

Spring 2026

CANNON TOWNSHIP

Communicator

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Supervisor**

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The Arcidiacono Family

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Technology, Roads,
Elections, Cemeteries

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From Your Township Board

In this issue of the *Communicator*, we share some great history about our departments and the visions that have come to life through the thoughtful use of your tax dollars. While many communities take on debt for projects, Cannon Township has made it a priority to save and pay cash whenever possible.

You'll learn how our trail system developed, which roads will be resurfaced this year and how those decisions are made. Perhaps the most exciting update is the continued progress on our new Community Building. You can even be part of it by purchasing a brick in honor of a loved one—see page 07 and 16 for more details. All of us are here to serve you. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you ever have questions.



Steve Grimm
Supervisor



Jim Alles
Clerk



David Spencer
Treasurer



Henry Betten
Trustee



Cy Balk
Trustee





Todd Olson
Trustee



**Jessica
Gutowski-Slaydon**
Trustee

Here To Serve You

 Cannon Township Center
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Zoning Administrator: 616-884-2206

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From the Supervisor

& Sewer Update

At our last meeting in February, the Cannon Township board held a public hearing on the proposed 2026-2027 budget to give our residents the chance to weigh in. In March, the board passed the proposed budget. Here are some highlights that demonstrate how we spend and protect your tax dollars:

10 years ago, the board decided to transfer funds to a capital improvement fund that would be used for capital projects, both planned and unplanned. We also adopted a policy that requires a general fund balance at least equal to expenditures. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have a balance of at least 103% of expenditures in the general fund. This is true even though we are transferring general

fund revenues into the capital improvement fund to pay cash for the new Balk Family Park on Belding Road. As you will recall, the Balk family donated the funds for the county to purchase the old Silver Lake Country Club to develop as a county park. Because the county did not move on the project for over four years, the Township decided to develop the park ourselves, and turn it over to the county to maintain in perpetuity. The exception is the community center, which the Township will control and maintain for the benefit of Cannon residents first. We will pay cash for the project without the need for special assessments or bonds. Following the completion of this project, we will begin replenishing our capital improvement fund for future use. Should the need arise, we will still have enough cash on hand to meet any emergency.

"All of the funds are projected to end with a very healthy fund balance to take us into the future. Cannon's financial position is as sound as I have seen."

– Peter Haefner



Steve Grimm
Supervisor

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Committees:

- Fire & Law Enforcement
- Sewer
- Communications
- Personnel
- Finance & Elections

The Fire Department will spend down its fund balance by approximately \$230,000.00 to begin paying for a new fire truck. Even with that spend-down, the Fire Department under the leadership of Chief Jim Morris will end the year with a fund balance equal to 159% of expenditures.

12 years ago, Cannon put together a sewer committee comprised of representatives of the lake associations, our engineers, the director of the North Kent Sewer Authority, the Supervisor, the Treasurer and Trustee Henry Betten. The first task of the new committee was to develop a long-range capital improvement plan to budget for future projects, plan future projects thirty years into the future, maintain at least \$1,000,000.00 on hand, take on no new debt, and never increase rates beyond 3% annually. This year we will redo the Belding Road trunk, install new generators at both Kitson lift stations as well as the Eldred lift station. After doing all that, while also performing regular, proactive maintenance, the sewer fund will have a year-end balance of at least \$1,600,000.00.

Let me quote our accountant Peter Haefner who summarized the budget at the public hearing: This year Cannon "will do a tremendous amount of capital work, capital projects...and no debt needs to be issued...All of the funds are projected to end with a very healthy fund balance to take [us] into the future... [Cannon's] financial position is as sound as I have seen."

Get Excited!

Youth, Summer Lingo Bingo is back for its third year!
More info in the next issue!

Treasurer's Report



David Spencer
Treasurer

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Committees:

- Finance
- Personnel
- Parks & Rec
- Elections
- Rockford Area Foundation Rep

As of this publication, the March 2, 2026, deadline for making summer and winter 2025 property tax payments has passed. All delinquent taxes were sent to the Kent County Treasurer's Department. If you still have an outstanding property tax balance for 2025, please call the Kent County Treasurer's office at 616-632-7500.

The Treasurer's Department recommends that you review your tax bill to make sure you are receiving the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE). If the PRE is in place, your annual tax

savings are approximately 18 mills. There are two places on your tax bill to check to make sure the "PRE" is in place. On your tax bill you should see: % **PRE/MBT:100% and exempt next to your school district Operating Tax on your bill.** If the PRE is not in place, please bring this to the Assessor or Treasurer's attention, and we will arrange for the proper forms for you to sign.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call David at: **(616) 884-2201** or Judy at: **(616) 884-2202.**

Zoning Update

Special Land Uses

All zoning designations have established permitted uses. These uses are allowed by right, meaning they do not require approval from the Planning Commission. Permitted uses vary depending on the underlying zoning district.

For residential properties, for example, single-family and multi-family homes may be allowed by right, depending on the district. In commercial districts, certain business uses may also be permitted by right, depending on the specific zoning classification.

Some uses require Special Land Use approval. Special Land Uses must be reviewed and approved by both the Planning Commission and the Township Board and require public hearings. Section 23 of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the application process, approval standards, and a complete list

of Special Land Uses permitted within the Township. You can also determine whether a Special Land Use is required for a specific use by reviewing the use tables provided in the Zoning Ordinance for each zoning district.

If a Special Land Use has previously been granted and you wish to make changes to the approval, you may apply for a Special Land Use Amendment. Amendments follow the same review and approval process as a standard Special Land Use application. Any approved amendment must comply with the conditions established as part of the original approval, unless those conditions are formally modified as part of the amendment.

Edmund Lockhart
Zoning Administrator
Planner



Pictured is Strike Team Leader, Ryan Wilamski and a large bittersweet vine

Protecting Forest and Wetland Habitat in Cannon Township

Residents of Cannon Township are familiar with the Iron Belle Trail which winds through lush forests and open wetlands bordering Sunfish Lake.

These natural communities work together to provide crucial habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, from great blue herons and pileated woodpeckers, to Blanding's turtles and wood frogs. Recognizing the importance of this natural corridor just west of Pickerel Lake County Park, the Kent Conservation District has been working with Cannon Township to control an aggressive invasive vine that is degrading the quality and aesthetics of this stretch of trail.

Invasive bittersweet vine has established dense populations throughout Kent County, especially along the Grand River, where birds deposit seeds as they forage and nest. Because of the plant's ability to grow rapidly, constrict and ultimately kill native trees, invasive bittersweet vine has become a major concern for the Kent Conservation District. The vine exacerbates erosion along rivers and streams. As large areas of forest are

strangled, roots that once held streambank soil together decompose, leading to increased soil loss during high-intensity storms and flash flood events. Sediment deposition degrades water quality and can contribute to increased algal growth. In addition, bittersweet berries continue to be spread by birds and carried downstream into previously uninfested habitats if management efforts are not sustained.

Working with Kent County Parks, Cannon Township, and several other park systems, the Kent Invasive Species Strike Team has prioritized parks and adjacent private lands in an effort to protect local forest and wetland wildlife habitat. If you believe invasive bittersweet vine is present on your property, contact the Kent Invasive Species Strike Team for do-it-yourself control recommendations or to hire the team for assistance.



Scan for Bittersweet Awareness Video or visit: vimeo.com/861669031

Kent Invasive Species Strike Team

kentstriketeam@gmail.com
(616) 365-5771

Spring Clean up is May 1st & 2nd

more info at cannontwp.gov

Parks & Recreation and Facilities Update

Hello again Friends and Neighbors,

Welcome to one of my favorite times of the year. The days are getting longer, the weather is warming up, and outdoor recreation opportunities abound in Cannon Township.

For this issue, I thought it would be meaningful to take a look at the history of the Parks and Recreation Committee and give credit where credit is due. So much of what we enjoy today did not happen by accident. It is the result of vision, hard work, and steady leadership over many years.

I reached out to a true Cannon Township legend, Bonnie Blackledge, who now resides up north. Bonnie was elected Clerk of Cannon Township in 1992, a role she served in exceptionally well until 2016. She was also the first chairperson of the newly formed Parks and Recreation Committee in the 1990s and remained in that position until the day she left office. In addition, Bonnie was a driving force behind

the success of the Bear Creek Watershed Committee and Water Fest, a festival dedicated to promoting stewardship and protecting the Bear Creek Watershed.

I would also be remiss if I did not recognize Mary Hefferan, Diane Jones, and Dave Heyboer. All three have been involved with the Recreation Committee since its early days and worked alongside Bonnie and subsequent chairpersons to develop and protect recreational opportunities in our Township. Mary and Dave continue to serve to this day. Diane stepped

down a few years ago after years of dedicated service. Much of the outdoor recreation and stewardship programming we enjoy today is a direct result of their efforts and commitment.

With the goal of honoring Bonnie and her body of work, I asked her to share some of the achievements she is most proud of during her time serving the Township.

I am deeply grateful for individuals like Bonnie, Mary, Dave, and so many others whose names may not appear here but whose fingerprints are all over the parks, trails, and programs we value today. Their vision and determination helped shape Cannon Township into the special place it is.

Another defining characteristic of our Township has been its fiscal conservatism. Over the years, when new projects were envisioned, they were not started unless funding was secured through the recreation millage rather than taking on debt, as many government entities do. Under the leadership of Supervisor Steve Grimm, the current Township Board remains aligned with that philosophy. As long as I serve as a Trustee and Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee, it is important to me that we continue that practice. We owe it to you, the taxpayers, to avoid unnecessary debt, because large projects become far more expensive once interest is added.

Thank you, Bonnie, for helping set that tone from the very beginning.

Wishing you a life well lived in Cannon Township.



Todd Olson
Trustee

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Committees:

- Parks & Rec
- Facilities

Kent County Commissioner
Katie DeBoer came and gave
us an update at our January 26,
2026, board meeting



Memories Of My Years On The Recreation Committee

Bonnie Blackledge

One of my fondest memories from my 24 years serving as Township Clerk for Cannon Township was leading the Recreation Committee. I remember the committee being made up of interested Cannon citizens with talents in various areas who were able to use their strengths to provide recreational opportunities. My main focus starting around 2000 was creating a trail system that would run through Cannon Township and then connect to the White Pine Trail in Rockford and also to Ada Township.

Creating a trail system was a daunting and expensive task. Knowing the Township would need funds, we created a Recreation Master Plan (approved around 2002), which allowed us to seek grant funding, and we also provided match funds through a recreation millage that provided about \$200,000 a year.

Working with Jim Hegarty from Prein & Newhof, the engineering firm that provided consulting services for Cannon, we drafted a grant application in 2006. We had previously applied for two other grants, outsourcing the grant writing, which we did not receive. This time, Jim and I partnered to complete the application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Jim compiled the cost figures and the project plans, and I wrote the grant narrative. This time, the grant was secured.

While we waited for news on the grant award, we worked on engineering and obtaining easements. We were pleased that most of the landowners who owned property along the trail were in favor of the project, but there were still a few who were reluctant to sign.

The first leg of the trail connecting the Township Center to Townsend Park was completed in 2007. The Balk family donated benches for the trail, and an Eagle Scout built a picnic table. A volunteer group worked on trail clean-up and light maintenance.

Near the Township Center, a playground was built specifically geared toward young children. Diane Jones and Mary Hefferan took charge of that project and brought it to fruition. Members of a local mountain bike group created some trails to the south of the Township Center. Bathrooms were constructed with paved access paths from the trail and park.

During the years after the trail was constructed, other improvements were made. An extension was made from the trail end in Townsend Park through the park section southwest of the entrance into the Village of Cannonsburg. This included a bridge to cross Bear Creek. After that, more grants were received that allowed us to add a sidewalk connection from the Bella Vista neighborhood to the Township Center. Before the end of my last term in November 2016, several more extensions had been added.

I am happy to hear that there are ongoing plans to extend the trail to Rockford and Ada. There is also a partnership with the North Country Trail group in Lowell that extended the NCT along the Cannon Trail. Working on the Recreation Committee and being able to develop this trail has been a dream come true.

Your Legacy Set in Stone

If you haven't heard yet, we're doing something first of its kind in Cannon Township. We're building a Cannon Township Community Center, and we'd love for you to be a special part of it.

We're launching a **commemorative brick campaign** with four levels of participation. We would be honored for you to be part of this legacy project and have your name etched along the path for generations to come. Please scan the QR code to place your order online or fill out the form on the back cover and return to the Township Office.

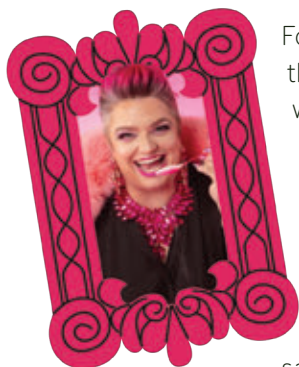
- Cy Balk, Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, Todd Olson, Ray Moulden & Roch Gagnon, Fundraising Committee



FAMILY FEATURE

The Arcidiacono Family

Sometimes home finds you in the most unexpected ways.



For Jenna and Maurizio Arcidiacono, their Cannon Township story began with a shared last name and a chance meeting while working at the Tre Cugini restaurant. A customer noticed their uncommon surname, made an introduction, and mentioned that his neighbor in Lake Bella Vista was about to sell his home. They saw the house before it officially hit the market and made a deal. That was 23 years ago.

Jenna had always dreamed of living on a lake. Childhood summers spent at Silver Lake with friends left her with memories she hoped one day to recreate for her own family. Cannon Township gave her that opportunity. Today, their Lake Bella Vista home feels like the perfect blend of house and cottage, where everyday life and vacation life intertwine.

Jenna and Maurizio, raised their daughters Gioia, 22, and Giada, 19, entirely in Cannon Township.

"It is the only place their girls have ever truly called home"

said Jenna. They learned to swim in these waters, to drive boats on the lake, and eventually to drive cars on these familiar roads. Many of the same neighbors who welcomed the Arcidiaconos 23 years ago are still there, and their children remain close friends to this day.



If you are thinking that the name sounds familiar, you are probably right. The Arcidiacono family owns Amore Trattoria Italiana Restaurant, located just west of Cannon Township. Chef Jenna, as many know her, is a local celebrity and a "Remarkable Woman" award winner. She is known not only for her culinary talent but for her generous spirit.

With her signature fork and spoon earring, pink hair, and a touch of glitter, Jenna is hard to miss. What truly stands out, however, is her heart. She is always praising fellow West Michigan restaurant owners and celebrating others in the industry. Her energy fills a room and she is swift to say 'yes' when something good needs to be done.

Family life centers around food, as you might expect. They love cooking together, sharing meals, and traveling. Some of their favorite summer traditions include fireworks over Lake Bella Vista and Rockford's Start of Summer celebration.



While their daughters are now stepping into new seasons and attending Michigan State University events, Cannon Township remains their anchor. It is the foundation from which everything else grew.

Jenna's nonprofit, Food Hugs, is based in Cannon Township and delivers meals weekly to individuals and families in need. Often arriving in her recognizable hot pink car, she spreads encouragement one meal at a time. The family has even shared Food Hugs with the Township staff (who they love!) and the Cannon Fire Department as a gesture of gratitude.

Maurizio contributes in his own steady way, volunteering with the Sheriff's mounted unit every Thursday for the past seven years.

Over two decades, the Arcidiaconos have watched Cannon Township grow. New amenities like the pickleball courts add energy. Strong schools and dedicated educators continue to shape young families. The food scene has expanded. The community has deepened. And they can't wait for the new Cannon Township Community Building.

For families considering a move, their story says it best. They came and never left. Cannon Township offers everything needed to raise a family, from meaningful community connections to simple joys like a weekly stop at Rocky's for ice cream.

If you would like to learn more about Food Hugs, visit www.foodhugs.org.



Invasive Species & Watershed Committee Update

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our first event of the year! Thank you to the Kent Conservation District for hosting an informational session on the invasive species in our community. The session was focused on what Kent Conservation District is doing in the West Michigan area to help protect our beautiful land. Ryan and David also shared what Strike Team members can do on their own property to help mitigate the impacts of invasive species.

Our next event will take place outdoors at the **James and Shirley Balk Family Park on Saturday, May 2 at 9am**. We will learn more about garlic mustard and have a community

work day to pull the invasive plant from the land. Please use the Cannon Township Office Facebook page for updates closer to the event.

On Wednesday, May 20 at 6:30pm, there will be another informational session. "Spring Foraging: How to ID, harvest, and eat the weeds around you" which will be hosted by Lea Sevigny. This session will not only offer a lecture inside the boardroom, but also a short outdoor walk to explore the plants around the Township building.

Please let me know if you have any questions or are looking for more ways to get involved with the Invasive Species and Wetlands committee.



Cy Balk
Trustee

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Committees:

- Parks & Rec
- Invasive Species and Wetlands

A BIT OF HISTORY

Update from The Historical Society

Have you ever driven along Pettis, just south of 5 Mile Road? If so, you may have noticed three giant oak trees standing tall, their wide crowns stretching overhead, and trunks so thick you could not wrap your arms around them. Based on their diameter, these trees are easily more than 200 years old.

How is that even possible?

We know that early Cannon Township was largely farmland, dotted with small villages that provided basic goods and services. When settlers arrived to claim their homesteads in the 1800s, one of their first tasks was clearing the land. Trees were felled, stones were hauled away, and fields were prepared for planting.

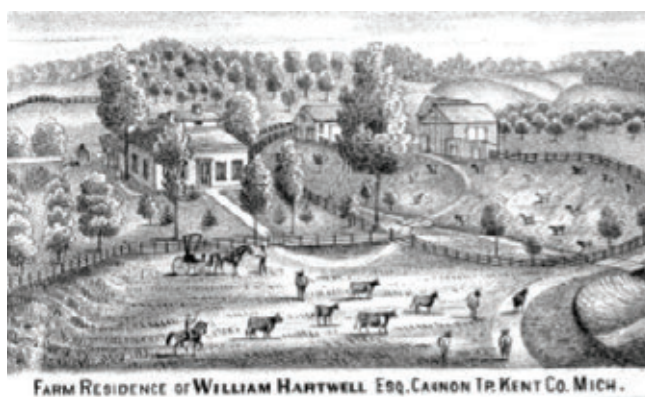


But not every tree came down.

Certain trees were intentionally preserved as property markers, a living boundary line that appears in early land ownership records. If you browse historic deeds, you'll find properties described in relation to these very trees. They were landmarks long before there were street signs or survey stakes.

With the expansion of the Pettis trail moving north, we are glad to hear that Kent County Parks & Recreation plans to preserve them. These trees are more than beautiful;

they are living landmarks. They provide shade, wildlife habitat, and a tangible connection to the earliest days of our Township. Intentionally preserved by settlers in the mid-1800s, they remain a meaningful part of our shared landscape and story.



Museum and Historic Society has a challenge for you

We're on a mission to find the oldest tree in Cannon Township. Can you help? Submit a photo, the tree's diameter (measured at about 4½ feet from the ground), and the tree species. Let's discover the oldest living witness to our Township's history together. Please send your info to:

cannonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com





NON-PROFIT FEATURE

Izaak Walton League of America

Dwight Lydell Chapter

For more than 100 years, the **Izaak Walton League of America** has been dedicated to protecting our nation's natural resources. Founded in 1922 by outdoor enthusiasts concerned about polluted rivers and disappearing wildlife, the organization was named after Izaak Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler*. At a time when there were no pollution laws and rivers were used as dumping grounds, the League stood up for conservation.

Today, the League remains committed to defending soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife.

The **Dwight Lydell Chapter**, the only chapter in Michigan, has been serving our region for nearly a century and will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027. The chapter was named in honor of local fisheries biologist Dwight Lydell, whose legacy of environmental stewardship continues to inspire the group's work.

Located on 39 beautiful acres at 5641 Myers Lake Ave. NE Belmont, MI 49306 the property includes Armstrong Creek, a pond, wooded trails, hills, and open green space. A lodge built in the late 1970s serves as a gathering place for monthly dinners and educational programs. Members enjoy walking trails, birdwatching, two pavilions, fire pits, and access to kayaks, a canoe, and a rowboat on the pond. It is a peaceful place to reconnect with nature and unwind from the pace of everyday life.

The "Ikes" are especially passionate about helping children build lifelong relationships with the natural world. In May they host free kids' fishing nights on Wednesdays from 6:00–8:00 p.m., providing helpers and equipment. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Throughout the year, the chapter also welcomes the public to events such as Winterfest, Summerfest, and various nature programs. The group has evolved

over time, beginning as a sportsmen's organization, becoming active in environmental advocacy, and now experiencing renewed energy from young families. Leaders such as Bob Stegmeier were tireless advocates for environmental protection and renewable energy. Another early champion, Harry Luton, believed so deeply in preserving natural spaces that he and his family donated much of the land that became what we now know as Luton Park.

The chapter also hosts Strong Roots, a forest school that meets on the property.

A family membership is \$100 per year, offering access to trails, programs, and a welcoming community rooted in conservation values.



Upcoming opportunities to connect include:

Kids' Fishing Wednesdays in May
Summerfest – June 13

Whether you are an avid outdoorsperson, a family looking for connection, or someone simply seeking quiet space among the trees, the Ikes welcome you.



To learn more or become a member visit: www.izaakwaltonmi.com
Facebook: Izaak Walton League – Dwight Lydell Chapter

Technology, Roads, Elections, Cemeteries

General

Everything I do begins with the residents of Cannon Township. As we make decisions and plan for the future, I continually ask myself: Are we spending your tax dollars wisely? Are we making the most thoughtful and financially sound choices for our community?

Input from residents helps lead to better decisions, so I encourage you to stay involved and speak up. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions, concerns, or ideas to share.



Jim Alles
Clerk

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Committees:

- Elections
- Personnel
- Cemetery
- Fire & Law Enforcement
- Facilities
- Communications & GVMC Rep

Roads

Plans are underway for the construction season for Cannon Township. If you have driven around the county, I think you will agree that Cannon has some pretty good roads compared to other areas. Since 2016 the road committee has used a rolling 3-year plan to identify roads that need work and what roads will need work in the near future. Our philosophy is to spend a little every year to avoid having to do any major projects that would affect our financial status negatively.

2026 Road Projects

- Weller Drive: M44 to Farrell Drive
- Farrell Drive: Weller Drive to Homestead Drive
- Farrell Drive: Homestead Drive to End
- Homestead Drive: M44 to Farrell Drive
- Robin Hill Drive: Egypt Valley to End
- Sunfish Lake Court: Sunfish Lake Ave. to End
- Eldred Drive: Young Avenue to East
- Eldred Avenue: Southerly to Backaround
- Eldred Avenue: Northerly to Cul-de-sac

We do not know the exact dates that individual roads will be under construction - much of that is dependent on the weather and when the Kent County Road Commission contractors have put things on their schedule.

Folks that live on these streets will be sent or may have already received, a letter from the KCRC with more details.

I am pleased to report that the Road Committee has added two new members, Judy Wood and Terry Smith, to help establish the new 3-year plan on what we will be working on in the future.



At our January 23, 2026, Board Meeting, Girl Scouts Troop 8228 came by and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance

Cemeteries

Currently we are waiting on the results of the environmental study on the area proposed for the new cemetery. If that comes back good, we will ask the Township Board for the authorization to move forward with the RFP (Request for Proposal) to clear the area and start the improvements to the drive. We then will be able to lay out the cemetery spaces and begin selling.

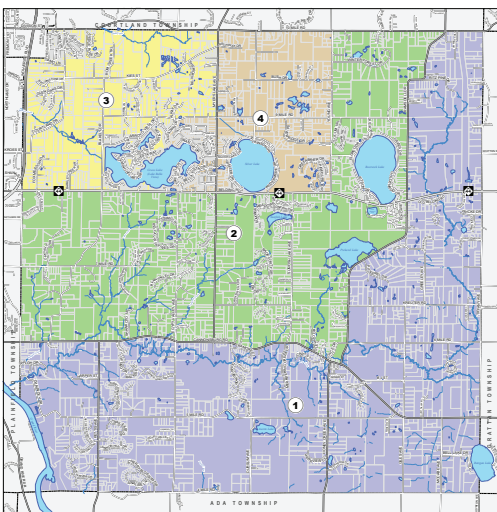
As we enter the summer months the volunteers will be out again cleaning headstones and working to improve the appearance of our four cemeteries. If you would like to be included and learn about cleaning headstones and repairing, please give me a call at 616-884-2207 or email jalles@cannontwp.gov. No special skills are necessary; everything can be learned and everyone is welcome. Benjamin Franklin once said:

"I only need to visit the graveyard of a community to know the character of the people."

Let's all help prove that the character of Cannon Township is awesome.

IT

You may have noticed that the email addresses now end with **.gov**. As of March 1, 2026, we have officially switched to the .gov extension. Not really a big deal but it does give a bit more security to our system. The .org extension will still work; it automatically transfers to the .gov extension so no email is missed.



Precincts & Polling Places
1 Cannon Township Community Center 7611 Seabury Rd. NE, Roseland, MI 48861
2 Cannon Township Community Center 7611 Seabury Rd. NE, Roseland, MI 48861
3 Cannon Township Community Center 7611 Seabury Rd. NE, Roseland, MI 48861
4 Cannon Township Community Center 7611 Seabury Rd. NE, Roseland, MI 48861

CANNON
Township
VOTING PRECINCTS
MARCH 2026
Electoral/Redistricting



Elections

Over the past several month the elections folks have been evaluating the benefits and issues with redrawing our precinct boundaries. Until 2022 the law limited precinct size to 2,999 voters. With Prop 2 that number increased to 4,999. It was felt that early voting and the Permanent Absent Voter list would reduce the number of voters on election day. Amazingly, 60% of our voters opted to vote early or AV.

Cannon reduced the number of precincts from 6 to 4. This bring our numbers to the 2,500 to 3,000 per precinct. One of the results is reduced election costs. The change will save about \$20,000 per election in terms of workers and equipment.

You will receive a NEW voter information card in the mail soon. This will have your new precinct listed. You will also get a mailer sometime before the August Primary Election with the voting location for that election. We are working with the local churches and schools to identify the best location.

We had planned to have the 2026 elections in the new Community Center at the Balk Family Park, but it looks like we will have the Primary election at the usual places and hopefully the General Election in November will be in the new building.

This is probably a good place to encourage you to vote early or AV to avoid any confusion on where to vote. Early voting for the primary election will be at the Cannon Township Center from July 25th thru August 2nd. Polls will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each of those days.

The Primary Election is August 4th 2026
The General Election is November 3rd, 2026



View map at www.cannontwp.goc/clerk or scan the QR code

A Shared Legacy of Service

Kent County Sheriff's Office & Cannon Township



The title "Sheriff" has deep roots stretching back to England. It comes from "shire-reeve," a local officer charged with keeping the peace and carrying out the law on behalf of the community. As the role developed over centuries, it crossed the Atlantic and became a form of local accountability.

In Michigan, the Sheriff is a constitutional county officer. Article VII, Section 4 of the Michigan Constitution requires every county to elect a Sheriff for a 4-year term; the office's duties and powers are established by state law. Michigan sheriffs are elected on the presidential election cycle, reinforcing that the Sheriff answers directly to voters.

Those responsibilities are practical: enforcing criminal and civil law, protecting people and property, operating the county jail, providing court security, and supporting public safety throughout the county. Sheriffs provide services that smaller jurisdictions may not be able to maintain on their own.

Michigan law further requires the Sheriff to appoint an Undersheriff, who serves as a general deputy and the second-in-command. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Sheriff, the Undersheriff executes the office until a Sheriff is elected and qualified, ensuring continuity of public safety leadership.

The Kent County Sheriff's Office was established in 1836 and has grown into a large, full-service agency. Today, it is the fourth largest Sheriff's Office in Michigan and ranks among the 100 largest Sheriff's Offices in the nation. Cannon Township has been an important partner in that mission. In September 2000, the Township contracted with the Kent County Sheriff's Office to ensure a dedicated deputy remains assigned within Cannon Township, strengthening visibility, improving response times, and providing consistent local coverage beyond general patrol availability.

Today, the agency is led by Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young, appointed in 2018 and the first female Sheriff in Kent County history, and Undersheriff Bryan Muir. Their leadership reflects a shared legacy that connects tradition, professionalism, and community partnership.



Bryan Muir
Undersheriff

FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

2025 Annual Performance Report

Cannon Township Fire Department

In 2025, the Cannon Township Fire Department continued to scale its operations to meet the needs of our growing community. Our Department managed a total of 777 calls for service, maintaining a disciplined focus on resource allocation and rapid response.

Service Metrics at a Glance

Our incident volume reflects the diverse needs of our Township:

- **Medical & Rescue Utility:** 58% of our total call volume was dedicated to Rescue and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), representing the core of our daily community value.
- **Fire Suppression:** 46 incidents were categorized as "Fire," including structural, vegetation, and vehicle fire responses.

Strategic Use of Millage Funding

Following the community's 2022 Millage authorization, we have successfully transitioned to a full 24/7/365 staffing model.

By always maintaining a consistent baseline of two on-site responders, we have:

- **Optimized Response Readiness:** Drastically reduced the time it takes to get wheels on the road.
- **Maximized Facility Utility:** Fully utilizing our infrastructure to provide round-the-clock protection.
- **Direct Value:** This shift represents a direct conversion of taxpayer investment into reduced response times and enhanced public safety.

Personnel & Professional Development

The Department currently consists of **32 dedicated members**. We are committed to continuous professional growth:

- Several recruits are currently enrolled in the **Fire Academy**.
- Multiple members are finalizing their **EMT-Basic licensure** to further bolster our medical response capabilities.

Spring Burn Permit Reminders

As spring arrives, Cannon Township would like to remind residents of our local burn ordinances. Please review the following guidelines to ensure a safe and legal burn.

When is a Permit Required?

- **Large Fires:** Any fire over 36 inches in diameter requires a burning permit.
- **Recreational Fires:** Small fires in burn rings are considered recreational and **do not** require a permit.
- **Timing:** Please apply for your permit **on the day** you plan to burn.

Prohibited Items

- **State Law:** Burning dimensional or treated lumber is strictly prohibited.
- **Leaves & Grass:** Leaf and grass clipping disposal is **only** permitted during the last two weekends of October and the first two weekends of November.

Safety Requirements

If you are burning yard debris, you must adhere to these safety standards:

- **No Accelerants:** Never use gasoline or other accelerants to start or maintain a fire.
- **Water Source:** You must always have a reliable water source nearby.
- **Supervision:** You must stay with your fire until it is completely out.
- **Curfew:** All fires must be extinguished by nightfall.

Note: If your fire causes a nuisance to neighbors or creates hazardous driving conditions due to smoke, you may be asked to extinguish it immediately.

How to Obtain a Permit

1. **Online:** Visit the Cannon Township Website, navigate to the Fire Department page, and click "Burn Permit." Complete the form and submit it. Please note: You will not receive a confirmation call unless we have specific questions or concerns.
2. **By Phone:** Call the Fire Department at **(616) 874-9725** to provide your information.



James M. Morris
Fire Chief, EMT

Cannon Township Fire Department Incident Statistics

Overall Incident Statistics For 9 Different Categories

