

OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Mark A. Hackel

1 S Main, 8th Floor, Mount Clemens, MI 48043
(586) 469-7001

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Mark's Message

Summer fun is winding down for many of us now that the school season is in full effect. The last pitch at Jimmy John's stadium was thrown on Sunday, Sept. 11. In case you missed it, the Utica Unicorns were the 2016 season champs! However, Macomb County still has a lot to offer during these fall months.

Our orchards are a destination spot for people all over Michigan. If you haven't stopped by one of [Macomb County's many orchards](#), now is the time. Also, farmers market season is far from over. [Many local markets are still open](#), selling pumpkins and fall flowers right through the end of the autumn season.

Looking forward, on Oct. 7, Macomb County will once again be leading the way in celebrating [Manufacturing Day](#). Manufacturing Day was created to celebrate modern manufacturing and to alert youth that a career in this field is still a very viable one. This is the fourth year our Planning and Economic Development department has spearheaded making sure our county is highly involved in this important national celebration. For example, at last year's event, thanks to the willingness of 43 great companies to get involved, more than 1,800 high school students visited plants and learned about career opportunities. To learn more about this year's event, visit www.manufacturemyfuture.com.

Oh, and for those of you living in, or who frequently travel to the northern part of our county, the 32 Mile Bridge is now open! The bridge opened at 6 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 12. This \$1.4 million bridge is used by about 15,000 vehicles a day, so it was a much-needed project and I am happy it is now complete.

Inaugural Michigan Bootlegger Heritage Festival set for Oct. 1 on the Nautical Mile

Volunteers needed

The first-ever Michigan Bootlegger Heritage Festival will be held Saturday, Oct. 1, on the Nautical Mile in St. Clair Shores. The event, which is a partnership between the Lake St. Clair Tourism Initiative and the Macomb County

Department of Planning & Economic Development, was created to feature antique boats and cars of the Prohibition era, surrounding a day-long schedule of music and entertainment.

The festival will benefit the Lake St. Clair Tourism Initiative, as well as local Knights of Columbus chapters and the Anchor Bay Yachting Association.

Event organizers are in need of volunteers to staff and pour beer at this event. There are a variety of positions to be filled, including beer pourers, registration, setup and cleanup, crowd management and security. Volunteer shifts are three and a half hours long and run from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. All volunteers will receive a complimentary T-shirt. Volunteers can register online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BXR5233>.

This 21-and-older-only event will be held from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., with most activities taking place at Colony Marine, 24530 Jefferson Avenue, and Wahby Park, 24800 Jefferson Avenue, in St. Clair Shores. There will be limited on-site parking at Colony Marine. Additional parking for the event will be available at off-site lots, with complimentary shuttle transportation to the event.

A number of craft breweries from around the region and the state will be serving up their best brews, and several of the area's finest restaurants will participate. Breweries featured at the event include: Kuhnhenh Brewing Co., Baffin Brewing Co., Dragonmead, Atwater Brewery, Griffin Claw and many more! Restaurants include: Twisted Rooster, Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen Café, Bobcat Bonnie's and North 42. In addition to a variety of food and craft beer, several live bands and a DJ will be playing throughout the day. For a complete list of participating breweries and restaurants, plus a live band schedule, visit www.BootleggerFestival.com.

This event is for ages 21 and older only. No children, or anyone under the age of 21 will be allowed on the premises. Tickets are \$35 online and \$40 at the door and include 12, 3-ounce pours and three, \$2 food vouchers. The Michigan Bootlegger Heritage Festival is sponsored by Colony Marine, Midwest's largest Sea Ray dealer with three locations to serve boaters in Algonac, Pontiac and St. Clair Shores. 89X and 93.9 The River are also major sponsors and will be broadcasting live at the event throughout the day. Tune in to both stations for a chance to win tickets to the event! To purchase tickets, visit www.BootleggerFestival.com.

Macomb County celebrates Welcoming Week

Macomb County will join many other municipalities throughout the United States in celebrating National Welcoming Week, which is Sept. 16-25, with a variety of activities designed to highlight Macomb County as a welcoming community.

National Welcoming Week was started by Welcoming America, a national membership organization which offers tools, resources and a national network to help nonprofit and government partners transform their communities into more welcoming places. Welcoming Week is a nationwide event that highlights the contributions of immigrants to American communities.

Macomb County is hosting a number of events during Welcoming Week, many of which are being put on by OneMacomb. OneMacomb was started by Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel to support Macomb County's increasing cultural diversity and inclusion efforts.

"We're proud these immigrants have chosen to make Macomb their home," said Executive Hackel. "Being multicultural makes Macomb County a more interesting place to live, work and play."

On Friday, Sept. 16, OneMacomb hosted a meeting with Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust (ALPACT) at the Macomb County Family Resource Center. The meeting will feature a showing of the film "Walking in Oak Creek" about the 2012 attack on Sikhs worshipping peacefully in Wisconsin.

Saturday, Sept. 17, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) College Fair took place at the Macomb County Family Resource Center. The event allowed students to meet with representatives from numerous historically black colleges and universities about education, career and financial resources through readiness sessions.

Today, Sept. 19, Welcoming Michigan is hosting a statewide convening from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lansing Community

College, West Campus. The day-long program is held for municipal and community leaders, welcoming leadership committees, Welcoming Cities and Counties and other partners across Michigan. OneMacomb is a proud partner of Welcoming Michigan.

Tuesday, Sept. 20, a citizenship workshop will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Max Thompson Family Center, 11370 Hupp, Warren. The workshop is for those who wish to become naturalized resource citizens and need assistance from immigration attorneys.

On Friday, Sept. 23, OneMacomb is hosting a naturalization ceremony where immigrants take their final step by pledging their allegiance before a federal judge and becoming United States citizens. The event is at 10 a.m. at the Clinton-Macomb Public Library.

OneMacomb works to promote multiculturalism and inclusion in Macomb County. For more information, visit OneMacomb on Facebook, Twitter or <http://people.macombgov.org/People-Home>.

CARROT app offered to employees in October

Healthstyles is excited to introduce a new program designed to reward all employees of Macomb County for leading active lives!

Beginning Oct. 3, all employees will have the opportunity to participate in CARROT Health & Wellness, a free program sponsored by Healthstyles that rewards employees for activities such as walking, running and climbing stairs. We'd like everyone to participate in this fun, new program!

There are many reasons we're launching this program. First and foremost, we recognize there are many benefits to being more active, and CARROT has demonstrated itself to be an extremely effective tool to help motivate people to walk just a bit more each day. This is a new, one-of-a-kind program that uses the latest in mobile technology to encourage people to be more active.

Secondly, this is a program that is private and personal. Everything is done solely through the app on your phone (not on a cloud), and your personal data is not shared with Macomb County or Healthstyles.

Thirdly, we think this is a fun program everyone will enjoy, and there are NO reporting requirements and NO paperwork to fill out. Everything – including monitoring your goals, tracking your progress and claiming rewards – is done solely on your phone, so it is extremely simple and fun to use.

Lastly, Healthstyles will provide rewards – employees can redeem their reward points through the app for gift cards (Target, Starbucks, Bath and Body Works and more) or other incentive items. Local businesses that register with CARROT offer additional incentives when you are in or near the business.

Stay tuned for more details as Oct. 3 approaches. We sincerely hope you choose to participate. To learn more about CARROT, visit <http://www.carrotpass.com/>.

Employee Focus

Tom Gaeschke – Finance Department

By Sarah Cormier

Have you ever thought about where your paycheck comes from, how it's created? How about how sick and vacation days are documented or how the county's annual financial reports are generated? Chances are, unless you are the person in your office dealing directly with the financial end of county business, you really aren't sure.

All of these functions – and many more – are all housed on one software system – ONESolution, formerly known, for those of you that have been with the county since before March 2016, as IFAS. And the overseer of that software is Tom Gaeschke, financial officer for Macomb County.

According to Gaeschke, the system deals with everything related to financial transactions the county oversees, such as Human Resources and payroll items, ordering office supplies, creation of important budget documents, etc.

“I consider it the lifeblood of the county,” he said.

And when you’re dealing with something as important as “the lifeblood of the county,” it’s a system that needs to be constantly updated and reviewed to make sure it is in top working order.

“There’s a lot of stuff that has to be done in the background a lot of people don’t think of,” said Gaeschke, who began working for the county in 1986.

He said the county upgraded to IFAS from using a mainframe system in 2003 after Information Technology and Finance formed a group together to evaluate the needs of the county. At the time, the system was unable to update itself until all of the information was received at the end of the day. The current system allows those with access to view the county’s financials in real time, which is important. Gaeschke said it took the group over a year to oversee the transfer of data from the old system to IFAS. ONESolution was implemented in 2016 as a necessary upgrade from IFAS. Gaeschke said it is the same program, just with a new name.

“IT and Finance worked together to make sure that the information that was in the mainframe was completely and accurately transferred into the new system,” he explained.

“It’s kind of like how Pine Knob is now called DTE, but everyone knows it as Pine Knob,” said Gaeschke. “It’s a new name and new look but operates the same.”

When Gaeschke’s not working on ONESolution, he’s also responsible for generating the county’s audit report, which shows what federal funds the county has received, and the apportionment report which looks at tax rates throughout the county. Coming up, he hopes to implement a regular employee training schedule for the ONESolution program. (Currently, there are training manuals on Macomb County’s intranet at <http://insidemacomb.macombgov.org/it-training>.)

“Tom is an invaluable asset to the Finance Department,” said Finance Director Steve Smigiel. “He is fun to work with and is always willing to stay late or come in on a Saturday if necessary. His attention to detail is a good fit for the nature of the work we do in the Finance Department.”

Away from the county’s day-to-day financial work, Gaeschke, a Harrison Township resident, is an outdoors enthusiast. He is an avid boater and traveler. He and his wife of almost 35 years, Debbie, have visited places such as Hawaii, Australia and Belize, but he states that there are still “a lot of places on the bucket list.”

During the winter months, from Labor Day to April, Gaeschke is an avid racquetball player – a sport he said he has been playing for 42 years.

“It’s a sport I fell in love with when I was 18,” he said. “I like fast paced and it’s a fast-paced game.”

For Your Benefit

By Macomb County Human Resources and Labor Relations

With open enrollment coming up in November, it is the perfect time to research the Macomb County Flexible Spending Account (FSA), administered by BASIC, a human resources solutions company.

A medical FSA is a pre-tax plan that may be used to pay for eligible medical, dental and vision expenses that are not covered by your health care plan. For a list of eligible expenses and a calculator to help you to determine your election amount, log on to www.basiconline.com under current client. There is also information about an app for your smartphone to provide an up-to-date balance and claim information.

The Macomb County FSA includes a grace period. The FSA grace period is an extended period of coverage at the end of every plan year that allows extra time to incur expenses and use your remaining account balance after the close of the plan year. It runs from Jan. 1 to March 15 of the following year. An easy way to think of it is that a 12-month plan is

actually 14-and-a-half-months long.

It is important to note that the plan filing deadline for the grace period is March 31. All claims must be submitted via debit card, faxed or postmarked by this date. The grace period only applies for those who have coverage through Dec. 31 of the previous plan year and elect coverage in the new plan year.

All FSA claims incurred in the new plan year between Jan. 1 and March 15 will automatically be processed against the previous year's balance first, as long as they are submitted prior to the processing deadline of March 31.

Example: Joe has \$80 remaining in his medical FSA at the end of the plan year (Dec. 31) and has no additional expenses left to submit for services incurred within that actual plan year. During the month of January, Joe goes to the dentist and incurs a charge of \$190 that he knows will not be covered by his dental plan. Joe submits the claim to BASIC. BASIC will process the claim and \$80 will be applied to the remaining balance from the previous plan year and \$110 is applied to the current plan year's balance.

Here are some spending tips to help you use any remaining balances before your grace period runs out: first aid kits, hot and cold therapy packs, breast pumps, contact lenses and blood pressure monitors. But when in doubt, you should always check with BASIC to confirm that products are covered. For additional products and services, visit <https://fsastore.com>.

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) is a pre-tax plan used to pay for dependent care services such as preschool, summer day camp, before or after school programs, and child and elder daycare so you and your spouse, if you are married, can work or look for work. It is important to note that any fees and tuition associated with kindergarten or elementary school are not eligible for reimbursement.

A DCFSA can be used to pay for eligible dependent care expenses for

- dependent children under the age of 13 who reside with you and for whom you are entitled to claim as a personal tax exemption as a dependent.*
- a spouse or other tax-dependent who resides with you and is physically or mentally incapable of self-care.*

The term "qualifying child or relative" can be tricky. Please click on the following link for the more details from the IRS: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p501.pdf>.



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