

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF AUGUST 21, 2017

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SML FRONTRUNNERS REACH AGREEMENT

In an effort to avoid a divisive leadership race in 2019, Senate Republicans have reached an agreement now—likely naming Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) as the next Senate majority leader and Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland) as the next Senate Appropriations Committee Chair in 2019.

The unofficial agreement was reached among current GOP Senators who are eligible to run for re-election in 2018. Both Stamas and Shirkey have been positioning themselves for leadership positions in the next term. The Senate Majority leader will officially be elected by the party's caucus after the November 2018 election.

The November 2018 election should see the arrival of many new senators, since only eight of the current 27 Republican seats are eligible for re-election.

GROT RUNNING FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

Republican Stan Grot, the Shelby Township Clerk, announced this week that he is joining the race for Secretary of State. Grot outlined a six-point plan with a focus on voter-integrity, including proof of citizenship and mandatory state ID or drivers' license in order to vote, increased oversight and election audits, and purging the voter rolls to get rid of people registered in more than one state or those who have died. It is likely Grot will face Sen. Mike Kowall (R-White Lake).

Delegates at the Republican and Democratic state party conventions in August 2018 will choose the final candidates for secretary of state, attorney general, and lieutenant governor.

Democrat Jocelyn Benson, former dean of the Wayne State University Law School, and Democratic nomination in 2010 is also expected to run. Benson lost to Secretary of State Ruth Johnson (R) last time. Johnson is not seeking re-election due to term limits.

LEGISLATORS MULLING VETO OVERRIDE ON CAR TAX BREAK BILLS

Legislators on both sides of the aisle have discussed a possible veto override of Governor Rick Snyder's elimination of a tax break for new car buyers.

The bills in question, SB 94 and SB 95, originated in the Senate, and passed in the Senate 37-0 and in the House 88-19, Gov. Snyder vetoed both bills on July 25, saying that the bills would place too much pressure on the General Fund and create a hole in the state budget.

Affecting both the auto industry and taxpayers, the bills would have increased the amount of a trade-in's value exempt from the sales tax by \$1,000 a year instead of the current \$500. It would have meant totally eliminating tax on the value of a trade-in by 2029 instead of the current 2039.

Veto overrides have been rare in the Michigan legislature, with the last one happening in 2002.

TRUCKER RANDY LAUNCHES AD CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOUSE REPUBLICANS

The group "Drain the Swamp," lead by "Trucker" Randy Bishop, Antrim County Republican Chair, launched a 60-second radio ad this week that names 16 House Republicans whom they say are preventing no-fault auto reform.

The ad, which lists mostly Oakland County, West Michigan and a few politically vulnerable Republicans encourages listeners to visit the "Drain the Swamp" website, donate funds and buy ad time.

The listed legislators are: Reps. Laura Cox (R-Livonia), Chris Afendoulis (R-Grand Rapids Twp.), Kathy Crawford (R-Novi), Daniela Garcia (R-Holland), Joe Graves (R-Argentine Twp.), Martin Howrylak (R-Troy), Brandt Iden (R-Oshtemo Twp.), Klint Kesto (R-Commerce Twp.), Jim Lilly (R-Park Twp.), David Maturen (R-Vicksburg), Mike McCreedy (R-Birmingham), Brett Roberts (R-Charlotte), Jim Runestad (R-White Lake), Jim Tedder (R-Clarkston), Rob Verheulen (R-Walker) and Mike Webber (R-Rochester).

MM&A Briefs

Overhaul on Capitol infrastructure begins this fall

A \$70 million project to update and replace the Capitol's mechanical and electrical systems is underway this month, with part of the project – the installation of 224 geothermal surface wells on the grounds expected to begin in September or October.

The full renovation project is expected to take about two and a half years to complete.

The geothermal wells will be 500 feet deep, connecting to the aquifer. Tim Bowlin, Capitol Commission chief financial officer and project manager, has said that the commission is working with local government and utilities to ensure proper placement of the wells.

Work on the wells is expected to be completed by mid-January, when work will begin on the inside of the Capitol as it remains open for business. According to the commission, there will be notice provided if work could affect the daily operations in the Capitol.

Race for Attorney General begins to take shape

Several candidates are throwing their names into the hat for consideration to replace Attorney General Bill Schuette, who cannot seek election in 2018 due to term limits.

On the Dem side, Wayne County attorney Dana Nessel is the first to officially announce her run for the nomination. Former U.S. Attorney for Michigan's Western District Patrick Miles is also expected to run. Rep. Tim Greimel (D-Auburn Hills) has also expressed interest.

Republicans are expecting House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-Dewitt) and Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton) to seek the nomination.

Calendar of Important Events

- Aug. 28 U.S. Rep. Jack Bergman (R-Watersmeet) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., LochenHeath Golf Club, Williamsburg
- Sen. John Proos (R-St. Joseph) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 9 a.m., The Lost Dunes Golf Club, Bridgman
- Rep. Triston Cole (R-Mancelona) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., 112 Water Street, Boyne City
- Rep. Henry Yanez (D-Sterling Heights) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Century Banquet Center, Sterling Heights
- Rep. Jeff Noble (R-Plymouth) Family Picnic
Location: 6 p.m., McClumph Park, Shelter 1, Plymouth
- Aug. 30 Michigan Republican Party Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Troppo, Lansing
- Sept. 5 Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Phil Phelps (D-Flushing) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Sept. 6 House Minority Leader Sam Singh (D-East Lansing) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-Dewitt) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Karoub Associates, Governors Room, Lansing
- Rep. Cara Clemente (D-Lincoln Park) Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Jim Lower (R-Cedar Lake) fundraiser
Location: 4 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Sept. 7 Rep. Chris Afendoulis (R-Grand Rapids Township) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing
- Rep. Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, Lansing

Sept. 7 Rep. Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Karoub Associates, Governors Room, Lansing

Rep. Bill Sowerby (D-Clinton Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Sajo's Restaurant, Clinton Twp.

Rep. Kim LaSata (R-Bainbridge Twp.) Fundraiser
Location: 6:30 p.m., St. Joseph River Yacht Club, Saint Joseph