

MC

Muskegon Chronicle



A SECOND TO SPARE

THE MICHIGAN FOOTBALL TEAM SCORED ON THE LAST PLAY OF THE GAME — A 47-YARD TD PASS TO JJ BUCHANAN — TO DEFEAT WESTERN MICHIGAN 13-12 IN THE SEASON OPENER FOR BOTH TEAMS. **C1**

MICHIGAN SUMMER MEMORIES

Expert-level campers know how to make unforgettable moments

State park campground hosts have many duties, but the one they take to heart is creating memories.

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CADILLAC — Colorful paints lain across picnic tables.

A pile of board games, a guitar and a campfire.

A movie under the stars.

A helping hand and a friendly face.

On any given day throughout the camping season, Michigan State Parks’ volunteer campground hosts are perfecting their unique recipes for creating unforgettable moments.

“We want to create opportunities for them to have moments that they can look back on,” said Gayle Jones, a fifth-year host with her husband, Tim Jones. “That’s what we do.”

The Joneses are among 450 campground hosts that volunteer each year at various state parks. They spend a large portion of every summer at Bay City State Park.

Meanwhile, fourth-year hosts Dan and Mary Lou Smith like to hop around, spending a month each at several parks — but they do have a favorite.

Seventh-year hosts Linda and Terry Cowell are partial to Muskellouge Lake State Park in the Upper Peninsula.

THE MAIN BENEFIT

The most obvious draw to becoming a campground host is the free (often full-hookup) campsite, but Gayle Jones said that’s not the best aspect.

“For us, the main benefit is connecting with families, watching youngsters grow up as they return year after year,” she said. “We’re about relationships.”

The Joneses host at Bay City every summer, often in July and August, and also have hosted at Clear Lake and Port Crescent state parks.

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Campground host Tim Jones talks with a camper. He and his wife, Gayle, are among 450 hosts that volunteer in Michigan State Parks every year. Submitted by Gayle Jones



Volunteer campground host Dan Smith paints a girl’s face. He spends two hours a day, five days a week on face painting.



Dan Smith poses with big winners from Candy Bar Bingo, a weekly event. Photos submitted by Dan and Mary Lou Smith

MICHIGAN ROADS

State plans to test pay-per-mile road funding in 2027

Funding has been allocated to study a fee system as an alternative to fuel taxes.

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LANSING — Michigan is exploring a new way to fund its roads in the future.

Last fall, lawmakers allocated \$7.65 million to study and implement a program to evaluate the possibility of charging a per-mile fee on drivers, also known as a road usage charge system.

The current system uses fuel tax and registration fees as the primary fund-

ing mechanism, but experts say it is not a sustainable revenue stream due to increasingly fuel-efficient and electric vehicles.

Initial planning phases of the 18-month pilot program got underway in June, according to Jennifer Roberts, the national road user charge discipline lead at CDM Smith, the consultant behind the pilot program.

Roberts provided an update during a recent episode of the Michigan Department of Transportation’s “Talking Michigan Transportation” podcast.

Officials plan to begin a robust public education campaign before the end of the year, followed by a legislative outreach campaign in January after the

newly elected lawmakers take office.

Beginning in February, the plan is to begin a six-month trial run with about 1,000 participants who agree to test out the program. A final report will follow by the end of 2027.

Proponents of a road usage charge system say it’s more equitable because it accounts for the transition to more fuel-efficient and alternative-fuel vehicles, which have reduced fuel tax revenue and shifted more of the road funding burden on drivers who may not be able to afford those vehicles.

“We’ve been using a fuel tax for the last 100 years, and that’s worked very well,” Roberts said. “Over time, as our fleet has

SEE MICHIGAN ROADS, A3

IMMIGRATION

Michigan ICE arrests peak since Trump took office

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is increasingly arresting people without criminal records, new data shows.

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Immigration officials swept up hundreds of people across Michigan this summer, hitting Detroit, Grand Rapids, Pontiac and other cities as arrests surged to a new peak.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested nearly 50,000 people across the country in July, including 504 in Michigan, new data shows. It’s the highest monthly total since President Donald Trump took office last year.

In Michigan, that marks a 43% increase from July 2025, according to ICE arrest numbers obtained through a public records lawsuit by the Deportation Data Project and analyzed by MLive.

A spokesperson from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said the agency is delivering on a promise to arrest criminals and deport people who are in the country illegally.

The latest data, which details ICE arrests through Aug. 5, creates a picture of how the Trump administration has been quietly ramping up enforcement throughout the country after facing backlash for its aggressive operations in Minneapolis earlier this year.

ICE has been bolstered by billions of dollars, partnerships with local police and thousands of new agents. The agency also is increasingly arresting people without criminal convictions, widening its net to immigrants whose legal status has been stripped away by the Trump administration.

“All of that together has increased the capacity for ICE to carry out arrests,” said Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, an analyst from the Migration Policy Institute.

MICHIGAN NUMBERS

The data shows that ICE arrested 3,122 people in Michigan through August this year, nearly outpacing the 3,336 arrests made in all of 2025.

The numbers dipped slightly after ICE agents shot and killed two people during an operation in Minneapolis in January. A new U.S. Department Homeland Security Secretary, Markwayne Mullin, then shifted tactics to quieter operations that do not target specific cities.

“My goal in six months is that we’re not in the lead story every single day,” Mullin said at his confirmation hearing in March.

Now, ICE is nearing a reported quota of 2,000 daily arrests across the country.

“The goal does not appear to be big, flashy arrests in ways that we saw at the

SEE IMMIGRATION, A3

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