



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Outcomes for Michigan's Future

Ensuring Efficient and Effective Government

In Brief

Today's Successes

- Over the past three decades of training, **78 percent of newly elected county commissioners** have completed the MSUE new county commissioner training.
- An MSUE and International Clerks Association municipal clerk training program has **graduated 50 certified municipal clerks each year** over the past 20 years.
- Last December, **28 newly elected legislators enrolled and participated** in the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) and MSUE **Legislative Leadership Program**.

Tomorrow's Results

- **About 65 percent of county board chairs and committee chairs** will complete the MSUE "Conducting Effective Public Meetings" workshop series in 2005.
- **More than 350 county commissioners and elected county officers** will complete the MSUE "County Budgeting and Finance" workshop series in 2005.
- MSUE will help local officials create **five new municipal fire authorities** in response to declining financial resources and increasing service demands.
- **Three regional MSUE workshops** will be held to train municipal officials on alternatives to self-production and self-provision for municipal service delivery. More than 150 local officials are expected to participate.
- MSUE, in collaboration with Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Department of Treasury, will launch the **On-Line Local Unit Fiscal Database Project**, which will provide state and local officials and researchers with access to revenue and expenditure information for all general purpose units.

Michigan's Priorities in Effective Government:

Creating Effective Local Government: Michigan has 1,859 units of local government at the village, city, township and county levels. The state has a strong heritage of “local rule” and local representation. Though this pride in local control and decision making is an asset, Michigan local governments, like the state government, are experiencing financial difficulties. Today the complexities of the technical decisions that must be made become complicated by the number of volunteer and part-time elected officials. Decisions are often disjointed between small and neighboring units of government.

Increasing Efficiency in Delivery of Community Services: The interaction of the Headlee Amendment, Proposal A, declining state revenue-sharing payments and voter resistance to approving additional tax levies has resulted in local officials making difficult choices between reducing personnel and reducing services to balance budgets while at the same time funding mandated services.

Wise Use and Effective Decision Making Around Land Use: Michigan's use of natural resources is expanding at an unprecedented rate despite Michigan's modest population growth. If current land use patterns continue, between 1.5 million and 2 million more acres of land will be urbanized by 2020 (Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council).

MSU Capacity:

- **Reach:** MSUE provides local government training programs that cover all 83 Michigan counties.
- **Experience:** MSUE and MAES are two of the longest standing research and information providers in the state. Local elected officials frequently turn to MSUE expertise in public policy education analysis, assistance and facilitation.
- **Expertise:** World-renowned experts from Michigan State University with state and national connections to additional authorities are working in all areas of local government financing, land use, community and economic development, and state and local public policy development.
- **Track record:** MSUE uses proven methods of quickly and cost-efficiently moving peer-reviewed research to recommendations to program development and implementation yielding documented results.
- **“Feet on the street”:** MSUE has staff members trained and on hand in every county, making it easy to position assets, tools, programs and ideas in every corner of the state.
- **Trust:** MSUE and MAES provide unbiased, scientifically sound research and education to help ensure that Michigan citizens can make educated decisions at local, regional and state levels.
- **Content:** MAES and MSUE conduct primary research and use the results to build on a large library of state and local governance programs.

Sampler of Success:

- Since 1968, MSUE, in collaboration with the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), has provided training for newly elected county commissioners following the November general election. Over the past three decades of training, **78 percent of newly elected county commissioners have completed the training.**
- Effective governance requires effective and efficient conduct of public meetings. MSUE, in collaboration with the MAC, has **trained 65 percent of all newly appointed county commissioner board chairs and committee chairs.**

- The MSUE state and local government team, in collaboration with the International Clerks Association, conducts a three-year municipal clerk certification program designed to increase the capacity of municipal clerks to fulfill their job responsibilities. The program has **graduated 50 certified municipal clerks each year** over the past 20 years. It increases not only the technical skills of municipal clerks but focuses on effective leadership and efficient operations.
- Increasing county officials' capacity to manage county finances is the objective of a 30-year program sponsored by MSUE and the MAC offered in odd-numbered years. About **45 percent of all county commissioners** participate in this biennial event, which has been expanded to include all elected county officers.
- Declining resources at the local level require increasing efficiency in the delivery of community services. Examining alternative institutional arrangements for service delivery offers viable options to local communities to maintain or expand community services. In the past two years, MSUE local government specialists have assisted **65 communities and 450 local officials in examining production and provision options such as intergovernmental contracting and functional consolidation of services** (e.g. fire and emergency services). MSUE has provided the research and technical information on the economic impact of alternative arrangements and facilitated community discussions that have resulted in **10 new intergovernmental arrangements involving 30 communities**, which have permitted local governments to maintain or increase service levels without raising taxes.
- MSUE state and local government team members have provided technical assistance in the development of six strategic plans for local government to assist the local units in repositioning to cope with declining resources and an increase in service demands. The plans include a seven-year review of local government finances and expenditure trends.
- MSUE maintains the only electronic database of conditional land transfer program agreements (P.A. 425, 1984) and provides the database to the secretary of state's office. In addition, MSU provides a written analysis every two years on the utilization of the state policy in promoting economic development.
- The Legislative Leadership Program is jointly sponsored by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) and MSUE. This program links scholars, legislators and practitioners in a discussion of public policy issues and the policy-making process. The Legislative Leadership Program kicks off every two years, shortly after state elections, with a three-day session for newly elected state legislators on timely public policy issues. Last December, **28 newly elected legislators enrolled and participated in the Legislative Leadership Program.**
- Since 2001, more than 2,000 citizens and elected officials representing **76 Michigan counties** have learned about tools available to conserve land while allowing community growth and development through the Citizen Planner program. Most participants are members of local planning and zoning boards. Because of Citizen Planner, the 64 percent of participants who serve on local planning and zoning boards indicated that they paid closer attention to legal issues. The Michigan Municipal Risk Management Association spent **\$15 million in the past 10 years on legal fees and damages because of flawed planning and zoning decisions.**

Outcomes for Michigan's Future:

MSUE and MAES are engaged in research projects and educational programs that will help Michigan's communities and local units of government make difficult but informed policy decisions.

MAES research initiatives over the next year will focus on:

- Comparative indicators for community development, environmental planning and public policy formation.
- Incentives for and impacts of land use change.

Using research results and departmental specialist expertise, MSUE will deliver educational programs on **increasing governance capacity, increasing efficiency in delivery of community services and land use.**

Ensuring Efficient and Effective Government

Increasing Governance Capacity

- **About 65 percent of county board chairs and committee chairs** will complete the "Conducting Effective Public Meetings" workshop series in 2005.
- **More than 350 county commissioners and elected county officers** will complete the "County Budgeting and Finance" workshop series in 2005. The focus of the workshops will be budgeting in a resource-constrained environment.
- An electronic Web-based county/state revenue-sharing calculator will be developed to assist county finance officers in projecting cashflow requirements given the forward collecting of county operating property taxes in lieu of receiving state revenue sharing.
- More than **75 municipal clerks** will achieve their certified clerk status in FY 2005-06 and **50 municipal clerks** will achieve master clerk status.

Increasing Efficiency in Delivery of Community Services

- **Five new municipal fire authorities** will be created/finalized in response to declining financial resources and increasing service demands.
- **Three regional MSUE workshops** will be held to train municipal officials on alternatives to self-production and self-provision for municipal service delivery. Increasing municipal financial constraints, especially related to fire and police services, will increase pressure on local units to seek alternative service provision arrangements. More than 150 local officials are expected to participate.
- **Six financial trend analyses and financial plans** will be completed for municipalities identified or referred by the Department of Treasury or self-referred because they are experiencing financial difficulties.
- MSUE, in collaboration with Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Department of Treasury, will launch the **On-Line Local Unit Fiscal Database Project**, which will provide state and local officials and researchers with access to revenue and expenditure information for all general purpose units. Financial information for local units was previously restricted to hard copy files with the Department of Treasury. MSUE will host and maintain the database for three years before turning over the program to state government.

Land Use Education

- MSUE will provide more than **350 Citizen Planner program** participants with in-depth information that they can use to benefit Michigan communities. Participants, many of whom are planning and zoning board members, will learn to reduce land consumption by exploring conservation planning and development alternatives. One strategy shows how building new homes in established developments and redeveloped brownfields instead of creating new developments helps **save local government more than \$17,000 per household in new infrastructure costs.**

Spotlight on Success

"MSU Extension has contributed to improving county governments through the new county commissioner training classes and technical expertise that has increased the capacity of local officials to address key issues. The 36-year partnership between MSU Extension and the Michigan Association of Counties has remained a strong, viable force for improving local government."

Corney VanderKam, Ottawa County commissioner and President of the Michigan Association of Counties

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity institution.

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