
2007 OTTAWA COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT



Future Grand Haven Courthouse

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Residents of Ottawa County,

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners and Ottawa County Administration, we are pleased to report on the activities of our County in 2007.

Over the last year and a half, the County has extensively reworked the way in which it conducts business, using a strategic planning process to guide our activities. In order to show you the results of our changes, this year's annual report is organized around the County's four goals. All of the goals feed into our mission statement, and the activities that support the goals are highlighted in each section. Because of the breadth of County services, this report does not cover all of the activities of the last year, and we encourage you to visit our website at www.miOttawa.org to view the annual accomplishments of each department.

The County experienced a positive year fiscally that was highlighted by maintaining high credit ratings. As you might imagine, economic conditions and the budget difficulties faced by the State of Michigan impacted us as well, and we are continuing to refine our budgeting and forecasting techniques to ensure that the County is well-prepared for the future.

While ensuring the County's financial stability, we also worked throughout the year to improve the efficiency of County operations and communication to residents and other stakeholders. Ottawa County continues to be one of the fastest-growing counties in the state, and much of that is due to our wonderful quality-of-life.

The state of the economy and continued growth in Ottawa County certainly presented 2007 as a year of change and challenges, and we look forward representing you effectively in 2008.



Board Chairperson
Donald G. Disselkoen



County Administrator
Alan G. Vanderberg



2008 ADOPTED BUDGET

SOURCES OF FUNDS

Taxes	\$43,898,485
Intergovernmental	56,812,777
Charges for Services	13,011,541
Fines & Forfeits	1,054,100
Interest on Investments	3,228,968
Rental	7,413,044
Licenses & Permits	768,865
Other Revenues	1,871,079
Transfers In	5,920,491
Use of Fund Balances	14,938,384
TOTAL	\$148,917,734

USES OF FUNDS

Health & Welfare	\$58,548,699
Public Safety	28,274,656
General Government	18,103,090
Judicial	14,484,614
Capital Projects	12,831,971
Culture & Recreation	8,661,331
Debt Service	3,525,923
Public Works	2,335,602
Community & Economic Development	785,841
Legislative	605,507
Other	760,500
TOTAL	\$148,917,734

OTTAWA COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

Ottawa County is committed to excellence and the delivery of cost-effective public services.

GOAL 1

TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNTY

REVENUE SHARING: MAINTAINING A PARTNERSHIP

In October of 2004, the State of Michigan eliminated revenue sharing payments to counties to help balance the State budget. To assist counties in preventing the loss of key services, the State moved the county property tax levy from December to July over three years. As a result of the adjusted tax collection, the County was allowed to establish a revenue sharing reserve fund from which a State-designated amount may be drawn each year to fund services. At the time revenue sharing payments were eliminated, the State also agreed to reinstate revenue sharing for counties as the individual reserve funds were depleted.

Revenue sharing began as a partnership between the State and local governments in the 1930s. Local governments agreed to give up the right to collect certain taxes in exchange for the State distributing revenues back to local governments. Ottawa County presently draws over \$4.1 million annually in revenue sharing reserve funds, and that funding is essential to providing quality local services. If the State fails to reinstate payments to counties as it is legally required to do, the impact at the local level would be substantial. The Board of Commissioners continually advocates for the restoration of revenue sharing to ensure that Ottawa County residents are not negatively impacted by State budget decisions.

BUDGET BALANCING PLAN SHOWS SUCCESS

In 2005, the Board of Commissioners implemented a plan to reduce an operating budget deficit in the County general fund. Portions of the 5-year budget balancing plan included the increase in employee health insurance co-pays, a hiring freeze on new positions, the review and ranking of discretionary services for possible cuts, the examination of existing services for efficiencies, and potential millage increases.

In 2007, the third year of the plan's implementation, the deficit was almost eliminated. The addition of a federal funding requirement for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and elimination of State funding for substance abuse services were the only two items which prevented the operating deficit from being eliminated. The County will continue to proactively address potential budget issues in order to continue providing quality services.

FINANCING TOOLS HELP MAINTAIN STABILITY

One of the keys to the County's financial success over the years has been the funding of several "Financing Tools". The Financing Tools are separate funds set aside for specific purposes such as technology purchases, equipment replacement, public improvements, and infrastructure improvements.

The Financing Tools improve financial stability by ensuring that funding is available for necessary improvements and eliminating the need to budget large amounts in single years for those improvements. Because the funds have been so successful in assisting the County in managing its finances, it is an annual goal of the Board of Commissioners to ensure that the Tools are fully-funded each year.



FUNDING FROM STATE LAGS BEHIND COST OF MANDATED SERVICES

Many of the services provided by county government, such as the jail, equalization of property values, and the court system, are mandated to be provided by State law. However, the Michigan Constitution prevents the State from mandating that a local government provide a service without providing the funding necessary to do so. In other words, the State may not implement unfunded mandates.

Ottawa County provides many mandated services in partnership with the State of Michigan, but unfortunately, the funding needed to support those services is often lacking. A 2004 Michigan State University Extension study concluded that only 55% of the costs of mandated services are covered by associated revenue.

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners continues to advocate for full funding of all mandates from the State and Federal governments.

Bond Ratings

Maintaining high bond ratings allows the County and local governments to borrow money for capital improvements at lower interest rates. The County currently has the following ratings:

Fitch's: AAA
Standard & Poor's: AA
Moody's: Aa1

GOAL 2

TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

ONLINE SERVICES CONTINUE GROWTH IN 2007 ON MIOTTAWA.ORG

MiOttawa.org is the newest place to conduct County business. Transactions such as the purchase of dog licenses, payment of Circuit, Juvenile, and District Court fees, and the reservation of park facilities can be conducted entirely online, twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Visits to the website were up 84% in 2007, and many services are now conducted almost exclusively online. Eighty percent of searches for tax information are conducted at miOttawa.org, and over 70,000 documents are downloaded each month. In addition to the interactive services available, departmental web pages offer extensive information on County services.

Features added to the site in 2007 include District Court fee payment, Parks reservations, and automatically updated Circuit, Probate, and Juvenile Court schedules. The site was also redesigned to update its look and improve the ease of use.



COMMUNICATING WHAT WE DO: GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

In order to better inform residents and other stakeholders, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners has placed additional emphasis on communication over the last two years. In addition to the communication efforts of individual Commissioners and County departments, extensive information has been posted on miOttawa.org, and the County has begun working proactively with the media to ensure residents receive important information about County services.

In 2007, the County hosted two press conferences that coordinated information from multiple sources in response to State budget actions. Both press conferences were well-covered by local media and generated many communications from residents to State legislators.

Because two-way communication and comments from residents are essential to all County activities, a feedback form is available on miOttawa.org that allows comment on any topic of interest.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERS

Several staff members, Commissioners, and elected officials serve in leadership roles in state and national professional organizations. Prosecutor Ronald Frantz served as President of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, Michael Galigan is Secretary of the Michigan Association of Equalization Directors, and Commissioners Gordon Schrotenboer and Roger Rycenga serve on the National Association of Counties (NACo) Justice and Public Safety Committee and Transportation Committee, respectively. Commissioner Joyce Kortman serves as Vice-Chair of the NACo Health Steering Committee.

IMPROVING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: PROTECTING A VALUABLE ASSET

In 2007, the County conducted its second, biennial employee survey. After the first employee survey, conducted in 2005, several employee work teams were created to make suggestions for improving employee satisfaction. Those suggestions, along with other improvements recommended by County Administration, were implemented over the last two years.

The results of the 2007 survey indicate that significant improvements have been made in almost every area of employee satisfaction. Communication efforts continue with employees so that results from the next survey in 2009 will show further improvement.

GOAL 3

TO CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING CONTINUES LEADERSHIP ON LAND USE

In 2007 the Ottawa County Planning Commission and Planning Department took an active role in several land use initiatives designed to improve the capacity of the county to manage the impacts of development. After the Board of Commissioners approved the establishment of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program early in the year, the Planning Commission worked with the agricultural community and local units of government to develop a detailed ordinance and scoring system that will govern applications to the State of Michigan's Agricultural Preservation Fund.

The Planning Department continues its work on a Countywide Build-Out analysis for local units of government, which will evaluate the potential outcomes of current land-use regulations and assist in better planning decisions in the future. This effort, combined with continuing work with the City of Hudsonville on its master plan and work with other units of government on a countywide corridor study, exemplifies the strong partnership between the County and local units of government on land use and transportation issues.

WATER QUALITY MATTERS

Water resources are vitally important to the quality-of-life in Ottawa County. The Board of Commissioners has undertaken several efforts to ensure that local water quality remains high. In 2007, the County hosted the second annual Water Quality Forum. The Forum brought together academic researchers studying the Grand River and Lake Michigan with community groups working to preserve local watersheds and governmental organizations examining infrastructure and natural resource issues. This opportunity for collaboration and information sharing will be continued in 2008 to ensure that opportunities for action on water quality issues are maximized. The Forum also provides opportunity for developing action plans based upon research and data.

The Planning Commission continued its work on a countywide groundwater resources study in 2007. The Commission is reviewing proposals and seeking funding to conduct the study, which will provide a comprehensive inventory of the quantity and quality of ground and surface water throughout the county.

BUILDING PARKS AND CONNECTING GREENWAYS

Using the Parks millage, the Parks Commission acquired 123 total acres in 2007, building upon its plan of purchasing land along major greenways to provide connected natural areas throughout the County. The purchases included options on land that will comprise a new park along Lake Michigan.

The Parks Department has many opportunities for residents to get involved. The Friends of Ottawa County Parks are a group of parks supporters who partner with the Parks Department to increase public awareness of the parks system. Early in 2007, a new volunteer Park Monitor Program was started with help from Friends of Ottawa County Parks. Park Monitors are assigned a specific park where they walk trails, check facilities and monitor other park features on a weekly basis. Monitors relay information to park supervisors who then address any problems or concerns.



Parks began working with consulting foresters in 2007 to manage about 500 acres of red pine plantations located on park properties. Red pine plantations were planted in Ottawa County and throughout Michigan in the 1930s and 40s to stabilize the soil after the lumbering era and failed attempts at farming the land. Currently, red pine plantations are experiencing significant problems including fungal disease and pine bark beetle infestations. The goal is to manage the plantations so they transition to native forest communities.

Finally, in 2007 a new park rule was approved to prohibit smoking on county park beaches. This rule will have several benefits for park visitors including reduced litter due to the elimination of cigarette butts left on the beach.

Did You Know?

The Ottawa County Road Commission is not part of Ottawa County government. Although the County Board of Commissioners appoints the 3-member governing board, the Ottawa County Road Commission is an entirely separate organization. For more information on the Road Commission, please visit www.ottawacorc.com.

GOAL 4

TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES

SERVICE EFFICIENCY STUDIES PRODUCE SAVINGS

Over the last year, the County has undertaken several efficiency studies with a dual purpose: to improve services and save money. Each year, Administration and the Board of Commissioners identify services for review, and either an internal team or external consultants analyze each area for potential efficiencies.



In 2007 several significant studies were completed, including an organizational review of the Community Mental Health Department and its services, an organizational review of the Clerk's Office, a staffing and classification study of the Prosecutor's Office, and a reorganization and reassignment of duties of the Administrative Services Department.

Several of the initiatives undertaken in 2007 resulted in significant financial savings. The reorganization of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief Commission into the Veterans' Affairs Committee resulted in \$70,234, the Equalization Reorganization Team recommendations resulted in \$63,737, and the Administrative Services reorganization resulted in \$20,000 in savings in the first year. In addition, the recommendations of the Parenting Plus evaluation conducted by the Planning and Grants Department and approved in September of 2007 will result in \$450,208 in savings in 2008.

FOCUS ON EVALUATION: PLANNING AND GRANTS

In addition to its land use and transportation planning activities, the Planning and Grants Department plays an important role in evaluating the County's internal programs and activities. Prior to implementing new programs, the Planning and Grants Department works with the initiating agency to establish a strategic plan and performance measurements so that the programs can be evaluated for effectiveness after predetermined periods of time.

Planning and Grants has worked extensively with the Circuit and District Courts to evaluate the Drug Court pilot projects. A preliminary evaluation of the programs was completed in 2006, and ongoing work in 2007 will assist in the complete evaluation of the programs in 2008.

The Department completed or was in the process of conducting evaluations of the following programs at the close of 2007: JAWS Program; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Patrol Officer and In-Jail Mental Health Diversion Study; Access to Health Care Program; Community Re-entry Program; Minor in Possession Program; Time Analysis and Cost-Benefit Study; Justice Document Management Imaging System; Social Benefits Cost Analysis Report; 20th Circuit Court Case Management Study; County v. Township v. City Benefits Study; Juvenile Community Justice Program; Inmate Assessment and Case Management Program; Domestic Violence Study.

For more information on the Department and program evaluations, please see <http://miottawa.org/CoGov/Depts/Planning>.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS DEMONSTRATE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

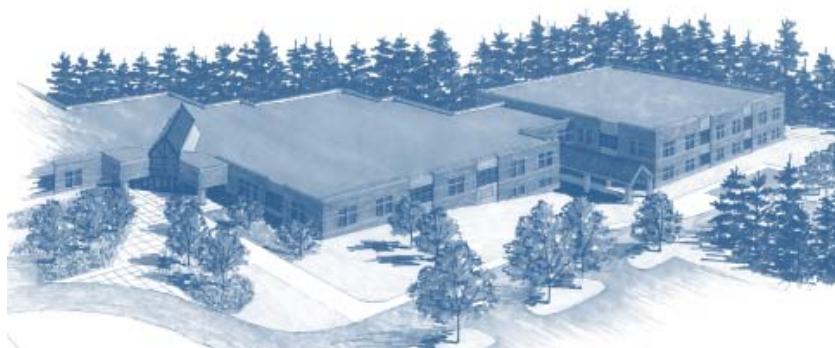
The County is mandated to provide many services by State law, such as those in Public Health, Community Mental Health, the Sheriff's Office, Drain Commission, Clerk's Office, and the Treasurer's Office. Even though the services are required to be provided, the County has options in the ways in which it provides those services. In order to ensure that the County maximizes the services able to be provided with limited resources, each department of the County is required to provide performance measurements with its annual budget request. The performance measurements must demonstrate the outcome desired from each service; simple counts of the numbers of services provided are not sufficient.

Since the outcome performance measurement system was implemented in 2006, County Administration has worked with departments to ensure that the measurements are being used not just for reporting purposes, but for making decisions about how funding is directed. For a detailed list of performance measurements by department, please see http://miottawa.org/CoGov/Depts/FiscalSvcs/pdf/2008Budget/complete_budget.pdf.

BUILDING PROJECTS CONTINUE ON SCHEDULE

After much planning, construction began on a new, 120,000 square foot courthouse in Grand Haven and a 38,000 square foot addition to the Fillmore Administrative Complex in 2007. Construction is well underway on both facilities, and progress on the Grand Haven building can be seen via webcam at www.miOttawa.org.

The Fillmore project is expected to be completed in late 2008, with the Grand Haven project to follow in 2009. Services currently available in Grand Haven will remain available at the courthouse with improved access through a public service center. County Clerk, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, and Drain Commission services will be added at Fillmore.



PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PRODUCE RESULTS

One way to provide efficient services is to collaborate with other units of government. While collaboration has been discussed extensively at the State level in the last year, local governments in Ottawa County have been cooperating to deliver services for many years.

Planning is one of the most common areas of cooperation. The County Planning and Grants Department has drafted overlay zoning ordinances for transportation corridors as a service to local units of government. It has also become involved in facilitating and providing support services for many multi-jurisdictional projects, including developing a model Tree Preservation Guidebook to preserve scenic corridors throughout the County.

The Planning Department continues to provide educational trainings for local planners and coordinates joint meetings between all of the on-staff planners in the county to discuss and address countywide planning issues. Additionally, the Planning Commission is presently exploring options that would permit local units of government to cost-share the expense of having on-staff planners to expand the planning services they presently are able to offer.

EVALUATING DISCRETIONARY SERVICES PREPARES COUNTY FOR LONG-TERM FUNDING DECISIONS

Discretionary services are those services that the County Board of Commissioners has elected to provide outside of those services that are mandated by the State of Michigan. Examples include the *Miles of Smiles* dental van, the acceptance of passport applications, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. Many of the services bring in substantial revenue or provide significant benefit to the community, however, as overall County revenues are stagnant or decline, the Board of Commissioners must thoroughly examine the value of all services the County provides.

As such, County Administration worked with Dr. Lynn Harvey, Professor Emeritus from Michigan State University, to develop a system that the Board could use to rank all discretionary services. First, program information, costs, and benefits were compiled for each service. Once that information was presented to the Board, Commissioners ranked the value of each service on a scale of 1 through 9 using the computerized Option Finder system. The Board has now ranked services twice using this method, and the ranking has become part of the annual business planning process.

If the County faces the loss of revenue sharing or other significant funding cuts, the discretionary services ranking will be used as the Board makes decisions about which services to continue to fund. In the meantime, over the next year, the Board will add mandated services to the mix and begin evaluating the levels at which those services are provided.

A comprehensive list of mandated and discretionary services is available at miOttawa.org.

OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Back Row (Left to Right): Gordon Schrottenboer—District 7; Matthew M. Hehl—District 5; Roger Rycenga—District 6; Edward Berghorst—District 9; James C. Holtrop—District 10; Dennis W. Swartout—District 3; Jim Holtvluwer—District 11;

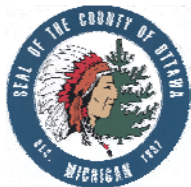
Front Row (Left to Right): Joyce Kortman—District 1; Chair Donald Disselkoen—District 8; Vice-Chair Philip Kuyers—District 2; Jane M. Ruiters—District 4

The Board of Commissioners meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 1:30 p.m. at the County Administration Building in West Olive.

The Board has five subcommittees which meet monthly:

- Finance and Administration
- Health and Human Services
- Human Resources
- Planning and Policy
- Special Committee on Technology

All Commission and subcommittee meetings are open to the public. Meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes are available at miOttawa.org or by contacting the County Administrator's Office (738-4898) or County Clerk's Office (846-8310). County Commissioner contact information is also available through the Administrator's and Clerk's offices or at www.miOttawa.org.



OTTAWA COUNTY OFFICES & CONTACT NUMBERS

GRAND HAVEN COUNTY BUILDING: 414 WASHINGTON STREET, GRAND HAVEN, MI 49417, 846-8295
 WEST OLIVE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: 12220 FILLMORE STREET, WEST OLIVE, MI 49460, 738-4000
 HUDSONVILLE HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING: 3100 PORT SHELDON, HUDSONVILLE, MI 49426, 662-3100
 JAMES STREET CAMPUS: 12251 JAMES STREET, HOLLAND, MI 49424, 662-6085

Administrator's Office 738-4898	Holland Office 494-5566/5567	Michigan Dept. of Human Services 394-7200
Animal Control 1-800-249-0911		Adult/Child Abuse or Neglect 24-Hour ... 394-7220
		or 800-762-8273
Central Dispatch	District Court	Parenting Plus 394-7223
All Police/Fire/Ambulance EMERGENCY. 911	Grand Haven 846-8280	Michigan State University Extension 846-8250
Police/Fire/Ambulance non-emergency 1-800-249-0911	Grand Haven Probation 846-8292	Michigan Works 393-5697
Administration 1-866-773-0911	Holland & Holland Probation 392-6991	Holland Service Center 396-2154
	Hudsonville & Hudsonville Probation 662-3100	Grand Haven Service Center 296-0776
Circuit Court 846-8320	Drain Commission 846-8220	Parks & Recreation 738-4810
Adult Probation/Parole - Grand Haven 846-8217	Emergency Management Services 738-4050	Planning & Grants 738-4852
Adult Probation/Parole - Holland 392-5442	Equalization 738-4826	Probate Court 786-4110
Adult Probation/Parole - Hudsonville 662-6075	Facilities Maintenance 738-4873	Property Description & Mapping 738-4818
Commissioners 738-4898	Family Court	Prosecuting Attorney—Grand Haven 846-8215
Community Action Agency 393-5697	Juvenile Services 786-4100	Holland 392-1446
	Treatment Services 393-4450	West Olive 738-4866
Community Mental Health	Juvenile Detention Center 786-4130	
Administrative Services 393-5600 x5697	Fiscal Services Department 738-4847	Recycling/Household Hazardous Waste 393-5645
To Request Services:	Friend Of The Court 846-8210	Register Of Deeds 846-8346
Holland 393-5681	Geographic Information Systems 738-4600	Road Commission 842-5400
TTY 494-5508	Health Department	
All Other Areas 1-877-588-4357	Administration 396-5266	Sheriff's Office
Help Line - Suicide Prevention Services. 1-866-512-4357	Environmental 393-5645	Emergency.....911
Community Corrections 846-8162	Coopersville Clinic 837-8171	Non-emergency.....1-800-249-0911
Corporation Counsel 738-4865	Grand Haven Clinic 846-8360	General Information 738-4000
County Clerk 846-8310	Hudsonville Clinic 669-0040	Deaf Phone/TDD 842-4812
Birth Or Death Certificates 846-8310	Resource Recovery 393-5645	Accident Records 738-4024
Concealed Weapons Permits 846-8310	Human Resources Department 738-4800	Administration/Detective 738-4094/4025
Elections 846-8310	Job Hot Line 846-8038 x1071	Jail & Inmate Information 738-4650
Marriage Licenses 846-8310	Information Technology 738-4833	
Passports 846-8310		Treasurer's Office 846-8230
Circuit Court Records 846-8315		

www.miOttawa.org