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CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The history of African Americans in the Saginaw Fire Department



DERRICK AND TYRONE HARGE, 1995.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The history of African Americans in the Saginaw Fire Department (SFD) is a story of perseverance, progress, and the fight for representation in public service. Since the hiring of the department's first two

Black firefighters, Warren Hurt and Joseph Black, in 1947, African American firefighters have played a crucial role in shaping the department while overcoming systemic barriers.

Hurt and Black, who served until their retirement in 1978, were trailblazers, breaking racial barriers in a

profession that had historically excluded Black workers. Their contributions paved the way for future generations, but it would take 25 years before another African American firefighter, Harold Pruitt, was hired in 1972.

CONTINUES ON PG 2, SAGINAW FIRE DEPARTMENT



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Delta student outreach features 'El Camino'

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FEATURED STORY

Through the lens of history: The Goodridge Brothers' legacy in Saginaw

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Cover story, Saginaw Fire Department

From 1975 to 1990, the City of Saginaw was under a Federal court-decree, mandating increased hiring of African American and Hispanic firefighters. During this period, 23 Black firefighters joined the department, significantly increasing diversity within the force. The decree, which ended in 1990, marked the largest wave of African American hires in SFD history.

Over the years, 42 African American firefighters have served in Saginaw, with several achieving historic milestones in leadership and emergency response roles. Lathel Wise II, hired in 1978, became the first Black Fire Chief, while Donald Coleman, hired in 1979, became the first Black Battalion Chief. Tyronza Snowden, also hired in 1979, was the first Black Fire Marshal and Derrick Harge became the first Black paramedic in Saginaw County.

Women also made their mark on the department, with Deborah Stephens, hired in 1990, becoming both Saginaw's first female firefighter and its first female lieutenant.

Despite progress, the hiring

of African American firefighters slowed significantly after the consent decree ended in 1990. The most recent African American firefighter, Joseph Cromartie, joined the department in 2024, continuing the legacy started by Hurt and Black nearly eight decades earlier.

The contributions of African American firefighters in Saginaw extend far beyond emergency response. Their leadership, mentorship, and commitment to service have shaped the department's history, ensuring a more inclusive future for generations to come.

African-American Saginaw Firefighters, past and present

1947 Warren Hurt, First African American Firefighter and First Black Fire Inspector *(deceased)*

1947 Joseph Black *(deceased)*

1972 Harold Pruitt*

1977 Loston Arnold*

1977 John Bond

1978 Lathel Wise, II, First Black Fire Chief

1978 Freddie Godbold*

1979 Donald Coleman, First Black Battalion Chief

1979 Derrick Harge, First Black Paramedic in Saginaw County

1979 Donald Gatson *(deceased)*

1979 Benjamin Moseley*

1979 Andre Bell*

1979 James Hunt*

1979 Herman Hunt* *(deceased)*

1979 Hubert Alexander *(deceased)*

1979 Felix Gardner *(deceased)*

1979 Tyronza Snowden, First Black Fire Marshal

1979 Edgar Johnson

1979 David McGhee*

1979 Calvin Thames*

1983 Karl Darling

1984 Maurice Patterson, First Black Fire Union President

1985 Tyrone E. Harge

1985 Stanley Curry*

1985 Tyrone Ward

1986 Calvin McFarland

1990 Deborah Stephens, First Female Firefighter and Female Lieutenant)

1990 Sean Wilkins

1990 Derrick Sanders

1990 Henry Landfair

1990 Bobbie Jones

1990 Ralph Martin

1990 Craig Ward*

1990 Daniel Welch* *(deceased)*

1990 Gregory Barton

1990 Edith Feaster*

1999 Chedrick Greene

2017 Jonathan Payns*

2020 Marcus Wright *

2021 Quintin White, Jr.

2021 Blake Stewart-McGhee

2024 Joseph Cromartie

**Left voluntarily (or was separated) from the Saginaw Fire Department before reaching their retirement date.*



SVSU to host 15th Annual 'A Taste of Soul' for Black History Month

SAGINAW – A beloved tradition returns to Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) as the Office of Diversity Programs hosts the 15th annual “A Taste of Soul” on Thursday, Feb. 27, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Marketplace at Doan near Curtiss Hall. This event, held in honor of Black History Month, offers attendees the chance to savor rich culinary traditions rooted in African American culture while engaging in a celebration of community and heritage.

For \$13 per person, guests

can enjoy a soul food-inspired menu featuring catfish, black-eyed peas, macaroni and cheese, fried okra, peach cobbler, and sweet potato pie. SVSU faculty, staff, and students may also use their meal cards. This year's featured dessert, caramel cake, is a special addition contributed by Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore, adding a personal touch to the lineup of traditional dishes.

A highlight of the event is the return of Men of Bethel/Sons of Allen from Bethel A.M.E. Church in Saginaw, who will once again

lend their culinary expertise. They will be joined by SVSU faculty and staff, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and cultural appreciation.

“A Taste of Soul” is one of our signature events, and we invite the community to join us in fellowship and celebration,” said Mamie Thorns, SVSU's associate vice president and chief diversity officer for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

More than just a meal, “A Taste of Soul” serves as a bridge between past and present, hon-

oring the resilience, creativity, and influence of African American culture. Through food, storytelling, and shared experiences, this event continues to be a powerful reminder of the rich traditions that shape Black history and identity.

For more information, contact the Office of Diversity Programs at (989) 964-4068.



MICHIGAN BANNER

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The Michigan Banner, Latino Banner and Youth Banner operates and serves as a print and online media venue committed to educating, informing and enlightening our readership regarding events and news that directly and indirectly affect the communities regionally and globally. Furthermore, to serve as a catalyst and a link for cultivating young adults as entrepreneurial and business leaders for the future.

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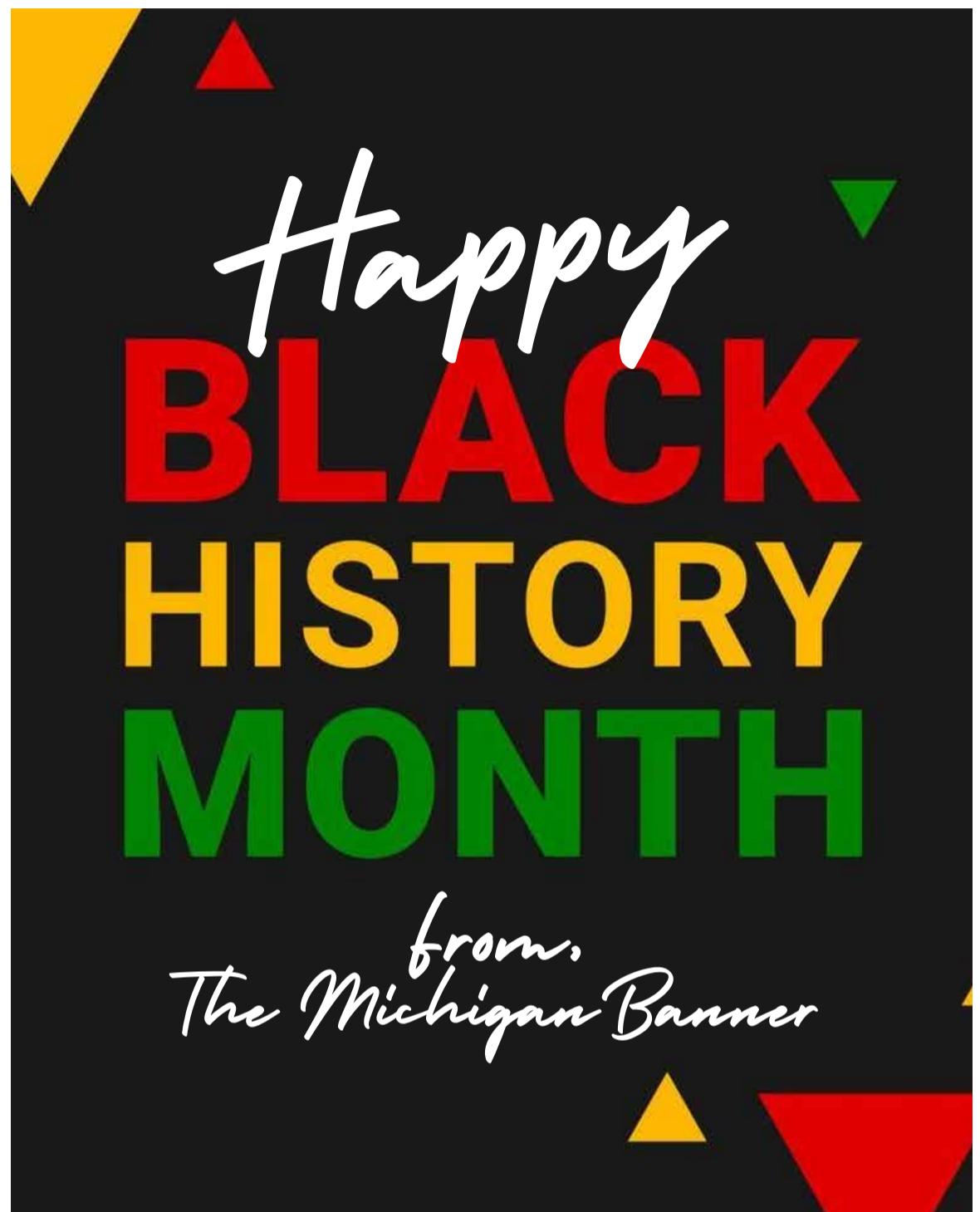
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MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 4



SVSU to host free youth soccer clinic on March 15



YOUNG ATHLETES TAKE THE FIELD AT SVSU'S FREE YOUTH SOCCER CLINIC. (COURTESY PHOTO | SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW – Young soccer players in the community will have the opportunity to train with collegiate athletes and coaches as Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) hosts a free youth soccer clinic on March 15, 2025. This event is part of SVSU’s Community Youth Days initiative, which provides hands-on sports in-

struction for local youth.

The soccer clinic will take place from 1 to 2 p.m. on SVSU’s campus and is open to children of all skill levels. Registration begins 45 minutes prior to the start time, and participants are encouraged to arrive early to secure their spot.

In addition to learning fundamental soccer techniques from SVSU coaching staff and student-athletes, all clinic participants

will receive free admission to an upcoming SVSU sporting event.

Sponsored by Meijer, the clinic emphasizes skill development, teamwork, and community engagement, ensuring that young athletes have access to quality training in a supportive environment.

For more information or special accommodations, individuals can contact the University Conference and Events Center at

964-4348 at least three days before the event.

SVSU continues to invest in youth sports and community outreach, offering young athletes an opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with collegiate mentors.



Indigenous youth fashion show returns to Soaring Eagle Casino for 3rd annual celebration

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT – The 3rd Annual Indigenous Youth Fashion Show is set to take place on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at the Soaring Eagle Casino Entertainment Hall, bringing together Indigenous youth, families, and the community for a night of culture, creativity, and empowerment.

This year’s theme, “M’nadendan Wi – Respect That!”, supports Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, reinforcing the importance of respect, self-expression, and cultural pride. More than 50 registered youth from eight surrounding schools will showcase their designs, celebrating Indigenous heritage and artistry through fashion.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with the fashion show beginning at 6 p.m. Following the show, attendees can enjoy light food, refreshments, and a drum and dance social, creating a welcoming atmosphere for youth and families to come together. Prizes will also be awarded throughout the evening.

The event is free and open to the public, inviting the entire community to come out and support local youth. All youth under the age of 15 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

With months of collaboration between young designers, artists, and event organizers, the Indigenous Youth Fashion Show has grown into an anticipated annual tradition, honoring cultural identity while fostering creativity and confidence among participants.

For more information, contact Behavioral Health Victim Services at 989-775-4400 or email BHVictimServices@sagchip.org.

M'nadendan Wi
"Respect That!"

Indigenous Youth Fashion Show
Theme: M'nadendan Wi - Respect That!
To support Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month


Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025

- ▶ **When:** Doors open at 5:30 p.m. – Event held 6-9 p.m.
- ▶ **Where:** Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort Entertainment Hall

- More than fifty registered youth will be gifted the apparel for participating in the event.
- Light food and refreshments will be provided for youth and their families.
- After the fashion show, a drum and dance social will be held.
- Door prize drawings will be held throughout the evening.

Youth under the age of 15, must to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

For more information, please contact:
Behavioral Health Victim Services at 989-775-4400 or BHVictimServices@sagchip.org

 **Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan**
"Working Together for Our Future"

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Mount Pleasant, MI 48858
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FOR MORE INFORMATION. CALL 810-309-7056



Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Delta student outreach features 'El Camino'

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — In her Delta College student recruitment efforts through El Camino (The Way), Monica Hernandez does not preach that her mother was a migrant farmworker and that as a teen she endured her share of rigorous labor in the fields. She simply aims for potential pupils to know that she cares, and that she carries empathy for whatever challenges that a young adult may encounter.

Still, her personal background is a mirror in her presentations, with the next scheduled for Feb. 27 at Union Civica Mexicana, 2715 Wadsworth, starting at 5 p.m. Her job title has advanced to assistant director of Delta's downtown center, but she remains a student recruiter and counselor at heart.

Monica's mother, Dora, came north during the late 1960s from Corpus Christi to work the fields. In the Thumb area, Dora encountered and wedded Augustine Hernandez, a homegrown product of Akron-Fairgrove High School, where he had been a standout athlete. When he found employment at GM Truck and Bus in Flint, she no longer needed to work the sugar beets and other crops. But Dora remained so that she could assist and organize the migrants for fair treatment.

Her daughter has inherited that same spirit in pursuit of civil rights.

Hernandez graduated from Caro High School but did not feel like a true member of the Class of 1991. Other than taking part in sports, this time reflecting her



MONICA HERNANDEZ

father, she felt isolated -- not by direct slurs, but incidents that transpired. For example, she recalls her brother being suspended for a fight at football practice, while the white combatant was unpunished.

Both parents pushed hard for education, to the point that her mother took her to the fields as a teen, a preview of her possible fate if she neglected her schooling. The hardest task, she recalls, was to "de-tassel" ears of corn.

"That made me feel like my

arms were going to fall off," she says. "My mother could not attend college, so she wanted to make sure her children would do so."

Monica matriculated first to Delta, then to Saginaw Valley State. She describes her K-12 grades as "average," but she began to soar in college, with eventual achievement of twin masters from Central Michigan and Western Michigan universities in the curricula of professional counseling.

She landed some scholarships, although they were more rare than the financial aid that she helps students uncover nowadays, and so she worked her way through college. Early on, her employment at Marlette's Teen Ranch exposed her to challenges faced by children raised in unstable families. This helped lead to her career at Delta, now in her 26th year.

Hernandez notes: "The kids (at Teen Ranch) didn't even think of attending college. For them, it was not an option."

For this reason, she emphasizes that counselors must be versatile and address each student based on where they currently stand in life, not allowing hard times -- past or present -- to stand in the way.

El Camino is Delta's "Hispanic/Latino student success initiative," as Michael Gavin, the community college's president, continues pursuit of increased diversity in enrollment.

The outreach team also includes Christopher DeEulis, DEI director; Elsa Olvera, Educational Opportunities Center director; and Cynthia Reyes, student admissions representative.

For anyone not able to attend Union Civica on Feb. 27, individuals may visit Delta downtown at 319 East Genesee or phone (989) 752-7500.

To view Mi Gente on Air interview with El Camino leaders, search "Rodarte El Camino Delta."

THE LATINO BANNER IS PROUDLY SPONSORED BY GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS

Luncheon at FIA to honor Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta



CHAVEZ & HUERTA
LUNCHEON
CELEBRATION

SATURDAY | MARCH 29 | 1-3 PM
Flint Institute of Arts | 1120 E Kearsley St. • Flint, MI 48503

BY MB STAFF

FLINT — The Latinx Technology & Community Center will host its annual National Cesar Chavez Day luncheon on Saturday, March 29, 2025, at the Flint Institute of Arts (FIA) to honor the life and legacy of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, two pivotal figures in the fight for labor and civil rights.

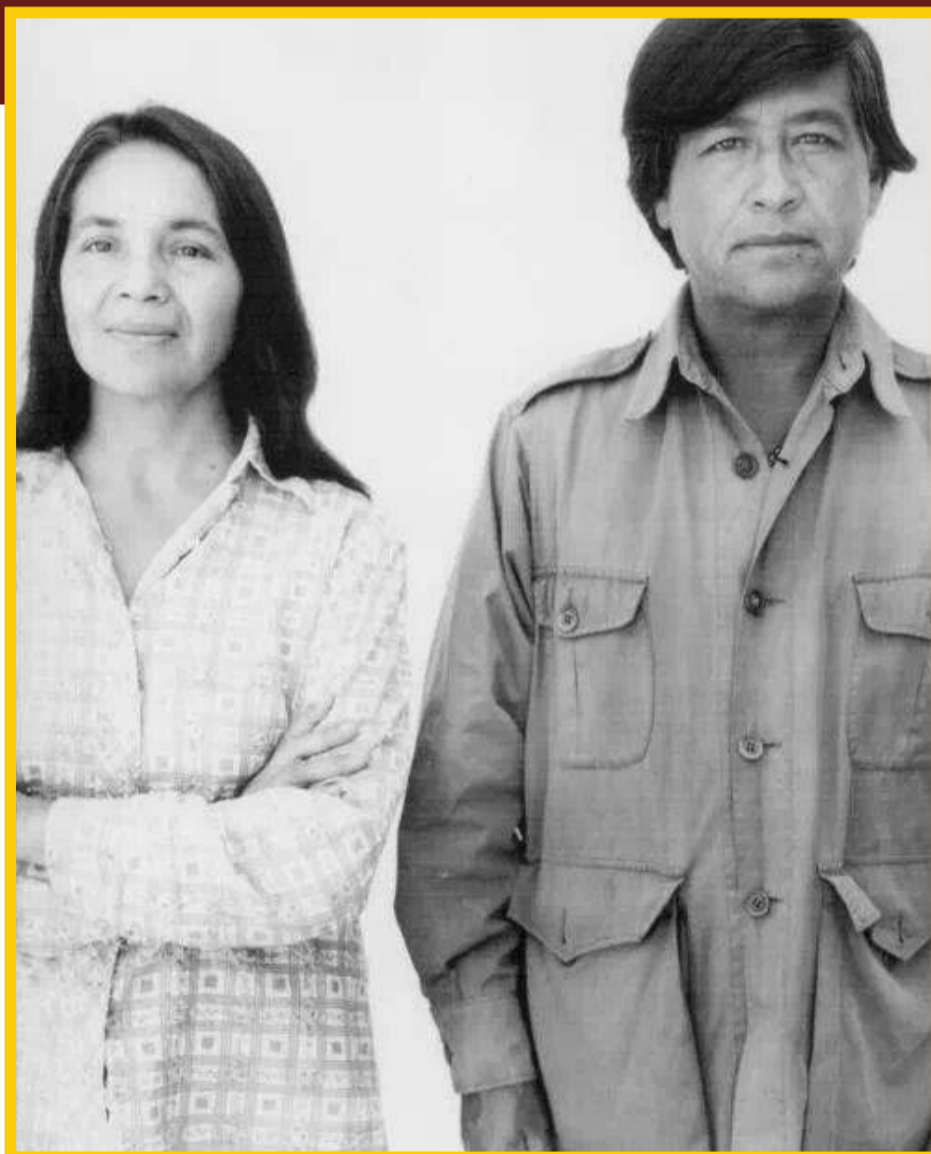
Observed as a federal holiday on March 31, National Cesar Chavez Day recognizes the contributions of Chavez, co-founder of the United Farm Workers (UFW), who championed labor rights and fair treatment for farmworkers across the country. The event also pays tribute to Dolores Huerta, a human rights activist and key leader in the movement for workers' rights. Both Chavez and Huerta have been awarded the Presidential Medal

of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for their lifelong dedication to justice and equality.

The luncheon program will highlight their achievements, impact, and lasting influence on the civil rights movement, underscoring their role in shaping history. Attendees will enjoy a keynote speech, cultural performances, and a menu featuring traditional Latin American cuisine.

The Latinx Technology & Community Center invites community members, leaders, and advocates to participate in this annual event, which fosters reflection, celebration, and dialogue about the continuing fight for workers' rights and social justice.

For more information, contact the Latinx Technology & Community Center at 810-715-5050.



DOLORES HUERTA AND CÉSAR CHÁVEZ



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**LATINO LEADERS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT
OF ADVOCACY & DEVELOPMENT (LLEAD)**



MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, Feb. 20th, from 6-7:30 PM
Delta College Downtown Saginaw Center
319 E Genesee Ave, Saginaw, MI 48607

LLEAD + HELP

WORKING TOGETHER IS BETTER

We welcome LLEAD-Saginaw Chapter members and HELP members to attend the general meeting.

Guest speaker: Kareem J. Bowen

General meeting topics: Business Committee upcoming events and membership opportunities

LLEAD MONTHLY MEETING

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — LLEAD will host HELP in a gathering of two local groups whose alphabet-soup acronyms have emerged as the 2020s decade reaches a midpoint. The session begins at 6 p.m. on Feb. 20 at the Delta College downtown campus, postponed because of the prior week's snowstorm.

Latino Leaders for Equity, Advocacy and Development is the Saginaw chapter of a state-wide group. The local president is journalist Christiana Malacara,

with an active LLEAD board that includes Vanessa Guerra, the county clerk.

Healing Engagement Love Presence was formed in summer 2023 when Mayor Brenda Moore called for outreach prevention efforts after a massive outdoor street party on Fourth Street, south of I-675, led to a pair of deaths. HELP organizers include Pastor Kareem Bowen from Potter's Touch, Terry Reed from Community Tire, and Ralph Martin from the African Cultural Festival. Like Malacara with "Solos Hispanos," Bowen hosts a radio show, "Straight Talk."

HELP last summer received the prior City Council's approval for \$700,000 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Act, signed in 2023 by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer with federal funds from ARPA, another moniker of the 2020s, standing for the American Recovery Program Act. Another major share, \$910,000, went to Victorious Community Development, via Pastor Chris Pryor of Victorious Believers Ministries.

LLEAD meetings are open to the public, free of charge.



KAREEM BOWEN

IT MATTERS WHERE YOU BUY YOUR CAR



5925 State St, Saginaw, MI 48603



Louie Garcia

(989) 770-3078

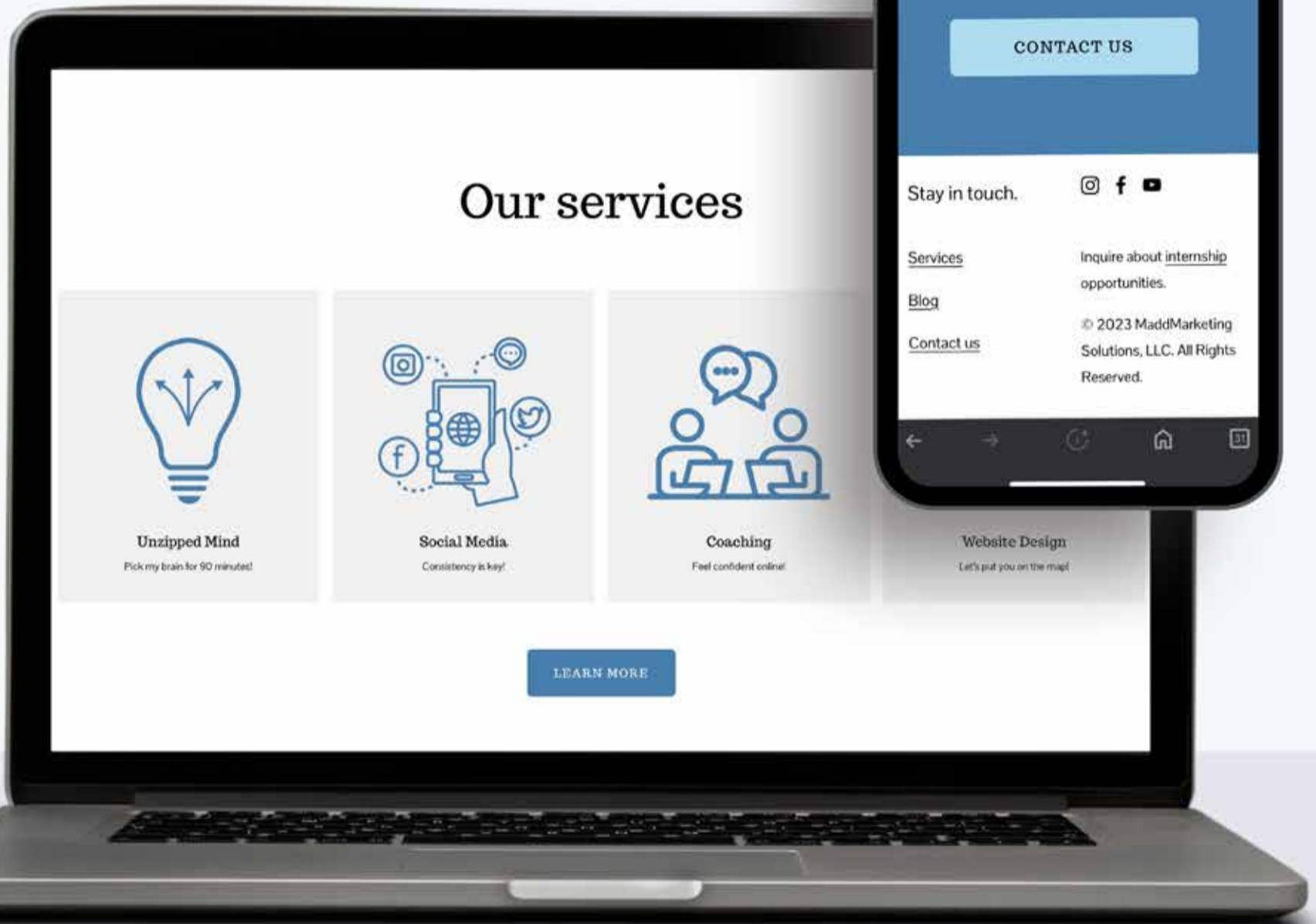
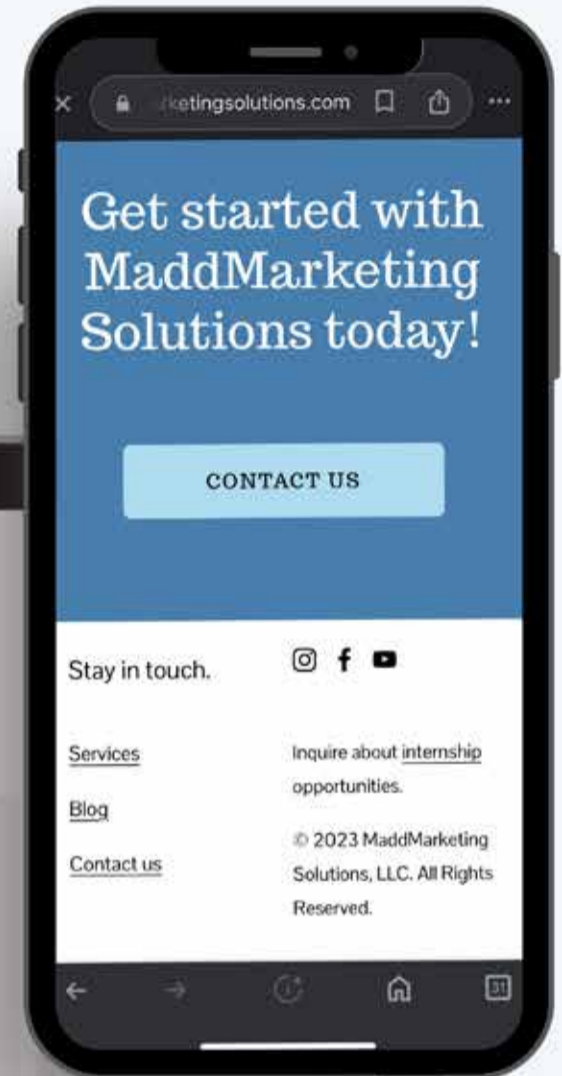
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COMMUNITY



Hoyt Library to host discussion on Black liberation and police brutality



DR. KENNETH JOLLY

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The public is invited to an evening of historical insight and discussion as Dr. Kenneth Jolly, Professor of History and Chairperson of the Black Studies Program at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), presents Black Liberation and the Fight Against Police Brutality in the Interwar Years. The event will take place at the Hoyt Library Auditorium on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Jolly's lecture will explore the critical period between World War I and World War II, known

as the interwar years, when national and local organizations, activists, and community leaders fought against police brutality and racist state violence as part of the broader Black Freedom Movement. The presentation will highlight the strategies, challenges, and victories of those who stood against racial injustice and discuss how this history informs today's continued struggle for civil rights and police reform.

A respected historian and scholar, Dr. Jolly specializes in African American history, the Black Power and Civil Rights Movements, and U.S. history. As Chairperson of SVSU's Black

Studies Program, he has dedicated his career to fostering critical discussions on race, activism, and systemic inequality in the United States. His research and teachings emphasize the importance of historical awareness in shaping modern social justice movements.

The event is free and open to the public, providing an oppor-

tunity for students, educators, activists, and community members to engage with a significant yet often overlooked chapter of American history. Those interested in attending are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

For more information or to reserve a seat, visit the Hoyt Library Auditorium before registration closes.

**An Evening with
Dr. Kenneth Jolly:
Lessons From Black History
for Today**

**Black Liberation and the Fight
Against Police Brutality in the
Interwar Years: Historical
Lessons For Today**

Join us for an evening with Dr. Kenneth Jolly,
Professor of History and Chairperson of the Black
Studies Program at SVSU for an event marking
Black History Month!

**Wednesday, February 19th, 6:30-
7:30 PM, Hoyt Auditorium**

COMMUNITY

Great Lakes Bay Region symphonies receive grants to support growth



THE FLINT INSTITUTE OF MUSIC RECEIVED \$750,107.51 THROUGH THE MICHIGAN SYMPHONY ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ITS MUSICAL INITIATIVES AND OUTREACH EFFORTS. (COURTESY PHOTO | FLINT INSTITUTE OF MUSIC)

BY MB STAFF

MICHIGAN — The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has awarded \$5.65 million in grants through the Symphony Economic Recovery Program, a new, one-time initiative designed to bolster the sustainability and community impact of symphony orchestras across the state. All 41 eligible symphonies that applied received funding, with grants distributed proportionally based on need.

In the Great Lakes Bay Region, several symphonies secured funding to enhance their operations and outreach efforts. The Midland Center for the Arts was awarded \$18,149.87, the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra received \$30,868.02, and the Flint Institute of Music secured a significant \$750,107.51.

“LEO is thrilled to help sustain arts and culture in Michigan and ensure all applicants received funding to enhance their communities and contribute to their financial stability,” said Susan Corbin, LEO Director.

“This initiative aligns with our vision to make Michigan a place where all people, businesses, and communities have the economic means and personal freedoms to reach their full potential.”

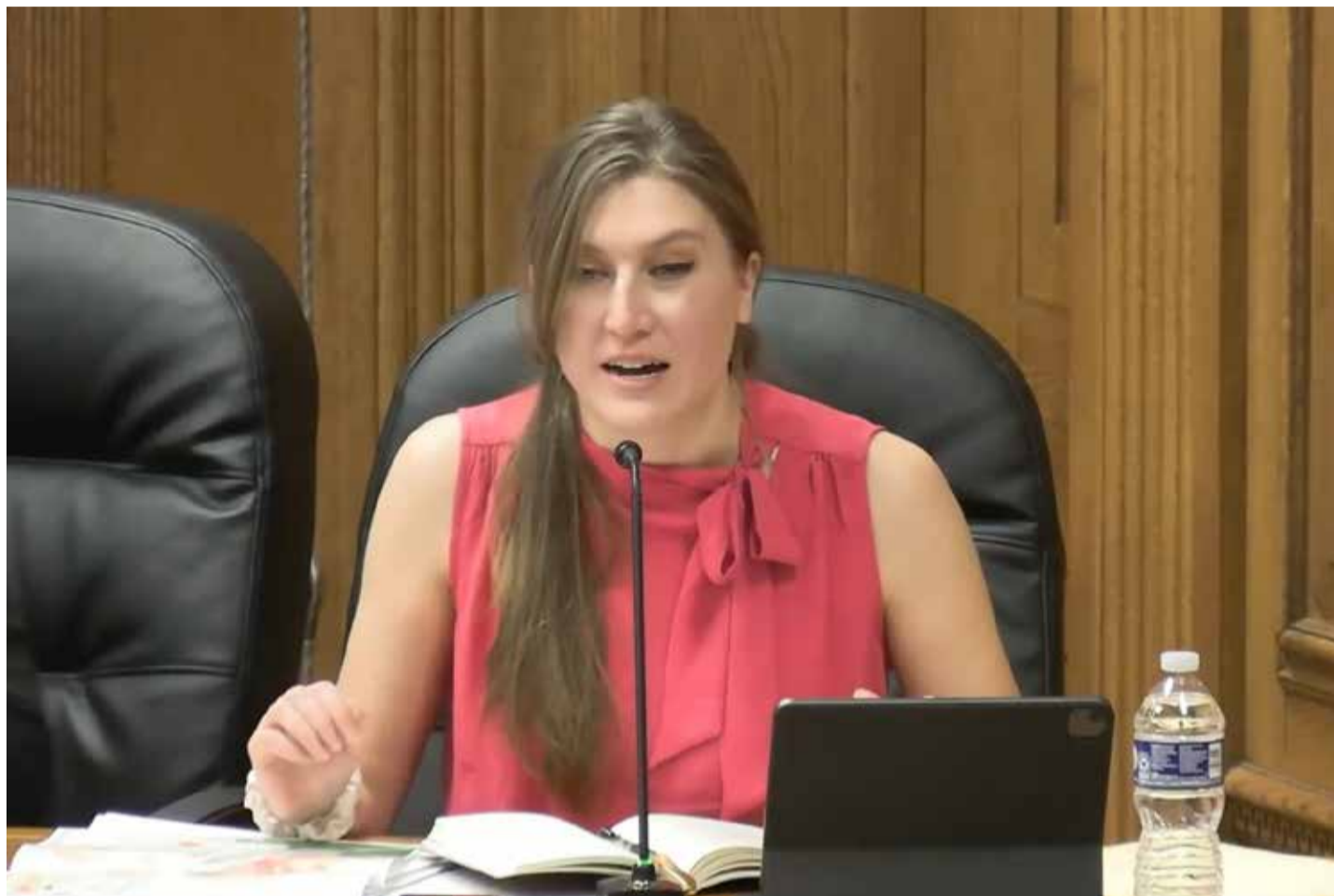
The grant funding will be available through September 30, 2029, supporting a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening Michigan’s symphony orchestras. Awardees will use the funds for renovating music halls, acquiring instruments, hiring musicians and administrative staff, providing professional development, and expanding marketing

and outreach efforts to increase audience engagement.

For Michigan’s orchestras—many of which have faced financial challenges in recent years—this funding is an opportunity to preserve and grow their contributions to local arts and culture. By investing in infrastructure and programming, these symphonies aim to create a lasting impact on their communities, making live orchestral music more accessible and sustainable for future generations.

COMMUNITY

Council on Feb. 24 to consider challenging Trump



CARLY HAMMOND

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW – Should the City Council take a public stand against President Trump's immigration crackdown?

None of the members are supporters of the 47th president, who is acting with more boldness than when he was 45th, but they are split on the question entering their Feb. 24 meeting

Councilwoman Carly Rose Hammond says yes, with her push to designate Saginaw as a "welcoming city" to those at risk of being deported. Mayor Brenda Moore and Pro Tem Priscilla Garcia, along with Councilwoman Jacinta Seals, responded with concerns that any public action could prove counterproductive by drawing the attention of federal enforcement agents.

On the meeting YouTube videotape, the 10-minute discussion begins at the 1:08 mark.

"If it is not broke, why try to fix it?" Moore asked. Garcia repeated the adage minutes later, noting that a relative in Grand Rapids had their papers questioned in spite of being a fifth-generation U.S. citizen.

A "welcoming city" is a more mainstream compromise with "sanctuary," in which local authorities stridently resist any Fed intervention. Still, Hammond asserted a need to "stand up" against the crackdown, because events of the past month show that Trump has been more aggressive than even some of his supporters may have expected. Another of his moves wreaked havoc with the Housing Commission's Section 8 rent subsidies, she noted.

Moore said, "I'm not a chicken and I ain't scared," but that she sees no need to potentially risk Saginaw's shares of federal funds

Councilwoman Heidi Wiggins joined her peers in awaiting a report from Manager Tim Morales and Police Chief Bob Ruth, but she rejected the notion of not acting because of concerns with being noticed. She cited the 1800s in general and the 1960s more specifically as times when oppressed people took risks for the sake of civil rights.

The City Council's vision statement from the Jan. 31 annual planning session, reads: "Saginaw, through collaboration and public/private ventures, will be a welcoming community that promotes neighborhood growth; stimulates business development and innovation; and fosters entertainment."

Moore and Garcia asserted that this could mean the issue already is covered, a notion that Hammond rejects because the intent clearly was not worded with immigration in mind.

In Bay City, Commissioner Chris Rudberg says he will introduce a welcoming community resolution on March 3. Rudberg is taking a different tack than Hammond, with emphasis on not using local taxpayer money for police to assist the feds, describing it as an "unfunded mandate."

Contrast in strategy

Here are common descriptions of sanctuary cities and welcoming cities:

A sanctuary city limits cooperation with immigration authorities, while a welcoming city creates a supportive environment for immigrants and all residents.

Sanctuary cities:

- Protect undocumented immigrants and refugees from deportation
- Law enforcement cannot question crime suspects about their immigration status
- Some say sanctuary cities reduce fears of deportation and crime rates
- Some say sanctuary cities undermine the rule of law and public safety

Welcoming cities:

- Provide access to city services
- Protect residents of all ages at school and work
- Prioritize the inclusion of immigrants in their communities
- Recognize the contributions immigrants make to the community
- Create a welcoming and supportive environment for immigrants

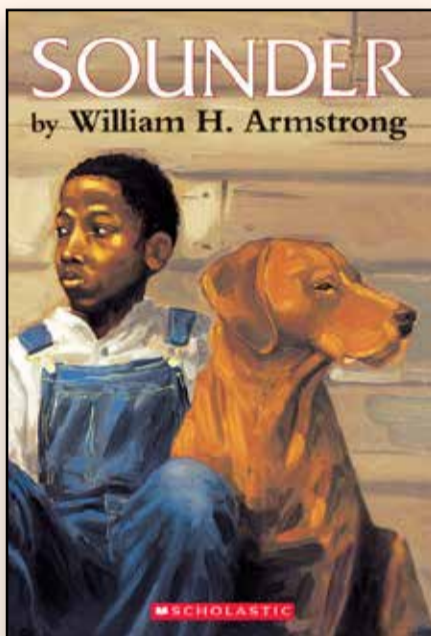
COMMUNITY

BHM

Three keepsakes for Black History Month

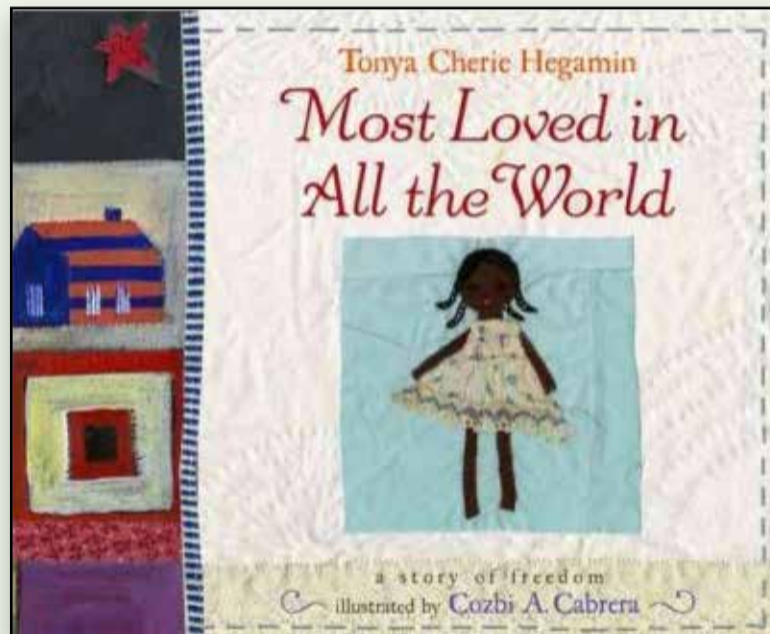
(As the Michigan Banner focuses on literacy, we will offer suggestions for children's books.)

Parents, caregivers and educators are called upon to decide when to move beyond the happy stories with smiling faces and cuddly tigers and bears for gradual coming-of-age reality. Here we view the tragic impact of slavery through the eyes of youthful souls, composed at mid-elementary grade levels.



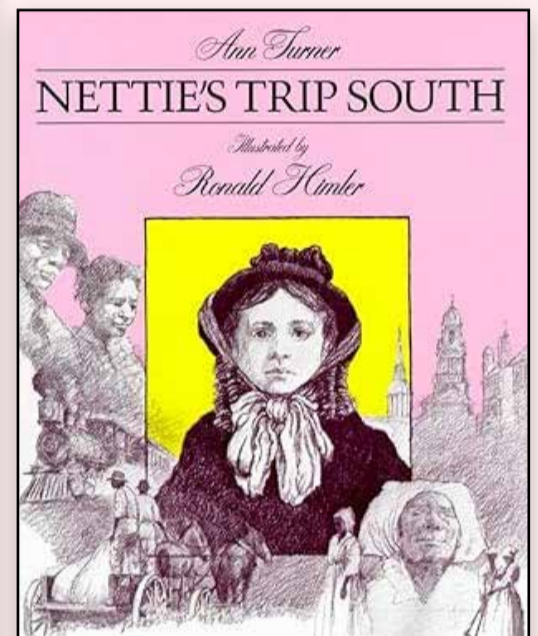
Sounder
by William Armstrong

The movie is a stark portrayal of the bondage that continued through post-Civil War sharecropping, but the cinema is sugar-coated in comparison to the tightly-written novel of barely more than 100 paperback pages. Without giving the storyline away, let's just share that the actual ending is not a happy one for the 11-year-old who grows into an all-too-soon manhood, devoted to his papa and his pooch.



Most Loved in All the World
By Tonya Cherie Hegamin

An enslaved mother spends her evenings sewing a quilt from scraps on the plantation. A little girl watches and wonders, until she received the cape for warmth on her escape venture north along the Underground Railroad. Her mother must stay behind, in her secret mission to help guide others to freedom. This could be paired with a Harriet Tubman bio.



Nettie's Trip South
By Ann Turner

A privileged New England family takes a horse-and-carriage vacation in 1859. Nettie's parents and older siblings seem untouched by all they see, culminating in a slave auction, but her eyes are wide open. She's old enough to know that the fieldworkers are considered three-fifths human, and innocently asks, still too young for sarcasm, why she is not seeing amputees among all the fieldworkers, missing arms and legs?

Artwork is outstanding, even on *Sounder's* paperback cover, which varies from version to version. When you pick up *Most Loved* you feel as though you are holding the quilt. The pencil sketches in *Nettie's Trip* show that basics still can work visual wonders.

Parents: Visit your child's school and your nearby public library. Get them their own cards, which will lead to far less grief than their driver's licenses may bring later on. To begin building an affordable at-home library for a youngster, consider used book sales and giveaways, and/or sift through the piles at thrift stores.

To volunteer as a READ Association tutor, see their website or call (989) 755-8402.

VBM's nonprofit arm launches outreach

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — If she still could speak, what would a homicide victim say about the domestic violence that killed her?

There is no way of knowing precisely, of course, but Patricia Vaughn is a social worker who endured a heartbreaking case in which a woman lost her life to her former significant other, wielding a baseball bat, at the close of a child custody visit.

Patricia is a Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) health care surveyor who reviewed the scenario, names and location withheld, as the Feb. 11 second installment in an eight-week series offered by Victorious Community Development, VBM's non-profit resource to be eligible for public-purpose grant funds. The Houghton-Jones Neighborhood Association is the host site.

In Vaughn's narrative, the slain 25-year-old mother of two, who would be 36 today, might suggest warning signs in the behavior of her partner, even if he currently is estranged, ranging from the physical to the psychological. Red flags include sudden, unexplained possession of weapons, from guns on down to blunt instruments like that baseball bat.

Janell Harrell is the Houghton-Jones building manager and also the project manager for Victorious Community Development, which is moving this year into the former Trinity-St. John's Community Center at Ninth and Cherry. Info is at govcd.org.

Janell says, "The main goal of the Safe Communities, Strong Families Workshop Series is to promote awareness, education, and actionable strategies to prevent gun violence and foster safer neighborhoods. Each workshop is designed to foster a sense of community while providing practical tools and knowledge

SAFE COMMUNITIES, STRONG FAMILIES WORKSHOP SERIES

This 8 week program is dedicated to empowering families and strengthening neighborhoods. Each session focuses on crucial topics such as gun safety, conflict resolution, mental health, financial literacy, and community engagement. Through interactive discussions and practical resources, this series equips participants with the tools to foster safer, more connected, and resilient communities.

Tuesdays Starting Feb. 4th | **5 PM - 7 PM** | **1708 Johnson St. Saginaw, MI 48601**
To sign up for each workshop, call 989-752-1660 or email info@houghtonjones.org

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

- FEB 4TH** 5 PM: **Understanding Gun Safety: Protecting Your Families** - Explore practical tips for safe firearm storage and handling, along with strategies to educate families on preventing accidental injuries and misuse. **FREE Gun locks given to the first 25 people to sign up!**
- FEB 11TH** 5 PM: **Recognizing the Signs: Preventing Violence Before It Starts** - Learn to identify early warning signs of conflict and violence while discovering proactive steps to address and prevent escalation in your community. **Free Stress - Relief Kit to the first 25 people to sign up!**
- FEB 18TH** 5 PM: **Youth Empowerment: Making Positive Choices** - Equip young people with tools to make informed, healthy decisions, build confidence, and become leaders in fostering a culture of respect and responsibility. **Free Youth Gratitude Journal to the first 25 people to sign up.**
- FEB 25TH** 5 PM: **Building Safer Communities: The Power of Collaboration** - Discover how partnerships among neighbors, organizations, and local leaders can create safer environments through shared responsibility and trust. **Free guide on how to start your own neighborhood watch for all.**
- MAR 4TH** 5 PM: **Grief, Healing, and Advocacy: Supporting Families Impacted by Violence** - Find solace and strength through conversations on coping with loss, accessing resources for healing, and advocating for change to honor loved ones. **Free Self Care Kit to the first 25 people to sign up.**
- MAR 11TH** 5 PM: **Engaging with Law Enforcement: Bridging the Gap** - Foster open dialogue between communities and law enforcement to build understanding, trust, and partnerships that prioritize safety and justice. **Free Know Your Rights wallet card for all participants.**
- MAR 18TH** 5 PM: **Media Literacy: The Impact on Violence Perception** - Uncover how media shapes our views on violence and learn critical thinking skills to challenge harmful narratives and promote positive representation. **Free worksheets, fact checking tools, and recommended reading lists for all participants.**
- MAR 25TH** 5 PM: **Celebrating Unity: Family Fun and Safety Day** - Bring families together for a day of celebration, education, and connection featuring activities, safety demonstrations, and resources for a stronger community. **Free family activities, prizes, and information for all!**

PARTNERED WITH: HOUGHTON-JONES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

for violence prevention and gun safety. These sessions encourage participation, dialogue, and action, ensuring a lasting impact on families and the community."

The series continues from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays through the end of March, as follows:

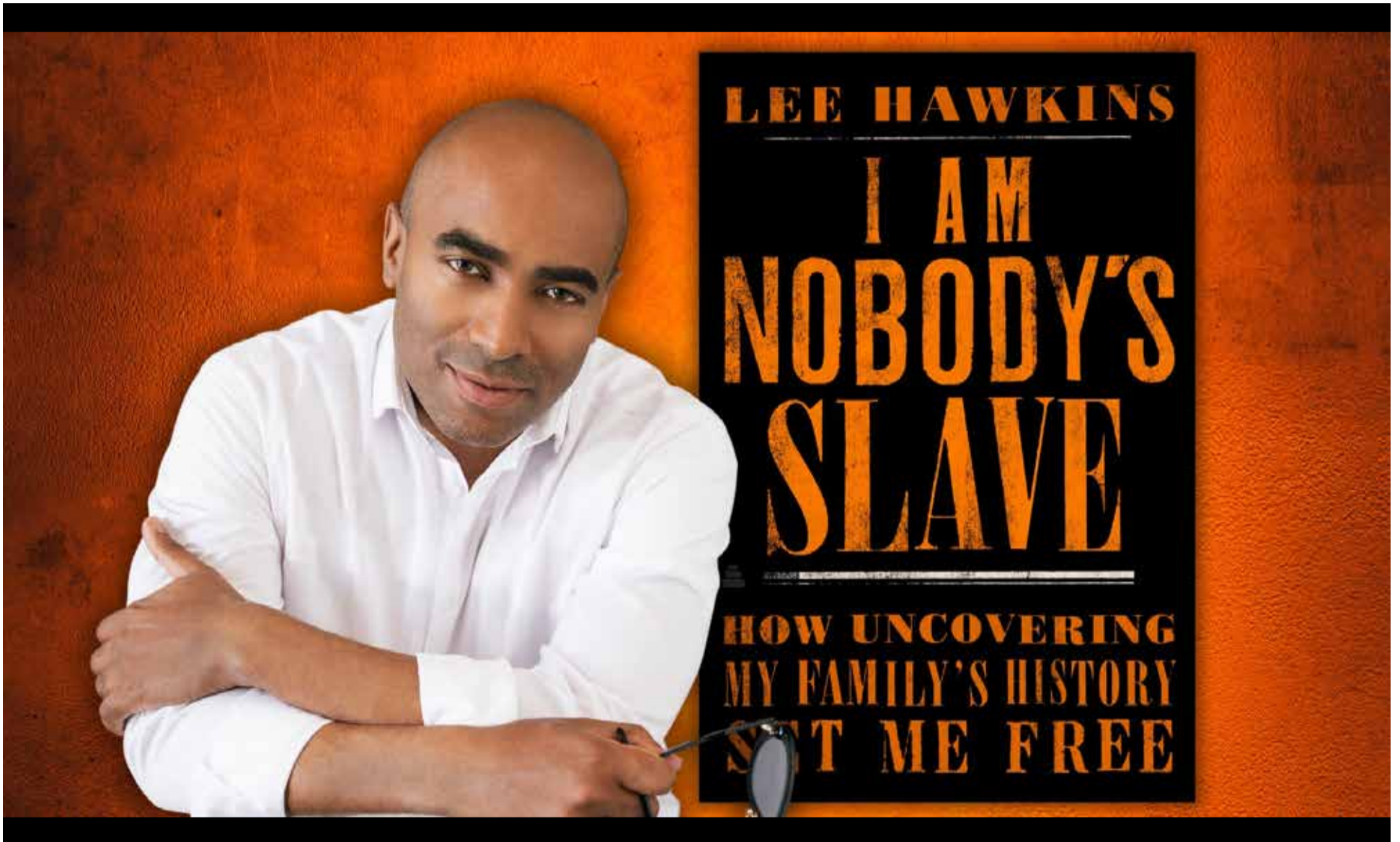
- Feb. 18, young voices.
- Feb. 25, collaboration for safety.
- March 4, support for families.
- March 11, engagement with law enforcement.
- March 18, media's role and responsibilities.
- March 25, family fun wrapup.

Houghton-Jones maintains a Facebook page and the office phone at 1708 Johnson is (989) 752-1660.

COMMUNITY

BHM

Journalist Lee Hawkins to discuss family legacy and racial resilience in upcoming author talk



BY MB STAFF

FLINT — Journalist Lee Hawkins will engage in a compelling discussion about his latest memoir, *I Am Nobody's Slave*, on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. This virtual event hosted by Mott Community College invites audiences to explore a deeply personal and historically rich examination of one Black family's journey through the lasting effects of systemic racism and racial violence.

Hawkins' book traces the experiences of his ancestors, detailing how post-enslavement

trauma, Jim Crow segregation, and racial violence shaped their pursuit of the American Dream. Using a blend of historical data, investigative reporting, and genetic testing, Hawkins sheds light on how the psychological and physiological impact of systemic racism has influenced generations of Black families.

Through his research, Hawkins explores how racism-triggered childhood trauma and chronic stress contributed to shortened life expectancies among his ancestors, while also highlighting their resilience and determination to thrive. His work

offers a powerful perspective on how genealogical research can be a tool for education and healing, making his family's story a broader reflection of America's complex racial history.

More than just a memoir, *I Am Nobody's Slave* serves as a testament to survival, strength, and the pursuit of justice. By weaving together personal narratives with larger themes of racial inequality and generational trauma, Hawkins provides a historically grounded yet deeply personal exploration of the struggles Black Americans have faced—and continue to face—in the fight

for equality.

This discussion will offer attendees the opportunity to engage with Hawkins' research, ask questions, and reflect on how history continues to shape contemporary experiences. The event is free and open to the public, with both in-person and virtual attendance options. Registration is required for participation, and attendees are encouraged to submit questions in advance to enrich the discussion.

For more information or to register for the event, visit: <https://libraryc.org/mcc/67464>.

COMMUNITY

C E L E B R A T I N G

BLACK *History Month*

Art Exhibition

All Month | Downtown Saginaw Center

Hidden Figures Screening & Book Club Launch

Thursday, February 6 | 5:30pm | Main Campus – N007, Downtown Bay City, Downtown Saginaw

Human Library

Thursday, February 10 | 2-4pm | Main Campus – N007

Poetry Read-In

More Details Coming Soon - RSVP below

Black History Month Keynote

Friday, February 28 | 6–7:30pm | Main Campus – Pioneer Gym

For more information

Sydney Smith

989-686-9017 | sydneysmith@delta.edu

RSVP Here

<https://forms.office.com/r/L8h7YV0hCC>



Delta College

COMMUNITY

Broadway hits 'Ain't Too Proud' and 'Tina' coming to Midland Center for the Arts



LOWES MOORE, JAMESON CLANTON, JOSIAH TRAVIS KENT ROGERS, RUDY FOSTER, BRYCE VALLE FROM THE NATIONAL TOURING COMPANY OF AIN'T TOO PROUD (PHOTO CREDIT: JOAN MARCUS)

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND – Two of Broadway's most electrifying musicals are set to take the stage at Midland Center for the Arts in 2025, bringing the legendary stories of The Temptations and Tina Turner to life. With powerful storytelling, unforgettable music, and award-winning choreography, these productions celebrate the impact of two of the most influential acts in music history.

'Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of The Temptations'
May 20-22, 2025

Audiences will be transported to the golden age of Motown as *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of The Temptations* chronicles the group's rise from the streets of Detroit to their place in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The show, nominated for

12 Tony® Awards and winner of the 2019 Tony® Award for Best Choreography, tells a gripping story of brotherhood, ambition, and perseverance against the backdrop of a rapidly changing America.

Set to the beat of some of The Temptations' biggest hits—including *My Girl*, *Just My Imagination*, *Get Ready*, and *Papa Was a Rolling Stone*—the musical captures the triumphs and struggles of the group that *Billboard Magazine* named the greatest R&B group of all time.

'Tina: The Tina Turner Musical'
June 20-21, 2025

Celebrating the legacy of one of music's

most dynamic performers, *Tina – The Tina Turner Musical* follows the extraordinary journey of Tina Turner from her humble beginnings to becoming the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall, the production is a tribute to Turner's resilience, groundbreaking career, and record-breaking performances.

Featuring a soundtrack packed with Turner's biggest hits, including *What's Love Got to Do With It*, *Proud*

Mary, River Deep – Mountain High, and *Simply the Best*, the musical offers an inspiring look at her struggles, victories, and

undeniable impact on music history. Turner, a 12-time Grammy® Award winner, sold more concert tickets than any other solo performer, solidifying her status as an icon.

With high-energy performances, timeless music, and compelling narratives, both *Ain't Too Proud* and *Tina* promise an unforgettable Broadway experience at Midland Center for the Arts. These shows offer audiences a rare opportunity to witness the legacies of The Temptations and Tina Turner brought to life on stage.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit midland-center.org or call 989-631-8250.

MIDLAND
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FOR THE
ARTS



JAYNA ELISE AS TINA TURNER IN TINA - THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL (PHOTO BY JULIETA CERVANTES)

COMMUNITY

Most Saginaw council members mum on marijuana



PREMIER CANNABIS, 910 E. GENESEE AVE., SAGINAW, MI. (FILE PHOTO)

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — Advocates for a halt on any more marijuana dispensaries in the city received no immediate responses Feb. 10 from most City Council members.

Bill Ostash is one of three remaining officials who joined the 2020 vote to allow the newly legalized cannabis stores. At the time, he expressed an outlook that personal adult THC products should not lead to imprisonment, especially when punishment is racially out of proportion. He invited the moratorium backers to exchange research info with him.

Others who voted “yes” five

years ago, Mayor Brenda Moore and Michael Balls, did not offer their views on stopping any new stores. Neither did Pro-Tem Priscilla Garcia, although she echoed former member Reggie Williams, with his law enforcement background, in noting that the dispensaries are not known for selling to minors in the same way as some of the party stores with alcohol and tobacco. Balls spoke of offering hope — training for decent jobs, mainly — as an alternative to dope.

Monique Lamar Silvia has been a dispensaries opponent. None of the four newcomers — Jacinta Seals, Eric Braddock,

Heidi Wiggins or Carly Hammond — indicated how they might vote on the matter.

Saginaw is home to 94 party stores and 12 dispensaries.

As promised, Joyce Seals brought forth a wide range of support for the marijuana moratorium, with a long-term aim of a total shutdown. The former mayor’s current roles are Board of Education trustee, coordinator of the county’s new Health Equity Council, and co-founder of the Family Youth Initiative, which evolved into the Prevention Council.

Inez Williams spoke for both the school district, serving as

family and community engagement specialist, and for the Prevention Council. She asserted that young people, and adults who supply them, may fail to realize that usage can lead to damaged brains, which continue developing into young adulthood. Warning signs are increased truancy and forgetfulness, leading to lower academic achievement.

Pastor Chris Pryor of Victorious Believers Ministries told the City Council he has detected the odor of reefer smoke at school sporting events and even on the clothing of elementary pupils. Regarding City Hall’s collections of state excise taxes, about \$60,000 per dispensary from 10 percent surcharges, Pryor said, “All business is not good business,” adding later, “All money is not good money.”

A pair of factual errors also came forth. The number of cannabis storefronts is not “rapidly increasing” or focused on the East Side. Rather, the count of a dozen has been in place for more than a year, and eight are on the West Side.

Statewide voters in 2018 passed a restricted legalization measure that allows more than 500 communities to decide whether or not to allow sales. The rounded-off 100 that have opened their doors include the larger cities and some low-income rural small towns like Caro and Vassar, home to Premier Provisioning, the only enterprise that has doubled up with stores on the East Side next to the soup kitchen on Genesee and on the West Side in the former Hamilton Bakery on Gratiot.

Speakers on the topic begin about 15 minutes into the meeting, with a video available on YouTube or at saginaw-mi.org.

The council’s next session is at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 24.

COMMUNITY

BHM

Through the lens of history: The Goodridge Brothers' legacy in Saginaw



THE GOODRIDGE BROTHERS (COURTESY PHOTO)

A legacy born from resilience

The Goodridge brothers came from a family that understood the value of hard work and perseverance. Their parents, William C. and Evalina Goodridge, were formerly enslaved but became successful entrepreneurs in York, Pennsylvania. Their father operated a confectionery and toy shop, but more notably, he was an active participant in the Underground Railroad, helping enslaved people escape to freedom.

The Goodridge family fled Pennsylvania during the Civil War, as William C. Goodridge's involvement in the Underground Railroad made them a target for retaliation. Seeking safety and opportunity, the brothers moved to East Saginaw, Michigan, following their sister, Mary Goodridge Nichols, who had settled there in the early 1860s.

Establishing a photography empire

In 1863, the Goodridge brothers opened their first studio in East Saginaw, beginning a decades-long career that would define Saginaw's visual history. Despite facing racial prejudice and financial struggles, they quickly built a reputation for high-quality portraiture and artistic composition, attracting a diverse clientele that included business leaders, lumbermen, and families from all backgrounds.

They weren't just photographers—they were visual historians. Their images documented Saginaw's rise as a lumbering giant, with breathtaking shots of

**CONTINUES ON PG 23,
GOODRIDGE BROTHERS**

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The Goodridge Brothers Photography Studio was more than just a business; it was a groundbreaking institution that documented Saginaw's transformation from a booming

lumber town to an emerging industrial city. Established in 1863 by Glenalvin, William O., and Wallace Goodridge, the studio became one of the most successful in Michigan, capturing the essence of life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

At a time when Blacks faced extreme racial barriers, the Go-

odridge brothers not only built a thriving enterprise but also left behind an unparalleled visual archive of Michigan's history. Their photography preserved historical landmarks, industrial expansion, and everyday life, ensuring that future generations could witness Saginaw's past through their lens.

COMMUNITY



From pg 22, Goodridge Brothers

log drives, sawmills, and lumber camps. Their ability to capture daily life in Michigan's industrial frontier set them apart from other photographers of their time.

Innovation in photography

The Goodridge Brothers were ahead of their time, adopting new photographic techniques to market their images nationwide. They produced Carte de Visites, small collectible portraits that families placed in albums, and stereoviews, dual-image photographs that created a three-dimensional effect when viewed through a stereoscope.

Their talent gained national recognition, and in 1902, they signed a contract with the Albertype Company of Brooklyn, New York, leading to the publication of The Goodridge Brothers' Art Souvenir of Saginaw, Michigan, USA.

After a devastating fire in 1908, which destroyed their studio, the Goodridge Brothers rebuilt and modernized their operations. By 1910, they had acquired a Cirkut camera, allowing them to capture large-scale panoramic photographs—a rare and

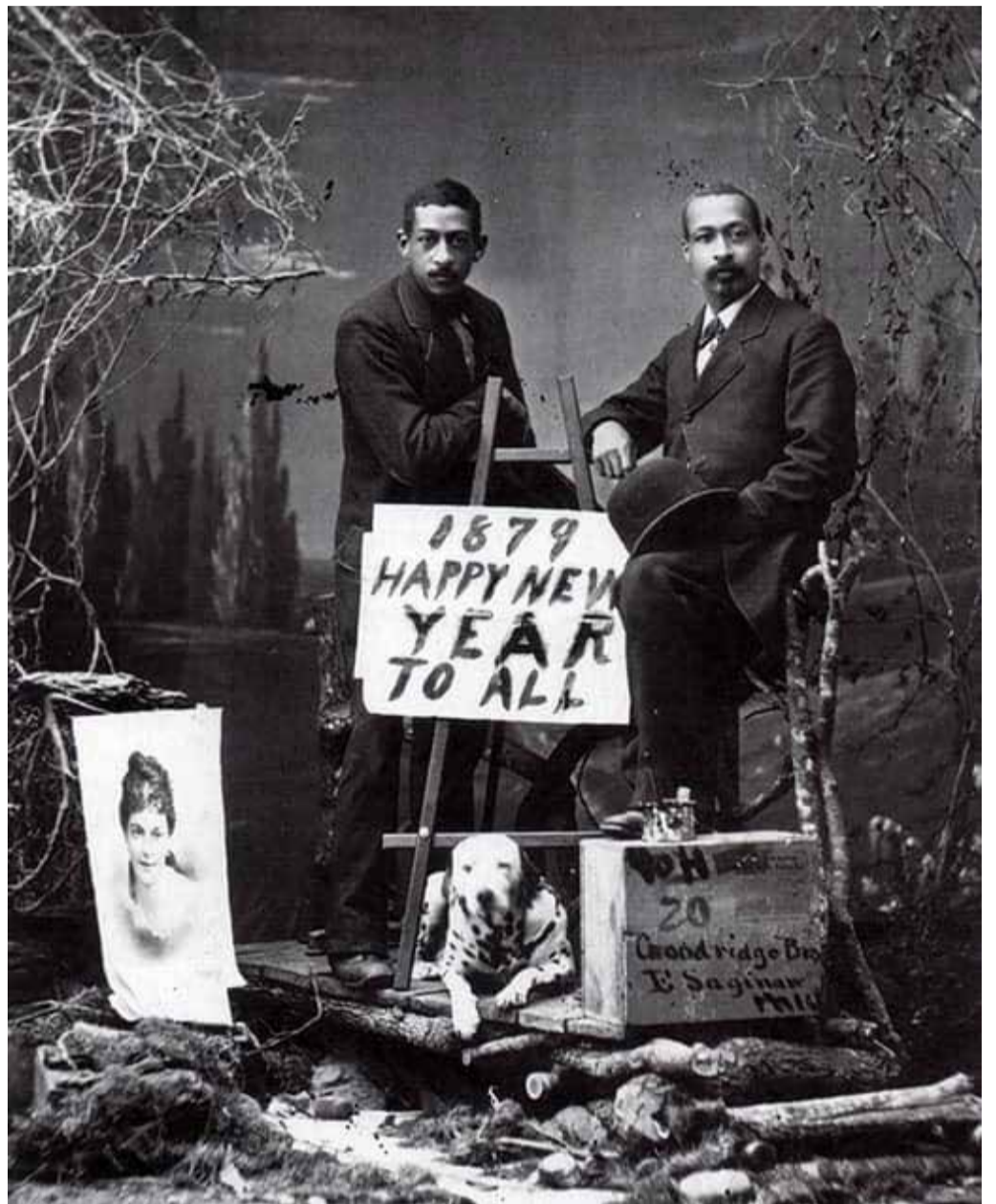
advanced technique for the time.

Wallace Goodridge: A visionary behind the lens

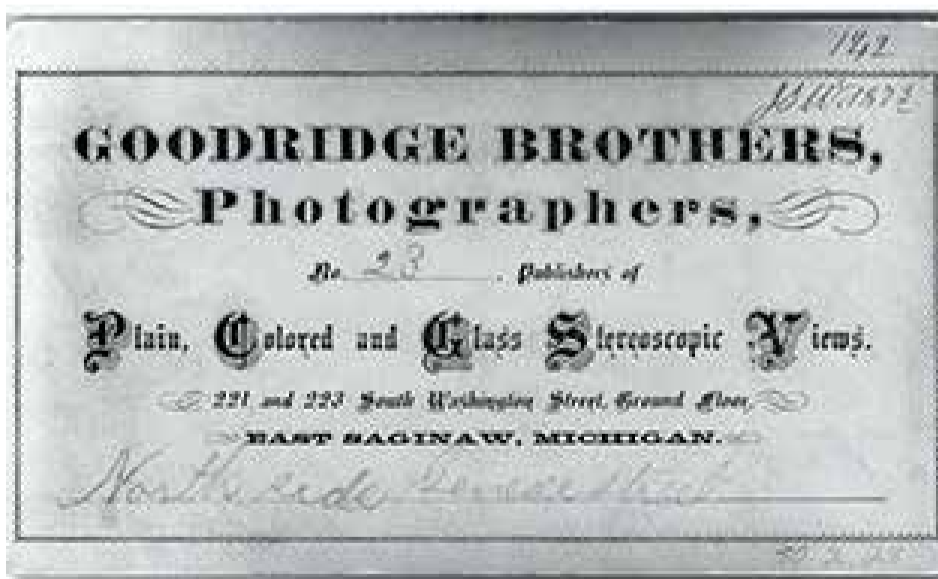
Of the three brothers, Wallace L. Goodridge gained the greatest acclaim, earning a reputation as one of the finest photographers of his era. He was particularly known for his ability to capture dramatic landscapes and industrial scenes, often traveling into remote lumber camps to photograph the rugged life of Michigan's loggers.

He documented the bustling sawmills along the Saginaw River, the massive spring log drives, and the daily struggles and triumphs of lumberjacks. His artistry was unmatched—his compositions were detailed, expressive, and crafted with the awareness that he was preserving history.

At the time of his death in 1922, Wallace was the oldest practicing photog-



1879 PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM O. AND WALLACE L. GOODRIDGE TAKEN IN THEIR STUDIO AT 220 SOUTH WASHINGTON AVENUE.



GOODRIDGE BROTHERS PHOTOGRAPHERS (COURTESY PHOTO)

rapher in Michigan and was believed to be the oldest African American photographer in the United States.

A lasting impact on Saginaw and beyond

Although the Goodridge Photography Studio closed after Wallace's passing, their legacy remains embedded in Saginaw's history. Their meticulous documentation of the city's growth is an invaluable resource for historians, educators, and photography enthusiasts.

Many of their images are pre-

served at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History and in the Local History and Genealogy Collection at Hoyt Library. Their work is also featured in numerous books and exhibitions on American photography, solidifying their status as pioneers in the field.

The Goodridge Brothers' story is one of resilience, artistry, and historical preservation. Through their lens, they captured not just images, but the soul of Saginaw, leaving behind a visual treasure trove that continues to educate and inspire.



SCAN ME



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COMMUNITY

Saginaw Mayor drops 'living on 1979 income' from tax-caps removal push

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — As the City Council considers a public vote to remove longtime property tax cap limits, Mayor Brenda Moore is avoiding the misstatements of her predecessors.

Inaccurate statements that City Hall is “living on an income based on 1979 prices” have prevailed over the years, including from past mayors Dennis Browning and Floyd Kloc. This line was included in the script of her Feb. 6 “State of the City” remarks, prepared in tandem with city staff, but she eliminated it from her address to the Chamber of Commerce because she found it to be misleading.

Property taxes are less than 10 percent of a general budget that also includes income taxes, fees and federal/state aid, and so the city is not living on 1979 fund levels.

In fact, the annual general fund budget was less than \$24 million in 1979 and has risen to \$44 million currently. Inflation has jumped prices more than quadruple since then, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics. City Hall indeed has lost purchasing power through the years, the same as numerous other families and local governing units, especially during the banking/housing crisis in 2008 and then the prime covid years. These are in addition to General Motors and smaller industries leaving town, but Saginaw is far from being forced to budget on a 1979 basis.

Specific dodge-the-caps revenue increases during the years after the “frozen income” include:

- 1980, trash is pulled from the budget, setting a separate new millage, now a fee, for pickup.



SAGINAW MAYOR BRENDA F. MOORE SPEAKS AT THE 2025 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS ON THURSDAY, FEB. 6 AT THE DOW EVENT CENTER. (MB)

- 1989, after repeated voter defeats to remove the '79 caps, a change in strategy leads to citizen approval of a 50 percent city income tax increase.
- 1994, transit is pulled from the budget, setting a separate new millage through STARS.
- 2000, the Civic Center is pulled, setting up a separate new millage, this one countywide, teamed with Dow Chemical sponsorship.
- 2006, a portion of public safety is pulled, in favor of a 7.5-mill special assessment approved by voters.

City leaders have focused on the police/fire tax, even remaining silent on the tax caps in caution until the millage — slightly higher than the Saginaw United school bond — quietly was renewed a year ago in a small mid-winter special election.

The cap revenue limit is \$3.83 million, which has forced

a general reduction of less than 1 mill over nearly a half-century, much from recent rises in home property assessments. Advocates of removal estimate a 46-year loss of a combined \$28 million, or \$600,000 per annum, or 1.3 percent. Far larger setbacks have been caused by industrial decline, led locally by General Motors, along with big losses of federal and state revenue sharing.

Skip a public vote?

Mayor Moore continued in her full address: “The city is working with state legislators to find ways to ease these restrictions. I appreciate the support of our legislators and their efforts to fight for us in Lansing.”

This refers to a push among Democrats in Lansing, including Rep. Amos O’Neal with his past experience on the City Council and County Board, to address local tax limits enacted by political conservatives through the years statewide. Many, including Saginaw’s, were inspired during

Ronald Reagan’s ascending years as a California Proposition 13 tax-slasher.

Members of the previous City Council expressed enthusiasm for O’Neal’s initiative, similar to what the mayor showed at The Dow breakfast event inside a packed Unity Hall, even with the prospect of denying citizens an up-or-down vote on the charter amendment for the tax caps. Usually local officials oppose state and federal mandates, but not in this case.

Since then, however, two drawbacks have emerged:

- Republicans took a majority in the Legislature on Donald Trump’s coattails in November.
- Furthermore, City Manager Tim Morales informed the council during the close of the Jan. 31 daylong planning session that the state legislation, if somehow still adopted, would remove only the revenue cap, not the millage rate limit. (The city would thus gain a mere \$500,000, as opposed to \$2.2 million from getting rid of both cap limits.)

And so the process is on track for a “lift-the-caps” referendum at an undetermined date, which would add a potential rounded-off 3.3 mills, roughly half of the Saginaw United/Handley/SASA school bond from 2020.

HEALTH

Michigan reports first pediatric flu deaths of the season, urges vaccination



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has confirmed the state's first two influenza-associated pediatric deaths of the 2024-2025 flu season, marking a tragic reminder of the serious impact of the virus. The cases involve children from Wayne and Genesee counties, both of whom contracted seasonal Influenza A (H1N1).

These deaths contribute to

the 57 pediatric influenza-related fatalities reported nationwide this season, with additional Michigan cases currently under investigation. Public health officials are urging families to take preventive measures, including vaccination and early treatment for flu-like symptoms.

MDHHS Chief Medical Executive Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian expressed condolences to the affected families, emphasizing that flu-related deaths remain a serious concern across the country. Last flu season, nearly 200 chil-

dren nationwide lost their lives to the virus. Bagdasarian stressed that while flu rates remain high, it is not too late to receive a flu vaccine, which can help prevent severe complications, hospitalizations, and fatalities.

Local health leaders echoed the urgency. Dr. Michela Corsi, medical director for the Genesee County Health Department, highlighted the importance of vaccination, particularly for young children and older adults, who are at higher risk of severe

flu complications. Wayne County Health Director Dr. Abdul El-Sayed reinforced that the flu remains a life-threatening illness, and vaccination is the most effective way to protect children and communities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that influenza-like illness (ILI) outpatient visits in Michigan are at their highest levels in 15 years. Since the start of the season, nearly 10,000 flu-related hospitalizations have been reported across the state, with weekly hospital admissions continuing to climb.

Despite these concerning trends, pediatric flu vaccination rates in Michigan remain low, with only 15.1% of eligible children receiving the vaccine this season, according to the Michigan Care Improvement Registry. Public health officials stress that vaccination is still beneficial even late in the season, particularly for those at higher risk of complications, including pregnant individuals, young children, and the elderly.

In addition to vaccination, early treatment with antiviral medications can reduce the severity of flu symptoms and lower the risk of hospitalization. Health experts encourage parents to seek medical attention promptly if their child develops flu-like symptoms, especially if they have underlying health conditions.

Flu vaccines are widely available at health care providers, pharmacies, and local health departments. To locate a flu vaccine, visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or contact your local health department. More information about flu prevention and treatment is available at [Michigan.gov/flu](https://www.michigan.gov/flu).

HEALTH

MyMichigan Medical Center Midland expands emergency department

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND — MyMichigan Medical Center Midland is undergoing a multi-year renovation project to expand its Emergency Department (ED), increasing capacity while enhancing patient experience, efficiency, and safety.

As patient volume continues to grow, system-wide advancements and expanded capabilities have made upgrades essential. Deanna Knopp, R.N., B.S.N., MyMichigan Health system director of emergency services, highlighted the hospital's designation as a Level 2 Trauma Center, an accredited Primary Stroke Center, and a STEMI receive-

ing center as key factors driving the expansion. With more complex cases arriving, the Emergency Department must continue evolving to meet community needs.

The project is being completed in phases to minimize disruptions.

Phase 1, now complete, increased staffing and converted holding beds into emergency beds, expanding total department capacity by 17% and increasing the number of emergency treatment beds by 42%.

Phase 2, currently under construction, focuses on improving security, registration, triage, and waiting areas, while adding six

additional spaces for lower acuity patients who do not require a bed. This phase will increase capacity by an additional 18% and is expected to be finished by August 2025.

Key improvements include expanding the waiting area to accommodate up to 50 people for greater space and privacy. Security, registration, and provider areas are being redesigned for safety and efficiency. New triage rooms, a tech workspace, and six vertical treatment spaces will improve patient flow and reduce wait times. Noise reduction measures will also enhance the environment for both patients and staff.

Knopp acknowledged that construction may temporarily impact wayfinding, parking, and drop-off locations and urged patients to follow posted signs for guidance. She expressed appreciation for the community's patience and emphasized that the Emergency Department remains open 24/7 to provide high-quality care.

Once Phase 2 is complete, Phase 3 will further expand the Emergency Department to meet projected future demand, though the timeline has yet to be determined.

For updates on the project, visit www.mymichigan.org/emergency-midland.



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Saginaw United School-Based Health Center

GRAND OPENING



Ceremony

February 20, 2025 8:15am - 10:30am
1903 N. Niagara St. Saginaw, MI 48602

The ceremony will feature remarks from local leaders, representatives, and School-Based Health Center staff. Guests will have the opportunity to tour the state-of-the-art facility, meet healthcare professionals, and learn more about the center's services and impact on the community. You will be welcomed at the main entrance of the school.

Please RSVP by February 11th to Angelia Williams at awilliams@glbhealth.org

POLITICS

Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson, a Democrat, announces run for governor



GENESEE COUNTY SHERIFF CHRIS SWANSON SPEAKS TO SUPPORTERS AT MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN FLINT ON FEB. 6, 2025, AS HE ANNOUNCES HIS CANDIDACY FOR MICHIGAN GOVERNOR. (COURTESY PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT — Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson has officially entered the race for Michigan governor, launching his campaign on Thursday, Feb. 6, at Mott Community College in Flint. The event drew more than 400 supporters from across the state.

“When there’s a challenge, we will solve it. When there’s a crisis, we will bring calm. When there’s an opportunity, we will seize it,” Swanson said. “I believe everyone has value. Michigan has value. It’s why I’ve always tried to find ways to help and bring people together. I believe that to-

gether, we are tough enough to win for Michigan.”

Swanson, a Democrat, has served as Genesee County Sheriff since 2020 and was re-elected in 2024. He currently oversees Michigan’s fifth-largest sheriff’s office.

The 2026 gubernatorial race is shaping up to be particularly significant. In the 2024 elections, Republicans experienced a notable resurgence, reclaiming the presidency and making gains in various state legislatures. This shift has emboldened the GOP, which now views Michigan as a prime opportunity to flip the governor’s seat. Democrats, on the other hand, are determined to maintain their hold on the state.

In true battleground form, Michigan’s governorship has consistently alternated between Democratic and Republican leadership over the past several decades. Gretchen Whitmer (Democrat) has served as governor since 2019, taking over from Rick Snyder (Republican), who held the office from 2011 to 2019. Before Snyder, Jennifer Granholm (Democrat) served from 2003 to 2011, succeeding John Engler (Republican), who governed from 1991 to 2003. Engler followed James Blanchard (Democrat), who served from 1983 to 1991, after William Milliken (Republican), Michigan’s longest-serving governor, led the state from 1969 to 1983.

The 2026 election will determine the successor to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who is term-limited and unable to seek re-election.

Declared candidates vying for the position include Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a fellow Democrat, and Senate Republican Leader Aric Nesbitt. Former Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, a Republican, has filed paperwork to explore a potential campaign, while Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan has entered the race as an independent.

With a diverse field of candidates and heightened political stakes, Michigan voters will play a crucial role in shaping the state’s future direction.

POLITICS

From policy shifts to controversial decisions, here's what Trump has done in his first 30 days

BY MB STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Since his inauguration on Jan. 20, President Donald J. Trump has implemented a series of significant and often controversial policy changes and executive actions, aiming to reshape various facets of American governance and society.

Immigration and border security

President Trump declared a national emergency at the southern border, reinstating the "Remain in Mexico" policy and deploying additional military personnel to curb unauthorized crossings. He has also designated certain Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and has expressed intentions to revise birthright citizenship laws. Additionally, he has directed the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America", a move that has sparked international debate.

Economic and energy policies

To bolster domestic industry, the administration imposed a 25% tariff on steel and aluminum imports and declared a national energy emergency to increase oil and gas production. These measures aim to strengthen American manufacturing and reduce reliance on foreign resources, though they have ignited discussions about potential trade tensions and economic impacts.

Cultural and educational reforms

In an effort to promote "patriotic education", President Trump

has restructured cultural institutions such as the Kennedy Center and the National Endowment for the Arts, resulting in the elimination of grants for certain marginalized groups. The administration has also introduced policies that restrict teachings on race and gender, emphasizing a traditional interpretation of American history. Notably, an executive order titled "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports" effectively bars transgender athletes from participating in women's sports, leading to widespread debate and legal challenges.

Government efficiency and workforce changes

To streamline government operations, President Trump established the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), appointing Elon Musk to lead the initiative. This department has been tasked with identifying and planning large-scale reductions in federal staff, with agencies instructed to hire one employee for every four who depart. These actions have raised concerns about transparency, potential conflicts of interest, and the overall impact on federal operations.

Civil rights and social policies

The President signed Executive Order 14151, titled "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing", directing federal agencies to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This move has been praised by those who view such programs as unnecessary bureaucracy, while critics argue it undermines efforts to address systemic inequalities. Furthermore, the administration has officially recognized only two

genders—male and female—affecting various federal policies and protections for transgender individuals.

Foreign policy and national security

On the international front, the Trump administration has withdrawn the United States from the Paris Climate Accord, citing economic concerns. Cuba has been re-designated as a state sponsor of terrorism, reversing previous policy shifts. Additionally, President Trump has expressed intentions to negotiate directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, a move that has significant implications for NATO dynamics and U.S. foreign relations.

Judicial and legal actions

As part of his approach to justice reform, President Trump has pardoned approximately 1,500 individuals convicted in connection with the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot. He has also revoked security clearances for several high-ranking political figures, citing national security concerns. These actions have been met with both support and criticism, reflecting deep divisions in public opinion.

Key appointments in the Trump administration

President Trump has assembled a team of key officials aligned with his policy objectives:

- **Secretary of State: Marco Rubio**, former U.S. Senator from Florida.
- **Secretary of Defense: Pete Hegseth**, a

former Army National Guard officer and media commentator.

- **Secretary of Homeland Security: Kristi Noem**, former Governor of South Dakota.
- **Attorney General: Pam Bondi**, former Attorney General of Florida.
- **Secretary of Health and Human Services: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**, an environmental attorney known for his vaccine skepticism.
- **Director of National Intelligence: Tulsi Gabbard**, former U.S. Representative from Hawaii.
- **Director of the Central Intelligence Agency: John Ratcliffe**, former Director of National Intelligence and U.S. Representative from Texas.
- **White House Press Secretary: Karoline Leavitt**, notable for being the youngest to hold the position.
- **Director of the Office of Management and Budget: Russell Vought**, returning to the role he held in the previous administration.

"Border Czar": Tom Homan, former acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

As President Trump's second term progresses, his administration's policies and actions continue to generate significant debate and discussion, both domestically and internationally.

POLITICS

Legal battle intensifies over Flint City Council vacancy



BEVERLY BIGGS-LEAVY

BY MB STAFF

FLINT – A candidate seeking to represent Flint's 3rd Ward is asking a Genesee Circuit Court judge to recognize her as the rightful appointee to the Flint City Council, arguing that she has been twice elected but denied the seat due to ongoing disputes.

Beverly Biggs-Leavy filed a motion on Feb. 11, requesting to

intervene in an existing lawsuit that aims to force the council to fill the vacant seat left by the passing of Councilman Quincy Murphy. The legal filing asserts that Biggs-Leavy was elected once through a public vote and again by council appointment, but neither instance resulted in her taking office.

The vacancy stems from the September 29 passing of Council-

man Quincy Murphy. In November, Biggs-Leavy participated in a special recall election, where she won the most votes among four candidates. However, because Murphy had passed away before the election, officials ruled that the results could not be certified, leaving the 3rd Ward without representation.

In a separate attempt to resolve the vacancy, the Flint City

Council held a vote during its February 5 meeting. Biggs-Leavy claims to have secured the necessary five votes, which should have confirmed her appointment. However, Councilman Leon El-Alamin later switched his vote to former council member Kerry Nelson, preventing her from taking office.

Since Murphy's passing, the council has attempted 168 rounds of voting to fill the seat but has failed to reach a consensus, leaving residents of the 3rd Ward without representation.

The legal dispute is further complicated by a December lawsuit filed by Flint's Ethics and Accountability Board, which accused the City Council of failing to act within the 30-day deadline mandated by the city charter. In response, Judge Elizabeth A. Kelly ordered council members into mediation in an effort to resolve the matter, but negotiations collapsed within a day.

Now, Biggs-Leavy is seeking a court ruling declaring her the rightful 3rd Ward representative, arguing that she has already been twice elected—once by voters and once by the council.

With no resolution in sight, the 3rd Ward is set to elect its own representative in the upcoming May 6 primary election. Biggs-Leavy is among four candidates competing for the seat, alongside A.C. Dumas, LaShawn Johnson, and Richard Jones. The top two candidates from the primary will move on to the August 5 general election, with the winner serving the remainder of Murphy's term, which runs through the end of next year.

For now, Flint's 3rd Ward remains without a voice on the council, and whether the seat will be filled by judicial intervention or left to voter decision remains to be seen.

EDUCATION

SVSU board approves expansion of student housing and research initiatives



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY IS EXPANDING STUDENT HOUSING WITH NEW APARTMENT-STYLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR 96 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS, SET FOR COMPLETION BY AUGUST 2026. (COURTESY PHOTO | SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW – Saginaw Valley State University is responding to increasing demand for on-campus living by approving the construction of additional student housing.

During its regular meeting on Monday, Feb. 10, the SVSU Board of Control authorized an additional \$6 million to expand housing capacity, bringing the total investment to \$12.3 million for apartment-style accommodations for 96 students.

The decision builds on the Board's previous approval in October for 48 new residential spaces, doubling the project's scope. Construction is set to begin this

summer and is expected to be completed by August 2026.

"We are seeing unprecedented demand from students who want to live on campus," said Noel Hornbacher, SVSU vice president for Administration and Business Affairs. "We provide exceptional safety, amenities, and a rich on-campus experience. That's why we've earned our national 'best dorms' ranking, and that's a big part of why students are eager to live on campus. The expansion is intended to respond to the growing student demand.

"By moving forward with these new additional units now, rather than waiting, we will see some cost savings, due to overall efficiency, and that too is good

news for our students."

In addition to expanding student housing, the Board approved an increase in funding for SVSU's Lake Huron Environmental Research Station. Originally budgeted at \$10 million, the project has now been expanded to \$13 million to enhance the scope and outfitting of the facility. This initiative marks the first university research station on Lake Huron, strengthening SVSU's role in environmental research and conservation efforts.

The funding includes \$7.5 million in capital outlay from the State of Michigan, initially approved in December 2023. The expansion will allow for greater research capabilities and ensure

that the facility is fully equipped to support students, faculty, and collaborative scientific endeavors.

The Board also granted tenure to Amy Guenther, assistant professor of teacher education, and Melvin McDowell, assistant professor of social work; reappointed Andrews Hooper Pavlik PLC as SVSU's auditors for fiscal year 2025; appointed John Cherry, JoAnn Crary, Heather Gallegos, and Lindsay Eggers to serve as the Board's nominating committee; approved an update to SVSU's mission statement; and established the Board's meeting schedule for the 2025-26 academic year.

EDUCATION

What if the U.S. Department of Education closes?



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

The U.S. Department of Education plays a crucial role in overseeing, funding, and supporting education across the country. But what would happen if it were shut down?

Oversight & Accountability

The Department of Education ensures that schools and universities comply with federal laws. If you have a complaint regarding discrimination, accessibility, or funding misuse, it often falls under their jurisdiction. Additionally, institutions receiving federal funds must undergo audits that are overseen by the department. Without this oversight, accountability could shift to individual states or disappear altogether.

Funding & Programs at Risk

A significant portion of federal education funding comes through the Department of Education, including:

- **Title I Funding** – Provides financial

assistance to schools in low-income areas.

- **Special Education (IDEA) Grants** – Helps schools support students with disabilities.
- **Student Loans & Grants** – The department oversees federal student aid, including Pell Grants and subsidized loans.
- **Early Education Programs** – Programs like Head Start, which support early childhood education, receive federal funding.

If the department were to close, these programs might be transferred to other federal agencies, state governments, scaled back, or eliminated entirely.

The Big Question: What Comes Next?

Would states be equipped to take on these responsibilities? Would funding remain stable, or would disparities between wealthy and underfunded schools widen? The future of education would be uncertain, with significant consequences for students, teachers, and families across the nation.

For a deeper dive into the potential impact, check out NPR's coverage at [npr.org](https://www.npr.org).

Board of Education reviews early literacy efforts

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, MI – The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and educators across the state are actively working to improve early literacy skills and student achievement, with a strong focus on implementing evidence-based reading instruction. During a recent State Board of Education meeting, MDE's literacy team provided updates on ongoing initiatives and advocated for making Science of Reading training mandatory for all public elementary school teachers in Michigan.

State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice emphasized the urgency of these efforts, citing recently released test scores that highlight the need for significant improvements in early literacy. He pointed to Michigan's new literacy and dyslexia laws as a crucial step forward but called on the legislature to take further action by requiring all K-5 teachers to complete Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training.

Educators and administrators from all 56 intermediate school districts participated in a virtual Dyslexia Summit on January 31, with over 2,100 attendees and 141 group watch parties held across the state. The summit provided guidance on supporting students with dyslexia using a multi-tiered system of support, reflecting Michigan's commitment to improving reading instruction.

The Committee for Literacy Achievement, established through the state's fiscal year

2025 budget, is working to allocate \$87 million in funding to districts, with applications opening in June and allocations scheduled for fall 2025. The committee, which began meeting in December 2024, is responsible for evaluating literacy materials—including curricula, textbooks, and professional development resources—to create a ranking system for literacy tools used in Michigan classrooms.

Another key initiative is the Reading Excellence and Advancing District (READ) Innovation Grant, a \$10 million competitive grant program that will award \$500,000 each to selected districts. Applications will be accepted beginning in summer 2025.

Professional development remains a priority, with 3,175 educators already completing LETRS training and 6,804 currently enrolled. MDE continues to host webinars and conferences to inform teachers about the new literacy laws and funding opportunities.

Dr. Delsa Chapman, deputy superintendent of MDE's Division of Assessment, School Improvement, and Systems Support, reinforced the significance of these efforts, noting that early literacy is a foundation for success in all subject areas. Improving reading proficiency remains a key goal in Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan, and state leaders are working to ensure that students have the resources and instruction needed to build strong literacy skills.

For more information on Michigan's literacy initiatives, visit www.michigan.gov/mde.



U.S. Department of
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Over \$1M awarded to Mid-Michigan schools to boost FAFSA completion

BY MB STAFF

MICHIGAN — The Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) has awarded over \$10 million to 75 school districts statewide as part of the Universal FAFSA Challenge, a statewide initiative aimed at increasing FAFSA completion rates, expanding access to financial aid, and supporting students in their postsecondary education and career training.

Several Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint-area school districts are among the recipients, collectively receiving over \$1 million to implement programs that encourage FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement. These schools will use the funding to integrate FAFSA completion strategies, provide financial aid workshops, and support students in navigating the college and career training process.

The following Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint-area school districts have been awarded funds under the MiLEAP FAFSA Challenge:

- Bay City Academy – \$31,753.20
- Bentley Community School District – \$51,598.95
- Birch Run Area Schools – \$134,157.27
- Chesaning Union Schools – \$78,589.17
- Clio Area School District – \$175,436.43
- Coleman Community Schools – \$31,753.20
- Frankenmuth School District – \$94,465.77
- International Academy of Flint – \$45,248.31
- Madison Academy – \$43,660.65



HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL, PART OF SAGINAW TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, IS PICTURED. THE DISTRICT RECEIVED \$287,366.46 THROUGH THE MILEAP UNIVERSAL FAFSA CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT FAFSA COMPLETION AND COLLEGE READINESS. (COURTESY PHOTO | SAGINAW TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS)

- Merrill Community Schools – \$41,279.16
- Midland Public Schools – \$474,710.34
- Saginaw Township Community Schools – \$287,366.46
- St. Charles Community Schools – \$61,918.74
- The New Standard Academy (Flint) – \$19,845.75

MiLEAP officials emphasized that increasing FAFSA completion rates is a key strategy in expanding postsecondary education access for Michigan students. FAFSA completion is required for students to access federal and state financial aid, including the Michigan Achievement Scholarship, which offers up to \$27,500 toward a four-year degree or tuition-free options for community college and trade programs.

Michelle Richard, deputy director of higher education at MiLEAP, stated that every student should have the opportunity to pursue their educational and career dreams, regardless of financial barriers. She noted that by participating in the Universal FAFSA Challenge, these districts are ensuring that all graduates

are equipped with the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their futures.

The awarded school districts will integrate FAFSA completion into their high school graduation requirements, ensuring all seniors have the support they need to complete the financial aid application. Schools will also provide financial aid literacy sessions, one-on-one FAFSA completion assistance, and direct partnerships with college advisors to guide students through the process.

Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea, director of MiLEAP, praised participating districts for their leadership in prioritizing student success. She commended the schools that are championing FAFSA completion and stated that this initiative sends a powerful message that higher education and career training are within reach for every student.

Noticeably missing from the list of awarded districts is Saginaw Public Schools, one of the largest districts in the Great Lakes Bay Region. While several surrounding districts secured funding, Saginaw Public Schools' absence from the grant recipients

raises questions about the district's approach to FAFSA completion efforts and financial aid accessibility for its students.

Students and families can complete the FAFSA online at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov). Recent updates to the FAFSA process have reduced the number of questions from 108 to 36, making the application easier and faster to complete. Most students and families can now complete the form in under 30 minutes.

With more than a dozen states implementing universal FAFSA policies, early evidence suggests that these efforts lead to increased FAFSA completion, higher high school graduation rates, and greater college enrollment. Michigan hopes to see similar success through the Universal FAFSA Challenge as part of its larger goal to increase the number of residents with postsecondary education and workforce credentials.

For more information on financial aid opportunities and FAFSA completion support, students and families are encouraged to contact their school counselors or visit Michigan.gov/FAFSA.

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EDUCATION

Former Jerome Elementary undergoing renovations to become high quality, state of the art green STEM preschool model



COURTESY PHOTOS

SAGINAW – Jerome was established as a Kindergarten through 5th grade elementary school in 1976 by the Saginaw Public School District. In 2013, due to low student capacity as well as district wide financial challenges. Dr. Ericka Taylor was the principal assigned to Jerome that year and understood first hand why the school was being offlined, especially in consideration of the many structural needs of the building and grounds.

However, when Dr. Taylor joined the Saginaw Intermediate School District in 2017 as the Director of Early Childhood, she was surprised to learn that Jerome was a preschool site that was being rented and utilized (in the very same condition) to provide early childhood services which include preschool classes, home visiting teachers and maternal infant support for the families of children birth through 5 years of age. This was an immediate reminder of the reasons why

Jerome was originally offlined, but it also spurred a deeper desire and vision to give our children and families in Saginaw County not only what they need, but what they deserve, which is the very best learning environment that we can possibly imagine and provide, despite their economic status and/or zip code!

A groundbreaking ceremony was held this past May and renovations are currently underway transforming the former Jerome elementary school into the new Jerome Preschool servicing students ages birth to 4 years old! These renovations will include a new roof, awning, heating/cooling system, parking lot and greenhouse. There will be designated space for onsite medical services for children and families, shared community space for partnerships with local colleges/universities, and community organizations. All classrooms and hallways will be updated with new lighting, paint and flooring. The former gymnasium will now be a multipurpose space for staff

professional development opportunities as well as community activities and events.

These renovations will not only enhance and beautify the local community, but will also give our youngest learners the academic, social and emotional foundation they need and deserve to begin their K-12 endeavors and beyond by providing them with a high quality, state of the art building focused on Green STEM. Our vision is that this preschool site will provide an early childhood model that we can replicate not only in Saginaw, but across the state of Michigan and beyond.

A huge thank you to Saginaw ISD Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Collier for allowing us to dream big for the children and families in our community! We welcome any questions you may have to be sent to Dr. Ericka Taylor, Executive Director of Early Childhood, at etaylor@sisd.cc.

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Sabrina Beeman-Jackson

Saginaw ISD Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director

About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

Established in 1965, Head Start promotes school readiness for children, ages three to five, in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services.

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

Early Head Start, launched in 1995, provides support to low-income infants, toddlers,

pregnant women and their families.

EHS programs enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Together Head Start and Early Head Start have served tens of millions of children and their families.

At Saginaw ISD Head Start our attentive staff is available Monday through Friday to answer all your questions and make every effort to ensure you are 100 percent satisfied.

Saginaw ISD Head Start
Claytor Administrative Building
3200 Perkins Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone 989.752.2193
Fax 989.921.7146

Office Hours

Monday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Tuesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Wednesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Thursday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Sunday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

For additional information concerning Saginaw ISD Head Start visit: www.saginawheadstart.org

Source: www.saginawheadstart.org

“Head Start graduates are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to need special education, repeat a grade, or commit crimes in adolescence.”

Joe Baca, former Dem. California Congressman

“Our mission is to provide high quality services, developing school readiness and family empowerment for prenatal to age five children and families by working in partnership with parents and the community.”
-Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Joann Fabrics to close 33 Michigan stores, including Flint, Saginaw and Midland



THE JOANN FABRICS STORE AT 2920 TITABAWASSEE RD IN SAGINAW IS AMONG 33 MICHIGAN LOCATIONS SET TO CLOSE AS PART OF THE COMPANY'S NATIONWIDE DOWNSIZING. (MB)

- Battle Creek
- Grosse Pointe
- Fort Gratiot
- Canton
- Madison Heights
- Bloomfield Hills
- Lapeer
- Shelby Township
- Novi
- Roseville
- Taylor
- Auburn Hills
- Brighton
- Rochester Hills
- Allen Park
- Chesterfield
- Burton
- Grandville
- Holland
- Jackson
- Lansing (Frondor Shopping Center)
- Norton Shores
- Benton Harbor
- Adrian
- Alpena
- Petoskey
- Big Rapids

BY MB STAFF

MICHIGAN — Joann Fabrics, a longtime staple for crafters and sewing enthusiasts, is set to close the majority of its Michigan locations as part of a nationwide restructuring effort.

According to bankruptcy court filings made Wednesday, the retailer will shutter 33 of its 41 Michigan stores, affecting communities across the state, including Flint, Saginaw, and Midland.

The closures are part of a broader plan to downsize operations, with nearly 500 of Joann's roughly 850 stores set to close

nationwide.

The Ohio-based company initially filed for bankruptcy protection in March 2024, securing \$132 million in financing as it worked to manage a debt burden exceeding \$1 billion.

The decision to close stores was not made lightly, according to a company spokesperson.

"This was a very difficult decision to make, given the major impact we know it will have on our Team Members, our customers, and all of the communities we serve," the spokesperson told USA TODAY. "A careful analysis of store performance and future strategic fit for the company determined which stores should re-

main operating as usual at this time."

For cities like Flint, Saginaw, and Midland, the loss of Joann Fabrics marks another blow to local retail options. Saginaw, in particular, has seen a wave of store closures in recent months, including Party City, Edible Arrangements, Dunham's, and H&M.

Michigan store closures

The following Michigan locations are set to close:

- Flint
- Saginaw
- Midland
- Essexville

Stores remaining open

While most of Michigan's Joann locations are closing, a few will continue operations:

- Grand Rapids
- Lansing – Delta Township (3750 W. Saginaw St.)
- Livonia
- Mount Pleasant
- Portage
- Traverse City
- White Lake

No official timeline has been announced for the closures, but they are expected to take effect immediately.

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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Chick-fil-A opens new Saginaw location

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — After months of anticipation, Chick-fil-A has officially opened its doors at 2525 Tittabawassee Road, bringing its signature chicken sandwiches, waffle fries, and hospitality to Saginaw Township.

The restaurant, which operates Monday through Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd who braved the winter storm to attend its grand opening celebration on Feb. 13.

Alongside their first orders of crispy chicken and hand-spun milkshakes, attendees were surprised with free stuffed cows, a nod to Chick-fil-A's beloved "Eat Mor Chikin" campaign.

As part of its commitment to supporting local communities, the restaurant marked its opening with a \$25,000 donation to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, helping to fight food insecurity in the region.

In addition to serving meals, the Saginaw Chick-fil-A will participate in the Chick-fil-A Shared Table Program, an initiative that repurposes surplus food and donates it to local soup kitchens and food pantries.

The new location features a modern dining area, efficient drive-thru service, and Chick-fil-A's signature customer service, known for friendly staff and their famous "my pleasure" responses. Guests can enjoy classic menu favorites like the Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich, Spicy Deluxe, Nuggets, and Frosted Lemonade, as well as seasonal offerings and catering options.




CHICK-FIL-A, LOCATED AT 2525 TITTABAWASSEE ROAD IN SAGINAW TOWNSHIP IS NOW OPEN.

BUSINESS + FINANCE



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SPORTS

Claressa Shields secures place in boxing history

BY MICHELLE MCCOY

FLINT — In 2016, after winning her second Olympic gold medal, Claressa Shields declared herself the “GWOAT”—the Greatest Woman of All Time. What began as a self-imposed title may now be undeniable.

On Sunday, Feb. 2, with thousands of fans packed into the Dort Financial Center in Flint, Shields solidified her legacy as one of the sport’s all-time greats, overcoming adversity to become boxing’s first-ever undisputed women’s heavyweight champion.

The historic homecoming fight nearly didn’t happen.

Just nine days before stepping into the ring, Shields suffered a torn labrum in her left shoulder, an injury that left her unable to lift her arm for days. Despite the setback, she pushed forward, determined not to let her hometown down.

“I really didn’t want to let Flint down,” Shields said after the fight. “I couldn’t really use my jab the way that I wanted to, but I did the best that I could... now I think I may have to have surgery.”

That determination carried her through ten grueling rounds



CLARESSA SHIELDS AND DANIELLE PERKINS DURING THEIR UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE BOUT ON SUNDAY, FEB. 2, AT DORT FINANCIAL CENTER IN FLINT, MI. (MB)

against top-ranked contender Danielle Perkins. Though she couldn’t rely on her usual powerful jab, Shields adapted, unleashing a relentless assault of straight rights and overhand punches. She controlled the fight from the opening bell, landing precise shots and keeping Perkins on the defensive. In Round 3, an overhand right staggered Perkins, nearly securing an early stoppage, but Perkins showed resilience, absorbing the punishment and pressing forward.

As the fight wore on, Perkins attempted to rally. In Round 7, Shields landed a straight right that visibly hurt Perkins, forcing her into survival mode. Understanding she needed a knockout to win, Perkins became more aggressive in the final three rounds, trying to pressure Shields and turn the tide. But Shields remained composed, continuing to land clean, effective punches.

With seconds remaining in the tenth and final round, Perkins threw a slow left hand. Shields slipped the punch and countered with a sharp, perfectly timed right, sending Perkins crashing to the canvas. The crowd at Dort Financial Center erupted as Per-

kins struggled to regain her footing. The referee signaled for the action to resume just as the final bell rang, preventing Shields from securing the knockout.

Still, the scorecards reflected Shields’ dominance, with one judge awarding her every round, scoring the fight 100-89. Another gave her nine rounds, scoring it 99-90, while the third had it 97-92 in her favor.

With the victory, Shields (16-0, 3 KOs) secured another historic accolade, becoming the only three-division undisputed champion in the four-belt era—male or female. Fellow Flint native and professional boxer Andre Dirrell summed up her greatness: “Claressa’s unstoppable. There’s no girl who can match her. She is women’s boxing! She’s the greatest to ever do it.”

But her impact extends beyond boxing.

More than a champion, Shields is a symbol of resilience for Flint, a city that has faced its own battles. She continues to wear blue in her hair to raise awareness about the Flint water crisis, ensuring that the struggles of her community remain in the national conversation.

“I don’t care where I go, I represent Flint to the fullest,” Shields said. “I’ve been wearing my hair blue for the water crisis since the water crisis started. I really stand up for Flint. I come here and I’m always talking to the mayor about how we can make the city better.”

In return, Flint has always stood by her.

“Flint is a different type of place,” Shields said. “They are so supportive, they take you for who you are and they take me for my full package.”

Shields’ bond with her hometown was on full display. “Whenever I hit Danielle, I heard fireworks going off all over in the area,” Shields said. “I’ve fought many places, but there’s no place like fighting in Detroit and Flint. They have the best fans in the world. They always show up for me and make a lot of noise. There’s never a quiet round, and I just thank them for being so supportive and sticking behind me.”

With her name already written in the record books, the question remains: Is it even possible to top being the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world? Her response was as straightforward as it gets.

“If anyone can do it, it’s me.”

As she looks ahead to the future, Shields is already eyeing new challenges, naming potential opponents such as Franchon Crews-Dezurn, Hanna Gabriels, Savannah Marshall, MMA icon Cris Cyborg, and even retired boxing legend Laila Ali.

While her next move is yet to be determined, one thing is certain—whether she’s fighting in the ring or fighting for her city, Claressa Shields continues to prove that she just may be the Great Woman Of All Time.



CLARESSA SHIELDS LOOKS ACROSS THE RING DURING HER UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE BOUT AGAINST DANIELLE PERKINS ON SUNDAY AT DORT FINANCIAL CENTER IN FLINT, MI. (MB)



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FAITH IN FOCUS



MINISTRY WITHOUT WALLS - 3783 MANNION RD, SAGINAW, MI 48603

Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

BY PASTOR JOHN DUNN

Ministry Without Walls has recently returned to its location at 3783 Mannion Road with a renewed vision, shaped by recent global events and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeking divine guidance, the organization has embraced a broader mission: to make the church an integral part of the community.

The new direction for Ministry Without Walls is centered around the theme of "Breaking Down Walls." This initiative aims to bridge gaps between spiritual life and community service, uniting church members, volunteers, and local professionals in a shared mission.

The organization's vision includes several key objectives:



PASTOR JOHN DUNN

- Creating a space where the spirit, soul, and body can achieve wholeness.
- Providing resources to those in need.
- Fostering collaboration

between the church, volunteers, and community professionals.

- Ensuring a welcoming environment where love prevails and judgment is absent.
- Maintaining privacy and prioritizing safety.
- Emphasizing the importance of the whole person.

Ministry Without Walls will continue to offer various teachings and seminars on topics such as outreach, spiritual growth, mental health, healthy living, finding purpose, financial management, entrepreneurship, and more. These programs are designed to address diverse needs and support personal development.

Recognizing that the mission field is close to home, not far

away, the organization is committed to a collaborative approach, knowing that achieving this vision will require the collective effort of many. Ministry Without Walls is dedicating its resources, talents, and connections to dismantle barriers and connect with the community more deeply.

Those interested in learning more or getting involved are encouraged to visit the church on Sundays at 11:00 AM. This offers an opportunity to meet Pastor John Dunn, ask questions, and experience the ministry's mission firsthand.

For more information, visit Ministry Without Walls at 3783 Mannion Road, Saginaw, MI 48603.

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Faith Ministries Church



Apostle Anthony Revis, Senior Pastor
Prophetess Linda J. Kemp Revis, Pastor

Praise & Worship Services

Sunday, March 9, 2025
10:15 A.M. Morning Worship

Our Special Guests at 3:30 P.M.
Center of Attraction Outreach
Apostle James Glenn

The New Christ Community Church
Dr. Eugene & Joyce Seals, Pastors
Audrey Parker Ministry of Love, Pastor Audrey Parker



CHURCH DIRECTORY



Christ Disciples Baptist Church

Founder: Pastor Eddie Benson
Pastor Genevieve Benson
3317 Lapeer Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-2444



Ministry Without Walls

Pastor, John Dunn
3783 Mannion Road
Saginaw, MI 48603



New Life Baptist Ministries

Dr. Craig Tatum
1401 Janes Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-753-1151
newlifelcm.com



Faith Ministries Church

Rev. Dr. Anthony Revis
Prophetess Linda J. Kemp Revis
3420 E Ashman St.
Midland, MI 48642
989-837-7777
faithministrieschurch.org



New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry

Pastor Roy & Evelyn Baldwin
2609 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-777-8272
Pastorbaldwin@charter.net



New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

3610 Russel St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-0801



Glory House Ministries

Pastor Jim House
3660 Hermansau Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
(989) 752-4769



New Beginnings Ministries

Pastor Augustine Delgado
701 Hess Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
newlife3881@gmail.com



Saint Paul Baptist Church

Rev. Dr., Vincent D. McMillon
120 North 15 St.
Saginaw, MI. 48601
stpaul2@yahoo.com



Holy Communion Gospel Center

Pastor Charlene Washington
1245 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48607
989-752-3993



New Birth Missionary Baptist

Bishop Larry D. Camel
3121 Sheridan
Saginaw, Michigan
989-327-1755



Victorious Belivers Ministries Church

Pastor Chris V. Pryor
624 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw, MI
989-755-7692



Jacob's Ladder

Pastor Dennis Barlow
1926 Fairfield Street
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-799-6601



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Pastor Ron Frierson
2395 S. Outer Drive
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FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

Data management – friend or foe? 

BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

Can data management – or CRM (customer relationship management) – really improve your fundraising results? Isn't it just one more thing to do – especially if you are a small organization, or a large one facing budget constraints? Maybe you're thinking that what you're doing is okay, so why invest in this area when there are "more important" things that require your attention, time, and money? Is implementing and updating your CRM a colossal waste of time?

But maybe your experience is different. Maybe you know that you and your team are able to build stronger relationships and partnerships because of how you update, segment, and analyze data related to donors, funders, partners, and supporters. Perhaps you are frustrated by your team's unwillingness to use the tools available, knowing that if your data were up to date, you could use your time more effectively and focus your messaging and work more strategically.

When it comes to data you



FILE PHOTO

can't hide your head in the sand. Collecting, updating, analyzing, segmenting, and using data to influence decision making is part of life. You have to build your data infrastructure, and you have to be careful not to let data take over your responsibilities. Your team needs to understand what data you are collecting, how, and why. You need cross training in use of the platform, checking for data integrity, and running reports. It's a balance, and here's how a balanced focus on data can benefit you and your organization or institution.

Accurate data helps you honestly answer the question, "did we have a good year?" You may have raised more money than last year, but what if 30% was a one-time gift that came from a bequest from a former board member who recently passed? You may think you had a good year, but maybe you also experienced a high number of donors who didn't give this year,

but who in past years made \$500 gifts. How would you know these things? Using data can help you determine where your gifts and grants are coming from – or not coming from. And this can inform how you set overall goals, and goals from specific sources or segments. You don't want to be pulling numbers out of the sky, are feeling stressed mid-year when you aren't seeing progress.

Here are the types of information that you want to be able to track and understand: new donors, recurring donors, and lapsed donors; donor giving history; and your attrition rate (those who gave in prior years

but are no longer giving). You want to know your progress towards financial milestones, as well as your progress towards goals in the areas of volunteerism and event attendance. You want to be able to compare year-over-year progress in general and within specific categories. This can help you see where your money is coming from and shifts in those sources. Your data management makes you competitive. It is your lifeblood and north star – it points the way for you. Take the time to find a balanced approach and evaluate the results.



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Mel and Pearl Shaw are authors of four books on fundraising available on Amazon.com. For help growing your fundraising visit www.saadandshaw.com or call (901) 522-8727.



PICS OF THE WEEK

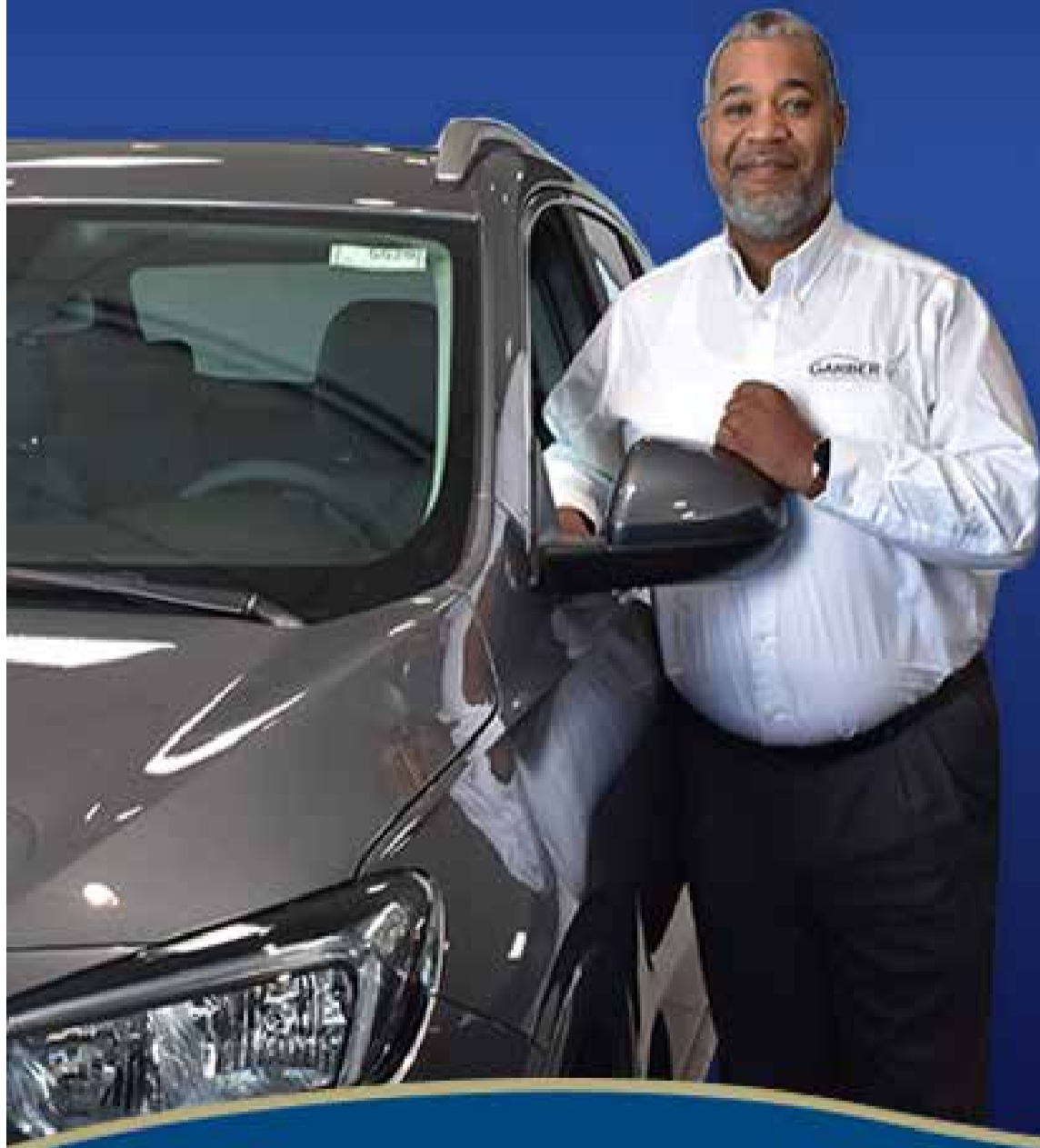
On Tuesday, Feb. 4, Victorious Community Development (VCD), in collaboration with the Houghton-Jones Neighborhood Association, launched the Safe Communities, Strong Families workshop series at the Christina Jones Resource Center, located at 1708 Johnson Street in Saginaw.

The first session, Understanding Gun Safety: Protecting Your Families, focused on essential firearm safety practices to prevent accidents and misuse.



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