

Serra Family grateful for benefit Letter to the Editor:

What an amazing community we live in! The outpouring of love and support we've received from all of you has been overwhelming, and has touched us so deeply it's hard to find words to thank you all! Because of your kindness and generosity, Jonelle's benefit dinner was a huge success! And, the good news is, we were able to give back — all the leftover food went to the Rescue Mission!

A special "thank you" to: Sandy Gardner, Kristin Clark, Lisa (Serra) Goll, Nikki (Serra) Hepworth, and Di Buys for organizing the event. What a great turn out! To Whitlow's for donating the hall; Tom Schalk (Quality Sound) for being our D.J.; Kellie Cavanaugh for the fantastic spaghetti sauce; Cole's Bakery for the garlic bread; Fruitport Area News for newspaper articles; all of you who made food donations as well as donors for our raffles/auction; all the volunteers; to all of you who were there to share in the fun; and to Brian Gemmel! You are our hero! We are grateful to each and every one of you for your part in making it all possible. (Hopefully, we didn't miss anyone.)

In closing, we want to thank all of you for your prayers and messages on Jonelle's carepages web page. It gives us strength every day to read your messages and to know there were so many people praying for her to get well.

God Bless You All
John and Chris Serra

AgeWell services says thanks! Letter to the Editor:

On behalf of AgeWell Services and the people we serve, we would like to publicly thank the following businesses and individuals for their support with our holiday meals fundraiser. We appreciate their generosity and spirit of giving. AgeWell Services is committed to the belief that all seniors have the right to live independently with dignity and respect in their own home, serving 363,000 meals to older adults in Muskegon, Oceana and Ottawa counties.

With programs funded by the Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) receiving a 13 percent budget cut from the state, our agency lost funding for 110 meals per day.

Over 60 percent of our clients live alone, and many struggle to make ends meet with prescription and utility costs. Having this special-made meal delivered to them along with the visit from the driver says, "You are not alone. Someone cares."

Participating businesses helped raise more than \$6,000, which covered the cost of 1142 meals!

So "thank you" to the following businesses: Gordon and Janice Merten, Mr. B's Pancake House, Ryke's Bakery, Steak & Egger, Pablo's Tacos, Spring Lake Orchard Market, Fruitport Orchard Market, Glenside Pub, Independent Bank, Muskegon Commerce Bank and Consumer's Energy.

Mary Beth Werner
Community Service Manager
AgeWell Services

No tax increase with a yes vote on school bond proposal Letter to the Editor:

After the last bond issue was defeated, the Fruitport school district, recognizing the need for improvements to its facilities, looked to re-convene the facilities committee. The board sought to expand the committee by advertising in the *Muskegon Chronicle* and at other notice locations. Many new district residents joined the facilities committee to find cost-effective ways to address the most critical needs of the district without raising taxes.

The facilities committee identified infrastructure, energy efficiency, safety and technology, as areas of critical need. The district's buildings are aging; the oldest is nearly 70 years old. Older facilities require more upkeep and were not built to accommodate modern technologies.

School funding in Michigan is not structured to allow for upgrades and maintenance to school buildings. This is especially true since, over the past few years, funding from the state has been significantly reduced. This is why the state allows school districts to sell bonds on the open market to raise capital for such needs.

The current three-mill local school debt retirement millage rate is set to roll back. If Fruitport voters agree to maintain the current millage rate by voting YES on the February 23, 2010 ballot question, approximately \$8.6 million would be generated with bond sales for upgrades and renovations to the district's existing facilities with no increase to the current millage rate. It should also be noted that this proposal will not extend the current debt retirement date.

We have an opportunity to provide \$8.6 million to address the district's most pressing needs of its existing facilities: Infrastructure, energy efficiency, safety, and technology without paying any more taxes than we are currently paying. Please vote YES.

John Winkas
404 N. Fifth Avenue



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The 2nd District Congressional Candidates

Bill Huizenga - Voted for the Michigan Business Tax (MBT)

Wayne Kuipers - Voted for the MBT and the 22% surcharge on top of the MBT

Jay Riemersma - Just a few months ago didn't know what the MBT was

Bill Cooper - Is the only candidate who has actually paid the MBT

It is imperative to elect principled leaders who understand the consequences of punitive government actions. It is unimaginable that anyone who has struggled through the challenges of operating a business would not have been able to anticipate the devastating effects of this tax.

The History

The citizens of Michigan, in a citizen-led initiative, voted to eliminate Michigan's Single Business Tax (SBT). Even Michigan citizens, not known to be particularly "pro business," realized that our state had lost more jobs and more population than any other state in the United States from 2000 through 2007, and knew something had to be done.

Despite the will of the people to eliminate this job-killing tax, the entire Democratic legislature, along with a few Republicans, created a new tax called the MBT (Michigan Business Tax) to replace the tax the citizens voted to eliminate. The new tax was designed to be revenue-neutral, meaning that no difficult spending decisions were made. In creating the new tax, the legislature simply exempted the state's biggest businesses (the Big 3) and pushed the same tax burden down onto mid-sized and smaller companies. As a result, the new MBT actually placed an even greater burden on all but a few Michigan job providers. Incidentally, more than 70% of all new jobs are created by small businesses.

The Decision

Huizenga crossed the aisle and voted with the Democrats for the new MBT. Kuipers went even further. In the eleventh hour, for reasons he should have to explain, he actually voted for the new MBT plus an additional 22% surcharge on top of the new tax. The voters were ignored.

The Result

The consequence of Huizenga's and Kuipers' decision to vote for the MBT has contributed to catapulting Michigan to 50th in nearly every economic category. Job providers are leaving our state. Every Michigan Republican gubernatorial candidate has condemned the MBT as a bad, job-killing tax that must be eliminated.

The Solution

We need to be represented in Washington by proven leaders who understand what it takes to create jobs and economic prosperity in Michigan and our country.

Who should you support?

Only one candidate:

- Has a proven track record of success in the private sector, creating several different businesses and hundreds of West Michigan jobs over 25 years.
- Has successfully met almost 1,300 consecutive payrolls.
- Has actually paid the unfair Michigan Business Tax.
- Has been an *Entrepreneur of the Year* finalist with three different companies.
- Has proven he is a fiscal conservative with his actions, not just words.

That candidate is Bill Cooper

To contact Bill, email him at Bill@BillCooperforcongress.com Please contribute to the campaign.

Paid for by Bill Cooper for Congress