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PICS OF THE WEEK
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Castle Museum secures decade of funding as Jonathan Webb announces retirement

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Castle Museum of Saginaw County History is preparing for a leadership change just days after voters approved another 10 years of funding for the museum and its community partners.

President and CEO Jonathan Webb announced Aug. 12 that he will retire Dec. 31 after nine and a half years leading the museum. The announcement followed the Aug. 4 election, when Saginaw County voters renewed the museum’s county-wide millage with 67.81% of the vote.

The proposal received 30,139 yes votes and 14,309 no votes. It continues the existing 0.1997-mill levy for another 10 years. The rate has remained unchanged since 2000 and is the smallest countywide millage in Saginaw County.

Continues on pg 2,
Castle Museum



CASTLE MUSEUM PRESIDENT AND CEO JONATHAN WEBB WILL RETIRE DEC. 31 AFTER NINE AND A HALF YEARS LEADING THE SAGINAW INSTITUTION.



Flint youth activist urges peers to reject gun culture amid deadly violence

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Michigan Immigrant Rights Center to end representation for more than 500 children

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Light Up the City returns to Saginaw with safety resources, family activities

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From cover, Castle Museum

Millage revenue supports the Castle Museum in downtown Saginaw as well as historical organizations in Bridgeport, Chesaning, Frankenmuth and St. Charles. The funding helps maintain museum collections, educational programs and community outreach. Free admission for Saginaw County residents, the Time Machine Mobile Museum Experience for schools and most museum events are expected to continue.

Webb said securing another decade of funding helped make the timing right for his retirement. During his tenure, the museum expanded educational programs and exhibits, strengthened community partnerships and successfully completed two millage renewal campaigns.

The Castle Museum houses more than 150,000 artifacts documenting Saginaw County history and serves nearly 100,000 people annually through museum visits, educational programs, tours and community events.

The museum's board had been preparing for Webb's departure for about a year. Museum members were informed of his retirement plans during the organization's annual meeting in April, but the board waited until after the millage vote to begin its formal search.

Board President Brad Jarvis said the successful millage renewal gives the museum financial stability while it searches for its next leader.

The board is seeking a president and CEO who will oversee museum operations, fundraising, community partnerships and long-term planning. Webb will remain in the position through the transition. He also plans to continue working part time as executive director of the Frankenmuth Community Foundation.



**THIS DAY IN
MICHIGAN
HISTORY**

AUGUST 16, 2018

On Aug. 16, 2018, legendary singer Aretha Franklin, known around the world as the “Queen of Soul,” died at her home in Detroit at age 76.



Raised in Detroit, Franklin began singing gospel music at New Bethel Baptist Church before building a career that produced classics such as “Respect,” “Think” and “Chain of Fools.” Beyond her music, Franklin became a cultural icon whose work was closely tied to the civil rights movement and the city she called home. Her death prompted tributes across Detroit and around the world, honoring a voice that helped define generations of American music.



MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 16



Flint youth activist urges peers to reject gun culture amid deadly violence



FLINT YOUTH ACTIVIST MARI COPENY, 19, IS URGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO REJECT GUN CULTURE AND CALLING FOR MORE SAFE SPACES AND YOUTH PROGRAMS FOLLOWING A RECENT SERIES OF DEADLY SHOOTINGS IN THE CITY. (PHOTO | MARICOPENY.COM)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — After a series of shootings left several people dead in Flint within days, 19-year-old activist Mari Copeny is directing a message toward members of her own generation: Carrying a gun is not a symbol of strength, status or respect.

Copeny, who became nationally known as “Little Miss Flint” through her advocacy during the Flint water crisis, spoke out this week as city officials, police and community leaders confronted another surge in gun violence.

The violence included the

deaths of two Flint teenagers following a shooting late Monday, Aug. 10.

Michigan State Police said officers responded about 11:40 p.m. to James P. Cole Boulevard and Stewart Avenue, where a large gathering had formed. Investigators said a fight involving several people broke out before someone fired into the crowd, striking a 16-year-old boy and a 17-year-old boy.

The 16-year-old was taken to a hospital, where he died. The 17-year-old was hospitalized with life-threatening injuries and died Tuesday, Aug. 11.

Police announced Aug. 12

that a 19-year-old Flint man had been arrested in connection with the shooting after investigators executed a search warrant in the city.

The deaths came at the end of an already violent stretch in Flint.

At about 10:52 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 8, Flint police responded to gunfire near South Saginaw and First streets in downtown Flint. Two 27-year-old men had been shot. One died at the scene and the other was taken to a hospital.

Police said the shooting occurred during a large pop-up gathering about an hour after Flint Drop Fest had ended. A

26-year-old man was arrested at the scene and was later arraigned on charges including first-degree murder and assault with intent to murder.

The following evening, Aug. 9, officers were called to another shooting near Windsor and Penbrook lanes about 5:32 p.m. A man was taken to a hospital in critical condition. Police said no suspect information was immediately available.

Copeny said young people cannot remain silent about the role guns are playing in conflicts involving their peers.

“Waving around a gun thinking you look cool don’t make you look cool,” Copeny told WNEM-TV.

Her comments were aimed directly at young people who may view carrying a firearm as protection or as part of the image they present to friends and followers online. Copeny said she knows people among her social media followers who carry guns and believes young people need to challenge that culture rather than normalize it.

She also argued that preventing youth violence will require more than arrests.

Copeny called for more community centers, recreation centers, clubs and other spaces where young people can spend time outside home and school. She said Flint youth need opportunities to gather safely, build relationships and see possibilities for their futures beyond the vio-

Continues on MYB pg 5, Flint Violence

From MYB Cover, Flint Violence



CRIME SCENE TAPE (FILE PHOTO)

lence around them.

Other Flint residents and community activists have raised similar concerns, calling for expanded mental health resources, conflict-resolution education and youth programs that begin before young people reach their teenage years.

The violence continued after Copeny spoke.

Michigan State Police said a family argument at a home on Dakota Avenue near North Averill Avenue ended in another deadly shooting at about 2:20 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12. Police said a 22-year-old Flint man shot a 59-year-old Flint man during the confrontation. The older man later died at a hospital, and the 22-year-old was arrested at the home.

Early Thursday, Aug. 13, Flint police responded to yet another shooting, this time in the 200 block of Edmund Street. Officers found two men suffering from

gunshot wounds about 1:40 a.m. One was pronounced dead at the scene and the other was taken to a hospital.

The string of shootings has led Flint police to increase enforcement throughout the city.

Police Chief Terence Green announced Aug. 12 that officers were moving into what he described as a zero-tolerance approach to traffic and other violations as the department works to interrupt patterns of violence. Police are also concentrating enforcement in locations where large gatherings and criminal activity have occurred, including the area of James P. Cole Boulevard and Stewart Avenue.

Green said the recent shootings were believed to be targeted incidents rather than random attacks.

The department has also been enforcing Flint's 9:30 p.m. curfew for youth 17 and younger. Police said about 18 juveniles had

been arrested for curfew violations since the enforcement initiative began.

The stepped-up police presence comes as thousands of visitors are expected in Flint for major summer events, including Back to the Bricks and the Crim Festival of Races.

For Copeny and other youth advocates, however, enforcement addresses only part of the problem.

Their concern is what happens long before police lights arrive — when an argument begins, when a young person decides to carry a gun or when someone feels there is nowhere else to go.

The deaths of the 16- and 17-year-old boys on Aug. 10 brought that concern into sharp focus. Both were young enough to still be preparing for another school year. Instead, their deaths became part of a larger discussion about how Flint can keep disagreements among young

people from becoming fatal.

Copeny has spent much of her childhood and teenage years speaking publicly about issues affecting Flint. At 19, she is now using that platform to address people close to her own age.

Her message asks young people to reconsider the idea that carrying a gun makes someone tougher and to recognize how quickly a confrontation can become permanent.

It also places responsibility beyond young people themselves.

If Flint wants fewer teenagers reaching for guns, Copeny argues, young people also need places to go, adults willing to listen and opportunities that give them something to move toward.

As the city mourns another round of lives lost to gun violence, the question facing Flint is no longer only what happens after a shooting.

It is what can be done before the next one.

Bay City Rowing Club opens beginner program to younger teens and parents



TWO SHOOTINGS INVOLVING SAGINAW TEENAGERS WITHIN FIVE DAYS HAVE RENEWED CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE AND THE CONSEQUENCES THAT CAN FOLLOW A SINGLE MOMENT OF CONFLICT.

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — Younger teens interested in rowing will have an opportunity to get on the water this month through a beginner program offered by the Bay City Rowing Club.

The club's upcoming Learn to Row course will allow 12- and 13-year-olds to participate when they register and row with a parent, giving younger athletes an introduction to the sport before they become eligible for high school crew.

The four-week program begins Aug. 18 and continues through Sept. 10, with sessions scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m.

The eight-session course will

meet Aug. 18, 20, 25 and 27 and Sept. 1, 3, 8 and 10.

Registration is \$190, and previous rowing experience is not required.

While the Learn to Row program is primarily designed for adult beginners, the parent-and-child option gives younger participants an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of rowing alongside an adult.

Participants will be introduced to basic technique, boat handling, safety and the coordination required to move a rowing shell effectively through the water.

Unlike many team sports, rowing depends heavily on timing and synchronization. Athletes must learn to match their movements with the other people in

the boat while maintaining balance, technique and endurance.

For younger athletes, the course can also serve as an early introduction to a sport they may later pursue through the club's regional high school rowing program.

Bay City Rowing Club offers rowing opportunities for high school students from throughout the area, including students who attend schools without their own rowing programs. The organization provides training and competitive opportunities for athletes interested in crew.

Opening the introductory class to 12- and 13-year-olds gives students a chance to become familiar with the sport before reaching high school eligibility.

It also gives parents some-

thing more active to do than watch from the shoreline.

Parents and young participants will learn together during the course, creating an unusual opportunity for families to try a new sport at the same time.

Rowing can appeal to students who are looking for an activity outside more traditional school sports. Success depends on endurance, discipline, teamwork and technique rather than experience with a ball or other commonly played youth sports.

The Bay City Rowing Club is located at 350 W. Lafayette Ave. in Bay City.

Additional information and registration are available through the club.

To Saginaw teens: One angry moment should not decide the rest of your life

BY A MYB CONTRIBUTOR

SAGINAW, Mich. — Two shootings involving teenagers in Saginaw within five days should make every young person in this city stop and think about how quickly a bad decision can change a life.

On Sunday, Aug. 9, Saginaw police responded about 10:35 p.m. to the area of Lyon and South Harrison streets, where officers found 17-year-old Ahmir Alexander Frazier suffering from gunshot wounds. He was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, where he later died.

Police later arrested 14-year-old Robert Marshall in Holland and returned him to Saginaw. Marshall was arraigned on charges of open murder, assault with a dangerous weapon and two counts of felony firearm. Saginaw police and the Saginaw County Prosecutor's Office said Friday that he is being charged as an adult.

Then, on Thursday, Aug. 13, another teenager was shot.

Police responded about 6:05 p.m. to the 1200 block of Janes Street and found a 15-year-old boy with a gunshot wound. He was taken to a local hospital with an injury police said was not life-threatening. As of Friday afternoon, no suspect was in custody and the Major Case Unit was investigating.

The ages in these cases are hard to ignore: 17, 14 and 15.

These are teenagers who could be sitting next to us in class, playing on our teams, showing up at the same events or following the same people on social media. One young person is dead. Another is facing a murder



TWO SHOOTINGS INVOLVING SAGINAW TEENAGERS WITHIN FIVE DAYS HAVE RENEWED CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE AND THE CONSEQUENCES THAT CAN FOLLOW A SINGLE MOMENT OF CONFLICT.

case as an adult. A third is recovering from being shot.

This isn't another adult telling us that young people need to "do better." We need to say it to each other.

Not every argument deserves a response.

Social media can make a small problem feel much bigger than it is. Somebody posts something. Friends start commenting. Screenshots get passed around. Before long, people who were never part of the original problem are encouraging two people to fight or "handle it."

But those people will not have to live with what happens next.

If you walk away, somebody

might call you scared. If you block somebody, they might make fun of you. If you tell your friend that fighting isn't worth it, you might not get the reaction you want.

None of that compares with losing your life or your freedom.

We also need to think about the role we play when our friends are angry. Being a real friend isn't recording a fight, hyping somebody up or helping turn an argument into something worse. Sometimes being a friend means saying, "We're leaving," and getting your friend away from the situation.

Saginaw police Detective Sgt. Oscar Lopez said the shooting death of Frazier highlights a large-

er concern about young people using firearms to settle conflicts. He called on law enforcement, parents, schools and the community to work together to keep guns away from youth.

Young people have a role in that conversation, too.

We have school years to finish, jobs to get, places to travel, people to meet and goals we haven't even thought of yet. One night of anger should not get to decide whether we experience any of it.

You do not have to prove yourself every time somebody challenges you.

Sometimes the strongest decision is simply going home.

Back to school already?

A teen's survival guide for the end of summer

BY MB STAFF

Summer has a way of ending without asking anyone's permission.

One week, sleeping until late morning feels completely reasonable. Summer has a way of ending fast.

One week, sleeping late feels perfectly normal. The next, stores are full of notebooks, parents are asking whether last year's clothes still fit and someone has started saying "school night" again.

For students across Michigan, another school year is almost here. You can't stop it, but you can make the first week a little easier.

Fix your sleep schedule

If you've been going to bed at 2 a.m., don't expect your body to suddenly cooperate the night before school. Start going to bed a little earlier now.

Will 6 a.m. ever feel fun? Probably not. But being awake during first hour is a good start.

Prep your backpack

There is a good chance it still contains broken pencils, old papers and a snack wrapper from June.

Clean it out now.

Check your school supply list, too. The 24-pack of matching gel pens may look impressive, but unfortunately, they do not automatically improve your GPA.

Plan the first-day outfit

Pick out what you're wearing before the morning of school and actually try it on.

Teenagers grow. Clothes shrink. At least that's the explanation we're going with.

Know where you're going

Check your schedule and learn where your classes are, especially if you're starting at a new school.

Getting lost is normal. Pretending you aren't lost while walking confidently in the wrong direction is also normal.

Just ask somebody.

Charge everything

Charge your phone, Chromebook and anything else you need for school.

Also, make sure you remember your passwords. Nothing says "welcome back" like discovering summer erased your login information.

Give yourself a reset

The first day does not have to be perfect. You do not have to have your whole future figured out either.

Ask for help when you need it. Talk to someone new. Try a club. Turn in your assignments. And yes, put your name on your work.

Whatever happened last year — a bad grade, friendship drama or questionable haircut — does not have to follow you into this one.

Show up. Give yourself time to adjust. And set the alarm.

Preferably more than five minutes before you have to leave.





SAGINAW PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

*A Promise
Made and Kept!*

Helping families and students plan for and achieve their educational dreams. A scholarship for Students who live in, attend school, and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone. For 15 years the Saginaw Promise has Invested in Saginaw's Future, its Economy, and its students with a "place based" Scholarship!

	\$1,515,062 has been awarded to over 804 scholars!		2026/27 academic year awards: \$4,000
	Available for 2 years		Apply Annually

▶ BACKGROUND

The Saginaw Promise is an economic initiative that is working to change a community, its economy and lives through information and a postsecondary education scholarship. The Saginaw Promise scholarship is both a benefit for and incentive to retain and grow the population while assisting students to earn a program certificate or degree from a technical/trade school, college, or university, which will provide an educated workforce to support local business and attract new businesses.

▶ WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Students who live in, attend school and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone.

▶ WHAT IS THE SAGINAW PROMISE ZONE?

The Saginaw Promise Zone is the geographic area that consists of the cities of Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kochville and that area of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District).

▶ HOW MUCH IS THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The scholarship award for the 2026/27 academic year is \$4,000. The scholarship is available for two years and must be applied for annually.

▶ WHEN TO APPLY?

Senior year of high school

▶ HOW TO APPLY?

Students must complete the online **Saginaw Community Foundation Scholarship Application** and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Saginaw Promise scholars have up to six years to use their scholarship.

▶ PLANNING A MOVE

Contact the Saginaw Promise office to confirm if you will still be in the Saginaw Promise Zone. **Important Note:** To be eligible for the Saginaw Promise Scholarship, a student must reside in, attend school and graduate from a high school within the Saginaw Promise Zone.

VISIT [SAGINAWPROMISE.ORG](https://saginawpromise.org) FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION.

Saginaw Promise / 1 Tuscola St., Suite 200, Saginaw, MI 48607 / (989) 607-3428



Latino Banner

**LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD****VAMOS ADELANTE**

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center to end representation for more than 500 children

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — More than 500 unaccompanied immigrant children in Michigan are expected to lose their attorneys after federal funding that supported the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center's children's legal program expired.

MIRC said this week that it is preparing to close more than half of nearly 950 active children's cases because it can no longer afford to continue representing all of them. The organization expects to keep slightly more than 400 cases using emergency and other available funding.

The federal contract ended Aug. 1. WILX reported that the contract was worth about \$12 million and funded roughly 70 positions at MIRC. Those attorneys represented unaccompanied children in federal custody in Michigan as well as children who had been released to sponsors. More than 1,100 children received representation through the program this year.

MIRC has represented unaccompanied immigrant children in Michigan since 2017, assisting with immigration court proceedings and applications for legal protections available under federal law.

The funding flowed through the Acacia Center for Justice, which administered federal money from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement to legal service organizations around the country. The contract supporting nearly 100 legal providers expired at the end



THE MICHIGAN IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CENTER SAYS IT WILL END LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR MORE THAN 500 UNACCOMPANIED IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AFTER THE FEDERAL CONTRACT SUPPORTING ITS CHILDREN'S LEGAL PROGRAM EXPIRED AUG. 1. (GENERATED IMAGE)

of July.

The Department of Health and Human Services has said the Office of Refugee Resettlement offered Acacia another temporary contract. Acacia and MIRC said the proposed terms required legal providers to turn over information they considered protected by attorney-client confidentiality. MIRC Senior Managing Attorney Ana Devereaux said accepting those terms would conflict with attorneys' ethical obligations to their clients.

The loss of representation means some children may have to appear in immigration court without an attorney.

Devereaux told WILX that immigration proceedings are difficult even for adults to navigate without legal assistance, particularly when language barriers and changing immigration rules are involved. Children who lose MIRC representation will receive copies of documents and legal work already completed in their cases.

The impact also extends to the attorneys handling those cases. MIRC said the 70 positions supported by the federal contract may not be sustainable beyond October without additional funding.

MIRC's other legal programs

will continue, and the organization said its offices in Detroit, Ypsilanti, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and Lansing will remain open.

The Michigan cuts are part of a larger national disruption in legal services for immigrant children. The expired federal program had supported legal assistance for roughly 20,000 children through providers across the country. Federal officials have awarded temporary work to other organizations, but questions remain about who will handle thousands of existing cases and how quickly representation can be transferred.

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Michigan farmworkers report growing fear amid immigration enforcement

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Immigration enforcement is creating growing anxiety among Michigan farmworkers, even though the state has not experienced the large-scale agricultural raids seen elsewhere in the country.

A new survey by the United Farm Workers Foundation found 88% of farmworker respondents were worried about detention or deportation. The survey included 2,250 farmworkers from several states, including Michigan, and focused largely on undocumented agricultural workers.

The fear is affecting everyday life. Sixty-one percent of respondents said they had reduced shopping, 29% said they had avoided

seeking medical care and 21% said they had become more cautious about using social media. About 90% were concerned that deportation could separate them from their families.

Anna Hill Galendez, managing attorney for the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center's Farmworker and Immigrant Worker Rights team, told WDET that Michigan has not seen large-scale immigration raids at farms under the current administration. She said the possibility of enforcement has still created fear among workers.

That concern is significant in Michigan, where agriculture depends heavily on seasonal and immigrant labor. Galendez said more than one-third of the state's crops require labor-intensive

work. She also noted that Michigan had nearly 16,000 positions certified for workers through the federal H-2A temporary agricultural visa program last year, reflecting a sharp increase in the program's use over the past decade.

MIRC has also received reports of workers facing employment problems as immigration concerns increase. Galendez said some employers have delayed wages and that her organization has seen instances in which local law enforcement officers questioned immigrants during traffic stops before contacting federal immigration authorities.

The UFW Foundation survey found many of the workers affected have deep roots in the United States. Eighty percent of

respondents said they had lived in the country for more than 10 years, while 41% had been here for more than 20 years. More than 40% reported working in agriculture for at least two decades.

The organization said the results also point to a need for greater access to legal information. Forty-two percent of respondents said they did not know their rights or where to obtain legal services if immigration enforcement affected them or someone they knew.

Michigan farmworker advocates are continuing to provide legal assistance and know-your-rights information as the federal government increases immigration arrests nationwide.

ICE arrests reach record high in July as enforcement expands

BY MB STAFF

WASHINGTON — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested about 51,000 people in July, the highest monthly total reported in Department of Homeland Security history as the Trump administration continues expanding immigration enforcement across the country.

The July total increased from about 43,000 arrests in June, according to figures provided by the Department of Homeland Security to Stateline. ABC News separately reported the 51,000 figure based on sources familiar with federal data.

The increase reflects a shift toward broader and less visible enforcement operations. ICE has increased arrests at airports and continued expanding cooperation with state and local law enforcement agencies.

The administration has defended the increased enforcement as part of President Donald Trump's effort to increase deportations and remove immigrants who are in the country illegally. Federal officials have emphasized arrests involving people with criminal records, while immigration attorneys and advocates say some of those detained have no criminal history and, in some cases, had valid work authorization or parole documents.

Separate ICE detention data showed 65,765 people were being held in immigration detention as of July 11. About 70% had no criminal conviction, according to data compiled by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

The rising national numbers are being felt in Michigan even when large enforcement operations are not taking place.

Michigan Immigrant Rights

Center attorneys say farmworkers have become increasingly worried about being detained during routine activities such as driving, shopping or seeking medical care. MIRC has also reported increased concern about local law enforcement involvement in federal immigration enforcement.

The July arrest numbers come as the federal government increases detention capacity and develops additional partnerships with local agencies. ICE's 287(g) program allows participating state and local agencies to perform certain federal immigration enforcement functions under

agreements with the agency.

Immigration advocates are urging families to understand their legal rights and prepare for the possibility that a family member could be detained. Federal officials, meanwhile, have said the enforcement campaign will continue.



ICE POLICE AGENT (FILE PHOTO)

Tejano Night brings Santiago Garza, Los Estrellas de Oro to Saginaw

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw's Tejano music fans will get a mix of Texas conjunto and Michigan talent when Santiago Garza y La Naturaleza and Los Estrellas de Oro take the stage Friday, Aug. 21, at The VAULT.

The downtown Saginaw venue, 110 Florence St., will host Tejano Night with doors opening at 7 p.m. Santiago Garza y La Naturaleza will headline the show, with Los Estrellas de Oro appearing as special guests.

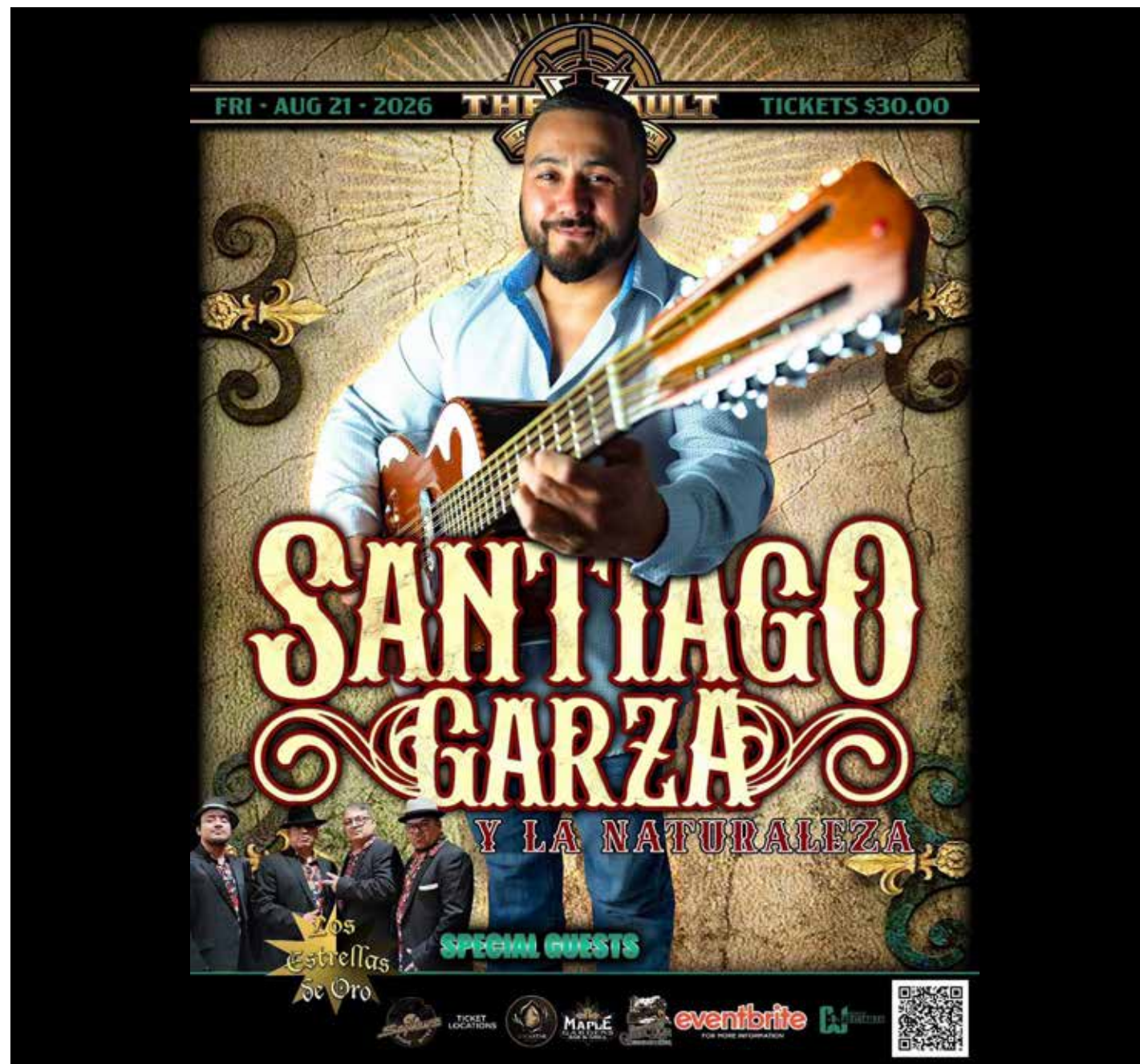
Garza has spent nearly two decades leading La Naturaleza and has built a following in the Tejano and conjunto music scene through his accordion playing, songwriting and dedication to traditional conjunto music.

The Dallas-based musician began performing at age 9 as a drummer, following the example of his father, longtime musician Jose Luis Garza Sr., known as "Pops." Garza later switched to accordion at age 15 and went on to form La Naturaleza, which he has led for more than 18 years. He has since been inducted into the Tejano ROOTS Hall of Fame.

Garza continues to record new music while maintaining the traditional accordion-driven sound at the center of conjunto. In 2025, the group released "Alma De Mi Alma," a song written by Garza about heartbreak and relationships. The track was recorded at Music Ranch Studios in San Antonio.

Saginaw audiences will also hear a group with Michigan roots.

Los Estrellas de Oro is a Grand Rapids-based Tejano and conjunto group that has gained recognition well beyond the state. The band was nominated for Best New Group at the 44th annual Tejano Music Awards in San Antonio in 2024, placing the Michigan musicians alongside emerging groups



SANTIAGO GARZA Y LA NATURALEZA WILL HEADLINE TEJANO NIGHT AUG. 21 AT THE VAULT IN SAGINAW WITH GRAND RAPIDS-BASED LOS ESTRELLAS DE ORO. GARZA IS A TEJANO ROOTS HALL OF FAME MUSICIAN, WHILE LOS ESTRELLAS DE ORO WAS NOMINATED FOR BEST NEW GROUP AT THE 2024 TEJANO MUSIC AWARDS.

from the heart of the Tejano music industry.

Both acts appeared this spring at one of conjunto music's major annual gatherings.

Santiago Garza y La Naturaleza performed May 15 at the 44th annual Tejano Conjunto Festival at Rosedale Park in San Antonio. Los Estrellas de Oro took the festival stage May 17 as part of a lineup that included performers from Texas, Michigan and beyond. The long-running festival is presented by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and

celebrates traditional conjunto music and the musicians carrying the genre forward.

Their Saginaw appearance brings two parts of that music community together again — an established Texas conjunto artist and a Michigan group gaining national recognition within the genre.

Tejano and conjunto music have long been part of Mexican American cultural life, carried through family gatherings, dances, festivals and community celebrations. The accordion re-

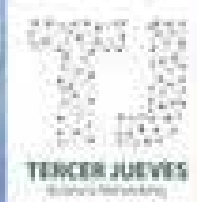
mains one of conjunto's defining sounds, accompanied traditionally by instruments including the bajo sexto, bass and drums.

The Aug. 21 concert also gives Saginaw-area listeners a chance to see a Michigan Tejano group whose reach is growing outside the state while welcoming an artist with deep ties to the Texas conjunto tradition.

Tickets are available in advance through Eventbrite and The VAULT.



Presenting Sponsor



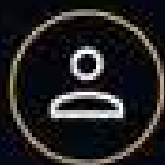
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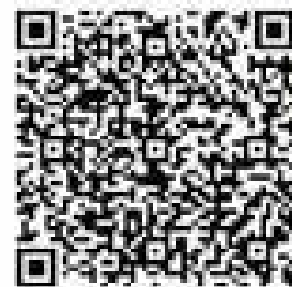


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Mexican American Council, Michigan Works partner for Saginaw job fair



THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COUNCIL AND GREAT LAKES BAY MICHIGAN WORKS! WILL HOST A FREE OUTDOOR JOB FAIR AUG. 26 AT THE COUNCIL'S SOUTH WASHINGTON AVENUE LOCATION IN SAGINAW.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Job seekers will have an opportunity to meet employers face-to-face when the Mexican American Council and Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! host an outdoor job fair Wednesday, Aug. 26, in Saginaw.

The free event will run from noon to 3 p.m. at the Mexican American Council, 1537 S. Washington Ave. It is open to the public.

Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! is encouraging participants to bring copies of their resumes and come prepared to speak directly with employers about available jobs.

The partnership places employment resources directly at a community organization that has long served Saginaw's Mexican American population. The Mexican American Council works to connect residents through community networking, education and recreational opportunities.

Holding the job fair at the council's South Washington Avenue location may also help introduce residents to employment services available through Michigan Works while giving employers another way to reach potential workers in Saginaw.

Job fairs can give applicants an opportunity to move beyond online applications and make an immediate connection with recruiters. Participants can ask questions about job duties, schedules, qualifications and hir-

ing requirements while learning about openings from multiple employers in one setting.

The Aug. 26 event comes as Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! continues to hold hiring events throughout the region,

including single-company and multiple-employer job fairs.

The Mexican American Council has also worked on efforts to strengthen connections among local residents, businesses and organizations. In 2024, the council began developing a directory highlighting Mexican American businesses, churches and community organizations in the Saginaw area.

The upcoming job fair extends that community connection into employment.

No admission fee is required. Job seekers should bring multiple copies of an updated resume and be prepared to discuss their work experience and availability with participating employers.

The Outdoor Job Fair will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 26, at the Mexican American Council, 1537 S. Washington Ave. in Saginaw.

OUTDOOR JOB FAIR!

**Wednesday
August 26, 2026
12:00 - 3:00 pm**

**1537 S. Washington Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601**



Mexican American Council



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COMMUNITY

Light Up the City returns to Saginaw with safety resources, family activities



LIGHT UP THE CITY SAGINAW WILL RETURN AUG. 19 AT OJIBWAY ISLAND WITH A SAFETY RESOURCE FAIR, FOOD, MUSIC, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AND THE SAGINAW BABY PARADE. (PHOTO | FB/LIGHT UP THE CITY)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Light Up the City Saginaw will bring families, community organizations and safety resources together Wednesday, Aug. 19, for an evening of activities at Ojibway Island.

The Safe Community Celebration will run from 5 to 8 p.m. at Ojibway Island, 121 Ezra Rust Drive. The free event will include a safety resource fair, food trucks, music and bounce houses.

Light Up the City has become a familiar summer gathering in Saginaw, combining family entertainment with opportunities for residents to meet organizations working in health, public safety and community services.

This year's celebration will also include Saginaw's Baby Parade through a partnership involving Rx Kids and the Saginaw County Health Department.

Baby Parade activities are scheduled from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Mona Hanna, Saginaw County Health Department Chief Administrative Officer Chris Harrington and Dr. Delicia Pruitt are scheduled to give brief remarks at the main stage at 6 p.m., followed by a parade around Ojibway Island.

The Baby Parade is designed to celebrate infants, young children and their families while connecting parents with organizations that provide local services. Yard games, dancing and bounce houses will also be available during the family-focused portion of the event.

The Aug. 19 gathering comes near the end of a busy summer at the recently reopened Ojibway Island, which has hosted Gospel Fest, the Saginaw Art Fair and other community activities this season. The city officially reopened the island in July following improvements to the park.

Light Up the City is free and open to the public.



SAGINAW POLICE OFFICER SPEAKS WITH YOUTH AT THE LIGHT OF THE CITY EVENT. (PHOTO | FB/LIGHT UP THE CITY)

COMMUNITY

Midland expands grants to help neighbors create community gatherings



MIDLAND RESIDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN APPLY FOR GRANTS TO ORGANIZE GATHERINGS DURING NEIGHBORING WEEK, SEPT. 27 THROUGH OCT. 3. (PHOTO | MIDLAND AREA CULTURAL AWARENESS COALITION)

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Midland County residents with an idea for bringing their neighbors together can receive a small grant to help make it happen during this year's Neighboring Week.

Neighboring Week will be celebrated Sept. 27 through Oct. 3, and applications are now open for the Neighboring Week Celebration Fund. About 30 individual \$75 stipends will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Residents can use the money

for activities such as block parties, ice cream socials, driveway gatherings, care packages, game nights or other events designed to encourage neighbors to meet and spend time together.

A new funding option this year will allow businesses and organizations to work together on larger community activities.

The Organizational Collaboration Stipend provides \$100 when two organizations partner, \$150 for three organizations, \$200 for four and \$250 for events involving five or more organizations. Funding for the new program is provided by the Con-

sumers Energy Foundation.

Neighboring Week is coordinated by the Midland Area Cultural Awareness Coalition, an initiative of the Midland Area Community Foundation. This marks the coalition's sixth year promoting the week as a way to encourage inclusion, belonging and stronger relationships throughout the community.

Previous grants have supported everything from ice cream socials and bounce-house gatherings to game nights, pumpkin painting and gift baskets left on neighbors' porches.

Organizers said the expanded

program is intended to give more groups a chance to participate, including organizations that may have an idea for an event but limited money for food, activities or supplies.

Neighboring Week also includes community-wide events planned independently by local organizations, businesses and residents. Participants are encouraged to submit their events to the Max Loves Midland community calendar.

Applications for both stipend programs will remain open until available funding has been awarded.

COMMUNITY

New recycling equipment brings \$600,000-plus upgrade to Isabella County facility



ISABELLA COUNTY'S MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY IS REPLACING ITS AGING BALER WITH A NEW TWO-RAM SYSTEM FUNDED THROUGH AN EPA INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT AND A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SAGINAW CHIPPEWA INDIAN TRIBE.

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich. — Isabella County's recycling center will replace one of its most important pieces of equipment this month through a federal infrastructure grant and a partnership with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

The Isabella County Material Recovery Facility, 4208 E. River Road, is preparing to install a new two-ram baler to replace equipment that has been operating for about 20 years. Facility Director Charity Sweet said the existing baler is nearing the typical 20- to 25-year life expectancy for the

machinery and has become more expensive to maintain.

A baler compresses sorted recyclable materials into compact bundles that can be stored and loaded onto trucks for shipment to other processing facilities. Nearly all of the material processed at the Mount Pleasant facility passes through the equipment before leaving the site.

County documents list the new American Baler two-ram system at \$607,658, including freight and installation. The purchase is part of a \$1.149 million U.S. Environmental Protection Agency infrastructure grant provided through an agreement be-

tween the county recycling center and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

The larger grant also supports other equipment upgrades, including compressors, a wheel loader and a forklift. County commissioners approved the baler purchase earlier this year.

Installation will temporarily affect some recycling services.

Business and large-hauler material will not be accepted from Aug. 21 through Aug. 29, according to facility officials. The entire recycling center will close Aug. 26 while electrical work is completed. Full operations are expected to resume Aug. 31. Res-

idential curbside collection is expected to continue during most of the installation period.

Sweet said the newer equipment should reduce the risk of breakdowns and improve efficiency. The baler was also selected with future facility upgrades in mind, allowing the county to incorporate it into a redesigned recycling system rather than replace it again when additional improvements are made.

The Isabella County Material Recovery Facility provides curbside collection, residential drop-off services and recycling options for businesses and commercial haulers throughout the county.

COMMUNITY

Saginaw to host first Neighbor Day at Hoyt Park

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw residents will have an opportunity to learn more about their neighborhood associations and meet people working in communities across the city during the first Neighbor Day celebration Aug. 22.

The free event will run from 1 to 5 p.m. at Hoyt Park, 1574 S. Washington Ave., and is designed as a citywide showcase of Saginaw's neighborhood

associations.

Residents will be able to learn how to join local neighborhood groups, speak with representatives from city departments and community organizations and share ideas about issues affecting their neighborhoods.

The event will include lunch, a panel-style question-and-answer session and an Impact Award ceremony. Participating organizations are expected to include the Saginaw Community Foundation, police and fire personnel, city staff, S.C.E.N.I.C.

and neighborhood associations from throughout Saginaw.

Live music and family activities are also planned, along with a school supply giveaway hosted by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Neighborhood associations often serve as a direct connection between residents and City Hall. They can help organize cleanups, report neighborhood concerns, share information about city services and bring residents together around projects affecting individual areas of Saginaw.

Neighbor Day gives residents

who may not already participate in an association a chance to see what the groups do and find the organization serving their neighborhood.

The city is also asking residents to complete its Community Impact Survey and share ideas about improvements they would like to see throughout Saginaw.

Neighbor Day will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, at Hoyt Park. Admission is free.

Mott Foundation commits up to \$30 million to Flint public safety, violence prevention

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation plans to invest up to \$30 million over the next decade in Flint public safety, combining support for law enforcement with neighborhood-based efforts intended to prevent violence.

The commitment is part of the foundation's new strategic plan and includes \$5 million expected to be invested during the next year. It is also part of a broader \$100 million commitment to community vitality and quality of life in Flint.

Foundation President and CEO Ridgway White said about two-thirds of the \$30 million is expected to support traditional law enforcement efforts. The remaining third will focus on community and neighborhood programs aimed at violence prevention.

The foundation already supports the Flint Police Department, Genesee County Sheriff's Office and University of Mich-



RIDGWAY WHITE, FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND CEO (PHOTO | THE CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION)

igan-Flint Department of Public Safety. Future funding could support additional officers, technology and community policing strategies.

Neighborhood investments are expected to include programs that engage young people and

residents in violence prevention, conflict resolution and community activities. The foundation currently supports the Community Safety Collaborative through the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, violence-interruption training involving groups

such as the Peacekeepers and programs through the Hurley Trauma Recovery Center.

The announcement followed a violent stretch in Flint that included several fatal shootings. A man was shot and killed Aug. 8 in downtown Flint near South Saginaw and First streets, outside the Mott Foundation building. Other shootings during the following days included the deaths of two teenagers near James P. Cole Boulevard and Stewart Avenue.

White said the foundation has begun discussions with law enforcement agencies, community organizations and other funding partners to determine where the new investment can have the greatest effect.

The plan also emphasizes youth programs, recreation, community centers and other places where young people can build relationships and spend time in safe environments.

The foundation has not yet announced a complete list of grants or recipients for the \$30 million commitment.

COMMUNITY

Flint presents Gov. Gretchen Whitmer with key to the city



FLINT MAYOR SHELDON NEELEY PRESENTED GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER WITH THE KEY TO THE CITY ON AUG. 12 DURING A CEREMONY RECOGNIZING STATE INVESTMENTS AND COOPERATION WITH FLINT DURING HER ADMINISTRATION.

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer received the Key to the City of Flint on Aug. 12 as local leaders recognized state investments in the city during her eight years in office.

Mayor Sheldon Neeley presented Whitmer with the key during a ceremony highlighting work involving infrastructure, education, public health, economic development and Flint's finances.

The ceremony also gave city leaders an opportunity to reflect on Flint's continued recovery from the water crisis.

Last month, Flint completed replacement of the final known active lead service line identified through a federal settlement agreement, closing a major chapter in the city's yearslong effort to

remove lead pipes from its water system.

Whitmer credited cooperation between state and local officials for completing the work and said Flint residents themselves have driven much of the city's progress.

Neeley pointed to state assistance during the water crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, along with support addressing pension and budget challenges. City officials said Flint has received hundreds of millions of dollars in state investment during Whitmer's administration.

Residents attending the ceremony also pointed to programs affecting families and children, including Rx Kids, the Flint-based initiative that provides cash assistance to mothers during pregnancy and the first year of a child's life.

Whitmer is serving the final

year of her second term as governor and cannot seek another consecutive term because of Michigan's term limits.

The Key to the City is a ceremonial honor and does not

carry governmental authority. The Aug. 12 presentation recognized what city leaders described as an eight-year partnership between Flint and the Whitmer administration.



FLINT MAYOR SHELDON NEELEY PRESENTED GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER WITH THE KEY TO THE CITY ON AUG. 12 DURING A CEREMONY RECOGNIZING STATE INVESTMENTS AND COOPERATION WITH FLINT DURING HER ADMINISTRATION.

COMMUNITY

Saginaw Play Dates in the Park series wraps up with skateboarding event

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — A summer recreation series designed to get residents into Saginaw parks is closing its 2026 schedule with tennis, pickleball and skateboarding.

Play Dates in the Park offered seven free events this year at locations throughout the city, with activities ranging from street hockey and swimming to fishing, gardening and field games. The program was organized by the city of Saginaw with Saginaw

County Parks and Recreation, BWell Saginaw and other community partners.

The series was developed from a Michigan Fitness Foundation pilot program aimed at reducing barriers to physical activity. Each event includes instruction, equipment and activities intended to introduce residents to recreation opportunities available in their own community.

The final event will be Skateboarding Day from 10:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, at Celebration Skate Park. Registration has already reached capacity.

Earlier events were held at Garber Courts, First Ward Community Center, Fordney Park, the Saginaw YMCA, Old Town Docks and Houghton-Jones Community Center. Local organizations provided coaching and resources for each activity.

The program also includes a transportation option for younger participants. Youth age 16 and younger can ride STARS buses to Play Dates in the Park events at no cost, although some riders may need a youth pass depending on their height.

City officials said the series is

intended to encourage residents to use public parks while introducing children and adults to activities they may want to continue through local clubs, teams or recreation programs.

Community partners supporting the 2026 series include MyMichigan Field Neurosciences Institute, Saginaw County Parks, Saginaw Public Schools, BWell Saginaw, Saginaw Community Food Club and Kitchen, Positive Results Downtown and the Saginaw County Health Department.

Hoyt Park upper drive closes for resurfacing project

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Construction is underway at Hoyt Park as the city completes a mill and resurfacing project on the park's upper drive.

Work began Monday, Aug. 10, and is expected to continue through Friday, Oct. 30, according to the city of Saginaw.

The Hoyt Park Upper Drive, accessed from Washington Avenue/M-13, is closed to vehicle traffic during construction. The park's lower drive remains open.

The project comes during a busy period at the park. Hoyt Park, 1574 S. Washington Ave., is used for recreation, community gatherings and seasonal events and is scheduled to host the city's first Neighbor Day celebration Aug. 22.

Residents attending activities at the park should expect the upper-drive closure to remain in place throughout much of the fall construction season.

The work is scheduled to be completed by Oct. 30, although construction schedules can change because of weather or other conditions.

Tittabawassee Road project moves into final construction phase

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW COUNTY, Mich. — Drivers along one of Saginaw County's busiest commercial corridors will see another traffic shift beginning Monday, Aug. 17, as the Tittabawassee Road rehabilitation project enters its final phase.

The Saginaw County Road Commission said Stage 3 will cover Tittabawassee Road between Towne Centre Road and North Michigan Avenue. At least one lane will remain open in each direction while crews complete the work.

The traffic change follows the completion of Stage 2b between Fashion Square Boulevard and Towne Centre Road. Crews were expected to finish

pavement markings before moving traffic into the new configuration.

The final phase is expected to take about two months. Work will be staged around the Labor Day holiday so all lanes can temporarily reopen to traffic.

The larger project stretches from Bay Road to North Michigan Avenue and represents about a \$2 million investment in the heavily traveled roadway. Kochville Township officials said roughly 26,500 vehicles use Tittabawassee Road each day. The project is funded with 80% federal funding and 20% county funding.

Stage 3 will be completed in two parts. Crews will first work in the south lanes while maintaining two-way traffic in the north lanes.

Work will then shift to the north lanes, with traffic using the south lanes. Access to businesses is expected to remain open during construction.

The rehabilitation project began in July and has required changing traffic patterns and detours along the corridor near Fashion Square Mall and surrounding businesses.

Electronic message boards and signs will continue directing drivers through the work zone. The road commission has also noted that newly poured concrete must cure before traffic can return to completed sections, which can create periods when little activity is visible at a work site.

COMMUNITY

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POLITICS

ACLU urges Saginaw City Council to reject nuisance gathering ordinance



SAGINAW CITY COUNCIL IS SCHEDULED TO VOTE AUG. 17 ON A PROPOSED NUISANCE GATHERING ORDINANCE THAT HAS DRAWN OBJECTIONS FROM THE ACLU OF MICHIGAN AND LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan is urging Saginaw leaders to reject a proposed nuisance gathering ordinance, adding a constitutional challenge to a debate that has already drawn concerns from residents and community organizations.

The ACLU sent a letter to Mayor Brenda Moore ahead of the City Council's scheduled Aug. 17 vote. The organization argues the proposed ordinance is written too broadly and could violate state and federal constitutional protections by allowing hosts and attendees to face criminal penalties when illegal activity occurs at

a gathering.

The ordinance is intended to give police another tool for responding to large gatherings that become violent or disruptive. A violation would be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500, up to 90 days in jail or both.

City Council advanced the proposal in July on a 7-1 vote. Councilwoman Carly Rose Hammond cast the only opposing vote and has questioned whether the language could reach beyond violent parties to protests, picket lines or other peaceful gatherings.

The proposal follows several large gatherings that have strained police resources in re-

cent years. A 2023 gathering in Saginaw ended with two people killed and 13 others wounded by gunfire. Police confiscated multiple firearms and made several arrests during a similar gathering this year.

Supporters say the ordinance could provide additional authority when large gatherings threaten neighborhood safety. Critics have questioned whether another ordinance is needed when laws addressing weapons, assault, disorderly conduct and other offenses are already available.

Jeff Bulls, president of the Saginaw Community Alliance for the People, told WNEM that residents want existing laws enforced. Kareem Bowen, executive

director of the HELP Community Violence Intervention Program, said police can become overwhelmed when large crowds disperse into different parts of the city. Bowen said that if the ordinance is adopted, the city should collect data showing how often it is used and who is affected.

The ACLU's involvement raises another question for council members: whether the city's attempt to address violence is narrowly written enough to avoid penalizing people who did not participate in illegal conduct.

The City Council is scheduled to consider the ordinance at its 6:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17, meeting at the Andersen Enrichment Center.

POLITICS

Saginaw City Council race puts majority of seats before voters

INCUMBENTS

FOUR-YEAR TERMS

TWO-YEAR TERMS



Brenda F. Moore



Priscilla Garcia



Michael D. Balls



Carly Rose



Tobias Young



Jeanette Barnett



Bob Johnson



Melvin Price Jr.



Charles Anthony Sledge



Rachel Weidinger



Charles Allen



Maximilian Olivarez

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw voters will decide five of the City Council’s nine seats in November, with 10 candidates competing for four full four-year terms and two candidates seeking a separate partial term.

The Saginaw County Clerk’s latest unofficial candidate list, updated Aug. 10, shows Michael D. Balls, Jeanette Barnett, Priscilla Garcia, Carly Rose Hammond, Bob Johnson, Brenda F. Moore, Melvin Price Jr., Charles Anthony Sledge, Rachel Weidinger and Tobias Young running for the four full-term seats. Voters may select up to four candidates in that contest.

Five of the 10 candidates are currently serving on the council: Balls, Garcia, Hammond, Moore

and Young. Moore is mayor and Garcia is mayor pro tempore. The city lists the terms of Balls, Garcia, Hammond, Moore and Young as expiring in 2026.

That means five sitting council members are seeking four available full-term seats, while Barnett, Johnson, Price, Sledge and Weidinger are seeking to join the council.

Young is the only one of the five current council members who was not elected to his present seat. The council appointed him in September 2025 to fill the vacancy created by the departure of former Councilwoman Monique Lamar Silvia. Under the appointment, Young serves until the November 2026 election.

Young is now running for one of the four full four-year terms rather than the remaining portion of the seat to which he was

appointed.

The separate partial-term race features Charles Allen and Maximilian Olivarez. The winner will serve the remainder of a term ending Nov. 12, 2028. Voters may select one candidate in that contest.

The city’s election information confirms that four four-year council positions and one two-year position are on the Nov. 3 ballot. Candidates were required to file nonpartisan nominating petitions with signatures from at least 50 and no more than 100 registered Saginaw voters by July 21.

Saginaw City Council consists of nine members elected citywide in nonpartisan elections. Unlike communities that elect council members from individual wards, each Saginaw council member represents the entire city.

The council sets municipal policy, adopts ordinances and resolutions, approves the city budget, determines tax rates and fees and appoints the city manager, who oversees day-to-day city government.

Saginaw residents also do not directly elect the mayor. The mayor and mayor pro tempore are selected by members of the City Council. As a result, the November election could affect not only the makeup of the council but also who holds its top leadership positions.

With five of nine council seats being decided, voters have an opportunity to significantly shape the makeup of Saginaw’s governing body for the next several years.

The general election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 3.

POLITICS

Neeley, Burns advance to November race for Flint mayor

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley and City Councilwoman Tonya Burns will face each other in November after finishing first and second in the city's Aug. 4 mayoral primary.

Neeley received 5,132 votes, or 42.79%, while Burns received 3,913 votes, or 32.63%, according to unofficial results with all city precincts reporting. Roshanda Womack finished third with 1,709 votes, followed by Micaiah Owens with 1,195.

Neeley, who has served as mayor since 2019 and won reelection in 2022, is seeking another four-year term. Burns has represented Flint's 6th Ward on City Council since 2021.

The November race puts two current Flint elected officials against each other after years of debate over the direction of city government.

Neeley has pointed to balanced budgets, blight removal, economic development and efforts to strengthen public safety during his administration. Burns has frequently challenged decisions coming from the mayor's administration and has empha-



(FROM LEFT) MAYOR SHELDON NEELEY, COUNCILWOMAN TONYA BURNS

sized transparency, neighborhood investment and stronger oversight at City Hall.

Public safety is likely to remain high on the agenda after a series of shootings in August renewed concerns about violent crime and youth gun violence.

Water quality, infrastructure, neighborhood development and the often-difficult relationship between the mayor's office and City Council are also expected to remain major campaign issues.

Nearly 12,000 votes were cast in the mayoral primary, a notice-

able increase from Flint's recent mayoral primaries.

The winner on Nov. 3 will lead a city that continues to deal with long-term recovery from the water crisis while pursuing redevelopment and neighborhood investment.

Flint City Council races narrowed as voters choose November finalists

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Four Flint City Council contests were narrowed to two candidates during the Aug. 4 primary, setting up a series of neighborhood races for the Nov. 3 general election.

In the 1st Ward, Arthur Woodson led with 625 votes, or 41.95%, while Debra Coleman received 471 votes, or 31.61%. Cyn-

thia Haynes finished third with 384 votes.

LaShawn Johnson led a five-candidate field in the 2nd Ward with 698 votes, or 41.01%. Incumbent Councilwoman Ladel Lewis advanced in second place with 426 votes, or 25.03%.

The 5th Ward race was closer. Joel Arnold received 465 votes, or 34.78%, and DeWaun Robinson received 406, or 30.37%.

Wantwaz Davis finished behind Robinson with 364 votes.

Ezekiel Harris led the 8th Ward primary with 752 votes, or 57.8%, followed by Casey Lester with 406 votes, or 31.21%.

Other council districts did not require primaries because the number of candidates did not exceed the number needed to advance. All nine City Council seats will ultimately be decided

in November.

The council races come at a time when Flint is dealing with public safety, housing, neighborhood development, city finances and questions about the working relationship between the legislative body and mayor's office.

The Nov. 3 election could change the makeup of a council that has frequently been divided on major city issues.

POLITICS

Benson, James move into general election race for Michigan governor

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and U.S. Rep. John James are moving into the final months of a gubernatorial campaign that will determine who succeeds term-limited Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Benson easily won the Democratic primary Aug. 4, receiving about 83% of the vote against Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson.

James won the Republican nomination with about 49.8%, defeating businessman Perry Johnson, who received about 35.1%. Former Attorney General Mike Cox and state Sen. Aric Nesbitt remained on the ballot



REPUBLICAN JOHN JAMES (LEFT) AND DEMOCRAT JOCELYN BENSON (RIGHT) WON THEIR RESPECTIVE AUG. 4 PRIMARIES AND WILL COMPETE TO BECOME MICHIGAN'S NEXT GOVERNOR IN NOVEMBER.

after ending their campaigns and endorsing James.

The two nominees bring very different backgrounds to the race.

Benson has served as Michi-



gan secretary of state since 2019 and has made election administration, government accountability and voting rights central parts of her public profile.

James is an Army veteran,

businessman and congressman representing Michigan's 10th District. He previously ran twice for U.S. Senate and received Trump's endorsement in the gubernatorial primary.

Affordability, education, economic development, taxes, public safety and Michigan's population and workforce challenges are expected to feature heavily in the fall campaign.

The race also marks the end of Whitmer's eight years as governor. Michigan law prevents her from seeking a third consecutive term.

James would become Michigan's first Black governor if elected.

Benson and James will appear on the Nov. 3 ballot.

Greene, Tunney set for November rematch in 35th Senate District

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — State Sen. Chedrick Greene and Republican Jason Tunney will meet at the ballot box again in November, six months after Greene defeated Tunney in a special election for Michigan's 35th Senate District.

Greene, D-Saginaw, was unopposed in the Aug. 4 Democratic primary. Tunney defeated Republican Chadwick Twillman, who received about 10.4% of the GOP primary vote.

Their Nov. 3 contest will determine who represents the district for a full four-year term beginning in January.

Greene defeated Tunney in the May 5 special election with



REPUBLICAN JASON TUNNEY (LEFT) AND DEMOCRATIC STATE SEN. CHEDRICK GREENE (RIGHT) WILL MEET AGAIN NOV. 3 FOR A FULL FOUR-YEAR TERM REPRESENTING MICHIGAN'S 35TH SENATE DISTRICT.

58.9% of the vote to Tunney's 39.4%. Libertarian Ali Sledz received 1.7%. The special election filled the remainder of the term left vacant when Kristen McDon-



ald Rivet was elected to Congress.

Greene is a Saginaw firefighter and Marine Corps veteran. His campaign has emphasized public safety, jobs, infrastructure and

services for working families.

Tunney, a Saginaw attorney and former assistant county prosecutor, has focused on lower taxes, education, public safety, government transparency and reducing regulations. He also has business experience through his family's manufacturing company.

The 35th District includes Saginaw and Bay City, parts of Midland County and surrounding townships and rural areas.

Greene enters the fall campaign as the incumbent, but Tunney made clear after the May loss that he intended to return for the regular election.

Voters will make the final decision Nov. 3.

POLITICS

Michigan Democrats rally behind El-Sayed after narrow Senate primary

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Michigan Democrats are working to close divisions exposed during one of the nation's most expensive and closely watched U.S. Senate primaries after Abdul El-Sayed narrowly defeated U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens.

El-Sayed received about 48.5% of the Democratic vote to Stevens' 47.5%, a much tighter result than several pre-election polls suggested.

The primary drew sharp differences over health care, corporate money in politics, Israel and Gaza and the direction of the Democratic Party. Stevens was supported by many establishment Democrats, while El-Sayed received strong backing from the party's progressive wing.

Since the election, Democratic organizations and leaders have begun publicly backing El-Sayed as the party shifts its attention to Republican Mike Rogers.



ABDUL EL-SAYED IS WORKING TO UNITE MICHIGAN DEMOCRATS AFTER NARROWLY DEFEATING U.S. REP. HALEY STEVENS IN THE AUG. 4 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY.

The Michigan Democratic Party Black Caucus endorsed El-Sayed Aug. 11 and called for unity

heading into November.

El-Sayed also spoke with former President Barack Obama

after the primary and said the conversation was encouraging. He has said he hopes Obama will campaign in Michigan before Election Day.

The effort to bring Democrats together matters because the race is expected to play a major role in determining control of the U.S. Senate.

Rogers, a former congressman and the Republican Senate nominee in 2024, ran unopposed in this year's Republican primary.

El-Sayed has centered his campaign on Medicare for All, household costs and reducing the influence of large donors and corporations in politics. Rogers has emphasized national security, the economy and Republican control of the Senate.

Michigan's seat is open because Democratic Sen. Gary Peters is retiring.

Midland City Council to review how business tax breaks are awarded

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Midland City Council members will take a closer look at the city's approach to industrial tax incentives as they consider whether future businesses should face a clearer set of requirements before receiving tax breaks.

Council will hold a special Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption workshop from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17, at City Hall, 333 W. Ellsworth St.

Industrial Facilities Tax exemptions are designed to encourage manufacturing investment and redevelopment. Approved companies can receive significant reductions on property taxes associated with eligible improvements for periods ranging from one to 12 years.

Council members have raised questions in recent months about how the city determines which businesses receive exemptions and how long each incentive should last.

The discussion became more

prominent as council considered tax breaks for Case Systems and Midland Compounding.

Case Systems received a 12-year exemption tied to a \$6.5 million expansion expected to retain 187 jobs and create 20. Midland Compounding later received a 12-year exemption for a roughly \$2.76 million project after council members debated whether the full term was appropriate.

Mayor Maureen Donker and other council members have said standardized criteria could create a more consistent process

for applicants while helping the city weigh job creation and private investment against lost tax revenue.

The discussion also comes after Midland increased its millage rate for the first time in nine years as officials sought to avoid drawing heavily from city reserves.

No final policy is scheduled for adoption during the workshop. The meeting is intended to give council members time to discuss possible guidelines.

HEALTH

Saginaw health roundup helps families prepare children for school

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Families still working through their back-to-school health checklist will have another opportunity to obtain immunizations, dental care and hearing and vision screenings Tuesday, Aug. 18, in Saginaw.

The Saginaw County Health Department and Great Lakes Bay Health Centers will host the final scheduled Kids' Health Round Up from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the health department, 1600 N. Michigan Ave. Walk-ins are welcome.

The event brings several services together at one location. Great Lakes Bay Health Centers will operate a dental bus in the health department's north parking lot, while immunizations will be available in Room 109. Hearing and vision screenings will be offered in Room 505.

Car-seat checks will be available by appointment from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the south parking lot. Face painting is also scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Aug. 18 roundup follows similar events held July 21 and Aug. 10. Health officials organized the series to give parents a way to complete several school-readiness health needs during a single visit rather than scheduling separate appointments at several locations.

Michigan schools and child care programs require documentation for certain immunizations, while hearing and vision screenings can help identify problems that may interfere with learning. Saginaw County also provides immunization services throughout the year at its North Michigan Avenue location.

The Aug. 18 event comes as families across the region prepare for the beginning of the 2026-27 school year.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers

KIDS HEALTH ROUND UP

HEARING • VISION • DENTAL IMMUNIZATIONS

DATES:

- ✓ JUNE 30TH
- ✓ JULY 21ST
- ✓ AUGUST 10TH
- ✓ AUGUST 18TH

WALK INS
8:30-3:30PM

CAR SEAT CHECKS
11-2PM

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HEALTH

New Saginaw County guide aims to improve mental health crisis response

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Police officers and other first responders across Saginaw County have a newly updated guide designed to help them respond consistently when they encounter someone experiencing a mental health or behavioral health crisis.

The Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority and Saginaw County Probate Court released the fifth edition of the Saginaw County First Responder's Guide for Behavioral Interventions this month. The handbook provides protocols and community resources intended for use across different jurisdic-

tions and agencies.

The guide addresses situations first responders regularly encounter, including psychiatric emergencies, the inpatient admission process, crises involving children and families, substance use and co-occurring disorders and the role of law enforcement during mental health emergencies. It also includes information on working with organizations such as CAN Council and adult and child protective services.

The county's first guide was developed in 2007 and was most recently updated in 2018. Saginaw County Community Mental Health officials said changes in policies, services and community

programs made another revision necessary.

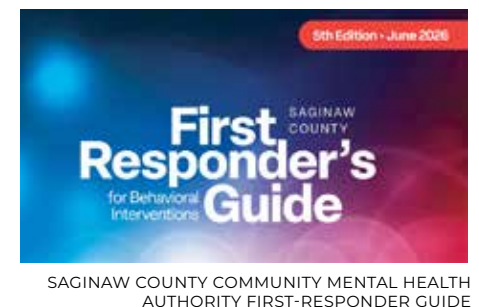
Mental health professionals, first responders, the court system and community organizations participated in developing the updated version. Sandra Lindsey, CEO of Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, said a coordinated approach can help residents receive appropriate treatment more quickly while allowing law enforcement officers to return to other public safety responsibilities.

Mental Health Supervisor Nancy Johnson said people experiencing behavioral health crises are among the community's most vulnerable residents and that

agencies benefit when they better understand one another's roles.

Probate Judge Patrick J. McGraw also credited collaboration among mental health professionals, courts, law enforcement and community organizations with strengthening the resource.

The handbook is available online for first responders and community partners.



SAGINAW COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY FIRST-RESPONDER GUIDE



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Next generation cancer treatments with next level patient care.

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Extraordinary care for every generation.

HEALTH

Great Lakes Bay Vet Center moves to larger Bay City location

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — Veterans, service members and their families across the Great Lakes Bay Region have a new location for confidential counseling and support after the Great Lakes Bay Vet Center moved from Saginaw to Bay City.

The center has relocated from 5360 Hampton Place in Saginaw to 6387 Westside Saginaw Road in Bay City. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will hold a public open house and dedication from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 20, with a dedication ceremony scheduled for noon.

The new facility is located near Interstate 75 and is intended to improve accessibility



THE GREAT LAKES BAY VET CENTER HAS MOVED FROM SAGINAW TO A LARGER BAY CITY FACILITY SERVING VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND FAMILIES ACROSS 15 COUNTIES. AN OPEN HOUSE AND DEDICATION WILL BE HELD AUG. 20. (PHOTO | VA.GOV)

for residents throughout the 15 counties served by the center. The site offers expanded parking, more outdoor space for outreach, recreation and whole-health activities and additional space for partnerships with veterans ser-

vice organizations.

Vet Centers operate differently from traditional VA medical facilities. They provide confidential counseling in a nonmedical setting at no cost to eligible veterans, active-duty service members

and their families.

Services include individual and group counseling and support related to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma. Staff can also connect veterans with substance-use treatment, VA health care and community resources when additional services are needed.

The center also assists veterans in connecting with service officers who can help with benefits and claims and works with county veterans offices, National Guard and Reserve units, colleges, universities and veterans organizations throughout the region.

The Aug. 20 open house is free and open to the public.

Michigan confirms H1N2 variant influenza case after Kent County Youth Fair

BY MB STAFF

LANSGING, Mich. — Michigan health officials have confirmed a human case of influenza A H1N2 variant after an Ionia County resident was exposed to swine while exhibiting animals at the Kent County Youth Fair.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced the case Aug. 14. The resident initially tested presumptive positive at the state Bureau of Laboratories, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the result Friday. The fair was held Aug. 3-8 at the Grand Agricultural Center of West Michigan in Lowell.

The confirmation came after illness was detected among pigs

at the fair. One pig died suddenly Aug. 7 and several others developed signs of illness, prompting officials to isolate the affected animals and close the swine barn to the public. Several people who had contact with pigs later reported flu-like symptoms, according to the Kent County Health Department.

MDHHS and the Kent County Health Department are contacting swine exhibitors and their families to identify other illnesses that could be connected to exposure at the fair. Health care providers in the area have also been asked to watch for respiratory illness among patients who recently had contact with pigs.

State Chief Medical Executive Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian said

the risk to the general public remains low. People who attended the fair and had contact with pigs are being advised to watch for symptoms and tell their health care provider about the exposure if they become ill.

Swine influenza viruses differ from the flu viruses that commonly circulate among people. Human infections are rare but can occur when people are exposed to infected pigs. Symptoms can resemble seasonal influenza and include fever, cough, runny nose, body aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Children younger than 5, adults 65 and older, pregnant people and people with certain chronic conditions or weakened immune systems face a greater

risk of serious complications if infected. Variant influenza can cause pneumonia and, in some cases, require hospitalization.

There is no human vaccine specifically for swine influenza, and the seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against H1N2 variant infection. Prescription antiviral medications can be used to treat infections, with early treatment particularly important for people at higher risk of complications.

Health officials continue to recommend hand washing around livestock, avoiding food and drinks inside animal areas and avoiding contact with pigs when sick. People at higher risk for serious influenza complications should avoid pigs and swine barns at fairs.

HEALTH

Higher WIC income limit could make more Michigan families eligible

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — More Michigan families may qualify for nutrition assistance after the state increased the income limit for the Women, Infants and Children program.

Under updated federal income guidelines, a family of four can now earn as much as \$61,050 annually and meet the program's income threshold, an increase of more than \$1,500 from the previous limit. The Michigan De-

partment of Health and Human Services announced the change Aug. 5.

WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding assistance and referrals to health and social services. The program serves eligible pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children younger than 5.

Approximately 187,000 Michigan residents receive WIC services each month, according to MDHHS. State officials are

encouraging families who previously earned too much to qualify to check their eligibility again under the revised guidelines.

Benefits are intended to help families purchase nutritious foods during pregnancy and early childhood, periods when adequate nutrition can play an important role in long-term development and health. WIC also connects parents with breastfeeding support and other health and community services.

The program is funded by

the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered in Michigan through MDHHS and local agencies.

Families can check eligibility and begin an application through Michigan WIC or the WIC Connect mobile application.



Michigan asks local governments to join forces on opioid settlement projects

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan is inviting counties, cities and other local governments receiving opioid settlement money to combine resources with the state on projects addressing substance use disorder and overdose prevention.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced the initiative Aug. 11, asking local governments to propose projects that could benefit from coordinated state and local investment. Potential efforts may focus on preventing substance use, reducing overdose risk, expanding treatment and supporting people in long-term recovery.

Rather than requiring communities to operate separate programs with separate pools of settlement money, the initiative creates an avenue for local governments and MDHHS to identify projects where their funds



MICHIGAN IS INVITING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO COORDINATE OPIOID SETTLEMENT INVESTMENTS WITH THE STATE ON PROJECTS INVOLVING PREVENTION, OVERDOSE REDUCTION, TREATMENT AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY.

could work together. State officials say coordinated investments could extend the reach of settlement dollars and support larger or more comprehensive programs.

Michigan is expected to receive more than \$1.8 billion from national opioid settlements

through 2040. Half is being directed to the state's Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund, while the other half is distributed directly to county, city and township governments.

Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Michigan's chief medical executive and chair of the Michigan

Opioids Task Force, said combining state and local resources could allow communities to build on work already underway to reduce overdose deaths.

Michigan reported in June that its overdose death rate had declined by 47% since 2021. The state has attributed that improvement to a combination of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery programs, including wider naloxone distribution, expanded medication treatment and additional recovery housing. State officials have cautioned that disparities remain, including significantly higher overdose death rates among Black residents and in some urban communities.

Local governments can submit proposals now. Projects selected through the initial process will move forward to more detailed planning with the state; the announcement did not identify specific local recipients or award amounts.

EDUCATION

SVSU secures foundation support for Lake Huron research station

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — Saginaw Valley State University has secured new support from four Great Lakes Bay Region foundations as it moves closer to developing what the university says will be the first university-operated environmental science research station on Lake Huron.

SVSU announced earlier this month that grants and gifts from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, Charles J. Strosacker Foundation, Bay Area Community Foundation and Saginaw Community Foundation will support the planned Lake Huron Environmental Science Research Station. The facility would be built along the Saginaw River near its meeting point with Saginaw Bay in Bay County's Bangor Township.

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation awarded \$750,000, the largest amount disclosed in the latest round of support. The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation contributed \$75,000, while the Bay Area Community Foundation awarded \$20,000 from its Community Initiative Fund. SVSU did not disclose the amount of the Saginaw Community Foundation gift in its announcement.

The Saginaw Community Foundation was the first of the four foundations to make a commitment to the project this year. Its contribution came through the Carl H. Jr. and Sandra Werth Fund. SVSU plans to name a laboratory in the facility the Carl and Sandra Werth Mesocosm Laboratory, where researchers



AN ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING SHOWS SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROPOSED LAKE HURON ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE RESEARCH STATION NEAR SAGINAW BAY. (PHOTO | SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY)

will be able to use an experimental water enclosure to study natural ecosystems under controlled conditions.

The research station is planned as more than a university laboratory. SVSU says the facility will provide research and classroom opportunities for its students, educational programs for K-12 students and opportunities for citizen scientists to participate in freshwater research.

Current university plans call for a roughly 20,000-square-foot facility containing classrooms, meeting areas, research laboratories and faculty offices. SVSU's fiscal year 2027 capital outlay request estimates the project at \$24 million and seeks \$15 million in state support. The university plans to provide \$9 million through university, donor and federal resources.

The station would become a home for SVSU's Environmental Science and Environmental

Studies and Sustainability programs, giving students direct access to the Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron ecosystems they study. It would also support high school internships and other regional STEM programs.

SVSU already conducts water-quality and environmental research throughout the Saginaw Bay watershed. The new station would allow researchers to work closer to the water rather than transporting equipment from the university's main campus about 20 miles away.

Research is expected to include freshwater ecosystem health, water quality, nutrient and sediment movement and other environmental conditions affecting Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron. The university also expects to collaborate with local health departments and agencies such as the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and the U.S. Environ-

mental Protection Agency.

The project could also contribute research connected to ongoing efforts to restore the Saginaw River and Bay. SVSU's current project proposal notes that research on nutrient and sediment movement could provide information useful to efforts toward removing the Saginaw River and Bay from the federal list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

SVSU has committed \$2.5 million from its capital project reserves and has received federal funding for the project. Fundraising for construction and future programming remains underway.

The project has not yet reached the construction stage. SVSU said it plans to proceed with groundbreaking after receiving construction approval from the Michigan Legislature.

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EDUCATION

CMU waives undergraduate application fees through Oct. 31

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich. — Prospective students considering Central Michigan University can submit an undergraduate application without paying an application fee through Oct. 31.

The university is waiving the fee for all domestic freshman and transfer applicants from Aug. 1 through Oct. 31, extending a college-access effort that CMU previously offered for shorter periods.

Students applying to attend CMU in person can also receive a university T-shirt if they are among the first 1,500 applicants during the promotion.

CMU uses rolling admissions, meaning applications continue to be reviewed as they are completed. The university does not require an admissions essay, and applicants generally submit an application and high school or college transcripts as part of the process.

For high school seniors seeking scholarships, applying earlier

than the Oct. 31 fee-waiver deadline may be beneficial. CMU recommends that freshmen apply by Oct. 15 to be considered for all competitive scholarship programs. Priority consideration for first-come, first-served merit scholarship funds is given to applications completed by Dec. 1.

Transfer students planning to begin during a summer or fall semester are encouraged to submit all application materials by March 1 for priority merit scholarship consideration. The priority date for spring transfer appli-

cants is Dec. 1.

The longer fee-waiver period is part of CMU's broader enrollment strategy. University officials announced earlier this year that the free-application window would be expanded from its traditional October period to cover August through October, giving students more time to apply without paying the fee.

The current waiver applies to domestic freshman and transfer applicants. Students can apply directly through CMU or through the Common Application.

New Michigan law changes cellphone rules in classrooms this fall

BY MB STAFF

LANSGING, Mich. — Cellphones will be harder to reach during class for Michigan students this fall as a new state law requires public and charter schools to restrict personal communication devices during instructional time.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed bipartisan legislation Feb. 10 requiring school districts and public school academies to adopt policies prohibiting students from using wireless communication devices on school grounds during instructional time beginning with the 2026-27 school year. The law allows exceptions for emergencies and authorized academic uses.

The statewide requirement does not impose the same bell-to-bell cellphone ban on every Michigan student. Instead, it establishes a minimum restriction during instructional periods and leaves districts room to adopt stricter local policies.

Midland Public Schools is



TEEN ON CELL PHONE (GENERATED IMAGE)

among the districts that have gone further. Its Board of Education approved a policy in July prohibiting cellphone use from bell to bell for students through eighth grade. High school students may use their phones during lunch, but not during instructional periods.

District officials said the high school exception reflects Midland's open-lunch policy, which

allows some students to leave campus during that portion of the day. The district had previously allowed students in grades six through 12 to use their phones during lunch.

The state legislation grew out of concerns from educators and lawmakers about distractions created by phones and social media during lessons. When signing the bills, Whitmer said

the goal was to improve classroom focus while encouraging healthier habits around screens and social media.

Because districts can establish policies that go beyond the state minimum, students in neighboring school systems may encounter different rules. Some may be required to keep phones stored throughout the school day, while others may be allowed access during lunch, passing periods or other noninstructional times.

Parents and students should review their district's 2026-27 handbook before the first day of school rather than assuming the rules will be identical statewide. Midland Public Schools, for example, begins classes Aug. 24 and has already incorporated its new restrictions into preparations for the school year.

The change makes the coming school year the first in which every Michigan public school district and charter school must have an instructional-time wireless device restriction in place.

EDUCATION

School is back in session soon



STUDENTS WALKING AT SCHOOL (GENERATED IMAGE)



BY MB STAFF

The coming school year is my 70th (counting my time as a student and an educator). *Goodness, that is staggering to consider, and 70 years underscores the point that it is “not my first rodeo,” so to speak.*

Clearly, going back to school is a great time for a fresh start.

Former SVSU President Eric Gilbertson once said that the school year gives everyone a chance to begin again.

However, a smooth first week doesn’t just happen — it comes from simple steps that help kids feel calm, organized, and confident.

Parents need to get to “back to school” meetings and open houses often held in August to set the stage. What is new this year? Find out by attending.

Furthermore, as summer ends, start adjusting sleep schedules at home little by little. Moving bedtime earlier by 15–20 minutes every few days makes mornings easier. It also helps

to practice the morning routine: wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed, pack your backpack, and head out. When kids know what to expect, the first day feels less stressful.

Emotions matter too. Many kids feel nervous about new teachers or classmates. Talking about their worries, visiting the school ahead of time, or reconnecting with friends can make the transition easier. Try not to overload the schedule during the first weeks so kids have time to settle in.

Healthy habits support learning. A breakfast with protein helps kids focus, and balanced snacks — like fruit with peanut

butter or crackers with hummus — keep energy steady. Make sure they bring a water bottle and drink throughout the day.

Staying organized also makes a big difference. Break the supply list into “must-haves” and “nice-to-haves,” pack backpacks the night before, and create one spot at home for school items. Review safety rules for walking or riding the bus, slow down in school zones, and be careful about sharing first-day photos online.

With a few smart routines, kids can start the school year feeling ready and confident. My wish is for 2026-27 to be the Best Year Ever!

Resource: <https://yourbestyeareverbook.com>

EDUCATION

Freeland schools put \$21.2 million bond proposal on November ballot

BY MB STAFF

FREELAND, Mich. — Freeland Community School District voters will decide this fall whether to approve a \$21.2 million bond proposal aimed at improving school safety, replacing aging building systems and addressing infrastructure needs throughout the district.

The Board of Education voted unanimously, 7-0, on Aug. 11 to place the 20-year proposal on the Nov. 3 ballot. The district describes the plan as tax-neutral because it is structured to replace the district's existing sinking fund millage rather than increase the overall school tax rate.

If approved, the bond would finance projects at multiple district buildings. Plans include replacing roofs at Freeland Learning Center and Freeland Elementary School, upgrading fire alarm systems districtwide and replacing boilers, air-handling units, exhaust fans and rooftop heating and cooling equipment.

Safety improvements would include redesigning the pickup and drop-off area at Freeland Middle/High School, upgrading



FREELAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTERS WILL CONSIDER A \$21.2 MILLION, 20-YEAR BOND PROPOSAL NOV. 3.

building security measures, installing new public address and clock systems and replacing the playground fence at the Learning Center. The district also plans electrical improvements, parking and sidewalk work, stormwater drainage upgrades and accessibility improvements.

Educational and student-use spaces are also included. Proposed work includes redesigning the middle/high school media center into a more student-centered

learning space, replacing Performing Arts Center lighting, renovating elementary student restrooms and improving high school locker rooms.

The proposal is smaller than a \$29.8 million bond considered in 2024. Under the current plan, the district's existing 1.984-mill sinking fund would be discontinued if voters approve a bond levied at the same rate, keeping the overall school tax rate unchanged, according to WSGW.

The district has scheduled additional public forums for 6 p.m. Aug. 25 and Sept. 17 in the Freeland Elementary School Library/STEM room. Residents will be able to review projects, learn how the financing would work and ask questions before the election.

The proposal will appear on the Tuesday, Nov. 3, general election ballot.

Saginaw Public Schools holds open interviews ahead of new school year

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw Public Schools is looking to fill several student-support positions as the district prepares for the 2026-27 school year.

The district will hold open interviews from noon to 3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17, at the Saginaw

Public Schools Board of Education office, 550 Millard St.

Current openings highlighted by the district include special education one-on-one aides, special education classroom aides and two-hour prekindergarten transitional monitor positions.

The special education positions place employees directly in classrooms supporting stu-

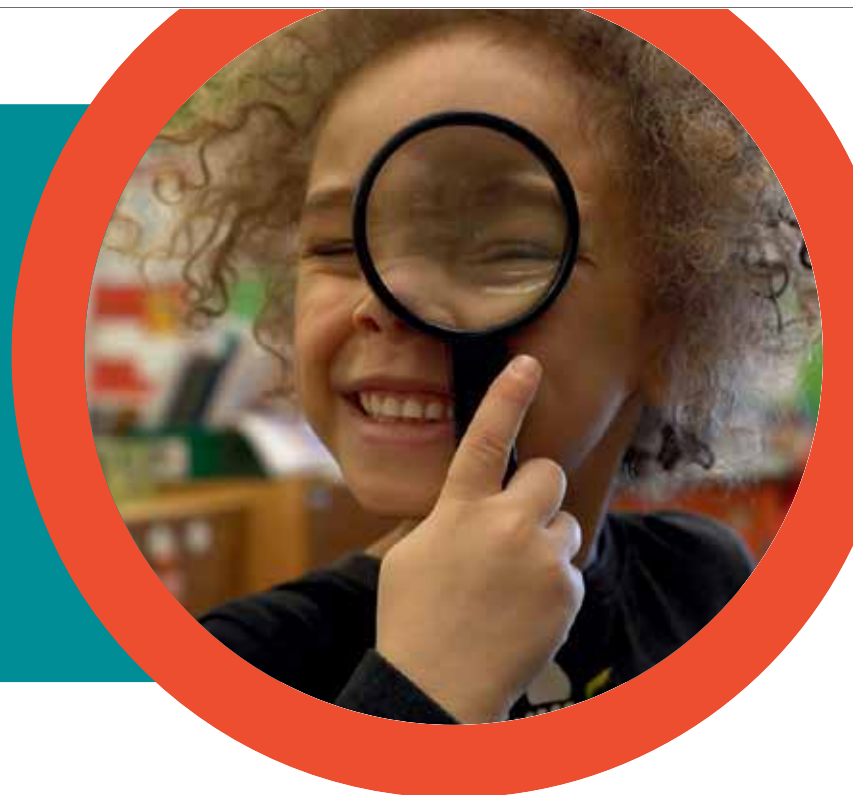
dents and instructional staff, while transitional monitors work with younger children during portions of the school day. The open-interview format gives applicants an opportunity to speak directly with district representatives rather than relying solely on an online application process.

Applicants are asked to bring a photo ID and resume

and should be prepared to learn more about employment opportunities throughout Saginaw Public Schools. The district is also directing interested candidates to its website for additional employment information.

Questions about the Aug. 17 interviews can be directed to Saginaw Public Schools at 989-399-6500.

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**Administration for Children and Families: Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of Evidence*



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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Saginaw-based company buys former Midland hotel properties and RV park



SAGINAW-BASED SOLON MARSHALL LLC HAS PURCHASED THE FORMER DAYS INN, THE NEIGHBORING FORMER BEST WESTERN PROPERTY AND A NINE-ACRE VACANT RV PARK IN MIDLAND. NO REDEVELOPMENT PLAN HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED.

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A Saginaw-based company has purchased nearly 20 acres of prominent commercial property along Midland's Bay City Road corridor, including a former hotel, the site of another demolished hotel and a vacant recreational vehicle park.

Solon Marshall LLC purchased the former Days Inn at 5217 Bay City Road, the neighboring property where a Best Western once stood at 5221 Bay City Road and a nine-acre former RV park at 800 Rockwell Drive,

according to the Midland Daily News.

The properties had been scheduled for auction in July, with prospective buyers facing a July 21 deadline to submit sealed bids. Millennium Bank of Illinois, which owned the properties, instead accepted what auctioneer Joel Zegart of JBS Advisors described as a compelling offer submitted before the scheduled auction. Other potential bidders were notified that the sale would move forward outside the auction process.

The purchase price has not been disclosed. Zegart said the

group behind Solon Marshall made its offer late in the process and does not have an imminent redevelopment plan for the properties.

Solon Marshall LLC was formed July 24. State filings identify Saginaw attorney Matthew Tarrant as the company's organizer and resident agent, with its registered office at Braun Kendrick Attorneys at Law in Saginaw.

The two former hotels have had a complicated recent history. Both the Days Inn and Best Western were closed in August 2022 after the city condemned the properties for code violations.

Millennium Bank took possession of the hotel sites in September 2023. The Best Western was demolished in 2025, leaving the Days Inn structure and a vacant neighboring parcel.

The acquisition puts several sizable parcels near the Great Hall Banquet & Convention Center under the control of a single buyer. Although no redevelopment proposal has been announced, the sale removes uncertainty surrounding properties that had been moving toward auction and could eventually open the door to new investment along the Bay City Road corridor.

BUSINESS + FINANCE

Midland approves second Starbucks at former Pi's restaurant site

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A second Starbucks is planned for Midland after the City Council approved a new two-tenant commercial development at the former Pi's Restaurant property on South Saginaw Road.

Council members voted 4-0 Aug. 10 to approve a conditional-use permit for the project at 1819 S. Saginaw Road. Councilman Tim Soler was absent. The drive-through component required council approval.

Plans call for Starbucks to

occupy the northern half of the building, next to Popeyes. A second tenant would occupy the other half, but that business has not yet been announced. The Starbucks portion includes a drive-through and a 517-square-foot outdoor patio facing South Saginaw Road.

The project also involves a small portion of neighboring property near Jersey Mike's to accommodate parking because of the unusual angle of the existing property line.

During the council hearing, a nearby resident raised

concerns about early-morning noise, including deliveries and trash collection. Nick Seehafer of Seehafer & Shaheen Design, representing the property owner, said deliveries and trash service would occur weekly rather than daily and that Starbucks deliveries would not take place at 5:30 a.m.

Construction is expected to begin in September or October, according to the developer's representative.

Midland currently has one standalone Starbucks location at 7201 Eastman Ave. The

South Saginaw Road development will add another national restaurant brand to an area that has seen continued commercial redevelopment.

The Pi's property has been vacant since the longtime restaurant closed and the building was removed. Plans for the new development were reviewed by the Midland Planning Commission earlier this summer before advancing to the City Council.

No opening date has been announced for the Starbucks, and the identity of the building's second tenant remains unknown.

R1SE opens Frankenmuth location as homegrown company looks beyond mid-Michigan

BY MB STAFF

FRANKENMUTH, Mich. — What began as one Freeland educator's idea for a different kind of after-school program has grown into a three-location business with ambitions to expand across Michigan and eventually beyond the state.

R1SE has opened its newest facility in Frankenmuth, joining existing locations in Freeland and Midland. Founder Trevor Szafranski, a former classroom teacher and parent, developed the concept after seeing both the different ways children learn and the challenges working families face finding meaningful before- and after-school care.

Instead of focusing solely on child care, R1SE combines aca-



THREE RIVERS CORPORATION SIGN

demics with recreation. Its programs include opportunities involving sports, gaming, art and STEM activities, creating spaces where students can complete schoolwork while also pursuing their interests.

The first R1SE opened in Freeland before the company expanded into Midland. The

Frankenmuth location is its third and is expected to serve as a model for future facilities.

Szafranski told Mid-Michigan NOW that he initially envisioned R1SE as a single-location operation. Growth in demand changed those plans. He now hopes to replicate the model elsewhere in Michigan and eventually in other

parts of the country.

Families attending a recent open house at the Frankenmuth facility were able to see the mix of academic and recreational spaces firsthand. The company's approach is designed around the idea that children do not all respond to the same learning style or after-school environment.

The expansion also represents another example of a business developed in the Great Lakes Bay Region growing beyond its original community. R1SE's first three locations remain concentrated in Saginaw and Midland counties, but company leadership is now looking at a wider market.

The Frankenmuth site will help determine how easily the concept can be reproduced as the company considers additional locations.

BUSINESS + FINANCE

Michigan makes more than \$1.1 million available to help small businesses reach global markets

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Emerging entrepreneurs will be able to test their ideas LANSING, Mich. — Michigan small businesses looking for customers outside the United States will have access to more than \$1.1 million in export assistance during the coming fiscal year.

The state announced Aug. 13 that it received \$847,000 from the U.S. Small Business Administration's State Trade Expansion Program, known as STEP. The Michigan Strategic Fund will contribute another \$282,333, bringing total available support to more than \$1.1 million.

The funding is administered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's MI-STEP program and is intended to reduce some of the costs small and midsize companies face when attempting to sell products internationally.

Eligible businesses can receive reimbursement grants of up to \$15,000 per year, covering 75% of approved export-related expenses.

Businesses can use the assistance for international trade shows, trade missions and sales trips. Eligible uses have also been expanded to include international marketing design and translation, compliance testing and international certifications for products entering foreign markets and shipping product samples to prospective customers.

Michigan has received nearly \$16 million in federal STEP funding over 14 years. MEDC says its international trade programs have helped facilitate more than \$6.3 billion in new small-business export sales over time.

During fiscal 2025, more than \$1 million in federal and state MI-STEP funding was allocated to 117 Michigan small businesses. Companies using MEDC international trade resources reported \$496 million in new export sales to customers in 121 countries.

Flint entrepreneurs gain new access to small-business loans and coaching

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint entrepreneurs who have struggled to obtain traditional bank financing have a new local option for small-business loans, financial preparation and one-on-one support.

Michigan Women Forward has established an on-the-ground lending presence in Flint through a partnership with 100K Ideas and the Ruth Mott Foundation. A full-time lending officer is based at the 100K Ideas office in downtown Flint.

The Ruth Mott Foundation is providing a \$500,000 investment for lending capital along with a \$450,000 grant over three years to support Michigan Women Forward's Flint operations.

The financing will allow Michigan Women Forward to offer loans generally ranging from about \$2,500 to \$50,000, with an emphasis on entrepreneurs who may have difficulty qualifying at traditional banks because of low credit scores, limited collateral or a short business history.

The initiative does more than provide money. Entrepreneurs will also have access to programs intended to strengthen bookkeeping, financial statements, business strategies and other areas lenders consider when reviewing financing applications.

One of those opportunities, the Capital Readiness Lab, begins Aug. 26 and runs through Sept. 30. The multiweek program is designed to help entrepreneurs strengthen their finances, refine business plans and prepare to seek capital.

Great Lakes Bay business leaders to gather for regional summit in Saginaw

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Business leaders from Saginaw, Bay, Midland and Isabella counties will gather Aug. 19 for an annual summit focused on the regional economy, workforce development and collaboration across the Great Lakes Bay Region.

The 15th annual Partners in Growth Great Lakes Bay Regional Chamber Summit will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Horizons Conference Center, 6200 State St. Doors open at 10:45 a.m.

The event is organized jointly by the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce and Midland Business Alliance.

Jeff Donofrio, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan, will deliver the keynote address. The statewide organization works with executives from major Michigan employers on issues including economic competitiveness, workforce talent, education and the business climate.

Donofrio previously served as direc-

tor of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and as executive director of workforce development for the city of Detroit. His career also includes work at Ford Motor Co. and in congressional offices. He currently chairs the Michigan Workforce Development Board and the board of Launch Michigan.

The summit will also recognize four businesses, organizations and individuals for their work in the region.

DuPont will receive the Corporate Achievement Award, while RAH Advantage will receive the Small Business Achievement Award. Longtime broadcaster Art Lewis will receive the Individual Achievement Award. Morey Courts Recreation Center and The Morey Foundation will receive the Quality of Life Award.

The annual gathering is designed to look beyond individual municipal and county boundaries and bring business leaders together around issues shared throughout the regional economy.



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SPORTS

SVSU football begins new era under head coach Michael Engle



Engle arrives with an offensive background. Indianapolis averaged 46 points and 500.3 yards per game in 2025, ranking second nationally in Division II in both categories. The Greyhounds also ranked second nationally in passing yards and passing touchdowns, while Engle was named one of five finalists for the FootballScoop Division II Coordinator of the Year award.

His first SVSU staff includes defensive coordinator Jacob Pardonnet, offensive coordinator and offensive line coach Cole Hoover, defensive line coach and recruiting coordinator Niklas Gustav, special teams coordinator Jack Connolly, wide receivers coach Willie Taggart Jr. and running backs coach Caden Goodrow.

The Cardinals also return established talent on defense. Defensive lineman Adom LeDuc was named to the D2Football.com Elite 100 first-team defense watch list Aug. 13. LeDuc enters his fourth season as a starter after earning first-team All-GLIAC honors last year. He recorded 51 tackles, 7½ tackles for loss, 3½ sacks and a team-high 12 quarterback hurries in 2025.

SVSU's defense led the GLIAC in rushing defense last season and ranked 23rd nationally in that category.

The Engle era officially begins at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, when SVSU hosts McKendree at Wickes Stadium in the annual Red Feather Game. The Cardinals remain home Sept. 5 against Texas A&M-Kingsville before traveling to Northwood for the Axe Bowl on Sept. 12.

MICHAEL ENGLE BEGINS HIS FIRST SEASON AS SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S HEAD FOOTBALL COACH AUG. 27 WHEN THE CARDINALS HOST MCKENDREE IN THE RED FEATHER GAME. (PHOTO | SVSU)

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — Saginaw Valley State University will open the 2026 football season with a new head coach and renewed expectations when the Cardinals take the field Aug. 27.

Michael Engle is preparing for his first season leading SVSU

after being named the eighth head coach in program history in January. Engle came to Saginaw Valley after four seasons at the University of Indianapolis, where he worked with quarterbacks and played a central role in one of NCAA Division II's most productive offenses.

SVSU made the coaching change after finishing 6-5 overall

and 5-2 in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference in 2025, good for second place in the conference. The university relieved Ryan Brady of his duties in December after six full seasons as head coach, saying it wanted the program positioned to consistently compete for GLIAC championships and NCAA playoff appearances.

SPORTS

Northwood enters 2026 with playoff expectations after breakthrough season

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Northwood University football enters the 2026 season carrying something it has not had in years: expectations built on a recent NCAA playoff appearance.

The Timberwolves were picked to finish second in the Great Midwest Athletic Conference preseason coaches poll, receiving 85 points and four first-place votes. Ashland narrowly claimed the top spot with 87 points and six first-place votes.

Northwood earned that respect after finishing 9-3 overall and 7-2 in conference play last

fall. The nine victories were the program's most since 2005, and the Timberwolves reached the NCAA Division II playoffs for the first time since that season.

Head coach Dusty Beurer has made it clear that the preseason ranking is not an accomplishment by itself. His current group must build its own identity after last year's breakthrough, with several key players returning but important positions still being rebuilt.

One of Northwood's biggest strengths is at quarterback. Junior Ethan Hamby returns after completing 64% of his passes for 2,312 yards, 23 touchdowns and just one interception last season.

The Timberwolves also return their leading receivers, including Case Boos, Lake Boos and Mitch Rivard.

The offensive line will be one of the areas to watch after Northwood lost several experienced starters. The running game also must replace Devin Brown, who led the team with 763 rushing yards last season, although Trent Hill returns with significant experience and Brandon Martin is back after ACL surgery.

Defensively, Northwood must replace Cole Simpson, who finished last season with 93 tackles and six interceptions. Experienced returners include linebacker Joe Lathers, defensive

backs Aviere Thomas and Lorenzo Alfred and defensive lineman Charlie Lovell.

Northwood ranked second in the G-MAC last season in both scoring offense at 29 points per game and total offense at 352.1 yards per game.

The Timberwolves open the season Sept. 3 at Wayne State before returning to Midland for the annual Axe Bowl against Saginaw Valley State at noon Sept. 12. Northwood's G-MAC opener follows Sept. 19 against Hillsdale.

After returning to the post-season last year, the challenge is no longer proving Northwood can compete at that level. It is finding a way to remain there.

Saginaw United enters third football season with growing roster and higher expectations

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Three years into building a new football identity, Saginaw United is entering the 2026 season with its largest consistent group of players and a roster that has now grown up together under one program.

The Phoenix opened fall practice under the lights this week as coach James King began preparations for Year Three. Saginaw United finished 2-7 last season, but King told WNEM that participation throughout the summer has been stronger and more consistent than at any previous point in the program's short history.

Saginaw United began competition in 2024 after the consolidation of Saginaw High and Arthur Hill, bringing together two



SAGINAW UNITED FOOTBALL OPENED ITS THIRD SEASON OF PRACTICE THIS WEEK. COACH JAMES KING SAYS PARTICIPATION HAS GROWN AS THE PHOENIX PREPARE TO HOST BAY CITY WESTERN IN THE AUG. 27 SEASON OPENER. (PHOTO | SP5D)

schools with generations of separate athletic traditions.

That history made the first two seasons about more than wins and losses. Players who once would have represented different schools had to create a new program, establish traditions and develop a shared identity.

By 2026, many of the current juniors and seniors have

spent their entire varsity careers as members of Saginaw United. King said the difference is noticeable in the way players have taken responsibility for offseason preparation and team leadership.

Participation has also grown. WNEM reported that the Phoenix entered practice with the largest group the program has consistently had throughout the

summer, giving the coaching staff more depth as it prepares for the season.

The team also enters its second season with the new Saginaw United football stadium and fieldhouse available on the Niagara Street campus. The district officially opened the athletic complex last fall.

Saginaw United will open the 2026 season at home against Bay City Western at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, according to the current MHSAA schedule.

For a program still establishing its place in the Saginaw Valley League, Year Three offers the first season in which nearly every returning upperclassman has developed entirely under the Saginaw United name.

SPORTS

New MHSAA playoff system changes road to football state championships

BY MB STAFF

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Michigan high school football teams taking the field this fall will be playing toward a postseason that looks different from the one they encountered a year ago.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association has adopted a regional seeding system for the 11-player football playoffs, changing how teams are grouped for the district and regional rounds beginning with the 2026 postseason.

Under the new format, the 32 playoff teams in each of Michigan's eight 11-player divisions

will first be divided geographically into four eight-team regions. The eight schools within each region will then be seeded according to their playoff-point averages.

Seeds 1, 4, 5 and 8 will form one district, while seeds 2, 3, 6 and 7 will form the other. The champions of those two districts will then meet for the regional championship.

Previously, geography played a larger role in establishing four-team district groupings before the tournament began. The change broadens the geographic pool to eight teams first, then allows playoff points to influence how those teams are divided into

districts.

For Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint-area programs, that means the strength of a team's regular-season performance could have an even more visible effect on its postseason path. Two nearby teams that might previously have been placed in the same four-team district are no longer guaranteed to land together once the eight-team region is seeded.

The change was recommended by the MHSAA Football Committee and approved by the association's Representative Council in May. It applies to 11-player football beginning this season.

The postseason begins with

Selection Sunday on Oct. 25. District semifinals will be played Oct. 30-31, followed by district finals Nov. 6-7, regional finals Nov. 13-14 and semifinals Nov. 21. The state championship games are scheduled for Nov. 27-28.

High school football practice officially began Aug. 10, and the first varsity games may be played beginning Aug. 27.

Another rules change players may notice this fall expands the prohibition against slapping an opponent's head. Previously applied to defensive players, the rule now applies to players on both sides of the football.

Midland Dow tennis coach Terry Schwartzkopf headed to state coaches Hall of Fame



TERRY SCHWARTZKOPF

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — More than two decades of championships, standout players and sustained success at H.H. Dow High School will earn longtime boys tennis coach Terry Schwartzkopf another place in a Michigan sports hall of fame.

Schwartzkopf has been selected for induction into the Michigan High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He will be honored alongside 11 other members of the 2026 class during a Sept. 27 ceremony at the Comfort Inn & Suites Conference Center in Mount Pleasant.

Few high school programs in Michigan have matched the consistency Dow has achieved during Schwartzkopf's tenure. The Chargers have won 19 Saginaw Valley League championships, 17 regional titles and eight Division 2 state championships, including five consecutive state crowns from 2009 through 2013. Dow has also finished as state runner-up twice.

Entering the 2026 season, Schwartzkopf owned a varsity

dual-match record of 345-33-28, along with 876 victories in multi-team events. He has coached 80 All-State players, 41 individual state champions and 23 state runners-up.

His former players include Michigan Mr. Tennis recipients Austin King and Varun Shanker and four-time individual state champions Michael Szabo, Jason Chang and Juli Guerra. Shanker went on to become a four-time NCAA All-American, while William Kirkman has competed internationally as a member of the Dominican national team.

Schwartzkopf's latest recognition is not his first Hall of Fame honor. He was inducted into the Michigan High School Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2023. His five consec-

utive state championship teams were inducted into the Midland County Sports Hall of Fame in 2020, and Schwartzkopf was inducted individually into the Midland County hall earlier this year.

He was also named the 2025 Bob Stoppert Coach of the Year, an honor recognizing coaching performance along with mentorship, sportsmanship, character and community involvement.

The MHSCA Hall of Fame recognition adds a statewide, multisport honor to a career that has already placed Schwartzkopf among Michigan's most accomplished high school tennis coaches.

The Sept. 27 induction ceremony will be held in Mount Pleasant, with ticket sales continuing through Sept. 13.

SPORTS

Claressa Shields stops Kaye Scott, reclaims middleweight titles in Atlanta

BY MB STAFF

ATLANTA — Flint native Claressa Shields returned to the middleweight division in dominant fashion, stopping Australia's Kaye Scott in the sixth round to capture the WBA and WBC middleweight championships Saturday night at State Farm Arena.

Shields, who had not fought at 160 pounds since 2023, controlled much of the bout with her speed, accuracy and combinations before overwhelming Scott in the sixth. The official stoppage came at 1 minute, 38 seconds of the round, improving Shields' professional record to 19-0 with four knockouts. Scott fell to 5-2-1.

The decisive sequence began when Shields connected with a hard left hook that sent Scott backward into the ropes. Because the ropes prevented Scott from falling, the referee administered a count. Scott continued, but Shields quickly attacked again with a sustained combination as Scott struggled to respond. Scott's corner threw in the towel, ending the fight.

The victory returned Shields to championship status in a division she once ruled as undisputed champion. She remains the undisputed heavyweight champion but dropped several weight classes for the opportunity to challenge Scott for her two middleweight belts. Shields said after the fight that she began training camp at 198 pounds and reached the 160-pound limit over 14 weeks, calling it one of the most disciplined camps of her career.

Shields did not appear to lose her speed or effectiveness after the significant weight cut. She worked Scott's body during the



FLINT NATIVE CLARESSA SHIELDS CELEBRATES AFTER STOPPING KAYE SCOTT IN THE SIXTH ROUND AT STATE FARM ARENA IN ATLANTA.

early rounds, landed the cleaner combinations and increasingly took control as the fight progressed. By the fifth round, Shields was sitting down on her punches with more power, setting up the finish in the sixth.

Unofficial punch statistics reported during the broadcast showed Shields landing 92 of 208 punches, compared with 60 of 103 for Scott.

The stoppage was also notable because knockouts have been relatively uncommon during Shields' professional career. Saturday's victory gave her a fourth stoppage in 19 professional fights and her first since defeating Van-

essa Lepage-Joanisse by second-round TKO at heavyweight in 2024.

The Atlanta event marked the first women's boxing main event in State Farm Arena history. Promoters had billed the fight as a historic opportunity for Shields to bring a major women's championship bout to the arena, and the event drew a crowd reported at about 16,000.

The victory adds another chapter to Shield's career that has included championships across five weight divisions and two Olympic gold medals. The 31-year-old has maintained close ties to Flint throughout her rise

in professional boxing and has repeatedly brought major championship fights back to Michigan.

Shields already has her attention on what could come next. She identified fellow Olympic gold medalist Lauren Price of Britain as her preferred future opponent and also mentioned a possible path toward becoming undisputed at middleweight again. Canada's Tammara Thibault currently holds the IBF and WBO middleweight titles.

For now, Shields leaves Atlanta with two more championship belts and an unbeaten record intact.

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 IN FOCUS

SERMONETTE SERIES

God is still working

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 (KJV)



BY MINISTER CAROLYN
CARTER TOWNSEL

Sometimes life doesn't look anything like what you prayed for.

The door closed.
The relationship ended.
The opportunity was lost.
The betrayal hurt.
The season became difficult.

But Romans 8:28 reminds us of something powerful: God does not have to make everything good to work everything together for good.

What tried to break you can become what builds you.

What looked like rejection may have been redirection.
What felt like an ending may have been preparation for a new beginning.
What brought tears may eventually become your testimony.

You may not understand what God is doing right now, but you don't have to understand the process to trust the One who is in control of it.

Don't judge your entire story by one painful chapter.

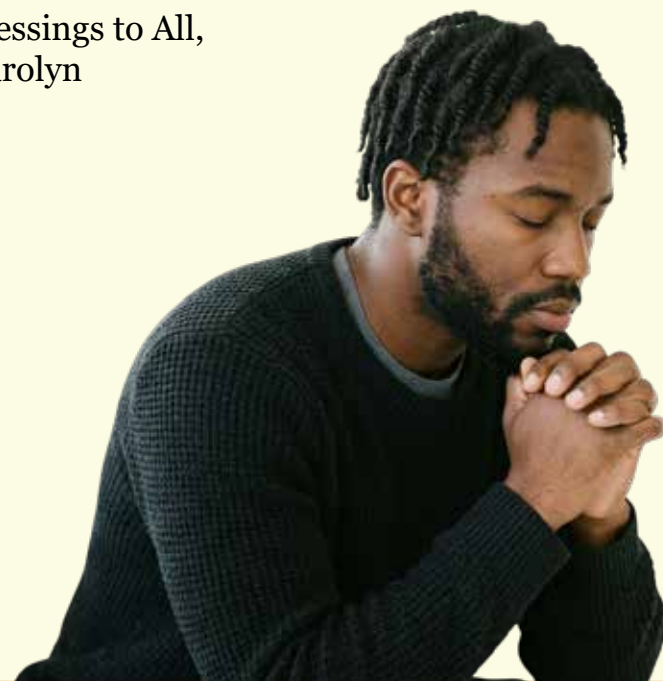
God is still writing. Your setback is not your conclusion. Your pain is not your identity and Your past is not your future.

Keep believing. Keep trusting. Keep moving forward.

Beloved, It may not look good right now, but God is not finished. What happened to you is not greater than what God can do through you.

You may not see the good yet—but God is already working it together.

Blessings to All,
Carolyn



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FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

Life is a Two-Way Street



BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

Life as nonprofit leaders and team members includes asking for assistance, funding, and resources, to support their organization. But sometimes the focus needs to expand to include the community or sector we are a part of. Sometimes we need to flip the switch and ask ourselves, what are we doing to enhance the growth of our community? Sharing expertise and advocating on behalf of others are two ways nonprofits can address important issues beyond their defined priorities.

Sharing expertise can take the form of mentoring and sharing information with a leader, employee, or volunteer from a peer institution. Spending a few days at the offices of a peer organization can expand the knowledge of team members. For example, a development associate can spend a few days working at the development offices of another organization. He or she can assist, observe, and learn from another development associate, gaining ideas and exposure to tools and can bring these back to your organization. A program director can observe the recruitment, onboarding, learning achievement, and retention of program par-



MAN ASSISTING SENIOR (FILE PHOTO)

ticipants from a peer. Likewise, an executive can be invited to observe a cabinet or board meeting at another institution, gaining insights into engagement, committee structures, reporting, agenda setting, facilitation, and follow-through. Sharing expertise can include serving on a municipal or state-level board. This brings the voice of those you serve to decision-making tables where your constituency may not otherwise have a presence. It will require time, thoughtfulness, preparation, consistency and can result in decisions that positively impact the lives of those you serve or advocate for.

Advocating for others is clear and straightforward. There is a billboard we pass on the freeway that reads: You don't have to be a Jew to protect Jews. We like it because it reminds us of the simple truth it proclaims. It also reminds us that there are important interests other than our own. It is important to be visible with-

in our sector or community, and it is powerful when we advocate for others beyond our circle of influence or concern. For example, the leadership of a senior-serving organization can show up to support increasing the number and quality of after-school programs. Arts organizations can advocate for local food banks and launch food drives. It is powerful when nonprofit leaders show up to support the advocacy efforts of others, sign a public letter, or launch a social media campaign that endorses another group, agency, institution, or movement. This relates to sharing expertise, as you

are using your public speaking skills, giving of your time, and/or sharing your network in support of a larger community or sector-wide concern.

Sharing facilities and equipment, participating in joint fundraising, marketing, and special events, and encouraging all staff to volunteer with other nonprofits and organizations are other ways we can extend ourselves to others. As we educate ourselves on the important roles that different organizations play in our communities, we can reach out and ask, "How can I be of service?"



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PICS OF THE WEEK

The Saginaw African Cultural Festival is underway, bringing music, food, art, vendors and cultural traditions to the community. These images capture highlights from the first two days of the celebration as residents and visitors gathered to experience African and African American culture in Saginaw. The festival continues Sunday, Aug. 16, for its final day, and the community is encouraged to come out, enjoy the festivities and be part of this longstanding Saginaw tradition.





Nathan Hankerson
Senior majoring in
Pre-Medicine/Biology

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