

Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

Weekly News and Information from the Michigan Townships Association | Sept. 30, 2016

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

\$3 million transfer to pay for presidential primary

Townships can expect to be reimbursed for the extra cost of the March 8 presidential primary. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees approved a \$3 million legislative transfer to reimburse counties, cities and townships for the election. The primary's total reimbursement amount was \$2.9 million over the original \$10 million appropriated last year, due to the large turnout. This transfer was approved to meet statutory payment obligations.



Families of slain officers will receive continued medical benefits

Families of slain public safety officers can now receive continued medical coverage from the state under a newly signed bill. **SB 218**, sponsored by Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), was signed by Gov. Rick Snyder this week and is now PA 284 of 2016. Previously, when a public safety officer was killed in the line of duty, his or her spouse and dependent children were eligible for a one-time payment of \$25,000, but their health care benefits were immediately terminated. PA 284 instead provides them with health care coverage for up to five years except in certain circumstances, such as if they receive comparable coverage elsewhere, or if they receive a medical benefit plan through the state retirement system. The new law was made retroactive to Oct. 1, 2015, to provide benefits to the family of a Detroit officer who died after being shot earlier this month.

MTA QUICK LINKS

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[Allied Service Providers](#)
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UPCOMING

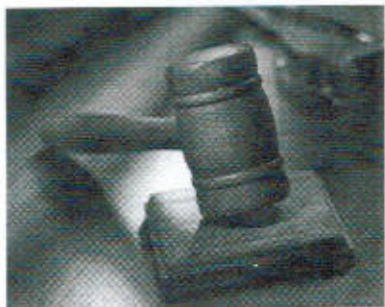
MTA EVENTS

**[MTA On the Road Regional Meetings](#)
**[Emerging Issues in Emergency Services](#)
**[Treasurer's Guide to Tax Collecting](#)
**[Township Finances](#)

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



House committee considers tax tribunal overhaul bill



The administrative court responsible for upholding the detrimental "dark store" assessing theory would get an overhaul under a bill recently discussed by the House Tax Policy Committee. **HB 5765**, sponsored by Rep. Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo Chtr. Twp.), would make numerous changes to Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT), including membership, training and compensation. While

the bill requires members to receive relevant training, it does not require members to possess any assessing background or training. In our testimony on the bill, MTA raised concerns on appropriate training needed when considering cases that deal heavily with local tax issues. MTA also cited concerns with the proposed expansion of MTT filing deadlines and in the taxable value or state equalized value threshold to file in the tribunal's Small Claims Division. The bill would change the deadline from 35 days to 90 days from the decision or ruling for filing a petition and from 60 days to 90 days to file regarding a contested tax bill. Additionally, the threshold for the Residential Property and Small Claims Division would increase from \$100,000 or less to \$250,000 or less. MTA continues to work with Rep. Iden and staff to address these concerns. HB 5765 would also require the governor to consider a list of qualified candidates solicited from at least one appropriate professional association when making an appointment. The bill will likely be taken up by the committee when the House resumes session in November.

* [Asphalt Materials, Inc.](#)

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

* [Consumers Energy](#)

* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

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

* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)



Brownfield bills ready for vote in Senate

The Senate is poised to vote on a package of bills that would make more contaminated sites eligible for tax increment financing (TIF) and grant funding to help with redevelopment. An amended version of SBs **908-913**, under lead sponsor Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), could see Senate passage in October. Together, the bills would update Michigan's brownfield redevelopment program, making it easier for developers and local units to follow. The redevelopment program would be expanded to include sites with leaking underground storage tanks, likely making those sites eligible for redevelopment grants. The Michigan Strategic Fund would also be able to approve plans for addressing eligible activities up to \$1 million, rather than \$500,000. MTA will continue monitoring the bills as they move through the legislative process.

Bill clarifies rental inspection law

A bill recently discussed by the House Local Government Committee would clarify the process for local government rental inspections. **HB 5561**, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Graves (R-Argentine Twp.), is supported by MTA as it would clear up confusion in the current law governing rental inspections. The bill would provide more specifics on the relationship between the local unit and landlords for scheduling rental

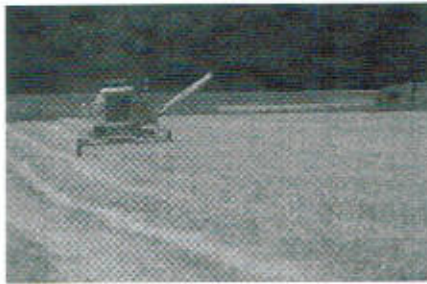


inspections and clarify that a rental inspection must take place every four years only if the local unit adopts an ordinance on such inspections. Otherwise, inspections are only required due to complaints. A change was made at MTA's request to make it easier for inspectors to access rental property. HB 5561 could be put to a committee vote when the Legislature resumes session.

PPT exemptions could be revoked for certain businesses

Townships could revoke new personal property tax (PPT) exemptions for certain businesses if the business doesn't follow a written agreement, under an MTA-supported bill on its way to Gov. Rick Snyder. [HB 4580](#), sponsored by Rep. Andy Schor (D-Lansing), would, after Dec. 31, 2016, require townships and other governing bodies to enter into written agreements in order to give a personal property tax exemption within a Next Michigan development district or an eligible local assessing district. These written agreements must include provisions that would revoke the exemptions in case the agreement was violated. A written agreement after Dec. 31, 2016, between a Next Michigan Development Corporation and an eligible Next Michigan business must also include additional tax exemption revocation provisions.

Some agricultural property would get sales, use tax exemption



Certain agricultural property would be eligible for a sales and use tax exemption under two bills recently introduced in the House. HBs [5889](#) and [5890](#), sponsored by Rep. Dan Lauwers (R-Brockway Twp.), were reported by the House Agriculture Committee earlier this month. Current law already provides sales and use tax

exemptions for land tile, portable grain bins and other agricultural personal property when it's sold to someone in an agricultural business. The state Department of Treasury interprets this to apply to sales to a person in a business that builds, repairs or improves real estate for others and is used for an agricultural purpose, such as subsurface irrigation pipe. HBs 5889 and 5890 would put this interpretation into law. MTA has not yet taken a position on this legislation.

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. 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.

Federal update for week of Sept. 26

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

Additional news you can use

Inland lake protection toolkit available

A how-to guide on inland lake protection is now available for townships. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality released "[Protecting MI's Inland Lakes: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#)" as a companion piece to "[How to Protect Inland Lakes: A Guidebook for Local Officials](#)." This document provides examples in different communities along with sample language and ideas for accomplishing protection goals. MTA-member township officials can access these, and other lakes resources, on MTA's "[Lake Issues](#)" web page on the members-only section of www.michigantownships.org.

Elections wait time study coming in November

The Michigan Bureau of Elections needs your help in analyzing wait times in the November election. The bureau is asking local clerks to instruct inspectors to perform a line count at the top of each hour on Election Day. The data is meant to help election officials improve the Election Day experience for Michigan voters. If you plan to participate, please email elections@michigan.gov for more information and details.