



Office of Administration

PO Box 885
1087 Newell
White Cloud, Michigan 49349
Phone: (231) 689-7200
Fax: (231) 689-7205

For Immediate Release:
May 21, 2010

Contact: Tobi Lake
231-689-7200

Newaygo County Bond Rating Raised to AA

Newaygo County has received good news. Fitch Ratings has upgraded the County's bond rating from AA- to AA. Investors rely heavily upon bond ratings as a measure of financial vitality and as a way to determine where to invest their money.

"The ratings increase reinforces the sound financial policies and procedures that the Board has implemented in recent years," said Finance Committee Chair Pat Gardner. "A higher rating will also save taxpayer dollars by leading to lower interest rates and reduced costs to borrow money."

A bond rating is an independent, outside opinion of Newaygo County's financial well-being and a measurement of the County's ability and likelihood to repay outstanding notes and bonds. An AA rating is just below the highest bond rating possible and means that Newaygo County has a very strong capacity to repay its financial commitments. When it issued the AA- rating in previous years, Fitch considered the state and local economy, unemployment rate, property values, population growth, and overall financial health, among other factors. Fitch's recent recalibration examined the ability of state and local governments as a whole to repay bonds including tax-supported general obligation and water/sewer bonds and determined that a positive adjustment was needed to accurately portray the low level of risk associated with these bonds.

"Our AA rating reflects Newaygo County's commitment to fiscal responsibility," said Board Chair Adam Wright. "Although all governments face financial challenges, the Board of Commissioners has worked diligently to reduce unnecessary spending and to meet the County's financial obligations."

###