

TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – June 2007 Activity Report

- County officials were recently notified that Brownfield grants totaling \$400,000 for clean up of environmentally damaged sites was received from the federal government – these funds are available for clean-up of sites that are environmentally polluted – the objective of the program is to eliminate environmental problems that have occurred at these sites so the land can be properly used – for further information and possible use of these funds for clean-up of sites in your community contact James McLoskey (Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation Director) at 989-673-2849
- At the June 12, 2007 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, action was taken approving a resolution to begin a program to help preserve farmland and open space – this program enables the purchase of development rights by the state to assure these lands remain available for agriculture or open space – this action was taken after receiving recommendations for the program from the Tuscola County Farm Bureau and County Planning Commission
- The County jail has again encountered overcrowding conditions over the past several months – the problem has recently intensified to the point that 36 prisoners have had to be housed in other county jails – if 36 prisoners continue to be housed in other facilities for an entire year the annual cost would be approximately \$460,000 at \$35 per day per prisoner – \$30,000 was budgeted for 2007 for housing in other counties - the Jail has a capacity of 80 inmates – many other counties in the state are experiencing overcrowding conditions – there are many factors that contribute to the overcrowding condition but most would agree the poor economic conditions are at least in part a reason for the problem
- County officials received a proposal from the governor and legislature intended to save state funds through reducing the level of funded prisoner beds – essentially the proposal revamps sentencing guidelines changing many felonies to misdemeanors and reducing the penalty for many crimes – although the changes are supposed to reduce state and county jail costs, many parties are skeptical and fear the program will push even more prisoners into already overcrowded jails – county officials are developing position statements regarding these proposed changes which will be forwarded to the state
- The Tuscola County Health Department was notified of full accreditation status from the state – this award has been received for several consecutive years – this means that the Health Department meets the highest of standards in the provision of health services to the public – this is a credit to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of the excellent health department staff and board – congratulations for a job well done!
- The Board passed a resolution that was forwarded to state officials in opposition to H.B. 4780 which would eliminate township functions involving elections, tax collection, property assessments and transfer these functions to the county
- Elections update: it appears there will be a Presidential Primary in 2008 but the question is, when? Under proposed legislation, it could occur as early as January 29 or as late as the third week in February - the roll-out of new election equipment occurred mid-year last year - along with new ballot tabulators, local units received a ballot marking device called an AutoMARK – this new equipment has necessitated extensive training and consequently, additional programming costs to local jurisdictions beginning in 2008 - one potential benefit of this new technology is local jurisdictions can transmit election results to the county clerk's office via modem.

Prepared by: Michael R. Hoagland, Tuscola County Controller/Administrator 989-672-3700