



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

STATE REVENUES CONTINUE TO SLIDE

The House and the Senate may not have held any formal sessions over the past two weeks, but legislative leaders have been keeping very busy trying to grasp the revenue projections for the current state fiscal year. The conclusion of the governor and legislative leaders is that the state is facing a \$780 million hole in the current year's budget. The fact that half of the fiscal year has now come and gone makes balancing the budget all the more problematic. The Department of Management and Budget is reviewing federal stimulus plans to see how much federal money can be used immediately to plug the holes. Much of the federal money must be used for specific programs, which limits the ability of the state to fix its budget issues. Senate leadership has struck out in a different direction, trying to determine the impact of 15 percent cuts to state programs that are funded through the state's general fund. The March revenue report indicated a nice 3.9 percent increase in sales tax collections compared to the prior year, but the year-to-date totals are still 7.6 percent below last years figures. Revenue sharing is based directly on state sales tax collections.

GOVERNOR SIGNS BILLS TO EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Three bills were signed this week that extend unemployment benefits for Michigan residents. The new laws will allow a person to receive unemployment benefits for up to 79 weeks. The extended benefits will be paid for by the federal government for private employers; however, public employers pick up the tab for any of their former employees who receive extended benefits. Local governments pay the actual cost of any benefits paid to former employees for sums paid in excess of the original 26-week benefit period.

LAND LAYS OUT CON-CON DETAILS

Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land started laying down the rules on the establishment of a Constitutional Convention, often referred to as a Con-Con. The voters of the state will be asked on the November 2010 ballot whether the state should call a Constitutional Convention for the purposes of rewriting our state's constitution. The constitution requires this question to be asked every 16 years. Secretary Land is offering a few more details should the voters say yes to the question. Con-Con delegates would be elected from each House and Senate district in the state, 148 in total. Delegates are selected on a partisan basis with the primary in February 2011 and the general election in May 2011. Delegates would be seated the second Tuesday in July 2011 and the convention would continue until the job has concluded.

2009 SUMMER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Want to know more about Constitutional Conventions? It will be one of the topics discussed at the 2009 MTA Summer Legislative Conference, which will be held Aug 12-14 at the Bavarian Inn Lodge & Conference Center in Frankenmuth. Other topics will include wind energy, recall and ethics, road funding, property tax reform, government efficiency reports as well as a federal report. MTA will be mailing details regarding the conference in the next few weeks, but we urge you to mark your calendars to save the dates for this very informative event. Remember, Aug. 12-14!

U-M HOSTS SEMINAR ON URBAN-RURAL CONNECTIONS

The Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute in conjunction with the U-M Government Relations office and the U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning are presenting a seminar entitled Urban-Rural Connections: Sustainability in a Volatile World. There is a free public lecture the evening of the May 12, and a full-day conference on May 13. The registration fee for township officials for the full program is \$25. Further details and registration information can be found at www.graham.umich.edu.

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