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Welcome to Muskegon County: Where the Lakeshore Comes to Life

By Lois Tomaszewski

Executive Editor

From sweeping Lake Michigan sunsets to vibrant downtowns and quiet small-town streets, Muskegon County offers a blend of natural beauty, history, culture and year-round adventure along Michigan's western shoreline.

Here, towering dunes meet sandy beaches, marinas fill with boats each summer, and trails wind through forests, parks and lakeshore communities. Whether visitors are strolling the waterfront in Muskegon, exploring the White Lake communities of Whitehall and Montague, or discovering hidden gems in the county's smaller towns and villages, Muskegon County combines the energy of a tourism destination with the warmth of a close-knit community.

The county's identity has long been shaped by the water. Once powered by lumber mills, shipping and Great Lakes industry, today the lakeshore continues

to define life here — from boating and fishing to surfing, sailing and beachgoing. Landmarks such as Pere Marquette Park, Muskegon State Park and the historic White River Light Station draw visitors from across the Midwest.

But Muskegon County is more than a summer destination. Fall colors transform the shoreline and forests, winter brings skiing and luge adventures, and spring ushers in festivals, farmers markets and waterfront events. Throughout the year, communities celebrate the arts, local history and the spirit of the lakeshore through museums, galleries, live theater and music venues including Frauenthal Center and The Playhouse at White Lake.

Rooted in tradition while continuing to grow and evolve, Muskegon County remains a place where visitors can slow down, explore the outdoors, experience local culture and discover the character that makes Michigan's lakeshore unique.

Trusted Advisors, proud to be a part of and to support our local community.

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Dan Bieszka



Andrew Geoghan

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education



Learning Across Muskegon County: Schools Shaping the Future

Education in Manistee County is built around four public From small rural districts to large urban systems, Muskegon County's educational landscape reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. The county is home to a dozen local public school districts, supported by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, along with private and charter school options serving students from the Lake Michigan shoreline to inland agricultural communities.

Education in Muskegon County is shaped by a mix of college-preparatory academics, career and technical education, arts programming and community partnerships. Districts such as Mona Shores, North Muskegon and Reeths-Puffer are known for broad extracurricular and academic offerings, while Whitehall and Montague schools help anchor the White Lake area. Rural districts including Holton and Ravenna maintain strong community-centered identities, while Muskegon Public Schools and Muskegon Heights Public School Academy System serve some of the county's most diverse student

populations. School districts throughout the county emphasize workforce readiness, technology, athletics and arts education.

The Muskegon Area Intermediate School District provides regional leadership, special education services, career-tech education and instructional support for local districts across the county. The ISD describes its mission as providing leadership, programs and services that enhance the success of students and educators throughout the region.

Higher education also plays a significant role in Muskegon County's economy and workforce development efforts. Muskegon Community College, founded in 1926 and celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, serves as the county's primary public college and offers associate degrees, certificates and transfer programs. The college also hosts the Stevenson Center for Higher Education, which brings bachelor's and graduate-level university programs to Muskegon through partnerships with Grand Valley

State University, Ferris State University, Western Michigan University and Michigan State University.

Baker College maintains a Muskegon campus with programs in business, health sciences, technology and skilled trades, while Grand Valley State University operates several educational and research facilities in Muskegon, including the Annis Water Resources Institute on Muskegon Lake.

Students in Muskegon County also benefit from proximity to several major colleges and universities within an easy drive. Grand Valley State University's main campus in Allendale is about 40 minutes from Muskegon, while Ferris State University in Big Rapids can be reached in about an hour. Grand Rapids Community College, Calvin University, Aquinas College and Kuyper College are all located in the Grand Rapids area, expanding opportunities for both traditional and nontraditional students. Hope College in Holland and Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo are also within regional commuting distance, giving area residents access to a wide range of academic, technical and professional programs without leaving West Michigan.

Together, Muskegon County's schools and colleges form an educational network that supports both traditional academics and workforce training, helping prepare students for careers in manufacturing, health care, technology, education, business and the skilled trades while remaining closely connected to the communities they serve.

Muskegon County school contact list

Fruitport Community Schools

Jason Kennedy
3255 E. Pontaluna Rd.,
Fruitport, MI 49415
(231) 865-4100
fruitportschools.net

Holton Public Schools

Adam Bayne
6500 Fourth St., Holton, MI 49425
(231) 821-1700
holtonschools.com

Mona Shores Public Schools

Bill O'Brien
121 Randall Road, Muskegon, MI 49441
(231) 780-4751
monashores.net

Montague Area Public Schools

Jeffrey W. Johnson
4882 Stanton Blvd.,
Montague, MI 49437
(231) 893-1515
mapsk12.org

Muskegon Area ISD

Randy Lindquist
630 Harvey St., Muskegon, MI 49442
(231) 777-2637
muskegonisd.org

Muskegon Public Schools

Matthew Cortez
1458 Fifth St., Muskegon, MI 49440
(231) 720-2000
muskegonpublicschools.org

Muskegon Heights Public School Academy System

Reedell Holmes
2441 Sanford St.,
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444
(231) 830-3703
mhtigers.org

North Muskegon Public Schools

Curt Babcock
1600 Mills Ave.,
North Muskegon, MI 49445
(231) 719-4100
nmps.net

Oakridge Public Schools

Tom Livezey
275 S. Wolf Lake Rd.,
Muskegon, MI 49442
(231) 788-7100
oakridgeschools.org

Orchard View Schools

Jim Nielsen
35 S. Sheridan Drive,
Muskegon, MI 49442
(231) 760-1300
orchardview.org

Ravenna Public Schools

Greg Helmer
12322 Stafford St.,
Ravenna, MI 49451
(231) 853-2231
ravennaschools.org

Reeths-Puffer Public Schools

Steve Edwards
991 W. Giles Rd., Muskegon, MI 49445
(231) 744-4736
reeths-puffer.org

Whitehall District Schools

CJ Van Wieren
541 E. Slocum St., Whitehall, MI 49461
(231) 893-1010
whitehallschools.net

Colleges and higher education

Muskegon Community College

Muskegon
Associate degrees, certificates and transfer programs

Baker College - Muskegon

Muskegon
Career-focused undergraduate and graduate programs

Stevenson Center for Higher Education

Muskegon Community College campus
University partnership programs

Grand Valley State University - Muskegon facilities

Muskegon
Research, outreach and university coursework

arts, culture

Creative Along the Coast: Exploring Arts and Culture in Muskegon County

From historic theaters and live music venues to community festivals and public art, Muskegon County's arts and culture scene blends lakeshore charm with year-round creativity. Across Muskegon, Whitehall, Montague and surrounding communities, visitors can experience professional performances, local theater, outdoor concerts and cultural festivals that help define the character of West Michigan's lakeshore.

At the center of the county's performing arts scene is the Frauenthal Center in downtown Muskegon. The restored 1920s theater hosts concerts, comedy shows, touring productions, dance performances and community events throughout the year. The venue also serves as a longtime home for the West Michigan Symphony and Muskegon Civic Theatre productions.

The county's creative identity extends well beyond traditional performance spaces. Downtown Muskegon features murals, sculptures and public art installations woven throughout its streetscape, while annual festivals regularly transform parks and waterfront areas into gathering places for music, food and the arts.

Among the area's largest cultural events is the Lakeshore Art Festival, which fills downtown Muskegon each summer with artists, street performers, interactive exhibits and live entertainment. Other major annual events include the Michigan Irish Music Festival, celebrating Irish music and heritage; the Unity Christian Music Festival; and Rebel Road, a motorcycle and music festival that draws visitors from across the Midwest. Seasonal events, ethnic festivals and community celebrations throughout the county also reflect the area's maritime, industrial and immigrant heritage traditions.

Community theater also remains an important part of Muskegon County's cultural landscape. The Muskegon Civic Theatre, founded in 1929, is among the oldest community theaters in Michigan and stages productions throughout the year at the Beardsley Theater inside the Frauenthal Center. The theater regularly features musicals, dramas, youth productions and educational programming.

In the White Lake area, The Playhouse at White Lake in Whitehall presents plays, concerts and touring performances throughout the year, while the

Arts Council of White Lake's Nuveen Center hosts exhibits, classes and creative programming for all ages. Together, the organizations help anchor the White Lake area's arts scene and provide cultural programming for both residents and seasonal visitors.

Downtown Muskegon serves as the county's primary arts and culture hub, with theaters, galleries, music venues, public art and festival spaces concentrated within several walkable blocks. The Frauenthal Center, Muskegon Museum of Art, Hackley Park and nearby performance venues anchor much of the city's creative activity, while restaurants, breweries and public gathering spaces help support the downtown arts and entertainment district. Public art installations throughout the downtown area further contribute to the district's creative identity.

The White Lake area — particularly downtown Whitehall and neighboring Montague — has also developed a smaller but active arts corridor. The Playhouse at White Lake, the Nuveen Center and seasonal festivals and concerts help draw visitors to the White Lake communities, where galleries, boutique shops and waterfront gathering spaces contribute to the area's creative atmosphere.

Music is another major part of the county's identity. During the summer months, free outdoor concert series take place in parks and waterfront gathering spaces throughout Muskegon, Whitehall and Montague. Venues ranging from parks and waterfront stages to historic theaters regularly feature local musicians, touring acts and seasonal entertainment. Summer concert traditions also remain an important part of the local cultural scene, including performances in Hackley Park, waterfront concerts in Whitehall and Montague, and seasonal music events tied to festivals and downtown gatherings.

The county's cultural story is also tied closely to its historic downtowns and waterfront communities, where restored theaters, public gathering spaces and locally supported arts organizations continue to shape community life. From major festivals and symphony performances to small-town concerts and public art walks, Muskegon County offers visitors a wide range of ways to experience the arts along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Creative Lakeshore Learning: Exploring the Arts in Muskegon County

Muskegon County offers opportunities to study and experience a wide range of creative disciplines, including music, theater, dance, visual arts, literary arts and culinary arts. From college programs and youth theater to writing groups, cooking classes and community workshops, the county's arts education scene extends well beyond traditional classrooms.

At the collegiate level, Muskegon Community College serves as one of the region's primary arts education hubs. The college offers coursework and community learning opportunities in visual arts, music, theater and humanities, along with programs connected to culinary and hospitality careers. The college regularly hosts student art exhibits, concerts and theatrical productions at campus venues including Overbrook Theater and the Art and Music Building.

Community theater organizations also provide hands-on performing arts education. Muskegon Civic Theatre, founded in 1929, stages productions throughout the year at the Beardsley Theater inside the Frauenthal Center. The organization offers youth theater programs, acting workshops and volunteer opportunities in stage production, lighting and costume design. The Frauenthal Center itself also hosts touring productions, concerts, dance performances and educational programming in downtown Muskegon.

In the White Lake area, The Playhouse at White Lake presents community theater productions, children's programming and summer performances, while the Arts Council of White Lake operates the Nuveen Center in downtown Whitehall. The center hosts gallery exhibits, artist workshops and classes in painting, ceramics and other visual arts.

Music instruction is available throughout the county through school programs, colleges, churches and private studios. Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, located just east of Muskegon County in neighboring Oceana

County, also draws many students from the Muskegon area for summer music, theater and arts instruction. Local instructors and music schools offer lessons in piano, guitar, voice, percussion and band instruments for both children and adults.

Community ensembles and seasonal performances also provide opportunities for musicians to gain live performance experience. Groups such as the West Michigan Symphony, the Shoreline Community Orchestra and local church and school ensembles regularly present concerts throughout the county. Summer concert series in communities including Muskegon, Whitehall and Montague create performance opportunities for local musicians, student performers and community bands.

Literary arts also have a place in Muskegon County's creative community. The Muskegon Area District Library system regularly hosts author talks, book clubs, writing workshops and community programs tied to reading and storytelling. Local bookstores and arts venues also periodically feature poetry readings, open mic events and visiting authors. Regional organizations such as Write616 and the Lakeshore Literary Foundation provide workshops, networking opportunities and support for West Michigan writers, while nearby groups such as Ludington Writers connect authors and poets from communities along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Comedy and improv performances have also become part of Muskegon County's performing arts scene. The Stage at The Corner in downtown Muskegon regularly hosts comedy nights, open mic performances, live music and variety shows. Community theater groups and special events throughout the county also occasionally feature sketch comedy and improvisational performances.

Dance education is another major part of the local arts community. Studios throughout Muskegon County offer in-



struction in ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical dance and tumbling, with many programs beginning at preschool age and continuing through advanced and competitive levels. Annual recitals and competitions provide students with opportunities to perform publicly.

Culinary arts have also become part of the county's creative landscape. In addition to coursework and community learning opportunities at Muskegon Community College, venues such as the Muskegon Farmers Market frequently host food vendors, specialty producers and culinary-themed events that highlight regional foods and local agriculture. Seasonal festivals throughout the county also feature cooking demonstrations, artisan foods and opportunities to explore West Michigan's lakeshore food culture.

Summer camps, gallery workshops, outdoor concerts and public performances throughout Muskegon County continue to provide residents and visitors with opportunities to experience and learn the arts in many forms along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Outdoors



Naturally Connected: Exploring the Outdoors Across Muskegon County

From freshwater shoreline and forested dunes to inland lakes, rivers and miles of multiuse trails, Muskegon County offers a broad mix of outdoor recreation opportunities along Michigan's West Coast. The county's landscape is shaped by Lake Michigan, the Muskegon River watershed and an extensive park system that connects residents and visitors to beaches, boating, hiking, cycling, wildlife viewing and year-round recreation.

At the center of the county's outdoor identity is Pere Marquette Park, home to one of West Michigan's most recognizable public beaches. Located

where Muskegon Lake meets Lake Michigan, the park draws visitors for swimming, sunsets, volleyball, kayaking and views of the South Breakwater Light. Nearby, the Muskegon channel and shoreline provide access for fishing charters, pleasure boating and sailing.

North along the lakeshore, the White Lake area offers a quieter coastal experience centered around White Lake, Whitehall and Montague. Duck Lake State Park combines dunes, inland lake access and Lake Michigan shoreline, while Medbery Park and the Hart-Montague Trail corridor connect commu-

Parks and Outdoor Spaces Across Muskegon County

Muskegon Area

- Pere Marquette Park — Lake Michigan beach, dunes and picnic areas
- Heritage Landing — Waterfront festival and event space along Muskegon Lake
- Fisherman’s Landing — Public boating and fishing access on Muskegon Lake
- McGraft Park — Recreation park with trails, athletic fields and wooded areas

North Muskegon

- North Muskegon Veterans Memorial Park — Waterfront community park and gathering space

White Lake Area

- Goodrich Park — Marina, fishing and White Lake waterfront access
- Covell Park — Community lake-front park and recreation area
- Medbery Park — White River access and trail connection point
- Montague Band Shell — Downtown gathering place for concerts and events



County and Regional Recreation Areas

- Muskegon State Park — Dunes, beaches, hiking trails and winter recreation
- P.J. Hoffmaster State Park — Forested dunes, campground and scenic overlooks
- Duck Lake State Park — Lake Michigan shoreline and inland lake access
- Meinert Park — Lake Michigan beach and campground north of Whitehall
- Muskegon County Pioneer Park — Campground and wooded recreation area

nities with walking and cycling opportunities. The White River and surrounding wetlands also make the region popular for paddling, birdwatching and fishing.

Muskegon County’s trail system continues to expand, linking communities and natural areas through both paved and natural-surface routes. The paved Hart-Montague Trail State Park stretches 22 miles through wooded corridors and small towns, attracting cyclists, runners and snowmobilers depending on the season. Additional trail systems at Muskegon State Park and P.J. Hoffmaster State Park offer hiking through dunes, forests and shoreline habitats.

For mountain biking enthusiasts, trails in and around Muskegon State Park and the Muskegon Luge Adventure Sports Park provide year-round outdoor activity. Located within Muskegon State Park along Scenic Drive near the Lake Michigan shoreline, the luge and winter sports complex has become one of the Midwest’s best-known outdoor recreation destinations. In warmer months, riders use nearby single-track trail networks, while winter transforms the area into a hub for luge, cross-country skiing and ice skating. The county’s four-season recreation opportunities have helped position

Muskegon as a growing outdoor tourism destination.

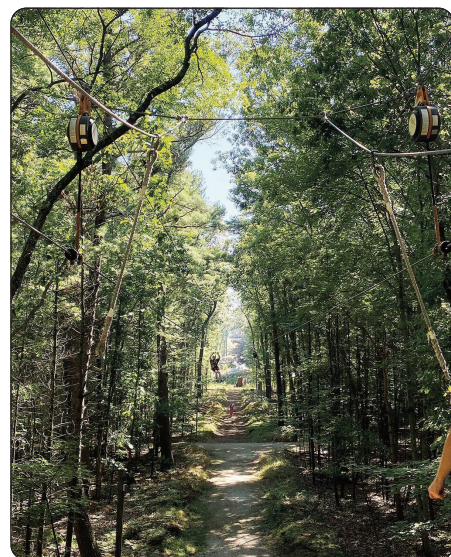
Water recreation remains one of the county’s defining attractions. Muskegon Lake, Mona Lake and Bear Lake provide boating, kayaking, paddleboarding and fishing access, while the Muskegon River supports anglers targeting salmon and steelhead during seasonal runs. Marinas and public boat launches throughout the county make access to the water widely available.

The county park system also plays a major role in preserving natural spaces and public access. Parks ranging from neighborhood green spaces to larger recreation areas offer campgrounds, picnic shelters, playgrounds and athletic facilities. Many local parks also host seasonal events, outdoor concerts and festivals that connect recreation with community life.

Outdoor education and conservation are woven into many of Muskegon County’s recreation spaces. Nature centers, interpretive trails and dune ecosystems provide opportunities to learn about the region’s environmental history and ecological significance. At P.J. Hoffmaster State Park, visitors can climb the park’s dune overlook for panoramic Lake

Michigan views while exploring one of the area’s most significant coastal habitats.

Whether exploring wooded trails, launching a kayak at sunrise or watching the sunset along Lake Michigan, outdoor recreation remains central to life in Muskegon County. The combination of water, dunes, forests and connected communities continues to make the county a destination for both adventure and relaxation along Michigan’s lakeshore.



Communities

Communities Across Muskegon County: A Guide to Local Municipalities

Muskegon County is made up of a diverse mix of cities, townships and villages stretching from the Lake Michigan shoreline to rural inland communities. From the urban center of Muskegon to the waterfront communities of Whitehall and Montague and the agricultural and residential townships throughout the county, each municipality helps shape the region's identity, services and quality of life. The following guide provides population figures, contact information and websites for municipalities throughout Muskegon County.

CITIES

City of Montague

Population: 2,417
8778 Ferry Street,
Montague, MI 49437
(231) 893-1155
cityofmontague.org

City of Muskegon

Population: 38,318
933 Terrace Street,
Muskegon, MI 49440
(231) 724-6705
muskegon-mi.gov

City of Muskegon Heights

Population: 9,985
2724 Peck Street,
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444
(231) 733-8999
muskegonheights.us

City of North Muskegon

Population: 3,789
1502 Ruddiman Drive,
North Muskegon, MI 49445
(231) 744-1621
northmuskegon.org

City of Norton Shores

Population: 25,211
4814 Henry Street,
Norton Shores, MI 49441
(231) 798-4391
nortonshores.org

City of Roosevelt Park

Population: 3,853
900 Oak Ridge Road,
Roosevelt Park, MI 49441
(231) 755-3721
rooseveltpark.org

City of Whitehall

Population: 2,951
405 E. Colby Street,
Whitehall, MI 49461
(231) 894-4048
cityofwhitehall.org

TOWNSHIPS

Blue Lake Township

Population: 2,014
1491 Owasippe Road,
Twin Lake, MI 49457
(231) 894-6335
bluelaketownship.org

Casnovia Township

Population: 2,822
245 S. Canada Road,
Casnovia, MI 49318
(616) 675-4064
casnoviatownshipmi.gov

Cedar Creek Township

Population: 3,192
6556 Sweeter Road,
Twin Lake, MI 49457
(231) 821-0014
cedarcreektownship.org

Dalton Township

Population: 9,064
1616 E. Riley Thompson Road,
Muskegon, MI 49445
(231) 766-3043
daltonmi.gov

Egelston Township

Population: 11,094
5428 E. Apple Avenue,
Muskegon, MI 49442
(231) 788-2308
egelstontwp.org

Fruitland Township

Population: 5,702
4545 Nestrom Road,
Whitehall, MI 49461
(231) 766-3208
fruitlandmi.gov

Fruitport Charter Township

Population: 14,574
5865 Airline Road,
Fruitport, MI 49415
(231) 865-3151
fruitporttownship-mi.gov

Holton Township

Population: 2,579
6511 Holton Whitehall Road,
Holton, MI 49425
(231) 821-2168
holtontownship.com

Laketon Township

Population: 7,097
2735 W. Giles Road,
North Muskegon, MI 49445
(231) 744-2454
laketontwpmi.gov

Montague Township

Population: 2,869
8915 Whitbeck Road,
Montague, MI 49437
(231) 894-4414
montaguetownship.com

Moorland Township

Population: 1,449
12416 Apple Avenue,
Ravenna, MI 49451
(231) 853-2015
moorlandtwp.com

Muskegon Charter Township

Population: 17,596
1990 E. Apple Avenue,
Muskegon, MI 49442
(231) 777-2555
muskegontwpmi.gov

Population figures are based on 2020 U.S. Census data and updated municipal estimates.

Ravenna Township

Population: 1,654
 3770 Blackmer Road,
 Ravenna, MI 49451
 (231) 853-6205
 ravennatwp.com

Sullivan Township

Population: 2,541
 8138 Heights Ravenna Road,
 Ravenna, MI 49451
 (231) 853-6900
 sullivantownship.com

White River Township

Population: 1,383
 7386 Post Road,
 Montague, MI 49437
 (231) 894-9216
 whiterivertwp.com

Whitehall Township

Population: 1,768
 7644 Durham Road,
 Whitehall, MI 49461
 (231) 893-2095
 whitehalltwp.org

VILLAGES

Village of Casnovia

Population: 316
 141 N. Main Street,
 Casnovia, MI 49318
 (616) 675-4780
 villageofcasnovia.org

Village of Fruitport

Population: 1,093
 45 N. Second Avenue,
 Fruitport, MI 49415
 (231) 865-3577
 fruitportvillage.com

Village of Lakewood Club

Population: 1,291
 6681 Automobile Road,
 Twin Lake, MI 49457
 (231) 894-9008
 villageoflakewoodclub.org

Village of Ravenna

Population: 1,206
 12090 Crockery Creek Drive,
 Ravenna, MI 49451
 (231) 853-2360
 ravennami.com



White River outlet at sunset, Montague

STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO



Wings over Muskegon

who to call

Who to Call:

Muskegon County Offices, Courts and Public Services Directory

County Administration

1903 Marquette Ave., Suite A111
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6520
Email: eisenbarthma@muskegoncounty.net
co.muskegon.mi.us/229/Administration

County Clerk

1903 Marquette Ave., Suite A104
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6221
Email: clerk@muskegoncounty.net
co.muskegon.mi.us/407/County-Clerk

County Prosecutor

990 Terrace St., Suite 550
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6435
co.muskegon.mi.us/634/About-the-Prosecutor

Register of Deeds

173 E. Apple Ave., Suite 301
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6245
Email: deeds.information@co.muskegon.mi.us
co.muskegon.mi.us/848/Register-of-Deeds

Sheriff's Office

990 Terrace St., Suite 450
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6351
co.muskegon.mi.us/1709/Sheriffs-Office

Animal Shelter (Pound Buddies)

1300 E. Keating Ave.
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6500
Website: www.poundbuddies.org

Emergency Management

1903 Marquette Ave., Suite J101
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6341
co.muskegon.mi.us/204/Emergency-Management

Equalization Department

173 E. Apple Ave., Suite 201
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6386
co.muskegon.mi.us/722/Equalization

Finance and Management Services

1903 Marquette Ave., Suite A106
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6206
co.muskegon.mi.us/702/Finance-Management

Parks and Recreation

Muskegon County Parks

1563 Scenic Drive
North Muskegon, MI 49445
Phone: (231) 744-3580
www.muskegoncountyparks.org

County Parks and Campgrounds

- Blue Lake County Park — 17505 White Road, Bailey
- Dune Harbor Park — Norton Shores
- Meinert Park — 8390 Meinert Park Road, Montague
- Moore County Park — 17505 White Road, Bailey
- Patterson County Park — 6090 Blackmer Road, Ravenna
- Pioneer County Park — 1563 Scenic Drive, North Muskegon
- Twin Lake County Park — 6231 Main St., Twin Lake

Reservations and information: www.muskegoncountyparks.org

Public Health

Muskegon County Public Health

1903 Marquette Ave., Suite S101
Muskegon, MI 49442
Main Phone: (231) 724-6246
Website: [co.muskegon.mi.us/1712/
Public-Health](http://co.muskegon.mi.us/1712/Public-Health)

Public Health Services

- Animal Bite Investigation: (231) 724-1228
- Environmental Health / Water Testing / Septic / Campgrounds: (231) 724-6208
- Children's Special Health Care Services: (231) 724-6209
- Communicable Disease Management: (231) 724-4723
- Community Engagement: (231) 724-1203
- Epidemiology: (231) 724-1202
- Food Service Sanitation: (231) 724-4406
- Health Education & Promotion: (231) 724-6350
- Hearing & Vision Screening: (231) 724-1394
- STI Testing & Treatment: (231) 724-1258
- Immunizations: (231) 724-1220
- Medical Examiner: (269) 337-6173
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness: (231) 724-1292
- Public Health Nursing: (231) 724-1244
- Substance Abuse Prevention: (231) 724-6350
- Women, Infants & Children (WIC): (231) 724-1391



Senior Services

AgeWell Services

Administration Offices at Berkshire
275 W. Clay Ave., Suite 100
Muskegon, MI 49440

Wellness Center & Driftwood Café at Tanglewood Park

560 Seminole Road
Muskegon, MI 49444
Phone: (231) 755-0434
Website: www.agewellservices.org

Transportation

Muskegon County Airport

99 Sinclair Drive
Muskegon, MI 49441
Phone: (231) 798-4596
Website: www.flymuskegon.com

Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS)

Louis A. McMurray Conference
Center
2624 Sixth St.
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

Herman Ivory Terminal

351 Morris St.
Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: (231) 724-6420
Website: www.matsbus.com

GoBus Transportation

Phone: (231) 724-3179
Website: www.matsbus.com/gobus

Muskegon County Courts

Probate Court

990 Terrace St., Suite 500
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6241
Website: [co.muskegon.mi.us/774/
Probate-Court](http://co.muskegon.mi.us/774/Probate-Court)

Circuit Court

990 Terrace St.
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6251
Collections Division: (231) 724-3470
Website: [co.muskegon.
mi.us/362/14th-Circuit-Court](http://co.muskegon.mi.us/362/14th-Circuit-Court)

60th District Court

990 Terrace St., Second Floor
Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: (231) 724-6294
Jury Duty: (231) 724-6228
Probation Department: (231) 724-6238
Sobriety Court: (231) 724-6511
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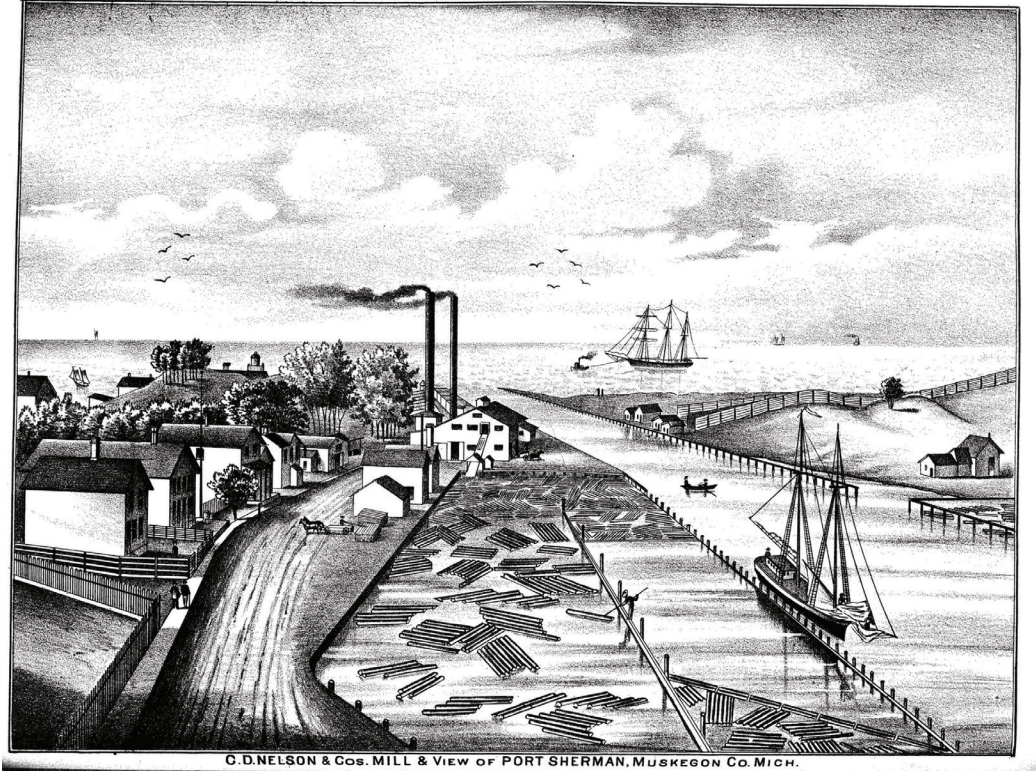
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Muskegon, MI 49442
Website: [co.muskegon.mi.us/439/
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Source material reviewed and verified from the 2025 Muskegon County Fact Book.

History



Harbors, mills and hometowns: The history of Muskegon County

MUSKEGON COUNTY — The story of Muskegon County is written across its landscape — in its lakes and rivers, its neighborhoods and downtowns, and in the communities that grew from timber camps into cities and villages.

Long before sawmills and smokestacks defined the shoreline, the area was home to Ottawa/Odawa peoples whose communities were centered along the region's waterways. Rivers, inland lakes and access to Lake Michigan made the region a natural hub for travel, trade and seasonal settlement.

That geography would shape everything that followed.

By the mid-19th century, Muskegon County had become one of the most important lumber-producing regions in the country. Vast stands of white pine covered the area, and waterways provided a ready-made transportation network to move logs to mills and fin-

ished lumber to markets across the Midwest.

Muskegon Lake, White Lake and the county's river systems became industrial corridors. Sawmills lined the shores, and ships carried lumber out through Lake Michigan to rapidly growing cities like Chicago and Milwaukee. By the late 19th century, Muskegon had become one of the nation's leading lumber ports, earning the nickname "Lumber Queen of the World" — a distinction that brought both prosperity and lasting change to the landscape.

Within that broader narrative, the White Lake area — centered on Whitehall and Montague — developed its own distinct identity.

White Lake, connected to Lake Michigan by a channel, offered a protected harbor ideal for lumber operations. During the height of the timber era, mills operated along its shores, and the lake became a staging ground for moving lumber to larger markets. Early lum-



ber entrepreneur Charles Mears played a major role in the development of both Whitehall and Montague as the lumber industry expanded along White Lake.

Whitehall, on the lake's eastern shore, emerged as a key shipping and milling center, while Montague, across the water, developed alongside its own mills and industrial activity. The two communities were closely linked economically, yet maintained separate civic identities — a dynamic that continues today.

Unlike the larger-scale industrialization that later defined parts of Muskegon, the White Lake area retained a somewhat smaller scale. As the lumber era faded, both communities transitioned more gradually, preserving elements of their early character.

As the forests receded, Muskegon County transitioned into a manufacturing center. Existing infrastructure — including ports, rail lines and a skilled workforce — helped fuel the shift.

Factories and foundries replaced

sawmills along Muskegon Lake, and industry expanded throughout the county. Metalworking, paper production and chemical manufacturing became economic anchors, shaping communities built around factory life.

For much of the 20th century, manufacturing defined daily life, particularly in areas like Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, where neighborhoods grew alongside industrial employers.

Like many Great Lakes communities, Muskegon County experienced economic shifts in the latter half of the 20th century. As manufacturing declined, communities began to look again to the natural assets that had first drawn people to the area.

Waterfronts once dominated by industry have been redeveloped for recreation, tourism and public use. Parks, marinas and beaches now occupy spaces where mills and factories once stood.

In the White Lake area, that transition reinforced an identity already tied to

quality of life and waterfront living. In Muskegon, it marked a broader reinvention — one that continues to reshape the city's economy and image.

Today, Muskegon County's history is not confined to archives or exhibits. It is visible in the layout of its communities, the architecture of its homes and businesses, and the continued importance of its waterways.

Each community contributes a piece of that story — from the industrial corridors of Muskegon to the harbor towns along White Lake.

Taken together, those pieces form a broader narrative shaped by geography, industry and adaptation over time.

In Muskegon County, the past remains closely tied to the water — reflected in its harbors, remembered in its mills and carried forward through the hometowns that continue to define the county today.

MUSEUMS



Stories in every corner: Museums across Muskegon County connect past to present

MUSKEGON — Step inside a Victorian mansion where lumber wealth once shaped a city. Climb through the tight quarters of a World War II submarine. Or stand before a gallery wall filled with color, texture and story.

Across Muskegon County, museums offer more than artifacts — they create experiences that connect visitors to the region's past, present and future.

At the center of that network is the Lakeshore Museum Center, the county's primary history museum organization. Its exhibits trace Muskegon's rise from a booming lumber town to an industrial and cultural hub, using photographs, artifacts and interactive displays to

tell the story of a community built on timber, labor and innovation.

During the late 19th century, Muskegon was one of the world's leading lumber ports, sending timber harvested from Michigan forests across the Midwest and beyond.

That story comes to life just blocks away at the Hackley and Hume Historic Site, where two restored Victorian homes operate as museums. Built in the late 1800s for lumber barons Charles Hackley and Thomas Hume, the houses are filled with carved woodwork, stained glass and period furnishings that reflect the wealth generated during Muskegon's lumber boom.

Downtown, the Muskegon Museum of Art offers a different kind of immersion, featuring a mix of regional and national works alongside rotating exhibitions.

For a more hands-on experience, the Muskegon Museum of History & Science invites visitors to engage directly with exhibits that explore both natural and technological worlds.

The county's connection to the water is impossible to miss. At the USS Silver-sides Submarine Museum, visitors can step aboard a WWII submarine, while the adjacent Great Lakes Naval Memorial & Museum highlights the region's long-standing maritime ties.

That maritime story continues in Whitehall, where the White River Light Station & Museum operates as a lighthouse museum. Visitors can explore exhibits inside the restored 1875 structure and climb the tower for sweeping views of White Lake and the channel. The

site is operated by Lakeshore Keepers, formerly the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association. Exhibits also explore the role navigation played in commercial shipping and maritime safety along Lake Michigan's shoreline.

Industry and invention take center stage at the Muskegon Heritage Museum of Business & Industry, where exhibits highlight the companies and technologies that shaped the local economy. From manufacturing advances to entrepreneurial success stories, the museum reflects the innovation that helped define Muskegon's industrial identity.

Beyond the city, smaller museum experiences add depth. In Montague, the Montague Museum, housed in a restored 1872 church, preserves the history of the White Lake area through artifacts and photographs. Exhibits include logging-era artifacts, historic photographs and items tied to daily life

in the White Lake communities.

Smaller museums also preserve the stories of everyday life and public service. The Fire Barn Museum, built after devastating fires in the 1870s, preserves firefighting equipment dating back to the 1880s, while the nearby Scolnik House of the Depression Era interprets daily life during the 1930s.

Together, these museums form a layered portrait of Muskegon County — one shaped by lumber and labor, creativity and craftsmanship, water and industry.

Whether it's through the quiet details of a historic home, the hum of a busy exhibit floor or the steel hull of a submarine, Muskegon County's history continues to be preserved through the people and places dedicated to telling its stories.

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MUSKEGON MUSEUM OF ART

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Locked Jury
Oil on Canvas, ca. 1950

muskegonartmuseum.org
296 W. Webster Ave | Muskegon, MI



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Museum Directory — Muskegon County

MUSKEGON

Lakeshore Museum Center
430 W. Clay Ave., Muskegon
231-722-0278
lakeshoremuseum.org

Hackley and Hume Historic Site
484 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon
231-722-7578
lakeshoremuseum.org

Muskegon Museum of Art
296 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon
231-720-2570
muskegonartmuseum.org

Muskegon Museum of History & Science
430 W. Clay Ave., Muskegon
231-722-0278
lakeshoremuseum.org

USS Silversides Submarine Museum
1346 Bluff St., Muskegon
231-755-1230
silversidesmuseum.org

Great Lakes Naval Memorial & Museum
1346 Bluff St., Muskegon
231-755-1230
silversidesmuseum.org

Muskegon Heritage Museum of Business & Industry
561 W. Western Ave., Muskegon
231-722-1363
muskegonheritage.org

Fire Barn Museum
510 W. Clay Ave., Muskegon
Seasonal
lakeshoremuseum.org

Scolnik House of the Depression Era
547 W. Clay Ave., Muskegon
Seasonal
lakeshoremuseum.org

WHITEHALL / MONTAGUE

White River Light Station & Museum
6199 Murray Road, Whitehall
231-894-7200
lakeshorekeepers.org

Montague Museum
8717 Meade St., Montague
231-893-2236
whitehall-montaguehistory.org

NOTE

Hours vary by season, particularly for smaller and volunteer-run museums and historical attractions. Visitors are encouraged to check ahead before planning a trip.

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Beyond the Beach: 10 Family-Friendly Experiences Across Muskegon County

From amusement parks and waterfront festivals to mini golf and escape rooms, Muskegon County offers families a wide variety of activities throughout the year. Whether visitors are planning a summer vacation or weekend getaway, the county features attractions for nearly every age group across Muskegon, Norton Shores, Whitehall, Montague and surrounding communities.

1. Michigan's Adventure

Michigan's largest amusement park remains one of the county's signature family attractions. The park features roller coasters, family rides, children's attractions in Camp Snoopy and the adjoining WildWater Adventure water park. Younger children can enjoy gentler rides and splash areas, while older kids and teens gravitate toward larger coasters and water slides during the summer season.

2. Muskegon Farmers Market

The Muskegon Farmers Market has grown into a year-round community gathering space featuring fresh produce, baked goods, flowers, local foods and artisan vendors. Seasonal programming often includes live music, family activities, themed events and outdoor entertainment, helping make the downtown market district a popular stop for both residents and visitors.

3. Putters Creek

Located near the White Lake area, Putters Creek offers mini golf, go-karts, kayaking and additional outdoor recreation for families looking for a casual afternoon activity. The attraction combines classic vacation-style entertainment with access to nearby waterways

and is especially popular during the summer tourism season.

4. Getty Drive-In

The Getty Drive-In continues one of Muskegon County's longtime summer traditions. Families can enjoy double-feature movies from their vehicles while children use the playground areas before the films begin. The seasonal theater remains one of the few operating drive-ins in West Michigan and continues to attract visitors looking for a nostalgic evening experience.

5. Muskegon County Escape Rooms

Indoor escape rooms have become increasingly popular for families, teens and group outings throughout Muskegon County. Players work together to solve puzzles, uncover clues and complete themed challenges within a set time limit.

Options include Lakeshore Quest Escape Room in Norton Shores, which offers family-friendly adventures and beginner-level rooms; Locked In Escape Rooms in Muskegon, known for immersive story-based challenges; and The Colby Escape Room in Whitehall, which gives visitors another indoor entertainment option near the White Lake waterfront district.

6. Bat'n Club

Bat'n Club has remained a Muskegon-area family favorite for generations. The seasonal attraction features two miniature golf courses along with batting cages for baseball and softball practice. The outdoor setting and



longtime local reputation continue to make it a popular stop for families during warmer months.

7. Family Sports and Live Entertainment

Families visiting Muskegon County can also catch live sporting events throughout the year. The Muskegon Clippers bring collegiate summer baseball to historic Marsh Field with affordable tickets and themed nights, while hockey fans can watch both the Muskegon Lumberjacks at Trinity Health Arena and the Muskegon Voyagers at Lakeshore Sports Centre. Local sports continue to provide one of the county's most affordable family entertainment options year-round.

8. Heritage Landing

Heritage Landing serves as one of Muskegon County's major waterfront event venues. Located along Muskegon Lake, the site hosts large festivals and

concerts throughout the year, including the Michigan Irish Music Festival and Unity Christian Music Festival. The open lakefront setting and festival atmosphere make it a major summertime gathering spot for families.

9. Muskegon South Pierhead Light

Walking the channel pier to the Muskegon South Pierhead Light remains one of the county's classic lakeshore experiences. The long pier provides views of Lake Michigan, passing boats and the Muskegon shoreline, making it popular for sightseeing, photography and sunset walks during the summer tourism season.

10. Arcades and Indoor Entertainment

Families looking for indoor fun can find arcade games, laser tag and interactive attractions throughout Muskegon County. Craig's Cruisers combines

arcade games with go-karts, mini golf and laser tag, while EntertainZone offers arcade games, play areas and virtual reality attractions geared toward younger children. Downtown Muskegon's RetroActive Arcade adds classic arcade and pinball gaming to the county's growing indoor entertainment scene.

More Than a Beach Destination

What makes Muskegon County especially attractive for families is the variety packed into a relatively small geographic area. Visitors can spend the morning at an amusement park, the afternoon shopping downtown or exploring the waterfront and the evening watching a movie under the stars or attending a sporting event or lakeside concert. From Whitehall and Norton Shores to downtown Muskegon, the county continues to build its reputation as one of West Michigan's most family-friendly travel destinations.

Landmarks



Landmarks That Define the Lakeshore:


Iconic Sights Across Muskegon County

From historic lighthouses and Victorian mansions to scenic channels and beach landmarks, Muskegon County is home to many of West Michigan's most recognizable sights. Some are tied to the region's maritime and lumbering past, while others have become enduring symbols of lakeshore recreation and community identity. Whether visitors are exploring the White Lake area, downtown Muskegon or the Lake Michigan shoreline, these landmarks help tell the story of the county's history, culture and connection to the water.


- Montague Weathervane — The iconic downtown structure known as the "World's Largest Weathervane."
- Muskegon South Breakwater Light — The red lighthouse at the Muskegon channel entrance.
- White River Light Station Museum — Historic lighthouse overlooking White Lake and Lake Michigan.
- Hackley and Hume Historic Site — Restored Victorian mansions reflecting Muskegon's lumber-era prosperity.



- The S.S. Milwaukee Clipper — Historic Great Lakes passenger steamship docked on Muskegon Lake.
- Duck Lake Channel — Scenic channel and pedestrian bridge connecting Duck Lake and Lake Michigan.
- Muskegon Pierheads — Popular walking piers and shoreline viewpoints extending into Lake Michigan.
- Pere Marquette Beach — One of Michigan's best-known Lake Michigan beaches and a defining feature of the county shoreline.
- White Lake Channel — The waterway connecting White Lake to Lake Michigan, long associated with boating and waterfront recreation.



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Summer Stages to Holiday Traditions: Major Muskegon County Events in 2026

Editor's note: This calendar reflects events confirmed for 2026 as of May 2026 through official event organizers, tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, venues or published schedules. Some annual events may not yet have announced 2026 dates and therefore are not included.

JUNE

- **THRU AUG. 21** — Parties in the Park free summer concert series, Fridays at Hackley Park, downtown Muskegon, featuring live music, food vendors, non-profit partnerships and family activities.
- **JUNE 5** — Parties in the Park featuring TBA, benefiting Noah Project, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **JUNE 7** — Feet on the Street 2026, downtown Whitehall
- **JUNE 12-13** — First Ladies of Song – Helen Welch and Carpenters, The Songs, The Stories, The Playhouse at White Lake
- **JUNE 12-13** — Taste of Muskegon, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **JUNE 13** — Muskegon Museum of Art Anniversary Gala, Muskegon Museum of Art
- **JUNE 16** — Montague-Whitehall Rotary Bandshell Free Summer Concert Series begins, downtown Montague
- **JUNE 16-JULY 28** — Free Tuesday night summer concerts continue weekly at the Montague-Whitehall Rotary Bandshell, Montague
- **JUNE 19** — Magic Bus performs at Parties in the Park benefiting AgeWell Services of West Michigan, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **JUNE 19** — North Grove Brewers Summer Concert Series begins for the season, Montague
- **JUNE 20-21** — White Lake Area Arts & Crafts Festival, Goodrich Park, Whitehall
- **JUNE 25-28** — Electric Forest, Double JJ Resort area.
- **JUNE 27-28** — Lakeshore Art Festival, downtown Muskegon.

JULY

- **JULY 4** — White Lake Area Fourth of July Parade, Whitehall-Montague
- **JULY 10** — Westside Soul Surfers perform at Parties in the Park benefiting Lakeshore Youth Hockey Organization, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **JULY 15-18** — Rebel Road motorcycle rally and music festival, downtown Muskegon.
- **JULY 15-19** — Muskegon Bike Time, downtown Muskegon.
- **JULY 16-25** — White Lake Chamber Music Festival performances in Whitehall, Montague and Twin Lake.
- **JULY 18** — Walk the Beat White Lake, downtown Whitehall
- **JULY 18** — 3rd Annual White Lake Honey Fest, Whitehall
- **JULY 19-25** — Muskegon County Fair, Muskegon County Fairgrounds, featuring carnival rides, grandstand entertainment, livestock shows, agricultural exhibits and youth competitions.
- **JULY 24** — The Journey Tribute performs at Parties in the Park benefiting United Way of the Lakeshore, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **JULY 25** — Colors for Hope 5K, Montague Bandshell
- **JULY 28** — Magic Bus free summer concert, Montague Bandshell
- **JULY 31** — The Insiders (Tom Petty Tribute) perform at Parties in the Park benefiting Muskegon Civic Theatre, Hackley Park, Muskegon.



AUGUST

- **AUG. 6-8** — White Lake Area Maritime Festival, Whitehall
- **AUG. 8** — Great Lakes Surf Festival, 12:30-6 p.m., Pere Marquette Beach, Muskegon. The eighth annual event features surfing demonstrations, beach culture activities, vendors and live entertainment. Sponsored by Muskegon Federal Credit Union.
- **AUG. 8** — Run White Lake 5K Color Run, Whitehall
- **AUG. 12-15** — Unity Christian Music Festival, Heritage Landing, Muskegon.
- **AUG. 14** — Let There Be Rock with Psychotic Paradise perform at Parties in the Park benefiting Muskegon Sports Council, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **AUG. 15** — Arts & Drafts Festival, Ross Park, Norton Shores.
- **AUG. 15** — Dog Days of Summer: Life in the

1930s, Scolnik House of the Depression Era

- **AUG. 21** — Rockstar closes the Parties in the Park season benefiting JCI Greater Muskegon, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **AUG. 29** — Burning Foot Beer Festival, Pere Marquette Beach, Muskegon.

SEPTEMBER

- **SEPT. 4-6** — Muskegon Polish Festival, Hackley Park, Muskegon.
- **SEPT. 17-20** — Michigan Irish Music Festival, Heritage Landing, Muskegon.
- **SEPT. 19** — Solitary Man: Neil Diamond Tribute, Frauenthal Theater
- **SEPT. 30** — World Ballet Company: Swan Lake with Live Orchestra, Frauenthal Theater

OCTOBER

- **OCT. 2** — Music of The Beach Boys with Endless Summer, Frauenthal Center
- **OCT. 9** — Flashlight Tour, Hackley and Hume Historic Site
- **OCT. 16-17** — Obituary Tour, Hackley and Hume Historic Site
- **OCT. 17** — Appraisal Fair, Muskegon Museum of Art
- **OCT. 22** — Harvest Fest 2026, 5-8 p.m., Culinary Institute of Michigan, featuring culinary tastings, beverages, entertainment and fundraising activities.



NOVEMBER

- **NOV. 13** — Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, Frauenthal Center
- **NOV. 21** — 3rd Annual Montague Craft Show, Montague
- **NOV. 26-JAN. 4** — Festival of Trees, Muskegon Museum of Art

DECEMBER

- **DEC. 5** — Snowball Tea, Hackley and Hume Historic Site
- **LATE NOVEMBER-DECEMBER** — Holiday Tours at Hackley and Hume Historic Site
- **DEC. 18** — Home for the Holidays, Frauenthal Center



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By Land and Lake: Transportation in Muskegon County

Whether arriving by highway, ferry, air or trail, Muskegon County serves as one of West Michigan's key transportation hubs along Lake Michigan. The county's combination of interstate access, regional transit, commercial ferry service and recreational trail systems helps connect residents and visitors to communities throughout the lakeshore region.

Major highways serving the county include U.S. 31, which runs north and south through Muskegon County, along with I-96, providing direct access east to Grand Rapids and the Detroit area. M-120, M-46 and M-104 also connect travelers to inland communities and neighboring counties. Scenic shoreline drives through communities such as Whitehall, Montague and Muskegon provide additional access to parks, marinas and beaches.

One of the county's most recognizable transportation links is the Lake Express high-speed ferry, which operates seasonal service between Muskegon and Milwaukee across Lake Michigan. The catamaran ferry carries passengers, vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles, providing a cross-lake alternative to driving around the southern end of Lake Michigan. The service departs from downtown Muskegon near the waterfront and has become both a tourism attraction and regional transportation connection. Lake Express

Public transportation throughout the county is provided by Muskegon Area Transit System, commonly known as MATS. The system operates fixed-route bus service throughout Muskegon, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park and surrounding communities, along with paratransit and countywide demand-response services.

Air travel is available through Muskegon County Airport. Located in Norton Shores, the airport supports commercial air service, private aviation and charter operations, while larger commercial airports in Grand Rapids remain within driving distance for many travelers.

For recreational transportation, Muskegon County maintains an extensive network of biking and walking trails. The Hart-Montague Trail State Park remains one of Michigan's best-known paved rail-trails, connecting Whitehall and Montague to northern Oceana County. Additional trail systems throughout Muskegon and along the lakeshore provide access to parks, beaches and downtown districts without relying entirely on vehicle travel.

Marinas and boating infrastructure also play a major role in local transportation and tourism. Muskegon Lake, White Lake and numerous inland waterways support seasonal boating traffic, charter fishing activity and recreational sailing during the warmer months.

At a glance

- Major highways: U.S. 31, I-96, M-46, M-104 and M-120
- Ferry service: Milwaukee-to-Muskegon Lake Express route
- Public transit: Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS)
- Air travel: Muskegon County Airport and nearby Gerald R. Ford International Airport
- Trails: Hart-Montague Trail State Park and Muskegon Lakeshore Trail
- Water access: Marinas, boat launches and charter services throughout the county

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