

# Kent COUNTY *Detail*

January/  
February  
2014

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## Health Department

### **March 2014: Snow + Frozen Ground = Flooding Threat???**

In April 2013, we saw historic flooding across West Michigan. Road closures, home and building evacuations, and water rescues kept first responders busy. Floodwaters caused millions of dollars in property damage. Winter 2014 has brought substantial snowfall totals, so there is concern for the potential for flooding, and some forecasters and hydrologists say it could be worse than last year. The Emergency Preparedness Team at the Kent County Health Department urges you to be prepared.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW**

When disasters strike, people sometimes are left with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Back up your computer files and operating systems. Keep copies, both electronic and hardcopy, of insurance and financial records, as well as medical and prescription information. Protect important documents and keepsakes. Try to keep many important documents in a place where they are easy to grab if you need to leave in a hurry. Social security cards, birth, marriage and death certificates, immunization records, insurance policies, wills, contracts, vehicle titles and property deeds, as well as a bank statement, could all be needed during an emergency.

Keep your home and car emergency kits stocked. You should have the following items in your household emergency kit: a flashlight, extra batteries, a fire extinguisher, a battery-powered radio, cash (or traveler's checks, in case electricity is down and businesses can't take credit cards), a first aid kit, matches in a waterproof container, napkins, paper cups, plates, plastic sheeting, a shut-off wrench (to turn off household utilities), a can opener, water (one gallon per person per day; you should have at least three days' on standby) and non-perishable foods.

### **CREATE AND SHARE YOUR PLAN**

Take a few minutes to talk with your family about a disaster plan. You should have two places to meet after a disaster. One location should be right outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. The other should be outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home or are asked to evacuate the area. Share your plan with a friend or relative that lives outside of the area where you live. This family contact may be easier to connect with, and can help get messages between family members. Discuss, in advance, how to take care of your pets.

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### NAVIGATING DURING FLOODING

Stay away from floodwaters – on foot or in a car. Never drive around a barricade or through a flooded road. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. Often, floodwaters carry debris that may not be visible from the surface, and water may contain dangerous chemicals or bacteria like E. coli. The water may also have a swift current that will pull you in. Use extra caution when driving at night, as it might be more difficult to see flood dangers.

For more emergency preparedness advice, or to become a volunteer during a disaster, go to [www.BeMittenReady.com](http://www.BeMittenReady.com) today.

## Animal Shelter

### Change in dog license expiration dates

The Animal Control Division of the Health Department is in the process of letting residents know about dog license renewals for 2014. License expiration is now linked to the month of a dog's rabies vaccination; there is no longer a "season," and March 1 is not necessarily the expiration date. There is a three-year license option that's new for Kent County residents. Throughout 2014, three-year licenses can be purchased if a dog's rabies vaccination is valid for at least 35 months beyond the purchase date of the three-year license. If the vaccination is not valid for at least 35 months, a one-year license can be purchased. Numerous veterinarians are offering One-Stop Vaccinations and Licensing this year. Many township and city offices provide licensing as well as the Kent County Animal Shelter, Humane Society of West Michigan, and C-Snip. Licenses are also available for purchase online. For more information about licensing locations and pricing, go to [www.accessKent.com/KCAS](http://www.accessKent.com/KCAS).



**HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**  
*Caring today for a healthy tomorrow*

## **Road Commission**

Road Commission Managing Director Steve Warren noted that there have been many media inquiries about the Road Commission's budget this winter. Steve indicated that the Road Commission's winter maintenance budget is split between County roads and State trunk lines. As of February 25<sup>th</sup>, expenditures for winter maintenance have exceeded FY2014 budget estimates by the following.

Budget County System:	\$4.0 million	Expended to date:	Approximately 126%
Budget State System:	\$3.0 million	Expended to date:	Approximately 160%

Funding for winter maintenance on the County system comes from the Road Commission's allocation of Michigan Transportation Funding revenues (i.e., statewide fuel tax and registration fee). The Road Commission will assess budget overages in the Spring to determine if there will be reductions in other budget items such as summer road improvements and/or look to fund balance. For the trunk line system, the Road Commission is under contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation who reimburses the Road Commission for expenses in excess of the budget. In terms of salt, the Road Commission started the year with approximately 66.5 thousand tons (on-hand or under contract) for both County roads and State trunk lines. To-date, 72% of that supply has been used, and it is anticipated that there will be adequate supply to last through the winter season.



## Shared by Cooperative Extension

# The Grand Rapids Downtown Market offers a variety of ways to expand your local food knowledge

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If you are interested in healthy eating, improving your cooking skills, or getting your kids engaged in meal preparation, check out the listing of classes offered by the [Downtown Market in Grand Rapids](#). Classes are located in their large Banquet Room, the intimate hands-on teaching kitchen, and in the roof top greenhouse.

One of the most popular March classes is [Girls Night Out: Cooking with Wine](#) on Friday March 7 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. for \$55 per person, which includes a three-course meal. Other cooking technique classes offered include: [The Sauces of Italy](#) by Dawn Davies of the Kent County Health Department, [Dry Heat Cooking 101](#) with Chef Jim LaPerriere and [Gluten Free Grains](#) on March 27. Scholarships are available for many classes. To find out more about scholarships for Downtown Market classes, view the online application and information [here](#).

Teens and youth are invited to two classes designed to teach them how to cook international dishes. [Click here](#) for the class listings. Both are on Tuesdays from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. for \$40 per person, which includes all ingredients and recipes.

Greenhouse classes include [Raised Bed Gardening](#) on Thursday, March 6 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. for \$15 per person and a family gardening class on [Fairy Gardens](#) on Saturday, March 22 from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. for \$55.

[Michigan State University Extension](#) has an office at the Downtown Market where two [Community Food System Educators](#) and one [MSU Product Center Counselor](#) are housed. MSU Extension will be offering a Lunch and Learn program on March 12 from noon – 1:00 p.m. on “[Budget Friendly Gardening for Your Health.](#)” This class is only \$5 if you buy your lunch in the [Market Hall](#) at one of the many great lunch spots.

Other MSUE programs at the Downtown Market include: a [Cottage Food Law](#) class, and a [ServSafe](#) workshop. For current news and updates about MSU Extension programs at the Downtown Market, like us on [Facebook](#).



## 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.

**Brandy Johnson** from the Prosecutor’s Office and **Ann Kaiser** from the Department of Public Works are recognized as the Kent County Quality Service Employees of the **4th Quarter** for helping to fulfill Kent County’s mission by providing quality service to customers of Kent County.

### The individual who nominated Brandy wrote:

“Brandy constantly takes the time to help everyone in the office, whether it is problems with their computers or questions about their work. She is our lead worker and has been so great at telling everyone how much she appreciates them and recognizes extra effort when it is given. She is a great example of a Quality Service employee. Most importantly Brandy stays late almost every night to meet with clients who may be running late because of work or other issues. She is always considerate of their schedule and home life. Brandy has never made anyone feel bad for making her stay late or not being able to make their appointment time. She is so considerate and very pleasant to our clients, no matter if they are mothers, fathers, grandparents, guardians or even the children.”



**Number of Years Employed by Kent County:** 5 ½ years.

**The hardest thing I’ve ever done:** Working full-time while completing both my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

**Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner:** I would invite my father-in-law and my Grandpa, who have both passed away, and my husband. I would then

give my spot at dinner to my Mom. I know my husband would do anything to have one more night to spend with his Dad and same for my Mom with her Dad.

**You’d be surprised to learn that:** I danced from the time that I was two years old until I was 18 years old. I also taught dance to young kids for about 4 years. I have a collection of spoons that I have acquired from the several places that I have traveled. And the most surprising fact, I can wiggle my ears!

**The thing that I like most about working for Kent County is:** Being able to come to work every day not knowing what’s in store. Every day in our office is an adventure and you never know what’s around the corner! You have to be ready to jump and make changes at any moment!

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### The individual who nominated Ann stated:

“I teach in Jenison and I have been taking my classes to Kent County's recycling centers for years. Due to changes in our scheduling procedures this year, it was difficult for the County to accommodate us. Ann went out of her way to be flexible and created a schedule for my classes and their parents to come to the facility.

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Her tour was fabulous. She treated the kids with incredible respect, was interesting, animated and clever in her presentation. The students have given her “Rock-Star” status in our classroom. Seriously, a lot of people do science, but Ann LOVES her job, is passionate about the difference she makes and communicates that passion to everyone she meets. AND she puts up with no nonsense. PERFECT!”



**Number of Years Employed by Kent County:** 6 ½ years.

**The hardest thing I’ve ever done:** Sharing my newborn daughter's diagnosis (cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease) with our family. Also, being a working mom to my two kids and parenting both of them fairly and consistently.

**Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner:** My dad, who was one of the most intelligent people I've ever

known & taught me to look at challenges as opportunities. My paternal grandmother, who was the most caring, self-less, and accepting person and taught me to see through the differences among people. Dr. Seuss, who made genius seem so simple. I think there would be a lot of laughter at this dinner.

**You’d be surprised to learn that:** I'm actually an introvert & quite shy; speaking to people I don't know is very difficult for me, but gets easier the more I do it.

**The thing that I like most about working for Kent County is:** The variety and diversity of the residents that I get to talk to or meet through my job. Every day is a little different & there is always something to challenge me.

Please join us in congratulating both **Brandy Johnson** and **Ann Kaiser** 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](http://www.accesskent.com/qualityservice) or on the Kent County intranet.

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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.  
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