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Tattoo,
11:30AM - VCR Stunt Show, 12PM-2PM
-Thunder Roads Bike Show & Voting – host-
ed by Thunder Roads, 3PM - Fuzzy's Field
Events
3PM – Event Start - Hot Pepper Eating
Contest Registration – Wangler Pavilion,
5PM - Hot Pepper Eating Contest
8PM - Mandi Layne & The Lost Highway –
starts in the Griffin Barn

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 G's Pizzeria in downtown 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** from 9:40 a.m. to 10:20 a.m., meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.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 517-304-6971. We do not meet in the month of December.
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 the Ogemaw County Annex Building in 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 – (First and third of

each month) **Newborn Parent Support Group** 6-7:30 p.m. MyMichigan 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.

June 13
Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake hosts **10th annual Free Fishing Derby**, Saturday, June 13, ages up to 16. Registration begins at 9:30, with derby running from 10 a.m. to noon. It

is held on the boardwalk in Skidway Lake. Bring your own pole, worms will be provided.

June 14
Flag Retirement Ceremony, hosted by the Arenac Veterans Club, located at 3221 N. M-76, Sunday, June 14, 6 p.m. Old flags may be brought to the ceremony. For more information, contact Ken Chapman, 989-345-5463.

June 20
2026 West Branch Community Airport Fly-In, Saturday, June 20, 8 a.m. to noon, West Branch Community Airport, 1519 Airport Rd., West Branch.

June 25
West Branch 2026 Music in the Park begins Thursday, June 25, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Irons Park, featuring The Insiders, a Premier Tom Petty Tribute. Concerts are free to attend, but donations are welcomed.

July 4
West Branch Independence Day Parade, Saturday, July 4, 6 p.m., downtown West Branch.

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 Teall
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! Pastor Chad Brandt
Sunday Worship - 10am; Sunday School - 11am

Welcome Pastor Chad, Rachelle & Family
Camps for K-2026 Grads
Women's & Men's Groups
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.

Bike Bash: Ride in, party hard, make memories

BY LAURA BENDER
Bike Bash, presented by the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds and Agricultural Society, is back for 2026 with a schedule jam-packed with exciting motorcycle events and rocking entertainment. The event runs Friday and Saturday, June 19 and 20, with a free night on Thursday, June 18, featuring an open mic followed by a chance to sing your favorite karaoke tunes.
Friday events include a blessing of the bikes, a loud pipes competition, and an audio show. A bike ride and the Dave Miner Memorial Poker Run is scheduled for noon. The ride's last stop will be in downtown West Branch for Show Off Your Chrome and

a concert by Embrace the Silence. Then it's back to the fairgrounds for a concert by Metro Detroit-based cover band Sunset Blvd, specializing in high-energy 1980s rock and pop music.
Activities on Saturday include a tattoo contest, the VCR Stunt Show, a hot pepper eating contest, the Thunder Roads Bike Show, and Fuzzy's Field Events. At 8 p.m. the energetic country rock band Mandi Layne & The Lost Highway will perform in the Griffin Barn. This popular Michigan quintet, which has opened for country acts including Blake Shelton, Sara Evans, Daryl Worley, and Colt Ford, is sure to get you up dancing.
“We have been planning this

event for the last eight months to make sure this is another great year,” said event planner Dakota Masters.
Tickets for the two-day event are \$40 per person and can be purchased at <https://ogemaw-countyfair.org/>. Campsites in the rustic campground can be reserved at <https://ogemawcounttyfair.org/camping/>. Bike Bash 2026 will take place at the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds, 2300 Rifle River Trail, West Branch, Mich. For more information call 989-345-5393, email info@ogemawcounttyfair.org or check out their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100094083826602>.

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County Alternative Educational Academy celebrates Class of 2026 graduation



The Alternative Educational Academy of Ogemaw County Class of 2026 recently graduated. Courtesy Photo

The Alternative Educational Academy of Ogemaw County proudly celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2026 during a commencement ceremony held on May19, at the Knights of Columbus Hall, West Branch.

This year, the Alternative Educational Academy graduated 21 students from across the county and surrounding communities, with 17 graduates participating in the evening ceremony alongside family members, friends, staff, and community supporters.

The ceremony featured an address by School Director Tina Williams, who encouraged

graduates to look toward their futures, “set new goals and keep moving forward.” The event continued with heartfelt testimonials and congratulations as academy teachers presented students with their diplomas.

The Alternative Educational Academy of Ogemaw County is a charter school authorized by COOR ISD. Established in 2014 as an alternative pathway to education, the academy serves students in grades 6–12 and provides online curriculum through learning labs located in West Branch and Gladwin. The mission of the Alternative Educational Academy

is “to provide and responsive educational experiences through non-traditional programs that effectively meet the needs of at-risk students. The Academy will enhance educational opportunities for students by developing programs based on students’ individual needs and.”

Reflecting on the evening’s event, Assistant Director Pete Newman shared, “This is always such a special ceremony. I’ve run my fair share of graduations over the years, but AEAO’s is easily my favorite. The testimonials from the teachers about each individual graduate really get to you.

GRADUATION continues on page 8 »

From rust to radiance: Casey LaVack’s artful powder coating

BY LAURA BENDER

Army veteran Casey LaVack is an artist who turns old, rusty metal pieces into beautiful items that will maintain their usefulness for years. Owner of Off-Road Custom Powder Coating in West Branch, Casey began working in this medium as a hobby.

“When I got out of the Army in 2004, I got a job in a factory. After my son was born, we decided I should be a stay-at-home dad. That’s when I began to teach myself how to do powder coating. I started with my own projects. Soon friends began asking me to do some work for them. Then friends of friends. My business has been built through word of mouth. Even now, I rarely need



Photo by Laura Bender

Casey LaVack recently opened Off-Road Custom Power Coating in West Branch.

EAA Chapter 1253 invites community to annual Fly-In and Pancake Breakfast

The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 1253 will host its annual Fly-In and Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, June 20, from 8 a.m. to noon at West Branch Community Airport.

The popular event draws aviation enthusiasts, families, and visitors from across the region for a morning of great food, unique aircraft, and community fellowship. Admission to the airport and fly-in activities is free.

Guests can enjoy the chapter's famous pancake breakfast featuring Mason's Maple Syrup, sausage links from Klemmer's Processing, eggs, orange juice, and coffee. Breakfast tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children.

A highlight of this year's event will be a visit from "Hairless Joe," the Michigan Air Museum's historic C-47 military transport aircraft. Aviation fans will have the opportunity to see the iconic aircraft up close and learn about its role in aviation history.

In addition to the featured aircraft, visitors can expect to see a variety of general aviation aircraft arriving throughout the morning. Pilots from around Michigan and neighboring states are expected to participate in the fly-in, making it a unique opportunity for the public to experience aviation firsthand.

The first 200 kids will receive a free foam glider to build and learn

to fly. Also available for smaller children is a pedal plane and "Mr. O," a home-built plane that kids can get into and learn the basics while on the ground letting their imagination soar to new heights.

Additionally, a car show will also be taking place showcasing some of the region's best classic cars. This fly-in celebrates the service of our veterans and the 250th birthday of our nation.

West Branch Community Airport is located at 3604 Airport Road in West Branch. For more information, E.A.A. 1253 Communication Director Kevin Finerty at 989-578-0309 or Airport Manager Ben Evergreen at 989-345-1453.

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2026 WEST BRANCH FARMERS MARKET

Get it Local & Get it Fresh...from our garden to your table!

Buy fresh veggies, baked goods, plants and much more at the 30th Annual Farmers Market on

SATURDAYS FROM 8 A.M. TO 2 P.M.
Downtown West Branch • South Third Street
June 6 - October 2026

Enjoy the opportunity to buy fresh, nutritious farm products directly from our local farmers. You may also find fresh baked goods, handmade crafts and local artists with their own hand made items.

Questions call City Hall
989-345-0500
www.westbranch.com

Walking Around the east bank of the Mill Pond

BY SALLY A. REA

I will now walk you around the east bank of the Mill Pond. It was much different when I was a child. The dam was in better shape and the pond still existed. I'll talk about things that I discovered in the year 2012. Unique as it was, it was the only water powered flour mill in a radius of 50 miles. The first flour mill was built and operated by William Hersley, who obtained the land from George and Annie Hauptman and David Wright (lumber barons). After the structure burnt, Hampton and D. Wright and Co. again obtained the property under the firm of D. Wright and Co.



BY SALLY A. REA
HISTORIAN AND
CURATOR

As I stood on the east shore of what used to be the old Mill Pond, I stopped in the office of the old mill and talked to Don Girard, present owner of the mill. Over the past few years, we've exchanged information and pictures of the old mill and pond. I am standing now in front of the old flour mill, which was first called the Grist Mill, but in my research, I found that the name changed in 1889 to West Branch Flour Manufacturing Co.

In 1918, Conrad Zailer and his wife purchased the business and moved the present house from the north end of town to the Mill Pond property where it still stands today. Over a period of years there have been 14 sawmills around the old Mill Pond. The cement gate to the sluice drain is still visible by the east end of the pond's back side, which prevented log jams around the turbine and reservoir.

Let's walk around the bank and as I stand in the area of the old pond where there used to be a huge wooden dock that ran all the way around the dam. The dock wasn't just used by the mill, the local people would come here to swim, picnic, boating and at one time the popular "Trout Festival" was held here, and yes, let's not forget the ice skating.

At one time ice was cut from the pond and hauled by train to surrounding cities to local businesses.

You can just imagine hearing the water roaring over the dam, people strolling across the dock, the splashing of swimmers and laughing, the fishermen shouting,



"look at the big one I caught!" I have an old post card with a picture of a group of young men standing on the dock, ready to take the big plunge into the icy cold water; in fact, one of the young men is my grandfather, F.A. Diebold. Where logs used to float in the pond, a large pond it was, all you can see is brush, bushes and old logs.

As I walk along the edge of the old pond and get to the dam, and

watch the water rush over the pilings that are still left there, I try to visualize what this area looked like when it was a thriving business.

There were at one time, six tracks that ran around the Mill Pond picking up wood products. At one time, a track ran across the Mill Pond. Across from the dam you can see where a train track once ran to the edge of the pond and a piece of the train track had

fallen down into the river. What a shame that the old pond is gone, but at least the mill is still standing.

Well, this is where I stop, on the east shore of the Mill Pond. It was a great journey, and I wish I could travel this trail again, but I am not a spring chicken anymore. Memories are all I have left, and they are good memories.

News from the Skidway Lake area

BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON

The Mills Township beautification club advertised they were going to start planting flowerbeds in the community. Judy Hitsman, who is Dakota McKuen's grandmother, contacted me asking if we could do one in memory of her grandson that was a 2020 Whittemore Prescott graduate. I felt that was a great thing to do and wanted to add the two girls that passed away who were also Whittemore Prescott students. Melody Broderick and Sariah Obst would have graduated in 2024. Dakota McKuen "Chewy," as he was nicknamed, was taken in a tragic work accident. Melody and Sariah were taken in a tragic car accident.

As plans were made, three cement flower boxes were donated by a community member and were perfect for this project. We decided the Skidway Lake Beach Park was the perfect spot for these flower boxes because that is where a lot of the WP students meet to play basketball. The

thoughts were our students that visit the beach would know Dakota, Melody and Sariah and feel a connection to them as fellow students and help to guard over the flower boxes and ward off any damage to them.

It was appropriate to plant flowers that were grown in the Whittemore Prescott School greenhouse. On the front of each flowerbox is a marble plaque with their photos, names, date of birth and date of death. As fitting, there is an engraved Cardinal and the words Forever a Cardinal. Whittemore-Prescott Student.

Dakota James McKuen "Chewy" was born Oct. 25, 2001 and passed March 21, 2024, at the age of 22. Melody Sue Broderick was born Nov. 29, 2006, and passed Jan. 12, 2024, at the

age of 18. Sariah Lillian Gene Obst was born Jan. 12, 2007, and passed Jan. 12, 2024, at the age of 17. It was an honor to do these flower boxes for these three Whittemore Prescott students. Stop by Lake Beach Park on Lake Street and check them out. If you have a student that went to school at Whittemore-Prescott with these students, share this story with them.



APRIL HARKEY-MASON

This area of the park is not for sadness or mourning, but for fond memories and pride of knowing Dakota, Melody and Sariah.

Remember to share any news you have with me by calling or texting me at 989-578-8768.

Until next time, God bless.

Updates from Optimist Club of West Branch

BY JOE BELL

The Optimist Club of West Branch meets every Thursday morning at 7 a.m. Loggers Depot in downtown West Branch hosts our meeting and feeds us a great breakfast with many menu options to choose from! 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.

This past weekend was one of our most anticipated annual events, the annual Optimist Club Small Fry Trout Derby! Every year since the 1980s club

members place screens in the stream flowing through Irons Park in West Branch to keep the fish contained in the park. Then we have 400 trout placed in the stream for the kids to try to catch as part of the contest. There are sections for the younger and older participants to use so that the younger kids get a fair chance to catch fish. We have had as many as 150 kids fishing at once! When they catch a fish, they bring it to the pavilion to be measured as they try

to win prizes. All kids receive something, but the winners get some nicer prizes! The smiles and excitement are very heartwarming to see as families fish together.

We close each meeting by reciting the Optimist Creed, part of which states: Promise yourself too noble for anger, too strong fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble! What a great way to approach your life! 'Bye for now!



JOE BELL
VICE - PRESIDENT

Ogemaw County Superior News

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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.

A parade and solemn ceremonies mark Memorial Day



Photos by Laura Bender
Veterans gather with Scouting America members as they wait for the West Branch parade to begin.

BY LAURA BENDER

The Ogemaw County Veterans Alliance held a Memorial Day parade and ceremony in West Branch, followed by a ceremony in Rose City on Monday, May 25.

In addition to remembering and honoring military personnel who died while serving in the Armed Forces, the Veterans Alliance also read the list of Ogemaw County veterans who died during the year.

Family and friends gathered to witness the reading, which was followed by a gun salute and the playing of Taps.

Ogemaw County Veterans remembered this year were: Edward Adams, Virgil Homer Adams, David Anthony Allen, Kevin Anderson, Jack Battin, John Bax, James Robert Bognar, Doyle Ira Brindley, Ralph John Brown, David Fredrick Fox Butler, Jack Allen Card, Thomas James Chapman, Stephen Cleale Cowing, Richard Dean Cramb Sr., Gerthen Lucien

Dawson Jr., Dennis Wayne Durek, John Albert Emond, Garry Randall English, Robert Melvin Fabera, Taras Fodczuk, Roger Edward Gildner, Alan Clifford Gildner, George Walter Glover, David Scott Goodfellow, Gary Wayne Gray, Jack Joseph Hall, Herbert Dennis Hamilton, Doreen Hancock, Mary Harvey, Ned Hilborn, Terry James Hool, Robert E. Hude, Leon William Jackson Jr., Harold Janiszewski, Lyle Gordon Johnson, Larry D. Kochan, Sherman Louis Kutchin, Ivan Fancis Lewis, Richard Duane Martin, Ronald Emery McCarty, Barry William McKenna, Paul John Mick, Harry Morrissett Jr., Raymond James

Neely, Jerome Allen Neubecker, Edwin “Ozzy” Dale Ostrander, Clifford George Parent, Richard Allen Preston Sr., Roger Allen Priest, David Charles Radabaugh, James Ralph, Lyle Gene Scharer, Robert Dale Schilke, Norman Clyde Schmidt, Joseph Trombly, Richard “Rick” Thomas Upton, John Peter Voss, Raymond Donald Walter, Guy Wheat, James Ernest Williams, Reed Wilson, Victor Floyd Wynkoop, Lynn Marie Zielinski and Edward Leroy Zimmer.



The Ogemaw Veterans Alliance Honor Guard gun salute at the Memorial Day service in Rose City.



Military veterans Sue Boom and Kenneth Anderson carry the banner announcing the new Veterans Memorial Park.

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CAR SHOW

FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH
6PM - 9PM

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To register, call 989-345-5226

Music By the Bay Concert Series bgins June 15th

BY LAURA BENDER

Need a chance to unwind?

Bring your lawn chair to East Tawas City Park on Monday nights at 7 p.m. for Music By the Bay, presented by the Tawas Community Concert Band.

Thirty-five musicians under the direction of Tina Donze will perform show tunes, patriotic songs, pop music, and a variety of other familiar pieces on nine consecutive Mondays between June 15 and Aug. 10. As the concert band closest to Ogemaw County, you may recognize several of the musicians who hail from our area. The director, Tina Donze, may also be a familiar face. She is the music teacher at St. Joseph

School in West Branch.

“What makes our summer concerts special is sharing our Monday evenings with you on Lake Huron,” Tina said. “We hope you will join us again for a season of musical entertainment featuring a wide variety of styles and favorites in every concert!”

Admission and pleasant breezes off the lake are free. Pets are welcome.



TINA DONZE
DIRECTOR, TAWAS
COMMUNITY
CONCERT BAND

Performances are subject to cancellation for inclement weather. The concerts are located at East Tawas City Park, 407 West Bay St., East Tawas. Head east on M-55, turn left at Lake Huron, then right into the park just before the downtown area.

Patriotism in practice: Surline students rise to the challenge



Fifth Grade All American Award recipients pose with members of the Veterans Alliance during the Surline Middle School Annual Awards Program.

Photo by Laura Bender

BY LAURA BENDER

Fifteen students received the Fifth Grade All American Award during the Surline Middle School Annual Awards Program. To be eligible, students had to complete eight tasks designed to help them grow into responsible citizens. The requirements were: name all 50 states and their capital cities, recite the Preamble to the Constitution, write the Pledge

of Allegiance, sing the National Anthem, write an essay entitled Why I Am Proud to Be an American, interview a military veteran, attend a township, school board or county meeting, and complete three hours of community service. “Students must complete all the requirements for the award outside the classroom,” their social studies teacher, Michelle Tennant, said. “They must schedule and

keep appointments for each task without adult prodding. Sometimes it takes a second or third attempt before they do the task perfectly, but then they know the award represents their best quality work.” Members of the Veterans Alliance presented the All-American awards to these fifth graders: Gracie David, Wyatt Grezeszak, Levi Mader, Coyla Walters, Lucas

Butler, Macie Kavalunas, Piper Barclay, Aubrey Rau, Aubrey Jenkins, Brooke Provoast, ReaLynn Queener, Cassidy Bader, Mackenzie Frechette, Sawyer Falkner and Tyler Bedtelyon. In recognition of her devotion to her students, Michelle Tennant was also presented with an award: The Surline Middle School All American Teacher 2025-2026 Award which read, “This

certificate is proudly presented to Mrs. Tennant in recognition of your exceptional encouragement and unwavering dedication to opening our student’s minds to the history and spirit of America. Thank you for investing your time and heart into shaping the citizens of tomorrow.” Congratulations to all awardees! We look forward to your future leadership in our county!

Writing life stories: A workshop for preserving your legacy

BY LAURA BENDER

“One day I will write stories about my life to leave for my children and grandchildren.” “I should write about what it was like to serve in the military.” “When people hear me tell stories about my career and my family, they tell me I should write a book.” Have you ever said these words? Then the upcoming free memoir writing workshop, Writing Life Stories, is for you. The workshop is a collaboration between MidMichigan Writers, founded in West Branch in 1977, and the West Branch Public Library. Anyone interested in writing family stories, tributes to loved ones, memories of childhood, special events, moments in history, or other personal stories is welcome to attend. The workshop will be led by

Marylou Bugh and Chris Lucka, who have been members of MidMichigan Writers collectively for more than 70 years. They enjoy the writing process and meeting with others who do. Marylou Bugh taught writing at Saginaw Valley State University and memoir writing at SVSU’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She has also offered these classes several times in West Branch. The author of five books, including a “how-to” on memoir, Marylou will give you the confidence and skills you need to tell your story. Chris Lucka is a freelance editor for all types of writing, including novels, short stories, and poetry, and has led poetry writing workshops. She is in the process of writing a memoir in poetry form. Marylou and Chris agree that “memoir is not just important for

friends and family, but for history. Events from our daily lives do not belong to the victors, but to everyday people.” As author and professional writing instructor, Lou Willett Stanek said, “Writers are scavengers, always scrounging for language and images to illuminate

their work.” According to Chris and Marylou, that’s what makes stories come alive. “In this memoir writing workshop, the goal is to reveal and communicate your stories,” Chris said. This free workshop will be held

at the West Branch Public Library on Tuesday, June 23, from noon to 2 p.m. Registration is not required. Light refreshments will be served. Write what should not be forgotten. ~ Isabel Allende ~

Volunteers beautify West Branch Fireman's Memorial



Courtesy photo

Fresh flowers and community spirit were on display as volunteers recently planted annuals at the West Branch Fireman's Memorial and Bell Tower, creating a beautiful tribute to the firefighters who have served the West Branch Area. Pictured (not in order) Clara Clark, JJ Craswell, Julie Elliott, Nancy Griffin, Barb Mitrzyk and Joyce Nelander. Not pictured are Grace Orr, Sue Westfield, Jan Wilkinson and Doug Norton.

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Diann Elaine Kropp
March 23, 1948 – May 24, 2026

Diann Elaine Kropp, age 78, of St. Hel- en, Mich., passed away on Sunday, May 24, 2026, at the Villa in West Branch. She was born on March 23, 1948, in Greenville, Mich., and lived a life marked by kindness, thoughtfulness, and love for her family and community.

Diann graduated from La- peer High School in 1966 and carried the values of hard work and dedication with her throughout her life. She began her career working as a tax assessor in the Upper Penin- sula and also enjoyed selling real estate. Later, she spent 18 years driving school bus for the West Branch Rose City School District, where she was a familiar and trusted presence to many children and families. After retiring from the school dis- trict, she continued to stay active by help- ing with the family roofing business, Bob’s Roofing.

Diann enjoyed the simple pleasures of life and found happiness in spending time with her family. She loved bowling, play- ing cards, dice, and cornhole, and she espe- cially enjoyed walking and camping. These pastimes reflected her warm spirit and her appreciation for time spent with those she cared about most. Her presence brought comfort, laughter, and a sense of togeth- erness to those around her.

Above all else, Diann was devoted to her children and took great pride in her family.



She is survived by her children, William (Theresa) Kropp, Michelle (Joe) Verrett, Roxann Armstrong, Jason (Bernice) Kropp, and Jeremy Kropp. She also leaves behind her beloved grandchildren, Tra- vis, Desiree, Aliva, Shalayne, Taylor, Kalea, Whitney, Kea- ton, JJ, Audreonna, Steven, James, and Nichole, along with 23 great-grandchildren who brought her much joy. She is also survived by her sister, San- dra Ripperdan, and many nieces and nephews who will remem- ber her with love and affection.

Diann is preceded in death by her husband, Robert Kropp; her parents, William and Phyllis Truax; brother, Gene Patterson, and sister, Judy Sweet.

Those who knew Diann will remember her as a kind, thoughtful, and loving wom- an whose life was centered on family, hard work, and quiet strength. She touched the lives of many through her steady devotion, her generous heart, and the care she showed to others. Her memory will remain a bless- ing to all who were fortunate enough to know and love her.

A graveside service was held on Thurs- day, May 28, at the Edwards Township Cemetery in West Branch.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. Online condolences can be shared at www.steuernolmclaren.com

William Robert Stephens
Feb. 19, 1943 – March 29, 2026

William Robert Stephens, age 83, passed away on Sunday, March 29, 2026, in Mesa, Az. He was born on Feb. 19, 1943, in Taylor, Mich., to Le- roy and Irene Stephens.

Bill graduated from Taylor Center High School in 1961 and graduated from Olivet Col- lege in 1965. He played foot- ball and ran track there.

After graduation from col- lege, he taught biology and science at Taylor Center High School and Truman High School for 32 years. He also coached high school football and track at both of these schools.

After retiring in 1997, he was inducted in 2004 into the Taylor Sports and Recre- ation Hall of Fame for his many years of coaching football and track in Taylor.

Bill and his wife, Mary Ann, spent 28 years during the winter in Mesa, Az. They enjoyed not having to be in the cold Mich- igan winters.

They also traveled quite extensively. Bill’s bucket list trip was to the Galapagos Islands. He really enjoyed this trip. Being a biology teacher, he had a lot of comments and knowledge about the animals and Dar- win’s philosophy on this trip. He enjoyed playing tennis for many years and was an avid golfer.



During his retirement he did a lot of wood carving. This was his passion in his later years when he wasn’t able to play sports a lot. He won many ribbons for his carvings at carving shows. He made a lot of carvings to give to peo- ple. His last big project was four flying birds of which he was very proud. One of his biggest joys was teaching new carvers the skill, at which he was very good.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of 45 glorious years, Mary Ann Ste- phens; a very special aunt, Grace; brother- in-law, Rob (Joy) Kirr; many nieces and nephews, Shelly (Ben) Diaczok, Shannon Saliba, Scott (Karleen) Stephens, Tom Stephens, Brent (Leslie) Stephens, Tay- lor (John) Boyer, Mark (Jane) Stephens, Gregg (Clarissa) Stephens, Robbie (Chris) Stephens, Todd (Natalie) Stephens, Sarah (Branden) Perry, and Daniel Kirr. There are many great nieces and nephews and also great-greats who will miss their Uncle Bill.

He is preceded in death by his parents, and brothers and sister, Jim, Jerry, Tom, Mick and Dorothy Westphal.

There will be a Celebration of Life in June 2026 in West Branch. There will also be one in Mesa in Jan. 2027.

Scott D. DeMars
Nov. 9, 1963 – May 9, 2026

Scott D. DeMars, passed away at home on May 9, 2026. Born on Nov. 9, 1963, in Detroit, Mich. to Dennis and Ruth Ann (Leasser) De Mars, Scott’s career was dis- tinguished by his work with General Motors as an elec- trical engineer, where he ap- plied his meticulous nature and sharp intellect to every challenge. His professional achievements were a source of pride not only to himself but also to those who valued his expert craftsmanship and careful attention to detail. Whether designing complex electrical sys- tems or tackling innovative projects, Scott approached his work with a level of preci- sion and care that defined his career.

Scott’s personal interests were as rich

and varied as his professional life. In qui- eter moments, he found joy in building things - the creation of crystal radios during the winter downtime being a particular favorite pastime. He also had a deep passion for cooking, bringing the same careful attention to de- tail to his culinary endeavors as he did to his engineering projects. Scott was devoted to caring for his property and his beloved pets.

He will be dearly missed by his family, including his daughter Kayla Newbert; son Devin DeMars; grandchildren Kinsley Ilaria, Aubree Newbert, Bentley Newbert, Emerson Newbert; brother Curt DeMars; sister Cynthia (Dave) Evans, and significant other, Janice Witt.



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K9 Diego

« Continued from page 1

each other.”

Officer Evans graduated from the Kirtland Police Academy in 2019. Four years ago, he joined the West Branch City Police. Having interacted often with the previous K-9, he really wanted to become a dog handler.

“Every Christmas I’d ask the police chief if I could have a dog,” Evans said.

Nikole David, the department’s administrative assistant, made the initial contact with K9 Hero Guardians, the Michigan non-profit that donated Diego. Prior to his arrival, Officer Evans and K-9 Diego had to complete an initial training period together. In addition, they must do 16 hours of federally mandated, docu- mented training each month. The classes cover not only how to execute proper police work but also socialization, obedience, and

aggression control (for the dog...) “We have a job to do,” Evans said. “We don’t have time for games, so Diego must learn not to react to other dogs or be distract- ed. He is also incredibly intelli- gent, so I have to mix things up in training or items I hide for him to find become too obvious.”

Since arriving in West Branch, K-9 Diego has performed well in the field.

“We arrived on scene where a man had attacked his roomma- te, then fled,” Officer Evans said. “I deployed K-9 Diego. He ran around the mobile home, paused in one spot, and returned. I de- ployed him again. Diego ran back to that spot, tore off the trailer skirting and held the man hid- den underneath so we could ar- rest him. Another time, we were looking for a weapon we believed had been tossed in a field. Diego

found it and sat with it between his paws until we removed it. Dogs used to be trained to retrie- ve objects, but too many were injured doing it, so now we train them to indicate and wait.”

Recently West Branch Police Department’s K-9 Diego received a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from the non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K-9 Diego’s vest was sponsored by Sharon Winters of Chandler, Az., and embroidered with the senti- ment “Born to Love-Trained to Serve-Loyal Always.”

This potentially lifesaving body armor for four-legged K9 officers is made in the U.S., cus- tom-fitted, and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) certified. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided over 6,513 vests valued at \$6.9 million to

K9s in all 50 states, made possi- ble by both private and corporate donations. Each vest has a value of \$1,800, weighs an average of four to five pounds and comes with a five-year warranty. The organization also sent a medi- cal and a NARCAN kit for K-9 Diego’s additional protection.

Having a canine on the force is costly. The West Branch City Po- lice Department is thankful for all donations which help to support K-9 Diego in his role of suppor- ting all of us. If you are a fan of K-9 Diego and would like to help by buying a t-shirt with his pictu- re, they will be available soon at the West Branch Police Depart- ment, 130 Page St. or call 989- 345-2627 for more information.

“I wish everyone loved their job as much as I love mine!” ~ K-9 Diego

Graduation

« Continued from page 3

Every class I’ve watched cross this stage, especially this year’s, is simply outstanding. We are so incredibly proud of you all for hanging in there and never giving up.”

The Alternative Educational Academy remains committed to creating supportive, student- centered learning environments that empower students to achieve aca- demic success and prepare for fu- ture careers, higher education, and lifelong learning.

For more information about the Alternative Educational Academy of Ogemaw County, please con- tact the school office at 989-343- 9070.

120 Miracle Miles: Paddling for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals

**BY JESSICA MADZIAR
MARKETING DIRECTOR FOR
CLOUSE’S ACE HARDWARE/
ROGER’S FAMILY FOODS**

In July 2026, Ryan Clouse, owner and operator of Clouse Family Ace Hardware stores and Roger’s Family Foods, will take on one of the toughest endurance events in North America: the Ausable River Canoe Marathon, a grueling, nonstop 120-mile canoe race from Grayling to Oscoda, Mich.

But Ryan isn’t racing just for the finish line - he’s racing for something bigger. Through his campaign, 120 Miracle Miles, Ryan’s goal is to raise over \$1 million for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals (CMN).

This cause is deeply personal to Ryan. His daughter, Kinsley,

was treated at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital (a CMN hospital) in Grand Rapids, Mich., where she underwent surgery to remove a benign tumor from her hand - twice before the age of five.

“I’m forever grateful for what they did for my family,” Ryan says. “My heart and prayers go out to those receiving care from these great hospitals. I am forever in their debt.”

Ryan has also been connected to the Ausable River Marathon through family. His wife, Sarah, is the great-granddaughter of Harry Curley, a legendary paddler and race organizer who earned the title Mr. AuSable Canoe Race. This legacy, along with his own sponsorship of race teams, inspired Ryan to pick up the paddle himself - despite having never raced a

canoe before.

Ryan has fully funded his own race expenses. That means 100 percent of sponsorships, donations, and apparel sales go directly to CMN Hospitals. He’s asking supporters to become Miracle Sponsors by pledging \$120 - one dollar for every mile of the race. His vision: 10,000 Miracle Sponsors equals \$1.2 million raised. In addition to sponsorships, Ryan has launched a fundraising store where every shirt, hoodie, hat, or wristband sold contributes directly to the cause.

Preparing for the Ausable River Canoe Marathon means 15 plus hours of nonstop paddling overnight, testing every ounce of endurance, grit, and faith. Ryan has committed to training daily - paddling several times a week

and working out relentlessly to be ready for this ultimate test of strength and perseverance.

To stay grounded, Ryan wears two crosses: one to remind him to pray for determination and grit to complete the marathon, and one to pray that this campaign will truly change lives through Children’s Miracle Network.

Ace Hardware stores across the U.S. already support CMN through round-up campaigns, bucket sales, and local fundraisers. Ryan’s effort builds on that tradition - bringing together his family, community, customers, and supporters nationwide to create the largest single fundraising event CMN has ever seen.

“With the power of social media, the support of local communities, and the generosity of

people with big hearts, I believe my goal is possible,” Ryan says. “And with God, all things are possible.”

It starts with a single paddle stroke; it starts with you. Donations can be made directly at www.120miraclemiles.com, and there is also apparel available on the website, with proceeds benefiting CMN hospitals.

To help amplify the mission, we’ve created an official 120 Miracle Miles anthem - a powerful and uplifting song designed to inspire participation and bring the community together around this cause. We would love for you to take a moment to listen and consider sharing it with others:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kvSCRutofSFRC-qmCsVLbSGLQ5Fk7CWS_/view

Civil War

« Continued from page 1

uniform was attractive, it was exciting, and it was great for recruiting.”

Zouaves wore brightly colored uniforms modeled after elite French units from North Africa.

“They literally looked like Algerian troops,” Shawn said. “But it had a lot to do with the idea that it was only going to be a three-week war, and you wanted to look good. These exotic uniforms generated a tremendous amount of interest. Our primary reenactment unit is called the 114th Pennsylvania, also known as Collis’ Zouaves. Collis was a lawyer who took Zouave uniforms to the Philadelphia slums, where he was able to recruit 1,100 men in 72 hours. And that’s how he became a colonel.”

During the encampment, you will hear many stories like this and other interesting facts about the daily lives of Civil War soldiers and civilians. Presentations in the Pavilion include:

- 11 a.m. Soldiers and Civilian Wear
- 12 p.m. Buglers and Drummers

- 1 p.m. Battlefield Medicine
- 3 p.m. Petticoats on the Battlefield
- 5 p.m. Soldiers’ lives, rations, etc.
- 7 p.m. Stories from the Battlefield

On Sunday at 10 a.m. the unit will perform drills and fire weapons on the field. This will be followed in the Pavilion by the presentation of a sermon preached in 1861 to Michigan troops leaving that afternoon to head south to join the fight.

“It’s one thing to read about history,” Shawn said. “It’s another to be in uniform and live the history. It reminds me that those who fought were just like all of us. They had hopes and dreams; they had families they wanted to get home to, and they didn’t like lice or bad food any more than you or I do.”

Come on out to Irons Park July 10 through 12 for a weekend of fun, learning, and cannon fire. Don’t just read history, experience it!

West Branch Veteran’s Banner Program 2026

BY LAURA BENDER

Is there a veteran or active-duty service member you would like to honor with a banner in downtown West Branch? Now is the time to make arrangements for a banner which will be displayed from the last week of September through mid-November.

The West Branch Veteran’s Day Banner Program is proud to offer this opportunity for your military loved one to be honored with their image displayed along Houghton Avenue.

Here are some of the details: The sponsor may choose to honor an active-duty serviceperson or a veteran, alive or

deceased.

The sponsor and/or veteran/active-duty service member must live, work, or actively volunteer in Ogemaw County, Michigan, at the time of the first display.

Applications must be returned by July 14, 2026.

The new sponsorship fee is \$125. Renewal for an existing banner is \$25.

Upon banner retirement, the banner will be presented to the sponsor.

In the event that there are applications in excess of available poles, a waiting list for the next year will be created.

The banner’s location is at the sole discretion of the committee.

Upon selection, applicants will be notified and will have two weeks to provide a photo and the required information to be displayed on the banner.

For additional information or an application, contact Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel at the City of West Branch at 989-345-0500, email her at clerk@westbranch.com, or visit West Branch City Hall, 121 N. Fourth St., West Branch.

The West Branch Veteran’s Banner Program committee looks forward to honoring your veteran in downtown West Branch. Remember: the deadline for applications is July 14.

LaVack

« Continued from page 3

to advertise. My shop is open by appointment only, and I’m currently booked out more than two weeks.”

Casey and his family live in Mio, where he worked out of his home for eight years before setting up shop at 113 N. First St. in West Branch in November 2025.

“Seventy-five percent of what you buy today is powder-coated,” Casey said. “The powder is actually plastic micro-beads which flow together and lock in to form a plastic coating when baked with an electrostatic charge. The coating prevents rusting and discoloration.”

Currently, Casey has two commercial accounts. For KDM in Standish, he coats half-shafts for military vehicles. For Tanis in Midland, he coats medical equipment. The size and usage of the items he works with vary, and not just for commercial applications.

“My curing oven can handle items up to 14 feet long,” Casey

said. “I can coat everything: dirt bike parts, lawn furniture, bumpers, wheels, automobile, jeep and side-by-side parts, and small items, too. A few years ago, I coated a pair of dragonflies that adorn the entrance of the AuSable Artisan Village in Grayling. I used iridescent powder, so when the sun hits them right, they look real.”

With over 6,500 colors available for powder coating, Casey can help his customers find a perfect match to anything, including countertops. All the work performed is dutifully overseen by his shop foreman, Stormy, an affectionate cat who follows him everywhere.

For more information, or to make an appointment, call or text Casey at 989-889-6229, or email offroadcustompowdercoating@gmail.com. To see samples of Casey’s work, check out <https://www.facebook.com/offroadcustompowdercoating/>.

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Public Hearings and Notices

SUMMARY OF CITY OF ROSE CITY
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 19, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00p.m.
Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Brent Hinkley
Absent: Ashely Herrick (Excused)
Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, County Commissioner Roger Mayhew, Larry Hummel with Fleis & Vanderbrink, Henry Cojocar, Madeline Cojocar, and Brenda Butler.
Council approved the agenda.
Larry Hummel addressed the council regarding the DWSRT project plans.
Public Comment: none.
Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

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Public Hearings and Notices

SUMMARY OF CITY OF ROSE CITY
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 5, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Public Hearing to order at 6:03p.m.
Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Ashely Herrick, Brent Hinkley
Absent: None.
Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, Mary Jane Schnautz, Chase Wiltse, and Brenda Butler.
Council approved the agenda.
Discussed proposed ballot wording.
Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

SUMMARY OF CITY OF ROSE CITY
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 5, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.
Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Ashely Herrick, Brent Hinkley
Absent: None.
Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, Mary Jane Schnautz, Chase Wiltse, and Brenda Butler.
Council approved the agenda.
Council approved the minutes for April 21, 2026 Meeting.
Council approved the bills in the amounts of \$11,094.58 from the Common Cash Account and \$157.17 from the Sewer Account.
Anthony Evans gave a DPW report.
Carol Lee Butler gave the Treasurer's report.
The Mayor gave his comments.
Council approved the banner application for Red, White & Blue Collar Festival.
Clerk gave an update.
Council approved to apply for the Category A Grant through M-DOT.
Council passed the resolution to approve the ballot wording for the Street Millage renewal for 2027-2036.
Council approved to pass the resolution to approve the ballot wording for Proposition 1 of the Charter Amendment with corrections.
Council approved to pass the resolution to approve the ballot wording for Proposition 2 of the Charter Amendment.
Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

SUMMARY OF CITY OF ROSE CITY
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 19, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.
Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Brent Hinkley
Absent: Ashely Herrick
Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, County Commissioner Roger Mayhew, Larry Hummel with Fleis & Vanderbrink, Henry Cojocar, and Brenda Butler.
Council approved the agenda.
Council approved the Public Hearing Minutes for May 5, 2026.
Council approved the Minutes for May 5, 2026.
Council approved the bills in the amount of \$6,909.72 Common Cash, \$0.00 Sewer Account.
Brent Hinkley gave a Fireboard meeting report.
Claire Myers gave a Library report.
Mike Samples gave a Personnel committee report.
Roger Mayhew gave a County Commissioners report
Anthony Evans gave a DPW report.
Carol Lee Butler gave the Treasurer's report.
The Mayor gave his comments.
Council adopted the Resolution 26-5-19-02.
Clerk gave her report.
Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

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