

CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter From Cascade Charter Township

Fall 2023



Finishing touches at the new fire station

+ Cleanup Day/Yard Waste + Heritage Festival + Pathways

From the SUPERVISOR

Grace Lesperance



As we come to the end of another beautiful Michigan summer, we are fortunate that Cascade provides a front-row seat to the changing seasons.

It was this natural beauty that moved early settlers to declare: “Cascade is to be a place of trees and falling waters.” Although Cascade looks quite different today, maintaining our community’s natural beauty and character are a top priority.

To that end, I would like to share recent happenings – all of which further **our goals of enhancing our residents’ quality of life and ensuring Cascade remains “a place of trees and falling waters”**:

Conserving green spaces and natural areas

- Since joining the township this spring, Cascade’s first Parks & Recreation Director, Melanie Manion, has been working tirelessly with the Building & Grounds team to spruce up our parks and recreational facilities. Her appointment highlights the **township’s new and vigorous commitment to protect and enhance our parks and natural spaces. Read more about improvements on page 5.**

Enhancing recreation infrastructure

- Cascade was recently awarded **\$3.5 million in state funds for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the I-96 expressway on Burton Road.** This bridge will safely connect Cascade to Grand Rapids’ regional network of bicycle and pedestrian paths.

- Approximately five miles of pathway along Cascade Road and Buttrick Avenue were repaved over the summer using existing pathway funds. Much of it was original and nearly 30 years old.

- The Township is working with the Kent County Road Commission and MDOT to complete construction plans on a pedestrian walkway on the Cascade Road bridge over the Thornapple River.

- Additional “village” improvements around Cascade Road and 28th St are in the planning stages. This project will be a partnership with local business owners, with the public portion funded by Cascade’s Downtown Development Authority. Read more details on pages 5 and 6.

Creating a gathering place

Thanks to the generous support of Friends of the Cascade Library and the Downtown Development Authority, the outdoor area surrounding the library will soon become a charming community gathering place for all ages. With construction scheduled for later this year, improvements include outdoor gardens with native landscaping, walking paths with benches, a pavilion, and a fountain.

Cost-effective public transportation solutions

On Aug. 28, the Township initiated a new transportation option for residents and workers through a public-private partnership with Hope Network. Unlike the Rapid’s fixed-route system, Hope Network’s cost-effective route and flexible schedule is

customized for workers and businesses who need transportation that goes right to their workplace or destination.

This decision came after the Cascade Township Transportation Committee and Downtown Development Authority spent months analyzing whether the Rapid’s service was effectively serving the needs of residents and local businesses. For more information, read our most recent press release at bit.ly/Cascadebusupdate

Providing for public safety

Construction of the Fire Station No.1 - **Cascade’s largest capital improvement project to date – remains on time and within budget** to be completed early next month. The new \$10.9 million station – long identified by residents as a top priority- was built to meet the community’s needs for the next 75 years. Read more on page 4.



Cascade Township Fire Chief Adam Magers answers questions from Township Trustee John Shipley during a tour of the construction site in June 2023.

PFAS remediation continues

Again – thank you again to the residents impacted by PFAS and remediation efforts **for their patience and participation** as this challenging and disruptive issue is addressed. This has been a difficult, extended and often frustrating process involving complex legal issues, multiple funding sources and coordination with State of Michigan EGLE, City of Grand Rapids, Kent County and Ford International Airport. Extension of municipal water to the 400-plus properties impacted by PFAS continues. Residents near the Burger/Goodwood intersection can still expect to be connected to municipal water this fall. The remaining homes should be connected in 2024. This project is funded entirely by state, federal and airport sources.

Heritage Festival is Sept. 16

Finally, we hope you join us as we gather as a community to celebrate our family-friendly third annual Heritage Day on Saturday, Sept.16. Thank you to longtime resident and FHC teacher Brad Anderson for sharing his energy, creativity, and time with us to create this special event. Find all the details on page 3.

It is an honor and a pleasure to serve you, and we love hearing from you. Please allow this note to serve as a personal invitation to attend our Board of Trustee meetings. Remember – in addition to regular business hours, I have “after hours” on the **first Thursday of each month from 6-7 p.m.** at the Cascade library. I look forward to hearing from you!

— Grace Lesperance, Supervisor

Cascade welcomes new township manager

Jade Smith, Cascade's new township manager, officially begins Sept. 11. Smith comes to Cascade with an extensive background in municipal administration—



Smith

most recently serving as director of municipal services for Canton Township. He previously served as city administrator for the City of Milan and deputy mayor/chief of staff for the City of Westland. Mr. Smith also has experience in private sector finance.

This news comes after former Manager Ben Swayze resigned in May, and after the Board of Trustees formed a Manager Search Sub-Committee to coordinate the recruitment and selection process. After receiving 32 applicants and publicly interviewing three finalists, the Board unanimously offered the position of Township Manager (Chief

Administrative Officer) to Smith. "Manager Smith's proactive and resident focused leadership style will serve Cascade well," Township Supervisor Lesperance stated.

Smith and his wife, Debra, have two daughters and two Labrador Retrievers. He has always enjoyed water and the outdoors and the entire family enjoys traveling and making memories together wherever they are. He and his wife enjoy the arts, specifically dance, and are self proclaimed foodies, loving to always try something new. This is good news for all of the unique Cascade dining establishments!

"My family and I are thrilled at this opportunity. Cascade is a naturally beautiful area with a unique character. I look forward to working with the Board and staff to further the goals of residents and enhance the community," Smith noted.

A special thanks to Interim Manager Ted Andrzejewski

The Board of Trustees and staff would like to express their sincere appreciation to Interim Manager Ted Andrzejewski for his outstanding service to Cascade over the past few months.

Andrzejewski came to Cascade from Ohio after 30 years of management experience in both the public and private sectors in Michigan and Ohio. His enthusiastic and collegial leadership was appreciated by everyone.



Andrzejewski

Andrzejewski will be staying on staff for a couple weeks to aid new manager Jade Smith in the transition.

Although he will be missed by everyone in the office, we know that his golfing buddies will be happy to have him back. Thank you Ted. We will miss you.

Cascade was recently notified Forest Hills Public Schools is seeking voter approval for a bond issue and millage proposal. Additionally, the Kent District Library system is requesting approval for millage renewal. In other words, Cascade will be holding an election on Nov. 7, 2023.

Proposal 22-2, passed in the November 2022 General Election, brings changes to Michigan elections. These changes will take effect starting in 2024. Here are some items of note:

Permanent Absentee Voter Ballot Applications

Before Proposal 22-2, Michigan voters were required to complete an Absentee Voter Application each voting cycle. This allowed municipal clerks to send a ballot application to the voter for upcoming elections. Once received and verified, a ballot would be sent to the voter.

Now with Proposal 22-2, any Michigan voter has the right to request an absentee ballot be sent to them for all future elections. Once verified, voters who request this will receive a ballot in the mail each election cycle without

From the CLERK



Sue Slater

needing to complete a new application. Voters may register for the permanent absentee voter ballot as soon as this next election.

Prepaid Postage for election mail

All absentee voter ballots and absentee voter ballot applications will have return postage. You will not need to include postage when you mail applications and ballots to the Township.

New drop box location

Beginning in 2024, Cascade Township will have a second ballot drop box installed in the KDL— Cascade Library Branch's Wisner Center parking lot for voter convenience. This is in addition to a ballot drop box at the Cascade Township office, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE. Voters may place their Absentee Voter applications and completed ballots in these blue boxes during all elections. Both ballot drop boxes are monitored

by video surveillance and checked daily during office hours by Clerk's Department staff.

Early In-Person Voting

All Michigan voters now have the right to vote early in person. Early voting will be offered for nine consecutive days beginning the second Saturday before an election and end the Sunday immediately before an election. Early in-person voting will operate exactly like a normal Election Day, with one key difference: instead of voting at a precinct, early voters will need to vote and cast their ballots at the Cascade Township Office. Precinct staff and a tabulator will be on-site for early in-person voting.

No election results will be generated or released until after polls are closed on Election Day. Voters may also choose to receive an Absentee Voter Ballot at the Clerk's office at any time during Early In-Person voting, but it will not be tabulated until Election Day with the other Absentee Voter Ballots.

Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk's office at 616-949-1508 or email sslater@cascadetwp.com.

Celebrate local history at Heritage Festival

Celebrate the unique character and history of this area from 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16 at the Cascade Heritage Festival.

Now in its third year, this free, all-ages community event will again be outside on the grounds of Cascade Christian Church, 2829 Thornapple River Drive SE.

The event will include a beer tent, food trucks, cornhole tournament and live music from Greg Hudkins.

Additionally, the Cascade Museum will be open 5-7 p.m. for attendees to learn Cascade's rich history.

There will be a variety of unique meals from three local food trucks, including Pancho's Tacos, Pronto Pups and Full Belly Food Truck, and treats from Cascade's own Frosty Boy ice cream shop.

Attendees can also cool off with beer, cider and soft drinks at the beer tent.



JOIN US!
SEPTEMBER 16, 2023
5-9PM AT CASCADE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
2829 THORNAPPLE DR. SE

 **BEER TENT**
 **FOOD TRUCKS**
 **CORNHOLE**

CASCADE MUSEUM OPEN TO PUBLIC 5-7PM


Cornhole Tournament

The cost to enter this year's cornhole tournament is \$65 per team and includes two Heritage tokens per player. Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the Forest Hills Central Youth Wrestling Club.



The prizes are \$250 for first place and \$100 for second place.

For more details and a link to register for the tournament, go to CascadeTwp.com and select 'Community' from the top blue bar. From there, select 'Community Events', or visit bit.ly/HeritageFest23


TICKETS ON SALE



BENEFITTING CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CCF.events




CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

COME ON DOWN

2023 CCF'S TRIBUTES & TRIUMPHS AWARDS

CCF's Tributes & Triumphs Awards
 Saturday, October 14 at the *MSA* Fieldhouse

to increase community philanthropy and financial resources provided to area nonprofits thru the Cascade Community Foundation

Live games & fabulous prizes | Get Tix Today | CCF.events



Cascade Cleanup Day is Oct. 21

The biannual Cascade Cleanup Day returns **Saturday, Oct. 21.**

From 8 a.m.-noon, Cascade Township residents are invited to drop off nonhazardous household waste at Ada Bible Church, 8899 Cascade Road SE. Gates will close at noon, so get there early.

Please note

- This event is for nonhazardous household waste only, such as appliances, scrap metal, electronics for recycling and paper for shredding.
- No yard waste will be accepted. You will need to use the yard waste dumpsters, leaf bag pickup program or other services for yard waste such as leaves, branches and brush.
- No hazardous materials will be accepted. Paint cans that are opened and dried are allowed. Please see earlier in this article for information on hazardous waste disposal resources.

• Residents should enter the Ada Bible Church parking lot off Cascade Road and exit on Quiggle Road. Please follow the signage on site.

• Identification is required to verify your residency within Cascade Township.

Services on site

- Arrowwaste Services will be on-site for general trash and junk, large and small appliances and scrap metal. No yard waste or hazardous waste will be accepted.
- Valley City Electronic Recycling will be on-site for computers, televisions, small appliances, cell phones, household batteries and other electronics.

All services are subject to availability, so check the Township's website – cascadetwp.com – as the date gets closer to ensure the service you want to utilize is available.

For questions, call the Township Hall at **616.949.1500.**

Fall 2023 yard waste disposal service info

The Township again this year will offer bagged yard waste pickup in the restricted burn area – generally the area west of Buttrick and north of I-96. Pickup will be every **Monday from Oct. 16-Monday, Nov. 27.**

Tags are available at the reception desk **8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays** at Cascade Township Hall, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE. Residents are limited to 20 tags.

Please note

- Place your yard waste near the curb by midnight each Sunday.
- Place an orange tag on each bag of leaves or bundle of branches. Only paper bags with orange tags will be picked up. No grass clippings, dirt, sod, cement, sand or rocks. Bags can weigh no more than 30 pounds.
- If you have orange tags from last year you plan to use, call 616.949.1500 to add your address to the fall 2023 list.
- Sticks should be no longer than 4 feet in length, and branches, logs and stumps are not to exceed 1 inch in diameter.
- This service is only available in the restricted burn area. To review the restricted burn area map, visit cascadetwp.com

and click on “Maps” under “Reference Desk.”

Yard Waste Dumpsters

The Township will again provide dumpsters for yard waste disposal from **Monday, Oct. 16-Thursday, Nov. 30.** The dumpsters will be located behind the Fire Station 2 building, 2990 Buttrick Ave. SE. Please note: The dumpsters are top load and yard waste needs to be carried up a small set of stairs to be dumped. Employees are not available to help dump yard waste.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

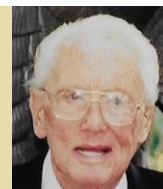
Due to the expansion of hours of operation at its SafeChem drop-off locations, the Kent County Department of Public Works is no longer hosting on-site community hazardous waste disposal programs. Instead, Kent County offers five disposal sites with varied hours and days operation around the County.

The nearest dropoff location to Cascade Township is in Kentwood at 5068 Breton SE. This location is open **Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

For additional locations, hours of operation, and more, please visit reimaginetrash.org/safehomes/safechem.

"I hope this becomes a place where people celebrate their families. I encourage parents and grandparents from all over the area to bring children here to fish the river, to play in the fountains, to picnic and just spend time enjoying each other."

— Leslie E. Tassell, speaking at the Tassell Park dedication, Oct. 4, 2001



Honoring the generosity of Leslie Tassell

These inspiring words still hold true 20-plus years after Leslie Tassell made them during the formal dedication of Tassell Park.

After my own children joyfully played in the whimsical water feature, my children reported that Tassell Park is the "best park ever!"

Tassell and other community leaders, including – but not limited to – the Wisner and Kingsland families gifted Cascadians a place to build memories with our families and friends for generations to come.

Unfortunately, the park needs attention. Though the park began as a shining beacon of the community, lack of maintenance has resulted in an aged and unkempt appearance.

For this reason, our Buildings and Grounds Crew have been



Director's Corner

Melanie Manion

working diligently to return Tassell Park to its former glory.

I am grateful that Cascade Township recognized the importance of having a Parks and Recreation Director to focus on the needs of these public spaces. After working over a decade within parks, I've learned that after the initial excitement of building a new park or pathway fades, the really hard work begins.

Maintenance work may be tedious but it's essential. I promise that from this point on, Cascade Township will strive to be good stewards of our community-owned properties.

There is still work to be done at Tassell, including updating the bathrooms and replacing numerous landscape plants, but the township hopes residents take a step outdoors to take in the improvements.

Township launches new parks volunteer program

Cascade Township is launching a new volunteer program to help with maintenance of its parks.

In addition to the group workdays hosted by Kent Conservation District, we will now be offering workdays throughout the year for groups and individuals. This will help the Township build capacity to:

- Remove invasive species threatening wildlife habitat.
- Improve maintenance of our flower beds and structures.
- Restore habitats with native species.

What to expect at a workday?

- Families, individuals and students are all welcome!
- Volunteers will learn how invasive species alter ecosystems in complex ways and how the public can assist with habitat restoration. There will be a hands-on demonstration on how to manage invasive species.
- All supplies, including gloves, tools, water and a snack will be provided.
- Please dress for the weather. Long-sleeved shirts, long pants and close-toed shoes are recommended.

To sign up for this workday, or for more information, please contact Melanie Manion at mmanion@cascaдетwp.com or call 616.949.0318

Upcoming volunteer workdays

Tassell Park Planting Workday

Saturday, Sept. 23, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Leslie E. Tassell Park, 2900 Thornapple River Dr. SE
Come help beautify Tassell Park by planting native species in the gardens.

Wycliffe Trail Marking

Saturday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Wycliffe Trailhead Park, 2965 Wycliffe Drive SE (Unity Spiritual Community Church parking lot)

This workday will focus on creating a new trail at Wycliffe Park.

Invasive Bittersweet Removal

Saturday, Oct. 28, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Cascade library grounds, 2870 Jacksmith Ave SE
Help the township remove invasive Asian bittersweet vine at the site of what will be a new park adjacent to the library.

Pathway improvements a priority

State funds secured for bridge over I-96; 5 miles of pathway repaired

Cascade Township is proud of its 17 miles of pathways. Maintained year-round, these non-motorized recreational routes provide a network to connect the community and are a resource for healthy lifestyles. At almost 30 years old, these trails are in need of maintenance.

For this reason, one of the first tasks of Township Engineer Aric Thorne in late 2022 was to evaluate the trails and develop a five-year maintenance plan with the input of a newly created Pathways Committee.

The Brenner team worked quickly, resulting in the restoration work happening this year: approximately five miles of pathway along Cascade Road and Buttrick Avenue were repaved over the summer using existing pathway funds.

An overview of this year's work can be found on our website under "Latest News."

\$3.5M secured for pedestrian bridge over I-96, connecting Cascade with Greater GR region. Cascade will soon be better connected to Grand Rapids' regional network of bicycle and pedestrian paths thanks to state funds secured with help from State Rep. Phil Skaggs. The \$3.5 million will be used to build a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over I-96 just south of Burton Street, connecting the Cascade and Kentwood pathway system.

"I am delighted that Rep. Phil Skaggs has secured state funding for this bridge project," said Grace Lesperance, Cascade Charter Township Supervisor. "We anticipate that this funding will finance the entire project. This bridge has been a longtime goal, and we appreciate his efforts on our behalf."

Although a construction date has not been set, we will continue to share updates on this exciting project.



Cascade Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance stands with State Rep. Phil Skaggs on Burton Street at the approximate location of the planned pedestrian and bicycle bridge over I-96. A construction date has not yet been set. Below: The site of the township's newest recreational property, Wycliffe Trailhead Park.



Walkway planned for Cascade Road bridge over Thornapple

Township engineers are working with the Kent County Road Commission and MDOT to complete construction plans on

a pedestrian walkway on the Cascade Road bridge over the Thornapple River.

Construction will begin in 2024. Enhancements will include a physical barrier to separate the pedestrian lane from traffic, a higher outer railing, and year-round lighting.

This long overdue project is an important step towards creating a more walkable "village" area. It is funded with state ARPA and Township DDA funds.

Wycliffe Trailhead Park property

Plans are solidifying for the township's newest recreational property, Wycliffe Trailhead Park. Just as the name suggests, Wycliffe will serve as a trailhead for existing pathways that run adjacent to the park and will feature additional amenities, including a nature playground and an outhouse for park and trail users.

Safety at the site is also being taken into account – there are plans to construct a fence to help prevent children from entering Cascade Road. The public can access the park from Unity Spiritual Community Church parking lot on Wycliffe Drive.

Finishing touches

New Cascade Fire Station No. 1 building nearly complete

Just a year after breaking ground, Grand Rapids-based general contractor Triangle Associates reports that the brand-new Cascade Fire Station No. 1 is on schedule to be completed – within budget – in September.

The exterior masonry facade was done at the end of August. Interior drywall installation, plumbing and piping were all complete by mid-August. Crews were preparing to move on to interior details, such as flooring, wall protection, paint, and fixtures.

The new fire station – which is being built on the same site as the old station – is designed to last 75 years. Designed to meld classic style with modern needs, what makes this new structure stand out is the tower and four bi-fold doors.

"The tower is a combination training and hose tower," said Cascade Fire Chief Adam Magers. "It serves a dual purpose - besides allowing our crew to properly dry hoses, it provides unique training capabilities for the department."

This means Cascade's firefighters can conduct high-rise

firefighting, four-story ladder training, rescue training, repelling, and more.

The bi-fold fire engine red bay doors are more than just aesthetically pleasing. According to Magers, they have a longer lifespan and require less maintenance, offer multiple layers of safety protection, and open quicker for faster response.

The fire department is on schedule to move in at the beginning of October. Nearly triple the square footage, this \$10.9 million structure will not require any additional millage or tax burden to residents. It is being paid for with monies set aside by the township for the past 15 years; bonds fully paid for with recent increases of State revenue sharing; and 2021 ARPA (Covid-related) funds.

"The township thanks Chief Majors and his crew for continually looking for ways to cut costs without compromising quality throughout the process," said Supervisor Grace Lesperance. "I also want to thank Trustee Timmy Noordhoek who worked to make the bidding and construction process transparent, ensuring there were no surprises or cost overruns."



Keeping tabs on TICKS

Parks & Recreation partners with Calvin University to study ticks at Burton Park

By Rich C. Lakeberg
Cascade Township Communications Specialist

Burton Park, with its wooded ravines and meadows, is a popular hiking spot. And, like at most West Michigan parks, visitors have reported ticks. With that in mind, Cascade Township Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion saw an opportunity: right in Cascade's backyard, Calvin University has been studying ticks in West Michigan parks. "With my previous work in other park systems, I was already aware of Calvin's efforts," said Manion. "So, to better understand ticks in our own parks and protect the public, I invited them to study Burton Park."

It's well-documented that over the past few decades, ticks have been moving north. "Western Michigan represents an area where ticks have been expanding. It's an ecological and public health concern," said Will Miller, Calvin University wildlife biology professor and disease ecologist who organizes the study.

Researching ticks is important because ticks can carry disease. The most well-known of these, Lyme disease, accounts for 82% of tick-borne illnesses in the U.S., according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

On a cool morning in late June, Manion met up with Miller and two students at Burton Park. The trio were kicking off one of their first tick surveys for the summer along the park's north woodland trail.

"We chose this trail – largely because we know ticks are here already. We've heard it from our local partners as well as the community, and we found them in the leaf litter," said Miller. Running his hands through the leaves, he continued: "All this ... provides a nice, humid kind of refugia for the teenage stage of the tick. We call them nymphs."

Drag sampling and mouse hotels
This survey is different from previous years. The goal is to compare two tick



Calvin University Wildlife biology professor and disease ecologist Will Miller works with two student assistants to collect a black-legged tick nymph they discovered during drag sampling in Burton Park.

Protect yourself from ticks

Fall doesn't mean the end of tick season. According to the Global Lyme Alliance, ticks remain active as long as the temperatures are above freezing. Ticks typically can be found in any wooded or grassy areas, especially along the edges of trails, roads and backyards. Follow these tips to help prevent tick-borne diseases:



- Wear light-colored clothing that covers arms, legs and feet
- Apply insect/tick repellent containing DEET. Follow the product label directions.
- Walk in the center of trails
- Check yourself, your children and your pets thoroughly for ticks.

For more information, including symptoms of tick-borne diseases and how to remove ticks, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/tickbornediseases

surveying methods: drag sampling and capturing ticks via small mammal nesting boxes.

The 'tried and true' approach is drag sampling. Using a large sheet attached to a wood poll, the sheet is dragged along trail edges. Every 20 paces, the sheet is examined for ticks. If found, they are collected with tweezers and dropped in a preservative for later study.

"(Drag sampling) is a very common approach that's used by many public health groups for tick surveillance, including the CDC. It's commonly used because we can actually get an estimate of density, since we know how far we're pulling this (sheet)," said Miller.

A new, more passive technique to survey ticks uses small mammal nesting boxes. Scientists consider rodents 'reservoirs' for Lyme disease. "We're working with Michigan State and the University of Wisconsin to test (this method) and hopefully share this data."

Earlier in the spring, Miller and his team set up nesting boxes made from PVC pipe. The floor of the box is a grate that leads to a collection tube filled with a preservative. The idea is ticks will fall off the host, through the grate and into the solution.

"We're making the mice our collectors," said Miller "It's a nice little mouse hotel."

see TICKS, page 14

A hot night for hockey

Cascade Firefighters Association game raises funds for Riding for Ryan, Brody's be Cafe

On a hot Saturday afternoon, hundreds of area residents and hockey lovers gathered at Patterson Ice Center for the Cascade Firefighters Association Third-Annual Charity Hockey Game. This benefit game raises funds for two local charities - bicycle safety focused nonprofit Riding for Ryan and Ada coffee shop Brody's be Cafe, which employs people with intellectual disabilities.

Festivities kicked off at 4 p.m. July 29 in the Patterson Ice Arena parking lot. Singer/songwriter Wild Air set the mood with covers of 1990s alt-rock hits and a few originals. Area first responders put their service vehicles on display. Families had the chance to explore the interior and exterior of a Kent County Tactical Apprehension & Confrontation (TAC) team armored vehicle and try on equipment.

Additionally, the public had the opportunity to get a close look at two Cascade Township fire trucks, a Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Fire/Rescue foam-spraying truck and Sheriff's Office Deputy Omar Dieppa's



TOP: Composed of a combination of former Grand Rapids Griffins, pro players, and collegiate Division 1 hockey players, the Engine Co. 'Black' Team faced off against the Ladder Co. 'Red' team in a competitive battle on the ice. Brothers explore the interior of a Kent County armored vehicle. **BELOW:** Brody's be Cafe barista Dominic Mastrovito (in red) enjoys the game with co-workers after dropping the puck.



patrol vehicle. Rounding out the displays were West Michigan TikTok fitness sensation Frankie LaPenna's "Booty Bus," a full-sized city bus he travels in.

At 5:30 p.m., attendees got treated to a double ceremonial puck drop - first by Brody's be Cafe barista Dominic Mastrovito, then Frankie LaPenna.

Composed of former Grand Rapids Griffins, pro players, and collegiate Division 1 hockey players, the Engine Co. 'Black' Team faced off against the Ladder Co. 'Red' team in a competitive battle on the ice. Attendees were treated to a fast-paced game. Ultimately, the Black team edged the Red team 6-5.

Final fundraising totals weren't available at the time of publishing, but were estimated to be around \$13,000.

National Night Out draws a crowd to local YMCA

Scores of area residents enjoyed food, fun and games at National Night Out 2023 on the grounds of Mary Free Bed YMCA right here in Cascade.

Hosted by the Kent County Sheriff's Office, National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes partnerships between first responders, local government agencies, non-governmental community organizations, and the public in which they serve.

Cascade Township firefighters and Cascade Parks & Recreation joined area emergency medical services staff, the

Kent County Road Commission, National Guard members, and the Kent County Sheriff's Office in celebrating the 40th anniversary of National Night Out.

Kids had the chance to explore police cruisers, fire engines, the Kent County Tactical Apprehension & Confrontation (TAC) team armored vehicle, pet horses from the Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit, sign a Kent County Road Commission snow plow blade. And with a bounce house, inflatable hoops shooting game, sprinting races, and a tumbling course provided by Grand Rapids gymnastics, there was no shortage of activities for families.

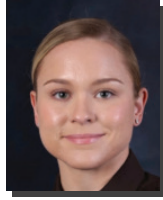


Living the dream of every toddler, this young boy experiences the thrill of sitting in a Cascade Township fire engine.

Protect your loved ones from identity theft

Officer's Advice

Deputy Kate Chase



In today's digital era, elderly populations face significant risks from identity theft and fraud schemes specifically designed to exploit their vulnerabilities. Scammers employ various tactics to deceive and manipulate older adults, often resulting in devastating financial loss.

Identity theft involves the unauthorized use of another person's information, such as Social Security numbers, credit card details, or bank account numbers, for fraudulent purposes. Scammers capitalize on the trust and naivety of the elderly, using a variety of methods to deceive and manipulate them.

One such method gaining popularity is the exploitation of gift cards. Let's review several common gift card fraud schemes:

Impersonation: These scams involve fraudsters posing as police, bank representatives or tech support agents. They manipulate victims into sharing their personal information or convince them to send money through gift cards. They tell victims that buying the cards will allow them to avoid a warrant for their arrest, taxes, fines or technical support fees.

Grandparent fraud scheme: Scammers trick you into sending money to help a

grandchild by claiming they are in some type of distress. Examples include being in a car accident or being arrested. They may request funds to cover medical bills, bail or other alleged expenses, and often emphasize the need for secrecy.

Sweepstakes and lottery scams:

Operating under the guise of legitimate sweepstakes programs like Publisher's Clearing House, scammers request payment for taxes or administrative fees via gift cards before releasing the winnings.

Gift card scams: Typically the victim is told to purchase card(s) and provide the scammers with details such as the card number, pin or security code. Once in possession, scammers can use the cards and leave victims with little to no recourse.

Preventative strategies

- Share the above information with your

loved ones, especially the elderly and/or other vulnerable adults. Telling them about warning signs and common fraud schemes can significantly reduce vulnerability.

- Encourage open communication. Tell older adults to mention any suspicious calls, emails or unusual requests for personal or financial information.
- Tell them to file a police report if a financial loss was incurred or if they shared personal information.
- Always independently verify requests for personal or financial information before providing it. Legitimate businesses and groups will never ask for payment via gift cards or demand sensitive information over unsolicited calls or email.
- Choose strong and unique passwords for online accounts and avoid sharing personal information on social media.
- Encourage elderly loved ones to be cautious when clicking on links or downloading attachments.

If you or a loved one has experienced identity theft or are victim to a fraud scheme, contact the Sheriff's Department Non-Emergency number at **616.632.6100**.

— **Kent County Sheriff's Office Deputy Kate Chase and Deputy Omar Dieppa are the community policing officers for Cascade Township. Contact Kate Chase by email at katherine.chase@kentcountymi.gov or call 616.430.7811.**

Fall fun at Cascade Township library!



The Cascade branch of the Kent District Library has plenty of events in store this fall season. Some highlights include:

Vibes Fest

12 p.m.-8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23

1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 24

A new version of Sunday Afternoon Live, called Vibes Fest. This two-day event highlights local talent, including artists featured on KDL's Vibes, a free streaming service that offers access to songs by area musicians. Enjoy free performances from full bands inside the Wisner Center and acoustic sets in the library itself. Featured local artists include Lazy Genius, Avocasquad, Low Phase, RTNR,

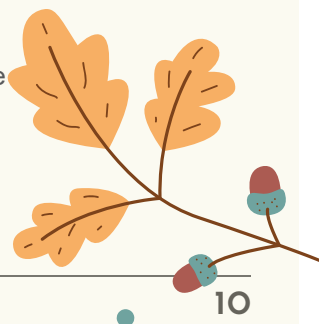
Hannah Rose Band, Ralston Bowles, Rabbit Fur, Alex Perez, J Oscar Bittinger, and others.

Fall Family Spectacular

10-11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 28

This family friendly program celebrates the fall season with crafts, games and more.

This is just a taste of what KDL Cascade Branch has to offer. To see a comprehensive list of recurring events for both children and adults, or for more information, visit kdl.org/locations/CAS.



PLAT MAPS

A window into Cascade's past

If you want to envision Cascade's past, or learn more about a specific location in the township at a specific time in history, a plat map is a great place to start. Each plat map is a snapshot of land ownership in a given year.

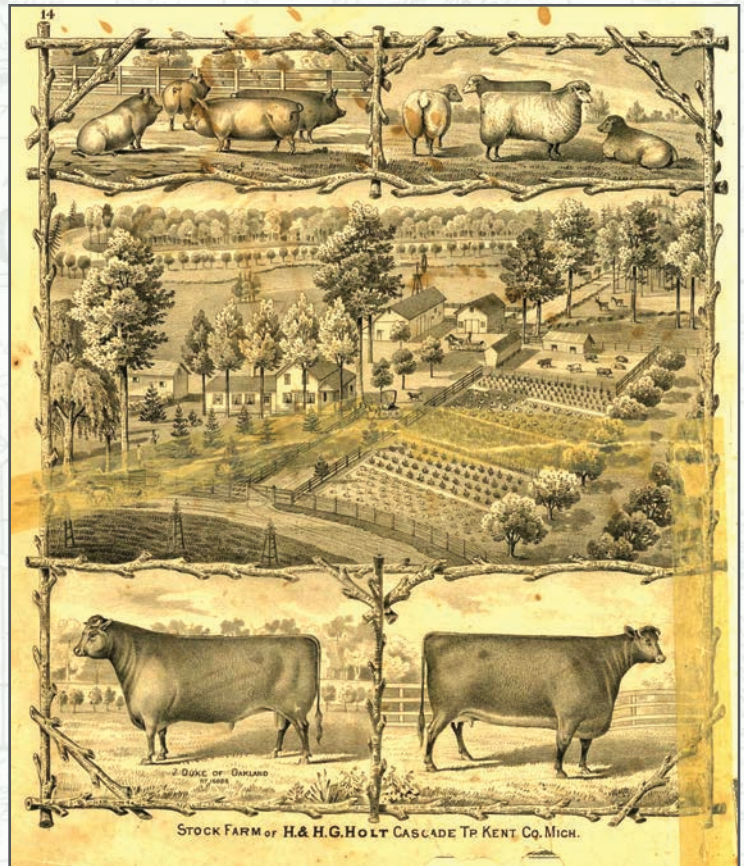
These legal documents providing fairly accurate descriptions of property lines, property ownership, and acreage, along with the location of buildings, roads, access ways, and geographical features. Plat maps offer a wealth of information for local history geeks as well as people who just want to know why they found so many horseshoes when they excavated their backyard for a pool.

The earliest property ownership map of Cascade was published in 1855, in Inne and Tinkham's Map of Kent County. Published in Chicago by H. Acheson Lithographers, the original map is now in the Michigan and Family History collection of the Grand Rapids Public Library. In 1987, the individual townships that are part of the larger map were photographed, carefully relettered, and collected in a book. Conservator Celine Idema noted that because the older plat maps were lithographs, all of the lettering on them was not only done by hand, but also backwards, so the text would read correctly when printed.

The 1855 map shows Cascade divided into sections, numbered 1 through 36. These sections each contain 640 acres, or a square mile – the same grid used for defining property lines today. The names of early settlers (such as Cook, Dennison, Eardly, Gove, Lennon, Patterson, Prince, Sears, Teeple, and Whitney) are on the 1855 map. However, the map also reveals large tracts of land that were owned by speculators. Several large swampy areas are shown which do not appear on subsequent maps. (You can see this map at accessionary.com, using reference number 52411.26.32.)

A village emerges

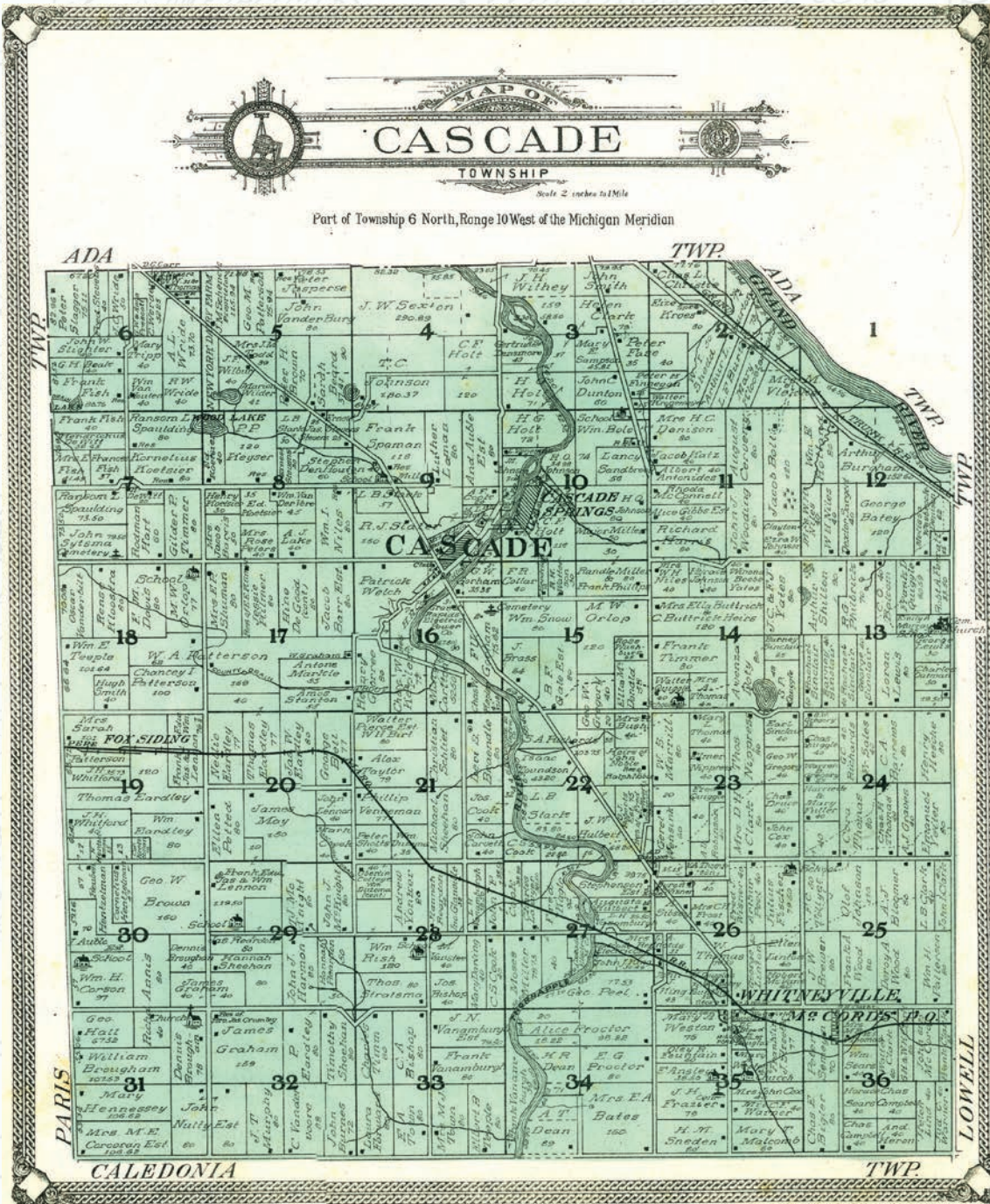
A surge of local pride prompted an uptick in the publication of plat maps in 1876, with the celebration of the nation's centennial. A plat map for the township, published by H. Belden and Co. in the Illustrated Historical Atlas of Kent County Michigan 1876, shows Cascade as a successful agricultural community, with schools, churches, and a cluster of businesses and residences where Cascade Road crosses



the Thornapple River. A railroad track follows the shore of the Grand River in the northeast corner of the township in Sections 1, 2, and 12.

The maps in this atlas are accompanied by idealized illustrations of the homes of prominent residents, where big cabbages line up in weed-free gardens, children play croquet on perfect lawns, and cows look contented and picturesque. Statistical tables at the back of the book tally up the worth and the output of the township's farmers: In 1876, Cascade is home to 600 head of swine, and over three thousand sheep – about 2.5 sheep for every person, given the human population was around 1,200 at that time. (To see this map, go to accessionary.com, and enter reference number 52411.26.33.)

The map of Cascade (page 12) is from the Standard Atlas of Kent County Michigan, published by Geo. A. Dole & Co. in



A 1907 plat map of Cascade Township, showing property owners, property lines, and acreage.

1907. It shows while many families have been farming the same land for 60 years or more, there are also many “new” names, which became “old” family names to the generation of Baby Boomers who grew up in Cascade, as well as their parents. The 1907 map also shows a second railway line in the southern half of the township, with a depot in the little village of McCords. This was the stopping point for passengers headed for Cascade Mineral Springs Resort. Better roads made it easier for horse-drawn buggies and wagons – and soon, automobiles – to travel within the township or places farther afield.

Cascade has entered the 20th century. In another 50 years, the landscape will be altered by the construction of the I-96 expressway, and in less than six decades, the township map will change significantly again, with the building of an international airport. For a closer look at this map, go to accessionary.com. The reference number is 52411.26.34. You can explore these maps in greater detail at accessionary.com. Plat maps are a great way to discover what Cascade was like long ago. Contact the Cascade Historical Society if you need help finding further information about a specific property or landowner.

Cascade Historical Society Museum open on Heritage Day!

Cascade’s local history museum in the old Township Hall will be open on Heritage Day, **Saturday, September 16, from 5 to 7 p.m.** Come see what’s inside!

About the Cascade Historical Society
The Cascade Historical Society meets the first Thursday of each month, except July, at 10 a.m. at the old Township Hall, 2839 Thornapple River Drive SE. Please join us.

“Cascade Chronicles,” our local history book, is available at the Township Office for \$10/copy.

If you have questions, comments, information or photos to share, email us at cascadehistory@yahoo.com.

Over 5,000 local history records can be searched at accessionary.com. Select Cascade Historical Society and enter your search criteria. This site also offers access to Ada, Cascade and Eastmont Suburban Life newspapers from 1955-68.

For quick access, visit bit.ly/CCTHistorySearch or scan the QR code below:



Firefighters bring the treats to you this Halloween

The spooky season is fast approaching, and Cascade firefighters are again bringing the holiday to you on Tuesday, Oct. 31!

In the coming months, the Fire Department will choose neighborhoods and central points to send firefighters in fire trucks on the holiday.

They will hand out goody bags containing fire safety materials, stickers and candy. The department's mascot Ember the Otter will join the team to see the best Halloween costumes.

Keep an eye on the township website and Facebook page for more information on neighborhoods and times.



Cascade Fire Department mascot Ember the Otter will join firefighters as they hand out treats on Halloween.

HALLOWEEN FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Make Halloween safe for your little monsters with a few easy safety tips...

Use a battery-operated candle or glow-stick in jack-o-lanterns.

When choosing costumes, stay away from long trailing fabric.

Teach children to stay away from open flames including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them.

Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper catch fire easily. Keep all decorations away from open flames and other heat sources like lightbulbs and heaters.

Remember to keep exits clear of decorations so nothing blocks escape routes. Make sure all smoke alarms in the home are working.



CHECK OUT SPARKY.ORG FOR MORE SPOOKY FUN!
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Buongiorno, Cascade!

Italy-based RV furnishings manufacturer to bring up to 130 skilled jobs to area

CASCADE — Tecnoform, an Italian manufacturer of high-end furnishings and fixtures for recreational vehicles, recently celebrated the grand opening of their new North American headquarters at 4999 36th Street in Cascade Township.

The 172,000 square-foot facility – the company’s first in the U.S. – covers all the bases, including production, warehousing, sales, and corporate offices for their new subsidiary, Tecnoform USA. Once fully operational, the company expects to bring up to 130 high-skilled jobs to Cascade.



Timyan

“Cascade is perfectly positioned for a high-end manufacturer like Tecnoform,” said Tecnoform USA Operations Manager James Timyan. “As a Cascadian myself, I’m ecstatic to be here on the ground floor of Tecnoform’s investment in U.S. manufacturing.”

West Michigan’s economic development body The Right Place was instrumental in bringing this successful international business to Cascade. During a pre-ribbon cutting presentation, Tecnoform CEO Renzo Kerkoc praised The Right Place, saying that access to the region’s skilled labor pool and nearby furniture makers made the Grand Rapids area a perfect fit for Tecnoform.

To ensure a skilled and diverse workforce, Tecnoform plans to work with West Michigan Works! to recruit local talent from disadvantaged areas. The Right Place has also offered staff time



An example of the high-end RV interior furnishings that will be designed at Tecnoform USA’s new facility in Cascade. Scan the QR code at right check out more event photos.



and support to the company. Individuals interested in careers with Tecnoform should visit www.tecnoform.com/people.

Supported by a \$750,000 Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant from the Michigan Strategic Fund, the project is expected to generate a total capital investment of \$7.3 million. Tecnoform’s investment is also a sustainable choice: instead of building new, Tecnoform chose to remodel and retool the Cascade facility, which formerly housed Guardsman Furniture Professionals by Valspar, a paint and finishing protection company.

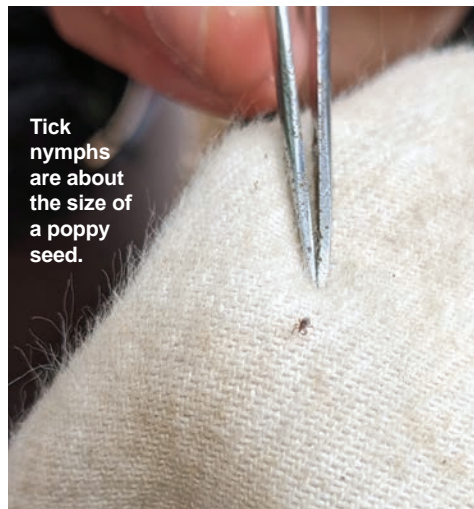
TICKS

Continued from Page 8

That day in late June, Miller and his team checked the traps they had placed just weeks earlier in the park but found no ticks. Reporting back at the end of summer, Miller said they did find larval ticks in one of the collection tubes. Miller and his students will continue checking these traps through the fall.

Back in June, the drag sampling was more fruitful. Right before a clearing along the north trail, the students discovered two nymphs. About the size of a poppy seed, these teenagers are difficult to spot and collect. But the students are adept at using forceps to carefully transfer the nymphs into vials of alcohol.

After collection, what’s next? If enough tick samples are gathered, they are taken to a lab where DNA is extracted and examined for Lyme disease.



Tick nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed.

Eventually, Miller hopes to test collected ticks for other diseases as well.

Invasives and ticks

Burton Park is a hotspot for two invasive plants – Asian bittersweet and Japanese barberry. According to Cascade Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion, barberry may provide shelter for ticks

and their rodent hosts. This could be a reason visitors report seeing more ticks at Burton Park.

Controlling invasive species within township parks and natural areas has been a top priority of Cascade Township’s Parks Committee for several years. Working with the Kent Conservation District, volunteer workdays have been held at Burton and other parks throughout the year to remove and/or treat aggressive species like barberry. With Cascade’s new parks volunteer program, even more invasive removal workdays are being scheduled.

But with localized data from Calvin University’s tick surveys, Cascade Township will be able to better understand tick populations and risks at Burton. Pair Calvin’s research with the township’s sustained invasive plant control efforts, and Burton Park may become less hospitable to these tiny terrors.



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