



## Administrator's Message

GREETINGS EVERYONE. Halloween and Thanksgiving are over and Christmas is right around the corner. There is no better way to celebrate the holidays than to give back. From small acts of kindness to large, here are several ways that you can give back this Christmas and throughout the rest of the holiday season.

**Donate Blood** in one of the three County Blood Drives on Wednesday, December 22nd. We are hosting drives at 200 N Main, Towner and the LRC. Contact [Joanna Bidlack](#) at 222-6731 to schedule an appointment.

**Donate Food** to Food Gatherers. Whole Foods is teaming up with Food Gatherers to help "Bag Hunger" this winter! Bag Hunger gift tags will be available at both Ann Arbor locations for \$5, \$10 or \$20. Provide healthy good food to families in need right here in Washtenaw County till December 31, 2010.

**Adopt a Family** through the Salvation Army. Your family or department can make a family's Christmas brighter by participating in the Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family. Additional information is available [online](#).

Choosing to give or not give is entirely up to you, but I hope you decide to give. Actually, I would like to challenge every employee to give back in some way - there's nothing more rewarding than showing kindness.



## News from the *Administrator*

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## TOGETHER WE ACCOMPLISHED A LOT



A few weeks ago I presented a [progress report](#) to the Board of Commissioners on my first six months on the job as County Administrator. I believe that preparing and reviewing this progress report is a very valuable

exercise. By looking in the review mirror I was able to recognize just how much we have accomplished in this short time, but it also gave me an opportunity to evaluate the manner in which we did it. No one will argue that results matter, but how you achieve the results are just as important in my mind.

As leaders, we have to be able to influence and move others to produce work. As you will see in the progress report, this organization has accomplished a great deal in the last 6 months. The accomplishments identified in this report were only possible due to the hard work and dedication from each of you though.

Initially, my work centered on getting my executive team in place and I couldn't be happier with how this team has grown. Deputy Administrator Bill Reynolds brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, but perhaps more importantly, he possesses a positive 'Go Get'em' attitude that is truly inspiring. He has learned so much about this organization, offers a fresh perspective and doesn't shy away from asking difficult questions. Finance Director Kelly Belknap has also been a great addition to my executive team. Kelly's organizational knowledge and attention to detail has proven incredibly valuable already. She too offers a fresh perspective that I've quickly come to depend on. I couldn't be more pleased with the work of Bill and Kelly and the work of this entire organization.

We have a very difficult road ahead as we address the projected \$20M deficit for 2012/2013. As difficult as this road is, it's also an opportunity to truly assess the strengths and needs of this organization and determine the best options for moving forward.

I hope you will take some time to review the [progress report](#) and watch the [online video](#). I encourage you to contact me directly and share your feedback, comments and or suggestions.

## CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP



Tonight is the final Board meeting for Commissioners Jeff Irwin, Mark Ouimet, Kenneth Schwartz and Jessica Ping. At the meeting, the Chair of the Board will present each of the departing commissioners with a resolution of recognition for their dedicated service to the citizens of Washtenaw County. **Please join us for an informal gathering immediately following the December 1<sup>st</sup> Board meeting at Argiero's on Detroit Street in Ann Arbor.**

As you may know, Commissioners Jeff Irwin and Mark Ouimet will soon be serving in the state legislature. Jeff Irwin will be Ann Arbor's next state representative, taking over the 53<sup>rd</sup> District House seat and Mark Ouimet will be representing the 52<sup>nd</sup> District. Commissioner Jessica Ping is looking forward to spending more time with her family and her newborn daughter. Commissioner Schwartz will continue his work as an Attorney and has expressed an interest in filling an upcoming vacancy on the County's Road Commission. I'm happy for Jeff, Mark, Jessica and Ken as they move onto the next chapter of their lives.

I've already met with Commissioner-Elects Rob Turner, Dan Smith, Yousef Rabhi and Alicia Ping. They will be attending various orientation sessions with Human Resources, Corporation Counsel and Administration in addition to MSU Extension's New Commissioner Orientation all within the next few weeks. They are also looking forward to the Tours/Departmental Presentations after the first of the year.

The new Commissioners' first official day on the job will begin with an **informal Meet & Greet on January 5th, 2011 from 5:30-6:30 pm in the lobby of the Administration Building.** I hope you will take some time to welcome them to the County family.

## DECEMBER BLOOD DRIVES



Three opportunities for employees to give the gift of life. We are partnering with the [American Red Cross](#) to host three blood drives on the week of Christmas. I hope you will consider donating because the need is great especially around the holidays.

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22ND

10 AM – 4 PM

#### 200 NORTH MAIN STREET

#### Lower Level Conference Room

Appointment Goal: 41

Good Pints of Blood Goal: 31

#### TOWNER ROOM 1120

Appointment Goal: 41

Good Pints of Blood Goal: 25

#### LRC ROOM B

Appointment Goal: 41

Good Pints of Blood Goal: 25

Employees who attempt to donate blood will have an opportunity to win prizes! The prizes are as follows:

- **First 50 employees to schedule an appointment** will receive a free cupcake from [Cake Nouvelle](#) or the [Cupcake Station](#).
- **Free Red Cross T-Shirt** to all employees who attempt to donate blood.
- **\$25 Gift Card to [Busch's Grocery Stores](#)** - Three employees will win a gift card.
- **\$5 Gift Cards to [People's Food Coop](#)** - Four employees will win a gift card.
- **A pair of movie tickets to [Rave Motion Pictures](#) (Previously Showcase Cinemas in Ann Arbor)**
- **Administrative Days Off** - All employees who attempt to donate blood will be entered into a drawing for one of three Administrative Days off. Sheriff Clayton, Bill Reynolds and I have donated 7.5 hours of our personal vacation time.

Contact [Joanna Bidlack](#) at 222-6731 to schedule an appointment. Read the [full story on eCentral](#) .

## WHO IS THE CURRENT MOTOR COMPANY?



Since 2001, Washtenaw County has lost almost 14,000 manufacturing jobs. With the closing of large manufacturing facilities such as ACH, Willow Run GM plant and Exemplar, many of your residents are experiencing unemployment and a reduction in per capita income.

In response to these conditions, the Eastern Leaders Group, made up of government, civic, education and private sector leaders, initiated several economic stimulus programs. Two of these programs, the SPARK East Incubator and the Eastern Micro loan program have focused on moving companies from the start up phase to production. One of the companies assisted with these job creation programs is Current Motors, a producer of two-wheel electric vehicles.

Current Motors started at SPARK East and received a County micro loan to develop their dealer network, patent the technology and builds their inventory. Their goal is to become the Vespa or Harley Davidson of the i-pod generation. The company is now producing their vehicles in Washtenaw County and is in the process of developing dealer networks in key target markets. During a recent tour of their facility, Commissioner Sizemore (himself a big Harley fan) got to see the operation and test out one of their electric scooters.



Replacing those manufacturing facilities that have left the County is working with the help of the programs established by the Eastern Leaders Group. The fact that this company uses green technology is an added bonus. For those of you interested in seeing their products and learn more about their company, visit <http://www.currentmotor.com/>.

## PLANNING ADVISORY TEAM UPDATE



Like most governmental agencies we continue to feel the effects of this economic downturn and we will continue to feel effects of the downturn after the recovery is well underway since our primary funding is through property taxes which are tied to property values, which remain low. In my last newsletter, I explained that our preliminary projections show a \$20M projected deficit for 2012/2013 and it may continue growing. Property tax revenues continue to decline, state revenues are unstable, federal recovery (stimulus) funding will be winding down all while demand for the service that our citizens require (particularly those in most need) is increasing.

The upcoming Planning and Budget Process is critical to redefining Washtenaw County. We must engage in a process that will identify the services/programs we will continue providing and those that we can no longer afford to do. As I said before, we can no longer be everything to everyone. I'm hopeful that this process will lead to a new Washtenaw County, an organization that more closely aligns our organizational structure with the community's needs and expectations, and at the same time managing the limited resources that we will experience over the next decade.

The Planning Advisory Team has been working on the draft 2012/2013 Planning and Budget Process along with a communication plan. The highlights of the draft process and communication plan include:

**Engaging the Community** – The Board will likely take the lead on engaging the community just after the first of the year. We're looking for the Board to provide the direction in terms of identifying their priorities, identifying a strategy for engaging the community, and whether they want to explore the feasibility of a Human Services Millage.

**Process Kick-Off** – Just after the first of the year we will share the Financial State of the County, target amounts for each budget solution category and a specific budget calendar for 2011.

**Working with County Leadership** – Administration will work closely with county leadership by thoroughly reviewing the budget allocations for each department. Administration will set a target dollar amount for the department and ask the department to identify a solution that meets that target.

**Getting Feedback from the Organization** – The specific strategy for engaging the organization is to be determined. The strategy is likely to include a lot of the same vehicles from the previous process, such as open Town Hall meetings, MSG and Department Head meetings and updates on eCentral and regular updates to the Board. In addition, we're considering some new ideas, such as:

**Brown Bag Lunch/Professional Development Class** to ensure employees understand the complexities of the budget and to provide an opportunity for employees to give feedback.

**YouTube! Videos** with Administration, Board, Finance/Budget and Union Leadership to reach a different segment of the organization.

**Town Hall meetings** with Administration, Board, HR, Union Leadership and union members to demonstrate the partnership between these groups.

**Online Surveys** for employees to give feedback to management and/or union leadership.

**Rumor Busters** section added to Budget Website to dispel (or support true) rumors.

**Sharing a Recommended Budget with the Board** – I will share the Administrator's Recommended Budget with the Board in the Fall of 2011. The board will deliberate from September to November and hopefully approve a balanced budget by the end of 2011.

As I said, this is a rough draft of the process. I'm working diligently with the members of the Planning Advisory Team to finalize the process and the communication plan. I can't emphasize enough the importance of this upcoming process. The budget will be the single most important thing for the leadership of this organization in the upcoming year and in my mind, it's an opportunity to redefine local government. Thank you for your patience and more importantly, thank you for staying informed.

## RESPONDING TO THE BOARD'S DECISION

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Leading during a storm of change is, without a doubt, a challenge. Demands and expectations skyrocket. All eyes are watching to see your next move. There is naturally additional stress. Every leader wants to do what is “right” to help

navigate out of the situation. However you may have heard me say before that there are no silver bullets or magic pills. There is no “right”. There are always various perspectives that must be put into balance and properly understood to find the best solution for all involved.

We witnessed this firsthand at the November 17th Ways and Means meeting when, after a great deal of discussion, a resolution proposed by Commissioner Leah Gunn to eliminate per diem, travel and mileage payments to commissioners was voted down. The Board’s difficulty to reach consensus on this resolution left employees asking the question, “Will the Board be able to make tough decisions to ensure the fiscal stability of this organization, when they cannot reach a consensus on \$33,000?”

Commissioners made some valid points about why they felt their compensation should remain intact. Some explained that while the Board salary remained the same for the past 10 years, the organization has received increases every year up to 2008. Others felt that an annual salary of \$15,500 is already very little, considering most commissioners put in a full time work week through their many involvements in county boards and with work being done on behalf of the county.

**What many may not realize is that the Board of Commissioners actually cut their budget in 2010 by 16.7%.**

Some may not understand the board’s decision and others may not agree with it. An important thing to realize though is that the discussion doesn’t end with the vote that took place on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The budget discussions and management practices of this organization are constantly evolving.

We no longer have the luxury of doing business as usual and must look to an uncertain future with hope and the desire to adapt and succeed. Step by step and group by group, we all need to accept that Washtenaw County will change. It must change if we have any hope of providing desperately needed services to the residents of this community. Most importantly, change starts with each of us; we must all be willing to be a leader of change during these times. That can take many forms, from raising suggestions, to asking questions, to showing support for unpopular decisions, to discussing the hard issues, etc.

I’ve been with this organization for over 28 years; I’ve worked with many of you and I know you’re passionate about public service. The 2012/2013 budget will balance the needs of this organization against increasing community needs and a weak economy; ultimately relying heavily on the willingness of each and every one of us to make sacrifices. We must all face the possibility of significant changes at all levels given our current projections.

I look forward to this challenge and to the inspiration that all of you give me to make this organization an example of success during these difficult times. Thank you for your commitment to public service and your willingness to embrace change.