April 19-21, 2020
Park Place Hotel, Traverse City, MI

To register, visit: micountyroads.org/CommissionersSeminar

For more information, contact Shelby Eva at 517.482.1189 or seva@micountyroads.org.

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Monday, April 20

7-9 a.m.  
Registration  
Breakfast

8 a.m.  
GENERAL SESSION I

OPENING COMMENTS  
Presiding: Chair, Frank Fiala (Barry)

Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome to Traverse City! Jim Carruthers, Mayor, Traverse City

What’s in a chair? The proper role of the county road commission chair  
Again this year, we begin with the basics! Many counties rotate the road commission chairmanship among the three or five commissioners. That means every member needs an understanding of the specific responsibilities of the chair - and there are many.

Larry Merrill, Senior Policy Consultant, Center for Local Solutions, Public Policy Associates, Inc.

Panel: Reflections on having a successful board chairmanship  
Mike Power, Chair, Huron County Road Commission

Gail Watkins, Chair and Commissioner, Clinton County Road Commission

9:30-9:45 a.m.  
BREAK

9:45-10:45 a.m.  
Working with townships: Sources of friction, feasible solutions  
Most conflicts a county road agency encounters when working with townships come from poor communication and local politics gone bad. Township relations can make or break a road commission, even up to changing the road commission structure. Barry County talks about the strides they’ve made to establish and maintain good township relationships. BRING YOUR QUESTIONS!

Brad Lambreg, PE, Managing Director, Barry County Road Commission

10:45-11 a.m.  
BREAK

11-11:45 a.m.  
Proper management of your manager  
A key responsibility of the commission is to evaluate its only employee: The chief administrative officer (CAO). Surprisingly, some commissions let this role slip on by - which is not a path to improvement! Leave with tools for doing better performance appraisals.

Larry Merrill, Senior Policy Consultant, Center for Local Solutions, Public Policy Associates, Inc.

11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
LUNCH

12:30-1 p.m.  
KEYNOTE  
To be determined

1-2 p.m.  
GENERAL SESSION II  
Presiding: Russell Williams (Marquette)

Respecting the CAO through difficult situations  
Beyond the annual evaluation, commissioners should have guidelines for possible difficult CAO situations. Having written policies ahead of time can remove emotion and create stability for the entire organization, while respecting the individual. This session covers the CAO employment agreement, at-will status vs. contract, causes for dismissal, appropriate severance and improvement plans to get things back on the right track.

Wendy Hardt, Attorney, Michael R. Kluck & Associates

2-2:30 p.m.  
How we do it: Managing the manager  
Two county road agencies talk about how they have handled these responsibilities and improved the commission-CAO relationship.

Rodney Chupp, CIC, St. Joseph County Road Commissioner  
Russell Williams, Vice Chair, Marquette County Road Commissioner

2:30-2:45 p.m.  
BREAK

2:45-3:30 p.m.  
Strategic planning: Applying the 80/20 rule  
Does strategic planning for your road agency sound overwhelming? This session proposes taking “small bites” of strategic planning at a time. Thinking laser-focus rather than big picture, lets the Board more easily tackle the areas of greatest need or biggest opportunity.

Deb Buchholtz, Chair, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County  
Joanna I. Johnson, Managing Director, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

3:30-4 p.m.  
Grants available to the road agency  
Many county road agencies receive competitive grant dollars to leverage their federal and state dollars. Learn about four important categories of grants, and examples of projects road agencies have performed with them.

Steve Puurti, PE, Engineering Specialist, County Road Association of Michigan

4-4:30 p.m.  
Nuts & Bolts: Questions from the audience  
CRA stuff to facilitate

4:30 p.m.  
Adjourn

6 p.m.  
RECEPTION (cash bar)

7 p.m.  
BANQUET

Tuesday, April 21

7:30-8:30 a.m.  
General Session II  
Presiding: Chair, Frank Fiala (Barry)

8:30-9:30 a.m.  
Who’s up next? Succession planning for leadership  
To be effective in the 21st century, commissioners should be thinking about succession planning for the CAO. With thin budgets for the last decade, there’s often not an obvious #2 on staff. Ensuring a plan is in place for who’s up next is an important role for commissioners.

Todd Surline, CEO, Hiring Solutions, LLC

Panel: One road commission’s take on succession planning  
Darrell Cass, PE, Menominee County Road Commission  
Tony Kokuk, Commissioner, Menominee County Road Commission

10-10:15 a.m.  
BREAK

10:15-10:45 a.m.  
Compensation at the road agency: MIRAD can help  
Learn about the wealth of data available to commissioners in the Michigan Road Agency Database (MIRAD). Compensation data can help create a compensation plan. Data can be sorted for like-sized, geographically similar road agencies.

Dustin Earley, Manager of Communications and Engagement, County Road Association of Michigan

10:45 a.m.  
Closing Remarks  
Frank Fiala, Chair

11 a.m.  
Door Prizes & Adjournment