



COUNTY OF MIDLAND MICHIGAN

DID YOU KNOW?



Men have been making (and breaking) New Year's resolutions since Babylonian times, but a 2007 study from the University of Bristol showed that 88% of those who make resolutions eventually fail to keep them.

The good news? The study also showed that men could achieve their goal 22% more often when they engaged in goal setting, while women succeeded 10% more when they made their goals public and got support from friends.

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January 2016 *Newsletter*



EMPLOYEES SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER

For the 34th year, Midland County employees have joined together to identify families within our County who can use help providing a merrier, brighter Christmas for their family. The effort is organized through the [Register of Deeds](#) office and includes committee members Julie Atkinson, Register of Deeds, Scott Haines, Chief Deputy Register, and Libby Varner from the Treasurer's office.

This year, Julie worked with the [North Midland Family Center](#) to identify families that needed our help. Terrah Johnson, the Family Resources Director, helped match County employees with two families that live in Midland County, have never used an agency for Christmas help in the past and have children (the employees enjoy providing Christmas for kids).

A Visa gift card raffle proceeds and individual donations are pooled to purchase family-specific toys, books, and clothing, along with grocery and gas gift cards. The families' clothing sizes and needs are shared with County employees and they do the rest. A few days before the planned delivery date the committee goes shopping for items still on the list.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan. 7 - Roger Garner's retirement party
- Jan. 18 – County offices closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- JCC Mentor Month
- February – American Heart Month
- Feb. 14 – Pinecrest Farms Valentines Arts & Crafts Day
- Feb. 14 – National (Organ) Donor Day
- Feb. 28 or 29 – Current property taxes due

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



Start celebrating American Heart Month early by learning healthy heart habits from the [American Heart Association](#).

County Employees were extra-generous this year, so a referral from Veteran's Counselor Ross Ahlich provided the name of a deserving Midland County veteran who needed help raising money to fix his furnace. Again, County employees stepped up to make his Christmas warm and wonderful, too.

The gifts were delivered to both families on a dark, rainy December 21, made brighter by the generosity of Midland County employees.



COUNTY EMPLOYEES HONORED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Thirty-five dedicated Midland County employees were honored for their years of service at the Board of Commissioners Executive Committee meeting on December 8. They are:

- 25 years – Mike Goodall, Sheriff; Ann Manary, County Clerk; Joyce McLaughlin, Mosquito Control
- 20 years – Thomas Anderson, Sheriff; Christine Golke, Circuit Court; Myron Greene, Sheriff; Kenneth Randall, Friend of the Court; Scott Stephenson, Sheriff; Michael Sutherland, Sheriff; Vincent Szilagyi, Sheriff
- 15 years – Brandi Allensworth, Juvenile Care Center; Jason Brandt, Sheriff; Carrie Filion, Juvenile Care Center; Brandan Hodges, Sheriff; Christopher Inda, Juvenile Care Center; Amie Keidel, Juvenile Care Center; Charlotte Kobel, Pinecrest; Angela Lewis, Friend of the Court; Andrew Lowry, Mosquito Control; William Yurcso, Information Services; Bill Zielinski, Information Services
- 10 years – Ross Ahlich, Veteran's Services; Joseph Amend, Prosecuting Attorney; Michele Brickel, Juvenile Care Center; Michael Carpenter, District Court; Paul Close, Sheriff, Diane Scott, Prosecuting Attorney
- 5 years – Patty Beson, Friend of the Court ; Nyesha Bryant, Friend of the Court; Jennifer Hawkins, District Court; Tori Meyer, Finance; Beverly Pretzer, Pinecrest; Joshua Qualls, Sheriff; Jessica Tucker, Juvenile Care Center; Adam Walser, Sheriff.



Certified Dementia Practitioners at Pinecrest Farms include MaKayla Grotkowski, universal worker, Vicki Johnson, universal worker, Ronda Cunningham, RN and director of Nursing, Joe Blewett, administrator.

TRAINING TO CARE FOR RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA

Pinecrest Farms Staff Well-Prepared

Alzheimer's Disease is a debilitating illness that can reduce cognitive and functional abilities to the point that sufferers are emotionally isolated from their families and caregivers.

To learn more about the disease and how to care for [Pinecrest Farms](#) residents members recently became

with Alzheimer's, four staff Certified Dementia Practitioners (CDP) through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners.

The September 21 training took place on World Alzheimer's Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about Alzheimer's and dementia.

Pinecrest Administrator Joe Blewett says the full-day intensive course included training on issues such as nutrition, personal care, spiritual needs, pain, communication, behavioral and emotional expressions, community resources, end-of-life, and abuse and neglect, prevention and awareness. “With this comprehensive training, our staff better understands how dementia impacts our residents and how we can help them be an active part of our community here.”

In addition to the CDP training, the entire staff also received the American Heart Association’s Basic Life Support training, covering topics such as CPR, choking, AED, respiratory issues, and cardiac arrest. *Visit the [Alzheimer’s Association](#).*



VULNERABLE ADULTS TO HAVE MORE PROTECTION

Vulnerable adults will have better protection now that the [Midland County Prosecutor’s Office](#) and [Senior Services](#) have teamed up to form the Midland County Vulnerable Adult Network (McVAN).

“By getting together we can see where we are overlapping, what we are missing; are there gaps in the system?” says Midland County Prosecutor J. Dee Brooks.

The goal of McVAN is to help adults 18 years and older, who are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or advanced age.

“It seemed to be critical to get key people together to discuss these situations within the privacy laws and figure out how we can best serve those folks,” Senior Services Director Alan Brown notes. “Sometimes there are hidden concerns because a family is reluctant to say much about the situation. This process is an important piece of the whole effort toward coordinated care.”

Key team members include representatives from local law enforcement, Senior Services, Midland County Public Guardian, Community Mental Health, MidMichigan Medical Center, Shelterhouse, Health Department, The Arc of Midland, Chemical Bank, Midland Area Homes, and Veteran’s Services, along with protective service workers from the Department of Health and Human Services.

“We have really been encouraged by everyone’s willingness to become a part of the team and truly believe that the team will be a great benefit to the community,” says J. Dee. “Vulnerable adult abuse is a serious issue everywhere, and by working together to keep an eye out for people in need or being taken advantaged of or abused, and making sure those people obtain needed services, we will help reduce these incidents in our community.”

Read the full December 8, 2015 [Midland Daily News story](#) by John Kennett online.

TEST. FIX. SAVE A LIFE.

January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a Class A carcinogen, known to cause cancer in humans. “The problem is, many people don’t realize it could be lurking in their homes at an unsafe level,” says Robert Wolfe, senior registered sanitarian with Midland County Health Department, [Environmental Health Services](#).

Experts estimate that nearly one in eight Michigan homes has an elevated radon level, and in some counties, as many as 40 - 45% of the homes could be affected. In general, Midland County homes have shown relatively low radon levels. In 2015, only eight homes had levels exceeding the required action level, and since 1992, only 70 homes exceeded the level where repairs were recommended.



Radon primarily comes from surrounding soil entering through openings in a home's foundation floor and lower basement wall openings. Sump openings, and other penetrations caused by plumbing, wiring, and ductwork not properly sealed may allow radon into a home.

The problem for people occurs when radon and decay products are breathed in.

Exposure over time can increase your risk of lung cancer. The Michigan Public Health Institute estimates that, in Michigan, every year 600 new lung cancer cases are attributable to exposure to elevated indoor radon gas levels. In fact, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States after smoking.

Bob says all homes should be tested for radon. "There are no obvious warning symptoms, so individuals tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes. The only way to know whether you're being exposed to radon is to test. Any kind of home can have elevated levels – new or old, drafty or well-sealed, and basement or non-basement. The only known health effect is an increased risk of lung cancer."

Make sure your home is healthy for your family. Radon-induced lung cancer is preventable. Free test kits are available from the Midland County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Services Division, and homeowners can complete the test in less than a week. *Read more about [radon testing](#) in Midland County.*



EASILY-SPREAD ILLNESSES PEAK IN WINTER

Good Health Habits Can Stop Winter's Germs

With cooler temperatures driving us indoors and children congregated in classrooms, a new season of illnesses sweeps through every corner of the country during the winter.

Midland County's [Public Health Emergency Preparedness](#) Coordinator Fred Yanoski says it's sometimes difficult to tell exactly which winter illness you have because they can have symptoms in common. "The important thing is to prepare for the season," says Fred. "Get a flu shot, practice good health habits to keep your immune system strong, and practice good personal hygiene."

Watch out for these common winter illnesses:

- **Seasonal Flu** - A respiratory illness, the flu spreads from person to person, mostly through coughs, sneezes and even general talking. It is possible to contract the flu by touching a surface infected with the flu virus, then transmitting it to your mouth, nose or eyes.
- **Common Cold** - Peak cold activity hits during the winter and rainy months. An upper respiratory infection with nasal congestion, scratchy throats and sneezing, colds are spread like the flu.
- **Norovirus** - As the most common stomach inflammation illness in the U.S., commonly referred to as the stomach flu, norovirus reaches its greatest strength during the winter months.
- **Acute Ear Infections** - Ear infections, especially in children, are more likely to occur in winter than any other season, as colder air takes hold.
- **Bronchiolitis** - A virus that mostly impacts children under the age of two, bronchiolitis is a swelling and mucus buildup within the smallest lung air passages. It most commonly is caused by a viral infection and is spread from person to person by direct contact with nose and throat fluids from someone carrying the virus. *Read more about [colds and flu](#).*

Prevent the spread of illness this winter:

1. **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.**
3. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
4. **Washing you hands often** will help protect you from germs
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
6. **Practice other good health habits – disinfect, rest and drink fluids.**

EXERCISING FOR BETTER HEALTH

Pinecrest Receives Grant for New Equipment

Most of us are aware that the risk of a fall increases with age. For older people in long-term care, the risk is even greater. According to the Centers for Disease Control, between 50 and 75 percent of long-term care residents fall every year, and many of these falls will result in further disability, functional decline and reduced quality of life.

Pinecrest Farms is doing something about that.

With a grant of \$18,700 from the Midland Area Community Foundation, the staff is implementing an exercise program designed to increase strength and overall health and wellness of its residents. The funds will be used to purchase new equipment, including free weights, physical therapy exam tables, exercise bikes, exercise bands, medicine balls, gait belts, mats and chairs.



Pinecrest currently hosts Hometown Health and Hospice volunteer-led exercise classes twice weekly and partners with Saginaw Valley State University nursing students to lead even more classes during the academic year. With the new equipment, visiting class instructors, physical therapists, and occupational therapists will be able to offer a greater range of exercises to residents, resulting in improved strength, balance, and mobility – and fewer falls.

SVSU's Acting Assistant Dean, Lang College of Health and Human Services, Elizabeth Roe says, "Based on the work that I have done with Pinecrest staff over the past year and their commitment to quality care, I believe they will be successful in achieving the outcome of fall reduction with the implementation of this exercise intervention."



LONG-TIME EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR ROGER GARNER RETIRES

Roger Garner, Midland County's first full-time emergency management coordinator, retired in December after 28 years on the job.

Under his leadership, the County developed a system of coordinated response to community emergencies that includes first responders, community health experts, local industry representatives, communicators and other resources. In addition to coordinating the County's response during dozens of training exercises and real emergencies, during his tenure Roger managed two Presidential Disaster Declarations for flash flooding in the City of Midland in 1996 and flooding in Midland County in 2013.

Roger was named Michigan Emergency Management Coordinator of the Year in 1991 and Michigan Professional Emergency Manager of the Year in 1997. In 2014, the Michigan Stormwater-Floodplain Association honored him with the George Hosek Outstanding Service Award.

As Midland County's Emergency Management Coordinator, Roger held the following appointments and certifications:

- 911 Coordinator/Acting Director, Midland County Central Dispatch, 1990-1992, writing the first 911 Service Plan for Midland County and serving as chairman of the committee that prepared the agreement creating the Midland County Central Dispatch Authority
- Served on the board that created the Professional Emergency Manager program for the State of Michigan and became one of the first to be so designated in 1994
- Appointed by Governor Engler to the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Commission, 1995 – 2003
- Served as a member of the Michigan Emergency Management Association Executive Board, 1988-1994
- Member of Midland-Gladwin Chapter American Red Cross Board of Directors, 1997-2003
- Member of the Region 3 Homeland Security Planning Board, 2007-2015
- Member of the Region 3 Healthcare Coalition Advisory Committee, 2002-2015
- Received the designation of Certified Floodplain Manager from the Association of State Floodplain Managers, 2008-2015

Prior to his career at Midland County, Roger served as Program Coordinator for the Hazardous Materials Training & Technical Assistance Program at Michigan State University and as a firefighter on the City of Mason Fire Department.

As a retiree Roger looks forward to traveling, spending more time with his parents in Dansville, Michigan, and concentrating on his hobbies of amateur photography and studying backyard wildlife.

Read Kelly Dame's recent *Midland Daily News* [story](#) on Roger's retirement.



WINTER CONDITIONS CAN CHALLENGE DRIVERS

With the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) citing traffic accidents as the leading cause of death during winter storms, the [Midland County Sheriff's Office](#) reminds travelers that despite adverse conditions, many injuries can be avoided by driving sober and wearing your seat belt.

In Michigan in 2014, 806 people were killed in car accidents, and more than a quarter of those fatalities (222) were due to people drinking and driving. In another 9,218 accidents, alcohol was at least a factor.

Despite statistics showing that seat belt usage in the U.S. has increased over the years with about 4 out of every 5 travelers now buckling up, there is still room for improvement. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that if all drivers and passengers wore seatbelts, approximately 8,000 lives would be spared every year, nationwide.

Sheriff Stephenson says drivers can be better winter drivers by driving carefully, making good decisions, and planning ahead. "Most importantly, *always* wear safety belts, and *never* get behind the wheel after having too much to drink."

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.

Safe and Secure

The Board of Commissioners recently adopted a new information security program policy after a year in development. The new policy will provide guidance to County managers as they create and implement a comprehensive information security program for safeguarding confidentiality, security, and integrity of County information and information systems.

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

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