
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE



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**Kent County Administrator Daryl Delabbio announces
June 2017 Retirement after 40 Years of Distinguished Public Service**

GRAND RAPIDS – This morning Kent County Administrator/Controller Daryl Delabbio announced he will retire on June 30, 2017, wrapping up a career spanning four decades in municipal management. Delabbio has held the Kent County Administrator/Controller role since 1998, after three years as Assistant County Administrator. Prior to working at Kent County he was City Manager in Rockford for 11 years and served in two other Michigan cities.

During his tenure Delabbio successfully built partnerships within the community and made it a priority to provide excellent customer service and encourage diversity and inclusion throughout the County. His efforts helped make the DeVos Place Convention Center a brilliant success. He has worked closely with Experience Grand Rapids and The Right Place, Inc., who promote our region on national and international platforms. He worked with Ambassador Peter Secchia and a number of other donors to create Millennium Park, which draws hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. He and his staff are dedicated to financial stability, receiving Triple-A Bond Ratings from Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investor Services for 18 consecutive years, including those years when the national economy struggled.

Delabbio is extremely well-respected by peers, local leaders and philanthropists alike. He is currently a Regional Vice President of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The organization boasts over 9,000 members worldwide. Daryl has served as board member on the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, The Right Place, Inc., Experience Grand Rapids, Davenport University Maine School of Business Advisory Board, Grand Valley State University School of Public and Nonprofit Administration Advisory Board, and was involved in the inception of the Kent County/Grand Rapids Convention and Arena Authority.

"I want to thank the Board of Commissioners that I have been fortunate to serve during the past 21-plus years," Delabbio said in a letter to the Board. "I appreciate the Boards – past and present – for their leadership and commitment to public service, and for their support and confidence. I also want to acknowledge and thank the extremely hard-working, dedicated, professional staff who are second to none."

"Daryl's work for Kent County is priceless, and he has truly led with a servant's heart," said Kent County Board of Commissioners' Chair Jim Saalfeld. "When a leader leaves a job, you hope it's left in better shape than when he or she arrived. Today, I believe Kent County is in as good of shape as it has ever been, and Daryl has played a significant role in getting us there, spearheading successful public/private partnerships with other local units of government, the private sector, and the philanthropic community. It is a great honor for me to work by Daryl's side, and more importantly, it is an honor to call him friend."

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“Daryl Delabbio has been an outstanding example of the best kind of public servant: resourceful, thoughtful, creative and dedicated. For the more than 20 years that Daryl has dedicated his career to serving the people of Kent County, our community has benefited from his vision and commitment to deliver services efficiently, effectively and transparently,” said Vice-Chair Shana Shroll, Kent County Board of Commissioners. “He has worked tirelessly – not only among county leaders but among other levels of government throughout the region, and his leadership and spirit of collaboration extends beyond Kent County and the State of Michigan with his work on the International City/County Management Association. We have all been blessed to have Daryl working with us over these many years and I will miss him dearly as both a both colleague and a friend.”

“It might sound hokey, but when I hear the phrase ‘public servant’ I think of Daryl,” added Commissioner Jim Talen, Kent County Board of Commissioners. “I had the good fortune of meeting him before he became County Administrator, as part of a group that was working to improve the quality of services provided by local government. He has worked tirelessly for the citizens of Kent County. His shoes will be very hard to fill.”

His impact has been felt by other community leaders:

“Daryl Delabbio is a model of professional public service. Throughout his career, his sole motivation has been to improve the lives of the constituents he serves. As a mentor, Daryl has shared his experiences and wisdom, benefitting our communities and future generations.” Greg Sundstrom, City Manager, Grand Rapids

“I've had the absolute pleasure of knowing Daryl for nearly 20 years and am proud to call him colleague and friend. When I think of a word that most aptly describes Daryl and his work over the years at the County, the word consistent is what comes to mind. The guy has been consistently committed to carrying out the vision of the County Commission and has done so with tremendous integrity. I've also appreciated how Daryl has become an empathetic listener and has administered an equity lens as it pertains to some of the societal ills that have adversely affected historically marginalized communities in our county. His commitment to being a lifelong learner around issues such as systemic racism and inequity is evident. I tell you what, he will be missed.” Joe Jones, Second Ward City Commissioner

“Daryl Delabbio has set the standard for excellence and integrity for city and county managers throughout Michigan. His contributions on ethics and professional development have had a national impact and many regard him as the best source for advice on difficult issues. For me, Daryl is former boss, mentor, friend, and colleague on the boards of many state, regional and local committees over the years. I know that I echo the sentiments of many when I say that though our friendship will continue, I will miss him very much professionally.” Al Vanderberg, Administrator, Ottawa County and former Kent County Deputy Administrator

“Daryl has been a trusted partner, colleague and friend for many years. As a board member of The Right Place, he was a champion of the organization, as well as economic development in Kent County and the region. He is a true public servant and I shall miss him.” Birgit M. Klohs, President & CEO, The Right Place, Inc.

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"Daryl has been a great colleague to work with on issues of importance to our community. Under his leadership Kent County government has been a solid, consistent partner with the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and the regional business community we represent. Daryl brings a solutions oriented approach to each issue and seeks a win-win resolution whenever possible." Rick Baker, Grand Rapids, President and CEO, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

"I have worked in five destinations throughout my career and never met a County official so committed to their role and the people of this area as Daryl has shown. If attitude, character and passion are three important characteristics of principle leadership, Daryl embodies each of them and thus, our County has benefited greatly under his tenure. I will miss his collaborative spirit, commitment to our industry and as a personal friend, his company. I wish him and Connie the very best as they open this new chapter in their lives." Doug Small, President and CEO, Experience Grand Rapids

"Through all the years and through all the complexities and diverse responsibility of county government, Daryl has always remained fair and helpful, keeping the best interest of county residents and public safety in mind." Sheriff Larry Stelma, Kent County Sheriff Department

"The Kent County Commission made a wonderful decision several years ago to hire Daryl Delabbio. Daryl is a true public servant, so rare these days; honest, open, inclusive, dedicated to good government, approachable, and a genuinely nice guy. He will truly be missed, wishing him many happy, relaxing years in retirement." Kathy Kuhn, Former Kent County Board of Commissioners' Chair

"There is an art to running a \$400 million entity with 2,000 employees and 13 bargaining units while answering to a random group of part-time would-be philosophers, each of whom has his or her own agenda, perceptions and ambitions. And Daryl is truly masterful. His commitment and dedication is absolute; his humility and empathy led to great relationships and countless win-win collaborations. Not only is Daryl a great administrator to me and countless others, he is also a great and steadfast friend." Steve Heacock, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, Spectrum Health; Former Kent County Board of Commissioners' Chair

"It was a pleasure and honor to serve with Daryl Delabbio while serving as a Kent County Commissioner. As a former Chair of the Kent County Commission, I was able to see first-hand the important contributions Daryl made to move our County forward. His vision and pragmatic approach will be missed. I wish him the best in his retirement." Sandi Frost Steensma, Former Kent County Board of Commissioners' Chair; Current President and Principal Consultant, Kennari Consulting

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