

# Benton Charter Township

## History

Benton Charter Township emerged in the early 1830's. Settlers arrived to find acres of rich soil, quaint ponds, and rolling sand dunes. These individuals, with their strong determination and foresight, were instrumental in the early development of Benton Charter Township. The earliest settlement within the Township was Millburg Village that was platted by Jehiel Enos and Amos Amsden in 1835. Benton Charter Township was named after U.S. Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri, and was officially incorporated on March 11, 1837. For civil purposes, however, it remained part of St. Joseph Township until 1841.

As the Township entered the twentieth century, its rapid growth continued with the coming of new industries and several schools. Manufacturers, finding that a welcoming atmosphere awaits them, have chosen to locate and expand in the Township. Commercial/retail development has boomed because of its strategic Interstate 94 location. Orchards Mall, Meijer, Target, Wal-Mart, Lowe's and other retail operations, along with numerous nationally known restaurants, have experienced the increasing advantages of the Benton Charter Township location.

## Observations

Benton Charter Township is strategically located on Lake Michigan, with five (5) intersections off Interstate 94, an airport, and access to a commercial port. It offers a rich mix of transportation modes to any industrial or commercial entrepreneur. In addition, the Township is halfway between Detroit and Chicago with convenient access to South Bend, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. Commercial development is currently experiencing a boom with sufficient land available for diversified future development. Residents enjoy possibly the lowest fire insurance rates in the entire state, as well as relatively low water and sewer rates. Benton Charter Township is a member of the Benton Harbor school district. This district has undergone major revisions of its program in order to improve the status of its students. Along with its excellent strategic location, the Township offers incentives to commercial and industrial entrepreneurs.

The Township is also engaged in programs to encourage quality housing within its borders. With officials working diligently to continue to improve Benton Charter Township's economic strength and competitiveness, the Township will continue to provide a place of welcome for residents and businesses.

## Community Vision

- A. Expand the tax bases through growth in retail and commercial businesses.
- B. Market Benton Charter Township's strategic location and economic strengths to new industries.
- C. Make the area a regional commercial development center.
- D. Meet the housing needs of the residents by an increase in single housing units.



## All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

### Population

1980 Census	19,120	
1990 Census	17,163	10.24 % decline
2000 Census	16,404	4.42 % decline
2009 Census Estimate	15,195	7.37 % decline

### Personal Income

Median Family	\$30,015.00
Average per Capita	\$16,068.00
Median Household	\$25,932.00

### Labor Force

Total Work Force	6,112
Unemployment Rate	12.2 %

### Principal Economic Base Employers

Whirlpool Administration Center	3,204 employees
Lake Michigan College	472 employees
Meijer	332 employees
Gast Manufacturing	320 employees
Wal-Mart	317 employees
Lowe's	295 employees
Atlantic Automotive	220 employees

### Housing

Number of Dwellings	7,470
Owner Occupied	3,890
Renter Occupied	2,583
Median Rent	\$486
Median Home Value	\$87,600

### Building Permits – 2010

	Number Issued	Dollar Amount
Residential	15	\$2,100,167.00
Commercial	24	\$14,210,008.00
Industrial	3	\$167,300.00
Other	166	\$2,450,877.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>\$18,928,352.41</b>



Benton Charter Township Hall

# Government

## Municipal Hall

Benton Charter Township Hall  
1725 Territorial Road  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
Phone: (269) 925-0616  
Fax: (269) 925-7134

## Board Meetings

Board of Trustee Meetings  
First and Third Tuesday of each Month  
Start: 5:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meetings  
Second and Fourth Monday of each Month  
Start: 7:00 p.m.

## County Commissioners

Robert Wooley, District 1  
P.O. Box 324  
Coloma, MI 49038  
Phone: (269) 468-7329  
nbosc@i2k.net

Marletta Seats, District 3  
1644 Stanley Drive  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
Phone: (269) 927-3062  
marletta@ameritech.net

Jeanette Leahey, District 6  
2985 East Bluffwood Terrace  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone: (269) 429-6349  
jeanetteleahey@hotmail.com

## State Governor

Rick Snyder (R)  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: (517) 373-3400  
Fax: (517) 335-6863  
Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov

## State Senator

John Proos (R), District 21  
P. O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536  
Phone: (517) 373-6960  
Fax: (517) 373-0897  
SenJProos@senate.michigan.gov

## State Representative

Al Pscholka (R), District 79  
Michigan House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514  
Phone: (517) 373-1403  
Fax: (517) 373-3652  
AlPscholka@house.mi.gov

## U.S. Representative

Fred Upton, 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
2183 Rayburn H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3761  
Fax: (202) 225-4986  
tellupton@mail.house.gov

## U.S. Senators

Debbie Stabenow (D)  
133 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-4822  
stabenow.senate.gov/email.htm

Carl Levin (D)  
269 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-6221  
levin.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm  
Access via website Contact Center

# Education

## Benton Charter Township is served by the following school districts:

Benton Harbor Area Schools  
Dr. Leonard Seawood, Superintendent  
823 Riverview Dr.  
P.O. Box 1107  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
Phone: (269) 927-0600  
Student membership: 3,688



Coloma Community Schools  
Terry Ann Boguth, Superintendent  
2518 Boyer Road  
P. O. Box 550  
Coloma, MI 49038  
Phone: (269) 468-2424  
Student membership: 1,778



# Public Services

## Police

Chief of Police: Vince Fetke  
Phone: (269) 926-8221  
Sworn Officers: 25  
Civilian Employees: 6  
Number of Cars: 20

## Fire

Fire Chief: Dan Durham  
Phone: (269) 925-3958  
Number of Stations: 3  
Professional Firemen: 14  
Reserve Paid (Volunteers): 16  
Insurance Rate Class: 5

## Trash Collection

Contact: Sanitation Department  
Phone: (269) 925-0616  
Type: Municipal  
Pick Up Day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
Thursday – Yard debris  
Cost: \$15.00 per month

## Recycling

Berrien County Community Development  
Jill Adams, Environmental Specialist  
(269) 983-7111 Ext. 8234  
Program information available online at  
[www.berriencounty.org/recycle](http://www.berriencounty.org/recycle).

## Water

Benton Charter Township Water Department  
Phone: (269) 925-0616  
Source: Lake Michigan  
Capacity: 12,000,000 GPD

## Sewer

Benton Charter Township Sanitation Dept.  
Phone: (269) 925-0616  
System Type: Activated Sludge  
Capacity: 18,000,000 GPD

## Telephone

A T & T  
Residential Customers (800) 244-4444  
Business Customers (800) 660-3000

## Gas

Michigan Gas Utilities  
1-800-778-3802  
711 Starlite Dr. Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022

## Electric

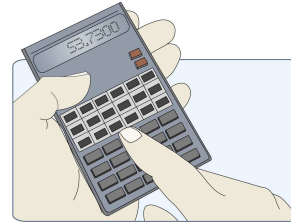
American Electric Power Company  
(800) 311-6424  
2425 Meadowbrook Road; Benton Harbor, MI

# Taxes

In March 1994, Michigan voters approved a new tax structure (Proposal A). The following table provides a simplistic look at the taxes currently levied within this community. Property tax is based now upon taxable value, not state equalized value.

## General Taxes

General County	4.7723
Law Enforcement/ Public Safety	0.3500
Special Voted 911	0.2500
Senior Citizens	0.3000
LMC College	1.7854
Township	0.7829
Special Voted	3.4720
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11.7126</b>



## School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

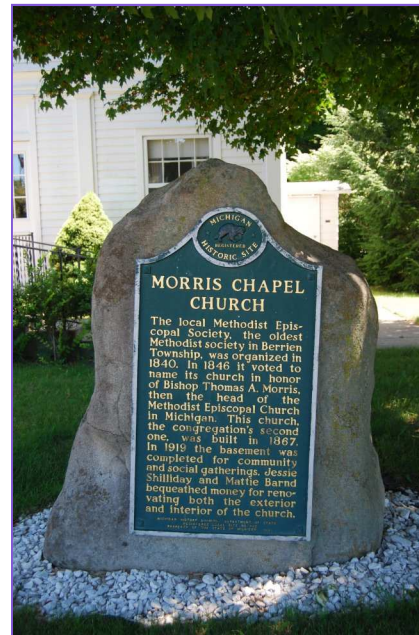
	Benton Harbor	Coloma
State Education Tax	6.0000	6.0000
Non-Homestead (Business)	17.8308	18.0000
Extra Voted Building & Site	2.0000	0.0000
Debt Retirement	0.0000	1.4000
Berrien RESA	0.1745	0.1745
Special Education	2.1954	2.1954
<b>Subtotals</b>		
<b>Homestead</b>	<b>10.3699</b>	<b>9.7699</b>
<b>Non-Homestead (Business)</b>	<b>28.2007</b>	<b>27.7699</b>

# Economic Development

Berrien County Community Development Department  
 701 Main Street  
 St. Joseph, Michigan 49085  
 Contact: Daniel Fette, Director  
 Phone: (269) 983-7111, Ext. 8617



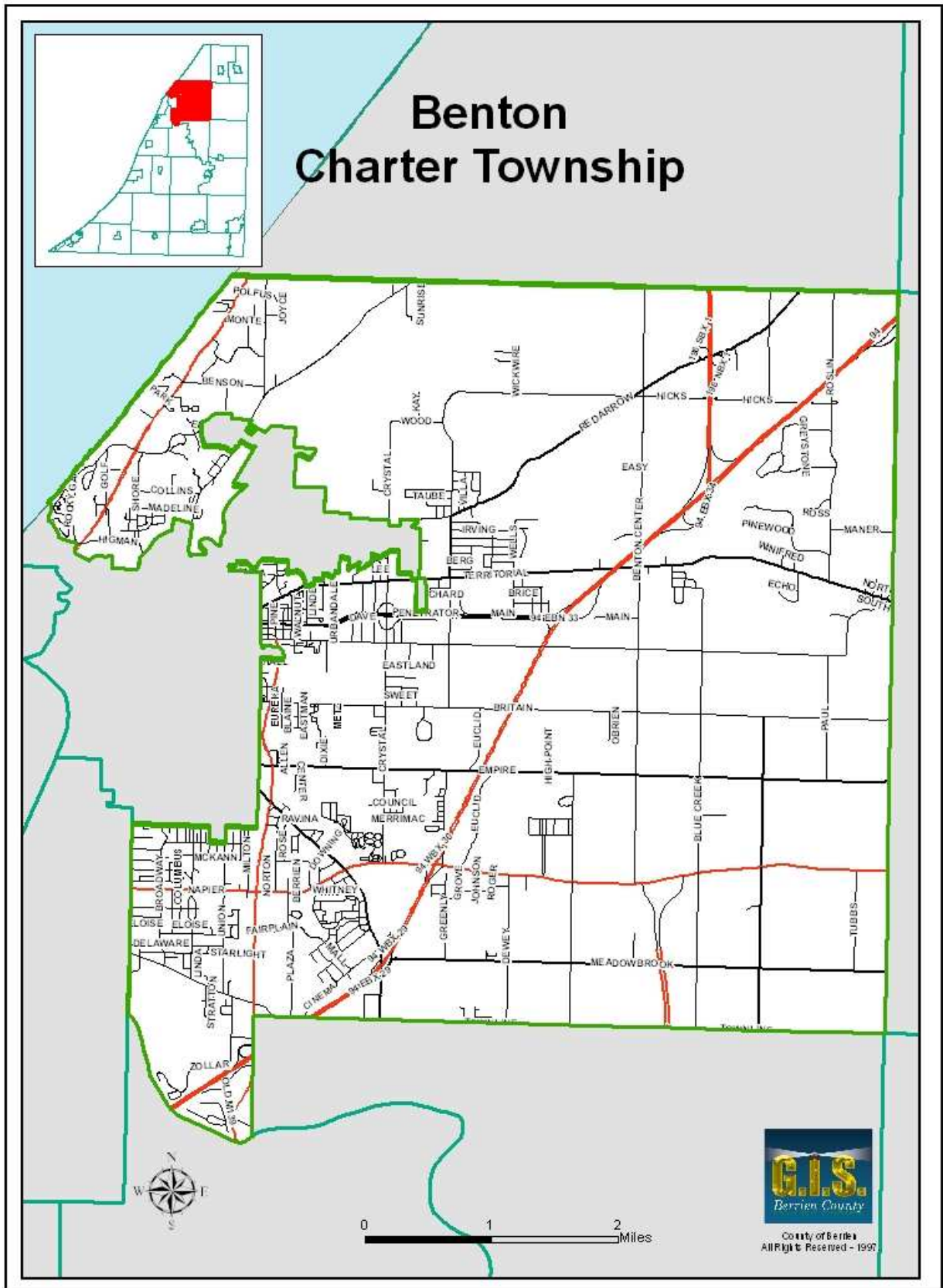
Cornerstone Alliance  
 38 West Wall Street, P.O. Box 428  
 Benton Harbor, MI 49023  
 Contact: Wendy Dant-Chesser, Executive VP  
 Phone: (269) 925-6100



**Morris Chapel Church  
 Historical Marker**



**House of David Park Vintage Postcard Photo**



This Community Snapshot has been prepared by the Berrien County Community Development Department. For more detailed information on services available in Berrien County, please visit our website at [www.berriencounty.org/CommunityDevelopment](http://www.berriencounty.org/CommunityDevelopment).

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. However, as data is constantly changing, Berrien County will be held harmless for any omissions or errors contained herein.