

Due to administrative error, this report was late filed on July 14, 2021.

**QUARTERLY ISSUES
AND
PROGRAMS REPORT**

**WNEM TV5
WNEM-DT
BAY CITY/FLINT/MIDLAND AND SAGINAW**

APRIL 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

OVERVIEW

Based on WNEM's ascertainment of community leaders and from data gathered from community organizations, the highest-ranking problems and needs of the Bay City/Flint/Midland and Saginaw markets are:

1. Jobs/Economy
2. Crime
3. Weather
4. School/Campus
5. Politics

ISSUES AND PROGRAMS REPORT

OVERVIEW

The following is the quarterly “Issues and Programs” Report placed in the public file of WNEM at the open of business day July 10th, 2021. The report covers the period from April 1st through June 30th, 2021. The report is based on significant problems and needs determined by WNEM’s community ascertainment. Below each problem/need is a brief description of some news segments broadcast during the quarter designated to call attention to or address the problem or need.

BAY CITY/FLINT/MIDLAND AND SAGINAW

April 1 through June 30, 2021

DATE/PROGRAM ISSUE /TITLE SOURCE

1. JOBS & ECONOMY

04/08/2021 – 10:00p – Biden’s Jobs Plan – national

Runtime: 1:49

President Joe Biden is rallying support for his infrastructure plan. The multi-trillion-dollar proposal aims to upgrade roads and bridges in need of repair, as well as the building blocks of the modern economy, including broadband. Part of the proposal includes raising the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% to help pay for the package, but it’s getting pushback from Republicans and business groups.

04/12/2021 – 11:00p – Shut Down Michigan? Lawmakers Weigh In – Local

Runtime: 2:07

As COVID-19 cases skyrocket across Michigan, should the state shut down yet again? Governor Gretchen Whitmer doesn’t plan on it, instead she wants to out-vaccinate the variants and is requesting more vaccines from the federal government. However, the CDC director is recommending Michigan do another shut down instead. Republican lawmakers in Lansing hope the governor ignores the CDC’s recommendation. Both sides agree that shutdowns do hurt the economy, but also recognize the thousands of lives that have been lost to the virus.

05/21/2021 – 6:00p – Business Owner: It’s Hard To Find Help – Local

Runtime: 1:24

A growing number of businesses across Mid-Michigan have help wanted signs in their windows. Jason Warda owns four businesses in Fenton, including three bars and restaurants. He says finding help is challenging, because the longer pandemic restrictions were in place, the more the pool of workers shrank. He says businesses are also competing against enhanced unemployment benefits. Warda urges patrons to be easy on staff, restaurants and with online reviews while things get back to normal.

05/31/2021 – Noon – Workshops For Warriors – National

Runtime: 1:53

From the frontlines to production lines, veterans in San Diego are learning critical skills in manufacturing. Headquartered in California, Workshops for Warriors trains, certifies, and places veterans and transitioning service members into advanced manufacturing jobs. The 4-month program provides hands-on training in fields like welding and robotics. Veteran unemployment in the U.S. was 5.3% in April, up from 4.6% the previous month. 95% of veterans who graduate from the program find employment. The starting salary for a job is around \$60,000.

06/09/2021– 6:00p – Barney’s Bar & Grill Takes A Break – Local

Runtime: 1:40

Barney’s Bar and Grill in Bay City has temporarily closed its doors. The move was planned to install a new point-of-sale system, but also due to a lack of employees. Barney’s is seeking to add two or three cooks and build depth at all positions before reopening on July 6th, but new applicants are hard to come by. Numerous businesses across the Great Lakes Bay region are hiring. Barney’s believes it sticks out amongst the rest because its employees are treated like family.

06/14/2021 – 6:00p – Whitmer’s Child Care Plan – local

Runtime: 2:17

Governor Gretchen Whitmer is proposing using \$1.4 billion in federal funding to expand access to high-quality, affordable childcare. Whitmer says her plan will help people to return to work from the coronavirus pandemic with the peace of mind that their children are safe and learning. The childcare industry lost an estimated 172,000 jobs in the pandemic, making childcare hard to come by for many parents. The governor’s plan expands eligibility for subsidized childcare from 150% of the federal poverty level for a family of four, to 200%, making low or no-cost childcare available to an estimated 150,000 more Michigan children. It also offers premium pay for childcare professionals with quarterly stipends from July 2021 to September 2022.

2. CRIME

04/02/2021 - 6:00p – Gaines Township Police At Risk – local

Runtime: 1:39

The police department of Genesee County's Gaines Township is at risk of being dissolved. Voters of the community will decide the fate of the law enforcement agency when they vote on a police millage on May 4th. Some residents are voicing their concerns, saying local officers help keep the neighborhoods feeling safe, and even keep an eye on children as they walk to school. Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson says he understands the concern for police protection and wants to ensure the community that State Police and the Sheriff's Office will police the area in the interim.

04/09/2021 – 5:00p – Attack On Flint Postal Employee – local

Runtime: 1:33

Two women were caught on camera attacking a U.S. Postal Service employee outside of the River Village Apartments in Flint. In a press release, Flint Police said arrest warrants on two individuals will be presented to the Genesee County Prosecutor's Office. Prosecutor David Leyton says he wants all the witnesses to be interviewed and wants to look at some physical evidence before deciding on charges. In a statement, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service says, "The safety and well-being of postal service employees is a top priority for the U.S. Postal Inspection Service."

05/02/2021 – 11:00p – Increase In Flint Shootings – local

Runtime: 1:49

An uptick in violence in Flint has the entire community on edge. With an increase in fatal and non-fatal shootings, Julie Lope with Crime Stoppers urges witnesses and victims to forward. Flint Police Chief Terence Green held a press conference this week and says that even people who get shot and survive don't always cooperate with police and even admit who shot them. As of April 21, there have been 73 non-fatal shootings reported in the city of Flint. This compares to 31 non-fatal shootings through the same date in 2020. The number of shootings this year reflects a continuation of the increase in crime experienced throughout Michigan and the United States last year and associated with COVID-19. Chief Green adds that last year, the city of Flint experienced a 32% increase in homicides.

05/27/2021 – 6:00p – Human Trafficking Arrests – local

Runtime: 1:21

A 14-year-old was rescued after becoming a victim of human trafficking in Shiawassee County. Investigators were tipped off by a medical professional about an Owosso girl being treated at a local hospital. The tip led to the arrests of Eric Michael Boylan and Jeffrey Lynn Funsch in a multi-agency investigation. Boylan is a registered sex offender, and is now charged with several crimes, including first-degree criminal sexual conduct causing personal injury. Funsch is also facing felony charges including human trafficking of a minor for commercial sexual activity. State Police say this case serves as a reminder of how parents need to be aware of their children's activities.

06/02/2021– 6:00p – Expungement Fair In Flint – local

Runtime: 1:48

Excitement was in the air in Flint for the state's first expungement fair at the Genesee County Jail. Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed the so-called "Clean Slate Bill" in law in April, expunging residents' records of misdemeanor crimes and giving them a second chance. More than 1,000 people registered for the event, getting help to clear their criminal records of marijuana and other eligible convictions. More expungement fairs are being planned for later this year.

06/08/2021 – 11:00p – Mt. Pleasant Murder Latest – local

Runtime: 1:58

Isaiah Gardenhire was only partially arraigned after becoming disorderly during the arraignment and failing to cooperate. The 40-year-old is accused of killing a 13-year-old girl and sexually assaulting her mother in Mt. Pleasant. After that incident, police say Gardenhire hid out in a nearby apartment complex for some time, struck a tenant living at the building before entering the apartment, then held the male and female tenants hostage while sexually assaulting the female. Gardenhire was arraigned on a 12-count complaint, including homicide open murder and criminal sexual conduct. Gardenhire also was recently on bond for criminal sexual conduct in the second degree out of Mason County. He's now being held on a \$3,000,000 bond, and his arraignment is expected to be completed tomorrow.

3. WEATHER

04/11/2021 – 10:00p – Guatemala Floods – national

Runtime: 2:21

Entire communities in the Guatemalan Highlands have seen homes gutted and crops destroyed by floods. Many are still trying to recover after back-to-back hurricanes hit the area last fall. New research has shown a dramatic spike in severe weather in the region in the last decade. It's believed that the intensity and rainfall of the hurricanes that struck in the fall were magnified by climate change. Some residents are leaving their families behind with hopes of finding work in the U.S. to send money back home.

04/20/2021 – 6:00p – Freeze Warning Crop Dangers – local

Runtime: 1:21

A yield of thousands of bushels of apples are at risk this week at Leaman's Green Apple Barn in Freeland. The owners are bracing for cold temperatures over the next several nights, leaving apple blossoms that bloomed early in danger. A few degrees above or below freezing could mean the difference between losing some of the crop, or all of it. The orchard plans to bring in apples from surrounding orchards as they experience significant losses.

05/08/2021 - 6:00p – Flower Shop Shortages – Local

Runtime: 1:40

The cold snap that put Texas in the freezer earlier this year also hit South America. The majority of roses come from Ecuador, and the rose crop saw significant damages after snow and freezing weather hit the region. Gaudreau The Florist in Saginaw lost about a quarter of their product as a result, forcing prices to go up. Colored roses, Chrysanthemums, and Baby's Breath were the hardest hit flowers. After the pandemic set them back roughly 30% in 2020, Gaudreau's is slowly making up the difference this year with a spike in internet sales.

05/12/2021 – 6:00a – Farmers & COVID – local

Runtime: 3:18

The pandemic had a large impact on farmers and their bottom lines. While making gains in direct sales, many lost sales to institutions like restaurants and schools. That loss of business created an enormous amount of stress. A January 2020 study by the CDC found farmers die by suicide at more than a 30% higher rate than the average population. Farmers can have high debt loads, and they can't control the weather, equipment breakdowns, market prices, or even the future of their own land.

06/03/2021 – 6:00p – Heat, Drought And Farmers – local

Runtime: 1:07

At first, farmers throughout Mid-Michigan were concerned about freezing temperatures late in the season. Now, those concerns have turned to hot, dry conditions. A prolonged stretch of dry weather hasn't stopped farmers from planting crops like wheat, corn, and beans. The First Warn 5 forecast calls for temperatures to be in the 90's into next week with mostly dry conditions. It's not the weather farmers hoped for, and say if a consistent rainfall doesn't come soon, it could start impacting their bottom lines.

***06/26/2021 – 10:00p – Port Austin Storm Damage - Local
Runtime: 1:40***

Storms that moved through Mid-Michigan led to numerous tornado warnings, with one touching down in the Port Austin area. High winds caused wind turbines to spin at triple the normal speed. The National Weather Service confirmed an EF2 tornado toppled trees and damaged homes in the northern thumb region.

4. EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

***04/03/2021 – 10:00p – Study On Virus Spread In Schools – national
Runtime: 1:18***

When it comes to coronavirus, knowing how it spreads can help stop the spread. Researchers at Emory University teamed up with the CDC to study how the virus can move around in places like schools and daycares. They found surfaces are an important source of risk. Frequent cleaning is important in settings where people spend a lot of time indoors. The study suggests the best way to reduce risk is to avoid contaminating surfaces by wearing masks.

***04/11/2021 – 11:00p – Midland Public Schools Following Guidelines – local
Runtime: 1:48***

Midland Public Schools is following the state health department and Governor Gretchen Whitmer's recommendations by halting face-to-face learning, athletics, and clubs for two weeks. A group of parents gathered at the Midland Community Stadium parking lot to protest the decision. The district argues that refusing to follow the recommendations could result in the district losing protection under governmental immunity. The parents argue that the decision is not fair to students who are struggling academically and emotionally from the back-and-forth changes.

***05/01/2021 – 6:00p – Special Education Teacher Shortage – local
Runtime: 1:52***

The statewide teacher shortage is bad and appears to be getting worse. Shortages have been attributed to teacher burn out, inflexible standardized evaluations and the high cost of education needed to go into the field. The Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education says a severe shortage already existed before the pandemic. The state Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice announced a waiver application for special education teachers to go outside of their specialty to teach a wider array of special needs students. Many fear the shortage will linger and impact schools in the fall.

05/14/2021 - 6:00p – Ok2Say Program Results 2020 – local

Runtime: 1:36

Ok2Say is helping create safer environments for students statewide. School and law enforcement personnel using the confidential reporting system overwhelmingly credit Ok2Say with stopping harm before it happens. Nearly 3 of 4 say they were unaware of the problem before the tip was submitted. Ok2Say empowers students to help prevent violence and make their schools safe by confidentially reporting threatening behavior. Anyone can report tips on criminal activities or potential harm directed at students, school employees or schools. Tips can be submitted 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

06/07/2021 – 6:00p – Hemlock STEM Center Opens – local

Runtime: 1:25

A high-tech grand opening was held for the Lockwood STEM Center of Hemlock Public Schools. The center will be the home for robotics and other STEM-related programs in science, math, engineering, and technology. Hemlock Semiconductor Operations provided \$100,000 in funding for the center, as well as an additional \$25,000 in matching funds. The company is also encouraging other businesses and residents to support fully outfitting the center with tools and safety features. The Merrill, Swan Valley, St. Charles, Freeland, and Hemlock School Districts will all share the center.

06/27/2021 – WKND 10:00p – Michigan Budget Education – local

Runtime: 1:29

The state budget is a step closer to being complete, after the Michigan House of Representatives signed off on the spending plan late Thursday. Governor Gretchen Whitmer says she's pleased with the plan that includes a record investment in K-12 schools. The legislature also passed bills aimed at ending added federal unemployment benefits. As for the budget, it now heads to the state Senate with a July 1st deadline looming.

5. POLITICS

04/05/2021 – 5:30p – Georgia Voting Law -- national

Runtime: 1:34

The White House says President Joe Biden supports Major League Baseball's decision to move its All-Star Game out of Atlanta after Georgia passed new voting restrictions. The new Georgia law shrinks the window for sending in absentee ballots, limits the number of ballot drop boxes available to voters, gives more control of local elections to state lawmakers, and makes it a crime to give food or water to people waiting in line to vote. Georgia Governor Brian Kemp says while there was no fraud in the last election, the law is needed to keep future elections secure.

04/14/2021 – 10:00p – Unifying America – national

Runtime: 1:46

A 22-year-old man believes his generation could be the key to tackling America's political polarization. Manu Meel co-founded an organization called Bridge USA in 2017 after fiery protests erupted at his alma mater, U.C. Berkeley, over a planned visit from conservative provocateur, Milo Yannopoulos. Bridge USA now has 35 chapters across college campuses nationwide. Meel says three challenges uniting Gen-Z include economic mobility, democracy reform, and climate change.

05/05/2021 – 6:00p – Voters Approve Mental Health Millage – local

Runtime: 1:33

Voters approved the Genesee County Health Millage on Tuesday. The CEO of the Genesee Health System says it's an important step for the community. Dan Russell says Genesee Health System serves more than 13,000 residents suffering from mental health challenges annually. They will now be able to expand current services and introduce new ones to continue helping a vulnerable population. The goal is to care for people in an appropriate and compassionate setting.

05/11/2021 – 6:00p – Thin Blue Line Flag Controversy – local

Runtime: 1:38

The Flint chapter president of Black Lives Matter says he's against a resolution being considered by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners to honor police officers. If approved, the thin blue line flag would be flown at county buildings as part of police appreciation month. Dewaun Robinson with Black Lives Matter says the flag has been used to symbolize white supremacy. He argues police agencies should focus on reforming policies before appreciation for law enforcement is expressed.

06/21/2021 – 9:00a – Federal Voting Rights Act – national

Runtime: 1:29

Senator Bernie Sanders says he supports the “For the People Act”, which is federal voting legislation that was passed by the U.S. House and back by the White House. The “For the People Act” would, among other things, automatically enroll eligible citizens to vote, make almost two weeks of early voting standard, and outlaw gerrymandering, which is partisan efforts to redraw congressional districts for political gain. Currently, the bill does not have the 60 votes needed to pass the U.S. Senate.

***06/24/2021 – 5:30p – Rally For Antrim County Clerk – local
Runtime: 1:36***

Antrim County’s election results initially showed President Joe Biden winning the traditionally Republican county. That was the result of human error and the results were corrected in favor of former President Donald Trump. Despite a hand recount, and dismissal of a lawsuit, The Antrim County Clerk’s Office remains at the center of unproven claims of fraud, and attacks continue on Antrim County Clerk Sheryl Guy and her staff. County clerks from Midland, Muskegon, and Genesee County’s stood along side Guy in a rally for support. The Clerks say they worry about what the continued spread of election disinformation could have on future elections.