



Official Newsletter of Alpine Township, Michigan

Harvester

5255 Alpine Ave. N.W. Comstock Park, MI 49321 (616)784-1262

Supervisor *Greg Madura*
Clerk: *Jean Wahlfield*
Treasurer: *Jim Townsend*
Trustees: *Ron Cordes*
Rob Scheidel
Bill Schweitzer
Mike Wahlfield

Community Events

Thursday January 16,
Planning Commission
Meeting 7p.m.

Monday January 20,
Township Board Meet-
ing 7p.m.

Monday January 27,
Historical Commission
1p.m.

Monday January 27,
Zoning Board of Ap-
peals, 7 p.m.

Tuesday February 11,
Parks and Recreation
Board, 7 p.m.

Monday February 17,
Township Board Meet-
ing, 7 p.m.

Thursday February 20,
Planning Commission
Meeting, 7 p.m.

Monday February 24,
Historical Commission,
1 p.m.

Monday February 24,
Zoning Board of Ap-
peals 7 p.m.

Monday March 16,
Township Board Meet-
ing, 7p.m.

Thursday March 19,
Planning Commission
Meeting 7 p.m.

Monday March 23, His-
torical Commission, 1
p.m.

Monday March 23,
Zoning Board of Ap-
peals, 7 p.m.

Supervisor's Report ...

Greg Madura

Happy Holidays, Alpine! We choose to live in Michigan in large part because each season brings its own unique beauty, traditions and activities. I love early mornings just after a light snow, drinking a cup of hot chocolate just relaxing and thinking of the day's events, or not thinking of anything in particular at all. In about a month, it will be 10 degrees outside, and we will soon thereafter walk to the mail box in a flannel shirt, no coat, and blowing snow. Our mind tells us "its winter no big deal". Then I will be amazed when spring comes along and we have a couple days in the fifties, and the temperature drops back to 40 and I feel like I am frozen.

For most of us, fall cleanup was wrapping up when the weather put the brakes on. Rain and snow came, then the oak leaves decided to fall from the trees. That means spring cleanup will take a little longer than usual. Leaf pickup will be in late April and early May, but no firm dates have been set yet.

As this year winds down, it is a good time to look back and reflect. The four wonderful parks in Alpine Township (Westgate, Dwight Lydell, Wahlfield, and Alpine Sports Complex) were all extremely busy. Every day scores of residents and visitors could be seen enjoying the benefits of each park. We will continue to make improvements to the Sports Complex and Westgate Park to keep them user friendly and safe. Kent County will be making huge upgrades to Dwight Lydell Park this next season. Community events were also quite prevalent this past year. There were sponsored events for community gatherings at Westgate Park, including a community Halloween contest that helped transform some homes into artistically thrilling spectacles that were fun for all of us, not just the kids getting candy. Now we are enjoying the beautiful evening lights of the Christmas holiday.

The past few months have been used to have community discussions about the growth along 4 Mile Rd. and Alpine Ave. It is important to have township planning that looks many years into the future so we can anticipate change, and be prepared to respond to development. Over eight miles of road will be repaved in the coming year. That makes two years in a row with major road projects that will in the long term be a benefit, but an irritation in the short term.

Also, the Township Board is getting closer to unveiling plans for our new Fire Station #1 and Community Building behind Sam's Club on Henze Street. This is important because we need to replace our existing fire station on Alpine Church Street. It was built in an era of smaller fire trucks with a smaller turning radius, and does not accommodate the equipment we anticipate in the future. It is also expensive to maintain.

Lastly, just a reminder that during this winter season, let's slow down. It is harder for the disabled and elderly to get to their mailboxes. People, especially children, are hard to see walking on the roads. Help make this coming year safe, and have a Happy New Year!

TREASURE'S CORNER

Jim Townsend

As we approach the end of 2019, I wish I could start out with a happier topic than **winter tax bills**, but they were mailed on December 2, and they are **due by 5pm on February 14**. We can accept late summer and winter payments for this tax year through February 29. After that, most payments must be made at the Kent County Building in downtown Grand Rapids.

We will **accept partial payments**, and point out that interest and penalty accruing after February 29 apply only to the unpaid balance.

Dog licenses can be purchased at the township office. We will need any letter you received from Kent County, your dog's proof of rabies shots, and proof of neuter/spay. Licenses last either one year or three, depending on which you choose. Senior citizens receive a discount.

If you have any questions about these things, call Beth Alt or me at the township office (784-1262).

Fund Balances: The Township holdings as of October 31 are:

General Fund:	\$2,548,613.10
Water Fund:	\$345,138.29
Sewer Fund:	\$3,825,753.30
Trust & Agency Fund:	\$63,787.18
Capital Improvements:	\$1,536,169.03

CLERK'S COMMENTS

Jean Wahlfield

A NEW YEAR

Election dates for 2020 -

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – Presidential Primary

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 – Special Election Date

Tuesday, August 4, 2020 – State Primary Election

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 – General Election

Registered Voters in Michigan may now request an absentee ballot without providing a reason. It is easy to get your name on the permanent voter application list - contact the Alpine Township Clerk's office at 616-784-1262. Fill out the absent voter application **first** and the **ballot** will be delivered to your mail box. Enjoy the convenience of voting your ballot in privacy at home just like 1,403 other Alpine voters.

Anyone can go to the Michigan Secretary of State website at any time to find out if they are registered, to find their voting precinct or to find a sample ballot.

Go to michigan.gov/vote

Local Alpine Township Officials will be elected in 2020. If you are interested in serving your community you will need to file for the full time offices of Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer. Trustees are also elected and attend meetings on the third Monday of each month. All applicants must file no later than **April 21, 2020, by 4:00 p.m.** Information and candidate packets are available at the Township Offices.

Best wishes to all Alpine residents for a happy and healthy New Year.

ALPINE TOWNSHIP LIBRARY

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

RHYME TIME MUSIC & MOVEMENT

Tuesdays 10:00 AM

Enjoy music, movement and rhymes.

FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

HEART TO HEART CRAFT PARTY

Wednesday, February 12, 6:30 PM

Celebrate Valentine's Day with snacks and crafts

FOR ADULTS

MACRAME KNOTS: BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Wednesday, January 15, 6:30 PM

Each student will create a unique macramé project to take home. New to knots? You are welcome too!

Pre-registration required

INSTANT POT BASICS

Wednesday, February 19, 6:30 PM

Learn how to use all the features with confidence, convert your favorite recipes to IP recipes and speed up meal prep. Samples included.

FOR ALL AGES

PAINT A CANVAS

Saturday, February 1, 11:00 to 1:00 PM

Let your creativity flow! We provide paint and one canvas per person while supplies last. Plenty of inspiration and examples will be on hand.

First come, first served

HOURS

Mondays and Wednesdays 12 –8

Tuesday 9:30—5

Thursday 9:30—5

Friday 12—5

Saturday 9:30—1:30

COMSTOCK PARK LIBRARY

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

TODDLER TIME

Mondays 10:00 AM

Nurture your toddler's love of books through music, movement, and stories.

BABY TIME

Mondays 9:30 AM

Delight and engage your baby with songs, a story and playtime.

FAMILY STORY TIME

Wednesdays 10:00 AM

Enjoy stories, rhymes, music and movement while developing a love of reading.

FOR ALL AGES

MEET THE SLED DOGS

Tuesday, January 14, 6:00 PM

Tun-Dra Kennels owners will talk about sled dogs. Families can meet the dogs and watch a demonstration.

HEART TO HEART CRAFT PARTY

Monday, February 10, 10:00 AM

Celebrate Valentine's Day with snacks and crafts.

FOR ADULTS

HAND LETTERING

Thursday, February 20, 6:00 PM

Sharpen your fancy font skills, learn the basics of hand lettering.

HOURS

Monday 9:30—8

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12—8

Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30—5

Saturday 1—5



Alpine Township Fire Department News Volume 3

In the last issue of the Harvester, I took you on a journey that sent us back in time and detailed the history of the Alpine Township Fire Department (ATFD).

In this volume, the ATFD will guide you with directions and assistance with understanding what the future needs are as it pertains to a new Fire Station, additional Personnel, and Equipment. The ATFD has reached a point where the department needs to expand in order to keep up with the continued volume of Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) assignments.

In October of 2018, the ATFD had a “Comprehensive Fire Department Strategic Plan” completed and submitted by the McGrath Consulting Group, INC. The McGrath Consulting Team utilizes consultants who are highly skilled individuals with both educational credentials and work experiences. Their consultants have an extensive understanding of the fire service data and utilize proven study methodologies. The culmination is an Alpine Township Audit/Strategic Plan that addresses current and future opportunities while ensuring the provision of fire and EMS services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.

I am inviting all of you to visit the Alpine Township website, (alpinetwp.org) and there, on the front page, you will need to scroll down until you see the phrase “Alpine Twp. Fire Dept. Strategic Plan”. To access the plan, simply click “here” and a copy of the “Comprehensive Fire Department Strategic Plan” will appear for your review. If you do not have access to the Web there will be a copy of the “Strategic Plan” placed at the front desk of the Alpine Township Offices (5255 Alpine), and Fire Station One (841 Alpine Church), and the Alpine Township Branch Library.

In the near future, the ATFD will host a “Questions and Answers” forum that will be open to the public.

Please Be Safe,

*Dave Klomparens, Fire Chief
Alpine Township Fire Department*

The General Fund includes the general operating expenditures for nearly all of the public services of Alpine Township. Revenues are derived primarily from state-shared revenues, property taxes, interest and charges for services.

General Fund Revenues

State Revenue Sharing: The State distributes sales tax collected by the state to local units of government.

Tax Revenues: Property taxes, commercial & industrial equipment taxes, and mobile home fees.

Other Revenue Sources: Licenses, permits, interest, facility rentals, charges for services and miscellaneous sources.

General Fund Expenses

General administration expenses (postage, Twp. newsletter, office supplies, etc.)

Buildings and Grounds expenses (3 fire stations, museum, Twp. offices & library, community building, future Fire station #1, the Sports Complex, Westgate Park and 3 cemeteries)

All expenses for police services through the Kent County Sheriff's Department for two 8-hour seven days-a-week shifts of policing and one Community Police officer

All Fire Department expenses (equipment, vehicles, training, medical supplies and staff wages)

The Township Annual Budget for 2019-2020 is \$2,548,600 and of those dollars, \$949,170 is expended for public safety (\$440,000 Kent County Sheriff and \$509,170 Fire Dept.).

Employee compensation and elected and appointed officials expenses (training, etc.)

Legal, auditing and engineering services expenses

Election expenses

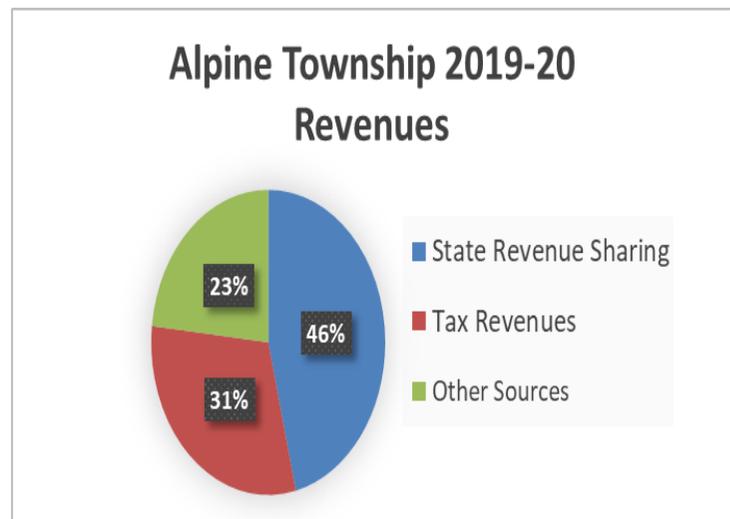
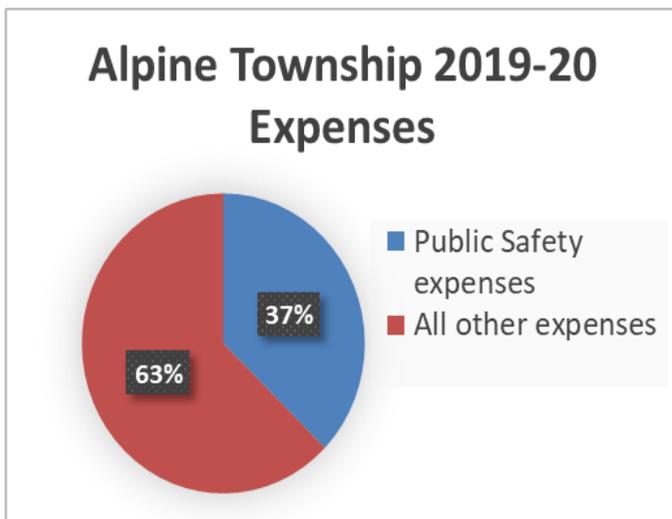
Township share of road construction and maintenance costs. Sidewalk and infrastructure costs.

The Rapid public transportation system

20% of Street light expenses

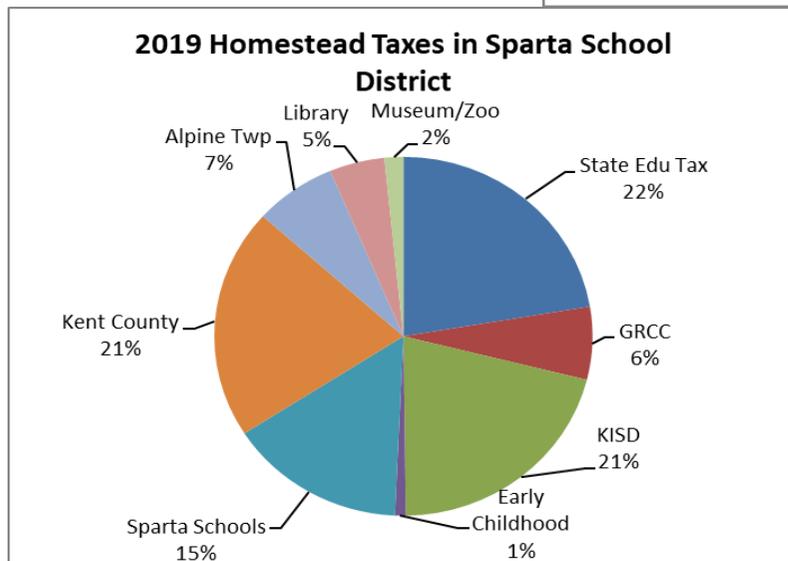
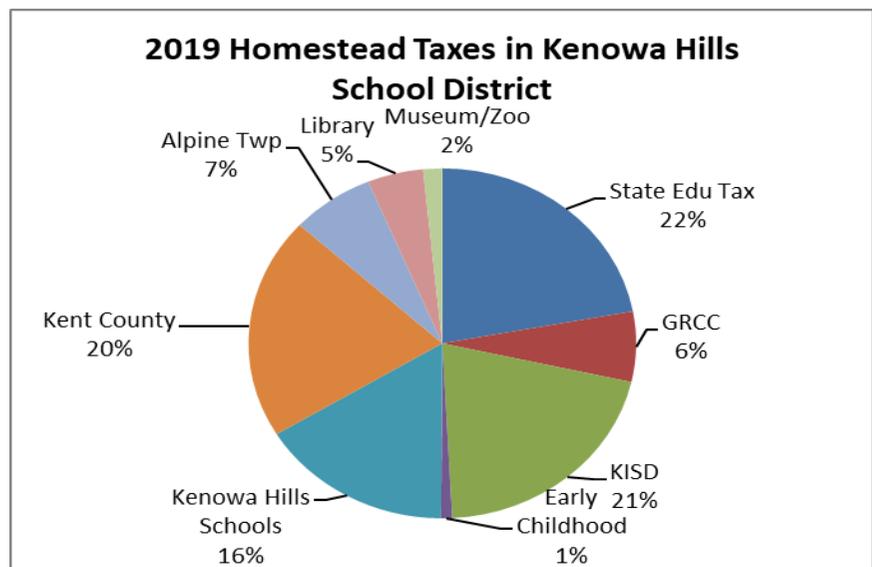
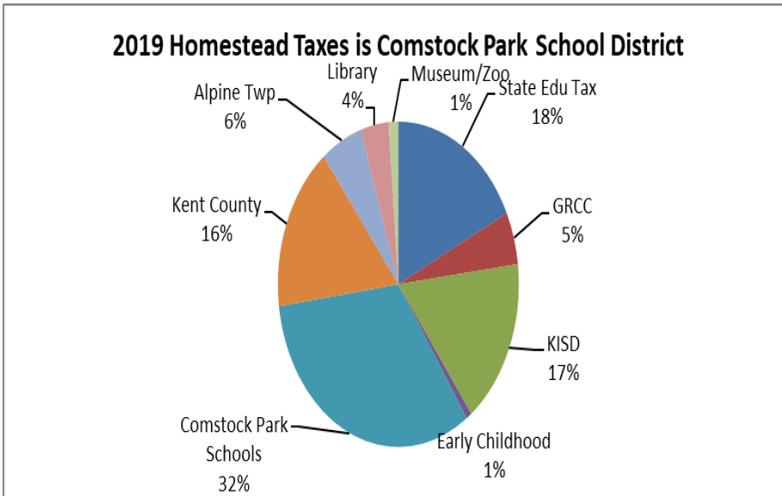
Watershed and storm drain expenses

Debt service (bond repayments)



Where Do My Tax Dollars Go?

When you write a check to Alpine Township for your property taxes, very little of that money remains with Alpine Township to provide services to the community. How can that be? It is because Alpine Township serves as the tax collecting agent for numerous other entities. The pie charts below illustrate where taxes collected by Alpine Township for owner-occupied homes are distributed:



Educational institutions receive the bulk of the tax dollars collected (State Education Tax, Grand Rapids Community College, Kent Intermediate School District, Early Childhood Education and local school districts). For example, in the Comstock Park School District in 2019, 73% of taxes received are for educational institutions and 6% of the taxes received remain with Alpine Township.

The property tax rates are expressed in mills. Property taxes are computed by multiplying the taxable value of the property by the number of mills levied. The total millage for an owner-occupied home in 2019 in each of the three school districts is:

Comstock Park	= 33.7182 mills
Kenowa Hills	= 22.7209 mills
Sparta	= 30.9272 mills

The following represents a typical home in the Comstock Park school district using 2019 millage figures. The figures would be somewhat different in the Kenowa Hills and Sparta school districts and would vary depending upon the taxable value of a home. For a typical home in the Comstock Park School District with a taxable value of \$63,000, the annual total tax bill would be \$2,124. The math is $[(33.7182 \text{ mills} \div 1,000) \times \$63,000] = \$2,124$ total tax bill and is broken down thus: Educational institutions receive the bulk of the tax dollars collected (State Education Tax, Grand Rapids Community College, Kent Intermediate School District, Early Childhood Education and local school districts). For example, in the Comstock Park School District in 2019, 73% of taxes received are for educational institutions and 6% of the taxes received remain with Alpine Township.

\$378	State Educational Tax	\$1,548	Educational functions
\$111	Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)		
\$354	Kent Intermediate School District (KISD)		
\$16	Early Childhood Education		
\$689	Comstock Park School District		
\$351	Kent County	\$469	Government functions
\$118	Alpine Township		
\$80	Library	\$107	Cultural functions
\$27	Zoo / Museum		
\$2,124	Total Tax Bill		

For a more detailed explanation of Township finances, please see the [Alpine Township Finance Primer](#) under the Documents tab at www.alpinetwp.org or at the Township offices.

ALPINE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Planned events are not scheduled through the winter months. We do work on most Wednesday mornings (9am-11am) at the Community Building in the office at 2015 7-mile Rd. NW. Call the Township (784-1262) to make an appointment or request information.

On-going projects involve the Veteran interviews and file/photo updates.

Also, the Alpine Township Fire Department project has started with interviews. Now we need help gathering photos and stories. As you read in the last Harvester, the early fire department started organizing in the 1940's and 50's. Under supervisor Charles Momber, Sr. the "volunteer" firemen began to form the original Alpine Fire Department Volunteers. Did you have a family member in this group? Did your farm or home have a fire during those early years, that you can relate to or have photos from that event? We are looking for firemen photos in groups or singles.

Spring Events –

March- A Book Sale is being planned to raise funds for the Historical Commission. Please donate your books, any age group or genre of book is wanted. We will post the plans on our website www.alpinetwp.org and on Facebook at [Alpine Township Historical](#), starting in January. Donations can be dropped off at the Community Building on 7 Mile on Wednesday mornings, or at the Township Office.

Sunday April 19th, The 11th Annual Maple Syrup Contest will be held at the Henze Center. Call 784-1262 to register your syrup.



Deputy Douglas's Safety Tips

It is important that we take steps to prevent ourselves from being victims of crimes. Today I will give you some tips to prevent yourself from being a victim of **scams**. The most common scams are Phone Scams, Charity Scams, and Caregiver Fraud. Phone scams occur when the suspect impersonates a business or agency in an attempt to collect money from you. Charity scams are current event related. 2020 is an election year and this scam will be used a lot. The suspect will also impersonate a local victim requesting assistance. Caregiver fraud occurs when the suspect steals property and or the identity of the victim. Senior citizens are usually victims of this type of fraud.

Avoiding Scams:

- If it's too good to be true.....
- Beware of unsolicited offers
- Don't confirm personal/financial info to unknown parties
- Screen phone calls
- Don't be afraid to be assertive

How to Protect your Information:

- Shred documents with personal information
- Use postal drop off sites vs home mail box
- Secure items that contain personal documents
- Don't respond to unsolicited requests for personal information
- Use secure websites when online (https)
- Use identity theft protection services

We are having Larcenies in the area again. The suspects have been entering unlocked cars and stealing anything of value. Please remember to lock your homes, car doors, and sheds and report any suspicious activity to the Kent County Sheriff's Office. Outdoor lighting is a great theft deterrent. LED motion detector lights work best because they are brighter and they last longer.

For up to date information about crimes in your area please download the FREE Kent County Sheriff's Office application onto your mobile device.

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Courtesy of GVMC

Michigan winters require a different style of driving due to many extreme conditions. It is important to exercise caution to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Avoid distractions such as phones.
- Look and wait for people walking to clear the intersection.
- Ensure that there is adequate space between you and the driver ahead of you.
- Check your blind spots before shifting lanes.
- Check your tires for adequate tread and tire pressure.
- Keep an ice scraper in your car.
- Don't use cruise control in snowy/icy conditions.
- Use extreme caution when driving on hills.
- Look for open areas off the road in case you find yourself sliding.
- Keep a container with a blanket, flashlight, hats, and gloves in your vehicle for emergencies.
- Keep tire chains, a shovel, and cat litter in your vehicle in case you or someone else gets stuck.

EVERYBODY COUNTS! 2020 U.S. CENSUS

This spring, the U.S. Census will be taken. You may not be aware that the Census population count has a financial impact on Alpine Township. State Revenue Sharing is distributed to municipalities on a per capita basis (\$65.00 per person in 2010).

Between 2000 and 2010, Alpine Township's population decreased by 640 persons to 13,336 people. Fewer people equals less revenue each year for 10 years until the next Census is taken.

In Alpine Township, the loss of 640 persons became a loss of approximately \$41,600 in revenue each year since 2010. So help shape your community's future by being counted. Thank You!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SATURDAY, January 25, 2020. Perrin Brewing Company will host the Frostbite 5K Run/ Walk. Events start at 2 p.m., Tickets cost \$35.00.

Proceeds for the event will be donated to Kid's Food Basket!

Go to their website for details.

Saturday March 7, 2020. The Mad Hatter 5K Run/Walk hosted by Holy Trinity Catholic School. Event starts at 9 a.m., cost is \$30.00. Proceeds go to buy a new ice machine for the school. Signup at runsignup.com/race/MI/ComstockPark/HolyTrinityMadhatterRun.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors:

1. This winter check on your neighbors (especially seniors) every few days. It makes a difference.
2. Get your children out of the house after it snows, shoveling is a great fitness activity. They might make a few bucks also.
3. Arrange to get your neighbors mail for them if they are unable to do so.
4. Bring a batch of homemade cookies to a neighbor, just because you can. That would bring smiles.

Beautiful and peaceful Hollyhocks!

Just in case you miss summer, this picture from 6683 Baumhoff will remind you of what you have to look forward to this coming summer.



**Fun for Seniors, Meet New Friends with the Golden Panthers
Save the Dates!**

At Greenridge School
3825 Oakridge Ave. NW

Programs begin at 11:00 AM

April 17, 2020 Artist Showcase. Area artist display their art from 11AM till 2PM.

Some items are for sale.

Free Ice Cream Social

The following event dates are still being planned.

April 24, May 1, 8, and 15.

For more information call 616-254-5243

E-Mail: cpgoldenpanthers@cpschools.com

Alpine Township has 3 facilities that are available for the residents of Alpine Township to rent. All three have a capacity to seat about 45 people. Rental cost is \$100.00 for the day. They are located at : 610 9 Mile Road. On the east side of Fire Station #3.

841 Alpine Church Street. On the lower level of Fire Station #1.

2015 7 Mile Road. In the Community Building.

Call Beth Alt at 784-1262 for more information.