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## News Nook

[Panelists discuss Macomb County's economic future](#)

[Green Macomb tree and plant sale returns](#)

[FEMA opening disaster recovery center in Macomb County in response to August storms](#)

## Blog Log

[Tree facts to keep in mind for this year's tree and plant sale](#)

## Events



[Macomb Business Awards](#)

Thursday, May 9, 2024

More details available soon.

## Message from Mark



Hello and welcome to Macomb Matters. While spring has not officially arrived, the sunny days and warmer temps are signs that it is just around the corner. With our 27 municipalities and the many parks, trails and natural spaces that make Macomb a great place to call home, it's never too early to get out and explore the many great things the County has to offer. Don't know where to start?

Visit [makemacombbyourhome.com](http://makemacombbyourhome.com) to find inspiration for your next outing and our [Make Macomb Your Home Events Facebook page](#) for all the latest on local events.

And if you're looking for something to warm your heart, keeping a connection with your local community can be a great start. From volunteering with County programs like [Meals on Wheels](#) to donating to the [Macomb Food Program](#) and [Animal Control](#), there are many ways for you to get involved.

On another note, this month I had the pleasure of speaking at two very important events in Macomb County, and I'd like to share more on those opportunities. First, the premiere for a documentary produced by our Department of Planning and Economic Development - [The Hidden History of Lake St. Clair](#). This grant-funded film provided an in-depth look at the lake, and the event was attended by more than 1,000 individuals who share a passion for this natural resource. Find more details and watch the film for yourself via the story later in this newsletter. More recently, I joined the National Association of Manufacturers, who held its annual [State of Manufacturing Address](#) right here in Macomb County. The address championed the unrivaled achievements of our 1,600 manufacturers in Macomb, and illustrated how manufacturing is the heartbeat of our economy. All told, I am incredibly optimistic about the future of manufacturing. Not just here in Macomb County, but across the country, because from concept to consumer, no one does it better than how we do it right here in America.

So here's to the final weeks of winter. Spring will be here before we know it. Thank you and take care,

Mark

## Employee News and Accolades



### Macomb County MSU Extension staff member receives meritorious service award

Seth Martin, Macomb County 4-H program coordinator, recently received the MSU Extension Meritorious Service Award. This award recognizes an individual who has supported the mission, program and professional staff of MSU Extension in an outstanding manner.

Seth is an integral part of the 4-H team in Macomb County. He oversees the animal project areas, numerous 4-H Clubs, shooting sports and the Armada Fair partnership. He typically takes the lead on county reports, financial accounts, and Exploration Days.

Seth has a great relationship with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Huron-Clinton Metroparks, Armada Agriculture Society and local schools. He serves on statewide 4-H Shooting Sports committee, serves as a mentor to new 4-H PCs, and serves as the lead for Exploration Days in which registration for 2023 was at its highest level since being in this position

Congratulations to Seth on this award!



**Macomb Sheriff Anthony Wickersham commends heroic efforts of deputies**

Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham last month praised the noteworthy efforts of Deputies Zachary Deng, Johnathon Korte, and Thomas Bartoli, for their outstanding efforts while responding to a fire call on January 10.

“I sincerely commend the valiant efforts of these Deputies in this life-threatening situation,” he said. “They acted swiftly and selflessly, preventing an even

greater tragedy from occurring.”



Deputy Deng was the first to arrive on scene. He could see flames through the closed front door window and attempted to kick in the door several times. Upon entering the home, he saw one individual and instructed her to leave immediately. He saw a male seated in a chair, engulfed in flames. Deputy Deng attempted to smother the fire with a blanket; however, he was unsuccessful. Deputies Korte and Bartoli arrived on scene with fire extinguishers in hand. The Deputies entered the home, which was filled with heavy black smoke making it incredibly

difficult to breathe.



Deputy Deng began sweeping the chair and flames with a fire extinguisher; but he had to exit the home due to being unable to breathe. Deputy Korte then took over sweeping the flames with another extinguisher until it was empty, while a Deputy removed the family dog, Keeva, from the home. Deputy Bartoli then re-entered the home with the first extinguisher and extinguished the remaining flames as Macomb Fire arrived on scene.

Both residents were taken to area hospitals for treatment. The three deputies were also seen for smoke inhalation and were released.

Is there someone in your office who deserves a “pat on the back” for an outstanding achievement? If so, please let the Macomb Matters committee know about it! Email [Megan.Ochmanek@macombgov.org](mailto:Megan.Ochmanek@macombgov.org) with the details.

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## Retiree spotlight



**Maria Zardis**

The Macomb Matters team would like to congratulate Maria Zardis, program director for marketing/communications in Planning and Economic Development, on her retirement in early January. Maria worked for the County for more than 20 years and was an integral part of many programs and initiatives, including this newsletter.

**What will you miss most about working for Macomb County?**

The opportunity to be involved in the many ways that PED is making Macomb County a great place for everyone to call home. Whether helping a business find its footing, extending our network of trails, providing real-time data and customized mapping, protecting our natural spaces, expanding access to broadband or child care, connecting K-12 students with meaningful career exploration experiences and all the work we have done to share these stories with others, this department and the people who work for it are truly shaping the future of this community!

**What are you most proud of in your career with Macomb County?**

After nearly 21 years, it has been a privilege to be involved in the beginnings of a lot of things that evolved to become something good for Macomb County.

When I started in 2003, our department was helping decide what to do with an abandoned railway. Today, that space is the Macomb Orchard Trail and work continues to expand the network of trails across the County.

In 2006, our department helped form Focus Macomb at the direction of then Board Chair Nancy White. An influential group of more than 100 CEOs from all sectors, they studied issues facing the County and presented their recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Focus Macomb strongly supported forming an executive form of government. Grace Shore, then president of the Macomb County Chamber, organized a campaign to take the issue to the voters who overwhelmingly supported the idea. In 2011, Macomb County became the fourth of Michigan’s 83 counties to have a County Executive in place.

In 2009, PED received federal funding to create a business incubator. Today, the Velocity Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is Macomb’s only SmartZone and is providing critical startup support for technology based businesses and is home to our International Landing Zone.

In 2013, we created an opportunity for high school students to see the manufacturing industry in person and learn about the vast array of careers associated with it. Today, more than 16,000 kids have participated in MFG Day and better yet, our “Fueling the Talent Pipeline” initiative has expanded to include all industries.

Over the years, the County has become increasingly sophisticated in the way it communicates both internally and externally. I was honored to be included as part of the team that helped to convey credible and current information about COVID-19 to the public.

Overall, I am proud of the opportunities I was given to be involved in these and many other meaningful projects.

**Post-retirement plans?**

I have no immediate plans but hope to land in a place where I can continue to be involved in making a difference.

**Any words of advice?**

No matter what our job entails, we all serve the good people of Macomb County. Take pride in all you do to exceed their expectations.

Congratulations on your retirement Maria! It is well earned!

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Click [here](#) for a list of retirees

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**In Memoriam**



**LaDonna Taylor**

LaDonna Taylor passed away on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. LaDonna was a Head Start teacher who loved her job. She started her career as a substitute teacher in 2018. Always willing to go anywhere to support Head Start classrooms, LaDonna was promoted to a full-time teacher in 2021. She was very dedicated to the children and families at Dort Elementary School in Roseville. A Head Start family shared: "She was my granddaughter’s motivation to

get to school everyday." LaDonna's life had an impact on those who knew her, especially the little ones she had the opportunity to teach everyday.



#### **Michael Pulizzi**

Corrections Deputy Michael Pulizzi passed away on Saturday, February 17, 2024 after battling cancer.

Michael dedicated his life to public service. He began his career at Macomb County as a security guard with Facilities & Operations in 2013. In February 2016 he was promoted to corrections deputy at the Sheriff's Office. Michael was a family man, loved by his wife

Jennifer and young daughter Daniela. Sergeant Nicholas Scardino shared: "Mike was such a wonderful caring person. His co-workers and friends would all tell you how laid back Mike was. One of the most easy-going people I've ever met. Even in a sometimes difficult and stressful career, Mike always brought a sense of calm to the staff and the citizens that he served. Mike loved to play golf, go ice-fishing, cook, and spend time with his family."



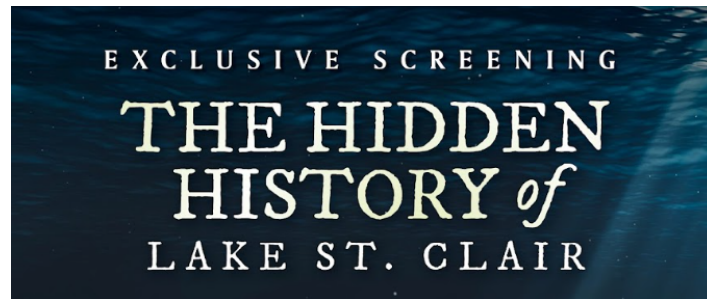
#### **Paul McGartland**

Paul McGartland passed away on Saturday, December 23, 2023. Paul joined the Department of Roads in June 2016 as a highway maintenance person at the Clinton Service Center. Less than a year later, Paul was promoted to a heavy truck driver at the Washington Service Center. Bryan Santo, Department of Roads director, shared: "Paul was well-liked and respected by his fellow workers and by management. Our hearts go out to Paul and his family. Paul will surely be missed as a co-worker, as a friend, and as a member of our Road's family. We truly appreciated Paul's hard work and dedication to his job." John Graber, Washington

Service Center Foreman, added that Paul took great pride in both his job performance as well as his equipment.

Paul was also a Captain with the New Haven Fire Department and an Emergency Medical Technician. He was no stranger to public service and dedicated his life to taking care of the needs

### **Hidden History of Lake St. Clair documentary now available**



Macomb County Planning and Economic Development (MCPED) recently unveiled the new grant-funded documentary film, 'Hidden History of Lake St. Clair,' at a special fundraiser event on Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts. The event, which benefited the [Noble Odyssey Foundation](#) and the Macomb Chamber's new Blue Economy Committee, was open to the public and saw more than 1,000 attendees.

"We've been working on this project for several years and the film for an entire year now, and I am so pleased with the results," said Gerard Santoro, program director, parks and natural resources, MCPED. "Our filmmakers and historians have done a phenomenal job uncovering information and documents that relate to Lake St. Clair and local settlers from the 1800s. We're focused on some stories that have truly never been told before. So attendees walked away with new knowledge of, and hopefully new appreciation for, our lake and gateway to the Great Lakes."

"Lake St. Clair is one of Macomb County's greatest assets, so it's incredible to have the opportunity to create this film and document why the waterway matters so much for our region and state," said County Executive Mark Hackel."

The film focuses on the search for the remains of the Village of Belvidere and the Church of St. Felicity, two early settlements believed to have been consumed by the rising waters of Lake St. Clair around 1855. Researchers, historians and archeologists have worked for decades to find artifacts and supporting documentation regarding the sites, but water levels and other factors have made this challenging. Hidden History filmmaker Robert Krepke showcases this in the documentary.

"This documentary video was exciting to create," said Krepke, a noted film director, Ford Motor Company's corporate historian emeritus and an award winning documentary filmmaker. "Lake St. Clair is very unique, it boasts the largest freshwater delta in the world. Great imagery depicts this fabulous freshwater treasure in the underwater search for the lost town of Belvidere and the Saint Felicity Church. This film takes the audience on an adventure through aerial photography, underwater photography, and much more as it highlights the remarkable features of Lake St. Clair."

The film serves to educate viewers about the settlements, but also the larger story of Lake St. Clair and its ongoing significance. Notably, it is now available for viewing online at <https://www.macombgov.org/hidden-history>. Additional information and education tools are listed on this page as well.

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## Baby Resource Network of Macomb needs survey responses



The Baby Resource Network of Macomb is a local Community Action Team (CAT) with a diverse team of community partners and health professionals who are working together to decrease infant mortality in Macomb County. Led by the Macomb County Health Department, the team develops action plans for community outreach, education and support to promote healthy pregnancies and infant safety and health.

The network currently needs your help. They are conducting a very brief (1-2 minute) survey on how mothers and other individuals get information about mother, infant and child health. Survey responses will help provide valuable guidance on how the network can improve its interaction with the clients they serve, and your input is essential! [You can access the brief survey here.](#)

Learn more about the Baby Resource Network of Macomb via the [Health Department website.](#)

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## A message from Andy McKinnon



This column has become a bit of an opportunity to discuss our Workday implementation. Implementing new systems and processes within any organization can be a daunting task. This one has certainly been met with challenges and opportunities. We understand that the transition period has been disruptive, requiring patience and understanding from everyone and especially those involved. As we continue our implementation phase and ready ourselves for the first update, we want to take a moment to extend our gratitude to each and every one of you for your patience and

support throughout.

Embarking on the implementation of Workday was not a decision taken lightly. We recognized the need for modernization and efficiency enhancements within our organization. However, we also understood that change, no matter how beneficial, comes with its own set of hurdles. From the initial planning stages to the rollout,



your cooperation and patience have been instrumental in ensuring the success of this endeavor.

Throughout the implementation process, we have encountered various challenges that tested our resilience and adaptability. There continue to be areas of frustration and uncertainty, but your commitment to the shared vision is appreciated. Whether it was adjusting to new workflows, troubleshooting technical issues, or simply adapting to change, your patience and perseverance plays a pivotal role in overcoming obstacles and keeping the project on track.

Change often provides valuable learning opportunities, and the implementation of Workday is no exception. As we navigate through training sessions, workshops and feedback sessions, your willingness to embrace new concepts and technologies is truly commendable.

One of the best parts of this project is witnessing the spirit of collaboration and support throughout the organization. Without excluding anyone, I have personally benefited from my interactions with our teams at the Clerk/ROD, Treasurer, Sheriff, HRLR, Finance and IT. I've personally witnessed these teams offering assistance and expertise whenever needed. Whether it was sharing best practices, offering guidance to colleagues or simply lending a listening ear, your collective efforts fostered a sense of unity and camaraderie that is invaluable. I also know there are many others in other departments that have been instrumental, I just haven't worked with them directly.

While this experience has been frustrating at times, whenever we finalize an area or item in Workday it is a vast improvement over what we have had in the past.

In conclusion, we want to express our gratitude to each and every one of you for your patience, dedication and support throughout the implementation of Workday. Your unwavering commitment to excellence and willingness to embrace change have been instrumental in shaping the success of this endeavor. We will continue to improve the product and experience as we move forward. Thank you and have a great spring!

Andy

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## Healthstyles

Join Macomb County MSU Extension for a 'Mindfulness in the Workplace' lunch and learn. This is a one-hour opportunity and a boxed lunch will be provided.

Attendees will learn about the concept of mindfulness, which can be defined as paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension, and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions. The purpose of this workshop is to understand how mindfulness can be beneficial in the workplace and help people improve relationships with colleagues and others.

The event will be held at the Verkuilen Building (21885 Dunham Rd, Clinton Township) on March 15 from Noon to 1 p.m. It is free to attend but registration is required. Learn more and reserve your spot [here](#).

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## Providing support by keeping it casual



The Board of Commissioners has announced the continuation of the Macomb County Casual Day Charitable Collections Program. Participating employees (with department leader permission) may wear casual clothing to work on Fridays (or other designated day), if they donate at least a dollar.

Participating departments will be monitored, and donations are sent in a timely fashion. Collected donations are then sent by the Board Office to the assigned charities.

Earlier this year, the BOC announced the [full list of programs](#) it will support in 2024. Stay tuned for additional announcements on the topic, and in the meantime, if you are able, please participate in the upcoming Casual Days that will help:

### **Lift Up a Child**

Provides products to local schools to help fight against Period Poverty

**March 1, 8, 15, 22**

### **Good Shepherd Coalition**

Coordinates services for Macomb County individuals and families in need of help with eviction and utility shutout assistance

**March 29**

### **The Bettye Harris Larynx Cancer Awareness Center**

The Macomb Diaper Bank program supplies diapers to parents in the community each month

**April 5, 12, 19, 26**

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## **IT Download**



### **A message from Jako van Blerk: How the IT industry is remodeling business processes through digital transformation**

In an era where technology advances at an exponential rate, the landscape of business operations is undergoing a profound metamorphosis. This transformation, known as digital transformation, represents groundbreaking changes in how companies conduct their operations, interact with customers, and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving marketplace. At the core it fundamentally reimagines traditional business processes through the integration of digital technologies. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT), empower businesses to streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and unlock new avenues for growth and innovation.

One of the most prominent effects of digital transformation is the optimization of business processes. Cumbersome, manual processes that are prone to errors, delays, and inefficiencies, are being phased out with automation, digitization, and optimization to operate seamlessly in this new, digital realm. Take for instance in County Government, the creation of self-serving e-Portals to provide services to our constituents (Applying for a soil erosion permit, a marriage license, a CPL, a job, etc.); electronic document management (OnBase that's being used by the Courts & Clerks for document storage and electronic workflow processes); and e-Learning (LinkedIn Learning that provides the County's Learning Management System deployed via Workday). These platforms lead to significant improvements in efficiencies and cost savings.

Through the implementation of advanced analytics tools, businesses can harness the vast amounts of data generated from various sources to gain actionable insights into customer behavior, market trends, and operational performance. This data-driven approach empowers decision-makers to make informed, data-driven decisions swiftly, thereby enhancing agility and adaptability in a rapidly changing business environment.

Customer-centricity is another key driver of digital transformation in business processes. With the proliferation of digital channels and social media platforms, customers are more connected and empowered than ever before. Businesses are leveraging digital technologies to gain a deeper understanding of customer needs, preferences, and behaviors, allowing them to deliver personalized experiences and tailored solutions. From AI-powered chatbots providing instant customer support to predictive analytics driving targeted marketing campaigns, digital transformation is

enabling businesses to forge stronger, more meaningful relationships with their customers.

Moreover, digital transformation is breaking down silos within organizations and fostering collaboration and communication across departments. With some integrations already in place, a large part of Macomb County IT's workload over the years to come will be focusing on more integrations, collaboration between departments, and facilitating seamless communication, and knowledge sharing among employees. This interconnectedness fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration, driving continuous improvement and agility within the organization. However, embarking on a digital transformation journey is not without its challenges. Legacy systems, organizational resistance to change, data security concerns, and talent gaps are just a few of the hurdles that we must overcome. Nonetheless, the benefits of digital transformation far outweigh the challenges.

By harnessing the power of digital technologies, businesses can optimize operations, enhance customer experiences, and gain a competitive edge in today's fast-paced, digitally driven world.

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## Recipe Corner



### Apple Cinnamon Pancakes

Number of Servings: 6

Serving size: 2 (4 inch) pancakes

Start to Finish: 20 minutes

Cost per serving: \$0.45

Cost per recipe: \$2.67

Cost is an average for the state of Michigan

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup quick oats
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- ¾ cup apple juice
- ½ cup nonfat milk
- 3 Apples- Shredded
- 2 Tablespoons canola oil
- Cinnamon
- Cooking spray

#### Directions Wash hands and all food preparation surfaces.

Remember to wash hands and prepare food safely.

1. Wash apples. Shred them with peel on. Discard seeds.
2. In a large bowl, combine flours, oats, baking powder, and salt. Mix well.
3. In another bowl, crack egg. Beat lightly with a fork.
4. Add apple juice, milk, shredded apples and canola oil to egg. Mix well.
5. Coat large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat.
6. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Do not overmix.
7. Pour ¼ cup batter into hot pan for each pancake. Adjust heat as needed to avoid burning.



8. Flip pancakes when bubbles appear on top of the batter and the edges are slightly browned, about 3-4 minutes. Cook until second side is slightly browned, about 2-3 minutes more.

Download a [PDF version](#)

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