



# THE COUNTY COMMUNICATOR

## MUSKEGON COUNTY ANNUAL EMPLOYEE PICNIC

On Saturday, August 19th at the Muskegon County Fairgrounds hundreds of employees and their family members gathered together for a fun filled day full of sunshine and smiles. The Annual Muskegon County Employees Picnic is a small way of saying thank you to all Muskegon County Staff as well as their family members. This years theme was "For All You Give, For All You Do, For Working Hard, For Being You!" Generous donations from Muskegon County Directors, Administrators, Elected Officials & Community Partners make this event possible. We also couldn't do it without the many volunteers.



## MKG HOSTS INAUGURAL AVIATION CAREER EDUCATION ACADEMY

On September 10th, The Muskegon County Airport hosted their inaugural Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy. ACE is a youth outreach program that offers first-level exposure to the aviation industry by providing aviation career exploration for local high school students. The FAA, the Black United Fund of Michigan, the Tuskegee National Historic Museum, Wayne State University and a long list of other supporters have sponsored a larger ACE program in the Detroit-Metro area for over 25 years.

In early-2023 Kelly Jost, a 1995 graduate of Muskegon High School and current Great Lakes Service Group Manager for C&S Companies, expressed an interest in expanding the program to her Muskegon hometown.

“I had the honor of being a part of the ACE program for the day and spent time with the students as they learned about the various job qualifications and classifications it takes to run an airport plus we all had the opportunity to fly which was an amazing experience,” said Commissioner Darrell Paige, Muskegon County Board of Commissioners. “It was so nice to see the kids light up and have so much fun learning. Being able to host this program right here in Muskegon is priceless. I am so thankful for this experience.”

17 high school students from 9 districts across the county along with their parents or guardians participated. Each student spent the day learning about principles of flight, aviation history, airport management, quality of leadership, and of course career path options in flying. The day culminated in a tour of the air traffic control tower and a Young Eagles flight provided by Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 211.

“The event was a huge success and the weather could not have been more perfect!” exclaimed Ken Efting, Director of Muskegon County Airport.

“Special thanks to Wayne State University, Fulton Leadership Academy in Atlanta, Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum, and Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 211 for this amazing experience.”



## SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Did you know in 2022 alone, 622 counties experienced at least one federally declared major disaster?

September marks National Preparedness Month, the annual recognition to remind everyone how important it is for individuals, families and communities to prepare for disasters and emergencies that can happen at any time.

The Ready Campaign’s 2023 National Preparedness Month theme is “Take Control in 1, 2, 3.” The campaign focuses on preparing older adults for disasters, specifically older adults from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the all-hazard events, which continue to threaten the nation. Older adults can face greater risks when it comes to the multitude of extreme weather events and emergencies we now face, especially if they are living alone, are low-income, have a disability, or live in rural areas.

Visit [ready.gov](https://ready.gov) to review safety tips and get tools to plan for emergencies.

\*Launched in February 2003, Ready ([ready.gov](https://ready.gov)) is a National public service campaign designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies and disasters. The goal of the campaign is to promote preparedness through public involvement.

### DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Plan how you will communicate if you have a communication need.



Plan for your transportation if you need help evacuating.



Plan how you will evacuate with any assistive devices.



Plan for food, water, and essentials for you and pets or service animals.



Include medicines, medical supplies, batteries, and chargers.



Make copies of Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance cards.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

- Contact information for important people and care providers.
- A list of medicines you need, dosage instructions, and any allergies.
- Contact information for your durable medical provider.
- Need-to-know information for first responders and others who might need to help you.



[ready.gov/disability](https://ready.gov/disability)

## MUSKEGON COUNTY HIRES NEW EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES MANAGER

Muskegon County is pleased to announce the recent hiring of Renee Gavin (pictured right) to the position of Emergency Management Services Manager. Renee has a broad spectrum of experience and skills. She has over 25 years of private and public safety experience in a number of disciplines such as Law Enforcement, EMS, Investigations, Public Safety, Public Relations, Marketing, and Retail.

In 2013, Renee finished her Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Grand Valley State University, graduating Cum Laude, but her learning did not stop there. Renee continued her studies in Advertising and Public Relations.



Currently, Renee is a certified Professional Emergency Manager (PEM) through the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, a Licensed Emergency Medical Technician, an American Heart Association Instructor, and a Community Emergency Response Team Instructor through the Emergency Management Institute. From June 2017 to August 2023, Renee served Newaygo County Emergency Services as Deputy Director, Planner and Coordinator of the combined Community Emergency Response Team and Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer. During that time she also served as the primary point of contact for the Newaygo County Hazard Management Plan as well as SARA Title III hazardous materials sites. Databases she worked with include: Volunteer Hub, School Drill Reporting (vetted, recommended, user), Medical Reserve Corps Reporting and National AED Registry.

Renee's experience doesn't stop there, she also managed aspects of response and recovery for two Governor's Disasters Declarations in 2018 and 2019 as well as aspects of response and recovery for a Presidential Disaster Declaration between 2020-2021. She has also completed several trainings such as Individuals Protection Specialists, Executive Protection and Advanced Tactical Driving, just to name a few.

In Renee's free time she enjoys spending time outdoors with activities such as kayaking and Ecotrek Fitness. Her favorite indoor activities include interior design, photography, and refurbishing furniture.

## SPORTSMEN FOR YOUTH – YOUTH DAY 2023

On Saturday, September 9, 2023 the Sportsmen for Youth- Youth Day at the Muskegon County Fairgrounds drew in 1,762 kids and 1,472 adults for the free one-day family friendly outdoor extravaganza. This absolutely free day provided activities, demonstrations, and information from over 60 participating organizations that create a unique educational experience for those in attendance. Prize drawings, lunch and gift bags are also provided for all youth in attendance.

“It was an honor to serve the community at this year’s Sportsman for Youth” said Michelle Hazekamp, Muskegon County Board of Commissioners Commissioner District 3. “Through out the day we served popsicles to thousands of kids! It is always a pleasure to serve our youth with events such as this that are not only fun, but also provide valuable education.”



Sportsmen for Youth, a non-profit corporation with 501(C)3 status, is a group comprised of many sporting organizations who have pooled their resources to design a free one-day family friendly event to introduce our youth to the great joy and appreciation of outdoor sports.



 **Sportsmen for Youth**  
YOUTH DAY MUSKEGON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
9am - 3pm SATURDAY AFTER LABOR DAY

# MUSKEGON COUNTY MICHAEL E. KOBZA HALL OF JUSTICE

## 990 TERRACE STREET MUSKEGON, MI 49442

### RENOVATION UPDATES

#### Curtain Wall Update:

- Glass panels in place on 5 of 11 bays
- Removal of old curtain wall system complete in 9 of 11 bays
- 10 of 11 bays scheduled for glass installation by end of October
- The 11th bay will remain as existing to allow for installation of an exterior hoist system for material handling for the 6th Floor
- Bay will get completed in 2024



#### 4th Floor:

- Courtroom painting and stained wood panel installation in progress



Contractor: Erhardt Construction  
Architect: DLZ

## CATASTROPHIC JET PUMP FAILURE FOR THE PBR66161 HISTORICAL VESSEL TURNS INTO OVERNIGHT RECOVERY ON MUSKEGON LAKE

On Friday, August 25, 2023 at the Operation Black Sheep Reunion a historical vessel PBR66161 had a catastrophic jet pump failure, which resulted in the boat sinking 53 feet into Muskegon Lake. The Marine Services Unit and the US Coast Guard responded to the call around 10:30am. A good Samaritan vessel saved the individuals in the water. The Muskegon County Sheriff Dive Team was activated and worked together with the Marine Services Unit to assist with the recovery of the PBR66161. Despite the depth & challenging conditions, in under 24 hours the historical vessel was back on land!

“The Muskegon County Sheriff Dive Team is dedicated to supporting the community which was evident from this rescue,” said Muskegon County Sheriff Deputy John Yax. “The combined experience from the well trained divers is invaluable especially when it comes to assisting with events like this.”

Thank you to everyone in the Muskegon County community that joined forces to make this recovery possible!



## MUSKEGON COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION RECEIVES STATE-WIDE AWARD

On September 13, 2023 during the County Road Association Self-Insurance Fund's (CRASIF) Annual Membership Meeting in Manistee, the Muskegon County Road Commission (MCRC) was recognized for having one of the lowest employee injury rates among road commissions in the State of Michigan this past year.

"Road Construction and maintenance are dangerous jobs. Every year at least one person is either killed or seriously injured in this industry," says Jim DeSpelder, CRASIF Administrator.

Collectively, Michigan's county road agencies manage 75% of all roads in the state. Michigan has the nation's fourth-largest local road system and are one of only about 20 states that must manage several freeze-thaw cycles per year and months of snow and ice.

"No matter the occupation, safe operations and managing the risks of injury is a never-ending challenge," said Chair Charles Nash, Muskegon County Board of Commissioners. "I am proud of the Muskegon County Road Commission for being recognized for having one of the lowest employee injury rates. This is a significant achievement and they deserve the public acknowledgement they have received for not only the work they do, but ensuring safety when doing so."

Over the past 129 years, the Muskegon County Road Commission has been responsible for the construction and maintenance of major portions of the public highway system in Muskegon County. The system has grown and expanded as a result of public demand and State Legislative actions. Currently, the MCRC maintains 1,101.89 miles of total county roads. In addition to the primary and local roads the MCRC has under its jurisdiction 63 bridges and almost 1,800 culverts. The MCRC under contract with MDOT also maintains 370 lane miles of State Roads.

MCRC takes the safety of its employees and the motoring public very seriously" said Ken Hulka, Muskegon County Road Commission Director. "While our numbers have shown significant improvement we will not be satisfied until our accident rate is zero."

Congratulations Muskegon County Road Commission on your hard work, dedication to our community, and for making safety at work of vital importance!



## MUSKEGON COUNTY DEPARTMENT UPDATES:



### MUSKEGON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

During the month of August, over 400 Veterans and/or their family members received services from our Department to include assistance in the forms of: Soldiers/Sailors Relief, Burial, Service Officers, Food Bank, Housing, and other forms of assistance.

### MUSKEGON COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES



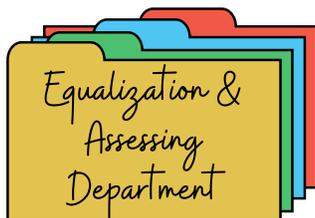
During the month of August, Human Resources' staff screened 617 employment applications, onboarded 11 new hires and separated 20 employees. Additionally, 28 Written Exams and 20 Oral Exams were conducted for City of Muskegon positions.

### MUSKEGON COUNTY FINANCE DEPARTMENT



Angela Gasiewski, Finance Director, proposed to move to adopt the FY2024 County of Muskegon Appropriation Ordinance including the Budget Amendments, position changes, and FY2024 Capital Projects, which collectively represent the implementation of the County of Muskegon's FY2024 Operating Budget to the Board of Commissioners during September 19, 2023 Ways & Means Committee Meeting. Final approval was received during the Tuesday, September 26, 2023 Full Board Meeting.

### MUSKEGON COUNTY EQUALIZATION



August was dedicated to the 2023 Equalization Studies, completion of various reports, training opportunities for staff, and appraisal-related work for a multitude of tax appeals.

### MUSKEGON COUNTY TREASURERS OFFICE

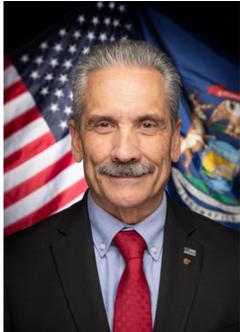


Treasurers Office

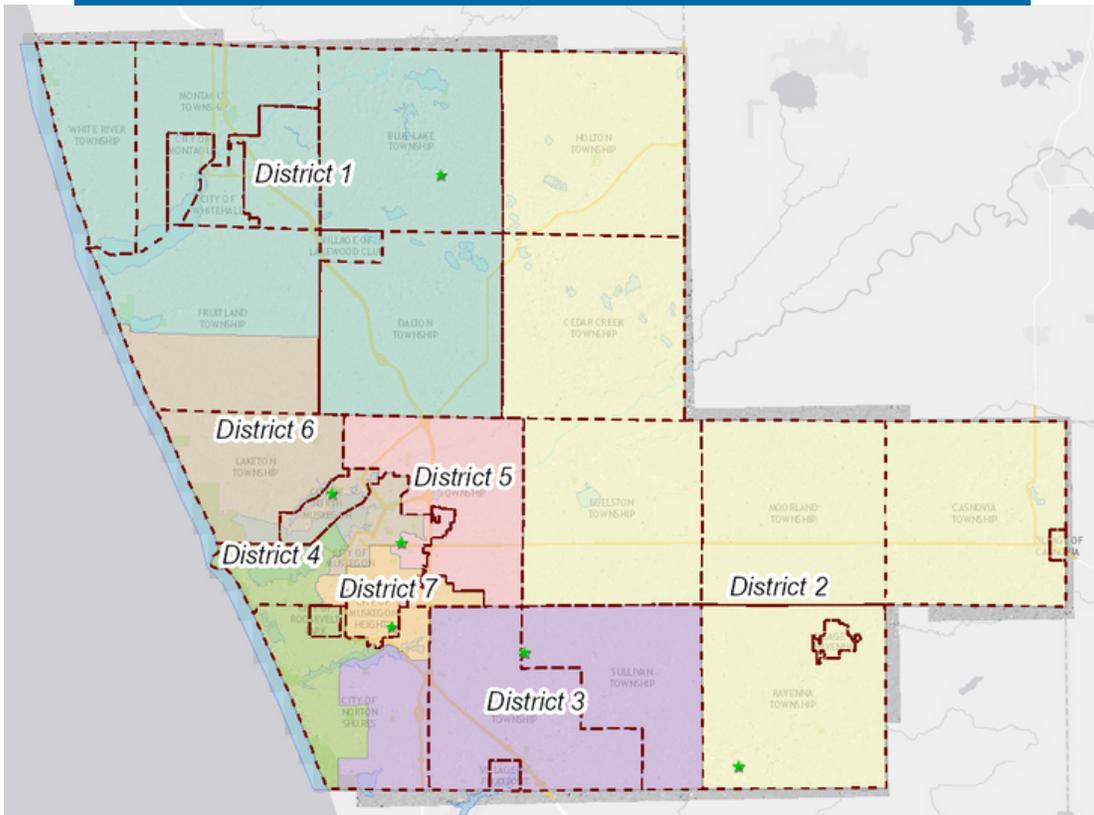
Muskegon County Treasurers Office continues to focus their efforts on keeping residents in their homes. As a result, Muskegon County's property tax foreclosure rate has been at a record low with 2023 being the lowest number of foreclosures in years, 2022 Forfeitures were 2122 and foreclosures 103 (5%); the 2023 Forfeitures were 2057 and foreclosures 81 (4%).

**Muskegon County Board of Commissioners:**

- Chair Charles Nash (D) - District 5
- Vice Chair Marcia Hovey-Wright (D) - District 4
- Kim Cyr (R) - District 1
- Zach Lahring (R) - District 2
- Michelle Hazekamp (R) - District 3
- Jessica Cook (D) - District 6
- Darrell Paige (D) - District 7



**My County Commissioner District - Effective January 2023**



For Agendas, Minutes, Live Meetings and Recordings Please Visit:  
<https://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/129/Agendas-Minutes>

October 2023 & November 2023 Committee Meetings, Board Meetings & Work Sessions

2023 OCTOBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2023 NOVEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2023 Committee & Board Meetings November 2023 Committee & Board Meetings

Thursday, October 5, 2023  
Public Works

Tuesday, October 10, 2023  
Human Services  
Ways & Means

Thursday, October 12, 2023  
Transportation  
Courts & Public Safety (Cancelled)  
Community Development & Strategic Planning

Tuesday, October 17, 2023  
Full Board

Thursday, November 2, 2023  
Public Works

Tuesday, November 7, 2023  
Human Services  
Ways & Means

Thursday, November 9, 2023  
Transportation  
Courts & Public Safety  
Community Development & Strategic Planning

Tuesday, November 14, 2023  
Full Board

October 2023 Work Sessions

Thursday, October 19, 2023  
Parks Commission Bylaws

Tuesday, October 24, 2023  
Countywide ORV Ordinances

November 2023 Work Sessions

No Work Sessions scheduled for  
November 2023 as of 9/25/2023

All Committee Meetings, Board Meetings & Work Sessions will begin at 4:00 pm  
and will be held at the Muskegon County Marquette Campus  
1903 Marquette Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49442

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<https://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/129/Agendas-Minutes>

## COMMUNICATION FROM ADMINISTRATION

Welcome Fall! Just like nature, with the changing of seasons comes new beginnings. Did you enjoy Muskegon County after you came to Visit Muskegon this summer? Have you lived in Muskegon your entire life but haven't explored the idea of Work in Muskegon County? Maybe a new career path is the change you need?

If you answered yes to any of these questions please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/muskegon>

With current openings at HealthWest, Equalization, Muskegon County Sheriff's Office, Public Defenders Office, Muskegon County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Public Works & more your next career opportunity might be a click away.

We would love to have you join our team!



### STAY INFORMATED: FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Muskegon County



@muskegoncountymi

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have information you would like to share with others in Muskegon County, Newsletter Feedback, Ideas?

If so, please email Sara Cooper, Community Relations Coordinator/Executive Assistant Administration, at [coopersa@co.muskegon.mi.us](mailto:coopersa@co.muskegon.mi.us) with the subject line **MCFI News Article**

The information provided will be reviewed. If your submission is chosen you will be contacted via email. Submission Deadline is the 1st of each month.

\*If submission guidelines are not followed your article will not be reviewed.

Visit the Muskegon County Website and Social Media Accounts for the latest updates <https://www.co.muskegon.mi.us>