

The RIM Newsletter

Rotary

In Motion



Club 16 (2809) District 6290, Chartered May 1, 1916
<http://www.muskegonrotary.org>

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?



Celebrating the people, events, and actions of the Muskegon Rotary Club, August 27, 2026

September 3, 2026, Beef Tips and Penne at the Lake House Program – Updates on Hackley Public Library and Torrent House

What's Coming

September 3 – Updates on Hackley
Public Library and Torrent House

Upcoming Birthdays

September 2 Tim Arter

September 3 Jon Gale

September 5 Darwin Smith

September 6 Kim Keessen

September 6 John Snider

September 8 Ryan Sterkenburg



Caring

Connections Fund

[Click here to donate](#)

Stage Manager This Week

Tiffany Dupont-Novak

Greeters This Week

Ryan Sterkenburg

Mary Boyd

Reflector This Week

Brad Hastings

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Emily Morgenstern

RIM Reporter – Kathy Moore

RIM Editor – Jackie Farrar



President Morgenstern begins the meeting playing "9 to 5" in honor of Dolly Parton.

Muskegon Rotary Board

Roger Morgenstern, President

Lisa Tyler, President-Elect

Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga & Arlen-Dean Gaddy,
President Nominees

Dave Alexander, Past President

Kimberly Taylor, Treasurer

Joanie Smith, Secretary

Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator

Directors:

Esther Ricco

Lisa Kraus

Melissa Moore

Samantha Scott

Dimitri Poland

Kelly DeVos

Martha Fohlbrook

John Selmon

Please email Club Board Members
through this [link](#):

Muskegon Rotary August 27th

YouTube Video:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Reflection



Brad Hastings give this week's reflection.

Visitors and Guests



Kathy Moore introduces Public Health colleagues, Joshua Ohst and Lionel Alexander III.



Visiting Rotarian, **Cori Christenson**, President of Gilbert, AZ Rotary Club presents our club with her home club's flag.



Mark Eisenbarth introduces, Muskegon County Executive Assistant, Kris Drexler.



Dave Medendorp introduces fellow Realtor, Eric Ratkiewicz.

This Week's Program:

Building Muskegon County
– Turning Data into Action

Presenters: **Jennifer Hodges**

Introduced by: **Mark Eisenbarth**

RIM Reporter:
Kathy Moore

RIM Photographer:
Emily Morgenstern



Mark Eisenbarth introduces this week's program.

Mark Eisenbarth introduced our guest speaker. Jennifer Hodges serves as the Housing Coordinator for Muskegon County and also serves as the Muskegon Charter Township Supervisor. In her role as Housing Coordinator, Jennifer works collaboratively with community stakeholders to address housing needs and expand opportunities for affordable, accessible, and diverse housing options throughout Muskegon County.



Jennifer Hodges, Housing Coordinator for Muskegon County presents this week's program.

Jennifer Hodges shared that her role encompasses many areas, making it difficult to summarize in a short presentation. Therefore, she focused her remarks on the progress and initiatives developed in response to the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment, which identified significant gaps and opportunities throughout the county. She also highlighted one of her important responsibilities—serving as a resource and problem-solver for some of our most vulnerable residents. In fact, she spent much of that morning gathering information and identifying potential solutions related to a recent housing crisis in a local mobile home community.

Her presentation emphasized that housing has become a countywide priority. The assessment identified a need for more than 9,000 additional homes across Muskegon County. The need is not simply for more housing, but for more housing choices—including options that vary in size, affordability, and accessibility.



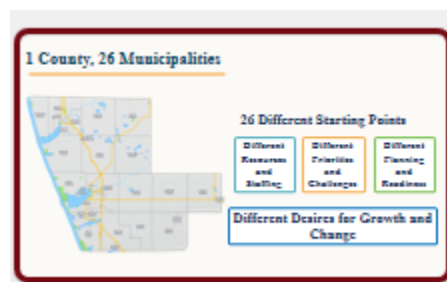
Jennifer explained that many working residents fall into a difficult gap: they earn too much to qualify for traditional housing assistance programs but do not earn enough to afford current housing market prices. She also noted that Muskegon County's existing housing stock is largely composed of three- and four-bedroom single-family homes, which does not meet the needs of approximately 62% of our population.

Housing, she explained, is directly connected to workforce development, economic growth, and long-term community stability. Housing influences who can live here, who can work here, and how communities plan for the future. Jennifer shared that 51% of employed residents work outside of Muskegon County, while 21,177 workers (38%) commute into Muskegon County—illustrating the important relationship between housing and the regional workforce.

Jennifer emphasized that the housing challenge has many contributing factors, including land availability, infrastructure, construction costs, financing, market demand, and local regulations. Addressing the issue requires multiple strategies and collaboration among many partners. She stated, "If we can create houses with smaller footprints in the communities that don't allow them,

we can bring those costs down to develop the homes for the people that need them."

That focus on building local capacity is at the center of Jennifer Hodges work. She continues to collaborate with municipalities, developers, employers, state agencies, and community organizations through housing education, zoning support, development mapping, resource coordination, capacity building, data and reporting, and implementation efforts. She reminded attendees that while Muskegon County is one county, each of the **26 municipalities** has its own unique challenges, opportunities, planning processes, and readiness levels. "We can't just build more housing; we have to create the conditions that make more housing possible." She noted that progress looks different in each community—but progress is happening. Some examples noted include zoning updates, ordinance amendments, master plan revisions, workshops, educational presentations, new partnerships, and increased collaboration.



Impressive progress! But, Jennifer emphasized that the work must continue. As Muskegon County's workforce grows, the community must grow with it. She is working on two additional tools to help support future housing development:

1. **A Countywide Corridor Analysis** – a visual planning tool that would identify underdeveloped or underutilized areas and illustrate opportunities for future development.
2. **A Countywide Brownfield Redevelopment Authority** – a resource that municipalities could access to help educate, advocate, and advise developers and communities on available tax incentives that can reduce costs and make housing projects more feasible.

Jennifer Hodges' presentation reinforced that solving Muskegon County's housing challenges will require continued collaboration, creativity, and commitment. By turning data into action and working together across communities, Muskegon County is building the foundation for a stronger future. Thank you, Jennifer, and everyone who has supported community housing efforts that will continue to make Muskegon County a great place to live, learn, work, and play!

This Week's Birthdays



Announcements



President Morgenstern gives club updates. He requests anyone with sewing capabilities contact him for a project putting together a banner with visiting club's flags.



Volunteers needed on Labor Day, September 7th to help put flags out on Seaway Drive. First shift is at 7:30am and second shift is to pick up flags at 7:00pm.



Muskegon Rising

ReWine Meeting Schedule 5:00pm social time - meeting starts at 5:15pm

- * Thursday September 3rd at Lake Effect Bistro & Lounge (located off the main lobby of the Shoreline Inn)
 - * Thursday September 17th at Socibowl
 - * Thursday October 1st at Lake Effect Bistro & Lounge (located off the main lobby of the Shoreline Inn)
 - * Thursday October 15, at Pigeon Hill Brewing Company
- RSVP by Wednesday at 5pm prior to each meeting by contacting Kaytie Drake at kaytieely@aol.com (Total # attending including guests)

Rotary in Action Kathy Evans



A Muskegon native, Kathy Evans joined Rotary in the summer of 2026, but she is not new to "Service Above Self". Retiring almost five years ago from the Regional Planning Office, Kathy stated that her background is in natural resources management and environmental planning. A lot of the work that she has done has to do with restoring fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, with a big focus on Muskegon Lake. She joined Rotary's Environmental and Sustainability Committee. She commented that participating in Rotary makes a person a better collaborator and increases success because of the unique collaboration that happens. She loves that Rotary provides the opportunity to "think globally but act locally".

Watch the full video [here](#)

Adopt-A-Highway Program Looking for Volunteers



Our next pickup for the Muskegon Rotary stretch of highway on I-96 will be on Saturday, September 26.

Volunteers will meet promptly at 7:30am for a short safety talk, then head out on the road to pick trash. (We will finish no later than 10am, sooner if we get a lot of help 😊).

I am also looking for two drivers to drive along with the volunteers who are picking trash. If you can help, please contact Esther Ricco, estherricco@hotmail.com or 616-283-1810 and she can provide you with details.

Be a part of keeping our adopted stretch clean and taking action to protect our environment!

RIM Reporting Team

Editors: Susan Besteman, Jackie Farrar, and Ginny Sprague

Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie, Sue Samaniego, and Ginny Sprague

Photographers: Wyatt Huggett, Brock Johnson, and Emily Morgenstern