Dear Resident:

Thank you for taking the opportunity to read my Autumn 2020 Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an update on Wayne County issues in which I have been involved as a member of the Wayne County Commission, as well as to provide helpful information to residents of our communities.

As we are all well aware, this year has presented us with tremendous struggles stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Tough choices are having to be made in business, in our personal lives and in government to try to balance the work that needs to be done with the safety and social realities that we are facing.

However, in the face of these challenges, I have seen the resolve and generosity from our Downriver community; residents helping their vulnerable neighbors, manufacturers producing and donating PPE to essential workers and citizens finding creative ways to brighten the days of others during social distancing.

It is my hope that Wayne County can continue to be a partner to our residents, businesses and others as we continue forward during this time. In addition, we must always strive to do these things in an accountable and transparent manner. Our residents deserve nothing less than this.

I am truly honored to represent the Commission’s 14th district on behalf of the residents of Brownstown, Flat Rock, Rockwood, Taylor and Woodhaven. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Raymond E. Basham
Wayne County Commissioner - District 14
Grade separation gets approval to move forward

One of the most significant news events of the last year was the approval of the construction of a grade separation at the railroad crossing near the intersection of Allen Road and Van Horn Road in the city of Woodhaven.

This project has been discussed for decades, but previously lacked the necessary funding for completion. Through a partnership between Wayne County, the city of Woodhaven and the state of Michigan funds have been secured to move the project forward.

The project will create a grade separation at Allen Road, elevating the train crossing above the road, which will be lowered by more than 20 feet to allow motorists to pass freely under the bridge. The projects are expected to take up to three years to complete with an estimated combined cost of up to $39 million, which will include road reconstruction work at both Allen and Van Horn roads as well as construction of a pump house and relocation of utility, water and sewer lines.

On average, more than 30,000 vehicles, including 2,140 commercial trucks, traverse the Allen Road crossing daily, typically competing with trains using the CN Flat Rock Yard. While the average stoppage caused by the trains is just over nine minutes, that amounts to more than one hour in total per day, and it’s not uncommon for some stoppages to last 45 minutes or more. In one instance in 2014, due to a mechanical failure, trains blocked the crossing for over six hours.

Design and engineering work has been ongoing with construction expected to begin in the Spring of 2021.

Report shows procedures cut Wayne County costs

Commissioner Raymond Basham, who chairs the commission’s Committee on Audit, praised the county’s Office of Legislative Auditor General following the release of its 2019 annual report, as required under the county charter.

“Everyone should be pleased with the results,” Commissioner Basham said. “The Office of Legislative Auditor General made some outstanding recommendations that were widely adopted. The end result is substantial savings for county taxpayers.”

The committee received the 2019 annual report in early January and unanimously forwarded the report to be heard before the full commission meeting, where it also received unanimous approval.

Per the report, the Office of Legislative Auditor General strives “to examine and evaluate county activities in order to achieve transparency and accountability of public funds, and improve the operations of county government for the benefit of Wayne County citizens and the customers of its services.”

The report showed that in 2019, the Office of Legislative Auditor General – under the direction of Auditor General Marcella Cora – completed new reports/projects regarding county operations, which included 94 new recommendations. Adopted recommendations had a financial impact of more than $26.7 million related to inappropriate, questionable and/or unsupported costs.

The office also reported a 94 percent implementation rate of its previously issued recommendations to date.

The full report can be viewed on Office of Legislative Auditor General’s webpage at www.waynecounty.com.

Auditor general’s office representatives and audit committee members meet twice each month to review county finances.

Meetings are open to the public and currently being held via Zoom.

The Committee on Audit’s meeting schedule and agendas are available at its section of the county commission page on the county’s website, www.waynecounty.com/commission.

Videos of all committee meetings are also available on the county website, www.waynecounty.com, and on the Wayne County Commission YouTube page.
Commissioner Basham presented a resolution to Trooper Meghan Neidy of the Michigan State Police who heroically saved a life of a motorist in Taylor.

Commissioner Basham provided an update on county issues before the legislative forum that was hosted by the Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Basham made several stops in District 14 communities, including the presentation of a resolution to A & B Locksmiths in Taylor for 45 years of outstanding service.

Commissioner Basham recognized Flat Rock resident Alton Schroeder in celebrating 25 years as the “Voice of Flat Rock Football.”

Commissioner Basham joined officials from Wayne County and the city of Taylor to dedicate the playscape at Vince Caplis Park. The park is part of the old Taylor Northeast Little League complex (now a part of the newly merged Taylor North LL). The playscape was acquired through a Wayne County Parks grant, secured by Commissioner Basham, along with matching funds from the city.

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Commission meetings continue on Zoom app

Due to stay in place orders involving the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wayne County Commission is continuing to hold its meetings by teleconference until further notice.

The public can participate in the meetings, as they occur, via the Zoom app. Zoom can be accessed via computer, tablet or smartphone. Individuals can join meetings by visiting https://zoom.us/j/8599664354 and dialing (312) 626-6799.

The meeting ID number is contained on the meeting agenda. Meeting agendas are available on the county webpage, www.waynecounty.com/commission. Zoom also allows the public to comment and ask questions.

Meetings are held in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act and under the commission’s standard rules of order.

County keeping you informed on COVID-19

A COVID-19 resource section has been added to the home page of the Wayne County website at www.waynecounty.com.

The page includes information on local testing sites, COVID-19 assistance sites and resources, including help for small businesses, and a dashboard on COVID-19 cases by community, updated at 5 p.m. each day. In addition, the county health department issues an update Monday through Friday on COVID-19 information, including information relating to Wayne County, Michigan and the nation.

This information is also shared on the Wayne County Commission’s Facebook page.

Also, the Wayne County Public Health Division and Garden City Hospital have jointly opened a drive-thru COVID-19 and antibody testing site.

Testing is available for all county residents and employees and no appointments are necessary. Individuals can drive up beginning at 7 a.m. weekdays to the tent in the hospital parking lot. Garden City Hospital is located at 6255 Inkster Road.