



THE COUNTY COMMUNICATOR

COMMUNICATION FROM ADMINISTRATION

On Friday, November 10, 2023, most Muskegon County facilities were closed in observance of Veterans Day on Saturday, November 11, 2023. On behalf of the County, I want to express deep gratitude to all Veterans and family members by saying thank you for your service! I encourage each Veteran to contact the Muskegon County Veterans Affairs Department to see if benefits are available to you and your family at 231-724-7143. There are countless resources available to Veterans and their families.

On Thursday November 28, 2023, and Friday November 29, 2023, we also took the time to observe the Thanksgiving holiday. I am thankful for the amazing employees that work in Muskegon County, the countless individuals that live in Muskegon County, and the constantly increasing individuals that visit Muskegon each year. Each and every one of you make this the best place to work, live and visit.

In observance of the holidays, most Muskegon County facilities will be closed. While the majority of County facilities are closed to observe the holiday, some are not able to do so. To those working the holidays, thank you for your service and dedication.

Add a new job on the list of things you are thankful for this year. Muskegon County currently has several opportunities available across various departments. Visit our Career Pages at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/muskegon> to find currently posted job opportunities to learn more about joining our team!



MUSKEGON COUNTY DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs

The mission of the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs is to fulfill President Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" providing accurate, efficient, and timely services to maximize benefits for Muskegon County Veterans and their families. Muskegon County is dedicated to helping Veterans and surviving spouses access the resources they need to thrive, including applying for VA Benefits such as health care, pensions, disability compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation. In addition, we provide Emergent Financial Relief through the State of Michigan and with community partners, distribute food from our pantry, and when drivers are available we offer rides to/from medical appointments and grocery stores.

We are proud to administer a program funded by DTE and Consumers Energy, which has provided new HVAC and Weatherization products to over 10,000 families in the past 11 years. For Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, we refer them to our VOA and VA partners. We also have a team of 20+ Veteran Mentors who provide mentorship to Veterans who participate in our Veterans Treatment Court.

The departments outreach extends beyond Muskegon County to neighboring areas, which includes working closely with Women of WINC to support female Veterans. "With all of us working together, we attend more outreach events each year, which means more Veterans and Surviving Spouses receive the essential services they deserve" said director Mike Baauw, USN Ret, MPA. "We are humbled to be a part of this TEAM and to serve the 11,755 Muskegon County Veterans and their surviving spouses."



*The Veterans Affairs
Department Team Consists of:*

*Dee Hatcher, Amy Hills,
Sonja White, &
Mike Baauw (County Staff)*

*David Moler & Annette Dennis
(VFW and DAV Staff)*

Sarah Osborn (VOA Staff)

20+ Veteran Mentors

MUSKEGON COUNTY CELEBRATES NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

November has been recognized as National Adoption Month since 1995 and statewide since 2002. During this season of thanksgiving, we express our appreciation for the love and support of our families, and want to especially highlight those created through adoption.

Adoption Month ceremonies are held every November. During these ceremonies courts statewide celebrate children becoming permanent members of their new forever families. In Muskegon County Chief Judge Gregory C. Pittman, Chief Circuit Court Judge and Probate Court Judge, presided and joined others across the Nation in the celebration of Adoption Day on Tuesday, November, 21, 2023. This event aims to inspire others to consider foster care and adoption, and to commemorate this long-standing tradition. In Muskegon County, we had 6 children/families that participated in adoption day. The adoptions consisted of: One family adopting 4 children, one child consenting to the adoption due to being over the age of 14, and a child being adopted by their loving grandparents. Adoption day was an amazing day of celebration, smiles, support and love.

Did you know in Michigan, approximately 10,000 children are in foster care, with 250 awaiting adoption? From the municipal level to the State, the goal has always been working hard to keep families together, reunite children with their families safely, and find adoptive homes more quickly when safe reunification is not possible. Thankfully more than 1,600 children are expected to be successfully adopted from Michigan's child welfare system in fiscal year 2023.



MUSKEGON COUNTY MICHAEL E. KOBZA HALL OF JUSTICE

990 TERRACE STREET MUSKEGON, MI 49442

RENOVATION UPDATES

Curtain Wall & Courtroom Renovation Updates:

- New curtain wall glass was completed on the west side of the HOJ in 10 of 11 bays. The north bay will remain as existing until sometime in 2024 as a material handling elevator is installed over this area for 6th floor renovation work. This elevator will allow movement of all demolition debris and new construction materials to be lifted to/from 6th floor without using the HOJ public elevators or stairs.
- Patching, painting and new window sill installation continues on the west side of the HOJ to restore areas disturbed by the curtain wall installation.
- The new HOJ 4th floor courtroom was opened for use the week of 11/6. Staff from HOJ 6th floor were moved down to temporary locations on 3rd and 4th floors the week of 11/13. The Sheriff's office was moved down to 4th floor the week of 11/27.
- Abatement and demolition activities are scheduled to start the week of 12/4 on HOJ 6th floor. All of these activities will occur during the evening and night. Facilities staff were very busy moving items off 6th floor and preparing floor building systems for demolition activities.

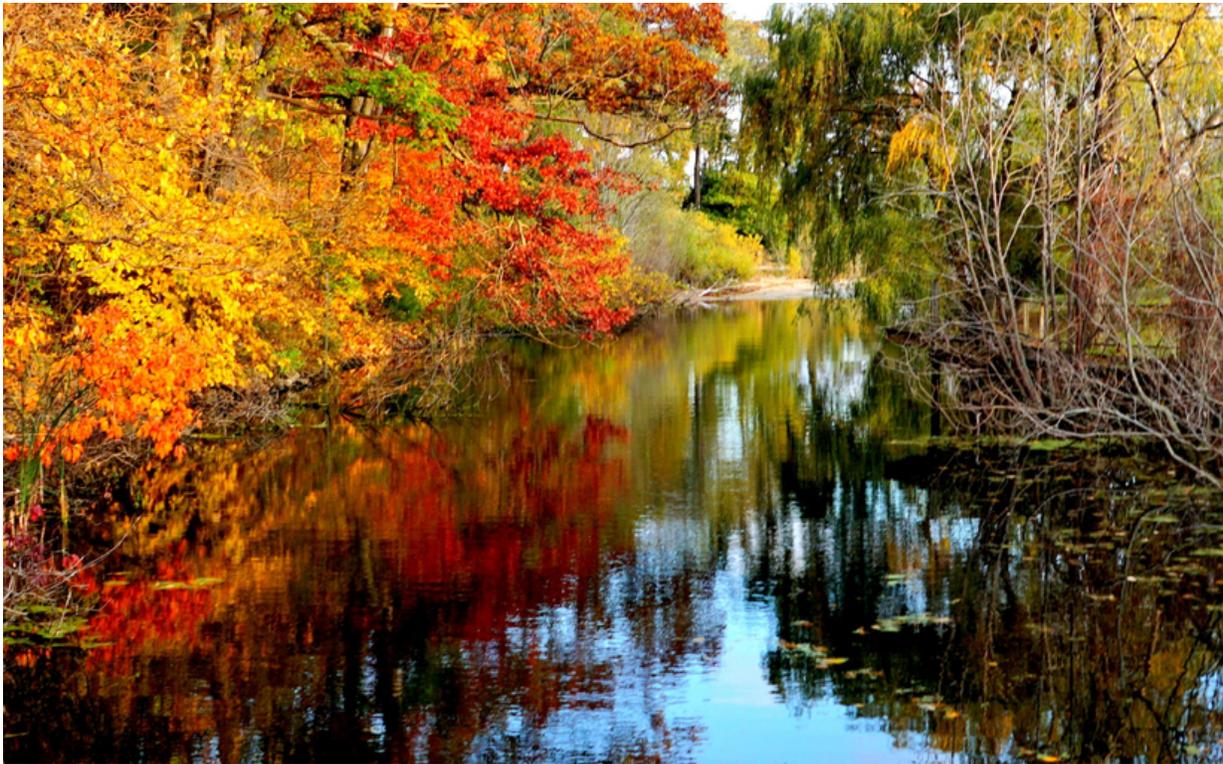


Contractor: Erhardt Construction - Architect: DLZ

19TH ANNUAL DEPOT TO DEPOT PHOTO CONTEST WINNER ANNOUNCED

The Annual Visit Muskegon “Depot to Depot Fall Color Tour” & Photo Contest is a perfect way to discover this beautiful Michigan beach-town during the glow of Autumn. Take your car or bike on this self-guided color tour, stretching from the Muskegon South Pierhead Light to the White River Light Station. Wind your way along Lake Michigan. Travel the historic West Michigan Pike Byway. Soar over a canopy of fall colors on a dual zipline. See the scenic roads of Muskegon County in all their autumn glory. Local shops, restaurants and attractions join in on the fun by offering specials during the entire month-long event! Not only do you get to celebrate the vibrant colors of our woods, dunes, and water, you also can win prizes by entering into the photo contest.

We are thrilled to share the winning photo entry in the 2023 Depot to Depot Self-Guided Fall Color Tour and Contest. The winner received an overnight stay at Shoreline Inn in downtown Muskegon and two round-trip passenger-passes aboard the Lake Express High-Speed Ferry for the 2024 sailing season. And the winner is.....



Autumn Reflected in White Lake – Photograph By Leo Valdez

Make sure to mark your calendar for October 2024 for the Visit Muskegon’s 20th Annual “Depot to Depot Fall Color Tour”. Experience this fun, fall tradition and be sure to snap a photo or selfie at designated locations and your favorite scenic stops. You may be the next “Depot to Depot Fall Color Tour” photo contest winner!

MUSKEGON COUNTY EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION & AWARDS



Congratulations Kathy Moore, Public Health – Muskegon County Health Officer & Public Health Director for being selected as the Community Foundation for Muskegon County 2023 Impact Award Winner.

The Community Foundations 2023 Annual Gathering – Celebrating HOME – occurred November 14, 2023 at the Frauenthal Center in beautiful Downtown Muskegon, MI! This annual Foundation event, in conjunction with Muskegon Area District Library’s NEA Big Read Lakeshore, is a fantastic opportunity to come together and celebrate literacy as well our amazing community that we call HOME. The event featured a presentation from this year’s NEA Big Read Author, Jerry Craft, and announced the 2023 Impact Award recipient Kathy Moore.

The evening was filled with fun, laughter, inspiration while providing an opportunity to connect with fellow community members, local leaders, and learn more about the initiatives that make Muskegon such a great place to live, work, and play.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Michigan Emergency Management Association Annual Conference was held October 9-11, 2023 in Bellaire, MI. During the conference Mr. James C. Norton received the "Emergency Management Professional Volunteer of the Year Award" for his exemplary performance & achievement through dedication & initiatives that has positively impacted the Muskegon County emergency preparedness efforts & capabilities through volunteer service.

James is a reservist Federal Emergency Response Official with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He frequently deploys as a Disaster Emergency Communications instructor, manager, & Mobile Communications Office Vehicle operator to disaster locations around the United States. His former full-time career with the U.S. Department of State included overseas embassy and domestic assignments as an information management & communications officer, project manager, inspector, & instructor. He continues to serve part-time as an inspector in the Office of Inspector General. Prior to entering the Foreign Service, James was a Radioman in the U.S. Coast Guard. Active as a volunteer in the State of Michigan, James is a member of the Region 6 All-Hazards Incident Management Team, Communications Unit Working Group, Local Emergency Planning Team, & as an instructor in multiple disciplines. He also serves in Auxiliary Communications activities supported by Muskegon County Emergency Communications Services. During local incidents & events in Muskegon County, he also assists the Emergency Services Director, deploys the County Mobile Command Vehicle and is a staff officer in the Emergency Operations Center. Relevant current certifications include: Professional Emergency Manager (PEM), Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Instructor, Communications Unit Technician (COMT), Auxiliary Communicator (AUXCOMM) and Instructor, Project Lifesaver Trainer, Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MI-CIMS) Trainer, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Instructor, Disaster Communications, & Amateur Radio Advanced Class – NA8DX.

As you can see James' heart for servicing reaches his local community, our Nation, & everything in between. Thank you James for your service & dedication.



*James C. Duram
Auxiliary Communications Manager*

*James C. Norton
Deputy Auxiliary Communications Manager
EM Professional Volunteer of the Year*

*Renee Gavin
Muskegon County Emergency Services Director*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 30, 2023

CONTACT:
Renee Gavin
Muskegon County
Emergency Services
231-724-6341

Muskegon County Hazard Mitigation Plan Pending Final Approval

MUSKEGON COUNTY, MI – The Muskegon County Hazard Mitigation Plan is a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan developed pursuant to the criteria contained in 44CFR Part 201, as authorized by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. This plan is required in order to maintain eligibility to seek federal funding under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program.

Hazard mitigation is an important part of being a disaster resilient community. Hazard mitigation is any action taken before, during, or after a disaster to permanently eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to human life and property from natural, technological, and man-made hazards. The purpose of mitigation planning is to identify policies and actions that can be implemented over the long term to reduce risk and future losses.

The draft Muskegon County Hazard Mitigation Plan is now ready for review. A draft Community Profile has been developed and posted on November 30, 2023 for public review. If you have any questions or comments in relation to the Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan, please contact the Muskegon County Emergency Services Director Renee Gavin via email at GavinRe@co.muskegon.mi.us or directly at 231-724-6284.

To view the 2023 plan, visit: <https://co.muskegon.mi.us/1838/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-2023-For-Public-R>

“Through the efforts of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee that included collaboration with local municipalities as well as public input, we developed the Muskegon County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan,” said Renee Gavin, Muskegon County Emergency Manager. “It is a tool to help jurisdictions identify the risk they face and develop strategies to reduce these risks. It also meets the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA200) which qualifies participating jurisdictions to be eligible to receive pre-disaster mitigation funds that may be made available in the wake of federally-declared disasters.”

The draft Muskegon County Hazard Mitigation Plan is submitted to the State of Michigan then FEMA for final approval. Once the plan is finalized, the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners will move to adopt the approved plan through a Resolution. Municipalities will then be presented with a Resolution to adopt the approved plan as well. Adopting the plan makes the municipalities eligible to apply for funding. Any municipality that chooses not to adopt the plan will not be eligible to apply for grants under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program.

State Hazard Mitigation Plans are updated every five years. This current plan will be due for an update in 2028.

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Emergency Services | 1903 Marquette Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49442 | Ph 231.724.6341



47884 'D' Street Belleville, MI 48111
(734) 483 —4030 • www.YankeeAirMuseum.org • FEIN 38-2387453

Contact: Ashley Myers, Wings Over Muskegon Director, Ashley.Myers@yankeeairmuseum.org, 734-274-9703
Ken Efting, Muskegon County Airport Director - F3 Airport kefting@f3airport.com, 231-798-4596

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wings Over Muskegon to Return in 2024

Dates set for August 9-11



BELLEVILLE, MICH. (October 24, 2023) – Following a successful 2023 inaugural show, Wings Over Muskegon organizers are excited to announce there will be an air show in 2024 on August 9-11. With the continued support of F3 Airport, the County of Muskegon and the City of Norton Shores, Yankee Air Museum, a non-profit organization, will again produce the event. Event Director, Ashley Myers, said, “We were thrilled with the overwhelming engagement of the community in terms of spectators, sponsors, volunteers and vendors. It is clear that West Michigan embraces an air show.”

The 2024 Air Show will include a Friday Twilight show that incorporates live music along with a preview of the weekend's aerial entertainment, including acts that are designed for evening with lights and pyrotechnics. Both civilian and military aircraft will be featured in the air as well as on the ground for static display. Historic aircraft from the Yankee Air Museum will also continue its ride program beginning Friday, August 9^h throughout the weekend.

A variety of seating options will be available beginning December 12th and can be purchased through the show's website at <https://wingsovermuskegon.com/tickets/>. Wings Over Muskegon uses dynamic pricing which means the lowest prices for general admission and parking start on December 12th and will incrementally increase once certain thresholds are reached. Organizers are able to keep prices at the 2023 levels and have added a number of ticket options for the Friday Twilight Show. Along with ticket packages, the website will also include an initial performer lineup along with information on how to volunteer and/or participate in the show as a vendor or a sponsor.

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About Yankee Air Museum: Established in 1981 the Yankee Air Museum is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. The Yankee Air Museum dedicates itself to educating individuals through the history of American aeronautics, aerospace industry and its associated technologies while inspiring generations through personal experiences to instill pride in our national accomplishments. Yankee Air Museum, located at 47884 D Street, Belleville, Michigan on the grounds of historic Willow Run Airport. Visit www.yankeeairmuseum.org to discover more or call 734-483-4030.

MUSKEGON COUNTY DEPARTMENT UPDATES:



MUSKEGON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

During the month of October, over 400 Veterans and/or their family members received services 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 October, Human Resources' staff screened 890 employment applications, onboarded 23 new hires and separated 12 employees. Additionally, 34 Written Exams and 10 Oral Exams were conducted for City of Muskegon positions.

MUSKEGON COUNTY EQUALIZATION

October was dedicated to preparation of the 2023 Apportionment Report, compiling data and performing appraisals for the 2024 Equalization studies, and appraisal-related work for a multitude of tax appeals.

Equalization appraisal studies are almost complete with focus on agricultural, industrial, and commercial classes of properties. Staff is focused on processing transfer documents in order to provide the local Treasurer's Offices with the latest information for the winter tax bills. The updated residential studies have been sent out. The Apportionment Report was approved by the Full Board on October 17, 2023. Also completed in October were the Tax Abatement Report and the IFT Report.



MUSKEGON COUNTY 14TH CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURT

The Honorable Kenneth S. Hoopes has been selected by the Michigan Supreme Court to be the 14th Circuit and Probate Court's new Chief Judge beginning on January 1, 2024!



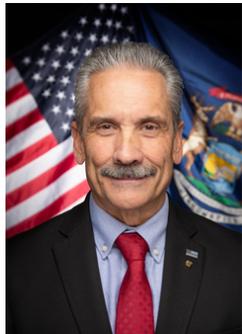
MUSKEGON COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

The Muskegon County Clerk's Office and Circuit Court Records Office are working with Tyler Technologies Inc. on continuing and expanding online solutions for vital records issuance, storage & processing. Both offices will be closed on Friday, December 8, 2023 for these system updates.

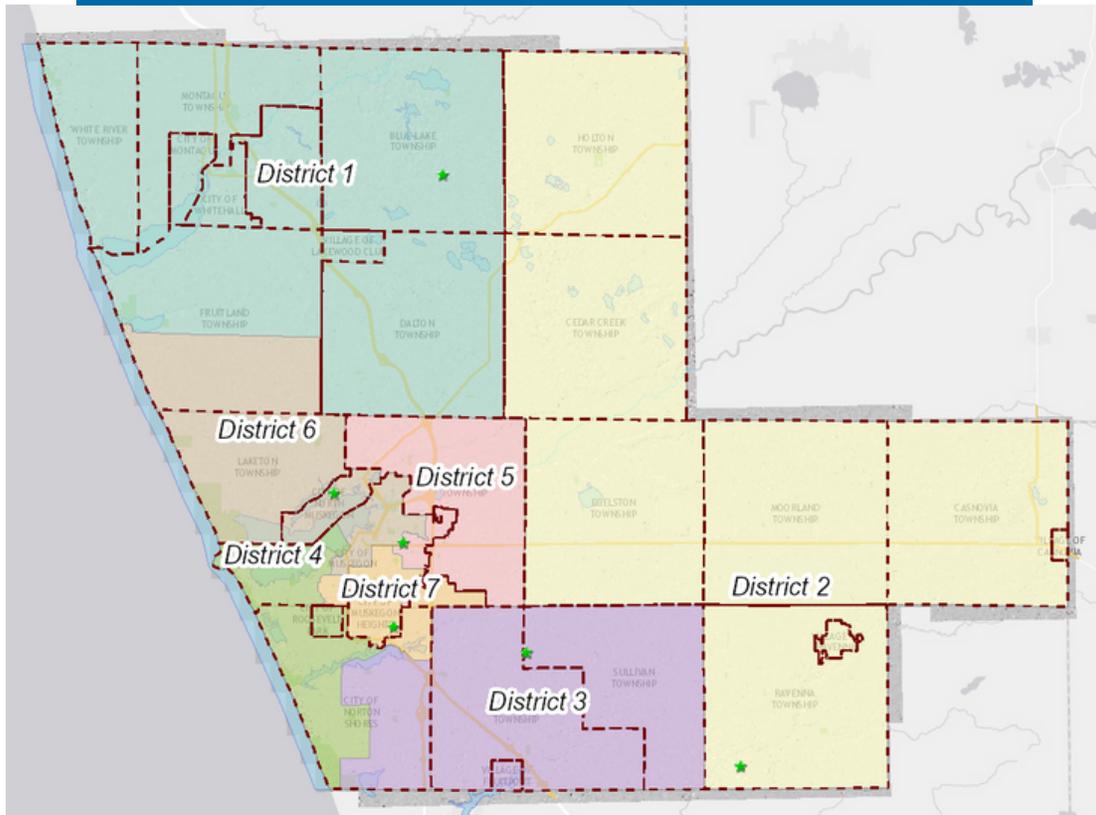


Muskegon County Board of Commissioners:

- 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>

**December 2023 Committee Meetings, Board Meetings & Work Sessions
January 2024 Muskegon County Board of Commissioners Organizational Meeting**



December 2023 Committee & Board Meetings

Thursday, December 7, 2023
Public Works

Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Human Services
Ways & Means

Thursday, December 14, 2023
Transportation
Courts & Public Safety
Community Development & Strategic Planning

Tuesday, December 19, 2023
Full Board

December 2023 Work Sessions

No Work Sessions scheduled for
December 2023 as of 11/29/2023

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

During the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners Organizational Meeting the dates, times and location for all regular committee and board meetings will be determined for the entire 2024 calendar year. If there is a change in the schedule of regular meetings, there shall be posted within 3 days after the meeting at which the changes is made, a public notice stating the new dates, times, and places of its regular meetings.

To obtain a copy of the Rules of the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners please visit:
<https://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/1711/Board-of-Commissioners>

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

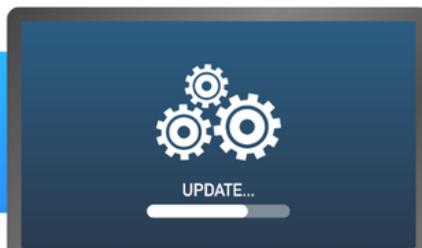
ATTENTION PLEASE



**The Muskegon County Clerk's Office &
Circuit Court Records Office
will be closed
Friday, December 8, 2023 from
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
for system upgrading**

**The offices will reopen on
Monday, December 11, 2023 at 8:00 AM**

We apologize for the inconvenience



NEW UPDATE...

STAY INFORMED: 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 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>