

Hastings Public Library
227 E State Street
Hastings MI 49058

VOL. 170, NO. 69

THE HASTINGS BANNER

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BARRY COUNTY SINCE 1856

www.HastingsBanner.com Thursday, August 21, 2025 $1.50

County administrator presents proposed 2026 budget



Barry County Administrator Eric Zuzga discusses highlights of the proposed 2026 budget before commissioners at Tuesday's Committee of the Whole meeting. **Photo by Molly Macleod**

Molly Macleod
Editor

County staff, elected officials and citizens got their first look this week at what the county's finances might look like next year.

Barry County Administrator Eric Zuzga introduced the county's proposed 2026 budget at Tuesday's Barry County Board of Commissioners Committee of the Whole meeting. The budget is not yet final, and county staff have the opportunity to make their case for additional funding at next month's Sept. 2 Committee of the Whole meeting. A final draft of the budget will be voted on later next month.

The proposed 2026 budget recommends $22,999,908 in general fund expenditures and revenues. Roughly three-quarters of the general fund expenditures are used on mandated services, such as public safety and court costs.

"The important thing in this budget is that it's balanced," said Zuzga on Tuesday. "It is just under $23 million general fund budget, you can see, with the contingency built in."

Zuzga cautioned commissioners not to count on the $309,847 currently sitting in the contingency category in next year's recommended expenditures. Those funds are in limbo while commissioners discuss potential cuts to health department spending. Eaton County, which cooperates with Barry County to fund the Barry-Eaton District Health Department, recently voted to make 15% cuts to its health department budget. Barry County is considering matching those cuts.

"At this point, I would not count that (money) to say, 'Hey, we are going to throw that to all these different things.' I would leave that there as you work through your issues at the health department and other issues in the budget," said Zuzga. "Just know that's there, and it has been accounted for."

While the proposed budget set the stage for next year's financial plan, it also included information on other capital projects down the line.

Zuzga and county staff not only included a list of the recommended 2026 capital projects, including

See **BUDGET** on 3



Jacob Hanson addresses members of the Lake Odessa Village Council during a special meeting Thursday, July 10. At the meeting, council members unanimously voted to recommend Hanson, who currently works for the village's Department of Public Works, be promoted to a temporary role as an administrative assistant under interim Manager Gregg Guetschow. **File photo by Dennis Mansfield**

Staff member withdraws from consideration to be Lake Odessa manager

■ Village president, interim manager to enter negotiations with DPW supervisor

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

The Lake Odessa Village Council's search for a new, permanent manager recently took yet another twist. Actually, it might have taken two, with village leaders now set to negotiate with a current department head to take on a dual role after the council's regular meeting Monday, Aug. 18.

Council members had seemingly hired their next manager a month before, approving a recommendation by interim Manager Gregg Guetschow at a special meeting July 10 to immediately promote Jacob Hanson, a member of the village's Department of Public Works since 2014, to train under Guetschow as an administrative assistant.

Village officials stated Hanson's progress would be evaluated at the end of a three-month trial period by both Guetschow and the council. If deemed successful, Hanson would then have been promoted to the position of deputy manager and continue his apprenticeship under Guetschow for up to another year, with the goal of him becoming the village's next full-time manager.

However, Hanson recently notified Guetschow he wished to end the training initiative and focus on his existing role with the DPW.

"The experience has offered me new perspectives – both about

See **WITHDRAWS** on 3

Summerfest taking over downtown Hastings Aug. 22-24



Hastings is saying farewell to summer this weekend with its annual Summerfest celebration. The three-day event kicks off tomorrow, Friday, Aug. 22, and runs through Sunday, Aug. 24, featuring arts and crafts vendors on the courthouse lawn, concessions, free trolley rides, children's activities, a softball tournament, 3-on-3 basketball, a 5K run, a parade, a car show, live entertainment and much more. Pictured here, a member of the Saladin Shriners Mini-T patrol greets a young parade-goer during last year's event. This year's Grand Parade steps off at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 23, in downtown Hastings. **File photo**

Barry County man sentenced on charges for threatening county prosecutor

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

A Barry County man who allegedly threatened a county official was sentenced to serve a year in jail during a sentencing hearing that carried over to a second day last week.

Richard Wayne Burtts, 46, of Hastings, was sentenced on three charges of resisting and obstruction of a public official during a sentencing hearing Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 13-14, before Judge Michael Schipper in Barry County District Court 56B.

Burtts was arrested in December 2024 after allegedly making threats against Barry County Prosecutor Julie Nakfoor Pratt and her family, as well as a dispatcher and Michigan State Police trooper.

Burtts faced a variety of felony charges as a result of the alleged threats, including false report or threat of terrorism, assaulting or obstructing a public officer, assaulting/resisting/obstructing a police officer, using 911 for an unauthorized purpose and malicious use of telecommunication services.

During an initial hearing Wednesday, Pratt admitted to being in an unusual situation of addressing the court as a victim.

"I'm standing in a position

See **CHARGES** on 3

CAR-RT LOT**C003
T1 P2 220 220
HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY
227 E STATE ST
HASTINGS MI 49058-1954



MONA SHORES NARROWLY BEATS TK FOR INVITE TITLE
PAGE 11

Hastings Public Library
227 E State Street
Hastings MI 49058

SUBSCRIBE
TO SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM
YOUR CONTRIBUTION MAKES TRUSTWORTHY REPORTING POSSIBLE
SUBSCRIBE TODAY: 269-945-9554

Spend it here.
Keep it here.
SHOP LOCAL
INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY.
VIEW Newspaper Group
THE HASTINGS BANNER





Dowling-area resident John Branham is led into Barry County District Court 56B to appear before Judge Michael Schipper for a motion hearing Tuesday, Aug. 12. Branham faces an open murder charge in the Jan. 23 death of his uncle. **Photo by Dennis Mansfield**

Alleged murderer to be sentenced Sept. 10

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

A Barry County man facing an open murder charge is scheduled to be sentenced after withdrawing a motion to change a previous plea of guilty to not guilty.

John Michael Branham, 27, a resident of the Dowling area, had reportedly filed a motion to have a previous plea of guilty related to felony charges including murder withdrawn. But, during a hearing Tuesday, Aug. 12, before Judge Michael Schipper in Barry County District Court 56B, defense counsel for Branham informed the court that Branham wished to withdraw the motion.

"I think he's making an informed decision," said defense attorney Gordon Shane McNeill. "I think he's making the right decision."

Branham was charged in late January with one count of open murder and one count of being a second habitual offender, with bond set at $1 million. He has remained lodged in the Barry County Jail.

The charges reportedly stem from a Jan. 23 incident that led to the death of Branham's uncle, Terry Lee Traister II. According to officials with the Barry County Prosecutor's Office, Branham was allegedly involved in an assault on Traister, who died from injuries sustained in the attack.

With Branham withdrawing the motion to change his plea, a sentencing hearing was scheduled for Sept. 10.

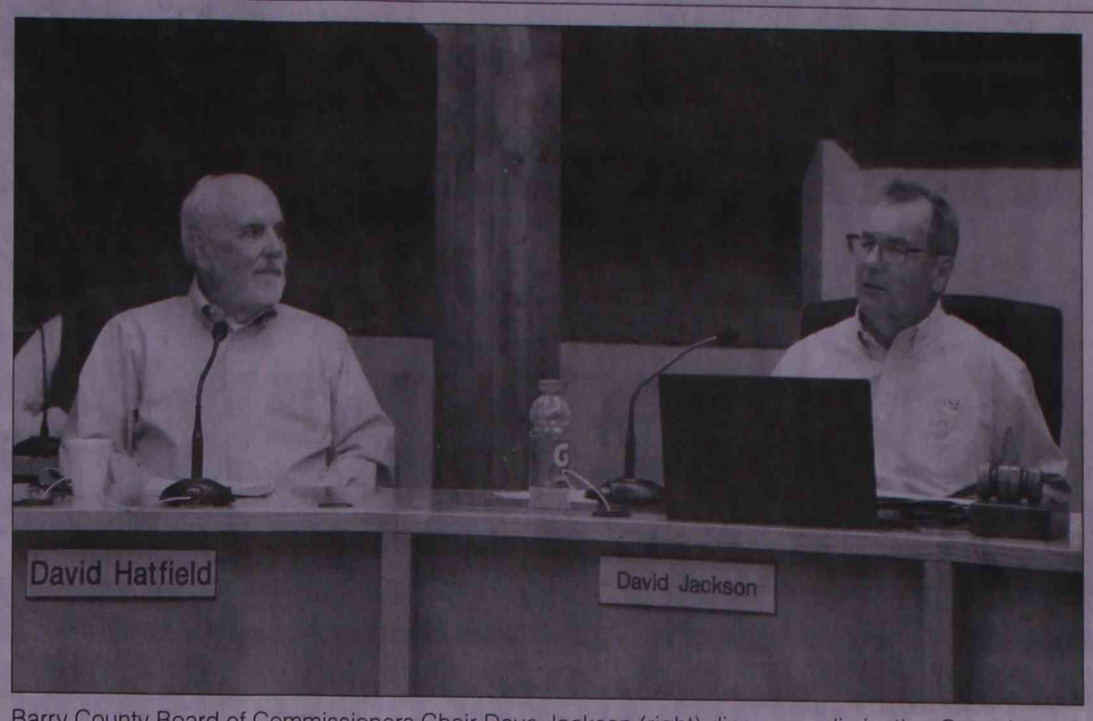
Schipper said he had not "seen the basis" for Branham's motion, but added that it was now a moot point.

"I believe you know what you're doing," the judge added.

According to previous news reports, Branham is no stranger to Barry County courts. In 2020, he pled guilty to a misdemeanor charge of assault with intent for great bodily harm less than murder/strangulation and was sentenced to 365 days in jail, received two years of probation and was ordered to an outpatient treatment program.

Then, in 2021, Branham reportedly pled guilty to more misdemeanor charges for domestic violence and destruction of property. He was sentenced to 93 days in jail, a year of probation and was again ordered to an outpatient treatment program.

— Editor Molly Macleod contributed to this report.



Barry County Board of Commissioners Chair Dave Jackson (right) discusses eliminating Committee of the Whole meetings on a trial basis in the fourth quarter of this year. **Photo by Molly Macleod**

Commissioners recommend eliminating COW meetings on trial basis

Molly Macleod
Editor

The Barry County Board of Commissioners might be meeting less frequently, but for longer in the fourth quarter of this year.

Commissioners voted at Tuesday's Committee of the Whole meeting to recommend eliminating COW meetings in the fourth quarter of 2026. The recommendation, if approved at next week's regular BOC meeting, would mean commissioners' business would be relegated to two meetings a month, instead of two COW meetings and two BOC meetings.

"We have had discussions probably almost as long as I've been a commissioner about why we do the things that we do with a COW meeting to debate things in a little more detail and then refer them to ourselves for the BOC the following week — and those BOC meetings are fairly quick, usually," said Board Chair Dave Jackson.

Jackson said fellow commissioner Marsha Bassett questioned the practice shortly after joining the board this winter. "When she sat through a couple months of meetings, she asked, 'So why do you do this this way?' And we've been asked that by constituents — 'Hey, you guys are kind of wasting your time to do two meetings to do two more meetings,' Jackson said.

"It can be viewed as a bit of a burden on the administration. It certainly would be a savings on mileage for commissioners coming from all corners of the county."

Jackson said he wants to try out the two BOC meetings, on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, on a trial basis throughout the next quarter. At the end of the 90-day trial period, commissioners will reflect and decide whether to reinstate the COWs or continue with the BOC-only meeting structure.

The rest of the board agreed with Jackson and unanimously voted to recommend the 90-day trial.

Jackson said commissioners should be aware that there will likely be special meetings called, when needed, on days that would usually be reserved for COW meetings.

Longtime Nashville trustee resigns

Leila Wood
Contributing Writer

Henry Felder served his last meeting on the Nashville Village Council on Thursday, Aug. 14.

After 10 years serving on the council, he and his wife are leaving Nashville and moving to Ohio to be closer to their son and grandchildren, he said in his letter of resignation, which was read during the meeting.

"I will miss being part of the council," he said. "However, we are starting a new adventure, and who knows? Maybe I will start going to council meetings in our new community."

He listed more than a half-dozen different boards and committees he has been on in his decade serving on the council and said he is proud of how he has seen the community grow in that time.

From the dedication of Parady Park and the reopening of the historic Kellogg school building as the new Village Flats, to the growth of local businesses, the reorganization of the transfer station, and the ongoing remodeling projects at Putnam Park and the village hall, Felder said, "I'm glad that I was part of that."

Village President Mike Kenyon presented him with a plaque and the council members thanked him, congratulated him and wished him well.

They also had cupcakes at the end of the meeting.

"We're going to miss a lot of people," said Felder. "We've had really good times, and we've fought hard to get this village to where it is now, and I think we've all worked together. We've got a good council right now."

The council will meet at 6 p.m. on Sept. 11 for a special meeting to appoint someone to fill Felder's seat before its regular monthly meeting later that evening.

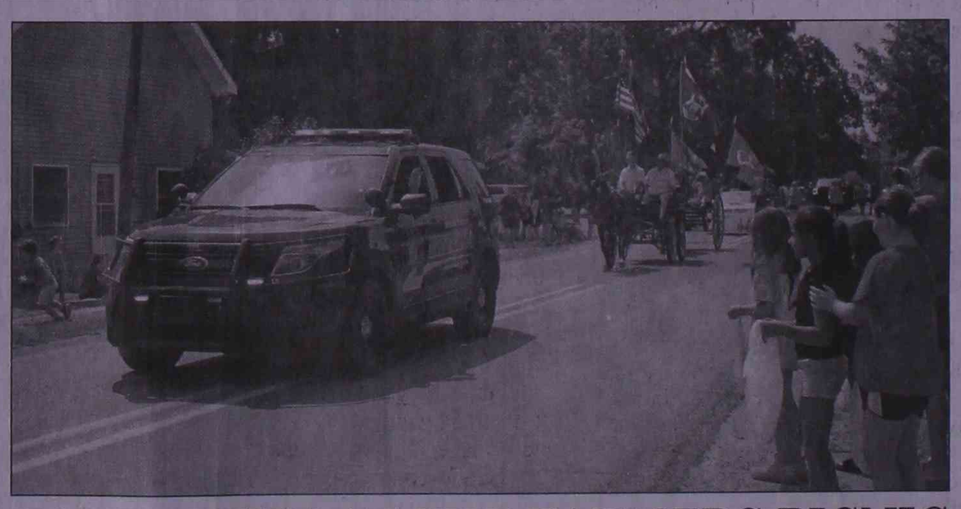
Any registered voter of the Village of Nashville who is interested in the position has until Sept. 8 to submit an application.

THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME
—AN EVENING WITH PRESIDENT—
LECH WALESA
USA & CANADA LECTURE TOUR | AUGUST 31 – OCTOBER 30, 2025



Meet the Nobel Peace Prize winner and one of the world's greatest leaders. Lech Walesa will take you behind the scenes of one of history's greatest turning points - and into the future we must build together.
REGISTER NOW: www.HistoryExplorer.com

DID YOU SEE?



FAMILY FUN AT THE FARMERS PICNIC

Sunfield natives showed up in full force this weekend for the annual Farmers Picnic celebration. The Farmers Picnic Grand Parade stepped off at noon on Saturday, Aug. 16, showcasing the Picnic's grand marshals, kiddie royalty, antique and modern tractors, local fire, police and EMS vehicles and much more. **Photo by Molly Macleod**

THE HASTINGS BANNER

(USPS #71830)
1351 N M-43 Hwy.
Hastings, MI 49058
269-945-9554
www.hastingsbanner.com

VIEWnewspaper Group
Rick Burrough, President
Wes Smith, Group Publisher
Molly Macleod, Editor

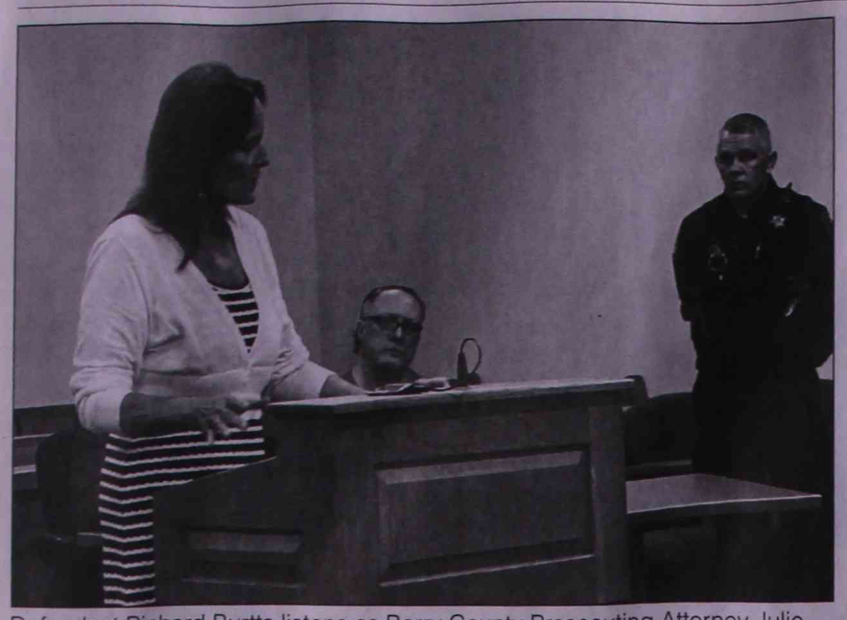
CONTACT US
EDITORIAL
mmacleod@mihomepaper.com
DELIVERY QUESTIONS
circulation@hastingsbanner.com
CLASSIFIED ADS
classifiedads@hastingsbanner.com

ADVERTISING
All advertising in The Hastings Banner is subject to the conditions in the applicable rate card or advertising contract, copies of which are available from the Ad Dept., 1351 N M-43 Hwy., Hastings, MI 49058 (269-945-9554). This newspaper reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Our ad takers have no authority to bind this newspaper and only publication of an ad constitutes acceptance of the advertiser's order.
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Chris Silverman
csilverman@mihomepaper.com

DELIVERY
Circulation Hours: Mon.-Th. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Home delivery: 269-945-9554
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
The Hastings Banner
1351 N M-43 Hwy., Hastings, MI 49058
NEWSPAPER RATES
Mailed periodicals postage paid at Hastings, MI 49058 and additional offices. Published Thursday.
Barry County ..... $78/yr. or $14/mo
Adjoining Counties ..... $85/yr.
Elsewhere in Michigan ..... $90/yr.
Elsewhere in U.S. ..... $90/yr.
Single Copy $1.50

PRIVILEGE OF RESPONSE
Persons who believe they have been unfairly treated in this newspaper are always invited to telephone, or to make a written response. See the Opinion Page for contact information and our letters policy.
MPA MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION

Copyright 2025
©2025 Jams Media, LLC
All Rights Reserved
Printed in the U.S.



Defendant Richard Burtts listens as Barry County Prosecuting Attorney Julie Nakfoor Pratt makes a victim's statement during sentencing hearings in Barry County District Court 56B on Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 13-14, in Hastings. **Photo by Dennis Mansfield**

CHARGES

Continued from Page 1

I'm not usually in," Pratt said. "It's hard.

"It scared the daylights out of me," she added, referring to the alleged threats by Burtts. "And I've been in this line of work for 37 years."

According to discussions during the sentencing hearing, Burtts had reportedly sought to have a family member prosecuted and was upset when he was informed that wasn't possible.

"I believed him," she said of the alleged threats. "I thought that it was the final straw for him to lose it."

Michael Frezza of the Michigan Attorney General's Office said the charges against Burtts constituted a "serious crime," considering that the defendant was college-educated and was reportedly trained in law enforcement, making his "conduct even more egregious."

"He should have known better," Frezza said, while addressing Schipper and seeking for the judge to send a message in sentencing Burtts. "But, even with his knowledge, he proceeded to make threats against governmental action.

"Lines have to be drawn, your honor."

While Burtts had agreed to a plea bargain, defense attorney Lyonel Woolley asked for the Aug. 13 hearing to be adjourned due to a conflict over whether any sentence would be served consecutively or concurrently.

When the hearing was reconvened the following day, Schipper said the issue of sentencing should have been settled when the two sides agreed to a plea bargain.

"Because that may have affected the plea agreement," the judge said. "In this case, that was not done."

Schipper said he was "limiting myself" in sentencing Burtts to serve 365 days for each of the three felony counts, as well as two years probation and paying related court costs, to be served concurrently, rather than consecutively. Burtts will receive credit for 249 days already served.

Burtts will also be required to submit to a mental health evaluation and act on any recommendations.

According to Schipper, the district court will be able to maintain some control over Burtts while he serves the sentence in the Barry County Jail, compared to if he had sentenced Burtts to potentially longer terms and to have the three charges served consecutively in a state prison.

"I can at least know what's going on," Schipper said. "The main reason is control. I want to know what's going on.

"Once we send them to (state) prison, we have no control," he added.

Pratt had one more request when asked by Schipper about any conditions she thought were necessary in sentencing Burtts.

"I also don't want him to be anywhere near me or my children," she said. "I want him nowhere near any of us."

Burtts took the opportunity Thursday to apologize to Pratt and her family.

"I'm not trying to make any excuses," Burtts said. "Julie, you deserve better than that.

"This is something that is totally out of character for me. I'll never do it again," he added. "Whatever makes Julie feel safe, that's what I hope you do."

Schipper said he also hoped Burtts' actions were "just a blip" and that he learns to act differently in the future when facing an emotional crisis.

"That's the key," Schipper said. "This can never be the response.

"These kind of threats I always take seriously," the judge added. "It's scary."

Johnstown board OKs resolution for Mill Lake special assessment district

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

The Johnstown Township Board of Trustees unanimously voted, 5-0, to approve a resolution regarding a six-year special assessment district to fund aquatic plant control treatments of Mill Lake at a special meeting Wednesday, Aug. 13.

Sheri Babcock, township clerk, said the special assessment district includes 111 total parcels, though 25 of the parcels are either non-buildable or vacant and are exempt, with another nine considered "half assessments."

Township Treasurer Karmen Nickerson added the only change to the special assessment district is time, with the new district being approved for six years, compared to a five-year period used previously.

According to the approved resolution, the district would raise an estimated $64,000 to fund the ongoing treatments at the lake.

A public hearing was held prior to the board taking action, with only one person in the audience making any type of statement. The gentleman said he was bothered by what he considered inconsistencies in the treatment of areas around the lake, bringing his support of the special assessment district into question.

Nickerson said the public hearing was the time for residents to discuss the need for the special assessment, pro or con.

"This is a break," she said. "This is their chance to say they don't want it anymore."

Though, she added, she's not heard of any "naysayers" prior to Wednesday's special meeting

And, township residents and property owners in the Mill Lake special assessment district will have another chance to voice their concerns or opinions at a second public hearing set for 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 10.

"If people say, 'No, no,' they don't want it, that's why we have these meetings," Nickerson said.

According to Babcock, the last step in re-establishing the special assessment district is to send out notices to the affected property owners. Assessments are set to be billed out beginning with the December 2025 tax bills.

BUDGET

Continued from Page 1

vehicle purchases, software purchases, office equipment and more, but also included a list of capital improvement projects county officials hope to complete in the next five years. Zuzga said he wanted commissioners to have an idea in their heads of what is coming down the pike in coming years when reviewing this year's budget.

The budget proposed on Tuesday is a living document, and it will likely go through changes before commissioners vote on the final document this fall.

"There are things, if you want to see additional areas of reduction, that we could, but I didn't do any large cuts this year," Zuzga said.

A full copy of the proposed 2026 Barry County budget can be found at barrycounty.org.

WITHDRAWS

Continued from Page 1

myself and about the village I've always been proud to call home," Hanson stated in the letter. "That said, I've found some aspects of the role difficult to navigate. At times, I wasn't always sure if I was meeting the expectations of the position, which made it challenging to approach the work with the confidence and clarity I hoped to bring.

"I absolutely value learning through doing, but I've realized that I may be better suited to a role that offers more structure and clearer guidance – at least at this stage in my journey," he added. "While I had truly hoped this internship would confirm a long-term path in the village manager role, I've come to believe that my strengths and interests are better aligned with the work being done in the Department of Public Works right now."

In his report to the village council prior to Monday's meeting, Guetschow stated he was "disappointed" the mentorship program proved unsuccessful.

"I had high hopes that this experiment would set up the organization for long-term stability in its top administrative role," he reported.

But, while one door might have closed, another might have opened.

Village President Karen Banks, at the council's Aug. 18 meeting, said the village's DPW supervisor, Jesse Trout, "expressed interest" in a possible dual role that would include serving as village manager.

Banks said she believes the dual-role position to be a workable solution, citing the leadership and support of the village's other "strong" department heads and council.

"We already have a strong team," she said. "We'll all work together to make this work. And, we'll make it work."

Guetschow added that any of the village staff's three department heads – including Trout, Police Chief Kendra Backing and Clerk/Treasurer Kathy Forman – "have the capability" to serve as manager. And, he complimented Trout for seeing an opportunity and wanting to "pursue new challenges."

"That's exactly the attitude you want in somebody stepping into that role," Guetschow said. "With that, there will be a learning curve.

"But, I'm confident he has the ability to learn those things and be a good village manager."

Banks received approval, through a consensus of the six other council members, for her and Guetschow to enter contract negotiations with Trout regarding a new dual role as DPW supervisor and village manager.

"I'm excited about this idea," said Trustee Ben DeJong. "I think he'd be a great fit for that position."

The village has been without a full-time manager since December 2023. That's when council members agreed to a separation agreement with then Village Manager Ben Geiger less than seven months after his accepting the job in May of that year. The council has conducted three hiring searches since then, without achieving a successful hire.

During its most recent hiring search, the village council interviewed four finalists, including Hanson, for the position of deputy manager at a special meeting May 31. Less than three weeks later, they voted to hire former Mt. Pleasant mayor and Paw Paw village manager William Joseph.

Guetschow confirmed the village had made an "official" offer to Joseph. But, Joseph notified Guetschow on June 26 that he was withdrawing his name from consideration.

Discussions then turned to Hanson, with the council approving Guetschow's plan at the July 10 special meeting to create a temporary position to help him learn the duties and responsibilities involved in serving as village manager. Hanson was to have worked in an administrative capacity two days a week for up to three months, while continuing his duties with the DPW the other three days.

"We will continue with our earlier plan to invest in Jake's continued development," Guetschow stated in his written report to the council. "To that end, he has enrolled in a leadership development program that gets underway in Charlotte in September and for which I am one of the presenters."



Financial FOCUS



Provided by the Barry County offices of Edward Jones

Jeff Domenico, AAMS™ CRPC®
Financial Advisor
450 Meadow Run Dr. Suite 100
Hastings, MI 49058
(269) 948-8265

Member SIPC

Wendi Stratton CFP®
Financial Advisor
423 N. Main St.
Nashville, MI
(517)760-8113

529 education savings plans: More flexible than you think

Planning for your child's education can feel overwhelming, but a 529 education savings plan offers a powerful way to build a financial foundation for their educational future.

One in 4 parents currently invests in a 529 plan, according to 2025 research by Edward Jones and Morning Consult. Perhaps it's because of the tax benefits — earnings are generally tax free if the money is used for qualified educational expenses. Or perhaps it's because of their flexibility.

Types of education. While most people know 529 plans can help cover college and university tuition, these versatile accounts can also pay tuition for vocational and trade schools, making them suitable for students pursuing careers in skilled trades like plumbing, electrical work or culinary arts. Additionally, some apprenticeship programs qualify for these funds. And even K-12 tuition expenses are covered, up to $10,000 per year for private, public and religious elementary and secondary schools.

Beyond tuition. Withdrawals from a 529 plan can move beyond tuition and cover the cost of room and board for students enrolled at least half-time. They can help pay for books, computers and qualified educational supplies. And a big surprise for some: A 529 plan can help with student loan repayment up to $10,000 per beneficiary.

Who can contribute. Fortunately, 529 plans welcome contributions from anyone — parents, grandparents, other family and friends. Contributions are treated as gifts to the beneficiary, so most contributors will want to stay within the annual nontaxable gifting limit (which for 2025 is $19,000 for individuals or $38,000 for married couples filing jointly).

Interestingly, 1 in 5 parents would prefer for their child to receive 529 contributions as gifts from loved ones, making these accounts perfect for birthdays, holidays and other special occasions.

Multiple children. If you have multiple children, you have options in how you structure your 529 savings. You can maintain separate accounts for each child or use one account for all your children.

Unused funds. You may be concerned about what happens if your child doesn't use all the money. Fortunately, these accounts offer numerous penalty-free options. You can easily change the beneficiary to another qualifying family member, including siblings, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or even yourself as the account owner.

You can also roll funds to another family member's existing 529 plan. If your child receives a scholarship, you can withdraw up to the scholarship amount without penalty (though you'll pay income tax on a portion of the money). The IRS allows an option to roll up to $35,000 into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary if certain requirements are met. You should consult with your tax advisor on this 529/Roth IRA rollover issue.

State options. It's important to note that 529 plans vary from state to state, and you're not limited to your home state's plan. However, it's smart to examine your home state's offerings first, as many provide special incentives like tax breaks for residents.

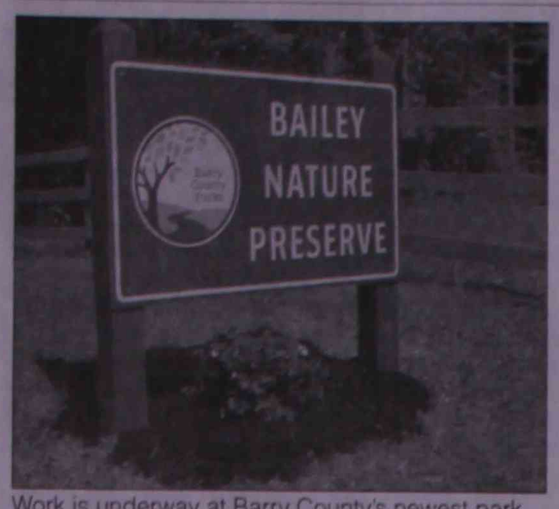
When comparing plans, consider factors such as tax benefits, fees, investment options and ease of use. A good financial advisor can help you navigate these choices and identify the plan that makes the most sense for your family's specific situation and goals.

529 education savings plans offer flexibility and tax advantages that help make them an excellent tool for education planning. With their expanded uses and multiple options for unused funds, they can help provide families with both security and adaptability in preparing for their children's educational futures.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Investments in 529 plans will fluctuate with changes in market conditions and may be worth more, or less than the original investment when redeemed.



Work is underway at Barry County's newest park. The Bailey Nature Preserve was dedicated earlier this summer. **Courtesy photos**



Members of the Bailey family celebrate the Bailey Nature Preserve's dedication in June.

Work underway at Barry County's newest park

Barry County Parks, along with Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC), held a public dedication for the Bailey Nature Preserve in June. Representatives from the Bailey family, local and state officials and community members celebrated the opening of Barry County's newest park with speeches, snacks and a guided tour.

The Bailey Nature Preserve includes 35-acre Metcalf Lake and was originally donated to the City of Battle Creek by David and Eleanor Bailey. In 2024, ownership was transferred to Barry County. Barry County Parks will manage the property to preserve the area's natural state for future generations.

The Bailey Nature Preserve boasts wooded ridges and wide ravines that lend themselves well to the trail system currently under construction. Groves of white cedar, eastern hemlock and tamarack surround Metcalf Lake, which parks staff say gives parts of the future nature preserve that "Up North" feel. The property is also a vital headwater source for Waubascon Creek and a whole chain of downstream lakes (including Waubascon and Foster Lakes), all the way down to the Kalamazoo River.

In the last three years, Barry County Parks has worked closely with SWMLC to permanently conserve the 160-acre property. Barry County Parks is in the process of creating a safe entrance, with a parking area and vault toilet for Bailey Nature Preserve. Dan Patton, director of Barry County Parks said, "The Baileys had a vision for Metcalf Lake, and we were thrilled to welcome the public to celebrate the culmination of their dreams for this land."

A fund has been established at the Barry Community Foundation to support the preserve's reopening and to establish a permanent endowment for the ongoing maintenance and management of the Bailey Nature Preserve. The Bailey Nature Preserve Fund, started by the Bailey Family, will provide future support necessary for the facility's growth. Information on the fund and how to donate can be found at barrycf.org/funds/bailey-nature-preserve-fund/.

Bailey Nature Preserve is located at 5175 East Baseline Road, Bellevue, MI 49021, in Assyria Township in Barry County, just 7 miles north of downtown Battle Creek. For more information, call 269-945-3775 or email info@charltonpark.org. — *Barry County Parks*



State Senator Thomas Albert gives a proclamation to Barry County Commissioner Catherine Getty at June's Bailey Nature Preserve dedication.



Delton Idol's Top Three included (from left) David Linder in third place, Katey Conklin in first place and Kamryn Schnooberger in second place. **Photos by Jeff Baurs and Kaleb Nyberg**

Conklin named 2025 'Delton Idol'

Several auditioned, dozens voted, one won.

Delton Idol saw its return Friday and Saturday, Aug. 8-9, at its current home at William Smith Memorial Park in downtown Delton alongside local vendors and food trucks.

Katey Conklin walked away with the first-place prize this year and the title of "Delton Idol." Kamryn Schnooberger came in second place and David Linder came in third.

"There were lots of uncertainties as to what to expect, but what we got was more than we could have ever expected," said organizer and Delton Idol emcee Kyle Burnham — also known as DJ Keil. "The contestants started to pile in along with large groups of spectators that were all ready for a weekend full of talent, passion, and performance… and that's exactly what they got. With our most ambitious audio and lighting production yet, we kicked off day one with our 30 eager contestants ranging in ages young to old, all gunning for the $1,000 first place cash prize and the title of Delton Idol."

Burnham, from DJ Keil Karaoke and Upbeat Sound And Party, has been producing and hosting the annual contest since 2013. The event has grown exponentially from the first year, which saw eight contestants and a prize of $100.

Burnham thanked Delton Idol's sponsors for helping grow the event. "This contest could not be what it is today without them," he said.

Thirty contestants competed for the title of "Delton Idol" this year, vying before a panel of four judges for the $1,000 first-place prize. Second and third place weren't left out of the prize pool, either, with each boasting a $300 and $200 prize, respectively.

"The first night went off great — all the contestants sang their hearts out to try and secure a place for the next night. All contestants had only one round to wow the audience and judges alike before we had to cut half of the talent…no easy task, making the cuts for the next day even harder," Burnham said. "As the night winded down, we reached the last singer, so it was time to call up all of our amazing performers and see how the judges' numbers all added up."

Delton Idol contestants are judged on a scale of one to 10 on five different criteria: voice, pitch, phrasing, presence and audience participation. Scores from each of those categories are added together by the judges at the end of each round. "Rounds are non-accumulative, so the contestants need to bring their A-game every time, and no one can accumulate a lead that way," Burnham said.

The top-scoring half of contestants from the first day of competition on Friday returned for day two to battle it out for the top prize.

"With four rounds and the final ahead of them, they had to be smart and craft which songs they performed while trying to stay alive in the competition," Burnham said. He said the judges' job got harder as the evening progressed, with each contestant bringing their own, diverse talent.

Audience members were treated to performances across all genres, from pop to country to classic rock, hard rock and everything in between.

Contestants were eliminated throughout Saturday's rounds of competition until only three remained. Burnham said the top three performed their final numbers before the judges tabulated for the last time. This year's winner, Conklin, is no stranger to Delton Idol. She took second place in the competition in 2023.

"She was amazing, changing her wardrobe in-between songs to mirror the mood of the songs she was performing," said Burnham. "A true talent and versatile performer, all the elements came together for her."

Festivities ended with a bang on Saturday with the final results and a fireworks show.

"It's amazing, the camaraderie between the contestants," Burnham said. "It's not a battle between them but a trip they all take together. They are encouraging and genuinely there for each other. It really is beautiful to see." — *MM*



A Delton Idol performer makes a connection with an audience member during this month's competition.

Goodwill's VITA Program to offer free tax prep assistance, volunteers needed

Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland, based in Battle Creek is once again supporting the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, or VITA, program to offer free tax preparation services to qualifying individuals and families across the region.

Through VITA, IRS-certified volunteers provide free electronic tax filing for taxpayers earning less than $67,000 annually, persons with disabilities, limited English-speaking taxpayers, and active or retired military members. Goodwill CMH helps recruit and train volunteers, as well as host program sites.

"This free service can save families an average of $250 per return," said Kenneth Bauer, Goodwill CMH president and CEO. "It's an important way we help ensure more income stays in the hands of those who need it most."

In addition to the regular tax season offerings, Goodwill CMH is currently extending its services with

See **VOLUNTEERS** on 6

• Closed-Cell Foam Insulation
• Blown-In Attic Insulation
Nelson's SPRAY FOAM, LLC
Nelson Schmucker
1700 N. Ainger Rd. • Charlotte, MI 48813
517-983-0954
Start Saving Today ~ Use Spray Foam

Hastings Live nears season's end with upcoming Summerfest performances

While there's still more to come, organizers of the Hastings Live Summer Concert Series have been very pleased with the attendance at events so far this summer.

"This summer flew by and we appreciate all in attendance," said Steven Hoke, arts and events coordinator for the City of Hastings.

"We also want to thank all the sponsors of this year's concert series," Hoke added. "Without all these sponsors, including the free will donations collected at concert sites from our crowds, Hastings Live could not offer our series for free each year."

The local concert series is set with the annual Hastings Summerfest. For information on Summerfest, persons may visit online at hastingssummerfest.com.

The 2025 Hastings Summerfest will host events at two different entertainment venues. The Thornapple Plaza Venue will host two shows on Friday, Aug. 22, at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and then two shows on Saturday, Aug. 23, also at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Between shows, the Expressions Dance Studio will be performing.

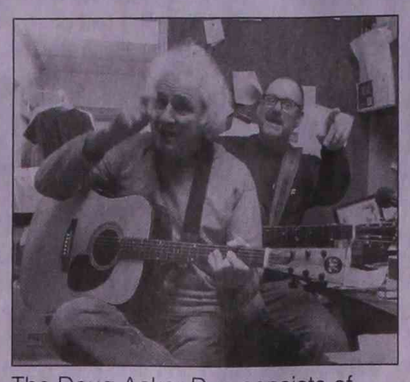
The Hastings Spray Plaza Venue will host four performances on Aug. 22 at noon, 1 a.m. and 2 p.m., as well as a Foam Party on the Spray Plaza at 3 p.m. On Aug. 23, there will again be performances at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., with another Foam Party at 3 p.m.

The United States Air Force Shades of Blue Jazz Ensemble, a group of 18 professional enlisted musicians, will take the Thornapple Plaza stage at 5:30 p.m. on Aug. 22. The Shades of Blue's repertoire ranges from traditional big band jazz to bebop and swing, to modern jazz.

At 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 22, the Thornapple Plaza Stage will host Get Wild: Celebrating the Music of Prince, a high-energy concert experience honoring the music and legacy of Prince. Led by musical director Mitch Myers, the production brings together an ensemble of vocalists and musicians to perform a wide range selection of Prince's iconic catalog. In addition to Prince's own hits, the show features a special segment showcasing songs he wrote for other artists.



Dueling Pianos will entertain Summerfest audiences on Saturday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. **Courtesy photos**



The Doug Acker Duo consists of Hastings father and son Doug and Tim Acker. The two will play at the Spray Plaza on Saturday, Aug. 23, from 2 to 2:45 p.m.

Performances at the Spray Plaza Venue will start at noon on Friday, Aug. 22, and will include:

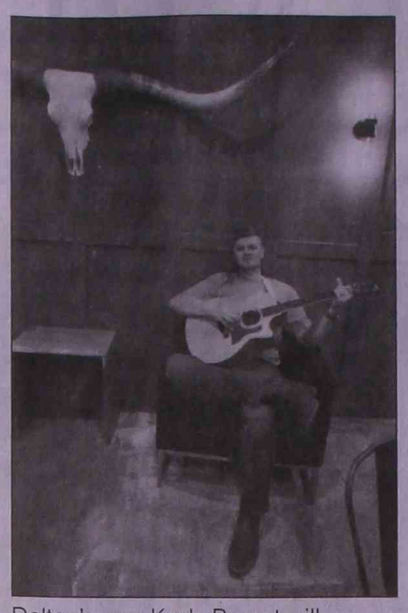
- Noon to 1 p.m. – Beth Lepak Strings;
- 1-1:45 p.m. – Lexi Adams, an American singer-songwriter and independent performing artist from southwest Michigan;
- 2-2:45 p.m. – Michigan Mafia String Band, featuring acoustic bluegrass, country and a little swing ;
- 3-3:45 p.m. – Stormy's Foam Party, a 30 x 60 play-space, foam cannons and up to 4 feet of allergy-free, zero clean-up, environmentally friendly foam.

Saturday's fun at the Spray Plaza Venue will begin at 1 p.m. and include:

- 1-1:45 p.m. – Kody Bryant, a solo acoustic country cover musician from Delton;
- 2-2:45 p.m. – Doug Acker Duo, Doug and Tim Acker are a father/son duo from Hastings; and
- 3-3:45 p.m. – Stormy's Foam Party, a 30 x 60 play-space with sudsy, refreshing bubbles that kids of all ages can play outdoors.

Other Summerfest performances are set to include:

- Saturday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. – Dueling Pianos; and
- Saturday, Aug. 23, at 7:30 p.m. – Eric Brown and the Boat Drinkers: Tribute to the music of Jimmy Buffet.



Delton's own Kody Bryant will perform from 1 to 1:45 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 23, at the Spray Plaza.

Between both the 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. performances, on both nights, the Hastings Expression Dance Studio will be performing for the audience.

All shows at both the Thornapple Plaza Venue and the Spray Plaza Venue are free to attend. —*DM*



Is it really a party without foam? Stormy's Foam Party returns to Summerfest at the Spray Plaza on Friday, Aug. 22, at 3 p.m.

Woodland couple to help lead annual Homecoming parade



Mary and Claude Smith are the 2025 Woodland Homecoming Parade Grand Marshals. The two will lead the parade through downtown Woodland at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 30. **Courtesy photo**

The Woodland Homecoming Committee announced that a local couple, Claude and Mary Smith, were recently selected as grand marshals and will help lead the festival's 2025 parade set for 1 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 30.

According to committee members, Claude Smith was born and raised in Woodland, with Mary moving to the area in her freshman year of high school. Both were supporters of the former Woodland High School, where Mary was a cheerleader and majorette.

Through the years, the Smiths have served their church, Zion Lutheran, in various capacities. Claude served in every position except finance secretary, a position Mary has held. They have each sung in the choir, taught Sunday school, and even preached on occasion.

Their commitment to their church family doesn't end within the church walls, as they faithfully visit the shut-ins.

Claude retired from Oldsmobile after 30 years, all the while farming, which he continues somewhat today. At one point, he took over his father's chicken business, with a flock of 5,000 birds.

Mary's career serving the children of the community started when she taught story hour, along with Carol Stadel. She continued in the Lakewood school system as a math aide in the Distar 3 program, working as a teacher's aide in Special Education, and as a secretary at West Elementary School. Mary retired after 29 years in education, with her last assignment working in Woodland with Wayne Abbot, then-director of special education. She received the Contributor Award from the Parent Advisory Board of the Ionia Intermediate School District in 2000.

After retiring, the couple built a greenhouse in their backyard and operated a seasonal business selling vegetable plants and flowers in the spring. They enjoyed providing plants to customers for seven years until an out-of-state family wedding kept them from reopening one year.

According to the festival committee, the Smiths have been valued members of various local organizations through the years. Mary is a past member of the Woodland Child Study Club, PTA and the Woodland Women's Study Club. Claude is a long-time member of the Lions Club and, in the last few years, served as a voting inspector.

"The Lakewood Community Council and the annual CROP Walk are causes that are near and dear to their hearts," committee members stated in announcing the Smiths' selection. "They have faithfully walked in the CROP Walk for over 40 years. Claude wore engineer boots for several years."

Claude and Mary Smith have seven children, 15 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Along with riding in the parade, the Smiths will be honored at a reception afterwards in the park.

"Please join us in congratulating Claude and Mary on this well-deserved honor at that time," committee members stated. — *DM*

CLASSIFIEDS

TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL 269-945-9554

WANTED

WANTED TO BUY: Standing Timber. Conscientious timber harvester. Saw Mill Office- 517-254-4463.

AUCTIONS

NOTICE - PUBLIC LAND AUCTION
The Barry County Treasurer will offer tax- reverted real estate at public auction online at www.tax-sale.info. The first auction will be held on August 26th, 2025 from 10:00am to 7:00pm EDT. Bids can also be placed up to 30 days in advance on the website. Assistance is available for those without computer or internet access. Incomplete or voided sales from the August 26th, 2025 auction, if any, will be re-offered on September 26th, 2025 from 10:00am to7:00pm EDT. Unsold tax reverted real estate from either of the previous auctions, if any, will be re- offered on October 31st, 2025 in a sealed- bid auction. All bids must be placed by 7:00 pm EDT for this final sealed-bid auction. Answers to common questions about the auction process and additional information can be found at www.tax-sale.info/faq For more information and to view a list of the properties being offered, please visit www.tax-sale.info or call 1-800-259-7470. Auction listings may also be available at the County Treasurer's office.

CAMPERS/RVS

1988 AVIAN Model X 34' RV for sale. Updated plumbing. New tires. Needs TLC. $8,000 OBO. 269-993-2529

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING DEADLINES

AD-VISOR & CHRONICLE
Monday at 4 p.m.

BATTLE CREEK SHOPPER NEWS
Monday at 5 p.m.

THE HASTINGS BANNER
Tuesday at Noon

THE REMINDER
Wednesday at Noon

THE SUN AND NEWS
Wednesday at Noon

VIEWnewspaper Group
mihomepaper.com

SAME DAY SERVICE AVAILABLE
LYONS SEPTIC TANK SERVICE
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
Septic Tanks Vacuum Cleaned
Year Round Pumping
Serving All of Barry County and Surrounding Areas
"Our family serving your family for over 61 years..."

Lyons Septic Tank Service Thanks you all for your business in 2024! We appreciate your business!

Extra long hose to protect your lawn

NEW Services offered in 2025
· Septic Tank Install
· Line Repair
· Risers Install
· Land Clearing
· Light Excavation

Bonded
Licensed by State of Michigan #96-001-2
Jesse Lyons, Owner

FAST, RELIABLE SERVICE SINCE 1961
945-5379 623-2089

OBITUARIES

VIEW OBITUARIES ONLINE. HASTINGSBANNER.COM

Ruth Ann (Gonzales) Reigler



Ruth Ann (Gonzales) Reigler of Freeport, MI went to be with the Lord on August 13, 2025.

She was born December 17, 1944 to Mary Alice (Clinton) and Alfred Gonzales. On August 1, 1964, Ruth married David Reigler at UBM and they recently celebrated 61 years of marriage. Ruth was known for her faith in God, her devotion to her family, her excellent culinary skills, listening to the Beach Boys, her sense of humor, kindness, and hospitality.

She touched the lives of many, including many of those who worked and resided at Thornapple Manor, where she lived in her final years. She made a point to call family and friends often, including phone calls with her longtime friends Judy and Barb. While living at the Manor, Ruth enjoyed playing games, bird watching and spending time with her husband David.

Ruth is survived and will be missed by her husband, David; daughters, Shelley (Gordon) Olsen, Susan (Ed) Harris; sons, Stephen (Amanda) Reigler, and Randall (Melissa) Reigler; grandchildren, Ashley, Josh (Kenzie), Bethany, Payton, Grace, and Anna; two great-grandchildren, Ava and Kaya; brother-and sister-in-law, Clayton and Norene Reigler, and many nieces and nephews, including, Bonnie Toogood, Bruce (Daire) Rendon, and Marcia (Randy) Clark, who she was raised alongside.

She was preceded in death by her parents; older siblings, Eugene Gonzales, Elena Martinez, Harold Moore, Helen Rendon, James "Jim" Gonzales; niece, Brenda Michael; mother-in-law, Cleone Tobias and fathers-in-law, Harry Reigler and Raymond Tobias.

A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025 at the Gathering Place on 193 Cherry St., Freeport, MI, 49325. The visitation will be from 11 a.m.-noon. The memorial service will be held at noon with a luncheon to follow at the Freeport Community Center, 200 S. State St., Freeport, MI, 49325.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a charitable donation be made to Thornapple Manor in Ruth's memory.

VOLUNTEERS

Continued from Page 4

late-season appointments now available in Battle Creek and Coldwater for those who missed the April 15 filing deadline and have yet to file their 2022, 2023 or 2024 tax returns.

Goodwill CMH officials are also seeking individuals to join the VITA volunteer team. No tax experience is necessary and all training, which is available online or in person, is provided free of charge. Volunteers may serve in a variety of roles, including as a tax preparer, greeter, interpreter, site administrator or quality reviewer.

For late-season appointments or to volunteer in Battle Creek, individuals may call 269-788-6500, extensions 2018 or 2037. Or, for Coldwater, persons may call 517-279-6565.

General eligibility and volunteer questions may also be submitted via email to vita@goodwillcmh.org or by visiting online at goodwillcmh.org/program-services/free-income-tax-preparation/. — *DM*

Worship Together



...at the church of your choice ~ Weekly schedules of Hastings area churches available for your convenience...

HASTINGS FREE METHODIST CHURCH
"We Exist To Be An Expression Of Who Jesus Is To The World Around Us". 2635 N. M-43 Hwy., P.O. Box 8, Hastings. Telephone 269-945-9121. Email hastfmc@gmail.com. Website: www.hastingsfreemethodist.com. Pastor Brian Teed, Assistant Pastor Emma Miller, Worship Director, Martha Stoetzel. **Sunday Morning Worship:** 9:45 a.m. with Kids Church and Nursery. Aftermath Student Ministries: Sundays 6 p.m.

SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH OF DELTON
7025 Milo Rd., P.O. Box 765, (corner of Milo Rd. & S. M-43), Delton, MI 49046. Pastor Roger Claypool, (517) 204-9390. Sunday Worship Service 10:30 to 11:30am, Nursery and Children's Ministry. Wednesday night Bible study and prayer time 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
502 E. Grand St., Hastings. Pastor Tod Shook
Wednesdays - Bible Study - 6 to 7 p.m.; Sunday School - 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Service - 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
www.cbchastings.org.

WOODLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
203 N. Main. Pastor: Kathy Smith. Sunday School 9:15 a.m.; Worship 10:15 a.m.

CHRIST THE KING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)
328 N. Jefferson Street. Worship 10 a.m. Nursery provided. Pastor Peter Adams, contact 616-690-8609.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA CATHOLIC CHURCH
805 S. Jefferson. 269-945-4246 Pastor Father Jeff Hanley. Mass 4:30 p.m. Saturday. Mass 8 and 11 a.m. Sunday.

LIFEGATE COMMUNITY CHURCH
301 E. State Rd., P.O. Box 273, Hastings, MI 49058. Pastor Scott Price. Phone: 269-948-0900. Website: www.lifegatecc.com. Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Wednesday Life Group 6:30 p.m.

HASTINGS BAPTIST CHURCH
309 E. Woodlawn, Hastings. Matt Moser, Lead Pastor. Sunday Services: 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages; 10:30 a.m. Worship Service; Senior High Youth Group 6-8 p.m.; Young Adults 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Family Night 6:30-8 p.m., Kids 4 Truth (Children Kindergarten-5th Grade), 6:30-8 p.m. Middle School Youth Group; 6:30 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer. Call Church Office 948-8004 for information.

PLEASANTVIEW FAMILY CHURCH
2601 Lacey Road, Dowling, MI 49050. Pastor, Steve Olmstead. (269) 758-3021 church phone. Sunday Service: 10 a.m.

This information on worship services is provided by The Hastings Banner, the churchesand these local businesses:

Flexfab®
1699 W. M43 Highway,
Hastings, MI 49058.
945-4700

HASTINGS
Fiberglass Products
A WORLDWIDE SUPPLIER OF Hot Line Tools & Equipment
1301 W. Green St.
Hastings, MI 49058
945-9541

PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE EVENTS

— AUGUST 21-28 —

Those interested can register for these events and find more information at cedarcreekinstitute.org/events/

Aug. 1-31 — Aug. Storybook Walk: "Mnoomin maan'gowing: The Gift of Mnoomin" by Brittnay Luby; illustrated by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley; translated by Mary Ann Corbiere. A seed is a gift to the future and a story you can hold. Follow the journey of mnoomin, or wild rice seed, as it encounters the wetland animals that prepare its way and the people who harvest it. Hike the trail and discover the forces that keep a wetland ecosystem balanced for mnoomin. The Storybook Walk is free and self-guided on the purple and green trails.

Aug. 1-31 — Walk the Planets. Take a hike around our solar system. Visit each planet and discover the solar system that surrounds Earth with a free, self-guided hike on the green trail.

Thursday, Aug. 21 — Social Hike, 10 a.m.-noon. Join the Institute for a free social hiking experience. Bring a friend, or make a new one. Water is required to hike — this is a safety precaution to prevent dehydration on the trail. This is a 2.3-mile hike that is open to all.

Thursday, Aug. 28 — Accessible Shinrin-Yoku Experience (ages 15+, under 18 with an adult), 6:30 p.m. Join Certified Forest Therapy Guide Katie Venechuk as she introduces the practice of Shinrin-Yoku (also known as "forest bathing"). This restorative series will help you experience nature in a new way—encouraging you to slow down, notice new things in the world around you and enjoy the peace of nature.

More information about these events can be found on the Institute's website at CedarCreekInstitute.org.

HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY SCHEDULE

Adventure awaits at the Hastings Public Library. Join the Summer Reading Challenge from June 7 through Aug. 16. Read anything for 15 minutes or more a day, log your days and win prizes. Pick up your prizes at the library any time.

No library card is required for library programs and activities.

Thursday, Aug. 21 – Novel Ideas Book Club meets at Tyden Park, 1 p.m.; Movie Memories and Milestones watches a 1948 film starring Mickey Rooney and Tom Drake, 5 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 22 – Friday Storytime, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 25 – Crafting Passions, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 26 – Baby Cafe, 10 a.m.; mahjong, 5 p.m.; chess, 5 p.m.; Rain Barrel Workshop with WMEAC (registration and fee required) 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 27 – Itsy Bitsy Book Club, 10:30 a.m.; Open Art Studio, 11:30 a.m.; acoustic jam, 5 p.m.

More information about these and other events is available by calling the library, 269-945-4263.



ASK DR. UNIVERSE

Dino-might

What was the largest dinosaur?

— Carlos, Calif.

Dear Carlos,

Your question almost stumped me. I don't really have dinosaur scientist pals. So, I turned to an expert on finding answers.

My friend Emily Cukier is a science librarian at Washington State University. She helps students and scientists find information. I asked her what dinosaur is the largest—and how she figures that out.

Cukier told me that I should think hard about my question. Are we looking for the tallest dino? The longest? The heaviest? Those might be different answers.

Then it's time to ask the internet.

"I'm a librarian, but the first thing I would do is put it into a search engine and see what I get," Cukier said.

A search engine uses huge, sorted lists of everything on the internet. It makes a new list of articles and sources related to my question.

The first thing you see will probably be an answer from generative artificial intelligence (AI). That's a computer program. It scrapes lots of information off the internet. Then it writes an answer to the question.

Cukier told me AI is like a parrot. It's been taught to make words and sentences. But it doesn't understand what it's saying. It can't tell if information is good or bad.

So, I'm going to ignore the AI answer at first. I don't want to risk getting a wrong answer stuck in my brain at the start of my search. Instead, I scan the search results for reliable sources. I'm looking for museums, universities, encyclopedias or scientists.

Right now, we think the largest dinosaurs were a group called sauropods. They were massive veggie eaters. They had strong, stout bodies with four legs and long tails. They had small heads set on long necks. The most famous sauropod is the Brontosaurus.

But the very biggest sauropods were titanosaurs. I see a few titanosaurs listed over and over in my reading: Dreadnoughtus, Argentinosaurus, Patagotitan, Puertasaurus and Sauroposeidon.

To learn more, I could do a new search for each of those dinosaurs. Or I could visit a library and check out books about them.

Cukier says that the way we get information is changing really fast. Everyone—even librarians—are working hard to learn the best ways to search.

By flexing your search skills early, the answers you find are sure to be the tricera-tops.— *Dr. Universe*

Do you have a question? Ask Dr. Universe.
Send an email to Washington State University's resident scientist and writer at Dr.Universe@wsu.edu or visit her website,askdruniverse.com.

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

THE LAST DROP: How the milkman faded from Hastings life

DAVID W. MILLER
Special to The Banner

In the 1950s and 1960s, the delivery of fresh milk was not just a convenience—it was a daily ritual that subtly fit into the rhythm of life in Hastings and throughout Barry County. Long before refrigerated grocery aisles and plastic jugs became standard, local dairies like Lockshore Farms, located at 127 North Market Street, stood at the center of a remarkably efficient and deeply personal food distribution system. This system, built on reliability, trust and close community ties, began each day before sunrise on the dairy farms scattered across the countryside.

On these small farms, dairy cows were milked twice daily—first in the early morning hours, and again in late afternoon. In the earlier decades, this work was done by hand, with farmers sitting on stools and using open pails. As technology advanced, mechanical milking machines were introduced, increasing both efficiency and cleanliness. Once the milk was collected, it was filtered through fine mesh or cheesecloth and poured into large 10-gallon metal milk cans. These sturdy cans were the first critical link in a chain that brought fresh dairy from farm to table.

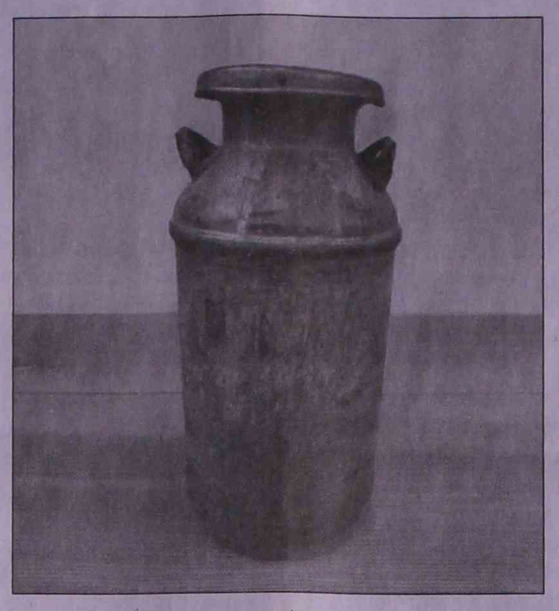
To keep the milk cool before pickup, farmers placed the filled cans in springhouses, ice-cooled cellars or troughs of cold water. Each morning, the cans were hauled to the roadside and placed on wooden platforms or metal stands, waiting for the arrival of the milk hauler. Typically arriving between 6 and 8 a.m., the hauler would collect the full cans and replace them with empties, ensuring a continuous loop of supply. The filled cans were transported to the local creamery—often Lockshore Farms in Hastings—where they were weighed, sampled, tested for butterfat and then pasteurized.

Once processed, the milk was poured into reusable glass bottles, most commonly quarts or pints, and for school service, half-pint bottles. Each bottle was sealed with a round cardboard cap that was both practical and iconic. A wonderful example from Lockshore Farms reads: "Please Return Empty Bottles – Try Lockshore Farms Inc. Fine Dairy Products." These caps served a dual purpose. They protected the milk from contaminants and also carried the dairy's branding. They featured a small pull-tab, under which was a punched hole designed for inserting a paper straw. For children across Barry County, this ritual—the tug of the cap and the first cold sip through a straw—was a familiar and comforting part of their school day.

Every morning, milk for home and school delivery was packed into galvanized steel wire crates, rugged and utilitarian, designed to hold six to eight glass bottles each. These crates were stackable, easy to clean, and strong enough to endure daily use and rough handling. They were loaded into specialized delivery vehicles—most often the iconic DIVCO milk trucks. DIVCO, short for Detroit Industrial Vehicles Company, produced vehicles perfectly suited for multi-stop delivery. With a cab designed for stand-up driving and no seat behind the wheel, these trucks allowed milkmen to exit and re-enter quickly as they made hundreds of stops each week.

One of Hastings' best-remembered milkmen during the '50s and '60s was Stew Howes, who served homes along South Jefferson Street. His truck—a familiar white vehicle often parked beside his home near where Jefferson meets Shriner Street—made daily rounds from early morning into the late afternoon. Gordy Howes recalls the long days his father would put in, beginning around 6:30 a.m., with deliveries extending to 5 p.m. During the summer months, his dad might drop by the house around 9 a.m. and coax him into assisting with the route. The physical challenge of hopping in and out of the truck, bottle crate in hand, to deliver milk, cream, cottage cheese, buttermilk and chocolate milk to the doorsteps of their neighbors was exhausting, even for a fit preteen.

Many customers left galvanized milk boxes on their porches, branded with the Lockshore Farms name in bold stenciled lettering. These insulated containers protected the milk from the elements—keeping it cool in the summer and preventing freezing in winter. The milkman would place the day's delivery inside and retrieve the empties. Some families would leave notes inside requesting specific items, while others placed payment—coins or bills—in envelopes, tucked neatly into the box. There were no receipts, no signatures, and no locks. The entire system was based on an honor code. In an era before home surveillance and electronic banking, this quiet act of trust served as a testament to Hastings' strong social fabric of the time.



The milk delivery process began at local farms. Once the milk was collected, it was filtered through fine mesh or cheesecloth and poured into large 10-gallon metal milk cans, like the one seen in the photo. **Courtesy photos**

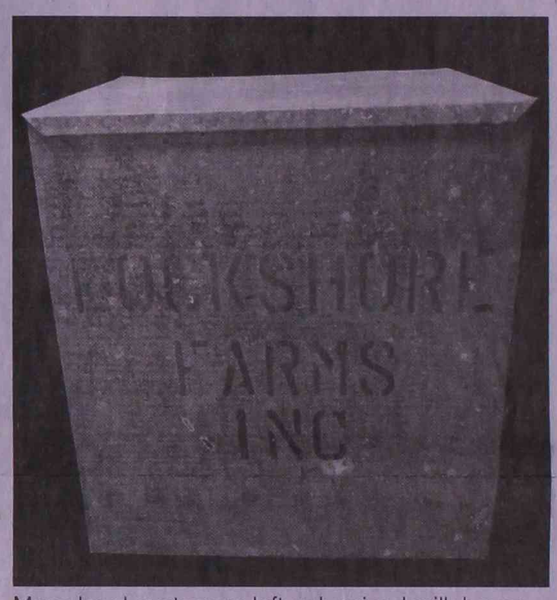
The milkman's duties didn't always stop at the doorstep. Gordy Howes remembers that in many households, especially for the elderly, the milkman would step inside—often unannounced—and place the bottles directly into the refrigerator. Most homes weren't locked, and this level of access was not only accepted but welcomed. A good milkman wasn't just a delivery driver; he was a trusted presence, a familiar face, and in many cases, a quiet participant in the daily life of the family.

Meanwhile, in Barry County's rural schoolhouses, milk delivery took on a slightly different form. Drivers like Albert Stauffer and Forest Schondelmayer made special deliveries to one-room schools throughout the countryside, bringing crates of half-pint bottles in the early morning so that children could enjoy a nourishing midday break. The bottles were handed out shortly before lunch, and students would remove the paper cap, insert a straw and sip the milk—served chilled but never wasted. Empty bottles were returned to the crate, which the driver would collect the next day. It was a simple, circular system—efficient and sustainable long before those words became fashionable.

At the heart of it all were the tools of the trade—the milk can, the bottle cap, the crate, the box and the truck. Each one served a specific purpose, yet all worked in unison to make a perishable product available to every doorstep and schoolhouse in the county. The system was low-tech, but remarkably effective: Local farmers produced the milk; local dairies processed and bottled it; local drivers delivered it and local families drank it.

Today, these humble artifacts—milk cans, wire crates, cardboard caps and porch boxes—survive in antique shops, private collections and the quiet corners of family barns, bearing silent testimony to a time when food was not only local, but deeply personal. For those who grew up in Hastings during the 1950s and '60s, the clink of returning glass bottles, the soft hum of the milk truck at dawn and the familiar tug of a bottle cap are more than nostalgic details—they are the sounds and textures of a way of life rooted in routine, trust and human connection. The milkman, with his daily rounds and dependable smile, was more than a delivery driver—he was a welcome figure at the door, a steady presence in the fabric of neighborhood life. Looking back now, half a century later, many recognize these men as the unsung heroes of their era—quiet stewards of nourishment and community who, one bottle at a time, helped keep homes and hearts full.

David Miller is a moderator for the "Hastings History" Facebook group.



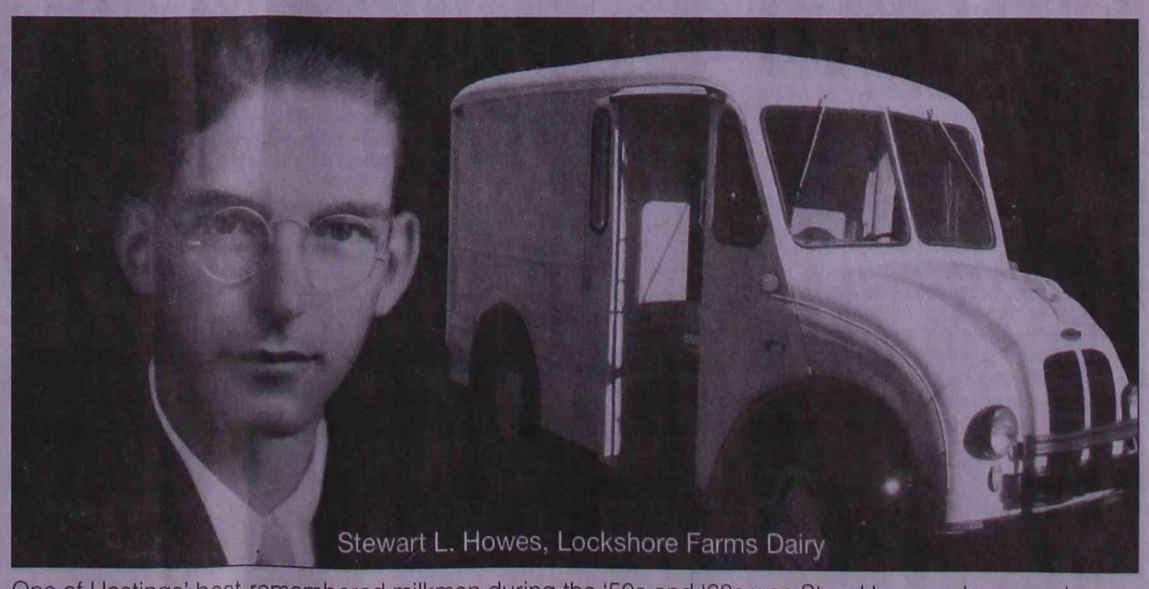
Many local customers left galvanized milk boxes on their porches, branded with the Lockshore Farms name in bold stenciled lettering. These insulated containers protected the milk from the elements—keeping it cool in the summer and preventing freezing in winter.



These 10-gallon metal milk cans were used to transport milk from local farms to the creamery, where the milk was weighed, sampled, tested for butterfat and pasteurized.



Milk bottles in the 1950s and '60s were adorned with paper caps, often bearing the Lockshore Farms logo.



Stewart L. Howes, Lockshore Farms Dairy

One of Hastings' best-remembered milkmen during the '50s and '60s was Stew Howes, who served homes along South Jefferson Street.

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement

Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Barry County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on August 28, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:

Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Joyce J. Dennie, unmarried

Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns

Foreclosing Assignee (if any): NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing

Date of Mortgage: July 17, 2014

Date of Mortgage Recording: July 30, 2014

Amount claimed due on date of notice: $9,797.45

Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Woodland, Barry County, Michigan, and described as: Lot Twelve (12) of Innovation Subdivision according to the recorded plat thereof being located in the Northwest one-quarter of Section 3 Town 4 North Range 7 West, Woodland Township, Barry County, Michigan.

Common street address (if any): 7795 Woodland Rd, Lake Odessa, MI 48849-9323

The redemption period shall be 1 year from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a.

If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.

This notice is from a debt collector.

Date of notice: July 31, 2025

Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515

1568098
(07-31)(08-21)

Lakeview and Gull Lake take wins over Saxon soccer

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Saxons were looking to toughen up the schedule this fall.

So far, mission accomplished.

Battle Creek Lakeview knocked off the young Hastings varsity boys' soccer team 8-0 in the season opener in Battle Creek Friday.

The Saxons were back in action Tuesday evening and fell 2-1 to visiting Gull Lake.

Gull Lake got goals from Brody Benedict and Ryland Vanderpol in the win.

"Plainwell, Otsego, Gull Lake, those are some tough teams typically. Those are going to be fun to be a part of," Hastings head coach Matt Hokanson said of the upgraded schedule.

"Last year, we had a winning record. Gull Lake had a down year last year and only won two or three games, and yet they were seeded seventh and we were seeded last [for districts.] It's all because of the MHSAA rankings, they call it MPR, which is all about who you played and who they played. Gull Lake may have only won two games, but they played harder people. They were ranked higher than we were. We had to take the stance that we're going to have to start playing better teams to get our seeding up come district time."

The Saxons had ten wins and faced an 18-1-2 South Christian team in the opening round of the state tournament. A tougher schedule means the potential to face a team that talented a little deeper into the tournament at the end of the season.

The Hastings boys are slated to host Fremont this afternoon, Aug. 21, beginning at 5:45 pm. They go to Wayland Saturday for the Csaba Barabas Memorial Tournament.

Hastings follows that up with matches at Ionia Monday and at home against Plainwell Wednesday in the week ahead.



Hastings' Pau Crespo and Battle Creek Lakeview's Josh Neal battle for possession of the ball during their season opening match in Battle Creek Friday, Aug. 15. **Photo by John Hendler**

Trojans take title at Montague tourney



The Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' soccer team celebrates a perfect first day of the 2025 season after wins over Kelloggsville and Howard City Tri County at the Montague Invitational Saturday, Aug. 16. The Trojans defeated Kelloggsville 4-3 in a shootout and then knocked off Tri County 2-0 in the tournament championship game. TK is now 3-0 with a win over Zeeland East added to the tally Monday. **Photo provided**

MORTGAGE SALE

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said mortgage, made by Christopher Bruining and Kylie Bruining, husband and wife, Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc (MERS) as nominee for Flagstar Bank, NA, Mortgagee, dated the 24th day of February, 2023 and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for The County of Barry and State of Michigan, on the 27th day of February, 2023 in Inst# 2023-001327 said Mortgage having been assigned to Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, the sum of One Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-Five and 69/100 ($142,835.69). Notice of Foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the Circuit Court Barry County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM o'clock Local Time on the 11th day of September, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. The bid may include interest thereon at 5.87500 per annum and all legal costs, charges, and expenses, including the attorney fees allowed by law, and also any sum or sums which may be paid by the undersigned, necessary to protect its interest in the premises. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land, including any and all structures, and homes, manufactured or otherwise, located thereon, situated in the City of Hastings, County of Barry, State of Michigan, and described as follows, to wit: Lots 7 and 8, Block 2, RJ Grant`s First Addition to the City, formerly Village of Hastings, as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 15, Barry County Records. Commonly known as 128 W COLFAX ST, HASTINGS, MI 49058 During the six (6) months immediately following the sale, the property may be redeemed, except that in the event that the property is determined to be abandoned pursuant to MCLA 600.3241a, the property may be redeemed 30 days after the foreclosure sale or when the time to provide the notice required by the statute expires, whichever is later. Pursuant to MCLA 600.3278, the mortgagor(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, of if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Dated: 08/07/2025 Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. Mortgagee HLADIK, ONORATO & FEDERMAN, LLP Athena Aitas (P61824) Attorney for Servicer 3290 West Big Beaver Road, Suite 117 Troy, MI 48084 (248)362-2600 24-02032 - 24-02032
1568699
(08-07)(08-28)

GO ONLINE TO HASTINGSBANNER.COM

SYNOPSIS
Hastings Charter Township
Regular Meeting
August 12, 2025

Meeting called to order 6:00 p.m.
All board members present
Approved agenda/consent agenda
Discussed emergency svc, tax disbursement, recycling, budget upcoming election, health dept
Approved payment of bills
Dept. reports received
Motion to adjourn 7:55 pm

Submitted, David J. Olson, Clerk
Attested to by
Jim Partridge, Supervisor

Lions ready for some reinforcements to arrive

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Lions don't have the depth they're hoping for yet, so head coach Mike Webb is hoping for better things ahead.

He's hoping the better things start Friday when his Maple Valley varsity boys' soccer team goes on the road to take on Olivet.

The Lions are off to an 0-2 start to the season. Laingsburg took an 8-1 win over the Lions in the season opener last Friday, Aug. 15, at Maple Valley High School. Dansville knocked off the visiting Lions 4-1 Tuesday evening.

"We have a couple boys that aren't joining until next week. Right now, we're playing with only 11. We're getting tired pretty quickly the first two games We're competing, we're competing and then getting pretty tired out," Lion head coach Mike Webb said.

Sophomore Owen Cushing scored his first varsity goal in the loss to Laingsburg. Michael Harwood scored the goal in the Lions' contest with Dansville.

The Lions did lose some of their scoring punch in the offseason, and there is still some work to do on the attack.

"Finishing is going to be a little work. We're getting the ball deep. That's not the hard part. Finishing has been the hard part so far," Webb said, "but with the players coming next week that problem should be alleviated."

The Lions return to action Thursday, Aug. 28, at Hillsdale Will Carleton Academy. The Big 8 Conference season starts with a visit from Stockbridge to Maple Valley High School Sept. 2.

Visit us online at mihomepaper.com

JOHNSTOWN TOWNSHIP
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ROLL FOR MILL LAKE
AQUATIC PLANT CONTROL SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT NO. 1

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF JOHNSTOWN TOWNSHIP, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Township Supervisor and Assessor have prepared and filed in the office of the Township Clerk for public examination a special assessment roll including all properties located within the Mill Lake Aquatic Plant Control Special Assessment District No. 1 that are benefited by the proposed aquatic plant control project. The roll has been prepared for the purpose of assessing the costs of the project within the aforesaid special assessment district, which district is more particularly shown on the plans on file with the Township Clerk. The costs of the project are as shown on the estimate of costs on file with the Township Clerk. The total project cost is $64,000 (including administrative costs, which is the amount of the assessment roll. The amounts assessed against each property will be $785.28 for parcels subject to a full assessment & $392.64 for parcels subject to a half assessment. The term of the special assessment will be six years (2026 through 2031 inclusive).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Supervisor and Assessor have further reported to the Township Board that the assessment against each parcel of land within the district is such relative portion of the whole sum levied against all parcels of land in each district as the benefit to such parcels bear to the total benefit to all parcels of land in each special assessment district.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Johnstown Township Board will meet at the Johnstown Township Hall, 13641 S. M-37 Hwy, Battle Creek, Michigan on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the special assessment roll, hearing any objections to the roll and confirming the roll as submitted, revised or amended. The assessment roll may be examined at the office of the Township Clerk during regular business hours of regular business days until the time of the hearing and may further be examined at the hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that an owner or party in interest, or his/ her agent, may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment or may file his/her appearance and protest by letter before the hearing, and in that event, personal appearance shall not be required. Any person objecting to the assessment roll shall file his/her objection in writing with the Johnstown Township Clerk before the close of the hearing on the assessment roll. The owners or any person having an interest in real property who protests in writing at or before the hearing may file a written appeal of the special assessment with the Michigan Tax Tribunal within 30 days after confirmation of the special assessment roll, as provided by law.

Johnstown Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' notice to the Township Clerk.

Sheri Babcock, Clerk
Johnstown Township
13641 S. M-37 Hwy, Battle Creek, MI 49017
(269) 721-9709

Notice to Creditors

Estate of Gregory S. Wagner Date of Birth: August 7, 1953

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Gregory S. Wagner, of 2501 Chippewa Trail, Hastings, MI 49058, Barry County, Michigan died July 25, 2025.

Creditors of Gregory S. Wagner are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to: Eileen M. Wagner, Trustee of the Wagner Protection Trust, u/a/d April 30, 2025, care of Carrier Law, P.C., 4965 East Beltline Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525 within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 8/18/2025
David L. Carrier P41531
4965 East Beltline Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
(616) 361-8400
Eileen M. Wagner
2501 Chippewa Trail
Hastings, MI 49058

Football teams prep for week one next Thursday



The Delton Kellogg High School marching band gets in some Tuesday evening practice before the start of the 2025 football season. Delton Kellogg will host a week one ballgame against sConstantine Thursday, Aug. 28.



Delton Kellogg sophomore Mason Ferris goes after the ball during a fumble recovery drill as coaches look on Tuesday evening at Delton Kellogg High School. The Panthers open the 2025 varsity football season at home, Aug. 28, taking on Constantine. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

High school football season is well underway – at least the preseason practices.

Second-year Lakewood head coach Tim Swore had his guys running and getting in some push-ups as practice closed on the grass outside Unity Field Monday evening at Lakewood High School.

Cooler temperatures were a welcome occurrence for the football players as they donned helmets and pads after getting the preseason started with conditioning exercises the start of last week.

Delton Kellogg has been practicing late this week, without the benefit of Friday night lights, or the lights on once its getting dark on Monday or Tuesday for that matter.

The Panthers rolled through defensive drills Tuesday evening working on recovering fumbles and also trying to force them before starting on some more X's and O's as the sun disappeared.

Tonight, Aug. 21, is the big varsity scrimmage night for high school football teams across the state – marking one week before the official start of the regular season.

Hastings and Thornapple Kellogg will continue what has been their traditional season opening rivalry in Middleville Thursday, Aug. 28.

Delton Kellogg is at home for a Southwestern Athletic Conference crossover against Constantine in week one.

Lakewood will be home to take on Godwin Heights Thursday, and coach Swore said he is happy to get the chance to try and build some momentum with three consecutive home football games to start the season.

The Maple Valley varsity football team opens its first season under head coach Mitchell McClintock on the road at Saranac Thursday.

The first day of competition for girls' swimming and diving and volleyball allowed by the MHSAA was Wednesday, Aug. 20. The rest of the high school sports across the state are already in full swing.

Seume takes over as BCCS boys' soccer head coach

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Duncan Seume is heading west along M-179 to keep on coaching.

The Maple Valley soccer stand-out from the class of 2022 is taking over as the varsity boys' soccer coach at Barry County Christian School (BCCS) this season..

Seume is a familiar face to the BCCS soccer community, having served as a soccer official for the past handful of years, including officiating several BCCS matches last fall.

His deep understanding of the game and firsthand experience with our program make him an exciting addition to the coaching staff stated a BCCS release on Seume's hiring Aug. 11.

Following a successful youth, club, and high school playing career, Seume transitioned into officiating, where he has remained active in the sport for nearly two decades. Last season, he felt a strong calling to step into coaching.

The Eagle season is getting rolling after a stellar 2024 campaign in which the Eagles won 17 games under former head coach Justin Schultz.

Delton guys outrun Martin at Gilmore race with Gull Lake

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Gull Lake swept its way to victories at the annual early-season meet with Delton Kellogg at Gilmore Car Museum Tuesday.

The Delton Kellogg boys were second at the three-team meet which included Martin this fall. Gull Lake took the boys' victory with 15 points. DK was second with 61 points and Martin third with 64 points.

The Gull Lake girls also tallied just 15 points. Martin was second with 50 and the Delton Kellogg girls didn't earn a team score with only three finishers.

Gull Lake had the eight fastest guys and the seven fastest girls Tuesday.

Delton Kellogg junior Landon Madden was the only guy in the top 11 not from Gull Lake. He hit the finish line ninth with a time of 19:46.90. A state qualifier a year ago, Madden was almost two minutes faster at Gilmore Tuesday than he was at the same meet at the start of his sophomore campaign in 2024.

The Delton Kellogg boys' team had sophomore Jace Hilton 12th overall in 20:07.90 and senior Nick Muday 14th in 20:41.40. Freshman Malachi Allersma clocked in 23rd with a time of 22:32.60. The number five guy for DK was sophomore Joseph McCoy who placed 25th in 23:20.20.

The Gull Lake boys were led by a pair of seniors. Gavin Markucki won the race in 17:56.90 and Finn Tauren was 18:03.00.

Senior Elli Timmerman was the first finisher for the Delton Kellogg girls. She came in ninth overall at 25:22.10. DK had junior Makayla Lutz place 18th in 28:55.60 and junior Evelynn Courneya 19th in 29:56.30.

Lane Isom, a junior, ran away with the girls' win for Gull Lake. She hit the finish line in 20:19.40. Senior teammate Elsie Markillie was second in 23:21.50.

Martin had sophomore Allison Rodgers place eighth with a time of 25:04.90 behind the seven Gull Lake scorers.

The race was the second one of the season for the Delton Kellogg teams which competed in the Aug. 15 Jim Carey Early Bird hosted by Lawrence.

The results were about the same there on the team side, at least for the Panthers. The Delton Kellogg boys were second at the three-team meet, ahead of Martin. Hartford won the boys' meet with 28 points. DK was second with 39 points and Martin third with 57 points. Martin beat out Hartford 25-31 in the girls' contest. The DK girls did not earn a team score. Comstock, Decatur, Eau Claire and Lawrence also had runners competing.

The top four for the DK boys came in as a pack. Madden led the way in sixth with a time of 20:09.10. Hilton was seventh in 20:13.29, Muday eighth in 20:16.73 and Allersma ninth at 20:19.89. McCoy placed 16th in 23:53.10.

Leading the race was Hartford junior Aiden McDonald who clocked in at 17:29.88 – the only guy to finish in fewer than 19 minutes.

Martin junior Beyda Conley had a big lead in the girls' race too at the end. She finished in 21:05.02. Hartford junior Juliana Morseau was second more than three minutes back.

Timmerman came in third for DK with a time of 24:55.87. DK freshman Olivia Vincent was eighth in 27:35.37. DK also had Lutz finish that race in 29:21.82 and Courneya finish in 29:38.47.

The Panthers return to action Friday at the South Christian Under the Lights Invitational.

PRAIRIEVILLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PRAIRIEVILLE, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing will be held on September 11, 2025, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Prairieville Township Hall, 10115 S. Norris Rd., Delton MI, 49046 within the Township, as required under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Zoning Ordinance for the Township.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, In addition to participation during an public hearing, members of the public may also provide comments for the Planning Commission's consideration by emailing or mailing those comments to the Planning Commission for receipt prior to the meeting, in care of the Township Zoning Administrator, Mark Thompson (mthompson@pcimi.com) or by leaving a phone message prior to the meeting with the Township Zoning Administrator, Mark Thompson at 269-948-4088.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the item(s) to be considered at said public hearing include, in brief, the following:

1. A request from property owner, Jeff and Kristen Harper, 11393 Lakeshore Dr, Plainwell, MI 49080 for a Special Land Use/Site Plan Review to allow for an accessory building on vacant property and failing to meet the size requirements pursuant to provisions in Section 4.20"Residential Accessory Buildings" of the Prairieville Township Zoning Ordinance. The subject site is unaddressed with an unassigned parcel number, split from parcel 08-007-006-50, 12705 Merlau Ave, Plainwell, MI 49080. The subject site is currently zoned R2- Medium Density Residential.
2. A request from property owner, Peter Seibert, 12758 Merlau Ave, Plainwell, MI 49080 for a Special Land Use/Site Plan Review to allow for an accessory building on vacant property and failing to meet the size requirements pursuant to provisions in Section 4.20"Residential Accessory Buildings" of the Prairieville Township Zoning Ordinance. The subject site is unaddressed with an unassigned parcel number, split from parcel 08-007-006-50, 12705 Merlau Ave, Plainwell, MI 49080. The subject site is currently zoned R2- Medium Density Residential.
3. Such other business as may properly come before the Planning Commission

The Prairieville Township Planning Commission and Township Board reserve the right to make changes in the above-mentioned proposed amendment(s) at or following the public hearing.

All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place, or, if an electronic meeting is held, to participate via the electronic meeting.

Prairieville Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' prior notice to the Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.

PRAIRIEVILLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
By: Fritz Bork, Chairperson
Prairieville Township Hall
11015 S. Norris Rd.
Delton, Michigan 49046

RUTLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION/SUMMARY OF STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE ORDINANCE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF RUTLAND, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Ordinance No. 2025-197 was adopted by the Rutland Charter Township Board at its August 13, 2025 meeting. This Ordinance enacts as Chapter 95 Article I of the Rutland Charter Township Code a new State Construction Code Ordinance, the sections of which are summarized as follows:

§ 95-1 (Section I) TITLE: Designates the Ordinance as the Rutland Charter Township State Construction Code Ordinance.

§ 95-2 (Section II) ASSUMPTION OF STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE/ACT RESPONSIBILITIES BY TOWNSHIP AND RATIFICATION AND CONTINUATION OF STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE/ACT RESPONSIBILITIES PREVIOUSLY ASSUMED BY TOWNSHIP: Assumes responsibility for administration and enforcement of State Construction Code Act and all parts of State Construction Code promulgated thereunder, to whatever extent Rutland Charter Township may have not previously assumed such responsibility pursuant to prior ordinances, and ratifies and continues the Township's previous assumption of such responsibility.

§ 95-3 (Section III) DESIGNATION OF ENFORCING AGENCY AND RESERVATION OF RIGHT TO PROVIDE FOR JOINT ENFORCEMENT: Designates and or ratifies prior designation of Building Official, Electrical Official, Mechanical Official, and Plumbing Official as enforcing agency to discharge responsibility of Rutland Charter Township assumed under the ordinance; authorizes Township Board to designate a person or persons to perform the duties associated with those offices, and to remove such persons from such offices, and reserves the right to contract with any other municipality for joint enforcement and administration of the ordinance and the Act/State Construction Code, and to contract with a private organization to perform any one or more of the related duties.

§ 95-4 (Section IV) ESTABLISHMENT OF FEE SCHEDULE: Authorizes the Township Board to establish a schedule of fees, rates and charges for the administration and enforcement of the ordinance and the Act/State Construction Code that are reasonable and bear a reasonable relationship to the cost and expense of such administration, enforcement and activity.

§ 95-5 (Section V) FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS OF STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE: Ratifies and continues the responsibility previously assumed by the Township to administer and enforce provisions of State Construction Code pertaining to floodplain management, and adopts by reference FEMA study and maps designating regulated flood prone hazard areas.

§ 95-6 (Section VI) CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF APPEALS: Ratifies the Rutland Charter Township Construction Board of Appeals previously established by prior ordinance, and addresses the qualifications, appointment, term of office, and powers and duties of Construction Board of Appeals members, and meetings of the Construction Board of Appeals.

§ 95-7 (Section VII) VIOLATION OF ORDINANCE; SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT: Specifies various actions constituting a violation of the ordinance; designates a violation of the ordinance as a municipal civil infraction punishable by a civil fine, costs and enforcement orders.

§ 95-8 (Section VIII) SEVERABILITY: Indicates any provision of the Ordinance or State Construction Code declared unenforceable by a court does not affect the remainder of the Ordinance.

§ 95-9 (Section IX) REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND SAVINGS CLAUSE: Repeals conflicting ordinances or parts of ordinances, but saves from invalidation construction permits validly issued before the effective date of the ordinance, and any pending enforcement proceedings.

§ 95-10 (Section X) EFFECTIVE DATE: States the Ordinance takes effect 30 days after publication as required by law or upon such later date as the ordinance is approved by the State Construction Code Commission.

This ordinance in its entirety has been posted in the office of the Township Clerk and on the Township website (www.rutlandtownship.org).

A copy of the ordinance may also be purchased by contacting the Township Clerk as indicated below during regular business hours of regular working days, and at such other times as may be arranged.

Robin J. Hawthorne, Clerk
Charter Township of Rutland
Rutland Charter Township Hall
2461 Heath Road
Hastings, Michigan 49058
Telephone: (269) 948-2194

DK/Martin don't have numbers for soccer squad in 2025

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Delton Kellogg High School has canceled its 2025 varsity boys' soccer season due to a lack of participants.

Delton Kellogg and Martin have formed a co-op to boost numbers and fill a program since 2016. The two schools combined had just a handful of guys attending preseason workouts this month.

The program was slated to open its season last Saturday at the Zion Christian Tournament.

JD Schroeder was set to take over as head coach this season for the DK/Martin squad taking over for Jonathon Cannell who led the program the past two seasons.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association participation numbers for the 2024-25 school year showed a slim increase from the previous year in the number of high school boys playing soccer in the state.

There were 14,063 playing varsity soccer at MHSAA members schools last season. That number is slowly climbing year over year back to where it was prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

GIVE US YOUR SCOOP!

If you see news happening, or if you just want us to know about something going on...

Email mmacleod@mihomepaper.com

THE HASTINGS BANNER
VIEW Newspaper Group

Saxon tennis still growing towards varsity competition

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Hastings High School boys' tennis team is set to open the 2025 season taking on Battle Creek Central in Hastings Friday afternoon, Aug. 22.

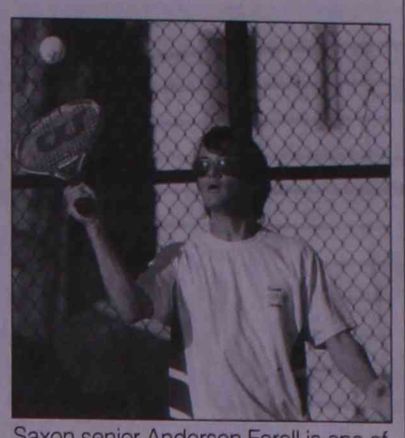
Practice is rolling on for the Saxons and head coach Krista Schueller, and the hunt for a few more tennis players is on too. This will be the second fall in a row that the Saxons won't compete against a schedule. There will be a few varsity foes here and there, but for the most part the Saxons will be competing against JV opponents from across the area.

A group of six Saxons have been working on developing their skills in the preseason, and that group includes a pair of freshmen and four guys who competed with the squad last fall.

The group back includes senior Anderson Forell, juniors Sam Webb and Owen Boge and sophomore Gage Rutkowski. The freshman duo consists of Francis Laponsie and Aiden Newell.

"We have tried to grow the middle school boys' team and then have those players move up. We had one last year and one this year move up. However, we are not getting as many male athletes as we need," coach Schueller said.

Boge spent most of last fall competing in singles matches for the Saxons. Webb and Forell split their time between doubles and singles and Rutkowski was exclusively a doubles player.



Saxon senior Anderson Forell is one of four returning guys that will play a JV schedule for the Hastings High School tennis program this fall. **File photo**

Saxons open XC season running Portage Early Bird

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Saxons are going from the Early Bird to a late night run.

The Hastings varsity cross country teams will be a part of the annual "Under the Lights" race at South Christian High School Friday, Aug. 22. The Saxons are actually in one of the earlier races at the meet this season with the boys taking off at 8:30 p.m. and the girls at 9:35 p.m.

It'll be the second run of the season for the Saxons who started the season at the Portage Central Early Bird Friday, Aug. 15.

Saxon junior Caroline Randall, a state medalist in each of her first two varsity cross country seasons, was the one medalist for her team Friday. She placed fourth in the girls' race with a time of 19 minutes 15.5 seconds.

In all, there were 224 girls and 274 boys competing Friday in the Early Bird. The Hastings girls were 13th as a team and the Saxon boys were 18th.

The only girls faster than Randall were Pickford senior Tayla Schreiber (18:15.26), Gobles junior Libby Smith (18:27.59) and Portage Central sophomore Gracie Carlisle (18:37.20).

A pair of Jenison girls were on Randall's heels with junior Paige McMeans fifth in 19:30.45 and sophomore Madeline Aleisa sixth in 19:41.58.

The Jenison girls' team couldn't quite chase down the Portage Central girls though at the top of the standings as Carlisle and the host Mustangs won the girls' meet with 51 points. Jenison was second with 71 points ahead of Rockford 72, Stevensville Lakeshore 145 and Grand Haven 146 in the top five. Gobles kept pace with those bigger schools with a sixth-place score of 171.

The Hastings girls finished with 362 points.

Saxon freshman Emerson Leary was number two for her team with a 116th-place time of 26:34.46. Junior Chloe Pirtle wasn't far behind in 122nd with a time of 26:53.44. Another freshman, sage DeCamp, placed 171st for the Saxons in 29:33.11.

Senior Maddie Elzinga rounded out the top five for Hastings with a 176th-place time of 30:27.93 and junior teammate Malena Tomaszewska was less than seven seconds behind her.

The Saxon boys were paced by sophomore Eli Li who was 185th overall in 22:27.29 and junior Caleb Kramer was with him placing 197th in 22:57.58.

Parker Erb placed 219th for the Saxons in 24:05.08. A couple of seniors rounded out the top five for the Hastings boys. Carter Kryzysik was 224th in 24:26.47 and Spencer Crozier 230th in 25:12.87.

Lowell junior Marshall Huhn raced to a victory in the boys' race with a time of 15:52.16. Kalamazoo Central senior Andrew Wright was the runner-up in 16:03.86, and in all 16 guys finished in less than 17 minutes.

Wright was one of three guys in the top ten for Kalamazoo Central. Senior Ty Billings placed fourth (16:32.55) and senior Elijah Thompson was eighth (16:43.44).

Those Kalamazoo Central boys won the team title with 83 points. Huhn and the Red Arrows were second with 91 points ahead of Kalamazoo Homeschool Sports 103, Portage Central 104 and Rockford 126 in the top five.

Hastings runs again Tuesday, Aug. 26, at Marshall's Barney Roy Invite at Cornwell's Turkeyville.

BARRY COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR MICHIGAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY REPAIR/ PROGRAM INCOME

Barry County will conduct a public hearing on **August 26, 2025** at **9:00am** at **220 West State Street, Hastings, MI 49058 in the Commissioners Room on the top floor (M)** for the purpose of affording citizens an opportunity to examine and submit comments on CDBG Program Income.

Barry County proposes to use CDBG program income funds in the amount of $43,281.35 **($35,490.71 rehab and $7,790.64 for administration)** for **emergency and critical repairs to single-family, homeowner-occupied residential homes in the County**. All activities, upon completion, will benefit low- to moderate- income households. **Zero** persons will be displaced as a result of the proposed activities.

Further information, including a copy of **Barry County's** CDBG Emergency Homeowner Rehab Program Guidelines are available for review. To inspect the documents, please contact **Kelli Shumway, Treasurer** at 269-945-1287 or review at **220 West Main Street, Hastings, MI 49058**. Comments may be submitted in writing through **August 25, 2025,** or made in person at the public hearing.

Citizen views and comments on the Program Income Program are welcome.

Barry County
Sarah M. VanDenburg, County Clerk
269-945-1285

BARRY COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR MICHIGAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY REPAIR/ PROGRAM INCOME

Barry County will conduct a public hearing on **August 26, 2025** at **9:00am** at **220 West State Street, Hastings, MI 49058 in the Commissioners Room on the top floor (M)** for the purpose of affording citizens an opportunity to submit comments on the completion of the CDBG Program Income for 2023-2024.

Barry County used CDBG program income funds in the amount of $47,022.69 **($40,864.02 rehab and $7,355.52 for administration)** for **emergency and critical repairs to single-family, homeowner-occupied residential homes in the County**. All activities benefitted low- to moderate- income households throughout Barry County. **Zero** persons were displaced as a result of the activities

Further information, including a copy of **Barry County's** CDBG Emergency Homeowner Rehab Program Guidelines are available for review. To inspect the documents, please contact **Kelli Shumway, Treasurer** at 269-945-1287 or review at **220 West Main Street, Hastings, MI 49058**. Comments may be submitted in writing through **August 25, 2025,** or made in person at the public hearing.

Citizen views and comments on the Program Income Program are welcome.

Barry County
Sarah VanDenburg, County Clerk
269-945-1285

RUTLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF ORDINANCE SUBMITTAL

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF RUTLAND, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE proposed Ordinance #2025-198 appended hereto was introduced for first reading by the Rutland Charter Township Board at its August 13, 2025 meeting.

This proposed ordinance will be considered for adoption by the Township Board at its scheduled regular meeting on September 10, 2025 commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Charter Township Hall.

Rutland Charter Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to Rutland Charter Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF RUTLAND
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ORDINANCE NO. 2025-198 (PROPOSED)
ADOPTED:
EFFECTIVE:

An Ordinance to amend §220-5-3.H. of Chapter 220 of the Rutland Charter Township Code pertaining to the keeping of livestock on a non-commercial basis in the CR Country Residential District.

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF RUTLAND
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ORDAINS:

SECTION 1
AMENDMENT OF §220-5-3.H. OF RUTLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP CODE PERTAINING TO KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK IN CR COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

§220-5-3.H. of the Rutland Charter Township Code, pertaining to the keeping of livestock on a non-commercial basis in the CR Country Residential District, is amended to read as follows:

H. Keeping of livestock on a non-commercial basis is allowable accessory to an existing dwelling on the premises, subject to all applicable provisions of this Chapter, including the generally applicable special land use approval standards specified in §220-20-3., and also the following density, setback, and other requirements:

1. The minimum lot area for the keeping of any such ~~animals~~ **livestock** is three acres. **The Planning Commission may approve a lot area of less than three acres but at least one acre for the keeping of a maximum of twelve (12) hens and chickens, pursuant to the otherwise applicable approval standards and requirements.**
2. There shall be at least two acres of lot area per animal unit kept on the premises. For purposes of this provision, only, the number of animals per animal unit shall be determined as follows:
   A. slaughter and feeder cattle: one animal equals 1.00 animal unit.
   B. mature dairy cattle: one animal equals 1.42 animal units.
   C. horses: one animal equals 1.00 animal unit.
   D. swine (weighing over 55 lbs.): one animal equals 0.40 animal unit.
   E. sheep and lambs: one animal equals 0.10 animal unit.
   F. laying hens or broiler chickens: one animal equals 0.01 animal unit.
   G. turkeys: one animal equals 0.018 animal unit.
   H. Any other types or sizes of livestock not listed here are to be calculated as one thousand pounds live weigh equals 1.00 animal unit.
3. All areas in which the ~~animals~~ **livestock** are confined shall be located at least 100 ft from all existing dwellings on adjacent properties.
4. All areas in which the ~~animals~~ **livestock** are confined shall be located at least 50 ft from any wellhead, ~~and shall~~ not include**ing** any drain field.
5. ~~Roosters are prohibited~~ **Keeping of Chickens**.
   A. Roosters are prohibited.
   B. ~~Otherwise permissible chicken shall at all time be confined to a chicken coop or otherwise enclosed structure and not allowed to free range~~. **Chickens must be confined to a chicken coop or enclosed structure. An outside, completely enclosed run attached to the coop may be provided.**
   C. **All feed and other items associated with the keeping of chickens likely to attract rats, mice, or other rodents or vermin shall be secured and protected in sealed containers.**

SECTION 2
REPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed. This Ordinance shall become effective on the eighth day after publication or such later date as may be required by law.

Robin Hawthorne, Clerk
Charter Township of Rutland

PK sparks Pennfield boys at Lakewood High

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

A young squad will improve as the season goes on and things played out kind of as expected for the Lakewood Vikings in their season opener Monday against visiting Pennfield.

The Panthers got the opening goal on a penalty kick early in the second half and went on to a 3-1 win.

An inexperienced defensive front relied a little more on some strong saves from senior keeper Levi Frizzell than the Lakewood team would really like. At the other end of the field, there weren't a ton of scoring chances for the Vikings, but the guys who connected on the team's one goal were two that coach James Leveque expects to be a big part of the offense throughout the fall.

"My entire back line is brand new to varsity soccer," Leveque said. "When you have literally two returning starters, a goalie and a kid that could play anywhere. Yes, I could put him back there on defense, but then I don't have any returning experience in putting the ball in the net."

The team's only two returning starters are Frizzell, in his second season in goal, and junior forward/midfielder Connor Merritt.

"The team will grow. The team will get better. I am not super worried about what I saw," Leveque added. "0-0 first half. We kind of started having a little bit of momentum I thought late in the first half. We started putting some chances together and locking the ball up a little bit up here, and then kind of halftime hit and we lost momentum. Once they scored, we went to a 4-4-2 a little bit later, which weakened our defense a little bit."

Frizzell continues to impress with his skills and instincts in goal, and building consistency is top of the list for his improvements for this season. He had more than a couple point-blank saves in the match.

It was a call that would not always be made, but Pennfield earned a penalty kick a minute into the second half. Frizzell slid out to try and beat Pennfield attacker Garrett Hill. Hill got a touch on the ball into the box first knocking it slightly towards the corner. The sliding Frizzell clipped his leg just enough to trip him up and the whistle blew.

Brady Conley fired a perfect PK to put his team in front 1-0.

The Pennfield lead got to 3-0 eventually with a pair of goals by Prosper Lúkole who didn't have to do much more than stick out a leg and deflect a pass into the open net. Phillip Wilkins IV tapped a ball across the Viking goalmouth for an assist to Lúkole with 12:36 to play. Lúkole also had space on the weak side to deflect a long crossing ball in from Conley on the right side into the back of the net with 10:54 to play.

Merritt got to move along the end line with the ball late in the second half and touched a pass to the feet of sophomore teammate Peyton Schipper in the box as the clock ticked under nine minutes to go. Schipper redirected the pass forward into the net to give his team a boost.

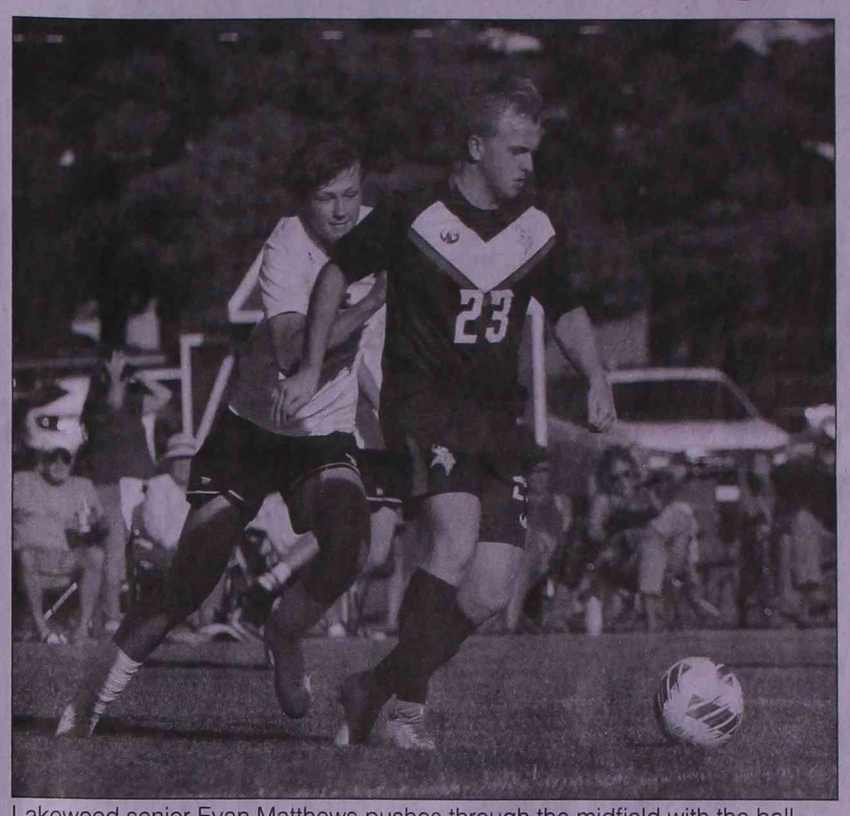
"The goal we did score was really pretty, I thought," Leveque said. "It was a really good soccer goal from the two guys that I expect to generate the most of our offense.

"Payton's been in the weight room with me every morning for the last eight months. Since last season, I pick him up every morning, 5:30 in the morning, we hit the gym all summer. He's been working on it. He's had a one-on-one coach all summer that helped him with his tactical skills and whatnot.

"Connor is a soccer player through and through. He's a three-year starter on varsity. Payton is only a sophomore. He came off the bench and played 25 minutes a game at best. So when those are your two best returners, those are the kids that watch soccer year round and and live and breathe the game, eventually this group is going to get good."

The Vikings also got some strong play through the midfield from senior Ethan Matthews, a new varsity soccer player. Isaac Scobey and Frizzell are the team's only two returning seniors this season.

The Lakewood boys were scheduled to visit Olivet, Aug. 20 and host Dansville Aug. 22. The Capital Area Activities Conference White Division season starts with a visit from Ionia Aug. 27.



Lakewood senior Evan Matthews pushes through the midfield with the ball as Pennfield's Garrett Hill gives chase during the second half of their non-conference season opener Monday at Lakewood High School. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Members of the Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' tennis team celebrate their medal-winning performances at the four-team meet hosted by Mona Shores Monday. **Photo provided**

Mona Shores narrowly beats TK for invite title

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' tennis team went 2-1 as it opened the season at Muskegon Mona Shores Monday.

The Trojans took an 8-1 win over Western Michigan Christian, an 9-0 win over Portage Northern and fell in a tough dual with Mona Shores 5-4.

Mark Gielincki at fourth singles won a flight championship for the Trojans, and TK took titles at three of the five doubles flights. Sam Teachout and Layne Schilthroat won the first doubles title. Luke Archer and Aiden Riffel won at third doubles. Alex Eggleston and Mark Cuison won at fourth doubles.

Parker Sylvestre at second singles, the second doubles team of Graham Eden and Gideon Scott and the fifth doubles team of Joel Archer and Joey Krystyniak all placed second.

Mona Shores was a perfect 3-0 as a team with a 6-3 win over Portage Northern and a 9-0 win over Western Michigan Christian.

The host Sailors got a singles sweep and pulled out the fifth doubles match in their dual with TK for the team title. It was one of a couple extremely competitive duals on the day with the fourth singles match and three doubles flights decided in super tiebreakers.

Schilthroat and Teachout at number one doubles had one of two super tiebreaker victories for the Trojans outscoring the Sailor team of Connor Knop and Brennen Resiter 5-7, 6-1, (10-5). TK also had the second doubles team of Eden and Scott win 6-2, 6-1, Riffel and Luke Archer win 6-2, 6-2 at number three doubles and Eggleston and Cuison win 6-0, 5-7, (11-9) at fourth doubles.

The fifth doubles team of Issac Musnon and Bella Faoro helped the Sailors clinch the dual as they rallied for a 1-6, 6-3, (10-8) over Joel Archer and Krystyniak at number five doubles.

The top three Mona Shores singles players won fairly handily. There were three freshmen total competing in the top two flights. Mona Shores Reid Hackney beat the senior Wilkinson in the first singles match, and Mona Shores freshman Marcus Powell outscored fellow freshman Sylvestre in the second singles match.

Gielincki came the closest to pulling out a singles point for the Trojans in the dual with the hosts, but he fell to Micah Bement 6-3, 3-6, (10-7).

Mark Lepper playing third singles had his one win of the day in the sweep of Portage Northern for the Trojans. TK took an 9-0 victory over the Huskies, but five of the eight bouts were decided in super tiebreakers after players split sets. Lepper had one of those taking a 10-8 win in the end.

Gielincki at fourth singles won a super tiebreaker and the TK second, third and fourth doubles teams all won super tiebreakers against Portage Northern too.

West MICHIGAN WORKS!®

Take the next step to a better paying job!

Learn about free:

- Computer skills training
- Career coaching
- Job search services



TAA
Trade Adjustment Assistance

PLUS: Ask us if you qualify for Trade Assistance Act benefits!

Call **1-800-285-WORK (9675)**
or visit westmiworks.org/job-seekers/

DK will try to put away another Central title in 2025

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

It's been a while since they've been in this position. They're the defending champs.

The Delton Kellogg varsity volleyball team ran through the Southwestern Athletic Conference Central Division to a conference title. The Panthers were undefeated against their five SAC Central foes in 2024.

It is a big group back looking to do it again led by seniors Jalin Lyons, Izzie Wendland and junior Laana Hooker. Lyons will swing through opposite side hitter, outside hitter and defensive specialist spots this fall as needed. Wendland is taking over the full-time setting duties. Hooker will see time at outside hitter and middle blocker.

"This girl brings everything to a high intensity," Delton Kellogg head coach Erin Thornton said of Lyons. " She has a great knowledge of athletics in general, and is a strong asset to have in any program, any sport. Her DS game is her bread and butter, but with her length we're getting her more accustomed to the front row. She soaks up everything that's given to her."

The Panthers will need some of that. Wendland will see her role change a bit too as this will be her first season as the varsity's primary setter.

"She is getting better with each rep," Thornton said. "She brings leadership to the court, and always has something to say about each play."

Hooker is a strong hitter, and Thornton said that when she is confident she is tough to beat. "It's nice to see that she can transition from middle to outside effortlessly, and bring the team up with her when we're doing well," Thornton said.

The group of returnees also includes junior OHClaire Barker, sophomore MB/OH Sophia Ferris and junior Bethany Butchbaker at all three positions across the net, and sophomore libero Rylee Foreman.

Coach Thornton is happy to gush about all her returnees. Barker hits a great short cross ball Ferris is back doing her thing getting blocks and aces. Butchbaker is becoming a go-to attacker because of her versatility. Coach Thornton expects Forman to do a great job of covering the court from the libero spot.

Junior opposite side hitter and setter Cora Morris is one of the key additions for the varsity this season. Some offseason work has strengthened her game on the right side of the court hitting, passing and setting.

"We've got a great passing game this season. The girls have really been digging deep to make sure we get

that down pat, because we know setters can't create something out of nothing," Thornton said. "Giving ourselves three options each play will really help the setters be able to make the best decision they can."

While there are some solid athletes with good volleyball skills on the outside, putting points away won't be easy. The Panthers don't want to be meek at the net though.

"We know we have to do it, but I think nerves take over," Thornton said. "We've been a young team the last couple of years, so now that the girls are getting older and have varsity experience, we're hoping to turn that around this year."

The Panthers have a solid chance of defending their SAC Central title. Overall, the SAC should be solid again across the three divisions. Kalamazoo Christian comes into the year ranked sixth in the MIVA Division 3 Preseason Poll.

"Obviously, Kalamazoo Christian is always a hot team. It seems like they're the bane of the SAC's existence, but in a great way," Thornton said. "It's something to work towards for our girls. If we can beat K-Christian, we can do anything."

The DK girls are slated to start their season Friday at Gull Lake for an invitational and then head right to Coloma for an invite Saturday.

The SAC Central season starts with a visit from Martin Sept. 16. The Panthers clenched the SAC Central title with a win on the Clippers home floor a year ago, "so they'll be coming at us with everything they have this year," Thornton said.

The first home contest of the season is a dual with Watervliet Sept. 9. Both of those contests are set for a 6:30 p.m. start.



Laana Hooker is one of six returnees for the Delton Kellogg varsity volleyball team that won the Southwestern Athletic Conference Central Division championship in 2024. **File photo**

Saxons hope to add volleyball I.Q. to athleticism

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Saxons have athleticism, grit, some experience, some youthful enthusiasm, a new head coach and now they're going to try and turn the whole thing into a competitive volleyball squad this fall.

Alexis Mast is taking over the reigns as the head coach of the Hastings varsity volleyball program, stepping in for Erin Slaughter. Mast is starting her third season coaching in the Saxon program after spending one year with the freshman team and one with the JV squad.

Returning to the varsity level this season for the Saxons is a group that includes junior setter Hannah Sorenson, junior middle blocker Bella Friddle, senior setter Riley Gurtowsky and senior defensive specialist Josalyn Russel who is stepping into the libero role. Gurtowsky was the team's leader in assists a year ago and had the top serving percentage on the team.

The Saxons won 17 matches in 2025, but were held without a win in the Interstate-8 Athletic Conference.

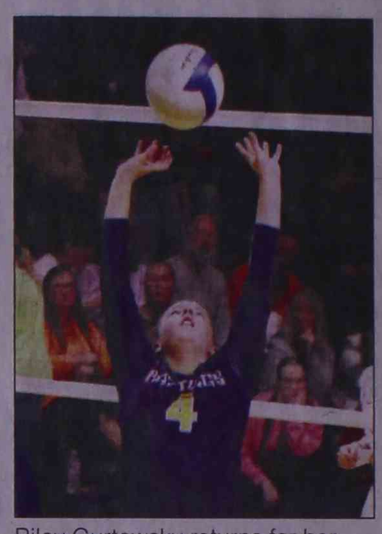
Looking to help improve on those numbers is a group of varsity newcomers that includes senior middle blocker Olivia Friddle who is returning to the varsity after missing last season with an injury, junior outside hitter Gabryella Juskewicz who was pulled up to the varsity late last season, junior defensive specialist Lola Grego and freshman outside hitter Isabella Perez.

"This team has impressive depth, with multiple players capable of excelling in all six rotations. They recover quickly, move with intensity, and bring a scrappy, relentless energy when on the court," Mast said.

Improving on volleyball IQ is the big thing for the group as a whole to accomplish as the season gets rolling.

"Critiquing, refining and elevating our play to reach the next level of competition," Mast said.

"I have big goals for this team. With the strengths we already possess, I see us becoming a much more competitive force this season. While a new coach brings inevitable growing pains, I have complete confidence that with the abilities and determination of these athletes, our path is only upward from here."



Riley Gurtowsky returns for her senior season at setter for the Saxon varsity volleyball team this fall. **File photo**

It is not just the varsity players who are spurring the program on.

"The freshman class has brought a much-needed sense of competition to the gym - something I feel we've been missing over the past two seasons at Hastings," Mast said. "My goal moving forward is to curate a culture built on a team-first mentality, a growth mindset, relentless intensity, and healthy competition."

The Saxons open the season Friday at the Fremont First Dig Tournament and then the varsity, JV and freshmen will all head to Plainwell Sept. 3 to take on the Trojans.

The Interstate-8 Athletic Conference season starts with a tough one against Harper Creek in Hastings Sept. 17. The Beavers are ranked tenth in the state in Division 2 in the first MIVCA poll of the preseason. Coach Mast said she expects Marshall to be the other top contender for a conference title.

Want to feel the "care" in health care again? That's where we shine.

Whether you're hoping for easier access to care or a provider who truly listens, you can count on Beacon. That's how we've earned a reputation in our communities as the leader in comprehensive services — raising care standards and delivering an uplifting patient experience.

Learn how Beacon Health is creating a brighter future for patients across southwest Michigan at BeaconHealthSystem.org/Shine.

BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

