

## Our view: Survey results not surprising

By the Midland Daily News |

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No one should be surprised by the results of a survey released Thursday that showed local government leaders are questioning whether Michigan is on the right track or not.

This has been a year of significant change in terms of budgeting on the state level, and local governments have felt the pain of some of those changes. The state has cut revenue sharing money for local governments and required them to achieve best practices — cutting spending and consolidating public services — to share in some of that money. The state also has passed legislation that gives state-appointed financial managers more authority in dealing with cities or school districts facing financial crisis.


These types of changes are not going to be received well by local government leaders. Yet even though Gov. Rick Snyder received poor marks in the survey — only 37 percent gave him a positive job rating — he did perform better than former Gov. Jennifer Granholm in a fall 2009 survey. That in itself should be seen as progress for the state.

So should the recent bond rating outlook revision by Fitch Ratings from stable to positive, just a first step toward an improved bond rating for the state and lower interest rates for borrowing by governments and school districts.

Two Midland County government leaders, Midland County Administrator/Controller Bridgette Gransden and Midland City Manager Jon Lynch, are keeping a close eye on developments at the state level. Lynch voiced concerns about potential reform of the personal property tax law. He has a right to be concerned: Midland had \$7 million in tax revenue from personal property taxes last year. Midland County's lawmakers need to ensure that any changes made in the personal property tax law do not disproportionately harm Midland County governments and schools.

While that's an issue local residents will need to keep an eye on, overall we believe Snyder and the state Legislature have Michigan moving in the right direction. For too many years, the state used a Band-Aid approach to the budgeting process, making temporary fixes without seeking a long-term solutions approach. That has changed this year in Michigan, and we believe it has been a change — albeit painful — for the better.

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