



GVMC Board Meeting: Final Report on the Street Summit

At the Board of Directors Meeting this morning a final report was given on the Street Summit. Representative Rob VerHeulen, detailed the many positive comments he has received from his colleagues regarding our Street Summit. He was impressed with the information that was provided and the preparation that made the event successful. He told us that others in state government are talking about the event in a very positive manner. Rob felt the Summit achieved our goals of informing our legislators of the need for a long-term and sustainable funding solution for our roads. Rob was pleased to be able to participate.

Next, Walker City Engineer Scott Conners informed the Board of all the participates on his committee that worked on the logistics and organization of the event. The committee was responsible for transportation, speakers, the route, the handout materials and other details. Scott's committee worked to ensure that everything went as planned and that the roads highlighted were representative of the local roads in all municipalities in our region. Many people participated in planning the event and Scott provided a great description of the collaboration that made the event possible.

Steve Warren, Managing Director of the Kent County Road Commission explained to the Board the fiscal restraints his agency has been under and the declining reve-

nues they have experienced since the 1990s. He provided specifics on revenues and expenditures since the last gas tax increase and the specific plans the Kent County Road Commission has for necessary maintenance and improvements to their system. His presentation highlighted the challenges faced by road agencies throughout Michigan and the need for permanent solutions to fund needed maintenance and system-wide enhancements.

Eric DeLong, Deputy City Manager of Grand Rapids talked about the Sustainable Streets Task Force and community-wide effort they have undertaken to analyze the needs and potential solutions for their street system. Eric highlighted the some of the findings of the Task Force including detailed analysis of their needs and plans for the future.

Finally, Andy Johnston and Josh Lunger of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce stressed the importance of finding a long-term solution to the road funding issue. Stating they "normally do not promote tax increases", they see this as a need for investment. By investing in our infrastructure today we can avoid huge expenses and capital needs in the future. They also detailed the participation by Chamber members from Lacks Enterprises and UPS in the Street Summit. Andy and Josh focused on the need for continued infrastructure improvements in order to provide economic opportunities and job creation in our region.



GVMC Members, Business Leaders and Legislators participate in the Street Summit.

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce President Joins GVMC Board

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce President Rick Baker was appointed today to serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors. Baker was selected from a group of very well qualified candidates for the position.

At-Large members bring a unique perspective to the Board and are a valuable asset to GVMC. They are experts in their fields and experienced members of the community. The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce represents 2,700 businesses in the region and is the largest business organization in West Michigan.

Baker recently stated, "We have begun to build a symbiotic relationship with GVMC and I believe my service on the GVMC Board of Directors will only further enhance the partnership." He added, "We are in a unique time in our region's history when a strong, collaborative working relationship between the Grand Rapids Area Chamber and Grand Valley Metro Council is essential to the continued growth and success of our regional economy".