



## April 2024 Board of Commissioners Activity Reports

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### HIGHLIGHTS FOR APRIL 2024

- 1. DCS Broadband Expansion Efforts Update and Comcast Subrecipient Agreement – During the** Chris Scharrer, DCS Technology, gave an update on the implementation of the ROBIN Grant broadband expansion efforts and the proposed Comcast Subrecipient Agreement. A demonstration was given on the broadband link on the county website. The Board will discuss the Comcast Subrecipient Agreement during the May 14th, 2024, BOC meeting for final approval.
- 2. Office of the Public Defender - MIDC Grant –** There was a request for the Board to approve the FY '24-'25 MIDC Grant application. This was approved during the April 9th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 3. MSUE Veterans Therapy Garden –** The Board approved of the continuation of MSU Extension to improve the area for use as a garden and to extend the agreement until 2030 during the April 9th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 4. New Covert Generating Cost Share Agreement - Covert Twp. –** There was a request for the Board to approve the revised New Covert Generating Tax Tribunal. The Board approved the request during the April 9th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 5. Computer Replacement Program -** The IT department purchases ~50 computers as part of our annual PC refresh project aimed at replacing aging devices deployed around the County. The Board approved of the 2024 PC refresh during the April 9th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 6. Prosecuting Attorney's Office Summer Intern 2024 –** There was a request of behalf of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for the Board to approve the employment of a summer intern from May 1st, 2024, through August 31st, 2024. The Board approved the request during the April 9th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 7. March 2024 Claims –** Claims in the amount of \$2,954,161.49 for February 2024 were submitted, reviewed, and approved by the Board of Commissioners during the April 23rd, 2024, Board meeting.
- 8. Retirement and Adoption of K9 Kuno -** There was a request on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, to approve the retirement and adoption of K9 Kuno. K9 Kuno is being retired due to his health and age. The Board approved the request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting. Thank you, K9 Kuno & his handler, for the unwavering dedication and hard work you both have put into the safety of our community!
- 9. Fire and EMS Mobile CAD Access Agreement –** There was a request to approve a boilerplate Fire and EMS Mobile CAD Access Agreement with local Fire Departments and EMS providers and to authorize the Board Chair to sign on the Board's behalf. The Board approved the request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC Meeting.

- 10. Michigan Materials Management Plan for Van Buren County** – There was a request for the Board to approve the submission of a Notice of Intent to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to prepare a Materials Management Plan as the designated County Approval Agency for Van Buren County and name the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission as the Designated Planning Agency and enter into a multicounty planning agreement. The Board approved the request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 11. Workers Memorial Day Proclamation** – During the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting the Board declared April 28th, 2024, as Workers Memorial Day in the County of Van Buren, Michigan.
- 12. Early Voting Grant Application Round 2 – EXPEDITED** – It was requested on behalf of the County Clerk, to submit the application for Round 2 of the Early Voting Grant. The Board approved submitting the grant application to the State of Michigan for Round 2 Early Voting request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 13. Equalization Report** – There was a request for the Board to approve the County Equalized Valuations as indicated within the attached equalization report a cumulative total for Real Property of \$5,614,712,677 (Five Billion, Six Hundred Fourteen Million, Seven Hundred Twelve Thousand, Six Hundred Seventy-Seven Dollars) and a cumulative total for Personal Property of \$635,656,230 (Six Hundred Thirty-Five Million, Six Hundred Fifty-Six Thousand, Two Hundred Thirty Dollars). The combined total of Real and Personal Property of the Cities and Townships in Van Buren County is \$6,250,368,907 (Six Billion, Two Hundred Fifty Million, Three Hundred Sixty-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred Seven Dollars). The Board approved this request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 14. 2022 and 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program Intergovernmental Funding Agreements** – On behalf of region 5 Homeland Security Board, R5 Fiduciary and St. Josephy Couty (MI), it was requested that the Chairperson of the County Board of Commissioners sign the HSGP Intergovernmental Funding Agreement. This request was approved during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 15. Creation of Position – Civilian Court Liaison – EXPEDITED** – There was a request on behalf of the Sheriff’s Office, for the creation of a position. The jail has expanded from a 158-inmate jail capacity to 213. The civilian court liaison position is primarily responsible for court proceedings and the liaison for the Public Defender’s Office. This position, however, is a unique position and will require an officer to be familiar with both court, transport, external programs, and jail operations. The Board approved this request during the April 23rd, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 16. Information Technology (IT) Update** – CJ Johnson, IT Director, provided a departmental update during the April 9th, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting.

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All board meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the county website:

<https://www.vanburencountymi.gov/129/Agendas-Minutes>



**Hours of Operation:**

Monday - Thursday 8am - 5pm  
Friday 8am - 2pm

**Cass County**

Immunizations  
1st & 3rd Wednesdays

STI testing & treatment  
Thursdays

Dental  
Monday - Friday

**Van Buren County**

Immunizations  
Thursdays

STI testing & treatment  
Wednesdays

Dental  
Monday - Friday

**Newsworthy**  
visit [vbcassdhd.org/news](http://vbcassdhd.org/news)

Measles Update: 97 Measles Cases have been reported by 18 States including 3 Cases in Michigan thus far for 2024. There were 58 cases last year throughout the United States.

**Medical Director/Nursing**

- STI/HIV Team provided testing & screening to Cass County Jail inmates
- Hearing and Vision screenings continue in Schools; the team is preparing for Kindergarten Round Ups in April
- Tuberculosis (TB) Nurses attended World TB Day in Lansing and presented on a suspect TB Case they encountered
- The Immunization team sent out Reminder/Recall letters for those 0-18 years of age in our District to alert caregivers their child(ren) are due for their recommended immunizations with a special focus on MMR Vaccine & Measles
- Van Buren County had a suspect Measles case that turned out *not to be a case*. Measles case investigations require a great deal of time and effort from our nursing team, and collaboration with other healthcare partners.
- The first Case of Mpox in 2024 for Michigan was in March. There have been 11 confirmed and probable cases thus far including cases in Kent, Genesee, Ottawa and Oakland County. Total in Michigan for 2023 was 401 cases.
- Our department has Jynneos Vaccine for the prevention of Mpox available for those that are high risk.

Mpox information

Symptoms:

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/symptoms/index.html>

Case counts/data: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/communicablediseases/diseasesandimmunization/mpv/mokeypox-epi-data>

**Community Health**

- MI-Train, a learning management system fully supported by the State of Michigan, was configured as our in-house online employee training system and training record keeping. Each employee has been assigned a training track and will use the system for their mandatory annual employment trainings.
- The team participated in the VB Tech annual career fair for seniors. Students took a survey about public health in exchange for a public health swag bag.

- As part of our Emergency Preparedness program, all eligible nurses completed fit-testing for N-95 respirators/masks, ensuring our employees are properly protected from harmful respiratory diseases like TB and measles while on the job.
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## **Environmental Health**

- In the month of March, the department reports:
    - 55 septic permits
    - 28 septic final inspections
    - 43 well permits
    - 32 final well inspections
    - 56 routine restaurant inspections
    - 14 restaurant follow-up inspections
    - 3 temporary food license inspections
    - 17 septic pumper truck inspections
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## **Dental Clinic & Outreach**

- Dowagiac Dental Clinic
  - served over 276 patients in the month of March\*
  - booked through October 2024 for treatment
  - booked through March 2025 for regular hygiene (cleanings)
- Lawrence Dental Clinic
  - served over 448 patients in the month of March\*
  - booked through February 2025 for treatment
  - booked through May 2025 for regular hygiene (cleanings)

*\*Due to a temporary reporting error, the number of patients listed in this report is lower than the actual number of patients served during the month of March.*



## Van Buren Conservation District April 2024 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director*

On April 8-13, Van Buren Conservation District staff were out of the office to have our annual **Tree Seedling Sale**. This year, we sold and donated over 19,000 tree seedlings! Thank-you to everyone who came out and supported this year's event!

Mark your calendars for our Volunteer Appreciation & Work Opportunity event at Thunderfoot Farm (32323 M-43 Paw Paw MI 49079)! Come join us on May 15, from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, for a fun event on the farm. We will have food, information on volunteer opportunities for the year, and fun farm activities.

Recycling collections have begun and details for all events have been posted at <https://vanburencd.org/van-buren-county-recycling-collections/>. Please encourage folks to sign up their tires ahead of time! In May and June you can find us...

**-Passenger & Semi Tire and Electronics Collection** | May 21, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Arlington Township Transfer Station | 51998 26th Ave., Bangor, MI 49013

**-Recycle Roundup Collection** | June 15, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM | Van Buren Community Mental Health | 801 Hazen Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079

### **Program Updates:**

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) - In February, the Ag & Water Quality Team helped coordinate our annual farm conference, "Farming for the Future." More than 120 people came together on March 13 to learn about understanding your soil, improving soil health, cost share opportunities, and more. Keynote speakers included soil researcher Dr. Alan Franzluebbers from North Carolina and soil health consultant Barry Fisher of Indiana. VBCD staff also shared new research and cost-share programs that can offer funding to farmers to try conservation practices. Additional speakers presented during breakout sessions targeting grain, grazing, and forestry topics.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) - The SWxSW Corner CISMA Team has taken advantage of important meetings and training opportunities to best engage with our community and prepare for the field season. Both attending and leading events, the CISMA Team is spreading the word and building knowledge of the ever-changing world of invasive species.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) - March was the month that saw payoff for a lot of work being done throughout the year. 26 verifications were scheduled over 3 verification days with MDARD employee Josh Appleby. 3 Verifications needed to be rescheduled and 2 didn't quite meet standards and will be reassessed and hopefully verified soon. On top of all the verifications, the MAEAP Specialist helped with Farming for the Future and also organized and led the Region 4/6 Envirothon Competition at Kalamazoo Nature Center which had 42 competitors and several volunteers from VBCD, Kent CD, and private companies like Four Elements Energy and True North Consulting Forestry.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) -The VBCD's annual Farming for the Future conference on March 13 was a major

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## Van Buren Conservation District April 2024 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director*

success for targeted resource concern outreach by our conservation technicians. Gabriel and Lucas organized separate tracks related to conservation in grazing and forestry respectively. 124 people in total attended the event with the majority of landowners seeking additional information on incorporating livestock, and improving grazing systems.

- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - The 2024 Food, Farm, & Fun Guides are here, so be sure to stop by the VBCD or municipality offices or one of many advertising businesses to get your copy! Keep an eye out for our upcoming events.
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) - Spring is quickly approaching and we will be starting the collection season soon. Most of the month was filled with preparations for collections, infrastructure grant work, and materials management planning. With part 115 updates, transfer stations are now going through a new site registration and review process. Kalli assisted communities with these challenges and helped them get started on the process.

## ROAD COMMISSION TALKING POINTS

April 17, 2024

### County-Wide Road Millage Renewal on August Primary Ballot

The County Board of Commissioners approved the Road Commission's request to place a renewal millage for the Road Commission on the August 6, 2024 Presidential Primary Ballot. Managing Director Bret Witkowski will be attending upcoming regular Township, Village and City board/council meetings over the coming months to better explain the millage, its purpose, what is received by the Road Commission, Cities and Villages, projects accomplished by the Road Commission using millage funds, and a review of what we intend to accomplish moving forward from 2024-2028.

### Board Awarded Projects/Materials

At its meeting on April 4, 2024, the Board of County Road Commissioners awarded the following materials/projects in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission:

- Hot Mix Asphalt Patching Materials - All bidding contractors with pickup based upon proximity and availability.
- Drainage Pipe - All bidding contractors with St. Regis Culvert as primary supplier.
- CR384 from South Haven Township line to CR687, Geneva Township; mill and pave, sealcoat and fog seal - Michigan Paving and Materials Company (trees removed by VBCRC crews).

### Bridge Inspection Services

The Van Buren County Road Commission is required to inspect all of our bridges with a span of more than 20 feet every two years, unless otherwise designated. The Board awarded bridge inspections to be performed in 2024 by Scott Civil Engineering. The staff at Scott Civil Engineering are technically qualified to accomplish these semi-annual inspections and also have background and historical information about each of the VBCRC's structures going back many years.

### Miscellaneous

- The VBCRC has a tentative agreement with a farmer to lease the 16 acres owned by the Road Commission on M-43 in Bangor Township.
- The Salt Barn in Lawrence has received its new shingle roof. We are now in the process of taking quotes to paint the barn.
- Took delivery of two roadside mowing tractors as VBCRC brings the service in-house.

To receive project and complete maintenance & operations updates (Weekly Update) please see visit the Road Commission's website at [www.vbcrc.org/projectupdates](http://www.vbcrc.org/projectupdates).





## VAN BUREN COUNTY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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### Information Technology Board of Commissioners Departmental Update

With the IT department being fully staffed for the last 8 months, we have been able maintain daily operations while allocating more time to implementing new processes and technologies with the intention of increasing security, network resiliency and departmental efficiency.

#### Security Improvements

- New IDS/IPS technology deployed.
- New EDR solution on all County servers. Partnered with the Center for Internet Security
- Security team strategies implemented to ensure security patches are being installed across the organization.

#### Data Protection

- Reengineered backup strategies to ensure data is stored securely and across multiple locations.
- Implemented cloud storage.

#### Workflow Improvements

- Server and workstation decommissioning process evaluated and modified.
- User decommissioning process evaluated and modified.
- Automated ticket creation of regularly occurring tasks.

#### Completed Projects

- Server 2012 R2 Upgrade. 15 servers migrated or upgraded.
- Assisted Clerks with new early voting process.
- Licensing renewal inventory.

#### Active Projects

- Court documents digitization.
- Hartford fiber connectivity.
- Citrix remote connectivity – High Availability.
- Annual PC refresh.
- Karpel implementation for Prosecutor's office.
- Redundant internet connections.
- Meraki/Cisco firewall replacements.
- Asset inventory and management.