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Team Hodges celebrates 60 years



Courtesy photo
 Team Hodges is celebrating 60 years of service in 2026, with many special events planned. Pictured, three generations of Hodges men – Jeff, Ron, (late) Ben, Terry and Terry Jr.

BY LAURA BENDER

For 60 years, the Hodges family has been helping the community find the right vehicle to fit their needs. Family sedans, work trucks, midlife crisis sports cars, soccer-mom SUVs, off-road rides, first cars - Team Hodges is the place to go. From sales to service to repair, they have helped folks maintain safe and comfortable transportation through all seasons

and life changes.

In September of 1966, Ben and Lillian Hodges bought Smith Motors and renamed it Ben Hodges Chevrolet-Oldsmobile. Ben was no stranger to the automobile business. He had started out working as a gas station attendant at age 18. Soon after, he was hired by George Wright of Wismer-Wright Chevrolet to do maintenance work. Over time, he

learned every job in the garage.

In 1951, after several years managing the parts department, he moved to the showroom, eventually becoming general manager. By the 1960s, Ben was ready to own his own dealership.

Ben Hodges Chevrolet-Oldsmobile was originally located at 120 Houghton Ave., where Cuzins' Cycle is now. In addition to

HODGES continues on page 3 »

Ogemaw County Salvation Army: Red Kettle collects over \$46k

BY LAURA BENDER

If you shop at Walmart in West Branch from Thanksgiving to Christmas, you will be greeted at the door by the Salvation Army bell ringer. These volunteers brave snow, sleet and frigid weather to receive donations in the iconic red kettle in support of those in need in Ogemaw County. This year, 427 volunteers representing 30 local organizations and businesses rang the bell. It makes a difference to see familiar and trusted faces standing by the kettle.

"We collected \$46,204 this year!" said Ellen Pugh, who coordinated the effort on behalf of the Salvation Army. "What a community!"

KETTLE continues on page 3 »



Courtesy photo
 Longtime Salvation Army bell ringer Mike Pugh, of West Branch, makes his annual visit with Santa.

2025 - The year in pictures

BY DEANNA SURBROOK

Happy New Year from the Ogemaw County Superior News, and what a year it's been. This community never ceases to amaze us with its rich history, heartwarming stories and interesting residents.

From West Branch to Rose City, over to Skidway Lake and everywhere in between, we have the joy and the privilege of bringing you only the positive news taking place right here in our county.

As we look back, we offer our sincerest thanks to our dedicated readers and loyal advertisers. We honestly couldn't do any of this without you.



Here's to 2026.

If you have a story or good news to report in 2026, e-mail Publisher Deanna Surbrook at deanna@superior-news.com or call 989-482-7695. We will be glad to hear from you.

2025 continues on page 6 »

Ogemaw County Helping Hands celebrates five years of community service

BY LAURA BENDER

In 2020, the world turned upside down. The pandemic caused the closure of schools, businesses, and houses of worship, and canceled beloved community events. In our community, more families struggled with finances at a time when local helping organizations were unable to meet or raise money from their usual events.

Seeing the unmet needs of neighbors and friends, sisters Emily and Kaylin Munsell and their friend, Teresa Noel, created a Facebook page called Ogemaw County Helping Hands to connect those in need with those who could provide support.

"What began as a small effort to support neighbors in need has become a lasting organization serving families across Ogemaw County," Emily said. "As we celebrate our five-year anniversary, we're proud of how much this mission has grown since its founding during the COVID pandemic."

In 2020, Ogemaw County Helping Hands assisted 34 families during the holidays. The number has increased every year.

- 65 families in 2021
- 109 families in 2022

- 131 families in 2023
- 165 families in 2024
- 253 families in 2025

"Many local people struggle with food insecurity, housing instability, and other difficulties," Emily said. "Helping those in need strengthens the fabric of the community. Over the past five years, Ogemaw County Helping Hands has provided food, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, clothing, toys, and winter gear to hundreds of local families. This growth would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, board members, donors, and community partners. We are truly thankful for their support."

To volunteer, contact ogemawhelpinghands@gmail.com. To provide specific help to a family in need or to offer a specific item, check out the Ogemaw County Helping Hands Facebook page year-round: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/818838255607573>



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With everything changing daily, if not hourly, we would advise that you call ahead to be sure the event is still scheduled.

Ongoing
Mondays - Disabled American Veterans meet the third Monday, 5 p.m. at the VFW/American Legion Post 496 E. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call 989-473-3416.
Mondays - Rose City Lions Club meets the second and fourth Monday, 6:30 p.m. at the Log Cabin in the Rose City Park. Call Ed 989-387-0609.
Mondays - (Second of each month) Coalition of Hope 9 a.m. Meeting virtually. Suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention. Call 989-345-5571.
Monday - (Third of each month, April-Dec.) Ogemaw County Genealogical and Historical Society 12:30 p.m. at the Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 E. Houghton Ave., West Branch. Call 989-701-2525.
Tuesdays - Kiwanis Club of West Branch meets at noon at China Inn, 601 W. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call 989-345-0978.
Tuesdays - Rose City Area Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., April through November, except August. Meet at the Rose City Lions Club Cabin. Call Cathy 989-345-5659.
Tuesdays - T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) weigh in at 1-1:30 p.m., meeting starts at 1:30-2 p.m. Ogemaw Hills Free Clinic, 2106 S. Gray Rd. in West Branch. Call Robin 989-343-0592.

Tuesdays - (First of each month) West Branch Creative Arts Association meeting, 7 p.m. located at 124 N. Fourth St. in West Branch. Call 989-345-1451.
Tuesdays - (First of each month) West Branch Area Retail Merchants Association meeting, 6 p.m. Held at the West Branch City Police Department. Call 989-345-5226.
Tuesdays - (Second of each month) Christian Motorcycle Association 6 p.m. for food and fellowship, 7 p.m. business meeting at G's Pizzeria, 200 W. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call Gary 989-343-9876.
Tuesdays - (Fourth of each month) Rifle River Quilt Guild 9:30 a.m. at the K of C Hall, 601 Columbus Dr. in West Branch. The meeting will be followed by a Show and Tell, mini-classes, quilting tips, demos and time to sew. Bring your sewing machine, a project and your lunch. Any level of quilter is welcome. Call Diane 989-345-7206.
Tuesdays - (Third of each month) Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake. Third Tuesday 5:30 p.m. at Café International, 4761 Sage Lake Rd. in Prescott. Call Janet 989-387-2640.
Tuesdays - (Second of each month) Survivors of Suicide Support Group 6:30 p.m. Call Vicki 989-510-0911 or info@coalitionofhope.net for location. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255

or text 741741.
Tuesdays - (Fourth of each month) Ogemaw County Democratic Party 5pm at China Inn downtown West Branch. Call Ken at (989) 345-1066.
Tuesdays - (Fourth of each month) Ogemaw County Republican Party meeting 5:30 p.m. at G's Pizzeria in downtown West Branch. Call Kristine 989-343-5120.
Tuesday - (Last of each month) Diabetes Support Group 1-2 p.m. Medical Arts Center, diabetes education conference room. Call 989-343-3276.
Wednesdays - West Branch Area Business and Professional Women's Organization meets the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Different locations each month. Call 989-745-4067 for information.
Wednesdays - (First of each month) Veterans coffee hour 9-10 a.m. Held at the Ogemaw County Commission on Aging, 1528 S. M-33 in West Branch. Call 989-345-3010.
Wednesdays - (First and third) Grief Support Group 6:30 p.m. Faith Alive Church, 2945 Hansen Rd. in West Branch. Open to the entire community. Call 989-345-5440.
Thursdays-GriefShare Support Group. 2-4 p.m. Fresh Start Community Church, 690 Campbell Rd., West Branch. March 7 through

May 30. \$20 for workbook. Scholarships available. Call Brenda 989-312-0105 for registration or info.
Thursdays - (First and third of each month) Newborn Parent Support Group 6-7:30 p.m. My-Michigan Health - West Branch in the executive dining room. Call 800-999-3199.
Thursdays - Northern Blend Sweet Adelines meets every week 7 p.m. at Logan Township Hall, 4507 E. M-55, Prescott. Call Ellen 989-345-0978.
Thursdays - (Second and fourth) Sit & Knit, 1 p.m. Knitting, needlework, and friendship. Whatever you craft. Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 1528 S. M-33 in West Branch. Call Alicia 989-345-3010, ext. 201.
Thursdays - (Third of each month) Rose City/Lupton Chamber of Commerce meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Rose City Council Chambers. Call Carl 989-473-3268.
Thursdays - Optimist Club of West Branch meets at 7 a.m. at the Loggers Depot in West Branch. Call 989-942-6608.
Thursdays - The Ogemaw County Fair board meets the first Thursday of each month in the main building at the fairgrounds. Call 989-345-5393.

Jan 31
Texas Hold'em Tournament, Saturday, Jan. 31, hosted by Max-Well Therapy Center, 2 p.m., West Branch Moose Lodge, 1731 W. State Rd., West Branch. Max-Well's goal is to enhance the lives of kids through the use of animal assisted activities. For more information, visit www.maxwelltherapycenter.org.

Feb 14
St. Joseph Trivia Night, Saturday, Feb. 14, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall, 601 Columbus Dr., West Branch. \$25 per person, sold by tables of eight. Dinner and two drink tickets included. Tickets are not sold at the door. Contact St. Joseph School, 989-345-0220, for tickets.

Apr 14
Fourth annual 'Nite at the Races', hosted by Max-Well Therapy Center, Saturday, April 11, 5:30 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall, 601 Columbus Dr., West Branch. Max-Well's goal is to enhance the lives of kids through the use of animal assisted activities. For more information, visit www.maxwelltherapycenter.org.

To place your event in the Community Happenings, email information to deanna@superior-news.com

FAITH & WORSHIP

God is love

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 —Romans 8:37-39 NIV

God is love. And He loves us all no matter where we are in life. God's love is unconditional. God's love is without limit. God loves us so much and his love is so deep that nothing can change his love or stop him from loving us.

God loves us in all seasons of life. God loves us every second of everyday. God loves us. God's love is permanent. God's love can never fade away.

God loves us and because of his love he cares for us. God Himself his love. God is full of love.

When I am waking up it's God loving me. God loves me in every situation and his love is always present in our lives. Even when I am not feeling well, his love is still there and yes I am not feeling well but that does not stop God from loving me, God does not want me to be in pain but his love is present to heal me of the pain. When I feel disappointed God loves me.

When I have failed God loves me. We need to start believing and accepting that God is love and he loves us deeply.
 — www.SermonCentral.com

Gladwin Cornerstone Baptist Church

3925 Round Lake Road,
 Gladwin, MI 48624
 989-426-6897

Sunday School 9:30
 Morning Worship 10:30
www.gladwincornerstone.com
 Pastor Scott Bradstreet

Churchill United Methodist Church

501 E. State Rd.
 (corner of State and Morrison roads)
 989-685-2350

Worship & Children's
 Sunday School: 11:30 a.m.
 Rev. Helen Alford

Calvary Baptist Church

235 Minzer Ct. • West Branch
 989-345-1651

Sunday School - 9:45 a.m. all ages
 Sunday Worship 11 a.m. • Youth Group - 5:30 p.m.
 Sunday Evening Service - 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
 Youth Group - 6:30 p.m. • Awana - 6:30 p.m.
 Wednesday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 7 p.m.
 Pastor Emeritus Tom Teal
www.cbcbw.org

Edward's Community Church

4520 Greenwood Rd., West Branch
 989-345-4227

Pastor Jon Scott
 Sunday School 10 a.m.
 Worship Service 11 a.m.
 (Greenwood Rd. west of S. M-30)

Hale Methodist Church

Everyone Welcome!
 Sunday Worship - 10am; Sunday School - 11am



Women's Life Group,
 Youth Group & Bkfst,
 Men's Breakfast

201 W Main/Esmond, Hale; 989-728-9522
 FB & IG: Hale Methodist Church

New Beginnings Lutheran Church

960 S. M-33, next to Ogemaw Heights High School, West Branch, MI
 Pastor Daniel Jansen
 989-836-6133
 Sunday Service - 9 a.m.

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989-915-1377

Hodges

« Continued from page 1



Team Hodges as it stands today.

Courtesy photos

selling cars, Ben also built a maintenance garage, which the business quickly outgrew.

In the early 1970s, Ben purchased property on the I-75 Business Loop. He took an active role in the preparation of the land, as well as the design and construction of the new dealership. In August 1973, he opened for business.

In 1994, Ben sold the business to his sons, Terry and Ron Hodges, who renamed it Team Hodges. Today the family business is run by Terry's son, Terry, Jr., and Ron's son, Jeff. Will there be a next generation to maintain Team Hodges into the future? If you stop by when school is not in session, you might see Jeff's eighth-grade son, Jeff, proudly wearing his Team Hodges uniform while raking leaves and shoveling snow, literally learning the business from the ground up, like his great-grandfather.

Although Team Hodges is celebrating the 60th anniversary of their business, it must be mentioned that in those 60 years, Ben, Ron, Terry, Jeff, Terry Jr. and their families have done more than just sell vehicles. They have been good neighbors. As an extended family, they have been instrumental in the life of the community, taking an active role in local charities and organizations. Among these are the Kiwanis Club, the Masons, the Pioneer Tractor Club, the creation of the West Branch Airport, with its fly-ins and charitable events, and many golf tournaments.

When Ben Hodges opened his dealership in 1966, the vehicle of choice was a Chevy Impala. In



The late Ben Hodges

1973, when the dealership moved to its current location, the bestselling vehicle was the Chevy Monte Carlo. Today it is the Chevy Silverado. Over time, vehicle styles, amenities and functions have changed. At Team Hodges, what hasn't changed is their commitment to excellence, both in the conduct of their business, and in their outreach to the community in which they live and work. Next time you stop in, remember not only to congratulate Team Hodges on their 60th business anniversary but also to thank them for their 60 years of caring.

To celebrate the milestone anniversary of Team Hodges and to thank their customers for decades of support, the community is invited to participate in 12 months of events and specials.

Among these are:

- For every vehicle purchased in January, Team Hodges will donate \$60 to charity.
- Every 60th customer in February will win a prize.
- In September, the staff of Team Hodges will complete 60 acts of kindness in the community.
- In November, there will be a 60th Anniversary Open House with food and activities for all

ages,

Check their website <https://www.teamhodgeschevy.com/> each month to see the specials they have planned for the year. In addition to the calendar of events, Team Hodges has challenged each department to post a list of 60 tips to help customers have an easier buying experience or learn basic information about service, maintenance and repair for their vehicles.

For more information, visit Team Hodges at 2265 S. M-76 in West Branch or call 989-345-1022.



Ben Hodges Chevy Oldsmobile in downtown West Branch.

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Kettle

« Continued from page 1

Last year in Ogemaw County, Salvation Army caseworkers processed 271 requests for help with utility bills, rent, emergency repairs, transportation, firewood, and other necessities. These requests provided assistance to 634 people. The total spent to meet our neighbor's needs for the fiscal year 2024-2025 was \$106,096.99. This includes money collected in the red kettles over the holidays, money from the Michigan Emergency Assistance Program (MEAP) and other gifts.

A team of four volunteer caseworkers is available Tuesdays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon at First United Methodist

Church on the corner of Fairview and State roads in West Branch. These volunteers meet with those in need to help them find resources. If you need help, bring your bill, eviction or shut-off notice, your ID, your State Emergency Relief letter from DHHS, and be prepared to fill out a few forms.

Thanks to all who braved the cold and inclement weather to ring the bell. Thanks to all who made donations to ensure their neighbor's emergency needs can be met. Your generosity not only provides monetary help, it shows the love and concern that makes Ogemaw County a special place to live.

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Here's to a 'kinder' 2026

BY DEANNA SURBROOK

"There are better things ahead than any we leave behind." – C.S. Lewis

Well, here we are again – the beginning of a new year.

While some of us had a great 2025, others were glad to see it go.

There is nothing really magical about the flip of the calendar, but it does represent a fresh start, a new hope and a blank canvas. Picture an empty book and each day represents a new page for us to write. I do realize, however, that some things are out of our control, but that's the time we need to lean on God even more to get us through.

It's also that time of year, many people make their New Year's resolutions. To succeed, experts suggest making goals very specific, realistic, and small to start, focusing on building habits rather than drastic change. Common resolutions include getting fit, saving money, learning a skill, reducing screen time, or improving work-life balance, with many people finding success by making actionable plans.

I find it interesting that only about three in 10 U.S. adults make a resolution. By late January, 59 percent kept all, 28 percent some, and 13 percent none.

As I got to thinking of my resolutions this year, I found myself coming up empty. Everything just seemed to not matter in the

greater scheme of things.

For me personally, 2025 was a challenging year being a single mom of five children, running a business, the challenge of maintaining healthy relationships and furthering my walk with God.

Some days were easy and I just breezed right through. Others were hard fought battles that took every ounce of energy I had.

The three weeks leading up to Christmas were especially difficult as I had to deal with a major loss in my life. I was shocked, sad and yes, even a little angry.

On one of my shopping trips to Walmart, a woman made a nasty comment to me when she mistakenly thought I was trying to cut in front of her in line. Upset already, I let her know I wasn't, but you should have heard my tone of voice. I also muttered something unpleasant underneath my breath.

As I got in my car, I was seething. How dare she? Who does she think she is? Why couldn't people just be kinder?

But then again, I thought to myself, why couldn't I?

Maybe she was having a bad day too. Perhaps it was something way worse than what I was dealing with. I will never know, but I still feel guilty of how I

responded to her. I could have just smiled, offered a brief explanation and went on my way.

Kindness is not just about how you treat others, but also how you treat yourself. In 2026, give yourself some grace when you screw up. Be gentle and allow yourself rest and forgiveness without guilt. Oh, that's a hard one, isn't it?

Take time for yourself and appreciate your body and mind. Sleep, work on your nutrition and daily engage in things you enjoy.

I also want to practice more gratitude this year. How often do we really say a heartfelt "thank you" or "I appreciate you?"

I'm going to compliment people more often as well. Hey, stranger in the grocery store, "I love your shoes." I guarantee you'll receive a big smile in return. When you do compliment, be genuine. People can tell the difference.

Lastly, this is huge for me. There is nothing wrong with setting boundaries. Choose people and situations that bring peace and have the courage to walk away from disrespect. Another hard one, but we can do this.

I'm resolving to have a great 2026. Won't you join me?



DEANNA SURBROOK

Museum has a good year in 2025

BY SALLY A. REA

The new furnace was a blessing for us and no more worries if the museum will be cold and the building is now very comfortable. A lot of new artifacts, Family Research, April's Art Walk and Wine Tasting, the "Music on the Porch" June, July, and August, and the Civil War Encampment and Re-enactment the second weekend in July.

The museum has been very fortunate to have Amy Gildner Fransee bring her artifacts for us to display from an old cabin that once stood behind her home. Her

displays were amazing and our visitors and school children enjoyed them so much. Amy had a dream and wanted her husband, Dan, to build her a cabin like the one that used to stand on their property. Well guess what, Dan, with the help from the Amish, is making her dream come true. When the cabin is done, I will post a picture.

If you missed seeing Amy's displays,

I am sure she will share them all again. Dan told me at the family Christmas that when he was digging the foundation he found buried in the ground the rest of the old wood stove. Amy had found one buried lid in her digs. She is truly living our "Mission Statement" of "Preserving Our Heritage." If I had to pick my favorite story for 2025, I'd pick Amy's story.



SALLY A. REA
HISTORIAN AND
CURATOR

MUSEUM continues on page 5 »




Optimist Updates

The Optimist Club of West Branch meets every Thursday morning at 7 a.m. at Loggers Depot in downtown West Branch. We would love to have you come and join us for breakfast and let us show you what the Optimist Club is working on next to benefit the children of our community and the world.

Local students were invited in October to participate in the Optimist Essay Contest. Students were asked to write an essay on this year's topic: "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me!" Local winners can win up to \$500 dollars and go on to compete at the state level. State competition pays \$2,500 for first place, \$1,500 for second and \$1,000 for third place. If you have a student who may be interested in competing, please reach out to our club at Loggers Depot Thursdays or contact their teachers.

Every year in March the Optimist Club holds a Camel Race fundraiser at the West Branch Knights of Columbus Hall. This year's event will be on Mar. 21 and it is the highlight of our year. Thirty-six camels compete on the table top race track and you bet on each race using camel bucks that are purchased at the event. The camels are all decorated by their sponsors who compete to win the best-looking camel prize.

It is a great way to support the kids in our community because all of the money raised that night is invested back in our children through scholarships and all of the children-focused events that we put on each year. So, shake off those midwinter blues and come join us for an exciting night of racing.

We close each meeting by reciting the Optimist Creed, part of which states: "Promise yourself to greet every living being you meet with a smile!" What a great way to approach your life.

'Bye for now.'

Kiwanis of West Branch
Gourmet Nuts are still available for \$25. You can buy yours at Mercantile Bank and Bucks. If you want to help, come be a part of our team.

The Kiwanis Club meets at noon on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at the G's Pizzeria. Anyone interested in learning about our organization is welcome to attend.

If you would like to be a guest speaker to show us what you do, text Denny at 315-725-1199. If you want to help the children of West Branch and around the world, we are here.

Aktion Club of West Branch

The Aktion Club continues to collect bottles and cans. You can call 315-725-1199 and make arrangements for pick up or drop off locations.

We are in the planning stages of a Valentine Dance on Feb. 13. Watch for the flyers we have around town or text Denny at 315-725-1199 for more information.

Those with special needs interested in joining our club, you have to be over 18 and completed school. Come on the second Wednesday of the month at noon at the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Fairview and State streets.

Ogemaw County Food Pantry
Looking for donations of



KIWANIS CORNER

food or money to help us with the influx of families. We supported over 267 families in the month of December. You can add to your grocery bill at Meijer Store with cards found at the checkouts or customer service. We will take donations every Wednesday of the month from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. We are located in the outreach building behind the Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 E. Houghton Ave., PO Box 543, West Branch. We want to thank those that have donated. If bad weather, call or text ahead at 315-725-1199 to see if we are open. We are open every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 11a.m. or until we run out of food. Families can come once a month. We want to thank those individual donors for their generosity at this special time. We also have several businesses to thank. Star Bucks, General Dollar stores of West Branch and St. Helen, and last but not least KFC. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Food Truck

The monthly food truck will be at the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Fairview and State streets on Jan. 16. Line-up begins at 9 a.m. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



DENNY SHUMWAY

Ogemaw County Superior News

The *Ogemaw County Superior News* is published the second and fourth Saturdays of the month and distributed in West Branch, Rose City, Prescott, Lupton, Alger, Skidway Lake and Hale. It is available at newsstands for 75 cents per issue or annually for \$50.

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News from the Skidway Lake area

BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON

With the weather lately we have had a lot of business closings due to dangerous roads. We are all at the mercy of Mother Nature when the weather is so dangerous. Everyone should plan for these kinds of days every year. Knowing there will be times your driveway and road may be too icy to navigate, always have gallons of water stored for emergency use. You can melt buckets of snow to flush the toilets.

If the power goes out, get yourself a back up heat source that does not require electricity and is safe for indoor use. Keep all your cupboard doors open where there is plumbing to keep them from freezing. Your food in the fridge can be put in plastic totes or a cooler and put in a snowbank to keep it good.

I know everyone can't afford a generator but that is your best option if you can. If you have a generator, make sure you keep

back up gas to run it. If you have kids, use the time with no electricity for electronics to read from books. Playing table games is always a great way to keep them busy too. For meals that you don't have to cook there is always the good Ole PBJ sandwich. Canned goods to stock up for emergency situations include tuna fish, spam, chicken, beans, fruits, and any home canned foods you have. You can freeze a couple loaves of bread so you would have bread to use for sandwiches.

Remember to rotate your emergency food storage so things do not get outdated. If you have an elderly neighbor, please check on them. It is so dangerous for the elderly to walk on ice. See if they are OK and if you can bring the

mail in to them.

There is ice racing on Skidway Lake planned by Glenn Stellwag on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 1 p.m. For more details contact Glenn Stellwag on Facebook. It is sponsored by 989 Raceway.



APRIL HARKEY-MASON

Years ago, there was snowmobile and motorcycle racing on the ice, and it was quite a gathering. Glenn is calling the event Frozen Fury ice race on Skidway Lake. I am sure there will be more things added as the plans come together. It sounds like fun. Anyone wishing to participate contact Glenn for the rules and information needed.

Remember, if you have any news to share with me, call or text 989-578-8768. Until next time, God Bless.

January is School Board Recognition Month

BY GAIL HUGHEY

This is a time to recognize the individuals who approach their volunteer work with the same dedication as a full-time job, and with extraordinary commitment to public schools. They are citizens whose decisions affect our children and build our community.



GAIL HUGHEY
SUPERINTENDENT
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SCHOOLS

School boards are charged with making decisions that can sometimes be quite difficult or require sifting through a great deal of information. They contribute hundreds of hours each year while leading our West Branch-Rose City Area School District.

Collectively, school board members across the state spend more than 7,500 hours on professional development to keep well-informed of the latest trends in educational leadership, are deeply involved in community activities, and spend many hours at extracurricular events.

Through their dedication, collaboration with other school district staff, their governance, and advocacy, they are building the

future of education in Michigan.

This month, we encourage all community members to thank a board member. Take this opportunity to show our year-round appreciation for these servant leaders and begin to better understand how local trustees work together to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders.

These are the men and women serving our West Branch-Rose City Area School District with their years of service:

- President Heather Kearns, 7 years of service
- Vice-President Gary Miller, 7 years of service
- Treasurer Dr. Alan Withers, 5 years of service
- Secretary Debra Abraham, 3 years of service
- Trustee Matt Biermann, 3 years of service
- Trustee Scott Kartes, 11 years of service
- Trustee Whitney Lehman, 1 year of service

Learn the science behind great gardens with MSU Extension

BY JULIE DARNTON, WITH SARAH RAUTIO AND RUTH DORANDO MARCY
MSU EXTENSION

Michigan State University Extension invites gardening enthusiasts to join the Foundations of Gardening course, a 10-week online program designed to help you grow healthier, more sustainable gardens. The next session runs Feb. 12 to April 16, with live virtual classes on Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Winter is the perfect time to prepare for spring planting. This comprehensive course covers essential topics such as plant science, soils, propagation, entomology, plant diseases and pests, lawn care, flowers, trees and shrubs, fruits and vegetables, and environmental gardening. Participants will enjoy a mix of

readings, videos, interactive activities, and weekly live lectures from MSU horticulture experts. The course is delivered online and those enrolled participate from the comfort of home.

The course is ideal for beginners and experienced gardeners alike and serves as the first step toward becoming an MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.

Past participants rave about the experience:

"Thorough course with great content. There is a lot of material, but it is presented in a way to allow for continued learning through ongoing reference to the material."

"I enjoyed the course a great deal. I now have the knowledge base and information resources necessary to improve my gardening skills."



JULIE DARNTON
DISTRICT DIRECTOR
MSU EXTENSION

Museum

« Continued from page 4

I am encouraging the local schools to start doing our "School Tours" once again in the spring. We have so much of our county and community history to share with the students. So, teachers, please call me, the curator, at 989-343-0177 and we can get these tours up and going.

One of our members, Pat Sciotti, was approached by LaDonna

Schultz, prosecuting attorney at the court house, to see if we would like to freshen two of the showcases there and take back to the museum what has been on display for many years. They would like us to do this to help celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States. Pat is going to set up a time for myself and her soon. I am looking forward to this.

Letter to the editor policy

The Ogemaw County Superior News encourages all readers to submit letters to the editor for possible publication. Please limit letters to 200 words or less.

The author must include a daytime phone number as they will be contacted prior to

publication. Unsigned letters will not be published. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject any letter.

Letters can be submitted via email to deanna@superior-news.com or by traditional mail to P.O. Box 603, West Branch, MI 48661.

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The year in pictures: A look back at the stories and faces that made 2025 one to remember

« Continued from page 1

January



We started off the year by introducing you to United States Air Force Special Agent Baylee Tinker, an Ogemaw Heights High School (OHHS) graduate, who was soaring to new heights.



Vietnam Era Veteran John Bennett, along with other veterans, unveiled "The Veterans of Ogemaw," a project created to preserve the military experiences of members of the community. It will include an anthology of stories and more.

February

For the first time in 27 years, the OHHS varsity wrestling team, won the MHSAA #117 Regional Championship. Liam Nicholson, a freshman, was the unlikely hero for the Falcons. Weighing in at only 76 pounds, he was moved up to the varsity team to fill in for an injured teammate. In the title match, he was behind 9-4, but after he was able to get the jump on his opponent, he scored the dramatic pin.



March



Ogemaw County Sheriff Brian Gilbert (second from left) presented lifesaving awards to Michigan State Police Trooper Andrew Farley and Mills Township firefighters Kyle Robertson and Kevin Yortan for their bravery during a house fire in the township.



Kaylee Biermann achieved rank of Eagle Scout, an impressive accomplishment.



In the fall of 2024, we introduced you to Baby Addie Walsh, who was battling leukemia. In February, we were able to report the good news that she was cancer-free.



The Rose City Snow Box Derby returned for another year. Alani Schiebel, pictured above, was one of the cutest participants.

April



The community came together to offer support to Todd Thompson, the longest serving mayor in the city of West Branch, who was diagnosed with cancer. His battle continues to this day.



For the second time in 10 years, Jessica Cloutier (l) needed a lifesaving kidney transplant. The community rallied, but sadly, a donor was not found and she passed away in October. She was 35 years old.



The Whittemore-Prescott Varsity Wrestling Team got the job done by bringing home their seventh straight Northstar League Conference Championship.

June



As part of the city of West Branch's 150th birthday celebration, the Dirty Mitten once again hosted Mrs. Roper's Romp. A great time was had by all who participated.



The Back to the Bricks Promo Tour made a scheduled "pit spot" in West Branch. Mayor Paul Frechette and his wife, Deanna, took in the sights, along with several hundred visitors to the city.

May



Law enforcement officials from across the county gathered during National Police Week to honor and remember those who lost their life in the line of duty. Rose City Police Chief, Allen Muma, was one of many who honored law enforcement officials that died in the previous year.



Ogemaw County marked Memorial Day with several heartfelt ceremonies across the county. Pictured, Veteran Dale Maddox.

In appreciation of Sally Rea's dedication to preserving the area's history, a reception was held in her honor at the Ogemaw County Historical Museum, where she serves as curator. West Branch City Manager John Dantzer presented her with a proclamation declaring May 28 as Sally Rea Day in the city. Sally is also a beloved member of the Ogemaw County Superior News family.



Dr. Jackie Hanifin D.O. celebrated her 100th birthday and she's still going strong.

June was a busy month as residents celebrated the West Branch's 150th birthday. During the festivities, State Representative Mike Hoadley (l) presented Mayor Paul Frechette with a proclamation marking the milestone.



2025 - The year in pictures

« Continued from page 6

July



The Ogemaw County Superior News family celebrated their first year in business.



The Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake hosted its annual 'Fun in the Sun' event at Elbow Lake Beach Park for kids, including this cutie, Oliver Smith.



The ever-popular Pioneer Power Days returned for its 32nd year taking visitors back to simpler times.

August



The Rose City Musical Festival got people out of their seats to dance the evening away.

Everyone knows that August means it's time for the Ogemaw County Fair. Visitors enjoyed a sunny week wandering through the exhibit halls, Antique Village, carnival and barns. Millie Chrvia, 6, of Rose City, and Applejack prepared for the Open Performance Horse Show.

September



The Civil War Cemetery Walks honored fallen soldiers at the Richland Township Cemetery and in Rose City.

October



This month, we introduced you to "Mighty" Malikai, a second grader at Surline Elementary School, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He became such an inspiration to everyone who knew and loved him. His last couple of months was filled with new experiences and unlimited joy. The 8-year-old passed away in December.

November



Ogemaw Heights High School graduate, Alex Rose, won a bronze medal in discus at the World's Athletics Championships in Tokyo. He is headed to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.



Dana Gray shared with us how she heroically beat breast cancer during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



The inaugural Oktoberfest, sponsored by the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, was a big hit.



The OHHS girls varsity volleyball team won their regional championship.



Also in November, OHHS Junior Oryana Dings competed in the State Tournament for swimming, finishing off an incredible season.



Caitlynn Kanitz, 12, inspired hope for others even as she battled leukemia and spinal cancer, while her mother was receiving treatment for breast cancer.

On Sunday, Jan. 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a benefit pancake breakfast is being held in her honor, at the Horton Township Hall, located at 2120 Rau Rd., West Branch. For more information or to donate raffle and auction items, contact Ed at 989-915-1377.

December



After a stellar season for the OHHS Varsity football season, Calvin Marshall was awarded the Golden Helmet, an honor his father, Klint, received 27 years earlier.

It was a very frigid day for the inaugural Candy Cane Lane in downtown West Branch, but it didn't deter folks from joining the fun. Mrs. Claus' Bakery was a huge hit with the kids and Karen Brabo (l) played the part very well.



Randy Huyck was honored as the 2025 Ogemaw County Veteran of the Year.



For the first time since 2009, the OHHS Falcons football team won the Division 5 Regional Championship.

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Whittemore - Prescott sixth graders take over county building



Courtesy photo

Recently, sixth grade students from Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools got right to work after being sworn in as "elected officials" for the day at the Ogemaw County Building. Students were able to learn how government works through hands-on experience.

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Whittemore - Prescott girls bowling team win tournament



Courtesy photo

The Whittemore-Prescott girls varsity bowling team competed Dec. 27 in the 2025 Holiday Special Tournament at HI Skore Lanes in West Branch, where they took first place. Pictured (l-r) Coach Vicki Barnes, Laikin Gielda, Mollee Lomason, Cadence Smith, Reese Lomason, Isla Smith, and Coach Becky Skaggs.



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The Ogemaw County Superior News is seeking an experienced freelance graphic designer to join our dynamic team. Remote position.

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Obituaries

James Earnest Williams

Dec. 30, 1947 – Dec. 20, 2025

James Earnest Williams, born on Dec. 30, 1947, in Montgomery, W. Va., passed away peacefully on Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025, at MyMichigan Medical Center in Saginaw, Mich., at the age of 77.

James dedicated 30 years of his life working at General Motors Powertrain in Ypsilanti, Mich. In addition to his career, James honorably served in the United States Navy for four years. He attended Ogemaw Hills Free Methodist Church in West Branch where he found great joy and community.

He had a love for nature and enjoyed spending his spare time hunting, fishing, and taking care of his yard. His stories were often shared with family during gatherings, where laughter filled the air.

James will be remembered fondly by his sisters, Betty Armstrong, Gatha Robinson, and Patricia Robinson. He also leaves

behind eight nieces, one nephew, and numerous great- and great-great nieces and nephews who cherished him deeply.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Elizabeth (Small) Williams; his infant brother, Billy, and his sister, Joyce, whom he lovingly cared for over the past 20 years.

James's memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

A Celebration of Life, with military honors, was held at the Ogemaw Hills Free Methodist Church in West Branch on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. Pastor David Kurtz officiated.

Burial has taken place at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Mich.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home. www.steuernolmclaren.com



Mary Ann Neubecker

March 2, 1945 – Dec. 19, 2025

Mary Ann Neubecker passed away peacefully at her home in West Branch, Mich., on Friday, Dec. 19, 2025, at the age of 80. Born on March 2, 1945, in Detroit, Mich., Mary Ann's journey through life was marked by her unwavering faith and her dedication to family.

Mary Ann was a proud member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in West Branch, where she found a deep sense of belonging and a strong community of faith. She was united in marriage to David Neubecker on Aug. 20, 1966, at the same church, a union that flourished over the years and brought forth a loving family.

Mary Ann enjoyed a multitude of activities that enriched her life and the lives of those around her. Her passion for sewing and gardening was only matched by her love for playing cards and tackling crossword puzzles. She found joy in cooking and canning, sharing delicious meals with her family, and was an active participant in her local bowling league, where she created lasting memories with her friends.

She is survived by her husband, David Neubecker; her daughter,

Nancy (Todd) Mousseau; her son, Allen (Angie) Neubecker, and son-in-law, Sam Jackson. Mary

Ann's legacy is beautifully carried on by her grandchildren, Kaylee Jackson, Connor Mousseau, Carter Mousseau, Ethan Neubecker, Owen Neubecker, and Aiden Neubecker, each of whom held a special place in her heart.

Mary Ann was preceded in death by her beloved parents, Clyde and Irene (Green) Gingrich; her cherished daughter, Diane Jackson, and sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Joan (Kirk) Mannor.

As we reflect on the beautiful years shared with Mary Ann Neubecker, we take solace in the fond memories and celebrate the legacy she leaves behind.

Visitation was held at Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, with a rosary. The funeral service was held at the funeral home on Jan. 3. Father Al Pillarelli officiated. Burial was at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery in West Branch.

Online condolences can be shared at www.steuernolmclaren.com



George W. Glover

Sept. 17, 1946 – Dec. 19, 2025

George W. Glover, 79, passed peacefully on Dec. 19, 2025. He was born on Sept. 17, 1946, in Detroit, Mich., to Clara Mae (Gipperich) Glover and Walter Thomas Glover. He was the fourth of seven children - the older of two boys - and grew up with five sisters.

George proudly served his country in the United States Air Force from 1965 to 1969. Following his military service, he dedicated 17 years to public service as a Detroit City police officer. At the heart of George's life was his marriage to Marilyn Lang, the love of his life. They were married on April 16, 1971, at Assumption Grotto Church in Detroit, and shared 54 years of unwavering love, partnership, and devotion. Together, they built a life rooted in commitment, laughter, shared adventures, and steadfast support. In 1986, he and his family moved to West Branch, where he worked at the Coca-Cola plant. He was known for his strong work ethic and reliability.

George had a deep love for working with his hands. He enjoyed woodworking, wood carving, and whittling, finding peace and purpose in creating something lasting. He also enjoyed sketching, capturing the spirit of the trees and beauty around his home. An avid fan of Sudoku and crossword puzzles, George approached every challenge with enthusiasm and determination. He cherished the time spent with his camping family and traveling side by side with Marilyn. Together they experienced the joys of the open roads and making memories together.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Marilyn Glover; his children, Nichole Glover, Valerie Glover, and Melissa (Edgar) Osborne; and his beloved grandchildren, Theadore Thurlow, George (Kacie) Thurlow, Sarah Thurlow, Nash Sanford, Clara Osborne, and Avery Osborne. He is also

survived and loved by many nieces and nephews.

George was preceded in death by his parents, Walter Thomas Glover and Clara Mae Glover; two sisters, Ruth Glover and Eileen Uhaize; his brother, James Glover; and his sons-in-law, Gary Sanford and Christopher Thurlow.

George will be remembered for his quiet strength, his deep and enduring love for Marilyn, his dedication to his family, and the simple joys that brought him happiness. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A Celebration of Life will be held in early February 2026.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Leukemia Foundation.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. www.steuernolmclaren.com



David Allen Neubecker

June 2, 1943 – Dec. 27, 2025

David Allen Neubecker, born on June 2, 1943, in West Branch, Mich., passed away peacefully on Saturday, Dec. 27, 2025, at The Villa in Rose City, Mich., at the age of 82. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, David lived a life filled with love, hard work, and commitment to his community.

David's career spanned many years at Consumers Energy, from which he proudly retired. He was a dedicated member of the Moose Lodge, Knights of Columbus No. 2022 and parishioner at St. Joseph Catholic Church in West Branch.

On Aug. 20, 1966, David married the love of his life, Mary Ann Gingrich. The couple shared a remarkable bond that lasted for 59 years, of unwavering support for one another.

David was an avid participant

in various hobbies, who enjoyed bowling leagues, hunting, fishing, farming, gardening, and playing cards. These activities provided him with much joy and were an integral part of his life, fostering connections with friends and family.

He is survived by his daughter, Nancy (Todd) Mousseau; son Allen (Angie) Neubecker, and son-in-law, Sam Jackson. David was a proud grandfather to Kaylee Jackson, Connor Mousseau, Carter Mousseau, Ethan Neubecker, Owen Neubecker, and Aiden Neubecker, each of whom brought immense joy and fulfillment to his life.

David was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Mary Ann Neubecker, who passed away on Dec.

19, 2025. He is also preceded by his dear daughter, Diane Jackson, as well as his parents, William and Agnes (Schaefer) Neubecker, and his sister and brother-in-law, Joan (Kirk) Mannor.

The impact David made on the lives of his family and friends will always be remembered.

Visitation was held at Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, with a rosary. The funeral service was held at the funeral home on Jan. 3, 2026. Father Al Pillarelli officiated. Burial followed at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery in West Branch.

Online condolences can be shared at www.steuernolmclaren.com



Shirley Ann Bedard

Oct. 9, 1929 – Dec. 29, 2025

Shirley Ann Bedard, passed away peacefully on Monday, Dec. 29, 2025, at The Brook in West Branch, Mich., at the age of 96. Born on Oct. 9, 1929, in Detroit, Mich., Shirley was known for her warm spirit, her generous heart, and her enduring commitment to her family and the many organizations that she served.

Shirley's life was marked by her active engagement in the community. She was a dedicated member of Faith Circle at the First English Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grosse Pointe, Mich., where she found both solace and camaraderie. She was also an active member of the Men and Women's Garden Club. Furthermore, she actively contributed to the Valparaiso University Guild and the Grosse Pointe Women's Club, fostering relationships and initiatives that enriched the lives

of those around her.

In her professional career, Shirley devoted years to the Detroit Convention Bureau at Cobo Hall in Detroit. She was the head of registration for some of the largest conventions. Her work ethic and expertise were admired by colleagues and friends alike.

Beyond her career and community service, Shirley had a nurturing side that shone through her beloved hobbies. She had a special talent for arranging flowers, transforming simple blooms into breathtaking displays. Her love for crafts and painting allowed her to express her creativity, capturing the beauty of the world around her. Shirley also loved vacationing in the upper peninsula of Michigan and

attending church services at The Brook in West Branch, where she resided.

Shirley will be deeply missed by her daughter, Francine Hungerford; her grandchildren, Garrett and Jenna, and great-grandchildren, Lydia, Preston, Esme, and Adalyn, who all brought joy and wonder into her life.

She is preceded in death by her husband, William Bedard; daughter, Renee Betz, and her parents, Roy and Evelyn McCall.

Burial will be at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Detroit.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. www.steuernolmclaren.com



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Schools of Choice Openings
2025-2026 School Year - 2nd Semester

Please be informed that the West Branch-Rose City Area Schools, under Section 105 and 105c of Enrolled Senate Bill 851, will accept applications for enrollment from nonresident students for **the second semester of school year 2025-2026**. There is space available in most grades, K-12.

Applications for student enrollments are available and will be accepted from January 2, 2026, through January 22, 2026.

For an application, please contact the superintendent's office (343-2001), the school building office or see our website at www.wbrc.k12.mi.us > Our District > Schools of Choice.

Note: Students who are currently 'schools-of-choice' students should NOT reapply as the original application continues active as long as your student remains enrolled.

Ogemaw County Help Lines

- District Health Dept. No. 2 989-345-5020
- AuSable Valley CMH 989-345-5571
- Caring Pregnancy Center 989-345-3909
- Dept. Health and Human Services 989-345-5135
- Emergency Assistance Program 989-345-8312
- Ogemaw County Clerk 989-345-0215
- Probate/Family Court 989-345-0145
- Emergency Shelter 989-217-0973
- Friend of the Court 989-345-5520
- Healthaccess 989-343-3608
- Ogemaw Commission on Aging 989-345-3010
- Options Resource Clinic 989-345-7398
- Ogemaw Public Transit 989-345-5790
- Children's Assmt. Center 989-275-7145
- Salvation Army 989-345-4690
- Community Food Pantry 989-345-0493
- MSU Extension/4-H 989-345-0692
- Ogemaw County Prosecutor 989-345-5700

- Michigan State Police 989-345-0956
- Ogemaw County Sheriff 989-345-3111
- West Branch Police 989-345-2627
- Rose City Police 989-685-3051

National Help Lines

- Adult & Child Protective Services 855-444-3911
- Domestic Violence 888-554-3169
- Food Assistance (WIC) 800-504-2650
- Catholic Human Services 800-356-5755
- National Suicide Prevention 800-273-8255
- American Red Cross 800-691-6059
- Poison Control 800-222-1222

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