

To: Tuscola County Board of Commissioners
Chairperson, Gerald Peterson
From: Controller/Administrator
Michael R. Hoagland
Date: March 6, 2003
Re: County Activity Report

The following report is intended to provide a brief status of various projects and work activities in the county. The report is divided into three sections: completed projects, projects that are underway, and projects that are to be initiated. The report will be updated at different points during the year to provide commissioners, employees, and the general public an on-going status report of various activities and projects of County Government.

COMPLETED

National Prescription Health Insurance Plan

The Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement that will enable a prescription discount for residents of Tuscola County who are at least 18 years of age and are required to pay for prescriptions with cash. The average prescription medication savings per person from this program is approximately 20%. In Macomb County Michigan, who has been in the program the longest, the average annual dollar savings was \$270 per person. Press coverage and meetings with human service departments have been held to help explain the availability and benefits of the program. For more information you may contact Julie Dillon or Renee Ondrajka in the Controller/Administrator's Office.

Medical Examiner System

Dr. Smallwood resigned and Dr. Larry Cole replaced him as the Chief Medical Examiner of Tuscola County. A new independent contractor agreement with Dr. Cole was prepared and approved. Dr. Smallwood will continue to serve as the Deputy Medical Examiner. He will also continue his other roles in the county including Medical Director at the Health Department and Administrator of the County Jail Health Program.

Unified Court Budget

The Budgeting/Accounting structure of the Court was changed from multiple court budgets to one primary court budget. The Friend of the Court and Child Care Fund budgets will remain as separate special revenue funds. The State has approved a law that provides the legal structure enabling Judges to work in different areas according to need that will be extremely beneficial using the unified court system.

County Master Plan

Development of the County Master plan has been completed. Copies are being distributed to all local units of government. Copies can be purchased at the Michigan State University Extension Service Office.

Tax/Parcel Information On-Line

The county has implemented a database of tax and parcel information that can be accessed through the Internet. This Internet access is convenient and useful to many public and private entities. This information has been available since the end of March. The annual subscription cost is \$160 per year.

Register of Deeds Fee Changes

Recent legislation has provided for an increase in fees collected in the Register of Deeds Office. These fees will be used to establish a technology fund to maintain and expand technological capability in the

Register of Deeds Office. The Board of Commissioners appropriates the use of these funds. The fee increase will also provide more funds for the surveying remonumentation program. This will enable the completion of this program in a shorter period of time.

Dispatch Computer System

On February 3, 2003 Tuscola County Central Dispatch obtained a new Computer Aided Dispatch System installed by LogiSYS, inc. The system is fully operational. It will decrease the time it takes Central Dispatch operators to dispatch fire and ambulance departments via the system's capability of automatic paging. In the near future, the system will be capable of providing detailed location information and the telephone number for wireless callers. The system has detailed record-keeping capabilities to assist police, fire, ambulance and other users. The system cost was approximately \$200,000.

Animal Control

In order to balance the 2003 County Budget, the Animal Control Operation was eliminated. The county is unable to answer most types of dog complaints. The Sheriff Department and other local police agencies are responding to animal bite cases and animal cruelty cases. The County Treasurer processes renewals of current kennel licenses. New kennel licenses require approval by the State. A new Animal Control Ordinance has been written to account for the fact that the county no longer has an Animal Control Operation. Kennel space in surrounding counties is being rented on an as-needed basis. Animal control is a difficult situation, but the county departments are doing the best they can in the absence of an Animal Control Department.

Building Codes

In 2002, the county entered into a contract with South Central Michigan Construction Code Inc. (SCMCCI) to perform construction code services in Tuscola County. Building code work conducted by this organization is well received by contractors and the public. There is still some work required to complete the transition from the previous county operation to SCMCCI. The County continues to monitor the change from a county-based building code operation to contracting with SCMCCI.

County Insurance Renewal

The County maintains property, general liability, vehicle, and other insurance coverage with the Michigan Municipal Liability and Property Pool. The renewal cost increase for the 2003/2004 period is approximately 10.5%. In 2002, the county increased deductibles to lower premium costs. Each year budget provisions have to be made to cover potential higher deductible costs.

Millington Township Police Services Contract

The County and Sheriff have entered into a three-year contract with the Sheriff Department to provide police services to Millington Township. This is the third township that has decided to contract with the sheriff department for police services.

UNDERWAY

Law Enforcement Information Network Cost Savings

Tuscola County is in the installation stage of a single dedicated connection to the State of Michigan Network. When this is completed, the cost of access to the LEIN (Law Enforcement Information Network) will initially be reduced by over \$20,000 annually. The long-term goal of the county is to bring other law enforcement units into the state network, which will reduce costs even further. One advantage of this connection is that it eliminated the need for other costly LEIN connections. Another advantage is that information will travel to Lansing in a fraction of the time compared to previous technology.

Millage Planning

Meetings are underway to develop the ballot language to be used for a public vote in 2003 to provide funding for 2004 county operations. The county is waiting to determine the impact of any further state cuts and the effects of these cuts on the ballot question. The date and specific ballot language has not been determined at this time. Further financial analysis will be conducted before finalizing the ballot question. A citizens group will be involved in explaining the county finances and ballot question.

Storage Space

Staff is working with individual departments in discarding unnecessary files. Additional file space has been created in the Storage Building. Although this may not be an adequate long-term solution, it is providing a short-term partial solution. Assistance from the various departments has been helpful in the success of this effort. Continued success is dependent upon annual program management. Files need to be reviewed and unnecessary records discarded on an annual basis.

Recycling Operation

The Recycling Committee and staff are accomplishing recycling improvements enabled by the public millage approval. A new paper shredder has been purchased and is in full use. The oil-recycling program is anticipated to be started soon. A part-time recycling educator will be hired to work on explaining the importance and value of recycling to students and others. Expansion of the used tire-recycling program is underway. Also, the household hazardous waste program will be continued. In mid-year 2003 an electronics hazardous waste program will be initiated.

Lease Agreement Regarding the Cox House

Staff is making necessary repairs to the house along Sherman Street behind the Jail. Roof, porch, and hot water heater repairs are being made. The county is obligated to make these repairs as part of the Lease arrangement. The individual in the home is entitled to reside there until their death at which time the county takes ownership.

County Policy

Staff and the Board are working on a comprehensive re-write to the overall County Policies. Policies are being reorganized and simplified. After a draft is completed, they will be submitted to departments for review and comment. Eventually, all employees will receive a copy of the policies.

Medical Care Facility Remodeling and Addition of Alzheimer's Beds

Voters approved one mil to make major improvements to the current Medical Care Facility and build 20 beds for Alzheimer's patients. The County Bond Attorney is waiting to receive cost estimates from the architect. Upon receiving cost estimates, bonds will be issued and funds will become available. Construction will likely begin by mid-year 2003. It is anticipated that construction will take up to two years to complete. Bond repayment will occur over a 15-year period.

Government Accounting Standards Board-Rule 34

Tuscola County, as with most other units of government in the nation, must comply by the end of 2003 with new accounting standards called GASB-34. These are new accounting standards that require significant changes in the organization and format of information presented in the County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Significant staff and auditor time will be required to gain compliance, but non-compliance is not an option.

Drain Assessing/Financing Changes

The county is working to stabilize drain-at-large costs. In late 2002, the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution changing the method of assessing drains to degree of benefit rather than a straight 25%.

Also, the Road Commission will be required to pay one-half of future drain-at-large costs based on benefit to roads using 14A calculations. On new-petitioned drainage projects, the Drain Commissioner will work with the Road Commission in determining benefit to roads and Road Commission/County costs.

Labor Negotiations

All county labor contracts will expire at the end of 2003. The County Board of Commissioners will begin negotiations in the second quarter of 2003. One of the primary bargaining issues will be containing escalating health insurance costs.

Operating Space Needs

Staff is reviewing alternative methods of providing space for the Drain prison work crew. Space previously used at a garage in Indianfields Township is no longer available because the Township now needs this space. An alternative location for the Adult Probation is also being researched. The current location is inadequate because it is not barrier free.

Vanderbilt Park

Because of financial constraints, Vanderbilt County Park has been closed. The county will investigate a potential state take-over of this park. If it is not used as a park, it reverts to the Vanderbilt family.

TO BE INITIATED

Preparation of the County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Obtain an update from the Court and Clerk regarding status of increasing collection of delinquent court fines/costs and parent responsibility for childcare costs.

Reconciliation of Delinquent Tax Funds in the Treasurer's Office.

Complete an update to the county non-union personnel policies.

Review what should be done next with the Jail space needs study.

Preparation of the 2003 Apportionment and Equalization Reports.

Review and comment regarding the Michigan Association of Counties Platform.

Preparation of the 2004 County Budget.

Evaluate alternative methods of entering warrants into the LEIN system

Begin Courthouse lobby repairs