

Berrien Township

History

Berrien Township was one of the earliest township settlements in Berrien County. Settlement began in 1827 when the John Johnson family, originally from Southern Indiana, settled on 80 acres. The density of the wilderness in which the early settlers lived is best shown by an incident that happened to one of them, Michael Hand. Michael went out one morning to shoot a squirrel for breakfast. Just a few roads from his house, he found a large breakfast -- a deer. While trying to drag the deer home, he became lost. A snowfall also added to his distress. After an hour of hopeless wandering, he shouted for help. His wife soon arrived on the scene showing that he had not been far from home at anytime and had been moving in a bewildered circle.

In April of 1832 Calvin Britain, the legislative representative from Berrien County, petitioned for the organization of Berrien Township from a portion of Niles Township. The first official election was held on April 1, 1833, at the tavern of Pitt Brown, who was immediately elected Supervisor of the Township. The number of settlers increased rapidly after 1840.

In 1847 the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution instructing the superintendents of the poor to purchase land in Berrien Township for the establishment of a poor farm. Almost 200 acres were bought for a mere \$1,220. The poor farm was totally destroyed by fire in 1867 but was rebuilt in 1869-1870. This poor farm operation continued well into the twentieth century and eventually evolved into the Berrien General Hospital Center that is now part of the Lakeland Regional Medical Center as a long term care facility. Love Creek Nature Park is also located in Berrien Township.

Observations

Berrien Township covers the unincorporated community of Berrien Center and part of incorporated Eau Claire Village. The Township has always been a home to rural dwellers and fruit and vegetable farmers. It is proud of its status quo. This friendly community enjoys a low crime rate and a reasonable increase in population. Although the residents do not encourage large industrial developments, they welcome that which will enhance the area. It is a good place for families who seek the peacefulness, friendliness, and quiet that such a community provides.

Community Vision

- A. To maintain the status quo of an agricultural community.
- B. To discourage large industrial development.
- C. To remain a friendly, bedroom community.

Agenda of the Community Strategic Plan

Please note this agenda is based off of the Berrien Township Sketch Development Plan adopted on February 1992, commissioned and conducted by the township planning commission. The suggested growth policies were:

- A. Encourage the preservation of the township's agricultural and recreational lands by requiring relatively large residential parcels in the Agricultural-Residential Districts and by establishing and maintaining predominantly agricultural zoning.
- B. Provide for a reasonable amount of urban development that will appropriately accompany the anticipated relatively low population growth.
- C. Guide urban growth toward non-prime agricultural lands, open and unused land, and least productive agricultural land.
- D. Require lot sizes adequately large enough to help prevent earth, groundwater, and surface water pollution, as well as to encourage aesthetically pleasing residential areas.

All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

Population

1980 Census	4,302	
1990 Census	4,697	9.16 % increase
2000 Census	5,075	1.70 % increase
2009 Census Estimate	5,280	4.04 % increase

Personal Income

Median Family	\$57,459.00
Average per Capita	\$21,233.00
Median Household	\$51,875.00

Labor Force

Total Work Force	2,586
Unemployment Rate	10.9 %

Principal Economic Base Employers

Berrien County Animal Control	17 employees
Berrien County Juvenile Center	58 employees
Lakeland Medical Center Billing Office	30 employees
Lakeland Specialty Hospital	298 employees

Housing

Number of Dwellings	2,023
Owner Occupied	1,428
Renter Occupied	374
Median Rent	\$728
Median Home Value	\$172,800

Building Permits – 2010

	<u>Number Issued</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
Residential	3	\$725,772.00
Other	45	\$599,361.00
Total	48	\$1,325,133.00



Apple Orchard in Berrien Township

Government

Municipal Hall

Berrien Township Hall
P.O. Box 61
8916 M-140
Berrien Center, MI 49102
Phone: (269) 461-6925
Fax: (269) 461-3762
Website: www.berriertownship.com

Council Meetings

Second Tuesday of Each Month
Start: 7:00 p.m.
Fourth Tuesday of Each Month
Start: 7:00 p.m.

County Commissioner

Bryan Bixby
(District 8)
5743 Pokagon Road
Berrien Springs MI 49103
Phone: (269) 471-9290
bixbyfarms@comcast.net

State Governor

Rick Snyder (R)
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone: (517) 373-3400
Faz: (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

Sharon Tyler (R), District 78
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514
Phone: (517) 373-1796
Fax: (517) 373-5918
sharontyler@house.mi.gov

U.S. Representative

Fred Upton, 6th 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

Berrien Township is served by the following school districts:

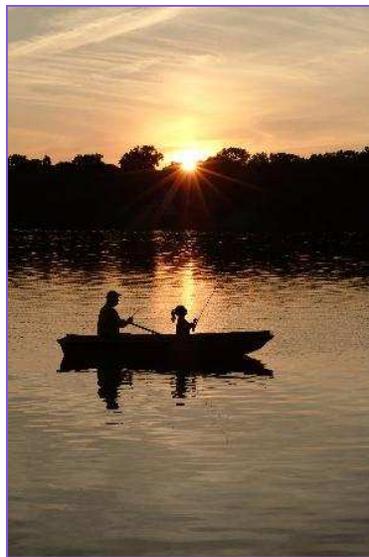
Berrien Springs Public Schools
One Sylvester Avenue
Berrien Springs MI 49103
Phone: (269) 471-2891
Enrollment: 2,015

Eau Claire Public Schools
6190 W. Main Street
Eau Claire MI 49111
Phone: (269) 461-6947
Enrollment: 812

Niles Community Schools
111 Spruce Street
Niles MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-0732
Enrollment: 3,835



Love Creek Nature Center



Fishing on the St. Joseph River

Public Services

Police

Berrien Township does not have its own police force. The Berrien County Sheriff's Department covers the Township.

Berrien County Sheriff's Department
(269) 983-7141

Fire

The Berrien Township Fire Department is shared with Pipestone Township and the Village of Eau Claire.

Fire Chief: Tom Stiles

Phone: 911

Number of Stations: 2 - Main Station & Substation

Professional Firemen: 0

Part-Time Paid: 30

Volunteers: 0

Insurance Rate Class: 7

Trash Collection

Reliable Disposal at (269) 465-3773

Waste Management at (800) 281-8185

Type: Independent Contracts

Recycling

Berrien County Community Development

Jill Adams, Environmental Specialist

(269) 983-7111 Ext. 8234

Program information available online at

www.berriencounty.org/recycle.

Water

Contact: Berrien County Health Department, Niles Office

Phone: (269) 684-2800

Source: Individual Wells

Sewer

Contact: Berrien County Health Department, Niles Office

Phone: (269) 684-2800

System Type: Septic Tanks

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	0.7171
Special Voted	0.0000
Subtotal	8.1748

School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

	Berrien Springs	Eau Claire	Niles
State Education Tax	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000
Non-Homestead (Business)	18.0000	18.0000	18.0000
Extra Voted Building & Site	1.0000	0.0000	1.0000
Debt Retirement	1.9254	3.2500	0.0000
Berrien RESA	0.1745	0.1745	0.1745
Special Education	2.1954	2.1954	2.1954
Subtotals			
Homestead	11.2953	11.6199	9.3699
Non-Homestead (Business)	29.2953	29.6199	27.3699



Trilliums at Love Creek Nature Center

Economic Development

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



Chamber of Commerce

Berrien Springs / Eau Claire Area
 P.O. Box 177
 Berrien Springs MI 49103
 Phone: (269) 471-2484
www.bsechamber.org



Long Lake Church, 1856

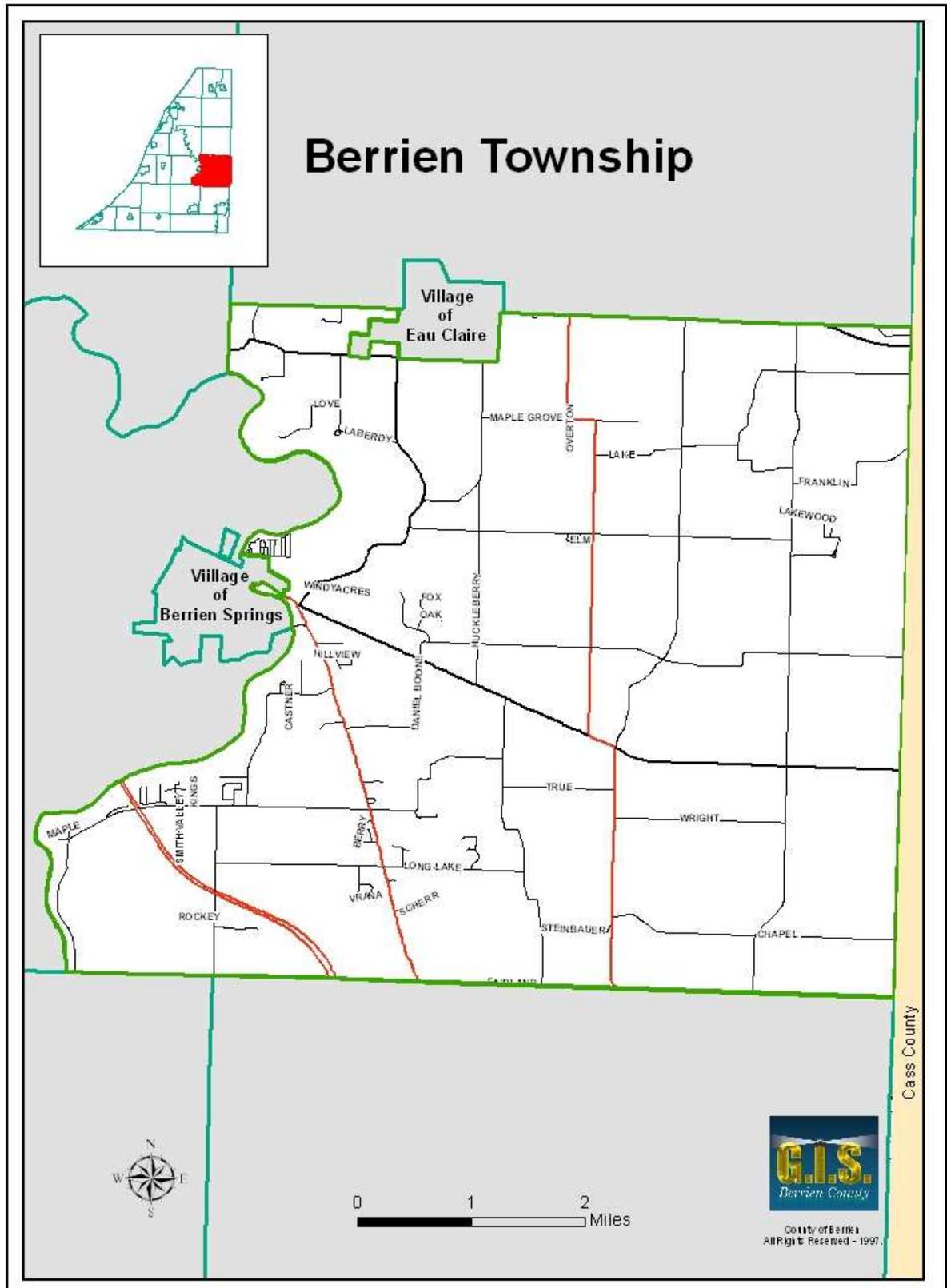


Autumn Colors

Climate

	January	July
Average Maximum Temperature	32F / 0C	82F / 28C
Average Minimum Temperature	18F / -8C	61F / 16C
Days over 90F or 32C	11	
Days below 0F or 18C	4	
Days of Growing Season	162	
Average Annual Rainfall	37" / 94cm	
Average Annual Snowfall	70" / 178cm	





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.

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.