

## **Administrator's Message**

- Verna Mc Daniel

"Now that election season has come to an end, we have a clear picture of who will comprise our new County Board of Commissioners, our U.S. Presidential Seat, and other representing Legislators for the coming year. I don't know about you, but I am glad all the election campaigning is over, because if I had to endure one more political commercial or political phone call, I would have imploded.

We are gearing up for 2013, which will be a budget development year. And right now, we are doing a lot of research on Best Practices as it pertains to budget forecasting. As you now know from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget Report, we are on track to have a balanced budget for 2012. It will be critical for us to stay on track, and continue our quest to reduce the structural deficit, while maintaining quality services. Bottom line is that if we make the right investments, our future will be a lot brighter.

We have a lot to be thankful for as an organization and community this past year. I wish the best to you and your family during this Thanksgiving Season."



"Kind words are the music of the world"
- F. W. Faber

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### **Inside This Issue**

- Meet Your New Board of Commissioners
- 2013 Budget Reaffirmation
- Veterans Day 2012
- 6 Employee Central
- 6 Information & Network Security
- Did You Know?!!!

## Meet Your New Board of Commissioners



Kent Martinez-Kratz Washtenaw County Commission District 1

### **Introducing Commissioner Kent Martinez-Kratz:**

Commissioner Martinez-Kratz has lived in Michigan for the past 48 years and has called Chelsea home since 1998. In 1990, Kent married his wife, Marina Martinez-Kratz, who is a Professor of Nursing at Jackson Community College. Kent is a proud parent to three children, Max 15, Jesse 14, and Sierra 9, who all attend school in the Chelsea School District. As a family, they share a love of gardening, running, reading, and politics!

Kent has proudly served the citizens of Chelsea, Michigan since 2005, when he was elected to the Chelsea City Council. Kent's Chelsea City Council service included liaison to the Chelsea School Board, liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and he served as a Chelsea Recreation Board member.

Kent is a graduate of Michigan State University and completed a Master's Degree in Education from Eastern Michigan University. Following in his parent's footsteps, Kent is certified as a special education teacher and holds an Emotionally Impaired Endorsement. He has dedicated his life to helping children with unique learning needs and works every day to inspire children of all levels to reach their fullest potential.

### Questions we posed to our new Commissioner and his answers:

- Commissioner, everyone here is asking about your platform, interests and passions. Please elaborate on these topics and how you hope they will impact your role on the Board of Commissioners?
  - I've run for County Commissioner to bring people together to find common ground and solutions to the issues facing Washtenaw County. As a Special Education Teacher and parent of a special needs child, I believe in the inherent strength and value of every citizen.
- What inspired you to be part of the Board of Commissioners?
  - I value and believe in public service. I want to dedicate my efforts to make Washtenaw County an attractive community for families, residents and business.
- What do you feel will be your biggest challenge with the organization, as seen from a Commissioner's perspective?
  - As a Chelsea City Council member I have been involved in budgeting decisions for the past several years. My new challenge will be addressing budget issues on a larger scope with the County.
- On the lighter side, are there any additional nuances the County should know about you as you become part of this family?
  - We own a yellow lab named Hershey, because she was supposed to be a chocolate lab.

## Meet Your New Board of Commissioners

### **Introducing Commissioner Andy LaBarre:**

I am a lifelong resident of Washtenaw County and a product of Ann Arbor Public Schools. I worked as a congressional aide for seven years, most recently for Congressman John Dingell from 2005-2011. I last served as his District Administrator. Having been born and growing up here, I have a real connection to this community. My wife, Megan, and I live on the north side of the City of Ann Arbor with our new son Declan and our dogs Yogi and Monster.

After graduating from Pioneer, I attended Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH, where I met Megan, who is now a special education teacher at Dexter High School. In 2012, I earned my Master's of Public Administration degree from Eastern Michigan University. Since 2011, I've worked as the Vice President for Government Relations at the Ann Arbor / Ypsilanti Regional Chamber. I try to serve my community through involvement in the following boards and organizations.

- Ann Arbor Housing Commission, Commissioner
- 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Democratic Organization, Corresponding Secretary
- SOS Community Services, Board Member
- Washtenaw Success by 6 Leadership Commission
- Washtenaw County Democratic Party, Vice Chair for Legislative Programs
- Center for Occupational and Personalized Education (C.O.P.E), Advisory Board Member
- Washtenaw Eastern Leaders, Member
- Community Investment Committee of the United Way of Washtenaw County



Andy LaBarre
Washtenaw County
Commission District 7

### Questions we posed to our new Commissioner and his answers:

- Commissioner, everyone here is asking about your platform, interests and passions. Please elaborate on these topics and how you hope they will impact your role on the Board of Commissioners?
  - I dearly want to strengthen our human services, specifically our ability to meet critical needs during difficult
    times. I have a passion for the environment and want to continue our leadership in land preservation, parks
    and access to natural resources. Finally, I'd like to work to produce budgets that reflect our values in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner.
- What inspired you to be part of the Board of Commissioners?
  - My dad worked for the Friend of the Court for roughly 15 years. I worked for Congressman Dingell for six years. Both of these experiences gave me a chance to see public service in action. It's not usually exciting or glamorous, but it's always important. I owe this community and hopefully I can give back through service on the Board of Commissioners.
- What do you feel will be your biggest challenge with the organization, as seen from a Commissioner's perspective?
  - I think Washtenaw County is well run and benefits from a great workforce. I hope I don't have challenges with the organization.
- On the lighter side, you have a new member of your family...how has life been for you as a new dad?
  - Life has been great and I remember more of it, because I don't sleep much. I have a two month old son,

    Declan. He's wonderful. I have a new found respect for my wife, Megan, who is already a wonderful mom.
- Are there any additional nuances the County should know about you as you become part of this family?
  - Please know I look forward to a productive relationship with the County's workforce. I hope to base that relationship on mutual respect, a shared sense of public service, and a willingness to be open in our communications with each other.

# 2013 Budget Reaffirmation

The holiday season is fast approaching, which means that the County is now nearly halfway through its biennial budget. Since the Board of Commissioners must adopt a balanced budget annually, I have made a recommendation for the 2013 budget reaffirmation. The budget reaffirmation is used in years that the Board is not adopting a multi-year budget, but reaffirming the document previously adopted, usually with some changes.

Since becoming Administrator, one item I have wanted to focus on is the maintenance of a robust County fund balance. Coming in to 2012, Washtenaw County had an unreserved fund balance of just over \$14.5 million. It's best to think of this reserve as an emergency fund to keep



# "We are anticipating a contribution to fund balance in 2012 of about \$100K more than anticipated..."

on hand in the event of unforeseen circumstances or new legislation, which could have negative impacts on County revenues. A strong fund

balance also puts us in a favorable position with bond rating agencies, which saves us money on debt service through lower interest rates. We are anticipating a contribution to fund balance in 2012 of about \$100K more than anticipated (about \$2 million in total as compared to the initial \$1.9 million that was budgeted), due to fabulous budget management by our departments, both Elected and Appointed, as well as, important concessions made by our labor partners through collective bargaining.

During the 12/13 Planning Process, we developed the assumption that we would need to dip into our fund balance to the tune of about \$3.8 million in 2013. Mitigating the demand on our fund balance is a priority as we head into 2013. Fund balance targets will be revisited to help offset negative cash flow due to property tax collections occurring seven months after incurred expenses. Due to unanticipated additional revenue generation and expenditure savings in 2012

(due in part to the large number of retirements in 2011), we envision utilizing about \$3.3 million in fund balance in 2013.

## "First and foremost, credit goes to the employees in the organization."

Several factors play into this positive news. First and foremost,

credit goes to the employees in the organization. Without sacrifices made in previous years, I'm sure that our situation would be direr. Departmental budget management also played a meaningful role. Effective budget management is as much about communication as it is about the numbers. Departments have done a marvelous job in letting the administration know about and plan for unforeseen changes and circumstances, both positive and negative. Without communication, planning for the future would be nearly impossible.

Even though we are in a better financial position than we anticipated when putting together the 2012/13 budget, there are still factors that worry me. Pending legislation on the elimination of the Personal Property Tax could come

# "While budgeting, we remain aware of these external factors, but grateful for such dedicated employees."

to fruition during the lame duck session of the State Legislature. Fringe benefit costs continue to increase, with no real end in sight. Unforeseen events, such as

the Dexter tornado earlier this year, are always a possibility. While budgeting, we remain aware of these external factors, but grateful for such dedicated employees. The critical services you all provide is a motivator in continuing our close monitoring of the budget. Please take a few minutes to look through the 2013 Budget Reaffirmation documents, as posted on the Board of Commissioners Agenda Page.



## Veterans Day 2012

Veterans Day 2012 will be Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, yet the official observance of the holiday will be Monday, Novem-

ber 12<sup>th</sup>. Here in Washtenaw County, there are 16,991 reasons to celebrate and be grateful this Veterans Day for the freedoms and liberties we all enjoy. 16,991 is the current number of veterans who live in Washtenaw County. The holiday is a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

The people of the State of Michigan agreed so much with the celebratory nature of this holiday, that Act 156 of 1851 (County Boards of Commissioners) was amended to allow the Board of Commissioners to "...authorize such sum as they deem fit for the purpose of a public celebration on Armistice Day."

The Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs encourages all fellow County employees to take time to reflect on the sacrifices made by current and former members of our US Armed Forces.



Consistent with the purpose of Veterans Day, please consider celebrating our 16,991 veterans with the simple gesture of saying, "Thank You for Your Service," or "Thank You for Serving."

Please also join the community to honor and celebrate our veterans at some of the events going on over November 11<sup>th</sup> and November 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Local 2012 Veterans Day Observances:**

- Official National recognition at the Eleventh Hour, on the Eleventh Day, of the Eleventh Month at Great Lakes
   National Ceremony 4200 Belford Road, Holly MI (Sunday, November 11, 2012)
- Veterans Tribute Concert (Saline New Horizons Band & Measure for Measure) at Saline Middle School 7190
   N. Maple Road, Saline MI beginning at 4:00 pm (Sunday, November 11, 2012)
- University of Michigan Tri Service ROTC US Flag Ceremonies U of M Diag Flagpole, Central Campus at 8:00 am AND 5:00 pm (Monday, November 12, 2012)
- VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System/Tri Service ROTC Ceremony at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System 2215
   Fuller Road, Ann Arbor MI beginning at 9:30 am (Monday, November 12, 2012)
- Concordia University Veterans Day Celebration 4090 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor MI beginning at 9:30 am (Monday, November 12, 2012)
- Applebees Signature entrée for veterans (Sunday, November 11, 2012)
- Denny's All You Can Eat Pancakes (Monday, November 12, 2012)
- Golden Corral Free Meal (Monday, November 12, 2012)
- Lowes Veterans Day Discount All veterans receive a 10 percent discount on Veterans Day up to \$5,000.00 on in stock and special order purchases

### **More Information about Veterans Day**

- Proclamation signed by the President of the United States
- Department of Veterans Affairs Website
- Veterans Day FAQ
- National Veterans Day Ceremony at Arlington
   National Cemetery

Home Depot – Veterans Day Discount – Every year on Veterans Day Home Depot offers a 10 percent discount

# Employee Central

### eCentral is 10 Years Old-You Tell Us What's Next!

On January 20, 2003, Former County Administrator, Bob Guenzel, wrote in his very first bi-weekly update: "Well, how do you like the place? Employee Central. You have to admit, it's a lot roomier - cleaner is the word I've heard the designers use-than our former employee website. I suppose it will take time to get used to, just like any new home, but soon enough we'll navigate with ease and soon after that, it will begin to feel indispensable."



Further, Bob shared his vision for communication throughout the organization as follows: The Six Communication Principles we've come up with:

- 1. Easy access to information.
- 2. Everyone is responsible to seek out information and share information, to make information more meaningful.
- 3. Speak the truth. Share both good news and bad.
- 4. All communication should offer avenues for feedback.
- 5. Business knowledge is needed to help understand work & County strategies.
- 6. Effective communications use multiple approaches.

Well, Bob was right. Employee Central, eCentral as it's now known, has become indispensable. It's the first thing we see when we sign on in the morning. It's how we process our timesheets, select our benefits, check for County job postings. In short, it is how we access and disseminate County related information that is relevant to our jobs. We've come a long way in the past 10 years, and so has technology. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Smart Phones, apps for Smart Phones, 3G, 4G....the ways in which we can stay connected is dizzying. So as we reflect over our successes of the past 10 years – and acknowledge those who have been here from the beginning, Andy Brush, Rhea Dreffs and Brenda Kerr — we can look forward to our technological future, and to you, our employees—the owners and operators of eCentral – for guidance. In the coming weeks and months, Andy and his eCentral team (<a href="https://employee.ewashtenaw.org/groups/news-team/ecentral-news-team-members">https://employee.ewashtenaw.org/groups/news-team/ecentral-news-team-members</a>) will be reaching out to ask your opinion for improving this valuable communication tool! So, please start thinking about how you want your website to look, types of information you'd like to have available and how we can better communicate with you, our most valuable assets. As Bob said in 2003, you are part of this plan!

## Information & Network Security at Washtenaw County

You don't have to look too hard to find recent stories of companies having security breaches, including local organizations like the University of Michigan (100 Top Universities Breached). With the real threat of information and network security breaches, Washtenaw County's IT Department is taking a renewed look at our security tools and guidelines. With encouragement and support from Administration, we have bolstered our tools to help prevent and detect issues on our network. Tools are one piece of the puzzle, end user education and clear guidelines are equally important. We are currently updating our End User Security Guidelines to help provide best practices, so all County Employees can help contribute to protecting our data and network. Our first step in rolling out the new guidelines is to get a baseline understanding of where we are at in regards to end user awareness of our current policies. To capture this baseline we are asking everyone to please take the time to fill out our survey. You can find it at <a href="http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q7PDRV9">http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q7PDRV9</a>.

### Did You Know?!!!

### **Master Rain Gardener Training Class Attracts Gardeners**

Do you garden? Want to make your garden perform double-duty to protect the water quality in the Huron River? Want to have supplemental water all summer in the garden for free? Our Master Rain Gardener training class is coming up in mid-January. This has become a successful program by training the community to become rain garden experts. We have tripled our program capacity by utilizing volunteer energy.

The Washtenaw Water Resources Commissioner's Office Rain Garden Program provides support for residents to dig and plant rain gardens. Rain Gardens protect the water quality in the Huron River - which is a municipal source of drinking water.



This is the third year for the Master Rain Gardener certification class – every year the class fills up and has a long waiting list. It is much in demand and makes a positive impact on water quality in the Huron River.

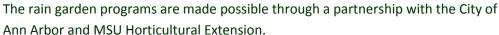


During February and March, people attend five morning classes, which culminate in their own design of a rain garden. Then in the spring, they dig and plant it themselves. This March, 28 people graduated from the Master Rain Gardener program. And many class participants joined together to dig their gardens – since many hands make light work of wielding a shovel!

Why does the Water Resources Commissioner care about Rain Gardens?

Rain gardens capture stormwater runoff before it

pollutes our local rivers. When it rains, a rain garden captures the runoff from a roof or driveway. One inch of rainfall means 600 gallons of water will be captured by a typical rain garden. This is water that won't go to municipal pipes, won't add pollution to the river, and won't contribute to flooding. This water will recharge the groundwater. But before it does, it keeps the garden looking green and lush.



Ann Arbor and MSU Horticultural Extension.



-Susan Bryan, WCWRC Rain Garden Coordinator

### Link:

Washtenaw County Rain Garden Program: www.ewashtenaw.org/raingardens

#### **Ann Arbor Utility Bill Credit**

Live in Ann Arbor? Get a break on the stormwater portion of your utility bill. Ann Arbor collects a stormwater fee to pay for stormwater conveyance – there are a lot of pipes underground that bring rain water to the river. To reduce the load on those pipes, and get a credit for doing so, build a rain garden that captures at least 50% of the area of your roof, and is at least 130 square feet. Send your info to storm@a2gov.org to be assigned a credit on your next utility bill.

