

# District One News

*From your County Commissioner*

News for the citizens of Calhoun County District 1



*Dear Neighbor,*

As your County Commissioner, one of my most important responsibilities is to continue to keep you informed about the issues that affect you and your family. In this summer newsletter, you will find information on the proposed August 3 ballot question on a consolidated 9-1-1 dispatch center, the successful first year of the Calhoun County Youth Council, and information on the new Medicare Prescription Drug Discount card.



County Commissioner Kate Segal

**Thank you** for giving me the opportunity to serve as your County Commissioner. If you need help cutting through the red tape of county government or want to share your concerns, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 781-0923 (office), 979-9767 (home) or via e-mail at [katesegal@hotmail.com](mailto:katesegal@hotmail.com).

Best Wishes,

Kate Segal  
County Commissioner, District 1

## Buyer Beware: Get the Facts on the New Medicare Drug Cards

In May, I hosted another informational forum for District 1 residents. This forum focused on the new Medicare prescription drug discount card that went into effect this summer.

The program marks the start of a historic change: President Bush signed into law the first-ever prescription drug benefit for people with Medicare. Yet many are confused about the Medicare Modernization Act and question whether the law will help or hurt older Americans and people with disabilities when it goes into effect.

Unfortunately, there are no simple answers. To assist area residents, I joined with staff from Burnham Brook in hosting a free public forum to help you and your families better understand this new law's impact.

The Medicare-approved drug discount card is available to all Medicare beneficiaries without outpatient prescription drug coverage; those with limited prescription drug coverage; or those receiving discounted prescriptions that are lower than the discounts offered by Medicare. Private companies may offer the Medicare-approved drug discount cards, but each company can determine the drugs to be included (or excluded) for the discount, and by how much. Providers of the cards must meet certain criteria including: customer service standards; past experience in operating drug discount programs; and a process for handling complaints. Medicare may also limit the fees that can be charged for the discount cards to no more than \$30 a year. Continued next page...



Residents share their questions with Kate.

If you want to discuss a county government issue with Kate, contact her at 979-9767 or via e-mail at [katesegal@hotmail.com](mailto:katesegal@hotmail.com).

**COFFEE**  
*with Kate*

Want more information?  
Have a problem?  
Join Kate for coffee:

Friday, July 30 at 8:00 AM  
**CONVERSATIONS!**  
**COFFEE HOUSE AND CAFÉ**  
691 Capital Avenue, SW

Friday, August 13 at 8:00 AM  
**SWEETWATER'S DONUT MILL**  
2807 Capital Avenue, SW

Friday, September 10 at 8:00 AM  
**MR. DON'S RESTAURANT**  
341 N. 20th Street

**LET'S TALK!**

# You Decide: Improved 9-1-1 Services?

If faced with a life-or-death emergency, reaching help at 9-1-1 is your best chance for a lifeline. You need your call answered quickly and you want help on the way as soon as possible. On Tuesday, August 3, you will be asked to support our emergency personnel with a county-wide, consolidated 9-1-1 system that will ensure Calhoun County has the technology it needs to protect our officers and get you help—fast.

## The Current Situation

Right now, we have three separate 9-1-1 dispatch centers. Each one needs to be upgraded and expanded at a cost of more than \$16 million each, a total of nearly \$50 million. The proposed consolidation will not only update the current technology used in dispatch services, but will also consolidate these operations into one system.

By creating a consolidated system, Calhoun County can increase the range of the new communication system to work throughout the county without “dead spots,” meet new technology needs, and equalize the current pay structure between cities and outlying areas for dispatch services. This system will also allow police, firefighters, and emergency service personnel throughout Calhoun County to communicate with each other, providing more safety measures for our police officers and firefighters.

## The Ballot Request

The estimated cost of this new system is 1.43 mills to pay for \$15 million in capital costs and annual operational costs of \$3.3 million. This means a homeowner with a \$100,000 home would pay approximately \$1.45 a week and the owner of a \$300,000 home would pay approximately \$4.29 a week. This estimate also includes

ongoing maintenance and technology needs to ensure that voters will not be asked to pay more again as technology changes.

To help ease the burden on you, the county is working with other area counties to secure federal funding for this system. If Calhoun County receives those grants, the Board of Commissioners has ensured that those dollars will be used to reduce the cost to you by lowering the millage. The county is also looking into additional Homeland Security Grants to further decrease the cost. In fact, Calhoun County has already dedicated \$126,000 to the purchase of new radios if the millage passes, lowering the total needed from the taxpayer.

This proposal will be on the Tuesday, August 3 ballot. If you have any questions or want further information, please feel free to contact me.

## Medicare... continued

Proper due diligence is the best way to ensure that you are saving money on your prescription drugs. With the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services approving more than 48 general discount cards, finding the right card for your specific needs may seem challenging.

For more information on the

Medicare Discount Drug cards or the new benefit beginning in 2006, call the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) toll-free at 1-800-803-7174. MMAP is an independent resource to help Michigan's residents make informed benefit decisions. You can also contact me at 979-9767 or at [katesegal@hotmail.com](mailto:katesegal@hotmail.com).

Have an  
idea for a  
forum?



Want more information about  
an issue facing our county?

*Call Kate!*

979-9767

E-mail: [katesegal@hotmail.com](mailto:katesegal@hotmail.com)

## Calhoun County's future

looks bright with the strong leadership and enthusiasm from the Calhoun County Youth Council. In recognition of their successful first year, the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners honored the inaugural class of the Council at its June meeting.

I developed the Council last year to help bring a voice to the youth of our county. The 13 members of the Youth Council took on the monumental task of taking a concept and creating a vibrant, strong force in our county.

The Youth Council's first year was filled with many accomplishments. They researched successful programs that could help lower teen pregnancy rates in our communities and created a presentation on the need to address teen pregnancy in their schools. They also played a key role in planning the annual Substance Abuse Coordinating Council Youth Forum in February, making it the first year that students from through-

out Calhoun County participated. The Council's latest project is collecting coats, hats, gloves and boots for the county's juvenile home. Next year, the Council plans on continuing its work on

For more information on the Youth Council or to donate winter clothing items to the juvenile home project, please contact me at 979-9767 or at [katesegal@hotmail.com](mailto:katesegal@hotmail.com).

## Building Tomorrow's Leaders

preventing teen pregnancy and with the juvenile home as well as organizing a county-wide event geared toward the youth in our community.

It has been an honor and a great privilege to have worked with this outstanding group of students.



### The Calhoun County Youth Council inaugural members:

Front Row: Amanda Tucker, Vice-Chair, Battle Creek Central; Emily Young, Battle Creek Central; Daniel Garland, Pennfield; Efrain Merchan, Lakeview. Back row: Garrett Brown, Albion; Jessica Biniacki, Athens; Amy Baker, Marshall; Nicole Donley, Bellevue; Rachel Goheen, Tekonsha; Eric Roth, Chair, Harper Creek; Morgan Davis, Secretary, Harper Creek; Nicholas Hildenbrand, Tekonsha; (not pictured: Brian Rutledge, Lakeview)