

Michigan Township INSIGHTS

Weekly News and Information from the Michigan Townships Association | July 22, 2016

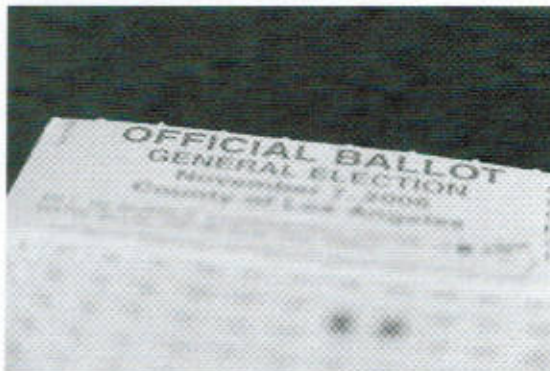
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal injunction issued on straight-party voting ban

A federal injunction issued this week halts Michigan's ban on straight-party voting from being enforced. Judge Gershwin Drain signed an order blocking the enforcement of [PA 268 of 2016](#), saying that the change would



result in longer lines at the polls and have a disparate impact on African-American voters. The Legislature passed a bill in December eliminating the straight-party voting option, which was signed by the governor earlier this year. This spring, a lawsuit was filed challenging PA 268, and the judge's ruling was issued after a week of hearings. **The injunction will not impact the August primary election**, but if it stands – the attorney general has indicated the state will appeal the ruling – it would affect the November general election. MTA will continue to update members on this issue.

Regional meeting with Treasury officials on PPT implementation

Some township officials got answers to their questions on personal property tax (PPT) reform implementation at a meeting with the Department of Treasury this week. The meeting, held in Muskegon, was the result of a request for regional meetings by MTA and other local government organizations, due to the significant number of questions from municipalities statewide. At this week's meeting, Treasury officials presented an [overview](#) of PPT reform, discussed relevant timelines under the law and reviewed the [forms](#) local units are required to submit. They also discussed in detail the role of the [Essential Services](#)

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**[Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning](#)
**[MTA On the Road Regional Meetings](#)

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



* [Asphalt Materials, Inc.](#)

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

* [Consumers Energy](#)

* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

Assessment as part of the overall reimbursement process, walking attendees through examples of calculating PPT loss and estimating reimbursement. MTA is working with the department about the possibility of future meetings around the state and will provide information as it is available.

* Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.

* ITC Holdings Corp.

* Mika Meyers, PLC

* Ted Hartlieb Agency

Slow revenue growth could impact revenue sharing



While revenue collections are above last year's level at this time, it is uncertain if Michigan will collect enough revenue this fiscal year to provide the 1.6 percent increase in constitutional revenue sharing that was included in the recently enacted state budget. This week, the House Fiscal Agency announced that collections for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 to date are \$394 million,

or 3 percent, higher than during FY 2014-15. Sales tax revenue showed modest growth over the previous year, with a 0.4 percent increase over FY 2014-15, but lags behind the 0.9 percent increase estimated at the Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference in May. The most recent estimates represent eight months of collections, and a larger increase could happen in the final third of the fiscal year. Watch future MTA newsletters for revenue updates.



Member input needed for MTA Policy Platform

Do you have a suggestion for MTA's Legislative Policy Platform? MTA is accepting submissions now for the 2017 Policy Platform. Members have until **Nov. 14** to submit suggestions and input to be considered by the MTA Legislative Policy and Resolutions Committee. This later date reflects the shift to an April MTA Annual Conference, beginning in 2017. The policy platform will be presented for membership approval during the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting on April 13, held in conjunction with the 64th Annual MTA Educational Conference & Expo in Lansing. Contact legislation@michigantownships.org or (517) 321-6467 with any proposed policies.

Infrastructure Commission holds first 'Listening Tour' stop

Several township officials attended this week's first Listening Tour stop for Gov. Rick Snyder's 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, which was created earlier this year through Executive Order 2016-15. The Grand Rapids meeting was the first of three listening stops to offer insight on Michigan's



infrastructure and to gather input from Michigan local officials,

businesses and residents on the current state of Michigan's infrastructure, the infrastructure system they envision, and how the state can work to close the gap between the two. The input received will help shape the commission's final report and recommendations, which are due to the governor by Nov. 30, 2016. Two additional events are anticipated--the next event will be held in Marquette and the final event will be held in southeast Michigan. You can also provide input via the commission's [website](#). Watch MTA communications for additional details regarding upcoming meetings.

Federal bills could impact townships

One federal bill impacting local units of government was signed into law this week, and another awaits U.S. House approval. President Barack Obama signed the FAA Extension, Safety and Security Act, which in addition to continuing current funding levels until Sept. 30, 2017, also prohibits drone users from interfering with emergency response activities, including wildfire suppression. The new law increases civil penalties to no more than \$20,000 for a violation. Additionally, the U.S. Senate passed the Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act, designed to help boost local efforts to revitalize waterfront communities by creating a Resilient Waterfront Community designation. It also establishes a network of such communities to support the sharing of best practices. Read the most recent issue of the National Association of Towns and Townships' [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for more details.

Local units must engage to address state funding shortage



Local government leaders must unite to address the chronic funding shortage, is what attendees heard at a Municipal Finance Summit this week. Township officials, along with other municipal officials, attended the meeting in Grand Rapids to hear about funding challenges local governments face and the need to educate lawmakers of the

challenges associated with funding local governments. One of the speakers, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans, said leaders must come together to address state policy that makes everyday functions difficult for local units. This is the second forum held, and a third is scheduled in the Upper Peninsula, from 9-11:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 11, at the Citizens Forum inside Lakeview Arena, 401 E. Fair, Marquette.

Federal update for week of July 18

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

Additional news you can use

Limited English Proficiency requirements part of federal funding compliance

Under federal laws prohibiting discrimination against persons based on national origin, the federal government has developed Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements for federally funded programs, including federal grant and loan-funded local programs such as USDA Rural Development funding. These requirements are aimed at ensuring that

governmental programs and services can assist people who have a limited ability to read, write or speak English to access those programs and services. Although the requirement is not new, many townships recently received USDA correspondence that it will look at compliance as part of its grant and loan compliance reviews. MTA offers guidance on these requirements on our member [website](#), under the "Answer Center" tab.

Transportation improvement plan available for comment

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) wants your input on its plan for improving state transportation. A draft of its 2017-2020 State Transportation Improvement Program is [available](#) for public comment until Aug. 15. This program is required under the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act and lists the transportation projects MDOT plans to fund with federal aid provided under the federal transportation program.