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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government Reform & Best Practices

- **Cutting Workforce & Wage Freezes**
- **Insurance & Benefit Plan Reforms**
- **Consolidation of Services/Positions**
- **Sharing Services for Savings/Efficiencies**
- **Financial Responsibility**
- **Leveraging Federal Funds**
- **Increased Energy Efficiencies**
- **Technology Updates**
- **Utilizing Private Sector Contracts**
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Cuts to Workforce & Wage Freezes

- **Berrien** has reduced full time county employment by 10% in the last 5 years
- **Saginaw** has eliminated 15% (118 jobs) of their employees in recent years
- **Kent** eliminated 60 full-time positions in the 2011 budget
- **Oceana** cut Register of Deeds Office staff by 60%
- **Ingham** has cut the Sheriff's office significantly with 17 positions in 2010 and 13 more in 2011 for a savings of 3.6 million
- **Midland** has eliminated and/or reduced over 46 full time positions from 2006-2011
- **Marquette** has eliminated 19% of their employees between the years of 2002-2011
- **Jackson** has eliminated 80 jobs over 5 years
- **Isabella** eliminated 12 county employees or had their hours of work reduced in 2010
- **Branch** has been not hiring replacements for employees that retire or terminate
- **Genesee** instituted a hiring freeze in 2010. This resulted in the loss of approximately 150 positions through either attrition or layoff since June, 2010
- **Isabella** has all wage scales (union and non-union) frozen at 2009 rates
- **Saginaw** has frozen wages for all employees for 6 of the last 8 years
- **Otsego** has had a wage freeze for non-union employees for three years
- **Ogemaw** had wage freeze for appointed department heads/elected officials for last two years and a hiring freeze
- **Osceola County** froze non-union employee wages in 2010
- **Oceana** had a wage freeze in 2010
- **Midland** has frozen wages for all non-represented employees for 2011
- **Kalamazoo** has held the line on general wage increases, below the rate of inflation. In 2004, 2005, 2010 and 2011, we had wage freezes for all non-union and union employees

- Schoolcraft eliminated one position in both the District Court and Probate Court. They also combined a Probate Deputy Register and Child Care Worker position and combined two clerical positions into one.

Insurance & Benefit Plan Reform

- Bay changed their retiree health coverage so they now require 20 years of service before they fully pay health insurance, employees hired after 2012 are no longer offered health care in retirement and current employees only receive a max of 50% for their spouse. They have established a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) for their future costs and they have been overfunding their retirement system since 1988 to help off-set the costs. Bay also set up self-insured employee insurance benefit plan and separated health insurance from prescription drug plan to save money and a wellness program
- Berrien has increased employees share in health insurance to 15%; raised the vesting requirement from 5 to 10 years
- Branch has increased employee burdens (insurance premium costs), decreased pension plan benefits and has increased pension plan employee contribution
- Crawford eliminated Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) for any new hires and they continually adjust their health care plan for active employees to save dollars
- Eaton changed to self-insured employee insurance benefit plans. They also replaced retiree's health insurance benefit with employee-matched retiree health saving accounts for all hired after 2006
- Genesee have closed the Defined Benefit Pension Plan to all new hires, began to self-insure the pharmacy benefits and Blue Cross/Blue Shield medical insurances and also made significant changes to their medical insurance provisions and pension plans including increasing employee contribution and changing retiree health care plans
- Gogebic changed hospitalization plan in its insurance for employees to most economical plan
- Isabella now has retirement benefits for employees hired since 2001 (currently 45.8% of the workforce) tied to a defined contribution program as opposed to traditional defined benefit programs
- Jackson has new employees share health costs and also put them on a defined contribution plan. Jackson also reworked retiree health care to make qualification at 25 years of service, and they are now moving to retiree health savings accounts
- Kalamazoo has reduced health care expenditures through a variety of mechanisms, including a wellness initiative and an overhaul to our health care plan, including self-funding and have increased employee contributions to 12%
- Lapeer have adopted hard cap rates on its health insurance
- Mason has increased the employee costs related to health insurance premiums
- Midland has eliminated the retiree health care and defined benefit pension plans for all new hires and now have implemented a defined contribution plan for all new hires
- Oceana has reduced employees' benefits, increased employees' deductible and they now pay a higher portion of their premium costs. These changes have left the county health insurance premiums in 2011 at the same level they were in 2006
- Ogemaw reduced its pension costs by changing its retirement plan in 2006 along with offering early retirement incentives and reducing its workers comp, umbrella policies and health insurance premiums
- Osceola has changed to a partially self-funded health benefits to reduce costs
- Osego increased employee health care premiums and moved employees from a defined benefit retirement plan to a hybrid plan
- Saginaw has eliminated benefits such as Longevity and Retiree Health Care in all union contracts for new hires

- **Schoolcraft** reduced retirement benefits for new hires in one union and in non-union/department head divisions

Consolidations

- **Alpena** consolidated the Coordinator position and other Elected Officials into other employees duties
- **Genesee** has closed three (3) facilities in the past two (2) years with those departments being consolidated into other existing County facilities
- **Kent** along with the cities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Walker, and Wyoming partnered with the Michigan State Police and other police, fire, and emergency medical service providers to create a regional 911 Authority. The 911 Authority has consolidated the 911 call-taking function and reduced the number of call-centers from five to two
- **Lapeer** has merged multiple departments including their Treasurer Office with Equalization Offices, their Parks department with Building/Grounds Operations and their Senior Programs with County Health Department. Lapeer has also consolidated its 911 services and consolidated kitchen functions for jail and senior programs into one
- **Mason** and City of Ludington consolidated the city and county libraries into a countywide District Library
- **Washtenaw** has consolidated 3 departments into one. The departments of Employee Training and Community Services, Economic Development and Energy, and Community Development became the Community and Economic Development department. Saving the county \$500,000 annually

Shared Services

- **Alger** partners with other counties for their community corrections programs, inmate lodging, 911 services and emergency management plans
- **Berrien** covers 911 dispatch responsibilities for two other local units of government and their emergency dispatch covers over 85% of the residents of the county at this point
- **Clinton** and **Gratiot** already share the 29th judicial circuit court and the department of Human Services
- **Clinton**, **Eaton** and **Ingham** share Community Mental Health Services, a Metro Narcotics Squad, an Office of Aging and a Regional Planning Commission
- **Clinton**, **Eaton**, **Ingham** and the City of Lansing work together as the Capital Region Airport Authority
- **Clinton**, **Gratiot**, **Montcalm** share a District Health Department
- **Crawford** shares same tax/assessing software with other local units making for easier data transfers and also shares the cost of a Sherriff's Deputy with the local school system
- **Eaton** contracts with charter townships for police services
- **Grand Traverse** recently added 5 townships to its sewer and water system and septage treatment plant
- **Gogebic** provides GIS computer services to 4 counties and LEIN services to police agencies. Gogebic also shares an airport and animal shelter with Iron County, Wisconsin
- **Ingham** and **Clinton** share Veterans Affairs
- **Ingham** collaborates with cities of Lansing and East Lansing to implement a dispatch center
- **Ingham's** Health Department provides medical direction and program consultation to the Ionia County Health Department
- **Isabella** provides building inspection services to the City of Mount Pleasant, 12 of 14 townships, and three villages within the boundaries of Isabella; along with providing inspections by contract

- to Clare and several Clare County municipalities. Isabella also provides curbside recycling services, by contract, to several townships and villages
- Jackson provides IT services to the road commission and the medical care facility, contributes HR services to the City of Jackson and shares a medical director and health officer with Livingston
- Kent alone is engaged in over 80 public/private or public/public partnerships. A complete list is available online at their website
- Lapeer shares an Equalization Director & Veterans Affairs Director with St. Clair. Lapeer also shares a Medical Director with 4 other counties and shares Community Corrections Services with Tuscola
- Manistee contracts with all townships, villages and the city of Manistee to maintain tax roll and provide tax bill preparation services. Manistee also contracts with the County Library, 911, and the shared Benzie County Courts for preparation of payroll and administration of employee fringe benefits.
- Mason is part of a 10 county health department that helped to create a Health Plan Corporation to provide health care to low income citizens. Mason also shares a 3 county mental health authority, a 3 county 211 system, a multi-county substance abuse entity and a 3 county DHS administrative office. Mason and the City of Ludington share staff for the housing program and staff for their Brownfield Authority. Mason shares a regional sewage treatment plant with the City of Ludington, Pere Marquette Charter Township, the City of Scottville, Amber Township, Victory Township, West Shore Community College, and the City of Ludington and Mason and their Chamber of Commerce share staff for their economic development offices.
- Mason provides zoning enforcement for the 12 townships within the county and provides payroll and accounting staff services to the District Library
- Midland and the city of Midland trade use of equipment and jointly use a Law Enforcement Center building to house their Midland County Sheriff's Office, the Midland City Police and the 911 Dispatch
- Midland and Bay along with the cities of Midland and Saginaw jointly own the MBS International Airport
- Oceana contracts with the Medical Care Facility for IT support to save money however with equipment in each police cruiser, Oceana County wishes it could provide its own IT support
- Ogemaw shares an IT Director with Ogemaw County Road Commission
- Osceola partners with Mecosta for District, Probate and Family court services and 911 Central Dispatch Authority. They also share services with several counties for public and mental health that are provided by regional area Community Mental Health for Central Michigan and Central Michigan District Health Department.
- Otsego runs the zoning for all 9 townships in the county with the townships and county sharing the cost
- Schoolcraft shares a Circuit Court's Scheduling Clerk shared with Luce, Alger and Mackinaw Counties.
- Schoolcraft is part of a 4 County Judicial Committee: All four counties are purchasing folders and forms together
- Schoolcraft shares retirement administration and payroll/human resources with Housing Commission, Commission on Aging, Medical Care Facility, Public Transit
- Tuscola and Sanilac share animal control services saving Tuscola \$100,000 a year. Tuscola also shares an Equalization Director with Huron
- Washtenaw joined together with the City of Ann Arbor to provide dispatch services jointly

Financial Responsibility

- **Bay** has had balanced budgets with no tax increases since 1993 with an increased general fund balance and Bay has now also begun creating budget forecasts that go 3 fiscal years out
- **Cass** has a AA bond rating
- **Cheboygan** created a Strategic Planning-Budgeting process in order to create the best possible outcomes for all new and old programs and operations
- **Clinton** had a bond rating increase from A+ to AA in 2010
- **Grand Traverse** received Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2010 Fiscal Year from GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association of the US and Canada), the 6th year in a row they received the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting
- **Lapeer** received GFOA award for Excellence in Financial Reporting 13 yrs in a row (1997-2010)
- **Macomb, Kent and Oakland County** have AAA bond ratings for 2012. The high marks come from credit rating company, Standard & Poors, for how counties have managed their budget. AAA is the highest mark and only 67 counties in the entire county received the honor
- **Muskegon** implemented a new budgeting methodology that all departments must now use that includes weighting each expenditure on a scale of mandatory to discretionary to make targeting reductions simpler and more uniform.
- **Oceana** had paid off 11 long term leases since 2008 without incurring any additional ones in order to save money
- **Ogemaw** has incorporated quarterly budget reviews and a finance committee that meets monthly to keep closer track of expenditures
- **Tuscola** has received Excellence in Financial Reporting Awards from GFOA

Leveraging Federal Funds

- **Bay** upgraded all township and city fire fighters with New Minitor V fire pagers; bought new VHF radios for Bay City Fire Department; bought new mobile and portable radios for all police, fire and ambulance agencies with almost all Homeland Security funds
- **Grand Traverse** has benefited from having only one Brownfield Redevelopment Authority in the county which has meant greater coordination and leverage of limited resources in the community. \$249 million in private investments have been added to the Grand Traverse tax base as a result of environmental clean-up on 17 sites. The new investments have resulted in 1,650 jobs. Further, \$241 million in future investments is anticipated with the continued redevelopment of these sites
- **Tuscola** has pursued federal grants including successfully receiving; \$490,000 for increasing energy efficiency in county offices. Tuscola also has done housing rehabilitation for approx. 15 years based on Community Development Block Grants and received \$400,000 in Brownfield Redevelopment Grants and cleaned-up 30 sites that can now be used commercially
- **Washtenaw** cut its status as the grantee for the Head Start program, saving the county \$500,000 annually beginning in 2013. Now, the federal government will release an RFP giving any educational organizations in the county a chance to vie for the grant

Increased Energy Efficiencies

- **Alger** upgraded 3 county facilities with new energy efficiencies including new heating, ventilation, air conditioning system (HVAC) and improvements in plumbing and lighting; saving \$115,000 annually in utility and operation costs
- **Gogebic** installed a new energy efficient boiler in courthouse
- **Lapeer** added energy efficient equipment to county buildings including new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC)
- **Ogemaw** has incorporated energy efficiencies into its physical plant to reduce operational costs

- Lenawee added energy efficiencies to their judicial and Human Service buildings and have already seen savings in their utility bills
- Eaton made numerous building efficiency upgrades including: lighting, roofs and insulation. Eaton also installed a pilot solar energy project at a satellite facility.
- Tuscola installed solar energy panels in one building, installed wind energy generators at another, upgraded street lighting, created a non-motorized transportation plan for Village of Harbor Beach, upgraded Watertown Township lighting and conducted energy audits throughout the county
- Clinton has been implementing energy efficient practices that will result in savings of over \$100,000 a year once completed. Those projects include, auto computer and printer shut down, lighting upgrades, enhancing heating and cooling controls, putting in occupancy sensors in bathrooms, hallways and conference rooms and replacing external and internal light fixtures with LED lighting.
- Ogemaw installed new energy efficient heating system and new water heaters in county buildings
- Kent created this partnership with the cities of Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Grandville, Kentwood and Walker to finance and operate the Waste-to-Energy Facility (WTE). Waste from the communities is burned to produce steam to produce electricity sold to Consumers Energy
- Genesee went through an energy audit and are in the process of capital improvements that will have significant energy savings and a net savings of \$3 million over the next 15 years

Technology Updates

- Bay started using electronic ticketing services resulting in immediate cost savings along with updating their phone system that saved \$30,000 annually
- Bay and Clinton have started using document scanning software to reduce filing of hard copies
- Berrien has invested approximately \$1,000,000 a year in technology updates
- Clinton has replaced mobile data computers and radio modems for their central dispatch and upgraded the Sheriff's record management system and electronic ticketing software and that has been extended to other local units and plans to move to more vendor electronic payments
- Gogebic utilizes video conferences saving approx. \$3,000 per hearing
- Kent moved many of its services online including reserving parks and campgrounds, applying for marriage certificates, obtaining dog licenses, filing accident reports, etc. They have saved considerably from this move to online services
- Kent has begun using video visitation services in their correctional facility, cutting down on travel for attorneys to meet with their clients
- Lapeer added judicial video arraignments and video conferencing saving on travel expenses
- Midland created a consortium with the city of Midland and the county Educational Service Agency (MESA) to provide, M.Co.Net Fiber Optic Network, which provides high-speed communications to all municipal facilities. This has created significant cost reductions in telephone and telemetry charges for all units
- Tuscola added video arraignments saving on travel expenses

Private Sector Contracts

- Kent has begun soliciting competitive bids from local service providers to provide certain support for the Sheriff's Department at the jail and they have seen significant cost-savings from this program
- Mason has privatized its maintenance and custodial positions
- Otsego contracted with privatized maintenance in Building & Grounds and the Airport

- **Tuscola** contracts with private company for IT support which has increased efficiency, support, response time and upgrades but not increased costs

Emergency Management Plan

- **Alger** has created and run an emergency management plan that is countywide
- **Bay** created an emergency preparedness plan including setting up an offsite computer back up and alternative work space and has created BAY alerts that are mass notification system that provides emergency information in the form of text, email, pages and phone calls to Bay County residents
- **Ingham** is participating in the preparation of a Tri-County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- **Mason** works with their surrounding counties in providing emergency management services and training on a regional basis and also participates in the development a hazard mitigation plan for the region
- **Midland** maintains an emergency management program and shares this service with the city of midland who participates in the Midland County Emergency Management program

Utilizing Volunteers

- **Crawford** runs recreation events including their annual AuSable River Canoe Marathon entirely by volunteer staff
- **Kent's** Parks Department engages hundreds of volunteers each year to help support and maintain the parks. These efforts have resulted in the culmination of thousands of hours of volunteer work and less reliance on seasonal staff
- **Presque Isle** uses volunteer groups to improve and manage various recreational facilities in the county

Recycling & Recreation

- **Clinton** recently opened its 1st county owned park – Motz Park in 2010. Clinton also created Clean Community Events that allow residents to dispose of recyclable or hard to dispose of items bi-annually
- **Crawford** partnered with other local units for a county-wide recycling system for all residents
- **Isabella's** recycling program was restructured in FY 2010 in recognition of economic challenges
- **Kent's** Purchasing Office developed a "Reverse Auction" process that enables live online bidding for numerous commodities that the County's departments purchase. The County has realized savings of approximately 18 percent on commodity purchases
- **Mason** along with other counties, cities, and townships developed a county household hazardous waste clean-up events for residents. Mason also partnered with Consumers Energy to fund and staff a County Park
- **Oceana** had to increase rates for the transfer station/recycling center by 35% in 2011 in an effort to make the station revenue neutral
- **Osceola** has two self-sustaining parks that provide recreation areas without using any tax dollars
- **Tuscola** developed a tire recycling program with funds from a Mosquito Abatement mileage. They partner with other local units to recycle tires on the sides of the road resulting in 6,400 tires being collected

