Official Newspaper of Record for the City of Belleville
& the Charter Township of Van Buren
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BELLEVILLE-AREA
INDEPENDENT

Vol. 31.51 Thursday, December 18, 2025 Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren FREE

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Rest of the City: 184 South Biggs

Independent photos by James Otzman

EARLY DEADLINES

Due to the upcoming Christmas Day Holiday, ALL ads must be submitted by 4 p.m. Friday, 12/19/25. Classified advertising deadline is Noon Monday, 12/22/25.

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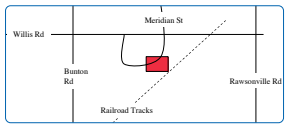

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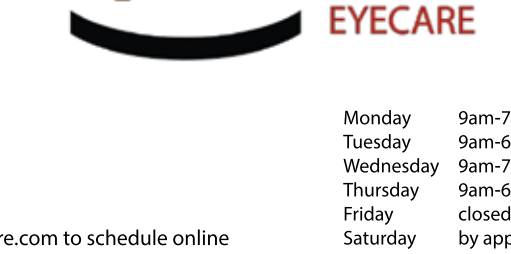

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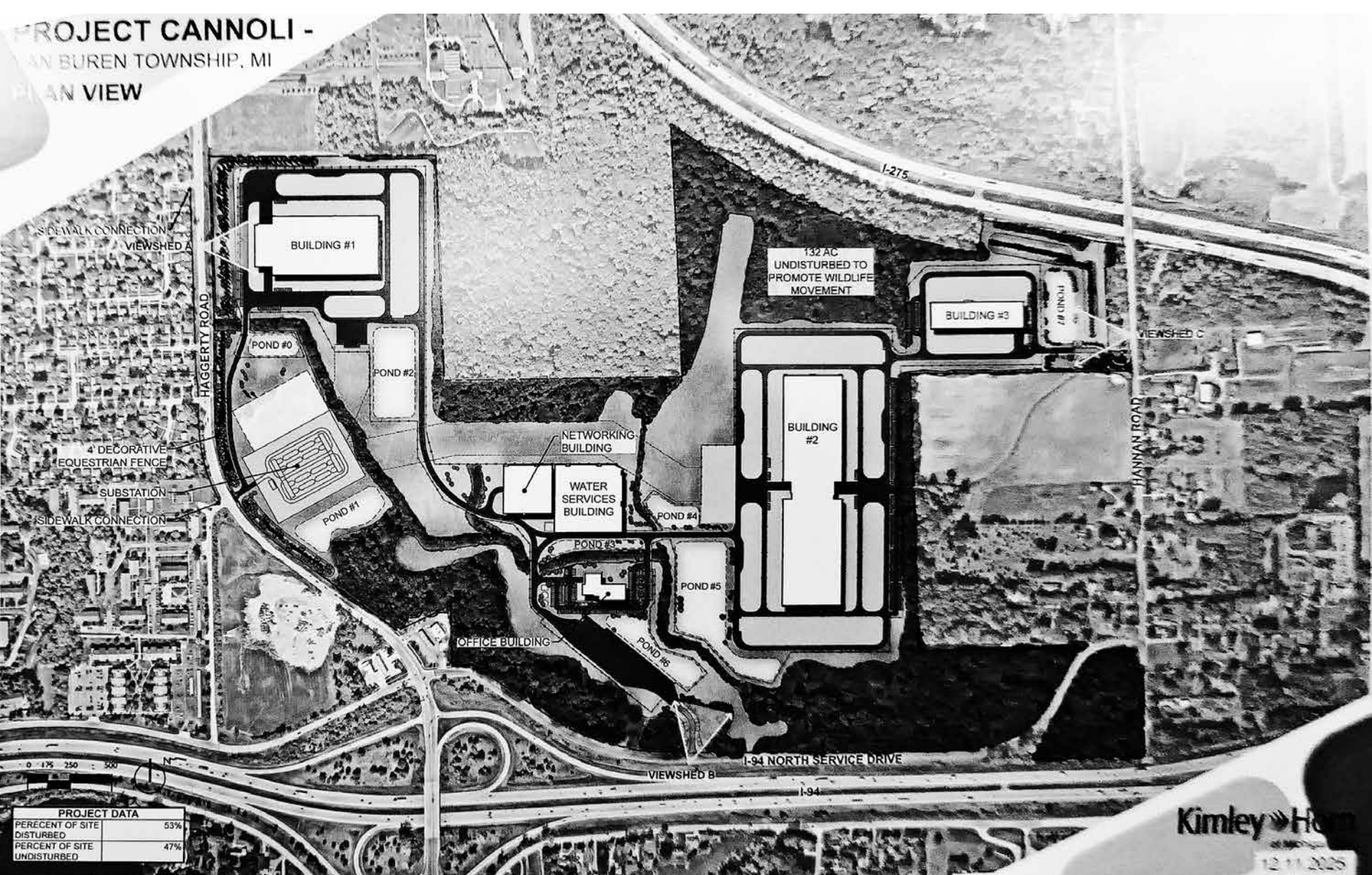
SECOND FRONT PAGE

Independent photos by Rosemary K. Otzman

A large crowd attended the data center meeting in the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees meeting room on Dec. 11 to find out the details of the proposed development called "Project Cannoli." The 280 acres east of Haggerty, north of the I-94 N. Service Drive, west of Hannan Road and north to I-275 is planned to house a data center. The site plan has been reviewed by the township staff and sent back to Panattoni, the developers, for revisions. It is expected to be revised and before the planning commission on Jan. 14 or Jan. 28. The zoning allows data center by right.



OPINIONS

Editorial:

Parents shocked by video of student beating on teacher

Last week, parents were shocked by a video on social media showing a Belleville High School student whaling away with his fists on a teacher in the classroom. The teacher directed him to sit down and he just came closer to the teacher, bunched up his fists, and started punching. The teacher was able to get him under control and the video ended.

One wonders who was recording this with a cell phone and if that person knew in advance that the student was going to attack the teacher. Students are not allowed to have their cell phones on during class, but students say very few adhere to that rule.

Belleville Police Chief Kris Faull said the teen was taken into custody after the assault. She said police tried repeatedly to get through to the Wayne County Juvenile Justice Detention Center and failed to get any return calls. They turned the teen over to the custody of his father. Meanwhile police are preparing criminal charges to submit to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, as required by law.

Some teachers report they are fearful in their jobs because, they say, the administration does not stand behind them when they try to discipline a student.

We know that parents are the ones who are responsible for disciplining their children, but in this culture fewer are doing so. One mother told me she was afraid of her teen and locked her bedroom door at night to protect herself.

If no one gets the kids under control, what will our society become?

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Otzman

Elena Manalp, of the communications department at Van Buren Township, recently was named one of the five Student Ambassadors of Sessions College for 2025-26. She is taking classes online to get a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Photography. The classes are very difficult and she has worked very hard, getting A's in every class so far. Her new classes begin in early January.

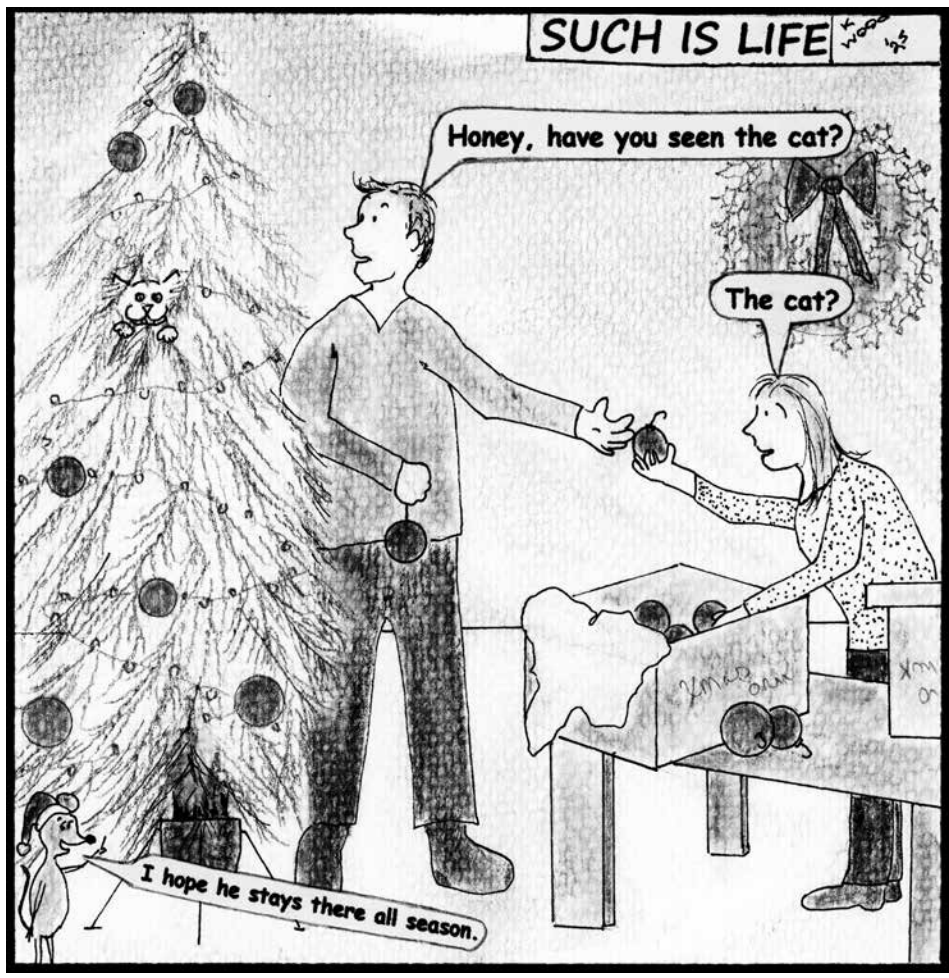
Each year the college selects Ambassadors to provide their feedback and perspectives on upcoming college projects. The college said these Ambassadors help the staff and faculty better understand the students' needs, shaping how the programs and services evolve to create a positive student experience.

We are very proud to have Elena's photos in our paper and to have her as a part of our community.

***

Social media comments are pointing out the bald eagle nest that has been seen for years in the area just north of the I-94 Service Drive in the area of Hannan Road. That's part of the proposed data center property introduced to Van Buren Township residents last week in a public meeting. Such nests have been taken seriously in the past, so it will be interesting to see if the eagle nest cuts off part of the 280 acres planned as the site for the new data center.

Ron Akers, the township's director of municipal services, told me the preliminary site plan for the data center is expected to be on the planning commission agenda on the first or second commission meeting in January – Jan. 14 or 28. He said the staff has reviewed the site plan and sent it back to the developer for revisions. When I talked to Ron, he hadn't received the updated site plan back yet.



The site is zoned properly for a data center "by right" so the only thing the township can do is work with the details of the project.

At the overcrowded meeting in the township board meeting room on Dec. 11, DTE told people that it had power for the project. An electric substation is on the site-plan drawing. Also, the township's engineering consultant told residents that the project will not be using township water and will be getting its water from a 42" main. The developers said they will not discharge water into Belleville Lake or Edison Lake, although one wonders where it will go.

We'll find out more of the details in the future planning commission meetings. For that Dec. 11 meeting people had to walk around to tables with signs on them and then to talk to officials when they could get a word in edgewise among the pushing crowd members – some of whom were quite rude and pushed cell phones into the officials' faces as they spoke. At the commission, the public is seated and the reports are not only given verbally, but they are available in writing. And, the meetings are very polite.

***

A news report out of Los Angelos on Dec. 10 said an electric school bus suddenly caught fire beneath a freeway overpass in the San Fernando Valley about 9:20 a.m. No children were on board, but the bus driver was hospitalized for minor smoke inhalation. The fire fighters were able to knock down the majority of the flames by 10:55 a.m., but they had to stand by. The bus was powered by lithium-ion batteries which are volatile and require hours of post-extinguishment monitoring to prevent reignition, according to the report. The cause of the fire remained unknown.

The Van Buren Public Schools announced receiving five "free" electric school buses through a grant and then a news report listed them as getting about 10 more. These are the buses that will be parked at the former Haggerty Elementary School once that school is converted into a bus garage and warehouse area.

OUR Next Energy was setting up a large business on the Ashley Crossroads site on Ecorse/Haggerty roads to make lithium-ion batteries but now has cut down on the space it needs since the use of those batteries is not as great as expected. The space they are using is just one-third of the building they had planned to fill.

These lithium-ion are the batteries that have burst into flame in a couple of vehicle salvage areas in Sumpter Township. It is also the reason that a neighbor to one of those newer salvage yards is asking the township to require a fire wall to be set up between that lot and her home. She said the fire wall won't stop the blaze from coming if a car explodes, but it will give her time to get to safety.

***

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Letters

Brown Funeral Home thanks those who helped

To the editor:

When most people think of funeral homes they think of death. But what we really do well is celebrate life.

A special thank you goes out to the sponsors of our recent events that helped to bring the community together. We have two events each year that honor lives. They are the Tree of Remembrance and Angel of Hope ceremonies. We have been hosting these for the past 20+ years. This year we changed the Tree of Remembrance; the ceremony began as soon as guests arrived. Next year we are open to many new ideas, including a community cookie exchange.

This year, for the Angel of Hope (a ceremony for those who have a child that died -- held every year on Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.) we also had the Winterfest parade. We would like to thank the planners for so graciously holding off the fireworks until the ceremony was finished. Because all city fire trucks were in the parade, Van Buren Township Fire Department came to light up the cemetery at night, and Davenport Construction again provided the heavy-duty generator for sound, lighting, etc.

We would also like to thank the following who always help make these events spectacular:

- Rev. Robert White of Grace Baptist Church
- Pinter's Flowerland on Rawsonville Road
- Cheryl Wagoner for ringing the bell
- The volunteers who set up, host, and clean up for both events
- The City of Belleville

It is truly our pleasure celebrating our community. Happy Holidays to everyone.

Shelly Brown-Chudzinski
David C. Brown Funeral Home

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Karen's Place has a new Nail Tech.
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We need help to get a seizure service dog

To the editor:

My daughter has been diagnosed with PNES (psychogenic non-epileptic seizures) and we are looking for donations to help get her a seizure service dog. https://gofund.me/5bf8cc957.

We are hoping to spread this call for help within the community. If you go to the Go Fund Me link, you can find out more about her diagnosis.

Nicole McGuire
Van Buren Township

St. Jude Thaddeus Novena

To the editor:

Please publish the following.

St. Jude Thaddeus Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, hear my prayer. St. Jude Thaddeus, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude Thaddeus, helper of the helpless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day for nine days. On the ninth day, prayers will be answered. Must be published.

Thank you, St. Jude Thaddeus.

C.P., Wayne

St. Jude Novena

To the editor:

I want to thank St. Jude for answering my prayers.

St. Jude Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, keeper of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say the St. Jude Novena prayer nine times a day. By the eighth day your prayer will be answered. It had never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.

Peacefully, J.C.P.

Upcoming Meetings

- Tuesday, Dec. 30 – Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority, NO MEETING.
- Monday, Jan. 5 – Belleville City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 8 – Keystone Academy School Board, 5 p.m. Also, Belleville Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Jan. 14 – Van Buren Township Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Jan. 20 – Belleville City Council, 6:30 p.m. Also, Van Buren Township Board of Trustees, 6 p.m., with 5 p.m. work/study as needed.
- Wednesday, Jan. 28 – Van Buren Township Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m.

Supt. Kudlak: 'It hurts all our hearts that our people don't feel safe'

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At the end of the open meeting part of the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education on Monday, school superintendent Pete Kudlak said the district has had a "rough week or so."

Supt. Kudlak said, "People in our buildings don't feel safe. It hurts all our hearts that our people don't feel safe." He said they would "work to make it better."

That was his only comment at the board meeting concerning the student who recently attacked a teacher with punches in a classroom. A cell phone recording of the assault by a student was reportedly circulated throughout the school building within five minutes of the attack and went on social media thereafter.

Board member David Shall said he was, "proud of the way kids reacted to violence," without further explanation.

The teen who attacked the teacher in the video was put in custody of his father by police, who are seeking a warrant to prosecute him.

No parents attended the school board meeting to speak about the offense, but the student representative on the board that evening, Artrell Green, thanked the high school principal for handling "issues," without explanation. The principal was not present at the meeting.

In other business at the 90-minute open meeting, the board:

• Met the new Rawsonville Elementary School principal Christen Hawkins, who will begin her job on Jan. 5. She said she has been a principal for four-and-a-half years in Ypsilanti and 12 years as a teacher in Michigan and in Georgia;

• Approved Stacey Buhro as a new Belleville High School counselor as of Dec. 1, Lauren Trejo as Edgemont/Savage speech pathologist as of Dec. 8, Tyler Jackson as social worker at the Early Childhood Center as of Dec. 11, and Hawkins as Rawsonville principal;

• Accepted the resignation of Owen teacher Danielle Duda-Buckshaw after less than a year of service;

• Accepted the resignation of custodian Sarah Charlton as of Oct. 1 after one-and-a-half-years of service;

• Approved employing Ronda Orr as a paraprofessional at Savage Elementary School as of Dec. 2 and Anna Lauber as a secretary at Edgemont Elementary as of Dec. 1;

• Approved 20-25 students, grades 9th-12th, to attend the KLAA Student Leadership Conference for student council officers and leaders in Grand Rapids Feb. 20-23. Cost to students is $350 each and fundraising is available to cover the fees;

• Were informed about progress in the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) and were told the clinic at the school is expected to open in January. It is

(continued on page 11)

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Obituaries

Betty Merritt

BETTY MERRITT

August 10, 1929 – December 11, 2025

Betty Merritt, age 96, of Van Buren Township, MI, passed away on December 11, 2025, with her family by her side. She was born on August 10, 1929, to Martin and Elly (Christiansen) Olsen in Ferndale, Michigan. Betty practiced Christian Science as her faith. She retired to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in 1986, and returned to Michigan in 2013; enjoying the sun and weather of the south. She loved dachshunds. Betty was also a bird watcher and enjoyed nature. A fun lady who will be missed by many. She is survived by her children Toni Merritt Bess of Van Buren Township, MI, and Norman Martin (Jane) Merritt, of Mountain Rest, SC; her grandson Michael Norman (Kelsey) Bess of Saginaw, MI; and her great-granddaughters, Charlie Michelle and Ava Antoinette, as well as many friends and neighbors.

She was preceded in death by her parents Martin and Elly Olsen, her husband Frank John Merritt, her brother Billy M. Olsen, and her son-in-law Ricky Bess.

According to her wishes, dignified cremation rites have been accorded with the David C. Brown Funeral Home, 460 E. Huron River Drive, Belleville, MI.

www.davidcbrownfh.com

If desired, donations would be appreciated in Betty's memory to the Ausable Valley Animal Shelter. www.ausablevalleyanimalshelter.org

TONI ANNE FREDENDALL

March 11, 1958 – December 9, 2025

Age 67, of Belleville, passed away after many health battles, lastly stage 4 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Survived by children Alan and Laura, siblings Floyd and Renee, 3 grandchildren. Anatomical donation to the U of M Medical School for research and study. Arrangements by David C. Brown Funeral Home.

www.davidcbrownfh.com

Things to do in the Belleville area...

• **Saturday, Dec. 20 –** Christmas photos with Santa, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Belleville Area Museum. Festival of Holiday Trees also continues at the museum.

• **Tuesday, Dec. 23 –** Redemption Bible Church will hold a Christmas service at 7 p.m. The church meets at Antioch Baptist Church, 6538 Rawsonville Rd.

• **Wednesday, Dec. 31 –** Welcome the New Year at the Van Buren Eagles, 9961 Beck Rd., Van Buren Township. The party is Celebrating 100 years of Great Gatsby and 1920's dress attire is optional but encouraged. Doors open at 5 p.m. to ticket holders only. Catered dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets are $50 per person and are available at the bar and online. Balloon drop at midnight and pizza. Live music. Open to the public.

• **Wednesday, Feb. 4 –** Chief meteorologist Joel Fritsma will tell all about the Michigan Storm Chasers at the Michigan Flight Museum, 47884 D Street, Willow Run Airport. The talk begins at 7:30 p.m., doors open at 6:30. (734) 483-4030. $10 per person for non-members; museum members free with registration.

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Photos courtesy of Elena Manalp, VBT Communications Dept.

Santa Claus greets Joel Yuhaz who came to see him with a list last Saturday at the Belleville Area Museum. They are surrounded by the Festival of Holiday Trees on the second floor. The Central Business Community will again bring Santa to the museum this Saturday, Dec. 20, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to meet with children and special-needs adults. Pictures with Santa are free, but donations are accepted.

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ORPHAN OF THE WEEK

QUACK

MEET QUACK!

A GENTLE SOUL IN A TINY FLUFFY BODY!

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www.amcvanburen.com

More Letters

The Blue Tape Bandits strike again

To the Editor:

After checking my security cameras the other day, I saw someone come up to my free flag display that I moved on to my porch and the person was doing something there. So today I went out and checked it and as you can see by the pictures there were several objects all wrapped up in blue masking tape A sure sign of the BLUE TAPE BANDITS.

I do believe this is a group of men that get together and bet on various games or events and the winner puts the proceeds into the donation box designated to Belleville VFW Post 4434.

I just want to PUBLICLY THANK them for their continuous support to the VFW Flag Program. And this IS NOT the first time they dropped off sizable donations, several hundred $$ over the last few years.

Pete Pitzen, chairman
Flag Committee
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 4434

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Photo courtesy of Dee Groeneweg

Participants in the Healthy Habits and WiHn (cardio drumming) group from the Belleville First United Methodist Church did some caroling at Cedar Woods Assisted Living and Memory Care in Van Buren Township on Dec. 15. The carolers also shared cookies and Christmas cards with the residents.

Photo courtesy of Elena Manalp, VBT Communications Dept.

The Paws with Claus event over two days at the Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority Harris Park building brought 28 dogs to see Santa. They signed up for the schedule and, reportedly, the dogs were very orderly and there were no conflicts. The pictures were put on line and people voted for their favorites.

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Belleville Central Business Community

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VBPS

(continued from page 6)

run throught the University of Michigan. The clinic will provide sports exams, glasses, substance abuse treatment, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted disease testing, and mental health services. If an adolescent is between the ages of 14-17 mental health care can be private. Mature minors can have private pregnancy testing, STD testing, and family planning, but no birth control devices;

• Heard details of the renovations planned for the heating and cooling of classrooms at Rawsonville Elementary School, starting at spring break and finishing before the new school year in August at a cost of $2,751,126 from the sinking fund;

• Heard financial director Priya Nayak say the missing piece of information from the federal government has come in so the board approved the 2024-25 annual audit report previously presented;

• Approved the Schools of Choice declaration for the second semester for an unlimited number of openings. Requests are being accepted Jan. 6-20. Trustee Shall suggested limiting new Schools of Choice students to 20% of the current students and after a discussion this issue was to be placed as the only item on a board workshop session this spring. Then there could be a change for the vote concerning Schools of Choice for the first semester of the 2026-27 school year. Trustee Vic DeLiberia also questioned the finances surrounding Schools of Choice and the staff needed;

• Heard Reg Ion, a grandfather of students, say he doesn't like Schools of Choice for various reasons. He said it leads to cheating in football and then the cheater went to a cheater university. He said when football players are recruited from other schools, students in this district don't get to play. "You just want the money," he said to the board. He then told of a school security guard who told his granddaughter that her father didn't like black people. She said it twice to his granddaughter, who then told her that her father is married to a black woman who is her mother. He said his granddaughter was hurt and embarrassed and though she wrote out the incident on Nov. 7 and turned it in and tried to talk to a counselor, that didn't happen. His son was promised a meeting with a counselor, but that hasn't happened either. Ion said he wants to know the name of "Mama K" the security guard and he wants to know why she is working with children. "I'm not going to rest," Ion said. "I'm looking for some answers." Kudlak said he would call Ion;

• Heard mother Angela Mears say she would like to correct a figure she quoted at a recent meeting. She said the BHS Class of 2026 raised $396 in November at Hungry Howie's, not $365, and raised $465 in October. She listed other upcoming fundraising Dine to Donate events for the graduation party at the end of the year;

• Approved the board's organizational meeting to be held at 7 p.m., Jan. 12, at the BHS Commons. The meeting for the upcoming year will be set at that time; and

• Went into closed-door session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation and to consider a funding resolution that includes opting into a grant with a recission stipulation if the state doesn't take action. When the board came back into open session, it voted to give Kudlak the highest rating as "effective" for the period of January-December 2025. No action was taken on the funding resolution. The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Sumpter ZBA approves plumbing service business for downtown

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent editor

After a 41-minute meeting of the Sumpter Township Zoning Board of Appeals on Nov. 20, the ZBA voted unanimously to permit a plumbing service business without a retail store to be considered suitable for the Central Business District zoning.

The property at 19435 Sumpter Rd. had been used in the past as a veterinary clinic, marijuana farm, and other businesses.

The township rezoned that area from C-2 to CBD in an effort to build a downtown atmosphere at the corner of Sumpter and Willis roads.

Steven Edwards said he plans to use Suite #5 in the back of the building for his plumbing service and didn't want to sell plumbing supplies in the front of the building as required in the CBD zoning. He said he didn't want to sell supplies because Ace Hardware is across the street and already sells such supplies to its customers.

He said he wants to park his water trucks inside at the back where there are big doors. He said his vacuum trucks need to be stored out of the weather.

The township planner said there had been eight violations on the building and didn't know if they have been taken care of. Edwards said he thought they had.

Edwards said there is room for apartments upstairs. He said his plans include a laundromat, coffee shop, and an executive office and he already has people interested in putting those in. He said there already are water taps that would suit a laundromat.

Township trustee Matthew Oddy, who sits on the planning commission and the ZBA, said Sumpter is a farming community so its business district would look a little different. He wanted a fence to block off the trucks that would be in back.

Also, a stipulation should be made so Edwards can put off the paving of the parking area until spring, so he doesn't have to come back to the planning commission again, Oddy said.

The motion put together by Oddy, with

(continued on page 12)

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Sumpter ZBA

(continued from page 11)

the help of the township planner, said the ZBA considers plumbing services with outdoor storage consistent with the CBD zoning and a fence should be put around the leased area. The hard surfacing of the parking area could be delayed no later than June 30, 2026. Also, the business needs to come up with a site plan that is in accordance with the ordinance, which would have the final approval by township staff.

Tanner Bailey, Pat Dyer accepted to program of distinction at Albion

Van Buren Township residents Tanner Bailey and Pat Dyer, both first-year students at Albion College, have recently been accepted to a program of distinction.

The college's programs of distinction offer enhanced instruction, experiential learning opportunities, and focused career preparation in pre-medical studies, public policy, business, environmental studies, social change, professional education, and the liberal arts.

Both Bailey and Dyer joined the Carl A. Gerstacker Institute for Business and Management.

Bailey is a graduate of Belleville High School and Dyer is a graduate of Father Gabriel Richard High School.

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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"Never be afraid to try something new. Remember professionals built the Titanic but an amateur built the ark."
– Father Brown

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City of Belleville Public Notice

CITY OF BELLEVILLE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 1, 2025 - 6:30 pm

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Voigt Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Bates Present
Council Member Kissel Present
Council Member Beebe Present
Council Member Priest Present

3. PRESENTATIONS & CITIZENS COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

• Presentations
i. Changing of the Guard – City Council
1. Judge Martin of the 36th District Court administered the Oath of Office to Council Members Kissel & Beebe.
ii. Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem – City Council

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Priest to re-appoint
Council Member Bates to the position of Mayor Pro-Tem.

ROLL CALL:

Council Member Beebe Aye
Council Member Priest Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Bates Aye
Council Member Kissel Aye
Mayor Voigt Aye

Motion Carried.

iii. Roll Call of New Council

Mayor Voigt Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Bates Present
Council Member Kissel Present
Council Member Beebe Present
Council Member Priest Present

iv. KSpringer Media – Social Media Management
1. Joey King and Jennifer Camilleri from KSpringer Media presented a slideshow of the services they offer.

• Citizen Comments
i. None.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Motion by Priest, supported by Kissel to amend the agenda as presented, adding items D: Discussion of Chambers at 330 Charles, and E: Plaque at 330 Charles.

Motion Carried.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda groups routine meeting discussion points into a single agenda item. In so doing, the grouped items can be approved in one action, rather than through the filing of multiple motions.

• Approval of Minutes
i. November 17, 2025 – Regular Meeting Minutes
• Budget report
i. None.
• Communications
i. None.
• Council Follow-up list
i. As of November 26, 2025
• Police Stats
i. None.
• Fire Stats
i. None.
• DPW Report
i. None.
• Special Events
i. None.

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Beebe to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. None.

7. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

• None.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS DISCUSSION

a. Resolution # 25-037 – 2026 Council Meeting Dates

MOTION: Motion by Bates, supported by Kissel to approve Resolution # 25-037, as presented.

Motion Carried.

b. Resolution # 25-038 – Liberty Street Watermain Bid Award

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Bates to approve Resolution # 25-038, as presented.

ROLL CALL:

Council Member Beebe Aye
Council Member Priest Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Bates Aye
Council Member Kissel Aye
Mayor Voigt Aye

Motion Carried.

c. Social Media Management for City of Belleville

MOTION: Motion by Beebe, supported by Priest to contract with KSpringer Media for management of the city's social media.

ROLL CALL:

Council Member Beebe Aye
Council Member Priest Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Bates Aye
Council Member Kissel Aye
Mayor Voigt Aye

Motion Carried.

d. Discussion – Council Chambers at 330 Charles
i. Item was discussed, deferred to future meeting.

e. Discussion – Plaque for Building at 330 Charles
i. Item was discussed, deferred to future meeting.

9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURES

• Accounts Payable
• Departmental Expenditures

MOTION: Motion by Bates, supported by Kissel to approve Accounts Payable and Departmental Expenditures in excess of $2,500, as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Council Member Priest Aye
Council Member Beebe Aye
Mayor Pro-Tem Bates Aye
Council Member Kissel Aye
Mayor Voigt Aye

Motion Carried.

10. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

• Winterfest starts this Thursday, with the parade being held on Saturday. Decorations for the event are currently being set up. All event updates will be posted on the city & DDA's social media.
• The renovations of 330 Charles St., the city's soon-to-be municipal building, are going well.
• Will present a timeline of the Liberty Water Main Project at a future meeting.

11. CITY COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member Kissel
• Thank you to the Fire Department for their mutual aid response to the major fire at National RV Center in Van Buren Township.
• Very pleased with the social media management by KSpringer Media thus far for the DDA.

Council Member Priest
• Excited for the holidays.

Council Member Beebe
• Looking forward to Winter Fest.
• Would like to see if amending the charter via resolution is an option to clarify the timeline for appointment of the Mayor Pro-Tem.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bates
• The décor at City Hall looks nice.
• Thank you to the DPW for their hard work.
• Thank you to KSpringer Media Management for their presentation.
• Thank you for the re-appointment as Mayor Pro-Tem.
• Looking forward to Winter Fest.

12. Mayor's Comments
• Welcome to Greg Flynn, the Fire Department's new embedded advisor.
• The hardware store is looking great.
• Looking forward to the judging of the holiday lights, as well as Winter Fest.
• Haywards was awarded a façade grant from the DDA.

13. CITIZENS' COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

• Chris Zweng
i. Congratulations to Landon for completing his Fire 1 & 2.

14. ACTION ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEEING

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion by Bates, supported by Beebe to adjourn at 7:35 PM.
No objections were noted.

Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Briana Papin, City Clerk/Treasurer
Publish: December 18, 2025

Musings

By Janet Millard
Independent
Advertising Director

This Third Thursday, Dec. 18, will find many businesses open with extended shopping hours.

Let's start with 734 Beauty Lounge which will be taking walk-ins until 7 p.m. Garden Fantasy on Main will be open until 8 p.m. with beautiful flowers (I love their special 10 stems for $10) and unique gifts. And, popping up in their store will be: Vintner's Winery, Barn Owl Design, Sparkle & Shine, Briar Patch Soy Candles, Northern Soy Candles and SJO Wellness-Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork.

Twisted Willow Soap Company will be open util 8 p.m. with not only its amazing products but with Rebekah from Crafty Corners teaching a D.I.Y. Sewing Class for all ages. Then stop by Moving the Mitten for a massage from Relax & Renew, enjoy wonderful apple pie slices. Taking orders for whole apple pies is Miller's Apple Piez and she will also have loose leaf tea, 3D and Crafts and Messy Crafter with clay earrings and car freshies.

Crafted Beanery & Gift Shop will be open until 8 p.m. with its wonderful drinks, sweets, and gifts plus body and bath crafter Three Daughters Tallow. Hometown Thrifts & Gifts is so full of everything you will ever need and lots of crafts on consignment. In the 500 block of Main in addition to BB's Belleville Boutique which has some great apparel and will be open until 8 p.m., are two new businesses. Next to the Butcher Shop, which is open until 7 p.m., is Divine Grace & Lace and across the street in the Masonic Temple is Eliza Lynn Bridal & Events – both will be open until 8 p.m.

Now, of course, the restaurants will be open even later: Johnny's on the Lake, The Bait Shop, Rusted Crow, Baan Pad Thai and Egan's Pub. I'm sure hoping the day isn't far off when the Bayou Grill opens again but under a different name!

There will continue to be pop-ups in some businesses on Main Street in January but the Belleville Central Business Community won't be scheduling any until next April. So, start saving your money after Christmas so you can shop until you drop and support all our small businesses next year.

***

Saturday, Dec. 20, may be the last opportunity for your children to tell Santa what they really, really want. He will be at the museum from 11:30 a.m. until noon to see special-needs children and adults. Then from noon until 4 p.m. he will spend time with everyone else. I did say "may be" because Santa seems to pop up in many places and just because I haven't seen his schedule – he could show up somewhere on Christmas week.

***

As everyone winds down this year, the Belleville Central Business Community is already making plans for its first event, the Flop E Bunny Candy Hunt scheduled for Easter Saturday at Victory Park. Once Santa leaves the building, you can start looking forward to the bunny's arrival in Belleville at Victory Park next April.

***

Redemption Bible Church has been meeting in the Belleville First United Methodist Church building for the last couple of years and has recently moved to 6538 Rawsonville Rd. in the Antioch Baptist Church building. You are invited to Redemption's first Christmas Service in its new space on Tuesday, Dec. 23, at 7 p.m. Mark your calendars to celebrate this holy season with Redemption Bible Church.

***

Do you have an item for this column? Call Janet Millard at (734) 699-9020.

Birthdays

Dec. 22 – Gabbarella Hooks Simmons
Dec. 23 – Drew Perez
Dec. 24 – Ashley Lampert
Dec. 28 – Mandy Maier

City of Belleville Public Notice

CITY OF BELLEVILLE
CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING

The Belleville City Council will conduct a Public Hearing on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

The purpose of the public hearing is for public input on the city's proposed Parks and Recreation Plan.

The Public Hearing will take place at the Municipal Building, 6 Main Street, Belleville, MI 48111, in the City Council Chambers.

Briana Papin, City Clerk/Treasurer

Publish: Dec. 18 and 25, 2025 and Jan 1, 2026

Van Buren Township Police Dispatch Log

There were 235 dispatch calls reported by Van Buren Township police this week including the following.

Sunday, Dec. 7:
0105 – domestic, Quirk Rd.
0115 – welfare check, W. Archwood Dr.
0223 – family trouble, Ironwood Dr.
0251 – traffic offense, Haggerty/Ecorse
0250 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd./N. I-94 Service Dr.
1049 – property damage accident, Bemis Rd.
xxxx – personal injury accident, Bemis/Martinsville
1204 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, W. Huron River Dr.
1319 – trespassing, Belleville Rd.
1637 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1704 – road hazard, Belleville/Van Born
1814 – family trouble, Bradley Dr.
1849 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Jackson/Hayes
1841 – threat, Aspen Ln.
1913 – neighbor trouble, Oak Ln.
2014 – assist other dept., Jackson St.
2023 – welfare check, Belleville/Van Born
2225 – motorist assist, Belleville Rd. / N. I-94 Service Dr.

Monday, Dec. 8:
0316 – welfare check, E. Huron River Dr.
0417 – property check, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0730 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
0726 – property damage accident, S. I-94 Service
0825 – welfare check, Belleville/Van Born
0828 – shooting, Jackson St.
1249 – domestic, Sylvia Dr.
1322 – larceny, N. I-94 Service Dr.
xxxx – private property impound, Belleville Rd.
1503 – property damage accident, Lohr Rd.
1554 – animal complaint, Belleville Rd.
1558 – civil matter, Van Born
1616 – traffic offense, Robson Rd.
1959 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Rawsonville
2122 – intrusion alarm, Samuel Barton Dr.
2135 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Lacy Dr.
xxxx – repossession, Meadows Ln.

Tuesday, Dec. 9:
0004 – family trouble, Tyler Rd.
0153 – animal complaint, Tyler Rd.
0308 – motorist assist, Ecorse/Belleville
0501 – property damage accident, S. I-94 Service
0513 – intrusion alarm, Rawsonville Rd.
0531 – welfare check, Morton Taylor/N. I-94 Service Dr.
0718 – parking complaint, Ecorse
0749 – animal complaint, Lake Crest Dr.
0826 – assist fire dept., Parkwood Dr.
0830 – family trouble, Maple Dr.
0911 – welfare check, Belleville Rd.
0923 – animal complaint, Sumpter/Hull
1016 – neighbor trouble, Haggerty Rd.
0935 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / Westlake Cir.
0951 – personal injury accident, WB I-94 / Rawsonville
1053 – intrusion alarm, Marlowe Ave.
1036 – welfare check, S. I-94 Service Dr.
xxxx – assist fire dept., Bay Pointe Dr.
1119 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
1119 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
1135 – animal complaint, Sheldon Rd.
1159 – missing person, Park Estates Dr.
1203 – welfare check, Belleville Rd.
1302 – intrusion alarm, Colonial Rd.
1511 – property damage accident, Haggerty/Tyler
1548 – property damage accident, Ecorse/Beck
1627 – assist other dept., E. I-94/Belleville
1852 – trespassing, Haggerty
1756 – background investigation, Tyler Rd.
1819 – warrant arrest, E. Michigan
1938 – fraud, Buchanan St.
1944 – animal complaint, Kirkridge Park Dr.
2006 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Belleville/S. I-94 Service Dr.
2114 – welfare check, S. I-94 Service Dr.
2220 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Rawsonville/Martz
2302 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belleville

Wednesday, Dec. 10:
0103 – property damage accident, N. I-94 Service Dr./Haggerty Rd.
0930 – private property/property damage accident, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0929 – intrusion alarm, Marlowe Ave.
1214 – property check, Chinkapin Dr.
1406 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1404 – disorderly, Belleville Rd.
1409 – assist other dept., Michigan Ave./Dellor
1704 – civil matter, Quirk Rd.
1719 – welfare check, Belleville/Lake Villa Dr.
1823 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / Sunrise Ln.
1850 – animal complaint, Tyler/Belleville
2018 – welfare check, Quirk Rd.
2044 – civil matter, Tyler Rd.
2135 – welfare check, Country Walk Ct.
2212 – domestic, Tyler Rd.
2216 – private property/property damage accident, Belleville
2340 – personal injury accident, N. I-94 Service Dr./ Belleville Rd.

Thursday, Dec. 11:
0053 – noise complaint, Village Green Ln.
0421 – motorist assist, Michigan Ave./Denton Rd.
0456 – civil matter, Aspen Ln.
0910 – fraud, Purple Sage Ct.
1028 – animal complaint, W. Huron River Dr.
1058 – property damage accident, Belleville/Ecorse
1157 – property damage accident, Ecorse/Belleville
xxxx – misc. complaint, McBride
1301 – trespassing, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1509 – property damage accident, Ecorse/Denton
1548 – 911 welfare check, Denton Rd.
1717 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Ecorse / Haggerty
1727 – fraud, Cobblestone Creek Dr.
1842 – motorist assist, Haggerty/E. Huron River
1858 – 911 welfare check, Jeremy Rd.
1955 – noise complaint, Westlake Cir.
2001 – private property/property damage accident, Belleville Rd.

Friday, Dec. 12:
0412 – assist fire dept., Lake Point Blvd.
0448 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Ecorse Rd.
0526 – assist other dept., Bayshore Dr.
0618 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
0616 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
0631 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
0745 – assist other dept., Michigan/S. Sheldon
xxxx – repossession, S. I-94 Service Dr.
xxxx – intrusion alarm, McBride Ave.
0951 – intrusion alarm, Preswick Ct.
1159 – traffic offense, Harmony Ln./S. I-94 Service Dr.
1335 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1404 – lost property/child, Bog Rd.
1414 – traffic offense, Belleville/Ecorse
1520 – domestic, Anna Dr.
1606 – welfare check, Park Estates Dr.
1634 – missing person, Quirk Rd.
2038 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
2242 – intrusion alarm, Tyler Rd.
2254 – warrant arrest, Michigan
2356 – noise complaint, Huron River Dr.

Saturday, Dec. 13:
0112 – property damage accident, W. Huron River
0135 – 911 welfare check, Kirkridge Park Dr.
0306 – private property/property damage accident, Ecorse Rd.
xxxx – repossession, Meadows Cir.
0457 – intrusion alarm, Van Born
0642 – intrusion alarm, Tyler Rd.
0646 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Tyler Rd.
0822 – civil matter, Anna Dr.
1002 – welfare check, Rawsonville Rd.
1050 – intrusion alarm, Marlowe Ave.
1158 – assist other dept., Fret Rd.
1339 – suicidal person, Brookview Dr.
1418 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belleville Rd.
1420 – property damage accident, Haggerty/Ecorse
1507 – welfare check, Park Estates Dr.
1704 – harassment call, Sawgrass Ct.
2315 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Rawsonville Rd.

Also, on this log are 89 traffic stops, 13 of which are on the I-94 and I-275 freeways.

Belleville Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Dec. 7:
1025 – property damage accident, Brain St.
1929 – intrusion alarm, Main St.
1954 – missing person, Main St.

Monday, Dec. 8:
0031 – welfare check, Capistrano Ct.
0043 – assist fire dept., Belle Villa
0552 – assist fire dept., Clarence St.
1050 – 911 welfare check, Main St.
1315 – assist fire dept., Church St.
1634 – animal complaint, W. Huron River Dr.
1749 – assist fire dept., Menlo Park Dr.
2140 – animal complaint, Sumpter Rd.
2233 – narcotics crime, Carmell St.

Tuesday, Dec. 9:
0048 – intrusion alarm, W. Columbia Ave.
0912 – intrusion alarm, E. Huron River Dr.
1059 – assist fire dept., Bay Pointe Dr.
1142 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Main St.
1206 – assist fire dept., W. Columbia Ave.
1413 – juvenile complaint, W. Columbia Ave.
1756 – assist fire dept., W. Columbia Ave.
1815 – intrusion alarm, Owen St.
xxxx – assist fire dept., Sumpter Rd.

Wednesday, Dec. 10:
0930 – disorderly, E. Huron River Dr.
1057 – assist fire dept., W. Columbia Ave.
1347 – fraud, Menlo Park Dr.

Thursday, Dec. 11:
0308 – assist fire dept., San Carlos St.
1524 – vehicle lockout, Sumpter Rd.
1957 – welfare check, Main St.
2200 – 911 welfare check, Carmell St.
2333 – intrusion alarm, E. Columbia Ave.

Friday, Dec. 12:
0642 – repossession, N. Liberty St.
1516 – operating while intoxicated, E. Columbia Ave./South St.
1859 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belle Villa Blvd.

Saturday, Dec. 13:
0540 – intrusion alarm, Sumpter Rd.
0734 – assist fire dept., Belle Villa Blvd.
1248 – assist fire dept., W. Columbia Ave.

There are 78 reports on this week's log, 43 of which are traffic stops.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Dec. 7:
0134 – fire dept. assist, Virginia St.
0229 – fire dept. assist, Birch Dr.
0303 – suspicious circumstance, 44000 bl. Judd Rd.
0315 – fire dept. assist, Birch Dr.
0359 – fire dept. assist, 19000 bl. Sharon Ct.
0812 – 911 hangup, 48000 bl. Wear Rd.
0903 – alarm, 50000 bl. Willow Rd.
0959 – property damage accident, New Mexico
1048 – personal injury accident, Bemis/Martinsville
1054 – suspicious person, 44000 bl. Judd Rd.
1120 – alarm, 18000 bl. Martinsville
1126 – 911 hangup, Stonecrest Dr.
1208 – civil matter, Magnolia Dr.
1235 – mental health call, Birch Dr.
1346 – 911 hangup, 51000 bl. Willis Rd.
1838 – 911 hangup, Alaska St.
1935 – property damage accident, Willis/Crandell Ct.
2004 – suspicious circumstance, Rustic Ln.
2109 – citizen assist, Wayside Dr.
2323 – 911 hangup, Delaware St.

Monday, Dec. 8:
0455 – alarm, 50000 bl. Willow Rd.
0914 – fire dept. assist, 46000 bl. Wear Rd.
1119 – follow-up investigation, out of township
1335 – fire dept. assist, Ohio St.
1339 – suspicious circumstance, 8700 bl. Rawsonville
1355 – family trouble, Rustic Ln.
1446 – fire dept. assist, Nevada St.
1505 – fire dept. assist, 20000 bl. Martinsville
1728 – civil matter, Virginia St.
1834 – welfare check, 47000 bl. Bemis Rd.
1836 – property damage accident, 45000 bl. Harris
1837 – juvenile matter, 21000 bl. Clark Rd.
1843 – 911 hangup, Kansas St.
2031 – juvenile matter, 21000 bl. Clark Rd.
2040 – alarm, 23000 bl. Martinsville Rd.
2143 – fire dept. assist, 51000 bl. Judd Rd.

Tuesday, Dec. 9:
0120 – fire dept. assist, 21000 bl. Bohn Rd.
0441 – animal complaint, Willis/Martinsville
0912 – suspicious circumstance, Mulberry Dr.
0939 – harassment complaint, Mulberry Dr.
1102 – civil matter, Edgewood Dr.
1146 – suspicious circumstance, Second St.
1410 – 911 hangup, Utah St.
1846 – follow-up investigation, out of township
1914 – assault, Rustic Ln.
1954 – follow-up investigation, Texas St.
2035 – follow-up investigation, Rustic Ln.
2151 – suspicious circumstance, 45000 bl. Paris Dr.
2152 – suspicious person, Arizona St.
2156 – assist other agency, 46000 bl. Reed Ave.
2255 – 911 hangup, 28000 bl. Sumpter Rd.

Wednesday, Dec. 10:
0338 – welfare check, Magnolia Dr.
0405 – suspicious circumstance, 8200 bl. Oakville Waltz
0811 – death investigation, 43000 bl. Willis Rd.
1101 – suspicious circumstance, 46000 bl. Executive Dr.
1208 – suspicious vehicle, 23000 bl. Sumpter
1249 – follow-up investigation, 47000 bl. Wear Rd.
1414 – animal complaint, 23000 bl. Bohn Rd.
1418 – suspicious person, 44000 bl. Willis Rd.
1429 – mental health call, 19000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1431 – follow-up investigation, out of township
2117 – fire dept. assist, Brookview Dr.

Thursday, Dec. 11:
0132 – animal complaint, Sumpter/Arkona
0535 – fire dept. assist, 46000 bl. Arkona Rd.
0821 – larceny report, Oregon St.
0836 – follow-up investigation, 46000 bl. Arkona
1442 – follow-up investigation, 45000 bl. Clay
1646 – civil matter, Magnolia Dr.
1743 – fire dept. assist, 43000 bl. Harris Rd.
1933 – suspicious circumstance, 28000 bl. Sumpter
2018 – subpoena service, 45000 bl. Clay Rd.
2109 – 911 hangup, Knollwood Dr.
2118 – fire dept. assist, 40000 bl. Bemis Rd.

Friday, Dec. 12:
0424 – 911 hangup, Oregon St.
0605 – civil matter, Washington St.
0702 – motorist assist, Rustic Ln./Rawsonville
1050 – property damage accident, 288000 bl. Clark
1155 – family trouble, 25000 bl. Haggerty
1249 – alarm, 41000 Harris Rd.
1720 – juvenile matter, 21000 bl. Clark Rd.
1918 – follow-up investigation, Oregon St.
2036 – family trouble, New Mexico St.
2058 – suspicious person, 28000 bl. Sumpter
2106 – family trouble, 8200 bl. Oakville Waltz
2136 – fire dept. assist, 44000 bl. Judd Rd.
2141 – suspicious person, 28000 bl. Sumpter

Saturday, Dec. 13:
0005 – suspicious person, 28000 bl. Sumpter
0304 – harassment complaint, Rustic Ln.
1107 – 911 hangup, Arizona St.
1313 – suspicious circumstance, 43000 bl. Willis
1436 – citizen assist, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1702 – animal complaint, 21000 bl. Sherwood
2038 – suspicious circumstance, 20000 bl. Martinsville
2042 – operating while intoxicated, Bemis/ Martinsville
2314 – follow-up investigation, out of township
2350 – family trouble, Birch Dr.

Also on this week's log were 155 patrol checks, 53 traffic stops and four misc. details.

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VBT planners vote 4-1 to OK preliminary plan for expansion of data center

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

U.S. Signal at 9275 Haggerty Rd. received preliminary site plan approval from the Van Buren Township Planning Commission to expand its present data center. This was at the commission's Dec. 10 meeting.

The vote was 4-1, with commissioner Jackson Pahle voting no. Absent were commissioners Medina Atchinson and Peter Creal.

U.S. Signal has a data center of 25,000 square feet on the northeast corner of Tyler and Haggerty roads and future expansion was discussed when that was built in 2019. Three other phases were planned and phases two and three will add 35,000 square feet to the current center. A future phase four of about 27,000 square feet is yet to be planned.

The 7.91 acres is zoned OT (Office Technology) which allows a data center by right. It uses closed-loop cooling said Andrew Bajuszik of U.S. Signal.

Commissioner Pahle referred to a written list of questions that he asked the applicants one after another, including if this will result in a rise in price for electricity or water for residents. He asked if the polyethelene glycol it planned to use was environmentally safe and how long it would be before the process they use is obsolete. He said he was against increasing the burden on the community while bringing no new jobs.

Later in the discussion, Pahle said he was against all data centers. Then he cast a no vote on approving the planned expansion.

Vice-chairman Jeff Jahr noted the number of generators at the site is doubling and asked if that would make an issue with sound. He suggested they look at the specificiations that come with the machines.

Planning consultant Vidya Krishnan said if all the generators were turned on at once there might be a sound problem.

And, Jahr said, to consider the air conditioners and breaking up the façade of the long building planned with relief features. The developers were asked to bring a picture of what the building's façade would look like.

Jahr said he has previous experience with data centers and, "I understand it's a building for robots and their human minders."

Jahr said it's not a big data center and not heavily industrial. It is being built in phases and the generators are for backup.

He said there have been no complaints about it since it was built in 2019 and it has been a good neighbor.

Jahr pointed out it is across the street from the township's only other data center (J.P. Morgan) which deals with finances. It is far back and hardly noticed.

"At this scale, I'm not concerned," Jahr said of these two data centers. "We should be looking at our ordinances concerning mega data centers. This is one small data center that already has been approved."

Commissioner Bernie Grant agreed and added that a member of the public brought out good questions about ordinances and data centers.

"This one is small," Grant said. "It's reasonable. The one across the street is set back and you hardly know it's there. I have concerns on the hyperscale version."

Jahr said this is expansion of an existing use, a reasonable expansion.

"Were a new one coming, I would look at it differently," Jahr said.

A man who said he lives on Alden Drive said polyethelene glycol is a contaminant if it gets in the water. The applicant said it was non-toxic.

Another member of the public, Monique Kurdowski, said she is against data centers as a whole. She questioned them being allowed in Office-Tech zoning.

Krishnan said, "A lawful land-use cannot be excluded… The planning commission can look and plan for the future, but it cannot retroactively change anything once the applicant has applied."

Kurdowski said you should be able to stop something once you know it hurts the public and commissioners said they had no desire to hurt the public.

Jahr made the motion to grant the preliminary site plan approval, which will have to come back for final approval before it can be built. He said Bajuszik can gather more information on environmental concerns, noise, the façade, where the water will be discharged and the impact on water or electrical bills.

Bajuszik said they have no control over electricity rates and Jahr said Bajuszik could go to DTE and have it state whether this is an undue burden on them. DTE could indicate it can provide the power at current rates.

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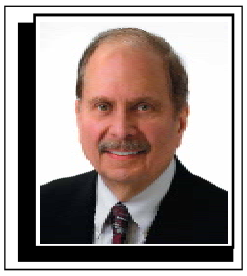

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