



## February 2026 Board of Commissioners Activity Report

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### Highlights

- **Financial Approvals:** The Board approved the January 2026 claims in the amount of \$4,419,517.97. Furthermore, the Board approved the 2026 Annual Borrowing Resolution for the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund, authorizing the County Treasurer to borrow up to \$8 million to provide cashflow for paying out delinquent real property taxes.
- **Public Transit Enhancements & Funding:** The Board took several actions to support Public Transit in February. They expedited the MDOT FY 2027 Annual Application, which serves as the required "portal" to receive state and federal operating and capital funding for the upcoming fiscal year. Additionally, the Board approved a contract (MDOT Contract 2022-0144 P9) to acquire \$99,788.00 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant funding specifically for bus replacements. Finally, to accommodate the schedule and reduce the excess hours currently being worked by part-time staff, the Board expedited approval to hire two new full-time drivers.
- **Policy Updates:** The Board approved updates to the Personnel Handbook to reflect recently negotiated contract language regarding the Insurance Benefits Policy. The Board also reviewed an update to the Building Closure Policy.
- **Annual & Departmental Reports:** Several updates were presented to the Board, including the Prosecuting Attorney Annual Report presented by Susan Zuiderveen and the Information Technology Annual Report presented by Director CJ Johnson. The Veterans Services Department also provided an update, reporting 886 total contacts for FY26 and noting that the dental program has spent \$41,215.54 to date.
- **Broadband Expansion:** Chris Scharrer of DCS Technology gave a Broadband Update to some of the Board regarding ongoing infrastructure efforts.
- **Travel & Personnel Updates:** The Board granted expedited approval for out-of-state travel for a member of the Sheriff's Office to attend a digital video data structures

training in Hoover, AL. Expedited approval was also given for 8-9 members of the Specialty Courts team to attend the All-Rise Conference in Nashville, TN, utilizing federal grant funding. Additional personnel items reviewed included a Public Transit staffing increase and an application for an additional MERS Service Credit purchase.

- **Board Vacancy:** Following a memorial update for Commissioner Randall Peat, Administrator Faul advised that a notice was published for qualified voters in District 5 to submit Letters of Interest to fill the current Commissioner vacancy. There is a 30-day window to make an appointment, and interested candidates will address the Board at the March 10th meeting.

## Committee and Board Appointments/Reappointments

The following reappointments were approved in February:

- **Community Mental Health (CMH) Board:** Reappointed Carol Sjoquist and Michael Saenz for three-year terms running from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029.
- **Van Buren District Library Board:** Reappointed Sandra "Sandy" Hanson for a four-year term running from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2029.

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### Medical Director and Nursing

Public Health Nursing staff completed training in preparation for the MCIR Modernization Project, transitioning immunization reporting to the new system in summer 2026. Respiratory illnesses, including RSV, influenza, and COVID-19, increased in early December, prompting vaccination outreach from **MDHHS**<sup>1</sup> and VBCDHD to encourage timely flu and other recommended vaccines. During this period, one long-term care COVID-19 outbreak was reported, along with two pediatric **pertussis**<sup>2</sup> cases and continued sporadic reports of **hand, foot, and mouth disease**<sup>3</sup>. Communicable Disease Nursing also received updates on **New World Screwworm**<sup>4</sup> surveillance, with current risk to the U.S. remaining very low.

**Flu cases in Michigan**<sup>5</sup> continue to be a concern, especially **among children**<sup>6</sup>. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are available for all ages, with free or low-cost options for **eligible children**<sup>7</sup> and adults. For scheduling or questions, call the health department at (269) 621-3143 or visit **Vaccines.gov**<sup>8</sup>.

### Environmental Health

- 26 septic permits
- 27 septic final inspections
- 28 well permits
- 23 well final inspections
- 47 restaurant inspections
- 14 restaurant reinspections
- 02 temporary food inspections
- 03 body art facility inspections

### Dental Clinic and Outreach

In December, the Dowagiac clinic saw 347 patients, including 22 new patients, while the Lawrence clinic saw 429 patients with 12 new patients. Over the past couple of months, the dental clinic has experienced several changes, along with a seasonal slowdown due to holidays and severe weather, which led to an increase in cancellations. Fortunately, this appears to be mostly behind us, and we are looking forward to patient volumes picking up in the coming weeks.

### Health Promotions

VBCDHD received a \$25,000 SNAP-Ed Nutrition grant from the Michigan Fitness Foundation to support the planned sunset of the SNAP-Ed program, which officially ended statewide in September. Through this funding, the program will aim to educate community members at events on nutrition related resources including food banks, mobile food distribution efforts, budgeting, and general nutrition education.

In addition, we were awarded a \$4,000 well-being grant from the Michigan Associational of Local Public Health (MALPH) to support employee wellness initiatives.

## Location

### Van Buren County

260 South Street, Lawrence, MI 49064

### Cass County

302 S. Front Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047

## Business Hours

Monday - Thursday · 8:00am to 5:00pm

Friday · 8:00am to 12:00pm

## Clinics

### Van Buren County

Immunization · Thursdays

STI Testing & Treatment · Wednesdays

Dental · Monday - Thursday

### Cass County

Immunization · 1st and 3rd Wednesdays

STI Testing & Treatment · Thursdays

Dental · Monday - Thursday

## Newsworthy

**Recall Alert: Pecorino Romano Cheese – Listeria Risk**

**UPDATE: Precautionary Boil Water Advisory – Eagle Lake Condos, Cass County Lifted**

## Links

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/inside-mdhhs/newsroom/2025/12/02/flu-vaccine>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/about/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/stop-screwworm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/flu/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder1/Folder43/MIFluFocus.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.wnem.com/2026/01/22/flu-cases-rise-sharply-among-mid-michigan-children-season-hits-early/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-for-children/about/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vaccines.gov/en/>



**County Board of Commissioners  
County Administrator Agenda Item**

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**TO: Board of Commissioners**  
**FROM: David Krzycki, Veterans Services Director**  
**DATE: February 24, 2026**  
**RE: Veteran Services Dept Update**

**REQUEST:**

The request is to receive the Veteran Services Update

**BACKGROUND:**

Departmental Update

**REVIEWS:**

Prior to submitting this request, this agenda item was reviewed by all impacted departments noted below: (e.g. Administration, B&G, Finance, HR and IT)

Administration

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The recommendation is to receive the Veteran Services Update.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. COW FEB 2026 Complete
2. DEC-JAN26COWUPDATE(addon)

John Faul  
County Administrator



David Krzycki  
Veterans Services Director

## VAN BUREN COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

Phone: (269) 657-8200 Ext 1612  
Fax: (269) 415-0250

226 E. Michigan Avenue  
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Email: KrzyckiD@vanburencountymi.gov  
Web: www.vanburencountymi.gov

1. **This report covers the reporting period from Dec-Jan FY2026.**
2. **New Hire Casey Somers for our VSO position.**
3. **Statistical information Indicates:**
  - Overall, this year we have seen **886** contacts for FY26. New contacts, **Aid and Attendance, Funerals and Relief**, are the main topics during this period.
  - The dental program has spent **\$41,215.54** in FY26 with **203** visits.
  - Soldiers and Sailors had **0** fully developed relief request for consideration from Dec-Jan FY2026.
  - We had **0** burial relief approved for this reporting period.
4. **Statistics Aug-Sept FY2025**
  - **VA Claims/Actions:** We had **52** claims/actions filed in December and **42** in January. This reflects all the various actions related to additional benefits, DIC, Relief, Aid and Attendance, and requests for DD214's.
  - **Appeals:** We had **1** appeals in December and **3** appeals for January.
  - **Health Care:** Veteran services had **1** veterans signed up for VA Health Care in this reporting period.
  - **Home/Event Visits:** **0** home visits in this reporting period.
  - **Assisted Living Visits:** Conducted a total of **0** Assisted Living Visits this reporting period.
  - **Community Events:** Conducted **6** outreach and County Events since our last report.
5. **Public transportation gave 4 rides in December and 9 rides in January.**
6. **The following events were conducted during this reporting period FY26.**
  - **December 2025**

- Trees for Troops
- Visit VFW (South Haven)
- Christmas Meals
- Veteran Event Kalamazoo Mortgage.
- **January 2025**
  - Bangor American Legion
  - New Hire
- **Upcoming events for Veteran Services:**
  - NACVSO Training for Casey
  - NACVSO Conference in Michigan 20-24 April
  - Memorial Day

**Notes: Military Branch Birthdays**

- Army. June 14, 1775.
- Coast Guard. August 4, 1790
- Air Force. September 18, 1947
- Navy. October 13, 1775.
- Marine Corps. November 10, 1775.
- **National Guard December 13, 1636.**
- **Space Force, December 20, 2019.**



# Van Buren Conservation District February 2026 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director*

As we all dive deeper into the new year, we are planning for a year filled with programs, services, and community engagement. Be sure to follow along as we announce events, continue our services, and be your go-to for conservation and natural resources. As always, the VBCD is here for you, our community, and natural resources. Reach out anytime!

**2025 Annual Report** – We are excited to share our 2025 Annual Report with you. Our shared conservation story with many successes will inspire you – as it has inspired me. This easy-to-read report gives a snapshot of who we are, what we do, how we work together, and our impact. We'll be delivering copies but feel free to read online: [VanBurenCD.org/Annual-Reports](https://VanBurenCD.org/Annual-Reports)

**Regular Meeting Schedule** – The VBCD Board of Directors has set our meeting schedule for this year. The meetings are open to the public and give you the opportunity to engage directly with us, our programs, and the board. [VanBurenCD.org/notice-2026-reg/](https://VanBurenCD.org/notice-2026-reg/)

**Tree Sale** – Our annual Tree Sale provides affordable, quality seedlings to our community. The benefit? Large scale pollinator and wildlife habitat building and community beautiful. Profits go back into our conservation efforts and programs further benefiting our communities. Shop the sale at [VanBurenCD.org/Shop](https://VanBurenCD.org/Shop)

*Emily Hickmott*

Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

## **Upcoming Events** (details available on [our website](#))

- SWxSW Corner Annual Meeting | February 11 | Come engage with our invasive species team
- Washington's Birthday | February 16 | Office closed
- VBCD Board Meeting | February 25 | [VanBurenCD.org/About](https://VanBurenCD.org/About)
- Farming for the Future Conference | March 11
- Discover with the District: Kal-Haven Trail | Saturday, March 21 | [VanBurenCD.org/discover-2026](https://VanBurenCD.org/discover-2026)
- VBCD Board Meeting | March 25 | [VanBurenCD.org/About](https://VanBurenCD.org/About)
- Tree Sale Order Pickup & Leftover Sale | Friday, April 10 & Saturday April, 11 | [VanBurenCD.org/shop](https://VanBurenCD.org/shop)
- VBCD Board Meeting | April 22 | [VanBurenCD.org/About](https://VanBurenCD.org/About)



# Van Buren Conservation District February 2026 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

## Program Updates

**Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) – We are working with five community drop-off centers to bring year-round foam recycling to the county. Look for the upcoming announcement!

**Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – Three big projects are coming soon or are here: the 2025 Annual Report; the Food, Farm, and Fun Guide; and Tree Sale. Shop affordable, quality seedlings and support local conservation efforts! [VanBurenCD.org/shop](http://VanBurenCD.org/shop)

**Agriculture & Water Quality Team** (*Erin Fuller and Colleen Forestieri*) – Our research, with partners like the University of Notre Dame, on the effectiveness of conservation practices on farm fields continues. Important world class research is happening right here in Van Buren County!

**Invasive Species SWxSW Corner CISMA Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) – We've been meeting with partners to discuss future projects funded by grants and contracts. We have started drafting 2026 survey locations and management areas and completing field work. We wish Abbie Bristol, Land Management Project Manager, the very best in her next endeavors!

**Conservation Technical Assistance Program: MAEAP and Regenerative Agriculture Programs** (*Kyle Mead*) – Kyle has been busy reaching out to and visiting with producers about verifications and assessments as well as making connections with NRCS. He has also helped several producers gain access to the new water use reporting site.

**Natural Resource Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) – Many interested landowners from across Van Buren County's diverse agriculture have reached out with various resource concerns. We worked hard to provide landowners opportunities to be involved in programs whose deadlines for the first round were in January. Efforts in education and networks were made at the Great Lakes Exposition and Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting. We also wish Lucas Hartman, Conservation Technician, well in his next endeavors!

**Forestry Assistance Program** (*Benjamin Savoie, Barry Conservation District*) – Ben is working across nine counties, including Van Buren County, supporting our forests. Working with landowners, Ben works in the Qualified Forest Program to save landowners money and strengthen forest health.



**ROAD COMMISSION TALKING POINTS**

**Township Year-End Billing**

Year-end invoices and annual Activity Summaries have been mailed to the Township Clerks. Should any questions arise regarding invoicing or the year-end Activity Summary please contact Jill Brien at 269-674-8011, Extension 236, or via email at [JillBrien@vbcrc.org](mailto:JillBrien@vbcrc.org). We request that Township invoices be paid in full no later than February 26, 2026.

**Road Commission Hosting Open Interviews**

The Road Commission will be hosting open interviews for Seasonal Road Maintenance Employees on Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3 from 3-7 PM. We will also be advertising for the following positions in “regular” interview format:

- |                                               |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Up to 2 Road Maintenance Employee Apprentices | 2 Seasonal Engineering Interns   |
| Up to 1 General Mechanic                      | Up to 1 Heavy Equipment Mechanic |
| 1 Purchasing Clerk                            |                                  |

Please stay tuned to our website for more details to follow: <https://www.vbcrc.org/jobs>

**Board Awards Bids at February Meeting**

The Road Commission awarded bids for Motor Fuels (No-Lead Gasoline, and Diesel Fuel) at its February meeting to Fleming Brothers Oil for the 2026 season. In addition, bids for Dust Control were also awarded to all bidding vendors so as to allow the Townships to choose which product they wish to use on their gravel roads during the 2026 season. The Board also awarded the tree and stump removal project on CR687 from CR376 South to CR372 (Bangor and Hartford Townships) to the low bidding contractor, Krohn Excavating. The remaining work on CR687 scheduled to take place in 2026 is a Federal Aid job which includes trenching, widening, crushing, shaping, and repaving.

**2026 Special Maintenance Cost Schedule Adopted by Board**

The Road Commission adopted the 2026 Special Maintenance Cost Schedule. It is of note that 2025 sealcoat prices were held in 2026. Although we anticipated that there would be slag available on a first-come, first-served basis the piles were completely depleted in 2025 and there is none available. De-Berming prices were reduced because of efficiencies the Road Commission has developed hauling away the spoils. In addition, Gravel Spreading costs were also held over from 2025 to 2026. See price comparison below:

<b>SEALCOAT + FOG SEAL</b>	<b>Price Per Sq. Foot</b>	<b>2026 Average/Mile Cost (assume 21' road width)</b>	<b>2025 Pricing (Reference Only)</b>
Roads Rated 1-3	<b>\$0.347</b>	\$38,475.36	\$0.347
Roads Rated 4-6	<b>\$0.317</b>	\$35,148.96	\$0.317
Roads Rated 7+	<b>\$0.284</b>	\$31,489.92	\$0.284

<b>DE-BERMING</b>	<b>2026 Pricing</b>	<b>2025 Pricing (Reference Only)</b>
Local Roads per mile	<b>\$4,500.00</b>	\$5,600.00
Primary Roads per mile	<b>\$4,500.00</b>	\$5,600.00

<b>Contract Gravel</b>	<b>2026 Pricing</b>	<b>2025 Pricing (Reference Only)</b>
Spreading cost per ton	<b>\$2.28</b>	\$2.28

**Seasonal Weight Restrictions to be Implemented on Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

The Van Buren County Road Commission, as well as all surrounding counties, will implement full Seasonal Weight Restrictions beginning Monday, February 16, 2026 at 6:00 AM for all roadways under its jurisdiction, except for County Class A roadways (All-Season roads).

Under state law, road agencies may enact restrictions on non-All-Season roads when conditions require it. During this period:

- Axle-loading limits are reduced by 35%
- Maximum travel speed is reduced to 35 MPH for vehicles over 10,000 pounds
- The VBCRC does not issue any overweight/oversize moving permits when seasonal weight restrictions are in place

All roads under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission are restricted unless specifically designated as “All-Season”. For more information, please visit the Road Commission’s website at <https://www.vbcrc.org/seasonalpermits> or contact AJ Brucks, Permit Officer, at [AJBrucks@vbcrc.org](mailto:AJBrucks@vbcrc.org) or by phone at 269-674-8011, Extension 252.

**VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION**

**NOTE:** 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).