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A note from the Editor-in-chief



By Sydney Neal
Editor-in-chief

Welcome back to campus, Chippewas! A new semester means new classes, new faces and plenty to catch up on. This issue is your guide to getting back into the rhythm of campus life, with stories to keep you informed, prepared and connected.

Football season is here,

and our cover story takes a closer look at what’s ahead for the Chippewas. Get ready for the season with our football preview and hear from our football beat writers on their predictions for the season.

Election season is approaching and knowing how and where to vote is just as important as knowing who is on the ballot. We break down where students can vote on campus and all the information you need to make informed decisions.

A new golf facility is bringing fresh energy to Central Michigan. Look at the development, what it means for the university and how the facility could create new opportunities for students and the

surrounding community. Whether you’re a first-year student still learning your way around or a returning student looking for a refresher, we’ve got you covered. Find stories and resources to help you get acquainted with campus, navigate the semester and make the most of your time at CMU. From campus happenings and student life to the people, places and stories shaping CMU this semester, this issue is packed with everything you need to know as you settle back in. So, grab a copy, get comfortable and stay informed on all there is to know. This is your campus and your home.

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On the cover: Photo taken by Claire Vachon

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COVER

Central Michigan Football went 7-6 in the 2025 season under first year head coach Matt Drinkall, finishing the year with a loss to Northwestern in the GameAbove Sports Bowl. The Chippewas went 5-3 in the Mid-American Conference, only being eliminated from conference title contention in the final week of the season after a 21-3 loss to Toledo.

Schedule

@ New Mexico 9/5: 10 p.m.

Colgate 9/12: 1 p.m.

- Family & friends weekend

Wyoming 9/19: 1 p.m.

@ Miami (FL) 9/26: 6:30 p.m.

Akron 10/3

- Homecoming

@ Ohio 10/10

Western Michigan 10/17

- Battle of the Victory Cannon Trophy

Miami (OH) 10/24

@ Eastern Michigan 11/4

- MACtion @ Ford Field

Sacramento State 11/11

@ Buffalo 11/18

@ Ball State 11/28: 1 p.m.

Year two kicking off

CMU football embraces new mindset



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

Central Michigan University sophomore linebacker Antonio Cherry Jr. attempts to tackle CMU freshman running back Trav Moore during the CMU football scrimmage at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

By Noah Henson
Sports editor

Since November 2025, Kelly/Shorts Stadium has sat dormant, awaiting the arrival of the 2026 college football season after a year that breathed new life into the Central Michigan football program.

In his first year as head coach at CMU, Matt Drinkall led the Chippewas to a winning record for the first time since 2021, finishing 7-6 after a post season loss to Northwestern in the GameAbove Sports Bowl.

With a solid foundation going into year two under Drinkall, the team's motto coming into the season is that sometimes you have to "own the ugly."

"You realize that those other great teams all have really talented players, really smart coaches, they all practice, they all lift weights, they all eat pretty good, they've all got cool gear, so what is it that actually separates people?" Drinkall said. "We want to take ownership of every ugly part of our jobs that we have to do, we want to embrace that, talk about it, live in it."

The ugly

The success that the Chippewas achieved last season may prove to be a double-edged sword with the new era of college athletics and the transfer portal. Many key contributors to last year's feats transferred out of the program searching for new opportunities.

With key defensive backs Brenden Deasfernandes and Kalen Carroll exiting the program alongside the large senior class, the coaching staff was forced to replace eight out of its 11 defensive starters.

"We prepared for this, the transition and the loss of that senior class on defense really before we got here," Drinkall said. "One of the things that is really unique, credit to our staff especially our recruiting staff, most of our staff has a lot of history with division two, NAIA, FCS. We are pretty good at finding guys that are going to develop."

With Korver Demma, Quavion Bird and Jaion Jackson being the only returners on defense, how the unit will fare is largely unknown, but will be tested quickly as the Chippewas look to take on New Mexico in week one.

The offense

Last season, Drinkall debuted a unique offense headlined by a three quarterback rotation. However, even with senior Joe Labas graduating out of the program, a multi-quarterback system may still be the answer for CMU.

“There’s six quarterbacks on the roster and they are all doing a tremendous job and if I’m being 100 percent transparent, there’s really kind of two groups,” Drinkall said. “There’s three guys who are veteran, game-tested, ready to go compete for the starting job right now and then three guys that are developmental right now in their process.

“You don’t want to rule out anything if it helps you win. You just do it.”

With Labas’ departure, Angel Flores and Jadyn Glasser will look to grow their roles from last season, as the quarterback battle continues with Glasser only recently recovering from an injury that left him sidelined for most of the 2025 season.

“Being in this offense for a year now, I am way more comfortable with the scheme and everything,” Flores said. “Having done it in games, I feel like I am extremely confident in my abilities, so I definitely feel confident in my position this year.”

With strong continuity on the offense, the running back position stands out as both Nahree Biggins and Trey Cornist, who started for the Chippewas last year, will not be returning.

Brock Townsend is expected to take the reins as the primary carrier as he looks to expand on last season.

“I don’t want to say this in a disparaging way, but I think when we first got here, he [Townsend] was kind of like happy to be here and wasn’t really forcing the issue, and halfway through camp, I grabbed him and I told him ‘you know you’re one of the best players on the whole team, right?’ Drinkall said. “He obviously had a very good year last year, but he is really starting to grow. You see him now the way his body moves and functions... he is kind of the jack-of-all-trades master of none. He is just very good at everything.”

With the continuity Townsend provides, Drinkall and the coaching staff have bolstered the running back position with Liberty transfer Vaughn Blue and Holy Cross transfer Jayden Clerveaux.

“Vaughn Blue joined us, he is a veteran guy who is just exactly like Brock as far as operation,” Drinkall said. “(He’s) just a total professional. He was on our leadership council immediately, really good at everything and a very good compliment to Brock.”

What to look for this season

The Chippewas will be tested right away as the squad heads to New Mexico to take on the Lobos in week one.

“If you look back over probably the last 10 years, this is probably the most premier schedule Central Michigan has had during that time, highlighted by our opening trip out to New Mexico, who I think is picked to win the Mountain West in several publications,” Drinkall said.

The three-game stretch including Ohio, Western Michigan and Miami (Ohio) is one to watch as the Chippewas will get the chance to play three of the best programs in the Mid-American Conference back-to-back-to-back.



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

Central Michigan University junior defensive back Tysen Campbell grabs the legs of senior fullback Rusty VanWetzinga IV during the CMU football scrimmage at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

However, it is the rivalry match with Western Michigan last year that leaves the Central Michigan players wanting revenge as CMU looks to host the Broncos on Oct. 17.

“I think about that game all the time,” Flores said. “I got hurt last season the game before that game and I was looking forward to that all season. I don’t know why, but I have always had the sense that I want to play in that rivalry game and it’s crazy that I came to Central, I have always had that game circled on my calendar and now since I didn’t get to play in it last year I am really looking forward to it.”

With the close finish the game yielded last season and the imposing atmosphere the maroon and gold faced in Kalamazoo, Drinkall reflected on his thoughts about the rivalry.

“One of the coolest opportunities for Central Michigan

right now has been Western Michigan’s success,” Drinkall said. “I am glad they won the conference last year. What a great bar for us, because who benefits more from having to raise their level of anything than Central Michigan if Western Michigan does well?”

With a lot of continuity on offense, the most notable change will be the scheme as Drinkall looks to play to the strengths of his players.

“One thing you will see, is you will see us be a little bit more gun and pistol based this year than more under center,” Drinkall said.

Finally, with such a rigorous schedule, all eyes will be on how the defense is able to adapt throughout the course of the season as so many new faces will get the chance to make a name for themselves.

OPINION

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— *The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States*

YOUR TURN

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Reach out to the Editor-in-chief at editor@cmlife.com or mail to 436 moore hall, CMU, Mt.Pleasant, MI 48859

Editorial: Here's to another year at CMU



Mark Hoover | Visuals editor

The fall 2026 *Central Michigan Life* editorial staff poses for a group photo inside a stairwell at Moore Hall on Sunday, Aug. 23, 2026.

Whether you're returning after taking the summer away, stepping onto Central Michigan University's campus for the very first time or somewhere in between, the sidewalks are busy, residence halls are filling up, classes are beginning and campus is once again becoming the community we know and love all too well.

A new academic year means a chance for new opportunities, new classes, new friendships, new organizations and new challenges. It also means another year of stories waiting to be told.

That is where we come in.

We are *Central Michigan Life*, the university's editorially independent student-run newspaper. For generations of CMU students and Isabella County residents, CM Life has been the prime news source for all things CMU, to learn about the people who make up our community and stay connected to the issues that matter to all.

But we are more than just a newspaper.

We are students just like you who attend classes, walk across campus, go to Slim Chickens and try to balance school with everything else life throws our way. We understand what it is like to be students at CMU because we are students at CMU.

Our job is to tell the stories that matter to the community and to make sure the voices that might otherwise go unheard have a place in the conversation. We cover the decisions, issues and events that directly affect students, faculty and staff.

While CM Life is rooted in CMU, our readership extends far beyond campus, with readers throughout Michigan and across the country. That reach gives us an opportunity and a responsibility to tell the stories of our community in a way that resonates well beyond the people

who see them every day.

College campuses are communities, and communities are complicated. Journalism gives us an opportunity to ask questions, seek answers and provide people with the information they need to understand what is happening around them.

We believe that people deserve to know what is happening in their own backyards. We also believe that those same people deserve a voice in those conversations.

That is one of the most important things about CM Life: we are here for students and the community.

As you begin this new academic year, we encourage you to pay attention to what is happening around you. Get involved and support your fellow community members.

And, of course, read your student newspaper. You may be surprised by how much is happening on campus.

Our newsroom is made up of students who are learning the craft of journalism while doing the work of journalism. We are reporters, photographers, editors and designers.

CM Life isn't just a place for journalism majors. We welcome students from across CMU who want to write, report, photograph, advertise, design, edit or simply learn something new. A newsroom is stronger when it reflects the community it covers, and our campus is full of different experiences, backgrounds, interests and perspectives.

So, as we welcome everyone back to campus, consider this an invitation.

Read our stories. Follow along with what is happening at CMU. If there is a story you believe needs to be told, let us know. If you have a perspective that deserves to be heard, share it with us.

Most importantly, remember that this is your campus and your town. Every person has a story, and every year brings thousands of new ones.

Top places to eat in Mount Pleasant

By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz

Former editor-in-chief

As I just graduated from Central Michigan University this May and am preparing to leave Mount Pleasant, I realize that I will miss this little town. It has so many kind people, beautiful parks, a river and my favorite, good food.

If you just arrived as a freshman, first, may I say welcome. Even though Mount Pleasant seems small, it has so much to offer. I am so excited for you to experience it all for the first time and soon call Mount Pleasant home.

With so much love for the town and with a warm welcome for you, reader, here is my list of the top five places to get a nice meal in Mount Pleasant:

Wood Shop Social

This has to be my favorite place. If I am looking for a nice treat, a celebration of a big event or a beautiful date night—Wood Shop Social is always my pick.

This restaurant has the best mocktails in town. As a person who doesn't drink alcohol, its mocktails stole my heart. Beachy Peach, Blueberry Mockjito and Asian Pear Sparkler are the best.

The desserts are also great. I love its chocolate cake, tiramisu and crème brûlée.

Last but not least is the great food. I noticed that Wood Shop Social changes its menu from time to time, but it always has some unusual options, such as venison burger and boar sausage. It's mostly an American cuisine, but I love its pasta.

The food, the atmosphere, the interior, the service—I can't stop praising this place. Five out of 5 for me.

Jib-Bob Korean Restaurant

Jib-Bob is the must-visit place if you are in Mount Pleasant. It is conveniently located downtown and is owned by the most charming and kind lady. Maya always has a smile on her face and will greet you so friendly and warmly that it will make you feel like coming home to mom's kitchen.

The food tastes absolutely delicious, fresh and homemade. Bul-go-gi, bibim-bob and job-chaе are amazing. I also love drinks at Jib-Bob. It has Korean soda and many types of tea. I am a huge tea lover, and I can say that Jib-Bob's tea is delicious.

Another thing worth praising at Jib-Bob is the atmosphere. The restaurant's interior has beautiful Korean decor that helps you immerse yourself in the experience. You should definitely check it out.

Ponder

My campus-favorite place to grab a cup of coffee before a night class or a delicious lunch is Ponder. This is the best coffee shop to meet your friends for a cup of coffee.

My favorite drinks there are the lavender vanilla latte, brown sugar cinnamon latte and banana bread latte. My go-to food option is an egg, avocado and tomato sandwich.

You absolutely must visit Ponder if you're in Mount Pleasant, as dare I say, it's the town staple.

Sumo Sushi & Steak House

The hibachi experience was so much fun at Sumo Sushi. It has great chicken, shrimp and scallop hibachi. Sushi is huge and very tasty at this place, too. The restaurant also offers some fun sushi options, such as the Michigan roll.

Besides the delicious food, the atmosphere is usually fun, as it's a popular place. I loved celebrating some happy occasions there.

Sergey's Bakery

If you're up for a drive with your friends or are interested in experiencing some European atmosphere and authentic pastries, you have to visit Sergey's Bakery in Midland. Dubai chocolate croissants, Ukrainian cake and sourdough will blow your mind. Check out my story on *Central Michigan Life's* website to learn more about the place.

Frankly, the list of great restaurants in Mount Pleasant can go on and on. From Shin's Korean Restaurant to Los Amigos to Slim Chickens, you truly should try all the delicious food the town has to offer. I hope you love all these amazing places as much as I do and share this love with the people you meet in Mount Pleasant.



Jib-Bob Korean restaurant prepares the night before for the big re-opening Nov. 2.

Zipporah Abarca | File Photo

Get involved on campus!

By Grace Walker
Senior news editor

This time of the year is so exciting, but also exhausting. You have to move into a completely new environment, with roommates that are basically strangers and then head off to classes with even more strangers. Whether this is your current experience or not, the freshness of everything can be overwhelming and you may want to curl up in your dorm and hide.

Even if you feel that way, I can't stress enough how important it is to get out, make friends, join different Registered Student Organizations and just have fun.

Two years ago, I started at Central Michigan University as a transfer student from the University of Michigan-Flint. At the beginning, I knew some people at CMU, but most of the time, I felt completely alone. There were so many new faces, so many new clubs and everyone felt like they were already part of something. It felt terrifying jumping into something new because it wasn't familiar.

Even though it all felt overwhelming, walking through MainStage and forcing myself to find the clubs and organizations I knew I wanted to be part of led me to the

places I now call home: *Central Michigan Life* and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). What I didn't know at the time was that I was meeting people I now consider family and building skills to something I now consider my whole life.

College life will be fun, stressful, frustrating and, at times, feel completely isolating. You will grow as a person and watch the people you walked into college with grow as well. This is the place to find what your interests are and who your people are. Take advantage of that.

At CMU, we offer hundreds of clubs and organizations to join. If there isn't something that interests you, look again. We offer silly groups like Squirrel Watching Club (our very own reporter Ava Harmon is the president) and Crochet Central to more career focused groups like Business Honors Society and the Student Government Association.

These places are here not only for you to relax from classes, but also to grow your experiences before you even graduate. There are many different organizations that exist to help you get a taste of what your career will be like in the field.

While I have learned so much about what it means to be

a journalist in my classes, I wouldn't have gotten all the experience and knowledge I've built up without CM Life or SPJ. Without these two organizations, I wouldn't have become close with those in the real field or my colleagues who I know may one day be working alongside me in the real world.

If no other club or organization looks interesting, CMU has so many other opportunities to get involved. An example of this is our Alternative Breaks program through the Volunteer Center where you have the opportunity to go out to different places around the country and do community service. You can find more information on what that is through the CMU website.

Overall, my main piece of advice is, go to MainStage on Aug. 30 and see what catches your eye. If you can't make it, scroll through Engage Central, a website that lists all the different activities hosted by clubs or the university, and get your feet wet. Otherwise, keep an eye out for flyers and chalk on the sidewalks.

Have fun, and don't be shy. You'll never know what you'll end up liking if you don't try.

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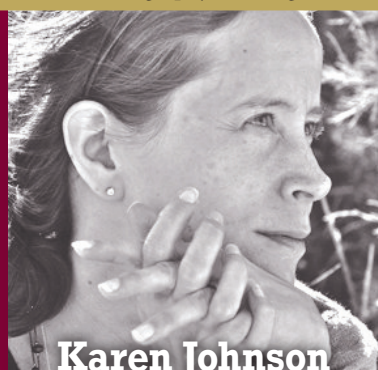
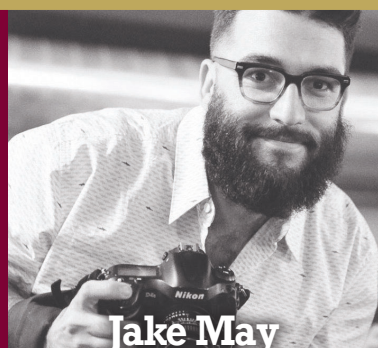
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Finding the right fit in therapy

By Elizabeth Sadecki

Staff reporter

In the past year, 12% of 18 to 25 year olds reported having suicidal thoughts, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). During September, NAMI uses Suicide Prevention Month to remind people that talking about suicide isn't harmful, staying silent is.

Students can also access support that best fits their needs with mental health services on and off campus. Local therapists and Central Michigan University's resources offer different options to provide people with the right care for them.

"Students shouldn't feel obligated to keep going [to a therapist] just because they feel like they are stuck with someone," Campfire Therapy owner and sole counselor Kevin Daum said. "Sometimes it takes a while to find the right fit."

Off campus options

The owner of Center of Hope Counseling, Lisa Carpenter, said she wants clients to feel comfortable as soon as they walk through the door.

Her practice specializes in eating disorders and body image issues. They recently hired a male therapist who specializes in men's emotional health and helping college athletes transition to other career paths after graduating. It also treats for:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Trauma
- Helping students navigate or adjust to college

Center of Hope Counseling offers telehealth appointments and is in the process of adding more office spaces and a group room. Carpenter said its goal is to provide groups for college students on different topics.

"Our mission is just to help as many people as we can and to provide evidence-based, good quality care to our clients," Carpenter said. "And I mean, honestly, we're a pretty cool group of clinicians."

Its best clinician, she said, is their cat Sigmund Freud. He's always in the office and is a natural emotional support animal.

"He's a very great asset to our staff," she said.

Carpenter said she encourages anyone who's apprehensive to start therapy to "just try it," because they have nothing to lose.

"Counseling can be fun too," she said. "A lot of our clinicians here are fun, so we bring that into the session. It doesn't have to be all gloom and doom when you come into counseling. You can have fun with it."

Kelley Raab-Butler, the owner of New Mind

Counseling Services, said it offers free 15 minute meet and greet appointments for clients to explore if the match is a good fit.

Some examples of what it can help students with are:

- Time management and organizational skills
- Anxiety
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Relationships
- Trauma
- Motivation
- Anger
- Healthy habits

"I think we're a pretty friendly office," Raab-Butler said. "We're located right downtown and if anybody has just any general questions, like about therapy and what to expect, they can always call and talk to me."

She said students can do a combination of telehealth and in-person sessions.

"We try to help them find that balance, so they're not so stressed out all the time, and learn those stress management skills," Raab-Butler said. "Because when you can decrease your stress, your anxiety and depression isn't always as high."

Along with talk therapy, Daum at Campfire Therapy is certified in Eye Movement Desensitization and

Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. He said EMDR is a memory focused approach that can help with both single incident or accumulative trauma that people are either aware or unaware of.

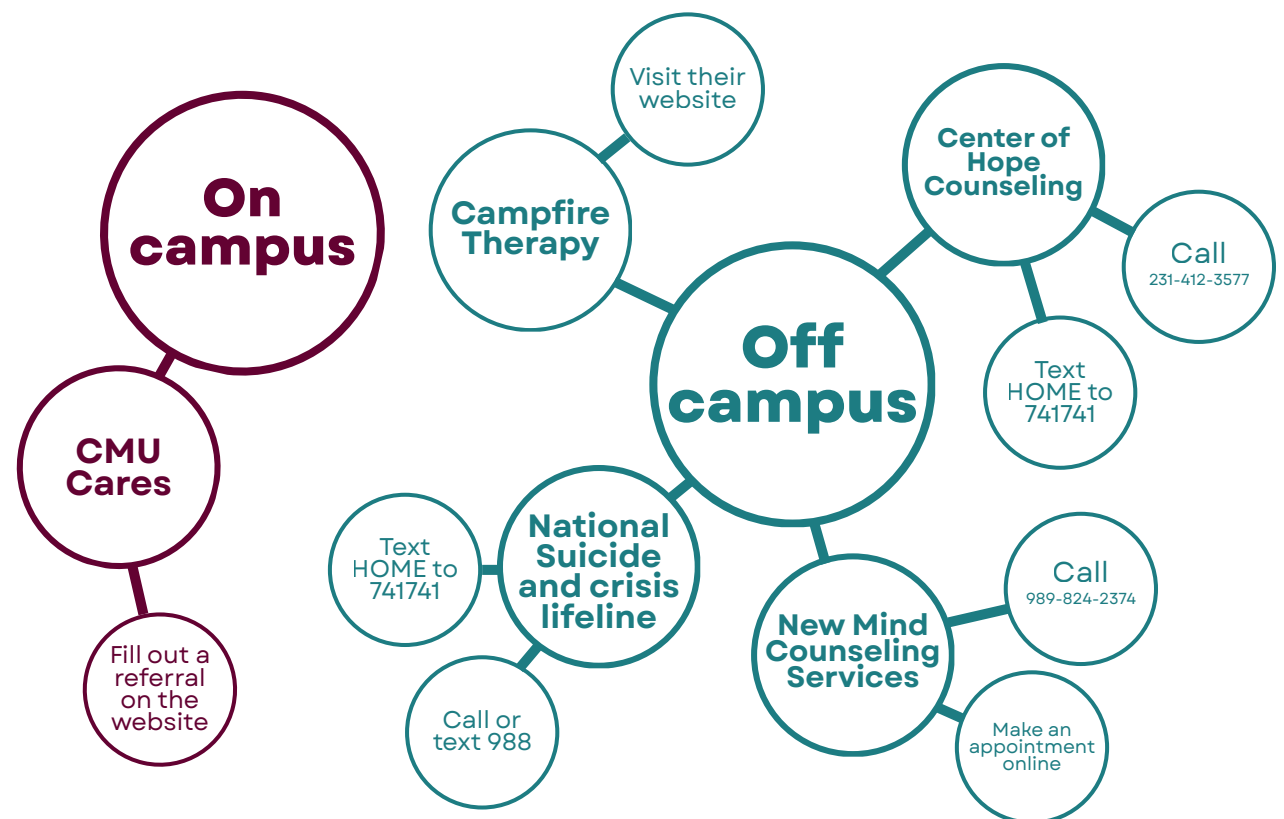
"If you can see any connection between the trouble that you're having right now and experiences you've had in the past, then EMDR will be a good fit for that," he said.

Campfire Therapy also specializes in trauma, post traumatic stress disorders and career counseling.

On campus options

Both Center of Hope Counseling and New Mind Counseling Services work closely with CMU's Counseling Center, which offers 24/7 resources for students in crisis.

The center and CMU Cares, the university's comprehensive support group, can also work with students to find them the mental health care they need. Anyone can fill out a referral for themselves, or another student or faculty member they are concerned about. The team will reach out to people referred and offer them help with finding the right support.



Ben Westerhof | Senior associate designer

MDHHS reports highlight runaway girls at 'understaffed' youth center

By Ethan Wallace

Assistant news editor

A week of protests about the New Hope Youth Center occurred from May 31 through June 6. Protest organizer Lilian Cassidy said the purpose was to raise awareness of the mistreatment and abuse towards youths.

These protests started after 46 runaway reports and from the center, Michigan State Police and Cassidy said. These runaways sparked protests alongside concerns on social media platforms.

The New Hope Youth Center has had 23 more reports about runaway youths since the protests started.

She added that the girls are not getting the care they deserve or the help some of them need. Cassidy said the youths don't have anywhere else to go.

"If the allegations are true, we want there to be change," Cassidy said. "We want the kids to realize that we are there for them."

Investigation reports through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) show the facility is understaffed, which resulted in the use of police resources to help with the runaway youths.

The New Hope Youth Center is a residential trauma and treatment facility for girls ages 10 to 17 who are victims of abuse and/or neglect, according to its website.

The center's goal is to set up the youth for their transition to the next stage of life following their time at the facility or when they turn 18.

Programs at the center include educational services, therapy, social and life skills training, mental health treatment and more.

The maximum capacity of the center is 15 girls and there should be a maintained ratio of one staff per three youth.

According to investigation reports from the MDHHS, several reports show a variety of accusations at the center.

There is a mixture of true and false reports, such as six violations for a lack of staff to take care of the residents and five false allegations of staff violence so far this year, according to the MDHHS.

In a report filed on May 29, a youth went AWOL on April 27. The report stated that the youth called the facility on a stranger's phone, so she could be picked up six hours after she went AWOL. Law enforcement picked her up because the staff were unable to.

In the report, the youth that went AWOL said the girls at the center run away for many reasons, such as boredom, wanting to go for a walk or just to not be at the facility.

Two staff from the report both said they could not leave the facility to watch over the seven youths at the facility.

At the facility, the youth are allowed to go on a 15-minute walk, but often don't return, according to the report. If the youth don't return between 15 minutes to 2.5

hours, law enforcement is contacted by the staff.

"The facility is found in non-compliance as per youth and staff interviews and documentation review, the facility is lacking sufficient staffing and programming to decrease AWOLs and law enforcement involvement due to the youths' behaviors," according to the report analysis.

The facility was found non-compliant in a similar manner in a report from Aug. 7. The MDHHS concluded that the facility did not address the lack of staff to help with the reoccurring issues.

In the August report, one staff member said the facility is not short staffed. However, he said he spoke about having more staff on shifts due to some of the youth's aggression becoming intense.

The MDHHS raised concerns about the increase in incidents at the house in several reports. The more incidents' staff attend to, the less supervision other youth get.

Another staff member from the report said the facility is properly staffed, but it is normal for one of them to watch over more than three girls.

According to a June 12 report, multiple Michigan State Police body cameras were reviewed. This was one of several reports that detailed how police stopped in and

used their resources for the understaffed facility.

An email from an unnamed officer in that June report said that the MSP have expended more than 150 hours (as of May when the report was filed) to issues related to New Hope.

State Police Sgt. Casey LaLone said officers would often go to the center from one to six times a day.

He said in April, there was a spike in runaway girls from the center that ended in July.

"Now that they got the four problem children out of there, we don't have the problems," LaLone said.

Isabella County Sheriff Michael Main said officers typically go to the center for runaway girls, fighting or in response to mental health crises. However, the frequency of runaways takes officers from other incidents.

"The home does what they can, but are very restricted based on state laws and regulations," Main said.

"Alongside the MDHHS says what they can or cannot do." Main said the troubled girls can't just be transferred out because of limited resources and the court systems to make it happen.

When reached by phone, a worker at New Hope Youth Center said the organization had no comment.



The New Hope Youth Center in Mount Pleasant, Michigan on June 4, 2026.

Ethan Wallace | Assistant news editor

A guide on voting in the 2026 November election

By Ava Harmon
Staff reporter

This November, Michiganders will be hitting the polls to cast their ballots for the Michigan general election.

The offices on the ballot in Michigan are United States Senate, United States House, Governor, state Senate, state House, special state legislative, state Supreme Court, intermediate appellate courts, school boards, municipal government, recalls, ballot measures and local ballot measures.

The U.S. senate is a key election, with Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic candidate, and Republican Mike Rogers on the ballot.

El-Sayed won against Democrat Haley Stevens in the August Primary, in a heated race.

The U.S. House of Representatives spot will provide voters with the opportunity to elect 13 candidates to serve in the House from each one of the 13 districts.

The primary election in August finalized the ballots for voters, with key highlights:

- Jocelyn Benson was chosen as the Democratic governor nominee
- El-Sayed won against Stevens for U.S. Senate Democrat nominee
- John James became the GOP's gubernatorial pick

Michigan for youth voter turnout ranks third in the country, according to a press release from the state. A study from Tufts University states that right under half of the youth voted in 2024 for the presidential election.

The youth counted in the statistics include ages 18 to 29, that are eligible to vote in the United States.

As college students across the state vote in November, their votes represent a large demographic of voters in Michigan.

On Central Michigan University's campus, there are various resources students can turn to in order to get information on voting.

Central Votes is a resource for students, to help them become engaged citizens, according to the CMU website.

"Now, obviously we're in election year, so that's where our energy is going in a direction to try and get all of our kids engaged," Norma Bailey, the co-chair of Central Votes, said.

She said the Central Votes Coalition has a 10 Tuesdays campaign to get students involved with voting in elections, by providing students with resources from different organizations on campus.

"We try every avenue we can to get students engaged by finding out the information," Bailey said.

After the 2024 election, Central Michigan has been named a voter-friendly campus by the Campus Vote Project and the National Association of Student Personnel

Administrators. According to a press release from CMU, the mission is to bolster colleges and universities to help students overcome barriers to participating in the political process every year.

"Our voting rate hit CMU in 2014 was only 16%," Bailey said, about the election information according to Tufts. "By 2018 we had more than doubled it to 34.9% and in 2022, we had increased it again to 45.6%."

CMU hosts a polling place on campus and early voting begins in Mount Pleasant up to nine days early. According to the Central Civics website, the early voting is located in Powers hall room 136 and starts on Oct. 24.

Voters looking to get registered for the November election must do so 14 days in advance, be a U.S. citizen, be at least 17.5 years old and turn 18 before Election Day and have lived in their voting city for 30 days.

Michiganders can register to vote online, by mail or in person by visiting their local clerk's office.

If a Michigan voter prefers to submit their vote by an absentee ballot, they can request one starting 40 days before the election.

Voters can request their ballot through their local clerk office, unless they are on the permanent absentee ballot list. The application can be submitted online, through the mail and in person.

If a resident is already registered to vote at their current address, they are unable to request an absentee



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ballot on Election Day. The only exception is in the case of an emergency situation, in which the voter can apply for the ballot from their local clerk's office as late as 4 p.m. on the Election Day, according to the Michigan Secretary of State.

Michiganders can learn more about what's specific on their specific ballot online at the Michigan Voter Information Center. It will show a sample ballot for each precinct.

The state website on voting provides residents with do's and don'ts for polling places.

- Don't wear campaign clothing or accessories in or within 100 feet of the polling place
- Do bring an interpreter if needing to vote in any language other than English
- Don't bring election or campaign flyers in or up to 100 feet of the polling place
- Do take pictures outside of the voting area, but don't take photos inside the voting area

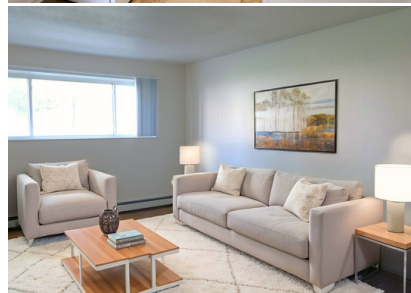
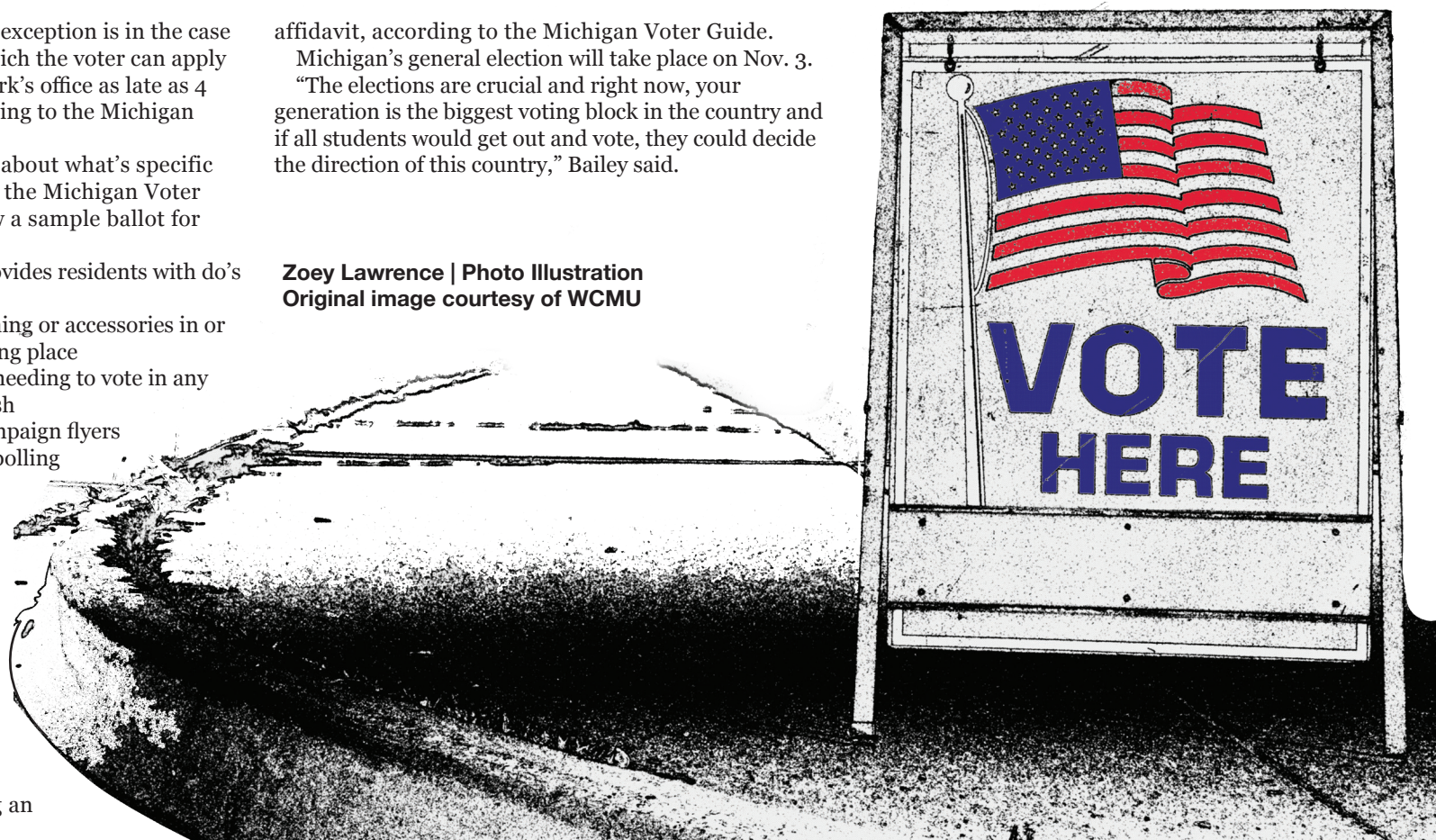
According to Michigan laws, people are not required to possess a photo identification to vote, but voters that do possess a photo ID must present it at the polls. If the voter doesn't possess a photo ID, they can still vote by signing an

affidavit, according to the Michigan Voter Guide.

Michigan's general election will take place on Nov. 3.

"The elections are crucial and right now, your generation is the biggest voting block in the country and if all students would get out and vote, they could decide the direction of this country," Bailey said.

Zoey Lawrence | Photo Illustration
Original image courtesy of WCMU



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Want to stay in the loop?

By Grace Walker
Senior news editor

As you get settled into your new home and navigate your new life at Central Michigan University, you will find, like most universities, that there is so much going on all of the time. There are so many different things to be a part of, activities to do, games to watch and places to explore at the university and throughout Mount Pleasant.

That's where student media comes in!

There are so many different ways to keep up with what's going on around CMU. Here are just some of the ways to stay informed:

Central Michigan Life: Want to know what's going on at CMU and the community around? Check us out! We are a national award winning student newspaper that reports on everything from CMU sports, events and news from the university and the community around us. And we don't just report on news. We have shows and podcasts that are just for entertainment.

Want to check out more? Find us our monthly newspapers anywhere on the CM Life racks throughout campus and Mount Pleasant, or check us out at [cm-life.com](#). Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube to stay updated.

CMU Athletics: CMU offers many, many, many different sports teams including club sports. Want to go to a game or check the scoreboard? Check them out CMU athletics at [cmuchippewas.com](#) or on social media.

Moore Hall Television: Looking for student media you can watch? MHTV offers so many student-made shows like News Central, Sports Central and Dungeons and Dormrats. MHTV broadcasts shows made completely by students 24/7 on television, on Vimeo and, with some shows, through YouTube.

Want to check out more? Watch MHTV on Charter Spectrum Cable or on Vimeo. MHTV and its different shows are also on Instagram and YouTube.

Moore Media Records: Want to listen to music from local artists? Moore Media Records is the place for you. MMR produces and records the music of different local bands and artists. Check them out on Spotify, YouTube and Instagram.

VERGE Magazine: a student-run magazine that focuses on fashion and lifestyles.

There are so many more student media groups to check out. As you make your way through CMU, be sure to check out some of what these student media groups do.



Soli Gordon | Staff Photographer

Central Michigan University hosts Fall Mainstage 2025 on Franklin Street, Sunday, Aug. 24, 2025. Attendees had the opportunity to meet with student organizations, Greek life, club sports, local businesses and campus departments.

<

Paige Jaczkowski | Junior designer

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Former CMU club leader gets sentenced for \$27,000 embezzlement

By Makayla Herrick
Staff reporter

Former CMU club baseball president and fraternity leader, Elliott Darr, was sentenced to 30 days in the Isabella County Jail on Monday, July 20 after pleading guilty to two felony embezzlement charges involving more than \$27,000 stolen from club baseball and Alpha Kappa Psi co-ed business fraternity (Zeta Xi chapter).

“Because of Elliott’s actions we almost didn’t have a season,” Central Michigan University club baseball president Ben Sermo told an Isabella County judge during Darr’s sentencing, describing how the theft nearly derailed the team’s season.

Isabella County Circuit Judge Sara Spencer-Noggle also sentenced Darr to 24 months of probation and ordered him to pay fines and restitution exceeding \$10,000 for each felony. Darr could have faced up to five years in prison on each of the two felony embezzlement charges.

“You took advantage of people who trusted you, despite you needing money for school, you were getting things

you wanted, not needed,” she said. “You just wanted a lifestyle you couldn’t afford.”

Detective Sarah Cuthbertson picked up this case after members of the club baseball team contacted CMUPD in October 2025 after discovering about \$11,000 in unauthorized purchases made with the organization’s debit card.

Investigators said Darr, who had access to the team’s debit card while serving in a leadership role, used organization funds for personal expenses over several months.

Those purchases included rent, tuition, vehicle expenses, gasoline, groceries, fast food and veterinary bills for Darr’s dog.

After obtaining banking records through search warrants, Cuthbertson said investigators found “pages and pages of unauthorized charges.”

“There was some travel between here and his hometown that was very distinct, that showed it was him, not somebody else,” Cuthbertson said. “Also his rent, no one else is going to use the card to pay his rent.”



Trevor Sparks | Staff photographer

The Isabella County Courthouse on the evening of Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026.

See **EMBEZZLEMENT** | 16



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CONTINUED FROM 15

Cuthbertson said the evidence quickly pointed investigators toward Darr as the person responsible.

"Once I was able to get the records, it was pretty cut and dry that it was him," she said.

While investigating the baseball team's complaint, detectives received another report from Alpha Kappa Psi after the fraternity's newly elected president reviewed its financial records and found unexplained transactions.

Central Michigan Life contacted multiple current members of Alpha Kappa Psi seeking comment on the case, but did not receive a response before publication.

Police determined approximately \$16,724 had been improperly taken from fraternity funds through credit card payments, rent, groceries, ATM withdrawals, veterinary bills and other personal expenses.

The two investigations became connected after detectives discovered Darr had lived at two residences managed by the same property company, allowing them to trace rent payments made from both organizations' accounts.

Sermo told the court that Darr's actions nearly ended the baseball team's season because the stolen money was needed for travel and operating costs.

"While he kept stealing, he portrayed someone who we thought we could trust," Sermo said.

Sermo said teammates confronted Darr after discovering financial discrepancies, but Darr attempted

to reassure them by providing screenshots claiming payments had been made. Sermo said those screenshots were later found to be false.

"I thought he was part of the family," Sermo said. "He wasn't just another player. He was the president."

Prosecutors argued Darr's actions represented a continued abuse of authority rather than a single mistake.

Darr apologized during sentencing and asked the court for another opportunity.

"I made a lot of mistakes and it doesn't show who I truly am as a person," Darr said. "I would love a second chance."

Darr's attorney, John Melton, described him as "a young man who made a mistake and owned up to it," and said that Darr is "a good man with a bright future."

Spencer-Noggle said jail time was necessary, adding that Darr's financial struggles did not excuse repeatedly stealing from organizations funded by student dues and fundraising.

"You stole from nonprofits," the judge said. "It's a terrible situation."

Lt. Jason VanConant with CMUPD said financial crimes involving student organizations are not unusual, but the amount stolen in Darr's case was among the larger cases he has seen.

"I think this was one of the higher amounts," he said. "A lot of these organizations don't have that kind of money. That's what they depend on to keep themselves afloat."



Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer





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Local millage, city commission elected

By Grace Walker
News editor

The Isabella Commission on Aging had a Senior Citizens Services millage re-approved during the past primary election on Aug. 4.

The millage will be used to fund any programs and services for elderly adults in the county. The bond language states that residents will be taxed 1.00 Mill, which is the same rate as the last millage. The current millage will end in 2035.

The millage was first approved in 2006, and has now been renewed twice. It is estimated that around \$2,829,633 tax dollars will be raised for the facility with this millage, according to the official bond language.

"We're so grateful," Jennifer Crawford, director of the Isabella County Commission on Aging, said. "It's humbling. We're so excited about the support that we have from the community."

"I think it just shows the importance of the work that's being done here and the wonderful things that our team does, and so we're just really proud of that and very excited about that support."

The millage had a success rate of around 77% throughout the county, according to the county page.

Crawford said the millage provides up to 65% of the

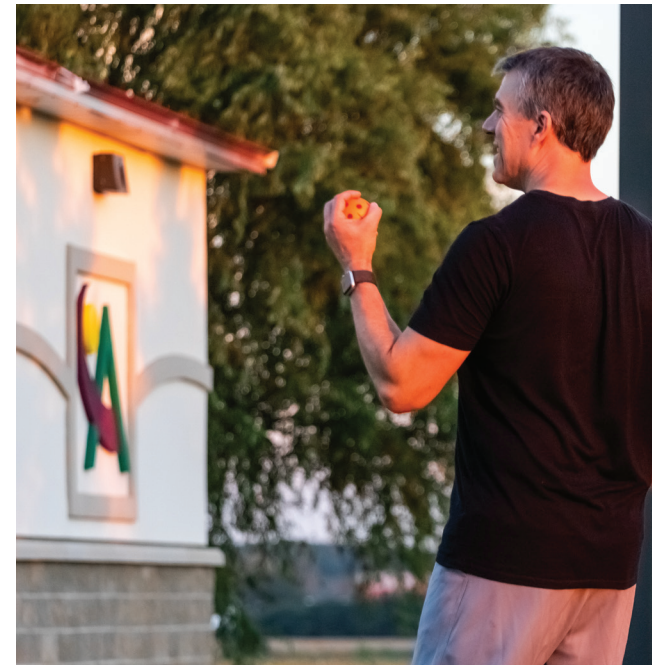
commission's revenues. The money supports the staff and the commission's five programs. This includes:

- The nutrition program that provides home delivered meals to older residents
- Home programs that aid in housekeeping
- Activities program
- 300 volunteers
- Foster Grandparent Senior Companion Program, which is a program working to receive grant funding

"I think (the millage passing) just shows the importance of the work that's being done here, and the wonderful things that our team does," Crawford said. "We're just really proud of that and very excited about that support."

Along with the millage, city commissioner Hanna Demerath was elected as a city commissioner for Mount Pleasant. She beat candidate Michael C. Kostrzewa by 55.64% of the vote. She will be in office until December 31, 2028.

"I know it's a lot of work, but I take a lot of responsibility that I was voted in," Demerath said. "(Campaigning) has a great experience, and I'm glad to have it."



Trevor Sparks | Staff photographer

Mount Pleasant resident and Central Michigan University Professor Mike Hixson serves a pickleball at the Isabella County Commission of Aging in Mount Pleasant on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026.

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Chances of a lifetime

By Zoey Lawrence
Senior designer

Hey reader! Yes, you! Thank you so much for looking at our paper made just for you! As a senior at Central Michigan University, I was once in your shoes. I was scared coming to a big school, and I knew only one person on campus. But being scared or nervous should only be temporary, college is all about what you make of it. Not about who you once were, this is a chance to start fresh and create a beautiful new chapter in your life that you will remember forever.

I honestly could say coming here was the best decision I could have made for not just my career but for my life.

Central Michigan is a hidden gem of a school with so many opportunities. From our vast alumni networks across the country, to passionate faculty who help connect you to job opportunities, to clubs and jobs on campus that offer opportunities for recognition in your field and so much more.

In my own personal experience, I have had amazing opportunities throughout my time here. I've received national awards, such as best advertising graphic designer in all collegiate media, and other titles with our student media organization, Central Michigan Life, collaborating with registered student organizations (RSOs), and even getting to work under the College of Arts and Media.

Opportunities like these are not as hard to find on CMU's campus, you are always one door away from a chance of a lifetime.

With all of that being said, to pursue those opportunities, I had to grow up, learn how to talk to others and have some pep in my step when I wanted to ask for something. The best part of me talking about it is that it's what college is all about, making those mistakes now while you still can learn and get back up.

The opportunities don't stop with just your career; CMU has so many ways of making friends while you're here. We have over 200 RSOs. Whether you're into squirrel watching, video games, sports, writing, arts, music or even just want to party, there is a place here for you.

Every year CMU holds an event called Mainstage, where every RSO, Greek organization and even some departments set up a table to talk to anyone walking around who might be interested. It's your first big chance to see these opportunities right in front of you and chase them.

Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer





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Sparks' summer stormchasing

By Trevor Sparks
Staff photographer

Thirteen minutes. That is the average time you have from the time a tornado warning is issued to when a tornado could be destroying your home.

There is some advance notice, such as forecasts posted by the National Weather Service (NWS) days in advance, watches posted a few hours from storm arrival and the news and social media coverage that comes with it.

There are some things during severe weather you just can't know for certain looking at a radar.

I'm Trevor Sparks, and I am a storm chaser.

I developed a deep-rooted fear of severe thunderstorms at a young age. It took everything in me to not panic at every rumble of thunder during my childhood. I was so terrified, I taught myself how to read weather radars and warnings at 8, and then how to interpret weather models at 12.

In trying to help my storm anxiety, I found a hidden passion for storms I never knew was there.

Ground truth from a thunderstorm, when people relay updates to an NWS office for real-time hazards and locations, is critical to warn the public in time of severe weather. Storm chasers are one of the key players in this role.

Storm chasing is one of the most thrilling, daring, exhausting and mentally challenging things I embark on every year. It is physically putting yourself in harm's way to document and relay information to get the word out there about danger.

What does storm chasing look like? It starts by waiting. I look at computer models of potential conditions coming together for severe weather over a week in advance.

I map out routes and look at all the major highways in the region that will be affected. I find hotels, train tickets and inquire with my chasing buddies on the day so we can plan as a group.

Under three days out, you make your final forecasts and head out to where the weather takes you.

This is what I did numerous times this year, most notably on June 17 in southern Illinois.

The night before, I took a train out of Michigan all the way to the far outskirts of Chicago to meet up with friends to chase a potential tornado outbreak. On three hours of sleep, we headed four hours south to Decatur, Illinois, our initial target area.

We hopped from storm-to-storm all day, where there were a few weak and brief tornadoes and some incredible storm structure, but nothing that the day had the potential to bring.

That was until late in the day, when we headed back west all the way from the Indiana state line towards a strengthening supercell thunderstorm approaching Effingham, Illinois.

With daylight waning, this was our last shot at seeing anything up close.



Lighting strikes in a severe thunderstorm over Dimondale, MI on Friday, July 3, 2026.

All photos provided by Trevor Sparks

As we approached from the east, the storm produced a tornado. The tornado touched down north of Effingham and was moving southeast. We drove right towards it as it neared peak EF-3 intensity, with windspeeds of over 150 mph.

My friends and I intercepted the tornado from less than a half mile away. Our car was being hit with debris and trees around us ripped out of the ground as it crossed the highway. We filmed and watched as the tornado destroyed property as it moved away from us.

It was the most adrenaline-inducing and intense feeling I have ever felt in my life.

As a storm chaser, it is my priority to be a first responder after a violent tornado. I am CPR and first-aid trained, and that almost had to come into play that day. We were ready to go into the destroyed homes and businesses to rescue people. By the time we arrived, EMS and firefighters were already on the scene.

The video I shot got relayed to the local NWS office and other media outlets, and the storm remained severe for hours after as it pushed southeast.

The adrenaline of something like that does not fade

easily. Even after a four hour car ride back into Chicago, I couldn't sleep. I stayed up for 38 hours straight.

Basking in the adrenaline will get you killed. Daring to do this requires you to not be stupid.

Storm chasing requires years of experience, training and development of critical skills.

It is building connections and understanding fundamental weather mechanics in order to make the right decisions on a dangerous day. Without training, you are in danger when storm chasing, and shouldn't chase at all.

Storm chasing is not always this glamorous and intense. There are days where conditions are favorable for a tornado outbreak - and it's just clear blue skies. There are days you can't eat because you are driving to a target area, days you completely miss out entirely and days that don't reach their full potential.

I willingly put myself into this each year. I get myself into life-threatening situations for the dream. The dream of helping, bringing hope to people and being up close and personal with Mother Nature's fury.



A violent tornado destroys a barn in Effingham, IL on Wednesday, June 17, 2026.



The rotating base of a tornado-warned supercell near Bethany, IL on Wednesday, June 17, 2026. This storm went on to produce a brief EF-1 tornado 10 minutes later.



The remains of homes and wildlife rest in Union City, MI on Friday, April 3, 2026. Three people were killed here when a EF-3 tornado tore through the area on Friday, March 6, 2026.



A mobile home rests overturned after a strong tornado hit rural parts of Branch County, MI on Saturday, May 18, 2024.

SPORTS

Grading Last Year's Predictions

Last season Noah Henson predicted Central Michigan football would go 6-6 in the regular season, slightly under-selling its actual performance in which the team went 7-5.

CMU immediately exceeded expectations in week one, beating San Jose State 16-14, a game in which Henson picked the Chippewas to lose.

Expectations were once again thrown into question as Central Michigan dropped a game against Akron, who Henson expected CMU to dominate.

Overall, Henson picked seven out of the 12 results correctly.

With head coach Matt Drinkall entering his second season at the helm with a year's worth of experience, Henson and 2026 football reporter Chance Hamilton both expect CMU to finish with a better record come December.

Calling the shots

Henson & Hamilton predict season



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

Central Michigan University's football team gathers and cheers at the beginning of its scrimmage at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

By Noah Henson & Chance Hamilton
Sports editor and Staff reporter

With the 2026 college football season growing ever-closer, *Central Michigan Life* sports editor Noah Henson and sports reporter Chance Hamilton give their predictions for how CMU football will stack up against the competition.

Week 1 @ New Mexico

Henson: UNM 37, CMU 13

Similar to last season, Central Michigan football begins its season out west for a night game against a Mountain West Conference opponent. Second year head coach Jason Eck has New Mexico revitalized after a 9-4 last year. While I think both programs are in similar spots with promising, young head coaches, the Lobos momentum coming into the season as one of the favorites out of its conference should give the squad the confidence to start the season 1-0 over the Chippewas.

Hamilton: UNM 34, CMU 17

CMU once again begins its season on the other side of the country, immediately posing a challenge physically. New Mexico head coach Jason Eck has built a program worthy of contending for the Mountain West Conference title, bringing back 63% of its roster. I would love to see the Chippewas make a statement with the revamped run

game right off the bat, but the Lobos' rushing defense has enough experience to shut them down quickly.

Week 2 vs. Colgate

Henson: CMU 44, Colgate 10

CMU returns to Kelly/Shorts to host Colgate, and while the Raiders consistently exceeded expectations in the 2025 season, playing multiple close games with teams among the best in the Football Championship Subdivision, the Chippewas have the size, speed and experience on offense necessary to win this game decisively.

Hamilton: CMU 42, Colgate 13

Kelly/Shorts Stadium opens its gates for the first time in the 2026 season to greet Colgate, an FCS program looking for something to prove with more development and a healthy roster. Quarterback Angel Flores, who was second on the team with 527 rushing yards in his debut year with the Chippewas, has the chance to showcase his control over head coach Matt Drinkall's offense with a great matchup to set the team's tempo.

Week 3 vs. Wyoming

Henson: CMU 27, Wyoming 14

The Cowboys enter the season with a lot to prove after a rough ending to 2025 that saw the team rank as one of



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

Central Michigan University senior offensive lineman Matthew Nehf lifts up his teammate freshman running back Trav Moore to celebrate the touchdown he scored during the CMU football scrimmage at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

the worst offenses in college football. However, Central Michigan lost a bulk of its production on defense from last season, which may allow the game to remain close as the new unit continues to learn.

Hamilton: CMU 23, Wyoming 21 Wyoming ranked 131st in the nation in scoring last season, managing an average of just 16 points per game. However, the Cowboys put in the work to resolve their issues, with promise in the run game and consistency on the defensive side of the ball. Central Michigan only brings back 29% of its defensive production, but I believe in coordinator Sean Cronin's ability to replicate the physicality of last season's squad. This should be a nice test and an early statement win.

Week 4 @ Miami (FL)

Henson: Miami 56 (FL), CMU 3 It was not long after the National Championship loss that head coach Mario Cristobal started planning for the 2026 season, securing talent to fill the void that the National Football League draft brought. Transfer quarterback Darian Mensah has Miami eyeing trophies this season and I expect the Hurricanes to play championship caliber football no matter the opponent.

Hamilton: Miami (FL) 46, CMU 7 After suffering defeat in the National Championship, Miami lost numerous stars to the National Football League, forcing new faces to step up. CMU makes the long road trip to Florida looking to shock the nation, but this final non-conference matchup could quickly turn sour for the visitors. The Hurricanes' new transfer quarterback Darian Mensah will get a chance to control this game's rhythm,

Alivia Cranick | Staff photographer

Central Michigan redshirt sophomore tight end Rusty VanWetzinga IV, left, and junior tight end Jacob Kaminski, right, run a drill in the end zone during warmups before a game at Kelly/Shorts Stadium Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025.

leaving the Chippewas scrambling for answers on both sides of the ball.

Week 5 vs. Akron

Henson: CMU 28, Akron 20

CMU will return to Kelly/Shorts to start conference play and take part in its homecoming game, and with last year's 28-22 defeat to Akron potentially looming in the minds of players from last season's team, CMU will have all the motivation it needs to beat the Zips.

Hamilton: CMU 27, Akron 18 Akron's star running back Jordan Gant returns to the team after recording 1,032 rushing yards in 2026 yet most of the roster is

seeing a changing of the guard with new names across the board. If the defense can contain the Zips' run game, CMU's experience on offense can easily take over this game. I expect it to be a strong homecoming showing for the offensive line, giving Flores time to open the downfield attack.

Week 6 @ Ohio

Henson: CMU 20, Ohio 10

The Chippewas travel to Ohio to take on the Bobcats in the first game of a very important three game stretch. Ohio ranks among the top of the conference in both total offense and defense, but with quarterback Parker Navarro's departure and new head coach John Hauser taking the reins it is not hard to imagine CMU pulling out a victory.

Hamilton: Ohio 24, CMU 20

Ohio must rebuild quickly to remain one of the more consistent programs in the Mid-American Conference, seeing its third head coach in two years. However, the Bobcats were 7-0 when allowing fewer than 140 rushing yards in 2025, which could be disruptive for Central Michigan's offensive identity. This one will be close, but I think Ohio will pull away late.

Week 7 vs. Western Michigan

Henson: CMU 31, WMU 27

After Western Michigan's conference championship last season, it is easy to forget that CMU was so close to securing the Victory Cannon Trophy in 2025. With a bulk of Western Michigan's production returning, coach Drinkall and his squad will have another chance to claim what seemingly just slipped through their fingers last season. With a more dynamic offense this season, I expect the squad from Mount Pleasant to secure the Victory Cannon.

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FOOTBALL |

CONTINUED FROM 23

Hamilton: CMU 26, WMU 24

Central Michigan was two minutes and a pair of crucial plays away from conquering its rival in their own stadium, and the sting of defeat is certain to be fresh in their minds. WMU was dominant in 2025 and brings back much of its championship-winning roster, posing a challenge for this year's Victory Cannon faceoff. If the Chippewas are able to contain the Broncos' stars on offense such as Broc Lowry and Jalen Buckley, I like their chances to avoid a heartbreaker at home.

Week 8 vs. Miami (OH)

Henson: Miami (Ohio) 28, CMU 19

Following its rivalry game, CMU will host conference championship runner up Miami (Ohio) who I expect to once again be one of the top contenders in the MAC this season. The Redhawks enter the season with a QB battle as the focal point of the offseason, but regardless of who takes the field as the starting quarterback for Miami (Ohio), the offense will have ample time to mesh before its meeting with Central Michigan, and I think it will lead to the Redhawks securing the defense.

Hamilton: Miami (Ohio) 30, CMU 23

Another MAC title contender rolls into Mount Pleasant, with the RedHawks spending \$8-10 million in NIL money to piece this year's roster together. There are questions at quarterback for Miami, and Central Michigan's defense can look to take advantage of inexperience. Flores and the CMU offense must be able to consistently score points against a defense that's loaded with playmakers, but overall I don't like this matchup for the Chippewas' scheme.

Week 9 @ Eastern Michigan

Henson: CMU 31, EMU 20

Central Michigan will meet Eastern Michigan at Ford Field in Detroit. EMU returns a majority of its production, notably quarterback Noah Kim. While the continuity will be a big difference maker for Eastern Michigan, it is that lack of change on defense that I think will end up contributing to Central Michigan's victory as the Chippewas will look to expose the Eagles lack of run defense, which finished bottom of the country last season.

Hamilton: CMU 23, EMU 20

The Chippewas are back at Ford Field in Detroit, with the venue serving as a neutral site against their in-state rival. EMU ranks 24th in the nation for returning production, most notably including quarterback Noah Kim in his seventh college season. Roster continuity should allow the Eagles to drastically improve offensively in 2026, but after fielding the worst run defense in the country last year, the CMU run game should have the edge.



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

(From left to right) Central Michigan University junior running back Brock Townsend celebrates with senior tight end Landon Swanson after Townsend scored a touchdown during the CMU football scrimmage at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

Week 10 vs. Sacramento State

Henson: CMU 38, Sac State 7

Sacramento State enters the MAC for its first season at the FBS level, and while the team's story is intriguing, I expect growing pains as the program enters a higher level of football. I see the Chippewas leaving no doubts in this game whatsoever.

Hamilton: CMU 31, Sac State 16

Wednesday night MAction returns for Central Michigan against the latest addition to the conference. Sacramento State's debut season at the FBS level is sure to have some bumps in the road, and the bulk of the roster will have to adjust quickly to the higher level of physicality. That tough mentality is the soul of this Chippewas team, who overpower the Hornets early and refuse to back down in their home finale.

Week 11 @ Buffalo

Henson: CMU 23, Buffalo 20

Coming off of what I expect to be a win the week before, I could see the Chippewas struggling in what may be a trap game on the road at Buffalo. However, the Bulls will be without Victor Snow who has transferred to North Carolina State and Red Murdock who was selected with the final pick in the NFL draft by the Denver Broncos. With so many key contributors out of the way for Buffalo, I think CMU has everything it needs to get through this game with a win.

Hamilton: CMU 26, Buffalo 19

A difficult slate of opponents will make it difficult for the Bulls to contend for the conference, but they will have answered questions about their quarterback and linebacker rooms. CMU learned firsthand last year that Buffalo had a turnover issue (with five takeaways by the Chippewas' defense), so creating more in this year's matchup will be the key. Cornerback Jaion Jackson and the Central Michigan secondary have a chance to step up in another key game for the MAC standings.

Week 12 @ Ball State

Henson: CMU 31, Ball State 10

Central Michigan ends the regular season with Ball State, and while the CMU defense remains largely unknown with so much of its production leaving, Ball State struggled greatly on offense last season no matter the opponent. All eyes should be on the Chippewa defensive line who should have a great advantage against a below average Ball State offensive line.

Hamilton: CMU 30, Ball State 20

Central Michigan closes out its regular season against a Ball State team which once again will struggle to scrape a convincing resume together. The pass rush for CMU can turn up the pressure against a leaky Cardinals offensive line, while the Chippewas continue to embrace their rushing rotation. I believe this will end up being an exciting conclusion to the year and an overall polished performance.

WEEKS OF WELCOME 2026

Aug 27 | 1-5PM Paint the Pavement

Sidewalk between Fabiano Gardens and Park Library. Leave your mark on CMU by helping paint a giant Flying C on the pavement!



Aug 27 | 1-5PM URec Welcome Showcase

University Recreation

Student Activity Center

Join the URec staff for an afternoon of FREE drop-in recreation/wellness, room of experiences, disc golf tournament, esports, fitness challenges & More!

Aug 27 | 6-9PM

UESA Welcome Carnival

University Engagement and Student Affairs Bioscience Field

Celebrate the start of your CMU journey on a ferris wheel at the Welcome Carnival!

Aug 28 | 10-11:30AM

College Life 101

Various Campus Partners McGuirk Arena

Hear from campus partners as they share important resources, to help you thrive as a CMU student.

Aug 28 | 3PM

No Zebras Presentation

Sexual Aggression Services McGuirk Arena

Join us for an engaging program for first-year students on preventing violence and promoting consent.

Aug 28 | 10PM-12AM CMU Program Board Glow Foam Party

CMU Program Board Moore Amphitheater
Light up the night at the CMU Program Board Glow Foam Party! Come dance and sing along to your best tunes!



Aug 29 | 12-4PM Bowling *

University Engagement and Student Affairs Riverwood Resort (Off-Campus)

Spend an afternoon knocking down pins and making new memories at Riverwood Bowling.

Aug 29 | 12-4PM

Putt-Putt Golf *

University Engagement and Student Affairs Golf Center (Off-Campus)

Challenge your friends to a round of putt-putt golf at The Golf Center and enjoy a laid-back afternoon off campus.

Aug 29 | 12-4PM

Waterpark *

Soaring Eagle (Off-Campus)

University Engagement and Student Affairs
Dive into an afternoon of fun at Soaring Eagle Waterpark with water slides, DJ, drinks/snacks!

Aug 29 | 12-4PM Ziibiwing Center *

University Engagement and Student Affairs Ziibiwing Center (Off-Campus)

Explore the rich history and vibrant cultures of the Anishinaabe people with a visit to the Ziibiwing Center.

* Denotes free transportation is available from the EHS Parking Lot

Aug 29 | 5-9:30PM Mount Pleasant Concert/Festivities Various Community Partners Downtown Mount Pleasant

Head downtown for an evening of fun and community! Explore what our vibrant community has to offer.

Aug 29 | 6-7:30PM Lavender Orientation

LGBTQ+ Center and Partners

Kulhavi 141/142
Help incoming first-years and transfers learn about the resources and supports available.

Aug 30 | 4-7PM MainStage2026

Student Activities and Involvement

Bovee UC, Central Pkwy, Pearce/Anspach Courtyard.
CMU's biggest welcome event! Find your home on campus and in the community at MainStage! Free food and giveaways!

Aug 31 | 8:30-11AM Central Welcome Breakfast

Volunteer Center & Student Activities and Involvement
Bovee UC Rotunda
Join us on the first day of the semester for a free 'grab and go' breakfast and school supplies giveaway

Sept 2 | 11AM-1PM Student Employment Job Fair

Student Employment Services
Bovee UC Rotunda
Connect with campus employers and check your Work-Study eligibility!

Sept 2 | 4-7PM Get Acquainted Day

MASS Office
Pearce/Anspach Courtyard

Your chance to connect with multicultural organizations, new friends, enjoy food and fun, and kick off the year together!

Sept 7 | 3-7PM

Span Student Welcome Back BBQ

Island Park - West Shelter
Engage students from various communities who are new to campus as you acclimate to the CMU community.



Sept 8-13 RecFest

University Recreation

Student Activity Center

A six-day celebration of University Recreation designed to kick off the fall semester and showcase the many ways students can get involved.

Sept 8 | 2-5PM

CBA Involvement Fair

College of Business Administration Warriner Mall
Discover CBA orgs, study abroad, grad programs, advisors, free food, snacks, and t-shirts (first 200)!
snacks, and t-shirts (first 200)!

Sept 9 | 5-8PM

First-Gen Mixer & Gaystage

Office of LGBTQ+ Services and Gender Equity Programs

NIRSA Room, SAC
First Gen students, find support, make connections, and build your CMU community!

Sept 11 | 11AM 9/11 Day of Service

Volunteer Center

Bovee UC 106

Join the Volunteer center as we honor 9/11 with days of service

Sept 12 | 1PM CMU Football

CMU Athletics Kelly/Shorts Stadium

Come support and cheer on your CMU Chippewas as they take on the Colgate University!



Sept 15 | 10AM-3PM Fire Up the Vote

Volunteer Center Library Lawn

Join the Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Centers' Central Votes program as we provide voter education and information on how to sign up for absentee ballots and more!

Sept 18 | 1-4PM Wellness Fair

Counseling Center

Student Activity Center

Stop by for interactive activities, helpful tips, and simple wellness strategies you can put into practice!

Sept 20 | 12-4PM

Carne Asada

MASS Office

Small Sports Forum, SAC

Join us for a carne asada as we come together to warmly welcome back both returning and new Latino/a/x/e students to campus.



Visit the Division of University Engagement & Student Affairs Website for all Weeks of Welcome programs:



CMU, an AA/EO institution, strongly and actively strives to increase diversity and provide equal opportunity within its community. CMU does not discriminate against persons based on age, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, sex, sex-based stereotypes, sexual orientation, transgender status, veteran status, or weight.

Welcome to Central's game days

By Sydney Neal
Editor-in-chief

For many students at Central Michigan University, athletic events are one of the biggest parts of campus life. Whether it is a packed football Saturday at Kelly/Shorts Stadium or the Toilet Paper Toss inside McGuirk Arena, CMU athletics gives students opportunities to participate in traditions and experience Division I competition throughout the school year.

For incoming students especially, attending games may seem confusing at first. However, CMU Athletics has transitioned to a digital Student Access Pass system that allows students to enter athletic events directly from their phones.

The process is designed to make entry easier while also encouraging more students to attend events across campus.

What is the Student Access Pass?

CMU Athletics introduced the Student Access Pass system as a digital ticketing option for students attending athletic events. Instead of relying only on physical student IDs, students now use a mobile pass that can be scanned at athletic venues.

According to CMU Athletics Student Access Pass information, students receive an email with instructions for downloading their Student Access Pass. The pass is accessed through a mobile device and can be added to Apple Wallet or Google Wallet for easier use on game days.

Once downloaded, simply present the digital pass at the entrance of athletic venues where ticket attendants scan the code before entry.

The Student Access Pass remains free for currently enrolled CMU students and is required for all ticketed sports throughout the academic year.

Football at Kelly/Shorts Stadium

Football remains one of the largest athletic attractions on CMU's campus.

The Chippewas compete at Kelly/Shorts Stadium, located near the center of campus and capable of holding more than 30,000 fans. During the fall semester, game days often become all-day events for students, alumni and community members.

Students typically gather for tailgates in Lot 63 before kickoff before entering the stadium together. Student section seating are positioned behind the opposing team's bench, helping create one of the loudest environments on campus during Mid-American Conference play.

Football games usually take place on Saturdays during the early part of the season before some conference games shift to weekday "MAAction" matchups later in the fall.

Here is the upcoming 2026 home football schedule, all times are currently to be announced:

- Sept. 12 vs. Colgate (Home opener)
- Sept. 19 vs. Wyoming
- Oct. 3 vs. Akron (Homecoming)
- Oct. 17 vs. Western Michigan (Battle for the Victory



Mark Hoover | Visuals editor

The Central Michigan University student section celebrates a big play at Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024

Cannon Trophy)

- Oct. 24 vs. Miami (Ohio)
- Nov. 11 vs. Sacramento State (MAAction)

Fall sports beyond football

While football often receives the most attention during the fall semester, several other CMU athletic programs compete throughout the season and offer students additional opportunities to attend outdoor sporting events.

Women's soccer hosts matches at the Soccer/Lacrosse Complex during the fall, with many games taking place in the afternoons and evenings early in the semester. The matches provide a different atmosphere compared to football Saturdays, giving students a closer view of Division I competition in a smaller venue setting.

Field hockey also competes during the fall season and remains one of CMU's longtime athletic programs. Games are played at Cristy Freese Field which is located next to the Soccer/Lacrosse Complex.

Because many fall sports seasons begin before move-in week, athletic events often become one of the first campus traditions new students experience at CMU. For students looking to get involved on campus early, attending fall

sporting events can be an easy way to meet people while supporting Chippewa athletics and its athletes.

Inside McGuirk Arena

Several of CMU's indoor athletic programs compete inside McGuirk Arena, one of the busiest athletic facilities on campus.

Men's basketball and women's basketball, gymnastics and wrestling all take place there throughout the winter season, while the volleyball team competes inside the arena during the fall.

The smaller arena environment allows students to sit close to the court, creating a more personal atmosphere compared to football games. Student sections are often filled with chants, themed outfits and organized cheering sections during rivalry games and conference matchups.

Student section seating for basketball games can be found behind each basket. Basketball season stretches across much of the academic year, giving students opportunities to attend games before and after winter break.

Volleyball matches are also popular early in the school year because they provide one of the first major athletic events of the fall semester.



Cristin Coppess | Managing editor

The crowd throws toilet paper onto the court during Central Michigan University's annual toilet paper toss held in McGuirk Arena on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. CMU Athletics reported 5,352 people were in attendance at this year's game.

Spring sports across campus

As temperatures begin to rise during the spring semester, outdoor athletic events become more common around campus.

CMU baseball plays at Theunissen Stadium, located near Kelly/Shorts Stadium. The stadium hosts both non-conference and MAC matchups throughout the spring season.

The softball team competes at Margo Jonker Stadium, named after the legendary former CMU softball coach. The stadium can be found near

Both baseball and softball games provide more relaxed outdoor environments where students can watch games between classes or spend weekends supporting the Chippewas.

Track and field and cross country competitions are hosted at CMU facilities throughout the year as well.

Because many spring sporting events occur outdoors, attendance often increases later in the semester when weather conditions improve.

Every Division I sport offered at CMU

CMU sponsors 17 Division I varsity athletic programs.

Men's sports include:

- Football
- Baseball

- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Golf
- Cross country
- Track and field

Women's sports include:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Softball
- Lacrosse
- Gymnastics
- Field hockey
- Golf
- Cross country
- Track and field

Most teams compete in the MAC, though some sports participate in affiliate conferences depending on sponsorship availability.

Throughout the year, students can attend athletic events nearly every month of the academic calendar.

More than just sports

For many students, attending games becomes part of their college routine.

Athletic events offer opportunities to socialize, meet other students and participate in traditions tied to campus culture. It's a time to share fun memories with friends and family members. It also gives us a break as students, which will always be very needed as you navigate your time in college.

Many games also include promotional giveaways, theme nights and fan engagement activities designed specifically for students. If you're a fan of free stuff, sporting events will be your favorite place.

How students can stay updated

Students looking for schedules, game times and ticket information can visit CMU Athletics for updated information throughout the year.

Game schedules, roster information, promotions and venue policies are all listed through the athletics website.

Students can also access their Student Access Pass and mobile tickets through the digital system outlined by CMU Athletics before attending games.

For all in-game content, features and live play updates, follow along with Central Michigan Life on any socials and through our website.

Breaking ground on the future

CMU's donor-funded golf facility is slated to open in fall of 2027

By Chance Hamilton

Sports reporter

Golf had never found a permanent home on the Central Michigan University campus.

Throughout the history of the men's and women's programs, CMU opted for off-site locations to compete, whether at local country clubs or other nearby golf courses.

As a result, issues and frustrations were quick to pop up.

"Our roster limit is nine," Kevin Jennings, the head coach of the men's golf program, said. "If we go to country clubs ... and out on the putting green, that issue for a lot of facilities is daunting because it's like we're taking over the green."

However, the men's and women's teams being displaced would not be a permanent problem.

In 2024, Central Michigan Athletics announced its plans for a 40-acre year-round golf facility, located directly west of Theunissen Stadium on the southwest end of campus. A 16,000 square foot clubhouse would stand as a centerpiece for the site.

In the eyes of Denise Williams Mallett, chair of the Central Michigan Board of Trustees, this golf facility represents a bold step forward for both the athletics department and the university in general.

"I look at things from three perspectives," Mallett said. "Student success is huge for me and our board, stewardship and long-term vision. ... This facility to me is about more than just golf."

Mallett was quick to mention that this project is entirely funded by donors who hold a vision for the future of golf at CMU.

A \$5 million lead donation by Thomas 'Rocky' and Traci Ricelli, a family who has financially supported the golf programs in the past, kickstarted the funding process. It was the largest single-gift donation in CMU Athletics history.

With the project estimated to cost over \$11 million, the remaining funds were covered through other cash gifts by individual donors and by reaching fundraising goals.

"The Ricelli family covered 70-80% of it," Mallett said. "This is their vision, and to have them want to give back to CMU is wonderful. ... It allows us to have that opportunity to not rely on tuition dollars to do construction, so that's fantastic."

After accounting for the project's funding, the focus shifted toward which amenities were necessary to greatly improve student-athlete development.

Jennings played a considerable role in finalizing what was important to include in Central Michigan's facility.

"During the planning stage, I had the pleasure of visiting facilities all over the country," Jennings said.



Courtesy Photo | Central Michigan University Athletics

A digital rendering of the upcoming golf facility for Central Michigan University. Photo courtesy of Central Michigan Athletic Communications.

"What I've been able to bring [back] ... can maximize the possibilities within the resources we have."

As a year-round facility, there will be numerous amenities to promote student-athlete growth both indoors and outdoors.

During the warm months, golfers can train on three reversible holes with multiple tee boxes, while refining other skills on driving ranges and a dedicated short-game practice area.

Meanwhile, the clubhouse's interior will include four hitting bays and training simulators, a putting green, locker room space and locker room space for the men's and women's programs. Coaches will also enjoy their own office space, along with room to host events and show hospitality.

"The biggest thing to me, because this is the lens of my own personal philosophy, is that human factor, the community element, that's woven into this," Mallett said. "Often we can miss that, we can take it for granted."

Strengthening relationships

Central Michigan has made an intentional effort to emphasize community with this project, particularly focusing on continuing its relationship with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe by allowing them to have a voice throughout the process.

Erik Rodriguez, the interim public relations director for

the SCIT, is optimistic for the development of the facility and the university's commitment to the Tribe.

"We value that relationship, hope to continue that relationship, and hope others continue to see the beauty and depth of the tribal heritage and the culture we have here at the Saginaw Chippewa tribe," Rodriguez said.

CMU invited the Tribe to perform a ground blessing ceremony on June 24, recognizing the history of the traditional Anishinaabe land while celebrating the future of the project.

"It's the opportunity for us to offer some of the traditional smudging medicine and ceremony to that land to cleanse it, to heal it, to have good thoughts," Rodriguez said. "We want to ... integrate that into everything that is Central Michigan University and the campus."

Tribal Elder Joseph Sowmick performed the smudging ceremony around the perimeter of the site, burning sacred plants as an act of restoring balance to the land.

"[It's] to make sure that this land will continue to be utilized and stewarded for the purposes development, the core principles of those teachings we are passed down," Rodriguez said.

The SCIT's involvement with the facility expands beyond the blessing ceremony as well. Younger members of the Tribe will have opportunities to use the facility as they learn about the game.

"I think there's a tremendous mutual benefit to the

space,” Rodriguez said. “Throughout our nation, we have a community that really loves the game of golf as well. Our tribal youth can utilize that space to interact with Division I student athletes and coaching staff.”

Building a long-term vision

The ground blessing ceremony only marked the beginning of the construction process, which Jennings said is already creating increased interest about the men’s golf program.

“I can already see the type of individuals who are interested or are paying attention,” Jennings said. “The level of interest for recruits ... has grown dramatically. There’s a lot of great things happening within the program.”

Central Michigan has drawn recruiting interest from across the nation and at the international level with both the men’s and women’s golf programs, including players from Canada and India currently representing the maroon and gold.

Jennings said it’s encouraging to see this increase in attention on so many levels.

“The [men’s] group we have this fall is an entirely new team, and it’s a very exciting time for them,” Jennings said. “It raises the bar in every manner as we try to bring the first title to Central Michigan University.”

With a new season approaching, both programs will have some ground to make up if they wish to contend for a Mid-American Conference championship. The men’s team placed seventh in the 2026 competition, while the women’s program finished eighth overall.

For CMU golf, the future ultimately begins with the



Courtesy Photo | Central Michigan University Athletics

A digital rendering of the upcoming golf facility for Central Michigan University. Photo courtesy of Central Michigan Athletic Communications.

construction of the facility. Mallett is encouraged that the strength of the community will be an important driving force for years to come.

“We’re talking about five, ten, twenty years in the future,” Mallett said. “It’s one of those things that show that when we’re investing in people, students, facilities,

this hits all areas of that. And it’s very attractive when we’re trying to compete for the strong student base, faculty, coaches and supporters.”

Development has already begun on the site near Theunissen Stadium, with the project aiming to be completed in fall 2027.

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Multiple Online Auctions. Bid now on RC cars, trucks, model trains, holiday decor, fishing boat, snow thrower, sports memorabilia, much more! Browse full catalogs online at SherwoodAuctionServiceLLC.com. Call 1-800-835-0495 ext. 2.

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HUGE SALE!
FRIDAY, September 11!

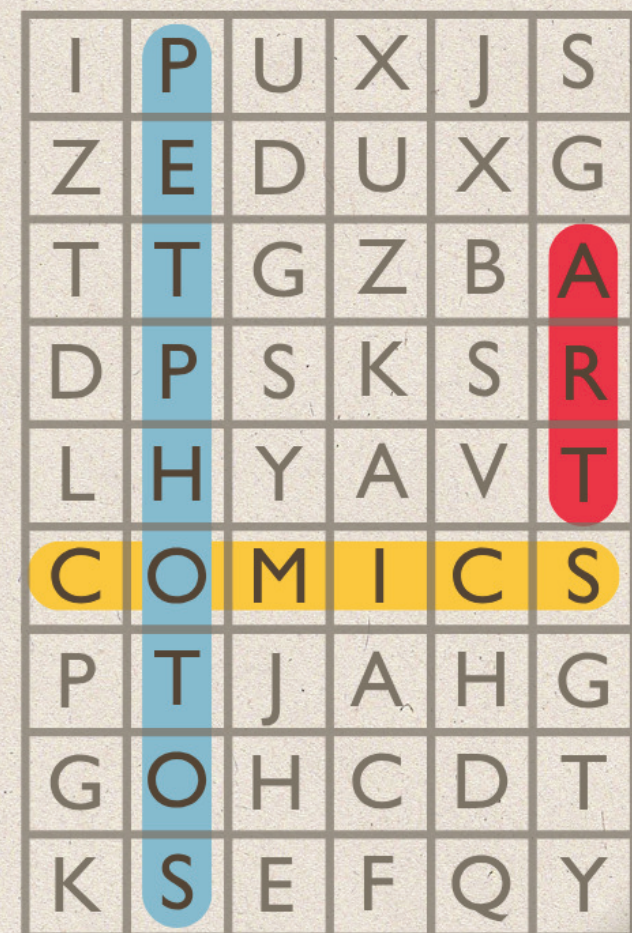
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GOLD ROUTE

SAC/Indian Trails	:13	:43	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Stadium Mall			UPON REQUEST
TJMaxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown Apts.	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Broomfield Mall			UPON REQUEST
Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

MAROON ROUTE

Village@Bluegrass	:21	:51	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
University Meadows	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Union Square	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Target			UPON REQUEST
Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Main St./Gaylord	:48	:18	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
MMC/Doan Center			UPON REQUEST
Washington/Clayton	:05	:35	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Larzalere	:06	:36	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Wightman	:07	:37	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Park Library	:08	:38	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Building Lot #33	:12	:42	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

DEERFIELD

Towers	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deming/Edgewood	:16	:46	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Westpoint Village	:18	:48	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Lexington Ridge	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Theunissen Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Commuter Lot #75	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
SAC/Indian Trails	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR



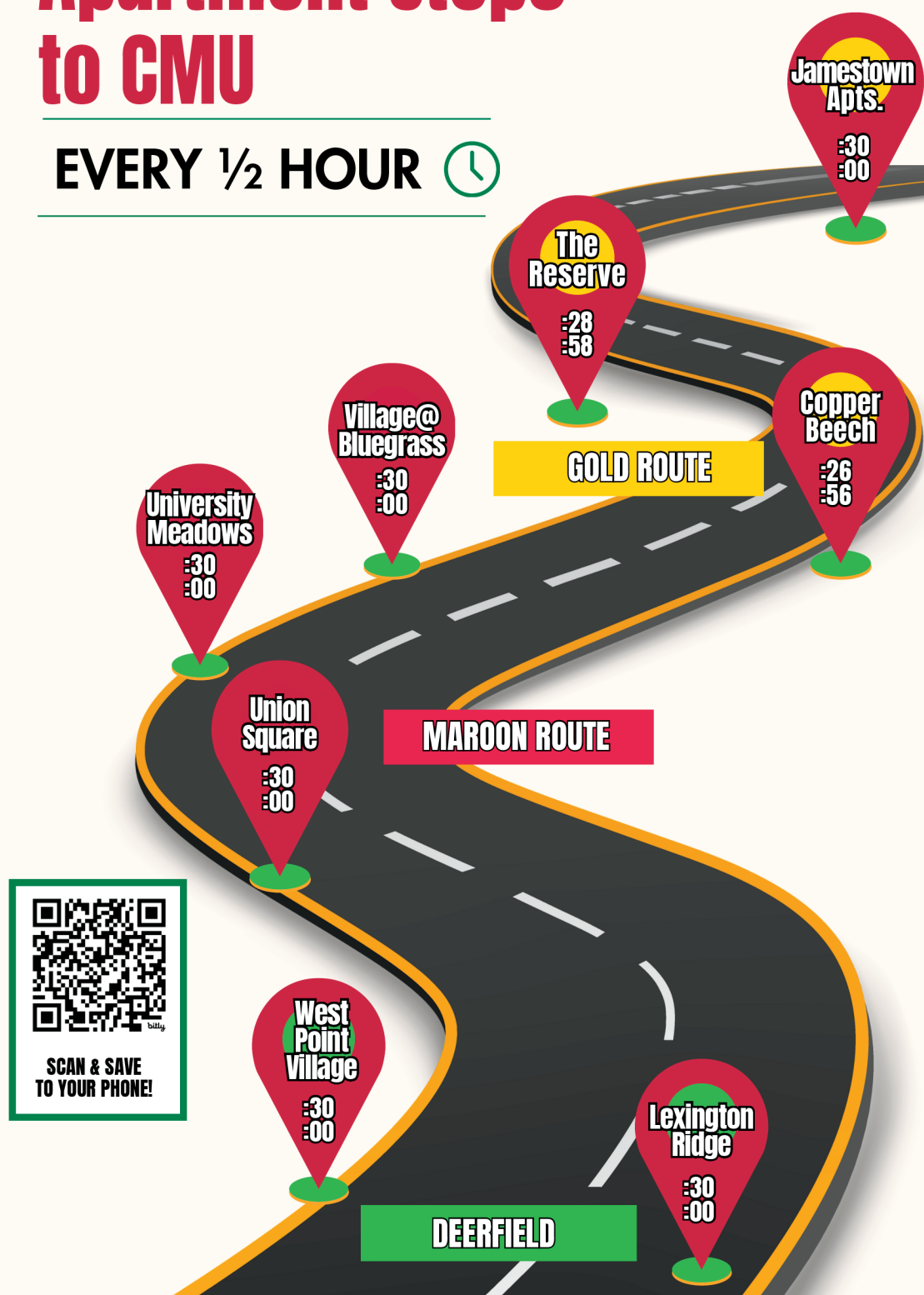
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