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PROJECTS ARE TAKING SHAPE INSIDE THE RALPH
PAGE 11

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CCS seeks candidates for board vacancy

Caledonia Community Schools officials recently announced a vacancy on the district's board of education following the recent departure of Trustee Katie Isic, who has moved out of the district.

"Katie has been a steady and thoughtful voice on our Board," said CCS Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer. "She brought heart and perspective to every conversation, and always kept students at the center of every decision.

"We're excited for her next chapter and truly appreciate her dedicated service to the students and families of Caledonia."

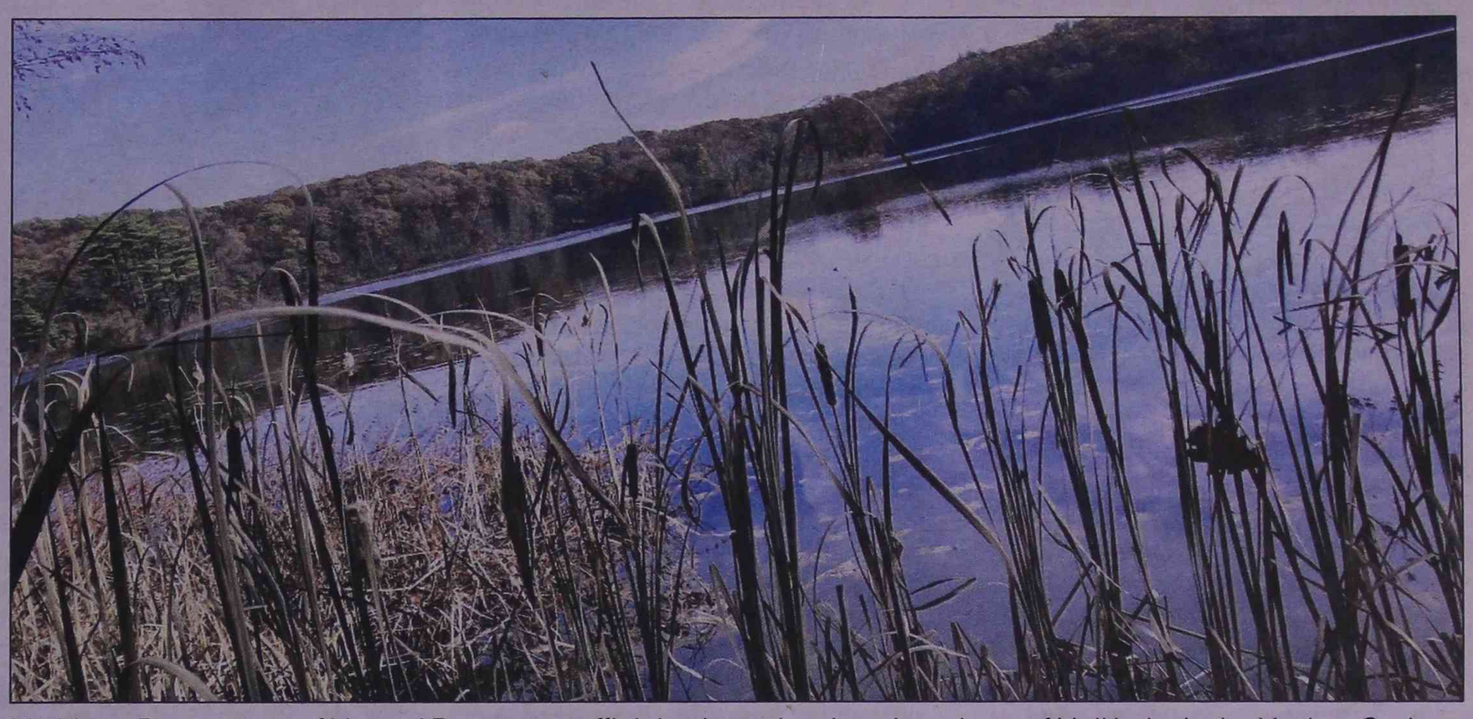
With Isic's seat at the school board now empty, board members will seek to appoint "a qualified individual" to fill the vacant trustee position, according to a statement released by CCS officials on Monday, July 14. The appointed trustee will serve until Dec. 31, 2026, and will have the opportunity to run to retain the seat in the November 2026 election, if they choose to continue.

To be eligible, applicants must be a resident of the Caledonia schools district, a registered voter, at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and must have lived in Michigan for at least 30 days.

See **VACANCY** on 5



Caledonia Community Schools is seeking candidates to fill its recent vacancy on the board of education. **Courtesy photo**



Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials plan to begin a drawdown of Hall Lake in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area later this month as part of the plan to address safety issues with the earthen dam beneath Gun Lake Road. The plan is for 6 feet of water to be drained from the lake level by the fall of 2026. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

DNR planning Hall Lake drawdown over the next year

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The North Country National Scenic Trail winds along Hall Lake's western edge in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area, as well as a bit of the lake's namesake trail.

Not far from where those two paths coalesce, there is a perpetual lean-to "fort" in a section of pine forest that has served as a playhouse for generations of youngsters. A boat ramp on the southeastern tip of the lake has been used by families of anglers for decades as they look to snag bass, perch, bluegill and the like.

The lake's edge will slowly move away from the trails and the lean-to over the coming months, and it appears eventually the Michigan Department of Natural Resources may look into putting in a carry down boat access site.

But, MDNR officials also announced Friday, July 11, that the state agency is moving forward this summer with a phased plan for drawing down Hall Lake Dam to a lower lake elevation – a decision that reportedly addresses safety issues with the Barry County impoundment, while also allowing for continued recreation use at Hall Lake, according to state officials.

A routine spring inspection followed by an engineering analysis of the dam led the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to issue an emergency drawdown order.

The MDNR will immediately apply for the necessary permitting to begin the gradual drawdown, which will begin later this month. The final project drawdown is expected to be complete by fall 2026 and is funded by an MDEGLE Dam Risk Reduction Grant. Those grant funds must be spent by October 2026.

"Given its classification as a significant hazard dam, the worsening condition of the culvert and embankment, the prohibitive cost estimates to undertake replacement by the state or local municipality, and the risk of expiration of grant funding for the project, reducing the lake level by decommissioning, or drawing down, of Hall Lake Dam is the only viable option," said Joseph Jandernoa, park manager at Yankee Springs Recreation Area.

Not everyone is in favor of the project, however. At its regular meeting Thursday night, July 10, the Yankee Springs Township Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution to support the preservation of

See **LAKE** on 7

Developer obtains final OK for apartment homes in Dutton

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Township Board of Trustees provided its final approval for Continental Properties to move ahead with plans to build 14 two-story, 24-unit apartment houses in Dutton.

After a public hearing, township trustees voted 6-0 at their regular meeting Monday, July 14, in favor of a planned unit development, or PUD, rezoning request for a proposed 336-unit complex at M-6 and Hanna Lake Avenue.

The complex will be named "Authentix Gaines," after the Authentix-style housing brand. The project reportedly will be constructed on a 24-acre section of a 40.5-acre property along the 6300 block of Hanna Lake Ave.

No residents spoke at the public hearing.

The property had been zoned as Residential-4 (mobile home) and Residential-10 under the township's previous zoning ordinance but is being rezoned as part of a new PUD Overlay District under a revised ordinance adopted in April.

Township board members also approved the final site plan for the 336 apartments that will be built. The Gaines Township Planning Commission had recommended approval of the site plan and the PUD rezoning at a public hearing on May 22.

Gaines Township Community Development director Dan Wells said Wisconsin-based Continental Properties plans to begin site preparation over the next month and then build the project's infrastructure ahead of an anticipated construction start this fall. The developer will pay for utility extensions and infrastructure.

The 24 apartment rental units will feature a mix of studio, 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments, plus a clubhouse and various on-site amenities such as clubhouse, a fitness center, a pool, a community garden, a pet playground, a pergola and a fire pit.

The property is currently owned by Vernon and Linda Verduin.

Continental Properties Development director Jordan Teichen said Continental has an agreement with the Verduins to purchase their property. In return, Continental has offered to deed 3.6 acres of the land to the township for establishment of a new public park, which would commemorate the Verduin family's legacy, with its ownership of the property dating back more than a century, and its agricultural heritage.



Continental Properties Development director Jordan Teichen speaks to the Gaines Township Board of Trustees at its July 14 meeting at the township hall. **Photo by James Gemmell**

Gaines Township officials have an option to receive the open park space until six months after Continental receives its last certificate of occupancy, which the developer projects to be in 2028. The township also has the option of letting the offer expire or declining it.

According to reports, the township attorney is reviewing specifics of that proposal.

"It will give the township approximately three years to make a decision whether to take it for public use or not," Wells said. "Continental will maintain the space until the township decides whether to receive it."

Teichen said Continental Properties did suggest, in the proposed agreement, that it would provide topsoil for the land and seed it while the township considers whether to take ownership of the proposed park space.

Township Trustee Kathy Vander Stel said the revised site plan shows a "significant" decrease in the ratio of proposed parking spaces per apartment unit from 2.25 spaces to the revised 1.8 spaces per unit. That would provide a total of 626 parking spaces for 336 apartments units.

"It just seems like everybody comes home at night and they all need spaces, and any visitors that come through," Vander Stel said. "It sounds light to me."

"It has to do a lot with their clientele," Wells said. "They don't get a lot of families that would (have) two cars.

See **DUTTON** on 6

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Library officials updates township board on programs, services

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Members of the Kent District Library knew they had their work cut out this year to try to match their accomplishments of 2024, when they won multiple national awards.

But, KDL executive director Lance Werner informed the Gaines Township Board of Trustees on Monday night, July 14, that they have gotten off to another good start in the first half of 2025, as he and other library officials provided township trustees with an update on the district's programs and services.

Before they did that, however, Werner read a list of KDL accomplishments last year, including winning the Institute of Museum & Library Services' national medal for Museum and Library Service. KDL was one of five public libraries in the U.S. to win the medal.

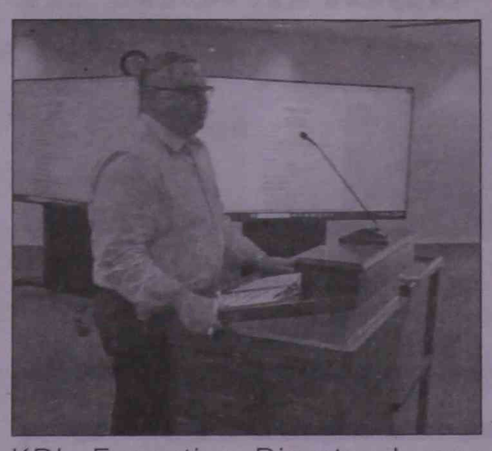
"That is the highest award that a public library can receive in the country," he said. "Also in 2024, we disbursed the $250,000 that we won for another national award the year before."

That other national award was the Library Journal's Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize, which is presented to one library every year that has demonstrated a major community impact through partnerships and programming.

Werner said the $250,000 was used to help fund four building projects in the library district and for a community scholarship fund.

"I'm very proud to say we gave away the first two scholarships this year – one to a non-traditional student and one to a traditional student," Werner said.

As for some other highlights from 2024, he said the KDL's electronic (e-book) checkouts increased by 19 percent. Library visits rose by 7 percent to 2.4 million and in-person program attendance went up by 14 percent to 320,000 people across the county.



KDL Executive Director Lance Werner apprised Gaines trustees at their Monday night board meeting about what the district library has accomplished in the past year. **Photos by James Gemmell**

"We are the most visited cultural institution in Kent County, by far," Werner said.

Last summer, the KDL distributed more than 23,000 meals to kids as part of its summer food program in collaboration with the Feeding America West Michigan food bank.

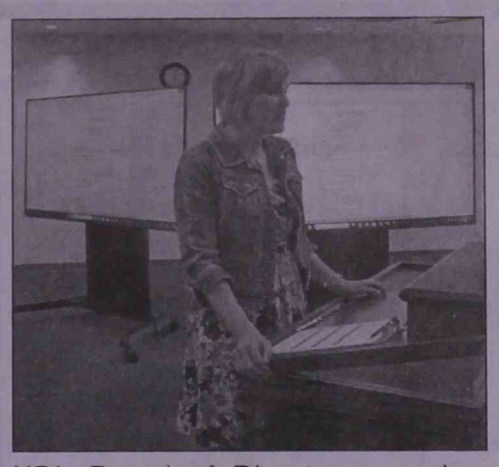
And they are off to a good start again this summer.

"Last month, we distributed over 10,000 meals," Werner added. "Food for kids that come in, that are under 18. And we know that kids with full stomachs are better able to learn and read."

"It's really awesome to see kids come in and get the food they wouldn't get otherwise when school is out," added Kiosha Jeltema, who manages the KDL's Gaines Township branch.



Kiosha Jeltema, manager of the Gaines branch of the Kent District Library, talked about some of the resources the library provides.



KDL Board of Directors member Christina Tazelaar thanked the Gaines Township Board for partnering with the district library to benefit the residents of the township.

The library district runs the food-distribution program called "Gather 2 Grow" Monday through Friday, from noon to 1 p.m. Meals are available at the various KDL branches and bookmobile from June through August.

According to Jeltema, there are many other services the district library provides. She gave an example in which the KDL provided a private room for someone to attend virtually a legal hearing through an online video link.

"We also provided a Chromebook (laptop computer), so they could do the meeting remotely, and provided the support on how to use it," Jeltema said. "So, it's things like that allow people to know that the library really is for everyone."

She added that the KDL branches offer free printing of up to 50 pages per week for patrons who have library membership cards. There is a small fee that is applied for additional pages.

"So, just trying to be fiscally sustainable," Jeltema said. "But really, people are blown away that they can get so much from the library."

KDL Board of Directors member Christina Tazelaar added, "It takes a partnership between municipalities and the library in order to offer library services for the good of our community."

"KDL exists to further all people, including the kids who are participating in all the creative and fun programming over the summer to keep them learning and sort of prevent a summer slide," said Tazelaar, who represents the library district's Region 6, which covers Caledonia and Gaines townships, and the City of Kentwood.



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Obituaries

Jean Marie (Higgins) Hadder

Jean Marie (Higgins) Hadder, born July 3, 1952 passed away June 4, 2025 with her family by her side after a battle with cancer.

Jean was proceeded in death by her mother, Thelma (Fillingham) Higgins.

She is survived by her loving husband, Wayne Hadder; daughters, Teresa Weedall and Ashley (Kamari) Henley; son, Travis Hadder; brother, John (Pat) Higgins; sister, Carol (Wayne) Hammond; many grandchildren, great grand grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.



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Everett Dale Mutchler



Our community has lost a great man in Everett Dale Mutchler.

A volunteer, advocate, and friend to many, he passed in his home with his wife Sheilah on July 11, 2025.

A service and luncheon will be held at Thornapple Valley Church on July 25, 2025 at 12:30pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Sportsmen Outreach, supporting veterans in the outdoors, at 304 E. Main St., Caledonia, MI 49316.

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Commissioners tap mental health veteran to fill vacancy

Jayson Bussa
Contributing Writer

The Barry County Board of Commissioners is filling a vacancy on the Barry County Community Mental Health Authority Board and doing so with an individual who wields decades of experience in the field.

Commissioners conducted interviews for the vacant seat on the 12-person board on Tuesday morning, July 15, during their Committee of the Whole meeting.

The county received two applications for the seat, but only one individual went through with the interview process. That was Jerry Wilson of Irving Township, who is now retired after spending decades in the world of mental health.

Wilson reportedly holds a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in social work and a doctorate in higher education administration. He was a county mental health administrator for 15 years, taught social work for 10 years and formed a mental health foundation in Cass County in 1991 that is still in operation today.

"I've been bumping around mental health for the last 45 years or so," Wilson said during his interview Tuesday. "I'm retired now … and I thought I had plenty of time."

His term on the local mental health board will expire on March 31, 2028.

VACANCY

Continued from Page 1

According to district officials, applications will be reviewed during the school board's July 28, followed by public interviews at a special meeting on July 29. If needed, deliberations reportedly will continue at an additional special meeting on July 30.

Community members interested in serving on the CCS board are invited to submit a letter of interest and current resume to Michele Zoet by July 24. Applications may be emailed to zoetm@calschools.org or mailed/delivered to 8948 Kraft Ave. SE, Caledonia, MI 49316. Office hours for in-person drop-off are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

"Joining the Board is an opportunity to lead and serve our community in a meaningful way," said Tim Morris, CCS board president. "We're looking for someone who is ready to listen, collaborate, and help guide the future of Caledonia Community Schools."

More information about the vacancy, eligibility and appointment process is available on the CCS website and through CCS communication channels.

— Report compiled by staff writer Dennis Mansfield

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Additional college-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners announced

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced the names of nearly 800 additional winners of National Merit Scholarships financed by colleges and universities, according to a statement released Monday, July 14.

And those additional winners included Thornapple Kellogg High School's Cole Novak, who is set to attend Michigan State University to prepare for a potential career in microbiology/immunology.

The recent Merit Scholar designees join more than 2,900 other college-sponsored award recipients who were announced in June.

Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program who will attend their institution. College-sponsored awards provide between $500 and $2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship. — *DM*



MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The July 14 meeting opened with roll call and the secretary's report. There are now two fish in the fishbowl.

Maryellen brought a fruit fusion parfait for everyone to enjoy. Virginia will be bringing a desert oasis watermelon and feta salad to the next meeting.

Maryellen went over the rules for the new contest "Slow and Steady Wins the Contest." Chapter members filled in one dot for each one-tenth of a pound lost.

Maryellen won the Ha-Ha Box.

The meeting ended with marching in place as the group recited the TOPS pledge.

TOPS, a weight-loss support group, meets every Monday at Lincoln Meadows in Middleville. Weigh-in is from 3:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., followed immediately by the meeting. Press the white buzzer for entry.

The chapter is looking for anyone interested in a group that supports weight-loss journeys without shame.

Anyone with questions may call Virginia, 269-908-8036, or Maryellen, 616-318-3545. The first meeting is free.

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DUTTON

Continued from Page 2

It's a lot more single professionals."

Trustee Tim Haagsma, who is also on the Gaines Township Planning Commission, said commissioners also inquired about the parking spaces at their June meeting.

"At their other developments, that's what they see they need," Haagsma said. "If they don't have enough parking, their residents are going to tell them that they don't have enough and they'll have to deal with that."

Teichen added, "We did talk about this at the Planning Commission. Across our portfolio in Midwestern markets, I believe our ratio is about 1.85 (spaces per unit), which is just slightly higher than what's on this site.

"Internally, across all of our communities we target 1.75 stalls per unit," Teichen said. "So, we feel comfortable with 1.8."

Township set to save after switching insurance carriers

The fate of a dam at Hall Lake wasn't the only agenda item before the Yankee Springs Board of Trustees during its regular monthly meeting Wednesday, July 10.

Board members also voted to switch its insurance provider to EMC Insurance through the Ted Hartleb Agency. The decision was made after a comparison of three quotes, with EMC offering broader coverage at a lower annual premium – $51,129 compared to the township's current $58,000 plan.

The new policy includes full replacement value for fire trucks and coverage for township signage and memorials previously left unprotected.

Board members also improved what they reportedly see as budget friendly infrastructure improvements, including a new digital phone system to replace its outdated analog lines. The system, provided by Ocean Omega, includes 14 lines and will cost $140 monthly – down from the current $200 – after an initial $2,600 equipment investment.

The board also OK'd to add another pad and bin for recycling funded by a $4,000 grant from Barry County Waste Management, as well as the scheduling of a public hearing on Aug. 14 for Payne Ridge paving improvements under Special Assessment No. 51.

The evening's public comment featured residents raising concerns about tax policy and board transparency, with former clerk Mike Cunningham sharply criticizing the board for maintaining a 1-percent administrative fee on tax bills, Cunningham stated it was unnecessary and showed a disregard for residents' pocketbooks.

"The board is supposed to notice when we can save residents money – and act on it," he said.

Also, precinct delegates Dave and Robin Laansma called on the board to restore a previously eliminated public comment slot at the beginning of meetings and pushed for live streaming to improve public access and accountability.

Robin Laansma accused the supervisor of suppressing voices, calling it "a sign of weak leadership."

In other business, township fire department officials reported strong community feedback following a busy Fourth of July weekend and noted that the old fire truck will be sold soon. Also, Park Committee projects – particularly the pickleball court and walking path – are reportedly nearing completion, while Planning Commission discussions included progress on a mining ordinance and a potential new blight ordinance.

And while the Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet this month, a tentative meeting scheduled for August.

Board members closed with praise for Tom Hopkins' work on the insurance policy and enthusiasm for local road improvements.

The next regular meeting of the board of trustees is scheduled for Aug. 14 at 6 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall on North Briggs Road. The township does not stream meetings online, but recordings of previous meetings are available at the township office.

LAKE

Continued from Page 1

the Hall Lake Dam, marking a firm stance against state plans to drain the lake.

Yankee Springs Township trustee Dave VanHouten and Supervisor Rob Heethuis voiced strong opposition to the state's plan to eliminate the Hall Lake Dam, citing concerns over environmental impact and community loss.

VanHouten, who attended a recent MDNR and MDEGLE meeting, said no clear explanation was provided for why Hall Lake was targeted beyond a general liability reduction initiative.

The board voted, 5-0, to adopt a resolution opposing the dam's removal and authorized Clerk Tom Hopkins to draft letters to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the MDNR advocating for the dam's preservation.

"This is a beautiful lake and a vital part of our community," VanHouten said. "Draining it would be a huge mistake."

Originally an eight-acre lake about 6-feet deep, the Gun Lake Road embankment raised the water level about 6 feet when it was installed. A water control structure added in the mid-1960s raised the lake another six feet. Hall Lake currently covers roughly 46 acres.

MDNR officials reported that its Parks and Recreation Division met with various units of local government and other non-governmental organizations to discuss the possibility of transferring ownership of Hall Lake Dam. Unfortunately, no group was able to commit to financing the necessary repairs, including the ongoing monitoring and reporting of safety and maintenance concerns.

According to reports, MDNR Park and Recreation officials are no longer leading any efforts to find a new owner and are moving forward with plans for decommissioning of the dam and lowering of the impoundment.

According to the MDNR, the phased drawdown will protect the integrity of Gun Lake Road, which runs along top of the earthen berm dam. The project calls for an initial drawdown of 3 feet during the month of July and about another 3 feet in June 2026.

A gradual drawdown of not more than 6 inches per week is planned to protect fish and wildlife, as well as stabilize sediments as much as possible.

"Once the project is completed, a smaller body of water will continue to exist for outdoor recreation, similar to its original lake size," Jandernoa said. "And fortunately, there are other small lakes within Yankee Springs Recreation Area that can provide recreational experiences like those available on Hall Lake. These include Williams Lake, Long Lake, Baker Lake and Chief Noonday Lake."

Repairing the dam was the clear choice of those who voiced concerns with the plan during a spring open house on the project. When it became clear to the MDNR that local governments and agencies were unable to assume full responsibilities for the dam, state officials determined that drawing down the impoundment was the appropriate course of action.

During those discussions, MDNR officials reportedly learned that dam impoundment conditions had worsened and would need to be addressed quickly.

In 2022, MDNR Parks and Recreation Division initially engineered a project to replace the water control structure, culvert and a portion of the embankment. The competitive bid for that first phase of dam repairs came in at over $1 million, more than double the original budget of $500,000.

An estimate for that repair now in 2026 is $1.1-1.3 million. That project would also need to include a second phase of work to address additional embankment work to bring the dam back into compliance with MDEGLE's Dam Safety Unit requirements, a phase that never got close enough to reality to come up with an additional cost estimate.

Classified by MDEGLE as a significant hazard dam, failure of Hall Lake Dam could cause economic and environmental damage, or disrupt essential services downstream, though loss of life is unlikely. The dam also previously received a condition rating of "poor."

"It is the DNR's goal to ensure that Hall Lake and surrounding amenities remain valuable natural resources that are both safe and sustainable," Jandernoa said. "The short-term aspects of decommissioning the dam include a gradual lowering of Hall Lake to an approved level, removal of the outdated water control structures, installation of a new culvert under Gun Lake Road and full restoration of the road.

"Long-term, the drawdown will reduce the size and depth of Hall Lake but will allow this body of water as well as the North Country Trail and Hall Lake Trail to remain. Once the new lake level is established, the DNR will also explore replacing the existing boating access site with a carry-down access site."



Middle, high school students invited to take part in 'Congressional App Challenge'

Congressman John Moolenaar, R-MI, invites students in Michigan's Second Congressional District to enter the 2025 "Congressional App Challenge," according to a recent statement released by his office.

To enter the contest, students can work on their own, or in a group of up to four students, to create an original app of their choosing. The contest is open to all middle school and high school students in the Second District, which includes all of Barry and Ionia counties, as well as all or parts of 18 other neighboring counties.

The winning individual or team from the Second District will have their app displayed in the U.S. Capitol. They will also have the option to attend an event in Washington, D.C., where they will showcase their app alongside other students from across the United States. Entries must be submitted on the Congressional App Challenge website. Rules and a checklist for submissions can be found online at www.congressionalappchallenge.us. The deadline for entries is noon on Oct. 30.

Additional questions about the 2025 Congressional App Challenge may be directed to Congressman Moolenaar's Washington, D.C. office by calling 202-225-3561. — *DM*

TK cheer program planning first pickleball tournament

The Thornapple Kellogg cheer program is hosting the first of what it hopes to be an annual pickleball Tournament fundraiser Saturday, Aug. 2, at Yankee Springs Township Park.

Sign-up is going on now and a link for online sign-up can be found on the TK athletics Facebook page. A team's spot is confirmed once both the online registration form and payment have been received.

The bracket style tournament is scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Entry is $50 for teams of two. All ages are welcome.

In addition to the tournament play, there will be a skills competition, raffles, silent auction, food and more.— *DM*

KCC Theatre to perform free showings of original play July 25-27

Theatre fans will get a chance to see the play Kellogg Community College Theatre students and community members will be performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this summer via a series of free performances scheduled this month in Battle Creek.

Nearly 20 KCC students, alumni, employees and community members will embark on the trip of a lifetime this summer to perform with KCC Theatre at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

The trip, which runs July 29 through Aug. 10, will feature the international premiere of an abbreviated version of KCC Theatre coordinator and professor Brad Poer's original play "Pando," which debuted at KCC in the spring of 2024.

The community is invited to watch cast members load in, perform and load out the show in 90 minutes or less with performances starting at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 25; 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 26; or 3 p.m. Sunday, July 27, at the Binda Performing Arts Center on the KCC campus at 450 North Ave. in Battle Creek.

All performances are free and open to the public, though donations will be accepted to support future KCC Theatre trips and initiatives.

Poer describes the play as "a philosophical comedy set in the worlds of video games" that's accessible for all ages. It consists of a series of short one-act plays, each set in a different video-game-inspired universe and connected via a handful of short scenes between them.

The Edinburgh trip precedes the College's 2025-26 theatre season, which includes two mainstage productions, one in the fall and one in the spring. Audiences can catch the D.D. Brooke murder mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" on campus in November and the musical comedy "Disaster!" by Jack Plotnick and Seth Rudetsky, in March.

For more information about the upcoming trip, "Pando" performances or KCC Theatre programming in general, persons may contact Poer via email at poerb@kellogg.edu or by visiting the KCC Theatre Facebook page at facebook.com/KCCTheatre. — *DM*

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Village of Middleville Public Works Department will be flushing fire hydrants beginning at 7:00 am on Monday, July 21, 2025, and will continue throughout the month of July and August. Village water customers may experience some discoloration, and or pressure difference while this regular maintenance is being completed. The water remains safe to drink during this process. Usually letting the tap run for a few minutes will clear up any discoloration and normal pressures will return once flushing operations have been completed. If you have any questions regarding this operation, contact the Department of Public Works at 269-795-3385. We appreciate your patience in our endeavor to provide you the highest quality of water possible.

Posted: July 16, 2025
Kim Dannenberg
Village Deputy Clerk

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF PUBLISHING

At a regular meeting of the **Gaines Charter Township Board** of Trustees, held Monday, July 14, 2025, at the Township Hall located at 8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316, the Board of Trustees adopted an ordinance to amend and approve the Authentix Gaines Planned Unit Development rezoning.

The Township Board approved a request by Continental 870 Fund LLC to rezone the Authentix Gaines Planned Unit Development (PUD), site plan, associated roads, and utilities. The PUD is legally described as:

Parcel 1: 41-22-02-100-051 Commonly known as 6338 Hanna Lake Ave., SE
Parcel 2: 41-22-02-100-055 Commonly known as 6330 Hanna Lake Ave., SE
Parcel 3: 41-22-02-100-053 Commonly known as 6326 Hanna Lake Ave., SE

A true copy of the approved ordinance to amend and approve the Authentix Gaines Planned Unit Development rezoning, can be obtained at the Clerk's office during normal business hours (8:30am-5:00PM Mon-Fri).

Said ordinance shall take effect seven days after first publication of this notice.

Michael A. Brew
Gaines Charter Township Clerk

Barry County Fair closes curtain on 'Kids Rock' week Saturday

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Barry County Fair concludes its week Saturday, July 19, at the Barry Expo Center between Middleville and Hastings.

Midway amusements get rolling at noon on Saturday. The fairgrounds are open from 8 a.m. until at least 10:30 p.m.

The 4-H events kicked off with Youth Dog Judging in the show arena Saturday morning, July 12. Youth Non-Livestock Judging was held throughout the day Saturday. Rabbit, Cavy and poultry took the 4-H spotlight Sunday.

Open class home economic entries like photographs, paintings, jellies and jams, vegetables, breads, antiques, crochet and quilted items etc. started making their way into the expo building Sunday afternoon and judging took place in those classes beginning Monday morning.

4-H judging continued throughout the week. The small animal sale was held Thursday and the livestock sale Friday in the show arena.

Grandstand events this week included Mitten Mud Race Series mud runs, a couple nights of Unique Motor Sports Off Road Derby and demolition derby, Super Kicker Rodeo and Michigan Truck and Tractor Pullers. The finale of the evening shows is the Michigan State Fair Super Cross races Saturday. Super Cross is set to begin at 7 p.m. Admission to the grandstand is $15 in addition to the regular fair admission.

Fair admission for adults is $8 per day. Kids 8 and under are free. Parking is free all day every day. Credit cards are now being accepted at the gate as well as cash.

The schedule for the fair on Saturday also includes the 4-H Show of Champions in the show arena beginning at 8:30 a.m. followed by the Young Clover Dairy Show. Antique Tractor Pulls will be held to the west of the Expo building beginning at 10 a.m. Barrel racing will be held in the horse arena beginning at noon. The livestock fashion show is in the show arena at 3 p.m. and the 4-H Has Talent show will be held in the show arena at 4 p.m.



Bryan Wilder of Hastings takes a turn with his monster truck during the Mud Mitten Race Series in front of the grandstand at the Barry County Fair in Hastings Monday. The fair wraps up its week of activities today, July 19.

Visit us online at www.Sunandnews.com

TK Library Water Fun Spray Day planned for Tuesday afternoon



All are welcome to come cool off with the 2025 summer reading program at the Thornapple Kellogg Community Library Tuesday, July 22. The summer activity schedule once again includes a Water Fun Spray Day with the Thornapple Township Fire Department. The annual event will be held in the parking lot south of the high school from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Folks are told to come prepared to get wet. **Photo provided**

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Sporting News

MHSAA sports participation numbers highest since 2018-19

Michigan High School Athletic Association member high schools reported a combined participation of 275,684 athletes in MHSAA-sponsored tournament sports during the 2024-25 school year – the highest number of participants in those activities since 2018-19 and despite another decrease in combined enrollment across those 754 schools.

This past year's participation total was 5,020 students – or 1.9 percent – higher than in 2023-24, while enrollment at member schools fell by 1.3 percent. Boys participation was up 1.9 percent to 161,329 – also its highest since 2018-19 – and girls participation was up 1.8 percent to 114,355, its highest count since 2019-20. MHSAA participation totals count students once for each sport in which they participate, meaning students who are multiple-sport athletes are counted more than once.

Two sports set participation records during 2024-25. Boys track & field counted 24,759 participants – a 3.7 percent increase from a year ago in breaking its previous record from 2005-06. Girls lacrosse participation was up 0.9 percent from last year to 3,970 participants in setting a record for the second-straight season.

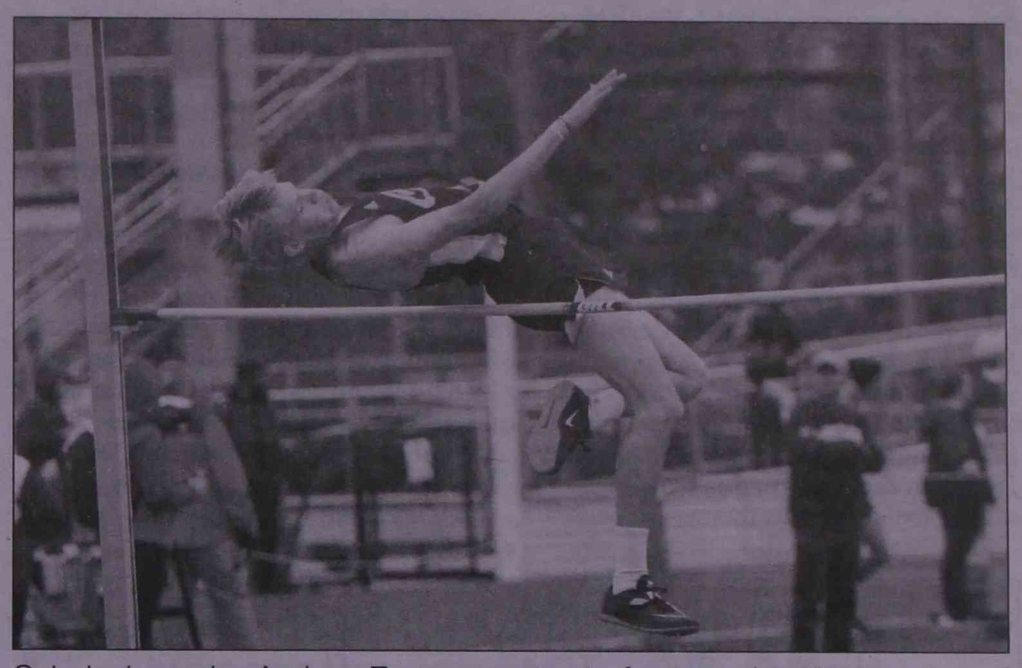
Another 15 sports saw participation increases this past school year. Girls tennis saw an increase of 6.4 percent to 9,485 athletes, followed by boys and girls wrestling's combined increase of 5.2 percent to 12,422 participants – with boys wrestling participation up 3 percent and girls up an incredible 24 percent to 1,505 athletes. Girls track & field (18,108 athletes) and boys cross country (8,209) also saw some of the largest jumps at 4.5 and 4.1 percent, respectively.

Also reporting increased participation during 2024-25 were boys tennis (3.7 percent, 6,163 total athletes), football (3 percent, 36,210), girls volleyball (2.9 percent, 19,679), boys golf (2.7 percent, 7,416), girls competitive cheer (2.4 percent, 6,319), boys basketball (1.7 percent, 20,541), girls cross country (1.4 percent, 6,826), boys soccer (1.1 percent, 14,112), boys bowling (1 percent, 4,333), boys swimming & diving (0.9 percent, 4,073), and girls soccer (0.7 percent, 11,090).

Although 11 sports saw participation decreases during 2024-25 from the previous school year, those for girls basketball (-0.4 percent) and boys ice hockey (-0.7 percent) were lower than the 1.3-percent enrollment decline at MHSAA member schools.

Football remains the most popular sport in terms of participation at MHSAA member high schools, with that total of 36,210 athletes its highest since 2017-18. Girls volleyball remained the most popular girls sport in 2024-25, with its 19,679 athletes the highest total since 2012-13.

The participation figures are gathered annually from MHSAA member schools to submit to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) for compiling of its national participation survey. Results of Michigan surveys from the 2000-01 school year to present may be viewed on the MHSAA website.



Caledonia senior Andrew Tava was a part of a record-setting number of student-athletes participating on MHSAA varsity boys' track and field teams this spring. Boys' track and field and girls' lacrosse both reached record levels of participation during the 2024-25 school year. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF PUBLISHING

At a regular meeting of the **Gaines Charter Township Board** of Trustees, held Monday, July 14, 2025, at the Township Hall located at 8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316, the Board of Trustees approved an ordinance to amend the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance as provided for in Chapter 32 thereof by amending Section 2.20 and the Township Zoning Map. The amendment of Section 2.20 thereof, the Zoning Map, rezones the following property from Agricultural/Rural Residential (ARR) to Village Residential (VR), the land being commonly described as parcel 41-22-32-200-005 located at 1264 100th Street SE. The legal description is as follows:

W ½ NE ¼ EX S 20 A. & EX N 750 FT OF E 691 FT & EX N 223 FT OF W 396 FT* SEC 32 T5N R11W 46.08 A.

The approved amendment of Section 2.20 thereof, the Zoning Map, rezones the following property from Agricultural/Rural Residential (ARR) to Village Residential (VR), the land being commonly described as parcel 41-22-32-200-005 located at 1264 100th Street SE.

A true copy of the adopted ordinance amending the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance as provided for in Chapter 32 thereof by amending Section 2.20 and the Township Zoning Map, can be obtained at the Clerk's office during normal business hours (8:30am-5:00PM Mon-Fri). Said ordinance shall go into effect seven days after it is first published.

Michael A. Brew
Gaines Charter Township Clerk

Projects are taking shape inside The Ralph

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The first two dates on the Caledonia varsity football schedule are home ones, and work is progressing at Ralph E. Myers Stadium in hopes of having it ready for visits from Holy Names Catholic High School out of Ontario and Reeths-Puffer.

The Fighting Scots are slated to open the 2026 football season at home in Caledonia Aug. 28 against the Holy Names Catholic program.

The old home side stands and press box are gone. A visitors grandstand is currently gaining height.

The massive new concession stand and restrooms are progressing nicely.

The new arched entrance at the south end of the stadium is taking shape as well as the tiered sections of the hill inside the south end of the stadium.

Construction began inside "The Ralph" as the 2025 season wrapped up, and kept right on rolling through the spring while the Caledonia track and field teams had a season of competitions completely on the road.

This construction follows the installation of synthetic turf prior to the 2023 fall football season which was a small part of the $88 million bond passed in 2020. Caledonia voters also approved a supplemental bond in the spring of 2023 in part to continue the stadium renovations.

The Caledonia football program is hoping to host its annual Purple and Gold scrimmage inside the stadium Aug. 15. The first date for 2025 football practice allowed by the MHSAA is Aug. 11.

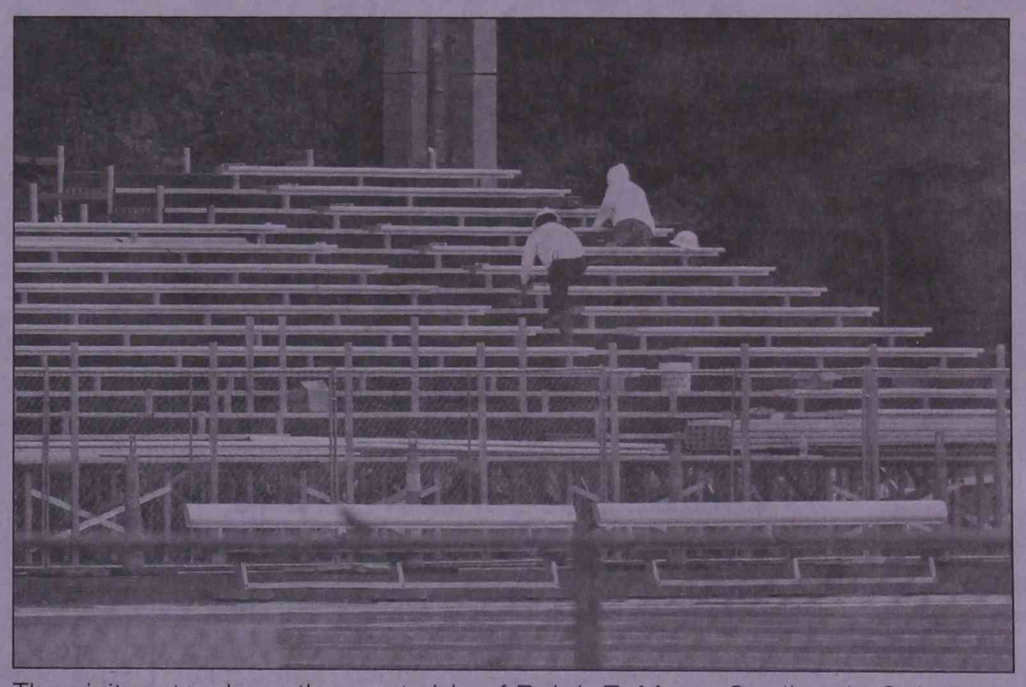


Work progresses on the massive new building on the south end of Ralph E. Myers Stadium in Caledonia Wednesday. The project includes improved concessions stands and restrooms as well as a newly designed entry way. The plan is for the stadium to be ready to host football games this fall. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

The Fighting Scot football program is also preparing for one of its big fundraisers, the annual Scots Kickoff Social at Butcher Block in Caledonia which is slated for Aug. 16. That will be a good opportunity for folks to hear from new varsity football head coach Whitney Bell.

Tickets for that event are available at caltouchdownclub.com.

The work going on at Ralph E. Myers Stadium is just a small portion of construction going on throughout the district this summer including work at the new Dutton Elementary, and big upgrades at Caledonia Elementary and at the bus garage.



The visitor stands on the west side of Ralph E. Myers Stadium in Caledonia are beginning to take shape. **Photo provided**

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Tri Del Sol returns to Barlow Lake area Sunday morning

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

It took just over two hours for Connor Reynolds to hit the finish line first in 2024.

A little over 22 minutes of swimming, 58 minutes of cycling and 41 minutes of running gave him the victory in the Olympic Triathlon at the annual Tri Del Sol Triathlon held at the YMCA Camp Manitou Linn at Barlow Lake in Middleville.

The event, an annual fundraiser for the myTeam Triumph West Michigan Chapter, returns to Middleville Sunday, July 20 for its 2025 edition.

The event's Olympic Triathlon includes a 1500-meter swim, a 40k bike ride and a 10k run. There is also a sprint triathlon which is half of each of those distances and a super sprint triathlon that covers a 200-meter swim, a 10k bike ride and a 3k run.

There are also duathlon, aquabike, relay and swim only contests for each of those distances.

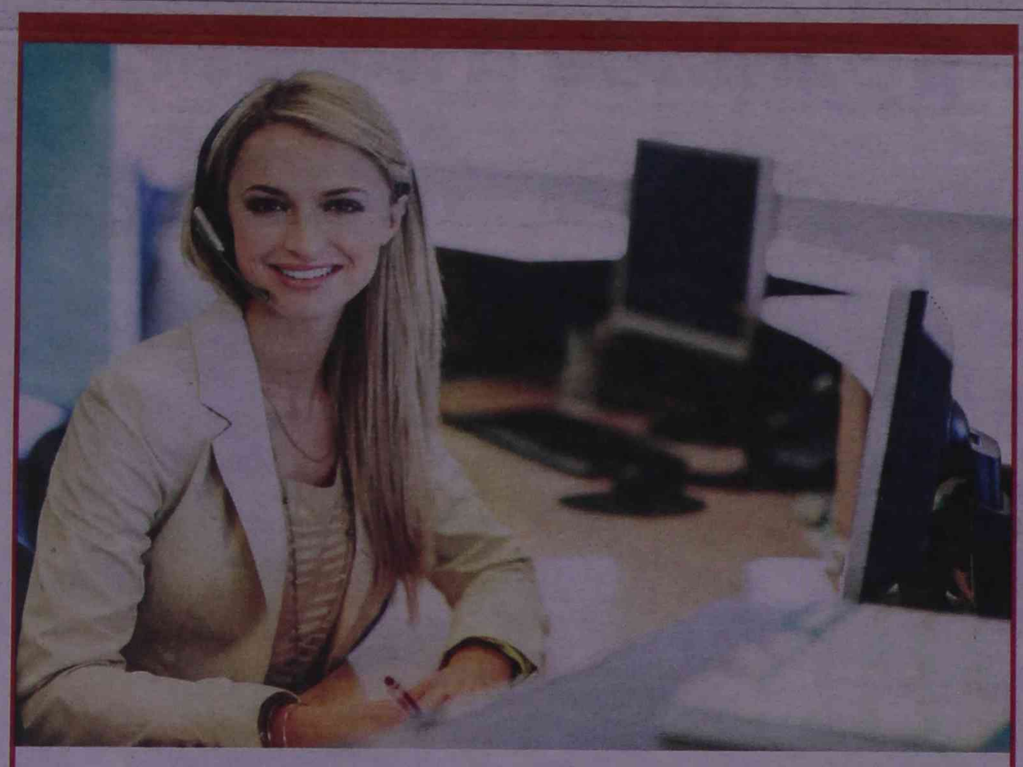
Event organizers are expecting an excellent weather day and are happy to report that lake temperatures are right around 80 degrees for the swim.

Opening ceremonies are set to being at 7 a.m. Sunday, with a rolling start for the Olympic length event beginning at 7:30 a.m. The transition open time for racers is 5 a.m. and it will remain open until 6:45 a.m.

An awards presentation is scheduled for 10 a.m. As well as championship awards, there will be random prize drawings including two $250 prizes and other sponsor gifts. Folks must be present to win prizes and previous random cash prize winners from the event are not eligible for the random cash drawings.

The cycling course takes riders east of Barlow Lake along Shaw Lake Road. Olympic distance bikers head south on Yankee Springs Road from there, travel east on M-179 to Gun Lake Road and then back southwest until they reconnect with Yankee Springs Road and head back up to Camp Manitou-Lin to begin the run. Runners head south from the camp around the south end of Barlow Lake and then loop back to the finish.

The sprint and super sprint courses are shorter out and back portions of those routes.



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