

386 Boyer Court  
Marshall, MI 49068  
January 28, 2009

To the editor:

Not all my exercise this winter has come from shoveling. I've also been exercising our rights under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

I've contacted all the cities, townships, and villages in Calhoun County – plus the County Board of Commissioners, all the school districts and charter schools, and several public library boards. I requested a six-month subscription to each governing board's meeting agendas. And to make the agendas cheaper and easier to send and share, I asked that they be e-mailed to me . . . with supporting information, if it too was available in electronic form. (Michigan courts have ruled that, if public records exist as computer files, citizens are entitled to receive them that way.)

So far, I've made progress with about 2/3 of the 50 or so agencies. Unfortunately, I don't have enough Webspace yet to post all the agendas, but I can e-mail copies and share sources. You can see a summary of source information if you look on the "information superhighway" at

<http://members.triton.net/jalp/LocalGovBds--overall.pdf> or

<http://members.triton.net/jalp/LocalGovBds--overall.html>

I'll also send this "progress report" to all the public libraries – even the ones I don't yet have electronic contact information for.

Now, I'm starting to collect policies on FOIA request handling and fees, and public comments at board meetings. Why? To serve FOIA's purpose: "The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process."

Want to help keep this information current? Suggest more public information to gather? Watch over some meetings? Report on them? Please e-mail [jalp@triton.net](mailto:jalp@triton.net) or call 269-781-9478.

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