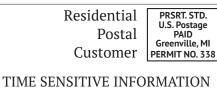




Your Good News Paper.



**POSTMASTER:** Please deliver on February 15, 2025

Printed with soy ink on recycled paper

The Market Pat

Moody on

Moody

#### Mason Jar Cafe owners investing in major renovation

"We believe in the community. We're staying in this area. We are investing." That's the sentiment from Mason Jar Cafe owners Jayme Cousins and Abel Abarca as they close for two weeks to begin a major renovation of their life's work.

While closing a restaurant for two weeks during the throes of a fickle Southwest Michigan winter might not seem like much of a sacrifice, it can feel like an eternity for people familiar with the popular breakfast and brunch spot in the heart of Benton Harbor's Arts District.

But the pain will only be temporary, and the husband-and-wife owners are excited about the planned improvements.

"We've had the same size kitchen since we opened. It was made to accommodate only about 40 people and since (then) we've expanded to (seat) about 220 people. So, we are doing a full kitchen remodel," said Cousins.

Abarca said the new kitchen will accommodate 10 staff where the current space typically bursts at five to seven people.

In addition to building a brand-new kitchen that will be double the size of the current one, they're creating a formal bar/coffee barista area at the rear of the space and installing four new unisex bathrooms. They're installing a new roof, a new fire suppression system, updated walls and flooring, and adding dining area seating.

Abarca said the budget for the overhaul is \$800,000 and Pantelleria Construction Services is the chosen contractor for the work. Cousins said they've been thinking about a renovation for the better part of the last five vears

"We're going to try and keep it in line with how we are right now. We don't want to change the 'eclectic mess' of the cafe, but we do want to make it more functional. There will be seats at the bar so you can come in and get a drink or have a coffee and sit down."

**Restauranteur Collaboration** 

Starting Monday, February 10, the Mason Jar will be closed for two weeks. When they reopen, they will borrow Grand Mere Inn's Ducks on the Run food truck to use as a tem-

Continued on page 4



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#### Sarah Spoonholtz

Regional Director. SMR Chamber

While we continue to wait on any changes to the new Minimum Wage, Tip Credit, and the Earned Stick Time Act before they take effect on Friday, February 21st. We did receive a different update from Lansing this week, courtesy of our partners at the Michigan Chamber.

On Tuesday, Governor Whitmer released a proposal to attempt to generate \$3 BILLION in new long term road funding revenues. Called

the "MI Road Ahead Plan" one of the more significant parts of the plan includes the attempt of raising \$1.6 billion via new taxes on Michigan businesses.

Advocacy Update - Governor Whitmer's Proposed Road Budget

Some of they key wording from the Governor's office on this includes:

The MI Road Ahead Plan is a \$3 billion long-term, sustainable funding solution that is

*Continued on page 2* 

#### **Inserts & Promotions**

<sup>2</sup>SERVICES

VETERAN

- Family Fare
- Love Your Pets Guide
- Martins Super Markets
- Renewal By Andersen
- Slumberland Furniture

Inserts may vary by zip code

#### **Spoonholtz** Continued from cover

not funded on the backs of commuters. It will lower vehicle repair costs, invest in local roads and transit, and ask big corporations to pay their fair share to do business in Michigan.

**Ensuring every dollar Michigan drivers pay at the pump goes to roads.** Under laws set by previous administrations, 25% of the sales tax drivers pay on gas is diverted away from fixing the roads, leaving a gap in funding. The governor's plan will close the gap by ensuring that every penny drivers pay at the pump goes toward Michigan infrastructure. It ensures local governments still get the resources they need through Constitutional Revenue Sharing, with the plan holding the School Aid Fund harmless.

Requiring big tech and corporations to pay their fair share. Governor Whitmer's plan will ask Big Tech industries, led by the nation's wealthiest individuals, and massive corporations pay their fair share to do business in Michigan and use Michigan roadways. Currently, Michigan laws have not been updated to account for the corporations that haul heavy weights on Michigan roadways and bombard Michiganders with nuisance pop ups and ads. This will raise \$1.6 billion in additional revenue to fix the roads without putting the costs on the backs of everyday Michiganders.

One of the rumored parts of the above includes an increase to the state's **Corporate Income Tax** (CIT) from the current **6% rate to 8%**. Specific details on the increase have yet to be made clear, but other sources of revenue listed in the in the plan include:

A new wholesale tax on marijuana, that would account for \$470 million in new revenue;
Increased fees or taxes on digital adver-

tising, delivery services and heavy trucks; and • \$500 million from "cutting red tape and finding savings in government to pay for roads." Michigan's chronic underfunding of road maintenance and rebuilding has led to our state having some of the worst transportation infrastructure in the country.

• While bonding and federal funding have helped in recent years to mitigate a bad problem from getting even worse, those funds are quickly running out and the state faces a significant funding shortfall, or fiscal cliff, for road funding later in 2025.

• Michigan is chronically underfunding road construction and currently has an estimated annual **revenue gap of \$3.9 billion**.

However, an increase in the CIT is not a realistic solution, as it **puts Michigan's economic competitiveness and jobs at risk**, creating a stifling business climate and would not be an appropriate or sustainable source of revenue.

• 87% of businesses that pay the CIT have fewer than 100 employees and are already facing higher costs and economic headwinds from supply chain disruptions, labor shortages and inflation.

• Michigan's CIT is already higher than half the country, including Midwest competitors like Ohio and Indiana. In fact, 16 states have cut their CIT rates since 2018. Moving in the opposite direction will have a chilling effect on future business investment.

Governor Whitmer presented her budget to the Joint Appropriations Committee last week, however, the new taxes proposed Tuesday were *not* included in the \$83.5 billion budget proposal. A proposed \$3.1 billion road funding plan that relies solely on re-prioritizing existing state revenues has been presented in the House but has not gained traction yet.

For more information on what's happening with the Chamber, including our role in advocating for businesses, head to our website www.smrchamber.com or feel free to connect with me directly at 269-932-4040 or sspoonholtz@smrchamber.com. See you around Southwest Michigan!



#### 50,314 Weekly Readers!

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Photo of the Week



#### **Pier Michigan** Photo by Lyn Braddock

Please email your favorite photo with a brief description to <u>Photos@MailMaxOnline.com</u> Photos must be horizontal orientation to be considered for Photo of the Week.

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#### More Love Than You Can Know

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge. Ephesians 3:17-19

Ten-year-old Aiden loved everything about the ocean, as anyone who met him would know.

"Did you know that the earth's oceans are just one huge body of water covering seventy-one percent of our planet?" Aiden would ask out of nowhere. "That's one hundred thirty-nine million square miles!"

"My favorite is the Pacific Ocean. It's massively huge! The biggest thing on the planet-bigger than all the continents put together! And it's incredibly deep. The average is maybe twelve thousand feet, but there's this place called the Mariana Trench, and the guy who made the Titanic movie went down there in a submersible and made videos, and it was seven miles down! It's so cool!"

If you let him, Aiden could talk for hours about his passion. But here's the thing: Aiden's family lived far from the coast, and he had never visited the ocean in person. He never experienced its vastness or heard its waves.

PLANK'S

TAVERN

**Grilled Raspberry Chicken Dinner** 

Instead, he soaked up every book and video from the library that would reveal more details about his favorite subject.

The apostle Paul was just as passionate in the way he talked about Jesus Christ. He wanted others to share his love and to discover what a wonderful Savior we have in Jesus. Unlike Aiden and the ocean, though, Paul did personally encounter Jesus. He knew his love firsthand. Previously, Paul had been violently persecuting Christians, dragging them to prison. But Jesus had mercy on him, forgave him, and called him to proclaim his saving grace to the world.

The love that Christ has for you is more than you can ever fully know. You can spend a lifetime exploring its heights and depths and never reach its limits. But it is worth the investment of your time. Join with the rest of God's people who share this passion in learning what it means to be loved by him.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I have only scratched the surface of learning about your ises so that I may know you better. Amen.

#### **Moody** *Continued from cover*

porary kitchen space until the new kitchen is fully finished.

"The Racines are wonderful people. We had been looking for a mobile kitchen for a while and then my husband was like, 'Well, Charlie has a food truck and they're not using it right now.' So, he went over there one night and talked to Charlie, and he said, 'Okay, you can borrow it. That's no big deal.' It's amazing. They're really great people."

While the temporary kitchen is in place, Cousins said the menu will be abbreviated.

We're probably going to have to shorten the menu down a little bit when we're working out of the food truck, though I don't think the truck is much smaller than what we're working in right now."

Even though the temporary menu will be missing some items, Cousins promised, "The pancakes will not be affected."

#### New Staff Opportunities

With the updates and expanded areas, Cousins and Abarca said they plan to add more people to the team. As many as 10 in

www.MailMaxOnline.com ing, reorganizing, and that kind of stuff that they'll all be able to come in and help with and get paid for."

Abarca said the team's willingness to help outside of their typical roles is something he never expected.

'I thought the staff would be like, 'Well, you guys are closing so we'll be on vacation. No. They all want to do something. They want to come and help. I don't know what we'd do without them. Everyone is so excited and wants to be part of the demolition. They want to be part of doing something. I don't know how to say it. We have a hell of a team."

#### **Suicide Prevention Coalition** receives support from Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors

The Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition has received a boost from the Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors.

**Public Welcome** 

Hours:



Mary Couitcher is a volunteer with the Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition and also an associate of the Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors. She tells us when the realtors held their annual holiday luncheon and fundraising auction this year, they opted to support the coalition with the proceeds.

Couitcher says as suicides rise in Berrien County, it's more important than ever to offer people help. That's what the Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition is all about.

They promote the 988 yard sign, which is a national suicide crisis lifeline for anybody considering taking their lives or anyone who's dealing, how to help somebody that they fear for," Couitcher said. "So the coalition pours a lot of money into that, I think the Realtor Association really saw that and thought, 'Yeah, we definitely want to support this because mental health really is getting more and more important to have a focus on it."

Couitcher says the Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors auction raised a total of \$15,647. Half went to the Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and half went to the Will Help Foundation. She says the coalition will use the donation to continue spreading the word about mental health support services and promoting the 988 suicide crisis line.

In 2023, suicides were up 33% in Berrien County. If you or anyone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, call 988 to be connected with help.

Round Barn unveils 'Bourbon Barn' at Saturday Grand Opening

The Round Barn family is growing. The largest winery group in Berrien County has been expanding into the 'spirts space' for several years and takes the next step Saturday with the Grand Opening of 'The Bourbon Barn' It's located on the Round Barn Winerv & Estate, 10983 Hills Road, Baroda 49101.

Jose BREAKFAST HOUSE <sup>\$200</sup>OFF ANY ORDER OF \$25 OR MORE Expires 3/1/25 Dine In Only Must present coupon \$**300**0FF ANY ORDER OF \$40 OR MORE Expires 3/1/25 Dine In Only Must present coupon <sup>\$500</sup>OFF ANY ORDER OF \$60 OR MORE Expires 3/1/25 Dine In Only Must present coupon



According to the Round Barn folks, guests at the Grand Opening will "savor expertly curated bourbon flights, featured cocktails, and a selection of unique offerings while they experience the warmth and charm of Round Barn with every pour, and discover the heart of Round Barn in every sip."

Event Details & Highlights Saturday, February 15

Explore and enjoy Round Barn Distillery's finest spirits

 New Bourbon Products: Maple Bourbon and Port Finished Bourbon

- Bourbon Honey Cocktail Feature
- Bourbon Spirits Flight
- Meet & Greet Distiller, Robbie Scudder
- No cover charge/No reservation needed • 21+ only

Pat Moody

Publisher, MoodyOnTheMarket.com moody@wsjm.com



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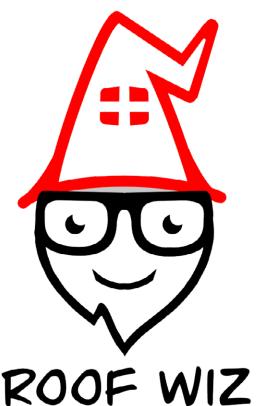
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PROUD





#### 2024 FORD BRONCO **SPORT 4X4 BIG BEND**

Shadow Black, 17 Inch Carbon Gray High Gloss Wheels, Rear Parking Sensors, Heated Front Seats, Wireless Charging Pad, Cargo Net, 1.5 Ecoboost Engine, and Much More! F24285

MSRP .....\$32,850 SIEMANS DISCOUNT...... 750 TRADE-IN ASSISTANCE BONUS CASH\*\* - 1,500 **SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$30,600** JEEP COMPETITIVE CONQUEST BONUS CASH\*\* - 1,000 MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH \* \_ 500

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#### **2024 FORD EXPEDITION XLT 4X4**

Agate Black Metallic, Black Accent Package, 20 Inch Gloss Black Painted Wheels, Panoramic Vista Roof, PowerFold Third Row Seat, and Much More! F24268

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MSRP\$72,410
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 2,915
TRADE-IN ASSISTANCE BONUS CASH** - 5,750
<b>SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$63,745</b>
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH* - 500
AS LOW AS \$63,245
PLUS 1.9% FOR 36 MONTHS,
2.9% FOR 48 MONTHS, 3.9% FOR 60 MONTHS,
<b>OR 4.9% FOR 72 MONTHS*</b>
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**RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY/MUST TRADE-IN QUALIFY-
ING FORD VEHICLE



#### 2024 FORD F-150 SUPERCREW STX 4X4

Atlas Blue Metallic, 2.7 V6 Ecoboost Engine, 20 Inch Dark Gray Aluminum Wheels, Locking Rear Axle, 12 Inch Touchscreen, Blind Spot Detection, Cross Path Detection, and Much More! F24276

MSRP\$52,680
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 1,685
TRADE-IN ASSISTANCE BONUS CASH** - 3,000
TRADE-IN ASSISTANCE BONUS CASH** - 500
<b>SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$47,495</b>
SILVERADO/SIERRA/TUNDRA/TITAN CONQUEST CASH** - 2,000
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH* - 500
AS LOW AS \$44,995
PLUS 1.9% FOR 36 MONTHS,
2.9% FOR 48 MONTHS, 3.9% FOR 60 MONTHS,
or 5.9% FOR 72 MONTHS*

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**CAB 4X4 LARIAT TREMOR** 

Iconic Silver, Leather Seats, 7.3 V8 Engine, Chrome

Package, 35 Inch Off Road All Terrain Tires, Vehicle

Safe by Console Vault, Power Twin Panel Moonroof,

Tough Bed Spray-In Bedliner, Tailgate Step, Naviga-

tion, 360 Degree Camera, B&O Sound System, and Much More! F24077 MSRP.....\$78,810

SIEMANS DISCOUNT.....- 4,315

**SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$74,495** 

FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH\* - 500

AS LOW AS \$73,995

\*MUST OUALIFY



#### 2024 FORD E-450 **15 FOOT BOX TRUCK**

Oxford White, Cloth Seats, Remote Keyless Entry, Power Mirrors, Cruise Control, Rear View Camera, Power Windows and Locks, Exterior Upgrade Package, Limited Slip Rear Axle, and Much More! F24037

MSRP\$43,140
ADD FOR WABASH CARGO BOX <u>+18,907</u>
SUBTOTAL\$62,047
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 6,052
<b>SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$55,995</b>
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH* $\underline{-500}$
<b>AS LOW AS \$55,495</b>
*MUST QUALIFY



#### 2024 FORD BRONCO **RAPTOR 4 DOOR 4X4**

Oxford White, Onyx/Blue Leather with Suede Seats, Interior Carbon Fiber Package, Hardtop, Navigation, 360 Degree Camera, 12 Inch Touchscreen, Too

don, 500 Degree camera, 12 men road	inscreen, roo
Many Off Road Items to List! Sharp!	F24105
MSRP	\$96,650
SIEMANS DISCOUNT	10,655
RETAIL CUSTOMER CASH**	<u>- 3,000</u>

**SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$82,995** JEEP COMPETITIVE CONQUEST BONUS CASH\*\* - 2,000

MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH\* - 500 AS LOW AS \$80,495

\*MUST QUALIFY \*\*RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY



Avalanche, 3.5 PowerBoost Full Hybrid V6 Engine, Trailer Brake Controller, 20 Inch Chrome-Like PVD Wheels, Twin Panel Moonroof, Locking Rear Axle, B&O 8 Speaker Sound System, Power Sliding Rear Window, Heated Front Seats, Wireless Charging Pad, and Much More! F24106

.....\$67,015 MSRP. SIEMANS DISCOUNT.....- 4,020 TRADE-IN ASSISTANCE BONUS CASH\*\* - 3,000 **SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$59,995** SILVERADO/SIERRA/TUNDRA/TITAN CONQUEST CASH\*\* - 2,000 MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION EXCLUSIVE CASH\* - 500

AS LOW AS \$57,495 PLUS 1.9% FOR 36 MONTHS, 2.9% FOR 48 MONTHS, 3.9% FOR 60 MONTHS,

**OR 5.9% FOR 72 MONTHS\*** \*MUST OUALIFY/MUST FINANCE THRU FORD MOTOR CREDIT \*\*RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY/MUST TRADE-IN QUALIFY-ING FORD VEHICLE



#### 2024 FORD F-650 **24 FOOT BOX TRUCK**

Oxford White, 7.3 V8 Engine, Wabash Aluminum Box, 60 Gallon Fuel Tank, Power Windows and Locks, Remote Keyless Entry, and Much More! F24021

MSRP	\$74,950
ADD FOR WABASH ALUMINU	
SUBTOTAL	\$103,517
SIEMANS DISCOUNT	<u>- 13,522</u>

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2024 JEEP COMPASS

Diamond Black Crystal, Leatherette Seats, Heated
Front Seats, Heated Steering Wheel, Power Seat, 10
Inch Touchscreen Radio, Blind Spot and Cross Path
Detection, Remote Start, and Much More! C24048
MSRP\$36,585
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 1,090
NATIONAL RETAIL CONSUMER CASH - 500
RETAIL BONUS CASH 2,500
NATIONAL PRESIDENTS DAY RETAIL BONUS CASH - 1,500
SELECT INVENTORY BONUS CASH - 2,000
<b>SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$28,995</b>
SFS LEASE LOYALTY BONUS CASH* - 1,500
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER BONUS CASH* - 500
AS LOW AS \$26,995
*MUST QUALIFY/ MUST FINANCE THRU CHRYSLER CAPITAL



PROMASTER 14 FOOT BOX TRUCK

Bright White, Bay Bridge 14 Foot Box Truck, Roll-Out Ramp, E-Track, Sliding Bulkhead Door, Chrome Front Grille, Wide Power Heated Mirrors, Front Fog Lamps, and Much More! C23244

MSRP	
ADD FOR BAY BRIDGE 14 FOOT PROMASTER SHE	ET/POST BOX <u>+14,376</u>
SUBTOTAL	\$61,621
SIEMANS DISCOUNT	<u>- 17,626</u>





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Abyss Finish Wheels, Heated Steering Wheel, Heated Front Seats, Power Seat, Adaptive Speed Control, Parksense Rear Park Assist, Lane Keep Assist, Full Speed Forward Collision Warning, and Much More! C24094

MSRP......\$45,185 SIEMANS DISCOUNT.....- 1,190 NATIONAL RETAIL CONSUMER CASH - 7,500 NATIONAL PRESIDENTS DAY BONUS CASH - 500 SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$35,995 SFS LEASE LOYALTY BONUS CASH\* - 2,000 MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER BONUS CASH\* - 500 AS LOW AS \$33,495 \*MUST QUALIFY/ MUST FINANCE THRU CHRYSLER CAPITAL

2024 JEEP WRANGLER

**RUBICON** 43X4

Hydro Blue Pearl, 3.6 V6 Engine, Black 3 Piece Hard-

top, Automatic Transmission, Heated Front Seats,

Heated Steering Wheel, Remote Start, and Much

More! C24089

SIEMANS DISCOUNT..... 1,952

NATIONAL STANDALONE 10% BELOW MSRP - 5,648

**SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$48,875** 

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Silver Zynith, Nappa Leather Seats, Navigation, Sky One Touch Power Top, 12 Inch Touchscreen, Heated Front Seats, Power Driver and Passenger Seats, Alpine Premium Audio System, Remote Start, Adaptive Cruise Control, Blind Spot and Cross Path Detection, Trailer Tow and Auxiliary Switch Group, 20 Inch Wheels, Heated Steering Wheel, Off-Road Camera, and Much More! C24106

MSRP......\$71,480 SIEMANS DISCOUNT......- 2,985 NATIONAL RETAIL CONSUMER CASH - 7,500 NATIONAL PRESIDENTS DAY BONUS CASH - 500 SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$60,495 MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER BONUS CASH\* - 500 AS LOW AS \$59,995



Jeep

Bright White, 20 Inch Gloss Black Painted Aluminum Wheels, Heated Steering Wheel, Heated Front Seats, Remote Start, Power Liftgate, Wireless Charging Pad, Adaptive Cruise Control, Active Lane Management, Blind Spot and Cross Path Detection, and Much More! C24087

MSRP\$48,080
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 1,585
RETAIL BONUS CASH 2,500
NATIONAL PRESIDENTS DAY RETAIL BONUS CASH - 1,500
<b>SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$42,495</b>
SFS LEASE LOYALTY BONUS CASH* - 2,000
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER BONUS CASH* - 500
AS LOW AS \$39,995



#### 2024 RAM 5500 43X4 DUMP TRUCK

Flame Red, 6.7 Cummins DIESEL Engine, Heavy Duty Snow Plow Prep Package, Chrome Tubular Side Steps, MAX Tow Package, Chrome Appearance Group, Power Windows and Locks, VOTH Drop Side Dump Body, and Much More! C24081

MSRP\$78,020
ADD FOR VOTH DUMP BODY
SUBTOTAL\$108,866
SIEMANS DISCOUNT 10,371
RAM COMMERCIAL PRODUCT BONUS CASH COUPONS - 5,000
ON-THE-JOB COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT/UPFIT** - 1,000
NATIONAL TRUCK MONTH BONUS CASH - 2,500
SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$89,995
MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER BONUS CASH* - 500
AS LOW AS \$89,495
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February 15, 2025 MailMax Page 7



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3.6 V6 Engine, 8 Speed Automatic, Aluminum Wheels, Less Than 25K Miles! Security Cover, MOPAR Spray-In Bedliner, Running Boards, Remote Start, Navigation, Premium McKinley Leather Heated Front Seats, Heated Steering Wheel, Alpine Premium Audio System, Back-Up Camera, Frailer Tow Package, Remote Keyless Entry System, Jeep Certified! Snazzberry Pearlcoat, F24333/

2021



5.7 V8 HEMI ETorque Engine, 8 Speed Automatic, Polished Painted Wheels with Inserts, 30K Miles Security Cover, Bedliner, Running Boards, Remote Start, Navigation, Memory Power Leather Heated/AC Front Seats, Heated Steering Wheel, 210 Row Heated Seats, Front Collision Mitigation Back-Up Camera, Remote Keyless Entry System, Ram Certified! Bright White, F24282A



3.6 V6 Engine, 8 Speed Automatic, Aluminum Wheels, 31K Miles, Remote Start, Navigation, Memory Power Leather Heated Front Seats, Heated Steering Wheel, 2<sup>10</sup> Row Heated Seats, 7-Passenger Seating, Adaptive Cruise Control, Bind Spot Monitor, Lane Keeping Assist, Lane Departure Warning, Front and Rear Collision Mitigation, Back-Up Camera, Power Liftgate, Remote Keyless Entry System, Balance of Factory Warranty! Baltic Gray Metallic, U25001

Dan

Zarobsky

Alisha

Danneffel

Jim McLean



2.7 V6 Engine, 10 Speed Automatic, Aluminum Wheels, Less Than 3K Miles! Remote Start, Navigation, Convertible Hardtop, Climate Control, Blind Spot Monitor, Cross-Traffic Alert, Lane Keeping Assist, Lane Departure Varning, Front Collision Mitigation, Back-Up Camera, Remote Keyless Entry System, Ford Certified! Cactus Gray, U24166

Jonathan Ingels

大

Jeff Miller

2.3 Ecoboost Engine, 10 Speed Automatic, Aluminum Wheels, 47K Miles, FX4 Off-Road Package, Bedliner, Running Boards, Trailer Tow Package, Sport Appearance Package, Auto Climate Control, Front Collision Mitigation and Warning, Back-Up Camera, Remote Keyless Entry System, Ford Certified! U24082A

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#### A Slightly Butchered Valentine's Day Column

The other day, on a nationally televised program, someone saluted Valentine's Day with a comment along the lines of "Here's to VD!" If you don't find that super-amusing, I hope you'll like today's column topic better - it also relates to a nationally televised program. (If you do think that line's funny, then look for it in one of my future columns!)

It all started when I checked out a lengthy list of notable people born on February 14, Valentine's Day. The first name was someone I'd never heard of – Leone Battista Alberti, born in 1404. A much more recent name on the list was Paul Butcher, born in 1994, and also someone I'd never heard of.

You're probably wondering, "Geez, Stuart never heard of these guys; what could possibly be notable about them?" Well, Alberti was an Italian author, artist, architect, poet, linguist, philosopher, and cryptographer, and general Renaissance polymath. (While "polymath" might at first blush sound vaguely illegal or unsavory, it's actually a complimentary term defined as "really REALLY knowledgeable, much like your local weekly humor columnist.")

Here's Paul Butcher's resume: Child actor, best-known as "Dustin Brooks" on the Nickelodeon TV show "Zoey 101."

I almost allowed this enormous discrepancy between the significance of Alberti's life accomplishments versus those of Butcher to distract me into a lengthy rumination on the state of our culture until I realized - I know who Paul Butcher is! I've watched him act scads of times! (If you want to call it "acting"; let's say he brought new meaning to the notion of "Butchering a role.")

I watched "Zoey 101" with my kids, in the spirit of attentive parenting. Of course, parenting, attentive or otherwise, was hardly germane to "Zoey 101." The series was set at a fictional boarding school called "Pacific Coast Academy"; parents, attentive or otherwise, were nowhere to be found. And they were apparently not much present behind the scenes either, as the star of "Zoey 101," Jamie Lynn Spears, rather famously became pregnant at age 15.

Anyway, while Paul Butcher's outstanding life's work deservedly landed him on a list of notable February 14, uh, "birthees," he - like Leone Battista Alberti – needs a career boost since "Zoev 101" is defunct. My suggestion: Alberti's descendants should join with Paul Butcher's people and develop a new TV show that raises both their profiles. After all, with the global events generally overcooking in a fondue pot of chaos, the world really needs more mind-numbingly terrible kid's TV like "Zoey 101." So, I suggest a spinoff, starring Paul Butcher and a new "nutty professor" cast member named "Leone Battista Alberti"!

Maybe the cast could also include a wild and crazy gym teacher and coach, modeled after Paul Butcher's father, who borders on "famous and notable" in his own right: He's Paul Butcher, Sr., former National Football League player.

While web-surfing for info on Paul Butcher the linebacker, I learned something wonderful that I offer as a tip to the scriptwriters of the "Zoey 101" spinoff: The show's target audience will bust a gut laughing at the "Leone Battista Alberti" character if he sports the nickname given to Butcher the linebacker.: "Dr. Psycho."

Trust me, kids LOVE that kind of stuff. Which reminds me - love is what this column is all about! Happy Valentine's Day!

TakefiveT5@yahoo.com



#### **Dave Savs** She'll Be Just Fine

Dear Dave.

My mom is 76, and the only debt she has is about \$60,000 left on her mortgage. She has \$600,000 in retirement accounts, plus a long-term care insurance policy. But she has just \$25,000 in a money market account with check-writing privileges for everyday bills and purchases. To be honest, this worries me. She has always lived within her means, so am I wrong to be concerned? She has also been talking about paying off her mortgage, and I'm not sure how I feel about that, either. I'd love your opinion.

Kelly Dear Kelly,

You sound surprised that she'd still be in the stock market at her age. In my mind, that's not a bad thing at all. It might not be what the typical financial planner would tell you to do, because for the most part they'll try to get you to be super-conservative with your money as you get older. But from the way you've described things, it sounds like she's not planning on using this money, but using the income from the money. If that's the case, she won't whittle it all down to nothing. So, if she's in good mutual funds—not single stocks-I think she'll be just fine.

Now, let's talk about the mortgage. I would absolutely recommend she go ahead a pay it off. If she can do that at age 76 and

FOR MEN and WOMEN

www.MailMaxOnline.com still have \$540,000 left, that's the way to go. Let's pay off the house, and then she can start taking her income off a percentage of the remainder. She won't need much with the house payment out of the way, because she won't be sending money to the bank to pay the anymore. –Dave

The Best Laid Plans...

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have been talking about paying off our mortgage in the next two or three years. Do you think we should make this happen by paying extra toward the house, or invest that money on top of the 15% we're putting into retirement? March

Dear March,

If I were in your shoes, I'd pay extra on the house. On the other hand, you're not really doing a bad thing by putting the extra cash it into retirement, either.

But here's the deal. No matter how well you plan, you never know exactly what will happen over the upcoming years of your life-or the life of your investments. You might think you know. You may even believe you've taken every possibility into account. The hard, cold truth, though, is even the best and smartest plans don't always work out the way we think they will-or the way we want them to.

And if something unplanned or unforeseen happens, it sure would be a nice thing to own your home free and clear, wouldn't it? -Dave

\* Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.

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#### **Transparent Pricing Can Save You** Money & Stress on Home Services

We have ALL at one point or another called on a plumber, electrician, or contractor to find a solution to a problem that we have going on in our home. Does anyone else feel like you have no idea what you're really going to pay? Many homeowners have been there-getting an estimate that sounds reasonable, only to be hit with unexpected costs once the work is done. These uncertainties only add to the ever-building anxiety that comes with a major in-home repair.

The home service industry-covering everything from AC & Furnace repairs to replacements-has a long history of unclear pricing. Some companies give vague estimates, charge by the hour without explaining how long the job will take, or tack on hidden fees. Here at BOSS Services we practice a new trend that is changing that: transparent pricina.

#### Why Hidden Costs Are a Problem

If you've ever received a bill that was much higher than expected, you know how frustrating it can be. A survey by Consumer Reports found that 64% of homeowners have felt overcharged for home services at some point. Let's break down their biggest complaints:

- Unclear or misleading estimates
- Extra charges that weren't explained upfront

- Hourly pricing that dragged out the final bill

Companies that use transparent pricing are making it easier for homeowners to know exactly what they're paying for-before the work even starts.

#### How Transparent Pricing Helps You

Transparent pricing is quite simple & ethical, it means a company tells you the total cost upfront, with no hidden fees or surprises. This can take place in different forms, such as:

- Flat-rate pricing - Instead of an hourly charge, the company gives you a fixed price for the iob.

- No-hidden-fee policies - If extra work is needed, they get your approval before adding costs. This type of pricing helps homeowners in

multiple ways:

- You can compare prices easily - You won't be surprised by a huge bill at the end of the project
  - You can budget with confidence
  - You'll feel more in control

#### Things to Look for When Hiring a Home Service Provider

Not all companies offer clear pricing, so it's important to ask the right questions before hiring someone:

• Do you offer flat-rate pricing or charge by the hour? Is this estimate the final price, or could it

change? Are there any additional fees I should know

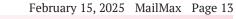
about?

If a company is hesitant to answer these questions, it might be a red flag. The best service providers are upfront about costs and won't surprise you with extra fees.

#### Leading the Charge for the Future of Home Services

At the end of the day, you deserve to know what you're paying for. Transparent pricing isn't just about getting a fair deal-it's about peace of mind. When you hire a contractor, plumber, or electrician, you should feel confident that the price you agreed on is the price you'll pay.

So next time you need home repairs or improvements, make sure you choose a company that values honesty and transparency. Your wallet-and your stress levels-will thank you.



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#### LEGALS

Planning Commission Public Hearing - PUD

The Lake Charter Township Planning Commission will conduct a Public Hearing for a request for approval of a Final Plan for a Site Condominium Commercial PUD (Planned Unit Development) on March 3, 2025 at 7:00pm. at the Township Hall located at 3220 Shawnee Rd. Bridgman, MI 49106.

The request is for an approval of a Final Plan for a Site Condominium Commercial PUD and has been applied for by Mike Scott for property number 11-11-0018-0003-11-0 located on approximately 2.8 acres fronting Red Arrow Hwy within the C-1 (Commercial) District. The site plan as presented consists of: a 1.200sf commercial building and several residential homes. The

submitted Final Plan Site Condominium Commercial PUD is required to follow the Township's Zoning Ordinance for a Special Use Commercial PUD. Additional information pertaining to this Public Hearing, of the submitted Final Plan for the Site Condominium

Commercial PUD, will be available at the Lake Charter Township Hall Written comments will be accepted through March 3,

2025 by 11:00am. at the Lake Township Hall (3220 Shawnee Rd. P.O. Box 818 Bridgman, MI 49106) or through e-mail at rkubsch@lake-township.org.

The Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those with disabilities planning to attend upon seven (7) days' notice to the Township Clerk. If you require such aids or services and plan to attend this meeting, please call the Township.

All interested parties will be heard during the meeting. Richard Kubsch

Zoning Administrator / Building Official

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