

4 – 4 – 2024
IRON COUNTY MI

Spring Fishing is upon us and 2024 Licenses are available now.

In Michigan, the statewide Trout opener is April 27th, while walleye and Northern Pike seasons open in the Upper Peninsula on May 15th. The Statewide Michigan Bass season opens May 25th, while muskellunge possession season opens June 1st.

In Wisconsin, Trout, Northern Pike, Walleye, Largemouth Bass and General Inland Fishing opens May 4th with the Musky Northern Zone Harvest beginning May 25th.

Check Michigan or Wisconsin DNR websites for season details or to purchase licenses.

In other news, National Library Week begins April 8th, and the West Iron District Library in Iron River will be celebrating with daily activities culminating in a finale with prize drawings on Saturday, April 13th. Contact the West Iron District Library for more information on the Weeks events.

END OF STORY



MSP Newsroom

News aired
4/3/24



State Police Amends Policy to Restrict Pursuits

March 14, 2024

Media Contact:

"has ~~not~~
already taken effect"

Ms. Lori Dougovito

MSP Communications and Outreach Division

DougovitoL@Michigan.gov

517-281-9586

In an effort to reduce the inherent risks involved with police pursuits, Col. James F. Grady II, director of the Michigan State Police (MSP) announced the MSP is aligning its pursuit policy with best practices that will protect the lives of innocent bystanders and our enforcement members.

Under the new policy, which takes effect immediately, MSP enforcement members may only engage in a pursuit if there is probable cause to believe the driver or occupant of the pursued vehicle has committed a life-threatening or violent felony.

"High-speed pursuits are one of the most dangerous circumstances police officers face," stated Grady. "A key consideration in any pursuit must be the seriousness of the underlying crime and whether the risks of a pursuit outweigh the public safety benefits of immediately apprehending the suspect. In all decisions, protecting lives – that of innocent bystanders, police officers and fleeing suspects – is of paramount importance and it is for this reason we have revised our policy."

In 2022, MSP members engaged in 235 pursuits; this number increased by one to 236 pursuits last year. So far this year, MSP members have been involved in 33 pursuits.

Nationally, on average, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice, crashes occur in at least 30 percent of vehicle pursuits, and injuries or fatalities occur in 5 to 17 percent of pursuits.

MSP's revised policy aligns with recommendations from the Police Executive Research Forum in its 2023 report, ["Vehicular Pursuits: A Guide for Law Enforcement Executives on Managing Increased Risks."](#)

This policy, as well as all other non-confidential department Official Orders can be found online on MSP's Transparency and Accountability webpage at [mi.gov/MSPtransparency](#).

News Releases

MI Newswire

Michigan State Police

Michigan State Police

Related News

Sgt. Kristina Lidak Droste, "Our Femininity is Our Strength"

Statewide Tornado Drill Scheduled for March 20

Official Statement - State Police Announces New Method for Firearm Disposal

\$150 Million Available to Strengthen Communities Across Michigan

The Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) is working to help local communities obtain low interest loans for projects designed to reduce risks from natural hazards and disasters.

Considering a Change? A Career of Service Could Serve You Well.

Celebrating Black History Month - Video Spotlight

2
April 2024

Iron River, MI

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is inviting the public to several informational and public input meetings for the month of April, this is an important avenue for input at local meetings of the public bodies that advise the DNR and, in some cases, also set policies for natural and cultural resource management. Frequently check the DNR boards, commissions, committees and councils webpage for updates.

April meetings

- Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee – (Special meeting to discuss Recreation Passport) Thursday, April 4, 1:30 p.m.
- Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council – Thursday, April 4, 6 p.m.
- Forest Management Advisory Committee – Wednesday, April 17, at 1 p.m.
- Lake Erie/Lake St. Clair Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee – Wednesday, April 10, 10 a.m.
- Michigan State Waterways Commission – Friday, April 26, 10:30 a.m.
- Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup – Thursday, April 18, 10 a.m.

For more information contact. [REDACTED] michigan.gov/dnr



1 – APRIL - 2024
LANSING, MI

Starting Monday, April 22nd until Friday, May 10th, Michigan employers looking to take advantage of the Going PRO Talent Fund program will be able to apply for a share of competitive training awards in the 2024 Going PRO Talent Fund, Cycle 2. The application period for the 2024 Going PRO Talent Fund Employer Led Collaboratives is currently open.

The Going PRO Talent Fund helps ensure employers have the talent they need to grow and stay competitive by providing awards to assist in training, developing, and retaining current and newly hired employees.

Grants are awarded to employers through the Michigan Works! Network, where employers then work with their local Michigan Works! agency to develop appropriate training plans.

Since 2014, the Going PRO Talent Fund has provided over seven-thousand awards averaging a training cost per person of just under fourteen-hundred dollars.

Businesses may apply for funding by contacting their local Michigan Works! Service Center. Go to MichiganWorks.org for contact information.

To learn more about the Going PRO Talent Fund, visit Michigan.gov/TalentFund

END OF STORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Amanda Fisher, Michigan State Director,
517-927-1058

or Mike Donohue, Senior Media Manager, 202-525-9835

News aired 3/30/24

Small Businesses Appeal Income Tax Increase to Michigan Supreme Court

NFIB challenges the interpretation of the Michigan Income Tax Act

THIS Week,

LANSING, MI (March 26, 2024) – The **National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)**, the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, **late yesterday** appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court its litigation over the *Michigan Income Tax Act* and whether the income tax cut triggered in 2023 should expire or remain permanent.

“NFIB is hopeful that the Court will hear this case and recognize the need for clarity on the income tax rate for Michiganders,” said **Amanda Fisher, NFIB Michigan State Director**. “We urge the Court to affirm the permanence of the tax cut going forward.”

Last year, NFIB along with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and several others filed suit against the

Michigan Department of Treasury's decision to raise the personal income tax rate back to 4.25% in 2024. The rate was lowered to 4.05% last year thanks to a 2015 law that created a tax cut trigger. The trigger automatically lowers taxes when state revenue outpaces inflation by a set amount.

Small business owners consistently rank tax-related issues as a top concern for their small businesses, including "State Taxes on Business Income," "Tax Complexity," and "Dealing with IRS/State Tax Agencies."

The **NFIB Small Business Legal Center** protects the rights of small business owners in the nation's courts. NFIB is currently active in more than 40 cases in federal and state courts across the country and in the U.S. Supreme Court.

###

For 80 years, NFIB has been advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C. and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven association. Since our founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses and remains so today. For more information, please visit nfb.com.

Front Desk <frontdesk@wikb.com>

3/26/2024 9:36 AM

Fwd: MDOT meeting April 9 to discuss 2026 M-35 rebuilding/roundabout project in Marquette County

To Jimm Han <news@wikb.com> Copy Mitch Ness <mitch@wikb.com>

*News aired
3/29/24*

----- Original Message -----

From: Michigan Dept of Transportation <MDOT@govsubscriptions.michigan.gov>

To: [Frontdesk@wikb.com](mailto:frontdesk@wikb.com)

Date: 03/26/2024 9:34 AM CDT

Subject: MDOT meeting April 9 to discuss 2026 M-35 rebuilding/roundabout project in Marquette County

[View or share as web page](#)



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

newsroom

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT

Dan Weingarten

906-250-480

WeingartenD@Michigan.gov

MDOT meeting April 9 to discuss 2026 M-35 rebuilding/roundabout project in Marquette County

[REDACTED] - The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) invites the public to a meeting regarding a planned 2026 improvements project on M-35 in Marquette County between County Road 480 and US-41, including rebuilding [the M-35/County Road 492 intersection](#) to a modern roundabout. During this meeting, there will be a brief presentation followed by a question-and-answer session.

Who:

[REDACTED]
MDOT staff

[REDACTED]
Interested residents and business owners

[REDACTED]
Community stakeholders

When:

This meeting will be on

Tuesday, April 9, [REDACTED]

at 5:30 p.m.

Where:

at the

Negaunee Township Hall,
42 East State Highway M-35
Negaunee, MI 49866.

Accessibility:

[REDACTED]
Attendees who require mobility, visual, hearing, written or other assistance for effective participation

[redacted] should contact Orlando Curry at 517-241-7462 or CurryO@Michigan.gov preferably at least five business days prior to the scheduled meeting. Forms are located on the Title VI webpage. Requests made after this timeframe will be evaluated and honored to the extent possible.

Project information:

MDOT plans to invest about \$7.2 million to crush and shape the existing pavement and surface with new asphalt pavement, widen existing paved shoulders, realign the M-35/Marquette County Road 492 intersection to build a modern roundabout, and perform grading and tree clearing at various locations for safety improvements.

Work is expected to begin in spring 2026 and be completed in fall 2026.

Throughout work, project information will be posted on MDOT's Mi Drive website and will also be shared on social media.

Public comment:

In addition to the public meeting, comments and input can be submitted by the M-35 Roundabout comment form or by using the contact information below *by email*

Monica Monsma
MDOT Environmental Services Section
MonsmaM@Michigan.gov

or by mailing

425 West Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
517-335-4381.

or call

###

Work zones are temporary,
Bad decisions behind the wheel can last forever.

Follow MDOT



[MDOT](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Mi Drive](#)

Want to change how you receive these e-mails?
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Subscriber Help](#)

This email was sent to Frontdesk@wikb.com using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Michigan DOT · 425 W. Ottawa St. · Lansing, MI 48909 · 517-241-2400

[Large redacted area]

Iron Mountain, MI

03/27/2024 (airing 3/28)

Copy

In a contentious vote to fill vacancies on the Northpoint board, the Dickinson County Board of Commissioners split their support for the applicants, Ralph Kramer and Tim Perlot. Kramer, the spouse of Commissioner Barb Kramer, gained the position via a vote of one nay -two yays and one present, the latter vote being a procedural maneuver to abstain from favoritism. The nay vote was from Commissioner John Degenauer.

Perlot won the appointment similarly with Two nays, one from Kramer and one from Commissioner Ann Martin, while the remainder of the board affirmed.

The difficulty of securing unanimous voting is due to the apparent in-fighting surrounding Northpoint and the ongoing dispute regarding retention bonuses paid to employees. The dispute triggered several comments and questions about how Northpoint was being run and if finances were being used as directed by the various funding agencies that support Northpoint.

This is a developing story that WIKB will continue to follow and as details develop will be brought to the public.



MSP Newsroom

News aired
3/27/24

\$150 Million Available to Strengthen Communities Across Michigan

March 11, 2024

Media Contact:

Lauren Thompson-Phillips

MSP/EMHSD Public Information Officer


517-216-0103

The Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) is working to help local communities obtain low interest loans for projects designed to reduce risks from natural hazards and disasters.


Through the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund program, \$150 million in federal funding is available in 2024. The program, created by U.S. Senator Gary Peters' Safeguarding Tomorrow Through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM Act), allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to work with states and tribal governments to establish low interest loan funds for disaster mitigation.

The MSP/EMHSD must provide a project proposal list, generated from communities to FEMA to apply and is currently seeking proposals from communities to implement hazard mitigation projects. Interested communities are asked to complete an online project information form.

"Communities across Michigan are dealing with increasingly severe storms, extreme flooding and shoreline erosion," said Senator Peters, Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. "I passed legislation creating the Safeguarding Tomorrow program to ensure that Michigan communities can get the federal assistance they need to invest in disaster mitigation projects. I'm grateful to the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division for their work to ensure our communities can access these critical resources and protect against future natural disasters."


"Just within the last year we've seen the effects of natural disasters across our state in the form of flooding, wildfires, and severe weather," said Capt. Kevin Sweeney, deputy state director of Emergency Management and commander of the MSP/EMHSD. 

 The Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund program helps local governments invest in essential infrastructure projects, repairs, and  

Projects designed to reduce disaster risks for homeowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and communities from the impact of natural hazards are eligible for this program 

-  Drought and prolonged episodes of intense heat,
-  Severe storms, hurricanes, and extreme wind,
-  Wildfires,
-  Earthquakes,
-  Flooding, including the construction, repair, or replacement of a non-Federal levee or other flood control work,
-  Shoreline erosion, high water levels, and storm surges,
-  Zoning and land use planning changes,
-  Building code enforcement.

In 2023, the state of Michigan was selected to receive \$5.1 million in funding from the Safeguarding Tomorrow program. The loan amount will be divided among approved community projects across the state.

Communities interested in applying must complete the online project information form  by April 12, 2024.



110TH DISTRICT
STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 30014
LANSING, MI 48909-7514

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GREG MARKKANEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PHONE: (517) 373-0850
FAX: (517) 373-9303
GregMarkkanen@house.mi.gov
www.RepMarkkanen.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 21, 2024

News aired 3/26/24

Rep. Markkanen: There's no way 62,000 bottles just fell off the back of the truck

State Rep. [Greg Markkanen](#) is calling attention to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) after the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) uncovered widespread mismanagement within the commission. The MLCC is made up of five unelected governor appointees.

The OAG [investigation](#) revealed that more than 62,000 state-owned bottles of liquor were missing and uncovered extensive accounting failures. The value of the missing bottles totaled nearly \$1 million, over 20 percent of its total inventory. The MLCC could not provide any information about the missing supply and was forced to process a refund to all vendors for the missing bottles.

“Prohibition ended almost 100 years ago, but alcohol in Michigan is still turning up missing,” said Markkanen, R-Hancock. “We all know Al Capone spent a lot of time in the Upper Peninsula, but some folks at the MLCC may be embracing that history a bit too much. Auditors uncovered widespread failures that cannot continue. There must be consequences when state departments lose taxpayer dollars and fail to report those losses to the public.”

The MLCC manages spirit products by facilitating sales through authorized distribution agents (ADAs) using 11 state-owned warehouses. The OAG revealed that the MLCC failed to keep adequate sale and purchase records. From February 2021 to August 2022, \$1.1 billion in spirit orders were not filed in the state's online ordering system.

###

Iron Mountain, MI

03/25/2024

Copy

Rekindling the spirit of the 1970's and eighty's, the Humongous Fungus Festival is bringing back the beloved soap box derby.

The derby will take place on Marquette Street in Crystal Falls, Michigan on April 24th, 2024, after the parade has ended. The soap box derby was a much anticipated and appreciated staple of the festival during the seventies and eighties. The contestants of the day constructed their non-motorized gravity driven cars and raced along the closed streets for fun and prizes.

Superior Sport and Feed recently requested donations of bicycles and parts for contestants who were unable to find suitable pieces for their build. There is no fee to enter the derby, however, racers should note that safety gear will be necessary.

Those interested in participating in the Soap Box Derby can find more information on Superior Sport and Feeds Facebook page or call Steve at [\(906\) 874-1131](tel:9068741131).

###

23 – MAR – 2024
IRON RIVER

The following is from a press release from the Windsor Center in Iron River.

The 14th Season of Open Mic Night at the Windsor Center will kick off on Saturday, April 27th at 7:00 p.m. Open Mic Night is a showcase of local musicians playing nearly every genre of music on a variety of instruments. Past performers have ranged in age from children to octogenarians.

“You never know what you’re going to hear at an Open Mic Night,” said coordinator, Erika Sauter.

The kick-off show is already starting to fill up, with a brand-new band on the docket from Alvin, WI that includes Dave and Linda Monson, long-time Open Mic supporters. There are still openings for musicians for this show and the other shows slated for this season, the dates of which are as follows: April 27, May 25, June 29, July 27, August 31, October 26 and December 14.

“We have some amazing local talent here in Iron County and the surrounding area, and we’re looking forward to a great season ahead,” Sauter said. For more information, to sign up to perform, or to sponsor a show, contact 284-0647, email egsauter@gmail.com, or find Open Mic at the Windsor on Facebook.

The Windsor Center is located at 612 W. Adams Street in Iron River. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and a \$3.00 donation per person is requested for attendees ages 13 and older.

Press Release from the Windsor Center, abridged. I’m Garrett Bigelow, for Iron River Community Broadcasting News.

-30-

END OF STORY

22 – MAR – 2024
LANSING

The following is from a press release from the Michigan Department of Treasury.

The Michigan Department of Treasury is reminding taxpayers that state individual income tax returns are due in less than a month. State individual income tax returns must be filed electronically or postmarked through the U.S. Postal Service by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 15. For more information about e-filing, go to mifastfile.org

For the 2023 tax year, the Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit for Working Families quintupled from 6% to 30% and retirees have more options for choosing the best taxing situation for their retirement benefits.

To date, more than 2.1 million returns for the 2023 tax year have been processed, providing more than \$1.46 billion in refunds. The average refund amount is \$841. Printed tax forms are available online and at public libraries, post offices in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, Department of Health and Human Services county offices, and Treasury field offices.

For the benefit and convenience of taxpayers, both federal and state of Michigan individual income tax returns are due April 15.

Individuals with low income, disabilities or are 60 years of age or older may qualify for free tax preparation help from IRS-certified volunteers. For information about free tax help, go to irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep or dial 211.

Additional free tax help can be found at michiganfreetaxhelp.org.

To learn more about Michigan's individual income tax or to download forms, go to ~~www~~ michigan.gov/incometax.

Press Release From Michigan Department of Treasury, abridged. I'm Garrett Bigelow, for Iron River Community Broadcasting News.

-30-

END OF STORY

Fwd: Economic Injury Disaster Loan Webinar

To Jeremy Johnson <news@wikb.com> Blind copy Mitch Ness <mitch@wikb.com>

----- Original Message -----

From: Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance <brett@iron.org>

To: frontdesk@wikb.com

Date: 03/19/2024 4:32 PM CDT

Subject: Economic Injury Disaster Loan Webinar

**Michigan
SBDC**

News aired
3/21/24

Economic Injury Disaster Loans

admin
Many of you are aware of the SBA's recent announcement about their Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program they have recently released. As we have mentioned in a previous email, the ICECA would have preferred a grant program vs a loan program however this opportunity is better than nothing at all.

Some highlights to the SBA's EIDL Program include:

- The loan can be up to \$2 million
- Maximum interest rate of 4% for small businesses
- Maximum interest rate of 2.375% for private nonprofit organizations
- Terms up to 30 years
- Interest does not begin to accrue, and monthly payments are not due, until 12 months after initial disbursement
- SBA sets loan amounts and terms based on each applicant's financial condition
- Loans up to \$25,000 without collateral needed

The declaration for both Iron and Dickinson Counties has been extended from May 13th, 2024 to September 26th, 2024 (Iron County) and May 13th, 2024 to November 27, 2024 (Dickinson County) so small businesses and private nonprofit organizations in both counties can apply until those declaration dates in their respective county.

If your business is interested in applying, there are ^{15 9} ~~some~~ EIDL Application Assistance Webinar ^{30:ite} ~~links~~ below, provided by the Michigan Small Business Development Center. You will need to pre register for the webinar you would like to attend.

Get the training you need to complete the Economic Injury Disaster Loan application, led by Laura Marohnic, UP SBDC Regional Director.

In order to register for ~~one of the dates below~~, please click the appropriate link: _____

Wednesday, March 20th at 10:00 am central ^{or}

~~time: <https://events.blackthorn.io/en/5Y1bSaM7/eidl-loan-application-assistance-webinar-3-20-24-or-11am-et-5a1t5YPLGxu/overview>~~

Thursday, March 21st at 5:00 pm central

~~time: <https://events.blackthorn.io/en/5Y1bSaM7/eidl-loan-application-assistance-webinar-3-21-24-or-6pm-et-5a1t5YPLGy4/overview>~~

To apply for this loan (deadline of Sept. 26, 2024), please follow this link: <https://lending.sba.gov/search-disaster/?disaster=MI-00113>

Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

The ICECA will provide assistance to interested businesses that may not have the ability to apply themselves; however that process is not yet determined and won't be any earlier than March 25th, 2024.

If you have any general questions, please feel free to reach out to the ICECA at (906) 265-3822.

Threats to County Commissioners

MAR 19, 2024 News aired 3/20/24

Gladstone Post

On 3/8/24, detectives from the Michigan State Police, Gladstone Post received a complaint involving threats towards three Delta County Commissioners. Information obtained by the detectives shows the threats were specifically made to these commissioners through email. Detectives from the Gladstone Post are actively involved with this investigation. Contrary to information circulating in the local area, the FBI is not investigating this incident and no threats of terrorism have been made. This remains an active investigation and no suspect or victim information will be released. Anyone with information regarding these threats is asked to call the Gladstone Post at (906)428-4412.

Media Contact:

19 – MARCH – 2024
CRYSTAL FALLS MI

The Iron County Board of Commissioners had previously spoke out against the state having local control over green energy zoning, and as of this month's meeting they put it to writing that they supported a statewide effort to repeal the laws making that possible.

On March 12th, the entire board voted toward retaining local control, much like Dickinson County had done a month ago.

As we stated last time, the piece of paper in question is Part 8 of Public Act 233 of 2023, which gives the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) the authority to permit green energy projects without the input of local governments. This in an effort to hit a 2050 statewide carbon neutrality goal.

The board had voiced their opposition to what would later become Public Act 233 last September, before it had been adopted in November.

4-H was also funded at the meeting. A number of people during the first public comment segment spoke in support of them. Later on, the board said they were supportive of local 4-H efforts and were complementary to locals in 4-H, but wanted to know where the money was being spent.

In addition, Commissioner Patti Peretto said just prior to the vote, that regional MSU Extension director Paul Putnam has "dropped the ball all the time". In fact, she went further, saying that she does not believe Putnam serves Iron County particularly well and that she doesn't know what he does for other counties in this region.

The board also tackled a number of personnel matters the legal end of the county, specifically working with Judge Donald Powell to organize a replacement for outgoing Court Administrator Lori Willman, with Summer Olson being trained as her replacement.

They also heard some concerns during public comment about illegal immigrants possibly being moved into Dickinson County, as mentioned in yesterday's piece on their own recent gathering.

-30-

END OF STORY

18 – MARCH – 2024
IRON MOUNTAIN MI

The first meeting of the Dickinson County Board this month, on March 11th, was punctuated by drama right from the get-go. As part of this unusual start, board member John Degenauer bolted out of the meeting in protest over Northpointe interviews.

Degenauer said he wanted a policy in place before going ahead with the interviews, and said that not doing so would ultimately chasing people away from signing up to with Dickinson County government. Chairman Henry Wender and the rest of the board disagreed, prompting Degenauer to exit the meeting, declaring it to be “illegal” on the way out.

This is not the first time Degenauer has had sparks with other board members. In particular, Degenauer had many moments last year when he found himself in strong disagreement with the Dickinson board over how the state of the county fair.

The board also heard from a number of residents concerned about illegal immigration. This prompted on word that a number of unregistered border crossers may be in the Dickinson County area.

Similar concerns were voiced at the Iron County meeting the next day, March 12th.

Towards the end of the meeting, Commissioner Joe Stevens said the board “really needs to sit down” with Prosecuting Attorney Lisa Richards, and get a handle on the situation.

-30-

END OF STORY

16 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

The Iron Area Health Foundation recently announced CoVantage Credit Union's commitment to the upcoming 2024 IAHF golf fundraiser, scheduled for June 2nd. Part of that deal is a contribution of \$500 towards the event.

In addition, CoVantage will provide raffle prizes, and golfer bag gifts. They're also set to sponsor a tournament team, and will also sponsor a hole at Young's Recreational Complex. All part of a Friday announcement from the IAHF.

The IAHF's golf fundraiser aims to raise funds for various health initiatives in Iron County. They expressed gratitude towards CoVantage in their press release, for the credit union's support of the event.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic a few years back, there's been some kind of health-related golf outing in Iron County for decades. This extends all the way back to 1991, if you count the period of time when the IAHF was part of Aspirus.

Last year, the tournament followed a four-person scramble format, with an entry fee of \$300 per team. It covered carts, donuts, and post-event dinner. Competitors were also able to earn cash prizes, if they were one of the top placing teams.

Deadlines for the event are approaching, so anyone interested in more information may wish to get a hold of the IAHF, through their website or their social media.

-30-
END OF STORY



NEWS RELEASE

MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

Marquette Man Arrested for Accosting Children for Immoral Purposes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 13, 2024

MARQUETTE, MICH. The Michigan State Police (MSP) Computer Crimes Unit, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force is announcing the arrest of Trevor John Flynn, 41, for accosting a child for immoral purposes, and using a computer to commit a crime.

Flynn was arrested following an investigation which was initiated when it was learned that Flynn was chatting with minors on the internet. The case was referred to the MSP Computer Crimes Unit from The East Haven Police Department in Connecticut. A search of his residence resulted in digital evidence being seized.

Flynn was charged with one count of children-accosting for immoral purposes and one count of using a computer to commit a crime. Flynn was arraigned in the 96th District Court on Monday, March 11.

If convicted, Flynn faces up to four years in prison for children-accosting for immoral purposes and seven years in prison for using a computer to commit a crime.

The MSP Computer Crimes Unit encourages parents to speak to their children and family members about safe use of the internet. There are many resources available to assist in keeping people safe online. The MSP ICAC Task Force provides a comprehensive list of resources on their website at <http://www.michiganicac.com>.

If you have information regarding possible child sexual exploitation, report it to the CyberTipline at <http://www.missingkids.org/cybertipline>.

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

D/Sgt. Nichole Dyson, MSP Computer Crimes Unit, 906-231-0196

A PROUD tradition of SERVICE through EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY, and COURTESY since 1917

www.michigan.gov/msp

14 – MARCH – 2024
LANSING MI

As a heads up to people planning to travel this year, be prepared for some scheduled park closures. In the listening area, McLain State Park – up in Houghton County – will close it's modern campground early, towards the end of this summer.

Beginning August 1st, the modern campground will close, and will remain closed through the last part of the 2024 U.P. camping season.

The closure comes as part of a series of renovations being undertaken across multiple Michigan state parks, due to a \$250 million investment via the American Rescue Plan Act.

McLain will receive an upgrade of it's wastewater treatment system, with a projected cost of \$350,000 funded in part by ARPA resources. Other items there are set to be fixed up with this money, as well.

The work is part of a state DNR project, announced this Tuesday, where they're fixing a long backlog of dilapidated systems and elements within Michigan parks. All through these Federal funds.

Anyone looking for updates regarding the McLain closure, or who want to look up the other parks in the state that may be temporarily shuttered as a part of the project, can go to michigan.gov/DNRClosures.

You can check out details of the enhancements, anticipated closure dates, and use the information to factor in potential impacts on any travel plans you may have this year.

-30-
END OF STORY

14 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

News Director Jeremy Johnson with a special Lightning News recap this week: most of the news the last few days has been fire-related in some way, shape, or form. And with conditions out there ripe for burns, local fire officials have asked us to remind Iron County residents – and anyone else who can hear us – to refrain from burning anything outdoors, until weather conditions turn the north-woods into anything but so much kindling. There's your bulletin, here's Doctor Larry!

-30-
END OF STORY

13 – MARCH – 2024
CRYSTAL FALLS MI

Crystal Falls Township is changing how their funding arrangement with the Crystella Ski Hill is arranged, in order to give them a little more certainty, during a time of need.

Township Supervisor Scott Kenney, during their monthly meeting on Tuesday, received a call shortly before that meeting, from the ski hill. Kenney had said the ski hill had a “horrific year”, where they were open exactly one weekend this winter. Kenney indicated that the impression he got was that the ski hill was “struggling”.

Historically, the township has reimbursed the ski hill on a reimbursement basis. But after that talk, Kenney brought forward the idea of moving to a funding contribution system. The ski hill would get \$5,000, the historic budget, much faster and in a way that would help the ski hill plan their financing out.

Otherwise, the ski hill would only be able to receive \$1,000 in a timely fashion.

The board passed the proposition, with no one voting against it.

There was some hope that the new system will help eliminate keeping track of reimbursements, at least in this area they control. It may also aid Crystella during budgeting, as well.

-30-
END OF STORY

12 – MARCH – 2024
HEMATITE TOWNSHIP MI

V2

Anyone heading up to Covington from Crystal Falls – or vice versa – up or down the direct route of Highway 141, should expect delays heading down it due to bridge work.

The bridge over the Net River, about 20 miles north of Crystal Falls, will be down to one lane until the weekend.

The work is being done as part of a \$4.9 million MDOT project to rebuild four bridges. This bridge is the only one in Iron County being fixed up through the project, with the other three being Ontonagon County bridges, along M-64 and US-45.

There's a few alternative routes if you want to head north from Crystal Falls, or south from Covington, and don't want to hit this delay. Going up '45 between Watersmeet and Bruce Crossing will bypass the work, as will going up or down '95 from Sagola to Humboldt.

Rural roadways could also be considered, but given the season, sticking to '45 and '95 would be the reliable and safer options.

And '141 will remain open. Just factor in the bottleneck if you choose to travel down it this week.

One additional update, a follow up from yesterday, the National Weather Service has issued a special weather statement warning against wildfires, as of 4:52AM today. The advisory ends at 7:30PM this evening. Please avoid any outdoor burning today, and check for sparking hazards.

-30-
END OF STORY

12 – MARCH – 2024
HEMATITE TOWNSHIP MI

Anyone heading up to Covington from Crystal Falls – or vice versa – up or down the direct route of Highway 141, should expect delays heading down it due to bridge work.

The bridge over the Net River, about 20 miles north of Crystal Falls, will be down to one lane until the weekend.

The work is being done as part of a \$4.9 million MDOT project to rebuild four bridges. This bridge is the only one in Iron County being fixed up through the project, with the other three being Ontonagon County bridges, along M-64 and US-45.

There's a few alternative routes if you want to head north from Crystal Falls, or south from Covington, and don't want to hit this delay. Going up '45 between Watersmeet and Bruce Crossing will bypass the work, as will going up or down '95 from Sagola to Humboldt.

Rural roadways could also be considered, but given the season, sticking to '45 and '95 would be the reliable and safer options.

And '141 will remain open. Just factor in the bottleneck if you choose to travel down it this week.

-30-
END OF STORY

11 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

With the end of winter, in all but name, comes the prospect of dry dead brush scattered through Northwoods forests. But it's not clear if there's a wildfire threat just yet, even though we're in the middle of a drought.

The National Drought Mitigation Center is reporting wide band of moderate to severe drought in Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula, based on data released Thursday. The places with the highest impact are Gogebic and Ontonagon counties, and the Wisconsin counties along the border with the U.P..

However, signs are mixed if that translates into wildfire chances at the moment. The National Weather Service seems to think things are fine, at least for the next week or so.

However, MesoWest at the University of Utah, indicates that a risk of fire has been going up in these parts over the past few days.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources released a map on Facebook on Thursday, marking the Western Upper Peninsula – from the western border to around Escanaba – as having “above normal” wildland fire potential.

It stands to reason that as temperatures increase, with at least one day hitting the 60s this week, that fire chances will go up. And this may come to the fore earlier this year, due to the anemic winter we experienced.

The nice weather that we can expect in the near future may be the perfect time to police for potential sources of fire on your property; either sources of fuel you can clean up, or to check where points of ignition are possible.

As always, be careful with fire during the late winter, early spring period.

-30-

END OF STORY

9 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

A local news roundup for your weekend, hitting Iron, Dickinson, and Gogebic counties today.

First up, the state DNR put out a notice on Friday asking motorists in the Upper Peninsula to be on the lookout for increased deer movement while driving.

The reason being is that deer are moving from wintering quarters back to their spring and summer grounds, which means more deer crossing over roads and highways. So they want people stay alert for the critters, for the time being.

Things have been somewhat active in Florence County as well, with the City of Marinette, and Marinette County itself in Wisconsin, sending their area K9 units up here for training on February 27th.

The Florence County Sheriff's Department hosted the training, and said it went without a hitch.

Today, March 9th, also a day of activities up at Keyes Peak in Florence, uphill truck drag racing. The gates opened at 8AM, and the racing started at 10:30AM.

It has been reported that the event is attracting an international crowd, with people from across the U.S., and Canada coming to participate.

Aside from the racing, there's also a raffle, and food sold on site.

In Gogebic County, police are on the lookout for a red truck that was stolen at the beginning of the month.

The truck is a red Ford F250, model year 2000. Has a matching top for the crew cab, and is short box. Wisconsin plates, starting with the letters P and C.

If anyone happens to see it or know a bit about it, call (906) 667-0203.

-30-
END OF STORY

8 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

The Iron Area Health Foundation (IAHF) recently announced a contribution of \$500 to Aspirus Iron River, the hospital in that city, to fund the purchase of gas cards for medical transportation assistance for homeless patients.

The announcement was made on Wednesday. It's part of the IAHF's mini-grant program, where they make strategic financial injections into area health and safety effort.

This tracks with the IAHF's mission to improve the overall well-being of Iron County residents. The gas cards make it a little bit easier for west Iron County residents that don't have a roof over their head to access medical care.

In the recent past, the IAHF has also supported educational efforts related to medicine through scholarships for both high school graduates, and adult learners resuming their education in the medical field. They also awarded another mini-grant to Forest Park last month, to help them get an anti-choking tool.

Anyone interested in applying for a mini-grant can find the necessary forms on the IAHF website.

-30-
END OF STORY

7 – MARCH – 2024
LANSING MI

Nothing is sacred to criminals, including the particulars of the dead. And the state Attorney General has put out a notice that there's an uptick in people engaging in identity theft using the credentials of deceased relatives.

In a Wednesday bulletin, AG Dana Nessel's office issued a report on criminals using data from obituaries to "open bank accounts, obtain loans, secure health insurance, or file false tax returns".

Most people do not realize that it is not difficult at all to reverse engineer social security numbers. Armed with an SSN, and some of a person's vital records, online criminals can use the data to steal someone dry.

Nessel's office issued caution the use of online obituaries, citing an AARP article stating that loved ones may overshare information with internet-facing obits, making it even easier for thieves to steal all the data they need to commit crimes.

It could also be possible for a living family member to have enough information about them in an obituary, making them a valid target for such crime, as well.

Iron River Community Broadcasting is aware that this can be an issue, and already strives to mitigate identity theft chances when airing our daily obituary reports.

Nessel's office also warned against people who might try to manipulate grieving relatives. They could be pretending to be government agencies, debt collectors, or insurance companies. Scammers could also pose as previously unknown acquaintances of a deceased individual, to get data out of surviving relatives that way.

Another point of concern in the report are people who repost obituaries elsewhere on the internet, usually with the idea to make money off of internet ad revenue as people click through a page looking for specific obits. This isn't illegal, and the data could be used for identity theft, just as well as any other source.

If you suspect fraud as a result of someone scraping obituaries for data, you can get a hold of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Team. The phone number for them is (517) 335-7599. Toll free, at (877) 765-8388.

-30-

END OF STORY

7 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

News Director Jeremy Johnson with the Lightning News recap for the week: Dickinson county board member Barb Kramer spoke out against a property tax killing proposal, the state is offering a pathway for businesses nailed by the lack of winter this year to get relief money from the Small Business Administration. Some changes to state fishing rules this month, and last but not least, our news department won two awards from the state's broadcasting association. Best investigative reporting in our area. There's your recap, here's Doctor Larry!

-30-
END OF STORY

6 – MARCH – 2024
LANSING MI

Some of Michigan's fishing rules are set for big changes this year, starting this month, as new guidelines come into force for commercial harvesters and sportsmen alike. Impacting both the Great Lakes, and inland waters.

Effective this month, the Great Lakes Fishing Decree updates the framework for fishery resources shared by the state of Michigan and five tribal governments.

The new framework will last for the next quarter century. The text of the decree, and maps pertaining to it, can be found at the Great Lakes Co-management webpage.

One specific provision and revision of the decree, involves the use of electronic reporting systems on commercial fishers, with both the state and tribes collecting the harvest data. It's a requirement with the stated aim to better monitor fish populations, and inform and any possible future regulation.

Also starting this month, sport inland fishing guides in Michigan must secure an inland guide license for operations on inland bodies of water.

The license is mandatory for all waters except the Great Lakes, Great Lakes connecting waters, and bodies of water smaller than five acres.

Applicants must pass a few hurdles: they have to possess valid certification in first aid, a Michigan driver's license or ID card, no felony convictions within the past three years, and eligibility to purchase licenses for targeted fish species.

Additionally, starting April 1st, fishing guides must also file monthly catch activity reports electronically.

A lot of changes to fishing this year, coming one after another. They don't impact everyone, but people looking to make money off of fishing will have to be a little more careful going forward.

-30-
END OF STORY

5 – MARCH – 2024
LANSING MI

In the latest development in what the Michigan DNR is now coining the “Lost Winter”, Governor Gretchen Whitmer is – along with a bipartisan mix of Northern Michigan politicians – now asking small businesses in the state to take advantage of Federal aid, to help compensate for losses suffered over the last few months.

In a Monday press release, Whitmer urged area businesses to take advantage of Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the Small Business Administration, out in D.C.. A wide range of individuals tacked themselves on to the statement; Congressman Jack Bergman, State Senator Ed McBroom, and State Representatives Jenn Hill, and Betsy Coffia. Two Republicans and two Democrats, respectively.

This mirrors the idea announced in Wisconsin two weeks ago, on February 20th. Down there, Governor Tony Evers also proposed that their own small businesses take advantage of EID Loans from the Small Business Administration.

In addition, the release from Whitmer’s office lists 42 counties as having a drought disaster designation. The idea is that since these counties are in drought, stakeholders in them can apply for Federal loans that way. This includes Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Iron, Marquette, and Ontonagon counties.

The deadline to apply varies from county to county. Of the ones listed just now, Iron, Gogebic, and Ontonagon counties have the least time to wait to apply, with a deadline of the 13th of May.

Down in Wisconsin, the similar Evers plan allows interests in Forest and Vilas counties to apply with a deadline of May 29th.

There’s been a call for state-level disaster relief since January, with the current economic outlook having been predicted by the middle of that month. The warm winter weather is the largest issue in the Upper Peninsula this year, with millions of dollars in losses due to lack of snowmobile and skiing opportunities, and the cancellation of numerous winter events. Not the least of which was the UP200, which we reported on a few weeks ago.

No snow, and no cold, generally means less winter tourists. Even companies which aren’t seasonal have indicated that they have seen a decrease in sales opportunities, since the seasonal businesses they liaise with are tightening their belts, creating a knock-on effect.

If you are interested in applying for (or learning more about) a loan from the Small Business Administration, you can call their customer service number at (800) 659-2955. You can also email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information.

-30-

END OF STORY

4 – MARCH – 2024
IRON MOUNTAIN MI

Dickinson County's last meeting in February, while a little quieter than some recent meetings, had a big focus on a proposal to eliminate property taxes. And county board member Barb Kramer isn't a fan of it.

The effort is spearheaded by the "AxMiTax" (*pronounced "Axe my tax", and don't say quote-unquote, it's an actual entity. -- editor.*) campaign, who has gotten significant support for an effort to prohibit state, county, and local property taxes.

The ballot initiative appears, in lieu of property taxes, to shift the onus of taxation to sales taxes. Local governments would get an increased cut of state sales tax revenue, and counties would begin to get a cut from the sales tax. In addition 10% of tax revenue from recreational narcotics – alcohol, tobacco, marijuana – would go to counties and local government, apiece. And tax revenue going to counties and local governments could only use it for essential services.

One of the main ideas behind the tax is to prevent tax foreclosures on housing.

Kramer disagrees with the effort, saying that shutting down access to property taxes would disproportionately impact a number of Dickinson County entities.

She said that without property taxes, Dickinson County Library would have no tax millage, and would cease to exist in short order. As would Bay College's presence in the area, along with many senior centers. The Veterans Service Office and Health Benefits Assistance Program would also lose funding, according to Kramer.

Kramer also said that Dickinson County school districts would lose funding. AxMiTax does have it's own take of this on it's website, where they say only 10% of school funding would be impacted, which would be made up for with local businesses more willing to directly support school programs with increased funding on their own end from property tax savings.

Regardless, Kramer said that a little over half of the county's budget is based on property taxes, and she said she believes that the State of Michigan will increase sales taxes to cover shortfalls if they exist. Which may instead encourage businesses to look at different states to ply their trade. Kramer believes that it would ultimately give the state more control, over where tax money goes.

-30-

END OF STORY

2 – MARCH – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

News Director Jeremy Johnson, after a straight month going from controversy to controversy, we're taking a break from that today. Some good news, this time internal to WIKB and WFER; Iron River Community Broadcasting News has once again won a Michigan Association of Broadcasters award for Broadcast Excellence. In fact, this year, we've won two.

For our region of Michigan, we won first place in the Investigative Story category. We got top spot in investigative news for our coverage of Crystal Falls Mayor Mike McCarthy's cancer situation, and his subsequent issues paying various entities in Iron County in 2023, not the least of which was the neighboring City of Iron River itself.

We also won a merit award for our use of "new media", specifically for our radio and internet coverage of the West Iron County Wall of Fame, and Forest Park Hall of Fame. These events happened within weeks of each other at Young's Recreation in late 2023, dinners celebrating the achievements of West Iron and Forest Park alumni. We covered the dinners on the radio, but also filmed full versions, which we posted on our social media.

This is the second year in a row our news department here has won statewide industry awards; last year, we won the merit award in breaking news for the fires that occurred in Iron River, towards the end of 2022.

In addition to myself, the MAB also recognized Garrett Bigelow – our Saturday Telephone Time host – for his work as a news anchor, as he is included in the award for the "new media" category. I would also like to thank him for his work voicing news here over the last year or two.

Thank you all once again for listening the past year, and look forward to what we can accomplish in 2024.

-30-

END OF STORY

1 – MARCH – 2024
CRYSTAL FALLS MI

While there's been a number of events to cover in the last month, everything from the Iron River explosion to the presidential primaries, there's also been some controversy out in Crystal Falls. Specifically, at the Forest Park schools.

There does not appear to be any one reason why over 50 people showed up at the Forest Park school board meeting on Monday. But most of the crowd seemed to be unhappy with affairs at Forest Park.

A number of grievances have been on display in recent weeks, one early incident involving Forest Park varsity basketball coach Jason Price, who had been suspended for multiple games. Since then, the issues seem to have branched out into other complaints, and concerns.

One of the chief allegations at the February meeting itself involved bullying among female student athletes, and by athletic personnel at Forest Park towards female student athletes. Several people in the crowd during public comment said their daughters had been targeted. Some signs were displayed during the meeting, quoting alleged abusive statements made by staff at the school, which were disputed from the board.

Other complaints involved a sense of partisanship in the community, more in the social sense than the political. Some residents expressed a belief that institutional families involved in the Crystal Falls area in general, and Forest Park in particular, have been treated better than people from other families.

On top of all this, Forest Park Superintendent Christy Larson is leaving the school. According to a February 5th article by Jim Paul of the Iron Mountain Daily News, she's now set to be Superintendent of the Florence County School District, set to start July 1st.

The board (minus member Troy Margoni, who was absent) was also obviously expecting a fight at the February meeting. A prepared statement was read out at the very start of public comment by board VP William St. John, detailing a number of areas that the board would be looking into, and asking residents to follow a certain procedure to report issues at Forest Park. Board President Jim Nocerini followed that up with a more extemporaneous and aggressive statement: (NOCERINI CLIP).

We have recorded video of the public comment section of the February meeting, and have uploaded it to the WIKB Facebook page, with minor amendments for family-friendly rebroadcasting.

-30-

END OF STORY

29 – FEBRUARY – 2024
CRYSTAL FALLS MI

The City of Crystal Falls is concerned about housing issues in town, and it wants some demographic information on local residents, in the form of an online survey.

Or rather, the S.C. Swiderski company appears to want the info. On the city's Facebook page, published on Wednesday, has a post with a QR code that leads to a Microsoft-managed survey asking area residents to contribute a fair amount of personal information.

Clicking the link to the form's privacy page leads to S.C. Swiderski's Privacy Statement, on their own business site: privacy.scswidorski.net.

This comes in the wake of the City trying to grow it's economy by attracting new residents to work there. In November, S.C. Swiderski gave a presentation about new housing being built in town on 27 acres in land. City Manager Gerard Valesano characterized this development as a huge economic boon for the city, if it got off the ground.

The survey asks for your age, marital status, income, length of commute, how many people live with you, how much housing costs for you, and what kind of house you'd like to live in.

It also asks if there are any safety concerns residents have, and if they are going to buy an electric vehicle in the foreseeable future. Crystal Falls has two electric car chargers.

The bottom of the Microsoft Forms page says it offers "AI-Powered surveys"; raising the question if those with access to the data are planning to utilize AI inference to find certain patterns with what people give it. Microsoft does make use of ChatGPT, but that is not the only AI system the company makes use of, thus what the data could be run through is not immediately clear.

Swiderski Privacy Statement indicates that they "do not sell, trade, or otherwise transfer personal information to third parties for their marketing purposes".

Time will tell how the survey is used, but it appears that more research needs to be done in Crystal Falls, before the housing in question can move forward.

-30-
END OF STORY

28 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

Michigan primaries are over, and unsurprisingly, former President Donald Trump – to borrow a turn from him – “won bigley” in the Republican corner. So did his likely November opponent, current President Joe Biden, in his barely contested bid to remain the Democratic choice.

Trump picked up 68% of the vote in the Republican primary, versus direct challenger Nikki Haley’s 26%. Meanwhile, Biden got 80% of the Democratic pie. The only remaining Biden challenger in the Democratic primaries, Dean Phillips, got a little under 3%.

Trump readily carried most of Michigan, though Washtenaw County – essentially the Ann Arbor area – was a bit of a soft spot, where Haley came within 5 points of him.

Things weren’t completely clean for Biden, either, as over 13% of Democrat primary voters cast an “uncommitted” ballot, some of it due to an organized protest action. In other words, they voted “present”. The Dearborn area in particular was a sore spot, with the Arab vote there pushing back against his stance on the Israel/Palestine conflict, causing him to fall under the uncommitted option there.

With everything concluded, Trump now has 119 Republican delegates, while Biden has earned 177 Democratic delegates. Haley has 22 delegates. For the Republicans, more delegates will be awarded on March 2nd.

A couple of states will hold Republican caucuses in the first week of March, but the next big head-to-head primary runs will be on March 5th, Super Tuesday. After that, the direction of what the 2024 presidential election will likely settle substantially.

In more local developments, the Iron County Central Dispatch taxes passed, by a margin of 2286 to 774 for the renewal of the larger tax for them, and by 1962 to 1081 for the new small tax. The additional funding generated by the tax should give Iron County Central Dispatch nearly \$800 thousand to use, a substantial increase.

The West Iron District Library also got it’s tax millage renewed, by a margin of 1229 to 642.

The end of the primary means things can go back to normal for county and city government for a little bit, and no doubt everyone involved will be pleased that early voting efforts have now passed along, with grumbling over state support of the process and low turnout at recent city and county level meetings.

-30-

END OF STORY

29 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

News Director Jeremy Johnson with the Lightning News recap for the week: update on the Iron River explosion, aside from Michigan State Police and DTE running the investigation, IRPD Chief Curt Harrington said recently that victim Gregory Dierkes and his house were being looked into as part of the cause of it. West Iron County put money towards school security. And unsurprisingly, Trump and Biden had good nights in the Michigan primary. Iron County 911 got some money, as well. There's your recap, here's Doctor Larry!

-30-
END OF STORY



The mission of Lake Antoine Park Partners-Dickinson County, Michigan is to preserve, improve, promote and protect Lake Antoine Park in Dickinson County, Michigan, for the use and benefit of the general public. Lake Antoine Park Partners is a 501(c)3 Organization.

02-26-2024

Free kite flying event has been cancelled Public safety on Lake Antoine is priority for organizers

IRON MOUNTAIN – Lake Antoine Park Partners (LAPP) board members checked conditions on the park's grounds to determine if the chairman's plans for a kite flying event in March could safely continue.

County park manager Eric Robinson walked on the shoreline February 26 to observe ice conditions with LAPP treasurer Ann Hruska and event chairman Barb Kramer.

"This ice is so unstable even now, and the weather forecast is for temps in the 60's for the next 10 days," Kramer informed the event organizer. "We were on the ice today, and the cracks are opening to 18 inches in the fly zone. Since safety is our utmost concern, we made the decision to call off the event today so we can have time to notify our sponsors, vendors and of course our wonderful kite friends."

The 2023-24 mild winter has affected ice on Midwest bodies of water, especially in the past two weeks. With sunlight plus daytime temperatures in the 50s melting the ice on this Dickinson County Lake, overnight lows are not cold enough to regenerate safe ice.

A six-inch minimum of healthy ice is required to anchor the kites and support the fliers, according to members of the Wisconsin Kites Club. The safety of the fliers and of the public coming to attend the event was a top priority for LAPP.

In addition to safety concerns, LAPP had to consider a significant ice shove could make walking on the beach difficult plus bare ground and puddles in the lawn area could create muddy areas.

Two prior KOALA (Kites Over Awesome Lake Antoine) events brought thousands of viewers to the lake. Funds for the third KOALA had come from local businesses and organizations collected by LAPP to sponsor the March 8-9 flying.

LAPP appreciates the sponsors who had joined them in organizing the community event to make it a no-admission event to the public. The business sponsors will be contacted about their financial contribution.

28 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

Michigan primaries are over, and unsurprisingly, former President Donald Trump – to borrow a turn from him – “won bigley” in the Republican corner. So did his likely November opponent, current President Joe Biden, in his barely contested bid to remain the Democratic choice.

Trump picked up 68% of the vote in the Republican primary, versus direct challenger Nikki Haley’s 26%. Meanwhile, Biden got 81% of the Democratic pie. The only remaining Biden challenger in the Democratic primaries, Dean Phillips, got a little under 3%.

Trump readily carried most of Michigan, though Washtenaw County – essentially the Ann Arbor area – was a bit of a soft spot, where Haley came within 5 points of him.

Things weren’t completely clean for Biden, either, as over 13% of Democrat primary voters cast an “uncommitted” ballot, some of it due to an organized protest action. In other words, they voted “present”. The Dearborn area in particular was a sore spot, with the Arab vote there pushing back against his stance on the Israel/Palestine conflict.

As of noon Wednesday, Trump now has 122 Republican delegates, while Biden has earned 207 Democratic delegates. Haley has 24 delegates. For the Republicans, more delegates will be awarded on March 2nd.

A couple of states will hold Republican caucuses in the first week of March, but the next big head-to-head primary runs will be on March 5th, Super Tuesday. After that, the direction of what the 2024 presidential election will likely settle substantially.

In local developments, using preliminary numbers, the Iron County Central Dispatch taxes passed. The renewal of the larger tax went through by a margin of 2286 to 774, and by 1962 to 1081 for the new small tax. The additional funding generated by the tax should give Iron County Central Dispatch nearly \$800 thousand to use, a substantial increase.

The West Iron District Library also got it’s tax millage renewed, by a current margin of 1229 to 642.

The end of the primary means things can go back to normal for county and city government for a little bit, and no doubt everyone involved will be pleased that early voting efforts have now passed along, with grumbling over state support of the process and low turnout reported at recent city and county level meetings.

-30-

END OF STORY

27 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

Michigan Primary Day today, a week before Super Tuesday. People throughout the state will be able to take their pick of Republican or Democrat presidential nominees, though the front runners are fairly obvious heading into today's political quarterfinals.

And both of them have been behind the big desk in Washington D.C., former President Donald Trump for the Republicans, and current President Joe Biden for the Democrats.

Trump is running the Republican field so far with 110 delegates, next closest choice being Nikki Haley with 20. Meanwhile, Biden has 91 delegates, with the rest of his competition having none to their name. Of course, the Democrat's primary process has super-delegates down the road, whereas the Republicans don't use that system.

The only other primary opponents that Trump and Biden have anymore are Haley, and Ryan Binkley for Trump, and Dean Phillips, for Biden. All five of them will be on Michigan primary ballots today. Democrat dropout Marianne Williamson will also be a choice. Retired Republicans on the ballot include Ron DeSantis, Vivek Ramaswamy, Asa Hutchinson, and Chris Christie.

That doesn't mean there won't be a number of immediately pressing local choices on the ballot. Focusing on Iron County for brevity, there will be options here to vote for renewing a tax to support medical care maintenance and operations, and a choice to support and increase the operations tax for the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department.

Iron County 911 will also be on the ballot, in fact, it will be on local ballots twice. Once for a \$1 of tax for every \$1000 of taxable value, and again for a 25 cent tax for every \$1000 of taxable value. Combined, if both pass, it would raise over \$790,000 for Iron County Central Dispatch.

The first vote of \$1 is a renewal, whereas the smaller 911 ask is new. Iron County Central Dispatch was the subject energetic discussion in Iron County during 2023, given a debate about costings to maintain it.

They also face competition from the Negaunee Regional Communications Center vis-à-vis the Michigan State Police, a very modern facility we toured last year that claims it could organize 911 services for most of the U.P., if staffed to scale. Iron County government investigated the possibility, which caused an uproar in some circles.

There's also a millage for the Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District. Within Iron River, there is a millage for the local library.

We will share primary results, as well as other notable developments in the Western U.P., for our Wednesday coverage. Tune in for those results.

-30-

END OF STORY

26 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON MOUNTAIN MI

With election season starting to ramp up – and primaries on Tuesday – Michigan residents can look forward to voting on state and local proposals over the next few months. And one potentially big one on the horizon involves local control over green energy, something Dickinson County has endorsed heading into this partisan cycle.

At the first monthly meeting of February for the board, held on the Eleventh, their county government supported the statewide effort to repeal Part 8 of Public Act 233 of 2023.

The act was the culmination of efforts through 2023 – via House Bills 5120 through 5123 – to give the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) the authority to permit green energy projects without the input of local governments.

The idea was that local governments may be adverse to supporting the projects in some jurisdictions, which would make a 2050 statewide carbon neutrality goal very difficult to achieve. As such, the MPSC would have greater authority in the choice, instead.

The Iron County Board of Commissioners had voiced their opposition to these measures in September of 2023, before the house bills became Public Act 233 later in November, as they were against the state taking away local zoning rights.

Dickinson County has now likewise followed suit. Commissioner Joe Stevens also urged members of the public to sign a petition in support of the repeal, referring to the petition put forward by Citizens For Local Choice.

The vote was not unanimous in this regard, with board member John Degenauer being the sole voting member against the repeal effort.

The Michigan Townships Association has taken a broadly negative position on both Public Act 233, and Public Act 234 of 2023, due to the issue involving potential state assumption of local control.

Both PA 233 and 234 will go into effect on November 29th.

-30-
END OF STORY

23 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

Details of the Iron River explosion earlier in the month continue to filter into the public domain as the investigation rolls along.

Iron River Police Chief Curt Harrington summed up some of his thoughts on the situation during the Iron River city meeting on Wednesday.

(SOUND CLIP – IRPD Chief Curt Harrington): “But...the whole thing was obviously very unfortunate...um, not, I mean...had nothing to do with the city. Um, it was just strictly, um...the home, and maybe, even, Mister...Mister Dierkes. We’re not sure. So...um...just a horrible situation, but, we’ve been...we’ve been busy dealing with that, so...”

Harrington referring to the victim of the blast, 80-year-old Gregory Dierkes (*say as “Dirks” or “Derks” – ed.*), who was laid to rest on Tuesday. Harrington said the family had come up, and retrieved Dierkes ashes. They then went up to Cable Lake, and spread his ashes in that area.

The investigation of the February 10th blast isn’t in the hands of the Iron River Police Department, instead being run by the Michigan State Police.

In his monthly report Wednesday, Harrington said a significant amount of his time in recent weeks had been taken interacting with the MSP fire chief.

DTE is also hands deep on it’s own end, flying up a number of experts to the area to research the exact cause of the blast. Harrington said he had also been interacting with DTE’s inspection efforts, as well.

Both the MSP and DTE had been observed at the site by our news department since the explosion.

Harrington characterized his work with both groups as a collaboration, saying there was a lot of evidence to go through.

He was hopeful the investigation would be over within the next two weeks.

-30-

END OF STORY

22 – FEBRUARY – 2024
IRON RIVER MI

News Director Jeremy Johnson with the Lightning News recap for the week: the winter that never started is coming to an end, with all state trunklines at and south of US-2 – all the way up to Iron Mountain – opening up. Not even talking about the same happening in Wisconsin, such as in Florence County. But up north, it was still cold enough for Copper County folks to celebrate Sauna Week. Down here, same old, same old: local officials looking for money. There's your recap, here's Doctor Larry!

-30-
END OF STORY

Troopers Respond to Fatal Crash

FEB 22, 2024

News aired

Iron Mountain Post

IRON COUNTY, MICH. On February 21, 2024, at approximately 5:10pm Michigan State Troopers from the Iron Mountain Post responded to a single vehicle crash on Gibbs City Rd in Iron River Township. The driver, a 68-year-old Michigan resident, was treated at the scene by first responders, however succumbed to his injuries and was later pronounced dead. Michigan State Police Troopers were assisted by the Iron River Police Department, West Iron County Fire Department, Iron County Search and Rescue, and Aspirus Ambulance. The crash remains under investigation.

Media Contact:

20 – FEBRUARY – 2024
CRYSTAL FALLS MI

Amidst unfavorable economic conditions and higher gas prices in Iron County, the Iron County Board of Commissioners grappled with the question of adjusting mileage reimbursement rates for public servants at their February 13th meeting, something they might not be able to legally do.

Currently, Michigan state statutes limit mileage reimbursement rates for county commissioners to \$0.44 per mile. However, that's lower than some other counties in the area, according to Commissioner Patti Peretto. Peretto said during the meeting that Ontonagon County was at \$0.55 per per mile, and that Gogebic County paid out \$0.62 a mile.

The base rate is felt to be inadequate in light of rising fuel costs, and the region's challenging economic landscape coming out of a forceless winter, leaving the board questioning the fairness of that compensation when other state entities provide more. County Chair Mark Stauber said Michigan Works paid \$0.67 a mile.

However, County Legal Council Steve Tinti cautioned against straying from statutory limits, emphasizing the potential legal consequences that could arise if county officials were to exceed the authorized reimbursement rate.

While Tinti said he could not speak to what other counties were doing, he said that if a public official takes money beyond what the law allows, that action can be punished as a felony. He further stated that the statute on the books of the State Officers' Compensation Commission clearly said \$0.44 per mile.

He suggested that discussing this situation with the state legislature and asking for relief may prove to be more fruitful.

Ultimately, the county board decided to investigate their options further, tabling the discussion while they spoke with regional counterparts on the matter.

-30-

END OF STORY