



## Administrator's Message

**GREETINGS EVERYONE!** It's a new year and I'm elated with our accomplishments for 2011. I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and time spent with your families. Though 2011 was filled with a lot of challenges and surprises, it was a good year for the County. We were able to balance the budget and avoid any major organizational changes in staff. We're looking ahead to the 2014/15 budget year and upcoming elections. As you may remember our Board of Commissioners will go from 11 to 9 members with the redistricting that took place last April. The Apportionment Commission voted unanimously on a plan that will reduce the number of districts in Washtenaw from 11 to 9. To learn more about the 2011 redistricting and this year's elections, please visit the Washtenaw [Elections website](#).

### *Group of 180*

This year's first Group of 180 meeting is scheduled for **February 10, 2012**. As you know the "Group of 180" pulls together key people from across the organization on a quarterly basis to discuss new challenges, shifting priorities and new initiatives. This month's meeting will include internal audit control training by Christine Dobrovich from Experis Finance and I will address departmental restructuring for the organization. An invitation for restructuring opportunities will go out to all Appointed & Elected Department Heads, as well as Managers to engage in a roundtable discussion with Administration regarding collaboration & restructuring. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!



News from the \_\_\_\_\_  
*Administrator*

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# Internal Audit Announcement



At the direction of the Board of Commissioners, Experis, an independent firm, has been retained to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the County's internal financial controls. The Board

firmly believes that we must ensure we have proper checks and balances in place for all of our important business processes, so taxpayer monies are safeguarded and used for the purposes for which they were raised.

## Internal controls are simply good business practices.

Internal financial controls are meant to be an integral part of any organization's financial and business policies and procedures. Internal financial controls consist of all the measures taken by an organization to protect its resources against waste, fraud, and inefficiency; to ensure the accuracy and reliability of accounting and operating information; to secure compliance with the policies and procedures of the organization; and to evaluate the level of performance in all areas of the organization.

## Everyone within the County has some role in internal controls:

- The Board of Commissioners and County Administration establish our standards of integrity, ethics, and competence. They set the "tone at the top" for a positive internal financial control environment.
- County-wide elected officials and department heads oversee internal financial controls within their units.
- Managers and supervisory personnel are responsible for executing internal financial control policies and procedures at the detail level within their specific units.

## The work to be performed by the independent firm will consist of:

1. A review of county-wide internal controls in place today, including the tone set by the County's key leaders. **A survey of selected County staff will be used to assess the perceived tone at the top.**

2. A financial risk assessment of County departments and operations, to identify those areas that may be most at-risk. **Interviews will be conducted with key County fiscal staff to assess the level of risk.**
3. Development of a multi-year internal auditing schedule for departments, on a rotating basis.
4. Performance of internal auditing work for one or more departments.
5. Assistance with establishing an anonymous fraud hotline that can be used by employees to report possible fraudulent behavior that comes to their attention.
6. Provide internal control/ethics training to applicable County staff. **This will take place initially at the February 10<sup>th</sup> Group of 180 meeting as well as other training events at the County.**
7. Assistance with developing a code of conduct/code of ethics for the County.

Experis was selected through an RFP process by a team of County employees representing a cross section of departments. Experis has the next ten months to complete the first phase of their contract.

Should you have the opportunity to interact with Experis' representative, we request your cooperation with their requests for information and their need for a few minutes of your time.

Pete Collinson presented information regarding internal audit controls at the December 7, 2011 Department Head meeting. Please go [here](#) to view Pete's presentation.

# Courthouse Construction Update

Jason Fee from Facilities Management updated the Board of Commissioners on the construction in the courthouse in downtown Ann Arbor. Below is the information he presented at the February 2nd Working Session, which shows the project's progress and next steps.

## Project Phase A – 3rd floor and Jury Room on 2nd floor

Work on Phase A completed spring 2011 on time and within budget.

- The former 15<sup>th</sup> District Court suite on the second floor was remodeled to allow jury assembly to move from the third floor to the second floor, and provide operations that are more efficient.
- Work on the third floor was designed and built to accommodate the Juvenile Court.
- Staff moved from 2270 Platt rd to the third floor of 101 E. Huron.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Juvenile Court Staff



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Jury Room



## Project Phase B – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor East Wing

Remodeling on Phase B is scheduled for completion March 16 and is projected to be on time and within budget.

- Phase B on the first floor is broken down into four sub phases.
- Court business interaction areas will be located in the newly remodeled area.
- The following areas are also located in phase B; staff lunchroom, file room, BAR Association, Legal Resource office and Court Administration.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Before



## 1<sup>st</sup> Floor After

# 2011 Retirements



**W**e are headed into the actuarial season! An actuarial is the annual report on which the organization can estimate needs for funding future retiree pensions. In my previous newsletter I reported that at the end of 2011 **74 employees** were in the process of retiring from the County. I also mentioned the average number of retirements normally experienced during any given year is around 30. Washtenaw County experienced **117 retirements in 2011**, below is a breakdown of that number by area. I thank all of our retirees for their dedication and hard work and wish them the best as they embark on a new journey in their lives.

◆ Civic Infrastructure	12
◆ Community & Economic Development	6
◆ Health & Human Services	51
◆ Land Use & Environment	4
◆ Public Safety & Justice	35
◆ Support Services	9

With such a large number of retirements, we've experienced a great shift in our organization and understand that it also has created stress and uncertainty for many. We are very mindful of everyone's concerns and believe that there are also opportunities for efficiencies and service improvements. The Board of Commissioners have been engaged in our development of long-term strategies. To address the large scale changes in our organization, we will be providing a hiring review process to Department Heads and requesting feedback for restructuring opportunities. We will keep you posted on County recruitment and hiring opportunities.



# Head Start Update

On September 21, 2011, I recommended relinquishing our Head Start grantee status through my proposed 2012/13 budget. The Board of Commissioners adopted a budget, which included this recommendation on November 16, 2011. At my direction, a letter was then mailed to our Head Start regional office notifying them of our intent to relinquish the Washtenaw County grantee status effective July 31, 2012. We received confirmation of acceptance of the relinquishment from our region in December. The federal government will now post a request for proposals to begin accepting applications from potential new grantees for Washtenaw County Head Start.

It is imperative that the County be involved in ensuring a smooth, seamless transition to the next grantee. As a display of our commitment; myself, along with Board of Commissioners Chair Conan Smith attended the two most recent Head Start Policy Council meetings. These meetings allowed us to hear the concerns of key stakeholders in the Head Start Program. Washtenaw Intermediate School District Superintendent Scott Menzel was also present in the second of these two meetings. It was made clear that the WISD is interested in pursuing Head Start Grantee status for the Washtenaw County program.



Mr. Menzel, County representatives, and the Policy Council discussed ways that the WISD could put in a strong proposal to the federal government. It was also revealed that under the WISD, the Head Start program has the potential to expand by adding capacity for additional students. Although my recommendation to relinquish the program was a difficult one, I believe that the program will continue to be an excellent one, and may have even more opportunity to thrive if administered by the WISD.

# Humane Society of Huron Valley



**W**ashtenaw County has had a long standing relationship with the Humane Society of Huron Valley for the provision of animal control services. Ongoing conversations have led to the development of a proposed contract which will provide the County with continued animal control services and fund the HSHV through December 31, 2012, pending approval by the Board of Commissioners. In addition to agreeing on the funding aspect of the contract, both the County and the HSHV will participate on a committee, with direct oversight from the Sheriff, to determine costs and services of animal control in Washtenaw County. If approved at the February 15th Board of Commissioners meeting, the agreement will stabilize animal control in the County and offer a framework to determine costs and services moving forward. Washtenaw County and the Humane Society of Huron Valley have a longstanding partnership, and I am pleased to announce the proposed continuation of relations as we work through some of the larger issues. As of the close of business on Friday, February 10th, you can view the agreement on the Board of Commissioners Agenda Page.



## 2012 BOC RETREAT



**T**he Board of Commissioners had their retreat on January 21st in which they discussed strategic priorities for the county in 2012/13. The retreat was held at the Parks and Recreation Administration Building and was attended by Elected Officials, the County Clerk's Office, County Administration, Department Heads and the media. Board Chair, Conan Smith lead the discussion and covered the areas below.

- ◆ Support Programs that Help Residents Feel Safe And Secure
- ◆ Support Programs that Address the Basic Needs of Children and Families
- ◆ Support Programs that Increase Economic Opportunity for Residents
- ◆ Integrate Efforts Across Agencies to Meet Strategic Priorities
- ◆ Ensure Our Fiscal Responsibility Focusing on Long-Term Institutional Stability
- ◆ Improve the strategic integration of human services with the provision of public safety and justice;
- ◆ Address homelessness as a public safety and security issue;
- ◆ Enhance the interoperability of separate departments and agencies offering children's services;
- ◆ Proactively engage stakeholders in assessing opportunities;
- ◆ Focus resources on geographies with the greatest need as evidenced by dependable data; and
- ◆ Lead the development and implementation of a "Blueprint for Collaboration" that accomplishes the following:
  - \* Reductions in cost or duplication of the provision of "invisible" services; and
  - \* Increased support for discretionary services that are board priorities.