

INGHAM COUNTY



Issues Update

April, 2002

Ingham County Controller's Office

Jerry Ambrose, Controller

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Services of Ingham County

Ingham County government provides and supports many services to its 279,000 residents. Services are provided in the areas of health and other human services; law enforcement and judicial administration; recreation; economic development; the recording of personal and property records, and others.

On any day, many residents access services provided or supported by Ingham County government by:

*Utilizing the many public health, sanitation, or disease control services provided by the Health Department, the support services of Veteran Affairs, or the residential services of the Medical Care Facility and the Housing Commission;

*Utilizing the many other County supported human service programs in mental health, substance abuse, aging, special transportation, or youth violence prevention;

*Utilizing the services of the Prosecutor, Sheriff, or the courts, or anticipating the arrival of law enforcement, fire or emergency medical service personnel dispatched by county supported 911 Centers;

*Obtaining birth, death, tax or property information from the offices of the County Clerk, Treasurer, or Register of Deeds, participating in elections; receiving assistance in drainage-related problems from the Drain Commissioner; or traveling on county-built or maintained roads in non-urban areas of the county; or

*Attending educational events sponsored by MSU Cooperative Extension, visiting one of the many county parks, or visiting the county fairgrounds.

County services are provided by dedicated employees under the leadership of elected officials, department heads and agency boards. Ingham County has a history of excellent labor relations which is typified by peaceful contract negotiations, by the stability of the county workforce, and by the cooperative approach taken by labor and management to address rapidly rising health care costs. The County also has a history of dedication to strong financial management, which was again recognized with a recent upgrade in the county's credit rating, and by the development of annual budgets which maintain vital county services in areas of importance to our citizens even in times of economic uncertainty. County buildings and facilities continue to be maintained in good repair, while investments in technology are continued, enabling our work to be more productive and our services more accessible.

For more information on services provided or supported by Ingham County, please visit the Ingham County Web Site at www.ingham.org

Activities Anticipated in 2002

Priorities for county services and directions for county staff are set by the Board of Commissioners. Priorities identified over the past several years include expanding access to health care; expanding recreational opportunities; and increasing the continuum of sanctions and placements for youth and adults. Other priorities include encouraging the participation of youth in county government, assuring an appropriate level of services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, exploring ways to expand and improve services for seniors, improving the overall jury selection system, exploring more equitable ways of governing and financing the Capital Region Airport, assessing the county's responsibilities for Phase II of the Federal Clean Water Act, and examining the implications of regional land use on the region's future. Internal priorities include developing and equipping the county workforce, enhancing the county's management information services capabilities, and preparing the Board of Commissioners' room to reflect changes necessary due to redistricting.

As a county with a significant urban population, Ingham is increasingly challenged to determine how demands for services, particularly those relative to low income residents and incidents of crime, will be addressed when total population is declining, and while the county's tax base relative to other counties in the region is also declining. It is also challenged to assure residents in suburban and rural areas of the county that their demands for county services, which may not be the same as for urban areas, are also addressed.

As the economy has slowed, there have been financial impacts to the county. Although property tax revenues remain stable, state shared revenues have been reduced and interest earnings are below expectations. In addition, there are financial challenges to specific programs which rely on state and federal grants as grant levels remain at current levels or are reduced. Ongoing monitoring of the budget and conservative estimating aims to assure that critical county provided and supported services continue to be provided at acceptable levels.

In 2002 the priorities and challenges from 2001 will continue and new ones will be faced. Consideration of the proposed smoking regulation and the plan to provide an organized system of health care for the uninsured; financing of the solid waste plan; a challenge to the unfunded requirements of the recently enacted Concealed Weapons legislation; responding to September 11 with increased focus on safety and security improvements to the 911 emergency dispatch system; continued focus on alleviating regular jail and youth detention center overcrowding; assessing the county's role regarding new storm water regulations; and improving the jury selection system are all examples. A review of progress made on identified areas of priority will be made and further progress determined. Renovation of the Grady Porter Building will take place during 2002, with employees returning from temporary quarters by year's end. Accommodations will be made for the expansion of the Board of Commissioners from 13 to 16 members. In addition, there will likely be continuing discussions on issues of regional and county importance, including the need for a living wage ordinance; economic development, access to health, water quality, and land use growth trends. Ongoing budgetary, labor relations, and other administrative processes will occur, with the possibility of budgetary amendments necessary to reflect unanticipated revenue losses; with consideration of recommendations on user fees; and the reality of labor negotiations with major bargaining units, where the continuing escalation of employee health insurance premiums is expected to be a major concern. Finally, there will be continuing work with the various elected officials, judges, department heads, and others as opportunities and challenges arise in the day to day delivery of county services.

Activities in the First Quarter of 2002

In addition to its daily business, Ingham County in the first quarter of 2002:

- **Adopted a proposed regulation to assure smoke-free areas in public places and work sites other than bars and restaurants.** Over the past two years, a county appointed task force worked to develop the proposed regulation. Several public hearings were held. The regulation received the approval of the County Board in February, and is scheduled to go into effect in April. The Human Services Committee of the Board will be addressing questions now arising about the implementation of the regulation.
- **Called for a regional approach to the governance and funding for the Capital City Airport Authority.** It is anticipated that within the next sixty days, a meeting will be convened to which representatives of those entities most directly affected by the airport are invited. This would include representatives of the City of Lansing, Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties, including those municipalities most directly affected by the airport; Michigan State University; Lansing Community College; the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce; the Regional Economic Development Team; state legislators; a representative of the Executive Branch of state government, the Greater Lansing Labor Council, and the UAW.
- **Appointed 15 members to the recently established Ingham County Youth Commission.** The ICYC was created in late 2001 to advise the Board of Commissioners and others within the county government on issues relating to young people throughout the county. The first meeting of the Commission was held on December 10, 2001.
- **Announced the grand opening of Hawk Island Park on June 15, 2002.** The park should be in full operation by July 4, 2002 when the beach is opened. Hawk Island Park is located at Cavanaugh and Pennsylvania Ave. in the southern part of the City of Lansing.
- **Began a \$10.5 million renovation of the Grady Porter Building.** The renovation of this building, in conjunction with the new adjoining Veterans Memorial Courthouse in downtown Lansing, will provide space for the Ingham Circuit and Probate Courts and Prosecutor's Office. The Prosecutor and court staff who will occupy the building when it is complete at the end of this year are temporarily located in the old JNL building on Executive Drive in Lansing.
- **Authorized the release of a new Request for Proposals for improving the 911 emergency telephone answering and dispatch systems serving Ingham County residents.** The response from this round of RFP's is due back by early summer, and if an acceptable response is received, work on the system improvements could begin in the fall.
- **Reduced the county's overall budget by 3.4% as state revenue sharing funds are reduced and interest earnings continued to fall.** County services were only marginally impacted as departments, county offices, and the courts address the reduction through short term measures such as delaying hiring; deferring capital expenditures, and a reduction in contingency funds.
- **Avoided an additional revenue loss of more than \$1 million arising from the State of Michigan cancelling its contract with Ingham County for the rental of 103 jail beds.** Due to the efforts of the Sheriff's Office, the beds were able to be rented to Oakland County, avoiding a significant financial loss.

- **Approved an agreement with the state Family Independence Agency for the care of juveniles which should increase the capacity of the juvenile justice system without increasing costs.** A significant increase in delinquent and neglect petitions filed with Family Division of Circuit Court, partially as a result of change in state law, has resulted in the county's Youth Center being regularly overcrowded and in the Child Care Fund being overspent. Discussions on how to address the long term funding needs of the juvenile justice system, including identifying additional revenue sources, have begun between Commissioners, court, and law enforcement officials.
- **Approved a lease with Capital Area Community Services, allowing them to utilize a county building in Mason as a replacement for their current building, which has become unusable.** The lease will allow CACS to continue providing services out of Mason to many areas of the county.
- **Appropriated \$5,000 to the Council Against Domestic Assault to support their services to and shelter for victims of domestic assault.** The funds will be matched from Neogon Corporation to provide at total of \$10,000 in support to CADA.
- **Began discussions on the feasibility of a "living wage" policy for certain contractors providing services to the Ingham County government.** The policy under discussion would generally require that contractors with 5 or more employees who provide services to the county in excess of \$50,000 on an annual basis would be required to pay their employees at a minimum an hourly wage equal to 100% of the federal poverty level for a family of four (currently \$8.83), if health insurance is provided, or 125% of the poverty level (currently \$ 11.04), if health insurance is not provided.
- **Convened a meeting of judges, law enforcement officials, and others to address the ongoing problem of jail overcrowding.** The goal of the meeting, one of many over the past years, is to manage the situation in a manner that assures that the safety of the public is protected while the integrity of the judicial system is maintained. Strategies include improving the sharing of information in a timely manner; establishing a committee of judicial and law enforcement representatives who meet regularly to monitor the use and population of the jail; and a review and update of the Circuit Court Administrative Order governing early release.
- **Continued to increase access to health care for the uninsured in our county through support of the Ingham Health Plan.** Through the IHP, nearly 13,000 residents now have access to primary physician care and speciality care; through the Capital Area Prescription Plan where some 2,000 residents have access to medication at reduced costs; and by financially supporting implementation of a subsidized health insurance program on a pilot basis for small employers, which is to be offered by the Ingham Health Plan in 2002.
- **Continued to contribute time and resources in planning efforts for various areas affecting our communities and region.** These include the Youth Violence Prevention Coalition's work to prevent incidents of youth violence and encourage positive youth development; the Tri-County Planning Commission's evaluation of the long term impact of current land use trends; the Capital Area Transportation Authority's feasibility study of a Lansing to Detroit Commuter Rail System; and the Capital Area Health Alliance's development of an organized system of health care for those without insurance.
- **Continued efforts at supporting economic development in the county.** Activities this quarter included approving a Brownfield Redevelopment Project for the Village of Dansville; renewing an agreement with the City of Lansing for the continuation of a contract providing retention services; and applying for a Michigan Regional Telecommunication Planning grant on behalf of the Tri-County Regional Economic Development Team.

Officials and Employees of Ingham County Government and Courts

2002 Ingham County
Board of Commissioners
676-7200

Chairperson John B. Czarnecki, District 7
Vice Chair Victor Celentino, District 1
Vice Chair Pro Tem Thomas Minter, District 11
Commissioner Debbie De Leon, District 2
Commissioner Michael Severino, District 3
Commissioner Mary R. Stid, District 4
Commissioner Randy Schafer, District 5
Commissioner Curtis Hertel Jr, District 6
Commissioner Mark Grebner, District 8
Commissioner Amy Krause, District 9
Commissioner Lisa Dedden, District 10
Commissioner Chris Swope, District 12
Commissioner Calvin Lynch, District 13
Board Coordinator Becky Bennett
County Attorney Peter A. Cohl

Countywide Elected Officials

County Clerk Michael Bryanton
676-7201

Drain Commissioner Patrick Lindemann
676-8395

Prosecuting Attorney Stuart J. Dunning, III
483-6108

Register of Deeds Paula Johnson
676-7216

Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth
676-2431

Treasurer Eric Schertzing
676-7220

Judges

30th Circuit Court
483-6500

Hon. Peter D. Houk, Presiding Judge
Hon. William E. Collette
Hon. Laura Baird
Hon. Thomas L. Brown
Hon. Lawrence M. Glazer
Hon. James R. Giddings
Hon. Paula J. M. Manderfield
Circuit Court Administrator Jody Kranz

55th District Court
676-8400

Hon. Thomas E. Brennan, Jr., Presiding Judge
Hon. Pamela McCabe
District Court Administrator Lisa Bailey

Probate Court
483-6300

Hon. R. George Economy, Presiding Judge
Hon. Richard J. Garcia
Probate Court Administrator Janelle Lawless

County Boards and Departments

Animal Control Department, Roger Fleming, Director - 676-8370
Budget Office, Teri Younger, Budget Director - 676-7231
Community Corrections Advisory Board, Judge Collette, Chair; Mary Sabaj, Manager - 676-7232
Controller's Office, Gerald W. Ambrose, Controller - 676-7206
Economic Development Board, Joe Guenther, Chair; John Haneiski, Director - 676-7210
Equalization Tax/Mapping, Doug Stover, Director - 676-7212
Fair Board, Stan Jordan, Chair; Terry Brail, Director - 676-2428
Financial Services Department, Jack Restuccia, Director - 676-7329
Board of Health, Pat Hepp, Chair; Bruce Bragg, M.P.H., Health Officer - 887-4300
Housing Commission, Dick Baker, President; Bruce Johnston, Director - 349-1643

Human Resources Department, Harold Hailey, Director - 887-4327
Facilities Department, John Andresen, Director - 676-7312
Medical Care Facility, Pat Munshaw, Chair, Susan O'Shea, Director - 349-1050
Medical Examiner, Dr. Dean Sienko, M.D., M.S., Chief Medical Examiner - 887-4318
MSU Cooperative Extension, Joe Lessard, Ph.D., Director - 676-7207
Management Information Systems, Rodney Taylor, Director - 676-7373
Parks Board, Ron Eggleston, Chair; Bob Moore, Director - 676-2233
Purchasing Department, Jim Hudgins, Director - 676-7222
Road Commission, Larry Smith, Chair; John Midgley, Managing Director - 676-9722
Veteran's Affairs Committee, Barry Damon, Chair; Randy Marwede, Director - 887-4331

Employees

There are approximately 1,200 employees in Ingham County government and courts. Other than appointed officials and confidential employees, county and court employees are represented by the United Automobile Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW); the Ingham County Employees Association (ICEA); the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP); the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) or the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME).