



# The Quarterly

## Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

*Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected*

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### 2011 GRAHAM WOODHOUSE AWARD

The annual Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award was presented to the thirteen organizations involved in the Lakes Area Sewer Authority Wastewater Collection and Treatment System Project.

SWMPC Chair Linda Preston presented award plaques to 8 representatives of the 13 agencies involved. Accepting the plaque on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development were Jim Turner and Todd MacLean.



Chair Linda Preston with Wightman & Associates representatives Alan Smaka and Thomas Deneau

Cass County was represented by Robert Wagel, Larry Malsch, and Joe Silvia, all from the Cass County Board of Public Works. Greg Kinney of the Van Buren County Road Commission received the plaque for Van Buren County. Gerald Melko, accepted awards for the Lakes Area Sewer Authority, and also on behalf of the Big Fish Lake Property Owners Association. Project engineers Tom Deneau and Alan Smaka represented Wightman & Associates. Marcellus Township was represented by John Grib and Bob Tower. Deborah Leath accepted for the West Saddlebag Lake Association.

John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Executive Director, said: "the Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award seeks to assure those who search for collaborative change that their work is appreciated and worthy of recognition. The process can be thankless and the players are frequently not recognized."

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# SWMPC ANNOUNCES AWARDS

## *Graham Woodhouse Award continued*

### **Organizations involved in the project included:**

Village of Marcellus; Volinia, Porter and Marcellus Townships; Gravel Lake and West Saddlebag Lake Associations, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development; Cass County Board of Public Works; Van Buren County Road Commission; Lakes Area Sewer Authority; Big Fish Lake Property Owners; and Wightman & Associates.

Congratulating the participants, Jim Turner, USDA Rural Development State Director, spoke of the success of such projects throughout the state and described the various loan and grant programs his agency administers. According to Alan Smaka, Wightman & Associates; "the Lakes Area Sewer Authority was formed to provide the area with an environmentally sound sanitary system through inter-municipal cooperation maximizing the service area and minimizing duplication of services." In 2009, USDA funding was approved as part of the \$10.8 million project and construction began September 2009 on the first Schreiber wastewater treatment facility in Michigan, concluding in November 2010. Smaka commented that; "the overall success of the project is a clear example of how building trust in relationships among all team players is the true objective and driver for the project."

This award was established in 1987 to honor former Dowagiac Mayor Graham Woodhouse and is presented annually for projects that exemplify cooperation by local units of government. Recipients receive the Award in recognition of outstanding cooperative effort in problem solving.

## **2010 Welch-Lackey Leadership Award Recognizes Yemi Akinwale**

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission has selected Yemi Akinwale as the 2010 Welch-Lackey Leadership Award recipient.

In announcing the award, John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Executive Director, commented; "There is no finer ambassador for the SWMPC across the region than Mr. Akinwale." Akinwale, City of Hartford Manager, has served the SWMPC since 2000 as Berrien County Citizen Representative, joining the Administration Committee in 2001. Alternate Treasurer for nine years, he has provided vital input to the Financial Management Policies and Procedures Committee. In addition to Akinwale's work with the SWMPC, he served as a critical member of the four-jurisdiction effort for joint planning along the I-94 corridor and assisted the involvement of Partnerships for Change. Currently, he is helping to navigate a Hartford City/Township Joint Master Plan process. Akinwale is also involved with The Community Hospital/Lakeland Foundation Board, The Area Agency on Aging, and Van Buren County Red Cross.

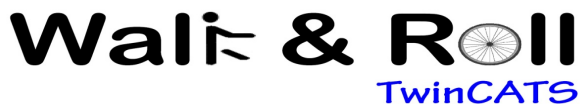


Yemi Akinwale and SWMPC Chair  
Linda Preston

The Welch-Lackey Leadership Award is given each year in honor of former Commissioners George A. Welch and William F. Lackey.

See a complete list of past SWMPC Award recipients at [www.swmpc.org/board.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/board.asp)

## AROUND THE REGION



During Bike to Work Week, May 16-20, the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS) Walk & Roll committee will be holding community outreach meetings to gain knowledge of where citizens of the Twin Cities region would like to see facilities such as transit stops, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and shared use pathways.

The locations for the meetings are:

- MAY 16-Lincoln Charter Township Hall 1-4pm  
*2055 W. John Beers Rd. Stevensville, MI 49127*
- MAY 17-St. Joseph Public Library 4-7pm  
*500 Market St. St. Joseph, MI 49085*
- MAY 18-Michigan Works-Benton Harbor 4-7pm  
*499 W. Main St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022*
- MAY 19-Bridgman Public Library 4-7pm  
*4460 Lake St., Bridgman, MI 49106*

For more details regarding the meetings or project visit

<http://swmpc.org/walkbiketwincats.asp>

### **Transportation & the Environment: Water Quality and Flooding Recap**

On March 22 citizens representing various interests throughout the Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren county region attended a one-day workshop that focused on the importance of transportation and the impact that it can have on the environment. The workshop gave participants an overview of the abundant water resources in southwest Michigan. Both our water resources and our transportation system are essential to our economy and quality of life. These systems are both threatened by polluted water and flooding. To protect both of these vital systems, a better approach to managing polluted runoff in transportation project planning and implementation is essential. For workshop presentations or materials visit:

[www.swmpc.org/trans\\_water.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/trans_water.asp)

Venture Quest 2011 is currently accepting applicants in its inaugural year. The business plan competition is open to new or existing businesses that are less than three years old with less than \$250,000 in capital and will be or are located in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties.

The Berrien County Office of Community Development, Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation, the Cass County Economic Development Corporation, and the SWMPC are currently soliciting donations for the prize pool. The Edward Lowe Foundation has graciously agreed to host the award ceremony on Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30p.m. The top five plans will present at the award ceremony to showcase exciting and new investment opportunities in southwest Michigan. The judging panel will consist of seven members; two each from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties and one at-large judge.

The Niles Daily Star featured Venture Quest in a recent article.

The website [www.bizplancompetitions.com](http://www.bizplancompetitions.com), which bills itself as “the most comprehensive site in the world devoted to business plan competitions,” has created a page for the competition. For more information visit:

<http://venturequestswmi2011.istart.org/>

#### *Venture Quest Dates to Remember*

April 1<sup>st</sup> - Intent to Compete Form  
April 15<sup>th</sup> – Application Deadline for Venture Quest  
May 31<sup>st</sup> – Award Ceremony, Edward Lowe Foundation



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*The SWMPC's Mission is to promote a sustainable high quality of life through facilitation of sound planning and decision making*

## Calendar of Events 2010

[www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp)

April	May	June
<p>15<sup>th</sup> Venture Quest 2011 application deadline            22<sup>nd</sup> SWMPC Offices close at noon            18<sup>th</sup> 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS            25<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. NATS            26<sup>th</sup> 8:30 a.m. Rural Small Business Capital Access to Create New Jobs (East Lansing)</p>	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> 6:00 p.m. MSUE Complete Streets Workshop (Benton Harbor)            16-19<sup>th</sup> TwinCATS Walk &amp; Roll Input Meetings (see page 3)            30<sup>th</sup> SWMPC Offices closed            31<sup>st</sup> Venture Quest 2011 award ceremony (Cassopolis)</p>	<p>12<sup>th</sup> Safety Day (Bridgman)            20<sup>th</sup> 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS            28<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. NATS             NATS=meets in Niles            TwinCATS=meets in Benton Harbor</p>

### 2011 Board Meeting Schedule

#### SWMPC Full Commission Meeting

*Location: Southwestern Michigan College  
 Mathews Room West-Dowagiac, MI*  
 April 19, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 July 19, 2011 9:30 a.m.

Location: Southwestern Michigan College-Tentative  
 October 18, 2011 9:30 a.m.

#### SWMPC Administrative Committee Meeting

*Location: Vincent Place Conference Room-Benton Harbor, MI*  
 June 21, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 September 20, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 December 20, 2011 9:30 a.m.