

Kent COUNTY Detail

May/June
2013

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Emergency Management Division: U.S. Small Business Administration Loans for Flood Damage Available

GRAND RAPIDS – Kent County Emergency Management learned on June 19 that residents and businesses affected by severe storms and flooding April 7-20, 2013 can apply for low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator for Kent County, says “These loans will help provide some relief to residents and businesses impacted by this disaster.” Applicants are encouraged to apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA’s secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

“The SBA is strongly committed to providing the people of Michigan with the most effective and customer-focused response possible to assist homeowners, renters, and businesses of all sizes with federal disaster loans,” said Administrator Mills. “Getting businesses and communities up and running after a disaster is our highest priority at SBA.”

“Loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for loans up to \$40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property,” said Frank Skaggs, Director of SBA’s Field Operations Center East in Atlanta.

“Businesses and non-profit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets,” said Gerald Moore, SBA’s Michigan district director. According to a release sent by the SBA, a loan “may be increased by up to 20 percent of the total amount of disaster damage to real estate and/or leasehold improvements, as verified by SBA, to make upgrades that lessen the risk of property damage by similar future disasters.”

There are also Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) for small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small aquaculture businesses and most private non-profit organizations of all sizes. The EIDLs are meant to help meet working capital needs that were caused by the disaster. This assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage. Based on each applicant’s financial condition, interest rates could be as low as 1.688 percent for homeowners and renters, 2.875 percent for non-profit organizations, and 4 percent for businesses. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA, with terms up to 30 years.

Individuals and businesses may also obtain information and loan applications by calling the SBA’s Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (1-800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing), or by emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Loan applications can also be downloaded at www.sba.gov. Completed applications should be returned to the center or mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is August 12, 2013. The deadline to return economic injury applications is March 12, 2014.

These loans are being made available in response to a request from Gov. Rick Snyder on June 7, asking for a disaster declaration by the SBA. The declaration covers Kent County, as well as Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties. At the time of this news release, officials are still waiting to hear if a Presidential Declaration will be made for our jurisdiction regarding any FEMA funding that may be available for public property damage and disaster response.

Administration

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION WORK GROUP REPORT

In November 2011, the Collaboration/Cooperation Subcommittee of the Board of Commissioners created a Community Collaboration Work Group (CCWG), with a broad base of representation from local units of government, the private sector, and community groups, to identify, evaluate, and recommend opportunities for collaboration and consolidation of public services.

The 13-member Work Group met regularly throughout 2012 and developed a comprehensive report outlining its process, findings, and recommendations. The Report was accepted by the CCWG on March 20, 2013, and presented to the Collaboration/Cooperation Subcommittee, which has recommended that the report be adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The CCWG report was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Commissioners at its meeting on June 13.

Members of the CCWG included County Commissioners Jim Saalfeld (who chaired the Work Group), Dan Koorndyk, Carol Hennessy, and Michael Wawee, Jr.; Grand Rapids City Commissioners Rosalynn Bliss (who co-chaired the Work Group) and James White; Grand Rapids Township Supervisor Michael DeVries; Walker City Manager Cathy VanderMeulen; Attorney Jim Brown; Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce President Rick Baker; The Right Place, Inc. President Birgit Klohs; Hispanic Center of Western Michigan CEO Martha Gonzalez-Cortes; and Grand Valley State University Economics Professor Dr. Paul Isely.

The report can be found on the County's website at:

http://www.accesskent.com/Departments/BOC/pdfs/Reports/CCWG_final_report.pdf



Working Together

to identify, evaluate and recommend opportunities for collaboration and consolidation of services.

GET TO KNOW US

For more information, you can also use this link: <http://www.cwgg.info/about.htm>

Public Works Department

June 2013–Don't Flush or Throw Old Medicine in the Trash

The Problem: An estimated twenty to sixty percent of prescription medications go unused. For years, these expired or unneeded medications would be thrown into the trash or flushed down the toilet. Now considered environmentally dangerous, neither of these disposal methods are recommended. Putting unwanted or expired medicine in the trash leaves it vulnerable to being stolen and used, potentially resulting in illness or death. Throwing unused medication in the trash sends it to the local landfill, where it may seep into the surrounding water table. Flushing unused medications down the toilet sends these chemicals to sewage treatment plants, which don't screen for them. That means these chemicals often end up in rivers and streams, eventually making their way into Lake Michigan. The U.S. Geological Survey looked at 139 streams in 30 states in 2002. Testing found 80% of these waterways had chemicals from prescription and nonprescription drugs, as well as steroids and reproductive hormones. **So what can you do?** The Kent County Health Department is working with the Kent County Department of Public Works to share www.takebackmeds.org, a site that explains what you can do with unused or expired medications. You can search by zip code or city. The site will suggest Kent County pharmacies or other sites near you that accept:



- Prescription medications and medication samples (Except controlled substances e.g. Codeine, Ritalin, Vicodin, etc.)
- Antibiotics/steroids
- Cold and flu medications
- Vitamins/herbal supplements
- Pet medications
- Medicated ointments/lotions

Just leave the medications in their original container. Block out any identifying personal information on the prescription label, but leave the name of the medication unblocked. The dropoff site will make sure the medication is disposed of quickly and properly. If you have a controlled substance such as Vicodin or Oxycodone, the Kent County Sheriff's Department and its Sub-Station have drop boxes that will keep these drugs secure and inaccessible to the public.



Kent County is hosting a free craft or movie activity for families every Monday this summer at its [Recycling and Education Center](#). Each Monday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. families can enjoy turning recyclable materials into fun new items or viewing a movie with an environmental theme. Families can

also walk out on the observation deck and see how recyclable materials are sorted and processed. The schedule of activities is as follows:

July 1	Cereal Box Bookmarks
July 8	Greeting Card Boxes
July 15	T-shirt Capes and Bags
July 22	Environmental-themed Kids Movie
July 29	CD Coasters
August 5	Egg Carton Bird Mask
August 12	Water Bottle Octopus
August 19	Environmental-themed Kids Movie

These are family events and younger children may need a parent's help with crafts.

Health Department



Health Notes

A Service of the Kent County Health Department

Stay Safe in the Summer Heat

Hot, humid weather is in the forecast again today, with temperatures expected to reach highs in the upper eighties throughout most of this week. Children, the elderly, and pets are especially at risk of becoming ill in these temperatures. The Kent County Health Department wants everyone to take a few precautions to stay healthy during hot summer days.

Never leave children or animals in a parked vehicle unattended, even with windows cracked open. The temperature inside a parked car can reach 120 degrees or more in a matter of minutes. Heat stroke and death can occur in these dangerous situations. If you are leaving the car, take your children and/or pets with you. So far this year, 15 children have died after being left unattended in cars in the U.S., according to the San Francisco State University Department of Geosciences.

Elderly people have a much more difficult time dealing with heat. "People who are elderly may have trouble adjusting to changes in temperature," says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "Also, some medications can cause adverse reactions to heat. If you have elderly family members or friends, check on them twice a day during these hot days." If they appear to be suffering from dizziness, muscle weakness, cramping, vomiting, heavy sweating, or paleness, they may be suffering from heat exhaustion. Get them to a cool area, and seek medical treatment.

If you wait until you're thirsty to drink, you may already be dehydrated. (Some people may be limited in the amount of fluid they drink due to certain conditions or medications. Check with your doctor to see how much you should drink while the weather is hot.) Drink non-alcoholic fluids often, and avoid alcohol or sugary drinks, as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.

Be sure pets have fresh, clean drinking water. Keep them indoors or provide a shady place for animals to stay out of the sun. Don't let them overheat: keep strenuous activity and playtime short. If you are looking for additional resources to help you during hot weather, the Heart of West Michigan United Way may be able help. Call their free informational and referral service by dialing 211 for more information.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

Cooperative Extension

Building communication channels between farmers, distributors, and purchasers

Garrett Ziegler, Community Food Systems Educator, MSU Extension

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In order to develop a more robust local food system, attempts are being made to encourage stronger relationships between the various stakeholders, including community organizations, businesses, and individuals who are involved in aspects of the [food value chain](#), from production to distribution to waste management and all in between.

[Michigan State University Extension](#) has worked with [MSU's Center for Regional Food Systems](#) to develop a series of “**Meet and Greet**” events across the State. These events have the goal of bringing farmers (producers), distributors, and purchasers together. When farmers are able to engage one-on-one with the people and businesses who are eventually receiving their food, they are better able to understand each other's needs. These events help purchasers to appreciate where their food comes from and better [know their regional and local farmers](#). This open line of communication may require some extra work on the part of both farmers and food purchasers but the results can be well worth the effort.

Many times it is the connections developed at more informal networking events that spark and foster lasting producer/purchaser relationships. While developing and fostering these connections is a great first step in leading to a stronger farm-to-institution connection in Kent County, MSU Extension is continuing to work on programs that help turn these relationships into an increase in local product sales. Working one-on-one with school and hospital food service directors to identify needs that can be met locally as well as helping farmers overcome barriers to entering institutional markets are just a few of the ways the MSU Extension is helping create a more robust local food economy.

Look for more Michigan State University Extension-hosted local food events and educational programming, including future “**Meet and Greets**” at the new Downtown Market in Grand Rapids. The Extension will be housing two community food systems educators at the market full time and will also be providing outreach and information at other weekly outdoor farmers markets.

If you would like more information about how a “**Meet and Greet**” event could help improve the local food system in your area, contact Garrett Ziegler with MSU Extension at zieglerg@anr.msu.edu.



Kent County Quality Service Employee of the Quarter

At Kent County, providing quality service to our customers is our number one priority. *Our mission* is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.

Jason Buck is recognized as the Kent County Quality Service Employee of the 2nd Quarter for helping to fulfill Kent County’s mission by providing quality service to citizens of Kent County. The individual who nominated Mr. Buck wrote:

“The purpose of this letter is to tell you how much we appreciate one of your employees, Jason Buck. We bought land in Plainfield Township and have been developing it for many years. We met Jason Buck when he first began working in Environmental Health for Kent County. He has completed all our perc tests, explained our water quality on our wells, answered our many questions over the years, sent us paperwork and reports carefully completed with great detail, and carefully filled out permits with great drawings attached.

“He always represents the Kent County Health Department with integrity and honesty. He is extremely knowledgeable; always fills requests promptly; explains procedures so we understand them and always sends us very accurate reports. We are very grateful that Jason has been so dedicated to his career all these years. Jason Buck’s dedication to the people of Kent County needs to be recognized. He serves us well.”



Number of Years Employed by Kent County: 8 years and 11 months.

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: Still in process, two daughters 17 months apart. Best friends, worst enemies.

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Leonardo da Vinci (dead), Tom Hartmann (living), and John Stewart (The Daily Show).

You’d be surprised to learn that: I have an identical twin brother. He was covering for me the day I apparently provided great customer service!

The thing that I like most about working for Kent County is: Every day brings a new challenge. This is a unique position that provides assistance, enforcement, and regulation. It can be difficult to balance the three tasks and still provide the service the customer expects, the County needs, and that will be sustainable for the future use of a property long after all the involved parties have moved on. The work is exciting and the days have been flying by.

Please join us in congratulating **Jason Buck** for earning Kent County’s Employee Recognition for Quality Service Award.

If you know a Kent County employee who is deserving of this award please complete a nomination form at www.accesskent.com/qualityservice or on the Kent County intranet.

The County Detail is a compilation of news and information that helps fulfill our commitment to the residents of Kent County, and is distributed bi-monthly to local government officials. Editorial questions or submissions should be directed to Melanie Grooters, *County Detail* Editor. Administrator’s Office; Ph: (616) 632-7561; E-mail: Melanie.Grooters@kentcountymi.gov