

ISSUES UPDATE – JULY 2008



The second quarter of 2008 was a very busy time for Ingham County Government. We are already working on the 2009 budget and we are predicting a shortfall of approximately 5.6 million dollars for 2009. With the cooperation of the Elected Officials and Department Heads, the Ingham County Board of Commissioners will develop a plan that will continue to provide access to health care for the uninsured; expanded recreational opportunities; and improved the adult and juvenile justice system.

The second quarter of 2008 has seen much activity in Ingham County Government to include the following:

- The County Advisory Tax Limitation Committee, created by the Board of Commissioners, has met and made a unanimous recommendation to establish the fixed tax limitation millage rate for an indefinite period or until altered by the voters, at the rate approved by Ingham County voters in 1970. (Ingham County - 6.8 mills, Townships - 1.0 mill, Intermediate School District - 0.2 mill.) The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution submitting to a vote of the electorate in November the establishment of separate tax limitations for Ingham County, the Townships, and the Ingham Intermediate School District.
 - Ingham County currently levies 6.3512 mills for its general fund operating millage. Due to Proposition A and Headlee, the maximum levy of 6.8 mills has been rolled back. The current maximum allowable millage is 6.426. If the separate tax limitation is not reestablished, once the millage is rolled back below 6.3512, the millage rate will likely be reduced by around .03 mills each year, equating to around \$220,000 annually. Unused taxing capacity, an important component of Ingham County's excellent financial position, would also be lost once the millage is rolled back below 6.3512. If approved on November 4, 2008, the maximum levy will be restored to 6.8 mills, addressing both of these issues for Ingham County, as well as the Ingham Intermediate School District and the Townships within the County.
- As part of the annual budget process, county fees have been reviewed and increases for 2009 have been approved by the Board of Commissioners. This annual review allows for incrementally adjusted fees based on changing costs. Additional annual revenue from the fee update is anticipated to be around \$400,000, which will be included in the 2009 Controller Recommended Budget.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized the expenditure of funds from the 911 Emergency Telephone Dispatch Services - 911 Fund for Management and System Improvements to reimburse the Lansing 911 Center, for the purchase and installation of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) upgrade.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the City of Lansing and the City of East Lansing, authorized a contract with Plante & Moran for Consultant Services to develop an Action Plan to devise a blue print to move toward an Ingham County 911 Center Consolidated Dispatch Center.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners honored by Resolution, Officer Yvonne Gaines as the 2007 recipient of the National Animal Control Officer of the Year Award, for the contributions she has made to the citizens of Ingham County in the performance of her duties.
- Ingham County voters originally approved a Millage to support a 911 emergency telephone and dispatch system in 1986. The Millage and telephone surcharge that have been established have maintained financing for a countywide system of emergency telephone and dispatch services for the benefit of the citizens of the County ever since through several renewals.
 - The current Millage authorization expires on December 31, 2008, therefore, the Ingham County Board of Commissioners have approved ballot language to renew the Millage by a vote of the electorate of Ingham County at the primary election to be held August 5, 2008. If approved the Millage will be renewed for a time period of four (4) years (2008-2011).
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized a SCAO/OHSP grant award to the Ingham County 55th District Court in order to enhance the Courts' Sobriety Court Program.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office, approved the 2008 Risk Avoidance Grant (RAP) from the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority (MMRMA) to purchase the latest firearms simulator (Milo) and accessories, at a greatly reduced rate to provide on-going Firearms Proficiency and Simulation Workshops. This was a cooperative venture with several other police agencies and their funding units.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the City of Lansing and the Sheriff's Office, authorized the Ingham County Sheriff's Office to participate and contract with the Lansing Police Department in the "Project Safe Neighborhoods" grant, to provide enforcement action and problem solving strategies against gangs, guns, and drugs throughout Ingham County.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the City of Lansing, the Lansing Police Department, and the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office, approved a "Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies" grant from the office of the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs to provide for two full-time police officers to teach the "GREAT" gang resistance curriculum in the Lansing Public Schools.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved the recommendation of the Sheriff's Office to change the name of the Emergency Services Office to the *Ingham County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management* to bring Ingham County up to date with Federal, State and Local County agencies in which the Emergency Services Office works closely with and receives funding.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office, authorized the Ingham County Sheriff's Office to enter into an agreement with PropertyRoom.Com, Inc., as a pilot program. The Ingham County Sheriff's Office acquires various items of property that have been abandoned, forfeited or for which there is no identified owner and by statute must be disposed of by auction. This pilot program will contract with PropertyRoom.Com, Inc. and require this vendor to pick up and transport property from the Sheriff's office and conduct nation-wide auctions for the property online to the public. Ingham County will recoup a percentage of the proceeds from the online sale. It is hoped this new system will enhance revenues, reduce storage space in the County and reduce staff time associated with the past practice of conducting local auctions.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the Ingham County Circuit Court Family Division, purchased Our Savior Lutheran Church and School for the price of \$1,975,000.00 with Juvenile Justice Special Millage funds. The 46,000 square foot church/school building is located on 22 acres of land at 1601 W. Holmes Road, just west of the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. and Holmes. The facility will now be known as the **Ingham County Family Center**, in recognition of its mission to improve the juvenile justice system, as a service to the families of Ingham County.
 - The Ingham County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with the Ingham County Circuit Court's Family Division, is in the process of renovating the facility to convert this property to provide services for youth and their families. One of the initial programs to be offered there is a day school called the Ingham Academy for non-violent youths who are struggling in school. These young people will be hand-selected, based on their need for a structured school environment and their likelihood of graduation. In addition to the day school, we plan to offer some evening study and activity time for at-risk youth.
 - **There will be no overnight stays**, and all day and evening programming will be highly structured and safe for the participants and neighborhood.
 - The Ingham Academy will be operated by the Ingham County Circuit Court's Family Division which provides a variety of services for at-risk and adjudicated youth and their families.
 - Much planning has already taken place and budgets adopted to adequately renovate and then maintain the facility and grounds, and to staff and operate the programs at the facility.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners and Ingham County Family Division of the Circuit Court are excited about moving forward with this positive step for the young people in our community, and anticipate providing programming at the Ingham County Family Center beginning the 2008/09 school year September 2, 2008.
- Efforts are underway in the Purchasing Department to purchase equipment, vehicles, classroom supplies and materials, and furnishings for the Ingham County Family Center, with the goal of having everything purchased and installed by September 2008.
- A resolution establishing areas of priority emphasis to guide 2009 activities and budget development was adopted in April. The resolution was developed from ongoing discussions regarding the status of current areas of priority emphasis and departmental perspectives regarding areas of importance for 2009. The adopted resolution was distributed to departments and offices for their information as they prepared their proposed budgets and activities for 2009, and is being used to guide the development of the Controller's Recommended Budget.
- In May, a contract and lease agreement with Our Savior Lutheran Church was authorized to keep the on-site food pantry operational at its current location through the end of 2008. This arrangement is temporary however, and a more permanent solution will need to be identified as a part of the 2009 budget process.
- Several millage issues were approved for the August 5, 2008 primary, and November 4 general election ballots. These include:
 - A farmland and open space preservation millage request of 0.14 mills. This millage would generate just over \$1 million for the implementation of the County's purchase of development rights ordinance.
 - A proposal to renew the special millage for continuing comprehensive emergency telephone services in Ingham County. If approved the .85 mill renewal would raise an estimated \$6,790,381 the first year, if levied in full. Millage revenues currently represent approximately 77% of the total revenue for the 911 Fund.
 - A proposal to establish separate tax limitations for Ingham County, the Townships, and Ingham Intermediate School District. If approved on November 4, 2008, the maximum levy will be restored to 6.8 mills.
- The Human Resources Department has been very busy with several new projects and changes:
 - Reorganization of the Human Resources Department occurred resulting in the elimination of the Assistant Director- Employment position and the reclassification of the Employment Specialist position, to include working

supervisor responsibilities. Increased a part-time and a ¾ time position to full-time status. These changes allowed the Department to meet/exceed the proposed 2009 budget cuts.

- Implemented a new expedited application process in the Human Resources Department allowing for positions to be referred faster, at the request of the departments. The Department will continue to provide full service interview and referral processes to those departments that desire it. Implemented new interview confirmation process.
 - Installed computer terminals in the lobby for applicants to be able to access the Human Resources job opening Web page and online application.
 - Instituted Other Qualified Adult (OQA) coverage and distributed documentation to affected individuals. Moved life and disability insurance from 2 carriers to a single carrier saving 10%.
- Ingham County was approached by Community Mental Health to purchase their building from the County. Currently the building is being leased from the County as a result of the original agreement when it was built. Purchasing the building would financially assist CMH. The Building Authority has met on this issue and is making a recommendation to the County to sell the building to CMH.
 - The Board of Commissioners approved an electrical project for the Fair that will greatly enhance the ability to service the many individuals who park at the Fair during Fair Week. For years, the inadequate electrical service has been Extremely difficult on staff during Fair Week, but has also caused liability concerns. These concerns will be eliminated and the Fair will be greatly enhanced by the improvements.
 - The Facilities Department continues to work with the staff at Potter Park and the Potter Park Zoo to make improvements to many of the exhibits and grounds. A new Horticulturalist position has been approved by the Board of Commissioners for the Zoo, which will continue to provide further enhancements to the Zoo.

For further information please contact:
Matthew J. Myers, Ph.D., Controller/Administrator
(517) 676-7206 or mmyers@ingham.org