



April 26, 2013

A few thoughts about local government...

Over the past week, our region has been challenged with record rainfalls, floods, evacuations, and emergencies of all kinds. Through it all, local government was there to assist our citizens.

In the past, we have all heard the criticism of local government and experienced significant reductions in personnel, revenues and resources. Yet, in times of need, it was our local police, public works, fire, road commissions and public safety departments that were on the job serving the public.

Watching the broadcast news or reading the print media, we all saw images of people being rescued. If you looked closely you not only saw the citizens in need but the local government employees walking waist deep in water carrying the child, pushing the rescue boat, helping the elderly, filling the sand bag or providing necessary information to assist the public.

Throughout our flood emergency local government was on the job doing what they do best. We saw photos of police officers working side by side with emergency personnel from other communities. Available rescue equipment from municipalities was dispatched wherever it was needed.

During this emergency there were no boundaries, no municipal borders and no limits to the cooperation. If there was a need, it was

fulfilled. It did not matter where the personnel or equipment came from.

Collectively, local government was there when needed and local government answered the call in a professional, efficient and cooperative manner.

We can all be proud of the way this emergency was handled and feel confident in the knowledge that if anything like this happens again, local government will be there to assist our citizens. Job well done!!

John Weiss

LGROW Spring Forum

The 10th Annual Lower Grand River Organizations of Watersheds Spring Forum was a success. It was held at the East Grand Rapids Community Center on Thursday, April 25th with a turnout of 60 guests. This year's speakers discussed local watershed issues along with addressing recent flooding in the Grand Rapids area.

Rodney Stokes, Special Advisor for Place-making to Governor Rick Snyder and former DNR Director came with a message from the Governor to continue to work on watershed issues, saying the governor "knows you can't do everything". Rodney also talked about place making initiatives and the role of our great water resources in this process.

Alan Steinman, PhD, presented

on climate change and water levels. According to Dr. Steinman, although we have recently had huge rainfalls our lake levels are still going to be lower than average. This is due to higher rates of evaporation and a net decline in precipitation over the years.

Mike Lunn gave an overview of the City of Grand Rapids water quality monitoring system and its importance to the community. Water Quality has improved over time and we need to keep up that trend.

Finally, The Grand Rapids Restoration Project was present to give an update on their exciting project for the Grand River. They are still in the planning and testing phase of the project. The project will help restore the river to its natural state.

A special thank you to the Spring Forum planning committee and East Grand Rapids Community Center for their help in planning this event.

*Katherine Collen,
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Rodney Stokes, Special Advisor to Governor Snyder addresses the LGROW Forum.