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TICKET PRICING

Full Conference Registration (includes meals)..... \$325

Guest Meal Ticket \$99

*Guest Associate Member Holiday Party tickets complimentary.
Registration is still required.*

**Cancellations received within 14 days of the event are not eligible for a refund.*



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

101 S. Washington Square, Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48933

517.482.1189

FOLLOW CRA ON SOCIAL!



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HOTEL INFORMATION

The Highlands at Harbor Springs

600 Highlands Dr. | Harbor Springs, MI



**THE
HIGHLANDS**

To register for a hotel room, visit:

micountyroads.org/NorthernConference

Hotel cutoff date is November 7.

**“WHAT’S NEW WITH THAT ‘OTHER’
INFRASTRUCTURE...**

**AND HOW IT IMPACTS
COUNTY ROADS, BRIDGES.”**



2026

NORTHERN MICHIGAN ROAD COMMISSIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

December 8-10, 2026

The Highlands at Harbor Springs
600 Highlands Dr. | Harbor Springs, MI



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

For more information, please contact Melissa Plotnick: mplotnick@micountyroads.org | 517.482.1189

To register, visit: micountyroads.org/NorthernConference

TUESDAY | DECEMBER 8

3 - 6 p.m.
▶ REGISTRATION

6 - 8 p.m.
▶ WELCOME RECEPTION AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY

WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 9

7 - 8 a.m.
▶ REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST

MORNING SESSION

That “other” infrastructure
Moderator: Dave Pettersch, Gladwin CRC

8:30 - 8:35 a.m.
▶ WELCOME REMARKS
Dave Pettersch, President of Northern Michigan Road Commissions and Managing Director, Gladwin CRC

8:35 - 9:35 a.m.
▶ REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN MICHIGAN’S INFRASTRUCTURE
There’s no question that a quiet tide of new infrastructure has come to Michigan. From broadband to solar farms, data centers, the BESS and carbon storage, energy and tech are changing our lives – and impacting our roads. Get an overview from this panel of industry experts.
Chris Hackbarth, Regional Manager, DTE Energy
Hillary Kipp, Government Affairs, Consumers Energy
Kelly Wawsczyk, Area Manager Government & Community Affairs, ITC Holdings
Moderator: Ed Noyola, CRA Chief Deputy and Legislative Director

9:35 - 9:45 a.m.
▶ LIGHTNING ROUND!
Nuts and Bolts!
Rob Putnam, Managing Director, Road Commission for Montcalm County

9:45 - 10 a.m.
▶ SNACK BREAK

10 - 11 a.m.
▶ MOVING ON IN: SOLAR FARMS, BATTERY FACILITIES
Wind farms are long-established. But move over, here come solar farms and battery facilities to store the new green energy. Where are these sometimes-controversial industries headed in Michigan?
Solar industry representative



11 - 11:10 a.m.
▶ LIGHTNING ROUND!
Working with your County Treasurer on investing cash balance.
Tony Casali, Managing Director, Isabella County Road Commission
Jalene Sandel, Finance Director, Isabella County Road Commission

11:10 - 11:25 a.m.
▶ BOOGIE BREAK

11:25 - 12 p.m.
▶ LET’S GET SOME FACTS ON: DATA CENTERS
The what, when, where and why of data centers including computer servers, data storage and network hardware. Get answers to oft-asked questions about their power and water use, power contribution, grid stabilization and noise.
Samantha Gibson, Director of Government Affairs, Switch

12 NOON
▶ LUNCHEON

12:30 - 1 p.m.
▶ KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: WHAT’S NEXT WITH MI WEATHER?
Are we still global warming? Or is climate changing? Is the groundwater reservoir still chock-full, and the Great Lakes at record high levels? Get the macro-weather forecast for Michigan’s Upper and Lower Peninsulas.
Mark Torregrossa, Meteorologist, MLive

1 - 1:15 p.m.
▶ STRETCH BREAK

AFTERNOON SESSION

Part II: The “other infrastructure”
Moderator: Rob Putnam, Road Commission for Montcalm County

1:15 - 2 p.m.
▶ WHAT’S NEXT? CO₂ STORED 3000 UNDERGROUND?!
In a move to sequester “excess” CO₂, industries are looking to pump it into depleted oil fields and other underground spaces. Is this coming to Michigan?
Michael Alaimo, Senior Director, Legislative and External Affairs, Michigan Chamber of Commerce

2 - 2:10 p.m.
▶ LIGHTNING ROUND!
Is the belt-tightening over?
Jerry Byrne, Managing Director, Kent County Road Commission

2:10 - 2:25 p.m.
▶ SNACK BREAK



2:25 - 3:25 p.m.
▶ CAN A ROAD USE AGREEMENT BE HELPFUL WITH THE “OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE?”
County road agencies are beginning to negotiate their own Road Use Agreements (RUA) with large-scale non-agricultural land uses. MCRC SIP attorneys talk about how the RUA could and should be used with a county already using them.
Kristine Parsons, PE, Managing Director, Calhoun County Road Department

3:25 - 3:40 p.m.
▶ BOOGIE BREAK

3:40 - 4:10 p.m.
▶ NEW! 2025-2030: BRIDGE LOAD RATING PROJECT UPDATE
To meet the FHWA mandate for proof-positive of per-bridge-per-load-per-trip analysis, local agencies and MDOT have partnered in regional contracts to load rate all 8,000 local bridges. A check-up on that project and changes road agencies will need to consider for full compliance.
Craig Atwood, PE, Managing Director, Allegan CRC and CRA Engineering Committee Chair
Burt Thompson, PE, CRA Engineering Specialist

4:10 p.m.
▶ ADJOURN UNTIL SOCIAL DISTRICT

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
▶ SOCIAL DISTRICT AND DINNER

10 p.m.
▶ HOSPITALITY ROOMS OPEN

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 10

MORNING SESSION

Bridges, business of a road agency and college benefits.
Moderator: Dave Pettersch, President of Northern Michigan Road Commissions and Managing Director, Gladwin CRC

7 - 8 a.m.
▶ BREAKFAST

8 - 8:15 a.m.
▶ ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

8:15 - 9 a.m.
▶ THE COUNTDOWN IS ON! “MIGHTY MAC” TURNS 70 IN 2027
Sit back and enjoy pictures and the story of Mighty Mac, Michigan’s best-known bridge engineering feature. And the longest suspension bridge in the Western Hemisphere.
Mackinac Bridge Authority



9 - 9:15 a.m.
▶ LIGHTNING ROUND!
The roads runneth over – Spring 2026 Flooding
Karl Hanson, PE, Engineer-Manager, Wexford County Road Commission

9:15 - 9:30 a.m.
▶ SNACK BREAK – HOTEL CHECK-OUT

9:30 - 10 a.m.
▶ COUNTY CRISIS RESPONSE PROJECT
A joint effort of the Superintendents Committee and CRA’s engagement specialist, this is a compilation of checklists and other preparedness and follow-up activities to a disaster out on the county road network. Walk through how you can be better prepared when disaster strikes.
Dustin Earley, APR, CRA Deputy Director of Engagement

10 - 10:45 a.m.
▶ NEW! MICHIGAN DOT’S MIRUC PROJECT
Michigan needs sustainable transportation funding as fuel efficiency, EVs and inflation challenge reliability of traditional gas tax, which is 47% of current road funding model. Learn more about the MiRUC Pilot Project and MDOT’s exploration of next-gen road funding solutions.
Paul McDonald, Chief Administrative Officer, Michigan Department of Transportation

10:45 - 11:15 a.m.
▶ NEW MODULES COMPLETED! ROAD CONDUCTOR® PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE MOVES AHEAD
Michigan Tech has completed programming the Materials Certification-QA/QC module, the full mobility (field data) feature and a Contractor’s version. See what nearly 200 license subscribers have adopted.
Craig Atwood, PE, Managing Director, Allegan CRC

11:15 - 11:25 a.m.
▶ FUTURE ROAD WORKERS! FERRIS STATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HELPS AND CONCLUSION
Road agencies are big supporters of students, and Ferris State is a big benefit to future road workers. Update on scholarship program.
Ferris Foundation
Conclusion: Dave Pettersch, President of NMRC and Manager, Gladwin CRC

ADJOURN

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