



COUNTY OF MIDLAND MICHIGAN

DID YOU KNOW?



Legend has it that Martin Luther first placed candles upon a tree in sixteenth century Germany, but it wasn't until 1832 that Harvard Professor Charles Follen decorated an evergreen with candles in what is believed to be the first such U.S. decorated tree. By 1856, the candle-adorned Christmas tree had become so popular that President Franklin Pierce erected one in the White House, making a rural Pennsylvania custom into a nationally-recognized symbol of the American Christmas.

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December 2015 *Newsletter*



SHERIFF NAMED TOP CRIME FIGHTER

Midland County Sheriff Scott Stephenson was honored last month with the Crime Fighter Award from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan, a statewide non-profit organization led by more than 500 of Michigan's police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and crime survivors.

Sheriff Stephenson participated in meetings with lawmakers about the benefits of investing public dollars in proven programs to help kids succeed in school and beyond. Programs include high-quality preschools, volunteer home visits, quality after-school programs, and child and family coaching to help kids stay on track for a successful future.

The award was presented to Sheriff Stephenson at a meeting with local pastors at the Midland Law Enforcement Center by Tom Pearce, acting director of Fight Crime Michigan. Tom says the Midland County Sheriff's work has helped set an agenda that is both tough and smart on crime. By focusing on prevention, Stephenson helps reduce the consequences of crimes that result in shattered lives and high costs associated with incarceration.



LOOKING FOR A WAY TO STAY FIT AND ENJOY WINTER?

With miles and miles of wooded trails on 325 acres of the most diverse terrain in Midland County, Pine Haven is posted with signs indicating the degree of difficulty on each cross-country ski trail. You'll always know the challenge that lies ahead.

Pine Haven is open daily from dawn to dusk at 1490 W. Maynard Rd. in Sanford. You and your family can even learn to ski!

IMPORTANT DATES

December – [MSU Extension's](#) Fruit Cake Month

December – Shop with a Hero at Meijer

Dec. 1 – Santa arrives in Midland's [Courthouse Lighting](#), 7:00 pm

Dec. 2 – Flu Clinic

Dec. 7 – Pearl Harbor Day

Dec. 8 – Midland County Service Awards

Dec. 22 – Winter Solstice

Dec. 24-25 – County offices closed for Christmas holiday

Dec 31-Jan. 1 – County offices closed for New Year's holiday

Jan. 18 – County offices closed for Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday

Save the Date...

Roger Garner's Retiring!

Join us in celebrating his long career as Emergency Management Coordinator:

Jan. 7, 2016, 4:00-7:00 pm

Springhill Suites, Midland

Calling All Outdoor Exercise Enthusiasts...

Midland County Parks and Recreation plows two stretches of the [Pere Marquette Rail-Trail](#) (Dublin to 8 Mile and Lewis to County Line) *all winter* for your convenience. Be sure to check the [map](#) for trail details!



NEW CIRCUIT COURT PROGRAM WILL CURB PROBATION VIOLATIONS

Discretion – judges use it constantly to administer appropriate punishment. However, a new program, Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program, will take the discretion out of sanctions for probation violations in Midland County.

“I do believe this will be good for the community,” says Midland County’s [42nd Circuit Court Judge Stephen P. Carras](#). “I’m as excited about running this program as anything I’ve ever done. It puts consistency above discretion.”

The program is a probation supervision program that targets high-risk felony offenders with a history of probation violation. It is expected to help reduce positive drug tests and recidivism in probationers.

“Right at the start, we’ll bring the probationer in and go through the program with them,” Carras says. “They will know the sanctions ahead of time.”

The one-year program, which will provide probation supervision for 25 probationers, is being funded by a \$70,000 grant from the Michigan Supreme Court State Court Administrative Office.

“This is a small program on purpose, because I want to see all the parts of it,” says Carras. “If it is not successful when the grant expires, there is no capital outlay. The money that is going to be spent under the contract is all for drug testing supplies, observation and counseling services.” [Read the full Midland Daily News story online.](#)

MEET DORY Court Therapy Dog- In Training

Midland County Probate and Juvenile Court’s newest employee is in training to become the Court’s next therapy dog.

Her job is to comfort boys and girls as they attend Court hearings.

Dory greets the youth when they first arrive and helps to ease their anxiety and stress prior to a hearing. Knowing that Dory can stay with them makes youth less apprehensive about the whole process and more willing to share their thoughts – a huge step in their journey towards healing and rehabilitation.



When Dory is not working at the Courthouse, she lives and works at the Juvenile Care Center where she is trained by youth involved in the Paw Pals program, made possible by generous private donations.



USE LEFTOVER FOOD SAFELY

After a party, family gathering or a simple evening meal there are often some leftover food items. [Michigan State University \(MSU\) Extension](#) offers these tips for safe use of leftovers to protect you and your family from food poisoning:

- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling any cooked food, especially food you store to eat later. Use clean utensils to handle the food, and store it in clean containers. Only place food on a counter or cutting board that has been carefully cleaned.
- Place foods to be refrigerated or frozen in small, shallow containers, three inches or less in height, and cover them completely. Do not stack these containers right next to other containers, but leave some air space around them. By using shallow containers and by leaving air space around the containers you can promote rapid, even cooling of the food.
- Eat or promptly refrigerate uncooked foods, such as cold salads or sandwiches.

The goal is to minimize the time a food is in the “danger zone” — between 40 and 140 Fahrenheit (four and 60 degrees Celsius) — when bacteria can quickly multiply.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture [Food Safety Inspection Service](#) recommends that when you are ready to eat leftovers, reheat them on the stove, in the oven or in the microwave until the internal temperature reaches 165° F (74° C). A food thermometer will help measure the temperature of the food. Slow cookers (crock-pots) and chafing dishes are not recommended for reheating leftovers.

[Michigan State University Extension](#) recommends that you never taste leftovers that are of questionable age or safety, and generally, never keep leftovers for more than four days.

42nd Circuit Court



ADULT DRUG COURT PROGRAM EXPANDS WITH TWO GRANTS

Midland County’s Adult Drug Court, will be able to serve even more participants in the next year after receiving two program grants totaling \$129,000: a federal Byrne Justice Assistance Grant and a Michigan Drug Court Grant Program grant.

Administered by [42nd Circuit Court](#), the probationary program combines treatment with close supervision to effectively address substance abuse and associated criminal behaviors.

What is Drug Court?

It’s a court-supervised treatment program for individuals who abuse or are dependent upon a controlled substance.

Did you know?

Michigan has been a pioneer in the drug treatment court movement. There are currently 84 drug treatment courts in Michigan, consisting of 32 adult drug courts, 23 DWI courts, 15 juvenile drug courts, 11 family dependency courts, and 3 tribal healing-to-wellness courts. Michigan’s drug treatment courts operate in 40 counties (the three tribal drug courts have special jurisdictions).

Drug treatment courts evolved to address the revolving-door cycle in which drug and alcohol offenders moved in and out of the justice system. Drug courts treat addiction as a complex disease and provide a comprehensive, sustained continuum of therapeutic interventions, treatment, and other services to increase a participant’s periods of abstinence and reduce the rate of relapse, re-arrest, and incarceration.

Twenty-five participants have “graduated” from the Midland program since its inception in 2010, according to Adult Drug Court Coordinator Jalene Vickey. This year, with *two* operational grants, they will be able to include even more participants in the focused program and provide more comprehensive services.



START THE HOLIDAYS WITH A VISIT TO SANTA

This year's courthouse lighting ceremony on Main Street at 7:00 p.m. and Santa House opening at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 1 will signal the beginning of the holiday season for many Midlanders.



Volunteers needed! Call Laura Dittenber, 989-839-9661, or email info@midlandfoundation.org.

Each year, Santa comes to Midland on the Tuesday evening after Thanksgiving, arriving at the Tridge, and making his way up Ashman St. to light the dazzling Midland County Courthouse display. Then he makes his way over to the [Santa House](#) where he stays for the holidays, visiting with families from all over, delighting children and adults, bringing joy to everyone who stops by to visit.

This year's new addition to the festivities sponsored by the [Midland Area Community Foundation](#) is the Northern Star train, providing tours of downtown Midland during the Santa House season. The train will depart from the courthouse on Main Street for 10-15 minute rides through town before returning to the courthouse. The train will run most weekdays in December from 6:00 until 8:30 p.m. and on weekends 1:30-4:30 and 6:00-9:00 p.m. Check the Foundation's website for more information and hours for the Santa House.



HEATING WITH WOOD THIS WINTER?

Follow These Tips for Cleaner Air

Midland County [Environmental Health Services](#) reminds us that indoor air pollution can have significant health effects. Studies conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency show that levels of many pollutants may be 2-5 times higher in indoor air – and occasionally more than 100 times higher – than outdoor levels. Follow good wood burning habits to minimize health problems and help keep the environment clean.

Know *when* to burn:

- Monitor all fires; never leave a fire unattended
- Upgrade older woodstoves to ones with a catalytic combustor that

burns off excess pollutants

- Be aware that wood smoke can cause problems for people with developing or sensitive lungs (i.e. children, the elderly)

Know *what* to burn:

- Split large pieces of wood and allow it to dry for a year; burning fresh cut logs makes smoky fires (when buying wood from a dealer, do not assume it has been seasoned)
- Small hot fires are more efficient and less wasteful than large fires (never burn treated wood or non-wood materials)
- Manufactured fire logs have the least impact to air quality, and are a good choice for little-used fireplaces

Know *how* to burn:

- Proper combustion is key; make sure your wood fire is not starved - if excess smoke is coming from the chimney or stack, the fire isn't getting enough air
- Visually check your chimney or stack 10 to 15 minutes after you light a fire to ensure it is not emitting excess amounts of smoke
- Homeowners should have woodstoves and fireplaces serviced and cleaned yearly to ensure they are working properly

WINTER DRIVING REMINDER

Slow Down and Make Good Decisions

With winter upon us, Sheriff Scott Stephenson would like to remind citizens to drive carefully and be safe in the snow and ice.

“A high percentage of traffic crashes are caused by poor decision-making,” says Sheriff Stephenson, “and with snow and ice on the roads, the chances of traffic crashes increases.”

Add in a holiday and the combination of long distance travel in a relatively short time period, and poor weather can turn deadly according to Stephenson. “Over Michigan’s Thanksgiving holiday in 2013, 13 people were killed and 631 were injured in car crashes,” Sheriff Stephenson says. In order to avoid becoming a statistic, he suggests getting plenty of rest before driving, avoiding alcohol and wearing your seat belts.

Sheriff Stephenson says drivers can prepare for winter with the following vehicle safety tips:

- Check tires, engine oil, antifreeze and brakes before traveling
- Buckle your seat belt and make sure your passengers do, too
- Reduce your speed in snow, sleet and ice
- Allow yourself plenty of braking space on snow- and ice-covered roads
- Lightly pump your brakes when slowing your vehicle or coming to an intersection
- Avoid distractions such as cell phones and eating
- Listen to the radio for information on local road and weather conditions
- Pull off the road to a safe place if conditions become dangerous

For more information on winter road conditions and severe winter weather warnings and advisories, check out Midland County Emergency Management’s facebook page at www.facebook.com/MidlandCountyEmergencyManagement or the Michigan State Police [Winter Travel Advisory](#) website.



PREPARE FOR POOR ROAD CONDITIONS

Keep these extras in your car all winter:

- Water
- Flashlight
- Snowbrush/ice scraper
- Small Shovel
- Extra winter clothing
- Cell phone for emergencies

Want to receive a reminder each month when our newsletter is published?

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