



You're
over the
drafty
windows.

You're over the wait.

Marquette's **HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN SALE** means it's the perfect time to bring your dreams to life. Visit **MarquetteSavings.bank/loan-sale** to learn more.



Erie Times-News

WEEKEND

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2026 | GOERIE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

PRINT-ONLY SUBSCRIBER-EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL EDITION INSIDE

2026 NFL season preview: Rams look unstoppable

What East Bayfront can teach us about community



A COMMON
CURRENT

Josh Imhof Erie Times-News | USA TODAY NETWORK

Chance Hartnell would wake each morning to the crackle of a walkie-talkie on his nightstand. On the other end was Thoai Tran, his mom’s landlord, telling him it was time to get ready for their morning workout. • The two would exercise, eat breakfast and then Tran would walk Hartnell to school. • Now Hartnell and his brother, Cameron Czuwara-Russell, help Tran, 52, with handyman jobs and construction projects around the East Bayfront.



Tran

“He teaches us for when we get older,” Hartnell, 13, said.

One street north in Erie’s East Bayfront neighborhood, Kelly Ellingsen, 49, and Gentry Andrews, 53, often are found sitting on their front porch.

The New Bedford, Massachusetts, transplants settled in Erie and found the porch to be a gateway to meeting people.

“It’s the next best thing to camping,” Ellingsen said.

A few houses down the street, Deborah Clinton teaches her friend Tom Beason how to tend to his new garden. Ever since they were kids living on the 400 block of East 18th Street, the two have been on-and-off neighbors.

“It’s like growing up with a sibling. We’ve shared life and death. ... I don’t know what it’s like (to have him) because I don’t know what it’s like without,” Clinton said.

Relationships like these exist throughout the East Bayfront, silently weaving the streets into something more than just house numbers on a grid bound by Holland and East Sixth streets and the Bayfront Parkway and Connector.

Whether they intend it, each resident plays a larger role in the ecosystem of the neighborhood. Some are watchdogs. Others are community builders. Many are both.

East Bayfront residents
take little things personally

Tony Graff, 43, falls into the latter category.



Six-year-old Londyn Love holds her doll Dellilah while sitting outside with her mother Danaysha Fox, 32, on East Fourth Street in Erie, on July 9.

PHOTOS BY GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

A resident of the East Bayfront for a year and a half, Graff lives with his husband, Justin Graff.

When he’s not working as the house and grounds leader at Community United Church, he can often be found sitting on his front porch or doing maintenance around his house, both of which serve functions beyond their face value.

“Truthfully, all it is is presence,” Graff said. “Presence is a deterrent.”

See EAST BAYFRONT, Page 4A

TOP: Teenage members of Groundwork Erie Green Team work at the community garden on East Fourth Street in Erie’s Historic East Bayfront neighborhood on July 9.

ERIE CITY COUNCIL

Forman Block,
Spencer
House gain
historic status

Kevin Flowers
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two more downtown Erie buildings have been granted historic status under city of Erie zoning laws.

Erie City Council on Aug. 19 gave final approval to ordinances that sign off on the designations for the former William & Mary Spencer House, 519 West Sixth St.; and the Forman Block building, a three-story, brick commercial structure located at 1013-1015 State St.

The city’s zoning map will now be amended to reflect the historic status of both properties.

City Council previously hosted public hearings regarding whether the properties should receive historic designation status.

Historical zoning designations aim to protect and preserve properties deemed historically, architecturally or culturally significant. In some cases, the designation can also help owners access specific types of grant funding.

Both the city’s Planning Commission and its Historic Review Commission supported the historic zoning designations.

About the Spencer House

The Spencer House is a three-story brick and wood home built in 1871 by Erie businessman Judah Colt Spencer. It has operated as a bed and breakfast since 1991. The Spencer House website references a slightly different

See STATUS, Page 3A

