



The State of the Township, 2013

**By
Timothy J. Braun,
Supervisor**

Saginaw Charter Township

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Moving Forward and Growing Saginaw Township

Good afternoon! It's great to be a part of this special STBA event every year and celebrate the success of our local businesses. I also enjoy reporting the State of the Township and sharing my optimism for the future of our community. Thank you for attending today!

I want to acknowledge my fellow Township Board members for their hard work and dedication as we work together to set the broad policies needed to move our community forward. Once again I would also like to thank our Manager, Rob Grose, for leading our department heads and staff in providing high quality services each and every day. As you all know, Saginaw Township is known for its well run government for several reasons.

The title of today's address, "Moving Forward and Growing Saginaw Township", reflects the philosophy that has always been the foundation of our township government – moving forward. I have been a part of Saginaw Township government for 29 years, and we have never accepted standing still/standing pat. In fact, we have done just the opposite. Our Board members, manager, department heads, and employees have always worked to move our community forward, with an emphasis on improving the services the Township provides. As a result, our Township team is proud of its work ethic and rightfully so.

To begin with, the Township has always made sure that our employees have been provided the highest level of education and training. Many of our positions require specialized certifications, and we make sure those are obtained and often exceeded. A number of our staff members also belong to state and local professional organizations that emphasize being the best. These organizations also provide extended educational opportunities which benefit our employees.

As you can imagine, many of the services we provide require the use of the latest equipment and technology. As the Township has grown and the services we provide have expanded, we have budgeted to make sure we have the tools and equipment to get the job done. We have focused on increasing the use of technology within all our departments which makes us more efficient.

Another key to our success is the strong involvement of our employees in planning and decision making. All are encouraged to participate in suggesting ways to improve the way we deliver services to our residents. This is done formally while participating on one of our ad hoc committees and in biweekly staff meetings, or informally while working with other staff members. This creates a positive work environment which makes a more efficient operation. All of this lays the foundation for our local government to be a key part of growing our community.

This afternoon I am going to share some very specific facts about several of our departments that I believe are essential to moving Saginaw Township forward. I begin by sharing some of the basic yet fundamental services we provide as a part of our Department of Public Services operation. Its director, Mr. Sonny Grunwell, leads a staff of 41 full-time and 25 seasonal employees. They are responsible for 250 miles of water main which provides water to 14,339 customers. His employees provide administrative support for these customers and monitor usage on all the water meters, as well as providing service to them. They maintain 2,563 fire hydrants and a 750,000 gallon water storage facility. In regard to our sewer system, they are responsible for 185 miles of sewer main including 11 wastewater pumping stations. A highly trained staff operates our 6.5 million gallons per day wastewater treatment facility. They also maintain a 4.9 million gallon sewer overflow retention basin. The maintenance of this infrastructure is crucial in providing service to our residents and businesses, as well as making our community attractive to prospective businesses.

In addition, our DPS staff maintains 7 buildings on 50 acres. They monitor our closed, 40 acre landfill and its state/federal licensed wetland collection and treatment system. Our crews maintain the grounds and playground equipment at 15 parks on 225 acres. They have 275 acres of grass to cut, some weekly and the rest bi-weekly. Skilled technicians maintain our entire fleet of 154 vehicles and 42 pieces of equipment. In addition, workers maintain 48 miles of sidewalk on our primary roads throughout the Township and plow them as needed during the winter months. All this work is so important in keeping Saginaw Township a very attractive place to live and do business.

Providing strong public safety is another essential piece as we work to move our community forward. Chief Jim Peterson leads our Fire Department made up of 1 part-time and 6 full-time staff members and 85 on-call fire fighters. Emergency calls are down 13% from 807 in 2011 to 703 in 2012. Much of this can be attributed to the hard work of our fire inspectors as they work with our local businesses and assisted living homes on updating their fire alarm systems and providing educational programs to residents and staff. In 2012, our fire inspectors conducted 530 on-site inspections. They held 75 meetings with contractors and reviewed 176 construction plans which included 54 fire suppression systems and 61 fire alarm systems. Their community educational programs are also very important in reducing the threat of fire. Last year 139 programs reaching 2,500 people were presented in our schools, businesses, and in our senior living homes. We know that all of this work reduces the number of accidental fires.

Our fire fighters responded to last year's 703 runs from three modern fire stations strategically located across our community. They participated in 4,882 hours of training and spent an additional 2,411 hours on apparatus and station maintenance, off-site educational opportunities, and station meetings.

All of this hard work and training keeps our community moving forward. It keeps our current residents and businesses safe but also makes a big difference in attracting new businesses to our community. For example, having a strong water supply system and highly trained, professional fire fighters with up to date and well maintained fire trucks and equipment, earned us an ISO rating of 4 which provides our community very good insurance rates.

We are very proud of the police officers and civilian staff members of our Police Department for all the hard work they have done and continue to do on a daily basis to keep our community safe. Chief Don Pussehl and his two lieutenants lead a department of just 43 sworn officers. Saginaw Township has seen a growth in population over the past twenty years and now has 40,840 residents, yet crime has decreased.

The FBI annually reviews and certifies crime statistics for communities across the country. These statistics are divided into categories. Part 1 Crimes include Violent Crimes Against Persons: homicide, criminal sexual conduct, robbery, and felonious assault; and Property Crimes Against Persons: burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson. The certified FBI statistics we have from 1991 through 2011 show that our community had 2,010 Part 1 Crimes in 1991 and just 1,050 in 2011. This is remarkable given all the ways greater Saginaw has changed over the same period of time.

I believe this shows that our police officers are hard working and that they are working together as a well coordinated team. The Patrol Division is made up of 21 officers and 5 sergeants who provide emergency response 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A typical shift has just 5 officers and 1 sergeant on duty yet they maintain an excellent response time.

These emergency calls require considerable investigation and evaluation before many are prosecuted by the 6 detectives assigned to our Investigations Division. These detectives also investigate and prosecute auto theft cases. Another key component of this division is the Crime Prevention Unit. A command sergeant leads this unit which is comprised of 2 undercover surveillance officers, 3 crime prevention officers, a school resource officer, and a detective assigned to the BAYANET drug task force.

I believe this staffing reveals another reason why the men and women of our Police Department have been so successful in reducing crime. There is a balance in the number of officers responding to emergency calls, the detectives following up and investigating/evaluating those calls, and the officers assigned to crime prevention. They are attacking crime using a variety of strategies.

Let's take a further look at the steady decrease in Saginaw Township total Part 1 Crime over the past 21 years, examining the averages in increments from 1991 through 2011:

1991 - 1996 1,574 average per year
1997 - 2001 1,415
2002 - 2006 1,240
2007 - 2011 1,168

*2012 crime statistics will be certified and released by the FBI in September, 2013.

- In the last 4 years, beginning in 2008, our violent crime totals have steadily dropped from 103, to 90, then 87, and just 73 in 2011. The national violent crime rate is 3.86 violent crimes per 1,000 residents. In Michigan it is 4.45 violent crimes per 1,000 residents. Our annual violent crime rate is 1.8 violent crimes per 1,000 residents..

- The national property crime rate is 29.08 property crimes per 1,000 residents. In Michigan the property crime rate is 26.12 per 1,000 residents. Our property crime rate is 24.2 property crimes per 1,000 residents. In the last 5 years burglary and larceny totals have dropped steadily from 1,152 in 2007 to 954 in 2011.

From everything I've shared with you this afternoon it is very clear why Saginaw Township is moving forward and steadily growing. First, our Board members, manager, department heads, and all our employees are professional and highly educated. They are hard working and dedicated to being the best they can be and take great pride in providing high quality services to our residents and businesses. Second, the Township's water delivery system and sewer system are structurally sound and well maintained. Having this quality infrastructure in place lays the foundation for residential and business growth. Third, our outstanding police officers and fire fighters work extremely hard to keep Saginaw Township the safe community it has always been. Their hard work and commitment reflects the belief of our residents - that being a safe community is one of our deeply held Core Values. It always has been and always will be.

All of what I have described today, which is only part of our operation, lays the foundation for the Township to grow. Our residents and business owners have confidence that our Township government is not only stable, but well organized and working properly. In spite of the very slow economy over the past five years, let's look at the business growth that has occurred in Saginaw Township.

- In 2008 we recognized 5 Businesses of the Year award winners including: the redevelopment of Block Plaza, the major redevelopment of Green Acres Plaza including the addition of the new Kroger and Rite Aid stores, and the newly constructed United Financial Credit Union on State Street.
- In 2009 our award winners included: Independent Bank on Bay Rd., the Morley Companies expansion on Schust, the opening of Chen's Mongolian Grill, and the new Harvey's Grill.
- In 2010 the Township recognized the new Wildfire Credit Union on State St., the new Saginaw Valley Equine Clinic on Tittabawassee, the opening of MAACO auto parts store on McCarty, the remodeled Lake Huron Credit Union at Wieneke and Shattuck, and the complete renovation of Draper Toyota.
- In 2011 our award winners were the new Hampton Inn, SVRC Industries new apartment building on Barnard, the renovation of the McDonald's Restaurant on Bay Rd., and the major redevelopment of Township Square Apartment Homes on N. Center.
- For 2012 we are recognizing the new Logan's Roadhouse, ULTA Beauty in West Valley Shopping Center, Sarah Fechter Fitness on State St., and the major redevelopment of 1st State Plaza on Fashion Square Boulevard.

These are 22 businesses that in difficult economic times chose to locate in Saginaw Township or make a significant financial reinvestment by renovating their businesses. This demonstrates the positive business climate in our community.

As I have said many times before, at Township Hall we work closely with developers and business owners either planning to locate a new business in our community or growing their

existing company. Bridget Smith, our Assistant Director of Community Development, leads this effort, and her hard work over the last five years has assisted several companies as they have expanded.

- In 2008 Mistequay ISG on Bay Rd. invested \$271,109 and purchased several pieces of equipment while adding 5 new skilled workers. In October of 2008 Miller Mold Company on Bay Rd. invested \$952,325 in advanced manufacturing equipment and software and added 4 new jobs over 2 years.
- In 2009 Saginaw Control and Engineering on Midland Rd. invested \$430,000 in a new stud welding station making its facility much more efficient while adding 4 new jobs. The Township supported Morley Companies as it received its first MEGA incentive from the State of Michigan and began hiring additional employees.
- In 2010 Midwest Reprocessing Center, a new business in Saginaw Township that reprocesses medical devices, expanded its operation and added 23 jobs to our community. Saginaw Control and Engineering continued its growth by adding 12 new jobs while investing \$1.1 million in new equipment.
- In 2011 Miller Mold invested \$309,095 in a new vertical machining center and two engineering software systems while adding 4 new jobs.
- In 2012 Kremin Inc. on Universal Dr. invested \$262,767 in equipment and committed to adding 4 jobs. Miller Mold invested \$675,045 in a machining center, software, a 5 ton crane system, and a hoist while adding 2 more jobs. Morley Companies purchased the AT&T building at 4075 Bay Rd. and amended its original MEGA incentive grant from 2009 to invest in computers, furniture, and fixtures while pledging a large number of new jobs. In fact, from 2008 through 2012 Morley has grown remarkably by investing \$13 million and adding approximately 1,175 employees.

It has been very satisfying for our leadership team at Saginaw Township to help small manufacturing companies grow their businesses and assist a major employer like Morley Companies as it significantly expanded its operation.

This year there is tremendous potential for additional growth. The addition of the Cabela's store has sparked an interest in investment along Tittabawassee and Bay Road. The adoption of the State Street Corridor Improvement Plan was positively received by nearby residents and local businesses, and we look forward to additional investment along this corridor.

Ladies and gentlemen the State of the Township is strong, and Saginaw Township is moving forward and growing!