

Bertrand Township

History

In the early 1800's Joseph Bertrand realized the potential of the land controlled by the Potawatomi Indians. Around 1804 he married Madeleine Bourassa who was part Potawatomi. On an ideal piece of land south of where the Great Sauk Trail crossed the St. Joseph River and lying south of what is now Niles, Bertrand opened a trading post. Officially, in 1808, he settled here, marking the birth of the "Village of Bertrand".

The new village grew rapidly and is said to have numbered almost 1,000 people at one time and boasted three hotels, a warehouse, seven dry-goods stores, and a post office.

By 1833 Indian trade was dwindling and land speculation promised a golden future. The Bertrand Association was formed to take advantage of this opportunity. Initial members included Joseph and Madeleine Bertrand, Sr., Joseph Bertrand, Jr., John Silsbe, Edwin S. Garnsey and John Hudson but others soon bought into the company. Daniel Garnsey who was not only engaged in laying out the Chicago Road but also served as trustee, agent, and attorney for the selling of plotted lots plotted the land of Bertrand in 1833.

Gradually, the village began to decline. A colorful tale in history attributes its decline to an Indian curse. The story is told that in the early 1830's an Indian was refused liquor at a local Inn and, in his rage, swore that..."South Bend will grow...Niles will grow...but Bertrand will die." Although a colorful tale, the village's downfall was because of economic, not mystic, conditions. In fact, Bertrand's decline came about because the village's proprietors raised the prices of the lots too high and the Michigan Central Railroad was routed through Niles, thus bypassing Bertrand. The village declined, but Bertrand Township flourished as settlers moved in to claim land after the Chicago Treaty of 1833. In April of 1836, Bertrand Township held its first election at the new Union Hotel where Fredric Howe, originally from New York, was elected Supervisor.

Until 1910 the township experienced a steady increase in population and became a main agriculture area. Over the past three decades, the population has stabilized because of the scarcity of available land.

Observations

Bertrand Township is located on the border of Indiana. Consequently, the residents of this bedroom community focus much of their leisure and cultural activities at the northern Indiana area. The township dwellers have purposely decided to maintain the status quo of a quiet, rural, bedroom community, which differentiates it from neighboring Niles. Approximately 95% of the township has been zoned suburban residential. A large farming community remains.

Bertrand Township residents enjoy access to the many job markets in Niles and South Bend, and are proud of their four good school districts. The township is a farming community and traditionally has discouraged industry from moving in, except for one industrially zoned area, formerly occupied by a large AT&T plant. The township has an industrial park adjacent to the U.S. 31 Bypass that provides quick access to I-80 East and West.

Community Vision

- A. Maintain the mix of farming and residential uses.
- B. Encourage Industrial Development in selected areas.

All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

Population

1980 Census	2,369	
1990 Census	2,228	5.95 % decrease
2000 Census	2,380	6.82 % increase
2009 Census Estimate	2,554	7.31 % increase

Personal Income

Median Family	\$72,500.00
Average per Capita	\$31,252.00
Median Household	\$62,614.00

Labor Force

Total Work Force	1,341
Unemployment Rate	5.5 %

Principal Economic Base Employers

AACOA Extrusions	160 employees
Lakeland Regional Health System	476 employees
Pilkington North America	245 employees

Housing

Number of Dwellings	1,039
Owner Occupied	941
Renter Occupied	59
Median Rent	\$496
Median Home Value	\$181,700

Building Permits – 2010

	<u>Number Issued</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
Residential	2	\$1,857,019.05
Commercial	2	\$549,765.00
Other	28	\$935,770.00
Total	32	\$3,342,554.05



Lake Michigan College Bertrand Crossing

Government

Municipal Hall

Bertrand Township Hall
3835 Buffalo Road
Buchanan, MI 49107
Phone: (269) 695-5001
Fax: (269) 695-4205

Council Meetings

Board Meetings: Second Thursday of Each Month
Start: 7:30 p.m.
Zoning Board: First Thursday of Each Month
Start: 7:30 p.m.

County Commissioner

R. McKinley Elliott
(District 11)
1 Park Court
Buchanan MI 49107
Phone: (269) 695-9312

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

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

Bertrand Township is served by the following school districts:

Brandywine Community Schools
1830 S. Third Street
Niles MI 49120
Phone: (269) 684-7150
Enrollment: 1,450

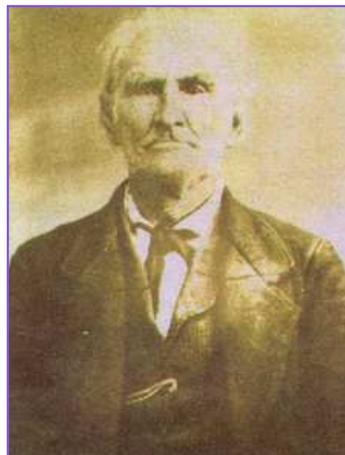
Buchanan Community Schools
401 W. Chicago Street
Buchanan MI 49107
Phone: (269) 695-8401
Enrollment: 1,677

Galien Township Schools
122 E. Southeastern Avenue
Galien MI 49113
Phone: (269) 545-3364
Enrollment: 185

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



Howe School
January 1950



Joseph Bertrand Jr.
Oldest living son of
Joseph Sr. and Madeline.

Public Services

Police

Bertrand Township does not have its own police force. The Michigan State Police and the Berrien County Sheriff's Department cover the Township.

Michigan State Police – Niles Post
(269) 683-4411
Berrien County Sheriff's Department
(269) 983-7141

Fire

Fire Chief: William Knisely
Phone: (269) 683-1289
Number of Stations: 2
Professional Firemen: 0
Part-Time Paid: 20
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: City of Niles – Utilities Department
Phone: (269) 683-4700
Source: Municipal Wells
Capacity: 6,000,000 GPD

Sewer

Contact: Niles WWTP
Phone: (269) 683-4700
System Type: Secondary
Capacity: 5,800,000 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



Agricultural Land

Taxes

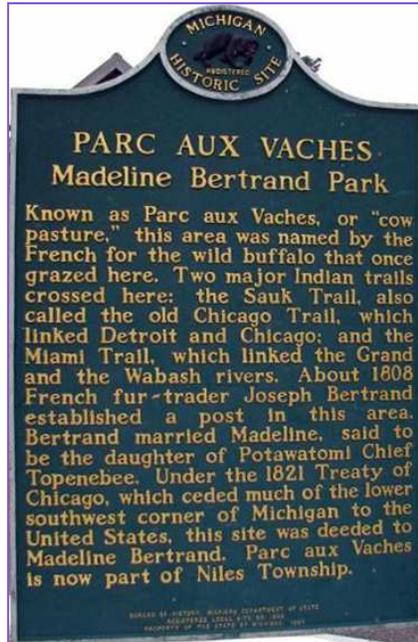
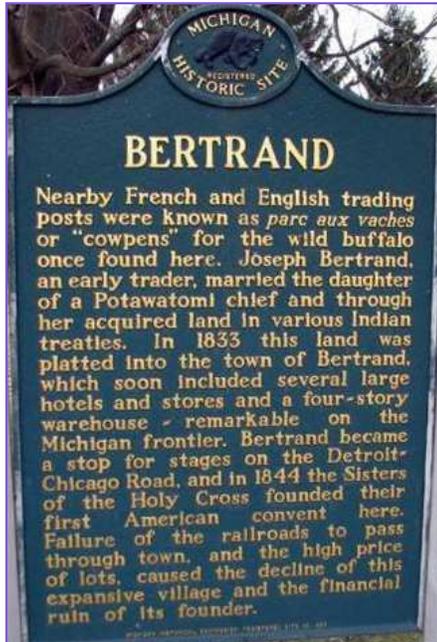
In March 1994, Michigan voters approved a new tax structure (Proposal A). The following table provides a simplistic look at the taxes currently levied within this community. Property tax is based now upon taxable value, not state equalized value.

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	0.8888
Special Voted	2.2460
Subtotal	10.5925

School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

	Brandywine	Buchanan	Galien	Niles
State Education Tax	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000
Non-Homestead (Business)	18.0000	18.0000	18.0000	18.0000
Extra Voted Building & Site	0.0000	0.8000	0.0000	1.0000
Debt Retirement	4.8500	4.2000	2.6500	0.0000
Berrien RESA	0.1745	0.1745	0.1745	0.1745
Special Education	2.1954	2.1954	2.1954	2.1954
Subtotals				
Homestead	13.2199	13.3699	11.0199	9.3699
Non-Homestead (Business)	31.2199	31.3699	29.0199	27.3699



Madeline Bertrand Park
Tribute Plaques

Economic Development

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

Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance
Shelley Klug, Executive Director
1950 Industrial Drive
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-1833



Chamber of Commerce

Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 10
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-3721

Average Maximum Temperature
Average Minimum Temperature

Days over 90F or 32C
Days below 0F or 18C
Days of Growing Season

January

July

32F / 0C
18F / -8C

82F / 28C
61F / 16C

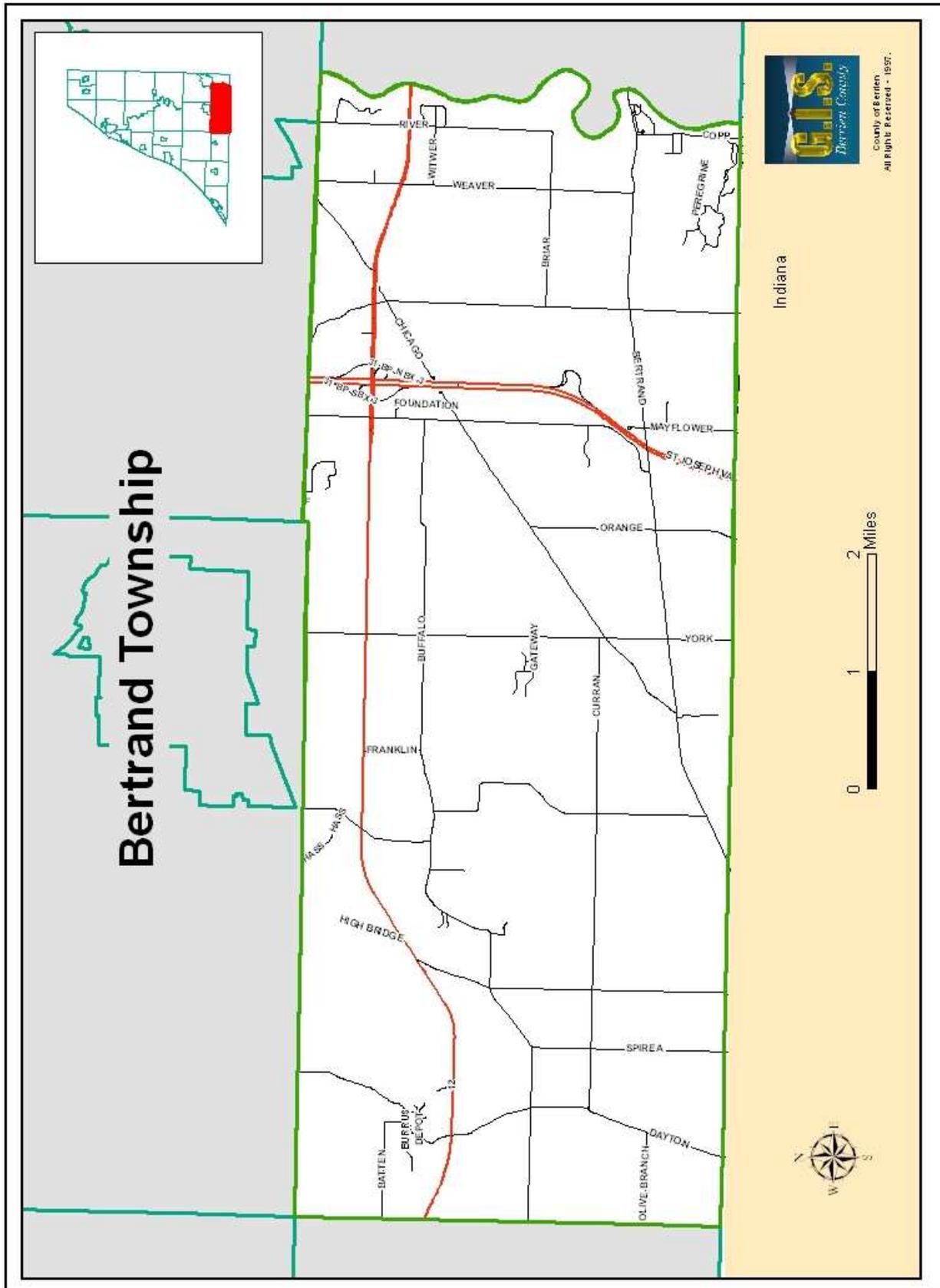
11
4
162

Average Annual Rainfall
Average Annual Snowfall

37" / 94cm
70" / 178cm



Climate



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.