



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

January 9, 2009

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

REVENUE CONSENSUS CONFERENCE SHOWS BIG BUDGET HOLE

Yesterday, after closing the books on the 2007-08 fiscal year, state officials announced a budget surplus of more than \$700 million for the year. Today, all reason to celebrate was extinguished as the projections for state revenue were discussed at the revenue estimating conference. This conference is held twice a year to finalize revenue projections for the purpose of creating a budget. The members of the conference committee determined that the state will collect \$917 million less this year compared to last year for the state general fund and school aid fund combined. Much of this decrease is associated with the cost of the film tax credit program as well as the implementation of the earned income tax credit for this year. These issues, added to the poor economy, will significantly reduce state revenues. The picture for 2010 offers no relief. The conference members concluded that revenues for the combined state funds for that year will be \$444 million below this year's depressed level.

EMS ACCREDITATION DECISION COMING SOON

The state Emergency Medical Services Coordination Committee (EMSCC) will be making a decision on Friday, Jan. 23, whether to accept the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians' recommendation to require accreditation of emergency medical services (EMS) paramedic training programs throughout the country and to establish a single national EMS accrediting agency for all training programs. The recommendation would require all EMS paramedic students to graduate from an accredited program after Dec. 31, 2012, to become eligible to take their certification exam to become a paramedic. Many have raised concerns that this effort will create hardship for Michigan's current 44 training programs, EMS paramedic students, and the ability of local governments to recruit, retain and pay for qualified paramedics. The EMSCC will be taking letters of concern into consideration when making their decision on Jan. 23. Those letters of concern should be sent to Robin Shivley, Section Chief, EMS & Trauma Systems Section, Michigan Department of Community Health, at rmshivi@michigan.gov. Additional information on this issue can be obtained at www.michigan.gov/ems and click on the "EMSCC" line, www.coaemsp.org, or www.michigantownships.org/downloads/december_2008_revised.pdf and look at the EMS article.

TOWNSHIP PARK COMMISSION BILL SENT TO GOVERNOR

A few years ago, residents of a township in west Michigan voted to dissolve their township park commission during a general election. The action was later challenged in court because it was argued there is no specific language in state statute (P.A. 157 of 1905) that establishes a process by which a township can dissolve such a commission. The assumption was made that since state law clearly establishes a process by which townships can create a park (or parks & recreation) commission by a vote of the people, that the same process could be used to dissolve such a commission. SB 1487, sponsored by Sen. Ron Jelinek (R-Three Oaks Twp.), was introduced to resolve the matter and create a process to dissolve township park commissions in the future by the voters. The bill gained House approval during the lame-duck session and prior approval from the Senate. It is expected to be signed by the governor on or before Jan. 13.

FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE LIKELY TO SEE SLIGHT DELAY

Passage of the \$800 billion economic stimulus package proposed by President-elect Obama, and currently under consideration by the U.S. Congress, will likely see a delay from the third week in January to mid-February. Therefore, there is still time to act on efforts to target some of that money to townships in general as well as your particular township projects that are "ready to go" within 180 days and will create jobs in our community. MTA asks you to contact your federal legislators and Governor Granholm in support of programs that provide the greatest benefit to townships along with any of your own specific township "ready to go" projects. For more on the programs visit:

www.michigantownships.org/downloads/natat_stimulus_recommendations.pdf

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