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Organ donor registrations up 89 percent

(Submitted by Michigan Secretary of State)
 Nearly 41,000 residents joined the state's organ donor registry last month, an increase of 89 percent from February, 2011 and further evidence that Michigan is improving the odds for those in need of transplants.

Through the first two months of 2012, more than 82,000 people registered as donors in Michigan. That puts the state ahead of 2011's pace by 77 percent. Nearly 400,000 residents — a record number — joined the registry in Michigan last year.

Registrations have surged since May, when Secretary of State Ruth Johnson put a policy in effect requiring Secretary of State branch office employees, as time permits, to ask customers at the counter if they would like to join the state's donor registry. The department has also strengthened its partnerships with donation advocates and taken other steps to promote registration, including placing reminders on printed and online forms for customers.

"With every day we are given, we have the opportunity to give of ourselves, help others and advance the common good," said Johnson. "By choosing to donate life, we can make a difference in the most profound way possible."

Almost 3,000 people in Michigan are waiting for an organ transplant. Nationwide, there are more than 113,000. There are currently more than 2.5 million people on the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.

For more information about organ donation and Secretary of State office locations and services, visit www.Michigan.gov/SOS.



Muskegon Chamber launches innovative buy local campaign

(Submitted by the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce)

As Muskegon sees an increase in new retail stores, the Chamber is launching a new buy local campaign. As of March 1, a commercial will air before every movie at the Cinema Carousel highlighting the next generation and using kids to promote shopping local.

According to the *New York Times*, teens in the U.S. spend around \$160 billion a year and influence parental purchases totaling over \$500 billion a year. As new retailers make their home in Muskegon, this buy local message is crucial to the local economy.

Historically, the Chamber has had a slew of buy local campaigns including, "buy local, think global" and "'Tis the season to buy local." This new message has a much broader target audience than previous buy local campaigns.

"It's important for the buy local message to start resonating with people of all ages," says Cindy Larsen, president of the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce. "These kids are the future of our country and many of them, too, will one day own businesses. Listening to this message from children may inspire those both young and old to understand the impact each dollar has on the local economy."

This video can be found on the Chamber website, www.muskegon.org, as well as the Chamber YouTube page: www.youtube.com/muskegonchamber. We encourage and promote the use of this video by anyone for the purpose of promoting shopping local in Muskegon County. Visit www.muskegon.org for more information about the impact of local spending.

MADL offers "Wowbrary" service, freegal

(Submitted by the Muskegon Area District Library)

The Muskegon Area District Library is offering a new service to notify its patrons of the new materials available through its branch libraries. This is a free service. Those who sign up will receive a weekly email listing all the newest library materials from books to DVDs, to books and music on CD. Patrons without email can still use the service by visiting the website, www.madl.org and scrolling down to the bottom of the page to "Newest Arrivals."

Freegal is another service, but it does require a MADL library card. Freegal allows you to download up to 3 free songs per week. To use the service, go to the website, www.madl.org, and click on "books & more," then "freegal music," then "freegal downloadable music." Enter your library card number and your pin number and download your favorite songs.

Heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases are America's No. 1 killer

(Furnished by the American Heart Association)

Most common stroke warning signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Any of the above symptoms may be temporary and last only a few minutes. Don't ignore them! If symptoms appear, call 9-1-1 to get medical attention immediately.

Most common heart attack warning signs:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. This feeling can occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs. These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

If you or someone you're with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, don't wait longer than five minutes before calling for help. Call 9-1-1... get to a hospital right away.

Internet hacking
 By Harry Wojahn

I am sure many of you are aware of and may indeed have been a victim of internet hacking. With the growth of technology, the hackers have found a source of hacking allowing them to get into almost anyone's computer and take whatever they want. All they need is an internet connection.

That is one of the major reasons that it is a safe idea to install security software on your computer to make it more difficult for the hacker. My wife and I have been victims of hackers, and it is not a joke. When these criminals get into your computer, it takes away the feeling of security that you should have when you are at your house where you should always feel safe. Facebook seems to be one of the biggest sources for hackers to get your information.

I know that security software is extremely expensive. There should be cheaper software out there for people who cannot afford it. I hope that someday soon we are able to get a software program that can be affordable for everyone and prevent hacking from happening. I know that hackers are constantly finding what they call "back doors" to get into other people's computers.

If you feel you have been hacked, I would suggest you contact the police, as they do have a division for these situations. Aside from that, I would suggest for now that if you can afford the software, go ahead and install it.

Passwords that are easy for you to remember but extremely unlikely for anyone to ever guess are a very wise idea. That will greatly help decrease your risk of being hacked.

Until we have a sure fire way to prevent hacking, I would suggest being careful about the sites you visit. And if someone you don't know tries to add on Facebook, be careful. Anyone could be a hacker looking to make you their next victim.