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Official Publication of the Michigan Townships Association

march 2009



A Legislative Update for Township Officials

Corriveau and Van Woerkom named MTA legislators of the year



Left to Right: MTA Legislative Liaisons Bill Anderson and Tom Frazier, Rep. Marc Corriveau, Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom and MTA Legislative Liaison David Bertram.

MTA honored two distinguished members of the Michigan Legislature as legislators of the year for 2008 at the MTA Annual Banquet on Jan. 29, 2009, at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. State Rep. Marc Corriveau (Northville) and state Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (Muskegon) were recognized for their efforts on behalf of township government.

Rep. Marc Corriveau represents House District 20, which includes the following portions of Wayne County: city of Northville, **Northville Charter Township**, the city of Plymouth, **Plymouth Charter Township**, the eastern edge of **Canton Charter Township** and the city of Wayne. He earned a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and also earned a law degree from the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law. He has been a practicing attorney for six years. Corriveau also served in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1994 to 2001.

Corriveau served on the Education Committee, Health Policy Committee and Judiciary Committee in his freshman term in the 2007-08 session. However, it was his work as chairman of the Ethics & Elections Committee that gained a close working relationship with MTA. Corriveau has been a very open chairman who has listened to all concerns. As election reform legislation was gaining steam, he always maintained an "open-door" policy to hear the concerns of clerks. He always assured MTA that

his stamp would always be put on any final version related to early voting. Corriveau understands the challenges facing part-time clerks and has always taken that into consideration. And he thinks like most township officials do when it comes to "no reason absentee voting." He supports it!

Further, Corriveau came to Lansing with an immediate idea of ethics reform. The second bill he introduced was House Bill 4313, a bill to place a one-year moratorium on legislators and executive branch officials from lobbying after leaving their positions. Later in the session he sponsored House Bill 6499, an ethics bill outlining procedures for local government ethical standards.

It was early 2008 when MTA contacted Corriveau about a critical bill to help townships, and more specifically to assist Northville Charter Township in his district. A developer, who purchased the former Northville State Psychiatric Hospital to develop it into a subdivision and shopping area, had an underhanded plan to take the property into the city of Livonia through an annexation. The issue received extensive media coverage and demonstrated how flawed the current annexation laws are in Michigan. Corriveau answered the call and introduced House Bill 5779, to provide protection to townships of 20,000 population or greater from annexation. The bill passed the House 101-8 with his support. Unfortunately, it had a much tougher go in the Senate and never received a vote.

Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom served as a teacher and administrator in the field of Christian education for 28 years. He won election to the state House of Representatives in 1998 and in 2000. In 2002, Van Woerkom was elected to the state Senate and re-elected in 2006. He represents the 34th District, which includes Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana Counties. He received his education at the University of Michigan and Calvin College.

Most of his committee assignments in the state Senate are significant to townships and MTA, especially his two chairmanships of the Local, Urban and State Affairs Committee and the Agriculture Committee. He also serves as vice-chair of Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs and is on the Transportation Committee.

Van Woerkom is also close to local government by way of his community involvement. He serves as a member of the Muskegon County Local Emergency Planning Committee and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, and is active in the White Lake and Muskegon Public Advisory Committees

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President Obama signs stimulus bill into law: Michigan projects total \$49 billion

On February 17, President Obama signed into law the much-debated federal economic stimulus package. Officially known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the final version amounts to a \$787 billion stimulus bill to help create jobs and rejuvenate the U.S. economy.

During the last few weeks leading up to final passage of the stimulus bill, MTA was working with the governor's office to collect township projects that are ready to go. Nearly 500 such projects have been submitted to the governor for consideration. Following submittal to the governor, MTA released the list of township projects to the media and made it available to our membership and the public at: www.michigantownships.org/downloads/stimulus_projects_in_michigan.htm.

In addition to tax cuts for individuals and businesses, as well as dollars going to states for such programs as Medicaid and unemployment benefits, a significant portion of the monies will go for infrastructure projects. Included among the infrastructure-related funding is \$1.38 billion total in grants for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program. This program provides funding for rural water and sewer projects.

In addition, a total of \$4 billion (approximately \$170 million for Michigan) is provided under the stimulus bill for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, which provides low-interest loans to communities for sewer infrastructure projects. The EPA Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund will receive \$2 billion total from the stimulus bill with approximately \$70 million coming to Michigan. This program provides low-interest loans for water projects.

It is important to note that all funding for water and sewer projects under the stimulus will go through these existing programs. Therefore, even if your township has a water and/or sewer project on the list MTA submitted to the governor's office for federal stimulus funding projects,

you must still work through the relevant program mentioned above to be eligible for water and sewer infrastructure stimulus funding consideration.

Additional funding approved under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes \$27.5 billion for distribution under the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for highway infrastructure and additional money for both urban and rural transit. Michigan will see approximately \$635 million of the FHA funding for state-run roads and another \$212 million for local roads. Even though townships do not have direct authority over roads and bridges, many local projects will become eligible for federal stimulus funding if they rank high enough on transportation priority lists provided by the various Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) or Rural Task Forces.

Other components of the overall stimulus bill include \$2.5 billion for broadband grants through the USDA and another \$4.35 billion through the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Technology's Opportunities Program. For law enforcement, \$765 million nationally was provided for various programs under the Department of Justice's State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance and another \$1 billion for the COPS-hiring program. A large amount of funding was also provided under various Department of Energy programs for weatherization assistance (approximately \$280 million for Michigan alone) and block grants for energy efficiency and conservation.

By no means does this exhaust the list of possible fundable categories under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for township-related projects. More information on how the stimulus project approval process will move from this point forward and what you need to do to further your projects along, please visit the governor's Web site for federal stimulus project funding at: www.michigan.gov/recovery.

Recession hits Michigan government employees

Between 2005 and November 2008, six states in our nation saw a net reduction in the number of government jobs, according to figures provided by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington, D.C. also saw a net reduction of government jobs during that time period. In total, 57,000 jobs were lost in the government sector during the referenced time frame within those six states and our nation's capitol.

Unfortunately, Michigan was one of those six states that saw a reduction of government employees. In fact, Michigan led the nation in the number of jobs lost in the government sector over the past few years. Actually, Michigan did more than just lead the nation; two out of every three jobs lost in the government sector within our nation over the last four years were Michigan jobs. Michigan has lost 37,200 government jobs since 2005. Of that amount, Michigan lost over 20,000 government jobs in the last year alone. Michigan government employees are being hit just as hard as the rest of the citizens of our state. ■



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List of House committees for 2009-2010 session

In late January, Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.) announced the membership of all standing House committees for the 2009-2010 session. Listed below is the membership, including chairs (C), majority vice-chairs (VC) and minority vice-chairs (MVC) for those committees of key importance to MTA and local units of government. Democrats are listed first with Republicans listed starting with the minority vice-chair. Contact information is available at: www.house.michigan.gov.

Agriculture (7 Democrats, 4 Republicans)

Mike Simpson (C-Liberty Twp.); Mike Huckleberry (VC-Montcalm Twp.); Vicki Barnett (Farmington Hills); Jennifer Haase (Richmond); Jeff Mayes (Bangor Chtr. Twp.); Judy Nerat (Menominee Twp.); Mary Valentine (Muskegon); Sharon Tyler (MVC-Niles); Kevin Daley (Arcadia Twp.); Goeff Hansen (Hart Twp.); Kenneth Kurtz (Coldwater).

Appropriations (19 Democrats, 12 Republicans) (Note: Members in bold also serve on general government sub-committee)

George Cushingberry, Jr. (C-Detroit); Richard Hammel (VC-Flushing); Joan Bauer (Lansing); Doug Bennett (Muskegon Chtr. Twp.); Terry Brown (Windsor Twp.); Robert Dean (Grand Rapids); John Espinoza (Croswell); **Fred Durhal (Detroit)**; Lee Gonzales (Flint Chtr. Twp.); Vincent Gregory (Southfield); **Shanelle Jackson (Detroit)**; **Michael Lahti (Hancock)**; Richard LaBlanc (Westland); Gary McDowell (Rudyard Twp.); Fred Miller (Mt. Clemens); Alma Smith (Salem Twp.); Dudley Spade (Franklin Twp.); Jon Switalski (Warren); Rashida Tlaib (Detroit); Chuck Moss (MVC-Birmingham); David Agema (Grandville); Darwin Booher (Osceola Twp.); Bill Caul (Mt. Pleasant); Bob Genetski (Saugatuck); Kevin Green (Wyoming); Gail Haines (Lake Angelus); David Hildenbrand (Lowell Chtr. Twp.); **Matt Lori (Constantine Twp.)**; John Proos (St. Joseph Chtr. Twp.); **Bill Rogers (Genoa Twp.)**; Tonya Schuitmaker (Antwerp Twp.).

Energy & Technology (12 Democrats, 7 Republicans)

Jeff Mayes (C-Bangor Chtr. Twp.); Douglas Geiss (VC-Taylor); Lisa Brown (West Bloomfield Chtr. Twp.); Ed Clemente (Lincoln Park); Ellen Cogen Lipton (Huntington Woods); Kate Ebli (Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.); Mike Huckleberry (Montcalm Twp.); Bert Johnson (Highland Park); Steven Lindberg (Marquette Charter Twp.); Tim Melton (Auburn Hills); Sarah Roberts (St. Clair Shores); Dan Scripps (Leland Twp.); Ken Horn (MVC-Frankenmuth); Hugh Crawford (Novi); Jim Marleau (Orion Twp.); Paul Opsommer (DeWitt); John Proos (St. Joseph Chtr. Twp.); Tonya Schuitmaker (Antwerp Twp.); Wayne Schmidt (Traverse City).

Ethics & Elections (6 Democrats, 3 Republicans)

Kathy Angerer (C-Dundee Twp.); Jennifer Haase (VC-Richmond); Lisa Brown (West Bloomfield Chtr. Twp.); Marie Donigan (Royal Oak); Dan Scripps (Leland Twp.); Dian Slavens (Canton Chtr. Twp.); Kim Meltzer (MVC-Clinton Chtr. Twp.); Kenneth Kurtz (Coldwater); Tom Pearce (Cannon Twp.).

Great Lakes & the Environment (9 Democrats, 6 Republicans)

Rebekah Warren (C-Ann Arbor); Judy Nerat (MVC-Menominee Twp.); Timothy Bledsoe (Grosse Pointe); Kate Ebli (Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.); Deb Kennedy (Brownstown Chtr. Twp.); Gabe Leland (Detroit); Mark Meadows (East Lansing); Sarah Roberts (St. Clair Shores); Dan Scripps (Leland Twp.); Arlan Meekhof (MVC-Olive Twp.); Kevin Daley (Arcadia Twp.); Joseph Haveman (Holland); Rick Jones (Oneida Chtr. Twp.); Phil Pavlov (St. Clair Twp.); Wayne Schmidt (Traverse City).

Intergovernmental and Regional Affairs (7 Democrats, 4 Republicans)

Marie Donigan (C-Royal Oak); Vicki Barnett (VC-Farmington Hills); Timothy Bledsoe (Grosse Pointe); Harold Haugh (Roseville); Robert Jones (Kalamazoo); Deb Kennedy (Brownstown Chtr. Twp.); Coleman Young, II. (Detroit); Pete Lund (MVC-Shelby Chtr. Twp.); Cindy Denby (Handy Twp.); Arlan Meekhof (Olive Twp.); Wayne Schmidt (Traverse City).

Tax Policy (10 Democrats, 7 Republicans)

Kate Ebli (C-Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.); Tim Melton (VC-Auburn Hills); Vicki Barnett (Farmington Hills); Ellen Cogen Lipton (Huntington Woods); Andy Coulouris (Saginaw); Robert Jones (Kalamazoo); Andrew Kandrevas (Southgate); Jeff Mayes (Bangor Chtr. Twp.); Jim Slezak (Davison Twp.); Rebekah Warren (Ann Arbor); Brian Calley (MVC-Portland); Eileen Kowall (White Lake Chtr. Twp.); Pete Lund (Shelby Chtr. Twp.); Arlan Meekhof (Olive Twp.); Kim Meltzer (Clinton Chtr. Twp.); Jim Stamas (Midland Chtr. Twp.); John Walsh (Livonia).

Tourism, Outdoor Recreation & Natural Resources (7 Democrats, 4 Republicans)

Joel Sheltrown (C-Ogemaw Twp.); Jim Slezak (VC-Davison Twp.); Kate Ebli (Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.); Mike Huckleberry (Montcalm Twp.); Steven Lindberg (Marquette Chtr. Twp.); Mike Simpson (Liberty Twp.); Woodrow Stanley (Flint); Jim Stamas (MVC-Midland Chtr. Twp.); James Bolger (Marshall); Goeff Hansen (Hart Twp.); Ken Horn (Frankenmuth).

Transportation (10 Democrats, 7 Republicans)

Pam Byrnes (C-Lyndon Twp.); Andrew Kandrevas (VC-Southgate); Marie Donigan (Royal Oak); Douglas Geiss (Taylor); Martin Griffin (Jackson); Harold Haugh (Roseville); Gabe Leland (Detroit); Judy Nerat (Menominee Twp.); Roy Schmidt (Grand Rapids); Coleman Young, II (Detroit); Paul Opsommer (MVC-DeWitt); James Bolger (Marshall); Larry DeShazor (Portage); Marty Knollenberg (Troy); Tom Pearce (Cannon Twp.); Wayne Schmidt (Traverse City); Paul Scott (Gland Blanc).

Urban Policy (7 Democrats, 4 Republicans)

Gabe Leland (C-Detroit); David Nathan (VC-Detroit); Vicki Barnett (Farmington Hills); Mark Meadows (East Lansing); Kate Segal (Battle Creek); Woodrow Stanley (Flint); Jimmy Womack (Detroit); Paul Scott (MVC-Grand Blanc); Goeff Hansen (Hart Twp.); Kim Meltzer (Clinton Chtr. Twp.); Phil Pavlov (St. Clair Twp.). ■



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Michigan Townships Association
512 Westshire Drive
Lansing, MI 48917

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Despite tough state budget, revenue sharing protected

The task of piecing together a state budget for the coming fiscal year began in earnest with the governor presenting her budget recommendations to the combined membership of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. The initial presentation included over \$600 million in budget reductions. What was missing from the presentation was a clear understanding of the impact that the federal stimulus package would have on the general operations of the state for both the current and next fiscal year.

The very positive news contained in the budget message was the plan to spare local governments from any additional cuts to revenue sharing. For the current fiscal year, the Legislature appropriated enough money to ensure that every city, village and township would receive the same amount in revenue sharing this year as they received last year. The budget bill went so far as to state that even if sales tax revenues were to decline below anticipated levels, the money necessary to guarantee the freeze would be automatically appropriated. This is very unusual language to be placed in an appropriation bill. Local governments are very fortunate that the language was approved, because sales tax revenues have been extremely weak this year. Sales tax collections are down 8 percent during the first four months of this fiscal year compared to the same time period a year ago. However, the appropriations language should mean that all townships will see at least as much revenue sharing during this fiscal year as they saw last year, despite the plummet in sales tax collections.

The governor's proposed budget for state fiscal year '09-'10 would continue the freeze guarantee that was established for this year into the next year as well. Given what is happening in other parts of the budget, MTA views this as a very positive proposal. Many believe that the state

budget proposal takes into account that many local units across the state will see real declines in property tax revenue for the first time in memory due to the housing market collapse caused by the meltdown of our real estate finance system.

The governor's budget recommendation also retained funding for payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) payments to local units of government. These funds have been frozen for the past five years, but the legislation that froze the value on PILT lands is allowing those values to increase with the rate of inflation beginning this year. This should mean inflationary increases in PILT payments in the future. ■

Legislator of year continued from page 1

and in several Muskegon County watershed projects.

In contrast to Corriveau, who is just beginning his second term, Van Woerkom has been serving in the Legislature since 1998. The legislative liaisons at MTA have had a very consistent rapport with Van Woerkom. He uses a common sense approach regarding issues. He has maintained a tight balance on agriculture issues and the role of local government in that area. An example of his balanced and open approach was when he assembled a workgroup related to the drain code rewrite. He brought together roughly 30 different interests to the table, to talk through all the critical details. Other key issues that Van Woerkom has been active on include elections issues; he introduced an important recall reform bill, SB 139, last session (2007-08). He has also been active related to water withdrawal legislation and was the sponsor of Public Act 187 of 2008.

MTA wants to thank Sen. Van Woerkom and Rep. Corriveau for working closely with MTA and for their exceptional accomplishments in 2007-08. MTA looks forward to our continued working relationship with both legislators. ■