the community remains a central responsibility of local officials. Along with daily management, local governments have a duty to identify and address risks that affect their communities. Learn what’s special about public entity risk management, and how to identify and control your exposures.
Speakers: Michigan Township Participating Plan Risk Control Services representatives, Auburn Hills



NOTE: Participation in the Allied Service Provider program does not constitute or imply MTA’s endorsement of the company or its products/services.

turn long, unproductive meetings into effective, efficient ones. Explore the rules of engagement and recognize the benefits of consensus versus majority rule. Techniques for promoting good communications between the board and the public will also be addressed.

Speaker: Jim Beelen, MTA Member Information Services Liaison

Ask a Planner/Lawyer

Ask your most pressing planning and zoning-related questions and get answers from an expert who is both a planner and a lawyer. Even if you don't have a question to ask, hear what other townships are dealing with, and gain insight on how to address these challenges.

Speaker: Catherine Kaufman, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Employee or Independent Contractor?

Is an assessor considered a township employee or an independent contractor? Learn the answer to this question—and more—at this informative session addressing the distinctions between an employee and an independent contractor for employment tax purposes. Discover what provisions are needed for an independent contractor agreement and what township employment classifications cannot be held by independent contractors.

Speaker: Robert Thall, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Financial Forum—LIVE!

Led by the author of *Michigan Township News'* popular *Financial Forum* column, this session tackles some of the toughest accounting questions your township faces, from bookkeeping to payroll and even tax issues. Join one of your favorite monthly columnists as he examines many perplexing financial issues.

Speaker: David Williamson, CPA, Post, Smythe, Lutz & Ziel of Plymouth, LLP, Plymouth

Great Festivals and Celebrations

This session repeats from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. Community festivals, fairs and special events are a major element of the Michigan lifestyle and tourism economy. Explore the "how and why" of bringing events into your township. The economic benefits for the township, and the state, can be significant—with little local expenditure.

Speaker: Sue Bila, Executive Director, Michigan Festivals & Events Association, Chesaning

Handling Complaints from the Public

Complaints are a natural byproduct of managing a township. The good news is that complaints are only what you make of them. Discover save-the-day responses to everyday public complaints and learn tried-and-true tips for handling complaints, providing information and other good-faith efforts to solve real problems.

Speaker: Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist

Legislative Update

This session repeats from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. As Michigan continues to be mired in an economic "free fall," the Legislature continues to search for ways to cut the state budget and collect new revenue. Learn how the state budget resolution could impact your township's revenue picture.

Speakers: Bill Anderson and Tom Frazier, MTA Legislative Liaisons

Public and Private Roads: Township Authorities, Prohibitions and Obligations

Examine a myriad of issues surrounding roads, from new legislation on truck route authority to court decisions on riparian rights for roads ending at water's edge. Sidewalk liability and limits of responsibility for county road improvements will also be discussed.

Speaker: John H. Bauckham, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

Real-world Records Management

Will I ever get caught up on filing? What's really in those boxes under the basement stairs? Is there such a thing as a paperless agenda? Is document imaging essential—even if we can't afford it? If any of this sounds hauntingly familiar, don't miss this session! Participants will walk away with tools and tips that can be put to work immediately to tame the "paper tiger."

Speaker: Heidi Isakson, MMC, Clerk, City of Wyoming

Regional Strategies to Attract Industry

To prosper in the new economy, communities must come together and decide how to align assets to achieve a state of regional cohesion. A regional approach helps create an environment that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship. Explore the benefits of reaching across community lines to market and promote your assets and learn business-attraction strategies to create a regional persona that will foster creativity and attract innovation.

Speaker: Soji Adelaja, Ph.D., Director, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Staying Ahead of the Curve During Changing Times

While none of us can predict the future with 100 percent accuracy, every township needs to anticipate trends and learn how



to evolve systems to question what types of potential outcomes these changes may have in their community. Delve into this cutting-edge discussion, which goes beyond what's on the radar screen, and explore what these signals could mean for you and your township. Learn how to get ahead of the curve and create your township's future.

Speaker: Debra McGuire, CAE, IOM, MTA Director of Communications and Education

The Future of Bioenergy in Michigan

This session repeats from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Bioenergy technologies use renewable resources to produce an array of energy-related products, including electricity, liquid, solid and gaseous fuels, heat, and bio-based products. Learn more about bioenergy regulations and programs that encourage production and use. Agricultural and economic development opportunities will also be discussed.

Speaker: Tania Howard, Biomass Energy Program Coordinator, Bureau of Energy Systems, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, Lansing

Take a (Refreshment) Break!

Take a break between classes on Thursday afternoon, and enjoy a complimentary beverage, courtesy of



Thursday, January 28

3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Broadband Options in Rural Areas

If you live in a rural or less densely populated suburban area, chances are good that you've been pining for broadband Internet services. Learn more about the range of technology platforms that can be used to provide broadband services to areas that were previously unable to receive it. Broadband infrastructure can help attract businesses and residents to the area, while opening doors of opportunity across the state.

Speakers: Northern Michigan Broadband Cooperative Board Members, Gaylord

Compatibility of Offices and Conflict of Interest

Can a township official hold two or more offices? What constitutes a conflict of interest and under what circumstances does a township official abstain from voting on an issue where there may be conflict? Discover the court's interpretation and the attorney general's opinions, and learn how to apply them in your own situation.

Speaker: John Lohrstorfer, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Lohrstorfer, Thall & Seeber, P.C., Kalamazoo

How to be a Welcoming Township

Prosperity thrives in places where there are many talented people and new ideas. Michigan communities must create climates known for producing new ideas, enable productive partnerships and attract talented people. Learn methods that foster creativity, attract innovation and renovate your image as you improve your talent, population and business attraction strategies.

Speaker: Barbara Fails, Director, Rural Entrepreneurship, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Missing the Mark on Employee Classification?

Learn how to classify employees as full-time, part-time or temporary, and as exempt or nonexempt. These concepts are useful for identifying which employees are eligible for benefits (such as health insurance and paid time off), and for overtime based on the number of hours worked and the type of job duties performed.

Speaker: Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services Specialist

Tax Abatements: Friend or Foe of Prosperous Townships?

By encouraging new investment, tax abatements can increase or maintain employment, encourage redevelopment of deteriorated areas and stimulate investment in specific areas of a community. Abatements should be implemented only after a careful assessment of likely outcomes and be accompanied by strings, such as performance guarantees. Hear how

other townships have used this strategy to promote economic development in their communities.

Speaker: Bill Anderson, MTA Legislative Liaison

The Importance of Multi-Year Planning

This informative session focuses on the basics of multi-year planning and multi-year budgeting. In today's uncertain economic environment, understanding the impact of projected revenue streams and rising costs to your fund balance is imperative. Explore the basics of setting up this analysis and learn how it has fared in other communities.

Speaker: Pam Hill, CPA, Associate, Plante & Moran, PLLC, Southfield

The True Cost of Development in Your Township

Even the most well-intended plans can create unanticipated fiduciary impacts. Understand the role land uses play in your township's budget—including its impact on the bottom line. Discover the benefits of using a cost of community services study to determine an expense-to-revenue ratio that reveals the fiscal implications of providing community services to various land use types. Will changing land use practices lower the cost of community services in *your* township? *Speakers:* Eric Frederick, AICP, LEED AP, Project Planner, LSL Planning, Inc., Grand Rapids, and Tracy Miller, AICP, Director of Community Development, Delhi Charter Township (Ingham Co.)

When Your Township is Targeted for a State Assessing Audit

The state audits local assessors through the 14-point review. Failure of this audit has resulted in the state assuming jurisdiction of assessing duties and billing the township for all associated costs. This session examines the most common problems found in the review and what the township board can do to avoid the costly consequences.

Speaker: Val Washington, Deputy State Treasurer, Bureau of Local Government Services, Michigan Department of Treasury, Lansing