

BI-Weekly Update from County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, 3/19/14:

Notes from Monthly County Leadership Meeting:

Enhanced Messaging Possibilities

On Tuesday, March 18, County Elected Officials, Judicial Administrators, and Department Heads saw a presentation from County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, Assistant County Administrator Brad Wilcox and Executive Assistant Chris McComb on the potential for expanded use of our **text-messaging and e-mail alert system**, hosted by Textcaster. By clicking on the phone icon from the County's website www.calhouncountymi.gov, the public can sign up for free County notifications sent as text messages directly to mobile phones, wireless PDAs or pagers, and/or as e-mail messages. We currently offer two categories of alerts for the public: building closures and weather alerts. County departments also have the capability to create internal messaging groups, such as the new overtime request system just implemented this month by Sheriff Matt Saxton's Office. This system stemmed from discussions during collective bargaining with the non-supervisory union, represented by the Police Officers Association of Michigan-Calhoun County Sheriff's Association. Sheriff Saxton reports that it has greatly increased efficiency for his managers by eliminating time spent calling numerous employees, and has reduced response time to fill overtime needs. The County is currently reviewing Textcaster's applications within other municipalities to explore opportunities for enhancing our communications within the County and with our residents.

Upcoming Events

Senior Services Manager Carl Gibson announced the **2014 Marshall Area Senior Fair**, to be held on Thursday, **April 10, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** at the Marshall Middle School Gymnasium at 100 E. Green St. in Marshall. Sponsored by the Calhoun County Senior Millage, the City of Marshall and Oaklawn Hospital, this free event will showcase local businesses and services of special interest to older adults and caregiving family members. It is a collaborative event with numerous community partners, and includes a light lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The County's Senior Millage Allocation Committee is chaired by County Commissioner Jim Haadsma, and includes Commissioners Art Kale and Kathy-Sue Dunn, along with ten other members of the community. For more information on the Senior Fair, please call the Senior Services Office at 269.781.0846.

Juvenile Home Director Mike Gillum announced the **15th Annual Jayhawk Open golf outing**, to be held on **Friday, June 13**, at Alwyn Downs Golf Club in Marshall. Those interested in golfing or providing individual or corporate sponsorships are invited to show their support and register early for this event, which benefits programs and activities at the County's Juvenile Home. For more information and to for registration forms, call the Juvenile Home at 269.781.7221.

Planning Consultant Jen Bomba announced that **Historic Bridge Park will be officially open on May 1** for the summer season.

MSU Extension District Director Ginger Hentz announced the **"Good Food Matters: Come to the Table!" event**, to be held on **March 29, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at the Calhoun Area Career Center in Battle Creek. According to the MSU Extension website, a central focus of the conference is the Battle Creek Community Food Assessment (CFA). Issues of food access for all residents will also be discussed, as well as other important food work happening across the community. Renowned food system activist Malik Yakini, who is delivering the keynote address, is Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food

Security Network. Yakini will provide expert understanding into how America's food system is and isn't working and why that's important. In addition to the workshops, lectures and lunch, students from the Calhoun Area Career Center culinary program are providing delightful cooking demonstrations and delicious samples. Free childcare and lunch will be provided. For more information about this event, email Rita Klavinski at klavinsk@anr.msu.edu, or by phone at 269.781.0784.

A Few Other Departmental Highlights

Cindy Rude, the Calhoun County Probate Court Manager/Register, reported that through the **Judicial Council's court-wide training program**, 136 court staff attended training sessions focusing on serving those who come to the courts with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Other staff were able to access the training online. These sessions of training provided "Limited English Proficiency - Culturally Competent Communication Tools & Techniques" for court staff as part of the Courts' Language Access Plan, designed to ensure meaningful participation in the court process for those who don't speak English as their primary language and have limited abilities to read, write, speak, or understand English. The Judicial Council is a joint leadership team for the County's courts, and includes the Honorable Michael Jaconette, Chief Council and Probate Judge; the Honorable James Kingsley, Chief Circuit Judge; and the Honorable John Hallacy, Chief District Judge.

Jeff Albaugh, Circuit-Probate Court Administrator and Judicial Council Administrator reported the March 17 announcement made by John Hallacy, Chief Judge of the 10th District Court, that effective May 5, 2014, **Katherine Ambrose will become the Court Clerk and 10th District Court Administrator**. Kate has been serving as deputy court administrator and attorney magistrate since March 23, 2009.

Prosecutor David Gilbert reported that he will be enhancing the content on the Prosecutor's Office webpages within the County website, and that the **Prosecutor's new Economics Crime Program** will be implemented soon.

Veterans Affairs Committee Begins Strategic Planning:

The Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee met on March 12, with the main order of business being to start updating strategic plans for the next several years. Chaired by Rodger Seidel, the Committee chose Humanergy, a leadership training and coaching organization from Marshall, MI, to facilitate this process. In addition to Committee members, Calhoun County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox, and Corporation Counsel participated in this **2014 Strategic Planning** introductory session, along with Veterans Affairs Director Scott Losey and Services Officer Kristina Higgins. The Committee also discussed with Ken Buckelew, Deputy Assessor from the City of Battle Creek, frequently asked questions and answers about the recently enacted **Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption** under Public Act 161 of 2013. The next regularly scheduled Veterans Affairs Committee meeting is **Wednesday, April 9, at 2:30 p.m.**, at the County's Toeller Building in Battle Creek.

Road Department Updates:

Seasonal Weight Restrictions began on March 10 and are expected to remain in effect through May, depending on frost levels as the spring weather progresses. During the seasonal weight restrictions or

"frost law" period, trucks traveling on restricted roads must carry lighter loads and travel at slower speeds. The Michigan Vehicle Code prescribes these restrictions in attempt to preserve and protect local roads when they are most vulnerable from freeze thaw cycles that cause road damage. This year the Calhoun County Road Department will not be placing weight restriction signs throughout the county, which is an optional activity that has been done in past years. This year due to the extreme winter weather and the quickly emerging potholes, we are attempting to focus all road crew efforts on winter maintenance and road repairs. Because commercial drivers are required to know which roads are restricted as part of their licensing terms, the choice to remove the optional signage step from our list of priorities is not expected to cause problems. For details on Calhoun County's seasonal weight restrictions and permitting, visit the Road Department's website at www.calhouncountyroads.com, and the County Road Association of Michigan's website at www.micountyroads.org. Erin Cummings, the county's Permit Agent, can also be reached by calling the Road Department at 269.781.9841 or by email at ecummings@calhouncrc.net.

This week the Michigan legislature approved SB 608, the FY 2013-14 supplemental budget. The final language sent to Gov. Snyder included \$215.3 million in general fund spending for roads. The first \$100 million was a "special winter road maintenance" appropriations to help all Michigan road agencies offset the high cost of this winter. This one-time funding will provide approximately **\$500,000 in additional revenues** to the Calhoun County Road Department this year to help fill our significant budget overage in the area of winter maintenance. Also included in this bill is \$115 Million for the Priority Road Investment Program, a new program initiated by the legislature for county road improvement projects that must be obligated and construction underway, or design work completed, by July 1, 2014. The Calhoun County Road Department has submitted several top priority projects for consideration by the legislature.

Managing Director Jerry Peterson reports that he continues to develop **equipment replacement plans** to be implemented starting with the purchase of several trucks this year. Jerry is also working with engineering officials to review the County's **bridge load ratings**, with a focus on those that currently have weight restrictions placed on them. Following a recent meeting with area school superintendents, the Road Department is already **planning for next winter's snow plow operational plans**. Changes being explored include modified snow routes and/or changes in scheduled shift hours to increase efficiency and effectiveness with our snow storm response efforts. Mr. Peterson also met recently to **follow up with Enbridge** officials on the ongoing effort to monitor and assess the impact their equipment is having on our roads. Enbridge continues to state that they are committed to compensating the county for all costs we incur related to the 2010 oil spill and their current Line 6b replacement project within Calhoun County.