

# FOCUS MACOMB

MARCH 2020

## COVID-19 in Michigan

Please visit the Macomb County Health Department [website](#) to find the latest important information on COVID-19.

## Macomb in the News

[Importance of completing census stressed at Macomb ISD forum](#)

[Macomb County Coronavirus Disease \(Covid-19\) Readiness Public Health Update](#)

[Panel: Macomb economy strong, challenges on horizon for industry](#)

## Macomb Business Blog

[Robotics Collaboration and Innovation Center announces official 501\(c\)\(3\) status, acknowledges first \\$85,000 in contributions](#)



[Local pickle company feels impact of winning a Macomb Business Award](#)

[Macomb County represented at the United Nations](#)

## Event Calendar

[Macomb Business Awards](#)

Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
7:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.  
Palazzo Grande, Shelby Township

Click [here](#) for more events near you.

## Business Calendar

[Succession Planning for Leadership Positions](#)

Tuesday, March 31; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
1 S. Main St., 7th Floor, Mt. Clemens

[Building Better Teams](#)

Wednesday, April 15; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
1 S. Main St., 7th Floor, Mt. Clemens

[Family and Medical Leave Act](#)

Wednesday, April 29  
1 S. Main St., 7th Floor, Mt. Clemens

To find more business events in Macomb County, visit [Macomb](#)

## Message from Mark



Welcome to the spring edition of the Focus Macomb newsletter.

**My message to you in this issue: It's time for the 2020 census.** Every ten years, the U.S.

Census Bureau counts the population in all 50 states. In the 2010 census, Macomb County's response rate was **82 percent**. That means **18 percent** of the county's residents did not fill out their form and were not included in the count. This year, we want to make sure everyone participates!

Why does it matter? Census data is used to determine how much money communities receive from the federal government. This could be funds for roads, education, small businesses and health care programs. So your participation is vital.

**You will soon receive an invitation in the mail from the Census Bureau asking you to complete your census form on Census Day (April 1).** This year, you have three options to respond: Online, by phone or by mail. All it takes is 10 minutes to fill out, and you can have an impact on the next 10 years.

If you want to learn more about the count, I encourage you to check out [macombgov.org/census2020](http://macombgov.org/census2020). You can also contact the Census Bureau at 301-763-INFO (4636) or at 800-923-8282 with any questions or requests for assistance.

In closing, if my office can be of assistance to you, please call 586-469-7001 or write to [executive@macombgov.org](mailto:executive@macombgov.org). My team is ready to help.

## Tickets on sale soon for the 8th annual Macomb Business Awards



Mark your calendars! Tickets will go on sale for the Macomb Business Awards on Monday, March 23. The event will recognize outstanding businesses located in the county's 27 communities. Over the last several weeks, 58 companies have been nominated in the following categories:

- Champion of Workplace Culture – offering creative solutions that empower employees to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments and passions (sponsored by Metro Parent)
- Corporate Citizen – providing meaningful support to our community through service and/or philanthropy.

County's Planning and Economic Development calendar [here](#).

### Point of Pride

Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel recently [announced](#) the creation of the Macomb County Office of Public Defender and introduced the Public Defender Administrator, Thomas J. Tomko. "Tom will be the architect of the Macomb County Public Defender's Office," said Hackel. "He understands the direction we want to head in Macomb County in the areas of criminal justice reform, and he will make this office a place that treats everyone fairly."

### Coming Soon



The 9th Annual Sprint & Splash will be held at Lake St. Clair Metropark in Harrison Township on Saturday, June 20. Registration for all of the events is currently open [here](#).

- Diversity and Inclusion Leader – creating an environment where diversity is valued as evidenced by inclusive practices. (Sponsored by OneMacomb).
- Hidden Gem – uncovering a unique Made-in-Macomb product or place that more people should know about!
- Manufacturer of the Year – in recognition of a manufacturer or supplier of any size or industry that is achieving success through its efforts to diversify its customer base, retain employees and/or implement new technologies or efficiencies.
- Trailblazer of Future Talent – creating partnerships that provide opportunities for the next generation of our workforce to explore career possibilities and experience work-based learning.

A panel of judges are currently reviewing the nominations and will select winners in each category. Judges include: Gene Lovell – president and CEO of First State Bank, Karen Smith – executive director of Leadership Macomb, Jim Sawyer – president of Macomb Community College, Mike Lee – managing editor of Crain's Detroit Business and Vicky Rad – director of Macomb County Planning and Economic Development. Winners will be announced at the breakfast on Tuesday, April 21.

Individuals interested in attending can make their reservations at [www.macombbusiness.com](http://www.macombbusiness.com) starting March 23. Entry fees will include breakfast and networking opportunities with more than 400 regional leaders. The event, which will be held at the Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township from 7:30 a.m. – 10 a.m., will also feature Fox 2 Detroit's Huel Perkins and Charlie Langton as emcees. County Executive Mark A. Hackel will present all of the awards.

Sponsorship opportunities for the Macomb Business Awards are still available. More information and a link to the sponsorship form is available at [www.MacombBusiness.com/bizawards](http://www.MacombBusiness.com/bizawards) or by contacting Maria Zardis at [maria.zardis@macombgov.org](mailto:maria.zardis@macombgov.org) or (586) 469-5285.

### Why businesses should care about the 2020 census



It's time for the 2020 Census, and Macomb County is working to make sure every household is counted. This is important for several reasons - including reapportionment and the distribution of federal funding. For instance, in 2016, Michigan received nearly \$30 billion from the federal government, including \$1.1 billion for highway planning and construction, \$16 billion for health programs, \$5 billion for education, \$2.3 billion for food assistance programs and \$1.5 billion for housing assistance.

But there are other benefits that stem from a complete count, including high-quality data on our country's population. And businesses (both small and large) need that information.

Michael R. Strain, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute who writes frequently on the importance of census data for policymakers and the private sector, provided further explanation in an [interview](#) with *The New York Times*.

"The 2020 census is used to help construct many other data products produced by the federal government," he said. "Some of those products are heavily used by businesses when determining where to open new stores and expand operations, or even what items to put on their shelves. This affects retail businesses, for sure, but businesses in many other sectors as well."

Census data relevant for businesses is currently available on the U.S. Census Bureau website [here](#). A quick look shows statistics about county business patterns, local employment dynamics and industry snapshots - all of which can [help](#).

- Create projections of growth and identify prime locations to open new operations or shut old ones.
- Enhance hiring practices and identify skilled workers.
- Offer valuable information on customer bases, including income levels, household size and home ownership, which can further inform business strategies such as pricing and locations.

Small and large companies are not alone in using this data to make business decisions. The government, at all levels, also uses census information to figure out ways they can support business. For instance, the data provides the basis for setting geographic eligibility for initiatives like [Opportunity Zones](#). It also guides the distribution of grants and loans for economic development, like the [Business and Industry Loans](#) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

All of this to say: The census is important and participation is vital, as it ultimately helps our Macomb County businesses succeed and grow. So be on the lookout. In mid-March, households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 census. All it takes is 10 minutes, and you can impact your community (and local businesses) for the next 10 years.

To learn more about the census, visit Macomb County's 'Count on Macomb' initiative site at [www.macombgov.org/census2020](http://www.macombgov.org/census2020).

### Fixing the funding fixes the roads



Earlier this year, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that Michigan will borrow \$3.5 billion to rebuild the state's deteriorating highways and bridges over five years. The bonding program will provide funding to [fix a number](#) of the state's most-used roads - action that will benefit all Michiganders. But what about local roads? How do we fix this infrastructure?

At a recent [luncheon](#) hosted by the Macomb County Chamber of Commerce and the Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce, which the governor attended, Executive Mark Hackel laid out his solution: "Fixing the funding fixes the roads."

So what exactly does this mean? The Focus Macomb team assembled a simple outline here to help clarify:

#### Who has jurisdiction over Macomb County roads?

- 44 percent of Macomb County roads are county/township roads
- 35 percent of Macomb County roads are city/village roads
- 14 percent of Macomb County roads are private roads
- 7 percent of Macomb County roads are state roads

#### Who is responsible for funding roads?

The state legislature.

#### How does the state fund road repairs?

The largest sources of funding are the gas tax and vehicle-registration fees. Those dollars are distributed to state, county and local road agencies through a formula laid out in Public Act 51 (PA 51).

#### What is Public Act 51?

PA 51 directed the creation of a road-funding distribution formula and the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF). Dollars from that fund are filtered

through the formula – with 39.1 percent going to MDOT, 39.1 percent going to county road commissions and 21.8 percent going to cities and villages.\*

#### **What are the problems with Public Act 51?**

PA 51 is nearly 70-years-old. Its formula is outdated and does not serve the needs of our communities. For instance:

- County road commissions are responsible for 75 percent of Michigan's roads – yet only receive 39.1 percent of the money distributed through the MTF.\*
- The money counties, cities and villages receive is partly based on centerline miles of roads. This does not consider how many lanes a road may have and the associated cost of maintaining or improving that road.\*\*
- The Metro Detroit area has the largest volume of traffic in the state and significant road repair needs. But Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties are all donor counties through the PA 51 road funding formula. They are a part of 22 counties subsidizing local road funding in the state's 61 other counties.\*\*\*
- **In fact, Macomb County is the largest donor county.** And if the PA 51 funding formula changed to distribute dollars based on population, Macomb would receive an additional \$27.45 million annually for road repairs.\*\*\*

These points make it clear. Public Act 51 must be changed so that the funding formula is based on population, road usage and true lane miles. This adjustment, combined with additional forms of revenue, is how we ultimately fix the roads.

*\*"Michigan's Road Funding Crisis," Road Commission for Oakland County, 2019*

*\*\*"Recap: Local Government Finance - Road Funding 101," SEMCOG, April 2019*

*\*\*\*Analysis from Rep. Julie Brixie, as published by MIRS Capitol Capsule, January 27, 2020*

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#### **The need for cyber security is growing. Are you ready?**

Did you know that 43 percent of all cyber security attacks are on small and medium sized businesses? It's a scary fact, but it's the new reality businesses must face in a world dominated by the digital sphere.

To help organizations deal with the complexities of cyber security, the Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a 'Cyber Security for Business' breakfast. The event featured a panel of local experts that discussed how businesses can make sure they are protected from cyber threats. This included several easy-to-follow tips for preventing malicious attacks through both organizational and personal devices:

1. **Security awareness:** Train your users, often! Teach them about data security, email attacks and your policies and procedures. Use a training solution and 'done for you' security policies that find and train the users to best help prevent these attacks.
2. **Computer updates:** Keep Microsoft, Adobe and Java products updated for better security. Use some form of a 'critical update' service via automation to protect your computers from the latest unknown attacks.
3. **Be aware of public wifi:** Coffee shops can be prime hunting grounds for cyber criminals because it is much easier for them to steal personal and financial information that is shared over public wifi. Consider using a VPN, or your own cellular signal to stay protected.
4. **Don't get hooked by a phishing scam:** Phishing emails are often made to look like confirmation for purchases or updates on shipping information. Don't open emails from unknown senders

and don't click on suspicious links. For packages, go to the carrier's website and manually type in tracking numbers.

5. **Spam emails:** Secure your email. Most attacks originate in your email. A service designed to reduce spam and your exposure to attacks on your staff via email is a critical addition to your company's security.
6. **Backup your data:** By saving important information and backing up your data on an external hard drive or cloud based account, you give yourself some protection from ransomware attacks.
7. **Protect your passwords:** When you shop online, use different passwords for every website and account. Change your passwords after the holiday season is over and use passwords that are hard to guess. You may laugh but 'Password' and '1234' are still the most commonly used passwords.
8. **Shop secure, reputable sites:** Avoid websites with 'http' in the address. The 's' in 'https' offers extra security. Proceed with caution even if the website appears to be secure. Spotting mistakes on a website can be a tipoff to a fake site.

For organizations that do business with the government, or more specifically, the Department of Defense, cyber security awareness is more critical than ever. In fact, by the end of the year, there is a new requirement for these companies to become [NIST compliant](#) (National Institute of Standards and Technology). Join experts from the University of Michigan on Tuesday, March 17 for a [free seminar](#) to learn what this means for businesses, what resources are available to assist them in maintaining cyber security resiliency and to hear industry experts talk on cyber security-related topics. The event will run from 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Macomb Community College (Center Campus – UC1 44575 Garfield Rd, Clinton Twp). All interested parties are encouraged to attend, as the importance of cyber security is only going to grow.

For additional information on local cyber security efforts in the region, visit [www.madcat.org](http://www.madcat.org).

### Macomb County tree and plant sale aims to increase the tree canopy in the region



[Green Macomb](#) and the [Blue Water Conservation District](#) have announced the return of their annual tree and plant sale, an opportunity for the public to purchase young trees, fruit trees, flowering shrubs, wildflower seed and other fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices. The sale kicked off with a pre-order period that started February 1. It will run through Friday, April 3. Interested individuals can visit [bluewatercd.org](http://bluewatercd.org) to browse available stock, place their orders and make payments.

"We've held the tree and plant sale for the last three years and we've always had a great response from the community," said Gerard Santoro, program director for Macomb County Parks and Natural Resources, which assists the Green Macomb program. "Last year we had a record 20,000 trees and plants sold during the presales – which helps us with our goal to double the amount of trees in Macomb."

Items available for order include fruit, oak, maple, lilac, persimmons and dogwood bushes/trees as well as strawberry, raspberry, asparagus,

horseradish and rhubarb plants. Prices range from \$5 to \$20 while supplies last.

“Ultimately, our objective with the sale is to increase tree canopy in Macomb County, as this will have a number of positive benefits for our community,” Santoro said. “For instance, areas with a healthy amount of trees see a reduction in pollutants, a reduction in home energy usage and an increase in property values. Increasing tree canopy also aligns with one of the goals of our Macomb County Parks and Natural Resources Master Plan – which is to enhance natural resources and promote environmental stewardship.”

All items purchased during the pre-order period can be picked up at the in-person tree and plant sale on Arbor Day - Friday, April 24 (10 a.m. - 7 p.m.), or Saturday, April 25 (9 a.m. - 1 p.m.) at Dodge Park in Sterling Heights. A limited stock of trees and plants will be available for purchase on site.

Since the sale began three years ago, more than 60,000 trees and plants have been purchased by residents, businesses and communities throughout Macomb County. For more information on the tree and plant sale, visit the [Green Macomb website](#).

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### Shoutout: Paslin expanding in Warren to support future development of electric vehicles



The Paslin Company, headquartered in Warren, started as a small stamping facility in 1937. Today the company is a design and build organization that provides customized integrated robotic assembly lines for Tier 1 suppliers and OEM automotive companies.

Paslin recently received a contract with Rivian to supply vehicle assembly systems and battery frame assembly systems for the automaker’s highly anticipated electric vehicle. As a result of the contract, Paslin plans to make significant investments into electric vehicle-specific machinery and equipment. The project will generate Metro Detroit purchases of \$45 million and create 200 jobs in Michigan, resulting in a \$1 million Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant.

“We are very pleased that Rivian has chosen Paslin, and Macomb County, for this important and exciting project,” said Vicky Rad, director, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development. “This region’s talented workforce and our history of design and innovation will surely be an asset to them as they move forward with the production of their new electric vehicle.”

For information on careers with Paslin, visit <http://www.paslin.com/careers/>.



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