



APRIL 6, 2015

A larger crowd this week as Spring Breaking Rotarians returned home and the snow birds continue to head back north. The rain stayed away for us but there was definitely excitement in the air as WNDU cameras rolled to capture our special presentation about Proposal 1 which will be hitting ballots in Michigan next month.

ROTARIANS URGED TO GET OUT TO VOTE ON MAY 5

Rotarians were treated to not one but three experts in their respective fields to help break down the intricacies of Proposal 1 at the first April meeting



of the year. Speakers for the day were Ann Cardon, Superintendent of St. Joseph Public Schools, Louis Csokasy, Managing Director of the Berrien County Road Commission; and Michael Garey, Mayor of the City of St. Joseph. Each shared their unique perspective from an educational, infrastructural and local governmental perspective.

Rotarian Ann Cardon got the ball rolling with the question that was on many of our minds: what exactly is Proposal 1?

- MI sales tax increase from 6% to 7%
- Elimination of the current 6% sales tax on motor fuels
- 14.9% Wholesale fuel tax to replace the current 19¢ per gal gas/15¢ per gal diesel tax
- **Federal taxes of 18.4¢ per gal gas/24.4¢ per gal diesel would remain the same

While there is concern about the increase in MI sales tax, compared with neighboring states, 7% is well within the normal range with Wisconsin at 5.43%, Indiana at 7%, Ohio at 7.11% and Illinois at 8.16%. The current 6% sales tax is applicable on fuel sales but that revenue does not go into the transportation fund and MI is only one of five states to employ this funding model.

Currently, the tax revenue generated on fuel sales is distributed as follows:

- 19¢/15¢ flat tax goes directly to the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) which funds roads, bridges, culvert repairs
- 18.4¢/24.4¢ federal taxes go to the Federal Highway Trust Fund
- 6% sales tax goes to
 - School Aid Fund
 - Local Revenue Sharing
 - Comprehensive Transportation Fund
 - MI Health Initiative Fund
 - General Fund (can be used for roads)

If passed, Proposal 1 has three strong guarantees: 1). Every penny you pay at the pump in state fuel taxes is constitutionally guaranteed

to fund transportation. 2). Road builders would have to provide warranties on the roads they build so that taxpayers aren't forced to pay for improper repairs. 3). Every penny in the School Aid Fund is constitutionally guaranteed for K-12 schools and community colleges.

If Proposal 1 passes, additional sales tax revenue from the 1% increase would go to:

- \$1.25 billion for road and bridge repairs
- \$300 million for School Aid Fund (about \$200 per pupil)
- \$140 million for public transportation purposes
- \$95 million for revenue sharing to cities, villages and townships

The 14.9% wholesale fuel tax would be directed 100% to road repair and maintenance. These changes would go into effect on October 1, 2015.

So, why now? How has the situation with our road funding become such an issue? Louis Csokasy shared the Road Commission perspective on why this proposal is so important.

Joke of the Week!



APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

- 4/6 – Lori Marciniak
- 4/8 – David Burghart
- 4/12 – Charles Duncan
- 4/15 – Steve Murray & Chuck Dill
- 4/17 – Emily Hosinski
- 4/18 – Lisa Cripps-Downey, Randy Reimers, Mike Garey, Breeze Ettl
- 4/24 – Ann Cardon & Maria Kibler
- 4/25 – Ken Wuerfel & Matt Hanley
- 4/26 – Joe Wasserman & Jay Van Den Berg
- 4/29 – Gyl Kasewurm

Happy Birthday!



ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

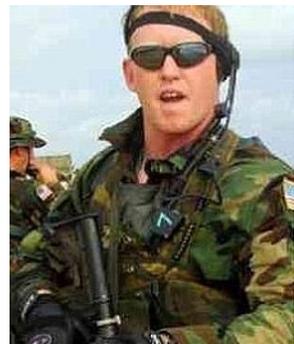


TO JIM O'MALLEY
Great grandchild #9 was born on Easter Sunday, 4/5/15.

- **4/9/15** - Navy SEAL Rob O'Neill event at the LMC Mendel Center to benefit Lakeshore Excellence Foundation
- **4/13/15** - Rural Agricultural Day
- **4/20/15** – Essay Contest Winners Announced
- **5/1/15** – Rotary Track Meet
- **5/2/15** – Interact Fundraiser – parking cars during the Blossomtime Parade at Edgewater Bank
- **5/11/15** – Law Day, a table will be set-up to pre-purchase tickets in the weeks preceding the event

THIS THURSDAY! NAVY SEAL AT LMC

The Lakeshore Excellence Foundation proudly presents Robert O'Neill, one of the country's most highly decorated Navy Seal Combat Veterans to speak at the LMC Mendel Center



Mainstage on April 9, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. The Lakeshore Excellence Foundation is raising money for area libraries. The ticket price is \$25.00 per person. O'Neill has 400 combat missions on record, including the capture of Osama Bin Laden, and the saving of Captain Phillips. Support the Lakeshore Excellence Foundation by hearing this extraordinary man's story. Tickets may be purchased at lefonline.org or lmcmainstage.org or by calling Sandy at 269-429-1254.



PROPOSAL 1 (CONTINUED)

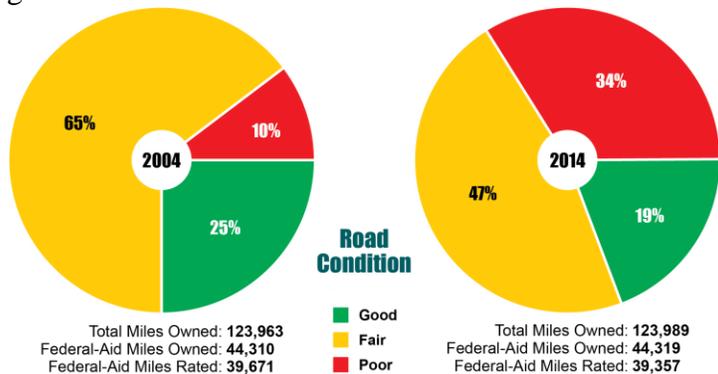
A decade ago, the annual revenue received in Berrien County from the Michigan Transportation Fund was approximately a half million dollars more than it is today. This reduction in funding is partially attributed to gas tax revenues declining over the last 17 years due to less driving (recession, high gas prices) and the predominant use of more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Less revenue means fewer miles of roads



repairs/upgrades annually (about 50 miles fewer than 10 years ago) and hence, then overall quality represented in the current state of our roads is disturbing. In 2004, 10% were rated poor, 65% were rated fair and 25% were rated good. In 2014, a shocking 34% of roads received a poor

rating, with only 47% reaching fair status and 19% at good.



Right now, over \$1 billion that's paid at the pump is not going to roads with \$17 billion having been short-changed to MI roads since 1997. MI ranks dead last among the 50 states for per capita spending on roads and these bad roads are costing MI motorists \$539 in vehicle repair costs every year.

This proposal also has implications for the City of St. Joseph. Michael Garey shared that municipalities must operate as a business but their revenues are flat. Not only do St. Joseph roads mirror the county trends of increasing percentage of bad roads but there is also a "wish list" of projects facing funding challenges as well. What we need to ask ourselves is "what do we want our

cities to be like?" Some examples Garey outlined were the state of our parks, the need for a new fire engine and providing support for the public library. If Proposal 1 passes, not only would the funding for roads increase but also the funds received for municipal capital projects. In addition, the new structure would generate a more consistent funding model which would be greatly beneficial to the City of St. Joseph.



The team of speakers also took the time to address some of the common questions about Proposal 1:

Q: Why is Proposal so complicated?

A: To achieve the goal of having all taxes collected at the pump be dedicated to road repairs than the complexities are necessary to ensure it's done correctly.

Q: Why is this in the hands of the public instead of the legislature?

A: Public support is needed to generate political support.

Q: Why is there so much "pork" in Proposal 1?

A: Most of the non-road revenue will go to restoring cuts made previously when the state economy was struggling.

Q: How do we know that road money will be used correctly with Proposal 1?

A: Under laws tied to Proposal 1, road work will be competitively bid for projects over \$1 million dollars and warranties will be required of the contractors who complete these projects.

Q: Why can't we repair the roads with existing fund dollars?

A: \$1.2 billion in new money is needed for road repairs and it has to come from somewhere – using existing state funds would mean budget cuts in other areas. Where would you expect those cuts to come from?

To view WNDU's coverage of the presentation, visit <http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Michigan-voters-mull-tax-increases-298825421.html>.

STUDENT GUESTS



Two student guests were on-site today – Eric Engle and Sahana Harikrishnan, both juniors at St. Joseph High School interested in

the field of anesthesiology. They had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Ryan Dudley DO at Lakeland Health and both found the experience to be quite positive.

This experience helped them to understand what the college journey looks like and what standardized tests they would face. Dr. Dudley expressed the importance of being personable and

having a strong network in the field. Dudley also imparted on the



students that “if you’re worried about the money, you’re in this for the wrong reason” although Eric humorously added that his parents might disagree with that sentiment.

VOLUNTEERS AND PROGRAM ADS NEEDED



Two great ways to support the Rotary Track Meet – sign-up to volunteer and sell those ads! Starting next week, Randy Bettich will be providing sign-up sheets to recruit volunteers. Please consider donating your time for the Rotary Track Meet on Friday, May 1. He has guaranteed that the weather will be beautiful that day.

At this event, we award four (4) academic scholarships totaling \$8,000 and Rotarians play a critical role in raising those funds through advertising sales. Last year:

- **Rotarian businesses purchased 25 out of 27 ads sold (93%)**
- **Rotarian business ad sales totaled \$7,420 of \$7620 raised (98%)**

The advertising purchase order form can be found at our Monday meetings and can also be found on the last page of the E-Wheel. The submission deadline is Wednesday, April 25 and any questions can be directed to J.C. Anderson, Rotary Track Meet Advertising Chairperson.

AGRICULTURE DAY

Members of the Rotary Club of Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor will be hosting the Rural Agricultural Day to celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of our area. The noon luncheon will be served on Monday, April 13th at the Priscilla Byrns Heritage Center located at 601 Main Street, Saint Joseph. Speakers of the day, Wrifton Graham and Don Lam, will give us an interesting presentation on the “Plight of the Bees”.

Wrifton Graham has been a beekeeper for over 10 years and owns a beekeeping supply store near Kalamazoo. He is President of the Battle Creek Bee Club and founder of the Michigan Bee Registry.

Don Lam has been a beekeeper for 25 years. He provides pollination services, produces honey, and frequently hosts field trips to his apiaries. Don is an officer of the Holland Area Beekeepers’ Association and serves on the Board of Directors for the Michigan Beekeepers’ Association.

Space may be limited – if you plan to bring a guest, please contact Art Cotter.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE E-

Your weekly email is brought to you by Debra Trapikas announcement, a bit of news you wish to share, or a write one or both at tawana53@aol.com or We will publish it if you promise to lay five Happy meeting. Thank you to Aaron Bradford for the



WHEEL?

and Emily Hosinski. If you have an story you wish to see featured, please emily_m_hosinski@whirlpool.com. Bucks on your table at the next wonderful photography.



58th St. Joseph - Benton Harbor

Rotary Track Meet

ADVERTISEMENT PURCHASE ORDER

YES!! We would like to purchase an advertisement in the St. Joseph – Benton Harbor Rotary Track Meet printed program.

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Your Name: _____

Black and White Advertisement Size Selection and Costs:

_____ Business card size cost of \$100

_____ 1/8 Page cost of \$200

_____ 1/4 Page cost of \$390

_____ 1/2 Page cost of \$775

_____ Full-Page cost of \$1,500

Payment (checks should be made payable to St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Rotary Club) and advertisement information* is due by April 25, 2015 and should be mailed to the following address:

J.C. Anderson
2943 Dunes Valley Path and/or E-Mail: anderjcna@gmail.com
Stevensville, Michigan 49127

*Please check your advertisement as noted below:

_____ Repeat advertisement as printed last year

_____ Camera ready artwork or a digital file format (Mac or PC, Illustrator, or Quark) included.