

# Cascade Connections



**2025 | EDITION 3**  
Cascade Charter Township Newsletter



## from the **Supervisor**

In this newsletter, I would like to answer some frequent questions from Cascade community residents regarding current projects and priorities:

### **ARE THERE PLANS FOR THE NEW PAVILION IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY?**

Yes—beginning with a summer concert series and many library programs. Details on pages 12-13. The upcoming *Concerts in Cascade* are part of a larger effort to create more community events, such as *Christmas at the Stone House* in December and the recent Easter Egg Hunt at Rec Park. Visit [cascadetwp.com/Events](https://cascadetwp.com/Events) or contact Parks & Facilities Coordinator Sydney Aubert at [saubert@cascadetwp.com](mailto:saubert@cascadetwp.com) for more information.

### **WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR TUFFY AND THE “VILLAGE” AREA?**

*Creating a more walkable village area* was a top priority for residents according to feedback received during the 2021-2022 strategic planning process. To achieve this goal, the Township initiated three projects to improve both public and private spaces:

**1. Updating Public Spaces/ Tuffy Plans:** Concepts to incorporate the Tuffy site into Tassell Park were initially presented at a public meeting last October, and have been available on our website since that time. Updated design plans based on feedback were presented at a public meeting on April 17 and are posted on our website. Certain elements remain undecided, but the goal remains the same: to create a timeless usable public space that emphasizes its proximity to the Thornapple River and calms the already busy intersection. For more information visit [cascadetwp.com/village](https://cascadetwp.com/village).

There is also the potential for public/private partnerships to update certain areas, such as the large parking lot at 28th Street and Cascade Road.



▲ An updated rendering of Tassell Park presented at the April 17, 2025 meeting.

**2. Façade Improvement Grant Program for Private Properties:** Most of the property in the village area is privately owned and already developed.

To kickstart creating a more vibrant streetscape in the village area, the Township’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA) recently launched a voluntary incentive program that provides a financial match to local businesses for qualifying façade and site improvements to existing buildings. Beyond improving aesthetics, this program aims to strengthen locally owned businesses, keeping dollars in the local economy.

**3. Updating Zoning for Quality Redevelopment:** Zoning in the village area is being updated to ensure *quality redevelopment with clear building standards*. New standards will be adopted this year.

### **WHAT IS THE DDA AND WHERE DOES IT GET ITS MONEY?**

**Downtown Development Authority (DDA):** A DDA is an economic tool available to local municipalities to help revitalize local business districts. They were created in the 1970’s after the rise of expressways, suburban shopping malls, and big box stores changed how people worked and shopped, leading to the decline of traditional downtowns.

**DDA Funding:** DDAs are funded through Tax Increment Financing. First a certain geographic area is designated for revitalization (a “TIF district”). As property values in the area go up, property taxes increase. Property taxes in that area are broken into two streams. The base stream, tied to the property value at the time the TIF district was created, continues to go where it always has: schools, roads, fire, police etc. The increase in property taxes—the “tax increment”—is recaptured by the DDA (for a set time period) to reinvest in the area. Local school millages and the State Education Tax are not subject to DDA capture; they continue to receive tax revenues on growth.

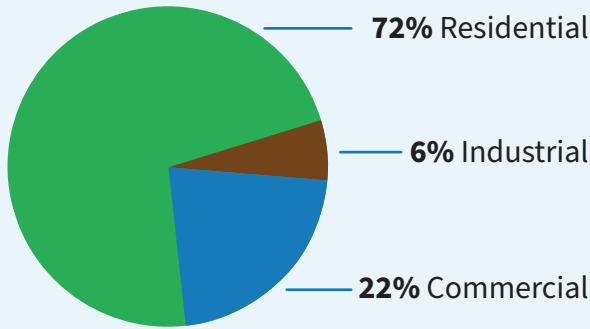
### **HOW IS THE TOWNSHIP FUNDED?**

Nearly 50% of Cascade’s annual revenue is funded through *state-shared revenue and service fees*. The other 50% of Cascade’s annual revenue comes from a *portion of local property taxes*.

### **WHERE DO MY PROPERTY TAXES GO?**

Townships serve as the property tax collector for all government entities. *Cascade Township receives about 11% of property tax revenues collected*. The Township then facilitates the distribution of the remaining **89%** of property taxes to various state and county entities (public school districts, state education, county government services and programs, libraries, and more).

## CASCADE'S PROPERTY TAX BASE BREAKDOWN



### WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES?

- 1. Administrative Efficiency:** With the right people in place and better oversight, *we have trimmed over \$500,000 in yearly operating costs.* We will continue to provide quality services efficiently while looking for areas to reduce administrative costs.
- 2. Proactive Growth Management:** To remain one of the most desirable places to live and do business in West Michigan, we must resist development that diminishes residents' health and property values and *encourage development that preserves Cascade's unique character.* This requires a comprehensive review and update to our Zoning Ordinance—which is underway and will be scheduled for public review and Board approval in the coming weeks.

A concept study rendering of International Beverage presented by OHM Advisors at the April 17, 2025 combined DDA and Board of Trustees meeting.



- 3. Creating a More Walkable Village Area:** This is being done by: *investing in improvements to public spaces—parks (e.g. Tuffy), streetscapes, and pedestrian pathway connections; incentivizing private property façade improvements with a match program; and ensuring quality redevelopment through updated zoning that provides clarity and requires quality.*

### WHAT IS CASCADE'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE/CONCERN RIGHT NOW?

*Protecting the property values and quality of lives of residents—especially those in the south and east areas of Cascade Township. Last year, the Township exercised its authority to regulate land uses in and around the airport that are **unrelated** to aeronautical operations. The Airport Authority responded by filing a lawsuit against the Township, claiming the Township has no authority to regulate development of **any** property owned or leased by the Airport Authority, including development that is completely unrelated to its airport operations. In other words, **the Airport Authority sued the Township alleging that any property owned or leased by the Authority is entirely exempt from any local zoning or land use regulations, even non-aeronautical uses, and including stormwater management.***

If allowed to stand, the Authority's position eliminates any reasonable local regulation of non-aeronautical activities and creates a loophole for the establishment of a multitude of unregulated activities completely unrelated to airport operations. Such development would drastically impact the areas and the neighborhoods east of the airport, as well as the Thornapple River. Litigation is ongoing.

### WHY CAN'T WE JUST LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT ON CASCADE ROAD?

State law precludes Townships from setting their own speed limits. The Township, however, partners with the Kent County Sheriff's Department for enhanced patrol and speed limit enforcement. Michigan follows the national standard and sets speed limits based on the 85th percentile speed, which is the speed at or below which 85% of drivers are currently driving a given section of road. For example, if 85 percent of drivers on a section of road are driving 45 mph or less, the 85th percentile speed would be 45 mph.

The underlying rationale for this methodology is that (1) the vast majority of drivers instinctively drive at a speed that is safe and comfortable based on road design and other factors, and (2) the more uniform the speed of vehicles in a traffic stream, the less chance of conflicts between drivers.

Bottom line: The Township will continue to support all initiatives to evaluate local speed limits and support enhanced patrol efforts, but we cannot set or change speed limits.

It is an honor to serve as your Supervisor. Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions are welcome and important. Evening office hours are suspended temporarily due to construction inside the library. Please reach out, and we can schedule another time to meet.

**Grace Lesperance**  
Cascade Charter Township Supervisor  
glesperance@cascadetwp.com

# Cascade Township Board Meetings

The Cascade Township Board meets on the **second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 pm** at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Drive. Adjusted dates due to holidays or elections are listed on the Township website.

Meetings can be attended in-person, are live-streamed via Zoom with the link available at the top of the meeting agenda, and recordings are posted on our YouTube channel afterward at [youtube.com/@cascadechartertownship](https://www.youtube.com/@cascadechartertownship).

The Township Board encourages participation in all of our public meetings!

For a full schedule of public meetings, visit [bit.ly/CascadeMeetings](https://bit.ly/CascadeMeetings).

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Supervisor** Grace Lesperance  
616-949-1500  
[glesperance@cascadetwp.com](mailto:glesperance@cascadetwp.com)

**Clerk** Sue Slater  
616-949-1508  
[sslater@cascadetwp.com](mailto:sslater@cascadetwp.com)

**Treasurer** Windy Korstange  
616-949-6944  
[wkorstange@cascadetwp.com](mailto:wkorstange@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee** Timmy Noordhoek  
[tnoordhoek@cascadetwp.com](mailto:tnoordhoek@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee** Chris Noordyke  
[cnoordyke@cascadetwp.com](mailto:cnoordyke@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee** Scott Rissi  
[srissi@cascadetwp.com](mailto:srissi@cascadetwp.com)

**Trustee** John Shipley  
[jshipley@cascadetwp.com](mailto:jshipley@cascadetwp.com)

## MEET YOUR TOWNSHIP BOARD

Front row, from left: Treasurer Windy Korstange; Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance; and Clerk Sue Slater. Back row, from left: Trustee John Shipley, Trustee Timmy Noordhoek, Trustee Chris Noordyke, and Trustee Scott Rissi.



## from the Treasurer

**SUMMER 2025 TAX BILLS** should be in your mailbox by July 1. Summer taxes are due Sept. 16, 2025. Payments made after that date will incur interest and penalties. There are multiple convenient ways to pay your taxes:

**In Person:** Payments may be dropped off at the Township Office during business hours or in the drop box outside of the main entrance.

**Online:** Pay online beginning July 1 by visiting [cascadetwp.com](https://www.cascadetwp.com) and selecting the blue 'Taxes' button on the home page.

**By Phone:** Call 855-770-5856 and use access code 90603016.

**By Mail:** Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Allow at least seven days for delivery, as the Township doesn't accept postmarks as proof of timeliness.

**Didn't receive a bill?** Please visit [www.cascadetwp.com](https://www.cascadetwp.com) or call the Treasurer's Office at 616-949-6944 if you don't receive one.

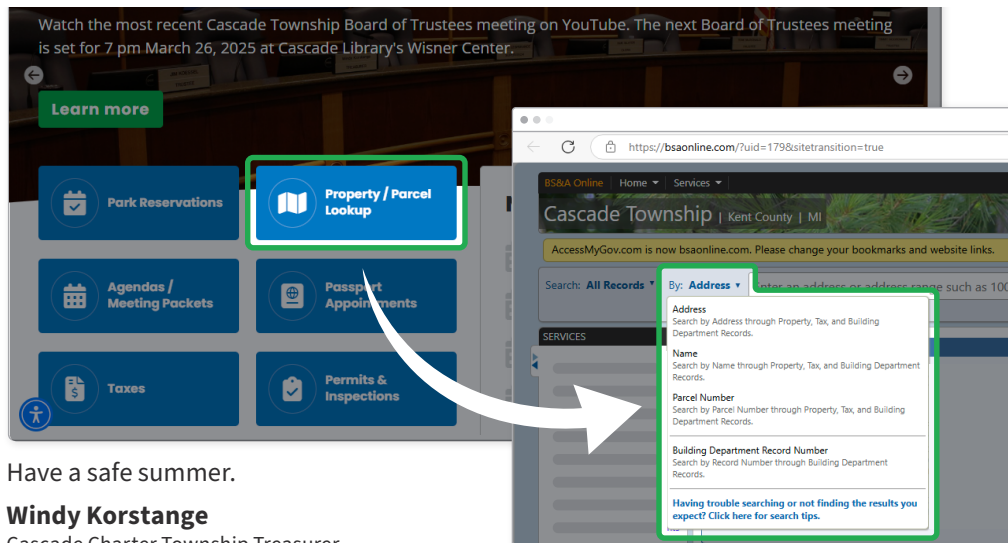
**Attention Travelers:** If you will be away this summer, please provide a forwarding or temporary address. We will forward your summer tax bill if it is returned by the Post Office.

**SUMMER TAX DEFERMENT** Cascade Township offers a Summer Tax Deferment to eligible property owners. If you qualify, you may pay your summer taxes, without penalty or interest, through Feb. 14, 2026. To qualify, your household income must be less than \$40,001, and you must be either 62 years or older; a paraplegic, quadriplegic, totally disabled; blind; an eligible serviceperson, veteran or widow/widower of a veteran.

Application forms are available online or at the Township Office. Completed forms must be returned by Sept. 16, 2025. You must request this deferment annually.

**CHECK YOUR PROPERTY TAX STATUS 24/7** with a link from the Township's website: [www.cascadetwp.com](https://www.cascadetwp.com)

- Click on the blue **Property/Parcel Lookup** button on the home page (*see below*), then follow the **Property/Parcel Lookup Tool** link.
- Search Municipal Records By (*top of page, see below*)
- Click the drop-down arrow to select data search (*by Address, Name, or Parcel Number, see below*)
- Click on the Selected Parcel
- Click Tax Information tab



Have a safe summer.

**Windy Korstange**  
Cascade Charter Township Treasurer  
[wkorstange@cascadetwp.com](mailto:wkorstange@cascadetwp.com)



# The People Behind Community Code

Keeping our community safe, welcoming, and well-maintained is a top priority. Our enforcement team ensures that Township ordinances and zoning laws are fairly and equitably enforced for the benefit of everyone.

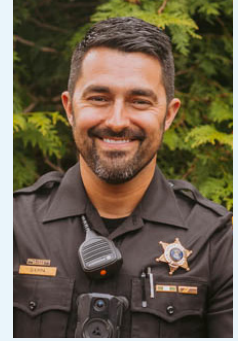
## INTRODUCING OUR ENFORCEMENT TEAM



**Ryan Sennett**  
PLANNING & ZONING  
ADMINISTRATOR

Originally from Beloit, Wisconsin, Ryan graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2024 with a Bachelor's in Public and Nonprofit Administration. Before joining us in November 2024, Ryan worked as a Management Intern at Ada Township. Ryan is currently pursuing his Master's in Public Administration with a focus on local governance. A fun fact about Ryan is he's currently training for his first marathon!

With over a decade of law enforcement experience, Omar is a Field Training Officer who teaches standardized field sobriety testing, drug recognition, and civilian response to active shooter events. He also instructs at the GRCC Police Academy. In his free time, Omar enjoys family time with his wife and four children. He is currently training for a 300-mile, three-day bike ride to honor fallen officers.



**Deputy Omar Dieppa**  
KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT

## WHY CODE ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The enforcement team's primary goal is to keep Cascade Township a great place to live and work. They help identify property violations early, before they become bigger issues, and encourage voluntary compliance. Whether you live in a residential neighborhood or manage a business in our commercial areas, Ryan and Omar are working to ensure the rules are clear and equally enforced, so our community is safe and beautiful for everyone.

Questions or concerns about code enforcement? Contact the Planning Department at 616-949-0224.

## Before You Dive In...

Pools are the ultimate way to beat the heat, but before you break ground, there are a few important rules to remember.

Pool safety requirements aren't just red tape; they're designed to protect kids, pets, and visitors. Michigan Residential Code requires barriers to prevent accidental access. In most cases, that means a fence. These fences have strict height requirements, specific gate types, and self-latching mechanisms. But if you've noticed some pools around Cascade without fences, don't worry! Some homeowners opt for an automatic safety cover, an alternative to fencing and door alarms.

For above-ground pools, the pool itself can count as a barrier if the walls are at least 48 inches high, and it has a lockable, removable ladder.

Planning to build a deck around your pool? Make sure your contractor understands all the rules before getting started.

Most importantly, make sure your installer is licensed and secures a permit through our office. This ensures all the safety features are properly inspected, so you can enjoy your pool with peace of mind.

Questions? Call the Building Department at 616-949-3765 before you take the plunge!



# Conservation in Action

The Township recently received the 2024 Friend of Conservation Award from the Kent Conservation District for our efforts to control invasive species and restore native habitats throughout Cascade. We've partnered with the District for over five years to remove harmful species like oriental bittersweet and Japanese knotweed, ensuring our natural spaces remain healthy and diverse.

“We're grateful for the hard work of our volunteers and our ongoing partnership with Kent Conservation District. A special thank you to Ginny Wanty and Jeanine Heibel for sharing their passion and enthusiasm for environmental stewardship with Cascade.”

—TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR GRACE LESPERANCE

### GET INVOLVED: VOLUNTEER WITH US!

This summer, we'll continue tending to garden areas and natural spaces throughout the Township, and we'd love your help.

Looking for a meaningful group activity? Workdays are perfect for scout outings, corporate volunteer days, and family projects!

Interested in volunteering? Email [volunteer@cascadetwp.com](mailto:volunteer@cascadetwp.com) to get involved.



▲ Supervisor Grace Lesperance accepts the 2024 Friend of Conservation Award on behalf of Cascade Township from Dr. Gerald “Jerry” Miller and Erin Sloan-Turner of the Kent Conservation District.

# Deer Study Update: Expanding Our Efforts

Cascade Township remains committed to addressing deer over population concerns and supporting sustainable solutions. In 2023, Cascade conducted an independent study in Burton Park to estimate deer densities and explore management options.



Last year, we expanded that effort by joining the Kent County Deer Management Coalition, a collaborative, county-wide initiative to develop adaptive and effective deer management strategies.

While deer harvesting by hunters is declining, the number of deer removed from roadways continues to rise—highlighting the need for balanced management strategies. Kent County has one of the highest rates of deer-related vehicle crashes in Michigan, with deer incidents accounting for 26% of all the county's crashes in 2023.

Researchers from Grand Valley State University have been tracking deer populations using field surveys, community input, and new tools like the Kent County Deer Carcass Tracking App to monitor roadkill incidents.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Field data collection continues through the summer of 2025.

The coalition will finalize recommendations in the fall of 2025.

Visit the Kent County Deer Management website for updates and public resources: [www.kentcountymi.gov/deer](http://www.kentcountymi.gov/deer).

# Infrastructure Improvements

Spring means warmer weather, blooming trees, and...**construction season**. Here's a quick look at infrastructure projects throughout Cascade Township:

## CASCADE ROAD BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Phase 2 of pedestrian enhancements on the Cascade Road bridge over the Thornapple River began on March 17 and are expected to be complete by May 30. These improvements will provide safer and more accessible pathways for pedestrians. Kent County Road Commission is resurfacing the bridge immediately after construction wraps, with a **completion date expected by June XX**.

## PFAS REMEDIATION IN THE BURGER-GOODWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

Water main installation resumed on April 7 in the Burger-Goodwood neighborhood. Work is expected to continue through late fall. Impacted residents will receive details in the mail with information on how to coordinate their water service connection.

## NEW TREES ALONG CASCADE ROAD

Cascade Township recently planted 39 new street trees along Cascade Road between Wycliffe Drive and Whitneyville Avenue. Started in late April, this project is part of a multi-year effort to enhance the community's tree canopy.

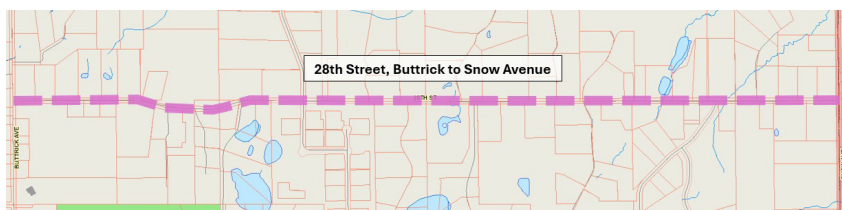
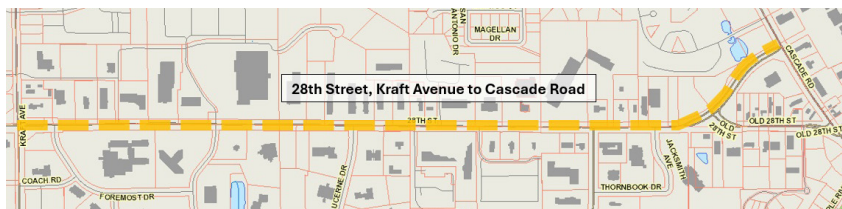


## KCRC ROAD PROJECTS

Several Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) projects are planned this summer in Cascade, including repaving, bridge rehabilitation, and preventative maintenance:

**Mill and Fill:** 28th Street from Kraft Avenue to Cascade Road

**Bridge Rehabilitation:** 48th Street bridge over the Thornapple River



## Preventative Bridge Maintenance:

- Thornapple River Drive over the CSX Railroad
- 36th Street, 0.4 miles northwest of Thornapple River Drive
- 36th Street, 500 feet east of Kraft Avenue

KCRC did not confirm exact construction dates, but they are expected to begin this summer.

For larger versions of these images and up-to-date project details, visit [cascadetwp.com/projects/roadimprovements](http://cascadetwp.com/projects/roadimprovements).



# Public Safety Training

This spring, Kent County Sheriff's Deputy Omar Dieppa led several CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) trainings, including one in Cascade. Built around the Avoid, Deny, Defend (ADD) strategy, these free sessions offered practical tactics and a proven plan for surviving active shooter events and other critical incidents.

If you missed a session, don't worry! More will be scheduled in the future. CRASE training covers the history and prevalence of active shooter situations, response options for civilians, and considerations for conducting drills in workplaces, schools, and public spaces.

Watch our community calendar at [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) for upcoming dates.

For more information, contact Deputy Omar Dieppa at [Omar.Dieppa@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:Omar.Dieppa@kentcountymi.gov) or 616-632-6435.



**READY, SET, HUNT!** Egg hunters of all ages had plenty of goodies to find.

## A Hoppin' Good Time

Cascade Recreation Park came alive on Saturday, April 19 for our first-ever Community Easter Egg Hunt. Families filled the field as kids raced to collect 15,000 eggs, plus jump ropes, sports balls, Play-Doh, and more.

The fun didn't stop at the hunt. Craft stations, vendor booths, raffles, and a visit from the Cascade Township Fire Department gave families plenty to explore. Firefighters passed out goodies, the Easter Bunny posed for photos, and kids got the chance to meet both bunnies and chickens from the petting station.

***Thank you to everyone who donated candy for the egg drive. Your support helped fill every egg and every basket.***

We're also thankful for the community partners who made this event possible: Automated Logistics Systems (ALS), BODYBAR Pilates of Cascade, Culver's of Cascade, Goldfish Swim School of Cascade, Your Pets Naturally – Grand Rapids, Greenridge Realty, OrangeTheory of Cascade, Texas Roadhouse of Grand Rapids, Doretha Ardoin for the music, and Cascade Township Trustee John Shipley.

**Interested in partnering or getting involved?**  
**Email our Parks & Facilities Coordinator at [saubert@cascaadetwp.com](mailto:saubert@cascaadetwp.com).**



▲ **FOUND IT!** One of the lucky few golden egg finders.



▲ **THUMBS UP** from our Easter Bunny.



▲ **A GENTLE HELLO** at the petting station.



VIBRANT YELLOW ROCKET blooms add a splash of color as the prairie at Friendship Park starts to take shape.

## We Want Your Input!

Help us improve how we share news, events, and updates by taking our **quick 1-minute survey**. Your feedback will influence how we keep you connected.

Scan the QR code or visit the Township Office to fill out a printed survey.

If you don't already, follow us on [Facebook.com/CascadeTownship](https://www.facebook.com/CascadeTownship) for updates and community news!

## Scan to Take the Survey



# Fireworks Safety



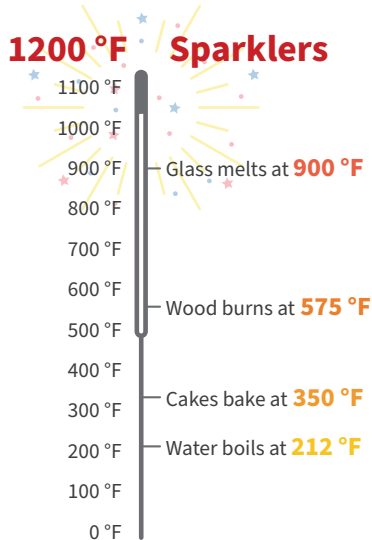
Fireworks, often used to mark special events and holidays, cause thousands of injuries each year. The only safe way to view fireworks is to attend a professional show.

**Fireworks are not safe in the hands of consumers.**

**A few ideas to get into the patriotic spirit, without fireworks:**

- 1. USE GLOW STICKS**, they glow in the dark and are a safe alternative to a sparkler.
- 2. LOUD AND PROUD.** Noise makers are sure to make a statement.
- 3. OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT.** Set up a screen and projector.
4. Red, white, and blue **SILLY STRING!**
5. Make a **PATRIOTIC CRAFT** with the family.
- 6. THROW A BIRTHDAY PARTY** for the USA, and don't forget the cake.

### How HOT does a sparkler burn?



- ★ More than 19,500 reported fires are started by fireworks annually.
- ★ Burns account for 44% of the 9,100 injuries treated in emergency rooms seen in the month around July 4.
- ★ Half of the fireworks injuries seen at emergency rooms were extremities: hand, finger, or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.
- ★ Children ages 10 to 14 had the highest rate of fireworks injury, with more than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks injuries under age 15.
- ★ Sparklers account for roughly one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) 2018 Fireworks Annual Report

*adapted from:*

## NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



## Cascade Township Fire Department

*Dedicated to Serving You*

Fire Station 1 | 616-949-1320 Fire Station 2 | 616-259-7020



# Independence Day Celebration



Join us **Friday, July 4** for Cascade Township's free community event filled with family fun, music, and fireworks.

Cascade Township's Independence Day celebration returns with a full day of fun, starting with the parade and ending with a shared fireworks show with Ada Township. This family-friendly tradition is open to all ages and offers something for everyone.



▲ Start your Independence Day with the Bike Parade! Kids of all ages are welcome to join. Just decorate your wheels and meet us at 8 am.

## BIKE PARADE INFORMATION

Kids and families can decorate any non-motorized ride—bikes, scooters, wagons, or strollers—and join the fun. Registration is not required for the Bike Parade.

Meet at 8 am outside Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (6655 Cascade Road SE).

Per Township ordinance, riders 14 and under must wear helmets.

Need decorations? The Kent District Library - Cascade Branch will host a *Decorate Your Bike* event on Monday, June 30 at 10:30 am. After the event, extra kits will be available at the library after the event while supplies last.

## COMMUNITY PARADE REGISTRATION – DUE BY JUNE 26

All participants in the Community Parade must pre-register online.

Visit [bit.ly/CTParadeRegistration2025](https://bit.ly/CTParadeRegistration2025) or scan the QR code to the right to complete the form.



Registration closes Friday, June 26. Please review the rules on the registration page before submitting your entry.

Participants should meet at the parade staging area at 7:30 am outside Thornapple Covenant Church (6595 Cascade Road SE).

## PARADE TIMES AND ROUTE

The parade kicks off at 9 am with the Bike Parade, immediately followed by the Community Parade.

The route begins at Cascade Road and Burton Street, heads west on 28th Street, and ends at 28th and Thornhills Avenue.

## FESTIVAL DETAILS

From 10:30 am to 2 pm, the celebration continues along Jacksmith Avenue and throughout the grounds of Friendship Park, the Cascade Library, and nearby properties. Jacksmith will be closed to motor vehicles, creating a safe, walkable event space for all.

Families and kids can enjoy:

- Inflatables and kids' rides in the Noto's parking lot
- Food trucks lining the street
- Live music at the Friendship Park pavilion

Friends of the Library Book Sale runs from 8 am to 3 pm in the library parking lot and inside the Wisner Center. All proceeds benefit the library.

The festival wraps up at 2 pm, giving families plenty of time to enjoy a backyard barbecue before heading to the fireworks show.



▲ Get ready to bounce! A variety of inflatables will return to the festival grounds for more family fun after the parade. Selection may vary.

## FIREWORKS SHOW

Cascade Township and Ada Township will once again partner for the community fireworks show, held at Amway Headquarters (7575 Fulton St. East, Ada).

Live music will begin at Ada's Legacy Park at 6:30 pm, leading up to the fireworks display at dusk. Bring lawn chairs and blankets and enjoy a great night out with your neighbors.

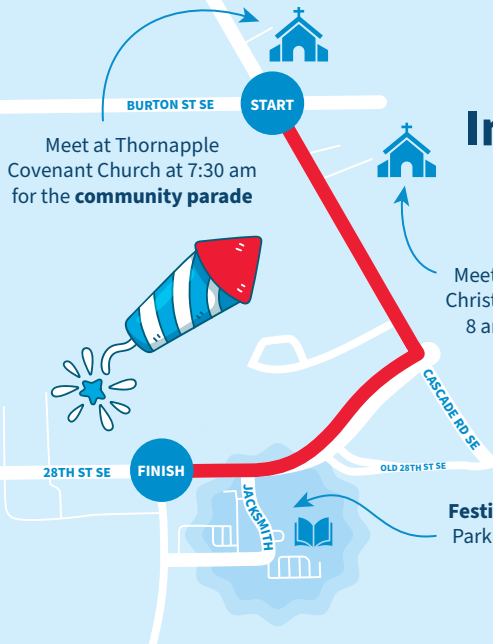
For more information on Ada's festivities, visit [adamichigan.org/events](http://adamichigan.org/events).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Cascade Township offices will be closed Friday, July 4 in observance of the holiday.

Fireworks may be used in Kent County from 11 am to 11:45 pm on July 3 through 5 in accordance with Michigan state law.

Call 616-949-1500 or email [reception@cascasetw.com](mailto:reception@cascasetw.com) if you have questions, visit [cascasetw.com](http://cascasetw.com), or our Facebook page, [Facebook.com/CascadeTownship](https://www.facebook.com/CascadeTownship), for up-to-date information.



CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Independence Day Parade Map

Meet at Thornapple Covenant Church at 7:30 am for the **community parade**

Meet at Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church at 8 am for the **bike parade**

**Festival Grounds** at Friendship Park, along Jacksmith Ave and in Library parking lot

**BIKE PARADE** 9 am  
Participants meet at 8 am outside Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (6655 Cascade Rd SE). No registration needed. Decorate any non-motorized wheels. Helmets required for riders 14 and under.

**COMMUNITY PARADE**  
**Immediately following Bike Parade**  
Participants meet at 7:30 am outside Thornapple Covenant Church (6595 Cascade Rd SE). All participants must pre-register online by June 26.

**FESTIVAL** 10:30 am–2 pm  
Held along Jacksmith Ave and Friendship Park. Enjoy inflatables, food trucks, live music, crafts, and more. Friends of the Library Book Sale runs 8 am–3 pm at the library.

**FIREWORKS** Dusk  
At Amway HQ (7575 Fulton St E, Ada), with live music at Ada’s Legacy Park starting at 6:30 pm. Bring lawn chairs or blankets.

## Meet Grand Marshal Sybrant “Sy” Dykhouse III

If you’ve been to the Cascade Independence Day Parade in the last fifty years, you’ve likely seen him with a top hat, tails, and a red, white, and blue spirit that’s hard to miss. For five decades, Sybrant “Sy” Dykhouse III has led the parade as Uncle Sam, waving the Spirit of ’76 flag and carrying on a family legacy that helped shape the celebration from its very beginning.

Sy moved to Cascade in 1946 when he was just two years old. Fresh out of the Air Force, his father bought a gas station with his cousin, Lyle Dykhuizen. “He became Fire chief in Cascade,” Sy recalls. “And it was the Fire Department that started the Independence Day parade and fireworks. As far as I know, there wasn’t anything before then.”

In 1974, following the passing of his father, Sy stepped into the role of Uncle Sam for the first time. “I did that in his honor,” he said.

“My neighbor, Lucy Wilcox, sewed my first uniform for me. It lasted about five years. She made the second one, too, and that’s the one still being used today.” That very costume was passed down to Sy’s grandson, Ashley Anderson, who wore it last year and will again this year. “It fits him better than it fits me now,” Sy laughed. “It must’ve shrunk over the years.”

Taking on the role was never about being in the spotlight. For Sy, it’s always been about patriotism, pride, and honoring his family’s history. “Independence Day has always been the

biggest holiday in our family, other than Christmas,” he said. “It’s just a really big way to keep the spirit alive.”

One of his favorite memories is marching with his kids and, years later, with his grandkids. Those early years, he said, “are really special.”

Last year, Sy officially passed the torch to his grandson Ashley. The decision was simple. “He was the only one in the family who said he would do it,” Sy said, grinning. “I’ve got two sons and a few other grandsons, but Ashley stepped up.” Sy was 30 when he donned the costume for the first time. Ashley was 22.

Over the years, the parade has remained remarkably consistent, with some years seeing bigger crowds than others. But the feeling has never changed. “It’s a real honor,” Sy said.

Many in the community now recognize him not just as a man in a costume, but as a symbol of Cascade’s Independence Day celebration.

“There used to be canoe races from the Cascade Dam to the camelback bridge,” he remembered. “We had water ball fights between fire departments, raffles, fireworks over the old gravel pit.

Even a greased pig contest once. Things were different back then.” The celebrations may have changed over time, but the tradition lives on.

“What I hope people remember,” Sy said, “is just that we’re honoring the spirit of our country.”



▲ An early image of Sy in character in front of his signature Spirit of '76 flag.



▲ Sy takes the lead during the 2019 parade, like he has since 1974.



**PRAIRIES & NATIVE GARDENS** serve different roles. Large prairie areas evolve naturally over time, while native gardens are intentionally designed in smaller spaces. Render provided by Native Edge, LLC.

Prairie

Native Garden

## Friendship Park is Growing Wild *(In a Good Way!)*

At Friendship Park, a new kind of beauty is starting to take shape. We're transforming open lawn areas into prairie and native garden spaces with guidance from local experts at Native Edge, LLC. These changes will support pollinators and wildlife, reduce long-term maintenance, and bring vibrant, seasonal color to the park.

Prairies are large, open areas filled with native grasses and wildflowers that grow and evolve naturally over time. Once established, they require little irrigation, no fertilizer, and only occasional management. Native gardens use the same types of plants but are installed in smaller, more structured beds near walkways and gathering spaces.

Both prairies and native gardens are being used at Friendship Park. A large prairie planting will fill the open field and serve as a natural vegetative buffer along the road, while native gardens will line paths and gathering areas. In the first season, most of the work will happen underground as prairie plants develop strong root systems. Above ground, crews will focus on weed control and regular mowing to help the native species take hold.

By next year, early-blooming plants like black-eyed Susans, coreopsis, and yarrow will begin to show. In year three, a wider range of native plants will bring a variety of colors, heights, and textures to the landscape.

The pavilion's green roof, planted in 2024, is also entering its first full summer. A live-stream camera will be added later this summer for an up-close look at this growing habitat.



## Summer Concerts

This summer, we're bringing live music right to Friendship Park. **Concerts in Cascade**, a **free music series**, will feature a little something for everyone.

**Mark your calendars for:**

**June 12: Electric Flower Co**



A female-fronted powerhouse cover band known for their high-energy sets, featuring hits from Journey, Fleetwood Mac, Bruno Mars, Taylor Swift, and more.



**July 17:  
Lee Murdock**

A noted Great Lakes folk musician, Murdock blends storytelling with blues, folk, and maritime traditions through songs rich with regional history.

**August 7:  
Chloe Kimes**

A Nashville-based Americana artist defining the next generation of folk-singing troubadours with an old-soul sensibility for storytelling.



Bring your blankets or chairs for an evening of live music and community connection. Each concert will also feature local food trucks. Guests are also welcome to bring their own snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

For more complete event details, including full band bios and weather-related updates, [cascadetwp.com/events](http://cascadetwp.com/events).

All photos provided and used with artists' permission. Presented in conjunction with Kent District Library's Vibes Reference Desk Mini Concert Series.



# Concerts *in* Cascade

**FREE  
FAMILY  
EVENT**

**JUNE 12**  
**Electric  
Flower Co**

**FEEL-GOOD  
COVER BAND**

**JULY 17**  
**Lee  
Murdock**

**MUSICIAN &  
STORYTELLER**

**AUGUST 7**  
**Chloe  
Kimes**

**NASHVILLE  
AMERICANA ARTIST**

**ALL CONCERTS START AT 6:30 PM AT FRIENDSHIP PARK**  
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Visit [CascadeTwp.com/events](https://www.CascadeTwp.com/events) for full details.

Presented in conjunction with Kent District Library's Vibes Reference Desk Mini Concert Series.





Exciting things are happening at Kent District Library - Cascade Branch! While the library wraps up construction, special programs will be hosted in Friendship Park during the first two weeks of June as we prepare to reopen with full services — just in time for Summer Wonder!

Summer Wonder is KDL’s free summer program for all ages, designed to keep minds engaged and curiosity thriving. Read, play, and discover while earning fun rewards. Whether you’re diving into a new book, joining us for a park program, or tackling creative activities, there’s something for everyone.

**SUMMER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**Family Programs**

Tuesdays & Fridays are big days for large, all-ages programming. Expect magic shows, storytimes, live animals, bubbles, nature exploration, STEM fun, library camp, and more to help prevent the summer slide.

Monday, July 14, 10–11 am – Special visit from Eric Litwin, author of *Pete the Cat*

**Teen Tuesdays**

Weekly Tuesdays at 2 pm

Teens can get involved through Teen Crew, especially for support during the July 4 Booksale

**Adult Programs**

Thanks to community interest and support from the Cascade Friends of the Library, more adult events will be offered this summer:

- Classic Movies
- Silent Book Clubs
- Bingo
- Craft Programs
- True Crime Analysis



**OUTDOOR PROGRAMS CALENDAR**

**All Ages / Family**

**Mondays at 10 am – Outdoor Play**

June 30, 10:30–11:30 am:  
Decorate Your Bike for the 4th of July

**Tuesday Mornings**

June 3, 10–11 am: Music Makers  
June 10, 10 am–1 pm: Critter Barn  
July 1, 9:30–11 am: Magical Creatures Party  
August 5, 9:30–11 am: Bubble Glow Party

**Wednesday**

July 2, 9:30–11 am: Dino Dig

**Thursdays at 6:30 pm – Acoustic Concert Series**

June 12, July 17, August 2  
Keep an eye on [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) for the line-up to be announced soon!

**Fridays**

June 6, 9:30–11 am: Summer Wonder Kick-off: Superhero Party  
June 13, 9:30–11 am: Touch A Truck  
August 8, 10 am: Summer Wonder Bash: Beach Party

Thursday, July 3, 3–5 pm: Friends Members Pre-Sale: 4th of July Booksale  
Friday, July 4, 8:30 am–3 pm: 4th of July Booksale

**Adults**

**Fresh Air Fitness**

Elevate your well-being through the benefits of nature, sound and movement.  
June 16 & July 7 at 6:30 pm

**Craft and Create: 4th of July Flower Boxes**

June 9 at 6:30 pm  
Stay tuned to [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) for reopening updates and more events.

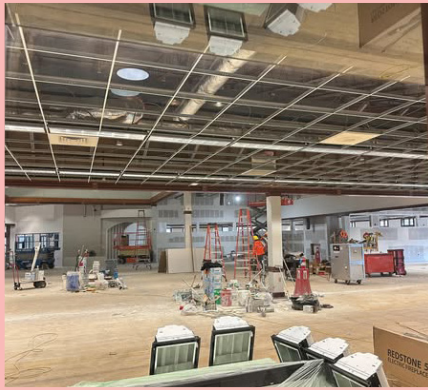
Visit [kdl.org/summer](http://kdl.org/summer) or call 616-784-2007 to learn more about Summer Wonder and a full listing of KDL events!

# Cascade Library

## REFRESH

Things are already starting to take shape inside the Cascade Library. We're excited to share a few recent photos from the transformation!

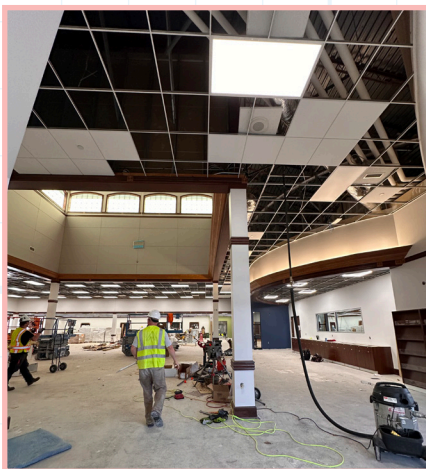
Library programming continues during construction next door in the Wisner Center. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/CascadeTownship](https://www.facebook.com/CascadeTownship) or our website at [cascadetwp.com/projects](https://cascadetwp.com/projects) for updates.



▲ **EARLY APRIL:** Drywall is up and the layout is taking shape. The new archway (center of the second photo) will lead to the children's area, now located on the fish tank side of the building.



▲ **MID-APRIL:** Color is starting to pop throughout the library as painting begins to bring the space to life.



▲ **EARLY MAY:** New lighting is going in and painting is nearly complete. Carpet installation is up next.

## Contact Us

### Township Manager

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### Parks & Facilities Director

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## FIRE

### Cascade Township

### Fire Department

### Fire Chief / Non-Emergency

Adam Magers  
616-949-1320  
[amagers@cascadetwp.com](mailto:amagers@cascadetwp.com)

## POLICE

### Kent County Police

### Department

### Sheriff / Non-Emergency

### Dispatch

616-336-3113

### Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa  
616-632-6435  
[omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov)





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PERMIT NO. 250

### Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-949-1500  
cascadetwp.com

### Township Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 7 am–4 pm  
Friday: 8 am–12 pm



**BIKE PARADE**  
9 am

**COMMUNITY PARADE**  
Immediately following Bike Parade

**FESTIVAL**  
10:30 am–2 pm

**FIREWORKS**  
Dusk in Ada

