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Michigan Sports Hall of Fame inducts Class of 2025 at Detroit ceremony

SPORTS, PG 41

Great Lakes Bay Region to honor Martin Luther King Jr. with annual celebration at SVSU

BY MB STAFF



FILE PHOTO CYNTHIA "CYNT" MARSHALL

SAGINAW TOWNSHIP, Mich. — The Great Lakes Bay Region will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, at Saginaw Valley State University.

The event is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing Arts inside Curtiss Hall on the campus of Saginaw Valley State University.

This year's celebration will feature a keynote address by Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall, president and CEO of Marshalling Resources, a consulting firm specializing in leadership development,

See SVSU MLK, Page 2



Alpha Phi Alpha to host 30th annual MLK Unity Celebration in Saginaw

COMMUNITY, PG 14



Angel Gomez appointed to Michigan Hispanic/Latino Commission

LATINO BANNER, COVER



SVSU MLK, from cover

culture transformation and optimization of people resources.

Marshall launched her consulting business after a 36-year career at AT&T, where she led efforts to build what the company described as a world-class workplace culture. That work contributed to AT&T being named to Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2017, the first time the company had earned the distinction.

In 2018, Marshall made history when she was named CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, becoming the first Black woman to serve as CEO of an NBA franchise.

She has since been recognized for her leadership and commitment to inclusion and organizational excellence, including being named one of Forbes' 15 Most Inspiring Female Leaders and being inducted into the 2024 Junior Achievement Dallas Business Hall of Fame. Her book, "You've Been Chosen," was nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

In addition to the keynote address, the program will include the presentation of Drum Major for Service Awards to individuals from Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties whose service reflects Dr. King's legacy of justice and community engagement.

The celebration will also recognize 15 high school seniors from across the Great Lakes Bay Region who will receive the 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Scholarship for their commitment to advancing racial harmony and social equity in their communities.

More information about the event is available on the university's website.



THIS DAY IN MICHIGAN HISTORY

JANUARY 1, 2013

Taking office on Jan. 1, 2013, Sam Singh made history as the first Indian American elected to the Michigan House of Representatives.

He continued to break barriers in January 2017, when he became the chamber's top Democrat, making him the first Indian American to serve as minority leader.

Singh's record of firsts began well before his time in the Legislature. At 24, he was among the youngest city council members in Michigan when he was elected to the East Lansing City Council. He went on to serve 12 years on the council, including two terms as the city's youngest mayor and the first person of color to hold that office.

MICHIGAN BANNER

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MISSION

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

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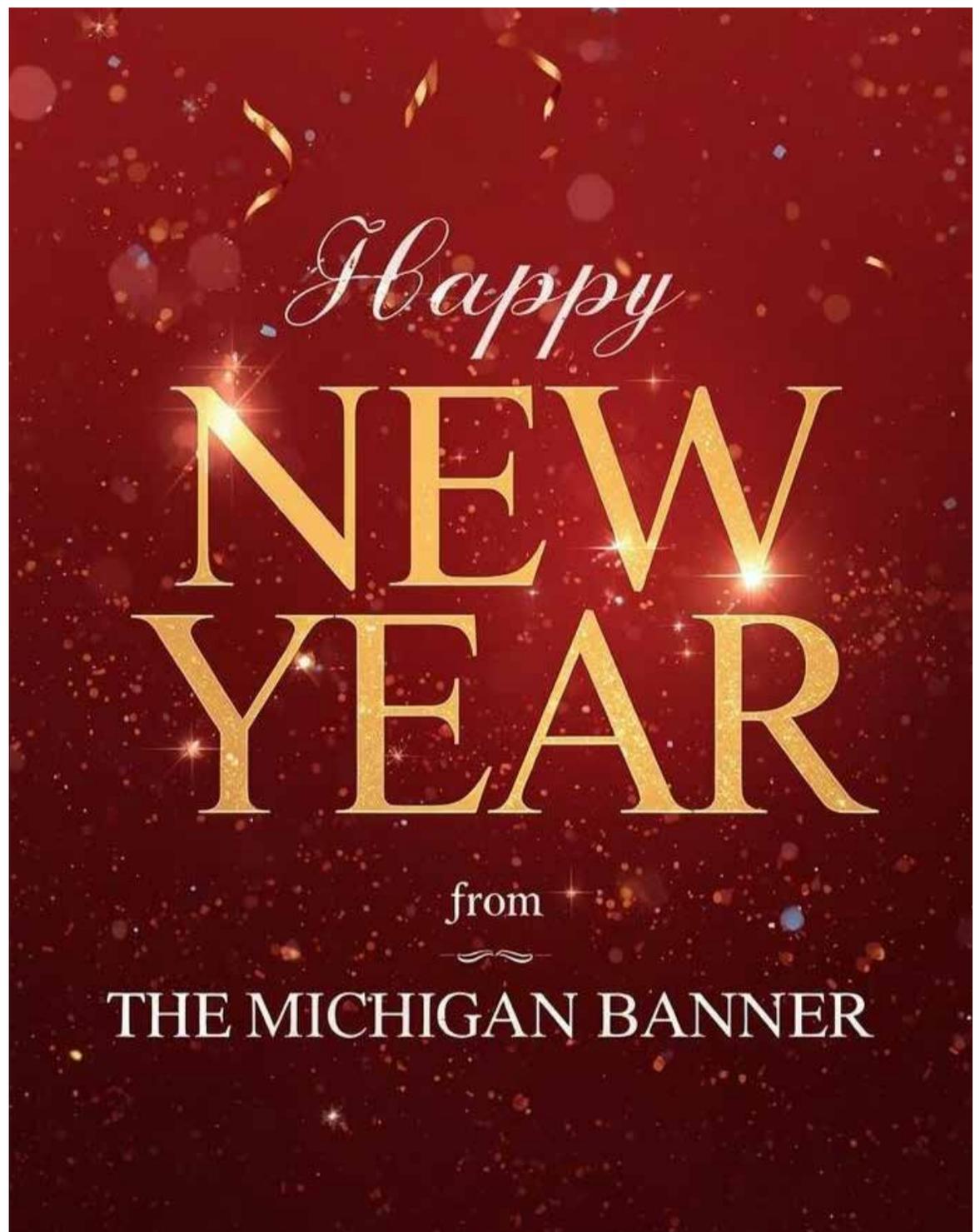
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MLK DAY

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR REGIONAL CELEBRATION

Thursday, January 22, 2026
7:00 p.m. — Malcolm Field Theatre
Located in Curtiss Hall

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



Inspiring conversation with **Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall**

*President & CEO, Marshalling Resources
Former CEO, Dallas Mavericks*

Cynt Marshall has been a dynamic force in business for over four decades, establishing a reputation as a champion for achieving business results through inclusion and a relentless focus on people and operational excellence.

Following a 36-year career at AT&T, Marshall established Marshalling Resources, a consulting firm specializing in leadership development, culture transformation and optimization of people resources. In 1987, she broke new ground when she was named CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, the first Black woman to hold the CEO title for any NBA team.

As senior vice president, human resources and chief diversity officer at AT&T, Marshall led the team that created a world class culture and also spearheaded the work that placed AT&T on Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2017, the first time in the company's history. She's had similar results with her clients at Marshalling Resources.

Marshall's first book, "You've Been Chosen," was released in September 2022 and nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

Widely recognized for her visionary leadership, Marshall has received numerous accolades, including the 2022 Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum Hope for Humanity award. In 2021, Forbes named Marshall one of 15 of the world's most inspiring female leaders, and in 2024, she was recognized as a Junior Achievement Dallas Business Hall of Fame Laureate. In 2025, Marshall was named Cal Alumni of the Year.

Marshall holds degrees in business administration and human resources management from the University of California at Berkeley. She has also been granted five honorary doctorate degrees.

She serves on four corporate boards and on several non-profit boards.

Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This event will feature:

- Keynote Address — Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall
- Presentation of the MLK Regional Scholarship Awards
- Presentation of the MLK Regional Drum Major Awards for Community Service
- The Dr. Mamie T. Thorns and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award

For more information, please visit svsu.edu/mlk or contact the Office of Diversity Programs at **989-964-4068**

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**SAGINAW VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**

MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 1



SMART goals for college students



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

College students- especially undergraduates- are either finishing a semester or preparing to begin a new one. This time of the year is a natural time for reflection and planning. With new courses, responsibilities, and expectations ahead, students often ask: How can I stay focused and successful? How can I improve?

One effective approach is setting SMART goals.

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. What I appreciate most about this framework is its flexibility—it can be applied to nearly any academic situation, regardless of a student's major or year in college.

Consider a student who is roughly halfway through their degree program. A possible SMART goal might be:

To earn 16 credits next semester with a 3.5 grade point average (PA).

This type of goal checks all five SMART boxes.

S First, it is specific. The student has identified the exact number of credits, the time frame (one semester), and the desired level of academic performance.

M Second, it is measurable. At the end of the semester, the student can clearly determine whether they earned 16 credits and achieved a 3.5 GPA.

A Third, it is achievable. Many students successfully complete this level of coursework, and in some institutions, this performance qualifies for recognition such as the Dean's List.

R Fourth, it is relevant. The goal supports steady academic progress and keeps the student on track toward graduation.

T Finally, it is time-bound. The goal applies to a single semester, which helps maintain focus and urgency.



FILE PHOTO

SMART goals are not limited to grades alone. Students can also use them for improving study habits, balancing work, and school, participating in campus activities, or preparing for internships and careers. The key elements are clarity and commitment.

As students begin a new semester- or a new year- setting

one or two well-defined SMART goals can provide direction, motivation, and accountability. Small, intentional steps taken now can make a meaningful difference by the time graduation day arrives.

Reference Doran, G. T. (1981). There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives. *Management Review*, 70(11), 35–36

Saginaw Promise Scholarship: Investment in Saginaw and its students!



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw Promise is making an investment in the future of Saginaw and in the lives of its students through postsecondary education. The Saginaw Promise is an organization that believes in the power of postsecondary education to be a “change agent” to affect positive change in Saginaw, its economy and quality of life and the lives of its students through a “residence based” scholarship; a benefit and an incentive for the children of families who live in the Saginaw Promise Zone to earn a program

certificate or degree. Education provides change for a lifetime to both the individual and their community.

The Saginaw Promise scholarship benefits students who reside in and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone (Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kocville and that area of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District). The Saginaw Promise scholarship can be used at technical/trade schools, community colleges, and universities throughout Michigan for tuition and mandatory fees and is renewable for up to two years. Students must apply for the scholarship

within two years of high school graduation and scholars have up to six years from high school graduation to use their scholarship. Note: The Saginaw Promise is working to revise its Development Plan to fund “Costs of Attendance,” once approved, funding would be broadened beyond tuition and fees to include costs such as housing, books, supplies, transportation etc. Since 2012, Saginaw Promise has awarded \$1,405,747 in scholarships to 774 scholars, and those scholars have earned 323 program certificates and degrees to-date!

How to apply: Students are required to complete the online

Saginaw Community Foundation scholarship application at saginawfoundation.org/site/scholarships/ and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <https://fasa.ed.gov/> to apply for the Saginaw Promise scholarship and to be reviewed for other available funding. Application deadline is February 13, 2026. For questions or information about the Saginaw Promise, programming or scholarship, visit www.saginawpromise.org or telephone (989) 607-3428.

SPONSORED CONTENT

New year, new you... again

BY MB STAFF

It's that time of year when calendars reset, motivation peaks, and you make bold promises to yourself that feel very serious on Dec. 31 and slightly less convincing by mid-January. New Year's resolutions arrive with confidence, good intentions and just enough optimism to make you believe this time will be different.

Your resolutions probably sound familiar: do better in school, stop procrastinating, save money, spend less time on your phone, get healthier. None of those goals are bad. They're just broad. And broad goals tend to disappear once homework piles up and real life kicks back in.

The Problem With Big Promises

Most resolutions fail not because you're lazy or unmotivated, but because the expectations are unrealistic. "Change everything" is not a plan. It's pressure. And pressure usually leads to burnout, not progress.

Saying this will be the year of perfect grades, perfect habits and perfect balance sounds inspiring on Dec. 31. By Jan. 15, it mostly sounds exhausting.

A Better Approach: Smaller Goals

Instead of massive resolutions, try smaller, specific goals that actually fit into your life.

Rather than promising to be "more productive," aim to turn in assignments on time. Instead of saying you'll be healthier, commit to drinking more water during the school day. Instead of deleting every app on your phone, try starting the day with

a short stretch of phone-free time.

They may not sound impressive, but they are realistic. And realistic goals are the ones that last.

Progress Is Not Perfection

Missing a day does not mean you failed. A bad week does not cancel your entire year. Growth is not neat or predictable, and it rarely looks impressive while

it's happening.

You are already juggling school, family expectations, friendships and decisions about your future. You do not need to become a different person to improve. You just need to make small changes and give yourself some room to learn.

The Real Resolution

The goal of the new year is not to create a brand-new ver-

sion of yourself. It's to move forward with a little more intention than before.

More consistency.

More confidence.

More patience with yourself.

Whether you set resolutions or skip them entirely, remember this: growth does not start on Jan. 1. It happens every time you decide to keep going.



FILE PHOTO



Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Angel Gomez appointed to Michigan Hispanic/Latino Commission

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Angel Gomez, a licensed clinical mental health professional and long-time community advocate, has been appointed to the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, representing the Saginaw area, according to an announcement released by the Michigan Executive Office of the Governor.

Gomez, who resides in Burt, serves as director of education and community outreach and as a clinical therapist at the McDowell Healing Arts Center in Saginaw. His appointment is part of a broader slate of board and commission appointments announced by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Dec. 18.

In addition to his clinical work, Gomez has been active in local civic and political engagement. He was recently named chair of the Latino Caucus within the Saginaw County Democratic Party, a role that places him at the center of efforts to increase Latino participation and representation in local political processes.

According to the governor's office, Gomez previously worked as a wellness coordinator at McDowell Healing Arts Center and as a foster care support visitation coach with Wellspring Lutheran Services. He is a licensed master social worker and earned both his Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work degrees from Saginaw Valley State University.



ANGEL GOMEZ

Gomez will serve a term on the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan beginning Dec. 18, 2025, and ending Dec. 10, 2028, succeeding Abril Siewert, whose term has expired. The appointment is subject to the ad-

vice and consent of the Michigan Senate.

The Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan was created to develop a unified policy and plan of action addressing the needs of Hispanic and Latino res-

idents across the state. The commission advises the governor, the Legislature and state agencies on the coordination and administration of programs serving Michigan's Latino communities.

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



2026 *Annual* MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SAVE YOUR SPOT!

Wednesday,

January 28th
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

MHCC Office

1700 Harmon Rd Suite One
Auburn Hills, MI 48326



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voluntarios y patrocinadores por
hacer de este año un éxito.

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volunteers, and sponsors for
making this year a success.



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Goya Foods opens applications for \$20,000 culinary, food science scholarships

BY MB STAFF

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Goya Foods, the nation's largest Hispanic-owned food company, has opened applications for its annual Culinary Arts and Food Science Scholarships, offering \$20,000 awards to students nationwide planning to pursue undergraduate degrees in culinary arts or food science.

The scholarships are available to students entering their freshman year of college and enrolling in an accredited two-year or four-year institution. Applications are due by March 3, 2026, according to the company.

Each scholarship totals \$20,000 and is disbursed as \$5,000 per academic year beginning in fall 2026. Awards are renewable for up to three additional years, provided recipients continue to meet eligibility requirements.

“For generations, food has been at the heart of family, tradition, and community,” said Rafael Toro, national director of public relations for Goya Foods, in a statement announcing the program. “By supporting students who want to study culinary arts, food science, and nutrition, we’re investing not only in their education, but in the cultural and culinary traditions that bring people together.”

The scholarships are administered by Scholarship America and awarded on a competitive basis. Selection criteria include academic achievement, leadership, community service, financial need and an essay describing how Goya has enriched the applicant's family traditions.

The Culinary Arts and Food Science Scholarships are part of the broader Goya Scholarship Fund, which the company describes as a key pillar of its community initiatives. Since its



GOYA gives Scholarship

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CULINARY ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

MAKE YOUR DREAM A REALITY. APPLY NOW TO THE GOYA FOODS CULINARY ARTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM!

The Goya® Foods Culinary Arts Scholarship is available on a competitive basis to students planning to enroll as freshman in a culinary arts or food sciences area of study. Four awards of \$5,000 each will be granted every year and are renewable for up to three years, or until a bachelor's degree is earned, whichever occurs first, for a maximum scholarship award of \$20,000 per student provided he/she remains eligible to receive funding.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or its equivalent)
- Be a U.S. Citizen, legal permanent resident, or eligible non-U.S. Citizen (DACA recipients are eligible)
- Plan to enroll full-time starting in the next academic year (2025-2026) in a degree seeking program at a two-year or four-year U.S. accredited institution
- Must be obtaining first undergraduate degree
- Must be entering as freshman and majoring in culinary arts or food sciences.
- Must be willing to complete 10 hours of community service per month while receiving funding. This activity will be tracked by Scholarship America®.
- Applicants are required to submit an essay response to the following prompt: "Please explain how Goya has enriched your family traditions."

Applications Start: Monday, December 16, 2024
Applications Deadline: Monday, March 3, 2025 at 4:00pm EST

WWW.LEARNMORE.SCHOLARSAPPLY.ORG/GOYACULINARY/

launch, the fund has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to students across the country, including children of Goya employees.

Founded in 1936, Goya Foods

manufactures, packages and distributes more than 2,500 food products from Spain, the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and South America. The company's products are rooted in the

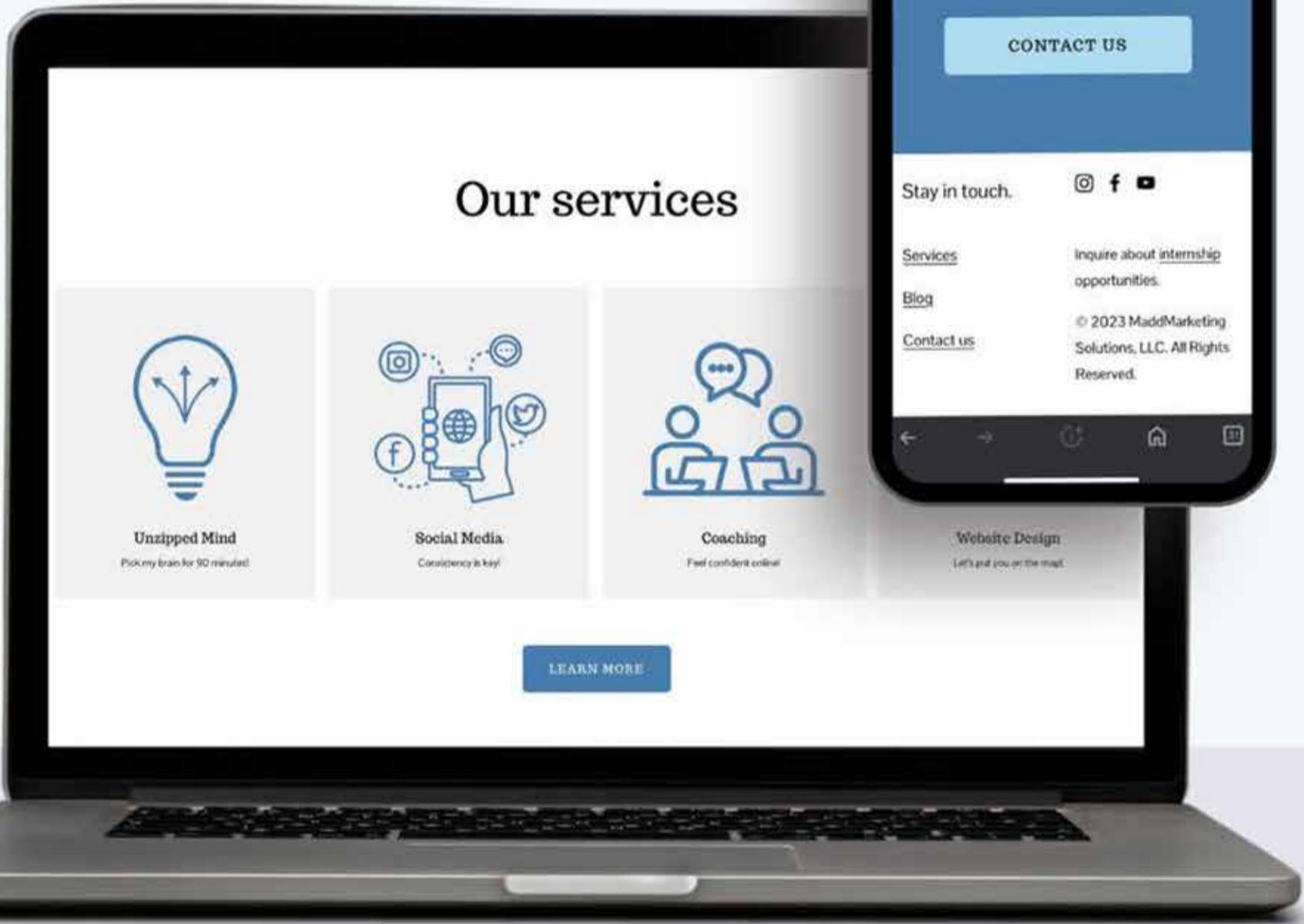
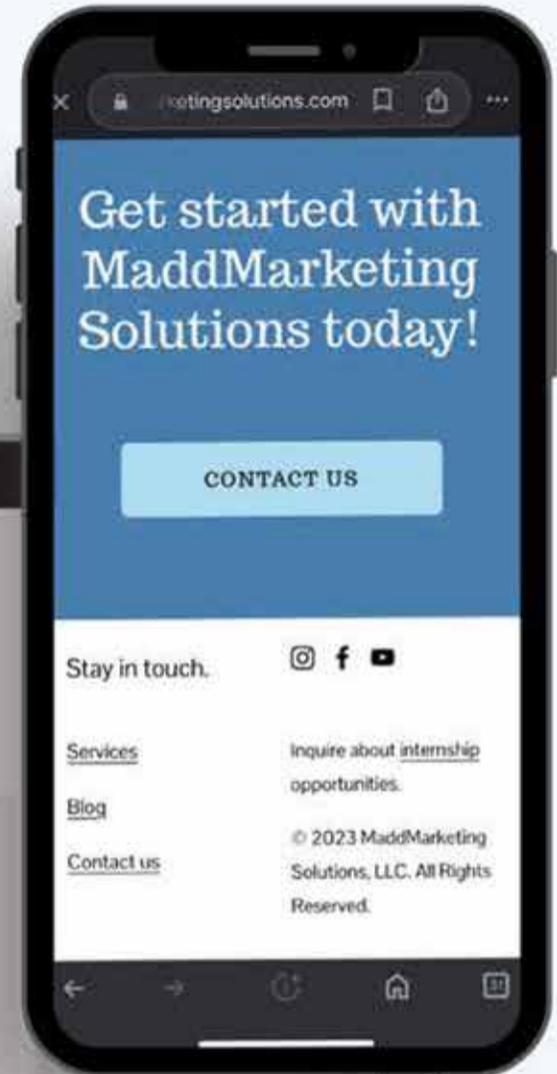
culinary traditions of Hispanic communities worldwide.

More information about the scholarships and the application process is available through Scholarship America's website.



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COMMUNITY

Alpha Phi Alpha to host 30th annual MLK Unity Celebration in Saginaw

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.'s Iota Chi Lambda Chapter will host its 30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Celebration on Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, continuing a long-running local tradition honoring the civil rights leader's legacy through reflection, community engagement and service.

The event is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. at Unity Hall inside the Dow Event Center in Saginaw. Tickets are \$60.

This year's celebration will be preceded by a Unity March, which will gather participants at 9:30 a.m. at the corner of Franklin and Hayden streets. The march will step off at 10 a.m. and proceed to the Dow Event Center, where remarks about Dr. King will be delivered following the march.

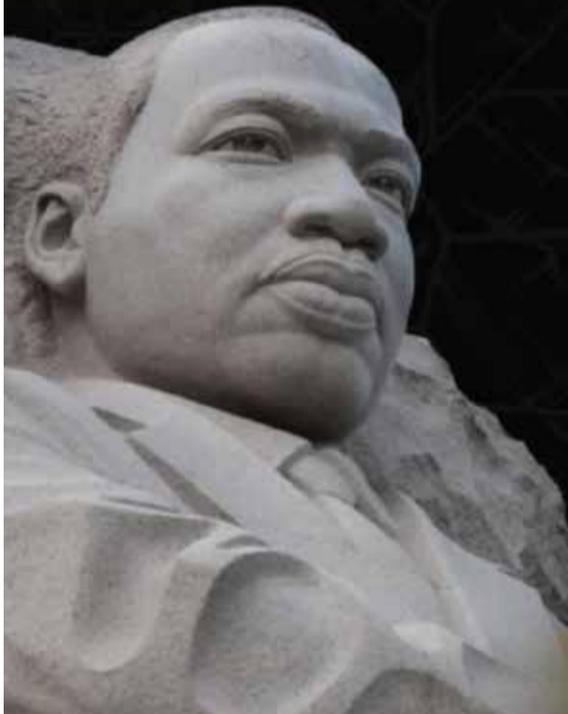
The keynote speaker for the event will be Rev. Andre L. Spivey, J.D., executive minister at Oak Grove A.M.E. Church in Detroit. Spivey has pastored within the Michigan Annual Conference for nearly 18 years and has served in multiple leadership roles, including the Board of Examiners, Conference Board of Trustees, Finance Committee and the Ministerial Efficiency Committee.

Spivey holds a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College and a Master of Divinity degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He is currently pursuing a Juris Doctor degree at Wayne State University Law School. He and his wife, Shema Spivey, a chemical engineer, have two children.

Community awards will also be presented during the celebration. The awards are sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. in partnership with the Delta College Black Faculty and Staff Association.

For additional information or tickets, organizers encourage the public to contact Larry Jones at 989-714-0709, Smallwood Holoman at 989-859-2602, or Eddie Foxx at 989-860-4146.





Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc
Iota Chi Lambda Chapter

PRESENTS

**THE 30TH ANNUAL
DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING JR.
UNITY CELEBRATION**

**Monday, January 19, 2026
11:00am at The Dow Center-Unity Hall**

TICKET PRICE: \$60

A Unity March* at 10:00 A.M. will precede the luncheon. The March will gather 9:30 A.M. at the corner of Franklin Street and Hayden Street. We will march to the Dow Event Center. There will be remarks about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the end of the March at the Dow Event Center.



Speaker:
Rev. Andre L. Spivey, JD
Oak Grove A.M.E.,
Detroit, MI

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKET(S)

CONTACT
Larry Jones (989-714-0709)
Smallwood Holoman (989-859-2602)
Eddie Foxx (989-860-4146)

SAGINAW ALPHAS ARE ON




Community Awards presented by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Delta College Black Faculty and Staff Association

Established
November 26, 1935

Cheers

90th

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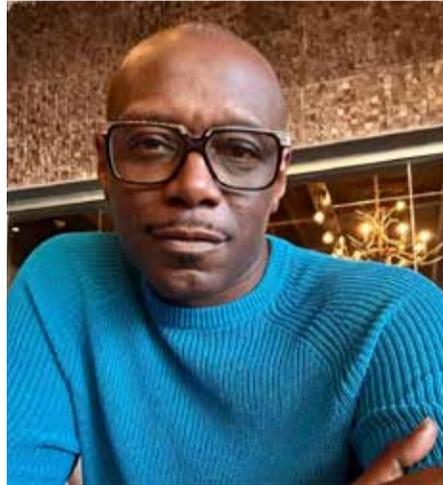
COMMUNITY

Kevin Jones of Saginaw named co-chair of Michigan Black Leadership Advisory Council

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Kevin Jones, a Saginaw-based cultural leader and entrepreneur, has been appointed co-chair of the Michigan Black Leadership Advisory Council, according to an announcement from the Michigan Executive Office of the Governor.

Jones, the founder of Blacktiquing and president of A Museum of Black Experiences, was designated co-chair for a term beginning Jan. 1, 2026, and serving at the pleasure of the governor. He succeeds Donna Bell in the role.



KEVIN JONES

Prior to his current work, Jones served as a senior associate at Morino Ventures. His ac-

ademic background includes a Bachelor of Arts in American culture from the University of Michigan, a Master of Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a Master of Public Health from the University of Pennsylvania.

The Black Leadership Advisory Council is housed within the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and serves in an advisory capacity to the governor. The council is tasked with developing, reviewing and recommending policies aimed at addressing discrimination and racial inequities across

the state. Its work also includes identifying gaps in state law that perpetuate inequities, promoting equitable legislation and regulations, supporting community organizations, and advancing cultural arts within Michigan's Black communities.

Jones' appointment was part of a broader slate of board and commission appointments announced by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Dec. 18. The council appointments are not subject to the advice and consent of the Michigan Senate.

Michigan AG warns residents about post-storm scams following winter weather

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is urging residents to be on alert for common scams in the wake of recent winter weather, warning that fraudsters often take advantage of storm-related damage to target consumers.

Nessel said residents should slow down and avoid making rushed decisions, particularly if approached by individuals offering immediate home or vehicle repairs in exchange for quick payment or on-the-spot contracts. Legitimate contractors, she said, understand that customers need time to verify credentials and review estimates before agreeing to work.

Residents are also encouraged to contact their insurance agents or companies to review coverage and deductibles before arranging repairs. Nessel advised

consumers to document conversations with insurers, including questions asked, answers received, and the names and dates of contacts, to better understand what repairs may be covered and how to prioritize them.

Before hiring a contractor, residents should confirm that the individual or business is properly licensed and insured, has a solid reputation in the community, and has an acceptable complaint history, Nessel said.

The attorney general also cautioned against paying cash or paying the full cost of repairs upfront. All estimates, promises and expectations should be documented in writing and carefully reviewed before signing a contract. Using a credit card is recommended because it offers added protections if work is not completed as agreed. Partial payments should be arranged, with final payment made only after work is completed to the

customer's satisfaction.

"Dealing with the aftermath of a winter storm can feel overwhelming," Nessel said. "Taking a moment to slow down, ask questions, and do your research before making any decisions can help protect you from scams."

Nessel also warned that storm damage can lead to utility and government imposter scams. In these cases, scammers may pose as utility company representatives, claiming service can be restored faster for an added fee, or as government officials offering repair assistance in exchange for personal or banking information.

Residents are cautioned that scammers can now use authentic-looking phone numbers, including toll-free numbers, to appear legitimate. If contacted by someone claiming to represent a utility company, consumers are advised to ask for an estimated restoration time and ver-

ify it against the company's official outage map. If a voicemail is left, residents should avoid calling the number provided and instead contact the utility directly using information from a recent bill.

Utility companies, Nessel emphasized, do not request additional payment to restore service, and residents should never provide payment information over the phone in these situations.

The state also offers a Power Outage Feedback and Inquiry form for residents experiencing extended outages or seeking information about overdue outage credits.

Consumers who believe they have encountered a scam or need additional information may contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Team at P.O. Box 30213, Lansing, MI 48909; by phone at 517-335-7599 or toll-free at 877-765-8388; or by fax at 517-241-3771.



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EXAMPLE	YOU PLAY	LOTTERY DRAWS	YOU WIN! \$100/\$50
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COMMUNITY

Delta College launches national search for next president

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — The Board of Trustees at Delta College has formally begun a national search to identify the institution's next president, marking a leadership transition following four years under President Dr. Michael Gavin.

In announcing the search, trustees expressed appreciation for Gavin's leadership and service during his tenure. The board said it is committed to conduct-

ing an equitable, inclusive and transparent process aimed at attracting a strong and diverse pool of candidates from across Michigan and the nation.

To assist with the search, the board has selected the Association of Community College Trustees to manage key aspects of the process. According to the board, ACCT will help develop the presidential profile, recruit competitive candidates, support the search advisory committee and provide guidance through-

out the selection process.

Applications and nominations for the presidency are now being accepted and will remain open until the position is filled. The board has set a target application deadline of Feb. 9, 2026.

Individuals with questions, suggestions or confidential inquiries regarding the search are encouraged to contact G. Duncan Harris, Ed.D., ACCT search consultant, at g.duncan.harris@gmail.com or 860-752-5681.

Additional details about the



FILE PHOTO

presidential search and application process are expected to be released as the process moves forward.

Fire damages Jack's Fruit and Meat Market in Essexville; no injuries reported



A FIRE IN ESSEXVILLE HAS FORCED JACK'S FRUIT & MEAT MARKET TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE ITS DOORS.

BY MB STAFF

ESSEXVILLE, Mich. — A fire broke out early Sunday morning at Jack's Fruit and Meat Market, prompting a response from firefighters with the Hampton Township Department of Public Safety, according to reports from local media outlets.

Fire crews arrived to find smoke and flames visible at the rear of the building. Firefighters made entry and were able to bring the blaze under control, limiting the spread of the fire within the structure.

No injuries were reported in the incident. The Hampton Township Public Safety Department fire marshal has launched

an investigation to determine the cause of the fire. That information was confirmed in separate reporting by WNEM, which also stated that no one was hurt and the origin of the fire remains under investigation.

Following the incident, Jack's Fruit and Meat Market announced it will be closed until further notice. The closure was

shared through a post on the market's official Facebook page and is expected to impact both the business and customers who rely on the longtime local grocery store.

Further details are expected to be released as the investigation continues.

Pit & Balcony launches Free Second Saturdays to expand access to live theater



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Pit & Balcony Community Theatre has announced the launch of Free Second Saturdays, a new initiative aimed at removing financial barriers and expanding access to live theater for individuals and families across the region.

The program will offer free admission to the second Saturday performances of select main-stage productions. The initiative is supported through corporate and individual sponsorships and is intended to reinforce the theater's commitment to accessibility, inclusion and community engagement.

Under the program, each participating production will be backed by at least one corporate sponsor. Pit & Balcony has partnered with Jolt Credit Union as a



THE INAUGURAL FREE SECOND SATURDAY OFFERING WILL FEATURE THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *STONE POINT* BY ALEX BURKART ON SATURDAY, JAN. 17.

program sponsor, with additional sponsorship opportunities still available. The structure also includes reserved seating for local nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve, while remaining seats will be available to the general public at no cost.

The inaugural Free Second Saturday performances include

the world premiere of *Stone Point* by Alex Burkart on Saturday, Jan. 17, and *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* by Ken Ludwig on Saturday, April 18. All performances will take place at Pit & Balcony Community Theatre in Saginaw.

The initiative is designed to broaden participation in the per-

forming arts by inviting audiences of all backgrounds to experience live theater without the constraint of ticket prices. Organizers say the program is intended to strengthen community connections, encourage dialogue and reinforce theater's role as a welcoming civic space.

Through Free Second Saturdays, Pit & Balcony continues its mission to engage audiences and artists through meaningful performing arts experiences, while ensuring live theater remains accessible and relevant throughout the region.

More information about Free Second Saturdays, sponsorship opportunities and upcoming performances is available at pitandbalconytheatre.com or by contacting the box office at 989-754-6587.

COMMUNITY



Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

Jimmy Carter, former president and humanitarian, passes away at 100

BY MB STAFF



Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, passed away on December 29, 2024, at his home in Plains, Georgia. A Nobel Peace Prize laureate and humanitarian, Carter's century-long life was marked by his dedication to human rights and public service, leaving a complex legacy on race and equality in America.

Born in 1924 in the segregated South, Carter grew up in a society deeply divided by race. His upbringing in Plains, Georgia, exposed him to both the harsh realities of systemic racism and the shared humanity of the Black families he lived among. This dual perspective shaped his approach to race relations.

After leaving office, Carter's commitment to racial justice deepened. Through The Carter Center, he worked tirelessly to combat global inequities and promoted policies to dismantle systemic racism. In his later years, he spoke candidly about America's ongoing struggle with racial injustice, urging reconciliation and equity.

President Joe Biden hailed Carter as "a man of principle who sought to heal America's divisions," while civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson praised him as "a Southerner who stood against the tides of racial hatred."

United Nations. He advocated for civil rights and desegregation, often citing his faith as a guiding principle for equality. His administration also funded historically Black colleges and championed voting rights, laying the groundwork for future progress.

BY MB STAFF

JANUARY 1

Jimmy Carter passes away at 100

Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu to keynote MLK event

BY MB STAFF



SAGINAW — Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) is set to host its annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 22, with Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu as the keynote speaker. The event will take place at 7 p.m. in the Malcolm Field Theatre, located in Curtis Hall, and is open to the public.

Rev. Tutu, a renowned race and gender justice activist, will draw from her experiences growing up as a Black woman under apartheid in South Africa to inspire attendees. Her journey, marked by resilience and advocacy for human rights, has shaped her into a globally sought-after speaker.

Beginning with her early work in South Africa, she has been a vocal advocate for justice. The event will also feature the presentation of the MLK Scholarship Awards and the Regional Drum Major Awards, recognizing individuals who exemplify the values of Dr. King.

This event underscores the importance of addressing systemic injustices and fostering dialogue. Rev. Tutu's keynote address will highlight the relevance of his dream and the importance of community.

BY MB STAFF

JANUARY 16

Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu keynotes SVSU MLK event

Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black migration and the bonds that helped to shape the Great Lakes Bay Region
Dr. Archer A. Claytor and Henry G. Marsh



BY MB STAFF

FEBRUARY 1

Black History Month Black migration in the Great Lakes Bay Region

Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The history of African Americans in the Saginaw Fire Department



BY MB STAFF

FEBRUARY 16

Black History Month History of Blacks in the Saginaw Fire Department

Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

Saginaw AKA chapter celebrates moms, students, women entrepreneurs and 63 years of service



BY ETA Upsilon Omega Chapter

MARCH 1

Saginaw AKA Chapter celebrates 63 of service

Journalism MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE

Hoyt Library to host Women's History Month discussion on gender and the 2024 election

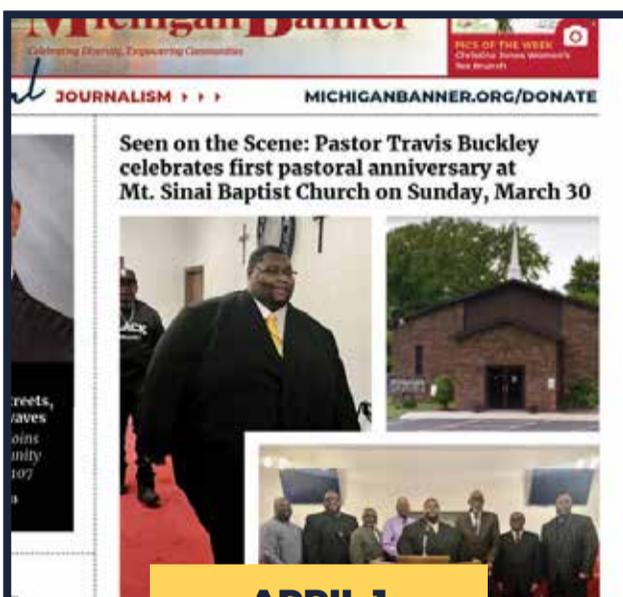


BY MB STAFF

MARCH 16

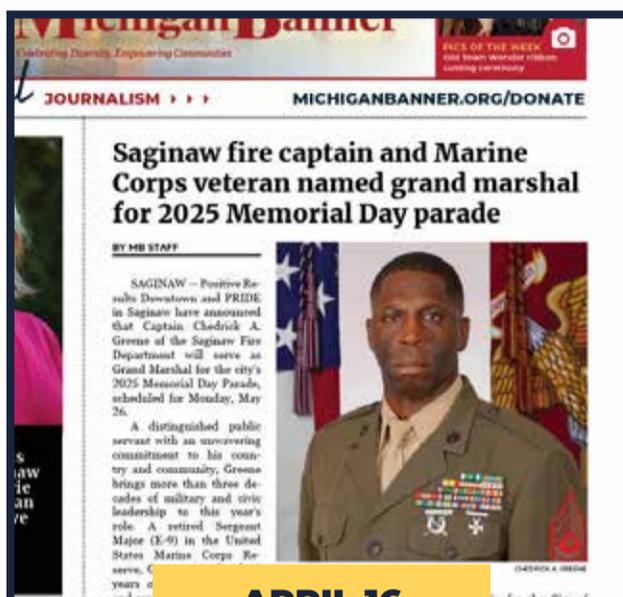
Hoyt Library hosts discussion on gender and the 2024 election

COMMUNITY



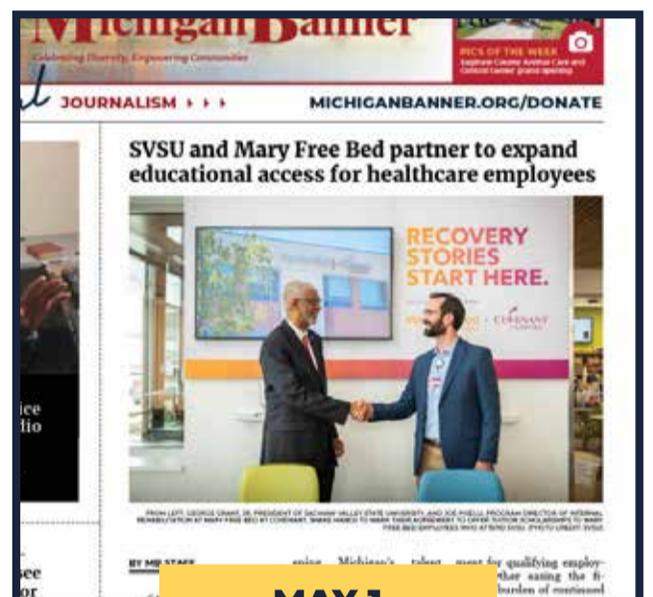
APRIL 1

Pastor Travis Buckley celebrates 1st Pastoral Anniversary at Mt. Sinai



APRIL 16

Chedrick Greene named Saginaw Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshall



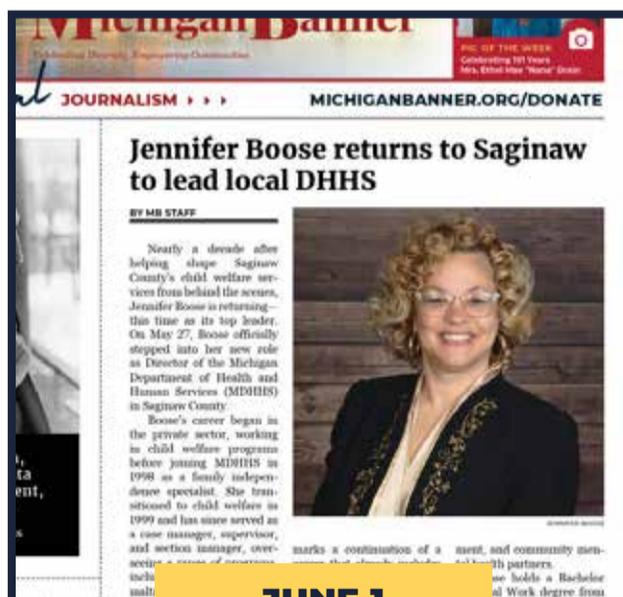
MAY 1

SVSU & Mary Free Bed expand educational access for healthcare employees



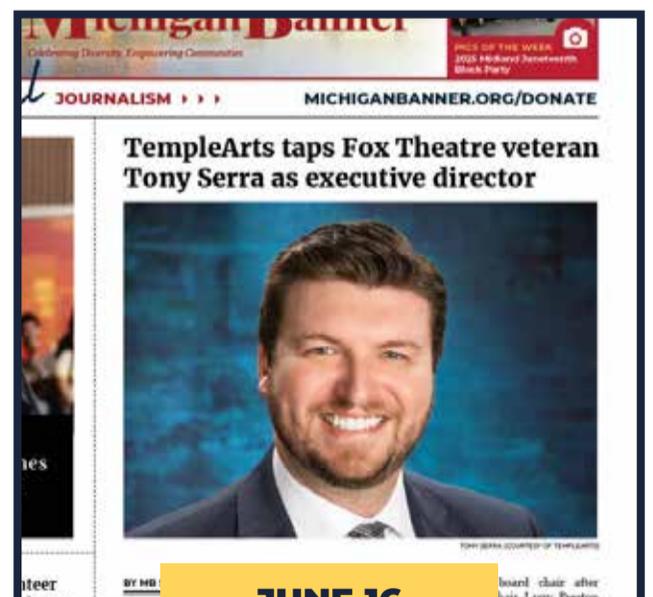
MAY 16

Annual All Men's Health Fair



JUNE 1

Jennifer Boose returns to Saginaw to lead DHHS



JUNE 16

TempleArts hires Tony Serra as executive director

COMMUNITY



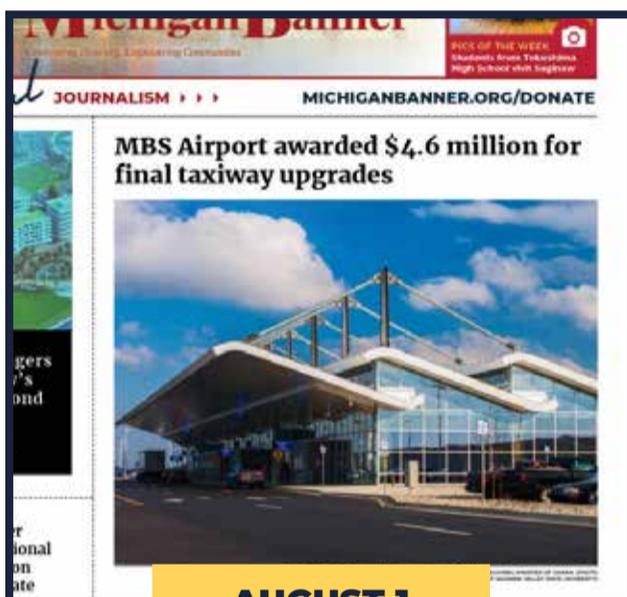
JULY 1

The Michigan Banner founder, Jerome Buckley, celebrates 72nd Birthday



JULY 16

SVSU students build global skills through Ghana collaboration



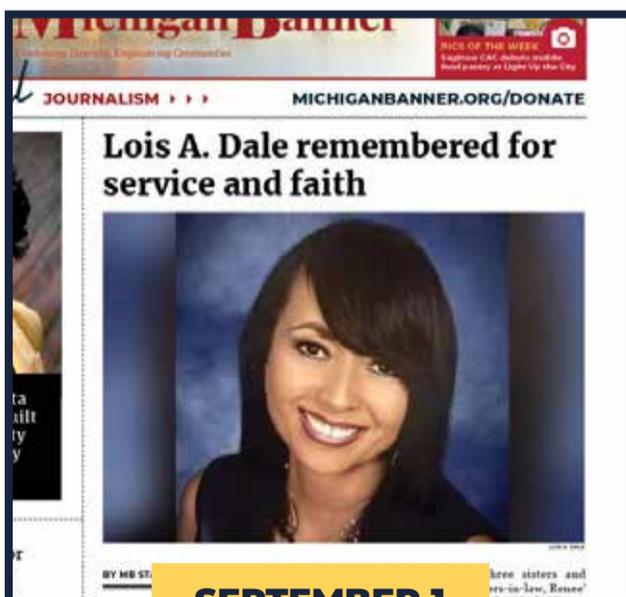
AUGUST 1

MBS Airport awarded \$4.6 M for upgrades



AUGUST 16

Auto Expo debuts in Saginaw



SEPTEMBER 1

Louis A. Dale passes away at 71



SEPTEMBER 16

Wilmer Jones Ham passes away at 75

COMMUNITY



OCTOBER 1

Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe hires Matthew Felon as CEO of Migizi



OCTOBER 16

Carl Otis Mosley Everett passes away 71



NOVEMBER 1

Saginaw Community Foundation awards 773K in local grants



NOVEMBER 16

Mattie Thompson passes away at 71



DECEMBER 1

Marshall "Coach T" Thomas passes away at 79



DECEMBER 16

A season of gratitude: Message from Jerome Buckley



POLITICS

Political upheaval, divided government marked Michigan's turbulent 2025

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A year defined by sharp political turns, budget brinkmanship and historic milestones reshaped Michigan's political landscape in 2025, setting the stage for a high-stakes election cycle ahead.

While no statewide offices were on the ballot, political jockeying intensified as candidates began positioning themselves for the 2026 races for governor, U.S. Senate and other top posts. Detroit voters also made history, electing the city's first female mayor, a landmark moment in the city's political story.

At the state Capitol, Michigan returned to divided government after two years of Democratic control. Republicans held the House, while Democrats maintained control of the Senate and governor's office. The result was one of the least productive legislative years in recent memory, measured by the number of bills sent to the governor. Still, lawmakers managed to strike agreements on a major budget, minimum wage changes and paid sick leave rules after months of stalemate.

At the federal level, President Donald Trump's return to the White House reverberated throughout Michigan. His administration moved quickly to enact sweeping policy changes through executive orders and emergency declarations, including expanded immigration enforcement, new tariffs affecting the auto industry and Canada, reversals of green energy initiatives and high-profile pardons tied to the 2020 election. The pace and scope of those actions



GRETCHEN WHITMER

tested presidential authority and prompted legal challenges from states, including Michigan.

Despite their history of conflict, Trump and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer found areas of cooperation in 2025. Whitmer met with Trump multiple times to advocate for Michigan priorities, including securing new fighter jets for Selfridge Air National Guard Base and addressing the threat of invasive Asian carp in the Great Lakes. She also publicly opposed elements of Trump's tariff strategy and raised concerns about proposed Medicaid changes that could significantly affect the state budget.

Tensions ran deeper within the Legislature. Relations between the Republican-led House and Democratic Senate deteriorated, contributing to legislative gridlock and court battles over stalled bills. A Michigan Court of Appeals ruling in October ordered House Republicans to transmit legislation that had been withheld from the governor, a decision later appealed. Disputes intensified late in the year when a House panel canceled hundreds of millions of dollars in previously approved spending, drawing sharp criticism from Democrats.

Budget negotiations ultimately culminated in the passage

of an \$81 billion state spending plan, approved after lawmakers missed the constitutional deadline and narrowly avoided a government shutdown. The deal included a significant increase in road funding, financed in part by a new wholesale marijuana tax and higher corporate taxes, along with cuts to vacant state positions and the elimination of funding for the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve Fund. The education budget set records for per-pupil funding and preserved free school meals, though dis-

**See MICHIGAN
POLITICS, Page 25**

MICHIGAN POLITICS, from Page 24

tricts expressed frustration with the prolonged delays.

Lawmakers also reached a bipartisan compromise on minimum wage and paid sick leave laws following a Michigan Supreme Court ruling that revived voter-approved measures from 2018. The agreement raised the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2027 while retaining a lower, gradually increasing wage for tipped workers and establishing different paid leave requirements for small and large employers.

At the federal level, Michigan felt the effects of sweeping budget cuts led by the Trump adminis-

tration's Department of Government Efficiency, which reduced funding for arts, public health, parks and social programs. Thousands of federal workers in Michigan were laid off or placed on administrative leave, prompting lawsuits from Democratic attorneys general, including Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, challenging the legality of the cuts.

Congressional gridlock also resulted in a 43-day federal government shutdown — the longest on record — disrupting food assistance, preschool programs and other services. More than 1.4 million Michigan residents tem-

porarily lost access to food benefits, increasing pressure on local charities and food banks.

The political year closed with significant shifts in Michigan's judiciary. Gov. Whitmer's appointment of Judge Noah Hood to the state Supreme Court solidified a Democratic-appointed majority on the bench, which took up major criminal justice and immigration-related issues. At the same time, transparency reforms advanced unevenly, with lawmakers approving earmark disclosure changes while shelving efforts to expand the state's Freedom of Information Act to the Legislature and governor's

office.

As 2025 ended, attention turned squarely to the crowded 2026 election calendar. Candidates from both parties — and one prominent independent — entered the governor's race, while a competitive contest also emerged for Michigan's open U.S. Senate seat following Sen. Gary Peters' decision not to seek re-election.

Together, the events of 2025 underscored a year of political volatility and realignment in Michigan, with lasting implications likely to shape the state's direction well beyond the coming election cycle.

Mary Sheffield sworn in as Detroit's first woman mayor

DETROIT — Mary Sheffield was sworn in Thursday as Detroit's first woman mayor in the city's 300-year history, taking office after winning November's election by a wide margin and succeeding longtime Mayor Mike Duggan.

Sheffield took the oath of office in a small ceremony administered by Detroit City Clerk Janice M. Winfrey, surrounded by a small group of family members, according to a release.

"I am incredibly honored to serve as Detroit's mayor," Sheffield said in the release. "This moment is bigger than me — it represents progress, possibility and the power of community. Together, we will work to ensure Detroit's future is inclusive, equitable and rooted in opportunity for every neighborhood."

Sheffield, the former president of the Detroit City Council, was elected in November with 77% of the vote, defeating challenger Solomon Kinloch.

In her first public act as mayor, Sheffield visited the Detroit Fire Department's Engine



MARY SHEFFIELD SWORN IN AS DETROIT'S NEW MAYOR (COURTESY OF THE CITY OF DETROIT)

27/Ladder 8 station and the Detroit Police Department's 5th Precinct, where she served lunch to first responders. She was also scheduled to visit the Capuchin Soup Kitchen later Thursday to serve meals to people experiencing homelessness.

"My administration will be rooted in service to others," she said. "On my first day as mayor, it was important for me to thank those who quietly serve our community every day, particularly our first responders and those providing critical support to our

most vulnerable residents."

Sheffield takes over for Duggan, who chose not to seek a fourth term as mayor and instead launched a campaign for governor as an independent. Photos of Thursday's events were provided by the City of Detroit.

POLITICS

Democrats in Michigan's 35th Senate District face a test of unity as dark-money attacks shadow special election

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The special election to fill Michigan's vacant 35th Senate District seat was always going to be consequential. The district — spanning parts of Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties — has gone without representation since then-Sen. Kristen McDonald Rivet took her seat in Congress, and the race will help determine whether Democrats can protect their narrow Senate majority.

But as the campaign moves toward its high-stakes May 5 special general election, some Democrats are confronting a different kind of threat: not a Republican platform, but a style of politics that turns allies into targets. In recent days, Democratic leaders have raised alarms about personal attacks aimed at candidate Dr. Pamela Pugh, with Saginaw County Democratic Party Chair Brandell Adams publicly denouncing the rhetoric.

"No one should covet a political office so badly to turn to personal attacks, lies, name-calling, malicious rhetoric," Adams wrote in a statement. "You can disagree on policy, strategy and tactics, but I will not stay silent while these disgusting attacks go on."

That sentiment should not be controversial. Democrats can — and should — argue over policy priorities, budgets, education, jobs, and how to compete in a swing region. But when campaigns drift into personal destruction, everyone loses: the candidates, the party, and voters trying to choose a senator based on ideas and competence rather than insinuation and outrage.

A mailer that arrived in multiple Great Lakes Bay households illustrates the concern. The piece, according to its disclaimer, was paid for by Michigan Vindicated

— a Michigan-based 501(c)(4) nonprofit, a "dark money" structure that is not required to disclose its donors. The organization was established by Lansing-based attorney Reid Felsing, who told City Pulse he was no longer involved with Michigan Vindicated.

Pugh, in a social media post, described the tactic as intimidation and said her phone number was included in a "hostile mailer."

The point here isn't to litigate which Democrat benefits from the chaos. It's to ask what kind of political culture Democrats want to build — especially in a district where turnout and trust will decide the outcome. If the party claims to value fairness, inclusion and respect, then those standards shouldn't vanish the moment a seat is on the line.

What the special election timeline looks like

Voters will first choose nominees in the Feb. 3 special primary, followed by the May 5 special general election to fill the seat.

A snapshot of the candidates

There are 10 candidates in the special election field — six Democrats and four Republicans — with a range of backgrounds and priorities.

Democratic candidates

- **Pamela Pugh:** President of the Michigan State Board of Education and a business owner, Pugh says she's offering "proven leadership" and has emphasized working-class issues and equitable school funding.
- **Chedrick Greene:** A Saginaw fire captain and retired U.S. Marine

Corps Reserve sergeant major, Greene highlights decades of leadership and says he's running on "character, courage and credibility."

- **Brandell Adams:** The Saginaw County Democratic Party chair and a member of Michigan's Board of Psychology, Adams calls for a "working class champion" with "fresh perspective."
- **Serenity Hope Salak:** An elementary substitute teacher, Salak says she's running because "nothing changes when the same folks keep running," and she wants to inspire more people to seek office.
- **Martin Blank:** A Covenant HealthCare surgeon, Saginaw police officer and retired Army colonel, Blank points to a career in public service and says working families "deserve a candidate who understands what it takes to improve lives."
- **William Morrone:** A chief medical examiner and Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine faculty member, Morrone says fixing "the broken medical system" is central to addressing broader problems.

Republican candidates

- **Andrew Carlos Wendt:** A retired teacher, Wendt describes himself as a legal immigrant and says he wants to bring his perspective to Lansing.

- **Christian Velasquez:** A former Dow Corning engineer and founder of a consulting firm, Velasquez says his mix of business and community experience positions him for the role.
- **Jason Tunney:** An attorney, Tunney says he's "a product of this community" and points to experience as a former prosecutor and in a family business.
- **Chadwick Twillman:** An executive director, Twillman says he entered the race to "expose" corruption and says he has a plan to address it.

The choice Democrats face

Competitive primaries are normal. Hard contrasts can be fair. But Democrats in mid-Michigan should be clear-eyed: politics fueled by anonymous money and personal attacks doesn't just damage one candidate — it lowers the temperature of civic life, teaches young voters that leadership is a blood sport, and makes it easier for cynicism to win.

If Democrats want to hold the seat, they'll need more than yard signs and mailers. They'll need voters to believe the party can govern with seriousness and integrity. That starts with a simple rule: fight hard on ideas, not on people — and don't do the work of your opponents for them.

If leaders mean what they say about values, then Adams' challenge — "Do better!" — should be the standard for everyone, not just the target of the week.

HEALTH

Michigan secures \$173M in federal funding to strengthen rural health care



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan has been awarded more than \$173 million in federal funding to support and strengthen health care services in rural communities, state officials announced this week.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services received \$173,128,201 for fiscal year 2026 from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services under the federal Rural Health Transformation Program. The funding is intended to help states

improve care delivery, support providers and advance new approaches to coordinating health care services in rural areas.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said the investment will help address access challenges facing rural communities, particularly amid financial pressures tied to federal Medicaid cuts. State officials said the funding will support efforts to connect more residents to care and provide additional wrap-around health services.

The Rural Health Transformation Program represents a \$50 billion national initiative aimed

at improving health outcomes in rural communities nationwide. Funding is distributed over five years, with \$10 billion available annually from 2026 through 2030. States are required to implement comprehensive strategies focused on strengthening rural health systems and improving long-term sustainability.

According to MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan's approved proposal emphasizes maintaining a resilient rural health care system while supporting provider growth and continued service in local communities.

Before submitting its application, MDHHS gathered public input through an online survey and two virtual listening sessions to better understand how the funding could improve sustainability for rural health providers. Based on that feedback, the department outlined several priorities for the funding.

Planned initiatives include strengthening regional partnerships among rural hospitals, clinics and community organizations to improve care coordination, align services, expand access points and promote financially sustainable care models. Additional funding will be directed toward recruiting and retaining rural health professionals, behavioral health providers and community health workers, as well as expanding training in prevention, chronic disease management and integrated behavioral health care.

The state also plans to invest in technology and rural interoperability by establishing a rural technology catalyst fund. The fund is intended to expand data exchange and increase adoption of telehealth, remote patient monitoring and technology-based care coordination tools. Other efforts include creating digital referral networks to connect residents with local health care, prevention and wellness resources.

More information about Michigan's funding plan is available through the MDHHS Rural Health Transformation Program website. Additional details on the federal initiative can be found through CMS.

HEALTH

MDHHS seeks grant proposals to expand care for Michiganders with sickle cell disease

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is seeking proposals aimed at improving clinical health care services for Michigan residents diagnosed with sickle cell disease, according to a grant funding opportunity released this week.

The competitive grant program is designed to help health care providers expand or strengthen services for individuals living with the genetic blood disorder. Funding will prioritize projects that improve access to high-quality, integrated care, increase the use of disease-modifying therapies and enhance acute

care services for patients with sickle cell disease.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, private and public entities, and universities that operate an existing hematology or hematology/oncology clinic within a Michigan hospital or medical school, or an emergency department at a Michigan hospital. Applicants must also be enrolled as Michigan Medicaid providers, comply with Medicaid policies and accept beneficiaries enrolled in Medicaid, MI Child, the Healthy Michigan Plan and Children's Special Health Care Services.

The grant period runs from April 1, 2026, through Sept. 30, 2026. MDHHS said the maxi-



FILE PHOTO

mum total award is \$80,000 per applicant, with approximately \$400,000 available statewide. The department anticipates awarding up to five grants, with continuation funding available

for successful applicants.

Grant applications must be submitted electronically through the EGrAMS system by 3 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27.

A pre-application conference will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, to review the funding opportunity and provide guidance on using the EGrAMS application system. The virtual session is expected to last about 90 minutes.

Additional information and application materials are available through the EGrAMS website. The full grant funding opportunity can be found under the "Public Health Administration" section by selecting the "SKLCE-2026" grant program.

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HEALTH

MyMichigan Medical Center Midland marks completion of emergency department expansion phase



A RIBBON CUTTING HELD THURSDAY AT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT MYMICHIGAN MEDICAL CENTER MIDLAND MARKED THE END OF PHASE 2 OF A MULTI-YEAR EXPANSION PROJECT THAT HAS INCREASED DEPARTMENT CAPACITY BY 38 PERCENT AND ENHANCED SAFETY, PRIVACY AND PATIENT COMFORT. ATTENDEES INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MIDLAND AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, MYMICHIGAN MEDICAL CENTER MIDLAND VOLUNTEERS, MIDLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE, THREE RIVERS CORPORATION AND MYMICHIGAN HEALTH. (COURTESY OF MYMICHIGAN)

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Community leaders, donors and hospital officials gathered Dec. 18 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Emergency Department of MyMichigan Medical Center Midland, marking the completion of Phase 2 of a multi-year expansion project.

The latest phase of construction increased the department's overall capacity by 38 percent and introduced upgrades aimed at improving safety, privacy and patient comfort. Hospital offi-

cials said the project was funded in part through donations from the Midland Area Community Foundation, MyMichigan Medical Center Midland Volunteers and other community donors.

Members of the Midland Business Alliance, along with medical center administrators, staff and key donors, attended the event.

Improvements completed during Phase 2 include a larger waiting room with seating for up to 50 people, enhanced safety and privacy features in registration and triage areas, new technology rooms and six vertical

care spaces designed for patients with less severe conditions. Additional beds and staffing were also added as part of the capacity expansion.

Planning is underway for Phase 3 of the project, though a timeline has not yet been announced. That phase is expected to further expand the emergency department and add a magnetic resonance imaging machine and a fixed positron emission tomog-

raphy scanner. Hospital officials said the additional equipment is intended to reduce wait times for critical diagnostic testing.

The emergency department will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout all phases of construction.

More information about the emergency department expansion project is available at mymichigan.org/emergency-Midland.



EDUCATION

Hemlock schools identified for \$1M federal funding to expand early childhood facilities



HEMLOCK PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

BY MB STAFF

HEMLOCK, Mich. — Hemlock Public School District has been identified for a \$1.015 million federal investment to expand early childhood child care infrastructure, district officials announced.

The proposed Childcare Facility Construction project was selected for Fiscal Year 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending, also known as Community Project Funding, through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Program. The district said it was notified of the designation by U.S. Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet as the federal process advances toward the formal

application stage.

District leaders said the funding is intended to strengthen and expand early childhood programming in Hemlock by increasing local child care capacity and supporting families, while reinforcing the district's long-term focus on student success beginning in the earliest years.

USDA's Community Facilities Program supports rural communities by helping finance the purchase, construction or improvement of essential public facilities, including child care centers.

Hemlock officials said the district will now move forward with USDA's next steps, which include submitting a project narrative, cost estimates, a funding plan and documentation

of the project's current design phase. The process mirrors the approach used to complete the Patrick Wolgast Fieldhouse, an earlier district project supported by a \$1 million Community Project Funding grant and finalized through USDA authorization in 2025.

"We've seen what this federal partnership can unlock for a community like ours," Superintendent Dr. Don Killingbeck said. "The Fieldhouse showed what's possible when vision, local support, and federal investment align. This early childhood project is that same kind of moment — only this time the impact starts even earlier. We are building a stronger front door to learning for young families, and

that strengthens everything that comes after."

The proposal comes amid ongoing child care shortages and long waitlists across Michigan and the nation, challenges that regional leaders have described as urgent for working families, including in mid-Michigan, according to reporting by the Midland Daily News.

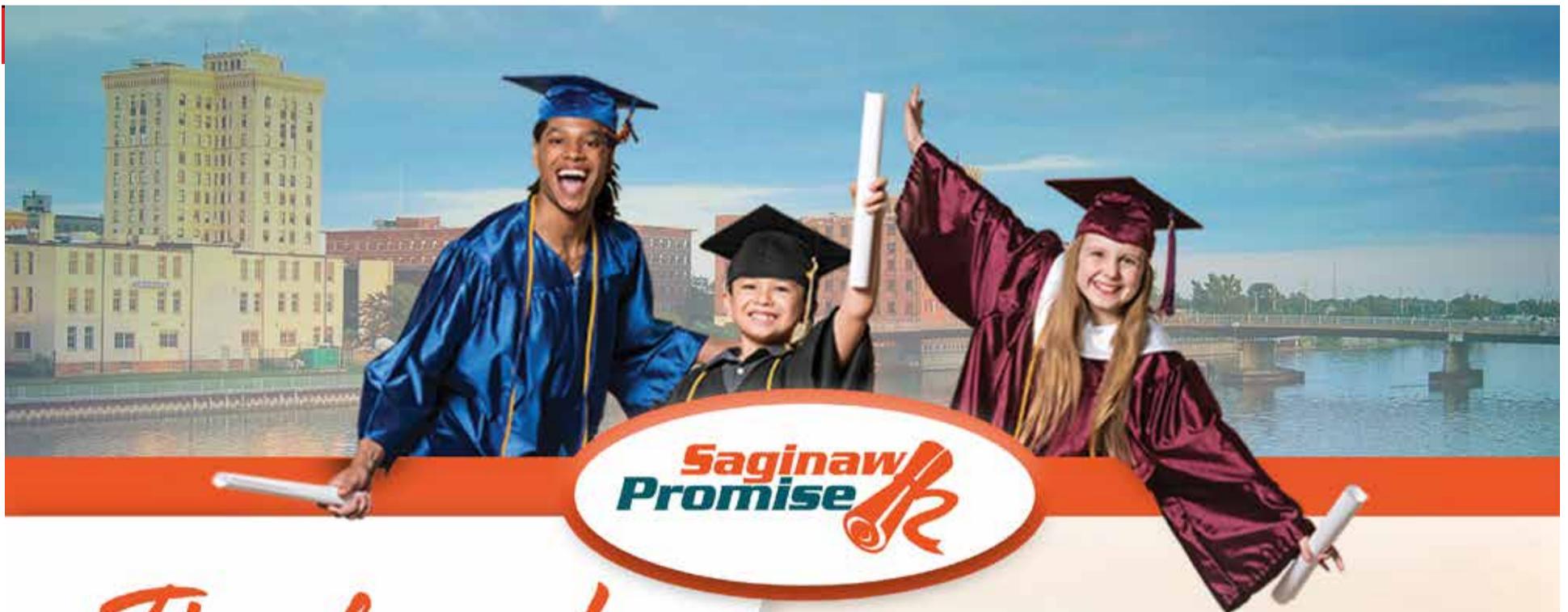
Hemlock's plan is designed to address those needs locally by expanding space and improving infrastructure for early learners and their families, district officials said.

Board of Education President Matt Wesener described the funding designation as a long-term investment in the community.

"This is the kind of investment that shapes a community's future," Wesener said. "We've made major commitments to student opportunity through facilities across the district. Now we're applying that same momentum to early childhood — because strong schools start with strong starts. This funding strengthens families, supports our workforce, and reflects our district's clear focus on Kids First."

As part of the next phase, the district will submit required materials to USDA Rural Development, including detailed project plans, cost estimates, design documentation and environmental review information. Following review, USDA is expected to assign a specialist to guide the district through the formal application process.

Hemlock Public School District serves students in Saginaw County through its elementary, middle and high schools.



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Return on Investment!

Program Certificates and Degrees earned by Saginaw Promise Scholars:

- ✓ Program Certificates: **13**
- ✓ Associate Degrees: **56**
- ✓ Bachelor's Degrees: **152**
- ✓ Master's Degrees: **33**
- ✓ Doctoral Candidates: **3**
- ✓ Juris Doctor: **1**
- ✓ Degrees earned, but report did not identify degree level: **65**

Total Number of program certificates and degrees earned... **323**

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EDUCATION

Nominations encouraged for Michigan Lottery's Excellence in Education Awards to honor outstanding educators



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

Parents, students, school staff members, and others are encouraged to nominate outstanding public-school educators for the Michigan Lottery's 2025-26 Excellence In Education awards.

All public-school employees may be nominated for the Excellence In Education awards, which recognize educators who go "above and beyond" to make a difference in the lives of children. To nominate a public school educator, go to <https://www.michiganlottery.com/excellence-in-education>.

The Michigan Lottery established the Excellence in Education awards in 2014 to recognize outstanding public-school educators across the state during the school year.

One outstanding educator will be selected each week and will receive a \$2,000 cash prize. At the end of the school year, one of these weekly award winners will be selected to receive the Lottery's Educator of the Year

award and will receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

The winner of the 2025 Educator of the Year award was Kelly Herberholz, a science teacher and administrative intern with Dakota High School in Macomb.

Hundreds of educators were nominated during the 2024-25 school year, which was the 11th year of the Excellence in Education awards program. Thirty-four of these nominees, including Herberholz, were selected to win a weekly award.

Previous winners of the Educator of the Year award:

- 2024 – Samantha TwoCrow, the director of the Indigenous Education Program for Suttons Bay Public Schools in Suttons Bay.
- 2023 – Kathryn Kluzak, a kindergarten teacher with Robert L. Green Elementary in East Lansing.
- 2022 – Spencer Vanderheide, a high school teacher with Kenowa Hills High School in Grand Rapids.
- 2021 – Janice Smith, a school social worker at Fisher Magnet Lower Academy in Detroit.
- 2020 – Megan Sidge, an Autism Spectrum Disorder teacher at Hickory Woods Elementary in Walled Lake.
- 2019 – Stewart Kieliszewski, an Earth science, biology, mechatronics, and media teacher for eighth through 12 graders at the Ubly Community Schools.
- 2018 – Kerri Moccio, a first-grade literacy intervention specialist at Bedford Elementary School in Dearborn Heights.
- 2017 – Linda Holzwarth, a social studies teacher at Portage West Middle School in Portage.
- 2016 – Daniel Carr, a Spanish and sports marketing teacher at

Waverly High School in Lansing.

- 2015 – Michael Craig, a special education teacher at the Charles Drew Transition Center in Detroit.

Excellence In Education award nominees should demonstrate the following qualities:

- Excellence – Their work consistently helps students and/or their schools or school districts advance to higher levels of academic achievement.
- Dedication – They consistently go above and beyond expectations to help students succeed.
- Inspiration – Their work inspires others around them to exceed expectations either academically or professionally.
- Leadership – They demonstrate clear leadership skills in their positions with their school or school districts.
- Effectiveness – The nominee's work has clear and positive results on the educational advancement of students within the school or school district.

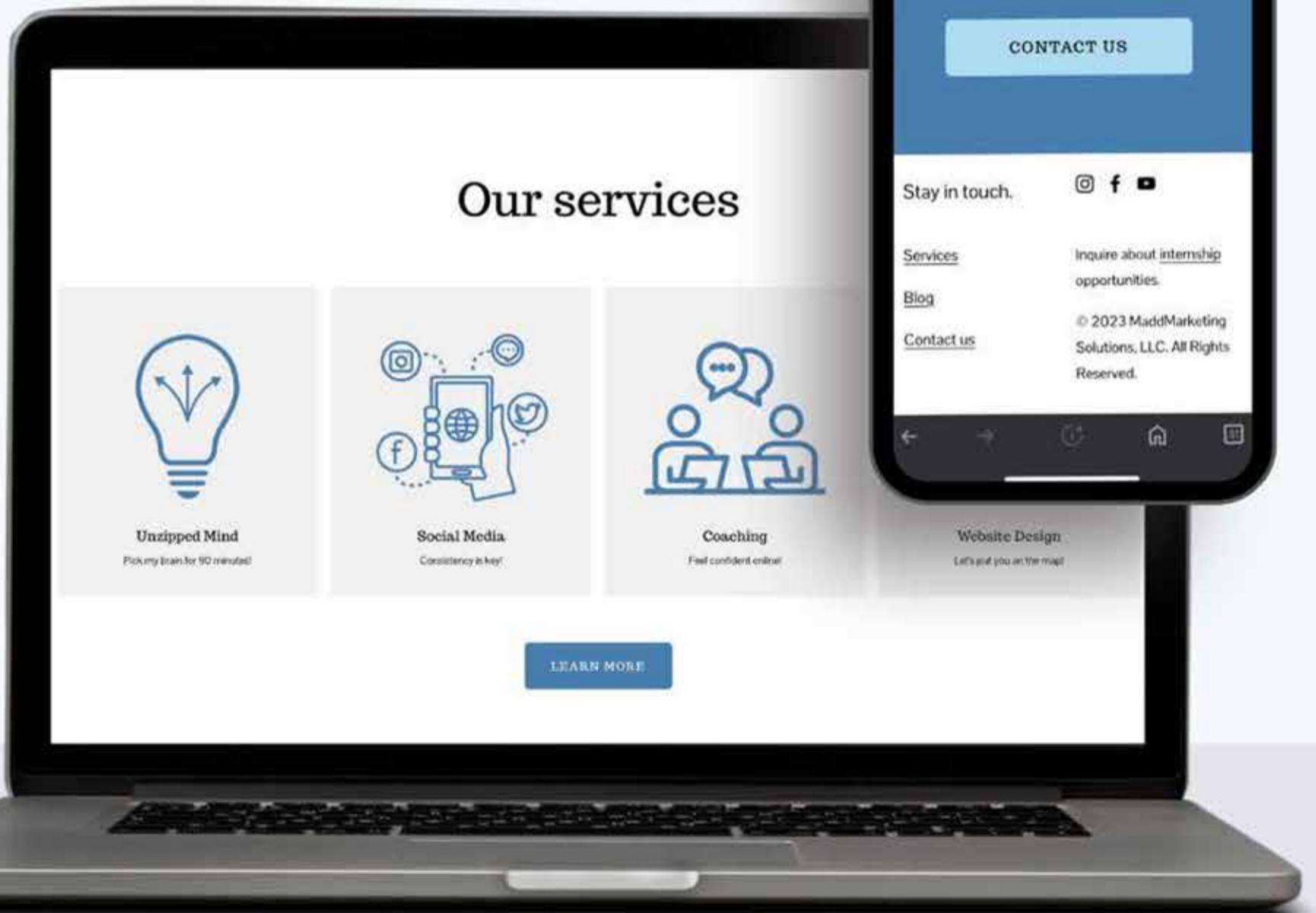
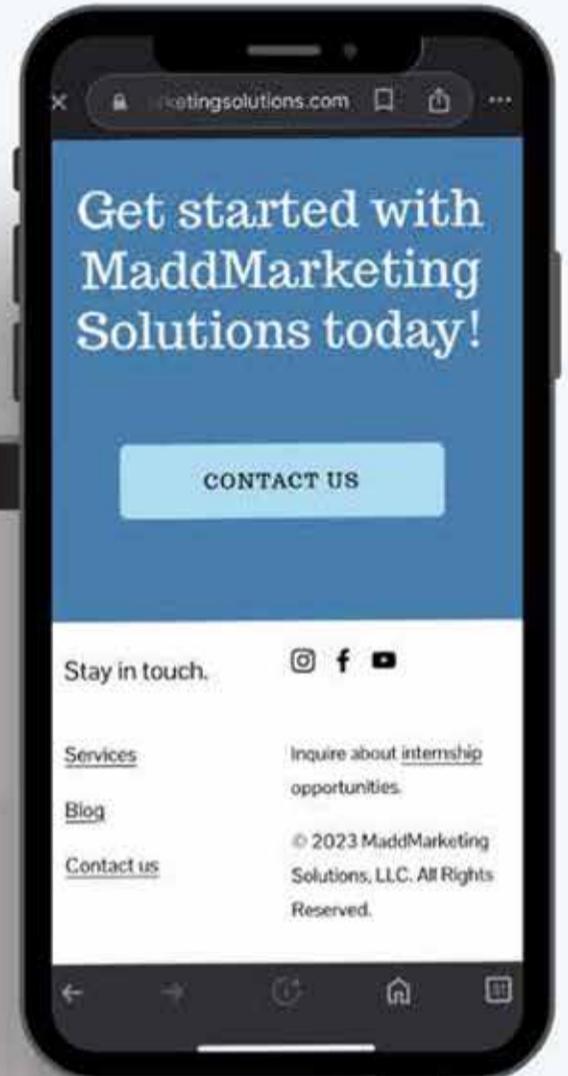
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CONTACT

US NOW

Ericka M. Taylor, Ph.D.
Executive Director
of Early Childhood

989-399-7423

etaylor@sisd.cc



EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

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MI Tri-Share Program Eligibility 2025

Household Size	Minimum	Maximum Income	Household Size	Minimum	Maximum Income
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5 People	\$75,300	\$150,600	9 People	\$119,300	\$238,600

200% - 400% Federal Poverty Level - Effective May 1, 2025

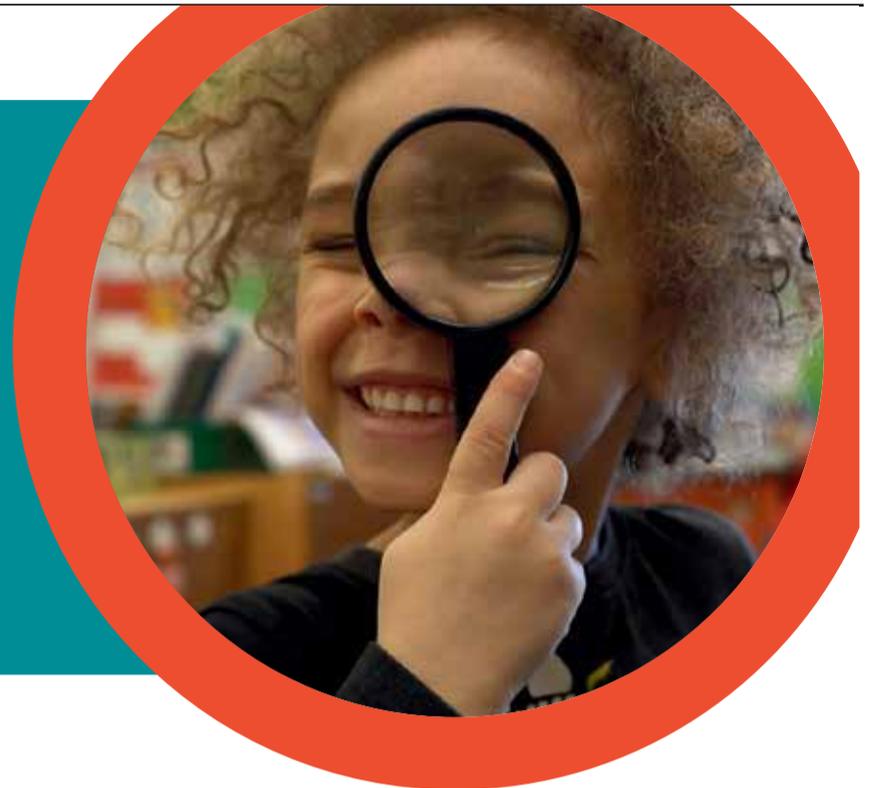
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**Administration for Children and Families: Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of Evidence*



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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Amsted Automotive earns Michigan Manufactured Export of the Year award



MEANS INDUSTRIES, INC. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, 3715 EAST WASHINGTON RD, SAGINAW, MI 48601

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Amsted Automotive has been named the recipient of the Michigan Manufactured Export of the Year award, an honor presented by the Michigan Manufacturers Association to recognize excellence in exporting advanced manufacturing products.

The award was announced Dec. 2 as part of the association's annual Manufacturing Excellence Awards, a statewide program that highlights the contributions of Michigan manufacturers to the economy, their

communities and the broader industry. Amsted Automotive was recognized for its leadership in exporting advanced powertrain technology, specifically its One-Way Clutch.

The company introduced its first Mechanical Diode One-Way Clutch into production in 1997 and has since shipped more than 100 million units. The clutches are manufactured in Saginaw and serve 13 vehicle brands across 15 countries. The technology is designed to deliver fast, seamless powertrain transitions within vehicle transmissions and is used in internal combustion engine, hybrid electric and fully electric

vehicle applications.

The Michigan Manufacturers Association has supported the state's manufacturing sector for more than 120 years, advocating for policies and programs aimed at strengthening one of the nation's most diverse industrial bases. Its Manufacturing Excellence Awards program annually recognizes companies for innovation, workforce impact and global competitiveness.

Amsted Automotive was formed in 2021 through the integration of Burgess-Norton, Means Industries, Transform Automotive and SMW Manufacturing. The company operates 21

facilities across North America, Europe and Asia and produces more than 200 million components and assemblies each year for automotive, off-highway and mining markets.

With 13 manufacturing facilities in the United States, Amsted Automotive emphasizes regional production to reduce supply chain delays and tariff exposure, supporting customers in multiple global markets.

Additional information about the Manufacturing Excellence Awards is available through the Michigan Manufacturers Association.

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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Detroit workshop to guide aspiring entrepreneurs through business startup basics

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Aspiring entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of launching a business during an in-person workshop scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 6, at the DPL Wilder branch on Detroit's east side.

The "Starting a Business" workshop will be held from noon to 2 p.m. at DPL Wilder, 7140 E. 7 Mile Road. The seminar is designed for individuals in the early stages of starting a business and will focus on helping participants evaluate their readiness to lead and manage a company.

Organizers said the workshop will cover key topics including assessing market and sales potential for products or services, understanding startup costs, exploring financing options and introducing basic business planning concepts. The session will also outline the initial steps required to move a business idea forward.

The event will take place at the DPL Wilder location, part of the Detroit Public Library system.

The workshop is open to the public and intended for those seeking practical guidance at the start of their entrepreneurial journey.



FILE PHOTO

Ebony Payns
Mental Health
Therapist, LMSW



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SPORTS

Michigan Sports Hall of Fame inducts Class of 2025 at Detroit ceremony



MEMBERS OF THE MICHIGAN SPORTS HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025 POSE WITH THEIR PLAQUES FOLLOWING THE INDUCTION CEREMONY FRIDAY, DEC. 19, 2025, AT THE SOUND BOARD THEATER INSIDE MOTORCITY CASINO HOTEL IN DETROIT. PICTURED FROM L: DAVID DOMBROWSKI, CHRIS CHELIOS, MARK DANTONIO, CLARESSA SHIELDS, JASON RICHARDSON AND RASHEED WALLACE.

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — The Michigan Sports Hall of Fame inducted its Class of 2025 during a ceremony held Friday, Dec. 19, at the Sound Board Theater inside MotorCity Casino Hotel, honoring athletes, coaches, media members and contributors whose achievements have shaped Michigan's sports legacy.

The class was selected through a voting process that included the Hall of Fame's Election Task Force, a statewide election committee and the public. The task force, chaired by Risa Balayem of PR1 Inc., includes current and former journalists, sports executives and community members. The class and award recipients were unanimously rat-

ified by the Hall of Fame's board of directors.

"This class is filled with champions at all levels. Their induction helps make sure that fans of Michigan won't forget what they accomplished," Hall of Fame Chairman Scott Leshner said.

The 2025 induction class featured honorees across multiple categories.

In the professional category, former Detroit Red Wings defenseman Chris Chelios was inducted after a Hall of Fame career that included two Stanley Cup championships with Detroit and recognition as one of the NHL's 100 greatest players. Also inducted was former Detroit Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace, who played a key role in the Pistons' 2004 NBA championship and helped anchor a team that

reached four consecutive Eastern Conference finals.

The amateur category included Flint native Claressa Shields, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and the first American boxer, male or female, to win consecutive Olympic titles, and Jason Richardson, a Saginaw native who starred at Arthur Hill High School and later helped lead Michigan State University to the 2000 NCAA men's basketball championship.

Former Michigan State football coach Mark Dantonio was inducted in the coach category after becoming the winningest coach in program history, leading the Spartans to three Big Ten championships, a Rose Bowl victory and a berth in the 2015 College Football Playoff.

In the media category, long-

time Detroit Free Press baseball writer John Lowe was honored for his coverage of Major League Baseball and the Detroit Tigers from 1986 through 2014, including the development of the "quality start" pitching statistic.

The contributor category honored David Dombrowski for his tenure as president and general manager of the Detroit Tigers, during which the franchise rebounded from a record-setting 2003 season to multiple playoff appearances and American League championships in 2006 and 2012.

The Hall also presented several special awards during the ceremony. Jon Falk, a longtime University of Michigan football equipment manager, and Jim Schmakel, who spent nearly four decades as clubhouse manager for the Detroit Tigers, received the Michigan Treasure Award for behind-the-scenes contributions. The Courage Award was presented posthumously to Andy Isaac, a Detroit sports fan whose upbeat social media presence during a public battle with cancer inspired athletes and fans before his death earlier this year. The Gerald R. Ford Award was presented to Carolyn King Lewis, whose childhood legal challenge helped end Little League Baseball's national ban on girls.

Hall officials also announced that the board has begun reviewing nomination and election processes as part of a broader effort to improve inclusion, with potential changes expected to be announced in 2026.

The Michigan Sports Hall of Fame is a volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the state's sports history.

SPORTS

Texas pulls away late to defeat Michigan 41-27 in Citrus Bowl



PHOTO CREDIT: BRYCE UNDERWOOD (MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHY)

BY MB STAFF

ORLANDO, Fla. — A back-and-forth contest swung decisively in the final quarter as No. 13 Texas Longhorns scored 17 unanswered points to defeat No. 18 Michigan Wolverines 41-27 on Wednesday, Dec. 31, in the Cheez-It Citrus Bowl at Camping World Stadium.

The game featured seven lead changes and was marked by penalties, with 21 flags enforced between the two teams. Michigan led midway through the fourth quarter but was unable to produce defensive stops as Texas closed the game with a flurry of offense and forced three turnovers over the final 18 minutes.

Texas quarterback Arch Manning capped the late surge with

a 60-yard rushing touchdown with five minutes remaining. The Longhorns also added a 30-yard passing touchdown during the decisive stretch to secure the bowl victory.

Michigan answered an opening Texas field goal with one of its own, a 53-yard kick by Dominic Zvada. Moments later, the Wolverines capitalized on a forced fumble on the ensuing kickoff, recovering the ball at the Texas 23-yard line. Two plays later, quarterback Bryce Underwood connected with Kendrick Bell for a 19-yard touchdown along the sideline, giving Michigan a 10-3 lead at the end of the first quarter after replay review confirmed Bell's foot was in bounds.

Texas responded with an 11-play, 75-yard drive that ended in a three-yard rushing touchdown.

Michigan reclaimed the lead on its next possession as Underwood, mixing runs and passes, finished the drive with a touchdown throw to Andrew Marsh. The Longhorns again answered, tying the game at 17 on a 17-yard passing touchdown with 7:45 left in the second quarter. The score held through halftime after Texas mishandled a snap on a potential scoring opportunity and Zvada missed a 45-yard field goal attempt as time expired.

Michigan opened the second half with a 12-play drive following a 43-yard kickoff return by Marsh, settling for a 31-yard Zvada field goal. The Wolverines converted two fourth-down plays on the march, both on runs by Bryson Kuzdzal.

Texas moved back in front when Manning scored on a 23-

yard rushing touchdown, part of a 155-yard rushing performance. Michigan threatened again after a 51-yard return by Marsh, but the drive stalled with an interception at the Texas seven-yard line.

After forcing a punt deep in Texas territory, Michigan regained the lead on a five-yard quarterback run by Underwood, who dove into the pylon to make it 27-24 with 10:56 remaining.

From there, the Longhorns took control. Texas intercepted two passes and scored three times over the final 11 minutes, including Manning's long rushing touchdown, to pull away for the win.

The loss closed Michigan's season at 9-4, while Texas finished the year with the Citrus Bowl title.

FAITH IN FOCUS



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

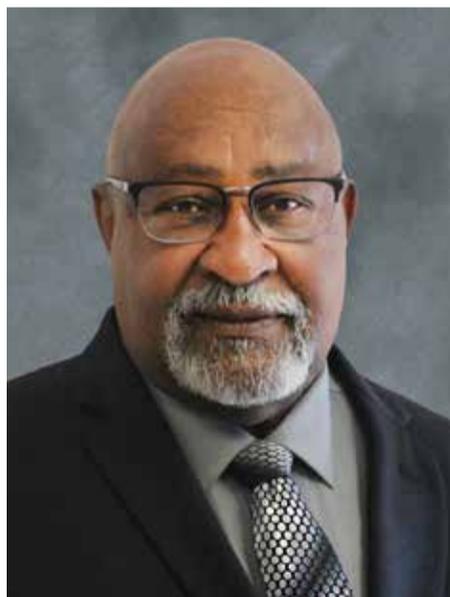
Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

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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From the Old to the New

"Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

Genesis 50:20 (NIV)



BY MINISTER CAROLYN
CARTER TOWNSEL



As the New Year begins, hearts around the world are pausing to reflect on what has been and what lies ahead. Ephesians 4:22-23 speaks directly to this sacred moment, calling believers to "put off the old self," be "renewed in the spirit of your mind," and "put on the new self," created to be like God in righteousness and holiness. This scripture reminds us that a new year is not just about resolutions, but about true transformation.

The "old self" may look like yesterday's burdens into today - old mindsets, unforgiveness, fear, shame, or habits that no longer align with who God has called us to be. It may sound like self-doubt instead of faith, bitterness instead of grace, or surviving instead of living. But the "new self" invites a powerful contrast: peace instead of anxiety, hope instead of despair, obedience instead of resistance, and purpose instead of confusion. Where the old was shaped by wounds and weariness, the new is shaped by truth,

healing, and renewed strength.

Renewal begins in the mind. When our thinking changes, our direction changes, and when our direction changes, our lives change. God does not ask us to fix ourselves; He invites us to be transformed by Him. As we step into this New Year, we are reminded that we do not have to repeat old cycles or remain bound to past chapters. We are empowered to rise, walk differently, and live intentionally.

As the calendar turns and a fresh season unfolds, may this New Year be marked by letting go of what was and embracing what is becoming. May you walk clothed in the new, renewed, restored, and ready.

Beloved, Happy New Year. May this year be filled with purpose, peace, and the power of new beginnings.

Blessings to All,
Carolyn

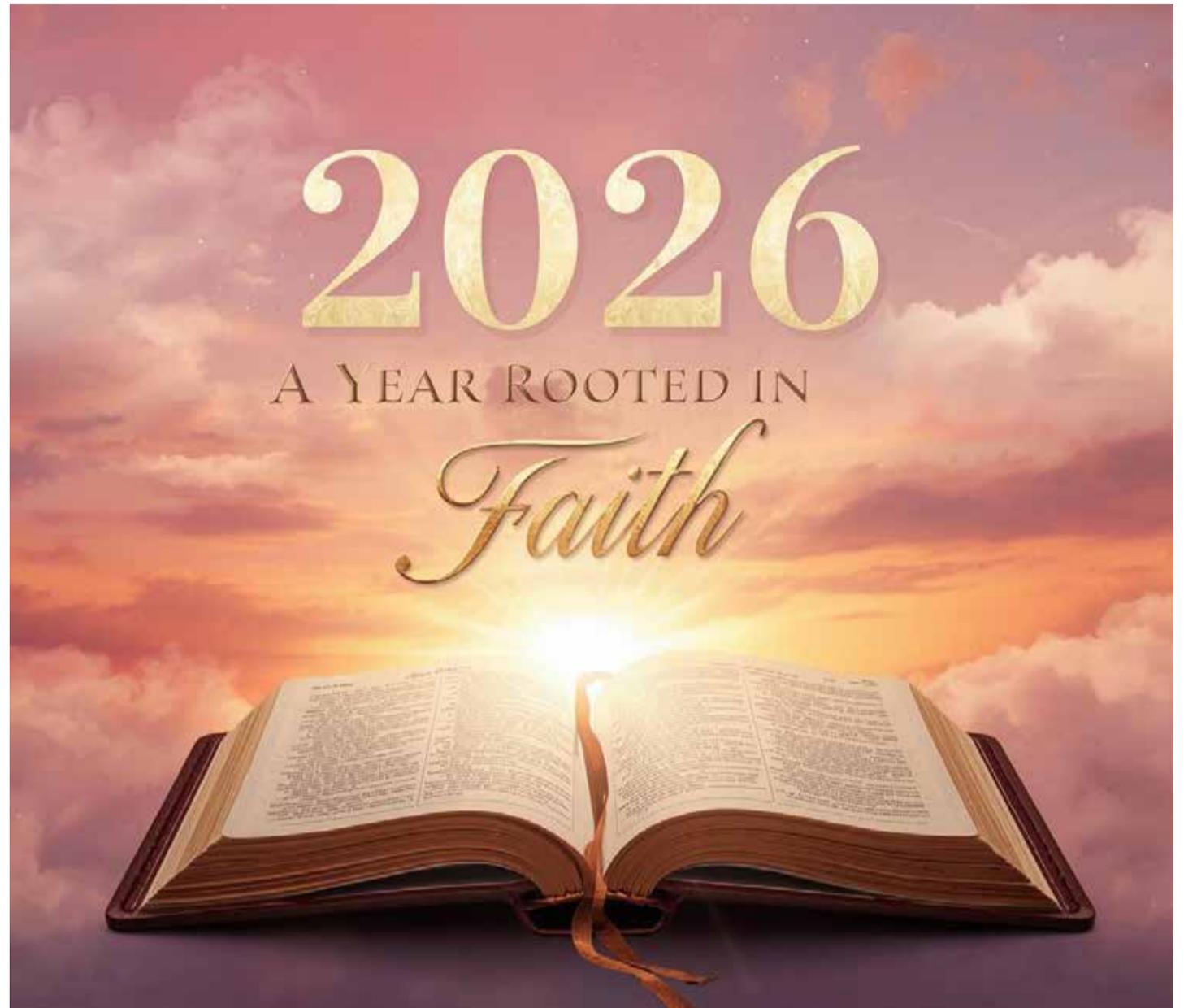
Start your year rooted in faith

BY MB STAFF

As the calendar turns and 2026 begins, it arrives not with certainty or guarantees, but with an invitation to trust. Scripture reminds us that new beginnings are not defined by the date on the calendar, but by God's faithfulness, which is renewed daily. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23). The new year does not promise ease, but it does promise presence, and that assurance carries more weight than any resolution.

There is often a quiet pressure at the start of a new year to become something more polished or accomplished, as though growth requires perfection. Faith, however, tells a different story. Scripture teaches that God's strength is revealed not in our accomplishments, but in our dependence. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). If the past year brought disappointment, delay, or struggle, it was not wasted. God draws near in those moments, reminding us that "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). What felt like an ending may have been the beginning of deeper trust.

Moving into 2026 may feel uncertain, but faith has never required full visibility. God rarely reveals the entire path at once. Instead, He calls His people to walk with confidence in Him, not in their understanding. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Scripture compares God's guid-



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ance to a lamp rather than a spotlight. "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105). It provides enough light to move forward, even when the horizon remains unclear.

True growth often happens quietly, without recognition or applause. In a world that celebrates speed and visibility, faith honors patience and perseverance. "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin" (Zechariah 4:10). God values the unseen work of the heart, where faith takes root and obedience becomes habit. Jesus taught that faith does not need to be large

to be powerful, saying, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). What begins small in God's hands can grow beyond expectation.

As the year unfolds, uncertainty may remain, but Scripture offers an anchor that does not shift. God's promises are not dependent on circumstances or seasons. "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). That promise was spoken to people in waiting, not comfort. The same God who carried them remains faithful today.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Entering 2026 is not about proving strength or controlling outcomes. It is about walking faithfully, trusting that God is present in every step. Faith is the confidence that God is working even when the full picture is unseen. "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). As the new year begins, may it be marked not by fear or pressure, but by steady trust in the One who makes all things new.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Faith Ministries Church

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Prophetess Linda J. Kemp Revis
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Midland, MI 48642
989-837-7777
faithministrieschurch.org



Ministry Without Walls

Pastor, John Dunn
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Saginaw, MI 48603



New Life Baptist Ministries

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newlife3881@gmail.com



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stpaul2@yahoo.com



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Bridgeport Community Church

Pastor Rob Ashmall
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PO Box 541
Bridgeport, MI 48722
989-777-1840



New Covenant Christian Center

Pastor Ron Frierson
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989-752-8485



Anointed Temple Ministries

Bishop Tim D. Holden, Sr.
612 Millard St.
Saginaw, MI 48607
901 Melbourne
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Zion Missionary Baptist Church

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FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

Holiday partnerships and collaborations



BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

As we celebrate the many holidays that come with the winter months, we can enjoy and plot and scheme for the coming year. By that, we mean we can observe and participate in the many good things happening and plan for how we can increase our participation for the coming year. Hold tight to the heartwarming feelings experienced as children receive gifts, seniors eat hot meals, and those who are cold huddle with extra blankets and new socks.

We can participate in these activities now, and we can plot and scheme – we mean plan – for how to increase the care we extend to our neighbors, known and unknown.

What to do today.

First, there's the obvious. Start setting aside funds and resources to share with others this time next year. It's always hard to "find the money," but allocating funds throughout the year to share during the year-end can make next year's giving easier. As nonprofits, we can observe what our partners are doing and consider how we can help them. Are they hosting meals? Paying electricity bills for those who may be



FILE PHOTO

cut off? Observe now and talk with community leaders early next year to explore how to add value. This is true for each of us as individuals and families as well. Watch, participate, ask questions, and get involved going forward.

There are other ways to help out now – and next year. These include asking staff, board members, and volunteers to help other groups deliver food, toys, clothing, and more during the holidays. Those who have access to buses and minivans can make a big difference when it comes to collecting toys, food, clothing, and blankets for distribution. The front porch – for those who are homeowners – or the office, if you are a nonprofit, can become an information center for people who are looking to donate, get in-

involved, and give, and know who is doing what. And we all know that our social media accounts are the new "front porch." We can all share what is going on in our community.

When thinking about next year, there may be more resources to share when there's more time to plan. Perhaps you'll decide on a special communication to your constituency to encour-

age giving to a community-wide program. Or maybe you'll advocate for longer-term solutions such as temporary housing, nutrition programs. As individuals, families, faith organizations, and nonprofits of every stripe, we can observe and participate in what others do well and make a plan to join with them in the coming year.



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



PIC OF THE WEEK

Saginaw Police Department Detective Albert Presley spread holiday cheer on Christmas morning, purchasing and delivering gifts at his own expense to seven children in three local families.



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*Brittany Saunders is ready to pay it forward. The Chicago native enrolled at SVSU with ambitions to pursue a teaching career. Brittany was encouraged and invigorated by other passionate educators who worked closely with her to ensure she would accomplish her goals. And she is. Even before she was set to graduate, Brittany could boast a résumé with a paid internship in a school district along with K-12 classroom experience. **Now she can't wait to begin a professional career, inspiring students with the same kind of one-on-one attention she received from her professors at SVSU.***



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