



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 13, 2010

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **PRIMARIES ARE OVER; NOW BACK TO THE BUDGET**

Now that the dust is settling in the primary election, the Legislature must return its attention to passing a state budget for the fiscal year that begins on Oct. 1. The federal government has helped Michigan in its budget woes by passing additional funds for Medicaid and school funding. The federal appropriation bill required a special session of Congress this week to enact. Michigan is expected to receive over \$300 million under each category. The largest question involves how to use the one-time revenues. Senate Republicans are signaling that they are looking to make budget cuts without taking the new revenue into account. They do not want to simply push the difficult decisions off until next year, when the additional money will likely not be repeated. This means that issues such as statutory revenue sharing remain a concern. On a positive note, sales tax revenues are one state tax that is showing some signs of life. Collections were up 3% last month, which is good news for constitutional revenue sharing payments.

### **ONE RECOUNT; 31 COUNTIES?**

One of the most interesting races that occurred last week was the Republican primary in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. This is an open seat based on the retirement of Congressman Bart Stupak. As the results currently stand, the top two candidates both received over 27,000 votes with less than 20 votes separating the two. There is a potential that the entire congressional district may need to be recounted. The congressional district stretches from Bay County through the entire Upper Peninsula. All told, the cities and townships from 31 counties may be required to go through the recount process. An issue that adds an additional complication is the fact that changes to the election law now require absentee ballots to be mailed at least 45 days prior to Election Day. This year that date is Sept. 18. If this election goes to a recount, it means that in the next 36 days, ballots in 31 counties must be recounted, the results certified, and general election ballots must be printed and mailed. This could be one of the biggest recounts in the history of the state.

### **THE RESULTS ARE IN; YOUR JOB ISN'T GETTING ANY EASIER**

The University of Michigan Center for Local, State and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) released the results of their latest survey of township, city and county officials. As many would suspect, local government officials are scrambling just as hard to balance their budgets as is everyone else in these tough economic times. The results are showing some fairly consistent results. Larger units of government are being harder hit in many cases than smaller operations. Many are making use of their fund balances. Those that have not used cooperative services in the past are taking a strong look at those issues in the future. Those that have significant employee costs are looking for ways to control the cost, even to the extent of privatizing the service. Local governments are more likely to cut spending on infrastructure whenever possible rather than eliminate specific services that benefit the citizens. The good news: a few more local government officials believe that there are signs of improvement on the horizon, but the majority are still not that optimistic. For further details, please follow the link to the full report. <http://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/6/local-governments-struggle-to-cope-with-fiscal-service-and-staffing-pressures>. MTA is a partner with the CLOSUP program and consults with them on question content. We thank the township officials for responding to the survey and ask for your continued support as new surveys are conducted.

### **POLICY PLATFORM RESOLUTIONS DUE BY SEPT. 1**

Do you have a good policy platform idea for township government? MTA is accepting resolutions from member townships and county chapters for presentation at the 2011 MTA Annual Meeting, to be held on Friday, Jan. 28, 2011. The deadline for submittal is Sept. 1, 2010. For additional information, contact MTA Legislative Liaison David Bertram at 517-321-6467 or at [david@michigantownships.org](mailto:david@michigantownships.org).

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