



Local government officials are dubious about Gov. Rick Snyder's performance and state's direction

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By

Gov. Rick Snyder's efforts to overhaul Michigan's tax code and political structure are winning him praise in boardrooms and storefronts across the state.

But not so much in city and township halls, according to a **recent survey of local government leaders** by the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

Overall, half of the 1,272 local officials surveyed said they believe the state is on the wrong track while 32 percent say it's on the right track, according to the results of the survey taken this spring.

"They were still banging their heads on a whole bunch of stuff out of Lansing," said Don Stypula, executive director of the **Grand Valley Metropolitan Council**, which represents 33 West Michigan government agencies.

"They (the Snyder Administration) still had not developed the system that is replacing revenue sharing," Stypula said.

The biggest factor was the pace of change that occurred during the first 100 days of Snyder's administration, Stypula said. "The only people I know that love change are babies with wet diapers."

Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell said he took the survey and gave the Snyder Administration good marks despite the budget cuts that may come the city's way.

"I believe we were absolutely stalled out as a state economy for the past six or eight years," said Heartwell. "The things he's doing I believe are stimulating our state economy."

Heartwell said he's relying on more changes from the Snyder Administration to help the city regain its economic footing through incentive programs that will replace revenue sharing and other state programs that have been put to rest.

"I've looked the governor in the eye and told him I'm trusting him on his promise that cities will lead the recovery in Michigan," Heartwell said.

According to the survey, Snyder should not feel too badly about his poor showing among local government officials.

Only 21 percent of the county, city and township officials surveyed gave the state legislature a "good or excellent" rating while 36 percent rated the legislature's performance as "poor."

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Gov. Rick Snyder, shown here in Grand Rapids City Hall, has not impressed many local government officials, according to a University of Michigan survey.