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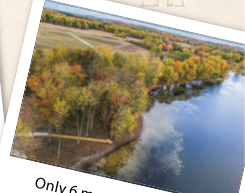
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Charming and well maintained 5-bedroom, 2-bath home offering a wonderful floor plan and plenty of space for comfortable living. This home features an updated kitchen with quartz countertops and stainless steel appliances, living room with beautiful hardwood floors and a fireplace. The nicely finished basement provides additional living space with a second family room with a gas fireplace and recreation room. Outside, enjoy the deck overlooking the spacious double lot, as well as the convenience of a 2-car garage.

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603 George Street, Ludington

Beautifully remodeled 2-bedroom home featuring a bright, open floor plan with abundant natural light. The versatile bonus room is ideal for a family room, home office, or additional sleeping area. Main-floor laundry, a full basement, and plenty of storage add to the home's functionality. Enjoy the charming front porch, spacious deck, and large driveway. Excellent location just two blocks from downtown dining, shopping, and brewpubs, offering convenience and easy access to local amenities. Move-in ready and a great opportunity to enjoy updated living in a desirable location!

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9748 N US 31, Free Soil

Pleasant and well maintained 3-bedroom home situated on 25 beautiful acres! The impressive 30' x 52' pole barn was built to commercial standards and features an ADA-compliant bathroom, sink, drinking fountain, 3-phase electrical service, and its own septic system and drainfield. The home has been thoughtfully updated with a new roof, well, septic system and drainfield, and 220-amp electrical service, all completed in 2022. The maintenance free exterior features vinyl siding and replacement windows. The home features a bright kitchen with lots of natural light, dining room with hardwood floors, spacious living room and so much more!

\$375,000

Weather-resistant materials *for outdoor spaces*

Outfitting backyard living areas can make these popular spaces more comfortable and inviting. However, nature is a relentless adversary that can compromise the integrity of outdoor furnishings over time.

Between the bleaching that occurs from UV exposure to the corrosive nature of humidity to the results of temperature swings, backyard gear faces a constant onslaught. Today's Patio says on average, backyard furniture can last between five

and 15 years, depending on the material and climate.

According to market research from the International Casual Furnishings Association, these outdoor furniture materials are considered particularly durable.

- **Poly-lumber:** Also known as high-density polyethylene lumber, this material is low-maintenance and made from recycled plastics. It is non-porous and infused

with UV inhibitors. Leading manufacturers say HDPE can withstand various conditions and temperatures for more than 20 years without degradation.

- **Power-coated aluminum:** Aluminum does not rust, unlike iron or steel. When aluminum is treated with a high-quality powder coating, it becomes much less vulnerable to rain and humidity.

- **Teak:** Homeowners who prefer the look of real wood over other materials often find teak is the gold standard for outdoor items. It contains high levels of oils and rubber to serve as built-in water repellents. Teak can turn silvery-gray over time, so to keep the golden color, homeowners may need to oil it

annually.

- **Performance fabrics:** Certain fabrics on outdoor cushions and pillows will not stand up to the sun and weather. Solution-dyed acrylics, like those offered by the brand Sunbrella, are much more durable. The fibers are saturated with pigment to the core, instead of other printed fabrics where the color merely sits on top.

Of course, the climate where one lives will dictate which materials to use. UV- and heat-resistance can be paramount in desert climates, while non-porous materials are better in high humidity to combat rot and mold. Investing in quality outdoor materials will help them withstand the test of time.

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Madelyn Kerbyson

News: Lois Tomaszewski,
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Cristina Juska, Sean Chase,
Larry Launstein Jr., Kate Babel

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202 N Rath Ave.,
P.O. Box 340,
Ludington, MI 49431
(231) 845-5181
(231) 843-4011 fax

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123 State Street,
PO Box 190,
Hart, MI 49420
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Popular backyard games and activities



Backyards are experiencing a resurgence in recent years. Driven largely by a collective desire to reduce screen time, which has surged among many age groups, particularly children, families are investing in physical play and recreational options at home. Indeed, All

About Play notes the global outdoor toy market is a growing industry valued at around \$23 billion in 2026. Fortune Business Insights says outdoor play has an expected steady growth of 4.65 percent annually through 2034. Modern outdoor spaces

feature far more grass and a swing set. Such areas have evolved into activity hubs for everyone who wants to spend time in the yard. Whether a homeowner has a small patio or sprawling acreage, these games can make outdoor entertaining spaces more fun.

- **Cornhole:** A reigning champion of “toss” games, cornhole has legions of fans. Hard core players may want to invest in regulation-sized solid wood seats and weather-resistant professional bags.
- **Pickleball:** Portable pickleball nets allow for quick pop-up courts on grass or driveways.
- **Supersized games:** Large versions of popular indoor games like Connect 4® and Jenga® enable play to be more hands-on and physical.

• **Active play:** The rise of digital active play systems has moved outdoors. Systems like Nex, for example, employ motion sensors to turn a backyard into a live-action video game. This bridges the gap for tech-savvy kids and adults who want to spend more time outdoors.

• **Virtual reality:** In a similar vein, players can take VR gear outdoors and enjoy the same rush of virtual play while outside in the fresh air.

• **Modular playgrounds:** All About Play says recent industry reports indicate the North American outdoor play structure market is expected to reach \$850 million by 2033. Families are prioritizing one-stop play environments that include modular set-ups.



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Is a sunroom right for you?

There is no denying the appeal of a sunroom. Sunrooms bring more of the outdoors inside by bridging the gap between home and yard. Demand is shifting, with more than 61 percent of homeowners now preferring four-season insulated rooms for year-round use, according to Market Reports World. A sunroom has the potential to offer a roughly 50 percent return on investment and can cost anywhere from \$22,000 to \$72,000 on average.

A sunroom addition is a significant investment and a decision not to take lightly, as it changes both the interior floor plan and backyard space. To decide if a sunroom really is a worthwhile endeavor, it's important for homeowners to consider the footprint of their homes/yards, how they plan to use the space, and the amount of sun the home receives.

Home footprint

Professionals with the National Association of Realtors say that a sunroom should not consume more than 30 percent of the remaining backyard and urge homeowners to avoid over-developing a lot. If installing a sunroom will leave a homeowner with only a small patch of yard afterwards, the result can feel heavy and unbalanced. It also won't match the neighborhood. Another consideration is the local zoning ordinances where a person lives. The City of Los Angeles, for example, warns that most towns require a setback between the sunroom structure and the property line. It's also important to look at the home's roof and whether or not the sunroom will fall right under the eaves or if it will require an expensive tie-in to the existing roof.

Utility

It is vital that homeowners

determine how they will use the space and when. This will dictate the type of sunroom that should be built. A three-season room is typically uninsulated with only single-pane glass. This is ideal if someone is looking for a screened-in retreat without all of the bugs and a little weather protection. Four-season rooms are fully insulated and tie into a home's HVAC system. This space will be functional all year long, but it is a more expensive undertaking as well.

Light evaluation

The purpose of a sunroom is to benefit from the sun. The value of the space will depend entirely on which way the room faces. North-facing sunrooms have soft light with minimal heat or glare that likely can be used all day. Morning people can appreciate an east-facing sunroom while drinking coffee or reading, and the space will cool down in the afternoon. South-facing rooms will be bright most of the day and may need high-end HVAC hookups or shades to stay comfortable, even in cooler months. West-facing sunrooms are great for watching sunsets, but the hot afternoon sun must be considered. UV-rated glass to prevent floor fading and even sunburn likely will be needed.

It is important to work with a company that specializes in sunrooms. Such firms are experienced in helping homeowners design and ultimately build these spaces to avoid common pitfalls, advises Champion, a window, sunroom and home exterior company.

In general, a sunroom is not a DIY project since it typically involves a major structural change. It can be a viable addition to a home when built correctly to remain durable through every season.



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Crosswinds Condo, 2 bed, 2 bath,
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319 N Rowe St, Ludington
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18 N Loggers Ln, Ludington
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Hamlin Lake, 2 garages w/loft
\$1,425,000



6875 W Illinois St, Ludington
6 bed, 4 bath, 105' lake frontage,
private boathouse, 5 bay garage
\$949,900



9 New William St., Ludington
Close to beach, 5 bed, 2 bath,
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\$325,000



6302 E Interlochen Rd, Fountain
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Low maintenance landscape features



Outdoor entertaining spaces have come a long way over the last several decades. While a simple deck or patio might once have been the norm, outdoor entertaining spaces have now evolved into multi-purpose spaces featuring full kitchens, living rooms equipped with televisions, and areas to gather around a fireplace or built-in firepit.

While hardscaping garners considerable attention when planning an outdoor entertaining space, landscaping should not be overlooked. Many homeowners want to enjoy their outdoor entertain-

ing spaces without having to spend too much time tending to the surrounding grounds, which can make these low-maintenance landscape features the perfect fit.

- **Native plants:** Native plants are low maintenance because they are naturally adapted to the local climate. That means homeowners won't have to expend extra effort and energy watering plants or amending the soil. Non-native species may provide some bold colors, but that comes at the cost of additional maintenance. There's also an environmental cost when planting non-native species, as the United States Environmental Protection Agency warns that non-native species typically displace natives, which can adversely affect the local ecosystem.

- **Perennials:** Homeowners looking to accent their outdoor entertaining areas with flowers can choose perennials over annuals. Perennials live for three or more years, and some species can even live for a decade or more. While they might re-

quire some seasonal pruning, perennials will not need to be replanted each year like annuals.

- **Tolerant plants:** Plants that can tolerate the local climate generally fall under the native category. But it's especially important that homeowners who don't want to expend much effort on landscape maintenance look for plants that can tolerate drought. A recent study from researchers at UCLA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, and CIRES predict drought conditions will last longer, cover wider areas, and become more severe as the climate continues to warm. Drought-resistant plants may still require some watering if such predictions hold true. However, such plants will not require as much maintenance as those that are less equipped to handle drought. Homeowners who choose plants with drought-tolerance in mind won't have to spend as much time watering and also can protect their financial investment.

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What is the 3-5-7 rule?

Home design trends come and go, but one that has inspired a legion of committed followers is the 3-5-7 rule. The 3-5-7 rule is a formula for interior decorating that encourages homeowners to group furnishings in odd numbers. The intention behind such groupings is to ensure homes feel balanced and intentional without sacrificing aesthetic appeal. Adherents to the 3-5-7 rule feel that odd-numbered groupings allow for an ideal blend of scale and height that creates a natural rhythm within interior spaces. Some even insist that odd groupings appear more curated. Size can come into play when pivoting to the 3-5-7 approach to interior design. Three large furnishings can be arranged (i.e., sofa, area rug and a large piece of wall art), five mid-sized items (chairs, coffee table, etc.) and seven small pieces (candles, framed photos, etc.).

How to tell bees, hornets and wasps apart

People who spend any measurable amount of time outdoors likely have crossed paths with various flying insects that cohabitate in a typical yard. Some of the most ardent pollinators and pest control agents also have the potential to be dangerous if provoked. While most bees, wasps and hornets are content to go about their business, their stingers can make these insects formidable foes, particularly to those who are allergic.

According to The Best Bees Company, there are more than 20,000 known species of bees and more than 100,000 known species of wasps worldwide. Those who don't want to get too up close and personal with stinging insects may not know how to tell the different types apart. Bees, wasps and hornets are distinguished by their behavior, waist and body texture.

Bees

If it has a fuzzy body, it's a bee. Bees tend to be non-aggressive and may be carrying pollen on their backs. They also live in wax hives. You'll likely see bees flitting from one flower to another in the warmer weather. Honeybees will die after one sting, advises PBS, but bumblebees and carpenter bees have smooth stingers that will not get stuck, enabling them to sting again.

Wasps

Wasps are stinging insects which can be social or solitary. Wasps have smooth, shiny bodies and narrow waists. They can be bright black and yellow or black and white. Wasps can sting repeatedly, says The Spruce, but they may not always be aggressive; it depends on the species. Yellowjackets are a type of wasp. They are sensi-

tive to threats and not afraid to use their stingers. Another way to distinguish wasps from bees is that wasps hang their legs down while flying and bees keep them tucked in.

Hornets

Hornets are wasps and tend to be social in nature. They only construct paper nests and can be more aggressive than other types of wasps. The Old Farmer's Almanac says hornets can be highly defensive with more painful

stings, and also may be larger and rounder in size than other wasps. In the United States, the one true hornet species is the European hornet, which nest in trees.

It's impossible to avoid bees and wasps entirely, but individuals can be mindful of where they are making their nests. As these insects are important to the ecosystem, it's key not to exterminate them haphazardly. If a nest is problematic, it's best to have a professional come and relocate or remove it safely.



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4354 N. US 31, Scottville

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- 30x40 Pole Barn, 3 Acres

\$149,000



27 N. Campbell, Fountain

- 3 BR Ranch, Pole Barn, Heated Shop
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\$215,000



929 S. Washington, Ludington

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7127 Wever, Fountain

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Sandy Lovewell
Office Manager

Repurpose rooms and breathe new life into a home

Homeowners do not need to get hung up on room labels as they explore ways to reinvent their spaces. Just because a floor plan labels a space as a formal dining room doesn't mean the area has to remain that way.

Repurposing rooms in a home comes down to aligning the space a person has with their lifestyle needs. Here are a few ways to rethink interior spaces and make a switch to improve utility.

- Identify unused or underused rooms. Take note of spaces that are cleaned but rarely used. For many people, this is a dining room or a guest suite. Either of these rooms can be transformed into something new.

- Invest in multipurpose furniture. Even people short on space can transform their homes. Replacing a traditional bed with a murphy bed or a daybed can make a room more suitable for a home office or yoga studio, but still provide a space for the occasional houseguest to sleep. A pull-down shelf desk in a bedroom or even a walk-in closet can turn an area into a compact home workstation.

- Claim dead space. The area under the stairs or another small spot often is used to collect junk. Instead, it can be turned into a built-in wine rack, a reading nook for kids or even a pet sanctuary with

just a few modifications. Analyze areas around the home that seem like they don't serve a purpose, and then figure out a way to make them more functional.

- Establish room zones. Some people simply cannot transform an entire room into something else. Visual partitioning makes it possible to create rooms within rooms. An area rug can be used to define a border of a space. Open bookshelves can serve as a wall to separate a sleeping area from a lounging spot. Lighting can add dimension

to areas in a space. A pendant light over a crafting or work table can be used define the space.

- Look at utility areas. Unless you are a do-it-yourselfer or have a hobby that takes up much of the garage or basement, utility areas are major spots in a home to consider repurposing. A garage can be turned into a home gym, kids' play area or even a hobby shop. Modular flooring and insulated walls can make the room comfortable. Attic lofts are the ultimate quiet zones, and can be serene spots for

reading, meditating or doing homework. An unfinished basement can be converted into a finished space to serve many different purposes. From media rooms to a teen lounge to a hobby cave, the opportunities are endless.

A good rule of thumb before converting any room is to give it a test run. Move in a piece of furniture and test how it works with its intended function. Assess lighting, noise and foot traffic for a week, and then move ahead with changes if the result is positive.



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Don Bradley

231-425-8838



Lois Mitzelfeld

231-510-5065



Random Messeder

231-425-8753



Ingrid Wadel

231-301-0646



Dave Moore

231-852-4700



Dana Allen

231-233-1620



Dick Boyd

231-590-1067



Brooke Klein

231-690-3675



Monty Ashton

231-907-7790



Laura Iles

231-907-0873



Pat Flagg

231-852-0446



LeAnne Enbody

231-233-0389



Chad Enbody

231-794-8961



BethAnn Kozicki

231-794-8960



Tim Gibson

231-233-7327



Toni Monton

231-233-9107



Danielle Kowalski

Office Manager



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PROPERTIES**

503 S Rath Ave
Ludington, MI

231-845-7500



goLighthouseRealty.com