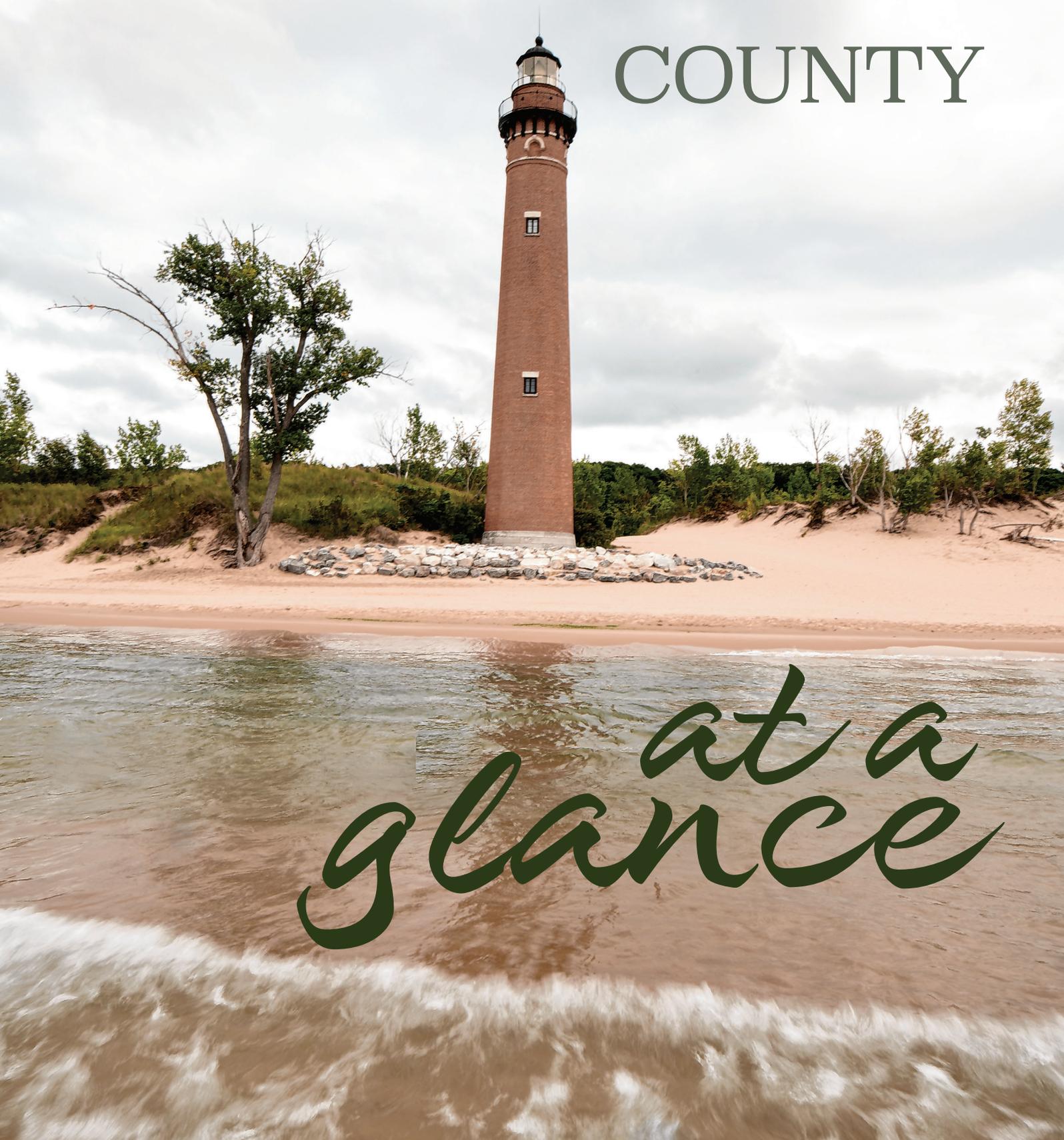


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*at a
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Oceana County At A Glance

From sandy Lake Michigan beaches and towering dunes to vibrant festivals and rich agricultural roots, Oceana County offers a blend of natural beauty, small-town charm and deep-rooted tradition.

Bordered on the west by Lake Michigan, Oceana County is one of Michigan's 83 counties and is known for its scenic shoreline, inland lakes, orchards and farmland. Whether you are exploring the Silver Lake Sand Dunes, climbing the 139 steps of Little Sable Point Lighthouse, biking the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail or strolling a summer farmers market, there is no shortage of ways to experience the outdoors.

The county's history stretches back centuries. Long before it was formally organized in 1851, the land was part of Ojibwe territory. The county's name is believed to trace back not only to its lakeshore setting, but also to James Harrington's 1656 political work *Oceana*. Early growth was driven by the lumber industry, and today agriculture defines much of the local economy.

Oceana County proudly carries the title "Asparagus Capital of the World," and that heritage is celebrated each June during the National Asparagus Festival in Hart. The county's calendar is filled with events that bring residents and visitors together — from Pentwater's fine arts fair

and homecoming celebrations to the Shelby Chainsaw Carving Festival, Silver Lake Apple & BBQ Festival and concerts at the base of Little Sable Lighthouse.

Communities throughout the county — including Hart, Shelby, Pentwater, Rothbury, New Era, Walkerville and Hesperia — each contribute their own character, traditions and sense of place. With 43 parks and recreation areas, miles of bike paths and easy access to beaches, boating, hiking and ORV adventures, outdoor recreation is a defining part of life here.

Today, approximately 27,000 residents call Oceana County home. The county encompasses 16 townships, six villages and one city — and is famously home to just one stoplight. While modest in size, Oceana County offers a strong sense of community, seasonal energy and year-round opportunity.

This Oceana County at a Glance guide is designed to help you discover what makes the area special — from local government and services to recreation, events and community resources. Whether you are a longtime resident, a seasonal visitor or exploring the area for the first time, Oceana County invites you to experience its history, culture and natural beauty.

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agriculture

Rooted in the Land: Oceana County's Agricultural Legacy

HART — Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Oceana County's economy, shaping its landscape, supporting local businesses and drawing visitors throughout the year.

Located along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan, the county's sandy, well-drained soils and lake-moderated climate place it within Michigan's renowned fruit belt. Those conditions support a diverse range of specialty crops, led by asparagus, apples and blueberries.

Oceana County is widely recognized as one of the nation's leading asparagus-producing regions. Each spring, crews harvest thousands of acres of the crop, which has become synonymous with the area's agricultural identity. The industry's prominence is celebrated annually during the National Asparagus Festival, which features parades, tastings and community events centered on the signature crop.

Beyond asparagus, local farms produce

apples, blueberries, cherries, peaches, pears and plums, along with pickling cucumbers, tomatoes, sweet corn, pumpkins, squash and dry beans. Multi-generation family farms dominate the landscape, and many operations offer direct-to-consumer sales through roadside stands and seasonal u-pick experiences.

Blueberry production plays a significant role in the county's agricultural output, supported by regional packing, cold storage and shipping facilities that distribute fruit to markets across the Midwest and beyond. Pickling cucumbers grown under contract also feed into Michigan's broader food-processing industry.

Agriculture and tourism intersect across the county through agritourism destinations and farm markets.

In New Era, Country Dairy offers guided farm tours, an on-site creamery and a restaurant featuring dairy products processed directly on the farm. Visitors





can observe milking operations while sampling milk, cheese and ice cream.

Nearby, Lewis Farms Market & Petting Farm combines a large farm market with family attractions, including u-pick crops, a petting farm, playgrounds, corn mazes and seasonal harvest activities.

Other farms produce baked goods, jams, syrups and specialty foods using locally sourced ingredients.

Livestock production, including beef, hog and poultry operations, complements crop farming. Youth agriculture programs and 4-H exhibitions are highlighted each summer during the Oceana County Fair, where livestock shows and agricultural competitions showcase the next generation of producers.



Local growers also work with conservation partners such as the Mason-Lake Conservation District to promote soil health, erosion control and water-quality

dune recreation often frequent farm markets and u-pick operations, reinforcing agriculture's role in the broader visitor economy.

From asparagus harvests in spring to apple orchards in the fall, agriculture continues to shape Oceana County's economy, culture and rural character.

In Hart, Up North Farm Market sells locally grown fruits and vegetables alongside Michigan-made specialty products. Farmers markets in Pentwater and Shelby provide additional venues for growers and value-added producers to sell directly to residents and summer visitors.

Value-added agriculture further strengthens the county's economy. Petersen's Farms in Shelby processes locally grown apples into cider, fruit juices and dried fruit products, allowing producers to retain more of the crop's economic value within the community.

protection. Michigan State University Extension programming provides technical assistance and educational support for producers and youth agriculture initiatives.

The county's proximity to destinations such as Silver Lake Sand Dunes further links farming and tourism. Visitors drawn to Lake Michigan beaches and



education

Education:

Small schools, strong identity and expanding opportunity

HART — Education in Oceana County reflects its rural landscape: small districts, close-knit communities and schools that serve as both academic institutions and centers of civic life.

Four public school districts serve just over 3,000 students across the county: **Hart Public Schools, Shelby Public Schools, Pentwater Public Schools** and **Walkerville Public Schools**.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, about 90% of Oceana County residents age 25 and older have earned at least a high school diploma, while approximately 21% hold a bachelor's degree or higher — below the statewide average.

Enrollment and graduation trends

Like many rural Michigan counties, Oceana County districts have experienced gradual enrollment declines over the past decade, largely reflecting demographic shifts and smaller graduating classes. While year-to-year figures fluctuate, total county enrollment remains just above 3,000 students.

Graduation rates across the four districts generally align with Michigan's statewide average, typically in the mid-80% range. Local educators continue focusing on literacy, math proficiency, attendance and workforce readiness as key indicators of long-term success.

District profiles

Hart Public Schools, home of the Pirates in red and black, enrolls approximately 1,150 students and serves much of central Oceana County. With elementary, middle and high school campuses, Hart maintains strong participation in athletics and agricultural-based programs that reflect the region's farming and food-process-

ing economy.

Shelby Public Schools, the Tigers, compete in orange and black and serve about 1,000 students in the southern portion of the county. The district has made recent facility improvements and offers dual enrollment and skilled trades pathways through regional partnerships.

Along the Lake Michigan shoreline, **Pentwater Public Schools** educates roughly 300 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The Falcons, wearing navy and gold, benefit from small class sizes and individualized instruction typical of the district's scale.

In northeastern Oceana County, **Walkerville Public Schools** serves about 250 students. The Wildcats, in blue and white, operate in a rural setting where close community ties and small enrollment contribute to personalized learning environments.

Regional support

All four districts receive services from the **West Shore Educational Service District**, based in Ludington. The intermediate school district supports Lake, Mason and Oceana counties with special education services, early childhood programming, career and technical education and professional development for educators.

For smaller districts especially, West Shore ESD provides access to specialized instruction, shared services and workforce training programs that might otherwise be difficult to sustain independently.

Post-secondary access

While Oceana County does not have a four-year university within its borders, graduates



commonly pursue higher education at nearby institutions.

The primary local option is **West Shore Community College**, located in neighboring Mason County. The college offers associate degrees, workforce certifications, adult education and transfer pathways to four-year universities.

West Shore Community College is expanding its presence in Oceana County with development of the West Shore Community College Oceana County Education Center at 710 S. State St. in Hart. The 25,000-square-foot facility, located in the former Gale's IGA building, is being renovated into classroom and workforce training space designed to increase access to post-secondary education and career development opportunities within the county.

Students also attend regional universi-

ties within commuting distance, including **Grand Valley State University**, **Ferris State University** and **Western Michigan University**.

Through partnerships with West Shore Community College and West Shore ESD, high school students may participate in dual enrollment, early college and skilled trades programs, allowing them to earn college credit or industry credentials before graduation.

Local education resources

In addition to K-12 districts and higher education institutions, Oceana County residents have access to:

- West Shore Educational Service District for special education, early childhood and career-technical services

- West Shore Community College for associate degrees, workforce training and adult education
- Public libraries in Hart, Pentwater, Shelby and Walkerville offering literacy programming, technology access and lifelong learning opportunities
- Michigan Works! West Central for employment and workforce development services

As enrollment patterns shift and workforce demands evolve, Oceana County educators and regional partners continue working to strengthen educational outcomes while expanding access to career-connected learning opportunities close to home.

Oceana County villages and townships: contact information

CITY

City of Hart

407 State St., Hart, MI 49420
 Phone: 231-873-2488
 Fax: 231-873-0100
 Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
 Council meetings: Second and fourth Tuesdays
 at 7:30 p.m.
 Website: <https://cityofhart.org>

VILLAGES

Village of Hesperia

33 E. Michigan Ave., Hesperia, MI 49421
 Phone: 231-854-6205
 Website: <https://hesperiami.com>

Village of New Era

4708 1st St., New Era, MI 49446
 Mailing: P.O. Box 85, New Era, MI 49446
 Phone: 231-861-5186
 Website: <https://neweramichigan.com>

Village of Pentwater

65 S. Hancock St., Pentwater, MI 49449
 Phone: 231-869-8301
 Fax: 231-869-5120
 Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
 Website: <https://pentwatervillage.org>

Village of Rothbury

7804 S. Michigan Ave., Rothbury, MI 49452
 Phone: 231-894-2385
 Fax: 231-893-4454
 Office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday,
 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
 Website: <https://villageofrothbury.org>

Village of Shelby

218 N. Michigan Ave., Shelby, MI 49455
 Phone: 231-861-4400
 Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30
 p.m.
 Website: <https://shelbyvillage.com>

Village of Walkerville

121 S. East St., Walkerville, MI 49459
 Mailing: P.O. Box 97, Walkerville, MI 49459
 Phone: 231-873-5842

TOWNSHIPS

Benona Township

7169 W. Baker Rd., Shelby, MI 49455
 Clerk: 231-861-2154
 Website: <https://benonatownship.org>

Claybanks Township

7577 W. Cleveland Rd., New Era, MI 49446
 Clerk: 231-861-1065
 Website: <https://claybankstownship.org>

Colfax Township

5594 N. 192nd Ave., Walkerville, MI 49459
 Clerk: 231-301-5685
 Email: joni.colfaxtp@gmail.com
 Website: <https://colfaxtownshipoceana.org>

Crystal Township

1499 E. Hammett Rd., Hart, MI 49420
 Clerk: 231-742-1798
 Website: <https://crystaltownship.org>

Elbridge Township

2266 E. Polk Rd., Hart, MI 49420
 Clerk: 231-873-4740
 Email: clerk@elbridgetownship.org
 Website: <https://elbridgetownship.org>

Golden Township

5527 W. Fox Rd., Mears, MI 49436
 Clerk: 231-873-4413
 Email: info@goldentownshipmi.gov
 Website: <https://goldentownshipmi.gov>

Grant Township

7140 S. Oceana Dr., Rothbury, MI 49452
 Clerk: 231-893-6336
 Website: <https://www.granttowntshipoceana.com>

Greenwood Township

5589 200th Ave., Hesperia, MI 49421
 Clerk: 231-854-0202
 Email: info@greenwoodoceanami.gov
 Website: <https://greenwoodoceanami.gov>

Hart Township

3437 W. Polk Rd., Hart, MI 49420
 Clerk: 231-873-2734
 Email: harttownship@gmail.com
 Website: <https://harttownship.org>

Leavitt Township

2401 N. 184th Ave., Walkerville, MI 49459
 Clerk: 231-329-5490
 Email: Supervisor.Leavitt.Township@outlook.com
 Website: <https://www.leavitttownship.org>

Newfield Township

3890 S. 198th Ave., Hesperia, MI 49421
 Clerk: 231-854-4702
 Email: supervisor@newfieldtownship.org
 Website: <https://newfieldtownship.org>

Otto Township

5458 S. 128th Ave., Rothbury, MI 49452
 Clerk: 231-349-5559
 Website: <https://ottotownship.com>

Pentwater Township

500 N. Hancock St., Pentwater, MI 49449
 Clerk: 231-869-6231
 Email: supervisor@pentwatertownshipmi.gov
 Website: <https://pentwatertownshipmi.gov>

Shelby Township

204 N. Michigan Ave., Shelby, MI 49455
 Clerk: 231-861-5853
 Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
 Email: info@shelbytownshipoceana.com
 Website: <https://shelbytownshipoceana.com>

Weare Township

6506 N. Oceana Dr., Hart, MI 49420
 Clerk: 231-301-0071
 Website: <https://wearetownship.org>

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Who to call

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

County Administrator

100 S. State St., Suite M-4
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4835
<https://oceana.mi.us>

Board of Commissioners

100 S. State St.
Hart, MI 49420
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/board-of-commissioners/>

County Clerk

100 S. State St., Suite M-1
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4328
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/county-clerk/>

Treasurer

100 S. State St.
P.O. Box 227
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-3980
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/treasurer/>

Register of Deeds

100 N. State St.
P.O. Box 111
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4158
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/register-of-deeds/>

Equalization Department

100 S. State St., Suite L-12
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4609
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/equalization/>

Drain Commissioner

100 S. State St., Suite M-11
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-3887
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/drain-commissioner/>

Building Department

844 S. Griswold St., Suite 200
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-5355
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/building-department/>

Planning Commission

Hart, MI
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/planning-commission/>

LAW ENFORCEMENT & COURTS

Sheriff's Office

216 Lincoln St.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-2121
<https://oceana.mi.us/courts-sheriff/sheriff/>

Prosecutor's Office

100 S. State St., Suite L-14
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4608
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/prosecutor/>

51st Circuit Court

100 S. State St., Suite M-10
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-3977
<https://oceana.mi.us/courts-sheriff/courts/circuit-court/>

79th District Court

100 S. State St.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4530
<https://oceana.mi.us/courts-sheriff/courts/district-court/>

Friend of the Court

100 S. State St., Suite M-10
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4605
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/friend-of-the-court/>

EMERGENCY & PUBLIC SAFETY

Mason-Oceana Central Dispatch (911)

9160 N. Oceana Dr.
Pentwater, MI 49449
Emergency: 911
Non-Emergency: 231-869-5858
<https://oceana.mi.us/courts-sheriff/central-dispatch/>

Emergency Management

844 S. Griswold St., Suite 300
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4473
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/emergency-management/>

Life EMS Ambulance

Phone: 1-888-LIFE-EMS
<https://www.lifeems.com>

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**District Health Department No. 10 - Oceana Office**

3986 N. Oceana Dr.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-2193
<https://www.dhd10.org>

West Michigan Community Mental Health

105 Lincoln St.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-2108
<https://www.wmcmh.org>

Oceana County Medical Care Facility

701 E. Main St.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-6600
<https://www.oceanamcf.org>

Council on Aging

4250 W. Tyler Rd.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4461
<https://www.oceanacoa.com>

FOOD SECURITY & BASIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE**Muskegon-Oceana Community Action Partnership (FiveCAP)**

195 N. Michigan Ave.
Shelby, MI 49455
Phone: 231-259-2007
<https://www.fivecap.org>

Bread of Life Food Pantry (St. Gregory Parish)

316 S. Peach Ave.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-4030
<https://stgregoryathart.org>

New Hope Community Church Food Pantry

951 N. Michigan Ave.
Shelby, MI 49455
Phone: 231-861-0536
<https://www.newhopegrows.org>

Trinity Lutheran Church Food Pantry

5631 W. Stony Lake Rd.
New Era, MI 49446
Phone: 231-861-4059
<https://www.tlcnewera.org>

United Way of the Lakeshore (Mobile Food Pantry Events)

Phone: 231-726-2839
<https://www.unitedwaylakeshore.org>

CHILD, FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**CASA of Oceana County**

<https://www.oceanacounty-casa.org>

Community Foundation for Oceana County

224 W. Main St.
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-869-3377
<https://www.oceanafoundation.org>

Staircase Youth Services

<https://www.staircaseyouthservices.org>

AGRICULTURE, EXTENSION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**MSU Extension - Oceana County**

844 S. Griswold St., Suite 400
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-873-2129
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/oceana>

Oceana County Economic Alliance

844 S. Griswold St., Suite 500
Hart, MI 49420
Phone: 231-742-3328
<https://www.oceanaeconomicalliance.org>

Oceana County Agricultural Society

1025 S. State St.
Hart, MI 49420
<https://www.oceanacountyfair.com>

ANIMAL SERVICES & ADVOCACY**Oceana County Animal Control**

2185 W. Baseline Rd.
Shelby, MI 49455
Phone: 231-861-5395
<https://oceana.mi.us/government/departments/animal-control/>

Oceana County Animal Friends

<https://www.oceananimalfriends.org>

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society**

<https://www.oceanahistory.org>
Preserves and promotes Oceana

STATE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**Governor of Michigan**

Phone: 517-373-3400
<https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer>

Michigan State Senate

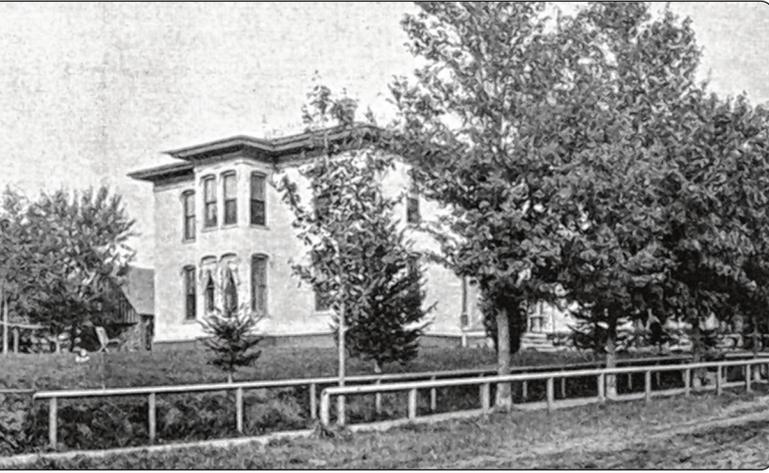
<https://www.senate.michigan.gov>

Michigan House of Representatives

<https://www.house.mi.gov>

***Note:** The offices of governor, state senator and state representative serving Oceana County are scheduled to appear on the ballot in the November 2026 general election. These may change after the 2026 election.*





History

Oceana County's History: From Indigenous Homeland to Lakeshore Community

OCEANA COUNTY, Mich. — The history of Oceana County is a story of movement and adaptation, shaped first by Indigenous stewardship, then by lumber camps, farm fields and waves of migration along Lake Michigan's eastern shore.

Anishinaabe Homeland

For thousands of years before European settlement, the land that became Oceana County was part of the homeland of the Anishinaabe peoples, including the Odawa (Ottawa), Ojibwe (Chippewa) and Potawatomi.

Seasonal migration patterns defined life in the region. Families moved between Lake Michigan's shoreline in warmer months — fishing and gathering — and inland forests during winter for hunting. Rivers such as the Pentwater served as transportation corridors, linking communities across the Great Lakes basin.

The dunes, inland lakes and hardwood forests supported hunting, fishing and trade networks that predated Michigan statehood by centuries.

Treaties and Transition

The 19th century brought dramatic change. The 1836 Treaty of Washington between the

United States and Ottawa and Chippewa leaders ceded millions of acres of land in what is now Michigan, including West Michigan shoreline territory.

While the treaty reserved certain hunting and fishing rights, it opened the region to Euro-American settlement.

In the 1850s, Odawa leader Chief Cobmoosa and his band relocated to northern Oceana County after displacement from Ionia County. A settlement near what is now Cobmoosa Lake reflected continued Native presence even as township governments formed.

Oceana County was formally organized in 1857. Hart later became the county seat.

Lumber Era and Early Industry

Like much of West Michigan, Oceana County's early economy was built on timber.

Dense pine and hardwood forests fueled sawmills along rivers and near Lake Michigan. Logs were floated downstream and loaded onto schooners bound for growing Midwestern cities.

Communities such as Pentwater developed as shipping hubs. The construction of Little Sable



Point Lighthouse in 1874 underscored the importance — and danger — of Great Lakes maritime trade during the lumber boom.

The timber industry drew migrants from New England, New York and Canada, as well as European immigrants seeking land and opportunity.

Agricultural Settlement and Immigration

As forests were cleared in the late 19th century, farmland replaced logging camps.

The county's sandy, well-drained soil proved well suited for fruit and vegetable production. Wheat and grains were followed by orchards and specialty crops.

Immigration from Northern and Eastern Europe — including Dutch, German and Scandinavian families — shaped rural townships and church communities. Polish immigrants also settled in parts of West Michigan, contributing to the agricultural workforce.

By the 20th century, Oceana County had earned national recognition as a leading asparagus-producing region, a designation that remains part of its identity.

Agricultural labor later drew Hispanic and Latino migrant workers, many of whom established permanent roots in communities such as Hart and Shelby, adding lasting cultural and economic contributions.

Transportation, Tourism and Modern Shifts

Railroads expanded access in the late 1800s, allowing farm products to reach larger markets and bringing visitors to the lakeshore.

In the early 20th century, auto tourism and roadside camping became part of the county's identity. Pentwater developed a reputation as a sailing and resort community. Silver Lake's dunes emerged as a regional recreational destination.

Today, agriculture and tourism operate side by side as major economic drivers. Food processing, small manufacturing and seasonal businesses support year-round residents, while summer visitors continue to shape

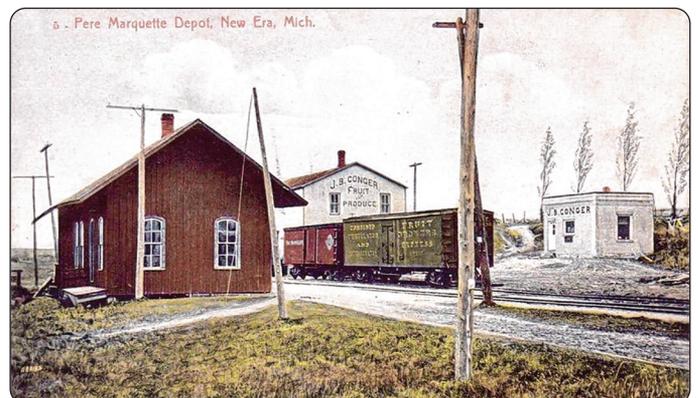
the lakeshore economy.

A Story of Movement

Oceana County's history reflects continuous movement — Indigenous seasonal migration, treaty-era relocation, lumber workers arriving by water, European farm families settling cleared land and later migrant labor supporting fruit and vegetable harvests.

Each wave left its imprint on the landscape, economy and culture.

From Anishinaabe stewardship to timber camps, asparagus fields and dune tourism, Oceana County's story mirrors the broader arc of Michigan history while maintaining a distinct lakeshore identity shaped by land and water.





Where Dunes Meet Forest: Exploring the Outdoors of Oceana County

HART — From Lake Michigan shoreline to wooded preserves, inland lakes and community parks, Oceana County offers extensive outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the year.

Among the county's most recognized destinations is Silver Lake State Park near Mears. Operated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the park includes the Silver Lake Sand Dunes, inland Silver Lake and more than four miles of Lake Michigan shoreline.

The park's off-road vehicle scramble area operates from April 1 through Oct. 31 and encompasses approximately 450 acres of dunes designated for ORV use. A valid Recreation Passport is required for motor vehicles entering the park, and ORV operators must carry both an ORV license and ORV trail permit.

Within the park is Little Sable Point Lighthouse, offering panoramic views of Lake Michigan and the surrounding dunes.

The Friends of Silver Lake - Lighthouse Trail

Committee promotes a 1.2-mile moderate hiking trail connecting Silver Lake to the lighthouse. Guided hikes are offered weekly through late October.

In Pentwater, Charles Mears State Park provides a public Lake Michigan beach, campground and fishing pier at the mouth of the Pentwater Channel.

Trails and Skiing

Cyclists and walkers use the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail State Park, a paved 22-mile trail connecting Hart and Montague. The trail supports biking, walking and running in warmer months and is used for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in winter.

The Pentwater Pathways trail system offers approximately 15 miles of wooded loops within the Pere Marquette State Forest for hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing.

Outdoors

In the southern portion of the county, the Crystal Valley Ski Trail system within the Manistee National Forest provides nearly 10 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails in winter and hiking opportunities during snow-free months.

Snowmobile trail routes maintained by regional clubs also cross portions of the county, connecting to broader West Michigan trail networks when conditions allow.

Nature Preserves and Quiet Spaces

For quieter nature experiences, Dumaw Woodland Nature Preserve features forested trails along the Pentwater River, while Otto Nature Preserve in Benona Township offers looped walking trails through protected habitat.

Additional informal hiking opportunities exist within state forest lands scattered across the county.

County Parks

Oceana County maintains several parks offering beach access, camping and scenic green space. Cedar Point County Park provides Lake Michigan beach access between Silver Lake and Pentwater. Black Lake County Park offers camping, fishing and swimming.

Crystal Valley County Park in Crystal Township includes access to Crystal Creek and Crystal Pond for fishing and paddling, along with ball fields, courts, picnic areas and a covered pavilion.

Additional county parks include Doo-

little County Park, Gales Pond County Park, Marshville Dam County Park and Stony Lake County Park.

Municipal and Township Parks

In Hart, John Gurney Park sits along Hart Lake with campsites and a public boat launch. In Shelby, Veterans Memorial Park offers athletic fields and gathering space.

In Pentwater, Pentwater Village Green serves as a waterfront community space. Additional village parks include Channel Lane Park, Chester Street Park, North End Park, the Longbridge Road Bridge Boardwalk and the Pentwater School Forest.

Just north of Pentwater, Otto Park offers wooded campsites and access to Bass Lake, while Claybanks Township Park provides Lake Michigan access and township-operated camping.

Organized Outdoor Activities

Beyond everyday recreation, Oceana County hosts a range of organized outdoor activities throughout the year.

Fishing tournaments are periodically held in the Pentwater area, particularly during salmon and steelhead seasons, with events organized by local fishing groups. Inland lakes also host small-scale bass tournaments and community fishing contests. The statewide Free Fishing Weekend sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural

Resources typically draws participation across the county.

Trail-based events occasionally take place along the Hart-Montague Trail and within Pentwater Pathways, including organized bike rides, charity runs and seasonal cross-country ski gatherings.

Snowmobile clubs coordinate group rides during winter months, linking Oceana County trails with broader West Michigan routes when snow conditions allow.

Seasonal festivals such as Pentwater's Homecoming often include outdoor fun runs, beach events and recreational competitions that highlight the county's lakeshore setting.

Water Recreation

Water recreation remains central to the county's identity. In addition to Lake Michigan, inland lakes such as Hart Lake, Stony Lake and Black Lake support kayaking, canoeing, fishing and power boating.

Public boat launches are located on several inland lakes and along the Pentwater Channel. Seasonal rentals for boats and personal watercraft are available in the Silver Lake and Pentwater areas.

From dune riding in Mears to cross-country skiing in Crystal Valley, fishing tournaments on Lake Michigan and lakeside camping in Hart, Oceana County's outdoor landscape reflects a blend of lakeshore, forest and accessible public land in every season.



MUSEUMS

Preserving the Past: Discovering Historic Treasures and Timeless Places

Museums, historic districts and nationally recognized landmarks across Oceana County provide preserved windows into the region's agricultural, maritime and civic past.

The county's central historical organization is the Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society, headquartered in Hart. The society maintains archival records, genealogical collections, photographs and artifacts documenting communities throughout the county.

Its primary museum campus, Oceana Historical Park, is located in Mears. The seasonal complex includes several preserved and relocated historic structures, among them the Swift Lathers Museum, Tool Museum, Boynton Cottage Museum, Transportation Museum, Robinson Museum, Old Town Hall exhibit and the Swedish Church. Together, the buildings interpret daily life, education, religion, agriculture and commerce in earlier eras.

Hart is also home to the Hart Downtown Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district encompasses late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial buildings that reflect Hart's growth as the county seat and a regional trade center during the height of agricultural expansion.

In Pentwater, the Pentwater Historical Society Museum preserves the village's maritime and lumbering heritage. Exhibits highlight Lake Michigan shipping, early industry, local businesses and civic organizations through artifacts and archival materials.

National Register of Historic Places — Oceana County

Oceana County has several properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the federal government's official list of historically significant sites. These include:

- Hart Downtown Historic District – Hart
- Charles Mears Silver Lake Boardinghouse – Mears
- Jared H. Gay House – Hart
- US 31-Pentwater River Bridge – Pentwater
- Dumaw Creek Site
- Green Quarry Site

These listings represent a mix of commercial districts, residential architecture, transportation infrastructure and significant archaeological sites reflecting Indigenous occupation.

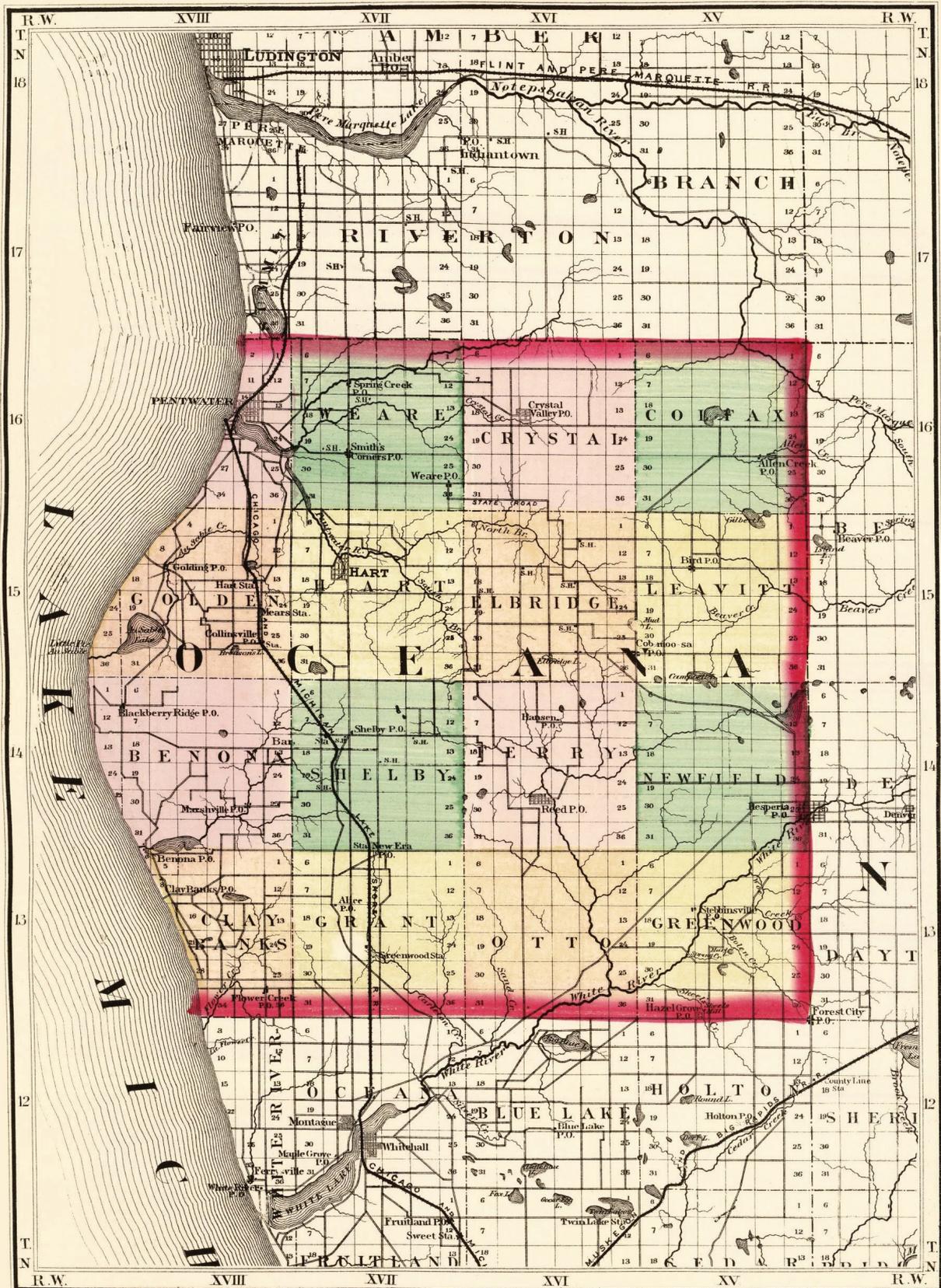
Michigan Historical Markers in Oceana County

In addition to federal recognition, several sites in Oceana County are commemorated with Michigan Historical Markers. Notable markers include:

- Little Sable Point Lighthouse
- Armistice Day Storm (Pentwater area)
- Pentwater Harbor
- Hart Historic District

These markers provide on-site interpretation of maritime disasters, lighthouse history, harbor development and community growth.

Together, the museum facilities in Hart, Mears and Pentwater — combined with National Register listings and state historical markers — form a structured network of preserved historic resources across Oceana County, offering residents and visitors multiple ways to engage with the county's architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage.



1873 Oceana County map

Copyright 2011 © HistoricMappress.com

Oceana County: Leaders, Legends and Local Roots

Though small in population, Oceana County has been linked to influential figures in Indigenous history, state government, literature and professional sports.

Indigenous Leadership

Cobmoosa, an Odawa chief, relocated to what is now Oceana County in 1855 following federal treaty agreements. He settled in Elbridge Township and became a central figure in the area's early Indigenous and settlement history. A monument in Hart commemorates his legacy, and the community of Cobmoosa was named in his honor.

Lumber and Early Community Development

During Michigan's lumber boom, outside investors played a major role in shaping Oceana County's shoreline communities.

Charles Mears developed lumber operations along Lake Michigan and established the village of Mears near Silver Lake. His business ventures helped anchor early economic development in the region.

Charles Hackley, widely known for his philanthropy in Muskegon, also invested in timber and milling operations in Pentwater during the height of the lumber era.

Political Leadership

Shelby was home to several early Michigan political figures.

Thomas Read served as Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, lieutenant governor and attorney general during the mid-19th century.

Samuel Odell later served as Michigan state treasurer and held additional public offices.

Attorney and civic leader **Charles Werden Deane** moved to Pentwater in the 1860s, served in the Michigan House of Representatives and later became village president, contributing to early local governance.

Literary Achievement



Children's author **Verna Aardema (AKA Verna Norberg Aardema Vugteveen)**, born in New Era, gained national recognition for adapting folklore into award-winning books. Her title *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* received the 1976

Caldecott Medal for illustration.

Professional Athletics

Hart native **Kyle Connor** became a standout collegiate hockey player at the University of Michigan before advancing to the National Hockey League. He was selected in the first round of the 2015 NHL Draft and plays left wing for the Winnipeg Jets, where he has been a consistent offensive leader.

Professional basketball players **Evan Bruinsma** and **Paul Griffin** also have roots in the county, along with hockey player **Josh Jacobs**.

Former racing driver **Brad Smith** and National Hockey League executive **Jim Lites** are likewise linked to Oceana County.

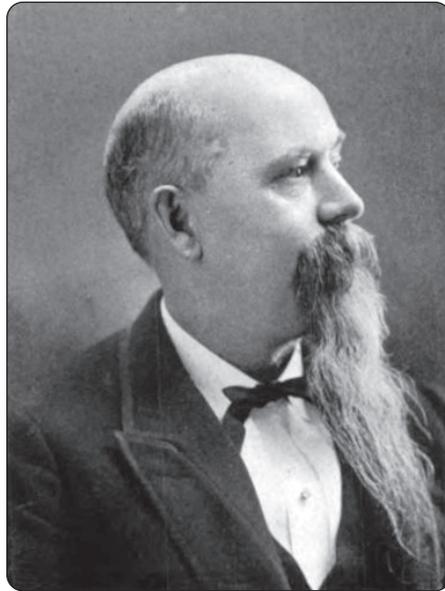
Editor's Note: *This list of distinguished people with ties to Oceana County is not meant to be an exhaustive list.*

Leaders

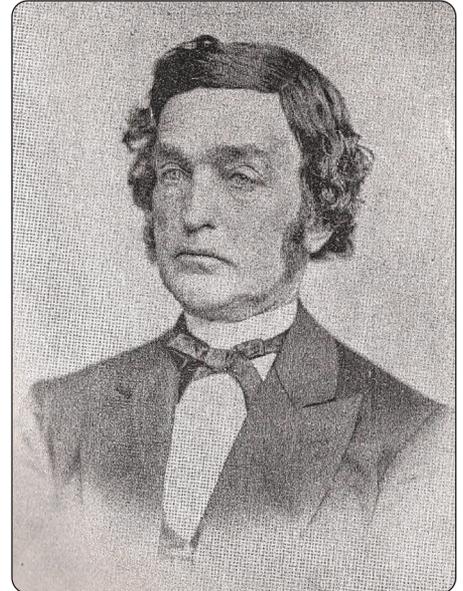
influential people at a glance



Thomas Read



Charles Henry Hackley



Charles Mears

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Four Seasons of Celebration: Oceana County's 2026 Festival and Event Guide

From nationally recognized music festivals to hometown parades, agricultural celebrations and snow-covered winter traditions, Oceana County's 2026 calendar offers a year-round reflection of community spirit and seasonal rhythm. Across Hart, Pentwater, Shelby, Rothbury and the Silver Lake area, each season brings its own traditions and signature events.

Spring: Remembrance and Momentum

Memorial Day Observances — May 25, 2026, Communities across Oceana County will observe Memorial Day with parades, cemetery ceremonies and remembrance programs honoring military service members. Hart, Shelby and Pentwater traditionally organize processions, speeches and wreath-laying ceremonies in collaboration with local American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts.

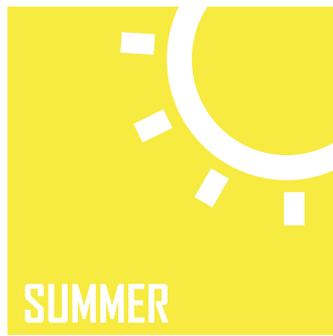
Silver Lake Jeep Invasion — May 28-31, 2026. The Silver Lake Jeep Invasion returns over Memorial Day weekend, drawing off-road enthusiasts to the dunes for group rides, parades, vendor displays and evening social events. The four-day gathering serves as a spring-to-summer kickoff for dune activity.

Summer: Music, Agriculture and Community Pride

National Asparagus Festival — June 12-14, 2026. Held in downtown Hart and around the courthouse lawn, the National Asparagus Festival celebrates Oceana County's agricultural heritage. The multi-day event includes a parade, arts and crafts vendors, the "Spear-It" 5K, classic car shows, farm tours and family activities.

Electric Forest — June 25-28, 2026. Electric Forest will take place June 25 through June 28, 2026, at Double JJ Resort in Rothbury. One of Michigan's largest music and arts festivals, it draws tens of thousands of





attendees with nationally recognized performers and immersive art installations.

Fourth of July Celebrations — July 4, 2026

Pentwater, Hart and the Silver Lake area will host Independence Day parades, fireworks displays and lakefront festivities.

Oceana County Fair — Mid-August 2026.

The Oceana County Fair returns to the fairgrounds in Hart in mid-August, featuring livestock exhibitions, 4-H projects, carnival rides, grandstand entertainment and traditional fair food.

Pentwater Summer Art Festivals — Summer 2026,

Pentwater’s historic downtown and marina districts host seasonal art and craft fairs throughout the summer, showcasing regional artists and handcrafted goods.

Fall: Harvest and Heritage

Silver Lake Sand Dunes Apple & BBQ Festival — Sept. 11-12, 2026,

The Apple & BBQ Festival will be held Sept. 11-12, 2026, at Golden Township Park near Silver Lake. The two-day event features live music, barbecue vendors, artisan booths, classic car and ORV shows, apple pie contests and a community 5K. Admission and parking are typically free.

Hippie Fest — October 2026.

Hippie Fest, held near the Val-Du-Lakes area in October, blends live music, vintage car displays and fall-themed entertainment.

Autumn also brings scenic drives, harvest activity and expanded outdoor recreation opportunities across the county.

Winter: Holiday Traditions and Cold-Weather Recreation

Veterans Day Observances — Nov. 11, 2026.

Veterans Day ceremonies will be held across Hart, Shelby and Pentwater, featuring school assemblies, flag ceremonies and community programs honoring military service.

Christmas in Pentwater — Early December 2026.

Pentwater’s holiday season begins in late November or early December with Christmas in Pentwater, a village celebration featuring a community tree lighting, Santa visits, seasonal music and extended shopping hours.

Pentwater Winterfest — Feb. 13, 2026.

Pentwater Winterfest is scheduled for Feb. 13, 2026, offering outdoor winter games, snowman-building contests and family-friendly activities.

Hart Winterfest — Winter 2026.

Hart hosts its own Winterfest during the winter months, highlighting snowmobile activity, outdoor competitions and

downtown promotions.

Throughout winter, residents and visitors take advantage of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing and snowmobiling, while Pentwater’s harbor and Hart’s rural landscapes offer picturesque snowy views.

A County Defined by Its Calendar

From Memorial Day ceremonies and dune-side Jeep gatherings to Electric Forest’s national spotlight and snow-lit holiday celebrations, Oceana County’s 2026 schedule blends community pride with seasonal diversity. Across all four seasons, the county’s rhythm remains shaped by service, agriculture, art, recreation and enduring community ties.

Editor’s note: Event dates and details are subject to change. Readers are encouraged to check weekly calendar listings and upcoming editions of Oceana’s Herald-Journal for the most current event information.



calendar



Oceana Events: A Year by the Seasons

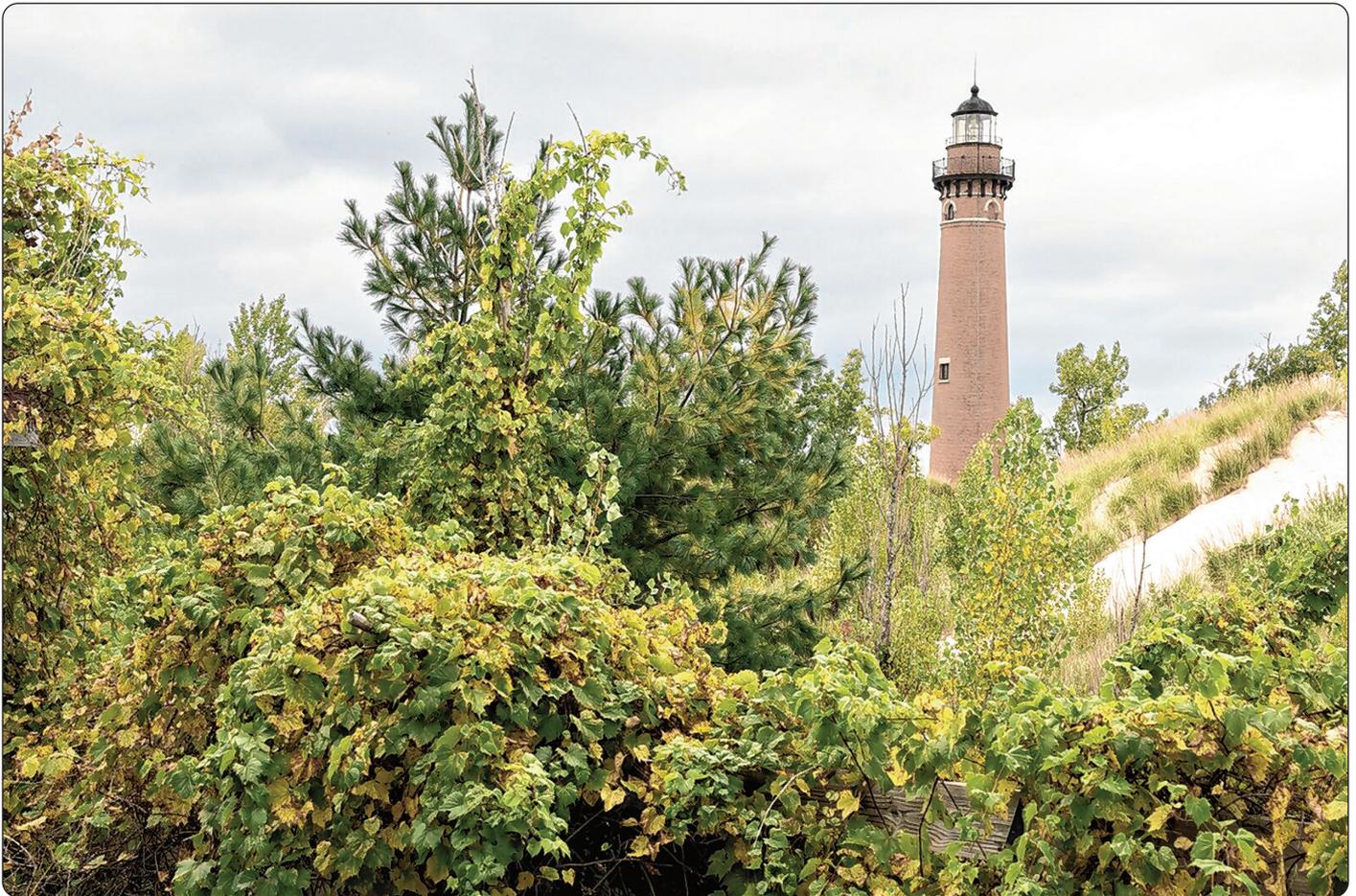
From early spring conservation programs to summer fireworks and fall harvest festivals, Oceana County's 2026 calendar follows the rhythm of the seasons.

MARCH

- MARCH 2** — Full Moon Owl Prowl, Otto Nature Preserve, Shelby
- MARCH 5** — Oceana Asparagus Day, New Era Reformed Church, New Era
- MARCH 19** — Agricultural and Natural Resources Banquet, West Michigan Research Station, Hart
- MARCH 20** — Cinderella (Rodgers and Hammerstein), Hart Middle School
- MARCH 21** — Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop, West Michigan Research Station, Hart
- MARCH 24** — Summer Job Fair, Shelby High School
- MARCH 25** — Summer Job Fair, Hart High School
- MARCH 27** — Forest School for Knee-High Naturalists, Doolittle County Park, Hart

APRIL

- APRIL 1** — Silver Lake State Park ORV Area Opening Day, Mears
- APRIL 4** — Community Easter Egg Hunt, Oceana County Fairgrounds, Hart
- APRIL 4** — Pentwater Easter Egg Hunt, Village Green, Pentwater
- APRIL 13** — Learn to Grow a Cut Flower Garden, Up North Garden Center, Hart
- APRIL 13** — Stewardship Day: On the Roadside, Hart
- APRIL 18** — Gateway to Glory Disc Golf, Pentwater
- APRIL 24** — Mr. B's Piano Celebration, Hart Public School Auditorium
- APRIL 25** — Ride for the Ranch, Grace Adventures Paradise Ranch, Mears



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

MAY

- MAY 2** — Brews and Beats, Village Green, Pentwater
- MAY 9** — Hart Hills Gravel Race, downtown Hart
- MAY 11** — Little Sable Point Lighthouse season opening, Mears
- MAY 15** — Authentic Unlimited (Hart Performing Arts Series), Hart Public School Auditorium
- MAY 15** — Spring Ephemeral ID Hike, Stony Creek Nature Preserve
- MAY 24** — Bump n Run + Demolition Derby, Winston Speedway, Rothbury
- MAY 25** — Memorial Day Parade, downtown Pentwater
- MAY 28-31** — Silver Lake Sand Dunes Jeep Invasion, Silver Lake/Mears
- MAY 29** — Birding Field Trip, Pines Point Recreation Area





SUMMER (JUNE - AUGUST)

JUNE

- JUNE 12** — National Asparagus Festival Kickoff Party, Oceana County Fairgrounds, Hart
- JUNE 13** — Ryan Walsworth Spear It 5K, Mears
- JUNE 13** — Arts and Crafts Show, Oceana County Courthouse lawn, Hart
- JUNE 13** — Asparagus Festival Joan Glover Royal Parade, State Street, Hart
- JUNE 14** — Fly-In Pancake Breakfast, Oceana County Airport, Shelby
- JUNE 17** — Night at the Lights Concert Series, Little Sable Point Lighthouse
- JUNE 20-21** — Spring Fest Arts and Crafts Show, Pentwater
- JUNE 26** — Pentwater Chamber Golf Outing
- JUNE 27** — Tacos and Trek, Pentwater Hart Trail





JULY

- JULY 1** — Night at the Lights Concert Series, Little Sable Point Lighthouse
- JULY 2** — Hart Sparks Fireworks, Hart Commons
- JULY 3** — Pentwater Fireworks, Charles Mears State Park
- JULY 3** — Charlie's Party in the USA Boat Parade, Pentwater Lake
- JULY 4** — Thunder Over the Dunes Fireworks, Silver Lake
- JULY 5** — Stony Lake Sparkler 5K, Shelby area
- JULY 10-11** — Shelby Chainsaw Carving Festival

- JULY 11** — 61st Annual Pentwater Fine Arts and Craft Fair, Village Green
- JULY 12** — St. Joseph and St. Vincent Ox Roast and Homecoming, Hart
- JULY 15** — Night at the Lights Concert Series
- JULY 17-18** — Heroes on the Dunes, Mears
- JULY 25** — Ladies' Classic Salmon and Trout Tournament, Pentwater
- JULY 25** — Mears Craft Show
- JULY 29** — Night at the Lights Concert Series

AUGUST

- AUG. 1** — C.O.V.E. Benefit Beach Walk/Run, Charles Mears State Park
- AUG. 7-8** — Bronco Takeover, Silver Lake
- AUG. 8** — PSA/Bannik's Lines Down Salmon and Trout Tournament, Pentwater
- AUG. 13-16** — Pentwater Homecoming
- AUG. 15** — Hazardous Waste Collection, Hart
- AUG. 15-16** — Free ORV Weekend, Silver Lake State Park
- AUG. 16** — Shelby Fruit Festival
- AUG. 21-22** — Pentwater Sidewalk Sales
- AUG. 22** — Old School Buggy Meet, Silver Lake
- AUG. 22** — Pentwater Sportsfishing Association Super Mini Tourney
- AUG. 24-29** — Oceana County Fair, Hart



AUG. 26 — Night at the Lights Concert Series
LATE AUGUST (traditionally Labor Day weekend) — Hart Traditional Pow Wow, Oceana County Fairgrounds (date TBA)

FALL (SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER)

SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 5 — Pentwater Sportfishing Association Mini Tourney
SEPT. 11-12 — Apple and BBQ Festival, Golden Township Park, Mears
SEPT. 18-19 — Luminous Trail: A Glow in the Park, Charles Mears State Park
SEPT. 19 — Stewardship Day: At the Beach

SEPT. 24 — Harvest Day, Village Green, Pentwater
SEPT. 26-27 — Fall Fest Arts and Crafts Show, Pentwater

OCTOBER

OCT. 10 — Pentwater Oktoberfest
OCT. 10 — Stout Stumble 5K Walk and Run
OCT. 10 — Oktoberfest Classic Car and Hot Rod Show
OCT. 24 — Spooktacular, Pentwater
OCT. 29 — Stewardship Day: Tree Planting and Protecting, Stony Creek Nature Preserve

NOVEMBER

NOV. 1 — Lewis Adventure Farm & Zoo season closing day, New Era
NOV. 28 — Merry Market, Hart
NOV. 28 — Santa on the Green, Pentwater

NOTE: Event dates, times and locations are subject to change. Readers are encouraged to check the weekly Mark Your Calendar page in the Oceana's Herald-Journal or contact event organizers directly to confirm details prior to attending.



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memories

Making memories: Events that have become traditions

Fun & Tradition: Youth Showcases, Harness Racing and Agricultural Heritage at the Oceana County Fair

The Oceana County Fair will be held **Aug. 24-29, 2026**, at the Oceana County Fairgrounds in Hart, featuring family-friendly entertainment, agricultural exhibits and youth competitions that highlight the work of local 4-H members and continue long-standing fair traditions.

Held annually at the fairgrounds, the event features livestock exhibitions, grandstand events, carnival rides and community vendors. A central focus of fair week is the 4-H program, with youth participants presenting projects ranging from market livestock and dairy cattle to baking, crafts and educational displays.

Throughout the week, 4-H members compete in showmanship and species-specific judging contests, culminating in the popular

4-H livestock auction. During the auction, buyers from across the community bid on market animals raised by youth exhibitors, with proceeds supporting the students' agricultural projects and future educational goals.

Harness racing also returns to the fairgrounds track, continuing a tradition long associated with county fairs across Michigan. The races feature standardbred horses pulling two-wheeled sulkies, with drivers competing in multiple heats for purses and bragging rights, drawing both seasoned racing fans and first-time spectators.

Fair officials encourage residents to attend the shows, races and auction to support local youth and celebrate Oceana County's agricultural heritage. For more information, visit www.oceanafair.com.



Asparagus Takes Center Stage: National Asparagus Festival Returns June 12-14

The National Asparagus Festival will return to downtown Hart June 12-14, 2026, celebrating Oceana County's agricultural heritage and its longstanding reputation as one of the nation's leading asparagus-producing regions.

Founded in 1973, the festival was created to honor local asparagus growers and the spring harvest that has shaped the county's economy for generations. Oceana County's sandy soils and Lake Michigan's moderating climate provide ideal growing conditions, helping make the region a national leader in asparagus production.

The three-day event blends agricultural tradition with family-friendly entertainment. Activities include the Ryan Walsworth "Spear-It" 5K, a grand parade through downtown Hart, live music, arts and crafts vendors, children's activities and carnival-style attractions.



One of the festival's signature events is the Taste of Asparagus competition, where participants prepare creative dishes featuring the crop. The festival also crowns an Asparagus Queen, who serves as an ambassador for the local agricul-

tural community throughout the year.

Farm tours during the weekend offer visitors a firsthand look at asparagus production, with growers sharing insight into planting, harvesting and the challenges of seasonal farming.

The festival typically concludes Sunday with the popular fly-in at the Hart-Shelby Airport, where pilots gather to display aircraft and give the public an up-close view of general aviation.

Organizers encourage residents and visitors to explore Hart's downtown shops and restaurants throughout the weekend and to participate in events that highlight both the county's farming legacy and its strong sense of community.

A full schedule of events is available at www.nationalasparagusfestival.org.

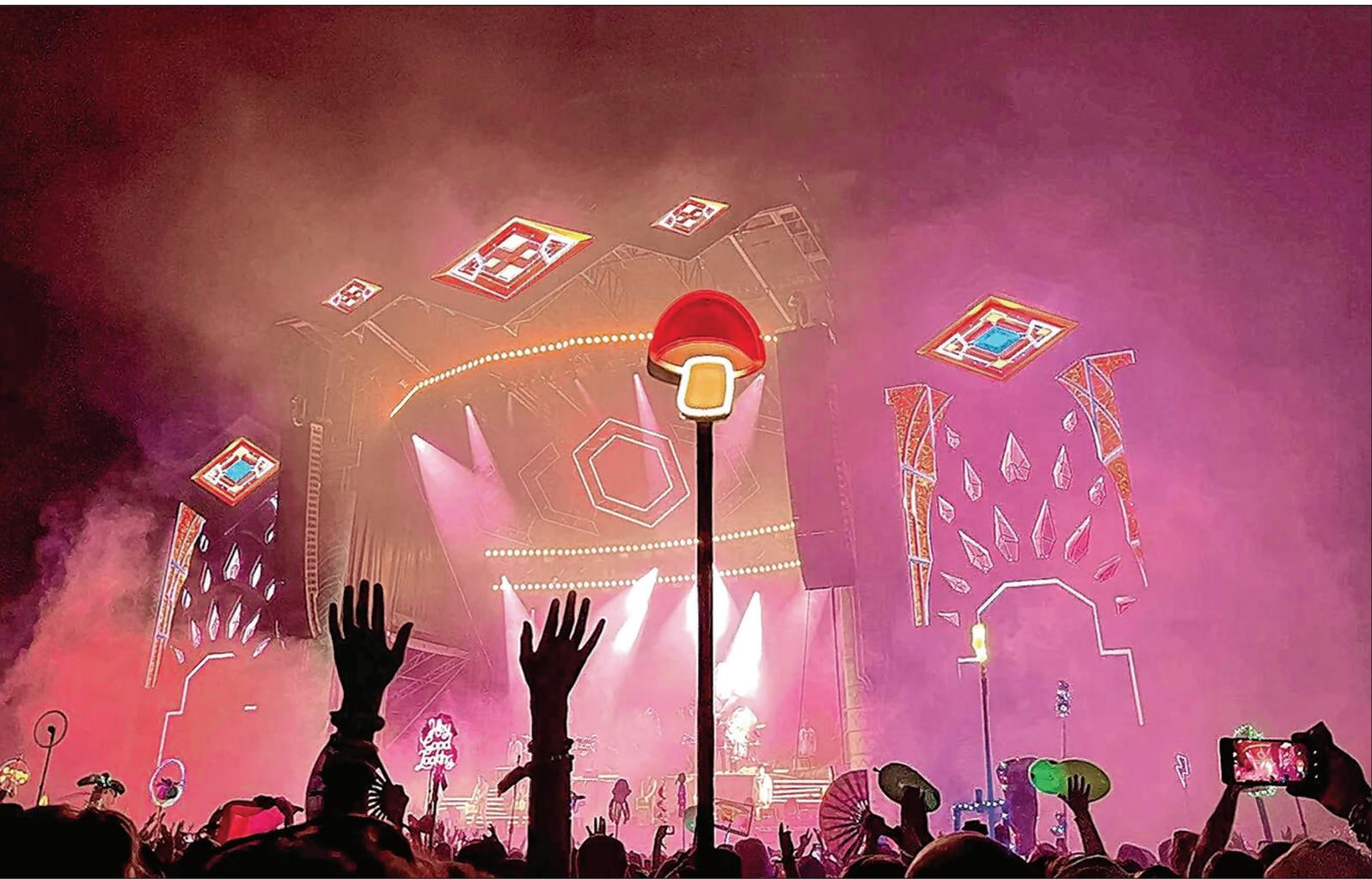
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Electric Forest Takes Root: Four-Day Festival Returns to Rothbury June 25–28

ROTHBURY — The 2026 edition of **Electric Forest** will bring four days of music and immersive art back to the Double JJ Resort from Thursday, June 25, through Sunday, June 28.

Organizers have announced an initial lineup featuring more than 100 artists spanning electronic dance music, jam bands, house, bass and crossover acts. Festival mainstays **The String Cheese Incident** are set to return with multiple performances, continuing the event's tradition of blending improvisational rock with electronic sounds.

Headliners include Michigan native **GRiZ**, who is scheduled to perform twice, including a special “Chasing the Golden Hour” set; melodic bass artist **IL-LENIUM**; house music veteran **Kaskadee**; tech-house producer **Chris Lake**; and bass music performer **Excision**.

Additional featured acts include DJ Diesel, Passion Pit, Purple Disco Machine, Madeon, Sullivan King, Wooli, LSDream, Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country and Bob Moses (Club Set), underscoring the festival's genre-spanning approach.

Beyond its multi-stage performances, Electric Forest is known for large-scale art installations and interactive experiences woven throughout Sherwood Forest on the resort grounds. Camping packages and festival passes are available through the event's official website, with additional artists and daily schedules expected to be announced.

First launched in 2011, Electric Forest has grown into one of Michigan's largest annual music events, drawing tens of thousands of attendees to Oceana County each summer.

Where Apples Meet Flame: Silver Lake Apple & BBQ Festival Fires up in September

SILVER LAKE — The Silver Lake Apple & BBQ Festival will return to Golden Township Park this September, bringing two days of smoky flavors, live music and harvest-themed fun to the lakeshore community. The Festival is set for Friday and Saturday, **Sept. 11-12**, bringing two days of smoky flavors, live music and harvest-themed fun to the lakeshore community.

Held near Silver Lake and just minutes from the dunes, the annual festival has become a fall tradition in Oceana County, drawing residents and visitors for a weekend that blends food, family activities and local vendors.

Barbecue takes center stage, with vendors serving ribs, pulled pork, brisket and other slow-smoked specialties. Apple-inspired offerings — from fresh cider to pies and baked goods — highlight the region’s agricultural roots and the approaching harvest season.

In addition to food, festivalgoers can expect live entertainment throughout the weekend, along with craft and artisan booths featuring handmade goods and locally produced items.

Family-friendly attractions are a key part of the event. Past festivals have included children’s activities, apple pie

contests, a classic car and ORV show, and a 5K run. Organizers say the event is designed to offer something for all ages while celebrating the area’s rural character and community spirit.

Golden Township Park provides a scenic backdrop overlooking Silver Lake, with open green space accommodating vendor tents, entertainment stages and gathering areas.

Organizers encourage attendees to watch official festival channels for specific dates, entertainment schedules and registration details as the event approaches.

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FOR ANY SEASON: Pentwater Homecoming tops village's summer calendar

PENTWATER — The largest annual event in Pentwater is the village's longtime summer tradition known as **Pentwater Homecoming**.

Typically held the second weekend in August, the multi-day celebration draws thousands of residents, seasonal visitors and boaters to the downtown district, village green and waterfront areas.

Homecoming events traditionally include a grand parade through downtown, fireworks over the harbor, concerts by the Pentwater Civic Band and other performers, a strawberry shortcake social, a sand sculpture contest at Charles Mears State Park, pancake breakfasts, sporting tournaments and family activities.

Organized by local volunteers and community groups, the festival has become a signature event of the summer season along the Lake Michigan shoreline, marking one of the busiest weekends of the year for local businesses and marinas.



Other annual events in Pentwater include:

- **Bus Days**, a summer concert series featuring live music and community gatherings, often centered near **Little Sable Point Lighthouse** and the Big Sable River channel.
- **Night at the Lights**, a social and music event held in conjunction with Bus Days that draws large evening crowds.
- **Pentwater Fourth of July** celebrations, including fireworks and community picnics that bring local families and visitors together.
- **Pentwater Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting**, a winter tradition that ushers in the holiday season with decorated storefronts, shopping promotions and festive activities downtown.

These recurring events, along with weekly summer concerts and seasonal markets, contribute to Pentwater's



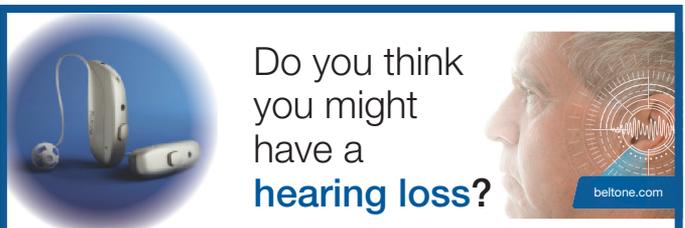
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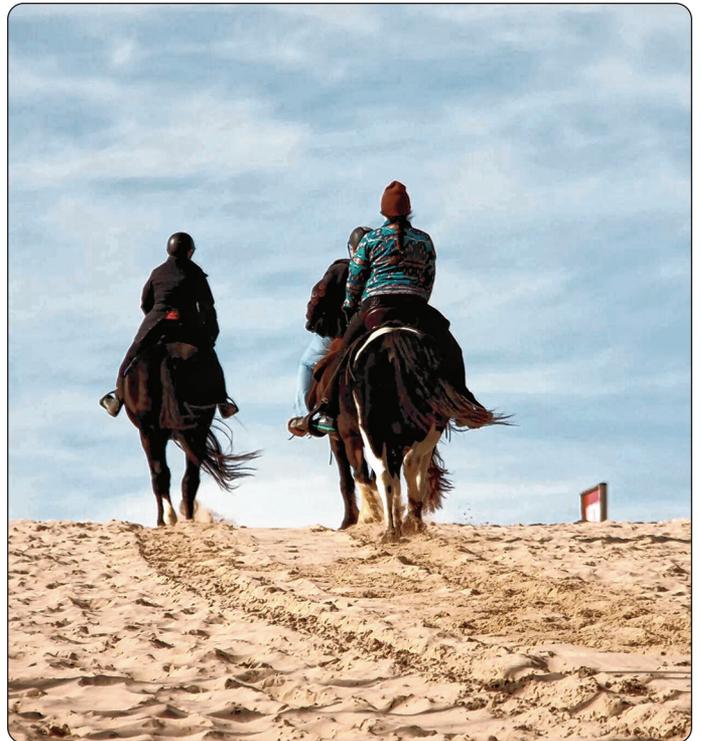
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county profile

Oceana County Profile: Size, People and Industry

Oceana County had a population of 26,659 as of the 2020 U.S. Census. More recent Census Bureau estimates place the county's population at approximately 26,800 in 2023, reflecting relatively stable growth.

The county includes about 538 square miles of land area, along with a significantly larger water area due to its Lake Michigan shoreline and inland waters. Population density is roughly 50 residents per square mile, underscoring its largely rural character.

The median age in Oceana County is about 43.9 years. Approximately 22.6% of residents are under age 18, while about 21.5% are age 65 or older.

By race and ethnicity, about 83.5% of residents identify as White. Hispanic or Latino residents, of any race, make up about 15.4% of the population. Smaller percentages identify as Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or two or more races.

There were 10,320 households counted in the 2020 Census, with about 15,538 housing units in total. Approximately 81.5% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, while about 18.5% are renter-occupied.

According to the American Community Survey five-year estimates, the median household income is approximately \$63,600, and per capita income is about \$31,600. An estimated 14% to 15% of residents live below the federal poverty level.

Industry and employment

Oceana County's economy is driven primarily by agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and service-related industries.

Agriculture is a major sector, with significant production of asparagus, apples, cherries, blueberries and other specialty crops. Food processing and agricultural support services are closely tied to this base.

Manufacturing also plays a key role, including food processing, metal fabrication and other light industrial operations.

Tourism is another important contributor, supported by Lake Michigan shoreline communities, Silver Lake Sand Dunes, state parks and seasonal recreation. Hospitality, retail trade and food services reflect the county's seasonal visitor economy.

Additional employment sectors include health care and social assistance, education services, construction and public administration.

Overall, Oceana County maintains a diversified rural economy anchored by agriculture and tourism, with manufacturing and service industries providing additional employment stability.



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