



## **Issues Update – July, 2006**

*In spite of challenges associated with a weak economy and declining state tax revenues, Ingham County continues to provide a high quality of services to its 280,000 residents. Health and human services, law enforcement and justice administration, recreation, elections, and record keeping are provided through the various County offices. Over the past several years, the Board of Commissioners has strived to maintain all county services at an acceptable level, but has placed particular importance on providing uninsured residents with access to health care; expanding recreational opportunities; improving the adult and juvenile justice systems; and promoting environmental protection.*

The second quarter of 2006 has seen much activity in areas of importance to the County Board, including the following:

- Expanded recreational opportunities have continued with the construction of a splash park at Hawk Island Park currently under construction, with an expected mid-summer opening date.

Funding is in place for a joint project with the City of Lansing to construct a section of the Heart of Michigan Trail between Potter Park and Hawk Island Park. A Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant has been approved for the continuation of that project south of Hawk Island Park to the intersection of Jolly and Aurelius Roads, with the eventual destination of the Hope Soccer Complex. Site location and engineering has begun on both sections, with construction of both sections planned for spring of 2007.

Lansing has begun construction of the “Scott Woods” section which will extend the Hawk Island Loop north approximately ½ mile providing a paved connection to the park for the neighborhoods to the north.

Local match funding is in place from Ingham County and Meridian Township to match both the Michigan Department of Transportation and Michigan Natural Resource grants, for the construction of the section of the Heart of Michigan Trail running between Lake Lansing and the intersection of Park Lake Road and M43. Construction could take place as early as spring of 2007 assuming approval of the grants.

Approximately 750 feet of boardwalk has been constructed around the lake at Hawk Island Park, by two crews provided to the Parks Department through the Jail Alternative Sentencing Program, in cooperation with the Friend of the Court’s Office. An additional 250 feet is scheduled for completion later this year.

The Friday night band shell performances at Lake Lansing South continue to draw an increasing number of visitors. The performances are free of charge thanks to the Friends' of Ingham County Parks fund raising efforts. The Friends' group also applied for and received several grants from the Capitol Region Community Foundation for: "Shade Kites" at Hawk Island; wheelchairs for seniors attending the band shell concerts; a handicapper accessible drinking fountain at Hawk Island; and sidewalk\parking improvements at Lake Lansing South designed to facilitate handicapper access.

Efforts to promote wise use of land and to support continued use of existing housing have been initiated. Implementation of the Farmland Preservation Ordinance continues. The Preservation Board is hosting its first landowner application cycle to begin the process of preserving farmland in Ingham County. The Agricultural Preservation Board also presented their proposed millage recommendation to the County Services Committee in May, with a decision on the millage expected in July. The County Treasurer has assumed the role of Foreclosure Agent for tax delinquent properties, and the Land Bank Authority is managing foreclosed properties. Start-up funding for the Land Bank has been approved, and a limited tax pledge has been made so that the Land Bank can secure loans to acquire, maintain and rehabilitate property. The Board of Commissioners has approved the acquisition of the first properties to be conveyed to the Land Bank. The Board of Commissioners approved a resolution supporting the "Tri- County Regional Planning's Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future" project's regional land use vision, policy, map, themes, and principles as well as agreeing to participate in the implementation phase of the action plan.

A strategic partnership has been formed with the Ingham County Housing Commission to focus on affordable housing in Ingham County. The Board of Commissioners has approved a contract for the Housing Commission to act as the Third Party Administrator for the City of Eaton Rapids in order to enhance the Housing Commission's efforts.

Efforts to promote environmental protection have continued with the adoption of a Point of Sale Regulation by the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, by amendment to the Ingham County Sanitary Code. The inspection and enforcement of criteria for on-site water supply and sewage disposal is an important public health function. These activities help assure that humans are not exposed to diseases. The amendment requires property owners with on-site sewage disposal and/or water supply systems to have those systems evaluated prior to transferring the property to a new owner. If a water supply or sewage disposal system needs to be repaired or upgraded to meet current standards, that upgrade and/or repair would have to take place before the transfer of ownership. A companion resolution was also adopted to establish a Fee Schedule for the Point of Sale Regulation.

- Efforts to expand the Capital Region Airport Authority have continued. However, the Airport Authority's counter-proposal to Clinton County for ex-officio membership on the Authority has to date been met with no response from Clinton County.
- Efforts to support recreational opportunities and intergovernmental collaboration are under way in response to Mayor Virg Bernero's request that the County place a countywide millage proposal on the ballot for the Potter Park Zoo, in order to provide a stable long-term funding base for the operation and capital needs of the Zoo. As a result, Chairperson Celentino appointed a Potter Park Zoo/County Park Task Force chaired by Commissioner Rebecca Bahar-Cook with representation from the County and City of Lansing, and invitations to other governmental entities in the Tri-County region to participate. The Task Force will explore the Mayor's request to place this issue on the ballot, as well as the relationship between the County, City and Zoo should the millage be placed on the ballot and what it will mean to the taxpayers of Ingham County. It is expected that the recommendations of the Task Force will be completed and presented by August.
- The Board of Commissioners approved an ordinance for regulating parking at all county parking lots with the exception of the lots at Veterans Memorial Courthouse/Grady Porter Building which are regulated under a separate ordinance. This new ordinance along with identical actions taken by the Parks Commission now has standardized the regulations and penalties in county parking lots.
- Efforts to support economic development have been enhanced with the approval of a tax sharing agreement with Meridian Township and approval of a Retention Program Contract. New opportunities for regional cooperation in economic development have arisen with the advent of several organizational and personnel changes, including ones at Michigan State University, the Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Economic Development Team, the City of Lansing, and Primus Civitus.
- Efforts to enhance the internal operations of the county have continued from the migration last year to a new finance and payroll system to the "continuous development and improvement" phase of the project.
- Efforts have continued in several other areas. The upgrade of the public safety wireless radio system is nearly complete and consideration is being given to consolidating the two current dispatch centers into one. A report from the consultant has been finalized and presented to the affected parties. Homeland security capacity continues to be enhanced with annual federal grants; processing at the Register of Deeds continues to be enhanced with the use of designated technology funds; and accuracy and availability of tax maps is being enhanced with the digitizing of tax maps and acquisition of a 2006 flight of the county.

- Efforts to provide appropriate treatment and sanctions for at risk juveniles continue to revolve around the Judiciary Committee's review of the Action Plan or the Continuum of Care for youth, as completed by Chinn Planning Inc., including the recommendations to develop model programs and facilities for at risk and adjudicated youth no later than 2006. The Board of Commissioners has approved the establishment of a Juvenile Justice Community Agency Process reserving \$50,000 of the Juvenile Justice Millage (JJM) funds to contract with qualified vendors, to increase the capacity of the county juvenile justice system for the treatment of delinquent and disturbed youth, and adopted a resolution to place on the August ballot a renewal of the special millage question to fund the continuing operation and enhancement of Ingham County's capacity to detain and house juveniles who are delinquent or disturbed, and to operate new and existing programs for the treatment of such juveniles.
- Adoption of the annual Resolution Establishing Areas of Priority Emphasis Guiding 2007 Activities and Budget Process and the Resolution establishing 2007 fees were accomplished as the 2007 budget process is under way.
- Labor negotiations for nearly all employees have been in process with most of them concluded with the exception of :

**ICEA/ASSISTANT PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS:**

This contract expired July 1, 2005. This contract is scheduled for arbitration in July.

**MAP/LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

This contract covering 70 employees expired on December 31, 2002. This contract is scheduled for arbitration in September.

- Many of the activities underway in 2005 have continued in 2006. Multi-year funding efforts to provide access to health care for all of the uninsured in the county and to connect county parks by means of non-motorized pathways can be expected to continue; Jail overcrowding, unfortunately, will continue to require the attention of the County Board and the law enforcement community; and county finances will be challenged in the face of continuing reductions in state and federal funding and escalating health care costs.

Efforts to assist in meeting basic needs were enhanced with the adoption of a resolution to place on the August ballot a new special millage question for a Countywide Transportation System Primarily for the Disabled and Elderly. This millage would run concurrent with the currently authorized millage (.40 of one (1) mill) through 2010. The millage has been deemed necessary in order to continue to provide services at the current level. Due to reductions in state funding for "public transit" operational costs, cutbacks by CATA in service would be necessary without the additional funds.

- The Medical Care Facility of Ingham County's new state-of-the-art Ingham County Rehabilitation Services facility opened on April 6, 2006. This will be the newest facility of this type in the area and will benefit people who have suffered fractures, strokes, temporary loss of function due to trauma, anesthesia or hospitalization; or had hip or knee replacement or elective surgeries, among other things. It will provide cardiac rehab, orthopedic rehab, strengthening and reconditioning, diabetes and pain management, and help with managing day-to-day activities, such as bathing, dressing, grooming and cooking. The 32 bed facility cost \$3.4 million.
- The 2006 Ingham County celebration of National County Government Week was held from April 23 -29, 2006. County Departments participated in County Government week activities; promoted and informed the citizenry of the valuable services that are provided by Ingham County.

Finally, the Board of Commissioners appointed A. Edwin Dore as its new Controller/Administrator effective June 5, 2006. Mr. Dore comes to Ingham County from the Michigan Department of Community Health where he served as the Chief Deputy Director, a position he has held since 2005. I'm sure you will all want to join me in welcoming Ed to his new role.

Mr. Dore has a broad and extensive background in Public Administration and rejoins Ingham County government, having served as Deputy Controller and Staff Policy Analyst from 1981 to 1983. Previously, Dore also served as President of the Ingham Regional Healthcare Foundation from 2002 to 2005, and as Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Secretary of State for the Michigan Department of State from 1986 to 2002.

Dore holds a Masters of Public Administration from Wayne State University – University of Michigan, and a Bachelors Degree in Public Administration, State, and Local Government from the University of Michigan.

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