



PICS OF THE WEEK
Summer nights at the Saginaw Art Museum & Gardens

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Gospel Fest returns to Ojibway Island for 25th anniversary

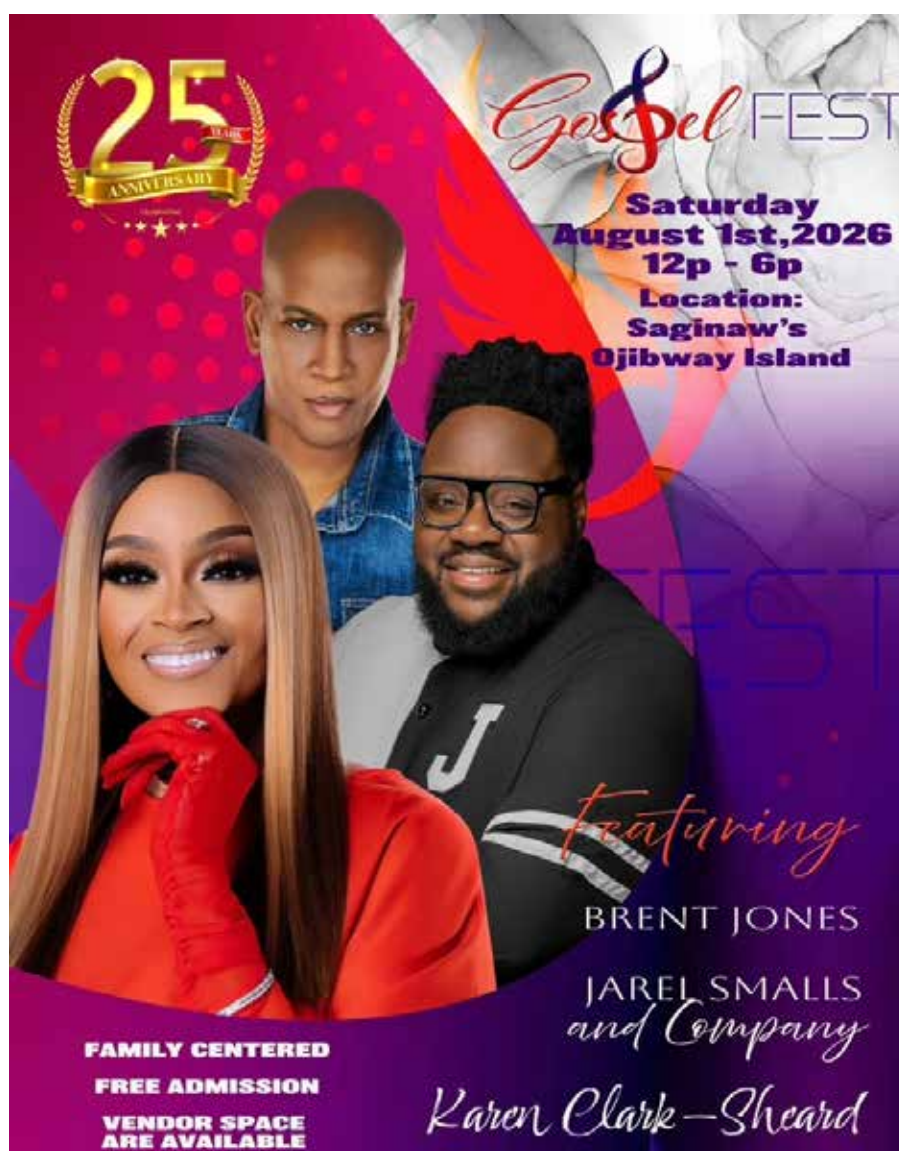
BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Gospel music has always carried more than a melody.

It carries testimony. It carries memory. It carries the sound of church mothers clapping on beat, choirs lifting the room, families holding on through hard seasons and communities finding hope together.

That spirit will return to Saginaw this summer as the 25th anniversary Gospel Fest is scheduled for noon to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 1, at Ojibway Island, also known as Rust Park, 121 Ezra Rust Drive in Saginaw.

The event is free and family-centered and this year's featured artists in-



Continues on pg 2,
Gospel Fest



Flint Latinx Technology & Community Center prepares to celebrate 25 years of service

LATINO BANNER, COVER



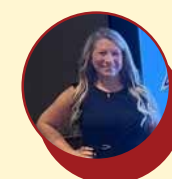
Ojibway Island reopens as Saginaw welcomes families back

COMMUNITY, PG 13



Saginaw voters will decide whether to repeal city property tax cap in November

COMMUNITY, PG 22



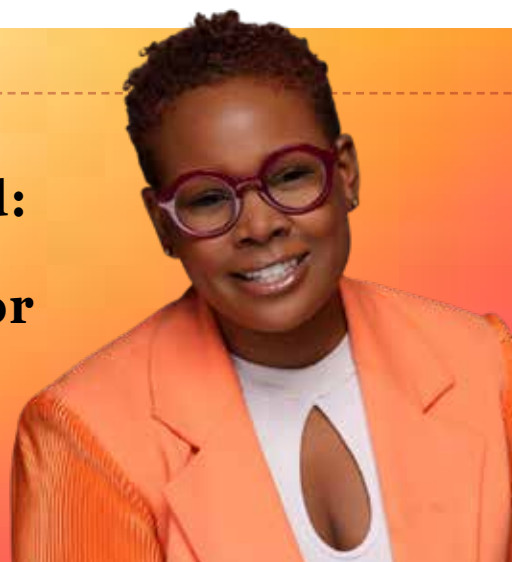
Great Lakes Royals bring pro basketball vision to Soaring Eagle

SPORTS, PG 45

FEATURED STORY

Carrying the legacy forward: Ashley N. Jackson joins the Michigan Banner as Director of Communications and Marketing

COMMUNITY, PG 15



From cover, Gospel Fest



clude Grammy Award-winning gospel singer Karen Clark Sheard, Brent Jones and Jarell Smalls & Company. The event also will include local artists, food trucks, vendors and an awareness focus on sickle cell.

Founded by Vicki Hill, Gospel Fest has grown into one of Saginaw's major faith-based summer gatherings. The festival was created to bring people together across generations, race and religion through gospel music, community fellowship and a peaceful outdoor environment.

The return to Ojibway Island gives this year's event added meaning after the city reopened the park in July following major renovations. For many families, the island has long been a gathering place for concerts, celebrations and summer memories.

Gospel Fest continues that tradition by turning the riverfront into a space for praise, worship and connection. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, enjoy the music and support local vendors throughout the day.

Vendor spaces are available, and event information is available through Vicki Hill GospelFest at 989-737-8179.

**THIS DAY IN
MICHIGAN
HISTORY**

JULY 16, 1857

On July 16, 1857, the first telegraph cable was laid across the Detroit River, creating a faster communication link between Michigan and Canada. The cable allowed messages to travel almost instantly across the border, marking an important step in the region's communication history.



MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 14



SVSU basketball camps give young players a closer look at the college game



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY HOSTED JULY BASKETBALL CAMPS FOR STUDENTS FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12TH GRADE, GIVING YOUNG ATHLETES A CHANCE TO BUILD SKILLS AND CONNECT WITH THE COLLEGE GAME.

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — For a young basketball player, stepping onto a college court can make the game feel bigger.

The hoop is still 10 feet high. The ball still has to bounce. But suddenly, the dream feels closer.

That was part of the goal as Saginaw Valley State University men's basketball hosted its July youth camps for local students during the week of July 6. The Cardinals offered one camp for

boys and girls in kindergarten through fifth grade and a position camp for students in sixth through 12th grades.

For the younger campers, the week was about learning the basics — dribbling, passing, shooting, moving on defense and working with teammates. For older players, the position camp gave them a chance to sharpen specific skills and better understand what it takes to compete at a higher level.

But the camp was not just about basketball.

SVSU men's basketball coach

Chris Fowler said the program is also about building a stronger connection between Cardinal basketball and the surrounding community.

"The focus is just trying to reach out to the community and gain a sense of togetherness with Saginaw Valley State men's basketball and the community of Saginaw and the Great Lakes Bay Region as a whole," Fowler said.

For students, camps like this can make college feel less far away. They get to meet coaches, learn from college athletes and spend time inside a university

setting. That matters, especially for kids who may not yet know what college life looks like or how athletics can connect to education, discipline and leadership.

Basketball teaches more than how to score. It teaches how to listen, how to recover after a mistake, how to be part of a team and how to keep showing up when something is hard.

For many campers, the biggest win may not have been a made shot. It may have been walking out of the gym with more confidence than they had when they arrived.

Saginaw Bay 4-H Fish Camp teaches kids how to fish — and why the Great Lakes matter



SAGINAW BAY 4-H FISH CAMP WAS HELD JULY 7-8 AT BAY CITY STATE PARK, WHERE YOUTH AGES 8 TO 13 LEARNED FISHING SKILLS, TACKLE CRAFTING, CASTING AND GREAT LAKES STEWARDSHIP.

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — Fishing can look simple from the outside.

Cast the line. Wait. Hope something bites.

But at Saginaw Bay 4-H Fish Camp, young people learned that fishing is also about skill, patience, science and taking care of the water around them.

The camp was held July 7-8 at Bay City State Park for youth ages 8 to 13. The two-day program was hosted by MSU Extension,

4-H, Michigan Sea Grant, Project FISH and local partners.

Campers learned hands-on fishing skills, including knot tying, tackle crafting and casting. They also learned about aquatic invasive species and how to help protect the Great Lakes.

That part matters in Bay City. Saginaw Bay is not just a pretty view. It is part of the Great Lakes system, a place for fishing, boating, wildlife, family memories and local pride. When young people understand the water, they are more likely to care about

what happens to it.

The camp was designed to help recruit the next generation of anglers and Great Lakes stewards. That means students were not only learning how to catch fish. They were learning how to respect the water, the fish and the environment.

For some campers, the best part may have been holding a fishing rod or landing a fish. For others, it may have been learning how to tie a knot, build tackle or understand what lives beneath the surface.

The lesson was clear: the outdoors belongs to young people, too.

Saginaw Bay 4-H Fish Camp also connects students to a tradition that can last for life. Fishing can be something shared with grandparents, parents, cousins, friends or mentors. It can be quiet, exciting, frustrating and peaceful — sometimes all in the same afternoon.

And if students leave camp knowing how to fish and how to protect the Great Lakes, that is a catch worth keeping.

Paid summer work program helps students build confidence before their first jobs

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Getting a first job can feel exciting. It can also feel confusing.

What do you say in an interview? How do you talk to a supervisor? What happens if you make a mistake? How do you figure out what kind of work you are good at?

A summer employment program serving students from the Genesee, Shiawassee and Ingham county areas is helping young people answer those questions while earning real work experience.

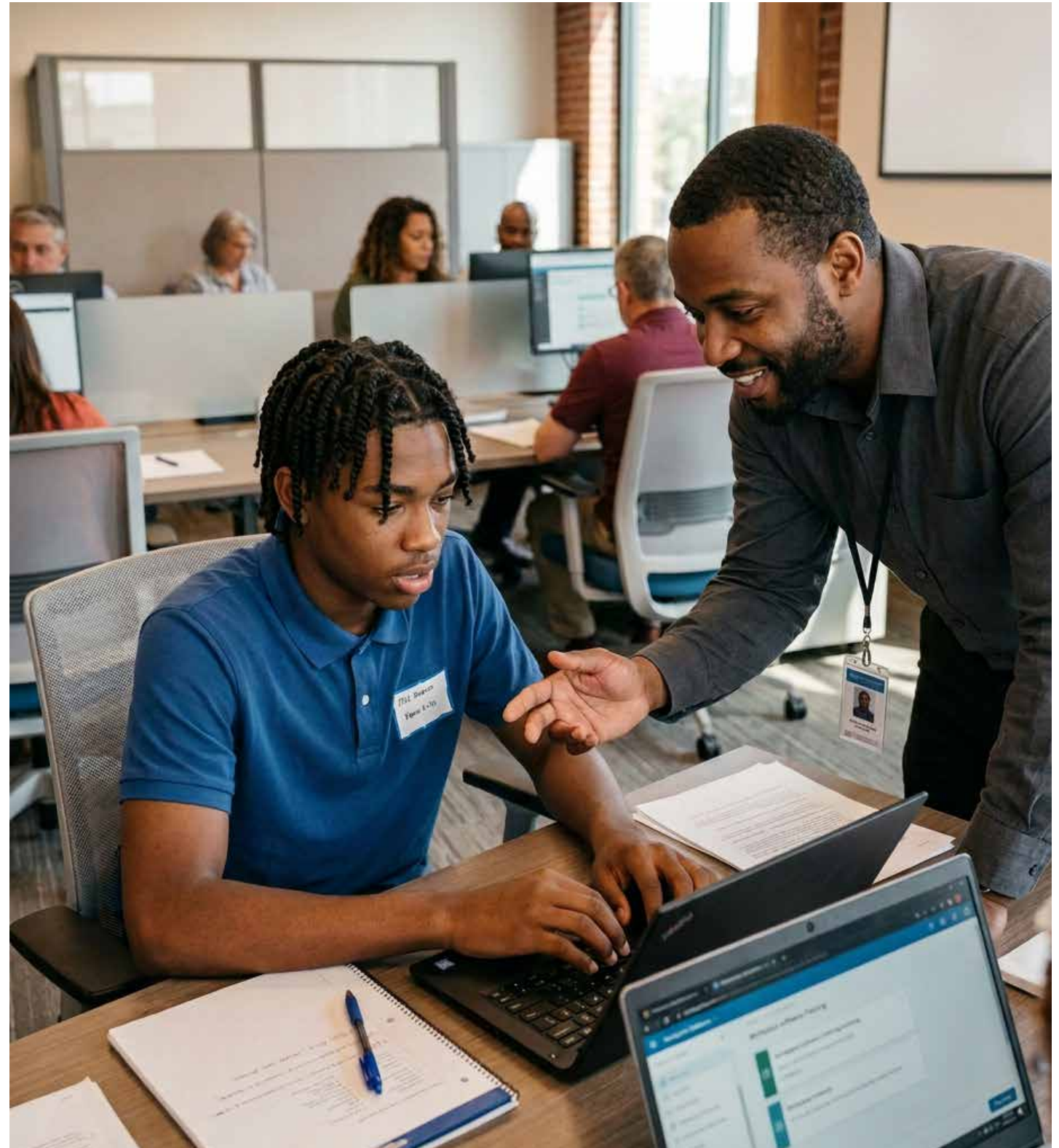
The Summer Youth Employment Training Program, offered by Michigan's Bureau of Services for Blind Persons and Peckham Inc., began its second session Monday, July 13. The session runs through Aug. 7 at Peckham, 3150 Capital City Blvd. in Lansing.

The program is designed for students looking for paid summer work experience. It includes two main parts.

First, students meet one-on-one with a Peckham specialist to talk about their interests, abilities and career goals. They also attend group classes that help them feel more comfortable entering the workforce.

Then students participate in a four-week paid work experience with a local employer for up to 20 hours per week. Afterward, Peckham schedules a wrap-up meeting with the student and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons to review what happened and talk about next steps.

For students who are blind or have low vision, supported work experiences can help build independence, confidence and self-advocacy. That means learning not only how to do a job, but also how to ask for what you need,



THE SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM'S SECOND SESSION BEGAN JULY 13, OFFERING PAID WORK EXPERIENCE AND JOB-READINESS SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS FROM THE GENESEE, SHIAWASSEE AND INGHAM COUNTY AREAS.

solve problems and speak up in a workplace.

Those are skills every student needs.

A summer job can teach lessons that do not always show up on a report card: showing up on time, managing money, working with different personalities and

learning how to keep going when the day is not easy.

The program's first session ran from June 15 to July 10. The second session continues through Aug. 7.

Questions about the program may be directed to Brittany Hamilton-Reed, Central Region

transition consultant with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, at 734-209-5855 or HamiltonReedB@michigan.gov.

For students, the paycheck matters. But the bigger reward may be walking away with the confidence to say, "I can do this."

College countdown: What students can do now before fall semester gets busy

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Fall semester may still feel a few weeks away, but college has a way of sneaking up fast.

One minute, it is summer. The next, students are trying to find a parking spot, open a textbook, check financial aid, answer emails, buy notebooks, remember their class schedule and figure out why they are already tired.

For local college students, now is the time to get ready before the rush begins.

Several regional colleges have fall dates already posted. Delta College announced July 6 that registration is open for fall 2026, with the fall semester beginning Aug. 26. Delta serves students across the Great Lakes Bay Region, with campuses in University Center, downtown Midland, Saginaw and Bay City.

At Saginaw Valley State University, fall 2026 classes begin Monday, Aug. 31. SVSU also lists Aug. 12 as the initial payment deadline for fall 2026, with late registration running Aug. 31 through Sept. 4. New first-year students also have a required Fresh Start orientation event scheduled for Friday, Aug. 28.

At Central Michigan University, fall 2026 on-campus classes begin Monday, Aug. 31, with drop/add ending Sept. 6 and no classes on Labor Day, Sept. 7.

For students, the dates are important. But getting ready for college is about more than circling the first day of class.

Start by checking your student email now. Colleges often send important information about financial aid, housing, course changes, bills, parking, books and orientation through school email. Missing one message can mean missing a deadline.

Next, look at your class sched-

ule like it is a real map. Know where your classes meet, whether they are online or in person, and how much time you have between them. If you are commuting, think about traffic, gas, parking and whether you need a backup plan.

Money matters, too. Students should check tuition balances, payment deadlines, scholarships, financial aid awards and book costs before classes begin. Waiting until the first week can make everything more stressful.

For students living on campus, this is the time to plan what to bring — and what not to bring. You probably need bedding, chargers, shower items, laundry supplies, medicine, school supplies and a few things that make the room feel like home. You probably do not need everything you own.

For first-generation college students, asking questions early can make a big difference. Call financial aid. Email an adviser. Ask where tutoring is. Find the student success center. Learn how office hours work. College has a lot of resources, but students have to know where they are.

The most important back-to-school supply might be a routine. Before classes begin, students can start building habits around sleep, meals, work schedules and study time. A strong first two weeks can set the tone for the whole semester.

College is a big adjustment, whether you are leaving home, commuting from down the road or returning after time away. It is normal to feel excited and nervous at the same time.

The goal is not to have everything perfect. The goal is to walk into the semester prepared enough to breathe.





Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Flint Latinx Technology & Community Center prepares to celebrate 25 years of service

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — For 25 years, the Latinx Technology & Community Center has been more than a building on Flint's east side.

It has been a translator's voice in a medical appointment. A tutoring table for a student trying to finish homework. A place where families can ask questions in Spanish, celebrate culture, find resources and feel less alone in a city that has become home.

The center, located at 2101 Lewis St. in Flint, is preparing to mark its 25th anniversary with a celebration scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 1, according to a public event announcement. The milestone comes as the organization continues serving Flint and Genesee County's Latinx community through language services, health and family support, literacy programs, workforce development and cultural events.

Founded in 2001, the center's mission is to "enhance the dignity and quality of life" for the Flint and Genesee County Latinx community and other cultures. Its work includes health care enrollment, school enrollment, systems navigation, translation, interpretation, tutoring, English and Spanish language programs, summer youth programs, resume building, job search support and business services.

That range of services matters because many immigrant and bilingual families do not struggle because they lack ambition. They struggle because systems are hard



THE LATINX TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNITY CENTER IN FLINT IS PREPARING TO CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO LATINX FAMILIES, IMMIGRANTS AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY. THE CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2001 AND IS LOCATED AT 2101 LEWIS ST.

to enter when language, paperwork, transportation and trust become barriers.

The center has become one of Flint's trusted bridges.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation reported in 2024 that the center, formerly known as the Hispanic Technology and Community Center, was established to address gaps in internet access, public information and language access. Since then, it has grown into a resource center that many families describe as a

home away from home.

Executive Director Asa Ascencio Zuccaro told the Mott Foundation the center's work can be described in three words: celebrate, educate and advocate.

That mission has been visible through community interpretation, youth tutoring, health fairs, cultural celebrations, Día de los Muertos events, Cinco de Mayo activities and summer programs that help children stay connected to both education and heritage.

As the center approaches its

anniversary, the celebration is not just about looking backward. It is about honoring the families, volunteers, staff members and community leaders who helped build a space where people can bring their whole selves — their language, culture, questions, traditions and dreams.

For Flint's Latinx families, 25 years is more than a number. It is proof that community can become infrastructure, and care can become legacy.

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

Michigan farmworker settlement highlights rights of H-2A worker



TWO H-2A FARMWORKERS REACHED A SETTLEMENT JULY 9 IN A MICHIGAN FEDERAL CASE ALLEGING TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT WORKER RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. ADVOCATES SAY THE CASE HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

BY MB STAFF

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Two farmworkers with H-2A visas have reached a settlement in a federal case that advocates say highlights the vulnerability of migrant agricultural workers whose legal status is tied to their employers.

Feliciano Velasco Rojas and Luis Guzman Rojas reached the settlement Thursday, July 9, in a lawsuit that alleged violations of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.

The workers were represented by the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, Farmworker Legal Services, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante and Farmworker Justice. The terms of the settlement were

not disclosed, and the settlement does not constitute an admission of any claim against the defendants.

The H-2A program allows U.S. employers to bring foreign workers into the country for temporary or seasonal agricultural jobs when there are not enough available domestic workers. Under program rules, employers must identify the specific location where the work will take place.

In this case, the plaintiffs alleged they were recruited to work in North Carolina on H-2A seasonal agricultural visas but were compelled to live and work in Michigan under poor conditions. They also alleged they were threatened with serious harm and abuse of the legal process.

Advocates say cases like this expose a difficult reality for many farmworkers: speaking up can feel dangerous when a job, housing and immigration status are all connected to the same employer.

“The H-2A program ties a worker’s legal status to their employer, creating a structural ‘chilling effect’ that punishes those who speak out against abuse,” said Julia Solórzano, legal and policy director at Centro de los Derechos del Migrante.

Gonzalo Peralta, senior staff attorney with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, praised the workers for bringing the allegations forward.

Michigan’s agricultural economy depends heavily on seasonal labor, including many workers from Mexico and Latin America.

They plant, pick, pack and process food that reaches grocery stores, restaurants and family tables across the state.

But behind the food system are workers who often face long hours, isolation, language barriers, limited transportation and fear of retaliation. Legal advocates say those conditions can make it harder for workers to report abuse or seek help.

The July 9 settlement does not end the larger conversation about farmworker protections in Michigan. It adds to it.

For Latino communities, the case is a reminder that labor rights and immigrant rights are deeply connected. The people who help feed the state also deserve safety, dignity and the ability to speak up without fear.

LAUP Fiesta celebrates Latino culture in Holland with five days of music, food and community

BY MB STAFF

HOLLAND, Mich. — For more than six decades, LAUP Fiesta has been one of West Michigan's brightest celebrations of Latino culture — the kind of event where music spills into the streets, families gather around food, children see their heritage honored and the whole community is invited to take part.

The 62nd annual LAUP Fiesta returns July 15-19 in Holland, with five days of music, dancing, food trucks, youth activities, cultural showcases, a car show, a World Cup watch party and the traditional Saturday Fiesta celebration.

The event is organized by Latin Americans United for Progress, known as LAUP, a Holland-based nonprofit that supports Latino families through advocacy, education, workforce development, youth programming, citizenship navigation and community services.

This year's Fiesta will take place at several locations across Holland, including the Holland Civic Center Place, GDK Park, Kollen Park and downtown Holland.

The celebration begins Wednesday, July 15, with a family-focused kickoff at the Holland Farmers Market near the Holland Civic Center. The event runs from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and will include children's activities, cultural programming, community resource tables and an interactive "Build Your Own Elote" station featuring traditional street corn toppings.

On Thursday, July 16, the celebration moves downtown for the Street Performer Series from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at GDK Park. LAUP is partnering with Downtown Holland to highlight Latino community talent through music, dance and public performance. Scheduled performers include GVSU Monarcas, Flow Like Water and Edwin Campos.



THE 62ND ANNUAL LAUP FIESTA RUNS JULY 15-19 IN HOLLAND WITH MUSIC, FOOD, YOUTH ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL PERFORMANCES, A SATURDAY FIESTA CELEBRATION, FIESTA BAILE, CAR SHOW AND FIFA WORLD CUP FINAL WATCH PARTY

The week continues Friday, July 17, with Concert at the Park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Kollen Park. Families are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for an outdoor evening of live music, food trucks and community celebration. Regional act Grupo Bengala is scheduled to perform.

The main Fiesta celebration takes place Saturday, July 18, at Holland Civic Center Place, 150 W. Eighth St. The day begins early with El Mercadito, the artisan and vendor market, opening at 8:30 a.m. The main festival runs from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will include live entertainment, local food trucks, children's activities, vendor booths and a youth talent show.

The talent show will feature local singers and dancers competing for cash prizes, with rounds scheduled at noon and 2 p.m. Food vendors listed by LAUP include Dolce Mini-Cakes, Jhomary's Paradise, Papa's Tacos, Poncho's Tacos, Shnack

Trap, Snow Stars Shave Ice, Taquero Mucho, Pochis Colombian Cafe, Las Rocas and El Globo Restaurant.

Saturday night will close with the Fiesta Baile, a ticketed dance and fundraiser for LAUP's community programs. The baile runs from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Holland Civic Center. Musical headliners include La Furia del Ritmo, Grupo Ekilibrio and Alpha Music.

The final day, Sunday, July 19, will bring together cars, soccer and community at the Holland Civic Center. A Car Show and FIFA World Cup Final Watch Party is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The car show will

feature food trucks, outdoor entertainment and live music by Villanueva Tamborazo. Vehicle registration runs from 9:30 a.m. to noon for a \$20 fee, and the event will include a \$500 tire raffle.

At the same time, the Civic Center's Market Side will host a free public broadcast of the FIFA World Cup Final, creating a community viewing experience for soccer fans. Youth soccer clinics and games will be provided by First Tee and Tulip City United.

In a year when communities across the country are reflecting on belonging, representation and American identity, Fiesta offers its own answer. Latino culture is not separate from Michigan's story. It is part of the rhythm, labor, faith, food, music and family life that continue to shape the state.

For five days in Holland, that story will be heard in the music, tasted in the food, seen in the dancers and carried by the families who return year after year.





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Información de contacto: Andrea Puebla, apuebla@mhcc.org

COMMUNITY

Ojibway Island reopens as Saginaw welcomes families back to treasured riverfront gathering place



SAGINAW CELEBRATED THE GRAND REOPENING OF OJIBWAY ISLAND ON JULY 10 WITH A RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, PUBLIC SAFETY VEHICLES, GIVEAWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — For more than a year, the center of Ojibway Island sat quiet.

The familiar riverfront space that had hosted family walks, summer gatherings, fireworks memories and community events was closed behind construction work, waiting for its next chapter. On Friday, July 10, Saginaw welcomed it back.

The city held the grand reopening of Ojibway Island from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., beginning with an official 11 a.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event invited residents, families, businesses and community partners to return to one of Saginaw's most recognizable public spaces after a major round of renovations and safety improvements.

The reopening was designed as more than a ceremony. KISS 107.1 broadcast live from the island. A children's activity area featured games, including a Gaga Ball Pit and Inflatable Archery Board provided by Saginaw County Parks, along with games from the Public Libraries of Saginaw's Library of Things. A Touch-A-Truck area gave families a close look at police emergency services vehicles and the Saginaw Fire Department's Fire Safety Trailer.

The celebration also included free snow cones from Sno-ball Shaved Ice for the first 200 attendees, courtesy of Saginaw County Parks, along with free hot dogs and popcorn. Local organizations, nonprofits and community groups were featured in a community tent area, and city staff were available to answer questions and offer tours of the island.

Ojibway Island had been closed to the public since spring 2025 while the city completed extensive improvements. The work included upgraded parking lots and walkways, shoreline stabilization and improvements to the stage and bandshell. The city also added public safety upgrades, including an enhanced security camera system, emergency call towers and landscaping boulders designed to prevent vehicles from entering the central lawn.

For Saginaw, the reopening is about more than a park improvement project. Ojibway Island has long been tied to the city's public life. It is a place where residents watch fireworks, walk along the water, fish, gather with children and attend community celebrations. Public spaces like that become part of a city's memory.

City Manager Tim Morales

said the celebration was about bringing people together, connecting residents with community resources and helping families create new memories in a place that has long mattered to Saginaw.

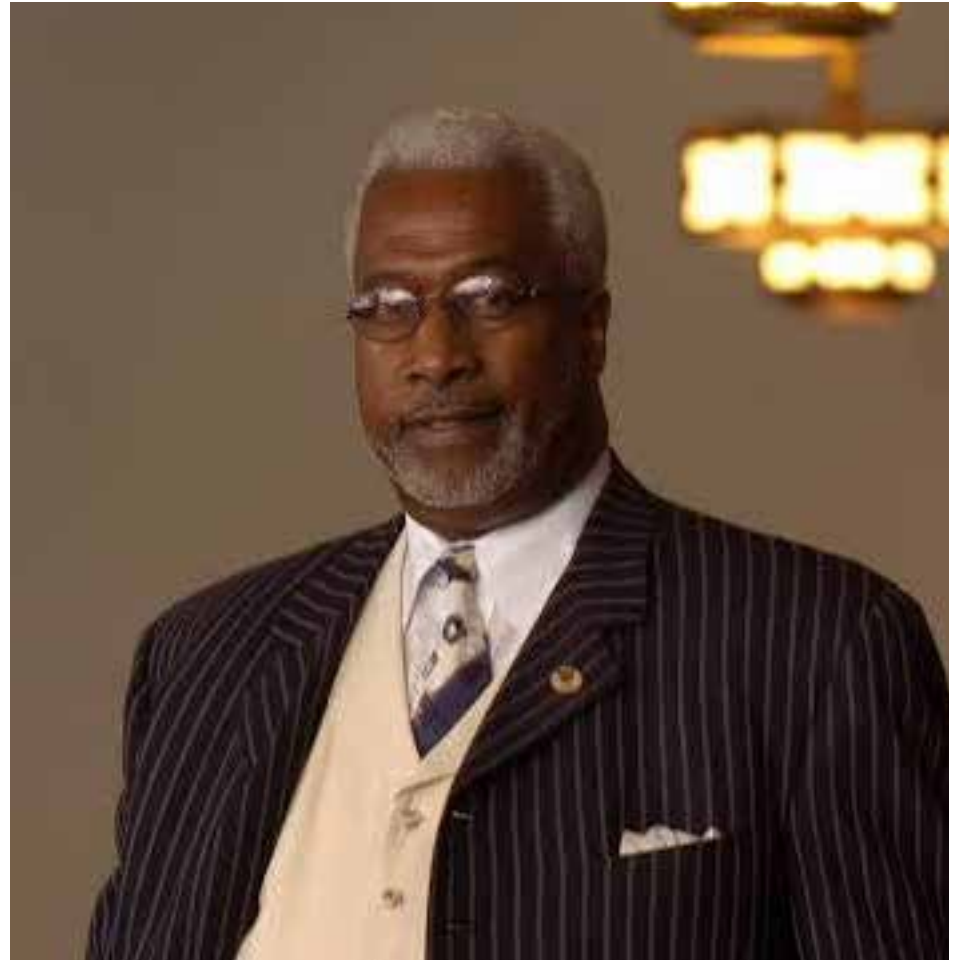
The reopening also comes as the city continues to think about safety, public access and the future use of Ojibway Island. With new walking areas, safety features and improvements to gathering spaces, the island is positioned again as a place for residents to enjoy the riverfront while also supporting larger community events.

For families who returned July 10, the message was simple: Ojibway Island is open again.

And after months of fencing, equipment and waiting, Saginaw once again has one of its most beloved public spaces back in the hands of the community.

COMMUNITY

Flint honors C. Frederick Robinson and Rev. Dr. Lewis Randolph with street dedications during Heroes Weekend



FLINT HONORED ATTORNEY C. FREDERICK ROBINSON (LEFT) ON JULY 10 AND REV. DR. LEWIS RANDOLPH (RIGHT) ON JULY 11 WITH HONORARY STREET DEDICATIONS DURING HEROES WEEKEND.

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Street signs do more than point the way.

Sometimes, they ask a community to remember who helped clear the path.

The city of Flint honored two respected community leaders during Heroes Weekend with honorary street dedications recognizing attorney C. Frederick Robinson, Esq., and Rev. Dr. Lewis Randolph. The ceremonies were held on consecutive days, celebrating two men whose lives helped shape Flint through justice, faith, equality and service.

On Friday, July 10, Baker Street at 2501 N. Saginaw St. received the honorary designation of C. Frederick Robinson, Esq. Robinson was a pioneering attorney and civil rights advocate who practiced law in Flint

for more than five decades.

After graduating from Howard University School of Law, Robinson opened his Flint law practice in 1956 and spent the next 55 years working for justice, equality and opportunity. He became known as a mentor, community leader and civil rights advocate who helped establish organizations that empowered Black residents and challenged systemic inequality.

For Robinson, the law was not simply a career. It was a tool for community change.

Attorney Trachelle C. Young said Robinson helped shape future legal professionals by pushing them toward integrity, excellence and service.

One day later, on Saturday, July 11, the city dedicated Grant Street as Rev. Dr. Lewis Randolph Street. Randolph served as pastor of Antioch Missionary

Baptist Church for 41 years and became one of Flint's most respected faith leaders.

Before entering full-time ministry, Randolph worked for 20 years as a tool and die maker at General Motors. His ministry later extended beyond the church pulpit. He counseled families, mentored leaders and advocated for positive change throughout Flint.

Randolph also served as president of the Concerned Pastors for more than a decade, bringing churches and community leaders together to address issues affecting Flint residents. He was remembered as an encourager, innovator, trailblazer and servant leader whose influence reached far beyond the walls of his church.

The two street dedications tell different parts of the same story. Robinson fought through the

legal system. Randolph served through faith and community leadership. Both spent decades building institutions, mentoring others and pushing Flint toward a stronger future.

For younger generations, honorary streets can become public classrooms. A name on a sign may spark a question. A question may lead to a story. A story may lead to a deeper understanding of the people who gave their lives to a city before many others were old enough to know their names.

During Heroes Weekend, Flint did more than honor two individuals. It placed their legacies into the city's geography, making sure that future residents can walk, drive and live among reminders of service that still matters.

COMMUNITY

Carrying the legacy forward: Ashley N. Jackson joins the Michigan Banner as Director of Communications and Marketing



ASHLEY N. JACKSON

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Michigan Banner is proud to welcome Ashley N. Jackson as its Director of Communications and Marketing, bringing with her a rich background in journalism, strategic communications, public affairs, media relations, and community-centered storytelling.

For Jackson, this new role is more than a professional appointment. It is a return to purpose, legacy, and the power of telling stories that reflect the heart of a community.

A Saginaw native and proud graduate of Florida A&M University's School of Journalism and Graphic Communication at Florida A&M University, Jackson's career has been shaped by her passion for storytelling, her love for community, and her ability to connect the dots through meaningful communication.

Jackson attended Saginaw High School and Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy during her time in Saginaw, Michigan. As she continued her education,

her professional experience spans broadcast journalism, healthcare communications, government public affairs, education, digital media, event promotion, and strategic marketing.

Throughout her career, Jackson has served in communications roles that required her to write, lead, interview, produce, organize, and amplify important messages for diverse audiences. From her early foundation as a broadcast journalist and multimedia storyteller to her work in communica-

tions leadership, Jackson has built a career around helping organizations tell their stories with clarity, purpose, and impact.

"I've always believed that storytelling is one of the most powerful ways to make people feel seen," Jackson said. "Whether I am writing an article, conducting an interview, developing a communications plan, or helping promote a community event, my goal is always to honor the people behind the story. Most people do not believe that everything is a story. I do."

Jackson's storytelling roots run deep.

Her desire to tell meaningful stories was inspired by her grandfather, Jim Colvin, also known as Alonza James Colvin. Colvin was a respected community leader, editor, public servant, and visionary in Saginaw County. He transitioned on January 19, 2026.

Colvin founded the *Valley Star Newspaper*, where he served as editor, using the publication to document life in Saginaw, uplift local voices, and create space for stories that may have otherwise



ALONZA JAMES COLVIN

gone untold. His work connected him to a broader legacy of Black journalism through his membership with the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

Beyond the newspaper, Colvin created the Miss Autumn Leaves Pageant, an initiative designed to encourage and celebrate diverse contestants. Through the pageant, he provided a platform for young women to be recognized not only for beauty, but also for confidence, presence, community pride, and representation.

For Jackson, that legacy represents more than family history. It is a cornerstone of her own passion for storytelling within Saginaw and the surrounding communities.

"My grandfather understood the importance of documenting our people, our work, our style, our businesses, and our brilliance," Jackson said. "Whether it was through the newspaper, the Miss Autumn Leaves Pageant, or his public service, he believed in celebrating us, building community, and opening doors for others. That has always stayed with me."

Colvin also served as a Buena Vista Township Trustee for many

years and as the Saginaw Director of the Federal Model Cities Project. Through those roles, he built partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to better serve the community he called home for more than 50 years.

"In many ways, I feel like I am continuing a piece of what he started," Jackson said. "He showed me that storytelling, service, and community pride can all work together. Now, as I step into this role with The Michigan Banner, I carry that legacy with me."

As Director of Communications and Marketing, Jackson will support The Michigan Banner's storytelling, visibility, digital presence, community engagement, event promotion, and overall communications strategy. Her goal is to help strengthen the bridge between the publication and the people, businesses, churches, organizations, educators, artists, families, and leaders who make Saginaw and surrounding communities vibrant.

"Community newspapers are more than publications," Jackson said. "They are archives. They are mirrors. They preserve who we are, what we have built, what we have survived, and where we are going. The Michigan Banner has always been a place where community matters, and I am honored to help carry that mission forward."

In this new chapter, Jackson hopes to highlight voices that often go unheard, celebrate businesses and leaders making a difference, and bring renewed energy to how stories are shared across print, digital, and community platforms.

"This is heart work," Jackson said. "This is legacy work. This is community work. And I am grateful to be part of it."

Courageous Conversation Series NAVIGATING THE CHANGING LEGAL LANDSCAPE: DEI, Free Speech, and Academic Freedom in Higher Education

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Location - Rhea Miller Recital Hall

Morning Session

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Afternoon Session

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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COMMUNITY

Saginaw prepares to celebrate new 3-million-gallon water tower with public ribbon cutting



SAGINAW WILL HOLD A PUBLIC RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY JULY 17 FOR ITS NEW 3-MILLION-GALLON MUNICIPAL WATER TOWER AT 702 WEBBER ST. THE 160-FOOT-TALL, \$18.1 MILLION STRUCTURE IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE WATER RELIABILITY FOR MORE THAN 150,000 REGIONAL CUSTOMERS.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The newest landmark in Saginaw is not a statue, a mural or a new building downtown.

It is a 160-foot-tall water tower designed to do something most residents may never think about until they need it: keep clean water moving reliably to homes, schools, hospitals and businesses across the region.

The city of Saginaw will celebrate the completion of its new municipal water tower with a public ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11 a.m. Friday, July 17, at 702 Webber St. The ceremony will recognize a major investment in the city's water infrastructure

and give residents a chance to learn more about how the system works.

After the ceremony, attendees will have an opportunity to walk inside the structure and view the tank from ground level. City staff are expected to be available to answer questions and explain the tower's role in the water system.

The new water tower is one of the largest in Michigan, with a capacity of 3 million gallons. The \$18.1 million structure will serve as a vital backup system to help prevent pressure loss for more than 150,000 regional customers.

The project was funded through a \$15 million forgivable loan from the state of Michigan, along with Water System funds. City officials say the tower is part

of Saginaw's ongoing work to modernize public infrastructure and support future growth.

For residents, the project may not look flashy in the way a new park, business or entertainment venue does. But water infrastructure is one of the quiet foundations of daily life. It supports drinking water, firefighting, health care, manufacturing, schools and neighborhood stability.

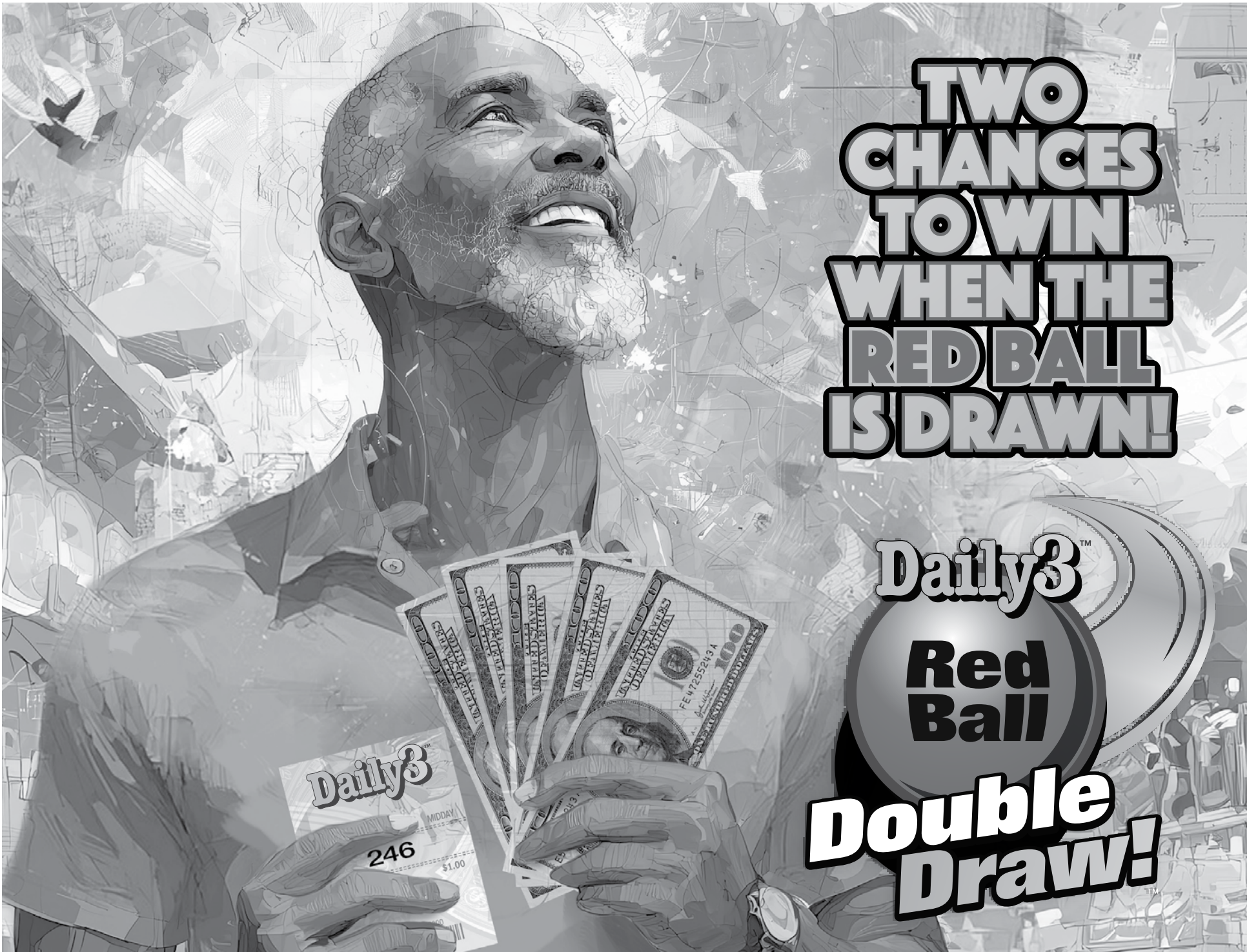
The new tower is expected to improve system reliability, increase storage capacity and help ensure the continued delivery of safe, high-quality drinking water to residents and businesses throughout the region.

Mike Grenier, Saginaw's director of Water and Wastewater

Treatment Services, described the project as part of the city's commitment to maintaining and improving the infrastructure residents depend on every day.

That kind of investment can be easy to overlook because the success of a water system is often measured by what does not happen: pressure does not drop, service does not fail and families do not have to wonder whether water will be available when they turn on the tap.

The July 17 ribbon cutting gives residents a chance to see the project up close and understand how one large structure fits into a larger system of public service.



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The Daily 3 Red Ball Double Draw promotion runs Monday - Saturday evening drawings only.



Odds of winning: Daily 3: Straight: 1 in 1,000; 3-Way Box: 1 in 333; 6-Way Box: 1 in 167; 1-Off Straight: 1 in 1,000; 1-Off One Digit: 1 in 167. Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call 1-800-GAMBLER for confidential help.



COMMUNITY

Auburn Cornfest marks 53 years of community, crops and small-town tradition



THE 53RD ANNUAL AUBURN CORNFEST WAS HELD JULY 9-12, CELEBRATING AUBURN'S FARMING ROOTS WITH RIDES, FOOD, CONTESTS, MUSIC AND THE "ALL-AMERICAN CORNY" PARADE.

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. - A Bay City AUBURN, Mich. — In Auburn, corn is more than a summer crop. It is a hometown identity.

It shows up in the city's traditions, its stories, its football field nickname and, each summer, in a festival that brings generations of families back together.

The 53rd annual Auburn Cornfest was held July 9-12, celebrating the farming roots, community pride and small-town spirit that have helped define the event since it began in 1973. Hosted by the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce, this year's festival included midway rides, contests, music, food and a citywide parade on Sunday.

The festival took place at Auburn City Park, 435 S. Auburn Road, with activities that

stretched across four days. Regional event listings described the festival as running from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on July 9, with additional festival dates following through July 12.

This year's theme also carried a patriotic note. The Sunday parade, called the "All-American Corny" Parade, helped mark America's 250th birthday and included around 50 community groups. The parade also featured vintage fire trucks from Bay City's Antique Toy & Fire Museum, including a rare 1959 Valley Fire Truck and a 1989 Spartan Foam Tanker and Industrial Foam Pumper once used at Dow Corning's Midland site.

The festival's corn theme reaches back to Auburn's agricultural roots. Former Auburn Mayor Lee Kilbourn, who served as parade marshal with his wife, Kathy Kilbourn, told the Midland

Daily News that corn and wheat have long been two of the area's main crops. The corn served during the festival comes from southern states with earlier harvest seasons, allowing Auburn to celebrate before local corn is ready later in the summer.

Festival co-chair Tracy Arthur said Auburn celebrates corn all year, pointing to details such as corn-decorated street signs and the Bay City Western High School football field known as "the Cornfield."

Beyond the food and fun, Cornfest also supports community needs. Proceeds from the festival have helped fund local initiatives, including the chamber's Adopt-A-Family program at Christmastime. A portion of proceeds from the \$5 parking fee is donated to Labor of Love, a volunteer birth doula organization.

The festival depends heav-

ily on volunteers. Local students, sports teams and community groups help set up, serve food and keep the event moving. That volunteer spirit is part of what has allowed Cornfest to become a tradition passed from one generation to the next.

For some families, Cornfest means carnival rides and music. For others, it is the parade, the food, the contests or simply the chance to stand along Midland Road and see neighbors, classmates, coworkers and relatives all in the same place.

Auburn may be a small community, but Cornfest gives it a big summer heartbeat.

After 53 years, the festival continues to do what it was built to do: celebrate the people, farms, families and traditions that make Auburn feel like home.

COMMUNITY

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COMMUNITY

Bay City Rib Fest returns with barbecue, concerts and charity events at Veterans Memorial Park



THE 2026 LABADIE RIB FEST RETURNS JULY 23-26 TO VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK IN BAY CITY WITH BARBECUE TEAMS, CONCERTS, FAMILY ACTIVITIES, A CHARITY COOK-OFF, MOTORCYCLE RIDE, CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT AND 5K RUN/WALK.

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — The smell of barbecue will return to Bay City's west side later this month, bringing with it four days of ribs, concerts, competitions, family activities and community fundraising.

The 2026 Labadie Rib Fest is scheduled for Thursday, July 23, through Sunday, July 26, at Veterans Memorial Park in Bay City. Festival organizers say the event will feature award-winning barbecue teams from across the country, national and regional live music, craft vendors, children's activities, community and nonprofit exhibits, a motorcycle ride, cornhole tournament, Charity Celebrity Rib Cook-Off and the second annual Rib Fest 5K Run/Walk.

Daily festival passes are \$10, weekend passes are \$30 and children 12 and under are admitted free. Select free admission times also are planned.

Bay City's event calendar lists Rib Fest hours as 4 to 11 p.m. July 23, noon to 11 p.m. July 24, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 25 and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 26 at Veterans Memorial Park on John F. Kennedy Drive.

Music will be one of the festival's biggest draws. Thursday night features Classic Seger, a Bob Seger tribute, with Eliminator, a ZZ Top tribute. Friday's lineup includes Smash Mouth with Sister Hazel. Saturday brings Night Ranger with special guest FireHouse, and Sunday closes with country singer Chris Janson and special guest The Family Tradition Band.

Concert gates open at 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with Sunday concert gates opening at 4 p.m. Concert tickets include festival admission, according to the Rib Fest website.

The festival also includes community events beyond the stage. The second annual Bay City Ribfest 5K Run/Walk is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Sunday, July 26, at Veterans Memorial Park. The event is open to runners and walkers of all skill levels, with medals awarded to the top two finishers in each age division.

For Bay City, Rib Fest is more than a food event. It is a summer gathering that supports local charities while drawing thousands of visitors to Veterans Memorial Park. Families can come for the children's activities and

vendors. Music fans can come for the concerts. Barbecue lovers can compare ribs from different teams. Runners, bikers and cornhole players can join the weekend through their own events.

That mix is part of what makes the festival work. It is not built around one kind of visitor. It is built around the idea that community events can bring many different groups into the same park for the same cause.

By the time the last rib is served and the final concert ends, Rib Fest will have done more than fill plates. It will have raised money, supported local organizations and given Bay City another summer weekend centered on food, music and community pride.

POLITICS

Saginaw voters will decide whether to repeal city property tax cap in November

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — For nearly five decades, Saginaw has lived under a property tax rule unlike almost anywhere else in the country.

This fall, voters will decide whether to keep it.

The Saginaw City Council voted unanimously Monday, June 8, to place a proposed repeal of the city's property tax cap on the Tuesday, Nov. 3, general election ballot. The cap limits the city's general fund property tax revenue to about \$3.8 million a year, regardless of whether new development increases property values.

The question is expected to become one of the city's most closely watched local government debates heading into the fall. Supporters say lifting the cap would give Saginaw access to revenue needed for public safety, infrastructure and basic services. Opponents have long argued the cap protects homeowners from rising costs and keeps city government from collecting too much from residents.

The cap dates back to 1979, when voters approved a hard limit on the amount of property tax revenue the city could collect. WCMU Public Media reported that the November proposal will be the eighth attempt to eliminate the cap, and that voters have rejected previous attempts each time. In 2009, the last time the question appeared on the ballot, 74% of voters chose to keep the cap.

City officials say the cap has left Saginaw in an unusual position: new investment may raise property values, but the city cannot fully benefit from that growth



SAGINAW VOTERS WILL DECIDE NOV. 3 WHETHER TO REPEAL THE CITY'S LONGTIME PROPERTY TAX CAP, WHICH LIMITS GENERAL FUND PROPERTY TAX REVENUE TO ABOUT \$3.8 MILLION A YEAR.

through general fund property tax revenue.

City Manager Tim Morales told WCMU that the city could have collected about \$600,000 more this fiscal year without the cap. He said that amount could translate into "four more firefighters or four more police officers," while larger development gains could mean more revenue over time.

Council member Carly Rose Hammond told WNEM that repealing the cap would not raise the millage rate, but would lift the revenue limit. She said the change is expected to generate

more than \$500,000 a year for city services.

The issue comes as Saginaw continues to see downtown and Old Town development, Medical Diamond investment and renewed interest in housing and commercial corridors. City leaders argue that if property values rise, the city should be able to use some of that growth to strengthen services residents rely on every day.

But the measure also comes at a time when many households are still watching every dollar. Property taxes are not just numbers on a city budget sheet. For

homeowners, seniors, landlords and small business owners, they are part of the cost of staying rooted in a community.

That is why the November vote will likely turn on trust: whether residents believe the city needs the additional flexibility, and whether they believe future revenue will translate into visible improvements.

The ballot question will not settle every debate about Saginaw's finances. But it will ask voters to decide whether a limit created in another era still fits the city Saginaw is trying to become.

POLITICS

Saginaw County prepares for Aug. 4 primary with voter deadlines, local proposals and early voting



SAGINAW COUNTY VOTERS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE AUG. 4 PRIMARY ELECTION, WITH COUNTYWIDE MILLAGE RENEWALS, LOCAL PROPOSALS AND RACES FOR STATE, CONGRESSIONAL AND LOCAL OFFICES ON THE BALLOT.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw County voters will soon begin making decisions that reach from the governor's race to countywide millages, local township offices and school and library proposals.

The Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2026, primary election will be held across Saginaw County, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The county clerk's office has posted election information, including candidate and proposal listings, sample ballot access, polling locations, drop box locations, registration notices and public testing notices.

The ballot includes primary races for governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, state Senate, state House, township offices and precinct delegates. The unofficial county candidate list includes Democratic candidates Jocelyn Benson, Christopher Robert Swanson and Kim Thomas for governor. Republican candidates listed include Ralph Rebandt, Mike Cox, John James, Aric Nes-

bitt and Perry Johnson.

In the U.S. Senate primary, Democrats listed on the county candidate filing include Abdul El-Sayed, Mallory McMorrow and Haley Stevens. Republicans listed include Mike Rogers and Bernadette Smith. The 8th Congressional District listing includes Democrat Kristen McDonald Rivet and Republicans Amir Hassan, Al Lemmo and Thomas J. Smith.

For local voters, the proposals may be just as important as the candidate races.

Saginaw County voters will see three countywide renewal proposals. Proposal 26-1 asks voters to renew a 1.75-mill levy for sheriff services, including countywide law enforcement, road patrol services and operations of the Saginaw County Sheriff's Office and jail facility for 2026 through 2029. If fully levied, the proposal is estimated to raise about \$12.7 million in its first year.

Proposal 26-2 asks voters to renew the Castle Museum of

Saginaw County History millage at 0.1997 mill for 2027 through 2036, supporting the Castle Museum and historical museums in Bridgeport, Chesaning, Frankenmuth and St. Charles. The first-year estimate is about \$1.45 million. Proposal 26-3 asks voters to renew the county parks and recreation millage at 0.2942 mill for 2027 through 2036, with an estimated first-year collection of about \$2.13 million.

Other local questions include a Bridgeport Township library millage, a Frankenmuth Township fire station bond proposal, a Tittabawassee Township police services millage renewal, a Freeland Community School District operating millage renewal and a St. Charles Community Schools bond proposal, among others.

The county also has posted voter registration information. The last day to register in any manner other than in person with a local clerk is Monday, July 20. After that date, eligible voters may register in person with proof of residency at their city or

township clerk's office through Election Day. Clerks will also be available Saturday, Aug. 1, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Early voting will be available at the Saginaw County Early Voting Center, 618 Cass St. in Saginaw, beginning the second Saturday before the election and ending the Sunday before Election Day. The notice says the center is open to all qualified electors in Saginaw County.

The county also scheduled public accuracy testing for 9 a.m. Tuesday, July 14, at the Early Voting Center, part of the required process used to test election equipment before ballots are counted.

For voters, the August primary is not only a warmup for November. In many races and proposals, the decisions made in August will shape what happens next — who advances, what public services are funded and how local communities plan for the years ahead.

POLITICS

Flint mayoral and City Council races head toward crowded Aug. 4 primary ballot

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint voters will soon begin narrowing the field for the city's next chapter of leadership.

The city's Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2026, primary election includes a mayoral race and several crowded City Council contests, setting up a high-stakes summer election in a city where local government decisions touch nearly every part of daily life — water, public safety, blight, roads, housing, economic development and trust in City Hall.

The City of Flint Clerk's Office lists four qualified candidates for mayor: Tonya Burns, incumbent Mayor Sheldon A. Neeley, Micaiah J. Owens and Roshanda Womack. The office of mayor is a four-year

term.

City Council races also will appear on the primary ballot in wards with enough candidates to require a primary. The qualified candidate list includes Debra J. Coleman, Cynthia Haynes and Arthur Woodson in Ward 1. Ward 2 includes Maurice D. Davis, LaQuindra Hodge, LaShawn Johnson, Ladel Lewis and Audrey Young. Ward 5 includes Joel Arnold, Wantwaz Davis, Jeron Dotson and DeWaun E. Robinson. Ward 8 includes Ezekiel Harris, Brandan Jamison and Casey Lester.

Under Michigan election law, the city notice says no primary election will be held in districts or wards with fewer than three qualified candidates.

The primary will begin the pro-

cess of deciding who leads Flint into the next four years. For residents, the election is likely to be about more than personalities. It will be about whether voters believe the city is moving fast enough on basic services, neighborhood safety, economic opportunity and long-term recovery.

Flint's Election Division, led by City Clerk Davina Donahue, is responsible for voter registration, election notices and polling locations for city voters. The city lists the 2026 primary election for Tuesday, Aug. 4, and the 2026 general election for Tuesday, Nov. 3.

The city has also posted voting locations for Precincts 1 through 29, effective for the Aug. 4 primary. Locations include community centers, churches, schools and

public buildings across Flint's nine wards, including Berston Field House, Doyle Ryder School, Mott Community College Event Center, Word of Life Christian Church, Flint City Hall and Freeman Elementary School.

Absentee voters have several secure ballot drop box options. The City Clerk's Office says drop boxes are accessible 24 hours a day and until 8 p.m. on Election Day. Drop boxes are located in front of Flint City Hall, in front of the Flint Police Department and at Flint Fire Stations No. 3, 5, 6 and 8.

The city also plans absent voter counting board early tabulation on Tuesday, July 28; Friday, July 31; and Monday, Aug. 3, according to the city's election page.

Midland council weighs industrial tax break, stormwater funding and future development hearings

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Midland City Council's July agenda showed the quiet machinery of local government at work: one item tied to manufacturing investment, another to stormwater infrastructure and others pointing toward future development decisions.

The council was scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. Monday, July 13, in council chambers at Midland City Hall, 333 W. Ellsworth St. The agenda included a public hearing on an industrial tax exemption request from Midland Compounding PM LLC, a proposed street vacation, stormwater funding and public hearings tied to future development requests.

At the center of the economic development discussion was Midland Compounding PM LLC's

request for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption for properties at 3700 and 3810 James Savage Road. The company plans to invest about \$2.76 million to construct a 15,960-square-foot building that would connect three buildings and expand production space.

City documents said the project is expected to retain 25 full-time employees and create three jobs within two years. If granted for the maximum 12 years, the exemption would save the company an estimated \$459,151 in taxes.

Tax exemptions are often presented as tools for growth, but they also come with questions residents may ask: How much public revenue should be given up to encourage private investment? How many jobs will be created? What long-term value does the city receive in return?

For Midland, the answer may depend on whether the project helps strengthen the city's industrial base while supporting jobs and expanded production capacity in an existing business corridor.

The council also was expected to consider a request to vacate part of Maple Street between Cleveland Avenue and Bayliss Street. The 30-foot right of way was platted in 1941 but was never developed as a street. The proposal would affect properties from 206 to 314 Maple St., while preserving a 15-foot city easement for access to Cleveland Park.

Another major item dealt with stormwater. Council was set to consider directing up to \$2.88 million in awarded state funding toward stormwater improvement projects. City staff said the money was needed after construction is-

sues used up contingency funding for seven storm sewer projects that must be completed by Oct. 31.

Stormwater may not attract the same attention as new restaurants or commercial buildings, but it is one of the systems that determines how well a city can handle heavy rain, flooding threats and long-term infrastructure pressure. For Midland, where flooding remains part of the community's recent memory, drainage and storm sewer work carry added importance.

The July 13 agenda also looked ahead. Council was expected to schedule Aug. 10 public hearings on a proposed Starbucks drive-thru at the former Pi's Restaurant site on South Saginaw Road and the rezoning of 3020 Bay City Road from residential to Neighborhood Center zoning.

HEALTH

Michigan parasite outbreak grows as health officials focus on lettuce, salad greens



MICHIGAN HEALTH OFFICIALS ARE INVESTIGATING A GROWING CYCLOSPORIASIS OUTBREAK THAT REACHED 4,312 REPORTED CASES BY JULY 16. EARLY INFORMATION POINTS TO LETTUCE OR SALAD GREENS AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE, BUT NO SPECIFIC GROWER, SUPPLIER OR PRODUCE TYPE HAS BEEN CONFIRMED.

BY MB STAFF

LANISING, Mich. — A Michigan parasite outbreak that began as a cluster of stomach illnesses in late June has grown into one of the state's most significant food-borne illness investigations of the summer.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported 4,312 cases of cyclosporiasis as of Thursday, July 16, including 102 reported hospitalizations. The state says case counts reflect reports through 9:30 a.m. Eastern Time and may change as more information becomes available.

The illness is caused by Cyclospora, a microscopic parasite that infects the intestines. Symptoms can include frequent watery diarrhea, nausea and stomach cramps. Cyclosporiasis is often contracted by eating or drinking

something contaminated with the parasite. Michigan typically records only 40 to 50 cases in an entire year, making this outbreak unusually large.

Early investigation results point to lettuce or salad greens as a possible source, although state officials said other foods have not been ruled out. No specific produce type, grower or supplier had been identified as the source as of the state's July 13 update.

"Although we do not have a definite product identified as the source of the outbreak, we want to let Michiganders know what we have learned so far so they can take steps to protect their families," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, MDHHS chief medical executive.

The outbreak has reached communities across Michigan. In the Michigan Banner coverage area, MDHHS reported 38 cases

in Saginaw County, 5 in Midland County, 1 in Bay County, 169 in Genesee County and 278 in Shiawassee County as of July 16. The highest county totals included Wayne County with 582 cases, Washtenaw County with 474, Oakland County with 396 and Ingham County with 393.

MDHHS said more than 1,000 interviews had been completed with people who tested positive. Investigators are working with local health departments and state and federal partners on traceback efforts. Because Cyclospora symptoms may take up to two weeks to appear after exposure, and because food distribution networks are complex, officials said the investigation will take time.

State health officials are asking residents to take extra care with lettuce and salad greens. MDHHS recommends buying

whole heads of lettuce instead of prewashed, bagged lettuce or premixed salad kits; throwing away the outer two to three layers of leaves; and washing the inner leaves thoroughly under clean running water. For greens that can be cooked, cooking to at least 158 degrees Fahrenheit is considered the safest option because the parasite is resistant to routine chemical disinfection and washing alone cannot guarantee removal.

Foods previously linked to Cyclospora outbreaks in the United States and Canada include bagged salad mixes and kits, fresh cilantro, fresh basil, raspberries, snow peas and green onions. MDHHS also recommends cooking produce when possible, peeling produce with removable skin and washing all fresh produce under clean running water, even if it will be peeled.

People experiencing frequent watery diarrhea are encouraged to contact a health care provider and specifically request testing for Cyclospora, because routine stool tests may miss the parasite. Cyclosporiasis is treated with antibiotics, rest and fluids to help prevent dehydration.

For now, the message from state health officials is cautious but clear: Michigan residents do not need to panic, but they should pay attention. The outbreak is active, the source is still being investigated and food safety habits matter — especially for young children, older adults, people on chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients and others with weakened immune systems.

HEALTH

Wildfire smoke brings health warnings across Michigan as doctors urge residents to limit exposure

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — The sky can change before the danger is fully understood.

A pale haze. A faint smell of smoke. A scratchy throat. A strange yellow-gray light over the neighborhood.

As wildfire smoke drifted into Michigan this week, state and local health officials urged residents to take the air seriously, especially children, older adults, pregnant women and people with heart or lung disease.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy issued a statewide air quality alert for elevated fine particulate levels beginning at midnight Wednesday, July 15, warning that smoke from ongoing wildfires in Canada had the potential to create a multiday event. Conditions could be unhealthy for sensitive groups and possibly reach levels that affect otherwise healthy people, EGLE said.

By Thursday, July 16, EGLE listed a statewide air quality alert for Thursday and Friday, with air across Michigan affected by wildfire smoke and fine particulate matter known as PM 2.5. Fine particles are especially concerning because they can travel deep into the lungs.

Dr. Paul Berg, chief medical officer and senior vice president at MyMichigan Health, said poor air quality can affect far more people than those already living with chronic lung disease.

“Poor air quality doesn’t just affect people with chronic lung disease,” Berg said. “When air quality reaches unhealthy levels, everyone can experience health effects, although children, older adults, pregnant women and individuals with heart or lung disease are at greater risk.”



WILDFIRE SMOKE FROM CANADA PROMPTED STATEWIDE AIR QUALITY ALERTS IN MICHIGAN THIS WEEK. HEALTH OFFICIALS URGED RESIDENTS TO LIMIT OUTDOOR EXPOSURE, MONITOR THE AIR QUALITY INDEX AND TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, OLDER ADULTS, PREGNANT WOMEN AND PEOPLE WITH HEART OR LUNG DISEASE.

For people with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or other respiratory illnesses, wildfire smoke can trigger coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and flare-ups that make those conditions harder to manage. Even healthy residents can experience eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing or difficulty breathing when air quality is very unhealthy.

Exposure to elevated air pollution also may increase the risk of cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and strokes, particularly for people with existing heart disease. Long-term or repeated exposure may affect lung development in children and adolescents, MyMichigan Health said.

Berg urged residents to limit time outdoors when air quality worsens, especially during

strenuous activity. He also recommended keeping windows and outside doors closed, using air conditioning or an air purifier when available, setting vehicle ventilation systems to recirculate air and wearing a properly fitted N95 respirator when extended outdoor time cannot be avoided.

EGLE and MDHHS encouraged residents to monitor the Air Quality Index, or AQI, and adjust outdoor activity based on local conditions. MDHHS also advised residents without air conditioning who cannot safely stay inside with windows closed to call or text 211, contact a local health department or spend time in an air-conditioned public place such as a library, mall or movie theater.

People should seek prompt medical attention if they experience severe shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, wheez-

ing or worsening asthma, COPD or other respiratory symptoms. Those with chronic lung disease should continue taking prescribed maintenance medications and keep rescue inhalers nearby, MyMichigan Health said.

“Fortunately, periods of poor air quality are often temporary,” Berg said. “By paying attention to air quality reports and taking a few simple precautions, people can reduce their exposure and better protect their health until conditions improve.”

The smoke served as a reminder that public health is not only about hospitals and clinics. Sometimes, it is about the air moving through open windows, the decision to cancel outdoor play, the worker trying to breathe through a long shift and the family checking on an elderly neighbor.

HEALTH

CMU Health mental health initiative receives \$10,000 grant to expand training in Bay County

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — A regional mental health initiative based at CMU Health has received a \$10,000 grant to help more Bay County residents learn how to recognize and respond when someone may be struggling with a mental health or substance use crisis.

The Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Initiative at CMU Health received the grant from the Bay Area Community Foundation to expand Mental Health First Aid programming in Bay County.

The training is designed for everyday adults — not only medical professionals — who may encounter someone experiencing distress, such as a panic attack, overdose,

depression, anxiety or other mental health challenge. The goal is to help participants notice warning signs, begin supportive conversations and connect people to help before a situation becomes more serious.

“Mental Health First Aid gives everyday people the knowledge and confidence to recognize when someone may be struggling and the skills to respond with compassion before a crisis occurs,” said Dallas Rau, director of the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Initiative at CMU Health. “We’re incredibly grateful to the Bay Area Community Foundation for investing in this work. Together, we’re building a community where more people know how to help, feel empowered to start the conversation,

and connect others to the support they need.”

Since partnering with CMU Health, the initiative has trained 156 people across the Great Lakes Bay Region. Organizers say those participants now have practical tools to help someone in distress and respond in a way that is calm, informed and compassionate.

The need for that kind of community training is significant. Dr. Lorrie Garces, a psychiatrist at CMU Health, said more than half of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental health or substance use challenge during their lifetime.

“We are extremely grateful for this funding to continue these early-intervention courses,” Garces said.

The next Mental Health First

Aid trainings are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. July 21 and Aug. 25 at the Bay-Arenac ISD Education Center. The cost is \$25 per person, which includes registration, lunch and refreshments.

The Bay Area Community Foundation awards grants twice a year to nonprofits and 501(c)(3) organizations serving Bay and Arenac counties. The foundation supports local charitable giving through endowment funds, grantmaking and community collaboration.

For more information about the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Initiative at CMU Health, contact Dallas Rau at rau1d@cmich.edu.

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HEALTH

MyMichigan breaks ground on Cedar Ridge Building to expand outpatient care in Standish

BY MB STAFF

STANDISH, Mich. — In rural communities, health care access can be measured in miles, minutes and the number of trips a patient must make to get the care they need.

MyMichigan Health is working to shorten that distance in Standish.

More than 100 guests gathered recently for the groundbreaking of the new Cedar Ridge Building, a 20,000-square-foot medical office facility that will be built next to MyMichigan Medical Center Standish. MyMichigan Health announced the project

Friday, July 10, describing it as an expansion of outpatient care access for residents throughout the region.

The new facility will centralize several outpatient services, including the rural health clinic, specialty clinic, Senior Life Solutions and physical therapy services. It also will provide convenient access to the geriatric psychiatry program.

For patients, putting services closer together can make a real difference. It can mean fewer confusing handoffs, less travel between buildings and a simpler experience for families trying to manage appointments, therapy, specialty care and behavioral

health needs.

The ceremonial shovel turn brought together MyMichigan Health representatives, local leaders and community partners. Participants included Charity Higgins, senior manager of MyMichigan Medical Group; Kimberly Nelson, specialty clinic coordinator at MyMichigan Medical Center Standish; Dan Scheffer, system vice president of facilities, construction and support services; Dr. Bob May, chief of staff and emergency room director for MyMichigan Medical Centers in Standish and Tawas; Angela Austin, program director of Senior Life Solutions; Rose Goick Saddler, vice president

and chief administrative officer of MyMichigan Medical Center Standish and Tawas; State Rep. Mike Hoadley; Heather Bauman, board member for MyMichigan Medical Centers Saginaw, Standish and Tawas; Bryan Cross, president and CEO of MyMichigan Health; Mike Erickson, market president for MyMichigan Medical Centers in Alpena, Saginaw, Standish, Tawas and Towne Centre; and Kyle Devrieze, rehab services manager for MyMichigan Health.

The Cedar Ridge Building is expected to be completed in July 2027.

Flint opens cooling centers as heat index pushes above 100 degrees

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — When heat settles over a city, it does not affect everyone the same way.

For some people, it is uncomfortable. For others — especially older adults, people without air conditioning, residents with chronic illness, outdoor workers and families with young children — extreme heat can quickly become dangerous.

The city of Flint activated cooling centers this week in response to dangerously high temperatures forecast across the area. The announcement was made Monday, July 13, as the National Weather Service forecast heat index values above 100 degrees in the Flint area.

Cooling centers were scheduled to be open Tuesday through

Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at three city locations: Mays Senior & Community Center, 1002 W. Home Ave.; McKinley Community Center, 249 Peer Ave.; and The Dome at Flint City Hall, 1101 S. Saginaw St.

City officials said the centers would provide residents with safe, air-conditioned places to escape the heat. Flint also said it would continue monitoring weather conditions and provide updates if hours are extended or additional resources become available.

The city encouraged residents to stay hydrated, limit strenuous outdoor activity during the hottest parts of the day, wear lightweight clothing and check on older adults, relatives, neighbors and others who may be vulnerable to heat-related illness.

Heat-related illness can

begin quietly. A headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea, heavy sweating or muscle cramps may be early warning signs. In severe cases, heat can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke, which can become life-threatening if not treated quickly.

The opening of cooling centers comes during a week when Michigan residents also were dealing with wildfire smoke and poor air quality, making the health picture more complicated. When temperatures are high, people may want to close windows to keep smoke out, but homes without air conditioning can become unsafe. For residents in that situation, cooling centers and air-conditioned public spaces can become essential.

In Flint, where many families already carry the stress of household expenses, transporta-

tion needs and health concerns, access matters. A cooling center can be the difference between trying to “tough it out” in a hot apartment and finding relief in a safe public building.

Residents seeking more information may contact the City of Flint Information Desk at 810-410-2020, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Extreme heat is easy to underestimate because it does not always look dramatic. But it can be one of the most dangerous weather conditions of the summer.

Flint’s message to residents was simple: do not wait until the heat becomes an emergency. Cool down, drink water, slow down and check on somebody else.



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EDUCATION

Delta College opens fall registration as students prepare for late-August semester start



DELTA COLLEGE ANNOUNCED JULY 6 THAT FALL REGISTRATION IS OPEN, WITH IN-PERSON, ONLINE AND BLENDED CLASSES AVAILABLE THROUGH ITS MAIN CAMPUS AND DOWNTOWN CENTERS IN BAY CITY, MIDLAND AND SAGINAW.

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — Delta College is encouraging new and returning students to register now for fall classes as the college prepares for the start of another academic year.

Delta announced July 6 that registration is open for the fall semester. The college's announcement said the fall semester begins Aug. 26 and urged students to plan ahead by registering for classes early.

Students can choose from in-person, online and blended classes, with day and evening op-

tions available in many of Delta's 140-plus programs. The college said students can build schedules that work for their lives, including accelerated or 15-week classes on campus or online.

Delta's main campus is located at 1961 Delta Road in University Center, and the college also operates downtown centers in Bay City, Midland and Saginaw. The multiple locations are part of the college's appeal for students across the Great Lakes Bay Region who may be balancing school with work, family responsibilities and transportation needs.

The college also highlighted

affordability in its announcement, listing in-district tuition at \$140 per contact hour and encouraging students to see whether they qualify for Michigan Reconnect or Michigan Achievement scholarships.

For students planning to transfer, Delta pointed to the Michigan Transfer Network, which helps students understand how courses may transfer to other colleges and universities. The college also noted that its programs include state-of-the-art facilities designed to provide hands-on training.

Fall registration is more than a calendar reminder. For many

students, registering early can make the difference between getting the course schedule they need and trying to fit school around leftover options. It can also give students more time to address financial aid, transportation, work schedules, child care, books and technology before classes begin.

Delta said students with questions about admission, official transcripts, prerequisites or transferring credits may visit the Admissions office in the H Wing on the main campus, email admissions@delta.edu or call 989-686-9093.

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EDUCATION

Midland Public Schools community meeting sparks debate over possible November sinking fund proposal



MIDLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOSTED COMMUNITY SESSIONS JULY 15 AT JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL TO DISCUSS A POSSIBLE NOVEMBER SINKING FUND PROPOSAL FOR FACILITY NEEDS ACROSS THE DISTRICT.

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Midland Public Schools leaders and residents are weighing whether a smaller, targeted facilities funding proposal could be the first step toward addressing hundreds of millions of dollars in long-term building needs.

A community meeting held July 15 at Jefferson Middle School drew about 25 people and generated discussion about a possible sinking fund proposal for the Nov. 3 ballot. The meeting was one of two sessions held that day to review the work of the district's Blueprint For Tomorrow steering team and gather public feedback.

The 29-member steering team has recommended that the Board of Education pursue a sinking fund between 1.5 mills and 1.75 mills, which would generate an estimated \$4.6 million to \$5.4 million per year. The recommendation also calls for the district to continue community dialogue before potentially pursuing a larger bond proposal in 2028.

A sinking fund is different from a bond. A sinking fund generates money through a millage without borrowing, while a bond allows a district to borrow money that taxpayers repay over

time with interest. The discussion follows a facilities assessment completed last winter by the district's facilities planning team. That assessment identified about \$549 million in work needed across 17 Midland Public Schools buildings over the next 10 years.

The July 15 meeting was led by Steven Gunther of GMB, part of the planning team contracted by the district. Gunther reviewed the work of the steering team and the results of a recent community survey. Superintendent Penny Miller-Nelson also spoke during the session.

The conversation reflected both urgency and hesitation. Attendees raised questions about the district's long-term plan, how to build trust with voters, how to communicate clearly with the public and how to identify community "champions" who could explain the proposal.

Amy Samborn, a member of the steering team, said the group viewed the sinking fund as a practical first step after learning from the district's unsuccessful 2025 bond effort. She said the committee felt the district needed to take a positive step forward while continuing to listen to residents.

Another steering team member, Tanveer Siddiqui, said the committee focused on narrowing the request rather than asking voters for too much at once.

The broader issue is not whether Midland's buildings need work. The harder question is what the community is willing to support, when and at what cost.

School buildings shape the daily experience of students and staff. Roofs, heating and cooling systems, classroom spaces, safety upgrades, accessibility improvements and career and technical education spaces all affect how students learn. But any millage request also reaches into household budgets at a time when many residents are watching taxes, utility bills and job uncertainty.

The Midland school board is expected to work toward consensus on a possible proposal at its July 20 meeting. A special board meeting is scheduled for Aug. 5, when the board is expected to vote on ballot language. If approved, the proposal must be submitted to Midland County by Aug. 11 to appear on the Nov. 3 ballot.

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Thursday, October 29, 2026
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Doors open 11 AM,
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EDUCATION

Summer Reading



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

Summer vacation is nearly half over, and it is not too late to focus upon reading. Reading assists students in so many ways, including the following:

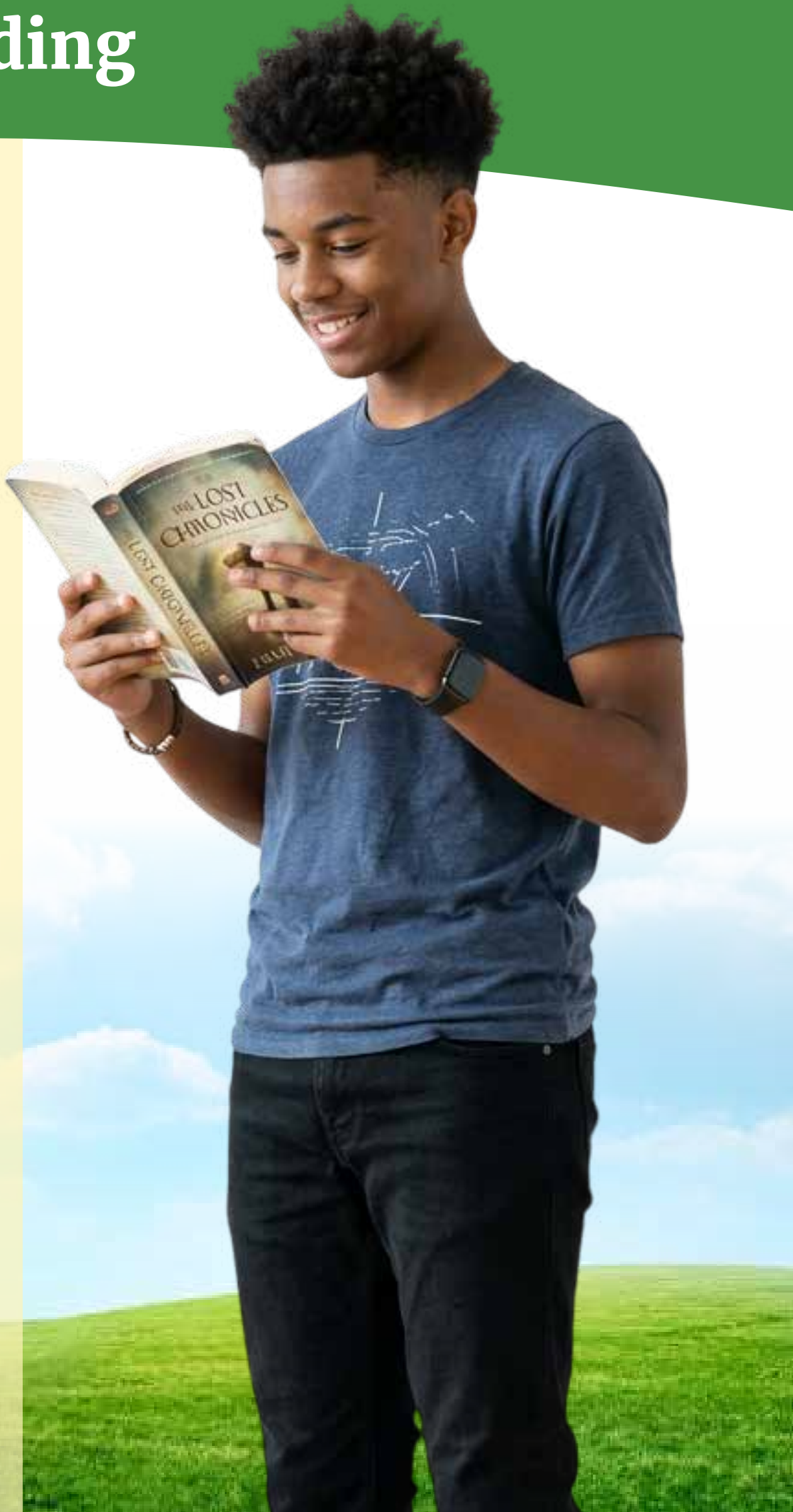
- **Counter the effects of “summer slide.”**
It is well documented that some learning is slowed or even lost during the summer months. Reading helps offset these tendencies.
- **Broaden areas of interest.**
Books can show children new topics that spark new interests. Books also tell stories that can provide children motivation to learn more and explore.
- **Expansion of vocabulary.**
Many times, children find new words when reading. New words are new opportunities to expand language, and vocabulary is directly related to reading abilities.

Local libraries do a great job in the summer to provide programs that spark student interest. I truly recommend that parents consider weekly visits to the library to let students explore books and programs offered. Making visits to the library gives students variety and helps them fight boredom.

For example, the Saginaw Public Libraries are offering in the next four weeks book-mobile stops, storytelling, a magic show, yoga, and much more. All of their information is easy found on their website which I am sharing with you below.

Best wishes to all parents and children as summer reading opportunities continue.

Resource: <https://www.saginawlibrary.org/events/list>



EDUCATION

Founders Grove Classical Academy invites Midland families to Summer Social before fall opening

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A new tuition-free public charter school preparing to open in Midland this fall is inviting families to meet staff, enjoy children's activities and learn more about the school before students enter the classroom.

Founders Grove Classical Academy will host a free Summer Social from 4 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 21, at 1025 E. Wheeler St. in Midland. The event is open to the public and is designed to celebrate the school's upcoming opening.

The Summer Social will include games and children's activities, bounce houses, food trucks, treats, raffles and opportunities to connect with community partners. Families will also be able

to meet members of the Founders Grove team and learn more about the educational experience planned for students.

Founders Grove Classical Academy is preparing to open in fall 2026 as a tuition-free public charter school in Midland. The school says it will begin with kindergarten through sixth grade and add a grade each year. It is a Hillsdale College Curriculum School focused on classical education.

The school's website says its mission is to promote academic excellence with a classical and virtuous foundation and to inspire future intellectual, civic and moral leaders. Its address is listed as 1025 E. Wheeler St., and school hours are listed as 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. on early-release Fridays.

Enrollment applications are

open for the 2026-27 school year for grades K-6, with the school planning to grow through grade 12. Families applying are asked to submit documents such as proof of birth date, proof of residency, immunization record or waiver and other paperwork depending on the student's grade and needs.

The school's arrival has drawn attention because it gives Midland-area families another public school option. Founders Grove describes itself as a classical school, a model that generally emphasizes content-rich instruction, literature, history, mathematics, science, the arts, civic knowledge and character formation.

Construction and renovation work have been part of the school's preparation. Earlier this year, Mid-Michigan NOW reported that construction was expected to be completed by mid-Au-

gust and that the school planned to start by serving students in grades K-5, then expand by one grade level each year until serving students through 12th grade by 2033.

Head of School Kirsten Fortier said in that report that Founders Grove represents an opportunity to give students a content-rich education rooted in academic excellence and character.

The July 21 Summer Social gives families a chance to see the campus, ask questions and get a feel for the school's culture before the first year begins. For parents considering a new school, those informal moments can matter. A conversation with a teacher, a tour of a building or a chance for children to play on campus can help families imagine whether the school feels like a fit.



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EDUCATION

Nominations Encouraged for Michigan Lottery's Excellence in Education Awards to Honor Outstanding Educators

BY MB STAFF

Parents, students, school staff members, and others are encouraged to nominate outstanding public-school educators for the Michigan Lottery's 2026-27 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 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.

Winners of the weekly award are featured in a news segment on the Lottery's media partner stations: WXYZ-TV in Detroit, FOX 17 in Grand Rapids, FOX 47 in Lansing, WNEM-TV in Saginaw, WWTV-TV in Traverse City, and WLUC-TV in Marquette.

The winner of the 2026 Educator of the Year award was Brandon Bailey, a fifth-grade math and science teacher at Forest View Elementary. The school is part of the Cadillac Area Public Schools.

Hundreds of educators were nominated during the 2025-26



TEACHER IN CLASSROOM (MB FILE PHOTO)

school year, which was the 12th year of the Excellence in Education awards program. Thirty-four of these nominees, including Bailey, were selected to win a weekly award.

Previous winners of the Educator of the Year award:

2025 – Kelly Herberholz, a science teacher and administrative team intern at Dakota High School.

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 Uby 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 demon-

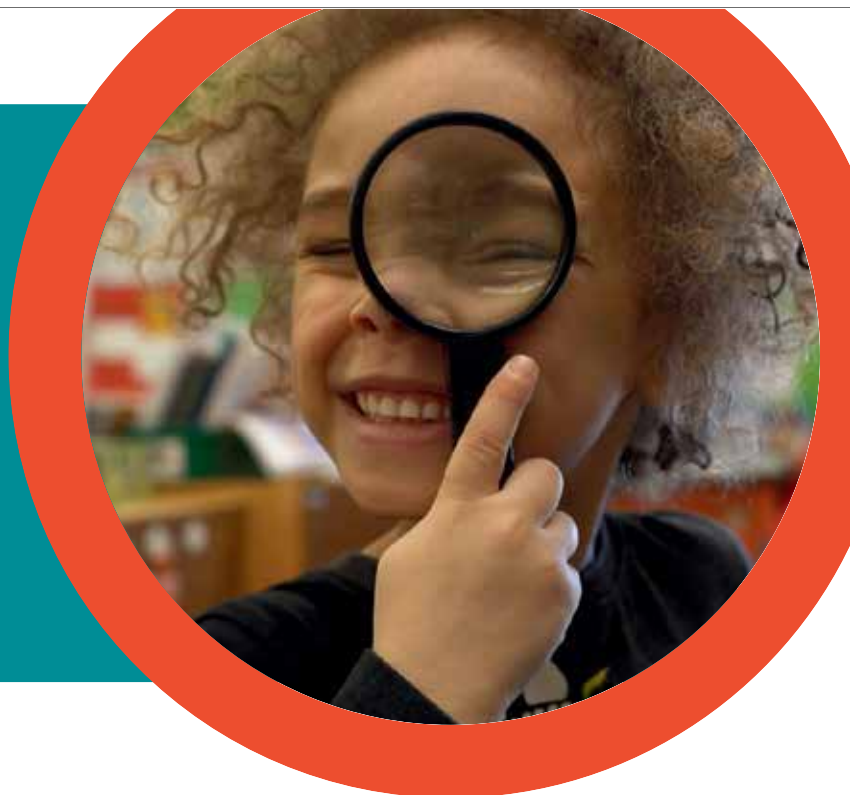
strate the following qualities:

- 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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**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

Kakes the Great Popcorn Co. celebrates grand opening in Old Town Saginaw



KAKES THE GREAT POPCORN CO. CELEBRATED THE GRAND OPENING OF ITS NEW OLD TOWN SAGINAW LOCATION JULY 8 AT 418 COURT ST. THE FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS OFFERS GOURMET POPCORN, CHOW CHOW BOWLS, SPECIALTY LEMONADES, BAKED GOODS AND OTHER TREATS.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Old Town Saginaw has a new sweet spot, and it comes with gourmet popcorn, handcrafted lemonade, baked goods and a story of family entrepreneurship.

Kakes the Great Popcorn Co. celebrated the grand opening of its new location Wednesday, July 8, at 418 Court St. in Old Town Saginaw. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held with the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce and marked the business's

expansion from its earlier start at the SVRC Marketplace into its own Old Town storefront.

The family-owned business was founded by young entrepreneur Kaylynn “Kakes” Martin and her mother, Alesha Martin-Lane. The company has become known for gourmet popcorn creations, signature Chow Chow Bowls, specialty lemonades and other treats.

For Martin-Lane, the new storefront represents more than a business move. It is a chance to create an experience.

“What Kakes is about is ex-

periences,” Martin-Lane told WNEM.

That experience now includes popcorn, handcrafted lemonades, fresh baked goods, boba and the company's popular bowls, which previously were available at Saginaw Spirit games and other assignments. The business is also cashless, according to WNEM.

Eugene Seals Jr., president and CEO of the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, said the opening is an example of a local brand growing from a smaller marketplace presence into a

larger downtown business. He told WNEM that the owner and her daughter built the business together, expanded into events at the Dow Event Center and are now growing into the Court Street location.

The opening comes as Old Town Saginaw continues to see new business activity, housing development and renewed interest in its storefronts. The new location adds to Old Town's growing mix of food, retail and professional services.

BUSINESS + FINANCE

Four-county home builders alliance expands to Bay County, advances Auburn skilled trades hub

BY MB STAFF

AUBURN, Mich. — A regional home builders association is expanding its reach at a time when housing needs, workforce shortages and skilled trades training remain major issues across the Great Lakes Bay Region.

The Home Builders Association of Great Lakes Bay Region has expanded to include Bay County, creating a four-county alliance representing Saginaw, Midland, Bay and Gladwin counties. The expansion was announced July 7 through the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce and has been endorsed by both the Home Builders Association of Michigan and the National Association of Home Builders.

The move brings the region's builders, subcontractors, suppliers and skilled trades partners under a broader organization at a time when many communities are discussing housing inventory, affordability, aging homes and the need for trained workers.

The expansion also comes as construction continues on the association's new Resource and Skilled Trades Training Center in Auburn. Once complete, the facility is expected to serve as a centralized hub for hands-on training, workforce development, education, meetings and industry support.

The association said the Auburn center will help address local workforce shortages by providing training opportunities for students, career changers and future trade profes-



THE HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF GREAT LAKES BAY REGION HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE BAY COUNTY, CREATING A FOUR-COUNTY ALLIANCE ACROSS SAGINAW, MIDLAND, BAY AND GLADWIN COUNTIES. CONSTRUCTION IS ALSO UNDERWAY ON THE ASSOCIATION'S RESOURCE AND SKILLED TRADES TRAINING CENTER IN AUBURN.

sionals. It also plans to support professional development, continuing education, legislative advocacy, networking, marketing and resources for regional trades professionals.

Chris Page, CEO of the Home Builders Association of Great Lakes Bay Region, said adding Bay County allows the organization to expand its impact and better support the builders, subcontractors and suppliers who drive the local economy. He also tied the expansion to larger goals around advocacy, education and workforce development.

Michael Heal, president of the association, described the partnership as an investment in residential construction and local homeownership, saying the four-county structure creates a stronger network of professionals focused on construc-

tion excellence and mentoring the next generation of workers.

The new Auburn facility is located at 932 W. Fisher Road. The association broke ground on the project in July 2025 after the earlier merger of the Midland and Saginaw home builders associations. At the time, leaders said the building would include a resource center for meetings, public gatherings and educational programming.

The organization's current office is listed at 3165 Cabaret Trail South in Saginaw, and its events calendar includes builders roundtables, board meetings, professional development programming and skilled trades-related activities.

The expansion is important because the housing conversation is not limited to one city or county. A shortage of skilled workers affects how quickly homes can

be built or repaired. Rising construction costs affect affordability. Limited housing inventory can affect employers trying to recruit workers and families looking to stay in the region.

A stronger regional builders alliance could help connect those pieces. It gives the industry a larger platform for training, advocacy and collaboration while giving young people and adults considering a career change a clearer path into the trades.

Construction jobs also offer another kind of opportunity: work that is hands-on, local and tied directly to community growth. Electricians, plumbers, framers, roofers, carpenters and contractors do more than build houses. They build the places where families live, businesses open and neighborhoods grow.

BUSINESS + FINANCE

SK Siltron CSS to close Michigan operations, affecting 140 Bay County employees

BY MB STAFF

MONITOR TWP., Mich. — A Bay County semiconductor manufacturer once promoted as part of Michigan's electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing future is preparing to shut down its Michigan operations.

SK Siltron CSS will close its Michigan-based subsidiary, affecting all 140 employees at its semiconductor wafer plant in Bay County. The company confirmed the closure Thursday, July 16, according to the Midland Daily News.

Most employees are expected to continue working for about another 60 days, while a smaller number will remain temporarily to help wind down operations. The company did not provide a precise closing date or details on severance or other assistance for affected workers.

SK Siltron CSS manufactures silicon carbide wafers, which are used in power electronics, including components that improve the efficiency, charging speed and driving range of electric vehicles. Company officials said changes in market conditions and slower-than-expected electric vehicle growth created sustained challenges for the silicon carbide wafer business.

The announcement marks a sharp reversal for a company that had drawn major state and federal attention.

SK Siltron CSS announced a \$300 million Bay County expansion in 2021, with plans to create up to 150 jobs. The company opened its expanded manufacturing facility on Straits Drive in Monitor Township in September 2022, and state officials promoted it as an important part of



SK SILTRON CSS WILL CLOSE ITS MICHIGAN OPERATIONS, AFFECTING 140 EMPLOYEES AT ITS BAY COUNTY SEMICONDUCTOR WAFER PLANT. THE COMPANY CITED CHANGES IN MARKET CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES IN THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE SECTOR.

Michigan's semiconductor supply chain.

The project was supported by a \$1.5 million Michigan Business Development Program grant and tax incentives. State economic development officials said at the time that Michigan was selected over competing states because of its workforce and proximity to automakers.

The federal government also supported the company's growth plans. The U.S. Department of Energy finalized a loan of up to \$544 million in late 2024 to support silicon carbide wafer production at the company's Bay City-area facility. That loan was projected to support up to 200 construction jobs and 200 permanent operating jobs at full production.

Company communications officials told the Midland Daily News that SK Siltron CSS paid off the Department of Energy loan earlier this month and worked with federal officials to ensure it was repaid in full.

The closure follows signs of strain that emerged last year. In November, SK Siltron CSS announced it was moving equipment and production from its Auburn-area plant to the Monitor Township facility as part of a restructuring. The company attributed that consolidation to slower-than-expected growth in EV demand.

SK Siltron acquired DuPont's Compound Semiconductor Solutions business in 2020 for \$450 million. At the time, the operation included an Auburn-area facility and about 65 employees. The company later expanded into the larger Monitor Township site and grew its Michigan workforce to about 250 employees before later layoffs and restructuring.

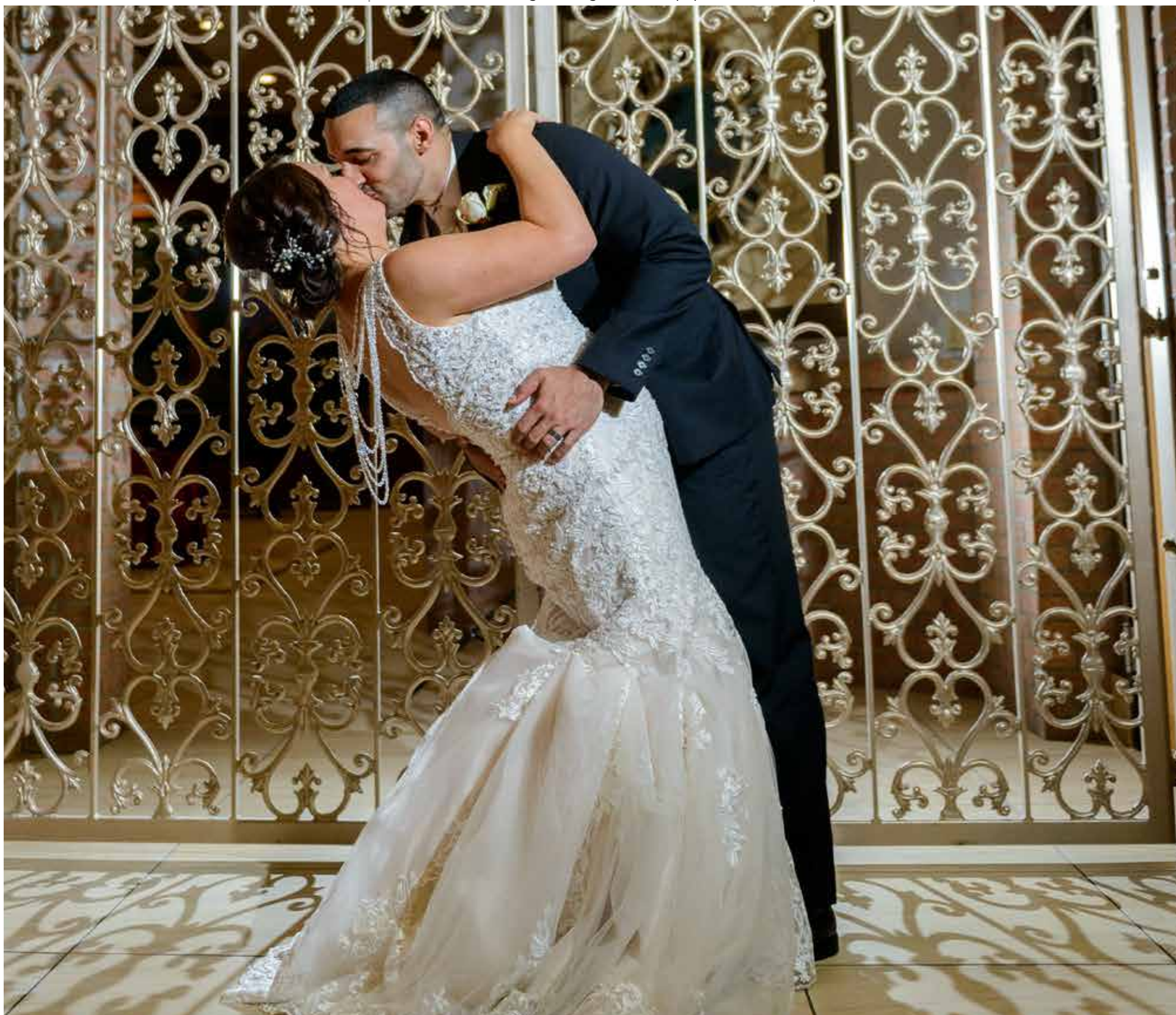
For Bay County, the closure is not just a corporate decision. It affects workers, families and a regional economy that had hoped the company would become a long-term anchor in semiconductor and EV-related manufacturing.

The announcement also shows how quickly economic development bets can shift when global markets change. Silicon carbide remains an important material in power electronics, but the pace of electric vehicle adoption, customer demand and supply chain investment can affect whether local facilities grow, consolidate or close.

For Michigan, the loss is especially symbolic. The state has spent years positioning itself as a hub for electric vehicles, batteries, semiconductors and clean technology manufacturing. SK Siltron CSS was one of the projects used to tell that story.

Now, the story is more complicated.

The next chapter will depend on how the company supports affected workers, whether the site can attract future use and how regional leaders respond to a major job loss in a sector that had been viewed as part of the future economy.



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SPORTS

Saginaw Spirit add young talent as offseason build continues

BY MB STAFF

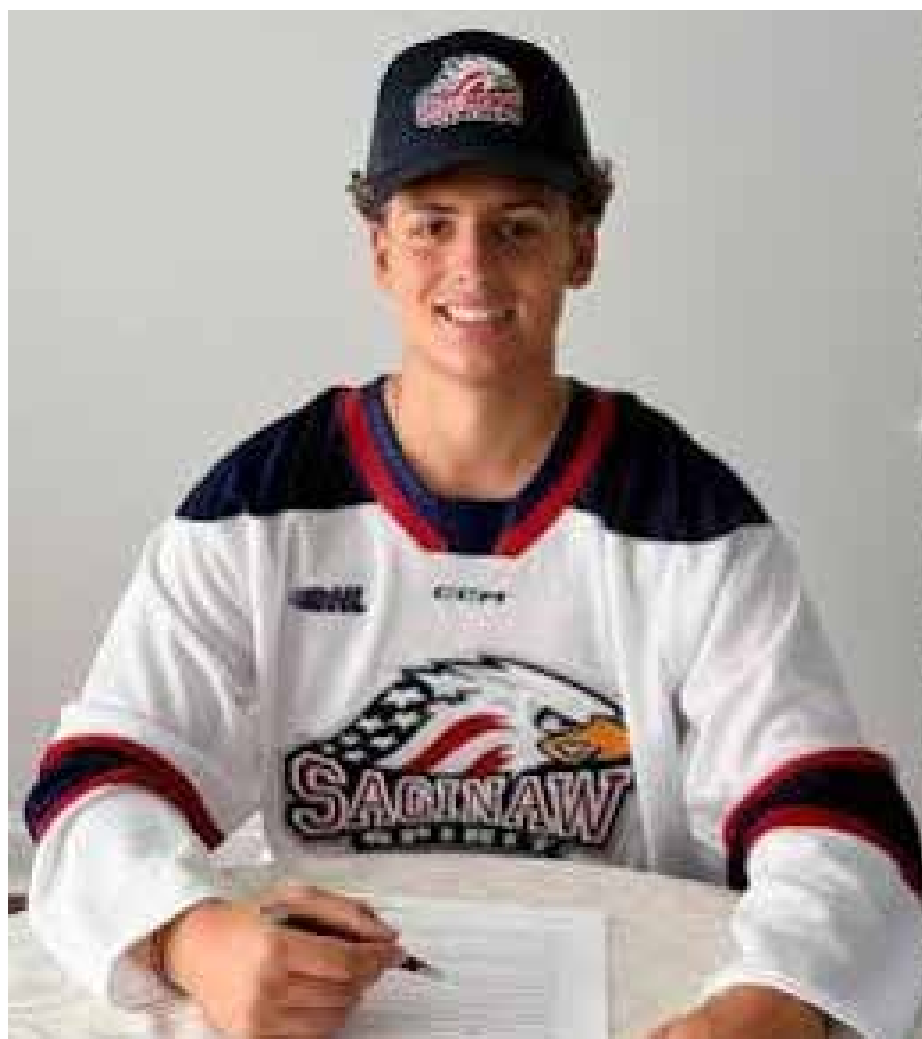
SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw Spirit are using the middle of July to keep building toward the next season, adding young talent, highlighting top prospects and strengthening the club's connection to national hockey programs.

The Spirit announced Thursday, July 16, that they signed forward Alexander Milojevic to an OHL Scholarship and Development Agreement. One day earlier, on July 15, the team announced the signing of import forward Dmitry Savin, who was selected 31st overall in the 2026 CHL Import Draft. The signings came the same week incoming Spirit rookies Drew Bate and Kyler Lauder were named to Canada's national under-17 development camp roster.

Milojevic, a left-shot forward from Chicago, was originally drafted by Saginaw in the fourth round, 73rd overall, in the 2025 OHL Priority Selection. The 16-year-old stands 6 feet and weighs 185 pounds. He spent most of last season with the U.S. National Team Development Program's U17 team, recording 15 points, including eight goals and seven assists, in 47 games. He also appeared in one game with the NTDP U18 team.

Spirit General Manager Dave Drinkill described Milojevic as an elite young player with "game-breaking speed and skill." Milojevic said he is grateful for the opportunity and excited to become part of the Saginaw community.

The signing adds another high-upside forward to Saginaw's future plans. Milojevic played



THE SAGINAW SPIRIT SIGNED ALEXANDER MILOJEVIC AND DMITRY SAVIN THIS WEEK, WHILE INCOMING ROOKIES DREW BATE AND KYLER LAUDER WERE NAMED TO HOCKEY CANADA'S NATIONAL UNDER-17 DEVELOPMENT CAMP ROSTER.

minor hockey with the Chicago Mission 15U AAA program and produced 101 points during the 2024-25 season, according to the Spirit. He will wear No. 93 for Saginaw during the 2026-27 season.

Savin brings a different kind of intrigue. The 17-year-old center is from Novosibirsk, Russia, and played last season with CSKA Moskva. He split time between the club's U17 and U18 teams, recording 59 points in 32 regular-season games with the U17 team and 43 points in 19 games with the U18 team.

Drinkill called Savin a "talent-

ed two-way center" and praised his attention to detail. Savin's arrival in Saginaw is still dependent on approval from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the team said.

The Spirit also received national-level recognition this week when Bate and Lauder were named to Hockey Canada's national under-17 development camp, scheduled for July 17-21 in Oakville, Ontario. The camp will help evaluate players ahead of the 2026 U17 World Challenge, which will be held Nov. 1-7 in Oakville.

Bate was Saginaw's first pick

in the 2026 OHL Priority Selection, going sixth overall. He led the ALLIANCE U16 AAA circuit with 72 points in 27 games for the London Jr. Knights and was named the 2026 ALLIANCE Player of the Year. He also added 21 playoff points and helped London reach the OHL Cup semifinals.

Lauder was selected by the Spirit in the second round, 24th overall, in 2026. He led the OMHA in scoring and was named OMHA East U16 AAA Player of the Year after posting 69 points in 32 games with the Central Ontario Wolves. He added 16 points in 10 playoff games.

The national camp connection also extends to Saginaw's front office. Drinkill will serve as director of operations for Team Canada Red at the U17 World Challenge for a third consecutive year. He previously earned silver with Canada in 2024 and gold last fall.

The moves come after the Spirit announced a unique seven-game preseason schedule that includes three games in Newfoundland against the Newfoundland Regiment of the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League. Saginaw will open its regular season Friday, Sept. 18, at the Soo Greyhounds before hosting the Flint Firebirds on Saturday, Sept. 19, at the Dow Event Center.

For Saginaw fans, the week offered a glimpse of the team's next wave. The Spirit are adding international skill, signing U.S.-developed talent and sending young Canadian prospects into national evaluation settings — all signs of an organization continuing to build beyond one season.

SPORTS

Girls wrestling, girls golf and boys track set Michigan participation records



GIRLS WRESTLING, GIRLS GOLF AND BOYS TRACK AND FIELD SET PARTICIPATION RECORDS DURING THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

BY MB STAFF

EAST LANSING, Mich. — More Michigan students competed in high school sports during the 2025-26 school year, with girls wrestling, girls golf and boys track and field reaching record participation levels.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association reported 277,533 athletes competed in MHSAA-sponsored tournament sports during the school year. The athletes represented 755 member high schools across the state.

The total was up 1,849 participants from the previous school year, even though enrollment at MHSAA member high schools decreased slightly by 441 students.

Girls wrestling continued to show some of the fastest growth.

The sport reached a record 1,783 participants, an 18.5% increase from the year before. Combined boys and girls wrestling participation also reached a record 12,647 athletes, despite a small decrease in boys wrestling participation.

Girls golf set a participation record for the second straight year, with 4,355 athletes competing. That was a 9.7% increase from the previous record set in 2024-25.

Boys track and field also broke its participation record for the second consecutive year, reaching 25,053 athletes, a 1.2% increase over the previous school year.

The MHSAA said the overall increase was helped in part by the addition of field hockey and boys volleyball to the association's postseason tournament lineup. Field hockey brought 1,169 participants to the girls total and saw

a 15% increase from the previous school year. Boys volleyball, in its first year as an MHSAA-sponsored tournament sport, rose 49% to 2,261 athletes.

Boys participation increased 1% to 162,984 athletes, while girls participation dipped slightly by 0.2% to 114,157.

MHSAA participation figures count students once for each sport they play, meaning multi-sport athletes are counted more than once.

Several other sports also saw growth in 2025-26. Gymnastics increased 6.2% to 528 athletes. Boys golf rose 5.4% to 7,819 athletes, its highest total since the 2005-06 school year. Boys soccer increased 2.3% to 14,435 participants, and competitive cheer grew 2.1% to 6,454 athletes.

Some sports saw small declines, including boys basketball, boys bowling, boys lacrosse, girls

soccer, girls swimming and diving, and boys tennis, but each decreased by less than 1%.

Football remained Michigan's most popular high school sport by participation, with 35,635 athletes. That was down 1.6% from the previous year, but still marked the sport's second-highest total in the past eight seasons.

Volleyball remained the most popular girls sport, with 19,297 athletes competing last fall. Although participation was down 1.9% from the previous school year, it was still volleyball's second-highest total in the past eight seasons.

The participation numbers are collected annually from MHSAA member schools and submitted to the National Federation of State High School Associations for its national participation survey.

SPORTS

Northwood hosts Tricity Cricket tournament as sport gains momentum in Great Lakes Bay Region



NORTHWOOD UNIVERSITY HOSTED TRICITY CRICKET 2026 ON JULY 11-12, BRINGING FIVE TEAMS AND MORE THAN 100 PLAYERS, SUPPORTERS AND SPECTATORS TO CAMPUS FOR A WEEKEND OF CRICKET, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION.

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — On a summer weekend in Midland, the sound of a bat meeting ball carried something larger than competition.

It carried culture, family, friendship and a sport that continues to grow in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Northwood University hosted Tricity Cricket 2026 on July 11-12 at the university's cricket ground near the Bennett Sports Complex, marking the first time the recreational tournament was held on Northwood's campus. The two-day event brought together local players, families and supporters, along with one out-of-state team from Cleveland.

The tournament was organized by Swapnil More, a North-

wood University international marketing and business analyst. The five participating teams were the Midland Mavericks, Saginaw Tigers, Mid-Michigan Indians, Midland Kings and Cleveland Lions.

Northwood had announced the event as a free, two-day tournament open to students, alumni, faculty, staff, families and area residents. More than 100 players, supporters and spectators were expected throughout the weekend, and the championship match was scheduled for 5:30 to 7 p.m. Sunday, July 12.

For many of the players, cricket is not a new discovery. It is part of home.

Players and attendees represented countries including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, according to Northwood. Cricket has

deep roots across South Asia, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Caribbean and other parts of the world, and organizers wanted the tournament to introduce more local residents to the sport while celebrating the diversity already present in the region.

"Cricket brings people together across cultures and generations," said Dr. Kristin Stehouwer, Northwood's academic vice president and provost.

The move to Northwood was also a step forward for the tournament itself. More told the Midland Daily News that last year's event was held behind a mosque in Saginaw, while this year's campus location provided an improved playing field and more visibility.

The tournament also reflected cricket's growing global spotlight. The sport appeared in the

Olympics only once, at the 1900 Paris Games, but it is scheduled to return to the Summer Olympics in 2028 in Los Angeles. That return has added momentum for local players who want more people in the United States to understand the game.

The local growth is not limited to men's teams. More recently began coaching a local women's team, and the area's first women's cricket teams — the Lady Luck Legends and Queen Ninjas — were scheduled to compete Sunday, July 12, for the first time.

For Rohini Vaidya, captain of one of the women's teams, the community connection made organizing easier. She told the Midland Daily News the players already knew one another and that the local community is closely connected.

SPORTS

Great Lakes Royals bring pro basketball vision to Soaring Eagle after earlier Saginaw Soul effort

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich. — A new professional men's basketball team is taking shape in mid-Michigan, carrying forward a vision that first began as an effort to bring the Saginaw Soul to the region.

The Great Lakes Royals, a new Basketball Super League franchise owned by Kelly Garety, will play home games at Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mount Pleasant for the 2026-27 season. The team announced the venue partnership this week, positioning the Royals as a professional basketball organization representing Mount Pleasant, mid-Michigan and the broader Great Lakes region.

The Royals' official website describes the team as a woman-owned, community-driven professional basketball franchise founded by Garety and built from the ground up in mid-Michigan. The team is listed as Michigan's expansion franchise in the Basketball Super League, with 16 home games planned for the 2026-27 season.

The announcement marks the latest chapter in Garety's push to bring professional basketball to the Great Lakes Bay Region. In April 2025, the Basketball Super League introduced the Saginaw Soul during an announcement at the Central Michigan University Research Corporation in Saginaw. At that time, league President David Magley appeared with Team Market Owner Kelly Garety, Team President Joseph Garety and Head Coach Isaiah "Zeke" Thomas.

The Soul had been expected to begin play in November 2025, with league officials saying they hoped the team would



THE GREAT LAKES ROYALS, OWNED BY KELLY GARETY, WILL PLAY HOME GAMES AT SOARING EAGLE CASINO & RESORT DURING THE 2026-27 BASKETBALL SUPER LEAGUE SEASON.

play at The Dow Event Center in Saginaw, though a venue agreement had not been finalized. The team's debut was later postponed to the 2026-27 season. The Royals announcement does not clearly state whether the Great Lakes Royals are a renamed and relocated version of the Saginaw Soul or a separate franchise connected by the same ownership and league.

What is clear is that the original promise behind the Saginaw Soul — professional basketball, family entertainment, community pride and youth engagement

— now appears to be moving forward through the Great Lakes Royals brand.

When the Soul was announced, Thomas spoke about Saginaw's basketball identity and the importance of creating something positive for young people and families. He described Saginaw as a basketball town and said the team could give the community a source of pride and a positive place to gather.

That community-first message is also central to the Royals. Garety said in the Royals announcement that the team

is meant to be about more than basketball, with a focus on bringing families together, creating opportunities, supporting local businesses and giving mid-Michigan a team to rally around.

The Royals' leadership team includes Garety as Founder and CEO, Steve Espinoza as chief operating officer, Joe Garety as director of basketball operations, Chantel Washburn as head of sales and partnerships, James Johnson as general manager and Keno Davis as head coach, according to the team's website.

The team will compete in the Basketball Super League, an independent professional basketball league with teams in the United States and Canada. The Royals' website says the league is designed to develop talent, grow markets and bring professional-level basketball to communities outside the traditional major-league sports landscape.

That shift may raise questions for Saginaw fans who followed the earlier Soul announcement and expected professional basketball to land directly in Saginaw. The Soul's original identity was deeply tied to the city's basketball history, local pride and the idea of bringing another professional sports option to Saginaw. The Royals now carry some of that same ambition, but under a broader regional name and with Mount Pleasant as the home court.

The team has not yet released a full schedule, roster, ticket information or complete community programming details. Additional announcements about tickets, sponsorships, the schedule and community initiatives are expected in the coming months.

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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While you're waiting, God is working

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"

Isaiah 40:31 KJV



BY MINISTER CAROLYN
CARTER TOWNSEL

Have you ever prayed, believed God, and then found yourself waiting? Waiting can be one of the most difficult seasons of the Christian life because we often mistake God's silence for God's absence. But just because God appears quiet does not mean He is inactive.

Throughout Scripture, God often worked behind the scenes long before His people saw the answer. While Joseph waited in prison, God was preparing a palace. While David tended sheep, God was preparing a throne. While Lazarus lay in the tomb, Jesus was preparing a miracle. God's delays are never wasted; they are often divine preparation.

Waiting is not a season of inactivity—it is a season of development. God uses waiting to strengthen our faith, deepen our trust, and shape our character. Often, He is doing a greater work "in us" before He does a greater work "for us".

Instead of asking, "Lord, why am I waiting?" perhaps we should ask, "Lord, what are You teaching me while I wait?" Waiting teaches patience, perseverance, dependence, and hope. It reminds us that God's timing is always perfect, even when it doesn't match our timetable.

So don't become discouraged because you haven't seen the answer yet. Continue to pray. Continue to obey. Continue to serve. Continue to trust. Every day you remain faithful, God is

arranging circumstances, opening doors, moving hearts, and aligning His perfect plan for your life.

Remember, the promise has not been canceled because it has been delayed. If God made the promise, He will fulfill it.

When waiting becomes difficult - Remember these Three Truths;

- 1. Waiting Strengthens Your Faith.**
God is building confidence in Him, not in your circumstances.
- 2. Waiting Shapes Your Character.**
Before God changes your situation, He often changes you.
- 3. Waiting Positions You for God's Best.**
His timing is always wiser than ours, and His plan is always greater than we can imagine.

Beloved, Don't give up because you can't see God working. Roots grow beneath the surface long before fruit appears on the branches. In the same way, God is accomplishing things you cannot yet see. Therefore, Keep believing,

Keep trusting, and Keep expecting. Because while you're waiting...God is working.

Blessings to All,
Carolyn

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FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

Board membership – asset or liability?

BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

During these times of uncertainty, our urban nonprofits do not have the luxury of having board members who are not engaged and not making an impact in terms of promoting the vision and goals of the organization.

Nonprofit board members play a critical role in the life of our nonprofits. This is true for those who serve grassroots and emerging organizations, as well as those who serve major institutions such as our HBCUs and national organizations. Sometimes, nonprofit board members are seen as “glamorous.” Those not familiar with nonprofit board service may think you are in a role similar to that of a bank trustee or corporate board member. The positions are similar in that both require you to bring your A game to the table. Unlike corporate boards, nonprofit boards don’t come with financial rewards. You will be rewarded for the good you do, but you won’t get paid.

If you are a nonprofit board member, you know the joys and the hard work. And you know to-



day’s environment makes board service – and the survival of our nonprofits – more challenging than ever. With this column, we ask you to reflect on how you live up to your roles and responsibilities. Weigh the following as you consider how you “measure up.”

For your consideration.

1. Have you bought into the vision and goals for the organization?
2. Are you in sync with leadership?
3. Do you attend board meetings on a regular basis?
4. What about committee meetings?
5. Do you have contacts that can provide grants and resources? Are your contacts active?
6. Do you make a meaningful financial contribution each year?
7. Do you serve as a fundraiser as well, asking others to join you in giving?
8. Do you introduce the nonprofit to potential partners and collaborators?
9. Do you have power, influence, and wealth? Or are you perceived by others as having these characteristics?
10. Do you have skills, expertise, and relationships that can help advance the work of the organization?
11. Do you expect to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses?
12. How many boards do you sit on?

13. Are you able to be effective given the number of boards you are a member of?
14. Do you serve because you believe in the organization or to enhance your resume?
15. Do you understand the work of the nonprofit and how it impacts your community?
16. Are you comfortable speaking your mind, or are you a “rubber stamp” person?
17. How long have you served on the board? If more than two terms, are you still adding value?
18. Do you find yourself able to offer solutions when challenges arise?

Assessing your ability to provide leadership, direction, and financial support allows you to consider whether you are in the right position. Maybe it’s time for you to step up and take more action on behalf of your nonprofit. Maybe it’s time to step back and support new leadership. Maybe there is a different role for you to play. Your engagement is so important, and our nonprofits need active and engaged leadership, now more than ever. God protect America and the world we live in.



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PICS OF THE WEEK

Summer evenings at the Saginaw Art Museum & Gardens continue to bring music, community and memorable moments to the gardens. The museum's July 7 Museum Tunes event featuring Charles Allen and the Vibe brought energy and joy to the outdoor space, creating a special evening for all who attended. The series continues Tuesday, Aug. 4, when Shakedown Band takes the stage for the next Museum Tunes. Guests are encouraged to gather friends, bring picnic blankets and enjoy another summer evening filled with live music in the gardens. **Event details are available at saginawartmuseum.org.**





Nathan Hankerson
Senior majoring in
Pre-Medicine/Biology

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