As 2019 comes to a close, it is appropriate to look back over the year and take stock of where Lenawee County government is today.

The courts saw two new judges installed in 2019, Judge Catherine Sala took over the Probate Court bench in January and Judge Michael Olsaver was appointed to the Circuit Court in April. The Probate Court will also see a change in court administrator after the first of the year with long time employee John Drahuschak retiring with over 41 years of service to the youth and citizens of this county. Congratulations to John and best wishes in retirement!

County Prosecutor, R. Burke Castleberry, initiated a new service to handle criminal cases for local units of government. The program has worked well with local units benefiting from the experience of the Prosecutor’s Office and the addition of an assistant prosecutor helping with the workload in the Prosecutor’s Office. Public Defender John Glaser’s office completed the first year under the new state Indigent Defense grant. The grant provided additional funding to meet the new service requirements for indigent defense. The office also took on the duties of court appointed counsel in many Probate Court matters.

It was a very active year in the Sheriff’s Office, beginning with the installation of a new Sheriff in March when Sheriff Troy Bevier was sworn in. The jail implemented additional mental health services through the inmate health care program currently in use. Access to mental health counseling and psychotropic drugs help to keep inmates with mental health illnesses on track while in jail. A new camera system was also installed in the jail to provide better surveillance and security.

In October, the Sheriff’s Office employees moved into their new building. The construction project that spanned 15 months was completed and a ribbon cutting and open house welcomed county residents to the new office. The 911 dispatchers had to wait until December to move into the new building to coordinate with the new 800 MHz radio system. The new radio system infrastructure, including two new towers in the county, was built out over the last two years. Coverage testing has been completed and rollout of new radios is underway. The new system brings clear radio communications and much better coverage to better serve the residents of Lenawee County in emergency situations.

The Board of Commissioners adopted a new five year parks plan for the county in December. In addition to plans for each of the County parks, the plan incorporates many of the objectives of the several non-motorized plans and studies that have been created recently to pave the way for future collaboration and grant opportunities. A study of document management options is underway by county departments to improved access to County records and reduce the amount of paper records maintained by various departments. The County is also participating in the 2020 Census complete count effort being spearheaded by the Community Action Agency.

On the financial side of things, the County is closing out 2019 in the black and saw the first back-to-back growth in the tax base in excess of 3% for the first time in over ten years. Growth in the tax base was aided by the installation of two natural gas pipelines in the county as well as by a slight increase in the consumer price index that limits tax base growth. Tax base growth is expected to continue in 2020 even if it is not as robust as the last two years.

A major project is underway for 2020 with plans being developed for renovations to the Old Courthouse. The 135 year old building is scheduled for interior updates that will prepare for the next 100 years while at the same time respecting the history and period look of this local landmark.

While there are certainly challenges ahead, we have much to be happy about. It is this in mind that, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and the 550+ employees of Lenawee County, I wish the residents of Lenawee County a very Happy New Year!

The Lenawee County Commissioners Scholarship was established in 2007. This $500 scholarship will be awarded to a Lenawee County graduating senior, who is pursuing a career in political science/government, criminal justice/public safety or business/economics.

Apply for the Board of Commissioners scholarship, or check out the many other opportunities.
School Board Member Recognition

For the past several years, we take a moment in January to recognize the contributions of local boards of education to the academic success of public school students. Our 82 local board members contribute hundreds of hours each year leading their districts—whether it is by deliberating important decisions about curriculum; adopting policies; hiring top notch personnel and administrators; listening to staff, parent, and student concerns; or recognizing outstanding programs—board members always keep their eyes on the goal of student achievement; Their focus on the well-being and achievement of children throughout the county is very much appreciated.

We encourage local school districts and community leaders to appropriately recognize your dedicated local school board members.

“The Lenawee County Board of Commissioners

MARILYN J WOODS
LENAWEE COUNTY TREASURER
517-264-4554

2019 Winter Taxes are due and payable at your local unit starting December 1st.

They are payable without penalty through February 14th.

2020 Dog Licenses go on sale December 1st.

Dec 1 – Feb 28
Spayed/Neutered $10.00
Unaltered $15.00

Mar 1 – Nov 30
Spayed/Neutered $20.00
Unaltered $30.00

A current valid rabies vaccination certificate must be presented To purchase a license.

State law requires all dogs 4 months old or over to have a license.

ENHANCED TREATMENT COURT the next graduation for Mental Health Court participants is set for January 9, 2020

WANT TO QUIT SMOKING?

The Lenawee County Health Department would like to help you by offering free smoking cessation classes.

This 7 week-long program, which begins January 7th and is held every Tuesday evening until February 18th follows the American Lung Association’s Freedom from Smoking coursework, and gives participants the time and resources to prepare to quit smoking before Quit Day during week 4 of the program.

To register or for more information, please contact Becky Selenko at rebecca.selenko@lenawee.mi.us or (517) 264-5253.
Lenawee’s Most Important Natural Resource: Water

The human body can go weeks without food, but only about 3 days without water. Access to clean and safe water is something we often take for granted. It is vital for drinking, recreation, sanitation, hygiene, industry, and agriculture. It is our most precious global resource.

Life in Lenawee depends on the water cycle, which is also known as the hydrologic cycle and includes our ground and soil. The Agricultural industry requires clean, healthy water to grow our food so ensuring that we are being intentional in preserving this valuable resource is vital to the continued success of our communities.

Read the entire article, and other great pieces on our blog. Lenawee.MI.US

2020 Mileage Rates

The County mileage reimbursement rate which is set at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate will be 57.5 cents per business mile beginning January 1, 2020.

The IRS announced the 2020 mileage rate on December 31, 2019 (http://www.irs.gov).