

Kent County Report

17 Years in a Row of Fiscal Fitness for Kent County

Kent County's AAA credit rating was reaffirmed for the 17th consecutive year by the rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Services. This is the highest possible credit rating that can be received. Receiving this credit rating is extremely important when the County goes to the bond markets for any infrastructure needs. High credit ratings allow the County to issue bonds at a lower interest rate – that means lower long-term costs for the County.



Board of Commissioners Chair Dan Koorndyk received applause after announcing the County's rating at the Board meeting April 23, 2015. "Michigan has endured an economic storm in recent years, with some communities truly struggling. With tough decisions and smart planning, Kent County has been fiscally responsible and strong," Koorndyk noted. "That results in long-term benefits to the communities we serve."

Koorndyk, along with County Administrator/Controller Daryl Delabbio, Treasurer Ken Parrish, and Fiscal Services Director Stephen Duarte, met with the rating agencies to review the County's financial situation. "The agencies recognize that Kent County is on course to maintain its strong budget flexibility and management profile over the next two-year outlook period," Delabbio said. "Long-term financial stability and sustainability is important for us to continue to be good stewards of public dollars."

In addition to the ratings, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recently announced Kent County received three prestigious awards: the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, and Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award.

There are approximately 3,200 counties in the United States; less than 3% of counties hold a Triple-A rating for long-term debt from both Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service.



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New FOIA Law Takes Effect July 1

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) will see a few changes soon. PA 563 of 2014, signed by Governor Rick Snyder in January, establishes uniform standards on charges for reproducing records requested under FOIA. It requires public bodies to establish specific written procedures and guidelines for FOIA requests, including a separate written summary informing the public on how to submit FOIA requests, how to understand the public body's responses to FOIA requests, deposit requirements, fee calculations, and how the public may challenge and appeal the public body's fee calculation or denial of a request.

The changes take effect on July 1, 2015. The County must provide free copies of the procedures, guidelines, and written summary upon request, and must include a free copy, or a link to the website copy, in all FOIA responses.

Kent County already has a record of responding to 100% of FOIA requests on time as prescribed by law. Attorneys from Kent County Corporate Counsel held an orientation/training session on April 24, 2015 for department FOIA coordinators. "The session allowed us to explain these changes and how it impacts the processing of requests," said Tom Dempsey, Kent County Corporate Counsel. "We want to be sure our staff understands and complies with these changes." The seminar was also offered to area municipalities interested in learning more. More than 50 people attended.

Governments must provide the records electronically, if that is the format requested, unless the agency does not have the technology to provide electronic records. If an agency misses the state-imposed deadline for responding to a FOIA request, the charge is dropped 5% for each day the response is late, up to 50%.

New Financial Management System for Kent County

Kent County's Fiscal Services, Human Resources, and Information Technology (IT) departments are working to implement a new financial and HR management system. The County entered an agreement with the Michigan Municipal Services Authority (MMSA) to purchase CGI's Advantage 360, a system that will replace an outdated program that the County has outgrown. This cloud-based, Software as a Service (SaaS) program provides government enterprise resource planning system capabilities, including powerful new features lacking in the current system.

By teaming with the MMSA, Kent County, Grand Rapids, and Genesee County are leveraging their buying power for the new CGI System. "We are taking advantage of a collaborative partnership in order to get a system that will make our operations better and more efficient," said Daryl Delabbio, Kent County Administrator/Controller. "There is a possibility through partnership that Kent County would receive grant funding through MMSA, which makes this a win-win for three municipal agencies." The system is expected to cost \$8 million over the next 5 years.

CGI says the system "reduces time, cost and risk with proven best practice business processes designed specifically for government and enables faster system implementation times through the use of a standardized, pre-configured solution." It also provided regular technology updates. Implementation of the new CGI system has already commenced. The Fiscal Services Department anticipates going live on January 1, 2016, while Human Resources plans to start using the system by April 1, 2016.

“A Perfect Storm” Damages Mental Health Funding in Kent County, for Partners



Scott Gilman, Executive Director of Network180, updates the Kent County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, April 23, 2015.

Mental Health Services are facing a crisis situation in Kent County. Network180, the local Community Mental Health Agency, recently announced their budget is looking at a \$5 million shortfall. The impact resulted in agency-wide cuts, including cutting several senior management positions, furlough days for employees, and a 10 percent salary reduction for some administrators. In total, Network180 is cutting \$1 million out of its administrative budget.

Scott Gilman, Executive Director of Network180, provided an update to Kent County Commissioners on Thursday, April 23. He said we

are victims of a “Perfect Storm.” Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recently completed an analysis of reimbursement rates, reducing the amount reimbursed to the LRP by \$10 million. There has also been a decline in West Michigan Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) enrollment, reducing funding of Lakeshore Regional Partners (LRP) another \$7 million: a total of \$17 million in the red. As a result, these reduced Kent County/Network180’s funds by approximately \$5 million.

Governor Rick Snyder, in an effort to cut administrative costs about two years ago, moved Network180 and several other community-based mental health agencies into a regionalized partnership, the LRP. While regionalization efforts anticipated better coordination of services and lowered cost, it has actually put Kent County and Network180 in an unfair position.

Gilman told the board that the rates paid to the new region are filled with inequity. While Oakland County receives about \$400 per enrollee to treat each person with developmental disabilities, Kent County is

receiving a paltry \$260 per enrollee.

In April, the Kent County Family and Children’s Coordinating Council took the unprecedented step of passing a resolution, urging the Board of Commissioners to continue its education and advocacy on this important issue. Staff from the Administrator’s Office and Network180 have been meeting with elected officials and DHHS staff to address the challenges facing the LRP as the Pre-Paid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) for the region.

Gilman suggested that in order to move forward, he will continue to work with lawmakers in Lansing. He suggested the Commissioners advocate for DHHS to adopt a more equitable formula for reimbursement and work to correct TANF revenue decline. On a regional level, Gilman says he will continue to reduce administrative costs across the region, and align benefit and costs across the region in a systemic manner.





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CDBG Information at the Click of a Mouse

Getting up-to-date information on Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) is easier than ever for our local municipalities. The Office of Housing and Community Development worked with Fiscal Services and Information Technology, as well as accessKent.com website administrator WebTecs, Inc., to develop a new application. Previously, a representative of the city, township or village would call or email to ask for updated projects, balances, and costs. This process could be time-consuming. The new system allows the local unit to access that information using accessKent.com. The information is uploaded to the website on a weekly basis. This new system can only be used by employees who have been given permission through their municipal office.

Kent County GIS Team to be Recognized

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team in the County's Information Technology Department has been selected to receive a Special Achievement in GIS award at the 2015 ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) User Conference. This award is given to user sites around the world to recognize outstanding work with GIS technology. The award goes to about 175 agencies, out of more than 100,000 eligible. Congratulations to the GIS Team for their dedication and hard work!

Kent County Board of Commissioners & Administrator's Office

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Kent County Mission Statement

The mission of Kent County government is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.