



MLICA News

Michigan Land Improvement Contractors of America

Michigan LICA Goes To Lansing

This past February, we attempted to put on a last minute Legislation day at the State Capital. Due to the timing of the newsletter and the urgency to do it before everyone got busy, the turnout less than expected, but we did see some very interesting things come from it.

Michigan LICA President Russ Talaski and Will Word met with several State Representatives and Senators to discuss some topics and ideas they felt would benefit LICA members.

The issues that were discussed are as follows:

• A Resolution to Support The Michigan Conservation Districts.

We passed a Resolution at our annual meeting to help support these Districts. They currently received about \$11,000 per year to staff and administrate the District offices. They are slated to take a 50% cut this year .

• Remove the 6% sales tax on the Off-Road Fuel that we use in our machines to make Agricultural Land Improvements.

They thought that we may fall under the Land Husbandry part of this law and that we may be exempt. We will be looking into this.



• Exemption from Personal Property Tax for Equipment used for agricultural improvement purposes. Again they feel that we may fall onto the Land Husbandry part of the law.

• The outlook of the Department of Environmental Quality in Michigan. The Governor has proposed turning the wetlands back over the the hands of the federal government under the EPA. (see update on page 5)

• Revision to the Clean Water Act. As of February there was no changes.

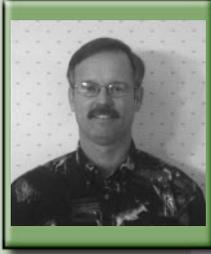
The visit was great and we all felt that this would be a good opportunity to make this an annual event.

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Notice:
Last board meeting
was rescheduled to
this new date

Next board meeting
Monday June 29
4:30 pm
Lansing Best Western Midway



BY: Russ Talaski
President

Michigan LICA Board Members

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wconfd@frontiernet.net

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Associate Board Members

Kevin Holdwick

(989) 479-9822

James Proffer

(810) 955-3868

President's Desk

Well it's here again Spring , A time to start a new season and to finally put into practice the plans that we have made all winter. It seems good to go back to the field , move dirt and install tile in the ground. I don't know any contractor that enjoys paper work more that working on the land. In my conversations with a few of you it sounds like we are looking forward to another great year, even with the farm prices a little lower that last year our customers are very concerned with making improvements on their land to increase their profits to offset the increase of almost all input cost. They can not con-

tinue to apply fertilizer and seed to a field that will not produce a good yield because of poor soil structure , poor surface drainage or poor subsurface drainage. We have a great farmer in our area that always say's these type's of improvements don't cost they pay. If we look at the cost of land per acre, our improvements are usually about 10 to 15 % This is a very good investment to help pay off that land in a shorter time.

HAVE A GREAT SPRING !!!

Russell Talaski

June 29th Board Meeting

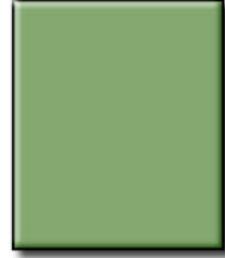
At the June board meeting we will be meeting with Scott Everett from Earthscape Resource Management Inc. He will present some ideas and a proposal to work with the Michigan LICA chapter to pursue our local legislative ideas and to promote our organization. We urge you to attend the meeting, wether you are on the board or not. This should be a very informative meeting and we welcome any and all input from the members.

We had also planned to meet with Gerald Biuso, National LICA Executive VP, to start a membership drive, but with the busy and delayed season this year Gerald has agreed to meet sometime in late July or early August. So, be thinking of contractors in your area that

we could contact this summer and we will put together a list for the membership drive.

The meeting is at 4:30 at the Midway Best Western on Monday the 29th. We hope to see you there!





Legislative Information

Just before our March board meeting I was contacted by Scott Everett from Earthscape Resource Management Inc. He is a Lobbyist in Lansing that used to work for Farm Bureau. He looked over the issues that we took to Lansing and was contacted by a Senators Aid that thought he could help us. I met with him and explained what our organization was all about and what we were looking for. Will Word also met with him in April.

Scott believes he can be a valuable asset to our organization and we can accomplish several things here locally that not only would benefit our members, but would also draw in new membership. Not only does Scott bring to the table the knowledge of how to get things done in Lansing, but also how to provide valuable resources to our members.

Scott has put together a contract and would like to get things started. Unfortunately by the time our next board meeting rolls around, the legislature will be approaching their summer break. Scott has offered to get some of our ideas presented to some of the lawmakers with our permission, and we can decide on financial obligation of the contract at the June meeting. He has basically offered to provide his services free-of-charge, until the June meeting. If the board decides at that time not to acquire his services, we won't be out anything.

Scott will be attending our June Board Meeting to present the contract to us for the board to review.

After a lengthy discussion about the Personal Property Tax, Scott thought that we may be able to ask for a line item exemption for a percentage of agricultural work performed. That would allow the excavators and other members that weren't 100% agriculture, to also get a reduction on the Personal Property tax they pay.

On that same note I will be asking all Members and Associate Members to send a list of other contractors in your area so that we could create a list of contractors, so if we take this Personal Property Tax proposal further, we will have the numbers to present to our Legislators if needed. Some time in July or August, Gerald Biuso, our National LICA Executive Director, will be attending and we will be hosting a membership drive with him. We will be visiting these contractors to explain our goals and ask them to join.

You can send this list to Russ Talaski at fieldtile@avci.net or 180 S.Ruth Rd Harbor Beach, MI. 48441.

Most members should have received an e-mail copy of the proposed contract. If you would like a copy, please contact Will Word @ (517) 398-1105 and he will see that you receive a copy either by mail, fax or e-mail.

*Submitted by :
Russ Talaski & Will Word*

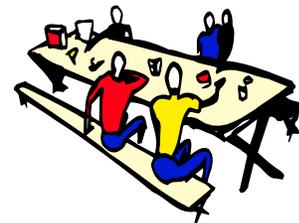
Chapter News

The annual Michigan LICA summer picnic and board meeting date has been set for Saturday August 15th

Submitted by:
Newsletter Editor

Web site:
Please check out the
Michigan LICA
Web site at
www.MichiganLICA.org.

As usual, the board meeting will be at 10:00 am and the picnic will follow at noon.



This is a new location on the west side of the state. The picnic will be held at Trevor and Kelly Young's home or possibly at a park on Lake Michigan. As soon as the location is determined, we will notify all members.

Trevor lives in Ravenna, which is near Muskegon. Trevor has arranged to have a hog roast and I'm sure it will be a great time.

If you plan to camp for the weekend there are several campgrounds nearby.

Yogi Bear Jellystone - Grand Haven

Several state parks:

Muskegon state park

Duck Lake State Park

PJ Hoffmaster State Park

Holland State Park

Michigan Adventure Amusement and Water Park is also nearby if you want to make a fun family weekend out of it!

Trevor and Kelly Young have been working on making this a fun family event for everyone. For more information, call Trevor at (231)853-5277

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- Digging Wheel Pivot



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Wetlands Update

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 3, 2009
10:06 AM

CONTACT: Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)
Luke Eshleman (202) 265-7337

Michigan Give Feds Notice of Surrendering Wetlands Program U.S. EPA and Army Corps to Begin Take-Over of State Permits and Enforcement

WASHINGTON - April 3 - The State of Michigan has given formal notice to the federal government that the state is beginning the process of withdrawing its wetlands protection program and the federal agencies must prepare to take over permitting and enforcement, according to a letter released today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). Michigan's Legislature is still considering whether to adopt Gov. Jennifer Granholm's proposal to scrap wetland protections in her state.

Federal regulations require the state to provide at least 180 days notice of a transfer of authority. The March 31, 2009 letter from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Director Steven Chester to U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson indicates that the state wetlands program may be defunct as of October 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year, thus necessitating immediate notice.

The regulations also require Michigan to "submit a plan for the orderly transfer of all relevant program information...such as permits, permit files, reports, [and] permit applications" necessary to run the wetlands program. Michigan has yet to develop this transition plan, however. DEQ Director Chester instead asked for permission to develop an unspecified "alternative transfer scenario". Chester writes that DEQ will have to figure out how to achieve "a minimally disruptive process for all parties involved" for -

- * Federal take-over of all current, pending and proposed permits that DEQ has issued;
- * The Army Corps and EPA assuming jurisdiction over wetlands violations, making such enforcement matters literally into federal cases; and
- * Suspension of federal grant funds to Michigan, return of unspent grants and accounting for incomplete projects.

"This move by Michigan promises to be a major headache that will eat into whatever small savings the state hoped to achieve," stated PEER Executive director Jeff Ruch, noting that the state projects an annual savings of only \$2 million by repealing its 30-year wetland law, considered a national model. "The Corps has only a handful of people in Michigan. It is likely that many construction projects will face long delays until the Corps can staff up to cover the added workload."

One additional problem is that the state law is far more protective than federal law - and the scope of federal law is in flux, subject to sharp disagreements and litigation. Unfamiliarity with both federal rules and officials will compound uncertainties, as indicated by the fact that even the top DEQ wetland official did not know how to contact the Secretary of the Army to send the required transfer notice.

"Local officials know local conditions and therefore often deliver the best, most responsive service to the public," Ruch added. "Michiganders will rue the day they gave up local control to a distant federal government."

*Submitted by:
Mike Cook*

March 5th 2009 Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order @ 5:13 PM by President Russ Talaski

Trevor Young made the motion to accept the motion to accept the agenda as printed, 2nd by Jack Bower. Will asked to add Soil Conservation district under new business. Motion passed.

Jack Bower made a motion to accept the treasures report as printed. 2nd by Will Word. Motion passed.

Various committee reports were given with no board action need at this time.

Convention summary given by Mike Cook. All bill paid, next years contract to be coming.

National convention report given by Mike Cook. Bylaw change of voting delegates was passed. John Peterson was introduced to be the new legislative liaison replacing retiring Wayne Maresch. Gerald Biuso is assisting states in membership drives by hosting regional member/new member meetings to promote LICA. Trevor Young Motioned to ask Gerald come to June 15 board meeting and stay Tuesday thru Thursday to have membership drive meeting in different Regions. 2nd by Will Word. Requested Mike Cook make arrangements with Gerald to get ball rolling. Motion passed.

Trevor Young motioned to have another field day in 2010. 2nd by Rob Cook. Motion passed.

Government issues: Will & Russ reported of the capitol visits in Feb. Pulled together too quickly to get a lot of members there, suggested to do again this summer. Motion by James Proffer, 2nd by Trevor Young to have Russ form a committee to explore a lobbyist and report back at June meeting. Motion passed.

Motion by Will Word, 2nd by Dave Dunne that MLICA support a Soil Conservation Districts resolution to increase funding to the districts. Motion passed.

Summer Picnic...Al Kemp has requested to not host the next picnic. Trevor Young volunteered to have it in his area. Board accepted, and Trevor will provide more details at the June meeting

Meeting dates were selected and to be posted in the next newsletter.

No other business was presented, so Jack Bower motioned to adjourn meeting @ 6:45. 2nd by Dave Dunne. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by; Mike Cook
Secretary/Treasurer

2010 Field day possibility

Russ Talaski has been approached by a non-profit organization in his area about doing some drainage. The site seemed to be a good location for a field day, so he will be working on some details and presenting the idea to the board. The site is located in the village of Elkton.

Mark you calendar for National LICA Summer Meeting
July 14-18, 2009
Des Moines, Iowa

A field day will be held at the Iowa LICA chapter's demonstration farm in Melbourne and there are several tours planned. They will be constructing a water treatment wetland to remove nitrates from drainage water in collaboration with the NRCS (CREP program) and the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition. Members will have the opportunity to operate the equipment and learn how these practices are designed and constructed.

Let's try to have a good showing of Michigan LICA members!



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The Difference Between Focusing On Problems And Focusing On Solutions

Case 1

When NASA began the launch of astronauts into space, they found out that the pens wouldn't work at zero gravity (ink won't flow down to the writing surface). To solve this problem, it took them one decade and \$12 million. They developed a pen that worked at zero gravity, upside down, underwater, in practically any surface including crystal and in a temperature range from below freezing to over 300 degrees C. And what did the Russians do...??

They used a pencil...

Case 2

One of the most memorable case studies on Japanese management was the case of the empty soap box, which happened in one of Japan's biggest cosmetics companies. The company received a complaint that a consumer had bought a soap box that was empty. Immediately the authorities isolated the problem to the assembly line, which transported all the packaged boxes of soap to the delivery department.

For some reason, one soap box went through the assembly line empty. Management asked its engineers to solve the problem. Post-haste, the engineers worked hard to devise an X-ray machine with high-resolution monitors manned by two people to watch all the soap boxes that passed through the line to make sure they were not empty. No doubt, they worked hard and they worked fast but they spent a whoopee amount to do so.

But when a rank-and-file employee in a small company was posed with the same problem, he did not get into complications of X-rays, etc., but instead came out with another solution. He bought a strong industrial electric fan and pointed it at the assembly line. He switched the fan on, and as each soap box passed the fan, it simply blew the empty boxes out of the line.

Moral

Always look for simple solutions. Devise the simplest possible solution that solves the problems.

LET'S LEARN TO FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS, NOT ON PROBLEMS.



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What Employers Need To Know When Employing Minors

Agency: Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (Michigan.gov)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN EMPLOYING MINORS:

WHO IS NOT COVERED BY THE ACT

- * 16- and 17-year-olds who have completed requirements for high school graduation.
- * 17-year-olds who have passed the GED test.
- * Emancipated minors (e.g. married minors, emancipation by court order)
- * Students 14-years-old and older working under a work-study contract between an employer and a school district that provides supervision.
- * Domestic workers at private residences.
- * Minors who sell, distribute or offer for sale, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, political or advertising material.
- * Shoe shiners.
- * Members of recognized youth organizations (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, etc.).
- * Minors working in businesses owned and operated by their parents.
- * Workers who plant, cultivate or harvest crops or raise livestock on farms.
- * Minors employed by a school, academy or college where the worker, age 14 through 17, is a student.

WHO IS COVERED BY THE ACT

- * Workers under 18 years of age, including volunteers and performing artists.
- AND:
- * A minor must be at least 14-years-old for most occupations unless exempt from the Youth Employment Standards Act.
 - * A work permit is required unless the minor is exempt from the act or employed in corn detasseling.
 - * Minors may be employed in most jobs except those considered hazardous.
 - * Minors may only work certain hours.
 - * Teenage workers may not work more than 5 hours without a 30 minute break.
 - * A minor may not be employed unless the employer or another employee 18 years of age or older provides supervision. Special penalties apply for employing minors in occupations involving cash transactions after sunset or 8 p.m. without required supervision.
 - * Supervision means being on the premises to direct and control the work of minors and to assist in case of an emergency.
 - * Wages must be paid on a regular basis: weekly, bi-weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly.
 - * Minors 16 and older covered by Michigan's Minimum Wage Law may be paid the following:
 - A training wage of \$4.25 to new employees 16 to 19 years of age for the first 90 days of employment as long as it does not displace another employee.
 - A youth sub minimum wage to a minor age 16 or 17 which is 85% of the adult minimum wage as follows:

Beginning	Minimum Wage Rate Per Hour	85% of Minimum Wage Rate
July 1, 2008	\$7.40	\$6.55*

* The state 85% rate of \$6.29 is valid between July 1, 2008 and July 23, 2008, effective July 24, 2008 the federal minimum wage will increase to \$6.55. Under Section 14 of Public Act 154 of 1964, as amended, being MCL 408.394 (1) the act states: "Sec. 14. (1) This act does not apply to an employer who is subject to the minimum wage provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938, 29 USC 201 to 219, unless those federal minimum wage provisions would result in a lower minimum hourly wage than provided in this act."



Editors Note:

Funny Stuff

Submitted by:
Will Word

Send suggestions and
info to me at
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Or e-mail to
wconfd@frontiernet.net



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Editors note:
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Event Calendar

June 2009

29 (Monday) MLICA Board Meeting
4:30 pm at Lansing Best Western
Midway Hotel

July 2009

14-18 National LICA Summer Meeting
Des Moines, IA (319) 334-9884

August 2009

15 (Saturday) MLICA Summer Picnic
10:00 AM Board Meeting
12:00 Picnic
(Hosted by Kelly and Trevor Young -
Ravenna, MI)

November 2009

11 MLICA Board Meeting
4:30 pm at Lansing Best Western
Midway Hotel

January 2010

10-12 MLICA Annual Convention
Lansing Best Western
Midway Hotel

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