



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

REGISTER
TODAY!



2026 COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

NOW WE'RE TALKING!

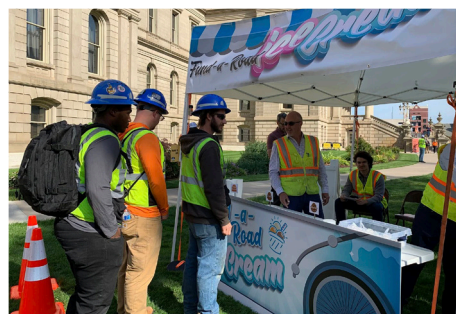


Tuesday, November 3 | 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Comfort Inn & Suites and Conference Center | 2424 S. Mission St., Mt. Pleasant

The Communications Workshop returns for 2026 with sessions you won't want to miss! Send several staff! From the latest tech to communicating on road funding and crisis comms, there's something for everyone at the road agency.

AUDIENCE: Managing Directors, finance and human resources managers, superintendents, commissioners, public relations staff and other leaders – and future leaders – at your county road agency.



Registration: **\$175** (includes breakfast, lunch and snacks)

Register at micountyroads.org/CommunicationsWorkshop

Overnight accommodations at the Comfort Inn & Suites available at **\$98 per night**. Visit the Communications Workshop link above to book your room or call **989.772.4000**. No group code required. Rate expires October 12, 2026.

For more information contact:

Melissa Plotnick | 517.482.1189 | mplotnick@micountyroads.org | micountyroads.org

2026 COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

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WORKSHOP AGENDA

7:30 – 8 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

Welcome



Scott Merillat, PE, CRA President and Managing Director, Lenawee County Road Commission

Workshop Moderator: Craig Bryson, APR, Chair, CRA Public Relations Committee and Senior Communications Director, Road Commission for Oakland County

8 – 8:45 a.m.

Building a website people want to use



Wrong question: *Why even put it on the website? No one's going to look at it.* Right question: *How do I build a website people will want to use?* Hear how the PR Committee can help.

Eric Dimoff, Coordinator of Communications and PR, Macomb County Department of Roads

8:45 – 9:30 a.m.

Keeping a human brand voice with AI



How do you maintain your voice and still harness the power of AI? With the right assistance, AI helps organize the chaos so you can act on what matters.

Ashley Smith, CEO, Insights by Ash

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

BREAK

9:45 – 10:30 a.m.

21st century service requests



Still managing service requests through sticky notes and spreadsheets? Hear how one road agency made the leap to next-gen operations management software and how it affects comms.

Jake Welch, Managing Director, Barry County Road Commission

10:30 – 11:15 a.m.

The people want to know: What's up with NRF?



Tired of talking about the Neighborhood Roads Fund (NRF)? Your residents sure aren't! From managing expectations to dispelling rumors, you **need to** be talking about NRF.

Doug Steffen, Managing Director, Clinton County Road Commission

11:15 – 11:45 a.m.

LUNCH

11:45 – 12:30 p.m.

Take it to the comments



Social media is a two-way street. At least, it should be. Two counties with different policies talk about the ups and downs of allowing comments on social media, and what can happen when you don't.

Kylie Dontje, Communications Coordinator, Genesee County Road Commission

Adri Boone, Communications Coordinator, Berrien County Road Department

12:30 – 12:45 p.m.

BREAK

12:45 – 1:30 p.m.

How crisis comms works in the moment



Motorists aren't driving safer and weather isn't getting nicer. While a good plan is best practice, crises come in many shapes and sizes. What do crisis comms really look like in the heat of the moment?

Craig Bryson, APR, Senior Communications Director, Road Commission for Oakland County

Dan Watkins, Managing Director, Grand Traverse County Road Commission

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