

THE LEGISLATIVE LEDGER



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July 2011

6 Months in Review

PA 312 Reforms

Local Government Cooperation

Preventing of Local Government Bankruptcy

Cost-Saving Public Employee Health Care Reforms

End Retired Lawmaker Health Care Benefits

More Access and Affordability to Higher Education

Education Quality Reforms

Welfare Reforms

FY '12 Budget Passed

Tax Restructuring

Redistricting

Medical Marihuana

Dear Friends,

It has been an incredible and historic past six months. The legislation passed during this time has set the stage to retain and attract jobs and for a leaner, more efficient state government.

After hundreds of hours of testimony, town halls and constituent meetings across the state by myself and my colleagues, I am proud to say that we took definitive action on a number of issues that had been deferred for far too long. While many of our decisions had painful consequences, they were necessary to kick-start Michigan's economy and bring jobs to the state. We worked hard to ease the negative impact as much as possible.

Citizens in Michigan will benefit from repeal of the job-killing Michigan Business Tax, a move that should spur the economy and lift the state out of the fiscal doldrums that have prevailed for the past decade. Additionally, the tax plan protects low-income seniors and older seniors by creating a three-tier tax system to phase in a repeal of a tax exemption that previously favored a select group of pensioners at the expense of other pensioners and working citizens. Michigan will now have the 14th best income tax structure for job-providers and the 8th most generous treatment of retirement income among states with income taxes.

We were also able to pass a pared-down, balanced budget four months before it was due and months before Michigan faced another government shut-down, addressing a long-term structural budget deficit.

We gave schools and local governments a fiscal plan earlier than any Legislature has in the past 30 years. They can plan their next year knowing exactly what is in store financially. They don't have to guess what their funding will be.

Throughout the budget process, I worked aggressively to prioritize K-12 funding while addressing a massive budget deficit plaguing the

Protecting Nonprofits
from Lawsuits

Sex Offender Registry

District Office Hours

Summer Fun

Pure Michigan Summer

Recreation Passport

Boating Safety

LARA's Home
Improvement Tips

MDOT Guide to State
Construction

State of Michigan for 10 years. The governor originally proposed a \$300 per pupil cut, which equated to a 3.9% cut in the aggregate. We were able to lower the aggregate cut to 1.4% after reaching an agreement with the Governor and the Senate. This cut of 1.4% is significantly less than the double digit cuts nearly every other state department is facing. While each school district is different, that effectively equates to a \$100 per pupil cut.

That reduction from 3.5% to 1.4% was made possible through the allocation of an additional \$300 million to K-12 based on future revenues projected to be realized by the State as determined at the Revenue Estimating Conference. We also have allocated \$133 million to a reserve account within the School Aid fund to cover future retirement liabilities for school employees. Furthermore, we are dedicating additional projected revenue to a rainy day fund to cover future retirement liability for school employees and are dedicating additional projected revenue to a rainy day fund to create greater budget stability in the next year as the economy in Michigan remains fragile. It is, in my opinion, preferable to exercise caution in spending projected revenue that may or may not materialize.

One of my personal accomplishments was the passage of a bill I introduced allowing community colleges to offer four-year degrees in five specific fields of study. Students who want to remain in Michigan to finish the last two years of their specialized degrees will now be able to do so.

I must warn you, this Legislative Ledger is a long one reflecting a summary of the historic legislation considered over the last 6 months through the use of articles, press releases and commentary. I hope you find this information useful. As always, I encourage you to attend my local "office hours" to provide feedback or ask questions. They are held at the Livonia Senior Center at 5 Mile and Farmington Road on the third Friday of the month from 11 a.m. to Noon. No appointment is necessary.

Additionally, if you have any family, friends, or associates living in the 19th District who would like to receive my Legislative Ledger, please ask them to contact my office at johnwalsh@house.mi.gov. We would be happy to include them as subscribers.



Government Reforms

PA 312 Reforms Help Municipalities Keep

Public Safety Employed

The Legislature approved reforms to the binding arbitration laws, PA 312, for police and firefighters that help put taxpayer concerns first but still protect collective bargaining for police officers and firefighters.

For years, local governments have been requesting reforms to the binding arbitration process. This process occurs when an impasse is declared by either the union or the employer during a mediation process. A third-party arbitrator determines the appropriate level of compensation for the employees by choosing between each party's last offers. The arbitrator's determination is binding, meaning that both parties are legally required to honor the decision.

Particularly with the decline in the economy, Michigan municipalities want PA 312 to take the financial realities facing our government into account. Many local governments have seen a huge reduction in revenue from property taxes, and other fees and taxes. This has caused cities to tighten their belts and reduce their workforce. In just the past decade, Michigan cities have laid off 2,315 police officers and 2,000 firefighters.

To help give local governments tools to address their financial concerns, the House passed bipartisan reforms to PA 312 (on a 109 to 1 vote).

Highlights include:

- The municipality's ability to pay must be weighted more heavily than any other consideration.
- When looking for local examples, the arbitrator must consider the contracts of other public workers in the community equally with those in comparable communities to ensure local costs are met.
- Municipalities and unions must split the cost of their own arbitration. The state will no longer have to pay as part of this process.
- Decisions can take no longer than 180 days. (Currently, cases often take a year or more to be resolved.)
- The Act also would apply to those employees of an authority, district, or board.

John's Comment: Perhaps one of the best examples of good public policy achieved through the compromise and agreement of all those involved. After years of contentious debate, management and labor, local and state governments, Republicans and Democrats, and various associations were able to negotiate this meaningful reform.

Legislation Helps Local Governments Cooperate More Effectively

When two local governments want to share or merge services, they must take the highest parts of each wage and benefits package and merge it into one contract. As a result, local governments are forced to pay public employees the higher of the two rates. Regular pay, healthcare and fringe benefits are all automatically moved to the higher position for the employees. The current Urban Cooperation Act therefor dissuades local governments from entering into these agreements with each other, especially when a large disparity exists in compensation.

HB 4309-12 fixes the existing Urban Cooperation Act so that cities can use it to cooperate, as it was originally intended. The legislation will require the municipalities to negotiate a new contract, allowing both the employer and the employee to bargain for a wage that is fair for the shared entity. These changes will remove barriers to cooperation while still allowing for collective bargaining. Budget shortfalls are forcing communities to work together. These changes will help give local governments the tools they need to avoid financial hardship and stay solvent in this economic climate. These bills will aid them seeking out best practices and efficient choices.

John's comment: While the ultimate decision for consolidation is left to local preference, Lansing has enhanced the possibility through this simple and fair public policy change that protects the taxpayer while preserving the right to labor negotiations.

House Bills Help Local Governments Prevent Bankruptcy

Michigan cities and school districts are facing difficult economic times. In extreme cases, gross mismanagement has put some cities and school districts on the brink of failure. In other cases, large labor contracts, escalating health care costs, and declining revenue, threaten to bury cities and schools under mountains of escalating debt.

The previous Local Government Fiscal Responsibility Act already allowed for the governor to appoint an emergency manager (EM) in case of dire economic circumstances, but there were flaws in the process that delayed state intervention. The system limited the steps the state and local governments could take before reaching emergency status, which overlooked several relatively painless options along the way.

In a proactive measure, the Legislature passed legislation designed to create a system for early state response so as to help local governments

avoid receivership. This legislation would repeal the existing Local Government Fiscal Responsibility Act and replace it with language that would allow the local unit of government to potentially remedy their financial stress before there is a crisis. This is due to language that requires the state treasurer to review the local government's financials and determine the level of financial stress. If it is determined that the problem is not severe, the local government can develop a plan to correct their problems.

However, if it becomes clear to the state treasurer, state superintendent or governor that a local government or school district cannot act to correct their financial situation, then the local government enters into receivership and a trained EM is appointed.

This Emergency Manger legislation will encourage transparency and accountability for taxpayers in the EM process by eliminating many of the political obstacles to success. Giving the EMs more autonomy and greater authority to do their job without fear of reprisal will enable them to turn the local government around and prevent a far worse situation, bankruptcy.

John's Comment: While this act has been portrayed as the end of local control and collective bargaining, it is far from it. Less than 1% of our school districts and municipalities will even face the prospect of an EM, and those that do will be well-served by the intervention for the benefit of citizens.

House Approves Cost-Saving Public Employee Health Care Reform

The Michigan House and Senate have each approved a cost-saving reform to bring public employee health care benefits in line with the private sector by limiting the amount public employers contribute annually to the health care of their employees.

SB 7 prohibits public employers from paying more than the following amounts toward the annual health care of their employees - including legislators:

- \$5,500 for individual
- \$11,000 for married couples
- \$12,500 for single-parent homes
- \$15,000 for other family plans

Additionally, public employers can voluntarily switch to an "80/20" percent plan upon approval of their local governing board. Under this plan, employers must not pay more than 80% of total annual health benefit costs. There is no hard dollar limit.

These new limits do not apply to current public employees until new collective bargaining agreements are renewed. Lawmakers are included in this and do not have the option to opt out.

SB 7 is now being reviewed by a joint House-Senate Conference Committee.

John's Comment: Leading by example, please know that elected officials, as well as state, municipal and school employees will be covered. The private sector has suffered the loss of 1,000,000 jobs over the past decade and our citizens have endured higher and higher health care costs. Our public servants must reflect this reality, and SB 7 is a step in that direction.

House Votes to End Retired Lawmaker Health Care Benefits

State Rep. Walsh voted in favor of legislation that will eliminate retirement health care benefits for most Michigan legislators, including himself.

Currently, former lawmakers serving at least six years were eligible for health care coverage starting at age 55. House Bill 4087 ends this benefit, affecting most lawmakers currently serving and all future lawmakers.

HB 4087 is now under consideration in the Senate.

Education Reforms

Walsh's Bill Would Help Bring More Access and Affordability to Higher Education

The House of Representatives approved a measure by state Rep. John Walsh allowing community colleges to award bachelor's degrees for several unique programs facing extraordinary economic and academic demand.

This bill, HB 4496, would permit, but not require, community colleges to offer a baccalaureate degree in maritime technology, concrete technology, culinary arts, energy production technology and a bachelor of science in nursing. The community college baccalaureate proposal is predicated on access and affordability to higher education for Michigan's citizens and would put us in line with 21 other states that are already using defined baccalaureate programs at community

colleges to address demand in select areas. It would use existing community college infrastructure, facilities, faculty and programming as bachelor degrees in four of the five fields are not currently offered by Michigan universities and they have shown little desire to add these degrees to their offerings.

Additionally, it would enable our state's community colleges to respond to the demand from growing industries and the need in areas of the state that are underserved by Michigan's current higher education system. Michigan's employers would greatly benefit from this legislation as there is an immediate need for trained workers, particularly in the medical field, where a nursing shortage exists.

The bill passed with broad bipartisan support and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

House Supports Education Quality Reforms

The Michigan House recently passed on a bipartisan basis a bill package, HB 4625-28, that will help make Michigan schools a better place for quality education and quality educators.

One thing is certain: the success of future generations requires that the state act now to address some of the long-standing shortfalls present in our public school system. We must be certain students leave Michigan schools qualified and ready to meet the challenges that await them in a rebounding economy. In keeping with our goal to put kids first, lawmakers are dedicated to making sure schools can provide children with the best educators under a system that promotes excellence.

One critical point of reform is an end to the practice of seniority-based staffing when determining new labor contracts. Also known as Last In, First Out, this antiquated standard of hiring does not take into account the success or quality of an educator, only how long they have been in the system. Other than being unfair to young educators, it is hardly the standard we should use to determine who we should pay to educate our children. Like any value-based employer, schools should be allowed to keep quality teachers of every age.

Other elements of the full package include:

- Updating Michigan law to grant tenure based on performance
- Creating a procedure that more reasonably and affordably allows the dismissal of ineffective or suspended teacher
- Allowing both administrators and potential teachers to have a more equal share in determining job placement.
- Preserves the tenure system.

John's Comment: While some legislators and citizens encouraged the complete elimination of tenure, I and others worked hard to

create a system that protects teachers from arbitrary and capricious termination while introducing job performance and merit as part of the system.

Job Creation

House Reforms State Welfare System

The Michigan House recently approved legislation to reform the state's welfare system by setting state assistance at 48 months for able-bodied adults and ensuring illegal immigrants don't receive benefits.

House Bills 4409-10, exempts senior citizens, pregnant mothers, domestic violence victims, adults who are physically or mentally incapacitated, and adults with a disabled child at home from a time limit for assistance. Michigan is only one of three states in the nation that has no limit on receiving welfare assistance. Putting a four-year cap for able bodies workers in place could save the state as much as \$75 million and bring us in line with national standards.

The legislation does not affect the state's food stamp program. Residents would still be able to use food stamps for longer than 48 months. The plan also allows Michigan residents to work more hours while still qualifying for welfare assistance. Currently, a worker earning minimum wage is removed from the program after working an average of 26 hours per week. This change would allow them to work up to 37 hours before being removed. This eliminates the incentive to turn down work and receive assistance instead.

The plan also requires the state to verify the residency status of each non-U.S. citizen applicant, and incorporates a "three strikes and you're out" disciplinary program where recipients could be permanently banned from assistance after three offenses. HBs 4409-10 now go to the Senate for consideration.

Fiscally Responsible Budget Passed- Earliest in 30 Years

The Legislature passed a balanced state budget which includes fiscally responsible spending decisions to provide for a better future in Michigan. It was the earliest the budget has been completed in 30 years which allows for better planning for schools and local governments.

We knew we had to get state spending in line with our limited revenues and be clear about what Michigan taxpayers can and cannot afford.

We've done that and made significant changes to the way state government serves the people. We worked hard to find a solution that would turn our economy around and keep state government up and running for those who need it.

Highlights include:

- Protected low-income seniors by preserving Medicaid funding.
- The K-12 budget reduction will be effectively reduced to less than \$100 per pupil (1.4%) this year for schools that implement the best practices criteria and participate in MPSERS, well below the governor's original \$300 per pupil (4.1%) recommendation.
- \$256 million of projected revenue has been ear-marked for a rainy day fund. This will allow us to plan for the years ahead with an assurance of further stability than we have now.
- \$30 million on top of the already-agreed amount (\$15 million to counties and \$15 million to cities, townships and villages) will help struggling local governments work through the reductions in revenue sharing and continue to meet their financial obligations.

John's Comment: After numerous billion dollar deficits since 2000, we finally made the difficult decisions everyone knew were necessary to address the structural problems facing our budget. We recognized the reality of our situation and made the cuts necessary to live within our means - a decision million of Michigan's families have already made in their households during this challenging economic time.

House Approves Michigan's Tax Structure

The House approved legislation that changes Michigan's income and business tax structure.

House Bills 4361 and 4362 will simplify Michigan's tax structure by eliminating the Michigan Business Tax and replacing it with a flat 6-percent corporate income tax. Under this plan, Michigan will have the 14th best income tax and the 8th most generous treatment of retirement income among states with income taxes. It also moves Michigan up from the bottom of the rankings in business tax competitiveness in order to encourage job creation. To help job seekers, we must make Michigan a better place to provide a job. The status quo is not an option. Bold changes and tough decisions are necessary to put Michigan back on top.

Highlights Include:

- Eliminates the Michigan Business Tax and replaces it with a flat corporate income tax.
- This plan is a net tax cut of \$700 million over three years for our citizens.
- Evens the burden for all pensioners. Replacing a system that held some seniors responsible for income tax and allowing others to be tax free.
 - Pensioners who are 67 or older in 2012 **do not** see a change to their pension exemptions.
 - Pensioners between 60 and 66 in 2012 have an exemption up to \$20,000 of retirement income, \$40,000 for joint filers. When they hit age 67, that exemption applies to all income.

Younger pensioners have their exemptions removed until they reach age 67, when they receive the \$20,000/\$40,000 exemption.
 - Social Security income and military pensions are **not** taxed.
- The Homestead Property Tax Credit remains at 60% for non-seniors, as is current law. Seniors have a sliding scale based on income to determine the size of their credit.

John's Comment: After years of requiring some seniors to pay tax on their income while permitting others to avoid taxes, we've created a fair system for all. That being said, I strongly opposed the Governor's recommendation for immediate effectiveness and successfully fought for a phase-in that lessens the impact for those who previously made retirement decisions prior to this year's debate.

Redistricting

In the past 10 years, Michigan has experienced major population shifts. Loss of residents to other states has meant that Michigan will lose one seat in the U.S. Congress, reducing the total number to 14. Additionally, residents moving from one city to another city will play a major role in determining the new congressional districts. This is because redistricting must follow the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA), which requires a preponderance of minority voters in two of Michigan's

congressional districts. Complying with the VRA, will require significant changes to congressional district boundaries since the city of Detroit has lost almost 240,000 residents.

Furthermore, redistricting must generally follow what are commonly referred to as the "Apoll Standards," requiring that all House and Senate districts strive to preserve county and municipal boundaries and be contiguous and within 5% of the ideal district population -- the number of total Michigan residents divided by the number of seats in each respective chamber. In sum, new boundaries must comply with state and federal law, including the Michigan and U.S. Constitutions, as well as the federal Voting Rights Act.

The Legislature's Redistricting Committees were responsible for the drawing of the new maps, as well as reviewing numerous maps that were submitted by the public. The end goal of redistricting is to draw district lines in a manner that is both legal and fair. The Legislature recently passed legislation containing maps which achieve both of these guiding principles.

Law Enforcement

House Introduces Bills to Clarify Medical Marijuana Law

House lawmakers, led by state Rep. John Walsh, introduced a bipartisan package of bills that will ensure public safety by clarifying the many ambiguities in the Medical Marijuana Act.

Voters passed the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act in 2008, legalizing the possession and use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. However, the many holes in the law have led to widespread confusion on the part of law abiding patients, local municipalities and law enforcement. Medical marijuana users and local officials alike would agree that the current implementation is not going smoothly.

Cities are trying to pass their own ordinances regulating the use and distribution of the marijuana, but are facing lawsuits over their actions. The uncertainty and disagreements are costing taxpayer's money.

Additionally, some are taking advantage of the situation to exploit loopholes in the law. Websites have been created where an individual can become certified completely online.

The recently introduced bills ensures medical marijuana is being

properly certified and acquired appropriately by patients who truly need it, clarifies and protects the rights granted by voters in the 2008 election, and it gives municipalities and law enforcement a roadmap for enforcement. The amendments would do the following:

- Require verification of a bona fide physician/patient relationship. The language is based on the definition provided by the board of medicine and the board of osteopathic medicine.
- Require the marijuana to be stored in a completely enclosed and securely locked facility, and restrict access to the registered caregiver or patient.
- Clarify the certification process to reflect a bona-fide physician/patient relationship.
- Prohibit patient-to-patient transactions and prohibit caregivers from providing marijuana to patients who are not theirs.
- Allow law enforcement to have access to the registry of patients during the course of their official duty. It does not allow carte blanche access by law enforcement.
- Require a standard photo to appear on medical marijuana ID cards.
- Allow local governments to zone and regulate dispensaries.

John's Comment:

When voters approved medical marijuana in 2008, I don't think they expected the "wild west" we've witnessed - drug houses, uncertain law enforcement, physician based "papermills" distributing certificates after an internet consultation. Our package aims to protect the law abiding citizen/patient, while increasing the enforcement structures to protect against abuse.

Legislature Passes Bills to Put Michigan in Compliance with Adam Walsh Act

In 2006, U.S. Congress adopted the Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act which requires states to comply with specific guidelines for state sex offender registries. The primary intent of Senate Bills 188, 189 & 206 (PA 17, 18 & 19) was compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act. These bills were signed into law by the Governor on April 12, 2011

Michigan is a national leader on the issue, and is only one of a handful of states that achieved compliance to date, ensuring the state will not lose 10% of its Byrne/JAG grant funding.

Updating Michigan's Antiquated Divorce Laws

Michigan's statutory divorce laws date back to the 1840s. While our courts have done a masterful job of applying the laws on a case by case basis, our citizens still face great uncertainty with regard to marital property - and uncertainty means greater acrimony and expense for both the husband and wife.

House Bill 4672 and 4673 are designed to codify existing case law and protect both men and women. Unfortunately, a number of attorneys have attempted to kill debate of this public policy by alleging it is unnecessary, anti-women, and done on the sly for a select few. Please know this couldn't be further from the truth. The public record and plain language of the legislation stands to the contrary. Debate will continue on these bills through the fall. Numerous judges, attorneys, and advocates are presently working on revised language as this issue continues to be debated here and across the country.

Walsh's Bill Protects Nonprofits from Frivolous Lawsuits

Speaker Pro Tem John Walsh's legislation protecting nonprofit organizations from being sued by parents who had signed a written release allowing their child to participate in a sport has become law.

Previously, nonprofits were exposed to liability for injuries suffered by children participating in sports, even though the parent or guardian had signed a written release of liability. Rep. Walsh's bill permits use of the waiver as long as the injury was sustained during the normal participation in the sport or activity. However, if the injury resulted because of negligence on the part of the sponsoring organization, parents could still seek legal relief.

Changes in the law were deemed necessary after Michigan courts determined that written waivers signed by parents were invalid based on common-law rules. Walsh's bill provides a statutory exception to common law that the Michigan Supreme Court ruled necessary.

Because of the court decisions, many smaller nonprofits were in a position where they might not have offered sports and recreation activities. They were precluded from organizing events because they would have been put in financial jeopardy without the protection of the waivers.

The bill would cover only nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations, because governmental organizations such as schools already have

immunity, and for-profit ventures can obtain insurance.

District Office Hours

To provide residents a convenient opportunity to meet with me in person, I hold local "office hours" at the Livonia Senior Center at 5 Mile and Farmington Road on the third Friday of the month from 11 a.m. to Noon.

No appointment is necessary. Residents who are otherwise unable to meet during the above office hours may contact my Lansing office at (517) 373-3920 or by e-mail at johnwalsh@house.mi.gov.

Over the past couple months, I have held a Town Hall and scheduled extra office hours in addition to the regularly scheduled office hours in order to give constituents more opportunities to provide feedback on the budget and tax proposal. I would like to thank all those who came to my meetings and expressed their feedback.

Summer Fun

Pure Michigan Summer

Memorial Day is often considered the starting point for summer activity in Michigan. Included in this newsletter are a variety of articles about summer fun and safety. Remember, whether you are looking for a vacation spot, a weekend getaway or an outdoor hobby this summer, there are great spots right here in our state. To start your Pure Michigan experience, simply visit the state website [here](#).

Recreation Passport for Summer Family Fun

Credit: www.michigan.gov/DNR

The \$10 Recreation Passport replaces the state park sticker to get residents of Michigan into all state parks, recreation areas and boat launches.

Money spent on the passport helps preserve forest campgrounds and trails, historic sites in state parks, and parks within resident's own community.

Get your Recreation Passport by checking "YES" on your license plate renewal form or visit www.michigan.gov/recreationpassport.

Boating Safety Education

Credit: www.michigan.gov/DNR

A person who is 12 but less than 14 may operate a personal watercraft if he or she obtained a boating safety certificate before January 1, 1999.

Also a person born after December 31, 1978 cannot operate a personal watercraft unless they obtain a boating safety certificate.

The operators of a personal watercraft must carry their boating safety certificate. To receive a safety certificate please visit <http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/recnsearch> for a schedule of classes and a course in your area.

LARA's Summer Safety Tips for Home Improvement Projects

Credit: www.michigan.gov/LARA

The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs is reminding consumers, who are looking to remodel their homes, important safety tips that will help them avoid costly mistakes while renovating.

Before starting a project proper verification of a contractors and builder's license can prevent a future disaster. Consumers can ask to see a copy of a worker's license and verify online at www.michigan.gov/licenselookup or call LARA's Bureau of Commercial Services Licensing Division at 517-373-8376.

Many online referral and advertising sites when searching for builders or contractors will advertise the individual is licensed. Consumers should use caution and confirm the worker is properly licensed.

Consumers should also never pay the contractor or builder the full amount of money in advance. If the project is large, an upfront payment agreement should be reasonable to the percentage of the total price.

It is important for homeowners to check with the local or state building department to see if a permit for their project is required.

Typically, permits are required for:

- New Buildings
- Additions (family rooms, bathrooms, bedrooms)
- Renovations (garages, kitchen expansions, reroofing)

- Residential work (decks, fences, pools)
- Electrical systems
- Plumbing systems
- HVAC (heating, ventilating and air-conditioning) systems

Even if homeowners have no immediate plans for a renovation, basic routine maintenance steps such as changing the filter on heating and air conditioning systems will protect investments and keep homes functioning properly.

Homeowners should remember that cleanliness, inside and out, plays a major role in making a home last longer and work better.

For more information, visit the Bureau of Commercial Services website at www.michigan.gov/bcs or Bureau of Construction Codes at www.michigan.gov/bcc.

For more information about LARA visit www.michigan.gov/lara.

Michigan Department of Transportation Offers a Guide to Navigate State Construction

Credit: www.michigan.gov/drive

To help you plan your summer routes, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is providing a free guide, "Paving the Way." In past years, this annually updated map has been a great boon for travelers and commuters, providing motorists with the locations of major MDOT road and bridge projects statewide.

A copy of the map can be downloaded from the "Maps and Publications" section of the MDOT Web site. Motorists are also advised to reference the Mi Drive Web site, MDOT's frequently updated list of lane closures on state roads, at www.michigan.gov/drive.

The 2011 map will be available at all MDOT Transportation Service Centers and regional offices, state rest areas, and Welcome Centers. As of early May, Michigan's Upper Peninsula Welcome Centers should now have maps available.

The 2011 edition of "Paving the Way" also provides construction details and specific maps for state roads in Detroit, Lansing and Grand Rapids.

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