

MEDICARE 2026

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SHOPPING SEASON IS HERE, AND WITH IT A DOSE OF COMPLEXITY AS PLANS CHANGE OR DISAPPEAR ALTOGETHER. WE'RE HERE TO HELP. L2

Sunday

KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

MICHIGAN TRAFFIC SAFETY

Amish road fatalities this year show a disturbing trend



As a no-passing zone ends east of Clare, a vehicle maneuvers around a buggy during a stormy April 18 evening. Bernie Eng, MLive.com

Four deaths highlight the dangerous encounters between horse-drawn buggies and vehicles on rural highways.

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A dead horse still attached to its mangled buggy lay in the snowy field. Henry Troyer, the 27-year-old Amish driver, lay nearby, barely clinging to life as the sun rose in the east. A black lantern box bearing his name was ripped from the carriage. It was a cold Monday morning in March, about 6:30 a.m., near the Amish communities of Gladwin and Clare counties. Moments earlier, an oncoming SUV struck Troyer as it attempted to overtake a school bus, according to police. Despite their efforts, medics airlifted Troyer to a hospital in Ann Arbor, where he died 11 days later. The other driver was cleared of any crime.

In August, northeast of Grand Rapids, Rudy and Jemima Shetler and their five children were clomping along a Montcalm County road in a buggy when a pickup slammed into them during a misjudged passing attempt. Three days later, they were burying their 4-month-old daughter. Troyer and the Shetler baby were among four members of Michigan's Amish community to die in buggy crashes so far this year — and many others have suffered serious or critical injuries. In the Upper Peninsula's Delta County, two Amish women were injured after their



An oncoming SUV attempting to pass a school bus in March crashed into Henry Troyer's buggy. He received fatal injuries in the collision. Gladwin County Sheriff's Office

buggy was rear-ended by a pickup in April. One suffered brain damage, and another will likely be paralyzed for life. In Van Buren County, a 10-year-old Amish girl lost both of her legs when her family's buggy was struck from behind in August. Then, in Clare County, a 4-month-old suffered a head injury after being thrown from a buggy on Sept. 3. When horse-drawn wooden carriages going 12 mph meet 2-ton steel vehicles going 55 mph or more, the outcomes can be lopsided and bloody. The fatalities highlight a disturbing trend in Michigan. While there's no national database that tracks Amish

crashes, Michigan State Police data shows the four deaths in 2025 are the most in a single year in the past decade. "I just tend to see a lot more of these accidents showing up reported in Michigan," said Erik Wesner, who created Amish America, a website and media company focused on the Amish. "In recent times but also going back several years, some of the worst ones I've seen come out of Michigan ... I'm just continuously amazed." It raises the question — what can be done to stop them? SEE MICHIGAN TRAFFIC SAFETY, A6

ELECTRICITY NEEDS

Does the era of AI data centers mean bad news for utilities?

Activists are urging the state to ensure an artificial intelligence boom doesn't drive up power rates.

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AUBURN HILLS — Spurred by the rise of artificial intelligence and cloud computing, Michigan faces the prospect of multiple new data centers sucking more electricity from the power grid than all the homes in its largest cities. The potential for a data center boom means a new age for Michigan utilities, as for the first time in decades they are courting projects bringing massive jumps in demand to fuel Big Tech's AI arms race. OpenAI's announcement last week that it plans to build a huge data center in Washtenaw County only adds to the concern. "One of the biggest changes over five years ago is really that we're in an era that we're seeing potential load growth, and that can be a good thing, but that can also be a bad thing," said Dan Scripps, the state's top energy regulator and chair of the Michigan Public Service Commission. That tension was on full display at Oakland Community College on Monday, where some two dozen protesters gathered to warn of the worst-case scenarios behind unchecked construction of giant server farms in the Great Lakes State. "Without protections, AI data centers could leave us holding the bag for the buildout," said Michelle Martinez, director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment at the University of Michigan. SEE ELECTRICITY NEEDS, A7

DAYLIGHT SAVING Whew, it's early ...

It's time to fall back! Daylight saving ended at 2 a.m., so don't forget to set your clocks back one hour.



Advance Local

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