



SUPPORT *Local* JOURNALISM ▶ ▶ ▶

MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE



**Rev. Dr. Robert Edward "Sam" Donald remembered for faith, service and love**

FAITH, pg 43

# Great Lakes Bay Health Centers luncheon raises more than \$50,000



GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS CHANGING LIVES FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON (COURTESY PHOTO)



**Michigan teen job market expected to be competitive this summer**

YOUTH BANNER, PG 5



**Latinx Technology & Community Center expands Spanish-language mental health support in Genesee County**

LATINO BANNER, COVER

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Great Lakes Bay Health Centers raised more than \$50,000 in gifts and pledges during its Changing Lives Fundraising Luncheon on May 21 at the Horizons Center in Saginaw.

The event brought together more than 285 guests in support of the health center's mission to remove barriers and expand access to

trusted, affordable care. Thirty-three table captains helped welcome attendees, and about half of the guests made a donation.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers also welcomed two new members to its Giving Hope Society, bringing the total to 29 individuals who have committed to giving over multiple years to help change lives and strengthen communities.

Funds raised through the luncheon will support programs that help make dental and vision care possible for more schoolchildren, help women enter motherhood with greater confidence and help individuals and families

**Continues on pg 2, Changing Lives Luncheon**

## From cover, Changing Lives Luncheon

find a trusted medical home.


The event also highlighted the story of Dan, a patient who found support through Great Lakes Bay Health Centers as he worked to improve his health, reverse chronic illness, lose weight and live better.

“Great Lakes Bay didn’t just help me medically and mentally,” Dan said. “They made dental and vision care affordable too. For the first time in years, I felt comfortable in a doctor’s office. Caring is what motivates people to get healthier.”

Organizers said Dan’s story reflects the experience of many patients who need more than a single appointment. They need care that is affordable, welcoming and connected to their whole health.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers provides medical, dental, vision, behavioral health and family-centered care across the region. Through donor support, the organization is able to reach more people who may face challenges such as cost, transportation, lack of insurance or difficulty finding a provider they trust.

Organizers thanked new donors, continuing donors, sponsors, table captains and guests for helping make the luncheon a success. They said thousands of people across the region still need access to care, and community support can help open more doors for families, children and individuals working toward better health.



**THIS DAY IN  
MICHIGAN  
HISTORY**

**JUNE 1, 1837**

On June 1, 1837, Charles Cronkright and Samuel Gordon walked from Saginaw to the area that would become Midland. Their journey marked an early moment in Midland’s settlement history, when the region was still known as “The Forks.” Today, both men are remembered through local street names that continue to connect the community to its beginnings.



MAIN STREET IN MIDLAND, MI IN THE LATE 1880S/EARLY 1900S

**MICHIGAN BANNER**  
301 E Genesee Ave, Suite 201B  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
989.992.2600  
publisher022@gmail.com

**PUBLISHER**  
Michelle McCoy

**VP SALES & MARKETING**  
Jerome Buckley

**EDITOR EMERITUS**  
Rae Lynn Buckley

**MISSION**

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

**DISCLAIMER**

The Michigan Banner and its staff are not responsible and will not be held liable for any mistakes, error, misspellings and false advertisements in part or whole that may be placed within its publication. Articles, information or comments printed in the newspaper are not necessarily the views or beliefs of The Michigan Banner newspaper. The Michigan Banner reserves the right to edit, change, or delete any information, or refuse to print any information, article or advertisement which is believed to be inconsistent with or conflicts with the mission of the newspaper.

**DEADLINES**

1 week before each publication date of the 1st and 16th of each month

**SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

Mailed or e-mailed  
Preferred format: Jpeg or PDF

**CONNECT WITH THE MICHIGAN BANNER ONLINE!**

www.michiganbanner.org  
Facebook.com/TheNewMichiganBanner  
Twitter.com/MichiganBanner





# Play Dates in the Park

EVENT 2026 SERIES



FREE hands-on summer events for families. Registration required: Saginaw-MI.com/PlayDatesInThePark

 <p><b>Streetball Hockey Day</b> at First Ward Community Center <i>Hit the pavement with First Ward and leave stick-in-hand.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 4/2 SATURDAY <b>03 21</b> 11:30 AM - 2 PM</p>
 <p><b>Welcome to Summer! Field Day</b> at Fordney Park <i>Big-time recess vibes with Saginaw Public Libraries &amp; Saginaw County Parks.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 3 SATURDAY <b>05 16</b> 1 PM - 4 PM</p>
 <p><b>Swimming Day</b> at Saginaw YMCA <i>Make waves with Saginaw YMCA &amp; SASA Swim and take home a life jacket.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 7/8 SUNDAY <b>05 31</b> 10:30 AM - 1 PM</p>
 <p><b>Fishing Day</b> at Old Town Docks <i>Cast &amp; reel with Saginaw County Parks and keep the gear.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 3 SUNDAY <b>06 07</b> 11 AM - 1:30 PM</p>
 <p><b>Home Garden &amp; Planting Day</b> at Houghton-Jones Community Center <i>Start something growing with Houghton-Jones and see what it becomes.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 5 SATURDAY <b>06 13</b> 11 AM - 1:30 PM</p>
 <p><b>Tennis &amp; Pickleball Day</b> at Garber Courts <i>Serve, swing, and step onto the court with Urban Racquet Sports.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 7/8 SATURDAY <b>08 15</b> 11 AM - 1:30 PM</p>
 <p><b>Skateboarding Day</b> at Celebration Skate Park <i>Find your balance with Shawn Deer and roll home with your own gear.</i></p>	<p>ROUTE 7/8 SUNDAY <b>08 23</b> 10:45 AM - 1:30 PM</p>

**IN THIS ISSUE ▶**

Youth Banner ..... 4 - 7  
 Latino Banner ..... LB 1 - LB 4  
 Community ..... 12  
 Politics ..... 18  
 Health ..... 22  
 Education ..... 27  
 Business ..... 34  
 Sports ..... 39  
 Faith ..... 44

# MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 11



## Flint Teen Resource Fair helps young people prepare for the future



TEEN RESOURCE FAIR (MB FILE PHOTO)

### BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint teens and young adults were invited to connect with documents, services and support during a Teen Resource Fair held May 27 at the McKinley Center.

The City of Flint announced the event May 19, saying the fair was designed to help young people prepare for adulthood, employment, higher education and independence.

The event was scheduled from

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the McKinley Center, 249 Peer Ave. It was open to residents of all ages, with a special focus on teens, young adults, parents and guardians.

Several agencies and community partners were scheduled to provide free resources and services. The Michigan Secretary of State was expected to issue state IDs, while Genesee County Records was expected to issue birth certificates. Financial Plus Credit Union was scheduled to help open bank accounts, and the

city's Office of Public Health was expected to provide health and wellness resources.

Other vendors were expected to offer information on education, employment, mentorship and community support.

"Young people deserve access to the tools and resources that help them build a successful future," Mayor Sheldon A. Neeley said in the city's announcement.

For many young people, basic documents such as a state ID or birth certificate are important

steps toward getting a job, opening a bank account, enrolling in programs, applying for college or training, and accessing services.

The city encouraged students, parents, guardians and community members to attend and take advantage of the resources available during the one-day event.

The announcement also listed documents young people might need to bring. To get a Michigan ID card, attendees may need proof of identity, proof of Social Security number and two documents showing a Michigan address. Examples include a school ID, school transcript, report card, birth certificate, passport, Social Security card, pay stub, W-2 form, school records, government mail, insurance paperwork or parent and guardian documents showing the youth's address.

Attendees younger than 18 may need a parent or guardian to come with them, show identification and sign paperwork.

For a birth certificate, the city said attendees may need three alternate pieces of identification, such as a school ID, school transcript, medication information or a check stub. Nothing from a phone was to be accepted.

The resource fair comes as communities continue looking for ways to help teens make the transition from school to work, college, training and adult responsibilities. Events that bring services together in one location can reduce barriers for young people and families who may not know where to begin.

# Michigan teen job market expected to be competitive this summer



TEEN CASHIER (MB FILE PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan teens looking for summer jobs may face a competitive labor market this year, according to the state's summer 2026 teen employment forecast.

The Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget released the forecast May 19 for teens ages 16-19. The state projected that 252,500 teens will be working or looking for work from June through August.

Of those, about 207,100 teens are expected to be employed, while 45,400 are expected to be unemployed. The projected teen unemployment rate for the summer is 18%.

Michigan's teen population ages 16-19 is projected at 515,000 in 2026. Nearly half are expected to participate in the labor market this summer.

"While Michigan's unemployment rate overall has been steady for many months, the teen unemployment rate has been trending upwards," Wayne Rourke, labor market information director for the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, said in the state's announcement.

The state said the summer job market matters because many teens look for work after high school graduation or seek temporary jobs to earn money and build their resumes.

Retail trade, accommodation and food services are expected to offer many of the greatest summer job opportunities for teens. Common entry-level jobs include retail salesperson, fast food and counter worker, stocker and order filler.

Those jobs often offer flexible hours and may require little previous work experience, making them common first jobs for

young workers.

The state said teen unemployment has been rising. Michigan's unemployment rate for teens ages 16-19 averaged 18.1% in 2025, compared with rates closer to 13% in 2023 and 2024. Nationally, the teen unemployment rate increased from 10.5% in early 2023 to 14.1% in the first quarter of 2026.

For youth readers, the forecast means preparation may matter. Teens looking for work may need to apply early, follow up with employers, prepare a resume and be ready to interview.

The state also pointed young workers to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Youth Workers' Rights Initiative. The program is designed to help young workers understand workplace safety, fair pay, work permits, wage protections and where to get help if problems come up on the job.

Young job seekers also can connect with local Michigan Works! offices for help with resumes, job searches and Pure Michigan Talent Connect.

Summer jobs can help teens earn money, gain work experience, develop customer service skills and learn how to manage schedules and responsibilities. They also can help students explore careers and build references for future opportunities.

But state officials said young job seekers will need to stay alert and persistent when applying.

For teens entering the workforce for the first time, the forecast also underscores the importance of knowing their rights. Young workers should understand work permit rules, safe working conditions, pay requirements and limits on certain types of work.

# Nineteen Michigan students named U.S. Presidential Scholars semifinalists



BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Nineteen Michigan high school students have been selected as semifinalists for the 2026 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

The Michigan Department of Education announced the semifinalists May 20. The students were selected by the Commission on U.S. Presidential Scholars of the U.S. Department of Education.

Nationwide, 161 students will be chosen as U.S. Presidential Scholars. The program recognizes some of the country's most

accomplished graduating high school seniors.

"These 19 students represent the many outstanding scholars we have across Michigan," State Superintendent Glenn Maleyko said in the announcement.

One of the semifinalists is from the Great Lakes Bay Region. Angelina E. Chen of Midland was selected from Herbert Henry Dow High School in Midland Public Schools.

Other Michigan semifinalists include Alexandra Danciu DaSilva of Ann Arbor, Greenhills School; Vihaan Gehlaut of Troy, International Academy Okma; Anusha Gupta of Troy, Troy

High School; Emily Y. Hu of Ann Arbor, Huron High School; Eric Liu of Bloomfield Hills, Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School; Krishna D. Mano of Grand Rapids, City High Middle School; Audrey Pierce Mason of Traverse City, Interlochen Arts Academy; Saghana Parasuraman of South Lyon, South Lyon East High School; Brianna Park of Rochester, International Academy Okma; Ajay Singh Raj Purohit of Ann Arbor, Greenhills School; Sahas Ravor of Rochester Hills, Athens High School; Janet Rucker of Coldwater, Coldwater Senior High School; Siddh Amit Sheth of Rochester Hills, Stoney

Creek High School; Mayas Smith of Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Hills High School; Benjamin D. Wayne of Reed City, Big Rapids High School; Janelle W. Yao of Portage, Portage Central High School; William M. Zhang of Bloomfield Hills, International Academy Okma; and Daniel Hanxiang Zhou of Ann Arbor, Skyline High School.

Mason, Rucker and Wayne were listed as Scholar in Arts semifinalists. Other semifinalists were selected for broad academic achievement.

For the general component of the program, eligible students must score exceptionally well on the SAT or ACT and be nominated by a chief state school officer or partner recognition organization. For the arts component, students must demonstrate academic achievement and talent in visual, creative or performing arts.

For youth readers, the recognition highlights different pathways to excellence. Students may be honored through academics, arts, leadership and long-term commitment to learning.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is one of the nation's highest honors for high school seniors. While the final scholars will be chosen at the national level, the Michigan semifinalists already have earned recognition among top students in the state and country.

The program also reflects the role of families, teachers, counselors and school communities in helping students reach high levels of achievement.

Final U.S. Presidential Scholars are expected to be selected by the U.S. Department of Education.

Tuesday-Wednesday  
**June 23-24, 2026**

Early arrivals Monday, June 22

Location:

**SV** **SAGINAW VALLEY**  
**SU** **STATE UNIVERSITY**  
7400 Bay Road • University Center, MI 48710 • svsu.edu

# SAVE THE DATES



## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Michigan Teen Conference **Take Charge 2026**

PROMOTE THIS EVENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOSTER CARE • REGISTRATION TO OPEN SOON

***Be ready for lots of exciting new features as we've recharged this year!***

**Keynote presenter** with lived foster care experience will set the tone with an **uplifting and inspiring message!**

**Hands-on real-life workshops and evening activities such as...**

- Car maintenance
- Cooking/nutrition/food storage/safety
- Financial literacy/money management
- Healthy relationships
- Rental applications/apartment search
- Resume building
- Self-defense
- Vision boards
- Yoga

**Resources and tools for success**

- At the Resources Fair, you'll get to **explore in person** a wide range of helpful resources and opportunities available to you.
- The online *Resources for Life* guidebook is organized by seven life domains, with links and contact information to make it **easy to follow up and access** programs, services, and products when you need them.



# Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA  
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

## Latinx Technology & Community Center expands Spanish-language mental health support in Genesee County

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Latinx Technology & Community Center is expanding access to mental health support for Latino and Hispanic families in Genesee County through a new partnership with NAMI.

The center announced the partnership May 19 during Mental Health Awareness Month. The collaboration is intended to increase Spanish-language resources, family support and community-based care for residents in Genesee County and surrounding areas.

As part of the partnership, Paul Ferreira, resource department coordinator at the Latinx Technology & Community Center, completed official NAMI training as a Family Support Group Facilitator.

The center said Ferreira is the first NAMI-certified Family Support Group Facilitator offering services in Spanish in Genesee County. The certification allows him to lead structured family support groups in a safe and confidential setting.

The first Family Support Group was scheduled for May 9 at the Latinx Technology & Community Center, 2101 Lewis St. in Flint. The group is designed to provide a safe space for sharing, learning and support in Spanish.

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, was founded in 1979 and provides education, peer support and family-based services related to mental health. The or-



COMMUNITY MEMBERS SEATED IN A BILINGUAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP. (MB FILE PHOTO)

ganization works with local communities to expand support and reduce stigma surrounding mental illness.

The Flint partnership is designed to address a barrier that many families face when seeking mental health support: language access. For Spanish-speaking residents, finding culturally responsive services in their own language can be difficult.

The center said the program will help families access support in their own language and cultural context. The partnership also connects individuals with licensed mental health professionals in Genesee County when additional care is needed.

Mental health concerns can affect individuals, families, students, workers and entire com-

munities. Stress, anxiety, sadness, family conflict, emotional exhaustion and isolation can become harder to address when people do not have trusted places to seek help.

For Latino and Hispanic families, stigma and lack of culturally appropriate services can make it even harder to talk about mental health or ask for support. Community-based programs can help reduce those barriers by offering familiar, trusted and accessible spaces.

The Latinx Technology & Community Center said the NAMI partnership is part of its long-term commitment to community well-being in Genesee County. The organization provides programs and services intended to enhance quality of life

for Flint and Genesee County's Latinx community and other cultures.

By adding Spanish-language family support groups, the center is expanding beyond information and referrals to offer a more structured support network for families navigating mental health challenges.

The program also reflects a growing recognition that mental health is part of overall community health. Families dealing with depression, anxiety, trauma or other mental health concerns often need both emotional support and practical guidance.

The center said its doors are open to residents who feel overwhelmed, isolated or unsure where to begin.

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

# Mexicana Emprende program helps Mexican women grow business skills in Michigan

BY MB STAFF

MADISON HEIGHTS, Mich. — A business education program connected to the Mexican Consulate in Detroit is helping Mexican women in Michigan and northern Ohio strengthen their businesses through training, mentorship and networking.

Mexicana Emprende, now in its seventh cohort, supports Mexican women living outside Mexico as they develop and grow businesses. The program is organized through the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, or Institute for Mexicans Abroad, and serves participants locally through the Mexican Consulate in Detroit, located in Madison Heights.

EL CENTRAL reported on the program May 28.

The program is fully virtual, except for graduation, making it accessible for participants to complete coursework from home. Participants need access to a computer or laptop to complete lessons through DreamBuilder, an interactive online platform developed by the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University.

The program includes 13 required lessons covering foundational business concepts such as financial management, operations, marketing and strategic planning. By the end of the first phase, participants have developed the framework for a business plan.

The initiative includes six Mexican consulates across the United States: New York; Raleigh, North Carolina; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Philadelphia; Seattle; and Madison Heights.

The program is divided into three phases. In the first phase, participants complete the DreamBuilder curriculum independently while also attending sessions led by consultants involved in the initiative. The second phase focuses



HISPANIC BUSINESS WOMAN (MB FILE PHOTO)

on areas where participants need additional support, including business regulations and administration. After graduation, the consulate continues to support graduates through networking events and business fairs.

For women entrepreneurs, that kind of support can be important. Many small business owners have strong skills in their trade or service area but need help with taxes, legal paperwork, marketing, bookkeeping, business plans and growth strategy.

EL CENTRAL highlighted several Michigan entrepreneurs connected to the program, including Brenda Herrera-Reed, founder of Herrera MD MedSpa, a medical aesthetics and metabolic clinic. Herrera-Reed, who was born in Tijuana and later moved to the United States, said the program helped her at a time when her business was growing and

she needed more support with administrative responsibilities.

The article also highlighted Priscilla Saucedo, owner of Baby Time Center in Troy, and Elena Beltral-Varela, owner of Artesanías ElenitaLinda, which works with Indigenous artisans from Mexico. Both said the program helped them strengthen parts of their businesses beyond their original areas of expertise.

The initiative also creates opportunities for participants to connect with community events. Graduates of the program were invited to showcase their businesses during the 2025 Grito celebration in Southwest Detroit hosted by Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development.

The program's local connection is significant because the Mexican Consulate in Detroit serves a region that includes Michigan and northern Ohio.

Through programs such as Mexicana Emprende, the consulate can help women entrepreneurs access business training while also connecting them to broader community resources.

Latina and immigrant entrepreneurs often face barriers to business growth, including limited access to capital, language barriers, unfamiliarity with U.S. business systems and smaller professional networks. Training and mentorship programs can help address some of those challenges by providing practical tools and trusted guidance.

For Michigan communities, supporting women-owned and immigrant-owned businesses can contribute to neighborhood vitality, job creation, cultural visibility and local economic growth.

The seventh cohort is currently in its first phase.

# ICE detention plans and conditions draw opposition across Michigan

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Immigration detention plans and conditions in Michigan continue to draw protests, lawsuits and public pressure from advocates, attorneys and family members of detainees.

EL CENTRAL reported May 21 that nearly 50 protesters gathered May 18 outside the Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse in Detroit in support of a federal lawsuit filed by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel and the City of Romulus. The lawsuit challenges a plan by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to convert a warehouse in Romulus into an immigration detention center.

The lawsuit, filed March 24, challenges the proposed conversion of a 261,450-square-foot warehouse at 7525 Cogswell St., near Detroit Metropolitan Airport, into a detention facility with capacity for 500 detainees.

Nessel's office said the complaint alleges the site is not appropriate for detention because it is within a mile of an elementary school and a middle school, abuts residential neighborhoods, lies within a floodplain that experienced flooding as recently as last year and lacks adequate infrastructure to support 500 detainees and staff.

The lawsuit also argues that federal officials moved forward without sufficient environmental review or coordination with state and local authorities.

The hearing scheduled for May 18 was rescheduled, according to EL CENTRAL. Protesters and advocacy groups still used the gathering to call for the project to be stopped and to raise broader concerns about immigration detention in Michigan.

The Romulus proposal is



ICE POLICE OFFICER FROM BEHIND (MB FILE PHOTO)

not the only facility facing scrutiny. Advocates also have raised concerns about conditions at the North Lake Processing Center in Baldwin, a 1,800-bed immigration detention facility operated by GEO Group under ICE custody.

The ACLU of Michigan and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center sent a public letter to ICE documenting what the groups described as dangerous medical conditions and limited access to legal counsel for people detained at North Lake.

The groups alleged that some detainees experienced delays or denials of medical care, difficulty accessing attorneys and other barriers. The letter included reported concerns involving high blood pressure, mental health conditions, access to mammograms, medication and emergency medical response.

Advocates have called for an independent medical audit, systematic health screenings, stron-

ger emergency protocols, free access to medication, adequate translation services and improved legal access.

EL CENTRAL also reported that protesters have gathered outside the Baldwin facility for several weeks, demanding better medical care, improved conditions and greater transparency for detainees and their families.

Immigration detention has become a major civil rights and public policy issue in Michigan as federal enforcement activity and detention capacity draw more attention. Advocates say detention separates families, creates fear in immigrant communities and can make it harder for detainees to access legal help and medical care.

Federal immigration officials have previously denied reports of substandard medical conditions in ICE facilities. ICE has said detainees have access to medical care and legal and communication resources.

The dispute places Michigan communities at the center of a broader national debate over immigration enforcement, detention conditions and the role of state and local governments when federal agencies seek to open or expand detention facilities.

For Latino and immigrant communities, the issue has direct personal consequences. Families may face uncertainty when a loved one is detained, transferred or unable to communicate regularly. Community organizations and legal advocates often help families navigate the process, connect with attorneys and understand their rights.

The Romulus lawsuit remains part of the legal effort to block the proposed detention center. Advocacy groups say they will continue organizing, monitoring conditions and pressing state and federal officials for accountability.



It Matters Where  
You Buy Your Car



Make your next deal with

# Louis Garcia

Sales Associate • Used Car Sales

**Contact:**

(989) 770-3078

[l.garcia@garberbuick.com](mailto:l.garcia@garberbuick.com)



5925 STATE ST, SAGINAW, MI 48603  
SALES: 989-683-4697

## COMMUNITY

# Grit Your Grief 5K returns to MBS runway to support grieving children and families



6TH ANNUAL GRIT YOUR GRIEF EVENT (PHOTO CREDIT: CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTER OF THE GREAT LAKES BAY REGION)

BY MB STAFF

FREELAND, Mich. — Families, runners and community supporters gathered May 16 at MBS International Airport for the 2026 Grit Your Grief 5K Run/Walk, a regional fundraiser supporting grieving children and families.

The event, hosted by the Children's Grief Center of the Great Lakes Bay Region, gave participants a rare opportunity to run or walk on airport property, including MBS taxiways and a portion of a main runway.

The live 5K began at 10 a.m. at the airport, 8500 Garfield Road in Freeland. A family Color Fun Run followed at 11:30 a.m. on MBS property. Virtual race weeks also ran from May 6-20,

allowing participants to complete their own routes if they could not attend the live event.

The race is designed to bring the community together around grief support while raising money for services provided to children and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region.

The Children's Grief Center provides support for children, teens and families who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Events such as Grit Your Grief help raise awareness about grief while providing a visible reminder that families do not have to carry loss alone.

Organizers also offered memorial signs to honor loved ones who have died. The signs were displayed on MBS property during the event, giving participants a way to remember family mem-

bers, friends and others who remain important in their lives.

The race format included options for different ages and abilities. Participants could register for the timed 5K, the virtual 5K, the Color Fun Run or a spectator pass. The family-focused design allowed people to participate as runners, walkers, supporters or volunteers.

The event also highlighted the regional nature of the Children's Grief Center's work. The organization serves children and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region, including communities in and around Saginaw, Bay City and Midland.

Community fundraisers are important for nonprofit organizations that rely on donations, sponsorships and volunteer support to sustain services.

For grief support organizations, local funding can help cover programming, outreach, materials and family support efforts that may not be fully funded through other sources.

The MBS location also added a unique draw. Airport runway events are uncommon because the space is usually restricted, making the 5K a memorable experience for participants and families.

For many participants, the event was both a fundraiser and a tribute. The combination of movement, memorial signs and community support gave families a way to honor loved ones while helping others find support after loss.

# City of Saginaw releases 2026 Hot Times summer youth activities newsletter



2026 HOT TIMES SUMMER YOUTH ACTIVITIES (PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF SAGINAW)

## BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The City of Saginaw has released its 2026 Hot Times summer youth activities newsletter, offering families a guide to recreation, enrichment and learning opportunities for children during the summer months.

The city posted the annual newsletter May 29.

Hot Times is a cooperative summer program sponsored by

Saginaw Public Schools, Saginaw County and the City of Saginaw. The program is intended to involve the community in providing a variety of learning opportunities for school-age children.

The city describes the program as a way to provide recreation, enrichment and academic activities that are enjoyable, affordable and accessible for children. The program also aims to help students develop a healthy appreciation for leisure time, prepare youth for success and

connect families with positive activities.

The summer guide serves as a resource for parents, guardians and caregivers looking for safe and constructive activities while school is out. Summer can be a challenging time for families seeking affordable programming, transportation options and reliable information about youth opportunities.

By gathering activities into one newsletter, Hot Times helps families review options in one

place. The guide also helps community organizations reach families who may not otherwise know about their summer programs.

The city's goals for Hot Times include encouraging collaboration among agencies, communicating alternatives to students and parents, providing a safe and healthy environment during the summer and helping prepare young people to become future leaders.

Summer youth programming can play an important role in student development. Activities outside the classroom can help children build confidence, develop skills, stay physically active and maintain positive routines when school is not in session.

Programs also can help reduce isolation and provide children with supervised spaces during the day. For working families, access to reliable summer activities can be an important support.

Saginaw's approach brings together public schools, county government, city government and community partners. That kind of coordination can help reduce duplication and make it easier for families to find programs that meet their needs.

The 2026 Hot Times newsletter continues a long-standing community effort to help families navigate summer. The release also comes as the city and partner organizations continue offering other family-centered programming, including Play Dates in the Park and seasonal recreation opportunities.

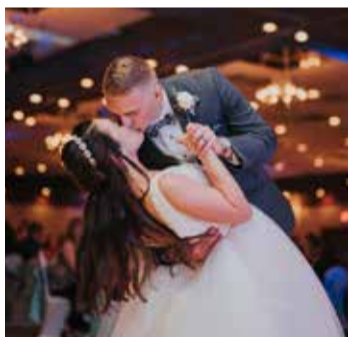
Families can view the 2026 Hot Times summer youth activities information through the City of Saginaw.

COMMUNITY

### Business & community events *beyond* compare.

When you choose HORIZONS, our team will customize the details for your business function to fit your unique needs and budget. Your event coordinator will be with you from start to finish, helping plan for every eventuality, and your personal banquet manager will be on hand during the event to ensure its success.

Get in touch with one of our event coordinators today!



Book a tour today!

### *Spectacular* weddings. Surprisingly affordable.

Your special day deserves to be everything you've always imagined. At HORIZONS, our experienced coordinators take care of all of the details to help plan the wedding of your dreams.

Complimentary to all weddings at HORIZONS:

- › Professional event planning
- › Beautifully accented ballrooms
- › White knee-length linen and napkins
- › China, silver and stemware
- › Wedding cake cutting and serving
- › Ballroom setup and cleanup
- › On-site security and ample free parking

#### More than a venue ... your planning partner.

HORIZONS is much more than a venue ... we're your dream wedding planning partner. Our experienced in-house hospitality professionals will create an exceptional experience for you and your guests – with stunning linen and floral designs, our renowned cuisine and exceptional service.

Whether you envision an intimate affair or an elaborate, themed event, we've done it all. Our unique, versatile facility features a dozen distinct venues spread over 40,000 square feet – offering infinite configurations to take you and your guests from ceremony to cocktail hour to the reception. Off-site catering is also available.

HORIZONS  
ART OF HOSPITALITY

HORIZONS Conference Center  
6200 State Street | Saginaw, Michigan

(989) 799-4122 | horizonscenter.com  
weddings@horizonscenter.com

@horizonscenter  
 @HORIZONSconfctr

## COMMUNITY

# Downtown Midland Pedestrian Plaza returns June 1 with outdoor dining, games and music



DOWNTOWN MIDLAND, MICHIGAN (FILE PHOTO)

## BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Downtown Midland's Pedestrian Plaza is returning for the summer, bringing outdoor dining, games, seating, live music and community gathering space back to Main Street.

The City of Midland announced May 21 that the plaza would return June 1 and continue through Sept. 30. The seasonal setup transforms part of Main Street into a vehicle-free area designed for dining, entertainment, shopping and public use.

Main Street between Ashman and Rodd streets and portions of McDonald Street will be closed to vehicle traffic and parking for

the duration of the plaza season. The plaza follows street closures already planned May 29-31 for the Summer Art Fair.

The Pedestrian Plaza includes outdoor games such as corn hole and ping pong, comfortable seating areas and special programming. The space is designed to encourage people to spend time downtown and support nearby businesses.

Beginning June 5, the Commons Live Music Series will return to Main Street with free concerts every Friday and Saturday from 7 to 9 p.m. through Sept. 26. The series is presented by Galoup Forberg Smith Merlo, with support from Jolt Credit Union and other community sponsors.

The plaza has become a famil-

iar summer feature in downtown Midland. By closing the street to vehicles, the city creates more room for pedestrians, outdoor dining and community events. Similar pedestrian spaces have become popular in downtowns across the country as communities seek to support local businesses and create more inviting public spaces.

For restaurants and retailers, the plaza can help increase foot traffic during warm-weather months. For residents and visitors, it creates a place to gather, eat, listen to music and enjoy downtown without navigating vehicle traffic on that section of Main Street.

The plaza also gives families and visitors free or low-cost en-

tertainment options. Outdoor games, seating areas and live music can encourage people to spend more time downtown before or after shopping or dining.

City officials said the expanded public space is intended to bring people together. Sponsors and downtown partners also help support programming throughout the season.

The plaza's return coincides with a busy summer calendar in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Events such as the Summer Art Fair, downtown concerts and other public activities can help bring visitors into Midland and contribute to the local economy.

The Pedestrian Plaza will remain in place through Sept. 30.

## COMMUNITY

# State opens \$2.1 million grant opportunity for anti-trafficking victim services



MB FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is seeking grant applications from anti-trafficking organizations to strengthen services for survivors of labor and sex trafficking.

MDHHS announced the grant funding opportunity May 22. The department expects to award about \$2.1 million through the program.

The funding is intended to

expand or enhance direct support and specialized services for victims of human trafficking. The state said the focus is on established victim service organizations that provide holistic, trauma-informed care promoting long-term safety, healing and well-being.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofits, private and public entities, local health departments, federally recognized tribes, groups of federally recognized Michigan tribes, Urban In-

dian Health Clinic programs and universities.

The grant period begins Oct. 1, 2026, and ends Sept. 30, 2027.

Project directors must request access to the application by 5 p.m. June 18. Completed applications must be submitted electronically through the EGrAMS system by 3 p.m. June 24.

A pre-application conference was scheduled for June 1 to provide instructions on using the EGrAMS system. A recording was expected to be posted afterward.

Human trafficking can include both labor trafficking and sex trafficking. Victims may need a range of supports, including emergency shelter, legal help, medical care, counseling, case management, transportation, language access, employment assistance and long-term safety planning.

Trauma-informed services are especially important because survivors may have experienced violence, coercion, isolation, exploitation and other forms of harm. Effective services often require coordination among community organizations, health providers, advocates, law enforcement, courts and social service agencies.

The grant opportunity is designed to help organizations strengthen their capacity to serve survivors and respond to complex needs.

For communities across Michigan, including urban, rural and tribal communities, trafficking can be difficult to identify. Survivors may not immediately seek help because of fear, lack of resources, immigration concerns, threats from traffickers or distrust of systems.

Funding for established victim service organizations can help improve local responses by expanding specialized staff, outreach, training and survivor-centered support.

MDHHS said the complete grant funding opportunity and resource documents are available through EGrAMS under the HTPC-2027 grant program in the Bureau of Community Services section.

The department said the funding will support a broad range of critical services for survivors and help ensure access to care that supports long-term safety and healing.

## COMMUNITY

# Flint residents invited to help shape future of neighborhood parks



STEPPING STONE FALLS PARK IN FLINT, MICHIGAN (FILE PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint residents are being invited to help shape the future of neighborhood parks through a series of community input meetings focused on outdoor spaces, recreation and future investment.

The City of Flint and the Mott Foundation announced May 26 that residents are encouraged to attend Parks Input community meetings across the city. The ses-

sions are designed to give residents an opportunity to share ideas, voice concerns and provide feedback on what they would like to see in Flint parks.

City officials said the feedback collected during the meetings will help guide future improvements, programming and investments in Flint parks and recreational spaces.

The meetings are open to the public. Residents may attend the location most convenient for them.

Within the May 16-June 1 issue window, meetings were scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 26, at Brennan Park; 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, May 28, at Sarginson Park; 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, May 29, at McKinley Center; and 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at Mott Park.

An additional session is scheduled from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, June 6, at the Cultural Center.

City officials said resident participation is essential to mak-

ing sure parks reflect the needs and priorities of the community.

Neighborhood parks often serve as more than recreation areas. They provide gathering spaces for families, children, seniors, athletes, walkers and community groups. In many neighborhoods, parks also support public health by giving residents access to green space, play areas and places to be active outdoors.

The input meetings give residents a chance to talk directly about what is working, what needs improvement and what types of programming would help families and neighborhoods use parks more often.

Possible topics may include playground conditions, walking paths, sports fields, lighting, seating, safety, accessibility, restrooms, maintenance, trees, open space, community events and recreational programming.

For families, strong neighborhood parks can provide free or low-cost places for children to play and for residents to connect. For seniors and adults, parks can support walking, exercise, relaxation and social interaction. For young people, parks can create safe places for sports, mentoring programs and summer activities.

The meetings also come as communities across Michigan continue to look for ways to improve public spaces and expand access to outdoor recreation. Public input can help local leaders decide where resources are most needed and how future investments should be prioritized.

The City of Flint said the community feedback will directly help guide decisions about future park improvements and recreational spaces.

Residents with questions may email [flintkids@flintkids.org](mailto:flintkids@flintkids.org) or call 810-238-5651.

## POLITICS

# Whitmer delivers final Mackinac Policy Conference keynote as governor

BY MB STAFF

MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer used her final Mackinac Policy Conference keynote address as governor to call for collaboration, common ground and continued work on housing, literacy and affordability.

Whitmer delivered the address May 28 during the 2026 Mackinac Policy Conference, hosted by the Detroit Regional Chamber at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Her office described the speech as her final keynote at the conference as governor.

The annual conference brings together business, government, education, nonprofit and civic leaders from across Michigan to discuss major issues facing the state.

Whitmer, a Democrat serving her second and final term as governor, focused much of her address on bipartisanship and the need to continue finding areas of agreement in a divided political climate.

Since taking office, Whitmer has signed nearly 1,600 bipartisan bills and seven balanced, bipartisan budgets, according to her office. In her remarks, she pointed to road funding, education investments, economic development, tax cuts and Selfridge Air National Guard Base as examples of work completed through cooperation.

The governor also outlined priorities for the rest of the year. Those included building more homes, reducing costs for families and helping every child read.

Housing affordability has become a growing issue across Michigan, affecting workers,



GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER DELIVERS FINAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT MACKINAC POLICY CONFERENCE (MB FILE PHOTO)

families, seniors and local economies. Business and community leaders have increasingly raised concerns that housing shortages can affect workforce development, community growth and the ability of employers to attract and retain workers.

Whitmer also emphasized literacy, an issue that has remained central to state education policy. Michigan has launched several efforts focused on reading instruction, early learning and support for students who are behind in reading.

The governor's message at Mackinac centered on what she described as choosing Michigan over division. She argued that solving major problems requires leaders to lower the temperature, rebuild trust and stay focused on residents' needs.

Her remarks also reflected the political moment. Whitmer is term-limited, and Michigan voters will choose a new governor in 2026. Her final conference address gave her an opportunity to frame the remaining months of her administration and highlight what she sees as unfinished work.

The Mackinac Policy Conference often serves as a stage for statewide political and business priorities. This year's conference included discussions on the economy, talent development, technology, education, infrastructure, public policy and Michigan's competitiveness.

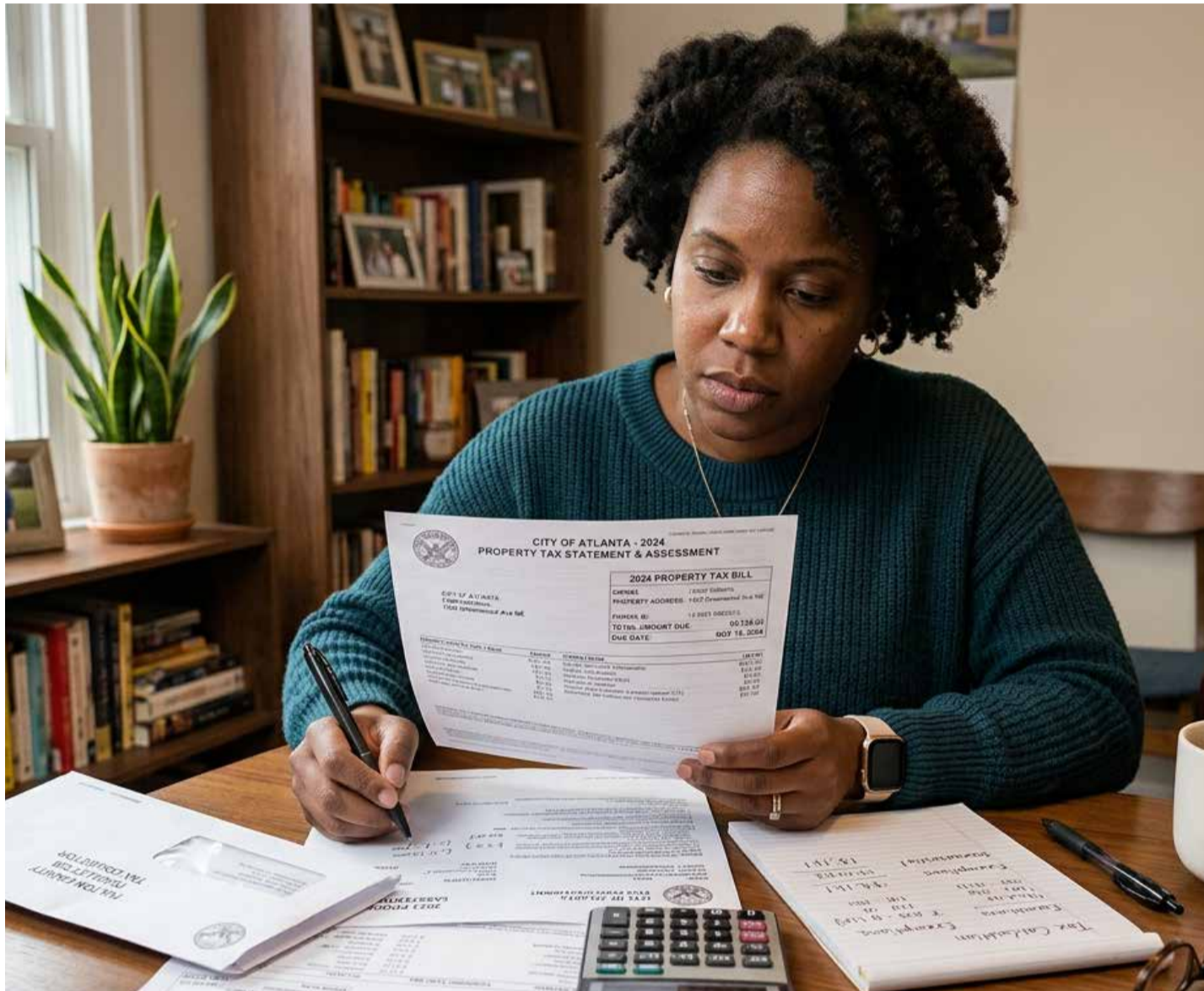
For communities across the Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint, the issues raised during the conference are tied to local needs. Housing, literacy, workforce development and affordability remain common concerns for cities, schools, families and employers.

Whitmer's final keynote also came as Michigan leaders continue to debate the state budget, tax policy, economic development and education outcomes. While partisan divisions remain strong in Lansing and Washington, the governor used the speech to argue that progress depends on continued cooperation.

The conference ran May 26-29.

## POLITICS

# Property tax elimination proposal fails to make Michigan ballot



MB FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A proposal to eliminate property taxes in Michigan will not appear on the 2026 statewide ballot after organizers failed to collect enough valid voter signatures.

AxMITax, a group seeking to abolish property taxes through a constitutional amendment, fell short of the signatures needed to put the question before voters. Bridge Michigan reported May 22 that founder Karla Wagner announced the campaign did not have enough signatures to qualify.

The group needed 446,198

valid voter signatures collected within a 180-day window.

The proposal would have sought to eliminate real and personal property taxes in Michigan. Property taxes are a major funding source for local governments, public schools, libraries, public safety services and other public operations.

The effort drew attention because it targeted one of the state's most familiar and often-debated taxes. Homeowners, businesses, school districts, cities, townships and counties all would have been affected by any major change to the property tax system.

Supporters of eliminating

property taxes have argued that property owners need relief from rising tax burdens and that residents should not continue paying taxes on homes, land or other property they already own.

Critics have warned that eliminating property taxes without a replacement revenue plan could create major budget problems for local governments and schools. Property taxes help pay for services such as police and fire protection, road maintenance, parks, libraries and local government operations.

The failure of the AxMITax petition drive means voters will not decide the issue this fall.

However, property taxes remain a major issue in Lansing.

Lawmakers have continued to debate property tax relief proposals, including plans that would reduce property tax bills or change how some taxes are assessed. Those discussions are separate from the AxMITax ballot effort.

The property tax issue is especially important for communities with aging infrastructure, limited local tax bases or ongoing service needs. Cities such as Flint, Saginaw and others across Mid-Michigan depend on local revenue to support public safety, neighborhoods and basic government services.

At the same time, rising housing costs and property assessments have made tax bills a concern for many homeowners and seniors on fixed incomes.

The AxMITax campaign had attempted to reach the ballot before and failed. Its latest shortfall reflects the difficulty of qualifying a constitutional amendment for a statewide vote. Michigan ballot campaigns must collect a large number of valid signatures, meet strict deadlines and survive review by state election officials.

Michigan voters may still see other statewide questions on the 2026 ballot, depending on the petition and certification process for separate proposals. Voters also are expected to decide whether the state should hold a constitutional convention, a question that automatically appears every 16 years.

For now, the failure of the property tax elimination petition leaves the issue in the hands of lawmakers, local governments and future ballot campaigns.

## POLITICS

# Bipartisan group seeks changes to Michigan candidate selection process

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A bipartisan group of Michigan lawmakers and former governors is backing a proposed constitutional amendment that would change how candidates are selected for two statewide offices and how the boards of Michigan's three largest public universities are chosen.

The proposal would move Democratic and Republican nominations for attorney general and secretary of state from party conventions to primary elections. It also would change how board members are selected for the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University.

Michigan Public reported May 23 that the proposal would give the governor authority to appoint members of those university boards, subject to state Senate approval. That is already the process used for Michigan's 12 other public universities.

Currently, candidates for attorney general, secretary of state and the governing boards of U-M, MSU and WSU are selected through political party conventions. Voters then choose between nominees in the general election.

Supporters say the change would give more voters a direct role in choosing nominees for attorney general and secretary of state. They argue that primaries would allow voters to learn more about the candidates before the general election and make the process more consistent with how gubernatorial candidates are selected.

Sen. Ed McBroom, R-Waucedah Township, is one of the proposal's sponsors. In a May 22 release, McBroom said many residents are surprised to learn that



MB FILE PHOTO

primaries are not used for those two statewide offices.

The proposal also reflects concerns about university board governance. In recent years, Michigan's major university boards have faced public controversies, internal conflicts and questions over accountability.

Supporters of the resolution say moving to a governor-ap-

pointed, Senate-confirmed system could create stronger vetting, clearer accountability and improved governance. They also say appointed board members would be subject to state ethics laws that already apply to appointed boards at Michigan's other public universities.

The proposal would establish term limits and new ethics

requirements for board members of U-M, MSU and WSU. It also would add a ninth member to each board, with alumni associations submitting names for consideration.

Under the proposed structure, MSU's board also would include a member with an agricultural background, reflecting the university's role as a land-grant institution.

The plan has bipartisan sponsorship, but moving it forward would require significant legislative support. A constitutional amendment placed on the ballot by the Legislature requires a two-thirds vote in both chambers.

If approved by lawmakers, the proposal could appear on a statewide ballot for voters to decide.

The issue reaches across education and politics. Michigan's three largest university boards oversee major institutions with large budgets, thousands of employees and statewide influence. Their decisions affect tuition, leadership, campus safety, labor relations, research, health care, athletics and the student experience.

Changing how candidates are selected for attorney general and secretary of state also would affect statewide campaigns. Those offices oversee major issues, including elections, consumer protection, legal representation for the state, driver and vehicle services, business filings and public records.

Supporters say the changes would modernize Michigan's selection process. Critics may question whether giving governors appointment power over the three largest university boards would reduce voter control.

The proposal remains subject to legislative debate.

# U.S. Senate hopefuls clash during Mackinac Policy Conference debate

BY MB STAFF

MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich. — Three Democratic candidates running for Michigan's open U.S. Senate seat clashed during a televised debate May 28 at the Mackinac Policy Conference, highlighting divisions over campaign money, party direction and who is best positioned to win in November.

The debate featured Abdul El-Sayed, a physician and former public health official; state Sen. Mallory McMorrow of Royal Oak; and U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens of Birmingham.

The candidates are competing in the Democratic primary for the seat held by U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, who is not seeking reelection. The primary is scheduled for Aug. 4.

The seat is expected to be one of the most closely watched Senate races in the country. Michigan remains a battleground state, and both parties see the contest as important to the balance of power in the U.S. Senate.

The debate at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island gave the candidates a statewide platform in front of business, political and civic leaders attending the 2026 Mackinac Policy Conference.

El-Sayed used the debate to draw sharp contrasts with his opponents. He criticized corporate campaign donations and presented himself as the candidate pushing for a more progressive direction for the Democratic Party.

Stevens emphasized her record in Congress and framed herself as a candidate focused on results and legislative experience. She has represented a suburban Detroit-area congressional district and is seeking to make the case that she can appeal to voters



STATE SEN. MALLORY MCMORROW, LEFT, U.S. REP. HALEY STEVENS, CENTER, AND FORMER WAYNE COUNTY HEALTH DIRECTOR ABDUL EL-SAYED, RIGHT, PARTICIPATE IN A U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE DEBATE DURING THE MACKINAC POLICY CONFERENCE ON MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH., ON MAY 28, 2026. (MB FILE PHOTO)

in a competitive statewide race.

McMorrow positioned herself between the two, calling for unity while also arguing that Democrats need new energy and a generational shift. She has gained statewide and national attention since being elected to the Michigan Senate and has emphasized communication, messaging and electability.

The candidates also discussed the Senate filibuster. All three said they support eliminating the rule, which effectively requires 60 votes to advance most legislation in the U.S. Senate.

The debate showed the different strategies emerging in the Democratic primary. El-Sayed focused on grassroots support and progressive policy. Stevens leaned on her congressional ex-

perience. McMorrow presented herself as a candidate who could bridge divides within the party while reaching broader groups of voters.

Michigan's two Democratic U.S. senators, Peters and Elissa Slotkin, have not endorsed in the primary. The Associated Press reported that Slotkin described the contest as messier than she would have preferred, while Peters said the nominee will need to bring people together in a purple state.

The winner of the Democratic primary is expected to face former U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, a Republican who narrowly lost Michigan's 2024 U.S. Senate race to Slotkin. Rogers is running again in 2026 and is expected to have a clearer path through the

Republican primary.

Outside spending is expected to be heavy. The AP reported that the Republican Senate campaign organization has reserved \$45 million in advertising, compared with \$20 million by Democrats.

The race is likely to be shaped by national and state issues, including the economy, health care, tariffs, gas prices, foreign policy, campaign finance, abortion rights and the direction of the Democratic Party.

For Michigan voters, the primary offers three distinct Democratic choices before the general election. The Mackinac debate showed that the race is becoming more competitive and more pointed as candidates try to define themselves before August.

## HEALTH

# MDHHS awards nearly \$400,000 to expand sickle cell care in Michigan



MB FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has awarded nearly \$400,000 to expand and improve care for people living with sickle cell disease.

The department announced May 27 that five projects across four organizations were selected through a competitive grant process. Each project will receive about \$80,000 to help increase access to quality care, improve acute care services and support the use of disease-modifying therapies.

Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders that can cause severe pain, infections, stroke, organ damage

and other serious health complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the disease affects about 100,000 people in the United States. More than 90% of people living with sickle cell disease in the U.S. are non-Hispanic Black or African American, and an estimated 3% to 9% are Hispanic or Latino.

State health officials said the grants are part of Michigan's broader effort to address gaps in care and support the goals of the state's 2026-2030 Sickle Cell Disease Public Health Strategic Plan.

"The proposals selected demonstrate an understanding of the issues people living with sickle cell face in accessing the health

care they need," MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel said in the announcement.

Henry Ford Health will use its funding to continue expanding the transition of patients from pediatric to adult sickle cell care. The work also will focus on helping patients gain better access to other specialties and treatment management services.

The University of Michigan will work to prepare pediatric patients for transition to adult care by increasing self-management skills and knowledge of disease-modifying therapies. U-M also will help develop a comprehensive adult sickle cell clinic to improve access to coordinated care.

Bronson Health Foundation will establish a multidisciplinary

specialty clinic designed to improve access to care and acute care services for people living with sickle cell disease, with an emphasis on adult care.

Children's Hospital of Michigan will establish a Sickle Cell Day Hospital. The goal is to move some pain management care from the emergency room to the sickle cell disease unit, which could help patients receive more specialized care in a setting focused on their condition.

Health officials said the funded projects are meant to address long-standing barriers faced by patients with sickle cell disease, including difficulty finding adult care, limited access to specialists and challenges receiving consistent treatment for pain and other complications.

The CDC says many people with sickle cell disease do not receive recommended screenings and treatments. The agency also notes that some patients report feeling stigmatized or dismissed when seeking care.

The Michigan grants are intended to help providers build systems that are more responsive to patient needs. The work includes transition support, specialty care, care coordination and improved treatment access.

Successful applicants may receive continued annual funding through Sept. 30, 2030, depending on available funding and performance.

Residents seeking more information about the new clinic services may contact MDHHS by emailing [genetics@michigan.gov](mailto:genetics@michigan.gov).

## HEALTH

# Great Lakes Bay mental health initiative announces new name, fundraising milestone



CMU HEALTH

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Initiative at CMU Health has announced a new name and a \$30,000 fundraising milestone as it continues efforts to reduce stigma and expand mental health programming across the region.

The organization, previously known as the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership, announced the update following its “Lifting Our Voices: Be the Light” event held in April. The announcement was reported May 21.

Officials said the new name reflects the organization’s transition from partnership-building to measurable action, expanded programming and continued regional outreach.

The initiative is now housed at CMU Health. The move, which took effect earlier this year, marked a new chapter for the

organization after several years under the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance. The transition is intended to strengthen the initiative’s connection to clinical education, patient care and community-based mental health programming.

More than 100 people attended the “Be the Light” fundraising event, which has raised \$30,000 to date. Proceeds will support anti-stigma initiatives, youth and workplace mental health programs, and efforts to improve access to mental health providers.

During the event, interim Executive Director Dr. Delicia Pruitt unveiled the organization’s new name and logo. Speakers included Jenna Candreia of The Liv Project and representatives from Windover High School, who discussed the impact of Teen Mental Health First Aid training.

Organizers said the training has helped increase peer support and create more open conversations about mental health among

students.

The initiative’s mission is to collaborate with community and clinical partners to improve mental health for people across the Great Lakes Bay Region. Its work focuses on strengthening access, expanding education and promoting early intervention.

The organization’s broader strategies include advancing anti-stigma efforts, expanding workplace and youth mental health programs, and improving access to mental health providers.

Mental health access remains a significant concern across Michigan communities, particularly for youth, families, workers

and people seeking timely care. Regional partnerships can play an important role in connecting schools, employers, health providers and community organizations around shared goals.

Officials said the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Initiative will continue outreach and community partnerships throughout 2026.

The organization also reminds residents that people experiencing a suicidal, substance use or mental health crisis may call or text 988 for immediate support. People experiencing a medical emergency should call 911.



## HEALTH

# Blue Cross, Michigan Medicine reach agreement to preserve patient access



BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Michigan Medicine have reached a new long-term contract agreement that will keep Michigan Medicine's facilities, clinics and physicians in the insurer's health network.

The agreement was announced May 27 by top executives from both organizations. The deal means Michigan Medicine's academic medical center and affiliated facilities will remain in network for Blue Cross members.

The organizations said they will continue meeting over the coming weeks to finalize details before a June 30 renewal date. Final terms of the contract will remain private.

The agreement is significant for patients across Michigan who receive care through Michigan Medicine or University of Michigan Health facilities and rely on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan insurance coverage.

Without an agreement, some services could have been considered out of network beginning July 1, potentially affecting costs and access for patients. The new agreement avoids that disruption and preserves in-network access to Michigan Medicine providers.

Michigan Medicine includes the University of Michigan Medical School and University of Michigan Health. Its system includes C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital, University Hospital, the Frankel Cardiovascular Center, Kellogg Eye Center, University of Michigan Health-West, Uni-

versity of Michigan-Sparrow and the Rogel Cancer Center.

Michigan Medicine said the agreement ensures continued access for patients and Blue Cross members statewide.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is a nonprofit mutual insurance company and an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The company provides health benefits to more than 4.7 million members living in Michigan, as well as employees of Michigan-headquartered companies who live outside the state.

For patients, in-network status often affects out-of-pocket costs, referrals, appointment access and continuity of care. Contract disputes between health systems and insurers can create uncertainty for patients, especially those receiving specialized

treatment, ongoing care or services at major academic medical centers.

The new agreement removes that uncertainty for Blue Cross members who use Michigan Medicine providers. It also maintains access to care at one of the state's largest academic health systems.

Michigan Medicine said its work includes patient care, medical education and research. The U-M Medical School has more than \$800 million in total research funding, according to the health system.

Blue Cross said the agreement supports continued access while also addressing affordability of care and coverage.

The organizations did not release additional financial details of the contract.

HEALTH

# State warns residents to avoid foam on Michigan lakes and rivers

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — State health officials are reminding residents and visitors to avoid foam on Michigan lakes, rivers, streams and other surface waters.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued the advisory May 20 as summer approached. Foam can appear white, off-white or brown and may have an earthy or fishy smell. It can build up in bays, eddies, dams or other river barriers.

Officials said foam may contain harmful chemicals or bacteria, including high levels of PFAS. PFAS are human-made chemicals linked to harmful health effects, including high cholesterol

and liver damage.

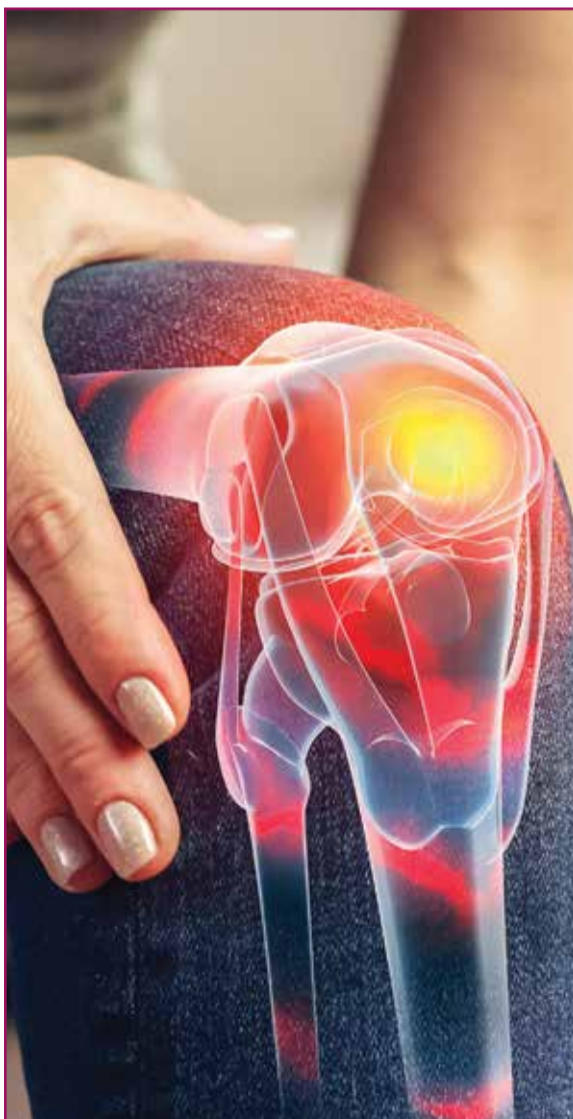
People who touch foam should rinse off or bathe as soon as possible. Officials said the skin is generally a good barrier to PFAS, but people can accidentally swallow foam or other substances if they do not rinse off after contact.

Pet owners also should keep animals away from foam. Pets that touch foam should be rinsed and bathed with fresh water because animals can swallow residue while grooming.

Residents with questions about PFAS or foam exposure may call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline at 800-648-6942.



SHORELINE FOAM PUBLIC SAFETY SIGNAGE (MB FILE PHOTO)



## NEXT GENERATION ORTHOPEDIC TREATMENTS

Choose the most preferred health system for orthopedics.

It's important to keep your bones and muscles strong. Covenant HealthCare keeps the whole family one step ahead. We're leading the way with next generation treatments, like robotic-assisted joint replacement, advanced expertise for complex trauma injuries, and a personalized approach to sports medicine. With the largest orthopedic team, we're with you every step of the way. You have a choice. Choose Covenant HealthCare.



CovenantHealthCare.com/Ortho



## HEALTH

# MDHHS highlights harm reduction efforts as overdose deaths decline in Michigan

BY MB STAFF

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Michigan health officials are highlighting harm reduction programs as overdose deaths continue to decline across the state.

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Elizabeth Hertel visited the Grand Rapids Red Project on May 27 to learn more about the organization's harm reduction strategies and how opioid settlement funding is supporting local efforts.

The Grand Rapids Red Project provides services for people affected by substance use, HIV and other health issues. During the visit, Hertel met with staff, peers and clients and toured outreach spaces and a mobile health unit that brings services directly to people in the community.

State officials said the visit was meant to show how local organizations are using opioid settlement funding and state investments to reduce overdose deaths, prevent the spread of infectious disease and connect people to treatment and recovery services.

Michigan is projected to see a 47% reduction in overdose death rates in 2025 compared with the state's 2021 peak, according to provisional data cited by MDHHS. The state expects fewer than 1,800 overdose deaths annually in 2025, down from more than 3,000 deaths in 2021.

State officials said the projections would mark the fourth consecutive year of declining overdose deaths in Michigan.

Harm reduction programs are designed to reduce health risks and save lives. Services can include naloxone distribution, syringe access, drug checking, wound care, outreach, education and connections to treatment or



OUTREACH WORKERS WITH A MOBILE HEALTH UNIT (GENERATED IMAGE)

recovery support.

MDHHS said a recent modeling study found harm reduction programs have contributed to reductions in overdose deaths, hospitalizations and hepatitis C cases in Michigan.

The Grand Rapids Red Project has received \$4.2 million from MDHHS between fiscal years 2024 and 2026 to support harm reduction work addressing substance use disorder.

The state's fiscal year 2026 budget includes more than \$131 million from the Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund to support harm reduction, treatment and recovery services. More than \$25 million is being used to support

harm reduction agencies, diversion, law enforcement training and naloxone distribution.

Michigan is expected to receive more than \$1.8 billion from national opioid settlements by 2040. Half of that funding is distributed to the State of Michigan Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund, while the other half goes directly to county, city and township governments across the state.

MDHHS said harm reduction agencies now operate at more than 115 sites across Michigan. In 2017, there were five such sites.

For communities across the state, including the Great Lakes

Bay Region, the decline in overdose deaths represents an important public health development. Local governments and community organizations continue to use settlement dollars and state support to expand prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction services.

State officials said continued investment will be needed to maintain progress and reach residents who remain at risk.

More information about substance use disorder and opioid resources is available through [Michigan.gov/SUD](https://Michigan.gov/SUD). Information about harm reduction agencies is available through [Michigan.gov/SSP](https://Michigan.gov/SSP).

## EDUCATION

# Michigan teachers awarded \$822,000 for national certification

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — More than 129 teachers in 41 Michigan school districts are receiving \$822,000 in state grants for earning National Board Certification, an advanced professional credential for educators.

The Michigan Department of Education announced the awards May 18. Districts and intermediate school districts applied on behalf of teachers who earned the certification, which is designed to recognize accomplished teaching and support improvement in schools.

Teachers receiving the grants will receive at least \$4,000. Teachers who work in high-poverty schools that receive building-wide federal Title I funding are eligible for \$10,000 grants.

The National Board Recognized Achievement grant program is funded through the State School Aid Act. State education officials said the program is intended to acknowledge the professional learning, growth and achievement of Michigan teachers who have obtained National Board Certification.

The grants also support Michigan's broader goal of increasing the number of certified teachers in areas of shortage, one of the priorities in the state's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan.

Saginaw Public Schools was among the districts receiving funding. The district was awarded \$42,000 for six teachers.

Other districts receiving larger awards include Detroit Public Schools Community District, which received \$180,000 for 18 teachers; Rochester Community



MICHIGAN TEACHERS ARE BEING RECOGNIZED FOR EARNING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION, AN ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL FOR EDUCATORS. (MB FILE PHOTO)

Schools, which received \$84,000 for 21 teachers; Lansing School District, which received \$80,000 for eight teachers; Kentwood Public Schools, which received \$58,000 for seven teachers; and University Preparatory Academy in Detroit, which received \$40,000 for four teachers.

National Board Certification is considered one of the highest professional certifications available to teachers. It is separate from state licensure and is meant to recognize educators who demonstrate accomplished teaching through a rigorous process.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards says the certification was designed to develop, retain and recognize accomplished teach-

ers while generating continued improvement in schools nationwide.

For school districts, the state grants can serve as both recognition and retention support. Teacher recruitment and retention remain major concerns in Michigan and across the country, especially in high-poverty schools and subject areas where qualified educators are harder to find.

Education leaders have said investing in teachers can have a direct effect on student learning, school culture and long-term student outcomes. National Board Certification requires teachers to reflect on their practice, demonstrate knowledge of their students and content area, and show

evidence of effective instruction.

The Michigan Department of Education said the grants reward educators who are committed to their profession and to students.

The awards come as districts continue to focus on improving classroom instruction, reducing staffing shortages and strengthening educator pipelines. Programs that recognize advanced credentials may help districts retain experienced teachers while encouraging other educators to pursue professional growth.

Anyone interested in learning more about National Board Certification may visit the Michigan Department of Education's National Board Certification webpage.

# LET'S FIND OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS!



[www.sisd.cc](http://www.sisd.cc)

Know someone looking for their next opportunity? Saginaw ISD is **NOW HIRING** across all departments!

- competitive wages
- tuition reimbursement
- reduced childcare\*
- full benefits packages
- continued professional development

*\*For those that qualify through Tri-Share*



EDUCATION

# Why do schools ask voters to approve bonds?



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

Michigan k-12 schools ask voters to approve school bonds for three main reasons.

### 1. Repairing and Improving School Buildings

Many school buildings in Michigan are old and need repairs. Bond money can help fix roofs, heating systems, plumbing, and electrical systems. Schools may also improve security, update playgrounds, and make buildings safer and easier for everyone to use.

### 2. Updating Technology and Classrooms

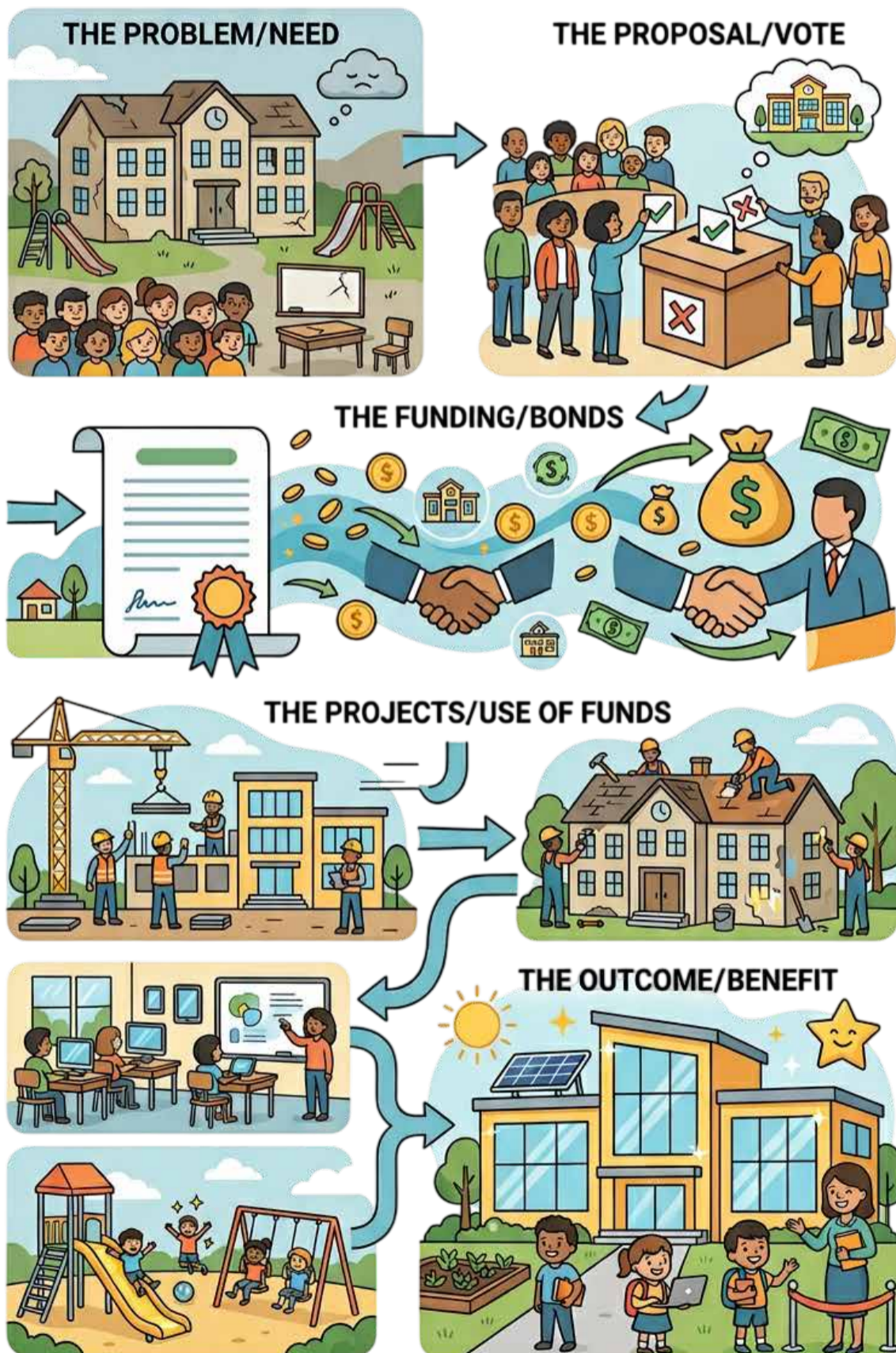
Schools use bond money to buy new technology and improve classrooms. This may include computers, science labs, internet systems, and spaces for career training classes. These updates help students learn skills they will need for college and future jobs.

### 3. Meeting the Needs of Students and Communities

Some schools need more space because student enrollment changes over time. Districts may build new classrooms, improve sports or arts areas, or create spaces for preschool and special education programs. Bonds can also help schools save money in the future by replacing old buildings with newer, more efficient ones.

In Michigan, voters are asked to approve school bond proposals before districts can borrow money for these projects. Bond money can only be used for buildings and major improvements, not for teacher salaries or daily school expenses.

This is the system for all Michigan k-12 districts, varied in size and population. Large districts, small districts. Rural or urban. Upper or lower peninsula. K-12 districts who have capital improvement needs face the challenge of asking voters to approve school bonds.



## EDUCATION

# Saginaw Promise Changing Funding Options to Increase support to Scholars!



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES (COURTESY PHOTO)

Saginaw Promise, an economic initiative working to impact the future of Saginaw, its economy, and the lives of its students through information and scholarships for post-secondary education. Since 2012, the Saginaw Promise has awarded \$1,515,062 in scholarships to 804 scholars! Saginaw Promise Scholarship Applicants number 232 for the 2026/2027 academic year!

In 2026, the Saginaw Promise is increasing support to scholars as it can now fund “costs of attendance”, in addition to tuition and mandatory fees, the Saginaw Promise scholarship can now fund housing, books, sup-

plies, food, transportation etc. Funding “costs of attendance” will increase support and assistance to scholars as they pursue their educational goals and increase persistence and attainment rates.

Who is eligible for the Saginaw Promise scholarship? The Saginaw Promise Scholarship is a benefit and an incentive for children of families who live in and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone (comprised of the cities of Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kochville and that area of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District). The organization’s goal is to impact the future of Saginaw by provid-

ing information and scholarships for postsecondary education to assist scholars to earn a program certificate or degree from a technical/trade school, community college, or university. The benefit of a postsecondary education will help retain and grow Saginaw’s population, which will support current businesses and attract new businesses with an educated workforce.

For Saginaw Promise Information or Questions: Visit [www.saginawpromise.org](http://www.saginawpromise.org) or email [dsanchez@saginawpromise.org](mailto:dsanchez@saginawpromise.org) or telephone (989) 607-3428.

SPONSORED CONTENT

## Support the Saginaw Promise 2026 Special events:

### “Swinging for the Promise” Golf Event

Saginaw Country Club  
Thursday, August 13, 2026  
10 AM

### “Power of a Promise” Luncheon

Horizons Conference Center  
Thursday, October 29, 2026  
11:30 AM

*\*Event details regarding golf registration, event tickets and sponsorship opportunities will soon be available for both events and included on the Saginaw Promise website.*

# State releases 2026 special education performance data

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan's 2026 performance data for students receiving special education services is now available to the public.

The Michigan Department of Education announced May 21 that data required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is available for students ages 3 to 21 who are eligible for special education services and have an individualized education program.

The public data is used to inform results and compliance indicators in the state's State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report. Reporting areas include graduation, drop-out rates, statewide assessment and parent involvement.

State education officials said the data gives families, educators, school leaders and community members a way to review how districts and intermediate school districts are performing in several areas tied to special education services.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires states to report annually to the public on the performance of each local educational agency on targets included in the state's performance plan. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs designates the specific indicators states must report.

The State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report includes data on 18 special education indicators. Local educational agency data is publicly reported for indicators 1 through 14.

According to the Michigan Department of Education, the



MICHIGAN'S 2026 SPECIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE DATA IS NOW AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES, EDUCATORS AND THE PUBLIC.

data is available through the MI School Data portal, Michigan's official public education data website maintained by the Center for Educational Performance and Information. Data for intermediate school districts and local education agencies can be viewed through the Michigan School Data Summary.

The reported data is primarily from the 2024-25 school year. State officials said federal requirements create a one-year reporting lag for certain indicators, including graduation, dropout and discipline-related indicators.

The data is collected through multiple systems, including the Michigan Student Data System and Catamaran. The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability also provides Michigan Education Assessment Sys-

tem data used in the reporting.

Some district data may be listed as "N/A" if the district does not meet reporting criteria. For example, graduation rates may not be available for districts without a 12th grade, or drop-out rates may not be available if there are no students in the relevant age range.

Data is also withheld when a district has 10 or fewer students in a subgroup. State officials said those limits are used to protect student privacy and comply with federal and state privacy laws.

For families, the public reporting can provide insight into how schools are serving students with disabilities. For districts, the data can help identify areas of strength and areas where more support may be needed.

Special education services

are designed to support students whose disabilities affect their ability to access learning without individualized supports. Individualized education programs, commonly known as IEPs, outline services, accommodations and goals for eligible students.

The release of the data comes as Michigan continues to focus on equity, student outcomes and access to high-quality instruction for all learners.

People who want a free paper copy of the data may contact their intermediate school district or local school district office of special education.

Questions about the public reporting data may be directed to the Michigan Department of Education.

## EDUCATION

# Michigan creates Every Child Reads council to advance literacy goals

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan has created a new statewide literacy council intended to help guide efforts to improve reading outcomes for students.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed Executive Order 2026-12 on May 28, establishing the Every Child Reads Champions Council as an advisory body within the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential.

The council will advise the governor and state education leaders as Michigan continues its Every Child Reads literacy effort. The state's literacy agenda focuses on early starts, proven methods and extra support for students who need help becoming strong readers.

The order says the council will bring together leaders from education, business, philanthropy, nonprofits, government and other sectors to support a shared goal that every child becomes a strong reader, writer and communicator.

The council will include the state superintendent of public instruction or a designee, the MiLEAP director or a designee, members with expertise in the science of reading, representatives from nonprofit and advocacy sectors, philanthropic and business leaders, and a member with experience working in tribal government or educating in tribal communities.

The council also will include members appointed from lists submitted by legislative leaders.

The executive order says council membership should reflect Michigan's diversity, including urban, suburban and rural communities. It also calls for representation connected to



YOUNG CHILD READING A BOOK (MB FILE PHOTO)

early childhood education, out-of-school time, special education and English language learners.

The council's duties include championing the Every Child Reads program, aligning statewide leaders around literacy, identifying what is working, hosting conversations with national literacy experts and helping guide public updates on implementation.

MiLEAP, in coordination with the Michigan Department of Education and with guidance from the council, will prepare an annual Every Child Reads Implementation Update beginning in 2027. That update is expected to summarize progress, implementation needs and opportunities.

The state also plans to develop and update an Every Child Reads Dashboard. The dashboard is expected to include state

assessment data, national assessment data and other information relevant to tracking the progress of Michigan's literacy work.

The executive order says the dashboard should include data broken down by school district and student demographics to the greatest extent possible. The first annual dashboard update is expected by Jan. 15, 2027.

Whitmer's order also abolishes the Michigan PreK-12 Literacy Commission, which was established in 2016. The new council is intended to reflect changes in state literacy law and current understanding of effective

reading instruction.

State leaders have said Michigan is redesigning reading instruction to better align with the science of reading, an evidence-based approach that emphasizes how students learn letters, sounds, word meaning, fluency and comprehension.

Literacy has become a major education priority in Michigan because reading skills affect student success across subjects and grade levels. Students who struggle to read can face challenges in math, science, social studies and later career preparation.

The Every Child Reads effort is intended to support literacy from early childhood through later grades. State officials have described the plan around three major areas: starting early, using proven reading methods and providing extra support when students struggle.

The council will serve without compensation, though members may be reimbursed for necessary travel and expenses. It may also create advisory workgroups, consult with outside experts, hold hearings and receive public comments as part of its work.

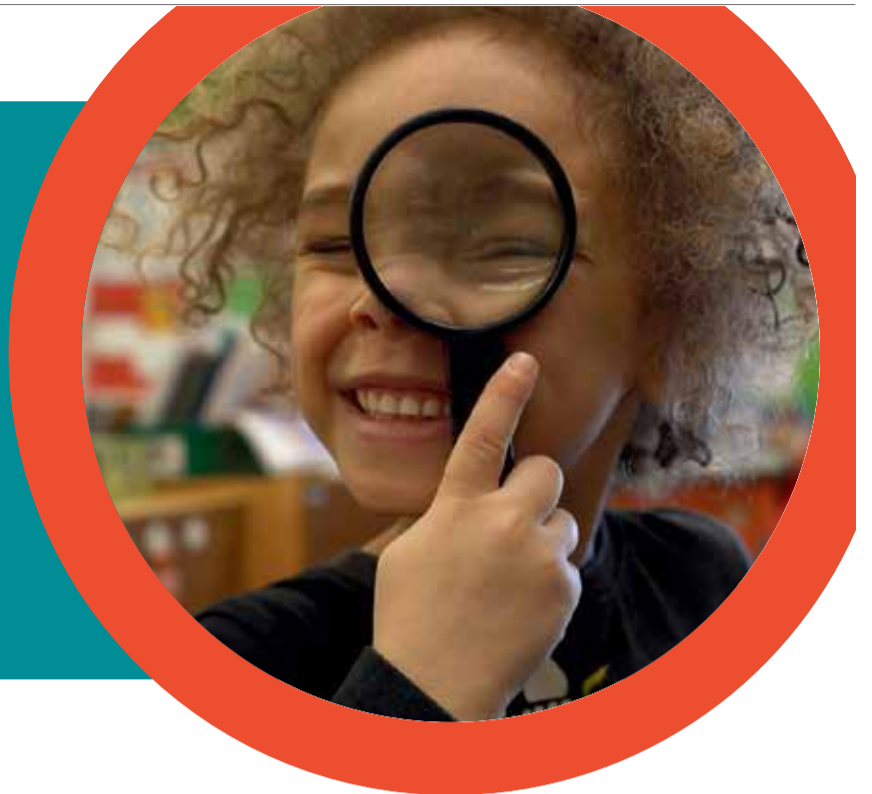
The order took effect upon filing.



Every child reads.

MiLEAP

# NOW OPEN: Enrollment for NO-COST, High- Quality PreK for All



## APPLY NOW FOR THE 26-27 SCHOOL YEAR TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!

Open to children who will be four by December 1, 2026.

Thanks to **Michigan's PreK for All program**, participating PreK classrooms are available at **NO COST** to families with licensed teachers throughout Saginaw County.

### OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Half-days or full-days
- Four- and five-day programs
- Extended day programs are available in some locations
- Transportation is available in some areas

Research shows participation in a quality PreK program **improves a child's emotional, social and intellectual skills** and helps ensure they are healthy and ready for kindergarten.\*

All Michigan 4-year-olds qualify for NO-COST, **high-quality** PreK with licensed teachers. While children from low-income families receive priority, this program is available to all Michigan families regardless of income.

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



Visit [www.earlychildhood.sisd.cc](http://www.earlychildhood.sisd.cc) or call  
**989-752-2193** for more information and apply today!

## BUSINESS + FINANCE

# Applied Innovation Theater unveiled at Dow Event Center in Saginaw



APPLIED INNOVATION AND THE SAGINAW SPIRIT OFFICIALLY UNVEILED THE APPLIED INNOVATION THEATER DURING A RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY MAY 27 AT THE DOW EVENT CENTER. (PHOTO CREDIT: APPLIED INNOVATION)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — A new name has been added to one of downtown Saginaw's longtime entertainment spaces.

Applied Innovation and the Saginaw Spirit officially unveiled the Applied Innovation Theater during a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 27 at the Dow Event Center, marking a new naming rights partnership for the venue's theater space.

The theater, located inside the Dow Event Center at 303 Johnson St., seats roughly 2,200 people and has served as a regional venue for concerts, comedy, Broadway productions, community events and other live performances. The space was formerly known as The Theater at The Dow Event Center.

Officials said the naming agreement reflects a growing partnership between Applied Innovation and the Saginaw Spirit that began in 2022. Applied In-

novation has served as the Spirit's office technology provider and has been a premier sponsor of the hockey club.

John Lowery, CEO of Applied Innovation, said the naming opportunity represents a deeper investment in the community and the region.

Lowery said the company views the partnership as a "long-term investment in the people and places that make Mid-Michigan strong."

Applied Innovation is a Grand Rapids-based, family-owned technology company that provides imaging, technology and automation services for businesses, health care organizations, schools, manufacturers and other clients. The company has offices in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Florida and employs more than 500 team members.

Beyond its business relationship with the Spirit, Applied Innovation has supported several Saginaw-area organizations and initiatives, including Hoyt Park,

the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum, CAN Council, Temple Theatre, Saginaw Choral Society and Rescue Ministries of Mid-Michigan.

Craig Goslin, president and managing partner of the Saginaw Spirit, said the partnership aligns with the Spirit's broader mission of community engagement and economic investment. Goslin said the organization was "thrilled to welcome Applied Innovation" as the theater's naming rights partner.

The Dow Event Center is owned by Saginaw County and managed by Legends Global. It includes multiple event spaces, including the arena, theater, atrium, garden room and Jolt Credit Union Event Park. The arena is home to the Saginaw Spirit, which has played in the Ontario Hockey League since 2002 and has become one of the region's most visible sports and entertainment organizations.

The naming of the theater comes as Riverfront Saginaw con-

tinues to see attention from public and private partners focused on strengthening downtown as a destination for entertainment, business and community activity. Local officials and organizational leaders have pointed to the Dow Event Center as one of the anchors of that activity.

The theater has hosted national entertainers, touring productions and local events over the years, including performances by comedians, musicians and Broadway-style productions. Venue officials said the Applied Innovation Theater will continue to serve as a destination for performing arts, entertainment and community gatherings.

The agreement also adds another corporate naming partnership to the Dow Event Center complex. The overall facility has carried the Dow Event Center name since 2004, when The Dow Chemical Co. secured naming rights for the former Saginaw County Event Center.

For Applied Innovation and the Spirit, officials said the new theater name represents more than a sign change. They framed the partnership as a shared commitment to service, local investment and the role entertainment venues play in bringing people together.

The Applied Innovation Theater is expected to remain part of the Dow Event Center's regular lineup of performances and community events, supporting downtown Saginaw's continued efforts to attract visitors, strengthen local partnerships and expand access to cultural experiences in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

## BUSINESS + FINANCE

# Michigan approves business projects expected to create 650 jobs, \$97 million in investment

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Three business development projects approved by the Michigan Strategic Fund are expected to create 650 jobs and generate more than \$97 million in capital investment across Southeast Michigan.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Economic Development Corp. announced the approvals May 19. The projects include an electric vehicle company expanding its North American headquarters in Troy, a new food and beverage manufacturing operation in Fenton and a robotic 3D concrete printing company establishing a new facility in Detroit.

The projects are supported through performance-based grants from the Michigan Business Development Program, which assists companies that create qualified new jobs or make new investments in the state. State officials said the grants are tied to job creation and investment commitments and are reimbursed after companies meet eligible requirements.

The largest job commitment comes from Slate Auto, an electric vehicle manufacturer that plans to expand its North American headquarters in Troy. The Michigan Strategic Fund approved a \$5 million performance-based grant for the project.

Slate Auto, which has been headquartered in Troy since it began operations in 2022, is expected to invest \$10.4 million

and create at least 392 jobs over the next five years. The new jobs are expected to include corporate, engineering and design positions.

The company also has a facility in Sterling Heights and currently employs 325 people in Michigan, according to state economic development officials. Slate Auto has received more than 150,000 reservations for its principal product, an affordable electric pickup truck, and expects deliveries to begin in late 2026, with higher-volume production expected in 2027.

State officials said Slate considered several states before choosing to expand in Michigan, citing the state's automotive history, industry infrastructure, skilled workforce and access to other mobility and vehicle electrification companies in Metro Detroit.

In Genesee County, Fenton Food and Beverage LLC is expected to create at least 96 jobs and invest up to \$56.2 million in the city of Fenton. The Michigan Strategic Fund approved a \$960,000 performance-based grant for the project, along with a five-year, 50% Alternative State Essential Services Assessment exemption valued at up to \$168,000.

The company is newly formed and connected to Fenton Food and Beverage LLC, Fenton Holding Co. Inc. and Fenton Food and Beverage Properties LLC. The project's average wage is expected to be \$33.32 per hour, plus benefits. State officials said all positions are expected to start above the

regional median wage of \$21.58 per hour.

Fenton Food and Beverage is owned by Yahya Abbas of YaYa Foods Corp., a Canadian food and beverage manufacturer with more than 30 years of experience. Manufacturing operations for YaYa Foods and the new Fenton facility will remain independent, but the Fenton site is expected to produce a primary product that could be used as a component in some YaYa Foods products.

State officials said the Fenton facility is expected to use new technology to extract milk from nuts with water instead of making milk from paste. The project is connected to the growing plant-based milk alternative market, where YaYa Foods has a long history.

Michigan was one of six states in the Midwest and Southeast considered for the project. Officials said the company selected Michigan because of its workforce, business partnerships and access to global markets through Detroit Metro Airport.

In Detroit, Alquist 3D LLC plans to establish a new manufacturing and research and development facility. The Colorado-based company specializes in robotic 3D concrete printing for construction.

The Michigan Strategic Fund approved a \$1.6 million performance-based grant for Alquist 3D. The company is expected to invest at least \$31.25 million and create up to 162 jobs over the next five years.

The new Robotics and Engineering Center of Excellence will be located in Detroit's technology corridor at Newlab. The facility

is expected to include space for research, manufacturing, robotics production, engineering development, workforce training and 3D construction printing advancement.

Alquist selected Michigan after evaluating several other states, including Nebraska, Georgia, Arizona, Arkansas, Minnesota and North Carolina. State officials said Detroit was selected because of its manufacturing base, industrial workforce and education and training infrastructure.

The company also has a workforce training component. Since September 2024, Alquist's educational program has trained more than 200 students. As part of its Michigan expansion, the company plans to grow that effort and has been in discussions with Henry Ford College, Wayne State University, the University of Michigan and other schools.

State officials said the three projects reflect Michigan's continued push to attract investment in electric vehicles, agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, construction technology and workforce development.

The Michigan Economic Development Corp. said the job and investment numbers represent company commitments to the state. The terms will be formalized through performance-based project agreements and may be amended or canceled if commitments are not met.

## BUSINESS + FINANCE

# Bay City seeks public input on future of Midland Street Business District



MIDLAND STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT (COURTESY PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — The Midland Street Business District is asking residents, visitors, business owners and others who spend time in the area to share feedback on the district's future.

A 10-question anonymous community survey was released May 20 to help guide future improvements, events, promotions and long-term planning for the district.

The survey asks people what they enjoy about Midland Street, what they would like to see more of and what ideas could help make the area a stronger place to visit, connect and support local businesses.

The Midland Street Business District is one of Bay City's recognizable commercial and entertainment areas. It includes restaurants, bars, retail, service businesses, professional offices and nearby residential areas. The district also has been a place for community events, nightlife and local business activity.

The survey begins by asking

how often people visit the district and their primary reason for visiting. Options include dining and restaurants, bars and nightlife, shopping and retail, events and festivals, services, living nearby or other reasons.

Participants also are asked to rate the current experience in the district on a scale of one to five and choose words that best describe Midland Street today. Options include vibrant, historic, up and coming, inconsistent, underutilized, in need of improved safety, entertainment focused or unsure.

Another question asks whether Midland Street currently offers the mix of businesses and services needed to serve both residents and visitors.

The survey also asks what types of businesses people would most like to see added. Options include retail shops, dining, grocery, lodging or hotel uses, rental living, fitness studios or gyms, nightlife establishments, health care or medical services, professional offices and other ideas.

Events also are part of the

public feedback request. Participants are asked what types of events would encourage them to visit more often, including farmers markets, live music, seasonal festivals, holiday markets, food and wine events, family-focused activities, art and historic walks or everyday experiences.

The survey asks what improvements would most enhance the visitor experience. Options include more parking, streetscape beautification such as lighting and landscaping, improved walkability, clearer signage and way-finding, public seating areas, improved safety presence and extended business hours.

The final questions look to the future. Participants are asked how they would most like Midland Street to be known in five years. Options include a vibrant dining destination, a cultural and arts hub, a family-friendly community district, a nightlife hotspot or a mixed-use district with shops, dining and lodging.

The survey also gives participants space to write their own ideas for changes that could posi-

tively affect the district.

The feedback could help shape decisions made by district leaders and city officials as they consider how to support existing businesses, attract new investment and improve the experience for people who visit or work in the area.

The Midland Street Management Board is responsible for encouraging the district to be a strong urban center with retail, service, residential and recreational opportunities. The board oversees maintenance, physical improvements, repairs, security of publicly owned off-street parking lots and streetscape, and marketing for the district.

The board has 13 members and meets at 9 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month, excluding December, at River Rock, 614 E. Midland St.

Public input efforts such as the survey can be important for business districts because they help identify what people value, what barriers may keep them from visiting and what changes could support business growth. Feedback from residents and visitors can also help communities balance entertainment, walkability, safety, housing, parking, events and small business development.

For Midland Street, the survey may help clarify whether the district should continue building its identity around dining and nightlife, expand into arts and culture, add more family-friendly programming or pursue a broader mixed-use vision.

Community members, visitors and business owners may complete the anonymous survey online.

# SBA, General Motors to host Michigan supplier expo for small businesses



SUPPLIER MATCHMAKING EXPO (PHOTO CREDIT: U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Small businesses and local suppliers will have an opportunity to meet directly with major companies and government buyers during a Michigan Supplier Matchmaking Expo scheduled for June 5 in Detroit.

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced May 27 that it will host the event with General Motors at MotorCity Casino, 2901 Grand River Ave. The expo is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is free to attend.

The event is designed to connect small businesses with large corporations, industrial producers and public-sector buyers that are seeking suppliers. Organizers said the goal is to help strengthen domestic supply chains while creating more opportunities for small businesses to pursue contracts and business relationships.

The Michigan event will be the

SBA's second supplier matchmaking expo of 2026. The agency launched its first expo in March in Charlotte, North Carolina, where more than 675 small businesses connected with 35 large industrial buyers and public-sector resources. More than 170 small businesses successfully matched with large companies to provide services, according to the SBA.

The Detroit expo will include one-on-one matchmaking sessions between small businesses and prospective buyers. It also will include an exhibit hall with U.S. buyers and local, state and federal organizations that support small manufacturers.

Confirmed buyers include American Rheinmetall, Boeing, Defense Logistics Agency, Department of the Air Force, Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority, DTE Energy, Google, MillerKnoll, NASA Office of Small Business Programs,

RENK America, SAPA Transmission, SMART, Swamp Stick LLC, Things Sought After Inc., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The expo is being hosted by the SBA in collaboration with General Motors and the New American Industrial Alliance.

For small businesses, the event is intended to provide direct access to buyers that can be difficult to reach through traditional networking. Businesses may be able to use the sessions to introduce their products and services, discuss supplier needs, learn about contract requirements and build relationships that could lead to future work.

The event also is expected to be relevant for Michigan manufacturers, professional service providers, component suppliers, technology firms, logistics companies and other businesses that support industrial and govern-

ment supply chains.

Federal contracting and supplier diversity opportunities can be important growth pathways for small businesses, particularly in a state with deep ties to manufacturing, mobility, defense, engineering and advanced technology. Michigan's business economy includes thousands of small firms that provide parts, services, design, logistics, professional support and specialized products to larger companies.

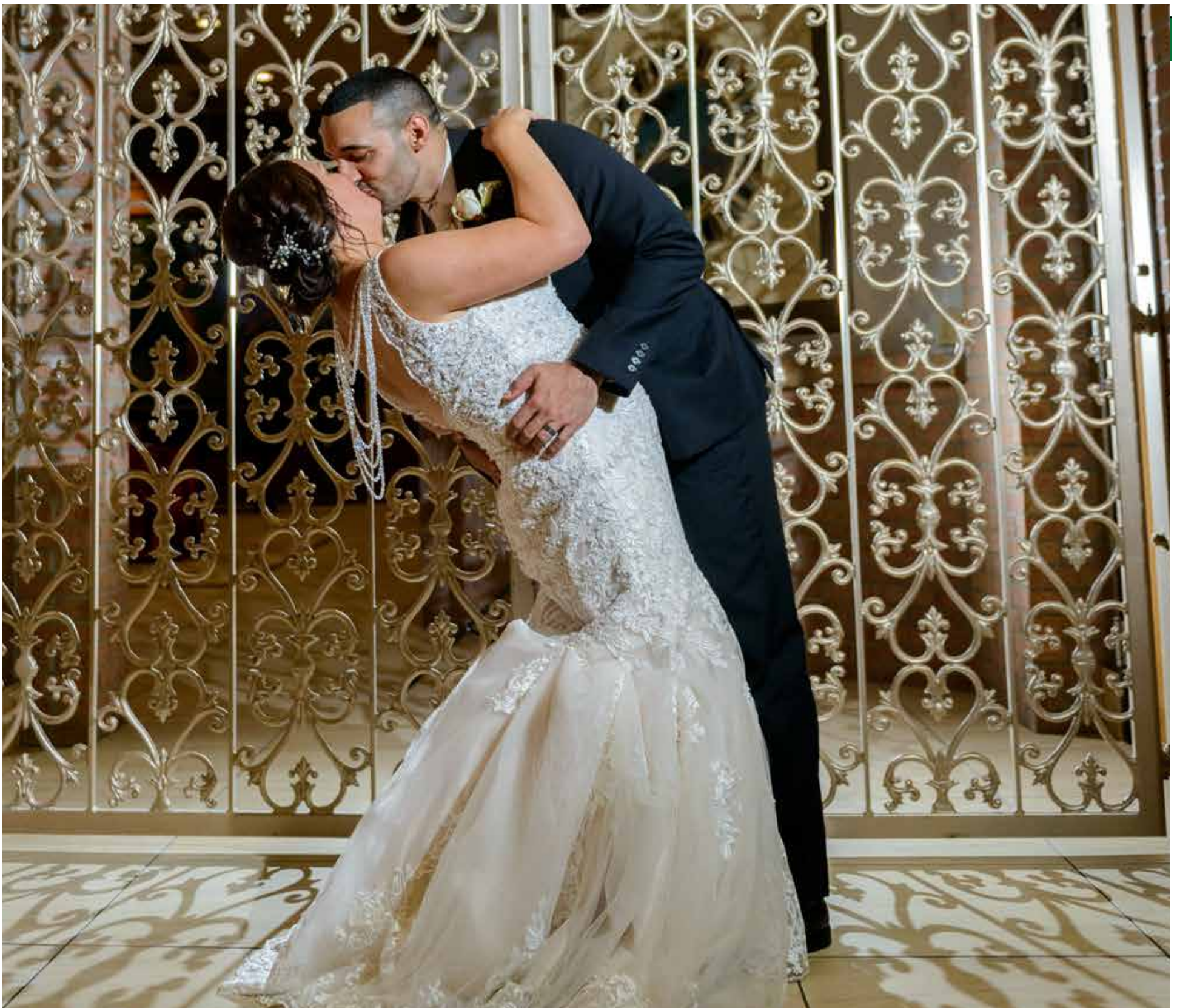
The Detroit location also connects the event to Michigan's automotive and manufacturing base. General Motors, headquartered in Detroit, is one of the nation's largest automakers and has a broad supplier network tied to vehicle production, engineering, technology and business services.

The SBA said large companies rely on small businesses for a wide range of services, from component manufacturing to business support. The agency said the expo is meant to help more small companies make those connections and compete for supplier opportunities.

Registration is open to both buyers and suppliers. Organizers said space is limited.

The SBA said reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available if requested at least two weeks in advance. Requests may be directed to Savannah Wilburn at [savannah.wilburn@sba.gov](mailto:savannah.wilburn@sba.gov).

The U.S. Small Business Administration provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses through field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. Its services include access to capital, counseling, contracting support and disaster recovery assistance.



## Your *dream wedding* destination.

Our creative team delights in making your vision come to life so you and your guests will experience an unforgettable day. Start planning your dream wedding today with HORIZONS.

**HORIZONS**  
ART OF HOSPITALITY

HORIZONS Conference Center  
6200 State Street | Saginaw, Michigan

(989) 799-4122  
weddings@horizonscenter.com

horizonscenter.com @horizonscenter  
@HORIZONSconfctr @horizonsweddings

## SPORTS

# SVSU softball closes season in NCAA Midwest Regional final



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY SOFTBALL ENDED ITS SEASON MAY 16 IN THE NCAA DIVISION II MIDWEST REGIONAL FINAL AGAINST INDIANAPOLIS. (PHOTO CREDIT: SVSU)

## BY MB STAFF

INDIANAPOLIS — Saginaw Valley State University's softball season ended May 16 with an 8-5 loss to the University of Indianapolis in the NCAA Division II Midwest Regional final.

The Cardinals finished the season 39-16, marking their fifth consecutive year with more than 30 wins. SVSU entered the regional as the No. 4 seed and advanced to the championship game after battling through the double-elimination tournament.

Indianapolis, the regional's top seed, completed an unbeaten run through the bracket and advanced to the Midwest Super Regional.

SVSU scored three runs in the second inning and added another

in the third to take early momentum. The Cardinals finished with five runs on eight hits and one error. Indianapolis answered with one run in the first, one in the second, two in the fourth, two in the fifth and two in the sixth. The Greyhounds finished with eight runs on 10 hits and one error.

The Cardinals continued to fight late, scoring one run in the seventh before Indianapolis closed the game.

Olivia Elliott and Natalie Savage each homered for SVSU. Savage drove in three runs, while Elliott added one RBI. SVSU also got runs from Jenna Morse, Emily Schmeltz, Mya Purdy and Savage.

Aalana Kimble took the loss for SVSU, finishing the season

with an 18-9 record.

Indianapolis pitcher Cheyenne Eads earned the win, improving to 31-2. Caitlin Bunte recorded the save. Brooklyn Willis helped lead the Greyhounds offensively with a leadoff home run and three RBIs. Cara Cooper added two RBIs, while Paige Vickery scored three runs.

The loss ended a strong postseason run for SVSU, which opened regional play May 14 with a 5-2 win over Ashland. After falling to Indianapolis 6-4 on May 15, the Cardinals stayed alive by beating Ashland 3-2 in an elimination game later that day.

That win sent SVSU into the regional final, where the Cardinals needed to beat Indianapolis twice to advance. The Greyhounds, however, secured

the championship with the 8-5 victory.

The regional appearance continued a successful stretch for the Cardinals' softball program. SVSU has become a consistent postseason presence and remained among the top teams in the Midwest Region throughout the season.

The Cardinals' 39 victories reflected a season built on strong pitching, productive offense and continued postseason experience. While the final game ended short of a Super Regional berth, SVSU closed the year as one of the region's top Division II softball teams.

Indianapolis moved on to host McKendree in the NCAA Division II Midwest Super Regional.



# The Foundation



The Swagnew Foundation has been providing resources to youth, aiding mental and physical development, as well as providing low cost and free sports camp experiences since 2013. Meet the team behind it >>



## Vince Agnew Founder

### Personal

Native of Grand Rapids, Michigan and graduate of Catholic Central High School. Graduated from Central Michigan University receiving a bachelors of science degree in Journalism.

Mother and Father, Valencia and Darron Agnew, still reside in Grand Rapids, along with siblings, Paige and Carty.

Inducted into Grand Rapids Catholic Central Hall of Fame for academic and athletic excellence as a two-sport All-State student-athlete.

Attended Central Michigan University 2006-2010, playing on a team that won three MAC Championships and ranked in the Nation's Top 25. Vince was named Defensive MVP in 2009 and named a Captain and Defensive MVP in 2010.

### Professional

Played professional football for the Miami Dolphins, Dallas Cowboys, Kansas City Chiefs and Toronto Argonauts.

Retired and began work as a feature writer for the NFL, interviewing first-round draft picks and influential league leaders. During that time, also volunteered at parks and served as a Title-I paraprofessional in Davison Public Schools teaching math and reading.

Worked as a personal trainer and sports development professional at the Freeland SportsZone and Midland Country Club.

Owner of Michigan Made and Founder of the Swagnew Foundation.

## Steph Agnew Co-Founder



### Personal

Native of Bad Axe, Michigan and graduate of Bad Axe High School. Graduated from Central Michigan University followed by receiving a masters degree in Occupational Therapy at Nova Southeastern near Ft Lauderdale, FL.

Mother and Father, Theresa Byrne and Ron Johnston, still reside in Bad Axe.

BAHS Varsity Letter Winner in Volleyball, Basketball and Track and Field, and broke multiple school records in each sport from 2002-2006 as well as winning a Track and Field State Championship.

Attended Central Michigan University 2006-2011, and is a member of CMU's current record-holding 4x400 M Relay team.

Served as a caregiver during college, living with and providing care for her late cousin Jess that was born with muscular dystrophy.

### Professional

Has worked as an Occupational Therapist providing services to a wide range of populations, from youth to the geriatric settings. This includes traumatic brain injuries, home care, within the school district and in-patient rehab.

Steph has volunteered with entities across the state and country including the Special Olympics of Michigan, National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Suicide Prevention and more.

She has spent the last 8 years working for My Michigan Health serving geriatric and special populations as an OT.

Co-Owner of Michigan Made and Co-Founder of the Swagnew Foundation.

# Midland Tennis Center hosts 2026 MHSAA girls tennis state finals



MIDLAND TENNIS CENTER (PHOTO CREDIT: GREATER MIDLAND)

## BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — The Midland Tennis Center became the center of Michigan high school girls tennis as the Michigan High School Athletic Association opened its 2026 Lower Peninsula Girls Tennis Finals in Midland.

The finals began May 27 and are scheduled to run through June 6, with all four divisions playing at Midland Tennis Center. Division 4 competed May 27-28, Division 1 competed May 29-30, Division 2 is scheduled for June 3-4 and Division 3 is scheduled for June 5-6.

The event gives Midland a statewide spotlight as hundreds of student-athletes, coaches, families and spectators travel to the community for championship tennis.

MHSAA officials described

this year's Lower Peninsula girls tennis finals as having a new look, with all divisions being played at Midland Tennis Center over a two-week period. The first two divisions were completed within the May 16-June 1 issue window.

In Division 4, Ann Arbor Greenhills won its fifth straight state championship May 28. The Gryphons finished with 35 points, 11 points ahead of runner-up Grand Rapids Catholic Central. The title continued a dominant run for Greenhills, which has remained one of the state's top small-school girls tennis programs.

Greenhills received flight championships from Jahan Soofi at No. 4 singles; Danica Rakic-Dennis and Lauren Ye at No. 1 doubles; Anye He and Alice Zhu at No. 3 doubles; and Aoife Tang and Linnea Bengtson at No. 4 doubles.

Grand Rapids Catholic Cen-

tral's runner-up finish was a historic moment for that program. It was the school's best finish in the girls tennis finals and the first time the program took home a team trophy.

Other Division 4 champions included Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett sophomore Sonya Jayakar at No. 1 singles, Mary-Kate Ansley of Traverse City St. Francis at No. 2 singles and the Pontiac Notre Dame Prep doubles team of Vanessa Artinian and Regina Carpenese at No. 2 doubles.

In Division 1, Northville repeated as Lower Peninsula champion May 30. The Mustangs entered the final rounds needing to hold off Utica Eisenhower and did so behind a strong doubles performance.

Northville finished with 27 points, while Utica Eisenhower took second with 23 points. Eisenhower finished runner-up

for the third consecutive season.

The Mustangs won three doubles flight championships. Lucia Lachapelle and Aadya Pullalarevu won at No. 3 doubles, Michelle Lee and Emma Murphy won at No. 4 doubles and Sravya Doppalapudi and Francine Ong won at No. 2 doubles.

Eisenhower captured the No. 1 doubles championship with Kara Lu and Alexis Gabriel. Eisenhower also received a second straight No. 2 singles title from sophomore Morgan Emerick, who improved her combined high school record to 74-1.

Other Division 1 flight winners included Clarkston junior Kayla Lemke at No. 1 singles, Portage Central's Aarna Betala at No. 3 singles and Rochester freshman Jilly Knoester at No. 4 singles.

The tournament also creates an economic and community benefit for Midland. State championship events bring athletes and families into local hotels, restaurants, shops and other businesses. Hosting a statewide event also reinforces Midland Tennis Center's role as a major sports venue in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

For local tennis fans, the finals offer a chance to watch some of Michigan's top high school players without leaving the region. For student-athletes, the event represents the final stage of a season that began with regional competition and culminated in state-level play.

The remaining divisions are scheduled to continue in June, with Division 2 and Division 3 champions to be crowned after the current issue window.



# Saginaw Township JR HAWKS FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>  
26-27 school year

Get Ready to Compete in the  
Tri Cities Premiere Youth  
Tackle Football League

In partnership with Heritage High School  
Football Coach Justin Thelen.

**Must be a Saginaw township resident.**

- Certified coaching staff teaching fast paced offense, strong defense culture, player development focus, speed and agility training
- Professional film study
- Certified coaching staff vertically aligned with the high school program in scheme, skill development, and strength & conditioning.
- Concussion awareness and training
- Professional helmet / uniform fittings
- Refundable uniform deposit required
- Brand new, performance standard helmets
- Feeder program for Saginaw township schools utilizing the hawk name and logo

LEAGUE START  
DATE

**AUGUST 17TH**

**COST: \$199**

by May 25th (\$299 after)

**PRACTICE & GAME FIELDS  
AT HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL**



**FOR MORE INFO:**  
989-791-9860

Register Online

<https://saginawtownship.recdesk.com/Community/Program>

# FAITH IN FOCUS



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

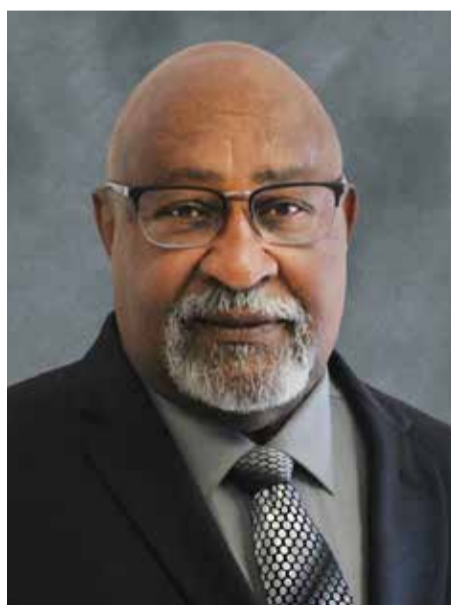
## Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

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.

SPONSORED CONTENT

## FAITH IN FOCUS

## SERMONETTE SERIES

**Righteousness will outlast  
wickedness***"Fret not thyself because of  
evildoers, neither be thou envious  
against the workers of iniquity."**Psalm 37:1 KJV*BY MINISTER CAROLYN  
CARTER TOWNSEL

It is in Psalm 37:1, that we are reminded not to become consumed by frustration when we see people prosper through wrong actions. God never asked us to compete with evil, envy it, or lose our peace over it. What looks successful today can never compare to the lasting favor, peace, and purpose that come from walking upright before Him. Stay focused on your assignment, your growth, and your healing. God sees every tear, every sacrifice, and every silent battle. Your season will come, and when it does, it will be evident that God's hand was upon you all along.

Sometimes the greatest test is remaining faithful while watching others appear to advance through compromise, deception, or selfish ambition. But God's timing is intentional, and His rewards carry no sorrow with them. Do not allow temporary situations to make you question your worth, your journey, or your calling. What God has for you does not require you to abandon your integrity to obtain it. Keep your heart pure, your spirit steady, and your eyes on Him. The same God who sustained you in private will honor you openly in His appointed time.

There will be moments when silence feels heavy, waiting feels long, and justice seems delayed, but

never mistake God's patience for absence. He is working beneath the surface in ways you cannot yet see. Every disappointment, closed door, and painful season is shaping strength, wisdom, and endurance within you. While others may chase temporary recognition, God is building character that can sustain lasting purpose. Remain planted in faith, because what is rooted in God cannot be destroyed by the opinions, actions, or successes of others.

Beloved, always remember: In due season, righteousness will always outlast wickedness. What is built on truth may bend under pressure, but it will never break under the weight of evil. Wickedness may appear loud, powerful, and temporarily victorious, but it cannot stand against what God has established. Stay faithful when the process feels slow. Stay prayerful when your heart grows weary. Stay grounded when others choose to compromise. For in God's timing, every lie fades, every unjust act is exposed, and every seed of righteousness planted in tears will rise in strength, peace, and victory.

Blessings to All,  
Carolyn

# Rev. Dr. Robert Edward “Sam” Donald remembered for faith, service and love

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Rev. Dr. Robert Edward “Sam” Donald, a longtime pastor, teacher and spiritual leader whose ministry touched families in Tennessee and Michigan, died Sunday, June 7, 2026. He was 84.

Donald was remembered as a faithful servant of God, a compassionate counselor and a preacher whose words carried wisdom, humor and conviction. For 25 years, he served as pastor of New Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Saginaw, where he shepherded generations of worshippers and helped shape the spiritual life of the community.

Born Nov. 6, 1941, in Gibson, Tennessee, Donald was the 10th of 11 children born to Andrew Donald Sr. and Georgie Rice Donald. His early education began at Polk Clark Training School in Milan, Tennessee, in Gibson County. He later attended Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee.

Before completing his undergraduate studies, Donald answered a call to ministry that would define the rest of his life. He enrolled at American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, where he devoted himself to theological study and earned several degrees, including a Ph.D. and a Doctorate in Theology.

Donald’s ministry began in Tennessee, where he served for 10 years as pastor of Cane Creek Baptist Church in Bemis. He later accepted the call to lead New Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Saginaw, beginning a 25-year pastorate marked by preaching, teaching, counseling and faithful service.



REV. DR. ROBERT EDWARD (SAM) DONALD (COURTESY PHOTO)

Even after retiring, Donald continued to serve at Truevine Missionary Baptist Church in Saginaw under the leadership of Pastor Paul Broadus.

Those who knew Donald remember him not only for his education and pastoral leadership, but for the warmth and steady faith he brought into every room.

His life was marked by wisdom, compassion and a deep love for God’s people. Through sermons, personal counsel and the example of his daily walk, he encouraged others to live with faith, kindness and purpose.

He also had a way with words that brought smiles as easily as reflection. Among his favorite sayings were, “I’m tight, but I’m right,” “Singing won’t take you to heaven, but it sho’ll make you want to go,” and “It’s just nice to be nice.”

Those expressions reflected the spirit many came to love: direct, joyful, grounded and full of heart.

Donald was preceded in death by his parents; five sisters; five brothers; and his beloved daughter, Patricia Ann Crawley.

He leaves to cherish his memory his devoted wife, Melba J. Donald; three daughters, Deborah Atkinson and her husband, Horace, Juanita Donald and Samelba Lewis; one son, Benedict Donald and his wife, Shelly; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; extended family members; church family; and many friends whose lives were blessed by his presence and ministry.

Although his earthly journey has ended, Donald’s legacy continues through the people he taught, comforted, baptized, prayed with and encouraged. His ministry lives on in the families he served, the churches he strengthened and the community that will remember him as a man of faith, service and love.

# CHURCH DIRECTORY



### Faith Ministries Church

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



### Ministry Without Walls

Pastor, John Dunn  
3783 Mannion Road  
Saginaw, MI 48603



### New Life Baptist Ministries

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



### Glory House Ministries

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



### World Outreach Campus

Bishop Hurley J. Coleman Jr.  
2405 Bay Road  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
989-752-2955  
worldoutreachcampus.com



### New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

Pastor Rev. Corey Clay, Jr.  
3610 Russel St.  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
989-754-0801



### Holy Communion Gospel Center

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



### New Beginnings Ministries

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



### Saint Paul Baptist Church

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



### Jacob's Ladder

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



### New Birth Missionary Baptist

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



### Victorious Belivers Ministries Church

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



### Bridgeport Community Church

Pastor Rob Ashmall  
3821 State St.  
PO Box 541  
Bridgeport, MI 48722  
989-777-1840



### New Covenant Christian Center

Pastor Ron Frierson  
2395 S. Outer Drive  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
989-752-8485



### Anointed Temple Ministries

Bishop Tim D. Holden, Sr.  
612 Millard St.  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
901 Melbourne  
Detroit, MI 48211



### Bethel AME Church

Rev. Dr. Dennis Laffoon  
535 Cathay St.  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
(989) 755-7011  
bethelame-saginaw.org



### Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor Rodrick A. Smith  
721 Johnson Ave  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
989-754-9621  
zmbc-saginaw.org



List your Ministry  
in The Michigan  
Banner Church  
Directory

CONTACT US AT (989) 249-3882 TO ADD YOUR MINISTRY TODAY

## FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

## Value of Volunteer-Led Fundraising



BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

*We have had hard times before, and we are having them again. Will it get better? We believe it will. But in the meantime, it's time to help each other. And it's time to support the value and dignity that nonprofit organizations and institutions provide each and every day. These nonprofits are us – the best of us.*

Do you need to raise funds for your nonprofit? We suggest starting with building a volunteer fundraising team. This means embracing those who support the organization or institution you lead and asking them to extend themselves by asking those they know to support the nonprofit's work. This turns your fundraising on its head. Yes, you will still need staff for aspects of fundraising such as grant writing and reporting, data management, and now, importantly, volunteer engagement. And the CEO and development team (board and staff) will increase their focus on supporting, engaging, and empowering volunteers. They will be sharing tools, suggestions, information, and ideas. They will be listening to what volunteers are saying and who they are identifying as ideal donors and supporters. They will be busy asking questions such as "Who do we know who believes in our work and may be willing to



MB FILE PHOTO

help us?" and "What do you need from me in order for you to feel comfortable talking with so-and-so about our work and impact?"

With volunteer-led fundraising the work of staff is to identify, cultivate, and support volunteers who can ask their peers – and others – to support an organization they are a part of, believe in, and are financially supporting. Some people debate the idea of volunteer-led fundraising, saying it is "easier for me to just go out and raise money than to deal with volunteers." That thinking belies what we call a "bad attitude." Yes, it takes time and energy to engage and support volunteers, but it also takes time and energy to engage and support donors. When you engage those who believe in your organization or institution, you are gaining expertise, building a team, strengthening relationships with those who already support "your" organization, and those who are loyal to the organization despite changes in leadership or staff. You are, importantly, multiplying what you can do by the num-

ber of active fundraising volunteers you are supporting.

Fundraising professionals are skilled professionals who add great value to individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector as a whole. Volunteers – when working with fundraising professionals or a talented CEO – add a different value and are perceived differently. Specifically: they are not being paid to raise money. They are fundraising because they believe in the organization, identify with it, and want it to succeed. That's not to say that fundraising professionals lack these qualities: they share them. But they are being paid for their skills and that creates the difference in perception, who they

can talk with, and how they talk with current and potential donors. Volunteers bring a defined following, meaning they have personal, business, and political relationships and history with people you may never have heard of. Ideally, they can talk with and influence the "powers that be" in your community.

Volunteers will call on you to do your best. They will require you to be open, honest, transparent, and responsive. They will open doors and build bridges that you cannot. Fundraising volunteers are your super-power. Your job is to manage and support their work.



Copyright 2026 – Mel and Pearl Shaw of Saad&Shaw–Comprehensive Fund Development Services, providing fundraising coaching, planning, case for support services, and more. [www.saadandshaw.com](http://www.saadandshaw.com). Virtual services and consultations always available.



# PICS OF THE WEEK

There are over 19,000 police officers serving throughout the State of Michigan. On May 21, three members of the Saginaw Police Department were honored as Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) Officers of the Year.

Officers Peter Miller, Joseph Coffey, and Alex Mawer were three of only 12 officers statewide to receive this prestigious recognition at the POAM Annual Conference in Grand Rapids.

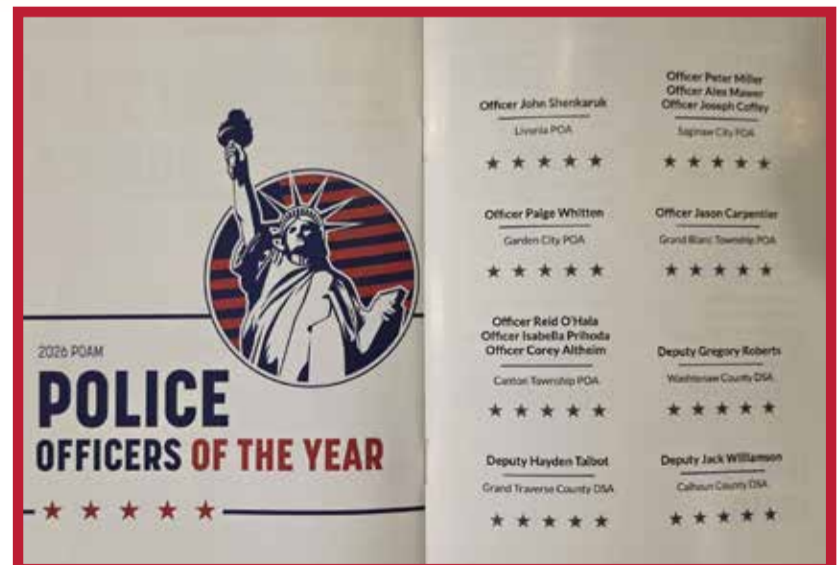


PHOTO CREDIT: FB / CITY OF SAGINAW POLICE DEPARTMENT



**We**

*inspire.*

**Nathan Hankerson**  
Senior majoring in  
Pre-Medicine/Biology

**You are so much more than a student.**  
*At SVSU, we see and cultivate your full potential. Our award-winning faculty partner with you to pursue hundreds of different research opportunities, study abroad experiences, academic conferences and practical internships. Cardinals fly far beyond the classroom. We unleash our students' talents around the globe — from presenting at Oxford University to touring Asia for a new cultural perspective.*



**SAGINAW VALLEY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**  
[svsu.edu/opportunity](http://svsu.edu/opportunity)



RECOGNIZED IN 2016 & 2018 BY  
INSIGHT INTO DIVERSITY WITH THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE  
IN DIVERSITY (HEED) AWARD.



7400 Bay Road • University Center, MI 48710 • (800) 968-9500



# It Matters Where You Buy Your Car

Make your next deal with

# John Wright

Sales Associate • Used Car Sales

**Contact:**

(989) 308-4971

[jwright@garberbuick.com](mailto:jwright@garberbuick.com)



5925 STATE ST, SAGINAW, MI 48603  
SALES: 989-683-4697