

Kent COUNTY Detail

October
2013

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Cops Fore Kids 16th Annual Golf Outing

The Cops Fore Kids 16th Annual Golf Outing was held on Friday, August 2, 2013, at the Gracewill Country Club.

Participants this year included 26 Kent County deputies, as well as law enforcement officers from Grand Rapids, Grandville, Rockford, Walker and Wyoming Police Departments, and a few special guests.

This all-day event teamed law enforcement officers with juveniles who are currently near discharge and who performed extremely well while on probation. In addition, kids from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Grand Rapids Youth



Commonwealth joined in the fun. Each team consisted of two officers and two youth and nine holes of golf were played in a scramble fashion.

The weather was beautiful and there was plenty of participation with a great group of kids. The law enforcement officers went out of their way to help make the kids feel special, while engaging them in building meaningful relationships.

It is very apparent just how much the kids at these events are inspired, and it was seen, firsthand, how many lasting memories are being made by the connections they share with the other participants. Capping the event was a delicious lunch. Guest speakers included US Attorney Patrick Miles and State Representative Brandon Dillon. Then there was a short awards ceremony and prizes, including four brand new bikes that were given away!

Before leaving, every young person received a backpack filled with school supplies and a \$10 gift card.



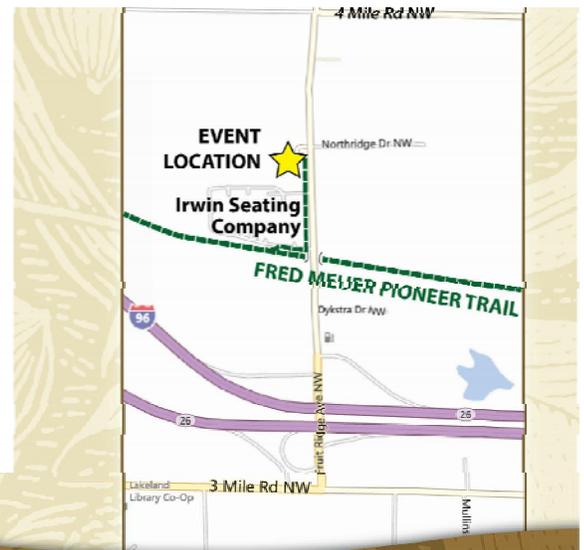
Administration

The covered bridge at Fallasburg Park is near and dear to many. While it is officially the responsibility of the Kent County Road Commission, it is also an iconic photo for many people of their trip to the Park. With the destruction of the Whites Covered Bridge in Montcalm County by an arsonist this past summer, the Fallasburg Covered Bridge became the last original covered bridge in West Michigan. Kent County Road Commission, Vergennes Township, and Kent County Parks worked together to ensure that the Fallasburg Covered Bridge is protected. Over the past month the Road Commission has been repairing the damage done to the bridge by a 30-ton concrete truck that drove across the bridge in August, and completed a general cleaning of the bridge. Kent County Parks staff then added a fire retardant to the entire inside of the bridge. Road Commission staff provided the retardant, and finalized the process by applying it to the outside of the bridge. Vergennes Township helped fund the work.



Parks

There will be a public dedication of the new Irwin Trailhead on Friday, November 1, at 11 a.m. The Trailhead is a collaborative effort between Irwin Seating, which has generously devoted 50 parking spaces for the joint effort, the Department of Natural Resources, Kent County Parks, and Road Commission. The Trailhead is located on Fruit Ridge, north of I-96 highway and south of Four Mile Road, at the Irwin Seating headquarters. The Trailhead will be a core access point for the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail which will now be connected between the Musketawa Trail and Meijer headquarters at Walker and Three Mile. Kent County Board Chair Dan Koorndyk will be offering remarks at the dedication.



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Health Department



Health Notes

A Service of the Kent County Health Department

October 2013 – Don't get stuck with the flu!

Last season, Kent County physicians reported a steep increase in confirmed flu cases compared to the 2011-2012 flu season. That particular virus packed quite a punch for those who caught it. It can take up to two weeks to become effective, so **now** is the time to get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says everyone six months of age or older should be vaccinated against

influenza every year. Doctors say it is the most effective way to protect yourself and your family from the flu.

What is the Flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu viruses spread when people with flu cough, sneeze, or even talk. Someone might also get flu by touching a surface or object (like a phone) that has flu virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, eyes, or nose. Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). The flu can have serious complications for children under the age of five, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems.

Prevention is Critical

If you feel flu-like symptoms, stay home to prevent the spread of disease. Practice good hygiene all year round. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water (or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available). Sneeze or cough into your sleeve or a disposable tissue, then throw it away. If you use a phone that others use, clean it before and after you use, and avoid touching your eyes, face or mouth.

Help is Available: StickItToTheFlu.com

The Kent County Health Department seasonal influenza program provides numerous vaccinations against influenza. Costs are \$25 for the injectable three strain vaccine, \$29 for preservative free three strain vaccine, \$30 for preservative free, four strain vaccine or \$33 for FluMist nasal spray (a live, preservative-free, four strain vaccine). Children from six months through eighteen years who have no insurance, or who have insurance that doesn't cover vaccines, will pay a sliding scale administration fee of up to \$15. The Health Department can only bill Medicaid and Medicare. Cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, or Discover are accepted. To make an appointment at any of our five clinic locations, call (616) 632-7200. You can also schedule online at www.stickittotheflu.com.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

Downy Mildew Alternatives display helps “Little Garden” have Big Impact

Since 2004, the Michigan State University Extension "Grand Ideas Garden" located at 775 Ball Ave. in Grand Rapids has become a site of inspiration and learning for thousands of visitors.

The seeds of this educational garden germinated shortly after the Kent/Michigan State University Extension office was notified they would be moving to a new location at 775 Ball Street in Grand Rapids. A group of enthusiastic volunteers went to work visioning garden concepts and fund raising for the site that now encompasses two small city lots. With some expert help, plans were drawn for a system of pathways and garden spaces to support multiple educational uses.

Nearly ten years later, the small garden shows off thousands of different annuals, perennials, trees shrubs and vines that are both native and exotic. Averaging over 5,000 guests a season, the garden has become a living-laboratory for people of all ages. Annuals are displayed in containers as well as in the garden beds and are maintained not as a scientist or botanic garden would, but rather how a typical backyard gardener would. Throughout the garden, interpretive signage and plant labels help visitors get current information about the latest plants, gardening tips and techniques.

Downy Mildew Makes its Mark

The Michigan State University Extension Grand Ideas Garden philosophy is when something goes wrong, as it does in every backyard, is simply to make lemonade out of lemons. During August of 2012 a large planting of impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*) was infected with downy mildew (*Plasmopara obducens*) that quickly took over the bed. Knowing that the inoculum of the disease would carry on for some time, thought was given to the palette of plants should replace this colorful entrance in 2013. It was decided to just try them all...that is...trial them all.

With the help of a handful of local garden centers and commercial greenhouses, dozens of cultivars including begonias, New Guinea impatiens, coleus, colorful tropical plants and ferns now make up the display that helps visitors get ideas for their own gardens. With the help of the Michigan State University Department of Horticulture's Dr. Bridget Behe, signage featuring a QR code directs Grand Ideas Garden guests to use their smart phone to "vote" for their favorite plant.



Learn about Smart Gardening When You Visit

The garden also encompasses a turf trial, mulch display, beautiful waterfall garden and general container display. The plantings and methods of care are intended to help gardeners adopt earth-friendly, sustainable practices. Signs and labels help guests conveniently identify plants.

The latest addition to the Grand Ideas Garden is a "native plant" garden that also acts as a bio-swale for the building's flat roof. Capturing and mitigating water during heavy or light rain, two "ponds" are surrounded by plants representing the best Michigan, Midwest and U.S. native plants. This part of the garden also attempts to demonstrate native cultivar comparisons side-by-side. The native area is designed with the home landscape in mind, focusing on plants that have a "tidy" appearance and do not become maintenance issues.

Green industry partners have enjoyed growth in their own businesses due to ideas "planted" by the Grand Ideas Garden. Consumers visiting the garden consistently comment that they were inspired to make changes in their own landscape. A common statement is "I come to the garden to swipe ideas!" Yes, that is what it was intended for.

In a survey done in 2009, eighty three percent of guests say that they will adopt an environmentally friendly gardening practice or make a purchase of new plant material within the next season. With no admittance or parking fees, the garden averages over 5,000 visitors each summer and has played host to dozens of bus tours from all over Michigan and out of state.

The Michigan State University Extension Grand Ideas Garden will celebrate their tenth birthday next season. However, if a candle could be lit for every idea generated the cake would collapse!

For more information on a wide variety of "Smart Garden" topics, you can log onto www.migarden.msu.edu or contact MSU's toll-free garden hotline at **1-888-678-3464** with any of your questions. Rebecca Finneran is a Michigan State University Extension Horticulture Educator and garden columnist. Her BLOG can be found at www.stuckongardening.com



Kent County Quality Service Employee of the Quarter

At Kent County, providing quality service to our customers is our number one priority. *Our mission* is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.

Leslie Drenten is recognized as the Kent County Quality Service Employee of the **3rd Quarter** for helping to fulfill Kent County’s mission by providing quality service to customers of Kent County. The individual who nominated Leslie wrote:

“I found myself in a bit of a pickle today as it relates to finalizing our redevelopment plan associated with the Centennial Country Club property in Cascade Township. We entered into conveyance agreements and purchase agreements as early as January of 2013 and the approval process with the township then took considerably longer than could have reasonably anticipated. We eventually received final Township Board approvals last week.

Due to no fault of the County, I now find myself in a situation where I need to get lot splits completed and PPN's assigned in very short order. Long story short, modifying interdependent contracts with the five neighboring condominium associations would be next to impossible and missing deadlines could jeopardize a year long process that ultimately received unanimous support from both the Township Planning Commission and Township Board.

It is a very complex situation consisting of over 85 acres and approximately 30 splits and exchanges. Today, I reached out to the Bureau of Equalization seeking help. I had a wonderful experience with **Leslie Drenten** and I wanted to convey my gratitude for exceptional public service. She was patient, considerate, and competent. I work on projects similar to this one across the state and country and rarely see such excellent customer service from local government. I am truly grateful to have such exceptional public servants in our great County. Thank you for all that you do.”



Number of Years Employed by Kent County: 11 years

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: I couldn't drive for 6 weeks after ankle surgery this last January

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Chris Farley (dead), Rusty Wallace (living) and James Patterson (living)

You’d be surprised to learn that: That I recently just got married for the first time!!

The thing that I like most about working for Kent County is: The great people that I work with. They are a hard working group that makes me want to work just as hard as they do.

Please join us in congratulating **Leslie Drenten** for earning Kent County’s Employee Recognition for Quality Service Award.

If you know a Kent County employee who is deserving of this award please, complete a nomination form at www.accesskent.com/qualityservice or on the Kent County intranet.

The County Detail is a compilation of news and information that helps fulfill our commitment to the residents of Kent County, and is distributed bi-monthly to local government officials. Editorial questions or submissions should be directed to Melanie Grooters, *County Detail* Editor. Administrator’s Office; Ph: (616) 632-7561; E-mail: Melanie.Grooters@kentcountymi.gov