

Contact me: 262-7268 or e-mail
hamast@comcast.net; view Blog sat
<http://haroldmast.blogspot.com>



JAN 2012 NEWSLETTER

Commission meetings: Jan 5 and 26 at 8:30 am.

January Meetings/Events:

- * Jan 3 W/K Chamber Government Affairs Comm.
- * Jan 5 Veteran's Advisory Comm.
- * **Jan. 5 Board of Commissioners Mtg.**
- * Jan. 5 Round Table Program w/ former Congressman Vern Ehlers
- * Jan. 5 Advocates for Seniors Legislative Comm.
- * Jan. 6-16 Ten day church Cuba Mission Trip
- * Jan. 17 BOC Finance Comm.
- * Jan. 17 Network 180 Board Retreat
- * Jan. 18 MSU Extension Advisory Committee
- * Jan. 19 BOC Executive Committee
- * Jan. 19 Round Table Program
- * Jan. 20 Aging Services Commission of Michigan mtg. —Lansing
- * Jan. 20 CALL Luncheon
- * Jan. 24 BOC Legislative Committee
- * Jan. 24 MCAH Finance Comm. Lansing
- * **Jan 26 Board of Commissioners Mtg.**
- * Jan. 27 W/K Annual Dinner Mtg.
- * Jan. 31 Grand Rapids Home Builders' Summit
- * Jan 31 KC Veteran's Council

Some key events and happenings to tell you about include:

- The Commission recently approved the allocation of over \$6.4 million in Senior Millage funds to nearly 50 different agencies in our county. These funds continue to address senior health care and independence issues not covered sufficiently by state or federal funding.
- I need to make a correction in a statement I made last month. I reported the Commission had adopted a balanced budget but used \$158,000 of General Fund reserves to achieve that balance. The Commission actually was able to balance the budget with receipts actually meeting expenditures without using that small amount from the GF surplus.
- The Kent County Veterans' Affairs Department was recently authorized to hire three new part-time individuals to help process claims for emergency financial relief, pension, health care, etc. available from the Veteran's Administration. This will add support to the one staff currently doing this work.
- The Kentwood Police Department is pleased to announce that citizens can now gain access to neighborhood crime activity in near real time. You can do this by either accessing crime information through the www.CrimeReports.com website or through the Crime Reports Iphone app available free in the Apple iTunes store.
- The Kent County Public Works Department is working with the West Michigan Take Back Meds work group to establish an unwanted prescription medication collection program in the near future. The work group plans to have several unwanted prescription collection points on April 28, the date established by the US Drug Enforcement Agency for the national collection program. Visit the web site <http://www.wmtakebackmeds.org/> for info.
- There will be a change in the Executive Director position at the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council starting Jan. 2012. Mr. Don Stypula, Executive Director for the past decade will be stepping down. A recruitment and interview committee is busy at work to find a replacement and this will be announced soon.

Issue of the Month: Kent County Prevention Initiative and Evaluation

Ever since 2002 the County Commission has allocated funds for a "Prevention Initiative" for our county. The Commission in that year directed the Administrator to "develop a plan to fund" three priority service needs: (1) primary prevention family support services (2) services to families who have had reported child abuse or neglect interventions, (3) substance abuse prevention activities. Since 2003 the Commission has allocated up to \$1.7 million annually from the county General Fund to help local non-profit agencies address these three areas. The County has used the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council (KCFCCC) to oversee the distribution of these Prevention Initiative funds. The KCFCCC has provided reports of how the monies have been used, and the Commission has felt assured the funds are proving effective in addressing needs in the priority areas. The KCFCCC recently adopted a process of evaluating effectiveness of human service dollars in our county—including the Prevention Initiative—called the "Collective Impact Strategy". The County Commission embraced this strategy, and is encouraging participation by all organizations involved with addressing social issues in our community. This includes businesses, governments, non-profit agencies, and philanthropic agencies. The Commission will be getting periodic reports of the KCFCCC's implementation, and I will pass these reports on to my readers. I will work hard to assure our county's commitment to the Prevention Initiative continues and we play a continuing role in addressing social needs in our community.