



Police Academy Graduates

Five recent police academy graduates have joined the Antrim County Sheriff's Office. Pictured below with Sheriff Kevin Hoch and Undersheriff George Lasater are Deputies Keegan LaBlance, Edson Blaisdell, Cooper Pieprzak, Joshua Nycz, and Jeffrey Fletcher.

The deputies are currently working full time under the supervision of Field Training Officers. Their training is expected to be complete in August.



Lake Levels Under Study

Lake level issues continue to be a concern for the Elk River Chain of Lakes (ERCOL). The Antrim County Drain Commissioner (ACDC) has been working with local governments and lake associations to find a solution. The ERCOL watershed covers over 500 square miles and 75 miles of waterway, including 14 lakes, five rivers and +200 streams. It also spans four counties, 14 townships, and four villages.

A recent partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers resulted in a hydraulic model that is being used to study behavior patterns of the water flow and to predict lake water levels under different storm scenarios.

A 2023 report noted that the Elk Rapids hydro dam overflow spillway is more than 100 years old and is need of repair. Also, the Bellaire dam would overtop its banks if a 100-year flood event (also known as a 1% flood) were to fall on the entire upper chain. Antrim County has received a grant from the State to engineer a solution.

In May, the Antrim County Board of Commissioners affirmed that the ACDC has the authority to address lake levels and associated issues. A lake level committee assembled by the ACDC has identified a number of options, and a final decision is expected this summer. After construction documents are prepared, costs can be obtained.

Funding options are being explored, including grants, volunteer activities and possible special assessments. For more information, contact Drain Commissioner Leslie Meyers via email at 231-533-3633 or meyersl@antrimcountymi.gov.

Update: Public Safety Center

In early May, the Board of Commissioners created a committee to discuss next steps regarding a Public Safety Center. During their meetings, the Committee approved increasing the County's up front contribution, decreasing construction costs by \$5.5 million, decreasing the amount financed by \$7.5 million, and reducing the bond length by five years. These changes resulted in a **25% reduction in total cost, a savings to the taxpayers of almost \$13 million.**

The Committee unanimously approved a motion recommending that the Board bond for a Public Safety Center for an amount not to exceed \$18,000,000 for a period not to exceed 20 years. The motion also recommended that the Board, Administration, and the Sheriff continue to work towards a lowest possible cost and establishing the lowest possible period of bonding.

In addition, the Committee recommended prioritizing prevention, diversion, and community-based programs/services in the facility's planning to address mental health needs and reduce incarceration, ensuring the design reflects a balance of detention and treatment spaces. The recommendations will be discussed at the June 19 Board meeting, which starts at 6:30 pm.

Regional Training Exercise: Antrim County Airport on June 1

The Antrim County Office of Emergency Management, with the Michigan National Guard, conducted a joint training exercise at the airport. The goal was to enhance response capabilities and coordination between agencies.



"The need for this training is important," said Matt Adamek, Emergency Service Coordinator, adding that everyone "worked together very well."

Retirement Announcement: Al Meacham, Antrim County Transportation

After 16 years of service to Antrim County, Al Meacham is retiring. Mr. Meacham spent most of his career in the private sector in distribution warehousing, and moved north with his wife in 2009.

His accomplishments at ACT include stabilizing its finances and creating a solid staff. "These guys are great," Mr. Meacham said. In addition to traveling and golfing, he is looking forward to spending more time with his family.