There is a Light at the End of the Tunnel

Lawmakers returned to their districts for summer recess after several unsuccessful attempts to provide Michigan residents with a long-term road funding fix. Legislators have vowed to continue working on a solution over summer break. The Senate Majority Leader commented a senate-appointed workgroup would be created to ensure the issue remains a top priority.

While many Michiganders are frustrated with lawmakers’ inability to complete the job, the County Road Association is still hopeful a plan will be devised to improve roads for the long haul. Reform bills, conversion to wholesale tax (inflation-indexed funding) and diesel parity have already passed. Just the main funding bills remain unfinished.

“It is disappointing that a solution hasn’t been reached, but we hope legislators will come back from recess with fresh ideas and resolve to finish the package,” said County Road Association director Denise Donohue. “Meanwhile, we will continue encouraging lawmakers to vote for the high-quality roads and bridges our state deserves. County road agencies and commissioners need to stay positive and let their voices be heard with both legislators and candidates.”

Another ray of hope for Michigan roads can be seen all the way from Pennsylvania. Bradley Mallory, deputy executive secretary of PennDOT and keynote speaker of this year’s annual Highway Conference, insists increasing road funding is a long but rewarding process. As he said in March, it took Pennsylvania three years and many failed votes to pass a comprehensive road funding bill in 2013.

As summer progresses, stakeholders should continue to build support locally. Members should attend town hall meetings hosted by their legislators to be the voice for local roads and make it clear Michigan voters are willing to pay to fix roads.

While the media has rallied in support of increased road funding, it is vital that lawmakers understand constituents back home support such a move as well.

For the first time in many years the number-one call to legislator offices was a request to fix the roads. Keep that momentum up and help the public understand our need for increased tax revenue.

Take a moment to write a letter, call your State Senator and Representative or attend a legislator’s district event. Encourage friends and family to do the same.

“The moment is coming for comprehensive road funding,” said Ed Noyola, the County Road Association’s deputy director, who has worked the Capitol halls and offices for years. “We have the momentum. We need to keep the pressure on and be ready to push it over the finish line in a positive way, either in September or in lame duck session.”
New Managing Directors Arrive for Cass and Gladwin Counties

Both Cass and Gladwin Counties have welcomed new managing directors in recent months, bringing fresh eyes and perspective to the county road agencies.

Steve Lucas joined Cass County Road Commission (CCRC) from Three Rivers Community Schools where he served as director of operations since 1999. With about two months under his belt at the CCRC, Lucas says he enjoys meeting new people and is working to build trusting relationships with those in his county. He also believes he has learned quite a bit in a small amount of time.

“The toughest part so far has been educating our residents about the way road funding works,” Lucas said. “The public is very upset about the road conditions, and each contact provides a new opportunity to explain road funding and present our case for new revenue.”

Lucas looks forward to growing new relationships as managing director and bridging the gap between county residents and their road commission.

Dave Pettersch joined the Gladwin County Road Commission after six years with J. Ranck Electric, Inc., where he worked as a project manager running MDOTs lighting and transportation projects. Prior to that, he was an estimator for Rieth-Riley Construction Company where he oversaw asphalt-paving projects.

Pettersch has been with Gladwin County for three months and says he, too, has learned a lot. He jumped in with both feet and is already serving on the County Road Association’s Public Relations Committee.

“We have an extremely skilled and hardworking crew. I have learned a lot about our county, and the roads we maintain,” Pettersch said. “Few people realize the challenges road commissions face, from funding to weather to customer service. We have to be ready to face a variety of situations, and very few are ever the same.”

Pettersch said he has enjoyed working with townships the most.

“We have to work together to share resources and turn plans into action,” said Pettersch. “Working with the townships allows us to do more good for the entire community.”

When he is not at work, Pettersch enjoys spending time with his family, especially his two children, four-year-old Ella and three-year-old Gabe.

Welcome to the new managing directors – the Association and all counties look forward to working with you and seeing your accomplishments as you continue on in your new position.
President’s Corner

Hopefully you were all able to enjoy an extended Fourth of July weekend. You certainly deserved it, putting in the tremendous effort to serve your constituents with far too little funding. At the Barry CRC we must deny more and more requests for legitimate services that we used to be able to provide. Saying “No” to residents, in a tactful, professional manner with a good explanation takes a lot of time and finesse for management employees.

The sentiment seems to be the same across the state – stress for road commission employees is on the rise. We all want to do a good job but that gets harder when we are forced to say “No” more often. Even with construction season in full swing, it’s important to relax and recharge.

Possible solutions include coping, training, counseling, or for some retirement. 😊 But, the real solution is to start saying “Yes” again. We need increased funding first. The Senate was close at the end of June. The County Road Association (CRA) and our allies are not giving up. We are hopeful this issue will be addressed properly in Lansing before the end of the year. Along with our partners, we will be ramping up efforts again this fall to push this issue across the finish line.

But this leads me to a request from your CRA Board. The CRA Board of Directors approved asking our membership to vote on increasing dues to the County Road Association. This requires a by-law amendment agreed upon by a majority of the members. The language will be available for discussion at the next round of council meetings.

The current by-laws require all road agencies to pay dues according to Act 51 receipts. This is fine but when we are struggling, due to years without a funding increase, so does the Association. When it’s time for a funding increase and we need CRA the most, they are cash strapped, just like us. This is not the best way to do business. If anything, when things are going well and funding is up, CRA could get by on the least. We have set up the Association to be poorly funded at the worst possible time.

As a result, we requested a special assessment last year of $1,000 per county to ramp up road funding efforts. Thank you all for the help! Hopefully you have noticed our efforts and improvements and felt that was worth the investment. In order to keep the push on in Lansing, in the media and continue the efforts to improve our service to the membership; the County Road Association needs a 30 percent increase in revenue. Specifically the proposed by-laws will request a 15 percent dues increase yet this year and the full 30 percent for 2015 and beyond. I know this seems like a lot at once but we have waited too long to ask.

To put this into perspective a 30 percent increase for the Barry CRC amounts to an additional $2,227 per year, for Oakland $9,229 per year. We recognize you all need a very large funding increase just to get back to normal. CRA needs it now to continue becoming more relevant and secure that increase for our membership, so you can start saying “YES” again.

Please consider the proposed by-law changes and don’t be afraid to ask the tough questions of your board of directors or the CRA director. Having the resources to be effective is essential, especially now. Funds will be used wisely to increase our impact and the services we offer.

Bradley S. Lamberg, P.E., CRA President and Managing Director of the Barry CRC
When a Crisis Strikes

Publicized crises, major events that play out in the media, can happen to any organization, at any time. They can erode your image, destroy your reputation with the public and create headaches for management and employees. When a crisis strikes it can be alarming, but can be weathered with a plan.

A crisis communications plan is just as critical for an organization as any other strategic plan. Being prepared for a crisis before it occurs can make a world of difference. To begin planning:

- Make a list of “what ifs?” and outline how your agency should react to each potential “what if?” situation.
- Decide who would be your spokesperson. Determine how they can be contacted at any time of any day. During a crisis it is crucial that your agency respond with one calm voice.
- Assign responsibilities beforehand. Who will be in charge of media relations? Employee communications? Emergency operations, including an external location if needed?
- Develop and frequently update your media list and contact information.
- Create and store sample news releases that can be used as templates in a crisis.
- Make sure all critical documents and information could be accessible in a crisis.

When a crisis hits, time is critical. While an organization should take time to develop a strategy, it must be done quickly. A crisis management team should be assembled and treated as the go-to source for all decisions and communications. This team is responsible for gathering all the facts and developing and implementing a plan of action. However, they don’t have to go at it alone.

“When our road commission faced a potential crisis, the first thing we did was contact the County Road Association office,” said Ken Hulka, managing director of the Muskegon County Road Commission. “They helped organize a crisis communication plan that we could follow to address the situation. Luckily, we haven’t had to implement the plan, but it gave us some peace of mind knowing it was there. I felt much more in control of the situation and our message.”

After an initial strategy is created, all employees who interact with the public should be notified of the situation and given instructions on how to communicate with external parties. Frequent updates should be provided to communicate accurate information.

Remaining silent often makes a crisis worse. Organizations must protect themselves and reassure the public that a situation is being handled. Communication does both.

Most organizations in a crisis fear the media. Instead, they should view reporters as a vehicle to communicate their messages. Media outlets have direct access to the public and can be used to an organization’s benefit. Advance planning and a comprehensive crisis communication plan will help you to gain and keep control of your message. Building a social media presence ahead of time also enables a road agency to go to the public directly.
Be aware that initial media questions will be simple and predictable:

- What happened and when did you discover the situation?
- What are you doing to remedy the problem?
- Who is responsible?
- Why was this issue not discovered earlier?

Always be honest and up-front with the media. If an answer is unknown, agree to update them when one becomes available. Never lie and be prepared to correct misinformation immediately. Organizations should also consider using social media to communicate their messages to the public directly. Research has shown the public is more understanding of crisis situations if they are addressed quickly and honestly by an organization. Organizations should be open and update reporters, employees, key officials and social media followers on the situation frequently. Someone will be talking about the crisis online. An organization’s reputation is too important to let someone else tell or create the story.

The crisis management team should continue listening to comments from the public and media to see if sentiments are changing. Be sure to closely monitor news articles, internet posts and social media pages for new information.

As time passes and the situation is resolved, every organization should evaluate their efforts in the crisis management process. Note what worked well and what did not. Learn from the experience and use it as preparation to prevent future crises.

The County Road Association is always available to help in a crisis. If your road agency needs assistance, please contact Monica Ware or Denise Donohue.

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<tr>
<th>IN A CRISIS SITUATION</th>
<th>Do</th>
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<td>Prepare for interviews</td>
<td>Repeat loaded words like “crisis”</td>
<td>Speculate about circumstances or facts – Tell what you</td>
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<td>or “devastating”</td>
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<td>Develop key messages and steps</td>
<td>Speculate about circumstances or</td>
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<td>taken to remedy the situation</td>
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<td>Anticipate questions from</td>
<td>Make “off the record” comments.</td>
<td>Say “no comment” to something you do not know – Instead</td>
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<td>reporters and be prepared with</td>
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<td>Be positive but show empathy</td>
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<td>Ask a journalist to clarify</td>
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<td>questions you don’t understand</td>
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<td>Correct misinformation</td>
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<td>Make yourself accessible</td>
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<td>Control the message</td>
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RUSH-PAC Needs Support From All Commissioners and Road Agency Staff

As each summer day ticks by, Election Day is drawing nearer. RUSH-PAC has been busy learning about candidates to support and selecting key races to be involved in for the primary. As we prepare to be active in many races this fall, we need your support to make an impact. Even the smallest contribution from every commissioner and road agency staff member can make a huge difference.

A RUSH-PAC donation helps support candidates who will champion issues important to county road agencies when they are elected. Make a donation to open doors in Lansing and let your county’s voice be heard. We need you to join the team!

Together we are a stronger voice!

Current County Support for RUSH-PAC

| County         | Alcona | Alger | Allegan | Alpena | Antrim | Arenac | Baraga | Barry | Bay | Benzie | Berrien | Branch | Calhoun | Cass | Charlevoix | Cheboygan | Chippewa | Clare | Clinton | Crawford | Delta | Dickinson | Eaton | Emmett | Genesee | Gladwin | Gogebic | Grand Traverse |
|----------------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----|--------|---------|--------|---------|------|------------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
|                | 3      | 2     | 2       | 8      | 1      | 0      | 2      | 2     | 4   | 0      | 1      | 0      | 0      | 1    | 1          | 3         | 2       | 0      | 5       | 0        | 4     | 2        | 0     | 1       | 2       | 0      | 0       | 0     |
|                | Gratiot | Hillsdale | Houghton | Huron | Ingham | Ionia  | Josco  | Iron  | Isabella | Jackson | Kalamazoo | Kalkaska | Kent  | Keweenaw | Lake    | Lapeer  | Leelanau | Lenawee  | Mackinac | Macomb  | Manistee | Marquette | Mason  | Masonine | Mecosta | Midland | Menominee | Out-of-State |
|                | 2      | 1     | 3       | 4      | 4      | 0      | 0     | 1     | 2   | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 4    | 1          | 0         | 0       | 0      | 5       | 1        | 1     | 3        | 3     | 2       | 2       | 3      | 3       | 3     |
Election Year 2014: Be the Voice of Roads

As political campaigns are in high gear across the state, candidates are seeking supporters to help them learn the issues and get voter support. While candidates may receive hundreds of checks from political action committees, the value of relationships built when investing sweat equity cannot be underestimated.

No matter the candidate, the County Road Association is encouraging all members to “put skin in the game” and get out on the campaign trail this year.

While endorsing a candidate or donating directly to a campaign are good options, there are also many low- to no-cost ways to get involved in races locally.

- Volunteer to be a roads and bridges resource and help candidates answer questions important to voters in your district.
- Consider volunteering to go door-to-door with or for a candidate.
- Volunteer to drive your candidate and other volunteers around the district to save time and increase face-to-face interactions with constituents.
- Consider doing door-to-door literature drops as the election approaches.
- Volunteer at a campaign office, walk in a community parade or help with get-out-the-vote activities such as phone banks and driving people to the polls.
- Provide snacks such as cookies, fruit and bottled water to a campaign office.
- Write a letter to the local newspaper’s editor endorsing a candidate and place a campaign sign in your front yard.

There are many volunteer activities that anyone can do. Most importantly, don’t forget to vote. If making it to a polling station on Election Day is difficult, register for an absentee ballot. An election can be won or lost by just one vote. Volunteered time, dedication and support matters and can make a difference.

For more information on how to “Be the Voice” for local roads, please contact Monica Ware in the County Road Association office.

2014 RUSH-PAC Primary Endorsements

In a tactical change to be more effective in Lansing, the RUSH-PAC will be making only a limited number of endorsements and financial contributions before the primary election. Making these early endorsements based simply on survey responses is no longer the best strategy, as term limits and other factors have changed the climate and the best way to support candidates.

Look for the “short list” in the next Legislative Update.
Roads, Risk & Reserve Fund Special Projects Underway Across the State

While comprehensive funding reforms are still on the table, many road agencies across the state are experiencing the benefits of special funding. The Monore County Road Commission held a pre-construction ribbon cutting event on July 1 with State Rep. Dale Zorn (R-Monroe) to announce the reconstruction of a road that has plagued Monroe County residents since the 1960s.

The state built Samaria Road as a main truck route using a test material for flexible concrete. Following construction the Monroe CRC took over jurisdiction from MDOT, not knowing they were taking over responsibility of an inferior road which started to deteriorate within three years. Over the years, the Monroe CRC has not had funding to do more than patch the jarring craters on this heavily travelled local road.

As a former Monroe County Commissioner, Rep. Zorn was familiar with Samaria Road before he came to Lansing. He heard loud and clear from his constituents during townhall meetings in 2011 that something needed to be done to finally fix it.

In 2013, Rep Zorn took his concerns about the failure of Samaria Road to Gov. Snyder and leadership – this road had been built as a trial road by the state and the state should help with the cost of reconstruction. While working on the state funding aspect in Lansing, Rep. Zorn approached the townships and asked them to contribute $500,000 toward the project.

Monroe CRC received $5 million toward the reconstruction of Samaria Road in the first round of Roads, Risk and Reserve Fund appropriations from the legislature. Since a match was not required in the final Roads, Risk and Reserve legislation, the townships agreed to put the $500,000 toward other roads in their townships.

Rep. Zorn told the media and residents gathered for the project’s kickoff that the allocation of special funding “allowed county road commissions to stop patching and actually replace a failed road.” Zorn hopes to continue this type of funding in the future. “Two pockets are better than one,” he said. “The job is being started and tax dollars are being used to improve roads for local residents.”

Bucky Brooks, sales manager at Asphalt Materials Inc. addressed the technical aspects of the project. “With the start of this project, motorists will not hear anymore thuds,” Brooks said. “This is a unique, innovative project that will stretch available funds.”

The project, originally estimated at $8-10 million came in under $5 million by using recycled materials. Approximately 40,000 tons of recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) will be used to repave the road. The 158,000 tons of stone from the crushed concrete currently on Samaria Road will be used on gravel roads throughout the county. “This is a 100 percent green job,” Brooks said.
Michigan’s Local Roads Need You

The Local Roads Matter Coalition is growing stronger and larger every day. The growth we have experienced so far allowed us to directly reach more than 2,500 contacts with an action alert toward the end of session. Our indirect reach was even greater as coalition members and partner organizations forwarded our call to action.

Many county road commissions, townships and associations have joined the movement to support Michigan’s local roads. Thank you to the organizations listed below for helping spread the word across the state. If your organization isn’t listed, sign up today at www.milocalroads.com by clicking the “Join Us” button.

Agricultural Leaders of Michigan
Alcona County Road Commission
 Allegan County Road Commission
 Alpena County Road Commission
 American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan
 Antrim County Road Commission
 Asphalt Pavement Association of Michigan
 Associated General Contractors of Michigan
 Assery Township, Barry County
 Barry County Economic Development Alliance
 Barry County Road Commission
 Bay Township, Charlevoix County
 Branch County Road Commission
 Chippewa County Road Commission
 Clinton County Road Commission
 County Road Association of Michigan
 County Road Association Self-Insurance Fund
 Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Dewey’s Auto Body
 Eaton County Road Commission
 Emmet County Road Commission
 Ford River Township, Delta County
 Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
 Henn Lerisperance PLC
 Hillsdale County Road Commission
 Ionia County Road Commission
 Keweenaw County Road Commission
 Lake County Road Commission
 Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Lenawee County Road Commission
 Luce County Road Commission
 Mackinac County Road Commission
 Mackinaw Administrators LLC
 Marquette County Board of
 County Road Commissioners
 Marquette County Road Commission
 Mason County Road Commission
 Mecosta County Road Commission
 Michigan Agri-Business Association
 Michigan Apple Association
 Michigan Association of Counties
 Michigan Chamber of Commerce
 Michigan County Road Commission Self-Insurance Pool
 Michigan Farm Bureau
 Michigan Forest Products Council
 Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association
 Michigan Lodging & Tourism Association
 Michigan Milk Producers Association
 Michigan Municipal League
 Michigan Pork Producers Association
 Michigan Sheriffs’ Association
 Michigan Townships Association
 Newaygo County Road Commission
 Ontonagon County Road Commission
 Osceola County Road Commission
 Pavement Maintenance Systems LLC
 Pavement Recycling Inc.
 Road Commission for Oakland County
 Shiawassee County Road Commission
 St. Joseph County Road Commission
 Strawser Construction, Inc./DBA Terry Asphalt Materials, Inc.
 Superior Collision
 Superior Towing
 Time Alliance – Tourism Improving Michigan’s Economy
 Valley Truck Parts
 Washtenaw County Road Commission
 Wexford County Road Commission

IS YOUR COUNTY MISSING?
Only 28 of 83 county road agencies have joined the Local Roads Matter coalition.

We need support from everyone to make our voices heard in Lansing and across the state.

Visit www.milocalroads.com and click “Join Us.”
Important News and Updates from the County Road Association

2014-2015 County Road Association Directory to Hit Mailboxes
The new and improved 2014-15 CRA Directory will hit mailboxes in early August. The directory will unveil our new brand and will be on the desks of legislators, partner organizations and department leaders for the next year. We’d love to hear your feedback on the changes and hope you will thank our advertisers who made this professional looking directory possible. Once the new website is unveiled, a searchable version of the directory will be available to association members.

2015 Highway Conference Planning Underway – We Want to Hear From You
County Road Association staff is working this summer to plan the agenda for the 2015 Highway Conference. Continuing on the improvements made this year, our goal is to ensure the programming is of interest to every member of the Association. What legal aspects do you want to see addressed? Are there hot topics that you would like to have someone speak to? Contact Cindy Reisig at the CRA Office at 517.482.1189 x418 with your suggestions.

Job Postings and Bid Information Available on CRA Website
While we work through the process of developing a new website, don’t forget to visit micountyroads.org for up-to-date employment opportunities and bid information. The website is consistently being updated with new postings and continues to be an excellent resource.

6th Annual Shake Your Mailbox Day – October 18, 2014
Shake Your Mailbox Day is an opportunity for residents across the Great Lakes State to take proactive steps toward ensuring their mailbox is safely and properly maintained prior to the start of winter maintenance operations. The annual event, scheduled for the third Saturday in October, is a great way to help your road agency minimize the negative public relations associated with mailbox complaints. Educating your residents before the snow starts to fly can prevent headaches later.

2014 Transportation Asset Management Council UP Conference
The 2014 Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council UP Conference has been scheduled for October 23 in Marquette. For more information visit Michigan.gov/tamc.

New Direction, New Brand, New Newsletter Format
Starting with this edition, the CRAM News will be sent bi-monthly as we begin the process of transitioning to a magazine-style newsletter. Look for our next newsletter during the second week of September.

Don’t forget to submit your idea for a new publication title. Our Put it in Print Contest allows you to contribute to the rebranding process. We hope to receive some creative ideas. Please email your entry to Monica Ware at mware@localroads.net. The submission deadline is July 30. We are looking forward to hearing your ideas. Remember – think roads, and think big!
RUSH-PAC Golf Outings – A Winning Combination

The Southeast CRAM RUSH-PAC Golf Scramble had four winners at their June 27th event. With a score of 61, Tom Clement, Mickey Pinnell, Jim Hoover and Chris Robinson (pictured) formed the winning team. Mike Johnson of Michigan CAT won the men’s longest drive competition, Danielle Deneau, women’s longest drive, and Scott Fessler, the closest to pin. Unfortunately, no one won $10,000 for a hole in one.

Saginaw’s NBC25 news station covered the tournament and the story can be viewed at http://www.wnem.com/story/25891279/golf-tournament-to-raise-money-to-fix-roads

RUSH-PAC golf outings are a great way to have some summer fun, network and raise money for a good cause. There is still time to register for one of the two remaining events. Sign up information below.

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Join RUSH-PAC for Some Summer Golf Fun

Aug. 1  **Southern Mid-MI RUSH-PAC Golf Outing** – The Emerald Golf Course, St. Johns.
Joe Pulver, Clinton CRC, 989.224.3274 x224, pulverj@ccrc-roads.com

Sept. 2  **17th Annual Northern RUSH-PAC Golf Outing** – Shanty Creek Cedar River Golf Course, Bellaire. Don Spray, office 231.627.4526, fax 231.627.3440

Questions about RUSH-PAC events – Cindy Reisig, 517.482.1189 x418, creisig@localroads.net
The Road Ahead

JULY
15 Seven County Council Meeting
Eaton County Road Commission, Detroit

17 Blue Water Council Meeting
Franklin Inn, Bad Axe

23-24 County Road Commission’s Insurance Conference
CRASIF Annual Meeting
MCRC SIP Annual Meeting
Soaring Eagle Resort, Mt. Pleasant

AUGUST
1 Southern Mid-MI RUSH-PAC Golf Outing
The Emerald Golf Course, St. Johns

11 Southwestern Council Meeting
GVSU Muskegon Campus

21 Paul Bunyan Council Meeting
McGuire’s Resort, Cadillac

SEPTEMBER
1 Labor Day – Association office closed

2 17th Annual Northern RUSH-PAC Golf Outing, Shanty Creek Cedar River Golf Course, Bellaire

3 County Road Association Board Meeting and committee meetings
Shanty Creek, Bellaire

3-5 ASMRC and NMARC Joint Conference
Shanty Creek, Bellaire

7-11 ITS World Congress
Detroit

11 Great Lakes Council Meeting
Baraga Lakeside Inn, Best Western, Baraga

OCTOBER
1-3 40th Annual Superintendents’ Seminar
Kewadin Casino & Convention Center, Sault Ste. Marie

NOVEMBER
20 Paul Bunyan Council Meeting
McGuire’s Resort, Cadillac

DECEMBER
8 CRA Board Meeting and Committee Meetings
Mt. Pleasant, Location TBD

Save the Date – Major 2015 Events

FEBRUARY
3-5 County Engineers Workshop
Little River Casino & Resort, Manistee

17-19 County Road Association Highway Conference
Radisson Hotel Lansing & Lansing Center

APRIL
12-14 Commissioner’s Seminar
Grand Traverse Resort, Acme

MAY
12-14 Finance HR Business Seminar
Double Tree Hotel, Bay City

JUNE
10-11 UP Road Builders Summer Meeting
Kewadin Casino & Resort, Sault Ste. Marie

JULY
22-23 County Road Commission’s Insurance Conference
Soaring Eagle Resort, Mt. Pleasant