

**QUARTERLY ISSUES
AND
PROGRAMS REPORT**

WNEM TV5

WNEM-DT

BAY CITY/FLINT/MIDLAND AND SAGINAW

OCTOBER 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

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 January 10th, 2024. The report covers the period from October 1 through December 3, 2023. The report is based on significant problems and needs determined by WNEM’s community ascertainments. 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.

WNEM

BAY CITY/FLINT/MIDLAND AND SAGINAW

October 1 through December 31, 2023

DATE/PROGRAM ISSUE /TITLE SOURCE

1. JOBS & ECONOMY

10/6/2023 – 6 pm – Local United Way Helps UAW Workers During Strikes – Local – Runs 1:48

As the UAW strikes continues, impacted auto workers are starting to feel the financial pinch. The United Way of Genesee County is helping, by creating personal care packages to those displaced by the strikes. The United Way partnered with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. They are handing out 700 boxes a week, each weighing about 25 pounds filled with food and other basic necessities.

10/23/2023 – 5PM – Local UAW Member Supports Expansion of Strike – Local – Runs 2:19

The United Auto Workers Union has added another Michigan facility to its ongoing strike. Workers walked off the job on Monday, Oct. 23 at the Sterling Heights' Stellantis plant. The union said 6,800 members walked out of the plant that makes Ram trucks. Since the strike started on Sept. 15, 40,000 workers have joined the picket lines. "I agree with Shawn Fain and what he's saying. I think the company does have more to give. However, I don't know that we'll get that. But I have faith that the negotiators and everybody down in Detroit knows what they're doing," said Craig Simpson, with UAW Local 651.

11/21/2023 – 5:30PM - A New Spin on Small Business Saturday in Flushing – Local – Runs 2:34

The Flushing community is taking a new approach to Small Business Saturday. You can pick up your map at any of the participating stores the day of, or grab one from Bueche's Food World beforehand, to get an idea of where you want to go. At each store you patronize, you will collect signatures that you can exchange for tickets. For every five stores you shop at, you get a raffle entry. For every 10 stores, you get three raffle entries. The raffle entries go towards giant gift baskets from the shops participating.

11/30/2023 – 6pm – Reports Show Childcare Costs More Than College Tuition in Some States – Local – Runs 5:28

A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute found childcare is more expensive than in-state college tuition in 28 out of 50 states. The average annual cost for infant care in Michigan is \$10,861, or about \$905 per month. That's only 12.7 percent less than the cost of in-state tuition at a four-year public college. A typical family in Michigan spends 40 percent of its income on childcare alone.

12/20/2023 – 6pm – More Than \$17M of Investments Announced in Bay County – Local – Runs 2:00

Three economic development projects, totaling more than 17 million dollars are coming to Bay County. The largest is a new warehouse facility and distribution center for products made by Frito Lay. The project is expected to create nearly 50 jobs and they are currently hiring. The second project is the expansion of A global leak testing company, and the third is Bay City epoxy manufacturer who will invest more than half a million dollars into reconstructing and modernizing it's company headquarters.

12/22/2023 – 6pm – Buick Dealerships Taking Buyouts from GM as Company Transitions to Electric Vehicles – Local – Runs 2:19

Almost half of all the Buick dealerships across the country are opting to take buyouts from General Motors to drop the Buick brand rather than spend the money to sell electric vehicles. Tony Young owns four dealerships across the state. His Vasser dealership took the buyout. Young doesn't see the deal as losing a dealership, just losing a low volume franchise. By next year, GM says there will only be 1,000 Buick dealerships nationwide.

2. CRIME

10/18/2023 – 5pm – Sheriff: Suspect Shoots Himself: Investigators Still looking for Estranged Wife Believed to Be Victim – Local – Runs 3:42

The suspect in what Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson is calling a high-profile case shot himself in the head Wednesday morning, Swanson said, but his estranged wife is still missing.

The update comes after the sheriff's office urged the public to be on the lookout for a missing and endangered couple Tuesday night. That couple was identified as 60-year-old Kelly McWhirter and her estranged husband, 57-year-old Steven Higgins, both from Flushing.

10/20/23 – 6pm – Vigil Honors Victims of Domestic Violence as Search for Flushing Woman Continues – Local – Runs 2:49

A vigil held Friday morning was all about coming together to support Kelly McWhirter of Flushing and all those affected by domestic violence. An investigation began this weekend when 60-year-old Kelly McWhirter of Flushing and her estranged husband, Steven Higgins, were reported missing.

Police later located Higgins, pulling him over in Montrose Township. However, Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson said Higgins killed himself, and McWhirter was nowhere to be found.

While police continue to search for McWhirter, the community held a vigil on Friday, Oct. 20 in her honor and to honor others who have been victims of domestic violence.

11/14/2023 – 6pm – Rosebush Residents Recount Hours-Long Manhunt – Local – Runs 1:42

The town of Rosebush was on lockdown for several hours as police searched for a man they said was armed and dangerous. All residents were urged to shelter in place. Police initially went to check on someone who appeared to be slumped over their steering wheel, but the man drove off, leading to the pursuit. After the suspect's car either died or stalled out, he got out of his vehicle, took a shot at an officer, and ran into Mears - an energy infrastructure company - which had several employees inside at the time.

11/16/2023 – 5pm – Child Paralyzed in Drive-By Shooting; Family Looking for Answers – Local – Runs 2:45

Crime Stoppers is offering a \$1,000 reward for information in the unsolved case of a five-year-old boy left paralyzed from a drive-by shooting. It happened two years ago when Demarius, also known as Pete was hit by gunfire while sleeping in a Flint home, leaving him paralyzed. Now seven-years-old, Demarius requires around the clock care.

12/6/2023 – 5:30pm – Drones Help Police Fight Crime in Bay City – Local – Runs 1:40

The Bay City Police Department wants to make the city safer, one flight at a time. The department has purchased a \$30,000 drone as their new crime fighting tool. Officers will use it to canvas buildings, look into windows in barricaded situations, and help in the search for lost children. It also has night vision

and a camera that can zoom in from a far distance. The drone was paid for with drug forfeiture money and a grant from the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority.

12/26/2023 – 6pm – Parents of Teen Shot, Killed on Christmas Eve Speak Out – Local – Runs 2:14

The parents of a 15-year-old boy who was shot and killed inside a vacant Flint home Christmas Eve are speaking out about gun violence. They urge other parents to guide their children better, and are asking the city to tear down abandoned buildings, so they are don't become a dangerous playground for kids. Flint police have a 17-year-old in custody in connection with the double shooting. They are searching for two more suspects.

3. WEATHER

10/13/2023 – 11pm – Fans, Students Brave Weather for Heritage Homecoming Game – Local – Runs 1:42

Fall has finally arrived in Mid-Michigan. Football fans around the area are braving the cold and wet weather Friday night to support their teams on the field. Students and fans filled the bleachers for Heritage High School's homecoming game to support them rain or shine.

10/18/2023 – 5:30pm -DNR Shares Tips on Avoiding Deer-Vehicle Crashes – Local – Runs 1:48

Last year, there were nearly 60,000 crashes involving deer. Most of those happened in the months of October and November. A change in the weather and shorten daylengths is bringing deer out of their natural habitat, and drivers are seeing more and more of them along the road. While deer strikes may be inevitable, there are things drivers can do to avoid them. If driving thru a heavily wooded area, slow down and be more cautious. Don't swerve if you see a deer. Just hit the brakes and stay in your lane.

11/6/2023 – 6PM – Experts Share Winter Weather Preparedness Tips- Local – Runs 2:19

As winter approaches, so do the brutal storms that come with it. That's why Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declared this week "winter hazards awareness week" to get us all ready. State police and local departments are echoing Whitmer's message with some tips to prepare your home and vehicle for winter. Whitmer along with the Michigan State Police (MSP) Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (EMHSD) are urging Michiganders to make winter emergency preparedness a priority.

11/16/2023 – 5:30PM – Local Road Commissions Prepare for Winter – Local – Runs 1:18

Winter is coming and local communities are preparing. The Genesee County Road Commission (GCRC) had a training on Thursday Nov. 16 where drivers got behind the wheel of the plow trucks and tested their abilities on maneuvering the truck and its controls. As we get closer to having snow on the ground, the GCRC is getting itself prepared for wintry conditions. The commission took its snow plow drivers out on an obstacle course, giving them some hands-on training before the weather fully hits us.

12/4/2023 – 4pm – How Could El Nino Impact Michigan This Year? – Local – Runs 3:22

TV5 First Alert Meteorologist Diane Phillips talks to a Central Michigan University Professor about how the El Nino Weather pattern could affect Mid-Michigan this winter.

12/7/2023 – 11pm – Task Force Announces Cost Estimate to Rebuild 4 Mid-Michigan Dams – Local – Runs 1:54

Work is progressing on rebuilding four dams that will hold in the mid-Michigan lakes that drained in 2020, but that work comes with a big price tag.

Property owners who will be paying to restore the lakes drained by the flood of 2020 have a clearer picture of what they might be paying in the future. Members of the Four Lakes Task Force hosted an informational webinar Wednesday night, Dec. 6, offering a possible price tag on the work. The price of the work has gone up to an estimated \$350 million to repair and restore the Secord, Smallwood, Edenville, and Sanford dams. Four Lakes Task Force representatives agree that while the dams are separate, the lakes they form are connected, which is why they are looking at a generally uniform price in a special assessment district that would cover maintenance and operations for five years.

4. EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

10/16/2023 – 11pm – Saginaw High Holds Community Meeting to Address Concerns – Local – Runs 1:55

Complaints about the condition of Saginaw High School involving its bathrooms and food concerns were addressed during a special community meeting. Laying down concerns that the community has about the condition of Saginaw High School, the superintendent and the school's administration engaged with the public to give them a proper guideline on how to best address issues and concerns moving forward.

10/25/2023 – 11pm – New FAFSA Requirement Proposed for High School Graduation – Local – Runs 1:52

Newly proposed legislation may add another requirement for Michigan's High School Seniors to meet before graduation. The state legislature is considering requiring all high school seniors to fill out Free Application for Federal Student AID (FAFSA) in order to get their diploma. Students could obtain a waiver if they are ineligible or if their parents choose not to fill out the form. The bill passed through the Senate Education Committee and will now head to the full Senate.

11/03/2023 – 6PM – Montrose Community Schools' Bond Proposal on the Ballot – Local – Runs 2:19

Montrose Community Schools is hoping its bond proposal gets a passing grade from voters on Tuesday. It is a zero mil increase. The idea is to extend out the bond that we currently have in place," said Linden Moore, the superintendent for Montrose Community Schools. This means residents will not pay more in taxes. The current bond, which is proposed to be extended, goes out until 2031. If passed on Nov. 7, it would be extended to 2046 and would net a total of \$15.9 million.

11/8/2023 – 11PM – Hemlock Students Host Special Thanksgiving Dinner for Veterans and First Responders – Local – Runs 2:00

A group of students in Hemlock prepared an early Thanksgiving dinner for veterans and first responders as a small way of saying thank you for their service. The students have been planning the special meal for two weeks, preparing and serving all of the Thanksgiving classics themselves. "Each of my students every year is allowed to invite a veteran or first responder that they know and, in turn, that veteran or first responder gets to also invite a guest so that two of them can enjoy a fabulous meal," said Leann Gerard, a teacher at Hemlock High School.

12/8/2023 – 6pm – Oxford School Shooter Sentenced to Life Without Parole – Local – Runs 2:07

The Oxford High School shooter has been sentenced to life in prison without parole.

On Friday, Dec. 8, a judge sentenced Ethan Crumbley, the teen who pleaded guilty to killing four students and injuring seven other people during the shooting on Nov. 30, 2021. Before the judge sentenced Crumbley, victims of the shooting addressed the court and asked the judge to sentence the shooter to life in prison without the possibility of parole. He also ordered that Crumbley is not to have any contact with the families of the murdered victims, nor is he to have contact with several of the survivors or their families.

12/15/2023 – 6pm – Flint Schools Enforcing No Cellphone, Hoodie Policy Starting in 2024 – Local – Runs 1:45

Flint Community Schools has amended its code of conduct to include a no cellphone and hoodie policy within school buildings and school buses when students return to school after the Christmas Break. School administrators say the new policy is to address safety concerns and encourage personal responsibility by controlling the use of cellphones and the wearing of hoodies. The new policies were approved by the school board at a recent meeting and comes after several altercations inside Flint's Southwestern Academy.

5. POLITICS

10/18/2023 – 11pm – Flint Officials Divided Over Metal Detector – Local – Runs 2:17

Safety measures inside Flint's City Hall is leading to fights among the city's elected officials. Metal Detectors were recently installed to ensure city council meetings are a safe place for everyone to attend according to Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley. He added that past incidents during the council meetings warranted the installation. But some council members fear the detectors will deter some city residents to attend meetings, due to the second amendment and their right to bear arms.

10/27/2023 – 11pm – Flint City Council Holds Special Meeting on ARPA Funds – Local – Runs 2:08

Flint City Council held a special meeting as they continue to decide on how to spend millions of dollars from the American Rescue Plan. The first hour of the meeting was spent on in-fighting among city council meetings, with no discussion on ARPA Funds. During the public comment portion of the meeting, residents spoke up about their concerns with the council's infighting. Three hours in to the meeting, the council passed a resolution to spend \$1M in ARPA funds on the Flint RX Kids Program. The council has until December 31 to allocate the rest of the money.

11/07/2023 – 5:30PM – Lawsuit Filed Against Flint Mayor, council Over Gun-Free Zone – Local – Runs 1:48

Three Flint residents and three gun groups have filed a lawsuit against the City of Flint's Mayor Sheldon Neeley, and city council over City Hall's gun-free zone. The plaintiffs are seeking a permanent, preliminary injunction and declaratory relief to stop the city's "unlawful practice of purposeful and targeted exclusion from open meetings of those who seek to ensure their own personal safety." The lawsuit, filed Friday, Nov, 3, said the ban on weapons infringes on citizen's rights who lawfully carry firearms for personal protection but noted councilmembers can carry personal protection. The lawsuit also alleged a violation of the state's Open Meetings Act (OMA), by excluding gun owners from Flint City Council meetings.

11/9/2023 – 11pm – Flint Business Owner Voices Frustrations with City Council – Local – Runs 2:37

Tension continues to derail the Flint City Council as council members fail to approve a plan to spend American Rescue Plan Act funds and now a local business owner says the council inability to get things done is hurting his bottom line. Dan Wright, the food and beverage manager of Flint's new Hilton

Garden Inn is waiting for members to take up a resolution that would end the ban on Sunday morning liquor sales. It first came up in October but hasn't been discussed since. The law allows early Sunday liquor sales with a permit, but the city of Flint opted out, completely banning sales on Sunday morning. The Hilton has been paying for a permit for three years, and if the city council can put their differences aside, it could mean a new experience for people to enjoy downtown Flint.

12/12/2023 – 11pm – Flint Mayor Delivers State of the City Address – Local – Runs 2:33

Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley gave his State of the City address touching on the struggles the city is facing with the hurdles it has overcome. The mayor highlighted the \$2Billion of investments that has been committed to the city over the past 12 months. Neeley concluded his speech with the announcement of a new City of Flint Customer Service Center opening on the northside in January 2024 and a call for a feasibility study to be done for a new City Hall.

12/19/2023 – 11pm – Proposal on Ballot to Allow More Marijuana Growth in Caro – Local – Runs 1:51

Voters in the city of Caro will have a decision to make in February after a group of citizens received enough signatures to place a new proposal on the ballot to raise the number of adult-use marijuana grower licenses in the city. The additional licenses to grow would bring additional revenue in to the city.