Commissioner Clark-Coleman is named to airport board of directors

On Feb. 6, I received an incredible honor from my fellow Wayne County commissioners when they unanimously named me to the Commission’s seat on the Wayne County Airport Authority board of directors. The Authority, which meets monthly, operates Detroit Metropolitan and Willow Run airports.

It is a tremendous responsibility, one that I really wanted and am looking forward to as the Commission’s voice on the seven-member board. I promised my fellow commissioners that I would make them proud.

The airports are critical to Wayne County’s economy. From the more than 32 million passengers who used Metro in 2013 to the more than 440 million pounds of cargo that’s shipped annually, you see the awesome responsibility that comes with being on the board, which lives by the motto, “Making the world available.”

The Authority’s mission statement is, “To operate safe, secure and dynamic air transportation facilities for our customers, creating economic vitality by providing global travel, cargo and business opportunities.” Its core values are teamwork, accountability, customer satisfaction, employee respect, integrity and diversity.

Metro is by far the state’s largest and busiest airport, while Willow Run – a short drive west of Metro along I-94 – handles cargo and also serves corporate and general aviation clients. A 2014 University of Michigan-Dearborn study showed that Metro itself has a $10.2 billion economic impact on the entire state.


My fellow Authority board members are Chairman Michael Jackson Sr., Vice-Chair Suzanne Hall, Nabih Ayad, Michael Garavaglia, Ronald Hall Jr. and Reginald Turner. Together, we are managing a $362.5 million budget and working to ensure that Metro and Willow Run continue to be a driving force in Wayne County’s economy while offering a first-class customer experience.

When Metro and Willow Run airports win, everyone in Wayne County wins.

Irma Clark-Coleman
Wayne County Commissioner
Grandsons, grand occasion!

Commissioner Irma Clark-Coleman receives the oath of office from her grandsons, James Moss Jr. (left) and Jamel Moss, at the Commission's organizational meeting held Jan. 8. Looking on is Commissioner Clark-Coleman’s daughter, Melanie Moss. The commissioner is in her third term and represents the 5th District, which covers north-central Detroit.

Job opportunities on tap for new arena district

District Detroit is hosting neighborhood career outreach meetings to inform the public about construction job opportunities in the proposed 50-block sports and entertainment district that will be anchored by the Detroit Red Wings’ new arena and connect the city’s downtown and midtown districts.

The arena will be built west of Woodward Avenue and north of I-75. The District, which includes the arena, is expected to create about 8,300 construction and related jobs and 1,100 permanent jobs. Ground has been broken for the arena, and construction is expected to start this spring. The project is expected to be completed in summer 2017.

Both of the meetings will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They’re being held May 6 at the Patton Recreation Center, 2301 Woodmere; and May 14 at the Northwest Activity Center, 18100 Meyers.

Olympia Development’s goal is to have at least 30 percent of its construction jobs going to Detroit businesses and at least 51 percent of the jobs going to Detroit residents. At the meetings, the public can learn about skilled trades associations; training and financial aid programs; and help with GED certificate preparation and testing.

Visit DistrictDetroit.com for more information.

Newest installment of county’s Citizen’s Guide is now available

For many residents, the function of Wayne County government is somewhat of a mystery.

To shed light on the process, the Wayne County Commission has published its second edition of “A Citizen’s Guide to Wayne County Government,” with updated information for the 2015-16 term, which began in January.

The 24-page booklet explaining how county government works, including its budget, along with its history, is now available to residents in District 5.

In addition, the guide offers contact information for commissioners, as well as other elected officials, and various departments throughout the county.

The Citizen’s Guide is also available online under the “News & Resources” menu on the commission’s home page at waynecounty.com/commission.

Residents can also contact Commissioner Clark-Coleman’s office to have a copy mailed to them. Her email is iclark@waynecounty.com and her office phone is 313-224-0942.
Officials from the Wayne County Veterans Services Division were looking for a way to provide assistance to veterans beyond the scope of what it could offer.

A public-private partnership proved to be the answer.

Kevin Kelley, Wayne County director of Senior and Veterans Services, brought a Veterans Consortium Agreement proposal to the Wayne County Commission – and, just as important, a private donor brought a $10,000 check to kick it off.

The check was presented by Robert Miller, president of the nonprofit Real Estate Donations USA, at the Commission’s Special Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs meeting March 19. Also participating was William Sumner, president of the nonprofit My Vet Connect and chairman/CEO of Health Management Systems of America (HMSA). Miller’s charity is based in the HMSA building at 601 Washington, downtown Detroit.

Real Estate Donations USA has donated more than $4 million to several causes, including those involving veterans. It presented houses to two veterans at the 2014 Quick Lane Bowl at Ford Field in Detroit.

My Vet Connect, which is using private money, is a partnership among HMSA, the Wayne County Veterans Services Division and the Veterans Community Action Team, which is an outgrowth of the division and has relationships with more than 200 organizations that help veterans. The partnership must be approved by the full Wayne County Commission.

My Vet Connect aims to connect veterans and their dependents to vital services like job placement, counseling and financial assistance, among others. Call the Veterans Services Division at 313-224-5045 for more information.

**Commissioner accepts $10K donation for veterans assistance**

Officials from the Wayne County Veterans Services Division were looking for a way to provide assistance to veterans beyond the scope of what it could offer.

A public-private partnership proved to be the answer.

Kevin Kelley, Wayne County director of Senior and Veterans Services, brought a Veterans Consortium Agreement proposal to the Wayne County Commission – and, just as important, a private donor brought a $10,000 check to kick it off.

The check was presented by Robert Miller, president of the nonprofit Real Estate Donations USA, at the Commission’s Special Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs meeting March 19. Also participating was William Sumner, president of the nonprofit My Vet Connect and chairman/CEO of Health Management Systems of America (HMSA). Miller’s charity is based in the HMSA building at 601 Washington, downtown Detroit.

Real Estate Donations USA has donated more than $4 million to several causes, including those involving veterans. It presented houses to two veterans at the 2014 Quick Lane Bowl at Ford Field in Detroit.

My Vet Connect, which is using private money, is a partnership among HMSA, the Wayne County Veterans Services Division and the Veterans Community Action Team, which is an outgrowth of the division and has relationships with more than 200 organizations that help veterans. The partnership must be approved by the full Wayne County Commission.

My Vet Connect aims to connect veterans and their dependents to vital services like job placement, counseling and financial assistance, among others. Call the Veterans Services Division at 313-224-5045 for more information.

**VCAT’s presence assists veterans in seeking variety of key services**

“Serving those who have served.”

That’s the goal of the Wayne County Department of Veterans Services and its VCAT – or Veterans Community Action Team – project. VCAT bases its mission on four “pillars”: Health care, education, quality of life and employment for veterans.

“It is important that veterans have the opportunity to seek services they require and have earned,” Commissioner Irma Clark-Coleman said. “Wayne County is honored to assist those veterans who bravely have served our country.”

VCAT takes a “no wrong door” approach, meaning that if the office doesn’t have the answer to a veteran’s concern, it will find the agency that does among the roughly 200 that are affiliated with the group. Bureaucratic red tape can easily frustrate a veteran to the point of them not pursuing the services they need and have earned.

VCAT also works with veterans offices in Macomb and Oakland counties because needs and agencies cross boundaries.

There are an estimated 120,000 veterans living in Wayne County, but officials believe the number is more than 140,000 because some veterans haven’t sought services.

To learn more about veterans’ services offered by Wayne County, call 313-224-5045 or visit www.waynecounty.com/svs/636.htm.
**Enjoy summer with a stop at Aquatic Center**

A sure way to enjoy the summer is The Wayne County Family Aquatic Center at Chandler Park on Detroit’s east side.

The facility, owned by Wayne County, features a wave pool, more than 100 spray fountains and two 23-foot-high water slides where swimmers can body or tube slide into the pool.

The Family Aquatic Center also features the “Double Dipping” concession stand, the “Tikki Hut” shop, a bathhouse and a first-aid station.

The pool is staffed by lifeguards, and swim lessons are offered.

The center also hosts special events, and family reunions, birthday parties and group gatherings are welcome. Special rates are offered for groups of 15 or more.

The Family Aquatic Center is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., with the pool closing at 6:30 p.m. It’s open weekends from Memorial Day to June 14, and every day from June 15 to Labor Day.

Daily entry fees for Wayne County residents are $2 for ages 2 and younger, $5 for ages 3 to 12 and $7 for adults. Nonresident fees are $1 more.

To get to the center, take I-94 to Conner Avenue (Exit 220) and go south. Turn left on Shoemaker, which turns into Chandler Park Drive. It’s at 12660 Chandler Park Drive.

Visit www.waynecountyaquatic.com or call 313-822-POOL (7665) for more information.

**Commission’s attention now turns to CEO’s reorganization plan**

When a new Wayne County executive is elected, the office is required to submit a reorganization plan. County Executive Warren Evans, who took office in January, has crafted a plan with several departmental changes in light of the county’s deficit.

On March 31, CEO Evans forwarded his reorganization plan to the Wayne County Commission, which has 90 days to review and cast its vote either in favor or against the plan. If approved, it is projected to save nearly $3.7 million annually and an important step in the process of erasing the $70 million deficit.

Here are some highlights:

- The departments of Health and Human Services, Children and Family Services, and Senior and Veterans Services, along with the Division of Community Development, would be merged into the new Department of Health, Community Wellness and Senior Services, which is projected to save approximately $570,000 annually and merge services offered in different places.

- EDGE, or the Department of Economic Development Growth Engine, would be eliminated and activities would move to the Wayne County Economic Development Corp. to save about $550,000 annually.

- The Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility staff would be reduced to reflect it operating at 55 to 60 percent of capacity. The county and state would each save $700,000 annually.

- Offenders would be moved from the Alternative Work Force to nonprofit service to save $800,000 annually.

- The Wayne County Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which serves an average of 10 walk-in patrons daily, would become a mailing service provided by the state, saving about $400,000 annually.

- Management of the Meals on Wheels program that serves Downriver and western Wayne County would be transferred to The Senior Alliance, saving about $340,000 annually.

**Treasurer’s office offering ways to avoid foreclosure**

The Wayne County Treasurer’s Office is offering three ways for delinquent taxes to be paid so the parcels aren’t forfeited or foreclosed upon: Online, by mail or in person.

- Online: Go to www.wayne-county.com/treasurer and click on the link on the front page. There are two options: A debit to a checking or savings account; or via MasterCard or Visa, for a fee.

- By mail: Checks – payable to “Wayne County Treasurer” – should be mailed to: Wayne County Treasurer, P.O. Box 33555, Detroit, MI 48232-5555.

- In person. The Treasurer’s Office is on the fifth floor of the International Center Building, 400 Monroe, between Brush and Beaubien, Detroit.

The office is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. For information, visit the website or call the hotline at 313-224-5990.
Around Wayne County!

_Clean- ing up illegal dumping_

Wayne County’s Department of Public Services is accepting project applications for its CLEAN – or County Lending Environmental Assistance to Neighborhoods – program, which it has run since 2004.

Groups identify areas that need to be cleaned of illegal dumping. The community group provides the manpower; the county provides roll-off boxes for collecting the waste, as well as hauling and disposal.

The county also works with the group to develop preventive measures and long-range security for the site to reduce the potential for additional dumping.

The Department of Public Services’ Land Resource Management Division reviews proposals. For application instructions, contact Mary Vangieson, program administrator, at 734-326-4494 or mvangies@waynecounty.com.

_Healthy Start for moms, babies_

The Institute for Population Health’s Healthy Start Detroit program is geared toward providing improved birth outcomes for African-American women. The program is for women who are pregnant; are the parent of a child age 2 or younger; between the ages of 18 and 45; and living in the following ZIP codes: 48203, 48205, 48212, 48213, 48224 or 48234.

Healthy Start services include: health education; infant safe sleep education; information on family planning and between-conception care; insurance enrollment assistance; information on community resources; home visits for pregnant women and families with babies; parenting groups; and Transition to Success, a family empowerment program. Call 313-309-9330 for more information.
Wayne County Parks

Fishing Derby
June 13

The 20th Annual Fishing Derby undoubtedly will provide joy and excitement for children 12 and under as they fish for great prizes along the Rouge River at Waterford Bend Park in Northville. The river will be stocked with rainbow trout in anticipation of a highly-contested casting contest. Anglers must supply their own equipment and bait. The Derby runs from 8-11 a.m.

Saturday In the Park
May 2 - Sept. 26

Warmer temperatures signal opportunities at outdoor fun and Hines Park, along Hines Drive, is the place to enjoy activities such as running, walking, skating and bicycling Saturdays from May 2 through Sept. 26. The six-mile stretch will be closed to traffic during the daylight hours.

Mud Day
July 7

Every mother’s worst nightmare becomes reality at this annual event held at Nankin Mills Park in Westland. It’s tons of mud and tons of fun for those children 12 and under looking to be crowned King and Queen Mud. The muddiest day of the year runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.