

Lakeview Area News

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Record Number Attend VFW Honors Banquet



The 2024-2025 Patriot Pen Winners with Commander Stacey Roberts and Quartermaster Jessica Wright



Brandy Dood is this year's Dispatch honoree. She is pictured with Amy Thomas

By Linda Huckins

Saturday, March 29, 2025 was Vietnam Veterans Day. It was also the day that the Hough / Pontius VFW Post 3701 in Lakeview held its annual honors banquet where local people were recognized for their exceptional service to the community.

More than 150 people attended the event that was held at the VFW hall in downtown Lakeview. McKenna's Restaurant catered the delicious meal

of chicken, red-skinned potatoes, green beans, salad, and a variety of luscious desserts.

VFW 3701 Commander Stacey Roberts welcomed everyone and led attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. VFW 3701 Auxiliary President R.J. Poulk delivered the invocation.

"Tonight, we recognize outstanding volunteers, dedicated public servants, remarkable youth, and committed community members,"

Roberts said.

The first award of the evening was the Community Partner Award. Roberts said that it goes to a business that has stood with the post time and time again.

"Whether it's through donating time and materials to improve our post, supporting and sponsoring post events, or lending a hand behind the scenes, Arrow Electrical Services' generosity never wavers," she said.

Unfortunately, there

was no one from Arrow Electrical Services in attendance. The award will be presented to the business at a later date.

Next on the program was the Young Patriot of the Year Award. Baylor Serjala was this year's recipient. She exhibits what leadership and love for country looks like at a young age. Some of her accomplishments include organizing military appreciation night, sending more than 150 invitation letters to veterans, and

going out of her way to thank the veterans in person.

The Community Member Award went to Cammie Jo Decker. Roberts said that Decker's compassion and dedication are felt by everyone around her. She donates meals for veterans and gifts for Santa's Workshop as well as helping people navigate the VA system. "She's made a lasting impact in quiet yet powerful ways," Roberts said.

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Town Topics

We had some major storms the last few days. Ice caused power outages in the northern lower peninsula and the upper peninsula, and tornadoes were a problem further south, but Lakeview was spared. As always, this is a great place to be.

Spring Forecast

Thu Mostly sunny, with a high near 51. West wind 13 to 18 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Thu Night Partly cloudy, with a low around 28.

Fri Mostly sunny, with a high near 53.

Fri Night A chance of showers after 2am. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34.

Sat A chance of showers before 2pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 52.

Sat Night Mostly cloudy, with a low around 32.

Sun A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 46.

Sun Night Mostly cloudy, with a low around 25.

Mon Partly sunny, with a high near 38.

"O Gotion, Where Art Thou?"



By Cindy Havens

"...it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security."
~Declaration of Independence, July 1776

The land lies silent. Not much is happening between 18 and 19-Mile Roads north of Big Rapids.

And that's just the way the Green Township residents like it. Those who have followed the ongoing actions between Gotion, Inc. and Green Township residents since early 2023, know most of the details: all of the initial secrecy surrounding the project, the backdoor deals between Gotion and certain board members that residents knew nothing about, the

monthly township meetings that soon overflowed with 300-400 concerned citizens trying to get at the truth, the rallies, the protests and the hundreds of yard signs that can still be seen peppering Mecosta County. And then they got busy. The citizens of Green Township organized door-to-door recall petitioning and got the word out in local and social

media. They took all the steps necessary that eventually led to the entire township board being recalled, with the exception of those who resigned. This was followed by a newly elected board that listened to residents and said no to Gotion with legal action. Concerned citizens also formed the Mecosta Environmental and Security Alliance (MESA), a non-profit that researches and presents the facts on why national security and environmental issues are the main reasons to stop Gotion.

Now, two years after the residents began speaking out against a factory they never wanted — and were never told about — things have changed. Perhaps the most telling is that the applications for permits required by Gotion, have yet to be filed. The J.C. Penney store that was allegedly purchased by Gotion to house 200 employees, remains vacant. And according to

local sources, the few people they did hire have been let go. Gotion Vice-President Chuck Thelen is no longer photographed distributing checks to food banks and other community organizations in Big Rapids. His virtual press conferences, which appeared to take place in motel rooms, and where questions had to be submitted ahead of time, have stopped. And according to a source close to the event, Gotion has no plans to be at the Michigan Works! local job fair scheduled for June 10. This is a far cry from "the 2,350 good-paying jobs" promised after the deal was promoted as "the biggest ever economic development project in Northern Michigan." Of course, that was after Governor Whitmer's administration greased the skids for Gotion with \$715 million in taxpayer incentives in 2022.

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