

# Crossroads

The Quarterly Journal of the County Road Association of Michigan

Volume 4 | Issue 4

Summer 2019



## GO BRIDGE, OR GO HOME

*Bridge bundling could bring efficiency  
to Michigan's bridge problem*

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Good luck, bad luck has shaped  
Baraga County history

Chair of the Senate Transportation  
Committee talks about roads





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*Crossroads* is the quarterly publication of the County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan. The 83 county members of CRA represent the unified, credible and effective voice for a safe and efficient county road system in Michigan.

The Association, headquartered three blocks north of the State Capitol, is dedicated to helping members promote and maintain a safe, efficient county road system including stewardship of the county road right-of-way in rural and urban Michigan.

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### ON THE COVER:

Miller Road, a county road over railroad tracks that leads to Ford Motor Company Dearborn truck plant in Wayne County, is in such dire condition that it requires more than 400 temporary supports to keep it from being closed.

*(Photo courtesy of the Michigan Department of Transportation)*

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## Next Publication

What's new for winter? The Fall 2019 issue of *Crossroads* will look at innovative approaches to winter maintenance for county road agencies.

*Crossroads'* editorial team wants to hear from you. Call CRA at 517.482.1189 and share ideas for future issues!

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



The winter of 2019 started fairly cooperatively in early January, but Mother Nature quickly taught us who was in charge by the end of the month. Through the challenging weeks that followed, county road agencies across the state showed the motoring public just how resilient we are. Twenty-four hours a day, agencies kept the plows moving and kept the roads open.

This kind of determination makes me extremely proud to represent the 83 county road agencies across Michigan, as CRA President for 2019.

While I recognize the challenges that face our association in the coming year, I can't help but appreciate how far we have come. CRA has become the vocal advocate for local road agencies in Lansing and is building on its strengths to continue protecting and advocating for safe, efficient and sustainable roadways.

While CRA has met many challenges and overcome obstacles, we must remain vigilant, protecting our roads and right-of-way at every turn.

Road funding has again reached the forefront in Lansing, and you can bet that I – and everyone else at CRA – will fight for fair and adequate funding for all agencies across the state.

We look forward to being part of the discussion, and even more, part of the solution.

CRA has established our county road agencies as the local road professionals, and as such, we need to have our voices heard during funding discussions in Lansing and across the state. We fully intend to do just that.

At the time of writing this article, the summer construction season is about to begin. While I work from an office, my heart will always be in the field.

The excitement of a new construction season is upon us. The dreams have become plans, the material ordered, and the equipment ready to work. As we head out to repair, rebuild and maintain our roadways this summer, I wish you a safe and successful construction season.

I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming year and serving to lead CRA in the challenges that lie ahead.

David Pettersch  
CRA President  
Managing Director  
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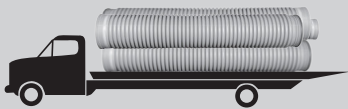
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# OF TRUCKS\* 49

- RCP uses more trucks
- Machinery required to unload

\* Based on 5,000 feet of 30" diameter pipe.

## STAGING

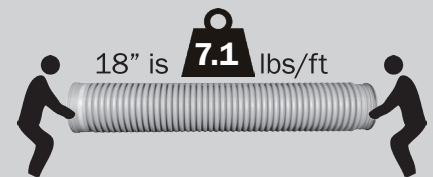


- HP Storm is able to be stacked high
- Nest smaller diameters



- RCP stacks two high

## STRINGING



- HP Storm can be moved quicker
- Handle safer

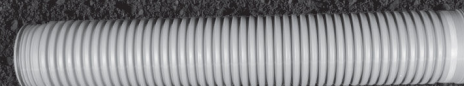


- RCP is moved two at a time
- Requires machinery

## INSTALLATION

A typical project with 5,000 ft specified on the plans will net you:

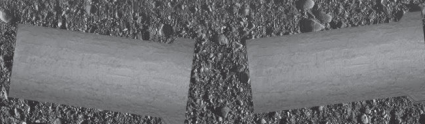
- 25 days using HP Storm (56 days with RCP)
- 250 joints using HP Storm (625 joints with RCP)



**30" HP Storm:**  
Installation Rate  
of 200 ft per day\*\*



**30" RCP:**  
Installation Rate  
of 88 ft per day\*\*



\*\* Data compiled from RSMeans





## MEMBER PROFILE

# BARAGA COUNTY



State Rep.  
Greg Markkanen  
(R-Hancock), far left,  
poses for a photo  
with members of the  
Baraga County Road  
Commission staff.

## Good luck, bad luck has shaped the history of Baraga County

It's perhaps cliché, but twists and turns of fate have set the course for the people and the roads of rural Baraga County, which anchors the UP's Keweenaw Peninsula.

With 8,800 residents, it is one of the least populated counties; however, Baraga is Michigan's 13<sup>th</sup> largest county with about 900 square miles of rugged land. The Huron Mountains dominate the eastern half of the county, including Mount Arvon, at 1,979 feet the state's highest natural point.

And therein lies one of fate's "roads not taken."

In a stroke of **GOOD LUCK** for early 20<sup>th</sup> century Baraga, Henry Ford established his UP base of operations there in the still-quiet company towns of Pequaming and Alberta, milling local trees into boards shipped downstate for auto manufacturing.

Ford longed to be accepted into the uber-exclusive Huron Mountain Club (HMC), which lies north of Marquette along the Lake Superior shore. The club was limited to 50 members, and Ford had to wait – which didn't sit well.

At the time, the Michigan State Highway Department was building M-35 along the shoreline working north from both L'Anse and Marquette. They were nearing club property to complete the connection.

In one of many land acquisition maneuvers common to roadwork, Ford purchased land adjacent to HMC, successfully lobbied Lansing to halt M-35 construction, to HMC's delight, and was rewarded with admission to the club.

**BAD LUCK?** M-35, the state highway that could have brought tourism, major development, and the Circle Michigan Tour more fully into Baraga County, was never completed and has disappeared

from state maps, although physical evidence of the abandoned almost-highway remains.

### The top 13: Largest Counties in Michigan

1.	Marquette	1,821 sq. mi.
2.	Chippewa	1,561 sq. mi.
3.	Ontonagon	1,311 sq. mi.
4.	Schoolcraft	1,178 sq. mi.
5.	Delta	1,170 sq. mi.
6.	Iron	1,166 sq. mi.
7.	Menominee	1,044 sq. mi.
8.	Mackinac	1,022 sq. mi.
9.	Gogebic	1,019 sq. mi.
10.	Houghton	1,011 sq. mi.
11.	Sanilac	963 sq. mi.
12.	Alger	918 sq. mi.
13.	Baraga	904 sq. mi.

Source: Census 2000 Public Law 94-171 Redistricting Data, U.S. Census Bureau.



## JUST THE

## Facts:

### Baraga County Road Commission

<b>Office headquarters:</b>	L'Anse
<b>Staff:</b>	18 full time
<b>No. of commissioners:</b>	3 (appointed)
<b>Miles of paved roads:</b>	Total: 178 Primary: 124 Local: 54
<b>Miles of unpaved roads:</b>	Total: 318 Primary: 25 Local: 293
<b>MDOT contract:</b>	No
<b>No. of bridges:</b>	46
<b>Annual budget:</b>	\$5,500,000 (FY 2018)
<b>Local revenue:</b>	\$630,000 (FY 2018)
<b>Annual snowfall:</b>	220 inches
<b>BCRC established:</b>	May 2, 1901
<b>No. of garages:</b>	4
<b>Office built:</b>	1957

#### FUN FACT:

BCRC maintains over 2,400 culverts – three times the state average of 1.7 culverts per mile. This is due to Baraga's topography that drains water from high elevations like a funnel into Lake Superior.

### Building connections with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

On the bright side, the **Baraga County Road Commission** (BCRC) has long worked cooperatively with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) for the mutual benefit of all. KBIC of the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa Indians is located in Baraga County and has dual land bases on both sides of the Keweenaw Bay.

The L'Anse Indian Reservation encompasses one-third of Baraga's land area and is the largest reservation in Michigan, which presents transportation challenges and also provides many opportunities to both entities.

"Working with the tribe opens up very beneficial opportunities for the road system," said **Doug Mills**, PE, engineer-manager of BCRC since 1993, and longtime CRA board member.

"We've had four significant flood events in recent years, including 15 sites damaged by the 2018 Father's Day rainstorm. We were able to work with the tribe to rapidly secure Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funding to repair roads, culverts and bridges within or leading into the reservation boundary," Mills said.

Mills works with KBIC road administrator Jason Ayres to maintain its roads, culverts and bridges serving the reservation. Some snowplowing is also performed by the KBIC public works department on tribal roads and driveways for its senior citizens.

While the KBIC gaming operations are modest in size compared to other Michigan tribes, it's worth noting that the development of Indian gaming was founded in Baraga County with blackjack tables in a two-car garage along the rural Skanee Road in the village of Zeba on New Year's Eve 1983. It was the brainchild of

Fred Dakota, at that time a cash-strapped tribal member acting on his own idea.

From that small operation and events in Baraga County, Indian gaming quickly took off and expanded across Michigan and all over the country.

"It's good that the 2% profits from slot machines go to Baraga County government," Mills said. "The road commission can apply for those funds on a quarterly basis for road purposes. Many other counties have their MDOT maintenance contract to help even out the financials; we have our program with KBIC and the BIA."

### Maintenance contract and MDOT Garage

Another unfortunate twist of fate for BCRC was the arrival of a telegram from the state in 1928, cancelling its maintenance contract and setting up its own MDOT garage that today is just under a mile away from BCRC.

Not having the state maintenance contract has some upside, in that BCRC does not have to pay for and keep these winter plowing crew members on staff during the summer – when the state's financial support for them dries up, Mills said.

At the same time, not having the MDOT contract has put BCRC behind the 8-ball in maintaining its fleet.

Most "contract counties" purchase newer equipment on a regular basis to service the state trunkline and receive reimbursement to offset costs and provide cash flow for replacement on a more expedited basis.

"For our equipment, we have an aged, but debt-free fleet that is over 17 years old on average. Many vehicles have very high mileage, and some have been refurbished



+ A portion of the 1932 Official Michigan Highway Map from the Michigan State Highway Department shows incomplete M-35 segment through Huron Mountains as "impassable."





**+** State Rep. Greg Markkanen (R-Hancock), left, visited the Baraga County Road Commission and met with Doug Mills, PE, engineer-manager of the road commission.

to extend their useful life," Mills said.

"If Baraga still had the state contract, I do believe the fleet would be newer and the equipment and facility assets would be managed differently with the ability to receive reimbursement from the state. As it is, we retire older trucks and purchase 8-, 10-, 12-year-old trucks – those are the 'new' trucks in Baraga."

## BCRC staff: "Can do" spirit

The UP is known for resilience, and the BCRC staff is no exception.

"We run very lean, having one-third fewer employees than we did a couple of decades ago. Yet if we have a need, our people always come through; we try to hire capable people who can multi-task," Mills said.


"Local public support has been great; we have a 2-mill county road millage that has been in effect since 1981. However, it only generates a modest amount of about \$400,000 to \$500,000 per year, a far cry from what 2 mills would generate in a more affluent county like Oakland," Mills said.

"We may not have the high traffic, but we still have a huge and spread-out road network we are responsible for with challenging drainage and poor soil conditions. Of course in big snow country, winter operations gobble up much of the operational funding," Mills said.

BCRC also has an over 60-year-old, outdated but debt-free building that serves as office and main garage.

Modern-sized trucks can hardly get in and out of the building, said **Roy Koski**, BCRC commissioner for 35 years and Michigan's second-longest serving road commissioner. "We need a new facility, which will also allow us to consolidate and get rid of our aging outbuildings," Koski said.

Despite the challenges, BCRC staff are optimistic as new road funding ramps up, Mills said.

"The big conundrum that I see is the roads were built and now we can't afford the system we have, unless attitudes toward funding change," Mills said. "In private business or your personal life, you either generate more income or have the option to get rid of an asset you can't afford, and we can't do that. Road commissions can't start over with a clean sheet of paper." 

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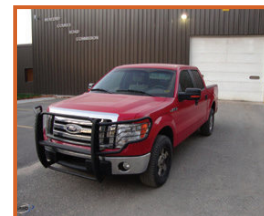
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# Ask MDOT

## CAVs are coming. Are you ready?

Technological advancements permeate just about every crevice of our lives.

Smart phones, virtual assistants (Ask Alexa®), appliances with increasingly intuitive abilities.

That kind of technology has reached roads, and over the next few decades will need county road agencies' attention.

In this edition of "Ask ..." we spoke with Collin Castle, MDOT Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) program manager, about where connected and automated vehicle (CAV) technology stands and what county road agencies should be thinking about with respect to both.

"Pretending like they don't exist, that's the wrong approach," Castle said. "They're here."

**Connected vehicles** communicate with nearby vehicles and structures; and **autonomous vehicles** operate in isolation from other vehicles using internal sensors. CAVs leverage both capabilities.

Castle said county road agencies would be well served taking into consideration both types of vehicle technologies when making improvements to infrastructure.

"When it comes to the connected side of things, with signalized intersections, [the question is] when do you put in that radio that allows you to communicate with cars?" Castle said. "When you're modernizing a signal, there's a cost associated with that radio and it's incremental in relation to the overall cost of modernizing signals. But we're not modernizing a signal every year, so putting in the foundational elements to support connected vehicles is important."

On the automated vehicle side, decisions are more challenging.



MDOT Intelligent Transportation Systems program manager Collin Castle spoke to road agency staff at the 2019 Highway Conference.

"One of the messages is automated vehicles are going to happen regardless of infrastructure, so the same things you're doing to support regular motorists would be valuable to automated vehicles," Castle said. "High quality lane markings are really important, and you want to have that without automated vehicles. So keeping those assets in good condition is important."

"But what about in inclement weather when those lane markings are covered or on gravel roads where there are none?" Castle said. "An automated vehicle is going to have to make a decision on how to operate regardless of the lane markings."

The need to embrace CAV technologies is not unique to urban or rural counties.

Everyone will be impacted at some point.

"One of the applications of the technology, particularly automated vehicles, that'll happen everywhere is providing mobility solutions to underserved areas as demonstrated as part of the Michigan Mobility Challenge," Castle said.

"MDOT in collaboration with MEDC put out a request for proposal to showcase the use automated vehicle technology to serve persons with disabilities, and this application is not just for urban areas."

How soon will automated and connected vehicles be mainstream? Hard to say, but it could be as soon as a decade or two.

"It's coming," Castle said. ---

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**+** Sen. Tom Barrett, center, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, meets with Clinton County Road Commission representatives, from left, commissioner Gail Watkins; retiring managing director Joseph Pulver, PE; and new managing director Doug Steffen.

## LEGISLATOR PROFILE

### STATE SENATOR TOM BARRETT

State Senator Tom Barrett, who represents the 24th District, including Clinton, Eaton and Shiawassee counties and bits of Ingham County, is a jack of many trades.

The recently elected Senator has extensive military experience, including overseas combat deployment; is an active helicopter pilot for the Michigan National Guard; has worked for the Michigan Department of Treasury; and served two terms in the House of Representatives and is Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, among many other achievements and accomplishments.

How does Sen. Barrett's experience affect his view of transportation issues in Michigan? *Crossroads* and CRA deputy director **Ed Noyola** sat down with Sen. Barrett to find out.

**CRA:** Tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to have such a variety of experience.

**SEN. BARRETT:** I grew up in Madison Heights in Oakland County as one of seven kids. I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up, so I joined the Army right out of high school in June of 2000, just before 9/11. I had never been on an airplane before basic training, and before Christmas that year I was in South Korea. I wanted to be a helicopter pilot right out of the gate and worked my way toward it. After my initial two-year deployment, I stayed on part time while I finished college going through more deployments in that same time period. I entered flight school in 2009, graduated in 2011 and moved back to Michigan at that point.

**CRA:** How did you come to be involved in state politics?

**SEN. BARRETT:** I've always liked politics and policy. My degree is in public policy so that's something I have always enjoyed. My great-grandfather, Louis Rabaut, was a congressman in Michigan first elected in the 1930s. He's best known for introducing the first resolution to add the words "under

God" to the Pledge of Allegiance in the early 1950s. My father is also involved in politics, so I like to say it's something that's in my blood.

In 2014, I ran [for office] out of a motivation that at the time we had the second highest unemployment rate for veterans in the entire country. I had seen that first hand and struggled with it myself. I was the only Iraq War veteran in the House of Representatives for the 2014 term, and I'm currently the only Iraq War veteran in the Senate.

**CRA:** How has your unique array of life experiences affected how you approach transportation issues in Michigan?

**SEN. BARRETT:** I drive on the roads like everyone else. I like to try to find solutions to problems. Whether that's something like veteran affairs that I have experience with or something like transportation that everyone deals with, it's about finding real solutions that work, where everyone walks away with something they want, but often the solutions we have are not easy or perfect.

**CRA:** It seems that road funding has been a top priority for the Legislature since the start of this session. Can you give us any insight

into how the Senate is approaching the issue?

**SEN. BARRETT:** We're approaching it very seriously. The Governor put out a really aggressive plan, and my district, that elected me to advocate for them, has been vocal about not supporting it the way it stands.

But we want to be cautious and really examine what the Governor put out and assess where our priorities are as a caucus. We did raise road funding in 2015 and a lot of us want to see that fully implemented while we continue to look at other efficiencies and innovations.

**CRA:** Can you tell us about your relationship with the road agencies in your district?

**SEN. BARRETT:** I try my best to be open and receptive with every level of government in my district to learn about the issues that are important to them and see where their priorities are and the things they see as obstacles to them doing the best job they can.

I strive to be an approachable person so people feel like they can come to me and be open without feeling intimidated and learn from the folks who have more experience than me. I never try to pretend to be an expert in something I'm not, so I try to defer to those that are and welcome that feedback as much as possible.

**CRA:** What can county road agencies do to help their legislators stay informed on recent and upcoming transportation issues?

**SEN. BARRETT:** As a sincere request, and this is not a criticism, I would challenge the groups in the transportation space to come up with more ideas that go beyond asking for more money.

We recognize that, yes, we would like to spend more money on roads and infrastructure. But there may be other issues like material pricing that won't take money to fix but rather political will and legislative work. Bidding is another example. The bidding process can disqualify the use of certain contractors or materials because of stringent rules. We can fix that without injecting more money into the system and it will improve the outcome of getting more traction with existing funding.

Those experienced in this business can help educate legislators on these kinds of issues and build that trust. ---





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# GO BRIDGE, OR GO HOME

**County road agencies work with MDOT  
to address dire bridge situation**

**+** Mud Lake Road  
in Houghton County

Michigan's got a bridge problem.

One in eight are structurally obsolete, and although road funding is increasing, bridge funding is not.

A new idea is needed.

## Background

Bridges have been tied to a static half-cent of funding through the state fuel tax since 2005, resulting in:

- Nearly 500 local agency bridges rated in serious or critical condition.
- More than 1,000 of Michigan's 5,700 local bridges are load restricted.
- Another 60 closed due to their condition or structural capacity issues.

Money is short, again. The multi-agency Local Bridge Advisory Board (LBAB) oversees \$48 million per year to meet more than \$300 million in project requests annually. Untold other bridges aren't even submitted for funding because the backlog is intimidating.

But there may be hope in the form of an MDOT-led, local road agency bridge bundling initiative with an aggressive goal: Zero critical and serious local bridges by 2025.

"People have really rallied around this goal, and the collaboration has been outstanding," said **Matt Chynoweth**, PE, chief bridge engineer and director of the MDOT Bureau of Bridges and Structures. "Folks don't want to think about: 'If I'm going over or under this bridge, am I safe?'"

## How it works

Bridge bundling departs from traditional bridge building practices in that a group of bridges linked by geography, size, condition and/or delivery method would be bid out, or let, as a package.

The projected savings – estimated up to 30 percent over traditional building methods – come from the contractor working on

multiple bridges in a small region in efficient sequence.

**Doug Mills**, PE, engineer-manager for **Baraga County Road Commission** and a longtime CRA representative on the LBAB, sees potential for progress in bundling.

"Bundling can mean packaging several different structures together, regionally, by type of work, various categories, complexity," Mills said. "It's about trying to catch up on a huge backlog in a short period of time and get them constructed more efficiently and for less dollars."

Including the state, 312 agencies own at least one bridge – all 83 county road agencies, 148 cities and 80 villages. Of those, 77 own just one bridge. So partnering with other agencies in a bundling program brings expertise and efficiency.

Delivery of the bridges can come in a variety of ways as well to realize more savings. Some might go through the traditional design/bid/build process while others through private/public partnerships or design/build/finance/operate/maintain programs.





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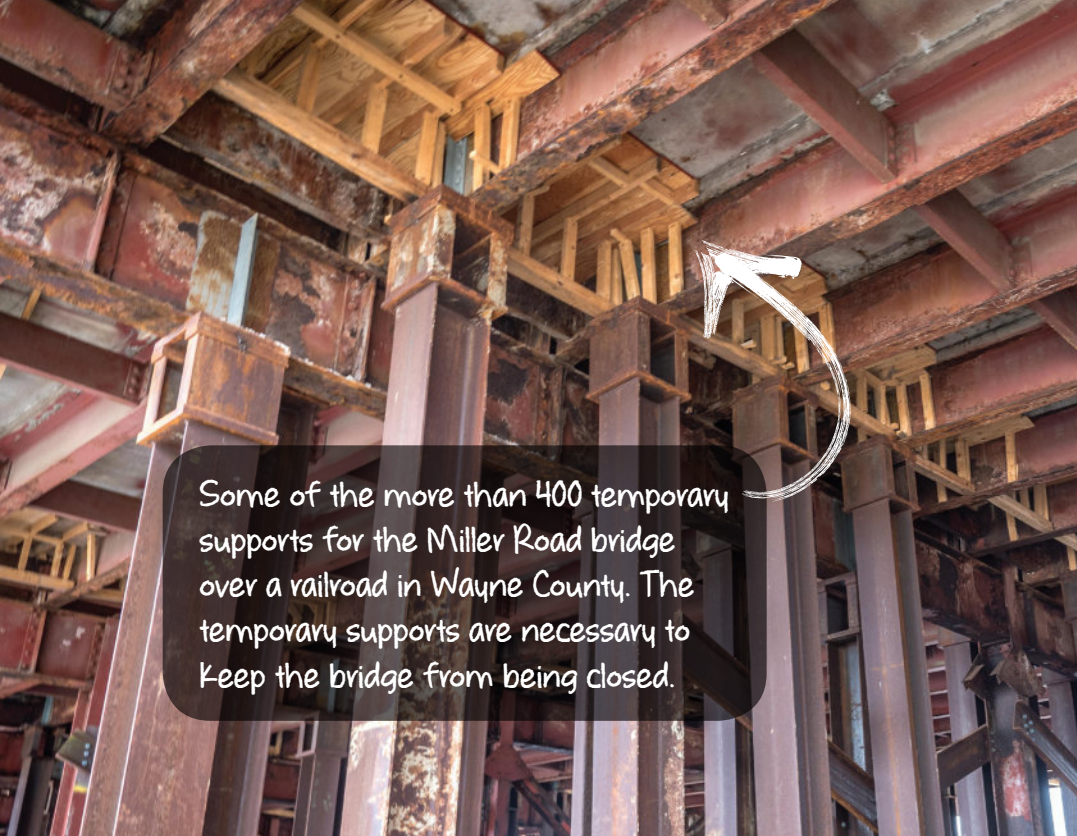
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Some of the more than 400 temporary supports for the Miller Road bridge over a railroad in Wayne County. The temporary supports are necessary to keep the bridge from being closed.

While the idea of bridge bundling is new to Michigan, other states have employed the strategy, with some completing their programs.

- In 2008, Missouri launched an ambitious effort to replace 802 bridges at a cost of \$685 million and completed the program a full year ahead of the five-year goal.
- In 2014, Pennsylvania began replacing 558 bridges at a cost of \$899 million and finished in three years.
- Massachusetts' \$3 billion Accelerated Bridge Program was adopted in 2008. Of 200 advertised contracts awarded under the program, 161 focused on the replacement or repair of 270 different bridges and the other 39 supported maintenance/preservation of other bridges.

### Can it work?

Already, MDOT and county road agencies have collaborated to collect and analyze local bridge data, with a feasibility report expected to be delivered to Governor Whitmer's desk this spring.

"MDOT has ultimate responsibility for all the bridges in the state and is working to improve all bridge needs. It's not acceptable to say, 'These are local agency bridges, we can't do anything with them,'" Mills said. "They've delegated bridge inspection to local agencies, but ultimately they are responsible for making sure it all gets done.

"MDOT leadership has stepped up to the plate. This is a fresh start, a fresh look at bridges, a fresh welcomed attitude and

opportunity to start talking again (about local bridges). A bridge is a bridge is a bridge."

Initial MDOT estimates peg the number of "serious" and "critical" bridges at 800 to 1,000 structures of the total of 11,126 bridges in Michigan at a cost of \$800 million to \$1 billion.

"The level of investment has not been commensurate with the amount of infrastructure out there," Chynoweth said. "Two years or so ago, we started investigating [the bridge issue] and didn't want to be in a situation where it was MDOT vs. locals. We really wanted to partner and figure out the best way. This is a Michigan bridge issue. We can't only care about MDOT bridges. Our families drive across *all* the bridges."

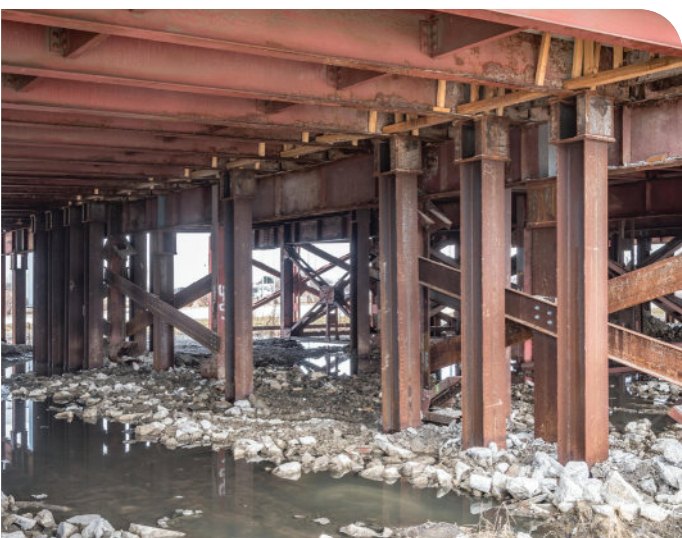
*"This is a fresh start, a fresh look at bridges, a fresh welcomed attitude and opportunity to start talking again (about local bridges). A bridge is a bridge is a bridge."*

- Doug Mills, PE, engineer-manager for Baraga County Road Commission & Local Bridge Advisory Board member

Michigan's goal is focused on life safety, mobility and having positive impacts on the economy. Many agree it's the best proposed solution to a critical program in a long time.

"With the right amount of money and contracting capability, it can be (part of a solution)," Mills said. "Other states have bundled bridges together, and we're looking at that and all the issues of getting bridges under contract and built. Some are easy, some are complex. It's typically two to five years for a bridge to be delivered, and moving that window up will be a challenge."

As of press time, nearly every county road agency had worked with their municipalities assessing the overall bridge picture. ---







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# CRA'S Legal Issues Corner



## Medical marijuana and the job offer; pediatric dental contract and objection to bidding process

*Medical marijuana and children's dentistry don't usually mix, but two Michigan Court of Appeals cases involving them were recently decided on similar grounds.*

### CASE #1

In the marijuana case, *Angela Eplee v. City of Lansing and Lansing Board of Water and Light*, MCA No. 342404, February 19, 2019 (Unpublished), the Court of Appeals determined that an employer who rescinds an offer of employment has not violated the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act ("MMMA"), when it terminates the offer of employment based on a failed drug test.

In this case, Angela Eplee was offered a job with the Lansing Board of Water and Light ("BWL"), contingent on her passing a drug screening test. Upon learning that a drug test was required, Eplee informed her supervisor that she was a qualified patient under the MMMA. When her drug test was returned positive for tetrahydrocannabinol, the active chemical in marijuana, the BWL rescinded Eplee's offer of employment.

Eplee argued that the MMMA protected her from any adverse employment consequences arising out of her use of marijuana, by providing that a medical marijuana cardholder cannot be "penal[ized] in any manner, or denied any right or privilege, for

the medical use of marihuana in accordance with this act." MCL 333.26424(a).

The court determined that while the MMMA grants immunity, it does not create affirmative rights. The court concluded that Eplee did not show that she suffered a "penalty" under the MMMA, by failing to demonstrate "some pre-existing entitlement or right or benefit that has been lost or denied." Eplee therefore could not establish "that she had any right or property interest of any manner in employment with the BWL."

She also did not show "that there was any prohibition — statutory or otherwise — on the BWL's ability to withdraw — for any or no reason at all — its conditional offer of employment." Accordingly, the Court of Appeals affirmed summary disposition for the BWL, finding that Eplee failed to state a claim on which relief could be granted.





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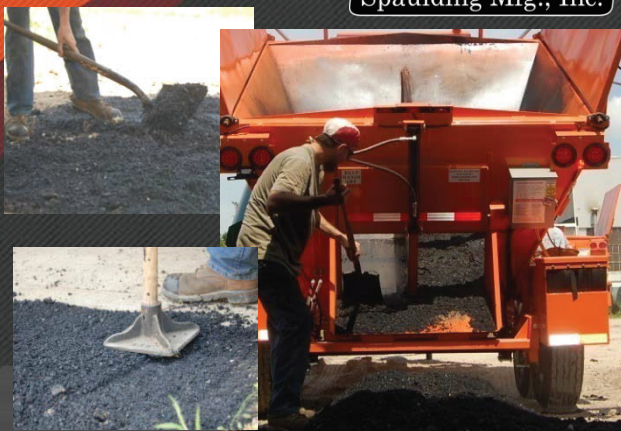


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## CASE #2

In the second case, *MCNA Insurance Company (d/b/a MCNA Dental) v. Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DMB)*, MCA No. 642646, January 15, 2019 (For Publication), four insurance companies submitted bids seeking to provide the Michigan DMB with a "Healthy Kids Dental Program."



MCNA lost the bid to Delta Dental and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM), but alleged that improper deductions were made in scoring its proposal, that BCBSM and Delta Dental were non-responsible bidders, and that the DMB improperly allowed BCBSM to amend its proposal after the deadline for submission had passed.

The court determined "that a disappointed bidder does not have standing to challenge the bidding process." Because MCNA had no expectation to be awarded the contract, it could not "show an injury arising from the failure to be awarded the contract." Thus, MCNA was not an aggrieved party and had no standing to bring an appeal in the Circuit Court.

Despite involving completely disparate facts, in the end, both the marijuana case and the Healthy Kids dental case turned on the plaintiff's inability to establish that a legally recognizable right had been violated. ---

*Matthew R. Willson is the Deputy General Counsel for the Road Commission for Oakland County*

## CROSSROADS EVENT Calendar

**JUNE 12-13**

### UP Road Builders Annual Summer Conference

Educational seminars and networking are the highlights of this two-day conference at Island Resort & Casino in Harris in Menominee County.

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**JUNE 14, JULY 12,  
JULY 26, SEPT. 9**

### Roads+™ Golf Outings

Mark your calendars for these fun outings to enjoy with co-workers and CRA Associate Members:

22nd annual Northern Golf Outing, June 14,  
The Chief Golf Course, Bellaire

Urban Council Roads+™ Golf Outing, July 12,  
The Links of Novi

Southern Mid-Michigan Roads+™ Golf Outing,  
July 26, The Emerald Golf Course, St. Johns

Friends of Transportation Roads+™ Golf Outing,  
Sept. 9, Binder Park Golf Course, Battle Creek

**REGISTRATION LIVE!**



**SEPT. 11-12**

### 7th annual Northern/ Southern Joint Conference

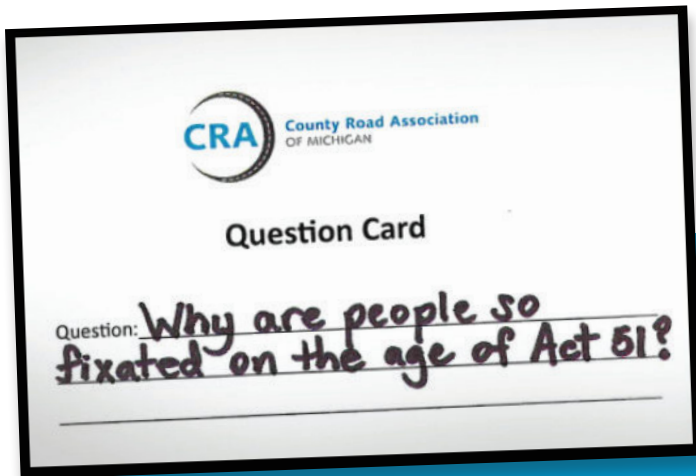
A two-day conference and gathering of county road agency staff across the Lower Peninsula, the "No/So" as it has become known returns to Firekeepers Casino in Battle Creek.

To register and for details on all CRA events, visit [www.micountyroads.org/events](http://www.micountyroads.org/events).



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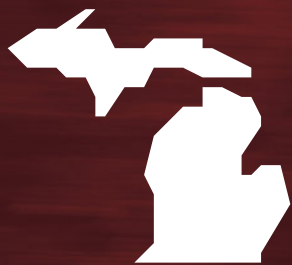


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Act 51 has been around for a while, but it's important to note that it has had 306 amendments. It has had 6 changes to the formula before arriving at the current "39-39-22" level. To those who question its age, respond by saying this isn't your grandfather's Act 51.



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# CRA AWARD SEASON

## HIGHLIGHTS

The 48th annual Member Awards ceremony at the 2019 CRA Highway Conference celebrated the many accomplishments of county road agency staff for distinguished service or who excelled in the areas of Communications, Collaboration and/or Operations through IMPRESS Awards.

A record-high 28 entries were received for IMPRESS Awards, with 22 of them receiving awards.

### MEMBER AWARDS

#### Merit Awards

**Joe Girskis**, Montcalm County Road Commission  
Southern Roads+™ Golf Outing Chair

**Dave Czerniakowski**, Road Commission for  
Oakland County  
Urban Roads+™ Golf Outing Chair

**Frank Fiala**, Barry County Road Commission  
Commissioners Seminar Chair

**Bradley Lamberg**, PE, Barry County Road Commission  
Friends of Transportation Roads+™ Golf Outing Chair

**Lance Malburg**, PE, Dickinson County Road Commission  
County Engineers Workshop Chair

**Terri Taylor**, Sanilac County Road Commission  
Finance & Human Resources Seminar Organizer

**Burt Thompson**, PE, Antrim County Road Commission  
Northern Roads+™ Golf Outing Chair



#### Distinguished Service to the Highway Industry Award

**William McEntee**  
Vice Chair, Transportation Asset Management Council



#### Distinguished Service Award

**Eric Wilson, JD**  
Past Chair, Road Commission for Oakland County, Board of Road Commissioners



#### Distinguished Service Award

**Houghton County Road Commission Staff**  
For response to devastating flooding in June 2018

John Cima, PE, and Kevin Harju, PE



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## IMPRESS AWARDS COLLABORATION



**Berrien County Road Department**  
*Berrien County Flood Emergency  
 - Spring 2018*  
 Pictured: Jason Latham



**Chippewa County Road Commission**  
*The Little Rapids Restoration Project: A Great Lakes  
 Restoration Initiative Success Story*  
 Pictured: Tom VanDorn, Robert Laitinen, Bradley  
 Ormsbee, and Dick Timmer



**Clinton County Road Commission**  
*Clinton County Road Commission Collabora-  
 tion with Local Entities*  
 Pictured: Joseph Pulver, PE



**Emmet County Road Commission**  
*Merging River Care and Asset Management*  
 Pictured: Brian Gutowski, PE,  
 and Lisa Kleeman



**Road Commission of Kalamazoo County**  
*Municipal Maintenance Technician  
 (Roadway Technician) Apprenticeship*



**Roscommon County Road Commission**  
*Paving for our Neighbors*  
 Pictured: Jim Porath, Tim O'Rourke,  
 Stefanie Simmons, and Brian Vaughn



**Saginaw County Road Commission**  
*Dixie Highway Project Reconstruction*  
 Pictured: Deb Kestner and Dennis Borchard



**Superintendents Association of Michi-  
 gan Southwest Council**  
*New Employee Winter Training Class*  
 Pictured: Eric Scott, Muskegon



**Washtenaw County Road Commission**  
*The Baker Road Roundabouts*  
 Pictured: Emily Kizer and Sheryl Siddall, PE

## IMPRESS AWARDS COMMUNICATIONS



**Berrien County Road Department**  
*Social Media*  
 Pictured: Jason Latham



**Ionia County Road Commission**  
*Ionia County's Road Millage Mailer*  
 Pictured: Morgan Prescott  
 and Dorothy Pohl, CPA



**Kalkaska County Road Commission**  
*Road Trip!*  
 Pictured: John Rogers and Rebecca Hilmert



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## IMPRESS AWARDS COMMUNICATIONS *continued*



**Kent County Road Commission**  
*Work Zone Safety Poster Contest*  
Pictured: Steve Warren



**Midland County Road Commission**  
*Millage Brochure*  
Pictured: Terry Palmer, PE,  
and Sam SanMiguel



**Washtenaw County Road Commission**  
*Employee Central*  
Pictured: Emily Kizer  
and Sheryl Siddall, PE

## IMPRESS AWARDS OPERATIONS



**Berrien County Road Department**  
*Asset Management Roads and Bridges*  
Pictured: Jason Latham



**Delta County Road Commission**  
*Custom Built, Drop-in Sander*  
Pictured: Jody Norman, John Malnar and  
Nancy Roseman, PE



**Grand Traverse County Road Commission**  
*Snowplow Wing Wiring*  
Pictured: Andy Marek, Tobin Javin,  
Brad Kluczynski, and Wayne Schoonover, PE



**Road Commission of Kalamazoo County**  
*W Avenue – Scrap Tire Trials,  
HMA Pavement and Chip Seal*



**Roscommon County Road Commission**  
*The Sand Barn*  
Pictured: Jim Porath, Tim O'Rourke,  
Stefanie Simmons, and Brian Vaughn



**St. Joseph County Road Commission**  
*Post-Tensioning Timber Structures*  
Pictured: Vince Mifsud, John Lindsey  
and Rod Chupp



**Washtenaw County Road Commission**  
*WCRC Storage Woes*  
Pictured: Emily Kizer and Sheryl Siddall, PE

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## Key transitions at...

### ...Road Commissions and Departments

**Dave Adams** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Saginaw County Road Commission**.

**Dieter Amos** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Antrim County Road Commission**.

**Mark Asselin** has been elected road commissioner for the **Delta County Road Commission**.

**Tony Bair** has been elected commissioner for the **Jackson County Commission**.

**Barry Bolich** has been hired as manager of the **Gogebic County Road Commission**.

**Kenneth Bower** has been elected road commissioner for the **Menominee County Road Commission**.

**Nicholas Bowerman** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Ionia County Road Commission**.

**Larry Brown, PE**, has been appointed road commissioner for the **Allegan County Road Commission**.

**Doug Burleson** has been appointed commissioner for the **Van Buren County Road Commission**.

**Bob Busch** has been elected road commissioner for the **Isabella County Road Commission**.

**Ric Crawford** has been elected road commissioner for the **Shiawassee County Road Commission**.

**Tom Eckerle** has been elected road commissioner for the **Leelanau County Road Commission**.

**Ron Frailing** has been elected road commissioner for the **Iron County Road Commission**.

**Michael Frederick** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Clinton County Road Commission**.

**Bob Harrison** has been elected commissioner for the **Berrien County Commission**.

**Rochelle Hatcher** has been elected commissioner for the **Calhoun County Commission**.

**Chris Heugel** has been elected commissioner for the **Berrien County Commission**.

**Chuck Hinman** has been elected road commissioner for the **Gladwin County Road Commission**.

**Karen Hulliberger** has been elected road commissioner for the **Clare County Road Commission**.

**James Hyatt** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Midland County Road Commission**.

**Mike Ingison** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Mason County Road Commission**.

**Corey Kennedy** has been elected commissioner for the **Jackson County Commission**.

**Brad Kluczynski** has been hired as manager of the **Grand Traverse County Road Commission**.

**Stephen Lang** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Presque Isle County Road Commission**.

**Robin LaCroix** has been elected road commissioner for the **Schoolcraft County Road Commission**.

**Richard LaHaie** has been elected road commissioner for the **Cheboygan County Road Commission**.

**John Lindsey** has been promoted to managing director at the **St. Joseph County Road Commission**.

**Gerald Lucas** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Alpena County Road Commission**.

**Klint Marshall** has been elected road commissioner for the **Ogemaw County Road Commission**.

**Les McClelland** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Cass County Road Commission**.

**John Midgley, PE**, has been hired as managing director at the **Calhoun County Road Department**.

**Vince Mifsud** has been appointed road commissioner for the **St. Joseph County Road Commission**.

**Greg Mikowski** has been elected road commissioner for the **Leelanau County Road Commission**.

**Tommy Miller** has been elected commissioner for the **Calhoun County Commission**.

**Geoff Moffat** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Van Buren County Road Commission**.

**Thomas Morgan** has been elected commissioner for **Ingham County Commission**.

**Bert Notestine** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Emmet County Road Commission**.

**Richard Olson** has been elected road commissioner for the **Keweenaw County Road Commission**.

**Mark Polsdofer** has been elected commissioner for **Ingham County Commission**.

**Richard Runnels** has been elected road commissioner for the **Lake County Road Commission**.

**Mary Samuels** has been promoted to manager/director at the **Mason County Road Commission**.

**William Schumacher** has been elected road commissioner for the **Bay County Road Commission**.

**Ronald Schwab** has been elected road commissioner for the **Arenac County Road Commission**.

**Dennis Skinner** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Gogebic County Road Commission**.

**Derrell Slaughter** has been elected commissioner for **Ingham County Commission**.

**Travis Smith** has been hired as fleet and facilities manager at the **Wexford County Road Commission**.

**Doug Steffen** has been hired as the managing director for the **Clinton County Road Commission**.

**Emily Stivers** has been elected commissioner for **Ingham County Commission**.

**Phil Strong, PE**, has been hired as engineer for the **Gogebic County Road Commission**.

**Jack Thayer, PE**, has been appointed road commissioner for the **Monroe County Road Commission**.

**Chris Trubac** has been elected commissioner for **Ingham County Commission**.

**Tom Van Dorn, PE**, has been hired as engineer at the **Chippewa County Road Commission**.

**Rob VerHeulen** has been appointed road commissioner for the **Kent County Road Commission**.

**Timothy Ward** has been appointed road commissioner for the **St. Clair County Road Commission**.

**Darius Williams** has been elected commissioner for **Jackson County Commission**.

**Justin Wykoff** has been elected road commissioner for the **Roscommon County Road Commission**.

### ... Mile Markers

**Jim Cook**, manager, has retired from the **Grand Traverse County Road Commission** after six years of service.

**Donald Patnode**, assistant superintendent/shop foreman, has retired from the **Wexford County Road Commission** after 23 years of service.

**Joseph Pulver, PE**, has retired as managing director of the **Clinton County Road Commission** after 11 years of service.

**Joan Terzaghi**, administrative/accounting assistant, has retired from the **Marquette County Road Commission** after 10 years of service.

### ... In Memoriam

On March 11, 2019, **Ralph A. Lange**, managing director for the **Monroe County Road Commission** from 1999 to 2008, passed away.

Do you have a staff member you want recognized in Crossroads? Call Dustin Earley at 517.482.1189, or email [dearley@micountyroads.org](mailto:dearley@micountyroads.org).



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## Bridging *the* Gaps

# They snooze, you lose

## How to present your numbers and messages in ways that will leave an impression

We've all been there.

In a stuffy room with a dry speaker monotonously droning while showing a PowerPoint overstuffed with data and numbers.

No one wants to be in that room. And no one should be *that* speaker.

Chris Gautz, public information officer for the Michigan Department of Corrections and former journalist, shared at CRA's 2019 Highway Conference his tips for connecting with an audience without putting them to sleep.

"The best way to communicate is to tell a story," Gautz said. "If you have important numbers you're trying to get across, whether you're giving a presentation to your community on why you need a millage ... or a presentation on building roads, that's important. But we don't want to be boring."

While PowerPoints are good presentation tools, there are tips to getting the PowerPoint to truly engage the audience.

Among Gautz's suggestions:

**Avoid excess words.** Audience members will start reading what's on the screen rather than listening to the presenter. An image can prevent that; after all, a picture is still "worth a thousand words" and is a good visual cue for the speaker.

### Want to go the extra mile? Try these.

There are several techniques presenters can use to enhance their presentations but maintain a professional look that's lost when animated paragraphs and slide transitions are used.

**Dimming effect:** If a slide lists words or data, use the dimming effect to control which words the audience focuses on. A brief video is available on YouTube with instructions on its use. Search "dimming effect in PowerPoint" on YouTube.

**Spotlight effect:** The spotlight effect will train the focus of the audience on a specific part of a slide. Search "spotlight effect in PowerPoint" on YouTube.



**By the numbers.** Limit your use of numbers. In fact, a singular number on a slide can pack a punch, such as the cost of pothole damage.

**The 10-20-30 rule.** The "rule" states no more than 10 slides in a presentation, no longer than 20 minutes to tell it and no text smaller than 30-point type.

**No handouts beforehand.** Once attendees have the printed presentation, Gautz says they will thumb through it, focusing on it rather than the speaker.

**Be colorful.** Color can help slides "pop" without losing the message. For example, white text on a dark background can help drive home a point.

Gautz said a good rule of thumb to remember is K.I.S.S., or Keep It Simple, Stupid.

"Presentations don't need to be long and drawn out," Gautz said. "People's time is precious, and you don't want to waste it. Certainly not the time of your board or commission who controls your budget or the public who is coming in to see your presentation."

"The key is to tell a story, not recite numbers," he said. "Don't fill it full of fancy buzzwords or corporate lingo or bureaucratic-ese. Make sure that what they're learning is simple and straightforward." ---

**Live polls:** A good way to interact with the audience is by polling them during your talk. Pollevywhere.com is compatible with PowerPoint. A great way to get community input!

**Word Cloud:** Take a document or passage, run it through wordart.com, and select the image you want the words to create. Attention getting!

**Others:** Consider memes, gifs or Bitmojis to lighten up the presentation and add some humor.



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# Fun featuring Facebook

## Police departments find success with social media humor, and county road agencies could, too

Face-to-face interactions with agitated citizens can be tense.

Residents demanding their roads be paved or folks complaining the plow knocked over their mailbox aren't happy.

Yet, social media provides a forum where road humor is not only acceptable but encouraged, even on certain serious matters.

Few know that better than two mid-Michigan police agencies whose social media prowess and use of humor have generated monstrous response. Despite policing a community with around 2,000 residents, Bath Township (Clinton County) Police Department (BTPD) Facebook has about 62,000 likes! Neighboring East Lansing Police Department (ELPD), using similar humorous tactics and college-town material, has about 11,500 "likes."

The two agencies were featured at CRA's 2019 Highway Conference, sharing tips of how county road agencies can benefit from humor – while gaining public support.

"As a police department or any other agency or company, it's a positive public perception that's a big thing," said ELPD Officer Katelynn Bennett, a three-year veteran of the police force and member of ELPD's Social Media Team.

"It puts out there what we're doing besides just doing traffic stops or writing tickets or taking people to jail. It actually shows the more in-depth part of our job," Bennett said.

One of ELPD's more memorable posts included a photo of an officer looking for speeders at a recognizable location on a hot summer day and included a hashtag of #BringUsIceCream. The next photo was of the officer posing with two residents who brought a couple cups of ice cream.

BTPD used humor to help spread word of a motorcyclist who rode through a freshly-poured concrete

### Reasons to Use Social Media:

- |                                                                  |                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Positive public perception.                                      | Way to recognize business and individuals who are going above and beyond. |
| Vehicle to provide news to the public.                           |                                                                           |
| Additional platform for the public to report information to you. | Recruitment for new employees.                                            |
| Community praise/support.                                        | International connections.                                                |
| Community help.                                                  | Professional relationships.                                               |
|                                                                  | No cost.                                                                  |

Source: East Lansing and Bath Township police departments

highway, got stuck and abandoned the bike. The post read:

*"You my friend have picked an entire bouquet of Whoopsidaies. When you feel like coming to pick up the bike you left sinking in fresh poured concrete, come have a chat with us. #TakeThatThingOffAnySickJumps #Lookatmepassallthistafficohnoimstuck #Failtown"*

The post was shared nearly 3,800 times and received almost 900 comments.

BTPD Officer Avery Lyon, a four-year veteran of the department and BTPD Social Media Team member, said his three-person team uses humor daily and believes county road agencies could as well.

"You could do a 'roads are getting kind of bad' (post), which everyone knows, or you can take something and create humor with it and something that will be picked up by the community and reach more people," Lyon said. "Whether people think you're not being very professional or not, you're always going to have those people. But it's up to you to find your niche and have some fun with it."

#DontBeAWetBlanket 🌨





## EDITOR'S NOTE

## We all have a hand in playing the advocate card



The County Road Association – and all 83 of our members – are involved in a daily game of education in a very public arena.

How do we help Michigan residents support what we're doing with road funds and the need to finish the funding revamp? In other words, how do we best advocate on the subject of funding needs and our results?

In mid-April, a new Marketing Resource Group poll out of Lansing found that for the second straight year, roads and infrastructure are the top concern of Michigan residents. Clearly, even in the third year of new road dollars, Michiganders aren't convinced the problem has been adequately addressed.

We know it hasn't. When the 2015 Transportation Funding Package was signed into law, all key players agreed it was a good *first step* toward a \$2.5 billion (at that time) need.

So how do county road agencies play the right cards when discussing the full solution?

- Talk about how you've used new road dollars so far, and where you'll use it going forward. CRA's 2018 member survey shows 88% of new dollars went to roads and bridges, 5% to equipment and 3% to boost underfunded liabilities, as required by the new law.
- Review and share three new videos on CRA's YouTube channel, which describe innovation in road funding from Montcalm, Chippewa and Mackinac County Road Commissions.

(Subscribe to the channel while you're there!) Tell your own stories of funding effectiveness and creativity.

- Listen to presentations at the many road panels now going on across Michigan to hear the questions being asked. Most are online.
- Promote your work on social media channels.
- Post the #FixMIRoads signs next to construction projects, including the cost. The public is largely unaware of the cost of roadwork.
- Bring in your township officials to get input on future projects and funding, and secure their support.
- Develop a good relationship with your local State Representatives and Senator. Show them the remaining needs, specific project costs and what you've done with new dollars received so far.

Like it or not, we're all players in the card game of influence. If you aren't playing an advocate card by telling your road commission's "story," someone else is playing your cards for you. And they probably won't recognize the efficiencies and creativity you've brought to the process.

*Denise Donohue*

Denise Donohue, CAE, APR  
CRA Director  
ddonohue@micountyroads.org

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*Steve Sobers, Former Big Rapids City Manager*

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