

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

Weekly News and Information from the Michigan Townships Association | July 1, 2016

## In this issue

State budget | PPT implementation | Forest property | False reporting of a public threat | Infrastructure fund | Farmland development | Obsolete properties | State emergency fund | Opioid abuse prevention

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### Snyder signs budget

Set against the backdrop of the "Big Red" lighthouse at Holland State Park in **Park Township** (Ottawa Co.), Gov. Rick Snyder signed the 2016-17 state budget, which includes an estimated 1.6 percent increase in constitutional revenue sharing over actual current year funding and preservation of City, Village and Township (CVT) revenue sharing for 134 townships at their 2015-16 levels. Other items that impact townships are full funding of payments in lieu of taxes, \$5 million for election equipment replacement, a \$1 million increase for firefighter training grants, a \$3.4 million increase for fire protection grants, and \$3 million to fund the firefighter cancer presumption fund. The budget bill, now [PA 268](#) of 2016, was sponsored by Rep. Al Pscholka (R-Lincoln Chr. Twp.).



### REMINDER: New PPT implementation form due July 15

Townships have until July 15 to submit the personal property tax (PPT) reform implementation form to the state Department of Treasury. The department developed [Form 5448](#) to help municipalities calculate their percentage of general operating millage used to fund the cost of essential services in 2012. (A previous article contained the incorrect form number. MTA regrets the error.) The calculation helps to determine PPT reimbursement for essential services, such as police, fire and ambulance, as a result of previous PPT reform. Forms must be sent by July 15 to Treasury via email at [TreasORTAPPT@michigan.gov](mailto:TreasORTAPPT@michigan.gov), by fax at (517) 335-3298, or by mail to Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis, PO Box 30722, Lansing, MI 48909. If you have questions, email [TreasORTAPPT@michigan.gov](mailto:TreasORTAPPT@michigan.gov) or call (517) 373-2697.

#### MTA QUICK LINKS

[Members-only Website](#)

[Training](#)

[Answer Center](#)

[Advocacy](#)

[MTA Store](#)

[Township Governance](#)

[Academy](#)

[Allied Service Providers](#)

[Classified Ads](#)

[NATaT](#)

[MTA Webcasts](#)

[MTA Publications Catalog](#)

#### UPCOMING MTA EVENTS

[\\*\\*Cemeteries: Challenges & Solutions](#)

[\\*\\*Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning](#)

[\\*\\*MTA On the Road Regional Meetings](#)

#### ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



\* [Asphalt Materials, Inc.](#)

\* [Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seiber & Kaufman, PC](#)

\* [Consumers Energy](#)

\* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)



## Bills aimed at increasing qualified forests now law



More forests may eventually return to township property tax rolls under three new laws. PAs [260](#), [261](#) and [262](#) of 2016, sponsored by Sens. Darwin Booher (R-Osceola Twp.) and Tom Casperson (R-Wells Twp.), were recently signed by Gov. Rick Snyder. Together, they will allow forestland to move from the commercial forest program to the qualified forest program, while gradually paying the associated tax increase over a five-year phase-in period. This change is in an effort to encourage more commercial forests, which aren't subject to property taxes, to become qualified forests, which pay property taxes except for the 18-mill school tax. The other difference between the two

types of forests is commercial forests must allow public access, while qualified forests don't have such a requirement. For a commercial forest to qualify, the owner must have owned the property since no later than Sept. 1, 2016, and the deadline for transfer is Sept. 1, 2021.

\* [Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

\* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

\* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)

\* [Ted Hartleb Agency](#)



## False reporting of public threat becomes reimbursable offense for local units

Townships could be reimbursed for the costs of responding to a falsely reported public threat, under [PA 236](#) of 2016, sponsored by Rep. David Maturen (R-Brady Twp.). The new law adds false reporting of a public threat to the list of offenses in which the convicted may be ordered to reimburse the state or local unit for expenses incurred responding to the offense. PA 236 was part of a three-bill package in response to the Kalamazoo shooting rampage earlier this year. [PA 235](#) of 2016, sponsored by Rep. Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo Chtr. Twp.), creates a notification system to be used during emergencies, including active shooter situations, and makes it a felony to falsely report such an event. [PA 234](#) of 2016, sponsored by Sen. Mike Nofs (R-Battle Creek), makes the false reporting of a public threat a Class F felony with a maximum sentence of four years in prison.

## Infrastructure fund created

A new "Michigan Infrastructure Fund" was created under [PA 223](#) of 2016 to offset future infrastructure expenses. Sponsored by Sen. Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell Chtr. Twp.), the new law establishes the fund and allows money or other assets from any source to be deposited into it. The Legislature included a \$5 million appropriation to the new fund in the FY 2015-16 supplemental. Money in the fund can only be spent as provided in an appropriation act. The specific use of the funds, including any distribution to local units of government, has not yet been determined, pending recommendations from the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission created under [Executive Order 2016-5](#).



---

## Reporting requirement eliminated on farmland development

A new law eliminates a reporting requirement for townships and changes requirements for farmers applying for a farmland development rights agreement. [PA 265](#) of 2016, sponsored by Rep. Dan Lauwers (R-Brockway Twp.), no longer requires townships or counties to notify the governing body of a city or village when land within three miles of a city or one mile of a village applies for a farmland development rights agreement. The law also eliminates the \$25 fee that was previously charged by the state land use agency to collect and process each change of ownership or subdivision.

---

## Deadline extended for obsolete property rehab districts

Townships now have an additional 10 years to create obsolete property rehabilitation districts. [PA 222](#) of 2016, sponsored by Sen. Ken Horn (R-Frankenmuth) and supported by MTA, extended the previous deadline of Dec. 31, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2026, for setting up such a district in commercial areas. These districts allow property owners to apply to pay an obsolete properties tax instead of property tax. Townships use the designation to help revitalize blighted areas and attract economic development.

---

## State emergency fund could increase

Michigan's emergency fund could potentially double under a new public act. [PA 220](#) of 2016, sponsored by Sen. Mike Nofs (R-Battle Creek), increases the statutory cap on the fund to \$10 million. Previously, the maximum amount that could be appropriated to the state's Disaster and Emergency Contingency Fund was \$4.5 million. The fund is used to pay for state and local costs in state or federal disasters.

---

## New commission to help stop opioid abuse



A [newly created commission](#) is meant to help curb Michigan's opioid epidemic. The Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission, created by Gov. Rick Snyder's [Executive Order 2016-15](#), will include state and independent health experts and be responsible for monitoring indicators of drug abuse.

Appointments to the commission are expected in August. It will also make recommendations on issues such as licensing, law enforcement, substance abuse treatment and education. The commission will serve as an advisory board within the Executive Office, reviewing recommendations by a previous task force, and

developing and proposing policies and an action plan to implement those recommendations.

---

## Federal update for week of June 27

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships' [e-newsletter](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.



---

## Additional news you can use

### **Tell us your story**

MTA knows that every township has a story--and we want to help tell yours. We want to know what's happening in your township--no project, service, collaboration or experience is too small. Your insights, suggestions and ideas could be featured in *Township Focus* magazine, as part of our "Township Happenings" column. Or they could inspire a longer article or a feature on your township, or be included in cover stories. Or we may share with our followers on social media. You could even be asked to share your insights and experiences as part of an MTA workshop or Conference session. You're proud of your township, and we are, too. Let us help you tell your story. Email your story ideas, happenings in your township, pictures, etc. to [jenn@michigantownships.org](mailto:jenn@michigantownships.org).