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WAYNE COUNTY EXECUTIVE WARREN C. EVANS BRINGS FAIR FUNDING SUMMIT TO WEST MICHIGAN

Evans holds meeting to build consensus around funding fix for local municipalities

Well-respected research and policy institutions partner with County Executive on new initiative

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans' **Investing in Michigan Communities: Finding Fair Funding for Strong, Successful Communities** statewide tour continues July 19 with a stop in Grand Rapids. Mayors, township supervisors, commissioners, city council members and other decision-makers are scheduled to join Executive Evans at the Kent County Courthouse for the second of seven summits aimed at identifying viable solutions to Michigan's broken model for funding local governments.

"For too long local leaders have been divided by geography when we often face similar challenges," said Executive Evans. "I am excited not only to build off the success of our first summit, but to also forge a real partnership with west Michigan communities on the critical issue of funding communities."

In May, leaders from Wayne County cities and townships joined with Executive Evans in Trenton, Mich. for the first summit designed to educate participants on the history of Michigan's existing local funding system, hear stories of how the current model is hurting local communities, examine past proposals to fix the system and to discuss possible solutions. Grand Rapids is the second stop on the funding tour with stops in the Upper Peninsula, Lansing, Traverse City, and Flint planned for later this year. A final seventh summit, planned for Southeast Michigan, will feature the findings from the previous summits along with some of the recommended solutions.

At each event, a different local official will present their perspective about the local funding model. Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss is the featured elected official at the July 19 summit. Additionally, Executive Evans has assembled a team of well-respected research and policy institutions, many of whom have already been exploring solutions for improving local finance, to join him on the tour. They are: Michigan State University Extension Center for Local Government Finance and Policy, the Michigan Municipal League (MML), Citizens Research Council of Michigan (CRC), Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).



“We are seeking the best solutions to fix local funding,” said Executive Evans. “Municipalities are finding that the cost cutting measures they have implemented are not enough to meet the long-term needs of their communities. It is a struggle for many to properly fund basic services like police, fire, road and infrastructure repairs.”

“Michigan’s current system to fund local governments does not support strong, successful communities. Through these summits I am working with local decision makers and think tanks to build consensus around an agenda that provides fair funding to Michigan communities,” said Executive Evans.

Executive Evans initially raised the issue during his State of the County Address this past March when he called the existing system “broken” and said it “*threatens the financial stability of counties and local municipalities.*”

The remaining **Investing in Michigan Communities: Finding Fair Funding for Strong, Successful Communities** summits will invite government leaders representing the counties, cities, townships, and villages near the summit site. The remainder of the summit tour schedule, which is subject to change, is as follows:

- July 2016 – Grand Rapids
- August 2016 – Upper Peninsula
- September 2016 – Lansing
- October 2016 – Traverse City
- November 2016 – Flint
- January 2017 – Southeast Michigan

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