

From The President:



Let's start this article with a question. What in the world happened to summer? It doesn't seem possible that it is gone already. They always said the older you get the quicker it goes and they are right. Now I'm trying to find time to hunt and I got a late start on that part of my life. Oh well...life moves on. I hope you all had some time to enjoy your 2019 summer.

MSTA did a billboard promotion called "Septic Smart Week" and had sixty billboards throughout Michigan's highways and byways. We have heard great reviews from members and so we hope this has generated some work for our association members. These ads were to be up for a minimum of one month and some will be longer if the billboard doesn't get contracted out. I saw one October 12th on M-20 just outside of Mt. Pleasant. If we continue to get good reviews on this venture, we can repeat it in the future. I'd like to thank Lamar Advertising for a "Job well done!" on the designing of our billboards.

It was good to see you all who made the fall meeting in Mt. Pleasant. We had a great turn out and enjoyed a great lunch. Thanks to Mike Thomas for not receiving the email about not having a chili contest and making up a batch of his secret chili. It went really well with the Jimmy John's subs. Thank you Karlyn for taking care of all the scheduling, reporting and guiding us through the day. You are tops in my book! Also a big thanks to the General Agency for sponsoring the fall meeting again. The General Agency rents the Deerfield Township Hall and purchases gift baskets to raffle off. Thanks Mick and crew.

We would like to thank Senator Rick Outman for coming and explaining what is going on in Lansing and for listening to us on our opinion about the draft for a "Sanitary Code" in the State of Michigan (and to have the guts to tell us he went 30 years without pumping his septic tank). He needs to get educated about septic systems and our environmental practices and public health in the State. Especially living on one of Michigan's waterways. For shame!

I hope the non-members reading this will take interest in joining our association. We have done a lot of things to help the industry such as Septic Smart Week promotion, legislative activities and continuing education classes, all of which has benefitted your businesses. The knowledge you get being around folks in the same industry as you is priceless. Please take the time and effort to talk with a MSTA member and join one of the oldest Associations in the State of Michigan.

Hope to see you all for the January conference and MSTA's banquet.

Submitted by: Dave W. Snyder (MSTA President)

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Senator Rick Outman



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Lindsay Leh & Jason Clark from the General Agency Company



Class Session



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Rodrigo Meirelles – Williams & Bay Pumping,
Karlyn Wickham – MSTA Executive Officer



Class Session



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2020 MICHIGAN ON-SITE WASTEWATER CONFERENCE

January 14-16, 2020



Please join us January 14-16, 2020 for the 69th Michigan Onsite Wastewater Conference, an annual three-day educational conference for the industry including septic tank service providers/pumpers, portable toilet service companies, local public health, engineers, consultants, installation contractors and other interested parties. Participants will learn about the latest in onsite wastewater industry trends, regulatory changes, wastewater management options and the latest technologies. Organized as a joint venture by the Michigan Septic Tank Association (MSTA), the Michigan Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (MOWRA), the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Environmental Health Association (MEHA) and Michigan State University (MSU) to educate those involved in the onsite wastewater field.

“Onsite 2020 – A Clear Vision for the Future” Program Schedule (subject to change)

Tuesday 1/14/2020 – 6 CSE total for the day
Registration starts at 7:45am

	Track 1 – Lincoln Room	Track 2 - Auditorium	Track 3 – Rooms 104 A & B
8:30	The Onsite Crystal Ball	Safe work Practices for Excavations and Confined Spaces	All Day Workshop (See below) “Improved Techniques for WW Treatment and Dispersal” (No CSE’s)
9:30	Septic Systems on Great Lake Coasts	Federal & State Motor Carrier Regulations	
10:30	Demystifying Part 31 & Part 22 Rules	Learn What Impacts the Value of a Septic Business	There is an additional \$25 fee for this workshop.
11:30	Lunch	Lunch	
12:30	The 1994 MI Criteria for Subsurface Sewage Disposal	Integrity of the Industry	WORKSHOP Continues until 3:30
1:30	EGLE Groundwater Permitting Process	DOT Critical Driver Compliance	
2:30	The 2013 “draft” MI Criteria for On-Site WW Treatment	Portable Toilet Industry	

In addition to the above schedule, EGLE will have one-on-one meetings with those interested. Sign up for your 30-minute session when you arrive. There will also be a Mobile Truck Simulator located outside for viewing and demonstrations.

The exhibit hall will be open from 3:00 to 5:30 with a light buffet dinner and cash giveaways from the vendors.

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Wednesday 1/15/2020– 6 CSE total for the day
Registration starts at 7:45am

8:30	Introduction – Big Ten Room		
8:35	Keynote Speaker: James Bell, Past President of NOWRA / Retired Executive Vice-President Bio-Microbics		
10:00	Break		
10:15	Fenner Nature Center Treatment and Reuse Systems Liz Roxberry, Fenner Nature Center Larry Stephens, Stephens Consulting Services, PC		
11:15	Break in Exhibit Hall		
12:00	Lunch		
	Track 1 - Lincoln Room	Track 2 - Auditorium	Track 3 - Rooms 104 A&B
1:00	Advances in Microbial testing for Freshwater	Website Tools – Office Preview for Site Evaluations	Fenner Nature Center Field Trip Group #1 (No CSE's)
2:00	Break in Exhibit Hall		
2:30	EGLE Question & Answer Session	USDA Rural Development Financing for Rural Sewer Systems	Fenner Nature Center Field Trip Group #2 (No CSE's)

Fenner Nature Center Field Trips:

There will be 2 trips going to the Fenner Nature Center. You must sign up at the registration desk if you would like to go. There are no CSE's offered for this trip.

Association Meeting:

The MSTA Annual Meeting will take place in the Auditorium at 3:30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. This is worth 1.5 CSE's.

Social Hour: Please make plans to attend the Social Hour in the Big Ten A starting at 5:30.

MSTA Banquet: The MSTA Banquet starts at 6:30, ticket required, and will include a raffle with some great prizes. See a list of prizes in this newsletter.

Exhibits: The exhibit room will be open most of the day, so please visit the vendors who help keep the cost of our conference down with their booth fees plus there will be cash giveaways in the afternoon.

Location: The conference will be held at the Kellogg Center at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Harrison Road in East Lansing. The address is: 219 South Harrison, East Lansing 48824. The conference site features spacious meeting facility and excellent overnight accommodations. Parking in the ramp south of center is included in the registration.

Exhibits: With over 30 exhibitors in the hall, this will be an ideal place to exchange ideas and discuss new products &/or services. Representatives from all major suppliers will be present Tuesday afternoon from 3:00 to 5:30 and Wednesday from 8:30 to 4:00. Social hour on Wednesday will start at 5:30 in the exhibit hall in the north end of the Big Ten Hall.

Registration:

Full Conference: \$150 per person (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday)

One-day Fee: \$65

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Thursday 1/16/2020 – 5.5 CSE total for the day
Registration starts at 7:45am

Roundtable Discussions – Big Ten Rooms			
8:15	1. Health Care Reform Update 2. Understanding Your Credit Report 3. Pumper Stories 4. GIS Mapping 5. Ask the Pumper 6. Why Watertight Septic Tanks are Important 7. USDA Rural Development Financing for Rural Sewer Systems 8. System Selection Based On-Site Needs and Code Requirements 9. Land Application Septage Management 10. Tools that Can Help You Make Additional Profit in Servicing Septic Systems		
11:15	Break	Break	Break
	Track 1 – Lincoln Room	Track 2 - Auditorium	Track 3 – Outside
11:30	Putting On-site Systems on Bedrock	Innovative Septic System Accessories	Mobile Truck Simulator (No CSE's)
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00	Harmful Algal Blooms – What Does the Science Say About Onsite Systems and HABs	Portable Restroom & Installer Panel Discussion	Mobile Truck Simulator (No CSE's)
3:00		Prize Drawing in Auditorium Must be present to WIN	

Conference registration includes lunch and snacks at breaks. REGISTRATION for the conference is **REQUIRED**. The registration deadline is **December 13, 2019**. There will be a \$15 late fee after **December 13, 2019**. After December 22, 2019 the late fee increases to \$25. Walk-ins will pay \$25 late fee.

Lodging: Arrangements have been made with the Kellogg Center for a special conference room rate of \$103 for a single or double, plus taxes. Lodging reservations must be received by **December 8, 2019** to assure the room. After that date, rooms will be on a space available basis. Kellogg Center has great amenities including the excellent State Room restaurant and the Spartan Pub. Room reservations can be made by call 800-875-5090 or online at www.kelloggcenter.com using group code 2020ONSITE

MSTA Banquet: The annual Michigan Septic Tank Association Banquet will be held the evening of Wednesday January 15th at 6:30 and everyone is invited. Each current MSTA member is entitled to (2) discounted pre-registration tickets at \$10 each. Additional tickets for members and non-members will be \$30 each and can be purchased with registration. Please note MSTA members **MUST** reserve their discounted banquet tickets on the registration form. Please contact Karlyn Wickham at executiveofficer@msta.biz if you need to check MSTA membership status.

Continuing Septage Education: Licensed Septic Haulers will have the opportunity to earn up to 17.5 continuing septage education credits at the 2020 conference. Obtaining 30 CSE hours is required by all haulers to meet the license renewal requirements. The Continuing Septage Education Enrollment is now included on the Conference Registration Flyer which will be mailed in November and posted on the MSTA website at www.msta.biz.

Hope to see everyone there!!

MSTA Annual Raffle Tickets On Sale Now

We are happy to be hosting the 7th Annual Raffle at the MSTA Banquet during the 2020 Onsite Wastewater Conference in January. Below is a list of prizes you could win:

- 1st: Ruger GoWild 450 Bushmaster or \$750 Cash
- 2nd: SigSaver 365 9mm Pistol or \$450 Cash
- 3rd: Winchester XPR 270 or \$400 Cash
- 4th: TriStar O/U 12 Gauge Setter or \$400 Cash
- 5th: Winchester SXP 12 Gauge 3 1/2 Camopump or \$300 Cash
- 6th: Traditions Pursuit Muzzleloader 50 cal or \$200 Cash
- 7th: Savage B-Mag 17 WSM or \$175 Cash
- 8th: Ruger LCPII 380 Pistol (black) or \$150 Cash

2019 Raffle Ticket Sponsor:

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Thank you to KERKSTRA PORTABLE RESTROOM SERVICES for sponsoring the raffle tickets!

Tickets are 3 for \$25 and you do not have to be present to win. They would make a good present for the deer hunters on your Christmas list or just for yourself! Contact Chris Sloan if you want to purchase tickets. Call Chris at 989-845-6280 right away as the tickets will go quickly. If there are any left, they will be available for purchase at the conference.

Sincerely,

MSTA Raffle Committee

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HOW TO NAVIGATE THE MSTA WEBSITE

www.msta.org



*Karlyn Wickham
MSTA Executive Officer*

HOW TO LOG IN TO YOUR PERSONAL PORTAL OF THE MSTA WEBSITE

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz

If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password. Follow the instructions on this email to log in.

GETTING YOUR CSE CREDITS OFF FROM THE MSTA WEBSITE

As you already know, we have a new website and database system to track your membership and CSE credits. The old website contained all your CSE Credits prior to August of 2017. If you don’t have records of your credits prior to August 2017, you will not be able to get them by logging onto the website. Instead you will have to send an email to the address below to request a report of those.

The new website contains your CSE Credits from August 2017 through now. To get a record of the credits you received from the Fall 2017 meeting or the 2018 Michigan Onsite WW Conference, follow the steps below:

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “other information” tab
4. Click on “Prior Event Registrations”
5. Find the class you just attended and click on the symbol with the checkmark inside the square
6. A copy of your transcript will appear showing the credits you earned by going to the meeting
7. Print this page and keep it for your records to be turned into the DEQ when you renew your license.

Please save these instructions for future use. Please also save your username and password somewhere safe as well so that you can log onto the MSTA website again. By the way, your username and password can be changed to something you remember more easily by clicking on “Member Information / change username and password” (right next to the “other information” tab).

CHANGING CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “Membership Information” tab
4. Click on “change contact / profile”
5. Change your profile information
6. BE SURE TO PRESS SUBMIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE

ADDING EMPLOYEES OR ADDITIONAL PEOPLE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “Membership Information” tab
4. Click on “additional individuals attached to this membership”
5. Click on “add an additional member”
6. Fill out the information about this member
7. Do this for every person you would like to add to your membership



Legislative Report for MSTA

Judy Augenstein, Legislative Consultant



MSTA September 2019

The Legislature resumed holding regular session days this week and the two issues front and center were the budget and road funding. Wednesday Governor Gretchen Whitmer accused legislative Republican leaders of “screwing around” with the 2019-20 fiscal year budget by failing to publicly announce a proposal on how to generate enough new funding for roads. Republicans responded that Ms. Whitmer insists on a 45-cent per gallon fuel tax increase that has no support.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) said Senate Republicans would proceed with sending a 2019-20 fiscal year budget to Ms. Whitmer without a plan to raise funds for roads, which he said would be handled separately, but House speaker Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) did not sound prepared to go that route.

Throughout the summer, Governor Whitmer has criticized the Republican legislative majorities on roads and their decision to adjourn for the summer after June 20, returning to the Capitol this week after a nine-week recess. On Wednesday she called a news conference in which she said, “It’s time for the Republican-led Legislature to get serious, to get back to work, to stop screwing around and to get it done.”

In March, Ms. Whitmer proposed a 45-cent per gallon fuel tax hike to generate \$2.5 billion. That would raise funding for roads by \$2.1 billion in the 2019-20 fiscal year with the remainder replacing the General Fund money former Governor Rick Snyder and Republican lawmakers appropriated to boost road funding. Returning that General Fund money toward its traditional usage in the higher education budget would then allow the return of some \$500 million from the School Aid Fund used to back-fill the higher education budget to be used for K-12 schools and provide a substantial increase there.

The comments from Ms. Whitmer and responses by Senate Majority Mike Shirkey and House Speaker Lee Chatfield underscored that the deadline to have a 2019-20 fiscal year budget in place by midnight September 30 is fast approaching, the past two months flew by with no apparent progress and the possibility of a partial government shutdown starting October 1 is real.

One of the key points of dispute is that Republicans have not publicly announced their proposal to add funding for roads. Further, there’s been no clear indication as to how much new spending on roads the Republican leaders support.

“Has the public seen a Republican plan? Or is it just we’re having these quiet conversations behind closed doors,” Gov. Whitmer said. “All of these little snippets and rumors from around town are not a plan. And that’s what I’m calling on the Legislature to bring.”

The governor later added: “Saying no is not leadership. Coming up with an alternative, publicly talking about it and saying this is how we can meet the needs of the people of this state, that’s what leadership looks like. That’s what we haven’t seen yet.”

Chatfield and Shirkey again mostly declined to discuss this week how they would generate more funding for roads

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or how much they think should be spent. But there is one part of their plan that has been public if still not fully formulated.

Speaker Chatfield and House Republicans have called for removing the sales tax on fuel and replacing it with a revenue-neutral fuel tax that would be earmarked for roads, unlike the sales tax which mostly goes to schools and local governments. That would raise about \$850 million more for roads without a net tax increase.

The problem with that proposal is replacing the \$627 million to schools as well as the money to local governments. Majority Leader Shirkey backs a plan to sell \$10 billion in bonds off the teacher pension system that would reduce the amount the state annually pays out of the School Aid Fund to make payments covering the unfunded liability in the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System. Supporters say the savings, combined with extending the repayment period by another 10 years and investment earnings, would be enough to make the payments and thus relieve the School Aid Fund of that obligation, replacing the lost revenue from the sales tax on fuel.

While Majority Leader Shirkey has repeatedly endorsed the use of pension obligation bonds, Speaker Chatfield has yet to publicly embrace the idea. House Republicans have instead covered some of the loss of funding to K-12 schools through shifting money around within the budget, largely through providing a nearly flat budget to higher education.

Asked why the combo of the sales tax shift and bonding off the teacher pension system (or only extending the payment period on the unfunded liability with no bonding) is not a serious proposal in her mind, Governor Whitmer said, “the same reason that Rick Snyder rejected those ideas. They’re fiscally bad ideas. And it’s taking money out of education to fill potholes. It’s not a real solution.” She said both MPSERS scenarios are “off the table.”

The Senate Majority Leader and Speaker of the House appear set on presenting a budget to Governor Whitmer without a long-term road funding plan while continuing to address the issue separately, which could have the Legislature moving toward a showdown with just over 30 days remaining before the end of the current fiscal year. The budget battle and the issue of funding roads continues.....

Rep. Abdullah Hammoud, D-Dearborn is crafting legislation to create a Statewide Sanitary Code and will forward MSTA the proposed bill as soon as it is available for review. Over the summer, I have been working to develop a relationship with Rep. Hammoud and his chief of staff Joe Sullivan. Former Rep. Ken Goike worked with Joe Sullivan and now deceased Rep. Julie Plawecki on the issue before Ken was term limited; and that activity has given MSTA instant credibility with Rep. Hammoud and Joe.

MSTA October 2019

Governor Gretchen Whitmer used her line-item veto pen to wipe out 147 different spending items in the 2019 - 20 budget totaling \$950 million, including \$375 million for roads and \$128 million in the K-12 budget that Gov. Whitmer called “pork” and, in something of a surprise, all funding for the Pure Michigan tourism promotion program was also wiped out.

The Pure Michigan tourism funding in the 2018-19 fiscal year was funded at \$36 million. In her budget proposal the governor had originally called for a cut of \$5 million gross to the program. The conference report as passed by

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the Legislature rejected her proposal and instead had added \$1 million gross funding for Pure Michigan, then came Whitmer's veto pen.....

“The Republican budgets were a complete mess, and today I used my executive powers to clean them up to protect Michiganders,” Ms. Whitmer said. “The state's budget is a reflection of our values, and make no mistake that public health and safety, access to health care, and protecting classroom spending is more important than handouts to lobbyists and vendors.”

All of the budgets were filed with the Office of the Great Seal by 7:40 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 30, officially averting a partial government shutdown that would have commenced at midnight absent the enactment of spending authority for the new fiscal year. Only two budgets, community colleges and the Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs did not contain a line-item veto.

The State Administrative Board met on Tuesday and quickly approved \$576 million in budget transfers from one department to another to shore up Whitmer's proposed Year 2019-2020 budget. The unprecedented move of using the Administrative Board to transfer monies from one department to another was last used in 1991 when Governor John Engler was at an impasse with the legislature over his budget request.

Ms. Whitmer's use of a line-item veto for \$375 million in one-time funding for roads was difficult to decipher in the absence of additional information Monday night. The Legislature added \$400 million General Fund to the Department of Transportation budget for roads, so what happened to the other \$25 million was unclear. But it appeared that the surviving \$25 million was for the local bridge program. The rest – \$132 million for roads and bridges and \$243 million for four specific bridge projects was vetoed.

The Republican push to include more money from the General Fund for roads – on top of the \$468 million in income tax revenue already required to be rerouted from the General Fund to roads – prompted Ms. Whitmer to break off budget negotiations in September. She had given up on a vow to make a long-term road funding plan part of the 2019-20 budget and she, House Speaker Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) agreed to pause road funding talks until after the budget.

In her March budget proposal, Ms. Whitmer eliminated the \$1.5 million for the algebra tool, which was put into the budget originally for the 2017 fiscal year after then-Rep. Tim Kelly was pitched on the Algebra Nation program when he chaired the budget by the company that made the program.

Other programs in the K-12 budget that Ms. Whitmer either did not include or eliminated in her March budget proposal:

- A grant to provide information technology education opportunities to students (\$2.3 million),
- A Detroit pre-college engineering program (\$400,000),
- A career exploration pilot program (\$80,000),
- A grant to the Michigan Industrial Technology Education Society to provide industrial and technological education and workforce preparation for students and professional development opportunities and support for teachers (\$50,000),

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- An additional online mathematics tool, early Spanish language learning tool and a literacy instruction tool (\$3 million), and
- Funding to reimburse nonpublic schools for the cost of various requirements (\$250,000).

Republicans criticized Ms. Whitmer's budget actions particularly that she vetoed most of the additional one-time funding toward roads. House Appropriations Chair Rep. Shane Hernandez (R-Port Huron) said she is attempting "a power grab that will hurt Michigan families."

Rep. Jack O'Malley (R-Lake Ann) Chair, House Transportation Committee said Whitmer is vetoing money for roads and favoring a plan that hurts northern Michigan. Speaker Chatfield said the entire impasse was "silly" and that the governor "wasted every-body's time and manufactured a crisis out of thin air."

Rep. O'Malley said Gov. Whitmer was willing to turn down \$375 million in additional dollars for roads because her 45-cent per gallon fuel tax increase proposal was dead with the Republican majority. The \$375 million, though, was indeed one-time money and a fraction of the \$2.5 billion in annual new spending the governor was calling for. Senate Republicans quickly took aim at Ms. Whitmer on Twitter, mainly at her line-item veto of one-time road funding.

I have forwarded the first draft of legislation to require a Statewide Sanitary Code to the executive committee for review. Rep. Abdullah Hammond, D-Dearborn has resurrected the issue and has requested MSTA input. I will bring copies of the first draft to the upcoming October board meeting along with new legislative directories for our members. Senator Rick Outman, R-Six Lakes, Chair, Senate Environment Committee plans to attend the October meeting along with Rep. Roger Hauck, R-Mt. Pleasant. I have requested they give their opinion and suggestions on a Statewide Sanitary Code.

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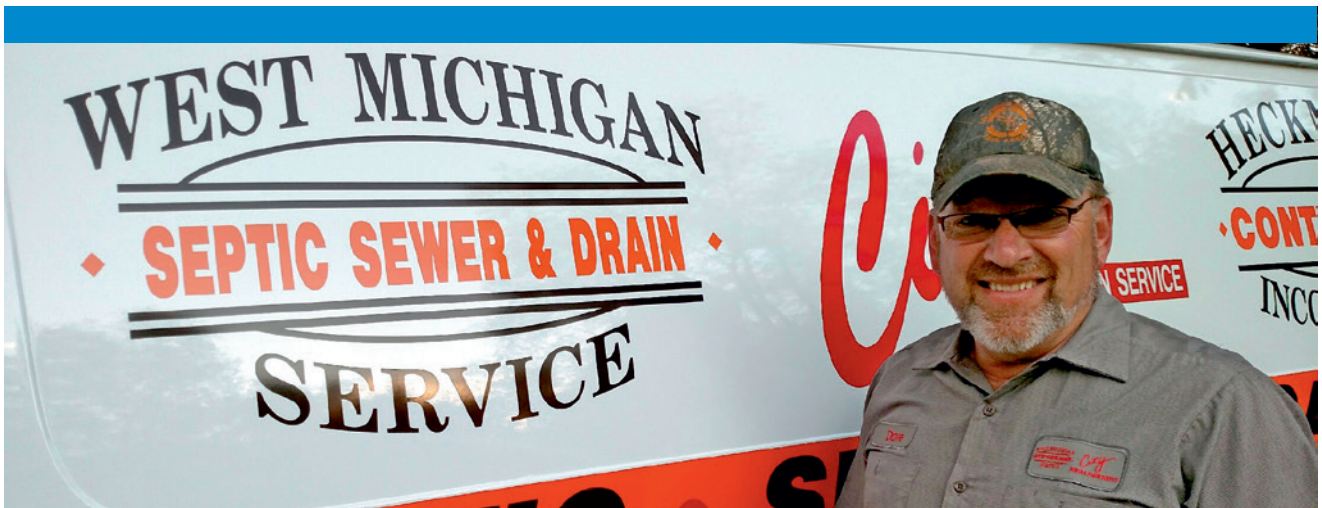
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Silently I Stand

I Stand silently waving in the breeze, a symbol of freedom, and democracy and a show of patriotism.

Do you remember what my colors stand for? The red for hardiness ,valor and bloodshed, the blue for vigilance, justice, and preservation; the white for purity and innocence, and my stars to represent symbols of heaven and the goals for men and women to reach to remember those things.

I stand and I watch. I watch and some of you look up and see me as a symbol of freedom and democracy and still look at me as a symbol of those things.

I have seen tears of all kinds all over the world.

But now here in my own county my stars are turning into tears because you have forgotten what I mean and represent.

Some of you misrepresent what I stand for and have soiled the white strips of purity and innocence and some lack the color blue for justice. For remember Lady Justice, wears a blindfold for a reason, she holds the scales of justice for a reason. She represents our law system being fair and balanced. Innocent until proven guilty. Justice for all and not just one. That is why the Blue is so big, it holds all the stars for all the states. So all states are included.

When Francis Scott Key wrote a song about me, did you ever think it was because he saw the hope in my stars, and knew that they would reach their goal and be triumphant? Or was it the red in my stripes for hardiness to go on? Or the bright white of the stripes reminding him that we were fighting for our innocence and purity to be a free nation.

When our Nation was asked go overseas to help in WWII, men and women of all nationalities and religions came to the call. Proud to serve because they knew what our county stood for, what I the mighty **RED, WHITE** and **BLUE** stood for.

I then saw several kinds of tears.

I saw tears of joy from the both the soldiers and the liberated villages when they saw my solders come in waving my colors **proudly**. I saw the hope in their eyes when my solders came in to the village, knowing what my colors meant. Tears of fear turn to tears of joy when they saw my soldiers and the flag roll in because they knew what I stood for.

Freedom was fought for. A belief in freedom at all cost and the belief that all living humans have that

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right. The right to religious freedom, the right to a democracy. This right to not be prosecuted for a certain religion or nationality.

I saw the tears of joy when the war ended in both men and women. The pride swell in my beloved county I am so proud to represent. A county that is so bless we have the hand print of God.

And when we say God it is you the public that assume which religion it is referring to. That it why it is in the constitution that we have freedom from religious persecution.

This is what our soldiers fought for in the war of the world's greatest generation. And what they continue to fight for. Do you know; do you care?

I watch and see your tears as I'm laid over a casket as a soothing blanket for men and women in service instead brought home to final resting place. Hoping to bring them and their family a final comfort for the great service they provided For God, family, and country.

When you fly me at half-staff it's my way of mourning too. When men and women go into service for our country for our city, County, state and country they honored what I represent: Democracy, Freedom, Liberty, Justice, in the right for the pursuit of happiness.

Sadly my stars have become tears, for all those who have forgotten what we were founded on. For those who have forgotten the constitution and the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and our fundamental laws. Our country has become divided instead of United. We are to be one country under God, indivisible, with Liberty and justice for all; that is our pledge. You've taken that out of schools so you can forget about me.

I once was something to be proud of; did you forget? I represent you the American people. I am your flag. I should be flown proudly in every yard or on every house. Don't abandoned me; don't abandoned our fundamental foundation of which we stand for.

I, like you, have gone through changes but my core meaning is still the same. We all have evolved since 1776. Our styles have changed but our core values used to be the same. You have learned from your mistakes. Those that were victims are now survivors and have and can create a legacy if they choose and be a victim no more. You have that choice here in this beautiful county of the U.S.A. you can start over if you have the desire and determination.

My stars have becomes 50 tears as I watch a country divided over politicians that sully my white stripes for the purity they represent. They try to tip the stars to one side in my flag and make my blue that stands for justice tilted.

Remember when my flag flew outside your house year round. Now I am only a decoration. I should be on the outside of your house and your book of faith should be in it. When we were taken away from the home the country changed. Patriotism changed. Never forget what I stand for, what this county stands for. Don't let my stars become tears for a dream of for fathers lost.

Fly the American flag once again for freedom & Democracy and every freedom I stand for.

For God, Country, Family and the American way.

Be the silent fighter with a flying flag on your house and be sure to vote. And bring back the American Way. Make being proud to be an American mean something. Make your flag mean something.

-- Misty D.



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