



## *Ron Williams*

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
AND BUSINESS OWNER  
SEES A BRIGHT FUTURE  
FOR CHEBOYGAN

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Photos and Story by Phil Eich,  
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Series

I've been a Cheboygan County commissioner for about four years now. It's very fulfilling to actually help somebody, whether it's connecting them with the right person or helping them with a property tax issue. Those are the little things that are frustrations in people's daily lives. When you can help improve their lives that little bit or improve the area to draw more business and more people, that's fulfilling.

It's certainly not about the pay because it's about 10 cents an hour if you do the math! My cell phone number is on the county website, and I get calls from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. You're out there in front of everybody, but I really like it. As long as the people keep electing me, I'll keep doing it until I retire.

I see community groups getting smaller and smaller: volunteer groups struggling for members, county boards, commissions, and city councils struggling to get people to run for office. There are a lot of great people out there who are terrified to do it, but for our communities to get better, people have to step up and say, 'My community needs me, I've got good ideas, and I'm going to take that chance.'

If you see a problem in your community or you have an idea for how to make something better, the first question is, 'Have you told anybody?' You can have a great idea, but if you just sit there and don't do anything with it or at least tell someone about it, it's not going anywhere. So, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, city

council, county commissioner, or whoever it may be. And, if you don't get anywhere, ramp it up—see them in person, volunteer, or run for office.

I would encourage folks to get involved at whatever level they can. For example, join a community group like Rotary. Or, volunteer with your local chamber of commerce or DDA, whatever it may be. There are many ways to help—you just have to do a little homework.

Through that social interaction of helping somebody, you end up meeting other people with the same interests, the same energy, and the same direction. You build momentum in your personal life and in the community. As time progresses, you learn the job, you get better, and you get to take those good ideas you had and put them into action.

I'm very excited about the direction of Cheboygan and Cheboygan County. I have lived here most of my life. I'm a business owner and a county commissioner. I just love the area and loved raising my children here.

We have all these townships and villages and cities, and we all need to work together. I think we're getting there—if you look at downtown now versus even 10 years ago, there has been an amazing transition and a lot of outside investment coming in.

If you count all the lakes and rivers, Cheboygan County has more surface water than any other county in Michigan. So why are we not developing as some other northern Michigan communities have?

Cheboygan's got the same coastline and we've got more water. But I think that's starting to change. I think people are beginning to realize what Cheboygan has to offer.

—Ron Williams, County Commissioner, District 4, and Owner of Williams Office Equipment

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# Michigan Main Street Story Series



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