



2026 WINTER OPERATIONS CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 20-21, 2026 • MUSKEGON, MI

Delta Hotels Muskegon Conference Center
939 Third St, Muskegon, MI 49440

Please scan the QR code below or visit linktr.ee/ctt_mtu to access the full list of conference resources, the conference evaluation, and to view the session summaries and speaker biographies.

Conference Evaluation, Presenter Q&A & other resources:

Visit vevox.app
and use Session ID: 193-288-071

OR Scan the QR Code and select the
Conference Evaluation + Q&A button to fill
out the conference evaluation and/or to ask
the presenter(s) a question.



Michigan's
Local Technical
Assistance Program



CENTER FOR
**TECHNOLOGY
& TRAINING**

WELCOME



Michigan Winter Operations Conference is a 2-day conference intended for township, city, county, and state employees in positions ranging from Operators, Superintendents, Mechanics, Managers, Foremen, Directors of Public Works, and anyone else who is involved in any step of the process of moving snow! Generally, sessions will address a range of winter-related processes, safety measures, updates, and more.

Michigan Winter Operations Conference is hosted by the Center for Technology & Training (CTT), home of Michigan's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).



The Center for Technology & Training (CTT) is a research center housed at the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geospatial Engineering at Michigan Technological University.

The CTT works with local road agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and other transportation-related organizations to build, maintain, and manage public infrastructure.



**Michigan's
Local Technical
Assistance Program**

Michigan's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) serves state, county, and municipal transportation personnel. Its mission is to bridge the gap between research and practice by conducting training sessions, providing engineering technical assistance, and serving as a clearinghouse for information related to state-of-the-art technology in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure.



**Michigan's
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AGENDA

DAY 1 - OCTOBER 20, 2026

07:00 AM REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST BUFFET

07:55 AM WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Ingrid Sandberg, PE - Center for Technology & Training

08:00 AM LIQUID ROUTE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Karl Hanson - Wexford County Road Commission

08:30 AM WEATHER UPDATE

Brandon Hoving - National Weather Service

09:15 AM BREAK

09:30 AM MULTI-LANE PLOWING, TOW PLOWING, WING PLOWING (PANEL)

Andy Moran - MDOT

Matt Schluckebier - MDOT

TBD - Mason County Road Commission

10:00 AM SALT MEASURING AND REPORTING TOOL & NEXUS RC BARRY COUNTY

Steve Wessels - Mason County Road Commission

Jake Welch - Barry County Road Commission

11:00 AM PLOWING GRAVEL ROADS AND SHOULDERS

Moderated Menti Discussion

11:30 AM CALIBRATION - HOW IT GOES WRONG

Bryan Pickworth - City of Farmington Hills

12:00 PM LUNCH

01:00 PM BOUNCE, SPREAD, SCATTER, PRE-WETTING, GRIT: LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES (PANEL)

Bob Chapin - MDOT

Adam Lape - Washtenaw County Road Commission

Steve Roon - Kent County Road Commission

01:30 PM WINTER MAINTENANCE LEGISLATION & LIABILITY LANGUAGE

Charlie Pike - Michigan County Road Commission Self-Insurance Pool

02:15 PM LIQUIDS: WHAT TO KNOW AS AN OPERATOR (PANEL)

Brandon Jackson - West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation

Jim Miller - Ohio Department of Transportation

03:00 PM EXHIBITOR SHOW



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AGENDA

DAY 2 - OCTOBER 21, 2026

07:00 AM REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST BUFFET

07:55 AM WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Ingrid Sandberg, PE - Center for Technology & Training

08:00 AM IN-HOUSE TRUCK BUILDOUT AND SPEC WRITING

Luke Bush - MDOT

Ted Breen - Kent County Road Commission

Tom Donnellon - Huron County Road Commission

08:45 AM BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WINTER MAINTENANCE TRAINING PROGRAM

Matt Pratt - MDOT

Ken Harris - Washtenaw County Road Commission

09:30 AM BREAK

09:45 AM HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR SNOWFIGHTERS

Brea Beckley - HealthWest

10:30 AM HEAVY EQUIPMENT SIMULATOR FOR TRAINING

George Smith - Kent CRC

10:45 AM NUTS & BOLTS

Group discussion about issues affecting snowfighters:

- diesel emissions, blowing snow, corrosion, and more!*

12:00 PM LUNCH & ADJOURN

Thank you to the Michigan Winter Operations Conference Planning Committee

Mark Crouch

Carl Fedders

Rob Hudec

Andy Manty

Bryan Pickworth

Duane Poole

Jacob Welch

Matt Wiktorowski

Ben Willcome



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2026 Exhibitors



AIS Construction Equipment Corp.
Aquaphalt
Beet Heet
Certified Power Solutions
Clear Heights Construction, LLC
Crystal Flash
Evolution Edges
Falcon Asphalt Repair Equipment
Great Lakes Chloride, Inc.
Hoekstra Equipment
Kaplan Liquid Solutions
Kimco USA Inc.

Knapheide Truck Equipment
Liquid Calcium Chloride Sales, Inc.
MacAllister Machinery
Marcus Construction
Michigan Chloride Sales LLC
Municipal Employees' Retirement System
SoundOff Signal
SPC Specialty Products, LLC
St. Regis Culvert
Truck & Trailer Specialties Inc.
UNIQUE Paving Materials Corp.
Wolverine Truck Group

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Day 1

Liquid Route For The First Time

During this session, Karl Hanson will discuss liquid route.

Presenter: Karl Hanson - Wexford County Road Commission

Weather Update

What goes into a winter outlook? Often we have to look at the past to determine what led to previous outcomes and apply those principles to forecasting. In this talk, Brandon will not only highlight what happened last winter, but will also assess winter trends over the last 10 years. Then, Brandon will discuss what El Niño is, what it's done in the past, and why it matters for this winter. Combining these factors with computer model forecasts allows for the production of an informed winter outlook. Finally, we'll go over some NWS resources you should be aware of as we head into winter.

Presenter: Brandon Hoving - National Weather Service

Multi-lane plowing, tow plowing, wing plowing (Panel)

This session will cover MDOT's policy on the use of a wing plow, the different configurations of wing plows, and some of the hazards to look out for when using a wing plow.

Presenters: Andy Moran - MDOT & Matt Schluckebier - MDOT

Salt Measuring & Reporting Tool & Nexus RC Barry County

During this session, Steve and Jake will discuss how the Salt Measuring & Reporting Tool is used to track salt application during winter weather events. They will also cover Barry County's use of the Nexus RC app.

*Presenters: Steve Wessels - Mason County Road Commission
& Jake Welch - Barry County Road Commission*

Plowing Gravel Roads and Shoulders

This will be a moderated menti discussion.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Day 1

Calibration - How It Goes Wrong

As a best practice, calibration of materials, sensors etc. is a core exercise in the Snow & Ice control world. In this brief session, learn about some of the headaches to avoid and tools to aide in the calibration process.

Presenter: Bryan Pickworth - City of Farmington Hills

Bounce, Spread, Scatter, Pre-wetting, Grit: Lessons Learned and Best Practices

This will be a panel-style discussion on some issues and best practices involving bounce, spread, scatter and pre-wetting.

Presenters: Bob Chapin - MDOT & Adam Lape - Washtenaw County Road Commission & Steve Roon - Kent County Road Commission

Winter Maintenance Legislation & Liability Language

During this session, Charlie will talk about winter maintenance legislation & liability language

Presenter: Charlie Pike - Michigan County Road Commission Self-Insurance Pool

Liquids: What To Know As An Operator

This will be a panel discussion on liquids and what you need to know as an operator.

Presenters: Brandon Jackson - West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation & Jim Miller - Ohio Department of Transportation

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Day 2

In-House Truck Buildout and Spec Writing

This session will cover spec writing and in-house truck buildout.

*Presenters: Luke Bush - MDOT & Ted Breen - Kent County Road Commission
& Tom Donnellon - Huron County Road Commission*

Building An Effective Winter Maintenance Training Program

During this session, Matt and Ken will discuss building an effective winter maintenance training program.

Presenters: Matt Pratt - MDOT & Ken Harris - Washtenaw County Road Commission

Health and wellness for snowfighters

Snow and ice operations bring unique demands, including long hours, disrupted sleep, unpredictable schedules, and high-pressure working conditions. This session explores the impact of stress on mental and physical well-being, how to recognize signs of burnout, and practical ways to build resilience. Participants will leave with realistic strategies they can use to manage stress and support their well-being throughout the winter season and beyond.

Presenter: Brea Beckley - HealthWest

Heavy Equipment Simulator for Training

George will be talking about a heavy equipment simulator

Presenter: George Smith - Kent County Road Commission

Nuts & Bolts

This will be a group discussion about issues affecting snowfighters:

- diesel emissions, blowing snow, corrosion, and more!

PRESENTERS

Brea Beckley

HealthWest

Brea Beckley is the Community Outreach and Education Coordinator at HealthWest, a community mental health organization in Muskegon County, Michigan. With a background in psychology and public health, she works to make mental health information practical, relatable, and useful in the real world. Through community education, Brea helps people better understand mental health, reduce stigma, and build strategies that support resilience and well-being, especially when work and life are demanding.

Bob Chapin

MDOT, TSMO

Bob Chapin is a Statewide Maintenance Coordinator for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Chapin has been in several roles with MDOT over his 28 years of service. In his current role, Chapin coordinates statewide efforts for maintenance training for direct forces and contract agencies, identifies and evaluates new technologies in roadway maintenance and equipment innovations in the industry. Chapin began his career in MDOT's University Region where he was an Operator and Crew Leader, he moved to the Maintenance Services Section in the Bureau of Field Services, TSMO Division in 2025. Chapin is a member of the APWA and serves on several Maintenance Advisory Teams for MDOT.

Karl Hanson

Wexford County Road Commission

Karl Hanson, PE, is the engineer manager for Wexford County Road Commission. Hanson, PE, is an active member of the County Road Association of Michigan's Engineering Committee, as well as serving on the Joint Agency Transportation Committee between EGLE, MDOT, MML, and CRA.

PRESENTERS

Ken Harris

Washtenaw County Road Commission

Ken Harris has been the Superintendent of Maintenance within the Operations department at the Washtenaw County Road Commission since December of 2014. As the Superintendent, Harris oversees the operational aspects of the road commission crews, overseeing 8 crews and one direct staff member. Previously, Harris worked as an inspector for the city of Ann Arbor, spent time as a project manager in the oil and gas segment and after college spent time in Texas and Louisiana working for Peter Kiewit doing heavy civil work. In 2007 Harris did a summer internship with the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Harris is an active APWA member and has a Bachelor of Science degree in Construction management from the Eastern Michigan University.

Brandon Hoving

National Weather Service

Brandon Hoving is a Meteorologist and Observing Program Leader with the National Weather Service in Grand Rapids. In these capacities, he provides weather forecasts and warnings to 23 counties in Michigan, oversees the Cooperative Observer Program, and delivers both seasonal and subseasonal forecast information to various users. Additionally, Brandon serves as the program lead for surface transportation sector support, providing weather and climate information to MDOT, county road commissions, DPW officials, and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Since 2022, Brandon has led a team of meteorologists who email a weekly briefing to transportation officials, highlighting temperature, precipitation, and snowfall trends two weeks out. This service has provided officials with substantial lead time to plan for potential staffing and equipment needs. Ahead of and during significant weather events, Brandon often leads NWS Webinar briefings for local and state officials, helping answer questions related to storm timing, intensity, and impacts. Brandon holds a certification as a Michigan Professional Emergency Manager in 2022. With this certification, he has provided on-site weather support and expertise to emergency management officials at the State of Michigan, the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan State University, and the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division. He also assists with exercise planning and development and served as this year's lead for weather scenario development for the State Emergency Operations Center's annual state exercise, involving local, state, and federal officials. Brandon holds a bachelor of science degree in Meteorology from Central Michigan University.

PRESENTERS

Adam Lape

Washtenaw County Road Commission

Adam Lape has been the Director of Operations at the Washtenaw County Road Commission since June of 2022. As the director, Lape oversees all operational aspects of the road commission including road and highway maintenance, buildings and grounds maintenance, and equipment maintenance. Previously, Lape worked for the Ohio Department of Transportation starting as a summer intern in 2005, and working up to manager before going to Washtenaw County as a superintendent of maintenance in 2014. Lape is an active APWA member and serves on the Homeland Security Task Force for Washtenaw County. Lape has a bachelor's of science degree in health care management from the University of Phoenix.

Andy Moran

MDOT - Williamston Garage

Andrew Moran is a TMW 9 Lead Worker at the Michigan DOT Williamston Garage. He has been with MDOT for 24 years.

Bryan Pickworth

City of Farmington Hills

Bryan has spent over 35 years at the City of Farmington Hills, Michigan, working through the ranks from a laborer to supervisor to currently a part-time safety and projects coordinator. Bryan facilitates right of way maintenance and equipment safety trainings as well as helps out where is needed. Bryan is a graduate of Michigan Public Service Institute. Since 2011 Bryan has served on the APWA's National Snow and Ice subcommittee. Bryan continues to serve on various APWA certificate programs as an instructor and assist review committees as well as help coordinate Michigan's Snow Plow Operator Training program.

Charlie Pike

MCRCSIP

Charlie Pike, JD is the Director of Risk Management at MCRCSIP. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Grand Valley State University and his law degree from Wayne State University Law School. Prior to joining the Pool, he was an attorney at Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge where he specialized in defense litigation and governmental immunity. Charlie and his wife, Megan, live in Howell with their two sons, Deacon and Nolan. When not working, Charlie enjoys spending time with his family, studying history, and watching Detroit sports.

PRESENTERS

Matt Pratt

MDOT

Matthew Pratt is a Human Resource Developer with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), where he oversees MDOT's Transportation Maintenance Worker (TMW) Element Program. Matt provides statewide guidance, instruction, and technical expertise to MDOT regions, Transportation Service Centers, maintenance garages, and contract agencies in all aspects of roadway maintenance operations. He serves as a technical resource for the implementation of new technologies, policies, and procedures related to snow and ice control and other roadway maintenance initiatives. In addition to his program responsibilities, he identifies, coordinates, and develops training materials for MDOT employees and contract agencies covering a wide range of roadway maintenance operations. He also assists with the review and revision of maintenance advisories, memorandums, specifications, and other guidance related to roadway operations. Through his work, Pratt supports the development of a knowledgeable and well-trained maintenance workforce and helps promote consistent, safe, and effective roadway maintenance practices across Michigan.

Steve Roon

Kent County Road Commission

Steve Roon serves as Director of Maintenance for the Kent County Road Commission, where he oversees the day-to-day operations of the Maintenance Division and coordinates road maintenance and local road construction in partnership with Kent County's 21 townships. During his 25-year tenure with the Road Commission, he began as a driver, later moved to the Engineering Division as a Senior/Lead Property Specialist, and then served as Assistant Director of Maintenance before being appointed the Director of Maintenance. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Human Resource Management and General Business from Western Michigan University. He currently serves on the CRA MDOT Contract Negotiation Committee, CRA Local Roads Research Program Gravel Road Committee and the APWA Midwest Michigan Branch Snow Rodeo Committee.

PRESENTERS

Matt Schluckebier

MDOT - Bay Region Saginaw Eastside Garage

Matt is a Transportation Maintenance Worker- 9, Lead Worker, with the Michigan Department of Transportation at the Bay Region Saginaw Eastside Garage. Matt started with the department in 2016 as a non-career employee for winter maintenance and in June 2017 was hired full time with Region Wide Bridge Crew. In July 2022 Matt was hired into the Eastside Garage as a TMW9 Lead Worker. Winter Maintenance is a larger part of Matts' work now as a lead worker. Monitoring weather conditions around the clock and deciding who and when to dispatch equipment on the roads to keep things safe. Matt strives for efficiency in all aspects of daily operations at MDOT, especially with winter maintenance. The use of 4- Tow Plows, Wing plows, and multilane planning for the I-75 corridor in Saginaw County falls in line with that desired efficiency.

George Smith

Kent County Road Commission

George has dedicated over 26 years to the Kent County Road Commission, where he currently serves as Employee Safety Superintendent. In this role, he oversees safety initiatives and programs aimed at protecting employees and ensuring compliance with industry standards. In addition to his public works career, George served more than 35 years as a volunteer firefighter with the Grattan Township Fire Department, retiring with the rank of Captain. He also contributed to emergency services education as an Instructor Coordinator for the State of Michigan Medical Licensing. George holds numerous state and local certifications in employee and fire safety, along with an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-IC) license earned through National Registry. He remains actively involved in professional development and industry advancement through committee service and training leadership. His current affiliations include the Michigan Safety Conference, the State of Michigan Medical Oversight Committee, the Superintendents Association of Michigan New Employee Training Committee, and the American Public Works Association Lunch and Learn Committee.

PRESENTERS

Jake Welch

Barry County Road Commission

Jake Welch is the managing director for Barry County Road Commission. Welch leads engineering-related activities as well as operations, strategic planning, public relations, and safety duties with an amazing team of talented leaders. Welch started at the BCRC in September of 2013, currently holds a Board of Directors position on MCRCSIP and serves on the CRA PR committee.

Steve Wessels

Mason County Road Commission

Steve Wessels serves as the Managing Director of the Mason County Road Commission, where he oversees the agency's operations, infrastructure programs, workforce, and long-term planning. Prior to joining Mason County, Steve spent 26 years with the Michigan Department of Transportation, working his way through the ranks and gaining extensive experience in transportation operations, maintenance, and leadership. He brings a practical, hands-on perspective to public infrastructure and is committed to safety, innovation, fiscal responsibility, and providing dependable service to the communities he serves.

Great Ideas Challenge

Do you have a great idea?

The Great Ideas Challenge rewards the great work that gets done at local road-owning agencies in Michigan. We're looking for innovative ideas that improve safety & efficiency, are cost effective, and can easily be adopted by other agencies. Submit your great idea today!



Visit www.michiganltap.org/great-ideas to Learn about prizes & submit your great idea today!



- Engraved plaque
- Free registration for two people to a CTT conference
(County Engineers' Workshop, Bridge Week, Highway Maintenance, or Winter Operations)
- Consideration for entry in the FHWA "Build a Better Mousetrap" competition



- Framed certificate
- Free registration for one person to a CTT conference
(County Engineers' Workshop, Bridge Week, Highway Maintenance, or Winter Operations)

**Questions & submissions
can be emailed to:
ctt@mtu.edu**



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Facility Map



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