



**Emmet County Lakeshore Association**

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*In unity, there is strength*

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**Emmet County Lakeshore Association**

**Board of Directors**

**Bob Bokram, Treasurer** • Rob Deane  
Kimberly Dowd • Don Gschwind  
**Lou Kasischke, Vice President**  
**Franz Neubrecht, Secretary**  
Catherine Reindel • George Reindel  
**Gary Rentrop, President** • Dick Selvala  
Dave Shear • George Smolak

[www.emmetcountylakeshore.org](http://www.emmetcountylakeshore.org)

**Transfer of the Family Cottage or Home to a Child a New Law:**

A new law went into effect in Michigan on December 31, 2013. Parents can now transfer homes, and cottages to their child or children without uncapping the properties taxable value. Prior to this new law, when property was transferred, including transfers to children, the new owners's taxes increased. This often meant inherited, or gifted cottages and homes, often in the family for years, could no longer be kept in the family because of the cost of the real estate tax which often increased dramatically. The new law creates an exemption from what is a "transfer of ownership" which now excludes "a transfer of residential real property if the transferee is related to the transferor by blood or affinity to the first degree and the use of the residential real property does not change following the transfer." A child can now receive such property by inheritance or gift without the taxable value becoming uncapped and a corresponding increase in property tax. MCL 211.27(a).(7).

**Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
43rd Annual Business Meeting and Presentation**

**Friday, August 1st 2014  
Beginning at 11:30 a.m., Lunch will be served at 12:00 Noon**

**Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club  
Main Clubhouse, 600 Birchwood Drive, Harbor Springs**

**Road Repairs and Improvements—  
Things of Which You Were Never Aware**

**Why fix roads in good repair first and roads in bad repair last?  
Why fix local roads in Townships first and primary roads last?**

**Brian Gutowski, Manager of the Emmet County Road Commission,  
will have answers to these questions and many more.**

**Members:** Lunch is \$15.00 per person. Pre-paid Reservations are required. Seating is limited. Space will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Please complete the registration form below and return with payment no later than Friday July 25. Your 2014 dues must be current to attend the annual meeting.

**Non-Members:** Non members may attend as a guest of a member of ECLA, or may join at the Annual Meeting as a member of ECLA by the payment of \$25 annual dues. Membership is open to all property owners in West Traverse, Friendship, Readmond and Cross Village Townships.

**For more information, please contact Mandi Garber at (231) 373-0754  
or [ecla@emmetcountylakeshore.org](mailto:ecla@emmetcountylakeshore.org).**

**Return form with payment to: ECLA, P.O. Box 277, Harbor Springs, MI 49740**

**ECLA 2014 Annual Meeting / Luncheon Reservation**

Name of Member(s) attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending: \_\_\_\_\_ at \$15.00 per person Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This reservation form must be returned no later than **Friday, July 25.**

**ASSOCIATION ADDRESS: ECLA • PO BOX 277 • HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740**

**Emmet County Lakeshore Association**

**Summer 2014 Newsletter**

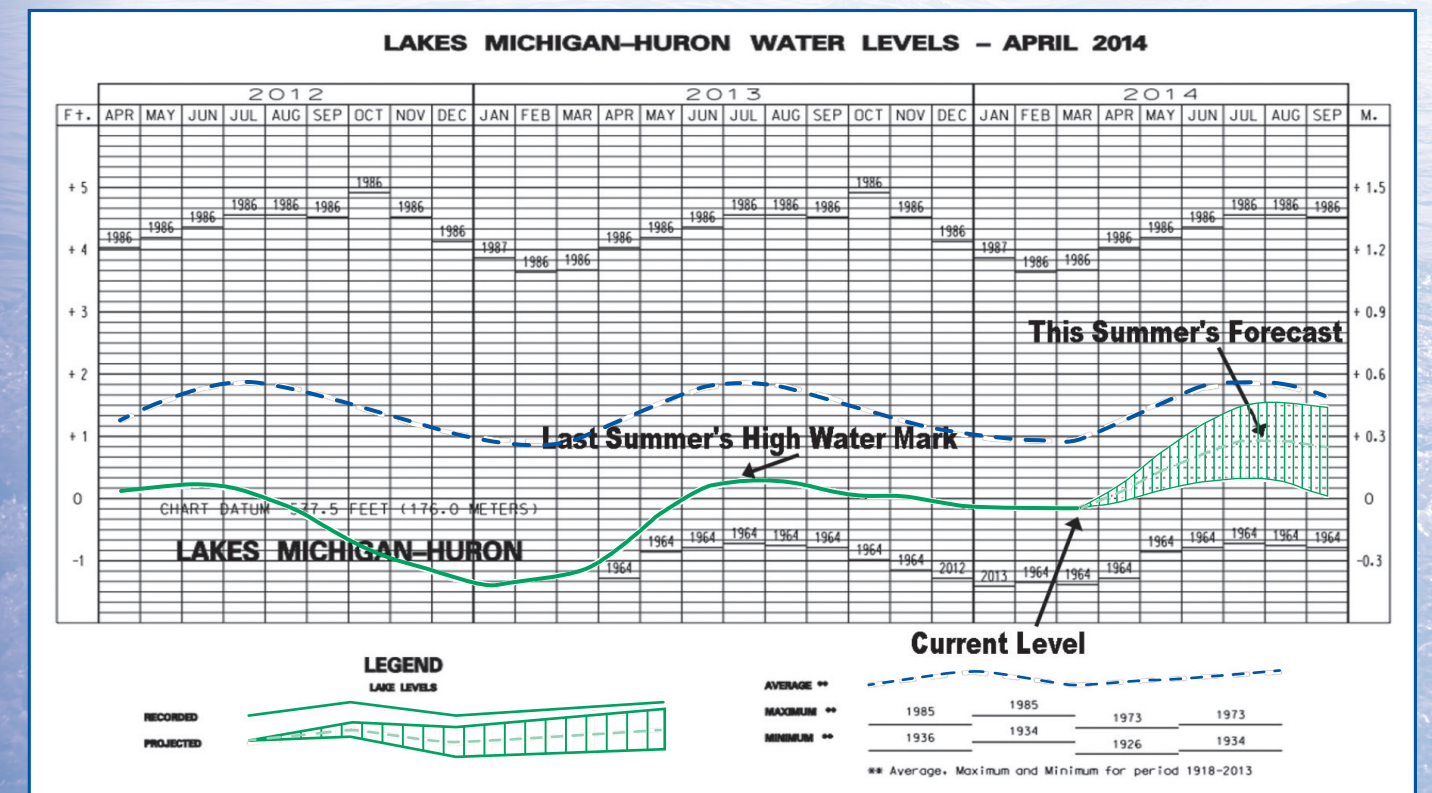


*Contributors for the articles are: Lou Kasischke, Gary Rentrop, Rob Deane and Kimberly Dowd*

**Lake Michigan Lake Levels Up But . . . The Great Lakes Confluence**

We are all pleased to see Lake Michigan lake levels up after a 15-month wet period and winter's bitter cold, which froze most of the lake's surface area, blocking evaporation. Whether the improvement will continue or is a momentary blip in a downward spiral remains to be seen. The downward movement in lake levels began in the late 1990s and bottomed out (we hope) in January 2013. In March a conference entitled "Science-Policy Confluence Conference: Great Lakes Water Levels" was held in Ann Arbor over two days. This conference included 50 scientists and policy makers. The objective was to have policy be developed based on good science. The following is a summary of the input from these experts:

- Some advocates want to build up Lake Huron and Lake Michigan levels by building a structure at the St. Clair River to restrict outflow. Over the years, the river has been dredged, allowing a greater outflow from the lakes. This project would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and may have negative consequences, such as damaging fish spawning areas or causing flooding elsewhere. More science is needed.
  - Some residents want higher water levels and some lower (those whose houses could be threatened by higher water). The politics of this [GR—DID YOU MEAN DETERMINATION? ] will likely prevent any engineering efforts to regulate lake levels.
  - Most believe that installing new engineered structures to control lake levels (beyond engineering to return the lakes to natural levels such as the St. Clair River proposal) is not a good idea.
  - The EPA director spoke and identified the three greatest environmental threats to the Great Lakes:
    1. Combined sewer overflows and discharge of untreated wastewater.
    2. Contaminated sediments.
    3. Impaired tributary waters that discharge nutrients, pathogens and sediments. She concluded that lake levels have little impact upon these environmental concerns.
- Lake levels will remain largely beyond human control. All agreed "adaptation" should be the watchword for regions, businesses, governments, and shoreline property owners. We need to be prepared for a greater range in lake levels given the potential impacts of global warming upon Great Lakes water levels.





## Support the Upcoming Millage Renewal for Emergency Medical Services in Emmet County!!!

By Peter Olson, Ph.D., EMT-P, I/C; Associate Dean of Health, Business, Technology, North Central Michigan College  
Vice-President, Allied EMS Systems, Inc. Board of Directors; Non-Voting Member, Emmet County Ambulance Advisory Committee

Here are some basic facts about Emergency Medical Services in Emmet County that may provide background to the debates surrounding the County's efforts to modify funding for these services; supporting Emmet County's efforts to fund EMS services in the ways mentioned below is critical to making sure that an EMS crew appears wherever, whenever needed throughout the County.

After much discussion over the past four years, the County now appears ready to continue the millage support at its current level for Allied operations, but to supplement those moneys with funds from refinancing County bonds; these additional funds will be used to address capital equipment (including a solid schedule of ambulance and critical equipment replacement), re-design or relocation of Allied stations in Petoskey and Harbor Springs to improve quarters that are currently sub-standard, and to provide funding for County first responders in several ways still under discussion (certainly more recruiting and training opportunities but "stipends" for these responders have also been mentioned). To the extent that a portion of Emmet County lies within Mackinaw City Ambulance's response area, Mackinaw City Ambulance has been involved in these discussions, and will also benefit from the revised funding mechanisms.

The bottom line is always this: most EMS services throughout the state are affiliated with other public safety entities, such as fire departments. Emmet County is unique in having a private, non-profit EMS provider. Throughout discussions with the County, the services provided by Allied have always been hailed as exemplary, even by big-city standards, but the funding to keep these services operating along that cutting edge is seriously threatened; this is why we must support the County's millage renewal proposal!

### What Follows Here Provides Additional Background:

Currently, Allied EMS in Emmet County staffs two trucks all day every day, each with at least a paramedic and a basic emergency medical technician on board. Paramedics typically have been through 2200 hours of specialized training, EMT-Basics about 200; for a truck to be considered "Advanced Life Support" in Michigan, both a paramedic and an EMT-Basic (if not another paramedic) must be on board with the proper equipment.

Trucks operate out of a garage in Harbor Springs and a garage in Petoskey; the majority of Allied Emmet runs originate from the denser population areas, especially the city of Petoskey and Resort-Bear Creek township. When a run occurs north of a dividing line between the two stations (roughly at Petoskey Brewing Co.), the Harbor Springs truck takes the run, and the Petoskey truck moves to Allied's station on M-119 (across from the Emmet County Sheriff's building and the Health Dept), which is approximately halfway between the two main stations. When a run occurs south of the dividing line, the Petoskey truck takes the run, and the Harbor truck moves to the station on M-119. If a second run is dispatched before the first truck has returned to service, the truck that had moved into position halfway between the Petoskey and Harbor stations takes the run, and simultaneously calls for a back-up crew to head for the M-119 station, ready for a potential third run. If a third or fourth run occurs, the process of asking for backup is repeated. Allied Emmet has the potential to put six trucks on the road within approximately 30 minutes for multiple individual runs or for a single incident of greater severity (ambulances typically transport only one serious patient at a time, so an incident with several sick or injured patients will require multiple trucks). In a typical year, Allied EMS responds to approximately 3,000 runs (this number also contains patient transfers between hospitals).

This system works very well to adjust to wide seasonal variations in run volume; on a busy summer day (or, increasingly, a busy winter day during ski season), it is not uncommon for three or even four Allied trucks to be out on runs or transporting patients

between hospitals at the same time; on the other hand, during March/April or October/November/early December, the Allied trucks may respond to only one or two runs all day, but at least two crews must be on hand at all times to cover such a wide geographical area. Emmet County and many other primarily rural areas also dispatch Medical First Responders (typically volunteers associated with a local fire department who will respond in their own vehicles or a fire department vehicle to calls close to where they live), who carry basic emergency supplies (automated external defibrillators, oxygen, etc.); these First Responders (trained to a lower level than the Allied crews) are often able to provide life-saving treatment to patients before the Allied crews arrive, but they are unable to transport the patient to the hospital. It is often difficult for rural fire departments to maintain a sufficient number of first responders, especially during the day, when these volunteers often must work other, better-paying jobs. (For comparison, starting pay for an Emmet County paramedic is approximately \$15.50/hr; First Responders are often paid far less, if they are paid at all, and are often paid only a low fixed amount per run.)

When a run occurs, Allied crews respond and treat and, if necessary, transport the patient without regard for the patient's ability to pay for the service. This fact, coupled with the costs of fuel and staffing crews in times when no runs occur, means that nearly all ambulance agencies operate at a loss and require supplements in some form. Further, reimbursement from patients who are insured fails to meet the actual costs of the service.

Emmet County has recognized this shortfall with money from a millage; however, these funds have historically only been used for ambulance operations; capital equipment (ambulances at \$175,000 each, monitors at \$27,000 each, for example) has been provided through donations. After these donations diminished substantially with the economic downturn in 2008-2009, Allied approached the County in 2010-2011 with a plan to secure funding in four separate, but tightly linked areas: operations, capital equipment, facilities, and training. The County now appears ready to help Allied with the necessary additional funding.

## The Wind in the (Beach) Willows . . . .

Beachfront property owners may notice a recent surge of what some call "beach willow" — shrubby, willow-like plants—growing toward the water's edge. The plant, which is part of the willow family, is a natural resident of the Great Lakes region. This shrub is not considered to be invasive.

Board Certified Master Arborist Ben Veling explained why some beachfront areas have experienced increasing growth of the willows: When water levels dropped, vegetation from our lakeside forests and dunes began taking over the newly available landscape. Willow seedlings and plants established themselves near the shoreline and benefitted from abundant algae, which acts as a fertilizer.

Some oppose removal of shoreline vegetation such as the willow, which helps prevent erosion and serves as a protective habitat for birds and insects.

The plants can be removed by extraction, or complete removal of entire plant and root. Cutting is not recommended, as plants may continue to proliferate. Please note that a State permit may be required for activity on a critical dune. Also, please note that the willow plant is different from the phragmites plant, which is an invasive species plaguing certain areas of the Great Lakes. To prevent further invasion of phragmites, proper removal procedures must be followed. More information can be found at the websites of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council ([www.watershedcouncil.org](http://www.watershedcouncil.org)) or the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality ([www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq)).

## Oil and Gas Pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac:

### Did you know that:

- There is a 60 year old fuel pipeline that spans the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac which carries approximately 22.7 million gallons of oil and liquid natural gas per day?
- The pipeline is owned and operated by the same company that experienced a major spill in the Kalamazoo River in 2010—Enbridge Energy Partners, L.P., a Canadian Company?
- Enbridge is proposing to transmit oil sands (tar sands) from Canada through the Straits' pipeline which will require an increase in pressure in the Straits' pipeline?
- That, according to the NTSB investigation report, the failure of the pipe in Kalamazoo River was due to corrosion and the failure of the company to shut off the pipe flow for 17 hours after the regulating device determined a leak?

Michigan's Attorney General, Bill Schutte, and Department of Environmental Quality Director, Dan Wyant, have sought and are in the process of obtaining additional information upon the issue of maintenance and safety of the pipeline.

## Come 2017, You May Not Have a Telephone "Landline"

The controversial Bill allowing the phone companies to discontinue telephone landline service if an alternative phone service is available became a law in 2014. After January 1, 2017, a telephone company that provides landline services may begin to take steps to discontinue that service if the following conditions are met:

1. Notice by mail to the customer must be given by the provider and publication must be filed by the provider of the proposed landline service discontinuance; and
2. The customer has comparable voice service (by at least one provider) with reliable access to 9-1-1 and emergency services. "Comparable voice service" is defined to include any two-way voice service offered through any form of technology including VoIP and wireless services. The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) will only have authority to investigate if there is a complaint.

A complaint must be filed by the customer within 90 days of notice of discontinuance or the landline service will be discontinued.

Obviously, this new law has the potential for a significant impact upon our members with poor cell phone coverage and inferior VoIP via satellite and may impact those who have alarm systems or emergency response devices.

ECLA plans on meeting with an AT&T representative in the near future. The ECLA Board will keep our members advised.