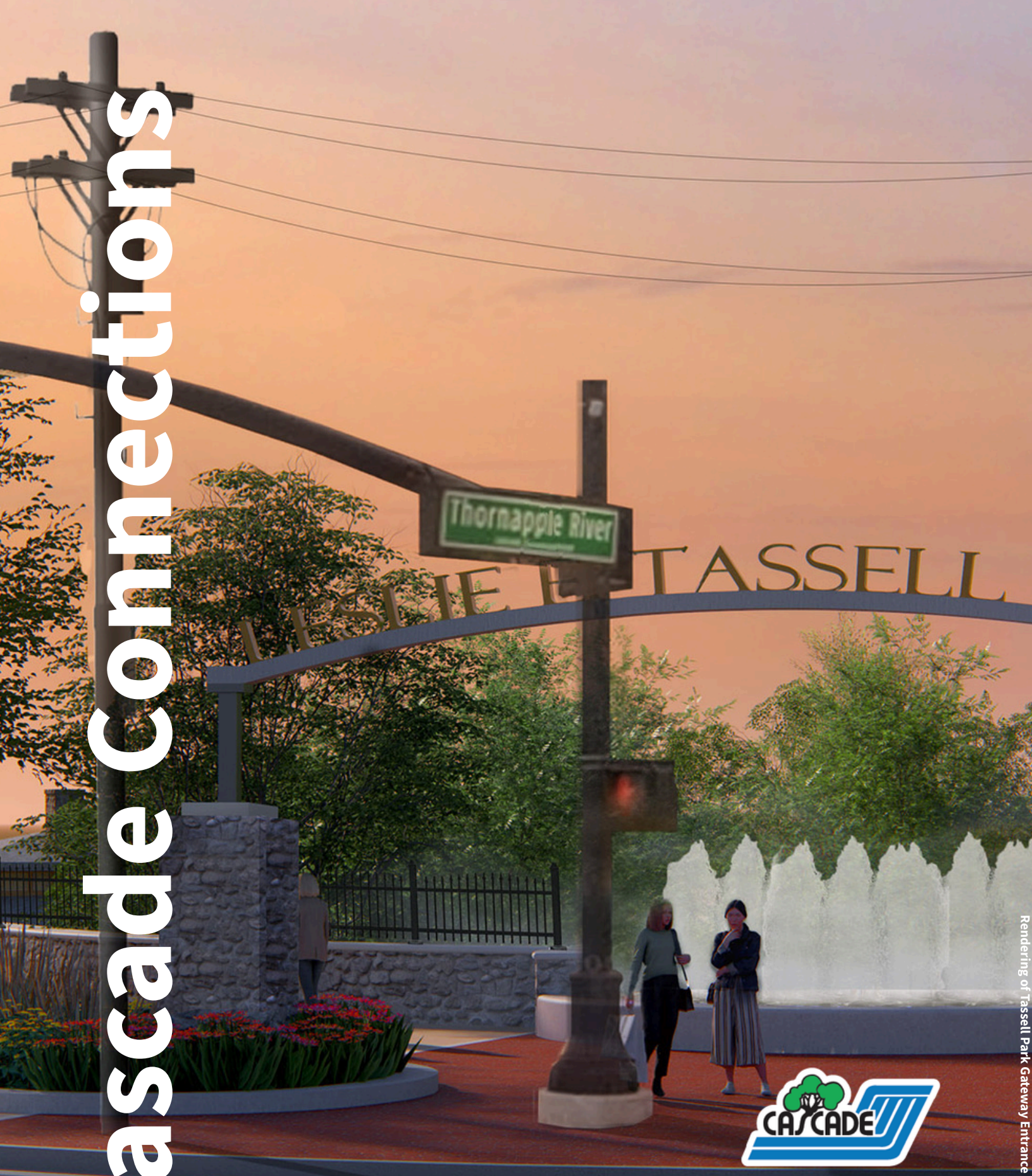


Cascade Connections



Rendering of Tassel Park Gateway Entrance



2026 | EDITION 3
Cascade Charter Township Newsletter



from the **Supervisor**

Dear Cascadians,

With spring in full swing, I want to highlight some current and ongoing Township projects and initiatives – all of which further our goal of **preserving Cascade’s unique character and enhancing**

residents’ quality of life. Thank you to the many residents, volunteers and staff who are making these collaborative efforts a reality.

TASSELL PARK DESIGN FINALIZED

Updated design plans based on feedback were presented at the March 11 Board meeting. The goal remains to create a timeless public space for all ages that emphasizes its proximity to the Thornapple River and calms the already busy intersection. **For more information visit cascadetwp.com/village.**

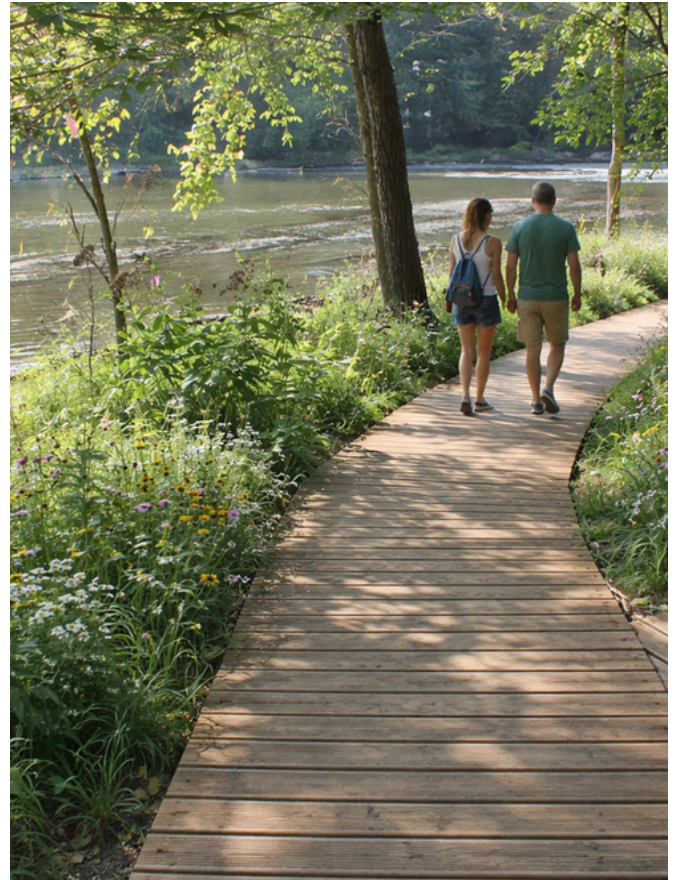
FUNDING VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Cascade’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is funding the Tuffy & Tassell Park improvements. The DDA is an economic tool available to local municipalities to help revitalize local business districts. They were created in the 1970s after the rise of expressways, suburban shopping malls, and big box stores changed how people worked and shopped, leading to the decline of traditional downtowns.

DDAs are funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). First, a certain geographic area is designated for revitalization (a “TIF district”). As property values in the area go up, property taxes increase. Property taxes in that area are broken into two streams. The base stream, tied to the property value at the time the TIF district was created, continues to go where it always has: schools, roads, fire, police etc. Some of the increase in property taxes—the “tax increment”—is recaptured by the DDA to reinvest in the area. Local school millages and the State Education Tax are not subject to DDA capture; they continue to receive tax revenues on growth.

The DDA does not capture any property taxes outside of its defined boundaries.

DDAs must reinvest funds received on improvements in the



DDAs must reinvest all tax revenue captured back into public infrastructure and improvements within the DDA District.

DDA district. Recent examples include Friendship Park in front of the library, the pedestrian updates to the Cascade Rd. bridge over the river, and the purchase of both the Tuffy and Verburg properties. *State law prohibits the use of DDA funding on community initiatives outside of the DDA District (PFAS remediation for example).*

ZONING UPDATE

Over the past year, the Township conducted a series of public meetings and open houses to consider updates to its zoning ordinance to help the Township address growth and development pressures. In February, a majority of the Board of Trustees voted to adopt a new zoning ordinance.



After adoption of the ordinance, a group opposed to the new zoning filed a petition challenging its enactment. Public campaign finance records show that the group hired legal counsel (paid \$6,139), hired a public relations firm (paid \$9,775), and hired a professional signature gatherer company (paid \$99,915). According to those reports, the Michigan Realtors and the Greater Regional Alliance of Realtors paid the signature gatherer company the entire \$99,915, with GRAR paying the public relations firm an additional \$7,000. Enough signatures were obtained to meet the threshold requirements of Michigan law.

As a result of the filing of the petition, the zoning ordinance adopted by the Board of Trustees in February is not currently in effect. The ordinance will be submitted to voters at the next regular election on August 4. Until that election occurs, the existing zoning ordinance (which is more than 30 years old) remains in effect.

FISCAL OVERSIGHT, ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

In preparation for the annual audit, the Finance Department is closing out the accounting records for Fiscal

Year 2025. This one sentence equates to roughly two hundred hours of staff effort, culminating in three external auditors working at Township Hall during the third week of April. The completed audit will be presented to the Board at the July 8 Board meeting and will also be posted on the Township's website.

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY - MONDAY MAY 25

Lastly, I hope you will join me for Cascade's annual **Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday May 25, at 10 am at the library. Details on page 11.**

It is an honor to serve as your supervisor. Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions are welcome and important. I hope to hear from you soon.

Grace Lesperance

Cascade Charter Township Supervisor
glesperance@cascadetwp.com



from the **Clerk** Sue Slater

PRIMARY ELECTION INFORMATION

In the **August 4, 2026 Primary Election**, voters receive a single ballot listing all candidates by party and must choose candidates from only one party section (Under Michigan Law, MCL - Section 168.576 - Michigan Legislature, votes in the primary must be cast within one party column only). They cannot “split” their vote between parties for partisan offices.

If voting in a precinct, the voting equipment WILL warn you of this mistake and give you the opportunity to fix your ballot.

If you are submitting your ballot absentee, please review your ballot carefully before signing and returning it to the Clerk’s office. There will not be an opportunity to fix this mistake when submitting absentee.

HOW TO PROPERLY SUBMIT AN ABSENTEE PRIMARY BALLOT

- 1) Pick one party column and vote only for candidates within that column on both the front AND back of the ballot. **Mixing parties will invalidate your ballot.**
- 2) Check your ballot twice before submitting it. Confirm you have chosen only candidates in one party column.
- 3) Submit your completed ballot by mail or secure drop box with your signature. Please note that according to Michigan Law, Power of Attorney, parents and spouses CANNOT sign on a voter’s behalf.

These choices apply only to this specific election and do not permanently affiliate a voter with any party as Michigan voters are not required nor can they register with a political party in their local jurisdiction. **For more information visit cascadetwp.com/elections.**

CLERK’S OFFICE CONTACT INFO

Sue Slater - Clerk
 Michelle Alberts - Deputy Clerk
 Robyn McKenna - Election Specialist
 (616) 949-1508

NOTE FOR VOTERS

During election cycles, election advocacy groups & political parties may mail you a NEW voter registration form or Absentee Ballot Application. If you are already registered to vote, already on the Permanent Ballot List or do not want an absentee ballot, simply ignore these mailings. The Township will only mail you an application if you remain on our Permanent Absentee Application list or a ballot if you are on a Permanent Ballot List. No need to re-register to vote.



from the **Treasurer** Windy Korstange

NEW TREASURER’S QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORT

During the January 28 Township Board Meeting, the Treasurer’s office presented the Board with its first quarterly report concerning the investment of funds. See below graphics of what was included. **For questions, call the Treasurer’s office at (616) 949-6944.**

INVESTMENTS BY TYPE



INVESTMENTS BY FUND



INVESTMENTS BY MATURITY*



*THIS GRAPH DOES NOT INCLUDE \$21,053,717 IN LIQUID FUNDS

ELECTION DEADLINES & DATES



END OF JUNE
TBD
Absentee Ballots mailed to voters eligible to participate in the Aug 4 election

JUNE
25
Absent voter ballots available for issuance to voters. Applications are available online or at the Township offices.

JULY
20
Deadline to register by mail or online and be eligible to vote for the August election.

JULY
21
In-person registration with local clerk with proof of residency allowed between this date and Election Day.

JULY
24
Deadline for electors to submit a written request to spoil their absent voter ballot and receive a new absent voter ballot **by mail**.

JULY
24
Deadline for electors who have returned their absent voter ballot to submit a written request **in person** to spoil their absent voter ballot and receive a new absent voter ballot **in the clerk's office**.

JULY 25- AUGUST 2
EARLY VOTING
7:30 am- 3:30 pm at the Wisner Center

JULY
31
Deadline for clerks to send an absent voter ballot via First Class mail.

AUG
01
Clerk's required weekend office hours 7am- 3pm

AUG
03
Deadline for electors who have lost their absentee ballot or not yet received their ballot in the mail to submit a written request to spoil their absent voter ballot and receive a new absent voter ballot in the clerk's office.

AUG
03
REGISTERED VOTER MAY APPLY FOR AV BALLOT IN PERSON AT THE CLERK'S OFFICE.

AUG
04
Deadline for emergency absentee voting 4 pm (Begins Friday at 5 pm)

AUG
04
Election Day registrants may obtain and vote an absent voter ballot in person in clerk's office or vote in person in the proper precinct.

AUG
04
POLLS OPEN 7 AM - 8 PM
Election Day!

AUG
07
Deadline for voter to cure the signature on Absentee Voter ballot return envelope, allowing an otherwise valid ballot to be accepted for tabulation.



Tassell Park

IMPROVEMENTS

We are excited to share additional renderings of the new concept for Tassell Park below. Improvements to the park will include construction of a boardwalk underneath the bridge along the river so residents have a safer way to cross Cascade Road. Other elements include walking trails, natural gathering areas along the riverbank, picnic spots, and more.



RIVERFRONT BOARDWALK GAZEBO RENDERING



RIVERSIDE DECK RENDERING



CURVED WALK OVERLOOK RENDERING



BOARDWALK LAWN BRIDGE RENDERING



SUNKEN PLAZA WATERFALL RENDERING



SHORELINE BOARDWALK RENDERING

For more information regarding the reimagining of Tassell Park, visit cascadetwp.com/projects.

AN EGG-CITING TIME



A good time was had at Cascade's Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 28! More than 20,000 eggs were picked up in just five minutes! A BIG thank you to the sponsors of this community event and to all the volunteers who helped make it such a fun day. **Interested in partnering or getting involved in Cascade Township events? Email our Parks & Facilities Coordinator at saubert@cascadetwp.com.**

ZONING UPDATE

On February 11, the Township Board adopted comprehensive amendments to the Cascade Charter Township Zoning Ordinance. A few days later on February 18, the Township Clerk received a Notice of Intent to File a Petition seeking to place the adopted zoning amendments before Township voters for approval via referendum.

Completed petition forms were submitted by the deadline and the Clerk's Office verified both the petition documents and signatures.

On April 22, the Township Board approved language for voters that will appear on ballots during the August 4, 2026 election.

This means voters will be able to decide whether or not to approve the language the Board adopted. In the meantime, the previous zoning ordinance remains in effect.

To see the language that will appear on the ballot, visit cascadetwp.com/zoning.

UPCOMING ASTRONOMY VIEWING EVENTS AT CASCADE REC PARK!



The Perseid Meteor Shower Wednesday, August 12 11:00 pm - 3:00 am

This will be an ideal year for this annual meteor shower, with no moonlight and peak activity expected just after midnight.

Near Total Eclipse of the Moon Thursday, August 27, 10:00 pm - 2:00 am

Watch the full moon progress deep into the earth's shadow and then slowly emerge. The moon will not darken completely but most of its disk will take on the characteristic red glow of a total eclipse.

Bring lawn chairs, blankets and snacks to enjoy these events. Telescopes will be set up throughout the park. These events take place only if the sky is clear. This event is being held in partnership with the Grand Rapids Astronomy Association. **For more information, visit graa.org.**

Summer at the LIBRARY



Summer at Kent District Library is like the Super Bowl season for librarians! With 111 events planned, the library will be buzzing with opportunities to read, learn, and connect. The largest events will take place Tuesdays and Fridays, with many events being hosted in Friendship Park! **All events can be found online at kdl.org/events.**



Summer WONDER

June 1 - August 7

30-Day Reading and Learning Challenge for All Ages

Kent District Library is excited to announce Summer Wonder 2026!

Summer Wonder is free for all ages and contains a learning challenge, prizes and a whole lot of fun! Visit kdl.org/summer for more information.

Need a library card? Register now at kdl.org/ecard.





Take part in Summer Wonder, a seasonal program designed to engage all ages through reading, exploration, and hands-on learning. Activities include **outdoor discovery, scavenger hunts, STEAM experiences, and more** - offering something for every interest and ability.

June 1- August 7
Participation is free.

Pick up a Wonderlog at any KDL branch or register online at kdl.beanstack.org.

SUMMER LIBRARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

6/5 10:00am Summer Wonder Kick-Off
6/8 6:30pm 4th of July Flowers
6/11 6:30pm True Crime Analysis
6/12 10:00am Raptors Live
6/13 10:00am Foam Party
6/16 10:00am Touch A Truck
6/17 2:00pm Foam Dart Party
6/18 3:30pm Animal Magic
6/23 6:30pm Pressed Paper Lanterns
6/26 10:00am Dinosaurs of Today
6/30 10:00am Color Lab

July

7/3 10:00am Decorate Your Bike/Celebrate the 4th
7/6 10:00am Operation Top Secret
7/9 6:30pm UFOs over Michigan
7/14 10:00am Cameron Zvara
7/21 10:00am Critter Barn & Kids/Teen Craft Show

August

8/7 10:00am Summer Wonder Bash: Beach Party

Participants enjoy the "Craft & Create" event that they were able to take home.



The recent Cardio Drumming event in Friendship Park was well attended!



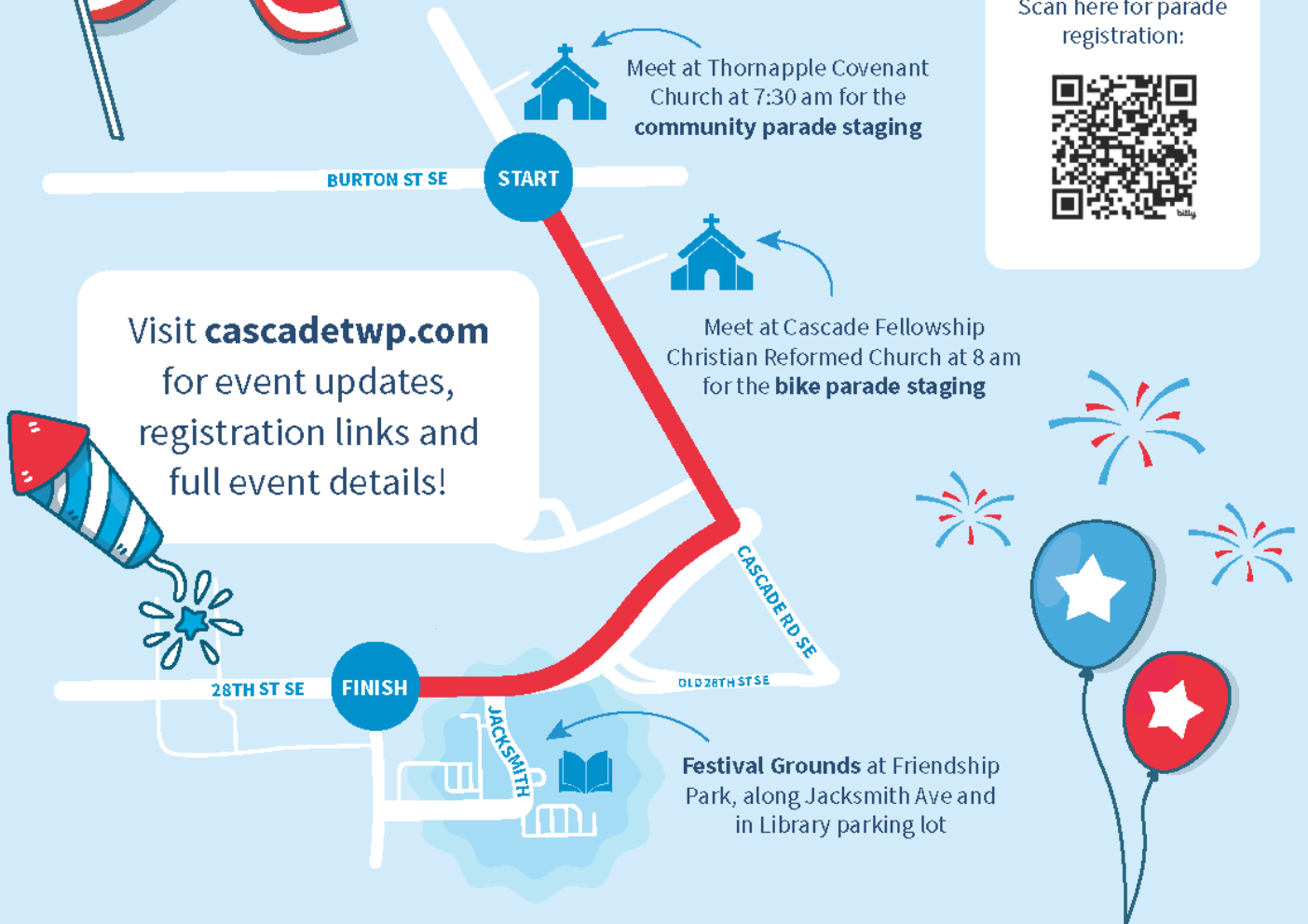
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Independence Day Celebration

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2026



Scan here for parade registration:



BIKE PARADE 8:30 am

Participants meet at the staging area outside Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (6655 Cascade Road SE) at 8 am.

No registration required. Please decorate anything non-motorized with wheels. Riders 14 and younger must wear a helmet per Township ordinance.

COMMUNITY PARADE

Immediately following Bike Parade

Participants meet at the staging area at 7:30 am outside Thornapple Covenant Church (6595 Cascade Road SE). **All participants must pre-register online.** Registration closes Friday, June 26. See the red line above for parade route.

FESTIVAL 10:00 am–1 pm

Along Jacksmith Ave and at Friendship Park. Come for inflatables, food trucks, live music, crafts, and more! The Friends of the Library Book Sale will be running 8:30 am–3 pm in the library parking lot.

FIREWORKS Dusk

Starting at dusk at Amway Headquarters (7575 Fulton St. E, Ada). Our community is invited to enjoy live music at Ada's Legacy Park starting at 6:30 pm. Plan on bringing lawn chairs and/or a blanket.



A LOOK BACK:

CASCADE TOWNSHIP'S FIRST FIREWORKS SHOW



The Grand Marshal of this year's Independence Day parade is Chuck Dykhuizen, whose bout with tuberculosis as a child helped bring the festivities, including fireworks, to Cascade. Get to know a bit more about Chuck and how he came to become this year's Grand Marshal.

Chuck Dykhuizen moved to Cascade Township from Grand Rapids with his family in 1946. His father opened a garage with Chuck's Uncle, Sybert Dykhouse, called "Dyk & Dyk Garage," located at the old Verburg location.

Chuck attended Cascade School which was at the corner of Burton and Cascade Rd. and when he was in the 6th grade, he tested positive for tuberculosis.

Chuck's tuberculosis diagnosis at just 11 years old kickstarted a 15-month hospital stay at Sunshine Sanatorium where he was forced into complete and total bedrest in order to fully recover.

Once Chuck was discharged from the hospital, his dad, who by then was a long-haul truck driver, bought fireworks while on the road to celebrate Chuck's homecoming. Chuck's family invited neighbors to watch the fireworks that Independence Day from the front yard of their home.

The event was such a hit that Chuck's dad, who was also the commander of the American Legion and Chuck's Uncle Sy, who was now Fire Chief, organized the first official Independence Day fireworks display the following year.

"The first few years, the firefighters and American Legion members would walk around during the fireworks with tin coffee cans to take up a collection to pay for the fireworks for the next year," said Chuck.

Chuck, the oldest of four siblings, fondly remembers growing up in Cascade.

I can't imagine a better way of growing up than the way we grew up," said Chuck. "The river was our playground."

From fishing and swimming in the summers to ice skating, and hockey in the winter, Chuck and his friends were constantly outside enjoying what Cascade offered.

As Chuck grew up, he adopted the same commitment to community involvement that was instilled in him by his father. It was around this time the Township was thinking of

bringing in water and sewer for its residents. Chuck became a member of the Water and Sewer Commission before moving over to the Planning Commission.

"I was the Vice Chair and worked on the Township's very first Zoning Ordinance," said Chuck.

Nowadays, Chuck and his wife live in Middleville, but he still views Cascade as home.

"I grew up in Cascade and we still attend Cascade Christian Church and have a lot of friends here," said Chuck. "We still call it home."

This includes never missing the community's fireworks show every Independence Day.

"Cascade's Independence Day celebration has preserved the neighborliness that I experienced as a child," said Chuck.

In fact, last year, he happened to see Cascade Trustee Scott Rissi during Cascade's Independence Day events. He shared with Scott the story of that first fireworks show.

"I was eating lunch at the Independence Day celebration last year when Chuck started chatting with us," said Scott. "I really enjoyed his story about how his family was the catalyst behind the celebration all of us have enjoyed for years."

Thus, Chuck was nominated to be this year's Grand Marshal.

"I view the Independence Day events as reattachment to the joy I had growing up in Cascade," said Chuck. "I will carry those memories with me always."



Chuck holding a photo of his dad and uncle's auto garage, "Dyk & Dyk"



DEDICATION

We the Eighth Grade Class of '53, wish to dedicate this, our first yearbook, to Chuck Dykhuizen.

It would be very hard to express in a few words the emptiness we have felt since Chuck left us.

It is our hope that he may soon regain his health and be our companion once more.

Chuck's school dedicated the 1953 yearbook to him as he recovered from tuberculosis

Concerts in Cascade



CONCERTS IN CASCADE RETURN THIS SUMMER IN FRIENDSHIP PARK!

May 14
Mark Dvorak
Folk Singer

June 25
Windbreakers
Yacht Rock

July 23
**Rin Tarsy &
Mandarin**
Singer/Songwriter

August 20
**Blue Water
Kings Band**
12 person band

ALL CONCERTS START AT 7PM AT FRIENDSHIP PARK
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Visit CascadeTwp.com/events for full details.

A special thank you to our sponsors
Friends of the Library
Consumers Credit Union
Scooters
Thornapple Brewery
Cascade Downtown Development Authority

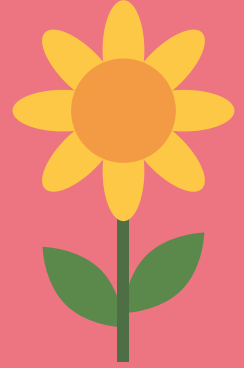


Parks Programs & Events



WALKING CLUB IS BACK!

Cascade Recreation Park
10 am
May 20, 27 & June 3 & 10
Meet at the bathrooms
Free for all | No sign-up needed



Visit
cascadetwp.com/events
for details on all events.



Mahjong Tuesdays!

1-3:00 pm

Located at the Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

Every Tuesday this summer!

Games provided! If you have your own, please feel free to bring it!



Memorial Day Ceremony | Monday, May 25
10:00 am
Kent District Library - Cascade Township

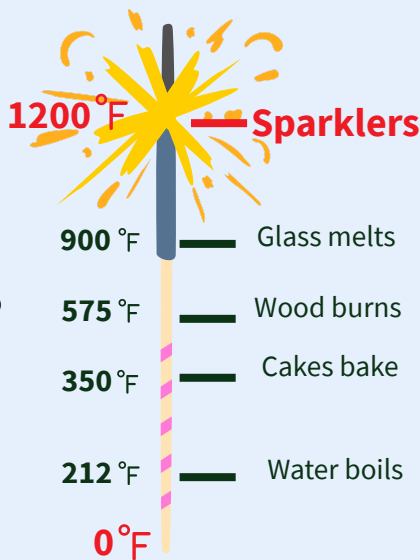
Fireworks

SAFETY

Fireworks are often used to mark special events and holidays. While everyone wants to celebrate and have a good time, don't let a mistake put a damper on your or anyone else's night this Independence Day. Visit a fireworks show put on by professionals or incorporate other fun ways to celebrate the United States of America's monumental 250th birthday listed below:

- Use glow sticks that glow in the dark and are a safe alternative to sparklers. Fun for all ages.
- Loud and proud. Noise makers are sure to make a statement. They can be found at local party supply stores or you can make your own.
- Outdoor movie night. Set up a screen and projector. Don't forget the bug spray!
- Red, white, and blue silly string...fun for all ages.
- Make a patriotic craft with the family.
- Throw a birthday party for the USA and don't forget the cake.

HOW HOT DOES A SPARKLER BURN?



FACTS

- ! Approx. 19,500 reported fires are started by fireworks annually.
- ! Burns account for 44% of the 9,100 injuries treated in emergency rooms seen in the month around July 4.
- ! Half of the fireworks injuries seen at emergency rooms were extremities: hand, finger, or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.
- ! Children ages 10-14 had the highest rate of firework injuries, with more than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks injuries under age 15.
- ! Sparklers account for roughly one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.

Contact Us

Township Manager

Jade Smith
616-949-1500
jsmith@cascadetwp.com

Township Assessor

Paula Jastifer
616-949-6176
pjastifer@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections

Brian Wilson
616-949-3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

Community Planning & Development

616-949-0224

Township Engineer

Aric Thorne
616-949-1500
athorne@cascadetwp.com

Finance & Budget Director

Lorna Nenciarini
616-949-1500
lnenciarini@cascadetwp.com

Human Resources Director

Katie Murawski
616-949-1500
kmurawski@cascadetwp.com

Parks & Facilities Director

Dan Zwick
616-949-1500
dzwick@cascadetwp.com

Cascade Township Fire Department

Fire Chief / Non-Emergency
Adam Magers
616-949-1320
amagers@cascadetwp.com

Kent County Sheriff's Department

Sheriff / Non-Emergency Dispatch
616-336-3113

Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa
616-632-6435
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov



CASCADE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT
Dedicated to Serving You
Station 1 616.949.1320 Station 2 616.259.7020



National Fire Protection Association
The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety



Cascade Roads Consistently Rank High

The Kent County Road Commission uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system to visually rate roads statewide. For the past five years, Cascade roads have consistently ranked above the state average. See ranking chart below.

Historical Data			2025 Condition Breakdown		
Rating Year	Average Road Rating	State Local Average	Rating Description	Cascade Township %	Average Local %
2020	6.2	5.5	Poor (1-4)	12	45
2021	6.5		Fair (5-7)	25	33
2022	6.8		Good (8-10)	63	22
2023	7.1				
2024	7.4				
2025	7.7				

2026 Cascade Road & Pathways Projects

Each year the Township partners with (KCRC) to prioritize local roads for surface treatment measures. This program allows KCRC and the Township to remain on schedule with maintenance and rehabilitation of local roads. KCRC continues to offer 50/50 split cost-sharing.

In 2024, the Cascade Township Board of Trustees approved a \$2 million budget for road resurfacing in the **Burger Plat** per a 2023 agreement with Kent County. Approximately 3.52-miles of the 7.40-mile Burger Plat were completed in 2025. The remainder of the Burger Plat (3.88-miles) and Thornapple River Drive from Thornhills Ave to Cascade Road (0.83-miles) is slated for resurfacing this year.

Additionally, improvements to the **Burton St. pedestrian bridge** over the expressway are still in the permitting process at the state level.

The 2026 Pathways Improvements will start/finish this fall. See map below for which pathways will be improved.



CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VISIT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM
THIS SUMMER!

You are invited to explore the Cascade Historical Museum on two special Sundays this summer!

Sunday, June 14 | 2-4 pm

Sunday, August 9 | 2-4 pm

2839 Thornapple River Drive



Photo of infamous egg fight at the corner of Cascade Rd. and Old 28th St.

Come see what's new and revisit old favorites, like the photo above of the infamous egg fight at the corner of Cascade Rd. and Old 28th St.

Members of the Cascade Historical Society will be giving tours or you can wander on your own. There will be refreshments and activities for kids. Come take a look at Cascade's fascinating past!

The museum is located in the old town hall on Thornapple River Dr. next to Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park.

For questions, contact the Cascade Historical Society at cascadehistory@yahoo.com.

REMINDER!

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on Cascade Pathways (gators, golf carts, dirt bikes). Exceptions are certain ebikes.





PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT NO. 657

Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-949-1500
cascadetwp.com

Township Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 7 am – 4 pm
Friday: 8 am – 12 pm

CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP Independence Day Celebration

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2026

Meet at Thornapple
Covenant Church at 7:30 am
for the community parade



BURTON ST SE

START



Meet at Cascade Fellowship
Christian Reformed Church at
8 am for the bike parade

Visit cascadetwp.com
for event updates,
registration links and
full event details!



28TH ST SE

FINISH

CASCADE RD SE

OLD 28TH ST SE

JACKSMITH



Festival Grounds at
Friendship Park, along
Jacksmith Ave and in
Library parking lot



BIKE PARADE 8:30 am

Participants meet at the staging area outside Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (6655 Cascade Road SE) at 8 am. No registration required. Please decorate anything non-motorized with wheels. Riders 14 and younger must wear a helmet per Township ordinance.

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