

RETIREES



We're looking for one adventurous retiree from each of MSEA's 10 Regions to be a volunteer coordinator on the Retiree Committee. We would also like to form a special MSEA Veterans Group. If you're interested, please feel free to contact the committee chairs with any questions or to volunteer your much-needed time and energy!

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The cost for retirees to belong to MSEA is just \$12 a year as stated in the MSEA Constitution: Article VI, Section 8: *Any retired Union member age fifty (50) years or older or with at least ten (10) years of membership, or a disabled Union member, shall be entitled to retain membership in the Union for \$1.00 per month, to be paid in advance at the rate of \$12.00 per year. Retiree's dues are to be pro-rated from the date of retirement to the next January 1st. Thereafter, the retiree's dues shall be payable on January 1st, with thirty days advance notice given by MSEA Central Office.* **By paying your retiree dues of only \$12 per year, you will continue to receive the MSEA News. Please make checks payable to Michigan State Employees Association and mail to: MSEA Central Office, 6035 Executive Dr., Suite 104, Lansing, MI 48911**



Michigan has launched an \$8 million grant program through the **Department of Transportation (MDOT)** to address mobility and transportation needs for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities. The grants will be given to multiple projects in urban, rural and suburban communities, and will fund a portion of the costs. Remaining costs will be covered through fares, local contributions and other funds. Proposals can be submitted beginning June 4

and officials expect the first projects to be introduced in the fall. The project is expected to demonstrate three pillars to mobility: safety; infrastructure efficiency; and opportunity to give those with challenges or constraints the means to move around.



House Bill 5834, sponsored by **Rep. Beau LaFave (R-Iron Mountain)**, would provide a specific exemption in the motor vehicle code for someone who is disabled while operating a disability mobility vehicle. The vehicle is defined as a wheelchair or other mobility device, designed to carry a single passenger powered by a battery, fuel or other engine, and isn't able to exceed 25 miles per hour.

The bill was inspired by a disabled constituent, trying to get to the store on an electric wheelchair on the shoulder of a road where there were no sidewalks, and was ticketed for operating a motor vehicle without a license. Currently, there's nothing in the law LaFave's constituent can use to fight the ticket. LaFave thinks that needs to change and gave a presentation on the bill to the **House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**.



President Donald Trump has signed the **VA MISSION Act**, legislation that will help veterans get the care they deserve. It replaces the VA Choice Act and is the result of a bipartisan effort in the **U.S. House and Senate**. The VA MISSION Act will improve the **Department of Veterans Affairs'** ability to hire high-quality health care professionals, streamline VA community care programs, expand caregiver benefits to pre-9/11 veterans and create a process to examine VA's capital infrastructure to better serve veterans.

Congressman Jack Bergman, Chairman of the VA Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, in a statement said: "For years, Veterans in rural

communities of northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have struggled to access the care they've earned in a timely and convenient setting...The VA MISSION Act addresses these shortcomings, and will provide rural Veterans the flexibility needed to receive the care they've rightfully earned."

RETIREES



Secretary of State Ruth Johnson arrived at a press conference, kicking off May as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, on a 1200 cc Harley-Davidson Sportster, with a group of riders. Johnson noted the high involvement of baby boomers in motorcycle crashes. She encouraged boomers who ride motorcycles or who are thinking about it, to take a returning-rider safety course, even if they rode in their younger years.

“People joke about never forgetting how to ride a bike, but operating a motorcycle is different. It requires constant practice to develop the judgment and skills necessary to identify and avoid hazardous situations on the road.”

Johnson noted that male motorcycle riders aged 50-69 were involved in 34.1% of all two-vehicle crashes with a motorcycle and 33.6% of all single-vehicle crashes (those just involving the motorcyclist). Female riders aged 40-59 are at the greatest risk of being involved in either a multiple vehicle or single vehicle crash.

Boomers interested in refreshing their riding skills should look into the department’s **Returning Rider Basic Rider Course** and the **Advanced Rider Course**. The department also offers a class for three-wheeled motorcycles, and a **Basic Rider Course** designed for those who are new to or wish to review the fundamentals of motorcycling.

CRIME PREVENTION

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette on May 29 announced that he is expanding the Criminal Division, creating the **Child, Elder and Family Financial Crimes Division**. As technology expands, so do the avenues for financial crime. The creation of this innovative unit allows the assistant attorneys general working on prosecuting these crimes to evolve as well, allowing them to better protect Michigan residents.

“Michigan’s children and seniors are two of Michigan’s most vulnerable populations,” said Schuette. “When it comes to financial crimes, scam artists are always coming up with new tactics to complete their crime. By creating a specific unit, we are evolving to better handle the ever-changing field of financial crime.”



A federal appeals court rejected **Genesee County Circuit Judge Michael J. Theile’s** challenge to Michigan’s age limit for judges. In a May 29 opinion by U.S. Sixth Circuit Court Judge Bernice Bouie Donald, the court shared a lower court’s opinion that Theile’s arguments were “eloquent,” but said it has to follow the results of prior similar cases.

Theile, who can’t run again in 2020 because he will be 71, says the age limit in Michigan’s Constitution is irrational, noting there are no age restrictions on governors, state legislators or federal judges. He argued such limitations violate the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.



About 43 million **Medicare beneficiaries** have prescription coverage under a Part D plan, according to the nonpartisan **Kaiser Family Foundation**, with premiums that vary widely, averaging \$41 a month this year. The benefit is subsidized by taxpayers and administered through private insurers, which are supposed to act as negotiators for beneficiaries and Medicare. Initially, the program was credited for encouraging a frugal shift to generic drugs, but in recent years, spending has accelerated. Polls regularly find that the public is alarmed about the cost of prescription drugs, and that voters, regardless of political affiliation, want

government action. **President Donald Trump** recently hinted that major drug companies will soon announce “voluntary massive drops in prices.” No details were forthcoming.

A report released by the **Health and Human Services inspector general’s office** June 4, blames rising manufacturer prices for squeezing older people and taxpayers.