



Issues Update – April, 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 first 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 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. 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.
- Approximately 750 feet of boardwalk has been constructed by two crews provided to the Parks Department through the Jail Alternative Sentencing Program, in cooperation with the Friend of the Court's office, around the lake at Hawk Island Park. An additional 250 feet is scheduled for completion later this year.
- Efforts to promote wise use of land and to support continued use of existing housing have been initiated. Implementation of the Farmland Preservation Ordinance has begun. The Agricultural Preservation Board is hosting its first landowner application cycle to begin the process of preserving farmland in Ingham County. The County Treasurer has assumed the role of Foreclosure Agent for tax delinquent properties and a Land Bank Authority has been created to

manage 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. A strategic partnership has been formed with the Ingham County Housing Commission to focus on affordable housing.

- 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.
- The Fair Board has been expanded from 11 to 13 members in order to increase geographic and ethnic diversity on the Board.
- The Board of Commissioners approved an ordinance for regulating parking at the Veterans Memorial Courthouse/Grady Porter Building, in order to maximize the availability of parking at the lot for people that are conducting County business at the facility.
- Efforts to support economic development have been enhanced with the appointment of several new members to the County's EDC. Other efforts include approval of a tax sharing agreement with the City of Mason; the appointment of the Ingham County Economic Development Coordinator to the Smart Zone Consortium Board, and review of the tax sharing agreement with Lansing Township. The Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce to participate in the Lansing Regional Economic Development Assessment Project. The study would evaluate the region as a location for business growth and investment and offer marketing studies that could enable the Lansing region to develop successful regional economic development strategies and practices. 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 the formation of the new Primus Civitus organization.
- 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 is being finalized and will be 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 as an Action Plan for the Continuum of Care for youth has been completed by Chinn Planning Inc. and recommendations to develop model programs and facilities for at risk and adjudicated youth no later than 2006 are being reviewed by the Judiciary Committee for implementation.
- Adoption of the 2007 budget calendar has been completed and the 2007 Strategic Planning process is underway. There is in place a six week hiring delay as a cost reduction measure for the 2006 budget, and additional funding was provided to increase access to health care, improve recreational opportunities; and enhance efforts to manage jail overcrowding.
- Labor negotiations also have been underway for nearly all employees. Several Collective Bargaining agreements have been approved over the past quarter and several are still in negotiations. The status by bargaining unit is summarized below:

FOP/ANIMAL CONTROL:

The new contract term is January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

FOP/CORRECTIONS:

The new contract term is January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

FOP/SUPERVISORS:

The new contract term is July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2009.

ICEA/ASSISTANT PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS:

This contract expired July 1, 2005, and is currently in negotiations.

ICEA/COUNTY PROFESSIONALS:

This contract expired December 31, 2005, and is currently in negotiations.

ICEA/COURT PROFESSIONALS:

This contract expired December 31, 2005, and is currently in negotiations.

ICEA/PARKS:

The new contract term is January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2007.

ICEA/PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES:

This contract expired December 31, 2005. We have reached a tentative agreement, waiting for approval by the employees and Board of Commissioners.

MNA/NURSE PRACTITIONERS AND CLINIC NURSES:

The new contract term is January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

MAP/LAW ENFORCEMENT:

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

OPEIU/FAMILY COURT:

OPEIU represents the professional employees of the Family Division of the Circuit Court. The new contract term is January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

OPEIU/PROBATE COURT:

OPEIU also represents the professional employees of the Probate Court. The new contract term is January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

UAW/TOPS:

This contract expired on December 31, 2005. We have reached a tentative agreement, waiting for approval by the employees and the Board of Commissioners.

- 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.

- The Ingham County Department of Human Services Board held an open house for media and community leaders on Wednesday, March 15, for the newly opened Ingham County Rehabilitation Services, a division of the Medical Care Facility of Ingham County. The new center is an addition to the existing long-term care facility at 3860 Dobie Road in Okemos.
- The Medical Care Facility, Ingham County's new state-of-the-art facility, will be the newest in the area and will benefit people who have suffered fractures, stroke, 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 and opened on April 6, 2006.
- The 2006 Ingham County Cultural Diversity Committee's 7th Annual Cultural Diversity Luncheon was held on February 23, at the Ingham County Fairgrounds in Mason. This event was well attended with excellent ethnic food served and the events program featured entertainment and speakers to celebrate this year's theme, "Diversity in Motion".

Finally, the Board of Commissioners is currently engaged in the process to select a replacement for the previous County Controller Gerald W. Ambrose, who left the County at the end of 2005. It is anticipated that the selection process will conclude by the end of April.

For further information, please contact:
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