THE SUN AND NEWS
Your Hometown Newspaper Serving the Middleville, Caledonia and Gaines Township Areas
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SLAGEL EARNED ALL-AMERICA HONOR AT AAU DIVING NATIONALS
PAGE 8



# New TK supe hits the ground running

**Karen Turko-Ebright**
Staff Writer

With five years of experience as a school superintendent, Rob Pouch hit the ground running as Thornapple Kellogg Schools' new leader from the day he started on July 1. With his first board of education meeting on July 21 in the rearview mirror, Pouch said he continues moving ahead.

"First and foremost, I'm blessed. It's no secret that Middleville has an amazing staff and gorgeous facilities, and we have a board that has the best interest in doing what's best for kids," Pouch said.

"And that's important for success. Those are all good foundational skills we want all our school systems to have."

Pouch has served as the superintendent of Morrice Area Schools for the last five years and as the principal at Linden Middle School from 2017 to 2021.

On April 29, the Thornapple Kellogg School Board voted unanimously at

See **SUPE** on 5



New Thornapple Kellogg School Superintendent Rob Pouch started his position on July 1. **File photo by Karen Turko-Ebright**



Dan Larabel of Allen Edwin Homes explains to the Gaines Township Planning Commission how the 233-unit Dutton Center project will roll out during a July 24 meeting. **Photo by James Gemmell**

# Initial phase of Dutton Center development receives final OK

**James Gemmell**
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Township Planning Commission gave its final stamp of approval for the first phase of the Dutton Center residential project to begin.

Planning Commission members voted, 6-0, at their July 24 meeting to approve the final site plan for the 233-unit mixed-use development at the 3300 block of 68th Street. The development is part of a proposed five-phase project between Dutton and Hanna Lake avenues that will also include some commercial development.

Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells said the development complies with the township's updated master plan adopted in 2023 that envisions a village center being built along 68th Street.

Wells said it also comports with the historic character of the village, with the village-center concept aiming to create a blend of commercial and residential structures that accommodate a walkable neighborhood.

Dan Larabel, a land manager with Allen Edwin Homes, presented an update on plans for the project on behalf of the J&A Post Family Farm, LLC. The developer received approval last year to have a 30-acre parcel rezoned to provide additional flexibility in laying out the properties.

"They can start construction on utilities," Wells said after the meeting. "And once they get all the utilities in the ground, then they can start coming in for building permits."

Phase 1 will include 37 rental townhomes, 10 fewer than what was originally proposed in the northeast section of the parcel. Larabel said that will allow for some commercial frontage to remain intact. There will be two neighborhood commercial buildings facing 68th Street, plus some single-family detached "veranda" homes.

Developers also needed approval for the site plan changes because the Kent County Drain

See **DEVELOPMENT** on 3

# Twp. planners revoke special use permit for home-based business

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Members of the Gaines Township Planning Commission voted unanimously at their July 24 meeting to revoke a special use permit that allowed for a car detailing business to operate out of a family's garage.

The 6-0 vote, with one member absent, came less than two years after the Planning Commission had approved the permit in November 2023 for the home occupation in an accessory building on the 4600 block of 100th Street in Caledonia, just west of Patterson Avenue.



Gaines Township staffers reported multiple vehicles were found on the 100th Street property where a car-detailing operation was taking place, many without license plates. Source: gainestownship.org

"I don't know if we've had a similar (incident) like this in the township," said Connie Giarmo, Planning Commission chairperson.

Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells said the township received a complaint from neighbors on June 2 that multiple vehicles and trash were stored on the property. He added he and Sgt. Jeff Bylsma of the Kent County Sheriff's Office inspected the property the next day.

"And, sure enough, the report was correct," Wells said. "There was trash piled up against the garage on one side.

"But there were also about 10 to 12 vehicles parked around the yard … many of which didn't have (license) plates. So, they're considered inoperable under our ordinance," he added. "And storing inoperable vehicles outside of an enclosed space is not allowed. So, there clearly was a violation there."

Planning commission member Talimma Billips said the business had committed an "outright violation" of its agreement with the township.

"We grappled with the decision to allow it in the first place," Billips said. "And we truly, honestly believed that, if it was exactly what they said, that would be awesome.

"And from day one it sounds like, or shortly thereafter, it just never was what we approved."

According to Wells, the special use permit allowed property owners Jennifer Ranero and her husband to store no more than one vehicle at a time inside a carport or garage.

"At the time, we put the stipulation detailing work would be restricted to interior cleaning only and not generating any wastewater or waste chemicals by exterior or engine washing," he said.

It was one of several conditions the township reportedly stipulated for

See **PERMIT** on 6







# Clement appointed as new Cal Schools trustee

The Caledonia Board of Education appointed Kyle Clement this week to fill a vacant trustee seat on the board, following a public application and interview process. The appointment was made during a special board meeting held on Tuesday, July 29. The vacancy was created last month when former trustee Katie Isic relocated outside the district, making her ineligible to continue serving.



Kyle Clement

Clement will serve the remainder of Isic's unexpired term through Dec. 31, 2026. He previously served as a Caledonia Community Schools Board Trustee from 2016 to 2022. During his six-year tenure, he was an active member of the Finance and Bond Committees, where he contributed to budget development, long-term financial planning, and oversight of bond-funded projects.

"His experience brings valuable continuity and insight into the district's ongoing strategic efforts," wrote staff in a district-wide email.

In addition to his past board service, Clement currently serves on the Caledonia Township Planning Commission and is involved with the Caledonia Youth Sports Association.

"We were fortunate to have a strong group of applicants, and we appreciate the time and interest shown by every candidate," said Board President Tim Morris. "Kyle brings a calm, collaborative approach and a deep commitment to doing what is best for all students."

For more information about the Caledonia Board of Education, visit calschools.org. — *KTE*

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# Gaines Twp. officials discuss public safety staffing, budget at special meeting

**James Gemmell**
Contributing Writer

Gaines Township officials have until November to finalize its 2026 budget, with preliminary discussions beginning in earnest at a special meeting of the township board of trustees on Monday, July 28.

The board hosted a workshop session Monday night, with various township staffers, police officials and firefighters in attendance.

"By Labor Day, I will present to the board budgets for the five funds that the township operates under," Township Manager Rod Weersing said.

The public safety budget was the primary topic of discussion at the meeting. Township Fire Chief Ken Van Hall gave a presentation on a fire department staffing proposal that calls for the addition of three full-time employees at the Cutlerville Fire Station – or one firefighter per shift. One part-time position would be moved from that station over to the Dutton Fire Department.

Van Hall said the proposal addresses an urgent need for increased staffing to meet the growing demand for public safety in Kent County's fastest-growing township. He added state standards require that fire departments have at least four members on the scene of a fire before they enter a burning building. But Gaines Township firefighters may have to wait for additional personnel to arrive on the scene, due to staffing shortages.

Van Hall compared the ability to respond to an emergency to a chair with three legs. One leg involves personnel, another leg is the training, and the third leg is the fire apparatus and facilities.

"Any creak in that causes the chair to tip," he said. "Right now, with the way we're staffed, we're not getting enough people on the scene to take care of the problem. It's really compromising firefighter safety."

Several new residential and commercial buildings are being built in Gaines Township, and more are in the planning stage. Van Hall said that will put an even greater demand on first-responders in responding to fire and rescue calls.

Township Manager Rod Weersing estimated it will cost the township about $130,000 per each additional staff member.

Supervisor Bob Terpstra said he and Weersing met with Van Hall recently to discuss creating a three- to five-year plan for addressing growth in the township.

Weersing said the old system of having two firefighters per each fire engine is outdated.

"That goes back prior to 2010, when the township was much smaller, had fewer calls, not nearly as much going on," Terpstra said. "So, it's time to bring that up in 2025-26."

Township recently applied for a federal SAFER grant, which provides funding to help fire departments increase personnel numbers to meet

See **MEETING** on 7

## DEVELOPMENT

Continued from Page 1

Commission required a stormwater retention basin to be expanded.

The stormwater runoff would be collected in a detention basin in the northeast section of the Dutton Center PUD's first phase.

"So, we're kind of in that final stretch," Larabel said. "(Kent County) Road Commission approval has been obtained. The Drain Commission, we're right there on the finish line with them. We're receiving our final permits to start construction here this fall,"

Allen Edwin Homes is in the process of completing the construction of Phases I and II of the Thornapple Farms subdivision immediately south of the Dutton Center project.

The first phase of the Dutton Center subdivision reportedly will be built concurrently with the third phase of the Thornapple Farms development. That would provide an interconnected public roadway network between Dutton and Hanna Lake avenues.

"They need to connect another road from the Thornapple Farms subdivision to the south through this area, so they have a second emergency-access point off Dutton Avenue," Wells said. "They're going to hit their 30-house limit. Until they have that second connection, they can't build any more houses."

Representatives with Michiana LLC, a subsidiary of Allen Edwin Homes, also recently proposed building the second phase of the Dutton Center subdivision as a site condominium, instead of as a plat. Phase 2 would have 51 single-family residential lots in the southern section of the development, including a mix of ranch, two-story and bi-level homes with three to four bedrooms and an attached two-car garage.

# Caledonia's Celebration on Main on tap this week Aug. 6-7

Caledonia's Celebration on Main is now a two-day event, slated for Wednesday, Aug. 6 and Thursday, Aug. 7 this week. Each night, celebrations will kick off on Main Street, fittingly, at 5:30 p.m. Events will wrap up both nights around 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday's offerings include a car show and Family Tavern Cruise Night. The Taste of Caledonia will also be displaying all kinds of tasty treats throughout the event, including Brink's Ice Cream Express, Sugar Momma's Bakery, Farmgirl Cake Pops and much more.

In addition to the festivities, live music from Easy Idle String Band will play during on Wednesday.

On Thursday, there's fun for the whole family including a tractor show, a farm animal pet and play area, the Caledonia Farmers Market and the Pet Parade starting at 6:30 p.m. Plus, festival-goers can enjoy live music from Candid Antics.

Questions can be directed to caledoniaevents01@gmail.com. — *KTE*

Thornapple Township is seeking a qualified resident to fill the position of

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# MIDDLEVILLE
## TOPS 546

The July 28 meeting opened with roll call and the secretary's report. There is one fish in the fishbowl; two jumped out.

Virginia's program was from the July/Aug TOPS magazine titled "Mind the Meds." There is very little research done on how weight loss affects drug doses. The only research is after bariatric surgery. After weight loss, drugs are absorbed differently, but there is insufficient evidence for general dosing guidelines. One aspect is clear. It needs to be addressed on an individual basis. GPs are usually the last ones to get the message. Talk to your doctor. Make sure they know you are trying to lose weight. Gradual changes in dosages is the best. Working with your doctor, especially one who is aware, is the best. It could save your life.

Chapter members continued their contest by filling in one dot for each one-tenth of a pound lost.

Virginia was the best loser for the month of July.

Maryellen lost 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.*

# Garden workshop scheduled for Aug. 10

Area residents can learn about composting and organic garden fertilizers at a free workshop this month.

Herbalist, Michigan State University Pollinator Champion and Master Gardener Robbin Glass will lead the workshop on Sunday, Aug. 10, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Attendees of the class will learn how to compost and how to solve common composting problems. Glass will also explain organic fertilizers and which fertilizers are harmful to pollinators.

Glass encourages attendees to ask gardening questions during the question-and-answer portion of the class.

Attendees have the chance to win prizes from a free drawing.

The workshop will be held at the Hastings SDA School at 904 Terry Lane in Hastings.

All are welcome to attend the class; there is no need to register. For more information, contact Glass at 517-652-3056. — *MM*


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cornerstonemi.org/weekend

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## SUPE

Continued from Page 1

a special meeting to select Pouch as their new superintendent. Newly elected members of the TK board include trustees Katie Stanton, Keara Hilton and Mark Price. Returning board members who are officers are president Derrick Brock, vice president David Smith, secretary Brenda Hess and treasurer Tyler Wenger.

"I was fortunate where I was able to work the previous couple of months closely with Mark Provost (assistant superintendent) from a distance and really be in tune with what had been going on in the district in April, May and June," Pouch said. "So, that allowed me to hit the ground running and allow me to focus on building some relationships early on."

Over the course of the past month, Pouch has spent time in the school buildings visiting with staff. 'It's been great being able to focus on staff and building relationships with the staff that's here and spending time one-on-one with our board members and discussing what's important here for Thornapple Kellogg Schools," Pouch said.

"As a fifth-year superintendent, you climb to the ranks as a veteran superintendent," Pouch said. "I'm very thankful that my previous superintendent experience has also allowed me to hit the ground running."

While circulating through the school buildings, Pouch had an opportunity to meet with the nurses and talk about the program. "That's been one blessing that came out of COVID is all districts typically now have some form of nursing program," said Pouch. "That's been great."

Plus, he's been to several cabinet meetings. "I've been able to listen and learn," he said. He also met many people at the local Rotary club.

In addition to all of the staff and community visits, Pouch attended the Barry County Fair.

"I was just amazed at the work, the facility, the care for the campus. It was very nice. It was nice to see some of our students' work." Pouch said at last month's board of education meeting during his superintendent's report. "We'll call it work that they do because it is hard work every day of the year, all hours of the day sometimes taking care of those animals."

Pouch added that he chit-chatted with some of the kids and toured the fairgrounds with board members Brock and Wenger and saw some other community members, other superintendents and had the opportunity to talk to the local sheriff's department.

"What a great event, and there's just no greater joy when you go to a fair and you have the kids talk about their animals and the process that it takes to raise those animals. Their eyes light up, they shake your hand, they get excited, they could talk forever," Pouch said. "Thank you to Tyler and Derrick for taking time to tour Mark and I around the campus."

Pouch said he's looking forward to the new FFA barn and where that program is going. He is eager to see how the program expands into additional fair presence in the future.

"Ideally, it would be great. Not everybody has access to the ability to raise animals to take to the fair. Maybe now we'll afford that opportunity to individuals who maybe don't have that opportunity as that barn program gets up and running down the road."

Pouch recently sold his house in Howell, Mich. He and his wife have five kids, and they sold their 30-acre hobby farm. They currently reside in Ottawa County. Their five kids are 12, 10, 7, 4 and 10 months old.

The superintendent seat became available this year after former superintendent Craig McCarthy retired at the end of 2024.

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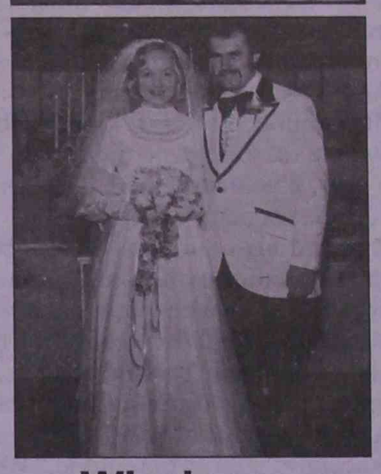
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## ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT





### Wieringas to celebrate 50th wedding anniversary

Paul and Sallie Wieringa were married in Grand Rapids on August 2, 1975. They lived in Middleville for the 50 years of their marriage.

They have two children, Jennifer and Scott Pollmann and Eric and Nicole Wieringa. They were blessed with seven grandchildren.

Those who would like to send cards of congratulations can mail them to 11054 Jackson Rd., Middleville, MI 49333.

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## PERMIT

Continued from Page 2

the operation. Others included restricting the hours of operation to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the vehicle stored on-site must be within a fully enclosed structure.

A neighbor, Terry DeVries, was the only resident to speak at a public hearing during the meeting.

"Basically, from the day that thing started, they have never abided by any of the rules that are on this list," DeVries said. "There's always been more cars. There's nowhere near anywhere from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's seven days a week.

"And I've seen as many as (five) people around there working. I don't know who they are. And there's always been cars. I've counted as many as 20 cars on the property at one time."

He added his main concern is about potential contamination of the well water in his yard. Wells said that is why the township attached the condition that only interior cleaning would be allowed.

"Usually when you detail a car, you'll use solvents to try to clear off all the gunk that's accumulated on the engine," Wells said. "And there was really no place for that to discharge safely. And considering there's a drain right behind the property, there was some concern about that."

DeVries added he was concerned about what products were being used.

"Eventually, it's going to soak into the ground," DeVries said. "And it's going to get to the water. My well is 57 feet (deep) and it's not going to take too many years of multi-car washings and greasing to get to the well."

Ranero pleaded for the special use permit not to be revoked.

"Being able to raise our kids ourselves while running our business from home has been a blessing for our family," Ranero said. "This is our livelihood and helps us support our children."

She apologized for the report of unregistered vehicles and the clutter that accumulated near their pole barn, adding the family worked to clean up the area after being contacted by township officials.

"We have committed to stand in compliance and keep our home and business in good standings with township rules," Ranero said. "We feel that it would be a premature and unfair decision to revoke our special use permit at this stage, especially since this is the first formal warning we've received."



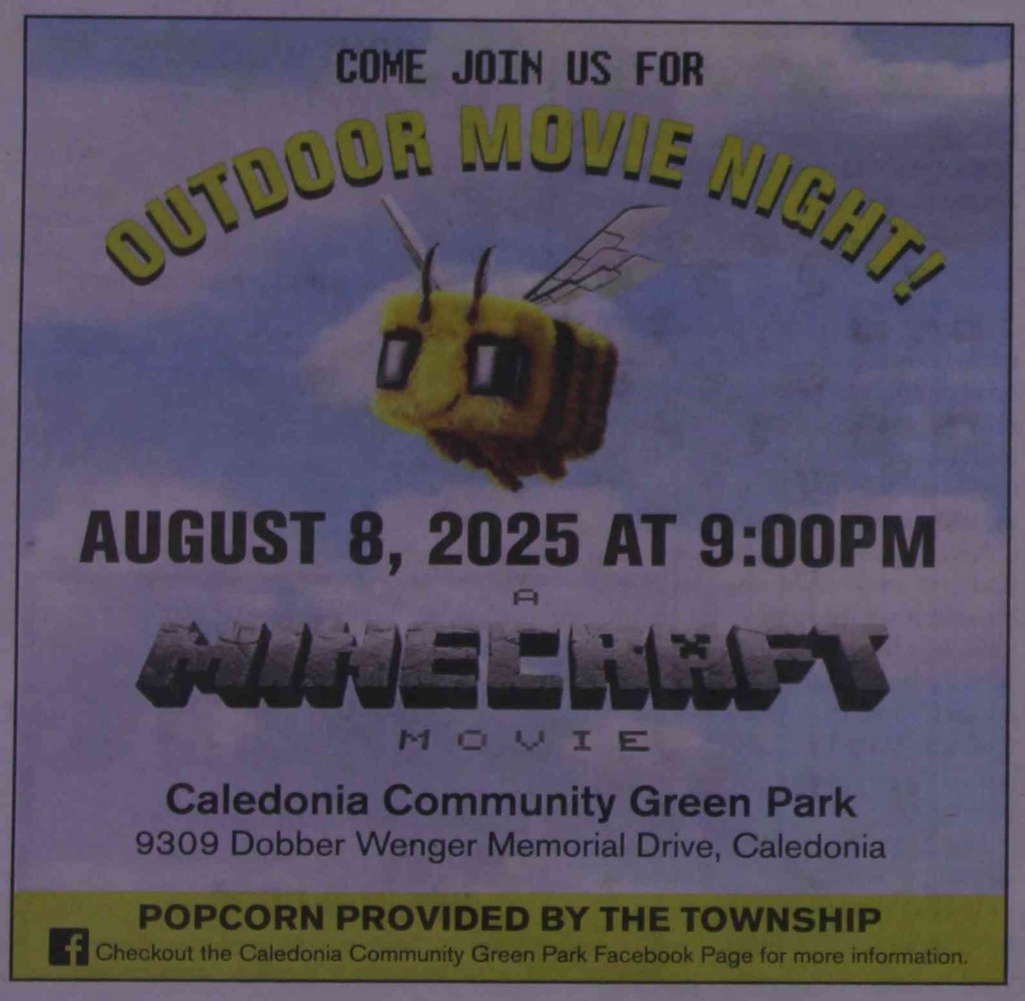
Gaines Township officials said a pile of trash bags and loose trash was piled against the east wall of the accessory building on the site of a home-based car detailing business. **Source: gainestownship.org**

But that didn't seem to sway members of the Planning Commission.

"If this were a slight infraction, a warning (might be warranted)," Billips said. "Or, if it was one additional thing. But this is pretty disappointing and pretty egregious, in my opinion."

The action to revoke the special use permit was done under a section of the township zoning ordinance pertaining to general compliance and property conditions, vehicles, equipment and machinery.

"We have quite a few special-use permits in the township," Giarmo said, "and if we want our residents to take seriously what we say when we grant them, I think we have an obligation to stay true to what we required when we first passed this."




## MEETING

Continued from Page 3

minimum industry standards.

"It's a little bit of savings but not significant, if we get it," Weersing said.

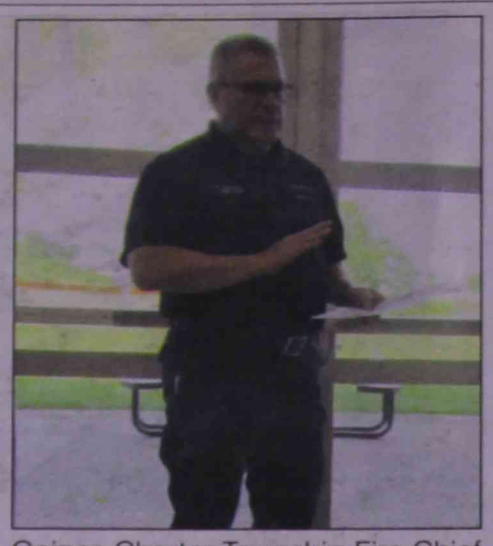
Van Hall added beefing up staffing would allow for more effective operations, as well as reduce the risk of injuries. Also, he said addressing the staffing shortages would improve community safety, not only in fighting fires, but in responding to medical emergencies and other calls for service.

Van Hall said adding firefighters will help during periods of high demand.

"If we have someone call in sick or if we have someone that gets hurt, the chair tips," Van Hall said. "We have no resiliency. We have to rely on these people that are sitting here to fill shifts.

"They have lives, too," he added. "They're already working 2,900 hours a year."

Also, Weersing said a new platform fire truck the township ordered last year is due to arrive in October. The $1.7 million aerial platform vehicle was purchased from Wisconsin-based Pierce Manufacturing last year.



Gaines Charter Township Fire Chief Ken Van Hall gives a presentation to the township board July 28 on a fire department staffing proposal. **Photos by James Gemmell**

Weersing added the township's Fire Advisory Committee reviewed a long-term template for replacing some of the department's aging vehicles.

"I took a look at what we'd have to set aside each year over the next 12 years to make this replacement plan work," he said. "So, basically, my recommendation and what I'm planning on handing to the budget again is setting aside $500,000 per year, so that we can get in line and be ready for replacement of these vehicles as they come up."

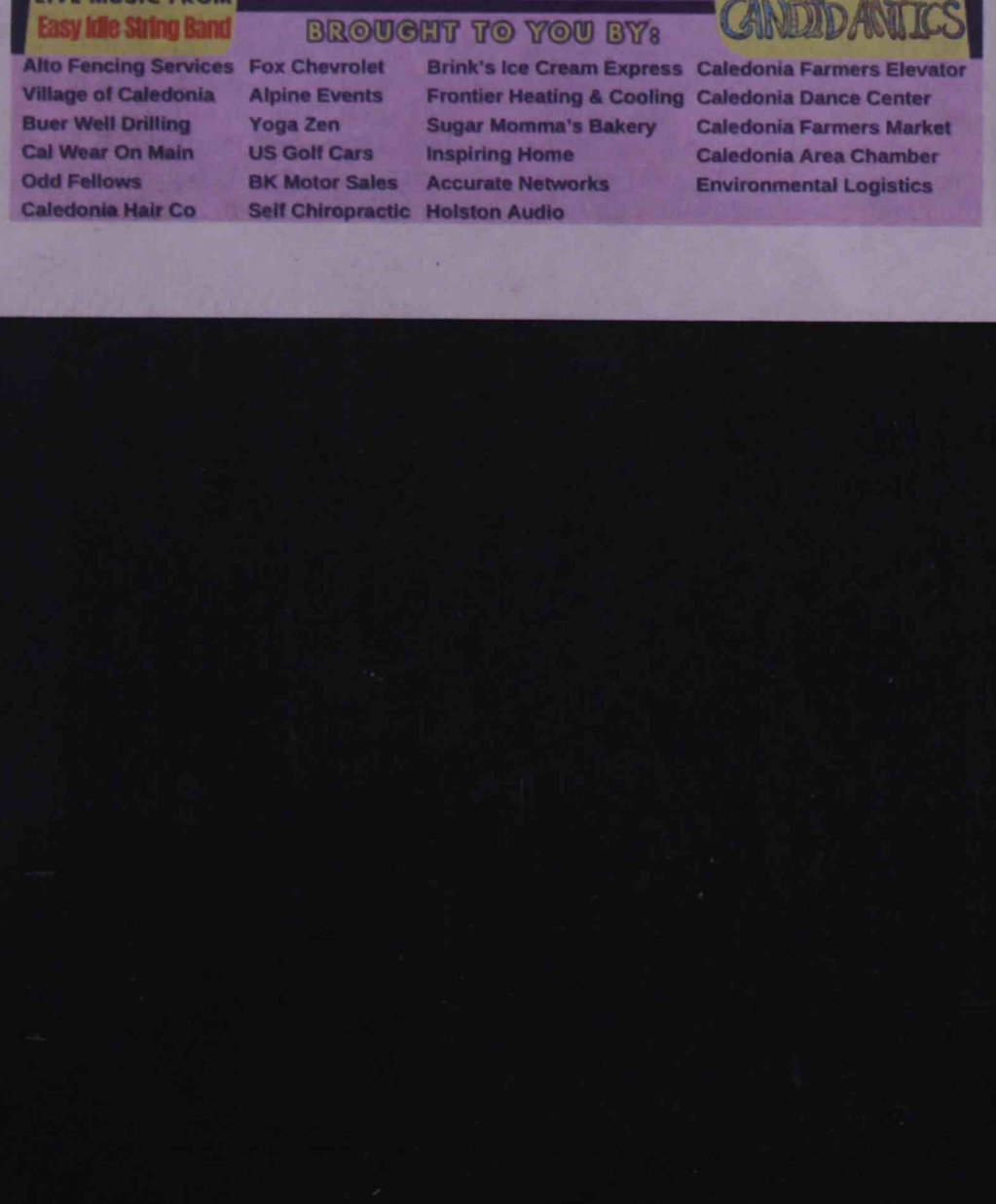


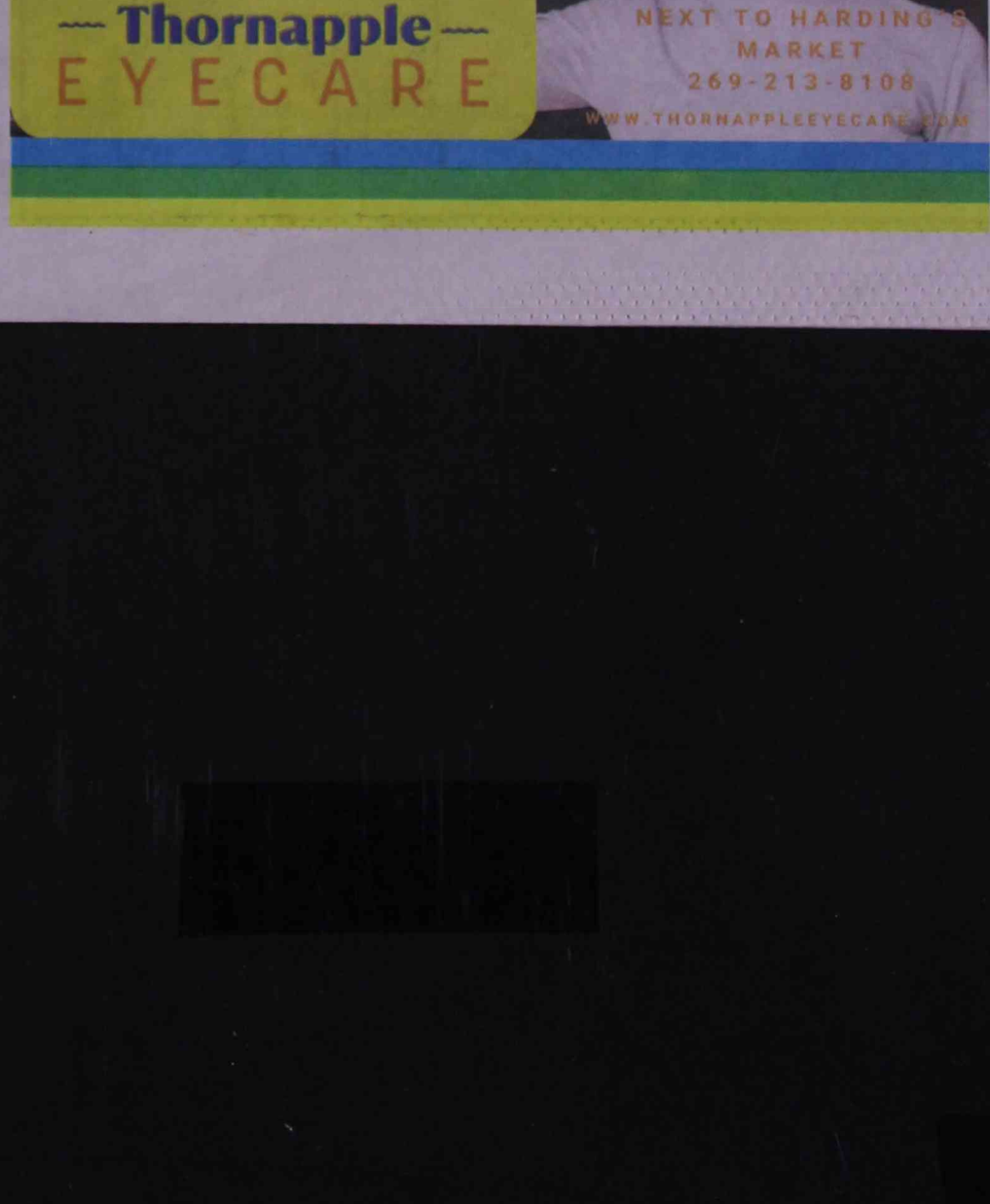
Gaines Township Supervisor Bob Terpstra (left) makes a point during preliminary budget talks at the township hall at a July 28 workshop session.

Township staffers are also considering whether to replace a Kent County Sheriff's Office vehicle in Gaines Township. The estimated cost for a command vehicle would be $75,000.

"That could change a little bit," Weersing said. "We're doing some research to see if it makes sense to get something now, before tariffs kick in. To see if there's significant savings in doing something now instead of waiting."

Township board members also briefly discussed some other future initiatives that the board intends to prioritize in the coming fiscal year, which begins Jan. 1. Those include potential improvements to Prairie Wolf Park, possible development of Cody's Mill Park and upgrades to township cemeteries.





**Yankee Springs Township**

284 N. BRIGGS ROAD- MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN 49333
269-795-9091 / FAX 269-795-2388

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
### Township of Yankee Springs, Barry County, Michigan

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that as a result of petitions of property owners within the township signed by the record owners of land whose area or footage constitutes more than 50 percent of the total area or footage of the hereinafter described Payne Ridge Drive special assessment district and the township board of the Township of Yankee Springs proposes to make road improvements consisting of installing 1.5 inches of base course asphalt compacted, and installation of 1.5 inches of surface asphalt compacted. The area of roadway is approximately 21,276 square feet. And to create a special assessment for the recovery of the costs thereof by special assessment against the properties benefited therein.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the district within which the foregoing improvements are proposed to be constructed and within which the costs thereof is proposed to be assessed is more particularly described as including the following parcel numbers:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 08-16-017-021-00 | 08-16-017-021-30 | 08-16-017-021-20 |
| 08-16-017-021-10 | 08-16-017-012-00 | 08-16-017-013-00 |
| 08-16-017-014-00 | 08-16-017-015-00 | 08-16-017-016-00 |
| 08-16-017-017-00 | 08-16-017-018-00 | 08-16-017-019-00 |
| 08-16-017-020-00 | 08-16-017-022-00 | 08-16-017-023-00 |
| 08-16-017-024-00 | 08-16-017-037-00 | 08-16-017-026-00 |
| 08-16-017-027-00 | | |

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township Board has received engineering plans showing the improvements and an estimate of the costs of such construction in the approximate amount of $52,000, has placed them on file with the township clerk, and has passed a resolution tentatively declaring its intention to make the improvement and to create the special assessment district. The township board has also tentatively found the petitions to be in compliance with statutory requirements.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that said plans, estimate of costs, proposed special assessment district and petitions may be examined at the office of the township clerk from the date of this notice through the date of the public hearing and may be examined at such public hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a public hearing on the petitions, plans, district and estimate of costs will be held at the Yankee Springs Township hall at 284 N. Briggs Road, Middleville, Michigan, commencing at 6 o'clock p.m. on August 14 2025.

At the hearing, the board will consider any written objections to any of the foregoing matters filed with the board at or before the hearing as well as any revisions, corrections, amendments, or changes to the plans, estimates and costs or special assessment district.

All interested persons are invited to be present at the hearing and to submit any comments they may have.

Township clerk signature: Tom Hopkins
Township address: 284 N. Briggs Road
Middleville, Michigan 49333



Hastings Community Diving Club divers Aubrey Yarger and Lydia Slagel celebrate earning All-America honors at the AAU Diving Nationals in Riverside, Calif., in mid-July. **Photo provided**

# Slagel earned All-America honor at AAU Diving Nationals

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

The Hastings Community Diving Club has never had a more successful season of national competitions than the one that just wrapped with the AAU National Championships in Riverside, Calif.

The successes for the club included Thornapple Kellogg junior Lydia Slagel earned All-America honors, a title she has earned on three different occasions this summer.

Slagel, an all-state diver in Division 1 for the Thornapple Kellogg co-op varsity girls' swimming and diving team last fall as a sophomore, had a top finish in Riverside of seventh in the Girls A1 16-year-old 1M Finals. She placed tenth in the same division on the three-meter board and added a 26th-place finish in the 16-18 Girls Platform Finals.

Slagel also reached the finals in two synchronized diving events. She was 16th along with in the 16-18 Girls 3M Finals diving with HCDC teammate Aubrey Yarger and teamed with Kiyana Perez from the Northside Diving Academy to place 24th in the 16-18 Girls 1M Finals.

HCDC diver Abigail Dumond, a recent Thornapple Kellogg graduate who is set to dive for Alma College next season, reached the finals of the synchronized 16-18 Girls 1M competition with teammate Hollen Emmick and the duo placed 25th.

HCDC head coach Todd Bates said he celebrated the successful meet by doing a front somersault off the 10-meter platform.

"College coaches are recognizing our diver athletes and it's exciting to see them move on to the next level," he said.

Club diver Major Vance won the national championship in the Men's Masters Silver 1M (19-49) competition with an overall score of 204.25 points after the finals July 16. Vance, who broke a nearly two-decade old Grand Rapids Union scoring record as a diver during his senior season last winter, has plans to compete for Aquinas College this season.

Yarger, the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 2 diving state champion last fall from the Delton Kellogg/Hastings co-op, also competed in the synchronized 16-18 Girls 1M Finals with teammate Taniya Ott and the duo scored a 15th-place score. The top finish of the meet for Yarger came in the Girls A1 16-year-old 3M Finals where she was ninth. She also competed in the meet's 16-18 Girls Platform event.

It was the first nationals appearance for both Emmick and Ott. Club teammate Dawn Miller placed 33rd in the 16-18 Girls Platform Finals.

In all, there were more than 600 divers competing at the AAU National Championship which ran from July 12-23.

# Caledonia girls runners-up at District 9 tournament

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

The Caledonia Baseball Softball League 10U All-Star purple softball team scored a runner-up finish in the

Little League Softball Michigan District 9 All-Star 8-10 Tournament in July.

The Caledonia girls were a perfect 3-0 in pool play and then won their first three games in the championship bracket. They knocked off the Georgetown Blue team 4-0 in the third round of the championship tournament, but the Georgetown girls won their way out of the to a rematch with the Caledonia girls in the double elimination tournament. In the end the Georgetown girls took back-to-back 3-0 and 9-1 victories over the Caledonia team to win the district title July 12.

The All-Star Caledonia Purple squad at the district tournament included Elliana Boening, Molly Bouma,

Harper Chrisman, Taya Clement, Allison Davis, Elizabeth Dean, Gabrielle Ebels, Kendall Guider, Addilyn Miller, Avery Terry, Braelynn VanDuyn and Emery Vansuilichem.



The CBSL 10U All-Star Softball team celebrates a runner-up finish at the Little League Softball Michigan District 9 Tournament July 12 at the CalPlex. **Photo provided**

The Georgetown girls were about the only ones to put much pressure on the Caledonia team. The Caledonia team had a 1-0 win over the Hudsonville Gold team in pool play, but also had an 18-1 win over Western and a 10-1 win over Rockford to open the tournament.

The run in the championship bracket for the Caledonia Purple team began with a 25-0 win over Byron Orange and then a 10-1 win over Byron Black. They followed those victories up with a 4-1 win over the Georgetown Blue girls.

The team was led by volunteer coaches Travis Miller, Kelli Bouma and Kim Ebels and had sponsorship help from Trane.

**Yankee Springs Township**
284 N. BRIGGS ROAD- MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN 49333
269-795-9091 / FAX 269-795-2388

**YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**
**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing will be held on August 21, 2025, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall, 284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville MI, within the Township, as required under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Zoning Ordinance for the Township.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE In addition to participation during a 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, Joe Shea (joeshea@yankeespringstwp.org). Letters and emails are due one week before the hearing date; or by leaving a phone message prior to the meeting with the Township Zoning Administrator, Joe Shea at 269-795-9091.

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

1. **SEU 25-07-08; Parcel ID: 16-370-018-00, 12747 Whispering Pines Drive #21, Wayland, MI 49348.** A request by Jacqueline Garn, the property owner, for a special exception use permit to operate a commercial Short-term rental pursuant to the Yankee Springs Zoning Ordinance, ***Article X, Short Term Rentals***.
2. **Such other business as may properly come before the Planning Commission.**

Anyone interested in reviewing the application material may do so at the township hall. 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.

Yankee Springs Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (7) 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.

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
By: Shana Bush, Chairperson
Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd.
Middleville, Michigan 49333
(269) 795-9091

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# Third-place finish for CBSL boys at District 9 tourney

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

The Caledonia Baseball Softball League 11U All-Star Baseball team placed third at the Little League Baseball Michigan District 9 Tournament in mid July.

The team's impressive run included an undefeated pool play performance.

The Caledonia squad knocked off Holland Maplewood 8-4, Algoma 29-1 and Sparta 23-3 in its three pool play contests.

The Caledonia guys went 1-1 in their first two contests in the championship bracket. They knocked off Zeeland 7-5 but then fell 6-5 to Rockford in round two.

That loss dropped the Caledonia team to the bottom half of the bracket in the double-elimination tournament where they rattled off wins by the scores of 12-2 over Maplewood and then 7-0 over Zeeland to get into the semifinals.



The CBSL 11U All-Star Baseball team enjoys a moment together in the dust around home plate during its run to a third-place finish at the Little League Baseball Michigan District 9 Tournament. **Photo provided**

There the Caledonia team fell to Rockford 7-4 at Rockford Middle School July 18, the same Rockford team that had handed the team its first loss of the tournament.

Rockford went on to finish second to the Southern Little League squad.

It was a season full of growth, sportsmanship, and grit for the Caledonia guys, according to the CBSL.

The all-star squad was made up of teammates Crew Cavagnaro, Landon Hanson, Jacob Hokewater, Noah Kleinschmit, Bo Schiefen, Jayse Schultetus, Mitchell Thornton, Elijah Utash, Jackson Vanderband, Evan Veitch and Leo Webster.

The team was led by volunteer coaches Kurtis Wells, Brandon Cavagnaro, Jacob Utash and Shawn Veitch.

616-891-0150

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# Palmitier named assistant A.D. at Caledonia High

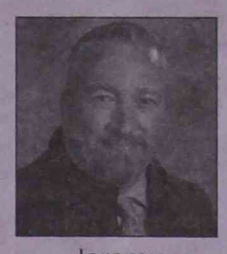
Caledonia Community Schools has announced that Jeremy Palmitier is the new assistant athletic director at Caledonia High School.

Palmitier brings a strong background in education, coaching, and leadership to the role, along with a passion for mentoring students that spans more than 20 years.

He began his career in Arizona, teaching elementary and middle school for five years before returning to Michigan. He taught sixth grade for a year, then moved into administration, serving as a high school assistant principal, athletic director, and executive secretary of the SAC Conference. He also served on the MHSAA Basketball Committee, led alternative education programs, and most recently worked as an elementary principal.

Alongside his 16 years of administrative experience, Palmitier has coached high school football and basketball for more than two decades. He has been part of the Caledonia girls' basketball program for the past two seasons and has spent the last ten years involved in Caledonia youth sports.

"Jeremy is a servant leader who builds relationships, values character, and puts students at the center of everything he does," said Caledonia athletic director Phil Miedema. "He understands that a successful athletic program starts with a positive culture built on behaviors that lead to results. His leadership and integrity will be a huge asset to Caledonia Athletics."



Jeremy Palmitier

Caledonia Community Schools shared that Palmitier's leadership is grounded in humility, teamwork, and high expectations. His values closely align with Caledonia's commitment to developing student-athletes both on and off the field.

Palmitier and his wife, Antonia, have been deeply rooted with Caledonia for many years. Antonia is a first-grade teacher at Caledonia Elementary and is entering her 18th year in the district.

Their son, Lukas, recently graduated from Caledonia High School and has plans to play volleyball at Grand Valley State University. Their daughter, Isabella, is a sophomore involved in basketball, soccer, and student council at CHS. — *BB*

## Freeport Homecoming has all kinds of victors



Samuel Myers of Caledonia with his championship plaque after winning the Turtle Derby at the annual Freeport Homecoming celebration Saturday. Although he had to be talked into participating, he was one of close to 80 youth who took part in the competition. Read more about the annual Freeport festival in this weekend's edition of The Reminder. The day long event included a competitions like a car show, kiddie car show, chicken poop bingo, cornhole, horseshoes, a hay bale toss as well as a fire barn breakfast in the morning, dancing in the street in the evening, and more. **Photo by Brett Bremer**


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